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# Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture

**Pierre Bourdieu**  
*and*  
**Jean-Claude Passeron**

*translated from the French by*

**Richard Nice**

*with a Foreword by*

**Tom Bottomore**

*Preface to the 1990 edition by*

**Pierre Bourdieu**



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## ACADEMIC ORDER AND SOCIAL ORDER

### Preface to the 1990 edition

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*Reproduction*, I am told, has made its way among the most widely cited books:<sup>1</sup> the 'author's vanity' would incline me to accept this consecration without further ado . . . if the lucidity of the sociologist, based on a few cases of direct encounter, did not lead me to surmise that a number of the references to it were purely classificatory, and, for some, negative, so that it may be that this book obtained in part for wrong reasons the recognition which it perhaps had every right reason to beget.

Among the causes of the success of this study – which hopefully will no longer be read in complete isolation from those of my other works to which it is closely linked<sup>2</sup> – the most obvious is arguably, along with the timing of its publication in the midst of a period of academic upheaval, its title, which quickly made it the emblem of a new current of analysis. The counterpart for this more or less acknowledged position of theoretical leadership that critics, and particularly the most critical and simplistic of them,<sup>3</sup> thrust upon the book by falling for the effect of label, however, was an extraordinary simplification – if not outright distortion – of the scientific thesis it propounded and of the empirical inquiries it contained (in a language which, I must concede, did at times reach peaks of density and difficulty, particularly in the first part devoted to a tentative exposition, *more geometrico*, of a theory of symbolic violence). Its advocates and adversaries alike have frequently joined in reducing an involved analysis of the extremely sophisticated mechanisms by which the school system *contributes* to reproducing the structure of the distribution of cultural capital and, through it, the social structure (and this, only to the extent to which this relational structure itself, as a system of positional differences and distances, depends upon this distribution) to the ahistorical view that society reproduces itself mechanically,

identical to itself, without transformation or deformation, and by excluding all individual mobility. It was no doubt easier, once such a mutilation had been effected, to charge the theory with being unable to accommodate change or to take it to task for ignoring the resistance of the dominated – so many (mis)interpretations that I have explicitly and repeatedly rejected, and which a close reading of the book, along with the empirical research in which it was grounded, should suffice to put aside.

To explain such misreadings, I could be content to invoke those interests and passions that are commonly called political: analyses guided by the will to know and explain, at the cost of a constant effort to surmount the passions, often contradictory, that the academic institution necessarily instills in those who are its product and who live off it, if not for it, are thus read in the logic of the trial, perceived through initial prejudice, for or against, as mere political theses inspired by an ordinary bias for denunciation or legitimation. Owing to the philosophical mood of the moment, such “political” readings were also often compounded with a “theoretical” or, to be more precise, a theoreticist reading: when the English translation of the book appeared (nearly a decade after the French original), the British intellectual universe was under the sway of the Grand Theory of Althusserian philosophers who had amplified the simplified “theses” they had read in *The Inheritors* and *Reproduction* by “generalizing” them under the idiom of the Ideological State Apparatuses.

None of this helped to attract the reader's attention to the painstaking empirical research and to the concrete field descriptions in which the theoretical propositions were rooted and which qualified and nuanced them from numerous angles. Thus in a series of studies published in 1965 under the title *Pedagogical Relation and Communication*, and which are still unavailable in full English translation to this day,<sup>4</sup> we developed a perspective on classroom interactions and on negotiations over the production and the reception of language which anticipated, and stands much closer to, ethnomethodological constructivism (and in particular to a book such as *Language Use and*

*School Performance* by Aaron Cicourel and his colleagues published some ten years later)<sup>5</sup> than to the kind of structuralism that *Reproduction* is routinely associated with. In this work, we examined the social construction of the multilevel social relation of classroom understanding in and through misunderstanding to reveal the process whereby students and teachers come to agree, by a sort of tacit transaction tacitly guided by the concern to minimize costs and risks in a situation that neither controls fully, on a minimal working definition of the situation of communication. Also, in another related study entitled ‘The Categories of Professorial Judgment’ published a few years before the English translation of *Reproduction*,<sup>6</sup> we attempted to retrace the social genesis and functioning of the practical taxonomies, inseparably social and academic, through which professors fabricate an image of their students, of their school performance and of their academic value, and act to (re)produce, via forms of cooptation based on these categories, the faculty as an institution. This indicates how much the labelling of *Reproduction* as a structuralist work owes to ignorance of the empirical work which underlays it.<sup>7</sup>

