Bourdieu and Latour in STS: “Let’s Leave Aside All the Facts for A While”

by

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M.A., Aarhus University, 2011
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

(Science and Technology Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (Vancouver)

September 2014

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Abstract

Through the lens of the English-speaking Science and Technology Studies (STS) community, the relationship between Pierre Bourdieu and Bruno Latour has remained semi-opaque. This thesis *problematizes* the Anglo understanding of the Bourdieu-Latour relationship and *unsettles* the resolve that maintains the distance that STS has kept from Bourdieu. Despite many similarities between these two scholars, Bourdieu has remained a distant figure to STS despite his predominance in disciplines from which STS frequently borrows and the relevance of his corpus to topics dear to the heart of STS. This is in part due to Latour's frequent criticisms of Bourdieu by name, Latour’s philosophical disagreements with Kant and neoKantians, and Latour’s prestige in STS, and partially due to Bourdieu’s somewhat indirect or orthogonal ways of addressing natural and physical sciences and technology. Due to the fact that the writings of both needed to be translated from the original French to be received by Anglo audiences, important cultural, stylistic, and rhetorical nuances were lost, mistranslated, or not translated across the linguistic and geographical divides. Including these distinctions is invaluable to understanding their relationship and further weakens the justification for Bourdieu's absence from STS.
Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Lee Claiborne Nelson.
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Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Stephen Petrina, for taking me on as his student and for his patience, counsel, support, and enthusiasm. His professional scholarship and personal friendship throughout this project, all of which began in his class on Bruno Latour, has taught me more than he will ever know. I only wish that I was going to be around for another year so that I could attend his upcoming class on Actor-Network-Theory.

I would also like to thank the head of the Science and Technology Studies Program at the University of British Columbia, John Beatty, for his guidance throughout my degree, and for having me as his Teaching Assistant. In addition, I am also indebted to Steven Taubeneck for his support and mentorship, and for fostering a community which I hold to be one of my most valuable treasures acquired during my time in Vancouver.

To my colleagues Alexis Beckett, Josef Garen, and Peggy Chiappetta, I wish to offer my thanks and enduring love for our time together, and for putting up with Rouxdi's not-always-pleasant presence. I would like to extend my thanks as well to Cameron Duncan and Matthew Kruger-Ross, for both their friendship and lubricated intellectual stimulation – their wit, insight, and intelligence will be duly missed. To Marco Altamirano I owe the indebtedness one gives to their guide. He is and has been my veritable sherpa through the moors of academia– a knowledgeable guide, mindful companion, and reassuring friend. My time in Vancouver could not have been as precious without the reading groups which Jeremy Arnott, Sahand Farivar, and Hannah Tollefson made most memorable – my abounded appreciation is yours.

Finally I would like to thank my mother, Dorothy Duval Nelson, who has always been my greatest support, loudest cheerleader, and ruthless editor.

To all, ya'll've been wonderful.
Dedication

To my loving parents for your unrelenting support and all that you have given me, ... and to spell check, without which I would not have been able to act/be as I have in the world.
1. Introduction

This article addresses the history of Science and Technology Studies (STS) in light of longstanding antagonisms between Pierre Bourdieu and Bruno Latour. Given that both are within the French intellectual tradition, to what extent do antagonistic differences translate across boarders and into contemporary contexts? Are there aspects of the conflict that have remained opaque despite wide adoption of both thinkers across a diverse range of disciplines? Has Bourdieu’s absence or exclusion from STS been taken for granted? Has this absence in STS been justified, or rather, were Latour's criticisms of Bourdieu taken at face value given Latour's posture within STS? What is at stake in answering these questions is how STS scholars understand their discipline's lineage and development, and whether or not certain embedded assumptions are appropriate. In short, to what extent is the history of STS predicated upon a range of misunderstandings compressed into ‘the Bourdieu-Latour conflict’?

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1 In private correspondence, Mario Biagioli had this to say about including Pierre Bourdieu in his edited volume *The Science Studies Reader* while other “readers” or “handbooks” of Science Studies, such as those published by the Society for Social Studies of Science, did not: “having been ignored by the Mertonians (whom he despised), sidelined by SSK (because of their parochialism and church-like esprit des corps), and then publicly ‘killed’ by Latour, I am not sure [Bourdieu] will get a second chance in STS.” The descriptive language Biagioli uses in discussing Bourdieu's eventual banishment is interesting in relation to the religious metaphor Steve Fuller invokes to describe the history of STS. Private email correspondence on October 3rd, 2013.

2 In his obituary for Bourdieu, for instance Breslau ends matter of factly: “The field of science studies since 1975 has not followed the research programme sketched by Bourdieu, although there have been a number of studies that have either applied or adapted Bourdieu’s approach. The past 20 years or so have seen an eclipse of the social in the science of science.” Daniel Breslau, “Pierre Bourdieu (1 August 1930 – 23 January 2002),” Social Studies of Science 32 (2002): 631-635. See also e.g., Ina Spiegel-Rösing, Derek John de Solla Price, Eds., *Science, technology, and society: A cross-disciplinary perspective*, Sage Publications, 1977; *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*, ed. Sheila Jasanoff, Gerald E. Markle, James C. Petersen, Trevor Pinch, Sage Publications, 1995, *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies, 3rd edition*, ed. Edward J. Hackett, Olga Amsterdamska, Michael E. Lynch, Judy Wajcman, Wiebe E. Bijker, MIT Press, 2007.] Bourdieu is mentioned in these texts, but sparingly (once in the first, and four times each in the second and third).

3 Douglas Allchin details well in his paper “Pseudohistory and Pseudoscience” what is at stake: in speaking about science, Allchin states that the concern “is not false history per se, but pseudohistory. Pseudohistory conveys false ideas about the historical process of science and the nature of scientific knowledge, even if based on acknowledged facts. Fragmentary accounts of real historical events that omit context can mislead, even while purporting to show how science works” (186) He continues: “pseudohistory need not be deliberate or intentional. It may result from negligence or even naivety. […] One cannot understand science fully without appreciating the controversies. And one cannot understand the controversies if some evidence is missing” (187). It must be noted that “Pseudohistory may not include any outright falsities. But this does not mean that the resulting story cannot 'lie’” (188). Douglas Allchin, “Pseudohistory and Pseudoscience,” *Science & Education* 13 (2004), 179-195.
This article *problematises* our understanding of the relationship – the controversy – between Bourdieu and Latour and the conflict between them in relation to STS. Much of the discussion of and general perspective on the conflict indicates the absence of key contextual matters that allow for more nuanced histories. The intent is to complicate our history and understanding of the relationship between Bourdieu and Latour, which resulted in Bourdieu's work remaining outside the reach of the interdisciplinary field of STS even in its most eclectic quarters. No doubt the criticisms lobbed at Bourdieu by Latour have been fundamental to shaping STS as distinct from SSK and HPS (though the borders still remain hazy, as identified by Peter Dear and Sheila Jasanoff). Whether or not those criticisms hold fast with fidelity is questionable given the context in which the criticisms were formed. Unquestionably many criticisms Latour made of Bourdieu are important for STS scholars, but whether these criticisms remain tenable is questionable.

Steve Fuller, not always a fan of Latour's, divides divergent currents in the history of STS into two “churches”— Low and High— for indicating broad differences in style, concerns, and genealogies. These terms date to the eighteenth century, where Low Church generally signified evangelicalism and the pulpit, while High Church signified respect of authority and the ministry. For Fuller, Low Church STS generally refers to “Science, Technology, and Society,” and High Church to “Science and Technology Studies.” The mirror acronym with cosmetically different titles aside, the difference can broadly be identified in interest, style, and emphasis. The Low Church STS “consists of such heterogeneous groups as policymakers, feminists, journalists, and others with a concern for the problems that science has caused, has solved, and possibly can solve in modern society,” whereas the High Church STS consists of “of philosophers,

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5 Carl Martin Allwood, Jan Barmark, and Steve Fuller, “A Conversation with Steve Fuller,” *Configurations* 8
sociologists, and historians of science, who share a largely intellectual interest in the hold that science and scientific knowledge have over society,” of which Latour is “the most famous High Churcher.” According to Fuller, when he asked Latour in 1992 about the distinction between the two, Latour admitted to not knowing that the Low Church STS even existed. Fuller describes the general focus of the two churches at that time where “the High Churches [were] following the line of the Edinburgh School in cultivating the disciplinary identity of STS, whereas Low Churches conceptualized STS primarily as a social movement designed to transform the relationship of science work to the rest of society.” Though discussion of the distinction is now less common, particularly due to more recent 'filling' or 'crossing' of the divide – including much of the recent work of Latour – the distinction between Low and High Church STS can be more readily seen by the patronage and absences found in High Church STS literature and references. Bourdieu's relative absence from High Church STS recently prompted a special issue of Minerva in 2011 entitled “Beyond the Canon: Pierre Bourdieu and Science and Technology Studies” to address his absence in High Church STS scholarship. In the introductory article, the authors observe that, though the topics Bourdieu popularized have gained attention in recent years, “relatively few scholars have integrated the conceptual tools developed by Pierre Bourdieu into their work.” Bourdieu's presence in Low Church STS and related fields, however, has remained fairly strong. Perhaps largely due to Latour's criticisms of Bourdieu, rarely is Bourdieu recognized within STS.

6 Ibid, 390.
8 Ibid, 193.
9 Minerva is somewhat of a mix of 'low church' and ‘high church’ journal, as affirmed by its subtitle, “A Review of Science, Learning and Policy.”
Given that STS, like Latour's work, is a “bricolage” of various tools, methods, and ideas, the ascetic ideals which have led to and maintained a separation between Bourdieu's methodologies or tools and STS is perhaps telling of a too hastily made decision or accepted declaration. Peter Dear and Sheila Jasanoff argue that STS “embraces as its field of investigation knowledge and knowledge making, including the wider ramifications of producing various kinds of authoritative knowledge (science writ large), embodying them in objects and material systems (artifacts, instruments, and industries), and seeing how the resulting 'things,' epistemic and otherwise, play their parts in such activities as law, policy, politics, social organization, religion, aesthetic culture, the economy, and ethics.”

