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# Figured worlds in the field of power

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This paper seeks to deepen our understanding of how structural relations of power should be understood in local accounts of activity and identity. Thus, we critically review the synthesis of Bourdieu and Activity Theory in Figured Worlds, analyzing two critiques of Bourdieu: his insufficient *localism* and his over-emphasis on *embodiment of habitus*. We are left with Bourdieu's overwhelming concern to explain how the field of power is locally refracted, and to critique its doxa in a field of opinion, while arguably doing so at the expense of imagination, *self-authoring* and *world-making*. We conclude with our own suggestions of a synthesis.

**Keywords: CHAT, Bourdieu, Holland, identity and agency, localism, and field of power.**

## Introduction

The aim of this paper is to deepen our understandings of the way that structural relations of power are refracted in local activity. On the one hand there is a tendency in some of the literature for power relations in a cultural field to be analyzed in ways that allow class relations to recede or even disappear. In educational research, for instance, one sees that *black ethnic minority* or *free school meals* becomes the variable or conceptual proxy for disadvantage rather than *working class* or even *working and non-working poor* (for exceptions see Bowles & Gintis, 2002). On the other hand, such studies that focus on structural relations reveal reproduction of class relations and poverty, while neglecting the cultural mediations of educational engagement and identification that explain class reproduction locally in terms of lived experience (here for a paradigmatic exception, see Willis, 1977).

We are concerned to bring the structural *and* the local together in the educational field, revealing how the local culture of schooling ensures class reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). For example, when Paul Willis ethnographically investigated how a group of working class *lads* got working class jobs, he found that it is the conflict between schooling and working class *cultures* that is at the very heart of social immobility. In his powerful text *Learning to Labor*, Willis further argued that these conditions of existence were deeply embedded in the pedagogical relationships within schools, and between schools and the labor market. We have argued that this involves understanding schooling from a

Marxist/ian point of view. Thus, we ask how social and cultural capitals relate to each other and to labor power. We mean this not only on the structural level, but in the daily, lived experience of education and schooling where some 'learn to labor' (as in Willis, 1977) while others learn to take positions of power. These position-takings, which are not always necessarily conscious, involve understanding the complex ways in which the class system is mediated culturally in the school system. In other words, we want to understand how certain students tend to disengage from or not to align with schooling. As such we want to deepen our own understanding of how to synthesize sociological theory of class reproduction (such as that of Bourdieu) with an Activity Theory of identity and motivation, and of engagement of identity in schooling practice (see Williams, 2011a; 2012; Williams & Choudry, 2016).

Holland et al.'s (1998) theory of Figured Worlds (FWs) has been successful in conceptualizing the narration of identities including imaginative developments of the self, potential 'agentive actions' (Holland et al., p. 278) and change in one's life trajectory. Thus at the heart of the formulation of FWs is semiotic mediation (drawing on Activity theory after Vygotsky, Leontiev, and Bakhtin) a person's construction of identity and its relation to activity, or in other words 'identity in practice' (p. 271). But these identities are *positioned* in their FWs as in a Bourdieusian 'field' (see Bourdieu, 1977), hence synthesizing Activity theory with Bourdieu's notion of power or capital. The FW synthesis, then, has had significant implications for the development of the authors' own subsequent work. For example, the study of struggles to identify or *figure oneself* in contested local practices (see Holland and Lave, 2001) and the study of 'history in person' (Holland, 2007, p. 169) in order to understand 'agentive actions' (p. 278) are rooted in the theory of FWs. Subsequently, researchers (for example in the field of education) have adopted this framework sometimes by focusing on a particular element of the theory such as identity formation (Boaler & Greeno, 2000; Rubin, 2007; Vågan, 2011), play and imagination (in imaginary FWs) and its role in re-contextualizing learning by creating new opportunities (Jurow, 2005) and world making in relation to possibilities of creating new figures for professional development (Williams, 2011b). Thus FW allows us to understand the role of agency in the formation of identity as embedded within practice, thus providing a context for transformation and change:

By 'figured world', then, we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents [...] who engage in a

limited range of meaningful acts or changes of state [...] as moved by a specific set of forces ... (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52).

