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Literary Field and the Question of Method – Revisited

Abstract

Field theory is one of the most efficient and influential analytical schemes in the critical sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, which he consistently developed in his model of literary field. The analytical reliability of the model derives from the way in which Bourdieu combines the structural category of “field” with the phenomenological categories of “doxa” and “habitus”. This article argues that Bourdieu’s selective application of the two phenomenological categories produces a static structural model of literary field where all processes are explained in causal and deterministic terms. The article further seeks to present an alternative reading of the same categories within a discursive model where the processes in literary field and the motivations of its agents are driven by field’s discourses rather than by its rigid structures.

Keywords

Field theory; Literary sociology; Literary history; Husserlian phenomenology; Collective identity; Collective memory; Critical sociology

This article will analyze key categories in the literary sociology of Pierre Bourdieu—literary field, literary doxa, and habitus—and will discuss how they enhance and confine sociological understandings of literary worlds. Bourdieu’s theoretical apparatus and his phenomenological insights about literary field have inspired new directions in the sociology of literature and have also influenced cross-disciplinary studies. Many of them use these categories either as explicit analytical concepts¹ or they combine them with the studies of the networks of production, reception, or distribution of the literary texts and the organization of these processes in literary field.² With regard to phenomenological contributions of Pierre Bourdieu to

¹ Gisele Sapiro has further enhanced Bourdieu’s empirical research of the autonomy of literary field by analyzing its recent depoliticization, as well as the relationships between the French literary field and the French state or literary market. Gisele Sapiro, “The literary field between the state and the market”, *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts*. Vol. 31, No. 5, 6 (2003), or “Forms of politicization in the French literary field”, *Theory and Society*. Vol. 32, No. 5, 6 (2003). Also studies of the German literary field(s) significantly draw from Bourdieu’s concept of literary field or habitus. See Markus Joch and Norbert Christian Wolf. *Text und Feld*, Niemeyer: Tübingen, 2005, or Sabine Cofalla: “Elitewechsel im literarischen Feld nach 1945. Eine soziologische Verortung der Gruppe 47”, ed. Parkes Stuart and John J. White, “The Gruppe 47 Fifty Years on: A Re-appraisal of its Literary and Political Significance”, *German Monitor*. (London: Rodopi, 1999) No.45, 244-262.

² Some schools in the sociology of literature combine Bourdieu’s theory of cultural field with the network analysis. They focus either on external networking strategies among different cultural institutions (Ibsch, Verdaasdonk) or on networks amongst the agents within the literary field. For

sociological theory, I wish to argue two things. First, that Bourdieu's use of the three categories—field, doxa, and habitus—produces a coherent analytical framework which is informed by phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl on the one hand but is firmly grounded in the premises of causality and functionality on the other. Second, that Bourdieu's selective application of phenomenological categories of “doxa” and “habitus” to his sociology of literature produces a static structural model of literary field in which all of its processes and motivations are explained in deterministic terms. This paper will seek to present an alternative reading of the same categories within a discursive model of literary field where field's processes and the motivations of its agents are driven field's discourses rather than by its rigid structures.

Though the following argument is mostly theoretical, it was inspired by the case of the literary field known as *Die Gruppe 47* (Group 47) which was one of the most influential literary groupings in the German Federal Republic.³ It emerged in 1947 as an avowedly apolitical association yet less than two decades later it became one of the major political forces in the country. The transformative processes within the *Gruppe* inspired the methodological argument outlined in this article. The *Gruppe 47* was also one of the most contentious literary groupings—in the fifties were its writers disregarded for having encouraged the revival of the memories about National Socialism whereas in the seventies they were acclaimed for it. Many of them became the icons of the German literary and intellectual fields where they still hold their canonical positions.⁴ Its success, its cultural and political influence, and its controversial nature made the *Gruppe 47* an intriguing object of sociological and literary studies which examined it as a literary field that (re)produced a specific kind of literary habitus—that of a writer as a public intellectual.⁵ While acknowledging the

a comprehensive analysis of intersections of social and artistic networks see a pioneering study by Harrison White, *Careers and Creativity: Social Forces in the Arts*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), or a study by Wouter de Nooy. “Fields and Networks: Correspondence Analysis and Social Networks Analysis in the Framework of Field Theory.” *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts*. Vol. 31, No. 5,6 (2003). For an exemplary study of literary production, reception, and interpretation see Hugo Verdaasdonk, “Valuations as Rational Decision-making: A Critique of Bourdieu's Analysis of Cultural Value”, *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts*. Vol. 31, No. 5,6 (2003).

³ The *Gruppe 47* was founded in 1947 and it officially disbanded in 1968. It broke-up mainly due to the conflicting political positions of its members toward the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the US war in Vietnam.

⁴ A younger generation of the *Gruppe's* writers (Günter Grass, Martin Walser) entered the literary and the public lives in the sixties, and until nowadays they have monopolized the moral discourse on the war and the Holocaust. Some literary historians emphasize inner tensions and the ideological inconsistencies on these issues within the *Gruppe 47*. Hans J. Hahn, “*Literarische Gesinnungsnazis oder spätbürgerliche Formalisten? Die Gruppe 47 als deutsches Problem*”, ed. Stuart Parkes and John J. White, “The *Gruppe 47* Fifty Years on”: A Re-appraisal of its Literary and Political Significance”, *German Monitor*. No.45, 279-292. Some studies brought in the *Gruppe's* latent anti-Semitism. Klaus Briegleb, *Missachtung und Tabu: eine Streitschrift zur Frage: “Wie antisemitisch war die Gruppe 47?”* (Berlin: Philo, 2003).

⁵ A study of the French postwar literary field by Gisele Sapiro is rather instructive. On an example of Jean-Paul Sartre, Shapiro illustrates the effect of the “intellectualization” of the French literary field on other West-European literary fields. She argues that the role of a public intellectual, endowed with an authority to comment the political and social events, became highly fashionable also outside France. See “Forms of politicization in the French literary field.” *Theory and Society*. Vol. 32, No. 5,6 (2003). A similar study by Helmuth Peitsch shows how keenly the *Gruppe 47* embraced the French example. See “Die *Gruppe 47* und das Konzept des Engagements”, ed. Stuart Parkes and John J. White, “The *Gruppe 47* Fifty Years on”: A Re-appraisal of its Literary and Political Significance”, *German Monitor*. No.45, 25-52.

analytical value of Bourdieu's concepts of field, doxa, and habitus, the case of the *Gruppe 47* prompts their following reconsiderations.

Firstly, I will argue that, in addition to Bourdieu's description of literary field as of a space of the (re)distribution and the (re)production of cultural capital, the field is also a space that puts forward a question or a set of questions. They may embrace a dilemma about an identity of a social group or the whole society vis-à-vis its historical experience or its momentary situation. For instance, in American literature it has been the question of slavery, which has gained tremendous social exposure in the past two decades.⁶ Literary fields in Europe pose a range of questions as well. British postcolonial literature has brought in a dilemma about the ethno-cultural identity of the immigrant Brits between their Eastern origins and their Western experience, whereas French literature poses questions about the French cultural identity which has been facing the crisis of civic engagement and socialization.⁷ Austrian and German 'Literature of Remembrance' (*Erinnerte Vergangenheitliteratur*) has for the past fifty years addressed either the failure of Austrian society to deal with its Nazi past or the challenge to reintegrate that past into German collective memory.⁸ A search for an answer to the question "at stake" is the source of the dynamics of the literary field—it grounds and shapes it.

