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The Centre de sociologie européenne, Paris: social theory and politics. Aron, Bourdieu and Passeron and the events of May, 1968.¹

The purpose of this contribution is to explore historically the dialectical relationship between the social theory emerging in the Centre de Sociologie Européenne, Paris during the 1960s and the specifically Parisian events of May, 1968. Adopting the terminology of an article of 1981 by Pierre Bourdieu himself (“Décrire et prescrire. Note sur les conditions de possibilité et les limites de l’efficacité politique” [Describing and prescribing. A note on the conditions of possibility and the limits of political effectiveness] [Bourdieu, 1981]) my purpose is to consider in what ways the work of the Centre de Sociologie Européenne could be said to *describe* or *prescribe* the May ‘events’. This consideration is a vehicle for an assessment of the diverging positions of Aron, Bourdieu and Passeron at the time, particularly by reference to their responses to the work of Weber.

The Centre de sociologie européenne was established by Raymond Aron in 1960. I shall explore the development of Aron’s view of sociology in the context of his prior commitment to engaged historical observation and then consider his influence on Bourdieu and Passeron. My purpose is to ask what it meant and might still mean to regard objective phenomena or events as either *social* or *political*.

Mise-en-scène.

Raymond Aron was born in 1905 and was one of a famous cohort of entrants to the Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1924 which also included Jean-Paul Sartre. His training was predominantly philosophical. In 1930 he obtained a post as teaching assistant at the University of Cologne. He spent almost three years in Germany. After one year in Cologne, he moved to Berlin, leaving in 1933. In Germany, he decided that he would undertake doctoral research on the philosophy of history. This was not to be a consideration of Idealist philosophy of history but, instead, a philosophical analysis of the practice of writing history and, increasingly, an exploration of what it might mean to be an historian of the present. It was by chance that Célestin Bouglé invited him to write an account of contemporary German sociology which Aron published in 1935 as *La sociologie allemande contemporaine*. The largest part of that book was devoted to a celebration of the work of Max Weber. Aron was the first French intellectual to give detailed attention to Weber’s work, but he was interested in Weber’s philosophy of history and his philosophy of social scientific method more than in Weber as a sociologist. Aron completed and published his main and complementary doctoral theses in 1938. The effect of the arguments of the two theses was that Aron developed a view of a ‘participant historian’. He followed Weber in being committed to retaining a division between the roles of politicians and scientists, but what was unclear was whether his scientific historical observation of the present was essentially a form either of social or political science. Historical events caused Aron to begin to identify social reality with politics. Shortly before the French surrender to the Germans early in 1940, Aron travelled to London where he was soon recruited to write a regular monthly column, “Chronique de France”, for *La France libre*. His engaged historical observation took the form of political commentary. After the War, Aron carried on with his journalism, becoming an employee of *Le Figaro* for which he wrote regularly from 1947 until 1977. During the period between 1944/5 and 1955 when Aron appeared to have chosen a career in journalism, he maintained university contacts, teaching at the Ecole Nationale d’Administration

¹ This paper benefits from research which I am undertaking with the support of the ESRC on the work of Jean-Claude Passeron.

and the Institute of Political Studies and giving lectures abroad. In these years he also published *Le Grand Schisme* (1948) and *La Guerre en chaînes* (1951). As Aron states in his *Mémoires*, these were linked to the intellectual position he had reached in his research theses in that they were ‘an attempt at a kind of immediate philosophy of history in the making intended to serve as a framework and a basis for my daily or weekly commentaries and for the positions I took’ (Aron, 1990, 199). Notice that Aron had come to assume that ‘history in the making’ is virtually synonymous with politics and international relations. In June, 1955, Aron made it known that he wished to be appointed to a Chair at the Sorbonne, and he was successful in his application in competition with Georges Balandier. Aron was instrumental in institutionalising the teaching of sociology for a *licence* within two years of his election to the chair at the Sorbonne. The lecture courses which he gave in 1955-6, 1956-7, and 1957-8 were initially roneographed for distribution by the Centre de documentation universitaire but Aron agreed to their more extensive publication and they appeared, respectively, as *Dix-huit leçons sur la société industrielle* [18 lectures on industrial society] in 1962; *La Lutte des classes. Nouvelles leçons sur les sociétés industrielles* [class struggle] in 1964; and *Démocratie et totalitarisme* [democracy and totalitarianism] in 1965. In addition, two other courses were published in two volumes in 1967 as *Les Etapes de la pensée sociologique*. Throughout, Aron maintained his commitment to the work of Weber. Julien Freund’s translations of Weber’s two lectures of 1918 – *Wissenschaft als Beruf* and *Politik als Beruf* – published together with an introduction by Aron in 1959 as *Le savant et le politique*, were the only texts of Max Weber available in French in 1960. Freund was to translate some articles from Weber’s *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* in 1965 as *Essais sur la théorie de la science* and also to publish his *Sociologie de Max Weber* in 1966. Aron’s *La sociologie allemande contemporaine*, first published in 1935, was re-issued in 1950 and 1966.

Jean-Claude Passeron had been teaching at a lycée in Marseille since 1958 when, in 1961, he received a phone call from Raymond Aron inviting him to become his research assistant at the Sorbonne. Passeron had been born in a mountain village in the Alpes-Maritimes in 1930 and received his secondary education at the lycée in Nice before gaining entry to the Lycée Henri IV in Paris prior to entry to the Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1950. At the Ecole, he gained a licence de philosophie, certificat de psycho-physiologie. He was particularly friendly with Foucault and Althusser and was associated with the communist cell organised at the Ecole by Le Goff. He gained a diplôme d’études with a thesis entitled “L’image spéculaire” [the mirror image] written under the supervision of Daniel Lagache who was appointed Professor of Psychology at the Sorbonne in 1951 and who also created a Laboratoire de psychologie sociale at the Sorbonne a year later. Passeron had remained at the Ecole until 1955 when he was conscripted to serve in the army in Algeria. He had remained there until 1958 before returning to France to take up his teaching post at Marseille.

