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Does gender *fit*? Bourdieu, feminism, and conceptions of social order

How to theorize the relationship between structures of male domination and the intersubjective experience of women can be termed a “central problem” in feminist theory. Yet feminists have not engaged the sociological literature on the related topic of the relationship between structure and interaction because these accounts rarely consider gender in any systematic fashion. Although this criticism applies to Pierre Bourdieu’s writings on the articulation of structure in practical action, feminists will nevertheless find in his work a powerfully elaborate conceptual framework for understanding the role of gender in the social relations of modern capitalist society. Furthermore, Bourdieu’s epistemological and methodological approach to social science research parallels and enhances feminist positions on this important subject. He recognizes, like feminists, that theoretical narratives and political programs are themselves embedded in social relations, no matter how relevant and applicable to their empirical referents. In this article, I employ a rich body of feminist research in order to present, critique, and then develop Bourdieu’s sociological, epistemological, and methodological writings with respect to gendered social life.

It is helpful to begin by considering a very underdeveloped but nevertheless encompassing proposal for the study of gender relations which attempts to incorporate noted aspects of feminist theorizing into a single research agenda. In separate contributions Sandra Harding and Joan Scott proposed dividing gender relations into the categories of gender symbolism, gender organization, and gender identity.¹ Gender symbolism refers most essentially to durable cultural expressions of gender difference. It represents the persistence of hegemonic binary oppositions in core gender identity (male/female, masculine/feminine), even though the substance of the dualism is often quite illusive, contra-

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dictory and/or exclusive of most women (woman = virgin, whore, mother, mammy, wife, angel, bitch, etc.). Gendered forms of social organization specify the constitutive role of gender in the ongoing construction of social institutions. Some prominent examples in feminist research are the household division of labor and occupational sex segregation. Finally, gender identity refers to the multiple and often contradictory experiences of femininities and masculinities which rarely conform to the hegemonic images of gender symbolism, both across and over time within individuals. Although this tri-categorization helps in elaborating multiple levels of gendered experience and domination, more difficult is the task of understanding the interrelationships among these dimensions toward the end of explaining substantive gender inequality. This task must include the understanding that class, race, ethnic, and sexual distinctions mark each of the three levels.²

Women's work is one domain in which symbolism, organization, and identity come together. To take the well-studied example of a secretary, the relevant inquiry describes the intersection of 1. a stereotype which invokes elements of gender symbolism – blond bombshell or motherly drudge; 2. a systematic pattern of organization – secretaries are women, they are not in positions of advancement, and they are assumed to take on the class location of related men, either fathers or husbands; and 3. a subjective identity that ranges from embracing secretarial work as a lifetime career to conceiving it as a temporary job during a summer between years at college.³ Some feminist researchers have started to name these specific components of women's work experiences, although not in this lexicon. A few shorthand phrases have been gaining momentum in the research literature: gendering jobs, gendering workers, gendering structures.⁴ In all, these formulations attempt to grasp one of the central sociological questions of coordination – how do populations and institutions unite, in the specific ways they do?⁵ Analyzing the intersection of gendered individuals and gendered jobs where both phenomena express concrete historical and cultural meanings posits gender as an analogical connection between two seemingly disparate systems. It is this insight that here will be explored through Bourdieu's elaborate conceptual framework.

Returning to the three-level typology of gender relations, I discuss how three aspects of Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework correspond to the elements and the aim of this typology. With respect to gender symbolism, Bourdieu's roots in structuralism lead him to posit hierarchical relations of difference as symbolized by binary oppositions as

the most elementary forces of *social order*.⁶ Bourdieu's assessment of the differences between pre-capitalist and capitalist social orders further reveals just how symbolic gender may or may not be depending on the exact relationship between his theory of practice on the one hand and society types on the other. With respect to gender organization and identity, two crucial components of Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus, *capital* and *habitus*, speak to a recurrent and puzzling feature of gender relations: the persistence of nearly universal and binary gender stratification accompanied by varieties and multiplicities of gendered identity in practice.⁷ Investigations by feminists into these complex manifestations of gendered social life likewise suggest many criticisms of Bourdieu's less than rigorous and often androcentric treatment of gender in the formation of social structural *positions* (via forms of capital) and *dispositions* (habitus).

I offer two readings of these concepts, elaborating on the second less recognized and more underdeveloped reading. The first reading takes occupational and educational status as primary determinants of social class position within which gender differences operate as secondary determinants. The second reading rejects the singular primacy of occupational and educational capital while examining the interaction of gender with class distinction through the lens of embodied cultural capital.⁸ These readings suggest that Bourdieu constructs a male-gendered conception of social structure – the public sphere of economic and cultural life. As a derivative of this construction, Bourdieu assigns two crucial attributes to the habitus which must be construed as indicative of his gender biasedness: its predominantly public and unconscious aspects. Taken together, my criticisms and reconceptualizations of capital and habitus, motivated and informed by recent developments in feminist research, serve as an underlying medium for exploring the complex and often mystified relationship between positions and dispositions in Bourdieu's scheme of social order.

Gender and social order: Two readings of capital and habitus

The social order is perhaps the most elusive of Bourdieu's concepts, but it refers most centrally to binary oppositions which structure the entire social space (e.g., dominant/dominated, high/low, strong/weak, male/female, culture/nature):

Our perceptions and our practice, especially our perception of the social world, are guided by practical taxonomies, oppositions between high and low, masculine (or manly) and feminine, etc. The classifications which these practical taxonomies produce owe their value to the fact that they are 'practical', that they make it possible to bring in just enough logic for the needs of practice, neither too much – fuzziness is often indispensable, particularly in negotiations – nor too little, because life would become impossible.⁹

The social order also refers to specific logics that structure different arenas of social life. In Bourdieu's language, these specialized arenas are called *fields*, and they indicate the particularity of and homology among different social environments. Most centrally, Bourdieu applies the operation of self-interested activity to the institutions of cultural production, such as art, literature, law, education, and science. Thus Bourdieu extends the economic rationale to modern cultural institutions, just as he extended the rationale of symbolic practice to the sphere of economic relations in pre-capitalist societies.¹⁰ In either event, binary oppositions take specific form according to the type of society, and in modern societies, the logic of practice governed by binary taxonomies comes under the influence of the particularity of power relations in fields. Although the social order of binary oppositions underpins all social structure, the exact relationship between social structures in fields and among fields is unknown leaving unresolved whether there is one overarching field or social structure.¹¹ In this article, the social structure will be understood by the formula he uses to determine positions in the field of social class as defined in *Distinction*.¹²

According to the first reading, one's social structural position is determined by many indicators. Among these are origins of existence (geographical and position of family in social structure) as measured by volume and composition of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic), and life trajectory – how initial capital is transformed throughout life histories. Working under operational constraints, however, occupation becomes the primary organizing variable for positions in social structure. Secondary principles of division include gender, ethnicity, age, and geographical place of residence. Other forms of capital besides the economic form enter Bourdieu's position determining equation. Individuals richly endowed with cultural capital but low in economic capital (e.g., an artist or professor) reside in the dominant class. Position, then, is largely defined by occupation, and occupation is largely determined by origins of existence and life trajectory – which in turn are determined by parents' occupation, etc. Like-

wise, Bourdieu's studies of fields of cultural production target occupations and occupational environments (e.g., scientists, artists, lawyers, professors, philosophers, etc.). The social structure, then is defined by occupations and the capitals associated with them.

