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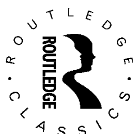
Pierre
Bourdieu

Distinction

A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste

Translated by Richard Nice, with a new introduction by Tony Bennett



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Preface to the English-Language Edition

I have every reason to fear that this book will strike the reader as 'very French'—which I know is not always a compliment.

French it is, of course, by virtue of its empirical object, and it can be read as a sort of ethnography of France, which, though I believe it shows no ethnocentric indulgence, should help to renew the rather stereotyped image of French society that is presented by the American tradition. But I believe it is possible to enter into the singularity of an object without renouncing the ambition of drawing out universal propositions. It is, no doubt, only by using the comparative method, which treats its object as a 'particular case of the possible', that one can hope to avoid unjustifiably universalizing the particular case. With the aid of Norbert Elias's analyses, I do indeed emphasize the particularity of the French tradition, namely, the persistence, through different epochs and political regimes, of the aristocratic model of 'court society', personified by a Parisian *haute bourgeoisie* which, combining all forms of prestige and all the titles of economic and cultural nobility, has no counterpart elsewhere, at least for the arrogance of its cultural judgements.[1] It would, however, be a mistake to regard all that is said here about the social uses of art and culture as a collection of Parisian curiosities and frivolities—and not only because, as Erving Goffman once pointed out to me, the Parisian version of the art of living has never ceased to exert a sort of fascination in the 'Anglo-Saxon' world, even beyond the circle of snobs and socialites, thereby attaining a kind of universality.

The model of the relationships between the universe of economic and social conditions and the universe of life-styles which is put forward here, based on an endeavour to rethink Max Weber's opposition between class and *Stand*, seems to me to be valid beyond the particular French case and, no

doubt, for every stratified society, even if the system of distinctive features which express or reveal economic and social differences (themselves variable in scale and structure) varies considerably from one period, and one society, to another.[2] For example, the slightest familiarity with the structural mode of thought tells one that the use of French words, proper names, preferably noble, or common nouns—Institut de Beauté, Confiseur, Haute couture, etc.—performs the same function for shops on Fifth Avenue or Madison Avenue as English words like hairdresser, shirtmaker or interior designer on shop fronts in the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.[3] But, more broadly, the sense of distance, even strangeness, which scientific objectification itself produces and which is intensified by the differences in historical traditions, giving different contents to different realizations of the same structures, must not prevent the reader from reflecting onto his own society, onto his own position within it, in short, onto himself, the analyses he is offered.

That is why, though I am aware of the dangers of a facile search for partial equivalences which cannot stand in for a methodical comparison between systems, I shall take the risk of suggesting, within the limits of my knowledge of American society and culture, some guidelines for a reading that seeks to identify, behind the specific institution of a particular society, the structural invariant and, by the same token, the equivalent institution in another social universe. At the level of the 'international' pole of the dominant class the problem scarcely arises, since the cultural products are (relatively) international. One could replace *Les Temps Modernes* by *Partisan Review*,[4] France-Musique by educational television (Channel 13, WQXR, WGBH etc.) and perhaps ultra-leftism by sixties 'camp',[5] while the *New York Review of Books* would (alas) represent an unlikely combination of the weekly *Nouvel Observateur*, the review *Critique* and, especially in its successive enthusiasms, the journal *Tel Quel*. As regards bourgeois taste, the American professionals, executives and managers might ask of the film, book, art and music critics of the *New York Times* or magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* the same balanced, subtly diversified judgements which their French opposite numbers expect from *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro* or weeklies like *L'Express* or *Le Point*. The titles and authors favoured by the best-seller readership will vary from country to country, but in each case there will be a preponderance of the life-stories and memoirs of exemplary heroes of bourgeois success or 'non-fiction novels'. The undemanding entertainment which Parisians expect from boulevard theatre, New Yorkers will seek in Broadway musicals.

But I believe I have said enough to encourage my readers to join in the game, at least so as to correct my mistakes and perhaps to pursue the search for equivalents, which would have to be sought in song and cinema (Is Brigitte Bardot like Marilyn Monroe? Is Jean Gabin the French John Wayne, or Humphrey Bogart or Spencer Tracy?)—and also in dress, interior decoration,

sport and cooking. For it is certain that on each side of the Channel or the Atlantic some things are compatible, others are not; and the preferences of a class or class fraction constitute coherent systems. To support this hypothesis, which all the empirical analyses confirm, I can invoke Edgar Allan Poe, who spells out the link between the most everyday choices, in decoration, for example, and choices in the 'fine arts', seeing in the ordinary arrangement of the wealthy apartments of his country the expression of a way of life and thought: 'We speak of the keeping of a room as we would of the keeping of a picture—for both the picture and the room are amenable to those undeviating principles which regulate all varieties of art; and very nearly the same laws by which we decide on the higher merits of a painting, suffice for decision on the adjustment of a chamber.'[6]

In its form, too, this book is 'very French'. This will be understood if the reader accepts that, as I try to show, the mode of expression characteristic of a cultural production always depends on the laws of the market in which it is offered.[7] Although the book transgresses one of the fundamental taboos of the intellectual world, in relating intellectual products and producers to their social conditions of existence—and also, no doubt, *because* it does so—it cannot entirely ignore or defy the laws of academic or intellectual propriety which condemn as barbarous any attempt to treat culture, that present incarnation of the sacred, as an object of science. That is one of the reasons—along with the costs of book production—why I have only very partially reproduced the survey material and the statistical data used, and have not always given the exposition of the method as much prominence as the rhetoric of scientificity would demand. (As in the French edition, some passages of the text, containing detailed statistical material, illustrative examples or discussion of ancillary issues, are printed in small type so that the reader who seeks an overview of the main argument may pass over them on a first reading.) Likewise, the style of the book, whose long, complex sentences may offend—constructed as they are with a view to reconstituting the complexity of the social world in a language capable of holding together the most diverse things while setting them in rigorous perspective—stems partly from the endeavour to mobilize all the resources of the traditional modes of expression, literary, philosophical or scientific, so as to say things that were de facto or de jure excluded from them, and to prevent the reading from slipping back into the simplicities of the smart essay or the political polemic.[8]

Finally, I realize how much the specificity of the French intellectual field may have contributed to the conception of this book, in particular to its perhaps immoderate ambition of giving a scientific answer to the old questions of Kant's critique of judgement, by seeking in the structure of the social classes the basis of the systems of classification which structure perception of the social world and designate the objects of aesthetic enjoyment. But in an

age when the effects of a premature division of labour separate anthropology from sociology, and, within the latter, the sociology of knowledge from the sociology of culture, not to mention the sociology of food or sport, it is perhaps the advantage of a world still haunted by the ultimate and total questionings of the prophetic intellectual that one is led to refuse the self-induced myopia which makes it impossible to observe and understand everything that human practices reveal only when they are seen in their mutual relationships, that is, as a totality.[9]

At all events, there is nothing more universal than the project of objectifying the mental structures associated with the particularity of a social structure. Because it presupposes an epistemological break which is also a social break, a sort of estrangement from the familiar, domestic, native world, the critique (in the Kantian sense) of culture invites each reader, through the 'making strange' beloved of the Russian formalists, to reproduce on his or her own behalf the critical break of which it is the product. For this reason it is perhaps the only rational basis for a truly universal culture.

Introduction to the Routledge Classics Edition

It is now over thirty years since Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction* was first published in French, and nearly fifty years since the fieldwork the book draws on was conducted. Its influence over the intervening period has been quite extraordinary. It has arguably shaped the concerns of contemporary sociology more deeply and extensively than any other single text, while its influence among arts and cultural theorists has been equally significant. And if the book's concerns were informed by the French education and cultural policies of the 1960s, its theories and concepts have become a part of the vocabularies which now routinely inform the terms in which questions concerning the relations between such policies and questions of social stratification are posed.

Yet if this is an astonishing accomplishment it is also a surprising one for a book centrally preoccupied with the sociology of taste. Questions concerning the relationships between tastes and society had a significant influence on the early development of the social sciences. The role of tastes in ordering the relations between different social groups in market societies was a central preoccupation of David Hume, for example, as well of Adam Smith. However, the subsequent development of philosophical aesthetics, particularly under the influence of Immanuel Kant, separated questions concerning the exercise of the faculty of aesthetic judgement from more empirical and mundane considerations concerning the role of tastes in everyday social life. This was not entirely true—questions of taste remained important in the sociologies of Georges Simmel and Thorsden Veblen—but their role in the work of the more central figures of 'classical sociology' (Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, for example) was less significant.

How, then, was Bourdieu able to turn the tide and insert questions of taste

into the heart of sociological concerns? This was mainly due to the ways in which he redefined such questions by connecting them to three related concepts—cultural capital, habitus and field—which, in turn, allowed him to reformulate the terms in which MaxWeber had posed questions concerning the relationships between social class and status. Although Bourdieu does not explicitly refer to these three concepts in introducing his book, they are all implicitly in play in the opening paragraphs of *Distinction* which lay out the trajectory along which the analysis will unfold.

He begins by quoting a scene from a medieval play in which one teacher tells another that their pupils ought to view the knowledge they had acquired through their schooling in language and the liberal arts as 'an intellectual stock in trade' that belongs to them 'as if it were a house, or money'. This is the root of Bourdieu's famous conception of cultural capital which refers to the distinctive forms of knowledge and ability that students acquire—whether at home, at school, or in the relations between the two—from their training in the cultural disciplines. This capital, which might be manifested in particular musical, artistic, or literary tastes and competencies, Bourdieu argued, is to be regarded as just as much an asset as economic forms of capital—a house or money, for example. This means that, like economic capital, there are distinctive mechanisms of inheritance through which cultural capital is transmitted from one generation to the next. And, just as there are mechanisms for converting one form of economic capital (property) into another (money), so there are mechanisms for converting cultural capital into economic capital, and back again.

These are the mechanisms that Bourdieu sets out to explore when, in his first sentence, he tells us that his concern is with the distinctive properties of the economy of cultural goods. There is, he says, a specific logic governing what are considered to be the legitimate ways of consuming or appropriating those cultural goods that are regarded, at particular moments, as works of art. Bourdieu condenses two ideas into one here. The first concerns the role of what he goes on to call the institutions of legitimation—museums, art galleries, universities—whose practices of classification and evaluation distinguish between those cultural goods that are canonized as 'art' and other cultural goods, those commonly described as either popular or mass culture, that are accorded a lower status. At the same time, he tells us that there are more and less legitimate ways of consuming the works of art that are so canonized, thus bringing into view the social mechanisms through which art consumers acquire particular ways of valuing and appropriating work of art: attending to their form at the expense of their content; viewing or listening to them in particular conditions; or attending to them disinterestedly for their own sake rather than for any consideration of their usefulness, for example. But then, in his third sentence, Bourdieu unsettles the assumption that these ways of

consuming high culture might be considered solely in their own right by arguing for a broadened field of analysis in which it is the relations between different kinds of culture that matter. Practices associated with the restricted and normative meaning of the word culture, he argues, have to be displaced into the wider anthropological understanding of the concept of culture. Bourdieu draws here on his training in the French traditions of sociology and anthropology represented by the work of Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss which emphasized the role of symbolic practices in organizing social life. From this perspective, Bourdieu goes on to argue, culinary tastes are just as much a part of culture as are artistic tastes. More important, he insists on the need to bring the two together: to reconnect 'taste for the most refined objects' with 'the elementary taste for the flavours of food'.

This is the underlying principle of Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Although this concept is now most famously associated with Bourdieu, it has quite a long lineage in the history of social thought. It is a key aspect of Weber's work and was quite extensively elaborated by Mauss, but mainly drawing on examples from his work on the 'primitive cultures' of colonized peoples. Bourdieu not only brings the concept 'back home' by applying it in a study which, in introducing the English edition of *Distinction*, he describes as 'a sort of ethnography of France'; he also vastly extends its reach in contending that people who belong to the same social group and who thus occupy the same position in social space tend to share the same tastes across all forms of symbolic practice. Of course, there are exceptions; his argument is a probabilistic one. But its principles are clear: those who have particular kinds of taste for art will have similar kinds of taste not just for food but for all kinds of cultural or symbolic goods and practices: for particular kinds of music, film, television, sports, home decor, clothing and fashion, dance, and so on. The habitus, for Bourdieu, consists in the set of unifying principles which underlie such tastes and give them a particular social logic which derives from, while also organizing and articulating, the position which a particular group occupies in social space. But this, of course, is always a position that is relative to the positions occupied by other social groups.

This is the point Bourdieu goes on to make in his second paragraph where he brings together the concepts of habitus and cultural capital. If tastes for varied kinds of legitimate culture hang together as a set, he argues, this is not because they are the expression of some natural gift which some members of society have and others lack. Rather, their social logic is made clear by their statistical correlation with, first, level of education and, second, with social position—that is, with position in the occupational class structure. As such, this logic is a socially divisive one; it marks, produces and organizes a distinction between those whose tastes are regarded as 'noble' because they have been organized and legitimated by the education system, and those whose

tastes, lacking such markers of nobility, are accorded a more lowly status. In this way, the separation that Weber had posited between the orders of stratification based on class and those based on status is questioned. These orders, Bourdieu argues, are closely interconnected through the role that different class-based principles of taste play in organizing the cultural values and practices through which classes organize, symbolize and enact their differences from one another.

By the end of his first two paragraphs the whole set of concepts underlying and organizing Bourdieu's thesis in *Distinction* has thus been assembled. Tastes of all kinds across a diverse array of practices can be grouped together through a set of unifying principles which express and organize the interests of different social classes. The relations between these classes are ones of competitive striving in which struggles for economic position and for status are connected as the differences between legitimate tastes and less legitimate ones yield different and unequal stocks of cultural capital for the members of different classes. The key mechanism of connection here consists in the role played by the education system in mediating the relations between the status hierarchies associated with different tastes and cultural preferences on the one hand, and the organization and reproduction of the occupational class structure on the other. Those from higher class positions in the professional and managerial classes endow their children with an initial stock of cultural capital by familiarizing them with both the works of canonized high culture, and the 'correct' way of appreciating them, as a part of their early training in the home. This cultural capital is rewarded and enhanced in the education system through the 'elective affinity' between the values of middle-class households and those of the school and university where the cultural competencies acquired in the middle-class home result in higher levels of educational attainment relative to other social classes. And these higher levels of educational attainment lead to higher levels of recruitment into well-paid, powerful occupations whose high status is publicly symbolized by high levels of engagement with legitimate culture (opera, classical music, literature and the theatre as well as art). It is in this way, Bourdieu argues, that class relationships are reproduced as the economic capital associated with professional and management class positions is converted into forms of cultural capital. These are transmitted to the next generation of middle-class children through the mutually reinforcing connections between home and school, with the consequence that educationally successful children from middle-class homes are able to convert their holdings of cultural capital into economic capital at the point at which they enter the job market.

These mechanisms do not provide an exhaustive account of the organization of class relations in contemporary societies. The connections between cultural capital and class position are, Bourdieu argued, more important for

those constituting what he called the 'dominated fraction of the dominant class'—that is, for managers and professionals—than they are for the upper echelons of the class structure. For these the mechanisms for transmitting large holdings of economic capital across generations that are secured by inheritance laws are more important considerations, as are the stocks of social capital they accumulate through privileged social connections acquired, for example, via elite private schools. It is the role of these different forms of capital—economic, social and cultural—and their significance relative to one another in the strategies of different classes that govern what Bourdieu calls the dynamics of fields. Drawing on the principles of field theory developed in early twentieth-century physics, Bourdieu also plays on the concept of field as a sporting metaphor for visualizing the lay-out of social space—or the space of lifestyles, as he calls it—as one in which different classes compete with one another in a 'game' whose outcomes are determined by the different volumes of economic, social and cultural capital they are able to accumulate as well as by the relative weighting of these different capitals in the overall capital holdings of different classes.

These, then, are the chief theoretical coordinates guiding the terms in which Bourdieu reports and interprets the findings of his empirical inquiries into the relationships between tastes and class in 1960s France. Drawing on the statistics produced by his survey of contemporary tastes, as well as on a rich archive of interview material, Bourdieu's discussion is a virtuoso combination of theoretical acrobatics and painstaking empirical analysis. It is also a methodological triumph in deploying the techniques of multiple correspondence analysis, derived from field theory, which made the more conventional forms of statistical analysis favoured by positivist sociologists look distinctly dated and flat-footed. Focusing mainly on the lower echelons of the bourgeoisie, the petit-bourgeoisie, and the working class, Bourdieu traces the connections between the tastes of each of these classes and a set of organizing principles governing their habitus. In the case of the bourgeoisie, he finds a unified principle for its cultural tastes in the Kantian principle of disinterestedness; that is, of a liking unguided by any calculations of utility. As the antithesis to this, the habitus comprised by the working class 'culture of the necessary' subordinates aesthetic considerations of form to functional considerations. The habitus of the petit bourgeois governed by what Bourdieu calls the 'culture of good will' is straddled between the habitus of these two classes. Distancing itself from the working-class culture of the necessary, this aspires to the effortless and at-ease cultural familiarity of the bourgeoisie without ever being able to achieve it.

In his preface to the English edition, Bourdieu admits that many aspects of his argument are specific to the socio-cultural dynamics of 1960s France. But he also contends that his arguments are generally applicable to the relations

between the economic, social and cultural dynamics of class in contemporary societies. No doubt it is true, he says, that the particular patterns of French tastes are not fully replicated elsewhere. This is not, though, he insists, what matters most from a sociological perspective. What counts here is whether the same principles are at work in organizing the space of lifestyles as a set of relations between different tastes which can, with qualifications, be attributed to different classes, and whether these different class cultures are shaped by the relations between the education system and the occupational structure. There is, I believe, little doubt that this is so. Of course, there are national particularities, and these are important. There are also significant differences in how the relations between class and culture are worked out in the considerably more affluent twenty-first century than in 1960s France, still recovering from the ravages of war and occupation. However, there are now countless studies conducted in many countries which, while qualifying particular aspects of Bourdieu's thesis, have confirmed its central arguments.

This is not to say that *Distinction* is without problems. Its neglect of ethnicity has attracted a good deal of criticism, much of it, though, taking insufficient account of the fact that Bourdieu's hands were tied here by the French legislation prohibiting the inclusion of questions on ethnicity in social surveys. There has also been a good deal of criticism of Bourdieu for his failure to accord women any autonomous role in the processes through which cultural capital is transmitted across generations. Yet, what is perhaps most striking in recent years is the extent to which both new approaches to race and ethnicity and feminists seeking new approaches to the social dymanics of gender relations have looked precisely to the more general aspects of Bourdieu's work for inspiration.

Yet it is perhaps precisely here, in relation to his more general theoretical perspectives, that Bourdieu's work has recently been most critically probed, particularly in the years since his untimely death in 2002. This has been perhaps most true of debates in France where, in what is now a rapidly changing climate of sociological debate, several of his key concepts have been called into question. His interpretation of the habitus as a unified and unifying mechanism has been hotly contested. While he can validly claim to have pioneered of the principles of relational sociology, many now also argue that Bourdieu's commitment to the view that the relations between positions within a field—the space of lifestyles, for example—is determined by an underlying structure places an undue restriction on the principles of relational analysis. And if, true to his sub-title, Bourdieu showed that the exercise of the judgement of taste rested on social principles, his tendency to over-polarize the tastes of different classes has been widely remarked.

It is, however, that very fact that Bourdieu's work continues to draw criticism from so many quarters that testifies to its continuing power and

standing as a—if, indeed, not *the*—classic sociological text of the twentieth century. Classic texts deserve their name only for so long as they generate questions and continue to be key points of departure for critical intellectual work and debate. There is little doubt that, judged on this criterion, the status of *Distinction* as a classic is ensured for some time to come.

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Introduction to the First Edition

> You said it, my good knight! There ought to be laws to protect the body of acquired knowledge.
>
> Take one of our good pupils, for example: modest and diligent, from his earliest grammar classes he's kept a little notebook full of phrases.
>
> After hanging on the lips of his teachers for twenty years, he's managed to build up an intellectual stock in trade; doesn't it belong to him as if it were a house, or money?
>
> Paul Claudel, *Le soulier de satin*, Day III, Scene ii

There is an economy of cultural goods, but it has a specific logic. Sociology endeavours to establish the conditions in which the consumers of cultural goods, and their taste for them, are produced, and at the same time to describe the different ways of appropriating such of these objects as are regarded at a particular moment as works of art, and the social conditions of the constitution of the mode of appropriation that is considered legitimate. But one cannot fully understand cultural practices unless 'culture', in the restricted, normative sense of ordinary usage, is brought back into 'culture' in the anthropological sense, and the elaborated taste for the most refined objects is reconnected with the elementary taste for the flavours of food.