Pierre Bourdieu had been a maître de conférences at the University of Lille for two years when he was invited by Aron to become the secretary to the Centre de sociologie européenne in Paris. It appears that the paths of the two men (Bourdieu and Passeron) had not crossed significantly either at the Ecole Normale or in Algeria, but their social backgrounds and trajectories were remarkably similar. Bourdieu had been born in 1930 in the Béarn and had moved early on to a mountain village in the Hautes-Pyrénées. From the age of 7 he was a boarder at the lycée at Pau before gaining entry to the other main Parisian lycée preparing students for entry to the Ecole Normale Supérieure – the Lycée Louis-le-Grand. Bourdieu entered the Ecole in 1950. He left in 1954, having acquired his licence and having gained his diplôme d’études supérieures with a dissertation under the supervision of Henri Gouhier which involved making a translation of, and a commentary on, Leibniz’s critique of Descartes entitled *Animadversiones in partem generalem Principiorum cartesianorum*. Bourdieu had taught at the lycée in Moulins for two years before

he too was conscripted to serve in the army in Algeria. Whilst at Moulins he registered to undertake doctoral research to be supervised by Georges Canguilhem on “Les structures temporelles de la vie affective” [the temporal structures of affective life] but this never commenced. Bourdieu had managed to get himself a post in military intelligence in Algeria which enabled him to become associated with official statistical collection. He was appointed to a post at the University of Algiers in 1958 when he published his first book: *Sociologie de l'Algérie* [sociology of Algeria]. By the time that Aron invited Bourdieu to become secretary to his Research Group, the second edition of *Sociologie de l'Algérie* had been published (1961) and this was followed by the English translation which was published by Beacon books, Boston in 1962 as *The Algerians*, with a Preface by Aron.

Aron's conception of the relationship between social science and political action.

In the first paragraph of the introduction to *Le savant et le politique*, Aron could have been writing about himself:

“Max Weber a été un homme de science, il n'a été ni un homme politique ni un homme d'Etat, occasionnellement journaliste politique. Mais il a été, toute sa vie, passionément soucieux de la chose publique, il n'a cessé d'éprouver une sorte de nostalgie de la politique, comme si la fin ultime de sa pensée aurait dû être la participation à l'action” (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 7)

[Max Weber was a man of science. He was neither a politician nor a statesman, but occasionally a political journalist. All his life he was passionately concerned about public issues and never ceased showing a kind of nostalgia for politics, as if the ultimate goal of his thought ought to have been participation in action]

Aron's introduction to Weber's lectures is self-regarding but it also offers some critique. Aron explains that Weber insisted that it is not possible ‘en même temps’ [at the same time] to be a scientist and a politician but that, equally, Weber asserted that ‘on peut prendre des positions politiques en dehors de l'université’ [political positions can be adopted outside the university]. In other words, the activities had to be kept separate but they had to impinge on each other reciprocally. There are logical grounds for this reciprocity because the pursuit of causal explanation in science relates to purposive action. As Aron summarises Weber's view:

“Une science qui analyse les rapports de cause à effet … est donc celle même qui répond aux besoins de l'homme d'action” (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 8).

[A science which analyses the relations between cause and effect … is therefore one which responds to the needs of the man of action]

However, there is no necessary causal connection between science and action. Aron says:

“La compréhension de l'action menée par les autres dans le passé ne conduit pas nécessairement à la volonté d'agir dans le présent.”

[Understanding actions taken by others in the past does not necessarily lead to the will to act in the present]

In other words, Aron is tacitly making it clear that his view of the function of history is not at all historicist. He preserves human freedom by insisting that our historical perceptions of the past

do not determine future events. Importantly for our purposes, Aron tries to insist on the separation of the man of science from man in his everyday humanity. He continues:

“Il n'y en a pas moins, philosophiquement, et, pour employer le jargon à la mode, existentiellement, un lien entre la connaissance de soi et celle des autres, entre la résurrection des luttes que se sont livrées les hommes disparus et la prise actuelle de position”. (Weber, int. Aron, 10)

[There is nonetheless, neither philosophically nor, to use fashionable jargon, existentially, no link between self knowledge and knowledge of others, between resurrecting the struggles in which past men were involved and taking positions in the present]

and, a little further on, he elaborates:

“La réciprocité entre la rencontre avec l'autre et la découverte de soi est donnée dans l'activité même de l'historien. La réciprocité entre la connaissance et l'action est immanente à l'existence non de l'historien, mais de l'homme historique.” (Weber, int. Aron, 10).

[The reciprocity between the encounter with the other and self-discovery is a given in the very activity of the historian. The reciprocity between knowledge and action is intrinsic to the existence of man in history and not of the historian]

In other words, Aron is arguing that the knowledge of a man acting as a scientist does not dictate his behaviour as a man. People have multiple identities and there is no necessary integration of knowledge acquired in following the rules of autonomous intellectual discourses with the behaviour inducing personality of the scientist. It is significant that Aron has a swipe at existentialism in this context. The opposite view to the one Aron is upholding would argue that, as individuals, we are involved in a process of self-totalising self-construction and that the acceptance of multiple identities manifest in fragmented and discrete roles is evidence of a lack of authenticity and of bad faith. Aron is tacitly advancing the argument against Sartre which he was to make in full in *D'une Sainte Famille à l'autre*, published in 1969.

I don't want to discuss whether Aron accurately represents Weber here, but he immediately raises some theoretical objections to Weber's position, the first of which I want to consider. Aron continued with these three sentences:

“On s'est demandé dans quelle mesure la pensée propre de Max Weber s'exprime adéquatement dans le vocabulaire et les catégories du néo-kantisme de Rickert. La phénoménologie de Husserl, qu'il a connue mais peu utilisée, lui aurait, me semble-t-il, fourni l'outil philosophique et logique qu'il cherchait. Elle lui aurait évité, dans ses études sur la compréhension, l'oscillation entre le ‘psychologisme’ de Jaspers (à l'époque où celui-ci écrivait sa psycho-pathologie) et la voie détournée du néo-kantisme qui n'arrive à la signification qu'en passant par les valeurs.” (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 10-11).

