BRISTOL SHORTS RESEARCH

BOURDIEU AND AFFECT

Towards a Theory of Affective Affinities

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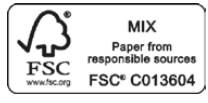

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I am lucky enough to have colleagues at the University of Newcastle who have been influential on my theoretical thinking over the last few years, especially Julia Coffey and David Farrugia in our work on affective labour; Megan Sharp in our work on punk, gender, defiance labour and reflexive complicity; and Penny Jane Burke and the whole Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) crew in our work on higher education and labour market transitions.

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Preface and Background

The data in this book are from my own research, observations and life experiences, and from many other researchers' work. I use novels, media, news stories, pop culture and other sources to illustrate various points. I also make use of sociological vignettes that are somewhat hypothetical, somewhat biographical and somewhat based on research data, which are drawn from being immersed in the literature and research on those things and need to be given some poetic licence.

You may also notice that I sometimes use the word 'we' when I am generalizing about the theories and concepts in the book. I understand that the use of 'we' should always be treated critically, because it is often used to create a false inclusivity, and that invocations of 'we' are an inevitable exercise in omission, whether intentional or not. Therefore, I use 'we' here as a deliberate form of inclusivity, but one that also contains an implicit reminder to denote that social scientists, the intended readership of this book, are largely practicing within the same social forces as our research objects. The 'we' is a ploy to encourage social scientists to think more reflexively about our own place in the world and the way in which we practice within it: that is, we are often reflexively complicit in the very things we critique. I also use examples from academia for the same purpose.

While this book may act as an idiosyncratic introduction to Bourdieu, the imagined reader has been introduced to Bourdieu's concepts and, broadly, to affect theories. It does not try to define those concepts in depth, or to go over and

rehash debates about the various concepts, although there is a definitional table for how I am using them at the end of the Introduction. There are many works that cover that material in depth and, as this is a short book, it is impossible to give that work the attention it deserves here.

The ideas for this book were developed in the research monograph *Youth, Class and Everyday Struggles*, in which there is a section in Chapter Three where I begin to bring Bourdieu and affect together. The second chapter in that book thoroughly outlines Bourdieu's sociology and defines his concepts in depth, foregrounding the importance of illusio and social gravity. This can serve as in introduction to Bourdieu's work, but there are many others.

Introduction: Towards a Bourdieusian Sociology of Affective Affinity

Introduction: inequality *feels …*

After the 45-minute drive in from the outer suburbs, Sharon tells her mum to drop her off a block from the venue. There are not many 1998 model Camrys in this part of town. She enters the Town Hall ballroom slowly, not sure what to expect. She has never been in a room like this before, let alone to the Law Students' Annual Gala. Men are wearing tight-fitting suits and women are in designer dresses, sipping wine out of huge glasses. They are talking about future investment properties and holidays on the Amalfi Coast. Sharon has struggled to make friends in the first year of her law degree. The equity scholarship helps, but she must still buy second-hand textbooks. She sits by herself in tutorials. A big group of people about a metre away, who act like they are long-lost friends, laugh loudly. She feels underdressed and underpaid. A layer of sweat begins to cover her forehead. A feeling that she needs to get out of there washes over her, but she grabs a beer from the open bar instead. I'm going to need a few of these, she thinks to herself. Just get through it. *It's hard to explain: this discomfort and anxiety. This is affect. This is a moment where class and gender are made and remade, not as structural relations, but as embodied, visceral experience.*

Alan waits at the gates, excited. He can see his two mates Daz and Matt coming and a third boy he doesn't recognize. Born in Sydney 15 years ago, he is about to watch his beloved Sydney Swans play the hated Collingwood Magpies on the hallowed turf of the Sydney Cricket Ground. He is wearing a Swans jersey and scarf, and this is the first year his parents have let him buy a season ticket out of his own pocket money. His friends arrive and Daz says: "Hey Al, this is Jordan. He's taking our extra ticket." "Cool," Al says. They turn towards the stadium, and Daz and Matt continue their conversation, while Al and Jordan make the awkward small talk of teenagers who have just met. "Where you from?" Jordan asks. "Bankstown," says Al. "No, where you really from?" responds Jordan, with slight incredulity. Al sighs. His parents were both born in Sydney, and his grandparents were Vietnamese refugees. Al is used to this and, without missing a beat, says: "My grandparents are from Vietnam, if that's what you mean … do you reckon Buddy will kick a few goals today?" Just get on with it. *It's hard to explain: the mundanity of resignation. This is affect. This is a moment where ethnicity and belonging are made and remade, not as racist insult, but through 'friendly' assumptions, provoking feelings of being the eternal other.*

He knows he should be listening to what the teacher is saying, but it is hard to focus on the words. It's even worse than in class, where he can't read the blackboard properly from the back anyway. After being told that he may have to repeat Year 9, there is only white noise in Sam's head. The teacher's words are static. What will 'the boys' think? "Shit, what about Abby?" he thinks, his girlfriend who is in Year 10. "The boys already tell me I'm punching above my weight, what is she going to think?" His elder brother says to just leave, that school doesn't matter – get a job and some cash. Mum says to tough it out and finish Year 10. But, having tried much harder in the test this time – he even studied in between footy training and Netflix – he is still not pleasing anyone. Only one thing springs to mind: What's the fucking point? Just get out. *It's*

hard to explain: humiliation and frustration. This is affect. This is a moment where the 'education system' meets individual desires, where class and masculinity are made and remade, where family history meets the present, casting a trajectory into the future.

These familiar sociological hypotheticals illustrate how the settings we occupy and pass through in our day-to-day lives are immersed in affective economies. Our history, our present and our future converge; situational encounters create the feelings and emotions that drive our everyday practice. The previous examples attempt to portray how inequality *feels*, which is almost impossible to do with words. These are the kinds of *affects* – treated here as an abstract noun – that this book intends to capture sociologically through developing a Bourdieusian theory. I also seek to reimagine Bourdieu to emphasize the affective elements that are already implicit in those well-known concepts (Matthäus 2017), and to propose that Bourdieu is useful for analyzing the sociocultural distribution of affects. The specific emotions produced in any affective encounter derive from one's relation to the elements of that encounter, more specifically one's *affinity* with all of the phenomena present. This book develops a Bourdieusian approach to the concept of affinity (Mason 2018) that seeks to theorize connections, potencies and relations between people and things.

Affect is a concept that has come to prominence in psychology, cultural studies, social geography, philosophy and literature, where the critical development of process philosophy perspectives has seen the rise of new materialism, non-representational theory, science and technology studies, actor–network theory, post-humanism and object-oriented ontology, among others, all of which engage with concepts of affect in one way or another. The 'affective turn' (Clough 2007; Gregg and Seigworth 2010) has had a huge influence in the social sciences, drawing attention to how everyday moments or situations, and the things we feel in their duration, are permeated with social significance and consequence.

The very notion of affect is theorized and defined in multiple ways. There does not seem to be a consistent definition, and it means a lot of different things in different contexts (Thrift 2008: 175). Some see 'affect as excess' that escapes the discursive (Massumi 2002; Thrift 2008) The 'affect as excess', or non-representational, version of affect is difficult to reconcile with Bourdieu's sociological practice[1] and has been criticized as being riddle-like in definition, whereby 'scientists can detect' it, 'philosophers can imagine' it but 'social scientists and cultural critics cannot interpret' it (Hemmings 2006: 563; see Barnwell 2018). But I see in Bourdieu many conceptual tools and orientations that speak to the affective ties that bind individuals to 'people like us', affective affinities that attract humans to things, texts, genres, subcultures and the like, and affective boundaries that work by producing an emotional *range* from active policing to subtle self-exclusions.[2] As Ahmed puts it:

> Emotions are not 'in' the individual or the social, but produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects … emotions create the very surfaces and boundaries that allow all kind of objects to be delineated. (2014: 10)

Bourdieu's language of struggle, investment and interest are deeply affective categories. Affects have been shown to drive both the reproduction and the transformation of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity discourses and inequalities (Berlant

1 The verb 'practise' has been spelled as 'practice' throughout the book to align with the Bourdieusian concept.

2 The term 'range' is important here. While this could be read as a dichotomy of either policing or exclusion, it is meant to represent a continuum of possibilities. I will use this rhetorical device throughout the book to try to capture diversity and complexity, so please read and imagine those comparative dichotomies as signposting broad possible trajectories or spectrums and not either/or scenarios.

2008, 2011; Ahmed 2010, 2014). My own area of interest is class and there have also been some prominent sociological developments on class, emotions and affect (Skeggs 2004a, 2005; Lawler 2005; Illouz 2007; Lane 2012; Skeggs and Loveday 2012; Wetherell 2012; Reay 2015; Vandebroeck 2017). But there seems to be a general reluctance to connect affect and class for fear of 'ushering in structuralism through the back door' (Bissell 2010: 273). Bourdieu can help overcome this apparent problem, contributing to how affects are unevenly distributed and are relational to positions in social space. I develop this way of thinking about affect in relation to habitus in Chapter Two, especially in relation to Ahmed's (2014) work on how affective encounters leave an impression, a mark or a trace.

This book follows Barnwell's (2018: 22) advice that 'the aims of affect theory could be better served by a deeper engagement with, rather than a departure from, the traditions and concerns of sociological thought'. Where Barnwell highlights Durkheim's utility for considering structures and affects, I bring a Bourdieusian perspective to considerations of affect and, importantly, elaborate affective components for Bourdieu's key concepts. A Bourdieusian contribution to studies affect can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the way everyday moments are the very constitution of how the social contours of inequality such as class, gender, race, sexuality, ableism and so on are made, transformed and remade, but also contested and resisted. This book develops Bourdieu's relational sociology towards a theory of affective affinity.

Why affect needs Bourdieu (or at least a theory of practice)

The recent theoretical paradigms mentioned in the previous section, and other theories that stem from a post-humanist or flat ontology, offer sociologists conceptual tools for analyzing the particular, the relational, the ineffable and multiplicity, immanence, emergence, processes, uncertainty and change.

But, when those theories talk about stratifications, coherence and structures, and the things that seem to remain quite the same over time, especially when considering the key sociological question of 'who benefits?', they can't help but return to the language of habit, discourse, governmentality or structures of feeling, if not by using those concepts explicitly, at least implicitly between the lines. I agree with Wetherell (2012: 56) here when she criticizes 'affect as excess':

> this line of cultural theory is not calling for cleverer, more flexible, and more productive analyzes of meaning making practices and their entanglements with bodies but seeks to relegate the discursive almost entirely, and in this way I believe trips itself up. The discursive is defined in the narrowest possible passive sense, not as a verb, or seen as a form of unfolding practical social action.

As even Thrift (2008: 175) has pointed out, 'affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world, but it is intelligence nonetheless, and previous attempts to either relegate affect to the irrational or raise it up to the level of the sublime are both equally mistaken'.

To be clear, this book is not an attempt to dismiss those perspectives *in toto*, all of which contribute important and interesting ways of understanding everyday life and have influenced some aspects of the perspective taken in this book. Affect theory has its lineage in the process philosophy of Spinoza, Bergson and Deleuze. In recent times Deleuzian perspectives have been particularly prominent. This point of view has a very different ontology from Bourdieu's. In Deleuze social structures are just another part of an assemblage, whereas in Bourdieu social structures are where meaning emanates. One ontology sees social structures as inter alia, the other both a priori and a posteriori. So, I will be drawing upon what I would call 'more-than-representational' (Lorimer 2005) conceptions of affect, influenced by the likes of Wetherell,

Ahmed, Berlant, Skeggs and Ngai, but more generally relying on Spinoza's distinction between *affectus* (the force of an affecting body) and *affectio* (the impact it leaves on the one affected; see Robinson and Kutner 2019 for critical discussion). Affects can accumulate 'to form dispositions and thus shape subjectivities' (Watkins 2010: 269), which describes how I would like to see the developments of a habitus come to be defined. *Affect is therefore defined in this book as embodied meaning making* (Wetherell 2012: 4).

This definition aligns to one of Anderson's definitions of affect as 'augmentations or diminutions of a body's "force of existing" that are expressed in feelings and qualified in emotions (and where emotions/affects become indistinguishable in experience)' (2014: 89). Thinking about affect this way means paying attention to everyday encounters, where affect is mediated and shaped by the participants, the non-material things and the history, norms and expectations that are relevant to, or present in, the specific situation.

> A body's 'charge of affect' is a function of both a series of immediate encounters and the geo-historicity of the body – the manner in which capacities have been formed through past encounters that repeat, with variation, in the habits, repertories and dispositions of bodies. 'Capacities to affect and be affected' are not, then, pre-discursive, in the sense of existing outside of signifying forces. They are mediated through processes of agencement that involve but exceed the discursive. (Anderson 2014: 89)

None of this is to say that it is a zero-sum game between perspectives on affect: at a time when all of the aforementioned theoretical paradigms are becoming more prominent in the social sciences, there hasn't really been a reduction in the use of, say, Bourdieu or Foucault. In fact, if anything, a veritable Bourdieu industry has developed. So, while these perspectives tend to treat each other as a 'straw man' or even as an enemy

to strengthen their arguments,[3] they can cohabit and help explain different aspects of social life and the things, situations, moments and relations that are its ingredients. Hage (2015) has made a clear and convincing argument for the vitality of using theories with different ontology to analyze the same research objects. In essence, he is calling for fewer theoretical oppositions and more theoretical 'sympraxy' (Bourdieu 2008: 112), which is Bourdieu's word for sympathetic but imaginative engagements with his own work. I agree that these essentially different ontological perspectives are useful for unpacking what is going on with various research objects. But I do have concerns about the more political aspects of what these new perspectives bring. The flat ontology position is quite amenable to dominant discourses, where the focus on chaos, change, immanence and difference speak to vitalist aspects that seem easily co-opted (see Culp 2016), which quite closely coalesce with what is happening in mainstream politics (see Barnwell 2016a). While there are anti-humanist moments in Bourdieu, for me the removal of the human from the centre and focus of sociological analysis resonates with the dehumanizing forces of global political economies. What I call the 'New Functionalists (object-oriented ontology, actor–network theory and the pragmatist sociology promoted by the likes of Boltanski) shed useful descriptive light on their objects, but struggle to usefully account for power despite their arguments against this critique (Latour 2004; Boltanski 2011).

So, the attempt to connect Bourdieu and affect here is an effort to sociologically account for aspects of power, values, morals and the like that are either absent or downplayed in some analyses of affect. For instance, an example of where affect theory needs a theory of practice is what has been called 'enclothed cognition' (Adam and Galinsky 2012), which

[3] And, in distancing affect in this book with 'affect as excess', and worrying about the political elements, I know I have somewhat done this too.

demonstrates the influence of clothing in the way relational judgements are made and how this affects one's actions. This research shows a symbiosis between the practical functions of clothing and their social status. In their experiment, when a subject wore a coat *described* as a doctor's coat, their sustained attention to a given task increased compared to when the subjects wore a coat *described* as a painter's coat. *It was the same coat*. The symbolic meaning attached to wearing the coat *affects* one's behaviour. But this affect is impossible to explain without a sociological understanding of value and status, where professional white collar intellectual work is *valued* differently – that is, more – than trade, blue collar manual work. This hierarchical social relation is so deeply ingrained that it can change one's orientation and focus. It is examples like this that critically engage with the idea that affects cannot be recognized or owned and are thus resistant to critique (Massumi 1995: 88; see Barnwell 2016b for a critical overview of the turn away from critique in this regard). Bourdieu can help to recognize how affects are disseminated and, while not owned per se, attach themselves to bodies and things in socially homologous ways, producing affinities. In Ahmed's (2004) terms, affects 'stick'.

Bourdieu's sociological practice is well equipped to interrogate situational affects and social change even if they are not the object of his own studies, as well as social reproduction, which mostly was his object. There is a growing interest in this intersection between affect theory and Bourdieu, as seen by a rise in journal articles and book chapters that bring the two together (even if only in passing). Further, the influence of the work in the *Feminism after Bourdieu* (Adkins and Skeggs 2005) collection has become central to much contemporary Bourdieusian research. This book will build on those developments. By imagining the habitus as a wellspring of dispositions that are affectively primed, and imagining fields as the accumulation and organization of affects, we can use the notion of affective affinities to unpack the subject/object divide that Bourdieu devised those concepts to move beyond.

Affects gather in spaces and are accumulated in the body. It is the encounters between embodied and site-specific affects that energize practice.

Why Bourdieu needs affect (or drawing out the affect in Bourdieu)

The 'symbolic' does a lot of work in phenomenological aspects of Bourdieu. The symbolic often seems to stand in for what are affective relations that produce specific emotions that correlate to position in social space. When Bourdieu writes about what appears to be affect, he turns to concepts that are broad metaphorical devices: social magic, social gravity, symbolic violence, hysteresis, interest, investment, even the forms of capital. Thinking with affect can flesh out these concepts; it can fill in the blanks that are alluded to, left unsaid or bracketed out.

Bourdieu's conception of habitus has a vague understanding of emotion and largely excludes affect, at least in the writing up to *Pascalian Meditations*. If the habitus sets the frame and adjusts between possibilities and probabilities (Probyn 2005a: 230), this reframing happens situationally as individuals encounter people, things, rooms, atmospheres, institutions, sights, tastes, smells, sounds and so on. Wacquant has undertaken definitional work on the notion of habitus that opens it up to consider emotions and affect because habitus 'is both *structur-ed* (by past social milieus) and *structur-ing* (of present perceptions, emotions and actions)' (Wacquant 2016: 67, emphasis in original). Therefore, individuals are 'suffering and desiring beings at the intersection between historical structures and situated interaction' (Wacquant 2014b: 123). Between historical structures and situated interaction is where the capacity to be affected takes place. Neuroscientific developments are reinforcing this way of thinking about how the brain functions, where we are not pre-structured by all experience, but are sensing 'relatively invariant structures, forms, and realities in the world' (Lahire

2019a: 11) that spring practical anticipations and improvizations into action.

Bourdieu has been criticized for neglecting actual face-to-face relations and moments in favour of more abstract ones (Bottero and Crossley 2011; Crossley and Bottero 2013; Fox 2013). If we consider social space as consisting of people as symbolizers, struggling in specific fields, where the symbols are themselves imbued with immanent and imminent affects, Bourdieu can provide an understanding of these social relations and processes. Social norms (symbols, values, morals, aesthetics, tastes, genres and so on) coalesce to become an affective order. Norms, traditions and common sense affectively reproduce themselves over time. This eternal process produces emotional responses on a trajectory from social alchemy to social closure. Processual relations are central to how symbolic violence, which is an affective violence, works to 'naturalize' hierarchies that are really the outcome of social struggles. The moments when one experiences or does not experience symbolic violence will depend on one's affinities.

From a broader perspective, the world has changed a lot since Bourdieu's death in 2002, and even more since he wrote most of his work. Recent scholars have come to regard emotive states as key to understanding subjectivity in the contemporary world. Therefore, considerations of affect are also relevant to changes in society that have moved towards what Davies (2018) has called 'nervous states', where emotion trumps rationality.[4] There is the rise of precarity and anxiety as dominant emotional modes that are engendered by the move to a mediatized, digitized, virtualized and cyborgian life. There are material and existential threats to existence raised by climate change, terrorism and other aspects of risk society (Beck 1992), where the 'slow cancellation of the future' (Berardi 2011) may result

4 While it won't date very well, pun intended.

in an affective spectrum dominated by melancholy (Brown 1999; Gilroy 2005), nostalgia (Hatherley 2017) and hauntology (Fisher 2014, 2018; Blackman 2019).

There has been an argument to integrate more phenomenology into Bourdieu to account for non-conscious, individuating and corporeal aspects of practice (Atkinson 2010b). Again, this book is not an argument against that work, but works in parallel with it as an argument to consider the affective as a way of addressing those concerns and opening up 'Bourdieu's *oeuvre* to currents in the social sciences which question the limits of the sociology of the social in the context of an increasingly ontological life' (Adkins 2013: 295).

Antecedents for a theory of affective affinities

While Bourdieu did 'not wax lyrical about emotions' and his 'description of emotion could be called affect' (Probyn 2005a: 230, 231), there are moments in his work where he points to affects and the productive nature of emotions: 'the factors which are most influential in the formation of the habitus are transmitted without passing through language' (Bourdieu 1991: 51). In his early ethnographic work in Algeria, Bourdieu used terminologies such as 'affective ties', 'affective attitude' (Bourdieu 1962: 103, 150), 'affective quasi-systematization', 'affective autonomization' and 'affective value' (Bourdieu 1979: 58, 59, 89–90, 120) without fleshing them out conceptually. Bourdieu wrote an unfinished doctoral thesis called 'The temporal structures of emotional life' under the supervision of Georges Canguilhem, who was a fundamental influence on his epistemology (see Reed-Danahay 2005: 99). He referred to this in interviews as his work on 'affective life' (Bourdieu 2019: 1). There are constant allusions to being affected throughout Bourdieu's *oeuvre* in the connections between emotions and practice: the 'weight of the world' (Bourdieu 1999); 'silent censures' (Bourdieu 2000: 167); 'limits imposed

individuals taking the form of bodily emotion (shame, timidity, anxiety, guilt)' (Bourdieu 2000: 169); 'refuse what one is refused' because 'that's not for the likes of us' (Bourdieu 1984: 471); succumbing to *amor fati* and being therefore 'content with what one is and has' (Bourdieu 1984: 573–5; see Lane 2012). These descriptions are mostly left as just that, yet there are ways of thinking through these phenomena as affective affinities.

Recently there has been a growing literature that attempts to bring together aspects of affect and practice theory, especially in social geography. Schatzki (2002) conceptualizes 'site ontology' and 'teleoaffective structures' to think about spatial connections between affect and practice. This aspect brings together Latourian 'arrangements' with site-specific social practices. Bille and Simonsen (2019: 1) argue that 'affect is not a noun with a clear ontological status; it only takes such status through verbal or adjectival forms as qualities of materialities connected to bodily practices of affecting and being affected'. They theorize 'atmospheric practices' as a way of bringing together affective atmospheres, phenomenology and practice theory. More direct encounters between Bourdieu and affect have also recently come to light. Engaging with work that considers emotions and emotional capital, Scheer (2012) sketches an array of 'emotional practices', where emotions are a practical engagement with the world. Emotions are then positioned as having their own history. Reckwitz's (2012: 255) 'praxeological outlook' argues for an emphasis on the affective dimensions of habitus, where 'routine practices mostly rely on perfect matches between atmospheres and sensitivities similar to the ideal fits between habitus and field that Pierre Bourdieu mentions'. Christou and Janta (2019: 657) develop the concept of affective habitus to consider the relationship between materiality and emotions, 'bridging things–feelings–people–place'. They define affective habitus as 'performative repertoire of practices imbued with affective connotations and shaped by the personal magnitude of things

in the narratives of … lives'.[5] Matthäus (2017: 75) mounts a strong case for Bourdieu as a theorist of affect in late modernity, seeing an implicit theory of affect in Bourdieu, where feelings, emotions and sensations are naturalized evaluative social practices: 'Therefore, "to feel" means "to recognize" – to recognize in practice, i.e. practically recognize – that social order against which the social subjects are to be endowed with more or less value and thus with more or less legitimacy' (Matthäus 2017: 78).

Wetherell proposes a research approach she calls 'affective practice' that focuses 'on the emotional as it appears in social life and tries to follow what participants do', where practices 'unfurl, become organized, and effloresce with particular rhythms' (2012: 4, 12). This approach can explore 'who is affectively privileged, who is able to 'bank' large amounts of 'emotional capital', and who 'naturally' seems to produce valued affective styles, avoiding abjection and contempt' (Wetherell 2012: 105). By focusing on practices, it allows an understanding of the limitations on individuals, without removing the possibility of forms of agency and even resistance (Loveday 2016). Ahmed's (2004; 2014) work on the cultural politics of emotions and affective economies is also important for thinking about the sociocultural dissemination of affect. An affective economy is a way of thinking about how 'emotions work to align some subjects with some others and against other others' (Ahmed 2004: 117). This idea counters the traditional understanding that emotions are 'individual' or 'private' concerns, or that they originate 'inside' individuals and then flow away towards other bodies and things. Emotion in this sense is not 'in' or 'out' per se, and they are not 'owned' by individuals. Emotions flow between bodies, things, meanings and so on. But, importantly, emotions are something we *do*, not just *have* (Solomon 2007). As Bourdieu states in *Pascalian*

[5] See also Forbes and Maxwell (2019) for discussion of the affective elements of habitus.

Meditations, the book that comes closest to dealing with affect in detail: 'The social order inscribes itself in bodies through this permanent confrontation, which may be more or less dramatic but is always largely marked by affectivity and, more precisely, by affective transactions with the environment' (Bourdieu 2000: 141).

It is through this kind of thinking that Bourdieu can be used to *make* connections between emotions, the physical senses, the spaces we occupy and social sensibilities.[6] By emphasizing the importance of illusio, symbolic violence, social gravity and social struggles, I will show how Bourdieu's concepts are already primed to consider affective phenomena.

Affinities?

Mason (2018) analyzes affinities as the flows and energies of social relations, moments of recognition and resemblance, with a particular focus on the uncanny, the ineffable, hauntings, weird sensations or déjà vu, that is, times where one can't quite put a finger on the feelings one has. Affinities are sensations that spring from a particular social context and are therefore sensuous connections. Mason sees affinities as a kind of spark, where kindred sensations of connection can make one feel enchanted, charismatic or joyful on the one hand, or toxic, disgusted or downbeat on the other. These kinds of personal sensations and feelings of connection between people, things, institutions, moments and settings have a *potency*. That potency can be a resemblance, empathy or closeness, or an indifference, aversion or distance, but may also be more liminal affects such as feeling eerie, weird or strange (see Fisher 2016). In this sense these affinities may spark epiphanic moments that can enchant or pollute

[6] By 'make' I am referring to the affinities assembled in those everyday encounters, whether that is a close affinity, one of distance or none at all.

everyday experiences. But, I argue, affinities may also be routine and habitual. The potency of affective connections in the moment of affinity creates sensations that make one *feel*. This potency is relational and in cases where sensations, feelings and emotions lead to being included or excluded, feeling comfortable or uncomfortable, they carry weight, 'the weight of the world' in some cases.

Like Mason, I'm not just interested here in traditional anthropological notions of kinship as affinity, affectionate connections to family and the like, although they are important things to consider in terms of how affinities become habitual, as much Bourdieusian research has illustrated. Also, like Mason, I approach the concept of affinity as affective charges and energies. But Mason does not want to consider affinities through what she calls traditional sociological concerns, wanting to focus on the spaces between things, the flows, forces and energies that resonate with non-representational theories and new materialism. In this sense, Mason uses the concept of affinity to concentrate on relational spaces themselves, where the space between things is where affinities function to spark potencies. Mason is therefore inviting an imagining of affinities in ways that cannot be 'contained' by existing sociological thought. I agree with Mason, whose book is a wonderful example, that affinities provide a great opportunity to theorize differently. That said, I also think that existing sociological thought can also be very useful for thinking with affinities. It does not have to 'contain' thinking of affinities as Mason puts it (which suggests that something is being held back), but can accentuate a sociological concept of affinity by emphasizing aspects that are immersed in hierarchies and power.

