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Is there a model for symbolic revolution? Bourdieu's theory in Manet and a comparison with a case study: the Generation of 1914 in Spain

¿Existe un modelo para las revoluciones simbólicas? La teoría de Bourdieu en Manet y una comparación con un estudio de caso: la Generación del 14 en España

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ABSTRACT

The courses that Bourdieu dedicates to Manet help to better understand the link between cultural production, political position and social trajectory. Nevertheless, Bourdieu does not always fully clarify his position. In this article, first we will clarify what Bourdieu considers to be a model for symbolic revolutions. To do so, Manet's courses are revisited and their links with Bourdieu's work in general and, more specifically, with his sociology of philosophy are made explicit. After that, we will examine Bourdieu's assertions about scholasticism or academicism in the sociology of culture, its importance in symbolic revolutions, and how his proposal encourages a specific view on the history of cultural productions, especially the philosophical ones. Then, Bourdieu's model of symbolic revolution will be tested by comparing it with a study with statistical treatment of data in a different and significant historical context: the Generation of '14 in Spain. Finally, we will propose some nuances and developments to Bourdieu's model based on the conclusions of that study.

Keywords: Symbolic revolution, social philosophy, sociology of philosophy, political philosophy, Bourdieu, generation of 14.

RESUMEN

Los cursos que Bourdieu dedica a Manet ayudan a comprender mejor el vínculo entre producción cultural, posición política y trayectoria social. Pese a todo, Bourdieu no siempre clarifica completamente su posición. En este artículo, en primer lugar, aclararemos cuál

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es el modelo de revolución simbólica según Bourdieu. Para ello, releeremos los cursos sobre Manet y sus vínculos con la obra de Bourdieu en general y, más específicamente, con su sociología de la filosofía. En segundo lugar, examinaremos lo que Bourdieu entiende por escolasticismo o academicismo en la sociología de la cultura, su importancia en las revoluciones simbólicas y cómo su propuesta anima una mirada específica sobre la historia de las producciones culturales, señaladamente las filosóficas. Después, compararemos el modelo de revolución simbólica de Bourdieu con un estudio que incluye tratamiento estadístico de datos procedentes de un contexto histórico diferente: la Generación del 14 en España. Por último, propondremos algunos matices y desarrollos al modelo de Bourdieu, basándonos en las conclusiones de dicho estudio.

Palabras clave: Revolución simbólica, filosofía social, sociología de la filosofía, filosofía política, Bourdieu, generación del 14.

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INTRODUCTION

This article has two main parts: the reading of the courses that [Pierre Bourdieu \(2013\)](#) dedicates to Manet, which shows us a model for symbolic revolutions, and the analysis of one of these revolutions in the contemporary Spanish intellectual field, which justifies some nuances and a clarification of Bourdieu's model in relation to the academic role in these revolutions. For the first part, we will highlight everything that contributes to a sociology of philosophy in Bourdieu's courses: in the development of his lessons, Bourdieu uses examples derived from philosophical discourse and the challenges that arise from confronting it sociologically. The parallelism with the sociology of philosophy, therefore, is imposed by the author himself. In the second part, we will broaden the perspective by including examples of our own research on contemporary Spanish philosophy.

One key aspect in the article is the effect of the academic institutions on the cultural production. We will try to clarify how Bourdieu's *Manet* helps us to understand fundamental aspects of the genesis and functioning of the scholastic attitude in art and philosophy. This work should be read in continuity with three further works ([Moreno Pestaña, 2013, 2016](#); [Costa Delgado, 2019](#)) in which another (not scholastic) model of practicing the history of philosophy was explored, fundamentally by discussing Ortega y Gasset's works from the 1940s and 1950s and the Generation of '14. Specifically, in regard to Bourdieu in particular and to the sociology of culture in general, a series of parallelisms is reconstructed. The first section helps to understand the material conditions for any symbolic revolution, and it shows how Bourdieu applies the same scheme that he used for other processes of cultural creativity. After that, we analyze what Bourdieu means by scholasticism and what characteristics a scholastic disposition has in cultural production, particularly in painting and philosophy, to expose, in the third section, a specific reading of the intellectual creator on the basis of Bourdieu. Thus, we will see how a creator can break with scholasticism and revolutionize the way of understanding painting or philosophy. The last three sections, dedicated to the Generation of '14 in Spain, will show how the features of symbolic revolutions can vary according to the historical context, what will help us nuance the model of symbolic revolution and the notion of scholasticism constructed by Bourdieu based on Manet's case.

THE SYMBOLIC REVOLUTION

Bourdieu (2003, p. 131) states that there is a general model for all symbolic revolutions. We are going to explore it by referring to the study dedicated to Manet, his most specific work (Bourdieu, 2013). He has reflected on that question at least since 1971, although the topic is already present in his early work on Algeria and the economy of symbolic goods (Sapiro, 2016, pp. 91-92). In a fundamental work for his perspective, Bourdieu (1971a, p. 334) points out the difference between political revolutions and revolutions that modify the way of judging and perceiving the world: the symbolic ones. Although the former need the latter, they do not always integrate them. We find identical statements in later works, for example regarding the difference between economic and symbolic transformation (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 234). Symbolic revolutions know different scales ranging from localized spaces—for example, pedagogical relations (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 274)—to structures of enormous historical scope, such as the modern state (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 226) or the crisis of the family related to the feminist or gay movement (Bourdieu, 2003, pp. 152-153; Bourdieu, 2016, p. 228).

All fields do not have the same logic, which is why we will refer below to certain specific features of the philosophical field as opposed to the field of painting or literature. In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu studies the literary field, but at the same time he affirms that this study supposes a model that can be extrapolated to other fields, obviously prior empirical work, which in our case refers to the study of the Generation of '14. But before going into more detail, let us present the central features of the symbolic revolution.

Bourdieu begins to analyze demographic changes. The increased number of students produced a transformation of audiences that had been previously restricted. The bohemians were, in France, an artistic entity shaped by factors genuine to the Hexagon: political history (with the joint effect of the Revolution, the Restoration and the Empire) brought about a turnover of administrative staff, who seized power at a relatively young age. Furthermore, France's centralization imposed the concentration of aspirants in Paris: the capital is the place where cultural capital—among others—is accumulated. The political elites, on the other hand, were strongly prevented against the social mobility produced by culture and the deleterious effects of the Arts and Humanities on the perspectives of the middle classes: Frédéric's trajectory, the hero of *Sentimental Education*, unforgettably described by Bourdieu (1998, pp. 19-81) in *The Rules of Art*, is an ideal type of this period. The ambitious youth of the middle classes, unable to settle for their position, shifting from politics to art, represent a wind of social Fronde, although very politically ambiguous (Bourdieu, 2013, pp. 243-246; 2016, pp. 584-585).

