



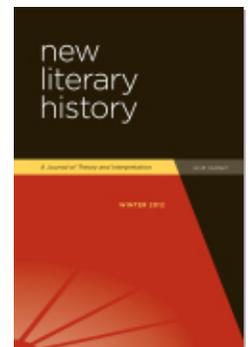
PROJECT MUSE®

The Double Life of Writers

Bernard Lahire
Gwendolyn Wells

New Literary History, Volume 41, Number 2, Spring 2010, pp. 443-465
(Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: [10.1353/nlh.2010.0001](https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2010.0001)



➔ For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/nlh/summary/v041/41.2.lahire.html>

The Double Life of Writers

Bernard Lahire¹

IF PIERRE BOURDIEU SELDOM QUESTIONED THE CONDITIONS under which literary autonomy exists or is maintained, it is obviously because he conceptualized the social worlds he was studying after the model of the scientific or academic field, that is, based on the example of institutionalized, codified, and (in the economic sense) professionalized social worlds that have largely resolved the question of this type of autonomy. These institutionalized universes,² through admissions policies based on degrees, (competitive) exams, and appointments, as well as in the regulation of different “career stages,” offer real professions to the major agents in the field (researchers or teacher-researchers in philosophy, physics, mathematics, sociology, et cetera), who, out of professional obligation, can and must fully devote themselves to their work. These fields, which provide their members with “full-time” jobs and thus constitute their primary universe of social membership, are quite different from other universes, such as the literary universe, to which people are, most frequently, linked only in a secondary fashion, objectively speaking, even if some consider their connection to this world to be their principal connection. How does the writer who leads a parallel life as a teacher, librarian, job trainer, lawyer, journalist, physician, psychologist, business manager, or farmer, who “exists” in literature only intermittently or part time, compare with the physician, philosopher, business manager, lawyer, or farmer who engages in activities in his or her respective social universes in a complete and continuous manner?

By adopting a structural or even structuralist method, we may consider works of literature independently of who their producers are and what they do (“inside the field” and “outside the field”), and independently of the concrete social conditions of their production. Structuralism applied to literary works thus results in the erasure of the writer by the work, echoing the views of Paul Valéry, as recalled by Gérard Genette: “Valéry dreamed of a history of Literature understood ‘not so much as a history of authors and the accidents of their careers, or that of their works, than as a History of the mind, insofar as it produces or consumes

literature, and this history might even be written without the name of a single writer being mentioned.”³

While it enables us to break with an internalist structuralism (focused solely on works as signifying structures), Bourdieu's concept of field may be better suited to the study of the position and differentiated value of works and the publishing houses supporting them than it is to the producers of works and their conditions of production. Bourdieu is entirely right in considering works, both past and present, *relationally*, or *in relation to one another*, by considering the “literary field” as a universe of more or less autonomous reference that writers perceive as such. This means, concretely, that part of what determines the literary nature and specificity of a given work cannot be understood without taking into account the past and present state of the literary field and not just external factors such as the author's social properties or the ideological context of the period. And, after all, just as certain theoreticians of social class have maintained that despite individual cases of upward or downward mobility (which account for the fact that part of the dominant class may come out of the dominated classes and, inversely, that the dominated classes may be partly made up of sons and daughters of the dominant class), the important thing is that the social existence of a class structure and class relations are not called into question by instances of mobility (individuals can move from one class to another without the classes themselves being threatened with disappearance), so, too, it is essential to bring to light the structures of opposition and power relations between the subfield of restricted production (the consecrated avant-garde and writers aspiring to it) and the subfield of large-scale production (with its oppositions between academic, mainstream, best-selling, and mass-market literatures) without asking who the producers of these works are and what they do.

But by disregarding writers as individuals, we nonetheless pass over many central facts that influence the workings of the literary universe. For example, it seems important to ask to what extent a cultural producer in general (and a writer in particular) is situated inside or outside of the “game” at a given point in his or her trajectory. Clearly inside the game when he publishes, the writer may leave the game for some amount of time to pursue other activities, before reappearing when a new book is published.

These entries into and departures from the literary game at various intervals are not uncommon. A survey questionnaire showed that while a minority of writers (less than one-fifth) publish at least one book a year over the course of their literary career, most publish less frequently and more sporadically.⁴ But by looking closely at writers characterized

by different degrees of literary productivity, we also refute the overly generalized argument that the lowest degree of productivity is to be found among writers who could summarily be described as “amateurs.” If high literary productivity is, obviously, fairly clearly associated with indicators of strong recognition and professional integration, it is still possible for a writer to be nonprolific and yet very well recognized in the literary game. Conversely, we see that extreme productivity is not unrelated to the nature of published genres (fiction rather than poetry, and especially “genre fiction”), and that although it may go hand in hand with professionalism of the economic type, it does not necessarily guarantee a very high degree of literary legitimacy, but may indicate a pace of production that is characteristic of various forms of “industrial” and well-remunerated literature.

The sociologist who is interested in variations in intraindividual behavior and in individuals’ patrimonies of dispositions cannot help but wonder what “kind of man” (in the Weberian sense) society is shaping when it considers the more or less schizophrenic *double life* of the writer to be a regular social phenomenon, when it sees as “habitual” the permanent sense of frustration that comes of not being able to devote oneself to one’s art, when it considers as “normal” or “banal” the suffering linked to the discrepancy between an individual’s subjective definition of self (as a writer) and a large part of that individual’s objective life conditions. Unlike those people who experience their profession as a central and permanent part of their personality, writers who, for economic reasons, work a “day job” have a cultural and “personal” foot in literature and a material (and sometimes also “personal”) foot outside of literature (the second foot freeing the first from dependence on market constraints).⁵

Types of mobility other than the entry into and exit from the literary game (at various intervals) can also be observed within the literary universe. We could therefore wonder whether the same individuals can produce works that occupy different positions within the literary game, whether they can come from the sector of restricted production and go toward the sector of large-scale production and vice versa, or whether they can simultaneously produce works belonging to different sectors of the universe in question. This would reveal the entire range of practices of the *literary double life* (often with authors’ use of pseudonyms),⁶ whereby some writers may simultaneously produce personal works of literature and other works, for example, “mass-market” literature or even practical literature, to make money.