Hence, the neglect of certain useful or practical tools due to philosophical or meta-theoretical differences founded upon one prominent scholar's criticisms seems short-sighted at best. Though there have been insightful discussions of the theoretical differences between Bourdieu and Latour, as well as arguments regarding the legitimacy of certain aspects of the criticisms of each, suggestions that certain tools developed by Bourdieu are no longer in vogue, despite their continued usefulness in other and related fields to STS, is premature. Dear and Jasanoff take pause with Latour's proposal for what constitutes (and does not constitute) STS, stating that “if, as would be our contention, Latour's declaration [that skeptical or critical approaches are dead] is based on an overly narrow and particular construction of critical practices in and around science studies, then that claim, too, deserves investigation with all the tools we have for explicating the use of knowledge of social and political purposes, including the active making and unmaking of scholarly disciplines.”

And if, at times, this essay seems biased or heavy handed when it comes to Latour, this is merely an effect of his legacy within the history of STS, as well as a result of his numerous criticisms of

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12 Ibid, 773.
Bourdieu.

Anders Blok and Torben Jensen, in Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World, make note of an important point that runs the risk of being glossed over in the historical understanding of the Bourdieu-Latour conflict. “It is worth noting,” they state “that Bourdieu's criticisms takes its point of departure in Latour's early anthropology of science and technology, as presented in Laboratory Life (1979). Many of Bourdieu's more specific points of criticism may perhaps be defensible in the delimited context of this work, but they still emerge as misleading in light of later displacements in Latour's thinking.”13 Though Bourdieu's criticisms of Latour are found in the last book before his death, Science of Science and Reflexivity (2001 original, 2004 English translation), to take that single text of Bourdieu's and weigh it with all of the texts in which Latour has attacked Bourdieu would be a misleading or false equivalency. Of course one cannot say in what ways Bourdieu would have responded to Latour's continued criticisms. In wake of this second absence, we should take pause to properly assess the first absence, that is, Bourdieu's banishment from STS.

2. Social/Practice

What is perhaps surprising in view of so much tension between Bourdieu and Latour is that they were responding to similar issues and developed thematically similar solutions. Perhaps it was due to the similarities that there was so much disagreement and need for distancing that the younger Latour was so critical of the older (by seventeen years) and established Bourdieu (as of 2007, Bourdieu was the second most cited author in the Humanities). Both took issue with the old Cartesian dichotomies and dualism that seemed to produce so much confusion, and both provided solutions to the dualities by focusing on practice: Latour developed a research methodology to follow how science is *practiced* in the laboratory as a negotiation and assemblage of human and nonhuman *actants*, and Bourdieu, concerned with how *practice* instantiates the social world (*The Logic of Practice, Outline of a Theory of Practice, Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*), developed his Theory of Practice to analyze situated conflict and differencing under a scope of *habitus*. Latour said that through STS there was a “shifting attention from the theory of science to its practice.” However, the practice Latour mentions is differentiated from Bourdieu's. In the Glossary of *Pandora's Hope*, Latour notes, “Science studies is not defined by the extension of social explanations to science, but by emphasis on the local, material, mundane sites where the sciences are practiced. Thus the word 'practice' identifies types of studies that are exactly as far from the normative philosophies of science as they are from the usual efforts of sociology [i.e., Bourdieu]. What has been revealed through the study of practice is not used to debunk the claims of science, as in critical sociology, but to multiply the mediators that collectively produce the sciences.” Thus, though both are interested

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16 Ibid, 309.
in how practice constitutes the social world, what “social world” means is emphatically different: for Bourdieu, the social world is defined by capital distribution amongst individuals in a state of competition arranged according to class. Latour, for whom class plays no role whatsoever, problematizes the qualifier “social” to describe the world as an assemblage, collective, or network of humans and nonhumans, where both are considered participants treated as equals in the creation and maintenance of said network.

Blok and Jensen state that for Bourdieu, “sociology is a science that aims to break with the self-understanding of social actors by way of theoretically re-constructing a social space (field), structured around inequalities in economic and cultural capacities (capital). Only in this way does sociology attain a critical potential via the objectification (Latour would say 'revelation') of the unacknowledged inequalities of power that shape all domains of society, including science.” For Latour, on the other hand, “the sociology of associations is a method that allows the researcher to follow how actors gradually build human and non-human networks, the precise contours of which remain in never-ending empirical challenge; only by tracing these networks does sociology achieve a constructive political and scientific relevance as a contributor to negotiations within the hybrid collective.” They conclude that in “Bourdieu's view, the social can be used to explain and criticize. To Latour, however, the social explains nothing; instead, it should itself be explained through detailed empirical and historical studies.17 In Latour's view the critical-humanist sociologist (read: Bourdieu) enjoys no privileged access to the realm of criticism.”18 Indeed, in We Have Never Been Modern, Latour describes two mutually exclusive visions of the world that social scientists construct, one where humans have freedom and things

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18 Blok and Jensen, Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World, 143.
are inert, the other where things are so active that humans are devoid of all choice. He states that in “the first denunciation objects count for nothing; they are just there to be used as the white screen on to which society projects its cinema. But in the second, they are so powerful that they shape the human society, while the social construction of sciences that have produced them remains invisible. Objects, things, consumer goods, works of art are either too weak or too strong.” Though in that text Latour takes Bourdieu to task both by name and by implication, Bourdieu has stated something similar: “Social science… oscillates between two seemingly incompatible points of view, two apparently irreconcilable perspectives: objectivism and subjectivism or, if you prefer, between physicalism and psychologism…. On the one hand, it can 'treat social facts as things' according to the old Durkheimian precept, and thus leave out everything that they owe to the fact that they are objects of knowledge, of cognition—or misrecognition—within social existence. On the other hand, it can reduce the social world to the representations that agents have of it, the task of social science consisting then in producing an 'account of the accounts' produced by social subjects.” The bifurcation of the world into subjects and objects beginning with Kant is acknowledged by both Latour and Bourdieu. But whereas Bourdieu attempts to overcome it with his notions of habitus, Latour avoids it altogether, advising, “don't try to overcome the subject-object distinction. It's not made to be overcome. It's not a defect of philosophy; it's made to be un-overcomable. It's made to make the distinction impossible. It's made to do politics. It's made to do war. It's made to do science wars.” For Bourdieu, the two moments in Kant stand in a dialectical relationship such that “the perception of the social world is the product of a double structuring” where “Social existence

thus means difference, and difference implies hierarchy, which in turn sets off the endless
dialectic of distinction and pretension, recognition and misrecognition, arbitrariness and
necessity.”

As Loïc Wacquant explains, “neither habitus nor field has the capacity unilaterally
to determine social action. It takes the meeting of disposition and position, the correspondence
(or disjuncture) between mental structures and social structures, to generate practice.”

The meeting place, the relation between not just the field and objects within the field, nor between the
rules of the field and capital, is the overall orientation of a field orchestrated by habitus. In other
words, it is from habitus that subjects and objects are produced in their particular historical
manifestation, and thus habitus precedes these categories.

Latour’s move to avoid the dichotomy altogether echoes both Alfred North Whitehead
and Gilles Deleuze: Whitehead in identifying the bifurcation and avoiding it by focusing on
events, and Deleuze for developing an alternative philosophical genealogy from pre-Kantian
philosophers to post-Kantian philosophers without going through Kant in order to provide an
alternative history of modern philosophy. Together, both allow Latour to avoid the subject-
object, Nature-Society, primary-secondary dichotomies when applying an anthropology that
“will no longer have to solve” said dualities because they never arise. Latour, in Reassembling
the Social, states of his Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) that “it’s important to notice that this has
nothing to do with a ‘reconciliation’ of the famous object/subject dichotomy. To distinguish a
priori ‘material’ and ‘social’ ties before linking them together again makes…” the very task of
linking nearly impossible.

Bourdieu, however, because he is interested in human agents,
obviously constructs a view of the social with humans as the central figures in a historically

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24 Ibid, 296.
situated context of nonhumans. Although in so doing he comes under the wrath and criticisms of Latour, there are still other similarities to consider before ruling on whether or not the criticisms hold, given their different interests.
3. Culture/Capital

While Latour states that the role of anthropologists is to “account for the multiplicity of agencies entertained by the collectives with which they come into contact,” Bourdieu's approach takes the position that “There can be no explanation of human actions without reference to the culture in which they occurred. Thus, Bourdieu's framework demands work by anthropologists and cultural historians to make sense of the actual interplays of interests.”

There are, therefore, clear differences insofar as what is to be taken as important from anthropological considerations: Bourdieu's concern is human interests, while Latour's is human-nonhuman mediation. “Dualism has its charms,” notes Latour, “but it takes the anthropologist only a few months of fieldwork to notice that dichotomies do not have, among the Moderns in any case, the extraordinary explanatory virtues that the anthropology of remote cultures so readily attributes to them. The raw and the cooked, nature and culture, words and things, the sacred and the profane, the real and the constructed, the abstract and the concrete, the savage and the civilized, and even the dualism of the modern and the premodern, do not seem to get our investigator very far.”

Here we can tease out a difference in research perspectives: Bourdieu's project is prescriptive for the purpose of analysis and how to explain, while Latour's is simply descriptive.

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26 It should be noted that Latour's anthropology has shifted focus in the past decade, from symmetrical anthropology to what he calls “diplomatic” anthropology, though he by no means abandons symmetry. For this transition, see Bruno Latour, “The Recall of Modernity: Anthropological Approaches,” Cultural Studies Review 13 (2007): 11-30. In addition, the type of anthropology that Latour champions reconciles the social or cultural anthropology with the anthropology of nature which, he says, had hitherto maintained the bifurcation despite necessarily crossing over into the domain of the other (see Bruno Latour, “Waking up from 'conjecture' as well as from 'dream' – a presentation of AIME,” Keynote lecture at the American Anthropological Association Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, November 21st, 2013).


