

*1. Introduction: Understanding an unlikely alliance*

Around the middle of the 1960s, three young rising scholars in different disciplines of the social and human sciences and with diverse social, cultural and national backgrounds befriended each other and engaged in a series of intellectual collaborations.<sup>1</sup> How can we understand this unlikely alliance between French Greek scholar Jean Bollack (1923-2012), Hungarian-German literary scholar Peter Szondi (1929-1971) and French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)? How did it emerge and evolve? Which shared experiences as well as social, political, academic and intellectual affinities made it possible? The present article analyses unpublished materials from the archives of the three protagonists involved. It seeks to understand both their social trajectories and their intellectual positions and relate them to each other in a systematic way.

First, I establish the chronology of the most important cooperations between the three agents. I retrace a sequence of exchanges by which they supported each other's projects. I highlight especially Bollack's role as an intermediary between Bourdieu and Szondi and as a facilitator of two translations which are still the most tangible result of the trio's collaboration. Second, I provide a sociological interpretation of the similarities that united Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi and made their exchanges possible. Beyond obvious biographical differences, all three had particularly >improbable< social trajectories leading from the margins to the centre. In response, they developed uniquely reflexive dispositions and strategies which made them take critical stances on academic institutions in general and on the state of their respective disciplines in particular. Lastly, I connect these social characteristics with Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi's intellectual positions. All three of them opposed the methodological opposition between >positivism< and >hermeneutics< that structured their fields at the time.

1 This text is based on my contribution to the symposium >Jean Bollack. Lectures d'un lecteur – Kritik des Verstehens< in December 2021 in Bern and Fribourg (see Stéphanie Cudré-Mauroux, Christoph König, Martin Steinrück (eds.), *Lire Jean Bollack – Jean Bollack lesen*, Basel 2023). I am grateful to several right-holders for having authorized me to access and cite from archival documents: Jérôme Bourdieu for the Fonds Pierre Bourdieu (Humathèque, Campus Condorcet, Paris-Aubervilliers, henceforth FPB), Christoph König for the Nachlass Peter Szondi (Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, henceforth NPS), Sabine Collé Bollack for the Fonds Jean Bollack (Archives littéraires suisses, Bern, henceforth FJB) as well as to Wolfgang Fietkau for materials from the aforementioned archives. Many people have contributed to this work in various ways. Thanks to Wolfgang Fietkau, Jean-Pierre Faguer, Heinz Wismann and André Laks for interviews; to Solange Lucas and Victor Collard for leads concerning the correspondence between Bollack, Szondi and Bourdieu; to Stéphanie Cudré-Mauroux, Ruth Doersing and and Clarisse Sabbagh for help in the archives; and to Denis Thouard, Christoph König, Tangi Audinet, Matthias Fringant and Aube Richebourg for comments on drafts of this text.

They shared the ambition to go beyond this dichotomy and formulate an original position regarding the then much-debated transversal movement of ›structuralism‹. Through their exchanges, Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi formed for some time a sort of ›invisible college‹ of ›heretics‹, seeking to establish, against the reigning orthodoxies, new standards of scientificity in classics, literary studies and sociology. Eventually, all three should become genuine ›heresiarchs‹, i. e. respected innovators in their fields.

Methodologically speaking, the analysis uses the sociology of fields of cultural production as developed by one of the agents involved, Pierre Bourdieu, to explore the both social and intellectual ›homologies‹ that enabled the cooperation between Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi.<sup>2</sup> It draws, moreover, on conceptual tools from functionalist sociology of science to understand how they formed an informal interdisciplinary community through scientific gift exchange.<sup>3</sup> The systematic comparison of Bollack, Szondi and Bourdieu on the intellectual as well as the social level can contribute to a better understanding of the position of each one of them.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. *A triangle of elementary recognition through academic gift exchange*

The ties which formed the triangle between Bollack, Szondi and Bourdieu were multi-faceted. They were at once, and to varying degrees, amicable, emotional, academic, political, editorial and intellectual. The two solid angles of the triangle were formed by two close friendships starting from Bollack: Bollack and Szondi had become friends in the spring of 1959 through their mutual friend, Swiss literary scholar Bernhard Böschstein (1931-2019). They were also soon connected through their friendship with Romanian poet Paul Celan (1920-1970). Bollack and Bourdieu, on the other hand, had met in 1961 at the Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines in Lille, where Bourdieu had begun as a *maître de conférences* in sociology (1961-1964) while Bol-

- 2 Pierre Bourdieu, *Microcosmes. Théorie des champs*, Paris 2022. For the reflexive application of Bourdieu's sociology, see Johan Heilbron, *Practical Foundations of Theorizing in Sociology. The Case of Pierre Bourdieu*, in: *Social Knowledge in the Making*, ed. by Charles Camic, Neil Gross, and Michèle Lamont, Chicago/London 2011, pp. 181-205; Julien Duval, Johan Heilbron, Pernelle Issenhuth (eds.), *Pierre Bourdieu et l'art de l'invention scientifique. Enquête au Centre de sociologie européenne (1959-1969)*, Paris 2022; Victor Collard, *Pierre Bourdieu. Genèse d'un sociologue*, Paris 2024.
- 3 Warren Hagstrom, *The Scientific Community*, New York/London 1965; Warren Hagstrom, *Gift Giving as an Organizing Principle in Science*, in: *Science in Context*, ed. by Barry Barnes and David Edge, Milton Keynes 1982, pp. 21-34; Diana Crane, *Invisible Colleges. Diffusion of Knowledge in Scientific Communities*, Chicago/London 1972.
- 4 Several publications have recently discussed the relationship between Bollack, Szondi and Bourdieu: Solange Lucas, *Um der französischen Kritik willen. Pierre Bourdieu liest Peter Szondis Aufsatz ›Über philologische Erkenntnis‹ (1962)*, in: *Geschichte der Philologien* 57/58, 2020, pp. 114-123; Victor Collard, *Bollack et Bourdieu: une amitié scientifique productive*, in: Cudré-Mauroux, König and Steinrück (fn. 1), pp. 103-117; André Laks, *Sur la signification d'une publication française différée: remarques sur Pierre Bourdieu et le ›traité‹ ›Sur la connaissance philologique‹*, in: *Eurostudia* 15, 2024, no. 1-2, pp. 25-39; Denis Thouard, *›Une contribution capitale: pourquoi Bourdieu lit Panofsky‹*, in: *Critique* 942, 2025, pp. 912-924. My analysis both builds on these works and differs from them.

lack had been teaching Greek studies since 1958. In 1966, Bollack brought his two friends together at Szondi's *Seminar* in Berlin. From that moment on, Bourdieu and Szondi developed a relatively independent relationship, including some correspondence, several meetings in Paris and various collaborations. Yet, Bollack kept his position as the hinge of the triangle and continued to function as an intermediary between Szondi and Bourdieu.