Bourdieu does not mention it, but he seems to use Norbert Elias's model (1989, p. 71) in *The Civilizing Process* as a reference. Elias described, during the 18th century, the exclusion of the German intelligentsia by their national elite, which stood in contrast with the centripetal character of the French Court. The 19th century in France, however, witnessed how the expectations—stirred up because of political changes on the turnover of cultural and administrative staff—were brutally shut out and the situation started to look like the one in Germany in the previous century. The dramatic growth in the cohorts that could access the educational system confronted graduates with their dashed hopes and, just like in May 1968, those who held the greatest expectations were the ones who experienced it the most. Just like Randall Collins (2009, pp. 791-797), Bourdieu considers that scholastic repetition only works when the material foundations (economic, institutional, disciplinary) remain unaltered. When these get out of place—for instance, with the arrival of not integrated candidates—, there is a possibility of intellectual novelties breaking in.

What did the world of dashed hopes invent? The *pseudo-proletarian intelligentsia* (Max Weber) or a basic layer of the lumpenproletariat (in a note of 18 Brumaire, Marx included bohemians there, as Bourdieu recalls). Rejected, they did not go home; quite on the contrary: the rejection triggered an enormous process of multiplication of

instances of academic consolation (schools, publishers, journals, colloquiums...). Such parallel symbolic markets went by their own momentum against an art that was fully controlled by the State, which worked as an apparatus. A mass audience was also born, as the school system provided for more producers and consumers. Bourdieu does not attribute any features of salvation to this new audience. Bohemians represent the empire of opportunists, of the rejected by the Salon and the Academy who wish they could have entered, of the mandarins who sense changes and switch sides...

This audience did not understand that *Manet* explored low-prestige themes, since the power of the norm lies in saying what is susceptible of being art and what is not, what is a big theme and what isn't, what is, on a different level, an important philosopher and what isn't, what is a fundamental historic event and what is a bagatelle: bohemians, despite their turbulent character, could still defend the canon (claiming to be better than the ones who were in it) or replace the privileged poles while maintaining the hierarchical system. Spaces opened up, audiences changed, France's political history generated a political apparatus too centralized and distrustful. In *Manet*, the state always appears linked to a routine norm that introduces heteronomy into the artistic field, although this is not the only logical and empirical possibility: on other occasions, a state intervention can reinforce the autonomy of a specific social field. We will show how fractions of the field of state, also influential in the intellectual field and linked to processes prior to themselves, promoted the symbolic revolution in the Generation of '14.

However, bohemians by themselves, they don't explain it all. Replete with loose cannons, speculators and tricksters, *Manet* could not rely on this group to build an alternative instance of consecration. Because this is exactly what any creator needs: someone who assures him that he is not mad, that he is not an impostor pretending to be cursed. Bourdieu always insisted that social conditions enable a symbolic revolution, but do not determine it absolutely (Bourdieu, 2013, pp. 389-396; Bourdieu, 2017, p. 615): it is necessary to understand the specific logic of the production space in which the author in question is located and what the author transforms in it. In the next sections, we will try to provide an answer to that question: what conditions does intellectual autonomy possess according to Bourdieu and what allows it to resist academicism?

SCHOLASTICISM: THE INFLUENCE OF SYSTEMATIC INSTITUTIONS ON CULTURAL CREATION

Bourdieu is confronted with the scholastic attitude because, even in its best versions, it is the main obstacle to a historical sociology of art. What do we understand by scholasticism? In principle, it is the set of dispositions generated by academic experience and, very remarkably, the liberation from practical urgencies¹. This liberation from the demands of daily life comes with the submission to the exclusively academic demands and tends to be projected towards all the works of culture and, in general, to the view on the social world.

Nonetheless, Bourdieu leaves some questions open in his identification of scholasticism. On the one hand, in a specific sense connected with the production of academic habits, he identifies as scholastic the art dependent on a school (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 168). In more general terms, he considers the dehistoricized reading that characterizes commentators as scholastic (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 106). Bourdieu rotates between explanations without being clear: sometimes he seems to preach the academy's scholasticism; then, scholasticism is equated with dehistoricized commentary, which only pays attention to the works and to whatever can be deemed worthy or unworthy in them with respect to the canon.

¹ Besides *Manet*, please see *Le Sens Pratique* (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 30).

The doubt could be resolved by trying to clarify Bourdieu himself, which is always a risk. We could get out of the problem by pointing out that scholastic criticism entails an intellectual reading of all practices: obviously, those practices arising from the academic institution itself, but also other practices that have nothing to do with it and even break away from it, philosophical and artistic practices that are different from commenting philosophical texts or exhibiting one's mastery on the canvas. There is an identical anxiety underpinning the young philosopher who wishes to guarantee his status by comparing Merleau-Ponty with Husserl (though without studying the ideological and intellectual crisis of Catholic philosophical societies in the 1930s) and the reader of *Manet* who only allows himself to talk about the Venus of Urbino (but not about the socio-demographic shifts of the symbolic revolution): not tarnishing the canon with social or historical problems which are by definition excluded from it. These practices share a similar disposition to that of artists or philosophers who reproduce dogmatic patterns in their works dictated by an institution which, protected by tradition, ignores the social and historical genesis that gives meaning to the practices that are transmitted.

An important difference, however, can be established between academic art and the artistic field: in the latter, the specifically aesthetic skill is increasingly valued. This can also be said of the philosophical field in a certain sense, but in a much less explicit way. In academia, both in philosophy and painting, the norm stemming from the scholar universe is irresistibly established, to the point that it ends up conceptually wasting art itself or creative philosophies. When an academic writer reads a work or commentates a painting, he will always look for specific features: whether its finish is good, whether the author is competent according to the dominating pattern, whether the historical references are correct... But what does he forget? The fact that an innovative work harbors a tradition, but it also alters what was transmitted of it and the uses by means of which it was transmitted, connecting it with new uses or sensitivities, or even recovering the living richness of a tradition as opposed to its reified version caused by academic routine (Bourdieu, 2012, pp. 355-364). Therefore, he proposes a new way to read history, a new way to define the finish of works, a new way, in sum, to define the artistic, literary or philosophical skill. In this sense, as Bourdieu reminds us, when *Manet* sought to be admitted in the painting canon, he intended something impossible: for the canon to accept what was going to destroy it. In sum, in order to be loyal to authentic iconological or conceptual innovation, the history of artistic and philosophical creation needs to invoke much more than just icons or concepts. Manet's symbolic revolution was indigestible for scholar and scholastic reading devices (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 172).