This paper takes our effort of synthesis forward via a close examination of the use of Bourdieu in Holland et al.'s (1998) work on Figured Worlds as presented in their book *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* and its relation to Bourdieu's notion of the 'field of power', whilst reflecting and drawing on Bourdieu's own writings (e.g. Bourdieu, 1977; 1990; etc.). We are specifically interested in the role of power relations in FWs as a manifestation of their synthesis of Bourdieu with CHAT. In our previous work we have also found the need for Bourdieu to exercise a critical role with CHAT in understanding the political economy of education. For example, Williams (2012) draws on the notion of use value (as represented in the Marxist psychology of Vygotsky and CHAT) in contradiction with the notion of exchange value (of capital as represented in Bourdieu's theory) in order to provide 'a joint theory of education as both development and re-production of labor power' (p. 57). Williams and Choudry (2016) argue that going to Bourdieu's theory of reflexive sociology and beyond involves not only exposing the 'dominant cultural arbitrary' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 20) in a classed, stratified education system, but also offers perspectives on transforming the system. Thus, we argue that our analysis and synthesis here may have significant implications for socio-cultural theory and educational research.

We hypothesize that FWs may offer a critical part of this project since it allows for transformation through concepts such as play, imagination and world making, but that there needs to be close attention paid to the criticality and, thus, to power relations that this theory can offer. We will argue that such criticality is manifest through their use of Bourdieu and therefore, we need to pay close attention to their use of his work. By doing so, we will then re-present our own proposed synthesis of Bourdieu with CHAT, adding to previous conceptualizations (such as in Williams, 2011a; 2012; 2015).

We thus pose the question: "How does Holland et al.'s concept of Figured World utilize Bourdieu's concept of the field of power, and with what consequences for exploring transformation, as well as social reproduction, of the system?"

## **Methodology**

Given the theoretical and analytic nature of this paper, the methods applied can be described as 'theoretical analysis' (Bryman, 2004, p. 71) of

literatures. In the background is our study of Bourdieu in contrast with the founders of Activity Theory (including Vygotsky and Leont'ev) and Bakhtin's concept of dialogism (see Bakhtin, 1981). We foreground a critical review of Holland et al.'s appropriation of Bourdieu's theory, especially their key criticisms of this theory as a whole.

Then, we focus on the parts of the FWs theory that are relevant to its positions on Bourdieu by, firstly, combing through all mentions/use of key Bourdieusian concepts, i.e. *field*, *habitus*, *capital* or *power*, etc. (beyond the mentions in the index and manually searching the pdf version of the book). Secondly, we cross-referenced any mentions of Bourdieu in FWs to key works of Bourdieu cited (see 1977, 1990 etc.) and to other significant work (e.g. see Bourdieu 2000a, 2000b etc.) that predates FWs theory albeit sometimes published in English later and which, thus, are not cited in Holland et al. (1998). When important discrepancies between Holland et al.'s representation of Bourdieu and Bourdieu's own writings have been found, these have then been further investigated by expanding the search to other writings of Holland (such as Holland & Lave, 2001), if required. Through this process, we identified 31 key paragraphs in the main text and 17 endnotes that were significant enough to warrant closer analysis that informed our critique of Holland et al.'s central positions (a complete list can be obtained from the corresponding author). As a result of our cross referencing, we identified two main critiques of Bourdieu in the theory of FWs:

1. Firstly, 'localism': Holland et al. criticize Bourdieu for not attending to local interactions that could potentially have led him to explore phenomena relevant to their own theoretical interests in symbols, discourses, figures, and narratives, all of which resource agents' self - authoring and world making.
2. Secondly, 'change': Holland et al. criticize Bourdieu's notion of embodied, unconscious habitus as being 'too embodied' and not semiotic, specifically not malleable enough to change. In another words, accusing Bourdieu's perspective of being too depressing of the possibility of real change/transformation.

In order to engage with these criticisms, we offer what we think Bourdieu might have said in reply. We do so by, firstly, critically presenting Holland et al.'s Figured World of the US undergraduate dating game as an example. Secondly, we tackle these FW analyses from a Bourdieusian perspective as a means to contextualize our critique. The direction of our argument will be that Holland et al. are:

- (a) partly wrong in their critiques of Bourdieu (about locality and the field of power and the lack of transformative potential of the habitus: and here Bourdieu has something to offer that might make FW theory more critical) and;
- (b) partly right about their own perspective offering more possibilities for envisioning world making and agency.

But we will want to recognize the value of Holland et al. in 'going beyond' Bourdieu, for our own purposes in a CHAT-Bourdieu synthesis.