This book develops a Bourdieusian conception of affective affinities to think about relational connections, where affects emerge in social hierarchies and develop over time, to consider how inequalities are disseminated affectively. Mason does not want to use affinity as a device to study people who

are attracted to certain things, pleasures, tastes, behaviours or even other people, but this is exactly the kind of *sticky affinities* that I am seeking to illuminate by bringing in Bourdieu to think about dissemination and mediation of affinities. That is not to oppose Mason's focus, but to take a different track to think about apprehending and perceiving 'affinity' and its relation to power and inequality, the social magic of homologous affinities and the affective violence of social distance. *Sticky affinities are gathered as one moves through life's trajectory*. When one is exposed to a myriad of experiences and their situational affects, some pass one by with relative inattention, while others stick. The affinities that stick formulate dispositional orientations that are attracted to or repelled by the affective atmospheres and structures of feeling of specific social spaces.

Bourdieu's concepts

Throughout Bourdieu's career, he reworked and developed various concepts, and sometimes even within the same work their definitions are quite elastic. This has resulted in a proliferation of meanings of those concepts, where certain terms mean different things for different readers. Table 0.1 acts as a glossary of Bourdieusian concepts to clarify the definitions that I am relying upon here and as a summary of the conceptual developments I make in this book. Some of these definitions are straight from Bourdieu, but the book also relies upon some developments of Bourdieu's work.

Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
Habitus	'Transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' (Bourdieu 1977: 72). A 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1993b: 5). 'Regulated improvisations' (Bourdieu 1990: 57).	An affective reservoir of immanent dispositions, primed to instinctively react in some situations or to reflexively deliberate in others. Habitus is one's history rolled up into an affective ball of immanent dispositions, an assemblage of embodied affective charges. Habitus is essentially an antenna to detect the feel of a space, a capacitor that stores affinities and a transformer that regulates an array of performative dispositions.
Field	Leaky containers of social action that germinate shared expectations, common sense norms, classification systems and 'joint ways of thinking, feeling, and acting' (Wacquant 2014b: 120).	Fields have structures, histories, norms, traditions and so on, but those aspects mean that a field is also a collection of affects and will therefore have its own hierarchy of the distribution of affects. Thinking about field in this way emphasizes that fields are ontological spaces with their own affective atmospheres and structures of feeling, with doxic norms an ever-present ambient background.
Objectified cultural capital	'Cultural goods … which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.' (Bourdieu 1986: 243).	Ownership of, or access to, legitimate cultural goods confers an affective affinity with them, affording ease and comfort while also bestowing material advantage.

(continued)

Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions (continued)

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
Embodied cultural capital	'Long lasting dispositions of the mind and body' (Bourdieu 1986: 243). 'Advantageous attributions' (Bourdieu, 1984: 475–9).	Legitimized embodied sticky affinities. Being immersed in social spaces that share affinities with doxic norms, values and expectations confers a social magic effect of feeling like a fish in water. Being excluded from legitimized spaces confers social distance, feelings of being a fish out of water.
Institutionalized cultural capital	'A form of objectification which … confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee' (Bourdieu 1986: 243).	Institutionalized recognition of affective affinities, themselves enveloped in a hierarchy of status affects.
Social capital	'The aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network more or less institutionalized relationships or mutual acquittance and recognition' (Bourdieu 1986: 248).	Relations of social homophily form an affective affinity where people stick together. Sticky affinities develop between 'people like us'. Social capital is personal affective relations that can work in terms of deliberate forms of exclusion such as nepotism and favouritism, through to subconscious desires to be around similar people to feel comfortable.

(continued)

Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions (continued)

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
Symbolic capital	'Degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge and recognition' (Johnson in Bourdieu 1993b: 7).	An affective transference, where the form of capital is recognized and conferred by others in the field, and if the symbolic power is especially distinguished, outside and across fields. Symbolic capital is a felt relationship through processes of deference, celebrity, respect, admiration, etc.
Illusio	An orientation towards the stakes and rewards of a particular field and whether they are constituted as valuable. Illusio is the belief in the value of what is pursued in a specific field, and is a way of engaging with how meaning is created, maintained and transformed (see Bourdieu 1990: 195). 'A belief that is fundamental to ensuring that what happens in that field is considered important' (Bourdieu 2017: 95). Once an illusio is personally invested in, a trajectory is formed where one is 'taken in and by the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 116).	Individuals emotionally invest in day-to-day struggles within particular fields or settings as the means for making their lives worthwhile. The more they invest their time, efforts and emotion, that is, the more they are cathected, the more that illusio becomes central to their being and identity, that is, it accumulates social gravity.

(continued)

Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions (continued)

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
Doxa	'What goes without saying' (Bourdieu 1998: 170) – a set of the limits of what can be legitimately thought and said in a field, the 'universe of possible discourse' (Bourdieu 1998a: 169). The social world is 'a universe of presuppositions: the games and the stakes it proposes, the hierarchies and the preferences it imposes' (Bourdieu 2013: 298).	Doxic norms are an ever-present ambient affective background, an absent presence as one moves through day-to-day life. Doxa are key to the affective atmospheres of fields and settings. The emotional relations of the doxa and the hierarchies of those spaces reproduce or transform class relations, where those with the right affinities move through space with comparative ease compared to those lacking the required but often unsaid affinities that assemble to formulate 'what goes without saying', what is legitimate and normal, and therefore dominant, in any space.
Social gravity	'Is nothing other than the forces experienced by the social subject moving along its trajectory as it is exerting the force of its own presence on other subjects' (Hage 2011: 85).	Social gravity is a force that permeates between one's sticky affinities and the illusio of fields and settings. Affinities attract individuals to certain groups, institutions and practices. A relation of positive affinity can produce more investment; a relation of negative affinity can produce self-exclusion.

(continued)

Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions (continued)

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
	When people have invested in their lives by taking a specific social path (a trajectory), 'the subject becomes aware of the "gravity" of the situation, at the same time as society's social forces of gravity pull him or her to become an internalized part of that society' (Hage 2011: 85).	As these feelings reproduce over time, social gravity may develop towards desire, enthusiasm and dedication towards, or repulsion, apathy and indifference, to a said practice.
Trajectory	'While class positions, measured in terms of volume of capital accumulated within a field, are important tools of analysis, in themselves they offer a deformed, static, conception of social position and need to be understood in relation to a more dynamic conception of class trajectory … To see people on a trajectory is to also see them as capable of acting strategically within their class position.	One's trajectory is affected by the relations between sticky affinities and illusio. As different levels of social gravity emerge, fade or disappear, an individual's trajectory through specific fields, or their very possibility of entering specific fields and settings, will wax and wane. Some trajectories are precluded from entering certain social spaces before they start, and others seem inevitable.

(continued)

Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions (continued)

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
	That is, along with class position one needs to examine the strategies of "position-taking" … that social subjects engage in' (Hage 2011: 85).	Trajectory is also a temporal element in terms of how one's affective affinities confer a speedy path of relative ease through social space as opposed to a sluggish road with lots of obstacles to overcome.
Homology	In Bourdieu, homologies exist between fields or between spaces within fields, such as between consumer taste and producer supply, similar to Weber's application of elective affinities. Homology is also the relation between possessing the right forms of cultural capital for success in a particular field. It also speaks to the distinction relations between individuals and groups, where doctors and lawyers are likely to have more in common with each other than with plumbers or telemarketers.	Homology implies abstract relations, where thinking about these social homologies as affective affinities focuses on the face-to-face, the *in situ*, moments where these relations produce feelings and emotions that will be on a spectrum from pleasure and ease to discontent and difficulty. Relations of homology result in ease, comfort or conviviality; where there is less homology there will be difficulty, discomfort or frostiness.

(continued)

Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions (continued)

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
Social magic/ alchemy	'Social magic is the means of obscuring the conditions in which value is constructed so that fit comes to be seen as "natural" and the cultural arbitrary is denied … Social magic generates the belief that the person possesses capacities that are unrelated to the social world in which they developed. It casts a magical veil so that embodied forms of cultural capital become naturalized and the structures in which they were generated are denied existence' (Ingram and Allen 2018: 729).	Social magic occurs when one's sticky affinities match the social conditions of the field or setting, conferring feelings of natural ease and comfort in that space. Social magic happens when one's habitus spontaneously reflects doxic demands, the feeling of a fish in water, but as an apex predator that largely gets its own way.
Symbolic violence	Feelings of denigration, shame, guilt, frustration and anger due to inequalities: 'Violence which is exercized upon a social agent with his or her complicity' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 167);	Symbolic violence is an affective violence: it delivers emotional cuts and bruises, which then marks our immanent wellspring of dispositions accordingly.

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Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions (continued)

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
	'a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely misrecognition)' (Bourdieu 2001: 1–2). It is expressed along the lines of 'not for the likes of us' (Bourdieu 1984: 471). or succumbing to *amor fati*, and is therefore 'content with what one is and has' (Bourdieu 1984: 573–4).	These experiences may stick to form affinities, which impress limitations on our practices, where we learn what is for the likes of us, what is for the likes of me, and what is reasonable and realistic to expect, to hope for, and to pursue and invest. The feeling of a fish out of water, but even when in water it is always taking cover from predators and struggling to find sustenance in an unforgiving environment of scarcity.
Distinction	Distinction is formulated by those with more cultural capital who work to characterize themselves as more tasteful, moral, cultured, etc.	Distinction is an affective relation of status, where sticky affinities in the forms of tastes, morals and values are performed, reflexively or not, to mark the individual or group off from other individuals or groups, and is usually directed

(continued)

Table 0.1: Bourdieu's concepts with added affective dimensions (continued)

Concept	Definition	With added affective dimensions
	As those with more cultural capital also have the means to define what is tasteful, moral and cultured, this distinction is both performative and legitimized through the 'natural' social order. 'With natural distinction, privilege contains its own justification' (Bourdieu 2013: 300).	against those who are lower in social space. Relations of distinction produce feelings and emotions across an affective spectrum from superiority to disgust.

Chapter summaries

Like some of my previous work (Threadgold 2018a, 2019a), I want to foreground illusio and social gravity as key concepts for thinking about affect. Following this introduction, which has made the case for the importance of an 'affective Bourdieu', in Chapter One I will turn towards the underutilized concepts of illusio, social gravity and social alchemy/magic to consider everyday affective notions such as motivations, aspirations, orientations and intensity as the key to thinking about how meaning making is central to the affective economies that make and remake inequality. Chapter Two builds on the usual definition of habitus and on recent developments to argue that it needs to be thought of as an affective reservoir of immanent dispositions, where affinities stick and are primed across an emotional trajectory to instinctively react in some situations or reflexively deliberate in others. Chapter Three rearticulates the methodological and ontological concept of field as having distinctive affective atmospheres, and makes

an argument for thinking differently about broad social fields and specific social settings. This chapter opens up Bourdieu's fields towards thinking across multiple fields and incorporating broader affective economies into specific fields, and also to consider how some of Bourdieu's concepts might still work in spaces that cannot be considered a field. Chapter Four develops an understanding that Bourdieu's forms of capitals have affective properties and propensities, arguing that they need to be understood as skills and capacities for lubricating success in a particular field, and emphasizing how they work in the specific everyday moments and encounters where relationality matters and class is made, patrolled and reproduced. Chapter Five moves to consider how tastes, ethics, morals, values, aesthetics and the like are all key to thinking about modes of distinction and the dissemination of symbolic violence. These phenomena are situated as an affective economy, where engagements and entanglements with things and people in specific social spaces summon emotions and feelings that are the very moments where inequalities shift from being immanent and imminent to being present and felt. Symbolic violence is therefore an affective violence. Chapter Six considers aspects of social change through a Bourdieusian lens, outlining the affective poles of fields and their subversive innovators. It then examines recent social changes around the rise of reflexivity, irony, cynicism and anxiety. In a precarious global labour market, where even the well educated experience forms of insecurity about the future, reflexive and ironic ways of being are becoming normalized, while mental health issues effect an ever-greater proportion of the population. This produces a relation of cruel optimism (Berlant 2011). If the illusio of specific fields increasingly come under scrutiny as being unachievable, unsustainable or violent, this may open a space for emancipatory social change. In the final, substantive Chapter Seven I make the argument, like many others, that the dominant figures used to stand in for humans, such as *Homo economicus* and cultural dupe, must die. I also sketch out the

problem of what I call the figure of the inspirational meritocrat, which aligns with the rise of the happiness and wellness industries and with individual stories of overcoming hardships in movies and media profiles. The Bourdieusian model of the 'reasonable' accumulated being is then put forward as a way of overcoming the problems of those figures as it considers how sticky affinities mediate everyday struggles and strategies that move beyond the rational, ideological and entrepreneurial. The Conclusion sums up the main arguments, summarizes the conceptual developments and specifies the vitality of a theory of affective affinities.

ONE

Illusio, Social Gravity and Social Magic: Purpose, Motivation and Aspiration

Introduction

Feelings are beginning to be understood as central forces of evolution, driving the rise of what we now call civilization. For instance, medical science did not begin in a social vacuum or as a purely intellectual endeavour; it emanated from the specific feelings of the ill and those looking after them, rising from an empathetic and compassionate drive to alleviate pain and suffering. Of course, medical science may well be driven today by the drive for profit, but even greed is a feeling (Damasio 2018). The endeavours that humans commit themselves to are wide ranging: some try to cure cancer; some troll women on the internet; some may do both. From the outside, one's motivation, purpose and drive may appear absurd, but for the individual heavily invested in a practice – a religion, a subculture, a career, a social science – it may be as important as life or death. These drives, these *social libidos*, can be understood through Bourdieu's concept of illusio.

Illusio is an orientation towards things in the world, the stakes and rewards of a particular field and whether they are

constituted as valuable or worth pursuing. This orientation is therefore affective: it denotes emotional *investment* in day-to-day struggles as the means for making life worthwhile. Illusio is the belief in the *value* of what is pursued in a specific field, and is a way of engaging with how meaning is created, maintained and transformed (see Bourdieu 1990: 195). As Bourdieu states, one 'of the most unequal of all distributions, and probably, in any case, the most cruel, is the distribution of symbolic capital, that is, of social importance and of *reasons for living*' (2000: 241; emphasis added). Illusio therefore has obvious affective elements, where one emotionally invests in struggles, which within a wider philosophical perspective, makes one's own life meaningful. Illusio is particularly useful for analyzing motivations, aspirations, orientations and the intensity to which those things are experienced, all of which speak to aspects of affect in the sense that one must invest effort, time and emotions to pursue them. The success or failure of these investments has emotional consequences.

Illusio engages with the existential problems of human existence that are associated with Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre, whereby humans are 'thrown into the world' (Bourdieu 2000: 140–1). To avoid experiencing life as meaningless, humans need to create their own meanings, both in everyday circumstances and in terms of 'the meaning of life'.[1] They then need to invest themselves in those socially constructed meanings to make them legitimate and to construe them as emotionally meaningful, without which we would be frozen and trapped in a dreadful existential vacuum. Faced with 'the risk of emotion, lesion, suffering, sometimes death', illusio therefore can be conceived as a necessity, where we are 'therefore obliged to take the world seriously (and nothing is more serious than emotion)' (Bourdieu 2000: 140).

[1] For a light-hearted reflexive expression on this, see Peter Kelly (2019) on the 'absurdity' of youth studies.

As societies become more complex and differentiated, they require a greater array of autonomous illusio to function 'efficiently'. Following Durkheim's development of divisions of labour, as societies become denser and more voluminous, more social development and differentiation is needed, which creates a problem in social space as more people pursue the same things. 'If everyone "ran" for a small number of common objectives, the great majority of "runners" would be frustrated, but if a series of specific, differentiated competitions is organized, everyone can run with a chance of not being too badly ranked' (Lahire 2015: 69–70). The production of autonomous fields and their specific illusio multiplies the ways in which people can *feel* recognized. Further, as societies become more complex, to be able to exist in day-to-day life we need to render profligate events happening in the background out of our immediate attention, as we do not possess the means to pay attention to everything. This is not to say that investing strongly in illusio will avoid a schizophrenic subject position, as too much investment in an illusio may lead to obsession. Illusio is how we are captivated by things, people, institutions, movements, causes, careers, cultures and the like, but invest in them without reflecting too much on their actual meaning. That lack of reflection aligns with Bourdieu's concept of misrecognition, where current doxa is perceived as a social order and not as the result of conflict and struggle between competing interests that usually advantage vested interests (Bourdieu 2013: 298).

An individual's orientations towards things in the world influences processes of social homology and social closure. There are nods to these kinds of affective economies in Bourdieu's *oeuvre* – phrasing like 'blighted hope' and 'frustrated promise' (1984: 150) – but they are left as descriptors of symbolic violence. Thought of in this way, symbolic violence is an affecting force producing specific emotions that are folded into one's habitus that will influence future practice. This process is discussed in detail in Chapters Two and Five. In this

chapter, I propose that the concept of illusio can be applied to thinking about the different interests and investments individuals make; how those investments *affect* how they conceive of themselves; the different ways in which they are affectively pushed and pulled by social forces; and how these experiences coalesce into the habitus. These forces relate to 'social gravity' and 'social alchemy/magic', terms that spring up throughout Bourdieu's *oeuvre* but are relatively undefined.

Social gravity and social magic: relations of affective affinity

Terms like 'social gravity' and 'social magic' allude to the realm of affect where assemblages of people, things, factors and phenomena, all imbued with social history, come together to generate specific outcomes that may feel spontaneous, random and easy, or elusive, exclusive and laborious, all of which are the product of hierarchical social relations. These are relations of affective affinity. Social magic is how those relations fashion hierarchical forms of immanence. Individuals and groups imbued with the right capitals have a more lubricated trajectory towards success, that is, they develop affective affinities with the immanent affects in a field.

How interest, investment and trajectory are oriented form what Bourdieu, in passing, has called 'social gravity'. The concept is not specifically defined by Bourdieu[2] but has been developed by Hage (2011), who brings together different usages of 'gravity' and 'gravitas' throughout Bourdieu's *oeuvre*. In Hage's view 'gravity' alludes to both the 'seriousness' of life and the way we are pushed and pulled by forces beyond our immediate control. The concept is a way of thinking about individuals on a trajectory rather than fixed in place in social

[2] I cannot find a definition in English, but it could well be defined in non-translated French work.

space. We invest in our lives by pursuing various illusio, which puts us on a specific social path. This creates a momentum: 'the subject becomes aware of the "gravity" of the situation, at the same time as society's social forces of gravity pull him or her to become an internalized part of that society' (Hage 2011: 85). This also introduces struggles with temporality into the mix as, after investing in a specific illusio through a commitment of time, effort and emotion, there is an array of consequences if commitment diminishes or the wrong strategies are pursued. For example, if a student is two years into a degree, it is not just a simple choice to stop and do something else. They will have acquired debt, spent time, expended effort and emotion, and gained support from friends and loved ones, who may have told them that they are proud. It will feel as though there needs to be a return on that investment. Stopping at this point will feel like losing an investment and letting others down. This way of thinking troubles the very concept of 'choice' by emphasizing that individuals decide on reasonable strategies that reflect their previous efforts and engage realistically with their present, while mapping a future path. 'To see people on a trajectory is to also see them as capable of acting strategically *within* their class position' (Hage 2011: 85; emphasis added). For instance, contemplating what he calls the dominated fractions of the dominant classes, specifically new professions such as psychology, marketing, advertising, marriage guidance and sex therapy, and media and culture industry workers, Bourdieu writes that they possess a practical utopianism, refusing to be classified even though most of their practices involve performing classifications. Bourdieu sees these denials of classification while forever classifying as 'thinly disguised expressions of a sort of dream of social flying, a desperate effort to defy the gravity of the social field' (1984: 429).

Social gravity is useful for thinking about intensity and how we are attracted to some things over others. Social magic, also referred to in Bourdieu as social alchemy, is a way of thinking about stable and functional social orders of day-to-day life. We

ignore how 'the way things are' emerges from social struggles over time that have advantaged some groups or individuals more than others, and how that socially formulated order magically rewards some people, seemingly naturally, when really they are lucky to have been born into the right place in social space. Language is central to this process. Representatives of the state such as a judge can channel authority by rendering someone 'guilty' on its behalf (Bourdieu 1991) through the power of words and nomination. The state itself can wield its magic by conferring on some individuals the position of a 'graduate' (Bourdieu 1996b: 112) through the creation of official legitimacies. Bourdieu draws on the theological concept of theodicy, developed to vindicate God's permitting of evil, to describe a form of social magic where social struggles over morals, ethics, values, tastes and legitimacies are misrecognized as doxic social norms (2000: 241). He also uses the term 'sociodicy' in this regard to refer to the way a society justifies its 'nature', despite the implementation of arbitrary hierarchies.

'Alchemy' connotes the ability to turn things into gold. For the privileged, their feeling more 'at home' in institutional settings is a sticky affinity with what is defined as tasteful, moral, valued and so on, which provides them with an uncanny capacity to put their desires into practice. Related to social magic is where one's sticky affinities correlate with the conditions of the social spaces one occupies; this challenges the very notion of meritocracy that dominates public discourse.

For instance, Ingram and Allen (2018) show how the 'ideal graduate' remains one who is privileged with specific forms of capital, despite decades of higher education policy initiatives towards greater inclusion and diversity. By analyzing recruitment materials at the likes of Google and PricewaterhouseCoopers, they show how the tone and tenor of employers' communication to applicants, and 'pre-hiring processes of attraction', results in elite professions are still dominated by the usual graduates from elite universities. While all graduates navigate the same 'employment game', employers

are looking at institutional prestige. At a more individual level, embodied cultural capital, expressed colloquially as things like polish, charm, presentation and confidence, mean that 'professional' middle-class[3] modes of comportment are privileged; style and bodily hexis are valued beyond degrees and grade point average. These dispositional elements of the graduate employment market are not publicly discussed, and obviously not spelled out in job advertisements. They are the backstage of the employment game, hidden from even the successful players, who will feel that they are successful because they have worked hard, said the right things and made the right choices – which of course they have. But this success is the conversion of capital – an affective process, a relation of sticky affinity – whereby individual habitus magically matches the doxic conditions of the institution or field. Social magic, therefore, 'is the means of obscuring the conditions in which value is constructed so that fit comes to be seen as "natural" and the cultural arbitrary is denied' (Ingram and Allen 2018: 729). By focusing on the codes and unsaid practices and expectations of the graduate employment process, Ingram and Allen (2018) construct a social magic conversion table that unpacks what the official discourses really mean. The criteria in Table 1.1 apply to those seeking work at Google. This analysis reveals the hidden inequalities faced by individuals from the 'wrong' background, but also shows how these corporations create an impression of providing the possibility of social mobility,

[3] I am aware of making a very broad generalization in my use of the term 'middle class' like this. It is used in this way to make general observations and comparisons between people in relatively homologous social positions. It would be more accurate to talk about the middle class*es* in this regard, but I am referring here to relatively high cultural capital – knowledge of what is cool, tasteful, fashionable, stylish, legitimate, appropriate and so on – that develops a comfortable affinity with what is required in social situations such as job interviews, as well as an affinity with the person doing the interviewing.

Table 1.1: Google's Social Magic

'Objective' criteria	Socially structured 'capital'
Strong educational credentials Passion and natural curiosity Highly motivated	Degree from a global elite university 'Good' extracurricular activities; interesting leisure pursuits Internship (ideally with Google): financially supported by parents and sourced through family social networks
Go-getting self-starter/ entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial activity undertaken in spare time; supported by available economic capital
Quirkiness; like-mindedness	At ease in interview setting; supported via institutional assessment preparation and family networks
Committed to the 'Google Family'	Able to participate in work social activities; unburdened by caring responsibilities or other commitments

Source: Ingram and Allen 2018: 733

all the while continuing traditional exclusionary practices that favour the already privileged. 'This is a sleight of hand that transforms subjective value judgements into seemingly objective assessments, without anyone recognizing the illusion' (Ingram and Allen 2018: 737).

These type of social magic processes have also been illustrated by Burke and McManus (2009) in their work in art schools. Observing the interview process that potential students need to navigate to get into the programmes, Burke and McManus note that white, middle-class markers of taste and privilege were rewarded in the interview conversations. For instance, Nina, a young, black, working-class fashion designer said she was influenced by hip-hop and would like to design sports tops. After she said this, the interviewers demonstrated negative body language towards Nina: they seemed to go through the motions in the interview and she was given less time than

other candidates. This relation of social distance through taste was an affective moment, a turning point after which Nina had no chance. Afterwards, the two interviewers had the following discussion:

> Interviewer 1: Why should we say we are rejecting her?
> Interviewer 2: Well she's all hip-hop and sports tops.
> Interviewer 1: We'll say that her portfolio is weak.

Before the interview her portfolio was fine. The interviewers then also recorded in their notes that she was not appropriately dressed, even though she was dressed in a similar manner to the other, white, candidates. They also marked her down because she had said that she would continue to live at home, as they deemed this a sign of immaturity. The following candidate, a white middle-class man from an affluent town, wore expensive clothes, cited famous designers and artists as his inspiration and said that he would be leaving home as 'it is all part of the experience'. He was offered a place, even though his portfolio was considerably weaker than Nina's (Burke and McManus 2009: 41–2).

These affective affinities in the job market have also been demonstrated to occur even before people meet, with research on the affectivity of names on CVs showing clear bias as to who gets the interview call-up. Studies in countries dominated by white people show that, in identical (fake) job applications from candidates with the same qualifications, those with names that are ethnically associated with whites were more likely to get an interview. In the United States, black jobseekers were anywhere between 50 per cent and 500 per cent less likely to get a call back than the general population (Pager 2007, 2008). In Australia, a study conducted field experiments using names that sounded distinctly Anglo-Saxon, Indigenous, Italian, Chinese and Middle Eastern, replicating Pager's US study by sending CVs to entry-level jobs. They found that the best call-back rate was for white Anglo-Saxon-sounding

names (36 per cent). The other call-back rates were: Italian 32 per cent; Indigenous 26 per cent; Middle Eastern 22 per cent; and Chinese 21 per cent. These studies indicate that just an 'ethnic'-sounding name, regardless of actual skin colour or religion, can have a detrimental effect on one's job market success (Booth et al 2012). In the affective economy of names, having a white one bestows social magic.