Secondly, if the literary field is a discursive space shaped by questions then the production of literary text cannot be driven only by a writer's motivation to succeed in the field, as Bourdieu claims. It must also be driven by the questions that are at stake in that field and by the writer's naïve belief to respond to those questions freely. Bourdieu calls this uncontested belief in the autonomy of the field, its texts, and its authors, literary doxa and argues that doxa, which he reduces to naivety, is a crucial reproductive mechanism for sustaining the field. This reduction of doxa in Bourdieu's model and the concentration on the doxa's reproductive function obfuscates its other dimension—that of an enabling attitude. Naivety does not necessarily have to make field's agents less autonomous; unlike Bourdieu shows, it does not need to reduce them to the thoughtless carriers of field's norms but, rather, it can instigate debates about the field's rules and the questions that are at stake in it. While it can be argued that the question(s) that constitutes the field eventually gives rise to aesthetic, political, or historical discourses, it can be assumed that the naïve belief to respond to them freely generates the conditions of possibility for such discourses to emerge.⁹

⁶ In American literature, the legacy of slavery began as an implicit literary theme. William Faulkner's trilogy *Snapes* (1940-1959), was among the first serious attempts to articulate the phenomenon of slavery from the perspective of a white American. From the seventies on, Toni Morrison has represented most consistently African-American voice in the US literature about slavery (*The Bluest Eye*, 1970; *Beloved*, 1987; *Jazz*, 2004, or *Tar Baby*, 2004). Her novel *Paradise* (1998) is a rare example of a uniquely sensitive and honest articulation of the shady moments in the history of underprivileged people. E.L. Doctorow's most recent novel *The March* (2005) is yet another return of a white author to the theme of slavery.

⁷ In British literature, the stories by Salman Rushdie articulate the experience of multiple cultural identities. (*East, West: Stories*, or *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*). In French literature, themes like identity, politics, and alienation intertwine in the novels of Jean-Paul DuBois (*A French Life*), Antoine Volodine (*Fiction du Politique*), or of Milan Kundera (*Identity; Ignorance*).

⁸ In Austrian literature, the criticism of Austria's National Socialist past reaches back to the works of Ingeborg Bachmann from the sixties (*The Book of Franza; Malina*). Nowadays, it resounds for instance in Thomas Bernhard's playwrights (*Der Heldenplatz*), or in Elfriede Jelinek's novels (*Wonderful, Wonderful Times; Lust; Greed*).

⁹ I was encouraged to make this argument by Jeffrey Goldfarb. In his comparative analyses of artistic practices in the communist Poland and in the United States, Goldfarb points out subversive powers of the performing arts vis-à-vis the power of the state or the market and their political or economic restrictions. He shows that while negotiating their own autonomy, artists

Thirdly, Bourdieu's concept of habitus as of the field's embodied knowledge revolves around the questions what does the literary habitus embody and how. Habitus internalizes the rules of the field during the process of its adaptation to the field's structures and according to Bourdieu's model, the adaptation is habitus's main mode of relating to the field. This emphasis on adaptation and on the determining nature of embodiment obliterates the relevance of experience as yet another form of practical knowledge which habitus possesses. As I will show later, embodiment of the rules can be a creative as much as a determining process which can produce similar outcomes, such as the decisions to accept or to reject the rules, but completely different experience from arriving at these decisions. If we study literary field as a discursive space, which puts forth question(s) about the group's identity, then writers' habituses embody not only the knowledge of field's structures, as Bourdieu claims, but also of field's quintessential questions. Such knowledge is grounded in writers' personal or mediated experience with social worlds in which these questions originate. For instance, a shared experience of war and of Germany's totalitarian past connected the different generations of writers in the *Gruppe 47*. This analysis does not want to allege that all literary fields challenge their audiences with existential questions, such as collective identity, nor does it want to argue that all literature encourages collective self-reflection of a group or society but it attempts to provide an adequate analytical framework for those literary fields that do.

Overview of Bourdieu's Functional Model

Bourdieu's analytical model of literary field systematically debunks the aura of the literary world—a world conventionally viewed as a refuge of individual autonomy and artistic freedom.¹⁰ By unveiling the calculative and strategic nature of artistic practices, Bourdieu's model deflates the myths about disinterestedness of art and about unrepressed creativity of an artist. Perhaps as a trade-off for its methodological clarity the model disregards a pervasive ambivalence in the structure of the literary field, which emerges from two different but compatible possibilities for a writer—to succeed and to have her voice heard. The following overview will focus on the reductive premises in Bourdieu's model and will discuss how they compromise this ambivalent structure of the field. Bourdieu generally characterizes literary field as a structure with an inbuilt self-reproductive mechanism, which is determined by other fields that momentarily dominate it, whether they are economic, political, ideological, intellectual, or careerist (Bourdieu 2000; 1993; 1996). Literary field has two poles—autonomous and heteronomous. The former is characterized by high cultural capital of its authors and their readers and the latter by the writer's economic success and the access to it is restricted by consecrated writers, who determine its aesthetic criteria, and by literary critics, who have the power of judgment over the quality of literary work. The entry to the heteronomous pole is practically unrestricted since

took for granted the legitimacy of their claim to autonomy and therewith achieved unexpectedly efficient results. See Jeffrey Goldfarb, *On Cultural Freedom: An Exploration of Public Life in Poland and America*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), and *The Persistence of Freedom: The Sociological Implications of Polish Student Theatre*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980).

¹⁰ The tradition to 'debunk' the aura of art is rather salient in critical theories; it reaches back to Walter Benjamin's canonical essay which de-auratizes visual art in order to reveal its political (mis)uses by the totalitarian regimes in the Third Reich and in the Soviet Union. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", *Illuminations*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1968) 217-252.

literary quality here is measured by economic success and “with respect to the demands of the general public (Bourdieu 1996: 285)” rather than by artistic standards.

Those newcomers to the field who aspire to the positions in the autonomous pole perpetuate the so-called ‘struggle for consecration’—a struggle that reproduces the inherent controversy between the consecrated and the avant-garde artists.¹¹ Bourdieu maintains that the newcomers are the quintessence of the avant-garde artists because, in their aspiration for literary esteem, they subvert the existing literary canons by continuously introducing new styles into the field. This avant-garde “principle of permanent revolution (Bourdieu 1996: 239)” was instituted in the literary field in the 19th century, and has functioned as its *modus operandi* ever since.¹² The tradition of the avant-garde is a cumulative one because it is habitually reproduced by each newcomer and a non-reversible one because the very intention to surpass it is already inscribed in the rules of the field. Bourdieu argues that this functional symbiosis between the habitual and the structural components of the avant-garde tradition constitutes the relative autonomy of literary field vis-à-vis other fields. It also constitutes its specific history where the field’s autonomy is taken for granted because, as Bourdieu observes, it is “difficult to deduce [literary autonomy] directly from the state of the social world (1996, p.242).”

I would argue that this part of Bourdieu’s epistemology, with the emphasis on the field’s structure and its reproduction, field’s rules and their inscription in the writers, the access to the cultural capital and to the positions in the field, is embedded in the language of efficiency. Efficiency is the main criterion for assessing all interactions in the literary field in which, as Bourdieu argues, the relationships are not chosen individually, as we commonly believe, but are given objectively. It is a common scientific praxis that the scientists who study the structure of the fields’ relations overlook this given nature of relationships, as Bourdieu (1996) confesses:

It is thus that a first effort to analyze the ‘intellectual field’ stopped at the immediately visible relations between agents engaged in intellectual life: the interactions between authors and critics or between authors and publishers had disguised from my eye the objective relationships between the relative positions that one and the other occupy in the field, that is to say, the structure that determines the form of those interactions. (pp. 181-182)

To view field’s relations as objectively given has several consequences for the model where ‘objective’ can be understood as a proxy to ‘institutional’ because all interactions among agents are determined by the field’s institutions, their hierarchy, and their efficiency. Objectiveness further implies some kind of conclusiveness since the rules that are encoded in the institutions are more resistant to the change. This correlation between the objectified (institutional) and the habitual (individual) relations in Bourdieu’s model is strikingly reminiscent of Max Weber’s description of bureaucracy as a paradigm par excellence of “objective relations” because the rules and power structures here are also external to the agents and are reproduced

¹¹ An example of such struggle was a rivalry between Impressionists and ‘Salon’ painters in the 19th century France. See Mary Rogers, “The Batignolles Group: Creators of Impressionism”, Milton C. Albrecht, James H. Barnett, and Mason Griff, ed. *The Sociology of Art and Literature; A Reader*. (New York: Praeger, 1970).