READING DIFFERENTLY, WITHOUT SCHOLASTIC MUTILATION. BEYOND THE QUESTION OF BREAK AND CONTINUITY

Bourdieu's argument about the symbolic revolution reminds us of a thesis by Randall Collins (2009, pp. 150-151). After comparing Greece and China between 500-300 BCE, Collins confirms the existence of twelve creative generations in the former and a shorter sequence in China. Chinese authoritarian patterns imposed legitimation in a way that Athens never did, where Plato could develop his philosophy without trouble, despite it being completely hostile to democracy. In the case of France, the creation of alternative markets allowed for the survival of intellectuals in conflict with the norm. England, with its arriviste and submissive artists, draws analogies with the case of China's Confucian unification, although in a more decentralized way. Paris and Athens have two things in common: the concentration of the space of attention and the possibility of a competitive intellectual market not severely monopolized by any political institution, which facilitate ties between schools, debates and rivalries. Without them, intellectual life can perish due to dispersion and to the absence of a critical mass.

But we still have the problem of what revolutionizes the revolutionary. In the first place, revolutionaries do not reject tradition: rather, they prove that orthodoxy misunderstands it. *Manet* had the history of painting embedded in himself and therefore, he was able to rescue Velázquez against the *art pompier* of his time. His contemporaries, who boasted of upholding tradition, actually ignored it; in fact, they only knew about it what the school administered, and the school always captures the past in a biased way. Bourdieu devises a magnificent formula: *Manet* proposed “a mobilization of the technical capital that had accumulated over the history of painting, but had been mutilated by academic selection” (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 355). Wherever there is a norm, continuities, consecrated genealogies... the revolutionary proposes new syntheses. At that moment, the academy loses its symbolic support because, with its actions, the revolutionary accuses it of separating what should not be apart and of uniting what should be separated.

In support of his thesis, Bourdieu (2012, p. 285) appeals to the description of Heidegger's attack to the neo-Kantians. Although the analogies between the philosophical field and the artistic field come from Bourdieu himself, the peculiarities of the former must be established. The philosophical field, whose existence Bourdieu (2003, p. 34) traces back to the fifth century BC is characterized in the contemporary world by the constant loss of its own objects, which have been monopolized by specialized disciplines. In this sense, the philosophical field must always refer to such lost knowledge, to a large extent demonstrating its unacknowledged debts to philosophy (Bourdieu, 2003, pp. 43-47). The relationship of philosophy with its tradition is not identical to the logic of permanent revolution that characterizes the fields of restricted production in art, where producers produce for a public of creators, with the inevitable mediation of intermediaries: critics, editors, gallery owners... (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 208-209). The specifically philosophical activity consists much more in a permanent rereading of tradition in order to confront present conflicts (Bourdieu, 2016, p. 571). Certainly, Bourdieu considers that any great creator knows the history of his field. In philosophy this is shown in a more intense and academically guaranteed way. In fact, it has been pointed out that a condition of belonging to the field is still the competence in the history of philosophy (Pinto, 2007, p. 65). This is something that is well verified in the case of Heidegger.

In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger showed the primacy of Aesthetics and the intuition about the logical categories of knowledge and the foundations of science. Time, which is constitutive of imagination, lays the foundations for the subject of knowledge; therefore, science is not embedded in logic, but in a deeper experience: the specific, existential temporality (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 71). Similar to what *Manet* did with Velázquez with regard to the *pompier* academia, Heidegger proved neo-Kantians that they did not know their prince of thought. He also avoided Jünger-like essayism like the plague. Where Jünger —equivalent to the Parisian bohemians— invoked Nietzsche, Heidegger went back to the pre-Socratics (Bourdieu, 1988, pp. 47-48). Therefore, the symbolic revolutionaries, like Heidegger and *Manet*, know the tradition but without its academic mutilation, and precisely because they know it, they distinguish themselves from the false revolutionaries, who are in truth amateur critics of academia (and this will always have an easy time to disqualify them).

Let us recapitulate: we have the crisis of the institution, with its plethora of aspirants who do not find their space and step forward to contest the mandarin; in addition, we find the creation of new markets where to find support and, subsequently, we find a revolutionary who is particularly well-educated in the history of the field, be it *Manet* or Heidegger. And something enigmatic: we find a tradition mutilated by academia that allows the revolutionary to overcome orthodoxy (by precisely, using its forte: the “sources”) and to distinguish himself from the resentful criticism made by those expelled without much competence (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 455).

However, in which way is tradition mutilated? To our understanding, this is the key question. Tradition is mutilated because it is dehistoricized and it turns ancestors into summarized and stereotyped characters susceptible of academic transmission, into

mere labels, a coherence that ignores the whole pragmatic effort that the creator had to deal with. We can mobilize here [Ortega y Gasset \(2009, p. 730\)](#), who wonders about the temporality of thought and concludes that it depends on pragmatic situations and on how these—which unite thought and institutions—last through time. Bourdieu himself states something similar when he claims a “good use” of anachronism: when one has good general models, the past can be compared, always with precautions, with structural equivalents, homologous in certain oppositions, but not in others ([Bourdieu, 2012, p. 360](#)). This is an example of the mobilization of tradition, but it is a pragmatic mobilization that takes the thinker (or the artist) without removing him from his time and conflicts. The creator perceives the sociological and intellectual moment in which the conjunction claims a certain past. This, of course, is not taken from academic manuals: it requires to know more than what they contain, as well as knowing what in the concrete world claims a new reading of the past. The creator is possessed by the history of the field, as Bourdieu insists repeatedly, but he can also see the objective possibilities in the present. Is he an intellectual genius? Yes, but because he is a sociological, even a political genius. And that genius makes him a great painter or a great philosopher. Revolution is not just intellectual: it is also social. Otherwise, Bourdieu would take us back to the charismatic ideology of the creator. The creator can tell intuitively that there is an opportunity in a specific conjunction of a new articulation of tradition. [Bourdieu \(1998, pp. 222-223; 1988, pp. 56-57\)](#) insists that it is a collective process that cannot be made to depend on a single individual. As [Fowler \(2020, p. 454\)](#) points out, Bourdieu puts forward an “anti-charismatic conception of social creativity” and, referring to the links between symbolic revolutions and politics, states that “groups create themselves by creating people who create the group”. In the artistic field, [Bourdieu \(1977, pp. 5-7\)](#) argues that the value of the work depends on a circuit of agents that go beyond the writer or the painter. That said, there is no doubt that the creator is also an active agent who strongly resembles the prophet in the religious field. The prophet—or the creator—has nothing extraordinary about him, but he grasps the extraordinary situations and allows what was only among the virtualities of the present to exist ([Bourdieu, 1971a, pp. 331-334](#)). Moreover, [Bourdieu \(1998, pp. 185-188\)](#) has tried to specify the social properties of the great creators: they are subjects with a high symbolic capital, often coming from dominant classes, but absolutely distanced from bourgeois routines. We will return to this question later, with regard to the collective subject of the symbolic revolution in the Generation of '14.