Bourdieu continually refers to the "fundamental" structures of dominance, the "fundamental" oppositions in the structure, and the "fundamental" properties which describe conditions of existence.¹³ In these cases, the most fundamental attributes of positions and dispositions, or social structure and habitus, are those related to positions in relations of economic and cultural production. Often Bourdieu employs a more materialist image by invoking "distance from necessity" as the *sine qua non* of distinction. It is as compared with "distance from necessity" that gender, ethnicity, age, and geographical origin rank as secondary principles of societal division. These secondary variables acquire their specific form and value as a result of volume and composition of capital (e.g., artists are endowed with large volumes of cultural capital). *This is to suppose that gender is not a form of capital.* In fact, age and gender are considered *general, biological* forces which obtain *specificity* from social class position.¹⁴ Furthermore, he goes on to state that group mobilization is also limited by capital, that "groups mobilized on the basis of secondary criterion are likely to be bound together less permanently and less deeply than those mobilized on the basis of the fundamental determinants of their condition."¹⁵ Secondary status, then, pertains to the derivation of position in social space, and consequently to the formation or mobilization of social groups.¹⁶

The concept of capital is central, if not most central, to Bourdieu's construction of social space:

... the kinds of capital, like the aces in a game of cards, are powers that define the chances of profit in a given field.¹⁷ ... the structure of the social world is defined at every moment by the structure of the distribution of the capital and profits characteristic of the different particular fields...¹⁸ it is important to work out the correct hierarchy of the principles of hierarchization, i.e., of the different forms of capital. ...¹⁹

In relation to economic and cultural capital, another secondary principle, ethnicity, reinforces the structure of capital since it is "relatively independent of economic or cultural properties ... (ethnicity distributes its members into social classes according to its location in the hierarchy of ethnic group.)"²⁰ Stratification of ethnic groups functions as a *vertical* overlay on the stratification of social classes.

The distributing mechanism with respect to gender differs from that of race and ethnicity:

...in every relationship between educational capital and a given practice, one sees the effect of the dispositions associated with gender which help to determine the logic of the reconversion of inherited capital into educational capital, that is, the 'choice' of the type of education capital which will be obtained from the same initial capital, more often literary for girls, more often scientific for boys.²¹

The initial capital appears to be gender-neutral²² and shaped in the reconversion process by "dispositions associated with gender," resulting in a gendered form of cultural capital but still essentially defined by the associated field of occupation. The neutrality of the initial capital implies that gender, unlike race, acts as a distributing mechanism *within* the social group defined by the volume and composition of the initial capital. In this context, secondary usefully refers to a mediating dimension of position in social structure, but the inherited capital must also have been gendered:

Sexual properties are as inseparable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon is from its acidity: a class is defined in an essential respect by the place and value it gives to the two sexes and to their socially constituted dispositions. This is why there are so many ways of realizing femininity as there are classes and class fractions, and the division of labor between the sexes takes quite different forms, both in practices and in representations, in the different social classes.²³

The class variation of binary gender roles produces, according to Bourdieu, an intimate fit between gender and class such that gender roles analytically distinguish class locations and vice versa. Why, then, not use constructed femininity and masculinity as indices of the class structure, that is, as capital?

Bourdieu does unwittingly offer such a possibility through what I offer as the second reading of *secondary*. He variously refers to secondary criterion as "hidden," "unofficial," and "real."²⁴ By this Bourdieu exposes how real principles of selection and exclusion are hidden behind nominal constructions of categories such as occupation and educational qualification. Although forms of capital correspond to occupational fields (e.g., literary capital, scientific capital, etc.), they have gendered meanings because they are given form by *gendered dispositions*. In this light, there must be a clearer understanding of the relationship between capital, dispositions, and gender.

As we have seen, gender does not appear as a form of capital, but this seems odd upon further investigation of Bourdieu's elaboration of a particular form of capital, *embodied cultural capital*. This form exists as one of three defined as follows:

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of *long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body*; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.) ... and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification resulting in such things as educational qualifications.²⁵

In this very important formulation, *embodied cultural capital* actually manifests itself in dispositions, or put another way, certain types of dispositions are themselves forms of capital. These dispositions intimately inhabit the mind and the body:

The accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state, i.e., the form of what is called culture, cultivation, *Bildung*, presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor.... Cultural capital can be acquired, to a varying extent,..., in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously. It always remains marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition which, through the more or less visible marks they leave (such as the pronunciations characteristic of a class or region), help to determine its distinctive value.²⁶

Bourdieu takes account of several crucial aspects of dispositions by accounting for the way in which socialization shapes them.

First, the process of individual socialization is taken seriously. Not only does this process vary by race, class, etc., but also by age, beginning with the "earliest conditions," including those associated with familial development. Second, while the process of individual socialization accounts for unique aspects of development within families, it is also clearly a product of internalizing external standards of value or those which are beyond individual differentiation and extra-familial, though certainly transmitted in some respects through the family. Finally, "because the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, i.e., to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate (inherited) competence."²⁷

Other passages provide evidence for this second definition of secondary principles of organization (secondary because they are hidden yet

more pervasive throughout social space). The social construction of bodily appearances is described here as *gendered forms of cultural capital* relating to charm and beauty. These

have led to emergence of a whole set of female occupations and to the establishment of a legitimate market in physical properties. The fact that certain women derive occupational profit from their charm(s), and that beauty thus acquires a value on the labor market, has doubtless helped to produce not only a number of changes in the norms of clothing and cosmetics, but also a whole set of changes in ethics and a redefinition of the legitimate image of femininity.²⁸

The above phenomena, such as the development of female occupations and the redefinition of femininity reach out to the corners of social space, affirming historical and cultural varieties of cross-class gender symbolism. Although Bourdieu does demonstrate that beauty norms are best achieved by those with economic capital, he also cannot assert that beauty and charm only operate for women in the dominant classes. The very physical character of this form of capital classifies it as embodied cultural capital, which according to Bourdieu is the most hidden and universal form of capital, becoming symbolic capital. Therefore, gender as a principle of division is secondary because it is hidden and it is hidden because it appears to be universal and natural. Gender as such, a form of capital, figures significantly in the analysis of social space, escaping the superstructural status assigned to it by the first and more literal definition of secondary.²⁹

What I want to argue is that both interpretations of secondary in Bourdieu's lexicon conform to what we know about the role of gender in social relations of domination. The first reading acknowledges the quite significant class divisions among women, yet feminists recognize that this represents only part of the story. Two explanations can be given for why Bourdieu fails to capture the logical extension of his own development of capital and habitus (the first and most common interpretation) into the second interpretation. First and perhaps most important, Bourdieu's account of the contrasts between pre-capitalist and capitalist societies displaces the site of symbolic practice from interpersonal relations to institutional domains.³⁰ Kinship structures gave way to institutions, such as the free-market economy, law, and education, and Bourdieu is clearly attempting to generalize the rationalization of economic self-interest to cultural domains. Although correct in recognizing the decline of kinship as society's central form of social organization, Bourdieu neglected to account for the emergence

of the *family* as a modern institution *proper*.³¹ Further, economization of practice in the cultural domain left him vulnerable to misrecognize *embodied* cultural capital in the economic sphere. We cannot say that family and gender are wholly absent. Descriptive examples of gendered practice are abundant and illustration is arguably the locus of Bourdieu's theoretical genius. Nevertheless, gender and family have become overshadowed by Bourdieu's primary institutions of modernity.

The second reason that Bourdieu stops short of realizing the potential of gendered dispositions is because he considers female gender status imbued only with uncontested symbolic violence. On the one hand, Bourdieu takes the perceived biological body too seriously by attributing feminine dispositions to women only and masculine dispositions to men only. On the other hand, he fails to take the body seriously enough by overlooking the *real* violence of the cross-class, racial, ethnic, and sexual hegemony of a dominant heterosexuality and sexual division of labor that reduces all women to sexual essence and caretaking. Both of these phenomena create divisions of consciousness within classes and alliances across classes. Just as class obscures gender unity, gender obscures class unity. I now consider in detail the contradictory character of binary gender symbolism and multiple gendered identities, as well as their contribution to gendered social organization.

Gendered dispositions as cultural capital

Rarely if ever is femininity exclusively profitable for women as implied in Bourdieu's description of the public redefinition of femininity in terms of beauty and charm. Women who have feminine-sexual cultural capital, in a culture dominated by heterosexuality, cannot escape the consequences of such capital when compared to other types of cultural capital, such as educational qualifications (feminine beauty = no brains). This, of course, fits into Bourdieu's assessment of symbolic violence where appearances of profitable gains ultimately fall prey to dominant interests. But symbolic violence is not so clear cut when removed from contexts in which all men and women operate under the respective codes of gender symbolism.³² A woman may choose to obtain masculine gendered capital by acquiring masculine traits on the job or for the job.³³ Perhaps these are already "part of disposition" ("she's not like most women"). Even so, women who do acquire masculine traits never escape their sex-stereotyped dispositions. Still classified as women, but in particular, as woman who act like men, they are subject to a corresponding social sanction. This raises the issue of

whether gendered forms of capital, possessed by women, can in fact unequivocally function as profitable capital. And, if ambiguity does weave through the operation of capital, should this alter the definition of capital in relation to gender or does it just confirm that gender should not function as a form of capital? I shall argue for the former conclusion.