These codes, rationalizing manoeuvres and straight-up biases, usually made by white middle-class cultural intermediaries who dominate influential positions, is how social magic transpires. These forms of social magic range from the individual level of feelings of ease for those relatively high in cultural capital, to the functioning of whole social fields where, for example, a *copy* of a specific painting may be transformed into a *masterpiece* by the right experts (Lahire 2019b). It is how the middle class gets to make the world in its own image, which is discussed in terms of the concept of conatus in Chapter Two. For the privileged:

> The illusio is a kind of knowledge that is based on being born into the game, belonging to the game by birth: to say that I know the game in this way means that I have it in my veins, in my fingertips, that it plays within me, without me, as when my body responds to a feint before I even saw it. (Bourdieu, trans and cited in Lahire 2015: 75)

Where Bourdieu argues that this is knowledge, I would argue that this is better described as a feeling. The privileged usually deny their privilege, even if they 'know' it. Nevertheless, how privilege functions is through affinities that are in one's veins – embodied. The hippy aphorism 'magic happens' is true, but it is not some spontaneous or mystical event; it is the reflection of social hierarchies disguised as a natural social order where taste, morals and values are wielded as instruments of exclusion, but is experienced affectively: 'my body responds to a feint before I even saw it.'

As an increasing amount of research argues, 'feelings, emotions, sensations, etc. are … central for explaining the (re-)production and in fact transformation of social order in the sense of social inequality or social dominance, consequently deepening our understanding of [Bourdieu's] theory of habitus' (Matthäus 2017: 76). Recent work that theorizes aspects of habitus, especially how an actor may have a plurality of dispositions (Lahire 2011), helps to situate how habitus works to produce site-specific emotions that drive practice. But, importantly, Bourdieu refers to collective aspects of habitus, the 'implicit collusion', as collusio (2000: 145), which adds a collective element to his concept of illusio. This does not imply class consciousness, but a homology of interests – affinities – resulting from occupying similar positions in social space. As Fowler (2007: 368) puts it: 'Bourdieu's theory of practice is linked not just to strategies of reason or survival but to the ways of the "heart", that sense of the game instilled through solidarity and fidelity to one's group or honour.' This is an important aspect of Bourdieu's theoretical conception of class, where individuals in comparable positions have an affiliation of interests that result in similar dispositions and practices, but not a reflexive class membership. It is here that the metaphoric notions of social gravity and magic can be used to explain the way in which habitus impels an individual towards some practices over others while at the same time positioning them in a relation of social magic or closure with what is needed to successfully pursue the said practice.

Using illusio and social gravity to think about aspirations

If we understand the Bourdieusian social subject as one that accumulates being, a cumulative self (Noble 2004) that gathers things, relations and experiences in the constant struggle for meaning and recognition, illusio demonstrates how this is a purposeful process that unfolds over time. When an individual

is invested in the illusio of a field, they see the investment of their own time, their energy and effort, and the emotions that result from this struggle as a valuable endeavour because they are inspired by its stakes to regard it as something worth struggling towards. Motivation and commitment to reaping the rewards of the field are something worth *aspiring* towards, even if they may experience frustration, disappointments and setbacks. Once invested in the illusio, a trajectory is formed where they are 'taken in and by the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 116). The stakes of that field therefore increase the social gravity for the individual.

This process reveals an affective element to aspirations, which are usually considered discursively in research. Data around aspirations in higher education, for instance, usually include responses along the lines of: 'I want to go to the University of Sydney'; 'I would really like to be a high school teacher'; 'If I get a good job, hopefully I can travel and meet someone to start a family'. This is valuable work because the discursive reveals the linkages between intentions, motivations, possibilities and outcomes, and how class, gender, race and ethnicity, location, disability and so on mediate both what people aspire to and the realistic possibility of reaching those objectives. The discursive is one ontological element in the assemblage that formulates aspirations, but there are also affective elements that resonate closely with how aspirations function. This is especially important for considering everyday moments and specific situations where moments of desire do not match expectations or even possibilities: saying the wrong thing in a tutorial such as mispronouncing 'Bourdieu' as Bordeaux; finding it impossible to get to class because of distance and the absence of public transport; needing to work too much to have the time to study enough. As Wetherell argues: 'We cannot stop the clock, start it just from some constructed moment of initial impingement and ignore the meaning-making contexts and histories that so decisively shape the encounters between bodies and events' (2013: 355). Affective encounters are simultaneously sensed,

recognized, categorized and communicated, all of which rely upon habitus, which is one's history rolled up into an affective reservoir of immanent embodied dispositions.

Bourdieu theorized illusio to engage two distinct aspects of social life (Aarseth 2016). First, illusio helps to disclose the 'hidden profits' guiding people's practice, which connects to the discursive aspects discussed previously, where motivations to go to a particular university or to get a better job not only are about attaining meaning in one's life and ontological security, but also relate to forms of economic gain, recognition and status distinction. Second, illusio also demonstrates how people are moved by stimuli and incentives in certain fields and not others. Possessed by what Bourdieu called social libido (2000; see Steinmetz 2006), forms of social gravity summon individuals out of a state of indifference and places them on a trajectory towards fulfilling their desires (Wacquant 1992: 26). Illusio can help us perceive different configurations of 'anxieties and desire that emerge in and in turn incite particular engagements with the world, an affective dynamic underlying the enchantment with the game' (Aarseth 2017: 12). This is important for thinking about how aspirations emerge, to be strategized and struggled towards.

Illusio and economies of motivation and intensity

Illusio does appear in some Bourdieu-inspired research (Järvinen and Ravn 2018), and something like it is often hinted at, especially in education studies (see Bowers-Brown 2016), but it is often left implicit, with the term itself rarely used. Studies like this are important as they investigate how the motivations, goals and rewards of students are affected by modalities of inequality (Bathmaker et al 2016). Broadly, while the general illusio of higher education includes things like acquiring a job in a chosen field, and the 'hidden profits' that implies, these processes look and *feel* very different for students from different class backgrounds. For instance, my

doctoral research in three high schools in the Newcastle area of New South Wales, Australia (Threadgold and Nilan 2009) explored how students at the 'working-class' school were determining whether to try to go to university, or aspired just to get to university, any university they could get into. The goal for these students was entering higher education as an end in itself, with relatively blurry visions of what would or could follow. They *felt* nervous about this, unsure of what the future held, oriented towards the future with relative uncertainty. The future is affectively present, but unknown. Students at the working-class university were also reflexive about their position in social space. As Genevieve put it:

> 'it's like when you apply for a job, like if you live out in [low-SES, low-status suburb] compared to in at [high-SES, high-status suburb] or something, their parents are more likely to know each other which helps, plus they are likely to go to a school like [expensive private school] rather than [here], so that can have an effect on the job and getting it.'

This analysis by Genevieve is an insider's account of the feelings of symbolic violence coalescing in a reasonable vision of what she faces in her future trajectory. There is not resignation here, a complicity in this relation of symbolic violence, but rather an understanding of her circumstances.

In contrast, at the academically selective school and the expensive private school, students were not deliberating whether to attend university. The decisions they were making were about which university to accept an offer from, usually on the basis of the perceived prestige of the programme or institution, or which professional degree to pursue. This is reflected in feelings of relative comfort with the transition from high school to higher education, even if they also were anxious and stressed about making the right decisions. This is

well expressed by Nell, whose parents are both academics and who attended an academically selective school:

> 'Well, I have this thing lately where I don't wanna go to Uni straight away or do the whole career stuff straight away, because it seems like the first 20 years of your life are the most eventful and then you do the same thing for 40. It just seems pointless. So, I was gonna maybe wait even ten years and do spiritual fulfilment stuff first [laughs].'

These motivations for higher education have obvious class implications, where entering university is seen as an achievement in and of itself for some young people, while for others it is a taken-for-granted stepping stone on their trajectory to something else. The more privileged kids have an affective affinity with the processes of heading into higher education. This further relates to the intensity with which one commits to illusio.

As Hage argues (2011: 85), 'Along with class position one needs to examine the strategies of "position-taking" … that social subjects engage in.' Illusio therefore can help consider 'modalities and intensities of consciousness' (Noble and Watkins 2003). Commitment towards an illusio has consequences. How much time, effort and emotion does one have to invest? How does a willingness to invest in one field lubricate or impinge on achieving success in another? Just how much is one willing or able to 'buy in'? This orientation towards the illusio of a field, or multiple fields, relates to whether 'one is inclined to "furiously" accumulate capital or to "take it easy". This [aspect of] disposition is an important component of what Bourdieu calls habitus' (Hage 2011: 86). While this intensity may point to aspects of an individual's psychology, or their personality and character traits, it can also demonstrate the strategies they use to surmount obstacles to achieving their aspirations. For example, a student in a degree programme that mandates

regular face-to-face attendance will be disadvantaged if they live far from campus, do not own a car or do not have access to convenient and timely public transport (see Threadgold et al 2018). This may result in their commitment to the illusio *draining*, their intensity of purpose affected by very real material barriers, which results in feelings of frustration, failure, guilt and exhaustion. A student may be highly committed, desperate to do well, begin study with all the intensity that is humanly possible, but material, temporal and emotional hurdles can have deleterious consequences on aspirations and motivations. If the student lacks the support – economic, familial, infrastructural, emotional – to overcome these forms of symbolic violence, it is likely to have damaging effects on their graduate trajectory.

An individual's relationship with illusio will be at a certain level of intensity, but there are also 'levels of awareness' that will mediate aspiration strategies and access to networks. Noble and Watkins (2003: 533) develop Bourdieu's games metaphor, specifically using tennis, where ability depends on different orientational intensities:

> When we play tennis, we can simply 'go with the flow' and 'forget' our bodily movements in terms of shot execution; or we can check our stroke when we realize it isn't working; or we can reflect upon our strategy and alter it as we see fit.

'Check our stroke' here describes a reflexive moment, a level of awareness. For example, students have different orientations towards what they think a degree will provide and what extra-curricular activities are needed to lubricate success. In research about the struggles faced and the strategies used in transitions from higher education to the labour market (Threadgold et al 2018), students in the social science programme, who tended to be the first in their family to attend university and to come from relatively low socio-economic backgrounds, often think that a degree alone will be enough to get them a job in

their field of study. In comparison, business degree students, who tend to come from more middle-class backgrounds, are often furiously networking while studying, trying to make connections to set themselves up post-university (see also Bathmaker et al 2013). Social science students seem to go more with the flow, while business students seem to realize that a 'degree is not enough' (Bathmaker et al 2016: 96). These students adjust their strategy to a precarious labour market that has developed to a point where in many professions and vocations free internships and volunteering are doxic. Awareness of these circumstances, relative freedom from material necessity, and the ability to network with the right people relates to their family's position in social space (Forbes and Maxwell 2019), a form of social magic that draws on their already established capitals.

One can also invest in an illusio without necessarily practicing in a field per se (see Chapter Three) or even be totally committed to its rewards without necessarily strategizing to win. For instance, to extend the tennis example, one may have a casual game once a week with mates or get some coaching for relaxation and fun, but this hardly means being heavily invested in the field of sport. There are many people who have lessons but never play a competitive game, or even a social game for that matter. This amateur participant can be juxtaposed with the professional who spends countless hours training, in the gym, hitting thousands of balls and watching hours of videos. One may be a consumer of tennis, heavily invested as a fan in the success of say, Roger Federer or Serena Williams. The fan is somewhat close to the illusio, but is not invested in the same way or with the same intensity of commitment. Also, an individual may be central to the material elements of a field, but not be pursuing the field's interests: the people who prepare the courts, wash the towels, clean the changing rooms, sell the Pimm's and lemonade and the strawberries and cream are all 'at the heart of the game without being concerned with the stakes' (see Lahire 2015).

Thinking with illusio through orientations, intensities and awareness emphasizes affective affinities and temporal elements of aspirations, where one may want to invest in the field, but lacks the realistic strategies and time to be able to pursue the rewards. This formulates an affective economy that mediates trajectories towards achieving aspirations, where one may float along with the steady momentum of social alchemy or meet obstacles and hurdles when faced with a relation of social distance. How this trajectory *feels* will mark future orientation.

Conclusion

Illusio, social gravity and social magic are useful tools to analyze the affective economies in which we are all immersed. Pursuing illusio makes life meaningful. Social gravity sees people pushed away and pulled towards illusio in ways that are homologous to position in social space. Positionality in social space moves in a trajectory as time, effort and emotion are invested. Once an individual invests in something, it takes on a gravity where its significance becomes entwined in individual and collective identities. But the game is stacked. Despite stories of meritocracy, determination and enthusiasm dominating public discourse, in terms of how to succeed, some people magically have more means because their habitus aligns with the demands, both overt and subtle, and obvious and hidden, of the illusio being pursued (see Littler 2018). A privileged disposition has a sticky affinity with the demands of pursuing illusio.

Illusio then can bring an affective layer to research that considers people's motivations, aspirations, orientations and intensity. Investigating illusio in terms of motivations uncovers the hidden profits of individual actions, exposing how they are entrenched in an affective economy, where one's aspirations and their possible fulfilment are relations of social homology and social closure. 'The more power one has over the world, the more one has aspirations that are adjusted to their chances of realization, stable and little affected by symbolic manipulation'

(Bourdieu 2000: 226). Symbolic manipulation in this sense is *felt*. For those with less 'power over the world', that is, who are less in possession of forms of capital, aspirations may 'burgeon', feel a little affectively 'off' and instil a dispositional sense of a 'lack of a future' (Bourdieu 2000: 226).

Importantly, some aspirations – such as the benefit of attending university – are held up as beyond dispute or discussion. Thinking with illusio can afford scholars an opportunity to ask reflexive questions about principles of belief, including their own, which may jeopardize the very illusio of their own field (Bourdieu 2000: 102). For instance, the value of attending university in a time of debt, degree inflation and mass attendance is not questioned; it is seen as an intrinsic good, even if the very experience of pursuing this illusio may have detrimental effects on some individuals' well-being. By critically interrogating the dispensation of possibilities of achieving illusio, researchers can publicly intervene in the misrepresentation of opportunities.

TWO

Habitus: An Affective Reservoir of Immanent Dispositions

Introduction

When I enter big, brightly lit Westfield-style shopping centres, I feel that I instantly crave a chocolate milkshake. I *need* one. From when I was a kid through to my late teens, I went into those places to hang out with friends, meet girlfriends and look at the Air Jordans I couldn't afford. As I grew up in a town about a 50-minute drive from such a place, it was a relative treat to go there. Every time I would get myself a chocolate milkshake. It became routine. Now when I go to such places – very reluctantly – to buy a TV or to get a present for someone I don't know very well, I sometimes feel that I can smell one when I know there are none around. I would know if there were because I would have one in my hand. There is something of a Pavlovian imprint left on me from those early mundane experiences. I have changed a lot since then. I now go through some kind of anti-Gruen Transfer that makes me feel as though I'm in a hospital when I go into a large shopping centre, so great is my dislike for such places because of their overt consumerism and taste relations,

which are now 'not for the likes of me'. Hospitals have always terrified me: they make me want to faint, and influence the way I now feel in shopping centres – both make me feel so anxious. It must be something to do with the bright lighting and the sterile environments of medical practices – rampant consumerism and death – which I don't really like very much. So, I have the somewhat pleasurable feeling of craving a milkshake in shopping centres, often a 'large' which made me feel bloated and queasy when I was younger, whereas I now feel anxious just being in that space, because it makes me feel like I'm in a hospital, which is where you go when you are sick. I developed a rather ordinary habit as a teenager and have been affected: an indelible imprint on my disposition swells during the time I am in that space. An immanent feeling that was habitually developed but that has been lying dormant is summoned, *activated into actuality in the affective atmosphere* of a shopping centre, and emotionally performed as temperamental unease and dread.

Habitus is made to do a lot of conceptual work in Bourdieu, and has been criticized for being something of a black box. It seems capable of explaining everything, and it could well be that it explains nothing. This chapter posits a critical reconfiguration of habitus 'to open the mysterious and sealed boxes that sociologists were content to simply evoke when speaking of schema, of disposition, of mental or cognitive structures, of habitus' (Lahire 2019a: 3) by elucidating the affective elements already inherent in the concept (Matthäus 2017). With reference to the milkshake and discomfort described previously, I'm not sure a sociological concept like habitus can or should be used to account for such detailed and specific individual psychological peccadilloes, but I don't think it is necessarily needed either. The concept of habitus should be used quite modestly. While the aforementioned example is illustrative of how habitus should be imagined in terms of affective affinity and the

body working as a 'memory pad'[1] (Bourdieu 2000: 141), habitus works best when applied to the social homologies and social distances between individuals or groups, the social spaces that they occupy and what happens in those spaces. More specifically, habitus explains what happens to people when they enter different social spaces and how that makes them feel and practice, and how these feelings and practices are drivers of the reproduction and transformations of social inequalities. The recent work of Lahire (2011, 2019a) encourages a sociology of the individual, where the analysis of actions, which are in the first instance 'individual', is not necessarily to address psychological peccadilloes, but to avoid the perennial problem of researchers putting their participants into 'habitus boxes'.

Habitus can account for how we feel in specific spaces along an array of emotional trajectories: from comfortable to uncomfortable, from a feeling of fitting in to a feeling of standing out, from confident to anxious, from smart to stupid, from cool to lame, from pride to shame and so on – from a 'fish in water' moving smoothly upstream to a fish flapping about on the shore, struggling for breath and to get back to the familiar comfort of the water. Emphasizing the *array* of dispositions of any habitus is important here, as it brings in a Goffmanesque understanding of performing different versions of ourselves in different social circumstances. Sometimes that is done reflexively, and sometimes it happens instinctively. What sparks these different dispositional orientations, what Bourdieu calls 'practices', is one's social capacity to be affected and to

[1] Both Lahire (2019a: 9) and Butler (1999: 127) link Bourdieu's conception of the body as memory pad to Bergson, and point to how memory is also forward oriented. 'Memory itself, with the totality of our past, is continually pressing forward, so as to insert the largest possible part of itself into our present action.' 'Habit rather than memory, it acts our past experience but does not call up its image' (Bergson 1988: 151, 108).

affect. The habitus is embodied experience, affinities assembled through repetition that transforms feelings and emotions into beliefs, temperaments and preferences. Habitus should be thought of as an affective reservoir of immanent dispositions, primed to instinctively react in some situations, or to reflexively deliberate in others.

Bourdieu's thinking tools in general can help us understand the way in which the affective atmosphere of a specific setting can bring forth emotions that are 'feeling the past in the present' (Skourtes 2016: 392). Habitus is traditionally defined along the lines of 'transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' (Bourdieu 1977: 72). The 'structuring structures' part is where affect happens: a set of dispositions that delineates how one feels in specific situations, whereby feelings emerge from one's affinities with the contents of the space they are occupying. Those feelings produce context-specific practices. There is much in Bourdieu's theoretical tools and empirical studies to illuminate the messiness of the affected social subject's 'joint ways of thinking, feeling, and acting' (Wacquant 2014b: 120). This chapter theorizes a way of understanding how the array of dispositions that assemble the habitus of any individual – the 'regulated improvisations' (Bourdieu 1990: 57) – are hailed in specific situations through affective affinities between one's past, present and future.

Levels of habitus and its affective plane

Habitus has been theorized with habitual pre-conscious elements built into its many layers, with debates about how much the habitus functions below consciousness or whether it can be reflexive (Sweetman 2003; Adams 2006; Threadgold and Nilan 2009; Atkinson 2010a; Archer 2012; Bouzanis and Kemp 2020). Since affect has been situated as embodied and pre-conscious, a consideration of habitus can help us understand how affects are differentiated and can lead to people feeling differently, and therefore acting differently, in the

same social situations.[2] As Ahmed (2014: 8) argues, 'Emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices.'

Wacquant's (2016) recent theoretical work elucidates aspects of habitus by weaving together the many developments that Bourdieu made of it throughout his career. This work enhances aspects of the theory of habitus, contributing to analyzing carnal and affective phenomena (Wacquant 2014a, 2014b). Habitus itself is multi-scalar, consisting of primary, secondary and tertiary levels that contain cognitive, conative and affective aspects. These work at individual and collective levels. Every individual has a 'primary' generalizable habitus that provides the foundation for the development of myriad secondary specific habitus (Wacquant 2014b: 7). The primary habitus essentially is the *priming mechanism* that is affected by one's surroundings to spark the appropriate, or sometimes the inappropriate, response. This develops and accumulates from the moment of birth through affective relations with family, in the household and near surroundings. I would argue that this development period maps on to Talcott Parsons's primary and secondary socialization, influenced by family, peer groups, school and media (Parsons and Bales 1955; Parsons and Shills 2001). Secondary habitus develops as we move out into the world and take on different roles: as worker, club member, mother, punk, sportsperson and so on. Wacquant (2004) also sketches a tertiary habitus where individuals may engage in intensive bodily practices that favour a reflexive disposition, such as when he trained to be a boxer (see also Bunn 2016, 2017). There is a correlation between the ease

[2] A note on when I use the term 'situation': situations aren't simply neutral genres or spaces of practice, but complex ensembles of actions and relations. A woman being interviewed for a job by a sexually aggressive man is not the same situation as her being interviewed by a supportive colleague. So when I use 'same situation' it should be thought of as a broad generalization – the job interview, for instance – that will be experienced very differently by different people.

or difficulty of a newly adopted practice and its distance from the primary habitus.

At each level, habitus has cognitive, conative and affective components that are collectively forged (Wacquant 2014a).[3] The cognitive components are the patterns of perception and classification that we have developed since birth (see Ignatow 2009 167; Leyva 2019). The conative relates to aspect that are the 'proprioceptive capacities, sensorimotor skills, and kinaesthetic dexterities' (Wacquant 2014a: 8) developed to align with specific purposes, practices, labours and struggles. As these sensory skills develop, we aim them towards the practices that we are best at and most comfortable performing (see Fuller 2008). Bourdieu defines conatus as an arrangement of interests and dispositions that incline individuals to try to reproduce their own social position, what I refer to as 'making the world in their own image' throughout this book, even when they are not deliberately or consciously trying to do so (see Bourdieu 1988: 176). Conatus therefore relates to the intensity with which one pursues one's practices and how this activity reproduces social norms and unequal relations.

In terms of the affective plane of habitus, which is our focus here, Wacquant argues that to be successful at a specific practice one must be motivated and moved by its illusio over time. He writes of affect in term of Parsons's cathectic and Freud's libidinal desires. The cathectic was used by Parsons and colleagues to construct a general theory of action (see Parsons and Shills 2001, especially ch. 3) and can be defined as the concentration or direction of emotional energy towards an object. When a person is cathected it means that they are invested in and enamoured by the rewards of a practice, and are therefore likely to pursue it more intensely than someone who is less cathected. The reference to Freudian libido is about

[3] It is important to remember that the levels and planes I am discussing here should not be reified. They are uneven, interactive, relational and dialogical processes.

developing the required disposition in a specific field which requires the transformation of the 'generic (narcissistic, sexual) libido into specific libidines [which] operates via the redirection of desire toward, and the quest for recognition from, cathected persons beyond the familial circle' (Wacquant 2014a: 14; see also Bourdieu 2000).

Wacquant brings these aspects together where affective elements of habitus resonate (or not) with illusio, stimulating and distributing where individuals invest their life energies. To be able to practice any given endeavour successfully, as a pugilist, a pianist, a politician or a professor, means 'acquiring in practice the distinctive cognitive constructs and the skilled moves as well as developing the proper *appetite* for the stakes of the corresponding social game' (Wacquant 2014a: 9; emphasis added). To be successful one must satiate one's appetite by investing one's time, energy and emotions, but, even if one's desires are aroused and directed – cathected – towards that illusio, not everyone has the capitals to affectively lubricate that investment or to convert their time, energy and emotion into realization and recognition. The intensity of one's need to invest time, energy and emotions relates to social magic. It will just kind of happen for those with the capitals that have affinity with the doxic needs; others may invest as intensely as possible but success is likely to already be socially foreclosed, headed off by material obstacles and symbolic violence, leading to them feeling like failures in a game already stacked against them.

Affect, emotions, feelings, limitations

The affective plane of the habitus is where desires are aroused, but importantly, these desires are in proximal, socially homologous relation to one's position in social space, where affective affinities develop and stick. As Mead (2017) outlines, Bourdieu's conception of habitus is based on individuals 'knowing' the world implicitly and in a bodily *sense*; it imposes a set of limitations. We sense and feel our limitations: they unfurl as shame, anxiety, stress,

frustration and resignation. Our limitations are therefore *felt* as much as known. In *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu expands on the well-known 'that's not for the likes of us' quote, in reference to this bodily knowledge: 'I know confusedly what depends on me and what does not, what is "for me" or "not for me" or "not for people like me", what it is "reasonable" for me to do, to hope for and ask for' (Bourdieu 2000: 130).

Knowing the world is *felt*: it is an affective affinity that leads to emotional orientations towards things. But, rather than conceiving of the individual as fully determined by these limitations, we can then imagine a delineation as to how individuals may *reasonably*[4] struggle and strategize with and through these limitations. Importantly, reflexive engagement with these limitations may spring towards a 'labor on overcoming this knowledge, by a form of bodily re-learning, or to relent to the necessity of a world that they lucidly know extends beyond their capacity to amend' (Mead 2017: 628). Limitations may also emerge from straightforward forms of symbolic violence. For instance, affective practices around struggles for value engender forms of shame that can have deleterious affects on educational performance. The relationality of an affective encounter where one receives judgement, positive or negative, leaves an emotional imprint. For instance, as the student Ruth in Loveday's (2016: 1147) research, which discusses the use of language and accents, says:

> 'I have to work hard to speak … And people … start talking to you like you're dumb when you've got a bit of an accent … it lowers their opinion of you … Certain words sound kind of stupid. Everyone starts taking the piss [teasing] a bit.'

[4] What Bourdieu refers to as reason in this sense is discussed in Chapter Seven in more detail via the figure of the accumulated being, but I flag this here because reason here is not the Enlightenment form of 'Reason', nor rationality, but an everyday reasonableness.

Experiences such as this result in an array of affective practices to manage feelings of shame and to avoid judgement, condescension and mockery.

Addressing the impression or trace of an affective encounter, Watkins (2010) maintains the importance of Spinoza's distinction between *affectus* (the force of an affecting body) and *affectio* (the impact it leaves on the one affected). Affect can accumulate 'to form dispositions and thus shape subjectivities' (Watkins 2010: 269). Affective confrontations with the social order 'essentially shape how we refer to ourselves evaluatively which manifests itself in our feelings' (Matthäus 2017: 83). So, while we may distinguish between being affected and having emotions (Probyn 2005b), which gives a sense of ownership to emotions while affect is 'out there', emotions operate in an affective economy that inevitably aligns some individuals and groups with and against others, where our relations to other bodies, things and signs produce emotions that circulate socially (Ahmed 2004). In terms of being affected and the ability to affect, Ahmed theorizes the concept of 'impression', where affects can leave a mark or a trace: 'Not only do I have an impression of others, but they also leave me with an impression; they impress me, and impress upon me' (Ahmed 2014: 6). This constitutes a way for thinking about the affective elements of habitus, that is, how habitus is formed and transformed. It also allows us to more sociologically connect who is affected and when, for affective economies distribute desires, emotions and feelings that attach to the affective affinities of the very individuals and groups that make them.

