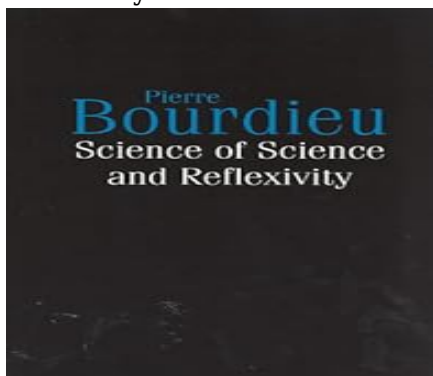


Science of Science and Reflexivity By Pierre Bourdieu When he died in 2002 he was considered to be a thinker on a par with Foucault Barthes and Lacan—a public intellectual as influential to his generation as Sartre was to his. In this posthumous work Bourdieu declares that science is in danger of becoming a handmaiden to biotechnology medicine genetic engineering and military research—that it risks falling under the control of industrial corporations that seek to exploit it for monopolies and profit. Bourdieu's goals in *Science of Science and Reflexivity* are to identify the social conditions in which science develops in order to reclaim its objectivity and to rescue it from relativism and the forces that might exploit it. In the grand tradition of scientific reflections on science Bourdieu provides a sociological analysis of the discipline as something capable of producing transhistorical truths; he presents an incisive critique of the main currents in the study of science throughout the past half century; and he offers a spirited defense of science against encroaching political and economic forces. A masterful summation of the principles underlying Bourdieu's oeuvre and a memoir of his own scientific journey *Science of Science and Reflexivity* is a capstone to one of the most important and prodigious careers in the field of sociology. *Science of Science and Reflexivity*



Bourdieu pioneered investigative frameworks and terminologies such as cultural social and symbolic capital and the concepts of habitus field or location and symbolic violence to reveal the dynamics of power relations in social life. He built upon the theories of Ludwig Wittgenstein Maurice Merleau Ponty Edmund Husserl Georges Canguilhem Karl Marx Gaston Bachelard Max Weber Émile Durkheim Erwin Panofsky and Marcel Mauss. Bourdieu rejected the ide Bourdieu pioneered investigative frameworks and terminologies such as cultural social and symbolic capital and the concepts of habitus field or location and symbolic violence to reveal the dynamics of power relations in social life. He built upon the theories of Ludwig Wittgenstein Maurice Merleau Ponty Edmund Husserl Georges Canguilhem Karl Marx Gaston Bachelard Max Weber Émile Durkheim Erwin Panofsky and Marcel Mauss. His argument is put forward by an original combination of social theory and data from surveys photographs and interviews in an attempt to reconcile difficulties such as how to understand the subject within objective structures. {site_link} This is a collection of Bourdieu's final cycle of lectures at the Collège de France where he concerns himself with science and with the appropriate way of conducting the sociology of science. who develop an a priori account of how science should rationally be done) and relativists on the other (that is Bourdieu's own hyperbole by which he means strong program sociology the 'social history of science' and especially his bête noire ethnomethodology à la Latour). Bourdieu rejects both approaches and calls upon his usual field theory to propose a third way which he promise to both retain the special epistemological status of science while acknowledging its historicity and social conditioning. The scientific field for Bourdieu has achieved a very high level of autonomy which means that its specific rules are largely independent from the pressures of politics economy or religion. This is developed in considerable detail using Bourdieu's own lovingly polished jargon and opens up interesting vista regarding the topology of the field explaining in particular the affinities between subaltern positions (i. However Bourdieu both rejects the ontological autonomy of science (for him its relative autonomy is achieved through social organisation not through the perfect application of logic or mathematisation) and its political character (according to Bourdieu from the scientist's pov competition for resources takes