A woman who works as an engineer may have a gendered disposition which is more masculine than feminine, and this carries a certain amount of symbolic capital necessary for her job as an engineer.³⁴ If she decides to have children and work part time, she becomes reminded of her distinction as a woman in a different way, as a mother, a part-time worker, a marginal contributor to both family and work, and to the official economy overall.³⁵ This scenario cannot be neutralized in terms of gender by calling to mind the same scenario with a man as the main character. If he “chooses,” and this would certainly be a choice on his part (if we assume fairly traditional arrangements), to work part-time in order to care for his children, then he is perceived at best as a new breed of man, and at worst as another marginal worker. He and his performance at work avoid explicit classification as gendered in the worst case scenario, and in the best case, he is rewarded with explicit reference to his gender.³⁶ Gender as an asymmetrical category of perception is apparent in other work situations as well.³⁷ An attractive woman who must interact with men at work may be perceived by heterosexual men as a distraction at best, incompetent at worst, or even a potential legal threat if she were to charge sexual harassment or sex discrimination. An attractive man however escapes connotations of incompetence and may even consider it his duty to enliven the workplace with his stimulating presence.³⁸

It is clear then that it is not the *situation* that presents itself as problematic, nor is it simply the *position* of the actors. Rather, it is the disposition of actors in a very asymmetrically gendered form. Whatever gendered capital women possess in one respect, they lose in others. On the one hand, the multiplicity of gendered dispositions in the form of capital contributes to the construction of positions: gendered dispositions are multiple and not, of course, attached only to sexed biological bodies, yet they become attached to the body in the form of embodied gendered dispositions shaping individuals' social trajectories. Yet on the other hand, the dichotomous action of gender acts to constrain and subordinate the meaning of women's activity, whatever the content of the so-called capital. It is precisely this dilemma, a strict adherence to the imposition of dichotomous gender classificatory schemes in the

face of a multiplicity of gendered dispositions that calls into question the *public* and *unconscious* aspects of the habitus when applied to the dominated position of women in society.

By distancing himself from structuralist connotations associated with metaphors of mechanical social reproduction, Bourdieu attempts to capture the agency of everyday life, of group representation, and of classification struggles. Feminists have identified these elements as critical to an agenda of change in the relations of gender domination. But where Bourdieu finds uncertainty leading to symbolic struggles, he also finds only two forms of such struggle – collective and conscious, individual and unconscious.³⁹ Shifting from his empirical referent of the middle class, however, to gender relations, such distinctions fall apart. Although the unconscious elements of symbolic struggles resonate with the shifting and swaying of gendered identity when subjected to the overwhelming hegemony of society-wide binary gender symbolism, the example Bourdieu provides of the middle classes, as *the* contemporary site of struggle, misses the role of individual consciousness because the middle class does not clearly designate dominated status. The different picture obtained from the uncertainty of gender relations, however, derives power and salience from taking seriously the perspective of dominated social groups.

Only some patriarchal representations of women also serve as representations for women.⁴⁰ Bourdieu confidently and imperialistically asserts that “archaic” societies organized the world through dualist oppositions of masculine/feminine,⁴¹ yet today this dualist opposition serves among many others to reflect the entire social order.⁴² While Bourdieu recognizes, implicitly if not explicitly, the different state of gender relations historically and the quite significant contemporary struggle over gender identity, he must be accused, along with the Lacanian French feminists, of constructing the universal power of gender symbolism too rigidly and deterministically.⁴³ For women, individual gender identity varies quite dramatically: it denies and challenges society-wide stereotypes, and covers the fault line between and among masculinities and femininities, causing at least two effects: gender self-consciousness and vertigo.⁴⁴

In her book, *The Woman in the Body*, Emily Martin investigates the hegemony of science on women’s bodies and whether women have internalized this as “common sense” or resisted.⁴⁵ In terms of habitus, to internalize patriarchal representations of the body would be to make

such dominant representations common sense. To resist such representations of the body would be to construct alternative and empowering visions of reality. Martin suggests from her study that resistance among women arises from their contemporary positions in social space and/or from their subjection to multiple forms of oppression.⁴⁶ Women work and rear children. They straddle the nature/culture opposition and thus see it as false, asserting that the “dominant ideology is partial: it does not capture their experience.”⁴⁷ Women internalize the opposition itself, rather than one side of the opposition, for they are mediating between at least two domains: the masculine/public world of paid work and the feminine/personal world of human reproduction, encountering patriarchal relations in both.⁴⁸

Because the economy is at the center of Bourdieu’s analysis, internal differentiation of this sort is not found in Bourdieu’s description of the largely public habitus. Although both men and women shift between personal and public spheres, women are most identified with what is variously called the domestic, family, or personal life because of the historical legacy of gender divisions of labor. Anna Yeatman argues that “women in their distinctive domestic role and the domain of domestic or personal life are accommodated but at the expense of being located as the lesser part of a dual ordering of social life. The other part concerns the public aspects of our social existence, a world with which men are still more identified than are women.”⁴⁹ Although Bourdieu acknowledges the role of mothering, especially in regard to the cultural capital transmitted from mother to her children, he never combines this aspect of a woman’s habitus with that associated, for example, with her work in the paid labor force. Nor does he account for any dimension in the relationship between spouses with respect to their work. These two moments are differentiated, but not considered as an (incomplete) package uniquely defining everyday social and institutional realities of women and to a lesser extent, men. Furthermore, as Nancy Fraser notes in her criticisms of Jürgen Habermas’s gender blindness to the gender mechanisms at work throughout his constructions of the private and public spheres, the economic sphere passes as simply the gender-neutral sphere of the official economy, rather than as an explicitly gender-biased and segregated sphere of official masculine production.⁵⁰

Some women’s consciousness forms, then, for the opposite reasons that Bourdieu gives for the reproduction of the social order. It is not around acceptance of the social order as self-evident, common sense, etc.,

through the practical schemes of perception and appreciation provided through the unconscious workings of the habitus. The world as constructed by gender symbolism is not as natural as the “natural attitude of gender” may have us believe,⁵¹ it does not make sense, and it is false. As Gayle Rubin famously notes, femininities and masculinities are based on the negation of similarities between men and women and differences among men and among women.⁵² On the other hand, in the slogan, “that’s not for the likes of me,” Bourdieu illustrates the dominated classes’ practical consideration of their lack of opportunity to join in the cultural and economic life of the dominant classes. Social divisions appear obvious and self-regulated by individuals and social groups.

This denies not only that dominant members of the dominated class recoup lost economic capital through gender and race privilege, but that women are continually entering and struggling in environments that are not for the likes of them.⁵³ Elizabeth Free describes her experience as a scientist:

Should a woman scientist expect to cultivate a split personality, should she develop a gender-neutral persona for the laboratory, should she integrate her her scientific work with a specifically female identity: how can she avoid being discounted as either too weak or too aggressive? She rarely makes a single choice, but rather a succession of choices, involving a whole series of practical decisions, consciously or unconsciously made. In this process, women internalize the cultural contradictions of gender in a constant, ongoing process of mediating opposing cultural demands.⁵⁴

A self-consciousness is acquired from venturing into male-dominated fields, from taking a gendered disposition into a position that does not fit it, especially when considering the entire social space as a single field of male domination.