[The question is raised to what extent Max Weber's own thought is adequately expressed in the vocabulary and categories of the neo-Kantianism of Rickert. The phenomenology of Husserl, which he knew but used little, would, it seems to me, have provided him with the philosophical and logical tool for which he was searching. It would have enabled

him to avoid, in his studies of understanding, oscillation between the ‘psychologism’ of Jaspers (at the time when the latter was writing his psycho-pathology) and the neo-Kantian detour which only reaches meaning by passing through value judgement]

Aron seems to be implying that the problem of Weber’s adherence to Rickert’s neo-Kantian epistemology is that, in imitation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, the boundaries of historical understanding are situated categorically within a logically a priori ‘historical reason’, whereas if Weber had lived to know both Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations* and his *The Crisis of the European Sciences*, he would have had the possibility of recognising that categories of thought derive pre-predicatively from the Life-world. Aron seems to be implying that he has the advantage over Weber in this respect and that he has followed Weber’s thought but has replaced the transcendental idealism which he derived from Rickert with a transcendental phenomenology derived from Husserl. This is what Aron seems to be saying, but I want to suggest that it was Bourdieu who was to deploy phenomenology descriptively, deprived of its transcendentalism, whereas Aron’s thinking continued to rely on a neo-Kantian framework. This latter point is apparent in Aron’s discussion of what he calls the continuation of Weber’s notion of the disenchantment of the world by science in which he considers two kinds of threat posed by contemporary science. The first is that scientists, particularly natural scientists, have become intimidated by the consequences of the exploitation of their science. The second is that totalitarian political states insist on the nation-state allegiance of their scientists and seek to control the pursuit of objective truth. Aron argues that the fallacy inherent in this second menace is that it ignores, as he puts it, that there is a “République internationale des esprits qui est la communauté, naturelle et nécessaire, des savants.” [international republic of minds which is the natural and necessary community of scientists].] (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 15). This community operates according to its own rules and “Les problèmes à résoudre leur sont fournis par l’état d’avancement des sciences …” [the problems to be resolved are generated by the stage of development of the sciences] and not by any political state. Aron then takes the example of his friend Jean Cavaillès to illustrate both this point and the point that we all have multiple identities or live plurally in a range of contexts. As a French soldier, Cavaillès fought against the occupying Germans, but, as a man of science or logician, he remained a disciple of international mentors – Cantor, Hilbert, and Husserl. Aron concludes that when a state tries to dictate to science what should be its objects or its rules of activity, what we have is the “intervention illégitime d’une collectivité politique dans l’activité d’une collectivité spirituelle, il s’agit, en d’autres termes, du totalitarisme, saisi à sa racine même” [illegitimate intervention of a political collectivity into the activity of a spiritual collectivity which, in other words, is a question of totalitarianism in its essence] (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 16). The important point to note here is that Aron assumes that these two kinds of collectivities are categorally different. Whilst he makes no comment whether the political collectivity is socially constructed, he uses the word ‘spirituelle’ to show that a scientific collectivity has transcendental status, that its social existence reflects a logical necessity. Aron proceeds to commend Simmel for having described brilliantly “La pluralité des cercles sociaux auxquels chacun de nous appartient, et il voyait dans cette pluralité la condition de la libération progressive des individus” [the plurality of social circles to which each of us belongs, seeing in this plurality the condition for the progressive liberation of individuals] (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 16-7) and he contrasts this celebration of plurality with the fundamental totalitarian impulse:

“Ce souvenir nous permet de juger les tentatives de totalitarisme pour ce qu’elles sont: des efforts proprement réactionnaires pour ramener les sociétés au stade primitif où les disciplines sociales tendaient à embrasser tous les individus et les individus tout entiers.” (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 17).

[This memory enables us to judge the endeavours of totalitarianism for what they are: efforts which are properly called reactionary to restore societies to their primitive state where social disciplines tended to encompass all individuals and individuals in their entirety]

It is clear from Aron's other writing at the time that these words are a thinly veiled attack on Durkheimian social science and, associated with this, an attack on the ideology of the 3rd Republic which could be said to have deployed Durkheimian social science to legitimate a socialist, totalitarian state.

However, Aron is not able to hold this line entirely. He immediately concedes that science can be seen to be 'partially' determined by social, historical and racial factors. However, he insists that there is a fundamental difference between accepting that the character of science is shaped by its social milieu and accepting that its agenda can be determined by political authorities. As Aron comments:

“Dans le premier cas, la communauté de la science continue d'obéir, pour l'essentiel, à ses lois spécifiques. Dans l'autre, elle abdiquerait son autonomie et mettrait en péril, du même coup, sa vocation et ses progrès ultérieurs. (Weber int. Aron, 1959, 17).

[In the first instance, the scientific community continues to obey, in its essentials, its own specific laws. In the other, it would abdicate its autonomy and endanger, with one blow, its calling and its future developments]

This argument led Aron to conclude that it would be fatal to deduce from the fact that social science is in part dependent on its social context

“... la conclusion que les sciences sociales ne sont que des idéologies de classes ou de races et que l'orthodoxie imposée par un Etat totalitaire ne diffère pas en nature de la libre recherche des sociétés pluralistes. Il existe, quoi qu'en dise, *une communauté des sciences sociales*, moins autonome que la communauté des sciences naturelles mais malgré tout réelle.” (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 19)

[...the conclusion that the social sciences are only the ideologies of classes or races and that the orthodoxy imposed by a totalitarian State doesn't differ in kind from the free research of pluralist societies. There exists, whatever one may say, a *social scientific community* which is less autonomous than the natural science community but, nonetheless, completely real.]

Aron proceeded to outline the constitutive rules of this community of the social sciences; first the absence of restriction on research and the establishment of the facts themselves; secondly, the absence of restriction of any discussion and criticism of findings or methodologies; and thirdly, the absence of any restriction of the right to disenchant reality. For Aron, the community of the social sciences has to retain the right to question what he called the 'mythologies' which dominate our behaviour whether these are imposed by communist or democratic states. He insisted:

“Par crainte d'être accusés d'antidémocratie, ne nous arrêtons pas devant l'analyse des institutions parlementaires telles qu'elles fonctionnent à l'heure présente en Europe.” (Weber, int. Aron, 1959, 22)

[Don't let us resist analysing parliamentary institutions as they currently function in Europe for fear of being accused of being anti-democratic]

Indeed, by allowing free criticism of itself, democracy demonstrates its superiority.

