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Citation: Susen, S. (2013). A Reply to My Critics: The Critical Spirit of Bourdieusian Language. *Social Epistemology*, 27(3-4), pp. 323-393. doi: 10.1080/02691728.2013.824646

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Link to published version: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2013.824646>

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A Reply to My Critics:

The Critical Spirit of

Bourdieuian Language

Simon Susen

ABSTRACT

Drawing on my article “Bourdieuian reflections on language: Unavoidable conditions of the real speech situation”, this paper provides a detailed response to the above commentaries by Lisa Adkins, Bridget Fowler, Michael Grenfell, David Inglis, Hans-Herbert Kögler, Steph Lawler, William Outhwaite, Derek Robbins and Bryan S. Turner. The main purpose of this “Reply to my critics” is to reflect upon the most important issues raised by these commentators and thereby contribute to a more nuanced understanding of key questions arising from Bourdieu’s analysis of language.

KEYWORDS: Adkins; Bourdieu; Communication; Fowler; Grenfell; Inglis; Kögler; Language; Lawler; Outhwaite; Robbins; Susen; Symbolic Power; Turner

First of all, I would like to thank the commentators——Lisa Adkins, Bridget Fowler, Michael Grenfell, David Inglis, Hans-Herbert Kögler, Steph Lawler, William Outhwaite, Derek Robbins and Bryan S. Turner——for contributing to this Special Issue on “Bourdieu and Language”. I am infinitely grateful for their detailed and insightful commentaries, in which they raise numerous important points and examine

the weaknesses and limitations of the argument developed in my article “Bourdieuian reflections on language: Unavoidable conditions of the real speech situation”¹. Inevitably, my paper gives a partial account of what I consider to be the principal elements of a Bourdieusian philosophy of language. The shortcomings of my outline, which have been skilfully identified by the commentators on the basis of their perceptive engagement with my analysis, need to be addressed in order to push the discussion forward and thereby avoid falling into the trap of intellectual dogmatism. After all, Bourdieu was deeply suspicious of theoreticism, and the last thing he sought to achieve was to invent static conceptual templates for an unreflexive sociology. The discussions sparked by this Special Issue have been intensely illuminating to me. In fact, it seems to me that the critical and eclectic spirit in which the commentaries are written illustrates, once more, that it would be erroneous to suggest that anyone possesses an epistemic monopoly on the interpretation of Bourdieu’s oeuvre. In this “Reply to my critics”, I will try to address the key issues raised by the commentators.

William Outhwaite

William Outhwaite’s commentary—entitled “Bourdieu and Habermas: ‘Linguistic exchange’ versus ‘communicative action’? A reply to Simon Susen”²—conveys an important message: useful lessons can be learned from cross-fertilizing the works of seemingly opposed thinkers, such as Bourdieu and Habermas. I share Outhwaite’s view that their approaches should be regarded as *complementary*, rather than as antithetical; and I am flattered by his suggestion that I have “provided such a comprehensive and illuminating analysis that it is hard to know what to add”³. To my mind, this comment reflects both a vital strength and a significant weakness of my study. On the one hand, it may well be true that my account is sufficiently wide-ranging and insightful to come to the conclusion that it covers almost every fundamental aspect of what I consider to be a Bourdieusian philosophy of language. On the other hand, it is precisely its methodical and logocentric character of which many Bourdieusian scholars will be suspicious. Unlike Parsons and Habermas, Bourdieu was not a “system builder”; on the contrary, he was profoundly distrustful of ambitious attempts to provide macro-theoretical frameworks capable of capturing the complexity of relationally organized realities by virtue of catch-all concepts and explanatory recipes.

In a way, then, unsympathetic critics may argue that a more appropriate title for my article would have been “*Anti-Bourdieuian reflections on language*”. For the *system-building* spirit in which it is written, including the various *transcendental* claims it makes about the nature of language, may be deemed incompatible with the *open-minded* disposition and the *relationalist* convictions underlying Bourdieusian modes of sociological investigation. It seems to me that such a criticism is entirely justified, just as I concur with the assessment that it would be erroneous to reduce Bourdieusian analysis to a theoretical framework based on the socio-ontological trinity of “field, habitus and capital”. I also believe, however,

that—as I have sought to show in the article—Bourdieu makes various *universalist* assumptions about the constitution of the human world. The pivotal question is not whether or not this contradicts Bourdieu’s intentions (a scholastic question which does not have any practical consequences one way or another). Rather, the interesting question is what *insights* can be gained from Bourdieu’s analysis, regardless of whether one comes to the conclusion that it is founded on “relationalist” or “quasi-transcendentalist” presuppositions (a scientific question which permits us to engage with the subject matter itself, rather than with the connotatively charged labels used to represent it).

Let me attend to the task of responding to six important issues raised by Outhwaite.

(1) *Idealism*: As far as I can see, Outhwaite is right to remark that my essay creates a somewhat *questionable opposition between Bourdieu and Habermas*. To put it bluntly, the former plays the role of a hermeneutic hero in my analysis, whereas the latter “appears as a foil in this article”⁴. Outhwaite correctly points out that this paradigmatic antinomy is flawed to the degree that both Bourdieu and Habermas “were reacting against [...] ‘hermeneutic idealism’”⁵. In other words, although it makes sense to suggest that, as I have tried to demonstrate in my paper and elsewhere⁶, Habermas puts forward a “somewhat idealized model of language use”⁷, whilst Bourdieu favours a “more robust sociological approach”⁸, both reject scholastic accounts which make “particularly strong claims for the place of language in human relations”⁹ and instead conceive of language as only *one* amongst other fundamental elements of social life.

(2) *Utopianism*: Outhwaite has every reason to remind Bourdieusian scholars, who have a tendency to misrepresent Habermas’s arguments, that “his image of the ‘ideal speech situation’”¹⁰ is “almost always presented as an *ideal type* and *reference point*, rather than as a concrete utopia”¹¹, in his writings. Thus, Habermas—similar to Bourdieu—is concerned with the unavoidable conditions of *real* speech situations, rather than exclusively with the avoidable conditions of the ideal speech situation. It is no accident that Habermas, in his later writings¹², has expressed some dissatisfaction regarding the fact that, as he sees it, his conception of ideal speech has been misinterpreted and, in some cases, even caricatured, making him look like an armchair philosopher who fails to engage with the messy reality of social life, including everyday communication. The truth is, however, that Habermas has been insisting for a long time that “[l]anguage is *also* a medium of domination and social power”¹³, and that, based on this central presupposition, the whole point of developing an “idealized model of language use”¹⁴ is to recognize that symbolically mediated forms of intersubjectivity hardly ever meet the internal and external preconditions for the possibility of ideal speech.

(3) *Functionalism*: What is the main function of language? Outhwaite pertinently states that we need to question Habermas’s “peculiarly narrow focus on language use as essentially a means of coming to *agreement* about states of affairs in the world and what to do about them”¹⁵. He nonetheless sympathizes with Habermas’s attempt “to abandon the primacy of intentionality in favour of the

priority of mutual linguistic understanding”¹⁶, which lies at the heart of the theory of communicative action¹⁷. In this respect, it is useful to distinguish three principal levels of understanding:

- understanding in the *cognitive* sense of comprehending something (*Verstehen eines Tatbestandes*);
- understanding in the *intersubjective* sense of comprehending someone else’s assertions (*Verstehen einer Aussage*); and
- understanding in the *empathetic* sense of comprehending someone else’s motives, feelings or situation (*Verstehen eines Mitmenschen*).

The picture becomes more complex if we distinguish between the following four terms, which are etymologically interrelated: *Verstand*, *Verstehen*, *Verständigung* and *Einverständnis*. As a species, we have learned to make use of reason (*Verstand*) and to reach different levels of comprehension (*Verstehen*) by learning to communicate with one another (*Verständigung*) and, if necessary, reach agreements with one another (*Einverständnis*). All four practices—that is, *reasoning*, *interpreting*, *communicating* and *agreeing*—are conceivable only as (a) *cognitive*, (b) *intersubjective* and (c) *empathetic* dimensions. As a species, we have learned to *reason*, *interpret*, *communicate* and *agree* with one another by developing (a) the *cognitive* capacity to argue with and against one another, (b) the *intersubjective* capacity to socialize with one another and (c) the *empathetic* capacity to feel for one another. Far from being reducible to a merely semantic argument, the awareness of the etymological affinity between *Verstand*, *Verstehen*, *Verständigung* and *Einverständnis* is vital to appreciating the civilizational significance inherent in the power of human understanding.

(4) *Foundationalism*: Outhwaite draws our attention to the fact that Habermas’s “early attempt [...] to construct what became his theory of communicative action as a linguistic *foundation* of sociology in ‘universal pragmatics’”¹⁸ was initially developed in his Gauss Lectures of 1970–71, which Bourdieu may never have read. Outhwaite accurately contends that, if Bourdieu had taken note of Habermas’s confession of having distanced himself from “the interests of the sociologist”¹⁹ by trying “to satisfy the explicative demands of the philosopher”²⁰, the French Pascalian *relationalist* might have had a more sympathetic attitude towards the German neo-Kantian *rationalist*. Ultimately, for both of them, the paradigmatic opposition between philosophy and sociology constitutes an artificial and counterproductive antinomy, since neither of the two can be adequately pursued without the other. Philosophy without sociology is tantamount to a skeleton without flesh, just as sociology without philosophy is tantamount to flesh without a skeleton. Habermas’s objective to provide normative foundations for critical theory by reconstructing the rational grounds of communicatively organized societies may be considered a pointless enterprise by Bourdieusian scholars. To the extent that Bourdieu’s account of language is *also* based on universalist assumptions about the nature of symbolic forms, however, it is not incompatible with the foundationalist spirit of Habermas’s endeavour.

(5) *Dichotomism*: Outhwaite perceptively remarks that “it is ironic that Bourdieu, while reacting against French structuralism, remained fixed in *binary oppositions*”²¹. Hence, Bourdieu’s self-declared mission to overcome counterproductive antinomies in the social sciences²² is contradicted by the fact that his conception of language is based on a number of dichotomous categorizations. As I have sought to demonstrate in another study²³, this also applies to Bourdieu’s tension-laden conception of science. Furthermore, one may wonder to what extent this is true for his homological account of the social, which emerges from the interaction between field and habitus.²⁴ Regardless of whether or not one comes to the conclusion that Bourdieu has succeeded in overcoming counterproductive antinomies in the social sciences, it appears that conceptual binaries will be with us for a long time to come.

(6) *Dogmatism*: Perhaps, this is the most important lesson to be learned from Outhwaite’s astute comments. There is no point in converting Habermas into a straw man and in portraying Bourdieu as the king of sociological theory. The nuances of their works cannot be captured by creating a reductive opposition between the former, as a hopelessly *abstract philosopher*, and the latter, as an *empirically engaged sociologist*. As I have sought to demonstrate elsewhere²⁵ and as Outhwaite rightly insists in his commentary, useful insights can be obtained from recognizing that “[t]heir respective models of language and society are best seen as *complementary*”²⁶. Far from constituting a merely scholastic undertaking, the project of exploring key points of *convergence*, *divergence* and *integration* between Habermas and Bourdieu²⁷ permits us to cross-fertilize two seemingly incompatible perspectives and thereby overcome some of their shortcomings. In this respect, the following three insights are particularly important: (a) Habermas’s socio-ontological *idealism* is expressed in his optimistic belief in the preponderant role of communicative action capable of shaping dialogically structured lifeworlds. (b) Bourdieu’s socio-ontological *fatalism* is epitomized in his pessimistic assumptions concerning the predominant force of strategic action mobilized in power-laden fields. (c) Socio-ontological *realism* does justice to both the cooperative *and* the competitive elements permeating the development of human interactions.

Bridget Fowler

In her paper “Simon Susen’s ‘Bourdieuian reflections on language: Unavoidable conditions of the real speech situation’—A Rejoinder”²⁸, Bridget Fowler has demonstrated once again why she deserves to be regarded as one of the leading Bourdieusian scholars in contemporary British sociology. Her commentary contains an abundance of perceptive and constructive remarks, which shed light on both the strong and the weak aspects of my article.

I am flattered by her judgement that “Susen’s (2013) critique of Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of language is impressively erudite”²⁹, as well as by her assessment that “Susen’s virtuoso presentation argues convincingly that Bourdieu’s socio-analysis of language has certain *ontological* premises”³⁰. Furthermore, it is kind of

her to suggest that my study “illuminates the subtlety of Bourdieu’s Diltheyan/Weberian heritage”³¹, expressed in his concern with the existential centrality of the human search for *meaning*, an aspect of Bourdieu’s work which is often ignored, particularly by empirical sociologists. I am also pleased to learn that Fowler thinks that my piece “displays, with great pathos, Bourdieu’s *tragic sense of being human*, viz. that we are born into a world where we learn to use language; yet, as we do so, we are drawn surreptitiously into *acceptance of pre-reflexive prejudices*”³², which are part of the socio-historical horizons in which we find ourselves immersed. I am grateful to Fowler for stating that she thinks I write “with the utmost clarity and simplicity about these carefully juggled *paradoxes* of Bourdieu’s historical sociology”³³, notably the various tensions arising from the complementary relationship between the naturalization of the social and the socialization of the natural. Finally, it seems to me that Fowler’s refusal to defend Bourdieu’s positions at whatever cost demonstrates that she is not interested in proselytizing philosophical dogmas or endorsing the unreflexive use of conceptual straitjackets. Instead, she is willing to concede that his writings are flawed by *internal contradictions*, especially by those arising from the “*tension between objectivist realism and normativist constructivism* in Bourdieu’s epistemology”³⁴.

In brief, Fowler and I appear to agree upon the significance of the *ontological, phenomenological, hermeneutic* and *historical* presuppositions underlying Bourdieu’s approach to language, whilst acknowledging that the validity of his paradigmatic propositions suffers from serious theoretical tensions and contradictions. Given this “common spirit”, it seems to me that there are more areas of agreement than sources of disagreement between Fowler and myself. Let me nevertheless focus on four points of contention which appear to be crucially important.

(1) *Pessimism*: According to Fowler’s perhaps most fundamental criticism, “Susen risks creating a *straw man* in place of engaging directly with Bourdieu”³⁵. More specifically, she maintains that Bourdieu’s interest in “the processes by which a privileged minority acquires symbolic profits”³⁶ is essentially inspired by his ambition “to understand, and thus overcome, obstacles to an emancipatory project, or ‘rational utopianism’”³⁷. This interpretation leads Fowler to distinguish between a “*negative dialectic*”³⁸ and a “*positive dialectic*”³⁹, both of which she considers to be central to the Bourdieusian project. The former is reflected in Bourdieu’s analysis of *domination*, in particular with regard to struggles over material and symbolic resources, which are unequally distributed in social fields. The latter manifests itself in Bourdieu’s insistence upon the possibility of *emancipation*, understood as a process which permits human actors not only to recognize relations of domination but also to transform them, or at least minimize their detrimental and disempowering consequences. In a nutshell, Fowler accuses me of *overemphasizing* the role of “negative dialectic” and *underemphasizing* the significance of “positive dialectic” in Bourdieu’s works. Following her account, I portray Bourdieu as a pessimistic thinker who remains trapped in socio-ontological fatalism, positivist scientism and structuralist determinism. On this view, I give the misleading impression that Bourdieu fails to do justice to the critical and moral

capacities of ordinary actors, who are endowed with the reflexive ability to shape their environment in accordance with negotiated criteria of normativity.

In response to this criticism, it is worth pointing out that, as William Outhwaite observes in his commentary, if there is any straw man in my article, it is *Habermas*, not Bourdieu. Bourdieusian sociologists may criticize my analysis for being “too Habermasian”, just as Habermasian philosophers may reject my account for being “too Bourdieusian”. The idea, however, is not to please either side, just for the sake of being taken seriously by both of them. Rather, as Outhwaite rightly remarks and as I have tried to show in an in-depth study of the contributions made by these two thinkers⁴⁰, it is more fruitful to regard their theoretical frameworks as *complementary* approaches to the social. Admittedly, one may come to the conclusion that, both in this article and in my book, I have a tendency to represent Habermas as a “socio-ontological optimist” and Bourdieu as a “socio-ontological pessimist”, in order to justify an alternative stance, which we may describe as “socio-ontological realism”. Whichever position one may favour, there is abundant textual evidence to demonstrate that, by and large, *Bourdieu’s writings* are characterized by the *preponderance of “negative dialectic” over “positive dialectic”*.

(2) *Functionalism*: Fowler gives an insightful account of the problems arising from the *standardization* of language based on the imposition of national languages. On the one hand, we are confronted with Gramsci’s *mystifying* view that “the formal teaching of normative grammar in the standard language operates as an important resource for encouraging a more logical and inclusive ‘national-popular’ culture”⁴¹. On the other hand, we are faced with Bourdieu’s *demystifying* notion that “the national language is [...] the symbolic capital of the dominant class and the traditional intelligentsia, whose children are distinctive in being socialized everyday, from birth, into the rules of its use”⁴². According to the former perspective, the standardization of language can be an empowering instrument of disempowered groups, an ethnocultural vehicle for social inclusion and integration, and hence a potential force of *emancipatory transformation*. According to the latter interpretation, the standardization of language tends to be a self-sufficient instrument of the most powerful groups, a contributor to processes of social exclusion and marginalization, and thus a constitutive element of *ideological legitimation*. In essence, Fowler appears to suggest that, because of my criticism of Bourdieu’s somewhat one-sided and pessimistic view, my position is too close to that of Gramsci and that, in this sense, my claim that “the normalization of language can have both disempowering *and* empowering consequences for both empowered *and* disempowered groups in society”⁴³ is misleading.

In response to this criticism, I would like to stress that, as someone who has, throughout his life, been exposed to *different linguistic horizons* (mainly German, English, French and Spanish), lived in *different countries* (Germany, Scotland, England, France, Spain, Chile and Mexico) and experienced language in radically *different social contexts* (from underclass neighbourhoods to elitist academic environments), I am fully aware of the *processes of inclusion and exclusion* which can be triggered or reinforced by the normalization of language. Yet, just as we

have to be “particularly sensitive to the distinctive linguistic alienation”⁴⁴ of disempowered social groups, as well as to the distinctive linguistic domination exercised by the privileged factions of society, we need to acknowledge that processes of linguistic self-realization can be experienced by *all* actors capable of converting their encounter with reality into an existential involvement shaped by cognitive reflexivity and playful creativity. Sociological functionalism does not have to be conservative, just as social functions do not have to be reproductive. Regardless of the question of whether or not it is possible, let alone desirable, to convert “Bourdieu into a ‘left-Parsonian’”⁴⁵ and Parsons into a right-Bourdiesian, it is deeply erroneous to reduce actors capable of speech and reflection to mere cultural dupes of social reproduction. To understand that *homo sapiens* is a *homo ludens* requires acknowledging that not every playful performance is a struggle for and over social power.

(3) *Sociologism*: Fowler declares that “Susen risks adopting [...] an *overly simplistic binary model*”⁴⁶ by suggesting that, for Bourdieu, “rationally ascertained ‘*validity claims*’ are relationally determined ‘*legitimacy claims*’, since linguistic power is unavoidably a matter of social power”⁴⁷. Fowler considers this account to be based on “a simplistic binary opposition”⁴⁸, which is “unfaithful to Bourdieu’s complex nuances”⁴⁹. In opposition to this view, she contends that, from a Bourdiesian perspective, “dominant elites *are* constrained to use reason in their own internal conflicts [...] and [that] this has certain important consequences”⁵⁰. In support of her argument, she refers to Bourdieu’s assertion that “reason, disinterestedness, civic-mindedness”⁵¹ are mobilized by dominant social groups as “a symbolically effective weapon in the struggles of the moment”⁵². According to Fowler, this statement demonstrates that we are confronted with “a ‘*reasoned utopian*’ theory of intellectuals”⁵³. This theory, she affirms, implies that Bourdieu regards “intellectuals, one of whose main tools is language, as *legitimate* claimants of the *universal*”⁵⁴. In short, from Fowler’s standpoint, the distinction between “*validity claims*” and “*legitimacy claims*” leads to a binary misrepresentation of Bourdieu’s multi-layered conception of scientific reasoning.

In response to this criticism, it seems valuable to observe that, in the quotation used by Fowler, Bourdieu examines the nature of social struggles, and the legitimation of the role of the most powerful in these struggles, in terms of “the symbolic *universalization of particular interests*”⁵⁵. I can hardly think of a less ambiguous way of expressing a *binary* logic shaping the unfolding of social life. Despite his self-declared intention to overcome artificial and counterproductive antinomies in the social sciences, binary logics are at work in Bourdieu’s own writings.⁵⁶ Given his field-based conception of the social, the “*force de la rationalité*” is—contrary to Fowler’s account—conceived of as subordinate to the “*rappports de force*” in his analysis. To be sure, this is not to suggest that Bourdieu denies the emancipatory potential, let alone the existence, of rationality. This does imply, however, that he regards *pouvoir faire* (that is, the performative capacity to do things on the basis of *Macht*) to be a far more powerful social resource than *pouvoir raisonner* (that is, the cognitive ability to reflect upon things by virtue of *Vernunft*). In fact, this

conviction lies at the heart of his critique of scholastic conceptions of the world.⁵⁷ In short, to the extent that he conceives of linguistic power, first and foremost, as a form of social power, Bourdieu suggests that “rationally ascertained ‘validity claims’ are relationally determined ‘legitimacy claims’”⁵⁸. The question of whether or not one agrees with this view is another matter.