Emotions are therefore 'intentional', not in the sense that they are deliberate per se, but in that they are directed towards something – an intended person, a place or a principle. In affective economies, 'emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments' (Ahmed 2004: 119). This resonates strongly with notions of

collusio and homophily[5]: 'we are affected by "what" we come into contact with. In other words, emotions are directed to what we come in contact with. They move us "toward" and "away" from such objects' (Ahmed 2006: 2), which is a way of thinking how social gravity functions. Further, the phenomenological concept of 'orientation' can illuminate how we register our proximity and distance to objects and others. This orientation shapes the way we 'apprehend this world of shared inhabitants, as well as "who" or "what" we direct and energy towards' (Ahmed 2006: 3), which is a well-developed way of thinking about social libido and illusio. When we apprehend an object, a person or a space, an emotional reaction transpires where our orientation towards it is summoned from the past, from our accumulated history. For an object to make an emotional impression, we need to be oriented towards it in a particular way, and that orientation affects what we feel, think and do: 'Emotions involve such affective forms of (re)orientation' (Ahmed 2006: 2). Thinking about habitus through the lens of affective economies can help account for the difference between 'the force of an affecting body and the impact it leaves on the one affected', in other words, the accumulation of affect and the ways in which it may sediment into habitus (Watkins 2010: 269).

A habitus limitation: illusio lag

In Chapter One, I outlined how the concepts of illusio and social gravity can help us think about whether we notice the things in front of us or not, and more importantly how there is a need to focus on specific things and to blank out what is not specifically important or relevant in any particular social context. Illusio and doxa set the horizon, while habitus is one

[5] Homophily is a 'pattern of differential association in which agents are more likely to associate with those who are socially similar to themselves' (Bottero 2009: 400), discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

of the mechanisms that mediates what is and is not noticed. Habitus affectively delineates what is focused upon and what is written out as background, excess or noise. This opens up a way of thinking about what we don't think about, not just as ideology or even the common sense of doxa, but as a kind of play-off between the necessity of needing to focus on specific things in specific situations; about being physically, mentally, ontologically unable to know everything anyway; and about a structural analysis of how power is dispersed throughout the fields in which we practice.

Thinking about habitus in this way brings to the fore an affective-temporal component to how a trajectory in a specific field is negotiated and how one comes to know what is expected or required to succeed. The timing of practices is an important affordance or limitation. For instance, in research conducted with Matthew Bunn and Penny Jane Burke, we found that there were competing and even contradicting illusio upon entering the field of higher education, where students from disadvantaged backgrounds seemed to possess expectations that matched those of a previous generation of students, that is, a degree is enough for getting ahead (Threadgold et al 2018; Bunn et al 2019). Like the work in the 'paired peers' project (Bathmaker et al 2013, 2016), many of our working-class participants had assumed that getting a degree would be enough, that it would give them a labour market advantage and put them on a path to their chosen career. In contrast, students from more privileged backgrounds were working more with contemporary expectations that, while the degree was an important goal, it would not be enough to get them the career they desired, so they were furiously networking, doing volunteer work and internships on top of their study, as the degree itself was not enough in a time of mass higher education and upward credentialing. This is an example of the social magic of habitus, where privilege magically reflects the doxic demands: they have the connections to get the right internship and 'the bank of mum and dad' (Friedman and

Laurison 2019) to help them get by when paid work needs to be decreased to focus on these extracurricular activities. For those with less family support, living further away from campus or having to support and care for family members themselves, these 'opportunities' were less possible, not because they were less inclined to participate in them but because of very real economic and material hurdles with emotional consequences.

Therefore, fields are likely to contain competing or contradictory illusio, or at least differing conceptions of them. People can bring in different understandings of what the very illusio is. The different expectations of, and orientations towards, illusio are key social limitations attached to habitus, which will result in a spectrum of emotional experiences.

Conclusion

Bourdieu's work can be interpreted as a 'hermeneutics of contingency' (Susen 2017). Contingency, uncertainty, ambivalence, ambiguity and doubt are central to our very being and we do considerable emotional work to 'hold it together'. Being affected often invokes emotions that work to reproduce social norms with which we have affinity, even if those sensations or feelings are ineffable, ghostly, feeling both 'of us' and 'beyond us' (Mason 2018: 3). Social homologies are relations where one's sticky affinities correlate with the doxic conditions of the social situation, generating feelings of ease and comfort. Relations of social distance are the opposite: one's sticky affinities do not correlate with the doxa, or the affinities developed in that social space that have 'stuck' have coalesced as feelings of difficulty and discomfort. Therefore relations of social homology and distance are relations of affinity.

Habitus is one's history rolled up into an affective ball of immanent dispositions, an assemblage of embodied affective charges. As capitals are accumulated, they constitute a reservoir of dispositions that constitute the capacity to be affected and to affect. Each affective moment is pedagogical: we learn

from it; it sticks to us; we develop affinities, which then shape our future practice. We absorb where we are comfortable and where we are not, where we are appreciated and where we are not, what we are good and bad at over time. Throughout this process affinities develop, oriented along a spectrum between positivity and negativity. If habitus is theorized as a collection of accumulated dispositions over time, the way in which those dispositions are therefore enacted, that is, how they emerge or spring forth at any given time, is through affinities. In other words, the sensations and feelings we experience in certain social situations emerge through relations of affinity. Habitus is essentially an antenna to detect the feel of a space, a capacitor that stores affinities and a transformer that then regulates an array of performative dispositions.

THREE

Fields, Settings, Atmospheres

Introduction

You are seeing your favourite band for the ninety-third time since 1993. They started with the one your sister and now brother-in-law used in their wedding ceremony in 2012, and when you glanced over at them it seemed that they had travelled in time, as they looked at each other in the same way when they were saying their vows. They've played that one you listened to on repeat when you broke up with your first love in 1996. You know that they will finish with the one you still like to listen to on the way to your infrequent visits to the gym in 2020. But it's this one that has always got you. When they get to the bit where the lyrical couplet relates and the music soars, you pass into that blissful state between joy and melancholy. You feel it in your gut and on the back of your neck. There are tears in your eyes. In the very same moment, you are transported to your past while being immersed in the present, all the while not thinking about the future. *It's hard to explain: intangible and wonderful. This is affect. This is a moment where your past and present coalesce to make and remake you.*

There's a lot going on in this situation, in this *moment*, certainly too much to methodologically 'capture' in one Bourdieusian field. We could say that this is taking place in

the field of cultural production. Or is it the field of cultural consumption? The venue is the back room of a pub historically associated with the DIY music scene. Scenes are not really fields, but could it be considered as a subfield of cultural production or consumption? The venue will be exposed to an array of often ludicrous regulations, so we can see the field of power come into play, where the 'right-hand' bureaucratic functions of budget cuts, regulations and economic deregulation dominate its 'left-hand' social functions – arts funding, education and welfare (Wacquant 2015). But much of the emotion here is about friendships, loved ones and experiences where music is a background, motivation, pleasure, connection, catharsis or distraction (see DeNora 2000; Green 2016). We could say that this relates to the field of family relations or affective capital[1] (Atkinson 2016). In this one small example it is difficult to locate the moment in a specific field, so it seems sensible to look at it through the lens of a social setting or as practicing in a multiplicity of fields simultaneously. 'Fieldish' things are going on here – forms of evaluation, comparison, positioning of taste – but it cannot be located in just one field.

Fields are Bourdieu's most abstract concept, but can be thought of as leaky containers of social action that germinate shared expectations, common sense norms, classification systems and 'joint ways of thinking, feeling, and acting' (Wacquant 2014b: 120). The activity in fields, or at least the 'important' fields that were Bourdieu's object, produce the knowledge, norms, rules, laws and expectations that make societies function, but advantage some groups over others. Developed as a way of understanding the modernization and differentiation of complex societies, 'field' can be used both

[1] This does not refer to affect in the way it is used in this book but to affection in terms of love, family and relationships, and is constructed critically against the establishment of emotional capital (Reay 2000, 2004; Burke et al 2013).

methodologically and ontologically (Hilgers and Mangez 2015). More generally, the term 'field' has many uses, from its specific theory-method construction in Bourdieu to the anthropological sense of being ethnographically 'in the field', to the more colloquial usage in reference to the (usually professional) fields such as medicine, law or social work. It is important to be vigilant about these definitional divisions, as in sociological circles the meaning of 'field' can slide between them without consideration of the implications that may threaten the utility of the concept. Often one hears the 'field of education', 'bureaucratic field' or the 'field of punk' used to talk about a profession, institution or subculture when they do not really mean 'field' in the Bourdieusian sense, and if they do they are not really taking the necessary definitional care.[2] While it is fine to refer to such things in passing, it means that 'field' is one of those terms that, when used, may meaning different things, which means that we could be talking past each other.

In Bourdieu's sociological craft, fields are not actually things outside of a research project. The purpose of 'field' is to create and limit one's research object, which is important to the reflexive scientific practice of sociology. 'Field' is a carefully constructed object of study – a 'multi-dimensional space of positions' (Bourdieu 1985: 724) – largely a way of limiting methodological focus, deciding what needs to be analyzed and creating an understanding of the usually *hierarchical relationships* that are relevant to the sociological problem at hand.[3]

In terms of Bourdieu's definition of field, a brief way to explain its analytical foci is through three interlinking

[2] I find myself accidently doing this regularly, even though I'm cognisant of it, and it is a good example of Bourdieu's critique of 'theoreticist theory' and 'theoreticist fallacy' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

[3] See Hilgers and Mangez (2015) for a detailed synopsis and Lahire (2015) for the concept's limits.

metaphors: the farm field, the military field and a magnetic field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 15–19):[4]

- The farm field symbolizes a fenced-off space where specific things happen (Wacquant 2012) with relative autonomy from other fields, where there is an established history, an established way of doing and saying things, and established stakes and rewards. In the field of education, people are teaching and learning from a curriculum; they are not skydiving.[5]
- The military field alludes to a battlefield (Bourdieu 1993b: 148–50), where individuals and groups commit to struggles over the field's resources and rewards, with those that usually dominate these battles possessing the necessary weapons and tools called capitals. In the economic field the struggle may be to establish sustainable economics over economic growth; in the artistic field it may be to establish a new genre or to resist selling out; in the political field it could be to maintain capitalist realism over alternative possibilities; in the sociological field it could be to establish Bourdieu over Deleuze, Foucault or Latour as the way to think about power.
- A magnetic field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 17) has connotations of energies and potencies beyond one's ken and control, which are linked to the tug and thrust of social gravity (discussed in Chapter One). This also alludes to the notion of trajectory: one isn't static in a field but moving along a trajectory that relates to one's own potency, but also to the latent doxic norms and hierarchical structures.

[4] Thompson (2008) sketches out similar explanatory principles using a football field, science fiction force fields and a force field.

[5] You can probably think of an example where someone may skydive in relation to the field of education, but you get my point.

The magnetic aspect can link to the concept of affective atmosphere. As Bissell (2010: 273) notes:

> Possibly the most effective way of grasping the idea of an affective atmosphere is therefore to think of it as a propensity: a pull or a charge that might emerge in a particular space which might (or might not) generate particular events and actions, feelings and emotions.

The affective atmosphere of a field

A field has historical orthodoxies, customs and rituals, but fields also have immanent and imminent tendencies which can be useful for analyzing what happens in specific situations and moments. As Noble (2013: 355; emphasis added) states: 'fields are not simply objectified social spaces, but *virtual spaces we carry with us* in our embodied, socially shared capacities activated in institutions, occasions and settings.' Practicing successfully in any given field, or any given social setting, relies on a tacit understanding of the absent presence of its 'history' in each situation: what is relevant to a specific situation or moment and what an individual brings to that moment, but also an understanding of how multiple possible futures are present in any setting.

To bring an affective layer to thinking about Bourdieu's field, we can imagine them as having their own multilayered 'affective atmospheres' and 'structures of feeling' (Anderson 2014). Fields are structures, histories, norms, traditions and so on, but those aspects mean that a field is also a collection of affects and will therefore have its own hierarchy of the distribution of affects. Imagining them in this way emphasizes that fields are ontological spaces that transcend physical space, with doxic norms an ever-present ambient affective background, an absent presence. The series of 'opposites' that Anderson (2009) sketches out as elements of an affective atmosphere – presence and absence, materiality and ideality, definite and

indefinite, singularity and generality – are absorbed, interpreted and negotiated in any setting through one's habitus (which I have now also defined as an affective reservoir of immanent dispositions). These opposites will shape the structure of feeling within a field, and one's affective affinity with negotiating them is a key form of embodied cultural capital.

In the same manner, we could also see normative or doxic opposites that relate to discourse as ambient affective background for individuals to practice with or without, or somewhere in between: normal and abnormal; right and wrong; masculine and feminine; successful and failed; tasteful and vulgar; cool and lame; moral and immoral; rational and emotional; order and chaos; efficient and inefficient; legal and illegal; and the like. Again, the meaning of these opposites – for example, whether being more masculine or feminine is 'better' – will be established throughout the historical struggles within the field and become misrecognized as the natural social order of things. One's affinity with these histories and traditions has obvious consequences for how one feels in that space.

I am using the term 'affective atmospheres' as shorthand to link to Anderson's complex theorizing of how affect is encountered. He uses the notion of affective atmosphere to ascertain how 'collective affects become conditions that shape without necessarily determining capacities to affect or be affected' (Anderson 2014: 137). Anderson distinguishes this from his development of Raymond Williams's structures of feeling, which more directly set limits and exert pressures. Thinking of fields through notions of affective atmosphere or structure of feeling highlights the everydayness of practice and diminishes the deterministic elements that field theory is often accused of.[6]

[6] See Inglis (2013) for a thought experiment arguing that maybe Bourdieu is not determinist enough.

Sensing the 'feel' of a room, the anticipation of what comes next, the understanding of unsaid and historical 'absent presences' are all forceful forms of embodied cultural capital opening one towards the social magic of privilege. They are a sticky affinity with the affective elements of a specific social situation. All social settings have immanent and imminent impressions of the possibilities of what can immediately follow an affective moment, the potential trajectory on which one can then embark. Therefore field can be used to illustrate how affects do not emerge or occur in some kind of socio-temporal vacuum. The dissemination of affects and feeling affected always happens in specific circumstances where people bring their histories to that moment and what can happen next is co-constituted 'between skilled agent and pregnant world' (Wacquant 2014a: 5). Thinking of fields as having an affective history and temporality can help capture how history and hierarchy manifest in everyday moments.

Situating where affective affinities occur: from field to setting

Specific fields have their own affective atmospheres and structures of feeling,[7] but we also need to consider how broader affects cut across fields, and also situations where the concept of field may not work. Field works best when considering large institutional aspects of society such as education, politics, the state and bureaucracy, the law and so on. Field also works well when considering professions, especially those that have considerable influence on how societies function: science and medicine, media, economics, cultural production, the legal

[7] Fields also have affective poles where activity is organized around conserving the status quo and current power relations (the heteronomous pole) and activity that is striving for change and creativity (the autonomous pole). These are discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

system and so on. The field of cultural consumption, the object of study in *Distinction*, is an example of a field lacking professionalization or institutionalization, but still maintaining the key properties of a Bourdieusian field. The dissemination of affects in these fields delineate how individuals or groups *feel* in many contexts, as they maintain the accepted way of life – what is legitimate, moral, legal or good.

In previous work I have also argued that specific subcultures and scenes can be analyzed like a field but should not be considered a field per se (Burns and Threadgold 2018; Threadgold 2018b; Sharp and Threadgold 2020). Lahire (2015) has criticized the development of secondary fields where the rewards are 'too low' to be considered a primary field. He contrasts fields to games as a way of considering specific practices that may have relative autonomy, but that do not take place in a social space that has the necessary ingredients or social importance to be called a field. I have some sympathy with this point of view, but also think that, despite his criticizing Bourdieu for an inherent class bias in the definition of field (in that 'importance' seems to correspond mostly to middle-class professional fields, rendering the working class as passive or absent), Lahire's response could be considered to manifest the same problem. Why not widen the definition of field to consider smaller social settings, scenes and games? Games seem to imply fun and triviality, where what happens in 'secondary' spaces can be very serious. Many of the practices and affects that take place, say, in a pub, at a gig, in amateur sport or at a dinner party seem to function very much like fields: they have people who dominate and are dominated, there is a social history and a way of doing and saying the right thing, and so on. People dedicate their lives and emotionally invest themselves in many practices that do not seem to qualify as taking place in a Bourdieusian field.

Habitus and field are usually thought of as working in tandem, where it has been traditional to think of them as

mutually inclusive in that one cannot function without the other.[8] As Butler (1997: 117) noticed, 'the habitus presupposes the field as the conditions of its own possibility'. But Bourdieu's work has considerable phenomenological aspects that can be transported into thinking about what happens in a specific social *setting*, even if that setting does not fit the precise definition of field. Despite the usual notion that habitus and field can work only in unison, Bourdieusian concepts can still be useful for looking at the mundane or the quotidian. It is therefore important to acknowledge in this regard that the very concept of field is a methodological device that cannot and should not capture all aspects of the social. 'Not every pertinent context of activity is a field' (Lahire 2015: 72).

For instance, as Noble's (2013) work shows, when considering the position of migrants in Australia, field has limited utility as they are daily racialized in an assortment of fields *simultaneously*. Not all social practice can be said to take place in a specific field at any one moment.

The micro-sociological concept of setting can therefore be useful for an affective analysis to consider the specifics of what is taking place, or how practice can shift across fields and settings instantaneously, even while occupying the same physical space. For instance, Noble uses the 'intellectual field' as an example that complexifies the relationship between practices, settings and fields. Within the intellectual field there are many disciplines (some of which may be considered fields). Intellectual practice happens across an array of institutions (universities, government departments, private companies), specific settings (lecture theatres, classrooms, meetings, offices), occasions (conferences, book launches, meetings) and people (academics,

[8] See Wacquant (2014b; 2016) for work that challenges the need to keep habitus and field together, and Atkinson (2015) who defends the need for mutual inclusivity. See Butler (1999) for a critique of the problems of Bourdieu's attempt to break the objective/subjective dichotomy.

administrators, students). The field itself may be affectively invoked in an array of settings such as cafes, houses, parties or even thinking while driving in your car, which do not make up the physical space of the intellectual field.

> We can interact with participants in those fields outside these institutions, and we can interact with people inside these institutions but 'outside' the field (cleaners etc). In those institutions, settings and occasions, any participant might move between fields; sitting in a university common room discussing a political association, changing the conversation in a cafe from the latest journal article to the amateur musical performance two academics are in, and so on. (Noble 2013: 353)

This complexity of settings that 'intellectuals' negotiate throughout day-to-day life is mediated by the habitus, regardless of whether the space where it is taking place can be considered a field or a setting. Further, an academic may not think of themselves as an intellectual; it may not be a key factor in their own concept of self. The affective space of a field can therefore be anywhere.

In these contexts, it is an *affective disposition* from the habitus that will snap one back and forth between 'fields', even when we are not necessarily 'in' one particular field. In terms of the mutual inclusive relationship between habitus and field, this makes sense when limiting one's object in a research project, but it is not how something like a habitus works in actual practice, in day-to-day life. It doesn't switch off and reboot when moving between fields, or spaces or settings; it is the very mechanism that reacts instantly, with a missing half-second according to some affect theorists (Massumi 1995), and that changes one's orientation to fit the social context. This change of disposition, a change of focus or attention, or a change in the performance of self can happen only affectively, and the way we feel during these movements

will correlate with our sticky affinities. That is, the habitus acts as an immanent set of embodied dispositions, affectively primed to facilitate one to recognize, cope, survive, act and prosper in any given setting. In general, the habitus does its most heavy lifting when we are 'in between', when we are trying to cope with the demands of multiple fields or settings. For those unlucky enough to be in a field where they are not experiencing the alchemy of homologous affective affinity, one's habitus is working particularly intensely to 'hold it together' when navigating the dread, toil and suffering of symbolic violence.

Practicing in multiple social spaces: fields, settings or games?

The world is not a field (Lamont 2019). Practice does not just happen in one field, or in one field at a time, but is a continual traversing of material and ontological spaces, where a broader 'world horizon' perspective can bring in aspects of multiplicity (Atkinson 2016). Individuals may be invested in specific illusio of a specific social universe, but that universe may not possess the qualities to be called a Bourdieusian field (Lahire 2015). An illusio may be invested in, but it will not necessarily be one's whole life and may be only partially important to giving that life meaning. Lahire also argues that there is essentially a class bias in what is considered a legitimate field, that is, it is usually more educated, professional or prestigious practices that create important knowledge and discourses (law, economics, religion, science, politics) or cultural intermediaries that influence media and culture (journalists, art, fashion, literature, music). Working-class practices are therefore left out of 'important' field analysis, because the players are often all middle class, or the working classes are rendered into a position in the field of cultural consumption. An exception is the field of education, where the working class appear as struggling subjects forced to learn

someone else's culture: 'Field theory devotes much energy to shedding light on the big scenes where stakes of power are played for, but little to understanding those that build the stages, assemble the scenery, clean the theatre, photocopy the documents or type letters' (Lahire 2015: 74). While Lahire uses the term 'game' to describe activities that do not have the importance or ingredients to be defined as a field, I prefer the more neutral term of 'setting' to do the same conceptual work, especially as it has a history of use in phenomenology that methodologically resonates with studying affects.

The example that Lahire draws upon to illustrate that social actors cannot be reduced to 'being-as-member-of-the-field' is the 'literary game' versus the 'literary field' (2015: 78–93). Most writers are only part-time writers; many need to work elsewhere to support themselves financially. Although the literary field can convey immense symbolic capital – fame, fortune, awards – the literary world for the most part lacks professionalization and, for most of the players, confers little financial reward. Therefore, many people involved in 'literature' are not full-time cathected actors in a field, but part-time players who move in and out of that social world, often leading 'double lives' with 'literary interludes'. When Bourdieu writes about literature, he relies on a Flaubertian figure of full-time dedication, giving their 'body and soul' to their art, a masculine figure largely free of familial responsibilities. This figure is an empirical rarity in reality, where writers also work as teachers, engineers, scientists and so on. Moreover, writers do not just write literature: they also write training manuals, children's books, reports, autobiographies, sports analysis, textbooks and so on. In a straightforward Bourdieusian analysis of this situation, this would be reflected in the distributions of position in the field, with those having to work closer to the heteronomous pole, and those 'fully invested' collecting the rewards and benefits of being recognized (see Bourdieu 1996a: 83–5). Writers are therefore situated to pursue multiple

illusio, as are all humans, that cannot be reduced to the activity in the one field.

What is interesting here in terms of Lahire's critique of field theory and his move towards a sociology of the individual is how Bourdieusian concepts with more emphasis on affect can play a role in deciphering how individuals orient themselves within fields or settings and between fields and settings, and how they are attracted to pursue practices in some social worlds over others. The intensity of investment, along with how social gravity will push and pull individuals, relate to one's capacity to affect and be affected. An individual's social libido may be cathected by pursuing the writing of their novel, but they may not have the material or economic means to do so. Their passion may be to pursue the literary game, but their position in social space may preclude that from happening, especially as the availability of governmental support for artists declines (Fowler 2017) and artistic and creative spaces are increasingly dominated by the privileged middle classes (Friedman and Laurison 2019). For others, social magic kicks in, giving them the freedom from necessity to pursue the right internships, take that gap year and have the right connections. Talent is important, but it is impossible to know just how many talented working-class artists' careers are ended before they even have a chance to begin.

Using Bourdieu to think with social settings

The previously described definitional considerations of field may seem like a detour from considering affect, but I think these considerations need to be spelled out before we can import affective elements into considering social practices. The concept of field has great methodological utility for illustrating power relations, following trajectories through social space and tracing how forms of capital operate. Field is useful for analyzing from an abstract bird's-eye view. But

field is not so useful for thinking through what happens 'between social spaces' (Liu 2020) or in face-to-face interactions and everyday moments, that is, more affective everyday relations. To illustrate this, I will use the following example of a situated interaction in a specific social setting, which cannot really be defined as always occurring in one field: eating practices.

It is difficult to describe what is happening when 'eating at a table with other people' as taking place in one field per se. While the practice is always a form of consumption, it takes place in an array of what could be described as fields or settings. Fine dining or cafes may be imagined as sites of the field of cultural consumption, but cafes are increasingly places of work (eating in the labour market?). Decisions about food is served in school lunch halls and canteens, provoking an array of moral panics about what is appropriate for kids to eat (eating in the field of education?). There are a multitude of fields where eating takes place, without even considering familial and relationship gatherings. Bourdieu and Bourdieusian research broadly have produced detailed maps of who eats what and where, and of the social implications of this distribution of practices. But this mapping can have the effect of bracketing out the intense sociality of eating situations: the sacrifice, love, conviviality, arguments and laughter; the routine or creativity; or the smells, tastes, sounds and textures. That is, it limits the importance of the affective relations in these moments,[9] the affinities that one has with the tastes, smells and people. Social space maps only hint at the actual affectivity of eating practices and their relation to the morals and emotions of distinction.

An example of the vitality of combining Bourdieu with affect can be illustrated by considering Spence and

[9] See the blog post by Ghassan Hage (2013) on one particular intense social interaction in a public eating place.

Piqueras-Fiszman's (2014) interdisciplinary (but mostly psychological) research on what they call 'gastrophysics'. Popularized by the likes of the celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal, this work shows how the senses are affected in specific social spaces and moments. But this work does not consider the sociological aspects of how social values are actually affective affinities towards objects, norms and traditions. The *sense* of taste is mediated by all manner of socio-contextual modulations. Whether one likes the taste of something or even enjoys the dining experience has as much to do with all the physical senses, as well as mood (Räsänen and Kauppinen 2020) and, importantly for bringing in Bourdieu, expectations and social history. These interactions do not happen in a vacuum of social *values* (see Skeggs 2005; Skeggs and Loveday 2012). Bourdieusian concepts and analysis are very useful for unpacking the social aspects of affective affinities in that setting. For instance, in terms of restaurant dining (though I would speculate that most of this applies in an array of eating settings), gastrophysics includes the examples (left column), which require a sociological explanation to be fully understood (right column), as shown in Table 3.1.

If we define affect as embodied meaning making (Wetherell 2012: 4), what is missing in the left column is a historicized understanding of social values, associations and tastes. Bringing a Bourdieusian perspective to affective phenomena like this can discern how these sensations are heavily laden with doxic social values that are far from 'natural', are heavily discursive, are the product of class relations and stem from distinctive affective atmospheres that spark our dispositions into practice. The traditional associations of heavy plates or classical music assemble the ambient affective atmosphere and structures of feeling of the dining experience. These affinities affectively manipulate the senses.