I want to take two main points from Aron's introduction to Weber. The first point is that although Aron had been appointed professor of sociology at the Sorbonne in 1955, his philosophy of social science was derived from his philosophy of history. His view of the participant historian related to Weber's view of the roles of the scientist and the politician in as much as Aron's view of participation was primarily that of the political scientist in politics. He tended to regard historical reality as essentially *political* reality. Social scientific explanation clarifies a subordinate domain of political reality and Aron's hostility to the Durkheimian tradition was that it sought to subordinate politics to social relations and to see sociology as the instrument for actualising individual and collective relations and of establishing a coherent, totalised social solidarity which renders the political sphere moribund. Aron's subordination of social scientific explanation was mirrored by his wish to subordinate social and cultural movements to changes brought about by 'legitimate', constitutional, political means. Hence his hostility to the events of May, 1968 and his use of his own terminology in describing the student revolt as a 'mythology'. The second point is related to this: the community of social science within which it is practised is an intrinsically autonomous community. To regard it as socially constructed would be to insert social scientific explanation within a totalising Durkheimian social scientific world view.

Aron's conception of the nature of sociology as science.

Aron devoted the first lecture of his *Dix-huit leçons sur la société industrielle* to an attempt to offer some 'general considerations on the nature of sociology' (Aron, 1962, 13). He approached this task by trying to characterise the self-interrogations of sociologists by comparison with the self-interrogations of philosophers and political economists. Philosophers, Aron claimed, raise general questions without wanting to have anything to do with particular sciences, whereas political economists want to isolate one sector of global reality and subject this to scrutiny through the application of their own autonomous methodology. Sociology is caught between these two ambitions. As Aron put it, 'it wants to be a particular science and, at the same time, to analyse and understand society in its totality' (Aron, 1962, 16). On the one view, sociology is just 'one discipline amongst a range of social disciplines' (Aron, 1962, 19), but, on the other view, which Aron attributes to Durkheim, sociology aspires to embrace all the social sciences and 'to become the principle of their unity and the instrument of their synthesis' (Aron, 1962, 20). For Aron, the former view is properly that of 'sociology' whereas the latter view is what he calls 'sociologism'. In France, according to Aron, the confusion has been dangerous and sociologism has usurped the functions of moral philosophy. Aron made it clear that he was hostile to sociologism which, he thought, was embodied in the structure of the French educational system which was the consequence of the political adoption by the 3rd Republic of the post-Comtean sociologistic thinking of Durkheim. Nevertheless, he thought that sociology which was content to limit itself to detailed enquiry was unsatisfactory. Detailed enquiry could be a means to the end of general understanding by articulating the similarities and differences between social systems in such a way that it would become possible 'to determine the fundamental types of social organisation, the subterranean logic of life in common' (Aron, 1962, 25). This would be an universalisation which would be achieved in the understanding, deduced from particular enquiries, rather than a posited universalism immanently underpinning all forms of social life. He cited Lévi-Strauss's *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* favourably as a 'model of sociological science' (Aron, 1962, 24) in this mode and he proceeded to argue that the sociologist should compare and contrast American and Soviet economies and their political structures. Finally, in other words, Aron reached a view of sociology as a meta-science able to suggest sociologistic perceptions by carrying out detailed comparative examinations of

economic and political sub-systems, understood as autonomous entities. Indeed, the essential function of sociology for Aron, viewed in this way, was to establish whether economic behaviour itself has an universal logic or is conditioned by the political framework within which it is situated. Loyal to Weber, Aron wanted to argue that sociology could demonstrate that there is no autonomous logic of economic behaviour but his hostility to Durkheim made him unable to conceive of the possibility that the differences perceived sociologically might themselves be the products of autonomous social or cultural self-determinations within different contexts.

The ‘Aronian’ research of Bourdieu and Passeron in the 1960s.

Aron was most concerned to establish sociologically whether economic behaviour is a-political. His own work had never been empirical, but his intention in establishing a Research Group was precisely to sponsor investigations which would explore in detail aspects of the emergence of industrial society within alternative political systems. Bourdieu and Passeron had emerged deeply disenchanted out of the French higher education system. At the very beginning of the 1960s they launched a project which, in Aronian terms, can be seen to have been an attempt to examine the logic of pedagogical relations in themselves and the implications of their operation within politically determined or managed educational systems. Initially, therefore, Bourdieu and Passeron were united in carrying out a research agenda which followed from Aron’s views. In the early 1960s they undertook research which, as Aron recommended, questioned whether aspects of French democracy in the 5th Republic were true to the vision of an inclusive, socialist republic of the 3rd Republic. In particular, was the education system perpetuating the values and the privilege of the dominant classes and denying the cultures of the dominated? Were new technologies of the time, such as photography, allowing for the expression of indigenous culture or was there an increasingly homogenised culture imposed by the mass media? Were museums and art galleries perpetuating social exclusion or were they the disguised instruments of state control? Were Malraux’s motives in establishing the Maisons de la Culture essentially political in sustaining the subordination of popular culture to a state approved high culture? Bourdieu and Passeron came to the study of education and culture not with the intention of contributing to the analysis of culture or education per se but with the intention of considering how educational and cultural systems functioned politically. Hence their use of Aron’s terminology in their attack on mass culture in “Sociologues des mythologies et mythologies de sociologues” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1963) and hence their interest in comparing educational systems within different political systems as evidenced by their contributions to *Education, développement et démocratie* (Castel & Passeron, 1967). The findings of the educational research of the early 1960s for which Bourdieu and Passeron are most famous were first released in a working paper of the Centre of 1964, entitled “Les étudiants et leurs études”[students and their studies] (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964). These findings were the products of analyses of questionnaires returned by students of Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Lille and a range of other northern French universities. In the same year, Bourdieu & Passeron published a book – *Les Héritiers* [the inheritors](Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964) - which re-presented these findings with an interpretative gloss. In both forms, the research findings attempted to analyse the socio-cultural processes of pedagogic communication without explicit consideration of the political structure of the French educational system within which the processes were situated. However, the implicitly Aronian dimension of their project is most clear from a publication of the Centre de Sociologie Européenne of 1967 which assembled papers which had been given in conferences organised by the Centre in Madrid in October, 1964 and in Dubrovnik in October, 1965. *Education, Développement et Démocratie* (Passeron & Castel, 1967) assembled papers on education in, amongst other regimes, those of Franco’s Spain, Tito’s Yugoslavia, de Gaulle’s France, and the Greece of the Colonels. The collection was edited by Robert Castel and Jean-Claude Passeron. The Introduction to the collection contains a Foreword by the editors and an