To appraise justly the effort of rupture that resulted in *Reproduction*, one must bear in mind what the dominant theoretical climate of the 1960s was:<sup>8</sup> the notion of “mutation” had become the buzzword of many a sociologist, especially among those who claimed to dissect the effects of the new mass media;<sup>9</sup> others prophesied the vanishing of social differences and ‘the end of ideology;’ others still, firm believers in the extraordinary ‘mobility’ of American society, proclaiming the demise of class, held that ascription was finally and for ever giving way to ‘achievement.’ Against all these notions, *Reproduction* sought to propose a model of the social mediations and processes which tend, behind the backs of the agents engaged in the school system – teachers, students and their parents – and often *against their will*, to ensure the transmission of cultural capital across generations and to stamp pre-existing differences in inherited cultural capital with a meritocratic seal of academic consecration by virtue of

the special symbolic potency of the *title* (credential). Functioning in the manner of a huge classificatory machine which inscribes changes within the purview of the structure, the school helps to make and to impose the legitimate exclusions and inclusions which form the basis of the social order. In my most recent book *The State Nobility*,<sup>10</sup> which brings together the results of a whole array of investigations on the relations between elite schools, professorial practices, and what we may want to designate by the short-hand term of the ruling class, some of which were undertaken well prior to writing this 'work of youth' that *Reproduction* is, I have shown that educational titles credentials fulfil, in a different historical context, a social function quite analogous to that which befell nobility titles in feudal society. The specific symbolic efficacy of educational titles lies in that it not only guarantees technical competency but also, as the public attestation of 'gifts' or individual 'merits,' consecrates a true *social essence*. Whence the ambiguity of the 'progress' which has taken us from the collective and hereditary statuses of the nobility *stricto sensu* to today's school nobility: if the degree of achievement and of technical proficiency actually required of the dominant has no doubt never been higher, it nevertheless remains that it continues to stand in very close statistical relationship to social origins, to birth, that is, to ascription. And, in societies which claim to recognize individuals only as equals in right, the educational system and its modern nobility only contribute to disguise, and thus legitimize, in a more subtle way the arbitrariness of the distribution of powers and privileges which perpetuates itself through the socially uneven allocation of school titles and degrees.

But one must go beyond the misunderstandings that were inscribed in the challenge that *Reproduction* represented, at least in intention, for the great antinomies that structure the understanding of the academic sociologist, those which oppose theory and research, internal and external analysis, objectivism and subjectivism, and so on. To come to a correct measure of the change of perspective (or, to use a more pompous term, of paradigm) to which *Reproduction*

contributed, it is more fruitful to focus, not on the so-called theoretical issues and polemics that owe much of their existence and of their persistence to the logic of academic reproduction, but rather on the range of works that have emerged since and have entirely renewed our knowledge and understanding of the school, in both the United States and Great Britain. Such studies, at once empirical and theoretical, as Cookson and Persell's *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools*, Jeannie Oakes' *Keeping Track*, Brint and Karabel's historical sociology of community colleges or Michelle Fine's ongoing research on ghetto schools, to name but a few,<sup>11</sup> have made us aware that American society, which was almost invariably described, in the sixties, i.e., at the time when we began our first research on education, as the promised land of social fluidity and individual achievement (in contradistinction to the older European societies ensconced in the conservatism and social rigidities of their nobilities and bourgeoisies), also has its "elite schools" and its lesser educational institutions equally devoted, like their European counterparts, to the perpetuation and legitimation of social hierarchies. Thus we now know that, in America no less than in Europe, credentials contribute to ensuring the reproduction of social inequality by safeguarding the preservation of the structure of the distribution of powers through a constant re-distribution of people and titles characterized, behind the impeccable appearance of equity and meritocracy, by a systematic bias in favour of the possessors of inherited cultural capital. This empirical validation of the model outlined in *Reproduction* in the very society that was for so long held up as its living refutation would appear to be worth all the proofs and procedures of conventional empiricist methodology. And we shall not despair that America loses yet another parcel of its 'exceptionalism' when this loss contributes to the greater unity of social science.