As the correspondences show, these three friendships quickly combined strong emotional and intellectual ties.<sup>5</sup> They generated a specific form of >elementary scientific recognition< that operated relatively independently of, and even in opposition to official recognition by academic institutions and immediate peers in their disciplines.<sup>6</sup> It was based on a complex symbolic economy of exchanges between Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi – gifts of time, attention, energy, affection, information, critical feedback, encouragement, invitations, academic, editorial and institutional contacts and advice, publication opportunities, etc. The exchanges concerned at least four distinct levels: (1) the publication of books in specific publishing houses and book series (especially Suhrkamp's >Theorie< and Éditions de Minuit's >Le Sens commun<); (2) the publication of articles in specific journals (*Neue Rundschau*, *Der Monat* or *Critique*), (3) the work of assistants (involving especially Wolfgang Fietkau and Jean-Pierre Faguer), and (4) editorial, academic and financial contacts (for example, with the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst). The two translated volumes resulting from these various interactions best illustrate the mechanisms, stakes and obstacles of their collaboration.

The first of these translations was Bourdieu's earliest book in German: >Zur Soziologie der symbolischen Formen< (henceforth *ZSSF*), published in 1970 in Suhrkamp's recently launched >Theorie< series.<sup>7</sup> This publication was the direct result of the contact Bollack established between Bourdieu and Szondi. The starting point was a conference by Bourdieu in Berlin in July 1966. At the end of 1965, Szondi had founded his *Seminar für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft* at the Freie Universität Berlin (FU) – the first institute in comparative literature in Germany.<sup>8</sup> There, Szondi organized a lecture series, inviting many illustrious international guests over the years.<sup>9</sup> On Szondi's invitation, Bollack stayed in Berlin as a *Gastprofessor* between

5 The most important correspondences are located at NPS, 88. 9. 507 and 88. 9. 50 (Bourdieu-Szondi), 88. 9. 1121 and 88. 9. 1114 (Bollack-Szondi); FJB, A-3-a-BOP-CORR/1 and FPB, 1ARCH20-4 and following boxes (Bollack-Bourdieu).

6 Hagstrom (fn. 3), pp. 9-68, distinguished between >institutional recognition<, awarded by official bodies through official channels of communication, and >elementary recognition< produced by informal gift exchange between scholars.

7 Pierre Bourdieu, *Zur Soziologie der symbolischen Formen*, transl. Wolfgang Fietkau, Frankfurt am Main 1970.

8 Irene Albers (ed.), *Nach Szondi. Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft an der Freien Universität Berlin 1965-2015*, Berlin 2015, pp. 454-456.

9 On these lectures, see Christoph König, *Engführungen. Peter Szondi und die Literatur*, Marbach am Neckar 2004, pp. 73-80; Hans-Christian Riechers, *Peter Szondi. Eine intellektuelle Biographie*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2020, pp. 162-163.

April and July 1966.<sup>10</sup> One of the first things Bollack did in agreement with Szondi after his arrival in Berlin was to invite Bourdieu to give a lecture in the framework of the series.<sup>11</sup> This conference took place on 11 July 1966. Bourdieu presented a tentative version of what should become his very first article on the concept of ›field‹, a paper entitled ›Projet créateur et champ intellectuel‹.<sup>12</sup> It was published a few months later in Jean-Paul Sartre's (1905-1980) journal *Les Temps modernes*.<sup>13</sup>

On the occasion of the conference in Berlin the plan for a publication of Bourdieu in Suhrkamp's new ›Theorie‹ series (1966-1986) took shape. The article on the intellectual field served as a starting point. Gradually, further articles – some already published, others in writing or still to be written – were added. Suhrkamp's ›Theorie‹ series was part of the Berlin network to which Bollack introduced Bourdieu. On the one hand, Szondi had been involved with Suhrkamp since the success of his ›Theorie des modernen Dramas‹ (1956). He apparently used these contacts to support Bourdieu's publication. On the other hand, Austrian-Swiss philosopher and sociologist of religion Jacob Taubes (1923-1987) had also attended Bourdieu's lecture. Taubes was both Szondi's colleague at the FU as a professor of Jewish studies and hermeneutics and in a complex relationship with Bollack since their student days in Switzerland.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Taubes was one of the editors of ›Theorie‹ – in fact, its key player at the time.<sup>15</sup> He spoke highly of Bourdieu's lecture to philosopher Hans Blumenberg (1920-1996), another of the series' editors, together with Jürgen Habermas (1929-) and Dieter Henrich (1927-2022), and clearly supported the project of publishing Bourdieu.<sup>16</sup>

As for the translation of Bourdieu's articles from French to German, the solution came again through the Bollack-Szondi connection. It was Szondi who suggested Wolfgang Fietkau (1941-), who at the time was studying at Szondi's institute.<sup>17</sup> The work on the translation began as early as summer 1966, immediately after Bourdieu's visit to Berlin. It was Bollack who took charge of organizing and supervising Fietkau's work. Bollack and Fietkau already knew each other from Bollack's earlier stay in Berlin. Because of his bilingualism Bollack became Fietkau's privileged interlocutor on questions of translation. Fietkau could write to Bollack in German and discuss technical questions concerning the translation of certain French terms (for example,

10 See NPS, 88. 9. 1114/22, 88. 9. 1111/4, 88. 9. 1118/8.

11 Bollack to Bourdieu, n. d. (probably April 1966), FJB, A-3-a-BOP-CORR/1.

12 For the announcement of Bourdieu's lecture at Szondi's *Seminar*, see Albers (fn. 8), p. 457.

13 Pierre Bourdieu, *Champ intellectuel et projet créateur*, *Les Temps Modernes* 246, 1966, pp. 865-906.

14 Jerry Z. Muller, *Professor of Apocalypse. The Many Lives of Jacob Taubes*, Princeton/Oxford 2022, pp. 48, 265, 285, 470.

15 On the history of ›Theorie‹, see Morten Paul, *Suhrkamp Theorie. Eine Buchreihe im philosophischen Nachkrieg*, Leipzig 2022.

16 »Hervorragend ist auch Pierre Bourdieu. Ein jüngerer Soziologe in Paris, der wohl der Nachfolger von Aron werden wird. Er war vor kurzem in Berlin und hat uns alle sehr beeindruckt.« (Hans Blumenberg and Jacob Taubes, *Briefwechsel 1961-1981 und weitere Materialien*, Berlin 2013, p. 101) Taubes was one of the first German intellectuals to remark Bourdieu (Unsel'd to Lindon, 8.12.1964, DLA Marbach, SUA: Suhrkamp/03 Lektorate; Taubes to Bourdieu, 22. 9. 1966, FPB, IARCH20-2).

