



Bourdieu: Preface

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Preface

In October 2001 I met Pierre Bourdieu for the first and last time. It was in Brussels, in a small conference organised to discuss the findings of a project led by his research centre. After his talk I publicly disagreed with him on the way he thought domination and neo-liberalism could be effectively critiqued and countered today. He immediately asked if I had empirical evidence for what I suggested. After the conference we started a discussion but he had to leave early because he "felt tired". I explained to him what I thought about the advancing fragility that is now seriously damaging the middle classes since the 1990s and that ongoing research on a similar project that I led seemed to support that an effective critique needs to be mounted on a cross-class platform. He got very interested, suggested that we meet in Paris in December and gave me his phone number. When I telephoned to arrange a meeting his assistant told me that he was hoping to contact me in the second half of January. On the 23rd Bourdieu died. I was never able to make my case to him. I remain impressed by the affability he showed and his commitment to sociology despite his ill health. I hope that this volume contributes to the posthumous discussion that many among us continue to hold with his work.

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