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Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste

The Social Space

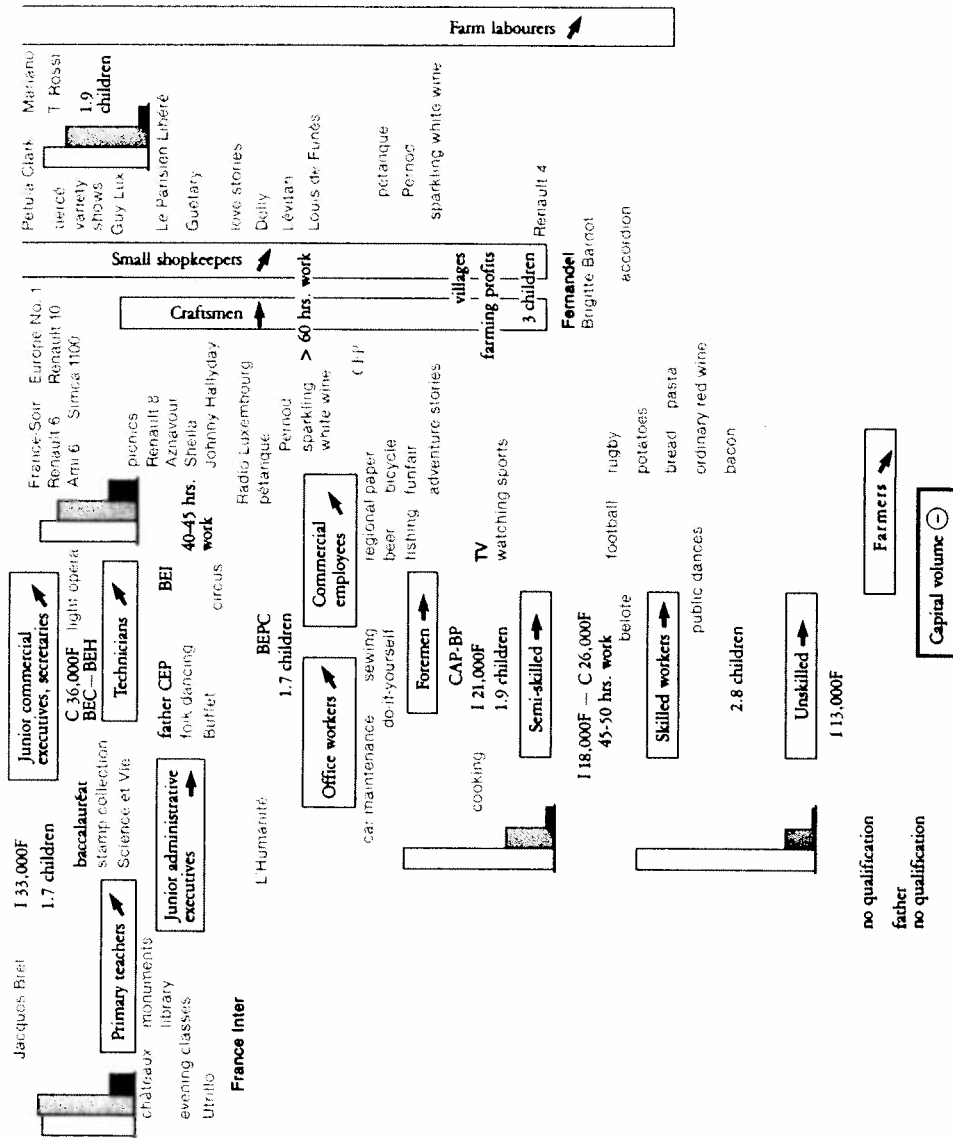
The distribution of the different classes (and class fractions) runs from those who are best provided with both economic and cultural capital to those who are most deprived in both respects (see figures 1 and 2). The members of the professions, who have high incomes and high qualifications, who very often (52.9 percent) originate from the dominant class (professions or senior executives), who receive and consume a large quantity of both material and cultural goods, are opposed in almost all respects to the office workers, who have low qualifications, often originate from the working or middle classes, who receive little and consume little, devoting a high proportion of their time to care maintenance and home improvement; and they are even more opposed to the skilled or semi-skilled workers, and still more to unskilled workers or farm labourers, who have the lowest incomes, no qualifications, and originate almost exclusively (90.5 percent of farm labourers, 84.5 percent of unskilled workers) from the working classes.¹

The differences stemming from the total volume of capital almost always conceal, both

from common awareness and also from 'scientific' knowledge, the secondary differences which, within each of the classes defined by overall volume of capital, separate class fractions, defined by different asset structures, i.e., different distributions of their total capital among the different kinds of capital [economic and cultural].