17 Szondi to Bourdieu, 4. 11. 1966, NPS, 88. 9. 50/1; see also Fietkau in Albers (fn. 8), p. 323.

the term ›projet‹ in the title of Bourdieu's lecture) or the adjustment of Bourdieu's articles. He also partly communicated with Bourdieu through Bollack, for example about a pre-publication of the Berlin lecture or about requests from Suhrkamp, represented at the time by Karl Markus Michel (1929-2000), the executive *Redakteur* of the ›Theorie‹ series.<sup>18</sup>

An important case illustrating the information circuits concerns the title of Bourdieu's book. The originally planned title for the volume was ›Strukturalismus und Soziologie‹ or ›Soziologie und Strukturalismus‹.<sup>19</sup> However, in August 1968 Fietkau informed Bollack of Michel's request to change the title. At the time, the first wave of imports of ›structuralism‹ was hitting Germany.<sup>20</sup> In this situation, Michel feared that the ›Theorie‹ series could become ›completely structuralized‹ (*völlig verstrukturalisiert*). Fietkau reported that he had spoken to Szondi, who had proposed ›Zur Kritik der soziologischen Vernunft‹ as an alternative title – an obvious allusion both to German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and to German philosopher and historian Wilhelm Dilthey's (1833-1911) project for a ›critique of historical reason‹.<sup>21</sup> After a personal discussion with Bourdieu,<sup>22</sup> Bollack sent Szondi Bourdieu's proposal for a new title: ›Soziologie der symbolischen Formen‹.<sup>23</sup> Szondi, in turn, discussed the title with Fietkau – who agreed – and with Taubes – who found the title ›immodest‹ given German neo-Kantian philosopher Ernst Cassirer's (1874-1945) imposing three-volume ›Philosophie der symbolischen Formen‹ (1923-1929). Szondi proposed – by way of compromise – the addition of ›zur‹ (like in his proposition ›Zur Kritik der soziologischen Vernunft‹), to limit the pretention of the title. In passing he remarked also that the notion of ›symbolic forms‹ »n'est pas très dans le vent suhrkampomarxiste«.<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu then communicated the final title to Fietkau.<sup>25</sup> ›Zur Soziologie der symbolischen Formen‹ was retained. The title was a compromise, as it were, between the two perils of ›Verstrukturalisierung‹ and ›suhrkampomarxisme‹, with Szondi's ›Zur Kritik der soziologischen Vernunft‹ acting as a third influence.

Bourdieu's collection of articles was eventually published in the first half of 1970. The book was the product of a genuine German-French exchange. Thanks to the heuristic function of translation, Bourdieu found in ›sociology of symbolic forms‹ a highly distinctive, multifunctional label that enabled him to demarcate his position

18 The relevant correspondences are located at FJB, B-2-FIE (Fietkau-Bollack) and FPB, IARCH20-2 and 20-4 (Fietkau-Bourdieu).

19 Szondi to Bourdieu, 4. 11. 1966, NPS, 88. 9. 50/1; Bourdieu to Szondi, n. d., probably February 1967, NPS, 88. 9. 507/7 and 6. 8. 1967, 88. 9. 507/3.

20 Hans-Harald Müller, Marcel Lepper and Andreas Gardt (eds.), *Strukturalismus in Deutschland. Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaft 1910-1975*, Göttingen 2010.

21 Fietkau to Bollack, 16. 8. 1968, FJB, B-2-FIE.

22 Bollack to Szondi, 14. 10. 1968, NPS, 88. 9. 1119/16.

23 This was the first time the term appeared in Bourdieu's work. Shortly after the publication of *ZSSF*, Bourdieu would introduce it in French in Pierre Bourdieu, *Genèse et structure du champ religieux*, in: *Revue française de sociologie* 12, 1971, no. 3, p. 296.

24 Szondi to Bollack, 3. 11. 1968, NPS, 88. 9. 1112/18.

25 Fietkau to Bollack, 26. 10. 1968, FJB, B-2-FIE.

at once from several dominant currents in French and German-speaking intellectual fields at the time: ›intellectualist‹ academic philosophy, Marxism, hermeneutics, positivism and structuralism. Indeed, he should use the term until the end of his life as a characterization of his intellectual project.<sup>26</sup>

But the exchange ran also in the opposite direction. Bollack built not only on his friendship with Szondi to encourage the first publication in German of Bourdieu. He simultaneously used his contact with Bourdieu to facilitate Szondi's first book in French, ›Poésie et poétique de l'idéalisme allemand‹ (henceforth *PPIA*), published posthumously in 1975.<sup>27</sup> The plan for this publication even predated Bourdieu's German-language collection. It took shape at a meeting between Bollack and Szondi in Basel towards the end of 1965. At the beginning of 1966, Szondi already sent Bollack a list of texts for Bourdieu.<sup>28</sup> At the time, Bourdieu had just launched his new book series ›Le Sens commun‹ (1965-1991) in the publishing house Éditions de Minuit.<sup>29</sup> Szondi's book was intended for this collection, the initially planned title being ›Essais philologiques et philosophiques‹.<sup>30</sup>

The project took shape after Bourdieu's visit to Berlin in July 1966. However, it was soon impeded by various problems that combined in complex ways and effectively blocked the publication for several years. The difficulties involved (1) the translation and the issue of finding and paying competent and reliable translators; (2) the publishing house, Éditions de Minuit, and the reluctance of its director Jérôme Lindon (1925-2001); and (3) the adaptation of Szondi's opening essay ›Über philologische Erkenntnis‹<sup>31</sup> (henceforth *ÜPHE*) to the French context demanded by Bourdieu and Bollack.

Initially charged with the task of finding a translator, Bourdieu soon called on Bollack for help.<sup>32</sup> At the end of 1966, Bollack and Szondi recruited Antoine-Marie Buguet, a young teacher of German whom he had met during his stay in Berlin and whom Celan had also recommended.<sup>33</sup> While there was agreement on the quality of Buguet's translations, progress soon stalled – probably due to the fact that the work could not be paid for as long as there was no contract with Minuit. When the contract was finally signed in May 1970 – for a book, however, whose modified outline excluded texts that had already been translated<sup>34</sup> – Buguet abandoned. Worse, he was no longer

26 E. g. Pierre Bourdieu, *Méditations pascaliennes*, Paris 1997, p. 32.

27 Peter Szondi, *Poésie et poétique de l'idéalisme allemand*, transl. Jean Bollack, Barbara Cassin, Isabelle Michot, Jacques Michot and Helen Stierlin, Paris 1975.