Like Fee, Minnie Bruce Pratt recounts her experiences, this time of living in a town with the “U.S. Army’s second largest home base,” where she found “not such a surprising realization: to understand that women are used as sexual pets, or are violently misused, are considered prey. But, there it was: for the first time I felt myself to be, not theoretically, but physically and permanently, in the class of people labeled woman: and felt that group to be relatively powerless and at the mercy of another class, men.”⁵⁵ Zakia Patak and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan provide another striking example – a muslim woman seeking economic compensation after a divorce: “When Shabano was ejected from her home after forty years of marriage and several children, the ejection

problematized the values that were embedded in the daily routines of life ... the ejection and divorce provided Shabano with the lived experience that leads to a sharp consciousness of gender in a patriarchal culture."⁵⁶ As Denise Riley puts it, at one time or another, women find themselves reflecting – “but that’s [not] me.”⁵⁷ The ontological complicity between habitus and field breaks down: *fit* no longer explains the relationship between positions and dispositions.

This necessarily *temporal* experience is reflective, and not necessarily momentary. It appears to women whether they are prepared to challenge it or not, whether they are gendered for the position or not. They carry with them the trait of femaleness by the existence of the perceived female biological body. In the case of a woman overstepping boundaries and working in gender inappropriate settings, she is victimized by the classifying schemes of others which alert her to the non-complicity of her disposition with her environment (“tomboy,” “butch,” “aggressive”). Although she may continue to perceive the world as she is perceived, her self-consciousness arises from the internalization of the masculine/feminine opposition: both sides reflect the reality of her experience. If talking sex with the guys on the job successfully initiates a woman into a male-dominated work group, she must never talk it the same way or with the same degree of vulgarity lest she transgress an unforgivable boundary of femininity.⁵⁸ And this experience represents a conscious moment, or in Bourdieu’s language, a break with doxa, the set of knowledge that is common sense. As Teresa de Lauretis describes consciousness, it is a “particular configuration of subjectivity, or subjective limits, produced at the intersection of meaning with experience,”⁵⁹ in this case, in which meaning contradicts experience.

It is still not enough, however, simply to recognize the conscious aspects of the habitus. A uniquely masculine practice constructs the unconscious habitus. Sharon Traweek demonstrates this well in her ethnographic study of what could be called the habitus of high energy physicists. Traweek explored “those parts of emotions which are culturally constructed experiences, culturally named and defined ... what this group considers masculine and feminine, male and female...⁶⁰ I quote at length her insightful analysis of the physicist’s postdoctoral phase:

Paradoxically, to be fully conscious of the social and psychological forces at work in this postdoctoral phase would be debilitating for the candidate, according to this community’s values. ‘Unconscious’ in this community

means arbitrary and unknowable, and hence uninteresting. Concern with these and related matters, such as how to get along with other people, is considered somewhat unscientist-like. Social eccentricity and childlike egoism are cultivated displays of commitment to rationality, objectivity, and science. Young scientists often assert their ignorance of human motives, of everything 'subjective', as if that confirms their vocation. Development of insight into one's own motives and actions is thought to be a division of time and attention better spent on science. One experimentalist has told me that he believed a successful post doc had to be rather immature: a mature person would have too much difficulty accepting the training without question and limiting doubts to a prescribed sphere. He felt that this precondition kept most women and minorities from doing well: their social experience had taught them to doubt authority only too thoroughly.⁶¹

Of course, not all objectively oppressed groups doubt authority even in the privacy of members' minds. This aside, physics represents one of the most male-dominated fields in a discipline (natural sciences) that is one of the most infused with the contours of masculinity. In this realm, Traweck finds an essential characteristic of physicists, at least in this stage of their career, to be their active and cultivated rejection of a developed consciousness "of the social and psychological forces at work." Thus, Traweck demonstrates the unconsciousness aspect of the physicist's habitus, an aspect associated with the male-dominated and modernist world of scientific research, without assuming it a priori. In this way, the unconscious attribute, while critical to the understanding of the practices of both men and women more generally, represents an attribute of masculine behavior.

From a feminist perspective, then, one of the most significant aspects of Bourdieu's theory acts at once as an asset, a liability, and an ambiguity. Gender as an organizing principle is not given systematic treatment throughout Bourdieu's work because gender division is seen as universal and natural, one of the relations of domination that structures all of social life. Despite this and although gender characteristics appear in descriptions of dispositions and capital, gender as an analytic category almost never appears in the construction of concepts, except when it is given secondary status, as in the first reading.⁶² Bourdieu himself hides behind the pervasiveness of gender symbolism through his ambiguous and multi-faceted definition of *secondary*, failing to detail or acknowledge the intricacies and complexities of gender identity and its intersection with sexuality and gender status. Where gender order appears to be universally reproduced on the one hand, gender as an organizing principle remains secondary on the other. With the capital in its

gender-neutral form appearing to be primary and gender secondary, Bourdieu's construction of social class structure closely represents a modern institutionalist public/private dichotomy. In this way, Bourdieu misses a critical dimension of women's experience: their internalization of the public/private, male/female, culture/nature opposition and the contradictions inherent in that condition.

On the other side illustrated by the second reading, we find a Bourdieu infinitely more flexible and attuned to operations of gender, including, yet moving beyond, dichotomous meanings. On this side, the term secondary takes on interpretations which suggest the workings of multiple gendered dispositions and gendered capitals, all constitutive, rather than derivative of social structure, and all out-stretching the confines of the perceived biological body. Where in the first reading alliances among groups draw theoretically from economy and culture (the fundamental parameters of society), alliances here form across such parameters. Group solidarity arises from common subordination in the face of pervasive gendered binary symbolism and organization. An exploration of this side of Bourdieu's thinking, which he does not provide, suggests the criticisms advanced above about the androcentric (public and unconscious) attributes of the habitus. Bourdieu simply fails to go far enough in exploring the fascinating as well as tragic drama of gendered social life, even though his conceptual framework and empirical illustrations remain useful and provocative. I argue here for the best of what a sociological analysis such as Bourdieu's provides: a study of the complex process of enacting patterns of gendered social practice in a world that is at once rigid in its enforcement of gender symbolism and inventive in its capacity to challenge such symbolism in everyday life.

Feminist epistemologies and methodologies: A sociological perspective

Because Bourdieu appears to reproduce sexist dichotomies, his sociological opus requires readings of the sort advanced here to uncover its usefulness to feminists, perhaps one reason why his work has been overlooked or even disdained by feminists. This cannot be said of his epistemological and methodological positions. In the following, I organize a few central contributions in the literature on feminist politics, methodologies, and epistemologies into a construction of a specifically *feminist habitus*. This type of analysis directs attention away from

knotty scientific and philosophical questions and toward the institutional practice of researchers in their various fields. For example, do the designations of certain methodologies or philosophical positions (or sexual practices or state apparatuses, for that matter) depend on the abstract notion of whether they are feminist or masculinist? Or, does it instead depend on who is positioned within these fields as dominant actors, along with their associated patterns of practice and the structure of their interaction with dominated fractions? If the latter is the case, then what is at work is our interpretations, evaluations, and appreciations of feminist practice, whatever that may be – and “fuzziness is often indispensable” – functioning within concrete fields of social relations and across multiple divisions of social life.

The field of the sciences and social sciences in particular has come under increasing epistemological and methodological attack from feminists and others. The critiques are familiar; the feminist quarter’s specific complaints target the gender, class, and racial bias among so-called objective social scientific observers. The critiques are situated within a field of struggle over the legitimate claims to knowledge derived from social processes of social research. In this sense, the struggle over epistemological legitimacy is critical, especially given evidence of the correlation between epistemology and receptivity to feminist perspectives. Stacey and Thorne argue that feminism suffers exclusion from disciplines grounded in positivistic as opposed to interpretive epistemologies.⁶³ On the other hand, the debate is misplaced, unresolvable, and a deterrent to feminist theoretical and empirical progress, if the goal is to establish a specifically feminist epistemology or methodology. The epistemology debate, while being productive in revealing principles and priorities of research, is really a debate over politics and the recognition of feminist research within the field of the social sciences.⁶⁴ Therefore, the epistemological and methodological critiques point toward a character of feminist research rather than a new methodology or a unique epistemology to which all feminists must subscribe.⁶⁵ This character of feminist research might be described as a feminist habitus.