Whereas the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education: surveys establish that all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going, reading etc.), and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level (measured by qualifications or length of schooling) and secondarily to social origin.[1] The

relative weight of home background and of formal education (the effectiveness and duration of which are closely dependent on social origin) varies according to the extent to which the different cultural practices are recognized and taught by the educational system, and the influence of social origin is strongest—other things being equal—in 'extra-curricular' and avant-garde culture. To the socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. This predisposes tastes to function as markers of 'class'. The manner in which culture has been acquired lives on in the manner of using it: the importance attached to manners can be understood once it is seen that it is these imponderables of practice which distinguish the different—and ranked—modes of culture acquisition, early or late, domestic or scholastic, and the classes of individuals which they characterize (such as 'pedants' and *mondains*). Culture also has its titles of nobility—awarded by the educational system—and its pedigrees, measured by seniority in admission to the nobility.

The definition of cultural nobility is the stake in a struggle which has gone on unceasingly, from the seventeenth century to the present day, between groups differing in their ideas of culture and of the legitimate relation to culture and to works of art, and therefore differing in the conditions of acquisition of which these dispositions are the product.[2] Even in the classroom, the dominant definition of the legitimate way of appropriating culture and works of art favours those who have had early access to legitimate culture, in a cultured household, outside of scholastic disciplines, since even within the educational system it devalues scholarly knowledge and interpretation as 'scholastic' or even 'pedantic' in favour of direct experience and simple delight.

The logic of what is sometimes called, in typically 'pedantic' language, the 'reading' of a work of art, offers an objective basis for this opposition. Consumption is, in this case, a stage in a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code. In a sense, one can say that the capacity to see (*voir*) is a function of the knowledge (*savoir*), or concepts, that is, the words, that are available to name visible things, and which are, as it were, programmes for perception. A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded. The conscious or unconscious implementation of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation which constitutes pictorial or musical culture is the hidden condition for recognizing the styles characteristic of a period, a school or an author, and, more generally, for the familiarity with the internal logic of works that aesthetic enjoyment presupposes. A beholder who lacks the specific code feels lost in a chaos of sounds and

rhythms, colours and lines, without rhyme or reason. Not having learnt to adopt the adequate disposition, he stops short at what Erwin Panofsky calls the 'sensible properties', perceiving a skin as downy or lace-work as delicate, or at the emotional resonances aroused by these properties, referring to 'austere' colours or a 'joyful' melody. He cannot move from the 'primary stratum of the meaning we can grasp on the basis of our ordinary experience' to the 'stratum of secondary meanings', i.e., the 'level of the meaning of what is signified', unless he possesses the concepts which go beyond the sensible properties and which identify the specifically stylistic properties of the work.[3] Thus the encounter with a work of art is not 'love at first sight' as is generally supposed, and the act of empathy, *Einfühlung*, which is the art-lover's pleasure, presupposes an act of cognition, a decoding operation, which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement, a cultural code.[4]

This typically intellectualist theory of artistic perception directly contradicts the experience of the art-lovers closest to the legitimate definition; acquisition of legitimate culture by insensible familiarization within the family circle tends to favour an enchanted experience of culture which implies forgetting the acquisition.[5] The 'eye' is a product of history reproduced by education. This is true of the mode of artistic perception now accepted as legitimate, that is, the aesthetic disposition, the capacity to consider in and for themselves, as form rather than function, not only the works designated for such apprehension, i.e., legitimate works of art, but everything in the world, including cultural objects which are not yet consecrated—such as, at one time, primitive arts, or, nowadays, popular photography or kitsch—and natural objects. The 'pure' gaze is a historical invention linked to the emergence of an autonomous field of artistic production, that is, a field capable of imposing its own norms on both the production and the consumption of its products.[6] An art which, like all Post-Impressionist painting, is the product of an artistic intention which asserts the primacy of the mode of representation over the object of representation demands categorically an attention to form which previous art only demanded conditionally.

The pure intention of the artist is that of a producer who aims to be autonomous, that is, entirely the master of his product, who tends to reject not only the 'programmes' imposed a priori by scholars and scribes, but also—following the old hierarchy of doing and saying—the interpretations superimposed a posteriori on his work. The production of an 'open work', intrinsically and deliberately polysemic, can thus be understood as the final stage in the conquest of artistic autonomy by poets and, following in their footsteps, by painters, who had long been reliant on writers and their work of 'showing' and 'illustrating'. To assert the autonomy of production is to give primacy to that of which the artist is master, i.e., form, manner, style, rather than the 'subject', the external referent, which involves subordination

to functions—even if only the most elementary one, that of representing, signifying, saying something. It also means a refusal to recognize any necessity other than that inscribed in the specific tradition of the artistic discipline in question: the shift from an art which imitates nature to an art which imitates art, deriving from its own history the exclusive source of its experiments and even of its breaks with tradition. An art which ever increasingly contains reference to its own history demands to be perceived historically; it asks to be referred not to an external referent, the represented or designated 'reality', but to the universe of past and present works of art. Like artistic production, in that it is generated in a field, aesthetic perception is necessarily historical, inasmuch as it is differential, relational, attentive to the deviations (*écarts*) which make styles. Like the so-called naive painter who, operating outside the field and its specific traditions, remains external to the history of the art, the 'naive' spectator cannot attain a specific grasp of works of art which only have meaning—or value—in relation to the specific history of an artistic tradition. The aesthetic disposition demanded by the products of a highly autonomous field of production is inseparable from a specific cultural competence. This historical culture functions as a principle of pertinence which enables one to identify, among the elements offered to the gaze, all the distinctive features and only these, by referring them, consciously or unconsciously, to the universe of possible alternatives. This mastery is, for the most part, acquired simply by contact with works of art—that is, through an implicit learning analogous to that which makes it possible to recognize familiar faces without explicit rules or criteria—and it generally remains at a practical level; it is what makes it possible to identify styles, i.e., modes of expression characteristic of a period, a civilization or a school, without having to distinguish clearly, or state explicitly, the features which constitute their originality. Everything seems to suggest that even among professional valuers, the criteria which define the stylistic properties of the 'typical works' on which all their judgements are based usually remain implicit.

The pure gaze implies a break with the ordinary attitude towards the world, which, given the conditions in which it is performed, is also a social separation. Ortega y Gasset can be believed when he attributes to modern art a systematic refusal of all that is 'human', i.e., generic, common—as opposed to distinctive, or distinguished—namely, the passions, emotions and feelings which 'ordinary' people invest in their 'ordinary' lives. It is as if the 'popular aesthetic' (the quotation marks are there to indicate that this is an aesthetic 'in itself' not 'for itself') were based on the affirmation of the continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function. This is seen clearly in the case of the novel and especially the theatre, where the working-class audience refuses any sort of formal experimentation and all the effects which, by introducing a distance from the accepted conventions

(as regards scenery, plot etc.), tend to distance the spectator, preventing him from getting involved and fully identifying with the characters (I am thinking of Brechtian 'alienation' or the disruption of plot in the *nouveau roman*). In contrast to the detachment and disinterestedness which aesthetic theory regards as the only way of recognizing the work of art for what it is, i.e., autonomous, *selbständig*, the 'popular aesthetic' ignores or refuses the refusal of 'facile' involvement and 'vulgar' enjoyment, a refusal which is the basis of the taste for formal experiment. And popular judgements of paintings or photographs spring from an 'aesthetic' (in fact it is an ethos) which is the exact opposite of the Kantian aesthetic. Whereas, in order to grasp the specificity of the aesthetic judgement, Kant strove to distinguish that which pleases from that which gratifies and, more generally, to distinguish disinterestedness, the sole guarantor of the specifically aesthetic quality of contemplation, from the interest of reason which defines the Good, working-class people expect every image to explicitly perform a function, if only that of a sign, and their judgements make reference, often explicitly, to the norms of morality or agreeableness. Whether rejecting or praising, their appreciation always has an ethical basis.

Popular taste applies the schemes of the ethos, which pertain in the ordinary circumstances of life, to legitimate works of art, and so performs a systematic reduction of the things of art to the things of life. The very seriousness (or naivety) which this taste invests in fictions and representations demonstrates a contrario that pure taste performs a suspension of 'naive' involvement which is one dimension of a 'quasi-ludic' relationship with the necessities of the world. Intellectuals could be said to believe in the representation—literature, theatre, painting—more than in the things represented, whereas the people chiefly expect representations and the conventions which govern them to allow them to believe 'naively' in the things represented. The pure aesthetic is rooted in an ethic, or rather, an ethos of elective distance from the necessities of the natural and social world, which may take the form of moral agnosticism (visible when ethical transgression becomes an artistic *parti pris*) or of an aestheticism which presents the aesthetic disposition as a universally valid principle and takes the bourgeois denial of the social world to its limit. The detachment of the pure gaze cannot be dissociated from a general disposition towards the world which is the paradoxical product of conditioning by negative economic necessities—a life of ease—that tends to induce an active distance from necessity.

Although art obviously offers the greatest scope to the aesthetic disposition, there is no area of practice in which the aim of purifying, refining and sublimating primary needs and impulses cannot assert itself, no area in which the stylization of life, that is, the primacy of forms over function, of manner over matter, does not produce the same effects. And nothing is more

distinctive, more distinguished, than the capacity to confer aesthetic status on objects that are banal or even 'common' (because the 'common' people make them their own, especially for aesthetic purposes), or the ability to apply the principles of a 'pure' aesthetic to the most everyday choices of everyday life, e.g., in cooking, clothing or decoration, completely reversing the popular disposition which annexes aesthetics to ethics.

In fact, through the economic and social conditions which they presuppose, the different ways of relating to realities and fictions, of believing in fictions and the realities they simulate, with more or less distance and detachment, are very closely linked to the different possible positions in social space and, consequently, bound up with the systems of dispositions (habitus) characteristic of the different classes and class fractions. Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. And statistical analysis does indeed show that oppositions similar in structure to those found in cultural practices also appear in eating habits. The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition—linked to different distances from necessity—between the taste of necessity, which favours the most 'filling' and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty—or luxury—which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating etc.) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function.

The science of taste and of cultural consumption begins with a transgression that is in no way aesthetic: it has to abolish the sacred frontier which makes legitimate culture a separate universe, in order to discover the intelligible relations which unite apparently incommensurable 'choices', such as preferences in music and food, painting and sport, literature and hairstyle. This barbarous reintegration of aesthetic consumption into the world of ordinary consumption abolishes the opposition, which has been the basis of high aesthetics since Kant, between the 'taste of sense' and the 'taste of reflection', and between facile pleasure, pleasure reduced to a pleasure of the senses, and pure pleasure, pleasure purified of pleasure, which is predisposed to become a symbol of moral excellence and a measure of the capacity for sublimation which defines the truly human man. The culture which results from this magical division is sacred. Cultural consecration does indeed confer on the objects, persons and situations it touches, a sort of ontological promotion akin to a transubstantiation. Proof enough of this is found in the two following quotations, which might almost have been written for the delight of the sociologist:

'What struck me most is this: nothing could be obscene on the stage of our

premier theatre, and the ballerinas of the Opera, even as naked dancers, sylphs, sprites or Bacchae, retain an inviolable purity.'[7]

'There are obscene postures: the simulated intercourse which offends the eye. Clearly, it is impossible to approve, although the interpolation of such gestures in dance routines does give them a symbolic and aesthetic quality which is absent from the intimate scenes the cinema daily flaunts before its spectators' eyes . . . As for the nude scene, what can one say, except that it is brief and theatrically not very effective? I will not say it is chaste or innocent, for nothing commercial can be so described. Let us say it is not shocking, and that the chief objection is that it serves as a box-office gimmick. . . . In *Hair*, the nakedness fails to be symbolic.'[8]

The denial of lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile—in a word, natural—enjoyment, which constitutes the sacred sphere of culture, implies an affirmation of the superiority of those who can be satisfied with the sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, distinguished pleasures forever closed to the profane. That is why art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences.

Part I

A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste

> And we do not yet know whether cultural life can survive the disappearance of domestic servants
>
> Alain Besançon, *Etre russe au XIXe siècle*

1

THE ARISTOCRACY OF CULTURE

Sociology is rarely more akin to social psychoanalysis than when it confronts an object like taste, one of the most vital stakes in the struggles fought in the field of the dominant class and the field of cultural production. This is not only because the judgement of taste is the supreme manifestation of the discernment which, by reconciling reason and sensibility, the pedant who understands without feeling and the *mondain*[1] who enjoys without understanding, defines the accomplished individual. Nor is it solely because every rule of propriety designates in advance the project of defining this indefinable essence as a clear manifestation of philistinism—whether it be the academic propriety which, from Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölfflin to Elie Faure and Henri Focillon, and from the most scholastic commentators on the classics to the avant-garde semiologist, insists on a formalist reading of the work of art; or the upperclass propriety which treats taste as one of the surest signs of true nobility and cannot conceive of referring taste to anything other than itself.

Here the sociologist finds himself in the area par excellence of the denial of the social. It is not sufficient to overcome the initial self-evident appearances, in other words, to relate taste, the uncreated source of all 'creation', to the social conditions of which it is the product, knowing full well that the very same people who strive to repress the clear relation between taste and education, between culture as the state of that which is cultivated and culture as the process of cultivating, will be amazed that anyone should expend so much effort in scientifically proving that self-evident fact. He must also question that relationship, which only appears to be self-explanatory, and unravel the paradox whereby the relationship with educational capital is just as strong in areas which the educational system does not teach. And he

must do this without ever being able to appeal unconditionally to the positivistic arbitration of what are called facts. Hidden behind the statistical relationships between educational capital or social origin and this or that type of knowledge or way of applying it, there are relationships between groups maintaining different, and even antagonistic, relations to culture, depending on the conditions in which they acquired their cultural capital and the markets in which they can derive most profit from it. But we have not yet finished with the self-evident. The question itself has to be questioned—in other words, the relation to culture which it tacitly privileges—in order to establish whether a change in the content and form of the question would not be sufficient to transform the relationships observed. There is no way out of the game of culture; and one's only chance of objectifying the true nature of the game is to objectify as fully as possible the very operations which one is obliged to use in order to achieve that objectification. *De te fabula narratur*. The reminder is meant for the reader as well as the sociologist. Paradoxically, the games of culture are protected against objectification by all the partial objectifications which the actors involved in the game perform on each other: scholarly critics cannot grasp the objective reality of society aesthetes without abandoning their grasp of the true nature of their own activity; and the same is true of their opponents. The same law of mutual lucidity and reflexive blindness governs the antagonism between 'intellectuals' and 'bourgeois' (or their spokesmen in the field of production). And even when bearing in mind the function which legitimate culture performs in class relations, one is still liable to be led into accepting one or the other of the self-interested representations of culture which 'intellectuals' and 'bourgeois' endlessly fling at each other. Up to now the sociology of the production and producers of culture has never escaped from the play of opposing images, in which 'right-wing intellectuals' and 'left-wing intellectuals' (as the current taxonomy puts it) subject their opponents and their strategies to an objectivist reduction which vested interests make that much easier. The objectification is always bound to remain partial, and therefore false, so long as it fails to include the point of view from which it speaks and so fails to construct the game as a whole. Only at the level of the field of positions is it possible to grasp both the generic interests associated with the fact of taking part in the game and the specific interests attached to the different positions, and, through this, the form and content of the self-positionings through which these interests are expressed. Despite the aura of objectivity they like to assume, neither the 'sociology of the intellectuals', which is traditionally the business of 'right-wing intellectuals', nor the critique of 'right-wing thought', the traditional speciality of 'left-wing intellectuals', is anything more than a series of symbolic aggressions which take on additional force when they dress themselves up in the impeccable

neutrality of science. They tacitly agree in leaving hidden what is essential, namely the structure of objective positions which is the source, inter alia, of the view which the occupants of each position can have of the occupants of the other positions and which determines the specific form and force of each group's propensity to present and receive a group's partial truth as if it were a full account of the objective relations between the groups.

The analyses presented in this book are based on a survey by questionnaire, carried out in 1963 and 1967–68, on a sample of 1,217 people. (Appendix 1 gives full information concerning the composition of the sample, the questionnaire, and the main procedures used to analyze it. Appendix 3 contains the statistical data drawn from the survey, as well as data from other sources.) The survey sought to determine how the cultivated disposition and cultural competence that are revealed in the nature of the cultural goods consumed, and in the way they are consumed, vary according to the category of agents and the area to which they applied, from the most legitimate areas such as painting or music to the most 'personal' ones such as clothing, furniture or cookery, and, within the legitimate domains, according to the markets—'academic' and 'non-academic'—in which they may be placed. Two basic facts were thus established: on the one hand, the very close relationship linking cultural practices (or the corresponding opinions) to educational capital (measured by qualifications) and, secondarily, to social origin (measured by father's occupation); and, on the other hand, the fact that, at equivalent levels of educational capital, the weight of social origin in the practice- and preference-explaining system increases as one moves away from the most legitimate areas of culture.

The more the competences measured are recognized by the school system, and the more 'academic' the techniques used to measure them, the stronger is the relation between performance and educational qualification. The latter, as a more or less adequate indicator of the number of years of scholastic inculcation, guarantees cultural capital more or less completely, depending on whether it is inherited from the family or acquired at school, and so it is an unequally adequate indicator of this capital. The strongest correlation between performance and educational capital qua cultural capital recognized and guaranteed by the educational system (which is very unequally responsible for its acquisition) is observed when, with the question on the composers of a series of musical works, the survey takes the form of a very 'scholastic' exercise on knowledge very close to that taught by the educational system and strongly recognized in the academic market.

The interviewer read out a list of sixteen musical works and asked the respondent to name the composer of each. Sixty-seven percent of those with only a CEP

or a CAP could not identify more than two composers (out of sixteen works), compared to 45 percent of those with a BEPC, 19 percent of those with the *baccalauréat*, 17 percent of those who had gone to a technical college (*petite école*) or started higher education and only 7 percent of those having a qualification equal or superior to a *licence*.[2] Whereas none of the manual or clerical workers questioned was capable of naming twelve or more of the composers of the sixteen works, 52 percent of the 'artistic producers' and the teachers (and 78 percent of the teachers in higher education) achieved this score.

The rate of non-response to the question on favourite painters or pieces of music is also closely correlated with level of education, with a strong opposition between the dominant class on the one hand and the working classes, craftsmen and small tradesmen on the other. (However, since in this case whether or not people answered the question doubtless depended as much on their dispositions as on their pure competence, the cultural pretensions of the new *petite bourgeoisie*—junior commercial executives, the medical and social services, secretaries, and the various cultural intermediaries (see Chapter 6)—found an outlet here.) Similarly, listening to the most 'highbrow' radio stations, France-Musique and France-Culture, and to musical or cultural broadcasts, owning a record-player, listening to records (without specifying the type, which minimizes the differences), visiting art-galleries, and knowledge of painting—features which are strongly correlated with one another—obey the same logic and, being strongly linked to educational capital, set the various classes and class fractions in a clear hierarchy (with a reverse distribution for listening to variety programmes). In the case of activities like the visual arts, or playing a musical instrument, which presupposes a cultural capital generally acquired outside the educational system and (relatively) independent of the level of academic certification, the correlation with social class, which is again strong, is established through social trajectory (which explains the special position of the new petite bourgeoisie).

The closer one moves towards the most legitimate areas, such as music or painting, and, within these areas, which can be set in a hierarchy according to their modal degree of legitimacy, towards certain genres or certain works, the more the differences in educational capital are associated with major differences (produced in accordance with the same principles) between genres, such as opera and operetta, or quartets and symphonies, between periods, such as contemporary and classical, between composers and between works. Thus, among works of music, the *Well-Tempered Clavier* and the *Concerto for the Left Hand* (which, as will become apparent, are distinguished by the modes of acquisition and consumption which they presuppose), are opposed to the Strauss waltzes and the *Sabre Dance*, pieces which are devalued either by belonging to a lower genre ('light music') or by their popularization (since the dialectic of distinction and pretension designates as devalued 'middle-brow' art those legitimate works which become 'popularized'),[3] just as, in the world of song, Georges Brassens and Léo Ferré are opposed to Georges Guétary and Petula Clark, these differences corresponding in each case to differences in educational capital (see table 1).

