THE LITERARY FIELD:
AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF BOURDIEU'S
SOCIOLOGY OF ART*

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Abstract   Bourdieu describes the structure of society as a result of class con-
flicts and status competition. Art in general, and the literary field in particular,
is interpreted as a differentiated social field that is autonomous in the sense that
it follows its own logic – the competition for cultural legitimation. What litera-
ture has in common with other social systems is the stratification of its internal
structure into a hierarchical arrangement. Thus the literary field can be described
as a horizontally differentiated system that is, however, vertically differentiated
internally.

   The concern of the paper is to test Bourdieu's theoretical considerations
empirically. Data for the analysis and interpretation are based on interviews
of Cologne writers. The data are analysed with the aid of blockmodel and
correspondence analysis. As far as the data allows us to operationalise the thesis
that the literary field is an autonomous differentiated system, Bourdieu's thesis
is confirmed. The internal structure can be described more precisely: the first
line of demarcation is, in fact, the difference that Bourdieu described between
legitimate and illegitimate art: high-culture literature and low-culture literature
are the two poles of the literary field. The realm of the legitimate literature
is further differentiated into three blocks (elite, junior elite, periphery). The
elite and the periphery differ in terms of the different degrees of success. The
junior elite occupies an intermediate place. Bourdieu's sociology of literature is
supported by the empirical material at hand.

   Starting from the universality of class conflict and status competition as the
premise of his theory of society, Pierre Bourdieu depicts the structure of
societies as an outcome of such positional struggles. Like any other social
sphere, the realm of art, claiming innocence and lack of practical purpose, can
be interpreted as a structural result of status competition in the broadest sense
(1979 : 356–7). In Bourdieu's view the characteristic of art in general, and of
literature in particular, is its preoccupation not with competition for material
goods, political power, educational titles, scientific reputation, or athletic success,
but rather with cultural legitimation. In that sense one can characterise literature
as a differentiated social system or social field that is autonomous in the sense
that it follows its own logic – the competition for cultural legitimation. What this
logic has in common with other social systems, however, is the stratification of
its internal structure into a hierarchical arrangement. Bourdieu assumes that the
literary field, a 'market for symbolic goods' (Bourdieu 1985) can be described

as a horizontally differentiated system that is, however, vertically differentiated internally (Bourdieu 1974).

Primarily, Bourdieu conceives of society less as a simple vertical arena than as a functionally differentiated one. Accordingly, his attention is directed to internal hierarchies. The overall positions of hierarchical structures stem from the relations which individual positions have to other social positions in society. This societal structure can be imagined as a multi-dimensional parallelogram of forces, where the arrangement of actors, the topography, results solely from their relations to the other actors in the field. Like the knots of a spider's web, the positions of the individual actors result from the relations and forces acting upon them.

The actors of the literary field belong to different groups that represent their respective interests – writers, publishers, agents, critics, radio and television broadcasting stations, cultural institutions, and universities, all of which are involved as organs of legitimation in the process of defining position. The interplay of the various actors gives rise to a hierarchical pattern of positions localised between the poles represented by its centre and periphery.

The model of the literary field as outlined in its basic structure here has been elaborated theoretically by Bourdieu himself and DiMaggio (DiMaggio 1976; Bourdieu 1983, 1985). Few attempts have been made to examine it empirically, however. The concern of the following analysis is quite simple; it attempts to begin putting Bourdieu's theoretical considerations on an empirical footing.[1] Although the thesis of a differentiated literary social system is also examined, the primary effort will be to test Bourdieu's description of the literary field as a vertically differentiated arena. Data for the analysis and interpretation are based on interviews of Cologne writers, conducted with the help of a semi-standardised questionnaire. The data are analysed with the aid of blockmodel and correspondence analysis.

The identified universe consists of 227 Cologne writers, defined as authors of fiction (thereby excluding authors of literary non-fiction and scientific material) who had published a book or a work in an anthology after 1970. It was possible to interview 149 of the 227 authors. As for the 78 authors not interviewed, information about sex, age, number of books published, and, if the person could be reached by telephone, the reason for declining to be interviewed were collected from a variety of published sources. An analysis of these variables revealed no systematic and significant differences between authors who were interviewed and authors who were not.