(4) *Reductionism*: Perhaps, Fowler’s most substantial criticism is expressed in her fourfold allegation that I downplay, or even disregard, the central role of (a) the “historical-transcendent”⁵⁹, (b) the “split or fragmented habitus”⁶⁰, (c) “contradiction and crisis”⁶¹ and (d) “reflexivity”⁶² in Bourdieu’s writings.

(a) In relation to the role of the “*historical-transcendent*”, Fowler draws our attention to the importance of Bourdieu’s critical engagement with literature and art, markets for symbolic goods, so-called mimetic markets and gift exchange. In this respect, she maintains that, “[d]espite their brilliance, neither Susen’s earlier book (2007) nor this article (2013) pays heed to the *variety* of these *markets for symbolic goods*”⁶³. More importantly, she insists that it is important to recognize that Bourdieu, despite his “earlier critique of the fetishization of culture”⁶⁴, does not downplay, let alone deny, the “singularity”⁶⁵ of art works and the “reflexivity”⁶⁶ of those who produce them. Besides, Fowler criticizes me for neglecting “the field of law”⁶⁷, which Bourdieu conceives of not only as an “autonomous [legal] field”⁶⁸, functioning in accordance with “an underlying (legal) logic”⁶⁹ and sustained by virtue of “a legal language and knowledge”⁷⁰, but also as a reflexive social field, in which one can develop “a subjective sense of awareness of one’s rights”⁷¹ and in which, because it “is more *justifiable*”⁷², the discursive power of “a reasoned argument or truth”⁷³ can prevail over the purposive force of “competing hostile interests”⁷⁴.

Fowler is right to insist that we need to pay attention to the *plurality*, *complexity*, relative *autonomy* and internal *reflexivity* of social fields. I need to point out, however, that these are precisely some of the constitutive features of social fields examined in my writings, although admittedly on a theoretical, rather than on an empirical, level.⁷⁵ In addition, it is worth mentioning that, far from constituting a peripheral element of analysis, the tension between “the historical” and “the transcendental” has always been one of the central concerns in my studies of Bourdieu’s texts.⁷⁶

(b) In relation to the role of the “*split or fragmented habitus*”, Fowler maintains that the fact that “Bourdieu, in his later works, uses increasingly the concept of *habitus clivé*, that is, of a ‘fragmented habitus’”⁷⁷ remains “[u]nremarked by Susen”⁷⁸. As she rightly spells out, such “a ‘split’ or ‘cleft’ habitus—provoked by a *movement* from one class to another, or from one discipline to another—heightens *reflexivity*”⁷⁹. Furthermore, insisting upon the intimate relationship between thought processes and life experiences, she reminds us of the fact that “Bourdieu regards his own case as that of a man who has experienced this radical *disjuncture of positions* within the field of power”⁸⁰.

Again, I need to underline that this has been a central concern in my recent writings on Bourdieu.⁸¹ In fact, as I have argued on various occasions, the rise of

the “split or fragmented habitus” is particularly relevant to the critical analysis of highly differentiated societies, in which more and more actors are expected to be able, as it were, to “commute” between different interactional roles, whilst finding themselves immersed in various social fields. The pragmatic capacity to cope with both *intra-role and inter-role conflicts* is vital to the reproduction of life forms in which actors are exposed to multiple, and often contradictory, expectations in different, possibly competing, social fields. In the article, I put this as follows:

Just as human actors are *simultaneously* determined by several social determinants (such as class, ethnicity, gender, age and ability), *simultaneously* influenced by an ensemble of coexistential conditions (in particular, sociological, historical, anthropological, psychological and biological factors), and *simultaneously* immersed in different levels of existence (micro and macro, ephemeral and institutional, communal and societal), they are *simultaneously* situated in various social fields.⁸²

The “split or fragmented habitus”, then, requires the ability to participate in *intersectionally* structured realms of interactionality.

(c) In relation to the role of the “*contradiction and crisis*”, Fowler claims that “Susen analyses doxa, orthodoxy and heterodoxy but, misleadingly, assumes that these are *static* in relation to the dominant and the subordinate groups”⁸³. She rightly insists that “for Bourdieu crises in domination are ineradicable, just as for Marx capitalist finance and industry are inherently prone to contradiction and crises”⁸⁴. Moreover, she follows Bourdieu in suggesting that “in crises [...] the sources of heterodox thought multiply”⁸⁵ and that, in moments of social rupture and transformation, “even the legitimate language loses force, now revealing itself as the quaint idiom of a minority: outmoded, artificial and stiff”⁸⁶. On this view, “fetishization is always a fraught and insecure accomplishment”⁸⁷, that is, every socially predominant orthodoxy constitutes a provisionally established discursive hegemony.

Given that I have emphasized the porous, conditional and malleable nature of field-specific discourses both in this article⁸⁸ and in previous writings⁸⁸, I am surprised that Fowler accuses me of portraying doxa, orthodoxy and heterodoxy as “static” in relation to dominant and subordinate groups. In fact, in accordance with Fowler, I state that “social fields can create an *infinite number of language games*, whose ideological complexity *escapes* the *binary logic* of an ideological antagonism between orthodox and heterodox discourses”⁸⁹, and that, paradoxically, “[d]ominant groups can have heterodox discourses, just as dominated groups can have orthodox discourses”⁹⁰. Thus, it is ironic that, despite my constructivist contention that “all social arrangements are provisional and malleable”⁹¹, and notwithstanding my insistence upon the fact that “linguistic relations are always open to transformative reconstruction”⁹², Fowler accuses me of providing an insufficiently elastic account of field-specific language use in particular and a “mechanistic conception of social reality”⁹³ in general. Yet, I agree with Fowler that Bourdieu’s conception of contradiction and crisis is far more nuanced than his unsympathetic critics are willing to concede and that one may even go as far as to

suggest that “Bourdieu offers a theory of revolution”⁹⁴. The question of whether or not his account of revolution is based on a determinist or non-determinist conception of the social is a different matter.

(d) In relation to the role of “reflexivity”, Fowler asserts that, “despite his proclaimed understanding of Bourdieu’s agonistic framework, Susen is in danger of turning Bourdieu into a ‘left-Parsonian’, whose highly cohesive model of (class) reproduction incorporates an ideological canopy of language, perfectly designed to protect the interests of the powerful”⁹⁵. The question of sociological functionalism left aside, Fowler takes issue with the following assertion:

Insofar as Bourdieu focuses almost exclusively on the reproductive mechanisms, rather than the transformative elements, underlying communicative processes, he *overestimates* the extent to which linguistic resources structure and determine largely complicit and unreflective agents and *underestimates* the extent to which language is structured and determined by potentially creative and reflective subjects.⁹⁶

Fowler attempts to save Bourdieu from this serious charge by arguing that the above accusation “cannot hold for Bourdieu’s view of scientific language”⁹⁷. As elucidated in my critical discussion of his “distinction between ordinary and scientific discourses”⁹⁸, Bourdieu’s tendency to privilege the latter over the former illustrates, in accordance with Fowler’s observation, that he conceives of enlightening epistemic capacities essentially as professional competences, rather than as anthropological faculties. On this account, only those equipped with the necessary conceptual and methodological tools are capable of generating reliable representations and explanations of reality.

Yet, as I maintain in my article, “[r]ather than regarding these cognitive capacities as an epistemic privilege of scientists and experts, we need to recognize that they are built into the human condition”⁹⁹. Fowler is right to insist that we need to reject both the *idealist* view that “every actor is assumed to have perfect communicative competence”¹⁰⁰ and the *fatalistic* position that individuals constantly pursue and, if necessary, justify their personal interests in an atomistic and amoral fashion¹⁰¹. Instead, we need to defend the *realist* position that actors—in social fields—relate to one another as both cooperative and competitive entities, just as scientists—in the academic field—are carriers of a “‘double consciousness’, characterized by both innocence *and* hypocrisy”¹⁰². Motivated by the scholarly spirit of conscientious exegesis, one may find cursory statements in Bourdieu’s writings which give the impression that, contrary to my criticisms, he does “insist on a general model of actors’ capacities for reflexivity”¹⁰³. Undoubtedly, this applies especially to his later writings¹⁰⁴, in which Bourdieu appears to have undergone a paradigm shift from a somewhat positivist “critical sociology” to a rather interpretivist “sociology of critique”, whilst the opposite is true for his disciple Luc Boltanski. However one seeks to interpret or explain intellectual transitions related to the complementary paradigms of interpretation and explanation, Bourdieu favours a *Realpolitik* of interest-laden reason over an *Idealpolitik* of pristine reason. The Bourdieusian mission consists in making *an invitation to reflexive sociology*¹⁰⁵,

rather than *an invitation to a sociology of reflexivity*. The most heterodox Fowlerian exegesis will not be able to lift the burden of this Bourdieusian orthodoxy.

Derek Robbins

In his commentary——entitled “Response to Simon Susen’s ‘Bourdieusian reflections on language: Unavoidable conditions of the real speech situation’”¹⁰⁶——Derek Robbins raises a number of important issues arising from his meticulous discussion of my article. In this rejoinder, I shall limit myself to addressing some noteworthy areas of convergence and divergence between his and my analysis of Bourdieu’s writings on language.

Robbins and I appear to *agree* on at least six essential points.

(1) It is both possible and useful to provide a *systematic account* of Bourdieu’s conception of language. As Robbins kindly states, “Simon Susen has given us a brilliantly lucid *expository systematization* of Bourdieu’s thinking in respect of language”¹⁰⁷. Thus, even if we recognize that Bourdieu makes different sociological claims in different periods of his academic trajectory, his writings on language are characterized by sufficient methodological and conceptual coherence to assume that there is such a thing as a *Bourdieusian framework* for the critical analysis of symbolic forms.

(2) Valuable insights can be obtained from drawing a *multidimensional comparison* between Bourdieu and Habermas. Both Robbins and I endorse the view that it makes sense to be “explicit in acknowledging that Bourdieu was opposed to Habermas’s ‘communication-theoretic approach’”¹⁰⁸, as this permits us to shed light on both the philosophical and the sociological implications of the fact that “the legitimacy of linguistic validity is always contingent upon the validity of social legitimacy”¹⁰⁹. Unlike Robbins, but in accordance with Outhwaite, I do not think that, in order to defend a Bourdieusian stance, one has “to sustain an anti-Habermasian position”¹¹⁰. For, although Bourdieu and Habermas differ in many important respects¹¹¹, they not only share numerous significant concerns¹¹², but, in addition, their approaches can be fruitfully integrated¹¹³.

(3) We need to take note of the fact that, in the secondary literature, Bourdieu is regarded primarily as a *sociologist*, rather than as a philosopher. It would be erroneous, however, to ignore the various philosophical assumptions underlying his sociological writings. As appropriately stated by Robbins, my article “recognizes that there are three reasons”¹¹⁴ why, especially amongst Bourdieusians, there is considerable “reluctance to consider *philosophically* discussions of language which Bourdieu advanced sociologically and in specific social contexts”¹¹⁵. Somewhat sympathetic to my explanation of this omission in the literature, Robbins affirms that “the three reasons are well stated”¹¹⁶ and that, contrary to common belief, a case can be made for the view that there is such a thing as a “Bourdieusian philosophy of language”¹¹⁷.

(4) Whilst acknowledging the significance of several philosophical issues in Bourdieu’s works, we must not forget that his writings reflect a sociological

engagement with the nature of *power relations*. In this respect, his analysis of communicative practices is no exception. Robbins and I agree, then, that “Bourdieu’s concern about language was essentially a concern about power”¹¹⁸. Whatever the civilizational role of intersubjective processes oriented towards mutual understanding may be, and even if one comes to the conclusion that communicative rationality is an emancipatory force allowing for individual and collective empowerment, Bourdieu is right to insist that the challenge consists in uncovering the *social functions* of language, in particular its capacity *either* to sustain *or* to subvert power-laden codes of legitimacy.

(5) *Reflexivity* is not a professional privilege of scientists, but a *species-constitutive capacity* of human actors. We need to resist the positivist idealization of scientific knowledge and the fatalistic demonization of everyday modes of engaging with the world. Just as the sociological distinction between “laypersons” and “experts” is not a clear-cut separation between two entirely different spheres of action and cognition, the epistemological distinction between “common sense” and “science” needs to be drawn with considerable reservations in mind. As Robbins accurately points out, we concur in that “we both want to *acknowledge the conceptual capacities of ordinary people* and to *resist the professionalization of social knowledge*”¹¹⁹. Boltanski’s conviction that, as sociologists of critique, we need to take everyday agents seriously and Bourdieu’s insistence that, as critical sociologists, we need to struggle against the instrumentally driven institutionalization of knowledge production constitute two *complementary* positions, inspired by the assumption that the pursuit of a genuinely reflexive social science should strive to defend the common interests of humanity, rather than the particular aspirations of a privileged minority.

(6) Contrary to widespread belief, “Bourdieu’s account of language is based on a number of *ontological presuppositions*, that is, on a set of *universal assumptions* about the very *nature of language*”¹²⁰. Hence, challenging the reductive interpretations of an unsustainable *Vulgärsoziologie*, “we agree that ontological predispositions are to be found in Bourdieu’s work and that these are in need of further exploration”¹²¹. The critical study of the *socio-ontological* features of language illustrates that, far from constituting diametrically opposed or analytically separate realms of investigation, philosophy and sociology can be conceived of as two mutually inclusive modes of enquiry. Following this line of interdisciplinary thought, Robbins is right to remark that “Susen identifies a fundamental *ontology of language* which amounts to a subterranean *philosophy of language* and which underlies Bourdieu’s commitment to an understanding of linguistic communication within the *social context* which makes it possible”¹²². Regardless of whether Bourdieu’s examination of symbolic forms is embedded in a representationalist methodology or in “a phenomenological ontology”¹²³, it demonstrates a commitment to a philosophically inspired and sociologically informed engagement with the nature of language.

Let us direct our attention to the key issues on which Robbins and I do not concur. We appear to *disagree* on at least four essential points, which are expressed in the following charges.

(1) *The charge of dehistoricization*: Robbins states that “[i]t should be clear that my view is that Susen’s representations and critiques of Bourdieu are diminished because they are *a-historical*”¹²⁴. More specifically, he explains that his “contention is that the majority of the Bourdieu texts which Susen treats as being ‘about language’ derive from the decade between 1972 and 1982”¹²⁵. According to Robbins, this was a historical period “in which Bourdieu was ‘*position-taking*’ after having seized control of the Centre de Sociologie Européenne from Aron after the events of May 1968, and leading up to his appointment to the Chair of Sociology at the Collège de France at the end of 1981”¹²⁶. In other words, Robbins questions the validity of my claims about Bourdieu’s conception of language on the basis of the objection that the textual evidence provided in support of these assertions draws, to a large extent, on the writings produced during one particular period of Bourdieu’s academic career, that is, on a professional phase in which he sought to distinguish himself from other scholars, such as Passeron and Aron, and to consolidate his institutional position at the highest level of the French academic system.

In response to this observation, I want to point out that, whilst my article contains numerous references to various writings which Bourdieu published *before* 1972 and *after* 1982¹²⁷, I am not sure what can be gained epistemically from Robbins’s contextualizing considerations. Surely, Robbins is right to highlight that scientific writings cannot be abstracted from the historical context in which, or the motivational background against which, they are produced. Furthermore, it is true that we must be careful not to treat the works of intellectuals as monolithic, homogeneous, uniform, entirely coherent or static conceptual frameworks. Applied to the development of influential scholars, periodizing distinctions—such as the “early Marx” *versus* the “late Marx”, the “early Wittgenstein” *versus* the “late Wittgenstein”, the “early Foucault” *versus* the “late Foucault”, or the “early Bourdieu” *versus* the “late Bourdieu”—are unavoidably contentious. For they fail to do justice to the complexity underlying intellectual trajectories of high-calibre thinkers. Robbins’s emphasis on the spatiotemporally specific and biographically unique setting in which intellectual works are produced is crucially important for anyone committed to the sociological study of ideas. Such a historicizing effort, however, does little in the way of examining the *context-transcending* acceptability of philosophical claims to epistemic validity.

(2) *The charge of decontextualization*: Robbins makes the following claim:

Language deployed in sociological explanation is *always contingent*. Unlike philosophical or psychoanalytic language, sociological language is always necessarily in a *dialectical relationship* with what it seeks to analyse precisely because much social and cultural behaviour is expressed in words and because, therefore, the language of explanation is *immersed* linguistically in what it seeks to explain.¹²⁸

Ironically, Robbins accuses me of the same limitation of which Passeron accused Bourdieu during and after their intellectual fall-out: namely, not only “to treat concepts *philosophically*”¹²⁹, but also to employ sociological terms to “signify a *universally valid* correlation”¹³⁰ or representation, “rather than as a linguistic device adopted *contingently* to explain the particular situation”¹³¹. In view of my apparent insensitivity towards this contextual contingency of all epistemic claims to representational adequacy and explanatory accuracy, Robbins declares that “[i]t is not just that Susen tries to extract a philosophy of language from texts in which Bourdieu was writing sociologically. Much more importantly, he *de-contextualizes* those texts”¹³². In a quasi-Butlerian fashion, Robbins makes the scientific spirit underlying Bourdieu’s writings appear insignificant when affirming that—given that “Bourdieu was always insistent that his texts were interventions”¹³³—“his writings and talks were ‘*performative*’ rather than referential”¹³⁴ and, therefore, marked by a strong “*non-representational* dimension”¹³⁵. Robbins goes on to suggest that “Bourdieu’s writing about language needs to be *contextualized in the following two ways*: first, as itself *situated and strategic action*; and, second, as the *assimilation of previous writing*”¹³⁶. The first level requires “interpreting his texts in relation to his *social trajectory*”¹³⁷, whereas the second level entails “identifying socio-historically the *textual influences* which became constitutive of Bourdieu’s synthesized approach”¹³⁸. The first level can be grasped by virtue of a *socio-genetic* analysis¹³⁹ of the author’s constantly shifting biographical—that is, personal and professional—background. The second level can be examined by virtue of a *socio-hermeneutic* analysis capable of “acknowledging that Bourdieu’s thinking about language was constituted out of a range of influences, which he sought to synthesize”¹⁴⁰.

In response to this criticism, I must stress that I fully support Robbins’s two-fold proposition of contextualizing Bourdieu’s writings in terms of both a *socio-genetic* examination of his *biographic trajectory* and a *socio-hermeneutic* exploration of his *intellectual sources of inspiration*. Such a position is firmly committed to both a *socio-genetic* and a *socio-hermeneutic* analysis of intellectual writings. Yet, what is problematic in this regard is Robbins’s recommendation that we should follow Bourdieu’s suggestion, formulated in relation to Gaston Bachelard, that “*epistemology is always conjunctural*”¹⁴¹, because “its propositions and thrust are determined by the principal scientific threat of *the moment*”¹⁴². Robbins is right to assert that “Susen is not inclined to accept this starting point”¹⁴³, since it fails to allow for the possibility of raising claims to validity whose scope of rational defensibility transcends the limited horizon of context-dependent legitimacy. Sociologistic contextualism is no less problematic than ahistorical universalism: in the best-case scenario, it leads to cognitive and normative *relativism*; in the worst-case scenario, it can be used to endorse a position of cynical *nihilism*.

If, in a pragmatist fashion, we assume that every truth claim is *reducible* to a socio-genetically and socio-hermeneutically determined statement about the constitution of reality, we exclude the possibility of developing conceptual frameworks capable of making reliable assertions whose rational acceptability does not depend on relationally constituted, and hence socially contingent, codes of legitimacy. The

methodological imperative that Bourdieu's work "be understood developmentally [...], rather than a-historically as a set of propositions"¹⁴⁴, results in little more than *exegesis*. In fact, "[t]his recourse to contextualization as defence is circular"¹⁴⁵, if all it achieves is to describe the development (*Entwicklung*) of explanatory frameworks in a painstakingly meticulous fashion, but without offering any useful *conceptual insights* into particular aspects of social reality. Sociologists are right to be suspicious of philosophers who tend to decontextualize their assertions and findings, just as philosophers are right to be critical of sociologists who exclude the possibility of making any claims to universal validity. If epistemic cogency were only a matter of socio-genetic and socio-hermeneutic determinacy, science would be reducible to a language game driven by completely arbitrary parameters of contextual contingency. There is more to scientific thought than social context.

(3) *The charge of formalization*: "He [Susen] offers his account as apparently a *paraphrase* of elements of Bourdieu's discourse so as to construct a *uniform, systematic sense*"¹⁴⁶. According to Robbins, the aforementioned contextualization of Bourdieu's writings "may challenge the *systematic formulations* which he derives from them and, in turn, throw doubt on the validity of some of his critical remarks"¹⁴⁷. More specifically, Robbins accuses me of advocating what may be described as the "*philosophization*" of *sociological texts*. According to Robbins, "the problem [...] is that the framework which Susen adopts for his discussion necessarily imposes *formally* a judgement which is not contained in his consideration of the substantive position which he derives from Bourdieu's work"¹⁴⁸. For Bourdieu "was interested not in contributing to 'sociolinguistics' but, rather, in practising socio-linguistics. (He insisted on the hyphen.)"¹⁴⁹ Thus, given that Bourdieu's writings are not only empirically grounded but also informed by a non-negotiable commitment to critical engagement with social practices, it is, according to Robbins, erroneous to import philosophically inspired criteria into an account of language which is essentially sociological. On this view, "the opposition to the attempted development of a *formal epistemology* of social science"¹⁵⁰ à la Popper lies at the heart of the Bourdieusian sociology of knowledge, and "the same opposition applies in respect to the study of language"¹⁵¹. It is, in other words, not primarily the "logic of scientific discovery"¹⁵², but, rather, the sociology of scientific enquiry and of non-scientific experience which concerns the critical eye of a reflexive epistemology.