In any case, in seeking to account for the specificity of the workings of the literary universe, the investigator *must* adopt a broader framework

and ask what the agents located in the literary universe do and who they are outside literature. From the point of view of the very questions posed by field theory (with its notions of *illusio*, habitus, and investment), the frequent double life of writers is not an anodyne or insignificant fact, but an absolutely central fact of literary life. How, then, do writers manage their social investments when their literary activity is only intermittent and only occurs as a function of the “blanks” or “gaps” that their other obligations—personal and professional ones especially—afford them? Can they “invest” with equal intensity in different social worlds, whether or not these are organized as fields of struggle? And when they participate in different “fields” (literary, medical, journalistic, academic, diplomatic, et cetera), can they simultaneously invest in both fields and integrate the *illusio* (e.g., beliefs and values) of both?⁷ Is it possible to belong to two different fields and have incorporated the specific *illusio* of each? The case of writers and the literary universe is only one example, more flagrant and acute than others, of synchronic and diachronic participation in the heterogeneous social frameworks characteristic of individuals’ lives in specialized societies (with a strong social division of labor, and a clear differentiation of responsibilities, practices, stakes, and *illusio*). Participation in differentiated social worlds can range from an extremely long-term association to a very occasional and temporary investment in various social frameworks (family, groups, institutions). Caught between writing and a second profession, without even taking into account other social frameworks such as the family, writers constitute one somewhat atypical but not marginal case of multiple social memberships.

Field theory is thus classically flawed by the extended and nonspecific use of its key concept. The program that Bourdieu outlined in 1976 aimed to elaborate a “general theory of fields” that would bring to light the “general laws of fields” and at the same time reveal, with the study of each “new field,” the “specific properties characteristic of each individual field.”⁸ In fact, without distorting its intentions, it can be said that the program, as it was carried out, served more to underscore the general properties of fields, often via an enlarged and slipshod use of the concept (including discussions of the family as a field),⁹ than to show the different types of fields. The generalized and nonspecific use of the notion—every social universe was supposed to be organized in the form of a “field”—causes us to overlook the *ensemble* of properties that define these historically determined spaces. If we see “field” everywhere as soon as we think we detect the existence of a space of struggle or competition, or the minute we observe configurations of relations of interdependence based on a relational mode of thinking, then we no longer see anything at all, and the concept loses all its interest. As always in such cases, we

might sum up the problem of the infinite extension of the use of a concept by saying: he who grasps at too much loses everything.

In and Out of the Field

As I have already had the occasion to stress, the sociological reduction of an individual to his "being-as-member-of-the-field" is problematic in several respects.¹⁰ First of all, it must be remembered that not all agents participate in fields, since the latter are professional worlds that put into play, and into competition, members of elites (economic, political, religious, journalistic, scientific, cultural, or sport related). Field theory thus cannot cover all possible cases of relevant contexts of action. But it also cannot account for all possible categories of agents: there is no field for industrial or agricultural labor, nor is there a field that would include housewives, et cetera. And even when they belong to worlds that are structured like fields, that is, as spaces of competition and struggle that have stakes and specific rules of play, agents never belong exclusively to one social universe and never play exclusively on one stage. Given their habitual association with many other out-of-field contexts (private or public, lasting or ephemeral) and particularly groups (family, friends, cultural, or sports), they are not reducible to their activity within the field. Field theory thus has the greatest difficulty in conceiving of out-of-field agents as well as the time that in-field agents spend outside of the field, and thus it tends to underestimate the importance of out-of-field practices for understanding in-field practices.

If the overall functioning of the social world is not indifferent to the fact that the same individuals act, think, and feel in very different contexts of social life, and also not indifferent to the fact that these individuals experience tensions or contradictions linked to constant movement between one universe or subuniverse and another, then it is critical that sociologists take this fact into account as systematically as possible in their studies and analyses. To do so presupposes that the conditions of possibility and the tools for a sociology of intraindividual variations in behavior be made clear.¹¹ Otherwise, field theory may be contributing to a premature hyperspecialization within sociology (different researchers becoming specialists in different fields) and thereby obscure the phenomena of multiple social memberships or forms of inclusion that are crucial in highly specialized societies.¹²

But clearly, the reduction of individuals to their being-as-member-of-the-field is even more problematic, and the problems immediately more obvious to investigators, when participants in that "field" seldom have

both feet in that field, but rather keep one foot outside: the money-making foot that allows the other one to “dance.”¹³ It is this particularity of the literary universe, in the sense of a universe that brings writers into play, that I would like to return to here in order to explain the notion of the “literary game.”

For all intents and purposes, it is as if the model of the “literary field” were conceived by being based on the very atypical figure of the *rentier* (Flaubert) who has the economic resources needed to maintain a purely disinterested relationship to his art, to devote himself to it completely, to refuse to produce purely money-making literature, to delay publication of his work until he deems it worthy of publication, to reject literary fashions, and to despise vulgar or useless journalists and critics.¹⁴ Obviously, the point is not to assert that those who have studied the “literary field” have systematically ignored the fact that most often writers are tied to a second job,¹⁵ but rather to observe how this fundamental fact of the literary universe, as of other artistic worlds, has failed to modify ways of speaking about this “field” and its main agents (writers).

Indeed, though Bourdieu recognizes that the “profession of writer or artist” is “one of the least capable, too, of completely defining (and nourishing) those individuals who claim it and who quite often cannot assume the function they take as their principal one unless they have a secondary profession to provide them with their main income,” he retains from this situation only the insight that there are certain “subjective profits offered by this double status, with [one’s] proclaimed identity [as a writer] allowing one, for example, to be satisfied with all the small jobs described as being just to pay the bills, which are offered by the profession itself (such as that of reader or proofreader in publishing houses) or by related institutions (such as journalism, television, radio, and so forth).”¹⁶ Beyond the fact that writers do not draw their economic resources solely from jobs in publishing or the media, the question of the economic insecurity that can be engendered by such situations, the question of the time “second jobs” take away from the time available for writing, the question of the effects of this double life on the individual patrimonies of dispositions (which inevitably undermines the notion of habitus to the extent that it is difficult to speak of the “literary habitus” for agents [such as writer-doctors, writer-teachers, writer-journalists, writer-engineers, writer-workers, et cetera] who are simultaneously in possession of two sets of dispositions or “habitus” that in theory cannot be concurrent)—all of this the author more or less disregards.

