

# **DURABLE DOMINATION: GRAMSCI MEETS BOURDIEU**

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Second Conversation with Pierre  
Bourdieu, Havens Center, April 3, 2008

# OVERVIEW

- Reflections on the first conversation
- History and Biography
- Domination: Symbolic Violence vs. Hegemony
- Traditional and Organic Intellectuals
- Synthesis: University as the Modern Prince

# I: Reflections on the First Conversation

- What is a conversation?
- First Conversation
  - Foundation: The logic of practice
  - Borrowing: The idea of the field
  - Elaboration: “Superstructures”
  - Disagreement: Class (un)formation
  - Divergence: Exploitation

## II. History and Biography

- General convergences
- Divergent trajectories

## II. History and Biography

	BOURDIEU (1930-2002)	GRAMSCI (1891-1937)
Childhood	Village → City	Village → City
Formative Political Experiences	Algerian Revolution	Factory Councils
Theoretical Development	Scholastic Community	Communist Movement
Final Redirections	Public Interventions	Prison Notebooks

# III. Durable Dominations

BOURDIEU

Symbolic Violence

Hegemony

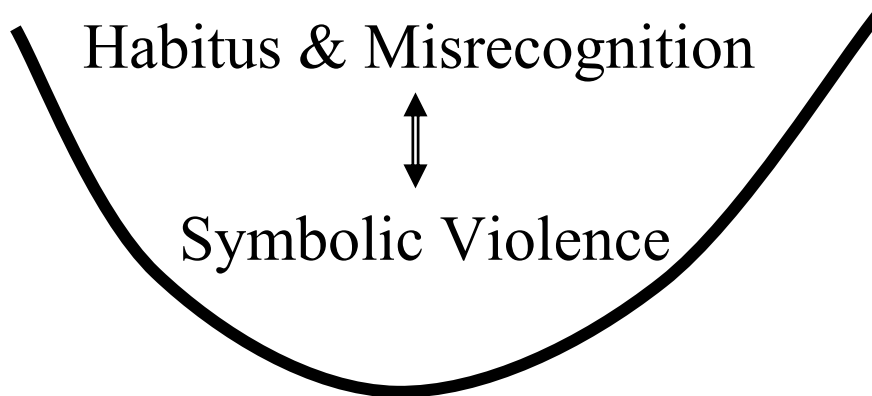
GRAMSCI

# Symbolic Violence

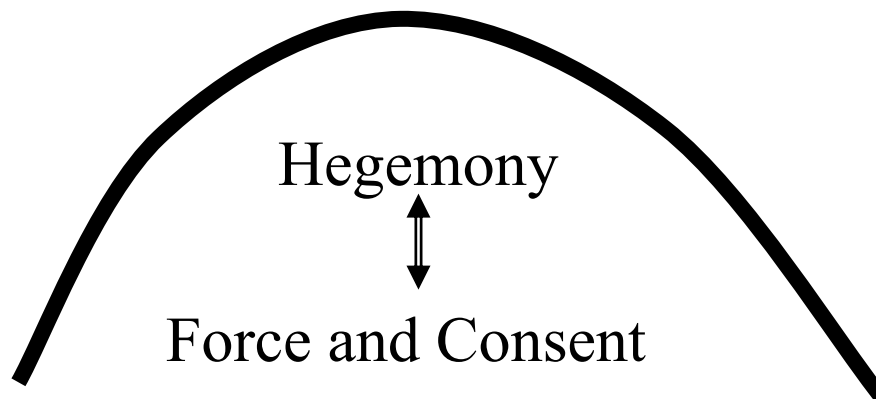
**“And another effect of the scholastic illusion is seen when people describe resistance to domination in the language of consciousness – as does the whole Marxist tradition and also the feminist theorists who, giving way to habits of thought, expect political liberation to come from the ‘raising of consciousness’ – ignoring the extraordinary inertia which results from the inscription of social structures in bodies, for lack of a dispositional theory of practices. While making things explicit can help, only a thoroughgoing process of countertraining, involving repeated exercises, can, like an athlete’s training, durably transform habitus.”**