Table 3.1: Gastrophysics, social values and affects

Gastrophysical situational affect in specific social setting	Bourdieusian explanation
The use of heavy cutlery or plates means that we will enjoy the food more (Spence and Piqueras-Fiszman, 2014: 24).	The weight of a plate has connotations of traditional understandings of superiority and excellence associated with fine dining, wealth and even royalty. Heavier has come to be equated with quality and expense, which is then linked to higher status. Food served on paper plates would undoubtedly be associated with cheapness and low quality. This affect then emerges from socially hierarchical values that come to orient one's habitus towards the practice, that is, heaviness is an affinity with quality, which affects how we taste and how much we will pay.
Whoever orders first in a group situation is more likely to enjoy their meal the most. The 'followers' tend not to choose what has already been picked and are therefore more likely to pick something that they didn't really want (2014: 45).	The affective relation here is towards social distinction, where, rather than feeling like a follower, people will choose something else on the menu to express themselves as autonomous individuals, even when that seems to decrease the possibility of enjoying the meal.
Classical music sees diners become more 'discerning' in their choices and more likely to choose more expensive options (2014: 282–5).	We bring our historically developed affinity with classical music into this situated interaction. Classical music is associated with high culture, affecting our orientation towards the social situation. Once we feel this, to avoid affective violence, our disposition will be adjusted to suit the social circumstance so as to fit in. Classical music affects the consumer to be more 'middle class' in their performance of self.

(continued)

Table 3.1: Gastrophysics, social values and affects (continued)

Gastrophysical situational affect in specific social setting	Bourdieusian explanation
We think more expensive wine tastes better (2014: 55–9).	Spending more is associated with higher-quality and better products. This affinity is so deeply ingrained that the sense of economic value relation overrides or manipulates the physical senses.

Conclusion

The concept of field was developed to account for the differentiation of complex societies, but what if those societies are going through a process of de-differentiation (Lash 1990)? Despite globalization processes seemingly adding more complexity to our lives, there are scarcely any activities or practices that escape the 'logic of the attribution of economic values, to their products, services, etc., and that of commercial exchange' (Lahire 2015: 72). That is, many fields seem to have less and less relative autonomy from the field of power, with the field of higher education a prime example. The rise of platform capitalism and social media immersion sees our very feelings and emotions become commodities, metabolized in what Lyotard described as capitalism's 'tungsten-carbide stomach', which chews up anything in its path (Lyotard 1973: 31; see also Fisher 2018: 585).

We can use Bourdieusian concepts to think outside and beyond being contained in a methodological field, broadening attention to what could be called the lifeworld (Atkinson 2016) towards practices that occurs 'off field' or to more specific social settings that do not possess the high stakes of influencing broader societal doxa, but that still retain intense meaning for the individuals who pursue them, and are therefore of central importance to how humans live, struggle and relate. Emphasizing the affective atmospheres and structures of feeling

of fields and settings foregrounds the emotional relations of the doxa and hierarchies of those spaces. It is those emotional relations that reproduce or transform class relations, where those with the right affective affinities can move through with comparative ease compared to those lacking the required but often unsaid affinities that assemble to form what goes without saying, what is legitimate and normal and therefore dominant, in any social space.

FOUR

The Affectivity of the Forms of Capitals

Introduction

Jack walks up the stairs struggling with his tie. 'It's so bloody tight!' he thinks to himself. He hates wearing a collared shirt, let alone a tie, and can't wait to get it off. He wipes the sweat from his brow and fidgets with his collar. He can't remember being this nervous before, maybe before the grand final last year? He turns into the brightly lit room where there are three people smartly dressed in business attire. He instantly realizes that the loose-fitting suit he usually wears to weddings and funerals, handed down to him from his older brother, doesn't seem quite right here, as a rush of heat that started in his stomach washes over his body. He doesn't say much at the best of times and isn't looking forward to having to answer all these questions. Jack knows he'd be good at this job but hates talking about himself – what a wank this all is. He's not even sure he wants it now. Sweating though his long-sleeved shirt despite the air conditioning, he sits down and looks across the table. Who are these people? They look like robots dressed by a magazine. Why would there be three people to interview one person for a job? And a shitty job at that! They all look

at him in that weird friendly but condescending manner that he has become used to from people like them. His favourite teacher told him to just be himself, to relax, and that his school grades are good enough to be competitive. That felt helpful at the time but, looking across this table, he knows that these people would not even know where his home town is, let alone have heard of his state school. The man in the middle begins to speak, but he misses the first bit because he is distracted by how posh he sounds. He takes a deep breath and begins to respond, a bit taken aback by how squeaky his own voice sounds and how different the way he speaks is from what he has just heard. Shit, here we go …

The job interview is a common situation where Bourdieu's forms of capital coalesce in an affective moment. The relationality of the full array of contours of inequality – class, race, gender, sexuality, disability and so on – come together with institutional doxa, middle-class vernacular and status symbols. Then there is the hierarchy of ethics, values, morals, tastes and aesthetics to navigate. The job candidate will need institutionalized cultural capital – credentials, qualifications, references – to make the cut to the interview stage. Through the duration of the interview, embodied cultural capitals such as language, both speaking and body, will influence how the situation *feels* for all involved. Affinities matter here. Comfortable exchanges or awkward pauses will leave an *impression* that interviewers will take away from the meeting – what they think of the candidate's 'fit'. Objectified cultural capital will play a role in the judgements being made: What is everyone wearing? Was a suit appropriate? Are skinny or wide ties in this year? If the interviewee is not used to wearing a suit, it is likely that they will be sweaty and fidgety, exhibiting an awkward bodily hexis that gives off a bad *vibe*. This is the affectivity of social distance. If the interviewee is used to wearing a suit, their disposition – their sticky affinities – will be more comfortable and they will be at ease in the interview situation. This comfort is where social magic happens, as cultural capital works across

an affective spectrum that intercedes in social interactions. Or, for those for whom the cultural arbitrary feels like it has been turned into a social hierarchy, symbolic violence transforms into undesirable emotions and feelings.

Cultural capital is probably Bourdieu's most well-known concept and certainly the most used and widely applied, to the point where it has breached social science boundaries to be used in the public domain. It is used in school newsletters and promos and, quite ironically, has become something that UK educational policy wants to promote (Mansell 2019; Olah 2019).

In social research, cultural capital is employed to show how inequality works beyond the economic, where there are inherent but hidden hierarchies in cultures and institutions. It has been especially productive to highlight inequalities in education and how consumption and tastes work as select symbolic economies. Recently, cultural capital has been linked to the relationality of doxic morals, values, ethics and the like, in the sense that they tend to reflect the affinities of the middle classes, especially in relation to things like parenting styles (Barker 2009; Nayak and Kehily 2014). This is all very well established, and of course, as with any well-known sociological concept, there is a wealth of literature that debates and critiques its legitimacy and utility (Kingston 2001; Goldthorpe 2007). There has also been the development of specific forms of capital such as subcultural (Thornton 1995), emotional (Reay 2000, 2004; Illouz 2007), gendered (Huppatz 2012), institutional (Reay et al 2001; Atkinson 2011) and considerations of racialized forms (Wallace 2016, 2018).

These developments will not be rehashed here, as there is a lot of other literature that covers those advances and debates. This chapter rethinks Bourdieu's capitals by emphasizing that affective relations are central to *how* the forms of capital are so efficient at disseminating and buttressing inequalities. Many of the inequalities that cultural capital has been used to illustrate and analyze are as much affective relations – affinities – as they

are symbolic relations. Possessing cultural capital lubricates one's trajectory in specific social spaces. That lubrication of practice happens affectively, or more accurately through affective affinities. These relations are not simple: they take place between individuals; between individuals and groups; between different groups; between individuals and institutions; between individuals within institutions; between individuals and things; or between individuals and situational events in social settings that cannot always be considered a field. I want to position cultural capital as a way of thinking about capacities to affect and be affected, a way of understanding the distribution of affects and their homology to positions in social space, where affinities produce emotional responses in everyday situations.

The forms of capitals that Bourdieu and others have developed are themselves 'affective' in that how they work stems from an assemblage of material, temporal, spatial, and relational factors and their affects. Or, to put it differently, capitals are composed of affective properties and propensities. To return to the 'symbol' of the suit worn in the aforementioned example of a job interview: it has material aspects (it is an actual thing you can hold, and it can be made from a variety of materials which themselves are immersed in taste hierarchies and political economies); it has temporal and spatial aspects (there is a time and a place to wear a suit and different styles come in and out of fashion); it has relational aspects (one person's stylish suit is another's fashion atrocity; some are tailor made and some are made in sweatshops); it has affinity aspects (some people know when, where and how to wear a suit and therefore will feel more comfortable). These kinds of mundane everyday relations produce feelings and emotions that reproduce and reinscribe inequalities.

The affectivity of cultural capital

Status is an affective relation. Status relations are conferred with material things: prestigious degrees, cool brands, the big

house in the right suburb and so on. However, status itself is conveyed through a hierarchical arrangement of feelings along a relational emotional spectrum: love, adulation, admiration, deference, respect, collegiality, ambivalence, jealousy, guilt, discomfort, frustration, shame, mockery, denigration, hate, abjection, and all that is in between. Symbolic violence is experienced through this register of feelings that drive our practices. Symbolic violence is the manifestation of immanently hierarchical affinities. Not knowing which fork to use in a fancy restaurant may be a lack of knowledge about the utility of a material thing, itself the product of history and social relations, but it is the emotions and feelings that are generated in that specific moment – embarrassment, discomfort or even ironic mockery of the stupid traditions – that touch upon one's capacity to be affected and that may therefore mark future practices – self-exclusion, learning the rules or taking the piss. One's feeling in a situation or moment, whether experiencing the social magic of effortlessly fitting in, the social distance of feeling excluded or some more or less ambivalent in between, relates to one's possession and embodiment of capitals.

Embodied cultural capital

Embodied cultural capital, especially language use and bodily hexis, have obvious affective components. The role of learning language and the development of vocabulary and different accents are key to 'social functions of language for the exercise of power', but also act as 'virtual vectors of socialization' in that 'words also make us' (Lignier 2020). Language and bodily hexis are affective formations; embodied cultural capital can be basically imagined as affective affinities. The ability to use language appropriately in specific social or institutional situations is one form of embodied cultural capital that can affect whether one can enter some spaces to begin with, and then affects one's trajectory through that space: are they taken

seriously because they speak with authority, or are they treated condescendingly because they misspeak or do not understand the lingo? For instance, in any institution or workplace where one must attend meetings, knowing the right codes, acronyms and colloquialisms will mean a feeling of comfort. The rapid wielding of endless acronyms by administrators will be well known to academics in particular, giving a sheen of legitimacy to what most of us know and increasingly admit about many aspects of our jobs: they are bullshit (see Hil 2012 161; Graeber 2018).

The way one 'carries' oneself, what is generally known as body language or what Bourdieu refers to as bodily hexis, is another affective element of embodied cultural capital. This often takes up gendered elements, such as what has become known as 'manspreading', where men take up more space, sitting with their legs spread on public transport, often to the discomfort of the person occupying the next seat. Women are more likely to learn to sit with their legs crossed, taking up less space. When someone is called 'charming', it usually means they have a certain wit, good looks, dress sense and a way of holding themselves. Essentially, an individual who possesses certain forms of embodied cultural capital emits the *affect* of charm, usually through a mix of confidence and status. There are gendered aspects to these kinds of ascribed characteristics: it is rare that a woman is called charming, and when the term is applied to a woman it is usually a backhanded compliment to someone who is witty but not categorized as normatively beautiful.

Another affective element is where Bourdieu acknowledges that the anticipation of what comes next in a field is a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 2000: 130), which acts as a kind of affective competence. These affinities – ranging from getting the 'feel' of a social setting so that you say the right thing or act the right way, to how and why someone 'dominates' or 'charms' in that setting, to the anticipation of

immanent events or possible utterances in the setting and the understanding of unsaid and historical 'absent presences' – are all forceful forms of capital. These relations are sticky affinities with the affective elements of a specific social situation. Wielding these seemingly natural capacities is how conatus functions, that is, the ability to impress your own image and interests on the world.

Objectified cultural capital

Objectified cultural capital – the stuff we own or have access to – parlays advantage in a material sense. For instance, not having a computer or wi-fi access would make school or university study intensely difficult. The affective elements of objectified cultural capital are expressed in the feelings and emotions that emerge when we encounter things, and the specific social circumstances of where that happens. This has usually been illustrated by the relationship between things like the aura of original works of art compared to a reprinted poster; handcrafted antique furniture compared to Ikea furniture; or having the latest phone, laptop, software and data plans compared to struggling with hand-me-downs, malfunctions and data access restrictions. Thinking with the affective aspects of objectified cultural capital is a way of illustrating that a thing is always more than its use value.

For instance, a book is not always just a book. The bookshelves in my office can enliven conversations of shared interests with colleagues but may feel intellectually intimidating to a first-year student. To my mates, the books strewn all through my house are proof that I am a wanker. Another example of the affectivity of books is that simply having more in your household when growing up has a positive influence on educational success (Sikora et al 2019). It does not seem to matter what the books are: just being in a space where reading is normalized makes the educational setting more comfortable,

that is, it produces a relation of affinity. Again, we can see the social alchemy here where comfort with books turns into educational gold.

On a less institutional level, consumption artefacts distribute affects. This may emerge in the relationality of feeling comfortable in someone else's house and what one thinks of that person through their possessions. Our stuff stands in relationally for the categorizations we apply to each other, and therefore the distinctions we create for ourselves. For instance, in terms of the record, CD and zine collection in my house: owning the Per Purpose *'Eureka'* cassette tape on the Vacant Valley label in a limited edition run of 100, or the Sleater-Kinney coloured record box set, will spark interest or even jealousy in someone with similar tastes, but likely condescension from a classical music aficionado, and ambivalence or perplexed mirth from anyone else. Despite my sociological reflexivity, I can't help but make instinctively negative judgements of someone if they tell me they like Mumford and Sons, Chris Brown or Sticky Fingers. Bourdieu's famous quote 'taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier' describes a relation of affect as much as a relation of symbolic power. Distinction is an affective practice. Objects, texts and genres in this sense have affects that move beyond the symbolic to the emotional, where the affinities that this process produces transpires in judgements. Agreeance and like beget feelings of ease, intimacy and conviviality. Disagreeing and dislike beget discomfort, distance and frostiness.

Institutionalized cultural capital

Like objectified cultural capital, institutionalized cultural capital also works as an assemblage of the materiality of nobility, awards, degrees, honours, their social constructed hierarchies and rankings, and the feelings and emotions generated by one's affinity with those things. Broadly, the more credentials and qualifications one has the better, and the more they are from

high-status institutions the better. Like books, a degree is not just a degree. Qualifications from Oxbridge or Ivy League institutions carry more status than those from elsewhere: they carry a heavier affect, which increases the momentum of the trajectory of their possessor. These institutions themselves have cultural and symbolic capital and can wield their influence individually and collectively. In Australia, for instance, whenever the university sector is written about in popular media it is usually dominated by the voices and interests of the 'Sandstone' or G8.

This is all straightforward and shown by a mountain of social research. What I find interesting about this, especially as someone from a working-class background with a PhD from the University of Newcastle, is how social scientists themselves actively reproduce these hierarchies. I have observed this happen in situations where people I know will take the piss out of the heightened status of elite universities, denigrate (quite fairly) individuals at those places whom they deem less capable than themselves and point out the absurdities of these hierarchies, especially when they experience something negative because of them. Then, in competitive institutional situations such as ranking job applicants or evaluating grant applications, they will put people or applications higher in their rankings based on those very forms of institutionalized cultural capital. This is a reflexive complicity (Sharp and Threadgold 2020). Social scientists, therefore, even those who are familiar with Bourdieu, will reproduce the very hierarchies they resent in the institutional confines of their work that cause them anxiety and resentment in the first place (see Bacevic 2019).

As recent studies have shown, high-status, high-paying and influential positions still mostly go to the same people from the same elite institutions (Friedman and Laurison 2019). It is unlikely that institutionalized cultural capital will lessen in importance, especially given the upward credentialing of the workplace, that more and more people are going to university and because those critical of institutional hierarchies are usually

complicit with and reproduce them (to be clear, I include myself in this criticism).

The affectivity of social capital

Bourdieu's theory of social capital is one of exclusion and is not to be confused with the more common version used in the social sciences that is derived from Putnam and Coleman, which has been thoroughly critiqued as 'researchers behaving badly' (Fine 2010). Social capital speaks to how we form close relationships with people through affective bonds. We are more likely to feel comfortable around 'people like us'. This is called homophily: 'a pattern of differential association in which agents are more likely to associate with those who are socially similar to themselves' (Bottero 2009: 400). Homophily is an affective affinity where people *stick* together. The relationality of social capital is one of homology and distance. We are, through processes of social magic, more comfortable with people like us, and therefore we do not even have to practice deliberate favouritism or nepotism for social capital to function. That is not to say that favouritism or nepotism – 'jobs for the boys' – is not central to how exclusionary power functions, especially in term of access to elite positions. People also reflexively develop and maintain strategic relations with others that they feel are useful for their practices, but these relationships are likely to be easier and more convivial than those with people who are closer to them in social space.

The alchemy of social capital does not just work to exclude in elite fields. In bar work, for example, most people start through knowing someone at the place or are introduced through their social circle (Farrugia et al 2018). In our research on hip bars in Melbourne, getting work in the bars in this area is through whom you know, introductions or being consumers at the venue before working there. Having the right (sub)cultural capitals, that is the right look and taste, is paramount. On

meeting potential employees, managers performed what was called the 'sniff test', a brief meeting to decide whether the person is likely to 'work out' in the bar. Participants laughed at us when we asked about the relevance of institutionalized capitals – CVs and hospitality training – saying that these things are largely irrelevant in getting their foot in the door, and even more so getting a job in a bar where they actually want to spend their time. What matters is how one fits in affectively: the right look, the right taste, the right disposition and knowing the right people.

Sticky affinities develop between 'people like us'. Forms of social capital are personal affective relations that can work in terms of deliberate forms of exclusion, through to subconscious desires to be around similar people.

The affectivity of economic capital

The materiality of money has all kinds of affects: drop a million dollars in cash from a building in any city and watch the chaos as it rains down on the people below. An indication of the affectivity of money is in the way it is hidden. It is uncouth to talk about how much one earns or to flash bank notes around in company, and the virtualization of money into credit cards and phone apps has had the affect of disenchanting and dehumanizing market exchanges (Ritzer 2001). Beyond money's materiality, though, there are affective relations between one's financial position and one's orientation to the world. Financialization processes have fundamentally changed the way in which time is experienced (Adkins 2018). Debt, for instance, is one example of how material hierarchies are reflected by emotional and temporal hierarchies. Students across the Western world are racking up higher education debt for degrees that do not necessarily provide access to actual careers that make paying the debt back realistic, with some potential students choosing not to go to university because of the potential debt. For the wealthy, easy access to borrowing

money is a key mechanism of building wealth. Superannuation has been a great way for getting the working class to emotionally commit to the capitalist illusio.

Nevertheless, while there is an obvious homology between wealth and privilege, it is too simplistic to completely associate money with freedom and happiness. Research on 'middle Australia' (Pusey 2003) describes 'spending ourselves sick' as we have become wasteful, overworked, stressed, in debt and increasingly subscribed to all kinds of medication. Those at the top of the corporate sector, who are earning what most people feel is an obscene amount of money, do not seem to be experiencing happiness along with their immense wealth and privilege. In Australia, Hamilton (2003) reported that 47 per cent of people in the highest income group claim that they cannot afford to buy everything they 'need'. Only 5 per cent of millionaires regard themselves as prosperous, while 50 per cent of millionaires say that they are only 'reasonably comfortable'. Even among the very wealthy (those with household net worth in excess of $3 million), only one in five regard themselves as prosperous, while 7 per cent say that they are 'poor' or 'just getting along'. A similar reluctance to describe themselves as prosperous is apparent in households with high incomes, with only 5 per cent of those living in households with high incomes describing themselves as prosperous.

While we may write these claims off as the wealthy rationalizing or denying their privilege, we can also use this as evidence of the intensity of investing in various illusio that are inflected by discourses of hard work and meritocracy. Even at the extreme end of wealth – not even the 1 per cent but the 0.1 per cent – the *affect* of money does not seem to guarantee happiness. While immense wealth leads to freedom from material want and a seeming autonomy to do whatever one wants, it doesn't automatically lead to happiness and satisfaction, as lifestyle aims move up; to fulfil their materialistic ambitions people spend less time being with the people they

love or doing the things they love and become slaves to the very thing that is meant to provide freedom.[1] The cathected individual is not necessarily a happy one. I mean, does Donald Trump really appear to be a happy person to you?

As Marx theorized at the birth of capitalism, economic capital is the bedrock of inequality. Marx too saw this relationality as affective: inequality would grow to the point where its affects – alienation and exploitation – would produce a social recognition among the working class, a social gravity that would see them seize the means of production. This hasn't happened and there has been over a century of critical theory that analyzes why not, from Adorno's (1991) pseudo-individualization and the culture industry and Marcuse's (2013) 'one dimensional man [*sic*]' who prioritizes false needs over true needs, to the seduced masses of Baudrillard's (1983) simulacra, where the silent majority commit the ultimate form of resistance by doing nothing, a fatal strategy. In terms of analyzing why a material revolution has not happened, these theorists delve into the realm of affect, even when they focus on the material, cultural and symbolic.

More recently, when it comes to resistive movements, economic inequality is used to build slogans to create social gravity to affectively attract people to the cause. We can see this in the labels '1%' and 'we are the 99%' of the Occupy movement (see Graeber 2014), or the growing prevalence of the aphorism 'every billionaire is a policy failure'. Money then, when used in a politically symbolic manner, is an affective device whose uneven distribution produces an array of affects.

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1 As Deleuze and Guattari's (1983: 254) observed: 'there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves commanding other slaves … The bourgeois sets the example …: more utterly enslaved than the lowest of slaves, he is the first servant of the ravenous machine, the beast of the reproduction of capital … "I too am a slave" – these are the new words spoken by the master.' See Fisher on 'suffering with a smile' (2018: 535–7), also published at https://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=11586

Forms of capital to symbolic power: the affective transference of 'capital conversion'

Possessing forms of capital is a capacity that can be used to buttress one's status and legitimacy, and that therefore acts as self-fulfilling social magic. Converting specific forms of capital to what Bourdieu calls symbolic capital or symbolic power is an affective transference, whereby the form of capital is recognized and conferred by others in the field and, if the symbolic power is especially distinguished, outside and across fields. 'Conversion' in this sense works as an economic metaphor of a 'return on investment', but most of what happens at the moment of conversion is an affective transaction. The processes of converting forms of capital are a moment where emotions and feelings arise within specific ontological, spatial and temporal confines. This is especially the case where the level of symbolic capital outgrows and escapes the boundaries of a field. When a famous actor walks into a public place, for instance, their symbolic capital is *felt*. People stare, whisper and nudge each other. They will comment on how she looks or what she is wearing or say that they loved her in a particular movie. The cultural capital in the field of cultural production is recognized outside the confines of that field, affectively transferred into emotional reactions for those encapsulated within this encounter.

Symbolic power or capital is essentially an affective power that relates to the conatus elements of habitus: it is the ability to make the world in one's image; to make an impression; to move easily through institutional spaces; to have little chance of experiencing discrimination, marginalization or discomfort; to minimize anxiety and stress in specific circumstances (or, more accurately, not even to feel or realize that people could be anxious or stressed). Following Ahmed (2014), the ability to wield symbolic capital will leave an impression: it will sway how we are oriented towards them, whether that is gawking at a celebrity, showing deference to an esteemed figure in

one's field or following the instructions from one's boss even when one knows they will not work or thinks they are stupid. In those situations or moments, those with less capital – the gawkers, the deferring, the subordinate – cannot easily transfer their capitals into symbolic power.

Importantly, in education systems and research on them, the concept of cultural capital seems to have been somewhat reified, transferred into symbolic capital, by the very people who are using it to do research. Research into educational inequality that draws on the concepts of cultural capital needs to consider how it has become misrecognized as symbolic capital. These capitals are often treated uncritically as legitimate things that students need, but do not possess. 'Cultural capital' has gone through a process of governmentalization (see Bennett 2017). School principals and school newsletters now promote cultural capital as something to which students should aspire. But what is missing from this account is that it is improbable that the less privileged can ever possess legitimate forms of cultural capital because what constitutes it is either an embodied correlation developed towards doxic norms since birth, or an affinity with those who make those norms. As these norms change over time, the privileged magically keep up as the changes happen in their image, while the disadvantaged are always struggling to keep up, which involves learning to be someone else. All the elements of symbolic capital – being famous, important, visible, admired, loved, invited – are:

> so many manifestations of the grace (charisma) which saves those it touches from the distress of an existence without justification and which gives them not only a 'theodicy of their own privilege', as Max Weber said of religion – which is in itself not negligible – but also a theodicy of their existence. (Bourdieu 2000: 241)

Tertiary education refracts already classed trajectories, and the university is itself a fundamental part of the legitimation

of class and a crucial site of class struggle. Rather than sites of class alleviation, universities are sites of class reproduction (Bunn et al 2019; see also Burke 2015). The very point of the concept is that the disadvantaged cannot have an affinity with legitimized cultural capital.

Bourdieu draws on the theological concept of theodicy, which was developed to vindicate God's permitting of evil, as a form of social magic whereby social struggles over morals, ethics, values, tastes and legitimacies are misrecognized as doxic social norms. The cruelty of an uneven distribution of positive and comfortable affects is rendered natural. This is a key form of misrecognition that sees those without the required forms of capital experience symbolic violence, which I theorize as affective violence: stigma, shame, frustration, anxiety, discomfort, guilt, self-exclusion and depression. 'There is no worse dispossession, no worse privation, perhaps, than that of the losers in the symbolic struggle for recognition, for access to a socially recognized social being' (Bourdieu 2000: 241). Essentially, Bourdieu points to possessing symbolic capital as a crucial part of individual well-being: 'One of the most unequal of all distributions, and probably, in any case, the most cruel, is the distribution of symbolic capital, that is, of social importance and of reasons for living' (Bourdieu 2000: 241).