[. . .] The manner in which Bourdieu poses the question presupposes that the habitus is “one” (systematic and homogeneous) and that the goal of research is to see the effects of the translation of the “same habitus”

into fields with different properties and ways of structuring possibilities. He does not see that the somewhat atypical situation he believes he is describing—the participation of the same individuals in several universes—is precisely what is experienced by a very large number of writers who combine literary and extraliterary activity, not necessarily within other universes of cultural production, or even within other noncultural universes. There is thus no need to proceed like logicians and try to imagine realities that are in fact right under our noses.¹⁷

One of the problematic examples of the reduction of writers to their “being-as-member-of-the-field,” albeit one with the altogether praiseworthy aim of resisting political reductionism, can be found in Gisèle Sapiro’s study of writers during the Occupation period.¹⁸ The author explains the significance of her work as follows: “Our aim is to show the specificity of the behavior of writers under the Occupation, in light of the representations and practices characteristic of literary circles. The political position-takings of writers in fact obey modes of logic that do not have politics as their sole guiding principle. Further, the interested parties themselves rarely separate such principles from their *professional practices*: their propensity for social or political engagement also depends upon the way in which they conceive their particular trade [*métier*]. And it is most often as artists or intellectuals that they become engaged.” To write in this way, one would have to assume that the “profession of writer” existed like any other trade, that all writers lived off their writing (as a baker lives off the baking and selling of his bread), and that their social actions were essentially determined by their practice as writers, whereas in fact they were far from being socially reducible to their literary existence. In fact, if writers belong to a professional group, it is most often *outside* of the “literary field” (Bourdieu), and even *outside* of the “literary world” (Howard S. Becker). Obviously this does not prevent us from thinking that part of their political engagement may be linked to their parallel lives as writers, but the categorizing of the agents in question exclusively within the enclosed space of the literary field is a radical and extremely surprising theoretical decision. The “practical life conditions” of writers are in this way summarily limited to the literary dimension of their lives and the “principles governing modes of perception of stakes, attitudes, and adopted behaviors” are “related to the specific conditions in which these issues arise within the literary field.”¹⁹

The principle of blindness that leads to this kind of literary reduction of agents is twofold. First, field theory inevitably leads us to search for specific determining factors that influence social behavior by looking within relatively autonomous microcosms. But Sapiro’s is a somewhat peculiar use of field theory and it unwittingly subverts the primary

reason for looking for specific determinants. Bourdieu's reminder of the specific determinants associated with different fields that impose their own "laws" on agents in the field is a program that aims to avoid the temptation of gross sociological reductionism. Concretely, literary strategies and literary works (especially their genres and styles) cannot, for example, be forcibly reduced to the author's social class of origin or class membership. The conditions of the literary field, and in particular the space of literary possibilities that presents itself differently to each author according to assets of literary knowledge but also various initial resources, strongly influence participants' literary orientation. But here, it is *political behaviors* and not *literary practices* that the author attempts to explain through *literary determinants*. A slippage thus takes place in relation to the explanatory model of field theory, and one can legitimately wonder—while taking into account the principle of specification of field theory—whether it is not *specifically political factors* (political socialization via the family and then via education) that are simply influencing *political attitudes*.²⁰

This slippage is all the more problematic because we are dealing with a social universe that is unlike others and that has not been specified by field theory. Given that a writer is rarely "only" a writer, the question of determinants related to the second job (the fact of whether or not it exists, and, when it does exist, the nature of this "second job," which is often a writer's main professional occupation) should be posed. And it has not been.

The second principle of blindness is linked to the intellectual adversary that is being targeted, that is to say, political history. The scientific issue that is at stake here is that of resisting a "political" reduction of reality: "The theoretical objective of analyzing the attitudes of writers during the Occupation *based on the logic particular to the world of letters and its institutions* rather than on the *already constructed categories of political history* leads to a reassessment of the relative importance of certain social actors, to the emergence of others, and to the establishing of the role of continuities and ruptures in the collective and individual lives of the members of *this atypical social group*."²¹ But here again, Sapiro does not seem to take into account the fact that the writers she is describing are hard to characterize as a "social group." Since they join and leave this group, they are not wholly defined by the group and the "condition of writer" is not their sole determining principle. To counter a political reductionism (one that consists of reading social reality in terms of a purely political interpretive grid) with a literary reductionism is not, obviously, the best possible solution.

As we saw with Bourdieu, this author does not entirely ignore the second job, but she fails to draw from it all the necessary methodological

conclusions. Only gradually do we learn of the existence and importance of the second job. We read, for example, that such writers as “Jules Romains and Jean-Paul Sartre stopped teaching only after their literary career had been established, whereas Jean Guéhenno continued to teach his entire life.”²² Similarly, despite the fact that “turning to journalism as a means of subsistence and a stepping stone to a literary career” had been “discredited by writers from the most privileged class fractions,” we learn that “half of the pool of 185 writers were regular contributors to a daily newspaper (*Le Temps*, *L'Écho de Paris*, *L'Action française*, *Le Figaro*, *Paris-Soir*, *Ce soir*, et cetera),” that “nearly two thirds wrote more or less regularly for the popular press,” and that “for about one writer in four, journalism was the main source of income.”²³ Despite their hesitations and despite criticism, then, writers turned to journalism for subsistence. Thus, François Mauriac emphasizes the practical reasons for engaging in journalistic writing (those which “oblige a writer, especially if he is married and has children, to ‘round out,’ as they say, the end of the month”): “We must not be ashamed, in the final reckoning, to *reveal the motivations that were perhaps more important than the sublime ones in causing us to take up the journalist’s pen.*”²⁴ And in the grand poetic tradition, Jean Lescure can even remind us that writers should not have any material expectations of literature: “We were schooled in a certain idea of literature *that precluded us from thinking of it as a job. Or in any case, earning a living from it. One had to look elsewhere for material gain.*”²⁵

An explanation for the political behavior that is being studied in terms of the existence or nonexistence of a second job can even be glimpsed in the course of Sapiro’s analysis. For example, the author mentions that a writer who holds a second job can allow himself to abstain from publishing for reasons linked to the fact that he is not entirely dependent on his writing for his livelihood: “The [choice] made by Jean Guéhenno to remain silent, *which must be considered in relation to his condition of being a high school teacher* (he did not make a living from his writing), is nevertheless significant by comparison with the choice made by Jean-Paul Sartre, who was also a teacher.”²⁶ The weight of the second job can be discerned even in explanations that attempt to stress the importance of literary positions. How is it possible not to see that behind writers’ positions in the subfields of production (large-scale production and restricted production) or behind literary genres lies the hidden issue of greater economic independence (poets who are accustomed to not living off their writing and to holding second jobs) versus greater economic dependence (novelists or playwrights who write more or less full time) *vis à vis* the literary universe? [. . .]