Literature as a differentiated social system

The thesis that the literary field is not only vertically differentiated internally, but as a totality represents a distinct system of meaning distinguished from other systems, is asserted by Bourdieu (1974), yet only cursorily sketched and remains certainly one of the least elaborated parts of his conceptualisation.[2]

If art in the broad sense, and literature in the narrow sense, is labelled a differentiated system of meaning, it implies that the structure of this system stems from its own specific rationale, that it is not exclusively determined by

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external factors and conditions. The literary field is a differentiated system in that it is relatively autonomous. This does not mean that literature is unaffected by economic, political, religious, or scientific conditions. The influence of those conditions, however, must acquire their meaning through the needle's eye of aesthetic rationale.

Historically, many things had to come about before the arts became autonomous, the most important being their economic and aesthetic independence from both the aristocracy and the church (Harferkorn 1974). Literary production is no longer bound directly to patrons, nor do they shape aesthetic direction. It is relatively free production for the literary market and does not look to patrons for aesthetic orientation. Such a socio-structural development is culturally prepared and accompanied by much ideological vehemence. The cult of the genius in the 'Sturm und Drang' period, a phenomenon that has shaped the image of the literary writer to this day, reflects the process of autonomisation in terms of the writer's role. The aesthetic of 'art for art's sake', and the turning away from the aesthetics of production completes the differentiation in terms of art theory. Today the autonomy of art is taken for granted; it is scarcely a topic of discussion. For example, in a key passage of Article 5 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, it is even anchored in constitutional law. The autonomy of art is not reality for all societies, however. This autonomy depends on the existence of a literary market, independence from political interference, and the absence of self-restraint in literature (such as in the form of socialist realism).

A valid indicator of the autonomy of literature may be the question about the share of commissioned work in which literary content is prescribed. A total of 59.9 per cent of the respondents listed 0 per cent; and only 6.3 per cent of them estimated that the share accounted for over 50 per cent of their total production. Direct influence on their literary production in the form of commissioned production is therefore rare.

That has not always been the case. Until well into the eighteenth century literary production was commissioned production, financed by nobles who had homages and occasional poetry prepared and who often dictated the opening lines, the length and the verse form (Harferkorn 1974 : 216). Today, literary production is oriented instead to reference points inherent in literature. Almost 70 per cent (69.4 per cent) of the interviewed authors responded that they had a literary 'model', or influence, with one of them adding: 'When I am working on a manuscript, I read a lot in old books'. Obviously, literature itself serves as an orientation system for literature. The reference point is literature itself. The fact that 38.8 per cent of the interviewed authors had studied German literature can also be interpreted in these terms. For more than a third of the authors, knowing the history of their own system is the basis of their literary creation.

One final variable derived from the survey of writers can be related to the question about the autonomy of literature. We asked the respondents what had motivated them to become writers. The most important motive (49.6 per cent) was the sense of a calling to write. External incentives (e.g., parental influence, income, or status) played a smaller role in these cases. Considering that a second occupation is necessary for 76.4 per cent of the respondents since their income from literary activity is insufficient (Gerhards and Anheier 1987), the dominant

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motive for becoming a writer is the production of art for art's sake, a route which entails the uncertainties of irregular income. In terms of motives, the choice to follow the call to write could be seen as corresponding to the 'autonomy' of literature. Interestingly enough, even the transcriptions of the lengthy structured interviews with members of the literary elite contain few, if any, statements that can be related to the question of autonomy. The autonomy of a literary field as defined above is simply taken for granted.[3]

Vertical differentiation of the literary field

Bourdieu conceives of the literary field as an arena of the struggle for the cultural legitimation of the products of artistic activity. The actors in this competition are those persons creating art, on the one hand, and interpreters and recipients of artistic products (critics, philologists, editors, publishers, and ultimately the reading public), on the other. The result of this persistent struggle to define legitimate positions is a vertically differentiated social structure stemming from the interrelations of individual positions (Bourdieu 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1985).

Among the actors relevant for the literary field, we have focused on the authors themselves, on their patterns of interrelations, and not on other actors and spheres. The data were analysed in two steps. Blockmodelling was used to sub-divide our total population of authors into groups. Based on the principle of structural equivalence (White, Boorman and Breiger 1976; Kappelhof 1984, 1987), blockmodel analysis groups persons according to their relations to third parties. If all the relations that two persons have to a third party are about the same, then those two persons are assigned to the same group. This approach is appropriate for our purposes because Bourdieu's theoretical concept, too, rests on a relational basis for determining positions.

In the second step the four sub-groups derived from blockmodel analysis are further examined by correspondence analysis, which requires a set of variables that can serve as indicators of the literary field's structure. Correspondence analysis – one of the procedures used by Bourdieu himself (1982) – differentiates groups according to the frequency with which they correspond to the manifestations of the variables in a contingency table. The relations between groups and variables are graphically and numerically illustrated.