Thus, do we recover the theory of charisma? Not at all: the description of the creator’s social and financial resources shows in some way the collective work from which the individual’s social intuition emerges. The creator concentrates a whole network of collective work on a proper noun. Favorable comments about Manet’s paintings can be explained by its previous relations: he could fascinate, indeed, but the fascinated ones were in networks that were already well disposed to a warm reception. “The more science progresses, the more the charismatic myth disappears” ([Bourdieu, 2013, p. 442](#)).

DIFFERENT WAYS OF INTERPRETING BOURDIEU'S MODEL OF SYMBOLIC REVOLUTIONS: CAN THE ACADEMIA CONTRIBUTE TO A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION?

In the previous pages we have seen how scholasticism could appear in different circumstances, though all of them express the discipline that some kind of external institution imposes over the space of cultural production. Now we would like to address one specific question: can the academia have a positive role in a symbolic revolution? As we have pointed out, we can find support for this in works by Bourdieu other than the one we have analyzed. In his course *On the State*, Bourdieu remarks that the state conditions, in collaboration or in conflict with the subjects of each field, the capitals that function in each social space. This can be done through the arbitrary imposition of bureaucratic

rules, but also by encouraging the creation of autonomous environments, governed by their own rules (Bourdieu, 2012, pp. 196-197; Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 52-53). For Bourdieu, it is clear that Manet's revolution developed against the academy, but it is possible to think about a symbolic revolution whose basis are supported by a temporal institution.

For that to happen, the rules enforced by this institution should help a group of creators to resist the external influences threatening the authority of the very field of production to establish principles of legitimacy over the system of relations of production, circulation and consumption of the symbolic goods that have a place in it. In order to affirm that this institutional intervention contributes to a symbolic revolution, in addition to supporting the autonomy of the field it must, paradoxically, promote its transformation and guarantee a space of relative cultural freedom.

Bourdieu (1971b, p. 50) proposes three dimensions necessary for the formation of an autonomous intellectual or artistic field: 1) the development of a market for symbolic goods, which opens up the possibility of economic independence and a principle of impersonal competitive legitimization, free from the tutelage of temporal authorities such as the aristocracy, the church or the state; 2) the constitution of a specialized group of producers and intermediaries of the symbolic goods in question; 3) the multiplication and diversification of specific and competitive consecration instances within the field. Subsequently, this field is structured in an opposition between two poles: that of restricted production, aimed at an audience of producers, and that of production aimed at the general public (Bourdieu, 1971b, pp. 54-55). Of course, Bourdieu (1971b, p. 49) reminds us, autonomy is always relative and external pressures never cease to exert their influence, although this is expressed with a variable refraction effect depending on the field's own categories.

We argue that these three dimensions are present in the case of Generation of '14' in Spain, a group that played a fundamental role in a symbolic revolution that promoted the autonomy of the intellectual fields especially linked to the state through the university, as well as in the journalistic field. In this article we will focus on the philosophical field, although references to the effects of the Generation of '14' in other social spaces will be inevitable, given its interdisciplinary character and its active —albeit unequal— political involvement. In the following, we will briefly review² how the three dimensions of an autonomous field proposed by Bourdieu are expressed for the philosophical field in the Generation of '14':

1. Development of a market for symbolic goods: at the beginning of the 20th century, a series of cultural and socio-demographic transformations were observed in Spain that allow us to speak of a significant increase in the public of virtual consumers of symbolic goods, observable in the expansion of access to university and in the transformation in the mode of generation of a relevant fraction of Spanish elites. We will devote the next section to this, using the study by Costa Delgado (2019).
2. Constitution of a specialized group of intermediaries and producers: if we take institutional recognition as a relevant indicator, since the middle of the 19th century, the different scientific disciplines have been breaking away from philosophy, obtaining institutional recognition as autonomous studies in the university: in 1857, with the creation of a "Faculty of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences", and in 1900, differentiating between "philosophical studies", "literary studies" and "historical studies" within the faculties of "Philosophy and Letters". The process of specialization accelerated in the following years, especially with the Second Republic (Niño, 2013). In addition, the mode of access to the position of university professor was also profoundly transformed between 1894 and 1901, limiting the interference of political power in appointments and introducing more specialized evaluation criteria, such as studies abroad, the requirement that the members of the tribunal were "professors of a subject equal or analogous to that which is the object of the competition", or

2 For a more detailed analysis, see Costa Delgado (2019, pp. 193-226).

the delivery of a "original research or doctrinal work", in addition to the program of the subject (Martínez Neira, 2014). In general, what can be observed up to 1936 is a tendency to impose meritocratic criteria specific to the university, in the face of the double threat of political interference (political parties and the church) and "recommendations" (social capital). And, nevertheless, this whole process had the variable support of different fractions of the political field, including the numerous institutional spaces that the members of the Generation of '14 conquered throughout their professional and political careers.

3. The Generation of '14 prevented scholasticism by avoiding the imposition of an academic orthodoxy, while at the same time fought against the ideological pressure of an authority outside the philosophical field. To this end, the Generation of '14 contributed to multiplying the instances of consecration specific to the field: along with the consolidation of an increasingly autonomous pole of academic consecration in the university, the members of the Generation of '14 participated in other instances aimed at diverse audiences. There are three main ones: publishing houses oriented to the publication of scientific works; journals oriented to an intellectual public—although not separated by disciplines—and the daily press. Most of the publishing projects controlled by the generational core³ were characterized by their pretension of specialization and intellectual level; the desire to stimulate the demand of a public with a certain cultural capital; the professionalization of the staff; the use of technical advances in terms of material, management and advertising; and, above all, the attempt to generate a press autonomous from politics, in contrast to the journalistic environment characteristic of the Restoration (Cabrerá, 1994). All this did not prevent the existence, throughout the generational trajectory and often within the same subjects, of a permanent tension between the vocation to address an audience of specialists and the vocation to create a work aimed at a broad public, normally materialized in journalistic and political interventions.