The ease of capital transference is well illustrated by the widely shared passage in the hugely popular novel *Normal People*, by Sally Rooney.[2] In the book, a teenager, Marianne, a rich girl whom no one likes at school, gets together secretly with Connell, the popular, sporty and smart boy whose mum cleans Marianne's house. When they go off to a prestigious university together, both on scholarships, they swap positions in terms of popularity: Marianne's monied ease allows a frictionless existence in a world of people just like her, while Connell

[2] See Dan (2019) for an analysis of the reception of this book that illustrates the passages that follow.

has financial issues and his masculine sporting traits hold less value. Rooney perfectly describes the way the symbolic capital of the privileged in higher education works when Connell is describing student engagement with course readings:

> All Connell's classmates have identical accents and carry the same size MacBook under their arms … He did gradually start to wonder why all their classroom discussions were so abstract and lacking in textual detail, and eventually he realised that most people were not actually doing the reading. They were coming into college every day to have heated debates about books they had not read. He understands now that his classmates are not like him. *It's easy for them to have opinions, and to express them with confidence*. They don't worry about appearing ignorant or conceited. (Rooney 2018: 114)

A lack of anxiety, an ease of trajectory and confidence disguise ignorance. It is this 'convertibility' – an affective process that the economic connotations of 'conversion' are not well suited to describe – that makes inequality so difficult to perceive when it is happening *in situ*. We are immersed in situations every day where the distribution of affects is uneven. In another passage, at a book reading of a well-known author, Connell discovers the function of books as objects of distinction, where books discharge affects that makes their efficacy as art dubious and that have little to do with actually reading them:

> He knows that a lot of the literary people in college see books primarily as a way of appearing cultured. It was culture as class performance, literature fetishised for its ability to take educated people on false emotional journeys, so that they might afterwards feel superior to the uneducated people whose emotional journeys they liked to read about … all books were ultimately marketed as status symbols, and all writers participated to some

> degree in this marketing. Presumably this was how the industry made money. Literature, in the way it appeared at these public readings, had no potential as a form of resistance to anything. (Rooney 2018: 370)

Spoiler alert: Connell becomes a writer, in a reflexive complicity with the very symbolic violence he describes. I expand on the concept of reflexive complicity in Chapter Six, where the rise of reflexivity and the dominance of irony in culture are discussed in terms of social change.

Conclusion

The possession of forms of capital is an affective glue that binds people together in shared struggles, and individualizes them through visceral relations of tastes, morals and values. Struggles over forms of capital are an affective game in which groups and individuals may be divided or attracted through sticky affinities, while that very activity itself makes and remakes meanings, knowledge and social boundaries. This chapter has emphasized the affective elements of the forms of capital and processes involving those capitals, but I want to stress that these things do not happen in a social or institutional vacuum: the affectivity of the capitals is homologous with their value in specific social worlds, whether that be a Bourdieusian field or more specified settings or games. Knowing about an obscure pressing of a punk record produces little affect in, say, pursuing success in the field of medicine. That affinity is not contextually sticky. The traditional institutional fields have less and less autonomy from the field of power in late capitalism, and the most powerful forms of symbolic power are still generated from legitimized fields: politics, economy, business, art, law, media, science and the like. While it may be argued that celebrity or reality TV and social media are more widespread today, that symbolic power tends to be Warholian, a flash of recognition

with little prolonged cultural significance or economic wealth (with Kardashian-shaped exceptions to prove the rule).

In terms of Bourdieu's whole theoretical project, a key development is the move from ideology to symbolic violence, emphasizing that power is effective when it is not obviously being wielded. The material economy aspects of capital are still obviously central to understanding economic inequality. Money is the ultimate form of social magic. The material is but one facet that generates the uneven distribution of affects. The forms of capital work most effectively to reproduce inequality when they are working as affective affinities, affinities that develop and stick for some people more than others. As affinities stick, they become embodied. It is through this affective composition of the symbolic and the relational that social hierarchies are misrecognized as social order.

FIVE

Symbolic Violence and Affective Affinities

Introduction

In an episode of *Sex and the City* called 'The caste system', a young, good-looking man is approached by the art gallery director Charlotte when she recognizes him as a famous actor. He turns to the gallery wall and says, "How much for this piece?" Slightly confused, Charlotte responds: "The fire extinguisher?" Then, getting the gist of what is happening, she says, "Oh, no, no, no. That's a real fire extinguisher, for the gallery … in case there's fire." The actor just laughs, confidently responding, "I guess I'm a total idiot." Charlotte placates him by saying, "Don't worry, it happens all the time … you can take it and say you got it from the gallery, and people will probably think it's a Jeff Koons."

It seems that anything on the wall of a gallery can be classified as art. It is the internal struggles of the institutions of the art field and its symbolic power that defines what is legitimated as art. This is an example of how struggles in fields can metamorphize the meaning of things by assembling the cultural arbitrary into cultural hierarchies. But let's unpack this exchange a bit more: Charlotte instantly recognizes the

young, handsome man as a rich and famous actor, Wylie Ford. Seconds later they are getting it on in the back of his limo, despite Charlotte having a historic character arc of being rather conservative in her sexual relationships. He then calls her by the wrong name, but she does not care. A few scenes later Charlotte feels used up by the vapidity and emptiness of this celebrity encounter and opts out. In their first encounter, Charlotte responds to the actor in a way that avoids being condescending. She is quite obviously 'affected' by being up close to a celebrity. He reacts to his mistake without the slightest embarrassment, laughs at the irony of the situation and moves straight into pick-up mode: the social magic of immense symbolic capital. With exceedingly good looks and money to burn, the actor symbolizes access to all kinds of illusio that are desired in late capitalism. But, if we were to transfer the exchange in this scene to, say, a high school excursion to an art gallery, the social relations, and therefore the individuals' capacity to affect and be affected, would be distinctly different. If a teenager were to say something like this in front of their class, it would take a skilled and empathetic curator not to laugh or crack a joke at the student's expense, even as they try to turn it into a 'teachable moment'. The whole class is likely to explode with laughter, even if many of them also couldn't tell the difference between the fire extinguisher and the artworks. The student is likely to be affectively bruised by this situation especially if they have never been to an art gallery before. This moment will leave an impression. This affect is likely to stick. Future self-exclusion from the art world is possible: 'it is not for the likes of me.' This is how affective economies operate: immersed in spaces rich in symbols and meaning, history and hierarchy, individuals interact while unequally equipped to deal with the doxic norms and social expectations of each encounter, that is, they possess different affinities. The rich good-looking white man moves confidently through the world with the conatus his capitals bestow, where women can be appropriated as symbolic resources to further

generate profit and status (Mears 2015). The naive student feels shame, the rising heat of embarrassment, the *affectivity* of symbolic violence. Pleasurable or deleterious experiences like this will coalesce to form sticky affinities.

This chapter will rethink notions of symbolic violence and distinction through the lens of affects. Affective economies make and remake class, where notions of beauty and ugliness, moral and immoral, deserving and undeserving, tasteful and vulgar delineate everyday practices. A Bourdieusian lens can illuminate aspects of these relations, where *symbolic violence is an affective violence*. The distinctions through which people experience day-to-day life and relate to each other (or not) emerge through sticky affinities that draw us together or push us apart.

Symbolic violence

The 'symbolic' does a lot of work in Bourdieu, with the metaphor of symbolic violence devised to resonate with the consequences of physical violence. Physical violence leaves cuts and bruises on one's body and may lead to permanent disfigurement or death. Symbolic violence is an affective violence; it delivers emotional cuts and bruises, which then mark one's immanent wellspring of dispositions accordingly. We move through a social world that is full of symbolic stimulus – words, people, clothes, food, music, smells, sounds, tastes – and we move through institutions that are also rife with symbolic phenomena – rules, laws, duties, traditions, hierarchies. As we encounter these stimuli we are affected. These affective relations can be unnoticed, the effects may be fleeting or they may leave permanent impressions and traces, leading to self-exclusion or social exclusion, or forms of social death.

In a violent situation where one protagonist physically dominates the other, the dominated has limited strategic options to minimize damage: to flee, to cower, to appeal to the better nature of their attacker, to take it or to fight back knowing that it could make things worse. In terms of the

affective consequences of symbolic violence, there are similar limitations on the possible strategies to minimize suffering. One can ensure that they avoid situations where they feel dominated or that they are demure when they are forced to be there. One can seek consultation, collaboration or understanding with, or mercy from, the dominating figure, but will always be in a relation of subjection, in debt or dependence, where the support could arbitrarily disappear at any time. One can just accept the situation and get on with it, belligerently struggling on.

A particularly acute form of symbolic violence is what Bourdieu calls social death (see Bourdieu 1981, 1984: 478, 2000: 153, 161). Social death is an emotional state that follows countless or sudden instances of symbolic violence that lead to forms of waiting, withdrawal and resignation. For example, Bourdieu writes of the social death of the long-term unemployed in the following translation of his preface to Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, and Zeisel's 1931 study called *Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community*. There is so much in this passage that it is worth quoting at length:

> In losing their work, the unemployed have also lost the countless tokens (the thousand nothings) through which is realised and can manifest itself a socially known and recognized function, in other words the whole set of goals posited in advance, independently of any conscious project, in the form of demands and commitments – 'important' meetings, cheques to post, invoices to draw up – and the whole forth-coming already given in the immediate present, in the form of deadlines, dates and timetables to be observed – buses to take, rates to maintain, targets to meet. Deprived of this objective universe of incitements and indications which orientate and stimulate action and, through it, social life, they can only experience the free time that is left to them as dead time, purposeless and meaningless (emptied of all significance). If time seems to be annihilated, this is because

> employment is the support, if not the source, of most interest, expectations, demands, hopes and investments in the present, and also in the future or the past that it implies, in short one of the major foundations of illusio in the sense of involvement in the game of life, in the present, the primordial investment which – as traditional wisdom has always taught, in identifying detachment from time with detachment from the world – creates time and indeed is time itself.[1]

Social death here is in a form of redundancy: made redundant from their jobs, then struggling to find fulfilling work, which provides the means to lead a satisfying and dignified life, these men *feel* redundant. Free time is dead time; their affective life is subsumed by a sense of futility.[2] If extreme violence leads to physical death, extreme symbolic violence leads to hysteresis and social death.

These comparisons are not to propose that symbolic violence is the equivalent of the physical, or that they are opposed or separate. Physical violence profoundly affects one's habitus, but to continue the violence metaphor from the corporeal to the emotional, symbolic violence as theorized by Bourdieu proceeds affectively: one is put into a situation of discomfort or degradation emanating from the judgements of others and by the effects of social expectations and institutional practices (exams, policies, laws, norms and the like). That experience stimulates feelings and emotions – shame, guilt, frustration, anger, resentment, incredulity, anxiety, fear. This experience is accumulated into our embodied memory pads, especially if there are homologous occurences accrued in the same social space or across different social spaces over time. These experiences stick to form affinities. As the habitus develops,

1 This is a translation provided by Ghassan Hage on a Facebook post.

2 See Adkins (2011) on how not only is practice experienced *within* time or within different frameworks of time, but habitus *makes* time.

the experience of symbolic violence *impresses* limitations onto our practice, where we learn what is for the likes of us, what is for the likes of *me* and what is reasonable and realistic to expect, to hope for, to pursue and invest.

> The passions of the dominated habitus … are not of a kind that can be suspended by simple effort of will, founded on a liberatory awakening of consciousness. A person who fights his [*sic*] timidity feels betrayed by his body, which recognizes paralyzing taboos or calls to order, where someone else, the product of different conditions, would see stimulating incitements or injunctions. (Bourdieu 2000: 179–80)

The concept of symbolic violence reveals how everyday encounters, moments and situations are filled with the heavy immanence of social hierarchies misrecognized as natural everyday social relations. Everyday social encounters are accumulate into one's being, where relational forms of recognition and reward on the one hand, and social sanctions and stigmas on the other, mark the affective settings of social space and produce the emotional events accrued to assemble the affinities at the heart of the dispositional armoury.

Taste and morals as affective affinities: from symbolic violence to affective violence?

Cultural taste and morality are feelings as much as knowledge: *you feel that you like or dislike something before you 'know' it*. Sometimes you feel it in your gut. Sometimes an exciting moment of cultural consumption – a powerful guitar riff, an action sequence in a movie scene, the elimination of your most hated reality TV show contestant – may make you gasp, give you goose bumps or arouse a cheer before you 'understand' why. Other times when you feel uncomfortable or disgust – a person makes choices for their children that you

disagree with, makes a political comment you disagree with or is racist or sexist (or not) – you will feel heat rise up your neck or around your ears, a shudder, the rising of bile. These feelings can happen before you have had a chance to 'think' about it. For Ahmed, when people say things like 'how can you like that?' or, for that matter, 'how can you not like that?', they perform their 'judgment against another by refusing to like what another likes, by suggesting that the object in which another invests his or her happiness is unworthy. This affective differentiation is the basis of an essentially moral economy in which moral distinctions of worth are also social distinctions of value' (Ahmed 2010: 33–4; see also Sayer 2005).

The judgements we make and the way we categorize things and people are therefore an affective practice based on affinities. This affective practice composes the performativity aspects of class, where an affinity with categories, genres, aesthetics, symbols and morals 'make class' (Skeggs 2004a), just as these judgements and categorizations help to 'make' gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and so on. 'It is the fundamentally relational nature of social class – as it intersects with other social processes, such as gender – that makes class itself into an "affective practice"' (Loveday 2016: 1151). These emotional relations also complexify class relations rather than simply reflecting and reifying them. For instance, anti-vaxxers and climate change deniers, two groups that provoke considerable disgust among the educated middle classes, are likely to be from different 'classes', themselves, whether defined materially or culturally. But both draw on the same anti-science discourses for very different purposes.

Symbolic violence illustrates how a vast array of inequalities emanate from unequal social relations that are misrecognized as social order but are really social hierarchies that are struggled over, maintained, policed and invested in by those that both benefit and suffer from those very relations. 'Symbolic violence is the transfiguration of relations of domination and submission into affective relations' (Bourdieu 1998: 102).

Relations that are symbolically violent are affective relations where some individuals or groups of individuals can express the conative aspects of their habitus, their ability to make the world in their own image, even if these practices are not meant to deliberately denigrate or exclude but are just expressions of their own affinities.

In earlier times, the distinction between so-called high and low/popular culture was used to illustrate distinctive forms of inclusion and exclusion, from the consumption of opera, art and museums to the instillation of literature (that is, not 'bestsellers') as the legitimate canon to be studied (Bourdieu 1984; Bennett et al 1999; Bennett et al 2009). Access to these spaces and texts, or an affinity with them, came to be understood as key forms of cultural capital, especially in education systems, as it was these middle- and upper-class cultural practices and tastes that have become legitimized in educational institutions. While one can argue over whether they are given this legitimacy because of their intrinsic high quality, beauty or authentic artistic expression, opera, the arts and literature reflected the tastes and interests of cathected cultural intermediaries, who possess the best means to put the conatus elements of their habitus to work.

The research that expressed and analyzed these unequal relations is valuable work and has done much to uncover the hidden intricacies of how inequalities function culturally and symbolically. These forms of distinctive exclusions still matter a great deal, but they matter less today as there has been a conflation of high and low culture, where it is not necessarily *what* is consumed that is as important but *how* one consumes it (Jarness 2015). There is a reflexive performance of class, especially by the middle classes who display both an anxiety about being a snob while distancing themselves from those they feel are below them (Jarness and Friedman 2017; Pyysiäinena and Ryynänenb 2019). Older studies tended to let symbolic violence do a lot of work as a concept in this regard, left to stand in for discrimination, misrecognition, exclusion and so forth,

but with the everyday emotions produced by these relations largely bracketed out of analysis.

More recently there has been a move to bring affect and emotion to the fore in considerations of symbolic violence, especially following the influential collection *Feminism after Bourdieu* and the prominent work of Diane Reay, Beverley Skeggs, Stephanie Lawler and others. Reay's (2005, 2015) work in education has done much to uncover the affective elements of symbolic violence, bringing in 'the frequently overlooked anxieties, conflicts, desires, defences, ambivalences and tensions within classed identities' (Reay 2015: 10). Reay and colleagues have shown the emotional cost of entering education systems from disadvantaged backgrounds, where one may 'find or lose yourself' (Reay 2001) and where white middle-class anxieties about class and ethnicity play out in familial desires for their children's future security (Reay 2008) and choice of school (Lucey and Reay 2002; Crozier et al 2008). Educational experiences can trouble the soul and prey on the psyche (Reay 2017). In essence, the field of education is fundamental to the means and processes by which individuals develop a sense of self through their capacity to affect and be affected, where the affective transference between habitus and field 'often results in a predilection for shame, fear, anxiety or even righteous indignation, while the internalization of social inequalities in the privileged can result in dispositions of superiority, entitlement, disdain but also a predilection for guilt, ambivalence and discomfort' (Reay 2015: 13). Well-educated parents increase the chances that their children will possess sticky affinities with whatever is doxic in the field of education.

Skeggs (2004b) has been especially important in bringing affective aspects to think about Bourdieusian social relations, notions of value and the way class and gender mediate feelings when immersed in these exchanges. It is through the expression of 'ugly feelings' (Ngai 2005) such as anger, resentment and envy on the one hand (see Charlesworth

2000), and through humour, piss taking and antagonism on the other, that class relations are expressed 'but not often heard' (Skeggs 2004b: 90). Throughout a wide range of empirical studies on the consumption of reality TV (Wood and Skeggs 2008, 2011; Skeggs et al 2008) and gendered constructions of working-class subjectivity (Skeggs 1997, 1999, 2004a, 2005), Skeggs and colleagues repeatedly show how the affective relations of day-to-day life are where class relations are experienced and lived, not just as an economic struggle, but as a struggle 'against unjustifiable judgment and authority and for dignified relationality … struggle [is] at the very core of ontology, demonstrating how the denigrated defend and make their lives liveable' (Skeggs and Loveday 2012: 472). For Lawler (2005), middle-class women may construct their own subjectivity via affective relations with those they deem to be below them morally and aesthetically; they become 'disgusted subjects'. Highlighting the cathectic and affective elements of the habitus, Lawler shifts attention from problematic class relations to the normalcy of middle-classness, where middle-class dispositions are always the 'right' ones,[3] with everyone else judged in deficit and in need of change. Middle-class attitudes towards the working classes lie on a trajectory between disgust and romanticism; disgust is the dominant relation at the moment. McRobbie (2004) highlights the rise of the legitimation of class-based judgements, a post-feminist symbolic violence, where the public 'humorous' denigration of women by other women on TV generates and legitimizes class antagonisms. These important and influential studies point to how class is made and functions as an affective economy across multiple fields, settings and spaces, performatively played out through affinities with morals, tastes and anxieties.

[3] I trouble this assumption as well with the concept of reflexive complicity, discussed in Chapter Six.

In my own work, I have analyzed how hipsters and bogans (Threadgold 2018a) are invoked as figures to talk about moral and taste aspects of class relations, while eluding actual discussions of class itself, sometimes through comedy and satire, sometimes through straight news and opinion pieces. The *figures* of the hipster and the bogan indicate the blurriness of cultural class relations and the flickering boundaries between social groups while reinforcing middle-class tastes and morals, as it is those people who take up most of the positions in the culture, creative and media industries that produce the comedy, satire, news and opinion. The globally mobile hipster represents the new threats of the precarity of the labour market, the overload of irony and the impossibility of originality in a globalized popular culture. The local bogan represents the old threats of bad lower-class values and morals, and the vulgarity and passivity of consumer culture. The figures are relational and affective markers of a sense of an individual's distinctive place in social space. Whether one judges something as hipster or bogan will correspond to one's own affective affinities. Hipsters and bogans constitute elements of the affective atmosphere of the field of representation in constructing and maintaining fuzzy cultural class boundaries, and they work through the production of affects.

Conclusion

Hage (2015: 207) notes:

> By offering a conception of politics as a struggle between different realities, Bourdieu opens up a path for us to understand that what he calls symbolic violence is also a form of ontological violence: certain realities come to dominate others so much that they simply become 'reality', foreclosing their history as a process of domination and equally foreclosing the very possibility of thinking reality as multiple.

This kind of theoretical work can do much to introduce the 'incarnate agent as suffering and desiring being at the intersection between historical structures and situated interaction' (Wacquant 2014b: 123). Living within and between multiple ontological realities is the very affective space where individuals strategize and struggle, try to live their lives and give it meaning, happiness and satisfaction. The experience of symbolic violence is an affective experience of lack, that is, lack of sticky affinities with the 'right' things.

SIX

Stasis and Change: Innovators, Affective Poles, Reflexivity, Irony

Introduction

In her 2018 annual Christmas address, the queen of the United Kingdom sat in front of a gold piano to express her concerns about poverty. John Stewart and John Oliver are more trusted as news sources than the actual news. The satirical news sites The Betoota Advocate and The Onion seem to reflect 'reality' more than the media they parody. The cooling agents CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) were key to producing the heating effects of climate change. In 2016 an 18-year-old in Guatemala was shot dead when he broke into a house while chasing a virtual animal in the augmented reality game Pokémon Go. In July 2019 the Instagram star Belle Delphine sold her bathwater for $30 a jar; some buyers complained that the bathwater was not genuine as there was no sign of her DNA when they tested it. In August 2019 hundreds of tourists fled Times Square in New York, mistaking a car backfiring for a mass shooter. The affective atmosphere of the social world in which we are all immersed is very different since Bourdieu's death in 2002. Baudrillard seems ever more prescient today: our lives are

deeply immersed in hyperreality, parody and satire, resulting inevitably in reflexive, cynical and ironic dispositions.

The emergence of reflexivity, irony and cynicism is central to modes of contemporary subjectivity. As Boyne (2002: 119) argues, referring to *Distinction*, 'While class remains salient, expressions of class cultures are much more marked by reflexive attitudes – rueful, ironic, envious, reflectively proud – than was the case in the picture painted by Bourdieu in 1979.' The rise of the concept of reflexivity particularly challenges Bourdieu's framing of habitus and his model of social practice in general. Researchers and theorists have considered these implications for Bourdieu, especially as the original conception of habitus relied on sub-, non- or pre-conscious conceptions of practice. Some authors (Atkinson 2010a; Archer 2012) are critical of the possibility of bringing a concept like reflexivity into a Bourdieusian perspective, while others (including myself) have theorized that it is useful, even necessary (Sweetman 2003; Adams 2006; Threadgold and Nilan 2009; Farrugia and Woodman 2015).

This chapter argues that currently the illusio of specific fields are becoming increasingly unrealistic or being challenged, even if that challenge produces only cynicism and irony. Young people especially are finding the promises of long-dominant doxic norms – work hard, get educated, make the right choices – hollow and hypocritical. This is resulting in an array of orientations: acceptance, complicity, cynicism, ironic distancing, anger, resentment, resistance, even violence. Aarseth and colleagues (Aarseth 2016, 2017; Aarseth et al 2016) consider the affective elements of illusio, where the emotionally intensive work of 'becoming modern' means that 'conflicts in the habitus' (Aarseth et al 2016) are at the fore of contemporary subjectivity formation. Conflicts in the habitus constitute a spectrum from everyday reflexivity to moments of hysteresis (Strand and Lizardo 2017) and, as I theorize in the following section, cruel optimism (Berlant 2011). Facing the contradictory demands of a wide array of fields, there is increasing

pressure on individuals for a 'labour of integration' as social life *feels* more differentiated (Silva 2016). While Bourdieu created a delineation between consciousness and habitus, recent work has brought conscious deliberation into the notion of habitus, which makes the concept less mechanistic (Mead 2016).

As governance has moved from neoliberal to 'nihiliberal' (Fisher 2018: 319, 822, 904), this chapter theorizes social change through reimagining illusio with the rise of the reflexive subject and ironic culture, considering how reflexivity, reflexive complicity, cruel optimism, cynicism and irony challenge and accentuate Bourdieusian analysis. In the context of reflexivity, the oft-overlooked autonomous and heteronomous aspects of fields, their 'poles', which are in constant tension between reproduction and change, are key to understanding these processes of social change.

Social change through affective charges: the poles of fields and subversive innovators

Fields have autonomous and heteronomous poles. The autonomous pole is where practices happen with *relative* autonomy from other interests, while the heteronomous pole is where influences from other fields may leak in (Bourdieu 1993b: 29–72), especially from the field of power. These opposing poles are organized around 'the protagonists of change and the apostles of law and order, the progressives and the conservatives, the heterodox and the orthodox, or the challengers and the incumbents' (Kauppi 2003: 778). These tensions reflect concomitant and homologous struggles in the field of power (Hilgers and Mangez 2015).

One can broaden the visualization of these poles to think of them as affective, where the illusio of the field has its most intense charge at the autonomous pole, but may be challenged, resisted, threatened or distracted at the heteronomous. The heteronomous pole is where influences and affects from other fields, or affective atmospheres that are not contained within a

singular field – precarity, hauntology, anxiety, melancholy and so on – may have purchase, along with the usual economic rationalizing forces. Poles are not just where material things, knowledge or people enter and assemble; they are where emotions, feelings, sensations and affects congregate to shape practices. In this sense, we can imagine the oppositional poles of fields holding an affective charge, relating to the magnetic metaphor of field discussed in Chapter Three, and the concept of social gravity, where one's habitus is a range of affective dispositions immanently assembled and charged to be affected. One's habitus therefore is charged with immanent affects, where affinities will be attracted or repelled by the charge of the autonomous or heteronomous pole.

How the poles of a field function can be illustrated through practices in the art world, especially its upper echelons. Bourdieu described the field of art as the 'economic world reversed' (1993b), where recognition was awarded through a combination of autonomous 'authentic' phenomena such as aesthetics, critical reception, originality, form and technique, political expression and the like. These hold prestige within the art world, but may also develop to offer symbolic capital for those at the top of the field in terms of status and celebrity more generally. In this sense, the autonomous pole dominated the allocation of symbolic capital in the field of art. Throughout the 20th century this changed where influences from other fields, especially economic interests, entered the field, that is, heteronomous concerns became more widespread. Art itself has become more self-critical (Marcel Duchamp), ironic and oriented towards 'mass culture' (Andy Warhol) and even towards celebrity and finance (Damien Hirst). At the same time the class composition of the market for contemporary art becomes the playground of the 1%, displayed in CEOs' offices and boardrooms as much as in traditionally prestigious galleries and castles. Some artists have always been seduced by money and fame, yet there are still pockets of artistic activity that pursue illusio that are

unrelated to fame and money, where the autonomous illusio of 'authentic' artistic practice is still cathected for those artists, but the trajectory of the art world itself has changed as heteronomous interests have come to dominate (see Thornton 2008; Gerber 2017).

At the level of everyday interactions individuals in the field will be positioned in relation to the allocation of capitals, but at another level they will be positioned closer to one of the poles by their own 'position taking': they may be trying to conserve the current conditions or to be an agent of change, or they may be manipulating that struggle for their own interests so as to remain somewhere in between. For instance, if we can imagine the opening of an exhibition taking place in a gallery, the interaction of the people at the event will be affected by the immanent structures of feeling invoked through one's position in the field. The capacity to be affected and to affect will relate to one's possession of capitals, but also to the way in which the players are oriented towards each other's conserver/progressive, or authentic/sell-out, positions. Artists and their acolytes will gather, making snarky remarks about 'the suits' doing the buying and selling, essentially displaying the 'double language of disinterest' needed to try to maintain a performance of authenticity, while also trying to make a living. The agents will be networking, trying to make sales and complaining about the childish and narcissistic behaviour of the artists they represent. While this surface-level antagonism will be obvious but seem quite strange to the outside observer not invested in the field, for insiders it is business as usual, as they *harmoniously struggle* to satisfy their needs, despite their grievances with each other – all of which serves to maintain the broad doxic functions of the field itself while allowing change to occur. The artists and their agents play out a struggle, but they both share interests, an objective complicity, in the continued existence and rewards of the field beyond the struggles between them (Lahire 2015: 66). They are cathected individuals struggling towards shared interests, whose struggles may appear absurd

or hypocritical to those on the outside, who are not cathected by the illusio of the field.