Table 1 Class preferences for singers and music.[a]

Classes	Educational qualification	N	Singers				Music			
			Guétary	*P. Clark*	*Brassens*	*Ferré*	*Blue Danube*	*Sabre Dance*	*Well-Tempered Clavier*	*Concerto for Left Hand*
Working	None, CEP, CAP	143	33.0	31.0	38.0	20.0	65.0	28.0	1.0	0
	BEPC and above	18	17.0	17.0	61.0	22.0	62.5	12.5	0	0
Middle	None, CEP, CAP	243	23.0	29.0	41.0	21.0	64.0	26.0	1.5	1.5
	BEPC and above	335	12.5	19.0	47.5	39.0	27.0	16.0	8.0	4.0
	BEPC, bac	289	12.0	21.0	46.5	39.0	31.0	17.5	5.0	4.0
	higher education	46	17.0	9.0	54.0	39.0	3.0	5.0	21.0	4.0
Upper	None, CEP, CAP	25	16.0	44.0	36.0	12.0	17.0	21.0	8.0	8.0
	BEPC and above	432	5.0	17.0	74.0	35.0	16.0	8.0	15.0	13.0
	BEPC, bac	107	8.5	24.0	65.0	29.0	14.0	11.0	3.0	6.0
	higher education	325	4.0	14.5	77.0	39.0	16.5	7.0	19.0	15.0
	technical college	80	5.0	20.0	73.5	32.0	19.5	5.5	10.0	18.0
	licence	174	4.5	17.0	73.0	34.5	17.0	9.5	29.5	12.0
	agrég., grande école	71	0	3.0	90.0	49.5	11.5	3.0	29.5	12.0

a. The table (e.g., first row) is read as follows: out of every 100 working-class respondents with either no qualification, a CEP or a CAP, 33 choose Guétary and 31 Petula Clark among their three favourite singers (from a list of twelve); 65 choose the *Blue Danube* and 28 the *Sabre Dance* among their three favourite works of music (from a list of sixteen).

In fact, the weight of the secondary factors—composition of capital, volume of inherited cultural capital (or social trajectory), age, place of residence—varies with the works. Thus, as one moves towards the works that are least legitimate (at the moment in question), factors such as age become increasingly important; in the case of *Rhapsody in Blue* or the *Hungarian Rhapsody*, there is a closer correlation with age than with education, father's occupational category, sex or place of residence.

Thus, of all the objects offered for consumers' choice, there are none more classifying than legitimate works of art, which, while distinctive in general, enable the production of distinctions ad infinitum by playing on divisions and sub-divisions into genres, periods, styles, authors etc. Within the universe of particular tastes which can be recreated by successive divisions, it is thus possible, still keeping to the major oppositions, to distinguish three zones of taste which roughly correspond to educational levels and social classes: (1) *Legitimate taste*, i.e., the taste for legitimate works, here represented by the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (see figure 1, histogram 1), the *Art of Fugue* or the *Concerto for the Left Hand*, or, in painting, Breughel or Goya, which the most self-assured aesthetes can combine with the most legitimate of the arts that are still in the process of legitimation—cinema, jazz or even song (here, for example, Léo Ferré, Jacques Douai)—increases with educational level and is highest in those fractions of the dominant class that are richest in educational capital. (2) *'Middle-brow' taste*, which brings together the minor works of the major arts, in this case *Rhapsody in Blue* (histogram 2), the *Hungarian Rhapsody*, or in painting, Utrillo, Buffet or even Renoir, and the major works of the minor arts, such as Jacques Brel and Gilbert Bécaud in the art of song, is more common in the middle classes (*classes moyennes*) than in the working classes (*classes populaires*) or in the 'intellectual' fractions of the dominant class. (3) Finally, *'popular' taste*, represented here by the choice of works of so-called 'light' music or classical music devalued by popularization, such as the *Blue Danube* (histogram 3), *La Traviata* or *L'Arlésienne*, and especially songs totally devoid of artistic ambition or pretension such as those of Luis Mariano, Guétary or Petula Clark, is most frequent among the working classes and varies in inverse ratio to educational capital (which explains why it is slightly more common among industrial and commercial employers or even senior executives than among primary teachers and cultural intermediaries).

The three profiles presented in figure 1 are perfectly typical of those that are found when one draws a graph of the distribution of a whole set of choices characteristic of different class fractions (arranged in a hierarchy, within each class, according to educational capital). The first one (the *Well-Tempered Clavier*) reappears in the case of all the authors or works named above, and also for such choices in the survey questionnaire (see appendix 1) as 'reading philosophical

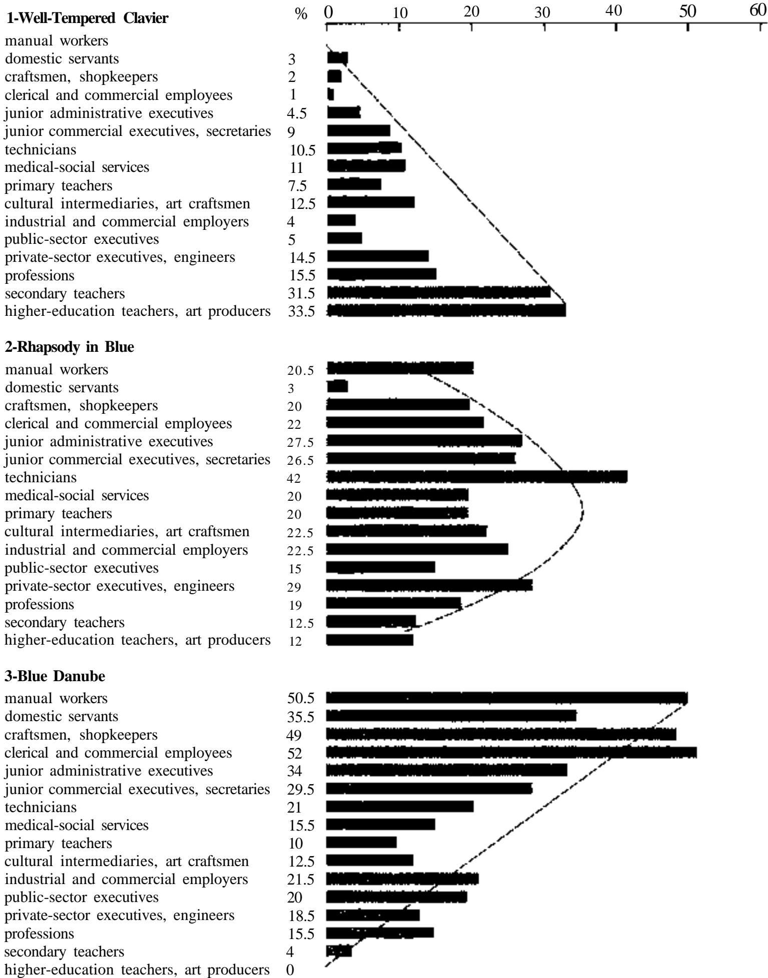


Figure 1 Distribution of preferences for three musical works by class fraction.

essays' and 'visiting museums' etc.; the second (*Rhapsody in Blue*) characterizes, in addition to all the works and authors mentioned (plus the *Twilight of the Gods*), 'photography', 'comfortable, cosy home' etc.; and the third (*Blue Danube*) is equally valid for 'love stories' and 'clean, tidy home' etc.

THE TITLES OF CULTURAL NOBILITY

A relationship as close as that between academic capital (measured by duration of schooling) and knowledge or practices in areas as remote from

academic education as music or painting, not to mention jazz or the cinema—like the correlation between museum visits and level of education—raises in the highest degree the question of the significance of the relationship, in other words, the question of the real identity of the two linked terms which are defined in their very relationship. One has explained nothing and understood nothing by establishing the existence of a correlation between an 'independent' variable and a 'dependent' variable. Until one has determined what is designated in the particular case, i.e., in each particular relationship, by each term in the relationship (for example, level of education and knowledge of composers), the statistical relationship, however precisely it can be determined numerically, remains a pure datum, devoid of meaning. And the 'intuitive' half-understanding with which sociologists are generally satisfied in such cases, while they concentrate on refining the measurement of the 'intensity' of the relationship, together with the *illusion of the constancy* of the variables or factors resulting from the *nominal identity* of the 'indicators' (whatever they may indicate) or of the terms which designate them, tends to rule out any questioning of the terms of the relationship as to the meaning they take on in that particular relationship and indeed receive from it.

Both terms of the relationship have to be queried in each case: the independent variable—occupation, sex, age, father's occupation, places of residence etc., which may express very different effects—and the dependent variable, which may manifest dispositions that themselves vary considerably depending on the classes divided up by the independent variables. Thus, for an adequate interpretation of the differences found between the classes or within the same class as regards their relation to the various legitimate arts, painting, music, theatre, literature etc., one would have to analyse fully the social uses, legitimate or illegitimate, to which each of the arts, genres, works or institutions considered lends itself. For example, nothing more clearly affirms one's 'class', nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music. This is of course because, by virtue of the rarity of the conditions for acquiring the corresponding dispositions, there is no more 'classifactory' practice than concert-going or playing a 'noble' instrument (activities which, other things being equal, are less widespread than theatre-going, museum-going or even visits to modern-art galleries). But it is also because the flaunting of 'musical culture' is not a cultural display like others: as regards its social definition, 'musical culture' is something other than a quantity of knowledge and experiences combined with the capacity to talk about them. Music is the most 'spiritual' of the arts of the spirit and a love of music is a guarantee of 'spirituality'. One only has to think of the extraordinary value nowadays conferred on the lexis of 'listening' by the secularized (e.g., psychoanalytical) versions of religious language. As the countless variations on the soul of music and the music of the soul bear

witness, music is bound up with 'interiority' ('inner music') of the 'deepest' sort and *all* concerts are sacred. For a bourgeois world which conceives its relation to the populace in terms of the relationship of the soul to the body, 'insensitivity to music' doubtless represents a particularly unavowable form of materialist coarseness. But this is not all. Music is the 'pure' art par excellence. It says nothing and has *nothing to say*. Never really having an expressive function, it is opposed to drama, which even in its most refined forms still bears a social message and can only be 'put over' on the basis of an immediate and profound affinity with the values and expectations of its audience. The theatre divides its public and divides itself. The Parisian opposition between right-bank and left-bank theatre, bourgeois theatre and avant-garde theatre, is inextricably aesthetic and political. Nothing comparable occurs in music (with some rare, recent exceptions). Music represents the most radical and most absolute form of the negation of the world, and especially the social world, which the bourgeois ethos tends to demand of all forms of art.

For an adequate interpretation of what would be implied in a table correlating occupation, age or sex with a preference for the *Well-Tempered Clavier* or the *Concerto for the Left Hand*, one has to break both with the blind use of indicators and with spurious, essentialist analyses which are merely the universalizing of a particular experience, in order to make completely explicit the multiple, contradictory meanings which these works take on at a given moment for the totality of social agents and in particular for the categories of individuals whom they distinguish or who differ with respect to them (in this particular case, the 'inheritors' and the 'newcomers'). One would have to take account, on the one hand, of the socially pertinent properties attached to each of them, that is, the social image of the works ('baroque'/'modern', harmony/dissonance, rigour/lyricism etc.), the composers and perhaps especially the corresponding instruments (the sharp, rough timbre of plucked strings/the warm, bourgeois timbre of hammered strings); and, on the other hand, the distributional properties acquired by these works in their relationship (perceived with varying clarity depending on the case) with the different classes or class fractions ('*ça fait* . . .') and with the corresponding conditions of reception (belated knowledge through records/early knowledge through playing the piano, the bourgeois instrument par excellence).

The opposition found at the level of distributional properties is generally homologous to that found at the level of stylistic characteristics. This is because homology between the positions of the producers (or the works) in the field of production and the positions of the consumers in social space (i.e., in the overall class structure or in the structure of the dominant class) seems to be the most frequent case. Roughly speaking, the amateur of Mallarmé is likely to be to the amateur of Zola as Mallarmé was to Zola. Differences between works are

predisposed to express differences between authors, partly because, in both style and content, they bear the mark of their authors' socially constituted dispositions (that is, their social origins, retranslated as a function of the positions in the field of production which these dispositions played a large part in determining); and partly because they remain marked by the social significance which they received from their opposition, and that of their authors, in the field of production (e.g., left/right, clear/obscure etc.) and which is perpetuated by the university tradition.

It is also clear what would be required for an adequate interpretation of the bourgeois predilection for the 'Impressionists', whose simultaneously lyrical and naturalistic adherence to natural or human nature contrasts both with realist or critical representation of the social world (doubtless one dimension of the opposition between Renoir and Goya, not to mention Courbet or Daumier) and with all forms of abstraction. Again, to understand the class distribution of the various sports, one would have to take account of the representation which, in terms of their specific schemes of perception and appreciation, the different classes have of the costs (economic, cultural and 'physical') and benefits attached to the different sports—immediate or deferred 'physical' benefits (health, beauty, strength, whether visible, through 'body-building' or invisible through 'keep-fit' exercises), economic and social benefits (upward mobility etc.), immediate or deferred symbolic benefits linked to the distributional or positional value of each of the sports considered (i.e., all that each of them receives from its greater or lesser rarity, and its more or less clear association with a class, with boxing, football, rugby or body-building evoking the working classes, tennis and skiing the bourgeoisie and golf the upper bourgeoisie), gains in distinction accruing from the effects on the body itself (e.g., slimness, sun-tan, muscles obviously or discreetly visible etc.) or from the access to highly selective groups which some of these sports give (golf, polo etc.).

Thus the only way of completely escaping from the intuitionism which inevitably accompanies positivistic faith in the nominal identity of the indicators would be to carry out a—strictly interminable—analysis of the social value of each of the properties or practices considered—a Louis XV commode or a Brahms symphony, reading *Historia* or *Le Figaro*, playing rugby or the accordion and so on. The statistics of the class distribution of newspaper reading would perhaps be interpreted less blindly if sociologists bore in mind Proust's analysis of 'that abominable, voluptuous act called "reading the paper", whereby all the misfortunes and cataclysms suffered by the universe in the last twenty-four hours—battles which have cost the lives of fifty thousand men, murders, strikes, bankruptcies, fires, poisonings, suicides, divorces, the cruel emotions of statesman and actor, transmuted into a morning feast for our personal entertainment, make an excellent and particularly bracing accompaniment to a few mouthfuls of *café au lait*.'[4] This description of the aesthete's variant invites an analysis of the

class variations and the invariants of the mediated, relatively abstract experience of the social world supplied by newspaper reading, for example, as a function of variations in social and spatial distance (with, at one extreme, the local items in the regional dailies—marriages, deaths, accidents—and, at the other extreme, international news, or, on another scale, the royal engagements and weddings in the glossy magazines) or in political commitment (from the detachment depicted in Proust's text to the activist's outrage or enthusiasm).

In fact, the absence of this kind of preliminary analysis of the social significance of the indicators can make the most rigorous-seeming surveys quite unsuitable for a sociological reading. Because they forget that the apparent constancy of the products conceals the diversity of the social uses they are put to, many surveys on consumption impose on them taxonomies which have sprung straight from the statisticians' social unconscious, associating things that ought to be separated (e.g., white beans and green beans) and separating things that could be associated (e.g., white beans and bananas—the latter are to fruit as the former are to vegetables). What is there to be said about the collection of products brought together by the apparently neutral category 'cereals'—bread, rusks, rice, pasta, flour—and especially the class variations in the consumption of these products, when one knows that 'rice' alone includes 'rice pudding' and *riz au gras*, or rice cooked in broth (which tend to be 'working-class') and 'curried rice' (more 'bourgeois' or, more precisely, 'intellectual'), not to mention 'brown rice' (which suggests a whole life-style)? Though, of course, no 'natural' or manufactured product is equally adaptable to all possible social uses, there are very few that are perfectly 'univocal' and it is rarely possible to deduce the social use from the thing itself. Except for products specially designed for a particular use (like 'slimming bread') or closely tied to a class, by tradition (like tea—in France) or price (like caviar), most products only derive their social value from the social use that is made of them. As a consequence, in these areas the only way to find the class variations is to introduce them from the start, by replacing words or things whose apparently univocal meaning creates no difficulty for the abstract classifications of the academic unconscious, with the social uses in which they become fully determined. Hence it is necessary to attend, for example, to *ways* of photographing and *ways* of cooking—in the casserole or the pressure-cooker, i.e., without counting time and money, or quickly and cheaply—or to the products of these operations—family snaps or photos of folk dancing, *boeuf bourguignon* or curried rice.

Appearances, need I repeat, always support appearances; and sociological science, which cannot find the differences between the social classes unless it introduces them from the start, is bound to appear prejudiced to those who dissolve the differences, in all good faith and with impeccable method, simply by surrendering to positivistic laisser-faire.

But the substantialist mode of thinking is perhaps most unrestrained when it comes to the search for 'explanatory factors'. Slipping from the substantive to the substance (to paraphrase Wittgenstein), from the constancy of the

substantive to the constancy of the substance, it treats the properties attached to agents—occupation, age, sex, qualifications—as *forces* independent of the relationship within which they 'act'. This eliminates the question of what is determinant in the determinant variable and what is determined in the determined variable, in other words, the question of what, among the properties chosen, consciously or unconsciously, through the indicators under consideration, constitutes the *pertinent property* that is really capable of determining the relationship within which it is determined. Purely statistical calculation of the variations in the intensity of the relationship between a particular indicator and any given practice does not remove the need for the specifically sociological calculation of the *effects* which are expressed in the statistical relationship and which statistical analysis, when oriented towards the search for its own intelligibility, can help to discover. One has to take the relationship itself as the object of study and scrutinize its sociological significance (*signification*) rather than its statistical 'significantness' (*significativité*); only in this way is it possible to replace the relationship between a supposedly constant variable and different practices by a series of different *effects*—sociologically intelligible constant relationships which are simultaneously revealed and concealed in the statistical relationships between a given indicator and different practices. The truly scientific endeavour has to break with the spurious self-evidences of immediate understanding (to which the pseudo-refinements of statistical analysis—e.g., path analysis—bring unexpected reinforcement). In place of the phenomenal relationship between this or that 'dependent variable' and variables such as level of education or social origin, which are no more than *common-sense notions* and whose apparent 'explanatory power' stems from the mental habits of *common-sense knowledge* of the social world, it aims to establish 'an exact relation of well-defined concepts',[5] the rational principle of the effects which the statistical relationship records *despite everything*—for example, the relationship between the titles of nobility (or marks of infamy) awarded by the educational system and the practices they imply, or between the disposition required by works of legitimate art and the disposition which, deliberately and consciously or not, is taught in schools.

THE ENTITLEMENT EFFECT Knowing the relationship which exists between cultural capital inherited from the family and academic capital, by virtue of the logic of the transmission of cultural capital and the functioning of the educational system, one cannot impute the strong correlation, observed between competence in music or painting (and the practice it presupposes and makes possible) and academic capital, solely to the operation of the educational system (still less to the specifically artistic education it is supposed to give, which is clearly almost non-existent). Academic capital

is in fact the guaranteed product of the combined effects of cultural transmission by the family and cultural transmission by the school (the efficiency of which depends on the amount of cultural capital directly inherited from the family). Through its value-inculcating and value-imposing operations, the school also helps (to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the initial disposition, i.e., class of origin) to form a general, transposable disposition towards legitimate culture, which is first acquired with respect to scholastically recognized knowledge and practices but tends to be applied beyond the bounds of the curriculum, taking the form of a 'disinterested' propensity to accumulate experience and knowledge which may not be directly profitable in the academic market.

The educational system defines non-curricular general culture (*la culture 'libre'*), negatively at least, by delimiting, within the dominant culture, the area of what it puts into its syllabuses and controls by its examinations. It has been shown that the most 'scholastic' cultural objects are those taught and required at the lowest levels of schooling (the extreme form of the 'scholastic' being the 'elementary'), and that the educational system sets an increasingly high value on 'general' culture and increasingly refuses 'scholastic' measurements of culture (such as direct, closed questions on authors, dates and events) as one moves towards the highest levels of the system.