**--- Pierre Bourdieu, PM, p.172**

BOURDIEU



GRAMSCI



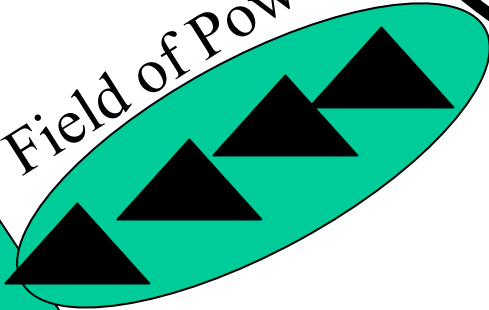
BOURDIEU

Habitus & Misrecognition



Symbolic Violence

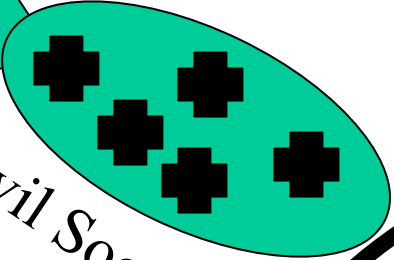
Field of Power



STATE



Civil Society



Hegemony



Force and Consent

GRAMSCI

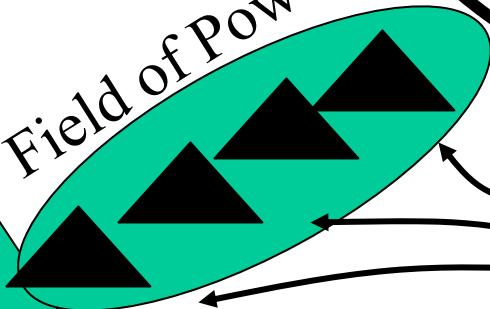
BOURDIEU

Habitus & Misrecognition



Symbolic Violence

Field of Power

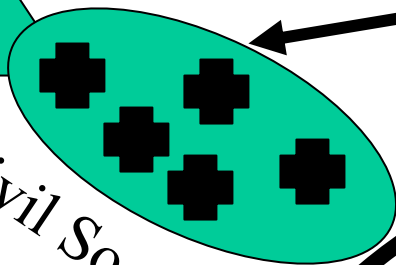


Classification  
Struggle

WoP/WoM

STATE

Civil Society

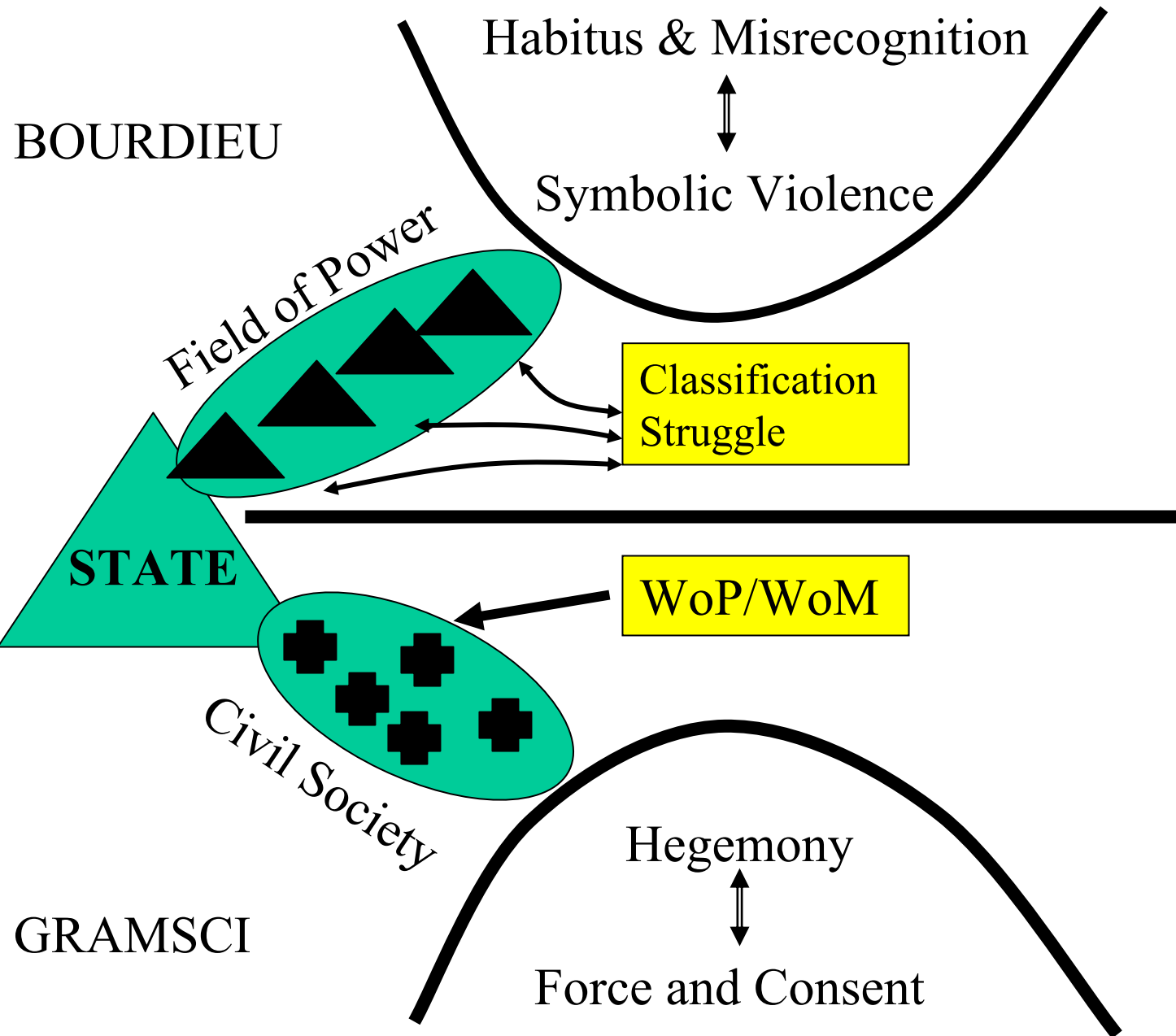


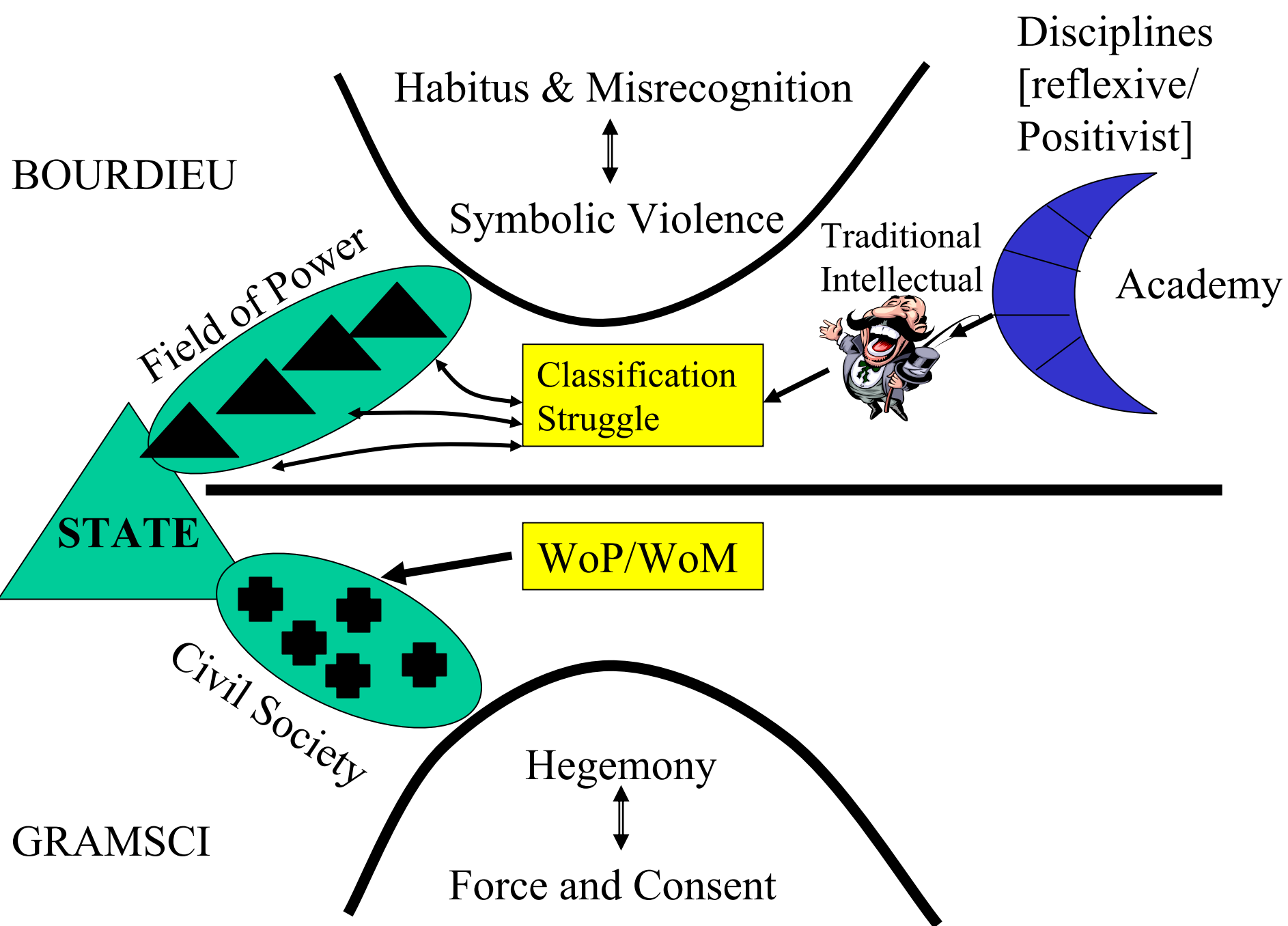
Hegemony



Force and Consent

GRAMSCI



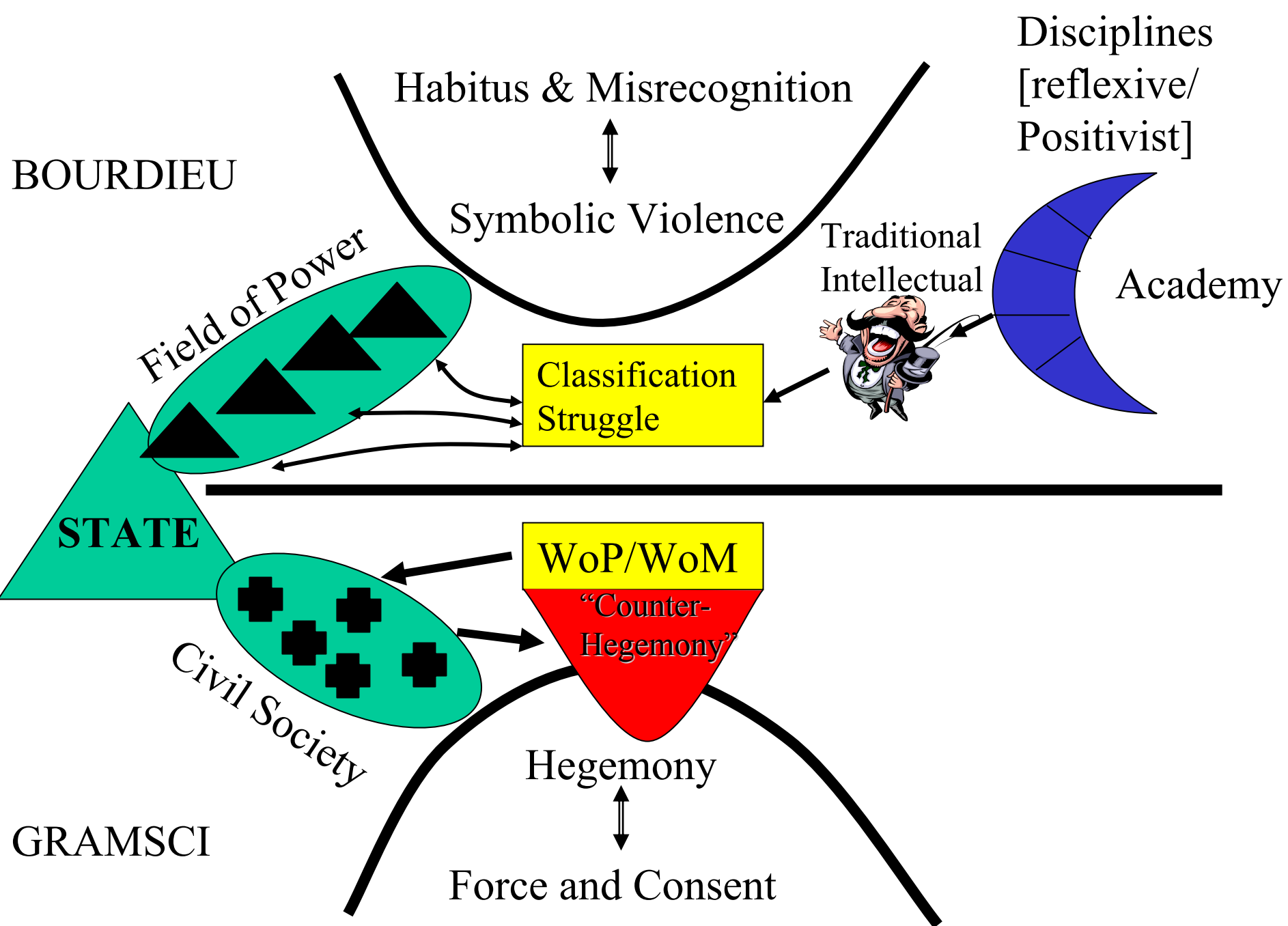


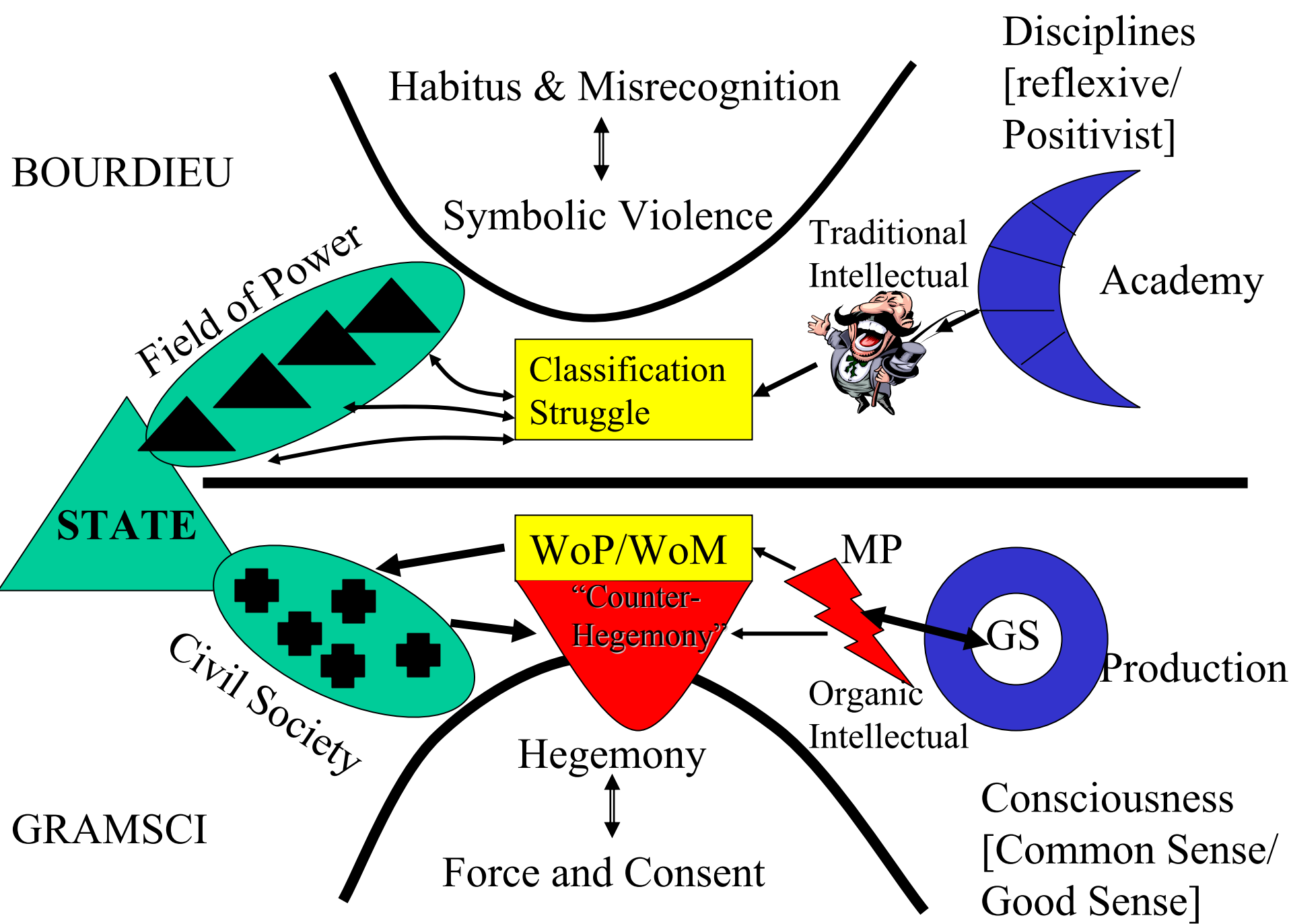
# Scientific field

“The scientific field is an armed struggle among adversaries who possess weapons whose power and effectiveness rises with the scientific capital collectively accumulated in and by the field (and therefore, in the incorporated state, in each of the agents) and who agree at least to appeal to the verdict of experience, the ‘real’, as a kind of ultimate referee.” (Bourdieu, PM, p.113)