Dorothy Smith critiques androcentric bias in social science research by identifying its organization of research around the “conceptual or capitalistic mode of ruling” (read: detached and exploitative).⁶⁶ Much of feminist epistemological theorizing includes a similar critique of knowledge production by male-dominated scientific practice. Some feminists, therefore, have resorted to a feminist standpoint epistemology in

order to resolve the dilemma over conducting research in social science hierarchies. Smith's work is guided by a standpoint epistemology as is that offered Donna Haraway.⁶⁷ Since Haraway's argument invokes the tri-categorization of feminist epistemologies advanced by Sandra Harding, Haraway's work will function as an example of the epistemological debate among feminist theorists.

In attempting to eliminate the dichotomies associated with objectivity,⁶⁸ Haraway responds to the apparent paradox which has plagued feminist critics of science. Harding states this paradox as the one governing feminist empiricism. Feminist empiricists attempt to correct bias in research and expand the objectivity of science by entering the ranks of scientific production where they may continually challenge unthought assumptions resulting from androcentric bias. This being an explicitly political endeavor, feminist empiricists have difficulty convincing scientists that political motivations may serve to correct rather than create "bad science." Therefore, the project of feminist empiricists is actually much more subversive than first appears. Feminist standpoint theorists, on the other hand, argue outright that feminists occupy a privileged knowledge-seeking position because of their experiences of oppression and domination in a patriarchal society. Lastly, feminist post-modernists argue that all knowledge is socially constructed and that knowledge derives from socially situated and embodied processes of acquisition, not from disembodied, scientific procedures. In this case, all knowledge is partial and local. Haraway attempts to combine all three epistemologies into one relatively parsimonious model. She argues that both feminist critical empiricism and radical constructivism (post-modernism) represent vital feminist projects. But a new definition of objectivity and an expanded form of standpoint epistemology are required to relieve the tensions between them. Thus, she calls for a "successor science," which pursues faithful or "objective" accounts of the real world with post-modern commitments to diverse perspectives. Such a successor science may be obtained by acknowledging the political dimension of objectivity and the position of social scientific researchers.

The standpoint element in Haraway's argument refers to the critical positioning of feminists in fields where the power of constitution (symbolic capital) resides. The tools for adoption of this critical positioning are best described by metaphors of the following order: passionate detachment, limited location, partial perspective, self-critical reflection, and new technologies of vision. By learning how to situate ourselves in

fields where meaning is contested and constructed, we contribute our perspective to the rationality of inquiry, thus to its objectivity.⁶⁹ Our contributing perspective must be recognized as partial (in both senses of the word) rather than universal, unbiased, disembodied, and transcendent, as traditional scientific perspectives tend to claim of themselves. According to Haraway, political accountability and responsibility are byproducts of feminist critical positioning. Although Haraway fails to explicate how to obtain or learn critical positioning, she warns that one cannot simply be in this critical plane by virtue of one's identity (as a woman, or any other "oppressed" person). This is where she departs from more traditionally conceived standpoint epistemologies, since she clearly envisions a *process of training and development* associated with critical positioning.

As feminists are demanding an explicitly stated critical positioning of scientists, Bourdieu is performing an epistemological experiment in his sociology of sociology by attempting to objectify the position of the social scientist. "What must be objectivized is not the individual who does the research in his biographical idiosyncrasy but the position he occupies in academic space and the biases implicated in the stance he takes by virtue of being 'out of the game'."⁷⁰ This project is part of a reflexive sociology that seeks to construct "scientific objects into which the relation of the analyst to the object is not unconsciously projected."⁷¹ Bourdieu takes his task in this project as involving "not simply telling the truth of this world, as can be uncovered by objective methods of observation, but also showing that this world is the site of ongoing struggle to tell the truth of this world."⁷² An analysis of this sort, informed by a critical political tradition, should not be "conceived as an end itself but as the condition of scientific progress."⁷³ Bourdieu speaks here of the sociologist's position in social space, and such positions have associated dispositions – acquired presumably through a process of training and development.

Both Haraway and Bourdieu have identified the social scientist's position as the site of struggle because it signifies the struggle over the social and scientific truth claimed by that position in social space. While admitting such struggles as related to epistemological debates, Haraway and Bourdieu rightly proclaim this struggle as fundamentally social and political, rather than epistemological.⁷⁴ In short, "political and ethics ground struggles for and contests over what may count as rational knowledge."⁷⁵ Whether the method of reflexivity posed to gain insight to "positions" is macro, as in Bourdieu's analysis of the

academic field of intellectuals, or micro, as in the analysis of individual researchers' beliefs and behaviors, both of these analyses point to data, evidence of the researcher and her position, which must be "part of empirical evidence for (or against) the claims advanced in the results of research." This evidence too must be open to critical scrutiny no less than what is traditionally defined as relevant evidence.⁷⁶ The definition of objectivity is thus expanded rather than discarded. It applies both to the position of the researcher and the results of the research.

Although in agreement over the political nature of the epistemological debate, several issues still stand between recent feminist work and that of Bourdieu. Feminists may object to Bourdieu's use of such terms as "truth" and his "objective" methods claiming access to the "truth" of the real world. These claims seem to be another artifact of disembodied, detached, scientific god tricks.⁷⁷ Feminists have preferred to emphasize partial "truths" and situated knowledges that placed them in early alliance with post-modern scientific sensibilities. This proclivity toward particularistic and partial knowledges derives from an acute concern for recognition of diversity and difference (ignorance of which led to and still leads to the exclusion of women's experiences in social and scientific research). Still, much acclaimed feminist critical work has followed in the empiricist tradition. In fact, this is exactly why Haraway wants to reclaim objectivity and avoid lapses into relativism, if for no other reason that to be able to claim that racial, gender, and class oppression is real. Both Haraway and Bourdieu are interested in exposing the (hidden) acts of domination that structure scientific research. Nevertheless, the spirit of post-modern respect for diverse and partial perspectives and knowledge filters through Haraway's account of a successor science.

Such epistemological tension between empiricism and post-modernism, noted by Harding, may be of a necessary transitional nature, but it need not be. Nor must resolution of such a tension reside in a standpoint epistemology that locks the researcher into an epistemological framework that is both faulty and limiting.⁷⁸ Rather, one resolution of this debate is to see feminist research (and all research for that matter) as the product of a certain type of disposition, in this case, a feminist habitus. Thus, we move from a debate about epistemologies, methodologies, and methods, to one about social dispositions. We move from the position of scientists to the disposition of scientists:

...the social dispositions one brings into academia evidently play a crucial role here. Those best armed to avoid this dilemma are people who bring together an advanced mastery of scientific culture with a certain revolt against, or distance from, this culture (often rooted in an estranged experience of the academic universe which pushes one "not to buy it" at face value), or quite simply, a political sense which intuitively leads one to reject or to resist the aseptized and derealized vision of the social world offered by the socially dominant discourse of sociology.⁷⁹

An analysis beginning with the disposition rather than the position of the scientist looks for a new form of critical social science. What exactly are the origins and content of such a disposition that can produce a critical social science? Rogers Brubaker attempts to identify the content of Bourdieu's sociological habitus and then trace its origin:

One key disposition, common to Bourdieu's ethnological and his general intellectual habitus, is the disposition to see the social world as structured by fundamental binary oppositions or polarities – dominant and dominated, noble and base, male and female, right and left, inside and outside, and the like – and the corresponding disposition to see the intellectual world as structured by similar bipolar oppositions. Another is the disposition to transcend or overcome these basic structuring oppositions.⁸⁰ Bourdieu's own sociological habitus owes many of its distinctive inflections to his prior scholastic, philosophical, and ethnological formation, and he has himself suggested in passing the importance of his temperament, his basic intellectual sympathies and antipathies, for sociological formation.⁸¹

Brubaker later admits that he is not content with the origins arguments of Bourdieu's sociological habitus. Nor should he be. How can *basic* intellectual sympathies be taken seriously as an origins account? Yet the tradition of feminist theory embodies this sort of disposition, that which is concerned with binary oppositions and the transformation of them, and its simple origin: that women have been the victims of such universal and ever fixed binary oppositions. Study of the field of gender relations is an outgrowth of such a disposition. In fact, one could argue that the overwhelming charge to feminist research in gender relations is to challenge binary oppositions inherent in gender symbolism either by eliminating them, bypassing them in favor of a diverse field of gendered dispositions, or reversing the valuations associated with them. This is one of the most fundamental challenges to the liberation of women.