(a) *Determining the macro-structure of the literary field.* The patterns of relationships between the interviewed writers were measured in four dimensions:

1. Information level: familiarity with the literary work of the other colleagues;
2. Informal connections: friendships with other writers;
3. Transfer of resources: aid received from colleagues in preparing manuscripts and establishing contact with publishers;
4. Reference group orientation: preference(s) expressed in answer to the question of which colleague(s) the respondent would like to invite to dinner.

Blockmodelling was used to analyse the data. On the basis of the relational data, we constructed four binary matrices 227 x 227 in size whose i–j[th] entry

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is "1" if a relation as specified above exists between writers i and j. Otherwise, relations are coded as "0". The blockmodel analysis included 78 authors who had not been interviewed but who had been named by the 149 interviewed writers with regard to the relational dimensions.

The goal of the blockmodel analysis was to differentiate a given population into non-overlapping groups, thereby reducing relational data to an underlying configuration as a relational synopsis of the given network. Intuitively, the principle of structural equivalence underlying the analysis can be understood to mean that the "1"s in the matrices cluster, as do the "0"s. If writer i is related to writer j in a structurally equivalent manner, then both relate in much the same way to every other member of the network. Then, and only then, do i and j constitute a block. Thus, if the original matrix can be sub-divided into equivalence classes (blocks), then a complex data structure can be reduced to its homomorphous image – a homomorphous structure that is less complex than the original matrix but that nevertheless retains the relations it described.

To approximate the principle of structural equivalence, we used the CONCOR algorithm, a hierarchical cluster procedure that forms non-overlapping groups, or equivalence classes (Arabie, Boorman and Levitt 1978). CONCOR replaces the binary data ij with the Pearson product-moment correlation of columns i and j (rij). Further iterations of the correlations between the columns yield the first sub-division of the population – into two groups, or blocks. Repeated use of CONCOR breaks the blocks down further and further until the clusters match the original matrices. Since CONCOR has no direct goodness-of-fit measure, there is a problem with using the algorithm to choose the optimal level of block refinement. To test Bourdieu's theses, it seems sufficient to sub-divide the population into four blocks. Their rationale and nomenclature emerge only as the argumentation continues, however. In a later step the densities of the relations between the blocks is calculated by figuring the ratio of the number of manifest relations to the number of possible relations.

The blockmodel analysis initially divides the field into a segment of low-culture, 'light' literature, and one of high-culture, 'serious' literature, which itself can be broken down into three sub-segments: the elite, the junior elite, and the periphery. The low-culture segment of literature accounted for 6.8 per cent of the writers, whereas the remaining 93.2 per cent belonged to the high-culture segment of literature. Looking at the density matrices for the four dimensions discerned, one can describe the relations between and within the blocks more precisely, as shown in Table 1.

Whereas the elite, the junior elite and the periphery form a hierarchy representing the sphere of high culture, the block of low culture constitutes a separate segment. In Bourdieu's terminology (1974), it is an area of illegitimate art, which does not enjoy the blessings of aesthetic recognition. The members within this segment are related to each other to a certain degree. Each writer knows something about the work of the other; there are friendships, albeit only a few; and some collaboration on manuscripts does occur. The writers of low-culture literature constitute a separate, independent area in that the other blocks disregard them.

The elite establishes itself as elite in the realm of high culture because it is

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Table 1
Density Matrices between Junior Elite, Elite, Periphery and Light Literature*

1. Awareness

	JE	E	P	LL
Junior Elite	19	34	2	2
Elite	19	42	3	3
Periphery	9	23	2	2
Light Literature	2	9	0	29

2. Friendship

	JE	E	P	LL
Junior Elite	2	2	0	0
Elite	3	7	0	0
Periphery	0	0	0	0
Light Literature	0	0	0	4

3. Assistance

	JE	E	P	LL
Junior Elite	2	6	0	0
Elite	2	5	0	0
Periphery	2	2	0	0
Light Literature	0	0	0	4

4. Invitations

	JE	E	P	LL
Junior Elite	2	6	0	0
Elite	5	15	0	0
Periphery	2	6	0	0
Light Literature	5	7	5	7

* Density is the ratio between possible and measured ties multiplied by factor 100

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defined as such by the other blocks. The members of the other blocks are familiar with much of the elite's work and choose it as a reference group for themselves. The reverse is not typically true; the relations are asymmetrical, precisely the feature that characterises elite positions. Elite writers have a relatively strong network with each other. They have helped each other relatively often in transferring resources, know each other's work, choose themselves as a reference group, and, relatively often, are friends with each other.