# From Science to Politics

As soon as one ceases to deny the evidence of history and accepts that reason is not rooted in an ahistorical nature and that, as a human invention, it can only assert itself in social games capable of favouring its appearance and its exercise, one can arm oneself with a historical science of the historical conditions of its emergence to try to strengthen everything that, in each of the different fields, tends to favour the undivided rule of its specific logic, in other words independence from any kind of extrinsic power or authority – tradition, religion, the State, market forces. One might then, in this spirit, treat the realistic description of the scientific field as a kind of reasonable utopia of what a political field conforming to democratic reason might be like; or, more precisely, as a model which, by comparison with the observed reality, would indicate the principles of action aimed at promoting the equivalent, within the political field, of what is observed in the scientific field in its most autonomous forms, that is to say a regulated competition, which would control itself ... by its own imminent logic, through social mechanisms capable of forcing agents to behave ‘rationally’ and to sublimate their drives. (Bourdieu, PM, p.126)





# Common Sense and Good Sense

The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world: and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. But this verbal conception is not without its consequences. It holds together a specific social group, it influences moral conduct and the direction of the will, with varying efficacy, but often powerfully enough to produce a situation in which the contradictory state of consciousness does not permit of any action, any decision or any choice, and produces a condition of moral passivity. Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political “hegemonies” and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one’s own conception of reality.

(Gramsci, PN: 333)