¹² Science is also one of the fields where the ‘newness’ is at stake. To succeed in scientific field, its agents have to play the game of newness by introducing new insights, theories, methods, etc. See *Homo Academicus*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

perfunctorily. Bourdieu's model works from the premise that the field's agents always subdue to the rules. However, unlike in Weber's concept of subject, it is not clear from Bourdieu's model where lies the source of this compliant attitude and what motivates it. Do agents comply with the rules normatively, because they recognize their own possibilities vis-à-vis the field's norms or do they comply gullibly, when they routinely reproduce the rules? Bourdieu's model leaves this dilemma unresolved. The model suggests that, on the one hand, field's agents reproduce the rules habitually without any unawareness of their confines but on the other hand, they deploy them strategically because only strategic use of the rules can guarantee their success in the field. This incongruous description of the practices of literary habitus raises questions what do the agents actually reproduce and whether the two sides of their action—habitual and rational—can be reconciled by a single actor (habitus) in the way suggested by the model. Reservations about these conciliatory practices and the question whether they can be fully explained by the functional model will be analyzed in the section on habitus.

According to the Bourdieu's functional model, the relationships in the literary field are viewed and evaluated like the relationships in economic field (market). Bourdieu argues that this transfer of relations is possible due to "general properties of the economic practices...which can be applied—through the categories like capital or power—to other fields while respecting their most concrete singularity (1996: 183)." In their highest symbolic form, economic relations assume the form of power relations and the operative logic of economic field transcends into the field of power. This import of the logic of one practice (economic), into the particularities of the other one (literary) underscores the asymmetry in Bourdieu's model, which is reminiscent of Marxist theory of infrastructure and superstructure where the former determines the latter. Asymmetric relations between the fields are always for the sake of the field of power and, similarly, the asymmetry within the literary field is always for the sake of the agents with the highest cultural capital and symbolic power. By reducing all relations to power relations, Bourdieu designs a model in which the rationale of efficiency is translated into the functional dependencies between the field and the habitus. Judith Butler makes an important insight when she argues that Bourdieu's "unitary notion of the market (1999: 127)" and its deterministic force reduces each field, including the market itself, into a static and atemporal entity.¹³ The literary field is a space which is also determined by power relations, as we read: "The field of power is the space of relations of force between agents or between institutions having in common the possession of capital necessary to occupy the dominant positions in different fields. It is the site of the struggles between holders of different powers (Bourdieu 1996: 215)."

Notwithstanding Bourdieu's characterization of the literary field as a space of "perpetual development (1996: 242)", or of antagonistic relations, these counter-processes, if they occur, do not generate alternative spaces but are reconciled by those fields of power (economic, political, careerist, etc.) that momentarily dominate it. The same conciliatory concept of antagonisms pervades also Bourdieu's definition of avant-garde which he views as a ruling principle of literary field. According to it, the entire subversive potential of avant-garde is subdued to

¹³ Unlike Bourdieu, Butler argues that: "capitalism produces excess market phenomenon that it cannot control and that undermines its own hypostatization as unity (p. 127)." She maintains that Bourdieu disregards the genealogy of the market because it would "undermine the thesis of its [market's] unitary and ultimately determining character (p. 127)". Judith Butler, "Performativity's Social Magic", *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Schusterman, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) 113-128.

the routine that “is inscribed as a matrix in each newcomer (1996: 243).” Those writers who master the rules replace their canonized counterparts but the field’s constellation and the hierarchies of its positions remain unchanged. The generative capacity of avant-garde is not obliterated—it still introduces new genres—but its subversive quality is instrumentalized for the sake of maintaining the field’s status quo.

All of the above categories in the functional framework—the relations and the rules in the field, the principle of the avant-garde, or of the power struggle—serve as the mechanisms for the reproduction of a relative autonomy of literary field. In it, autonomy represents the highest form of symbolic capital and therewith the highest form of power. Autonomy and power are the directly proportional variables and their straightforward equation—the higher the degree of autonomy the higher the monopolization of power—stands in the background of a complex network of relations in Bourdieu’s functional model. The claim to autonomy, which is a kind of claim to power, requires legitimacy since, as Weber’s concept of legitimate domination reminds us, there is no power without a legitimate belief in it.¹⁴ Bourdieu notices, that what gets reproduced in the literary field is a belief in its autonomy that was once established as the field’s primordial doxa (illusion) and integrated as a rule in the field’s structure. Reproduction of the belief in autonomy and the entire process of its legitimization unfold as a power game (between the consecrated writers and those who aspire to their positions) in which illusion of autonomy represents the highest stake for all involved, as Bourdieu (1996) asserts:

It is in the relationship between the habituses and the fields to which they are adjusted to a greater or a lesser degree...that the foundation of all the scales of utility is generated: that is to say, the fundamental adhesion to the game, the *illusio*, recognition of the game and the utility of the game, the belief in the value of the game and in its stakes—the basis of all the allocations of meaning and of value. (pp. 172-173)

The metaphor of game indicates two (implicit) assumptions: that the outcomes of the game are predetermined by its rules and that the rules remain unchallenged because the consensus on them is a precondition for playing the game. This dualistic structure of literary field, which is given by the rules of its autonomy on the one hand and by their habitual reproduction on the other, identifies two sources of the field’s legitimization: on rational and on irrational grounds. Legitimization on rational grounds relies on the institutional sources of autonomy, whether they are physical institutions like publishing houses or symbolic ones like consecrated writers, because they glorify artistic freedom and creativity, as well as the literary field as a unique space where these values are recognized and pursued. On the other hand, legitimization on irrational grounds relies on the belief which takes such a freedom for granted. The discrepancy between the rational nature of the rules (of autonomy) and the irrational belief in them is strikingly similar to Weber’s concept of bureaucratic domination. In bureaucratic sphere, too, the “validity of the claims to legitimacy may be based on.... rational grounds—resting on a belief in the legality of patterns of

¹⁴ In Max Weber’s typology of legitimate domination, each type rests on a different premise, being it rationality, tradition, or charisma, yet only the rational type of domination is explicitly anchored in the rules. The traditional one rests in the authority of those who exercise the tradition while the charismatic one in the “devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person.” Max Weber, “Basic Sociological Terms”, *Economy and Society*. Vol. I & III, ed. Guenther Roth and Klaus Wittich, (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968) 215.

enacted rules (Weber 1968: 215)", without ever challenging those rules.¹⁵ In both fields, power is claimed rationally and justified irrationally, as a habit. The challenge of Bourdieu's model of literary field is perhaps most salient in its juxtaposition with Weber's concept of bureaucratic sphere which highlights the legitimizing function of belief. According to Bourdieu, in literary field the belief in the autonomy does not only conceal the conformist and utilitarian nature of artistic practices but, more importantly, it gives them the illusion of their independence—the illusion without which the field could not be sustained.

Such an ostensibly functional explanation of the role of belief raises a doubt whether the actual texture of belief in (artistic) autonomy is not much richer than the perfunctory function ascribed to it in Bourdieu's sociological paradigm. In his critical appraisal of Weber's concept of legitimacy, Paul Ricoeur notices the deficit of the concept on the side of belief and makes a more general contention that: "Beliefs contribute something beyond what sociologists understand to be the role of motivation. (1986: 201)." He argues that belief carries within itself something more than what can be rationally explained in terms of interests and proposes motives as a more adequate explanatory framework: "The question of belief persists because we cannot speak of legitimacy without speaking of grounds and grounds refer to beliefs. Ground is both a ground and a motive. It is a motive...functioning as a reason for (1986, p.202)." Ricoeur's outline of the dualistic structure of belief is instructive for it uncouples its rational and irrational sides that Bourdieu's model attempts to reconcile. Attentive reading of Ricoeur can also elucidate one conceptual omission of Bourdieu's conciliatory attempt, namely the opacity of belief, which is derived from experience because, as Ricoeur argues, every belief is ultimately grounded in experience. It is precisely this ambiguous structure of belief and its unpredictability that Ricoeur points to and which, most likely, discredits belief from a repertoire of reliable categories in Bourdieu's model. In it, belief and experience are taken as social facts that have to be objectified. Strictly spoken, in Bourdieu's model the belief in literary autonomy and the experience which grounds that belief are adjusted to the objective forces and to a single type of rationality—that of power and domination. Bourdieu's insistence on objectively given structure of the field thus produces an atemporal, and a static model where the reciprocity of all relations is either absorbed by the field's structures or is a-priori excluded by them. The above analysis of the concept of belief in the autonomy and the auxiliary mechanism of its reproduction, like the power struggle or the rules of the field, suggests two shifts in the conceptualization of literary field—from its determining (objective) to its discursive structure and from its causal-functional to motivational framework.