Pierre Bourdieu  
 Collège de France, Paris, May 1989  
 (Translation by Loïc J.D. Wacquant)

## NOTES

1. [Translator's Note] This new paperback edition of the book marks the nomination of the book as a "Citation Classic" by the Institute for Scientific Information which puts out the Social Science Citation Index (see *Current Contents/Social and Behavioral Sciences* 21(8), 20 February 1988).
2. Among others, *The Inheritors* (with J.-C. Passeron, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1964]); *L'amour de l'art* (Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1966); *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1984 [1979]); and especially *Outline of A Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977).
3. I have in mind here, among others, the book by Stanley Aronowitz and Henri A. Giroux, *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Debate Over Schooling* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), whose subtitle alone reveals a petition of methodological principle that immediately voids the claim of sociology to the autonomy of science by adopting, as with classes, a purely political taxonomy, and furthermore a purely Anglo-American one.
4. Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron et Monique de Saint Martin (eds), *Rapport pédagogique et communication* (Paris and The Hague, Mouton, 1965). Portions of this volume appeared as: Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, "Language and Pedagogical Situation," and Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron and Monique de Saint Martin, "Students and the Language of Teaching," in D. McCallum and U. Ozolins (eds) *Melbourne Working Papers 1980*, (Melbourne, University of Melbourne, Department of Education, 1980, pp. 36-77 and pp. 78-124).
5. A.V. Cicourel, K.H. Jennings, S.H.M. Jennings, K.C.W. Leiter, R. McKay, H. Mehan, and D.R. Roth, *Language Use and School Performance* (New York, Academic Press, 1974).
6. Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint Martin, "Les catégories de l'entendement professoral," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 3 (May 1975), pp. 68-93 (ec. "The Categories of Professorial Judgment," in Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, Cambridge, Polity Press, and Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1988 [1984], pp. 194-225). An even earlier piece was Pierre Bourdieu, "Systems of Education and Systems of Thought," *International Social Science Journal*, 19(3), (1967), pp. 338-358.
7. For an early examination of the scientific contribution and limits of structuralism, see Pierre Bourdieu, "Structuralism and Theory of Sociological Knowledge," *Social Research*, 35(4), (Winter 1968), pp. 681-706. See also Pierre Bourdieu, "From Rules to Strategies," *Cultural Anthropology*, 1-1 (February 1986), pp. 110-120, and "Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory*, 7-1 (Spring 1989), pp. 14-25.
8. Indeed, a full appreciation of the place of *Reproduction* among works in the sociology of education which proliferated rapidly, especially in the United States

during the 1970s, in the direction it had charted (e.g. Randall Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification," *American Sociological Review* 36, 1971, pp. 1002-1019, and Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*, New York, Basic Books, 1976), requires that one pays notice to the original date of publication of this book and of its companion volume *The Inheritors* (1970 and 1964 respectively).

9. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, "Sociologues des mythologies et mythologies de sociologues," *Les temps modernes*, 211 (December 1963), pp. 998-1021.

10. Pierre Bourdieu, *La noblesse d'Etat: Grandes Ecoles et esprit de corps* (Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1989).

11. Peter W. Cookson, Jr., and Carolyn Hodges Persell, *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools* (New York, Basic Books, 1985); Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985); Steven Brint and Jerome Karabel, *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900-1985* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989); Michelle Fine, "Silencing in Public Schools," *Language Arts*, 64-2, 1987, pp. 157-174. See also Randall Collins, *The Credential Society: A Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification* (New York, Academic Press, 1976); Julia Wrigley, *Class, Politics, and Public Schools, Chicago 1900-1950* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1982); Michael W. Apple, *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

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## FOREWORD

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The work of Pierre Bourdieu and his colleagues at the *Centre de sociologie européenne* in Paris is already well known to some English speaking sociologists and cultural historians, and perhaps especially to those who have been investigating the context and development of working class culture. But it has not previously been fully accessible to the larger audience of those whose studies may involve, in a less direct way, problems concerning the maintenance of a system of power by means of the transmission of culture. The appearance of an English translation of *La reproduction*, by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, is therefore particularly welcome; for in this book the theoretical ideas which have guided the research on cultural reproduction over the past decade or so are clearly and comprehensively expounded, and some of the important results of that research are communicated. The two parts of the book, theoretical and empirical, as the authors make clear in their foreword, are very closely connected, the theoretical propositions arising on one side from the needs of research, and on the other side being constructed or elaborated in order to make possible empirical testing.