The block closest to the elite is what in the present context is called the junior elite (because of the relatively young age of the group). The junior elite chooses the elite as its reference group and is familiar with the work of the elite, whereas the reverse is not true to the same degree. The junior elite is perceived as such by the elite, as is shown by the density values pertaining to the question about the transfer of resources. What the junior elite receives from all segments most frequently is support, yet primarily from the elite. In terms of internal relations, the junior elite is located between the elite and the periphery.

The periphery, which accounts for more than 50 per cent of the authors, likewise chooses the elite as a reference group and is familiar with their work. The members of the periphery, however, do not maintain any de facto relations with members of the elite, whether as friendships or assistance. The degree of internal relations within the periphery is likewise minimal. The periphery consists of many individual members who have relations neither to others 'above' nor among themselves and who, accordingly, do not represent a collective actor.

The basic structure of the literary field is thus determined by (1) the segmentation into legitimate, high culture, on the one hand, and a segment of low culture, on the other, and (2) the differentiation of the realm of high culture into three hierarchically related blocks. Figure 1 summarises the findings arrived at thus far.

The blockmodel analysis has given us an insight into the nature of the macro-structure of the literary field by grouping the writers into blocks that have similar positions to third parties and by subsequently interrelating the individual segments. Apart from the density values, however, the segments themselves do not appear to be determined much by content. In the following section we shall

Figure 1
Segmentation and Stratification of the Literary Field

Segment of High Culture   *Segment of Low Culture*

Elite

Junior Elite

Periphery

Light Literature Writers

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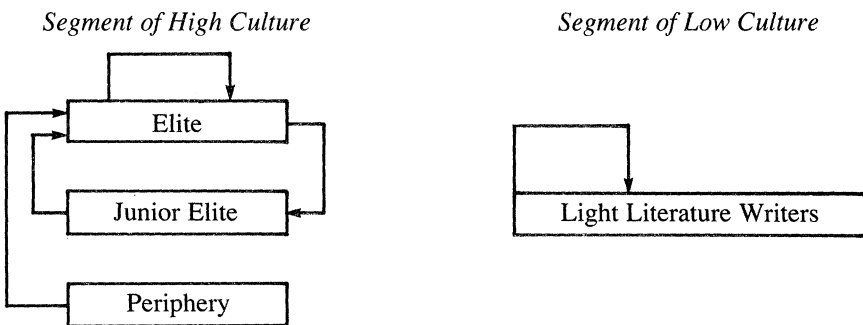
attempt to delineate the blocks more precisely by using socio-structural features. This has partially been done already in that the segments have been given labels whose plausibility will emerge only in the course of the following analysis.

(b) *Analysing the macro-structure of the literary field.* In this section the four segments of the literary field will be analysed 'substantively'. Correspondence analysis is an appropriate procedure for this task. Although it has been used by Bourdieu himself (Bourdieu 1982), it is not widely applied yet, so a brief introduction is in order.[4]

The advantage of correspondence analysis lies in the fact that it accepts nominal data, while at the same time allowing for multivariate analysis, which also permits a graphic representation of the basic results. In our study, the initial matrix for a correspondence analysis is constituted by contingency tables in which each of the four blocks obtained through blockmodel analysis represents a column, and 'independent' variables relevant to examine Bourdieu's theses represent the rows. The goal of correspondence analysis is to find a lower dimensioned space in which the four blocks can be projected and separated from one another by using the 'independent' variables. Graphically, this means projecting the four blocks of the literary field into a two-dimensional space defined by the frequency with which the blocks are distributed across the row variables. Their relative proportions are standardised across both rows and columns to a chi-square metric, a multi-step procedure that cannot be described here (for a more detailed description, see Blasius 1987a). However, it is important to note that the selection of the variables for the correspondence analysis is guided by theory with the goal of examining Bourdieu's theory of art. The rationale underlying the selection is presented in the next section.

The key line segmenting the literary field follows the criterion of legitimate and illegitimate art. Since literature is a differentiated system, this dividing line is based on inherent criteria of art. The questions of whether the primary literary intention of an author is to entertain and whether he or she writes in the local vernacular (Cologne dialect literature) are operationalisations of this aesthetic dichotomy between high and low culture. This dividing line can now be refined further. If the primary intention of low literature is to entertain, then that of high literature has frequently been to deliver a critique of society. Political involvement outside one's role as a writer has many precedents in German literary history, from Georg Büchner to Heinrich Böll. Giving a critique of society as the primary intention and being politically active are the corresponding operationalisations of this segmentation of legitimate and illegitimate art.