Let me, in response to Robbins's concern regarding the allegedly distorted formalization of Bourdieu's argument, make two straightforward remarks. First, there is a contradiction in Robbins's argument: on the one hand, he asserts that I *pretend to paraphrase* Bourdieu's writings in my article when, in fact, I make a case for my own—if you will, "Boursusenian"—conception of language; on the other hand, he complains that I *over-systematize* Bourdieu's perspective in my analysis when, in effect, there is no such thing as a formal Bourdieusian framework for the study of language. It seems to me that Robbins needs to acknowledge that it is logically unsustainable to level *both* criticisms against me. If my intention were to paraphrase Bourdieu, there would not be much point in developing a systematic

framework which both draws upon *and* goes beyond the epistemic positions defended in his writings. To put this in an intellectually constructive manner, my article is not supposed to be a paraphrasing exercise, based on a descriptive representation or repetition of Bourdieu's account of language. Rather, it aims (a) to cover what *I* consider to be the most important dimensions of Bourdieu's writings on language, (b) to present these dimensions in a *systematic* fashion and (c) to reflect not only upon the key insights gained from such a systematizing endeavour but also, more importantly, upon the *limitations* of Bourdieu's conception of language, thereby taking the discussion to a post-Bourdieuian level.

Robbins should recognize that tautological statements—such as “the ‘foundations of the *social*’ need to be defined in *social* exchange which entails establishing *socially* inclusive institutional foundations of *social*-theoretical discourse”¹⁵³, or “the *language* of explanation is immersed *linguistically* in what it seeks to explain”¹⁵⁴—will not take us far. Sociologistic approaches lead to little more than the formulation of constructivist truisms, emphasizing the relational, and hence relatively arbitrary, constitution of social arrangements. Instead of subscribing to sociologistic dogmas, we need to confront the challenge of exploring the *foundational* elements of human life, which—by definition—exist in *any* form of society, regardless of its spatiotemporal specificity.

Whilst I admire Robbins for his impressively wide-ranging knowledge of, and painstakingly meticulous engagement with, Bourdieu's writings, I am reluctant to confine our analytical task to the fruitless exercise of *exegesis*. Such scholastic endeavours lead to futile discussions about “right” and “wrong” interpretations of the master's own words, telling us little, if anything, about the constitutive features of the subject in question, that is, about *the nature of language*. Ironically, Robbins remains trapped in the stifling parameters of symbolic power and scholastic legitimacy when aiming to raise validity claims on the basis of exegetical considerations oriented towards the ideal of interpretive accuracy. Bourdieusians are in danger of undermining the Bourdieusian spirit not only if they convert sociological investigations into philosophical dogmas, but also if they attribute more importance to the spatiotemporal *contexts* in which validity claims are raised than to the epistemic *content* of these claims. In short, drawing upon Bourdieu's insights, my aim was to shed light on the nature of language, rather than on the writings of a great thinker. We must resist the temptation to treat Bourdieusian tools as “Bourdivine” dogmas. If thinkers are considered more insightful than their thoughts, then thoughts are in danger of becoming thoughtless. It is vital to examine *by whom, to whom, where, when, and why* something is being said. It is no less important, however, to scrutinize *what* is being said.

(4) *The charge of misinterpretation*: Perhaps the most central source of potential misunderstanding is the examination of Bourdieu's approach to the *relationship between ordinary and scientific knowledge*. Robbins stresses the importance of this dimension in the following statement:

I do not think that evidence exists for the contention that Bourdieu believed in the superiority of scientific discourse within a hierarchy of discourses. Bourdieu wanted to sustain the authority of social science so as to safeguard his power to subvert the hierarchy; but, of course, that ran the risk of actually perpetuating or being thought to perpetuate the structure he wanted to disrupt. Similarly, *Bourdieu's apparent support for stable, instituted discourse in opposition to "ephemeral" discourse was an instrumental strategy, equally wide open to misinterpretation, to mobilize existing sources of power for the benefit of the relatively impotent.* To offer this judgement in these terms is, undoubtedly, to accept Bourdieu's account of the unavoidable homogeneity between social trajectory and cultural/intellectual identity in defence of that account.¹⁵⁵

The above passage is problematic for several reasons.

(a) Rather than expressing "support for stable, instituted discourse in opposition to 'ephemeral' discourse"¹⁵⁶, the Bourdieusian spirit, imbued with Foucauldian virtues, invites us to endorse the *subversive discourses of the underdog*, which tend to escape the picture of instituted discourses, notably those produced and reproduced by legitimized and legitimizing institutions. Of course, Robbins is right to insist that "ordinary discourses are not pure expressions of ordinary experience, as presupposed by the notion of habitus, but, rather, partially assimilated versions of instituted discourses"¹⁵⁷. Yet, when analysing the interaction between common-sense knowledge and expert knowledge¹⁵⁸ in terms of "the relationship between the inherited dispositions of individuals and public positions represented by institutions"¹⁵⁹, we must not *conflate* "scientific discourses" with "instituted discourses" and "ordinary discourses" with "ephemeral discourses". For just as there are *ephemeral* scientific discourses, there are *instituted* ordinary discourses.

(b) Despite his sympathy for the socially disempowered, there is an abundant amount of evidence to demonstrate that Bourdieu, drawing upon Marx and Durkheim, believed in the superior epistemic capacities of science and the deceptive nature of doxa and common sense.¹⁶⁰ One may criticize Boltanski's fierce opposition to Bourdieu's alleged scientism on many grounds. Yet, even if one cherry-picks counterexamples, particularly from the latter's later works¹⁶¹, there is no point in denying that Bourdieu's conception of reflexive sociology is based on an epistemic hierarchy, according to which the conceptual and methodological tools of science enable us to *uncover* underlying causal mechanisms whose determining power largely escapes common-sense perceptions of the world. Moreover, Bourdieu's writings are weakened by a considerable lack of attention to the reflexive and discursive capacities mobilized by ordinary actors in everyday situations. If Robbins is not willing to accept this, his position is not dissimilar to that of contemporary Marxists who claim that the model of base and superstructure is simply a playful metaphor, rather than an explanatory framework. Robbins does not do himself, let alone Bourdieu, any favours by pushing the limits of interpretive elasticity to the point of dogmatically motivated untenability.

(c) Robbins's suggestion that Bourdieu's endorsement of scientific discourses was simply a context-specific *strategy* employed in the interest of marginalized and disempowered social groups is questionable. One does not need to be an autonomist

Marxist, à la John Holloway¹⁶², to be suspicious of the idea of “[a]ppropriating the legitimacy of instituted social science [...] to advance the political interests of those without voice”¹⁶³. Such a *paternalistic* position portrays reflexive social scientists as the enlighteners whose mission is to safeguard the to-be-enlightened, deceived by the illusions of doxa and common sense. If the “mission”¹⁶⁴ of reflexive intellectuals is to “go along with the recognized status of social science in order to liberate and give voice to ‘vulgar’ views”¹⁶⁵, then human emancipation is reduced to an exogenously induced process, orchestrated by those who, because of their privileged position, are able to see through the veil of doxa and are, therefore, entitled to emancipate all those incapable of emancipating themselves.

Steph Lawler

In her commentary, entitled “Unequal persons: A response to Simon Susen”¹⁶⁶, Steph Lawler raises a number of important issues concerning Bourdieusian studies of language. It seems to me that we concur on most points and differ on remarkably few. I am pleased to learn that Lawler thinks that my “paper gives us a wide-ranging and provocative account of the shortcomings of a Bourdieusian approach to language”¹⁶⁷. More specifically, it is worth mentioning that we agree on five main levels.

(1) We both insist on the *reflexivity* inherent in language. Lawler’s comments illustrate that we both endorse a *non-determinist* understanding of the social, as reflected, for instance, in the following statement:

Susen’s analysis is no doubt an important reminder—at least for those of us who tend towards determinism—of the possibilities for linguistic change and indeed for *change through language*. Clearly, he is right to point out that people do not mindlessly reproduce language games and that *reflection in and through language is an important means through which we engender new forms of insight and communication*.¹⁶⁸

On this view, language can be an *empowering* social tool which permits human beings not only to reflect upon the world, but also to act upon and transform it.

(2) We both emphasize the *sociality* of language. Providing us with plenty of examples which “show how the possibilities for communication are blocked by both linguistic *and* extra-linguistic factors”¹⁶⁹, Lawler argues with great skill and pungent lucidity that language cannot be abstracted from the social contexts in which it is used, let alone “from the persons who produce it”¹⁷⁰. On this account, linguistically articulated judgements are a deeply social, rather than merely epistemic, affair; “the case of those being judged or those doing the judging”¹⁷¹ takes place not in a bubble of neutral and disinterested parameters, but in a relationally constructed space of contextually contingent *jeux* (games) and *enjeux* (stakes).

(3) We both stress, although admittedly to varying degrees, the *bodily* nature of linguistic practices. As Lawler pertinently observes, “[i]n written communication, the body may slip from sight, and indeed one effect of formal linguistic registers is to divorce language as spoken by an embodied person from the written text”¹⁷².

Yet, as she accurately states, “[l]anguage is a *bodily* technique”¹⁷³, and it is “produced by *embodied* social actors”¹⁷⁴. To the extent that our “bodily hexis”¹⁷⁵ is unavoidably “brought into play within real speech acts”¹⁷⁶, there is no such thing as a disembodied communicative action. Even when we communicate with others via technological devices, permitting us to convert face-to-face proximity into a dispensable element of mutual comprehensibility, and even when we communicate with others on the basis of painted or printed symbols, allowing us to transform spatiotemporal immediacy into an expendable aspect in the construction of intersubjectivity, language emanates from *embodied* modes of human agency.

(4) Whilst Lawler gives a much more nuanced account of this dimension than I do, we are both interested in the role of *identity* in linguistic practices. Language is both a *classifying* and a *classified* force based on the creation of identitarian categories. As Lawler correctly insists, “language classifies, and it classifies the classifier”¹⁷⁷. The power of language, then, cannot be dissociated from the power of identity. Lawler sheds light on the relationship between language and identity in terms of six social processes:

- (a) *processes of signification*: “identity speaking”¹⁷⁸;
- (b) *processes of projection*: “judgements are routinely made on the entire bodily hexis of the speaker, assumed to reveal their identity”¹⁷⁹ — “identities were assumed to be [...]”¹⁸⁰;
- (c) *processes of stratification*: “identities [...] are all the products of *unequal* social relations”¹⁸¹, “classed identities”¹⁸²;
- (d) *processes of regulation*: “a normalization not only of certain linguistic forms, but also of the identities of the people who use them”¹⁸³;
- (e) *processes of classification*: “[...] identity may be conferred, in part, on the basis of accent”¹⁸⁴ [...] “[b]oth features—accent and idiom, as well as bodily hexis—are brought into play within real speech acts and combine to produce a conferred identity”¹⁸⁵; and
- (f) *processes of valorization*: “specific forms of English expression are held to indicate both identity and value”¹⁸⁶, and “different forms of identity have different values”¹⁸⁷.

In short, Lawler is right to point out that linguistically mediated constructions of identity are conceivable only as (a) interpretive, (b) projective, (c) divisive, (d) regulative, (e) classificatory and (f) value-laden processes.

(5) We are both concerned with the role of *legitimacy* in linguistic practices. Binary separations—such as “correct” *versus* “incorrect”, “national” *versus* “regional”, and “paradigmatic” *versus* “peripheral” forms of language use¹⁸⁸—are crucial to the *normalizing* function of symbolic power. Lawler provides instructive examples:

- “dictatorships seek explicitly to police language use and, in some cases (as in Franco’s Spain), to suppress regional languages altogether”¹⁸⁹;

- “in the UK, there are numerous deviations from standard English (Received Pronunciation, often—though inaccurately—understood as ‘accentless’ English), not all deviations are worth the same”¹⁹⁰;
- “the complex linguistic codes of Black adolescents in Harlem [...] will get them nowhere in educational markets”¹⁹¹; and
- “[t]he historian David Starkey—speaking in Standard English while appearing on the BBC’s flagship news and current affairs programme, *Newsnight*, and while commenting on the London riots of 2011—claimed that ‘the whites have become black’”¹⁹².

In brief, “speech cannot carry a ‘pure’ form of words”¹⁹³. In everyday interactions, the acceptability of linguistically formulated claims to validity depends upon the legitimacy attached to a speaker’s position in society. The relational contingency of social authority expressed through linguistic codes of legitimacy, however, is—as Lawler, drawing upon Gayatri Spivak, reminds us—not simply a question of “Who can *speak*?”, but, more importantly, of “Who will *listen*?”¹⁹⁴. To understand, in other words, that “[i]t is no good speaking if nobody listens”¹⁹⁵ requires comprehending that there is no symbolic power without social recognition.

Even though, as illustrated in the previous reflections, areas of agreement by far outweigh matters of disagreement between Lawler and myself, let me make a few remarks on aspects which, I believe, may be worth clarifying in this context. Lawler’s main objection concerns the problem of *linguistic idealism*. Her accusation that, despite my self-declared proposition to examine the conditions of the *real* speech situation, I remain trapped in an *idealistic* account of language use is perhaps most clearly conveyed in the following assertions:

For Susen, language is socially formed but also has the capacity to *escape* its social determinants and even to reshape social relations.¹⁹⁶

[...] I wonder whether, in the practice of social interaction, language in fact realizes its own possibilities to the extent that Susen implies that it does. It seems to me that *Susen wants to endow language itself with an agency that sets it free from its structural constraints*. Yet, while Susen is attentive to the activities of actual language users, his emphasis tends to underplay the differences *between* language users. More widely, I want to suggest that his emphasis is in *danger of removing language from its users*, who are embodied social actors who make judgements about themselves and others. Their identities, their embodiment and their judgements are all the products of *unequal* social relations. While I agree with Susen that language can escape its constraints, I wonder to what extent in practice it *does* do so: to what extent does it in fact undo social distance and inequality? To what extent are the hidden (because naturalized) effects of domination and violence made and reproduced, rather than undone, through language?¹⁹⁷

Of course, the problem with using examples is that counter-examples can be proliferated. I use them here, however, to indicate some of the other possibilities which, I think, Simon Susen overlooks and which may threaten to undermine the *optimistic tenor of his argument*.¹⁹⁸

In response to these critical remarks, let me make a few straightforward points, which, to my mind, indicate that Lawler and I tend to concur on most issues arising from Bourdieu's writings on language.

Whilst I do believe, and hope, that language can “reshape social relations”¹⁹⁹, my intention has *not* been to claim that “language [...] has the capacity to *escape* its social determinants”²⁰⁰. In fact, I have argued precisely the opposite, as expressed in the following contentions:

Linguistic conceptions of reality can never escape the *societal determinacy* of symbolically mediated interactionality.²⁰¹

Just as human actors are *simultaneously* determined by several social determinants (such as class, ethnicity, gender, age and ability), *simultaneously* influenced by an ensemble of coexistential conditions (in particular, sociological, historical, anthropological, psychological and biological factors), and *simultaneously* immersed in different levels of existence (micro and macro, ephemeral and institutional, communal and societal), they are *simultaneously* situated in various social fields.²⁰²

The whole point of my proposition to argue that there are specific *unavoidable* conditions of real speech is to demonstrate that language, although it cannot be reduced to a mere product of sociological determinants, cannot be properly understood in isolation from several relationally contingent variables, notably “sociality”, “legitimacy” and “symbolic power”. Insofar as she portrays linguistically mediated identities as mere “*products of unequal social relations*”²⁰³, Lawler is in danger of unwittingly endorsing sociologistic determinism. As she convincingly states, “people do not mindlessly reproduce language games”²⁰⁴. The possibility of “change through language”²⁰⁵ is indicative of the civilizational role of rationally coordinated and discursively negotiated interactions. Given that, as she concedes, “*reflection in and through language* is an important means through which we engender new forms of *insight and communication*”²⁰⁶, it would be erroneous to reduce the discursive reflexivity derived from communicative rationality to a sheer epiphenomenon of struggles over social legitimacy. Rather than suggesting that “[t]he authority of different language forms [...] derives not from language itself, but from the position of speakers within social fields [...] and from the status attached to their habitus”²⁰⁷, we need to explore the *various factors*—including critical rationality—which *can* determine the legitimacy attached to linguistically articulated claims to validity. We need to avoid falling into the traps of both *linguistic idealism*, according to which language can be abstracted from its social conditions of production, and *sociologistic determinism*, according to which the use of language is entirely governed by power relations. By doing so, we are able to embrace a more balanced view of *socio-ontological realism*, which recognizes that language is both a product and a producer of social relations.

Michael Grenfell

In his provocative commentary—entitled “‘Shadow boxing’: Reflections on Bourdieu and language”²⁰⁸—Michael Grenfell puts forward several strong arguments. Although his contribution is, in many respects, critical of my article, Grenfell emphasizes that he thinks that—given the relevance of Bourdieu’s “concerns for epistemology and vigilance”²⁰⁹ for sociological analysis—“this Special Issue is all the more welcome”²¹⁰. Despite his serious reservations regarding my theoretical outline, Grenfell kindly suggests that “Susen’s list of presuppositions, so ably presented and discussed”²¹¹, is a way of taking the debates on Bourdieu’s contributions to contemporary studies of language to a deeper level. Thus, he states that he “accept[s] that this present Special Issue goes some way to elucidating, if not finally nailing, Bourdieu and language from a socio-philosophical point of view”²¹² and that “Susen’s reflections are a welcome contribution in that endeavour”²¹³. It seems to me that Grenfell and I agree on at least three noteworthy points.

(1) We need to be aware of the *misinterpretations* that are particularly common amongst “what Bourdieu called an ‘Anglo-Saxon’ audience”²¹⁴. What Grenfell has in mind is the fact that the “grounding in neo-Kantian metaphysics that gave birth to phenomenology and existentialism”²¹⁵, both of which crucially influenced Bourdieu’s own intellectual development, is often “badly understood outside mainland Europe”²¹⁶. To put it bluntly, this should be reason enough to shed light on the *philosophical* dimensions underlying Bourdieu’s account of language.

(2) Taking note of these philosophical aspects in Bourdieu’s writings, Grenfell and I agree that “[i]ssues of *language are all-pervasive in his work*”²¹⁷ and that their paradigmatic centrality manifests itself on various analytical levels. Grenfell provides a useful summary, which distinguishes “four principal strands”²¹⁸ in Bourdieu’s writings on language: (a) language as an *empirical social phenomenon*; (b) language as a *mediating social force*; (c) language as a *specialist instrument of science*; and (d) language as an *object of philosophical contemplation*.²¹⁹ Grenfell rightly points out that Bourdieu was profoundly critical of the fourth level, as expressed in his sceptical remarks on “sociolinguistics (Labov), philosophy (Searle, Austin) and universal grammar (Chomsky)”²²⁰. In opposition to theoreticist approaches to language, “Bourdieu argues very strongly that his own conceptual tools were logically necessitated by the *empirical data* in which he immersed himself”²²¹, thereby stressing the importance of the *substantive* level for his praxeological engagement with symbolic forms.

(3) Grenfell and I concur in insisting on the *relational* nature of language. As Grenfell correctly states, “[w]ords for Bourdieu always imply *relationships*”²²², that is, not only the relation between “signifiers” and “signified”, but also “the *intentional [sic]* relation between a human being/social agent and their environment”²²³. The previous misspelling is meant to remind us of the fact that language is “a structure that is both *structured* and *structuring*”²²⁴ and that, far from constituting “a set of neutral signifiers”²²⁵, it creates meaning in value-laden ways. Put differently, language “makes us see certain things and not see other things, and—more

importantly—it permits us to see some things and precludes us from seeing other things in a *particular* way”²²⁶. Considering the field-specific differentiation of the social, language is always *power*-laden and “knowledge is always *interest*-laden”²²⁷. Due to its relational nature, “meaning is never once-and-for-all, neutral, singular, transmitted from one to another in a Lockean sense of perfect communication, but always *open* to interpretation”²²⁸. In a radical sense, then, every linguistic representation, because of its socially contingent constitution, is a potential misrepresentation. To the extent that social relations are imbued with power relations, language is potentially “contested but gravitates towards the *dominant* sense occurring in a social space in a centripetal way”²²⁹. In short, *linguistic* relations are not only *social* relations but, given their value-laden and interest-laden constitution, they are also *power* relations.

Finally, owing to his opposition to theoreticist approaches to language, expressed in his insistence upon the *socio-relational* constitution of symbolic forms, it comes as no surprise that “Bourdieu seems to have offended an academic *field* to such an extent that, for the most part, they deal with him by ignoring him”²³⁰. This should be reason enough to take him seriously and to demonstrate that the philosophical depth of his writings is informed by the sociological rigour of his empirical investigations.