### **Figured World of Romance**

In this section, we present our own understanding of FW theory and the case studies from the undergraduate dating game in the US as these are most relevant to the development of the arguments that we present in the later sections.

The FWs theory describes a FW as dependent on 'people's abilities to form and be formed in collectively realized "as if" realms' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 49). In other words FWs can be seen as social constructions of cultural worlds as envisaged by the people involved. The authors draw on Vygotsky's notion of 'collectively developed signs and symbols as the media by which children's mental and emotional faculties were culturally formed' (p. 50). These collectively developed signs and symbols (e.g. manifested in a child's play) are not only symbolic tools that lead to the development of children, but also allow them to go beyond what is immediately known to them, into a world of imagination in order to enact their role in a game. Hence these tools act as competences that make 'possible culturally constituted or figured worlds and, consequently, the range of human institutions' (p. 51). Furthermore, 'through "serious play", new figured worlds may come about' (p. 272), thus, signaling transformations and how these are manifested socially.

A FW can be seen as a 'socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation' (p. 52). It is these interpretations (sometimes also as in imaginations) 'that mediate behavior' (p. 52) through the use of artifacts either in the form of objects, people, or even in discourse itself (see pp. 61-62). FWs provide a space for imaginations and interpretations of *actions*, as well as, a space of authorship, i.e. for the 'dialogical' authoring of people's identities (referenced to Bakhtin, see p. 49).

Figured worlds take shape within and grant shape to the coproduction of activities, discourses, performances, and artifacts. A figured world is peopled by the figures,

characters, and types who carry out its tasks and who also have styles of interacting within, distinguishable perspectives on, and orientations toward it (p. 51).

In Holland et al. the theoretical constructs of the FW are contextualized through various case studies, such as the undergraduate dating game in the US, which Holland et al. refer to as the 'world of romance' (p. 98) and later on as the 'Sexual Auction Block' (p. 144):

Sensitive to her desires, he shows his affection by treating her well: he buys things for her, takes her places she likes, and shows that he appreciates her and appreciates her uniqueness as a person. She in turn shows her affection and interest and allows the relationship to become more intimate. This standard scenario also presupposes the motives or purposes of such relationships: The relationship provides intimacy for both the man and the woman. The relationship validates the attractiveness of both the man and the woman (p. 53).

We draw on a selected few examples of women's 'identifications with the culturally figured world of romance' (p. 115) just sufficiently to contextualize our arguments throughout this paper. For example, our own interpretation of two specific case studies drawn from the Sexual Auction Block Karla and Susan:

- Karla identified with this FW of romance, but rejected her former teacher's romantic advances towards her.
- On the other hand, Susan resisted and protested against the typical enactments of the romantic student culture and, thus, dis-identified with the FW of romance to a greater extent than Karla.

Holland et al. argue that the women presented above had differential experiences within the FW of undergraduate romance based on their expertise in and identification with it. Where necessary, we explore this account in more depth in the main part of the paper.

### **Figured World(s) and field(s) - 'insufficiently local'**

In this section, firstly, we will critically reflect on Holland et al.'s appropriation of Bourdieu's concept of field vis-à-vis FWs and the notion of localism. In the previous section, we have presented an understanding of FWs in terms of their social and cultural construction. But a FW is also structured in the form of a hierarchy of positions of power, and it is here that Holland et al. make use of the term 'field' (p. 58) acknowledging

## Bourdieu's concept as an analytical tool that adds another layer of understanding to FWs in terms of power relations

Fields are not absolutely autonomous, for they subsist in what Bourdieu calls the field of power, which is itself an aspect of class relations. They are instead relatively autonomous, for the relationship any field has to other fields or to the field of power is refracted by the mode of cultural production specific to the field. In this sense the field is a game like the games Vygotsky described. Bourdieu further intended the concept to be a kind of translation of "structure" that would not stand apart from persons. A field is "structure-in-practice," and as such is a world of relationships, of social positions defined only against one another (Bourdieu 1985a). It is also a peopled world; its positions, which are producers as well as products, are also social personages. Field thus closely parallels our notion of figured world and elucidates our later emphasis on positionality...' (p. 58).