Considering the above, we propose the case of the Spanish Generation of '14 as an example of a symbolic revolution developed through the academia, and not against it. Not every symbolic revolution is made against the academia from the outside. And so, the rejection of a castrating academia would just be one of the historical possibilities in which the creative autonomy against scholasticism is expressed. As mentioned above, here we adopt Bourdieu's view of academia as a set of public cultural institutions promoted and financed by the State, with the university in a place of special relevance. Of course, as every academia, these institutions enforced a set of rules that modified the cultural agents' behaviour in a very significant way, either through submission or rejection, in many different intermediate degrees. We believe that, in the case of Spain at the beginning of the 20th century, these temporal institutions were capable of producing a liberating interference in the cultural production, reinforcing pre-existing tendencies—and at the same time as a result of them—, as well as reinforcing the actions of specific agents—which, in turn, modified the orientation of these temporary institutions, in conflict and collaboration with other agents.

The case of the Generation of '14 allows us to explore a logical possibility that Bourdieu's model admits, but which is not present in Manet's empirical case. In the Spanish case, the symbolic revolution had the support of a fraction of the state in the face of pressures fundamentally coming from the political field (from positions of different ideological signs, but especially from the parties of turnism, which controlled the political power in Spain during the Restoration) and from the church, an institution with an enormous influence in the Spanish educational system. But does not such support from the state imply a form of interference from a temporary power that questions the autonomy of the field? We believe not, as long as such interference reinforces the autonomy of the field by positively influencing the three dimensions previously mentioned (Bourdieu, 1971b).

3 *Revista de Occidente, El Espectador, El Sol, La Pluma, España, CALPE...* Although the paradigmatic publications in the sense in which we interpret them here are those carried out by Urgoiti and Ortega, with the support of La Papelera Española.

The curriculum of the republican Faculty of Philosophy and Letters in 1931, promoted by significant members of the Generation of '14, is a good example of this: the state sanctioned an official curriculum that recognized disciplinary specialization, greater freedom for students to choose a personalized curriculum and greater autonomy for teachers within the subjects to be taught. These measures were intended to put an end to the "intellectual rigidity of the system of university chairs and opened up the possibility of disciplinary innovation, as well as introducing a certain degree of competition" (Niño, 2013, p. 96). One part of the academia used its institutional power against itself to counteract the scholasticism characteristic of the university at the end of the nineteenth century.

Let us now turn to Costa Delgado's study (2019), with the systematized data on the origin and social trajectory of a group of intellectuals and politicians involved in the Generation of '14. This will help us to deepen our understanding of the collective dimension of the symbolic revolution and will concretize the sociodemographic aspects mentioned above.

BRIEF METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON THE GENERATION OF '14 IN SPAIN

The statistical categories used in this section require an additional explanation, since they are based on materials from empirical research whose selection should be justified. The Generation of '14 was a group of people who conceived themselves in generational terms, tried to act in a coordinated manner between 1910 and 1914, and continued to maintain close bonds and common practices until the Spanish Civil War, with the permeability that defines any social group in a complex society where social destinies are not fixed legally from birth. This group was characterized, sociologically, by its high cultural capital, its links with Madrid, its predominantly bourgeois background, its relative youth in 1914 and, what we find most interesting in this article, its major role in the radical transformation of the Spanish intellectual field in the early 20th century, which we can define as a "symbolic revolution". In short, such a revolution can be characterized by a greater intellectual autonomy from the political field and from the Church, materialized in the three dimensions mentioned in the preceding section, and the institutional recognition of this autonomy, with a rationalization of public administration that was accompanied by the transformation of the recruitment criteria for the civil service, especially at university. Of course, all this was accompanied by a radical transformation of the way of understanding intellectual production in the fields that were most affected by it: the various scientific fields closely linked to the university and the field of journalism; although the symbolic revolution also produced significant changes in other fields, especially the political one⁴.

Costa Delgado (2019, pp. 53-76) elaborated a reasoned corpus as a starting point for his study of the Generation of '14. Here, the existence of two indisputably generational manifestos —because of their content and signatories, in 1910 and 1913— offers many advantages: it is a wide selection that does not fall back into an arbitrary preselection of relevant personalities; it responds to the group's internal criteria in relation to a specific social context; the manifestos are published in two important moments of the constitution of the group as such, and they generated significant responses and controversies following their publication; in short, it is the public image that the group projected when presenting themselves in society.

As far as this article is concerned, we will mainly use the treatment by descriptive statistics of a selection of variables from the signatories' available data (there were 169 signatories of the manifestos, out of which around 100 present available data).

⁴ Significantly, it did not produce substantial modifications in the logic of the literary field.

The population of this study is a fraction of the Spanish elites that stands out for its cultural capital, but the study had to place it, at the same time, in a broader social context: in relation to other fractions of the elites —particularly those that stand out for their economic capital— and to those social sectors excluded from the elites —popular classes and petite bourgeoisie without cultural capital. Hence, the categories do not pretend to be universal or to reflect essential properties of the subjects, but rather combine social class criteria with professional occupations whose access was mediated by the possession of cultural capital.

For the categorization of social positions, the study has been inspired by the variables used by [Christophe Charle \(2006, pp. 19-30\)](#). We have adapted them to the Spanish case and considered some social sectors that he excluded for different reasons. The grouping of subjects into categories is not representative of the whole Spanish society of the time; rather, it is adapted to the characteristics of the study's population: very nuanced in terms of the internal social divisions of the educated elites and with much more heterogeneous categories when it comes to economic capital and the popular classes. The latter two categories are in the minority —though present— among the signatories, but they are more frequent in their social background.

Also, 1910-13 and the Second Spanish Republic (1931-36) are generational milestones marking the beginning and end of the generational trajectory. The first date responds to the signing of the manifestos and the beginning of many of the signatories' public presence; the second indicates the generational social destiny before the break and radical alteration of the political and social order that came with the Spanish Civil War. In addition to these two milestones, we added the signatories' social background, collected from the available data from their parents' birth certificates and the available biographical news.

THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS FOR CREATORS: A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS OF THE GENERATIONAL BREAK

What does the case of the Generation of '14 contribute to Bourdieu's model of symbolic revolution?

The characterization of academia as a social space based on the distance from necessity and practical urgencies had a strong presence as a normative ideal in the Generation of '14, as it can be observed in the recurring opposition between university professors and journalists, which structures important debates within the group. However, in this case, the symbolic revolution did not occur from the outside and against academia, but from a dominated part of academia against the institution's conservative sector, relying on a bohemian group made up of young writers and journalists and, at least during its rise, on its dominated counterpart in the political field: the labor and the republican movement. The complex and variable composition of these groups generated in turn a receptive audience in face of a creative disposition prone to breaking the mold of an academia that was closed in on itself. If we resume the four defining socio-demographic factors of symbolic revolutions previously identified, we can better compare the contexts of the Generation of 14's and Manet. Let's recapitulate: (1) crisis of the institution, (2) candidates without space and prone to rebellion, (3) new markets, and (4) revolutionary educated in the field, who renews it by recovering tradition in an original way.