Understanding these aspects of the feminist habitus helps to grasp better and differently Bourdieu's concept of homology between cultural producers and the most dominated social groups of society. Bourdieu wants to take account of a phenomenon in the political field in which the

intelligentsia allies itself with the dominated classes. He describes this alliance by way of a homology between the dominated fraction of the dominant class, those “producers of cultural goods within the field of power” who are dominated by industrial and commercial employers in the field of power, and the “position in social space of those agents who are most completely dispossessed of the means of economic and cultural production.”⁸² He goes on to describe this homology in more details as that between intellectuals and “industrial workers.” This represents an “ambiguous alliance”⁸³ between two dominated groups, because this is indeed all that they have in common, their common dominated status, quite different in nature, and of course, their gender.

Their gender, however, is itself a source of domination to those feminist intellectuals who form alliances with feminists of all classes since they indeed share a common form of domination. With feminism, feminist women who reside in the dominated fraction of the dominant class challenge gender structures because they are a source of direct domination to them, both within the field of power and within the dominated fraction itself. Furthermore, they directly share this form of domination, gender, with those who are truly the “most dispossessed,” victims of multiple forms of oppression, and themselves often organized against it.⁸⁴ This is not the case with male intellectuals and industrial workers who at best form “ambiguous alliances.” The ambiguity involved in this relationship of homology arises from the male genderedness of the example, from analyzing the relationship between male intellectuals and male industrial workers, rather than feminist intellectuals and workers. This ambiguity falls away upon recognition of the “double vision of reality” characterizing the feminist habitus, where women scholars are both privileged and oppressed, sharing the nature of their oppression with all women.⁸⁵

How can a feminist habitus be described? Haraway employs the metaphor of technologies of vision to describe the notion of critical positioning. These technologies take the form of prosthesis, an embodiment of visionary techniques that guide feminist researchers through the complexities of gendered social life.

These technologies are ways of life, social orders, practices of visualization. Technologies are skilled practices. How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see for? Whom to see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets blinded? Who wears blinders? Who interprets the visual field? What other sensory powers do we wish to cultivate besides vision?⁸⁶

Her description contains hints of unconscious and self-conscious moments so much so as to wonder where the line between the two is drawn. Brubaker wants to emphasize the unconscious elements of the sociological habitus. He argues that “all sorts of specialized practices in the modern social world are regulated by incorporated dispositions.”⁸⁷ This follows from Bourdieu’s own work on the scientific habitus:

The most highly specialized fields, those most profoundly permeated by requirements of scientific and technical reason, like the economic field or the scientific field, presuppose and call forth quasi-bodily dispositions ... a practical mastery of the tacit laws governing the field, a mastery of the categories of perception and appreciation that permit one to apprehend important problems, and so on.⁸⁸

First, recall Traweek’s description of the genderedness of the physicist’s unconscious habitus and its resemblance to the description of a scientific habitus offered here. In a different field, the field of feminist scholarship, feminists call forth a disposition that allows them to reconstruct questions relevant to the lives of women and which challenge the gender order of social life. As Brubaker states when speaking about Bourdieu’s sociological habitus, to construct alternative visions is “to alter the principles of sociological vision of the social world [which] is to alter that world itself.”⁸⁹

The ambiguous mix of conscious and unconscious moments, however, is suggested by Brubaker’s introduction of a type of *stratified* habitus that allows for multiple layers of resocialization upon layers of socialization more directly associated with the classical concept of habitus. Brubaker argues that “reflexivity can and should be incorporated into the habitus, in the form of a disposition to monitor its own productions and to grasp its own principles of production. The reflective regulation of the unconscious workings of the habitus, in short, can be *inculcated* as part of the habitus.”⁹⁰ When feminists engage in discussion of unique feminist epistemologies and methodologies, they often embrace the process of reflexivity especially as it seeks to uncover androcentric biases and other unthought assumptions.⁹¹

Yet, again, the conscious layerings weaving through the unconscious layers must be emphasized. Teresa de Lauretis joins Catherine MacKinnon and many other feminists in the designation of self-criticism and self-consciousness as the “critical method” of feminism.⁹² Even though the popular affiliation of feminist politics with “consciousness-raising” has been devalued, de Lauretis argues that “it continues

to be essential, that is, if feminism is to continue to be a political critique of society. Even more important, or more to the immediate point, the practice of self-consciousness – of reading, speaking, and listening, to one another – is the best way we have precisely to resist horizontal violence ... and to analyze our differences and contradictions.”⁹³ Patricia Hill Collins echoes this more pointedly with her illustration of black-feminist intellectuals as “outsiders within.” Collins employs this powerful metaphor to reveal at least two sources of conscious internalized differentiation: first the experience of being both a woman and black in the white male world of academia, and second, the project of fighting the objectifying gaze of racist and sexist social science. Collins also advocates these aspects of black feminist habitus as crucial components of active resistance to internalized oppression.⁹⁴

Several advantages immediately result from the conceptualization of a feminist habitus as compared to a feminist standpoint epistemology, or a feminist methodology. First and foremost, the epistemological and methodological foundations of feminist research are not limited. Since the habitus directs research, the actual methods and techniques adopted by the researcher become less important. Analysis shifts to the organization of “capital accumulation” in the field of research and policy. Thus, feminists can do empiricist research, use quantitative methods, and so on, according to whichever method is appropriate for their project. This does not mean that feminists engage in epistemological relativism, or that there are not definite methodological and epistemological components to their feminist habitus (e.g., ensuring direct contact with subjects, rejecting positivistic assumptions about the world, etc.⁹⁵), it simply implies that these components cannot be subsumed into one methodological or epistemological category.

Lastly, Bourdieu clearly represents a social theorist and researcher who has reconceptualized social life and the study of social life. It is in this respect that his work parallels feminist efforts to grapple with epistemological and methodological concerns for progressive ends. He, too, is motivated by skepticism of objectivist methods of inquiry especially as they misrepresent subject/object relations. While he does not explicitly call into question the gendered bias of scientific practice, his epistemological experiment into a reflexive sociology does offer an opportunity to expose the gendered subtexts of such practice. Finally, it is these motivations and characteristics of his research that suggest promising overlap between his habitus and that of feminists.

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Notes

1. Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91/5 (1986): 1067; Sandra Harding, *The Science Question of Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 18. Attempts to theorize gender in precisely this way preceded these published proposals, most notably by Iris Marion Young, "Is Male Gender Identity the Cause of Male Domination?" in Joyce Trebilcot, editor, *Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory* (New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld Publishers, 1983), 129–146. Young argues that feminist psychoanalytic theory provides an account of gender differentiation but not of male domination: "while gender differentiation is a phenomenon of individual psychology and experience, as well as of cultural categorization, male domination refers to structural relations of genders and institutional forms that determine those structures" (134).
2. I acknowledge the extremely helpful comments of one reviewer on the relationship between the three level framework on the one hand, and the binary and multiple nature of gender relations on the other. Although I agree with the reviewer's suggestion that binary/multiple components operate at each level, I want to emphasize binary action at the level of symbolism and structure, and the unaccounted for multiplicity of gendered practice at the level of experience and identity.
3. Rosemary Pringle, *Secretaries Talk: Sexuality, Power, and Work* (New York: Verso, 1989).
4. Ava Baron, editor, *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); especially Ava Baron, "Gender and Labor History: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future," 1–46; Cynthia Cockburn, *Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men, and Technical Know-how* (Denver, N.H.: Pluto Press, 1985); Amy Wharton, "Structure and Agency in Socialist-Feminist Theory," *Gender & Society* 5/3 (1991): 373–389. Wharton ends her article with a reference to the unrealized feminist potential of Bourdieu's work. In a different context, feminist anthropologists have employed Bourdieu's theory of practice as applied to pre-capitalist societies. See Sylvia Junko Yanagisako and Jane Fishburne Collier, "Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender and Kinship," in Collier and Yanagisako, editors, *Gender and Kinship: Essays Toward a Unified Analysis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 14–52.
5. For an elegant statement of this problem, see Arthur Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology* (New York: Academic Press, 1983).
6. Rogers Brubaker, "Rethinking Classical Theory: The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu," *Theory and Society* 14/6 (1985): 746.
7. Recent research by Barbara Reskin and Patricia Roos perfectly illuminates this process. They have shown that while technological changes have altered

occupational structures and job content, with women entering some traditionally male jobs, a concomitant process insures resegregation of the workforce through male exit of those same jobs. See *Job Queues, Gender Queues: Explaining Women's Inroads into Male Occupations* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1986).