28 Szondi to Bollack, 1. 1. 1966, NPS, 88.9. 1 111/13; Bollack to Szondi, 4. 1. 1966, NPS, 88. 9. 11118/19.

29 On ›Le Sens commun‹, see Gisèle Sapiro, ›Sens commun (Le)‹ (Collection), in: *Dictionnaire international Bourdieu*, Paris 2020, pp. 782-785; Duval and Noël in Duval, Heilbron and Issenhuth (fn. 2), pp. 363-401; Étienne Anheim and Paul Pasquali, *Bourdieu et Panofsky. Essai d'archéologie intellectuelle. Suivi de leur correspondance inédite*, Paris 2025, pp. 52-56.

30 Jean Bollack, *Avertissement*, in: Szondi (fn. 27).

31 Peter Szondi, *Über philologische Erkenntnis*, in: *Hölderlin-Studien*, Frankfurt am Main 1962, pp. 9-34.

32 Bourdieu to Szondi, 26. 7. 1966 and 17. 12. 1966, NPS, 88. 9. 507/1 and 88. 9. 507/2.

33 Szondi to Bollack, 20. 9. 1966 and 6. 11. 1966, NPS, 88. 9. 1111/17; Bollack to Szondi, 13. 11. 1967, NPS, 88. 9. 1119/8.

34 Szondi to Bollack, 12. 5. 1970, NPS, 88. 9. 1113/8.

able to find some of the completed translations, including the translation of *ŪPHE*.<sup>35</sup> In autumn 1970, Bollack recruited Isabelle Michot, an assistant in German at the Faculté de lettres in Lille, and her husband, Jacques Michot, an assistant in comparative literature, as new translators.<sup>36</sup> In early 1971, first drafts of the translation arrived and the Michots were urged to continue. After a meeting of Szondi with the new translators and with Bourdieu in March 1971, things seemed settled and Szondi promised Lindon the final translation for 1 October 1971.<sup>37</sup> After Szondi's suicide in October 1971, however, problems resurfaced. They especially concerned the question of who was to pay for translators' work. In 1973, Bollack further included classics scholar and philosopher Barbara Cassin (1947-) and Helen Stierlin into the group of translators. With their help, the volume finally appeared in 1975.

The problems of translation intertwined with the reluctance of Lindon to sign a contract for Szondi's book. Lindon, who apparently doubted the financial interest of publishing a largely unknown scholar of German literature in French, wanted a translation of *ŪPHE* to get an idea of Szondi's work before providing »la confirmation officielle de la publication d'ensemble«. <sup>38</sup> Yet, once Buguet had delivered this translation in autumn 1967, Bourdieu and Bollack's demands to modify the text and Szondi's inability to rework it delayed the signature of the contract.<sup>39</sup> When Szondi approached them again in May 1968, Minuit refused to sign, now citing »l'encombrement actuel de notre programme d'édition«. <sup>40</sup> A meeting with Bourdieu in Paris in June 1968 failed to resolve the issue and the contract was not taken up again until June 1969. In this situation, Bourdieu proposed a new plan of the book to Lindon.<sup>41</sup> Szondi, in turn, gave Bourdieu and Bollack the final outline and the new title »Poétique et poésie de l'idéalisme allemand«. <sup>42</sup> At the end of September 1969, Szondi finally received a contract from Lindon.<sup>43</sup> But this was only the beginning of new arduous negotiations involving questions of copyright and translation fees.<sup>44</sup> In January 1970, Szondi's frustration with Lindon became such that he considered leaving »Le Sens commun« to change publishers.<sup>45</sup> A meeting with Bourdieu in Paris in March helped to reach an agreement. Four years after the start of the project, Lindon finally signed the contract in May 1970.<sup>46</sup> But now the problems with Buguet kicked in and

35 Buguet to Szondi, 24. 6. 1970, NPS, 88. 9. 521/2.

36 Bollack to Szondi, 14. 10. 1970, NPS, 88. 9. 1120/12.

37 Szondi to Lindon, 30. 3. 1971, NPS, 88. 9. 97/3.

38 Bourdieu to Szondi, n. d., probably February 1967, NPS, 88. 9. 507/7.

39 Szondi to Bourdieu, 14. 11. 1967, NPS, 88. 9. 50/6; Szondi to Bollack, 19. 12. 1967 and 26. 12. 1967, NPS, 88. 9. 1112/11 and 88. 9. 1112/13.

40 Szondi to Bollack, 5. 5. 1968, NPS, 88. 9. 1112/17.

41 Bourdieu to Bollack, 11. 6. 1969, NPS, 88. 9. 1393. For a facsimile of the plan, see König (n. 9), p. 82.

42 Szondi to Bourdieu and Bollack, 1.7.1969, NPS, 88. 9. 50/7.

43 Lindon to Szondi, 26. 9. 1969, NPS, 88. 9. 578/1.

44 See the correspondence between Szondi, Lindon, Minuit and Insel in autumn 1969, NPS, 88. 9. 578/1-3, 88. 9. 97/1-2, 88. 9. 1011/10.

45 Szondi to Bollack, 26. 1. 1970, NPS, 88. 9. 1113/3.

46 Szondi to Bollack, 12. 5. 1970, NPS, 88. 9. 1113/8; Szondi to Buguet, 6. 4. 1970, NPS, 88. 9. 56/2.

the translation was not ready when Lindon urged Szondi in early 1971 to submit the definitive French manuscript.<sup>47</sup> Only the meeting with Bourdieu and the translators in March 1971 settled things.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, the issue of adapting Szondi's work to the French context interlocked with these two previous issues. Solange Lucas has recently studied a long letter of comments on *ÜPHE* which Bourdieu and Bollack sent to Szondi in autumn 1967.<sup>49</sup> In this letter, Bourdieu and Bollack stressed the need to adjust the article to the situation of literary studies and ongoing methodological-epistemological discussions in France. The initiative for this adaptation probably came from Bourdieu who had his own specific interests as director of ›Le Sens commun‹. But Bollack, apparently interested in the success of Szondi's work in France, also insisted on the need for modifications.<sup>50</sup> Yet, Szondi did not have the time to rework his text. In late 1967, he was preparing his stay in Israel starting in 1968.<sup>51</sup> When the question of adapting *ÜPHE* arose again in 1969, Szondi – despite Bourdieu's repeated insistence on the importance of this text as an introduction to the volume – removed the article from the outline.<sup>52</sup> Finally, Bollack respected Szondi's decision in the volume published in 1975.<sup>53</sup> In any case, the exchange between Bourdieu, Bollack and Szondi on *ÜPHE* remains a major document for understanding the intellectual convergences and divergences underpinning their temporary alliance.