Producing high literature demands a great deal. As Bourdieu (1982) states, it requires a broad educational background, knowledge of stylistic tools, and the history of literature itself, a sense of 'culture' and taste. According to him, such incorporated cultural capital is essential for the production of such literature. To test whether this contention is true, the variables 'has studied German literature' in particular, and 'has a degree' in general, will be examined. Knowledge of literary history and of the current literary discourse, operationalised through 'reads a professional journal', and the active involvement in the discourse through the genre typical of such activity, the essay, should also distinguish between the

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two segments. Whether in fact the segments do differ in this way can be tested by including the two variables ('reads a professional journal' and 'writes literary essays').

If the variables discussed thus far primarily characterise the line separating high culture from low culture, then they certainly also play a role in the internal differentiation of legitimate art. But other variables are more important in this regard. For example, literary success as measured by the number of published books is not a criterion by which to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate literature in Bourdieu's theory. It surely distinguishes between the elite, the junior elite and the periphery within the field of high-culture literature, however. The same is true of an author's age. These two variables were included accordingly.

In a study of writers' associations, Kron (1974) showed that they were the entities in which the writers of serious literature were organised. That is true for the Association of German Writers (VS), especially for the international association of authors, PEN, to which one must be appointed and which thus represents an association of reputed men and women of letters. One presumes that the elite tends to congregate in the VS and, especially, in PEN more than may be true for the junior elite and writers on the periphery.

The main variables selected to test Bourdieu's theory have now been introduced. The question about the author's sex was included as well, not because it had anything directly to do with Bourdieu, but because of general assumptions about the significance of sex-specific differentiation. We will test whether they are important for the field of literature too.

Let us turn to the statistical analysis of the data. Their graphical display in Figure 2 must be interpreted with a certain degree of caution, for it presents only an initial impression of the results. Because of the projection into a space of a lower dimension, and as a result of the different proportions of variance explained by the axes, the distances between any two given points are not exactly comparable to the distances between other points. We will, therefore, primarily interpret the loading and location of variables and also their inertia, i.e., their distance from the centre of the coordinate system. (On the general interpretation of numerical results with correspondence analyses, see Blasius 1987b).

The abscissa, which represents the dividing line of the first dimension, separates the writers of low-culture literature, defined by the characteristic 'entertainment as primary intention', 'writes in the vernacular', and 'no degree', from the segments of the elite, marked by the characteristics 'membership in PEN and the VS', 'social criticism as literary intention', 'politically active', and 'has studied German literature'. This fully meets the expectations that go with accepting Bourdieu's distinction between legitimate and illegitimate literature.

On the second axis the elite and writers of low-culture literature, on the one side, are distinguished from the junior elite and the periphery, on the other, primarily in terms of the 'number of published works' and 'age'. This too is consistent with the hypotheses formulated at the outset.

The most significant factors in the interpretation are the squared correlations of items and variables with the axes (*QCOR*). The sign in the 'location' column indicates whether they load positively or negatively. The location indicates on which axis the individual items and variables are located, and how far from