Once one takes account of the structure of total assets—and not only, as has always been done implicitly, of the dominant kind in a given structure, 'birth', 'fortune' or 'talents', as the nineteenth century put it—one has the means of making more precise divisions and also of observing the specific effects of the structure of distribution between the different kinds of capital. This may, for example, be symmetrical (as in the case of the professions, which combine very high income with very high cultural capital) or asymmetrical (in the case of higher-education and secondary teachers or employers, with cultural capital dominant in one case, economic capital in the other). One thus discovers two sets of homologous positions. The fractions whose reproduction depends on economic capital, usually inherited—industrial and commercial employers at the higher level, craftsmen and shopkeepers at the intermediate level—are opposed to the fractions which are least endowed (relatively, of course) with economic capital, and whose reproduction mainly depends on cultural capital—higher-education and secondary teachers at the higher level, primary teachers at the intermediate level. . . .

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The Habitus

The mere fact that the social space described here can be presented as a diagram indicates that it is an abstract representation, deliberately constructed, like a map, to give a bird's-eye view, a point of view on the whole set of points from which ordinary agents (including the sociologist and his reader, in their ordinary behaviour) see the social world. Bringing together in simultaneity, in the scope of a single glance—this is its heuristic value—positions which the agents can never apprehend in their totality and in their multiple relationships, social space is to the practical space of everyday life, with its distances which are kept or signalled, and neighbours who may be more remote than strangers, what geometrical space is to the 'travelling space' (*espace bodologique*) of ordinary experience, with its gaps and discontinuities.

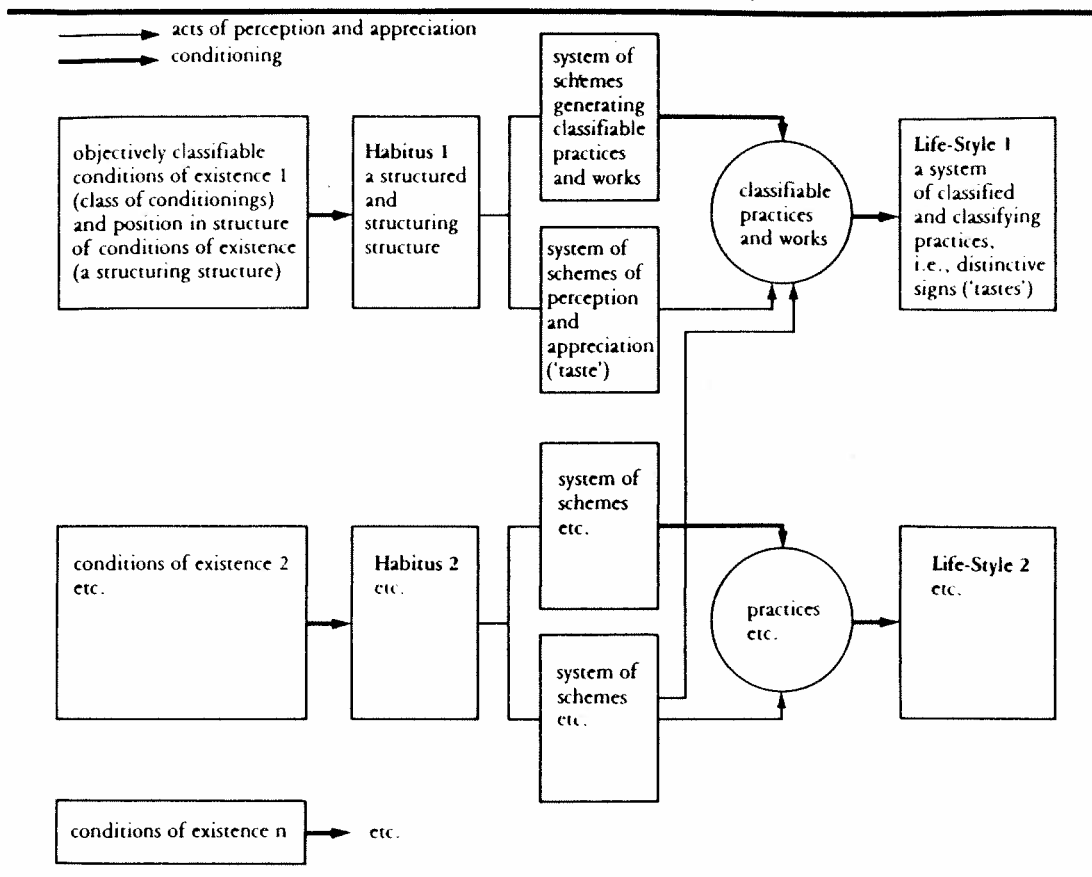
But the most crucial thing to note is that the question of this space is raised within the space itself—that the agents have points of view on this objective space which depend on their position within it and in which their will to transform or conserve it is often expressed. Thus many of the words which sociology uses to designate the classes it constructs are borrowed from ordinary usage, where they serve to express the (generally polemical) view that one group has of another. As if carried away by their quest for greater objectivity, sociologists almost always forget that the 'objects' they classify produce not only objectively classifiable practices but also classifying operations that are no less objective and are themselves classifiable. The division into classes performed by sociology leads to the common root of the classifiable practices which agents produce and of the classificatory judgements they make of other agents' practices and their own. The habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification (*principium divisionis*) of these practices. It is in the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the ca-

capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, i.e., the space of life-styles, is constituted.

The relationship that is actually established between the pertinent characteristics of economic and social condition (capital volume and composition, in both synchronic and diachronic aspects) and the distinctive features associated with the corresponding position in the universe of life-styles only becomes intelligible when the habitus is constructed as the generative formula which makes it possible to account both for the classifiable practices and products and for the judgements, themselves classified, which make these practices and works into a system of distinctive signs. When one speaks of the aristocratic asceticism of teachers or the pretension of the petite bourgeoisie, one is not only describing these groups by one, or even the most important, of their properties, but also endeavouring to name the principle which generates all their properties and all their judgements of their, or other people's, properties. The habitus is necessity internalized and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions; it is a general, transposable disposition which carries out a systematic, universal application—beyond the limits of what has been directly learnt—of the necessity inherent in the learning conditions. That is why an agent's whole set of practices (or those of a whole set of agents produced by similar conditions) are both systematic, inasmuch as they are the product of the application of identical (or interchangeable) schemes, and systematically distinct from the practices constituting another life-style.

Because different conditions of existence produce different habitus—systems of generative schemes applicable, by simple transfer, to the most varied areas of practice—the practices engendered by the different habitus appear as systematic configurations of properties expressing the differences objectively inscribed in conditions of existence in the form of systems of differential deviations

FIGURE 3
Conditions of existence, habitus, and life-style



which, when perceived by agents endowed with the schemes of perception and appreciation necessary in order to identify, interpret and evaluate their pertinent features, function as life-styles (see figure 3).²

The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes. Each class condition is defined, simultaneously, by its intrinsic properties and by the relational properties which it derives from its position in the system of class conditions, which is also a system of differences, differential positions, i.e., by everything which distinguishes it from

what it is not and especially from everything it is opposed to; social identity is defined and asserted through difference. This means that inevitably inscribed within the dispositions of the habitus is the whole structure of the system of conditions, as it presents itself in the experience of a life-condition occupying a particular position within that structure. The most fundamental oppositions in the structure (high/low, rich/poor etc.) tend to establish themselves as the fundamental structuring principles of practices and the perception of practices. As a system of practice-generating schemes which expresses systematically the necessity and freedom inherent in its class condition and the difference constituting that position, the habitus apprehends differences between conditions, which it grasps in the

form of differences between classified, classifying practices (products of other habitus), in accordance with principles of differentiation which, being themselves the product of these differences, are objectively attuned to them and therefore tend to perceive them as natural.

While it must be reasserted, against all forms of mechanism, that ordinary experience of the social world is a cognition, it is equally important to realize—contrary to the illusion of the spontaneous generation of consciousness which so many theories of the 'awakening of class consciousness' (*prise de conscience*) amount to—that primary cognition is misrecognition, recognition of an order which is also established in the mind. Life-styles are thus the systematic products of habitus, which, perceived in their mutual relations through the schemes of the habitus, become sign systems that are socially qualified (as 'distinguished', 'vulgar' etc.). The dialectic of conditions and habitus is the basis of an alchemy which transforms the distribution of capital, the balance-sheet of a power relation, into a system of perceived differences, distinctive properties, that is, a distribution of symbolic capital, legitimate capital, whose objective truth is misrecognized.

