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H-France Review Vol. 5 (December 2005), No. 139

Deborah Reed-Danahay, *Locating Bourdieu*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). xii + 208pp. Notes, bibliography and index. \$21.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 0-253-21732-6.

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In the Introduction to her new study of the work of the influential French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu, Deborah Reed-Danahay identifies one of her “underlying themes” as being “that of silences and ellipses both in Bourdieu’s work and in the literature on his work.” She goes on to provide a list of such “ellipses and silences”, which she intends to examine in each of the chapters which follow; the absence of any discussion of Islam in Bourdieu’s anthropological studies of Kabylia; the silences on the relationship between Catholicism and education in his studies of French education; the relative absence of attention in the secondary literature on his work either to Bourdieu’s relation to the field of Mediterranean Studies or to the role of emotion in his concept of “habitus” (p. 18). Further, Reed-Danahay announces her intention to complement existing secondary literature on Bourdieu’s work with “an ethnographic perspective” (p. 14). This “ethnographic perspective” refers not only to the insights Reed-Danahay can bring in her capacity as an anthropologist who has conducted ethnographic studies in French schools, but also to the discipline of “auto-ethnography”. This Reed-Danahay proposes to use as a means to cast light on the relationship between Bourdieu’s theoretical output, his own biography, and the semi-autobiographical or “reflexive” studies of his own “social trajectory” he published late in his life or that appeared shortly after his death.

As a statement of intent, this promises much and, indeed, in the course of pursuing this approach in the main body of her study, Reed-Danahay does raise a series of interesting, valid, and largely original questions of Bourdieu’s sociological theory and practice. However, her intention to use this approach the better to “locate” Bourdieu in both his national intellectual field and in the global field of social theory is ultimately frustrated by a series of fundamental flaws. The main body of the study is composed of a series of chapters devoted to, respectively, Bourdieu’s own biography and social trajectory, his work in the sociology of education, the relationship between his studies of France and those of Kabylia, the centrality of emotion to his concept of habitus, and his use of interview data in the light of his doubts as to the reliability of “the native point of view”. Each of these topics is entirely valid and merits further detailed analysis. However, the relationship between them is not entirely clear and Reed-Danahay’s study risks amounting merely to a series of reflections on disparate elements of Bourdieu’s work, which are never adequately linked together to form an overarching argument or coherent overall approach to his *oeuvre*. Secondly, Reed-Danahay’s analysis is marred by a series of basic errors of fact and interpretation, which lead the reader to question her reliability as a commentator on Bourdieu’s work. Thirdly, whilst Reed-Danahay does raise a series of interesting theoretical questions in relation to Bourdieu’s social theory, her analysis remains at too general a level, lacking the detail or conceptual rigour that might render her potentially interesting remarks in any way conclusive.

An early example of the kind of factual errors contained in this study can be found in the introduction, where Reed-Danahay criticises Bourdieu’s writings on education for being “too focused on secondary schooling” (p. 5). Given that none of Bourdieu’s studies of education concerns secondary schools, all dealing exclusively with higher education, this is a strange criticism indeed. [1] More seriously, in an analysis of Bourdieu’s study of the “grandes écoles”, *The State Nobility*, she asserts that “the centralized state controls all higher education in France” (p. 44). This is simply untrue and ignores the existence of significant numbers of privately run “grandes écoles” in France. To name but the most obvious example,

the prestigious Parisian “grande école” HEC (École des hautes études commerciales) is independent of the state, established and run by the Parisian Chamber of Commerce. Moreover, HEC has been joined over the past decades by an increasing number of such privately run institutions, predominantly business schools.

Reed-Danahay’s mistaken assumption that all higher education in France is controlled by the state is no minor slip. For, at the core of Bourdieu’s analysis in *The State Nobility*, is his critique of the rise of these independent, “heteronomous” “grandes écoles”, at the expense of the more “autonomous” state-run “écoles”, such as his *alma mater*, the École normale supérieure. Reed-Danahay seems unaware of this facet of Bourdieu’s work on education and this leads her to claim that his work in this area “manifests a growing interest in a critique of the state as an institution and its role in domination” (p. 46). In fact, by the time of the publication of *The State Nobility* (originally 1989), Bourdieu was quite evidently beginning to accept that the state, for all its failings, was infinitely preferable to the unbridled power of the market and that, as such, it might be able to safeguard certain “universal” values and ideals. By the last decade of his career, Bourdieu was issuing trenchant calls for “the Hegelian State—of which the French Third Republic was nearly an exact incarnation” to be protected, calls for “the defence of the Hegelian or Durkheimian vision according to which the state, far from being reducible solely to a class-based state, is also society’s self-awareness.” Thus Bourdieu trumpeted the capacity of the state “to find in the universal a compromise between opposing interests, in other words in public service, the general interest, education, disinterested amateurism, and large-scale independent non-profit-making educational institutions.”<sup>[2]</sup> Towards the end of her study, Reed-Danahay does note that, late in his career, Bourdieu began to call for a strengthening of the interventionist state (p. 146). However, she fails to explain how this relates to her earlier comment regarding his “growing interest in a critique of the state”. Of course, a lot depends here on what Reed-Danahay understands by “a critique of the state”. Does she mean Bourdieu increasingly criticised the state’s dominance over an education system which served to reproduce social inequalities? Or does she mean that Bourdieu increasingly criticised the state for failing to protect the “universal” values of education from the particular interests that hold sway over the market? The former appears to be the case, although this is never made entirely clear. Thus, whilst it is arguable that Bourdieu’s own position regarding the state was highly contradictory, Reed-Danahay’s comments on this important issue do little to clarify the nature of any such contradiction.

