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Misrecognition, Planning, and Cultural Capitalism

Independent Theatremaking in Ireland, 1990-2007

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

to the Department of Drama, School of Drama, Film and Music
Trinity College, University of Dublin

by

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March 2010

Supervisor: Prof. Stephen Wilmer
Declaration

I, Joshua A Edelman, the author of the thesis *Misrecognition, Planning and Cultural Capitalism: Independent Theatremaking in Ireland 1990-2007* submitted in 2010 to the Department of Drama, Trinity College Dublin, hereby declare that

— this work has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other University,
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Summary

This dissertation presents a critique of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology of the fields and practices of cultural production through an examination of the case study of independent theatremaking in Ireland between 1990 and 2007. Based on both a theoretical analysis of field-and-practice theory derived from Bourdieu and an ethnographic study of the ways that Irish theatremakers and arts policy workers make sense of their practices, this work seeks to further our understanding of cultural sociology in theatre studies and more generally. It also aims to sketch a detailed and accurate portrait of the Irish theatrical field useful to theatremakers and policy workers alike.

The first chapter begins with an overview of current sociological methods in theatre studies and suggests that they too often lack focus. It puts forward a proposal for one way that theatre sociology could proceed. It specifies this method through an examination of field theory and the notion of ‘practical intelligibility’ borrowed from the Wittgensteinian social theory of Theodore Schatzki. It contrasts this approach with ‘textual methods’ which take as their object not theatrical practice but various theatrical phenomena that it reads as if they were texts. Included in this category are those methods which see theatre as a subset of either literature or performance generally. In doing so, the chapter engages with Bourdieu’s own work on literature as well as the performance studies tradition of Victor Turner and Richard Schechner and specifically contrasts the approaches of Raymond Williams’s cultural studies and Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory. After differentiating Bourdieu’s thought from these alternatives, it goes on to discuss the dynamics of Bourdieu’s particular theoretical project, and in particular, his scepticism towards the ability of formal philosophical discourse to capture the reality of lived practice. It highlights a key and problematic element of Bourdieu’s social thought: the notion of méconnaissance (misrecognition), which insists that practitioners are necessarily unable to see the truth of the practice in which they are involved. After examining a few attempts to combat misrecognition that Bourdieu finds unsuccessful, it notes that Bourdieu’s commitment to a critical sociology requires him both to see misrecognition in the field and be unable, as an intellectual, to do anything about it. The chapter will close with the suggestion that artistic fields, especially those that are dependent on a central planning and funding authority like the Irish theatre, might provide a counterexample to the necessity of misrecognition.

The second chapter takes up that challenge with a examination of the Arts Council of Ireland’s efforts to shape the development of the theatrical field through its policies and
practices, especially the Arts Plans of 1994, 1999, and 2002. It surveys the history of Irish state intervention in the theatre and the consolidation of power by the Arts Council and political developments that led to the Plans’ formation. It examines the Plans’ language and the history of their implementation and demise. It attempts to assess their success through a statistical survey of funding data for the Irish theatre since 1990 and a set of interviews with current and former arts policy makers. As this approach is unable to explain the observed data, the chapter proposes that Arts Council funding serves as a form of formal approval from the state. The means by which the Council conveys this approval, and how effective it has been in doing so, are analyzed, and examines how even with this power, the Council is unable to achieve its goals. It is noted that Council employees were aware of the gap between their professed policies and their implementation of them. The chapter proposes that this policy work should therefore be seen as a “third practice” in the theatrical field, next to theatremaking and theatregoing.

The third chapter uses a survey and set of long-form interviews with Irish theatremakers to sketch out the practical intelligibility that undergirds their work. The key framework used in this sketching is the notion of multiple capitals grounded in a field’s doxa. The chapter identifies three primary capitals relevant to Irish theatremakers: funding (as a form of approval from the Arts Council and not simply money), development (that which will be useful to the Irish theatre of the future), and collegiality. It examines the nature and means of distribution of these capitals and the means by which they are contested. It looks at their overlap and conflict through the notion of niches that companies are expected to fill, and the means by which they embrace or reject that forced location. It closes by noting that the Bourdieusian notion of misrecognition is not to be found in the field as observed.

The conclusion begins by showing that misrecognition is not present in the ways that Bourdieu’s theory demands. It traces this problem to the distinction between the sens pratique and the sens logique, and suggests that the case study of the Irish theatre provides evidence that this distinction is unsustainable. It suggests that while there are meaningful distinctions between practices that affect what can be articulated within them, practical actors are cognizant of these distinctions and can use both logical and practical tools to make use of them as their needs demand.
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Finally, I have been privileged to spend the last few years working in and among the community of Irish theatremakers. They have been welcoming and generous to a curious stranger and a friendly and inspiring group of colleagues. I am quite aware of the tension inherent in my role as both their friend and their observer. I have tried to write this essay both about them and for them as an admiring but critical friend. Let me mention in particular Alan Stanford, David Parnell and Philip O’Sullivan, whose contributions to the Irish theatre have been immense and whose friendship to me has been a blessing.
Introduction: The Irish Theatre as Culture Theoretical Test Case

This is an essay about theatre as a social practice — that is, as something human beings do together. It tries to explain how people who make theatre understand the work they do and decide how to continue doing it. It also looks at the intellectual and practical challenges awaiting those who want to change the way the arts in general (and theatre in particular) are organized and thought about by artists, and how the arts fit in with the larger social world. In this effort, it engages with one central theorist and one central test case: French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), and the practice of theatremaking in Ireland in the 1990s and 2000s.

This is a very specific goal but one, I hope, with significant implications for larger discussions about the relationship between culture and society in the post-industrial world. Contemporary technology and thought has encouraged scepticism towards many of the ideas about the independence of the faculty of judgment and the social disconnection of artists that we have inherited from Kant and the Romantics. But these notions of pure artistic freedom has been problematic from the start. No responsible historian would present a study of Elizabethan performance practices without an attempt to understand the financial, political and social forces that shaped them and through which they made sense, and philosophical developments have not made this less the case for the modern era. The setting up of arts within a social matrix does not de-legitimize them; rather, it helps to explain their importance and power. I see no reason in principle that contemporary theatre should not be subject to the same scrutiny.

It may be argued that the reason that explanations the arts of the past need to refer to their social settings is that such settings are foreign to us; our present society, in contrast, is known. This is not entirely true. Contemporary cultural studies (in its British, French or American form) continues to give us new and sometimes startling insights into the cultural and social worlds in which we live. We often are unaware of the social forces behind much of what we do, either because we are simply ignorant of the information or because we have no need of it. Bourdieu’s central insight, that everyday participants in social practices have a different understanding of what they are doing than academics who examine such practices to find a logic, would encourage us to see that there is much in our own social
worlds that is invisible to us. In the conclusion, I will problematize this insight, but for now, it serves us well.

I am aware that this is not a typical essay in theatre studies. It does not examine the most important aspect of Irish theatre: the productions themselves. Nor does it discuss the experience of audiences in watching them. Rather, my concern is the social field that contains and conditions these productions and experiences. In no sense do I mean to assert that the sociological details of the theatrical field are more interesting or important than the productions being made or the audience’s experiences of them. I do assert, though, that these details have an analytical importance in their own right that has not been well studied in the existing scholarly literature.

Because of this overall concern, this essay will bracket out many central concerns of theatre studies. The largest such bracket is the aesthetic. I will (attempt to) refrain from all aesthetic evaluation, including the evaluation of phenomenological aesthetics from the point of view of the audience member. This does not come from lack of interest in theatrical aesthetics—I am an avid theatregoer and theatremaker and would never bother to turn up if it were not for aesthetic considerations. Instead, it comes from a longer-range desire to better understand theatrical aesthetics as they are practiced. Wittgenstein insists that language must be defined through its use and not through abstracted definition-building. Rather than beginning with the idea that theatre, as an art, must or ought to operate in this or that manner, I would like to examine some of the values that theatremakers actually use in their practice. If others wish to label these values as aesthetic, I have no objection, but I do not think that we make much of an interpretative gain by assuming at the outset that theatrical practice adheres to this or that definition of an aesthetic or artistic act.¹

This is not to say that the term ‘aesthetic’ or ‘artistic’ will not be used in this essay. The notion of artistry is basic to the way Irish theatremakers understand what they do, what it means, and how they ought to continue with it. This on-the-ground understanding is what Theodore Schatzki calls “practical intelligibility,” a term I will borrow from him in the next part. As this essay seeks to describe that practical intelligibility, it needs to make use of aesthetic language. What it does not need to do, however, is define the term ‘artistic,’ or evaluate various definitions of the term, or even claim that the (still-undefined) ‘artistic’ is the essential part of what makes theatre into itself. While I do not subscribe to the

¹ This position differs from that of Hans van Maanen and Natalie Heinich, who are concerned with describing the peculiarly artistic character of theatrical practices. See Hans van Maanen, How to Study Art Worlds: On the Societal Functioning of Aesthetic Values (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), particularly chapter 4.
ethnomethodological idea that those who are part of a practice are always necessarily correct in their assessment of it—indeed, that is the very methodological point that this essay seeks to explore—I do think it is methodologically wise to remain agnostic as to these key terms. In the theatre, we should assume that the artistic is what theatre people say it is unless and until we have some reason to think otherwise. That is, what this essay needs to do is not so much describe what the artistic is as recognize it. This, I believe, will help us more clearly see the social function of the aesthetic category.

There are a number of ways that a project to examine theatre’s role in society can proceed, and there is inevitably an element of contingency in the adopting of one of them. My choice of central theorist and case study are conditioned both by my own intellectual background and the context in which this essay was written. But the two are also chosen with regard to one other, and I have tailored the borders of each so that they can comment on each other more directly. I intend the Irish case study to test Bourdieu’s theory and help shed light on some of its limitations. The data on which Bourdieu bases his claims come largely from 1970s France, but if his conclusions are to have the general status of theory, they ought to be able to apply to other situations as well. In that they do not, they need to be revised. In this revision, I do not share the fundamental scepticism to all social-theoretical concepts of French sociologist of science Bruno Latour and his Actor-Network Theory.

General theories can help us make sense of and explain unfamiliar social phenomena. But they do need to be continuously checked against concrete social data and the objective conditions under which people live their social lives. This essay hopes to make a small contribution to that effort.

For clarity’s sake, the rest of this introduction will spell out more precisely the theoretical basis this essay borrows from Bourdieu and the case study to be applied to it.

**Pierre Bourdieu**

For all the criticism of his work, Pierre Bourdieu remains one of the central theorists of culture with whom anyone who wants to say something about the social function of the

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2 My training is in anthropology and religion, and in particular, the overlap between ritual performance and theatrical performance. I came to Bourdieu as a more systematic and helpful alternative to the Victor Turner/Richard Schechner line of thought on this overlap, and as one that was more in keeping with the approach taken by the most interesting scholars of ritual such as Catherine Bell. As I wrote this essay at Trinity College Dublin while working in that city’s theatrical community, the Irish case study was clearly the one to hand.

arts in the 21st century must contend. His importance to social thought is immense, and his ideas therefore deserve to be scrutinized in rigorous detail. As I hope will be apparent from this essay, I have great respect for him and his work. However, this respect has led me to approach him critically and not reverentially. I see problems with Bourdieu’s theories of cultural fields, especially when applied to collaborative or performing arts, particularly in the context of government subsidy. These problems are profound and their elucidation and correction motivate this essay. However, I do not wish to imply, and I see no reason to conclude, that Bourdieu’s framework for thinking about cultural life is outdated or should be discarded. Despite the need for correction, his work still represents one of the great sociological insights into culture of contemporary times.

Bourdieu grew up in a working-class home in a small town in provincial Aquitaine, in the southwest corner of France. His teachers noticed his prodigious intellect while he was still very young, and he was sent to Paris to study at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand and then the École Normale Supérieure, where he read philosophy under, among others, Louis Althusser. His began his academic career as a Lévi-Strauss-influenced ethnographer of the Kabyle people of Algeria. His fieldwork, undertaken during the latter years of the Algerian War of Independence (1958-1962), gave him firsthand experience of the interactions between politics and ethnography, as well as the flexibility and adaptability of ‘traditional’ cultural systems in the face of changing realities. The book that resulted was a major success both in France and abroad. Later in his career, particularly after his appointment to the Collège de France in 1981, he applied the sociological tools he had honed in Algeria to a wide variety of areas of French society: sport, literature, culture, education, the academic world, and sociology itself. Perhaps his most discussed work is Distinction, a large-scale sociological analysis of the French public’s taste for such things as art, music, television, clothing, and food. It remains a sociological classic to this day. By the 1990s, as one of

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4 Hans van Maanen calls him “undoubtedly … the most influential art sociology of the second half of the twentieth century.” Van Maanen, How to Study Art Worlds, 55.
7 At its 1998 conference, the International Sociology Association named Distinction the sixth-most influential book of the twentieth century.
France's leading public intellectuals, he participated in a good many public debates and controversies, both as protestor and (occasionally) as a government expert.  

Thomas Osborne makes a convincing case that Bourdieu's work should be understood in the context of the Marx-inspired tradition of cultural theory, partially because of the broadly educational (as opposed to merely descriptive) impulse behind it. In this, he links Bourdieu to Theodor Adorno and Michel Foucault. Though Bourdieu was never a politician or an activist, he did not regard himself as a neutral observer, either. He was deeply interested in the objective conditions of each practice he studied, and simultaneously felt the need to create some kind of framework within which these facts could be best understood—hence the concepts for which he is best known today (habitus, field, sens pratique, and so on). Certainly, this is a Marxian influence that often bubbles up above the surface, but it also differentiates Bourdieu (and Osborne's other cultural theorists) from the cultural studies tradition that grew up in Britain in the wake of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams. The contemporary academic paradigm of cultural studies owes quite a bit to both schools of thought, but this essay will focus on the Bourdieusian.

Bourdieu's scholarship touches on many issues, and it would be unwise to attempt to wrestle with the whole of it here. In what follows, my focus is on the concepts of field, practice, capital, doxa, méconnaissance (misrecognition), and the relationships between them. This is a long list, but not an exhaustive one. The most obvious exclusions are the concepts of class and taste and the relationship between the two (the primary topic of Distinction). This essay has nothing to say about the relationship between taste and class in the Irish theatre, and because its focus is on theatremaking, it sets the bulk of Bourdieu's work on taste aside.

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8 David L. Swartz, "From Critical Sociology to Public Intellectual: Pierre Bourdieu & Politics," in After Bourdieu: Influence, Critique, Elaboration, ed. David L. Swartz and Vera L. Zolberg (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 348. Swartz spells out Bourdieu's difficult relationship with governmental authority well: "On a few occasions during the eighties Bourdieu functioned as an expert advising political authority under a socialist government. But one could hardly characterize him as assuming a major advisory role to the left government. Bourdieu himself was far too critical of power and too fearful of falling into a kind of intellectual servitude role to political leadership to join in any official way the Mitterand government."

9 Thomas Osborne, The Structure of Modern Cultural Theory (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2008).

10 There are theoretical and methodological consequences of this move. The most confusing is a terminological difficulty over the term 'cultural capital.' In Distinction, Bourdieu uses the term to mean a certain 'elevated' taste which serves as a class marker and resource for the culture-consuming public. In his work on cultural production, however, he uses it in a very different sense, to describe the value held by autonomous work which accepts only the field's own criteria. It is this latter sense with which this essay engages.
My theoretical focus, then, is a line that runs from some of Bourdieu’s earliest theoretical writings (*The Logic of Practice*, primarily) to his later work on theory, reflexivity, and the scientific practice (*Pascalian Meditations, Science of Science*, and a few others). The middle works (*The Rules of Art* and *The Field of Cultural Production* in particular) are important more for their application of Bourdieu’s earlier insights to particular case studies than for their contribution to that theoretical through line. This line is not straight and unproblematic; there are differences in Bourdieu’s terminology between the beginning and end of his career that can lead to theoretical confusion, particularly his preference for the notion of ‘practice’ in his earlier writings and ‘field’ in the latter. But it does represent a reasonably consistent position which can be assessed, debated, and critiqued. It also is the thread of Bourdieu’s thinking that is most overtly concerned with social epistemology and the one most connected to the forbearer he most reveres, Ludwig Wittgenstein. To make the connection between Bourdieu and Wittgenstein clearer, I will make use of some of Wittgenstein’s own work as well as that of American social theorist Theodore Schatzki.

This essay’s principal critique of that thread involves the concept of *méconnaissance*, or misrecognition. It is a phenomenon that Bourdieu believes is a necessary aspect of any field of practice, including the arts. Bourdieu sees misrecognition as a consequence of the fact that fields of practice are governed by the *sens practique* (practical logic) and not the academic’s *sens logique* (logical sense, or even logical logic). As the *sens practique* does not permit a correct assessment of the values (i.e., capitals) that structure a field, they must be misrecognized as something else (building one’s own reputation as pure creativity, for instance).

If Bourdieu is correct in this view, it ought to be impossible for practitioners in a field to (successfully) plan for their own futures. At the very least, *méconnaissance* ought to make planning highly counterintuitive for those steeped in the patterns of thought that typify a practice. If one could successfully plan a cultural field, in contrast, that would imply that the values that structure it were correctly identified, and thus misrecognition had been overcome. Whether this is possible (and if so, how) is the central question this essay will explore with the Irish case study.

It is important to note, though, that what Bourdieu identifies as instances of misrecognitions are essentially *practical intelligibilities*, that is, the ways practitioners have of thinking about what they do and continuing to do it. To make an assessment of *méconnaissance* and the power of planning, then, we will have to examine not only the objective conditions of the practice of theatremaking (organizational structures, buildings,
financial arrangements, and the like), but also the patterns of thought that are every bit as structuring as these more conspicuous forces.

Irish theatre, 1990-2007

The case study examined in this essay is that of independent Irish theatre making in the late 1990s and much of the first decade of the 2000s, a period known as the “Celtic Tiger” era because of the country’s sudden economic growth spurt. Ireland’s newfound wealth had a marked effect on its cultural life. Christopher Murray and Martin Drury offered an overall sketch of Irish theatrical life in 1998, and there has been considerable growth and diversification in the decade since. In the context of this essay, I cannot hope to cover the whole of Irish theatrical life in this period. To keep this essay honed, I have made two important limitations.

First, as I mentioned, this essay is concerned the practice of theatre making, not that of theatregoing, as this is the group to which Bourdieu’s notion of méconnaissance most overtly applies. While a Distinction-style study of Irish theatre audiences would be illuminating, it is beyond my project here. Nor is it my intention in referring to the practice of theatre making to describe all artists working in the Irish theatre. By the term ‘theatre makers,’ I mean those people who make the primary decisions about the production of theatre in Ireland. Generally, these people are called directors or producers. But these titles are not universally applicable; some use other names such as devisor or administrator, a few call themselves actors, and some more collective companies do not use titles at all. My point in using the term is to differentiate between those who have primary responsibility for choosing what productions will be made and how, and those who are employed to carry out the necessary artistic tasks to bring those productions to fruition. Of course this distinction cannot be hard and fast, but in general, directors and producers are a better fit for Bourdieu’s theory than are actors or designers (who, in Ireland, ordinarily work as

11 Ireland’s Gross National Income (GNI), per capita and adjusted for inflation, rose over 57% from 1995 to 2004, from €19,200 to €30,300 (in 2003 prices). During that period, the unemployment rate fell from about 12% to just over 4%. Central Statistics Office, "Measuring Ireland's Progress," (Dublin: Stationery Office, 2005), 17, 35.
12 By “Ireland” (and the adjective “Irish”), this essay normally refers to the 26-county Republic of that name, not including the 6 northern counties on the island of Ireland that are part of the United Kingdom, known as Northern Ireland. While there are strong cross-border links, Northern Ireland has a distinct theatrical culture and community and its own arts council with its own policies and concerns.
14 In the second part, I will add another practice that I will call “policy work” as a subject for analysis. For now, it is the exclusion of theatregoing that is relevant.
freelancers). The social agents whom Bourdieu discusses in his portrait of the French field of cultural production are largely solo artists: novelists and painters, who are primarily responsible for their own artistic work. This is my reason for restricting the term ‘theatremakers’ as I do.

Second, this essay cannot consider all instances of theatremaking in Ireland. They are simply too varied. There are (at least) four different (albeit sometimes overlapping) modes of making theatre in Ireland. First, there is amateur drama, performed in schools, churches, and community halls in which few, if any of the participants have any formal training or are paid. An important subset of this mode of theatremaking is youth drama, sometimes led by professional facilitators. A 1995 report claimed that there were more than 1000 amateur theatre groups in Ireland; while this number may be somewhat inflated, it is clear that amateur drama is an order of magnitude larger than its professional counterpart. Murray and Drury note that the aims of amateur drama are largely “social and cultural” and compare it to another major Irish cultural institution, the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Second, there are the few for-profit companies which operate in Ireland, often with existing Broadway scripts or foreign personnel. Though this mode is rare—Ireland is simply not large enough to support much successful commercial theatremaking—it does exist and is, of course, housed in the largest venues. These first two modes—amateur and for-profit theatremaking—have an important feature in common: neither receives funding from the state’s arts authority, the Arts Council, which, as I will argue below, is an important marker of legitimacy among professional theatremakers.

Although the third and fourth modes are more closely related to one another, I would argue that they are still distinct. The third mode is represented by Ireland’s two largest theatres, the Abbey and Gate, which function quite differently than any others theatre companies in the country. They own building which house all of their non-touring work and in which they produce a regular season of performances. They are easily the largest and richest theatres in the country, in terms of subsidy, box office revenue, production activity, and staff. They also have a steady and regular audience in a way that

16 Murray and Drury, "Ireland," 355.
17 Murray and Drury note that an adequate “population base” to support commercial work does not exist in Ireland outside of Dublin and, to a lesser extent, Cork. Ibid., 339.
18 Murray and Drury noted the occasional production of what they term “legitimate drama” in commercial venues, but this was a phenomenon largely confined to the 1980s. While Dublin’s larger commercial venues did see larger-scale commercial productions of O’Casey and other Irish standards, the 1990s saw such work largely replaced with more reliable concert and comedy bookings. Ibid., 353.
essentially no other Irish company does. In many ways, they act like German Stadttheater, which have a good deal of stability and regularity. In contrast, theatres in the fourth mode—what I will call the independent sector—rarely have a space of their own, produce two or three productions a year at most and operate with very little staff and with few of the Stadttheater’s markers of institutional stability. (In Germany, these would be called freie Gruppen.) Such companies make up the bulk of professional theatre activity in Ireland. The distinction between the two major theatres and the independent groups is not absolute: one or two very large independent groups bear a few Stadttheater-like traits, individual theatremakers can (occasionally) move between them, and the work they produce is far more similar than that of the other two modes of theatremaking.\textsuperscript{19} But in terms of the means by which members of the two groups position themselves in the theatrical field, what I will call in this essay the ‘capitals’ of theatremaking, there is an important difference. The Stadttheater seek different goals than those of independent theatremakers, and this, sociologically, is a basic distinction.\textsuperscript{20}

It is the independent theatre in Ireland that is the primary subject of my analysis in this essay. It is by far the largest part of professional theatre practice in Ireland and produces the bulk of the work that most academics find interesting, but I chose it primarily because it best suits the theoretical questions of this essay. Because my interest is in the concept of misrecognition and the possibility of its being overcome, I am interested in the focused efforts to make objective plans for the future of the Irish theatre. The most important set of such plans during this period have come from, and have been implemented by, the Arts Council. These Arts Plans will be described at length in the second part. By far, the Arts Council’s influence is greatest over the independent sector. Amateur and for-profit groups do not have a financial relationship with the Arts Council, and the Council has always had much more influence over the independent sector than the more financially well-established Abbey and Gate. Because the primary effort to overcome misrecognition

\textsuperscript{19} This will be explored further below, p. 166-169

\textsuperscript{20} The published diaries of former Abbey director Ben Barnes (Ben Barnes, \textit{Plays and Controversies: Abbey Theatre Diaries 2000-2005} (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2008).), for example, show a very different set of concerns than those shown in interviews with a larger group of independent theatremakers, either those in a 2001 published collection (Lilian Chambers, \textit{Theatre Talk: Voices of Irish Theatre Practitioners} (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2001).) or those I conducted myself.

One could argue that there is a fifth mode, normally called Theatre in Education (TIE). There are three prominent groups that undertake this work in Ireland, generally using professional actors and audiences of schoolchildren. I prefer to see this as a particular kind of independent theatremaking, along the lines of specialized clown or puppet companies, but my argument here would not be seriously challenged by accepting TIE as a fifth mode.
was directed at the independent mode of theatremaking, my effort to understand what misrecognition is and how it functions will likewise be focused on that mode.

Combining the two

The first part will begin with a look at the current state of sociological analysis in the field of theatre studies. It will survey the historical and theoretical problems with that state, explain why a few existing methods are not properly suited for the task and put forward a proposal for a possible way forward, one based on Bourdieu's concept of the field. In making this proposal, it will work slowly backward to show where Bourdieusian field theory came from, and how this intellectual heritage could indicate how it might develop. In particular, it looks at the differentiation of the sens pratique from the sens logique, this dichotomy's theoretical and political connections to méconnaissance, and some of the problems this creates.

The second part examines the most specific effort in recent Irish theatre to directly challenge misrecognition: the Arts Council's formal Arts Plans of the 1990s and 2000s. I will discuss the history of the Irish state's relationship with theatre, the specific factors that led to the Arts Plans, their content and aims (both explicit and implicit), and their eventual demise. I will attempt an assessment of the Plans and their effectiveness. An important part of this is the extent to which the Plans aimed to change not only the economic or formal conditions under which Irish theatre is made, but the practical intelligibilities that theatremakers use to make sense of their practice. That is, the Plans were aimed not only at changing how theatre was funded or organized, but how also how it was understood by those who made it. I will try to assess both.

The third part takes the assessment of this practical intelligibility farther: based largely on a set of interviews, it sketches out the shape of the field from the point of view of an independent theatremaker. It identifies the three primary metrics that theatremakers use to evaluate the positions in the field that they or others hold, and how these developed over the era of the Arts Plans. Building on Bourdieu's broadly Marxian terminology, these are the three 'capitals' which, as measures of value and media of exchange, mark out the shape of the field. I identify these capitals as funding, development, and collegiality. I argue that they differ from Bourdieu's three capitals of cultural production (economic, cultural, and social), and how the interactions between the former three are also different from the interactions Bourdieu would expect. (I do not, by the way, argue that this list is exhaustive nor that these three capitals can fully explain the motivation of Irish theatremakers.)
In its conclusion, this essay will address what misrecognition was, in fact, present in the Irish theatrical field, and to what extent formal analysis and planning have diminished it. It will suggest that méconnaissance may not be as inevitable as Bourdieu seems to suggest, even if his diagnosis of the need for observers in the sciences to be reflexively aware of their own social place can be more broadly applied. While it will identify an element of misrecognition in terms of the inability of those in a field to articulate certain facts, it will argue that there is no need to see méconnaissance as a structural necessity of practical fields. In so doing, it will make an observation about the relationship between the sens logique and sens pratique that may be somewhat surprising.

While my main aim in this essay is to contribute to a debate within cultural theory, I do hope that this work will also be useful in beginning to build a methodology and data set for the study of Irish theatre as a social phenomenon, and as an example for those interested in cultural sociology or government planning for the arts worldwide. While I have here chosen a case study in order to illuminate a theoretical problem, the purpose of cultural theory is to help us understand the cultural workings of the societies we live in. If this essay makes a contribution to a theory that has more explanatory acumen for the contemporary world, including theatre in Ireland, it will have done its job.
I. Towards a Sociology of Theatre

Sociological analysis

In recent decades, as part of what Marvin Carlson calls "the shift from art object to art event," theatre and performance scholars have shown an increasing interest in the contributions that sociology and social theory more broadly can make to an understanding of theatrical phenomena. This shift was a reaction to the traditional placement of the study of theatre and drama as a branch of literary studies and criticism; social theory, it was thought, could help make sense of the effect, aesthetic or utilitarian, of performance practices by grounding theatrical phenomena in time, space, and culture, and politics. The move from the modernist conception of a theatre piece as a reified and rarefied work of art that relates only to its internal shape and to the most generalized human condition towards a notion of theatrical acts, performed by some people and witnessed by others to certain effects, required a better understanding of the relationships among the people being addressed and those doing the addressing. Put somewhat differently, the recognition that the ontology of theatre, unlike that of drama, necessarily included people (in the plural) is what led to the sociologization of theatre studies. This move is by now sufficiently well established that any research that claimed to interpret theatre with no reference to the social beings involved in it in some kind of neo-Russian Formalist sense would be seen as lacking.

And yet, it remains unclear exactly what sociology is supposed to do for theatre studies. Few would argue that a sociology of the theatre is unnecessary, but fewer would agree on what questions it ought to ask and how it should go about answering them. When Maria Shevtsova set out a programme for a sociology of theatre in a three-part essay in New

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2. Of course, Richard Schechner’s relationship with anthropologist Victor Turner was exemplary for this, but the move was felt more broadly by scholars of theatre and not only in the performance studies departments that soon differentiated themselves from theatre studies proper.
3. In this essay, the terms 'sociology,' 'social analysis,' and 'anthropology' are not as distinct as they might at first appear. They denote different intellectual traditions that are rapidly converging on common methods and goals. While my training is in the anthropological tradition, I see no need to choose between them. For more, see below, p. 163.
Theatre Quarterly in 1989, she noted that she was drawing “the contours of a project for the future rather than the bold line of achievements past and present.”

Twenty years later, these bold lines are still hard to find. Consider a 2002 focus issue of Contemporary Theatre Review edited by Maria Shevtsova and Dan Urian examining the sociology of the theatre. There, Bruce McConachie looks to cognitive science to explain (individual) audience members’ mental reactions to spatial configurations onstage and in the audience, Thomas Postlewait tries to locate the site of political meaning in theatre texts (with reference to Renaissance England), Maria Shevtsova applies Bourdieu’s concepts of field and habitus to the analysis of theatrical productions, Dan Urian follows Patrice Pavis in suggesting that social factors can explain why theatre artists make the choices they do, and Willmar Sauter discusses the techniques and ideologies of audience surveys. All of these essays are important contributions in their own right that identify and examine theatre as a socially-grounded phenomenon, certainly, but they present such a wide variety of ‘sociological approaches’ to theatre studies that it is not clear if that label denotes any kind of common method or set of assumptions.

To be sure, there is no need for all sociological approaches to be compatible. Just as sociologists of science think about and undertake their work differently, sociologists of theatre may do the same. There need not be more than a Wittgensteinian family resemblance between various sociological methods. Indeed, the family of sociological methods at work in theatre studies today is a rather extended one, and there is nothing inherently wrong with that. But if we want to claim that sociological analysis is an aid to theatre studies, we need to identify, at the very least, what theatre studies does (or would) look like without it. We need to be able to identify at least some ways of analyzing theatre that are not sociological. And if we argue that all theatrical analysis which takes account of social or cultural context is a ‘sociological analysis,’ this will not be possible. I would argue, therefore, for a narrower definition of the term. This is not to say those methods

which fall outside of the boundaries I will sketch below are illegitimate or ill-founded; on
the contrary, many of them are quite powerful. But they are something other than the
method of analysis I am proposing here under the name of ‘the sociology of theatre’ and
which I will use in the present essay. In her foundational essay of 1989, Shevtsova noted
that while the sociology of theatre remained underdeveloped, “studies of theatre in a social
context” were far more common.⁹ Such studies, in which the social tended to recede into the
background once it had framed the theatrical and pushed it to the foreground, did not stop
Shevtsova’s push for the development of sociology of theatre as a discipline. Like her, I am
arguing for a particular mode of analysis, not simply attention to social phenomena as such.

Most theatre scholars, qua theatre scholars, see their job as explaining the (real or
ideal) meaning, effect, or nature of theatrical phenomena. And, as most of them now accept,
none of these are possible without reference to society or to (socially founded) culture. If
theatre is said to have a meaning which can be communicated semiotically, we require a
culturally established semiotic code, or a culturally played language game to make that
semiotic function not only possible but conceivable. If theatre is said to have an effect, that
effect will necessarily be social in nature. It may be *action*, with certain social actors as
subjects and others as objects (perhaps with their complicit participation), or it may be
another means of instituting a Wittgensteinian ‘condition of life,’ including pattern
recognition and ‘intransitive understanding,’ such as is applied to music and works of art.¹⁰
As the American social philosopher Theodore Schatzki has shown, forms and mechanisms
that enable either overt action or any of these other effects are the results of practices and
will thus necessarily be social.¹¹ There are some exceptions here: for particular effects, the
mechanisms will be strictly biomechanical – a dancer’s muscular fatigue after a
performance, for instance, or an audience member’s cramp due to poor seating – and such
effects are genuinely non-social, relying on strictly mechanical, not interpersonal,
mechanisms. But a piece of theatre which attempted to work solely on these terms is
inconceivable; in the scholarly language game, these effects in themselves are not deemed
properly theatrical. Similarly, one could attempt to describe the nature of theatrical
phenomena with only (bio)mechanical reference, a particularly rarefied and de-cultured
form of what Ronald Grimes, in his theory of ritual and performances, called

the Social* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), especially pp. 70-83.
'kinaesthetics.' But this, too, would run afoul of the norms of the scholarly language game—and the popular one as well—in treating the properties and movements of objects (including human-bodies-as-objects) as definitive of the essential nature of theatrical phenomena. Instead, the people who participate in theatre are understood not simply as observers or producers of it but as its constituents. This is part of the (culturally-defined) meaning of the term theatre; we use that term to denote a particular thing which (among other traits) is made by and for people. As the term is used (and, per Wittgenstein, the term has no meaning apart from how it is used), ‘theatre’ is something done by people. Therefore, it is necessarily social.

This does not mean, of course, that all theatre scholarship is sociology, any more than all musicology as sociology just because music, too, is socially founded. When Shevtsova uses the imagery of the Russian Orthodox Church’s funerary rite to explicate the staging of Firs’s death in Lev Dodin’s production of Chekhov’s *Cherry Orchard,* she is making sense of the performance text with reference to “embedded sociocultural signs.” She does something similar in explaining the “sign systems” at work in Anatoly Efros’s 1975 production of the same script and how they were tailored for a Moscow audience at the time (and thus were far less effective when transposed to Paris nine years later). This is what performance analysis ought to do when it acknowledges a cultural context. But I would argue that such analysis is distinct from sociology. If it were otherwise, we would have to argue that, because all signs are necessarily socioculturally established and embedded, all close readings of dramatic or performance texts which note their references to the cultural context in which they are produced or consumed are sociological analysis. By such a standard, any non-sociological analysis by this standard would have to deny the humanity of the meaning, effect, or nature of theatre, and such analysis is not conceivable.

I also do not think it is wise to label as sociological all explanatory efforts whose methodology is borrowed from the social sciences and, in particular, from anthropology. One important example is Clifford Geertz’s notion of “thick description” (borrowed from Gilbert Ryle) in ethnography. For Geertz, a ‘thin’ description of an action is its overt observable content—‘raising the left eyebrow,’ for example. A ‘thick’ description, in contrast, is what the actor was *doing* by that observed action—‘expressing scepticism,’

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‘putting someone in their place,’ ‘acknowledging a bad joke,’ etc.—which requires not merely understanding that action as an element in the actor’s cultural vocabulary, but also an understanding of how and in what context the actor is deploying it in this particular case (creatively, ironically, polysemically, etc.) in order to achieve particular ends. To thickly describe an action is to take it as an object, place it in a cultural context, and try to describe what the actor does or communicates by it. Geertz is explicit that his method treats cultural phenomena as such as “semiotic”—that is, capable of being “read” like “a manuscript.” In so doing, he seems to place the investigator in the one-step-removed posture towards the world that Pierre Bourdieu (not wholly justly, I think) criticizes as “the scholastic view”: the academic observer treats actions in the world primarily objects for contemplation and analysis which only secondarily serve as tools to be used. Theatrical actions, like any others, can be analyzed in this way. Methodologically and theoretically, Geertz and Shevtsova are doing the same thing in thickly describing, respectively, Moroccan sheep theft and Lev Dodin’s directorial choices. Both are treated as examples of conscious, chosen, encultured, and interpersonal action. This is not the mode of analysis I am proposing here.

Nor am I proposing to label as sociological analysis the explanation of how an aesthetic or critical position is motivated or constrained by socio-political factors. Such explanation, while useful, is possible for any such position. According to some critics, for instance, Theodor Adorno pursues an autonomous, high modernist aesthetic program in specific response to the horrors of World War II and the dominant commodifying influence of late capitalism. The more completely an aesthetic was freed from the corrosive culture industry, the more of a (slim) chance it would have to embody and remind others of genuine

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16 Ibid., 5 and 10: “The concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs....” (5) “Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of ‘construct a reading of’) a manuscript—foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior.” (10)
17 Bourdieu’s (perhaps ill-conceived) charge can be found in Pascalian Meditations (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 52: “It is clear, for example, that in his ‘thick description’ of a cock-fight, Geertz ‘generously’ credits the Balinese with a hermeneutic and aesthetic gaze which is none other than his own; and it is then natural that, having failed to put explicitly into his description of the social world the ‘literarization’ that his description has imposed on it, he should follow through the logic of his error of omission and declare, against all reason, in his preface to The Interpretation of Culture, that the social world and the whole set of social relations and realities are simply ‘texts.’”
human freedom and possibility and thus earn the title “artwork.” Though in the end the purpose of an artwork was social (to reveal the possibilities of the human social existence, rather than for the glory of the gods), in order to serve that function, it needed to be as free as possible from actual social life. Adorno stands in a long line of Romantic, modernist writers who have struggled to establish an ‘autonomous’ field in which the fine arts (such as theatre) can operate free from the constraints of quotidian (and particularly economic) social existence. This is a particular understanding of the artwork’s relationship to the social. More than that, though, the assertion of artistic autonomy is just as much a response to the social world as is a relation of dependency. The desire for an autonomous artistic field is only comprehensible as a desire to make the artistic field autonomous from something else. This, then, is a form of aesthetic analysis that should always be present and is not what I am proposing as sociological analysis.

Because theatre studies is also a practice, in the manner I will outline below, the term ‘sociological analysis’ can only have the meaning given to it by the language game central to that practice. My proposal for what ‘sociological analysis’ ought to mean for theatre studies should be understood as a move in that language game. In the following parts, I will attempt to provide an example of such an analysis which can be understood as the beginnings of a definition by ostension. But because, as Bourdieu has shown with regard to the scientific field, that coherent rational argument has clearly become a valuable form of capital within the field, this part will try to accumulate this sort of capital for my proposal. That proposal is less a definition than a slogan, in the Wittgensteinian sense. No overt proposal like this one can or needs to define rules for the use of a term like ‘sociological,’ as such overt definition is unenforceable and incompatible with the practical logic of scholarship. What one can and should do is encourage other players and, eventually, the language game as a whole, to move in a particular direction.

My slogan is that the difference between sociological and non-sociological analytical strategies is the object taken for analysis. All of the above methods take theatrical phenomena, along with their meaning, effect, or nature, to be the object of analysis, and use social factors as essentially background in teasing out that meaning, effect, or nature. Of course, these methods choose different phenomena within theatrical practice: some analyze

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18 This is the case even if the freedom of the aesthetic is illusionary. “It is this illusory being-in-itself which makes possible the thought of real freedom from naked coercion, total dependence.” Simon Jarvis, Adorno: A Critical Introduction (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 117.

19 Pierre Bourdieu, Science of Science and Reflexivity, trans. Richard Nice (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004), 83: “Objectivity is an intersubjective product of the scientific field; grounded in the presuppositions shared within this field, it is the result of the intersubjective agreement within the field.”
scripts, while others look at performances, warm-up or rehearsal behaviours, audience responses, directors' or actors' choices, the use of words, the passage of time, and so on. Some even look at the intellectual, political, or psychological effect these phenomena have on performers or audience members. All of these are seen as phenomena for analysis, largely on the model of the close reading of a written text. In fact, many of these methods use the term ‘performance text’ (or even ‘event text’) to describe the object of their analysis. Building on, but moving considerably beyond, Shevtsova’s firm critique of formalist semiotic methods in theatre studies built on the “textual analogy,” I will therefore call the analysis of these theatrical phenomena ‘textual methods,’ a very broad category. All such textual methods can be usefully differentiated from those methods which try to analyze the theatre as a social field (or set of fields) in itself, and not as (a set of) phenomena which are influenced by them. It is these latter methods that I will call ‘sociological’ and with which I will concern myself here.

Put another way, sociological analysis means throwing off the last vestiges of the modernist critical project of defining theatrical performances as art objects, as opposed to a particular event in the working of theatrical practice. Certainly, dramatists like Schiller

20 Shevtsova, “Sociology, Part Three,” 287f. Her critique is that formalist semiotics inappropriately replaces an interest in meaning (which has a relevance, and refers out, to particular human beings outside of the system of signs) with an interest in signification (which, per Saussure, does not). Formalist semiotics is thus insufficient as a method to deal with the (thoroughly social) content of theatre works. Her aim, therefore, is to contrast a new and more adequate theory of sociocultural semiosis which will be able to show how and why the sign processes at work in performances make them thoroughly socialized phenomena. She writes, “Finding a place for meaning in the model adopted from linguistics would require dealing with the content of theatre works, how it was derived socially and what it refers to socially, the last two being the ‘referents’ excluded. Meaning is neither abstract nor an abstraction of something. It is brought into being by someone and communicated to someone.” Ibid., 286. This critique is furthered in her “Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu’s Champ and Habitus,” where she develops the cross-referential nature of performative sign processes, connecting them to the Bakhtinian idea of dialogism where social agents interchange with and communicate meanings to one another, as opposed to the “merely stylistic and merely signalled, or semiotic, interceptions of ‘intertextuality’ where texts talk to texts.” Shevtsova, “Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu’s Champ and Habitus,” 38-39.

21 While I believe the Bourdieusian language of field and practice is the most helpful in explaining social phenomena like the theatre, I do not count the use of these particular terms as a necessity for sociological study as such. Other, similar terms (‘games’ for Wittgenstein, ‘art worlds’ for Becker, ‘structures of feeling’ for Williams, ‘actor-networks’ for Latour, even ‘systems’ for Luhmann) keep the focus on the systematic social doings of theatre and thus do not fall into textualism. The best survey of these various methods is van Maanen, How to Study Art Worlds.

22 Shevtsova shares this concern to stress that theatrical events are a part of human practice before they are objects. In her essay on the sociology of performance, she writes, “Preference is here given to the term ‘performance’ rather than to ‘production’ … precisely so as to stress the doing of theatre works … The concept of performance is therefore particularly useful, for it guards against the idea that productions are inert things with thing-like properties.” Shevtsova, “Sociology, Part Three,” 283.
and theatremakers like Grotowski claimed that status for their work and expected others to recognize that claim, and one of the longstanding tendencies of the practice of theatremaking has been to grant (and expect others to grant) some version of that status to the playwright and to other theatremakers, but none of this obliges us to see such a status as a critically appropriate place to start. The title of ‘objet d’art’ can only be handed out by those authorized to do so by the field of artistic production; it does not exist apart from that field. Bourdieu’s Rules of Art is the definitive history of the development of this autonomous authority in the French literary field of the 19th century, particularly in poetry, the novel, and painting. The sociological turn in theatre studies asks us to turn the focus from theatre as a would-be-object like a text or a painting towards the various actions, social facts, and cultural understandings which make up and contain what we consider to be theatre.

This even means getting away from the straightforward and relatively uncontroversial view that theatre studies should take as its object “the manifestations of theatre and their nature,” as Andreas Kotte puts it in the introduction to his textbook on Theaterwissenschaft. Those ‘manifestations’ are nothing other than theatrical performances themselves, if not understood as art objects, then at least as artistic display, uncanny activity to which a person can most appropriately relate by spectation. Performances are of course a key part, perhaps the key part, of theatre as a (set of) practice(s), but they are not identical to it. Because these manifestations are phenomena out there to be seen, those who take this view sometimes adopt the label ‘phenomenological,’ even when their relationship to formal phenomenology is rather strained. Bert States’s fascinating work is a good example. I would prefer the label ‘microphenomenological’ to clarify that such scholars are interested, like Geertz, in discovering the nature of the (theatrical) phenomenon through a close reading of exemplary cases (of theatremaking).

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23 One of the places this is most clearly seen is in the legal rights granted to playwrights and (increasingly) directors over their work. For a contemporary example, see Jesse Green, "Exit, Pursued by a Lawyer," New York Times, 29 January 2006.


25 Andreas Kotte, Theaterwissenschaft: Eine Einführung (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2005), 11.

26 States helpfully qualifies his use of the label, explaining that his work is “phenomenological in the sense that it focuses on the activity of theatre making itself out of its essential materials: speech, sound, movement, scenery, text, etc.” See Bert O. States, Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), 1. Bourdieu uses the label as well, though he prefers the term ‘objective viewpoint’; both are seen as the view that “sets out to reflect an experience which, by definition, does not reflect itself.” Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), 25.
Also like Geertz, this perspective has a built-in point of view: that of the audience. "It has occurred to me, in fact, that most of the book was written from a theatre seat in my mind's eye," writes States in the introduction to his *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms*. Note that this self-positioning is not the *result* of his investigation but the *prerequisite* for it: the phenomenological investigator assumes the position of the audience, and thus the audience's relationship to the practices of theatremaking and theatregoing. There is nothing illegitimate about this, of course, but it does necessarily obscure the realities of the theatrical field that underlie and create the very possibility of the audience-experienced performative phenomena. From his theatre seat, States cannot see the processes that build the performance or bring the audience together; perhaps less obviously but no less importantly, he cannot see why the theatremakers have chosen to make this kind of play and not another (or, indeed, any play at all), or why the audience has chosen to come to this particular performance (or any).

In the context of academic investigation, Bourdieu calls this kind of obscuring the 'scholastic illusion' or, more simply, 'forgetting.' Picturing yourself in the theatre seat of the mind makes the seat itself seem natural or inevitable, when it may in truth be no such thing. Bourdieu writes:

The agent engaged in practice knows the world .... He knows it, in a sense, too well, without objectifying distance, takes it for granted, precisely because he is caught up in it, bound up with it; he inhabits it like a garment [*un habit*] or a familiar habitat. What is excluded is the historical and social shaping of that garment or seat. The nature and necessity of this 'knowing too well,' as well as Bourdieu's terminology of practice, agent, and misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) will be explored below, but the point here is that the phenomenological view of theatre, however readily apparent, hides too much of past social interactions which created the possibility of the present moment. Certainly, the phenomenal performance is of enormous import to the study of the theatre as a field of social action, but

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28 Most of the examples Bourdieu presents of the 'scholastic illusion' are anthropological (in his earlier writing) or scientific (in his later writing). But art history and literary criticism also make their appearance, and Bourdieu is clear that the criticism is applicable to the academic study of practical phenomena as such. Though theatre studies do not specifically appear in his writing, there is no reason why they should not.
29 Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 142-43. The brackets are the translator's, indicating the original French. It should be noted that this quote almost perfectly exemplifies Latour's objection to Bourdieu's perspective. Latour believes that a sociological study needs to start by following the actions, thoughts, and interactions of agents, not by positing a surrounding for them that they cannot see. This will be discussed further below.
it is a mistake to identify the phenomenon with that field. That move, to Bourdieu, smacks of essentialism:

Phenomenological description, though indispensable ... is liable to stand in the way of a full understanding of practical understanding and of practice itself, because it is totally ahistorical and antigenetic.\(^\text{30}\)

Theatre is not reducible to its artworks, then, not because of the aesthetic notion of art, but because of the always-already-finalized concept of the ‘work.’ As long as theatre studies takes as its object ‘works’ as phenomenological givens, each discrete and complete in itself, it will fail to capture what Bourdieu here as elsewhere calls the ‘historical’: the sociogenesis of certain ways-of-doing-and-being-in-the-world (the theatre) which make possible and relevant particular examples of doing and being (pieces of theatre). A phenomenological approach cannot take theatre in its social reality as its object.

The sociology of theatre as I propose it here is thus concerned with the analysis of theatre as a meso-level social phenomenon, and not as either a (set of) micro-social phenomena (such as individual performance gestures, Goffmannian instances of role-playing, or even particular theatrical performances, all which can be subjected to micro-level thick description) or a fully formed example or an analogue of macro-social phenomenon such as society, power, or value. In that textual methods analyze theatre’s relationship to society, they inevitably treat it in terms of micro-social phenomena. No one has ever considered theatre to be a macro-social phenomenon (except, perhaps, Geertz on the Balinese theatre state), but those who see a mirror-like analogue for the largest truths of human interaction in the theatre are engaging not so much in macro-social analysis as in positing a certain relationship between the micro (in particular, the artistic micro) and the macro, an act of positing which itself is a textual method and needs to be subject to sociological critique if the posited relationship is to have any force.

**My position: The practices and field of theatre**

Sociology does not have as many supple tools for dealing with meso-level phenomena such as theatre as it does for micro- or macro-social ones.\(^\text{31}\) In this essay, I take the position that such phenomena are most helpfully analyzed in their structure, use, and

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\(^{30}\) Ibid., 146-47.

\(^{31}\) "Sociology needs as much as ever complex and coherent meso-level concepts which can account for the mechanics of structural and institutional change. Field and practice are both promising candidates to this end." Alan Warde, "Practice and Field: Revising Bourdieusian Concepts," in *CRIC Discussion Papers* (Manchester: Centre for Research on Innovation & Competition, 2004), 3.
development through theories of practices and fields as developed by Bourdieu and those like Schatzki who have built upon his work. Field theory is designed to break down a number of dichotomies, principally the one between determining tradition and individual agency, by showing the structural frameworks in which people have space to act. Developing out of the late work of Wittgenstein and developed by Bourdieu in the context of postwar French philosophy, it attempts to take seriously the socially built and constituted nature of human action, and thus looks with scepticism on certain kinds of formalist, structuralist, and private-meaning theories which would reduce the social actor to either a purely rational individualistic decision-maker or a mere carrier (Träger) of a larger social essence or structure. In contrast, practice theory tries to focus the sociologist's gaze on the socially built ideas and concepts that allow an individual person to go on within her social practice, what Bourdieu would call the 'objective conditions' that a social actor faces, whether these conditions are based on differences in physical power, mental orientation, or possessions of different capitals. A key tool in this effort is Bourdieu's notion of habitus, a set of "durable, transportable dispositions" that are developed as a person is first introduced to new situations (in childhood or education, for example), and which form the basis of the "intentionless invention of regulated improvisation." The habitus are learned tendencies inscribed in the body by a narrow range of formative experiences that help guide an individual's responses to an open-ended set of social situations in which they find themselves. The non-conscious rigidity of table manners or appreciation for the arts or nature would be good examples.

I am arguing for a sociology of theatre that centers on an analysis of the practices within the theatrical field. The definition of those practices is for them to accomplish themselves, but it is important to note that I am not calling theatre itself a (singular) practice. Instead, I am arguing that theatre is a self-nominated social field in which certain self-nominated and distinct practices take place. Some of these practices are, in Schatzki's terms, dispersed—that is, present in many different fields and, while operative in the theatrical field, not definitive of it. Conversation, argument, and charm might be examples. Others are integrative, particular to and defined by this field. Initially, I posit two central integrative practices in the field of theatre: theatremaking and theatregoing. (In the next


The distinction between dispersed and integrative practices comes from and is explored at length in Schatzki, *Social Practices*, 91-116.

In one of the most important pieces of theatre sociology for modern Europe, Hans van Maanen identifies three "systems" at work in the theatrical field (with particular reference to the Dutch example):
part, I will propose a third. Each of these two practices contains various sub-practices within it (acting, lighting design, playwrighting, etc. in the former case; connoisseurship, casual attendance, and fan-devotion in the latter). There are other practices that fall between the two, which, while not dispersed as such, are shared between a small number of related fields and are not exclusive to the theatre. (One could call these 'semi-dispersed practices."

In this category would fall haberdashery, box office management, arts administration, development work (i.e., fundraising), office administration, literary management, and even writing.

My description of the field of theatre as the space in which all the related theatrical practices operate is a more specific claim than it may sound. The term "field" (champ) is a technical term for Bourdieu, and in this essay, I use it in a sense largely derived from his. For Bourdieu, a field is the overall space in which a set of highly interrelated practices operate—e.g., one can refer to the political field, the academic field, the field of cultural production, distribution, and reception. See Hans van Maanen, "How to Describe the Functioning of Theatre," in *Theatre Worlds in Motion: Structures, Politics and Developments in the Countries of Western Europe*, ed. Hans van Maanen and S.E. Wilmer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), as well as Hans van Maanen "A World of Indepe..." in *State on Stage: The Impact of Public Policies on the Performing Arts in Europe* (Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies, 2008), and van Maanen, *How to Study Art Worlds*. Though I would argue that theatre is better understood as a field of practices than a field of systems, his three-part taxonomy is not too far from my differentiation between theatremaking and theatregoing. The theatrical 'distribution system' is, in many contexts, a more-or-less specialized task of the practice of theatremaking. One of the particularities of the theatrical field in the Netherlands is the relative autonomy of this task from the rest of theatremaking practice; theatrical productions are made by one group of people and distributed by another, with decisions about theatremaking often somewhat disconnected from decisions about the 'touring circuit' through which productions are connected to theatregoers. (See Hans van Maanen, "The Netherlands," in *Theatre Worlds in Motion*, ed. Hans van Maanen and S.E. Wilmer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998).) Even in these cases, though, the 'theatre distribution system' shows greater practical affinities to theatremaking than theatregoing (regardless of formal, institutional differentiation): it is seen as a task which is compensated financially (rather than theatre-going, which costs money), it is done by a small group rather than a 'public,' it requires specialized experience or training, it is consciously competitive, and so on. Certainly, the autonomy of the distribution system is an important feature of a number of European theatre scenes, but I think it makes more sense to see it as a more-or-less autonomous subpractice of theatremaking than a system in its own right. Certainly, this is the case for the Irish field which this essay seeks to analyze, though one could argue it has important links to the 'third practice' I will describe in the next part.

My description resembles that of Shevtsova, who writes: "In my definition, as compared, say, to that of Gurvich or Duvignaud, the sociology of the theatre is a matter of understanding the theatre as a social and cultural practice." Shevtsova and Urian, "Introduction in the Form of a Dialogue," 2. She further develops the term 'practice' as a network of multiple activities with specific reference to Bourdieu's concept of field: "Theatre practice constitutes a whole network of creative-artistic and technical activities ... that define the field and distinguish it from any other, irrespective of whatever points in common may exist between identifiable fields." Shevtsova, "Appropriating Pierre Bourdieu's Champ and Habitus," 35.
production, and so on. A field is defined by its “specific capital”—the values peculiar to and sought by those within it. It also defines the positions which are available for social actors to take up, and it is the space in which the key Bourdieusian action—the taking of a position—has status, purpose, and effect. For example, the centrality of theatremaking and theatregoing among all practices in the theatrical field I identified above is not simply my claim. Nor is it a judgment about which practices are most ‘indispensable’ to the field or which require the most skill. Instead, it is a reflection of the higher status given to those practices (and the people who take positions involved with them) by the rest of the theatrical field. These practices command more field-specific capital than others. In other fields, the relative status may be reversed. Consider, for instance, the status given to the designers and wearers of clothing in the contrasting fields of theatre and fashion. A field, as Bourdieu and I use the term, is a social space built around a (relatively small) set of interrelated practices that are self-defined as central to that field. It demarcates the space of possible position-takings for current and potential participants in those practices. It may encompass other practices as well, either through overlap with another field or by incorporating subordinate practices wholesale (which can then make a bid within the field to change their subordinate status). Fields, then, are the social creations of practices and cannot be understood apart from them.

An important, if sceptical, view of sociological field theory is provided in a 2003 article by John Levi Martin. He traces sociologists’ use of fields to a theoretical borrowing from the physical sciences, where such concepts as the gravitational and magnetic fields were used to explain action at a distance. Martin describes these as very controversial concepts in the science of their time. It was thought to be impossible for one body to affect another in the absence of any kind of physical link by virtue of their relative locations. To solve this problem, various imperceptible and property-less links such as the ether were proposed, but as, by definition, no evidence of such phenomena could ever be observed, they served no function for scientific analysis and thus were eventually either replaced with identifiable, observable mechanisms (the best option, by far) or discarded for the (still frustrating) notion of action at a distance. To Martin, concepts such as ‘social space’ and ‘the structure of the social field’ are newer versions of the ether: while they may specify what will happen, they do not actually explain anything. He suggests that they will (or ought to) be replaced with actual social mechanisms, as they have in the physical sciences.

37 Martin also has a tripartite division of how field theory has been used in the social sciences, which I find a bit confusing. His three options are ‘gestalt’ field theory (working on the analogy with the
This is a correct assessment and an important acknowledgment that the concept of field, in itself, offers little in the way of explanatory weight, but I would argue that Bourdieu’s praxiological field theory provides exactly the kind of mechanism that Martin seeks. That mechanism is what Schatzki calls practical intelligibility: that is, the means by which a person knows what it makes sense to do in a given situation.\textsuperscript{38} The term ‘situation,’ however, is both broad and powerful, including the practices in which a person is involved, their habitus, stores of capital, relationships with others, goals, and location in various social fields. To Schatzki, practices are responsible for creating sociality, and they are organized principally around practical intelligibility and similar “understandings,” alongside “rules” made variously explicit in varying ways, and “teleoaffective structures” such as goals and purposes. Understandings, rules, and teleoaffectives are, of course, not separable. These teleoaffectives are very similar to Bourdieu’s concept of ‘capitals’ (in the plural)—that which a practice values and chooses to pursue—and the ‘rules’ and ‘understandings’ that organize the practice can be seen as based around what Bourdieu calls \textit{doxa}: the unarticulated (because uncontested) assumptions that undergird each practice and that need to be accepted as a condition of entry into it, such as the valuing of certain capitals, taboos, understandings, and expected ways of working.\textsuperscript{39}

There are in fact a trio of terms that Bourdieu uses with significant overlap. Bourdieu most often uses the term \textit{doxa} to refer to these presuppositions and rules which are shared as assumptions by those in a particular practice, while he uses the parallel term \textit{illusio} to refer to the (collective) acceptance of these doxic assumptions; most importantly,
the *illusio* means the *incorporation* of the doxa into the self-evident world; the *illusio* makes doxic rules natural and not arbitrary. Both of these terms are related to the *nomos*, the original point of view that needs to be taken up in order to participate in a field. The *nomos* creates the doxa and is part of what is accepted by the *illusio*. The three concepts are of course highly interrelated and almost impossible to define without reference to one another.

I take Schatzki’s concept of practical intelligibility as a more philosophically precise and helpful version of what Bourdieu calls the ‘logic of practice’ (*le sens pratique,* contrasted with *le sens logique* which I will translate as discursive logic), a person’s particular means of considering and deciding on potential actions that she can do (which he often refers to as a “feel for the game”). This logic depends on that person’s habitus, her location in a (set of) social field(s), her possession of certain capitals, and so on. My use of the term ‘field,’ then, is closer to Schatzki’s use of the word ‘domain’ — the structured space established by the intelligibility-determining mechanisms in this or that practice. This may make it not a proper field in Martin’s sense, but I think this is the most philosophically defensible way of making sense of the Bourdieusian idea of a field of social action.

When describing theatre as a field, then, I disagree with Alan Warde’s contention that field theory, deriving from Bourdieu, has to describe a field as a singular game-like contest, thus excluding anything that does not operate as such a contest from the category. Warde’s is a common misconception in much work on Bourdieu, and it needs to be cleared up here in order to allow me to use field theory as this essay’s theoretical framework, as I

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40 So Bourdieu defines the *illusio* as “the collective adherence to the game that is both cause and effect of the existence of the game” (Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 167.), while elsewhere he refers to “that undisputed, pre-reflexive, naïve, native compliance with the fundamental presuppositions of the field which is the very definition of *doxa*” (Bourdieu, *Logic*, 68.)

41 Because the *nomos* represents the position-taking act that creates the initial definition of a practice (it is “the founding point of view of the field”), Bourdieu refers to it as “the principle of vision and division” that is “defining” for a field “as such.” Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 223.

42 So: “This is *illusio* in the sense of investment in the game, interest in the game, commitment to the presuppositions — *doxa* — of the game.” (Bourdieu, *Logic*, 66.) In his later writing, Bourdieu uses the term *doxa* less and less but retains *illusio*. In this essay, I will use doxa as a more morally neutral term for the presuppositions the field expects and its participants offer. While *illusio* is not quite illusion, it is a bit too linguistically close for clarity. (The former term also offers up the useful adjective ‘doxic,’ which has no easy English equivalent for the latter.)

43 Warde, "Practice and Field," 16: "The concept of field is incapable of appreciating non-strategic action, purposeful behaviour in non-competitive circumstances, internal goods arising from participation in practice, and discrepancies between competence and social position."
intend to. While I agree with Warde that Bourdieu insuffciently explains what he means by the term ‘field’ (and his frequent athletic metaphors are not always helpful), he does offer enough clues and examples that lack the traits Warde thinks of as game-like (overt competition, explicit rules and criteria for winning and losing) that we can develop a better model than that of sport. Bourdieu has, in fact, discussed the sociology of various games and sports, and when he does so, he includes precisely those factors that Warde finds missing: reasons why people play games that are not directly related to skill or competition (exercise, the celebration of gallantry or “elegance,” “socialising with friends” and thus the establishment of social links, and so on).

In any event, the ‘field’ on which Bourdieu has written the most is not ‘cultural production’ but rather academic work, and in particular, two of its most powerful subfields: the “philosophical field” and the “scientific fields.” He even goes so far as to equate the term “field” with the term “discipline,” in the academic sense: both terms imply a definable history and set of practical assumptions on which they are based. Rather than encompassing a single practice (an option Warde also rejects), fields provide the context in which a number of interrelated integrative practices are made possible and (practically) intelligible. Cooking and eating come together in the culinary field; politicking and voting join in the electoral field; buying, marketing and selling define the commercial field, and so on. Like academic disciplines, such fields are contested and develop over time, and so contested examples that push at the margins of established fields (like theatre studies fifty years ago, perhaps) are an important part of how the field concept is used.

What defines such fields are not their contest-like properties but the fact that they comprise a set of practices which have developed a relative autonomy from the larger social world of which they are a part. As Bourdieu explains:

The field is subject to (external) pressures and contains tensions, in the sense of forces that act so as to drive apart, separate, the

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44 This misconception seems to underlie much of Latour’s objection to Bourdieu. See below, p. 35.
48 Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations, 29.
49 Bourdieu, Science of Science, 31, 63.
50 Warde, "Practice and Field," 9.
constituent parts of a body. To say that the field is relatively autonomous with respect to the encompassing social universe is to say that the system of forces that are constitutive of the structure of the field (tension) is relatively independent of the forces exerted on the field (pressure).  

Elsewhere, these forces are described as the competition for various capitals; a ‘tension’ is the competition for a capital specific to the field (the respect of one’s colleagues, for example), while a ‘pressure’ is a competition for a capital more generally accepted in the society at large (money or power, for instance).

Some fields are more autonomous than others, and to think of the field as being constrained by pressures and tensions is a helpful way to conceptualize and measure that autonomy. To take Warde’s example, the field of fine dining is subject both to external pressures such as labour economics, leisure practices, the weather, and so on, and internal tensions, such as gossip and fads within the industry, professional pride, and competition between restaurants. One can imagine fields with more pressure than tension which are then less autonomous (real estate, say) and those with more tension than pressure, and hence more autonomous (academia or modernist poetry). One can imagine a field almost completely isolated from external pressures (pure mathematics, for instance), but it is impossible to imagine a field without internal tension. Such tensions are indicators of a field-specific capital, which is what marks out a field as such.

But perhaps this is shading too close to the social determinism that Bourdieu rejected and for which he is nevertheless criticized. Not all members of a field react in the same manner to its tensions and pressures. In fact, their responses can vary considerably. Bourdieu explains this in terms of the “constructing disposition” or “presuppositions shared within the field.” To wit:

To each of the fields there corresponds a fundamental point of view on the world which creates its own object and finds in itself the principle of understanding and explanation appropriate to that object.