The first important characteristic of this work, then, can be seen in the continuous interplay between theory and research; the overcoming in an ongoing collective enterprise of that division between the construction of theoretical models by 'thinkers' and the use of such models, in a derivative way, by 'researchers', which has so often been criticized as a major failing of sociology as a science. It may well be that the division can only be transcended effectively by this kind of long-term involvement in the exploration of a particular broad domain of

social life, by a group of researchers who acquire to some extent the qualities of a 'school' of thought. In the present case this characteristic is evident not only in the books that Bourdieu and his colleagues have published, but especially in the recently established journal *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* which seems to convey even in its title the notion of a continuing process of theoretical-empirical investigation. I am sure, at any rate, that this kind of permanent and systematic organization of research activities will prove more fruitful than the intermittent launching even of large scale research projects, though these too have as one of their most valuable features — over a limited period of time — an inescapable interaction between, and merging of, the activities of theoretical construction and empirical study.

The principal theoretical proposition from which this work begins is that 'every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations'. To put this in the context of the theory from which it derives, and which it develops powerfully in new directions, we can say that not only are 'the ruling ideas, in every age, the ideas of the ruling class', but that the ruling ideas themselves reinforce the rule of that class, and that they succeed in doing so by establishing themselves as 'legitimate', that is, by concealing their basis in the (economic and political) power of the ruling class. From this initial proposition Bourdieu and Passeron go on to formulate others, concerning especially 'pedagogic action' (that is, education in the broadest sense, encompassing more than the process of formal education) which is defined as the 'imposition of a cultural arbitrary (an arbitrary cultural scheme which is actually, though not in appearance, based upon power) by an arbitrary power'. The concept of pedagogic action is then developed in a series of further propositions and commentaries, which bring out, with a great wealth of detail, the diverse aspects of this action which need to be analyzed. Perhaps the most important conceptions that should be mentioned here are those which concern the significant part that the

reproduction of culture through pedagogic action plays in the reproduction of the whole social system (or social formation), and those dealing with the 'arbitrary' character of culture, which is arbitrary not simply in its content, but also in its form, since it is imposed by an arbitrary power, not derived from general principles as a product of thought.

In the second part of the book these theoretical propositions are not 'applied' to empirical reality (to say this would be to distort the relation between theory and research that is embodied, as I have indicated, in this investigation); rather, we are shown how, in analysing a particular system of pedagogic action (primarily, in this case, the formal educational system) in France, the theoretical propositions can give rise to empirically testable propositions, while the confrontation with an empirical phenomenon stimulates the construction or modification of theoretical propositions. There is much that is original in this analysis, but perhaps what is most notable is its breadth; it is not confined to an examination of the social selection of students at different levels of the educational system, nor to a discussion of class differences in linguistic codes (here expressed more comprehensively as 'linguistic and cultural capital'), but observes closely the actual process of pedagogic action, especially in the universities, and sets all these phenomena in a wider framework of the historical transformations of the educational system. It would undoubtedly be of the greatest interest to have similar investigations in other societies, and in due course the possibility of comparisons which might reveal still more clearly the diverse ways in which cultural reproduction contributes to maintaining the power of dominant groups.

There is an important theoretical question posed by this study which deserves further consideration. In the first part of the book the authors refer frequently to the imposition of an arbitrary cultural scheme, and of a particular type of pedagogic action, by 'dominant groups and classes', and in the second part they make use of social class categories in examining social selection in the educational system. These propositions and analyses evidently presuppose a theory of classes and 'dominant groups' (fractions of classes or elites), both in the sense of a

general conception of the division of societies into such groups and classes which results in the imposition of a culture and in pedagogic action as symbolic violence, and in the narrower sense of a set of derived propositions which define the dominant classes and groups in a particular society and thus link the specific manifestations of pedagogic action with the basic characteristics of a determinate social structure.