Clearly, FWs are like fields. However, Holland et al. argue that analytically a FW adds a dimension of localism (see 'localized figured worlds' on p. 128), which Bourdieu's concept of field lacks:

Had Bourdieu mediated his understanding through "figured world" instead of "field," he would have told us more about the discourses of academia and the cultural constructions that constituted the familiar aspects of academic life... We learn much from *Homo Academicus* about the interrelations of scholars and institutions in France according to their relative prestige and influence; we learn much less about the day-to-day content of activity— and the ways positions of prestige play out locally—for the vast number of academics (p. 59).

Holland et al. suggest that Bourdieu's perspective pays too little attention to 'the ways positions of prestige play out locally' (p. 58). Holland et al. also suggest that if Bourdieu had taken a FW approach, this would have led him to a more detailed discussion of the local practices in the fields he studied with richer descriptions of how everyday folks experienced these practices. Thus the authors say Bourdieu in (e.g. *Homo Academicus*) (i) misses the local details of discourse and practice; and (ii) focuses on the dominant *elite* players of the French Education System at the expense of the *everyday* folks. At the same time, nevertheless, the authors acknowledge that 'a field analysis is relevant to any figured world' (p. 59). Here power is defined by relations between 'positions' in the field that Holland et al. associate with 'positional identities', that is, 'aspects that have to do with one's position relative to socially identified others, one's sense of social place, and entitlement' (p. 125).

We can argue that this characterization of Bourdieu's work draws perhaps a little too much from some of his sociology (e.g. *Homo Academicus*). It is perhaps rather unfair in regards to much of his other



work. For example, in Bourdieu's studies of life in *The Algerians* (1962) or in the housing market in 1960s France (Bourdieu, 2005) or later in the *Weight of the world* (Bourdieu et al., 1999) the detail of his ethnography is at least as elaborate and concerned with the lived experience and discourses of just plain folks as anything in typical anthropologies.

However, this is not the main point. What is more important, we will argue, is that the FWs notion of positional identity implicitly assumes the need to be *locally* mediated and *particular* at the expense of the analysis of the wider field of power in relation to the power structure of their FW.

Bourdieu's concept of field was mainly developed in his later writings. It was left unmentioned as such in his most cited theoretical text *The outline of a theory of practice* (1977), and only mentioned twice in *Logic of practice* (1990, see p. 58 & pp. 66 - 68). Nevertheless, there are indirect references in the *Logic of practice* to the structure of a field and how that relates to the reproduction of society, especially, in his case study of the Kabyle society. Holland et al. (op cit.) cite Bourdieu's book *The field of cultural production* (1993) in order to elaborate his notion of field. Indeed in this book, a collection of essays on literature and art, Bourdieu focuses predominantly on locating the cultural fields within the field of power, emphasizing structural effects of the field. But he does not do so at the expense of the local. His main point is to relate the field of power to the local literary field and habitus, explicitly revealing how local power structures refract the social domination in society as a whole (see Bourdieu, 1993, chapter 5).

The truth is, thus, that Bourdieu's approach (in *Homo academicus*, 1988) and methodology is almost always concerned with *explanation of power relations* in a given cultural field rather than with its description per se, or a description of its effects. He sees each cultural field as a particular realization of, or cultural *refraction* into, the local cultural space (at a particular time and space, i.e. a moment in history) of the field of power. Here, the field of power refers to the objective socio-economic system of production-and-consumption (and distribution and exchange) that allows the dominant classes to oppress the dominated. It is always the relation between the local instantiation of dominance in a cultural field and the field of power as a whole, which Bourdieu argues reveals the *objective* relations of dominance in the local.

A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative)

power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 40-41).

It is because the objective truth in cultural fields is most often obscured, or *misrecognized* by the particulars of the locale and its cultural arbitrary that his project is radical and potentially transformative as a reflexive/critical sociology (see also Bourdieu, 2008). For example, the marriage strategy in the Kabyle society serves an outward purpose of ensuring reproduction of lineage. At the same time, this strategy also has the underlying hidden agenda of ensuring integrity of patrimony. As such, it preserves and even grows symbolic, collectively recognized prestige, and material capital (in other words power in the form of honor and dowry that is brought into the groom's family by the woman; see Bourdieu, 1990). Hence, marriage unions are arranged according to the symbolic and material capital both families possess and the position they hold in society or positions held in the field, which then enable such exchanges to take place. But this *objective truth* is misrecognized. It is only through a Bourdieusian analysis that one looks beyond the day-to-day and local experiences, such as the arbitrary beauty capital or *attractiveness* of a girl that one is able to see how the wider social relations get refracted into this local world. This relation is misrecognized, particularly in the Kabyle example, because 'the earliest learning experiences, reinforced by all subsequent social experiences, tended to shape schemes of perception and appreciation, in a word, *tastes*, which were applied to potential partners as to other things: and even without any direct economic or social calculation these tastes tended to rule out misalliances' (p. 160). Hence the groom's and bride's family were pre-disposed to form alliances in such a way that the families prestigious positions in society were reproduced, maintained and further enhanced from one generation to another without the (need for any) conscious aim of doing so. We argue that this process of misrecognition is a missing element in the FWs theory. There is a danger that by focusing on the local experience of practice one loses sight of the objective social relations, i.e. power relations that ultimately secure the domination of the oppressed.