8. Most commentators fault Bourdieu for what they consider to be the class determinism of the first reading (Henry Giroux, "Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis," *Harvard Educational Review* 53/3 (1983): 257–293; Jay MacLeod, *Ain't No Makin' It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-Income Neighborhood* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1987); R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987)). For one of the few non-deterministic readings, capturing the spirit of my second reading, see Richard Harker, "On Reproduction, Habitus, and Education," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 5/2 (1984): 117–127.
9. Pierre Bourdieu, "From Rules to Strategies" (an interview by Pierre Lamaison), *Cultural Anthropology* 1/1 (1986): 118.
10. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), chapter 8, "Modes of Domination," 122–134.
11. In a lecture, "The Field of Power" (University of Wisconsin-Madison, April, 1989), Bourdieu alluded to the field of power as the one, overarching field of social organization and symbolic order. The field of power refers presumably to the field of positions occupied by individuals with hefty volumes of symbolic capital.
12. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).
13. *Ibid.*, 106–107.
14. *Ibid.*, 106ff.
15. *Ibid.*, 107.
16. In the pages referred to here (*ibid.*, 104ff.) and in the concluding chapter of *Distinction* (and in other sources as well), Bourdieu does make references to the possibility of gender and age groups, rather than occupations (*ibid.*, 468), forming class or social groups by comparing the system of domination predicated on the sexual division of labor and the division of sexual labor to that associated with other types of classes, particularly social classes (both sexual division represent "major relations of order," *ibid.*, 475). Bourdieu does admit the social construction of these divisions. But in the case of sexual division of labor and division of sexual labor (the definition of which is taken for granted rather than explicated, in the same way he assumes the existence of the structure of social class or the relations of production as well, on this point see R. W. Connell, *Which Way is Up*, Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), he attaches a universal symbolism to their character, representing domination in all social hierarchies – "invariant oppositions in which the relationship of domination is expressed" (*ibid.*, 470). Bourdieu is at best contradictory on this point and affords very little space and attention to working through the implication of these statements in an empirically systematic fashion, as he does with class habitus. Bourdieu has taken up the topic of male domination in a recent article, but, as becomes obvious later in the article, he continues to rely too heavily on "taken for granted" systems of symbolic domination ("La Domination Masculine," *Actes de la Recherche en Science Sociales* 84 (1990): 2–32.
17. "Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," 724.
18. *Ibid.*, 734.
19. *Ibid.*, 737.

20. Ibid., 743.
21. *Distinction*, 105.
22. Gender does not enter into the definition of capital: "To construct the classes and class fractions on which the subsequent analyses are based, systematic account was taken not only of occupation and educational level ... but also, in each case, of the available indices of the volume of the different sorts of capital, *as well as* age, sex and place of residence," (ibid., 571, my emphasis).
23. Ibid., 106.
24. Ibid., 104, 106–107.
25. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in John G. Richardson, editor, *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, 1983), 243, my emphasis.
26. Ibid., 222–225.
27. Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," 245, my emphasis.
28. *Distinction*, 153, my emphasis.
29. Other feminists have elaborated upon various versions of symbolic order to explain the subordinated position of women. One example includes those feminists, primarily psychoanalysts, who incorporate into their work Lacan's version of symbolic order: "the pre-given structure of social and sexual roles and relations which make up the family and society" (Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 167). Bourdieu, on the contrary, does not take sexual difference as the essence of symbolic order.
30. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 126–132.
31. Linda Nicholson, *Gender and History: The Limits of Theory in the Age of the Family* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 105–132.
32. A two-by-two table with male/female on one dimension and masculine/feminine on the other yields four simple outcomes. Two are common in symbolic order (male/masculine, female/feminine) and the other two are not (male/feminine, female/masculine). This is an extremely crude illustration of how practical identities and representations contradict the symbolic order, but I am suggesting that this schema is both durable and fluid enough to frustrate and spawn alternatives to competing dichotomous schemes.
33. This can be seen in individualistic but mass-produced solutions to "lack-of-fit" problems, such as assertiveness training courses or pre-apprenticeship training for women in the trades.
34. See Kristen Yount, "Ladies, Tomboys, and Flirts," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 19/4 (1991): 396–422, for a similar example using the case of coalminers where differences in gender dispositions among women have real consequences for women's job conditions and status, lending evidence to the proposition that gendered dispositions are achieved for survival and profit.
35. Although women's family status has not been demonstrated to affect a number of characteristics of women's labor force participation, such as affinity for part-time work, job commitment, productivity, and interest, etc., human capital theorists invoke women's housewifery as either in her or the family's subjective and economic self-interest and therefore the cause of women's lower wages. See Barbara Bergmann, *The Economic Emergence of Women* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Lourdes Beneria and Catharine Stimpson, editors, *Women, Households and the Economy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987).
36. It could also be that he is denigrated for his so-called feminine desires and commitments, but this does not have implications for his classification as a *worker*. Evidence has amounted for the cases of male nurses and flight attendants who may

- find that their masculinity becomes jeopardized in a culture of hegemonic heterosexuality, but nevertheless have greater opportunities for advancement than women in their female-dominated occupations. See Christine Williams, *Gender Differences at Work: Women and Men in Non-traditional Occupations* (Berkeley, 1990); Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, 1983). Other evidence, however, suggests that men in female occupations use women as their reference group and thus remain financially and psychologically secure (Amy Wharton and James Baron, "So Happy Together? The Impact of Gender Segregation on Men at Work," *American Sociological Review* 52 (1987): 583).
37. The following example blurs, as have past examples, mechanisms associated with gender and those with sexuality. It is beyond the scope of this article to make a clear analytical distinction between gender and sexuality, though I believe that it is ultimately necessary to do so without collapsing one into the other. Except for his references to the division of sexual labor (without explication), Bourdieu does not on a regular basis, and certainly not with respect to capitalist societies, address sexuality per se in his discussions of habitus and social order (but see note 17). One could, however, think of classification systems à la Bourdieu in relation to systems of sexual hierarchies as outlined by Gayle Rubin in "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in Carol S. Vance, editor, *Pleasure and Danger* (Boston, 1989), 281.
 38. Rosemary Pringle, *Secretaries Talk: Sexuality, Power, and Work*.
 39. Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," 14.
 40. Dorothy Leland, "Lacanian Psychoanalysis and French Feminism: Toward and Adequate Political Psychology." *Hypatia* 3/3 (1989): 97.
 41. Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," 18.
 42. *Distinction*, 468.
 43. See Nancy Fraser, "Introduction," *Hypatia* 3/3 (1989): 3–5. Also, Diane Fuss argues in *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1989), 6, that although Lacan claims to substitute a social constructivist apparatus in place of essentialist Freudian theories of sexuality and symbolism, "there is a sense in which social constructionism can be unveiled as merely a form of sociological essentialism, a position predicated on the assumption that the subject is, in essence, a social construction." Fuss applies a similar critique to a familiar Derridian phrase: "the danger (and usefulness) of *always already* is that it implies essence, it hints at an irreducible core that requires no further investigation. In so doing, it frequently puts a stop to analysis, often at an argument's most critical point" (*ibid.*, 17). I would echo this criticism both to Bourdieu's first and more literal analysis of gender as universally secondary and his rigid application of binary gender symbolism. On the other hand, his sociological orientation is far more amenable to empirical rectification than are neo-Freudian psychoanalytic theories.
 44. By focusing on women's gendered identities I in no way intend to imply that women have multiple gendered identities and men do not, as has been the implication of neo-Freudian theories that take, for a number of reasons internal to the theory, the importance of men's need to achieve masculinity to be far greater than women's need or capacity to achieve femininity. See Christine Williams; David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
 45. Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body* (Boston, 1987).
 46. Martin finds more resistance among Black women, echoing the voices of many Black feminists about the compounded impact of racism and sexism in their lives.