From another aspect, of course, it may be said that the analysis of pedagogic action, and of the whole process of cultural reproduction, itself generates or modifies theoretical conceptions of the structure of dominant and subordinate classes and groups. Hence, this kind of research may lead, as in the studies contained in the second part of the book, to a confirmation (or in some cases a questioning) of a theory of class relations initially taken for granted. It would be interesting to pursue further the examination of such problems: to ask, for example, what changes in cultural reproduction occur with changes (if there are such) in the composition of dominant classes and groups, or with the growth in size of the middle classes (in whatever way this is to be conceived theoretically), or with changes in the nature and situation of the working class, or sections of it. The authors mention occasionally the pedagogic action of 'dominated classes', with which we could associate the notion of a 'counter-culture', and this aspect of their subject is doubtless one that will be developed more fully in the future, along with the theoretical discussion of class relations.

Thus this whole project of continuing research reveals new features in the analysis of social classes and political power. Arising probably from the intense interest in cultural dominance and cultural revolution that emerged in radical movements a decade ago, these investigations connect cultural phenomena firmly with the structural characteristics of a society, and begin to show how a culture produced by this structure in turn helps to maintain it.

Tom Bottomore  
*University of Sussex, 1976*

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## FOREWORD TO THE FRENCH EDITION

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The arrangement of this work in two books, at first sight very dissimilar in their mode of presentation, should not suggest the common conception of the division of intellectual labour between the piecemeal tasks of empirical inquiry and a self-sufficient theoretical activity. Unlike a mere catalogue of actual relations or a summa of theoretical statements, the body of propositions presented in Book I is the outcome of an effort to organize into a system amenable to logical verification on the one hand propositions which were constructed in and for the operations of our research or were seen to be logically required as a ground for its findings, and on the other hand theoretical propositions which enabled us to construct, by deduction or specification, propositions amenable to direct empirical verification.<sup>1</sup>

After this process of mutual rectification, the analyses in Book II may be seen as the application, to a particular historical case, of principles whose generality would support other applications, although those analyses were in fact the starting point for the construction of the principles stated in Book I. Because the first book gives their coherence to studies which approach the educational system from a different angle each time (dealing in succession with its functions of communication, inculcation of a legitimate culture, selection, and legitimation), each chapter leads, by various routes, to the same principle of intelligibility, i.e. the system of relations between the educational system and the structure of relations between the classes, the focal point of the theory of the educational system which progressively constituted itself as such as its capacity to construct the facts was affirmed in our work on the facts.

The body of propositions in Book I is the product of a long series of transformations, all tending to replace existing propositions with other, more powerful ones which in turn generated new propositions linked

to the principles by more and closer relations. Our memory of that process would suffice to dissuade us from putting forward the present state of formulation of this system of principles as a *necessary* one — though they are linked by necessary relations — did we not know that this is true of every body of propositions — and even theorems — considered at a moment in its history. The guidelines which determined how far we pursued our enquiries were implied in the very project of writing the book: the uneven development of its various moments can only be justified in terms of our intention of pursuing the regression towards the principles or the specification of consequences as far as was necessary in order to relate the analyses in Book II to their theoretical basis.

Setting aside the incongruous option of devising an artificial language, it is impossible to eliminate completely the ideological overtones which all sociological vocabulary inevitably awakens in the reader, however many warnings accompany it. Of all the possible ways of reading this text, the worst would no doubt be the moralizing reading, which would exploit the ethical connotations ordinary language attaches to technical terms like 'legitimacy' or 'authority' and transform statements of fact into justifications or denunciations; or would take objective effects for the intentional, conscious, deliberate action of individuals or groups, and see malicious mystification or culpable naivety where we speak only of concealment or misrecognition.<sup>2</sup> A quite different type of misunderstanding is liable to arise from the use of terms such as 'violence' or 'arbitrariness'<sup>3</sup> which, perhaps more than the other concepts used in this text, lend themselves to multiple readings because they occupy a position at once ambiguous and pre-eminent in the ideological field, by virtue of the multiplicity of their present or past uses or, more exactly, the diversity of the positions occupied by their past or present users in the intellectual or political fields. We must claim the right to use the term arbitrariness to designate that and only that which is yielded by the definition we give it, without being obliged to deal with all the problems directly or indirectly evoked by the concept, still less to enter into the twilight debates in which all