That ‘point of view’ is what Bourdieu calls the nomos, the basic act of self-positioning which defines the shape of the field for its participants. This does not so much entail the

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52 Warde uses this example in the context of practice theory and thus would refer to the ‘practice’ of fine dining, not the field. (Though he sees both ‘practice’ and ‘field’ as Bourdieusian concepts, he regards them as distinct and not necessarily mutually illuminating.)
acceptance of certain truths as dogma but the assimilation of them into the body as *doxa*, presuppositions. Like the philosopher's radical doubt which is not itself doubted, these are the starting points of all human practice, not their conclusions. But unlike Kantian *a priori*, these doxa are not part of some kind of universal grammar or fundamental structure of human cognition. Instead, they are the reified legacy of particular social practices which have been inscribed into the body from childhood. They are at least theoretically multiple, therefore, and need not be founded on anything outside of society. Neophytes to a field are taught to take up a *nomos* that fits a field not as much through overt instruction as by imitating the physical and mental position-takings that define mature and full participation in the field. It is literally the whole historical development of the field which is inscribed into participants' bodies and aligns them to accept the *nomos*. "I never tire of quoting Durkheim's 'the unconscious is history,'" Bourdieu writes. By this, he means that the form of unconscious motivation relevant to the sociologist is not general childhood trauma but a person's (or culture's) own past, ossified not into a set of Freudian universal complexes but into the mental (and social) structure of the habitus and *nomos*, the position to take up. One can read a person's history in the positions they assume. Once that *nomos* has been accepted in some form, disagreements about its exact terms or implementations can lead to the sort of internal tensions, incomprehensible to an outsider, which are hugely important in marking out the identity, function, and internal geography of a field. But without internalizing such an acceptance, one cannot gain entry into this internal debate.

**An aside: Raymond Williams**

These are the basics of the Bourdieusian concept of a field. Sociological analysis in theatre studies, I argue, ought to take as its object the theatre as such a field. How such an analysis should proceed will be developed below, but first, I should explain why it is Bourdieu, and not Raymond Williams, who provides the theoretical underpinning for this study. Williams is probably the most prominent Anglophone cultural theorist with an interest in drama, and many (particularly British readers) may wonder why I have not chosen his work as my theoretical frame.

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56 The movement from the logical *a priori* to the social doxa is roughly equivalent to Wittgenstein's movement concerning the nature of language from the *Tractatus* to *Philosophical Investigations*.


58 Williams is part of the cultural studies tradition which Shevtsova notes as (potentially) indenously British, compared to the continental (or even specifically "Franco-Italian") tradition of the sociology of culture into which Bourdieu falls. Shevtsova, "Sociology, Part One," 28.
I argued above for a sociology of theatre that treats it as a meso-level social phenomenon, and I contrasted this with phenomenology’s focus on micro-level analysis. Williams has the opposite problem. Taking ‘received Marxist theory’ considerably more seriously than does Bourdieu, Williams develops but essentially maintains the Marxian ‘base and superstructure’ view of culture. Paul Jones has shown how Williams develops Althusser’s view of culture as an autonomous but superstructural field resting on an economic base by including what he calls ‘structures of feeling’ in the ‘base’: not just material resources, social structures, and technologies but the very means of intelligibility that enable Schatzki to talk about the self as inherently social: “peculiarly shaped feelings, illusions, habits of thought, and conceptions of life.” With this fuller understanding of the ‘base’ (traced back to Marx’s essay on “The Eighteenth Brumaire”), Williams can make sense of culture as a superstructural epiphenomenon that reflects the structure of the base.

Now, Williams is aware that this reflection can happen in a number of different and seemingly contradictory ways, but if overt culture (such as theatre) is specifically epiphenomenal, it must have some kind of reflective relationship to the social structure from which it arises. Williams does an impressive job of pointing out the various ‘homologies’ that mark out the relationships between culture and society belonging to each social ‘epoch.’ There is no crude social determinism here; culture-makers in Williams confront society with a measure of freedom and can (to some degree) make use of “both residual and emergent forms of thought and belief” to negotiate that freedom and determine their response. Cultural production is structured through a complex back-and-forth between artists, patrons, audiences, and the society at large, each carrying its own history; and this interplay takes on different forms where such relationships are structurally different.


60 The (too often neglected) essay in which this work is done is Raymond Williams, "Marx on Culture," in What I Came to Say (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989).

61 I am aware that many of Williams’s critics would disagree with these last three sentences. It is often thought that Williams repudiated Marx’s base and superstructure metaphor. But I am convinced by Paul Jones’s argument that, though he re-drew the line between base and superstructure, Williams never lost the concept of culture as socially epiphenomenal. See Jones, Williams, 38ff. for more on this discussion.

(book publishing versus television producing, for example). Innovative and oppositional movements are very much possible. To exist, however, they must first undergo an epochally appropriate process of marking out their own place within society, with this process leaving its mark on the movement that develops.\footnote{See Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), 202-03, as well as the helpful charts on Jones, *Williams*, 143-45.}

Williams's analysis bears a strong kinship with Bourdieu's work, insisting that the sociohistorical structuring of agents' understandings are key for cultural sociology while refusing any simple social determinism. There is a close parallel between Bourdieu's notion of the 'habitus' and Williams's 'structure of feeling',\footnote{Andrew Milner characterises these both concepts as "attempt[s] to theorise human sociality in terms of the strategic action of individuals within a constraining, but nonetheless not determining, context of values." Andrew Milner, "Dissenting, Plebian, but Belonging, Nonetheless: Bourdieu and Williams," in *Practicing Theory: Pierre Bourdieu and the Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Jeff Browitt and Brian Nelson (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 107.} though I would maintain that the habitus has the advantage of being firmly grounded in the body of the actor. This kinship has been noted, including by Williams himself,\footnote{See Jones, *Williams*, 59.} and there is no reason in principle that one should hesitate to use Williamsian concepts in a Bourdieusian socioanalysis. But there is a critical difference between Bourdieu's practice-and-field and Williams's production paradigms. In the practice-and-field view, a field such as theatre can be analyzed in itself: it is organized around specific capitals, it has a relevant and effective (though not static) internal shape, and the space of possible positions it marks out is the ground on which the practice can be meaningful and effective. Of course, the field's relationship to others (including larger fields such as the market economy) is a crucial subject for investigation, but field theory does not \textit{presume} any particular relationship between a given field and that of 'general' socioeconomics.\footnote{John Levi Martin goes farther than this, arguing that field theory necessarily has nothing at all to say about anything not wholly internal (such as the field's relationship to its neighbours), and thus invalidating the neighbourhood investigation I mention here. "Field theory, by never making explanation reach outside the field, must forswear any legitimating arguments that there is a reason why the field must be as it is." Martin, "What Is Field Theory?," 12. By his understanding of field theory, his point is strictly correct—the tensions within a field are not applicable outside of it—but asserting this point requires Martin to separate "field theory" from "the sociology of fields," the fuller category which can consider tensions, pressures, and even the sociogenesis of particular fields. (See his note 11 on the same page.) By this standard, it is hard to imagine a sociological application of field theory that does not also include the sociology of fields. Thus, I think the distinction is not an advisable one, and I have no problem using the terms "sociological field theory" and "sociology of fields" interchangeably.} Williams's production paradigm, in contrast, insists that no field can ever be meaningfully autonomous: because culture is an epiphenomenon of the current epoch's social structure, we are always already analyzing society when we analyze
fields of culture. Culture is a *social product*, and while it can hold various relationships to the society that produced it, it can never have any other genesis. The Williamsian sociology of culture, then, is always already the analysis of society as a whole. This is not a question of purity of independence: Bourdieu would agree that a field completely autonomous from larger fields organized around power or money is a fiction. But the *nature* and *scope* of that necessary dependence is, for Bourdieu, an open question to be answered through empirical investigation.

An early essay of Schatzki’s, though mentioning Bourdieu only in passing and Williams not at all, provides a helpful articulation of this distinction. Schatzki tries to pick apart the famous proposition from Engels that “although men make their history, the history that men have already made makes them.” He maintains that because “social reality is nothing other than interrelated ongoing lives,” the central form of causality in social life is the acting of human beings. There are limited ways in which social phenomena can bring about action, and there are limited ways in which states of affairs (Wittgensteinian conditions of life, again) can induce responses and mould intelligibility, but these all work *through* human action. “Overarching social formations” are simply constellations of actions, their detritus, and the relations between them. Certainly, such formations (states, religions, banks, history, productive forces, etc.) can be an important element in *how* or *why* an action is performed or understood in a certain way, but they cannot *be* or *cause* that action themselves. And so Schatzki concludes:

*Social change is caused neither by changes and confrontation between the forces and relations of production, social goals and needs, nor by the imperatives of systems maintenance.*

To claim that social formulations (such as ‘relationships of production’) do cause social change, as Marxism traditionally has done, is to confuse a cause (that which brings something about) with a condition (that which makes something possible: “that which helps

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68 Ibid.: 152. At this point in Schatzki’s career, he had not yet properly discovered practice theory and thus describes his basic premise (“social reality consists in interrelated ongoing lives”) as “a form of individualism.” Theodore R. Schatzki, "The Nature of Social Reality," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 49, no. 2 (1988): 247. Later, in *Social Practices* (1998), he will explain how practices are constitutive of individuals (individual ‘mind/actions,’ as he will put it), and thus fold practice theory into individualism. His statement here, then, that “all movement in social reality occurs at the ‘micro’-level” (Schatzki, "Social Causality," 164.) should simply be taken to mean that no movement in social reality occurs at the macro-level; the concept of a meso-formation (i.e., practice) is not yet ripe.

determine what the cause brings about”).

So social formations (such as history, socioeconomic contradictions, etc.) are conditions and thus cannot cause actions and that, in turn, create history. Instead, “Men accomplish this de facto, on the basis of these conditions.” This is a serious problem for Williams’s base-and-superstructure model of culture. However it is conceived, ‘the base’ is a social formation. If it does not possess causal properties, it is hard to see how it can ‘give rise’ to culture. Better, argues Schatzki, to see phenomena such as culture as the result of a constellation of human actions.

This does not exclude the presence of society in something like a Bourdieusian formulation of a set of social norms guiding the development of culture by means of the habitus. After all, one of the main kinds of social causality is action leading to the moldings of intelligibility; that is, the development of what makes sense for a person to do in particular situations. Moreover, Schatzki notes, “what a person lives through, perhaps especially when young, plays a major role in molding” this intelligibility. A child who grows up listening to opera at home may be more likely to become the sort of person to whom it makes sense to purchase opera tickets than would one who did not; this is the Bourdieusian notion of the habitus. But that does not make the intelligibility the cause of this or that action. As I argued above with reference to field theory, intelligibility is the mechanism described by social analysis. It may provide the necessary condition and means of social action, the way the ether was thought to allow gravity to operate, but it does not create it, any more than the presence of the ether was ever thought to make things fall down. To mistake intelligibility for causation is to treat Bourdieu as an old-fashioned structuralist who sees the individual as no more than the bearer (Träger) of her cultural context. This is what I have called a textual method, a reading of the social rather than an investigation of its means of operation. From a Marxian point of view, Bourdieu lacks an

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70 Ibid.: 154.
71 Ibid.: 167.
72 For example, in his introduction to one of the first important publications of Bourdieu’s work in English, Williams (writing with Nicholas Garnham) mischaracterizes doxa, not as a pattern by which presuppositions shape practices, but as a social state present in “so-called primitive social formations … Such societies exist in a state of Doxa, where the symbolic system is both common to all and taken-for-granted because existing at an implicit level as a logic of practice rather than as an explicit discourse.” Raymond Williams and Nicholas Garnham, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture," *Media, Culture and Society* 2, no. 3 (special issue on Bourdieu) (1980): 215. This is mistaking a mechanism of social analysis for a reading of society. To be fair, this was an easy mistake to make in 1980, before much of Bourdieu’s mature work had been published (in any language), but it does highlight the traditionally Marxian lens through which Williams was reading Bourdieu at the time.
“explicitly critical” theoretical model.\textsuperscript{73} From my perspective, this gives his theories an advantageous flexibility, and may even make him a more convincing social critic.

This essay examines the functioning of theatre within Irish society. Williams’s superstructural cultural sociology will not serve that purpose because it axiomatically takes the relationship of society to culture to be that of producer to product. This may turn out to be correct, but that should be a conclusion, not a presumption. Williams’s schema also seems to move directly from social structure (whether epochal, dominant, or fractional) directly to culture as product, with no role for the action of a human agent (however conditioned or autonomous). This is not only logically dubious, as Schatzki has pointed out, but also seems to lack the ability to account for a field such as theatre, where participants from genuinely similar social situations often engage in very different cultural actions. Nor does it seem to provide sufficient tools to understand the theatrical field’s own internal tensions and shape as a coherent whole rather than as a myriad of disconnected, dissimilar responses to the same social stimulus. Theatremakers respond to each other and their audiences at least as much as to society as a whole, and Williams seems to leave insufficient space for that to occur.

**A challenge: Bruno Latour and Actor-Network Theory**

Because of this basic difference of approach, I do not think Williams is the most helpful counterpoint to or critic of Bourdieu. That role I will reserve for Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory (ANT) which proposes an extremely flexible and sceptical notion of social organization well suited for contemporary cultural and intellectual fields (but not yet well known in theatre studies).\textsuperscript{74} Latour’s criticism is that Bourdieu’s theory is too conceptually heavy, in contrast to Williams’s contention that it is not heavy enough. Because of the importance of this challenge and its power to refine my own argument, I will explore it at some length.

I would imagine that most ANT scholars (who are generally happy to call themselves ANTs) would find my theoretical wrangling thus far comical. Why, they would ask, should one bother with this twisting and untwisting of knotty theoretical terminology? Sociologists’ job is to describe the workings of a social field not by forcing observed data

\textsuperscript{73} Milner, “Dissenting, Plebian,” 108.

\textsuperscript{74} ANT is not, however, entirely unknown to the study of the arts. There is a 2003 Belgian study that applies ANT methods to the dance field. Pascal Gielen, *Kunst in Netwerken: Artistieke Selecties in De Hedendaagse Dans En De Beeldende Kunst* (Tielt: Lannoo/Campus, 2003). I thank Hans van Maanen for drawing this work to my attention.
into rigid theoretical frameworks like shoes in metal boxes but instead by observing the real, specific connections made between actors (including objects) and by examining the way they work as mediators to form networks or accomplish tasks. Social scholars ought to observe actual social interactions—often called translations—and they should slowly follow the star-shaped networks in which each actor is connected to others to understand how these translations happen and are effective. What they ought not do, per Latour, is suggest that there are invisible ‘social forces’ behind these actor-networks that are both impossible to document and all-explaining.

In ANT, the term ‘social’ designates the fact of connection (as in the term ‘association’) rather than anything substantial. There is no such thing as social ‘stuff’: the term social connections does not mean ‘connections made of social,’ but new associations between non-social elements. Social ‘things’ do not exist if we cannot demonstrate them, Latour argues, and we distort our descriptions and usurp the authority of our subjects when we claim that they do. Latour would, of course, put most of Bourdieu’s terms discussed in this part—sens logique, sens pratique, méconnaissance—into this category of unsupported theoretical impositions.

The project of Actor-Network-Theory has been most comprehensively spelled out in Latour’s 2005 book, Reassembling the Social, which makes the case for an ANT ‘sociology of associations’ as opposed to a ‘sociology of the social’—that is, a sociology which (unhelpfully) takes ‘social’ as a meaningful noun. The ANT movement developed out of science and technology studies, a heritage that Latour cites as basic because, for the first time, sociologists were looking “up” at their subjects. In examining scientific practices, sociologists were writing about people with more scientific credibility (And social status) than they had themselves. The formative study was Latour and Steve Woolgar’s sociological analysis of Roger Guillemin’s lab at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, first published in 1979. Latour describes the insight he gained from that fieldwork:

*I remember how inescapable I found the conclusion: the social cannot be substituted for the tiniest polypeptide, the smallest rock, the most innocuous electron, the tamest baboon. Objects of science may explain the social, not the other way around. No experience was

75 Latour, Reassembling, 239.
76 Ibid., 98.
77 Latour and Woolgar, Laboratory Life.
This was the beginning of his distrust in the idea that sociological concepts had any real existence, causal potency, or explanatory power. As a consequence of this shift in thinking, Latour developed the controversial idea that objects (tools, animals, soil samples, etc.) could serve as full-fledged actors in their own right and build networks and connections (i.e., 'be social') in the same sense as people. The experience at the Salk Institute led Latour to the intuition that one could not dismiss a priori any kind of link as non-social, and that sociology should at base be a slow, detailed account of the making of connections and their effects, rather than a judgment about their nature. This meant that there was no reason to exclude non-humans from society. Therefore, the original subtitle of Latour and Woolgar's study of the Salk lab ("the social construction of scientific facts") was changed for the second edition: the word 'social' was dropped, since all construction, it was argued, is inherently social.

To take stock of this development, Latour and his colleagues developed ANT as a method that was "half Garfinkel and half Greimas." From Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, it borrowed the insistence that "the task of defining and ordering the social should be left to the actors themselves, not taken up by the analyst." From A.J. Greimas's narrative semiotics, it borrowed the idea of multiple figuration: that a dizzying number of forms of agency are readily available within networks, and that actors "also have their own meta-theory about how agency acts and more often than not it leaves the traditional metaphysician totally bewildered." ANT's third hero is Gabriel Tarde (1843-
1904), who argued in favour of a sociology of “massing together of minute elementary acts” as against the Durkheimian “supremacy of a law of evolution.”

In addition to multiple agencies, Latour’s ANT method focuses on a number of sites of uncertainty that need to be respected and analyzed rather than prematurely settled. The first is that social aggregates are not pre-existing facts but contentious groupings that need to be constantly reinforced and re-formed by actors themselves. (Latour refers to such groups as having a “performative” definition as opposed to an “ostensive” one, though he does not explain why the former is necessarily more contingent than the latter, or how an act of ostension like pointing is not itself a performance.) Second, action is “always overtaken” by other agencies; in the end, there can be no firm separation between actor and network because the two simultaneously create and define one another through their interconnections. This is why Latour uses the term ‘actor-network’ as a single noun where others would use only one of its halves. Latour’s metaphorical explanation for this term is, in fact, dramatic actors with their multiplicity of collaborative links. This view sees actors (including non-humans) as mediators, receiving multiple inputs and translating them (not always predictably) into other outputs. It is a sign of a good ANT account, Latour argues, when as many agents as possible are treated as such mediators rather than as mere (and thus ignorable) conduits, which he calls intermediaries. Other sources of uncertainty include objects, the differences between facts and concerns, and the effects of the sociologist’s own practice of writing (in a way that bears a great kinship to Bourdieusian reflexivity).

Overall, ANT aims to build a more scientific sociology by attending more closely to the specific actions and relationships of agents and by resisting the impulse to explain them by means of any theoretical framework. It assumes that observed actors and their actions have more explanatory authority than does the researcher. As Latour writes:

As soon as a site is placed ‘into a framework,’ everything becomes rational much too fast and explanations begin to flow much too fast and explanations begin to flow much too freely. The danger is all the greater because this is the moment most often chosen by critical sociology, always lurking in the background, to take over social explanations and replace the objects to be accounted for with

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85 Latour, *Reassembling*, 34.
86 Ibid., 46-47.
87 Ibid., 39.
88 See below, p. 78f.
irrelevant, all-purpose ‘social forces’ [that actors] are too dumb to see or can’t stand to be revealed.  

The consequence of this too-quick rationalization is that the sociologist is cut off from the genuinely new and surprising ways that actors do, in fact, build networks and understand their world. A prime example is Latour’s own analysis of the work of a soil sampling expedition in the Amazonian rain forest.  

A traditional sociological framework would insist that an important break happens when scientists move from the (empirical) observations they make in the field to the (constructed) classificatory schema into which such data are put. But Latour observes that this distinction is far from clean; classificatory schema exist before data are observed, and empirical objects (such as soil samples) retain significant agency long after a classification has been established. In other words, the danger of adhering to a rigid theoretical framework is that “it never fails to explain,” even when its explanations are wholly inadequate to the material under study.

_Reassembling the Social_ is a polemic, and Latour acknowledges that he is being somewhat unfair to sociologists of the social in order to make his case clear. Once artificial social constructs have been disassembled and the sites of uncertainty dealt with, the actor’s observed social world does need to be reassembled, and Latour acknowledges that the means he proposes by which to do so are not wholly incompatible with those of many other social scientists. But he makes an exception for what he calls “critical sociology,” which stands as the antithesis of his project. By ‘critical sociology,’ it appears that Latour has in mind nearly what Osbourne means by ‘critical theory’: academic study that looks for hidden forces with the aim of unveiling them for the sake of social enlightenment and liberation. But the only example that Latour gives of a critical sociologist is Bourdieu, who serves as a kind of nemesis for ANT throughout _Reassembling the Social_. At the book’s core is a fictional dialogue between a graduate student at the London School of Economics and a professor to whom he has come for advice on how to use ANT in his thesis project. The student, versed in critical sociology, insists on using the

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89 Ibid., 137. Latour reverses the words in brackets. I take this to be an error.
90 Latour, _Pandora’s Hope_, chapter 2, “Circulating Reference: Sampling the Soil in the Amazon Forest.”
91 Ibid., _Reassembling_, 251.
92 Ibid., 12-13: “I will be opinionated and often partial in order to demonstrate clearly the contrast between the two viewpoints. In exchange for this breach of fairness, I will try to be as coherent as possible in drawing the most extreme conclusions from the position I have chosen to experiment with.”
93 Ibid., 226: “Critiques of the sociology of the social are misdirected if they forget to consider their extraordinary efficacy in generating one form of attachments: the social ones, or at least that part of the social that has been stabilized.”

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social framework he has been taught to explain the actions of his subjects in a way only such a framework can; this is what he sees as the specific contribution made by academic inquiry. The professor's response is furious:

*Bravo, bravissimo!* So an actor for you is some fully determined agent, plus a placeholder for a function, plus a bit of perturbation, plus some consciousness provided by enlightened social scientists? Horrible, simply horrible. And you want to apply ANT to these people! After you have reduced them from actors to placeholders, you want to add insult to injury and generously bring to those poor blokes the reflexivity they had before and that you have taken away by treating them in a structuralist way! Magnificent! They were actors *before* you came in with your 'explanation'. Don't tell me that it's your study that might make them so. Great job, Student! Bourdieu could not have done better.®

The charge, in essence, is that critical sociology vacates agents. Their responses are determined (by reified social concepts), their actions are determined (by their functional role), and their consciousness is given to them by observers (the scientists). Any effort that the agent makes to escape this role is condemned as a manifestation of the very méconnaissance that requires the Bourdieusian 'generosity.' Latour's charge that this position is "simply horrible" is primarily a claim that it is a scientifically unsound means of doing social analysis, but the charge carries a political tinge as well. "Retracing the iron ties of necessity is not sufficient to explore what is possible," Latour writes.° By "confus[ing] the expansion of powerful explanations with the composition of the collective,"© critical sociology suppresses agents and treats them as mere puppets. The great potential for political change that Latour sees comes in agents' untapped power to form new and surprising networks; he calls this potential "plasma" after the fourth state of matter (an ionized gas) and compares to the space between the ropes of a net. Quoting Tarde, he sees this potential as "astronomically massive in size and range" compared to existing social ties. By denying actors their full agency, then, Bourdieusians are not simply misdescribing the social world but also doing an injustice to their subjects. Critical sociological

96 Ibid., 260.  
97 Though, as Latour is at pains to point out, actual marionettes are given far more agency by puppeteers than agents receive from critical sociologists (Ibid., 214). I am tempted to use the word 'dehumanize' instead of 'suppress' in this sentence, but of course, it is not just the human agents who Latour seeks to defend from the oppression of critical sociology.  
98 Ibid., 244.
frameworks deny actors the possibility of creativity and thus the potential of political change.

A Bourdieusian response

To what extent is this charge fair? Does Bourdieu, in fact, commit the sins that Latour accuses him of? I think not. In my view, Bourdieu would agree with these attacks on critical sociology far more than Latour would expect. As I will explain in a moment, Bourdieu does not have anywhere near the trust in the theoretical enterprise that Latour ascribes to him. Both men would be loath to treat their theoretical concepts as more valid than the objective conditions to which they apply. Latour also makes the mistake of treating Bourdieu as if he were a determining structuralist, a view Bourdieu specifically denies. Bourdieu also specifically rejects the power of sociological explanation to “raise consciousness” and thus give agents reflexivity. The notion of misrecognition that I will explain below is a structural one that information alone is not sufficient to combat.

Nevertheless, ANT still represents a potent challenge that anyone who advocates a sociology of practices and fields needs to answer. Bourdieu does believe that there are structural social factors—doxa, nomos, capitals, habitus, and so on—that both cannot be directly observed and that are instrumental in explaining the ways in which social interactions work. If ANT's can describe social life more thoroughly and effectively without this arsenal of concepts, why should it be used?

At a fundamental level, ANT’s basic stance has merit. Observable facts and empirical connections have an existence that theoretical concepts do not. This intuition connects to John Levi Martin’s observation that both social and natural scientists have been historically sceptical of field-based theories: they prefer an observable connection to an invisible one. It follows that if we can accurately build a sociological description that replaces the field-based notion of action at a distance with an observable connection, we should do so. The unnecessary reification of sociological concepts, especially when they come before an analysis of observed material, does lead to interpretative rigidity and, as Latour suggests, is an arrogant usurpation of actors’ authority.

But is this what Bourdieu does, or what he suggest others do? No. To characterise of Bourdieu’s arsenal of terms (field, practices, capitals, doxa, nomos, etc.) as designating entities with a real ontological presence is a category error. It is an error that many Bourdieusians have made, certainly, but it is the error at the heart of Latour’s critique of Bourdieu. The arsenal of terms represents an intellectual schema for making sense of social activity; they are not descriptions of activity itself. That effort of sense-making aims to
build on what Schatzki calls practical intelligibility. The nature and composition of that practical intelligibility will be clearer by the conclusion, but even at this point, it is clear that it is a form of understanding, not an observable object or phenomenon. While this understanding is obviously an important part of how actors (and scholars) interact with the social world around them, it is not identical to that world. Once one can differentiate between social connections, the understanding of those connections, and descriptions of that understanding, the danger of over-reification is greatly lessened.

That is the path I have tried to follow in this essay. While I think that the fields, practices, and capitals this essay will identify form a helpful and accurate framework for understanding independent theatremaking in Ireland, I do not mean to imply that they exist in the same sense that physical objects, people, or even theatrical productions do. I think the schema I propose here represents a reasonable description of the practical understandings that theatremakers and policy workers have of their field, and one that can accurately give a sense of the field to those from outside it. (This is

I have also tried to avoid any reification of the 'social' in this essay. Instead, I have argued that theatre is inherently social, and in saying that, I have not tried to make the word ‘social’ do any explanatory work beyond the fact of connectedness. Rather, I have argued that sociological methods are those which begin by seeing theatre as a social assemblage rather than as a reified social artifact such as a text. And in setting out the history of theatre policy and politics in Ireland, and in the ways that theatremakers locate themselves in their field, I hope to show the specific sites and mechanisms of connection. These are the sorts of things that Latour argues we should use to reassemble the social, once calcified concepts have been cleared away.

Though I have sympathy for Latour’s work and see significant overlaps between it and my own, I think the ANT model has two significant problems that prevent it from serving as a replacement (as opposed to a corrective) for field theory. First, the idea that a meaningful piece of general social insight can be garnered from the ANT technique without the development of ossified, problematic sociological concepts is simply not credible. If the methods for reconstruction that Latour proposes at the end of *Reassembling the Social* were followed, they would in time lead to the same sorts of reified concepts that the first half of the book sets to tear down. In *Laboratory Life*, Latour and Woolgar propose and make use of a number of concepts that could, in time, become reified in this way (such as the

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99 See below, p. 223-224.
The book that Latour praises more than any other as a model for how ANT should proceed is *On Justification*, which proposes a framework of five “forms of worth” and six “worlds” which can serve as the basis for justification recognized as legitimate by contemporary western society. While the book gives examples of these forms and worlds in action, they are proposed as general forms that apply generally. They are also presented as the authors’ invention and not as the result of any particular inquiry.

Terms have meanings, and a study which attempts to avoid technical language will find itself beholden to the vernacular of its day. While Latour’s writing is certainly clearer and easier to read than Bourdieu’s, much of this comes from the fact that he often assumes his readers’ familiarity with the basic organizational structure of the world which his subjects inhabit. For instance, he feels no need to define or explore the term “secretary” when used of workers in the Salk lab, yet thirty years later, the term seems to encode assumptions that a contemporary ANT would wish to trace back to their origin. Latour’s work does not, then, begin without a conceptual framework. It is not unusual to see proponents of new scholarly methodologies fail to completely implement their own proposals. But like Bourdieu’s “equivalent formulations,” the problem comes when these methodologies are used as a cover for theoretical imprecision. The theoretical innovations Latour does offer (translation, actor-network, mediators, and so on) need a robust philosophical defense if they are to prove useful. Appealing to his subject’s authority and the sovereignty of observed data will not in itself protect Latour’s language from the twin dangers of imprecision and trendiness.


102 The different justificatory regimes are evaluated through a look at contemporary business books, but the ‘forms of worth’ and ‘worlds’ are defined and established long before these books are considered. See Boltanski and Thévenot, *On Justification*, parts 2 and 3 (the establishment) and part 4 (the critiques).

103 Latour, *Laboratory Life*, 16.

104 This assumption of a kinship between subject and reader is one of the major differences between sociology and anthropology, and this difference might encourage Latour to be a little more sceptical of the potential of anthropology to serve as a model for a revitalized, ANT-based sociology. Yes, anthropologists have a metaphysical openness sociologists can lack, but a larger gap between reader and subject makes translation harder, not easier. “In many ways, ANT is simply an attempt to allow the members of contemporary society to have as much leeway in defining themselves as that offered by ethnographers. If, as I claim, ‘we have never been modern,’ sociology could finally become as good as anthropology.” Latour, *Reassembling*, 41.

105 See below, p. 70.
But there is a second, more fundamental problem. If one follows the actor-networks as they observably exist while refusing to make a move towards general theory, one can say very little about cases not currently under consideration. With ANT, the past can be observed, indirectly, and one can show how a series of acts and connections have built up the present state of affairs. One can observe and describe what is happening at the moment, and one can even anticipate the future of currently existing actor-networks on the basis of their present operations. But how is it possible with ANT’s tools to describe something that does not yet exist? Or something that has yet to be observed, which, in ANT terms, cannot properly be called existing?

This charge might upset the ANTs, as they insist that theirs is a sociology of innovation and change where critical sociology is static and mechanical. And yes, Latour is very good at showing the way that social practices can grow rhizomatically, with small buds branching off which contain the potential for future growth. But ANT finds it much more difficult to explain growth or change without such a rhizomatic connection. Latour and Woolgar’s description of the Salk lab tells us quite a bit about the workings of that laboratory, but unless another lab is a direct spin-off or has a direct rhizomatic connection to it (it uses the same equipment or personnel, for instance), there is no crumb trail of associations for the ANT to follow. While ANT may helpfully valorize objects, it unhelpfully neglects patterns of thought.

Those young Irish artists who wish to become theatremakers often start without physical resources or networked links to existing theatremakers, but they do not start with a blank slate. They have borrowed and assimilated real and observable patterns of thought. Without these, they literally would not know where to begin or how to continue. These patterns of thought—practical intelligibilities and the doxa that they come from—are a real and essential component of any description of the workings of a social field.

Latour recognizes this, of course, and he even recommends Bourdieu’s notion of habitus for its ability to generate these patterns of thought. Latour understands thought-patterning as part of the need to equip actors with certain subjectivities, intentions, and individualities in particular networks. As these actors might be non-humans, the relevant question is not an actor’s inherent subjectivity but the means by which a subjectivity is given to them. Many attributes that appear to be properties of an actor, Latour argues, are in fact the result of connections within networks. Scale and power, for instance, are only given to an actor by virtue of their multiplicity of networked connections; a command centre is

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106 Latour, Reassembling, 209, note 80: “Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, once it is freed from its social theory, remains such an excellent concept.”

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only a room until it has appropriate links to those who take orders from it. Latour argues that the equipment actors need to create their own subjectivity likewise circulates in networks. He explains:

[W]hy not postulate that subjectivities, unconscious, and personalities would circulate as well? .... They could be called subjectifiers, personalizers, or individualisers, but I prefer the more neutral term of plug-ins, borrowing this marvellous metaphor from our new life on the Web. When you reach some site in cyberspace, it often happens that you see nothing on the screen. But then a friendly warning suggests that you ‘might not have the right plug-ins’ and that you should ‘download’ a bit of software which, once installed on your system, will allow you to activate what you were unable to see before. What is so telling in this metaphor is that competence does not come in bulk any longer but literally in bits and bytes. You don’t have to imagine a ‘wholesale’ human having intentionality, making rational calculations, feeling responsible for his sins, or agonizing over his mortal soul. Rather, you realize that to obtain ‘complete’ human actors, you have to compose them out of many successive layers, each of which is empirically distinct from the next.¹⁰⁷

The metaphor is helpful, but Latour’s remarkably passive phrasing should make any sociologist nervous and an ANT scholar furious. Where do these plug-ins come from? Who makes them? Do they have a cost? Why does the (anonymous) website suggest that this plug-in, and not some other, is the ‘right’ one? Can we trace the connections between the user, the website, the website’s makers, the plug-in, and its source? Does one in fact have a choice between various plug-ins, or are there certain plug-ins that are so universal (Java or Acrobat, to push the metaphor) that it is simply assumed that all web users will already have them? The metaphor is helpful in describing subjectivity as the outcome of a process of assembly, similar to Schatzki’s claims about the socially constructed self, but it is unidirectional — web users do not modify their standardized plug-ins — and importantly, it obscures the fact that these plug-ins, like scientific facts, are constructions made by actors in networks for particular purposes.

In Latour’s example, users load their browsers and find standardized plug-ins already there or a near-automatic click away. In this essay, in contrast, I have tried to trace the history and formation of the key plug-in in the theatrical field: the practical intelligibility that theatremakers and policy workers use to decide how to continue in their work. This is, I think, an essential part of sociological scholarship. But individual theatremakers do, in fact, find themselves in roughly the position that Latour describes: on the receiving end of a pre-built practical understanding that must be downloaded and

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 207.
accepted in order to activate participation in the field. By ‘following the actor’ along those networks most apparent to the individual theatremaker, it can be difficult for an ANT approach to see the connections that the actors themselves have no need or opportunity to examine. It is not that these networks are invisible, but that they are so established as to no longer be matters of concern. A scholarly act such as an interview is needed to bring these connections back to the surface, a move that ANT scholars might hesitate to make.

What the ANT approach has difficulty seeing, then, is planning. Though plug-ins are built for identifiable purposes, they are not customized for particular situations or individuals. They are inherently general, as they are built for those who are likely to use them in the future. These plans may turn out to be incorrect, and the plug-ins may be used in unexpected ways, but there would be no reason to construct the plug-in in the first place unless the constructors had some justifiable plan for how it would be used. The key network link that defines the plug-in maker as an actor, then, is the one between these makers and users who do not yet exist, a link that ANT cannot talk about because it cannot be observed.

Planning requires some sense of what will exist in the future, and this requires a more or less stable social entity that can have an existence independent of the individuals who participate in it. It also requires the ability to step back from an active involvement in that social entity and examine it as a whole in a way that Bourdieu would call academic. In this essay, I use the Bourdieusian notion of field as that stable social entity; though I am persuaded that it is the most helpful option available, other observers may choose other formulations to fill this need. What is crucial, however, is that both observers and participants need an understanding of this social entity before planning is conceivable, and this is what a trail-following ANT approach has a hard time seeing. Though it is tempting in the present case to see a difference between the work of policy workers as planning for the field as a whole, and the self-interested strategic thinking of theatremakers, this is not a distinction that can be satisfactorily maintained. Both forms of planning require an understanding of a field’s operations as a generalized whole and the ways it is likely to

108 The nature of that incorporation is one of the major differences between Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus and Latour’s concept of the plug-in. Bourdieu’s habitus is written into the body by habit, education, and experience; it cannot be discarded any more than the body itself can. Latour’s plug-in, in contrast, remains separate from the agent who carries it: “The crucial point is that you are sustaining this mental and cognitive competence as long as you subscribe to this equipment. You don’t carry it with you; it is not your own property. You might have internalized it somewhat, but even for that feat of internalization you need to download another plug-in!” Ibid., 210.

109 Though, of course, they need not. ANTs, like other scholars, are more flexible in practice than in theory. Such interviews are an essential part of Gielen’s technique. I thank Hans van Maanen for bringing this point to my attention.
continue into the future, as opposed to merely an operational proficiency in currently-existing networks. The formal process of government arts planning that I will examine in the next part looked to shape a system that could encompass theatremakers who had not yet joined the practice. Theatremakers, likewise, have to contend with a set of capitals that I will detail in part three that concern themselves with that which will be useful to the field in the future, not what is useful at the moment. Both the formal Arts Planning process and theatremakers’ strategic use of cultural capitals required an understanding both of objective facts such as funding patterns and less tangible conditions such as aesthetic trends.

There is, then, an unavoidable element of generality that enters social thought whenever an actor attempts to plan for the future. If ANT is to be successful as social analysis, it will need to describe the mechanisms of that generality with more precise tools than the notion of plug-in. The tool that I have used here, and that I would suggest to other social researchers, is practical intelligibility. Such an intelligibility is not simply an appropriate response to a given situation, a move in an actor-network, or a feel for a (pre-existing) game. It is the tool (plug-in) that makes such moves possible, and though it may be modified with use and changing situations, it is always already present in any given actor-network. The major flaw I see with ANT is its difficulty in making sense of that level of generality, and it is therefore not an adequate basis for the sociological work I am attempting in this essay.

Sociological methods in theatre studies

As I hope is becoming clear, this essay is trying to take a specific theoretical position on the sociology of theatre as a field of practices. This stance not only differs from those of Williams or Latour, neither of whom are typically found in a theatre studies curriculums, but also from those who have been prominent in theatre studies over the past generation. It is worth exploring these other, more noted views of theatre sociology at some length to further differentiate my own position from theirs.

In the last twenty years, the English-speaking academy has seen two major methods of talking sociologically about the theatrical field. Both methods have focused more on theatremaking (and particularly the theatremaking practiced by actors) than on the other practices of the field. More importantly, each claims to better explain theatre by treating it as a subset of a larger field. One method, rooted in sociologies of culture such as those of Bourdieu and Williams, identifies theatre with the drama it presents and thus sees theatre as a subfield of literature or even culture at large. Another method, performance studies, which comes out of the work of Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, regards theatre as a
subspecies—antiquated, at that—of the more general mode of performance. Theatre is, or will soon be, of interest only to historians, epicureans, and anoraks (“the string quartet of the twenty-first century” in Schechner’s famous formulation).\footnote{Richard Schechner, "A New Paradigm for Theatre in the Academy," \textit{The Drama Review} 36, no. 4 (1992): 8.} To write about (traditionally conceived) theatre, then, is too stodgy for a progressive cultural critique. Both of these are sociological methods in the sense that I have argued for here, taking as their object of analysis the practice(s) of theatre and not a phenomenon or work of art. But both of these approaches claim, at least implicitly, that the business of theatre is best understood not as a field of its own but as part of a larger field—literature for the Bourdieusians and performance for the Schechnerians.

There is nothing natural or necessary about either of these moves. Of course Western theatre practices are and have been intimately linked with other performative and literary practices, but when one attempts to actually list them—reading, writing, rhetoric, politics, war, contests, scholarship, prayer, ritual, the fair, commerce, colonialism, etc.—the list becomes so exhaustive as to lose interpretative utility. Does it make sense to talk about a \textit{nomos} or \textit{illusio} shared by practitioners across all these practices (or a closely interrelated set of them)? Is performance (or literature) in fact a field subject both to internal tensions and external pressures, or is it so broad that everything is a tension, as there is no social space outside of it from which pressure can be applied? Field, like practice, is designed as a meso-social concept, with both a social inside and a social outside. Just as I call thick description a textual method because it is unable to capture the sociality \textit{internal} to the micro-activity being described (that is, it has pressure but no tension), a field theory which seeks an all-encompassing field cannot make sense of anything genuinely social \textit{outside} of what is being described. When the field being analyzed is as large as society itself, there can be tension but no pressure. Macro-analysis of this type veers towards a textuality, and thus is no longer sociological. The danger of using culture or performance as surrogates for the field of theatre is not simply that they are large, but that they are totalizing. It is not their size but their breadth that can obscure an understanding of how these practices operate.\footnote{Those who are sceptical of this argument might want to think about its connection to Artaud’s objection to the dramatic text as \textit{theological}; that is, as omniscient and all-controlling. Artaud’s objection was not to one text versus another but to the totalizing character of textually controlled theatre. (This is not to say that he did not wish to have total control over his own theatre.) My argument against placing theatre inside a totalizing social system parallels Artaud’s about the dramatic text as generative matrix for performance.}
At its most broad, the performance studies paradigm seeks to identify the performative element of, quite literally, all social activity. "We are constantly 'playing a part' when we are in society," wrote Nikolas Everinoff in the 1920s, and from that germ of an idea grew the contention that behaviour between people is performed in a manner akin to theatre and can be analyzed as such.\textsuperscript{112} This does appear to be a sociological method, but it is not necessarily a useful one. The application of this method to performance proper comes largely from anthropology and the study of macro-scale social activity, most centrally Lévi-Straussian \textit{rites de passage}.\textsuperscript{113} That is the context in which Victor Turner discovered van Gennep's notion of the \textit{liminal} (that which stands on the threshold between accepted social categories such as child/adult, man/woman, married/single, living/dead, etc), and that is the context in which he first used it. Turner's concept of social drama began as an attempt to explain performances he witnessed in times of social crisis among the Ndembu people.\textsuperscript{114} Applying 'social drama' (and thus, social performance) to descriptions of how societies deal with crises has been the most fruitful use of the concept. Anthropologists can observe all kinds of societies, both post- and pre-industrial. They can observe crises in these societies (including expected ones, such as a change in leadership or the coming of adulthood). And, ethnographically speaking, they have observed that most societies deal with these crises through performance. So Catherine Bell, in her attempts to come to an inter-cultural understanding of phenomena called 'ritual,' makes use of Turnerian and van Gennepian notions of liminality and social drama.\textsuperscript{115} So does Don Handelman in his efforts to broaden and de-theologize the concept of ritual into that of 'public events.'\textsuperscript{116} Though these anthropological tools can grow to an unmanageable breadth (as has the term 'ritual,' in some cases), they remain responses to a relatively specific anthropological question—how do societies respond to social crises?—and this family resemblance gives them some

\textsuperscript{112} Nikolas Evreinoff, \textit{The Theatre in Life}, trans. Alexander Nazaroff (New York: Brentano's, 1927), 99-100. I do not mean to imply, of course, that this idea is original to Evreinoff or that it was his work which was responsible for its dissemination.

\textsuperscript{113} It is important to note that 'macro-' and its cognates do not mean 'large.' They simply mean 'operating at the level of society as a whole,' which, if it is a society with a small population, will not involve many people. Macro-social factors are also often iterated, in Derrida's sense, so that even if a social act such as a \textit{rite de passage} is physically attended by a relatively small number of people, it may in fact be a macro-phenomenon if it is best comprehended as an iteration of a pattern established and enforced by, and accountable to, the society as a whole.


\textsuperscript{116} See Don Handelman, \textit{Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events}, 2nd ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 1988).
notion of kinship. ‘Performance’ is still a useful category here, though it certainly does not
describe a single social practice or field. At best, it describes a common property of a
number of independent practices.

Turner, like Lévi-Strauss and Bourdieu, begins by identifying a set of pertinent
categories by which a culture understands itself, its members, and the world around it.
(Though this is not a wholesale dichotomy, Lévi-Strauss focused more on the categories
themselves and their tendencies to form dichotomies,117 while Bourdieu focuses more on the
means by which those categories allow agents to create a practical understanding.118) Once
these categories are observed, it is then noticed that certain people, objects, and processes
do not fit into them; these are said to be in a liminal state. Moreover, these uncategorized
(because uncategorizeable) things, people and processes tend to be hemmed in by taboos
and isolated from others because of the threat their stateless state poses to social structure.
As such, Turner (following van Gennep and followed by Sutton-Smith) calls such liminal
entities “antistructural.” Mary Douglas’s *Purity and Danger* is the seminal anthropological
study of how societies deal with such “matter out of place”; her examples of antistructure
include menstruating women, corpses, resident minorities such as the Roma, coming-of-age
adolescents, and shellfish (un-fish-like fish).119

The liminal is a threat to social order because, from the perspective of antistructure,
there is nothing necessary or obvious about any particular social order. A society cannot
know what initiands will bring back from their passage through a liminal state, which is
why the reintegration of the formerly liminal is often such a painstaking and rigid process.
But such a process is possible, and may even be socially desirable. For instance, Turner
investigates religious pilgrimage as a form of liminality. He finds that one experience
commonly reported by pilgrims is a sense of non-hierarchical equality between all pilgrims
(or all humanity), a kind of primal psychical leveling that Turner calls ‘communitas.’120

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118 Bourdieu acknowledges his debt to Lévi-Strauss for the very concept of his work in the preface
to *Logic of Practice*, p. 1-3. Note that Schatzki takes Bourdieu to be closer to Lévi-Strass on this point
than I do, as he sees ‘fundamental oppositions’ as the basic building-block for Bourdieu’s claim to a
generative theory of practice. “The existence of all capitals ultimately rests on the oppositions” that
structure habitus, he writes. Schatzki, *Social Practices*, 144. See also Theodore R. Schatzki, "Overdue
This feeling is a result of antistructure, and would of course be very dangerous for any sort of social order if the pilgrims were to bring it back into society with them. So most pilgrimages, Turner notes, contain particular ending rituals which re-integrate pilgrims into society (or keep them separated for a sufficient time). When this is done effectively, the result is that the real feeling of communitas (now called “existential communitas”) is watered down into a socially unthreatening form Turner calls “normative communitas.” Existential communitas is opposed to the social order (as it is to all orders), but normative communitas can actually reinforce the social order: if the feeling of communitas is identified with the established system (or its leaders, foundational acts or texts), the feeling functions as the guarantor of the justice of that system. Malcolm X’s experience after returning from the Hajj in Mecca is an oft-cited example of normative communitas, and Turner identifies many more.

Thus, though liminality is potentially revolutionary, it is not necessarily so; like festivals of misrule, it can be contained and even used as a safety valve to allow an experience of antistructure in a controlled environment where it is less likely to threaten structure as such. But it is only socially desirable in limited quantities. The very point of liminality is that it is unusual and limited: it exists only in those instances when cultural categories fail. If liminality were ever to become a quotidian experience, or even common, it would no longer be a limen. Constant antistructure would become a structure in itself.

Thus far, this is cultural anthropology; the performance paradigm only becomes interested (and the sociological confusion only arises) with Turner’s move from the liminal to the liminoid. The category of the liminal contains within it its own limitation. ‘Liminoid,’ which refers, roughly, to the individualist modern version of the liminal, does not. Turner never offered or accepted a definition of what the liminoid was (and not just what it was not)—a glaring methodological omission on his part. The closest he came was in 1982, long after the term had become incorporated into the performance studies discourse, when he wrote that the liminoid was the “successor of the liminal in complex large-scale societies, where individuality and optation in art have in theory supplanted collective and obligatory ritual performances.” The connections between the liminoid, individuality, social

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complexity, and art can be inferred, but they are far from explicit. From this book and from Turner's other writings throughout the decades, we can say that he thought of the liminoid as the liminal's parallel in the case of "modern" societies, more individualistic and less socially determined than the liminal (and thus, say some, potentially more politically challenging), more occasional and less necessary, and more connected with artistic forms such as theatre.

But liminality was defined in terms of a gap between existing social structures or roles. Particularly when theatrical anthropologists are finding examples that split the difference between liminal and liminoid, it becomes hard to read 'liminoid' as anything other than the bastard child of the liminal and the modern. Turner does in fact seem to see the pure, pre-industrial limen as the Urquelle from which all cultural activity springs, and modern theatre is but "one of the many inheritors of that great multifaceted system." In an essay that sets out in its title to look for "universals of performance," the move from the liminal to the liminoid is necessarily in the direction away from universalism and clarity.

While I am not arguing that the term 'liminoid' is meaningless, I believe that it is ill-defined as a sociological concept.

Much of the methodology of performance studies à la Richard Schechner has been built on that vague concept. If the liminoid simply means the 'playful,' that which an individual does which is outside of (however strict) accordance with socially established rules, then all human activity is liminoid to some degree or another since, per Wittgenstein, we do not follow a rule as a computer executes a line of code but rather by performing an autonomous act which can be evaluated by certain social codes of rule-following. All human actions, because they are the actions of individuals, have some degree of freedom from the socially expected. If this freedom is equated with Turnerian antistructure, then the liminoid is omnipresent. And as the antistructural does not admit of measurement (a standard of measurement being the quintessential socially-established truth), we cannot even say that the liminoid is a matter of degree.

Performance itself is identified as a liminoid concept, and because there is no theoretical limit to the social activity that can be analyzed as a performance, again we have

'complex' societies." None of these terms are defined in the surrounding essay, and of course, many contemporary anthropologists have shown that so-called 'tribal' cultures can have remarkably complex technological and social systems. Richard Schechner, "Victor Turner's Last Adventure," in The Anthropology of Performance (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986), 9, fig. 1.

For example, John Emigh, Masked Performances: The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Theatre (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

the problem of the indeterminacy of scope. Look at the difficulty Marvin Carlson has in
drawing any borders around the term ‘performance’ in his book of that title.\textsuperscript{125} The problem
is not that just the field is very large; it is that describing theatre (or other social
phenomena) as a species of performance does little to strengthen our analysis. Because the
category of performance is so undifferentiated (both internally and externally), the label
‘performative,’ even if correct, does very little analytical work. The elision from a
defensible claim about the socially undefined (antistructure) to its penumbra of the socially
less-than-absolutely-certain (as all social statements are destined to be) may be inspiring,
but it is analytically obfuscating.

Turner’s legacy seems to inspire such moves. To take one example, Frederick
Turner (no relation) argues against departmental academic boundaries:

\begin{quote}
Hence the critical legacy of Victor Turner includes the notion that
there is no legitimate “literary” criticism as such; literature is part of
the spectrum of ritual and “rituoid” human activities (to coin a term),
and its investigation may take us at once into neuroanatomy and
psychophysics, economics, theology, kinship studies, political
philosophy, theatre, and our own personal lives.\textsuperscript{126}
\end{quote}

Notice how little time it takes to move from the defensible observation that literature stands
(somewhere) on the ‘spectrum of ritual’ to the huge, undifferentiated, and thus useless list
of disciplines that could now be covered by the old term ‘literary criticism’. The key is the
move from ‘ritual’ to ‘rituoid,’ obviously inspired by the ‘liminal’/‘liminoid’ pair. If such
an ‘-oidal’ move is not accompanied by some means of differentiating between more and
less –oidal examples (as it cannot be for an antistructural –oidal), the floodgates are open
and the term becomes a macro-social concept, a totality. But unlike other totalities, this one
does not even admit of description. Again, it is not either Turner’s observations I am
disputing here, but simply the usefulness of the -oidal terms. The fact that there is a
continuity (and not, say, a sharp break) between performing in a theatre and Goffmanian
everyday social role-play (as Kotte notes)\textsuperscript{127} does not make the term ‘theatroid’ of any use,
so long as the term remains internally undifferentiated, nor would it mean that the same
method (‘theatre criticism’) could helpfully be applied to all objects on that continuity.

11-12 for a Schechnerian attempt and pp. 84-85 for a Goldbergenian one.

\textsuperscript{126} Frederick Turner, "Hyperion to a Satyr: Criticism and Anti-Structure in the Work of Victor
(Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990), 151.

\textsuperscript{127} See Kotte, \textit{Theaterwissenschaft: Eine Einführung}, 56ff.
Though Goffman does seem to move in that direction, the goal of performance studies in the (para-)theatrical sense was never to deploy performance as a macro-social concept: as a means by which social action as such is carried out. Instead, performance was identified as an *oppositional* practice in a sense that Williams would recognize: it was structurally designed to oppose social-activity-as-usual, whether that was conventional theatrical forms, late capitalism, or the politics of the establishment. Without this oppositional nature, performance could not be progressive or revolutionary, as its proponents insisted it must be. But in order to define what it was opposed to, performance needed to assert what it was. Both of these tasks proved to be impossible: if performance was, in fact, antistructural (the one fundamental property of liminality preserved in the liminoid), then any understanding of ‘performance’ (even a practical understanding) would itself eventually become a structure which performance would need to oppose. Instead, theorists tended to make lists of what performance was not (conventional, structured, hierarchical, phallocentric, etc.) and to identify performance with other suitably large antistructural concepts. One of the most popular of these identifications was the notion of play, often in the sense of the Sanskrit term *lila*. *Lila*, like performance, Schechner argued, could only be defined by what it was not. It is "*neti, neti, neti*": not this, not this, not this.128

But this means of definition shows how difficult it is to use such concepts for sociological analysis. Sanskrit *neti, neti, neti* as a description of God means both that God is not whatever-you-consider-God-to-be and simultaneously that-and-everything-else-as-well.

Performance-as-such, when equated with play or misrule or ‘the liminoid,’ is an inherently unstable cultural form. *Neti neti neti* is a slogan for monism; objective differences between particular forms and even particular instances are necessarily obscured when distinctions as such are always subject to monistic erasure. It is not just external pressures that are erased by monistic performatism (as all social activity as such can be analyzed as performance); it is internal tensions, too, since distinctions between performances and performative types are quickly subordinated to the overall category of the performative. While not impossible to create typologies of performance, these tend to be overly broad and ineffective. Because the notion of liminality was grounded in objective social needs, one could divide it into categories on the basis of given societies and particular needs: rites of passage, seasonal rituals, funerary rites, birth rites, and so on. Because that grounding is absent for the liminoid and no statements can be made about liminoid

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phenomena as such, one cannot build a typology of liminoid phenomena such as performance except on the basis of its non-liminoid—and thus inessential—aspects.

Typologies of performance, then, cannot describe that which makes performances performative; they can only describe secondary traits and the ways in which performative instances fail to live up to the formal ideal. No wonder these typologies are of so little use in performance analysis. Schechner’s effort to build a typology of modern performance—a two-page chart with two pages of footnotes—is so unwieldy and convoluted that not even he makes any effort to use it. This monistic (and thus a-social) constitution is what differentiates Schechnerian performance studies from the form of sociological analysis based on meso-level concepts such as ‘field’ that I am proposing here. While of course any analysis of theatre needs to understand its performativity, considering the field of theatre as a subset of the field of performance is, I think, not a helpful way forward.

Literature may seem a more promising category, as it appears more limited. At its broadest, literature cannot grow larger than the set of linguistic cultural practices, the choice of words for particular cultural reasons—something we share with Shakespeare any time we order a sandwich. Culture is “ordinary,” in Williams’s phrase, because it is ultimately impossible to draw a clean line between our everyday talking and ‘high’ culture. In and of itself, this is not a problem: just because a sharp line cannot be drawn between different cultural forms and modes does not mean these forms do not exist. No one confuses a restaurant menu with Anna Karenina, if only because of how they are used.

Certainly, one can define a field of literary fiction. It has considerable autonomy, contains internal tensions with a degree of independence from external pressures (i.e., economic pressures). It makes sense to talk about the ‘cultural capital’ of the literary field—the internal currency by which the goods specific to the field (status, reputation, accolades) are calculated. Observing, measuring, and describing the way this currency works, and the various tensions and pressures present in the field, has been the main task of Bourdieu’s work on culture, particularly in his acknowledged masterwork, Distinction.

When applied to written literature strictly conceived (that is, the novel and poetry), these descriptions have considerable explanatory force. Pascale Casanova’s recent effort to describe a ‘world republic of letters’ which functions in parallel to and autonomously from the geopolitical world is a direct development of Bourdieusian sociology of the arts. This sociology, he hopes, will become a “critical weapon in the service of all deprived and

dominated writers on the periphery of the literary world. But when the same description is extended to cover a concept of ‘cultural production’ more broadly conceived, gaps almost immediately open up. The field of drama and theatre is, in fact, a particularly good example of this overextension.

Bourdieu’s picture of the shape of the French literary field in the mid-nineteenth century is a two-dimensional plane organized around the axes of social capital on the vertical axis and cultural and economic capital on the horizontal. (His diagram is reproduced below as figure 1.1). Social capital is a measure of the internal prestige (which Bourdieu also calls ‘consecration’) given to those in the literary field by established authorities like the Académie Française. It is drawn between the unknown, avant-garde young on the one hand and the acknowledged, consecrated old on the other. Such internal prestige is present in many fields; in contrast, the value specific to the literary field and which Bourdieu claims as the primary doxic value of the writers Bourdieu is mapping is what he calls cultural capital: literary worth recognized as valid. (Because this is the defining capital of the literary field, Bourdieu sometimes simply calls it “literary capital.”)

This, Bourdieu argues, stands in diametric opposition to economic capital (i.e., money); the more one has of one, the less one has of the other. Though these two axes operate independently, those with more cultural capital—i.e., the true artists—are more likely to find themselves consecrated, at least in the long run. The dominant axis, though, is the

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131 Bourdieu, Field of Cultural Production, figure 2, p. 49. This is not quite in keeping with the earlier picture he drew a decade and a half earlier, when his notions of cultural and social capital were not yet properly differentiated. See Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977).
132 It should be noted that Bourdieu’s use of the term ‘social capital’ in the context of the literary field does not match the more contemporary sociological use of that term as simply the collection of social relationships that a person has at his or her disposal. Bourdieu’s use, in contrast, measures a particular level of social prestige in a particular field. (See, for instance, Dario Castiglione, Jan W. van Deth, and Guglielmo Wolleb, eds., The Handbook of Social Capital (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), which uses only the contemporary sense of the term and ignores Bourdieu’s use.) While I will try to use the term ‘consecration’ for clarity, the term ‘social capital’ in this essay always refers to a Bourdieusian concept and not to the more contemporary usage.
133 Bourdieu is at pains to show that this young/old axis refers to artistic, not biological, generations, and in fact the two can be very different. See Bourdieu, The Rules of Art, 119ff.
134 A position can hold more or less social capital at either end of the rich/poor axis, though this consecration will come from different sources. Thus, those with high economic and social capital but low cultural capital are those consecrated by the bourgeois (Bourdieu mentions boulevard theatre in this case), while those with high social and cultural capital but low economic capital are those who have received what he calls ‘charismatic’ or academic consecration (the Parnassians are the 19th century model). The
horizontal, which divides the ‘rich’ (low cultural capital/high economic capital) from the ‘poor’ (high cultural capital/low economic capital). Bourdieu is adamant that these two capitals exist in direct opposition to one another. The literary field is thus the “economic world reversed,” or a seemingly paradoxical game where the “loser takes all,” as Bourdieu explains:

The fundamental law of this *paradoxical* game is that there one has an interest in disinterestedness: the love of art is a crazed love [*l’amour fou*], at least when one considers it from the viewpoint of the norms of the ordinary, ‘normal’ world.\(^\text{135}\)

The less interested an artist appears to be in economic (‘ordinary’) rewards, the more she

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\(^{135}\) Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or the Economic World Reversed," *Poetics* 12, no. 4-5 (1983).

\(^{136}\) Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 21. Williams and Garnham explain this similarly, if perhaps a bit more clearly: “It is precisely by stressing their ‘disinterestedness’ in the sense of their distance from crude material values that they maximize their interest in terms of the value at which they can ultimately

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Figure 1.1: Bourdieu’s map of the French literary field in the second half of the 19th century, from *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 49.

poor young ones are the true Bohemians, while the rich young ones are vaudevillians or other kinds of pop stars. See Ibid., fig. 2, p. 122.
will be rewarded with the true currency of the field, cultural capital.

Bourdieu charts the development of this cult of disinterestedness through the nineteenth century (and is more than happy to admit that it is much easier for those who are independently wealthy to pull it off). At first, he argues, there was essentially no difference between social and cultural capital; consecration or profit were artistic success. The differentiation of the two was the result of certain painters’ and writers’ “struggle to conquer their autonomy from the Académie.” This struggle began

the process which led to the universe of artists ceasing to function as an apparatus hierarchized and controlled by a corps, and beginning to constitute itself little by little as a field of competition for the monopoly of artistic legitimacy.

Bourdieu calls this (paradoxically) the “institutionalization of anomie,” the artistic field’s move to refuse any external standards and expectations and instead measure itself by a capital specific to the artistic field alone—that is, cultural capital. Such a move needs to be set down in the doxa of a field, and is thus revolutionary. Those who made it—Manet, Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Mallarmé are the names Bourdieu most often mentions—are thus justly characterized as “heroes” performing “acts of prophetic rupture” which created an autonomous space for less-heroic future generations. This rupture separates the cultural capital that organizes the field of cultural production from other standards of measurement (capitals) at work in the social world in general. As Bourdieu explains:

Thus the relative autonomy of the field is asserted more and more in works whose formal properties and value [i.e., capital] are derived only from the structure, hence the history, of the field, increasingly barring the ‘short circuit’, meaning the possibility of passing directly from what is produced in the social world to what is produced in the field.

While, in the long run, cultural capital may be convertible to other capitals, it cannot ‘pass directly’ to them. It is at base a value specific to the field and cannot be translated to the ‘social world’ at large without loss.

convert their cultural capital into economic capital or alternatively ensure the reproduction of their cultural capital.” Williams and Garnham, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture," 220.

137 Bourdieu, The Rules of Art, 83-84: “Inherited economic capital ... is one of the most important factors in the differential success of avant-garde enterprises, with their doomed or else very long-term investments.”

138 Ibid., 132. Italics in the source.

139 Ibid. Italics in the source.

140 Ibid., 68.

141 Ibid., 248.
But from a larger perspective, one may ask: what is it that this field-specific capital measures? The answer is easy with regard to economic or social capital: economic capital is easily defined in reference to the larger society as money and material resources, whereas the consecration represented by social capital can also be defined with reference to neighbouring fields, either through markers of respect such as awards; mentions in scholarship, textbooks, or journalism or by analogy with similar processes of consecration in other fields.\footnote{Cultural capital, in contrast, \textit{has no definition apart from what the literary field gives to it}. This is what makes it ‘specific’ to the field, and that is what the heroes of the 19th century fought for. While cultural capital can be tentatively described by critics or observers from outside the field, it cannot be defined by them. Perhaps this definitional difficulty, at least as much as his observations, accounts for Bourdieu’s assumption (which he never proves) that cultural capital is directly and inversely proportional to economic capital, and not simply that the two tend not to coexist. Without this assumption, mapping cultural capital would be a near-impossible task.}

A re-examination of the above quote will show that Bourdieu is claiming that works which aim at cultural capital (it is their ‘teleoaffective structure’) do not simply \textit{make use} of the autonomy of the field, they \textit{assert} it. This is part of the Bourdieusian notion of position-taking in a field: the field defines the positions available to be taken (and the habitus defines which of those make sense for a particular agent), but the act of taking up a position warps the shape of the field, changing the space of positions for those who will come after. Bourdieu uses the example of Flaubert, whose act of position-taking was both so radical and so effective that, from the perspective of those who came after him, it looks self-evident and obvious.\footnote{The taking-up of a position is simultaneously the assertion of the \textit{value} and \textit{definition} of that position; in a very real sense, a position does not exist until it is taken up.} This is relevant for the present essay because Bourdieu sees the various literary "genres" (the novel, poetry, and drama) as occupying different initial positions on the axis of cultural (and thus economic) capital, before any work of art or act of position-taking is made. (He calls this differential of “intrinsically symbolic credit” part of the “particularities of genres.”)\footnote{Bourdieu sees poetry occupying the ‘poor’ end of the axis, drama standing on the 'rich' end of the axis. Building on \textit{Distinction}, literature of high social capital can also be said to be that which is well-adapted to the taste of the social élite. This, however, is a circular definition, as taste for high-social-capital art forms part of the definition of the social élite.} Bourdieu sees poetry occupying the ‘poor’ end of the axis, drama standing on the 'rich' end of the axis.
on the ‘rich’ end, and the novel falling in between. Coupled with the insistence that only the
literary field can define cultural capital, this means that ‘poor’/high culture poetry is in a
better position than the novel (and in a much better position than drama) to define the
capital specific to the literary field, and thus what the term ‘literary’ and its associated field
mean. Again, this is the concept of autonomy: a field has autonomy if that which defines
value within it (its specific capital) is relatively independent of those capitals which define
value outside of it. The ‘poor’, avant-garde position is thus more socially powerful (within
the field) and authentically literary than the ‘rich’, ‘bourgeois’ position which, Bourdieu
cannot but notice, the theatre necessarily occupies.