Allow me, in the remainder of this section, to reply to some of Grenfell’s excellent criticisms, which he has so elegantly formulated when reflecting on the shortcomings and limitations of the arguments developed in my article. Whilst he makes numerous perceptive points, it seems to me that four of his critical remarks are particularly worth revisiting. Before tackling these, let me briefly address three forms of *misinterpretation*.

(1) It is a bit puzzling that most of Grenfell’s *quotations* are taken from the *opening pages* of my article. Not only does one get the impression that there is little, if any, indication that he has read the entire body of the text properly, but what is more worrying is that, owing to this omission, he fails to engage with substantial parts of my argument.

(2) Given his concern with misinterpretations and Anglo-Saxon scholars who “do not quite ‘get it’”²³¹, his *misrepresentation of Husserl and Heidegger* is surprising. Without providing any kind of textual evidence in support of his claim, he erroneously asserts that “Husserlian ‘emergence’ is just as dangerous as Heideggerian ‘transcendence’, since both reify sense and meaning, rather than seeing them as a dynamic social process of (re)construction”²³². Precisely the opposite is true; the whole point of their phenomenological investigations—notably of *Being and time*²³³—is to study meaning in terms of its *historical contingency*.

(3) Grenfell *misparaphrases* me on several occasions. Let me give a few examples.

(a) He maintains that I “suggest that, because it is right to say there is a Bourdieusian *study* of language, it would be a contradiction to affirm there is such a thing as a Bourdieusian *theory* of language”²³⁴. My article, however, states

that, due to Bourdieu's fierce opposition to theoreticist approaches to language, "it *seems* that, *whilst* [not because] it is right to point out that there is a Bourdieusian *study* of language, it would be a contradiction in terms to affirm that there is such a thing as a Bourdieusian *theory* of language"²³⁵.

- (b) Rather than claiming that "it *is* unjustified to *characterize* Bourdieusian sociology as a 'language-theoretic' approach to the social"²³⁶, I declare that this *appears* to be the case, because, "according to Bourdieu, language constitutes only one amongst other social dimensions and the linguistic field only one amongst other social fields"²³⁷.
- (c) Grenfell states that the various "points [of the article] are made by Susen to explain the absence of what he calls 'ontological presuppositions' in the literature on Bourdieu and language"²³⁸, when, actually, my analysis aims to explain their tacit but unavoidable presence both in the literature and in social life, and thus to problematize the lack of recognition concerning their existence and significance.
- (d) It is not true that, as Grenfell mistakenly announces, "Susen [...] says that, whilst there is a Bourdieusian *sociology* of language, there is no such thing as Bourdieusian *philosophy* of language"²³⁹. Contrary to Grenfell's misreading, the whole point of my article is to argue *against* this common misconception.

These are only a few examples which illustrate that Grenfell misparaphrases me on various occasions and, consequently, obscures one of the key objectives of my article, which consists in *challenging common misconceptions* of Bourdieu's philosophically inspired and sociologically informed writings on language.

Let us consider four of Grenfell's central accusations, which seem worth discussing in some detail.

(1) *The charge of misinterpretation*: Reflecting upon the "misuses and abuses"²⁴⁰ of Bourdieu, and acknowledging that his "own position within Bourdieusian studies [...] has moved from advocate to 'party-pooper'"²⁴¹, Grenfell complains that many approaches to Bourdieu are guilty of "*misinterpreting* what he intends"²⁴² and of failing to realize that "[t]hey *make too much of Bourdieu and too little*"²⁴³. Somewhat provocatively, Grenfell uses the metaphor of "shadow boxing"²⁴⁴ to convey the fact that "there is a great deal of intense activity, blows are directed at Bourdieu, but few are landed, since he is not quite standing where they think he is"²⁴⁵. In addition, Grenfell contends that "[t]his is never truer than in the case of language"²⁴⁶.

Let me, in response to this allegation, make three straightforward points.

- (a) There is nothing original about asserting that different scholars may misunderstand or misrepresent Bourdieu in several ways and on various levels. In fact, the principal purpose of engaging in *critical debates* on the complexity of his work is to recognize that there is not one single, let alone one accurate, interpretation of his writings. Otherwise, there would be little point in discussing his contributions, or those of other major thinkers, in the first place.

- (b) Whatever Grenfell’s legitimate or illegitimate misgivings with regard to recent controversies in Bourdieusian studies may be, the point is not to provide *the* right account of Bourdieu’s conception of language, but to move the argument forward. In other words, the objective of my article is not exegesis, but to contribute to a more *insightful understanding of language*. Rhetorical devices—such as the assertion that some tend to make both “too much and too little”²⁴⁷ of Bourdieu—fail to deepen our understanding of his philosophically inspired and sociologically grounded study of symbolic forms.
- (c) Whilst Grenfell’s “*shadow boxing*” metaphor applies to recent developments in Bourdieusian studies, it is relevant to many other influential scholars who have already passed away and are, therefore, unable to respond to the issues raised by their posthumous critics. This does not mean, however, that we should withdraw from the task of interpreting, and making use of, their works.

(2) *The charge of conceptual reification*: Grenfell describes this issue as follows:

[...] one of the strengths (possible weaknesses) of Bourdieu’s theory and method is that it almost demands to be critiqued in its own terms. Not to do so is somehow to *miss the point*. To do so, however, risks becoming ensnared in Bourdieusian language, of possibly *reifying his concepts*, or *applying a broad metaphorical sweep to narratives*. Both needed to be avoided. Bourdieu is probably at his most slippery and convincing in the way he uses language and, indeed, the analytical terms themselves. No wonder he told us to beware of language.²⁴⁸

Let me, in response to this criticism, make two straightforward remarks.

- (a) Rhetorical catchphrases—such as “Bourdieu is probably at his most slippery and convincing in the way he uses language”²⁴⁹—may sound provocative, and at first glance perhaps even insightful, but intellectually they achieve little in the way of contributing to a better understanding of Bourdieu’s conception of language. It is open to question whether or not Bourdieu has succeeded in his persistent attempt to move away from the French intellectualist habit of mobilizing unnecessarily complicated terminological tools in order to make remarkably simple points. Whatever the answer to this question may be, however, Bourdieu—in his mission to break out of conceptual straitjackets—is certainly *not* “at his most slippery [...] in the way he uses language”²⁵⁰.
- (b) Whilst, along with Derek Robbins and others, I share the view that we must resist the temptation to reify Bourdieu’s concepts, I find Grenfell’s approach to this issue contradictory. Consider, for instance, the following two statements:

[...] terms such as *habitus* and *field* are to be received not simply as metaphorical descriptors, heuristic devices to elucidate social processes but *scientific instruments* which are “realistically” present within the very phenomena from which they are involved.²⁵¹

Indeed, I have always adopted the practice of writing his key concepts—*field*, *habitus*, *capital*, etc.—in italics in order to draw attention to the fact that they need to be read as *dynamic epistemological matrices* entering a narrative, not as mere metaphorical descriptors.²⁵²

On the one hand, Grenfell proposes to make use of Bourdieusian concepts as “*hard*” scientific tools. On the other hand, he suggests Bourdieusian concepts should be employed as “*soft*”—that is, adaptable and malleable—terminological reference points. We cannot have it both ways. To be sure, Grenfell is absolutely right to warn of the reification of Bourdieusian concepts. In fact, Bourdieu himself was wary of sociological dogmatism, as expressed in the following passage:

It is very common to reduce “Bourdiesian thought” to a few key terms, and usually even just a few book titles, and this then leads to a kind of closure: “reproduction”, “distinction”, “capital”, and “habitus”—all of these terms are often used in misleading ways, without really understanding what they stand for, and hence they become *slogans*. In reality, however, these concepts—these frameworks—are only *principles* for scientific work, which is usually of mere practical nature; they are *synthetic* or *synoptic* notions, which serve to provide research programmes with scientific *orientations*.²⁵³

Even if one sympathizes with Bourdieu’s clarifications on this matter, philosophers of science may have good reason to be suspicious of such vague recommendations. Whilst we should resist the reification and dogmatization of social-scientific jargon, we need to recognize that concepts such as “field”, “habitus” and “capital” represent constitutive components of Bourdieu’s social-scientific *ontology*, rather than elastic metaphors of an imaginative and playful *poetry*.

(3) *The charge of overinterpretation*: The view that my article suffers from a tendency to “over-interpret” Bourdieu is expressed in Grenfell’s accusation that I put words in the master’s mouth and thereby create a terminology which pretends to be “Bourdiesian” but which in fact is, if anything, “Susenian”. The significance of this allegation is conveyed in the following statements:

Already in the title I find much to question: Is it “*reflections*” or “*reflexions*”? What does he mean by “*conditions*”? Why are they supposed to be “*unavoidable*”? What is “*real*”, or is it “*realist*”? Is it “*real speech situation*” or “*speech event*”? These questions are not simply those of a pedant, but raise the presuppositions, tropes, implications and interests that resonate with my own academic signifiers as I work to position this article in the social space that is Bourdieusian scholarship.²⁵⁴

Susen’s is an interesting list of characteristics that might be used to describe language from a Bourdieusian perspective: sociality, dialecticality, signifiability, doxicality, discursivity, legitimacy, ideology, contestability, commodifiability, symbolic power. *I did ask myself whether he made some of these up*—“commodifiability”? Again, I am not trying to be pedantic; rather, I am simply attempting to draw attention to the practice (a theoretical account of which we have from Bourdieu) of working in a field of practice. Words do have epistemological status in Bourdieu’s *would-be theory*.²⁵⁵

In response to these remarks, it is worth reemphasizing that my article is not supposed to be a summary of Bourdieu’s writings on language based on a mere

paraphrasing exercise. *Description*, whether it is textually or empirically informed, is at best the pre-level of science. *Analysis*, whether it is meant to be interpretive or explanatory, is embedded in the purposive and creative spirit of science. Certainly, one may doubt whether or not the terminology proposed in my article is useful for Bourdieusian studies of language. The point is not, however, whether I made some of these terms up or whether they were employed by the master himself; rather, the point is to contribute to a more insightful *understanding of language*.

Furthermore, I should clarify that I *do* mean “reflections” (referring to thorough and critical thought processes); I *do* mean “conditions” (understood as a set of elements underlying a particular mode of activity or being); I *do* mean “unavoidable” (as in inevitable); I *do* mean “real” (as in existing or occurring in actuality), but I *do not* mean “realist” (as in the sense of the epistemological or philosophical doctrine); and I *do* mean “situation” (describing a set of circumstances), rather than “event” (designating a happening or an occurrence). Grenfell is right to state that these are not merely semantic points raised by “a pedant”²⁵⁶. Instead of questioning my choice of words, it would have been useful if he had explained why and to what extent these terms may not be appropriate and on what grounds his own conceptual tools can be considered more suitable.

(4) *The charge of desocialization*: In Grenfell’s argument, this problem comprises the following interrelated dimensions: (a) “the *social*”, (b) “the *ontological*”, (c) “the *methodological*”, (d) “the *empirical*” and (e) “the *sociological*”. The significance of these dimensions is reflected in the following aphoristic statements:

- (a) For Bourdieu, language *is* social.²⁵⁷
- (b) For Bourdieu, what is epistemological *is* ontological—the two are co-terminus.²⁵⁸

My point is that Susen’s list of presuppositions [...] seems to imply a claim to *ontological* status which asserts (theoretical) significance, whilst what we need is to think more in terms of their (practical) adaptability and applicability.²⁵⁹

- (c) [...] I would argue that the main challenge of a Bourdieusian approach to language is now *methodological*, rather than *epistemological* [...].²⁶⁰
- (d) Bourdieu, of course, always asserted that he *never theorized as such* and, indeed, as above, I would side with him in arguing that much of his so-called theory was derived from *empirical engagement*.²⁶¹

In what sense are they “unavoidable”? Are they logically necessitated by *empirical* data? The terms on the list may represent a useful range of epistemological dimensions to language but seem to lack practical (praxis/praxeological) usefulness from a *methodological*, *empirical* point of view for the study of language.²⁶²

Thus, I have argued the following: it is necessary to be *terminologically ascetic*; to not use more terms than is necessary; it is necessary to *use only*

*those logically necessitated by the data; it is necessary to avoid theory for theory's sake [...].*²⁶³

- (e) [...] it would seem *impossible to dissociate his sociology from his philosophy* because of Bourdieu's own epistemological foundations to what he means by structure [...].²⁶⁴

I have always thought that Bourdieu is best described as a "*social philosopher*". It follows from all this that there is a *philosophy of language* in Bourdieu, although perhaps not the one that Susen *expects*, or, indeed, may even *recognize*.²⁶⁵

(a) Given his *relationalist* conception of reality, it is true that Bourdieu studies both foundational and ephemeral aspects of the human world in terms of their *social* constitution. It is far from clear, however, what is to be learned from Grenfell's assertion that, "[f]or Bourdieu, language *is* social"²⁶⁶. Such a statement is little more perceptive than the affirmation that Bourdieu *was* a sociologist. More importantly, the fact that, from a Bourdieusian perspective, language is relationally constructed does not mean that it cannot have several *socio-ontological* features, which are, by definition, built into particular aspects of human coexistence.

(b) Tying in with the previous point, it is not obvious what is to be gained from the unsubstantiated assertion that, "[f]or Bourdieu, what is epistemological *is* ontological—the two are co-terminus"²⁶⁷. In fact, the opposite is true: they are *not* co-terminus. Even if we concede that there is an epistemological tension between sociological constructivism and epistemological realism in Bourdieu's writings²⁶⁸, it is erroneous to make the unsubstantiated claim that the terms "epistemological" and "ontological" can be used interchangeably, or that they are conceptually or empirically interdependent. There is no knowledge without being, but there *is* being without knowledge. Put philosophically, there are no epistemologies without real or imagined ontologies, but there *are* ontologies without epistemologies. From a phenomenological point of view, reality exists *for us* only insofar as we experience, interact with and reflect upon it. From a realist point of view, reality exists *in itself*, regardless of our experiences of, interactions with and reflections upon it. Notwithstanding the question of whether or not constructivism and realism can be reconciled, "*knowledge about reality*" (on the epistemological level) and the "*existence of reality*" (on the ontological level) are not the same thing.

(c) Grenfell states that he "would argue that the main challenge of a Bourdieusian approach to language is now *methodological*, rather than *epistemological*"²⁶⁹. The problem with this contention, however, is not only that the author fails to substantiate its validity on the basis of discursive or substantive evidence, but also that his plea "for method", legitimate as it may be, should not be regarded as antithetical to a plea "for knowledge". Language is both the key tool by which we organize our encounter with reality *methodologically* and the main vehicle through which we raise validity claims about reality *epistemolog-*

ically. Yet, what is more significant with regard to Grenfell's aforementioned comment is that, by definition, every study of language is semantically organized. In other words, the study of language occurs, both methodologically and epistemologically, *through* language. In brief, Grenfell misses the point when opposing the methodological and epistemological dimensions of the study of language to one another.

(d) One need only read *Pascalian meditations*²⁷⁰ to realize that it is nonsense to assume that Bourdieu “never theorized as such”²⁷¹. Undoubtedly, Bourdieu's entire oeuvre is marked by a strong commitment to the view that “research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty”²⁷². Yet, this does not justify Grenfell's short-sighted—and, once more, unsubstantiated—claim that Bourdieu “never theorized as such”²⁷³. On the contrary, as has been widely acknowledged by both his sympathetic and his unsympathetic critics, Bourdieu has made several substantial *theoretical* contributions, notably to sociology, anthropology and cultural studies. To assert that we should “use only those [terms] logically necessitated by the data”²⁷⁴ means to subscribe to *crude empiricism*, a reductive methodological position to which Bourdieu was strongly and explicitly opposed.²⁷⁵ Surely, when reflecting upon the “unavoidable conditions of the real speech situation”²⁷⁶, as identified in my article, Grenfell plausibly questions their methodological usefulness for the *empirical* study of language. Moreover, he is right to imply that I could have given empirical examples to demonstrate their relevance to the sociological examination of communicative processes. I must emphasize, however, that my article is *not* an empirical study but a theoretical attempt to shed light on the “unavoidable conditions of real speech”²⁷⁷. *Grenfell does not give a single theoretical, let alone empirical, example to demonstrate that even one of the conditions identified in my article is not inherent in language.* Perhaps, I should write a second article with abundant empirical examples to illustrate not only the in-built existence but also the sociological relevance of the “unavoidable conditions of real speech”²⁷⁸.

(e) I do not object to characterizing Bourdieu as a “social philosopher”²⁷⁹, nor do I disagree with Grenfell's contention that, from a Bourdieusian point of view, it makes little sense “to dissociate sociology from philosophy”²⁸⁰. We need to admit, however, that, in practice, this is not what happens. Disciplinary boundaries are both imagined and real: they are *imagined*, in the sense that they are relatively artificial, since academic scholars, consciously or unconsciously, draw upon knowledge generated under the umbrella of various disciplines; they are *real*, in the sense that they exist, both ideologically and institutionally, and, therefore, have a substantial impact upon the ways in which knowledge is generated in discipline-specific terms. Bourdieu, as a philosopher by training and a sociologist by choice, is widely perceived as the latter, rather than the former. Given his emphasis on the relational construction of human reality, sociology is his “house of being”. In fact, from a Bourdieusian perspective, sociology is to philosophy what science is to religion: “a threat to the self-declared ultimate authority of an arbitrary historical authority”²⁸¹. Yet, this does not permit us to assume that—despite the global rise of

interdisciplinary research programmes—disciplinary boundaries have ceased to exist. Bourdieu's works have become an essential part of almost every sociology curriculum around the world. How many philosophy curriculums on this planet include Bourdieu on the menu? The answer is as follows: remarkably few, if any. We may not like it, but philosophy *remains* to a large extent—that is, both institutionally and intellectually—dissociated from sociology.

Bryan S. Turner

In his insightful article “Pierre Bourdieu and public liturgies”²⁸², Bryan S. Turner draws our attention to two aspects of language which, he believes, are often ignored by sociologists: its *historical* and its *performative* dimensions. It goes without saying that I am flattered by Turner's suggestion that “we should congratulate Simon Susen for providing us with a systematic account of what the sociology of language entails and *inter alia* for offering a valuable interrogation of the underdeveloped position of language in Pierre Bourdieu's general sociology”²⁸³. As should be clear to the reader, Turner and I share a number of key assumptions about the nature of language, perhaps most importantly—as he himself stresses—in regard to the “*sociality*”²⁸⁴ of language. Turner's contribution is a breath of fresh air. He centres his analysis directly upon Bourdieu's writings and gives a balanced account of the latter's ability to provide an insightful approach to the sociological study of language. Instead of recapitulating the numerous points on which Turner and I concur, let me focus on five central issues on which we disagree.

(1) Turner frets about “the relative *neglect* of language in contemporary social theory”²⁸⁵, complaining that it has been “relegated to the *margins* of social theory”²⁸⁶. As anyone familiar with developments in intellectual thought over the past one hundred years will be able to confirm, however, language has been a *central* concern in twentieth-century social theory, as reflected in the paradigmatic impact of different versions of the “linguistic turn”²⁸⁷. It is ironic that Turner asserts there has been “too little” emphasis on language in contemporary social theory, whereas Inglis, in his commentary, affirms there has been far “too much” of a preoccupation with it, leading to the “fetishization of language” in much of modern intellectual thought. One does not have to go as far as Inglis, but there is corroborative evidence to demonstrate that the thorough engagement with language has been *crucial* to recent developments in social theory in particular and modern intellectual thought in general (notably in the works of Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricœur, Habermas and Bourdieu—to mention only a few examples). In fact, the impact of this paradigmatic focus has been sufficiently significant to shape current debates in such a way that a wide range of theoretical approaches—as diverse as structuralism, post-structuralism, post-modernism, critical realism and critical theory—now take language-theoretic concerns remarkably seriously.

(2) Turner alleges that the most influential approaches in the sociology of language tend to be overly *micro-oriented*. Following this line of argument, he contends that “[w]e may reasonably claim that sociologists have concentrated

primarily on what I may call the *spontaneous eruption of language in face-to-face communication*²⁸⁸. On this account, sociology has hosted “typically the study of language as it is deployed in *everyday situations* as the primary medium of communication²⁸⁹. In this regard, Turner’s reference to “*conversational analysis*, which looks at the conventions of language use in interactional settings, such as turn taking and sequential placement²⁹⁰ is largely persuasive. His remarks on “the study of restricted codes in a lower-class milieu by Basil Bernstein²⁹¹, however, are much less convincing, as the main purpose of class-focused approaches to language is to make sense of the ways in which *macro-social structures* impact upon everyday language use, particularly in terms of people’s capacity to master the rules of semantics, syntax, phonetics and pragmatics. Yet, even more significant is Turner’s failure to recognize that *macro-oriented* versions of language-theoretic and communication-theoretic approaches in sociology have been no less influential than their micro-oriented counterparts. Arguably, the most prominent examples of these frameworks have sought to bridge the gap between micro- and macro-levels of analysis, as illustrated in the works of Bourdieu (*habitus* and *field*) and Habermas (*lifeworld* and *system*). In short, in contemporary sociology, language is both a micro-theoretic *and* a macro-theoretic object of study.