The various obstacles hindering the publication of *PPIA* were all linked, it seems, to a structural asymmetry between French and German publishing markets at the time. While there was a strong demand for French import products in Germany (in particular, concerning debates on ›structuralism‹), the demand for German products in France was relatively low – especially when they came from relatively obscure erudite disciplines such as literary studies or classics. Szondi needed to adapt his work to the French context while Bourdieu could allow himself to refuse to do so for the German context.<sup>54</sup> Beyond speculations about agents' psychology and strategies, this reflected, as it were, Germany's foreign trade deficit regarding French intellectual production.<sup>55</sup> In this situation, Bollack played a crucial role in surmounting the barriers for the pub-

47 Bourdieu to Szondi, 25. 1. 1971, NPS, 88. 9. 507/5; Lindon to Szondi, 11. 3. 1971, NPS, 88. 9. 578/3.

48 After Szondi's death difficulties with Lindon resumed, leading to a major conflict between Bourdieu and Lindon. It reached a point where Bourdieu, who was at the time at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Princeton, authorized his close collaborator Luc Boltanski (1940-) to abandon ›Le Sens commun‹ in a meeting with Lindon (Bourdieu to Bollack, 20. 1. 1973, FJB, A-3-a-BOP-CORR/1). Things calmed down in Spring 1973 with Bourdieu's return and direct negotiations with Lindon.

49 Lucas (fn. 4); NPS, 88. 9. 507/10 and 88. 9. 1336.

50 Bollack to Szondi, 13. 11. 1967, NPS, 88. 9. 1119/8.

51 Riechers (fn. 9), pp. 204-211.

52 Bourdieu to Bollack, 11. 6. 1969, NPS 88. 9. 1393; Szondi to Bourdieu and Bollack, 1. 7. 1969, 88. 9. 50/7.

53 Szondi's article was not published in French until 1982: Peter Szondi, *Essai sur la connaissance philologique*, transl. André Laks, in: *Poésies et poétiques de la modernité*, ed. by Mayotte Bollack, Lille 1982, pp. 11-29; see also Laks (fn. 4).

54 Bourdieu to Fietkau, 10. 3. 1969, FPB, 1ARCH20-4.

55 Rafael Y. Schögler, *Die Politik der Buchübersetzung. Entwicklungslinien in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften nach 1945*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2023.



lication of *PPIA*. He worked as an intermediary between Bourdieu and Szondi and, more generally, between the French and the German-speaking context. Among the benefits he obtained through this position were the publication of his three-volume thesis on Empedocles and a series of other writings in Bourdieu's ›Le Sens commun‹.<sup>56</sup> Through Szondi, on the other hand, there was the prospect of publishing a German translation of his ›Empédocle‹ with Suhrkamp – a project which finally failed.<sup>57</sup> Bourdieu, on his part, delegated much of the work regarding Szondi's volume to Bollack, but remained committed, beyond Szondi's death, to publishing *PPIA*, putting even the existence of ›Le Sens commun‹ on the line in his negotiations with Lindon.

Having retraced some of the exchanges between Bourdieu, Bollack and Szondi, another question emerges. Which social and intellectual affinities underpinned the mutual support of these three scholars working in disciplines as different as sociology, modern literature and classics?

### 3. *Three improbable trajectories*

In a letter to Bollack in late summer 1968, Bourdieu wrote:

Je crois que pour nous la rentrée va être dure et que les médiocres prudents et habiles de droite et de gauche, vous voyez ce que je veux dire, se concerteront pour nous déclarer ›impossibles‹. Je pense en fait que nous sommes si peu probables (au sens statistique du terme) qu'ils ont bien raison de nous trouver ›impossibles‹. Autre façon de dire ce que vous dites souvent: nous sommes très peu.<sup>58</sup>

Here Bourdieu expressed not only a sense of intellectual identity and ›brotherhood-in-arms‹ he shared with Bollack.<sup>59</sup> He also sketched a sociological analysis of their similarities. He and Bollack were ›improbable‹ in the statistical sense of the term. Given their starting points, they had little chance of getting where they were. This made them intellectually almost ›impossible‹ in the academic world. By linking their social improbability to their intellectual positioning Bourdieu expressed in passing an important theorem of his sociology of intellectual production: the idea of a structural ›homology‹ between social positions and intellectual stances, mediated by incorporated dispositions or *habitus*.<sup>60</sup> This offers indeed a fruitful hypothesis for understanding in a sociological perspective the similarities that united Bourdieu, Bollack and Szondi.

56 Jean Bollack, *Empédocle*, 3 vols., Paris 1965-1969.

57 Szondi to Bollack, 6.7.1969 (Paul Celan and Peter Szondi, *Briefwechsel*, ed. by Christoph König, Frankfurt am Main 2005, p. 274).

58 Bourdieu to Bollack, 19. 8. 1968, FJB, A-3-a-BOP-CORR/1.

59 Stéphanie Cudré-Mauroux, ›Auf in den Kampf!‹, *Der Bund*, 24. August 2018, p. 32.

60 Homologies are not simple relations of similarity between two or more terms ( $a : b : c$ ), but ›similarities of differences‹, as Lévi-Strauss put it (Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui*, Paris 2017 (1962), p. 97), i. e. second-order similarity relations between relations of difference ( $a : b :: c : d :: e : f$ ). See Pierre Bourdieu, *Le Sens pratique*, Paris 1980, p. 448.

Bourdieu, to start with, was born in 1930 into a peasant, petit-bourgeois background in a geographically remote rural area of South-West France, at about maximal distance from Paris. This world contrasted with the boarding schools in which he grew up from the age of eleven (first in Pau, then the Lycée Louis-le-Grand and the École normale supérieure in Paris).<sup>61</sup> Bourdieu embarked upon a French *cursus honorum*, including the competitive entrance exam for the ENS at rue d'Ulm, studies in philosophy leading to the *agrégation* in 1954, and the project for a thesis under the supervision of the eminent philosopher of science Georges Canguilhem (1904-1995). The mobilisation in the Algerian War marked a turning point. Bourdieu performed a conversion from philosophy to anthropology, ethnology and then sociology. Back in France in 1961, he became the protégé of eminent sociologist Raymond Aron (1905-1983) and *de facto* the director of the Centre de sociologie européenne. In 1961, he was appointed *maître de conférence* in Lille and in 1965 *directeur d'études* in the 6<sup>th</sup> section of the École pratique des hautes études. In the aftermath of May 68, Bourdieu broke with Aron and pursued his own path. He was elected professor at the Collège de France in 1981, won as the first sociologist the CNRS gold medal in 1993 and is today among the most cited social scientists in the world. Despite this record of excellence, Bourdieu retained what he called a »*habitus* clivé«. Even at the peak of consecration, he retained »le sentiment d'être parfaitement indigne, de n'avoir rien à dire qui mérite d'être dit«, a kind of »schizophrénie«. <sup>62</sup> This also expressed itself in his insistence on a reflexive approach in sociology which would strive to explain sociologically the things that are left unsaid in sociological research. <sup>63</sup>