philosophers can think themselves scientists and all scientists philosophers, and the neo-Saussurian or para-Chomskian discussions of the arbitrariness and/or necessity of the sign and/or sign system or the natural limits of cultural variations, discussions and debates which owe most of their success to the fact that they revamp the dreariest topics<sup>4</sup> of the school tradition, from *phusei* and *nomos* to nature and culture. When we define a 'cultural arbitrary' by the fact that it cannot be deduced from any principle, we simply give ourselves the means of constituting pedagogic action in its objective reality,<sup>5</sup> by recourse to a logical construct devoid of any sociological or, a fortiori, psychological referent. We thereby pose the question of the social conditions capable of excluding the logical question of the possibility of an action which cannot achieve its specific effect unless its objective truth as the imposition of a cultural arbitrary is objectively misrecognized. This question can in turn be specified as the question of the institutional and social conditions enabling an institution to declare its pedagogic action explicitly as such, without betraying the objective truth of its practice. Because the term arbitrariness applies, in another of its uses, to pure de facto power, i.e. another construct equally devoid of any sociological referent, thanks to which it is possible to pose the question of the social and institutional conditions capable of imposing misrecognition of this de facto power and thereby its recognition as legitimate authority, it has the advantage of continually recalling to mind the primordial relationship between the arbitrariness of the imposition and the arbitrariness of the content imposed. The term 'symbolic violence', which explicitly states the break made with all spontaneous representations and spontaneist conceptions of pedagogic action, recommended itself to us as a means of indicating the theoretical unity of all actions characterized by the twofold arbitrariness of symbolic imposition; it also signifies the fact that this general theory of actions of symbolic violence (whether exerted by the healer, the sorcerer, the priest, the prophet, the propagandist, the teacher, the psychiatrist or the psychoanalyst) belongs to a general theory of violence and legitimate violence, as is directly attested by the interchangeability of the different

forms of social violence and indirectly by the homology between the school system's monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence and the State's monopoly of the legitimate use of physical violence.

Those who choose to see in such a project only the effect of a political bias or temperamental irredentism will not fail to suggest that one has to be blind to the self-evidence of common sense to seek to grasp the social functions of pedagogic violence and to constitute symbolic violence as a form of social violence at the very time when the withering-away of the most 'authoritarian' mode of imposition and the abandonment of the crudest techniques of coercion would seem more than ever to justify optimistic faith in the moralization of history by the sheer effects of technical progress and economic growth. That would be to ignore the sociological question of the social conditions which must be fulfilled before it becomes possible to state scientifically the social functions of an institution: it is no accident that the moment of transition from ruthless methods of imposition to more subtle methods is doubtless the most favourable moment for bringing to light the objective truth of that imposition. The social conditions which require the transmission of power and privileges to take, more than in any other society, the indirect paths of academic consecration, or which prevent pedagogic violence from manifesting itself as the social violence it objectively is, are also the conditions which make it possible to state explicitly the objective truth of pedagogic action, whatever the degree of harshness of its methods. If 'there is no science but of the hidden', it is clear why sociology is allied with the historical forces which, in every epoch, oblige the truth of power relations to come into the open, if only by forcing them to mask themselves yet further.

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 NOTES
 

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1. The theory of pedagogic action presented here is grounded in a theory of the relations between objective structures, the habitus and practice, which will be set out more fully in a forthcoming book by Pierre Bourdieu (see Translator's Note).

2. I.e. 'méconnaissance', the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder. The (admittedly 'artificial') term 'misrecognition' has been adopted because it preserves the link with 'recognition' (*reconnaissance*) in the sense of 'ratification', and is consistent with the usage of other translators (trans.).

3. *arbitraire*: translated, according to context, as 'arbitrariness' or 'arbitrary' (as in 'cultural arbitrary') (trans.).

4. *les plus tristes topiques*: a passing shot at Claude Lévi-Strauss, author of *Tristes tropiques* (trans.).