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Figure 2
Graphical Presentation of the Results of Correspondence Analysis
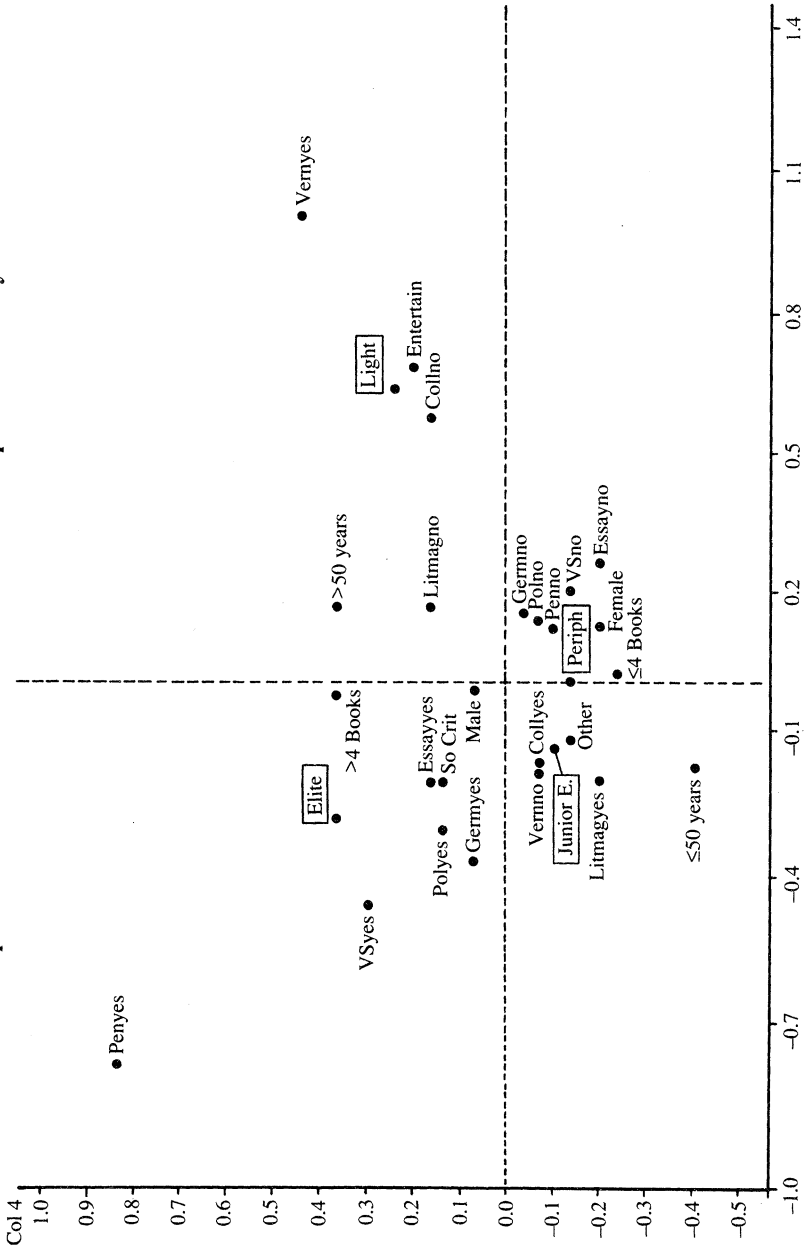
the centre. The sum of the correlations of the first three axes is recorded in *SQOR*. The 'mass' describes the relative share of rows and columns. Inertia (*INER*) indicates how strongly the model is determined by each row item and variable. We have chosen a value of 35 per cent as the cut-off value for the share of variance explained by the individual axes (Blasius 1987a).

On the first axis the writers of low-culture literature load in the positive area; the elite, in the negative area; and the junior elite, with a smaller share of explained variance (.221), also in the negative area. Unlike the elite, the block containing writers of light literature is characterised by the fact that these authors, in terms of their literary intention and aesthetic direction, produce low-culture literature and write in the local vernacular (this is the circumstance that legitimates 'labelling' the block as writers of low-culture literature). Furthermore, the members of this block attribute little significance to social criticism as a literary intention.[5] Their political involvement is correspondingly limited, and they do not take part in the discourses of legitimate art, either passively by reading a professional journal or actively by writing essays. Organisationally, they are excluded from the sphere of high culture and have no suitable representation in either PEN or the VS.

The fact that relatively few of the writers of low-culture literature have a degree and that most of those who have not studied German literature, can be interpreted, exactly as Bourdieu suggested, as a *cause* for the exclusion from the sphere of serious literature. Producing serious art does in fact require essentials that are acquired as incorporated cultural capital in the process of socialisation. College education, specifically the study of stylistic tools and the history of literature, is a way to acquire such capital. Writers of low-culture literature have not laid such preliminary foundations.

Assessing the results thus far, one finds that the distribution of the variables along the first axis confirm Bourdieu's assumption that the literary field is segmented into legitimate and illegitimate art. The fact that 'age' and 'literary success' (measured by the number of books the given author has published) are not relevant variables for the stratification of the field in the first dimension is also consistent with this picture.

What are the characteristics of the second axis, where the periphery and the elite are differentiated? Since the loading of the periphery on the second axis has a negative sign, the squared correlations of the variables with negative signs must be interpreted as a positive relation and those with a positive sign as a negative relation. The clearest discrimination between the two blocks is made by the characteristics of 'age' and 'literary success'. As far as the characteristic of legitimate/illegitimate art is concerned, the elite and the periphery obviously lie in the same interpretational context. Within that context, however, they differ in terms of literary success. Dividing authors by the median value of published books, one finds that the elite authors tend to have written an average of more than four books each. Most of the authors on the periphery have written four books or fewer. This circumstance may also be due to the age difference of the members of the two blocks. More members of the elite are over fifty years old than is the case of the authors on the periphery, who are largely younger. (The dichotomy of the age distribution was made, in turn, at the median of the study's