(3) Turner maintains that “in modern society we no longer easily recognize the role of liturgies in public life²⁹². Given that, in the capitalist era, “the public sphere has been severely eroded by the market²⁹³, “we have only a *weak notion of both secular and religious liturgies*²⁹⁴ and, consequently, “we no longer possess a vivid sense of that ensemble of public duties that have to be performed by citizens in a structured calendar of activities²⁹⁵. This, he suggests, is sociologically significant in that “[t]he transformation of the public sphere by the *modern technology of the media* has largely *robbed us of the experience of collective liturgies employing a shared language in a ritual context*²⁹⁶. I shall make three straightforward points in response to this concern:

- (a) Most worryingly, Turner’s account is suspiciously close to anti-modern views based on *conservative romanticism* à la Heidegger, implying that traditional and community-based societies are essentially more “human” social settings than post-traditional and highly differentiated ones. Yet, such a romanticization of premodern societies, expressed in the demonization of systemically differentiated and technologically advanced life forms, involves the risk of making the sociologically reductive, and politically reactionary, claim that the traditional “cult of community” is no less problematic than the post-traditional “cult of the individual”.
- (b) Rather than simply depriving us of collective experiences and shared languages, the media—including the mass media and social media—have contributed not only to the *colonization* of the public sphere by group-specific economic and political interests, but also to their *pluralization* and *democratization* in accordance with universal human interests.²⁹⁷
- (c) We must not forget that a strong and omnipresent public sphere, sustained through the celebration of both secular and religious liturgies, is *not a positive*

social phenomenon in itself. Totalitarian societies—notably fascist and state-communist ones—tend to be characterized by the presence of highly ritualized public performances and languages; their collectivist nature, however, does not convert them into desirable and legitimate arenas of intersubjective encounters. Public spheres need to contain *universally empowering* normative ingredients—such as democracy, dialogue, discourse and freedom of expression—in order to qualify as progressive and emancipatory realms of human interaction.

(4) Turner contends that two aspects of my argument need to be elaborated further: (a) the “inescapable *historical character* of language”²⁹⁸ and (b) “the *ritual of public events*”²⁹⁹. The first dimension refers to “its development through *time* as the common culture of a people”³⁰⁰, whereas the second element requires us to reflect upon “*language-as-performance*”³⁰¹ in the context of particular interactional settings. Turner affirms that “we can take [his] commentary on both Bourdieu and Susen as *a plea for the comparative and historical study of language as an institution that forms the foundation of the collective conscience and the shared memory of societies*”³⁰². In response to this proposition, it is worth pointing out that, as elucidated in my article, in Bourdieu’s work there *is* a strong concern with both the historical and the performative aspects of language. (a) With regard to its *historical* dimensions, Bourdieu emphasizes the *doxic* nature of linguistically constituted and contextually mobilized background assumptions, reflecting an analytical focus he borrows from hermeneutics. (b) With regard to its *performative* dimensions, Bourdieu stresses the *practical and context-specific* nature of language, notably in terms of its creative capacity to shape, and its adaptive capacity to be shaped by, field-specific interactional settings. By no means do Bourdieu and I deny that, as Turner puts it, language constitutes “a major institution that is essential for the conduct of social life in the public domain”³⁰³, and by no means do we reduce language to a “spontaneous [...] feature of interaction in everyday life”³⁰⁴. On the contrary, one of the principal aims of the Bourdieusian study of language is to shed light on its *socio-historical* and *socio-performative* functions at three essential levels: at the micro-level of the individual, at the meso-level of community and at the macro-level of society.

(5) As Bourdieu’s eclectic writings demonstrate, it is not true that he had “little understanding of the *role of religion in the performance of social life*, let alone the place of religion in creating *national consciousness*”³⁰⁵, as argued by Turner. One may have good reason to come to the conclusion that Bourdieu failed to make a substantial contribution to the sociology of religion.³⁰⁶ Yet, in accordance with the Weberian and Durkheimian spirit underlying large parts of his writings, his sensibility towards the bonding function of religion³⁰⁷ should not be underestimated, just as his critical awareness of the normalizing function of national languages—based on processes of standardization, officialization and institutionalization—needs to be taken seriously.³⁰⁸ Thus, Turner’s assertion that, essentially, there is “too much Weber” and “not enough Durkheim” in Bourdieu and that, consequently, he “has less to say

about the role of language in expressing and shaping the sentiments and consciousness of a society”³⁰⁹ is questionable—to say the least. From a Bourdieusian perspective, it is the relationship between languages and social fields which permits us to understand both the *bonding* and the *segregating* functions of symbolic power. Hence, “national consciousness” and “religious consciousness”, both of which are embedded in and reproduced through language, are only two amongst many other *field-specific* forms of doxa.

Lisa Adkins

In her excellent and challenging commentary “Ontological Bourdieu? A reply to Simon Susen”³¹⁰, Lisa Adkins questions the validity of my “ontological” interpretation of Bourdieu’s conception of language. As she forcefully states in her conclusion, her three lines of critique can be described as follows:

first, the critique of the idea of *language as meaning-bearing*; second, the critique of the idea of *the ontological as a site or source of transcendence and resistance*; and, third, the critique of the idea of *subjective experience as constructed through linguistic categories*—are all hard-wired to this transformation.³¹¹

Whilst I believe that Adkins demonstrates that we need to push my argument further, it seems to me that some of her criticisms are based on a misinterpretation of key elements underlying my analysis. Let me try to respond to her charges one by one.

(1) “*Language as meaning-bearing*”: This point of criticism boils down to the tension between two—seemingly opposed—theoretical positions. On the one hand, there is the *classical hermeneutic position*³¹², which stresses that, given “that language allows for the symbolic mediation of reality, we need to account for the socio-ontological centrality of everyday hermeneutics”³¹³. This view is synthesized in the Gadamerian contention, eloquently summarized by William Outhwaite, that “[h]ermeneutics is universal because understanding is the fundamental way in which human beings participate in the world”³¹⁴. On the other hand, there is the *post-hermeneutic position*³¹⁵, which suggests that, insofar as “human meaning and interpretation have reached a limit point in the contemporary present”³¹⁶, we need to face up to the fact “that participation in the world is increasingly *beyond* meaning and understanding”³¹⁷. This perspective is expressed in the neo-vitalist assertion that, over the past few decades, we have been witnessing “a historical shift in sociality”³¹⁸, which has profound implications for contemporary sociology. According to Adkins, this transition obliges us to revise traditional conceptions of social existence, based on “a *logic of structure and action*”³¹⁹ and “organized through *human consciousness*”³²⁰, and to develop new approaches to sociality, “operating through a *logic of affective modulation*, a modulation arranged through a *post-human ontology of matter*”³²¹.

Adkins’s *anti-rationalist* line of critique is founded (a) on the *philosophical* argument that “sociality operates not through meaning but through sensation or

affect”³²², (b) on the *sociological* argument that the contemporary world is characterized by “the emergence of affect as a source of value, including economic value”³²³, and (c) on the *methodological* argument that, in light of the above, it is time to make a case “for a reoriented sociology and especially for a sociology of the sensate empirical”³²⁴.

(a) In response to the *philosophical* argument, it is worth pointing out that I have never claimed that meaning is the only way in which human actors participate in the world, nor have I ever denied the existence of non-linguistic sources or vehicles of meaning. Rather than opposing meaning and sensation, or meaning and affect, to one another, I would insist that, in the human universe, they are inextricably *interrelated*. Indeed, I would go even further and suggest that emotions—such as love or hatred, sympathy or apathy, and empathy or indifference—can be much more powerful sources of meaning than reason. The constative, normative, expressive and communicative functions of language may enable us to interpret, justify, convey or share our sensations. This does not mean, however, that language permits us to control, let alone do away with, them. The existential search for meaning is vital to us not only because we are rational entities but also, perhaps more significantly, because we are emotional beings.

(b) In response to the *sociological* argument, I wonder why we should be inclined to think that affects and sensations are more powerful in the contemporary era than in previous epochs. Is the “background of a non-hermeneutic affective sociality”³²⁵, to which Adkins refers in her commentary, really such a new and unprecedented interactional scenario? Owing to their scepticism towards “ontological” or “transcendental” claims about the nature of the human condition, post-structuralist thinkers, such as Adkins, are reluctant to accept that the “affective or vitalist (or, as it is also sometimes termed, intensive) character”³²⁶ of sociality is an integral feature not only of “contemporary life”³²⁷ but also, more fundamentally, of human coexistence.

(c) In response to the *methodological* argument, it seems to me that Adkins is entirely right to imply that, for far too long, sociology has remained trapped in the stifling dichotomies of modern intellectual thought, such as the rational *versus* the emotional, the conceptual *versus* the empirical, the individual *versus* the social, and the cultural *versus* the natural—to mention only a few of them. Her plea for a “sociology of the sensate empirical”³²⁸, however, can be a fruitful way of breaking out of the presuppositional straitjackets of Enlightenment thought only to the extent that it recognizes the emancipatory potential of communicative reason. For, as humans, we are equipped with the species-constitutive capacity to shape our own destiny by raising reflexive—that is, communicatively negotiated and discursively tested—claims to validity. The idea of “a post-human ontology of matter”³²⁹ may sound intellectually challenging and cutting-edge. The question of whether or not we are able to live in a world without anthropological invariants, however, is an entirely different matter. Even if we reject the scientific spirit of early modern thought, we should be careful not to convert sociology into an esoteric enterprise of vitalist astrology.

(2) “*The ontological as a site or source of transcendence and resistance*”: Adkins states that I put forward “an ontological conception of language”³³⁰, in order to defend the notion that empowering anthropological capacities—such as our communicative competence—enable us “to overcome the material and symbolic distance generated by social asymmetries”³³¹. Moreover, she contends that I position “the ontological in regard to language not only as a *potential source of transcendence* for normative positioning across and within social fields, but also as a source of *potential resistance to domination*”³³². According to Adkins, this—arguably old-fashioned—view “is tied to a model of social formation whose relevance may now be exhausted”³³³, since we have entered an era in which “domination operates ontologically”³³⁴ and in which “life and domination can no longer be easily differentiated”³³⁵. In the current age, she affirms, “the ontological [...] is part of the very apparatus of domination”³³⁶, imposing its ubiquity “through a post-human ontology of human matter”³³⁷.

Adkins’s *anti-essentialist* line of critique is based (a) on the *philosophical* argument that there is nothing intrinsically emancipatory about ontologies, (b) on the *sociological* argument that, in the contemporary world, the ontological and the non-ontological have become indistinguishable, and (c) on the *methodological* argument that, as a consequence, we should embrace a post-ontological social science.

(a) In response to the *philosophical* argument, it is crucial to define the term “ontological”. Similar to other key concepts in intellectual thought, “ontological” is not “a self-evident sociological category”³³⁸; this does not mean, however, that it cannot be defined. I cannot speak on behalf of Adkins, but in my article the concept “ontological” refers to any kind of dimension worth describing as a form of *existence*. Thus, the term “socio-ontological” designates any aspect of reality which forms part of *human coexistence*. The question of what distinguishes existence from non-existence, or the ontological from the non-ontological, is a different matter. Yet, by no means have I ever sought to suggest that “the ontological” has a *normative* nature in itself, let alone an *emancipatory* potential, which is built into the authenticity of being. There is nothing intrinsically normative, let alone positive, about being, nor is a prescriptive “ought-to-be” inherent in a descriptive “is”. If there is anything normative about our “being in the world” (*Dasein*), it is the fact that our existence is characterized by both bright and dark sides, by both “being with one another” (*Miteinandersein*) and “being against one another” (*Gegeneinandersein*), by both cooperation and competition, by both subversion and compliance, in short, by tension-laden forces and interests.

(b) In response to the *sociological* argument, it seems to me that, although it has become fashionable to proclaim that, in late modern or post-modern societies, traditional boundaries are increasingly blurred, we need to recognize that the conceptual distinction between “the ontological” and “the non-ontological” is far from obsolete. The point is not to suggest that language constitutes an ahistorical force based on timeless properties, which can be abstracted from the particular historical contexts in which symbolic resources are mobilized by meaning-producing actors.

Rather, the point is to acknowledge that *all* languages, whilst they emerge and flourish in specific social settings, share a number of *universal* features—that is, several attributes which *transcend* the historical specificity of the relationally constructed contexts in which they are embedded. If, as I have sought to demonstrate in my article, this is the case, then these universal features of language are not, as Adkins implies, “tied to a model of social formation”³³⁹, but, on the contrary, they are integral to linguistically mediated engagements with reality in *all* social formations.

(c) In response to the *methodological* argument, it seems to me that the very idea of a *post-ontological social science* is a *contradiction in terms*. If science is not concerned with being, or with different forms of being, then it ends up confining itself to the interpretive task of deciphering appearances which have no background realities. Surely, we have every reason to believe that the natural sciences and the social sciences require profoundly different methodologies, since they study fundamentally different ontologies. Vitalist scholars may argue that the natural world of objectivity and the social world of normativity may have much more in common than has been widely assumed by Enlightenment-inspired thinkers. Even if, however, the boundaries between natural and social realms are increasingly blurred, there is no human existence without human *beings*. Every really existing form of sociality constitutes a really existing ontology.

(3) “*Subjective experience as constructed through linguistic categories*”: Adkins’s main charge in this regard is that “Susen makes use of the notion of *experience* in a relatively *unproblematic* fashion, indeed, proceeds as if experience were a *self-evident sociological category, a substance simply filtered from the world via linguistic categories*”³⁴⁰. Neither in this article nor in any other study, however, have I suggested that experience is (a) an unproblematic or self-evident category, (b) a substance filtered from the world, or (c) an element which is exclusively constructed via linguistic categories. On the contrary, to my mind, the point is to demonstrate that *experience* is (a) a *foundational*, yet controversial, category in the humanities and social sciences, (b) a filtering *process*, rather than a filtered substance, allowing for our bodily immersion in and engagement with reality, and (c) an element which contains various *non-linguistic* dimensions.³⁴¹

Adkins’s *anti-hermeneutic* line of critique hinges (a) on the *philosophical* argument that various constitutive aspects of experience “may be beyond the reach of language”³⁴², (b) on the *sociological* argument that, in the contemporary world, the non-linguistic dimensions of experience have been intensified due to the rise of “an affective or vitalist sociality”³⁴³, and (c) on the *methodological* argument that this societal transition process “demands a thoroughgoing rethinking of the relationships between language, experience and sociality”³⁴⁴, leading to the development of a post-empiricist “sociology of the sensate empirical”³⁴⁵.

(a) In response to the *philosophical* argument, I must stress that I have never maintained that *every* experience is filtered, let alone constructed, through linguistic categories. On the contrary, the whole point of my critique of “linguistic idealism”³⁴⁶ is to challenge the reductive view that “language is all there is for us” and

thereby resist the temptation to portray the human “house of being” as the “house of language”. As proposed in a previous study³⁴⁷, we can identify at least five socio-ontological foundations: labour, language, culture, desire and experience. (i) As *working* beings, we are purposive, cooperative, creative and socio-productive entities. (ii) As *linguistic* beings, we are assertive, normative, expressive and socio-contemplative entities. (iii) As *cultural* beings, we are connective, collective, individuating and socio-constructive entities. (iv) As *longing* beings, we are intentional, coprojective, imaginative and socio-utopian entities. (v) As *experiential* beings, we are objective, intersubjective, subjective and immersive entities. Adkins is unlikely to sympathize with the foundationalist spirit underlying this five-dimensional framework. Whatever one makes of this model, however, it illustrates that I conceive of experience as a *multi-layered* process, which is *irreducible* to a one-dimensional engagement with reality, let alone to a linguistically structured substance. We *do* experience language, and our experiences of reality *are* to a large extent mediated by language, but this does *not* mean that *all* aspects of our experience are “constructed through linguistic categories”³⁴⁸.

(b) In response to the *sociological* argument, it seems worth stressing that, whilst I agree with Adkin’s contention that “sensations and affects may be beyond the reach of language”³⁴⁹, I disagree with her assertion that in contemporary “social formations”³⁵⁰ this is more evident than in previous ones. As she accurately points out, “the operations of meaning and understanding are in some way now more mediated, constrained or even colonized or hollowed out by [...] powerful external social forces, for instance, the force of social fields or rule and resource sets”³⁵¹. Habermas has famously described this process as the “colonization of the lifeworld”³⁵², and Bourdieu’s analysis of power-laden social fields is also useful in this respect. Even if, following Adkins and other critical commentators, we are willing to concede that recent decades have been marked by “a thoroughgoing *transformation of sociality*”³⁵³, this does not mean that the latest developments have led to a complete *disentanglement of experience and language*. Certainly, any kind of profound social transformation “demands a rethinking of human experience”³⁵⁴, because the existential conditions of our involvement in the world change in relation to the material and symbolic changes by which we are surrounded. It remains to be seen whether or not the concept of “unexperience”³⁵⁵ may be enlightening in this regard. Yet, human forms of sociality have *always* had, and will *always* continue to have, a deeply “affective and vitalist character”³⁵⁶, because human experiences have *always* been, and will *always* remain, *embodied* processes.

(c) In response to the *methodological* argument, we have to be careful not to fall into the routine of advocating new paradigmatic “turns” every decade or so, just for the sake of demonstrating that sociology is capable of developing at the same pace as society itself. Indubitably, the various “linguistic turns” which have been announced over the past decades are fraught with difficulties, notably due to their tendency to reduce the human engagement with reality to an encounter with linguisticality. The multiple recent paradigmatic pleas—for a “vitalist turn”, “affective turn”, “post-ontological turn” or “(post)empirical turn”—are by no means less problematic,

however, to the extent that they ignore the *species-distinctive* features of human sociality, one of which is communicative rationality. Of course, there is no point in relapsing into the habit of endorsing abstract conceptions of quasi-disembodied and rational subjects, since such an endeavour would lead to the revival of an anthropocentric, positivist and empiricist sociology. Yet, it seems to me that there is little point in proclaiming the arrival of “a post-hermeneutic sensate sociology”³⁵⁷, if understood as a paradigmatic venture in which language and rationality are conceived of as peripheral, rather than foundational, elements of human sociality. Instead of opposing an “ontological Bourdieu” to a “sociological Bourdieu”, the challenge consists in exploring both the sociality of reality *and* the reality of sociality.

Hans-Herbert Kögler

In his stimulating commentary, entitled “Unavoidable idealizations and the reality of symbolic power”³⁵⁸, Hans-Herbert Kögler defends the paradigmatic significance of the study of language in Bourdieu’s writings. It is very kind of him to suggest that “Simon Susen does a formidable and impressive job of unearthing the largely implicit ontology of Pierre Bourdieu’s account of linguistic practices”³⁵⁹ and that “[h]is encyclopedic gaze allows him to discern 10 essential features of Bourdieu’s conception of language”³⁶⁰. Above all, I am grateful for his sympathetic assessment that, “[a]fter Susen’s analysis, there can be no doubt about the *centrality of language for Bourdieu’s reconstruction of practice*”³⁶¹. As should be clear to anyone who has read both my article and Kögler’s constructive commentary, there are far more points on which we concur than issues on which we disagree. Rather than focusing upon our various areas of consensus, I shall use this opportunity to take on the more challenging task of reflecting upon some key sources of controversy.

(1) It seems to me that Kögler has a tendency to underestimate the sociological significance of both *non-linguistic experiences of reality* and *non-linguistic sources of meaning*. With regard to the former, this tendency manifests itself in statements such as the following:

I take this to mean that *language* constitutes, in some respect, an *insurmountable* mediation of our reality and its understanding and that, furthermore, we can call this form of unavoidability “transcendental” in the sense that it allows for the *cognitive experience of social reality*.³⁶²

With regard to the latter, this tendency is expressed in assertions such as the following:

[...] we need *language* to engage *meaningfully* with the world [...].³⁶³

Kögler’s tendency to privilege linguistic over non-linguistic experiences of reality and sources of meaning is ironic in that one of his main ambitions is to expose the flaws of hermeneutic idealism. Yet, he does not explicitly acknowledge the fact that

there are several non-linguistic ways of relating and attributing meaning to the world, notably through affects, emotions and intuitions, which play a pivotal role not only in embodied, and to a large extent nonverbal, practices of everyday life, but also in diverse forms of artistic expression, which are arguably no less significant than language in shaping the species-constitutive elements of human existence.