essay by Bourdieu and Passeron entitled “La comparabilité des systèmes d’enseignement” [the comparability of systems of education] and there is a conclusion by the editors entitled “Inégalités culturelles et politiques scolaires” [cultural inequalities and scholastic politics]. These attempts to impose some interpretative order on contributions from researchers in various countries are all concerned to discuss the implications of attempting to adopt a comparative methodology. They express disquiet at the attempt to evaluate socialist educational systems in terms of capitalist and technocratic criteria – what we might call a kind of capitalist-centrism - but they also show anxiety at the inverse - the consequences of suggesting patterns of pedagogical relationship which might be thought to be independent of systemic context either as a result of a form of universal idealism or of autonomous culturalism. In particular, Castel and Passeron warn that ‘monographic fidelity to cultural singularities’ runs the risk of leading to ‘sociological analysis with uncontrolled associations with a metaphysics of culture’ (Castel & Passeron, 1967, 15) as in the case of Spengler and they comment that this is fundamentally Hegelian. To avoid these alternative traps, Castel and Passeron recommend that any comparative analysis must be presented in tandem with an analysis of the principles of comparability in use and, in this way, they indicate the significance for the whole collection of the contribution made jointly by Bourdieu and Passeron. Castel and Passeron recommend what we have come to identify with Bourdieu’s work – the rigorous introduction of a principle of reflexivity – but I want to suggest that the approaches of Aron, Bourdieu and Passeron were diverging during the 1960s and that this divergence crystallised in their reactions to May, 1968. Crudely, Aron retained a view of politics as diplomacy and of the primacy of politics understood as such. He would not regard social action as intrinsically political but only as a variable in comparing political systems. Bourdieu’s critique of structuralism led him to support immanent socio-cultural agency, running the risk of the culturalism described by Castel and Passeron and leading towards the totalitarianism of the social ascribed by Aron to Durkheim and the concomitant denial of the autonomy of politics as well as to what Passeron was to regard as clandestine Hegelianism. Attempting to resist the elements of transcendental idealism in Aron’s position as well as the incipient culturalism of Bourdieu’s, Passeron sought to map the autonomous logics of plural discourses, systems and institutions.

The incipient divergence between the positions of Bourdieu and Passeron.

As normaliens, both Bourdieu and Passeron had, of course, been trained philosophically. The incipient differences between their positions became apparent in the joint production of *Le métier de sociologue* (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1968) in which they tried to set out the epistemological preliminaries for sociological enquiry. In a sub-section of their introduction – ‘Epistémologie des sciences de l’homme et épistémologie des sciences de la nature’ [epistemology of the human sciences and epistemology of the natural sciences] – they appeared to be in agreement that the legacy of the competing philosophies of social science of the 19th Century offered a false dichotomy between positivism and hermeneutics and that the solution should be the establishment of an epistemology which would be particular to the social sciences. The proposal was:

“Pour dépasser ces débats académiques et les manières académiques de les dépasser, il faut soumettre la pratique scientifique à une réflexion qui, à la différence de la philosophie classique de la connaissance, s’applique non pas à la science faite, science vraie dont il faudrait établir les conditions de possibilité et de cohérence ou les titres de légitimité, mais à la science *se faisant*.” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1968, 27).

[“The way to move beyond these academic debates, and beyond the academic way of moving beyond them, is to subject scientific practice to a reflection which, unlike the classical philosophy of knowledge, is applied not to science that has been done – *true* science, for which one has to establish the conditions of possibility and coherence or the claims to legitimacy – but to science in progress.” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991, 8)

As Jean-Claude Passeron has said to me, the production of the text of *Le Métier de Sociologue* was like the preparation of agreed doctrinal statements at the Councils of Nicea or Trent in the early church. The process showed him the disjunction between shared language and shared thought. The idea of submitting practical scientific research to systematic reflexion united Bourdieu and Passeron in as much as both were opposed to theoretical theory or speculative theorising, but their conceptions of reflexion were very different. Just as Passeron, in, for instance, “La photographie parmi le personnel des usines Renault” (Passeron, 1962), had sought to analyse the emergent discourse of photographic criticism as manifest in everyday language, whereas, by contrast, Bourdieu was concerned with analysing the institutionalisation of an aestheticism of photography in the growth of photographic clubs as social phenomena, so Passeron was concerned to reflect on the deployment of linguistic categories in social scientific research whereas Bourdieu emphasized the need for social scientists to establish themselves socially as an epistemic community. It is significant that the introduction ended with a passage which was deferential towards Durkheim, quoting from *The Rules of Sociological Method*. Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron concluded the introduction with the comment that:

“In short, the scientific community has to provide itself with specific forms of social interchange ...” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeeeron, 1991, 77)

In other words, the uneasy compromise of *Le Métier de Sociologue* was that Passeron’s inclination to subject social scientific discourse per se to rigorous scrutiny was absorbed within a Durkheimian conception of the need socially to construct the community within which such scrutiny could occur. A fundamentally Weberian interest in rationality was absorbed within a conception of a socially constructed community which would have been anathema to Aron’s understanding of a social scientific community. My view is that Passeron’s work retained this linguistic/logical orientation, as shown in *Les mots de la sociologie* (Passeron, 1980) and in *Le Raisonnement sociologique* (Passeron, 1991), whereas Bourdieu’s work took a turn towards philosophical anthropology, mixed with phenomenology and ontology, as indicated by the subtitle of *Réponses: Pour une anthropologie réflexive* (Bourdieu, 1992a). Passeron retained his interest in language and reasoning, related to Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* and to Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, as introduced by Bertrand Russell, interested, in other words, in the logistic rejection of psychologism and in the early developments of logical positivism, whereas Bourdieu was, perhaps, more influenced by the late Husserl, whose position had been modified by contact with Heidegger, and by the late Wittgenstein of the *Logical Investigations*. Trained in a philosophical context which was primarily concerned with epistemology, Bourdieu and Passeron both became practising social scientists who found themselves analysing education and culture as a consequence of the political science and political orientations of their mentor, Raymond Aron.

Emerging differences between Bourdieu and Passeron in respect of the analysis of culture.