In comparison, Bollack had been born in 1923 in Strasbourg into an Alsatian and practicing Jewish family. From the age of two, he grew up in Basel, in German-speaking Switzerland, where he went to school. <sup>64</sup> Through his family (his father was speaking Alsatian, his mother French) as well as his school education, he was bilingual and acquired a dual culture. He received his first academic training in Basel under philologist Peter Von der Mühl (1885-1970) in the specific German tradition of classical philology. Having spent the Second World War in relative safety in Switzerland, he returned to France late in his academic education, in 1945. He passed the *agrégation* in grammar, but also took courses in philosophy, for example with Alexandre Koyré (1892-1964), Étienne Gilson (1884-1978) or Émile Benveniste (1902-1976). Visits to the FU Berlin in 1955-1958 foreshadowed the frequent back-and-forth between the German-speaking and French-speaking world throughout his career. In 1958, he started teaching Greek literature at the University of Lille. He defended his doctoral thesis under the supervision of Pierre Chantraine (1899-1974) on Empedocles in 1964. After informal beginnings since 1967, Bollack founded the Centre de recherche

61 Heilbron (fn. 2).

62 Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse*, Paris 2004, pp. 127-128, 137, 139.

63 Pierre Bourdieu, *Retour sur la réflexivité*, ed. by Jérôme Bourdieu and Johan Heilbron, Paris 2022.

64 Jean Bollack, *Dans une famille juive en Alsace. Un témoignage de Jean Bollack*, in: *Revue des sciences sociales* 40, 2008, pp. 212-215.

philologique in 1971, later known as the ›École de Lille‹. While he taught at the ENS from 1968 on (with the help of Bourdieu and Derrida), Bollack eventually preferred to stay in Lille to found his own ›Harvard du bassin minier‹. From this trajectory between France, Switzerland and Germany, Bollack kept a persistent ›experience of marginality‹ and alterity.<sup>65</sup> This, and the improbable combination of a French classicist with a formation in the German tradition of classical philology, nourished conflicts with the established conception of classical studies in France – expressed most spectacularly in the public conflict with Pierre Boyancé (1900-1976) in Bollack's *Lettre à un président*, published in Bourdieu's ›Le Sens commun‹.<sup>66</sup>

Szondi, finally, was perhaps the most improbable of the three men, in a particularly grim sense. Born into an assimilated Jewish family in Budapest in 1929, he was 15 years old in 1944, when Hungarian Jews were deported as part of the Nazi extermination campaign. Szondi's objective chances of survival were slim. The ratio between the around 476,000 Hungarian Jews murdered by the Nazis and the 1,685 who were able to escape on the train organized by Rudolf Kasztner (1906-1957), on which Szondi was exfiltrated thanks to the status of his father, eminent psychiatrist Leopold Szondi (1893-1986), is indicative.<sup>67</sup> Szondi survived the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where he spent six months,<sup>68</sup> and went with his family to Switzerland. Although his first language was Hungarian, he completed his school education there in German and studied philosophy, *Romanistik* and *Germanistik* in Zurich. His thesis ›Theorie des modernen Dramas‹ (1956) – inspired by then marginal figures of the German tradition such as Georg Lukács (1885-1971), Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) and Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969) – was an early success. Szondi continued his career in Germany, where he finally obtained a chair at the FU Berlin in 1965. This professorship enabled him to promote a new programme for ›allgemeine und vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft‹ at his *Seminar*, with the intention of internationalizing *Germanistik*. But although Szondi quickly reached the top of the academic hierarchy in Germany, he retained a persistent sense of marginality and even astonishment at his own trajectory.<sup>69</sup> Also, it is difficult not to infer a connection between this improbable and marginal trajectory and his suicide in 1971.

At the time Bourdieu, Bollack and Szondi collaborated, all three of them were still relatively marginal, but with a strong drive towards the centre. They were ›brilliant outsiders‹ (*brilliante Außenseiter*), as Fietkau put it.<sup>70</sup> Although they reached the peak of academic institutions in the course of their careers, they maintained an inner dis-

65 Bollack spoke of »meine nun schon alte, auf Basel zurückgehende Erfahrung der Marginalität« (Christoph König, Nekrolog für Jean Bollack, 2012, p. 3).

66 Jean Bollack, *Lettre à un président sur le découragement des études grecques en France*, Paris 1972; see also Cudré-Mauroux (fn. 59).

67 Paul Bogdanor, Kasztner's Crime, London/New York 2017.

68 Lili Szondi-Radványi, Ein Tag in Bergen-Belsen, in: Leopold Szondi. Zum 100. Geburtstag, Zürich 1993, pp. 43-60.

69 Jean Bollack, Opening Remarks, in: *Boundary 2* 11, 1983, no. 3, p. 8.

70 Fietkau in Albers (fn. 8), p. 323.

tance from these institutions and founded their own research environments. Their experiences of marginality undoubtedly fostered shared critical and reflexive dispositions towards tradition, and more specifically towards the scholarly tradition and the academic establishment (recurring themes in their correspondence).<sup>71</sup> Also, they developed comparable strategies for dealing with the centre and their own marginality. Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi all employed intellectual strategies that might be described as >critical outperforming<. This consisted in going beyond the scholarly tradition by weaponizing it against itself: being more erudite than the erudites, more positive than the positivists, more critical than the most critical hermeneuticists.<sup>72</sup> All three tended to reject the established rules of the academic game, which they perceived as arbitrary. They refused some of the fundamental alternatives that structured the disciplinary fields in which they evolved. But they appropriated and embraced their own marginality by means that were scientifically acceptable and acknowledged.

#### 4. *Three heretics against the hermeneutics-positivism opposition*

This sociological interpretation can explain some basic affinities between Bollack, Szondi and Bourdieu. But how did their social trajectories, dispositions and strategies express themselves in their intellectual stances? This level of analysis is crucial as the three agents engaged in specifically intellectual cooperations. Their critical and reflexive dispositions can be exemplified in their respective positions regarding the opposition between >positivism< and >hermeneutics<.<sup>73</sup> This dichotomy structured in one form or the other their respective disciplines at the time. Given that Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi were working in different fields, their intellectual alliance was based on more general methodological issues cutting through all three domains.