Another way that social change may occur is through subversive innovators (Hilgers and Mangez 2015: 17–18), individuals and groups that come along as products of the field itself, but who possess an orientation towards the field that runs ahead of its current doxa, anticipates emergent forms and takes advantage of immanent tendencies. Bourdieu wrote about Flaubert (Bourdieu 1993b) and Manet (Bourdieu 2017) in this regard, symbolic revolutionaries who did not destroy a field through subversion, as fields are rarely destroyed, but who reinvented its possibilities, in essence, shift its Overton Window.[1] As subversive innovators, such figures can become leaders of change, developing symbolic capital and producing new forms, products, styles, tastes and genres that will eventually become doxic. This subversive innovator perspective critiques the individual connotations of the notion of genius, showing how they are always products of the conditions of the field, regardless of how revolutionary, idiosyncratic or shocking their practices may be.

David Bowie can be used as an example of the subversive innovator. He started as a relatively straightforward singer-songwriter, drawing on dominant rock and folk tropes. He took on glam images, challenging gender and sexuality norms, all the while taking advantage of technological advancements that increasingly made image as important as sound in the music industry. Bowie is therefore seen as an individual who made a broader spectrum of gender and sexuality acceptable in the straight male-dominated field of rock, changing what was conventional, opening up space for a broader intersection of

[1] The Overton Window refers to refers to the range of ideas that are tolerated in public discourse at any given time (Lehman 2009). It is widely regarded to have shifted markedly to the right in recent years, with clearly racist and white supremacist language being used in politics and reported uncritically in the media.

identities to practice in the field and become popular. Bowie is placed as a subversive innovator in the rock canon. Many artists and fans have stated that Bowie was key to their own identity awakenings: seeing his image innovations *affected* their own conception of self. But, as we know, he certainly indulged in the usual rock star behaviours, including drugs and having sex with a minor. This seems par for the course for male rock stars but, as he is categorized as a white male genius, he has been largely absolved of any consequences (Strong 2011; Strong and Rogers 2016; Strong with Morris 2016). Some things change as some things stay the same. As time passed, Bowie became part of the furniture, shifted from innovator to conserver, dressed in business suits and had less cultural impact until a semi-comeback just before his death (and following it), but he is now part of the field's consecrated history. The power relations of the field have not really changed too much, but there has been simultaneous 'progress'[2] and change. We could point to many other subversive innovators that lead to both reproduction and change at once: Albert Einstein, Kim Kardashian, Malcolm X, Mark Zuckerberg, Rosa Parks, Belle Delphine, Larry Flynt, Marie Curie, Elon Musk, GG Allin, Laverne Cox, Vincent Lingiari, Siouxsie Sioux, Madonna, Malala Yousafzai, Greta Thunberg, Gandhi and Oprah. I'm using famous people as examples here, but there would be many in specific fields of expertise who are not celebrities but have a similar influence on their field. We can argue how subversive or how innovative each of these examples is, but their practices are synonymous with the social changes occurring around them. Judgements about whether these figures are perceived as drivers or as just beneficiaries of change will relate to where one stands in relation to the field's poles.

The art gallery and Bowie examples indicate how things simultaneously change and also remain the same. Individuals may

[2] See Tsing (2015) for a recent critique of the very notion of progress.

come along cathected to the illusio of a field, but affectively charged to challenge and change dominant tropes or create new genres. However, in terms of the relational dynamics of the field, who dominates and who is dominated, these changes tend to happen very slowly, if at all.

The affective poles of fields and subversive innovators have been overlooked in much Bourdieusian sociology, especially considering that Bourdieu is criticized so much for focusing on social reproduction over social change. These critiques have always seemed to me to be motivated by utopian or Marxian questions in terms of how revolution would happen in Bourdieu's theoretical system. But revolutions rarely happen; most change occurs slowly after a lengthy build-up even when things seem to happen quickly, and quite often, as things appear to change, they can also stay very much the same. The relationship between the practices at the poles of fields is a clear way of understanding social change processes, especially considering how the broadly labelled discourse of neoliberalism has come to dominate education, art, welfare, bureaucracy, media and many other fields. Considering the relationship between the poles of a field can help us understand how doxa and illusio from one field can have influence in another, and how one's position in social space in relation to these will be in the form of affective affinities.

Importing illusio from a different field: how individual dispositions may change

Illusio was developed to be utilized for analysis within one field. It is also a shared sense of purpose of a field, a *collusio* (Bourdieu 2000: 145), but it becomes an individual's own sense of purpose once they begin to invest themselves, as their emotional investment becomes more cathected. But an individual does not just have one illusio. For instance, education research tends to focus on that field only, or its labour market outcomes, or, more rarely still, a wider sense of general well-being. But, by

thinking from a wider multi-field perspective, we may be able to see how individuals possess multiple illusio across an array of fields and settings, where those different senses of purpose may compete or be at odds with each other. As discussed in Chapter Three, people do not just occupy one field – their lives do not occur in one setting – so thinking this way about the *relations between illusio* can provide a broader understanding of an individual's dispositions. Some aspirations, motivations, commitments and rewards may take priority over others. The experience of aspirations, motivations, commitments and rewards from one field may come to influence the strategies and struggles somewhere else.

An example of this can be drawn from my research in a multi-city DIY music scene in Australia (Threadgold 2018b). There were instances where some young people were using the values and ethics they had developed in punk spaces, with its DIY and anti-commercial doxa, to pursue what they *felt* to be a more authentic life. Punk attitudes were summoned to convey a moral sensibility in making decisions about careers, and about life decisions in general. In essence, there is an affective relation between competing illusio, where these young people gravitate towards what they feel to be more authentic and satisfying. Numerous members of the underground scene who had followed the normative post-school transitions – completing higher education, securing a professional job in a global city – were downsizing their careers to concentrate on their artistic and creative passions as early as in their mid-twenties. This was a reflexive reconfiguring of aspirations. As participants in an underground music scene, often since their teens, they had developed a strong affinity with what I describe as a DIY punk illusio: a commitment to attitudes and aesthetics that align with the notion of 'self-design' (Mankowski 2013) while concurrently building alternative spaces where like-minded people can work outside of the 'mainstream' to nurture relatively autonomous artistic communities (McKay 1998; O'Connor 2016; Woods 2017). This investment eventually becomes an

integral part of their more general disposition, that is, it sticks as they become more cathected. The illusio in which they have passionately invested the most time, energy and emotion from their cultural and artistic practices, the illusio that feels most authentic to their conception of self, is then smuggled into more legitimized fields to make decisions about career, relationships and lifestyle. Therefore, the affectivity of the punk illusio is constituted with more social gravity than normative illusio, and a closer affective affinity with punk illusio develops as they invest themselves in it. These young people become motivated by what they see as creative, ethical and moral rewards, rejecting the economic or material. This is an example of how illusio from different fields can interact, how some illusio are imbued with more or less intense social gravity and how affective affinities distribute aspirations within and between fields.

In another aspect of punk scenes, the resistive nature of punk illusio is challenged by the normative gender relations in the scene. The research I conducted with Megan Sharp (Sharp and Threadgold 2020), drawing upon ethnographic and interview data from the east coast of Australia, suggests that for non-men in punk spaces there are struggles that occur in the need to negotiate historically established male dominance. Punk scenes have the general illusio of being resistant to dominant norms and practices, especially when it comes to consumerism and capitalism, which is attractive to individuals who feel like outsiders. Yet through symbolic violence, systematic oppression can be perpetrated against those who do not invoke idealized forms of masculinity or femininity in punk spaces. To conceptualize this, we theorized concepts of *reflexive complicity*, where men and women reproduce inequality in punk spaces, and *defiance labour* – moments of overt challenge to symbolic violence within punk spaces and scenes. Men often talk a woke game when it comes to sexism in the scene, but do little to address it in terms of changing their practices. Women struggle against sexism but also acquiesce and compromise in ways that maintain the gendered hierarchy. We call

these moments, which can be invoked by men and women, reflexive complicity (Sharp and Threadgold 2020). At other times, though, women will oppose gendered symbolic violence and enact what we call defiance labour, confrontational moments where the complicity of symbolic violence is reflexively defied through reactions, responses and practices (Sharp and Threadgold 2020). In this sense a resistive punk attitude is invoked to defy dominant norms *within* punk. It is in these *affective* moments that women and queer-identifying punks utilize practices against sexism and take specific actions that contribute new narratives to change these symbolically and physically violent social relations in the scene. Hence, broader feminist illusio from outside the punk scene are imported into it to challenge male dominance and to create new doxic norms.

Cruel optimism, the promise of happiness and illusio

What if the rise of precarity means that people are striving for things that may actually be an obstacle to their own flourishing? How is the very imperative of happiness a moral call to participate in what is deemed 'tasteful', 'moral', 'worthy' or 'productive', an impossible duty that precariousness, ambivalence and reflexivity may well preclude? There is an affective differentiation in these economies of affinity. The distribution of what is deemed 'good' and 'tasteful' objects that come to embody what it means to have a good and tasteful life are moral distinctions of worth and value (Ahmed 2010: 34). One's orientation towards happiness is constituted by one's position in social space, one's sticky affinities and the intensity of one's investment in a given field or setting. Possible happiness is imbued with class, gender, race and sexual relationality which affectively mediates one's sense of what is right and wrong, fair or unfair. These affinities are expressed sensuously and emotionally.

Berlant (2011) has theorized the concept of 'cruel optimism' to consider a situation where rapid social change produces a

precariousness that has fundamentally altered how one can relate to one's own subject position and future: 'A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing' (Berlant 2011: 1). I have written about this through the figures of the hipster and the bogan (Threadgold 2018a). By thinking through the concepts of cruel optimism and illusio we can ask the research question: does one's investment of time, effort and emotion in a particular practice pay off? Cruel optimism is particularly useful for thinking about relatively privileged middle-class subjectivity and their taken-for-granted affinities. Precarity as a structure of feeling is moving up social space. As those with relatively high levels of cultural and economic capitals feel this anxiety, they also feel a sense of social injustice. Having done all the right meritocratic things – done well at school, finished a degree while engaging in strategic part-time work and internships, volunteered at the right places, taken on the short-term casual contracts at the bottom of the ladder – they find that there is still no comfort or security: the ladder just seems to lead to more ladders or trap doors. Despite doing all the 'right' things and making the 'right' choices, the middle classes are still struggling to hold it all together, to have financial security, to buy the house, to maintain relationships, to feel satisfied. Having invested themselves thoroughly in the illusio of education and work, they feel that this is not fair, especially if they are cathected towards these illusio.

At the same time there are people who didn't go to university, like miners and tradespeople, who seem to have the cash to spend on the stuff they want (even though it is the wrong stuff) and have bought their house (even though they are in the wrong places). Observing this produces ugly feelings (Ngai 2005) of envy and resentment from a disgusted subject position (Lawler 2005), directed here at the likes of the 'cashed up bogan' (Pini et al 2012; Pini and Previte 2013), who are usually also positioned as sexist, racist and environmental vandals (Nichols 2011) and are blamed for the rise of

right-wing political parties all around the world.[3] Therefore this investment in education and career looks like a relation of cruel optimism, an obstacle to flourishing. To be clear, I'm not saying that there are not obvious material and affective advantages for the educated middle classes, as reflected in a whole host of economic and health statistics, but they do not seem all that happy (Pusey 2003). Similarly, the very notion of happiness has become a form of affective practice, a moral order imposed by an imperative of 'the happiness industry' (Davies 2015).[4] If one thinks of happiness as a project of self, a project of world making, happiness becomes a promise for those who live in the 'right' way, make the 'right' choices and become 'a certain kind of being' (Ahmed 2010: 2; see also Ahmed 2014), a certain kind of accumulated being.

The project of world making reflects the key Bourdieusian struggle of drawing on the conatus aspects of habitus to make the world in one's image, and when that image does not match the reality, there is a deprivation of happiness through forms of affective violence. A lack of affinity with the doxic promises of doing the right thing leads to what Bourdieu calls the worst forms of dispossession or privation: having your own passions and interests go unrecognized (Bourdieu 2000: 241). Cruel optimism and the promise of happiness are useful for considering the illusio of all fields, settings and spaces, but especially when thinking about whether their promise is realistic, the emotional costs when they are not and the political potentialities of this disjunction.

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[3] Despite, for instance, the key demographics that voted for Trump in the 2016 presidential election being relatively wealthy (white wealthy and educated men were most likely to vote for Trump). White married women are also more likely to vote for conservative parties, despite their policies generally being socially detrimental to women (see Cole 2019; Ruppanner et al 2019).

[4] See also Cieslik (2015) for a critical engagement with the sociology of happiness studies.

Reimagining illusio through the problem of reflexivity

Much social theory in recent years has been concerned with the rise of an individualized, insecure and anxious subject position (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), where it seems that mental health problems are the new alienation of late capitalism (Fisher 2009). The rewards of the doxic promises we are immersed in from an early age throughout social space – be good, be disciplined, study, work hard, make the right choices, buy the right stuff and we will be satisfied and happy – are becoming a form of cruel optimism, except for the very privileged. There are costs and benefits for the upwardly mobile (Friedman 2014, 2016), and even the very privileged are not particularly happy (Hamilton and Denniss 2005). If this is the case, more and more people across the class spectrum will experience affective violence, which may mean that, rather than maintaining a complicity in those detrimental social relations, there will be an emergence of reflexive questioning of the very utility of investing in those illusio so intensely. Illusio is theorized in Bourdieu as a force of misrecognition that works to support those in the upper echelons of social space. The promises and rewards of fields certainly can work in this manner, but if we conceive of fields as spaces of change as much as spaces of reproduction, as forms of illusio become embedded in capitalist realism,[5] they may begin to feel like a relation of cruel optimism. New illusio may form that engender change. In this

[5] 'Capitalist realism' is a term coined by Mark Fisher (2009), which develops the misquote attributed to Jameson: that it is now easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. The actual quote is: 'It seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism' (Jameson 1996: xii). Capitalist realism is a way to think about the dominance of what Fisher calls business ontology across most facets of life, including education systems, work 'performance' cultures and metrics, and the individualization of the experiences of affective violence such as alienation and exploitation manifesting in the form of mental health problems.

sense, the ambivalent nature of illusio, that is, one's orientation towards it, is dependent on whether one is a conserver or a transformer, and can offer space for emancipatory trajectories.

In relation to Bourdieu and criticisms of determinism, illusio is not a proxy for ideology. While it can and often does play a social reproductive role, an illusio can function in anti-dominant ideological ways, in the sense that the doxa of some fields, subfields or social settings are committed to resisting and subverting dominant norms in all manner of ways, from everyday practices that 'make do' (De Certeau 1984) to criminal activity (McRobbie 2002), to protesting on the street and even terrorist acts. So, while illusio captures how individuals are cathected by social games, as a conceptual tool it should function as ideologically neutral but contextual to social space. Further, illusio is not illusion or self-delusion per se. Bourdieusian sociological practice uncovers how one is captured by social games and struggles for one's rewards through forms of self-investment. From the outside of fields, illusio may appear absurd or irrational: a priest's belief in God; the collector's search for that rare item; the edgeworker's dance with death; the sociologist's endless quest for funding. But illusio does not always work to reproduce social relations; sometimes it transforms them.

The last example is not just meant to be a self-aware throwaway line. An example to help think about how illusio works, especially in a book that is likely being read by academics, is to consider that the illusio of our field has a burgeoning relationship with reflexivity, or at least reflexive complicity. Like the generalized use of 'middle class' earlier in the book, I am using a broad generalization here as a rhetorical device; academics are a relatively broad array of people from all kinds of backgrounds. That said, there is no doubt a relative privilege in background is prominent in academia, with the majority coming from high-cultural-capital backgrounds, if not high economic capital. Academics from working-class backgrounds come to possess relatively high cultural capital, if middling economic capital, with the economic capital aspects correlating to

the precariousness of one's employment. Modern universities were invented partly to service the bourgeoisie and partly to train the middle-class professional expertise needed by the state and business. So, while academics are by definition 'middle-class' labour because of their occupation, their family backgrounds may vary. Recently, there has been a strong rise in working-class identities in the higher education system, with a corresponding rise in activism and organizing around the symbolic violence experienced by academics from a working-class background (Attfield 2016).

Reflexive complicity is the very situation of sociologists in academia. We are writing books like this, building our CVs, applying for grants, self-promoting with #AcademicTwitter, writing blogs and creating profiles on Academia.edu and ResearchGate. These practices seem to indicate a deep commitment to the game, and are evidence of our commitment to career-based aspirations. We are cathected with the academic illusio. But, at the same time, we are likely to be well aware of what we may refer to as 'whackademia' (Hil 2012) and the 'toxic university' (Smyth 2017), which beg the question of what 'good' the university is (Connell 2019): the wasted time and money going into applications with a 12 per cent success rate; the endless KPIs, REFs, ERAs[6] and other quantitative measures of our ever-increasing 'outputs'; the managerial bullying; the publish or perish culture that now sees PhD scholarship applications needing publications to be competitive; the university at the vanguard of asserting labour market precarity; the consumption and sharing of online academic satire such as Academic Obscura, Shit Academics Say, PHD Comics, University Wankings and Associate Deans. As sociologists, we are particularly well equipped to understand and to *feel* these dismal phenomena. Notice how we spend a lot of time at conferences complaining about this stuff over

[6] Key performance indicators; Research Excellence Framework; Excellence in Research for Australia.

post-seminar drinks (when not gossiping). We are aware of the absurd demands of our own field. We know that academics are over-represented in terms of depression and anxiety (Guthrie et al 2017). But we practice anyway; we struggle on. We 'come to know what we know', which is central to the very possibility of labouring to overcome deleterious social forces, or giving into necessity, where we 'lucidly know [what] extends beyond [our] capacity to amend' (Mead 2017). We seem to practice in academia in a perpetual state of cruel optimism.

At the moment, most academics are reflexively complicit in these relations, in one way or another and to different degrees. Sharp and I theorize a relation of reflexive complicity as being performed when an individual knows about unequal social relations, forms of marginalization or dubious practices, can observe them and claims to want things to change, but they make no significant changes in practice and put little effort into situational interventions that make a difference (Sharp and Threadgold 2020). But this can change. My white, straight maleness and relative job security mean that I do not suffer the sharp end of much of what has been described. Reflexively speaking, I think that my own working-class habitus in academia makes me particularly sensitive to these phenomena, where 'the emotional pull of class loyalties can entangle subjects in the affinities of the past' (Friedman 2016: 129), which, luckily for me, resulted in a relative ironic and cynical distance from these varieties of symbolic violence. But I am complicit, nonetheless.

Academics are a relatively privileged lot: I am not arguing that sociologists are alone in experiencing an increasingly reflexive, cynical, ironic or even outright hostile disposition towards aspects of the illusio of their own field. There is no reason those outside the social sciences cannot have the same reflexive relation to their own aspirations, motivations and rewards, which Bourdieu (2000) enjoyed pointing out in his critique of scholastic reason. My suspicion is that this ironic disposition, an emotional distancing from forms of affective

violence, is increasingly the norm. The rejection of illusio has been implicit in youth transitions research, especially where young people are seen to 'fail', for instance in an anti-school culture where 'working-class kids get working-class jobs' (Willis 1977). But reimagining illusio with the rise of the reflexive subject is a newer development that has implications for the very possibility of considering motivations, aspirations and their significance, and the mechanisms by which affective affinities orient one towards progressing or conserving, pursuing change or acquiescing to stasis.

Stasis and complicity: the challenge of reflexivity, irony and cynicism

While reflexivity offers possibilities to critically engage with doxic norms and illusio, reflexivity also reinforces already existing inequalities. Reflexivity therefore produces contradictory and ambivalent developments. People can be as reflexive as possible, but if they cannot put their choices into practice reflexivity becomes an intrinsic part of the experience of inequality (Threadgold 2011: 388), amplifying feelings of affective violence. Adkins notes how the reflexive subject is closely aligned with neoliberal needs (Adkins 2002: 123). For instance, rather than reflexivity freeing individuals from traditional gendered norms and expectations, gender is in fact reworked by reflexivity where it is 'bound up with modes of classification and with specific forms of power and inequality' (Adkins 2003: 34). Post-feminist analysis, for instance, highlights how traditional power and gender hierarchies are reinscribed at the same time as progress and equality are claimed (Gill 2017).

In our work (Threadgold et al 2020) with young people working in front-of-house service in Melbourne's 'hip' inner-city venues, we observed that reflexive relations of class play a similar role by working to 'make class' (Skeggs 2004a). The reproduction of symbolically violent class relations is a product

of the relations between bar staff and consumers. In the affective encounters between hospitality workers and customers, the bar workers draw on aesthetic, symbolic and moral class tropes to inform the decisions about who is a valued customer and who will become, or is, a risky patron. They sometimes draw on stereotypes reflexively, pointing out that they know this is 'wrong', but they do it anyway and then reflect on the irony and ambivalence of that situation. Class emerges relationally in these banal everyday interactions that range in intensity from the mundane to the violent. The regulation of these class relations is key to producing attractive affective atmospheres for the 'right' patrons. That is, regulation is performed through affective affinities, where controlling the right vibe in the venue is based not only on drinks, decoration and music, but on who is in the room. This is therefore key to value extraction in the night-time economies of late capitalism. These developments challenge the straightforward version of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence, which describes hierarchical relations implemented on people with their complicity. For Bourdieu, this complicity is rendered below consciousness. Bar workers and sociologists, however, can reflect on the symbolically violent relations they have with customers or with their job. The symbolic violence here is an affective violence that involves a reflexive complicity.

These kinds of social relations are further complicated by irony and its cousin, cynicism, which are increasingly the norm in a world of social media, global pop culture and fake news. Irony is central to Jameson's (1991) ever prescient analysis of postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism. Sloterdjik (1984: 190) calls cynicism an 'enlightened false consciousness'.[7] For him, contemporary cynicism

[7] I'm aware that that these authors are writing in a Marxian tradition, or at least engaging with that kind of thought, which endorses the notion of false consciousness that I have critiqued elsewhere (France and Threadgold 2015). I discuss this further overleaf in a Bourdieusian context.

> is that modernized, unhappy consciousness, on which enlightenment has labored both successfully and unsuccessfully. It has learned its lessons in enlightenment, but it has not and probably been not able to, put them into practice. Well-off and miserable at the same time, this consciousness no longer feels affected by any critique of ideology; its falseness is already reflexively buffered. (Sloterdijk 1987: 28)

Žižek (1989, 1994) is probably the most prominent exponent of the problems of irony and cynicism,[8] drawing on Sloterdjik and Lacan to claim irony and cynicism key components of Western subjectivity, a rejection or critical stance of norms while still reinforcing them. 'Cynical distance is just one way – one of many ways – to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy: even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, *we are still doing them*' (Žižek 1989: 30; emphasis in original). Academics are particularly implicated in these formations. Knowing and critiquing neoliberalism in books and journal articles, for instance, does not necessarily result in it having any less dominance or even in academics not behaving in entrepreneurial and competitive ways towards each other: 'Knowledge of the negative effects of specific forms of behaviour is not sufficient to make them go away' (Bacevic 2019: 389).

Bourdieu argued against Marxian notions of ideology and false consciousness (Bourdieu 1985; Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992) that Jameson, Žižek and Sloterdijk draw upon in their arguments about irony and cynicism. Bourdieu claimed that Marxian formations of class tend to mistake classes on paper with 'real' class, reduce the social world to the economic field alone and oversimplify the relations between owners and those selling their labour (Bourdieu 1985). By thinking

[8] A figure who himself now draws considerable irony and criticism.

relationally with Bourdieu and analyzing practices in specific social spaces, we can see how irony, cynicism and reflexivity are performed and what the specific consequences are. That is, irony and cynicism are a relative privilege, disseminated through affective affinities.

Irony and cynicism may sometimes express critique or feel like forms of everyday resistance or making do, as theorized by De Certeau (1984), but may also lead to a reflexive reinforcement and reproduction of the very things people are ironic and cynical about. Irony and cynicism can therefore be forms of reflexive complicity, but are often un reflexive or non-reflexive, in the sense that irony and cynicism are increasingly doxic. In my own work I have analyzed how cultural intermediaries are carriers of ironic distance, associated with so-called hipster culture, which produces forms of hipster racism and sexism (Threadgold 2018a).

More prominently, Chouliaraki (2013) describes the Western ironic spectator who views famine in the African continent through a mediated distance, where empathy or solidarity become a performative 'wokeness': wearing political wristbands, reading stories about celebrity charities and equating their diet with the experiences of famine. Political relations here are not about commitment to a cause but are lifestyle choices, where care for the other is performed through care of the self. Graeber (2018) proposes the ironic phenomenon of what he calls bullshit jobs, defined as: 'a form of employment that is so completely pointless, unnecessary, or pernicious that even the employee cannot justify its existence' (Graeber 2018: 3). Essentially, there are many people who are not just cynical about the relative merits of what they do, but think that the job itself should not exist, as it serves no purpose or actually does damage. There is an inverse relation in terms of renumeration whereby care work and jobs that benefit other people are poorly remunerated, but bullshit jobs that serve little societal benefit, or benefit the pockets and venality of the already wealthy – middle managers, administrators,

accountants, corporate lawyers, public relations – are likely to be well remunerated. Some of these roles are so bullshit that the people doing them realize it themselves, stop doing anything, even stop turning up, but keep getting paid for months or years anyway. Others spend most of the day on social media or find ways to appear busy, in a culture where performative busyness is de rigueur.

Conclusion

The Australian singer-songwriter Paul Kelly (2009) has written about what he calls 'The Pretendies':

> One minute you're putting a song over to the crowd, totally inside what you're doing, everything meshing; then suddenly you're adrift, floating above yourself and wondering what on Earth you're doing. You feel like a complete fake, and the thought runs through your head: *What made me think I could get away with this?* Anything can set The Pretendies off. Maybe a fluffed line or chord that jars you out of the moment. Looking at a pretty woman in the audience or glimpsing someone in the front row who reminds you of somebody you went to school with.

I propose that, as irony, cynicism and cruel optimism become even more entrenched, aspects of 'The Pretendies' will become a common experience, not just for performers who are singing, dancing and acting for our entertainment purposes, but in day-to-day life, as affective moments shudder us out of a cathected orientation towards illusio to a reflexive orientation. Whether this evolves into a rise in critical dispositions to change actual practices remains to be seen.