the form of an actual pursuit of objectivity) - the end result is a somewhat bastardized theory which does not pronounce itself too precisely on the key conflict between methodologists and sociologists namely how much does material reality conditions the outcome of scientific production. It is unclear whether Bourdieu self-consciously avoid the subject because it would be too specific for lectures or because it is out of his depth or because he insists on treating social sciences and hard sciences together or because he thinks it is just not all that important perhaps because such material conditioning of science pales in the face of all the social conditioning. Add to this that he indulges in an unsightly pummeling of Latour (there is room for a paper on Bourdieu's use of 'radical chic') and his customary theoretical nationalism (historical rationalism - meaning Bachelard Canguilhem and Vuillemin did it all before it was cool) and the book seem to spread Bourdieu's sociological marmelade rather thin. This is developed by Dick Pels in the more recent 'Unhastening Science' on the basis of which more concrete prescriptions are made for the protection of scientific autonomy in the face of a changing status for research and for education. To the extent that the disciplines philosophy spawned want to survive the transition to the new era they are compelled in becoming their own metadisciplines to return in part to the status of philosophy.) Less understandable is that seventy years after Godel neither the full formal difficulty of the problem nor the concrete advances that have been made on it over the last century shine through clearly in Bourdieu's text. It's a failing because without such clarification we have no way of applying his various pronouncements to various moments of inquiry that is of knowing which is appropriate to which moment of inquiry. Is this the moment to push on with the march of understanding or is this the moment to remember that the sociologist is embedded in the object s/he objectifies?) But let me break off the critical generalizing here and engage instead in a little direct if fictional dialogue. I did not do so out of some kind of positivistic scientism as some may think or pretend to think but because exaltation of the 'difference' of the social sciences is often no more than a way of decreeing the impossibility of a scientific understanding of their object. (And this I find absolutely unjustifiable: why postulate that certain things are unknowable and moreover do so a priori before any experience?)me: If this is indeed what they do then it is certainly unjustifiable. For one thing the definiteness of a certain thing in the subject of the proposition is already in contradiction with the predicate of unknowability even disregarding the additional contradiction that would take an unknowable contra Kant as an object of possible experience. Rather than allowing you a rational-empirical (first-order) science on the model of the field they've insisted on an equally hybrid - but still first-order - paradoxical science or non-science. Something that seems particularly backwards to me - Bourdieu: [T]he more autonomous a science is the more as Bachelard observed it tends to be nothing less than the site of a permanent revolution but one which is increasingly devoid of political or religious implications. me: This purity from social context on which the truth of the thesis depends could only be achieved in the case of pure mathematics and it's precisely there that it's completely false. Not having done the work to bridge the gap between symbolisms that makes it look as though it's about something else is not the same as having earned the right to speak of incommensurable language games or with more apparent modesty of fields which inasmuch as they are fields of knowledge still repeats the error of the Aristotelian epoch: placing the ontological pivot in the middle between eidos and chora immobilizing thought. On a more upbeat note - Bourdieu: It is worth reflecting on such use of the opposition old/new which is doubtless one of the obstacles to the progress of science especially social science: sociology suffers greatly from the fact that the pursuit of distinction at any price which prevails in certain states of the literary field encourages an artificial emphasis on differences and prevents or delays the initial accumulation in a common paradigm - everything endlessly restarts from zero - and the establishment of strong stable models. This is seen in particular in the use made of Kuhn's concept of the paradigm: any sociologist who feels so inclined will declare himself the bearer of a 'new paradigm' a 'new' ultimate theory of the world. In fine I would sooner call Bourdieu's lectures a sketch of a second-order sociology than a truly reflexive sociology one that iterates the ontological commitments of the first-order theory acknowledging the paradoxes of doing so but providing no positive apparatus for displacing them. It's to recognize the necessity of

reflection but to complete the reflection in an imaginary way without inquiring (as metalogic already does) into what actually happens at the point of reflection (an inquiry however which has more to do with pure ontology i. Bourdieu seems preoccupied by and certainly defensive about social science as torn between a certain continental status or lack of it as the country bumpkin cousin of philosophy or the insufficiently empirical pretender to the hallowed halls of real science:

Over the last four decades the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu produced one of the most imaginative and subtle bodies of social theory of the postwar era, *Science of Science and Reflexivity* will be welcomed as a companion volume to Bourdieu's now seminal *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*: The line between pure and applied science therefore must be subjected to intense theoretical scrutiny, His work emphasized the role of practice and embodiment or forms in social dynamics and worldview construction often in opposition to universalized Western philosophical traditions, A notable influence on Bourdieu was Blaise Pascal after whom Bourdieu titled his *Pascalian Meditations*: His work emphasized the role of practice and embodiment or forms in social dynamics and worldview construction often in opposition to universalized Western philosophical traditions. A notable influence on Bourdieu was Blaise Pascal after whom Bourdieu titled his *Pascalian Meditations*: Bourdieu rejected the idea of the intellectual prophet or the total intellectual as embodied by Sartre. His best known book is *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* in which he argues that judgments of taste are related to social position. In the process he tried to reconcile the influences of both external social structures and subjective experience on the individual (see structure and agency), In this particular discipline despite Bourdieu's immense prestige the book was rather poorly received and it is easy to see why. The field is roughly divided between methodologists on the one hand (positivists analytics popperians etc. That is very ambitious and it seems no one was too happy with the result: This high autonomy is the warrant of its 'objectivity' and is in turn recognised by other fields which does not stop them from trying to influence scientists, Such autonomy is mainly a consequence of the peculiar form of internal competition which defines the field: the rewards (positions awards credit etc.) specific to the field are assigned to actors (scientists) who shine by following the rules specific to the field. This means that competition among the actors reinforces commitment to the field's autonomous values, However perhaps less as an account of the actual functioning of the field and more as a prescription of what science should be it is very interesting, The core idea that competition within an autonomous field tend to reinforce its autonomy is very interesting, Bourdieu's book on its own is a disappointment but with Pels he offers important insights. T_ This style is not easy to penetrate at all: what's wrong with post-war french intellectual anyway??p: If you want to get to know Bourdieu this book is quite an ideal: It shows how his central concept work (habitus capital field) and why his concerning on reflexivity and contextualisation is important: 168 Si ahora reviso la fecha en la que comencé a leerlo y parece que se me hizo largo. Es un libro fascinante por momentos me resultó complejo fue lenta la lectura y hay capítulo que debí leer un par de veces pero es atrapante desde el inicio: Comienza presentando las preguntas que acompañan constantemente a las ciencias sociales y a la construcción teórica dentro de las mismas y realmente es denso pero muy estimulante. 168 [very rough remarks in progress as of 7/12] To say the least it's indicative, There's a reflexive (re)turn underway so far largely unthematized that separates us at the beginning of the new century from the virulent anti-dialecticism of the last one. It exceeds the institutional boundaries of philosophy at the same time that it serves as the engine again unremarked of the remarked-upon return of philosophy: Today the latter is the theory of reflexivity which for good metalogical reasons cannot be as Socrates already points out in *Charmides* a discipline among others. And here is another symptom and confirmation of the thesis of the reflexive turn from an unexpected quarter: To what does Pierre Bourdieu devote his final course at the Collège de France his swan song as a lecturer and teacher? [T]o the subject of science: And since it is always also a scientist a sociologist that Bourdieu aims to speak this means as his title openly acknowledges that reflexivity itself must again become a theme, Once again thought wrestles with the problematic identity of form and

content posited and blocked by the act of reflection this self-nominating self-delimiting drive, That this obligation is only partially discharged is understandable, The problem of what the itself itself might be taxes Plato's intellect in Alcibiades and Charmides: (And he didn't have the dead weight of Aristotle's obfuscation of the problem to throw off. It makes the interview I had with the philosophy department's library liaison during the first week of grad school seem like comedic prophecy: Bourdieu? Badiou: In contrast with Badiou - but troublingly very much like Quentin Meillassoux's recent release - the engagement with reflexivity remains frustratingly topical in this text. Perhaps we should have been warned by a second glance at the title: science of science is just a first approximation of what reflexivity might be, Perhaps this formula would better still be described as the essential negation of reflexivity the one thing that we can be sure it isn't: He juxtaposes warnings reminders cautions each of which performs a valuable moment without clarifying the structure of reflexivity itself: This is not a failing because of some neo-Hegelian desire for totalization, I have constantly been thinking of the social sciences of which I have in the past denied the particularity, I am thinking for example of a book by Adolf Grunbaum (1984) which describes the attempts by some philosophers Habermas Ricoeur etc: I have to say that I don't recognize any serious philosophers in this hasty portrait: But I agree that your named opponents are to blame as well, And they are of course to blame if they misanalyze the metalogic of their own critique taking the referent of the limit of science as a term rather than a place, The latter tendency can be only illicit quantifier shift regarded metalogically and culturally - religion: The purity functions in just the other way as completely general ontology as relevance itself: We recognize the situation from what gets called second-order logic.) Update in more accessible language? Basically PB sees that there's a hole in sociological knowledge corresponding to the categories of sociological investigation: But instead of taking on the conceptual problem of the hole as such and asking whether e: it points to a different relation of theory and praxis he ultimately just recommends plugging the hole with more data: His reflexive sociology would have metadata but not a true metalogic: 168 If you've read Bourdieu before and found him to be useful or interesting don't skip on this slim volume of lectures. To be sure he's cranky here but he also provides a wonderful overview of his own personal history in the larger history of sociology in France, Worth it for his discussion of his own positionings in his field in the last chapter: 168 I <3 Bourdieu tout court! Une analyse intéressante de ce qui est le champ scientifique l'habitus et le capital (social symbolique et autre. Something of a bastard child be seems to sigh but one which may one day grow beefy and kick sand in the faces of those who bullied it. Science thus endangered can become detrimental to mankind.e. pseudoscience) and heteronomous forces (i.e. political ideologies). No wonder then that he got the cold shoulder. 168 Frink' complicated.s. Forget Distinction. You mean Pierre Bourdieu. No I mean Alain Badiou. Bourdieu skirts the main theoretical problem though. (E.g. Bourdieu: In raising the problem of knowledge . to set a priori limits to these sciences.me: Word.e. mathematics than empiricism.g. If you don't know what a cleft habitus is you should.)qui le structurent. 168 A tough read which I could only skim. Not least nasty M. Foucault. But I may have formed the wrong impression. 168.