Bourdieu and Bollack's criticism of Szondi's *ÜPHE* offers a starting point for analysing their intellectual convergences and differences. In her thorough contextualization of the episode Lucas has emphasized the conflict that emerged here regarding the hermeneutical tradition.<sup>74</sup> In their comments Bourdieu and Bollack criticized Szondi's positive reference to Dilthey and the latter's distinction between *Geisteswissenschaften*

71 Bollack, Szondi and Bourdieu also reacted in similar ways to the student protests in 1968. See Collectif, *Appel à l'organisation d'états généraux de l'enseignement et de la recherche*, in: *Interventions, 1961-2001. Science sociale et action politique*, ed. by Franck Poupeau and Thierry Discepolo, Marseille 2022 (1968), pp. 75-82; Peter Szondi, *Über eine >Freie (d. h. freie) Universität< . Stellungnahmen eines Philologen*, ed. by Jean Bollack, Frankfurt am Main 1973.

72 For these and similar mottos, see e.g. Pierre Judet de La Combe, >L'École de Lille<: une concentration diasporique, in: *La philologie au présent. Pour Jean Bollack*, ed. by Christoph König and Denis Thouard, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2010, pp. 363-374; Heinz Wismann, *Penser entre les langues*, Paris 2012, p. 53; Pierre Bourdieu, *Science de la science et réflexivité*, Paris 2001, pp. 173-174.

73 Both notions are problematic. >Positivism< has been used since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a slur; >hermeneutics< has remained ambiguous. For the history of the terms and concepts, see the respective entries in Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer and Gottfried Gabriel (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, 13 vols., Basel 1971-2008.

74 Lucas (fn. 4).

and *Naturwissenschaften*.<sup>75</sup> Against this dualism, they invoked the French tradition of epistemology, epitomized by Koyré, Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) and Canguilhem, as well as the methodological lessons of the work of art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968), whose work Bourdieu had just published and commented in *Le Sens commun*.<sup>76</sup> Lucas's conclusion was that Bourdieu delayed with his criticism of *ÜPHE* the importation and reception of Szondi in France.<sup>77</sup>

Yet, if we want to fully understand the intellectual similarities and differences between Bourdieu, Szondi and Bollack, we must consider not only hermeneutics. We must include also what was taken at the time to be contrary to hermeneutics, namely *>positivism<*. In fact, the opposition between positivism and hermeneutics functioned at the time as what Bourdieu called with Bachelard an *>epistemological couple<* or *>obstacle<*.<sup>78</sup> Arguably, all three men tried to move beyond this obstacle.

Szondi, to begin with, attempted to define his *>literary<* or *>material hermeneutics<* in opposition to both philological positivism – represented in 19<sup>th</sup> century German philology for example by Wilhelm Scherer (1841-1886) – and to philosophical hermeneutics in the style of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002).<sup>79</sup> Against positivism Szondi insisted on the need to reflect on the historical starting point of the interpreter and the historicity of interpretations.<sup>80</sup> Against philosophical hermeneutics and its negative effects in the field of *Germanistik*, represented to some extent by his *Doktorvater* Emil Staiger (1908-1987), Szondi revived the heritage of hermeneutics as a technique or art of interpreting texts – a tradition represented by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and earlier figures such as Johann Martin Chladenius (1710-1759) or Georg Friedrich Meier (1718-1777).<sup>81</sup> Szondi's material hermeneutics had also a certain proximity with sociology. For example, Szondi himself would sometimes speak of a *>sociological reading<* (*lecture sociologique*).<sup>82</sup> Yet, he was seeking to avoid a simplistic Marxist theory of reflection that

75 Wilhelm Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften. Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte*, Stuttgart/Göttingen 1990 (1883).

76 Erwin Panofsky, *Architecture gothique et pensée scolastique*, transl. Pierre Bourdieu, Paris 1967. On Bourdieu and Panofsky, see recently Anheim and Pasquali (fn. 29); Thouard (fn. 4).

77 Lucas (fn. 4), p. 122. Lucas's account has recently been used as proof for Bourdieu's *>refus<* of Szondi's article and, more generally, of the hermeneutic tradition, see Thouard (fn. 4), pp. 913-15. This interpretation, however, does not seem coherent with the observable exchanges on *ÜPHE* and *PPIA*, involving Bourdieu's repeated attempts to convince Szondi to include a revised version of *ÜPHE*, the problems with Lindon, with translators, etc.

78 Bourdieu to Szondi, n. d., before 14. 11. 1967, NPS, 88. 9. 507/10; see also Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Chamboredon, Jean-Claude Passeron, *Le métier de sociologue. Préalables épistémologiques*, Berlin/New York 2005 (1968), pp. 27-49.

79 Peter Szondi, *Einführung in die literarische Hermeneutik*, Frankfurt am Main 1975, pp. 12-13.

80 *ÜPHE*, pp. 14-15.

81 Szondi (fn. 79), pp. 12-13.

82 Wolfgang Ietkau, *Molière in der Perspektive einer lecture sociologique – Versuche einer Rekonstruktion*, in: Peter Szondi, *Die Theorie des bürgerlichen Trauerspiels im 18. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 1973, p. 200.

he observed to some extent in Lukács. Rather, he wanted to explore the mediations between the literary work and the social context.<sup>83</sup> This hermeneutic project was not dissimilar to the sociology of literature proposed by Bourdieu in his Berlin lecture.

Bollack was close to Szondi's methodological point of view.<sup>84</sup> While he did not formulate an explicit theory of hermeneutics, Bollack called his own practice occasionally a >philological< or >critical hermeneutics<.<sup>85</sup> This orientation involved again the double rejection of positivism and philosophical or naive hermeneutics. For example, against a positivistic attitude focusing on isolated facts Bollack insisted in his account of Empedocles on reading the available fragments in their mutual relationships and identifying their structure, i. e. the whole into which they fit. Work on the detail and on the whole were supposed to inform each other. Against a naive hermeneutics, on the other hand, Bollack insisted on the critique of interpretations in their historicity. For example, he started his study of Empedocles with a study of Aristotle's interpretation of Empedocles and used this reconstruction against >modern interpretations< that raised a >>false problem<.<sup>86</sup> For Bollack, this critique of >>false interpretations< – a philological, historical and partly sociological task – was an essential part of enabling the right ones. Similar to Szondi, Bollack also criticized a hasty philosophical hermeneutics, represented by Heidegger, Gadamer and their followers in classics. For example, he identified at the very heart of Heidegger's philosophical-hermeneutical appropriation of pre-Socratic texts a naively positivistic conception of philology.<sup>87</sup>

Bourdieu, finally, subscribed to Bollack's historical and partially sociological criticism of interpretations.<sup>88</sup> But how did this fit with Bourdieu's apparent criticism of hermeneutics in the long letter written together with Bollack? This criticism needs to be specified. Firstly, it was directed not against the operation of >understanding< as such (or >construction<, as Bourdieu preferred), but against the particular conception of it in Dilthey's *Einleitung*, which drew on >inner experience< and intuition.<sup>89</sup> Secondly, the critique concerned an alleged consequence of this form of understanding, namely a dualism between the sciences of nature and the social and human sciences, the *Geisteswissenschaften*.<sup>90</sup> Against Dilthey's notion of understanding, Bourdieu followed Panofsky and the latter's disciple philosopher and art historian Edgar Wind (1900-1971) in emphasizing the >methodical circle< between theory and observa-

83 Szondi (fn. 79), pp. 18-20.

84 Denis Thouard, *Herméneutique critique*. Bollack, Szondi, Celan, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2012.