# IV: Organic and Traditional Intellectuals

# Organic Intellectuals

“Every social group coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential economic function in the world of production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.” (Gramsci, PN, p.5)

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“...the myth of ‘organic intellectual,’ so dear to Gramsci. By reducing intellectuals to the role of the proletariat’s ‘fellow travelers,’ this myth prevents them from taking up the defense of their own interests and from exploiting their most effective means of struggle on behalf of universal causes.” (Bourdieu, “Intellectuals in the Modern World,” p.109)

# Traditional Intellectuals

“....experience through an ‘*esprit de corps*’ their uninterrupted historical continuity and their special qualification, they thus put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group” (Gramsci, PN: 7).

# Traditional Intellectuals

“Cultural producers will not find again a place of their own in the social world unless, sacrificing once and for all the myth of the ‘organic intellectual’ (without falling into the complementary mythology of the mandarin withdrawn from everything), they agree to work collectively for the defense of their interests. This should lead them to assert themselves as an international power of criticism and watchfulness, or even of proposals, in the face of the technocrats, or – with an ambition both more lofty and more realistic, and hence limited to their own sphere – to get involved in rational action to defend the economic and social conditions of the autonomy of these socially privileged universes in which the material and intellectual instruments of what we call Reason are produced and reproduced. This *Realpolitik of reason* will undoubtedly be suspected of corporatism. But it will be part of its task to prove, by the ends to which it puts the sorely won means of autonomy, that it is a corporatism of the universal.” (*Rules of Art*, p.348)

# Rapprochement

- Mirror Opposites
- War on Two fronts
- Public Sociology as two-headed monster
- University as Modern Prince?