Literary Field as Question

In addition to Bourdieu's definition, literary field can also be viewed as an ambivalent space which accommodates two different but reconcilable sets of writer's motivations—to succeed and to have her voice heard. It can further be assumed, that the contents and the pursuits of these motivations are informed by the question(s) that permeate the field. This analysis will now turn to a concept of literary field in which the field's structure is discursive rather than objectively given, the writers' belief in their autonomy (doxa) is reflexive rather than habitual, and literary habituses are shaped also by the field's question(s) and not only by its rules. A discursive nature of

¹⁵ Legitimacy based on traditional grounds, that is on the "belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions", might also apply to literary field. (Weber, 1968:215)

literary field is mainly given by questions which are at stake for the writers as well as for a community whose dilemma(s) they address. In most literary fields, it is usually one initial question that has been re-formulated by several literary generations. For instance, first question that modern literature articulated was about the autonomy of a bourgeois individual vis-à-vis the society that had increasingly emphasized individual liberties (Habermas 1989). According to Ian Watt novel, which emerged as a new literary genre of modernity, most fully reflects “individualistic and innovative orientation of bourgeois subject (1957: 13)”, unlike previous genres which conformed to traditional practices.

I wish to argue that the 19th century literary fields in Europe established not only their institutions, as Bourdieu shows, but they also introduced a range of intellectual and anthropological themes which persisted until the following century. Among them, perhaps most revealing literary themes of the times revolved around the crisis of traditional authority and the institution of patriarchal family, which poignantly illustrate novels of Thomas Mann, Franz Werfel, and Franz Kafka. The taboo of sexual identity was another powerful literary theme of the times which was vociferously brought up in the works of Stefan Zweig, or Robert Musil.¹⁶ In the works of the Late Modernists, the dilemma about individual autonomy escalated into the anxiety about the effacement of subject, which they ascribed to the anomies of a highly rationalized modern world. In the works of Kafka, the locus of this anxiety lied in an unrestrained growth of the bureaucratic control of social life; in the novels of Musil it dwelled in the paralyzing power of state machinery, whereas in Marcel Proust’s opus about subjective time (which might have anticipated Foucauldian anxiety about the effacement of subject), it resided in the frailty of one’s own memory vis-à-vis the memories of the others.¹⁷

Autonomy was also collective value. It was highly acclaimed in the 19th century Europe by those ethno-national groups which were striving for their political and cultural independence from the Hapsburg Monarchy and were the precursors to small nation-states which emerged after the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in World War I.¹⁸ Meanwhile, in the Central Europe began to form the largest national state which emerged from the fragmented German states that were later united in

¹⁶ For instance, Thomas Mann’s family saga *Buddenbrooks* exposes the crisis of bourgeois concept of patriarchal family in the early 20th century. Similarly, the short story by Franz Werfel, *Not the Murderer*, which attempts to legitimize the parricide, or *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, which renders an intimate portrayal of a family suffocated by paternalistic rules, challenge patriarchal authority of the times. Theme of sexuality dominated Austrian literature which was under a strong influence of Freud’s writings. An emergent discipline of psychoanalysis resounded in some of Stefan Zweig’s novellas. Such as *Conflicts (Verwirrung der Gefühle)*, or in or Robert Musil’s ingenious short story *The Confusion of Young Törless*.

¹⁷ Among others, three major novels dealt extensively with these themes: *The Trial* by Franz Kafka, *The Man without Qualities* by Robert Musil, and *Remembrance of Things Past* by Marcel Proust.

¹⁸ In Hapsburg Monarchy, these emancipative attempts took place in the second half of the 19th century either in a form of ethnic uprisings—of Poles, Slovaks, or Bukovinians—or of political negotiations between Hungarians, Czechs, and the Austrian government. Hungarian negotiations resulted in the Austro-Hungarian political compromise that gave the Hungarian part of Hapsburg Monarchy the status of confederation. On the other hand, Czech negotiations generated frustration rather than political gain, which was largely due to the inability of the Czechs to consistently articulate their political requirements. This deficit in the Czech political experience fuelled Czech nationalism and later it became a source of their resentment toward German. Miroslav Hroch, “Real and Constructed: The Nature of the Nation,” *The State of the Nation*, ed. John A. Hall, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Deutsches Kaiserreich (German Empire).¹⁹ In the 19th century Europe, political projects of collective autonomy were glorified by nationalistic literatures that became the main vehicles and instigators of the emergent national, cultural, and political identities.²⁰ For instance, the Polish Romantic writers emphasized the grandeur of the Polish nation vis-à-vis the Russians, the Prussians, and the Hapsburgs to whom Poland lost independence for more than one century.²¹ The Czech nationalist writers emphasized cultural and moral distinctiveness and, indeed, a superiority of Czechs qua their Germanic rulers, and the nationalist poets of the Slovak Romanticism expressed the same attitudes toward the Hungarians, whom they denounced as their oppressors.²² These emerging nations delineated also the boundaries of numerous literary fields, among which the German literary field was the largest, the most prolific, and the most influential one. In that field, the question of collective identity has been perhaps the most lasting, consistent, and variegated literary theme. It was first raised by the Early Romantics (1795-1804) who found the sources of German identity in a distinctive aesthetic value of German nature and its connection with the arts. The Late Romantics (1815-1848) redefined German identity in ethno-national terms, when they grounded it in old German mythology. The opacity of the historical origins of German nation and its atemporal character gave the identity discourse a distinctive undertone of mythical nationalism.²³ The Late Romantics were,

¹⁹ German Empire was founded in January 1871, a year after the victory of the Prussians in Franco-Prussian war, mainly with the assistance of Otto von Bismarck. Bismarck became the first Chancellor of the new state. The Empire collapsed in 1918 and the Weimar Republic was declared.

²⁰ The correlation between nationalistic movements and national literatures is not confined to Europe. For instance, Wendy Griswold's study of the Nigerian literary field points out the similar interdependencies in between the process of nation building and the emergence of national literature postcolonial discourse. Griswold notices that for most Nigerian writers, the main challenge is to grasp the flux of Nigerian society that is caught between its indigenous tradition and the hegemonic discourse of western (post)modern ideology. Their writings bear witness of Nigerian's everyday life, such as tensions between urban and countryside live-styles, gender or generational split in the construction of social roles. Nigerian writers express their commitments to social aesthetics at home and to the search of Nigerian cultural identity, which they express as a universal human concern. According to Griswold, this is precisely the quality with which Nigerian literature impresses outside audiences. See Wendy Griswold. *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers and the Novel in Nigeria*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

²¹ Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1885) or the novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916) portrayed the tragedy of three Polish partitions: in 1772, 1793, and 1795. Mickiewicz, an author of Polish national opus *Mr. Tadeusz*, was involved in nationalistic uprising in 1848, which demanded the independence of Poland. In the same year, Czechs and Slovaks claimed their cultural and political autonomy from the Hapsburgs.

²² A major Czech nationalist writer Alois Jirasek (1851-1930), glorified cultural and historical traditions of the Czech people. His historical novels (*The Darkness; The King of Husites; or Against All*) communicated a strong anti-German sentiment which pervades also contemporary political and historical mainstreams. For instance, an analysis of Czech media and political discourses by Emanuel Mandler exposes the xenophobic tone of the debate about the expulsion of the Sudeten-German minority after 1945 and about the declaration of Czech-German atonement in 1992. See *Die deutsch-tschechische Welt - ein Märchen?: Politische Kommentare in der tschechischen Presse 1998 – 2002*. (Tittling Dorfmeister, 2003). On the Slovak side, the poets of Slovak Enlightenment (Miloslav Sladkovic, Ludovit Stur) who took part in the bourgeois uprising in Vienna in 1848, were the main protagonists of Slovak emancipation movement which demanded autonomy from Hungarians.