29 Latour has often and in many places stated that he is interested in description over explanation, and refers to the problematic moors of explanation (for a clear account, see Bruno Latour, “The Politics of Explanation: an Alternative,” in Knowledge and Reflexivity, New Frontiers in the Sociology of Science, ed. Steve Woolgar,
methodology, though their suggestions are quite different; their concerns manifest themselves in
the type of anthropology they advocate. “Bourdieu's exemplary sciences are theoretical ones, and
perhaps the prototype of them all is theoretical sociology, allowing reflexivity to be an easy
consequence. Unfortunately, this allows him almost entirely to neglect the materiality of
scientific work. Despite Bourdieu's attention to the material dimensions of habituses in other
contexts, his science is almost entirely ideal.”³⁰ However, this assessment might not be entirely
accurate, even if it holds true in general when considering the work of Latour. In the introduction
to Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action, Bourdieu states that the “philosophy of action,”
which he is proposing, “asserts itself form the outset by breaking with a number of established
notions which have been introduced into scholarly discourse without examination ('subject,'
'motivation,' 'actor,' 'role,' etc.) and with a whole series of socially powerful oppositions –
individual/society, individual/collective, conscious/unconscious, interested/disinterested,
objective/subjective, and so forth – which seem to constitute ordinary thought.”³¹ The desired
outcome of both Bourdieu's and Latour's methodology contain strikingly similar aspirations as
well as motivations.

Latour, since his goal is to treat humans and nonhumans symmetrically, decidedly
incorporates objects in a way that Bourdieu does not. When Bourdieu “speaks of fields of
power,” says Latour, “then science, technology, texts, and the contents of activities disappear.”³²

Objects nonetheless are not absent from Bourdieu, and in fact have a central locale in Bourdieu's

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³² Latour, We Have Never Been Modern, 6.
notion of capital. For example, in describing social capital, Bourdieu and Wacquant state, “capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.”33 Said resources include nonhumans and relational properties afforded to the individual depending upon their location within a particular system or network (i.e., field). Against what is often suggested of him, Bourdieu does include instruments and technology, though they never become a central topic of investigation. For example:

One of the most powerful instruments of rupture lies in the social history of problems, objects, and instruments of thought, that is, with the history of the work of social construction of reality (enshrined in such common notions as role, culture, youth, etc., or in taxonomies) which is carried out within the social world itself as a whole in this or that specialized field and, especially, in the field of social sciences…. I think for instance of all those things that have become so common, so taken for granted, that nobody pays any attention to them, such as the structure of a court of law, the space of a museum, a voting booth, the notion of 'occupational injury' or of a 'cadre,' a two-by-two table or, quite simply, the act of writing or taping. History thus conceived is inspired not by an antiquarian interest but by a will to understand why and how one understands.34

Though aware of the role and history of various nonhumans, Bourdieu never focused specifically on the history of technology nor elevated material histories on a par with human history. Since capital, field, and habitus are all intimately linked, though the imperative of reflexivity for the social scientists that Bourdieu advocates is unquestionably subjectivist, the tools Bourdieu provides introduces a material dimension. In other words, part of Bourdieu's project is a consideration of not simply what tools the social scientist should use, but also how researchers should understand their use of those tools.

In general, we can categorize Latour’s and Bourdieu’s different emphasis and concern as follows: Latour is concerned with the methods of research as they pertain to their subject-matter,

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34 Ibid, 238.
while Bourdieu is concerned with the researcher's methods (Table 1).

Table 1. Bourdieu and Latour’s Methods and Conceptual Tools.

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One of the difficulties for those who want to follow Latour is the anxiety about choosing the wrong actor to follow/trace, and Latour admits that there is a constant danger that the scholar will have to retrace their steps and take a different path. Latour, as we know, is “obsessed” with controversies, where the social assemblage is under great negotiation, and where properties of various actants are being swapped, borrowed, changed, and created. However, a Bourdieusian analysis may provide clues to what particular actors to follow through studying the snapshot of before and after a controversy. A major difference between Bourdieu and Latour centres around what can be termed 'the symbolic,' encapsulated in the seemingly synonymous terms they each deploy, namely “field” and “frame” or “network”. Bourdieu's field is a symbolic representation of the distribution of individuals according to their capital along particular coordinates, whereas for Latour social interaction “should not be understood as purely symbolic, but rather as something material; as buildings, room divisions, fences, computer networks, etc.”35 For Latour, nonhumans and humans constitute a network of a social world or collective, and often certain nonhumans are older, more stable, and more virile than their human counterparts. However, everything is constantly under negotiation and threat of change, and thus nothing is taken as fixed. This is nothing Bourdieu would deny, since, after all, humans are distributed in his field according to nonhumans such as institutional ties, familial history, land, banks, manner of

speech, clothes, and possessions. However, in Bourdieu's field nonhuman actors have already acted.

Bourdieu's field is always a “snapshot” of a particular social arrangement in which the subjects he is interested in are humans. There is undoubtedly a particular Gestalt figure-ground distinction between the human-figures and the nonhuman-ground, which would seem to recreate the subject-object dichotomy and place priority on the actions of the human subject. However, is this not also re-created in Latour since “non-human actants tend to act in more long-lasting, durable and reliable ways than humans”?\(^\text{36}\) The difference between the two is revealed in the field/frame distinction. Bourdieu's field assuredly becomes a useless tool when everything is in flux due to its 'fixing'. Though it would be possible to use Latour's framing instead of Bourdieu's field during times of relative calm, this does not mean that doing so would accomplish the same goals or be as useful for explicating particular social factors. With Latour we are able to tell the story of a controversy as it happens before the researcher's eyes, but with Bourdieu we are able to tell where we were and where we are now.\(^\text{37}\)

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\(^{36}\) Ibid.

\(^{37}\) It should be noted that Latour does provide a type of 'fixing' as in his AND-OR graphs that utilizes a type of Schmittian friend-enemy distinction to display associative changes over time. These graphs pin two central actors in a controversy against one another, and details changing associations (networks) each actor engenders over time. At each horizontal AND level, the actors are fixed, and only by comparing the vertical OR levels to one another do you get a visual description of strengthening or weakening networks over time. These graphs are used to depict how one actor 'wins out' over another by forming greater and greater human and nonhuman allies across a controversy. See pages 158-164 of Pandora's Hope, Bruno Latour, “Where are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts”, in Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change, ed. Wiebe E. Bijker and John Law (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992): 225-258, Bruno Latour, Philippe Mauguin, and Geneviève Teil, “A Note on Socio-Technical Graphs,” Social Studies of Science 22 (1992): 33-57, and Bruno Latour, “Technology is Society Made Durable,” in A Sociology of Monsters: Essays on Power, Technology and Domination, ed. John Law, (London: Routledge, 1991): 103-131, for description and figures of Latour's use of the AND-OR distinction. Though there is not room for it here, comparing Latour's AND-OR graphs with Bourdieu's Field graphs might identify additional similarities given that they both depend upon the inclusion of humans and nonhumans, though for Bourdieu the nonhumans are always 'behind' humans rather than 'next to' as for Latour. Might these be complementary?
4. Kant/Field/Network

Both Latour and Bourdieu resolve or at least avoid the problematic imposition of such distinctions such as the subject-object dichotomy. Indeed, the first sentence of the Introduction to Bourdieu's *The Logic of Practice* is: “Of all the oppositions that artificially divide social sciences, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism. The very fact that this division constantly reappears in virtually the same form would suffice to indicate that the mode of knowledge which it distinguishes are equally indispensable to a science of the social world that cannot be reduced either to a social phenomenology or to a social physics.”\(^{38}\) However, since Bourdieu treats nonhumans differently from humans, Latour sees Bourdieu as committing the original sin of the “moderns”: bifurcating the world into subjects and objects. Latour blames this on Bourdieu's neo-Kantianism, rendering the entirety of Bourdieu's methodological approach for Latour suspect, if not bankrupt, from the start.

Much of the difference between Bourdieu and Latour can be understood with respect to their relationships with Kant. As Frédéric Vandenberghe explains, sociology remains fractured along national lines. This probably explains why Anglo-Saxon commentators, who are unfamiliar with the rationalist tradition of French épistémologie (Bachelard, Koyré, Canguilhem, Duhem, Cavaillès) or with the German neo-Kantian tradition of *Wissenschaftslehre* (Lask, Cassirer, Panofsky), project their own brand of the philosophy of science (Bhaskar) on Bourdieu’s position, describing him as a “critical realist”.\(^{39}\)

Regardless of Bourdieu's actual indebtedness to Kant, it is clear that this is the guise in which


\(^{39}\) He continues, “This erroneous attribution is, however, easily understandable, as it results from the confusion between the epistemological and the metatheoretical levels of analysis. In epistemological terms, Bourdieu is a neo-Kantian, and thus an idealist; in metatheoretical terms, he is a Marxist-Weberian, and thus a materialist; the conflation of both levels of analysis leads to the label “realist,” which is the materialist brand of epistemology.” Frédéric Vandenberghe, “The Real is Relational: An Epistemological Analysis of Pierre Bourdieu's Generative Structuralism.” *Sociological Theory* 17 (March 1999): 38.
Latour sees him. Latour states that “most of the social sciences and most of philosophy since Kant have been without a world. Things do nothing. What you learn at the beginning of sociology 101, especially if it’s continental theory 101, Bourdieu or Frankfurt 101, is precisely that things do not act.”  

Latour goes on elsewhere to state that with this Kantian influence, “There exists no relation whatsoever between 'the material' and 'the social world,' because it is this very division which is a complete artifact.”  

From this, Latour states that we must be forced “to abandon the subject-object dichotomy, a distinction that prevents the understanding of collectives.”  

However, whether to overcome the dichotomy (Bourdieu) or avoid it all together (Latour), both Bourdieu and Latour vie for a similar solution, namely focusing on *practice* and making primary *relations*. Willem Schinkel, in his exploration of Bourdieu’s and Latour's focus on the 'relational', suggests that “the notion of the *relational*... is at the core of both Bourdieu's and Latour's analysis. It is on this concept that the two converge, but it is at the same place that their positions are dispersed. Bourdieu's relational sociology is opposed to Latour's relationist or relativist sociology…. However, this concept of relation is articulated differently in each case.”  

Thus, both attempt to move beyond, or at least do away with, the problematic subject-object distinction.

But is Latour's assessment of Bourdieu accurate? Though Bourdieu may in fact be Kantian in some respects, things do act, and we are able to see how they act – whether they are things such as names, materials, manner of speaking, membership to an institution, etc. – by how they affect the location of human actors in a *field*. The concept of *field* “makes it possible,” explains Bourdieu, “to conceptualize, for each agent, his or her position in all possible spaces of

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41 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 75-76.
competition (it being understood that, while each field has its own logic and its own hierarchy, the hierarchy that prevails among the different kinds of capital and the statistical link between the different types of assets tends to impose its own logic on the other fields).”