Such errors of fact are compounded by basic errors of interpretation, particularly in the treatment of the relationship between Bourdieu’s anthropological studies of Kabylia and his studies of class, education, and social distinction in post-war France. Reed-Danahay argues that throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Bourdieu understood the relationship between “traditional” Kabyle society and modern France in terms of a straightforward dichotomy between the “different systems of power” that operated in “societies that were preliterate” and “literate state societies” (p. 912). This dichotomy, she claims, became less stark after the 1989 publication of *The State Nobility*, in which Bourdieu “demonstrated a more nuanced version of the reproduction theory of education that lessened the split between ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ systems”, by drawing parallels between the “implicit” forms of “symbolic domination” in Kabylia and those at work in the “grandes écoles” (p. 94). What Reed-Danahay overlooks here is that those sections of *The State Nobility* in which Bourdieu drew such parallels between Kabylia and France date from the mid-1970s, having originally been published in article form at that time.<sup>[3]</sup> Moreover, in the 1976 article “Les Modes de domination”, whose conclusions were rehearsed in both *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *The Logic of Practice* (1980), Bourdieu argued that the “implicit”, “symbolic”, “gentle” forms of domination, characteristic of “traditional” societies such as Kabylia, were increasingly “returning” to become the predominant form of power or mode of domination in advanced, consumer capitalist societies, such as France. *Distinction*, originally published in 1979, is an attempt to identify and analyse the operation of such implicit forms of domination in 1960s and 1970s France; this is why Bourdieu could describe *Distinction* (1979) and *The Logic of Practice* (1980), an anthropological study of Kabylia, as being two “complementary” studies.<sup>[4]</sup> From at least the mid-1970s on, then, Bourdieu

explicitly drew analogies between the systems of power in Kabylia and in the West. The chronology of his publications simply does not support Reed-Danahay's claims either that his thinking underwent a significant shift in this respect in the late 1980s, or that, prior to this, he had posited a straightforward dichotomy between systems of power in the West and those operative in "traditional" Kabylia. This error of interpretation is again no minor matter since it constitutes a serious flaw in Reed-Danahay's understanding of Bourdieu's theorisation of power and its mode of operation in advanced capitalist societies such as post-war France.[5]

Sadly, even in those areas where Reed-Danahay does seem to have new and important insights to offer, her analysis remains inconclusive. Thus, she is quite right to note the important and as yet largely overlooked role of emotion in Bourdieu's concept of the habitus. However, rather than conducting a rigorous analysis of Bourdieu's understanding of emotion and of his contribution to the sociology of emotions, Reed-Danahay limits herself to merely noting the importance of emotion to the habitus, before making a series of extremely generalised comparisons with other sociological and philosophical theories of emotion. To give but one example of this kind of approach, she quite rightly notes that Bourdieu's work in this area draws on "Pascal's own approach to reason" (p. 110). Yet she offers no explanation of the nature of Pascal's approach to reason, of the manner in which Bourdieu makes use of Pascal, or of how this might make his approach distinct from, even superior to the work of other theorists in this domain. Reed-Danahay's comparison between Bourdieu's and Foucault's theories of power, the body, and subject formation proves equally unconvincing, being conducted at a similarly generalised level of analysis. Having offered an extremely condensed summary of Foucault's account of power and education, she concludes that Bourdieu's approach is similar "despite" his own "distancing from" Foucault (p. 61). Again, this raises more questions than it answers, since Reed-Danahay provides no analysis of the substance of Bourdieu's claims to the distinctiveness of his theories from Foucault's nor, having implied that such claims conceal a fundamental affinity, does she explain why Bourdieu might have made them. There are a series of significant conceptual differences between Foucault's and Bourdieu's respective social theories and skating over these by reference to a shared interest in questions of power and education does not appear to contribute much to our understanding of either thinker.

In sum, Reed-Danahay's study of Bourdieu proves something of a disappointment. This is truly a shame since, in places, her analysis shows genuine insight and she is never afraid to question or criticise the assumptions behind fundamental aspects of Bourdieu's social theory. There are the beginnings of an incisive and insightful critical analysis of Bourdieu's work here but, in order to realise her initial promise, Reed-Danahay would have had to undertake a much more detailed and conceptually rigorous analysis than the one she ultimately offers us.

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## NOTES

[1] See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Inheritors: French Students and their Relation to Culture*, tr. R. Nice, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979) and *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, tr. R. Nice, (London: Sage, 1977); Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, tr. P. Collier, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988) and *The State Nobility*, tr. L. Clough, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

[2] Pierre Bourdieu, "The State, Economics and Sport", tr. H. Dauncey and G. Hare, *Culture, Society and Sport*, vol.1, no.2 (1998): 20.

[3] See Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint Martin, 'Les Catégories de l'entendement professoral', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no.3 (1975): 68-93.

[4] Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, tr. M. Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p.23.

[5] For a more assured analysis of Bourdieu's theorisation of power, see David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997).

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