Notice that while Bourdieu uses the term ‘drama’ to denote the richest ‘genre’ of
literature, his arguments as to why drama occupies that position concern not aesthetic taste
but the structural social requirements of production, distribution and reception of dramatic
works as opposed to those of the novel or poetry. He would call them the ‘objective
conditions’ of the genre; as such, they are not in fact dramatic but properly theatrical:

No doubt because it is the genre most directly constrained by the
demand of an (at least initially) mainly bourgeois clientele, drama
was the last literary form to develop an autonomous avant-garde
which, for the same reasons, always remained fragile and threatened.146

The ‘clientele’ are not readers of playscripts but theatregoers, and, while the ‘autonomous
avant-garde’ remains unspecified, it is hard to imagine it not including such theatremakers
as André Antonie, who could not fairly be called a dramatist. Nevertheless, it is his scripts
that are seen to attract audiences and status, not his theatrical work. Bourdieu evaluates the
Théâtre Libre just as he would a publishing house.

This is the problem with treating the theatre as a would-be form of written
literature; first, the theatre is included in the literary field because it is assumed to be the
same sort of activity as literature and thus value the same form of capital, and then, the
theatre is demoted to a lower (that is, less fully literary) portion of that field because it lacks
that capital as compared to other literary forms. Theatre’s existing but less than full literary
capital is what places it both inside the literary field and into a subordinate fraction of that
field. When one tries to equate drama and theatre and treat them as a literary genre, these

145 Though he does sometimes use the term ‘sub-field’ to denote drama as opposed to the novel or
poetry, he never uses more phenomenological terms like “media” or “forms.”
146 Bourdieu, Field of Cultural Production, 54.
observations will show that drama is a lesser form. At its best, then, this view would seem to say that drama is always trying to be something it is not, and it is most valued when it is not itself. This impossible conclusion should lead us to question its underlying assumptions: perhaps theatrical cultural capital is not the same as literary cultural capital. (Willmar Sauter’s survey work has indicated, for example, that what audiences most value in a performance is not its language or plot but the skills of its actors.) Perhaps seeing theatre as part of the literary field obscures those capitals and tensions that are uniquely theatrical. This is not to say that there is no overlap or relationship between theatrical and literary fields. However, a sociological analysis which sees literature as a particular pressure from a neighbouring field may be a more helpful one. Though Bourdieu himself fell into the trap of conflating theatre and literature, there is nothing in his praxiological theory that requires such a conflation.

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147 Cassanova falls into this trap as well, treating playwrights such as Yeats, Synge, Beckett, and O’Casey as writers-in-general. For instance, he characterizes the Abbey Theatre’s ideological enmeshment in politics in the early 20th century—that is, its lack of autonomy from the general political discourse—as symptomatic of “total lack of autonomy” of the Irish literary world in general, writing: “Anything that threatened to challenge the mythology of national heroism and the accepted narrative of the nation’s founding was immediately rejected by a furious public, denying writers the least measure of creative independence.” Cassanova, The World Republic of Letters, 191-2. In a chapter discussing the ‘small literatures,’ he fails to notice that his examples of a ‘furious public’ are not readers but theatregoers. Writers, in fact, had far more creative independence than theatre artists; no incidents comparable to the Playboy riots of 1907 were provoked by the work of a novelist or poet (including Yeats’s own non-stage work). Perhaps the lack of autonomy had (at least) as much to do with the peculiarities of the theatrical form as it did with the political dependence of Irish literature. Despite the importance of the Abbey Theatre to his chapter on “The Irish Paradigm” (chap. 10), he never does theorize or explain the difference between theatregoing and reading.

148 Willmar Sauter, “The Eye of the Theatre: The Audience Meets the Performance - Experience, Repertoire, Habits,” in New Directions in Audience Research, ed. Willmar Sauter (Utrecht: Instituut voor Theaterwetenschap, 1988), 25: “No matter if the [audience’s] rating [of the performance] is high or low, the closest and many times the only element related to the general judgement is always the rating of the actor.”

149 Of course, one response to this is that Bourdieu simply had nothing to say about the theatre: he wrote only about drama, by which he meant written dramatic texts. Although The Rules of Art does map practitioner-led institutions such as André Antoine’s Théâtre Libre as part of the field, this is the exception. (See Bourdieu, The Rules of Art, 119ff.) Bourdieu mostly talks about the theatre as another genre in which a writer can pursue her interests. Bourdieu is correct that, particularly in the 19th century, dramatic texts circulated as a form of literature that had the possibility and intention of performance always already inscribed into them, even without any actual incident of performance. This, however, is not to say that such an understanding makes the best sense of contemporary theatre.
A larger field?

My examination above suggests significant problems with a sociological analysis of theatre that begins with its placement as a genre of either performance or literature. Yet there are other contexts in which theatrical practices can be, and often are, placed. For instance, practices of theatremaking can be placed within the field of actors' paid work (along with movie-making, voice-over, advertising work, waiting tables, and so on), and indeed, this is one of the main contexts in which professional actors organize their working lives. Similarly, practices of theatregoing can be placed in the field of entertainment, alongside movie-going, sports, music, reading, tourism, television, and walks in the park. Many large social actors place theatre in this context; the Irish state, for instance, funds theatre through the Department of Arts, Sports, and Tourism. There is nothing necessarily inappropriate about any of these delineations of the field in which theatre exists. Each brings to the fore traits that are genuinely true about theatrical practices. But each treats theatre not as a social field in and of itself but rather as an example of something larger, and thus necessarily obscures other traits of theatre practices.

All multiple-practice fields will necessarily find a context in which to place their practices, and the drawing-up of a field's border will always prove problematic. Bourdieu would draw his borders around particular doxa and capitals, whereas John Levi Martin would draw them around the entities which are said to create action-at-a-distance. (Warde has several proposals of his own, all of which he finds insufficient). Difficulties in moving from the general plural (practices, fields) to the singular and specific are rife in practice-and-field theory. Even Schatzki, whose distinction between integrative and dispersed practices seems the methodologically sharpest tool in drawing the borders of

150 Shevtsova discusses a similar question in asking about the sociology of theatre's relationships to kindred disciplines, such as the sociology of work or the sociology of culture or the arts. Shevtsova, "Sociology, Part One," 26-28.
151 Warde argues that a field is "integrated around" four traits: "a commitment to the values" of "some particular stakes," a set of positions which stand in some kind of structure, a set of agents to take those positions (who bear dispositions and resources), and a "set of strategic and competitive orientations" on those agents' part (or necessitated by the field, or both). Warde, "Practice and Field," 13. If we follow Bourdieu in understanding these 'stakes' as capitals, 'agents' as human beings who necessarily have a habitus embodied within them (and thus have doxic dispositions and access to resources), and if we follow him further in understanding 'positions' as the various locations one can take up in relationship to those particular stakes (and in relationship to the already-taken positions in relationship to those stakes), Warde's claim is simply that fields build themselves around embodied, habituated people and their active, strategic engagement with some particular capitals and each other. That this explanation does very little explanatory work is Warde's point.
fields, very rarely speaks of this or that practice, preferring 'practices' in general. One can talk of Bourdieusian praxiological field theory's mediation of questions of social power through an embodied, learned habitus or else insist, as I wish to, on the synthesis of the concepts of practice and field and an understanding that the two describe mechanisms of practical intelligibility—and not social causality—without doing the difficult work of drawing the lines of a particular field, with an inside and an outside (however fuzzy the border). But the difficulty is worth it: 'field,' in the singular, remains the most effective theoretical solution yet found to the problem of structure and agency, as Dominic Crossley has argued. The preference, of course, should be to draw up fields which provide the clearest picture of the practices under consideration. Borders which are philosophically unsound, which do not adhere to observed data, or which preclude the asking and answering of questions are much less useful. (For this reason, I will refrain from drawing the borders of a field around a specific capital in the present case. The Irish theatrical field under study in this essay does not seem to have a single capital around which it is organized—I will point to three instead—and yet I do wish to defend it as a coherent field.)

But how can one tell ahead of time which drawing-up will be more informative and clear? There is no necessarily correct answer to this question in all contexts, but there should be a default option. Fields, like practices, are self-nominated; they are recognized by social actors as distinct arenas of endeavour and positioning ('the business world,' 'academia,' 'the music industry'). The boundaries between such self-understood worlds are of course always contested, and a field's self-definition is part of that which is at stake within it. Certainly, this has been the case in contemporary theatre. But Warde's complaint that a field, in the end, is "just what participants take it to be" is precisely the point. Not all participant-markings-out will be the most informative and clear, and it is not self-nomination as such which defines a field. Rather, because self-nomination is often the most easily observed manifestation of the nomos internal to the field—the point of view that creates the practical object—it should be respected as a likely sign that such a nomos is in fact present and operative. Particularly when self-nomination is widespread and relatively un-controversial, it is a good indication that the common nomos, commonly acknowledged

152 He even mis-cites Bourdieu's book as The Logic of Practices, not The Logic of Practice. (See Schatzki, Social Practices, 138.) One does not want to read too much into what may be a typo, but the error is telling.


154 Warde, "Practice and Field," 17.
capitals (‘stakes’ in Warde’s phrasing), and common set of positions from which choices can be made that organize a functioning field are present.

It is my claim that theatre is self-nominated in this sense—that those inside it recognize it as the primary context in which they engage in specific practices—and we should therefore treat it as a field. Again, this is a stronger claim than it may seem. Over the last decades, one of the outcomes of the internal struggles over self-definition in world theatre has been a schism: certain practitioners understand themselves, and are understood by the rest of their (former) colleagues, to be working in something other than the theatrical field. Grotowski would be the most obvious example. Claiming that the theatre field should be understood as it nominates itself means that, at least initially, these individual practitioners are to be excluded from the field, whereas others who may make similar formal innovations and may also challenge the fields’ self-definition yet are not understood by their colleagues to be doing something other than theatre remain inside. (The Wooster Group may be an example of the latter.)

Similarly, my claim precludes the possibility of a phenomenological or semiotic answer to the question of whether related performative forms such as dance or opera should be included in the theatrical field. If one accepts my claim, there can be no a priori answer to such questions of inclusion and exclusion, as any conclusions must be based on empirical observation and the articulated opinions of the players in the field. If, for example, it could be shown that, audiences and performers understood the making and attending of opera along the same lines as parallel practices for the theatre, there is no sociological reason to argue that opera is not ‘really’ theatrical. And, of course, this data might differ geographically; it may be the semiotically confusing but sociologically sound case that opera is theatre in one country but not in another. To focus on practitioners’ self-understandings is to treat fields the way (late) Wittgenstein treated languages: as socially constructed things meant for and defined by their social uses.

This study’s starting point, then, is that theatre is a self-nominated social field in which certain self-nominated and distinct practices take place; most centrally, theatremaking and theatregoing (though I will add a third in the next part). It attempts to say something about the recent history of the theatre field in Ireland, specifically, through the use of Bourdieu’s vocabulary of practice, field, habitus, and multiple capitals. It does not, however, follow Bourdieu in his application of those concepts. Empirically, my biggest break from Bourdieu is the recognition of theatre as a distinct field, a move already made

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155 This self-nomination is far weaker with regards to commercial or amateur theatre, which is a reason for my decision to exclude them from the present case study.
by Shevtsova. But this will lead, I hope, to the most important theoretical insight to come out of this case study: a new understanding of the thorny Bourdieusian concept of *méconnaissance* and the relationship between (social) practices and (sociological) discourses.

**Bourdieu’s own position**

Before focusing on the theoretical nut that this essay hopes to crack, though, it is necessary to take one last step back to give us more perspective on Bourdieu’s work generally, the intellectual field in which he operated, and the position he occupied in it. Bourdieu, who died in 2002, was one of the leading French intellectuals of his day. He occupies a precarious position between philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies, and his work can be profitably understood as a reaction to his colleagues in the post-war French intellectual world, though he rarely cites or mentions by name the particular disputant to whom he is responding in any given work. This can be frustrating, but it is useful to keep in mind as an indication of his problematic relationship to the academic establishment and philosophical discourse, as I will demonstrate below.

As a young man, he left the philosophical fold for sociology, a move often noted as a formative step in his methodological development. Though he was seen as a Durkheimian wrestling with the legacy of structuralism, a desire to be scientific, and his opposition to Derridian deconstructionism, he admits that he “never had much taste


157 In an interview conducted by Wacquant, Bourdieu discusses this “conversion,” as he calls it, at some length. Wacquant writes that, for Bourdieu in the context of the Algerian war, sociology was “a politically more efficacious and ethically more relevant intellectual vocation” than philosophy. Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 211, n.174.

158 Andrew Milner sees Bourdieu’s position with regard to structuralism as “essentially analogous” to Williams’s position vis-à-vis culturalism. Milner, "Dissenting, Plebian," 108.

159 See Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, 26-27. Throughout his career, Bourdieu maintained this desire even as he saw how difficult it was to realize. See Bourdieu, *Science of Science*, 86f.

160 He famously called deconstructionism “ritual transgressions at which only traditionalists could be shocked.” Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 495. Note that he does not name any particular deconstructionist in pointing out the theory, though there can be little doubt who he had in mind.

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for 'grand theory.'”


This is not described by Bourdieu as “engaged” intellectualism on the Sartrean model but rather as “a kind of militant craftsmanship” on the Lévi-Straussian one. The main political development Bourdieu addresses in his early and theoretical work is the French colonization of Algeria. “In the social sciences, the progress of knowledge presupposes progress in our knowledge of the conditions of knowledge. This is why it requires one to return persistently to the same objects.” Bourdieu, *Logic*, 1-2.

My italics.

See Schatzki, "Overdue Analysis," 115-16: “Since the opposition between theory and practice in itself provides no reason why theory cannot accurately model practice, there must be some particular feature of practice or of theories of practice that Bourdieu thinks poses a problem.” Much as he searches, though, Schatzki can find no such features, and so he sees no reason to conclude that theory is incapable of accurately modeling practice.

*Philosophical Investigations*, x.

It seems to be particularly those commentators who wish to see Bourdieu as standing firmly in the Marxian tradition of cultural studies who are most prone to this. Williams himself, for instance, long before Bourdieu had fully articulated his mature project, tried to systematize Bourdieu’s thought more, I think, than Bourdieu himself would ever have asked for. Williams and Garnham, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture." Latour also takes aim at Bourdieu as a theoretical edifice, a move that helps him articulate his own position even if, as an argument, it is a bit of a straw man.
One part of the problem is occasion. As the objects of his investigation change, so do Bourdieu’s general conceptions of social life. For instance, the Kabyle people of Algeria, amongst whom Bourdieu did his fieldwork in the 1960s, are a constant reference point and model for thinking in his early forays into social theories (Outline of a Theory of Practice in particular), while in later works (Pascalian Meditations, Science of Science) the point of reference is more likely to be the academic world or contemporary French culture. As Schatzki himself notes, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to tell which of Bourdieu’s claims are general and which specific. So Schatzki’s criticism that Bourdieusian habitus-talk is too intellectualist (because it boils down to the all-pervading governance of certain fundamental oppositions) misses the point. Bourdieu’s theoretical insight here is the habitus-mechanism that explains how taught traditions and norms are embodied and lead to practices. Such often-observed oppositions have been a staple of ethnographic explanation since Lévi-Strauss, who Bourdieu views as a mentor and Schatzki never mentions. Unlike Lévi-Strauss, who really did view the oppositions as the organizing principle of all

167 There is also the question of the development of Bourdieu’s theoretical ideas over the course of his career. Warde notes how the notion of field eclipsed the notion of practice in Bourdieu’s work (with Distinction as the fulcrum between the two) without him ever explicitly articulating the reasons for this shift or, indeed, acknowledging that there had been one. Just as critics generally divide Wittgenstein’s work into an ‘early’ period (around the Tractatus) and a ‘late’ one (around Philosophical Investigations), and nearly treat the two as having separate authors, perhaps it makes more sense to ask what the ‘early’ or ‘late’ Bourdieu thinks about a particular question than to ask about Bourdieu as such. As will be obvious by now, my approach does not make this distinction, although I tend to lean towards the late works in instance of conflict. Bruno Frère makes a similar point with regard to Bourdieu’s distrust of ‘native’ or ‘lay’ sociologies, but he sees more continuity than I do and his analysis has other difficulties. See Bruno Frère, “Genetic Structuralism, Psychological Sociology and Pragmatic Social Actor Theory: Proposals for a Convergence of French Sociologies,” Theory, Culture & Society 21, no. 3 (2004): 93-94, and below, p. 71, note 186.

168 Schatzki, "Overdue Analysis," 117.

169 The objection is that because Bourdieu’s concept habitus is (a) too all-governing (“responsible for more or less everything that goes under the label ‘mind/action’”) and (b) reducible back to certain basic oppositions (such as “day/night, high/low, wet/dry, going forward-going backward, and hot/cold”) these oppositions thus “homologously structure habitus, practices, and the layout of the world.” Schatzki, Social Practices, 138, 40, 42. ‘Mind/action’ is Schatzki’s term for the fundamental building block of a Wittgensteinian social world; it is who a person is, both internally and externally. This takes Bourdieu to be closer to Lévi-Strassian structuralism than he, in fact, is and confuses (in the word ‘responsible’) the causal with the conditioning. For a fuller response, see the discussion of Judith Butler’s similar charge on p. 82, note 225, below.

170 Bourdieu, Logic of Practice, 2: “The respectful patience and attention to detail with which, in his seminars at the Collège de France, Lévi-Strauss dismantled and reassemble the – at first sight – meaningless sequences of these tales, could not fail to be seen as the model of a kind of scientific humanism.”

171 Lévi-Strauss appears nowhere in the index, the bibliography, or the text itself of Schatzki, Social Practices.
social life, Bourdieu sees them as strong rules of thumb, lodestars (as opposed to propositions or rules) that guide practical logic but do not eliminate the space or need for individual rational (or irrational) choice. That habitus leads to practice and that practical logic is arranged around such lodestars (not ‘governed by’ them, as they are polysemic and thus "uncertain") are general points; that the lodestars are oppositions is a specific (though not uncommon) one.

But the larger problem is that, in contrast to Latour’s claims, Bourdieu simply does not trust the ability of academic social theory and philosophy to capture the nature of practical logic. As early as 1977, he discussed the “objective limits of objectivism,” which, by their nature, will inevitably distort any academic understanding of a social practice. Bourdieu has a deep and longstanding “dissatisfaction with the philosophical game” which can appear to be simple disagreement with his philosophical opponents. It is that, but more to the point, it is a conviction that logical reason and the analytical gaze are not aids but rather impediments to understanding the way a practice actually operates for a practitioner—her all-important “feel for the game,” that which Schatzki calls “action intelligibility” (what it makes sense to a person to do at a given moment) and Wittgenstein, with respect to language, calls the ability to go on. Bourdieu thus sees philosophy claiming an explanatory authority he is unwilling to grant it.

Both of these impediments are a form of textualism. First, logical reason leads to what Bourdieu calls the “theorization effect,” the assumption that practical reasoning obeys the same rules as theoretical reasoning. Instead, he writes that practical logic:

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172 This does not stop him, in his earlier theorizing, to use a number of systematic-looking charts of thought that show the Lévi-Straussian influence in no uncertain terms. See the diagrams in Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.

173 See Bourdieu, *Logic*, ch. 5, particularly pp. 87-88. To be fair, Schatzki is simply taking too seriously an unfortunate word choice in Bourdieu’s earlier work. “Through the habitus, the structure which has produced it governs practice.” Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 95.


175 Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 42.

176 Keijo Rahkonen argues that Bourdieu’s distaste for philosophy goes back to the 1950s, or even “to his formative years at the École Normale: since then Bourdieu has quite obviously despised philosophers’ fads and their flirtations with semiotics and other literary fields (e.g. the Tel Quel group).” Keijo Rahkonen, *Not Class but Struggle: Critical Overtures to Pierre Bourdieu’s Sociology*, Research Reports (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Department of Social Policy, 1999), 31. In this vein, I would also mention his distaste for Derrida.

177 Bourdieu, *Logic*, 82 et passim. The French term sens connects the two phrases ‘feel for the game’ (le sens de la jeu) and ‘logic of practice’ (le sens pratique) more than is apparent in English translation.


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is not that of the logician … This practical logic… is able to organize all thoughts, perceptions and actions by means of a few generative principles … because its whole economy … presumes a sacrifice of rigour for the sake of simplicity and generality and because it finds in ‘polythesis’ the conditions required for successful use of polysemy. In other words, symbolic systems owe their practical coherence … to the fact that … they obey a ‘poor’ and economical logic.¹⁸⁰

Even if academic observers could learn the generative principles and their means of coherence (contained in the doxa), the rules of the academic language game would still see this sacrifice of rigor as unacceptable and this polysemy as unhelpfully imprecise. (Rigor and precision of language are not, of course, major concerns of most practices.)

Second, the analytical gaze creates a spatiotemporal synchronization of a practice that is foreign to the experience of its participants. The paradigmatic symbol of this for Bourdieu is the ethnographer’s diagram (of kinship relations, gift-exchange patterns, political power, or the like):

which owes its scientific efficacy precisely to the synchronizing effect it produces (after much labour and time) by giving an instantaneous view of facts which only exist in succession and so bringing to light relationships (including contradictions) that would otherwise go unnoticed.¹⁸¹

This synchronization is both temporal (“for the analyst, time disappears”¹⁸²) and spatial: the map, like the timeline, exists outside of space and time and appears not to implicate its own spatiotemporal existence in what it describes. Bourdieu italicizes the word ‘time’ in the quotation above to draw attention to the realities of space and time in the analyst’s own (academic) practice: the semester, the seminar room, the A4 sheet, the twenty-page chapter. It is because the academic is given “the time to totalize, that is, to overcome the effects of time” that she is able to generate seemingly ahistorical descriptions of historical phenomena.¹⁸³ Because she is an objective analyst, then, it is hard for her to understand the spatiotemporal tempo experienced within the practice she analyzes, which will inevitably differ from her own. That the social form of academic practice affects the conclusions academics draw is not as radical a thesis as it was when Bourdieu first systematically

¹⁸⁰ Bourdieu, Logic, 86. My apologies for all the ellipses in this quote. Because Bourdieu likes to write with a number of ‘equivalent formulations’ in each sentence (see below), it can take some pruning to isolate a single thought.
¹⁸¹ Ibid., 82. Italics in the source.
¹⁸² Ibid., 81.
¹⁸³ Ibid.
proposed it in *Homo Academicus*. But it remains a relevant reason to be sceptical of academic pronouncements on the nature of practical reality.

These concerns, then, have an effect on Bourdieu’s writing. Schatzki argues that Bourdieu puts himself into an impossible situation: he seems to be both building a social theory and demonstrating the impossibility of social theory as such. This is true, but only to a limited extent: Bourdieu, like all theorists, hopes that the intellectual tools he develops will be usefully applied to the field. He is, however, very aware of academic social theory as a practice, which, like any practice, contains certain presuppositions (doxa) related to its point of view (*nomos*) that cannot be articulated or seen from the inside. Though scientific practices (including social scientific practices) are structured and have developed in such a way that they recognize ‘objectivity’ as a highly valued form of capital, academic practice is inherently no more objective than any other. It is that practice that Bourdieu looks on with a “suspicious hermeneutics.” That his own particular work is part of that practice is an unfortunate necessity, but he does not single it out for suspicion as (a quick reading of) Schatzki may imply.

184 Schatzki, "Overdue Analysis," 116: “On the one hand, he [Bourdieu] calls for a science of practical mastery ... and on the other hand, he claims that such a theory is, strictly speaking, impossible, or more exactly, can at best yield mere theoretical ‘equivalents’ of this mastery.”


186 It is important to note this distrust in order to rebut Bruno Frère’s accusation that Bourdieu “does violence” to the thinking of his central mentor, Wittgenstein, in elevating scientific language above the “natural” speech of lay people’s common sense (Frère, "Genetic Structuralism," 91). Latour makes a similar charge when he suggests that Bourdieu grants sociology a near-magical power to explain actors actions that they themselves lack. First, while it is true that Bourdieu’s work does seek to show the internally obscured objective social underpinnings of the kind of unreflective, everyday practical thinking that goes by the name ‘common sense’ (which is part of what I will describe below as misrecognition), there is no contradiction between this and Schatzki’s claim (that I believe Bourdieu would support) that what it makes [common] sense for people to do in various situations is given within practices; it just means that what it makes [common] sense for people to do does not always (or does not ever) take into account (all of) the agent’s objective social conditions. (It is also worth noting that all of Frère’s evidence for this charge comes from a rather early [1973] book co-authored by Bourdieu, J.C. Chamboredon and J.C. Passeron, *Le Métier de sociologie*. Certainly, Bourdieu worked collaboratively, but perhaps it is a bit unfair to cite such a work as definitive of Bourdieu’s thought.) Second, and more importantly, Bourdieu in no sense places ‘science’ in a more trustworthy position than ‘practice.’ Rather, *science is a practice itself*, and contains within it all the misrecognitions of any other practice. Any distrust Bourdieu has for ‘lay’ language, then, applies equally to scientific language. Science is not necessarily more valid than other language games, nor are scientists more able than others to give true explanations. Bourdieu instead is suspicious of all language games, social practices, and (linguistic) justificatory regimes as such. How sociology itself is able to stand in this uncertain morass is part of what I hope to clarify with this essay.
The problem thus is with academic practice—with “the philosophical game,” as Bourdieu often puts it—and it is that game (which he happens to be playing) that gets questioned. For example, take this seemingly offhand but very revealing passage from *Pascalian Meditations*:

(When, as here and elsewhere in the text, I give numerous equivalent formulations, I am trying to help demolish the false frontiers between artificially separated theoretical universes, for example, the neo-Kantian philosophy of symbolic forms proposed by Cassirer and the Durkheimian sociology of the primitive forms of classification—and to secure the means of cumulating [sic] the insights of each while increasing the chances of being understood.)

Such a statement puts him outside the realm of the accepted socio-philosophical language game. These ‘numerous formulations’ are of course not ‘equivalent’ and their insights not necessarily cumulative, if for no other reason than each occupies a different position in the sociological field. Bourdieu does not seem to acknowledge that these well-policed boundaries actually have meaning and import.

Philosophical boundaries make for philosophical exactitude, and Bourdieu’s boundary-smashing impulse shows how little respect he has for such specificity. Bourdieu would prefer to create a more general understanding more generally ‘understood’—though perhaps understood differently by different readers—than a more exactlying marked-out philosophical position, work which would simply further the micro-philosophical project “set up to block awareness of the scholastic illusion.”

This kind of break with the philosophical and social theoretical *doxa* means that, in an important sense, he is no longer a philosopher or social theorist. We should not, then, expect from Bourdieu the kind of systematic social theory that his self-positioning does not allow him to provide. Not only, then, do I concur with Niilo Kauppi’s assessment that this “fundamental contradiction” in Bourdieu’s thought leads to theory that is “uneven” and evidences an “absence of specificity,” but I believe Bourdieu would concur as well.

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188 Ibid., 30.
189 For this reason, perhaps he would have been more intellectually content as a satirist. Bourdieu writes in his introduction to *Pascalian Meditations*: “Being convinced that Pascal was right to say that ‘true philosophy makes light of philosophy,’ I have often regretted that academic proprieties prevented me from taking this invitation literally .... I envied the freedom of writers (Thomas Bernhard on Heideggerian kitsch, or Elfriede Jelenik on the fuliginous [i.e., sooty] clouds of the German idealists) or of the artists, from Duchamp to Devautour, who have, in their own artistic practice, constantly subverted the belief in art and artists.” Ibid., 2.
190 Kauppi sums up the contradiction in a way quite compatible with my account over the last few pages: he asks, “if the social and the cultural are arbitrary and not logical, how can his theory
Despite this self-positioning, there are some evocative theoretical insights in Bourdieu’s work that I think are very useful for theatre studies: the embodied-experience-and-training-turned-generative-propensity of the habitus, the neither-deterministic-nor-autonomous logic of practice, the self-positioned-practical-space of the field, doxa, nomos, illusio, and the ways these concepts are manifested in both everyday and revolutionary practical living, among other insights. If one wants to find theoretical imprecisions, it is not that difficult to do so: for instance, the dividing line between the (unarticulated) presuppositions contained in a field’s doxa (plural) and general point of view (also unarticulated) adopted by the field’s nomos (singular but potentially complex) has never been clear. But it is neither difficult nor productive to poke holes in a sponge. Bourdieu’s theoretical work is a useful tool in explaining the social world, and if its use helps us see gaps we otherwise might have missed, so much the better. In the remainder of this part, I want to discuss one key point that I see not so much as a fudging of terminology as a fundamental paradox in the heart of Bourdieu’s theory: the term méconnaissance, or misrecognition. This is the difficulty on which I hope the case study of the Irish theatre can shed some light.

To anticipate and summarize, my argument can be glossed like this: Bourdieu imposes a necessary distinction between discursive logic and practical logic. The two function differently, and each sees what the other cannot. To function, a practice must remain unaware of its own discursive reality, and a discourse must be unaware of its own practical reality. But one of the consequences of habitus is that practices are embodied within particular corporeal human beings. Because of the singularity of the human body (one may not swap bodies the way one swaps hats), a person who functions in both discourses and practices will necessarily bring some of the habitus from one into the other, affecting its development, and ‘contaminating’ praxis with discursiveness or vice versa. Institutional factors (such as joint theoretical-practical training, practices with a highly discursive component, or the reading of Bourdieu) may encourage this tendency. As the timeframe of social change shrinks and lifespans grow, we may see the development of non-misrecognizing (‘cognizant’) practices. These practice/discourse hybrids will be unable to function with the doxa-and-misrecognition that Bourdieu sees as necessary for practices as such. In the following two parts, I will try to show that the contemporary Irish theatre contains instructive examples of such hybrids: Irish theatremaking has incorporated a discursive logic into its doxa, and the practice I will call theatrical policy work has been scientifically clarify the social and cultural worlds?” Niilo Kauppi, The Politics of Embodiment: Habits, Power, and Pierre Bourdieu’s Theory (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), 119, 22.
dominated by this way of thinking. Through a study of these examples, we can learn more about this hybrid logic and its functioning in the social world. It may even lead us to question the very distinction between discursive and practical logic, the foundational distinction of Bourdieu’s (and not only his) theories.

**Misrecognition**

Misrecognition is the translation of the French *méconnaissance* typically used by Richard Nice, Bourdieu’s usual English translator. Back in 1977, in *Repetition*, Nice explains the term as “the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder.”

This is expanded by Derek Robbins in the context of the popular misunderstanding of why the dominant culture has the right to wield the power it does:

‘Méconnaissance’ might as usefully be rendered as ‘lack of comprehension of’ or ‘misappreciation of,’ but certainly, an appropriate paraphrase of ‘misrecognition of the truth of the legitimate culture as the dominant cultural arbitrary’ might be: ‘not understanding that the objective truth of legitimate culture is that it is the dominant cultural arbitrary.’ In other words, the meaning is that the ‘legitimate culture’ is only such *by virtue of* its dominance rather than of any intrinsic quality.

Let us set aside for the moment the legitimacy-of-dominance question. The use of the term *méconnaissance* (and its relative *illusio*) shows that Bourdieu has theorized a gap between the ‘objective truth’ of a social phenomenon (here, cultural legitimacy) and its misrecognized conception. Given the context of the intellectual climate of post-war France, such a concept was necessary to carve out a space amidst Sartre, Foucault, Althusser and others. Generally in Bourdieu, this misconception takes the form of thinking that the values invoked by certain fields—‘art for art’s sake,’ the justice of government, the fair and meritocratic nature of education, the unassailable-because-logical nature of science—are the values that actually govern those fields. These are the very misconceptions Bourdieu’s work

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191 Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Sage Publications, 1977), xiii, note 2. Lest one jump too quickly to see this as Bourdieu indulging in easy condemnation, the sentence to which this note is attached reads: “Of all the possible ways of reading this text, the worst would no doubt be the moralizing reading, which would exploit the ethical connotations ordinary language attaches to technical terms like ‘legitimacy’ or ‘authority’ and transform statements of fact into justifications or denunciations; or would take objective effects for the intentional, conscious, deliberate action of individuals or groups, and see malicious mystification or culpable naivety where we speak only of concealment or misrecognition.”

has so undermined, and why his work provokes, in himself and others, “the feeling of transgression.” As Bridget Fowler puts it:

Hence the significance of Bourdieu – in a world where spiritual values are invoked, he will risk analysis of the discreetly-concealed political economy underlying publishing or galleries; in a world where critics are assumed to be absolutely autonomous, he will show that their evaluation intimately shapes economic values in the art market.

This “sacriligious” exposure lays bare the objective forces at work in a given field, which Bourdieu, in Marxian fashion, always describes in capitalist terms—though capital here is, as we have seen, a multifaceted notion that has grown rhizomatically out of the economic and branched out to include “all forms of power that enable individuals, groups or classes to cement or reproduce their position in [various] social hierarchies.” Bourdieu sees a central part of the sociologist’s job as the identification and analysis of these forms of power at work in various fields. He describes this process as “the sociologist break[ing] the enchanted circle of collective denial,” and indeed, this language of misrecognition as something holy or sacred that needs to be smashed is quite common in his more reflective writing.

The reason that this work is needed, though, is that without empirically grounded sociology, these powers will necessarily remain hidden. Bourdieu means this as the strong statement it is. Misrecognition of the powers objectively at work in a field is a necessary response to participation in that field, argues Bourdieu. Entering into a field requires the practical acceptance of (“tacit adherence to”) the framing conventions of the field—the doxa. This is not an act of intellectual assent (as in the acceptance of a religious creed) but the very “constructing disposition” that precedes participation in a field. To participate in a field’s practices requires what Bourdieu often calls a ‘feel for the game,’ a non-conscious

195 Jeff Browitt and Brian Nelson, eds., *Practising Theory: Pierre Bourdieu and the Field of Cultural Production* (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 2. The original quote refers to “the social hierarchy,” which is a bit of a misreading: nowhere does Bourdieu posit the existence of a single social hierarchy, and the whole point of field theory is that various social hierarchies operate according to different forms of capital.
197 So, in describing the development of the cult of the autonomous creative artist, he writes, “God is dead, but the uncreated creator has taken his place. The same person who announced the death of God seizes all of his properties.” Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 189. The implication is that Bourdieu’s sociology, in showing how the creator is created, allows him to pronounce the death of this new god.
practical understanding of how to think and act that can only come from taking up the position of the nomos. This acceptance necessarily leads to illusio, the “primordial belief” in the truth and appropriateness of that position. But these are not overt claims which can be subject to questioning; if they are not accepted, there can be no entry into a field.

So, within a field, the nomos must be misrecognized as truth; without this misrecognition, there would be no possibility of acting in the field:

This means that once one has accepted the viewpoint that is constitutive of a field, one can no longer take an external viewpoint on it. The nomos, a ‘thesis’ which, because it is never put forward as such, cannot be contradicted, has no antithesis. As a legitimate principle of division which can be applied to all the fundamental aspects of existence, defining the thinkable and the unthinkable, the prescribed and the proscribed, it must remain unthought. Being the matrix of all the pertinent questions, it cannot produce the questions that could call it into question.

This is not just an intellectual difficulty, but a physical one. Because participation in a field and the doxa it engenders are embodied properties, inscribed in the very flesh of participants in the form of the habitus, Bourdieu has to claim that participants in a field must necessarily misrecognize as legitimate the arbitrary nomos of their field. “We learn bodily. The social order inscribes itself in bodies through this permanent confrontation,” he writes.

If this is true, it precludes the possibility of discarding that learning without also discarding the body in which it has been inscribed. Practices, as learned social phenomena, cannot escape this problem:

There is every reason to think that as soon as he reflects on his practice, adopting a quasi-theoretical posture, the agent loses any chance of expressing the truth of his practice, and especially the truth of the practical relation to the practice. Academic interrogation inclines him to take up a point of view on his own practice that is no longer that of action, without being that of science .... Simply because he is asked questions, and questions himself, about the reasons and the raison d’être of his practice, he cannot communicate

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199 Ibid.
200 Ibid., 11.
201 Ibid., 97. For an earlier application of this concept to the field of pedagogy, see Bourdieu and Passeron, Reproduction, 22.
202 Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations, 141.
the essential point, which is that the very nature of practice excludes such questions.\textsuperscript{203}

Assuming that a practitioner can (or would even want to, if she could) answer such questions about her practical work in a field is a form of the ‘scholastic illusion’ that Bourdieu condemns in \textit{Pascalian Meditations}.\textsuperscript{204} Because it is embodied, misrecognition is not a conscious act (nor an ‘unconscious’ one, in the psychoanalytic sense of that term) nor is it a form of ignorance. It cannot be overcome by explanations and information alone. Bourdieu therefore takes issue with those who expect political liberation to come from the ‘raising of consciousness’ – ignoring the extraordinary inertia which results from the inscription of social structures in bodies, for lack of a dispositional theory of practices. While making things explicit can help, only a thoroughgoing process of countertraining, involving repeated exercises, can, like an athlete’s training, durably transform habitus.\textsuperscript{205}

Bourdieu here is taking issue not only with the political agenda of the \textit{soixante-huitards} generally but also with those who, like Roland Barthes, see the cure to academics rigid adherence to particular paradigms in the (psycho)analysis of themselves and their institutions. No knowledge or understanding can stop misrecognition, according to Bourdieu, because it stems not from ignorance but from the patterns of lived history embodied in the habitus. Further, because ‘training’ is something performed within fields (note the recurrence of the athletic metaphor), this ‘countertraining’ would entail a re-configuration of the \textit{nomos} and thus the doxa of various fields (not just those of pedagogy). Even this, then, is not a correct recognition of the various capitals at play in a field by its members, but a new \textit{nomos} (a scientific one, say), which, while enabling a clearer view of the old one, would inevitably misrecognize its own powers and ends.\textsuperscript{206} Is there ever a way, then, that the powers at play in a field can be correctly recognized by those who hold positions in it?\textsuperscript{207}

\textsuperscript{203} Bourdieu, \textit{Logic}, 91.
\textsuperscript{204} Bourdieu, \textit{Pascalian Meditations}, particularly ch. 2.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid., 172.
\textsuperscript{206} On this, see Bourdieu, \textit{Science of Science}.
\textsuperscript{207} The present essay is not, of course, immune to this problem. Per Bourdieu’s theory, I can no more see the true shape of the academic practice in which I am involved than anyone else; nor, in that I am a participant in the Irish theatre, am I immune from the blindnesses that come with its nomos. According to Bourdieu, this is not my failure but an inevitability. I am, of course, sceptical of this reasoning; in this essay’s conclusion, I hope to show more solid grounds for that scepticism. At this point, I will proceed despite Bourdieu’s warning because part of the academic doxa is that one must not simply \textit{accept} that certain things are \textit{a priori} unknowable—one must actively attempt to figure them out.
Bourdieu's writings offer two possible solutions, both of which are partial at best. The first is also related to the space he leaves for the possibility of change. The habitus is built up from "the social phenomena the experience of which give rise to it," but that does not make it "appropriate for the ever-changing particular circumstances through which the actor lives." In a fast-changing society, people may outlive the objective social structures that their habitus were built in response to. Such people are burdened with a habitus that is maladjusted to the objective structures they face in their actual lives. This, Bourdieu implies, is not so uncommon:

This perfect coincidence of practical schemes and objective structures is only possible in the particular case in which the schemes applied to the world are the product of the world to which they are applied, that is, in the ordinary experience of the familiar world (as opposed to foreign or exotic worlds). The indisputable charm of stable and relatively undifferentiated societies arises from the quasi-perfect coincidence between habitus and habitat.  

Without that 'quasi-perfection,' we have to deal with what Bourdieu calls a 'cleft habitus,' where countertraining for the new objective social structure is not yet complete. Interestingly, the largest description Bourdieu offers of the cleft habitus comes as part of his own autobiography:

The contradictory coincidence of election into the educational aristocracy with lower-class and provincial (I would like to say: very provincial) origins underlay the constitution of a cleft habitus, generating all kinds of contradictions and tensions. On the one hand, a recalcitrant disposition, especially towards the educational system. On the other hand, the self-assurance, even arrogance of the 'hyper-selected' student, who continues to see himself as the product of a miracle. This ambivalence is a sort of double distance with respect to the opposing positions, dominant and dominated, within the field.

While there is no sense in which Bourdieu claims that the cleft habitus is unique to himself (or those like him), it is hard to say that he sees this state as paradigmatic for the modern

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208 Schatzki, "Overdue Analysis," 117-18. To be fair to Schatzki, the quotations I use in this paragraph to refute the second of his claims were published more than a decade after his article. That being said, though, Schatzki offers no explanation at all for the second claim. One could surmise that he takes Bourdiesian 'fundamental oppositions' to control both habitus-building and social change, and thus a development in one will mean a development in the other. But, as he is not proposing a theory of social change, Schatzki never makes this argument. As legitimate as his disagreements are with Bourdieu's use of 'objective conditions,' he cannot show that they are (or Bourdieu sees them as) reducible to the 'fundamental oppositions' that, in Schatzki's view, are the basis of Bourdieu's understanding of practical intelligibility.


world as a whole. His works on modern French consumer tastes and the French educational system do not make use of the ‘cleft habitus’ concept. In fact, Schatzki is able to see in Bourdieu’s work on taste (Distinction) the same kind of ‘fundamental oppositions’ that govern the structure of the habitus in ‘stable’ and ‘charming’ societies. And, truthfully, the ‘cleft habitus’ concept is not one Bourdieu applies even to those people one would think would have the level of social awareness that he does, his fellow academics. Perhaps the idea came too late in his career (2000) for it to be properly developed.

But still, it is hard to imagine how a cleft habitus is necessarily cognizant. Because the habitus is first and foremost embodied, the physical unity of the body—the fact that each person has or is exactly one body—should in time resolve the cleft habitus into a unity of its own, with its corresponding nomos, doxa, and misrecognized truths. Eventually, this should be true, but there remains a period of time during which a habitus is confronted with objective structures it has no means to make intelligible (a first confrontation with foreign technology, for example). During this period of change, there may be a possibility of proper social cognizance within a practice (if one in crisis). Unfortunately, Bourdieu does not pursue this line of thought.

The second solution to misrecognition is the one Bourdieu attempts to use in his own work: reflexivity. It is quite possible for the sociologically aware practitioner to try to take stock of his own location and attempt to objectify his own point of view; indeed, most contemporary academics will do this as a basic part of their work. Bourdieu makes a number of serious attempts at auto-analysis, describing his own social trajectory, position in the academic field, and so on. “I am socially classified and I know precisely what position I occupy in social classifications,” he writes. But he seeks to distinguish this self-objectification from what he calls “egomaniacal postur[ing],” which he vigilantly avoids.

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211 Though he notes they are very different ones: male/female in ‘traditional’ societies, say, while rich/poor in capitalist ones. Nevertheless, Schatzki notes that in all cases, practical logic “is a description of the principles that govern the assignment of meaning to the situations and functions of action through the construction and application of families of opposition.” Schatzki, Social Practices, 140.


213 It would be interesting to pursue a Bourdieusian study of the attitudes of students from families with less educational background (perhaps in the arts) who are in the process of assimilating a new habitus, in an effort to observe the work of a cleft habitus in action. Can those with such a habitus see the reality of their social worlds? Obviously, while such questions are related to the present essay, they go significantly beyond it.

214 Most notably, Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations, 33ff, and Bourdieu, Science of Science, 110ff. Another important source is Bourdieu and Wacquant, Invitation.

215 Bourdieu and Wacquant, Invitation, 203.

216 Ibid., 202.
He seeks to take himself “as an object, not in a narcissistic sense but as one representative of a category”—that is, to try to describe objectively the social position he occupies, to objectively describe the space such a position renders invisible, and to incorporate that into his writing.\textsuperscript{217} His ideas of the kind of biography sociologists should be interested in, and thus his own auto-analysis, reject the personal, the private, and the individual in favour of socially objective conditions. He writes a form of “anti-autobiography,” a study of his position by “proxy,” or a set of “impersonal confessions.”\textsuperscript{218}

This is the sort of impersonal self-analysis that he enjoins on ethnographers as well, which he calls “participant objectivation.” While insisting that this is a call for the anthropologist to “know himself,” he contrasts it with “the explosion of narcissism verging on exhibitionism” that he sees in too many (particularly American) postmodern anthropologists.\textsuperscript{219} Rather than such “confessions,” he asks anthropologists to take on the more difficult work of explaining their own position in the field in terms of the most “brutally objectivist tools that anthropology and sociology provide,” including statistical methods.\textsuperscript{220} Bourdieu’s model asks ethnographers to follow his own example in looking at their own position in the academic field, the position-taking acts that have defined their career, their own habitus and relation to doxa, their class location and trajectory, and so on. Such data may be less exciting than personal confessions, but, Bourdieu argues, it is what will allow social scientists to be best aware of their own positions, and thus aware of what they are unable to perceive. Without this self-analysis, they will remain blind to themselves.\textsuperscript{221}

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 203.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.: 284.
\textsuperscript{221} Don Miller argues that this essay, given as the Huxley Memorial Lecture to the Royal Anthropological Institute on 6 December 2000, is a “frontal attack” on British anthropology for that very blindness (Don Miller, "Turning Anthropology against Itself: Bourdieu on Participant Objectivation," in \textit{Practicing Theory: Pierre Bourdieu and the Field of Cultural Production}, ed. Jeff Browitt and Brian Nelson (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 75.). The one British anthropologist Bourdieu names as blind to his own position, though, is James Frazer, who, while still very influential, died almost sixty years before the lecture. Interestingly, he does so not in his own voice but by means of quoting Wittgenstein’s (quite harsh) “Remarks on \textit{The golden bough}.” Even when chipping away at its foundations, Bourdieu has a feel for the game of academic discourse.
In itself, though, this auto-analytical reconstruction was not seen as sufficiently potent to pull scientists (including sociologists) out of the misrecognition of their own social status. While Bourdieu thought it could help them acknowledge the limitations inherent in writing from a particular position (as one cannot write from no position at all), it might not be enough to allow them to overcome them. They would simply be acknowledging that they did not hold what Bourdieu, paraphrasing Leibnitz, called the "geometral of all perspectives" and ascribed only to God: "the locus where all partial points of view are integrated and reconciled, the absolute point of view from which the world presents itself as a spectacle, a unified and unitary spectacle, the view without a point of view." It is, however, the particular historical achievement of the scientific field that the field itself began to approximate more closely that 'geometral.' No individual scientist as such can achieve it, but if in this field "antagonistic points of view clash in accordance with regulated procedures and are gradually integrated through rational confrontation," something akin to this omniscient geometral can be approached. Reflexivity as a collective task—requiring individual reflexivity, but then moving beyond it—does seem to offer some promise in overcoming misrecognition.

But there is a contradiction here, too. The more autonomous a field is—that is, the stronger its internal tensions specify the acceptance of a very particular and detailed set of doxa as a barrier to entry—the more likely it will be that no member of the field will be able to see the common ground between all points of view that can be taken up inside the field; that is, the ground necessitated by the acceptance of doxa. But the less autonomous a field is—the lower its barriers to entry, as Bourdieu puts it—the less its specific doxa will be shared by all members of the field, and because the doxa is responsible for a sense of collegiality and the feel for the game, the less they will be able to cooperate on the collective task of reflexivity. Recall the artistic field that has developed an autonomy in such a way that those that join it are already oriented towards the capitals of the field and cannot "short circuit" back to pursue capitals of the social world in general. None of this means that reflexivity is impossible or useless, but it does limit how useful it can be.

**Visionaries and the intellectual's paradox**

Bourdieu does discuss one other possible response to misrecognition, not as a viable social possibility but as a response that certain visionary rebels may have. These visionaries

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223 Ibid., 116.
occupy an ambiguous place in Bourdieu’s sociology. While he is not generally interested in the hagiographic personality cults of particular artists, there are a few whom he seems to admire as being unusually (socially) prescient, astute, or challenging. To be sure, he tends to discuss these men’s biographies (he mentions no women in this category) in the same de-personalized way in which he analyzes his own case, concerning himself not so much with questions of inner spirit or psychological nuance as objective fact: place and class of origin, educational trajectory, relationship to financial and social capital, and so on. He is, in other words, looking for their habitus, not their psyche. Bourdieu sometimes uses their works as uncannily accurate depictions of the sociological shape of a particular field, as he did in analyzing the society depicted by Flaubert in *Sentimental Education.* Any move by any player in any field necessarily affects the future shape and possibilities for movement within that field, but some moves do so radically. Manet is Bourdieu’s most cited example, and his heroic efforts to forge the autonomy of painting are much respected. Bourdieu’s genuine admiration for these men, and his detailed explanations of the precise effect their radical practice had on their fields should belie the oft-repeated claim that he is a “conservative” determinist who lacks no space for individual agency. In fact, in

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225 This claim has been most recently and clearly articulated by Judith Butler in her attempt to find a middle ground between Bourdieuian socially inscribed embodiedness and Derridian structurally unmoored freedom. “In making social institutions static, Bourdieu fails to grasp the logic of iterability that governs the possibility of social transformation,” she writes; a few pages later, the notion of “static social institutions” is expanded: “In Bourdieu’s account of performative speech acts, the subject who utters the performative is positioned on a map of social power in a fairly fixed way, and this performative will or will not work depending on whether the subject who performs the utterance is already authorized to make it work by the position of social power she or he occupies.” Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech* (London: Routledge, 1997), 147, 56. Butler is here ascribing to Bourdieu the very diagrammatic fallacy that he so condemns in structuralist anthropology, down to the choice of metaphor: the idea that the social world (here, the ‘institutions’ that authorize speech acts) functions as a static, objective system that can be correctly represented by a diagram drawn from a point of view outside of contingency and time—what Butler calls a “map.” (See Bourdieu, *Logic,* 100ff.) Bourdieu’s actual notion of the field (not map) of social power is far more nuanced; each act in the field shapes the future of the field, and radically unauthorized acts (such as Rosa Parks’s, Butler’s example) can shape it more. An agent does not become a machine because her body has been inscribed with the habitus of her society of origin. To claim that the habitus (the bearer of this ‘authorization’) is an “immutable principle... an inexorable ... and exclusive” one is, in Bourdieu’s furious denunciation of his critics, “to be able to claim an easy triumph over a caricatured adversary of one’s own making. How can one fail to see that the degree to which a habitus is systematic (or on the contrary, divided and contradictory) and constant (or fluctuating and variable) depends on the social conditions of its formation and exercise, and that this can and must therefore be measured and explained empirically?” Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations,* 64. Hans van Maanen notes that Natalie Heinich makes a critique similar to Butler’s. See van Maanen, *How to Study Art Worlds,* 74.
Bourdieu’s reading, such visionaries are at times even able to recognize the nature of their field from the inside, which Bourdieu had thought an impossible task:

As for awareness of the logic of the game as such, and of the *illusio* on which it is based, I had been inclined to think that it was excluded by membership of the field, which presupposes (and induces) belief in everything which depends on the existence of the field, i.e., literature, the writer, etc., because such lucidity would make the literary or artistic undertaking itself a cynical mystification, a conscious trickery. So I thought, until I came across a text by Mallarmé which provides both the programme and the balance-sheet of the rigorous science of the literary field and the recognized fictions that are engendered within it.²²⁶

He goes on to quote a passage from Mallarmé’s “La musique et les lettres” which explains how one takes joy in the literary field despite the sure knowledge that it is only “a game.”²²⁷ Bourdieu was shocked at this sociological consciousness from the pen of a practitioner, but noted one crucial caveat. The cognizant practitioner who overtly *articulates* the truths of his field would be subject to such severe reprimand that any voice he had would be immediately silenced. That is, the field “excludes the *publishing* of its own truth”:

> To utter ‘in public’ the true nature of the field, and of its mechanisms, is sacrilege *par excellence*, the unforgivable sin which all the censorships constituting the field seek to repress. These are things that can only be said in such a way that they are not said.²²⁸

About a decade later, Bourdieu expanded this reference into a prominent part of his discussion of the autonomous author’s point of view, in showing how Mallarmé’s “impious dismantling of the fiction” was part of his socially *cognizant* justification of literary pleasure (*joissances*). The element of the paradoxical saying-in-a-not-said-manner, however, is maintained and more specifically related to the *doxa* and *illusio* of the literary field:

> He knows that the solitary and vaguely narcissistic pleasure that he wants to do everything to save is doomed to be perceived as an illusion if it is not rooted in the *illusio*, the collective belief in the game, and the value of its stakes, which is both the condition and the product of the functioning of the ‘literary mechanism’… [therefore] he chooses to enunciate this seminal nothingness only in the mode of

²²⁶  Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 72. The chapter that this quotation was drawn from was originally published in 1983.
²²⁸  Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 73. He further connects such saying/not-saying to Duchamp’s “demystificatory mystifications.”
denegation, that is, in the very forms he does not deliver, since he has almost no chance of being truly heard.\textsuperscript{229}

Bourdieu appends a footnote to this quotation explaining that, in fact, Mallarmé's denegation was not heard by his contemporaries.\textsuperscript{230} It is clear, then, that Bourdieu believes that such cloaked, paradoxical statements of a field's truth (those said as if they were not said) are not comprehensible \textit{as} truth to the field as a whole. It seems they can be expressed only by privileged visionaries such as Mallarmé and they can be understood only by those like sociologists who stand outside the field and its illusio—and also, presumably, a few other visionaries such as Mallarme himself.

There is thus an important sense in which a field can never know its own truth by means of its visionaries. If articulating the field's truth necessitates exclusion from the field, then there is an important sense in which the field \textit{itself} necessarily misrecognizes its own truth, even if most of its members are Mallarmerian savants able to intuit it or comprehend its paradoxical non-articulation. Genius, in itself, does not escape the problem of misrecognition created by the taking up of a field's nomos and the acceptance of its doxa.

The problem of misrecognition, and the sociologist's role in combating it, leads to an uncomfortable tension in Bourdieu's thought that I do not think he ever satisfactorily resolved. On the one hand, he sees sociological \textit{truth} as a necessary (though not sufficient) part of social justice and liberation. Particularly in his later and more explicitly political writing, Bourdieu equates misrecognition with oppression; part of the socially engaged nature of his work is to point out the (arbitrary) power structures in place in such fields as politics, economics, and education so that they can be resisted or at least critically considered. Best-selling works such as \textit{Acts of Resistance} and \textit{The Weight of the World} were explicit attempts to inject certain truths about French society into the public discourse for democratic and progressive ends.\textsuperscript{231} Sociology is, in his mind, a necessary ingredient for progressive social policy.\textsuperscript{232}

This is no minor theme or fringe benefit. Bourdieu explains the very importance of sociology in society by building on Nietzsche's notion of re\textit{ssentiment} (and, though he does

\textsuperscript{229} Bourdieu, \textit{The Rules of Art}, 276-77. There are a few other changes in this reworking. He "came to read carefully a text by Mallarmé" rather than simply "com[ing] across" it, for instance, but the main developments are an increasing specific social intention and a focus on joissance as Mallarmé's goal.

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 390, n. 102.


\textsuperscript{232} Thus, Bourdieu has worked with the French Ministry of Education and various workers unions for the sake of building a more just society.
not mention it, the Sartrean idea of ‘bad faith’), the impulse to self-abasement that comes from the dominated classes’ suppressed—because—useless resentment of their dominators which Marx calls dehumanization:

I believe that sociology, when it is reflexive, enables us to track down and to destroy the last germs of ressentiment.... Ressentiment is for me the form par excellence of human misery; it is the worst thing that the dominant impose on the dominated.... Thus, for me, sociology is an instrument of liberation and therefore of generosity. \(^{233}\)

This is the closest Bourdieu comes to taking up the position of the classical Marxist intellectual, casting his work as an ‘instrument of liberation’ against the internal and external oppressions that depend on the misrecognition of the dominant as the natural. Though he was sceptical of the figure of the ‘total intellectual’ represented, above all, by Sartre (and took pains to show the historical development of Sartre’s position),\(^ {234}\) Bourdieu did believe that the sociological ‘instrument’ is social science’s unique and essential contribution to the revolutionary project.\(^ {235}\)

At the same time, in order to create such an instrument, sociology must take social things (including itself) as objects. This involves all the pitfalls of the objectifying, scholarly gaze described above. It also implies a social role which offers the time, space, and resources to make such disinterested and objective gaze possible. That role, of course, stands in certain power relationships with other roles, and commands a rather high level of authority, the legitimacy of which was questioned by Bourdieu’s sociology of the academic world. In an extraordinarily personal confession that is not in keeping with the tone of the vast majority of Bourdieu’s work, he writes:

I have never really felt justified in existing as an intellectual; and I have always tried — as I have tried again here — to exorcise everything in my thinking that might be linked to that status, such as philosophical intellectualism. I do not like the intellectual in myself.\(^ {236}\)

And elsewhere, he writes:

\(^ {233}\) Bourdieu and Wacquant, Invitation, 212.
\(^ {234}\) For instance, Bourdieu, The Rules of Art, 212-3: “Sartre converts into an ontological structure, constitutive of human existence in its universality, the social experience of the intellectual, a privileged pariah, doomed to the (blessed) malediction of an awareness which puts him at a distance from his condition and his conditionings.”
\(^ {235}\) Those true Marxians who question his dedication to this fight (Andrew Milner and Raymond Williams, for example) do have a point, which is why this is half of a paradox.
\(^ {236}\) Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations, 7.
I question this world because it questions me, and in a very profound manner, which goes well beyond the mere sentiment of social exclusions: I never feel fully justified as an intellectual, I do not feel ‘at home’; I feel like I have to be answerable—to whom, I do not know—for what appears to me to be an unjustifiable privilege.  

As I argued above, this is part of Bourdieu’s scepticism towards the powers of philosophy as such; it is born from a methodological concern with the effect of scholarly distancing and objectification and a scientific understanding of how these distancings came about and carry on. But it is also a sociological ennui. “Existing as an intellectual” means taking up a particular position in a set of social fields (particularly the political field) which are hard to justify epistemologically and ethically.

Bourdieu’s work on the sociology of French academia pulled no punches, and he is well aware that the privilege granted academics to be the arbiters of truth and value is a form of symbolic capital granted by the academic field and by society as a whole. It is exactly as arbitrary as any other form of symbolic capital. In fact, it may feel even more so, as Bourdieu showed how the educational establishment is an important part of the maintenance system for the class hierarchy and the social status quo. He did not feel justified as an intellectual because, per his own work, he was not so justified. The fact that there are intellectuals and that they are respected is a product of “exceptional historical and social conditions,” and so Bourdieu is justified in labeling as “aristocratic” the “unashamed commitment to the privilege of skholè” and its requisite “philosophical contempt for [both] the polis” and lived social existence, a contempt Bourdieu associates with Kant and, above all, with Heidegger.

These two realities—the role that intellectuals have to play in building justice and the injustice built into the intellectual’s role—exist in uncomfortable tension. One cannot simply gather up sociological truth and squirrel it away:

To opt to keep the secret, or to unveil it only in a strictly veiled form, as Mallarmé does, is to prejudge that only a few great initiates are capable of the heroic lucidity and willed generosity that are necessary in order to confront the enigma of fiction and fetishism.

But to sacrilegiously speak the secret would mean not simply being excluded from the field, passively, but taking up, actively, the very role of the intellectual who can say whatever he

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238 Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*.

239 Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 25, 27. He adds: “Heidegger presents, especially in the works of his youth, a particularly acute manifestation of the *hubris* of thought without limits.” (27)

240 Ibid., 6.
wants because he has no philosophical need to converse with the plebeians. Not speaking betrays the obligation to justice; speaking, even if possible, would betray the very role that gives an intellectual a voice.

The way out of the dilemma suggested by the practical logic is what discursive logic would call simple hypocrisy, which is perhaps neither so uncommon nor unhealthy. Most scientists, for example, are far more aware of the contingency and socially-determined nature of scientific authority than they are willing to admit in print or even, as the Sokal affair suggested, are willing to permit others to admit in print. Bourdieu wrote, “Formal discourse is hypocritical, but the propensity to ‘radical chic’ leads people to forget that the two truths coexist, with more or less difficulty, in the agents themselves.” And in his overtly political work, Bourdieu did in fact follow this path with a minimum of fuss.

But an acceptable practical solution is not necessarily an analytical one. Intellectuals do, in practice, find ways to reconcile their social obligations and their academic roles. The socioanalytical question of how they do so is not one that, as practitioners, they (who are also we) can be expected to answer. That is a job not for them but for those who study them; if at all possible, such analysis requires more subtle tools than the mere term ‘hypocrisy.’ (I will return to this in the conclusion.)

The issue of misrecognition remains highly pressing. If we do not find a way to answer the question socioanalytically, we may resort to psychoanalytic language to explain méconnaissance as a form not of hypocrisy but of repression. Some might see this as a helpful step, but privatization is, I believe, a move away from sociology as I am proposing

Bourdieu is so convinced of his point that he sees most efforts to make use of popular culture in high culture as a form of reinforcing, not undermining, class barriers. Consider, for instance, how Bourdieu viewed the Brechtian Verfremdungseffekt not as a technique to make Brecht’s theatre more effective for the masses, but to frame popular culture in such a way as to make it acceptable for the scholarly circuit through an intellectual move of self-segregation: “Brechtian ‘distanciation’ can be seen as the movement of withdrawal by which the intellectual affirms, at the very heart of popular art, his distance from popular art, a distance that renders popular art intellectually acceptable, that is to say acceptable to intellectuals and, more profoundly, his distance from the people, a distance that this bracketing of the people by intellectuals presupposes.” Quoted in Williams and Garnham, “Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture,” 218, from the French edition of La Distinction, p. 568. Needless to say, virtually all Brecht scholars would disagree with this interpretation, as do I. The possibility of a genuine cross-class understanding coming out of a V-effekt would seriously undermine Bourdieu’s notion of the scholastic illusion and how it operates. Perhaps this is part of why he needs to reject it so strongly.

For the differences between scientists’ personal chatting and their published discourse, see Bourdieu, Science of Science, 22-24. The Sokal affair involved the publication by physicist Alan Sokal of a nonsense article in the cultural studies journal Social Text to highlight the absurdity of postmodernism. For more on the Sokal affair, see Editors of Lingua Franca, ed., The Sokal Hoax: The Sham That Shook the Academy (Lincoln, Neb.: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2000).

it here. Nick Crossley, who endorses the psychoanalytic view of Bourdieu's work as a fulfillment of the Habermasian project,\textsuperscript{244} writes:

> The doxic is that we know without knowing that we know it; what we abide by and adhere to with, at best, only a vague and inarticulate sense of doing so. As long as this unspoken and doxic level of discipline, this unconscious submission to the demands of social order, remains in place, so too does the order.\textsuperscript{245}

Notice how quickly Crossley elides from the 'unspoken' nature of doxa to their 'unconscious' nature. This move is first, unnecessary (Bourdieu's claim that doxa cannot be expressed within a practice does not imply that they can never be thought) and second, as Richard Jenkins points out, leads the sociologist into an epistemological paradox.\textsuperscript{246} If the doxic is not just often forgotten but necessarily and always unconscious, then only the sociologist with her 'objective' point of view can understand an actor's true interest—the very intellectual vanity Bourdieu so condemns. We have, in Jenkins's words, "either an unavoidable dimension of conscious, calculative decision-making or an indefensible epistemological conceit."\textsuperscript{247} Jenkins, in my view, goes too far in claiming that misrecognition must be either unconscious or 'calculative,' accepting the same elision that Crossley does: that that which cannot be expressed necessarily cannot be thought, a claim neither man explicitly makes or proves. In fact, we can be aware of our doxa without being able to articulate them. Bourdieu points out with regard to Mallarmé, that what the field precludes is not an understanding of its own truth but that truth's publication.