²³ Late Romantics influenced other artistic schools, particularly the artists of *Jugendbewegung* at the early 20th century. In the twenties, these literary schools gave way to high modernism that was followed by the avant-garde forms, such as dada, futurism, and expressionism. Erika und Ernst von Borries. *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte: Romantismus*, and Ingo Reiss und Hermann Stadler. *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte: Wege in die Moderne*. (DTV, 1997).

undoubtedly, one of key social media that fostered the ideological and the cultural climate of the German unification in 1871. However, their legacy echoed much longer. They laid intellectual grounds for the historical dogma *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) which, in the 1930s, translated the writers of a synonymous literary field into their major literary theme. The writers of *Blut und Boden* redefined the identity question once again—this time in terms of German racial superiority. The disastrous consequences of National Socialist racial doctrine altered the context and the substance of the search for German postwar identity and the issue of identity, which was so prominent during the Third Reich, was completely silenced until the 1950s. Then, the writers of the *Gruppe 47* challenged West German society to answer one fundamental question: “Who are the Germans?” Are they a defeated or a liberated nation? Are they the victims of war or its perpetrators? And are they a nation with the new future or are they bounded by a duty to remember? A search for answers to these questions became a history of the struggle over the interpretation of Germany’s National Socialist past, in which the *Gruppe 47* played a fundamental role. By dealing consistently with the identity question, the *Gruppe* produced a literary narrative about German totalitarian past—a narrative that was simultaneously an eloquent testimony about the reluctance of West German society to deal with that past.

The question about (West)German postwar identity was reformulated several times by the *Gruppe’s* writers who, it can be argued, developed two main narrative perspectives in their accounts of Germany’s war past: of shame, and of guilt for the World War II and the Holocaust. Both narratives had different moralizing insights and operated as distinct narrative regimes that were shaping German collective memory. In the fifties, the aftermaths of war and the revelations of war crimes were still overwhelming even for the *Gruppe’s* writers and they significantly restrained their ability for critical writing. In the literature of the fifties resounded shame and embarrassment that contrasted with the political culture of atonement in Adenauer’s era. The novels of Martin Walser and Wolfgang Koeppen revealed monstrosity of “ordinary” people who were serving Nazi regime and evoked embarrassment and disgust about their successful restoration.²⁴ In the 1960s, the literary narrative of shame gave way to the narrative of German guilt for war and the Holocaust, which grounded the ideological identity of West German political and intellectual lefts. A homology between literary and political fields (the *Gruppe 47* and the Social Democratic Party/SPD) began to form in the 1960s, when some of the *Gruppe’s* writers supported the electoral campaign of SPD.²⁵ The homology solidified in the early 1970s, when the SPD’s politics of memory and the literary narrative of the *Gruppe* leaned on the same premise of guilt. Guilt narrative entered social institutions and, for more than one decade, it became the only official interpretation of the country’s National Socialist past.²⁶ The dilemma about German collective identity,

²⁴ Walser’s novella *Marriage in Philippsburg* (1953), and Koeppen’s novel *Death in Rome* evoke shame and embarrassment about Nazism and war era. In early sixties, Walser brought the theme of shame to the stage in his plays. See Martin Walser. *Plays*, vol. I. *The Rabbit Race. The Detour*. London: John Calder Ltd. 1963.

²⁵ Some of the *Gruppe’s* writers, like Hans Werner Richter, Günter Grass, or Siegfried Lenz, continued their political commitments to SPD until the party’s victory in 1969. Grass himself spent two years touring West German cities with the SPD electoral campaign and captured his impressions in a diary-style novel *The Diary of a Snail* (1972).

²⁶ This narrative regime changed in 1982, when the newly elected Chancellor Helmut Kohl (Christian Democratic Union) began to legitimize the memories of German war suffering. For an analysis of (West)German official politics of memory see an article by Jeffery Olick “What Does it Mean to Normalize the Past? Official Memory in German Politics since 1989”, *Social Science History*, 22:4 (winter 1998), 548-571.

albeit in its implicit form, was a major and the most consistently developed theme in the *Gruppe 47*; it can, undoubtedly, be viewed as yet another modification of the original identity question raised by the Early Romantics. If we return to the question about the *Gruppe's* success we could argue two things: to produce a lasting effect on the society, the field's literary narrative(s) have to enter public institutions and penetrate the discourses of media, education, and the politics. Secondly, it is usually a combination of all these networks that shape the (official) collective memory of society.

Discursive Structure of Literary Doxa

If literary field is a question-bound discourse then literary doxa is a mode of writer's involvement with field's question(s)—this is the basic relational scheme in the discursive model. In this section, two modalities of the literary doxa will be juxtaposed: its habitual (passive) mode, when doxa serves as a mechanism of field's reproduction (Bourdieu), and a discursive mode, when doxa extends into the writer's attitude toward field's questions. While Bourdieu's sociological translation of the concept of doxa from Husserl's phenomenology is confined to its naïve mode, the discursive concept of doxa goes beyond Bourdieu's limited use of Husserl and draws from the capacity of doxa to extend into the reflexive attitude and to generate discourses. The distinction between habitual and reflexive (discursive) attitude is relevant for the studies of literary field because it points to a co-dependence of a discourse and a reflexive mode of doxa, which is completely overlooked in Bourdieu's model. Bourdieu's concept of literary doxa is a modification of Husserl's thesis about the unity of the "natural world" and our belief in it, which Husserl calls 'natural attitude'. In Husserl's phenomenology, natural world is always there for us as a practical world of values, norms, and habits (lifeworld), and to this world, we hold natural attitude when we take everything in it for granted, including our own existence. Even if we, temporarily, expose ourselves to other worlds and take other attitudes we will always return to the force of natural attitude. Husserl (1998) maintains that natural world, with its values, viewpoints, habits and traditions, "remains on hand, afterwards, as well as before, I am in the natural attitude, undisturbed in it by the new attitudes (p. 55)." It is not enough that we take the world and ourselves in it for granted but we also believe in this relationship. Husserl calls such uncontested belief doxa and maintains that doxa is inseparable from the world. The unity of these two validities (*Geltungseinheit*)—of the world and of our belief in it—constitutes social spaces that we inhabit.

Any sphere of human activity is a practical sphere and Husserl's emphasis on praxis, as means of our self-constitution in the world, strongly resonates in Bourdieu's theory. There is a theoretical consensus between Husserl and Bourdieu's understanding of praxis as a routine activity and this habitual mode of social praxis is the locus of Bourdieu's critical sociology. Bourdieu (1996) questions objectivity of sociologists, particularly those studying the arts, because they are often unaware of their own participation on the cultural traditions that they study:

Probably because they are protected by the veneration of all those who were raised, often from their earliest youth, to perform sacramental rites of cultural devotion (the sociologists being no exception), the fields of literature, art and philosophy pose formidable obstacles, both objective and subjective, to *scientific objectification*. (p. 184, emphasis added)

The parallel between Husserl and Bourdieu's projects ends at this point, which is due to their different understandings of social function of naivety and of its potential. Bourdieu maintains that naivety of doxa obstructs our knowledge of social reality whereas Husserl believes that it uncovers it; according to Husserl, practical world is a source of knowledge. Bourdieu, who relies on scientific objectification of social world, thus increases a gap between naïve (unreflective) and scientific apprehension of reality. On the other hand, for Husserl, practical world raises questions about itself and about its own constitution and therewith it engenders "a new but a peculiar science about the doxa that is hold in contempt and yet entitled to lay the respectable grounds of episteme (1998: 178)." Doxic (unreflective) being in the world is thus also an inquisitive being because it can open our everyday experience to scientific interpretations and this fundamental turn in the conceptualization of practical world of the doxa is completely unnoticed in Bourdieu's methodology.²⁷

Husserlian doxa encompasses a range of attitudes and, analogously with this expanded view, so does literary doxa. It is not habitually absorbed by the agents of literary (artistic) field but undergoes a process of its own modifications when the writers change their initial, naïve belief in autonomy.²⁸ The range of doxic attitudes is, in fact, a variation on a single, original doxic belief starting at its initial stage (*Urdoxa/Protodoxa*), progressing to its interim stage (*Zuwendung*), when we turn our opinion about reality towards its prediction, and culminating in the final stage when we project our opinion into the social world. During that process, we develop different levels of knowledge about reality that we initially took for granted. Husserl shows us that doxic views are less limiting than we tend to think because naïveté does not have to be our ultimate position but only an interim one. In his comparative analysis of Husserl and Bourdieu's concepts of doxa, John Myles points out that: "Doxa is a basic form of knowledgeability derived from experience, embodied and socialized formations of the unconscious strata of urdoxa. "Below" this central area is proto- or urdoxa, the taken for granted or undiscussed which underlies most states of consciousness except projection and reflexivity (102)."²⁹ According to Myles, the taken-for-granted knowledge of reality influences our pre-reflexive as well as our

²⁷ In his essay, *Crisis and Reflection*, James Dodd analyzes modalities of doxa in Husserl's phenomenology of lifeworld. Dodd maintains that doxa is our "first encounter with the world", when we grasp the world as a question that is "open to its further articulations." In this sense, doxa precedes knowledge because it is the first step toward our apprehension of the world as a problematic entity. James Dodd, *Crisis and Reflection: An Essay on Husserl's Crisis of the European Sciences*. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004) 155.