(2) In addition to giving the impression of playing into the hands of hermeneutic idealism by privileging “internal *semantic* assumptions of the respective fields”³⁶⁴ over bodily *non-semantic* practices, Kögler unwittingly subscribes to the fatalistic fallacy of essentializing *processes of social distinction*. This is, perhaps most clearly, discernible in the following passage:

The reality of linguistic world-disclosure is *always already structured and permanently permeated by a social logic of distinction* that puts one’s socio-cultural standing at the core of a competitive and strategic world.³⁶⁵

Contentions of this kind give the misleading impression that processes of social distinction are quasi-naturally built into the human condition and that, consequently, any form of world-disclosure is *always already* impregnated with a stratifying logic. The whole point of Bourdieu’s relational approach, however, is to demonstrate that vertical modes of social organization, sustained by an unequal distribution of material and symbolic resources, are always relatively *arbitrary* and *contingent* upon the conditions of production in particular interactional settings, that is, in idiosyncratic social fields. As reflexive sociologists, we need to be critical of both “the socialization of the natural” and “the naturalization of the social”.³⁶⁶

(3) To my mind, Kögler presents us with an overly *sociologistic reading of Bourdieu’s conception of language*. To be sure, I share Kögler’s skilfully presented critique of “three hermeneutic illusions”: the “*illusion of unmediated open dialogue*”³⁶⁷, the “*illusion of trans-social meaning*”³⁶⁸ and the “*illusion of representational reference*”³⁶⁹. What is problematic in this context, however, is the following claim:

He [Bourdieu] does not consider [...] that the *linguistic mediation of reality* would be able to constitute *its own ontological force* and that it could amount to a *mediated sphere of transcendence* in which *oppositional forms of social agency* may emerge.³⁷⁰

As exemplified in the above passage, Kögler underestimates the extent to which Bourdieu considers the linguistic mediation of reality as a *relatively autonomous* affair. Yet, the relative autonomy of symbolic forms is one of the key concerns in Bourdieu’s critical analysis of language.³⁷¹ From a Bourdieusian perspective, linguistic practices cannot be dissociated from the field-specific contexts in which they are embedded. This does not mean, though, that language cannot function as a discursive driving force of “oppositional forms of social agency”³⁷². Bourdieu’s emphasis on the sociological significance of heterodox, and hence subversive, linguistic discourses suggests the opposite is true. It is in this light that we need to assess the validity of one of Kögler’s boldest assertions: “Bourdieu’s weakness—namely his *lack* of a conceptually carved out sphere of *autonomous linguistic understanding*—constitutes his very strength”³⁷³. If humans were not bestowed with

cognitive autonomy derived from linguistic reflexivity, then there would be no room for critical, and potentially subversive, agency in field-differentiated realities.

(4) I have some reservations about Kögler's account of the relationship between *language and power*. One problem in this regard is that he pays insufficient attention to social mechanisms of *misrecognition*, as illustrated in the following contention:

Therefore, agents encounter one another within a socially defined space in which the *epistemic authority* of the other is *inextricably intertwined* with the *socially granted authority* of the other as such-and-such a socially recognized speaker.³⁷⁴

The critical study of the relationship between validity and legitimacy³⁷⁵ reveals that, just as the *presence* of epistemic authority is intimately interrelated with the *access* to social authority, the *lack* of the former is often a result of the *absence* of the latter. Of course, Kögler is aware of the significance of relationally constituted mechanisms of misrecognition, but in his commentary these dynamics play at best a marginal role, when in fact processes of exclusion are a *constitutive* feature of stratified societies.

(5) Crucial to Kögler's reconstruction of linguistic practices is his mission to overcome the *antinomy between hermeneutic idealism and structuralist sociologism*. He poignantly describes this ambition—which he shares not only with me but also, more importantly, with Bourdieu—as the attempt to avoid falling into “the trap between the *Scylla of hermeneutic idealism* and the *Charybdis of sociological power-reductionism*”³⁷⁶. This issue ties in with one of Kögler's core concerns, which is also central to the argument developed in my article: namely, to think not only *with and against Bourdieu*, and not only *with and against Habermas*, but also *with and against Bourdieu through Habermas*, as well as *with and against Habermas through Bourdieu*. As pointed out by Outhwaite and myself, rather than simply opposing their approaches to one another, the more fruitful challenge consists in cross-fertilizing them by demonstrating that they constitute two complementary theoretical frameworks.³⁷⁷ In short, there is substantial “common ground”³⁷⁸ between Habermas and Bourdieu, and in this sense “a fully *normative* view and a fully *power-analytic* view”³⁷⁹ are by no means mutually exclusive.

Defending Habermas, Kögler legitimately insists that, given its emphasis on intersubjective practices in human lifeworlds, the theory of communicative action rejects “a simple opposition between situated discourse and ahistorical reason”³⁸⁰. Criticizing Bourdieu, Kögler makes the more controversial claim that, “when Bourdieu suggests that communication rarely functions as a pure instrument of communication, he is trivially right, but misses the point”³⁸¹. The previous two reflections, as well as discourse-ethical assertions such as “reasons are meant to be valid as such”³⁸², may give the impression that Kögler's own perspective is primarily Habermasian and only secondarily Bourdieusian. In any case, it seems to me that Kögler puts his finger on a curious paradox which lies at the heart of my article:

[...] it is [...] the apparent *conflict of rejecting* Habermas repeatedly, while nevertheless *endorsing* seemingly Habermasian intuitions in Susen's counter-critique of Bourdieu, that forces us to take a closer look.³⁸³

However one may seek to cross-fertilize Bourdieusian and Habermasian insights, such an endeavour obliges us to face up to “the intersection of social situatedness and linguistic mediation”³⁸⁴. Yet, rather than focusing exclusively on the relationship between “idealization”³⁸⁵ processes, based on communicative action, and “power maximization”³⁸⁶ dynamics, sustained by strategic action, a more interesting point of controversy is what Kögler astutely refers to as “*the multifunctionality of speech*”³⁸⁷. Some commentators will find it difficult to share Kögler's communication-theoretic assumption that “social fields can ‘function’ only via their mediation through language”³⁸⁸, or my universalist assertion that, as a foundational realm of human life, the linguistic field “constitutes a civilizational ensemble of relationally structured conditions the existence of which is *necessary* for the emergence of social order”³⁸⁹. Undoubtedly, the study of “*the multifunctionality of speech*”³⁹⁰ remains a major source of controversy. *What are the main functions of language?* The answer my article offers to this question is that the key *functions* of language are inextricably linked to the principal *features* of language. On this view, the assertive, normative, expressive and communicative functions of language cannot be dissociated from its (1) social, (2) dialectical, (3) interpretive, (4) doxic, (5) discursive, (6) (de-)legitimizing, (7) ideological, (8) value-laden, (9) interest-laden and (10) power-laden characteristics.

Rather than providing an exhaustive list of the multiple functions of language, however, Kögler and I seem to agree that the transcendentalist investigation of symbolic relations is worth nothing without the pragmatist exploration of the conditions of their real-world unfolding. Just as we should follow the late Wittgenstein in recognizing that the *meaning* of a word is defined by its *use*, we should follow Bourdieu in acknowledging that the *functions* of linguistic resources cannot be dissociated from the social *contexts* in which they are mobilized. Kögler and I appear to be united in this mission. To accept, then, that our task, as reflexive sociologists, is to examine “*ce que parler veut dire*”³⁹¹ means to face up to the fact that “[t]here is [...] much more involved in speaking than the intent to communicate”³⁹².

David Inglis

Anyone who has read the thought-provoking piece “Bourdieu, language and ‘determinism’: A reply to Simon Susen”³⁹³ will comprehend why David Inglis is one of the most original, intellectually challenging and rhetorically skilled scholars in contemporary British sociology. Throughout his article, he makes numerous perceptive comments, for which I am extremely grateful. On the sympathetic side, he considers that I have “produced [...] an even-handed account”³⁹⁴ and “a very fair-minded appraisal of Bourdieu's concerns with language”³⁹⁵, based on “a

remarkably clear exposition”³⁹⁶. More significantly, we appear to agree that identifying the conditions underlying “the *real speech situation*, always and inevitably wrapped up in social power relations”³⁹⁷, is a worthwhile project. Further room for consensus is expressed in Inglis’s assertion that “Susen is correct to emphasize that Bourdieu’s understanding of language is primarily rooted in his account of *power, domination and legitimacy*”³⁹⁸. In addition, Inglis’s contextualizing remarks are cogent, notably his observation that, “[c]learly, Susen has not read Bourdieu with the aim of dethroning a dead king”³⁹⁹.

Not everyone will share Inglis’s kind assessment that “[s]o logical and systematic is Susen’s exposition and critique of Bourdieu’s understanding of language that it is certain to become the definitive piece on such issues”⁴⁰⁰. To learn, however, that Inglis thinks that “[a]ny reader will be struck by the paper’s exceptionally comprehensive and lucid treatment of such matters”⁴⁰¹ is obviously both rewarding and encouraging, particularly in light of the fact that the literature on Bourdieu is characterized by a lack of attention to the explanatory significance of the *philosophical* assumptions underpinning his writings on language. I am honoured by Inglis’s generous concluding statement, according to which “Simon Susen has done the social theory field a great favour by excavating many of Bourdieu’s deepest assumptions in a manner no one has done before”⁴⁰².

As I hope will be apparent from these sympathetic comments, the fact that Inglis and I diverge on many counts should not distract from the reality that, in terms of the “big picture”, there is far more room for consensus than for disagreement between his and my reading of Bourdieu. Let me nevertheless try to address some of Inglis’s eloquently presented criticisms of my article. It seems to me that five charges are particularly worth discussing.

(1) *The overestimation and underestimation of Bourdieu’s insightfulness*: This criticism is succinctly expressed in the following passage:

Yet, I think Susen has overestimated Bourdieu and underestimated him at the same time. The *really serious criticisms* that could be made are *left untouched*, while the *criticisms offered* seem to me to be both *unfair* and rooted in some *questionable* assumptions of their own. That such an acute thinker as Susen has made these mistakes points to the fact that we are dealing here not with the idiosyncrasies of one paper or its author, but rather with *problematic yet unquestioned assumptions that plague the social-theoretical field*, and related intellectual domains, at the present time.⁴⁰³

In response to this assessment, I shall make four straightforward points.

- (a) From a merely discursive angle, the accusation that I have both overestimated and underestimated Bourdieu may sound provocative and challenging. In terms of substance, however, Inglis provides remarkably little, if any, convincing textual *evidence*, based on Bourdieu’s own writings, in order to justify this fundamental allegation.
- (b) The charge that the genuinely substantial criticisms that could and should have been launched against Bourdieu are ignored in my analysis is weakened

by the fact that, apart from the claim that the master's account of language lacks in originality, Inglis fails to specify what these *areas of significant disapproval* actually are.

- (c) By no means do I seek to suggest that my piece offers an in-all-respects-unprecedented, let alone exhaustive, account of Bourdieu's conception of language. A closer, and slightly more systematic, consideration of my critical reflections on Bourdieu's perspective, however, may have permitted Inglis to concede that some of the limitations and weaknesses discussed in my paper have not been identified, or at least not been examined from the same angle, in any previous studies. His binary notion of my purportedly concurrent overestimation and underestimation of Bourdieu, however, gives a curiously reductive account of the *multi-layered criticisms* developed in my article.
- (d) Perhaps unwittingly, Inglis portrays "the social-theoretical field"⁴⁰⁴ as a largely *homogenous* realm inundated with a series of "problematic yet unquestioned assumptions"⁴⁰⁵, as if all social theorists were singing from the same hymn sheet and subscribed to the same set of paradigmatic presuppositions. As Inglis knows, nothing could be further from the truth, not even with regard to the "Bourdieu is a determinist"⁴⁰⁶ thesis, since there are various Bourdieusian and non-Bourdieusian scholars—Inglis being one of them—who do not share this view.

(2) *The fetishization of language*: Elaborating on this issue, Inglis affirms that "Susen has been too kind to Bourdieu"⁴⁰⁷ for overlooking the fact that "a *focus on language*—shared by Bourdieu and just about every other major social thinker of his time—is a peculiarly *late twentieth-century fetish*, but a fetish certainly not perceived as such by those in its grip"⁴⁰⁸. Four interrelated analytical levels, on which this allegation is based, are particularly important.

- (a) On the *ontological* level, it is a common feature of many twentieth-century philosophers, especially of those associated with the "linguistic turn"⁴⁰⁹, to share the foundationalist assumption that, owing to its "*constitutive* role in human life"⁴¹⁰, "language [is] the *root* of all human existence"⁴¹¹.
- (b) On the *methodological* level, this paradigmatic obsession is, according to Inglis, reflected in the fact that "language's place in human existence was *drastically* overestimated in the last fifty years or so, both by German-style communication philosophy and by French-style semiotic thinking"⁴¹², as epitomized in "the *fetishization of Wittgenstein*"⁴¹³ and the increasing popularity of "the widespread assumption that language was the root of, and clue to, all things"⁴¹⁴. On this account, rigorous social-scientific methods need to have a sophisticated language-theoretic orientation.
- (c) On the *explanatory* level, the "linguistic turn" is intimately intertwined with the "cultural turn", both of which are based on "a set of interlocking assumptions about the allegedly *huge importance of language* and its capacities to create a *multiplicity of cultural arbitraries*"⁴¹⁵. As maintained by

Inglis, these two paradigmatic transitions do not only go hand-in-hand, but, in addition, they are “founded on a set of erroneous ideas about what ‘culture’ and ‘nature’ are, with *culture* falsely being seen to be *the driver of all things*”⁴¹⁶.

- (d) On the *historical* level, Inglis asserts that—in the future—the ontological, methodological and explanatory differences between seemingly irreconcilable (notably Bourdieusian, Habermasian and post-structuralist) approaches to language “will seem to be *utterly trivial*”⁴¹⁷, not unlike “peas in a pod”⁴¹⁸, whose elementary components are “*uncomfortably close*”⁴¹⁹ to one another.

In response to these critical considerations, I shall make four straightforward points.

(a) In relation to the *ontological* level, it is worth pointing out that language *does* play a *constitutive* role in the construction of human life. This does not mean, though, that it necessarily deserves to be given a *foundational* status in philosophical and sociological analysis. Inglis’s scepticism towards the fetishization of language in twentieth-century social philosophy is justified to the extent that we need to be suspicious of any form of “linguistic idealism” which reduces the complexities of social realities to the symbolic realm of language. It is crucial to be critical of *Zeitgeistsurfing*, that is, of the opportunistic tendency to embrace, or even celebrate, a set of paradigmatic presuppositions simply because they are *à la mode* and, therefore, ensure that our epistemic claims to validity are imbued with the most lucrative intellectual currency allowing for the pursuit of symbolic profits. What is more constructive than articulating legitimate concerns about the epistemological and moral fallacies of *Zeitgeistsurfing*, however, is to explore to what degree language can be regarded as one amongst other constitutive components, or even socio-ontological foundations, of human life. I have proposed a *Grundriß* of such a project elsewhere⁴²⁰; the advantage of such a multidimensional approach to the social consists in the possibility of recognizing the vital role of language in the construction of human existence, whilst acknowledging that there are various *other* constitutive and irreducible elements which are no less essential to the unfolding of everyday life than its linguistic components.

(b) In relation to the *methodological* level, it is worth remembering that the paradigmatic focus on language is not, as Inglis suggests, a *late* twentieth-century phenomenon, but that it began in the *early* twentieth century, inspired by the writings of the early Wittgenstein and the early Heidegger, although their later works are arguably more important to the “linguistic turn” advocated by modern social philosophers. Strangely enough, Inglis, whilst rightly insisting on Wittgenstein’s indisputable influence, omits mentioning Heidegger, who—for the right or the wrong reasons—is, along with Wittgenstein, one of the most influential twentieth-century German-speaking philosophers of language.

In addition, it is striking that Inglis, when objecting to the fetishization of language, fails to contextualize the rise of the “linguistic turn” in relation to the *Methodenstreit* (“methodological dispute”). One of the main reasons for the

paradigmatic prioritization of language in the twentieth century was the fact that philosophers were still grappling with a fundamental question (debated long *before*, *during* and even *after* the *Methodenstreit*): what, if anything, raises human beings above other entities? In response to this anthropocentric enquiry, many different answers have been given: “reason” (Kant, Descartes); “mutual recognition” (Hegel, Honneth); “productive activity” (Marx); “consciousness” (Husserl); “the unconscious” (Freud, Lacan); “freedom” (Sartre); and, last but not least, “language” (Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricœur, Habermas).⁴²¹ Regardless of whether one considers the modern ambition to identify the species-constitutive dimensions of human existence as a meaningful or pointless project, it seems to me that Inglis could and should have acknowledged that there are *multiple paradigmatic “fetishizations”* which have colonized modern intellectual agendas developed in response to the question of what makes humans different from non-human entities.

(c) In relation to the *explanatory* level, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that Inglis is culpable of *conflating the “cultural turn” with the “linguistic turn”*. Although these two paradigmatic shifts are both historically and intellectually interrelated, they are *not* the same thing. In essence, the former is broader and more inclusive than the latter. According to the former, human reality is a *culturally constructed*, and hence *spatiotemporally contingent*, sphere of existence. According to the latter, human reality is a *linguistically mediated*, and thus *symbolically constituted*, province of being. The former perspective is largely associated with *social constructivism*. By contrast, the latter view can be defended from various epistemological positions, notably *objectivist realism*, *intersubjectivist normativism* or *projectivist subjectivism*: language can be seen as a *representational* force (“objectivist correspondence theories of truth”), as a *social* force (“normativist consensus theories of truth”) or as an *expressional* force (“subjectivist projection theories of truth”)—or, indeed, as a combination of these options.

Owing to his fallacy of conflating the “cultural turn” with the “linguistic turn”, Inglis commits the mistake of identifying *all* language-theoretic and communication-theoretic approaches with the constructivist view that the social world is a realm composed by “a multiplicity of cultural arbitraries”⁴²² and “specific assemblages”⁴²³ and that, in this sense, culture can be regarded as “the driver of all things”⁴²⁴. This argument, however appealing it may seem in light of Inglis’s legitimate misgivings about the relativistic implications of social and cultural constructivism, is based on a gross misrepresentation of “the club of the linguistic-turn-inspired poets”; the early Wittgenstein, Gadamer, Ricœur, Habermas and probably even the scientistically inclined Bourdieu would find it difficult to subscribe to such a one-sided—that is, constructivist—account of language. Language-theoretic scholars may have a tendency to consider language as the “house of being”; their analytical representatives, however, regard it as an edifice built upon the firm *socio-empirical* grounds of human rationality, rather than as an arbitrary by-product of people’s networked interactions with the assemblages of culturally constructed realities.

(d) In relation to the *historical* level, it is worth making one simple observation: if, in the near or remote future, commentators come to the conclusion that the differences between Bourdieusian, Habermasian and post-structuralist approaches to language “will seem to be *utterly trivial*”⁴²⁵, as Inglis contends, then this means that they have failed to read their works properly. Inglis is right to insist that, in the long run, the twentieth-century obsession with language may go down as just another fashion-driven fetish of *Zeitgeistsurfing*. For, in the grand scheme of things, language is only *one* amongst other constitutive components of human existence, not to mention the fact that, as pointed out by various natural scientists⁴²⁶, some other species also have the capacity to develop at least rudimentary forms of both language and culture. Even if, however, we recognize that different approaches to language have an awful lot in common, it would be both intellectually naïve and analytically inaccurate to ignore the idiosyncrasies that separate them from one another. Inglis’s unwillingness to distinguish between the “cultural turn” and the “linguistic turn” prevents him from accounting for the presuppositional differences between realist, constructivist and subjectivist accounts of language. Far from being reducible to “peas in a pod”⁴²⁷, these approaches are embedded in separate “pods with peas”.

(3) *The derivative intellectualization of language*: According to Inglis, “Susen has been too kind to Bourdieu”⁴²⁸, insofar as the article gives the misleading impression “that Bourdieu’s understanding of language, and his theoretical position more generally, is somehow *distinctive, unique* and *novel*”⁴²⁹. Contrary to the view that Bourdieu’s account of language is an original and unprecedented one, Inglis claims that “the sense that Susen’s paper—presumably unintentionally—gives is in fact how *derivative* much of Bourdieu’s thinking seems”⁴³⁰. More specifically, Inglis comes to the conclusion that most of the central aspects covered in my article confirm the suspicion that Bourdieu remains caught up in “very *standard Saussurean* and *post-Saussurean* ideas about language”⁴³¹ and fails to add any—substantially new—insights to those already formulated by thinkers such as Saussure, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Weber, Gramsci and Vološinov. Given the prominence of their reflections on language in the French sociologist’s writings, Inglis maintains that “Susen should make clearer what, if anything, is *novel* in Bourdieu’s *appropriation and use* of such ideas”⁴³². Somewhat provocatively, Inglis refers to this concern as follows:

[...] the effect of Susen’s portrayal [...] is to make Bourdieu seem very *derivative* of *Weber*, and beyond him, *Nietzsche*. [...] Language as a tool of power; language as power; the linguistic expressions of power; language as the primary means of domination and legitimacy; language as a covert mechanism of oppression; language as the medium of social struggles—all of these points are *Weberian* and *Nietzschean in tenor*. This raises an issue troubling for Bourdieusians; is this *derivativeness* merely a product of the way Susen has narrated the story, or is Bourdieu essentially a *not-very-interesting epigone of two much greater thinkers*?⁴³³

One might add another troubling point—what is there in Bourdieu, on language or indeed on anything else, that really goes *beyond* or is an *improvement* on Gramsci? [...] And, in terms of the terminology used, is Bourdieu not inferior to Gramsci, insofar as the former has placed himself inside the *straitjacket of the “economistic” language of capitals*, a self-imposed restriction from which Gramsci would very likely have shied away?⁴³⁴

[...] did Bourdieu say anything more interesting or conceptually superior to what Vološinov argued half a century before? My suspicion is probably not, but such an issue needs systematic exploration.⁴³⁵

Let me, in response to these charges, make two straightforward points.