Placing misrecognition as part of a psychological unconscious, then, is an insufficiently sociologized view. That certain doxa are, at a sociological level, nonconscious (that is, the practice is not itself aware of them) does not make them unconscious in Freud's sense of the term. If it were the case that large numbers of people, one by one, repressed the objective truths of their social existence in an unhealthy manner, social life itself would be a

\textsuperscript{244} Crossley, "Systematically Distorted Communication," 90: Bourdieu "implements just the sociologized psychoanalytic epistemology that Habermas envisages in Knowledge and Human Interests." Frère calls for a similar project. See Frère, "Genetic Structuralism," 95.

\textsuperscript{245} Crossley, "Systematically Distorted Communication," 100.

\textsuperscript{246} Richard Jenkins, Pierre Bourdieu (London: Routledge, 1992), 115: "Of the two opposing modes of knowledge [subjective experience and misrecognition], only one — misrecognition as a result of ideology — is readily available to the sociologist via speech acts or other communications of research subjects. How the other, the 'real' motive force of behaviour, is to be determined remains, at first glance, a mystery." My brackets.

\textsuperscript{247} Ibid., 87.
form of neurosis.\textsuperscript{248} If we take seriously the argument that human beings themselves are socially constituted, this is an untenable position.

In fact, the Freudian unconscious is essentially incompatible with the Wittgensteinian conviction that language and meaning are socially founded. Both views make use of a meaningful arena that is not available to conscious analysis (Freud’s unconscious versus Wittgenstein’s nonconscious), but they do not function in the same way. Freud’s psychoanalysis could be seen as analysis of the (individual) psyche that treats it as if it were a text: looking at it as a reified thing to be read or even decoded. The Freudian unconscious \textit{can} and \textit{ought to} be brought to consciousness; indeed, this is the goal of psychotherapy. In contrast, the sociological nonconscious is a function of the organization of practices and fields. Even if individual actors were told what their \textit{doxa} and \textit{habitus} are, they would remain inarticulable within their practices and thus nonconscious at a sociological level. As Wittgenstein wrote: “Nothing would be more confusing here than to use the words ‘conscious’ [\textit{bewuβt}] and ‘unconscious’ [\textit{unbewuβt}] for the contrast between states of consciousness and dispositions. For this pair of terms covers up a grammatical difference.”\textsuperscript{249}

Instead of trying to psychologize society,\textsuperscript{250} I would argue, after Bourdieu, that built into the structure of certain social fields and their central practices is a gap in the possibility of the expression of certain truths, no matter how much the participants as individuals may be aware of and able to communicate these truths outside of the field.\textsuperscript{251} In other words, it is inappropriate to impute a psychological cause or motive to an essentially \textit{structural} social

\textsuperscript{248} In fact, this comes close to the view that Bourdieu describes as the \textit{völkisch} (and proto-Nazi) ideology of a certain fraction of the academy of Weimar Germany. See Pierre Bourdieu, \textit{The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger}, trans. Peter Collier (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), chap. 1.

\textsuperscript{249} Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}, §149. The passage I quote in the text is in parentheses and is proceeded by: “If one says that knowing the ABC is a state of the mind, one is thinking of a state of a mental apparatus (perhaps of the brain) by means of which we explain the \textit{manifestations} of that knowledge. Such a state is called a disposition. But there are objections to speaking of a state of the mind here, inasmuch as there ought to be two different criteria for such a state: a knowledge of the construction of the apparatus, quite apart from what it does.”

\textsuperscript{250} This is, of course, what Freud himself eventually did in his later works such as \textit{Totem and Taboo} and \textit{Moses and Monotheism}.

\textsuperscript{251} Bourdieu shows this in the case of scientists, where the creative, improvisatory, and even ludic nature of scientific investigation is well understood by scientists, even if it is rigorously excluded from their scientific writing. “One knows the truth of what one does (for example, the more or less arbitrary or in any case contingent character of the reasons or causes which determine a judicial decision), but to keep in line with the official idea of what one does, or with the idea one has of oneself, this decision must appear to have been motivated by reasons, and by reasons that are as elevated (and juridical) as possible.” Bourdieu, \textit{Science of Science}, 24-25.
phenomenon such as misrecognition. The habitus is neither a set of unarticulated beliefs or unconscious motivations nor is it a latent competence, but rather it is a patterned set of embodied tendencies and means of going on. The term ‘habitus’ refers not to tacit knowledge or tacit ability but to tacit action. Schatzki’s Wittgensteinian conception of ‘mind/action’ is very helpful here in explaining how practical intelligibility—the way of knowing what it makes sense to do—can be incorporated into action without the need to delve either into the inaccessible levels of an unconscious mind or to posit knowledge about the world that the actor does not know that she knows.

If we persist in attempting to see misrecognition as a feature of the unconscious, then the Zusammenhänge—the feelings of held-togetherness which allow us to coexist in some kind of social order—would become a sign of psychological disorder. If we accept this, and thus the privatization of misrecognition, we will be led down the deconstructionist route, and we will discover very quickly that social space as such has deteriorated. This post-Heideggerian view constructs an ontology of language and communication on certain essences and then vacates them, putting them under erasure. Language loses its (socially given) ability to refer out, becoming a Derridian ‘iterable mark’ with no necessary or essential tie to the sociocultural conditions of its use. Left with no means of articulation except unreferring words irreducible to anything other than themselves, we would seem to be incapable of saying things which can be legitimately said to mean something about the world in which we live. But since most people seem to continue to say such meaningful things about the world with no serious difficulty of which they are aware, we as scholars are left unable to describe what we as people observe and participate in every day. The Derridian insistence that all language can be understood as written marks and that all such marks are (at least potentially) free of their social context is simply not the case. Language, like all practices, is a historical as well as an ontological phenomenon. But Judith Butler’s discussion of the invisibility of linguistic ‘foreclosure’ to language (as opposed to explicit censorship, which must “state what it does not want stated”) makes a more minor version of the same error in assuming that language cannot talk about its own limitation. Linguists are perfectly capable of pointing out censorial (or grammatical) aporias in the languages they study in the field; we are perfectly capable of discussing language as an object as long as it is someone else’s. The details of Bourdieu’s grievance with Heideggerian insufficiently historicized ontology have been described well enough

253 In this, but not in what follows, I am in agreement with Butler, Excitable Speech, 144ff.
254 Ibid., 130.
But this dispute is not really about whether or not a philosopher’s stance is necessarily ‘homologous’ with his habitus or position in society. Instead, the issue is the relationship between philosophical discourse and the (forgotten) social structures, practices, institutions, and forms of intelligibility that make it possible. Moving misrecognition to the ‘unconscious’ plane makes that relationship far thinner than Bourdieu finds appropriate for a sociological analysis, and on this, I agree.

How many of the difficulties surrounding misrecognition can be traced back to the problem Schatzki identifies with Bourdieu’s work: that he thinks he is developing a causal theory of sociogenesis, when in fact he is developing a non-causal (conditioning) theory of intelligibility (of what it makes sense to do)? Some, but not all. Accepting Schatzki’s distinction between the causal and the conditioning would free us from any unjustifiable talk about how misrecognition caused this or that social phenomenon (structural imbalance, for instance). But it would not free us from the problem that conditions can still be necessary conditions. Intelligibility may not have causal powers, but it can have preventative ones: the unintelligible is also, in many settings, that which cannot be done.

We need not conceive that as a psychological prevention, of course, but this does mean that the problem of misrecognition stands: if there are certain facts that are necessarily unthinkable by participants in a practice, there are certain things that it will never make sense for those participants to do. Moreover, if those facts are the objectively true ones, then it will never make sense for practitioners to do some things which it is objectively true they ought to do.

Here is where the particular structure of the theatrical field may offer some genuinely new insight and perhaps even show the concept of misrecognition to be untenable. The theatrical field has devised a structural, institutional method for combating misrecognition in a way that few others have. Theatremaking is a resource- and labour-intensive practice, and as such, requires formal organizing and management, which is often seen as part of the state’s obligation to support the arts. Because such support is external and relies on observable facts, theatremakers have devised numerous ways of both discovering the facts that would otherwise go misrecognized and making use of those facts in their work. The bulk of the rest of this essay will be an effort to investigate how that
cognizance functions in the independent theaetremaking practice of contemporary Ireland. This topic, I think, is both of importance to and not well developed in the field of praxiological social analysis.

To that end, let me be clear about the way that I am making use of the concepts of field and misrecognition here. Because of Bourdieu's importance to the contemporary humanities and social sciences, I think it is important to treat his concepts with an initial seriousness in order to test how thoroughly they can be applied. I use them thoroughly I do not wish to reify them, however, or wholly accept them as correct or relevant. Rather, I use them thoroughly in order to interrogate them. Nor do I claim that these concepts, or the ones that I will develop in the following two parts, represent an exhaustive or comprehensive sketch of the forces at play in Irish theatre; they clearly do not. I have chosen them and not others because of their applicability in addressing my concerns with concept of misrecognition. It is beyond the scope of this essay to describe all the relevant motivating forces behind Irish theaetremaking; I can only identify those relevant for the current project.

It is also important to note that, though the Irish theatre has certain properties which encourage cognizance — centralization, collaboration, state involvement, a tradition of reflexive self-awareness, a need to communicate — it is far from a unique case. Other fields may have these properties, too, and even those that appear not to may find other ways to grow conscious of and make use of truths that Bourdieu marks out as misrecognized and thus inaccessible. The range of such fields is for other investigators to determine. I am putting forward the contemporary Irish theatre not as an exception but as a paradigm. The Irish theatre is particularly interesting and accessible because of its smallness, self-consciousness, internal communication, and the concerted effort made by many of its leaders in the 1990s and early 2000s to develop an objective sociological understanding of their own field. None of these factors, however, are irreproducible.

In this, it is important to note my differences from ethnomethodology. In no sense am I assuming that the explanations and justifications offered by practitioners are necessarily correct simply because they are internal ones. I have no interest in simply translating insiders' understandings of the theatre field for a general public. The level of understanding that practitioners have of their own field is, for me, an open question. I do not claim that all practitioners necessarily (or even usually) understand their practices, or that etic analysis necessarily (or even usually) is inferior to these primary understandings. I am only claiming that, contra Bourdieu, misrecognition may not be structurally necessary. It may be possible for certain practitioners to accurately understand the practice they engage
in. If and when this is the case, Bourdieu's concept of practical logic (Schatzki's practical intelligibility) will need to be seriously revised. I will attempt such a revision in this essay's conclusion.

My main empirical task, then, is to describe Irish theatremakers' self-understanding as participants in the theatrical field. How does their work make sense to them? Can their practical intelligibility be described; can the capitals and rules they respect be identified? Does such a thing as a theatrical *nomos* exist, and how closely does the theatremakers’ *nomos* match that of those who organize the practice on behalf of the State? How sociologically and philosophically aware are these authorities of their place in the field? Are theatremakers aware of the historical, economic, semiotic, and ontological problems of theatremaking? If they are, what do they try to do about it, and how does this affect their work? Does the kind of reflexivity that Bourdieu calls for in the sociological field, built on a plurality of perspectives and an awareness of the ontological limitations of one's own point of view, operate in the theatre? Could it? What is the relationship between this sense of *communal* reflexivity and its alternative, suggested by Crossley and Frère, the Derridian self-reflexivity and auto-deconstruction which is a feature of so much of the so-called 'postdramatic' theatre?257

Before looking at the study itself, one could hypothesize at least three potential outcomes. First, the entire field could operate with the kind of misrecognition that Bourdieu seems to see as necessary: there could be objective conditions that I am able to identify as an analyst that no practice in the field of theatre seems able to articulate—not theatremaking, not theatregoing, nor the managing practices of the Arts Council and others. This is the least theoretically interesting possibility, but it did not turn out to be the case. Second, there could be objective conditions present in the field which are articulable by some practices in the field, but not others. Some conditions may, for instance, be an explicit part of the Arts Council's funding practice but be inarticulable from the perspective of theatre-makers. This would, of course, require a mechanism that kept an understanding used as a tool by one practice veiled from its neighbors in the same field, and this mechanism would then need to be made a part of the practical intelligibility of practitioners on either side of the veil. The observed lack of such a mechanism was one of the main reasons this hypothesis, too, was not born out by the data. Third, Irish theatre could be organized in such a way that all (or nearly all) participants in the field are not only aware of but able, in some

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way, to articulate the reality of their objective conditions within their theatrical practice. If this is the case, how does the kind of sociological data on which the power of Bourdieu’s work rests become incorporated into Schatzkian understandings, rules, and teleaffective structures? How do objective conditions get folded into practical intelligibility? Do theatre practitioners manage to simultaneously understand what they are doing and continue doing it? Does this involve the kind of ‘hypocritical’ separation of language into a private (knowing) mode and a public (naïve) one, as Bourdieu observed among scientists, or is there a way that theatre-makers, in particular, can articulate an understanding of the objective conditions of their work through their work?

Conclusions come after data, of course, but for now let me alert the reader to the need to be vigilant to the difference between practical intelligibility (the means of knowing what it makes sense to do), expressible understandings (knowledge that can be given verbal form if demanded), and truths articulated through the work itself. With the current study, I hope to show that though the three are not interchangeable, they are not completely unrelated, either.

The following part of this essay will focus on the history of the most significant attempt to systematically overcome misrecognition in Irish Theatre: the Arts Plans of 1994-2006 and their origins, methods, mechanisms, and effects. The Plans’ aim to develop a rational understanding of the field and then to use it to change the way the field functions is the kind of effort that Bourdieu himself attempted at the end of his career even though his theories seem to posit its impossibility. And because misrecognition lies above all in the doxa of a practice, the third part will try to understand that doxa in order to sketch a portrait of the field and discover where, if anywhere, misrecognition still appears within it. If, in fact, the Arts Plans (or the development of the field more generally) have been successful in removing misrecognition, the Irish theatre could provide an important model of the organization and functioning of a social practice that incorporates sociological discourse within itself and thus is cognizant of its own place and function in social space. It might also help us understand the difference between a practice and a discourse, and the role reflexivity plays in bringing the two together.

Bourdieu often worried about the improper or “cynical” uses to which his sociology could be put: Distinction as an etiquette manual for the upwardly mobile, for example. But any use of his sociology will necessarily take place inside a practice. If the “possibility

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258 Bourdieu and Wacquant, Invitation, 210-11.
and necessity of universalizing that freedom from institutions which sociology affords is ever to be realized, it will necessarily change the workings of those institutions’ practices. This is not only inevitable, but should be welcomed. From the Enlightenment perspective, this is exactly the goal.

To some degree, though, this has already happened. Bourdieu has, in some sense, won: he has been consecrated, his theories are influential, and his name is invoked in countless academic conferences and by more than a few non-academic players in cultural fields. Even more broadly, some degree of social self-understanding is now part of how the guardians of many fields, including theatre, make practical sense of their work. Social theory is now part of how theatre and theatre studies decide how to go on. As analysts, we need to develop appropriate tools to take account of this new reality. It would be ironic indeed if their acceptance and practical incorporation rendered Bourdieu’s social theories outdated.

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260 And this, for all the scepticism of his Marxian critics, has to be seen as Bourdieu’s goal. For example: Miller, "Turning Anthropology against Itself": “Bourdieu, like Foucault, remained true to the ideals of the French Enlightenment, the liberation of humanity through the application of human intellectual abilities to understand and transform the human condition.”
II. Arts Planning in the Irish Theatre: A Cautionary Tale

The paradox of artistic policy

This part offers a brief history of theatre policy in Ireland, with particular reference to the era of the Arts Plans, 1994-2006. These state efforts were designed to influence not only the formal organizational structures of theatremaking in Ireland, but also the doxa and practical intelligibility of the theatremaking practice. The previous part’s discussion of theatre as a Bourdieusian field and its relationship to practical and discursive understanding indicated the ways in which formal developmental planning in the arts causes theoretical problems for Bourdieu’s notion of misrecognition. In this part, I will explore the working-out of these problems not only theoretically but also in the historical practice of arts administration in Ireland. In so doing, I will make the case that there is in fact a third practice, apart from theatremaking and theatregoing, that is integrative to the theatrical field: policy work.

A strict reading of Bourdieu’s field theory might lead one to the conclusion that formulating a logical policy for the arts is foolhardy, and implementing it is impossible. The arts are not supposed to make sense, at least not logical sense. It is one thing to accept that the social context in which theatre is made can influence its meaning or effect. It is another to argue that the theatrical field is a Beckerian art world, with its own enabling and limiting structures.¹ It is a different claim entirely to suggest that this field is a coherent whole with an explicit formal structure, one which might even be consciously manipulated by sufficiently powerful and well-informed social actors. Most theatre scholars would accept the first two notions but would bristle at the third. And yet, the animating impulse behind much of twentieth-century social thought—from structuralist sociology after Lévi-Strauss to Wittgensteinian use-based language to Rawlsian ethics to the anti-theoretical ANT of Latour—is the search for these very coherences in various fields of human striving, and the

¹ Howard S. Becker, Art Worlds, 25th anniversary ed. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2008 [orig. 1982]).
debate over what forces (class, myth, economics, moral ground) are most responsible for them. If these coherences could be identified, there is no reason to think that they could not be manipulated, even in a creative field like theatre. In most European systems where theatre depends on public financing, the only social actor with the ability to manipulate the field is the government’s funding body.

But this is problematic. As a social practice, the arts doxically resist the standard ministerial relationship between policy and practice. Even when European states subsidize the arts, they put structural barriers in place to ensure that artists retain their freedom to work as they see fit. The concept of artistic freedom, a holdover from Romantic-era notions of the artist as solitary intellectual hero, has developed into the concept of artistic autonomy: that the artistic field is free to follow its own guidance and need not be concerned with external factors.

Bourdieu would see this as an institutionalized form of misrecognition. The call to autonomy, he would argue, is an example of theadreanekers seeing as freedom that which is in fact the implicit work of powerful social forces (reputation, useful disinterest, academic interest, and so on). It takes the sociological vision, making use of both objective data and the corrective multiple perspectives of the scholarly community, to have a chance of seeing the way a field of practices like theatre actually works. Practitioners, in contrast, are “excluded” from such a clear view by their taking up the doxa necessary for participation in the field. One can either see a field clearly or participate in it, Bourdieu argues, but not both. And while one may function effectively as a player within the field with only a feel for the game, a wholesale reorientation of the field should require a comprehensive understanding that only a reflexive academic perspective with its sens logique can provide.

But is this true? In the last few decades, many state arts support bodies have assumed that it is not. They have tried to be both experts on their field and participants in it, looking to transform their funding programmes from patronage into developmental systems. If the social context of art-making can influence artistic outcomes, the reasoning went, why should the state not develop policies to encourage its preferred outcomes, as it would for any other field of social endeavor? Certainly, it may be a difficult task and politically sensitive to discuss, but with enough practical expertise, appropriate sociological data, and a commitment to implement a clear and coherent policy, there is no apparent reason that a state agency which controls the funding of an art form should not also be able to control its development.

The independent Irish theatre seems almost an ideal field to put this to the test. There are a number of reasons for this. First, Ireland is a small country with a small theatre
scene. The 2007 population of the Republic of Ireland was a mere 4.3m people, and the 2007 *Irish Theatre Handbook* listed only 51 subsidized theatre companies and venues. Historically, moreover, Ireland has had a very centralized government, and Irish theatre has long been highly dependent on this centralized source of funding. Local funding has been sparse: in 1995, only 2% of public funding for Irish theatre came from local authorities, compared to a European average of 25%. The agency charged with distributing state funds, the Arts Council, is so economically central for Irish theatre that Christopher Murray and Martin Drury, writing in 1998 on the state of Irish theatre, noted:

> The Arts Council's policy on theatre and the Council's budget for theatre has been de facto the national budget for this art form ... The reality is that in Ireland all professional arts activity, particularly in an area as labour-intensive and expensive as theatre, depends ultimately on support from the national agency.

And perhaps most importantly, this national agency has loudly and publicly eschewed the view of its role as a passive conduit and has embraced an explicitly developmental agenda. Since the adoption of its first Arts Plan in 1994, the Arts Council has sought to leverage its economic power to shape the field. In its efforts to do so, the Council commissioned a number of studies on the Irish artistic world and its relationship with the public. These studies were essentially sociological in nature, looking for class- and education-based patterns in arts attendance, for instance, or economic conditions of theatremakers. While these reports had a number of methodological problems, they nonetheless aspired to scientific objectivity and appear to have been aimed at providing the information necessary to design and implement a more coherent and effective arts policy.

The Irish Arts Council, then, has had the opportunity, the tools, the information and the desire to do the very sort of conscious, cognizant field manipulation that is the goal of any social policy. Its record, though, is at best mixed. Many promised changes have never materialized, and though I hope to show that there have been *significant* structural

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2 A full list of subsidized companies (and the major unsubsidized ones) along with a brief description of each can be found in the Appendix.
3 *Irish Theatre Handbook*, 4th ed. (Dublin: Irish Theatre Institute, 2007). The *Handbook* is a cross-border institution. Of the 62 subsidized companies and venues listed in the *Handbook*, 11 of them are in Northern Ireland, the rest in the Republic.
4 Murray and Drury, "Ireland," 336. See also Arts Council Theatre Review, "Views," 68. In the last ten years, local authorities have begun to establish arts officers and offer their own funding, but such local funding, compared to support from the national government, remains quite minor by European standards. Local authorities have been much more involved in capital projects, and a number have built new theatres and arts centres in smaller towns that struggle to find suitable productions to fill them.
6 See below, p. 110, for more.
developments as a result of the Plans, it is hard to point to transformative developments that have come about over the last fifteen years. Without wishing to cast blame on the Council or any other body, I think it is instructive to study this process for its insights into the nature of cultural systems and the possibility of their planned change. Again, Irish theatre is a maximal case, and I do think that the development process was essentially well-handled. Nevertheless, the practical outcomes of the Arts Plans do not conform with what they had predicted, and this deserves investigation.

I am thus not interested in examining Arts Council policy per se. Rather, I will try to identify a third integrative practice within the theatrical field (alongside theatremaking and theatregoing) which I will call 'policy work.' Treating the work of funders and policymakers as a practice and not as the purely logical or ministerial workings-out of formal statements will keep us from mistakenly equating what the Arts Council professes or sets out to do with what it actually does. Indeed, the funding priorities that the Arts Council expresses in its writings are only rarely reflected in its actual funding decisions. This very well may be a function of the formal Wittgensteinian language game of policy-making. I suggest that a perspective on planning similar to the one Bourdieu takes towards science will be helpful. Rather than taking statements that claim to be definitive (policy pronouncements, scientific conclusions) as such, Bourdieu suggests that we should look to how these statements function within the practices in which they are embedded, particularly in contrast with other, less formal, modes of communication. Science is a practice that puts a particular (doxic) value on empirical truth; policy is a practice that puts a certain (doxic) value on economic or political authority. But both are practices and can be evaluated as such. In The Science of Science, Bourdieu points out that there are things that scientists cannot put in their formal scientific writing even though they are central to the way they understand their own work. Latour offers a multiplicity of examples of things so assumed (or embedded in machines or procedures) that they need not be spoken. Science has

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7 Bourdieu, Science of Science, 22: “These operations cannot be written out and they can only really be understood through close personal contact. The authors speak of ‘practical skills,’ traditional knacks, ‘recipes’ (researchers often make comparisons with cooking). Research is a customary practice, learned by example. Communication is set up between people who share the same ‘background’ of problems and technical assumptions.” Bourdieu is here summarizing (and agreeing with) G. Nigel Gilbert and Michael Mulkay, Opening Pandora's Box: A Sociological Analysis of Scientists' Discourse (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984).

internal and external languages that are not interchangeable. This very well may be the case for policy as well. There may be things that, while they are key to policy workers' understandings of what they do, cannot be expressed in theatre policy written for the outside world. Such is the case for theatremakers, of course; it very well might characterise the field more broadly.

Orality remains important to the Irish theatre, and recording truths that can only be spoken is one important effort of the present study. As such, the following brief history of the Irish state’s relationship to theatre is constructed out of discussions, interviews, surveys, and informal documentation as much as possible. This, I hope, will address the obfuscation of a purely documentary approach. The assessment of the Arts Plans that follows will, likewise, make use of the Plans’ documents, discussions around them, the actual patterns of funding the Council has used, and interviews with those involved. (After making an important theoretical point about the nature of the Arts Council’s authority, I will offer a second, modified, assessment.) In the conclusion, I will argue that the tension between writing and speaking parallels theatremaking’s precarious position between practice and discourse. If this is the case, then a proper account of Irish theatremaking cannot rely on formal documents, though it cannot neglect them, either.

**Early state arts intervention**

Despite Ireland’s international reputation for dramatic writing, theatre as such arrived in Ireland fairly recently and was largely confined to English settlement. In his comprehensive history of Irish theatregoing, Christopher Morash dates the formal theatre in Ireland (as opposed to performance and minstrel traditions) back to a 1601 performance of Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton’s *Gorboduc* at Dublin Castle, the seat of the British court in Ireland. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Dublin’s Smock Alley joined London’s Covent Garden and Drury Lane as major theatres of the British empire. The Abbey Theatre, which was to become Ireland’s national theatre, was set up at the turn of the twentieth century, while the island was still under British rule. It also inaugurated the young Irish
Free State's experiment in public financing for the arts in 1924, when the state granted the Abbey an £850 annual subsidy (about €49,000 today).  

The state's sustained engagement with arts policy, however, began in May 1951 with the passage of the Arts Act, which set up An Chomhairle Ealaíon ("The Arts Council" in the Irish language). The Council was an independent agency under the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), with members appointed by the Taoiseach and one (poorly) paid employee. This bureaucratic location both put the Council near partisan politics but also gave it more independence than it may have enjoyed under the other obvious place for it, the Department of Education, which at the time was dominated by the Catholic Church. 

The Council had five specific tasks assigned to it by statute: (1) stimulating public interest in the arts, (2) promoting the "knowledge, appreciation and practice" of arts, (3) improving artistic standards, (4) organizing exhibitions, and (5) advising the government when necessary. But what the Council actually did was far simpler: it channeled the money it received from the government to arts organizations as subsidies. This could be generously construed as promoting the practice of the arts or assisting in improving standards, but it is hard to see the Arts Council's grant programme as anyone's idea of the most effective way to achieve those ends. The public aspects of the remit - public interest, knowledge, and appreciation - are not simply things the Arts Council has failed to achieve, but tasks it has largely refused to attempt, arguing, for instance, that they fall more appropriately to the (much better-funded) Department of Education.

I am not arguing that the Council somehow erred in not carrying out the tasks assigned it by statute, but rather that it was never meant to attempt them. The Arts Act also charged Council members to fulfill its statutory mandate "by such means and in such manner as they think fit," wide enough language to legally permit the Council to essentially ignore parts of their mandate at will. When the Arts Act was reformulated in 1973, it changed the composition of the Council and made it easier for it to hire professional staff, but it did not touch the Council's mandate. Despite the statutory language, for decades the Council saw its role as channeling funding to a small handful of arts organizations (in 1973, no theatres but the Abbey and Gate theatres received state funding). Though the Council was designated as independent in its decision-making, this was not always the case in its early years; at times, the Taoiseach and his advisors attempted to dictate which

10 This is often noted as the first time a theatre has received state funding in the English-speaking world, though of course court or civic funding of English theatre goes back centuries earlier.

organizations would receive Arts Council grants. While the Council resisted these efforts, its success was mixed. Its annual funding from government was so paltry — after twenty years of work, it had an annual budget of only Ir£85,000, or €0.036 per capita — that it was in little position to rebuke the office that controlled its purse strings. Even as early as this, we see a clear gap between formal policy language, here in statute (an independent body with a wide mandate) and the implementation of that policy in practice (a continuation of state-directed patronage).

The more general point is that the full relationship between the arts and the government is much wider than the government’s formal arts policy, whether set by the Council or by statute. Indeed, policy can be a fairly minor part of that relationship. The government’s most important theatrical intervention in the 1950s may not have been the Arts Act or the establishment of the Council but instead the Dublin Theatre Festival. It was set up in 1957 not by the Council but by Minister for Industry and Commerce (later Taoiseach) Séan Lemass as “a vital part of the country’s overall economic modernization.” The Festival was intended as an economic attraction and was initially funded by the Irish Tourist Board. The contribution from Dublin’s Pike Theatre to the first festival was Tennessee Williams’s The Rose Tattoo, a play that both celebrated the feminine libido and looked askance at clerical authority. The play’s director was arrested and charged with the presentation of “a lewd entertainment” for showing what appeared to be a condom on stage. Though the case was eventually thrown out of court, the battle bankrupted the Pike and gave ammunition to the then-Archbishop of Dublin, John McQuaid, in his ultimately successful campaign to cancel the Festival the following year over the inclusion of a play by Sean O’Casey. Perhaps the most thorough study of the Rose Tattoo scandal, Gerard Whelan’s Spiked, makes the point that this intervention was not the consequence of any kind of theatre censorship policy on the part of the government, but came out of an effort to placate and assuage Archbishop McQuaid about an unrelated matter. It certainly

12 Brian P Kennedy, Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and the Arts in Independent Ireland (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1990), 76 et passim.
was not an attempt to achieve the aims set out in the 1951 Arts Act, and there is no evidence that the newly formed Arts Council was consulted about the decision, even though providing advice to government on artistic issues was one of its statutory responsibilities. Lionel Pilkington observes:

That the Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs contained an advertisement for The Rose Tattoo at the same time that the Attorney-General instituted proceedings against the play was not so much a contradiction, but rather evidence of the erratic and sometimes uncoordinated nature of the state’s post-war expansion.¹⁵

This ‘erratic and uncoordinated nature’—the opposite of coherent policy—was not unique to the arts, but there was also no reason to think that the arts would be exempt from it. Though the government did attempt to influence the arts in certain ways, it did so haphazardly. Certainly, there was no attempt at systematic or coherent development.

The Arts Council’s organizational clout increased markedly with the Arts Act of 1973, which transferred executive responsibility from the minister-appointed Council chairman to a full-time staff director. The first holder of that office was Colm Ó Briain, who, “almost from the first day he sat behind the desk,”¹⁶ began pushing for an expanded role for the Council in state arts provision and a greater independence for it as an institution. At the time, five of the most important performing arts institutions in the state were subsidised through an annual grant directly from the Department of Finance, circumventing the Council. These so-called “Big Five” consisted of the Abbey and Gate theatres in Dublin, the Dublin Theatre Festival, the Irish Ballet, and the Irish Theatre Company, the last two set up by the state in 1973 to tour dance and drama respectively to smaller Irish towns that had no such provision of their own. Ó Briain succeeded in transferring responsibilities for these five to the Arts Council in 1976, and this meant the Council was suddenly in control of vastly greater resources. The Council’s 1976 grant to the Abbey Theatre alone, Ir£400,000, represented more than double its entire 1975 budget. The Council’s budget for 1976 topped Ir£1m, a five-fold increase on the previous year.

This was not a change in the state’s arts funding priorities; few organizations received substantially more in 1976 than they had in 1975, and indeed, the Council’s chair gave the Irish Times an “assurance” that “in no sense would the transfer of administration of theatre subsidies have an adverse effect on any of the bodies now receiving such

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¹⁵ Pilkington, Theatre and the State, 157.
¹⁶ Phelim Donlon, interview with the author, 2 April 2008. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotes from Mr Donlon in this part come from this interview.
subsidies." But it did represent an important move in the struggle within the political field between the Arts Council and elected officials. The government (to Ó Briain, the Fianna Fail party in particular) sought to use political procedures in dealing with its clients in order to control how arts allocations were spent. Ó Briain, in contrast, argued for the Council to take on responsibility for the Big Five "because the Arts Council had statutory autonomy, and it had expertise," in contrast with the Department of Finance. This theme, that all Irish arts subsidy should be channeled through a central, politically autonomous, and expert body was a necessary first step for the Council to become the incubator of an overall arts policy.

All artistic funding systems need to balance autonomy with accountability. Unlike in continental European states where a central arts ministry could set this balance as it saw fit, the Irish Arts Council’s resource base and administrative independence were never strong enough to be taken for granted. The Council’s actions have always reflected its own struggle for power and capital within the political field as much as its efforts to balance protection of the artistic field’s autonomy from the political with an increased developmental attention and financial resource base that could only be given by the political field. This balance, between a Council asserting its own political autonomy to protect that of the field, and one which represented the field at the political table and brought back increased resources and interest was one that Ó Briain and his colleagues would wrestle with many times in the three decades to come.

The end of the Irish Theatre Company

Perhaps the Council’s first serious attempt to make use of its new political clout in a specific, strategic way was its January 1982 decision to shut down the Irish Theatre Company (ITC) and redirect its funding to other companies that wished to tour their work. This proved to be an important influence on the way the Council understood its own work in the 1990s. It was a decision taken on the Council’s own authority; although some critics had thought the ITC’s days were numbered, few expected the axe to come so soon. Phelim

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18 Colm Ó Briain, interview with the author, 30 April 2008. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotes from Mr Ó Briain come from this interview.
19 Most presciently, less than three weeks before the cut, Gus Smith warned of coming cutbacks and praised the "rise of provincial theatre and arts centres" in his weekly theatre column in the Sunday Independent ("Fear of cutbacks causes concern," 10 January 1982). These regional theatres, he speculated, would soon "grow strong enough to initiate short tours themselves, as well as of course providing high quality drama for their own communities. This may well be essential, for a time may soon come when such a company as ITC will be a thing of the past."
Donlon, then the manager of the ITC, tells of his shock in being called in by the Council’s drama officer at the time, Arthur Lappin:

Arthur, to his eternal credit, said that he felt he should come and tell me face to face that the Arts Council had decided earlier that day to discontinue funding for the ITC, rather than me getting a letter in a couple days’ time. Which I must say, I admire. There was no obligation on him to do that.

The reason given for the cut was that it would be more efficient to distribute the ITC’s subsidy to other regional companies that wished to tour their work, but the feasibility of this was widely regarded with scepticism. Donlon had already planned a spring tour and had been hoping for an increase. This sense of shock and displeasure —aimed, notably, at the Council’s minister-appointed members by name and not its civil-service staff— was shared by the public. The Irish Times ran a front-page article the next day calling it “one of the most controversial decisions ever taken by the Council.” The ITC had developed something of a following among venue managers and its audience in its short existence, and there was serious public pressure put on the Council in light of its decision.

Hundreds of actors, theatre workers, and supporters with costumes and signs staged a demonstration at the Council’s front door, and the actors’ union passed a vote of no confidence in the Council. Specifically, protesters attacked the Council’s authority to make this decision. Union leaders sought to go above the Arts Council’s head, appealing to the Taoiseach and the Minister for Finance and even contemplating court action. Alan Stanford, an actors’ union leader and ITC member, said that the Council’s decision showed that it “doesn’t give a damn about artists” and that it had “set itself up as the final arbiter of artistic endeavor.” This was unjustified, unfair, and dictatorial, said the protesters. Argued one Abbey Theatre shareholder: “The role of funding should be given back to Government Departments because they never said you should put on this play or take that one off.” The Irish Times arts reporter, David Nowlan, reminded his readers both of the Council’s now-


One of the speakers at this rally was Labour Senator Michael D. Higgins, who addressed the actors as “fellow workers.” Higgins would go on to become Ireland’s first Minister for the Arts in 1993, and appoint as his advisor his Labour party colleague Ó Briain, who in 1982 was still serving as Council director and was thus one of the men most responsible for the ITC decision. Colm Boland, "Actors Protest at Itc Decision," The Irish Times, 12 February 1982 1982.

Frank McDonald, "Equity Votes No Confidence in Arts Council," The Irish Times, 5 April 1982 1982. Ironically, Stanford is currently a member of the Arts Council.

Ibid.
broken assurances of eight years previously and his own warnings at the time that the “vagueness” of the terms of the Arts Council’s assumption of responsibility for that funding “seemed to provide poor protection against injuries” to the Big Five companies, including the ITC.24 “What is to stop the Council in future years from abolishing, in turn, the Gate, the Abbey, the Irish Ballet Company and the Dublin Theatre Festival (and not necessarily in that order)?,” asked Nowlan. “It is a prospect that must chill the creative hearts of all who work in the mainstream of subsidised theatre in Ireland.” He went on to ask if the Council was even qualified to make judgments about theatre.

These objections went beyond accusations that the Council had made an incorrect decision, and indicated a distrust of the Council as an institution. The charge is that its intervention represented a dangerous and external force on the theatrical field, more an attack on the field’s autonomy than a defence of it. I would argue that it was this attack on the Council’s authority that cast the longest political shadow. Donlon speculates that part of the reason for the Council’s decision was an unarticulated desire not to be restricted by institutional structures that it had not created.25 To respond strategically and develop the field, the Council needed autonomy from its clients, political capital, and economic resources. Accepting responsibility for the Big Five added to the Council’s political capital, but allowing the ITC to become too established might have diminished it. Or, as Nowlan put it at the time, the Council’s plan to redirect touring funds to other companies. “would certainly allow the Arts Council more flexibility than it had with the ITC grant. It would also give it more power.”26 It is appropriate, I think, to see the Council’s “strangulation” of the ITC and the theatre sector’s reaction to it as takings-of-positions in the Bourdieusian sense: moves in the game of a practice that modify the shape of the field and affect the conditions under which future moves are made.

Colm Ó Briain was still serving as the Council’s director at the time, and though he defends the decision as appropriate, his view confirms the move as a position-taking act. He disputes that the ITC was given no warning that the Council had concerns about “standards and effectiveness,” and notes that one ITC board member sat on the Arts Council itself. But the biggest problem was structural. The ITC’s organization led it to value capitals that were not, in the Council’s eyes, legitimate theatrical pursuits. Ó Briain said:

25 Diplomatically, Donlon expressed this feeling as a “fear that if they [the Council] continued to provide the ITC with the level of funding that it merited, that they would have little or no hope of responding to needs in other art forms.”
26 Nowlan, "Curtains for the ITC."
It wasn’t a decision of the Arts Council to set up a touring company. It was a decision of the government under pressure from the union. And it seemed that only union objectives were being met [by the ITC]. Not cultural objectives .... The company was in the control of the union. And all of its priorities were determined by union priorities.

A company so structured cannot position itself in a way that allows it to behave as an artistically minded theatre company ought, explained Ó Briain. This is why one needed an autonomous and expert body like the Council to make such a politically unpopular (but culturally helpful) decision as withdrawing its funds. The decision, he said, “was a display of autonomy,” but this is true in two senses. The decision required autonomy to make, but in making it, the Council also brandished its autonomy to secure its own position in the field.27

But the harsh public reaction prompted by the decision led to a questioning of that very autonomy, or at least the Council’s ability to guard the autonomous sphere of culture from political interference. The same budget that led the Arts Council to cut the ITC’s grant brought down the government of Taoiseach Garrett FitzGerald, and one of opposition leader Charlie Haughey’s promises was that, if elected, he would restore the ITC’s funding.28 Haughey’s Fianna Fáil party won the election less than three weeks after the ITC’s funding had been cut, and he personally guaranteed the company’s continuing operation the next month. On the strength of this development, the ITC sought and hired a new artistic director, but Haughey’s government never did make statutory provision for the ITC’s funding, and once his government was defeated in the elections of November 1982, the ITC’s fate was sealed. When the fate of a theatre company is dependent on the results of elections, it is hard to see the artistic field’s independence from the political field. In the end, the Council’s decision (which FitzGerald declined to express an opinion, citing the Council’s statutory independence) stood, but it was a close call.

Donlon would later work for the Arts Council in various capacities for over fifteen years. What was most significant about the ITC incident from the Council’s perspective, he said, was not the debate over the prudence of the cut, but the shock to the system that the decision generated. The Arts Council, he said

From a perspective of ANT, this could be seen as an example of the need to maintain the operations of a network in order for it to continue to exist in a meaningful way. An unasserted authority would gradually dwindle. Groups, writes Latour, do not come as givens; rather, they “are made by the various ways and manners in which they are said to exist.” Latour, Reassembling, 34.


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learned a lesson from the poor view that was taken of such a sudden decision. Thereafter where the Arts Council had misgivings or concerns or wanted to change priorities … they engaged in firing shots across the bow – warning signals.

Warnings could help the Council avoid controversy. There were certain ‘shots across the bow’ in the Council’s arsenal that could be used if need be — most notably, the small cut in annual funding — but Donlon and others speculate that this incident made the Council extremely wary of administering any changes to the system, no matter how strategic, for some time. The Council gave grants to 17 theatre companies in 1989, including 8 of the 13 it had funded a decade earlier.²⁹

### The impetus to plan

This conservative, tense situation persisted for a decade, and became part of the doxa of the Council’s own practice. In 1993, however, a change in government led to a set of measures that “marked a revolution” for the structure of the Irish arts.³⁰ The snap election of November 1992 saw a disastrous result for Charlie Haughey’s Fianna Fáil and the rise to power of the Labour Party.³¹ Labour’s election manifesto devoted a surprisingly large section to the arts (more than it did to women’s rights or the environment); it promised that, if in government, the Party would replace the “inadequate, ad hoc and piecemeal” system of arts funding with a “co-ordinated 3-yearly plan.”³² Ó Briain, in his capacity as general

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²⁹ Ó Briain disagrees that the ITC controversy led the Council to use ‘warning shots,’ and cites as his evidence the de-funding of the Irish Ballet Company (IBC), which had been established alongside the ITC with the same model and, in the end, met the same fate.

³⁰ Murray and Drury, "Ireland," 334.

³¹ Though Fianna Fáil won fewer seats in 1992 than it had in any other election in the history of the Irish state, its main rivals, Fine Gael, also did quite poorly. Controversially, Labour formed an uneasy coalition government with Fianna Fáil. In November of 1994, Labour left the coalition and formed a new government with Fine Gael and the Democratic Left without calling new elections. That government lasted until June 1997, when Fianna Fáil was returned to power in a centre-right coalition with the Progressive Democrats. That coalition was re-elected in 2002, and in 2007, Fianna Fáil was returned to power a third time, this time in coalition with the Green Party. Thus, although the original idea for the Arts Plans came from the Labour Party, the majority of the planning era has seen the Labour Party out of power.

³² Labour Party, "Making Ireland Work: A Two-Part Programme to Put Justice into Economics and Trust into Politics, Part 2: Trust into Politics," (Dublin: The Labour Party, 1992), 13. The manifesto was hastily prepared because of the snap election. The chapter headed “The Arts” was the largest part of the manifesto’s “Citizens’ Rights” section. In fact, the Arts chapter contained more bullet points (19) than six others combined: health (2), housing (3), emigrants’ rights (3), immigrants and refugees (1), consumer policy (3), and international justice (2). Despite this strong interest in the arts, the manifesto was not entirely coherent. The bullet point that calls for an arts plan, for instance, proposes it as a solution to the
secretary of the Labour Party at the time, was the one who put this language into the manifesto. He said that the goal of this plan was to give Irish arts funding “a structured approach over a period of years rather than [the] ad hoc clientalism” that had prevailed under Haughey and Fianna Fáil. That approach, he said, was an “anarchic framework supported by the state.” It was what he “called the ‘bubble-up’ theory: you only support those you can give patronage to. … You feed [them, like] a tame monkey.” This was not, Ó Briain reasoned, an acceptable system for a democratic socialist party to support. By camouflaging the true artistic needs of Irish society under the cloak of political expediency, the clientalist approach was a form of injustice, and one too easy to exploit in order to do political favors. A planned system in which grants were awarded on the basis of clear criteria would be more fair and healthy for Ireland as a democratic society.

Once in office, the new government wasted little time in transforming the state relationship to the arts. First was the creation of a Cabinet-level post responsible for the arts, at first known as the Minister for Arts, Culture, and the Gaeltacht. The government also steadily increased funding for the Arts Council, from €9.4m in 1989 to €21.5m in 1995. With these newfound political and financial resources, the Minister, Michael D. Higgins of Labour, fulfilled the promise of his party’s manifesto and set the Council on a process of formal planning. This led to what Higgins termed “a breakthrough in the way in which the State proposes to address its responsibilities to the promotion of the contemporary arts”: the first Arts Plan, released in 1994. For the first time, the Arts Council could be said to have a formal policy on what it was attempting to do and why. As late as 1992, an investigation by Dublin’s municipal government reported that “[t]he Arts Council acknowledged to the present Report that it has no drama policy, and that if a policy were sought, ‘it could be deduced by examining the Council’s practice.’”

lack of co-ordination in capital expenditure on the arts, even though the Council has little role in capital funding.

“Gaeltacht” is the term for a rural area of Ireland where the Irish language is still dominant. There are four of these areas in the Republic, one in each of the four provinces. Gaeltacht areas receive special economic and cultural concessions not available to the rest of the country. The department has changed names over the years.

In original currency, these figures were Ir£7.4m for 1989 and Ir£16.9m for 1995. This, and all other funding figures, come from the Arts Council’s annual reports. It is important to note that this increase continued fairly steadily despite elections and changes in government.


Though this planning process marked a major break in the way the Council talked about its job, it did not necessarily mark a change in the way that it actually practiced it. This is no surprise; Bourdieu would expect that a ‘deduced from practice’ policy, based on the *sens practique* that the Council was using, would necessarily be different with a written document based on a *sens logique*. What is interesting, though, is that the planning process reads like an explicit effort to *replace* a practical sense with a logical one. As such, two aspects of the Arts Council’s planning process stand out. First and foremost, it presented itself as a struggle for *coherence*. Particularly in theatre, the language used in the plans was constantly one of “developing a coherent approach” to the field. This was part of a larger agenda that put great stock in the kind of formal, central planning processes that were a mainstay of Democratic Left institutions such as the Labour Party of the time. This was the same kind of process that had helped the Irish government receive substantial development funds from the European Union. The government in Dublin learned to write specific, goal-oriented plans for some sector of the economy or piece of infrastructure, the EU would offer funding, and the results would be measured and reported. This way of working was so successful that it became the general *modus operandi* of the Irish government in the 1990s and was a major contributor to the economic boom. If planned structural development had worked in so many other areas, why not the arts? The Labourites may have pushed for rational planning in the name of equality rather than development, but the two goals came together in a single method.

It is important to stress just how pervasive this language of rational coherence was. Arts Council reports had been calling for a “coherent” approach since the late 1970s. In later Arts Plans, this is called taking a “strategic” or, more often, a “developmental” approach to the field, and it is termed a “radical” departure from what had gone before. When speaking of the need to cut down on the number of theatre companies in Ireland so that resources are not so thinly spread, for example, the policy documents generally use the euphemism “rationalization” —implying that the profusion of companies the field had spawned was somehow irrational and therefore less than optimal. The assumptions here are...

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37 An Chomhairle Ealaion/The Arts Council, "Arts Plan 1994," 74, the drama chapter’s statement of policy.

38 C.D. Throsby and G.A. Withers, *The Economics of the Performing Arts* (London: St Martins Press, 1979), 204. “A coherent statement of objectives for public funding of the performing arts is important for purposive action and policy evaluation. It is true that objectives are often difficult to define and their achievement or otherwise almost impossible to determine. Nonetheless, an attempt must be made in order to at least constrain or reduce some of the randomness, arbitrariness or perhaps even corruption that may characterise the public involvement.” The fear of incoherence is almost palpable here.
that, first, the field ought to behave rationally; second, that the Arts Council had the power to impose a rational order; and third, that it ought to do so. All of these assumptions are questionable, and none of them were set out or explicitly defended.

While this strategizing process did include extensive and ongoing consultation with many theatremakers, it is remarkable how completely the Council presented itself as its author and executor. This is the opening paragraph of the first Arts Plan’s drama chapter:

As the major player in terms of support for drama in Ireland, the Arts Council is working to develop a coherent approach and to refine its strategic interventions in this area, taking account of a changing environment and aiming for maximum beneficial effect both in relation to the needs and development of the art form and of the country.39

The Council seems to want to be at once a systematizing, expert observer and also the major financial player in the field, a double position fraught with conflicts of interest and motive, which Bourdieu would reject as structurally impossible.

In that the Council recognized this difficulty, it saw it not so much as a structural problem with planning as a lack of information. Part of its solution, then, was a sustained effort of sociological data-gathering. If the decisions were based on objective data, the Council reasoned, this conflict of interest could be minimized. From the mid-1990s to the present, then, the Council has commissioned a number of economic and sociological surveys and reports on the state of the Irish theatre field. This effort began with the Theatre Review, called for by the first (1994) Arts Plan and begun the following year. The Review was so extensive that, in 1995, the Council allocated more money to it (Ir£117,090, about €149,000) than to all but five theatre groups (the Abbey, the Gate, Druid, Rough Magic, and the Dublin Theatre Festival). The studies, discussions, and documents provide the best statistical picture available of Irish theatre in the mid-1990s.

These reports do not represent a complete sociological data set, but they are a large move in that direction. They include an assessment of the economic impact of the arts in Ireland,40 a comprehensive history of Irish state involvement with the arts,41 a study of the economic justification for governmental arts subsidies,42 a survey of the Irish public’s views

41 Kennedy, Dreams and Responsibilities.
on the arts,\textsuperscript{43} an extensive set of notes on thematic discussions with theatremakers,\textsuperscript{44} and a large-scale sociological analysis of the organizational structures of theatremaking along with a relatively comprehensive survey of theatremakers' views.\textsuperscript{45} (More recently, these have been supplemented with more comparative studies on international trends in arts funding,\textsuperscript{46} an examination of the socio-economic conditions in which Irish theatremakers live,\textsuperscript{47} and an updating of the earlier study of the Irish public's views on the arts.\textsuperscript{48}) And while one can at times detect an analytical effort to paint the most positive picture possible, particularly in the executive summaries, their statistical range is impressive.

There are gaps: one looks in vain, for instance, for an attempt to gauge public tastes for particular styles or aesthetic choices, as Bourdieu does in \textit{Distinction}. I will argue below that the studies were meant to build the Council's case for expert status at least as much as they were meant to actually gather data. Nevertheless, the Arts Council was asking a set of questions and assembling a set of data that should have allowed them as surrogate sociologists to understand any misrecognitions structurally built into the field (through, say, constructions of cultural capital or a shared habitus). And the end result of this investigation was a comprehensive new policy for the Irish theatre: the document "Going On," published by the Council in 1996, replacing the drama chapter of the first Arts Plan. Phelim Donlon, the Arts Council's drama officer at the time and the author of "Going On," said that it and the Review process that led up to it came from the Council's desire to "be able to make decisions in relation to drama that would be well-informed," and that is why the policy document "was drawing on much of what we'd heard and assimilated and analyzed during the Review .... And it makes much of the fact that it is credible of the Arts Council to articulate a policy for theatre in Ireland and deliver that policy right through the whole gamut" of the industry. Such credibility was greatly enhanced by the sociological data.

For all of these reasons—the structural characteristics of Ireland and its theatrical field; the Arts Council's mandate, power, and stated desire to use data and expertise to create coherent plans; and the transformative, corporatist ethos of Celtic Tiger Ireland—a

\textsuperscript{45} Arts Council Theatre Review, "Views."
\textsuperscript{46} International Arts Bureau, "A Comparative Study of Levels of Arts Expenditure in Selected Countries and Regions," (Dublin: The Arts Council, 2000).
\textsuperscript{47} Hibernian Consulting, "Socio-Economic Conditions of Theatre Practitioners in Ireland."
sociologist should have every reason to expect great successes from these plans. Bourdieu’s is the only hesitant note, arguing that such planning is impossible because of the way social practices operate. It is hard to imagine a better example on which to test his theories. That the plans neither succeeded in achieving their overt aims nor failed in the manner that Bourdieu suggests should serve as a cautionary tale both for those who would make plans to develop cultural practices such as theatre and those who would scoff at them.

I will begin with a survey of the Arts Plans themselves and the politics of their creation and implementation, before turning to an assessment of the Plans’ successes and limitations. I will, in fact, make two assessments: first of the Plans’ overt outcomes in terms of the achievement of stated goals and the channeling of funding, and second, after an important theoretical aside on the nature of the Council’s authority and power, of the Plans’ more basic but less empirical effort to change the practical intelligibility of independent theatremaking in Ireland. In this, it will be important to keep in mind the changing understanding that the Council and its staff have of their own role in the theatrical field. Their work is a practice of its own, with a doxa that changes in response to developing conditions as much as any other practice’s. The Council’s effort to bring the value of rationality into the field is perhaps the most important and the most theoretically problematic aspect of the Arts Plans, and it is on that issue that this part will focus at its end.

The era of the Arts Plans

What I call the era of the Arts Plans in Irish artistic history has precise dates. It starts with the appointment of Michael D. Higgins as the first Minister for the Arts on 21 January 1993 and ends with the resignation of Patricia Quinn from the directorship of the Arts Council on 11 March 2004. Higgins initiated the era when he was appointed, naming his friends and colleagues Ó Briain and Ciaran Benson as his arts advisor and Arts Council chairman, respectively. The three led the creation of the first Arts Plan in 1994. That plan was originally scheduled to last until 1996, but it was extended until 1999 by Higgins’s department. After the elections of 1997, which saw Fianna Fáil’s Síle de Valera take over as Minister for the Arts, Patricia Quinn was appointed as the Council’s director and spearheaded a second Arts Plan which was in force from 1999 through 2001. The third plan was supposed to cover the years 2002-2006, but after the elections of 2003, a controversy arose about the Plan’s top-down ‘interventionist’ posture that saw the newly appointed
Council members “kill” the Plan, in Quinn’s words, leading to her resignation. The document which was eventually created to guide Arts Council policy—*Partnership for the Arts 2006-2010*—significantly refused to call itself a plan and had far fewer specifics than the three Plans that had come before. That marked the end of the Irish experiment with a certain type of formal state arts planning. Quinn and others see the post-Plan Arts Council returning to many of the practices that it had before the Plans era.

The Plans, then, were a specific effort led by a small group of people—Higgins, Ó Briain, Quinn, and Benson, largely—that guided the State’s relationship with the arts for an eleven-year period. A number of theatremakers have described this effort as an “opening up” of the political landscape for Irish arts, an opening that has since begun to close. Others, while noting the rise in funding during that era, describe the Plans as acts of comic hubris. Higgins is a popular and colourful figure in modern Irish political life, known nationwide as “Michael D.” A boisterous campaigner for human rights and a published poet, he took on the post of Minister for the Arts with ambitious plans. His Labour Party retains much of its traditional socialist flavour in a sense that its UK counterpart has not, and he was not shy about using state resources and planning to achieve social ends. He set up the Irish-language television station Teilifís na Gaeilge (now known as TG4), which has been widely credited with contributing to the recent revival of the Irish language. He developed the idea of an arts plan, according to Quinn, as a “bid device,” an effort to gain more resources and recognition for the arts and to “build political credibility.”

Though the three Arts Plans (1994, 1999, and 2002) were all quite similar, particularly in form, one can notice certain trends that developed over time. I will discuss the three as a group, pointing out how they differ when necessary. All three Plans have as

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49 Patricia Quinn, interview with the author, 26 March 2008. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Ms Quinn come from this interview.
51 A final nail in the coffin is the currently proposed dissolution of the Department of Arts. See below, p. 125.
52 Both views come from my interviews with theatremakers and were offered anonymously. See below, p. 162, note 2, for more on these interviews.
53 One can also notice each plan correcting the ‘excesses’ of its predecessor, in a way similar to the pendulum movement Mathias Bremgartner describes in the Swiss *Intendantenkarosel*. Mathais Bremgartner, "Intendantenkarosel," in *Global Changes, Local Stages*, ed. Hans van Maanen et. al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009).
their centerpiece a small number of overall strategic goals, and all three make an effort to spell out their general goals into more exact objectives and the means by which they will be achieved. All address concerns of the three major practices in the Irish theatre field: theatremaking (artistic quality, innovation, professional standards for treatment of artists), theatregoing (developing audiences, venue management, touring, North-South relations), and policy work (local government involvement, the Arts Council’s own practices).

The first Plan (1994) lists general objectives under six categories—quality, creation (i.e., encouraging innovation), access (“encourag[ing] real participation”), North-South cooperation, strategic partnerships, and research—which were then applied to each art form in “strategies” that sounded more like statements of principle than plans. The ‘Quality’ objective for theatre, for instance, was broken down into two strategies

A1 To support existing companies which either determine standards in theatre in Ireland or may have the capacity to do so in the future.
A2 To assist in developing skills in theatre in Ireland.

How this was different than current practice (A1) or how it was to be achieved (A2) was not specified. Instead, the Plan lists a large number of ‘measures’ (there are 39 for theatre) that seem to have no necessary relationship with the previous strategies. They are divided by geographic location into the “priority zone” (the underserved midlands), small cities, Dublin, and nationwide. These measures are often highly specific. The first announces the Council’s plan to increase funding to a particular company—Galloglass, in Clonmel. Other companies are mentioned by name elsewhere, and tables show precise numbers for the next three years’ touring subsidy and travel grants. Such specificity, of course, makes it only too easy for historians to see the yawning gap between what was sought and what was achieved.

Addressing the disparity between Dublin and the rest of the country—not just in arts provision, but in a wide variety of services—has long been a government priority. In this Plan, one major idea was to identify a “strategic centre of population” outside of Dublin as a home for each art form. The town identified as the “centre for the development of drama” was Waterford, in the southeast, the Republic’s fifth-largest city. This never happened. The Plan included elaborate maps of which cities would found companies, where touring

54 In the first Arts Plan, these are called “Strategic Objectives.” In the second, they are called “Strategies for the Arts,” and in the third, they are called “Objectives for the Arts.” I see no difference in the use of these terms.
56 Ibid., 80.
would go, and so on. Virtually none of that came to pass. One map shows six theatre-in-
education (TIE) companies operating around the country by 1997, each touring in six
directions a year and one working in the Irish language.\textsuperscript{57} By 2007, only two TIE companies
work at anything close to that level (the two that were already in place in 1995, TEAM in
Dublin and Graffiti in Cork). Another map projects theatre touring for 1997, anticipating
about twice as many tours as shown on the map of actual touring for 1993.\textsuperscript{58} This, too,
ever happened. Galloglass did see its funding quadruple over the course of the five years
the plan was in operation, but this hardly singled it out: eight other companies (three of
which were based in Dublin) received even larger increases, in percentage terms. These
failures were hardly a surprise. Longtime Irish theatre observer Stephen Wilmer, of Trinity
College Dublin, presciently wrote in 1997 that the plan to make Waterford the hub of Irish
drama “was seen both by politicians and practitioners as somewhat implausible (and it may
be quietly forgotten in the future).”\textsuperscript{59} That these obviously poor ideas were not implemented
tells us little about whether good ideas could have been; it does, however, suggest that
elements of the plan were not necessarily chosen because they were practically achievable.

Quinn called the first plan a “shopping list,” and she said that it was generally
understood that not everything on the list would happen. It was a wide-ranging and
disjointed proposal, and much of it simply could not be achieved with the time and
resources available. Higgins “spread his carpet very wide,” said Quinn, “and it was perhaps
inevitable that he wouldn’t get everything he wanted as quickly as he wanted it.” This is
certainly true – the first Arts Plan called for a very optimistic doubling of the Council’s
1994 budget by 1997, from Ir£13.2m (€10.4m) to Ir£26.4m (€20.8m). The actual 1997
budget fell Ir£6m short of that goal, though the target was hit the following year.

It is not fair, however, to blame lack of funding for putting all of the Plan’s aims out
of reach. Some of them failed for rather different reasons. Drama measure 15, for instance,
called for the following:

\begin{quote}
Council will rationalise the number of Dublin-based companies,
allowing for the natural wastage which is commonly evidenced in
the life-cycle of some theatre companies and providing support for
new companies which may emerge throughout the life of the Plan.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., projection map G2, before page 79. The actual figures for 1993 are given in maps G27 and
G28.\textsuperscript{58}  
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., maps G2 and G26. \textsuperscript{59} S.E. Wilmer, "Decentralisation and Cultural Democracy," in \textit{Theatre Worlds in Motion}, ed. S.E. Wilmer and Hans van Maanen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998).
\textsuperscript{60} An Chomhairle Ealaion/The Arts Council, "Arts Plan 1994."
The ‘rationalisation’ of the number of Dublin companies—a generally understood euphemism for de-funding and thus shutting down some companies—demanded neither money nor time, but it did require a political will that proved to be lacking. Despite measure 15, the period of the first plan, essentially a single company was ‘rationalised’: a small Lecoq-influenced company, Iomha Ildanach, which saw the very small (£3000-6000) grants it had received for three years not renewed in 1994, before the plan was put into place. Its funding was restored at a higher level in 1999 and cut off for good in 2001. This case will be discussed in more detail below.

Between the first and second Plans, there was a period from 1997 to 1998 when the Council’s drama policy was officially controlled by the conclusions of the Theatre Review in the document “Going On,” while all other art forms continued to be controlled by the first Plan.61 (It is worth noting that “Going On” was not disseminated anywhere near as widely as the first Plan had been. In a spring 2008 survey of Irish theaetremakers, more than 70% had never even heard of “Going On,” while only 29% had never heard of the 1994 Arts Plan—which is, after all, an older document.)62 “Going On” resembled the first Arts Plan more than the others in the boldness and specificity of its intentions, though it is also a clear correction to the excesses of its predecessor and puts into motion some themes that would be taken up by its successors. It is shorter and more focused. It pulled back on the first Plan’s commitment to setting up an Irish-language theatre-in-education company to be based in Galway, calling it “premature in the short-term.”63 It begins its tightrope-walk concerning the issue of training, asserting both that the Council “is not a training agency” and thus will not provide training itself, yet arguing that, in this area, its “objective will be the creation of well defined career paths in Theatre in Ireland.”64 It set out criteria for assessing grant applications that strongly foreshadowed the second Plan’s emphasis on

61 The first Arts Plan anticipated that the Theatre Review it set up would create a new policy document, writing that “action in theatre will be subject to the outcomes of this comprehensive review” (p. 77). “Going On,” in turn, claimed that mantle from the Arts Plan: “This document sets out the new Arts Council policies for Drama” (p. 2).

62 I conducted this survey with the assistance of Theatre Forum and the Association of Theatre Directors Ireland. People in decision-making roles in Irish professional theatre were invited to complete an online survey about their own position in the field, their views on theatre funding, and their opinions on the field and the Arts Council. The survey received 91 responses from across the field. All of this essay’s references to ‘the survey’ are to this study.


64 Ibid., 6.
administrative procedure. It asserted in strong terms that the Abbey Theatre should properly be treated like any other client, albeit a large and important one. "The Abbey must not be either exclusive or excluded. It cannot be either insulated or isolated." However, in the decade to come, Abbey grants were largely excluded from other Arts Council calculations and insulated from changes in policy.

More successfully, perhaps, it set up a three-tiered structure for funding theatre companies that continues in a modified form to the present. The top level, "those organizations in which the Council reposes confidence," would be considered 'contract' or 'franchise' clients, some of whom would be invited to apply for a three-year funding cycle. Those "whose work and/or whose level of development" did not justify this status would be considered "project" clients. Beneath this was a category of "start-up" grants "to enable young emerging companies to establish a basic administrative structure." Though the designations of the tiers have changed, this graduated structure of funding continues to this day.

Donlon, the author of "Going On," said that he thinks of the document as "setting a certain marker down." Its value, he said, was as a comprehensive and coherent statement of where the Irish theatre was and where it could be going, even if it did not control Arts Council decisions in years to come. The metaphor is a useful one, and I will push it a bit. To be useful, a roadside marker needs to be visible and easily understandable. How clear was this one? Consider the wording by which the document quashed the Waterford-as-drama-hub plan:

Since the status and meaning of some strategic centre designations in The Arts Plan remains unclear, the Council will fund a number of local theatre provision schemes on a pilot basis in two or three local authority areas over the period 1997-1999.