The best way to avoid any awareness of these determinants is to exclude them from an even remotely systematic analysis. Thus Sapiro, in

her factor-analysis model of correspondences, uses only those elements that support her hypothesis; that is, by retranslating into the logic of the literary field and its specific stakes all the stakes that are external to this field, political stakes in particular. Operating on the assumption that writers are part of a “professional milieu,” she proposes to proceed “from a given professional milieu, with its practices and institutions, to examine the repercussions of the crisis within it.”²⁷ From the outset, the extraliterary “professional” (occupational) situation of the writer is not held to be relevant. It is only when she raises, though merely in a footnote, the issue of “literary and nonliterary income” that we suddenly see appearing the reality of the life conditions of writers who rarely earn their living by their literary pen: “The variables taken into account fall into four main groups: social properties (age, social origin, geographic trajectory, educational trajectory, academic degrees); characteristics of position within the field (preferred genre, place of publication, publishers and periodicals, prizes, institutional affiliations, degree and type of recognition); aesthetic position-takings (literary schools, movements, or inspirations) and political position-takings (in the 1930s and under the Occupation). [. . .] Note 3: We found that data concerning trajectory of social origin were more reliable than *indicators such as occupation* or career length (which we encoded [as variables] but did not utilize in the analysis of correspondences). The latter would only have been relevant as indicators of social position if combined with estimates of literary and nonliterary income and print-run statistics, which were impossible to establish.”²⁸

How can we fail to see here, as in many other similar cases, the effects of a sort of theoretical blindness that hardly prepares us to see omissions (sometimes massive ones), counterexamples, and contradictions, or to develop a nuanced analysis? The initiator of field theory rightly spoke of this type of blindness in connection with an “invention according to an already-invented art of invention that, by solving all problems capable of being posed within the limits of the problematic established by the application of proven methods (or by working to save the principles in the face of heretical contestations [. . .]), tends to make us forget that it resolves only those problems that it can pose.”²⁹

The Literary Game

While he continues to use the concept of the “literary field,” it is undoubtedly Christophe Charle who has come closest to the problem that concerns me here. Beginning with an analysis of the distribution

of writers according to their social origin (their father's occupation) as compared with the structure of distribution of Parisian academics according to social origin as well as of senior civil servants in Paris and in the provinces during the same period, he is led to speak of the literary field as a "derivative field" that is distinct from "fundamental fields." "All the differences observed between the social characteristics of writers and those of members of other fields," writes Charle, "are finally attributable to the fact that the literary field is a 'derivative field' whereas the others are fundamental fields. This has both internal and external consequences . . . in fundamental fields, the stakes are different from those in the literary field. It is not just a question of literary life or death (or even of a post mortem literary life), but of social life or death."³⁰ Charle must acknowledge that "the choice of a literary career is thus only a partial choice," in that "one can combine this activity with another."³¹ And he rightly sees in these "not merely singular but multiple tensions between the writer's profession and his or her job . . . the basis for the particularity of the literary field in comparison with other fields."³² On the one hand there are remunerative fields with full-time participants and on the other, those fields that, like the literary field, are poorly remunerated for the vast majority of participants and thus rarely their primary occupation in terms of time. If, in the first scenario, "the definition of the position corresponds to the dominant occupation of the individual who holds it," for writers, "as the extent of patronage and private means diminishes, the match between literary vocation and the author's actual 'job title' is increasingly aleatory."³³

But the idea of a "derivative field" or of "derivation" unfortunately does not really help to clarify the problem at hand. [. . .] Rather than in terms of an opposition between fundamental and derivative, the overall situation of the literary universe is better understood as being based on an opposition between "principal" and "secondary." Given that the writer with a second job is the most typical figure in the contemporary literary universe, that entry into this literary universe can begin relatively late in individual trajectories, that writing is often an intermittent and discontinuous practice, and that publishing can be interrupted (for multiple reasons that are internal to the literary universe [rejection by publishers] or external to it [economic necessity]) frequently and for indeterminate periods, it becomes clear that it is worth distinguishing this type of universe from the totality of other "fields" by underscoring its objectively (but not necessarily subjectively) ancillary or secondary character in the lives of people who write. The notion of field (along with those of habitus, *illusio*, and investment) is undoubtedly better suited to social worlds in which the agents participate full time and in their

main capacity. It could thus be said that the literary universe is a sort of “secondary field” that is distinguishable from a whole series of “principal fields.” This does not preclude some of those who have a remunerative professional occupation other than literary writing from subjectively experiencing literature as their “true” principal occupation and considering the rest of what they do to be an “extra” or “money-making” job. But this singular situation of a double life distinguishes them from all the participants in other universes that provide a remunerative occupation as well as a *raison d'être* (an “identity”), a livelihood, and stakes that make it worth being in the running. It is this type of “secondary field” that I will from now on call a “game.”

Bourdieu often uses the metaphor of play or game—while pointing out its limitations, as regards a philosophy of action, for example³⁴—to describe the working of fields (the rules of the game, stakes [*enjeux*], the meaning of the game, winners, losers, trump cards, believing that “the game is worth the candle” as a belief in the values of the game, “being hooked on the game” [*être pris au jeu*], et cetera). The notion of the “game” seems to me especially well suited for describing activities that, like literature, are practiced with very different degrees of investment, but which, over all, involve individuals who cannot afford to spend all their time playing the game in question. Materially unable to live off their writing, writers thus alternate between time and investment in a “literary life” and an “extra-literary professional life.”

To explore the usefulness of the metaphor of the game in describing the literary universe,³⁵ but also to indicate its limitations, we can turn to the definitions of play/game put forth by Johan Huizinga and Roger Caillois.³⁶ The advantage of these two authors lies in proposing a general definition of play that, whatever its historical relevance, condenses a series of properties that are generally attributed to games and that can be used as a standard for the measurement of social reality.

In their definitions, Huizinga and Caillois both emphasize the fact that the game is a “free” activity (an obligation to play would be the very negation of the game as a leisure activity), “separate” from daily life (it takes place in an arbitrarily delimited space-time, circumscribed and distinct from “ordinary life”), “orderly” (with specific stakes and rules that are distinct from “ordinary laws”), “uncertain” (its progress and outcome are in part unpredictable), “nonproductive” (it is “gratuitous” in the sense that for Huizinga, it is “connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained from it”), and “fictive” (accompanied by a clear sense of “unreality” compared with “ordinary life”), but “at the same time [capable of] absorbing the player intensely and utterly.” But how are these properties of the game useful to the sociologist in studying a social universe like the literary universe?

First of all, the “free” (in the sense of “unconstrained”) nature of games corresponds exactly to the relationship maintained with respect to artistic activities that are based on desire and sometimes even a sense of vocation—socially constructed through multiple familial and educational experiences—rather than an obligation. Artists in general, and writers in particular, most often experience their activity not as a form of work that is obligatory, forced, or constrained, but rather as a response to inner necessity and personal desire. Moreover, anything that places writers in a situation that looks like constrained work (especially within time limits) or any type of required productivity—for example, works commissioned by publishers or institutions, or grants or artist-in-residence awards that require work to be submitted—puts them, as writers themselves plainly reveal, in a position that they often do not much appreciate.