Elsewhere he states, “Both habitus and field (and also the specific form of capital produced and reproduced in this field) are the site of a sort of conatus, of a tendency to perpetuate themselves in their being, to reproduce themselves in that which constitutes their existence and their identity.”

Though Bourdieu may indeed reinscribe the bifurcation which Latour detests, it is not there ab initio but is rather an analytic category inscribed post hoc to a habitus for identifying differing – though non-independent – types of historical influences. Though Bourdieu is always focused on humans, they are entirely imbedded in competition (or in negotiations, to use Latour's preferred terminology) with other humans, histories, institutions, traditions, and material conditions – any of which are unable to be divorced from the others – which suggests that the bifurcation in Bourdieu is an analytic distinction rather than an ontological one. What “Bourdieu is trying to address in his theory of practice is the problem of agency. He wants his fellow social scientists to realize that agency does not have to be limited to human beings but they can emerge from human practices,” practices which involve at all times humans and nonhumans.

Bourdieu's field is a three-fold relationship between the capital that corresponds to the field, the rules or logics of that capital, and the location of the individuals, groups of individuals, or institutions, in a topology that orients individuals, groups of individuals, or institutions in relation to one another according to their capital. Capital

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comes in three principle species: economic (material and financial assets), cultural (scarce symbolic goods, skills and titles) and social (resources accrued by virtue of membership in a group). A fourth species, symbolic capital, designates the effects of any form of capital when people do not perceive them as such (as when we attribute lofty moral qualities to members of the upper class as a result of their ‘donating’ time and money to charities). The position of any individual, group or institution in social space may thus be charted by two coordinates, the overall volume and the composition of the capital they detain. A third coordinate, variation over time of this volume and composition, records their trajectory through social space and provides invaluable clues as to their habitus by revealing the manner and path through which they reached the position they presently occupy.\(^47\)

The rules of a field are the structure and that which dictates the behaviour and effectiveness of capital in that field. The translation of symbolic capital into different fields, and whether or not and to what extent the rules of those respective fields adequately account for or accommodate the translated capital, are central concerns for how fields relate to one another. The rules for production of certain types of capital in one field can become symbolic capital in both that field and other fields. The logic that supports that capital is sustained most purely in its own field of production. Bourdieu states that symbolic capital “is any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value.”\(^48\)

What is clear is that the various forms of capital are not simply things that the various subjects possess, but rather are active in the structuring of a field and the respective locations of individual within them. Capital is thus the shorthand attribution of a structure's properties to the individual. When translating capital from one field to another, impurities occur, since the logic of each field has different rules for creating or maintaining the fidelity of symbolic capital from fields outside their own. Each field can be understood in institutionalized terms: government, academia, church, science, etc. Therefore, the “assets” or types of capital—economic, social,

\(^{47}\) Wacquant, “Pierre Bourdieu,” 268.

\(^{48}\) Bourdieu, Practical Reason, 47.
cultural, scientific, and symbolic— are nonhumans recognized and congealed in titles, names, and materials which affect the status of an individual within a particular context. Though these are linked to humans, orbiting humans and affecting their ability to act, be heard, and interact with other members in the field, they nonetheless do work and are not simply inert; they lend to the human subject certain properties that alter the dynamics of subject depending upon the particular field in question and the assets of other subjects. This of course will not suffice for Latour, despite the resemblance of the rules of a field to Latour's most recent articulation of felicity conditions of various modes of existence, for it maintains the focus on humans rather than treating humans and nonhumans symmetrically.

In adopting Michel Serres' terminology of quasi-subjects and quasi-objects, Latour is interested in the exchange of properties between subjects and objects. In We Have Never Been Modern, after arguing for the avoidance of the subject-object dichotomy and the usurping of the Kantian bifurcation of nature and culture found within the social sciences, he eventually allows some retention of the subject-object terminology; stating “Using the two dimension at once, the longitude and the latitude, we may now be able to locate the positions of these strange new hybrids and to understand how come that we had to wait for science studies in order to define what, following Michel Serres, I shall call quasi-objects, quasi-subjects.” Bifurcation, Latour explains elsewhere, is “what happens whenever we think the world is divided into two sets of things: one which is composed of the fundamental constituents of the universe—invisible to the eyes, known to science, real and yet valueless—and the other which is constituted of what the mind has to add to the basic building blocks of the world in order to make sense of them.” With Whitehead Latour is able to undo or avoid this Kantian division by developing an “understanding

50 Latour, We Have Never Been Modern, 51.
of the event of the grasping itself by science as being something that happens not only in the
world but to the world” (emphasis added).

This is in part why Latour is “obsessed with
controversies,” as he explains in the following:

Action should remain a surprise, a mediation, and event. It is for this reason that we
should begin, here again, not from the 'determination of action by society', the
'calculative abilities of individuals', or the 'power of the unconscious' as we would
ordinarily do, but rather from the under-determination of action, from the
uncertainties and controversies about who and what is acting when 'we' act—and
there is of course no way to decide whether this source of uncertainty resides in the
analyst or in the actor.

Controversies for Latour are the place of battles, negotiations and exchanges amongst many
participating actors. “If we call metaphysics the discipline inspired by the philosophical tradition
that purports to define the basic structure of the world,” says Latour, “then empirical
metaphysics is what the controversies over agencies lead to since they ceaselessly populate the
world with new drives and, as ceaselessly, contest the existence of others.” With the notion of
the event, which avoids the Kantian division, Latour adds his notion of hybrids, a “third
category” besides subjects and objects, which likewise avoids conforming to either of the
categories. These hybrids or quasi-objects “do not belong to Nature, or to Society, or to the
subject; they do not belong to language, either.” In this way, Latour creatively avoids the
subject-object gulf left by Kant.

Latour's proposal to treat humans and nonhumans semiotically the same collapses the
figure-ground distinction onto the same ontological plane such that all actants from the
beginning are given similar treatment. Although Latour takes Bourdieu to be emblematic of
instantiating such a figure-ground distinction in the construction of a field consisting of humans

52 Ibid, 230.
53 Interview with Latour in Blok and Jensen, Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World, 160.
54 Latour, Reassembling the Social, 45.
55 Ibid, 50-51.
56 Latour, We Have Never Been Modern, 65.
at the fore and nonhuman capital in the background, Bourdieu nonetheless, in his notion of
*habitus*, likewise seeks to collapse any ontological distinction which may shine through from his
theoretical approach: “As the mediation between past influences and present stimuli, habitus is at
once *structured*, by the patterned social forces that produced it, and *structuring*: it gives form and
coherence to the various activities of an individual across the separate spheres of life…. Habitus
is also a principle of both *social continuity and discontinuity*: continuity because it stores social
forces into the individual organism and transports them across time and space; discontinuity
because it can be modified through the acquisition of new dispositions and because it can trigger
innovation whenever it encounters a social setting discrepant with the setting from which it
issues.”

57 Out of the continuity-discontinuity develops a generative structuring of the social
world, which can be analyzed in terms of the *field*. Bourdieu's *field* is “based on a non-Cartesian
social ontology that refuses to split object and subject, intention and cause, materiality and
symbolic representation,” with the goal of overcoming “the debilitating reduction of sociology to
either an objectivist physics of material structures or a constructivist phenomenology of
cognitive forms by means of a genetic structuralism capable of subsuming both. He does this by
systematically developing not a theory *stricto censu* so much as a sociological *method* consisting
essentially in a manner of posing problems, in a parsimonious set of conceptual tools and
procedures for constructing objects and for transferring knowledge gleaned in one area of inquiry
into another.”

58 The generative aspect of Bourdieu's field contains within them the *events* which
are born out of and give rise to the structures of *habitus*.

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57 Wacquant, “Pierre Bourdieu,” p 268.
5. Reflexivity/Philosophy

What should not go unnoticed is the result of Bourdieu's reflexivity, or of sociology of sociology. To avoid the subject (researcher) - object (society) divide, which seems inherent in all scientific study, Bourdieu's suggestion of reflexivity distorts the ease in which this analytic division is made. Bourdieu states, “reflexivity is not something done by one person alone and … it can exert its full effect only if it is incumbent upon all the agents engaged in the field. The sociologically armed epistemological vigilance that each researcher can apply on his own behalf can only be strengthened by the generalizing of the imperative of reflexivity and the spreading of the indispensable instruments for complying with it; this alone can institute reflexivity as the common law of the field, which would thus become characterized by a sociological critique of all by all that would intensify the effects of the epistemological critique of all by all.”

Reflexivity is not simply a type of consciousness of an individual researcher, but rather a collective practice of critique and inquiry amongst researchers to stave off objectifying in practice the subject-object dichotomy.

Latour takes issue with 'classical sociologists' like Bourdieu and his directive for reflexivity and says such sociologists believe that they are able to see things as they really are and that they know more than their informants. However, one of Bourdieu's major concerns was the social scientist not accounting for her or his own involvement in their study. This latter point is addressed by Bourdieu's insistence on a reflexive sociology to account for the social scientists themselves, something which Bourdieu believed lay people, for the most part, were ill-equipped to do for themselves. Due to this belief, Latour characterized Bourdieu as a sort of elitist, one whose role as a sociologist is to show or teach their subjects something about themselves they are too ignorant to know without the sociologist's help. This point has been most scathingly

argued by Hélène Mialet, an avid follower and proponent of Latour and ANT; she states in a book review of Bourdieu's last book, titled “The 'Righteous Wrath' of Pierre Bourdieu,” that instead of “allowing things and beings the space they need to deploy their field of action and their mutual self-definition, the sociologist (Bourdieu) performs an operation of reduction, by relating the multiplicity of social (?) phenomena to underlying causes (like the systematic reference to social systems or structures), or by relating agents to the determinations that are supposed to make them act. This process of reduction implies that the sociologist has access to a dimension of reality hidden from the eyes of the actors themselves.”\textsuperscript{60} However, if it is true that this is what Bourdieu's theory commits him to, it should be noted that this type of reduction is different from a reduction to a more active structure of which the individual is simply a manifestation of various structural components. Though the sociologist may be able to identify things that their informants are not themselves aware of, this epistemological reduction is not an ontological reduction. Bourdieu's approach was “opposed to the more extreme theses of a certain structuralism by refusing to reduce \textit{agents}, which it considers to be eminently active and acting (without necessarily doing so as subjects), to simple epiphenomena of structure (which exposes it to seeming equally deficient to those who hold one position or the other).”\textsuperscript{61} Nonetheless, this difference is not enough to insulate Bourdieu, and other sociologists, from Latour's criticisms. Latour states, “Actors do the sociology for the sociologists and sociologists learn from the actors what makes up their set of associations”, but while “this should seem obvious, such a result is actually in opposition to the basic wisdom of critical sociologists.”\textsuperscript{62} Latour accuses “critical sociologists” of not listening to their informants, and, when they do, always translating the chosen words of their informants into their academic language which has been made suitable for