Note that the first clause of the sentence has no relationship to the second. If the problem was that the Plan was unclear in what it meant by Waterford as a 'strategic centre' for drama—and the Plan did not explain the term well—the solution would be to clarify that term. As an official policy document, "Going On" was uniquely well-placed to make that

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65 The criteria, under the headings "Artistic policy," "Operating environment," "Structure and administration," and "Financial and management controls," have virtually nothing to do with artistic outcome. (Of the 27 criteria, one asks if an artistic policy is "being implemented and developed." This is the only mention of an artistic outcome. [Donlon], "Going On," 4-5

66 Ibid., 5.

67 Ibid., 3-4.

68 Though the document is unsigned, Donlon confirmed his authorship in his interview with me.

69 Ibid., 7.
clarification. But instead, the document abandons the idea and instead calls for “two or three” areas—not just Waterford—to get local (not national) theatre provision. This is a policy about-face under the veneer of clarifying a term. While such euphemistic language is to be expected in policy papers, it does call into question the document’s status as a clear marker. Rather than coherence, the controlling value here seems to be that of continuity and only gradual, well-discussed change, a value that would have been strongly reinforced to the Council (and to Donlon in particular) by the 1982 ITC incident discussed above.

After the Theatre Review, a team of accountants was commissioned to examine the first Plan’s successes and failures. This review noted that despite the “important development” represented by the Plan and a few individual successes, much of what it called for was vague, untested, unfeasible, or not fully implemented, and many of the same structural problems present in the field before the plan remained in place after.\footnote{See Indecon, “Succeeding Better: A Review of the First Arts Plan 1995-1998,” (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1999).} It noted that it was difficult to show which of the positive developments during the years the Plan had been in place were genuine consequences of it, and which were simply fortuitous coincidences. They noted that its objectives were stated in a way that in “most cases makes assessment of progress in achieving the objectives very difficult and in some cases impossible.”\footnote{An Chomhairle Ealaion/The Arts Council, "The Arts Plan 1999-2001: A Plan for Government, a Strategic Framework for the Arts," (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1998), 52.} This was, perhaps, a rather diplomatic way of putting it. While the overall objectives for each art form (A1 and A2 above, for example) were too broad to evaluate, the plan had called for a number of highly specific measures that could easily be evaluated, and these were only very rarely achieved. Quinn summarized what she called the review’s “one substantial finding”:

The Council got the money it said it wanted to do the things in the Arts Plan. It did many of the things it said it was going to do. But there was absolutely no way of demonstrating that the spending of that money had the effects that they said it was going to have... And I think [the Council] launched into the business of making a second plan very alert to this important distinction between outputs and outcomes.

One can observe this attention to process—to showing how specific inputs would lead to defined outcomes—in the wording of the second Arts Plan, which came into force in 1999. Here, there is a much clearer hierarchical relationship between the three overall aims (excellence and innovation, audiences and participation, and capacity-building) and the twelve more specific strategies, four for each of the aims. Each of these strategies is spelled
out over a few paragraphs, with additional specification of related initiatives the Council will undertake. These twelve strategies are then applied to each art form, but not rigidly; when a strategy was not applicable, it was simply omitted for that art form. (Ten of the twelve applied to theatre, for example, but only four to architecture.) These measures are far less numerous and specific than those of the first Plan—they neither mention companies by name nor quote specific figures—but they do fit together much better than the previous ‘shopping list’. There is an evident movement towards increased logical coherence.

To take one example, the Plan’s fourth objective sat under the ‘excellence and innovation’ heading and called on the Council to “foster more recognition, acknowledgement, critical assessment and documentation of the arts.” Applied to architecture, this objective becomes a call for exhibitions and publications that promote architectural excellence and a public lecture series by prominent architects and critics on the contemporary architectural world. For film, it becomes a call to fund “film archive and promotion,” and for community arts, the focus is on disseminating information about good practice. The objective is considered not applicable to music, opera, dance, or multidisciplinary arts centres, though no explanation is given for this decision. For drama, the objective as applied specifically calls for “a feasibility study, followed by a call to tender for a well-formulated and resourced publication of record, critical analysis and debate about theatre.” This process was followed and led to Irish Theatre Magazine, a quarterly publication which has the distinction of reviewing every professionally produced play on the island, as well as the odd Irish production in London or New York. The 2008 survey found that more than 75% of Irish theatremakers say that they read it “regularly” or consider it “essential reading.”

While not all goals were so specific, they did allow for evaluation. The first strategy applied to theatre, for instance, read:

The Council will improve the professional formation, practice and career development of theatre artists by funding (1) cnuais (to

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72 Ibid., 36. Alert observers will notice the difference between “drama,” the Council’s heading for this art form, and “theatre,” the term used within the objectives under that heading. I see no reason to think that the Council sees them as anything other than synonyms. Enid Reid Whyte, the Council’s theatre advisor at the time, says the same. (Enid Reid Whyte, "From Promise to Sustainability, an Chomhairle Ealaíon/the Arts Council and Irish Theatre: Planning for the 21st Century" (M.Phil., Trinity College, 2001), page. Only the term ‘theatre’ is used from the third Arts Plan.

73 For financial reasons, the magazine ceased print publication in 2009. It can still be found at http://www.irishtheatremagazine.ie (accessed 3 August 2009).
members of Aosdána), bursaries and awards to theatre professionals; (2) informational and developmental resource organisations, (3) and by encouraging theatre companies to take greater responsibility for artistic career development,

Note that point (2) mentions no organizations by name, and point (3) does not specify how companies should handle that responsibility (or how they were to be encouraged to do so). And yet, Anthony Everitt was able to evaluate these points one by one by the plan’s end in July 2001, though not necessarily in the most penetrating way.75

One goal in particular stood out, even if it was not the most easily evaluable. The Plan’s very first strategy, under the heading of promoting artistic excellence and innovation, was to “improve the professional formation, practice and career developments of artists.”76 A “career” in the arts was not a well-established idea; professional training in the theatre arts was still inconsistent, and theatremakers were accustomed to mobilizing any resources they could to get individual productions made.77 In that environment of day-to-day planning and scanty resources, a long-term career path in the theatre was hard to conceive of. This push towards thinking of the arts as a profession, with all that term implies, was a novel and important development. By talking about a “maturing” sector and “encouraging theatre companies to take greater responsibility for artistic career development,” the second Plan put pressure on theatremakers to think about there being such a thing as a career path in the field that needed certain things to maintain it. In particular, the Plan pointed out that the theatre field “still lacks a broadly representative body” and expressed its intention to fund “information and developmental resource organizations.”78 Theatre Forum was founded shortly after in response to this (rather overt) call. The idea that the independent theatre sector could contain companies large and stable enough that those who ran them could

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74 Aosdána (Irish for ‘people of the arts’) is an honorary association of the most prestigious Irish creative artists. It members are entitled to the cnuais, an annual stipend, currently around €12,000, that enables them to pursue their artistic vocation full-time. Irish law makes a distinction between ‘creative’ and ‘interpretative’ artists, and only the former are eligible for Aosdána membership. Playwrights are classified as creative artists (and are well represented in Aosdána), but actors, directors, and designers are not, and thus are not members. A few choreographers have only recently been added. Outside of providing support to established playwrights, then, Aosdána is of little use for the Irish theatre.

75 Anthony Everitt, "Evaluation of the Arts Plan 1999-2001," (Dublin: The Arts Council, 2001), 21. In evaluating the above-quoted strategy, Everitt wrote: “Awards and bursaries to theatre professionals have continued. A feasibility study for the Theatre Forum was funded. Research into mentoring schemes for artists is proposed for 2002.” In other words, the Council continued to do what it had always done on (1), undertook a study into perhaps doing something about (2), and hopes to do (3) next year.


77 For instance, this was less than a decade after many theatre companies essentially misused a government training scheme to employ actors as “trainees” for jobs that did not exist. See below, p. 176.

begin to think of having a career in the theatre (without relying on film, television, or the Abbey) was a new one. As a result, what it meant to be a professional theatre artist had to change. Pushing for a sense of professionalism that took account of these changed conditions was, I would argue, one of the most important ways in which the Arts Plans changed the way that theatremakers *thought* about the work they did.

By this point, planning had been mandated on all state agencies by the Government’s Strategic Management Initiative, launched in 1994 and consolidated in the report *Delivering Better Government* two years later. The Arts Council was now working in an environment where the planning process was institutionalized, and it had to contend both with the legal obligation to produce a statement of strategy and its frustration with the planning process typical of government agencies, filled with what Quinn called “goals, targets, measurables, all of those horrible things.” The question was not whether to plan, but how to do so.

The second Plan came off without incident, provoked no major controversies, and resulted in a steady increase in government funding to the Arts Council (€36.5m in 1999 to €47.7m in 2002). Setting out qualitative yet still evaluable criteria tailored to each art form was one of the procedural achievements of the second Plan, and it served as a model for the third, issued in 2001 to cover the years 2002-2006. In fact, the third Plan placed even greater emphasis on reportable, measurable performance. The Council promised:

> We will report regularly on performance. To facilitate this, we indicate a range of appropriate measures at the end of each section. We will set targets that will define what we mean by the successful achievement of our objectives, strategies and actions: these will be published separately in the Arts Council’s Corporate Plan."

I could find no record of a Corporate Plan being published, but even without it, the measures and targets it mentions are all explicitly stated in the Plan itself. The Plan takes the form of six objectives for the arts overall, each presented with a background explanation for the problem, a set of plans to fix it, and a list of measures that can demonstrate the plan’s success. The objective to “broaden and enhance audiences for the arts,” for example, was to be measured through “increased audience loyalty, improved audience-building skills, better standards of presentation, programming, mediation and audience care,” and four others, all of which ought to be statistically measurable (even if some terms, such as ‘better

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80 In response to my inquiries, the Council was unable to find any information about this document.
standards,' still require definition). Of the six overall objectives, three are focused on the distribution domain (improving management, international impact, and bringing arts to local communities), one focuses on reception (broadening audiences), and two others stand between production and the social forces that allow for it (building an arts career path and broadening participation).

In addition, the Plan includes a single objective, with attendant plans and measures, particular to the situation of each art form. ("Raise the quality and quantity of music-making," but "Make Irish opera viable.") In contrast to the overall objectives, these form-specific goals focus much more clearly on the reception domain: in literature, theatre, and the visual arts, the call is to increase the audience, while for other forms, the link to reception is even clearer: "Make architecture central to our way of life" and "promote dance as a vibrant and enjoyable art form." When spelled out more specifically as plans and measures, however, these objectives shift focus towards the production domain without overt explanation. Only two of the theatre objective’s fifteen points follow the heading’s focus to audience development, and both of those concern marketing. While one of the objective’s eight measures of success is “positive trends in audience numbers and in artistic programming,” virtually all of the rest concern organizational aspects of the production domain—company organization, training, hiring and financial practice, physical infrastructure such as rehearsal and office space, and the like. This does not necessarily indicate that the framers of the Plan were specifically concerned with organizational production issues but chose to frame them under reception (or distribution) headings for some tactical reason (political palatability, say, or out of a sense of art as a public service). It may, instead, indicate the heavy importance of measurable, evaluable outcomes and the tendency for organizational or production inputs to be far easier to measure than reception outputs. I would argue that this is evidence not that the plan’s authors were most concerned with measuring production-side inputs, but that they were most concerned with measuring, and exactly what was measured was less important than the fact—and apparent objectivity—of the measurement.

This need for seemingly objective data to back up the Council’s actions was exemplified by some of the language that framed the third Plan’s goals. The second Plan had talked about its radical intent in realigning the Arts Council from a fund-channeling to a developmental body. But the third Plan took that a step further in implying that the Council

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81 The wording is slightly different—the visual arts audience is to be “cultivat[e]d,” while that for literature is to be “increas[e]d.” For theatre, the call is to “increase audiences for a theatre of high quality and artistic ambition.” These differences are trivial.

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might no longer be interested in being the primary funder of Irish arts at all. This Plan does not contain, for instance, a statement about the Council's dominant financial and organizational position in the Irish theatre, as do the first Plan, "Going On," and the most recent strategic document. Instead, it contains language like this, which was very worrying for many theatremakers:

This makes it both possible and necessary for the Arts Council to change its role. Increasingly it is becoming a partner in what is now a joint effort. Sometimes it is withdrawing altogether from a funding role to one where the focus is on general guidance and development. The emergence of other players makes it more necessary, rather than less, that an overall strategy for the arts is overseen with clarity and imagination.  

Quinn says this may have been a tactical error. "I think it was a mistake to talk about development and to allow people to think it didn't mean funding as a part of development," she said, noting that other development agencies (industrial ones, for instance) often use grant aid as a tool. This language may have been part of what Quinn identifies as the third plan's central problem, "having too big an agenda," but it also frightened those companies for whom Arts Council funding was a lifeblood.

Nervous whispers grew to a clamour when the Arts Council's state funding was severely cut at the end of 2002, a move Quinn called "absolutely crucifying." This was not a cut aimed at the arts sector; with the burst of the dot-com bubble, the Irish government found itself short on revenue and imposed across-the-board cuts on all its departments and agencies. The Council was not singled out for this cut, but it was not spared it, either.

Those cuts, more than anything else, marked the souring of the idea of the Council's strategic development of the arts field and the closing of the era of the Arts Plans. Theatremakers, said Quinn, never really bought into the whole concept of planning. They thought of it as an experiment they were happy to play along with as long as it provided for their needs: increased funding, a better relationship with government, and a sense of stability. But in 2003, that equation was broken and theatremakers blamed the Plan for the failure. Quinn's narrative—that theatremakers never accepted the logic of arts planning into the basic workings of their practice but were willing to play along with it as long as there were financial rewards—was confirmed by another longtime member of the theatre field:

83 Quinn describes the cut as 15%, but according to Arts Council figures, the cut was a more modest 7.8%. (Accounting for inflation, this was a 12.5% cut in real terms.) This was severe enough, however, to essentially undo two years of growth.

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When Patricia Quinn [made the third Arts Plan], it was her way of unlocking a whole number of new staff posts for the Arts Council and extra resources, and everyone went along with it because they thought, well, if this is going to help us get more money ... All of a sudden, this great policy wasn’t being funded by government [after] the election of 2003, because there was an economic slowdown, a blip. And all of sudden it wasn’t such a great idea. But in the beginning, when her first policies came out, there was a sense that, because there was a detailed policy, and because it had extra rigor, we were going to get extra resources. It keeps coming down to the simple two words: more money.

Donal Sheils, who served as arts advisor to the Minister in 2005 and 2006, said that blaming the planning process for the 2003 downturn was “unfortunate”:

It was almost like people were getting impatient with [the Plan]. So when the cuts came, I think it was probably short-sighted by the Arts community to almost haul that up as being the problem. Of course it wasn’t the problem at all.

This is only partially true. Yes, the problem was one of a national economic downturn, but because the Arts Plan had been sold to the sector as a means of raising state funding and not as a means to a necessary rational framework, the 2003 cuts took away the main reason theatremakers had for accepting the Plans in the first place. Coherence was not a value that the field ever fully accepted; rather, it was a value the Council held and the field was willing to put up with because of its structural dependence on Council-channeled funding. But when the equation between coherent planning and increased resources was broken, theatremakers no longer had a reason to support the planning process.

While many people, including Quinn and Sheils, characterized the 2004 decision to set aside the Arts Plan as “political” (and not, for example, as financial), it was not as simple as a new minister imposing a new policy. When John O’Donohue took over as Minister for the Arts following Fianna Fail’s re-election in May 2002, he appointed a number of Council members who were sharp critics of its past direction. But the Plan remained sturdily in place for some time. It was March 2004 before the Council’s new chair, Olive Braiden, told the *Irish Times* that her Council colleagues “can’t follow the steps of the plan. We've inherited it. We need a new one.”84 After that, it was less than two weeks before the Council would formally “set aside” the third Plan and Quinn would resign in consequence. Quinn told me that she has no doubt that the plan was killed under orders from the Minister. A new strategic document that was published in December 2005

eschewed the name ‘plan,’ calling itself “Partnership for the Arts 2006-2010.” It had nothing like the specificity of any of the three Arts Plans. The final nail in the coffin was the recommendation of the so-called “An Bord Snip Nua,” set up by the Irish government to suggest large-scale budget cuts in the aftermath of the 2008-2009 economic collapse. The group’s report called for a €6.1m cut to the Arts Council’s budget (which, in percentage terms, equals the size of the 2003 cuts), but more significantly, it recommended the dismantling of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism. The various agencies would be parcelled out to different departments, and the Arts Council would return to the very place that Michael D. Higgins had pulled it out of to escape political interference: the Department of the Taoiseach.

Arts Plans were not supposed to be policy statements of particular governments. When Síle de Valera of Fianna Fáil took over from Labour’s Michael D. Higgins as Minister in June of 1997, she did not abandon the first Arts Plan or the Theatre Review process— in fact, she pushed them both forward. While the 2002 election did see a new minister appointed, Fianna Fail was returned to power and the arts were at best a minor issue in the campaign. The proximate cause of the end of the Arts Plans, then, was not the change following the election but the cuts in the 2003 budget.

According to Quinn:

> The reduction in the Arts Council’s grant in 2002 was the most damaging thing that had ever happened in the relationship between the Department [of Arts] and the Arts Council, by a yard.

Part of the difficulty, Quinn and others said, was that the Council had to take responsibility for passing the cut in its budget on to its clients, and thus it was on the receiving end of theatremakers’ frustrations. Distrust of the Council in the sector grew tremendously.

It was in this environment that the Minister appointed a new slate of Council members in 2003. I would argue that it was this frustration in the arts community, rather than any pre-existing political agenda, that led the Council to look askance at the planning process. In July of 2003, a new Arts Act was passed that gave the Minister more direct control over the Council’s activities; the Minister was authorized to “give a direction in

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81 An Chomhairle Ealaíon/The Arts Council, “Partnership for the Arts.”
82 Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes [An Bord Snip Nua], "Report " (Dublin: Government Publications Office, 2009), 14, 18. The Bord Snip Nua recommended cut of €6.1m represents a 7.4% cut in the Council’s €82.1m 2008 budget. The 2003 cut was 7.8%. The difference, of course, is that in 2004, the Council’s fortunes recovered and its funding was raised 19.3%. That level of recovery is unlikely for 2010. While 2003 was a blip, the more recent difficulties look to be more persistent.
writing” to the Council calling on it to comply with Government policies. Though grant decisions were specifically excluded from this directive power, the Minister did have ways to force the Council to consider particular issues and, of course, all Council members were still political appointees. The Minister appointed new Council members in August 2003, and it was they who killed the plan off six months later. In a lead editorial on the issue, the *Irish Times* wrote: “It is no wonder the Government seized an opportunity to assume unprecedented policy-making functions in the recent Arts Act.”

Colm Ó Briain saw this as a return to the old partisanship that he, as much as anyone, had put the Plans in place to prevent. “The Plan was the instrument that de-politicized and de-clientelized the arts,” he said. “Fianna Fáil had a long agenda there, and when John O’Donohue killed off the plan, it was basically within the Fianna Fáil psychology.” Ó Briain argues, essentially, that Fianna Fáil prefers a clientalist approach that provides it with patronage, while his party prefers a rational and ‘de-politicised’ approach. It is not hard to see Ó Briain’s trust of central, ‘rationalized’ planning as ideologically in tune with his party’s socialist tradition. To call this ‘de-politicized’ is a contestable claim, but I should note that the second and third Plans were written under Fianna Fáil, which had its own ideological models in the business plans that were so important to 1990s Ireland. Neither view, though, addressed theatremakers’ reason for souring to the Plans: the fact that the Plans had stopped delivering the resources they had promised.

The controversy concerning the end of the third Plan highlighted both the difficulty and the continuing importance of the notion of ‘autonomy’ in the artistic field. The Arts Council understood its own administrative autonomy within the Irish state as a barometer of the artistic field’s autonomy from political influence. The Council could act as buffer, absorbing shocks from either the political or artistic fields and prevented them from being passed on to the other. But the 2003 budget cuts ruptured the connection between the Council’s autonomy and the field’s. The end of the third Arts Plan was certainly a blow to the Council’s administrative autonomy, yet it may have resulted in a strengthening of the autonomy of the artistic fields. The impulse towards planning had come from the political field, and in killing the Plan, the Minister was responding to pressure from artists themselves, even if Ó Briain was correct in that the Minister was also simultaneously serving his party’s political interests. Here, the politician was serving as buffer between the field and the Council. In fact, the principal objection to the third Plan, said Enid Reid Whyte, the Council’s theatre advisor at the time, was that:

87 "Arts Council's Role [Editorial]."
it was too interventionist. There was too far a reach into developing and shifting the arts by the Arts Council, rather than a more organic change through the arts themselves.88

Note that it is not the government but the Council that is being accused of ‘interventionism’ and that needs to be opposed with an argument of artistic autonomy—what Reid Whyte calls ‘organic change’ and Bourdieu would see as a field that is free to pursue its own specific capitals. This view of the Plan as foreign force was strengthened by its heavy-handed language and the lack of a full consultation process in its formation. The third Plan was developed during the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Ireland, which made travel inadvisable, and thus face-to-face consultation meetings to develop the Plan did not happen. The sense of alienation was furthered by how little the third Plan had to say about issues central to the practice of art-making. Aesthetic criteria (aside from the undefined terms “quality” and “excellence”) are absent from its text.

Quinn and the Plan’s advocates were seen as pushing too hard against something that should be left alone. One letter to the *Irish Times* poked gentle fun at the half-century old “arts war,” with Quinn as champion of the “Social Agendists” doing battle with “the Arsgratiaartists, the battalion which marches under the banner of Art for the Sake of Art”: “General Quinn was carried off the field of battle, bloodied but unbowed. Arts Plan, the roan stallion she had reared from a foal, had to be put down.”89

Such romantic (and Romantic) views of the battles for artistic autonomy are, of course, theoretically suspect. It takes only a small dose of history and context to see that the push against state interventionism was a move in a social practice, the same kind of move engaged in by the 19th century defenders of *l'art pour l'art* as described by Bourdieu. The double irony is that, not only was this form of ‘artistic autonomy’ achieved by political intervention, the call for it came from pressure external to the field. How did this view of the Council as social agenda-pushers rather than defenders of autonomy come about? Both are present in Ó Briain’s original conception of the planning process, and they are seen to be parallel: an autonomous field needs certain internal structures to keep itself free of outside influence, and these must be built, maintained, and empowered. But if Quinn and others are correct in that the field never truly trusted the idea of planning and were simply happy to use it as long as it generated new resources, the view may come from a deep-seated scepticism in the field as to what the Plans were—were they directed ‘upward,’

88 Enid Reid Whyte, interview with the author, January 2007. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotes from Ms Reid Whyte come from this interview.

towards the ministry that can grant the Council more autonomy or funding, or ‘downward,’
towards the artists who received Council grants? Many understood them to be largely the
former. As a consequence, the Council is not seen as speaking the same language as the
field, and therefore, its goals can be assumed (without evaluation) to be of a different nature
than those which the field pursues. As a part of practical logic, theatremakers did not think
the Plans had much to do with their work.

Donal Sheils, the former ministerial advisor and a longtime observer of the field, said
that the push that felled the third Plan was essentially a conservative panic:

Any business has a plan, and you make your adjustments as you go. I
think it’s the adjustment side that the people in the arts can’t really
deal with. They have a problem with change. It’s amazing for people
who are in such a creative industry that they can’t really adjust to
change on a major level.

When asked why he thought arts practitioners found administrative or policy change so
difficult, he replied:

I think because the history has told them to follow the money. So
they follow the money and when the money wasn’t there or
apparently was starting to dry up someone has to get blamed.

Others, anonymously, concurred with this, at least in the theatrical field. In surveys and
interviews, I have found that most Irish theatremakers do not see the relevance of the
Council’s plans. They are aware of how they rank compared to others in terms of grant
funding and, to some degree, of what language to use on an application to better their
prospects. But few care beyond that. Less than 30% of theatremakers surveyed agreed that
the Arts Council’s funding decisions reflected its policy. The majority had not read most
Arts Council policy documents. If there is so little connection between policy and funding,
why bother reading the documents, and certainly, why disrupt one’s work to follow their
lead?

‘Following the money’ means that theatremakers trust the annual grant cheques
more than they trust the reasoning behind those cheques. The annual grant, then, becomes
not just an economic subsidy necessary to enable theatrical practice, but a form of
communication that is more reliable than the Council’s own words. This is perhaps an
inevitable – and even a positive – outcome when an expert body has the power and the
mandate to channel economic capital towards artistic capital. (The idea of funding as a
capital in the field will be discussed in the next part.) This could be a consequence of the
planning process, or it may simply be the effect of channeling subsidy through a self-
proclaimed ‘expert’ body. Exactly what the Arts Plans have achieved is still an open question, which the next section will attempt to answer.

Assessing the plans, take one

As structured as these plans seem to be, it is not too difficult to find points in them that defy the logic of theatrical practice. The most obvious is the first Plan’s naively confident view that if the Council decides to do something and has sufficient funding to pay for it, then it will necessarily happen. The Plan’s optimistic ‘projection maps’ of theatre companies to be founded, tours to be done, arts centres to be opened and the like are obviously poor predictions. That they did not come to pass is neither surprising nor interesting. Even when a specific point from the first plan was achieved, it may not have represented an important development in the field. The first Plan’s review trumpets its success in channeling the promised 15% of funding to arts serving children and young people, but Quinn noted that, internally, it was seen more as an accounting trick than a developmental success:

A lot of what they ended up doing was reclassifying existing expenditure to meet the target. And people found funding by target was not necessarily a very smart way to go about achieving your goals.

While the second and third Plans moved away from some of the first Plan’s excesses of specificity, a measure-by-measure account of the extent to which each of the Plan’s goals were implemented would still make for monotonous and depressing reading. Certainly the second Plan’s emphasis on good business practice had a notable effect on the administrative function of the larger companies and had an impact on the way theatremakers thought about administration. But, in general, the more specific a goal, the more likely it was to go unmet.

But one must ask in all seriousness: were these goals actually meant to be achieved? The decidedly mixed and sombre formal evaluations of the first plan did nothing to dampen the trumpeting of success from Benson, the Council’s chairperson, in his annual reports. Interestingly, he has quite a different set of criteria for evaluation than that of the accountants:

The Arts Plan had implicit aims in addition to those explicitly stated. One implicit aim was to move the arts and their funding on to the political agenda in such a way as to achieve a cross-party consensus on the need to support the arts in Ireland adequately. Another was to

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increase the budgetary base sufficiently so that even when in some years the allocation was at a low percentage, at least it would be a low percentage of a higher base. Another aim was to initiate a process of explicit longer-term planning for the development of the arts in Ireland and for the Irish arts internationally and to provide ways of thinking and a language which would effectively move that aim along in the political arena. The success or failure of the first ever Arts Plan must be judged against these implicit criteria as well as against the explicit operating aims of the Plan itself.\textsuperscript{91}

By these criteria, Benson’s celebratory attitude remains largely justified to this day. The planning process is now established, the Council’s funding from Government has continued to increase (barring a few stumbles such as 2003 and 2009), and despite political developments, the consensus on the need for proper funding is now established across the political spectrum.\textsuperscript{92} Even if its artistic aims were at best partially achieved, the first Plan did represent a sea change in the way that the Irish government related to the artistic field. With the Plans, the Arts Council learned to speak the language of government planning. This was no simple or trivial feat, but it is adamantly not what the plans themselves claimed to be doing.

This intention can be demonstrated. The Plans were observably more effective in

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure2.1}
\caption{Arts Council and major theatre client grants, 1989-2005}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item[92] The nonpartisan Bord Snip Nua report of 2009 called for a 7.4% cut in the Arts Council’s grant, which, while sizeable, is considerably less than what was feared and what other programmes suffered. The report recommended, for instance, the closure of the Irish Film Board and a 17% cut in
\end{itemize}
convincing the government that the Arts Council deserved more money than they were in guiding the Council’s decisions as to what to do with that money. Benson may very well be right that this was intended from the beginning. The graph above (figure 2.1) shows the relative grants for the five largest theatre companies and for the Arts Council itself (in bold). The most obvious trend one can see is that the Arts Plans led to a sharp and fairly steady increase in the Council’s funding. It also seems clear that the funding of most large companies follows the year-to-year fortune of the Council itself, though to a dampened degree. The only objective that could be called ‘strategic’ was the offering of grants to an increasing number of companies, so that these five received progressively smaller percentages of the Council’s total grant allocation. (This is especially the case for the two largest theatres, the Abbey and Gate, the two lower lines in the chart.) During the era of the plans, there was a massive increase in the number and diversity of companies funded by the Council. There were only 17 recipients of Arts Council theatre grants in 1992. This figure began to rise sharply with the first plan in 1994, reaching 45 in 1996 and 67 by 2001.

The first two plans called for an increase in theatre provision outside of Dublin, but both also called for a ‘rationalization’ of the number of Dublin companies. The graph below (figure 2.2) shows the fortunes of Dublin- and regional-based theatre companies since 1989, both the number of companies that received funding (bars) and the total value of that funding (lines). (The Abbey is excluded from these figures as a national theatre; it often received more funding than all other theatres combined.) If the objectives the Plans set out had been followed, the regional figures should have grown faster and more consistently than their Dublin equivalents. This, however, did not happen. The steady growth in both the number of companies and their funding was slightly more pronounced among regional companies as opposed to those from Dublin, but this fell well short of the diametric

93 These five companies are the Abbey, the Gate, Dublin Theatre Festival, Druid and Rough Magic. All are Dublin-based except Druid, which is based in Galway. All funding data discussed in this part comes from the Arts Council’s annual reports, which include a list of all grants given. For figures since 2006, information compiled by Theatre Forum has also been used.

94 The exception to this was the Gate’s 2000 grant (the blip in the bottommost line of figure 2.1).

95 In 1991, these five companies received about 29.4% of the Arts Council’s total grant (and 81.2% of its theatre allocation) themselves. By 2003, this figure was down almost half, to 14.2%. The Abbey, of course, leads this trend. Though it receives a declining share of all theatre funding, its grants have increased steadily and remain an order of magnitude larger than those received by any other company. In 1991, the Abbey received about 19.4% of the Council’s total grant (51.6% of its theatre allocation). By 2003, the Abbey received only 9.7% of the Council’s total grant. This still dwarfed the 1.6% of the Council’s total grant received by the second-best-funded theatre, the Gate.
difference the Plan had called for. A dramatic increase in funding to regional companies did take place in 2000, during the heart of the second Plan, but it was not sustained. The very next year, regional grants began to lose ground and Dublin grants began to be raised. The promised decentring of Irish theatremaking away from Dublin through differentiated funding has not yet taken place.  

Was this pattern a result of the arts planning process? It is impossible to say. The Council does not state its reasons for grant decisions publicly, and even the theatre company involved receives only a terse (and confidential) one-page letter. It is thus very hard to establish any kind of causal relationship between the Council’s reasoning and its grantmaking, and in interviews, theatremakers are also unable to make this connection. It is also problematic to compare the funding patterns in place from before the Plans era to those that predominated during it. Before the mid-1990s, there were simply so few grant recipients that evaluating year-to-year grant stability was not particularly meaningful. Certainly, the pattern of stable, slow growth that had been the norm before the Plans continued after they ended, reaching its zenith in 2008, when all of the largest, most stable companies (identified as “regularly funded organizations”) received the same 3.4% grant increase from the Council, regardless of their applications, work, or demonstrated need. This was wholly unacceptable to many theatremakers—regardless of criteria, theatre companies insisted on being evaluated—and after an outcry from the field, the Department of Arts stepped in and provided additional ‘top-up’ funding to some, but not all, of these organizations, thereby making the required act of authoritative judgment.

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96 In fact, this desire for regionalism was An Bord Snip Nua’s justification for recommending a €6.1m cut in Council funding in 2009. “Given the size of the country, it is not financially feasible to provide for a full range of arts activities in every local area,” the report noted (p. 18). It will be interesting to see if, as per this recommendation, the Council’s red pen will be directed to non-Dublin companies. My argument here about the difference between policy documents and the practice of policy work would suggest that is unlikely.
Financial subsidy has been the Arts Council’s main function since its founding, and it remains the main function that theatremakers expect of the Council. The ‘follow-the-money’ attitude has meant that theatremakers take grant decisions more seriously than anything else the Council says or does. Its other programmes—commissions, studies, advocacy, and so on—are regarded by Council staff and by the field as being in service of this central financial task. Virtually all of my interviewees agreed that funding is the most powerful and direct means by which the Council can to influence the field’s development. And in these terms, there are three major indicators of the Council’s success in the Plans era. They are represented by the three lines of figure 2.3, below. During this time, the Arts Council’s annual funding from government rose dramatically. The Council first took on responsibility for funding an increased number of theatrical clients, and then moved to make more and more of those grants of substantial amounts. (The first Arts Plan noted that the average grant to a Dublin theatre in 1994, excluding the Abbey and Gate, was Ir£40,000, approximately €50,800. The graph’s third line indicates how many of the Council’s theatrical clients received at least that much each year, adjusted for inflation.)
In terms of theatrical provision, this is a massive expansion and a major achievement. But the other side of the plan—the ‘rationalization’ of the number of theatre companies and the repeated threats to de-fund underperforming companies—never materialized. What is also clear from figures 2.2 and 2.3 is that cutting off funding from an existing client is exceedingly rare. In the period 1989 to 2007, there are only seven examples of theatre companies which were funded at more than a miniscule level for more than two years and subsequently had their funding removed. At least half of these were companies set up by one or two artists to pursue a specific aim which ceased applying for funds when its founders moved on to other projects. All were relatively small and short-lived companies—the largest and most long-lived, Kilkenny-based Bickerstaffe, was funded for nine years and received a bit more than €100,000 a year at its peak in 2000. Few others existed for more than four years or ever received more than €50,000 a year. None of them caused anything like the controversy that surrounded the de-funding of the ITC in 1982.

In fact, the theatrical field is not averse to the idea of de-funding low-performing companies. A substantial section of Dialogues 1996 was devoted to the “restructuring” question. “There comes a time when people need to move on,” said a theatre manager from

Figure 2.3. Major indicators of the Arts Plans’ success

There is an eighth, the Irish-language company Amharclann de hide, but its funding was not cut off. Rather, responsibility for it was turned over from the Arts Council to the government department concerned with Irish-language affairs.
Waterford. At a 2007 industry conference in Limerick, a discussion on this topic was proposed (by a major Irish director) and a sharp debate ensued. In the 2008 survey, more than 40% of theatremakers agreed that “the Arts Council needs to cut off funding to low-performing companies to free up more funds for other purposes.” Few, of course, volunteer to take the cuts on their own heads.

The Council’s job is to support and develop the arts, not to stifle them, so there is nothing intrinsically wrong with an Arts Council hesitant to cut off funds for artists. The problem is that, according to both Council officials and theatremakers, the main lever the Council has to effect any kind of developmental agenda is its conditional funding power: the ability to leverage its funding decisions to encourage certain practices and discourage others. If the Council were to become an entitlement agency, handing out funding as a matter of right and not by competition, it would be deprived of its most powerful means of developing the field. This is part of why all three Plans held out the threat, no matter how obliquely put, of complete de-funding of those companies that did not follow their agenda.

No matter how seldom it may use it, this threat is too important to the Council to give up. The Council’s latest system, introduced in 2007, divides funded groups into three categories: project-based clients, ‘annually funded’ groups (AFs) and ‘regularly funded organizations’ (RFOs). This is not a distinction between heavily funded and lightly funded groups: RFOs can, and sometimes do, receive less subsidy than AFs or project clients. Instead, AF and especially RFO status is designed as an implicit promise of stability that can allow for long-term planning. But even under this system, the Council’s current head of theatre, David Parnell, was clear that the de-funding threat was still on the table. “There isn’t even a guarantee of an ongoing relationship with the RFOs,” he explained.

Why is this threat both omnipresent and so rarely used? Patricia Quinn, the former Council director, pointed to an inertia built into the funding system. Some companies would be funded not necessarily because they were superior to other applicants but “because we had a sense of responsibility to them because we had funded them last year.” This speaks to

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99 Identifying which of the seven fall into this category is not entirely straightforward. The Council will not release the names of its unsuccessful applicants, and locating information on companies that no longer exist can be difficult.


101 *The Irish Times*’s theatre critic reports the title of the discussion as “How Do We Approach the Issue of Encouraging the Arts Council to Cut Companies Who are ‘Past It’ to Enable New Talent to Breathe?” Peter Crawley, “Fall of the Small after Unkindest Cuts of All,” *The Irish Times*, 2 February 2009. Similar debates took place at the Theatre Forum conferences of 2007 and 2008, as well.

101 David Parnell, interview with the author, 25 February 2008. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Mr Parnell come from this interview.
the value that the field places on stability and what I will refer to in the next part as collegiality (a sense of a community of professional theatremakers with professional standards). This conservatism serves a purpose. As Ireland has yet to develop consistent multi-annual arts funding structures, any sort of continuity would be nearly impossible without a good deal of year-to-year predictability in funding. At the same time, Quinn called this inertia not simply "unfair" but "uniquely against the spirit of an enterprise setting out to prize innovation in cultural terms." Parnell was even more explicit:

There should always be the possibility — no matter how long you've been doing it — that you can be cut ... If the younger companies coming through think that, well, Rough Magic and Druid [two large, established companies] will never be cut, ever, so I'll never get any of that money, ever, and if Rough Magic and Druid think, well, we'll never be cut, so we never have to worry, then you can see how the whole thing stagnates.

Perhaps for this reason, the twenty-year-old Island Theatre Company received no 2008 grant, making it only the sixth company of the 29 funded since 1994 to no longer receive state aid.\textsuperscript{102} It had received €190,000 in 2007 (an 11.8\% increase over 2006), making it by far the largest company to be de-funded by the Arts Council since the Irish Theatre Company in 1982. Only five other companies with more than two years' experience\textsuperscript{103} had been cut since 1989: Passion Machine in 2004, Bickerstaffe and Iomha Illdanach in 2002, The Machine in 2000 and Co-Motion in 1997. Between 1989 and 2006, then, an established company was cut on average once every 3.2 years. If we only consider the years in which an Arts Plan was in place, this number falls somewhat, to one cut every 2.6 years, but it is still a very rare event.\textsuperscript{104}

The tension between responsible investment and responsive innovation are inherent in the Council's position in the field and do not come from the Plans, which, in their language, seem to call for the scale to be tipped towards innovation. During the Plans era, both large-scale cuts and large-scale increases were quite rare. Especially during the second Plan (see figures 2.2 and 2.3 above), there was a growth in the number of new companies, fuelled by the growth in the Council's budget. But the lack of cuts means that there has

\textsuperscript{102} This decision was made before Parnell joined the Council staff, and he was not involved with it.

\textsuperscript{103} In contrast, there have been a fair number of 'flash-in-the-pan' companies that have been funded for a year or two and then not funded again. These five are the only ones which were cut off after receiving funds for at least three years in a row.

\textsuperscript{104} Since 2008, though, the situation has changed. In 2009, due to the financial crisis, three companies of at least three years' standing saw their grants cut to zero: Galloglass, Storytellers, and Calypso. In other words, of the nine established companies cut in the past two decades, four were cut in the last two years.
been a serious limitation; the growth of well-funded companies has been far slower and essentially static since 2000, as the dashed line in figure 2.3 indicates. Many interviewees noted this as the ‘bottleneck’ problem. Parnell, for instance, discussed the problem of “middle-aged” companies, those that are no longer “brand new and fresh and exciting … they’re not getting to do the work they’re really ambitious to do because they’re not getting the funding, but the Arts Council is in a position where there just isn’t enough money to go around.” The pattern of growth from small company into large one is structurally unsustainable. There is not enough money to allow newer companies to grow at the rate that their ambitions would warrant. But because the Council is unwilling to either get rid of larger companies or cut middle-aged ones off, they are left, in Parnell’s terms, “queuing up.” This is not what the Plans called for.

Why does the Council’s grantmaking practice seem to value stability over innovation, when its policy documents profess the opposite? One very plausible answer was offered by Enid Reid Whyte, the Council’s former theatre specialist. The Council members, as opposed to its staff, are politically appointed, she noted, and there can be a lack of political will to rock the boat. “It has to do with who do you want to be friends with,” she said. On this point, many other interviewees agreed, referring to Ireland’s small, chummy political culture in which personal connections are central and personalities can be more important than job titles.

But this kind of insider culture is part of the whole notion of a practical field with entry barriers; it is far from unique to Ireland. The tension between innovation and stability brings out a key sociological point about the nature of the Arts Council’s funding power: it is a form of social capital, not just economic capital. Explaining this point is critical enough that I need to spend the next two sections teasing it out before I can return to a fuller and more theoretically grounded reassessment of the Plans’ success.

Funding as approval

The end result of the push for innovation and the push for stability is a stalemate, where the Council wants to, but is restrained from, using money strategically to encourage some behaviours and discourage others. Reid Whyte put it simply:

We can’t use either a carrot or a stick. We’re simply only going to be able to incrementally increase people’s funding, and very little else. So you will know you’ve done extremely well if you get better than a two percent increase, and you will know that you’re in deep trouble if you don’t get any increase.

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The Council’s annual grants, then, are being used both as a financial subsidy and as a means of conveying approval, a valuable form of social capital within the field. This was neither secret nor surprising, and Reid Whyte was not the only one to articulate this notion. Peter Crawley, the principal theatre critic of *The Irish Times*, explains the social importance of funding in similar terms. “Often the grant decision itself has been taken as the message: an increase is an endorsement, a standstill a formal rebuke, a decrease a horrible misunderstanding.”

As financial subsidy, grants correct a market failure in the artistic sector and thus make professional theatre economically possible. But as social capital, they create a social hierarchy that helps determine the shape of the theatrical field and, thus, what actions are seen as reasonable for theatremakers in particular positions. The next part will further develop this idea of funding as social capital and not just a source of money; for now, it is worth noting that changes in the distribution of financial subsidy, such as the ones recommended by the Arts Plans, have the additional effect of changing a basic metric that the field uses to organize itself and its possibility of going on in its work. If funding decisions are in fact used as a form of approval, then changing the standards by which these decisions are made will have an important effect on the way approval is distributed. The “follow the money” approach is not narrowly economic when money is being used to communicate social worth.

One wrinkle is that though both subsidy and approval are conveyed by the same grant, they do not necessarily parallel each other. Financial capital is transferred by the sum of money itself—the higher the grant, the more financial capital transferred. But approval seems to be transferred largely by the change in the grant from one year to the next. Both Crawley and Reid Whyte, above, refer to increases and decreases, not the value of the grants themselves. Consider the grants for 1999, the first year of the second Arts Plan. Rough Magic, the largest of Dublin’s non-venue-based theatre companies, received a grant of Ir£150,000 (€190,000), while Second Age, a Dublin company with a focus on Shakespeare for school audiences, received Ir£115,000 (€146,000). The Arts Council, clearly, transferred more financial capital to Rough Magic than to Second Age in 1999. But that grant represented a cut to Rough Magic from its 1998 grant of Ir£175,000 (€222,000) and an increase to Second Age from its 1998 grant of Ir£100,000 (€127,000). The raise was a compliment paid by the Arts Council to Second Age, and the cut was a warning to Rough

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105 Crawley, "Fall of the Small after Unkindest Cuts of All."

106 The figures in euro are approximations provided for reference. Ireland moved to the euro in 2000, and 1999 was the last year grants were awarded in pounds.
Magic. It is not the case that, in economic terms, the extra £15,000 or £25,000 bought or took away any more theatre. But in terms of social positioning in the field, a company receiving raises is in a stronger position than one receiving cuts, no matter the amount of money involved.

One can, of course, see approval as a durable, long-term resource and say that the built-up cultural capital of a company like Rough Magic is not dissolved by a single year’s cut. And yet, there is substantial evidence that the Arts Council used raises and cuts precisely to label which companies had “done extremely well” and which “were in deep trouble,” in Reid Whyte’s words, and not as a means of slowly building companies up. The best evidence for this is the frequent use of extremely small increases and decreases in annual grants that do not add up to a long-term pattern of growth or decay. The chart below (figure 2.4) shows the distribution of all the occasions since 1990 that the Council decided to raise, lower or hold the grant to a theatre company it had funded the previous year. The chart breaks down the distribution of these decisions by degree of change, from the largest decreases to the largest increases, rather than by year. Taller bars represent more common levels of increase or decrease, and shorter bars represent less common ones. The dark bars show all 63 theatre companies that received repeat grants during the period, while the light bars show the 24 largest and most stable of the Council’s theatre clients, as measured by their grant allocation.

One problem with this data is that it does not account for applications that were not turned in. Some, perhaps even most, of the 100% decreases represent companies that, after having received funds one year, did not choose to apply for funding the following year. Many represent companies that existed for a few years and have now shut down. The Council considers the list of its applicants a trade secret and was unwilling to share it with me for this essay.

Because of the dominance of the Council’s funding in the field, the best way to measure the size and stability of a company is the size and stability of its annual grant. The 24 companies in this list are the Abbey, Gate, Rough Magic, Dublin Theatre Festival, Focus, Barabba, Passion Machine, Fishamble, Storytellers Second Age, Calypso (all Dublin-based), Red Kettle (Waterford), Druid, Macnas (both Galway), Island (Limerick), Everyman, Meridian, (both Cork), Galloglas (Clonmel), Blue Raincoat, Hawk’s Well (both Sligo), Watergate, Barnstorm (both Kilkenny), Yew (Ballina), and Backstage (Longford). The only two companies I chose to exclude from this list are Graffiti (Cork) and TEAM (Dublin), Ireland’s two large theatre-in-education companies, whose budgets and programming obey rather different rules than those of the rest of the field. These 24 companies constitute the bulk of subsidized theatre in Ireland. Over the period 1989-2008, these 24 collectively received 82.5% of the money allocated by the Council to theatre.
Clearly, the chart shows that during this time, there have been far more grant increases than decreases. But it also shows that the Council makes of a great many financially trivial increases and decreases (less than 10%) in its efforts to guide the field. Nearly 30% of all decisions were within the plus-or-minus 5% band, all of which bear no meaningful financial difference from standstill grants. Some of these decisions were almost comically minimal: 5.8% of decisions for the larger companies (and 4.7% of those for all companies) represented cuts or increases of less than 2% but not zero. One company, Iomha Ildanach, saw its 2001 grant of €40,000 cut the following year to €39,999, a move that Patricia Quinn, who served as director of the Council at the time, called “a pretty blunt message.”

It is surprising how often the Council makes use of increases and decreases of only a few percent. These financially trivial changes are further broken down in figure 2.5, below. The Council did not, until 2008, have a policy of giving its regular clients inflationary increases as a matter of course. Each small increase or decrease reflects a decision. And, in differentiating between all of the Council’s repeat clients and the largest, most stable clients, we see some patterns that can begin to explain how the Council uses these small grant changes. The larger companies were more likely to receive an inflationary-at-best raise of between two and five percent, and were also more likely to see their funding cut by an extremely small amount (less than 2%). In contrast, they were less likely to see their grant remain exactly the same. The Council tends to give grants to smaller companies in round numbers—multiples of €10,000 or £5000—while larger companies are
often given more precisely calibrated grants. A grant increase for a small company from €30,000 to €40,000 is far more significant to the company than one from €200,000 to €210,000, and a 15% increase is financially easier for the Council to give to a small company than a large one. Just as important, the political factors that make it difficult for the Council to electively cut a company’s grant are far more pronounced in the case of larger companies. In fact, these political pressures make it nearly impossible for the Council to choose a large company to be the recipient of a grant cut. Figure 2.4 may over-state the percentage of cuts to the large companies. Of the 59 cuts of more than 10% to the 24 largest companies, a full 28, or 47%, came in the years 2001 and 2003, when the Council was severely disappointed in its own budget. If we exclude those two years, only 8.8% of cases involve a cut of more than 10%.

Consistent with Reid Whyte’s explanation above, we can see that, instead of dealing out financially meaningful cuts, the Council punishes companies, especially larger ones, by maintaining their grant at the previous level or by cutting it by less than two percent, and rewards them with raises of between two and six percent. These changes are intended as expressions of favour and disfavour and are generally understood as such in the field.

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109 For example, the only company in 2005 to receive a grant not in multiples of €1000 was Druid. It received €717,500, making it the third-best-funded company that year, behind only the Abbey (€5,050,000) and the Gate (€795,000).

110 The Council’s 2001 budget rose by 5.9%, a blow after eight straight years of double-digit growth. The Council’s 2003 budget fell by 7.8%.
especially by larger, more established companies. They are nudges on what most theaternakers call the “funding ladder.”

But are these small cuts the “warning shots” that Donlon notably did not receive when the ITC’s funding was cut back in 1982? There is some evidence that this is the case: Whyte mentions that some of her quiet words of warning for theatre companies were ignored until accompanied by a grant cut, and the year after lomha Ildanach was sent Quinn’s ‘blunt message,’ its funding was cut to zero. By this logic, approval (measured by the change in grant) serves as a promise of future financial commitment (measured by the grant itself). The data, however, do not bear this out. If approval does carry with it the promise (or threat) of future funding change, that promise is deferred. Small cuts do not seem to foreshadow large cuts, nor do small increases prefigure large ones. There is no observable relationship between one year’s change and that of the following year. For example, the small but long-lived Focus Theatre in Dublin, known for its Stanislavskian naturalism and one of the most consistent voices in Dublin theatre in the last two decades, has received less-than-1% grant increases and decreases six times since 1990. The four instances in which its grant remained exactly the same—1996, 1999, 2002, and 2007—were immediately followed by grant increases of 4.6% (1997), 10.0% (2000), 21.4% (2003, the ‘crucifying’ year in which most companies saw cuts), and a cut of 27.6% (2008). Focus’s two tiny grant changes—down 0.4% in 1998 and up 0.2% in 2001—were both followed by years of no change. It is hard, then, to read these grants in themselves as a clear and effective channel through which the Council can communicate its future intentions.\footnote{For example, Quinn’s “blunt message” to Iomha Ildanach by cutting its grant by €1 was not received. John O’Brien, the group’s director at the time, said that he took it to be an administrative error and ignored it. John O’Brien, interview with the author, 8 May 2008.} This is, of course, perfectly reasonable, as the Council has much better ways to communicate its intentions to its clients, even if it uses them rarely. What the grants were uniquely placed to do was not communicate but \textit{transfer capital}, both financial and social, from the Council to theatre practitioners.\footnote{Alison Richards draws a similar conclusion from her study of Australasian performance practice. She notes that while the state funding bodies of Australia and New Zealand in theory make grant decisions based on formal quality criteria, “in practice, decisions are buttressed by policy and precendents, which have the effect of constructing a highly selective competition for the legitimacy derived from becoming part of the officially-sanctioned cutural landscape.” Richards, \textit{Bodies of Meaning}, 21.}

As a last step before a conclusive evaluation of the Plans, then, this essay needs to examine the other levers that the Arts Council has with which to influencing the field’s development. In particular, it needs to look at the (precarious) nature of the Council’s

ability to confer *social* capital, and the ways in which this ability can be used to develop the field—and the doxa that structure it—in ways perhaps more profound than money alone can.

**The Arts Council and social capital**

A Bourdieusian perspective on cultural fields encourages us to think in terms of the tugs-of-war over multiple capitals that provide a field’s structuring tensions and pressures. The next part will examine more closely exactly which capitals are being contested in the theatrical field, but for now, the distinction between the financial capital (subsidy) and the social capital (approval) that funding transfers is important to clarify. It is easy enough to see how the Arts Council transfers economic capital—it is allocated a budget to do so. Its ability to confer social capital, though, is less direct and more surprising. In theory, Bourdieu social capital in the sense of respect ought to be given out by colleagues or experts, not by a government body. Social capital in a highly autonomous field such as poetry or pure mathematics is a measure of reputation among those who have been initiated into the field. Bourdieu calls it “consecration,” and while it can be given by either the “charismatic” visionaries of the field or the (bourgeois-installed) academics within it, it cannot come from outsiders, who can only recognize or acknowledge the judgments made within the field. The specialized expertise this judgment requires is not just an academic understanding of the field’s working, but also a practical understanding, steeped in the field’s doxa.

Though a government body, the Arts Council is designed to be an expert body of *practitioners in the field*. Its members are (supposed to be) senior artists respected by their disciplines, and its staff (are supposed to) bring particular expertise in their area to the Council’s work. If the field recognizes the Council’s status as senior, expert practitioners, then its judgments will be seen to carry the weight of social capital. If the Council’s authority is seen as tangible but coming from something other than status in the field (statutory mandate or government position, say), then to the extent that theatre is seen as a field autonomous from the rest of Irish social life, its judgments will lack the weight of social capital.

Does the field acknowledge the Council’s role as practical experts? Only to a certain degree. The Council’s membership in the field is inherently equivocal, and Council members and staff are aware of this ambivalence. Most Council members are in fact

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13 See Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 48ff, particularly fig. 2 on p. 49.
respected senior artists in their fields. Many interviewees were enthusiastic about the late 2007 appointment of David Parnell, an experienced actor and director of one of Dublin's younger companies, as head of the Council's theatre staff. At the same time, the field seems to recognize a certain social distinction between Council people and theatre people. Reid Whyte, Parnell's predecessor, is an American-born and trained actress who had worked for years as a producer for the Dublin-based clown company Barabbas. Her (Irish-born) husband is a regular actor in Dublin theatre. But when asked if she is seen as part of the field, she answered:

I've often made the joke that it's amazing how a couple of years in the Arts Council seems to cancel out thirty years of experience in the field, but it does, and it's quite remarkable how it does that.

Reid Whyte said that this cancelling happens "in other people's minds," not in her own, and she still sees herself as part of the Irish theatre. But she acknowledged that most members of the sector saw her as a Council representative and, at times, she felt the need to emphasize that distinction:

I have to be careful. I don't for example go to theatre companies' Christmas parties, unless I'm going as Mrs Mal Whyte ... I attend no fundraising events for theatre companies, even though I'd love to. I can't be seen; it wouldn't be right.

Parnell expressed a remarkably similar opinion about an awards banquet that he attended just after being appointed to his Council post:

I sat at the Arts Council table ... I was fine with that – I had a nice evening. But I was aware that last year I would have been at another table with another group of people who maybe would have been a little bit less inhibited ... It's not appropriate for me to go to the theatre awards and get drunk and hang out with my friends. I have no problem with that because I can get drunk and hang out with my friends in private. When you're wearing the hat on business, you have to wear the hat.

Notice how both use the language of appropriateness in considering the effect of outward, visible indicators of social status and group membership—party attendance, seating order, and social behaviour. Parnell's 'wearing the hat' is a very good metaphor for the act of position-taking that Council work seems to require. One must have a certain artistic habitus to be an acceptable candidate for that position, but the act of taking it up requires a certain distancing from the remainder of the field, a retreat into the quasi-judicial role of disinterested expert. It is a structural distinction in the shape of the theatrical field. The distinction is contested and can be muddied, of course, but that does not mean it does not exist.
The best way to understand this distinction, I would argue, is as a marker of a third practice in the field of theatre, a move anticipated by the seventh “subject area” for the sociology of theatre identified by Maria Shevtsova in 1989, “Theatre Policies, Policies for Theatre.”¹⁴ The previous part began with the assumption that the two integrative practices (to use Theodore Schatzki’s term) in the theatrical field are theatremaking and theatregoing. This now needs to be updated. The work that policy makers, funding agents, and all those who have stepped back from the making of particular pieces of theatre in order to attempt to guide and manipulate the field at a macro-level seems to be recognized as a practice in its own right, with doxa of its own and social structures (the different hats and tables) separating it from its neighbors. There is a parallel between these three practices and the three domains identified by Hans van Maanen in the art world of theatre—production, distribution, and reception.¹⁵ While theatremaking and theatregoing map nicely onto the first and third domains, theatrical policy work and distribution do not necessarily have such a parallel relationship. Van Maanen uses distribution in the standard economic sense of a company moving products to market—here, moving productions into the venues where they will be seen. That particular relationship of de-localized production is somewhat peculiar to the Netherlands, but if we understand distribution a bit more generally as the administrative work that matches productions with audiences and allows work to be made for and seen by a public in a way that responds to the needs of both, it makes sense to think of the Council’s work as falling into the distribution domain. Van Maanen notes that Dutch arts policy is more focused on the distribution domain than on the other two,¹⁶ and we can see a similar relationship in the Irish case. Democratic governments ought to have little authority or interest in deciding the content of theatre to be produced or how it should be received. But the intermediate structures—those that channel resources and attention, encourage operating procedures, and try to mould forces of production and reception to each other—seem to be both a more appropriate and a more effective focus for government intervention.

This effort is reminiscent of Bourdieu’s own work with the French ministries of Education and Culture in the 1970s and thereafter. Many of the attributes of the Irish Arts Council’s self-positioning—its expertise, its desire for a systematic and coherent approach based on data, and its (purported) ability to see the field’s overall, objective, and long-term conditions—place it in a role that Bourdieu equates with that of the sociologist. The main

¹⁵ See van Maanen, How to Study Art World.
difference is that the Arts Council makes an overt claim to be part of the theatrical field in a way that even the most participating of observers does not. Bourdieusian self-reflexivity may help sociologists acknowledge their own structural blind spots, but it does not in itself make them part of the field they study. Ethnographers (sociologists or anthropologists) studying their home societies do so by taking up an authorial position outside of them in order to construct an explanation in etic (external) terms. Even if they have an emic (internal) understanding of their own culture, their ethnography will be literally pointless if it cannot translate to a wider audience. As Woolgar and Latour argue in their anthropology of scientific practice, "the dangers of going native" are particularly marked in an academic study of a practice akin to academic work in a field that seems like familiar territory. These dangers are real and can deprive the work of its strength: "an analysis of a tribe couched entirely in the language of the tribe would be both incomprehensible and unhelpful to all nonmembers." Ethnographers need to take pains, then, to negotiate their position with regard to the groups they study. They must be close enough for correct and subtle observation, and yet they need to be able to step away in order to translate their observations into terms that are more broadly helpful. That assumption of an outside authorial role is thus an example of the kind of position-taking act in the academic field that is required for the social conferral of scholarly authority.

Bourdieu points out the social construction of this act even as he performs it in delivering a "lecture on the lecture," examining the act of scholarly consecration even as he accepts it onto his own shoulders. To ensure that his description of his own place both inside and outside the scholarly field is accurate, he relies on what he calls "impersonal confessions" of the objective facts that contextualize his self-location, a task he urges on all social observers.

Perhaps he should have urged it on policymakers as well. Like anthropology or sociology, the 'third practice' of theatrical policy work—the resource-apportioning and guidance role that is the principal job of the Council—needs to be part of the field, because while one of its roles is to interface with political and other external forces, its overall aim is to influence tensions internal to the field. And yet, in order to be unbiased and rational ('democratic,' in Ó Briain's phrase), it needs to make use of a fair and formal logic that marks a dividing line between policy work and theatre-making.

118 Bourdieu, "A Lecture on the Lecture."
119 See Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations, 33-42.
120 Bourdieu, "Participant Objectivation."
This difficult balance needs to be maintained. Because, while the main lever the Council has for exerting its influence is the differential transfer of both economic and social capital, the goal to which this leverage is applied is to change the doxa and practical intelligibility of Irish theatremakers. For instance, professionalism, which was one of the central rallying cries of the second and third plans, is not simply a question of external objective conditions such as salary, training, and contract terms, but also the internal conditions of how practitioners understand the nature of the work they do and how to go about doing it. These self-understandings are classic examples of that which is contested within the workings of a field, not externally to it. But if an effort to modify them comes out of an discursive, academic logic, then, per Bourdieu, it will be incompatible with the practical logic that a field of practices needs to use. This is the theoretical gap that the third practice needs to bridge in order to be effective.

The third practice, then, is very nearly in the position of Bourdieu’s ideal sociologist: combating méconnaissance and its consequence, oppression, with a self-reflexive perspective and good objective data. The crucial difference comes in its relationship to the field. Both require good understanding of the field, but sociology is seen by Bourdieu as a discourse, following a discursive logic that is foreign to a practice such as theatre. And as a practice, theatre is doxically incapable of incorporating the analysis of objective conditions that would allow it to function in the best possible way. This third practice, then, must both participate in discursive sociological observation and yet be an unambiguous part of the practical theatre field. Whether or not this is, in fact possible and what it implies about the nature of practical logic will be discussed in the conclusion. But the Council’s difficult situation should already be clear.

From its inception, this was exactly the gap that the Council was designed to bridge. It both drew its membership from the most respected members of the field and has, at least since the 1980s, commissioned both expert sociological studies and practitioner surveys on theatrical life in Ireland. The Plans represented a culmination of this

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121 With regard to Irish actors in particular, Reid Whyte said: “If actors don’t think of themselves as artists, then you have a problem, right from the start. And I would say that to some extent, they don’t think about what it is to be an artist because to some extent, many of them have not been trained.” In the context of this essay, I would suggest that, certainly in the early 1990s, a similar statement could have been made about independent Irish directors and producers.

122 It should also be noted that while the Council is, of course, the primary actor in the ‘third practice’ of arts policy work, it is not alone. There are other representative groups such as Theatre Forum, Actors Equity, the Irish Theatre Institute, and the Association of Theatre Directors Ireland which are beginning to participate in a more minor way in this work. Like the Council, they are composed of current or former practitioners and are unambiguously part of the field, but their contribution is largely
integration of systematic, ‘rational’ study and the internal dynamics of the field. Giving this hybrid body—and not a government minister—authority over Irish arts practice would be analogous to the French government’s delegating responsibility for educational policy management to the sociology department of the Collège de France, of which Bourdieu himself was a member.

Assessing the Plans, take two

With these concerns in mind, this essay can at last return to a reassessment of the Plans—first in broader, then in more focused terms. If theatre policy work succeeded in holding both a high position in the field and in maintaining a sociologically rigorous perspective, it should have been able to achieve the goal of Bourdieu’s sociology: recognizing the misrecognized, revealing that which is hidden by the field’s illusio, and guiding theatrical practice towards work that is better attuned to the objective conditions in which it finds itself. The Plans’ specific aims and proposals may not have been realized, but at their simplest level, they were an effort to transform the Irish arts funding regimen from a haphazard political process into a coherent and predictable scheme that would favour and encourage better work that better responded to the needs of Irish society. That is, if this third practice did what it set out to do, it should have enabled Irish theatremakers to make higher quality, more socially attuned work. In the end, any evaluation of the Plans has to, in the end, ignore the specific proposals that were obviously never implemented and ask this basic question: can we demonstrate that the Plans led to a genuine increase in artistic quality?123

I see no obvious way to demonstrate this, and in fact, there is evidence to the contrary. Certainly, there is more work now than there was fifteen years ago, but quantity in and of itself has never been a goal of the Arts Council. In that the Council has set explicit and general criteria that define the term ‘quality,’ there is no evidence that they have been followed. When asked for the criteria by which the Council decided questions of quality, Reid Whyte directed me to a four-page Council document from 2000 titled “Weighing Poetry” that contained what she called “formal artistic assessment methodologies.”124 The discursive, coming in the form of documents and discussions rather than in the making of theatrical productions.

123 I do not intend here to define the term ‘artistic quality,’ but I do want to differentiate it from the term ‘professional standards’ that I will use in the next part with respect to collegiality. See below, p. 193-194.