Second, specialized social universes in general, and the literary universe in particular, are characteristically separated from other universes by more or less clear and visible boundaries, and by being organized according to their own legislation and specific laws. Within the long tradition of sociological and anthropological thinking about the historical specialization of activities or social roles and the social division of labor (from Spencer to Bourdieu, by way of Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Elias), we come to see that the differentiation of the social world leads to the organization of universes possessing their own stakes and rules of play, thereby creating space-times specifically devoted to those activities. Writing literature means joining a specific game that is distinct from a whole other series of possible, more or less related, games.

Unlike a whole range of other social universes, the literary game does not create clear boundaries between experts and laypersons [*les profanes*]: in the literary game there is no real equivalent of the hospital and the physician’s white coat, or the courtroom and the judges’ or jurists’ robes, which, as Maurice Halbwachs reminds us, immediately create a distance between experts and the uninitiated and thus instantly signal the specificity of the universe in question.³⁷ This is why frictions between writers (experts) and the public (laypersons), or between writers and the various intermediaries that may come between them and the public (journalists, librarians, talk show hosts, et cetera) can occasion moments of crisis for writers. The latter sometimes have the sense of seeing their own particular literary logic being denied and the distinctive laws of their universe being flouted when, for example, public speaking invitations reduce writers to specialists on the subject-matter of their novels, placing them on the same realistic and nonliterary terrain as politicians, sociologists, psychologists, or historians. The problem is that of the boundary—visible in the case of lawyers or judges, invisible in the case

of writers—between the “particular,” the “inside,” the “internal,” the “special,” the “sacred,” and the “outside,” the “external,” the “profane.” What recourse, other than expressions of outrage and anger, do writers have to make it be known that their “insiders’ space” has been trampled on, profaned, invaded by an external and alien logic?

Unlike ordinary games, however, the social universes that have constituted themselves historically over time through struggles over competing definitions of the game and the rules of the game rarely have perfectly clear and explicit rules of play (making it possible to speak of the *tacit laws of the literary game*).³⁸ The participants in social games often start playing without knowing the rules of the game in their entirety. The idea of the “rules of the game” also makes it possible to distinguish between those who master the rules (players deemed to be competent) and those who master them less adequately or not at all (those players who are excluded from the most important stakes—in a sense, placed “out of the game”), or, alternatively, between those who are content to play with the rules of the game that they have been given, and those who, once they have perfectly assimilated the rules of the game, want to develop their own (distinctive and recognizable) style of play and, in part, help to transform it. With regard to the “uncertain” nature of games, here again, artistic activity in general, and literature in particular, is full of uncertainty (*the principle of economic uncertainty and of aesthetic uncertainty*). Unlike a whole series of other social universes, the literary game never guarantees a player’s permanent presence within the game. Indeed, one could claim that in all social universes that are remunerative and provide relatively stable occupations, uncertainty is limited with regard to the possibility of regular practice of an activity and legitimacy as a practitioner, as well as the value of the work done. The literary game, by contrast, is characterized by a strong measure of uncertainty with respect to all the following points: sales, critical reception, the aesthetic value of what one has written and published, and the possibility of publishing one’s work again. If a certain degree of literary fame, once achieved, can protect the writer from the most dramatic (commercial or literary) decline, for many writers and for a long period of time, “each new work is almost like another beginning,” in the words of Alfred de Vigny.

That a game is by nature “nonproductive” or “connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it,” is one of the problematic aspects of the definitions proposed by Huizinga and Caillois. First of all, it is not clear that games (in the ordinary rather than the metaphorical sense of the term), even those that appear the most “disinterested,” can be considered nonproductive, since they produce “diversion” (in both an everyday and Pascal’s sense of the term); they engender “pleasure in

playing” and contribute to the development of different types of competencies and skills and are therefore not devoid of all social utility for those who play them. Nonproductivity is even more contradictory in the case of literary activity, since, unlike a game (according to Caillois), it produces “works.” Nevertheless, if we retain only the economic aspect of utility *for the player*, in one part of the literary game, the one that corresponds to the sector of restricted production discussed by Bourdieu, the idea clearly emerges that literature must be practiced independently of any commercial end, and that when it is done “for money,” it is no longer literature (the “pure” position taken by Flaubert and a number of poets). Understood in a purely economic sense, the “free”—or in any case, hardly “profitable” or “paying” for writers—nature of a large sector of literary production can be underscored.

And it is precisely the low probability that players will earn their livelihood from economic gains derived from their participation in the literary game that compels most players not to participate fully. The idea of “secondariness” conveyed by the notion of play in this case, and the fact that “play activities” are often seen in opposition to “serious activities,” especially “the life of work” (Huizinga), is significant in reminding us of the situation of a “double life” (and sometimes even a “double game” between literary activity and remunerative extraliterary activities) familiar to the vast majority of players in the literary game. The idea of play is especially relevant when we are talking about a universe that is not, for the great majority of those participating in it, a “principal” activity. If play is an activity that is indulged in within temporal limits determined by one’s main activities, then the literary universe overall is closer to a game than to a professional universe.

In addition, the “fictive” nature of ludic activity, as underscored by Huizinga and Caillois, can be relevant for describing literary activity if we specify the limits of the term. Working with the words of language, writers create poetic, novelistic, or theatrical worlds that are separate from the everyday (practical) uses of language. However, we see that, through an ethnocentric reversal characteristic of those participants most strongly invested in (particular) social games, a series of oppositions such as futility/seriousness, fictive/real, literature/real life, et cetera, can be used by some writers to make of literature the only means of access to reality, the only life worth living, the only serious thing in the world, as opposed to everyday, ordinary life, the world of appearances, futile things, illusions, and wasted lives.³⁹ Not only does the feeling of “unreality” that players may experience in relation to “real life” (meaning that losers are reminded that “it’s only a game,” in the sense that everything that happens is “without consequence” for their everyday life) not stop them

from being “utterly absorbed” (Huizinga) in the game, but a number of the players who are very invested in the game may make the game their “only reality” or “true reality.”⁴⁰

Finally, recalling that games (in the ordinary sense of the term) can, like the most serious social universes, “absorb” their players, Huizinga and Caillois allow us to see that the same individual may be “entertained,” “occupied,” “preoccupied,” “invested,” or even literally “sucked in” by different activities, from the most serious to the most futile, from the most long lasting to the most ephemeral (professional activities, familial or romantic life, sports or games, et cetera). The *illusio* which characterizes those who are “caught up in the game” or “hooked on the game” can thus take very different forms,⁴¹ and the same individuals can, to some extent, combine several forms of *illusio* (with varying degrees of strength) or pass regularly from one form of *illusio* to another.⁴²