The reflexive, ironic and cynical subject can pose problems for how we do research and the legitimacy of our findings. For instance, when research is done on workplaces, it is rare

to be asked whether one thinks one's job should even exist. Research in a workplace that workers themselves think is bullshit is likely to evoke performative bullshit responses. In my own recent interviews with young people who create ironic memes about capitalism and social theory, I could not help thinking that some of the answers I was being given were also a performance of irony. But, more straightforwardly, it is difficult to get an interviewee to move beyond 'it's just jokes' or 'I was just being ironic' when they are pressed on racist, sexist or classist posts. They may be practicing ironically, but they are still practicing racism and sexism. The illusio of these practices – why someone is doing something, what its purpose and rewards are – are complex, and either individuals find them difficult to reflect on, or they do not want to reflect on them. Either way, considering orientations towards illusio in terms of cruel optimism, irony, cynicism and reflexivity is key to understanding contemporary subjectivity.

In this chapter I have emphasized how Bourdieu's concepts provide a robust method of accounting for social change. Affective poles and subversive innovators provide a model for thinking about how things change but also stay the same. Accounting for irony and cynicism in interviews and observation adds a level of complexity to empirical encounters, even when that is one's object of study. In the following chapter I sketch out a figure to consider the individual in social research: the accumulated being.

SEVEN

Homo Economicus Must Die: Towards a Figure of the Accumulated Being

Introduction

Turn on the TV news, read the newspaper or listen to politicians talk, and for the most part you will see human beings implicitly represented as *Homo economicus*, cultural dupes or inspirational meritocrats, or maybe a weird amalgam of all three. Of course, these are not the only figures employed in public discourse. There is a wide array of symbolically violent figures used to marginalize and scapegoat through the lenses of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability and so on: dole bludgers, single mums, junkies, chavs, young people, queue jumpers, boat people – the list goes on. Such figures are used for political purposes all the time, but the importance of the cultural dupe, *Homo economicus* and the inspirational meritocrat is their doxic status: they are invoked in the public sphere 'neutrally' in that they are not specifically used to dog-whistle or target specific groups, but to underpin the very essence of taken-for-granted assumptions on how humans practice and how society works (see Threadgold 2019b).

This chapter discusses an alternative Bourdieusian sociological figure as both a way of thinking about individuals in research, but more importantly, to publicly promote an opposition to the aforementioned figurative distortions. The accumulated being is a way of thinking about 'who we are' as a collection of embodied affects that accumulate over time, the sticky affinities that are folded into our very being.[1] Individuals therefore develop different affinities that coalesce to form the dispositions assembled as the habitus. The dispositional reservoir is then drawn upon to face current struggles and to strategize a future trajectory. I want the accumulated being to be a figurative representation of how habitus functions, not just as a 'habitual actor', but as one who struggles and strategizes 'reasonably'. The habitual aspect of habitus is often overemphasized: habitus is not fate (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 130).

Habitus produces not rational, but reasonable, expectations and practices (Bourdieu 2005: 214). Reason here is not the Enlightenment form of 'Reason', but an everyday *reasonableness*:

> Habitus is what you have to posit to account for the fact that, without being rational, social agents are reasonable – and this is what makes sociology possible. People are not fools; they are much less bizarre or deluded than we would spontaneously believe precisely because they have internalized, through a protracted and multisided process of conditioning, the objective chances they face. They know how to 'read' the future that fits them, which is made for them and for which they are made. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 130)

The accumulated being is sketched against the dominant models of *Homo economicus* (the rational decision-making machine), the cultural dupe (who has a false consciousness

[1] See Coffey and Farrugia (2014) for an analysis of Deleuze's 'the fold' and how it relates to the concept of agency.

and lives a life of apparently mindless consumption) and the inspirational meritocrat (who individually overcomes obstacles to achieve their goals, showing that determination and hard work always pay off).[2] I propose the accumulated being as a figure that opens up the everyday struggles that individuals face. This figure brings to the fore strategies people draw up to make plans and take up challenges that invokes the past, to deal with present, all while facing the future.

Considering how everyday emotions coalesce in affective moments between past experiences and future orientations helps capture how people make decisions that are not always entirely rational or seeking instant pleasure and gratification, but also considers very real obstacles and boundaries. This does not render rationality, ideology or determination as irrelevant for thinking about how humans practice, but places them among an array of reasonable criteria to consider the affinities individuals develop in everyday life. The figure of the accumulated being opposes the rationality of *Homo economicus* but does not deny the possibility of rationality in specific circumstances. It contests the oblivious sucker aspects of the cultural dupe while acknowledging that we are not always reflexively aware of our own circumstances. It attacks the false meritocracy of individualized success while not discounting the importance of making the 'right' decisions, dedication or discipline.

Homo economicus, the cultural dupe and the inspirational meritocrat

Political leaders and economic experts imagine, or at least pretend to imagine, the individual primarily as *Homo economicus*. It

[2] To be fair, I'm obviously simplifying and generalizing in the descriptions of these problematic figures, but this does not subtract from their everyday importance and the work they do in terms of maintaining doxa. I'm using these figures as a point of comparison to construct a heuristic that accounts for the emotionality of day-to-day life.

is the framing device of neoliberal economics that dominates the political economy and inflects how humans are imagined across government policy, even if the policy makers themselves, who are often trained in the social sciences, do not actually believe it.

There has been a widespread struggle in the social sciences and beyond, in connection to the unsustainability of current dominant economic policies, to kill off *Homo economicus* (see Hamilton 2003; Hamilton and Denniss 2005; Hodgson 2012; Cohen 2014; Fleming 2017; Marder 2018; Christiaens 2019; Urbina and Ruiz-Villaverde 2019). It really does need to die, but nonetheless it persists, a zombie category par excellence (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Beck and Willms 2004: 20–4). But, rather than being a zombie that is used in sociological analysis in what Beck sees as problematic with reference to concepts such as class, nuclear family and nation-state, this zombie is out there in the 'real world' doing all manner of material, existential and environmental damage. *Homo economicus* was essentially conceived as a rational decision-making machine, constantly trying to maximize its own utility based only on cost–benefit calculations. Bourdieu was very critical of *Homo economicus* as a theoretical construct, especially as espoused by Gary Becker, whose human capital theory is hugely influential in the mainstream economics that still dominates decision making and policy:

> *Homo economicus*, as conceived (tacitly or explicitly) by economic orthodoxy, is a kind of anthropological monster: this theoretically minded man of practice is the most extreme personification of the scholastic fallacy, an intellectualist or intellectualocentric error very common in the social sciences (particularly in linguistics and ethnology), by which the scholar puts into the heads of the

> agents he [*sic*][3] is studying – housewives or households, firms or entrepreneurs, etc. – the theoretical considerations and constructions he has had to develop in order to account for their practices. (Bourdieu 2005: 209)

The figure of cultural dupe is also prevalent in popular understandings of individuals, especially in critiques of everyday individual practices and forms of consumption. The cultural dupe has antecedents in the neo-Marxian model of false consciousness, where capitalism ideologically produces mindless consumers. It is also implicit in conservative critiques of young people's lifestyles, which are positioned as a threat to the moral fabric of society. Viewed from an elite, high-culture, educated, middle-class position regardless of left or right politics, the wrong individuals are cultural dupes, narcissistically consuming and vapidly ignoring what is apparently important, the vanguard of the decline of civilization: the dumbing of culture and environmental destruction. Essentially, the cultural dupe is spoon-fed by the culture industry, an attitude that lingers in popular discourse, from the dominant public understandings of social media usage (Owen 2014) to media stories linking music taste to school mass shootings (Kiilakoski and Oksanen 2011), to blue pill taking normies and members of the so-called 'Cathedral' targeted by the alt-right (Sandifer 2017). Bourdieu (1985, 1987) wrote explicitly against this Marxian model of human (see also Susen 2014, 2016). Across the left and right political spectrums, the cultural dupe figure is an empty vessel to be filled by the false needs of political manipulation and commercial interests.

[3] Note here that I have pointed out the sexist language where Bourdieu himself imagines the scholar as a man, but have not done so where he uses the term 'man of practice'. This is because *Homo economicus* is largely based on a male 'head of the household' model that is itself sexist and is therefore an accurate description of the scholastic fallacy at play here.

Where *Homo economicus* makes rational decisions, the cultural dupe is concerned only with instant gratification. Bloom (1987: 74–5) provides a good example of the cultural dupe figure when he writes of a teenage boy doing his homework while listening to music through headphones:

> He enjoys the liberties hard won over centuries by the alliance of philosophic genius and political heroism, consecrated by the blood of martyrs; he is provided with comfort and leisure by the most productive economy ever known to mankind; science has penetrated the secrets of nature in order to provide him with the marvellous, lifelike electronic sound and image reproduction he is enjoying.

For the likes of Bloom, this progress produces not a young person enjoying themselves while doing their homework, educational labour that has been increasingly shown to have little utility, but

> A pubescent child whose body throbs with orgasmic rhythms; whose feelings are made articulate in hymns to the joys of onanism or the killing of parents; whose ambition is to win fame and wealth in imitating the drag-queen who makes the music. In short, life is made into a nonstop, commercially prepackaged masturbational fantasy. (Bloom 1987: 74–5)

Despite a 'commercially prepackaged masturbational fantasy' not sounding so bad, the imagined individual here just does not know what is good for them; apparently, only if they learn to be like the white educated elite will they be able to fulfil their human potential.[4] But where the cultural dupe with a

[4] Not that high culture such as *King Lear* or *Pagliacci* could be described as masturbational fantasy!

false consciousness is blindly exploited or threatens morality, *Homo economicus* is a rational decision-making machine coldly making choices to ensure maximum efficiency and profit. This heuristic assumes that economic desires are paramount in how humans behave, which contradicts actual empirical research on how they make decisions and choices (Andre 2020). Both *Homo economicus* and the cultural dupe are severe distortions standing in for the usually white Western human.

A third more recently emerging figure is that of the inspirational individual, overcoming barriers, making huge sacrifices, investing themselves wholeheartedly in making a difference or achieving their ambitions. I call this figure the inspirational meritocrat.[5] This is the Oprahfication of the human, whereby a moving or extraordinary individual story is used to convey how, in the meritocracy that we apparently live in, no manner of obstacles and hardships are enough to keep the dogged striver down if they act entrepreneurially enough. This figure is especially present in movies and magazine profiles. The inspirational meritocrat is the anti-cultural dupe, going even beyond *Homo economicus* to pursue their goals and happiness by investing themselves in their endeavours in ways that are deeply emotional, making all the right choices but doing things that may not necessarily be described as 'rational'. This figure is particularly present in the PR of the happiness industries (Binkley 2014; Davies 2015), efforts to manufacture happy citizens (Ahmed 2010; Cabanas and Illouz 2019) and the rise of 'wellness' (Cederstrom and Spicer 2015) and 'mindfulness' (Purser 2019). Cabanas (2016, 2018) calls this highly motivated and cathected figure who struggles for their own happiness 'psytizens', invoking individualism and consumerism but in 'non-ideological' ways through scientific justifications based

[5] In Australia there is the hard-working 'battler', which has echoes of *Homo economicus* and the inspirational meritocrat, but with class condescension thrown in.

on positive psychology.[6] The wellness, mindfulness, happiness and inspiration industries, examples of what I would call Foucauldian forms of governing through freedom, have been critiqued on several fronts, most notably by Illouz (2007, 2008, 2018) and Ehrenreich (2009, 2018). The psytizen is essentially a figure of cruel optimism, where:

> happiness emodities[7] are effective because they are not limited to offering fleeting moments or states of pleasure, tranquility, evasion, hope, or reassurance, but mainly because they presuppose and target a determinate 'structure of feelings' … , a specific way of being, acting, and understanding the world, which is particular to and consistent with the neoliberal notion of citizenship. (Cabanas 2018: 175–6)

The pursuit of happiness has become institutionalized and commodified, encouraging us to become fully functioning psytizens: healthy, ready and primed for maximum productivity. A positive and energetic way of being is the only way to achieve elusive happiness. These developments are particularly relevant to women, fitting many of the features of post-feminist discourse (McRobbie 2009; Gill and Orgad 2015, 2017, 2018; Gill 2016, 2017; Gill and Kanai 2018, 2019; Banet-Weiser et al 2019).

To account for aspects of an individual's practice beyond the rational, the ideological and the inspirational, their history as embodied dispositions, their socially contextual nature and the affinities that they develop with all manner of things, people and institutions need to be empirically considered. Beyond

[6] See Rotondaro (2013) for the incredible story of a middle-aged graduate student who noticed something awry in the quantified justifications of a very prominent positive psychologist's thesis, who then embarked on a Sokalesque quest to uncover an intellectual fraud (see also Brown et al 2013; Anthony 2014).

[7] This is a neologism of 'emotional' and 'commodities'.

rational decisions, pleasure seeking or entrepreneurial striving, decisions are made in everyday affective moments.

> Only recourse to dispositions can – short of the disastrous hypothesis of rational calculation of all the ramifications of action – account for the immediate understanding that agents obtain of the world by applying to it forms of knowledge derived from the history and structure of the very world to which they apply them; it alone can account for the feeling of self-evidence which, paradoxically, masks the particular (but relatively frequent) conditions which make it possible. (Bourdieu 2000: 155–6)

The concept of accumulated being is a heuristic that can elucidate these aspects by considering affinities and their relation to processes of social magic and social closures.

The accumulated being

If *Homo economicus* is unrealistically rational, if the cultural dupe is too much of an ideological zombie, and if the inspirational meritocrat distorts how far one can realistically be socially mobile, how else can we figure the human?

Noble (2004) develops the notion of accumulat*ing* being in a study of material culture in the home. Prized possessions validate how being is accumulated in the struggle for recognition, demonstrating the density, breadth and depth of subjective experiences. This perspective moves beyond the collecting of goods as a mere expression of distinction, resonating with Miller's (1998, 2001, 2008, 2010) work that understands 'things' as having a deeply important role in what it means to be human. 'Things' certainly do 'cultural work' in that they represent social difference, establish one's social identity and procure social status. But both Noble and Miller argue that the things we possess form and delineate cultural meanings that

bestow personal significances beyond ideological domination. Things produce personal meaning relationally; they affect us. These affects can spring from pleasure, status or greed, but are also bound up with the relationality of gifts and sacrifice, defined in the anthropological sense. Things provide safety and comfort, identity and meaning. We develop affinities with things and form affinities to others through those things.

Noble uses the example of Greta, a 70-year-old who keeps two exercise books that contain writings from her grandma that she says are personally valuable because she was trying to "impart her life before she left this earth". Cliff, 59, keeps photos that "encapsulate your life and they're like keys to all the different doors of your memory". Nola "sentimentally" kept her sewing machine, but also because it expresses the *labour* she and previous generations had given to her family. These possessions provide an ontological verification of one's being: 'The affective pleasures of our prized possessions constitute the experience of that proof: joy, pain, happiness and sadness all testify to our having been and our continuing "to be"' (Noble 2004: 250). Accumulating relations with things allow a stronger consideration of the cumulative complexion of how we come to be who we are. Noble invokes Geertz's (1973) need for thick descriptions, with the model of the accumulating being ideal for considering the

> persistence and connectedness of human subjectivity across time and place … but we don't always address the ways in which this thickness is embodied in and between subjects and their objects and practices, situated in spaces and maintained over time, and how this thickness is central to the stability of key cultural categories and social relations of power. (Noble 2004: 234)

Noble writes of an accumulat*ing* being, which points to a *process*. Shifting ontology from the material to the affective, I would like to use this relational analysis to not only think

about the accumulation of things or the material goods one possesses, but also the ontological gathering of experiences and emotions to create a model of accumulat*ed* being – as a heuristic to be used to think figuratively about the individual in empirical research. By 'ontological' here I mean how as individuals we come to know what we know through the gathering of experiences that *become* our reality. This accumulation develops the affinities that become the *sensory radar* by which we navigate the social world and strategize a trajectory within it. A general illusio of each human life in late capitalism is therefore the struggle for ontological security, a struggle to hold it all together. This struggle is enacted along a trajectory from the reflexive fashion theorized by the likes of Beck, Giddens and Bauman, to the more habitual practices that align with the traditional Bourdieusian struggling actor.

The 'empirical' individual who is the object of research needs to be thought of as an assemblage of contextual experiences. The accumulation of experiences is our very being. What is accumulated to make our being? Affects. Affects are gathered and sorted, jettisoned and stockpiled, to form the emotional basis from which we *reasonably* engage with everyday life. How one reasons is not purely rational or purely emotional – this is impossible – but reason relates to drawing upon experiences, knowledges, relationships and emotions, sometimes instinctively, sometime reflexively. The accumulated being is an affected being that has developed and will continue to develop affinities. Importantly, this also brings a sense of temporality into the consideration of individuals in research: they have a past, present and future. When we survey, interview, observe or participate to collect data, at that very moment, the person or persons are an accumulated being; that is, at that specific point of contact they are the product of their history, but they are also on a trajectory. Once we finish surveying, interviewing, observing or participating with them, the individual does not cease to exist but will accumulate more being, including the participation in our research.

If the accumulated being is a way of accounting for past affects and an orientation towards the future, in terms of considering the here and now, the accumulated being is a future-oriented struggling and strategizing person. The concept of accumulated being allows us to think of an individual more holistically, as a person who shares accumulating being with others in families, groups, collectives and other shared social situations, but also, in a more individual perspective, as a person who not only practices in one field but accumulates being in social encounters across an array of fields and settings.

Importantly, accumulated being allows a sociological imagination towards broader structures of feeling and affective atmospheres that cut across fields and social spaces. An individual accumulating their being today, in a time of heightened ontological precarity, will be comparatively different from the individual accumulating their being in previous, maybe more secure, times. These different becomings can bring in thinking about broader changes in social phenomena and affective states, such as the rise of mental illness and depression in the last few decades. It can also be used to think through generational struggles over cultural capital (Bourdieu 1993a), where older generations tend to denigrate the young in all manner of ways.

The accumulated being heuristic should be used modestly, like any heuristic, in specific circumstances for specific research ends. As Lamont (2019) has reflected, the world is not a field, and all aspects of life cannot be captured by Bourdieusian struggles. Lamont's anecdote about her decision to break from Bourdieu is instructive here:

> As a student in Paris, I felt strongly that Bourdieusians believed that the world operated the way Bourdieu described it: like a combative Hobbesian zero-sum field. There were real fights and many people were frankly paranoid because they felt that the world operates like a field, that we are wolves unto one another. I did not

> want to lead my life based on such premises as I didn't think the world worked that way, at least not always, and not in a consistent manner. My decision to move away from these circles was an ontological decision, based on my understanding of the plural character of human relationships. (Lamont 2019: 169)

Lamont is pointing out here a possible reading of Bourdieu's actor, where struggle is defined as raw competition, where the individual does nothing but strategize for dominance in a field. This Bourdieusian actor has also been critically referred to as *Homo hierarchicus*, endlessly immersed in fields and competitively striving for distinction (Friedland 2009). The accumulated being can move past the stereotypical understanding of the Bourdieusian social subject of being in an eternal competition, a seeming war of all against all.[8] The struggle of this 'wolves unto one another' version is conceived as about winning, getting ahead, succeeding and accumulating capitals. But, while this captures important aspects of our lives, it is not an accurate depiction of all aspects of them. It is not *reasonable*.

This is especially so if we bring in reflexivity as a way of understanding contemporary subjectivity, whereby 'individuals are increasingly drawing on emotions in assessing themselves and their lives' (Holmes 2010: 139). Individuals are enlivened and animated by their different histories, motivations and interests; they draw on their experiences, their habitus, to make decisions. When individuals need to evaluate and alter their lives on the basis of knowledge about their circumstances, their very being is 'dependent on comparing experiences and can move others to reflect and reorder their own relations to self and others' (Holmes 2010: 139). In a risk society, especially

[8] The theorising of emotional capital is an important development in this area (see Reay 2000, 2004; Illouz 2007).

a 'post-truth' one, the production of and exposure to knowledge, whether scientific, political, media or commercially driven, does not provide more security and certainty but more insecurity and uncertainty. The need to formulate reasonable strategies in the search for ontological security engenders emotions that are homologous to position in social space, that is, one's interests. But interest here should not be thought of as only economic interest à la *Homo economicus*. Widening the concept of interests through a Bourdieusian perspective can see it evolve beyond the economic to more emotional interests towards kin and kind that do not look a lot like self-interest, but that include sacrifice, love, mistakes, missed opportunities and misinterpretations along with pursuing one's own economic interests, career or pleasurable desires. These concerns can be illuminated by making illusio more front and central in Bourdieusian research – that is, the motivations, interests and rewards of *wanting* to continue to invest oneself in a certain practice – will relate to the affinities an individual has developed and whether their investment feels like it is paying off. If it is not paying off, the individual's cathectic relation to the illusio will reasonably dwindle. Things will feel 'off'. Illusio is a way of thinking about an individual's sense of purpose, their emotional investments beyond the economically rational. Investment aligns here with Bourdieu's notion of struggle, whereby individuals move through the trajectory of their lives practicing in an array of fields and situations. The accumulated being is a product of history, develops and uses affinities to reasonably strategize about their current struggles, but is inherently oriented towards the future, even if that future may feel like it is being slowly cancelled.

Conclusion

There is nothing wrong with heuristic figures per se. Some kind of figure of the human is implicit or explicit in most philosophies, social theories and general ways of thinking about

'humans'. However, heuristic figures are damaging when they come to dominate the political, economic and social discourses for the gain of vested interests and the privileged, or when they ignore key aspects of human existence. In this sense, *Homo economicus* has replaced *Homo politicus*, which has critical implications for democracy (Brown 2015, 2019; see also Koning 2019). The cultural dupe figure allows the educated elite to blame all that is wrong in the world on a scapegoat, whether that critique is ideological or moral, all the while reflecting their conatus that is working to reproduce their *own* affinities. The inspirational meritocrat reinforces the entrepreneurial aspects of *Homo economicus* while providing an example that is the opposite of the cultural dupe: happiness is achievable not through instant gratification, but through being motivated, working hard and making the correct choices, deep inequalities be damned, even though research shows that individual cases that move up social space tend to be exceptions that prove the rule (Wilkinson and Pickett 2011; Leigh 2013; Payne 2017; Friedman and Laurison 2019). Ironically, the pursuit of wellness and happiness often relies on buying the 'right' things, especially technologies that can be used to discipline the self, such as fitness and diet apps and wearable technology such as the Fitbit (Lupton 2016).

The Bourdieusian actor is an empirical actor and needs to be thought of as a theoretical construction to understand the person being interviewed, observed or surveyed. I don't want to fall for the very scholastic fallacy that Bourdieu so vehemently critiqued, creating a figure, a theoretical construct that 'the scholar puts into the heads of the agents he [*sic*] is studying' (Bourdieu 2005: 209). But, as some kind of heuristic is needed to consider the individual in social research, the accumulated being opens up aspects of being human that other figures ignore or elide.

Conclusion

There are many 'Bourdieus'. There is the more determinist Bourdieu of *Reproduction* and the more affective and temporal Bourdieu of *Pascalian Meditations*. There was the Bourdieu who proclaimed that sociologists should stick to science and there was the Bourdieu who became a public intellectual appearing on TV. In this book I have rethought some of Bourdieu's concepts by drawing out their implicit reliance on affect, emphasizing relationality and the way affinities mediate and enable the emotional processes of social magic and symbolic violence. Individuals develop an affective reservoir of immanent dispositions as they move through the trajectory of their lives. Fields and settings are spaces imbued with their own affective atmospheres and structures of feeling. Practices develop through affinity, moments of potency where feelings and emotions emerge between the force of an affecting body and the impact it leaves on the affected.

Affects stick to form affinities. Practice in the social world is driven by affective affinities that range between what Bourdieu called social magic and symbolic violence, or what I am calling affective violence. A relation of positive affective affinity is one of ease and comfort, in the sense that one's taken-for-granted preferences, emotional relations and morals, tastes and associations provide a lubricated trajectory towards an illusio. But this trajectory will not necessarily feel easy. There still needs to be an investment of time, effort and emotion, still a need to work, to devote labour. But the affective conditions of the field or setting will be homologous with the affinities developed

throughout their history, will align with advantageous feelings and emotions in the present and then likely unfurl a relatively lubricated trajectory towards their desires. There will also be homophily with others in that space, minimizing overt conflict or discomfort. A common response of the relatively privileged when their advantages are called out is offence or bewilderment, with the complaint that 'I have worked hard for what I achieve'. Those who possess privileged affinities may still work hard, but this is a different kind of work compared to those who face material, symbolic and affective inequalities. There may be long hours, setbacks to overcome, obstacles to strategically avoid, but these hours, setbacks and obstacles fall in the realms of what is doxically expected and the individual's relative autonomy, that is, their reasonable chances. For those who are more exposed to affective violence, lacking the embodied and symbolic capacities desirable for the given social situation, there is a relation of social distance between doxic expectations and their sticky affinities. This means that in some situations, no matter how much hard work is dedicated to a particular pursuit, how cathected the individual is to the illusio of a field, the reasonable likelihood of success is precluded by material and economic insufficiencies that are compounded by symbolic sanctions and affective injuries (see Sennett and Cobb 1972 for a classic study in this regard).

As you can probably tell, after my reading Bourdieu for the last 20 years, the concepts have infused themselves into the way I see the world. They resonate affectively with my own experiences and trajectory, to the point where I need to switch it off when I'm relaxing or pursuing leisure, sport or cultural practices. But they are always there. You could say that this is therefore a problem in that my analysis is biased or misapplied, that the analysis itself lacks so-called rationality and is based too much upon emotions. But this in and of itself is the very point of affective affinities: Bourdieu has stuck to me from the early years of university study, resonating strongly at first with my own experiences and lay observations. This relation has been

developed throughout my research career. But no matter how attractive or comprehensive a social theory may be, there are always weaknesses, omissions or social changes that challenge its vitality. This book has been an intervention aimed at moving Bourdieu towards considering 'affective life', ironically one of the first things he was interested in at the start of his career.

To develop an understanding of the social order of affective events, empirical work using visual, digital and mobile methods will be valuable, along with the more traditional but vital surveys, interviews and ethnographies. By bringing together theories of affect with a much fuller array of Bourdieu's concepts than are usually drawn upon, and emphasizing the affective elements in Bourdieu, I hope that this book can be a contribution to a sociological imagination that considers the transmission and dissemination of affects as important components of class inequalities alongside the material and the symbolic.

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"Threadgold's *tour de force* through the key concepts in Bourdieu's work is both convincing and innovative. He successfully highlights and develops affective dimensions of Bourdieu's concepts."

Signe Ravn, University of Melbourne

"This project takes existing scholarship forward by truly initiating a dialogue between scholars of Bourdieu and specialists of affect theory."

Geoffrey Mead, University of Melbourne

Steven Threadgold's study represents the first comprehensive engagement of Pierre Bourdieu's influential sociology with affect theory.

With empirical research and examples from sociology, it develops a theory of 'affective affinities', deepening our understanding of how everyday moments contribute to the construction and remaking of social class and aspects of inequalities. It identifies new ways to consider the strengths and weaknesses of Bourdieusian principles and their interaction with new developments in social theory.

This is a stimulating read for students, researchers and academics across studies in youth, education, labour markets, pop culture, media, consumption and taste.

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