124 The document is more a list of suggestions than a precise methodology for evaluation, but that is not directly relevant.
document is not, however, on the Council’s website, and the survey showed that more than 80% of theatremakers had never heard of it, and less than 5% had read it. There are criteria of a sort in the Plans themselves (as well as in the document that has replaced them), but they are extremely vague. Many theatremakers, including Jim Culliton of Dublin’s Fishamble Company, saw this vagueness as a healthy thing:

I think it’s hard to pin down the criteria on which the work is assessed, because the policy is open, but I think that it’s necessary that it is open because I think if it begins to narrow down then you start making decisions based on [those criteria, which] wouldn’t be appropriate.\textsuperscript{123}

It is worth noting that explicit criteria are not something theatremakers, as a rule, want to receive from the Arts Council. Many of my interviewees say that though they are frustrated by not knowing on what basis the Council makes its decisions. The imposition of specific criteria would be an ‘inappropriate’ form of intervention and a threat to artistic autonomy. In fact, Reid Whyte makes the utility of this vagueness even more explicit in an MPhil dissertation she wrote while serving as Council theatre advisor:

The truth is that during the time of this [the second] and the subsequent Arts Plan, there were no formal criteria for evaluation. The sector knew this and it has warily asked for transparent evaluation since the appearance of the first plan. Warily, because the sector, [*sic*] understandably wanted input into the creation of criteria but has also expressed fears that the Council might simply impose the criteria for evaluation.\textsuperscript{126}

There is a necessary tension here. The sector repeatedly asks for specific criteria to evaluate quality because it sees Council decisions as capricious and ill-founded,\textsuperscript{127} but if the Council were to actually state criteria and thus impose them, they would be asserting an authority their position in the field does not allow. Again, this is not the way that an expert body with high cultural capital—as the Council claims to be—would position itself.

There are, of course, other ways of measuring quality besides general criteria. The Arts Council has encouraged its clients to develop their own plans, and it makes an effort to evaluate them on the performance of their own mission. This still allows the Council to evaluate the work and to suggest ways in which it can be bettered, but it does mean that, in Culliton’s words, the “artistic impetus” is coming from the artists and not “imposed on the company” by the Council. This more deferential (or partnership-based) approach may

\textsuperscript{123} Jim Culliton, interview with the author, 17 December 2007.
\textsuperscript{126} Reid Whyte, ”Promise to Sustainability”, 26.
\textsuperscript{127} The survey found that only 21% of theatremakers saw the Council’s grant decisions as consistent year-to-year, and only 30% said that the Council’s funding decisions reflect its policy.
sound more progressive, but it does not appear to have had much of an impact on the field. There is no appreciable difference between the number of theatremakers surveyed who said that the Council has “clear policies” for evaluation and those who say that they “know what the Council would like to see from me or my company.”128 A company-differentiated approach should find noticeably more people agreeing with the second statement than the first, which is not the case.

Or, perhaps, we should use funding itself to measure quality. The system of expert-led subsidy is designed so that, in the long run, economic capital flows to those companies with the best artistic outcome. I argued above that the ‘small cut’ and its accompanying hint of disapproval is the Council’s main means of warning companies whose standards (artistic or otherwise) have fallen below a satisfactory level. If such a warning is understood, a company ought to change its ways and then see its grants increase with no long-term economic harm done. I asked Reid Whyte for examples of such cuts that received the ‘best’ and ‘worst’ responses from the Council’s point of view. Figure 2.6 below shows the year-by-year grant fortunes of these companies.129 An effective grant system would see the poorly responding company’s grant fall in the long run compared to the properly responding one. In this case, though, the long-term grant prospects of the two companies are extremely similar, both growing at a steady, slow pace. This is a remarkably small contrast between best- and worst-case scenarios. If these are in fact the extreme cases, as Reid Whyte asserted, it seems clear evidence that ‘good’ and ‘poor’ response to grant cuts have little long-term impact on a company’s economic fortunes.

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128 For the first statement, 38% agree, while 39% agree with the second. Far more—76%—say that they know “where my work fits into the landscape of Irish theatre,” implying that this is a gap in the Council’s evaluation regimen (or the perception of it), not in theatremakers’ understanding of their place in the field.

129 Both of these examples are from the Arts Plans era, but they are not from the same year. I have aligned the graph so that both cuts come in the second year. Neither of these companies’ cuts came in the ‘crucifying’ year of 2003. At Ms Reid Whyte’s request, I have not included these companies’ names.
I can thus find no evidence that, even in a larger sense, the Council’s funding system under the Arts Plans has had the effect of changing the shape of the field of Irish theatre in a way that directly influenced artistic quality. The plans have certainly had certain other demonstrable structural effects—expansion of the amount of work produced and administrative and business-practice professionalization, most notably—but it is not possible to demonstrate a connection between these effects and an increase in quality. In this most critical sense, it is hard to see the Arts Plans as a success.\textsuperscript{130}

Is this gloomy assessment, however, all there is to it? Most of those who established and initially pushed for the Plans consider them successes. The main evidence they offer

\textsuperscript{130} While not as central a criterion as artistic quality, public access to the arts was also a major concern of all three plans and deserves to be addressed. The Arts Council commissioned a survey of public attitudes to the arts in 1994 (Clancy et al., "Public and the Arts.") and a similar one twelve years later (Hibernian Consulting, "Public 2006."). One of the conclusions trumpeted in the latter report’s executive summary was that the percentage of the population who “had difficulties in attending or taking part in arts activities” had gone down from 73\% in 1994 to 17\% in 2006 (Hibernian Consulting, "Public 2006," 18.). This, however, is a highly dubious reading of the data. The 1994 report asked what difficulties respondents had in artistic attendance or participation; 27\% picked “no difficulties” from the list, more than twice as many as any other entry. (Clancy et al., "Public and the Arts," 49[69].). In 2006, however, respondents were asked whether they had any difficulties; only those who responded positively were asked to specify the difficulties. (Hibernian Consulting, "Public 2006," 93.). The improvements in access and economic prosperity certainly did contribute to increased artistic access, but this very dramatic change was more likely influenced by the rephrasing of the question. Further evidence that the change comes from the question wording appears on the report’s same page, where it is noted that, despite the seeming lowering of difficulties, in 2006 “attendance and participation [are at] about the same levels as in 1994,” though there are far more theatres and arts centres spread around the country in 2006 than there were in 1994. This “seems at odds” with the data, the report observes, and I concur.
for this is the steady growth in the Council’s funding (See figure 2.1 above.) Donlon argues that the “Arts Plans were arguments ultimately to persuade government to increase the resources provided to the Arts Council,” and that their framers filled them with “what was judged to be most persuasive in the hands of government.” Ó Briain was more explicit: the Plans were successful because they “changed the debate” about the arts’ relationship with government and their role in society.

This is, perhaps, why the language of coherence, rationalization, and sector development is far more prominent in the Plans’ text than any overtly aesthetic discussion, and why this language does not seem to have influenced either the field’s self-conception, or, indeed, the actual practice of the Council’s grantmaking. The parallel in the Plans’ language with that of the EU structural development applications is one that governmental eyes would recognize, but theatremakers might not. Such language may have been new for Irish political culture, but it was used because it was extremely useful; per Wittgenstein, we engage in different language games for different occasions, different purposes, and different audiences, and as long as we know which one we are playing at any given moment, there is no need for all these games to be compatible. In this sense, it works to think of the Plans as directed upwards, towards government, in a plea for more resources and administrative independence. The upwards plea is more potent if not explicitly stated (pure begging rarely being an effective form of lobbying), and so these aims of the Plan needed to remain, in Benson’s term, ‘implicit’.

That the policy never really controlled the grantmaking was no secret to anyone in the field. Donlon was clear that, if the Arts Council saw a problem with a company’s work, the Plan’s “aspirations … would not divert the Council from addressing that situation.” Less than 30% of theatremakers in my survey agreed that “the Arts Council’s funding decisions reflect their policy,” and this was not always seen as a bad thing. Even the Council and its staff were resistant to actually imposing rational plans in their grantmaking practice. The plans did not fit in the way that their jobs made practical sense to them. Patricia Quinn spoke about the difficulty the Council itself had accepting that it would reject applications for strategic reasons, not simply because of lack of funds:

The whole posture of the Arts Council vis-a-vis the sector changed radically. It’s one thing to say to people, look, we only have €20m to spend on the arts. Your application was otherwise superb. If you read any of the letters that Phelim Donolon sent out to people, ‘this is a wonderful wonderful proposal, we think it’s fantastic, unfortunately

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131 In addition, Ó Briain disputes my assessment that the Plans did not guide the Council’s grant decisions. Most others agree that they did not.
our resources don’t allow us to support you and we’re very very sorry and we wish that we could do better.’ Now that letter went out to people whether we liked their work or not, is the truth …, [When we were underfunded, we could blame the government:] well, granddad said no, I’m sorry. Whereas if you get what you asked for, and you’re there taking responsibility … then you can’t any longer write those letters. But there was still a very strong desire on the part of a lot of the staff that had been there for a very long time to keep writing those kinds of letters. There was a certain unevenness about the adoption of this new type of proposition across the face of the Arts Council as an institution. Some people were more reluctant than others.

This attitude—one affirmed by a number of former Council staff—is the final evidence that the Council simply could not bring itself to allow the Plans to control its grantmaking decisions. As grant-giving was, by far, the biggest lever the Council had to influence the field, the doxically-built norms of the practice of policy work prevented the Council from using the most effective means at its disposal. The Plans, then, failed to substantially change the Council’s own practical understanding of its work, and thus left in place the dynamics of the most basic relationship the Council had with the field: funding. This is further evidence that Council members were part of the theatrical field: they think like theatremakers, not politicians. And if the Council was unable to change its own staff’s understanding of their jobs, it seems unlikely that it could have changed others’.

There is an interesting parallel to be made between the arts plans as government-addressed and the Bourdieusian idea of the complementary but not parallel internal language games of a practice. Many works in science studies, including those of Latour, show that scientists speak very differently with each other in person than they do in formal scientific writing, even though such writing is addressed to the same audience. Chemists have a “childish, ludic” view of their work and sometimes talk about it as a form of cooking, for instance, but would never dream of doing so in scientific journals. Most scientists know to be sceptical of certain large and lofty claims put into formal writing, such as published papers and grant applications.

There is, however, an important limit to the analogy between formal scientific language and that of formal arts planning. Scientists, Latour and Woolgar argue, tend to be quite averse to the kind of sociological analysis of their field that might point out the gap

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133 Bourdieu, Science of Science, 67.
134 Ibid., 23-24, and the rest of the section “A well-kept open secret”.

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between their formal language and the reality of their practice. Many theatremakers, in contrast, positively welcome the sociological focus. A consciousness of the social location of their work is part of the doxa of the contemporary arts. There are theatre companies whose mission is to examine the social role of theatre, and this is not seen as incompatible with theatrical practice. One would be hard-pressed to imagine a chemistry lab whose mission included the analysis of the role of chemistry in society. The Arts Council’s regimen of sociological reports played into the field’s consciousness of its own role, even if it never fully embraced the planning process. The openness to sociological study made the contradiction between the Plans’ language and the Council’s practice visible, but it did not erase it. Even true believers in the plans could only be frustrated by this contradiction; they were powerless to rectify it.

There is no reason that the Arts Plans could not have functioned in multiple discourses; arguing that they were addressed upwards is not to say that they were not addressed at practitioners, as well. A properly cognizant view of the field—one un-blinded by the doxa of a particular practice or field-location—ought to be able, not merely to address all parties, but to address them with the same statement. This ought to be the aspiration of any plan that styles itself rational, objective, public and coherent; the point of objective knowledge and standards is that they remain true and useful regardless of a person’s specific position within (or outside of) the field. A plan that was able to bring the same coherence both inside and outside the field would be a truly cognizant one.

I think it is fair to see the plans as an effort to bring about just such a situation. Many of the Plans’ founders and implementers talk about them as a “framework” for thinking about the field. Certainly, the main purpose for this framework was to give a politically palatable rationale for government subsidy that did not devolve into patronage, but the Plans’ recommendations went much farther than would have been necessary for that purpose alone. The Plans’ framers thought that the field’s own operations had need of an organizing framework, and that it was incapable of making one without outside interference. Many policy workers have noted that theatremakers can be unduly conservative and reactionary, even defensive of their turf. (“They’re precious of their kingdom, said one former Department of Arts official.) Sheils, the former ministerial advisor, said that theatremakers had an inability to think about the theatre field as a whole.

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135 Latour and Woolgar, Laboratory Life, 21., who refer to the “relatively frequent perception by scientists that sociologists are engaged in some kind of scholarly muckraking.” They argue that this is partially due to the way that scientists use a reference to social factors as evidence in attacking the credibility of scientific claims with which they disagree.
He said that the problem was often that artists were so set in their own particular ways of working that they were remarkably averse to change. Innovation was for the theatrical piece itself, not for the practice of theatremaking. Ó Briain similarly complained that “the arts sector is so immature, and so intellectually undeveloped in its approach.” He saw a lack of vision and courage on the part of the sector, largely due to its failure to think of and treat itself as a whole. “Any time a theatre company or any aspect of theatre has been in crisis, everyone keeps their head down,” he said. “There’s no courage, because there’s no vision.” Thus, there was a gap into which only the Arts Council could step.

Ó Briain claimed that the field-wide ‘framework for dialogue” provided by the Arts Plans had gone some way towards building this sense of the theatre as a whole (what the next part will call collegiality). The connection between the Plans and the development of a group feeling may not be as direct as Ó Briain would desire, but real connections can be demonstrated in the form of industry groups such as Theatre Forum and the Irish Theatre Institute, which came out of the planning process. These institutions—talking shops, labour unions, conferences, critical journals, and the like—built on a pre-existing sense of commonality. Common political projects, for instance, became conceivable by the end of the planning era in a way that they were not at the beginning of it. There are producers, designers, and technicians with far greater technical skills than was the case fifteen years ago. All of these developments speak of the growing coherence and professionalization of the practice of Irish theatremaking.

And yet, to many of those who led this effort, this work remains incomplete. The Irish theatre has camaraderie but not solidarity; theatremakers do not think of themselves as all undertaking a common project. While more than three-quarters of theatremakers surveyed said that they “know where [their] work fits into the landscape of Irish theatre,” only 5% agree that “the Irish theatre is a coherent whole.” Theatremakers are aware of their niches—of which more below—but they seem to be unconvinced that the sum total of those niches add up to a coherence. There remains a gap between the values that the Plans put forward for the field—coherence, rational development and planning— and those that were

136 Theatre Forum came out of the discussions surrounding the Theatre Review of 1995-1996 that was called for by the first plan. In Dialogues 1996, one can find calls for the creation of “some kind of a national forum” for the development of the field. Theatre Forum was founded shortly after, with that name. See Gorman, ed., Dialogues 1996, 18-20. Said one anonymous contributor, “We may not understand what the term ‘forum’ means … but we have to do it.”

137 Just one small example: in 2007, the government appointed a number of new members of the Arts Council. At that year’s Theatre Forum annual conference, there was a debate over whether or not the community of theatremakers should recommend particular candidates, or at least state which criteria they wished to see considered in selecting them.
already present in the field’s doxa—stability, collegiality, creativity, and so on. The field was more than willing to accept the Plans as part of the necessary system of accountability that comes with government funding, but this is a much lesser matter than allowing the Plans to write their values into the doxa of the field. Doxic values are traditionally taught in childhood (e.g., “sit up straight!”) or at the point of induction of new members into a field (i.e., in education or apprenticeship). The teaching of doxic values by an outside, government authority to adult, established practitioners is not something Bourdieu addresses directly; one would imagine he would expect it to be difficult or near-impossible without a particularly strong method of implementation.

But, unusually, the Council had such a method: its funding power. Perhaps, if the Council had rigorously followed through with its plans in all aspects of its grantmaking, it could have taught the field the value of rational organization and overcome its opposition. But this was simply not possible; the Council and its staff, artists themselves, were in no structural position, and did not have the habitus, to put through such a change. Donlon readily admitted that the Plans were not ‘gospel’ and were never the controlling force behind grant distribution. But ought they have been? I asked Donlon this question particularly with regard to the final product of the 1996 *Theatre Review*, the policy document “Going On.” He came to his answer after some thought:

> With the advantage of hindsight, and hopefully not being too partisan, I think I would argue that it would have been better if the “Going On” framework had carried through the decade following – 1996 to 2006. I do. I think it was coherent, it was understood, [and] it emerged as a consequence of very extensive interaction with the sector.

Specifically, he said, carrying the framework through would have lessened the “confusion, frustration and dismay” that dominated the sector’s relationship with the Council in the years around the turn of the millennium. Ó Briain, too, saw the lack of a “climate of robust intellectual debate” in the arts world as a failure of the Plans.

This is the same aspiration that first animated the idea of the Arts Plan – the desire for coherence, rationality, and logical unity made possible by the Council’s status as the dominant bearer of the field’s economic, cultural, and even sociological capital. If the Council had had the money, the respect of the field, and a good knowledge of the field and what it was doing, it ought to have been able to achieve this aspiration.

In truth, the Council had none of these. Money was always scarce, its position within the field as expert elders was always shaky, and its understanding of the objective conditions of the field and its own power was always limited. This is perfectly appropriate
for a democratic society. "Dealing with the arts is uncomfortable and should remain uncomfortable," said Ó Briain. The Arts Council should not impose its unified vision on the field; but more so, it should not be able to do so, no matter how autonomous from government it is. That is not the logic of a field, even a field dominated by a particular player. And, I think, Council members and staff always knew that and thus never tried to impose a specific agenda directly on the theatrical field.

Given all that, though, there is still an important sense in which the Council's stated policies, particularly its major documents such as the Plans, have had a pivotal influence on the field. Rather than in the sense of edicts to be followed, the statements are respected and studied strategically because of the Council's dominant economic and social power in the field. The Arts Plans may have functioned more as manifestos than blueprints. They have served as important and sought-after markers of destinations and hints of road markings, even if not as step-by-step plans. "Following a rule" is always a particular kind of chosen social action, in any case, and there is good evidence that the plans have been followed, albeit in a more tendentious way. Forty percent of theatremakers surveyed said that the Council's priorities can influence the work they decide to do, while 49% say that they try to "use language that the Arts Council uses in its policy documents" in their applications. Perhaps this last figure would have been higher a few years ago. One (anonymous) longtime observer of the field said that fewer applicants pay attention to the current policy document because it is now too old. But when it came out in 2006, theatremakers all tried to use the language of its goals in their applications. Back then, they said, "we'd all phone each other and say, what one are you doing?"

I would argue that this positioning of the Plans was not only intended but quite wise on the Council's part. It was far more in tune with the actual operation of a practical field like theatre than any attempt at imposition would have been. The Council already stands half-outside the field, and laying claim to a cultural capital (and thus an authority in the field) that it does not possess would only further alienate its clients. Moreover, there is ample precedent for the seemingly clear and unequivocal demands of the Arts Plans to become more of aspirational goals. Consider the way the Council used its own authorizing statute, discussed above. If this thoughtful and aspirational but rather loose approach is an appropriate way to follow statues—which, after all, carry legal force—it is certainly acceptable for policy statements such as the Arts Plans.

The single greatest success of the Arts Plans, then, came in convincing government to allocate more funding to the Council with which to subsidize the field. From 1994, the first year of the first plan, to 2006, when the last plan was shelved, the Council's funding
increased 367%. Even in a time of economic prosperity, that was a remarkable achievement. The second noticeable success of the plan, the development of collegiality in the field (a sense of professionalism, communality, and professional standards) was a (well-guided) derivative effect of that growth. Its other goals were either ignored, not achieved, or fell by the wayside.

Only one question remains. If, in the end, the goal of the planning process was to change the way in which theatremakers practically understood their work, and this could best be done by setting out plans and goals for the profession that were not so much to be implemented as aspired to, why should it have been the Arts Council that did the planning? The Council’s greatest resource is, of course, the money that it allocates to its clients, but I have been able to demonstrate only a few indirect connections between the grants given and its planning objectives. The job of standard-setting for an autonomous field is one that ought to be done by the most senior, respected members of that field; that is, those with the highest social capital or ‘consecration’ within it. It is a sign of the relative lack of autonomy of the Irish theatrical field that this position is held by the Arts Council. When social capital flows from financial capital (even when the two are not identical), the two are not wholly independent, and the fields they mark out—the theatrical field and the economic field more generally—are not truly autonomous vis-à-vis one another.

The scepticism that many theatremakers had for the Arts Plans is, in fact, evidence that the Council’s position in the field was not one that would allow it to set standards. While no other institution has yet emerged that is universally acknowledged to have that cultural authority, there are developments in that direction. Theatre Forum, is starting to run a set of public discussions and conferences that resembles the work carried out during the previous decade by the Theatre Review. However, the collaborative nature of Theatre Forum’s work makes it more difficult to develop a coherent policy. But this, perhaps, is a very healthy thing. It is not just that the Council lacked the cultural capital to create a coherent and comprehensive plan for the field as a whole. The nature of the artistic enterprise is that no entity can ever acquire that kind of capital in the arts. Whatever other

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138 Taking inflation into account, the Council’s budget still rose by 218% in real terms—more than a tripling in twelve years.

139 Significantly, the connections I have been able to show (Theatre Forum, Irish Theatre Magazine, the development of professionalism and collegiality) are all a good step removed from the practice of theatremaking. Certainly this development of the domain of distribution shaped the field and contributed to the development of theatremaking. This is a classic Bourdieusian social action, but the Plans promised far more. The other possible reason that it had to be the Council which took on the job of planning is that the process was so slow and expensive—remember the six-figure, three-year Theatre Review—that few other players in the field could manage it.
faults his description has, Bourdieu’s observation that novelty itself (what he calls ‘youth’) is a central but fleeting value of the field of cultural production. As time goes on, the fresh artistic ideas prized by experimental art work (Bourdieu’s ‘production for producers’) hardens into established movements and trends.\textsuperscript{140} Yesterday’s cultural capital is no predictor of future cultural prospects: in a healthy artistic field, cultural capital decays quickly, and standing in the field can be gained as well as lost. Stability, in itself, is not an artistic value—in fact, it goes against it—yet without stability, coherence is much harder to achieve.

The irony is that the field had no need for the Plans to make any claim to coherence. That simply is not a capital the field particularly respects; had the ideas in the Plan simply been presented merely as helpful suggestions from elders of the field (who happened to have significant economic power behind them), they very well may have been heeded more than they actually were. The imperative towards coherence and comprehensiveness came from political factors wholly external to theatrical practice: the Labour Party’s dispute with Fianna Fáil and the need for the Council to secure steady and politically sustainable increases in its funding. Had the Council played down the Plans’ claims to coherence in talking to Irish theatremakers, yet played them up with regard to politicians, the Plans might have been more successful.

This is the use of different channels of communication for different messages that scientists have long mastered. Such multiple channels do exist in the theatre world, and both theatremakers and policy workers are adept at using them differently. The theatremakers’ survey showed that the Council’s clients are more likely to read industry and Council newsletters rather than formal strategy documents, and they choose face-to-face meetings as their most helpful form of communication with the Council.\textsuperscript{141} If the Council is to play on two different fields—the artistic and the political—it will need to play two different games. In Ireland, policy work’s ambiguous stance between the two fields has not served it well. Had it learned the helpful hypocrisy of the sociologist, the participant observer, the expert insider, it may have better served all those who relied on its leadership and guidance.

\textsuperscript{140} Bourdieu, \textit{Field of Cultural Production}, 47.

\textsuperscript{141} Theatre Forum newsletters were read “regularly” or “considered essential reading” by 68\% of survey respondents; the figure was 71\% for \textit{Irish Theatre Magazine}. In contrast, only 35\% of respondents said that they had read the Arts Council’s latest policy document. When asked what form of feedback they found most helpful from the Council, 55\% named face-to-face meetings with Council members or staff, while only 7\% named the annual funding letter and 10\% said that they had received no helpful feedback at all.
Drama, to Bourdieu, is a less ‘artistic’ art form than poetry or the novel because it lacks their autonomy from general power. But this location of being always-already-compromised is, in fact, where most artists find themselves in the postmodern world. No longer is “recognition by one’s peers” the “sole legitimate profit” of the artistic enterprise.¹⁴² One hopes to have an artistic career that will both allow for creative success and pay the mortgage. This is both a curse and a blessing. We are cursed with the loss of faith in the grand récit that propped up the idea of a self-sufficient, autonomous art, but we are also blessed with the removal of that illusion. Compromised and impure, we are open to the possibility of seeing the reality of our objective conditions and using reflexive and thorough study in order to improve them. Artistic practices can have a real influence—culturally, socially, and politically—through cognizance of their position in the larger social order, not by denying it. But even if it learns to speak bureaucratic or sociological language, a practice does not become a discourse. Even when planned, a field is not logically coherent. Any effort to develop the field needs to take that into account. It is not that planning is impossible or that a practical field cannot be influenced—profoundly—by conscious, informed effort. Rather, expecting theatremakers to treat their work as a logical discourse is a basic category error. Even with understanding, a practice makes its own sense—which is not the sense of the logical plan.

¹⁴² Bourdieu, Field of Cultural Production, 50.
III. The Capitals of Irish Theatremaking

The doxa of the Irish theatre

The previous part examined the Arts Council’s attempts to shape the structure of the Irish theatrical field in the past three decades. As I argued, these efforts were aimed not only at the formal organizational structures supporting Irish theatremaking, but at the way that Irish theatremakers thought about their work, its value, and its location in a larger social context, especially when those thoughts were too fundamental to be articulated. This part goes farther in trying to spell out the basic beliefs constitutive of the shape of the field, which Bourdieu calls doxa. No sociological survey of a practical field could be complete without such a doxic assessment, and no assessment of an effort to transform that field could be complete without examining all the structures that organize theatremaking, both organizational and mental.

The term doxa is a wide one that includes all the unarticulated givens and rules that a neophyte needs to accept into her body in order to fully participate in a practice. This can include taboos, habits, power structures, and beliefs. But in the context of Bourdieu’s larger theories of fields structured by capital, a given field’s most important and defining doxa can be expressed in the same way: capital is valuable and should be sought after. The acceptance of field-specific capitals as values worth pursuing and competing for is the original means by which a potential member enters a field. The next step is the taking on of accepted techniques for the achievement of those values, and differentiating them from others which are less effective or taboo. Particularly in fields like the arts that prize creativity, this next step is considerably weaker than the first. This is certainly the case for Irish theatre.

In attempting to spell out the defining doxa of Irish theatremaking, this part will thus begin by asking the following questions: What are the values that structure the practice? How is it practically intelligible for its participants? Which values does the field see as legitimate to pursue, and which not? A proper answering of these questions will help us to describe not only a field’s doxa but its internal shape, as well. These values are standards of measurement, marking out the terms through which social structure is thought and thus the positions that can be taken up within it.
These questions, if not their application to the arts, are the hereditary province of anthropology, and my techniques in attempting to answer them are borrowed from ethnography. I have lived and worked in the community of Irish theatremakers over the past four years as an occasional freelance director. More systematically, I conducted a series of interviews in 2008 based on an online survey from 2007, with a large number of Irish theatremakers. Both the survey respondents and the interviewees were identified with the help of several industry-wide sources, and represent a rough cross-section of the professional Irish theatre in terms of age, position in the field, and geographic location. In the years 2004-2007, I had worked with and alongside more than a few of my interviewees. I knew many of them, and almost all of them knew (or at least knew of) me. As many noted, Ireland is a small place, and the theatrical field is a tight and collegial one. My sources, then, were not informants but friends and colleagues with whom I had built up a rapport over the years. This kind of participant observation has, since Garfinkel, been seen by anthropologists as a methodological necessity if an observer is to make sense of a field in a way that does justice to those who live and work in it. To be sure, many contemporary theorists have pointed out the paradoxical position of the participant observer, including Bourdieu himself. While the close observation that can only come from participation may be necessary for an ethnographically sound sketch of a practice’s doxa, it is not sufficient to ensure that the sketch is accurate. In particular, Bourdieu stresses, it is no substitute for scientific reflexivity and a de-personalized awareness of the observer’s own place in both the studied field and the academic one. In what follows, I will try to include these factors.

Together with my archival work and experience in the Irish theatre, the survey and interviews have allowed me to sketch an image of the Irish theatrical field from the perspective of those who have made decisions on its behalf. While the shape and boundaries of the field are of course an internal subject of debate, my research suggests a practice with noteworthy coherences of both psychological and organizational structures,

1 Since 2008, I have also done some freelance consulting and evaluation work for the Arts Council.

2 The sources used include Theatre Forum and Irish Theatre Institute (ITI), two research and advocacy bodies for the field, the Irish Theatre Handbook, the Arts Council and its records, and the Association of Theatre Directors Ireland. There were 92 respondents to the survey and 31 interviewees. Interviews were done in person and averaged about 60 minutes, though some went considerably longer. All theatremakers interviewed were offered anonymity and thus go unnamed in the text. Current and former Arts Council employees and other government officials are occasionally identified by name when their words are used with permission. To preserve gender neutrality, I will use the (slightly ungrammatical) singular ‘they’ in referring to interviewees whom I do not identify. The bibliography contains a full list of interviews conducted, and the appendix presents a more complete listing of the field.

3 Bourdieu, "Participant Objectivation."
centered around a trio of values or capitals. Of course, I do not claim that these three capitals exhaust the motivations and aims that theatremakers have for the work they do. These motivations are often particular and idiosyncratic, and are often therefore more powerful. What I am claiming is that these are the capitals valorized by the field. The extent to which those values are determinative for particular theatremakers is an open and individual question.

This fieldwork, coupled with a data-based approach, places my investigation between the ever-nearing disciplinary poles of cultural anthropology and sociology, a division that Bourdieu calls unnecessary and "scientifically damaging." However, in what follows, I want to make only a highly qualified claim to scientific objectivity. While data, ethnography and reflexive self-awareness can moderate and contextualize bias, they cannot eliminate it. Reflexivity, which I have tried to practice in this essay, may help us see our own perspective, but it cannot set us down at an Archimedean point from which we are able to panoptically survey the whole field. Foucault has persuasively argued that the human sciences' self-presentation as sciences had less to do with any objectively scientific character to their inquiry and more to do with the power of the prevailing scientific episteme at their founding. In Bourdieusian terms, such objectivity is a form of capital valued as a historical legacy of the intellectual *doxa* in which these fields were raised.

That episteme has—or at least should have—moved on. There is no need to make an impossible claim for pure objectivity for the present sketch of the field. Doing so would not only ignore fundamental anthropological lessons learned since Malinowski, but would go against a basic teaching of Wittgenstein: whenever one uses language, one is always already a participant in an existing language game. The claim that is required—and one that I hasten to make—is that I have made all possible efforts to be fair, comprehensive, and open-minded in my dealings with my informants and to listen to them as fully as possible.

To call the Irish theatre a 'field,' as I do, is not to call it a static or mechanical whole; it is to argue that it is a site of practice, identifiable by those who work in it or observe it. Bourdieusian fields are the sites of struggle over actors' positions and the

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5 Foucault sees "the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences" as some of the "modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), 208. In questioning the bases of these modes of inquiry, Foucault is specific that he is not calling for "a sceptical or relativistic refusal of all verified truth. What is questioned is the way in which knowledge circulates and functions, its relations to power. In short, the *regime du savoir*" (212).
meanings and values attached to them. While it is not hard for observers or practitioners to define an Irish theatre field, only 5% of those surveyed agreed that the Irish theatre was a "coherent whole." More than 75%, however, said that they knew where their work fit into the 'landscape' of Irish theatre. This is what we should expect: the point of a practical field is not that it obeys systematic and discernable rules, but that practitioners are able to find a position and a means of going on within it. This practical intelligibility, which this part attempts to map, differs in kind from discursive logic, and there is no contradiction in a functional field that is not logically coherent.

Nonetheless, as I argued in part one, there are basic incompatibilities between formal ideas of social structure in the cultural field and the reality suggested by an ethnography of theatre that can shed light on flaws in Bourdieu's theory. This will be fleshed out in the conclusion, but for now, let me suggest that in thinking of Bourdieu's metaphor of the champ (field), we should have in mind not so much a solid, level piece of land on which games can be played but a force field, a network of pushes and pulls that can be warped and deformed by actions within it. Such a field is not a fixed given, but it has a real and consequential existence in a way that the network of Latour's ANT does not. The theatrical field sketched by this part's ethnography should be understood in this light.

This sketch reveals a shape very different from Bourdieu's diagram of the French literary field of the 1960s. As described above, Bourdieu does not engage with the debate over subsidy or a contemporary concept of theatre, instead treating 'drama' as a species of literary (and thus not performative) production. Bourdieu's chart describes its field on the basis of the two axes of economic capital and social capital; that is, on the basis of financial wealth and formal prestige. But the true field-specific capital of the autonomous artistic field is not these but rather cultural capital, which is seen as inversely proportional to economic capital.

As numerous commentators have noticed, this describes not so much the whole situation of the French arts in the 1870s (or the 1960s) as the specifically Modernist conception of it. As I have noted, the omnipresence of subsidy problematizes the opposition between cultural and economic capital. While prestige still operates, my interviews show that it does not do so in a manner that can be measured by a single variable, as Bourdieu seems to suggest. Nor is either capital necessarily opposed to economic wealth, certainly not in the context of subsidy.

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6 For more on this survey, see above, p. 116, note 62.
7 See Bourdieu, "Field of Cultural Production."
8 See, for example, Osborne, The Structure of Modern Cultural Theory.
My argument here is that such a model is too simple to describe the practical basis of Irish theatremaking, and that a more detailed model may suggest more about the conditions under which theatremaking actually operates. It is more helpful, I claim, to think of not one capital specific to and definitional of the field of cultural production, but rather a number of them, all specific to and definitional of the field. This part will propose three, and show that the relationship between them, and between them and economic capital, is both complex and hotly debated. While it is very easy to rank Irish theatre companies according to their level of economic subsidy—and practitioners regularly do so—it is much harder to rank them on the basis of prestige or reputation, and indeed, theatremakers are not able to consistently do so when asked. Individual practitioners respect some companies more than others, certainly, but these preferences are stylistic and idiosyncratic and cannot be plotted on a single line. Nor, in the few cases where there appears to be field-wide respect for the cultural importance of a particular company, is that company necessarily on the poor end of the wealth spectrum, as Bourdieu suggests. In fact, it is more likely than not to be one of the richer companies. Artistic importance seems to be at least as much aligned with money as it is opposed to it. This might be what one would hope to see from a subsidized system: subsidy should flow towards the best quality work, which also garners the most respect. In addition, as I argued in the introduction, subsidy fundamentally alters the relationship of economic capital with other, field-specific capitals.

In arguing that the Irish theatre field does not have the shape that Bourdieu expected, I do not mean to conclude that does not have a shape that can be described in Bourdieusian terms. For all my criticism of his logic, I do believe that his theorizing provides us with the most helpful tools available to answer questions about the social place of cultural practices such as the arts. As his frequent collaborator, Loïc Wacquant, wrote: "An invitation to think with Bourdieu is of necessity an invitation to think beyond Bourdieu, and against him whenever required." This is such a case.

In this part, I will spell out three structuring values—capitals—that I have identified through my interviews and research: funding, development, and collegiality. It is not hard to see a parallel between these three and Bourdieu’s economic, cultural, and social capitals, respectively. I would discourage such an identification, though, as it conceals at least as much as it reveals. For Bourdieu, the economic is the least field-specific form of capital at work in the arts; its power signifies the lack of field autonomy. Cultural capital, in contrast, is specific to the artistic field, and social capital appears in many fields but cannot be

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transferred between them. But collegiality and development are capitals respected in many fields within Irish society, whereas subsidy is almost wholly unique to the arts. In addition, the three capitals I identify are nowhere near as independent as the Bourdieusian parallel might suggest. The possession of one capital may facilitate the others; it need not stand opposed to it. Nor does the possession of any particular one of these capitals mean that its holder is less fully artistic, or less fully theatrical. Rather, I would argue that the actions theatremakers take in pursuit of these values form the tensions which structure the practice of theatremaking. This need not be understood as combat: to use a slightly different metaphor, these values are the three sets of support beams that make up the field’s structural scaffolding. After some necessary preliminaries about who (or what) holds and pursues these values, they will be discussed in order from most to least explicit.

Commercial and Stadttheater companies

In describing the theatrical field, this essay follows the lead of virtually all of my interviewees in largely setting aside Ireland’s few unsubsidized, commercial theatremakers. There are several reasons for this. First, commercial theatre per se is extremely limited in Ireland, as there is too small a market for it to be profitable. While there are a number of commercial venues in larger cities that receive little or no subsidy, these make few forays into theatre besides the occasional Christmas panto, relying much more on popular music, stand-up comedy, and celebrity visits. The Irish Theatre Handbook of 2007 lists eleven ‘commercial producers,’ but this is an overestimate; the bulk of these do not produce theatre in Ireland on anything like a regular basis. Four are the producers of these sorts of commercial venues, three are theatre service organizations, one is a film company that has not done a play for nearly a decade, one is a UK and US-based producer of musicals that uses Ireland for tryouts, and one produces Riverdance around the world. That leaves only one commercial producer, Lane Productions, which until recently operated a 220-seat theatre with a 75-seat upstairs studio at Andrews Lane in central Dublin. Though Lane Productions was always a profit-making enterprise, it often worked in partnership with subsidized theatremakers, and productions at the Andrews Lane theatre were generally seen

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10 Successful shows from subsidized theatre companies will sometimes tour to these venues, particularly when they need a larger audience, but the field gives credit to the producing company, not the receiving venue, as the relevant theatremakers.

11 These venues are the Gaiety, Tivoli and Olympia Theatres in Dublin, and the Cork Opera House. There are a number of other receiving venues, e.g. the Helix in Dublin, which do not produce work of their own and are thus not listed, as well as the odd commercial music venue that occasionally hosts well-known large-scale productions such as Riverdance.
as an accepted part of the theatrical field. In 2006, however, Lane Productions shut down the Andrews Lane space to focus on larger, more commercially viable work in Ireland and abroad. This is a small but discernable pattern: those who seek to turn a profit from the Irish theatre find that economic necessity takes them either into film, music, or the kind of large-scale productions that can be supported only by the West End or Broadway. That is, commercial producers like Lane tend to leave the Irish theatrical field. This is not to say that subsidized theatremakers do not occasionally collaborate with commercial theatremakers or that the possibility of commercial success does not on occasion draw theatremakers out of the Irish field, but it should be acknowledged that this is an exit, and a rare one at that. Commercial success—the actual turning of a financial profit—is not a value internal to the field of theatremaking (as will be discussed below).

Second, and perhaps for that reason, the field strongly recognizes the distinction between commercial and subsidized theatremaking. When I asked subsidized theatremakers who their colleagues were, none mentioned those who worked in the commercial sector. None aspired to commercial success, and virtually all thought of the commercial theatre as engaging in a different sort of enterprise than their own. I could find no sense in which subsidized theatremakers compared themselves to the commercial sector. This was even the case with those venue managers who booked both subsidized and commercial work in their venues. The theatremakers I interviewed did not begrudge commercial companies their success and were certainly not averse to taking on employment from these companies in order to supplement their income, but it was seen as ‘outside work’ like voiceover recording for radio, television, or teaching: economically helpful side projects that matched their skill set but were part of a different practice, not one that is integrative to the theatrical field in Schatzki’s sense.

I should note that, as I described in the introduction, this essay focuses away from Ireland’s two largest subsidized companies—the Abbey and Gate—for two principal reasons. First, this decision reflects the field’s sense of itself. Almost no interviewees mentioned the work done at the Abbey or the Gate as that which they aspire to. The two occupy a very different position from any other company: they are far larger and more stable, producing perhaps six to eight productions a year in their own dedicated venues, whereas most others struggle to produce two in rented facilities. In Mitteleuropean terms, their position in the field makes the Abbey and Gate function much more like Stadttheater,
while every other company in the country functions more like a freie Gruppe.\textsuperscript{12} Second, this choice is a response to the particular sociological concerns that animate this essay.\textsuperscript{13} The theoretical questions that the Irish theatre raises with regard to conventional cultural theory have to do with cognizance and planning, the degree and means by which practical actors can understand, articulate, and make use of their own position. They are the questions that sent me to the Irish theatre as a test case. These questions are more properly addressed to the subsidized sector, in particular the smaller subsidized sector, where the Council’s effort to shape the field by policy and in response to research has been directed. Commercial companies are subject to different pressures and tensions than their subsidized counterparts, and even the two largest of the subsidized companies have been less influenced by Arts Council policies and the dynamics of theatremaking than their smaller colleagues.\textsuperscript{14} This essay does not set aside the handful of commercial companies and the Abbey and Gate because they are unimportant or irrelevant, but because their position is distinct, separable from others, and not directly relevant to the sociological questions at hand.\textsuperscript{15}

I am not suggesting that financial rewards as such are irrelevant to theatremakers. On the contrary, they are very important. But the social value of money, and its ability to shape the theatrical field, is not organized on a singular axis. Money can be a sign of any of the three capitals I set out below. While Arts Council funding, invitations to tour a

\textsuperscript{12} Druid is the one company that sits on the balance; though very successful, it has only a very small theatre of their own (90 seats) and produce a much lower quantity of shows than the Abbey or Gate. Its work is also much more oriented toward touring, such that their relationship to Galway is not as tight as that of the Gate or Abbey’s to Dublin.

\textsuperscript{13} It also reflects methodological concerns. It is difficult to convince the leaders of Ireland’s two largest theatre companies to sit down for an hour-long interview, and it is harder still to convince them to speak candidly. Memoirs such as Barnes, \textit{Plays and Controversies: Abbey Theatre Diaries 2000-2005} lend strength to my position that these large companies function more like \textit{Stadttheater}; their concerns are certainly very different from those that appear in my interviews. The relationship between the commercial companies and the Abbey and Gate, though, is one this essay has not been able to explore. One could make the argument that these large companies, for whom large-scale work is a more feasible possibility, would compare themselves to commercial producers in a way that others would not. Further research on this point might be illuminating.

\textsuperscript{14} The Abbey’s funding decisions are far more insulated from the policy work than any other company’s. Many of my Council-employee interviewees said that they would be powerless to influence the Abbey’s grant even if they would try to. The Gate, though well funded, is not reliant on its subsidy in the way most other theatre companies are. Many interviewees noted that the Gate’s grant represented a far smaller percentage of the theatre’s total income than was the case for any other company.

\textsuperscript{15} In terms of reflexivity, I should also speculate that my own position in the field—as a young director working in Dublin without a well-established position—makes me more sensitive to those who have concerns similar to my own. My distaste for commercial theatre, which Bourdieu would connect to my habitus as the child of educated professionals, likely also makes a contribution.
successful new play abroad, and increased box office receipts for a restaging of a classic all confer social as well as economic capital, they do so in fundamentally different ways.

Who are the actors?

It may not immediately be clear who are the social actors taking up positions in the theatremaking field. Particularly for those in continental Europe, the Irish use of the term ‘theatre company’ can be confusing. The term does not denote a permanently employed ensemble of actors; instead, it should be understood in the sense of a small business. Almost all Irish productions are made by one (or, occasionally, two) of these companies. Those which receive government funding have a rented office, a website, and a paid staff of three or fewer. (Aside from the Abbey and Gate, no company has a full-time staff of more than five.) Those legally incorporated as a company limited by guarantee — a requirement for larger Arts Council grants — have a board of directors and hold a formal annual financial audit. Most do not own a performance venue, and none has a stable group of actors who are in the company’s year-round employ.

Almost every Irish company was founded by a charismatic individual who continues to direct its development and serves as its face to the world. Less frequently, groups of two to five fill this role of founder; over the years, members of such groups tend to drop away leaving one founder as the company’s head.¹⁶ For the younger or more newly established companies, this individual is likely to be a director and the only person to devote attention to the group on a regular basis (though it is not uncommon for one other person, a producer or actor normally, to work alongside them). Few directors of younger companies receive any kind of compensation. In fact, many artistic directors of emerging companies insist on paying all the freelancers who work on the company’s productions before they will draw any money for themselves.

The majority of venues around the country are managed separately, renting out their space to local or touring companies. Only the Gate and Abbey own substantial performance spaces of their own.¹⁷ While the Arts Council has pushed in the last few years to ask venues to adopt theatre companies as ‘resident’ in their venue, this has not, thus far, proved particularly successful.

¹⁶ This was the case, for instance, for Lynne Parker of Rough Magic and Raymond Keane of Barabbas.

¹⁷ The two exceptions to this are the aforementioned Druid, and Dublin’s Focus Theatre, which owns a ramshackle 50-seat venue in a residential neighbourhood.
As only one company has a regular acting ensemble (the physical theatre company Blue Raincoat, in Sligo), virtually all Irish actors work as freelancers, contracting with individual companies for short periods for particular productions, though of course many freelancers work regularly with a few companies. This culture of freelancing serves both to bind the field together as a social unit (everyone is a current, former, or potential colleague of everyone else) and establish field-wide standards of operating practice and artistic quality—which are very important point given the rapid circulation of personnel and short (3- to 5-week) rehearsal times. These are the values that I will describe below under the rubric of collegiality. In such a culture, though, freelancers are not in a position to set the general terms under which their work will be made, or even the overall tone of a particular production. Breaking out of conventions—especially organizational conventions such as the script and the mechanics of the rehearsal room—is structurally more difficult for a freelance artist.

Those who wish to make theatre in their own way, then, especially those who wish to work without a script as generative matrix, need to set up a company of their own. One established director explained to me: “For young directors, there wasn’t a good way in. That was the only way to create work for yourself or to apply for funding—to set up a company.” This was a major reason for the rapid growth in the number of companies in the 1990s and early 2000s. Because of this, there is an important sense in which companies, especially smaller and newer ones, are legal fictions that allow the directors at their centre to make work. And this is reflected in the confusion as to who, precisely, is the recipient of the capitals described below: a company or its leader. In what follows, it is good to remember that the line where an individual starts and a company stops is rarely clear. Sociologically, if not legally, it is more accurate to say that the founding artists own their companies rather than that they work for them.

In the survey, the majority of those who described themselves as theatremakers were a full-time employee of (46%) or held primary responsibility for (19%) a theatre company. The people responsible for the structuring choices of Irish theatremaking—those who make the decisions who shape the field—generally garner their ability to do so through their association with theatre companies. Those in charge of other powerful organizations in the field—the Arts Council, certain support and lobbying groups, for instance—can also have an impact on the field’s shape, but for theatre artists, forming a company represents the most efficient means both to make work in their own way and shaping the broader field

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18 The members of Blue Raincoat’s ensemble do not receive a full-time wage.
Most Irish companies, then, are means to an end, tools thetremakers use to get desired work done. But it is also the case that the theatre company is such a central tool that it itself participates in and shapes the theatremaking practice, regardless of those in charge of it. In the context of scientific research, Latour and Woolgar have helpfully shown how key tools not only facilitate or permit scientist’s work, but shape or even determine the parameters through which it will be carried out.¹⁹ Latour tends to see these tools as physical reifications of well-established scientific truths, and his Actor-Network Theory insists on treating these objects as full actors in the same sense that the scientists who use them are. They are both actors and network nodes. Very similar claims could be made about the Irish theatre company; it is an (organizationally) reified technology developed over time whose form and ways of working have a structurally significant influence in the practice of theatremaking. A typical mid-sized subsidized theatre company consists of one director in an office and a producer or administrator at the next desk surrounded by files. When this is the main organizational ‘machine’ responsible for production, it encourages certain patterns in the making of theatre. Collaboration, for instance, is always mediated and subservient to this central office’s control: staging and administrative direction are equated, scripts (or actors with whom to devise) are seen as inputs and productions as outputs; and so on.

The value of this structure has been questioned. On the reasoning that this facilitation of the director’s work is the sole point of a company and in the context of severe budget cuts, the Arts Council has recently proposed the idea of a ‘production hub,’ a central organization and office that could facilitate the work of multiple directors more cost-effectively than if each had a company, office, and administrator of their own. While a number of administrators and younger directors told me that they were encouraged by the idea, more established theatremakers were, as a rule, aghast. One even claimed that if forced to give up their company, they would leave the business entirely. The Arts Council’s initiative ignores the fact that the company setup is not simply an administrative tool used by the field but a generative structure that forms it.

Indeed most artistic directors are quite defensive about their companies, and identify themselves strongly with them. One interviewee, the head of one of Ireland’s most prominent and established physical theatre companies, told me:

Yes. I don’t get it when other, younger people say, ah, there are too many companies, too many offices, too many administrators.

¹⁹ Latour and Woolgar, Laboratory Life, 51: “The final diagram or curve thus provides the focus of discussion about properties of the substance. The intervening material activity and all aspects of what is often a prolonged and costly process are bracketed off in discussions about what the figure means.”
Because for me, it's like my identity. I need my manager. I need my board. [They're] what gives us our strength .... If I'm going to grow as a company, I need that.

This deep, passionate link between the person and the company ("it's like my identity") was remarkably common. Another director of a company, perhaps fifteen years younger and considerably less established than the one quoted above, complained to me about what he had heard from the Arts Council:

They actually said there were too many companies being funded ....
It's like saying there are too many artists. It's crazy.

This of course is not true; companies are not artists, nor need companies and artists multiply or divide proportionally to one another. The argument for production hubs is not that too many artists are being funded, but that too many administrators are—which, in the context of limited funds, means that fewer artists are being supported than could otherwise be. The nervousness and fear that theatremakers show at the prospect of the decentralization of the company idea shows that companies hold a basic structural function in the field, and do not simply facilitate a director's work. Certainly, directors have worked hard over the years to build their companies and seek to defend them. But even more so, directors identify with their companies and claim they need them in order to do their work. The line between the company and its leader is not just structurally imprecise but willingly occluded.²⁰ The ambiguity as to who the social actors are in this field—theatremakers or their companies—is irreducibly ambiguous.

I will return to the company/individual distinction below in the discussion of niche. At this point, though, it is important to note that because of this identification, the capitals that structure relationships between positions held by organizations also (implicitly) structure relationships between people. They may be professionals, but theatremakers take this personally. If we are to take Schatzki's ideas of the socially-created self seriously, we should expect nothing less.

**Funding**

The most obvious and immediately apparent capital that can be used to arrange the Irish theatre on a linear axis is government subsidy. A full 78% of those surveyed agreed

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²⁰ It should also be noted that this link stops with the company's director. It is rare and difficult for a company to change its artistic director—only the Stadttheater-like Gate and Abbey have done so without problems, another sign of the identification between a company and its founder. Administrators and producers, however, routinely move from company to company as needed, and this does not seem to have a negative impact on the company's brand identity.
that there was a “clear difference” between rich and poor companies (compared with only 45% who saw a “clear difference” between mainstream and fringe companies). The annual analysis of Arts Council grants put out by Theatre Forum, the industry’s advocacy organization, is its most often-requested document, and annual grant decisions are occasionally reported in major newspapers. Virtually all interviewees were precisely aware not only how much subsidy their company received from the Arts Council (many could cite the exact number of euro) but also where this placed them in relationship to other companies.

It is hard to overstate the economic importance of Arts Council funding both for theatre companies that wish to do work at a professional level and theatremakers who wish to sustain themselves in the business. More than 60% of survey respondents said that over half of their company’s income comes from public funding, and 26% said they received more than three-quarters of their company’s income from the government. For nearly everyone in the field, producing theatre without government subsidy while still paying staff is impossible. Average incomes in the theatre sector are also quite low. A 2005 study found that the mean gross annual income for a theatre practitioner was a mere €13,383. For performing artists, that figure drops to €8737, well below the poverty line. A number of my interviewees expressed their “difficulty” or “frustration” in thinking so much about the Arts Council, but they felt they had little choice, as “they are the main funders.”

Intentionally, the survey did not define these terms. Interestingly, this difference was exaggerated among Dubliners. 84% of survey respondents from the capital perceived a clear difference between rich and poor companies, while only 40% noted such a difference between mainstream and fringe companies. Among those outside County Dublin, 68% agreed that the rich/poor distinction was clear and 50% said the same concerning the mainstream/fringe one. It is possible that extremities of wealth differential are more visible in Dublin, home to both the best and least funded companies. It is also possible that the term “fringe” was interpreted geographically by non-Dubliners, though this did not appear to be the case in my interviews.

Tania Banotti, interview with the author, 6 February 2008.

Hibernian Consulting, "Socio-Economic Conditions," 78-82. These figures may be slightly confusing. The Hibernian survey noted that most workers in the theatre sector had a ‘main specialist area’ (acting, design, or technical work, for example), but often earned income both from within the theatre field in a capacity outside of their main specialist area, and, additionally, from sources wholly outside the theatre. The numbers quoted in the main text are the report’s figures on theatre workers’ income from within the theatre, from any source. If non-theatre income sources are added in, the median income of the average Irish theatre worker nearly doubles to €24,728, and the median income of the average performing artist nearly triples to €21,909. This reflects the economic importance of film, radio, television, and commercial work, particularly for performers. All of these figures are for 2004. For comparison, the average per-person income in Ireland for 2004 was €18,773. Central Statistics Office, "Eu Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)." (Dublin: 2005).
Emerging practitioners who do not yet have public subsidy often create productions on a “profit share” basis, with all staff working for free and any small profits being shared among the group. In most instances, not only are there no profits to share but the originator needs to make use of their own funds to cover non-staff expenses. While such an arrangement might make sense for an emerging practitioner just out of college, it is not sustainable for the long term. Both a company and an individual require Council funding to make viable careers.

Almost all interviewees described their financial status with respect to the Arts Council and other companies as their place “on the funding ladder.” It is a telling metaphor. A ladder is essentially one-dimensional and has a clear direction; it is a near-perfect visual metaphor for the mathematical vector. On a ladder, it is very easy to see who is above you and who below, and height is a clear metaphor for worth. A ladder also represents a difficult and precarious climb; no one talks about the funding staircase. In particular, it is dangerous and awkward to stop on the ladder, particularly if there are others coming up behind you.

Specifically, it is the ‘funding’ rather than the ‘money ladder’ that theatremakers wish to climb. Though it seems that one’s position on the funding ladder can be expressed in terms of currency, the matter is not so simple. Funding confers social status as well as financial benefit; it is in fact a hybrid of Bourdieu’s economic and social capital, a form of consecration via money. My interviews suggest that it is the social status of climbing the funding ladder, not money as such, which is the value recognized in the practice’s doxa. This perhaps surprising finding can be shown in a number of ways.

First, though most companies receive the bulk of their income in the form of an Arts Council grant, almost all have other significant income streams: box office, local authorities, private sponsorship, other government sources, and so on. These additional sources are both substantial and unevenly distributed to the extent that they should, in theory, change the ordering of companies on a strict rich-poor axis. And yet, they do not affect the field’s perception of a company’s place on the funding ladder. Few know the exact amount their own company receives from these other sources and virtually none are aware of what other companies receive. A company with meager Council grants but substantial ‘other’ wealth would still be considered “poor” in terms of funding. Those of my interviewees whose companies received substantial non-Arts Council subsidy reported that they saw themselves as ‘below’ their competitors who received more Arts Council money.

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24 One interviewee who had a small company of their own told me that all of the last 14 shows which their company produced were on a profit-share basis. “Only in the last two did people actually get paid.”
on the funding ladder, even if those competitors received less money in subsidy overall. Even those who receive funding from the Arts Council under non-theatrical categories (music, for instance, or children’s programming) complain that, socially speaking, a euro of their subsidy valued less than a euro of ‘proper’ theatre subsidy. The extreme case is the few commercial companies that operate in Ireland without subsidy. Not a single interviewee compared their position in the field to any of these companies. The commercial companies simply have no place on the ladder at all.

Arts Council funding is financially valuable in a way that is possible, though difficult, to replicate but symbolically valuable in an irreplaceable way. Position on the funding ladder represents a company’s perceived worth in the eyes of the State, the ultimate consecrating authority. While there is furious debate as to how the Council awards its support, there is little or no debate about the Council’s right to serve as a primary vehicle for authoritative state support. Certainly, it is hard to separate out the social status conferred by such recognition from the long-term financial commitment implied by it; the one is seen to imply the other, and thus cultivating the Council’s good opinion is both smart politics and savvy business. But there are other sources of funding which can be as stable as Council subsidy—association with a university, local government, or bank—and while they are actively pursued, they do not carry with them the admiration and status of Council funding. The Council’s authority that allows it to legitimately set the funding ladder is not seriously questioned, either within the field or without. The Council’s funding list is not just a form of state support for the arts, but an ideological state apparatus in Althusser’s sense that, perhaps surprisingly, is yet to be undermined.

One effect of funding’s function as social legitimacy is that the ordering on the funding ladder is not quite so simple as it might at first appear; there are certain cases in which the monetary value of a grant does not directly translate to a position on the ladder. A company may choose to ask for less funding—as Barabbas did in 2001 when one of its three founding members decided to leave—without a short-term lowering of position on the ladder. (However, should the company prove unable to raise their grant back to the

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25 This may seem to be a question of the comparability and availability of data, but that is questionable. Lists of Arts Council grant decisions are made publicly available every year while other sources of funding are far rarer, far harder to track down, and (it is thought) far less generally available to all companies on an equal basis. But other grants—from city and county governments, for instance—are matters of public record, and they do not appear to be anywhere near as influential as the Arts Council.

26 In Foucaultian terms, this is an expression of the pastoral power of the state and its authority over the “production of truth.” Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” 214.

27 Raymond Keane, interview with the author, 1 December 2008.
previous level, its position on the ladder would fall.) Moreover, as noted, other funds given by the Arts Council, such as individual travel and training grants, do not seem to have any social status attached to them. Few theatremakers knew who had received them, though the information is just as publicly available as the Council’s larger grant decisions.  

Other sources of government funding also proved to have very different social statuses. Most of the theatre companies that emerged in the 1980s and early 1990s were funded not through the Arts Council but through a training scheme to reduce the unemployment rolls organized by FÁS, the Irish government’s jobs authority. This funding could be reasonably generous and, because it was linked to the number of trainees taken on, could support large-cast plays that were impossible for all but the largest of the Arts Council’s clients. Receipt of these grants, however, was considered “embarrassing” by many theatremakers; though it enabled work to be made, it had no intrinsic link to the theatrical field and thus carried no capital within it.

One interesting question is the status of touring grants as social capital. Until 1999, the Arts Council awarded grants for the touring of existing shows under separate cover from the standard annual funding grants, though both were announced in the same document (the Council’s annual report). It is difficult to gauge the social importance of these grants through interviews ten years after the fact, but they do not seem to have formed a part of the field’s funding ladder, nor do they appear to have formed an alternative ladder. This may be because such grants are highly erratic. While the standard grants show a pattern of halting but regular growth with few cuts (as shown in many of the graphs in the previous part), the tour grants show wide fluctuation: during the 1990s, it was not at all unusual for a company to receive a substantial touring grant one year and no such grant the following, a pattern that would have been impossible for standard grants.

With the exception of Druid, which received a touring grant in every year of the 1990s, there seemed to be no obvious relationship between touring grants and standard grants. Over the course of the 1990s, a number of groups received touring grants that had never received revenue grants (some, but not all, of these companies were from Northern Ireland). A few received both, but received more in touring funding than they did in revenue funding. Others received touring grants totalling 10–45% of their revenue funding for that decade. The largest group of companies, however, received no touring grants at all, or only very small ones.

Though a few companies did seem to receive fairly reliable, though not increasing, touring funding over that decade (Druid and Red Kettle), it would be impossible to draw much of a status ladder on the basis of this data. Red Kettle, for instance, received touring funds every year in the 1990s except 1994 and 1995. This gap, though, seemed to have no impact on its steady climb up the funding ladder, from Ir£41,000 in 1991 to Ir£139,500 in 1999. The company’s slowest year of funding growth during this time was in fact 1996, when it received only a 5.15% increase (from Ir£91,100 to Ir£97,000). This was the same year its touring funding was restored to the tune of Ir£40,000. If touring subsidy was part of the funding ladder, we should not expect to see this pattern.

At the 2009 Theatre Forum annual conference in the midst of an international financial crisis, delegates were encouraged to get over this sense of embarrassment and to accept funding from whatever source it could come from.
The social importance of funding can be most clearly seen, however, in the different statuses accorded to the Council’s different funding schemes. For most of its existence, the Arts Council has offered grants in response to annually written grant applications from organizations (and, to a lesser extent, individuals). Beginning at the time of the Arts Plans, though, there was a growing concern that this approach was not sufficiently tailored to the needs of every client, and thus multiple ‘streams’ of funding were created. The biggest innovation was the introduction of ‘project’ grants that were intended to fund once-off productions. Traditional ‘revenue’ grants, in contrast, were intended to provide annual subsidy for an organization. Such distinctions, though, have never been hard-and-fast: most small companies only produce one production a year; a larger project grant can easily be larger than a smaller revenue grant; and it is generally thought that a project grant is a stepping-stone to a revenue grant in years to come. While documents always refer to this system as a means of tailoring funding schemes for different needs, practitioners (as well as Council employees, in my interviews) have always regarded it as a “tiered” structure, with project grants holding the lowest tier.

When, in 2005, the Council introduced new upper tiers into the system in a way that was seen by many in the field as an opaque imposition, there was an outcry. The objection was not that the Council ought not have introduced these tiers, but that it should have developed an open process to apply for them. Ascending to a higher tier neither implies nor promises increased subsidy: some second-tier clients receive more money per year than some first-tier ones. But it was immediately accepted by the field that the new tier was a valuable status, a higher rung on the funding ladder. Its allocation, then, functions in the manner that funding does, and with funding’s incumbent status. As many in the field believe that there are certain democratic principles on which the Council’s funding decisions should rest (fairness, transparency, respect for excellence, and so on), it follows that decisions regarding tiering should rest on the same principles, even when no money is involved.

When I asked theatremakers why they valued a position on the higher tier, they were often taken aback by the question. The most common response was that a higher status was

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30 Project grants first appeared in 1990 as something of a rarity, but grew far more common during the Arts Plan years. In 1991, for example, there were 4 project grants and 23 revenue grants (simply listed as “grants”) given in the theatre sector. By 1999, the number of revenue grants (now called “operating” or “regional”) had inched up to 26, but the number of project grants had tripled to 12.

31 The upper tier was known as “Regularly Funded Organizations,” or RFOs, as opposed to “Annual Funding” (AF) clients. The Council granted RFO status to 77 organizations across all art forms, 18 of which were in the theatre field.
a better, though still imperfect, promise of stable and predictable future subsidy, thus facilitating longer-range planning. When I told them that, based on data, a higher tier promised no such thing (or when they came to this conclusion on their own based on events at the time) they often responded that, in that case, perhaps the upper-tier status was not so valuable. Nonetheless, 53% of theatremakers surveyed said that they would like to receive funding on the highest tier, even though the Arts Council specifically argues that such a tier is inappropriate for most companies because of the level of monitoring involved.

Most theatremakers I spoke with were visibly uncomfortable discussing the social importance of funding. They would acknowledge it, but it was considered embarrassing to discuss in a way that the simple economics of theatre was not. Much of this tension was expressed in terms of the theatremakers’ relationship with the Arts Council. The language interviewees used to describe these relationships was often familial, and specifically parental. This comes, I would argue, from a combination of the opacity of the Council’s reasoning, the desire for theatremakers not to be seen as competing with one another (see collegiality, below), and, to a lesser extent, the general social opprobrium attached to any public discussion relating to money. It is encouraged, I would argue, by the Council’s need to claim disinterest, and thus its reluctance to speak to individual theatremakers directly and simply.

The result of this is a psychologically unhealthy relationship, which emerges in metaphors and jokes that Freud would have recognized. Interviewees talked about what they could do to make the Council “like” them, about the work they had to do to “maintain the relationship.” Some saw funding as an “expression of love,” though the overt use of this language often drew a quick laugh. Theatre makers talk about the Council as guardian and authority figure. One said that their company was “quite well looked after” by the Council but also described the link as “kind of a father relationship.” This is not normally seen as a healthy situation.

One interviewee told me:

There’s a lot of fear - love and fear. It’s a strange relationship - like a really strict and unfair parent ... Certainly in our early years, I was really afraid to stick my head up above the parapet and say anything at all, just quietly do our really good work and hope they notice.

Not directly mentioned in this but behind concepts such as the “unfair” parent and the “parapet” are the role of the siblings, other theatremakers who are both colleagues and competitors. However explicit theatremakers are in describing their relationship with the Council in terms of parental care, it is always a three-dimensional metaphor. That is, the
concern is not just to be loved, but to be loved more than ‘everyone else.’ One interviewee said:

[We go to meetings with the Arts Council] and we’re always encouraged so positively – oh, your work is great, and if there’s any increase at all, obviously you’re at a very low base, yadda yadda, so you come away feeling, you’re in, and then you just go, we’re not in. We’re just the same as everybody else. They don’t care. They don’t love us anymore.