By acting as if the members of a “field” could be reduced to their “being-as-member-of-the-field” (and through his strange emphasis on the fact that it is important to think of the *illusio* as “a type of knowledge based on the fact of being born into the game”),⁴³ Bourdieu unwittingly privileges a certain type of social universe or a certain type of agent in these social universes: on the one hand those universes that give players the possibility of permanent investment, and, on the other, those agents who are characterized by the most intense investments in the social universes in which they participate (those who are “prepared to kill or be killed” for the field, or who experience the stakes of the field as a “life or death” matter). He speaks of a “visceral commitment to the game,”⁴⁴ but does not consider that all players do not invest equally in the game. The examples that come spontaneously to the sociologist’s mind are always extreme cases of total investment in the game: Bourdieu cites the case of politicians “ready to die for stakes that seem like bunkum” from the point of view of those who are not caught up in the stakes of the political field, the case of geometers “prepared to die for a theorem,” or that of André Breton, who “broke a rival’s arm during a poetic quarrel” and was “prepared to die for poetry.”⁴⁵

What, then, of those universes that, like the literary game, disfavor permanent investments on the part of players by obliging them to draw their means of economic subsistence from outside the game? What about half-time agents, agents whose participation is erratic or casual, and who have a variety of investments, including in social worlds that allow for full-time investment? Field theory remains silent on these different points.

Among the participants in the literary game,⁴⁶ three notable types of players can be distinguished:⁴⁷

- (1) First, participants in the literary game can practice literature as a form of “leisure” or “recreation” (in the manner of an “entertaining” parlor game) and thus they write, without any particular hardship, in the free time that remains after their social and, especially, professional obligations (*occasional players*). Whether they are amateurs or rather dilettantes who practice literature as a cultivated recreational activity, they do not maintain their *illusio* (in the sense of faith) as strongly as other players. They “play in moderation,” believing that the game’s interest or value is not sufficient for them to devote their entire existence to it (“the game isn’t worth the candle”). Some writers thus emphasize the “moderate” nature of their investment in the game: they spend part of their leisure time writing, during clearly delimited sequences of time that do not greatly impinge upon their life outside the game.
- (2) Participants in the literary game can also “invest at a loss”, because they are “hooked on the game,” make the game the main driving force of their existence, and often seek their “own style of play,” even though they are usually forced to maintain a paid activity outside the game that affords them the economic means to keep playing (*fanatical players*). In the history of the literary game, very few “fanatical players” have been able to devote themselves entirely to their art without any concern for economic profitability (thanks to an inheritance or the support of a spouse, for example).

Further extending the metaphor of the game, it can be said that fanatical players are a type of “pathological” or “compulsive” gambler—from the viewpoint of occasional players—for whom the game invades the whole of their existence instead of being merely “an aspect of [their] life.”⁴⁸ These writers “bet their lives” on the game by making it more than “just a game.”⁴⁹ For writers with the purest literary ambitions, the literary game corresponds to what Caillois refers to as “*ludus*,” that is, a game in which participants have done everything they can to “voluntarily raise the degree of effort and complexity” of the game, and which seems more interesting but also more demanding than professional activities that are considered “serious.”⁵⁰

- (3) Finally, participants in the literary game may “earn a living” (more or less successfully) by playing and thus live off their proceeds from the game (*professional players*, in the economic sense of the term). Among these professional players, some are former “fanatical players” with strong literary ambitions, who have been able to give up their secondary job by successfully establishing a readership over time, as they became better known (through winning prestigious literary

awards, in particular), and others are players who are literarily less “pure” and less invested, who capitalize on tested techniques of the game and can sometimes even play *in order to* make money.

Those who capitalize on the techniques of the game and who are sometimes subject to a sustained pace of production that makes them comparable to ordinary workers and distances them from the model of the inspired writer are hardly considered “players” any longer. As Caillois writes, “professional boxers, bicycle riders, or actors [. . .] properly find relaxation by playing at a game to which they are not contracted.”⁵¹

Thus, within the same game, players with very different degrees of investment, returns (income from publications), productions, and ambitions can coexist: “occasional players” (amateurs or dilettantes, with a second job), “fanatical players” (most often with a second job, sometimes independently wealthy or supported by their family), and “professional players” of very different types. However, only professional players, who rarely enjoy this status throughout their entire lives, can live exclusively from what their participation in the game provides.

The literary game is also clearly a game of the *âgon* type, that is, a game that involves perpetual competition among players and gives them an incentive to train, practice, and work to improve their performance. As with ordinary games and sports in which champions do not compete face to face (hunting, mountaineering, crosswords, et cetera) but “are involved in ceaseless and diffuse competition,”⁵² the literary game stages an immense, incessant, and diffuse contest between aspirants to the status of “writer” and even, for a minority, “great writer.”

What we have laid out here, then, is a model that forms a basis for thinking about writers and that is distinct from both field theory (Bourdieu) and the theory of social worlds (Becker). Field theory examines fields or subfields of cultural production by placing the emphasis on creators and the struggles and competition among them, but at the same time it reduces the agents who create to their existence as members of a field. Bourdieu held that art-worlds theory was “a regression in comparison with field theory,”⁵³ without, however, taking into account the fundamental difference in categorization of objects of study, and the interests in knowledge that distinguish him from that of Howard S. Becker. This difference resides in the fact that the notion of field privileges the study of those who are in competition for the appropriation of the symbolic capital proper to the field (artists, writers, et cetera), while the notion of “art worlds” considers artistic activity from the point of view of a sociology of work and includes in its field of observation all those who contribute to the collective, material, and symbolic construction of works: artists, but

also all those who are defined as *support personnel*.⁵⁴ Becker's art-worlds theory is thus essentially interested in art as a collective endeavor that puts into play various types of agents, or even several different "occupational groups," and centers on neither creators nor their works: "I have treated art as the work some people do, and have been more concerned with patterns of cooperation among the people who make the works than with the works themselves or with those conventionally defined as their creators."⁵⁵ The notion of the art world thus describes "the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that the art world is noted for."⁵⁶

Using an approach that is sensitive to variations in intraindividual behaviors, I focus on the agents who create and on the conditions in which they create (which distances me from Becker's conception of art worlds), while taking into account that the former are not reducible to their activity within the cultural universe in question (which distances my approach here from field theory as well as from the theory of social worlds).⁵⁷ Such an approach seems to me all the more important because we are studying social universes to which a large majority of agents do not devote all their time (for reasons of economic subsistence), and which can thus be called "social games." Working toward a *specification of field theory*, I endeavor to grasp the specificity of a *literary game* that puts into play agent-participants whose most common characteristic is that they are not completely involved in the game.