1. The crisis of the institution is very present in both cases, with a very strong criticism of its sclerotization, lack of originality and lack of capacity of renewal, attachment to outdated traditions and disengagement from social matters that needed to be addressed. However, whereas Bourdieu's criticism of the Ateliers in Paris presents them as a homogeneous bloc in its academicism, the university faced by the Generation of '14 harbored a minority that anticipated some of the breaks that would characterize

the symbolic revolution and even paved her way by introducing important changes in the recruiting of professors and in the definition of their academic trajectory. This is one of the factors that explain that the revolution against academia was not staged from the outside, but from a part of academia, with external support, against the dominating sector of it.

2. The increase in the university student population in Spain in the early 20th century and, at the same time, the spectacular rise in the proportion between assistant professors and full professors generated an equivalent to the situation of shortage in employment combined with a large number of candidates, but with a greater capacity of integration by academia and the State, since the parallel process of transformation of the political field from the parliamentary system made it difficult for the notables to put the apparatus of the State at the service of its client networks and, as a consequence, made possible a larger rationalization of the administration and its recruiting system.
3. The emergence of new markets, in the Spanish case, presented different forms linked to that complex coalition between dominated academics, intellectual bohemians and political opponents, but in general it was characterized by a larger capacity to associate non-academic audiences with a cultural production from academia or, at least, from the academics linked to this symbolic revolution. The coalition took variable forms, including publishing projects which explicitly sought—with mixed but remarkable success—to generate new dynamics of intellectual production oriented to large audiences, looking for economic independence, quality and specialization of contents, formal excellence, and an efficient management (Cabrera, 1994).
4. The emergence of a revolutionary (in our Spanish case, a group) educated in a field that renews it makes a substantial difference, which is not at all present in the French case: the reference to Europe and cultural importation as a value in itself. The reason behind this difference is evident: internationally, the position of France and Spain in the symbolic hierarchy was opposite. Whereas France mainly competed with Germany and England as international cultural references of the time, Spain was part of Europe's periphery, and its intellectual and political debates were mediated by the importation from metropolises. The Generation of '14 claimed to be importing the European culture into a backward Spain.

Let us now comment on the social composition of the signatories of the generational manifestos, with the aim of contrasting the hypotheses derived from Bourdieu's model of symbolic revolution. As seen above, in order to explain the exceptional nature of the symbolic revolutionary, what we previously termed as "creative autonomy", Bourdieu does not only allude to his cultural capital, but also to "external" resources outside the intellectual field such as his social capital—the network of previous contacts that reacts favorably to his production and disseminates it—and his economic capital—which allows him to disengage from practical urgencies and from the economic repercussion of being excluded from consecrated spaces—. In sum, we wonder: is it possible to imagine creative autonomy from social coordinates that are different from Manet's?

Let us look at three charts that depict the social trajectory of the Generation of '14: social background, social position in 1913 and social position during the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1936) of the signatories of two generational manifestos. Studying the differences between these three milestones will shed light on which type of social conditions were required to participate in the group and which social changes this concatenation of facts—which we sum up in the concept of generation—brought about to its participants.

A comparison between [Chart 1](#) and [Chart 3](#) leaves no doubt about the group's evolution. In a family generation's time, a limited upward social mobility occurred, combined with a conversion of economic capital into cultural capital, the latter being much more prominent than the former. The decrease in "Popular classes and petite

bourgeoisie” compared to all the other categories, considering how this category is constructed in this research, shows that upward tendency in terms of social position. The variation in the proportion between university professors and secondary school teachers points in the same direction, although in this case, the social distance between both categories is much shorter. A piece of data that points towards the moderation of this social mobility is the fact that the proportion between mid-level civil servants and the sum of owners and high-ranking civil servants did not vary at all. Changes in legal professions and the category of “Journalists, writers and artists” are not good indicators of social mobility due to the great internal heterogeneity of these categories in terms of economic and symbolic capital.

Chart 1. Social background of the Generation of 1914.

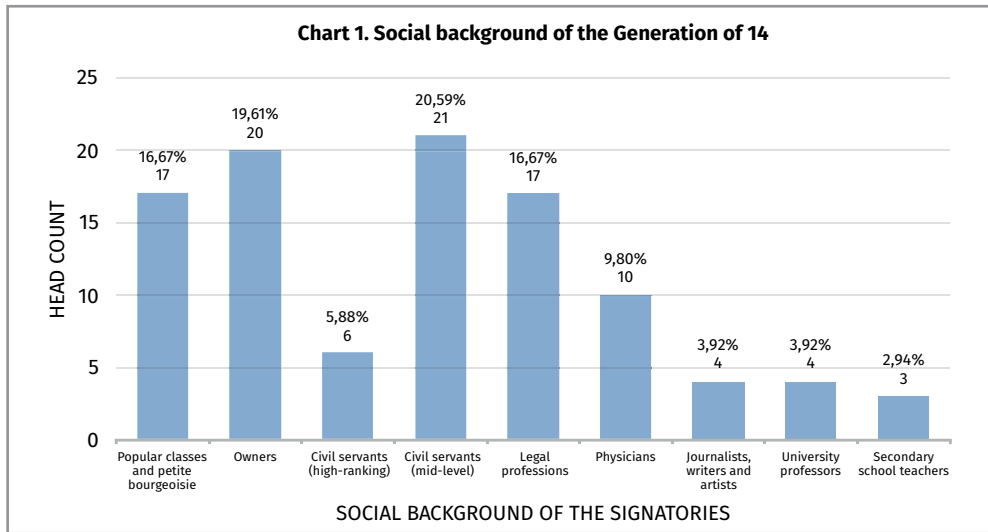


Chart 2. Social position of the Generation of 1914 in 1913.