Other theatremakers took this comparison farther, looking at what this or that of their colleagues had done to receive more ‘love’ than they had. This is, of course, a potential means of positive development—if theatremakers see their best-practicing colleagues being rewarded, they might copy them—but sometimes my interviewees speculated that the Council’s love was linked to irreproducible advantages such as gender, geographic location, or simple fads. None of my interviewees said that they found this aspect of their relationship with the Council informative or helpful; most found it disempowering and even personally depressing. Most interviewees were clear that they did not enjoy this dysfunctional family dynamic—participation felt selfish, retrograde and a bit shameful—but they felt they had to participate if they wished to make a career in the Irish theatre.

While they acknowledged that position on the funding ladder conferred status, there seemed to be a doxic aversion to overt efforts to climb it. Such efforts would be distasteful. Funding is seen as a reward, and while theatremakers naturally would like to be rewarded for their work, it is not acceptable to actively pursue that reward. Nor is it acceptable to tailor their work for the sake of the reward; the impression in others or even the feeling in one’s self that theatrical work is being made for the sake of Arts Council decision-making goes against the habitus of Irish theatremaking. It is in theatremakers’ social interest, then, that the relationship between artistic work and funding reward be either obscured or resisted, or both. This is the relationship that one of the most critical theatremakers I spoke

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32 One extended quotation from my interview with a company director illustrates this nicely. “There was one year where [Company A] and [Company B] jumped us [i.e., moved from below to above us on the funding ladder]. And I was very angry about that, because we had done, I think great work, but, I did think, maybe I’m being paranoid, but both of them are companies run by women, ... I thought, maybe we’re just not doing the right things politically .... Maybe all coincidence, who knows. But I was thinking, well, I saw the last play [Company A] did, it was brutal. Why are they going up? And [Company B], it’s [of a particular aesthetic trend], it’s trendy and sexy, and also their director is a woman, maybe they want to encourage women directors.”

33 This is a good example of the Schatzkian idea that the self, internally, is socially constructed. This need to obscure or resist the link between theatrical work and Council preferences comes from the field, but it has been so internalized by theatremakers that it can be present within an individual mind. The connection with Bourdiesusian habitus is also readily evident.
with called “not a mature dynamic ... not an adult power dynamic.” It is, in a word, infantilizing.

Even when the overt use of parent/child language was not present, many interviewees used other related metaphors of power and weakness. The Council was frequently depicted as extending a helping (or rescuing) hand to the theatremakers, who struggled in receiving it. One story that I was told both in a formal interview and in a social setting captures this dynamic nicely:

I remember one great moment when they finally gave us some money – I think about ten grand or something – and we met Phelim [Donlon, then the Arts Council’s drama officer] at some function, and he shook our hands and said, ‘well done boys, it’s good to have you on the raft.” To which my friend [..] said, “Thanks Phelim. Any chance of getting on the ship?”

It is perhaps this sense of disempowerment and dependency that leads to the embarrassment of discussing funding, at least as much as the general distaste for financial discussions. This sense of humiliation and vulnerability makes the relationships between the Council and its clients more difficult than it needs to be. Even those theatremakers who have a financially successful relationship with the Arts Council do not seem to enjoy it. While they accept that they have no choice but to do the work of relationship-building to tend to their place on the funding ladder, they resent it as too time-consuming, idiosyncratic, or unfair. This is the case even when it does them a favour. One interviewee related his experience of what he called the “Irish Banana Republic” system. When they were denied funding for a production that they was convinced deserved it, they began to play a game:

It’s who you know. So I spoke to someone I knew on the Arts Council and I said, this is a fuckin’ disgrace. I’ve never asked you for anything before, I’ve known you for years, I want something done about this. And he said, you’re right. It’s a fucking disgrace. This ended up in a shouting match between [the then director of the Arts Council] and this person in a restaurant. ... On the day before I was due to start rehearsals, I got a phone call, and he said, [name], put it down in a fax and fax it through to this number now. I put down, literally, I want, for this, signed [name], faxed it through, got a fax back within five minutes, ‘that will be allocated to you.’ If anything soured me about the workings of the institutions, it’s this.

The fact that the Arts Council has favourites and engages in political posturing is neither surprising nor interesting. However, the ‘souring’ towards the system expressed by the interviewee was a common theme worthy of attention. Most theatremakers who were the recipients of such ‘favours’ from the Council reported a small temporary feeling of gratefulness but a much more powerful and long-term feeling of distrust in, or even disgust for, the authority of the Council as an institution. This interviewee violated an etiquette rule
(noted by several others) when they approached a Council member directly; one is expected to go to the staff with concerns over particular grant decisions. But more importantly, this ‘souring’ shows how the concern is not really about particular grant decisions; it is about a paternalist, disempowering mindset that, even when they can manipulate it to their favour, undermines theatremakers’ sense of their own self-worth and autonomy. One of the doxic beliefs of the field is that it was theatremaking that made the Irish nation. It is very difficult for theatremakers to accept a position as subservient to the state.

That position is not only embarrassing, it also bears a strong scent of the patronage relationship that Michael D. Higgins and his Labour colleagues targeted with the Arts Plans. This would seem to indicate a failure on the Plan’s part; they have not stopped theatremakers from thinking of themselves as subservient to the Council. In fact, to this day many theatremakers want the Council to take a more, not less, active role. Only 46% of those surveyed agreed that the Council had “too much influence” over the direction of Irish theatre, and quite a few suggested that the Council should take on a still larger role in providing sector-wide leadership. In response to the open-ended survey question, “other than money, what do you want from the Arts Council?,” answers included:

- Scout for new work, nurture new directors, develop new practices for dispersing funds.
- Representation and lobbying on behalf of the sector.
- Vision about the future of the arts and what they can achieve.
- [from an interview] It would be nice sometimes to be told something positive. You’re never actually told you’re doing a good job.

Many of these speak directly to the field’s self-definition. They are functions that, per Bourdieu, should be the duty of those within the theatrical field who hold the most capital. It is unusual and arguably unhealthy that theatremakers are calling on an outside body—and a government agency at that—to take such a role in artistic self-definition. But the social effect of limited funding distributed by an accepted cultural authority is to place an enormous social weight on the means and level of that distribution. This makes funding not only an economic necessity for making theatre, but a social one for thinking about it. Funding provides both money and a key social capital around which theatremakers’ understanding of their work is organized. The Council’s monopoly over the former gives it a hugely powerful, if unintended, influence over the latter.

All of this, however, should be understood in the context of the severe distrust that theatremakers show for the Arts Council as an institution that the previous part discussed. Theatremakers simultaneously crave the accolades that the Arts Council can give through funding, but distrust the means of its distribution. One of my interviewees tried to articulate
both the hope that the Arts Council would take decisive action to make the systematic changes that they felt were necessary for the health of the field and the frustration that such action was highly unlikely:

Well, it’s certainly true that there isn’t a great deal of trust and confidence that they could do it. But that said, if there was a real sense that they were going to step up to the plate, I think that would be welcomed by people .... In some ways, people do like to be directed and they do like to feel that there’s a certain leadership and coherence and belief there that we can all step in behind – the big picture stuff. But there’ll be another policy document which’ll lie on the shelf unread.

This, too, sounds remarkably like a child talking about a father, but here the child is a bit older, more jaded, and increasingly aware that their father is not all-powerful. Needless to say, this adolescent relationship is no healthier.

**Development**

The second major capital at work in the field is that of development. One earns developmental capital by introducing novel, powerful, and effective ideas into the field. Ideas that prove to be more long-lasting are rewarded with more long-lasting capital. These ideas are often, but not always, artistic in the strict sense: they are aesthetic notions about the construction of a piece of theatrical art or new understandings of theatrical beauty or effect on the audience. New movements, styles, and methods of working are the most common forms of developmental capital. But this is not always the case: insights into a new relationship with the audience, organizational structure, or an understanding of the theatre’s social or political are all recognized by Irish theatremakers and function in the same manner as aesthetic developments strictly speaking. Development represents the Irish theatre’s restless desire for self-redefinition, whether that comes aesthetically, interpersonally, or organizationally.

For the reasons outlined in the introduction, this essay brackets out the content of aesthetic considerations, and so I will avoid evaluating the aesthetics of Irish theatre. It is, however, sociologically relevant to notice that almost all the terms that theatremakers use to describe development are about newness, and most often, novel means of perception. In assessing this value, it is noteworthy that theatremakers adopt the audience’s point of view. In contrast, funding and collegiality are much more internal to the practice of theatremaking; they have only an indirect relationship to the practice of theatergoing. One theatremaker described the production they most admired, and to which their own work aspired to, in these terms:
That was mindblowing, for me. So that’s where I would be trying to aim for. Something where it shifts your perspective radically a number of different times in the show, but it’s very accessible.\textsuperscript{34} Another said that “developing brand-new work is the only thing that’s of interest to me,” and another said that the greatest compliment they received was that “you never know what [their company is] going to do next.” Other compliments included “fresh,” “bold,” and even “naïve,” as well as work with “an innocence and danger to it.”

In contrast, work with less developmental value was described as repetitive or convention-bound. Such work was “not the thing that most urgently needs to be seen; it’s precededent,” said one. While those who are employed in the theatre-distribution business are well aware that a known title or playwright is very helpful in drawing audiences in, this goes against the notion of development. One theatremaker, admittedly of a more experimental bent, even cast scorn on the Gate Theatre’s recent tour of its definitive production of Beckett’s \textit{Waiting for Godot}. “Why get excited about a twenty-year-old production of a fifty-year-old play?” he asked.

Most theatremakers are terrified of nothing so much as stasis. The fear of doing more or less the same kind of show repeatedly, or staying at more or less the same rung on the funding ladder, was palpable.\textsuperscript{35} It is not considered acceptable to rest on laurels, no matter how abundant. But in assessing what they value about their colleagues’ positions in the field — a basic means of marking out Bourdieusian social structure — it becomes clear that developmental capital is not about novelty \textit{per se}, but about new ideas that can be used within the practice of theatremaking. When I asked theatremakers who else they respected within the field, their answers were illuminating. While there was no clear ‘respect ladder’ in the sense that there is a funding ladder, the kinds of development that theatremakers seemed to value most were those that led to new models of or strategies for theatremaking — aesthetic or organizational — or new ways of relating to audiences. The progenitors of new movements or ways of working, or at least those who first brought them to Ireland, received the most glowing comments. This was the case even for those whose own work was more traditional.

\textsuperscript{34} Note that “you” here refers to an audience member, not a theatremaker. In the rest of our discussion, this interviewee used “you” to refer to theatremakers — “a lot of times you’re just trying to get by on the skin of your teeth,” for instance.

\textsuperscript{35} Said one interviewee: “I’m not really afraid of cuts. I’m afraid of stagnation. I’m afraid of being left at this level [of funding.]” They explained that they would rather receive a funding cut than the exact same grant two years in a row because the latter “mentally, is more detrimental in some way. I would rather a decision. I would rather they take ten grand off of us and say, that’s because of X.”
For example, the clown- and physical-theatre company Barabbas was often mentioned, as were other companies that made devised work, site-specific or physical performances, or otherwise broke from the Irish tradition of script-based theatre. Theatremakers who had set up independent production structures outside of a company model also served as developmental lodestars. New ideas that were extremely useful to the field or powerful new organizational models could give developmental capital for years after they were meaningfully ‘new.’ Companies whose work, though innovative, was most often performed abroad or seen as not as engaged with the needs of the Irish field received fewer plaudits. (The experimental company Pan Pan falls into this category.)

Only one company was spoken of with respect by almost everyone I interviewed: Druid, the Galway-based company founded in 1975 and known for its work on classic and new Irish dramatic writing. Many did not see Druid’s productions themselves as aesthetically groundbreaking, but the company was regarded as the originators of a powerful model of how to make theatre in Ireland, especially outside of Dublin. One interviewee said:

They’re the origin of the species, if you like. They’re the original, and they created a model that was an inspiration to everybody in a regional setting and also everybody who had nothing but the desire to start a company.

It is perhaps a sign of the persistence of the company model that Druid still holds the developmental capital it does, despite being one of the most established companies in Ireland.

Developmental capital is similar to what Bourdieu calls “youth” in his descriptions of 1880s (and 1960s) France—those ideas that, while not yet established, have the virtue of novelty and hold the possibility of becoming established in a generation’s time. ‘Youth’ is specifically opposed to the institutionalized, canonical means of theatremaking. But the word is instructive – at the very least, it does connote a young chronological age. In my interviews and surveys, those two definitions of youth were often explicitly connected or even conflated. The concept of youth that theatremakers use in order to evaluate their place in the field is a mix of the two. The development of new ideas for the field is the primary definition of developmental value, but if those ideas come from younger people, it is seen as a positive indicator of this value’s presence and power.

Bourdieu describes at length the distinction between biological and artistic age in Bourdieu, The Rules of Art, 122ff and 150-154.
There are two, interlinked means by which the relationship between development and youth plays itself out. First, theatre companies see themselves as generational. Most interviewees were very conscious of the cadre of companies that had been set up roughly at the same time as theirs. A number of interviewees tied these generations to the social forces that were at play in particular points in recent Irish history: the Troubles and the Celtic Tiger period, in particular. Aesthetic trends also play a role in generational definition; the generation of companies that came of age in the late 1980s and early 1990s, for instance, were interested in American writing that had previously been relatively unknown in Ireland. Structural features can also define a generation. In the 1980s, many companies grew up with funding via a worker training scheme operated by FÁS, the Irish state’s employment authority, that was not specifically designed for the arts. Because the scheme’s funding was based on a per-worker subsidy to employers, these companies were encouraged to do large-cast, labour-intensive work. In contrast, those companies which came of age at the time of the Arts Plans and their emphasis on professional practice and proper salaries for actors were encouraged to do the exact opposite. For all these reasons, the ‘generation’ of companies is the primary context in which all three major capitals are evaluated. Companies compare their funding, development, and collegiality to others of the same generation. No one expects a three-year-old company to have the collegiality or funding of a twenty-year-old one.

Second, a generation as a whole begins to lose developmental capital as younger generations begin appearing below it. This is a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland, as the earliest identifiable generation of companies came about in the mid-1980s. It poses a difficulty for those who begin to think of themselves as “middle-aged” companies. Said one thetremaker:

I don’t consider myself young, although I’d probably still be put in that bracket. I’m nearly 40. I think it’s about time you stop being ‘emerging’ when you’re nearly 40,... I think it’s a tag that’s – I think that the exciting work is probably going to come through people who are 25 now, not people who are nearly 40. I mean, I’m nearly at the end of my exciting kind of – I know, but I’m excited by the stuff that’s coming through.

The fear here is palpable. Acquiring developmental capital requires constant growth, in some form or another, and the possibility that a company might begin to atrophy is deeply troubling. Even though actual incidents of companies generally recognized as obsolete are rare, the concern is much more widespread than the paucity of examples would indicate. It parallels thetremakers’ worries about Arts Council de-funding; both cast a shadow far longer than their rarity would suggest.
In the case of atrophied companies, however, there is an additional pressure. Many theatremakers claim that there are companies which have, in fact, atrophied, and which ought to be pruned away for the good of the field. This has been the case at least since the mid-1990s and the time of the first Arts Plan. That Plan’s call for a “rationalization” of the number of companies was taken up with some enthusiasm by the field. In fact, the arguments made by theatremakers in 1996 in favour of rationalization were phrased in terms of developmental capital:

There will be new emerging ways of making theatre, new voices and new talents. Something has got to give, and someone ... has to ‘pull the plug.’ I believe that some companies do have a finite life cycle. There comes a time when people need to move on.37

Of course, the atrophied companies were never named in public, as that would have been a serious violation of collegiality. Even with the promise of anonymity, few of my interviewees were willing to name names. This, too, can be seen as an effect of the field’s doxa; there is no problem with the general statement that the field contains dead wood, but specifying who that wood is would go so directly against the doxic value of collegiality that, even in private, theatremakers cannot do it. In any case, the inability to name names has not changed theatremakers’ awareness that atrophied companies are present in the field. The Second Arts Plan of 1999 recognizes the need to ‘wind down’ companies, and it was a constant theme in my interviews. One director said:

There’s a real problem for companies in the middle of their life …. It’s like the thin bit of an hourglass. They’re not getting the kind of funding that their ambitions would seek. They’ve got to queue to get up to the top end to the big sustainable organizations.

At the 2006 annual conference organized by Theatre Forum, one of Ireland’s leading directors, Annie Ryan of Corn Exchange, started a public discussion about culling companies to allow new ones to flourish. This discussion attracted more attention than any other discussion at the conference; similar discussion took place the following year. While the need to prune companies is, of course, a matter of money—with a fixed level of resources, more funding to one company means less to another—what is interesting is that the concern over atrophy seems to be more about developmental capital than funding. The need to cut companies was prominently discussed even when the Arts Council’s budgets were experiencing unprecedented growth. A concern for development may actually push against a desire for fair or equitable funding, as a long history of quality work may contribute to a company’s proven funding-worthiness but detract from its developmental

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potential. The fact that theatremakers link the need to cut companies with age and atrophy shows that this is an issue of development before it is one of funding.

Like many developmental issues, it is linked to an awareness that the audience, too, is generational: theatrical audiences are aging and there is a need to interest a younger public in the art form. One interviewee observed, correctly:

I would say most of the people who receive money from the Arts Council are over 35. And there’s almost a complete lack of strategic thinking in that.

Theatremakers, particularly older ones, see this generation gap in the audience as a major problem. When I asked the open-ended survey question of what was the biggest problem facing the Irish theatre, answers broke down into three main groups: funding, development (narrowly conceived), and the aging audience:

• “Dwindling audiences.”
• “Changing audiences.”
• “Relevance to young people (by young I mean under 35).”
• “Under-40 audiences”
• “Getting the wider public to recognize theatre and the arts being vital to their everyday lives.”

The assumption seems to be that it will take younger theatremakers to appeal to a younger audience. This is a concern even though more established theatremakers and audiences both tend to be older and a one-to-one correlation between younger theatremakers and younger audiences is hard to demonstrate. The assumption, however, speaks again to the conflation of youth and developmental capital.

Moreover, this assumption seems to imply the problem that older, more established companies will slowly lose developmental capital. And thus, for a remarkable number of older theatremakers, the solution seems to be the borrowing of youth. A large number of middle-aged and older companies are making an effort to bring in younger artists to their work. This is usually phrased in terms of the offering of help, but it does have the effect of positioning the older company as an enabler of developmentally interesting work, thereby increasing its developmental capital. One of the virtues of field theory is that there is no need to decide whether such tendencies are canny calculations or tacit rules that are too ingrained to need enforcement. As in the classic Bourdieusian example of Kabyle gift exchange, theatremakers understand the duty for the older to help the younger as a social obligation while acknowledging that it serves their own interests are well. One older theatremaker offered the following explanation as to why his company takes younger artists on:
Companies of our generation, or let us say age, have a responsibility to all those companies that are coming up.... In every way, we would be happy to let them piggyback on us. And that’s kind of a practical support thing. I do think in terms of the length of time we’ve been in operation and the new generation of people coming up, it is an absolute responsibility to address issues of evolution, succession.

Exactly what this ‘practical support’ would consist of, however, was far from clear; the interviewee struggled to clarify it. They were not, of course, offering to simply hand their financial and organizational resources off to a younger colleague. These efforts to ‘piggyback’ are not so much practical plans as acts of position-taking in the field, an effort to be associated with developmental youth. That there is no obvious form for this effort to take is a derivative practical problem that has little to do with the motivation for the position-taking. This eagerly accepted responsibility that fuses obligation to self-interest is one of the hallmarks of doxa.

Of particular note is how abstract the doxic value of development is. Developmental capital does not seem to be given for progress towards any particular end, but rather for development in any direction that proves fruitful. While there are trends and tendencies in this period of the Irish theatre that have been pointed out by others, this is not an era of manifestos and there are few identifiable artistic or political programmes for development to cohere into. As it is not a question of orthodoxy, I would suggest that we truly can think of development as a capital in the cultural economy of Irish theatre. It is a medium of exchange and a measure of wealth; it can be earned, lent, traded, won, and lost just as other capitals can. It is an unstable one, though, and hard to store up. To push the metaphor, one could say that the inflation rate for developmental capital is very high, and safe, predictable investments for it are hard to come by.

Perhaps even more than funding, development is a criterion on which all positions in the field are measured, whether they wish to be or not. This is, incidentally, why most commercial theatremaking is unable to take up a position with any power in the field. It is not that they are funded by different sources, but that their work is seen as lacking in developmental capital. Mass-market musicals or pantos, for instance, are seen as developmentally unserious and adding nothing to the practice of Irish theatremaking. On those occasions in which a commercially funded production accepts the same developmental (and collegial) standards of independent Irish theatremaking, it is evaluated

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on the same bases as any other production. Such instances, however, were seen by my
interviewees as infrequent enough as to set no meaningful precedent.

While essentially all theatremakers share the doxic value of development, they
_measure_ it in more idiosyncratic ways. When assessing other theatremakers’ work, the most
common criterion for measurement was work which excited them personally and served as
a propeller to further their own practice. However, formal recognition in the form of
positive reviews, awards, full houses, and successes in particular festivals were also
accepted as valid. Few interviewees hesitated to speculate on the developmental value of
their colleagues’ work, both positively and negatively.

In evaluating their own work, however, theatremakers were far more timid, often
deferring to someone else’s measurement of their developmental value. They often cited the
annual awards given by the *Irish Times* or invitations to (or success at) major international
festivals—the Dublin Theatre Festival and Edinburgh Fringe in particular. They put great
stock in feedback they received from audience members, frequently citing particular
feedback that they received years ago as an alternative to critical panning.\(^{39}\) If there was a
sense that it was the perceptual novelty of the work that audiences were responding to, this
was better than simple box office success or critical praise, though the latter were also
respected.

The preference for one of these two means of measuring one’s own developmental
success—from the side of theatremaking or theatergoing—was the closest analogue I could
find to the Bourdieusian notion of cultural capital particular to the field of cultural
production (and not simply social capital in the theatrical field). The opposition between
the two was clear. One director said:

> I have had—genuinely, I’m not bullshiting—people say that [my
> company’s] plays have been the best theatre experience they have
> ever seen. But I don’t think that the theatre cognoscenti in Dublin
> appreciate that.

The converse—respect for the cognoscenti over the audience—is not something many
theatremakers would openly articulate, but it is a fair interpretation, I think, of those
theatremakers who claim to be doing work that no one else is. While essentially all of my
interviewees professed a respect for the audience, it was expressed in ways divergent
enough with regards to development that a relatively clear gap could be seen. Compare the
views of two theatremakers explaining why they do the particular work they do:

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\(^{39}\) For example, one interviewee told me, regarding a show they had directed that received small
houses and mixed reviews: “I have had people say to me, total punters off the street, I absolutely hate
going to theatre, but I loved that show.”

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I’m not doing it because it looks good. I’m doing it because nobody else is doing it. We all fall into the danger of paying too much attention to fellow theatremakers. And I think it’s not helpful for the audience.

The first is defining their developmental value to the field in terms of what other theatremakers are (not) doing. The second defines it in terms of what is ‘helpful’ for an audience. Neither is a statement about the style or form of a particular piece of work, or even a statement about how a performance should relate to an audience. Rather, they are both measurements for the evaluation of a theatremaker’s store of developmental assets, and represent a minor but non-trivial difference in interpretation of the doxic value of development. The field attaches developmental value to that work which will be most useful for the theatre of the future. The disagreement over how that can best be defined and measured exists in that context, and these metrics reflect that.

What none of these metrics show, however, is a modernist interest in the personal development of the artist as such, which does not seem to be part of the doxa of the field. This might come as something of a surprise. There are not, of course, a lack of modernist models in the larger Irish cultural consciousness; Joyce and Beckett still loom very large. The forging of one’s unique voice is not an unheard-of interest in Irish arts, but it is quite distinct from what is valorized by the theatre as developmental capital. There are a (very) few theatremakers in Ireland who justify their work with the rhetoric of l’art pour l’art, but they receive neither respect or accolades for it. The term my interviewees used most often for these artists was “masturbatory,” and few expressed interest in seeing it. The Bourdieusian model of production for producers as the social role of l’art pour l’art only functions if there is a community of producers who wish to consume this work. Such a community does not seem to exist in Ireland. While work aiming to build skills was seen as an important investment, it was not itself the payoff. Skill building—which can be very individuated and take years—creates the potential of developmentally important ideas, but if unrealized, they are not given a social value. “You have to decide if you’re the sort of actor who does shows or the sort that does workshops,” said one director.

The field thus seems to differentiate an artist’s professional maturation and personal growth from the development of new ideas for use in the theatrical field. The first may be helpful, but only the second is recognized as a capital on which the field as a whole places a value. This is important because it speaks to the modernist idea of the arts as a site of autonomy from society as such, a field of pure freedom. This is what drew Adorno to the high-art music of his day, and it is part of what Thomas Osborne sees as the connection
between Bourdieu’s and Adorno’s views of culture (as well as Foucault’s).⁴⁰ Irish theatre prizes useful formal developments, a far cry from the radical personal freedom that Adorno saw in Schoenberg. I am not claiming that this radical freedom does not exist in the Irish theatre or that it is not important to Irish theatremakers—it is, as I will discuss below—but merely that it does not have the status of currency in the cultural capitalist system of the Irish theatre field.

Developmental capital is quintessentially useful for the future of the field, and in pursuing it, Irish theatremakers are following their modernist counterparts who “used the most important tool of consumer capitalism, novelty or innovation.”⁴¹ Strikingly, as much as they love personal artistic play, Irish theatremakers are well aware of the difference between innovation useful to the field and pure creativity.⁴² In other words, developmental capital is seen for what it is and is not misrecognized as ‘pure’ or socially disconnected. Theatremakers know that developing new and exciting ways of making theatre could lead to prestige, increased funding and job security, better box office sales, and even (substantial) financial reward. In other words, they see it as a social capital that will help them take a more powerful position in the field, and it would be disingenuous to claim that this is not part of why development is sought.

If not a case of misrecognition, the relationship between personal artistic growth and developmental capital is more complex. Like all contemporary artists, Irish theatremakers are influenced by the modernist notion of the artist’s role, and most embrace it enthusiastically. “That was always my need, to go deeper,” said one interviewee. “As an artist, you’re exploring and … finding new frontiers in the world and also in yourself and in your work,” said another, also fairly typically. But this sense of personal artistic growth is not much talked about in public, and it took some effort to get interviewees to discuss it (far more effort than it did to get them to talk about funding). It is seen as private. Few interviewees said they could name an artistic role model, and while most said that they

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⁴⁰ Osborne, The Structure of Modern Cultural Theory, 2: “These texts in modern cultural theory [Bourdieu’s, Foucault’s, and Adorno’s] refer, overtly or implicitly, to the ultimately ethical quest for autonomy as a guiding, if quite possibly impossible, ideal.” He expands on the ethical and social nature of art’s autonomy in his discussion of Adorno’s view that artistic autonomy “is both absurd and necessary. Absurd because serious art is socially conditioned and socially relevant; necessary because the idea of serious art holds the continuing hope, by the very fact of its absurdity, of a critique of existing conditions.” Ibid., 55-56.


⁴² This is not to say that all theatremakers agree on which innovations will be the most useful, but the principle is acknowledged as a matter of doxa.
respected those theatremakers who had developed their own personal vision, they put far more importance in the fact of a vision’s development than the precise content of it. This was even the case for those artists with specialized training in a particular skill (mime, circus, clown, dance, etc.) They recognized and respected their colleagues with a very different skill set and received developmental accolades from others with no interest in working in that form. Most of my interviewees were just as interested in formally innovative work that had little to do with their own as that which was quite similar to it.

Personal artistic growth is difficult to discuss, and because it is not valued by the field, the Schatzkian social constitution of the self would suggest that it plays a decreasing role in theatremakers’ understandings of their own artistic selves. To some degree, this does seem to be the case. Personal artistic growth is still a goal, for reasons of both social status and practical support, but developmental capital is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition to achieve that. This distinction also speaks to the (narrow) distinction between artists and the companies around them. Most interviewees spoke about developmental capital attaching to theatre companies, while they used the first person singular in describing artistic growth. In order to grow as an artist, theatremakers need access to companies with strong developmental capital. Theatremakers, then, seem to be remarkably aware of the social conditions necessary to create the possibility of Adornian artistic freedom, but it is those social conditions, more than the freedom itself, that are recognized as falling within the practice’s purview and thus the field’s interest.

Collegiality

The third capital operative in the field is that of collegiality; that which holds Irish theatremaking together as a practice, a profession, and a community. It takes a number of forms, but all share the function of cohesion. Unlike development, it is a conservative force: establishing and maintaining standards and policing both the inside and the outside of the field’s boundaries. It relates to what Bourdieu calls entry barriers, which both separate those who are not legitimately in the field from those who are, and which create a sense of commonality and shared feeling—Turnerian communitas, even—among those on the inside. It is the newest, least developed, and fastest-growing of the three major field capitals. While funding and development could be said to have existed for decades, collegiality only became an important value in the practice as it professionalized over the last twenty years. Though the field had a sense of collegiality before the Arts Plans, it is the capital that has been most specifically and directly developed by the Irish state’s recent experiment in arts planning.
As there are no formal entry qualifications to the fraternity of Irish theatremakers, the barriers to entry are policed through less formal social institutions and identification. Because of the value of developmental capital and its relation to ‘youth,’ however, theatremakers are very hesitant to raise barriers that would prevent new people, particularly young people, from entering the field. “I’ll talk to anybody,” said the manager of one Dublin arts centre. “That’s my job. It’s important that I’m accessible.” At the same time, it is necessary to differentiate theatremaking as a distinct practice if it is to enjoy any kind of structural autonomy. If the values that organize theatremaking are to be different from those generally at work in society, theatremaking has to be seen as a different kind of practice from other social activities. In particular, it needs to be distinguished from youth and amateur drama, which are both quite popular in Ireland. Theatremakers need to assert that, even if they are not getting a paycheck, they are engaged in a different sort of activity than are the amateurs, one that can make particular claims to government sponsorship, social importance, and artistic status.

In anthropological terms, a standard means of making such an assertion is to attempt to recognize those who devote their careers to this work as a distinct group of people. In the present case, though, external barriers keeping potential theatremakers out are seen as inappropriate. Instead, theatremakers have a number of strategies to build up bonds of friendship and affiliation in order to keep existing theatremakers in. Structurally, the two serve the same function of group definition; the differences between building a group with internal connections and coherences and keeping others out of it are not as great as they may seem. In interviews, theatremakers were extremely open to new voices entering the profession—part of development—but they were very concerned that others (politicians and actual or potential audience members, in particular) recognized what they did as a legitimate profession and not mere playing or amateur dramatics writ large. The field’s efforts to balance the two involve an identifiable community of professional theatremakers with both professional standards to maintain and a welcoming attitude towards new comers.

This inward pull towards a coherent and professional theatre community is the value that I am calling collegiality. It is organizationally expressed in the numerous

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43 See Murray and Drury, "Ireland," 355: “one gauge of the extent of interest in theatre in Ireland is the widespread dispersal of amateur groups.”
44 The Arts Council has a policy against funding amateur drama directly, though it does fund the National Association for Youth Drama, as well as what Enid Reid Whyte called “the three historically funded youth theatres” in Dublin, Galway, and Waterford. These three are essentially grandfathered in, as they have been funded from before the time the Council articulated any policies on the funding of youth theatre.
institutions that recognize, support, and bring together the community of Irish theatremakers. These include formal organizations such as Theatre Forum and Equity (the actors’ union); publications such as *Irish Theatre Magazine*; social events including opening nights, the Irish Times awards dinner and Arts Council-called consultation meetings; and places such as the Trocadero restaurant in central Dublin (the traditional late-night dinner spot whose walls are lined with generations of actors’ headshots) and the Flowing Tide pub across the street from the Abbey Theatre, known as the hangout of casts after performances. The means by which each of these can build a sense of camaraderie between theatremakers is clear enough, but it is important to emphasize that none of them are natural or automatic—they are built structures. All exist and function the way they do because of choices and considerable work on the part of theatremakers themselves.

Unlike development, which prizes theatremaking that differentiates itself from what already exists, collegiality values theatremaking that identifies itself with the existing tradition and builds up its internal cooperation. Part of the principle of collegiality is that theatremaking is better and more valued when it is a project done in partnership with an established theatre community. One director described their colleagues this way:

I think what’s interesting is that … we’re all good friends. We’ve known each other a long time. We would all always know what the other ones are doing. And I think that we don’t see ourselves as threats [to each other.] but the funders keep saying that we think we do, and people from the outside might think we do. But as a community, we don’t.

This feeling of being compatriots and not competitors is very common in Ireland, and is reinforced by the culture of freelancing: virtually every experienced theatremaker’s personal network of co-workers and former co-workers extends to a good portion of the field. Even those theatremakers whose primary work is built on a specific skill set or niche tend to participate in these networks of freelancing. It is not part of the doxa of collegiality that all theatremaking is homogenous or geared to the same purpose; rather, the claim is that it is easy to recognize theatremaking as such and that all of it is made easier when colleagues do their own job better. As one director, who, like many, had worked for multiple companies, put it, “If one of us is not on top of our game, the whole thing starts to wobble, because each of us complement each other.”

While almost all theatremakers I interviewed agreed with this sentiment, there was a significant minority who did not regard themselves as part of the Irish theatre community, preferring to identify themselves with other groups, such as the European theatre community or Irish visual artists. These alternative identifications did not give their holders
much collegial capital in the eyes of the theatrical field. Most who ‘identified out’ in this way were the heads of small companies who, while their work might be respected for its novelty, were not seen to be contributing much to Irish theatre as such. Alternatively, there are a few very large companies who are sometimes accused of caring more for international touring (to London or New York, generally) than in being part of the Irish theatre community.\(^{45}\)

Historically, there has been considerable resistance among Irish theatremakers against seeing themselves as a group with needs of its own, as opposed to a group of workers whose intention should be to serve the audience or nation. In close parallel with the views described above regarding the means of evaluating developmental capital, many theatremakers, particularly older ones, find collegiality embarrassing to talk about. Too much of a focus on the community of theatremakers, they say, is a distraction from the more important focus on the audience. They will assert, therefore, that their attentions are directed to their audiences, and that focusing on their fellow theatremakers is “not really the point.” In fact, one of the clearest and most consistent developments of the Arts Plans era is the growth of field-wide institutions and a field-wide consciousness. The simple articulation of a plan into which all Irish theatremaking would need to fit if it was to be funded—whether or not that plan controlled the Arts Council’s decisions—did much to encourage the field to think of itself in the singular. The development of group standards of practice and professionalism and the creation (and funding) of industry-wide discussion bodies and critical voices also built up a consciousness of collegiality. Repeatedly, in Arts Council documents and at meetings of Theatre Forum (itself a result of this development), theatremakers are urged to take action to help the sector as a whole: lobbying government for increased funding, sharing resources, coordinating tours, and so on. Based on the responses to the economic downturns of 2001 and 2008, these efforts have begun to bear fruit. The most recent financial crisis has led to a number of new means of sharing resources and even field-wide projects to lobby politicians, defend funding, and work for the good of the field.

So it appears that, aside from its newness, the major difference between this capital and the two others is that that it is anti-competitive: funding and, to a certain degree, the prestige of development are scarce resources and thus the source of competitive tension.

\(^{45}\) Patrick Lonergan mentions this charge, for example, in the Gate Theatre’s production of Brian Friel’s *The Home Place*, which moved to London’s West End as soon as its Dublin run concluded: “The Irish run was perceived in some quarters as a rehearsal for a West End transfer.” Lonergan, *Theatre and Globalization*, 195.
This appears not to be the case for collegiality; it is about mutual benefit. But a closer look shows that this is not necessarily the case. Whereas cultural capitalism need not be a zero-sum game, a value that does not differentiate itself between players in a field is not a capital in any sense Marxians would recognize.

My argument is that collegiality is, in fact, a capital in the classic sense, one measure of power unequally distributed for particular reasons. Collegiality is the capital received for building up the social and practical infrastructure of the field. That building-up usually takes a conservative form. The collegiality I am describing is a force that reinforces the existing shape of the field, including the power of those who already stand in stronger positions. Collegiality is directional: it is easier for companies in a stronger structural position to be collegial to those below them than vice versa. For instance, larger theatres, particularly outside of Dublin, often help their smaller neighbors. One Cork theatremaker told me:

I can guarantee you that every company in [Cork] owes a huge amount to Graffiti. There are so many shows I couldn't have done without Graffiti, in terms of providing space, in terms of equipment, a training route — in terms of the number of people who have come through as actors or designers. I make my rent by doing workshops for Graffiti. I wouldn’t be able to do what I do if they didn’t give me a regular job.

What this means, among other things, is that most Cork theatremakers have a vested interest in the continued health of Graffiti. The company’s assistance to others has considerably reinforced its cultural capital in the field through an intelligent use of collegiality.

While my interviews revealed similar stories in Dublin, there was a marked difference in the understanding of collegiality in the capital. Non-Dublin collegiality was grounded in a practical sharing of resources and work, as in the case of Cork above. Similarly, a number of regional venues in the north central part of the country have formed a network called Nomad to facilitate touring to and work in the region. This has served as a model for other regional networks. Regional venues have also been far more likely to answer recent calls (since 2007) to adopt a resident production company. Dublin theatremakers share resources and planning as well, but Dublin theatremakers are more

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Demographically and in terms of artistic practice, the Dublin area is a dominant force in the Republic of Ireland. Dublin companies receive about half of government theatre subsidy (this has developed over the years — see figure 2.2 on p. 129, above). Even this might underestimate the degree to which Dublin dominates. A number of theatre companies and especially venues not considered to be “Dublin companies” are located in areas that are demographically part of greater Dublin. The 2006 Irish census showed that greater Dublin housed about 37% of the Republic of Ireland’s population, but I would estimate that it held perhaps 60% of the Republic’s professional theatre activity.
likely to talk about the ways in which their work complements each other in a more artistic sense and less of a nuts-and-bolts one.

One of the major ways that collegiality holds the field together is through what the Arts Plans call "setting standards of excellence" for the industry. These can be—and often are—aesthetic standards: quality of writing, production, acting, design, and so on—but they are also what would be called in business terms "best practice," covering areas such as marketing, administration, financial management, adequate wages, and so on. The Arts Plans, particularly the second Plan from 1999, announced the Council's intent to reward these efforts at professionalism.\footnote{For example, the 1999 Arts Plan states:}

> The goal of the Arts Council is to achieve a more accurate alignment between our actual spending on arts organisations and projects and the high priority we assign to artistic excellence and innovation. Artistic excellence may be evident both in the process and the outcome of the making of artistic work and in the quality of artistic planning and production. (19)

This value of 'excellence,' particularly in the context of 'process,' speaks to the value being placed on professionalism—note that these values are being assessed not on artists but on 'arts organizations and projects.' When the plan stated that "The Arts Council is committed to ... enhancing the sustainability of theatre organizations" (35), this was widely understood to be a statement about management and professional practice.
up with those companies that the Arts Council sees as filling that role—the Abbey and the Gate.

This suggests that the two aspects of collegial capital seem to be located in different places in the theatrical field. Theatremakers tend to be more interested in group identification while policy-workers and audiences tend to be more interested in consistent standards of quality. Moreover, those of my interviewees who identified themselves as directors were more interested in the community of practitioners, whereas those who labeled themselves as producers, venue managers, or policy-workers showed more of an interest in professional standards. This is not to say that directors are unconcerned with quality or producers with the community, but that the effort to maintain a harmonic relationship between these two values reflects a structuring tension internal to the way that collegiality is evaluated by the field. The two aspects are two sides of the same coin. Without channeling the community of theatremakers towards an aesthetic ideal, the community becomes a mere club. Like development, collegiality is only valued in that it is useful.

My portrayal of collegiality as one of the three capitals most distanced from theatremaker themselves may sound odd at first, but it should not be so surprising. Coherence and cooperation make the field as a whole run more smoothly, but they may create a short-term burden for individual theatremakers. The second Arts Plan’s push for increasing standards of professionalism was, essentially, an effort to reassert a stronger standard of collegiality in Irish theatremaking. It was hotly resisted at first by many in the field, both because it was seen to be coming from the Arts Council and not theatremakers and because it imposed new burdens on existing companies. Many of these burdens had to do with administrative procedures, paperwork, and the hiring of administrators, but they also involved setting minimum salary and work environment standards that greatly increased the cost of large-cast plays. Though this imposed a frustrating burden for those who could not make the work they wanted, it was in time largely accepted as a positive development for the field.

It makes sense that the furthering of collegiality was the Arts Plans’ central achievement, both in terms of communal identification and professional standards. In fact, it is not hard to make the argument that collegiality, not planning, is the opposite of patronage. A patronage relationship always flows from the father/patron directly to the child/client. Siblings, or fellow artists, are competitors. A client is taken on by a patron not because they had achieved some kind of generally-recognized standard of quality, but because the patron personally liked their work; no explanation needed to be given for that
choice. If theatre funding is to be a matter of policy and not private preference, it is much easier for the policymakers if the theatremaking coterie has a coherent identity, a desire for standards, and a clear sense of itself. The following quotation, from a former Department of Arts official, represents the planner's desire for a more collegial theatremaking practice:

I think that would be a huge benefit to the arts, to cultivate the emergence of leaders, people who have the industry and its issues at their heart. If you were to see other industries in operation, when the Irish Hotels Federation comes in to meet the minister, they don't talk about a specific hotel in Dublin 2 or Dublin 4. They're talking about industry issues. In the arts, when specific leaders get in, they are talking about themselves. They're talking about their own particular productions, and that is a serious problem.

At the beginning of the 1990s, most theatremakers would have dismissed this call for unity as standard government-speak that failed to acknowledge the particular reality of theatremaking. But the ability to make sense of and see the value in this kind of language has been a major structural development of Irish theatremaking in the last decade and a half. Just as the process of making the Arts Plans taught the Council to speak bureaucratese, so the Plans taught theatremakers an industry-wide perspective. Collegiality—and the conservative, practical, and business-friendly standards that implies—has become a major capital around which Irish theatremakers organize their work.

Consider, for instance, the arguments made for the financial support of large, stable companies that have the 'potential' to do good work, even if their current work is seen as subpar. This is a classic example of collegiality and the upholding of standards. Valuing development in isolation should lead to pushing money away from these atrophied companies. While theatremakers do think that some pruning would be healthy, they also realize that a certain degree of stability is needed to maintain the coherence of theatremaking as a practice, even if it means that outdated work is at times funded instead of fresh work. "I think that companies doing not necessarily great work, they should still be funded," said one director who was far from the top of the funding ladder. And the argument for stability as a useful quality in its own right was articulated by the former Arts Council director, Patricia Quinn:

People would say, "there's no reason not to fund this otherwise excellent theatre company just because it's going through a bad patch. They've done great work in the past, they're in a rough few years, they made a mistake in terms of their artistic leadership, they will come good again, we have invested a lot in this organization in the past. They have the capacity to develop out of this hole in the ground. We should stay with them."
The conservatism is clear enough. The whole idea of 'standard of excellence'—a standard, a canonical measure for theatrical achievement—stands against development. This is even more the case when the criterion is not the quality of work but the capacity to make quality work. And yet, some kind of formal setting of standards and the more regular, predictable, field-wide support this would allow seems essential if the Irish theatre as a whole is to grow or develop into more than a collage of warring interests.

Official recognition, particularly foreign recognition, can also help establish collegial capital in this sense. That Druid and the Gate have been so successful in exporting productions to London and New York, for example, is seen as a sign that they are the ones who most regularly and reliably achieve a standard of excellence. As in the case with the evaluation of development, there is a tendency to defer judgment on standards of excellence, particularly with regards to one's own work, to another source, particularly British or American.⁴⁸ Again, success as measured by box office receipts, festival invitations, or awards can also serve to make the case that a company is setting aesthetic standards. While these are often the same criteria as are used to evaluate developmental value, the distinction between standard-establishing productions and new-ideas-generating ones are apparent enough by the field. A successful production that hearkens back to a 'classical' or established aesthetic will make its producers seem like standard-setters; one which looks forward to a new one will make its producers seem like innovators. The term most often used in my interviews for the first was "respected"; for the second, "exciting." An individual production can occasionally be both, but this is quite rare and almost always contested.

One of Bourdieu's most discussed means of establishing the kind of communal identification and compatibility I am describing with the term collegiality is education. For Bourdieu, education one of the most important sites where a socially established habitus is acculturated into the individual. That habitus is the means by which individuals are fitted with field-appropriate doxa, allowing them to pass the entry barriers and function properly in a field. One would expect, if that applied here, for education to play a significant role in the Irish theatre's understanding of these three capitals, particularly collegiality.

⁴⁸ Let me be clear that it is only the standards of measurement that are being deferred abroad; the work itself still needs a domestic base. In the common postcolonial pattern of allowing the more powerful external source to validate the quality and importance of internal work. The colonizer's ability to set standards is maintained ever after colonialism itself is done. A company that moved permanently from Ireland to the US or UK, as many actors have done, would no longer be seen as part of the Irish theatrical community and would not receive collegial capital. Those who occasionally brought those accolades and standards back to work that was seen as properly Irish, however, receive it in spades.
To some extent, this is the case, but with some important exceptions. A great many Irish theatremakers took their first artistic steps and made their first professional connections in Dublin’s two university student drama societies —Players, at the traditionally elite and Protestant Trinity College Dublin (TCD), and DramSoc, at the traditionally less elite and more Catholic University College Dublin (UCD). Players and DramSoc alumni represent a remarkably large number of the leading members of the Irish theatre. Less than 40% of theatremakers surveyed said that “formal training” was important in their career paths, and less than 10% mentioned it as the most important factor. This is not a contradiction, as Players and DramSoc are student societies, not training programmes, and their importance comes at least as much from the experience and social connections gained in them as from skills learned. It is no stretch to see them as teaching a Bourdieusian habitus that becomes an important contributor to the doxa of Irish theatremaking.

Unlike many of Bourdieu’s examples, though, the entry barriers to participation in Irish theatre are quite low. No formal degree or test is required, and, as I argued above with regard to development, the field has an incentive to allow new practitioners in. A 2005 report showed that the great majority of Irish theatre workers (73%) held third-level degrees of some sort, compared with only 28% of the general Irish labour force.49 This 73% figure includes not just TCD and UCD graduates but any diploma or degree course. The distinction is not between those who have attended university and those who have not, but between those from elite educational backgrounds and others.

An ‘alternative’ path exists through the youth and amateur theatre system, and the Dublin and Galway Youth Theatres in particular. Many theatremakers who did not attend TCD or UCD had been a part of this other, decidedly more working-class, system. In my interviews, it became apparent that these theatremakers were very conscious of their differing habitus, and would often mention their lack of education as a reason for feeling isolated. In contrast, those who did go through one of the universities mentioned their training rarely, and only in passing — it was the accepted norm. This meant that there was a different understanding of collegial capital amongst the two groups. Those who most enthusiastically embrace field-wide cooperation and the setting of standards tend to be Players or DramSoc alumni. Those from elsewhere are suspicious of it. One producer and director, themselves a Players alum, explained that while they valued cooperation in the field, it could also lead to an unhealthy elitism:

Where it becomes a bad thing is where everybody knows everybody else, and there’s a sense of a club, and a sense of us and them and a sense of people who have been educated at Trinity, and the old boy network, and people who haven’t been educated in Trinity. [There are those who think] “I haven’t gone to a university of any kind. I think I’m the only theatre director of any kind in this country that doesn’t have a university degree.”

The interviewee’s imagined director is not in fact alone—a number of directors and producers in Ireland do not have university degrees—but if it is the case that the TCD/UCD habitus is determinant of the field, it would make sense that a person who did not have access to that habitus would be conscious of this as a defect from a cultural norm. There are a small but non-trivial number of non-university educated people in leading positions in the Irish theatre. But it is still possible to see collegiality more as a conflict in a sense tied to larger class tensions in Irish society. That those who have elite educations can readily imagine the difficulties they would face without one, a good example of a sociologically effective act of reflexivity. That is, not only for those with less educational capital but their sympathizers as well, the dynamics of the relationships among theatremakers as well as theatergoers were less a question of field-specific collegiality and more a reflection of the dynamics of the larger culture which the field was reinforcing. The collegial feeling could become the previous interviewee’s ‘old boy network,’ and the upholding of standards could simply be the perpetuation of university elitism by another name. Another theatremaker, who is not a TCD or UCD graduate, explained that Ireland is full of:

- cultural dynasties—certain kinds of people, who go to certain schools … The same class ends up in politics and the arts, and they know each other, and they help each other out. That’s defined these days as social capital, that’s how it works …. For those on the outside of that, it’s extraordinarily unfair and undemocratic and it’s an appalling misuse of resources.

If (some of) the reason that some theatremaking is preferred to others by authorities, and popular opinion has to do with class discrimination, then the solution ought to be similar to the means of addressing this in other fields: organization, lobbying, and more democratic policy. This does seem to be the case; those with less formal education in the field tend to place more collegial capital in formal organizations and lobbying campaigns than do those who did attend university, who are more comfortable with informal understandings.

This, of course, also hearkens back to the very reason that the Arts Plans were implemented in the first place: to democratize the Irish arts. Colm Ó Briain, one of the Plans’ original architects, mentioned this very issue to me. The idea of deferring to the
standards of excellence set by the educated luminaries of the field, he said, was an
abdication of political responsibility.

A political class have been given permission to shrug it off saying,
it’s an aesthetic question. We’re not competent to discuss aesthetic
questions. I think it’s a civil rights question.⁵⁰

This is a strong challenge to the idea of collegiality, and, like many challenges, can be very
helpful in defining what it is challenging. Essential to the idea of a Bourdieusian
autonomous field is the ability to define the things it values (its capitals) independently of
the larger economic or political sphere. That definition is grounded in the field’s doxa and is
set by an internal debate. Yet, the field also needs to be cohesive enough to be able to make
such a definition, however contested and provisional. A field that cannot define a capital of
its own is not autonomous; one that cannot define a capital at all is not a field. In that the
theatrical field is defined by theatrical quality, it is defined by and requires collegiality; that
is the centripetal force that allows the field to define itself as (potentially) autonomous. The
end result of Ó Briain’s contention that aesthetic questions such as quality are properly civil
rights questions and thus concerns of general public policy would be to deny that the arts
are in the end separate fields, making any discussion of their autonomy, in the largest sense,
moot.

It is important to stress that this is a minority opinion at best, and those who hold it
have a nuanced understanding of the relationship of the arts to politics; they feel that the
politically appropriate role for policymakers with regard to the arts is a hands-off one, and
they are very far from calling for the imposition of a sort of neo-socialist realism. And yet,
one of the consequences of expanding the pool of theatremakers to those with a very
different habitus is a straining of assumptions about the nature and importance of
collegiality. Although there are mechanisms in place to overcome this strain—the freelance
system, conferences and meetings, the smallness and friendliness of the community—and
these are largely effective, they do have their gaps. Collegiality depends for its function on
a collective agreement among theatremakers that they are all doing their job together and on
a common doxic understanding of what that job is. Educational gaps eat away at that feeling
of community, leaving questions of fairness and democracy that are difficult to answer.

⁵⁰ Colm Ó Briain, interview with the author, 30 April 2008.
An aside: external capitals

In addition to funding, development, and collegiality, there are a number of external capitals that are crucial in mapping out the place of some Irish theatremakers in the field. These external capitals parallel (and are related to) Schatzki’s dispersed practices in that they are neither exclusive to nor definitive of theatre as a field. They can be pursued in fields other than theatre (often more effectively), and they are valued by those fields as well. It is not that the theatre sees these as unworthy goals, but as less-than-fully-theatrical ones. They are therefore not as important as the three intrinsic capitals in shaping the field.

My research has found three external capitals: education, social change, and profit.

Theatre in Education (TIE) is an important subsector of the Irish theatre. There are a trio of companies working in this area, one each in Cork, Dublin, and Kilkenny.\(^{51}\) In institutional terms, these are some of the largest and most established companies in the country, with staffs of as many as five or six. They also produce more performances and events per year than non-TIE companies their size. Those I spoke with insisted that though they have an educational goal in the broadest sense and were interested in serving children and young people, they were theatre companies as well, and wished to be evaluated on the same terms as other theatre companies. They compete for funding (and say that they are aware of their place on the funding ladder), they seek to be good theatrical colleagues and uphold standards (Graffiti, mentioned above as a collegial model, is Cork’s TIE company), and they also try to develop the practice (commissioning new plays and researching new ways of working, for instance). The Arts Plans made arts for young people a priority, and thus they receive substantial Arts Council grants, generally on the order of those given to mid-to-large-sized mainstream companies. Because of their educational focus, however, they do not receive the same level of respect or accolades.\(^{52}\) One TIE company complained that *Irish Theatre Magazine* had never reviewed any of their productions. ("We had an argument about it. They’re reviewing our next show.") The magazine is a quarterly specialist journal for the field that tries to review every professional show on the island. I asked one TIE theatremaker if they minded this lack of respect: "I think we went through that, and then we came out the other side and said, fuck ‘em. If they’re not interested, let

\(^{51}\) A fourth company, Red Kettle of Waterford, has a young audience’s wing (Little Red Kettle).

\(^{52}\) One explanation for this is that, as their audiences are largely children and they perform in non-traditional venues (i.e., schools), they are simply less visible to their colleagues than non-TIE companies. This may be true; I do not mean to imply that theatremakers are somehow against educational theatre. But it would still imply that the goods for the sake of which TIE companies sacrifice visibility are not, by the standards of the field, worth the cost. The tradeoff is thus not explicable from within the field. Even if the visibility explanation has merit, then, it changes little.
them alone.” Respect from teachers, international youth theatre professionals, or students—that is, outsiders—does not replace collegiality as a field capital. The field evaluates TIE companies on the same basis as other companies, and TIE companies receive no extra credit for its educational achievements.

The second external capital is social change, or peace and reconciliation. A pair of companies, Upstate Theatre Project in Drogheda and Calypso in Dublin, pursue theatre with an explicit social agenda. Upstate has a particular interest in using theatre to promote peace and reconciliation efforts in the areas around the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Calypso is interested in the ways that “theatre, with its vast imaginative resources, can be a catalyst for social change.” Both are evaluated on the same criteria as other companies and without regard to their direct social agenda, no matter how sympathetic many in the field are to it personally. The general manager of Upstate told me that most “theatre people don’t care” about the community-engaged side of his company’s work, and that while the Arts Council’s theatre team “appreciates” it, “we never thought they were funding it.”

Finally, there are the few commercial theatre operators in Ireland who respond, of course, to the profit motive. While they are small in number, commercial productions are in the largest venues and can purchase the most publicity. Very often, these productions originate from outside Ireland or at least are Irish stagings of Broadway-style scripts (such as Annie). The use of theatre to make money is seen as impressive by some theatremakers, but I could not find one who aspired to it as a goal. Actors and others are naturally happy to participate in commercial productions for the financial rewards, but they are not, as a rule, regarded as developmentally interesting. They are also not generally perceived as promoting camaraderie within the practice or pushing for professional standards. They also receive no Arts Council funding.

Overlaps and conflicts: the concept of niche

The three basic capitals of theatre interact with each other in complex ways. Unlike Bourdieu’s economic and cultural capital, the presence of one capital does not necessarily correlate positively or negatively with another. In different cases, the capitals can encourage

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54 Paul Hayes, interview with the author, 13 August 2008. Since this interview, the Arts Council has moved Upstate from the theatre portfolio to its “arts participation” strand, which Hayes calls a “complete change of strategy.” (Personal communication, 24 June 2009). As of 2009, the Arts Council is funding Upstate’s community work. But it does not (and according to Hayes never did) fund it as theatre.
or discourage each other’s growth. A company that produces developmentally interesting work, for instance, may see its funding rise as a consequence, as might one that maintains high standards of professionalism. In contrast, a company that focuses too much on maintaining standards at the expense of developing new ideas may see a decline in the interest of the rest of the field, and its funding may fall as a result. Funding can be cashed in for development or collegiality, and vice versa. Even development, when pursued long enough and collaboratively enough, can encourage collegial capital.

The nature of a social field governed by a sens practique is that those who work in it are free to take up complex and novel positions in the context of the field as it exists, and that those position-taking acts consequently change the shape of the field. It is not possible, then, to give a complete description of all possible interactions of these capitals, and any attempt to do so would be rather tedious. As a demonstrative example, I will look at the interactions between the three capitals through one particular conceptual case: the idea of the ‘niche’ for a theatremaker or company to fit into. I choose this example both because it is a central concern to many of my interviewees and because of its resonances with the notion of position-taking, the part of Bourdieusian theory most directly applied to the theatrical field by Shevtsova. Almost any social actions within a field can be seen as examples of position-taking by Bourdieu, whereas niche-filling is a once-in-a-generation action. But the concept of a field composed of niches meshes very well with Bourdieu’s ideas about how social actors shape a field through their choices.

Recall that the first (1994) Arts Plan was very explicit about the desire to fund particular companies to fill certain niches, going so far as to name a few companies and their perceived niche in its text.55 Needless to say, simply “making art” is too broad to be considered a niche. Enid Reid Whyte, a long-serving theatre advisor to the Council, said in an interview that for the Irish theatre to function well:

you need a certain critical mass. So the Arts Council in this small country, as it does in many big countries, niche funds. So it makes sure that we provide theatre across a wide range of practices.

The explicitness of this niche policy, as well as the Plans’ push for a higher level of professionalization, led the field to see theatre companies as fillers of a niche; that is, as more of brand than a group of artistic collaborators. The equation was well understood.

“Because you’re being given taxpayers’ money,” said one interviewee, “you’re expected to come up with a certain kind of work.” A company’s fortunes, then, follow not only the quality of its work, but the vitality of its niche and its ability to fill it. One interviewee

explained that Arts Council decisions “were sometimes not about excellent work, but about the remit of the excellent work.” If that remit was set aside or lost social importance, the company that had filled it could see their stock of capital fall precipitously. Another interviewee gave a fairly common explanation for a recent Council decision to de-fund a long-established company not by questioning the quality or innovativeness of the work, but by saying, “it was hard to see what they were for.”

Niches are, in other words, part of the objective conditions of the field to which Irish theatremakers need to relate. There is nothing inherently wrong with this. Artists tend to develop particular interests and talents over the course of their careers, and it would be nearly impossible to achieve technical excellence without this specialization. Venue managers and funders also find these niches extremely useful in making sense of the field, as do arts journalists. However, they do not seem to be as clearly operative for the public. Though many theatre companies claim to have built up an audience base over the years, most marketing and venue managers I spoke with said that only Ireland’s four largest companies have reputation enough to draw in audiences. In other cases, potential audience members make decisions on the basis of posters, actors known from the cinema or television, or recognizable titles or playwrights. Those theatremakers who have done some audience research often report their frustration that audiences were not able to recognize the niche their company filled. One surveyed attendees at their company’s productions and found that the audience seemed unaware of the rest of that company’s work:

I was surprised by how little crossover there was. I was disappointed in that. I would have hoped that, given that at this stage I’ve been in the [venue] every year for the past four years, that people would actually have started to join the dots. Some of them have, but fewer than I expected.

Niche companies, then, are not really an audience need or demand; they seem to function more as part of the practice of theatremaking and theatre policy work than that of theatregoing. The audience’s relative indifference contrasts with most theatremakers’ insistence that there is a specific niche that their work fills. More than 75% of those surveyed agreed that they “know where [their] work fits into the landscape of Irish theatre.” These niches were not necessarily as unique as theatremakers often claimed: for example, multiple companies claimed the particular niche of new Irish work (with varying definitions of new work). Nonetheless they provided a social identity for the theatremakers in the field of Irish theatre. They offered a position to occupy, in Bourdieusian terms, from which new acts of position-taking could be launched. Without that initial location from which to start, no move in the game could be made.
There is nothing necessary or natural about companies small enough to fill a niche. Their development, I would argue, is a form of ‘grant-reactive behaviour’—it is a response to the funding policies (and practices) of the Arts Council. Of course, most artists naturally develop some sort of specialization over the course of their careers for the sake of focus and quality. But the combination of company-as-director-facilitator and niche funding causes the Irish theatre company to function in unusual ways. Niches can encourage professionalism, but they can also promote stagnation. Many of my interviewees talked about their desire to push themselves out of a niche:

Because as an artist, you’re exploring and you’re discovering and you’re finding new frontiers in the world and also in yourself and in your work. And I think that should be encouraged. And yet sometimes, as a theatremaker or a theatre company, you’re forced to find a niche and stick to it.

The classic sociological term for this need to ‘explore and discover’ free of social constraints is autonomy. It is the potential for this sort of autonomy that led Adorno and others to take such an interest in the fine arts as one of the possible sites of resistance to the insidious and powerful social forces which subjugate modern life. These are the same forces, of course, that establish a person’s social identity, which is a virtual necessity for any social action. Above, I argued that this autonomy, in the form of personal artistic growth, was distinct from developmental capital, and that this distinction was understood by the field. Here, I want to note that regardless of the mechanics of the field’s cultural capitalism, in that Irish theatremakers are “forced” to “stick to” their niches, they are less autonomous, and for artists as artists, this is deeply frustrating.

The concept of niche relates to each of the three capitals differently. Niches were developed in response to the needs of the funding system, and they most closely relate to this form of capital. Nurturing a secure, unique niche over a long period of time is seen as—and, by the data, appears to be—the most effective way to secure stable and reliable funding from the Arts Council. There are, of course, problems with this relationship. All niches are, by definition, limited in scope, and some are rather small. In that the Arts Council uses niches to organize and structure companies and their work, it also places a rather firm upper limit on their potential for growth. One company, Yew Tree Theatre of Ballina (in County Mayo on Ireland’s western coast), is one of the oldest and smallest of the established companies. Since 2000, it has been stuck on a grant of about €70,000 each year, even as the Arts Council’s budget has nearly doubled. Even if Yew Tree has more ambitious plans (as, per the doxic value of development, they undoubtedly do), the small niche they fill does not allow for much growth.
Efforts to broaden a company’s remit are often seen as straying from the niche, and are not rewarded by the Council. Also, some niches are more unique than others. “New work,” for instance, is a niche that many companies claim as their own. There can be, and often have been, misunderstandings between the Council and companies as to exactly what is supposed to be new about such work. Such confusion can lead to unhelpful and unproductive second-guessing of an Arts Council intent that may not be articulated.

The niche system can both encourage and discourage development. At the simplest level, the companies that my interviewees most respected for their novelty and creativity were those that had a strong, clear niche, particularly one based on physical, precisely stylized, and site-specific performance (what one practitioner of the form half-mockingly called “jumping-up-and-down theatre”). A long-term engagement with a particular mode of theatremaking is a prerequisite for expertise in it, and if the one believes that artistic innovation comes out of this kind of expert engagement, niches should be seen as promoting development. However, niches can be generational in the same way that theatre companies that hold them are. (No one would have considered verbatim theatre a niche in Ireland twenty years ago; now, a case could be made.) In this context, then, the most obvious means of field development is the creation of new niches, with new, younger, companies to fill them. If everyone is expected to do exactly what they do best, then the desire for new models is a means of pulling new practitioners in and pushing older ones out. Holding to an ossified niche—which, at the extreme, seems to be what the funding regimen asks of practitioners—is thus antithetical to development. It discourages, if not outright prevents, established theatremakers from working in new ways.

If there was, in fact, a constant stream of new voices coming into the field, this might be an effective system, however difficult it would be for the people involved. But the tenure of funding capital—established companies’ security that they will not easily be cut—is very strong, and all-out cuts, while greatly feared, are extremely rare. This has to do with collegiality, but it also is a consequence of the niche system. A company which performs its niche work reliably and well for years is doing what it is supposed to in a way that no other company can (or is allowed to), and thus is nearly impossible to cut. In times of economic prosperity, a few new niches can be added to give some sort of developmental growth, but in poor times, the favoring of the established over the emerging means that longevity, not development, is the key to stability. From a developmental perspective, the niche model does encourage depth of work, but it makes the system as a whole rigid and incapable of responding rapidly to changing circumstances or artistic tastes.
One method that the system seems to have developed for dealing with this problem is the creation of a niche that is itself characterized by attention to formal development—usually known as ‘experimental.’ Dublin-based companies such as Operating Theatre and Pan Pan can be said to fill this role; though both have a significant international presence and are thus on the margins of the Irish theatrical field, they have both been funded by the Arts Council to make (and bring in) experimental work since 1997. This solution is, however, problematic. No thea remaker or company can be expected consistently to come up with entirely new ideas; some level of specialization is inevitable and necessary. More importantly, this is not the nature of a cultural capital such as development. It is not sufficient that it be present at some location in the field; it is a measure of value against which all players in the field are evaluated, whether or not they wish to be, and one that has effects on all of their acts of position-taking. ‘Development’ can no more be a niche than ‘funding’ can.