²⁸ For a sociological illustration of this argument, see the analyses of artistic practices in the totalitarian Poland in the works by Jeffrey Goldfarb. See Goldfarb. *The Persistence of Freedom* (1980).

²⁹ In his insightful article on Bourdieu's adoption of doxa, Myles identifies six modalities (stages) of doxa. The first four modalities (*Orthodoxy*, *Zuwendung/transition*, *Protention/opinion*, and *Heterodoxy/predictiveness*) are on the level of protodoxa, or of an unreflexive knowledge that we tend to 'take-for-granted'. The last two modalities (*Projection* and *Reflexivity*) are on the level of a reflexive understanding of social world and our belief in it. Myles's more nuance analysis of Husserlian doxa points to the consequences of its inadequate understanding in Bourdieu's theory which polarizes the everyday (non-scientific) and the reflexive sociological knowledge of social world and thus it overlooks the mimetism that lies in the core of every human praxis. As Myles asserts: "A reflexive sociology, one that links rationality with body and practice, should adequately conceptualize the potential of reflexivity to arise from everyday experience. (104) See John F Myles, "From Doxa to Experience: Issues in Bourdieu's Adoption of Husserlian Phenomenology." *Theory, Culture & Society*, 2004 (SAGE, London, Thousand Oaks), Vol. 21(2): 91-107.

reflexive attitudes because even at the reflexive stage we cannot completely detach our intuitive knowledge from our intermediate experience with reality.

In the context of the field theory, Myle's insight means that at the initial, naïve stage, we consciously espouse field's structures, its rules, and its games, and we rationally legitimize our intuitive knowledge of the field. At the second, reflexive stage, our doxic belief develops away from a naïve attitude because it is informed by our experience of the field, when we enter the field's discourse, interact with other agents, and adjust our beliefs (naïve attitudes) accordingly to these interactions. In the context of literary field, this discursive praxis involves writers' negotiations about their autonomy vis-à-vis field's rules and its questions and I would further argue that this interactive mode of being in literary field is its inherent feature.

Husserlian protodoxa has yet another dimension that reaches beyond a conventional or historical understanding of primordiality—doxa is our original attitude toward social world. Literary protodoxa is also something more than a historically first belief in autonomy—it is a source of and the main reference point for all later beliefs in the autonomy of literary worlds. This phenomenological distinction has one consequence for Bourdieu's model which emphasizes the historicity of literary doxa. Bourdieu studies historical origins of literary doxa to show that neither its validity nor the erroneous belief in the autonomy on which it rests are ever contested in literary field. Contrary to this view I would argue that if naïve attitude enables literary praxis than it is irrelevant for our understanding of that praxis whether such attitude rests on the objectively correct belief or the erroneous one. I would even argue, contrary to Bourdieu's reproductive theory, that doxic (naïve) attitudes are not reproduced, albeit habitually, but are imitated. Hence, the praxis of literary doxa unfolds as a ceaseless recurrence of the original belief in the autonomy and its modifications because, inevitably, every return to the original belief is different.

What are the implications of this theoretical debate for the sociology of literary field? If we return to the German literary field, we can track down its protodoxa to the 18th century when it was first articulated by a circle of the Early Romantics around Friedrich Schlegel. For the Early Romantics, art was a man's refuge from modern society where one could distance oneself from social world in order to connect to it as different human being. Through art, humans could restore a repressed mode of communication, a possibility to express and understand human experience, and generally a better world.³⁰ Literature was viewed as the only form of artistic praxis which was able to simultaneously free itself from society and to connect back to it through social criticism and reflection. Romantic communities, which lived and 'acted out' their art in everyday life, thus launched the tradition of living of one's own aesthetic style which, through a set of rules, shaped the writer's identity. On the one hand were these rules confining, on the other they made it possible for writers to detach themselves from social world and to abstain from its conventions. This protodoxic belief in autonomy was initially practiced also by the writers of the *Gruppe 47* who abstained from political and aesthetic discourses which they viewed as their two major confines. In the fifties, the writers still declared the *Gruppe* as an avowedly

³⁰ Early Romantics attempted to define an autonomous place with no relation to social reality—a utopian place outside the vicious circle of society. A philosopher and a literary critic Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) considered art to be such a place and he argued that it had to be "functionally dissociated" from the outer world. Schlegel found inspiration for his ideas in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, particularly in Kant's view that the emancipation of the arts was an inevitable outcome of modernization. Josef Friedrich Wilhelm von Schelling, *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Essays*. Thomas Pfau, Ed., (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994)

apolitical association with an exclusively aesthetic agenda, searching for new literary language. Theodor Adorno was the first one to address the fallibility of German literary language when he pointed to the procrastinating legacy of Nazi aesthetics full of floral language and obscure metaphors. Adorno's penetrating insights triggered the literary debate in the *Gruppe* which resulted in an adoption of a strictly non-ornamental, ascetic literary style known as New Realism.³¹ Yet, the debate climaxed with an unexpected esthetic trajectory of Günter Grass who combined the style of New Realism with his own ornamental and metaphoric language—precisely the kind of language that the *Gruppe 47* denounced as a residuum of Nazi aesthetics.

Grass' trajectory is sociologically interesting for two reasons. Paradoxically, it was Grass' rich metaphoric language, and not the style of New Realism, which laid the foundations of literary and political narratives of German guilt for war and the Holocaust. Literary historian Thomas Kniesche speaks of Grass own concept of metaphoric language—the one that is freed from its metaphysical vagueness and it suitable for scrutinizing reality.³² Kniesche notices that Grass historicized the metaphor by “turning it to history”—that is by framing it with always concrete social context. Grass's metaphoric language thus challenged postwar clichés about Nazism as a deception of the credulous people or as a momentary lapse of reason. Grass mastered historical metaphor in his major postwar novel *The Tin Drum*, which, I would argue, was the first articulation of German guilt in German postwar literature. In the novel, Grass uses a rhetoric figure that I would characterize as a metaphor “without exit”, which does not leave a way out from guilty conscience. Guilt is the only conscience that Grass' novel provides and all attempts to alleviate it are doomed to failure. Grass historicizes guilt by weaving it into individual memories of the novel's main protagonist; hence, guilt, which remains universal on the level of a concept, is personalized through the memories because it is always somebody's guilt that the novel brings up.

Grass' trajectory anticipated a shift in the commitments of the *Gruppe's* writers from aesthetic to political questions and envisioned their confining effect on their artistic autonomy. Literary debate is interesting for it shows that the new aesthetics was not imposed on writers but was negotiated by them, and provokes the assumptions that these negotiations were conducive to the politicization of the *Gruppe* in the sixties. Secondly, it challenges the dominant assumption that political positions inform aesthetic attitudes of writers, which are prevalent in the sociology of literature (Bourdieu 2000, 1996; Sapiro 2003; Griswold 2000).