In fact, the generalizing tendency of the cultivated disposition is only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for the enterprise of cultural appropriation, which is inscribed, as an objective demand, in membership of the bourgeoisie and in the qualifications giving access to its rights and duties. This is why we must first stop to consider what is perhaps the best-hidden effect of the educational system, the one it produces by imposing 'titles',[6] a particular case of the attribution by status, whether positive (ennobling) or negative (stigmatizing), which every group produces by assigning individuals to hierarchically ordered classes. Whereas the holders of educationally uncertified cultural capital can always be required to prove themselves, because they *are* only what they *do*, merely a by-product of their own cultural production, the holders of titles of cultural nobility—like the titular members of an aristocracy, whose 'being', defined by their fidelity to a lineage, an estate, a race, a past, a fatherland or a tradition, is irreducible to any 'doing', to any know-how or function—only have to be what they are, because all their practices derive their value from their authors, being the affirmation and perpetuation of the essence by virtue of which they are performed. Defined by the titles which predispose and legitimate them in being what they are, which make what they do the manifestation of an essence earlier and greater than its manifestations, as in the Platonic dream of a division of functions based on a hierarchy of beings, they are separated by a

difference in kind from the commoners of culture, who are consigned to the doubly devalued status of autodidact and 'stand-in'.[8]

Aristocracies are essentialist. Regarding existence as an emanation of essence, they set no intrinsic value on the deeds and misdeeds enrolled in the records and registries of bureaucratic memory. They prize them only insofar as they clearly manifest, in the nuances of their manner, that their one inspiration is the perpetuating and celebrating of the essence by virtue of which they are accomplished. The same essentialism requires them to impose on themselves what their essence imposes on them—noblesse oblige—to ask of themselves what no one else could ask, to 'live up' to their own essence.

This effect is one of the mechanisms which, in conditions of crisis, cause the most privileged individuals, who remain most attached to the former state of affairs, to be the slowest to understand the need to change strategy and so to fall victim to their own privilege (for example, ruined nobles who refuse to change their ways, or the heirs of great peasant families who remain celibate rather than marry beneath them). It could be shown, in the same way, that the ethic of noblesse oblige, still found in some fractions of the peasantry and traditional craftsmen, contributes significantly to the self-exploitation characteristic of these classes.

This gives us an insight into the effect of academic markers and classifications. However, for a full understanding we have to consider another property of all aristocracies. The essence in which they see themselves refuses to be contained in any definition. Escaping petty rules and regulations, it is, by nature, freedom. Thus, for the academic aristocracy it is one and the same thing to identify with an essence of the 'cultivated man' and to accept the demands implicitly inscribed in it, which increase with the prestige of the title.

So there is nothing paradoxical in the fact that in its ends and means the educational system defines the enterprise of *legitimate 'autodidacticism'* which the acquisition of 'general culture' presupposes, an enterprise that is ever more strongly demanded as one rises in the educational hierarchy (between sections, disciplines, and specialities etc., or between levels). The essentially contradictory phrase 'legitimate autodidacticism' is intended to indicate the difference in kind between the highly valued 'extra-curricular' culture of the holder of academic qualifications and the illegitimate extra-curricular culture of the autodidact. The reader of the popular-science monthly *Science et Vie* who talks about the genetic code or the incest taboo exposes himself to ridicule as soon as he ventures outside the circle of his peers, whereas Claude Lévi-Strauss or Jacques Monod can only derive additional prestige from their excursions into the field of music or philosophy. Illegitimate extra-curricular culture, whether it be the knowledge accumulated by the self-taught or the

'experience' acquired in and through practice, outside the control of the institution specifically mandated to inculcate it and officially sanction its acquisition, like the art of cooking or herbal medicine, craftsmen's skills or the stand-in's irreplaceable knowledge, is only valorized to the strict extent of its technical efficiency, without any social added-value, and is exposed to legal sanctions (like the illegal practice of medicine) whenever it emerges from the domestic universe to compete with authorized competences.

Thus, it is written into the tacit definition of the academic qualification *formally* guaranteeing a specific competence (like an engineering diploma) that it *really* guarantees possession of a 'general culture' whose breadth is proportionate to the prestige of the qualification;[9] and, conversely, that no real guarantee may be sought of what it guarantees formally and really or, to put it another way, of the extent to which it guarantees what it guarantees. This effect of symbolic imposition is most intense in the case of the diplomas consecrating the cultural élite. The qualifications awarded by the French *grandes écoles* guarantee, without any other guarantee, a competence extending far beyond what they are supposed to guarantee. This is by virtue of a clause which, though tacit, is firstly binding on the qualification-holders themselves, who are called upon really to procure the attributes assigned to them by their status.[10]

This process occurs at all stages of schooling, through the manipulation of aspirations and demands—in other words, of self-image and self-esteem—which the educational system carries out by channelling pupils towards prestigious or devalued positions implying or excluding legitimate practice. The effect of 'allocation', i.e., assignment to a section, a discipline (philosophy or geography, mathematics or geology, to take the extremes) or an institution (a *grande école* that is more or less *grande*, or a faculty), mainly operates through the social image of the position in question and the prospects objectively inscribed in it, among the foremost of which are a certain type of cultural accumulation and a certain image of cultural accomplishment.[11] The official differences produced by academic classifications tend to produce (or reinforce) real differences by inducing in the classified individuals a collectively recognized and supported belief in the differences, thus producing behaviours that are intended to bring real being into line with official being. Activities as alien to the explicit demands of the institution as keeping a diary, wearing heavy make-up, theatre-going or going dancing, writing poems or playing rugby can thus find themselves inscribed in the position allotted within the institution as a tacit demand constantly underlined by various mediations. Among the most important of these are teachers' conscious or unconscious expectations and peer-group pressure, whose ethical orientation is itself defined by the class values brought into and reinforced by the

institution. This allocation effect and the status assignment it entails doubtless play a major role in the fact that the educational institution succeeds in imposing cultural practices that it does not teach and does not even explicitly demand, but which belong to the attributes attached by status to the position it assigns, the qualifications it awards and the social positions to which the latter give access.

This logic doubtless helps to explain how the legitimate disposition that is acquired by frequent contact with a particular class of works, namely, the literary and philosophical works recognized by the academic canon, comes to be extended to other, less legitimate works, such as avant-garde literature, or to areas enjoying less academic recognition, such as the cinema. The generalizing tendency is inscribed in the very principle of the disposition to *recognize* legitimate works, a propensity and capacity to recognize their legitimacy and perceive them as worthy of admiration in themselves, which is inseparable from the capacity to recognize in them something already known, i.e., the stylistic traits appropriate to characterize them in their singularity ('It's a Rembrandt', or even 'It's the *Helmeted Man*') or as members of a class of works ('It's Impressionist'). This explains why the propensity and capacity to accumulate 'gratuitous' knowledge, such as the names of film directors, are more closely and exclusively linked to educational capital than is mere cinema-going, which is more dependent on income, place of residence and age.

Cinema-going, measured by the number of films seen among the twenty films mentioned in the survey, is lower among the less-educated than among the more highly educated, but also lower among provincials (in Lille) than among Parisians, among low-income than among high-income groups, and among old than among young people. And the same relationships are found in the surveys by the Centre d'études des supports de publicité (CESP): the proportion who say they have been to the cinema at least once in the previous week (a more reliable indicator of behaviour than a question on cinema-going in the course of the year, for which the tendency to overstate is particularly strong) is rather greater among men than women (7.8 percent compared to 5.3 percent), greater in the Paris area (10.9 percent) than in towns of over 100,000 people (7.7 percent) or in rural areas (3.6 percent), greater among senior executives and members of the professions (11.1 percent) than among junior executives (9.5 percent) or clerical and commercial employees (9.7 percent), skilled manual workers and foremen (7.3 percent), semi-skilled workers (6.3 percent), small employers (5.2 percent) and farmers and farm workers (2.6 percent). But the greatest contrasts are between the youngest (22.4 percent of the 21–24 year olds had been to the cinema at least once in the previous week) and the oldest (only 3.2 percent of the 35–49 year olds, 1.7 percent of the 50–64 year olds and 1.1 percent of the over-65s), and between the most and least highly educated (18.2 percent of those who had been through higher education, 9.5 percent of those who had had secondary

education, and 2.2 percent of those who had had only primary education or none at all had been to the cinema in the previous week) (C.S. XIIIa).[12]

Knowledge of directors is much more closely linked to cultural capital than is mere cinema-going. Only 5 percent of the respondents who had an elementary school diploma could name at least four directors (from a list of twenty films) compared to 10 percent of holders of the BEPC or the *baccalauréat* and 22 percent of those who had had higher education, whereas the proportion in each category who had seen at least four of the twenty films was 22 percent, 33 percent and 40 percent respectively. Thus, although film-viewing also varies with educational capital (less so, however, than visits to museums and concerts), it seems that differences in consumption are not sufficient to explain the differences in knowledge of directors between holders of different qualifications. This conclusion would probably also hold good for jazz, strip cartoons, detective stories or science fiction, now that these genres have begun to achieve cultural consecration.[13]

Further proof is that, while increasing slightly with level of education (from 13 percent for the least educated to 18 percent for those with secondary education and 23 percent for the most qualified), knowledge of actors varies mainly—and considerably—with the number of films seen. This awareness, like knowledge of the slightest events in the lives of TV personalities, presupposes a disposition closer to that required for the acquisition of ordinary knowledge about everyday things and people than to the legitimate disposition. And indeed, these least-educated regular cinema-goers knew as many actors' names as the most highly educated. Among those who had seen at least four of the films mentioned, 45 percent of those who had had only a primary education were able to name four actors, as against 35 percent of those who had had a secondary education and 47 percent of those who had had some higher education. Interest in actors is greatest among office workers: on average they named 2.8 actors and one director, whereas the craftsmen and small shopkeepers, skilled workers and foremen named, on average, only 0.8 actors and 0.3 directors. (The secretaries and junior commercial executives, who also knew a large number of actors—average 2.4—were more interested in directors—average 1.4—and those in the social and medical services even named more directors—1.7—than actors—1.4). The reading of sensational weeklies (e.g., *Ici Paris*) which give information about the lives of stars is a product of a disposition similar to interest in actors; it is more frequent among women than men (10.8 percent had read *Ici Paris* in the last week, compared to 9.3 percent of the men), among skilled workers and foremen (14.5 percent), semi-skilled workers (13.6 percent), or office workers (10.3 percent) than among junior executives (8.6 percent) and especially among senior executives and members of the professions (3.8 percent) (C.S. XXVIII).

By contrast, although at equivalent levels of education, knowledge of directors increases with the number of films seen, in this area assiduous cinema-going does not compensate for absence of educational capital: 45.5 percent of the CEP-holders who had seen at least four of the films mentioned could not name a single director, compared to 27.5 percent of those with a BEPC or the *baccalauréat* and 13 percent of those with a higher education diploma.

Such competence is not necessarily acquired by means of the 'scholastic' labours in which some 'cinephiles' or 'jazz-freaks' indulge (e.g., transcribing film credits onto catalogue cards).[14] Most often it results from the unintentional learning made possible by a disposition acquired through domestic or scholastic inculcation of legitimate culture. This transposable disposition, armed with a set of perceptual and evaluative schemes that are available for general application, inclines its owner towards other cultural experiences and enables him to perceive, classify and memorize them differently. Where some only see 'a Western starring Burt Lancaster', others 'discover an early John Sturges' or 'the latest Sam Peckinpah'. In identifying what is worthy of being seen and the right way to see it, they are aided by their whole social group (which guides and reminds them with its 'Have you seen . . .?' and 'You must see . . .') and by the whole corporation of critics mandated by the group to produce legitimate classifications and the discourse necessarily accompanying any artistic enjoyment worthy of the name.

It is possible to explain in such terms why cultural practices which schools do not teach and never explicitly demand vary in such close relation to educational qualifications (it being understood, of course, that we are provisionally suspending the distinction between the school's role in the correlation observed and that of the other socializing agencies, in particular the family). But the fact that educational qualifications function as a condition of entry to the universe of legitimate culture cannot be fully explained without taking into account another, still more hidden effect which the educational system, again reinforcing the work of the bourgeois family, exerts through the very conditions within which it inculcates. Through the educational qualification certain conditions of existence are designated—those which constitute the precondition for obtaining the qualification and also the aesthetic disposition, the most rigorously demanded of all the terms of entry which the world of legitimate culture (always tacitly) imposes. Anticipating what will be demonstrated later, one can posit, in broad terms, that it is because they are linked either to a bourgeois origin or to the quasi-bourgeois mode of existence presupposed by prolonged schooling, or (most often) to both of these combined, that educational qualifications come to be seen as a guarantee of the capacity to adopt the aesthetic disposition.

THE AESTHETIC DISPOSITION Any legitimate work tends in fact to impose the norms of its own perception and tacitly defines as the only legitimate mode of perception the one which brings into play a certain disposition and a certain competence. Recognizing this fact does not mean constituting a particular mode of perception as an essence, thereby falling into the illusion which is the basis of recognition of artistic legitimacy. It does mean taking note of the fact that all agents, whether they like it or not, whether or not they

have the means of conforming to them, find themselves objectively measured by those norms. At the same time it becomes possible to establish whether these dispositions and competences are gifts of nature, as the charismatic ideology of the relation to the work of art would have it, or products of learning, and to bring to light the hidden conditions of the miracle of the unequal class distribution of the capacity for inspired encounters with works of art and high culture in general.

Every essentialist analysis of the aesthetic disposition, the only socially accepted 'right' way of approaching the objects socially designated as works of art, that is, as both demanding and deserving to be approached with a specifically aesthetic intention capable of recognizing and constituting them as works of art, is bound to fail. Refusing to take account of the collective and individual genesis of this product of history which must be endlessly 're-produced' by education, it is unable to recontruct its sole raison d'être, that is, the historical reason which underlies the arbitrary necessity of the institution. If the work of art is indeed, as Panofsky says, that which 'demands to be experienced aesthetically', and if any object, natural or artificial, can be perceived aesthetically, how can one escape the conclusion that it is the aesthetic intention which 'makes the work of art', or, to transpose a formula of Saussure's, that it is the aesthetic point of view that creates the aesthetic object? To get out of this vicious circle, Panofsky has to endow the work of art with an 'intention', in the Scholastic sense. A purely 'practical' perception contradicts this objective intention, just as an aesthetic perception would in a sense be a practical negation of the objective intention of a signal, a red light for example, which requires a 'practical' response: braking. Thus, within the class of worked-upon objects, themselves defined in opposition to natural objects, the class of art objects would be defined by the fact that it demands to be perceived aesthetically, i.e., in terms of form rather than function. But how can such a definition be made operational? Panofsky himself observes that it is virtually impossible to determine scientifically at what moment a worked-upon object becomes an art object, that is, at what moment form takes over from function: 'If I write to a friend to invite him to dinner, my letter is primarily a communication. But the more I shift the emphasis to the form of my script, the more nearly does it become a work of literature or poetry.'[15]

Does this mean that the demarcation line between the world of technical objects and the world of aesthetic objects depends on the 'intention' of the producer of those objects? In fact, this 'intention' is itself the product of the social norms and conventions which combine to define the always uncertain and historically changing frontier between simple technical objects and objects d'art: 'Classical tastes', Panofsky observes, 'demanded that private letters, legal speeches and the shields of heroes should be "artistic" . . . while

modern taste demands that architecture and ash trays should be "functional".'[16]

But the apprehension and appreciation of the work also depend on the beholder's intention, which is itself a function of the conventional norms governing the relation to the work of art in a certain historical and social situation and also of the beholder's capacity to conform to those norms, i.e., his artistic training. To break out of this circle one only has to observe that the ideal of 'pure' perception of a work of art qua work of art is the product of the enunciation and systematization of the principles of specifically aesthetic legitimacy which accompany the constituting of a relatively autonomous artistic field. The aesthetic mode of perception in the 'pure' form which it has now assumed corresponds to a particular state of the mode of artistic production. An art which, like all Post-Impressionist painting, for example, is the product of an artistic intention which asserts the *absolute primacy of form over function*, of the mode of representation over the object represented, *categorically* demands a purely aesthetic disposition which earlier art demanded only conditionally. The demiurgic ambition of the artist, capable of applying to *any* object the pure intention of an artistic effort which is an end in itself, calls for unlimited receptiveness on the part of an aesthete capable of applying the specifically aesthetic intention to any object, whether or not it has been produced with aesthetic intention.

This demand is objectified in the art museum; there the aesthetic disposition becomes an institution. Nothing more totally manifests and achieves the autonomizing of aesthetic activity vis-à-vis extra-aesthetic interests or functions than the art museum's juxtaposition of works. Though originally subordinated to quite different or even incompatible functions (crucifix and fetish, Pietà and still life), these juxtaposed works tacitly demand attention to form rather than function, technique rather than theme, and, being constructed in styles that are mutually exclusive but all equally necessary, they are a practical challenge to the expectation of realistic representation as defined by the arbitrary canons of an everyday aesthetic, and so lead naturally from stylistic relativism to the neutralization of the very function of representation. Objects previously treated as collectors' curios or historical and ethnographic documents have achieved the status of works of art, thereby materializing the omnipotence of the aesthetic gaze and making it difficult to ignore the fact that—if it is not to be merely an arbitrary and therefore suspect affirmation of this absolute power—artistic contemplation now has to include a degree of erudition which is liable to damage the illusion of immediate illumination that is an essential element of pure pleasure.

PURE TASTE AND 'BARBAROUS' TASTE In short, never perhaps has more been asked of the spectator, who is now required to 're-produce' the primary

operation whereby the artist (with the complicity of his whole intellectual field) produced this new fetish.[17] But never perhaps has he been given so much in return. The naive exhibitionism of 'conspicuous consumption', which seeks distinction in the crude display of ill-mastered luxury, is nothing compared to the unique capacity of the pure gaze, a quasi-creative power which sets the aesthete apart from the common herd by a radical difference which seems to be inscribed in 'persons'. One only has to read Ortega y Gasset to see the reinforcement the charismatic ideology derives from art, which is 'essentially unpopular, indeed, anti-popular' and from the 'curious sociological effect' it produces by dividing the public into two 'antagonistic castes', those who understand and those who do not'. 'This implies', Ortega goes on, 'that some possess an organ of understanding which others have been denied; that these are two distinct varieties of the human species. The new art is not for everyone, like Romantic art, but destined for an especially gifted minority.' And he ascribes to the 'humiliation' and 'obscure sense of inferiority' inspired by 'this art of privilege, sensuous nobility, instinctive aristocracy', the irritation it arouses in the mass, 'unworthy of artistic sacraments': 'For a century and a half, the "people", the mass, have claimed to be the whole of society. The music of Stravinsky or the plays of Pirandello have the sociological power of obliging them to see themselves as they are, as the "common people", a mere ingredient among others in the social structure, the inert material of the historical process, a secondary factor in the spiritual cosmos. By contrast, the young art helps the "best" to know and recognize one another in the greyness of the multitude and to learn their mission, which is to be few in number and to have to fight against the multitude.'[18]

And to show that the self-legitimating imagination of the 'happy few' has no limits, one only has to quote a recent text by Suzanne Langer, who is presented as 'one of the world's most influential philosophers': 'In the past, the masses did not have access to art; music, painting, and even books, were pleasures reserved for the rich. It might have been supposed that the poor, the "common people", would have enjoyed them equally, if they had had the chance. But now that everyone can read, go to museums, listen to great music, at least on the radio, the judgement of the masses about these things has become a reality and through this it has become clear that great art is not a direct sensuous pleasure. Otherwise, like cookies or cocktails, it would flatter uneducated taste as much as cultured taste.'[19]

It should not be thought that the relationship of distinction (which may or may not imply the conscious intention of distinguishing oneself from common people) is only an incidental component in the aesthetic disposition. The pure gaze implies a break with the ordinary attitude towards the world which, as such, is a social break. One can agree with Ortega y

Gasset when he attributes to modern art—which merely takes to its extreme conclusions an intention implicit in art since the Renaissance—a systematic refusal of all that is 'human', by which he means the passions, emotions and feelings which *ordinary* people put into their *ordinary* existence, and consequently all the themes and objects capable of evoking them: 'People like a play when they are able to take an interest in the human destinies put before them', in which 'they participate as if they were real-life events.'[20] Rejecting the 'human' clearly means rejecting what is generic, i.e., *common*, 'easy' and immediately accessible, starting with everything that reduces the aesthetic animal to pure and simple animality, to palpable pleasure or sensual desire. The interest in the content of the representation which leads people to call 'beautiful' the representation of beautiful things, especially those which speak most immediately to the senses and the sensibility, is rejected in favour of the indifference and distance which refuse to subordinate judgement of the representation to the nature of the object represented.[21] It can be seen that it is not so easy to describe the 'pure' gaze without also describing the naive gaze which it defines itself against, and vice versa; and that there is no *neutral*, impartial, 'pure' description of either of these opposing visions (which does not mean that one has to subscribe to aesthetic relativism, when it is so obvious that the 'popular aesthetic' is defined in relation to 'high' aesthetics and that reference to legitimate art and its negative judgement on 'popular' taste never ceases to haunt the popular experience of beauty). Refusal or privation? It is as dangerous to attribute the coherence of a systematic aesthetic to the objectively aesthetic commitments of ordinary people as it is to adopt, albeit unconsciously, the strictly negative conception of ordinary vision which is the basis of every 'high' aesthetic.