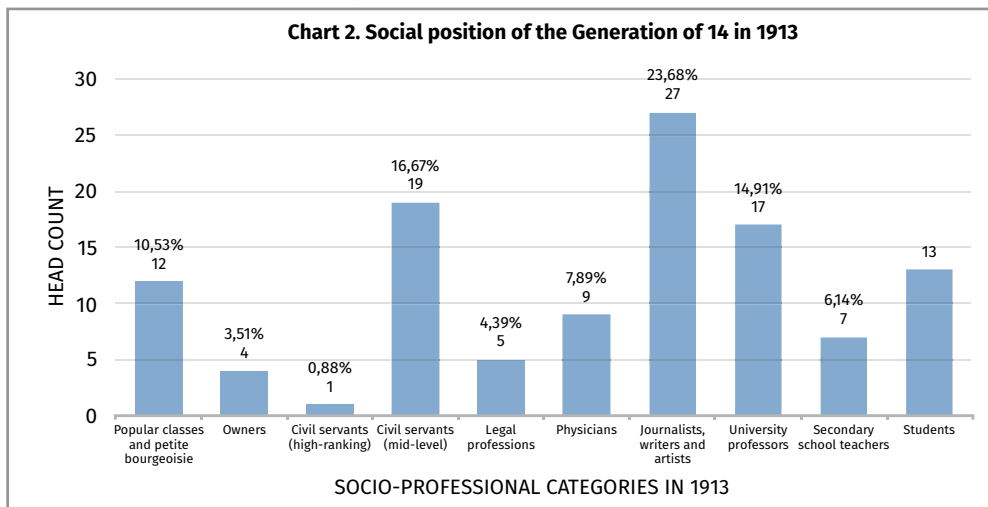
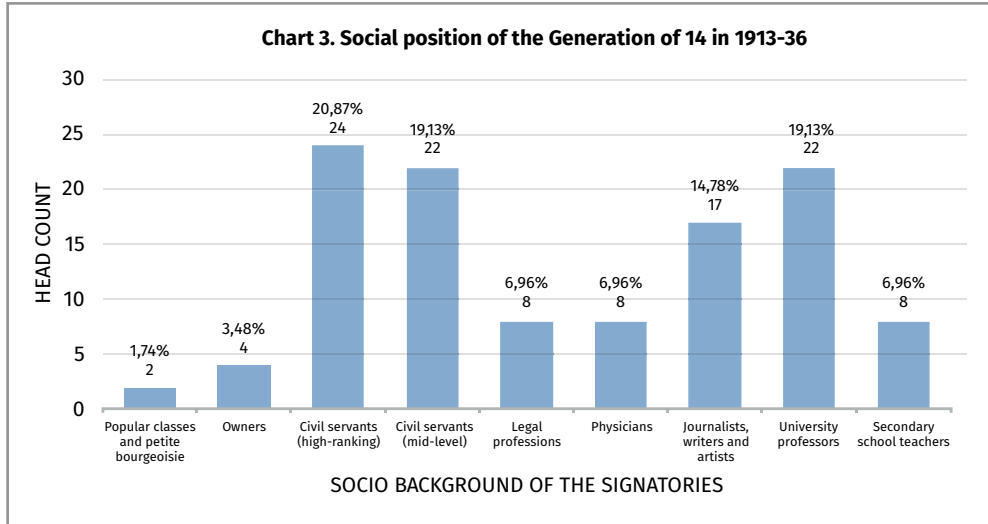


Chart 3. Social position of the Generation of 1914 in 1931-36.



The generational conversion of economic capital into cultural capital is evident. The enormous increase in university professors and secondary school teachers serves as an indicator of the importance of cultural capital in the social trajectory of the Generation of '14, which was also very closely associated with public administration. This can be observed in the significant reversal –practically symmetrical– in the number of owners and high-ranking civil servants, which shows an important generational shift in the way that elites were recruited: the Generation of '14 stood out for reverting the inherited financial and social capital in a determined cultural stake, thus modifying the conditions for the symbolic validation of economic capital. This lateral generational mobility of the elites, oriented towards public administration –especially towards educational and cultural institutions– is the biggest difference between the Generation of '14 and the symbolic revolution analysed by Bourdieu in *Manet*. The alliance between the revolutionary academic section and the intellectual bohemians can be clearly observed in the trajectory depicted in the three charts.

In terms of social background, we can see an important presence of economic capital (owners and a part of the petite bourgeoisie) and the cultural capital most closely linked to it and to politics (legal professions), although there is also a relevant link with administration, illustrated by the 21 signatories' fathers who were mid-level civil servants. In this regard, it is important to note that the symbolic revolution does not come out of the blue, it is not an absolute novelty: it recovers potentialities that are present in the field and rewrites them, also at the family habitus level. In 1913, the lesser importance of the categories that we highlighted in the social background is confirmed, with the logical exception of mid-level civil servants. However, we also observe an important increase in those categories associated with intellectual bohemians (journalists, writers and artists) and academia (professors and students, but also a majority of mid-level civil servants linked to educational and cultural institutions). The early academic consecration that is shown in this second chart is accompanied in the social destiny chart (Second Spanish Republic, 1931-36) by an outstanding increase in high-ranking and mid-level civil servants, as well as a moderate growth in professors and teachers (already present in 1913). This occurred at the expense of a part of the intellectual bohemians who found a more stable social position, though not necessarily a more prestigious one, in public administration: the symbolic revolution, in this case, created an institutional space for the revolutionaries within the state apparatus.

The possibility of a symbolic revolution driven and sustained from academia is therefore demonstrated, having always in mind that, as we said before, this academia was very distant from the one described by Bourdieu for art in the Second French Empire. In the Spanish case, the previous generation had managed to introduce relevant changes in the recruitment of professors and in the access to the civil service, paving the way for the symbolic revolution of those who succeeded them. But what about the two missing requirements that, according to Bourdieu, accompany cultural capital in the symbolic revolutionary? Does the academic support of the Generation of '14 mean that social and economic capital were not as decisive to sustain "creative autonomy" against scholasticism?

In this aspect, the Spanish case seems to partially support Bourdieu's claims, although there are two significant differences: 1. The collective and impersonal support that an academic institution guarantees is not exactly equivalent to the economic and social capital that a single individual can accumulate, even if we find a socially elitist selection in the access to the academia. 2. The fact of a symbolic revolution from inside the academia opens new theoretical possibilities to think this process in different empirical contexts and, above all, to analyze the logic of the field resulting from the symbolic revolution. Both differences have important sociological and philosophical implications, as discussed in the conclusion.