The distinction between the functional and the discursive approaches to literary doxa is perhaps most salient when we study doxa in its *naïve* mode. According to Bourdieu's functional model, naïve belief in the field's autonomy is imposed upon the habituses when they follow and reproduce its rules. According to the discursive model, naivety can vary from habitual to strategic apprehensions of the field, its rules, and its questions. Once naivety turns from a belief into an attitude, it undergoes “Husserlian” cycle of doxic modalities—from the initial naïve attitude, through its projection into everyday praxis, and finally to its reflective understanding. In the

³¹ Heinrich Böll was the “founding father” of New Realism. He declared its the principles in the essay on *Trümmerliteratür* (literature if rubbles), which he first read at the *Gruppe's* meeting in 1952, and promoted them in the novel *Acquainted with the Night* (*Und sagte kein einziges Wort*, 1954). Heinrich Böll. „Bekanntnis zur Trümmerliteratür.“ *Saufräumungs Arbeiten: Erzählungen aus Deutschland 1945-1948*. Ed. Thomas Friedrich, Berlin: Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983, Pp. 5-9.

³² Thomas W Kniesche. “Distrust the Ornament: Günter Grass and the Textual/Visual Imagination.” *Gegenwarts Literatur; Ein Germanistisches Jahrbuch*. (Staufenburg Verlag, 1/2002) 9.

context of literary field, the persistence of literary autonomy is comparable with, what Jeffrey Goldfarb calls, the persistence of cultural freedom. Such freedom emerges from a free public realm where public institutions that are “relatively autonomous from societal power centers (1982: 40)” provide the terrain for relative autonomy of artistic practices. In Goldfarb’s analysis of the performing arts, artistic freedom begins as an attitude but unfolds as a pursuit in which artistic imagination complements the unpredictability and the creativity of social world. Artistic creativity can withstand its own autonomy vis-à-vis the political and the economic constraints that constitute the terrain for artistic innovations precisely by confining them.³³ Goldfarb’s insights about creativity as a locus of artistic autonomy plays with the idea of autonomy of art as if it was social fact and are contiguous with the view of doxa as a force which, too, can generate autonomous spaces qua other fields of power and of its persistent naivety as a locus of this generative power. It can be argued that precisely in its naivety lies the enabling power of doxic attitude as a valid alternative approach to reality yet, it is not validity in a normative sense of rendering or falsifying the truth about social world, but in a sense of different apprehension of that reality.

Habitus and Experience

Habitus is a social entity that tangibly connects two more abstract categories analyzed in this article—the field and the doxa. It is a site where objective structures intersect with subjective experience. As a consequence of this intersection, habitus is a locus of the tension between the lived experience and its articulation vis-à-vis social world—an articulation that remains exasperatingly inadequate. A deficit in the communication between these two structural components of habitus—to encounter reality and to narrate about this experience—is a source of its ambivalent configuration. How do sociologists deal with this ambivalence? Bourdieu’s methodological solution lies in his concept of embodiment, which reconciles the tension between the objectively given external forces and an individual body for the sake of the forces. The process of embodiment unfolds as an internalization of the field’s structures during which the external reality (of the field) becomes the embodied reality of a habitus. In social praxis it means that we incorporate the external structures that shape us, the rules that control our behavior, the conventions that determine our interactions—the entire apparatus of everyday coercion that subtly, or blatantly, disciplines our bodies. Not only do we internalize the rules and accept their limitations, we keenly reproduce them and carry them out without being aware of their restrictive nature. We may even appreciate this sense of our own limits qua the world because the clear contours of our actions and possibilities add the certainty to our lives and, perhaps, even endow them with meaning. Then, the docility of the body rises to the docility of the mind. Our minds, too, dutifully follow the rule, to borrow the phrase from Charles Taylor, and we comply also mentally.³⁴ But do we fully comply and can we? Do not our ambivalences persist? And are the spaces where we can abstain from that omnipresent docility only illusory products of the game that we all play or are they real for precisely the same reason?

³³ Goldfarb shows that under the conditions of high ideologization and politicization of art in socialist era, Polish theatre was at peak of its artistic innovations and experimentation. In: Goldfarb, *The Persistence of Freedom*, 80, 128.

³⁴ For an innovative critical appraisal of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus see an article by Charles Taylor “To Follow the Rule”, *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, Richard Schusterman, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) 29-44.

In Bourdieu's model, an answer to these questions lies in the formative power of field's structures. Field relates to habitus as to the space of actual position and possibilities which "appear to wait for and call for [their] fulfillment (1996: 231-2)". This basic mode of being in the field—of maintaining positions and positions taking—unfolds as a social game which is controlled by the field's rules. In the literary field, the game has its historical specificities, such as the game's relative independence from other social constraints, as Bourdieu (1996) notices:

Since everything produced there [in the literary field] draws its existence and meaning, essentially, from the specific logic and the history of the game itself, this game is kept afloat by virtue of its own *consistency*, meaning the specific regularities which define it and the mechanisms—such as the dialectic of positions, dispositions and positions-takings—which confer on its own *conatus*. (p. 248)

Bourdieu maintains that the game is nothing else than participation on the illusion of the autonomy which is "rooted in the *illusio*, the collective belief in the game, and the values of its stakes (1996: 276)". By internalizing the rules of the game that is played in the given field, habitus becomes an epitome of that field—its *embodied* knowledge. All agents in the field have the same implicit understanding of the game—as far as the rules are functional and the game makes sense, this imitative praxis reactivates the game and corroborates the rules and the structure of the habituses.³⁵

Bourdieu's insistence on the durable constitution of habitus has one curious implication on his model: on the one hand, the model emphasizes the historicity of habitus yet on the other it overlooks the individual phases in its history. The model tacitly assumes that habitus remains the same during the entire process of its adaptation to the field and thus it eschews the different stages of the internalizing process, such as familiarization with the rules, their appropriation, acceptance, or rejection. Judith Butler (1999) maintains that this deficit on the temporal side of habitus is due to Bourdieu's focus on the "objective domain of the social field, a field described almost exclusively in spatialized terms (p. 125)". Due to this temporal deficiency, the model describes the reproduction of the rules as a mechanical process. Butler challenges this 'practical mimeticism' which in Bourdieu's theory "works always to produce conformity and congruence (p. 118)" and thus leaves unaddressed the question of ambivalence that is at the core of every imitation. She argues that "mimetic acquisition of norm is at once the condition by which a certain resistance to the norm is also produced; identification will not 'work' to the extent that the norm is fully incorporated, or, indeed, incorporable (p. 118)". Butler's insights weaken the deterministic tone of Bourdieu's concept of embodiment and point in the direction of experience as a source of the ambivalent structure of habitus.

In this respect, Husserl's distinction between the two types of experience—mediated (*Erfahrung*) and lived one (*Erlebnis*)—is quite relevant for the category of literary habitus that articulates and shares both types of experiences in the field, albeit differently. For instance, experience of literary autonomy is mediated (*Erfahren*) through tradition whereas direct experiences (*Erlebnis*) of the writers are usually shared through their stories. Unlike mediated experience, which is shared collectively as a written, oral, or habitual tradition, direct experience is lived individually and can

³⁵ Charles Taylor notices that: "express rules can function in our lives only along with inarticulate sense which is encoded in the body. It is this habitus which activates the rules." Taylor, "To Follow a Rule", 43.

remain unarticulated.³⁶ However, once the lived experience (*Erlebnis*) is articulated in a narrative and is vested with a belief it becomes a collectively shared experience. The same dynamics applies to the mediated tradition of autonomy (*Erfahrung*): what for habitus was an initially vague intuition about its autonomy becomes, via praxis, its embodied knowledge of the field. James Dodd (2004) shows that in Husserl's phenomenology, the embodiment of tradition undergoes different stages when, by accepting tradition, we embody its "received meaning...as something unclear but nevertheless passively given, even understood (p. 132)". Yet, this passive understanding is not the final stage of the appropriation of tradition but, as Dodd maintains, it is a precursor to "possible new ways of understanding (p. 133)". Dodd views passivity as a dormant potential for the future trajectories of experience and argues that: "passively embodied, it [tradition] is open to being taken up a kind of second life (p. 134)". More nuance view of the embodied understanding of tradition illuminates the different stages also in the appropriation of a belief in autonomy.