THE POPULAR 'AESTHETIC' Everything takes place as if the 'popular aesthetic' were based on the affirmation of continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function, or, one might say, on a refusal of the refusal which is the starting point of the high aesthetic, i.e., the clear-cut separation of ordinary dispositions from the specifically aesthetic disposition. The hostility of the working class and of the middle-class fractions least rich in cultural capital towards every kind of formal experimentation asserts itself both in the theatre and in painting, or still more clearly, because they have less legitimacy, in photography and the cinema. In the theatre as in the cinema, the popular audience delights in plots that proceed logically and chronologically towards a happy end, and 'identifies' better with simply drawn situations and characters than with ambiguous and symbolic figures and actions or the enigmatic problems of the theatre of cruelty, not to mention the suspended animation of Beckettian heroes or the bland absurdities of Pinteresque dialogue. Their reluctance or refusal

springs not just from lack of familiarity but from a deep-rooted demand for participation, which formal experiment systematically disappoints, especially when, refusing to offer the 'vulgar' attractions of an art of illusion, the theatrical fiction denounces itself, as in all forms of 'play within a play'. Pirandello supplies the paradigm here, in plays in which the actors are actors unable to act—*Six Characters in Search of an Author, Comme ci (ou comme ça)* or *Ce soir on improvise*—and Jean Genet supplies the formula in the Prologue to *The Blacks*: 'We shall have the politeness, which you have taught us, to make communication impossible. The distance initially between us we shall increase, by our splendid gestures, our manners and our insolence, for we are also actors.' The desire to enter into the game, identifying with the characters' joys and sufferings, worrying about their fate, espousing their hopes and ideals, living their life, is based on a form of *investment*, a sort of deliberate 'naivety', ingenuousness, good-natured credulity ('We're here to enjoy ourselves'), which tends to accept formal experiments and specifically artistic effects only to the extent that they can be forgotten and do not get in the way of the substance of the work.

The cultural divide which associates each class of works with its public means that it is not easy to obtain working-class people's first-hand judgements on formalist innovations in modern art. However, television, which brings certain performances of 'high' art into the home, or certain cultural institutions (such as the Beaubourg Centre or the Maisons de la culture), which briefly bring a working-class public into contact with high art and sometimes avant-garde works, create what are virtually experimental situations, neither more nor less artificial or unreal than those necessarily produced by any survey on legitimate culture in a working-class milieu. One then observes the confusion, sometimes almost a sort of panic mingled with revolt, that is induced by some exhibits—I am thinking of Ben's heap of coal, on view at Beaubourg shortly after it opened—whose parodic intention, entirely defined in terms of an artistic field and its relatively autonomous history, is seen as a sort of aggression, an affront to common sense and sensible people. Likewise, when formal experimentation insinuates itself into their familiar entertainments (e.g., TV variety shows with sophisticated technical effects, such as those by Jean-Christophe Averty) working-class viewers protest, not only because they do not feel the need for these fancy games, but because they sometimes understand that they derive their necessity from the logic of a field of production which excludes them precisely by these games: 'I don't like those cut-up things at all, where you see a head, then a nose, then a leg. . . . First you see a singer all drawn out, three metres tall, then the next minute he's got arms two metres long. Do you find that funny? Oh, I just don't like it, it's stupid, I don't see the point of distorting things' (a baker, Grenoble).

Formal refinement—which, in literature or the theatre, leads to obscurity—is, in the eyes of the working-class public, one sign of what is sometimes felt to be a desire to keep the uninitiated at arm's length, or, as one respondent said about certain cultural programmes on TV, to speak to other initiates 'over the viewers' heads'.[22] It is part of the paraphernalia which always announces the sacred character, separate and separating, of high culture—the icy solemnity of the great museums, the grandiose luxury of the opera-houses and major theatres, the décor and decorum of concert-halls.[23] Everything takes place as if the working-class audience vaguely grasped what is implied in conspicuous formality, both in art and in life, i.e., a sort of censorship of the expressive content which explodes in the expressiveness of popular language, and by the same token, a distancing, inherent in the calculated coldness of all formal exploration, a refusal to communicate concealed at the heart of the communication itself, both in an art which takes back and refuses what it seems to deliver and in bourgeois politeness, whose impeccable formalism is a permanent warning against the temptation of familiarity. Conversely, popular entertainment secures the spectator's participation in the show and collective participation in the festivity which it occasions. If circus and melodrama (which are recreated by some sporting spectacles such as wrestling and, to a lesser extent, boxing and all forms of team games, such as those which have been televised) are more 'popular' than entertainments like dancing or theatre, this is not merely because, being less formalized (compare, for example, acrobatics with dancing) and less euphemized, they offer more direct, more immediate satisfactions. It is also because, through the collective festivity they give rise to and the array of spectacular delights they offer (I am thinking also of the music-hall, light opera or the big feature film)—fabulous sets, glittering costumes, exciting music, lively action, enthusiastic actors—like all forms of the comic and especially those working through satire or parody of the 'great' (mimics, chansonniers etc.), they satisfy the taste for and sense of revelry, the plain speaking and hearty laughter which liberate by setting the social world head over heels, overturning conventions and proprieties.

AESTHETIC DISTANCING This popular reaction is the very opposite of the detachment of the aesthete, who, as is seen whenever he appropriates one of the objects of popular taste (e.g., Westerns or strip cartoons), introduces a distance, a gap—the measure of his distant distinction—vis-à-vis 'first-degree' perception, by displacing the interest from the 'content', characters, plot etc., to the form, to the specifically artistic effects which are only appreciated relationally, through a comparison with other works which is incompatible with immersion in the singularity of the work immediately given. Detachment, disinterestedness, indifference—aesthetic theory has so

often presented these as the only way to recognize the work of art for what it is, autonomous, *selbständig*, that one ends up forgetting that they really mean disinvestment, detachment, indifference, in other words, the refusal to invest oneself and take things seriously. Worldlywise readers of Rousseau's *Lettre sur les spectacles*,[24] who have long been aware that there is nothing more naive and vulgar than to invest too much passion in the things of the mind or to expect too much seriousness of them, tending to assume that intellectual creativity is opposed to moral integrity or political consistency, have no answer to Virginia Woolf when she criticizes the novels of Wells, Galsworthy and Bennett because 'they leave one with a strange sense of incompleteness and dissatisfaction' and the feeling that it is 'necessary to do something—to join a society, or, more desperately, to write a cheque', in contrast to works like *Tristram Shandy* or *Pride and Prejudice*, which, being perfectly 'self-contained', 'leave one with no desire to do anything, except indeed to read the book again, and to understand it better.'[25]

But the refusal of any sort of involvement, any 'vulgar' surrender to easy seduction and collective enthusiasm, which is, indirectly at least, the origin of the taste for formal complexity and objectless representations, is perhaps most clearly seen in reactions to paintings. Thus one finds that the higher the level of education,[26] the greater is the proportion of respondents who, when asked whether a series of objects would make beautiful photographs, refuse the ordinary objects of popular admiration—a first communion, a sunset or a landscape—as 'vulgar' or 'ugly', or reject them as 'trivial', silly, a bit 'wet', or, in Ortega y Gasset's terms, naively 'human'; and the greater is the proportion who assert the autonomy of the representation with respect to the thing represented by declaring that a beautiful photograph, and a fortiori a beautiful painting, can be made from objects socially designated as meaningless—a metal frame, the bark of a tree, and especially cabbages, a trivial object par excellence—or as ugly and repulsive—such as a car crash, a butcher's stall (chosen for the Rembrandt allusion) or a snake (for the Boileau reference)—or as misplaced—e.g., a pregnant woman (see tables 2 and 3).

Since it was not possible to set up a genuine experimental situation, we collected the interviewees' statements about the things they consider 'photogenic' and which therefore seem to them capable of being looked at aesthetically (as opposed to things excluded on account of their triviality or ugliness or for ethical reasons). The capacity to adopt the aesthetic attitude is thus measured by the gap (which, in a field of production that evolves through the dialectic of distinction, is also a time-lag, a backwardness) between what is constituted as an aesthetic object by the individual or group concerned and what is constituted aesthetically in a given state of the field of production by the holders of aesthetic legitimacy.

Table 2 Aesthetic disposition, by educational capital (%).[a]

Educational capital	*N*	*First communion*					*Folk dance*				
		No reply or incoherent	*Ugly*	*Meaningless*	*Interesting*	*Beautiful*	*No reply or incoherent*	*Ugly*	*Meaningless*	*Interesting*	*Beautiful*
No qualification, CEP	314	2.0	5.0	19.0	23.0	*51.0*	1.0	0.5	3.0	41.0	54.5
CAP	97	4.0	1.0	26.0	*38.0*	31.0	4.0	0	3.0	33.0	*60.0*
BEPC	197	2.5	7.0	27.0	*31.0*	*32.5*	3.5	0	7.0	33.5	*56.0*
Baccalauréat	217	2.0	12.0	43.0	24.0	19.0	2.0	0.5	*13.0*	*47.5*	37.0
Started higher education	118	4.0	*13.0*	45.0	23.0	15.0	6.0	*2.5*	13.0	37.0	41.5
Licence	182	1.0	11.0	*53.0*	28.0	7.0	2.0	1.0	11.0	*49.5*	36.5
Agrégation, grande école	71	4.0	*15.5*	*49.0*	6.0	25.5	4.0	*6.0*	*22.5*	28.0	39.5

Table 2 continued

Educational capital	*N*	*Bark of a tree*					*Butcher's stall*					*Cabbages*				
		No reply or incoherent	*Ugly*	*Meaning-less*	*Interest-ing*	*Beauti-ful*	*No reply or incoherent*	*Ugly*	*Meaning-less*	*Interest-ing*	*Beauti-ful*	*No reply or incoherent*	*Ugly*	*Meaning-less*	*Interest-ing*	*Beauti-ful*
No qualification, CEP	314	2.0	*14.5*	*46.5*	21.5	15.5	1.5	*31.0*	46.0	16.5	5.0	2.0	*28.0*	*56.0*	10.0	4.0
CAP	97	5.0	1.0	20.0	*37.0*	37.0	6.0	15.5	*48.5*	*24.0*	6.0	5.0	16.5	*63.0*	7.0	8.5
BEPC	197	2.5	*8.5*	*31.5*	30.0	27.5	3.0	28.0	*47.0*	17.0	5.0	2.0	17.0	55.0	13.0	13.0
Baccalauréat	217	2.0	3.0	21.0	*32.0*	42.0	3.0	29.5	32.0	*25.0*	10.5	2.0	*17.5*	48.5	19.0	13.0
Started higher education	118	6.0	1.0	23.0	25.0	45.0	4.0	*30.5*	29.0	18.5	18.0	6.0	9.0	47.5	*19.5*	18.0
Licence	182	0	3.0	18.0	23.0	*56.0*	4.5	29.5	22.5	*24.0*	*19.5*	2.0	16.0	51.5	8.0	*22.5*
Agrégation, grande école	71	4.0	3.0	8.5	24.0	*60.5*	4.0	29.5	23.0	18.0	*25.5*	3.0	11.0	38.0	*21.0*	*27.0*

a. The respondents had to answer this question: 'Given the following subjects, is a photographer more likely to make a beautiful, interesting, meaningless, or ugly photo: a landscape, a car crash, a little girl playing with a cat, a pregnant woman, a still life, a woman suckling a child, a metal frame, tramps quarrelling, cabbages, a sunset over the sea, a weaver at his loom, a folk dance, a rope, the bark of a tree, a butcher's stall, a famous monument, a scrap-yard, a first communion, a wounded man, a snake, an "old master"?' In each column, the italic figures indicate the strongest tendencies.

Table 3 Aesthetic disposition, by class and education (%).

Classes	Educational qualification	N	Pregnant woman					Cabbages				
			No reply or incoherent	*Ugly*	*Meaningless*	*Interesting*	*Beautiful*	*No reply or incoherent*	*Ugly*	*Meaningless*	*Interesting*	*Beautiful*
Working	None, CEP, CAP	143	1.5	40.0	36.5	14.0	8.0	1.5	28.0	57.0	8.5	5.0
	BEPC and above[a]	18	0	39.0	22.0	11.0	28.0	0	5.5	72.5	16.5	5.5
Middle	None, CEP, CAP	243	1.0	46.0	27.5	15.0	10.5	2.0	22.5	61.5	10.0	4.0
	BEPC and above[a]	335	3.5	34.0	30.0	13.5	19.0	2.5	17.5	49.5	14.5	16.0
	BEPC	149	3.5	39.0	35.0	9.0	13.5	2.0	21.0	56.0	8.5	12.5
	bac	140	3.5	37.0	21.0	17.5	21.0	3.0	15.5	45.0	19.5	17.0
	higher education	46	4.0	8.5	42.0	13.0	32.5	4.0	13.0	41.0	20.0	22.0
Upper	None, CEP, CAP	25	20.0	36.0	24.0	12.0	8.0	20.0	36.0	28.0	12.0	4.0
	BEPC and above[a]	432	3.0	36.0	22.0	19.0	20.0	3.0	14.5	48.0	15.5	19.0
	BEPC	31	6.5	48.5	38.5	0	6.5	6.5	6.5	38.5	32.5	16.0
	bac	76	0	60.5	16.0	5.0	18.5	0	21.0	55.5	17.0	6.5
	higher education	325	3.0	30.0	22.5	23.0	21.5	3.0	14.0	47.5	13.5	22.0
	technical college	80	7.5	17.5	30.0	32.5	12.5	6.5	6.5	52.0	20.0	15.0
	licence	174	0.5	36.0	21.5	19.5	22.5	2.0	18.5	49.0	7.5	23.0
	agrég., grande école	71	4.0	29.5	17.0	20.0	29.5	3.0	11.0	38.0	21.0	27.0

Table 3 continued

Classes	Educational qualification	N	Snake					Sunset over sea				
			No reply or incoherent	Ugly	*Meaningless*	*Interesting*	*Beautiful*	*No reply or incoherent*	*Ugly*	*Meaningless*	*Interesting*	*Beautiful*
Working	None, CEP, CAP	143	1.0	35.0	16.0	38.0	10.0	1.0	0	1.0	10.0	88.0
	BEPC and above	18	0	28.0	22.0	39.0	11.0	0	0	6.0	6.0	88.0
Middle	None, CEP, CAP	243	1.0	25.0	23.0	35.0	16.0	1.0	0.5	2.5	6.0	90.0
	BEPC and above	335	3.0	28.5	14.0	30.5	24.0	3.0	1.5	9.0	8.5	78.0
	BEPC	149	3.0	38.0	8.5	34.0	16.5	1.5	1.5	4.5	6.5	86.0
	bac	140	4.0	21.0	17.0	34.0	24.0	4.0	2.0	10.0	9.0	75.0
	higher education	46	2.0	19.5	24.0	9.0	45.5	2.0	2.0	20.0	13.0	63.0
Upper	None, CEP, CAP	25	20.0	36.0	4.0	24.0	16.0	20.0	0	8.0	8.0	64.0
	BEPC and above	432	3.0	18.0	13.0	38.0	28.0	2.0	3.0	15.0	17.0	63.0
	BEPC	31	6.5	19.5	16.0	29.0	29.0	0	0	22.5	0	77.5
	bac	76	0	22.5	8.0	50.0	19.5	0	0	14.5	8.0	77.5
	higher education	325	4.0	16.5	14.5	35.5	29.5	3.0	4.0	14.0	21.0	58.0
	technical college	80	5.0	14.0	20.0	36.0	25.0	6.0	5.0	10.0	26.5	52.5
	licence	174	2.5	20.0	14.5	35.0	28.0	0	5.0	13.0	24.0	58.0
	agrég., grande école	71	5.5	11.5	8.5	36.5	38.0	5.5	1.5	19.5	8.5	65.0

a. The category 'BEPC and above' (created for the sake of formal comparability) does not have the same content in the different social classes: the proportion of high qualifications within this category rises with social class. This essentially explains why the rarest choices—'beautiful' for the cabbages or the snake, 'ugly' or 'trivial' for the sunset—become more numerous as one moves up the social scale. The apparent exception in the case of the pregnant woman is due to the absence of women (who are known to be more likely to accept this subject) in this category.

The following question was put to the interviewees: 'Given the following subjects, is a photographer more likely to produce a beautiful, interesting, meaningless or ugly photo: a landscape, a car crash etc.?' In the preliminary survey, the interviewees were shown actual photographs, mostly famous ones, of the objects which were merely named in the full-scale survey—pebbles, a pregnant woman etc. The reactions evoked by the mere idea of the image were entirely consistent with those produced by the image itself (evidence that the value attributed to the image tends to correspond to the value attributed to the thing). Photographs were used partly to avoid the legitimacy-imposing effects of paintings and partly because photography is perceived as a more accessible practice, so that the judgements expressed were likely to be less unreal.

Although the test employed was designed to collect statements of artistic intention rather than to measure the ability to put the intention into practice in doing painting or photography or even in the perception of works of art, it enables one to identify the factors which determine the capacity to adopt the posture socially designated as specifically aesthetic. Factorial analysis of judgements on 'photogenic' objects reveals an opposition within each class between the fractions richest in cultural capital and poorest in economic capital and the fractions richest in economic capital and poorest in cultural capital. In the case of the dominant class, higher-education teachers and artistic producers (and secondarily, teachers and the professions) are opposed to industrial and commercial employers; private-sector executives and engineers are in an intermediate position. In the petite bourgeoisie, the cultural intermediaries (distinctly separated from the closest fractions, the primary teachers, medical services and art craftsmen) are opposed to the small shopkeepers or craftsmen and the office workers.

In addition to the relationship between cultural capital and the negative and positive indices (refusal of 'wetness'; the capacity to valorize the trivial) of the aesthetic disposition—or, at least, the capacity to operate the arbitrary classification which, within the universe of worked-upon objects, distinguishes the objects socially designated as deserving and demanding an aesthetic approach that can recognize and constitute them as works of art—the statistics establish that the preferred objects of would-be aesthetic photography, e.g., the folk dance, the weaver or the little girl with her cat, are in an intermediate position. The proportion of respondents who consider that these things can make a beautiful photograph is highest at the levels of the CAP and BEPC, whereas at higher levels they tend to be judged either interesting or meaningless.

The proportion of respondents who say a first communion can make a beautiful photo declines up to the level of the *licence* and then rises again at the highest level. This is because a relatively large proportion of the highest-qualified subjects assert their aesthetic disposition by declaring that any object can be perceived aesthetically. Thus, in the dominant class, the proportion who declare that a sunset can make a beautiful photo is greatest at the lowest educational level, declines at intermediate levels (some higher education, a minor engineering school), and grows strongly again among those who have completed several years of higher education and who tend to consider that anything is suitable for beautiful photography.

The statistics also show that women are much more likely than men to manifest their repugnance toward repugnant, horrible or distasteful objects: 44.5 percent of them, as against 35 percent of the men, consider that there can only be an ugly photograph of a wounded man, and there are similar differences for the butcher's stall (33.5 and 27 percent), the snake (30.5 and 21.5 percent) or the pregnant woman (45 and 33.5 percent), whereas the gap disappears with the still life (6 and 6.5 percent) and the cabbages (20.5 and 19 percent). The traditional division of labour between the sexes assigns 'humane' or 'humanitarian' tasks and feelings to women and more readily allows them effusions and tears, in the name of the opposition between reason and sensibility; men are, ex officio, on the side of culture whereas women (like the working class) are cast on the side of nature. Women are therefore less imperatively required to censor and repress 'natural' feelings as the aesthetic disposition demands (which indicates, incidentally, that, as will be shown subsequently, the refusal of nature, or rather the refusal to surrender to nature, which is the mark of dominant groups—who start with *self*-control—is the basis of the aesthetic disposition).