Passeron’s translation of *The Uses of Literacy* (Hoggart, 1957) was published as *La culture du pauvre* in 1970 (Hoggart, trans. Passeron, 1970), that is to say after Hoggart had left the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK, and, therefore,

precisely when the emergent English field of Cultural Studies was trying to shake off the legacy of the literary and textual tradition manifest in Hoggart's book. Passeron celebrates the way in which the *Uses of Literacy* practises the kind of sociology which is appropriate for the study of the working classes or the classes populaires. Precisely because Hoggart's book is essentially literary or particularly strong in registering working class language, Passeron tried to use Hoggart's work to support his contention that sociological analysis involves documenting the ways in which people articulate their own experiences linguistically, to support a kind of linguistic ethnomethodology, or, to relate this to a phrase used by Bourdieu, to support a linguistic analysis of texts of 'spontaneous sociology', like those supplied as appendices in *Travail et travailleurs en algérie* (Bourdieu, Darbel, Rivet, & Seibel, 1963). I just want to make one point about Passeron's 'présentation' of the translation of *The Uses of Literacy* as *La culture du pauvre*. Passeron comments that one of the most original aspects of Hoggart's book is his capacity to question the image of the working classes and their values held by other classes. He notes:

"Sans doute, le passé de l'auteur, né et élevé dans une famille ouvrière, devenu boursier, puis universitaire et chercheur, le place-t-il dans une position particulièrement favorable pour apercevoir la signification de classe de ces jugements sur les classes populaires qui ont, dans les classes cultivées, toute l'opacité des 'évidences naturelles'" (Hoggart, trans. Passeron, 1970, 17)

[Undoubtedly, the author's past – born and brought up in a working-class family, receiving a scholarship, becoming an academic and a researcher – puts him in a particularly favourable situation to perceive the class significance of those judgements on the popular classes which, amongst the cultivated classes, have all the opacity of 'natural self-evidence']

Passeron recognises that Hoggart was a 'transfuge'. In this respect, Passeron recognized an affinity between himself and Hoggart and, at the same time, Bourdieu. The crucial difference, however, is that Passeron's solution is completely unlike that attempted by Bourdieu in his "Célibat et condition paysanne" (Bourdieu, 1962). Bourdieu tried to engineer a conceptual encounter between the primary, unreflecting experience of Béarn peasants and the perspective on that experience which he had acquired as a social scientist who had attended Lévi-Strauss's seminars. Ten years later, Bourdieu was to articulate this encounter as a methodology when he adopted Bachelard's epistemological break to describe the three stages of theoretical knowledge, elaborated in *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* (Bourdieu, 1972). By contrast, Passeron continues in his présentation:

"Mais, s'il est vrai que toute personnalité intellectuelle est socialement conditionnée et si aucune expérience de classe n'est capable d'engendrer par sa seule vertu l'attitude proprement scientifique (nulle grâce de naissance ne prédestinant jamais à l'objectivité de la perception sociologique, pas plus dans les classes privilégiées que dans les classes défavorisées, ou même dans les couches intellectuelles, n'en déplaît à Mannheim), ... (Hoggart, trans. Passeron, 1970, 17)

[But, if it is true that every intellectual personality is socially conditioned and if no class experience is in itself capable of generating a properly scientific attitude (nothing ever predestining the objectivity of sociological perception thanks to birth, no more in the privileged classes than in the disadvantaged, pace Mannheim), ...]

In other words, scientific objectivity is not the preserve of any one class and is not socially constructed. All classes articulate their own self-understandings linguistically and these

articulations have to be analysed intrinsically as ‘science’ rather than relatively as the products of different social groups.

This clear distinction between the positions taken by Passeron and Bourdieu at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s relates as well to the difference between them in relation to the interpretation of *La Reproduction* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970). It was the paper given by Bourdieu in England in 1970 as “Reproduction culturelle et reproduction sociale” (Bourdieu, 1971) which consolidated the view that *La Reproduction* was arguing that cultural reproduction is an instrument in social reproduction whereas Passeron’s position had consistently been that there are autonomous logics in operation in both the cultural and the social spheres and that there is no universally formulatable causal connection between the two. The position which Bourdieu was developing became clear in the argument of *Esquisse* (Bourdieu, 1972), as further developed in the English translation as *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1977), but, in relation to class cultures, it was, of course, most apparent in *La Distinction* (1979). It was the publication of *La distinction* which stimulated the responses of Claude Grignon and Passeron which were expressed in the text which they finally published together in 1989 as *Le savant et le populaire*, echoing the title of Aron’s introduction to Weber’s essays. The book was the final version, barely altered, of seminars given in Marseille in 1982, and published by GIDES (Groupe inter-universitaire de documentation et d’enquêtes sociologiques) in 1983 and by CERCOM (Centre de Recherches sur Culture et Communication) in 1985. In the opening part of *Le savant et le populaire*, Passeron outlines the ‘cultural relativism’ position and the ‘cultural legitimacy’ position. He seems more inclined to expose Bourdieu as a cultural relativist and he suggests that the fallacy of Bourdieu’s position was that he wrongly tried to adopt in France a cultural relativist position which had worked in Algeria. Cultural relativism applies in a context of ‘pure alterity’ but within one society there is, instead, a situation of ‘altérité mêlée’. [Arguably, in parenthesis, in a global world, cultural relativism is now totally excluded since there is no possibility of any pure alterity and so, for Passeron, there is no defence remaining of Bourdieu’s approach.] Passeron’s main criticism of Bourdieu is the one to which I have already referred which he summarises again in the following way. Bourdieu acquiesced in a misreading of *La reproduction* which failed to acknowledge that

“... la connaissance des rapports de force entre groupes et classes n’apporte pas sur un plateau la clé de leurs rapports symboliques et du contenu de leurs cultures ou de leurs idéologies.” (Passeron & Grignon, 1989, xxxx)

[... the knowledge of the power relations between groups and classes does not dish out the key to their symbolic relations or of the content of their cultures or their ideologies]

In place of a crude, Marxist schéma to model the relations between culture and social class, Passeron proposes a second schéma which has the possibility of integrating cultural analysis with ideological analysis. This schéma represents diagrammatically the complex nature of socio-cultural analysis. As Passeron says:

“Une sociologie de la culture qui veut intégrer à ses analyses les faits de domination a toujours affaire à un circuit complexe d’interactions symboliques et de constitutions de symbolismes.”

[A sociology of culture which wants to integrate the facts of domination into its analyses is always involved in a complex circuit of symbolic interactions and constituted symbolisms]

Passeron knows that his second schéma is no more prescriptive or definitive than the first:

“Le schéma suggère évidemment l’apparence trompeuse d’un réseau routier que le chercheur pourrait parcourir sans problèmes. Ce n’est là qu’optimisme graphique.”

[The schema clearly suggests the mistaken appearance of a road network that the researcher can navigate without any problems. That is just graphical optimism.]