Each literary field has its own history of the embodiment of autonomy. The *Gruppe*'s history began with the debate about literary aesthetics, which marked a trajectory in the writers' apprehensions of their autonomy. The internalization of tradition of autonomy (*Erfahrung*) went in parallel with the politicization of writers, which was set off by the appeasing politics of memory practiced by CDU—it's main aim was to pacify the disturbing memories about National Socialist past.³⁷ Throughout the 1960s, most of the *Gruppe*'s writers engaged in different fractions of the West German political left and the political cleavages among them resulted in the disbandment of the *Gruppe*.³⁸ Both processes were highly discursive and they encouraged and facilitated numerous questions about Germany's Nazi past and about the aesthetic form(s) in which that past could best be accounted for. I would argue that during these political and aesthetic contestations, the writers of the *Gruppe 47* embodied aesthetic and political discourses of their literary field rather than its rigid structure. For instance, literary aesthetics of Günter Grass was a compromise between the old, metaphoric language and the style of New Realism that the *Gruppe* adopted as its literary canon. Similarly, writers negotiated their political stances, whether it was with their literary peers or with West German society at large. This reference brings us back to the dilemma about the fusion of rational and habitual strategies in Bourdieu's concept of habitus mentioned in the beginning of this article. Such fusion in a single habitus is problematic in functional model in which the belief in autonomy does not rest on rational grounds but is habitually adopted via literary praxis and its rules. On the other hand, in the discursive model is

³⁶ Paul Connerton's classification of memory works with three types: personal, cognitive, and performative. Personal memory equals personal history that can be reflected only by an individual herself. This memory can remain unspoken, even though it is often shared. Cognitive memory, on the other hand, consists of knowledge which needs the particular context in which it can be remembered; habitual memory is the reactivation of past knowledge through performance. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*. (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 22-27.

³⁷ The amnesty granted by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to NSDAP criminals in 1954, the accession of the Federal Republic to NATO in 1955, and the ban of Communist Party in 1956, were among those political events that mobilized West German intellectuals in the late 1950s.

³⁸ In the early sixties, the turbulent political events in and outside the Federal Republic divided the *Gruppe* in three ideological fractions: moderate liberals (Werner Richter, Günter Grass, and Sigfried Lenz), who continued their commitments with SPD; socialists (Heinrich Böll and Martin Weiss), who took a strong critical stance against SPD, and the leftist radicals (Martin Walser and Hans Magnus Enzensberger), joined the New Left. These political and ideological cleavages deepened during the second half of the sixties and brought the Group 47 to its end. See Heinz Ludwig Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47*. (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 2004) 125.

literary praxis understood as a process during which field's agents switch between rational strategies and habitual or intuitive behaviors. Discursive model works from an assumption that the basic mode of being in the literary field, its *modus operandi*, is to negotiate the degree of one's autonomy and not to take it for granted, as Bourdieu asserts. This interactive mode of being in the field is mainly given by a specific question, or a set of questions that procrastinate there and which, eventually, can motivate a writer to enter the field. Writer's relation to the field's question(s)—whether they concern past or recent events, a specific historical or experience, or one's position and orientation in the world—can also be informed by her lived or mediated experience.³⁹ Experience in its direct form (*Erlebnis*) is one of those ambiguous variables that sociologists dilute by objectifying it—by explaining it as an inevitable outcome of the structural processes (Bourdieu 2000; 1996).⁴⁰ A more synthesizing concept of experience, which fuses its lived and its mediated forms, can illuminate also the formation of (literary) habitus of the *Gruppe 47* and the two types of motivations that were entwined in it: to succeed in the literary field and to relate to the question about Germany's Nazi past. The motivation to succeed was guided by the formalistic strategies of the *Gruppe's* literary canon (New Realism) but also by a relative freedom of writers to variegated the principles of that canon or to depart from it completely, as was the case of Günter Grass. The motivation to respond to the field's question was driven by the writers' personal experiences with the recent past, which they shared through their literary texts and expressed in their political attitudes. All of the writers lived through (*Erlebte*) war and the totalitarian regime of the Third Reich; most of them were enlisted, sent to the front, ended up as the US prisoners of war, and all of them witnessed the rise and the fall of National Socialism.⁴¹

With respect to embodiment and its relevance for the formation of literary habitus, it can be argued that the constitution of habitus is a multidimensional process in which writer's experience is not fully absorbed by the field's structures but becomes one of its productive sources. It can further be assumed that a writer, who is a carrier of literary habitus, does not fully adapt to the field but, by variegating its rules, he negotiates the degree of his autonomy in that field. Contrary to Bourdieu's insight that these negotiations are motivated predominantly by writer's desire to

³⁹ This also applies to all past events that a writer did not experience personally but which circulate as identity narratives for a group to which the writer belongs. They constitute indirect experience that serve as reference points for writer's work. For instance, slavery is one of the most durable mediated experiences that has been reiterated and re-articulated as a literary question in the US literary field.

⁴⁰ For instance, in her analysis of the literary habitus of The *Gruppe 47*, Sabine Cofalla uses Bourdieu's concept of objectification of writer's experience. The study aligns writers based on the objective forces, such as class origins, cultural or intellectual backgrounds, to argue that they were conducive to the construction of the middle-class habitus that prevailed in the *Gruppe*. According to Cofalla, similar social backgrounds of the writers determined thematic and stylistic ranges of their texts. The study, nevertheless, illuminates neither motives nor sources of the critical attitudes toward these middle-class values that prevailed in the writers' political commitments in the sixties. Cofalla, "Elitewechsel im literarischen Feld nach 1945." *German Monitor*, No.45, 244-262.

⁴¹ Heinrich Böll's novel *And Where Were You, Adam?* (1951) or Wolfgang Borchert's play *The Man Outside* (1947) were among the first post-war writings, yet they were still more descriptive than critical. First critical accounts of Adenauer's Germany appeared in Wolfgang Koeppen's novel *Pigeons on the Grass* (1951). *Gruppe's* literature took a more political turn in the sixties with Rolf Hochhuth's play *Deputy* (1963), which marked the line between the critical and the descriptive accounts of war. In the late sixties, Grass in his play *Local Anaesthetic* (1969) and Lenz in his novel *The German Lesson* (1968) criticized older generation for its keen and thoughtless participation on the practices of the Nazi state.

succeed in the field I would argue that they are motivated also by her desire to articulate her testimony about social world. With Goldfarb we might say, that this insistence on cultural freedom is not a rigid stance but a creative attitude toward the changing social world. If, following Husserlian phenomenology, we understand experience as knowledge then its two modalities—as mediated and as lived experience—are two different stages of habitus's knowledgeability. This is an important trajectory in the formation of literary habitus under the discursive model where autonomy is practiced and corroborated through ceaseless negotiations. Undoubtedly, literary autonomy as a permanent state of literary field remains an illusion, yet it is an illusion which yields power to generate relatively autonomous spaces.

Conclusion

The purpose of this analysis was to challenge a generalized use of the dominant assumptions in the sociology of literature that literary praxis is shaped and motivated by the same conformist practices as any other kind of human praxis, and that this conventionalism is disguised by literary doxa. This article does not deny or ignore such congruence between literary and non-literary worlds, nor does it disregard the legitimacy of Bourdieu's concerns about social construction of artistic practices and artistic tastes since reasons for appreciating the arts as well as the choices of what will be appreciated often vary from pragmatic to, indeed, appalling.⁴² In this respect, Bourdieu's scrutinizing insights about the logic of these practices are, and will continue to be acknowledged as exceptionally illuminative. However, it remains to be asked whether to ascribe the absolute validity to these phenomena is an adequate method for sociological understanding of the art worlds and of what is distinctively important in art as social practice. Undoubtedly, literature will continue to challenge our sociological imagination about the world that we inhabit and study. However, the counter-opinions to Bourdieu's theoretical premises, as they were outlined in this article, were inspired less by the world of the text than by the challenge to understand those social spaces that make such response possible.

Note:

This article benefited from discussion with members of the seminar on Art and Action at the New School for Social Research in 2005. Direct correspondence about this article to: gajdj095@newschool.edu.

⁴² In his major study of the social construction of taste, Bourdieu analyzes social function of art as the means of social stratification. He exposes the mechanisms that facilitate the (mis)uses of art for the purposes of acquiring and maintaining of social status. See Bourdieu, *Distinction* (1984).

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