TRANSLATED BY GWENDOLYN WELLS

NOTES

1 This essay is an edited and translated excerpt from Bernard Lahire's *La condition littéraire: la double vie des écrivains* (Paris: Editions La Decouverte, 2006).

2 Editors' Note: Though "worlds" would be more idiomatic in English, we have retained the author's use of "universes" because, as he makes explicit further on, he wishes to distinguish his analysis not only from Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "fields" but also from Howard Becker's theory of "art worlds."

3 Gérard Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan, introduction by Marie-Rose Logan (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982), 18. And one cannot help thinking that the theme of "the death of Man" associated with structuralism has an equivalent in practices and policies that support literature (rather than writers). For example, government support for poetry (that is, booksellers and books) enables it to survive at the most prestigious publishing houses, but in no case does it allow poets per se to live or survive.

4 The span of the career was assumed to begin with the writer's first publication and to continue until the time of the survey.

5 It can be noted that field theory has remained equally silent regarding the specificity of certain "amateur" but highly competitive sports that require a strong investment from

participants. Not only do these social universes often presuppose a second job, but their participants have an intense, relatively short life in these universes, owing to the more or less rapid depletion of the physical resources necessary for competition. They are thus faced with the problem of a social reconversion (with a redirection of their “interests” or their *illusio*) and, at the same time, an inevitable reorganization of the contexts for mobilizing their individual dispositions and competencies. The same problem exists for other performing artists whose work relies on physical ability (dancers, circus performers, et cetera).

6 Of those surveyed, 13.8 percent had already published a book under a pseudonym.

7 This is not the case of writer-laborers, writer-employees, writer-farmers, et cetera, because field theory is, more precisely, a theory of the fields of power.

8 Pierre Bourdieu, “Quelques propriétés des champs,” in *Questions de sociologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1980), 113.

9 Bourdieu thus writes: “This work of integration is all the more necessary since, in order to exist and persist, and the function as a *body* the family always tends to function as a *field*, with its physical, economic, and above all symbolic power relations (linked, for example, to the volume and structure of the capital possessed by each member), its struggles for conservation and transformation of these power relations.” Bourdieu, “On the Family as a Realized Category,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 13 (1996): 22. He thus encouraged a purely metaphorical use of the concept (to the detriment of a more historic use), referring to nothing more than configurations in which there are power relations between agents with objective properties and specialized interests and strategies. Yet Émile Durkheim had underscored the total, all-encompassing nature of the family universe, which is unlike any professional universe: “To be sure, there is always this difference between them, that members of a family live their lives together, while members of a corporation live only their occupational lives together. The family is a sort of complete society whose action controls our economic activity as well as our religious, political, scientific activities. Anything significant we do outside the house acts upon it, and provokes the appropriate reactions. The sphere of influence of a corporation is, in this sense, more restricted.” Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York: Free Press, 1968), 16.

10 Bernard Lahire, *L'Homme pluviel: les resorts de l'action* (Paris: Hachette, 2006) and “Champ, hors-champ, contrechamp,” in Bernard Lahire, ed., *Le Travail sociologique de Pierre Bourdieu: dettes et critiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001).

11 Lahire, “Les variations pertinentes en sociologie,” in Jacques Lautrey, Bernard Mazoyer, and Paul Van Geert, eds., *Invariants et variabilité dans les sciences cognitives* (Paris: Éditions de la MSH, 2002), 243–55, and “Post-scriptum: individu en sociologie,” in *La Culture des individus: Dissonances culturelles et distinction de soi* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006), 695–742.

12 Which is not Bourdieu’s intention. Lahire, “Misère de la division du travail sociologique: Le cas des pratiques culturelles adolescentes,” *Éducation et sociétés. Revue internationale de sociologie de l'éducation* 16 (2005): 129–36.

13 Great works always provide elements of reflection that make it possible to critique them. Thus, even if he reduced phenomena composed of multiple forms of belonging to their inscription within different fields, Bourdieu raised a problem in 1986 that, systematically applied to field theory, could have led to a reflection of the type that I am trying to bring to carry out here. Speaking of the “social surface [*surface sociale*], that is, the possibility of existing as an agent in different fields,” he writes that this question of the social surface “raises many problems that are usually ignored, especially in statistical analyses. Thus, for example, surveys on “elites” will cause the issue of social surface to disappear by classifying individuals who hold multiple positions in terms of one property considered dominant or determinant, thus placing a captain of industry who is also a

media executive in the category of bosses, et cetera (*which among other things, has the effect of eliminating from the field of cultural production all producers whose principal activity is situated in other fields, thus allowing certain properties of the field to be overlooked*).” Bourdieu, “L’illusion biographique,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 62/63 (Juin 1986): 72n8.

14 “It’s a waste of time to read criticism. I pride myself on my ability to uphold the thesis that there hasn’t been a single piece of good criticism since criticism was invented; that it serves no purpose but to annoy authors and blunt the sensibility of the public; and finally that critics write criticism because they are unable to be artists, just as a man unfit to bear arms becomes a police spy. I’d like to know what poets throughout the ages could have in common with the critics who have analyzed their work. . . . And when to these you add the journalists, who aren’t even equipped to hide their leprous jealousy under a show of learning!” Gustave Flaubert, “Lettre à Louise Colet, Croisset, 14 octobre 1846,” *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert, 1830–1857*, ed. and trans. Francis Steegmuller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980), 85.

15 In reference to the literary life, Bourdieu speaks of a “profession that isn’t really one (since it is almost always associated with private income or a ‘day job’).” Bourdieu, “*Le champ littéraire: avant-propos*,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 89 (1991): 15.

16 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996), 227.

17 “To grasp the effect of the space of possibles, which acts as a discloser of dispositions, it suffices—proceeding in the fashion of logicians who admit that each individual has ‘counterparts’ in other possible worlds in the form of the ensemble of people each could have been if the world had been different—to imagine what people such as Barcos, Flaubert, or Zola might have been if they had found in another state of the field a different opportunity to deploy their dispositions” (Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 235).

18 Gisèle Sapiro, *La Guerre des écrivains, 1940–1953* (Paris: Fayard, 1999) 9, emphasis added.

19 Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 21.

20 Cf. Fabienne Federini, *Écrire ou combattre: des intellectuels prennent les armes, 1942–1944* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006).

21 Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 11, emphasis added.

22 Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 74.

23 Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 75–76.