5. I.e. the action of teaching or educating, considered as a general social process, neither limited to the school nor even necessarily perceived as education. In this translation the word 'pedagogy' is to be understood in the sense of educative practice, whose principles may or may not be explicitly formulated (trans.).

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 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE
 

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The availability of *Reproduction* in English is an event of some importance for Anglo-American sociology – and not only the 'sociology of education'. The remarks which follow, which seek to relate this book to its context in the collective research led by Pierre Bourdieu at the Centre for European Sociology (CES), in no way detract from its significance: on the contrary, by refusing to see *Reproduction* as a 'last word', but situating it in the process of research in which it represents a moment of provisional stock-taking, they should only enhance its utility.

Appended to this volume is a selective list of works on aspects of the sociology of education and culture, produced since 1964 by members of the CES; they are referred to by date and number here and in the notes to the text. Some of these works offer complementary applications and analyses, others carry further the theoretical analyses presented here, and others help to ground and rectify the general theory of symbolic power, of which the sociology of education is only one dimension.

Areas of specifically educational activity which *Reproduction* maps out more than it explores – scientific and technical education – are dealt with more fully by Claude Grignon (1971, 1; 1975, 11; 1976, 4) and Monique de Saint Martin (1971, 2). Other areas which have been studied more intensively include the *classes préparatoires* (1969, 1), religious education (1974, 4) and classroom disorder (1972, 4).

A point of reference to which *Reproduction* constantly returns is the structural homology between the school system and the Church. This homology is expounded more fully by Pierre Bourdieu in two articles on Weber's sociology of religion (1971, 5; 1971, 6). Religion and education, considered sociologically, constitute 'fields' – of forces

— comparable in their functioning to magnetic fields. This concept has been elaborated and applied in other areas in Pierre Bourdieu's subsequent work: see in particular 1971, 4 (on the intellectual field); 1973, 2 (the market in symbolic goods); 1975, 3 (the intersection of literature and power), 1975, 4 (philosophy and power); 1976, 1 (the scientific field). Recent articles by Luc Boltanski (1975, 1) and Bourdieu (1975, 8) explore fields (the strip cartoon, *haute couture*) marginal to the sphere of high culture but where a similar logic prevails. The studies of Flaubert, Amiel and Heidegger (1975, 3; 1975, 2; 1975, 4) seek to show at the level of the 'author' how individual strategy comes to terms with the objective structures of the field. Those who suppose that the methodological use of the 'cultural arbitrary' implies a selling-short of scientific culture will find that the article on the scientific field (1976, 1) specifies the conditions in which the play of interests and strategies within a field can nonetheless work to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

The agents involved in a given field share a 'misrecognition' of the true relations between the structure of that field and the structures of economic and political power; in the religious field this misrecognition is the foundation of *belief*, a concept amenable to transfer into the analysis of other fields. The process of misrecognition, formulated in a relatively abstract way in *Reproduction*, is grasped more concretely in 1975, 9, an analysis of the way in which teachers' judgements on their pupils transmute social classifications into school classifications (and, in a very different cultural context, in Bourdieu's anthropological studies in Kabyle society, in 1977, 1). These analyses may also be read in relation to the discussion of the institutional and social positions of the various categories of teachers which predispose them towards specific ideologies and practices (Chapter 4). Analyses of the situation of the teaching profession in the relationship between the school system and the economy, dealing more fully with the dynamics of that relationship, are to be found, in particular, in 1971, 9; 1973, 5; 1974, 3.

The role of class linguistic 'codes' is analysed further in 1975, 7, which contains a fuller discussion of the work of Basil Bernstein in

relation to the work of W. Labov, and a fuller exposition of the theory of language which underpins the research in Chapter 2. The discourse of teaching, the 'language of authority', is dealt with further in 1975, 5, where there is a critique of J. L. Austin's notion of the 'illocutionary force' of utterances, arguing that the power of the speech act resides in the social authority delegated to a legitimate spokesman.