Women's revulsion is expressed more overtly, at the expense of aesthetic neutralization, the more completely they are subject to the traditional model of the sexual division of labour and (in other words) the weaker their cultural capital and the lower their position in the social hierarchy. Women in the new petite bourgeoisie, who, in general, make much greater concessions to affective considerations than the men in the same category (although they are equally likely to say that there can be a beautiful photograph of cabbages), much more rarely accept that a photograph of a pregnant woman can only be ugly than women in any other category (31.5 percent of them, as against 70 percent of the wives of industrial and commercial employers, 69.5 percent of the wives of craftsmen and shopkeepers, 47.5 percent of the wives of manual workers, clerical workers or junior executives). In doing so they manifest simultaneously their aesthetic pretensions and their desire to be seen as 'liberated' from the ethical taboos imposed on their sex.

Thus, nothing more rigorously distinguishes the different classes than the disposition objectively demanded by the legitimate consumption of legitimate works, the aptitude for taking a specifically aesthetic point of view on objects already constituted aesthetically—and therefore put forward for the admiration of those who have learned to recognize the signs of the admirable—and the even rarer capacity to constitute aesthetically objects that are ordinary or even 'common' (because they are appropriated, aesthetically or otherwise, by the 'common people') or to apply the principles of a 'pure' aesthetic in the most everyday choices of everyday life, in cooking, dress or decoration, for example.

Statistical enquiry is indispensable in order to establish beyond dispute the social conditions of possibility (which will have to be made more explicit) of the 'pure' disposition. However, because it inevitably looks like a scholastic

test intended to measure the respondents against a norm tacitly regarded as absolute, it may fail to capture the meanings which this disposition and the whole attitude to the world expressed in it have for the different social classes. What the logic of the test would lead one to describe as a deficiency (and that is what it is, from the standpoint of the norms defining legitimate perception of works of art) is *also* a refusal which stems from a denunciation of the arbitrary or ostentatious gratuitousness of stylistic exercises or purely formalistic experiments. A certain 'aesthetic', which maintains that a photograph is justified by the object photographed or by the possible use of the photographic image, is being brought into play when manual workers almost invariably reject photography for photography's sake (e.g., the photo of pebbles) as useless, perverse or bourgeois: 'A waste of film', 'They must have film to throw away', 'I tell you, there are some people who don't know what to do with their time', 'Haven't they got anything better to do with their time than photograph things like that?' 'That's bourgeois photography.'

It must never be forgotten that the working-class 'aesthetic' is a dominated 'aesthetic' which is constantly obliged to define itself in terms of the dominant aesthetics. The members of the working class, who can neither ignore the high-art aesthetic, which denounces their own 'aesthetic', nor abandon their socially conditioned inclinations, but still less proclaim them and legitimate them, often experience their relationship to the aesthetic norms in a twofold and contradictory way. This is seen when some manual workers grant 'pure' photographs a purely verbal recognition (this is also the case with many petit bourgeois and even some bourgeois who, as regards paintings, for example, differ from the working class mainly by what they know is the right thing to say or do or, still better, not to say): 'It's beautiful, but it would never occur to me to take a picture of a thing like that', 'Yes, it's beautiful, but you have to like it, it's not my cup of tea.'

AN ANTI-KANTIAN 'AESTHETIC' It is no accident that, when one sets about reconstructing its logic, the popular 'aesthetic' appears as the negative opposite of the Kantian aesthetic, and that the popular ethos implicitly answers each proposition of the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' with a thesis contradicting it. In order to apprehend what makes the specificity of aesthetic judgement, Kant ingeniously distinguished 'that which pleases' from 'that which gratifies', and, more generally, strove to separate 'disinterestedness', the sole guarantee of the specifically aesthetic quality of contemplation, from 'the interest of the senses', which defines 'the agreeable', and from 'the interest of Reason', which defines 'the Good'. By contrast, working-class people, who expect every image to fulfil a function, if only that of a sign, refer, often explicitly, to norms of morality or agreeableness in all their judgements. Thus the photograph of a dead soldier provokes judgements

which, whether positive or negative, are always responses to the reality of the thing represented or to the functions the representation could serve, the horror of war or the denunciation of the horrors of war which the photographer is supposed to produce simply by showing that horror.[27] Similarly, popular naturalism recognizes beauty in the image of a beautiful thing or, more rarely, in a beautiful image of a beautiful thing: 'Now, that's good, it's almost symmetrical. And she's a beautiful woman. A beautiful woman always looks good in a photo.' The Parisian manual worker echoes the plain-speaking of Hippias the Sophist: 'I'll tell him what beauty is and I'm not likely to be refuted by him! The fact is, Socrates, to be frank, a beautiful woman, that's what beauty is!' (Plato, *Greater Hippias*, 287e).

This 'aesthetic', which subordinates the form and the very existence of the image to its function, is necessarily pluralistic and conditional. The insistence with which the respondents point out the limits and conditions of validity of their judgements, distinguishing, for each photograph, the possible uses or audiences, or, more precisely, the possible use for each audience ('As a news photo, it's not bad', 'All right, if it's for showing to kids') shows that they reject the idea that a photograph can please 'universally'. 'A photo of a pregnant woman is all right for me, not for other people', said a white-collar worker, who has to use his concern for propriety as a way of expressing anxiety about what is 'presentable' and therefore entitled to demand admiration. Because the image is always judged by reference to the function it fulfils for the person who looks at it or which he thinks it could fulfil for other classes of beholders, aesthetic judgement naturally takes the form of a hypothetical judgement implicitly based on recognition of 'genres', the perfection and scope of which are defined by a *concept*. Almost three-quarters of the judgements expressed begin with an 'if', and the effort to recognize culminates in classification into a genre, or, which amounts to the same thing, in the attribution of a social use, the different genres being defined in terms of their use and their users ('It's a publicity photo', 'It's a pure document', 'It's a laboratory photo', 'It's a competition photo', 'It's an educational photo' etc.). And photographs of nudes are almost always received with comments that reduce them to the stereotype of their social function: 'All right in Pigalle', 'It's the sort of photos they keep under the counter.' It is not surprising that this 'aesthetic', which bases appreciation on informative, tangible or moral interest, can only refuse images of the trivial, or, which amounts to the same thing in terms of this logic, the triviality of the image: judgement never gives the image of the object autonomy with respect to the object of the image. Of all the characteristics proper to the image, only colour (which Kant regarded as less pure than form) can prevent rejection of photographs of trivial things. Nothing is more alien to popular consciousness than the idea of an aesthetic pleasure that, to put it in Kantian

terms, is independent of the charming of the senses. Thus judgements on the photographs most strongly rejected on grounds of futility (pebbles, bark, wave) almost always end with the reservation that 'in colour, it might be pretty'; and some respondents even manage to formulate the maxim governing their attitude, when they declare that 'if the colours are good, a colour photograph is always beautiful.' In short, Kant is indeed referring to popular taste when he writes: 'Taste that requires an added element of charm and emotion for its delight, not to speak of adopting this as the measure of its approval, has not yet emerged from barbarism.'[28]

Refusal of the meaningless (*insignifiant*) image, which has neither sense nor interest, or of the ambiguous image means refusing to treat it as a finality without purpose, as an image signifying itself, and therefore having no other referent than itself. The value of a photograph is measured by the interest of the information it conveys, and by the clarity with which it fulfils this informative function, in short, its legibility, which itself varies with the legibility of its intention or function, the judgement it provokes being more or less favourable depending on the expressive adequacy of the signifier to the signified. It therefore contains the expectation of the title or caption which, by declaring the signifying intention, makes it possible to judge whether the realization signifies or illustrates it adequately. If formal explorations, in avant-garde theatre or non-figurative painting, or simply classical music, are disconcerting to working-class people, this is partly because they feel incapable of understanding what these things must signify, insofar as they are signs. Hence the uninitiated may experience as inadequate and unworthy a satisfaction that cannot be grounded in a meaning transcendent to the object. Not knowing what the 'intention' is, they feel incapable of distinguishing a tour de force from clumsiness, telling a 'sincere' formal device from cynical imposture.

The confessions with which manual workers faced with modern pictures betray their exclusion ('I don't understand what it means' or 'I like it but I don't understand it') contrast with the knowing silence of the bourgeois, who, though equally disconcerted, at least know that they have to refuse—or at least conceal—the naive expectation of expressiveness that is betrayed by the concern to 'understand' ('programme music' and the titles foisted on so many sonatas, concertos and symphonies are sufficient indication that this expectation is not an exclusively popular one).

But formal refinement is also that which, by foregrounding form, i.e., the artist, his specific interests, his technical problems, his effects, his allusions and echoes, throws the thing itself into the background and precludes direct communion with the beauty of the world—a beautiful child, a beautiful girl, a beautiful animal or a beautiful landscape. The representation is expected to

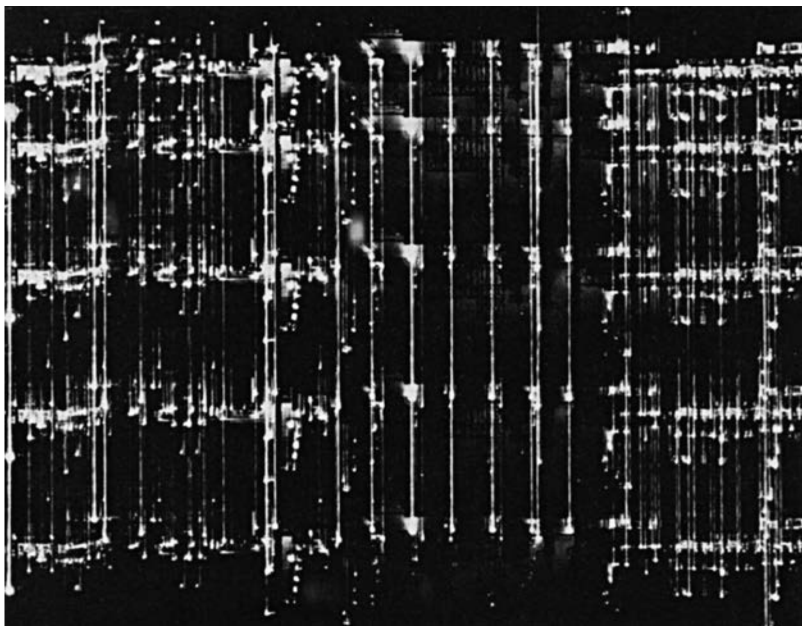
be a feast for the eyes and, like still life, to 'stir up memories and anticipations of feasts enjoyed and feasts to come.'[29] Nothing is more opposed to the celebration of the beauty and joy of the world that is looked for in the work of art, 'a choice which praises', than the devices of cubist or abstract painting, which are perceived and unanimously denounced as aggressions against the thing represented, against the natural order and especially the human form. In short, however perfectly it performs its representative function, the work is only seen as fully justified if the thing represented is worthy of being represented, if the representative function is subordinated to a higher function, such as that of capturing and exalting a reality that is worthy of being made eternal. Such is the basis of the 'barbarous taste' to which the most antithetical forms of the dominant aesthetic always refer negatively and which only recognizes realist representation, in other words, a respectful, humble, submissive representation of objects designated by their beauty or their social importance.

AESTHETICS, ETHICS AND AESTHETICISM When faced with legitimate works of art, people most lacking the specific competence apply to them the perceptual schemes of their own ethos, the very ones which structure their everyday perception of everyday existence. These schemes, giving rise to products of an unwilled, unselfconscious systematicity, are opposed to the more or less fully stated principles of an aesthetic.[30] The result is a systematic 'reduction' of the things of art to the things of life, a bracketing of form in favour of 'human' content, which is barbarism par excellence from the standpoint of the pure aesthetic.[31] Everything takes place as if the emphasis on form could only be achieved by means of a neutralization of any kind of affective or ethical interest in the object of representation which accompanies (without any necessary cause-effect relation) mastery of the means of grasping the distinctive properties which this particular form takes on in its relations with other forms (i.e., through reference to the universe of works of art and its history).

Confronted with a photograph of an old woman's hands, the culturally most deprived express a more or less conventional emotion or an ethical complicity but never a specifically aesthetic judgement (other than a negative one): 'Oh, she's got terribly deformed hands! . . . There's one thing I don't get (the left hand)—it's as if her left thumb was about to come away from her hand. Funny way of taking a photo. The old girl must've worked hard. Looks like she's got arthritis. She's definitely crippled, unless she's holding her hands like that (imitates gesture)? Yes, that's it, she's got her hand bent like that. Not like a duchess's hands or even a typist's! . . . I really feel sorry seeing that poor old woman's hands, they're all knotted, you might say' (manual worker, Paris). With the lower middle classes, exaltation of ethical virtues comes to the forefront

('hands worn out by toil'), sometimes tinged with populist sentimentality ('Poor old thing! Her hands must really hurt her. It really gives a sense of pain'); and sometimes even concern for aesthetic properties and references to painting make their appearance: 'It's as if it was a painting that had been photographed . . . Must be really beautiful as a painting' (clerical worker, Paris). 'That reminds me of a picture I saw in an exhibition of Spanish paintings, a monk with his hands clasped in front of him and deformed fingers' (technician, Paris). 'The sort of hands you see in early Van Goghs, an old peasant woman or people eating potatoes' (junior executive, Paris). At higher levels in the social hierarchy, the remarks become increasingly abstract, with (other people's) hands, labour and old age functioning as allegories or symbols which serve as pretexts for general reflections on general problems: 'Those are the hands of someone who has worked too much, doing very hard manual work . . . As a matter of fact it's very unusual to see hands like that' (engineer, Paris). 'These two hands unquestionably evoke a poor and unhappy old age' (teacher, provinces). An aestheticizing reference to painting, sculpture or literature, more frequent, more varied and more subtly handled, resorts to the neutralization and distancing which bourgeois discourse about the social world requires and performs. 'I find this a very beautiful photograph. It's the very symbol of toil. It puts me in mind of Flaubert's old servant-woman . . . That woman's gesture, at once very humble . . . It's terrible that work and poverty are so deforming' (engineer, Paris).

A portrait of a heavily made-up woman, taken from an unusual angle with unusual lighting, provokes very similar reactions. Manual workers, and even more so craftsmen and small shopkeepers, react with horror and disgust:



The Lacq gasworks by night

'I wouldn't like that photo in my house, in my room. It isn't very nice to look at. It's rather painful' (manual worker, provinces). 'Is she dead? Ghastly, enough to keep you awake at night . . . ghastly, horrible, I don't want to look at it' (shopkeeper, provinces). While most of the office workers and junior executives reject a photo which they can only describe as 'frightful' or 'unpleasant to look at', some of them try to characterize the technique: 'The photo is very well taken, very beautiful, but horrible' (clerical worker, Paris). 'What gives the impression of something monstrous is the expression on the face of the man or woman who is the subject of the photo and the angle from which it has been taken, that's to say looking up from below' (junior executive, Paris). Others appeal to aesthetic references, mainly drawn from the cinema: 'A rather fantastic sort of character, or at least rather bizarre . . . it could be a Dreyer character, Bergman at a pinch, or perhaps even Eisenstein, in *Ivan the Terrible* . . . I like it a lot' (technician, Paris). Most of the senior executives and members of the professions find the photograph 'beautiful' and 'expressive' and make reference not only to the films of Bergman, Orson Welles, Dreyer, and others, but also to the theatre, invoking Hamlet, Macbeth or Racine's Athalie.

When confronted with a photograph of the Lacq gas refinery, which is likely to disconcert realist expectations both by its subject, an industrial complex, normally excluded from the world of legitimate representation, and by the treatment it receives (night photography), manual workers perplexed, hesitate, and eventually, in most cases, admit defeat: 'At first sight it's a construction in metal

but I can't make head or tail of it. It might be something used in an electric power station . . . I can't make out what it is, it's a mystery to me' (manual worker, provinces). 'Now, that one really bothers me, I haven't got anything to say about it . . . I can't see what it could be, apart from the lighting. It isn't car headlights, it wouldn't be all straight lines like that. Down here I can see a railing and a goods lift, no, really, I can't say' (manual worker, Paris). 'That's something to do with electronics, I don't know anything about that' (manual worker, Paris). Among small employers, who tend to be hostile to modern art experiments and, more generally, to all art in which they cannot see the marks and traces of work, a sense of confusion often leads to simple refusal: 'That is of no interest, it may be all very fine, but not for me. It's always the same thing. Personally that stuff leaves me cold' (craftsman, provinces). 'I've tried to work out if it really is a photo. Perhaps it's a reproduction of a drawing done with a few pencil lines . . . I wouldn't know what to do with a photo like that. Perhaps it suits modern tastes. Up and down with the pencil and they like it. And as for the photo and the photographer, they don't deserve any credit, they've done nothing at all. The artist did it all, he's the one who ought to take the credit, he's the one who drew it' (shopkeeper, provinces). Office workers and junior executives, who are just as disconcerted as the manual workers and small employers, but are less inclined to admit it than the former and less inclined than the latter to challenge the legitimacy of what challenges them, less often decline to give a verdict:[32] 'I like it as a photo . . . because it's all drawn out; they're just lines, it seems immense to me . . . A vast piece of scaffolding . . . It's just light, captured by the camera' (clerical worker, Paris). 'Buffet likes doing things like that' (technician, Paris). But only among members of the dominant class, who most often recognize the object represented, does judgement of form take on full autonomy vis-à-vis judgement of content ('It's inhuman but aesthetically beautiful because of the contrasts'), and the representation is apprehended as such, without reference to anything other than itself or realities of the same class ('abstract painting', 'avant-garde plays' etc.).

The variations in the attitude to a very comparable object, a metal frame, provide a numerical proof of this: the proportion of respondents who think it could make a beautiful photo is 6 percent among manual workers and domestic servants, 9 percent among craftsmen and small shopkeepers, 9.5 percent among the clerical workers and junior administrative executives, 24 percent among the primary teachers and technicians, 24.5 percent in the dominant class—and 50 percent among the secondary and higher-education teachers. (One may assume that the reactions aroused by the architecture of the Beaubourg Centre obey the same principles.)

The aestheticism which makes the artistic intention the basis of the 'art of living' implies a sort of moral agnosticism, the perfect antithesis of the ethical disposition which subordinates art to the values of the art of living. The aesthetic intention can only contradict the dispositions of the ethos or the norms of the ethic which, at each moment, define the legitimate objects and modes of representation for the different social classes, excluding from the

universe of the 'representable' certain realities and certain ways of representing them. Thus the easiest, and so the most frequent and most spectacular way to 'shock (*épater*) the bourgeois' by proving the extent of one's power to confer aesthetic status is to *transgress* ever more radically the ethical censorships (e.g., in matters of sex) which the other classes accept even within the area which the dominant disposition defines as aesthetic. Or, more subtly, it is done by conferring aesthetic status on objects or ways of representing them that are excluded by the dominant aesthetic of the time, or on objects that are given aesthetic status by dominated 'aesthetics'.

One only has to read the index of contents recently published by *Art Vivant* (1974), a 'vaguely modern review run by a clique of academics who are vaguely art historians' (as an avant-garde painter nicely put it), which occupies a sort of neutral point in the field of avant-garde art criticism between *Flashart* or *Art Press* and *Artitude* or *Opus*. In the list of features and titles one finds: *Africa* (one title: 'Art Must Be for All'), *Architecture* (two titles, including 'Architecture without an Architect'), *Comic Strips* (five titles, nine pages out of the forty-six in the whole index), *Kids' Art, Kitsch* (three titles, five pages), *Photography* (two titles, three pages), *Street Art* (fifteen titles, twenty-three pages, including 'Art in the Street?', 'Art in the Street, First Episode', 'Beauty in the Back-Streets: You Just Have to Know How to Look', 'A Suburb Sets the Pace'), *Science-Fiction-Utopia* (two titles, three pages), *Underground* (one title), *Writing-Ideograms-Graffiti* (two titles, four pages). The aim of inverting or *transgressing*, which is clearly manifested by this list, is necessarily contained within the limits assigned to it a contrario by the aesthetic conventions it denounces and by the need to secure recognition of the aesthetic nature of the transgression of the limits (i.e., recognition of its conformity to the norms of the transgressing group). Hence the almost Markovian logic of the choices, with, for the cinema, Antonioni, Chaplin, cinémathèque, Eisenstein, eroticism-pornography, Fellini, Godard, Klein, Monroe, underground, Warhol.

This commitment to symbolic transgression, which is often combined with political neutrality or revolutionary aestheticism, is the almost perfect antithesis of petit-bourgeois moralism or of what Sartre used to call the revolutionary's 'seriousness'.[33] The ethical indifference which the aesthetic disposition implies when it becomes the basis of the art of living is in fact the root of the ethical aversion to artists (or intellectuals) which manifests itself particularly vehemently among the declining and threatened fractions of the petite bourgeoisie (especially independent craftsmen and shopkeepers), who tend to express their regressive and repressive dispositions in all areas of practice (especially in educational matters and vis-à-vis students and student demonstrations), but also among the rising fractions of that class whose striving for virtue and whose deep insecurity render them very receptive to the phantasm of 'pornocracy'.