85 Jean Bollack, *Sens contre sens. Comment lit-on? Entretiens avec Patrick Llored*, ed. by Christian Berner and Denis Thouard, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2018 (2000), p. 25.

86 Bollack (fn. 56), pp. 7, 11, 95-124.

87 Jean Bollack, Heinz Wismann, Heidegger l'incontournable, in: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 1, 1975, no. 5, pp. 157-161.

88 *ZSSF*, p. 12, fn. 3.

89 E. g. Dilthey (fn. 75), p. 92. Szondi was also critical of this conception of understanding, see Szondi (fn. 79), p. 406.

90 Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (fn. 78), p. 18.

tion, between the general and the particular.<sup>91</sup> Bourdieu thus proposed a notion of understanding in terms of structural analysis where the interpretation of an element informed the interpretation of the whole, and vice versa.<sup>92</sup> Against Diltheyian dualism, Bourdieu argued that we encountered this same circle in the natural sciences (the circle between theory or instruments and observation) and in the human and social sciences (the ›hermeneutic circle‹ between understanding a whole and understanding a detail). Bourdieu's anti-dualism was not about ›naturalizing‹ the social and human sciences, i. e. conceiving them according to a naïve picture of the natural sciences. If anything, Bourdieu ›hermeneuticized‹ the natural sciences by emphasizing the indispensable role of ›constructions‹ (hypotheses, theories) and their continuous critique.<sup>93</sup> As Bollack and Szondi, Bourdieu thus sought to surmount the positivism-hermeneutics dichotomy.

Finally, Bourdieu added to the critique of hermeneutics a properly sociological dimension. He integrated and radicalized Panofsky's suggestion that it was ›mental habits‹ (or *habitus*) inculcated by education and school which provided the concrete link between different symbolic systems (for example, between architects and scholastic philosophers in the Middle Ages). Bourdieu thus historicized and sociologized ›symbolic forms‹ and systems. They relied on bodily dispositions acquired through exposition to the structures and dynamics of the social world. In other words, Bourdieu sought to identify the social or ›socio-transcendental conditions‹<sup>94</sup> which made understanding possible in the first place, both on the part of the agents involved and of interpreters and observers. ›Sociology of symbolic forms‹ lended itself as a label for Bourdieu's position, distinguishing it from Szondi's and Bollack's versions of hermeneutics.

Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi, each in their own way, thus tried to go beyond the ›epistemological couple‹ of positivism and hermeneutics that defined the rules of the game in their respective disciplines. Using the reinterpretation of Max Weber's (1864-1920) sociology of religion proposed by Bourdieu in the early 1970s, they took the position of ›heretics‹ or ›prophets‹ against the church and its priests, the position of those who subvert the established symbolic order in order to invent a new one.<sup>95</sup>

91 Edgar Wind, *Das Experiment und die Metaphysik. Zur Auflösung der kosmologischen Antinomien*, Frankfurt am Main 2000 (1929); Edgar Wind, *Some Points of Contact between History and Natural Science*, in: *In Philosophy and History. Essays Presented to Cassirer*, ed. by Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton, Oxford 1936, pp. 255-264, also in Bourdieu, Chamboredon, Passeron (fn. 78), pp. 281-283; Erwin Panofsky, *Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art*, in: *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Garden City 1955 (1939), p. 6.

92 Bourdieu in Panofsky (fn. 76), p. 143.

93 »Il nous semble qu'il faille manier avec plus de prudence l'opposition entre méthode philologique et méthode mathématique et physique. [Paragraph] le [sic] cercle herméneutique est-il si différent de la preuve mathématique? L'interdémonstration des propositions mathématiques comme des propositions herméneutiques exclut la preuve par l'intervention d'un donné traité comme expérience cruciale.« (Bourdieu and Bollack to Szondi, 11. 1967, NPS, 88. 9. 1336, p. 8.).

94 Bourdieu (fn. 72), p. 158.

95 Pierre Bourdieu, *Une interprétation de la théorie de la religion selon Max Weber*, in: *Archives européennes de sociologie* 12, 1971, no. 1, p. 321.

In this sense, Bollack, Bourdieu, Szondi can be conceived as three heretics defying the structural opposition between hermeneutics and positivism. The >elementary scientific recognition< produced by their exchanges for some time created an interdisciplinary community. At a time when all three were establishing themselves in their fields this >invisible college< served as a resource and a lever for going beyond academic institutions and the specific recognition they could grant.<sup>96</sup> Building on their 1960s status as heretics, Bollack, Szondi and Bourdieu would finally become genuine >heresiarchs<, i.e. leaders of relatively coherent dissident groups within their disciplines.

### 5. Conclusion: *Allies, >mais la divergence reste<*

Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi emerged from this analysis as allies united by their shared >improbability<, both in social and intellectual terms. On the methodological level, each of them pursued unlikely strategies to surmount the commanding opposition between hermeneutics and positivism. In this way, they arrived at original positions regarding some of the most important forces in the intellectual field of their time, including structuralism and Marxism. Supporting each other's endeavours in the late 1960s and early 1970s through various sorts of gift exchange, they became both acknowledged and controversial innovators who redefined the standards of scientificity in their respective fields.

The present emphasis on convergences should not downplay, however, the real differences that separated Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi. The latter are obvious in the tensions in Bourdieu and Szondi's correspondence or in some of Bollack's later remarks on Bourdieu.<sup>97</sup> These divergences – undoubtedly based on particularities of their position and trajectory and on the specific histories of the national and disciplinary fields in which they evolved – would deserve further exploration. One might compare, for example, their respective practices of reading, say, the way Bourdieu read Flaubert, Bollack read Empedocles, Szondi read Hölderlin or all three of them read Heidegger. Given everything that separated Bollack, Bourdieu and Szondi, divergences were to be expected. The task pursued here was less obvious: to understand how this unlikely alliance became possible in the first place.

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96 For this sort of interdisciplinary >creative marginality<, see also Mattei Dogan, Robert Pahre, *L'innovation dans les sciences sociales. La marginalité créatrice*, Paris 1991.

97 Jean Bollack, *Au jour le jour*, Paris 2013, pp. 692, 702.