At first glance, collegiality seems to be a better fit for the niche-based system than development. The mechanist idea of the field is that the system as a whole works best when each individual piece is most effective, with niches amalgamating themselves into a coherent whole. This harmonic arrangement serves everyone: it allows artists to focus on and develop expertise in their particular area without duplicating each other’s efforts, and it ensures that theatergoers have a range and breadth of options. Differentiation by niche manages the collegial relationship, preventing head-to-head competition while facilitating the adoption of standards that cut across specialization.

But this of course does not function so simply in practice. A field coheres socially and not mechanically; positions taken up are not fixed slots but rather developing sites of identity and relationship under constant negotiation. Niches themselves do not begin with equal status. By the measures of development and funding, some niches are inherently more valuable than others. The large-scale work of the Abbey Theatre, for instance, or the experimental and hip work shown at the Project Arts Centre start with a higher level of capital than their rivals because of the values placed on those two tasks, regardless of how well the Abbey and Project carry them out. Much of the reason for Shevtsova’s insistence that we see Bourdieusian position-taking as a social act comes from her interest in the warping effect that these acts can have on the field. By taking up a position, an actor can add to (or subtract from) the capitals that position holds within the field. A powerful agent who takes up a low-status position suddenly raises that position’s status, like a trendsetter moving to a (formerly) less desirable neighbourhood. Collegiality, however, prevents such a move within the concept of niche. Best standards and convivial practice require each
company to do its own job, not another one. Rather than moving from one niche to another, a theatre company that truly decided to move niche is more likely to shut down and reform under a new name. Needless to say, this is costly and rare.

The ideal niche would be one that was once revolutionary and inspiring for a generation of theatremakers, and then defended with the highest of standards for decades thereafter. It would be able to evolve enough to create genuine formal novelty and yet be consistent enough that a tradition of work, measures of quality, and relationships with the rest of the field could be formed. Druid is the closest to having achieved this balance between development and collegiality, and it has been rewarded for it with ever-growing funding and continued respect (despite, or because of, its great commercial successes in the U.K. and U.S.). But this ideal is impossible even for Druid to fully achieve, and hard for others to even consider. Few niches offer such a combination of power, stability, and flexibility. More often, the specificity of the niche is a means by which the structure of the field, collegially enforced, keeps a company from developmental or funding growth and anchors it in the same kind of work it has been doing for a long time. In exchange for this inertia, companies are given stability; long-term small companies such as Yew Tree and Tall Tales can continue drawing small levels of funding and development capital and gain a position as reliable cogs in the Irish theatre machine.

Some may find that adopting of a niche provides all the social capital they need or desire, but for most, it is frustratingly limited and engenders a felt need to break out. One interviewee called it “stultifying.” What strategies do theatremakers use, then, to push back against these formal restrictions? My interviews show four, used either independently or in tandem. From least to most common, they are a refusal to participate, multiplicity, freelancing, and mockery.

First, there are a few theatremakers in Ireland who refuse to get involved with the niche/company structure at all. I asked the leader of one if their group could be called a company:

No. Starting from there, we don’t want to, because we don’t want to fall into these games .... the established theatre conventions here in Ireland, having to follow the same pattern in terms of keeping the Arts Council happy, and money, and just ignoring that and not even touching it.

This interviewee made it clear that it was not aesthetic conventions to which they objected to but rather structural and, in particular, financial constraints that were mediated by the Arts Council’s funding process. “When did theatre have money?” they added. “We cannot aspire to be something we are not. We are artists. We are not businessmen.” The desire not
to participate in "these games" meant that the group was not a company, it had no resources (an office, etc.) to support the making of work, it did not apply for Arts Council funding, and its members were not paid for their work. The group was nearly off the radar of the Irish theatrical field, performing only rarely in Ireland and almost never in venues considered prominent. My interviewee said that they saw their group as more European than Irish, and indeed, they had performed in festivals abroad far more often than they had domestically.

This solution is of course extreme, and very few theatremakers who seek to make a career out of it would choose this course. (This interviewee made a living through television work and social welfare payments.) It is not just that this total rejection of the system causes financial hardship. More importantly, this group received essentially no respect or even notice from their fellow theatremakers, not even recognition of their autonomy. This is a profoundly lonely position, far different from the valorized rebel of the Romantics and, of course, a very hard one for a social human being to sustain.

Second, there is the strategy of multiplicity, which relies on the fact that it is companies, and not artists as such, that occupy particular niches. For a beginning director, setting up a single company is sufficient to establish a position in the field. But since this might lead to the anti-autonomous restriction of niche-filling, many directors opt, if they can, to maintain relationships with two companies. Moreover, when directors move from one company to another, they rarely leave their old company fully behind, even if it falls completely inactive. One director described a company they had founded over a decade before as "still there, on the back burner," even though it had done no work and conducted no business for the past six years. Maintaining an ability to work under a different banner if necessary was a fairly common answer to the problem of autonomy.

It also says something about the nature of an Irish theatre company. Dormant companies that have not worked for years, or those whose charismatic founder spends much of their time on other projects, are still companies. And if a company is a brand that is designed to fill a niche, it can be taken out and put away as need be. Certainly, a company which produces no work for years loses prestige (and funding), but this is not to say that it ceases to exist. In that it still provides a potential platform for work to be made, it still functions as a company ought. In fact, if the company structure was much heavier (a permanent paid staff, building, etc.), this moving back and forth between platforms would be far more difficult, and the autonomy safety valve of multiple platforms, something many Irish theatremakers value, would be shut off.
This relates to the third strategy: freelancing. Until quite recently, there have been very few opportunities for freelance directors to work in Ireland. ("Who employed freelance directors?" said one middle-aged interviewee. "Only the Abbey and the Gate, and not much.") But also until recently, there was a tremendous flexibility in the roles people took in the theatremaking process. In the past, especially when funded through the FÁS Community Employment scheme, it was not unusual to have actors move into design, directorial, technical, or administrative roles or vice versa. Most directors began as actors; those who have formal training nearly always were trained as actors. (There are no university-level director training programmes in Ireland.) Stepping into the role of a freelancer allows theatremakers to make work outside of their own company's niche. As a consequence, however, they are making work under another company's niche, and they are in a weaker position to control the overall project. When possible, heads of theatre companies are more interested in working as freelancers (generally as actors, as this is what is most often available) with the largest companies—the Abbey, Gate, and Druid. They may also work abroad, direct a student production, or work in television or cinema. While these opportunities are not numerous, it is rare to find a successful leader of a theatre company who does not spend some small part of their time on outside projects.

Finally, theatremakers can simply mock the process of niche-finding and company-building. There are a number of structured forums for complaints: the industry advocacy group Theatre Forum organizes a major conference each summer, and the Arts Council convenes listening sessions and discussion groups whenever a new policy or programme is proposed or simply to check in from time to time. Though these are often billed as consultations, most theatremakers understand quite well that they have a negligible impact on policy. One interviewee expressed a very common view about such sessions:

Then you begin to think, this is ridiculous. This isn’t actually listening. There’s an awful lot of pretense of consultation—my God, how many focus groups meetings?.... And you’d sit there and you’d say what you felt next year’s policy should be, and an outside consultant would take notes, and then you’d find out that none of it ended up in [the policy document].

Despite this, these forums are generally very well-attended; theatremakers are anxious to express their opinions publicly, even if to no effect on policy. When the economic crisis erupted in 2008, a great many meetings were called to discuss and voice opinions, and by 2009 an avowedly political advocacy campaign had been established to convince members
of the Dáil, the Irish parliament, to maintain funding to the arts. Even without Arts Council representatives present, funding policy is a major topic of discussion among Irish theatremakers. This discussion is often hard, if not impossible, to separate from concerns about the development of theatre as an art form. One actor spoke of a more senior theatremaker’s
effort to create a forum to talk about theatre and to talk about these ideas that people talk about in pubs and cafes ….. It’s funny because after a couple of meetings, everybody started to talk about funding, and started to talk about the Arts Council … And [the leader] cut it, because that wasn’t the goal. The goal was to talk about theatre, not about funding.

Of course the funding discussion in this forum was not designed to change policy, any more than the countless pub discussions of the Arts Council are expected to lead to action. This conversational turn from the aesthetics of theatre to funding is common in many contexts, and while there are occasional tips and tricks exchanged, much of the discussion consists of complaints and wild speculation. But this, I would argue, serves a vital purpose. If niches in fact diminish autonomy in Irish theatremaking, it is all the more important for theatremakers whose standing is so diminished to have a public opportunity, or at least one in the company of their colleagues, to acknowledge and commiserate that fact. Grumbling about politics may not be particularly productive, but it is a form of resistance, however small. It is an acknowledgement of the forces that shape the field’s conditions, even if it also acknowledges the difficulty in changing them.

**Misrecognition**

These complaints and mockings are not incompatible with the acceptance of the existing theatrical power structure; one can, and many do, complain about that which one nevertheless accepts. But they are the opposite of méconnaissance. They are an indication, if a small one, that the structuring values of the Irish theatre have not become wholly naturalized; that is, that Irish theatremakers are aware of the gap between the apparent and the actual values that structure their work. One cannot complain about something that is wholly invisible.

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56 The effort included an extraordinary meeting of Theatre Forum in Dublin in January 2009, another meeting on production models in April and the bulk of sessions of the organization’s 2009 annual conference in Wexford in June, as well as a series of by-invitation consultations that the Arts Council conducted in June and July 2009. The political campaign included petitions, telephone campaigns, newspaper letter-writing drives and the establishment of arts workers interest groups in each parliamentary constituency.
The problem with treating this complaining acceptance as a form of resistance is that it seems to have no effect on the actual function of theatre companies. This is correct, but again, it points to a difference between the directors of theatre companies, who complain often, and the companies themselves, which cannot do so. It is not that companies, being corporate entities, cannot complain: in the right circumstance, they can and do use the press for that purpose. When the Arts Council makes a decision to make a substantial cut to a particular company’s funding, it can expect the company to instigate a response in the press. But such protests are always specific appeals against a particular decision; they do not address the Arts Council’s power as such and never extend to mockery. Formal objections, passed through proper channels and phrased in the first person plural, are not a form of resistance to the system so much as they are appeals to it. Compare the objections publicly voiced against recent funding decisions with the protests sparked by the 1982 decision to discontinue funding to the Irish Theatre Company. The 1982 decision provoked front-page articles, marches in front of the Arts Council’s offices, and specific attacks on the Council’s decision-making authority both from the actors’ union and in the press. The 2008 closure of three smaller companies (Galoglass, Storytellers, and Calypso)—admittedly a less structurally significant cut that was made in the face of economic downturn, but nonetheless a radical move by historical standards—could provoke no stronger reaction than this one from the chair of one of the cut companies: “I don’t think anyone knows how these decisions are made.”

The existence of complaints, thus, is somewhat unfocused and inadequate evidence of the absence of méconnaissance. For an adequate evaluation, one needs to return to the definition of the term: namely, practitioners’ necessarily incorrect identification of the values that structure their work. The question that must be asked is this: is there a gap between the values that theatremakers believe to structure the field, and those that objectively do?

No there is not, or at least not one of any significance. In my interviews, I asked my respondents both about how they located themselves in the field and how they placed others. While there were differences in the means of measuring one’s own location from that of others, the criteria were the same. Funding, development, and collegial reputation were the values that theatremakers used to assess both their own and others’ place in the

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58 For more of this, see above, p. 103.
59 Crawley, “Fall of the Small after Unkindest Cuts of All.”
field. And in examining the actual respect and resources given to various companies, these, too, align with the three capitals (with a few small but important exceptions). That is, theatremakers by and large seem to have correctly assessed the objective conditions under which their work is made, and have organized their practical work to be in alignment with these conditions. The means that theatremakers have used to assess the distribution of capital are certainly more accurate than, for example, Arts Council policy documents, audience figures, or the review pages of the *Irish Times*.

This is not to argue, of course, that all theatremakers have a perfectly accurate understanding of the conditions of their field, or even that they all share the one presented here. Different interviewees had different perspectives; the three capitals I have laid out in this part are my effort to consolidate and summarize what I heard in partial manner from many sources. I would expect my interviewees to take issue with the details of my consolidation, while still agreeing that these three values exist and have significance. The largest point of disagreement is on their relative importance. Those theatremakers whose work focuses on the maintenance of high artistic standards, for instance, are likely to place a higher value on collegiality than on development or funding. Such differences of perspective underlie Bourdieu’s call for reflexivity in the academic world, a quality most theatremakers demonstrate. In contrast, I have been unable to find many examples of systemic blindnesses to objective conditions, which one would expect if méconnaissance was a structural property of the field. I can see no evidence that the Irish theatre is a tool to continue class or ethnic divisions, for example, that is not articulated and wrestled with by theatremakers themselves.

In artistic fields, the standard (even clichéd) Bourdieusian understanding of méconnaissance is that, in thinking they are serving their own creativity, artists are in fact building useful social capital that can eventually be cashed in. Sociologists are expected to see through such a facade.⁶⁰ In this case, however, that gap does not seem to exist. Claims of labouring only in the service of personal creativity were met with far more scepticism than enthusiasm, and such work was often condemned outright as “mental masturbation” or “pointlessness” (both terms used repeatedly in my interviews). Those who undertook this

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⁶⁰ Bourdieu writes: “‘Symbolic capital’ is to be understood as economic or political capital that is disavowed, misrecognized and thereby recognized, hence legitimate, a ‘credit’ which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees ‘economic’ profits.” Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 75. In other words, though they do not recognize it as such, theatremakers acquire symbolic capital because it will be convertible into economic profits. By making this statement (especially with the word ‘almost’), Bourdieu is claiming an ability as a sociologist to see something (the true nature of symbolic capital) that his subjects cannot.
sort of ‘pure’ work despite such condemnations were often correct in their assessment of its limited potential for accruing social capital. It was not so much production for other producers as production for themselves (at its extreme, it attracted an audience only of personal friends). This was a tradeoff that some artists were willing to make, and based on the personal value that they placed on their own opportunities for personal self-expression, it was reasonable. But it was, strictly speaking, an antisocial decision. Irish theatremakers were correctly able to differentiate between unattached creativity, on the one hand, and developmental capital useful to the future of the field, on the other. Any claim to the first that an interviewee made would almost immediately be followed by a statement that it was the latter which was in fact more important. This is not a misrecognition of social capitalization as artistic creativity or the opposite; it is a socially astute differentiation between the two.

There are, however, a few consistent gaps which are not quite what a Bourdieusian reading would expect. They speak not so much to theatremakers’ (mis)understanding of the capitals at work in the field as to an inability to see facts and to evaluate their own position in the field—in other words, they are failures of reflexivity. Interviewees systematically underestimated their own place on the hierarchies of development and funding. Even though many responders knew the exact number of euro their companies received in grant from the Council and could name correctly where they stood in relation to companies that were either above or below them, all but the most highly placed interviewees said that this put their companies at a below-average place on the funding ladder. (To be sure, when I pressed them on this point, most conceded that they might be wrong.) Moreover, many interviewees also underestimated the respect their colleagues had for their formal innovation in developing the field. This gap was less ubiquitous than the understatement of funding; those with a relatively high level of developmental capital who were likely to understate it, while those with less made a more accurate assessment.

Such systematic understatements do not, I think, add up to misrecognition in any sense that Bourdieu would recognize. Rather, they speak both to the general difficulty that many social actors have in assessing their own reputation and to a specifically Irish disinclination for self-aggrandizement. Both are also related to the value of collegiality. The value that the field places on collegiality means that the explicit measurement of social capitals (including collegiality) is itself a violation of the doxa of the field that insist on a

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61 For example, one interviewee told me the long story of their successful breakout production and how new and exciting it was, ending with the line, ‘That’s the production that launched [my company] for me. It seemed to be something necessary.’
basic level of commonality in the practice (what Victor Turner would call normative communitas). This is part of what makes the funding ladder so controversial—it cannot but be explicit—and the other field capitals so difficult to discuss. The embarrassment reported by many theatremakers when trying to describe their place in the field is part of this disinclination to be explicit. The difficulty in locating one’s self with regards to these capitals is a structural problem, not a matter of individual tastes or preferences. It is a consequence of the basic collegiality theatremakers need to accept in order to be considered part of the field. This is where the technique of reflexivity may prove helpful.

The major problem for Irish theatremakers in negotiating positions in the field is not misperception but the confusing and complex interactions of multiple capitals. Rather than a misrecognition of one clear and simple reality as another, theatremakers deal with a reality which, though they correctly recognize its outlines, is never simple and rarely clear. Individuals have difficulty assessing their own stock of capitals, and these capitals can change rapidly and interact with each other in unpredictable ways. Moreover, the small but significant gap between the individual theatremaker and the company around them make the assessment of just who has what capital even more difficult. None of these concerns were an issue for Bourdieu, who treated actors in possession of cultural capital as (potentially) specifiable points on a map or as atoms with a definable location and trajectory. Irish theatremakers, in contrast, are more like quantum entities, occupying an indeterminable location and direction until an artificial (and destabilizing) measurement is made.

Yet this distinction is not, in fact, a radical departure from a Bourdieusian model of fields of cultural production; it is rather a filling-out Bourdieu’s own (earlier) idea that the sens pratique is different and fundamentally incompatible with the sens logique. There is something a bit brazenly logicist about Bourdieu’s charts of the capitalist system of cultural production, something he likely would have noticed and critiqued if another anthropologist had applied to the Kabyle. In his assertion that field positionings are inherently bidirectional and thus knowable through mapping, Bourdieu falls prey to his own mapmaker’s fallacy:

... like the map which substitutes the homogeneous, continuous space of geometry for the discontinuous, patchy space of practical pathways, the calendar substitutes a linear, homogeneous, continuous
time for practical time, which is made up of islands of incommensurable duration, each with its own rhythm...

Put somewhat differently, if practical logic is in fact distinct from discursive logic, why should we assume that the former will be easier to follow, more correct, or more accurate than the latter? Bourdieu himself often emphasizes that practical actors develop a ‘feel for the game,’ an ability to navigate these patchy islands. His interest is in showing how this ‘feel’ can function effectively even in the absence of a logical structure. Yet developing and deploying this feel for the game can be a challenge as great as following the rules of logic. Social self-positioning is hard work, and many do not do it as well as they could. This is neither new, interesting, nor particular to the fields of cultural production.

There is no reason, though, to equate this navigational difficulty with misrecognition. I have been unable to find systematic forces shaping the field that escape the awareness of theatremakers themselves, even if it is difficult for them to place themselves among these forces and predict their outcomes. The larger sociological question of the functioning of a non-misrecognizing practice will be dealt with in the conclusion. For now, it is important simply to note that the field’s lack of misrecognition does not mean that its functioning is entirely smooth or unproblematic. The three capitals identified in this part are all complex and contested measurements on which theatremakers locate themselves with difficulty. Their interactions are unpredictable and situation-dependent. And external forces are very powerful, as the recent economic crisis makes clear. Despite this, I maintain that these three values represent a comprehensive and fair mapping of the internal forces shaping the practice of theatremaking in Ireland. When theatremakers aim for respect, prominence, importance, or social status, it is these three capitals that they are aiming for. An understanding of their workings and relationships is necessary to allow theatremakers to go on in their work, and is also essential for any academic description of what the Irish theatre is and does.

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62 Bourdieu, Logic, 84. Bourdieu addresses the related issue of the ‘diagram’ a few pages earlier in the same work, p. 81ff.
Conclusion: Knowing in One Sense

Misrecognition absent

The previous two parts have described the workings of two of the three integrative practices of the Irish theatrical field—theatremaking and policy work. I have shown that the two practices do not, in fact, exhibit signs of Bourdieusian misrecognition. Theatremakers are able to correctly identify the capitals, or values, for which they are competing and that organize the structure of the theatremaking practice. Policy workers are also able to see the actual values (politics, tradition, stability) that shape how they go about the business of funding, and they know that these values are often more potent than written policy documents or statutory mandates. I have not found that those who are part of either practice think they are pursuing one thing (personal creativity, a logical structure) when in fact they are pursuing something else. While they may lack information or find it difficult to evaluate their own stores of capital, they do not think the capitals being pursued are other than what they are. They are, in other words, cognizant of the workings of their own field.

I want to emphasize that, in both cases, this cognizance can be observed because it does not result in a perfect congruence of the ideal and the actual. Though practitioners understand the way their practices work, they are not generally happy with the situation; they wish it were otherwise. Thus, policy workers such as Phelim Donlon express their opinion that policy work would have been more effective if it had actually followed the logical principles set out in the Arts Plans,¹ and theatremakers think the system would be more effective and just if they could simply make the work that they wish to and not play the “games” that the system of funding, development, and collegiality demands.² Both theatremakers and policy workers feel themselves unable to practice their work the way they would like, and that impossibility only makes the (sorry) reality of the actual workings of practices all the more apparent.

¹ See above, p. 156.
² See above, p. 211.
There remain, however, certain facts that individual practitioners are unable to see because of the position they have taken up in the field. These gaps are not instances of the practice-wide blindness that defined Bourdieusian *méconnaissance* but are rather specific blind spots inherent to particular field positions. The two clearest examples are the parallel assumptions among theatremakers that they are in danger of de-funding and among policymakers that small increases and decreases in grants were an effective means of managing the field. Neither assumption is borne out by the data, and yet both play a significant role in the practical intelligibility of theatremaking and policy work, respectively. These are obviously the sorts of minor problem that Bourdieu suggests can be solved by reflexivity, both as an individual and collective discipline. But this reflexivity seems to be doing much more work than Bourdieu allows for it to do in the academic realm. In the Irish, it seems to pull the ground out from under those unhelpful and unnecessary assumptions that ought to be identified at the field’s *méconnaissance*. What has been achieved here, which Bourdieu suggests ought to be impossible, is not just self-reflexivity but cognizance. That is a fatal flaw in Bourdieu’s theory.

Indeed, it is not hard to see the Arts Council’s recent push for collegiality-building institutions as steps in that direction. There is further to go, of course, but one of the important outcomes of the Arts Plans was to encourage this kind of cognizance among both theatremakers and policy workers. Self-critical reflection is valued by the field, and it is practiced with a minimum of fuss. Some methods of encouraging that cognizance have been more helpful than others. The Council’s efforts at sociological data-gathering, for instance, have not had much of an impact on the practical intelligibility of independent theatremaking, nor, frankly, did they have much influence on the Council’s own work. Field-wide discussions and face-to-face forums with the Arts Council, in contrast, were far more effective in encouraging reflexivity in both theatremaking and policy work. These sociological studies addressed important issues such as the low wage levels that prevail in the industry, but they did not engage with the tensions at play within the field. They were addressed, rather, to external pressures, principally the need to attain a larger budgetary allocation from the central government. In this sense, they succeeded admirably. Yet they were never intended to, nor did they, help bring theatremakers’ practical understandings of their work into line with their rational organizational schema.

While not without hurdles, this cognizance was achieved fairly unproblematically, and theatremakers are aware of their place in the field even as they seek to make their work in terms that can have little to do with the field. This absence of *méconnaissance* seems
obvious and unremarkable from the practitioners’ perspective. The problem, as I argued above, is ours: the theory of practices and fields, which demands the concept of méconnaissance, cannot adequately describe, much less explain, a situation that theatremakers and policy workers find themselves in as a matter of course. From the perspective of social theory, this situation is not acceptable.

The problem of the sens practique

As a solution, I would suggest that Bourdieu’s first major theoretical contribution to the theory of cultural sociology may need to be questioned. Certainly, the idea of a sens practique that works from the habitus to create a practical understanding operative in a particular field was a useful theoretical development; it was a major innovation over voluntarist and structuralist theories that treated social agents as either wholly rational decision-makers or as mere bearers of cultural patterns. And it is entirely possible that fields still exist in which the theoretical arsenal of The Logic of Practice is all that is needed for a sociologically sufficient explanation of the practices within them. But the Irish independent theatre is not one of those fields. In fact, as globalization and interdependence increase, the world’s “charming” societies will become increasingly rare, and more and more fields will, like the Irish theatre, be inexplicable if we view them as animated by the sens practique alone.

Though the sens practique is an attempt to slalom between the dichotomy of voluntarism and determinism, it is half of a dichotomy of its own; Bourdieu opposes it quite specifically to the sens logique. But this dichotomy, too, cannot hold up. In Homo Academicus and Science of Science, Bourdieu has shown that the sens logique at work in the sciences does not stop them from functioning with a practical logic; in the present essay, I have shown that the practical intelligibility governing the practices of Irish theatremaking and theatre policy work contain both practical and discursive elements. The fact that theatre policy work, like the sciences, makes use of rationally analyzed objective data does not mean that it lacks the capital structure of a practice. Nor does the ‘non-rational’ nature of theatremaking stop its practitioners from using calculative logic when it suits their needs.

3 See above, p. 86.
4 See Bourdieu’s quote above, p. 77.
5 See above, p. 75, and Bourdieu, Logic, 91, for more on the difficulty a practical actor has in adopting this “quasi-theoretical posture.”
The logical conclusion of Bourdieu’s work on the sciences, which the present essay only reinforces, is that the sens pratique/sens logique distinction is untenable.

The practical intelligibility that lets actors know how to operate comes from both the sens pratique and the sens logique. Rather than two kinds of logic, perhaps there is just one sens—the sense of knowing what it makes sense to do in a particular situation. As long as we include the capitals at play in a field and the objective conditions in which practitioners find themselves as part of that ‘particular situation,’ we cannot with honesty choose which of the two senses leads to practical intelligibility. We can understand logical argument as itself a capital in certain scientific fields, which is not to say that those fields always function logically. Many studies of scientific fields have shown that they often do not.

If the sens pratique does not exclude the possibility of discursive logic, then there is no structural need for the concept of méconnaissance. Recall that the reason practitioners were said to necessarily misrecognize their own ends was that they had taken up the field’s nomos and accepted its doxa as necessary conditions for participation in the practice. Seeing these conditions of entry for what they truly are is “excluded by membership in the field.” It is not that Bourdieu thinks this view is impossible to see, but rather that the very act of moving out of the nomos and away from the doxa is a scholarly act, and as such places any one who does it outside of the practice. As an anthropologist, Bourdieu does not think that informants are somehow physically or mentally incapable of cognizance. Rather, he argues that cognizance is a form of abandonment. Such a move would, he thinks, put practitioners outside of their practice into a foreign role, an untenable position for a person in society whose very identity is built of social ties. Even if individuals who are part of a given field do contemplate or even make such a move out, precisely because it is a move out, this will never be enough to introduce cognizance into a field.

Yet the current case study provides evidence to question the very paradigm of a cognizance that leads to abandonment is faulty. It would suggest that the boundaries between practices within a field can be not just debatable but necessarily uncertain, and as such, the question of who is “one of us” might settle in a way that does not provide for a stable nomos from which one can move away. To be sure, when David Parnell moved from theatremaking to policy work, he was aware of the new “hat” that he needed to wear. The distinction between theatremaking and policy work does exist. But it did not prevent him

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6 See above, p. 74, and Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations, 97f.
7 See above, p. 144.
from using information, insights, and practical intelligibilities gathered in his theatremaking
days and apply them to policy work. When theatremakers are asked to take responsibility
for the future shape of their practice, they are being asked to employ the tools of policy
work. They are not being asked to engage in a constant motion in and out of the territory of
theatremaking practice, which would be exhausting if not impossible. Rather, they are being
asked to pitch their tents on the border and to find a (single, but complex) practical
intelligibility that can make sense of a position that is consistently not fully in or out but a
mixture of the two.

The reason Bourdieu gives that reflexivity is not an effective counter to
misrecognition is that the nomos is a condition of entry; it is an entry fee that must be paid
in order to enter the field, and thus one cannot reflexively counter that position with
another. Taking up the nomos’s position means mistaking the doxa for natural rules rather
than contingent conventions. This argument falls apart, however, once one can participate
in the field without taking up that nomos or moving in and out of it. Once that happens, as it
has in the present case study, there is no reason that the doxa need to remain misrecognized.
It is not a question of standing in a different field or system and receiving communications
from that arena as inputs into the theatrical one after a translation or refraction, as Latour or
Luhmann would have it. Theatremakers are never so theatrical as when they critically
examine their own position. Self-analysis and the tools of the sens logique are not a step
removed from theatremaking or policy work in a sense that would require translation.
Rather, they are part of its quotidien practical operation.

But Bourdieu sees that as the self-positioning of the participant-observer, the one
who gets involved without taking up the nomos, is part of what Bourdieu calls the
“privilege of skhole”⁸—the privilege of being given the space, time, and resources to deal
with a practical field as an object for study rather than a reality in which to live. As I have
argued, Bourdieu does not see this privilege as inherently legitimate, and so he is at pains to
distinguish it from practitioners’ own interactions with their fields, arguing that the
scholarly prerogative is built on the sens logique, that it mistakes map for territory, and so
on.⁹ But this, quite simply, is a distinction practitioners do not make. In a cognizant field
such as the Irish theatre, those in it make use of whatever kind of logic they need to get on
with their work. Once we allow that practitioners need not step out of their own roles in

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⁸ Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations, 27.
⁹ See above, p. 69f.

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order to think logically and abstractly about their own work, there is no more distinction between the *sens logique* and the *sens practise* and thus no need for *méconnaissance*.

What defines a practice is not so much the particular logics that are used in it, which can and do converge, but the *capitals* that it values, which come together with more difficulty. These values are, of course, doxically grounded. The primary difference between theatremaking and policy work (and scholarship) about theatre is not that they take different objects on which to work but that they hold different capitals. Policy work and scholarship *value* discursive logical arguments in a way that theatremaking does not. Consider the recent furor over performance scholar Philip Auslander’s publication of *Theory for Performance Studies*. The book was a “nearly total” copy of William E. Deal and Timothy K. Beal’s *Theory for Religious Studies*. This sin was serious enough to lead Richard Schechner, editor of *TDR*, to ask Auslander to resign his position as a contributing editor of the journal. Schechner acknowledged that this sort of “creative stealing” is par for the course in a certain tradition of avant-garde performance, including his own (practical) work. Yet he maintained it was highly inappropriate for Auslander to do the same in a scholarly context:

> One shoe can’t fit all feet. What is creative theft in art is improper in scholarship …. But even if source materials are bootlegged, disguised, and misrepresented, the “rules” of artmaking are different than the codes governing scholarship.

Note the tenor of social judgment (“improper”): Schechner is saying that Auslander has violated a *taboo* of scholarship, not a law or regulation. And yet, if any academic discipline could be said to be imbued with a *sens practise*, it is performance studies. It is virtually impossible to maintain a rigid separation between the discursive and practical senses of performance studies, especially when articulated by a scholar/practitioner such as Schechner. It is not a different *logic* that makes Schechner’s borrowings acceptable and Auslander’s not, but rather a different understanding of what is valuable to the practice

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10 Philip Auslander [attributed], *Theory for Performance Studies: A Student’s Guide* (London: Routledge, 2007). In the end, this book was recalled by the publisher and all remaining copies were pulped.
15 Ibid.
and—in contrast—what is abhorrent. In that sense, scholarship and practice are no closer in performance studies than they were four decades ago. Neither Schechner nor the other commentators on this case misrecognize the difference between the values of practice and scholarship: they see it and articulate it openly.

That distinction, then, is basic to the practical intelligibility that performance scholars use in their everyday work. Though grounded in the *doxa*-underlined capitals that Bourdieu sees as definitional for the *sens practique*, it also can be openly articulated and debated like any other part of a *sens logique*. Schatzki's term 'practical intelligibility' is more helpful than Bourdieu's pair because it allows for the possibility of the two senses being united into one that can be used by both practitioners and observers to either guide and explain. The understanding built by it is complex and multifaceted, and individual actors, either observers or practitioners, only make use of those parts of the schema that help them continue in their work. That different actors use different parts of that understanding for different purposes was the initial intuition behind Bourdieu's distinction between the logical and practical senses, but this intuition needs to be refined. Complexity is not dichotomy; that different parts of a sense are used in different contexts does not imply that the sense should be bifurcated.

**Cognizance**

As this essay has shown with the example of the Arts Plans and theatre policy work in Ireland generally, the most important and effective means of planning is a strategic development of a field's practical intelligibility. Though the Council's efforts to develop the field used funding as a lever, its ultimate goal was not to change the distribution of money but rather to change the way that the theatrical field was thought about. And the key element of that practical intelligibility is a question that Bourdieu argues is answered through doxa: what capitals are worth valuing? The growing recognition of collegiality as a capital in the practice of Irish theatremaking represents the most important of the Plans' achievements.

Capital, and the valuing of it, requires a generalized sociological framework in which to function. Stores of capital, after all, are not aspects of a particular network. Rather, they represent a potential aspect of any of a number of networks that actors may find themselves a part of in the future. Even though capitals are not accumulated for their own sake, it is unnecessary and unusual to know how exactly capital will be spent when one is acquiring it. My research has not shown that theatremakers seek to acquire funding,
development, or collegiality in order to change the dynamics of specific relationships—the sort of activation of capital that an ANT scholar could helpfully analyze as an instance of translation. Rather, the logic of a capital-based system is that stores of worth are saved up for an unknown, or at least uncertain, contingent future. This is the reality of much social interaction; it includes a self-reflective, distancing move that ethnomethodological attention to specific interaction processes cannot properly consider.

To take an analogy, ethnomethodological descriptions might be very helpful in explaining how one earthquake happened, but they will be less useful in discovering how to prepare for the next one. In certain contexts, academic observers might be content with the first, but practical actors will often not be satisfied without the latter. While I agree with Bruno Latour’s insistence on the primacy of actors’ authority, we misconstrue the nature of human activity if we build an impermeable wall between the impulse to do and the impulse to understand. Scholarship can be both practical and useful; the desire to understand our place in the world is not in any basic way separate from the desire to better that place. Of course academic disciplines have developed particular technologies and methods that better serve their inquiries, but these can be (and are) borrowed by practical actors and they do not necessitate a divergence of the means of strategic thinking.

We cannot make a clean separation between planning and strategizing, then, for exactly the same reason that we cannot ultimately separate the sens pratique from the sens logique. In networks, actors construct totalities, and in fields, practitioners step in and out both to see their place and adjust both their own position and the shape of the field as a whole. In both theatremaking and theatre policy work, we have seen actors use both practical and scholarly tools to make sense of their work, their stores of capital, and their position in the field. This essay’s case study suggests that we cannot maintain a firm separation between practices and discourses. There are blindesses relating to specific locations, but there is no necessary misrecognition as Bourdieu would suggest. The field is cognizant, and its networks know what they are doing.

And yet, there are still divisions. My interviews showed a clear division and significant tension between theatremakers (the practitioners) and policy workers (the outside observers, from the theatremakers’ point of view). Like Schechner’s separate but related roles as scholar and theatremaker, this is a distinction maintained even when the same person occupies both positions. Both the history of the implementation of the Arts Plans as well as the ways that theatremakers talk about their relationships with the Arts Council show that there are misunderstandings between the two practices and that they are
not always pursuing compatible goals. That the same people can go back and forth should show that it is not about an incompatibility of habitus or practical understanding—each practice can understand what the other is doing, even if they do not always wish to—but a genuine difference in what capitals are being pursued.

This is where a refined and whittled-down notion of Bourdieusian misrecognition might in fact be useful. Recall that Bourdieu argued that what some fields specifically prohibited was not the understanding of certain truths about themselves but the publication of these truths. What made visionaries like Mallarmé important was not only that they could see things that others could not but that they could find a way to say them "in such a way that they are not said." This, I think, is a consequence of the doxic value of field-specific capitals. The opposite of the valuation of a particular capital is its rejection; in the same sense that the pursuit of a capital is encouraged, its rejection is taboo. In the plagiarism case discussed above, Auslander did in the end publish a letter in TDR to "acknowledge that [he] failed to meet [his] ethical obligation," and thus the question of his readmission to the field of performance studies could be debated. Had he used his letter to defend his actions as acceptable, he would have been rejecting a very specific capital that the performance studies field values—respect for tradition—and there could be no question about his expulsion. Auslander may in fact believe that he did nothing wrong, and may tell his friends this privately, but that is not important; a field needs to exclude only overt statements and actions that treat its capitals as worthless.

Similarly, theatre policy workers cannot officially say that their funding decisions are not based on rational criteria, nor can theatremakers openly admit that they do the work they do in order to impress the Arts Council. This is not a question of understanding (practical or otherwise), knowledge, or habitus. Policy workers and theatremakers may know and believe these things. Not only can they articulate them in other contexts, but they can use this information as part of their strategic acts of self-positioning in the field. What they cannot do is dismiss the capitals of a field within that field. That remains taboo.

Bourdieu saw it as a unique property of Mallarmésian visionaries that they can see the true nature of the fields they participate in. But the case of independent Irish theatre suggests that this might not in fact be so rare. Genius, like Raymond Williams's culture,

16 See above, p. 82, and Bourdieu, Field of Cultural Production, 73.
may in fact be ordinary. Using a multiplicity of practices and tools borrowed both from practical participation and external analysis, social actors can understand the actual forces that shape the fields, practices, and social networks of which they are a part and their own places within them. That understanding is much more difficult to articulate than it is to deploy for the sake of building useful plans to further both personal goals and the good of the collective.

Wittgenstein insisted that language has no meaning apart from how it can be used. Our statements are tailored for, and make sense in, particular language games. Our actions, too, are effective only in the practices for which they were conceived. And in the absence of an alternative language game in which they can be placed, our practical understandings may in fact be inarticulable and actors will be seen to be making plans that go against their own professed beliefs. It is not hypocrisy so much as the human condition. Coherence is rarely as valuable as effectiveness. The example of Irish theatre shows that planning is more useful when it does not attempt to impose an impossible rationality and rather accepts the messy, multiple way that most of us actually go about doing what we do. This is, I would suggest, a helpful paradigm. Both social scientists and policy makers would find their work more effective if they were to concern themselves less with sense and more with the observable patterns of actors’ manifest actions. Substituting rational minds for genuine human beings may be the biggest misrecognition of all.

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18 See above, p. 55.
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Jim Culleton, 17 December 2007
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Declan Gorman, 25 February 2008
Liam Halligan, 8 March 2008
Johnny Hanrahan, 2 September 2008
Paul Hayes, 20 August 2008
Ben Hennesy, 24 September 2008
Eimer Henry, 26 August 2008
T.V. Honan, 24 September 2009
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Pat Kiernan, 2 September 2008
Jo Mangan, 8 August 2008
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David Parnell, 25 February 2008
Chrissie Poulter, 3 April 2008
Nik Quaife, 25 September 2008
Patricia Quinn, 26 March 2008
Enid Reid Whyte, January 2007
Megan Riordan, November 2008
Donal Sheils, 4 April 2008
Willie White, 15 August 2008

Five additional Irish theatremakers who asked that their names not be listed.

231
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Theatre Forum discussion “Different Modes of Production,” Dublin, 1 April 2009.

Primary printed sources
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Secondary material


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Years Active</th>
<th>Avg. annual grant*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The average annual grant given by the Arts Council to the company during the period 1990-2007, excluding those years in which it received no grant and also excluding grants from other sources.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The contemporary ‘Big Five’</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Abbey</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1904-present</td>
<td>€4,197,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland’s national theatre and by far the country’s largest and most famous. The Abbey has its own building with two theatre spaces, one seating around 600 (reduced to 497 in 2007) and one about 120. Produces roughly six shows a year in the large space and seven or eight in the smaller. Well known worldwide for its emphasis on new and classical Irish writing. The only professional company in Ireland that can perform large-cast shows (over 10 actors) on a regular basis. Traditionally considered conservative and quite nationalist in its production style and choice of work, but its unmatched historical resonance and financial power give it options no other theatre could consider.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gate</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1928-present</td>
<td>€656,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin’s second theatre and easily its most bourgeois, it is housed in a Victorian music-box of a space on long-term lease from the Rotunda Hospital. Known for its technical excellence, its costume dramas, its use of stars, its lavish opening nights, its tuxedo-clad ushers, and the relationships it has developed with prominent modern authors like Beckett and Pinter through respectful and ‘definitive’ productions of their work. The highest holder of collegial capital in the sense of setting operating standards both onstage and in administration.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Druid</td>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>1975-present</td>
<td>€450,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many theatremakers’ favourite company, this first of the regional theatres is known for its work rooted in the experience of the West of Ireland with both new and classic playwrights. Their developmental capital is unmatched and many other companies aspire to their model. The company is known for the skill of its director, Gerry Hynes, their history of extensive touring to very remote parts of the country, and their spare and intense production style. They have enjoyed fame and success success in Ireland, the UK and in New York.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Theatre Festival</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1957-present</td>
<td>€419,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up by the Tourist Board in 1957 to showcase Irish work and encourage visitors, the Festival is now the most developmentally-oriented mainstream theatrical institution in the country. It brings in a collection of international work (often with a broader range of styles than is typical for Ireland) for a remarkably large audience for three summer weeks, and also gives new Irish work the biggest possible platform. A stop on the European festival circuit.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Educational theatre companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Funding (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rough Magic</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1985-present</td>
<td>274,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1974-present</td>
<td>215,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1984-present</td>
<td>116,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnstorm</td>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>1991-present</td>
<td>182,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Age</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1989-present</td>
<td>106,245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rough Magic**

Dublin 1985-present €274,000

The largest independent theatre company in Dublin, Rough Magic produces more work per year (as many as four shows) than any other independent company. They regularly perform in the Project Arts Centre in Dublin, tour nationally, and more recently, work internationally to great acclaim. While the company is still run by founding artistic director Lynne Parker, it is unusual in that it has a regular associate director in Tom Creed. Originally specialized in contemporary American work, now produces a variety of new and classic texts with less of an Irish focus than some companies. Also runs a training programme (called “Seeds”) for the next generation of designers, directors, producers, and so on.

**TEAM**

Dublin 1974-present €215,500

The largest Theatre-in-Education company in Ireland, TEAM was founded out of the remnants of the Young Abbey Theatre, disbanded in 1974. It produces two productions a year, one for primary school students and one for post-primary; these scripts are custom-written to fit in with curricular themes and educational goals. In addition, it has a large range of classroom materials and projects to incorporate theatre into education and education into theatre. Highly respected, but because of the specificity of its work and the fact that it values different capitals, it is not well known to the rest of the field.

**Graffiti**

Cork 1984-present €116,100

Cork’s leading Theatre-in-Education company, which similarly commissions new work for both primary and post-primary audiences with curricular relevance. A particular interest in research on best practice in educational theatre, which it has published. As it owns its own building (available to others on loan) and hires of a large number of freelance actors and designers, it is an organizational pillar of the Cork theatre community. Some of their work is in the Irish language.

**Barnstorm**

Kilkenny 1991-present €182,800

A smaller and younger theatre which produces work for younger audiences outside of a school context, both from established scripts and new writing. Has a home in Kilkenny (they do not own the space) and tours extensively. Also runs a youth theatre and an amateur adult drama club, as well as the Irish link to ASSITEJ.

**Second Age**

Dublin 1989-present €106,245

On the border between educational and independent theatre. The company’s work consists largely of the production of plays on the national schools curriculum, most of which is Shakespeare. Though the production values can be relatively high and the company prides itself on being Ireland’s foremost Shakespeare company, the schools orientation and the mostly-student audience can make its productions a difficult sell for adult audiences and hinder the company’s ability to receive collegial capital from the community. Unlike other educational companies, they receive reviews and other notice of developmental and collegial capital by the rest of the field. Founded and still directed by Alan Stanford, one of Ireland’s leading actors, who often works as an actor and director at the Gate.

### First generation companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Funding (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1963-present</td>
<td>75,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Founded by Deirdre O’Connell and one of the few companies in Ireland with its own building.
(a ramshackle 50-seat venue in a back lane in central Dublin), the Focus is best known for its long history of Stanislavskian realism. It runs an actor training studio and a large series of classes and workshops. It has been funded at a fairly steady level for a very long time; the company has experienced little growth since Joe Devlin took over the company following the death of O’Connell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Arts Centre</th>
<th>Dublin</th>
<th>1966-present</th>
<th>€496,200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project is the principal mid-sized venue in Dublin city centre, with a 220-seat theatre, a 90-seat black box, and an art gallery. Until very recently, there were few other comparable spaces in the area. The Project, however, is not a passive receiving venue. It started life as an artists’ collective, has moved from building to building, and now serves as the creative hub for most of Dublin’s experimental work, facilitating productions and encouraging a number of younger, less text-dependent artists. Because of this combination of active engagement with production and the central location, Willie White, Project’s director, has become one of the most important figures in the Dublin theatre. Being offered a Project venue is a tremendous developmental and financial boost, even to larger companies.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passion Machine</th>
<th>Dublin</th>
<th>1984-2006</th>
<th>€87,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founded and led by Paul Mercier, who wrote and directed about half of the company’s work. Dedicated to new Irish writing in the 1980s and 1990s and claiming the mantle of “wholly indigenous populist theatre,” it brought voices like Roddy Doyle and Brendan Gleeson to the Irish stage. Endured a serious funding cut in 2004 and not funded thereafter amid some concerns of commercialization, Mercier has worked successfully in film and television, and the company has not produced a show since 2006; it is not clear if it still exists.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-motion</th>
<th>Dublin</th>
<th>1985-1997</th>
<th>€33,400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A company co-founded by Joe O’Byrne and Declan Gorman (who would go on to run the Theatre Review and Upstate Theatre Project) performing German expressionism, European-style political cabaret, and other elements of the 1980s radical chic, some written by O’Byrne. Both founders moved on to other projects.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Theatre (née The Machine)</th>
<th>Dublin</th>
<th>ca. 1985-present (funded 1995-2000)</th>
<th>€22,100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founded and still led by Michael Scott. Best known for its larger, more commercially viable work, the company received some subsidy in the late 1990s when it produced work such as Dracula, Yeats’s Cuchulain Cycle, and a modern adaptation of the medieval mystery plays.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyman Palace</th>
<th>Cork</th>
<th>1985-present</th>
<th>€160,300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A beautiful late Victorian 620-seat theatre first opened in 1898 and Cork’s primary mid-sized venue, the Everyman both acts as a receiving house for other companies’ productions (theatre as well as music and comedy) and produces its own work. It has recently begun looking beyond Ireland and formed partnerships with the New York Public Theatre and the National Theatre of the UK. Host of the annual Cork Jazz Festival</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Red Kettle</th>
<th>Waterford</th>
<th>1985-present</th>
<th>€188,700</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One of Ireland’s leading regional companies, serving the southeast of the country with a long record of successful touring. Though most of its work over the last 25 years has been scripts from the modern classic repertoire (Shaw, Farrell, Miller), some pieces were written by the founding artistic director Jim Nolan and a few by the present director, Ben Hennessy. Has a youth company, Little Red Kettle, which runs workshops and productions for young performers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytellers</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1986-2009</td>
<td>€142,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macnas</td>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>1986-present</td>
<td>€241,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishamble (né Pigsback)</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1988-present</td>
<td>€117,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yew Tree (né Yew)</td>
<td>Ballina</td>
<td>1989-present</td>
<td>€43,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1989-present</td>
<td>€114,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galloglass</td>
<td>Clonmel</td>
<td>1990-2009</td>
<td>€105,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>1990-2007</td>
<td>€124,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasshouse</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1990-1996</td>
<td>€32,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Storytellers focuses on the adaptation of literary sources for the stage: novels, short stories, and mythological material. Works include *Wuthering Heights*, *Emma*, and *The Turn of the Screw*. Storytellers is one of the few companies to have changed artistic directors (from Mary-Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy to Liam Halligan). Its funding was cut to zero in 2008.

Macnas is a street performance group that produces exuberant, colorful and spectacular public events with large-scale community participation. Its annual festival parade in Galway is always eagerly anticipated, and it has staged other parades around Ireland and performed abroad as well (including with the band U2 on its Zooropa tour). Some of its members have links to Welfare State International. Extremely popular, but the particularity of its niche and its distance from most Irish theatre work diminishes its ability to acquire collegial and developmental capital.

Fishamble is the premiere new writing company of Dublin. While many companies focus on new writing, Fishamble is known for their long-term dramaturgical development work with a wide variety of new writers, many of whom are unknown. They have one of the few full-time literary managers (Gavin Kostick) outside of the Abbey, and run important playwrighting workshops. They are not known for directorial excesses, and they have had considerable international touring success.

Yew Tree is a long-serving production company producing new plays as well as standard repertory material in Co. Mayo and other parts of West and North-West Ireland. Led by director John Breen, its most famous success has been the rugby play *Alone It Stands*. Has been funded at low and consistent levels since 1990, growing far less than other companies.

Meridian puts its focus on interdisciplinary and multimedia work (with a particular musical interest) as well as with narratives that comes from the grassroots work with the Cork community. Most of its productions have been written, adapted, and/or directed by artistic director Johnny Hanrahan, one of the leading figures in the Irish theatre and the former chair of the industry discussion and pressure group Theatre Forum. Recently, it has begun working with younger (and un-funded) theatre companies in the area.

Galloglass produces largely Irish, American, and British repertoire with a particular interest in Tom Murphy. They claim a ‘non-naturalistic’ aesthetic. Their work tours extensively around Ireland. Unusually, uses freelance directors rather than a single artistic director. The company’s funding was cut to zero in 2008.

Glasshouse, a bellwether for many more cuts to come in the following three years. A small independent company started by Clare Dowling, Katy Hayes, Sián Quill, and Caroline...
Williams which performed work of female playwrights (including Hayes and Dowling), as well as staging two compilations with the ironic title “There are No Irish Women Playwrights” highlighting the work of Irish women theatre writers from 1920 to the present. Ceased operation in 1996.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Raincoat</td>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>1991-present</td>
<td>€171,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Blue Raincoat is somewhat unusual in that it has a regular ensemble of actors, all of whom are trained in the corporeal mime techniques that are the company’s signature. Though it is associated with a small (100 seat) space in Sligo called the Factory, the company tours essentially all of its work. Very well respected by the rest of the theatre community for its work, but somewhat isolated by its geographical and stylistic distance from their colleagues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corcadorca</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1991-present</td>
<td>€118,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A Cork company that produces site-specific work with a spectacular visual language, particularly in historically and culturally significant locations in Cork City, often on a very large scale (some productions can play to thousands of spectators at a time). Though the scripts range from Shakespeare to O’Neill to new work, the real force behind the company is founder and artistic director Pat Kiernan. They have a long and productive relationship with the Cork Midsummer Festival and playwright Enda Walsh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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</table>
| Irish for “multifaceted image,” this was a short-lived Lecoq-influenced theatre company doing physical and devised work resident in the small basement space of Dublin Castle. One of the few companies to come in and out of existence in response to the Arts Council’s creation and denial of funding. Started by John O’Brien, now at Guna Nua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barabbas</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1993-present</td>
<td>€102,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Clown-based and physical theatre company founded by current artistic director Raymond Keane and Veronica Coburn and Mikel Murfi, both of whom have since moved on. The initial production was so successful that the company grew up around it. Has had very successful international touring (particularly with their four-handed version of *The Whiteheaded Boy* in 1996). Now one of the most respected companies among Irish theatremakers for its unique contribution to a field that still is largely text-dependent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pan Pan</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1993-present</td>
<td>€113,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The most overtly post-dramatic company to receive regular funding in Ireland, Pan Pan’s work uses video, rock music, and multimedia, and has a much more aggressive attitude towards texts, characters and narrative than many of their colleagues. They famously did a production of Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World* in Mandarin Chinese with an all-Chinese cast. They often perform abroad, and are seen as filling an important experimental niche within Ireland. Founded and still run by Gavin Quinn.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedrock</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1993-present</td>
<td>€102,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Led by director Jimmy Fay, the company is known for its interest in scripts from Britain and continental Europe in the 1990s with a youthful voice (Sarah Kane etc.) as well as some devised work and less orthodox productions of classics. Jimmy Fay has also had success as an Abbey director.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calypso</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1994-2008</td>
<td>€136,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Dublin-based company focused on plays dealing with issues of social justice and human rights globally. Engaged with issues surrounding immigration and minorities in Ireland as well. Founded, led, and most productions directed by Bairbre Ni Chaoimh, who has also worked with Storytellers. Had built up considerable debt and de-funded in 2008.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calipo</td>
<td>Drogheda</td>
<td>1994-present</td>
<td>€63,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A professional company that grew out of the Droichead Youth Theatre and a few other youth theatre programmes, Calipo produces work using video projection and a youthful vibe, including scripts by David Mamet, Enda Walsh, and their founding director Darren Thornton. One of their successful plays (<em>Love is the Drug</em>) was made into a TV series, and so the company has recently begun working more and more for the screen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bui Bog</td>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>1994-present</td>
<td>€90,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A street theatre and spectacle company that creates outdoor theatre performances and parades, performs youth and outreach work, and offers corporate PR services (particularly street characters and mascots). Their work is often based on giant inflatable puppets which play with scale. Funded by the Arts Council for its educational and street theatre work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oroboros (née Theatreworks)</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1995-present</td>
<td>€72,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known for its lavish design and visual sense in productions of modern classic texts (Friel, Schaeffer), Oroboros generally only produces one show a year, but these are often some of the most sumptuous productions in Dublin. Run by actor (and sometime director) Dennis Conway, the company recently has begun performing classic texts (mostly Friel) in historical venues around Ireland and abroad.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gare St Lazare Ireland</td>
<td>Cork/Paris</td>
<td>1995-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run by director Judy Hegarty Lovett (director) and Conor Lovett (actor), the company almost exclusively performs the prose works of Beckett as monologues (recently adding Beckett’s radio dramas and monologues by Michael Harding and Conor McPherson). As the prose works are very spare, they are easy to tour, and Gare St Lazare often represents Ireland at international theatre festivals. Their direct Arts Council funding is sporadic, but their needs are also slight.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Fringe Festival</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1996-present</td>
<td>€213,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An increasingly large, multidisciplinary arts festival a few weeks before the main theatre festival in the late summer. Though it began quite small, it is now one of the most important sites for new work, and a regular means by which young companies can be introduced into the field. As such, it works as a gatekeeper for new voices in the theatre, and (to a lesser extent) a venue for international fringe work.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose Canon</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1996-present</td>
<td>€59,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose Canon was known for its sharp reinterpretations of classic dramatic texts (earlier in its career) and devised work from textual sources (more recently). They experimented with a (small) acting ensemble from 2000-2004. Director Jason Byrne, the motor behind the company, has directed successfully and repeatedly at the Abbey.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Space (née READCo)</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1996-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created in 1996 by Michelle Read (in cooperation with Tara Derrington) to produce her own writing, the company has recently re-named itself and broadened its remit to other writers and directors. Its work tends to be contemporary, narrative and intimate, often in apartments or other found spaces.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The New Theatre  
Dublin  
1997-present  
€14,900

A small theatre in the back of a socialist book store, the New Theatre brings in outside work and produces its own work (much of which is broadly compatible with the Irish Socialist tradition.) Though the space is small (it seats perhaps 60), it is in the centre of Dublin and next door to the Project Arts Centre. As Dublin City Centre has few accessible small venues, the New Theatre gets considerable attention.

Corn Exchange  
Dublin  
1997-present  
€153,000

The company has developed a neo-commedia dell’arte style designed to use traditional commedia acting styles with contemporary urban character types. Though in recent years they have moved away from the traditional commedia masks, the heightened acting style is still distinctly present. Most productions are directed by the founder, Annie Ryan, and written by Michael West (her husband).

Upstate Theatre Project  
Drogheda  
1997-present  
€91,200

A community-engaged theatre company in the Northeast and the border region which engages in year-round work in border communities and, using material from these workshops and sessions, produces original professional productions (often created by founding artistic director Declan Gorman). It has long been funded both by the Arts Council and the EU’s Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. This mixed funding, as well as a commitment to on-the-ground peace-building work alongside professional theatremaking, has complicated Upstate’s place in the field and make its acquisition of all three capitals somewhat problematic. Despite this, it is well respected domestically and abroad, and has worked with the Steinhardt School of Education at NYU.

Operating Theatre  
Dublin  
1997-2007 (funded from 1997)  
€47,300


Tall Tales  
Navan  
1997-present  
€51,200

A company producing and touring new plays, particularly by female playwrights, both Irish and international. Much of its work has been written by its artistic director and founder, Deirdre Kinahan. Since 2008, the company has taken up residence in the Solstice Arts Centre in Navan, Co. Meath.

Asylum  
Cork  
1998-present  
No regular funding

Founded by Donal Gallagher and Gerrie O’Grady, Asylum does work that is socially conscious without being explicitly political, and it engages in considerable outreach work with underserved parts of the Cork community. The company’s first production was Ionesco’s Bald Soprano, and that absurdist spirit underlies much of their work to this day, most of which is directed (but not written) by Gallagher. They proudly have no administrative structure whatsoever and thus spend all the (meager) funding they do receive directly on theatremaking.

Bickerstaffe  
Kilkenny  
1994-2002  
€72,800

A small Kilkenny company that commissioned a number of new Irish works, as well as producing outdoor summer Shakespeare. Much of its early work was devised by John Crowley and the cast. Bickerstaffe’s work tended to be light, contemporary, and very comic. Though the company has not been in existence since 2002, its legacy survives in Kilkenny’s Cat Laughs Comedy Festival.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lane Productions</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1998-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ireland’s leading commercial theatre company, Lane Productions used to run the Andrews Lane theatre in Dublin city centre, with a 300-seat main house and a 60-seat studio before selling the building in 2006. Often takes a single very successful production (such as *Stones in his Pockets*) and tours it at great length. Though it did engage in co-productions with a number of other, not-for-profit companies when it had a building, Lane are not seen to hold much developmental or collegial capital in the field. One of its co-founders, Pat Moylan, was recently named as chair of the Arts Council, causing no small level of concern.

**Third generation and emerging companies**

*This group is necessarily a more provisional list than the rest of the chart.*

*Those listed as “no regular funding” received no standard funding from the Arts Council through 2007, though they may receive funding from local authorities or project grants since that time.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gúna Nua</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1999-present</td>
<td>€57,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the hottest young companies to come out of the 2000s, Gúna Nua was co-founded by David Parnell and Paul Meade, both of whom write, direct, and act in their own work. Meade still runs the company, while Parnell is now head of theatre for the Arts Council. Most of their work is written (or heavily adapted) by the two founders, and virtually all of it is directed by them. They have the reputation of a “lad’s company,” putting a very accessible young male voice on stage. Some of their recent work, however, has taken up a concern with bio-ethical issues and an interest in women’s relationships. Name is the Irish for “new dress.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quare Hawks</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2000-2004</td>
<td>€29,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A company founded by director Liam Halligan designed to produce narrative-driven work which focused on and challenged social conventions of eccentric characters (the Irish term ‘quare’ is a bit more affectionate than the Anglo term ‘queer’). All five of its productions (most notably *The Undertaking*) toured so extensively it is hard to say where the company was ‘based.’ Halligan put the company on the shelf when he became artistic director of Storytellers in 2004; since Storytellers has shut down in 2008, he has dusted the brand off for future use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic Theatre</td>
<td>Tallaght</td>
<td>2001-present</td>
<td>€109,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Civic is a custom-built theatre in the Tallaght suburb of South Dublin that largely functions as a receiving house but, considerably more often than other venues, co-produce work with theatre companies (Gúna Nua and Storytellers have been their most frequent collaborators) and occasionally produce work on their own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpet Theatre (neé BDNC)</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2002-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Founded by director Ciarán Taylor who has trained at the Ecole Jacques Lecoq, Carpet works in promenade, in unusual locations, on commission for particular festivals and events, and with abundant use of mask, bouffon, and music. It has toured successfully around Ireland as well as in Wales, Bulgaria, Romania, and the Czech Republic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playgroup</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>2002-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Playgroup was set up as a platform for its directors, Tom Creed and Hillary O'Shaughnessy, who were both young Cork theatre artists. It has produced new and devised work, site-specific and promenade productions, and others. When Creed and O'Shaughnessy moved to Dublin, the former to take up the post of associate director of Rough Magic, Playgroup began producing more infrequently, but the company is still technically in operation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Livin’ Dred</td>
<td>Virginia, Co. Cavan</td>
<td>2003-present (funded from 2008)</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
<td>The company produces in Co. Cavan and the underserved North Midlands of the country. Director Padraic McIntyre has had success with <em>Conversations on a Homecoming</em>, which won awards and led to a productive partnership between the company and the NOMAD network of venues in the North Midlands which has recently jointly adopted the company as resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach Box</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2003-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
<td>A young company that works in installation, performance, and sound design with a particular interest in the performative possibilities of poetry (they have worked with texts from Rimbaud and Manley Hopkins). Many of their performances are promenade in found spaces, and they have been garnering interest and note of late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Corporation</td>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>2004-present</td>
<td>€75,500</td>
<td>A physical and site-specific theatre company founded and run by Jo Mangan, Performance Corporation have the reputation for fun, fast, offbeat, and accessible work, including unannounced mass public events. Almost all plays are written or devised by Tom Swift (Mangan’s husband) and directed by Mangan. The company is based in Kildare (south of Dublin), but its performances have taken place all over the country as well as abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arambe</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2004-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
<td>Set up by Bisi Adigun, the company serves the African community in Ireland. It generally works with an all-African non-professional cast, either using contemporary African scripts or others devised by Adigun. The company’s most prominent production was a new version of Synge’s <em>Playboy of the Western World</em> with a part-African cast performed at the Abbey and adapted by Adigun and Roddy Doyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokentalkers</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2004-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
<td>A performance art company set up by Gary Keegan and Feidlim Cannon with a particular interest in mediation, technology, distance, and the problematics of the real. Moving away from text and fictional construct much farther than most anyone else and yet being very accessible to a non-specialist audience, the company has made a name for itself and acquired developmental capital. Success in the Dublin Theatre Festival and in New York have only increased that prominence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAW</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2005-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
<td>Set up by director Rachel A. West to produce her work, which consists largely contemporary Continental theatre writing such as Falk Richter and Jon Fosse and new adaptations of classics such as the <em>Orestia</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph SD</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2007-present</td>
<td>No regular funding</td>
<td>Led by young director Wayne Jordan, Randolph SD is known for a young and playful sensibility and a strong sense of design. Their most successful play to date has been <em>Everybody Loves Sylvia</em>, an adaptation of Marivaux’s ‘La Double Inconstance.’ Since this success, Jordan has received considerable work at the Abbey Theatre, and thus his own company has been in something of abeyance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Receiving venues

The following are a set of regional theatre buildings which generally act as receiving venues for touring work, but will occasionally produce work of their own. There are other multi-purpose arts venues around the country which do not receive Arts Council grants, most of which do not programme theatre on a regular basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Grianan</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>1999-present</td>
<td>€130,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friars’ Gate</td>
<td>Kilmallock</td>
<td>1998-present</td>
<td>€30,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavilion</td>
<td>Dun Laoghaire</td>
<td>2000-present</td>
<td>€114,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Hall</td>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>1995-present</td>
<td>€120,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawk’s Well</td>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>1982-present</td>
<td>€145,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watergate</td>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>1997-present</td>
<td>€91,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork Opera House</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1963-present</td>
<td>€116,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>1992-present</td>
<td>€73,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstage</td>
<td>Longford</td>
<td>1995-present</td>
<td>€160,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garter Lane</td>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>1997-present</td>
<td>€185,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunamaise</td>
<td>Portlaoise</td>
<td>1999-present</td>
<td>€101,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belltable</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>1981-present</td>
<td>€195,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draiocht</td>
<td>Blanchardstown</td>
<td>2001-present</td>
<td>€148,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>