Arguably, FWs theory has presented in the world of romance a symmetrical relation between male and female, where the male is not necessarily the dominant force (if the man's capital is less than the woman's) even though the type of capital relevant to the man and woman is asymmetric:

If the man's attractiveness or prestige is less than the woman's, he compensates by treating her especially well. If the woman's attractiveness is the lower of the two,

she compensates by being satisfied with less good treatment from the man (Holland et al., 1998, p. 53).

Bourdieu might have, thus, argued that the FWs theory pays insufficient regard to this asymmetry and its roots in the wider Field of Power. The woman's attractiveness is partly constituted by 'beauty' capital. Holland et al. do reference the attribution to attractiveness as a form of symbolic capital and symbolic violence (i.e. a form of misrecognized gender domination women endure in this Figured World, see pp. 157/158). However, in the FWs theory it is not quite made explicit and clear whether (and in what sense) the various groups of women on the Sexual Auction Block constitute a dominant or dominated group, and how (if at all) this relates to the wider socio-political and economic relations in society. Of course the gender inequalities are obvious and Holland et al.'s view of *withdrawing from the game* is implicit. But if they were to take Bourdieu's global perspective more seriously then they would have sought the root of the local symbolic violence in the wider field of power, i.e. in the forms of the patriarchal society that support these asymmetries. In Bourdieu's analysis, it is not just that women are dominated by men, but both may suffer an asymmetric symbolic violence in an arbitrary dating culture that refracts the patriarchal field of power in capitalist society at large.

Bourdieu makes a relevant argument in the book *Masculine domination* (Bourdieu, 2000b) that any cultural approach to gendered symbolic violence has to manage the problem of *blaming the victim*, wherein the power and status of the male and female relation is defined by the rules of the gift-exchange economy. By (essentially) playing the game and misrecognizing the dominant/dominated positions endowed upon the male/female as a result of this gift exchange economy, women are complicit in re-producing their own domination. Here the woman's perceptions and schemes of thought are products of the historic sexual division of labor. In order to break away from this 'eternal' reproduction and stratification of society as mediated by gender, Bourdieu argues one has to become aware of (and objectify) one's own subjective recognition of the woman's role. From Bourdieu's point of view, we argue that in the case of the Sexual Auction Block, the *objective* role of men disappears from the account because it is misrecognized in the local, that is, it is described in terms of the local, which hides the raw facts of patriarchy in the field of power at large. We have acknowledged that Holland et al. explore local forms of female subjugation in the world of romance through the assertion of the concept of symbolic capital as a form of attractiveness, leading to agentic actions in cases of women who are able to reflect upon their dominated positioning and formulate a response. However, we claim

Bourdieu might add to this understanding: he might argue that this local instantiation of power should be understood in terms of the wider field of power, situating attractiveness as *attractiveness* to, and for, men-in-power.

In summary, we agree with Holland et al. that Bourdieu's theory can indeed be seen as a cultural sociology of *domination*. We argue that to fully understand power it is essential to understand this sociology. At the same time, we do not intend to imply reductionist causation here. Indeed, Bourdieu (in his interview with Wacquant) has argued that '...after controlling for economic position and social origin, students from more cultured families not only have higher rates of academic success but exhibit different modes and patterns of cultural consumption and expression in a wide gamut of domains...' (Bourdieu in Wacquant, 1996, p. 160). Indeed, this relative local autonomy is an important element in the misrecognition of the objective sources of power relations. We also acknowledge that structural effects of power may not be the central focus of Holland et al.'s project and that agency and cultural production in the form of narrativization might take analytical primacy in FWs.