\textsuperscript{61} Bourdieu, \textit{Practical Reason}, viii.
\textsuperscript{62} Latour, \textit{Reassembling the Social}, 32.
analytic manipulation. He scoffs that “it seems that only sociologists of the social—especially critical sociologists—can manage to efficiently muffle their informants' precise vocabulary into their own all-purpose meta-language.”\textsuperscript{63} However, Latour has admitted to administering a similar type of approach, most specifically in \textit{Politics of Nature}. In an interview Latour described the style of that book as Rousseauian, insofar as it took a position that “if people only were thinking differently, they would have a different life.”\textsuperscript{64} Though he admits that this is a task of the intellectual that they can never achieve, it nonetheless indicates that, if only for stylistic purposes, Latour himself occupied a position he elsewhere criticized of the sociologist of the social for occupying. When asked in the same interview, “you do claim that what you're arguing in terms of cosmopolitics has practical relevance for people who align themselves with political ecology, in the sense that if they would only know better, if you like, to what their practices of resistance against modernization were really about, it would give them a stronger political voice in the future,” Latour responded that yes, “That's the style in which the book is written.”\textsuperscript{65} Perhaps Latour can be forgiven insofar as he deploys different styles in different books, whereas Bourdieu, perhaps, adhered with adamant conviction to a more or less single style, but one can nonetheless see that Latour indulges in the same practices Bourdieu did despite criticisms of that very approach.

Of particular note regarding Bourdieu's concern with reflexivity – of researchers being reflexive about how their location and actions in the field effect the field itself – Latour seems unabashedly unreflexive. In an interview with Robert Crease, Don Ihde, Casper Bruun Jensen, and Evan Selinger, he admits at three separate occasions that he is unreflexive, admitting that

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid}, 125.
\textsuperscript{64} Blok and Jensen, \textit{Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World}, 156.
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Ibid}, 155.
“my degree of reflexivity on myself is nil,”66 “I am not very reflexive about my own work,”67 and, apologetically, “I am sorry to be so unreflexive on my own work.”68 However, in the same interview, which might speak to the reason for Latour’s unreflexiveness, he states that “I was saved from philosophy of consciousness by early high doses of Nietzsche.”69 Bourdieu, on the other hand, is concerned with consciousness insofar as it is part of what makes up and is affected by the structure of habitus. While Latour famously states, following one of his confessions about being non-reflexive, “I produce books, not a philosophy,”70 there is reason to believe that he has changed on this point, given his article “Coming Out as a Philosopher”71 and his most recent endeavour, An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns, wherein he explains the seeming necessity to engage in philosophy.72 This is perhaps less of a resignation than a well- or not so well-kept secret. He admits, “I have never left the quest for philosophy,”73 and concludes by saying, in a typical display of his finesse, wit, and humour, “A last wish with which to conclude: please, don’t tell anyone, especially in the UK or the US, that such is my overall life project and that I am, in effect, a philosopher – worst of all a philosopher with a system: they will never take me seriously again. Only under a German sky is one allowed to think that big!”74 Though engaging in philosophy is not necessarily akin to being reflexive, that, in the above interview, Latour follows one of his confessions about being unreflexive.75

67 Ibid, 23.
69 Ibid, 21.
70 Ibid, 19.
73 Latour, “Coming out as a philosopher,” 600.
74 Ibid, 607.
75 Though Latour admits his unreflexivity, he nonetheless has engaged with a critique of reflexivity in Latour “The Politics of Explanation: an Alternative,” in which he opens by saying “Reflexivity is necessarily at the heart of social studies of science because it is often argued that relativist sociologists are sawing the branch upon which they sit. By making social explanations of the behaviour of natural sciences they make it impossible for their own explanations to be seriously believed by anyone. Their arguments in feeding back on themselves nullify their own claims” (Ibid, 155).
immediately with a declaration that he writes books, and not philosophy, there is an obvious rhetorical shift in his admission of awareness of his place in the modern (or not-so-modern) world.\textsuperscript{76}

This being said, it is interesting to consider particular unreflexive undercurrents described by Tucker: “Science Studies considers the theories and beliefs of scientists political rather than direct reflections of an objective natural world. However, as 'first philosophy,' Science Studies rarely apply the same approach to themselves, to understand themselves as political and embedded in a social context.”\textsuperscript{77} In response to Lorraine Daston,\textsuperscript{78} Dear and Jasanoff argue that the distinction between the interdisciplinary STS and the disciplinary History of Science is one which is productive and positive to both camps, and they mention Bourdieu, albeit parenthetically, as being important to understanding the very nature of disciplinary differences, including that of the sciences: “Kaiser and Warwick, drawing, as noted, on Kuhn and Foucault (one might also add Pierre Bourdieu), rightly argue that for the sciences themselves the pedagogical component of a discipline is crucial.”\textsuperscript{79} With the above considerations, we find both homage as well as request for Bourdieusian tools or analysis to 'fill the gap' in the self-understanding of STS.

\textsuperscript{76} It should be noted that Bourdieu, too, spoke often of both his philosophical roots and his frequent ventures into the realm of philosophy. Bourdieu stated, in Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action, “You may wonder why, being a sociologist, I should play the part of the philosopher. Partly, of course, it is in homage to my philosopher friends who have convened here. But it is also because I am obliged to do so. To raise such questions on the very nature of the scientific gaze is an integral part of scientific work. These questions have been thrust upon me, outside of any intent or taste for pure speculation, in a number of research situations where to understand my strategies or materials I was compelled to reflect upon the scholarly mode of knowledge” (Bourdieu, Practical Reason, 130). In addition, Bourdieu also authored an oft ignored book on Martin Heidegger (Pierre Bourdieu, The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991)).


\textsuperscript{79} Dear and Jasanoff. “Dismantling Boundaries in Science and Technology Studies.” 769.
6. Anglo/French

When reading Latour’s musings on and criticisms of what he calls the “sociology of the social,” or of critical theory for that matter, Latour is directed by his context and experience in France. Mialet, a former student of Latour's, states that “Latour was fighting the French epistemological tradition (as represented by Bachelard and Canguilhem),” as well as “fighting French sociology (particularly, Bourdieu).”

He admits this: “If one autonomizes discourse by turning nature over to the epistemological and giving up society to the sociologists, one makes it impossible to stitch these three resources back together.” Though both Bourdieu and Latour were highly influenced by the French intellectual milieu, they nonetheless trace quite different traditions both within and outside of France. The conflict between the two likewise needs to be read in a specifically French context. Didier Bigo has commented that despite Bourdieu and Latour both responding and criticizing many of the same intellectual trends, “French academia politics tends to encourage these difficulties in recognizing similarities with other thinkers when they deploy different terms. This has been especially unfortunate in understanding the emergence of an alternative to the false dualism of structure and agency that both Bourdieu and Latour advocate through a relational approach to practices.” Indeed, despite much agreement on both the problems and the type of solutions, the two thinkers represent, and indeed saw themselves as, veritable opponents along strictly different paths. Tony Bennett notes that Bourdieu “is clearly the main target Latour has in mind in his generalized criticisms of sociology's claim to be able to uncover the real motives of social actions in underlying structural causes which remain hidden from, or only partially accessible to, social actors,” and clarifies that Bourdieu's approach is

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81 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 64.
“within the framework of a realist epistemology in contrast to Latour's constructivism.” Didier Bigo clarifies the similarities: 

Like Bourdieu, they [Latour and Law] have all criticized the individualistic approach and the rational choice theory that poses preconstituted identity of the subject as evidence, as a given. They have also disagreed with the structuralist, determinist, or holistic approaches associated with Durkheim or Althusserian Marxism in which agents become puppets of historical laws they do not understand. It is important to insist on this point. 

Likewise, Fuller described the two as “trying to capture the same transformation from opposing perspectives: Bourdieu, the director of the leading state-supported research institute in the social sciences, critiquing the ways the state has buckled under external economic pressures; Latour, the resident sociologist at a leading beneficiary of the emerging neoliberal order, denying that the state ever had much control in the first place.” Though Fuller's rhetoric may go a bit too far here, it is worth nothing other methods of distancing that begin to more fully emerge when Bourdieu and Latour are taken in context and not simply viewed through a theoretical lens.

Blok and Jensen contend that “Latour is often mockingly ironic when it comes to distancing himself from large parts of the sociological research establishment. He is particularly derisive of the branch of sociology that is typically known as 'critical sociology,' as embodied by, among others, Latour's slightly older and highly esteemed fellow countryman, Pierre Bourdieu.” They likewise acknowledge that “Bourdieu serves as a kind of implicit scapegoat in Latour's orchestration of his showdown with modernist patterns of thought.”

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84 “All these authors, despite their differences, beyond the attacks to which they have been subjected in order to normalize them in one camp or the other, are neither structuralists nor methodological individualists. They share the double rejection of the false alternative of structure versus individual. This is why they propose a radically different way to conceptualize politics.” Bigo, “Pierre Bourdieu and International Relations: Power of Practices, Practices of Power,” 236.
86 Blok and Jensen, Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World, 102.
87 Ibid.
it was not simply Latour who saw Bourdieu as advocating a misguided program; Bourdieu likewise saw this of Latour. “For Latour, Bourdieu is a structuralist, a Durkheimian or an Althusserian, while for Bourdieu, Latour is a methodological individualist denying politics. Both narratives are of bad faith.”

It would seem, then, that Latour's critique of Bourdieu is imminent in Bourdieu's methodology, whereas Bourdieu's transcends Latour's metaphysics.

In addition to their French context, the appropriation of both thinkers outside of France has been vast. A number of publications address the mis- or partial translation of both these thinkers from the French to the North American contexts. For example, David L. Swartz argued that while Bourdieu in Europe is thought of and used as a political theorist, in the North American context Bourdieu's work has only been taken up in the sociology of culture and education, as well as anthropology.