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Table 2

Results of Correspondence Analysis: Elite, Junior Elite, Periphery, Light Literature and Selected Variables

Vari	Macromodel			1st Axis			2nd Axis			3rd Axis		
	MASS	SQOR	INER	LOC1	QCOR1	INER1	LOC2	QCOR2	INER2	LOC3	QCOR3	INER3
Junior E.	0.154	1.000	0.107	-0.136	0.221	0.043	-0.088	0.092	0.028	-0.240	0.687	0.775
Elite	0.181	1.000	0.332	-0.307	0.430	0.257	0.352	0.562	0.533	0.043	0.008	0.029
Periph	0.543	1.000	0.113	0.003	0.000	0.000	-0.146	0.846	0.274	0.062	0.153	0.182
Light L	0.121	1.000	0.448	0.622	0.869	0.701	0.239	0.128	0.164	-0.036	0.003	0.014
Vernyes	0.013	1.000	0.129	1.006	0.840	0.195	0.423	0.148	0.055	-0.121	0.012	0.017
Vernno	0.070	1.000	0.023	-0.185	0.860	0.036	-0.073	0.132	0.009	0.018	0.008	0.002
Essayyes	0.044	1.000	0.035	-0.218	0.500	0.031	0.171	0.306	0.031	0.136	0.194	0.071
Essayno	0.039	1.000	0.039	0.246	0.499	0.035	-0.193	0.309	0.035	-0.152	0.192	0.080
Polyes	0.023	1.000	0.026	-0.328	0.805	0.037	0.146	0.160	0.012	-0.069	0.035	0.009
Polno	0.060	1.000	0.010	0.125	0.802	0.014	-0.056	0.162	0.005	0.026	0.036	0.004
Germyes	0.023	1.000	0.035	-0.384	0.807	0.051	0.055	0.017	0.002	-0.179	0.176	0.064
Germno	0.060	1.000	0.013	0.146	0.805	0.019	-0.022	0.018	0.001	0.068	0.178	0.025
Collyes	0.062	1.000	0.022	-0.197	0.909	0.036	-0.054	0.069	0.004	0.030	0.021	0.005
Collno	0.022	1.000	0.062	0.556	0.911	0.101	0.152	0.068	0.012	-0.084	0.021	0.013
Litmagyes	0.036	1.000	0.030	-0.219	0.474	0.026	-0.211	0.438	0.038	-0.094	0.088	0.028
Litmagno	0.048	1.000	0.023	0.165	0.475	0.019	0.158	0.435	0.028	0.072	0.089	0.021
Vsyes	0.026	1.000	0.097	-0.466	0.479	0.084	0.301	0.200	0.056	-0.382	0.321	0.328
Vsno	0.058	1.000	0.043	0.208	0.477	0.037	-0.135	0.201	0.025	0.171	0.322	0.147
Penyes	0.009	1.000	0.102	-0.807	0.475	0.087	0.841	0.516	0.151	-0.013	0.009	0.010
Penno	0.074	1.000	0.012	0.097	0.473	0.011	-0.102	0.518	0.018	-0.049	0.009	0.001
≤ 4 Books	0.051	1.000	0.025	0.029	0.014	0.001	-0.237	0.945	0.069	-0.049	0.041	0.011
> 4 Books	0.032	1.000	0.041	-0.046	0.014	0.001	0.382	0.944	0.111	0.080	0.042	0.018
≤ 50 Years	0.040	1.000	0.061	-0.180	0.176	0.019	-0.389	0.824	0.143	-0.007	0.000	0.000
> 50 Years	0.044	1.000	0.055	0.163	0.176	0.017	0.353	0.823	0.130	0.007	0.000	0.000
So Crit	0.024	1.000	0.017	-0.225	0.567	0.018	0.150	0.254	0.013	0.126	0.179	0.033

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Entertain	0.016	1.000	0.075	0.685	0.818	0.110	0.184	0.059	0.013	−0.265	0.123	0.097
Other	0.044	1.000	0.014	−0.123	0.409	0.010	−0.146	0.571	0.022	0.028	0.020	0.003
Male	0.065	1.000	0.002	−0.027	0.176	0.001	0.053	0.697	0.004	0.023	0.127	0.003
Female	0.018	1.000	0.008	0.097	0.175	0.003	−0.195	0.704	0.016	−0.081	0.121	0.010

Key for variables:

Junior E.:	Junior Elite
Elite:	Elite
Periph:	Periphery
Light L.:	Writers of light literature
Vernyes:	Writes in the vernacular
Vernno:	Does not write in the vernacular
Essayyes:	Writes literary essays
Essayno:	Does not write literary essays
Polyes:	Politically active
Polno:	Not politically active
Germyes:	Has studied German literature
Germno:	Has not studied German literature
Collyes:	Has degree
Collno:	Does not have degree
Litmagyes:	Regularly reads a professional journal
Litmagno:	Does not regularly read a professional journal
Vsyes:	Member of the Association of German Writers
Vsno:	Not member of the Association of German writers
Penyes:	Member of the Association of Writers
Penno:	Not member of the Association of Writers
≤ 4 Books:	Has published four books or fewer
> 4 Books:	Has published more than four books
< 50 Years:	50 years old or younger
> 50 Years:	Over 50 years old
So Crit:	Social criticism as primary literary intention
Entertain:	Entertainment as primary literary intention
Other:	Has another motive as primary literary intention

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total population.) The stratification of the realm of legitimate art into the elite and the periphery is also reflected in the dissimilar representation in the PEN, which is primarily a club of elite, prominent writers. The difference in the representation of the two groups in the VS is too small to be considered significant.

The distribution of the variables along the second axis confirms Bourdieu's theses in this respect as well. Within the realm of legitimate art, authors are ranked by their success. The fact that women belong predominantly to the periphery rather than to the elite attests to the fact that the literary field is no different from other sub-systems in this respect.

The junior elite is defined by the third axis. To delineate the junior elite more precisely by one of the variables is no more possible than it is to discern an 'opposite block'; none of the variables reaches the necessary level of significance. Across all the variables no special feature distinguishes the junior elite. As the blockmodel analysis showed, the field of high-culture literature is stratified into three blocks, with the junior elite constituting the one between the elite and the periphery. The junior elite has better relations to the elite than do the other blocks. Having 'good' contacts is significant for social positioning in general, and especially so for the realm of art, which lacks formal mechanisms of recruitment. The correspondence analysis shows that the junior elite differs neither from the periphery nor from the elite, but rather occupies an intermediary place, as shown by blockmodelling as well.

Summary of the results

The goal of this analysis was to examine Bourdieu's theory of the literary field. According to Bourdieu's sociology of art, literature is a differentiated social system stratified internally along various degrees of cultural legitimation.

The thesis that the social system 'literature' is differentiated, is only briefly outlined in theoretical terms by Bourdieu. Moreover, available data permit only a rudimentary examination. However, variables used to operationalise this differentiation seem to confirm Bourdieu's theses.

His theses concerning the internal structure of the system of literature can be more easily tested with the data. The results of the blockmodel analysis showed that the macro-structure of the literary field is divided into one segment that, like an island, refers solely to itself, and a second segment sub-divided into three hierarchical parts. The correspondence analysis made it more possible to describe segments and blocks in greater detail. The first line of demarcation was, in fact, the difference that Bourdieu described between legitimate and illegitimate art – high-culture literature and low-culture literature are the two poles of the literary field. The realm of legitimate literature is further differentiated into three blocks. The elite and the periphery differ in terms of the different degrees of success. The junior elite occupies an intermediate place. Bourdieu's theses are therefore confirmed and further supported by the empirical material at hand.

The literary field does not consist only of men and women of letters, however. Further empirical testing of Bourdieu's sociology of art should include other actors like critics, editors, publishers, and the public.

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Notes

1. That this can be only a partial attempt is due primarily to the fact that the data was collected with an eye to an objective other than that of examining Bourdieu's sociology of art. Certain gaps are thus inevitable.

2. Theories of functional differentiation originating primarily in systems theory have designed a finely meshed conceptual and analytical instrument that has at times been used on a variety of subjects (see the various contributions in Mayntz, Rosewitz, Schimamk and Stichweh 1988). The fact that art can theoretically be described as a differentiated sub-system has been shown elsewhere (Gerhards 1988). In the present context, we would like to confine ourselves solely to Bourdieu's theoretical statements about social differentiation.

3. There are no further possibilities to use the available set of data to examine the question about the autonomy of a literary field empirically. Further empirical examination of the question would require content analysis.

4. Developed in France during the 1960s, correspondence analysis has only recently spread to Germany. The works of Blasius (1987a, 1987b) and Blasius and Rohlinger (1988) are relevant here.

5. From the myriad individual intentions that cannot be interpreted, we have had to form a third literary intention (after social criticism and entertainment) – the catch-all category of 'other intention' – for the sake of completeness. For the purposes of the present discussion, however, this third category is disregarded.

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