However, recognizing this, we think Bourdieu might say their FW analysis is *too* local, or localized at the expense of the necessary global linkages. Adding analyses of such linkages might reveal the sources of domination, which might help us to see local mediations of domination in this important, wider context. Thus, arguably FWs and Bourdieu's concept of field of power are compatible here. Adding this relatively downplayed element can then help us to understand how arbitrary power relations impact on (for example) world making, transformation and agency.

### **The role of hysteresis in the 'too embodied' habitus**

So far we have argued for the significance of unraveling the structural effects of the field of power in local field(s) by making global linkages to the field of power in order to fully understand the (sometimes) hidden and misrecognized power relations in a FW. For example, the patriarchal relations are masked by *attractiveness* as a form of symbolic capital in the world of romance, or the Kabyle marriage market. In this section, we will go on to exhibit the 'hysteresis effect' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 78) and the '*field of opinion*, the locus of the confrontation of the competing discourses' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 168). We will also refer to his other thinking tools to unravel the misrecognition of power relations. We unpack the 'field of opinion' as predicated on the local field's *hidden* belief system, that is, the *doxa*, its defense via the *orthodoxa* and alternative opinions in the *heterodoxa* that can challenge orthodoxy. We argue this is relevant to

Holland et al.'s criticism of the habitus as being too embodied and not malleable to change in one's lifetime. More significantly, we do so because the field of opinion is at the heart of Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, which he claims is the source of his criticality. We will argue that the *embodied* habitus engages the symbolic in discursive practice and that these can lead to new, heterodox recognitions and representations. This will help us to, for example, understand the varying responses of the women discomfited on the Sexual Auction Block.

We refer back to the case of Della and Karla: both women are positioned in the figured world of romance as being *romantic types*. Della ignored her 'professor's attempt to recast her as other than a student' (p. 137), but, as Holland et al. note, did not go further in her act of resistance. Similarly, Karla too ignored the advances of a former teacher for a while, but then actively refused and rejected them, thereby also rejecting the characterization of her as a romantic type *Figure*, i.e., as an intellectual who should not care about the married status of a lover. Evidently, Karla was much more or perhaps contrastingly, differently agentic in her actions. This was also reflected in her refusal of her boyfriend's treatment of her during a spell of illness. As such Karla rejected her position as a dominated Figure in this gender relation, but 'instead created positions she liked' (p. 137). According to Holland et al. Karla developed 'a "sense" (in Bourdieu's terms) of... [her] world, an expertise in the use of cultural artifacts, that may come to re-mediate' (p. 137) her own position in this FW. Therefore, according to the FWs theory, Karla was enacting a form of agency by re-figuring herself (i.e. developing her figurative identity anew) in the world of romance and other FWs too. This participation in the world of romance is also influenced by her 'social situation(s) and histor[y]' (p. 111), i.e. her positional identity, more widely.

According to the FWs theory, here, positional identities are perceived as a manifestation of 'day-to-day and on the ground relations of power' (p. 127) and can be seen as mediated by social categories of divisions (such as gender, class, ethnicity, etc.), hence, granting access to privileges in varying degrees. The FWs theory explicitly states that 'positional identities inhabit the landscape of Bourdieu's habitus' (p. 138), but argue Bourdieu's concept of habitus is not sufficient to explore the symbolic, figurative aspects of identity, being too embodied rather than semiotic:

In Bourdieu's work, identity seems principally embodied; he pays much less attention to objectifications of identity or self-understandings (Holland et al., 1998, p. 278).

We must defend Bourdieu in part from this accusation. First, for

Bourdieu, habitus is *not* identity, and these two concepts must not be confused. His work on *Language and symbolic power* (1991) makes clear that he sees a role for (social) identification, the formation of groups, nominalization through language, categorizations, symbolic capital and its centrality in political struggles. All these implicate the symbolic and are not reducible to his concept of habitus. Also, Bourdieu mediates these categorizations *symbolically* in the field of opinion, i.e. in discourses of orthodoxa, heterodoxa and hysteresis. Additionally, these categorizations are also implicated in symbolic capital, in the way language, nominalization, etc. serve as means of recognition and misrecognition in a field, (see Bourdieu, 1991; also for our account of this see Williams & Choudry, 2016).

Schemes of thought and perception can produce the objectivity that they [i.e. doxic belief] do produce only by producing misrecognition of the limits of the cognition that they make possible, thereby founding immediate adherence, in the doxic mode, to the world of tradition experienced as a "natural world" and taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164).