Elsewhere, Swartz states that “many of Bourdieu’s central theoretical concerns remain somewhat elusive to much British and American sociology unless they are understood in light of this [French] philosophical tradition” of Bachelard, Canguilhem, Koyré, Vuillemin, and Merleau-Ponty. Similarly, Deborah Reed-Danahay argues that Bourdieu's work was “to a large extent a form of autoethnography in the double sense of being self-referential (referring back to his own origins and cultural preoccupations), and of constituting a description and analysis of his own sociocultural milieu in France and its former colony in Algeria.” She also notes that, with respect to English speaking audiences, “Bourdieu felt that much of his work was misunderstood by readers, and he tried to clarify the meaning of his work through several published interviews and essays.” Indeed, we find such attempts to clarify and

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92 Ibid, 161.
correct misunderstandings by non-French audiences as in the following:

Another major cause of misunderstanding is arguably the fact that, as a rule, non-French interpreters of my work, both anthropological and sociological, have offered a reading of it limited to its purely theoretical dimension. This has often led them to ignore its properly empirical dimension, as well as the contribution that my research brings to our knowledge of French society and, mutatis mutandis, of all modern societies. This ignorance, paradoxically, does not preclude a number of my critics from accusing me of limiting myself solely to the French case. In fact, as I have said hundreds of times, I have always been immersed in empirical research projects, and the theoretical instruments I was able to produce in the course of these endeavors were intended not for theoretical commentary and exegesis, but to be put to use in new research, be it mine or that of others. It is this comprehension through use that is most rarely granted to me, especially abroad – although more and more often I receive works that, instead of endlessly repeating commentaries and somewhat monotonous criticisms on habitus or some other concept of my making, are making use of a modus operandi closely related to mine.93

Bourdieu also goes on to say that elsewhere, “If you will allow me an image true to the spirit of my theory of practice (and thus of scientific practice), I blame most of my readers for having considered as theoretical treatises, meant solely to be read or commented upon, works that, like gymnastics handbooks, were intended for exercise, or even better, for being put into practice; that is, as books that put forth so many programs for work, observations, and experimentation.”94

Identified here is a distinction worth considering in relation to Latour's criticisms. Though Latour criticizes the theoretical backdrop of Bourdieu's theory about how to practice research, Latour also criticizes the outcomes of the research. However, Bourdieu's insistence on reflexivity insures that, at least in part, any theoretical (analytic) bifurcation are of a different type than any which may come out at the end after application. Though a house may retain traces of the hammer used to build it, the hammer is nonetheless not there after construction.

The relationship between Latour and Bourdieu can perhaps be understood in an anecdote Bourdieu offers in Science of Science and Reflexivity. One can understand the Bourdieu-Latour

94 Ibid, 271.
relationship by way of a parallel relationship between the then younger and up-and-coming Bourdieu with the older and established Robert Merton. Bourdieu states, “It has appeared to me retrospectively that I was somewhat unfair to Merton in my early writings in the sociology of science – no doubt under the effect of the position I then occupied, that of a newcomer in an international field dominated by Merton and structural functionalism.”

In a section where he critiques “laboratory studies,” Bourdieu reminds us that such studies, “with some other writings in similar view… [have] been the source of a number of misreadings of my work which are very widespread in the world of the sciences of science.” He goes on to suggest that Latour and Woolgar, amongst others, are part of a “new sociology of science” contributing to a dissolution of his own sociology of science. Others have suggested that Latour was the “new comer or prophet” and Bourdieu the “priest”, accounting for Latour's somewhat strawman engagement and continual criticisms of Bourdieu. Bourdieu goes on to say in *Science of Science and Reflexivity* that “when one is young—this is elementary sociology of science—other things being equal, one has less capital, and also less competence, and so, almost by definition, one is inclined to put oneself forward in opposition to the established figures, and therefore to look critically at their work. But this critique can in part be an effect of ignorance.”

Though he is speaking in the context of his relation to Merton, we can also see this applying to Latour's relationship to Bourdieu. In fact, this has been outright suggested by Willem Schinkel, who says that given the differing positions of Latour, the young newcomer, and Bourdieu, the established academic, their conflict “would fit with the Bourdieusian picture of a (relatively) young scientist making a distinction by means of challenging consecrated beliefs.” “What is at stake in such a struggle,” explains Schinkel, “between a consecrated scientific star such as Bourdieu ('priest') after his

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95 Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, 12. Bourdieu also invokes Weber's contrast between prophets and priests to describe his relationship with Merton, as well as uses the distinction frequently in his works.

96 Ibid, 13.
secession to the throne of the French scientific field (the chair of sociology at the College de France, which he occupied since 1980) and a new vanguard headed by Latour (‘prophet’)” is “a struggle over the legitimate classificatory schemes” in which “epistemological conflicts can in fact be regarded as political conflicts.” This tends to recapitulate Fuller’s two-church thesis of STS.

Sal Restivo, often a critic of Latour, described him as, “with the possible exception of Thomas Kuhn, the most widely influential student of science and society of the last fifty years.” Despite praise that “Latour is a formidable social theorist,” Restivo argues that this “does not automatically make his work sociological. His criticism of the sociologists of the social ignores that fact that sociologists as different as George Lundberg [American], Nikolai Bukharin [Russian], Howard Becker [American], and Randal Collins [American] have addressed the very issues and problems Latour claims requires ANT.” Though it may in fact be true that Latour does not engage with these other social theorists, has the French context within which Latour has worked in and from been taken into account? Restivo's response to Latour's *Politics of Nature* suggests otherwise. For Restivo, “Latour's elusiveness [as a scholar] is due in great part to the increasingly philosophical voice he has adopted combined with the wider and wider scope of the issues he has taken on. His philosophy, once unambiguously empirically grounded, has

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moved onto a metaphysical plane divorced from the social and political realities of everyday life. If he started his career with the promise of helping to fashion a Copernican revolution in the sociology of science, he has evolved into a thinker who reminds us more of Rousseau or Hobbes. This helps explain his ready dismissal of the perspectives and findings of the social sciences. His plan for bringing the sciences into 'democracy' is more Platonic and transcendental than empirical.”

As has already been attested by Aviezer Tucker, *Politics of Nature* “reflects the civic dislocation in France and the search for democratic alternatives to traditional technocratic decision making.” Though some of Restivo's criticisms may in fact be justified, ignoring the French context considerably weakens his position and assessment of Latour.

Tucker does a wonderful job of situating the French Science Studies founders, namely Latour and Callon, in France and of responding to the very specific French institutional and political context. Tucker explains that much of the *political* drive and considerations of Latour are in direct response to the structure of the academy and its intimate relationship to the state, arguing that “the social and political structure of French science explains the emergence of the descriptive and normative political theories associated with Science Studies.” Tucker concludes that “The unitary and exclusionary character of the French technocratic elite has favoured both its corruption and the emergence of the ideas of Science Studies,” and proposes that one read “Science studies mostly as a critical theory of French politics and the monolithic class hierarchy, especially in relation to the politics of science and technology and the peculiarly

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106 *Ibid*, 218-219,
French inbred symbiosis between scientists, engineers, managers, and bureaucrats.”¹⁰⁷ Latour and Geof Bowker also have written about the peculiarity of the French academic environment and how it differs from that of British or American environments, focusing specifically on the various disciplines involved with the study of science. At one point they invoke the words of Michael Pollack to make their case, where he described the difference between Anglo-Saxon and French traditions of studying science as being due to the fact that “they divide the world up differently.”¹⁰⁸ Latour and Bowker take the differences between Anglo-Saxon and French contexts seriously, noting that Anglo-Saxons “always miss the dispersed nature of French intellectual life, and the unique opportunity therein of developing in relative isolation works that are incommensurable with one another,”¹⁰⁹ and go on to say that between the Anglo-Saxon and French traditions stands accusations from both sides that neither are doing 'social studies of science' in the proper way.¹¹⁰ Latour took certain differences between the American and French divide seriously enough to use a pseudonym, Jim Johnson, to publish a paper in an Anglo journal. Latour states in a footnote to that paper, “The reason for this use of pseudonym was the opinion of the editors that no American sociologist is willing to read things that refer to specific places and times which are not American. Thus I inscribed in my text American scenes so as to decrease the gap between the prescribed reader and the pre-inscribed one.”¹¹¹ Wacquant echoes a similar concern, specifically regarding Bourdieu's introduction to America, cautioning that “American intellectual myopia functions in a fashion opposite to that of smaller national sociologies, such as Scandinavian or Dutch sociology; for whereas the latter cannot ignore

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
¹¹⁰ Ibid, 726.
American Social Sciences and can even be blinded by it to the point where they cannot see themselves, U.S. Sociology typically experiences difficulty seeing others due to its propensity to project itself everywhere it looks.”¹¹² In terms of the degradation of fidelity across the Atlantic, both Latour and Bourdieu, and their respective camps, are in agreement.

A question worth considering is whether it was simply Bourdieu's theoretical methodology that Latour disliked, or was it also the way Bourdieu was appropriated and used by others? For example, in *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods*, Latour takes a quick jab at Bourdieu, as he often does: “You can now have your Baudrillard's or your Bourdieu's disillusion for a song, your Derridian deconstruction for a nickel. Conspiracy theory costs nothing to produce; disbelief is easy, debunking is what is learned in 101 classes in critical theory.”¹¹³ This pithy remark seems to show Latour's frustration with how these thinkers’ methods are being *used* rather than what they *are*. Indeed, in “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern,” Latour's first named target is Bourdieu, but here he elaborates on what seems to be his main objection, namely, how his work is being used:

> Let me be mean for a second. What's the real difference between conspiracists and a *popularized*, that is a teachable version of social critique inspired by a too quick *reading of*, let's say, a sociologist as eminent as Pierre Bourdieu?... Of course conspiracy theories are an absurd *deformation of our own arguments*, but, like weapons smuggled through a fuzzy border to the wrong party, these are our *weapons* nonetheless. In spite of all the deformations, it is easy to recognize, still burnt in the steel, our trademark.¹¹⁴

Latour has specific criticisms of Bourdieu and “Reflexive Sociology” and “Theory of Practice,” as well as questionable appropriation, administration, and use of Bourdieu's work.