In other words, Passeron is in sympathy with Aron’s criticism of Weber that he imposed an overly simplistic model on complex social reality. To return to my starting point, my contention is that Passeron is equally in sympathy with Aron’s more positive interpretation of Weber’s position in balancing the commitments of science and politics. Passeron’s second schéma purports to offer a continuously self-modifying model of relations between culture and ideology which itself is scientific and non-ideological. The autonomous status of science is not questioned and political convictions or commitments are of a different order. I am reminded of Paul Veyne’s recent use of Weber to defend Foucault. Veyne (a close friend of Passeron) wrote:

“Si l’on cherche à cerner un type d’humanité, il y avait chez Foucault ce ‘renoncement sceptique à trouver un sens au monde’ dont parle Max Weber, qui y voyait avec quelque exagération une attitude ‘commune à toutes les couches intellectuelles de tous les temps’” (Veyne, 2008, 203, quoting Weber, 2006, 228).

[If we seek to discern a type of human nature, there was in Foucault that ‘sceptical refusal to find meaning in the world’ of which Weber spoke, who, with some exaggeration, saw in it an attitude which is ‘common to all intellectual milieux at all times’]

By contrast, Bourdieu tried to develop a conceptual framework which sought to represent the complexity of reality itself. Just as Passeron counteracts the Marxist schéma logically, Bourdieu tried, by developing the concept of ‘field’, to moderate the crudity of a Marxist position. Bourdieu’s contention was that there are in society socially constructed or institutionalised ‘fields’ within which autonomous cultural analyses are exchanged whilst these fields are themselves socio-economically conditioned. Grignon accuses Bourdieu of evaluating dominated culture by the criteria of dominant culture, but the point of *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu, 1984) is that Bourdieu deliberately situates the view of culture taken in *Distinction* as a function of his own position within the ‘game of culture’.

Differences between Aron, Bourdieu and Passeron in respect of education.

This is not the place to look fully at the work of the three men in respect of education during the 1960s. I want to offer some bibliographic details and make a few comments as a prelude to some brief reference to the events of May, 1968.

Aron wrote two articles specifically on education in this period. The first was “Quelques problèmes des universités françaises”[some problems of French universities], published in 1962. (Aron, 1962). He made it clear that his interest was in the way in which European universities, as historic institutions, might adapt to the challenges of modern, industrial society. The problems of adaptation were to be resolved politically. He examined the ideological legacy in France, not of the medieval university but of the revolutionary and Napoleonic regimes, revised at the beginning of the 3rd Republic. He was highly critical of French universities, but he sought

solutions in terms of management, governance, or legislative change. His second article was a paper given in June, 1966 (Aron, 1966) significantly, to a colloque of the *Institut international de planification de l'éducation* [the international institute for educational planning] thereby confirming his orientation towards the central, governmental planning of change.

As well as writing “Les étudiants et leurs études” and *Les Héritiers* in 1964, Bourdieu and Passeron wrote, with others under a pseudonym, an article in *Esprit* in the same year entitled “L'universitaire et son université” (Boupareytre, 1964). In 1965, they together wrote “Langage et rapport au langage dans la situation pédagogique” and, with Monique de Saint-Martin, “Les étudiants et la langue d'enseignement”, both of which were issued as a working paper of the Centre, with the title *Rapport pédagogique et communication* (Bourdieu, Passeron, & de Saint Martin, eds., 1965) most of which was published in English translation in 1994 as *Academic Discourse* (Bourdieu, Passeron, & de Saint Martin, eds., 1994). The tendency of these joint papers was still to see the social or class differences of students as a variable to be considered in the analysis of pedagogic communication, but not yet to see the system within which the communication was occurring as something which itself should be subject to sociological analysis. Writing separately, Passeron produced a report in 1963 entitled “Les étudiantes” (Passeron, 1963) which demonstrated that the language codes deployed by female students were the sources of pedagogically significant communicative variations and this view, perhaps, constituted a challenge to Bourdieu's inclination to define the student body as a social group exclusively in terms of its ‘studentness’, its gender-free situatedness. In 1967, Passeron published an article entitled “La relation pédagogique dans le système d'enseignement” in which he explicitly contended that the analysis of pedagogical relations was in danger of divorcing pedagogy ‘from the institutional and social conditions in which it is accomplished’ (Passeron, 1967, 149) and he proceeded to analyse instead the discourses of conservatism and innovation which were being deployed by those involved in educational reform. It was this discourse analysis which was also the basis of Passeron's contribution to a book which he published in 1966 with Gérald Antoine, entitled *La réforme de l'Université* (Antoine & Passeron, 1966). Passeron here compared the implementation of educational change at the beginning of the 3rd Republic, based upon the shared discourse of academics and legislators, with the difficulty of effecting change in the present when there was neither a shared discourse amongst academics nor a shared discourse between academics and administrators. Aron wrote a Foreword to this book in which he recognised that the change by legislation which he favoured was predicated on a community of values which was currently lacking in France.

The May ‘events’ of 1968.

Aron used his position at Le Figaro to write pieces about the student revolt whilst it was happening. These were reproduced in a book which he published in September, 1968, entitled *La révolution introuvable. Réflexions sur les événements de mai* (Aron, 1968). Fourteen short pieces, published between May 15th and June 28th, were collected as an appendix. The first, retrospective, part of the book offered reflections on the events, beginning with a statement about the nature of his involvement which helps us steer a way through his intellectual response to the events, contextualising the contents of the appendix. On Friday, May 3rd, the University Rector called in the police to clear the Sorbonne and there was a mass demonstration in the Latin Quarter. A week later, in the night of Friday 10th to Saturday 11th, there was a rising in the Latin Quarter following the breakdown of talks between the government and the students. The uprising was brutally repressed by the police. Aron recollects that he refused to write anything in Le Figaro in this first week of the events. In the University, as he says, he ‘belonged to the reformist and not the conservative party’ (Aron, 1968, 21). As much as possible, he tried to abstain, not wanting to ‘add to the confusion’ nor to join those of his university colleagues who