Bourdieu uses an analogue of a game to elaborate symbolic power/capital: 'players are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief (*doxa*) in the game and its stakes; they grant these a recognition that escapes questioning' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1996, p. 98). In other words, playing the game requires an implicit and unspoken acceptance of its purpose and rules. When the *doxa* is specifically defended, it produces 'orthodoxy' (Bourdieu 1977, p. 169), which may be verbalized and hence by entering the discourse can more readily be negated. In contrast to orthodoxy, Bourdieu refers to heterodoxy as negations that may oppose or challenge orthodoxy, and so the game of the field and its *doxa*.

Thus, *sustained agentive action* (as in Karla's case) can be seen as being brought about when an agent has entered a discourse of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, where a choice can be made. Hence, we argue Bourdieu's notions of *doxa*, *orthodoxa*, and *heterodoxa* provide a means to understand Karla's 'identity in practice' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 270), in particular how she is able to make a choice and reject the orthodoxy that she has voiced and talked through. Thus, we argue that the field of opinion directly addresses Holland et al.'s criticism of habitus.

For example in the Sexual Auction Block case study, Holland et al. state 'the women's individual social situations and histories influenced their varying degrees of recruitment to this figured world' (p. 110). Cylene 'seemed to entertain the possibility that a characterization of her as a

romantic type was true' (p. 108) and readily accepted that she needed a boyfriend/husband who could provide her with many material possessions. In another example, however, Susan rejected this particular FW:

Susan spent much time thinking about the sort of life she wanted to have. Her dilemma seemed to be a choice between becoming a "socialite" and becoming a "hippie." She was inclined to reject the upwardly mobile, upper-middle-class lifestyle that she felt pressured—perhaps by her family—to embrace. This struggle was related to her ambivalence about her studies and about romantic relationships (p. 109).

Holland et al. evaluate Susan's rejection and distancing from figures in that particular FW (of romance) as an evaluation of her own positioning in relation to her position in other FWs (such as her education) as well as in her limited expertise in this FW of romance. We argue if Holland et al. would have used the tools of the field of opinion, i.e. discursive contradictions between orthodoxy (which defends the status quo hidden in the doxa) and heterodoxy, they could have characterized Susan's voice as heterodoxy. Bourdieu might have argued that, in refusing to play the game of this field (i.e. romance), and in questioning what is at stake in the wider field (i.e. social mobility), there is implicit a challenge to class dominance (in the global field of power). Arguably such a move could be perceived as re-classification of what is symbolized within the field and, therefore, a restructuring the field itself.

Although in her second year at the college/university, Susan tries to re-enter this field of romance and tries to identify with her friends' romantic practices and talk, she has limited success. In her own words, 'it's pretty funny, all my friends are like: Go talk to the guy, Susan. Let's go talk to him. I just can't' (p. 114). Years later (when Susan was interviewed again) she was much more confident in the world of romance. We argue that Susan's habitus has over time changed creating a lag between the habitus and the field itself, which Bourdieu refers to as the hysteresis effect. Thus, the *hysteresis effect* is the 'lag in adaptation and counter-adaptive mismatch', for example, 'when old people quixotically cling to dispositions that are out of place and out of time; or when the dispositions of an agent rising, or falling, in the social structure' (Bourdieu, 2005, pp. 213-214). It is this particular mismatch that then creates a window of opportunity for new perceptions, and new positions to be taken, or for old dispositions to prevail (e.g. for Susan to become a 'socialite' just like her friends). Indeed, a habitus is not developed by experience in one field alone.

Holland et al. argue that any such change or enactment of agency in Bourdieu's theory would only take effect and 'make a difference to the habitus of the next generation' (p. 45). Holland et al. make a serious accusation when they suggest that Bourdieu's notion of agency is limited by the essentially inter-generational time lag in changing habitus. It is true that Bourdieu argues that habitus is shaped primarily in the early years of life and built on successively thereafter. But although the habitus is 'relatively persistent', it is not 'entirely unchangeable' (p. 214), i.e. a 'habitus changes constantly in response to new experiences' (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 161). Bourdieu's key argument pertaining to change in habitus here lies in 'confrontation of the conditions of actualization of the habitus different from those in which they were produced', which can happen as a result of the 'multiplicity of intra- and intergenerational movements of ascent and decline' (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 161).