The pure disposition is so universally recognized as legitimate that no voice is heard pointing out that the definition of art, and through it the art of living, is an object of struggle among the classes. Dominated life-styles (*arts de vivre*), which have practically never received systematic expression, are almost always perceived, even by their defenders, from the destructive or reductive viewpoint of the dominant aesthetic, so that their only options are degradation or self-destructive rehabilitation ('popular culture'). This is why it is necessary to look to Proudhon[34] for a naively systematic expression of the petit-bourgeois aesthetic, which subordinates art to the core values of the art of living and identifies the cynical perversion of the artist's life-style as the source of the absolute primacy given to form:

'Under the influence of property, the artist, *depraved* in his reason, *dissolute in his morals, venal and without dignity,* is the impure image of egoism. The idea of *justice* and *honesty* slides over his heart without taking root, and of all the classes of society, the artist class is the poorest in strong souls and noble characters.'[35]
'Art for art's sake, as it has been called, not having its legitimacy within itself, being based on nothing, is nothing. It is *debauchery* of the heart and *dissolution* of the mind. Separated from right and duty, cultivated and pursued as the highest thought of the soul and the supreme manifestation of humanity, art or the ideal, stripped of the greater part of itself, reduced to nothing more than an *excitement of fantasy and the senses*, is the source of *sin*, the origin of all servitude, the poisoned spring from which, according to the Bible, flow all the *fornications* and abominations of the earth . . . Art for art's sake, I say, verse for verse's sake, style for style's sake, form for form's sake, fantasy for fantasy's sake, all the diseases which like a plague of lice are gnawing away at our epoch, are *vice* in all its refinement, the quintessence of evil.'[36]

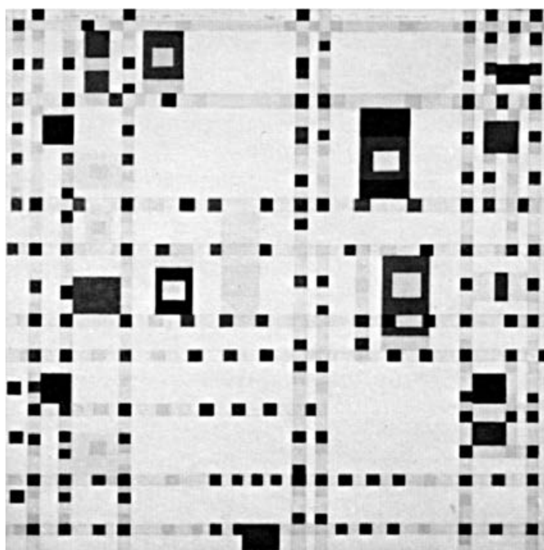
What is condemned is the autonomy of form and the artist's right to the formal refinements by which he claims mastery of what ought to be merely a matter of 'execution': 'I have no quarrel with nobility, or elegance, or pose, or style, or gesture, or any aspect of what constitutes the execution of a work of art and is the usual object of traditional criticism.'[37]

Dependent on demand in the choice of their objects, artists take their revenge in the execution: 'There are church painters, history painters, genre painters (in other words, painters of anecdotes or farces), portrait painters, landscape painters, animal painters, seascape painters, painters of Venus, painters of fantasy. One specializes in nudes, another in drapery. Then each one endeavours to distinguish himself by one of the means which contribute to the execution. One goes in for sketching, another for colour; this one attends to composition, that one to perspective, a third to costume or local colour; one shines through sentiment, another through his idealized or realistic figures; yet another redeems the futility of his subject by the fineness of his detail. Each strives to have his own trick, his own 'je ne sais quoi', a

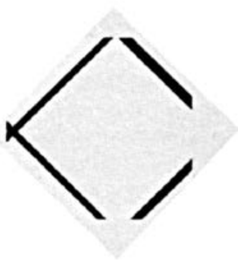
personal manner, and so, with the help of fashion, reputations are made and unmade.'[38]

In contrast to this decadent art cut off from social life, respecting neither God nor man, an art worthy of the name must be subordinated to science, morality and justice. It must aim to arouse the moral sense, to inspire feelings of dignity and delicacy, to idealize reality, to substitute for the thing the ideal of the thing, by painting the true and not the real. In a word, it must educate. To do so, it must transmit not 'personal impressions' (like David in *The Tennis-Court Oath*, or Delacroix) but, like Courbet in *Les Paysans de Flagey*, reconstitute the social and historial truth which *all* may judge. ('Each of us only has to consult himself to be able, after brief consideration, to state a judgement on any work of art.')[39] And it would be a pity to conclude without quoting a eulogy of the small detached house which would surely be massively endorsed by the middle and working classes: 'I would give the Louvre, the Tuileries, Notre-Dame—and the Vendôme column into the bargain—to live in my own home, in a *little house of my own design*, where I would live alone, in the middle of a little plot of ground, a quarter of an acre or so, where I'd have water, shade, a lawn, and silence. And if I thought of putting a statue in it, it wouldn't be a Jupiter or an Apollo—those gentlemen are nothing to me—nor views of London, Rome, Constantinople or Venice. God preserve me from such places! I'd put there what I lack—mountains, vineyards, meadows, goats, cows, sheep, reapers and shepherds.'[40]

NEUTRALIZATION AND THE UNIVERSE OF POSSIBLES Unlike non-specific perception, the specifically aesthetic perception of a work of art (in which there are of course degrees of accomplishment) is armed with a pertinence principle which is socially constituted and acquired. This principle of selection enables it to pick out and retain, from among the elements offered to the eye (e.g., leaves or clouds considered merely as indices or signals invested with a denotative function—'It's a poplar', 'There's going to be a storm'), all the stylistic traits—and only those—which, when relocated in the universe of stylistic possibilities, distinguish a particular manner of treating the elements selected, whether clouds or leaves, that is, a style as a mode of representation expressing the mode of perception and thought that is proper to a period, a class or class fraction, a group of artists or a particular artist. No stylistic characterization of a work of art is possible without presupposing at least implicit reference to the compossible alternatives, whether simultaneous—to distinguish it from its contemporaries—or successive—to contrast it with earlier or later works by the same or a different artist. Exhibitions devoted to an artist's whole oeuvre or to a genre (e.g., the still-life exhibition in Bordeaux in 1978) are the objective realization of the field of interchangeable stylistic possibilities which is brought into play when one 'recognizes'



Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*



Piet Mondrian, *Painting I*

the singularities of the characteristic style of a work of art. As E. H. Gombrich demonstrates, Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* only takes on its 'full meaning' in terms of a previous idea of Mondrian's work and of the expectations it favours. The 'impression of gay abandon' given by the play of bright, strongly contrasting patches of colour can only arise in a mind familiar with 'an art of straight lines and a few primary colours in carefully balanced rectangles' and capable of perceiving the 'relaxed style of popular music' in the distance from the 'severity' which is expected. And as soon as one imagines this painting attributed to Gino Severini, who tries to express in some of his paintings 'the rhythm of dance music in works of brilliant chaos', it is clear that, measured by this stylistic yardstick, Mondrian's picture would rather suggest the first *Brandenburg* Concerto.[41]

The aesthetic disposition, understood as the aptitude for perceiving and deciphering specifically stylistic characteristics, is thus inseparable from specifically artistic competence. The latter may be acquired by explicit learning or simply by regular contact with works of art, especially those assembled in museums and galleries, where the diversity of their original functions is neutralized by their being displayed in a place consecrated to art, so that they invite pure interest in form. This practical mastery enables its possessor to situate each element of a universe of artistic representations in a class defined in relation to the class composed of all the artistic

Gino Severini, *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*

representations consciously or unconsciously excluded. Thus, an awareness of the stylistic features which make up the stylistic originality of all the works of a period relative to those of another period, or, within this class, of the works of one school relative to another, or of the works of one artist relative to the works of his school or period, or even of an artist's particular period or work relative to his whole oeuvre, is inseparable from an awareness of the stylistic redundancies, i.e., the typical treatments of the pictorial matter which define a style. In short, a grasp of the resemblances presupposes implicit or explicit reference to the differences, and vice versa. Attribution is always implicitly based on reference to 'typical works', consciously or unconsciously selected because they present to a particularly high degree the qualities more or less explicitly recognized as pertinent in a given system of classification. Everything suggests that, even among specialists, the criteria of pertinence which define the stylistic properties of 'typical works' generally remain implicit and that the aesthetic taxonomies implicitly mobilized to

distinguish, classify and order works of art never have the rigour which aesthetic theories sometimes try to lend them.

In fact, the simple placing which the amateur or specialist performs when he undertakes attribution has nothing in common with the genuinely scientific intention of grasping the work's immanent reason and raison d'être by reconstructing the perceived situation, the subjectively experienced problematic, which is nothing other than the space of the positions and self-positionings constituting the field and within which the artistic intention of the artist in question has defined itself, generally by opposition. The references which this reconstructing operation deploys have nothing to do with the kinds of semantic echo or affective correspondence which adorn celebratory discourse—they are the indispensable means of constructing the field of thematic or stylistic possibilities in relation to which, objectively and to some extent subjectively, the possibility selected by the artist presented itself. Thus, to understand why the early Romantic painters returned to primitive art, one would have to reconstitute the whole universe of reference of the pupils of David, with their long beards and Greek costumes, who, 'outdoing their master's cult of antiquity, wanted to go back to Homer, the Bible and Ossian, and condemned the style of classical antiquity itself as "rococo", "Van Loo" or "Pompadour".'[42] This would lead one back to the inextricably ethical and aesthetic alternatives—such as the identification of the naive with the pure and the natural—in terms of which their choices were made and which have nothing in common with the transhistorical oppositions beloved of formalist aesthetics.[43]

But the celebrant's or devotee's intention is not that of understanding, and, in the ordinary routine of the cult of the work of art, the play of academic or urbane references has no other function than to bring the work into an interminable circuit of inter-legitimation, so that a reference to Jan Breughel's *Bouquet of Flowers* lends dignity to Jean-Michel Picart's *Bouquet of Flowers with Parrot*, just as, in another context, reference to the latter can, being less common, serve to enhance the former. This play of cultured allusions and analogies endlessly pointing to other analogies, which, like the cardinal oppositions in mythical or ritual systems, never have to justify themselves by stating the basis of the relating which they perform, weaves around the works a complex web of factitious experiences, each answering and reinforcing all the others, which *creates* the enchantment of artistic contemplation. It is the source of the 'idolatry' to which Proust refers, which leads one to find 'an actress's robe or a society woman's dress beautiful . . . not because the cloth is beautiful but because it is the cloth painted by Moreau or described by Balzac.'[44]

Analogy, functioning as a circular mode of thought, makes it possible to tour the whole area of art and luxury *without ever leaving it*. Thus Château

Margaux wine can be described with the same words as are used to describe the château, just as others will evoke Proust apropos of Monet or César Franck, which is a good way of talking about neither: 'The house is in the image of the vintage. Noble, austere, even a little solemn. . . . Château Margaux has the air of an ancient temple devoted to the cult of wine. . . . Vineyard or dwelling, Margaux disdains all embellishments. But just as the wine has to be served before it unfolds all its charms, so the residence waits for the visitor to enter before it reveals its own. In each case the same words spring to one's lips: elegance, distinction, delicacy and that subtle satisfaction given by something which has received the most attentive and indeed loving care for generations. A wine long matured, a house long inhabited: Margaux the vintage and Margaux the château are the product of two equally rare things: *rigour and time*.'[45]

DISTANCE FROM NECESSITY To explain the correlation between educational capital and the propensity or at least the aspiration to appreciate a work 'independently of its content', as the culturally most ambitious respondents put it, and more generally the propensity to make the 'gratuitous' and 'disinterested' investments demanded by legitimate works, it is not sufficient to point to the fact that schooling provides the linguistic tools and the references which enable aesthetic experience to be expressed and to be constituted by being expressed. What is in fact affirmed in this relationship is the dependence of the aesthetic disposition on the past and present material conditions of existence which are the precondition of both its constitution and its application and also of the accumulation of a cultural capital (whether or not educationally sanctioned) which can only be acquired by means of a sort of withdrawal from economic necessity. The aesthetic disposition which tends to bracket off the nature and function of the object represented and to exclude any 'naive' reaction—horror at the horrible, desire for the desirable, pious reverence for the sacred—along with all purely ethical responses, in order to concentrate solely upon the mode of representation, the style, perceived and appreciated by comparison with other styles, is one dimension of a total relation to the world and to others, a life-style, in which the effects of particular conditions of existence are expressed in a 'misrecognizable' form.[46] These conditions of existence, which are the precondition for all learning of legitimate culture, whether implicit and diffuse, as domestic cultural training generally is, or explicit and specific, as in scholastic training, are characterized by the suspension and removal of economic necessity and by objective and subjective distance from practical urgencies, which is the basis of objective and subjective distance from groups subjected to those determinisms.

To be able to play the games of culture with the playful seriousness which

Plato demanded, a seriousness without the 'spirit of seriousness', one has to belong to the ranks of those who have been able, not necessarily to make their whole existence a sort of children's game, as artists do, but at least to maintain for a long time, sometimes a whole lifetime, a child's relation to the world. (All children start life as baby bourgeois, in a relation of magical power over others and, through them, over the world, but they grow out of it sooner or later.) This is clearly seen when, by an accident of social genetics, into the well-policed world of intellectual games there comes one of those people (one thinks of Rousseau or Chernyshevsky) who bring inappropriate stakes and interests into the games of culture; who get so involved in the game that they abandon the margin of neutralizing distance that the *illusio* (belief in the game) demands; who treat intellectual struggles, the object of so many pathetic manifestos, as a simple question of right and wrong, life and death. This is why the logic of the game has already assigned them rôles—eccentric or boor—which they will *play* despite themselves in the eyes of those who know how to stay within the bounds of the intellectual illusion and who cannot see them any other way.

The aesthetic disposition, a generalized capacity to neutralize ordinary urgencies and to bracket off practical ends, a durable inclination and aptitude for practice without a practical function, can only be constituted within an experience of the world freed from urgency and through the practice of activities which are an end in themselves, such as scholastic exercises or the contemplation of works of art. In other words, it presupposes the distance from the world (of which the 'rôle distance' brought to light by Erving Goffman is a particular case) which is the basis of the bourgeois experience of the world. Contrary to what certain mechanistic theories would suggest, even in its most specifically artistic dimension the pedagogic action of the family and the school operates at least as much through the economic and social conditions which are the precondition of its operation as through the contents which it inculcates.[47] The scholastic world of regulated games and exercise for exercise' sake is, at least in this respect, less remote than it might appear from the 'bourgeois' world and the countless 'disinterested' and 'gratuitous' acts which go to make up its distinctive rarity, such as home maintenance and decoration, occasioning a daily squandering of care, time and labour (often through the intermediary of servants), walking and tourism, movements without any other aim than physical exercise and the symbolic appropriation of a world reduced to the status of a landscape, or ceremonies and receptions, pretexts for a display of ritual luxuries, décors, conversations and finery, not to mention, of course, artistic practices and enjoyments. It is not surprising that bourgeois adolescents, who are both economically privileged and (temporarily) excluded from the reality of economic power, sometimes express their distance from the bourgeois world

which they cannot really appropriate by a refusal of complicity whose most refined expression is a propensity towards aesthetics and aestheticism. In this respect they share common ground with the women of the bourgeoisie, who, being partially excluded from economic activity, find fulfilment in stage-managing the décor of bourgeois existence, when they are not seeking refuge or revenge in aesthetics.

Economic power is first and foremost a power to keep economic necessity at arm's length. This is why it universally asserts itself by the destruction of riches, conspicuous consumption, squandering, and every form of *gratuitous* luxury. Thus, whereas the court aristocracy made the whole of life a continuous spectacle, the bourgeoisie has established the opposition between what is paid for and what is free, the interested and the disinterested, in the form of the opposition, which Weber saw as characterizing it, between place of work and place of residence, working days and holidays, the outside (male) and the inside (female), business and sentiment, industry and art, the world of economic necessity and the world of artistic freedom that is snatched, by economic power, from that necessity.

Material or symbolic consumption of works of art constitutes one of the supreme manifestations of *ease*, in the sense both of objective leisure and subjective facility.[48] The detachment of the pure gaze cannot be separated from a general disposition towards the 'gratuitous' and the 'disinterested', the paradoxical product of a negative economic conditioning which, through facility and freedom, engenders distance vis-à-vis necessity. At the same time, the aesthetic disposition is defined, objectively and subjectively, in relation to other dispositions. Objective distance from necessity and from those trapped within it combines with a conscious distance which doubles freedom by exhibiting it. As the objective distance from necessity grows, life-style increasingly becomes the product of what Weber calls a 'stylization of life', a systematic commitment which orients and organizes the most diverse practices—the choice of a vintage or a cheese or the decoration of a holiday home in the country. This affirmation of power over a dominated necessity always implies a claim to a legitimate superiority over those who, because they cannot assert the same contempt for contingencies in gratuitous luxury and conspicuous consumption, remain dominated by ordinary interests and urgencies. The tastes of freedom can only assert themselves as such in relation to the tastes of necessity, which are thereby brought to the level of the aesthetic and so defined as vulgar. This claim to aristocracy is less likely to be contested than any other, because the relation of the 'pure', 'disinterested' disposition to the conditions which make it possible, i.e., the material conditions of existence which are rarest because most freed from economic necessity, has every chance of passing unnoticed. The most 'classifying' privilege thus has the privilege of appearing to be the most natural one.

THE AESTHETIC SENSE AS THE SENSE OF DISTINCTION Thus, the aesthetic disposition is one dimension of a distant, self-assured relation to the world and to others which presupposes objective assurance and distance. It is one manifestation of the system of dispositions produced by the social conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence when they take the paradoxical form of the greatest freedom conceivable, at a given moment, with respect to the constraints of economic necessity. But it is also a distinctive expression of a privileged position in social space whose distinctive value is objectively established in its relationship to expressions generated from different conditions. Like every sort of taste, it unites and separates. Being the product of the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence, it unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others. And it distinguishes in an essential way, since taste is the basis of all that one has—people and things—and all that one is for others, whereby one classifies oneself and is classified by others.

Tastes (i.e., manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference. It is no accident that, when they have to be justified, they are asserted purely negatively, by the refusal of other tastes.[49] In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation;[50] and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance ('sick-making') of the tastes of others. 'De gustibus non est disputandum': not because 'tous les goûts sont dans la nature', but because each taste feels itself to be natural—and so it almost is, being a habitus—which amounts to rejecting others as unnatural and therefore vicious. Aesthetic intolerance can be terribly violent. Aversion to different life-styles is perhaps one of the strongest barriers between the classes; class endogamy is evidence of this. The most intolerable thing for those who regard themselves as the possessors of legitimate culture is the sacrilegious reuniting of tastes which taste dictates shall be separated. This means that the games of artists and aesthetes and their struggles for the monopoly of artistic legitimacy are less innocent than they seem. At stake in every struggle over art there is also the imposition of an art of living, that is, the transmutation of an arbitrary way of living into the legitimate way of life which casts every other way of living into arbitrariness.[51] The artist's life-style is always a challenge thrown at the bourgeois life-style, which it seeks to condemn as unreal and even absurd, by a sort of practical demonstration of the emptiness of the values and powers it pursues. The neutralizing relation to the world which defines the aesthetic disposition potentially implies a subversion of the spirit of seriousness required by bourgeois investments. Like the visibly ethical judgements of those who lack the means to make art the basis of their art of living, to see the world and other people through literary reminiscences and

pictorial references, the 'pure' and purely aesthetic judgements of the artist and the aesthete spring from the dispositions of an ethos;[52] but because of the legitimacy which they command so long as their relationship to the dispositions and interests of a group defined by strong cultural capital and weak economic capital remains unrecognized, they provide a sort of absolute reference point in the necessarily endless play of mutually self-relativizing tastes. By a paradoxical reversal, they thereby help to legitimate the bourgeois claim to 'natural distinction' as difference made absolute.