considered it their ‘duty to accompany the students to the barricades’ (Aron, 1968, 21). He was abroad in the United States from the 14th to the 23rd of May, honouring a long-standing commitment. Before leaving, he had written two ‘Réflexions d’un universitaire’ which were published on May 15th and 16th. In the first, he argued against the student view that their condition was universal, and he insisted that lecturing staff should force themselves ‘patiently and modestly’ to resolve problems which took particular forms in different countries in spite of ‘certain common characteristics’ (Aron, 1968, 159). In the second, he argued that the crisis of the university derived from the fact that student numbers had increased – something which had occurred in all industrial countries – but that this had not been matched in France with the necessary disposition of resources. What was articulated by students as an intrinsic shortcoming of a ‘technocratic university’ was actually the shortcoming of the modern state in failing to make provision for the kind of university entailed by its modernisation. Aron argued still for dialogue but he feared that the current events prefigured more danger than hope. The analysis offered in these first two articles was still reminiscent of his earlier lectures on industrial society and totalitarian and democratic political systems. On May 16th Pompidou announced ominously that the government would ‘do its duty’ in the face of disorder. On the 18th, de Gaulle returned hastily from a visit to Roumania. The following week the parliamentary left demanded the resignation of the government, but a motion of censure was defeated in the National Assembly on the 22nd. On Friday 24th de Gaulle announced a referendum on participation, adding that he would resign if it were rejected. Aron cut short his trip to the United States and he recollects that, on his return on May 23rd, there was ‘apparently no government’. It was, therefore, as he puts it, no longer ‘a question of writing then about the university’ (Aron, 1968, 22-3). In his absence, the issues had escalated. His response escalated from that of a sociologist concerned with educational reform to that of a political philosopher confronting the problems of a modern social democracy. His method was historical. Rather than attempt a scientific analysis of contemporary events, Aron offered an account by analogy with the events of 1848 as recounted by de Tocqueville in a piece published on May 29th, entitled “Immuable et changeante” – a title which deliberately echoed that of a book which Aron had written in 1958 on the eve of the adoption of the constitution of the Vth Republic. On Thursday, May 30th, de Gaulle returned to Paris from a meeting in Germany and made a speech broadcast on radio and television in which he announced his refusal to withdraw and his decision to dissolve the National Assembly. When, as Aron comments, ‘there was a government again, that is to say after May 30’ (Aron, 1968, 23), he considered it his duty to continue pieces in his *Le Figaro* column which were informed by the fact that he was also a university professor. The present circumstances demanded this, that is to say because ‘there is such a confusion between university revolution and political revolution’ (Aron, 1968, 23). Aron’s intention was to continue the political debate of May ex post facto and the production of the book in September was an extension of this purpose. He compared the function of his book with that of his *Tragédie Algérienne* which he had written in 1958 when de Gaulle had been recalled to power during the Algerian crisis. The aim was to be polemical. He had no pretension ‘to impart the truth or the meaning of the event’. His objective was to ‘demystify’ and ‘desacralise’ it (Aron, 1968, 12). Aron’s interventions had begun as contributions to debate about the reform of the university but, after the beginning of June, culminating in the publication of his book in September, he broadened the discussion so as to offer an ideological critique, as a political philosopher, of the libertarian tendency in the French political tradition which drew inspiration from the jacobin communes of Paris of the 1790s, the 1848 revolution, and the Paris Commune of 1871.

The clearest evidence for Bourdieu’s association with the events of May, 1968 is offered in the book published in the year of his death by two of his disciples – Franck Poupeau and Thierry Discepolo – entitled *Interventions, 1961-2001, Science sociale et action politique*. (Poupeau & Discepolo, 2002). They are concerned to show the continuity of Bourdieu’s position from the

early 1960s through to his opposition to neo-liberalism in the 1990s and, in particular, they reproduce two documents with which Bourdieu was associated, the first entitled *Appel à l'organisation d'états généraux de l'enseignement et de recherche* [Call for the organisation of Estates General of teaching and research] and the second entitled *Quelques indications pour une politique de démocratisation* [some suggestions for a democratisation policy]. The first document was the product of a meeting of a group of lecturers and researchers which took place on May 12th ‘at the moment when, by their courage, the students have won a first battle’ (Poupeau & Discepolo, 2002, 63). It was most concerned to argue that there was a danger that the future of the university would be debated only by those who were the beneficiaries of the current system. In recommending the organisation of an Estates General which would provide a forum for those involved in education at all levels, from primary to higher education, the Call sought to ensure that the educational revolt would not be one within an autonomous, politically managed system, but would be transformed into a widespread social democratic revolution which would be operationalised by means adopted by the revolutionaries of 1789 in opposing the Ancien Régime. The second document outlines 16 principles to be followed in seeking to ensure that technocratic reform of the university does not reinforce existing social inequality. Together, these papers indicate the political implications of Bourdieu’s sociocratic opposition to technocratic control of educational processes and they do anticipate the position which he was to outline in *La noblesse d'état* (Bourdieu, 1989) as well as in the publications of Liber. *Raisons d'Agir* of the 1990s, especially *Quelques diagnostics et remèdes urgents pour une université en péril* (1997)

In 1966 Passeron moved to the University of Nantes and established a department of Sociology there before accepting a post as Head of Sociology in 1968 at the new post-1968 University of Paris VIII at Vincennes where he remained until 1977. He was committed to the institutionalisation of Sociology and to the view that legislative changes would become effective if a receptive common discourse of educational innovation could be established. He was one of the 78 signatories to the call for an Estates-General attributed, as we have seen, to Bourdieu, but it seems that Passeron had no further direct involvement with the Parisian events.

Summary.

I have tried to sketch the three positions adopted in the 1960s by Aron, Passeron and Bourdieu. For me, the legacy of 1968 is encapsulated in the tension between these three positions which is still our tension today. All three men wanted to be socio-politically engaged as scientists. Aron emphasized the necessity for political engagement and marginalised social activism. He sponsored sociological research in the hope of consolidating his political convictions through comparative analyses. Bourdieu and Passeron carried out these analyses. By exposing the extent to which pedagogical communication euphemized political domination, however, they autonomised the social and the cultural as arenas for a potential counter-politics, thereby undermining Aron’s intention. Bourdieu sought to translate this sociological analysis into a blueprint for political action, based on the mobilisation of social movements. Passeron was to detach himself from Bourdieu’s project in 1972 to concentrate, instead, on developing an epistemology of the social sciences, crystallised in *Le Raisonnement Sociologique* (1991)², so as to seek to understand philosophically the explanatory claims of those political and sociological discourses of which Aron and Bourdieu were opposed exponents.

² The revised edition of 2006 is currently being translated, to be published in 2010.

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