Thus the theory set out in *Reproduction* has been developed in ways which have constantly augmented its explanatory power and which dispel the vestiges of functionalism or abstract objectivism which the residual one-sidedness of some of the expositions in *Reproduction* may have allowed to remain. The central concept of the *habitus* receives its fullest development in 1972, 1 (the work referred to in the Foreword, note 1). The forthcoming English translation (*Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1977, 1) contains additional chapters on 'practical logic', symbolic capital, and the different modes of domination. The analysis in Chapter 3 of *Reproduction* of the dialectic of objective class future and subjective experience is taken further in 1974, 1. On the social origin of the 'pure' aesthetic capability and the competence required for decoding a work of art, see 1971, 3 (cf. also 1968, 1). *Habitus* as 'taste' is anatomized in 1976, 3.

The Appendix contains an account of the 'translation' of the structure of objective educational chances which, while itself remaining relatively 'objectivist', at least makes it possible to pose the question of the role which individual and class strategy play in this process. As subsequent studies by Bourdieu and Boltanski (1971, 9; 1973, 4; 1975, 6) have shown, this process results from the play of antagonistic interests competing on the terrain of symbolic production, especially for command of the educational system and the profits it gives. Enlargement of the field — without any change in its *structure* — integrates previously excluded classes, enabling and constraining them to engage in competition in which the definition of the stakes and the possible modes of struggle (the range of strategies) proper to that field are themselves at stake in the struggle. See, for example, 1972, 2 (on marriage strategies); 1973, 4 (reconversion of economic into symbolic

capital), 1975, 6 (the inflation of qualifications). The task of sociology in bringing these mechanisms to light is defined as one of 'deconsecration' (*Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 1, p. 2).

The term 'misrecognition' epitomizes the translator's quandary; in French *méconnaissance* is a simple word though given a specific scientific sense. Here as elsewhere a clouding of the original text seems unavoidable. It is hoped that recurrence and context will give familiarity to terms which have often been preferred to the use of too readily recognizable 'native' notions. Thus the term 'pedagogy' is no wilful gallicism but the sign of the break with merely psychological accounts of the teacher-pupil relation (see also the English translation of Durkheim's *Education and Sociology*). Such French usages as have been retained, whether for the sake of brevity (for the names of institutions, see Glossary) or merely inadvertently, will not, it is hoped, obscure the relevance of *Reproduction* to our own educational systems. Those who suppose this work treats only of France should remember Marx's admonition to his German readers when writing on England: *De te fabula narratur*.

Richard Nice  
Birmingham, UK, 1976

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS and Translator

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**PIERRE BOURDIEU** was born in 1930 in France. After study at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, he became agrégé in Philosophy. He lectured in the Faculty of Letters in Algeria 1959-60, at the University of Paris 1960-62, and at the University of Lille 1962-64. He is presently Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes and Director of the Centre for European Sociology, Paris. He is the Editor of the journal *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, and is the author of *Sociologie de l'Algérie* (1958), *The Algerians* (1962), *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie* (1964), *Le Déracinement* (with Abdel Malek Sayad, 1964), *Les étudiants et leurs études* (with Jean-Claude Passeron, 1964), *Les Héritiers* (with Jean-Claude Passeron, 1964), *Un Art moyen* (1965), *L'Amour de l'art* (with A. Darbel, 1966), *Le Métier de sociologue* (with Jean-Claude Passeron and Jean-Claude Chamboredon, 1968), *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* (1972), and numerous articles on the sociology of education.

**JEAN-CLAUDE PASSERON** was born in 1930 in France, and also became agrégé in Philosophy after study at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. He has taught at the Sorbonne in Paris, and at the University of Nantes. Since 1968 he has been at the experimental University of Vincennes, where he set up and directed the Sociology Department. Since 1960 he has collaborated in work at the Centre for European Sociology with Pierre Bourdieu, particularly in directing research in the sociology of education and in the publication of work arising from it, notably in *Les Héritiers* (with Pierre Bourdieu, 1964) and *La Reproduction* (with Pierre Bourdieu, French edition, 1970). He has also published *La Réforme de l'Université* (with G. Antoine, 1966), and has prefaced and directed translations, in particular that of Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (French edition, 1970).

**RICHARD NICE** was born in 1948 in London, and took his B.A. in English at King's College, Cambridge. He has taught for four years in the French educational system — at the University of Paris, the Ecole Normale Supérieure, and elsewhere in Paris, and also in Brittany. He now teaches French at the University of Surrey, UK.