Thus, arguably, change within one's lifetime, as well as, over lifetimes through critical reflection at a time of heightened consciousness (possibly caused by hysteresis) as manifested in discourses is at the heart of Bourdieu's criticality and potentially a missing element in the theory of FWs characterization of Bourdieu. We conclude that reflection on the orthodoxa that gives rise to possible alternatives in heterodoxa (which is stimulated by habitus-field mismatches such as in hysteresis effects) can do some of the work Holland et al. seek in FWs.

## **Conclusion**

We now conclude our analysis by reminding the reader that we are examining Holland et al. because of their use of Bourdieu's theory with CHAT (i.e. mainly Vygotsky, Leont'ev and Bakhtin) to form their own theoretical synthesis. We did so in order to bring together the structural relations of power (e.g. social reproduction of class inequality) with the local cultures of practice and identity (e.g. disengagement from education).

We have argued that in the theory of FWs more attention needs to be given to the linkages of the local FW with a class analysis in the global field of power, in order to truly understand and unravel the local objective relations between actors and their practices in these 'local' fields.

We appreciate how the FW theory adopts Bourdieu and through that brings in habitus, field and symbolic capital. However we have shown how important uses of Bourdieu not only include exposure of the objective linkages to the wider field of power, but also hysteresis, and the local field's doxa, with its associated field of opinion. We argue that the



Bourdieuian sociological analysis opens up new vistas for the local field of opinion, exposing the local orthodoxy as a misrecognition, and offering potentially a heterodox, radical critique. It is radical because it associates local misrecognitions in homology with all those in other fields where power is similarly misrecognized. The *lads* that disengaged from education according to Willis's (1977) account might have more in common with the women undergraduates on the sexual auction block than they recognize. According to Bourdieu's sociology our task is to expose this through objective analysis of their linkages with power or capital.

Thus, we seek our own synthesis of CHAT and Bourdieu by taking on board these two main theses. First, we highlight the importance of a Bourdieuian type of analysis of local positioning in a cultural field power as being dialectically caused by the wider Field of Power in society at large. Thus the hidden misrecognized objective truth of the local structure of power in the field of romance, or the field of education, must be understood by virtue of their relation to their functioning in reproduction of power in the capitalist system as a whole (see Williams, 2012). The day to day, local experiences (in symbolic forms as *attractiveness*, or educational *accreditation*) takes many forms that obscure this truth, so that players in the game normally misrecognize the doxa and are willing to play the game.

But second, on occasions when hysteresis occurs, or generally when the habitus mismatches the field, a discomfort may arise. For example, schooling *is not for the likes of us*. Some need to defend the doxa may arise. For example, the exam system is *equitable*. Others may feel the need to critique the orthodoxy. Thus, a field of opinion may open up in which re-classifications may occur. Here at last is the role of reflexive sociology in Bourdieu. The social analysis of the local as a refraction of global oppression by a social scientist may enter the field of opinion and argue that, for instance, schooling offers to the oppressed classes only the norms of failure (e.g. see Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; or Williams & Choudry, 2016).

Indeed we suggest that the interviews with the research team that raised the questions about Karla's and other students' identities made a (perhaps small) contribution to the construction of a field of opinion, whether by design or not. Attending to this kind of impact of research on the participants and so potentially on wider society would seem to be one of the conclusions we draw from our synthesis. Thus, the Bourdieuian synthesis we seek with CHAT would ask how the particular positional structures here are dialectically caused by the patriarchal structure of

power that it serves to reproduce. This, we find, is a question not directly addressed in the FW anthropology. However, when Holland et al. go to Bakhtin's notion of dialogism and self-authoring, they may allow for a wide array of imaginative resources that may not be reducible to negation of orthodoxy. This possibility is one that might provide a richer account of resistance of the doxa than Bourdieu offers. We think in this respect Holland et al.'s notions of world making and self-authoring through dialogism goes beyond Bourdieu. A fuller discussion of these issues goes beyond the scope of this paper (but is discussed to some extent in Williams and Ryan, 2014).

Bourdieu does well to situate the work of the reflexive sociologist in the field of opinion as an activist. He himself seems to do so in the *Weight of the world* (Bourdieu et al., 1999). Note that the central role of the social scientist so conceived is to cut through the misrecognition in the local, to point out the homologues in the local forms of oppression, to intellectually unite all the oppressed in capitalist society as a whole. This is really a re-recognition that *we are (almost) all in it together*.

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