This last point should not be passed over too quickly, as it remains strewn throughout Latour's corpus. In Latour and Emilie Hermant's *Paris: Invisible City*, a type of diorama travelogue in search of the entity referred to as “Paris,” Latour includes the following lengthy indictment of, among others, Bourdieu for having become too easily appropriated:

Just as the computers that in the fifties cost millions of dollars and filled immense rooms with empty tubes are now being reduced to minute electronic chips that hardly cost more than the sand from which they're made, so too the critical mind has been miniaturized and the drop in its prices is following Moore's famous law: the Walter Benjamin now measures no more than two millimeters, one can buy a Guy Debord anti-virus for next to nothing, plug in a Roland Barthes in one go, install a Bourdieu self-diagnosis module with a single cut-and-paste, and as for a Baudrillard, it's available in free share … The critical mind requires no more effort; doubting everything is as easy as doing a ten-digit division on a pocket calculator.

We now understand why critique, whether high-brow or popular, cumbersome or miniaturized, costly or cheap, brave or facile, sees nothing but lies everywhere. It still longs for a full, wholesome reality and finds only strands, paths or channels that it doesn't know how to follow, objects that it can't see how to fathom, stumbling at each step on the same abysmal distance between words and things, past and present, constant and fickle, objective and subjective, and that, without a vehicle enabling it to go step by step, it never manages to cross.115

A tendentious critique of critique, is this the fault of Bourdieu (and others mentioned) or is it the fault of those who have read Bourdieu and turned his tools into a series of 'double-click'116 talking points? Though Latour does indict Bourdieu and the others in the end, he also distinguishes between, on the one side, the high-brow, cumbersome, costly, and brave – supposedly the authors themselves and the scholars who labour to understand them – and the popular, miniaturized, cheap, and facile – those who have either read the authors lazily or familiarized themselves with the authors' terminology enough to turn it into pop-jargon. But

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might STS have missed this point? Might the conflict between Bourdieu and Latour have been
overinflated by Latour's exaggerations, leading to a premature or ungrounded ostracism of
Bourdieu?

It should be noted that Bourdieu himself was also frustrated with a similar state of
popular or lazy sociology when he began, which is part of the reason he branded his own
sociology. Bourdieu's "efforts during the 1960s and 1970s focused on developing a critical social
scientific research orientation as distinct from the academic sociology taught in the universities
and the media-oriented pop sociology that flourished in French intellectual circles." To these
ends, he "wanted to transform sociology into a rigorous research enterprise that would be critical
though not prophetic, theoretical though empirically researchable, and scientific though not
positivist," which were "not to take marching orders from political parties or interest groups."\(^{117}\)

However, he did feel that though sociology should be mindful of its direct or indirect patrons, the
intellectuals themselves were not free from imperative political participation. Bourdieu's method
of reflexivity was in part to maintain this very divide, such that the scholar "does not import the
logic of political struggle into the scientific arena yet is able to produce symbolic effects that can
shape political life."\(^{118}\) In any case, Bourdieu's entrance into sociology was greatly provoked by
his hopes and aspirations to distance the popularization of sociology, much in the same way that
Latour felt about the popularization of Bourdieu's work.

Latour is aware of the potential for Anglo readers to misunderstand him, and he attributes
this, at least in part, to differing philosophical traditions. Latour expounds in an interview,
"There is a literary element, of course, in it for me, but I always stop the exercise at writing well

\(^{117}\) David L. Swartz, "From Critical Sociology to Public Intellectual: Pierre Bourdieu and Politics,"  *Theory and
Society* 32, Special Issue on The Sociology of Symbolic Power: A Special Issue in Memory of Pierre Bourdieu

\(^{118}\) *Ibid*, 819-820, fn. 22.
– it is not about writing beautifully. It is very amusing, because it seems to be so obvious, but my Anglo-Saxon colleagues in science studies miss the semiotic point.¹¹⁹ To them, the fact that writing is a medium is absolutely invisible.... I think this feel for the materiality of writing is a completely Continental thing. For others, ideas are floating around.... It is ridiculous – I mean, everything in a book is an embodied intervention on a specific topic; it is a completely precise question. I feel responsible for what I have written if it is taken as writing.”¹²⁰ Latour admits that his various works are done in “a very French way; we were trained to say, like Rousseau: 'Laissons de côté tous les faits!' — let's leave aside all the facts for a while. It is not the way you are trained, if you are trained in Cambridge [England] or in Cambridge, Massachusetts, or whatever. I have a sort of weakness for this procedure, but you need specific conditions; you need to be not in a position of power, but a position of weakness – which we are in science studies – and you need to know that it is just a writing device.”¹²¹ Perhaps this latter point has gone completely unacknowledged by the Anglo world, and too much of Latour's apparent destruction of Bourdieu was taken as a fact and not as part of a rhetorical tool to explicate his position. This is not to take away from the criticisms laid at Bourdieu's feet, but it does suggest that the interpretation of Latour's defeat of Bourdieu has been overplayed and misunderstood. Latour goes on to state that he did not wish to 'dismiss' sociology, but rather to “elicit something… which is the fact that sociology, at least in France, has a much too close – too much of a role in the institutional work of the Republic. That's clear with Durkheim, but it is true all the way to Bourdieu anyway.” When asked in an interview to describe his engagement with sociology in *Reassembling the Social*, the text taken as Latour's most ruthless critique of

¹¹⁹ Earlier in the same interview Latour details four points on writing: “It is a semiotic, plus an actor-network, plus an ethical, plus a sociology of science point” (Blok and Jensen, *Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World*, 162).


Bourdieu, Latour responded, admitting

Ignorance. First of all ignorance. I'm too ignorant in sociology. It is not a fight, it is... I'm sneaking in at a party where there are already masses of people who are much more involved and interested. I'm just sneaking in and being mean because I want to develop one argument, which is completely orthogonal to sociology; which is connected to this obsession with non-humans and controversy. So, the reason I did this argument against sociology was to make the thing clearer, and one way of being clear is to be mean. But I'm not too proud of that, I have to say, because first, it is very unfair to the many sociologists who are doing something entirely different.

However, he goes on, “Again, it is a book; every book has its own strategy of writing.” These considerations should, at the very least, give pause to the presumed devastating blow Latour dealt to Bourdieu and how it has been interpreted.

For both Bourdieu and Latour, despite their popularity in the Anglo-speaking world, the theoretical backdrop of both is somewhat opaque to that very same audience. Given the absence of familiarity with their philosophical influences before their adoption, there exists a lag of attuned interpretation. Bourdieu's most well-known disciple, Loïc J. D. Wacquant, with whom he authored many books and articles, has written in a number of places on the reception of Bourdieu in America. In “Bourdieu in America: Notes on the Transatlantic Importation of Social Theory,” Wacquant provides many scathing assessments of Bourdieu's appropriation into the Anglo-speaking world, describing his chapter as “a contribution to the sociology of intellectual relations between France and the United States, in the – perhaps immodest – hope of helping to move them beyond what one scholar once called the twin attitudes of 'blind adulation' and 'Yankee yahooism'. ” He goes on to say, which may illuminate Latour in the American context as well, that “One major difference between the sending and the receiving intellectual universes in this respect is that the borders between sociology, anthropology, history, and philosophy are notably

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122 Ibid, 160. 

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more difficult to cross in the United States.”124 Wacquant states that “the moral of the story” regarding the exportation of Bourdieu “is that intellectual products such as social theories should, whenever possible, be exported with as much of their native 'context' as possible ..., and imported with full awareness of the distortions induced by the mediating interest of, affinities with, and biases built into the objective relations between producer, intermediary, and consumer.”125 Blok and Jensen have likewise detailed three types of readers of Latour in an attempt to situate Latour's various interpretations. The first are “researchers and practitioners with a stated interest in STS,” while the second is composed of “philosophers and historians of ideas.”126 They also explain a subgroup, namely sociologists, who read, they claim, Latour mainly as a philosopher of science (due in part from the criticisms of and from Bourdieu).127 To emphasize, Bourdieu's reception in the Anglophone world was accompanied by an absence of exposure to Bourdieu's intellectual predecessors. Has Latour's criticisms of not only Bourdieu but also of critical theory and the Frankfurt School been too readily accepted given the hitherto opacity of Latour's own philosophical genealogy?128

Given Bourdieu's seniority, there has been a sufficient amount of time that allowed for his predecessors to gain exposure and assessment in the Anglophone world. Similarly, despite Latour’s popularity and stature in STS, those who informed many of his methodological and philosophical approaches remain marginal at best to the STS community. For example, in “The Materiality of Things? Bruno Latour, Charles Péguy and The History of Science,” Henning Schmidgen provides an informative glimpse into the early intellectual life of Latour which is

125 Ibid, 247.
126 Blok and Jensen, Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World, 22.
127 Blok and Jensen themselves share backgrounds in sociology and anthropology and are likewise attempting to make a space for both authors and traditions. They lament in a footnote that in the Danish context with which they are most familiar, though this would be a familiar tale, “it would be reasonable to say that the sociological reception of Latour is virtually non-existent.” Ibid, 182, fn. 20.
128 Petrina, “The New Critiquette.”
necessary for understanding the often ignored theological aspects of some of Latour's works. Latour's 1975 doctoral thesis was “Exegesis and Ontology with Respect to the Resurrection,” written under the supervision of Claude Brinaire, “widely considered a 'theological philosopher' and a “Christian rationalist.'”\textsuperscript{129} Latour describes himself as having been “trained in philosophy and biblical exegesis.”\textsuperscript{130} Early in his career, he lectured and then published on Charles Péguy's \textit{Clio: Dialogue between History and the Pagan Soul}, providing a “structuralist reading ... making comparison with the textual structure of the New Testament gospels.”\textsuperscript{131} These brief remarks suggest another blind-spot inherent in Anglo scholarship on Latour, given that the exposure of thinkers such as Péguy,\textsuperscript{132} Tarde, Deleuze, and Serres have not been part of the common intellectual milieu.

Despite Bourdieu's notion of 'field', various forms of 'capital', 'habitus', and analyses of speech acts and the rights of naming which have been influential to the social study of scientific knowledge production, he remains but a distant and archaic figure in the STS literature and departments yet remains a prominent figure in Sociology. Latour's criticisms seem to have kept Bourdieu out of STS departments as well as himself out of Sociology departments for those same criticisms. Though Latour's criticisms of “Reflexive Sociology” may have some weight within the French context and beyond, the adoption and translation of both Latour and Bourdieu into the contemporary North American context may not in fact retain as much conflict.\textsuperscript{133} What has and


\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.} 6.