47. *Ibid.*, 200.
48. Martin borrows much of her theoretical argument from the pioneering work of standpoint feminist Dorothy Smith, "A Sociology for Women," in Julia Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck, editors, *Prism of Sex: Essays in Sociology of Knowledge* (Madison, 1977) and Nancy C. M. Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in Sandra Harding, editor, *Feminism and Methodology* (Indiana, 1987). Although the standpoint position, especially as it is represented here, may be based in its extreme forms on a type of essentialism (that all women embody this opposition, that all women straddle the fault line between being a mother and a worker), it does not necessarily follow from Martin's argument. She suggests that the embodiment of the opposition represents a reality for some women, certainly not all, and that most women are at least victims of society's imposition of binary gender images.
49. Anna Yeatman, "Women, Domestic Life and Sociology," in Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross, editors, *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 157. R. M. Connell also terms the "formation of personality ... an important and difficult theoretical task" (R. M. Connell, *Gender and Power*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987, 48). Similarly, some feminist psychoanalysts privilege the family as a unique site of gender and sexual development (Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley, 1978); for survey discussions, see Elaine Hoffman Baruch and Lucienne J. Serrano, editors, *Women Analyze Women* (New York, 1988) and Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, 1983), 151–193.
50. Nancy Fraser, "What's Critical About Critical Theory: The Case of Habermas and Gender," *New German Critique* No. 35 (Spring/Summer 1985): 105.
51. Even though Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna, *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) show that a vast amount of the achievement of gender in everyday life is accomplished by the unconscious workings of a natural attitude toward gender differentiation, this does not necessarily contradict the insight that even fleeting experiences of rupture may cause durable changes in gender ideology.
52. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Rayna R. Reiter, ed., *Toward and Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press), 157–210.
53. And, of course, *have* struggled as *women*, in the past tense.
54. Elizabeth Fee, "Critiques of Modern Science: the Relationship of Feminism to Other Radical Epistemologies," in Ruth Bleier, editor, *Feminist Approaches to Science* (New York: Pergamon Press Inc., 1986), 45–46.
55. Minnie Bruce Pratt, "Identity: Skin Blood Heart," in Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Barbara Smith, editors, *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 22.
56. Zakia Patak and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, "SHABANO," *Signs* 14/3 (1989): 571.
57. Denise Riley, *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of 'Woman' in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 99. Such reflection may occur at a very young age and be reproduced throughout life. This may be a significant difference between racial and sexual oppression. See Barbara Smith and Beverly Smith, "Across the Kitchen Table," in C. Moraga and G. Anzaldúa, editors, *This Bridge Called My Back* (N.Y.: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), 114.
58. Nancy DiTomaso, "Sexuality in the Workplace: Discrimination and Harassment," in Jeff Hearn, Deborah Sheppard, Peta Tancred-Sheriff and Gibson Burrell,

- editors, *The Sexuality of Organization* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989), 71–91.
59. Teresa de Lauretis, editor, *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 8.
 60. Sharon Traweek, *Beamtimes and Lifetimes: The World of High Energy Physicists* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988).
 61. *Ibid.*, 90–91.
 62. In the opening pages of “Social Space and the Genesis of Groups,” Bourdieu’s theoretical framework appears in perhaps its most concise published form. However, gender is noticeably absent.
 63. Judith Stacey and Barrie Thorne, “The Missing Revolution in Sociology,” *Social Problems* 32/2 (1985): 139.
 64. Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14/3 (1988): 575.
 65. Sandra Harding, *Feminism and Methodology* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987).
 66. Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World As Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987).
 67. Haraway advances a modified form of standpoint epistemology. She does not embrace its essentialist or its limiting epistemological position. Her standpoint is based mostly on the development of a critical positioning of the scientist (any scientist) in the field of social and scientific research. In this, she emphasizes the process associated with conducting research, rather than the actual position or identity of the researcher.
 68. The dichotomy associated with objectivity follows from its definition according to empiricist and post-modern epistemologies, where in the former it retains its traditional meaning of reflecting real life or natural and observable phenomena and in the latter it reflects the relative nature of socially constructed phenomena. Haraway finds neither of these extremes politically or practically tenable. Therefore, she searches for a way to infuse empiricist notions of objectivity with social and political concerns.
 69. Nancy Fraser in “Struggle Over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late-Capitalist Political Culture,” (paper presented at University of Wisconsin-Madison, February, 1989) provides a striking litany of examples: “...in the current wave of feminist ferment, *groups of women* have politicized and reinterpreted various needs, have instituted new vocabularies and forms of address, and so, have become ‘women’ in a different, though not uncontested or univocal, sense, by speaking publicly the heretofore unspeakable, by coining terms like ‘sexism,’ ‘sexual harassment,’ ‘marital, date and acquaintance rape,’ ‘labor-force sex-segregation,’ ‘the double shift,’ ‘wife-battery,’ etc.” (my emphasis to note that Fraser is not speaking of academic feminists alone or even primarily).
 70. Pierre Bourdieu, “Toward a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop with Pierre Bourdieu” (interview by Loic J. D. Wacquant), *Sociological Theory* (1989): 21.
 71. *Ibid.*, 20.
 72. *Ibid.*, 21.
 73. *Ibid.*, 22.
 74. *Ibid.*, 55, Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 597.
 75. *Ibid.*, 587.
 76. Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*, 9.
 77. Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 586.

78. Harding raises many criticisms of the standpoint epistemology advocated by feminists: assuming that empiricists comprise an audience to be convinced by feminist epistemological arguments, “those wedded to empiricism will be loath to commit themselves to the belief that the social identity of the observer can be an important variable in the potential objectivity of research results. Strategically, this is a less convincing explanation for the greater adequacy of feminist claims for all but the already convinced; it is particularly unlikely to appear plausible to natural scientists or natural science enthusiasts.” Secondly, Harding doubts the plausibility of a [single] feminist standpoint epistemology given class, race, and cultural differences among women. Thirdly, the standpoint epistemology is “too rooted in the alliance between knowledge and power characteristic of the modern epoch” (*Science Question in Feminism*, 26–27).
79. Bourdieu, “Toward a Reflexive Sociology,” 57.
80. Rogers Brubaker, “Social Theory as Habitus,” unpublished paper, 16.
81. *Ibid.*, 24. See Bourdieu, *Choses dites* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1987) 37.
82. Bourdieu, “Social Space and the Genesis of Groups,” 736.
83. *Ibid.*, 737.
84. See Linda Blum, *Between Feminism and Labor: The Significance of the Comparable Worth Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). This study of grass roots comparable worth organizing documents how women first oriented toward class politics move in the direction of gender politics and vice versa to achieve the dual class and gender interests of comparable worth demands.
85. Judith A. Cook and Mary Margaret Fonow, “Knowledge and Women’s Interests: Issues of Epistemology and Methodology in Feminist Sociological Research,” *Sociological Inquiry* 56 (1986): 2.
86. Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 587.
87. Brubaker, “Social Theory as Habitus,” 5.
88. From Tetsugi Yarnamoto, “Entretien sur la pratique, le temps et l’histoire,” January, 1989 interview with P. Bourdieu, quoted in Brubaker, “Social Theory.”
89. *Ibid.*, 11.
90. *Ibid.*
91. Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*; Dorothy Smith, “Women’s Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology,” *Sociological Inquiry* 44/1 (1974): 7.
92. Catharine A. MacKinnon, “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence,” in Sandra Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*, 135.
93. de Lauretis, *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, 8.
94. Patricia Hill Collins, “Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought,” *Social Problems* 13/6 (1986): S14.
95. Harding has evaluated feminist research with respect to three notable characteristics: problems driving research are derived from the experiences of women’s lives, social explanations are formulated for the benefit of women and the improvement of their lives, and the researcher is reflexive with regard to her subject matter and her relation to the subject (Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*, 6–10). Others have documented the preferred method of research among women researchers studying gender topics as qualitative or interpretive (Marlene Mackie, “Feminist Sociologists’ Productivity, Collegial Relations, and Research Style Examined Through Journal Publications,” *Sociology and Social Research* 69 (1985): 189; Stacey and Thorne, “The Missing Revolution in Sociology,” 309).