As structured products (*opus operatum*) which a structuring structure (*modus operandi*) produces through retranslations according to the specific logic of the different *fields*, all the practices and products of a given agent are objectively harmonized among themselves, without any deliberate pursuit of coherence, and objectively orchestrated, without any conscious concertation, with those of all members of the same class. The habitus continuously generates practical metaphors, that is to say, transfers (of which the transfer of motor habits is only one example) or, more precisely, systematic transpositions required by the particular conditions in which the habitus is 'put into practice' (so that, for example, the ascetic ethos which might be expected always to express itself in saving may, in a given context, express itself in a particular way of using credit). The practices of the

same agent, and, more generally, the practices of all agents of the same class, owe the stylistic affinity which makes each of them a metaphor of any of the others to the fact that they are the product of transfers of the same schemes of action from one field to another. An obvious paradigm would be the disposition called 'handwriting', a singular way of tracing letters which always produces the same writing, i.e., graphic forms which, in spite of all the differences of size, material or colour due to the surface (paper or blackboard) or the instrument (pen or chalk)—in spite, therefore, of the different use of muscles—present an immediately perceptible family resemblance, like all the features of style or manner whereby a painter or writer can be recognized as infallibly as a man by his walk.

Systematicity is found in the *opus operatum* because it is in the *modus operandi*.³ It is found in all the properties—and property—with which individuals and groups surround themselves, houses, furniture, paintings, books, cars, spirits, cigarettes, perfume, clothes, and in the practices in which they manifest their distinction, sports, games, entertainments, only because it is in the synthetic unity of the habitus, the unifying, generative principle of all practices. Taste, the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of life-style, a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same expressive intention in the specific logic of each of the symbolic subspaces, furniture, clothing, language or body hexis. Each dimension of life-style 'symbolizes with' the others, in Leibniz's phrase, and symbolizes them. An old cabinetmaker's world view, the way he manages his budget, his time or his body, his use of language and choice of clothing are fully present in his ethic of scrupulous, impeccable craftsmanship and in the aesthetic of work for work's sake which leads him to measure the beauty of his products by the care and patience that have gone into them.

The system of matching properties, which includes people—one speaks of a 'well-matched couple', and friends like to say they have the same tastes—is organized by taste, a system of classificatory schemes which may only very partially become conscious although, as one rises in the social hierarchy, life-style is increasingly a matter of what Weber calls the 'stylization of life'. Taste is the basis of the mutual adjustment of all the features associated with a person, which the old aesthetic recommended for the sake of the mutual reinforcement they give one another; the countless pieces of information a person consciously or unconsciously imparts endlessly underline and confirm one another, offering the alert observer the same pleasure an art-lover derives from the symmetries and correspondences produced by a harmonious distribution of redundancies. The over-determination that results from these redundancies is felt the more strongly because the different features which have to be isolated for observation or measurement strongly interpenetrate in ordinary perception; each item of information imparted in practice (e.g., a judgement of a painting) is contaminated—and, if it deviates from the probable feature, corrected—by the effect of the whole set of features previously or simultaneously perceived. That is why a survey which tends to isolate features—for example, by dissociating the things said from the way they are said—and detach them from the system of correlative features tends to minimize the deviation, on each point, between the classes, especially that between the petit bourgeois and the bourgeois. In the ordinary situations of bourgeois life, banalities about art, literature or cinema are inseparable from the steady tone, the slow, casual diction, the distant or self-assured smile, the measured gesture, the well-tailored suit and the bourgeois salon of the person who pronounces them.

→ Taste is the practical operator of the transmutation of things into distinct and distinctive signs, of continuous distributions into discontinuous oppositions; it raises the differ-

ences inscribed in the physical order of bodies to the symbolic order of significant distinctions. [It transforms objectively classified practices, in which a class condition signifies itself (through taste), into classifying practices, that is, into a symbolic expression of class position, by perceiving them in their mutual relations and in terms of social classificatory schemes.] Taste is thus the source of the system of distinctive features which cannot fail to be perceived as a systematic expression of a particular class of conditions of existence, i.e., as a distinctive life-style, by anyone who possesses practical knowledge of the relationships between distinctive signs and positions in the distributions—between the universe of objective properties, which is brought to light by scientific construction, and the no less objective universe of life-styles, which exists as such for and through ordinary experience.