About the social and economic capital, the charts do not disclose any information beyond the evident social selection that shows the social background of the signatories. Only 16.67% belonged to the category "Popular classes and *petite bourgeoisie*", a markedly low percentage compared with the quantitative representation of this category in the Spanish society of the time. However, the internal dynamics of the Generation of '14, studied from a qualitative analysis of trajectories and variables relative to the political evolution of the subjects provide us with more information, at least in regard to these three points:

1. In a society that was profoundly shaped by class differences, the lack of economic capital tended to result in children who had to work and contribute to sustaining the family economy being expelled very early from the scholar institution. In the rare cases in which such an exclusion was late compensated (for instance, with the support of workers' unions and parties) there was always a mark of cultural illegitimacy — both subjective and objective— that pushed these subjects to the margins of the intellectual field (Costa Delgado, 2019, pp. 263-310). This huge gap that separated the instances of bourgeois legitimacy from those which were specifically for workers also led to important disagreements inside the "coalition" that set in motion the symbolic revolution: there were several rapprochements between academics and intellectual bohemians, on the one side, and republican and labor parties with a broad grassroots base, on the other hand; but with the exception of some particular cases, they were always collectively ephemeral, partly because of the little interest of the latter in playing the academic-intellectual game of the former.
2. Once this access limitation had been overcome, the distance from necessity and the urgencies of practical life tended to distribute subjects among different places within the intellectual field. As we have seen before, Bourdieu identifies this aspect as one of the social foundations of scholasticism and, undoubtedly, it is present in fundamental intragenerational oppositions, such as the one that confronts university professors and journalists, which becomes evident in different exchanges and moments of the generational trajectory and granted the latter a lower status due to their dependence on short-term production. Also, that scholastic dimension is revealed in many of the signatories' perception of what meant to be an intellectual and in their political projects. However, the previous social selection process (which did not make this group as univocally dependent on academia as the intellectuals from humble backgrounds that the Church tended to recruit), as well as the fact that the academia of the time included forms of recruitment and promotion partly

adjusted to the patterns of the new symbolic revolution⁵, resulted in the academic sector of the Generation of '14 not being prone to maintaining the pre-existent academic orthodoxy. The uniqueness of the Generation of '14 lies in the fact that its processes of "creative autonomy" responded to similar principles to the ones that drove the new academic norm, in a wider context of reformation of the cultural institutions of the State: this norm was, so to speak, circumstantially functional to the symbolic revolution. Thus, this generation can be characterized by a scholasticism in the way of understanding the intellectual's social place (something that is inevitably linked to their social and economic background, by the way), but this was compatible with a non-scholastic intellectual praxis promoted by academia itself. Adhering to this new praxis was easier from an academia that stimulated it and tended to be harder when one got away from it and was put under other pressures, such as the need to stick to current political affairs or the urgency of presenting poorly written texts for economic reasons.

3. There is a third form of exclusion that reveals itself in a very subtle way. The accumulation of social capital required knowing how to behave in social spaces where a brutal classism operated and was made evident through details, through little interactions that selectively motivated or discouraged the subjects who participated in them with different properties and social resources profoundly rooted in their habitus. Modifying the deep layers of the habitus is an extraordinarily difficult endeavor, which reactivates forms of exclusion homologous to the ones described in the first point, but not exactly the same. As demonstrated by the comparison between the trajectories of Tomás Álvarez Angulo and Francisco Núñez Moreno ([Costa Delgado, 2019](#), pp. 263-310), it was easier to integrate oneself into the intellectual elites that made up the Generation of '14 if you were a laborer without formal education from the center of Madrid than if you were the son of a *cacique* from a small village in Andalusia with a brilliant academic track record: in this case, the uneven social distance from the informal rituals required in the center of the kingdom's intellectual and political life was a determining factor in order to stimulate or discourage the integration into the social networks that also sustained the Generation of '14, both within the academia and outside of it.

In sum, academia allowed the Generation of '14 to have institutional support for its symbolic revolution, but it did not eradicate the weight of social and economic capital, as they continued to be an implicit part in the social recruitment of the intellectual and political elites that made up the group. This is different from *Manet's* case, since managing a career and a creative process that are sustained by institutional networks does not respond to the same determinants as managing a career while being exclusively dependent on one's family rent and a network of symbolically prestigious contacts. But the institution, at least in our Spanish case, did not remove the weight of these two factors in the possibility of participating in a symbolic revolution.

CONCLUSION

The canon mutilates the historical strength of ideas, apprehended in the monotonous succession of the "great ones". But also, precisely because of the features of the academic universe (continuous monitoring, hierarchy, internalization of assessment), it mutilates the sense of risk of individuals and their capacity to perceive social demands, specifically, the potentialities underpinning the cultural field. That intuition is not enough to sustain a risky endeavor: it is also required to have a high economic capital, and an early socialization in the manners of the bourgeoisie; in sum, resources to charm in environments where a huge class racism operates. Scholastic mutilation is cultural, but also social. Therefore, it

⁵ Only in certain limited spaces, although particularly well situated in the academic system: for example, the doctoral courses, in Madrid.

comes as no surprise that academicism feeds off oblates, off humble people who fiercely defend —just like Torquemada did, who, as Bourdieu reminds us, was an oblate— the institutions that consecrate them and that they consecrate themselves to.

However, the case of the Generation of '14 proves that the tendencies that Bourdieu associated with the academic universe in Manet's revolution are not identical in other historical contexts. A divided academia can generate processes of creative autonomy from the dominant orthodoxy, while simultaneously maintaining other features of scholasticism such as the universalization of a theoretical view on the world or the social mutilation in the access to cultural elites. Bourdieu's theoretical model is still useful for understanding symbolic revolutions, but we believe we have demonstrated that the academia can play a positive role in these processes, while reinforcing the autonomy of the field. This, moreover, has repercussions on the configuration of the field of cultural production resulting from the symbolic revolution. Taking the philosophical field as a reference, in the Generation of '14, the rationalization of public administration and its synchronization with the symbolic revolution broke with a philosophical production placed at the service of a political and moral project sanctioned by the state —with an enormous influence of the church—, generating a situation of anomie different from that of the artistic field after Manet: a plurality of internal to the field instances and criteria of consecration developed, inside and outside the university, but with a much more stable structure and a greater capacity for integration of the revolution —both of its agents and its criteria— by the state. In addition, collective and relatively impersonal support —associated with institutional position, i.e., less dependent on the accumulation of exclusively personal economic and social capital— made careers more predictable and less dependent on powers outside the field. The new logic established in philosophy is not that of permanent revolution, typical of the artistic field: the active role of the academy and the professionalization of the producers are fundamental to understand this difference. However, neither the collective character of the revolutionary subject nor the academic support implies the disappearance of social selection within the intellectual field: creativity and the possibility of breaking with previous tradition continued to require, in the Generation of '14, a high level of economic, social and, obviously, cultural capital, although there was a greater margin for sociological exceptionality.

With all that in mind, we can imagine other logical possibilities for which validation could be found in other empirical contexts, such as a divided academia where the opposition between scholastic orthodoxy and creative autonomy does not correspond to the opposition that tends to confront people from a humble background with social elites; but instead, it aligns creative autonomy with the institutional promotion of profiles that are traditionally excluded from intellectual life; for instance, through the heuristic potential of a contradictory habitus, which invites us to reconcile possibilities that were unthinkable for the social universes of origin.

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