(a) It is true that I could have spelled out what is new and original about Bourdieu’s account of language, and possibly about my own Bourdieu-inspired approach to language. Yet, as I have already mentioned in my replies to some of the other commentaries, the purpose of my article was *not* exegesis. The danger arising from the Anglophone obsession with “big names”, “labels” and “brands of thought” is that we lose sight of what is most important: namely, the *arguments and insights* themselves, *regardless* of the symbolic power of those who have articulated them. Apart from the obvious and explicit focus on Bourdieu, my study is based on a thematically structured argument, developed in relation to 10 central features of language. Inglis may want to consider writing a piece centring upon 10 key thinkers—Saussure, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Weber, Gramsci, Vološinov, etc.—which are omnipresent in Bourdieu. Such an author-focused analysis would be a perfectly legitimate way of making sense of language through the eyes of scholars who have influenced Bourdieu. I am not sure, however, to what extent such a project would permit us to gain further insights into the nature of language. In fact, it is these insights, rather than the theorists to whom we owe them, that enable us to contribute to a better understanding of language.

(b) It is true that large parts of Bourdieu’s oeuvre are *derivative* of the writings of other scholars, but to me this seems to be a truism, as this applies to *every* influential intellectual. The most original minds will have drawn upon the works of previous thinkers. The question remains, of course, what Bourdieu and Bourdieu-inspired writers have added to the picture. With regard to my article, the short answer to this question is as follows: it is the *combination* of the 10 features of language identified in my study which makes Bourdieu’s account unique and innovative. One may provide solid grounds on which to reject the triadic terminology of “field”, “habitus” and “capital”, notably because of the “economistic”⁴³⁶ baggage that goes along with it. Moreover, one may have good reason to discard my own—socio-ontological—account of language, arguing that it is overly systematic and too remote from Bourdieu’s own words. The point, however, is to recognize that the fine-grained analysis of the intrinsic relationship between *all* of the aforementioned 10 features has not been accomplished before.

Far from being guilty of the “*uncritical appropriation of Saussurean ideas*”⁴³⁷, Bourdieu has both drawn upon *and* challenged the Saussurean, as well as other theoretical, traditions in multiple ways.⁴³⁸ (i) *Saussure’s* account lacks a critical analysis of linguistic practices as field-specific interactions. (ii) *Nietzsche’s* writings do not interpret the “will to power” as a “will to language”, let alone as a “will to the acquisition of linguistic capital”. (iii) The late *Wittgenstein* does not conceive of life forms as social fields and of language games as field-specific symbolic struggles. (iv) *Weber’s* studies, whilst recognizing the meaning-ladenness of human existence, do not offer a critical approach to markets of symbolic goods. (v) *Gramsci’s* conception of hegemony, although it escapes the straitjacket imposed by the reductive logic of the orthodox Marxist story of economic determinacy, fails to do justice to the polycentric complexity of field-divided realities. (vi) *Vološinov’s* remarkable *Marxism and the philosophy of language*⁴³⁹ is only the beginning of a decisive move towards *Post-Marxism and the sociology of language*, a book that still needs to be written. — All of these, admittedly scattered, remarks illustrate that it would be erroneous to brush Bourdieu aside and claim that he and his followers have failed to make substantial contributions to age-old controversies in the study of language.

(4) *The over-complexification of language*: Inglis suggests that it is “rather unfair”⁴⁴⁰ and “somewhat ungenerous”⁴⁴¹ to criticize Bourdieu for constructing a binary division “between more *orthodox* and more *heterodox* languages”⁴⁴². To be sure, Inglis concedes that “Susen correctly points out that a particular linguistic field may be *more complicated* than that, involving languages or speaking positions that are *ambiguous admixtures* of more heterodox and more orthodox terminologies and world-views”⁴⁴³. Inglis insists, however, “that dynamics of orthodoxy and heterodoxy are clearly at work”⁴⁴⁴ in the unfolding of discursively mediated social interactions and that, in a more general sense, one should only “expect a *model* to highlight the most *essential* aspects of the phenomena in question”⁴⁴⁵.

Let me comment on the contention that “the *orthodoxy/heterodoxy dyad* seems like an eminently *sensible conceptual foundation for the analysis of language*”⁴⁴⁶ and on the accusation that this is “a point that [...] Susen should have more warmly acknowledged”⁴⁴⁷. I share Inglis’s view that “it seems entirely sensible of Bourdieu to set up a basic model of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in language”⁴⁴⁸ and that, even if “empirical refinement”⁴⁴⁹ is needed, this dichotomous framework captures an important aspect of field-embedded, and hence interest-laden and power-laden, discourses. The whole point of my reflections on the discursive aspects of language is to support Bourdieu’s model, but by drawing attention to the fact that the complexity of language games often *escapes* this binary logic. In this respect, it may be useful to distinguish between *simplifying* and *simplistic* models. To the extent that this explanatory framework is not used as a conceptual straitjacket, Inglis and I agree that we are dealing with a simplifying, rather than a simplistic, model. I do consider the 10 key features identified in my article as inherent in language; on this account, *all* of them are “eminently sensible conceptual foundation[s] for the analy-

sis of language”⁴⁵⁰. This does not absolve us, however, from reflecting upon the explanatory limitations of Bourdieu’s approach to linguistic forms.

(5) *The idealization of language*: This point of critique is closely interrelated with Inglis’s scepticism towards (a) socio-ontological idealism, (b) naïve anti-determinism and (c) left-liberal *Zeitgeist*-opportunism.

(a) Inglis’s reservations about *socio-ontological idealism* are summarized in the following assertion:

A model of human doings inspired in large part by the image of *homo ludens* would no doubt be guilty of downplaying or missing altogether the more, let us say, *unpleasant* aspects of human life on which Bourdieu focuses—namely the dynamics of domination, misrecognition and oppression.⁴⁵¹

According to Inglis, not only Bourdieu but also “other great thinkers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer”⁴⁵² are right to remind us of the “*nastiness* implicit in *everything* we do”⁴⁵³. For the very possibility of an emancipatory society depends on our recognition of the dark sides of humanity.

(b) Inglis’s misgivings about *naïve anti-determinism* come to the fore in his relentless attack on the “Bourdieu is a determinist”⁴⁵⁴ thesis. As he remarks, Bourdieu’s perspective tends to be “associated with a *hyper-deterministic theory* of the all-consuming power of social class”⁴⁵⁵. Inglis, however, makes the challenging claim that “*Bourdieu was not determinist enough*”⁴⁵⁶, since—contrary to common wisdom—he “put *too much* emphasis on creativity, innovation, thoughtfulness”⁴⁵⁷. Fully aware of the fact that “[t]his is an argument likely to be loathed by most social theorists”⁴⁵⁸, as it “breaks the rules of the linguistic and ideological consensus”⁴⁵⁹ of what is widely considered as progressive thinking, Inglis nevertheless insists on the structural determinacy of literally all forms of human sociality. Inspired by his anthropological pessimism, Inglis makes a provocative prediction:

In time, Bourdieu’s ideas will not seem dated because of the *class-based determinism*—for given the history of human existence up until the present time, where *stratification into classes* or something like them has been *the norm in all societies* of a certain level of complexity and above, that class determinism may well be the factor that makes them ever-relevant.⁴⁶⁰

(c) Inglis’s suspicions about *left-liberal Zeitgeist-opportunism* are conveyed in the contention that critiques of sociological determinism are founded on idealist assumptions about the existence of altruistic dispositions. These are believed to be built into human nature and romanticized within the ideological framework of “the *liberal and left-liberal optimistic world-view*”⁴⁶¹, endorsed by thinkers who are committed to the humanistically inspired celebration of “the alleged *creativity and thoughtfulness* of all individuals”⁴⁶². This doxa—as Inglis asserts in a “politically incorrect” fashion, the tenor of which illustrates that he is certainly not a Boltanskian—permits researchers to “be far more happily received in left-liberal

academic circles than someone who declares the fundamental ignorance and stupidity of most or all people”⁴⁶³.

(a) Let me respond to Inglis’s reservations about *socio-ontological idealism*. I run the risk of repeating myself in this “Reply”, but the whole point of my attempt to cross-fertilize the works of Bourdieu and Habermas⁴⁶⁴ is to challenge the former’s *socio-ontological pessimism* and the latter’s *socio-ontological optimism*, with the aim of endorsing a critical position based on *socio-ontological realism*. Certainly, it would be erroneous to reduce *homo sapiens* either to a *homo ludens* or to a *homo lupus*. Furthermore, Inglis is right to stress that “we cannot expect any model of human life to capture *all dimensions of it*”⁴⁶⁵. Yet, to assert that there is “*nastiness* implicit in *everything* we do”⁴⁶⁶ means to succumb to socio-ontological fatalism under the banner of field-theoretic determinism. By no means have I ever suggested that there are any social actions which “are *beyond* the dynamics of power”⁴⁶⁷, as Inglis implies by putting these words in my mouth. As I have argued in my article and elsewhere, however, “[t]he fact that symbolic relations are unavoidably *power-laden* [...] does not mean that they are necessarily *power-driven*”⁴⁶⁸. In other words, “the fact that every social action is *power-permeated* does not mean that every social action is *power-motivated*”⁴⁶⁹. Instead of portraying social lifeworlds *either* as communicative realms of pristine intersubjectivity and mutual comprehension *or* as strategic battlegrounds of constant struggle and relentless competition, we need to face up to both the bright *and* the dark sides of symbolic interactionality and thereby recognize the normative ambivalence underlying human sociality.

(b) Let me comment on Inglis’s misgivings about *naïve anti-determinism*. In this respect, Inglis affirms that “Susen makes the mistake of repeating some of the usual charges against Bourdieu”⁴⁷⁰. The fact that this is a *common* criticism, however, does not mean that it is an *illegitimate*, let alone *insignificant*, point of dispute. Anyone familiar with the secondary literature on Bourdieu will know that the problem of sociological determinism is one of the key issues raised by both his unsympathetic *and* his sympathetic critics. One does not have to be a Boltanskian to recognize that Bourdieu has both a tendency to *underestimate* the normative significance of people’s critical, moral and discursive capacities and a tendency to *overestimate* the structuring influence of power relations upon human interactions and reflections.⁴⁷¹ Inglis’s assertion that “*Bourdieu was not determinist enough*”⁴⁷² may sound provocative. Yet, unless he is able to provide solid textual and empirical evidence to substantiate this claim, it is hardly more than a rhetorically playful and potentially challenging, but ultimately untenable, contention.

I share Inglis’s concerns regarding widespread forms of hypocrisy in the academic field, one of which is expressed in the fact that those who complain about Bourdieu’s alleged determinism, as well as his categorical rejection of the naïve belief in epistemic neutrality and disinterestedness, are usually the ones who, often without knowing it, are “keen to promote their own interests in the academic field”⁴⁷³. These are, however, *two different levels of analysis*: the existence of academic *hypocrisy* does not justify Bourdieu’s overemphasis on structural *determinacy* and his fail-

ure to do justice to the sociological importance of the normative resources mobilized by virtue of critical *reflexivity*. To put it bluntly, instrumentally driven behavioural patterns common in *academic life* do not suffice to provide large-scale corroborative evidence in support of “Bourdieu’s agonistic view of *human life*”⁴⁷⁴. Even if we acknowledge the existence of a “phenomenological Bourdieu” and consider the habitus as “a sort of hermeneutic hero”⁴⁷⁵, there is no doubt that the “positivist, realist and determinist” Bourdieu has far more muscle than his “interpretivist, constructivist and voluntarist” counterpart. Just as Bourdieu was a *philosophe* by training and a *sociologue* by choice, he was a subjectivist at heart and an objectivist in his head.

(c) Let me finish with a brief remark on Inglis’s suspicions about *left-liberal Zeitgeist-opportunism*. As already indicated in some of my previous reflections, it seems to me that Inglis’s reservations about *Zeitgeist- and paradigm-surfing* are entirely justified. If, however, we insist upon “the fundamental ignorance and stupidity of most or all people”⁴⁷⁶, then we are culpable not only of falling back into the trap of the “false consciousness”⁴⁷⁷ thesis, but also of advocating the sort of intellectualist elitism which Bourdieu himself despised and sought to overcome. Undoubtedly, Inglis makes both a legitimate and an important point when denouncing the hypocrisy of left-liberal intellectuals who, on the surface, appear to take ordinary actors seriously—by insisting on their reflexivity, creativity, dignity, common humanity and capacity for universal solidarity—, but who, in practice, play the game of cut-throat competition and ruthless positioning in the struggle over access to material and symbolic resources in a power-driven society. It is difficult not to empathize with Inglis’s cynicism towards the proselytizing mission of academic enlighteners, who appear to be committed to selflessness and philanthropy, whilst essentially being motivated by self-interest and calculative concerns of utility. The key—tension-laden—challenge with which we are confronted when reflecting upon real speech situations, then, is both to accept and to reject the will to power by mobilizing the will to reason.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Richard Armstrong for his detailed comments on an earlier version of this “Reply to my critics”.

Notes

[1] Susen (2013).

[2] Outhwaite (2013).

[3] *Ibid.*, 247.

[4] *Ibid.*, 247.

[5] *Ibid.*, 247.

[6] See Susen (2007), esp. Chapter 9.

[7] Outhwaite (2013, 248).

- [8] Ibid., 248.
- [9] Ibid., 247.
- [10] Ibid., 248 (italics added).
- [11] Ibid., 248 (italics added).
- [12] On this point, see, for example, Habermas ([1992] 1996, 323): “The counterfactual pre-suppositions assumed by participants in argumentation indeed open up a perspective allowing them to go beyond local practices of justification and to transcend the provinciality of their spatiotemporal contexts that are inescapable in action and experience. This perspective thus enables them to do justice to the meaning of *context-transcending* validity claims. But with context-transcending validity claims, they are not themselves transported into the beyond of an ideal realm of noumenal beings. [...] This thought experiment [of the ideal communication community] [...] refers to concrete societies that are situated in space and time and already differentiated.” (Italics in original.)
- [13] Habermas ([1967/1970]-b 1988: 172, italics in original).
- [14] Outhwaite (2013, 248).
- [15] Ibid., 248 (italics added).
- [16] Habermas (1984, 50). See also Habermas ([1984]-a 2001, 36). In addition, see Outhwaite (2013, 248).
- [17] See Habermas (1981a, 1981b). See also Habermas ([1981]-a 1987) and Habermas ([1981]-b 1987).
- [18] Outhwaite (2013, 248, italics added).
- [19] Habermas ([1981]-b 1987, xxxix). See also Outhwaite (2013, 248).
- [20] Ibid.
- [21] Outhwaite (2013, 248, italics added).
- [22] On this point, see Bourdieu ([1980] 1990, 25).
- [23] See Susen (2011d).
- [24] See Susen (2007), esp. Chapter 7.
- [25] See *ibid.*, esp. Chapter 9.
- [26] Outhwaite (2013, 248, italics added).
- [27] See Susen (2007), esp. Chapter 9.
- [28] Fowler (2013).
- [29] Ibid., 250.
- [30] Ibid., 253 (italics in original).
- [31] Ibid., 253.
- [32] Ibid., 253 (italics added).
- [33] Ibid., 253 (italics added).
- [34] Ibid., 259 n. 2 (italics in original).
- [35] Ibid., 250 (italics added).
- [36] Ibid., 251.
- [37] Bourdieu (1998c, 128). On this point, see Fowler (2013, 251).
- [38] Fowler (2013, 251, italics added).
- [39] Ibid., 251 (italics added).
- [40] Susen (2007).
- [41] Fowler (2013, 251).
- [42] Ibid., 251.
- [43] Susen (2013, 227, italics in original).
- [44] Fowler (2013, 251, italics removed from “*distinctive linguistic alienation*”).
- [45] Ibid., 257.
- [46] Ibid., 253 (italics added to “*overly simplistic*”; “*binary model*” italicized in the original).
- [47] Susen (2013, 218, italics added).
- [48] Fowler (2013, 253, italics removed from “*binary opposition*”).

- [49] *Ibid.*, 253.
- [50] *Ibid.*, 253–4 (italics in original).
- [51] Bourdieu ([1988] 1996, 389). On this point, see Fowler (2013, 254).
- [52] Bourdieu ([1988] 1996, 389). On this point, see Fowler (2013, 254).
- [53] Fowler (2013, 254, italics added). On this point, see Bourdieu’s *Corporatism of the universal*.
- [54] *Ibid.*, 254 (italics added).
- [55] Bourdieu ([1988] 1996, 389, italics added). On this point, see Fowler (2013, 254).
- [56] On this point, see Outhwaite (2013, 248).
- [57] See Susen (2007, 158–67).
- [58] Susen (2013, 218). On this point, see Susen (2007, 257).
- [59] See Fowler (2013, 252 and 254–6).
- [60] See *ibid.*, 252 and 256.
- [61] See *ibid.*, 252 and 256–7.
- [62] See *ibid.*, 252–3 and 257–8.
- [63] *Ibid.*, 255 (italics added).
- [64] Bourdieu ([1979] 1984, 250). On this point, see also Fowler (2013, 255).
- [65] Fowler (2013, 255).
- [66] *Ibid.*, 255.
- [67] *Ibid.*, 255.
- [68] *Ibid.*, 255.
- [69] *Ibid.*, 255.
- [70] *Ibid.*, 256.
- [71] *Ibid.*, 255.
- [72] *Ibid.*, 256 (italics added).
- [73] *Ibid.*, 256.
- [74] *Ibid.*, 256.
- [75] See, for instance: Susen (2007, esp. 171–80); Susen (2011a, esp. 176–84); Susen (2011b, esp. 368, 370, 373, 375, 377–8, 383, 394 and 401–2); Susen (2011d, esp. 58–60); Susen (2013, esp. 201, 207, 209, 210, 213, 214, 215, 219, 220, 221, 222, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230 n. 5, 232 n. 30, 234 n. 80, and 236 n. 121).
- [76] See, for example: Susen (2007), esp. Chapters 5–8; Susen (2011d, 64–8).
- [77] Fowler (2013, 256, italics in original).
- [78] *Ibid.*, 256.
- [79] *Ibid.*, 256 (italics added to “*movement*”; “*reflexivity*” in italics in the original).
- [80] *Ibid.*, 256 (italics in original). On this point, see also Bourdieu ([2001] 2004, 111).
- [81] See, for example: Susen (2007, 180–92 and 255–6); Susen (2011b, 368–71, 376, 379, 382, 384–5, 392–3, 395–9, 400 and 403).
- [82] Susen (2013, 226, italics in original).
- [83] Fowler (2013, 256, italics added).
- [84] *Ibid.*, 256. On this point, see also Bourdieu ([1984] 1988, 161–2 and 182–3).
- [85] Fowler (2013, 256).
- [86] *Ibid.*, 256. On this point, see also Bourdieu ([1984] 1988, 188–93).
- [87] Fowler (2013, 256).
- [88] See, for instance: Susen (2007, 138–45 and 177–80); Susen (2011d, 55–8).
- [89] Susen (2013, 225, italics added).
- [90] *Ibid.*, 225.
- [91] *Ibid.*, 208.
- [92] *Ibid.*, 212.
- [93] *Ibid.*, 225. Please note that this is my own, rather than Fowler’s, formulation.
- [94] Fowler (2013, 257). See also, for example: Boyer (2003, 275–9); Monod (1999).

- [95] Fowler (2013, 257). On this point, see also Susen (2013, 211 and 228).
- [96] Susen (2013, 223, italics in original). See Fowler (2013, 257).
- [97] Fowler (2013, 257).
- [98] See Susen (2013, 223–4).
- [99] *Ibid.*, 224.
- [100] Fowler (2013, 257).
- [101] See *ibid.*, 257–8.
- [102] *Ibid.*, 257 (italics in original).
- [103] *Ibid.*, 258.
- [104] See, for example, Bourdieu (1993c).
- [105] See Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992a).
- [106] Robbins (2013).
- [107] *Ibid.*, 262 (italics added).
- [108] *Ibid.*, 262.
- [109] Susen (2013, 200). See Robbins (2013, 263).
- [110] Robbins (2013, 263).
- [111] See Susen (2007, 242–54).
- [112] See *ibid.*, 235–42.
- [113] See *ibid.*, 254–68.
- [114] Robbins (2013, 263).
- [115] *Ibid.*, 263 (italics added).
- [116] *Ibid.*, 263.
- [117] Susen (2013, 199, 200, 201 and 218). See Robbins (2013, 263, 264, 270).
- [118] Robbins (2013, 268, italics added). On this point, see also Susen (2013, 200–2, 215–8 and 229–30) and Susen (2007, 142–5, 240 and 250–1).
- [119] Robbins (2013, 270, italics added).
- [120] Susen (2013, 200, italics added). On this point, see Robbins (2013, 263).
- [121] Robbins (2013, 270).
- [122] *Ibid.*, 270 (italics added).
- [123] *Ibid.*, 270.
- [124] *Ibid.*, 267 (italics in original).
- [125] *Ibid.*, 267.
- [126] *Ibid.*, 267 (italics added).
- [127] See, for example: Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 1988, 1993a, 1993b, [1984]-a 1993, [1984]-b 1993, [1984]-c 1993, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, [1992/1993] 2002, 2004, [2000] 2005); Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (1968); Bourdieu and Eagleton (1992); Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992a).
- [128] Robbins (2013, 262, italics added). Please note that this is Robbins’s summary of Passeron’s position.
- [129] *Ibid.*, 262 (italics added).
- [130] *Ibid.*, 262 (italics added).
- [131] *Ibid.*, 262 (italics added).
- [132] *Ibid.*, 263 (italics in original).
- [133] *Ibid.*, 263.
- [134] *Ibid.*, 263 (italics added).
- [135] *Ibid.*, 263 (italics added).
- [136] *Ibid.*, 264 (italics added).
- [137] *Ibid.*, 264 (italics added). On this point, see also *ibid.*, 270.
- [138] *Ibid.*, 264 (italics added).
- [139] See *ibid.*, 270.
- [140] *Ibid.*, 269–70.