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{132} Though Péguy's mentor and friend Henri Bergson is known and has been widely translated, thus far most of Péguy's work has yet to be translated into English.

\textsuperscript{133} This line of inquiry is partially provoked by consideration of Louis Hartz's “fragments theory,” which Hartz uses to account for the ideological stagnation of colonized countries in comparison to the originating colonizing countries whose ideologies continue to change. For example, “Hartz sees each case of colonization through settlement as a process of fragmentation, as a separation of a colonial part from the European whole, as an isolation of a specific slice or portion of European society endowed with particular ideological characteristics and tendencies…. In the New World setting, these parts or fragments of the original European ideological spectrum become totalities, wholes, absolutes, universes in their own right. Rigidity and traditionalism set in.
has not translated well across the Atlantic has been irregular, but this irregularity may not be entirely negative. Hitherto, Latour's criticisms of Bourdieu have translated fairly well, though much of the historical context, stylistic considerations, and rhetorical nuances have not. Perhaps when the “receiving country acts in a manner of a prism that selects and refracts external stimuli according to its own configuration,”\textsuperscript{134} there are new possibilities for reconciliation after the distortions than would be present with the context holding the original conflict intact. Given this situation, in becoming aware of or correcting for some of the irregularities, is the distance Latour created between STS and Bourdieu narrowed?

\textsuperscript{134} Wacquant, “Bourdieu in America: Notes on the Transatlantic Importation of Social Theory,” 247.

\textsuperscript{134} There is a strong tendency to a hardening or fixity of fragment values… because the basic enemies have been left behind in Europe and the battles won by default” (K. D. McRae, “Louis Hartz's Concept of the Fragment Society and its Application to Canada,” Canadian Studies 5 (1978): 19). I bring this up simply to gesture at the room for further research into the relationship between these two thinkers both on their home turf and in their appropriated contexts, and whether or not the problematics are the same in each context.
7. Conclusion

The appraisal of Bourdieu's prolific work with respect to STS has been judged disproportionately based upon Latour's multiple occasions of criticism and Bourdieu's single text on STS discourses and issues. In light of considerations mentioned above, the inclusion of Bourdieu’s work with respect to STS necessitates a reassessment of his potential usefulness to the discipline. That being said, some have continued to develop Bourdieu’s sociology of science and scientific knowledge,135 and Schinkel claimed that “even a radical heretic such as Latour can be quite easily accounted for in Bourdieu’s analysis.”136 In addition, Blok and Jensen state the following in a footnote: “In light of Latour's later controversies with Bourdieu, it is somewhat ironic to note that Latour and Woolgar actually borrow the concept of the cycles of credit from Bourdieu.”137 Might there be more?

Although Latour's latest book has been described as developing a “research protocol different from the actor-network theory with which his name is now associated,”138 ANT has been hugely influential and foundational to STS. I take up the point of Jonathan Sterne and Joan Leach: “Yes, it is true that one cannot know in advance the workings of power in any given situation, but Actor-Network Theory offers no path back into social analysis, into questions of domination, exclusion, resistance and transformation – the stuff of politics – once its work of mapping is done.”139 One must remember that, for Latour, in most situations “the sociology of the social will be adequate, because society only changes at a slow place.” But, when things change rapidly, such as during controversies, “such static concepts fall short, and sociology

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137 Blok and Jensen, Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World, 181, fn. 4.
stands in need of... sociology of associations.”¹⁴⁰ Save for the fissure over Kant, this may in fact account for a different way of understanding the differences between Bourdieu and Latour: the turbulence of the subject of their interest. Because Latour is most interested in controversies, when metaphysical and ontological negotiations are at their highest, it is not surprising that Bourdieu's sociology would be found inadequate. But as Latour indicates, in situations of relative stability, Bourdieu would suffice. Given that ANT offers little to account for how networks are reproduced over time, Bourdieu’s social and cultural reproduction are quite helpful in understanding this temporal continuity or stability.

Latour’s and Bourdieu's different methodological ends can be identified in the etymology of these ends. Analysis comes from the Latin *ana-luein* meaning “up” and “loosen”, while description or *describere* means to “write down.” The directions of these two are telling: Latour sees Bourdieu as providing meta-language that transcends and translates the speech of his informants into explanatory language. In an essay on Serres, Latour praises his refusal to use meta-language while criticizing 'critical' philosophers (extended to sociologists), stating, “Critical' philosophers firmly install their metalanguage in the centre and slowly *substitute* their arguments to every single object of periphery,” while “Serres' pre-critical philosophy” has “no centre and no substitution of one metalanguage that would *over* master others,” a discourse which is not “beyond or above or below”¹⁴¹ but rather is “inside.” Latour maintains a similar posture by *following, down* and *amongst* the actors he is investigating. A Bourdieusian analysis won’t do here because one has to trace the network, as Latour often reminds us, which is “traceable only when it's being modified.”¹⁴² But again, we see here that if there is no crisis, if there is no controversy, then Latour, by his own admission, has little, if not nothing, to add.

It is worth reconsidering if Latour's early criticisms of Bourdieu have maintained their apparent devastating blow. Though Latour no doubt still takes issue with Bourdieu and the entire sociological tradition from which Bourdieu derives, one should consider if remaining dedicated to the criticisms of the STS patriarch is desirable. After all, the other 'fathers' of ANT and STS, Michel Callon and John Law, rarely mention, let alone spend any length of time criticizing, Bourdieu. \(^{143}\) Dear and Jasanoff concluded that “Invoking tendentious disciplinary distinctions to exclude any of those [methodological] concerns from a purified 'discipline' does no one any good—neither the cause of scholarship nor the wider public goods of information and criticism that universities aim to serve.” \(^{144}\) It may be said that Bourdieu did not abide by Latour's principle of symmetry, but neither did Latour abide by Bourdieu's principle of reflexivity (though, perhaps, this is changing). Latour has said he is a *bricoleur* and that his philosophy is a bricolage, while Bourdieu's philosophy has been described as eclectic. \(^{145}\) Though these terms are used in general, it is worth asking: to what extent is there a difference? Though this point may be nominal at best, since both were practitioners of assorted methodologies, to what extent would sampling from both result in a greater set of tools which retain many of the virtues of both in order to deal with both the rapid and more regular movements of the social? The differences between Bourdieu and Latour are by no means minor, \(^{146}\) and the distinctions are most useful when the purpose of such

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\(^{143}\) In common texts of Law and Callon, Law is the only one to mention Bourdieu (6 times in *Organizing Modernity: Social Ordering and Social Theory*, and twice in *Actor Network Theory and After*).

\(^{144}\) Dear and Jasanoff. “Dismantling Boundaries in Science and Technology Studies.” 774.


\(^{146}\) A potential locale of convergence between the two may in fact be Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*. Though it is much too anthropocentric for Latour, there are striking similarities between Bourdieu's *habitus* and the use of *milieu* by Simondon (whom Latour considers, rather than Heidegger, the 'true' first philosopher of technology). There thus far has been no literature on this possible relationship, and much of Simondon's work has yet to be translated into the English-speaking world and intellectual sphere.
focus is to understand the distinctions. In STS, the two are as yet by no means compatible, although Sergio Sismondo has alluded to the “opportunity for Bourdieusian theorizing… to articulate science as a set of material practices, and its habituses as simultaneously human and non-human domains.”147

What is necessary is not some multiperspectival approach, where from different angles one sees different aspects of the same thing. No doubt what one sees is different depending on where one is looking or focused: down and near (Latour) or up and far (Bourdieu). Rather, the image I hope to portray is one of Bourdieu the Gatherer and Latour the Tracer. They manipulate their subjects differently: Bourdieu by grouping and arranging for analysis, Latour by tracing paths for description. The difference is, to analogize, that with Bourdieu we are provided with a map, albeit limited in its familiarity with the minute details of the regions, whereas with Latour we are provided with a detailed story of an excursion, but in a manner that makes it difficult to use again when taking a different path or undertaking a new excursion. Both are informative. But if this analogy seems a bit too strong, one should recall that Latour says “with the sociology of associations, the aim is to 'follow the actors themselves' as they restructure the heterogeneous collective. The logical implications of such an exclusive focus on restructurings is that, whenever a situation entails no movement and no change in social configurations, the sociology of associations – in contrast to the sociology of the social – will have nothing whatsoever to say.”148

In such a situation, Latour states, “No trace left, thus no information, thus no description, then no talk. Don't fill it in.”149 However, there is still work that can be done, work that Bourdieu allows us to do. In the snapshots that these tools allow, we are able to see, in a sense, initial and final stages on either side of the controversy. Though it may be provisional, a Bourdieusian analysis

147 Sismondo, “Bourdieu's Rationalist Science of Science: Some Promises and Limitations,” 94.
149 Latour, Reassembling the Social, 150.
of the pre- and post-controversy would provide researchers/scholars with a list of actors before they have completely familiarized themselves with the dynamics of the controversy underway. Blok and Jensen elaborate: “The aim is to follow techno-scientific actors in all aspects of their attempts to create alliances, no matter which types of materials, artifacts, or actors may become involved in the process.... The main task of the sociologist of associations is to follow, to the best of his or her abilities, the many trajectories and detours taken by the actors.”

Latour doesn't, and can't, tell us how to choose which actors to follow, but rather states that “the only viable slogan is to ‘follow the actors themselves'; yes, one must follow them when they multiply entities and again when they rarefy entities.” Blok and Jensen explain that “Latour argues that researchers of science and technology must develop a cleverness and broadness of repertoire that can match the actors they study,” but this is not particularly helpful for scholars beginning their study and who have not yet been acquainted with the litany of actors it is possible follow. Doing a Bourdieusian analysis before a Latourian description might provide the researcher with a veritable map and legend to identify ahead of time which paths (actors) one should follow. Supplementing Latour’s description with Bourdieu’s explanatory analysis of initial and final stages of a controversy may provide researchers with the ability to anticipate alliances between actors that develop from pre- to post-controversy. With map and story in hand, we may finally be able to navigate around the differences between Bourdieu and Latour to a place where Low and High Church are brought into negotiation without necessitating either a conversion to or an excommunication from STS.

150 Blok and Jensen, Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World, 39.
151 Latour, Reassembling the Social, 227
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