24 François Mauriac, *Mémoires politiques* (Paris: Grasset, 1967), 16. Quoted in Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 76, emphasis added.

25 Jean Lescure, *Poésie et liberté, Histoire de messages (1939–1946)* (Paris: IMEC Éditions, 1998), 47; quoted in Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 92, emphasis added.

26 Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 64–65, emphasis added. What Sapiro does not point out is that Jean-Paul Sartre aspired above all to become a writer and to leave the teaching profession: “Teaching was a way of life that disgusted us. Because for me and Nizan, teaching was just a job. Not like art. We wanted to write. Teaching disgusted us. We’d tell each other: ‘Okay, we’ll be teachers in the provinces for twenty years [. . .].’ But in reality we were not content with the idea of being teachers.” Anna Boschetti, *The Intellectual Enterprise: Sartre and Les Temps Modernes*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1988), 20. I have modified the translation because “political convictions” harden or soften according to material conditions of existence and desired positions. See F. Federini, *Écrire ou combattre*, 200–16.

27 Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 11.

28 Sapiro, *La Guerre*, 705, emphasis added. In another article focusing directly on the state and economic constraints that weigh on the literary universe (Gisèle Sapiro, “The Literary Field between the state and the market,” *Poetics* 31 [2003]: 441–64), there is again no mention of the “second job” of writers.

- 29 Bourdieu, "La spécificité du champ scientifique et les conditions sociales du progrès de la raison," *Sociologie et sociétés* 7 (May 1975).
- 30 Christophe Charle, "Situation du champ littéraire," *Littérature* 44 (December 1981): 14.
- 31 Charle, "Situation," 11. In fact it is not just that "one can," but that one generally has no alternative.
- 32 Charle, "Situation," 8.
- 33 Charle, "Situation," 8.
- 34 Indeed, nothing would be gained by imagining social agents as players who are aware of playing and know exactly what their stake in the game is.
- 35 Editors' Note: Difficulties of translation arise here owing to the fact that where English distinguishes between play and game (and, further, gaming/gambling), French offers only the one term "jeu" to cover these meanings. We have as far as possible rendered "jeu" in Lahire's text as "game" or "the game," since, as will be apparent, this is the sense of the French word that he develops in articulating a theory of the writer's double life. In discussing Roger Caillois's *Les jeux et les hommes* and Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (subtitled in the French edition "*essai sur la fonction sociale du jeu*"), we have made some room for the term "play" because these texts are so well known in English translations which favor that term over "game." The reader should bear in mind, however, that what Lahire is drawing from these texts is a general theory of the game.
- 36 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, trans. Huizinga (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans. Meyer Barash (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2001). Caillois further distinguishes between "play" and "art."
- 37 Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1976), 242–44. See my analysis of this point in *L'Homme pluriel*, 32–33.
- 38 This was true, for example, of the historical struggle during the classical era between men of letters [*les lettrés*] and writers of literature [*les littérateurs*], and the victory of the latter, which foregrounded the importance of form for the men of letters, who prized erudition above all else. See Alain Viala's, *Naissance de l'écrivain*.
- 39 Bernard Lahire, *La condition littéraire*, 522–28.
- 40 The terms used by Huizinga and Caillois might allow us to believe that there is "the real" on one hand and "the fictive" on the other, and that the fictive is not real. However, players spend real time playing and it is not certain that this "time" is without consequences or relationship to extra-game activities. Similarly, when Huizinga says that "play is not 'ordinary' or 'real' life" (*Homo Ludens*, 8), he again takes up the polemical opposition between "play" and "life" that is precisely what needs to be transcended.
- 41 In Bourdieu's work, *illusio* variously signals: belief (in the importance of the game), practical faith, a magical relationship to the game (the product of a complicitous ontological relationship between mental structures and the structures of the field), interest, specific libido, specific drive, investment, or practical mastery of the rules and stakes of the game. Depending on the case, the notion tends to refer either to competencies and knowledge or to beliefs and the believer's investment.
- 42 It also follows from this remark that *illusio* is not a sufficient property for there to be a "field" (and is thus not an exclusive property of fields).
- 43 Bourdieu, *Intérêt et désintéressement*, *Cours du Collège de France, Cahiers de recherche du GRS*, no. 7, Lyon, 1989.
- 44 Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000), 102.
- 45 Bourdieu, *Intérêt et désintéressement*, 12–13, 20, and 50–51.

46 Translator's Note: At this point, Lahire begins to use *jeu* also in the limited sense of "gaming" or "gambling," and *joueur* to mean "gambler."

47 These types are not exclusive and watertight categories, and in reality writers are most often situated somewhere between the three extremes. The first two types are essentially contrasted according to their degree of investment in the game (although biographical passages from one type to another are easy to imagine). And the third type is distinguished from the other two by the (statistically quite exceptional) fact of being able to earn a livelihood from one's work as a writer, regardless of the degree of investment or innovation on the part of the player.

48 André Tremblay, "Pour une carte sociale du jeu: une approche historique des rapports entre le jeu, l'État, et la société," *Loisirs et société / Leisure and Society* 26, no. 2 (2003): 503–31. In the case of Franz Kafka (See Lahire, *La condition littéraire*, 509–22), it can be seen that his intense investment in literature was incomprehensible to his mother, who saw literature as merely a cultivated leisure activity that should not overflow into the ordinary realms of normal life (and of professional life, especially).

49 Caillois returns to the ordinary categories of judgment by speaking of "perversion" when play ceases to be clearly separated from the ordinary world: "What used to be a pleasure becomes an obsession. What was an escape becomes an obligation, and what was once a pastime is now a passion, compulsion, and source of anxiety." (Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 44).

50 Caillois observes that "this supposed relaxation, at the moment that the adult submits to it, does not absorb him any less than his professional activity. It sometimes makes him exert even greater energy, skill, intelligence, or attention" (Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 66).

51 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 45.

52 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 17.

53 Bourdieu, "Le champ littéraire," 4.

54 Taking into account all those who, to one degree or another, contribute to the material or symbolic fabrication of works (and their value). Howard S. Becker, "Art as Collective Action," *American Sociological Review* 39, no. 6 (1974): 767–76.

55 Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1982), ix.

56 Becker, *Art Worlds*, x.

57 Becker says that "the first trick consists of forgetting about types of people as analytic categories and looking instead for types of activities people now and then engage in." Becker, *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), 44. But in making this choice, he obliterates the issue of people who practice different types of activity and move constantly from one to another. With regard to literature, this means that he overlooks the fact that "literary activity" is practiced by individuals who also practice other types of activity (notably, paid professional activity), and that the manner in which they practice literary activity is in part dependent upon these types of extraliterary activity.