- [141] Ibid., 264 (italics added). On this point, see also, for example: Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992a, 174); Boschetti (2006, 135).
- [142] Boschetti (2006, 135, italics added). See Robbins (2013, 264). On this point, see also Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992a, 174).
- [143] Robbins (2013, 264).
- [144] Ibid., 270.
- [145] Ibid., 269.
- [146] Ibid., 266 (italics added).
- [147] Ibid., 266 (italics added).
- [148] Ibid., 264 (italics added).
- [149] Ibid., 264.
- [150] Ibid., 264 (italics added).
- [151] Ibid., 264.
- [152] See *ibid.*, 264.
- [153] Ibid., 264 (italics added). On this point, see also Robbins (2010).
- [154] Robbins (2013, 262, italics added). In this passage, Robbins summarizes Passeron's critique of Bourdieu's alleged tendency to "universalize" the validity of sociological explanations.
- [155] Ibid., 269 (italics added).
- [156] Ibid., 269.
- [157] Ibid., 268.
- [158] On the Bourdieusian distinction between *ordinary knowledge* and *scientific knowledge*, see, for instance: Bourdieu (1980, 24, 43–5, 48–50 and 61); Bourdieu (1982b, 10, 15 and 32); Bourdieu (1997a, 119, 163, 217–8 and 225–6); Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (1968, 27–49 and 100–2); Bourdieu and Eagleton (1992, esp. 117). See also, for instance: Boltanski (1998, 248–51); Boltanski (1999–2000, esp. 303–6); Bonnewitz (1998, 27–8 and 34–9); Cicourel (1993, 90 and 93); Corcuff (2002a, 147 and 153–4); Corcuff (2002b, esp. 66, 68 and 70); Eickelpasch (2002, esp. 50, 54–6 and 59); Engler and Zimmermann (2002, esp. 36–40 and 44); Holton (2000); Jenkins (1992, 68–73, 156 and 177); Mesny (1998, 143–90); Mesny (2002, esp. 60–1 and 63–5); Susen (2007, 133–7, 204–6 and 221–6); Susen (2011d, esp. 75–6 and 82); Susen (2012b, esp. 695–6 and 713–5); Wagner (2003, 217–8); Webb, Schirato and Danaher (2002, 45, 52–4, 65–7 and 77–84).
- [159] Robbins (2013, 268).
- [160] See, for instance: Bourdieu (1980, 24, 43–5, 48–50 and 61); Bourdieu (1982b, 10, 15 and 32); Bourdieu (1982c, 18–9); Bourdieu (1995a, esp. 3–5 and 10); Bourdieu (1997a, 119, 163, 217–8 and 225–6); Bourdieu (1999, 334–5); Bourdieu (2001a, 15); Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (1968, 27–49 and 100–2); Bourdieu and Eagleton (1992, esp. 117); Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992b, 150); Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992c, 213). In addition, see, for example: Acciaioli (2000 [1981], 94–5); Bohman (1997, 177); Bohman (1999, 135); Boltanski (1990a, 37–40); Boltanski (1990b); Boltanski (1998, 248–51); Boltanski (1999–2000, esp. 303–6); Bonnewitz (1998, 27–8 and 34–9); Brubaker (1985, 754); Brubaker (1993, 216–7); Caro (1980, 1177); Cicourel (1993, 90 and 93); Corcuff (2002a, 147 and 153–4); Corcuff (2002b, esp. pp. 66, 68 and 70); Cronin (1997, esp. 206–7); Crowley (2002, 155–8); de Fornel (2003, 222–4); Dodier (2003, esp. 8–11); Eickelpasch (2002, esp. 50, 54–6 and 59); Engler and Zimmermann (2002, esp. 36–40 and 44); Grenfell and James (1998, 124); Griller ([1996] 2000, 196); Hamel ([1997] 2000, esp. 150); Heilbron (1999, esp. 301); Hérán ([1987] 2000, 4–5 and 7); Herz (1996, 236–7); Hoarau (1996, esp. 107 and 110); Holton (2000); Jenkins (1992, 68–73, 156 and 177); Karakayali (2004, 351–4); Karsenti (1995, 664); Kauppi ([1996] 2000, 230 and 234); Kögler ([1992] 1996, 220–7 and 229–33); König (2003, 86); Mesny (1998, 143–90); Mesny (2002, esp. 60–1 and 63–5); Monod (1995, 160–2); Mounier (2001, 211); Pinto (1995, 619); Susen (2007, 133–7, 204–6, 221–6); Susen (2011d,

- esp. 75–6 and 82); Swartz (1997, 56–60 and 274); Vandenberghe (1999, 40–3); Wagner (2003, 217–8); Webb, Schirato and Danaher (2002, 45, 52–4, 65–7 and 77–84).
- [161] See, for instance, Bourdieu (1993c).
- [162] See Holloway ([2002] 2005), Holloway (2010) and Susen (2012a).
- [163] Robbins (2013, 268).
- [164] *Ibid.*, 268.
- [165] *Ibid.*, 268.
- [166] Lawler (2013).
- [167] *Ibid.*, 275.
- [168] *Ibid.*, 276 (italics added).
- [169] *Ibid.*, 278 (italics added).
- [170] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [171] *Ibid.*, 278–9.
- [172] *Ibid.*, 277.
- [173] Bourdieu (1992, 86, italics added). See Lawler (2013, 276).
- [174] *Ibid.*, 277 (italics added).
- [175] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [176] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [177] *Ibid.*, 276–7.
- [178] See *ibid.*, 276.
- [179] *Ibid.*, 277.
- [180] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [181] *Ibid.*, 276 (italics in original).
- [182] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [183] *Ibid.*, 277.
- [184] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [185] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [186] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [187] *Ibid.*, 279.
- [188] On this point, see Susen (2013, 210 and 227).
- [189] Lawler (2013, 276).
- [190] *Ibid.*, 277.
- [191] *Ibid.*, 277.
- [192] *Ibid.*, 278.
- [193] *Ibid.*, 277.
- [194] On this point, see *ibid.*, 277. See also Spivak and Gunew (1993, 194).
- [195] Lawler (2013, 277).
- [196] *Ibid.*, 276 (italics added).
- [197] *Ibid.*, 276 (italics added, apart from “*between*”, “*does*” and “*unequal*”, all of which are italicized in the original).
- [198] *Ibid.*, 279 (italics added).
- [199] *Ibid.*, 276 (italics added).
- [200] *Ibid.*, 276 (italics added).
- [201] Susen (2013, 204, italics added).
- [202] *Ibid.*, 226 (italics in original).
- [203] Lawler (2013, 276, italics added to “*products*”; “*unequal*” italicized in the original).
- [204] *Ibid.*, 276.
- [205] *Ibid.*, 276.
- [206] *Ibid.*, 276 (italics added).
- [207] *Ibid.*, 277–8. See also Hanks (2005).
- [208] Grenfell (2013).

- [209] Ibid., 281.
- [210] Ibid., 281.
- [211] Ibid., 285.
- [212] Ibid., 285.
- [213] Ibid., 286.
- [214] Ibid., 281 (italics added).
- [215] Ibid., 281.
- [216] Ibid., 281.
- [217] Ibid., 281 (italics added).
- [218] Ibid., 281.
- [219] See *ibid.*, 281–2.
- [220] Ibid., 282.
- [221] Ibid., 282 (italics added). See also Bourdieu ([2000] 2005, 2).
- [222] Grenfell (2013, 282, italics added).
- [223] Ibid., 282 (italics in original).
- [224] Ibid., 282 (italics in original). On this point, see also Bourdieu ([1977] 1992, 165), Grenfell and James (1998, 74) and Susen (2013, 203 and 221–3).
- [225] Grenfell (2013, 282).
- [226] Susen (2013, 204, italics in original).
- [227] Grenfell (2013, 282, italics in original).
- [228] Ibid., 282 (italics added).
- [229] Ibid., 282 (italics added).
- [230] Ibid., 285 (italics in original).
- [231] Ibid., p. 281.
- [232] Ibid., 282.
- [233] Heidegger ([1927] 2001). See also Heidegger ([1989/1924] 1992).
- [234] Grenfell (2013, 283, italics in original).
- [235] Susen (2013, 200, italics added to “*seems*” and “*whilst*”).
- [236] Grenfell (2013, 283, italics added to “*is*”, but the word “*characterize*” appears in italics in the original).
- [237] Susen (2013, 201).
- [238] Grenfell (2013, 284).
- [239] Ibid., 283 (italics in original).
- [240] Ibid., 281. See also Grenfell (2010).
- [241] Grenfell (2013, 281).
- [242] Grenfell (2013, 281, italics added).
- [243] Ibid., 281 (italics added).
- [244] See *ibid.*, 280, 281 and 285.
- [245] Ibid., 281.
- [246] Ibid., 281.
- [247] See *ibid.*, 281.
- [248] Ibid., 285 (italics added, apart from “*miss the point*”, which is italicized in the original).
- [249] Ibid., 285.
- [250] Ibid., 285.
- [251] Ibid., 282 (italics in original).
- [252] Ibid., 284 (italics in original).
- [253] Bourdieu, Schultheis and Pfeuffer ([2000] 2011, 117, italics in original).
- [254] Grenfell (2013, 282, italics in original).
- [255] Ibid., 284 (italics added, apart from “*of*” [in “*field of practice*”], which appears in italics in the original).
- [256] Ibid., 282.

- [257] Ibid., 284 (italics in original).
- [258] Ibid., 284 (italics in original).
- [259] Ibid., 285 (italics added).
- [260] Ibid., 285 (italics added).
- [261] Ibid., 283 (italics added).
- [262] Ibid., 285 (italics added).
- [263] Ibid., 285 (italics added).
- [264] Ibid., 283 (italics added).
- [265] Ibid., 283 (italics added, except for “*expects*” and “*recognize*”, both of which appear in italics in the original).
- [266] Ibid., 284 (italics in original).
- [267] Ibid., 284 (italics in original).
- [268] On this point, see, for instance, Susen (2011d).
- [269] Grenfell (2013, 285, italics added).
- [270] Bourdieu (1997a). English edition: Bourdieu ([1997] 2000).
- [271] Grenfell (2013, 283, italics added).
- [272] See Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992a, 162, italics removed).
- [273] Grenfell (2013, 283).
- [274] Ibid., 285 (italics added).
- [275] On this point, see Susen (2011d, 49–55).
- [276] On this formulation, see Susen (2013, esp. 199, 200 and 218).
- [277] See Susen (2013, esp. 199, 200 and 218).
- [278] See Susen (2013, esp. 199, 200 and 218).
- [279] Grenfell (2013, 283).
- [280] See *ibid.*, 283.
- [281] Susen (2007, 166).
- [282] Turner (2013).
- [283] Ibid., 288 (italics in original).
- [284] Ibid., 288 (italics added).
- [285] Ibid., 288 (italics added).
- [286] Ibid., 287 (italics added).
- [287] On different versions of the “linguistic turn”, see, for instance: Apel (1976a, 1976b); Blanke (1991); Bourdieu (1982a, 1992, 2002b); Gadamer (1965, 1971, 2005); Ginev (1999); Habermas (1976, 1981a, 1981b); Habermas ([1967/1970]-a 1988), [1967/1970]-c 1988); Habermas ([1984]-b 2001); Jäger (2002); Kögler ([1992] 1996); Kögler (2011); Krämer (2002); Krämer and König (2002); Lafont (1993); Lafont (1997); May (1996); Oevermann (1972); Ricoeur (1969); Rigotti (1979); Rorty (1967a, 1967b); Schatzki (1996); Schnelle (1976); Schöttler (1997); Searle (2004); Stekeler-Weithofer (2002); Susen (2007); Vološinov ([1930] 1986); Wellmer ([1976] 1977); Wittgenstein ([1953] 1982).
- [288] Turner (2013, 288, italics added).
- [289] Ibid., 288 (italics added).
- [290] Ibid., 288 (italics added).
- [291] Ibid., 288.
- [292] Ibid., 293–4.
- [293] Ibid., 289.
- [294] Ibid., 289 (italics added).
- [295] Ibid., 289.
- [296] Ibid., 293 (italics added).
- [297] On this point, see, for instance, Susen (2011c, esp. 51–6).
- [298] Turner (2013, 288, italics in original).
- [299] Ibid., 288 (italics in original).

- [300] *Ibid.*, 288 (italics added).
- [301] *Ibid.*, 288 (italics added).
- [302] *Ibid.*, 293 (italics in original).
- [303] *Ibid.*, 288.
- [304] *Ibid.*, 288.
- [305] *Ibid.*, 289 (italics added).
- [306] On this point, see Turner (2011).
- [307] See, for instance, Bourdieu, Schultheis and Pfeuffer ([2000] 2011).
- [308] See Susen (2013, 210 and 227).
- [309] Turner (2013, 289).
- [310] Adkins (2013).
- [311] *Ibid.*, 301 (italics added).
- [312] See *ibid.*, 297–9.
- [313] *Ibid.*, 297.
- [314] Outhwaite (1987, 62). On this point, see also Susen (2007, 41).
- [315] See Adkins (2013, 301).
- [316] See *ibid.*, 297.
- [317] See *ibid.*, 297 (italics added).
- [318] *Ibid.*, 298.
- [319] *Ibid.*, 298 (italics added).
- [320] *Ibid.*, 298 (italics added).
- [321] *Ibid.*, 298 (italics added).
- [322] *Ibid.*, 298.
- [323] *Ibid.*, 298.
- [324] *Ibid.*, 298. On this point, see also Adkins and Lury (2009).
- [325] Adkins (2013, 299).
- [326] *Ibid.*, 298.
- [327] *Ibid.*, 298.
- [328] *Ibid.*, 298. On this point, see Adkins and Lury (2009).
- [329] Adkins (2013, 298).
- [330] *Ibid.*, 299.
- [331] Susen (2013, 222). See Adkins (2013, 299).
- [332] Adkins (2013, 299, italics added).
- [333] *Ibid.*, 299.
- [334] *Ibid.*, 299.
- [335] *Ibid.*, 299.
- [336] *Ibid.*, 299. See also Lash (2007).
- [337] Adkins (2013, 299).
- [338] *Ibid.*, 300.
- [339] *Ibid.*, 299.
- [340] *Ibid.*, 300 (italics added).
- [341] On my conception of experience, see Susen (2007, esp. 297–301).
- [342] Adkins (2013, 300).
- [343] *Ibid.*, 298 and 299.
- [344] *Ibid.*, 300.
- [345] *Ibid.*, 298. On this point, see Adkins and Lury (2009).
- [346] See Adkins (2013, 297). See also Susen (2007, esp. 22, 54, 115, 121–5, 227n.10, 239–40, 250, 253, 260, 270 n.21, 305 and 308).
- [347] See Susen (2007), Chapter 10.
- [348] Adkins (2013, 300).
- [349] *Ibid.*, 300.

- [350] See *ibid.*, 299.
- [351] *Ibid.*, 297–8.
- [352] On Habermas’s conception of the “colonization of the lifeworld”, see, for instance: Habermas ([1981]-c 1987, 332); Habermas ([1981]-d 1987, 134, 140–3 and 148); Habermas ([1981]-e 1987, esp. 196); Habermas ([1981]-f 1987, 333–5); Habermas (1982, 226 and 278–81).
- [353] Adkins (2013, 300, italics added).
- [354] *Ibid.*, 300.
- [355] *Ibid.*, 300. On this point, see also Clough (2009).
- [356] Adkins (2013, 300).
- [357] *Ibid.*, 301.
- [358] Kögler (2013).
- [359] *Ibid.*, 302.
- [360] *Ibid.*, 302.
- [361] *Ibid.*, 303 (italics added).
- [362] *Ibid.*, 304 (“*insurmountable*” italicized in the original, “*language*” and “*cognitive experience of social reality*” not italicized in the original).
- [363] *Ibid.*, 304 (italics added).
- [364] *Ibid.*, 313 (italics added).
- [365] *Ibid.*, 304 (italics added).
- [366] See Susen (2007, 182). On this point, see also Bourdieu ([1997] 2000, 152 and 168).
- [367] Kögler (2013, 306, italics in original).
- [368] *Ibid.*, 306 (italics in original).
- [369] *Ibid.*, 306 (italics in original).
- [370] *Ibid.*, 305 (italics in original, except for “*oppositional forms of social agency*”, which does not appear in italics in the original).
- [371] See Susen (2013, 204, 207, 213, 220, 225, 229, 232 n. 30, 234 n. 80).
- [372] Kögler (2013, 305).
- [373] *Ibid.*, 305 (italics added).
- [374] *Ibid.*, 306 (italics added).
- [375] See Susen (2007, 257). See also Susen (2013, esp. 200, 208–11, 212, 213, 217–8, 219, 220, 222, 223–6, 226–8, 235 n. 87, 236 n. 112).
- [376] Kögler (2013, 307, italics added).
- [377] On this point, see Outhwaite (2013). See also Susen (2007), Chapter 9.
- [378] Kögler (2013, 310).
- [379] *Ibid.*, 311 (italics added).
- [380] *Ibid.*, 308.
- [381] *Ibid.*, 309.
- [382] *Ibid.*, 308–9.
- [383] *Ibid.*, 309 (italics added).
- [384] *Ibid.*, 310.
- [385] *Ibid.*, 309, 310 and 311.
- [386] *Ibid.*, 311.
- [387] *Ibid.*, 309 (italics in original).
- [388] *Ibid.*, 310 (italics in original).
- [389] Susen (2013, 236 n. 121, italics in original).
- [390] Kögler (2013, 309, italics in original).
- [391] Bourdieu (1982a).
- [392] Kögler (2013, 309).
- [393] Inglis (2013).
- [394] *Ibid.*, 316.

- [395] Ibid., 316.
- [396] Ibid., 316.
- [397] Ibid., 316 (italics in original).
- [398] Ibid., 318 (italics added).
- [399] Ibid., 320.
- [400] Ibid., 316.
- [401] Ibid., 316.
- [402] Ibid., 322.
- [403] Ibid., 316 (italics added).
- [404] Ibid., 316.
- [405] Ibid., 316.
- [406] Ibid., 320.
- [407] Ibid., 316 and 317.
- [408] Ibid., 316 (italics added).
- [409] See previous note on different versions of the “linguistic turn”.
- [410] Inglis (2013, 317, italics added).
- [411] Ibid., 316 (italics added).
- [412] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [413] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [414] Ibid., 317.
- [415] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [416] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [417] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [418] Ibid., 317.
- [419] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [420] See Susen (2007), Chapter 10.
- [421] On this point, see Susen (2009, 84–5).
- [422] Inglis (2013, 317).
- [423] Ibid., 319.
- [424] Ibid., 317.
- [425] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [426] See, for example: Ford (1999); Hart (1996); Roitblat, Herman and Nachtigall (1993). In contrast to this view, see, for instance, Anderson (2004).
- [427] Inglis (2013, 317).
- [428] Ibid., 316 and 317.
- [429] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [430] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [431] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [432] Ibid., 318 (italics added).
- [433] Ibid., 318 (italics added, except for “*as*”, which is italicized in the original).
- [434] Ibid., 318 (italics added).
- [435] Ibid., 318.
- [436] Ibid., 318.
- [437] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [438] See, for example, Bourdieu (1982a, 7–9, 24–6, 40–1, 44, 60, 103 and 175).
- [439] Vološinov ([1930] 1986).
- [440] Inglis (2013, 319).
- [441] Ibid., 319.
- [442] Ibid., 319 (italics added).
- [443] Ibid., 319 (italics added).
- [444] Ibid., 319.

- [445] Ibid., 319 (italics added).
- [446] Ibid., 319 (italics added).
- [447] Ibid., 319.
- [448] Ibid., 319.
- [449] Ibid., 319.
- [450] Ibid., 319.
- [451] Ibid., 320 (italics in original).
- [452] Ibid., 320.
- [453] Ibid., 320 (italics in original).
- [454] Ibid., 320.
- [455] Ibid., 316 (italics added).
- [456] Ibid., 321 (italics in original).
- [457] Ibid., 321 (italics in original).
- [458] Ibid., 322.
- [459] Ibid., 322.
- [460] Ibid., 317 (italics added).
- [461] Ibid., 321 (italics added).
- [462] Ibid., 321 (italics added).
- [463] Ibid., 321.
- [464] Susen (2007), esp. Chapter 9.
- [465] Inglis (2013, 320, italics added).
- [466] Ibid., 320 (italics in original).
- [467] Ibid., 320 (italics added).
- [468] Susen (2013, 228, italics in original). On this point, see also Susen (2008a) and Susen (2008b).
- [469] Susen (2007, 208, italics in original).
- [470] Inglis (2013, 320).
- [471] On this point, see Susen (2007, 211–2 and 216–26).
- [472] Inglis (2013, 321, italics in original).
- [473] Ibid., 320.
- [474] Ibid., 320 (italics added).
- [475] Susen (2007, 215).
- [476] Inglis (2013, 321).
- [477] As indicated in Susen (2013), excellent discussions of this thesis can be found in Haug (1999), Rehmann (2004) and Reitz (2004).

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