Objectively and subjectively aesthetic stances adopted in matters like cosmetics, clothing or home decoration are opportunities to experience or assert one's position in social space, as a rank to be upheld or a distance to be kept. It goes without saying that the social classes are not equally inclined and prepared to enter this game of refusal and counter-refusal; and that the strategies aimed at transforming the basic dispositions of a life-style into a system of aesthetic principles, objective differences into elective distinctions, passive options (constituted externally by the logic of the distinctive relationships) into conscious, elective choices are in fact reserved for members of the dominant class, indeed the very top bourgeoisie, and for artists, who as the inventors and professionals of the 'stylization of life' are alone able to make their art of living one of the fine arts. By contrast, the entry of the petite bourgeoisie into the game of distinction is marked, inter alia, by the anxiety of exposing oneself to classification by offering to the taste of others such infallible indices of personal taste as clothes or furniture, even a simple pair of armchairs, as in one of Nathalie Sarraute's novels. As for the working classes, perhaps their sole function in the system of aesthetic positions is to serve as a foil, a negative reference point, in relation to which all aesthetics define themselves, by successive negations.[53] Ignoring or ignorant of manner and style, the 'aesthetic' (in itself) of the working classes and culturally most deprived fractions of the middle classes defines as 'nice', 'pretty', 'lovely' (rather than 'beautiful') things that are already defined as such in the 'aesthetic' of calendars and postcards: a sunset, a little girl playing with a cat, a folk dance, an old master, a first communion, a children's procession. The striving towards distinction comes in with petit-bourgeois aestheticism, which delights in all the cheap substitutes for chic objects and practices—driftwood and painted pebbles, cane and raffia, 'art' handicrafts and art photography.

This aestheticism defines itself against the 'aesthetic' of the working classes, refusing their favourite subjects, the themes of 'views', such as mountain landscapes, sunsets and woods, or souvenir photos, such as the first communion, the monument or the old master (see figure 2). In photography, this taste prefers objects that are close to those of the popular aesthetic but semi-neutralized by more or less explicit reference to a pictorial tradition or

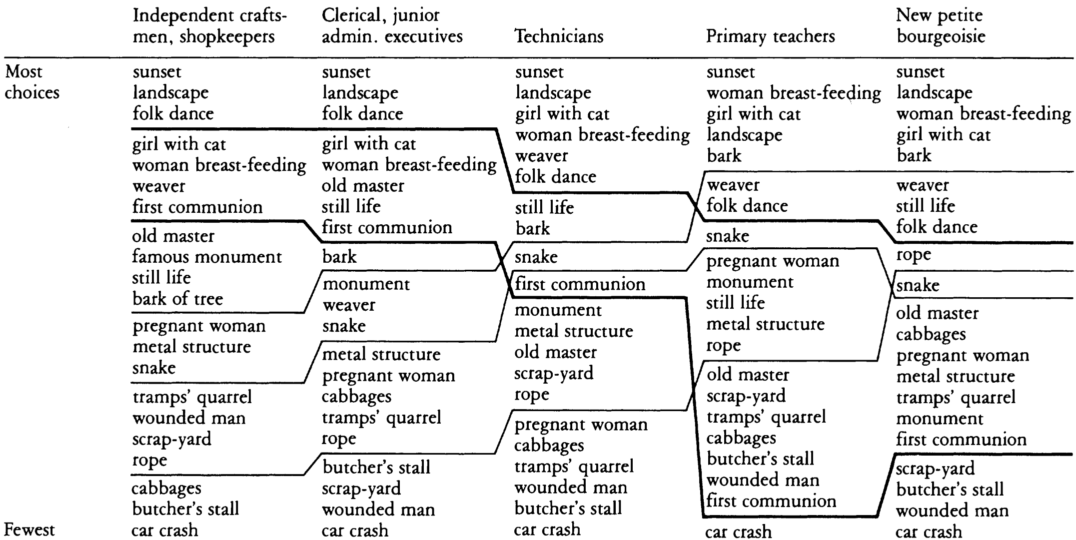


Figure 2 The aesthetic disposition in the petite bourgeoisie (the various objects are ranked for each class fraction according to the percentage saying they would make a beautiful photo).

by a visible stylistic intention combining the human picturesque (weaver at his loom, tramps quarrelling, folk dance) with gratuitous form (pebbles, rope, tree bark).

Technicians seem to offer the purest form of 'middle-brow' taste. Their tastes in photography locate them centrally in the structure of the middle classes (see figure 2), with the craftsmen, small shopkeepers, clerical workers and junior executives inclining towards the working class and the primary teachers and new petit bourgeois inclining towards the upper classes. They are particularly drawn to the objects most typical of middle-brow photography—the weaver, the still life—whereas the new petit bourgeois prefer objects which they see as lying outside the repertoire of the traditional aesthetic and therefore more 'original' (rope, cabbages), and also those belonging to the 'social picturesque' (tramps quarrelling).

It is significant that this middle-brow art par excellence finds one of its preferred subjects in one of the spectacles most characteristic of middle-brow culture (along with the circus, light opera and bull-fights), the folk dance (which is particularly appreciated by skilled workers and foremen, junior executives, clerical and commercial employees) (C.S. VII). Like the photographic recording of the social picturesque, whose populist objectivism distances the lower classes by constituting them as an object of contemplation or even commiseration or indignation, the spectacle of the 'people' making a spectacle of itself, as in folk dancing, is an opportunity to experience the relationship of distant proximity, in the form of the idealized vision purveyed by aesthetic realism and populist nostalgia, which is a basic element in the relationship of the petite bourgeoisie to the working or peasant classes and their traditions. But this middle-brow aestheticism in turn serves as a foil to the most alert members of the new middle-class fractions, who reject its favoured subjects, and to the secondary teachers whose aestheticism (the aestheticism of consumers, since they are relatively infrequent practitioners of photography and the other arts) purports to be able to treat any object aesthetically, with the exception of those so constituted by the middle-brow art of the petite bourgeoisie (such as the weaver and the folk dance, which are deemed merely 'interesting').[54] These would-be aesthetes demonstrate by their distinctive refusals that they possess the practical mastery of the relationships between objects and groups which is the basis of all judgements of the type 'Ça fait' ('It looks . . .') ('Ça fait petit-bourgeois', 'Ça fait nouveau riche' etc.), without being able to go so far as to ascribe beauty to the most marked objects of the popular aesthetic (first communion) or the petit-bourgeois aesthetic (mother and child, folk dance) which the relations of structural proximity spontaneously lead them to detest.

Explicit aesthetic choices are in fact often constituted in opposition to the choices of the groups closest in social space, with whom the competition is most direct and most immediate, and more precisely, no doubt, in relation to those choices most clearly marked by the intention (perceived as pretension) of marking distinction vis-à-vis lower groups, such as, for intellectuals, the primary teachers' Brassens, Jean Ferrat or Ferré. Thus the song, as a cultural property which (like photography) is almost universally accessible and genuinely common (since hardly anyone is not exposed at one moment or another to the 'successes' of the day), calls for particular vigilance from those who intend to mark their difference. The intellectuals, artists and higher-education teachers seem to hesitate between systematic refusal of what can only be, at best, a middle-brow art, and a selective acceptance which manifests the universality of their culture and their aesthetic disposition.[55] For their part, the employers and professionals, who have little interest in the 'intellectual' song, indicate their distance from ordinary songs by rejecting with disgust the most popular and most 'vulgar' singers, such as Les Compagnons de la Chanson, Mireille Mathieu, Adamo or Sheila, and making an exception for the oldest and most consecrated singers (like Edith Piaf or Charles Trénet) or those closest to operetta and bel canto. But it is the middle classes who find in song (as in photography) an opportunity to manifest their artistic pretension by refusing the favourite singers of the working classes, such as Mireille Mathieu, Adamo, Charles Aznavour or Tino Rossi, and declaring their preference for the singers who endeavour to dignify this 'minor' genre. That is why the primary teachers distinguish themselves most clearly from the other fractions of the petite bourgeoisie in this area, where, more easily than in the domain of legitimate art, they can invest their academic dispositions and assert their own taste in the choice of singers who offer populist poetry in the primary-school tradition, such as Jacques Douai or Brassens (who was on the syllabus of the Saint-Cloud entrance examination a few years ago).[56]

In addition to the data provided by the survey question, use was also made of the findings of a survey by the opinion research department of the French broadcasting service (ORTF) (C.S. XIX) and of thirty in-depth interviews designed to grasp the constellation of preferences and refusals in conditions as close as possible to ordinary conversation. These interviews confirmed that, as the ORTF survey also shows, the more strongly a singer is preferred by the less cultivated, the more he or she is refused by the most cultivated—whose tastes in this area are almost exclusively expressed in rejections. These refusals, almost always expressed in the mode of distaste, are often accompanied by pitying or indignant remarks about the corresponding tastes ('I can't understand how anyone can like that!').

Similarly, one finds that the declining petite bourgeoisie systematically rejects the virtues that the new petite bourgeoisie most readily claims for itself (witty,

refined, stylish, artistic, imaginative); whereas the latter signals its aesthetic pretension by a refusal of the most typically 'bourgeois' configurations and by a concern to go against common judgements, in which aesthetic commitments figure prominently. Thus, when asked to state the ideal qualities of a friend or a domestic interior, they produce motley combinations such as: 'artistic, sociable, amusing, comfortable, easy to maintain, imaginative' (sales representative, Paris), 'dynamic, pragmatic, stylish, studied, warm, imaginative' (gallery director, Lille), 'dynamic, refined, pragmatic, comfortable, harmonious, cosy' (radio presenter, Lille). It is again a similar process that leads the members of the professions to distinguish themselves from newcomers to the bourgeoisie by rejecting the qualities of ambition and upward mobility, such as 'pragmatic', 'dynamic' (often chosen by managerial executives), or the most 'pretentious' adjectives, such as 'stylish' or 'refined', which are much favoured by the new petite bourgeoisie.

It may also be assumed that the affirmation of the omnipotence of the aesthetic gaze found among higher-education teachers, the group most inclined to say that all the objects mentioned could make a beautiful photograph and to profess their recognition of modern art or of the artistic status of the photograph, stems much more from a self-distinguishing intention than from a true aesthetic universalism. This has not escaped the most knowing avant-garde producers, who carry sufficient authority to challenge, if need be, the very dogma of the omnipotence of art,[57] and are in a position to recognize this faith as a defensive manoeuvre to avoid self-exposure by reckless refusals: 'Who would say this: "When I look at a picture, I'm not interested in what it represents"? Nowadays, the sort of people who don't know much about art. Saying that is typical of someone who hasn't any idea about art. Twenty years ago, I'm not even sure that twenty years ago the abstract painters would have said that; I don't think so. It's exactly what a guy says when he hasn't a clue: "I'm not one of these old fogies, I know what counts is whether it's pretty" ' (avant-garde painter, age 35). They alone, at all events, can afford the audacious imposture of refusing all refusals by recuperating, in parody or sublimation, the very objects refused by the lower-degree aestheticism. The 'rehabilitation' of 'vulgar' objects is more risky, but also more 'profitable', the smaller the distance in social space or time, and the 'horrors' of popular kitsch are easier to 'recuperate' than those of petit-bourgeois imitation, just as the 'abominations' of bourgeois taste can begin to be found 'amusing' when they are sufficiently dated to cease to be 'compromising'.

Suffice it to point out that, in addition to those subjects which had already been constituted as aesthetic at the time of the survey, either by a pictorial tradition (e.g., the metal frame of Léger or Gromaire, the tramps quarrelling, a variant of

an old theme of realist painting often taken up in photography, or the butcher's stall), or by the photographic tradition (e.g., the weaver, the folk dance, the bark), most of the 'banal' subjects have subsequently been constituted aesthetically by one avant-garde painter or another (for example, the sunset over the sea, by Richer, who paints typically romantic landscapes from photographs, or Long and Fulton, English painters who make 'conceptual' landscape photographs, or even Land Art; or the car crash, by Andy Warhol; or the tramps' quarrel, with the 'tramps sleeping in the Bowery' of the American hyper-realists; or the first communion, by Boltanski, who has even given artistic status to the family album etc.). The only 'unrecuperated' and, for the moment, 'irrecuperable' subjects are the favourite themes of first-degree aestheticism, the weaver at his loom, the folk dance, the tree-bark, and the woman suckling a child. They are too close to favour the flaunting of an absolute power of aesthetic constitution; and because they do not allow distance to be manifested, they are more liable to be mistaken for 'first-degree' intentions. Reappropriation is that much more difficult when the aesthetic-in-itself which it works on clearly manifests recognition of the dominant aesthetic so that the distinctive deviation is liable to go unnoticed.

The artist agrees with the 'bourgeois' in one respect: he prefers naivety to 'pretentiousness'. The essential merit of the 'common people' is that they have none of the pretensions to art (or power) which inspire the ambitions of the 'petit bourgeois'. Their indifference tacitly acknowledges the monopoly. That is why, in the mythology of artists and intellectuals, whose outflanking and double-negating strategies sometimes lead them back to 'popular' tastes and opinions, the 'people' so often play a role not unlike that of the peasantry in the conservative ideologies of the declining aristocracy.

In fact, their 'pretension' leaves the petit bourgeois particularly disarmed in the less legitimate or not-yet legitimate domains which the cultural 'elite' abandon to them, whether in photography or in cinema, in which their ambitions are often expressed (as is shown, for example, in the fact that the gap between the petite bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie is much less wide regarding knowledge of cinema directors than of composers). The new-style petit bourgeois, who, confronted with objectively ranked judgements, are able to choose the 'right' answer, are almost as disarmed as the working classes when faced with an opportunity for aesthetic constitution of an object (not a single small art-dealer says that a car accident can make a beautiful photo, and the scrap-yard arouses similar responses).

CULTURAL PEDIGREE

While variations in educational capital are always very closely related to variations in competence, even in areas, like cinema or jazz, which are neither taught nor directly assessed by the educational system, the fact remains that,

at equivalent levels of educational capital, differences in social origin (whose 'effects' are already expressed in differences in educational capital) are associated with important differences in competence. These differences become all the more striking (except at the highest educational levels, where over-selection tends to neutralize differences of trajectory), firstly, when one appeals less to a strict, and strictly assessable, competence and more to a sort of familiarity with culture; and, secondly, as one moves from the most 'scholastic' and 'classical' areas of culture to less legitimate and more 'outlandish' areas of the 'extra-curricular' culture, which is not taught in schools but is valued in the academic market and can often yield high symbolic profit. The relative weight of educational capital in the system of explanatory factors can even be much weaker than that of social origin when the respondents are only required to express a status-induced familiarity with legitimate or soon-to-be legitimated culture, a paradoxical relationship made up of that mixture of self-assurance and (relative) ignorance, expressing true bourgeois rights, which are measured by seniority.

At equal educational levels, the proportion who say they know at least twelve of the musical works mentioned increases more sharply than the proportion who can attribute at least twelve of them to their composers, as one moves from the working class to the upper class (and the gap is very narrow among graduates) (see table 4). The same logic governs the differences by sex, except that they are less marked. Whereas, as regards composers, no differences are found between the sexes among individuals of the same class, strong differences appear in favour of women as regards familiarity with works, especially in the middle and upper classes (in the working class, this knowledge is very limited in both sexes); in the two most feminine occupational categories—the medical and social services and secretaries—all the persons questioned claimed to know at least three of the works. This difference in the experiential or stated relationship to music is no doubt partly explained by the fact that the traditional division of labour assigns to women familiarity with the things of art and literature.

The differences linked to social origin are also very strong as regards knowledge of film directors, which, at equal educational levels, rises with social origin. So too does the proportion who assert that 'ugly' or trivial objects can make a beautiful photograph. Needless to say, corresponding to the different modes of acquisition, there are differences in the nature of the works preferred. The differences linked to social origin tend to increase as one moves away from the academic curriculum, from literature to painting or classical music and a fortiori jazz or avant-garde art.

An earlier survey showed that students of working-class or middle-class origin who had scores similar to those of students of bourgeois origin in classical culture fell back as the test moved towards 'extra-curricular' culture, i.e., both avant-garde theatre and Paris 'boulevard' (middle-brow) theatre. One finds an entirely analogous relation here between the artistic producers and the secondary

Table 4 Knowledge of composers and musical works by education and class of origin (%).

Educational qualification	Class of origin	*Number of composers known*				*Number of works known*			
		0–2	*3–6*	*7–11*	*12+*	*0–2*	*3–6*	*7–11*	*12+*
None, CEP, CAP	Working	69.5	23.5	5.5	1.5	32.5	48.5	17.5	1.5
	Middle	68.5	21.0	8.5	2.0	21.0	55.0	19.5	4.5
	Upper	46.0	25.0	8.5	20.5	12.5	33.5	29.0	25.0
	All classes	67.0	22.0	7.5	3.5	24.5	51.0	19.5	5.0
BEPC	Working	57.5	15.5	23.0	4.0	15.5	27.0	50.0	7.5
	Middle	48.5	35.5	9.5	6.5	8.5	43.0	34.5	14.0
	Upper	31.5	41.5	13.5	13.5	8.0	31.5	41.0	19.5
	All classes	44.5	34.0	13.0	8.5	9.5	37.0	39.0	14.5
Baccalauréat	Working	11.0	59.5	18.5	11.0	0	33.0	52.0	15.0
	Middle	19.0	32.0	38.0	11.0	3.5	26.5	51.0	19.0
	Upper	21.5	21.5	37.5	19.5	5.0	19.5	42.5	33.0
	All classes	18.5	32.5	35.5	13.5	3.5	25.5	48.5	22.5
Technical college, some higher education	Working	20.0	0	70.0	10.0	0	30.0	60.0	10.0
	Middle	16.0	22.5	51.5	10.0	13.0	19.5	54.5	13.0
	Upper	17.5	11.5	39.0	32.0	11.5	11.5	33.5	43.5
	All classes	17.5	13.5	45.5	23.5	11.0	15.5	42.0	31.5
Licence, agrégation, grande école	Working	0	35.0	32.5	32.5	0	7.0	66.5	26.5
	Middle	7.0	15.0	47.5	30.5	0	22.0	49.0	29.0
	Upper	7.5	15.5	44.5	32.5	8.0	13.5	38.5	40.0
	All classes	7.0	16.5	44.5	32.0	5.5	15.0	43.0	36.5

teachers (or even the art teachers, who—as is evident in another survey now being analysed—especially when they are of working-class or middle-class origin, mostly have very 'classical' tastes and are much closer to the teachers than to the artists).

Those who have acquired the bulk of their cultural capital in and for school have more 'classical', safer cultural investments than those who have received a large cultural inheritance. For example, whereas the members of the dominant class with the highest qualifications (the *agrégation* or a diploma from a *grande école*) never mention certain works or certain painters typical of middle-brow culture, such as Buffet or Utrillo, have considerable knowledge of composers, and prefer the *Well-Tempered Clavier* or the *Fire-bird Suite*, the highly educated members of the working and middle classes more often make choices which indicate their respect for a more 'scholastic' culture (Goya, Leonardo, Breughel, Watteau, Raphael), and a significant proportion of them concur with the opinion that 'paintings are nice but difficult'. By contrast, those who originate from the dominant class know more works and more often choose works further from 'scholastic' culture (Braque, *Concerto for the Left Hand*). Similarly, those members of the established petite bourgeoisie (craftsmen, shopkeepers, clerical and commercial employees, junior executives) who have relatively low educational capital (BEPC or below) make choices clearly marked by their trajectory. Thus, those who are rising socially show their respect for legitimate culture in various ways (e.g., they are more likely to agree that 'paintings are nice but difficult') and choose works typical of middle-brow (Buffet, Utrillo) or even popular taste (*Blue Danube*). However, those whose fathers belonged to the upper classes manifest, at equivalent levels of educational capital, greater familiarity with musical works (although they are no more familiar with the composers' names), just as they more often say they like the Impressionists, visit museums more often and more often choose academically consecrated works (Raphael or Leonardo).

MANNERS AND MANNER OF ACQUISITION Cultural (or linguistic) competence, which is acquired in relation to a particular field functioning both as a source of inculcation and as a market, remains defined by its conditions of acquisition. These conditions, perpetuated in the mode of utilization—i.e., in a given relationship to culture or language—function like a sort of 'trademark', and, by linking that competence to a particular market, help to define the value of its products in the various markets. In other words, what are grasped through indicators such as educational level or social origin or, more precisely, in the structure of the relationship between them, are *also* different modes of production of the cultivated habitus, which engender differences not only in the competences acquired but also in the manner of applying them. These differences in manner constitute a set of secondary properties, revealing different conditions of acquisition and predisposed to receive very different values in the various markets.

Knowing that 'manner' is a symbolic manifestation whose meaning and