This classificatory system, which is the product of the internalization of the structure of social space, in the form in which it impinges through the experience of a particular position in that space, is, within the limits of economic possibilities and impossibilities (which it tends to reproduce in its own logic), the generator of practices adjusted to the regularities inherent in a condition. It continuously transforms necessities into strategies, constraints into preferences, and, without any mechanical determination, it generates the set of 'choices' constituting life-styles, which derive their meaning, i.e., their value, from their position in a system of oppositions and correlations.⁴ It is a virtue made of necessity which continuously transforms necessity into virtue by inducing 'choices' which correspond to the condition of which it is the product. As can be seen whenever a change in social position puts the habitus into new conditions, so that its specific efficacy can be isolated, it is taste—the taste of necessity or the taste of luxury—and not high or low income which commands the practices objectively adjusted to these resources. Through taste, an agent has what he likes because he likes what he has, that is, the properties actually given to him in the distri-

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butions and legitimately assigned to him in the classifications.⁵

The Homology Between the Spaces

Bearing in mind all that precedes, in particular the fact that the generative schemes of the *habitus* are applied, by simple transfer, to the most dissimilar areas of practice, one can immediately understand that the practices or goods associated with the different classes in the different areas of practice are organized in accordance with structures of opposition which are homologous to one another because they are all homologous to the structure of objective oppositions between class conditions. Without presuming to demonstrate here in a few pages what the whole of the rest of this work will endeavour to establish—but lest the reader fail to see the wood for the trees of detailed analysis—I shall merely indicate, very schematically, how the two major organizing principles of the social space govern the structure and modification of the space of cultural consumption, and, more generally, the whole universe of life-styles.

In cultural consumption, the main opposition, by overall capital value, is between the practices designated by their rarity as distinguished, those of the fractions richest in both economic and cultural capital, and the practices socially identified as vulgar because they are both easy and common, those of the fractions poorest in both these respects. In the intermediate position are the practices which are perceived as pretentious, because of the manifest discrepancy between ambition and possibilities. In opposition to the dominated condition, characterized, from the point of view of the dominant, by the combination of forced poverty and unjustified laxity, the dominant aesthetic—of which the work of art and the aesthetic disposition are the most complete embodiments—proposes the combination of ease and asceticism, i.e., self-imposed austerity, restraint, reserve, which are affirmed in that absolute manifestation of excellence, relaxation in tension.

This fundamental opposition is specified according to capital composition. Through the mediation of the means of appropriation available to them, exclusively or principally cultural on the one hand, mainly economic on the other, and the different forms of relation to works of art which result from them, the different fractions of the dominant class are oriented towards cultural practices so different in their style and object and sometimes so antagonistic (those of 'artists' and 'bourgeois')⁶ that it is easy to forget that they are variants of the same fundamental relationship to necessity and to those who remain subject to it, and that each pursues the exclusive appropriation of legitimate cultural goods and the associated symbolic profits. Whereas the dominant fractions of the dominant class (the 'bourgeoisie') demand of art a high degree of denial of the social world and incline towards a hedonistic aesthetic of ease and facility, symbolized by boulevard theatre or Impressionist painting, the dominated fractions (the 'intellectuals' and 'artists') have affinities with the ascetic aspect of aesthetics and are inclined to support all artistic revolutions conducted in the name of purity and purification, refusal of ostentation and the bourgeois taste for ornament; and the dispositions towards the social world which they owe to their status as poor relations incline them to welcome a pessimistic representation of the social world.

While it is clear that art offers it the greatest scope, there is no area of practice in which the intention of purifying, refining and sublimating facile impulses and primary needs cannot assert itself, or in which the stylization of life, i.e., the primacy of form over function, which leads to the denial of function, does not produce the same effects. In language, it gives the opposition between popular outspokenness and the highly censored language of the bourgeois, between the expressionist pursuit of the picturesque or the rhetorical effect and the choice of restraint and false simplicity (*litotes*). The same economy of means is found in body language: here too, agitation and haste, grimaces and gesticulation are op-

posed to slowness—'the slow gestures, the slow glance' of nobility, according to Nietzsche⁷—to the restraint and impassivity which signify elevation. Even the field of primary tastes is organized according to the fundamental opposition, with the antithesis between quantity and quality, belly and palate, matter and manners, substance and form.

Form and Substance

The fact that in the realm of food the main opposition broadly corresponds to differences in income has masked the secondary opposition which exists, both within the middle classes and within the dominant class, between the fractions richer in cultural capital and less rich in economic capital and those whose assets are structured in the opposite way. Observers tend to see a simple effect of income in the fact that, as one rises in the social hierarchy, the proportion of income spent on food diminishes, or that, within the food budget, the proportion spent on heavy, fatty, fattening foods, which are also cheap—pasta, potatoes, beans, bacon, pork—declines (C.S. III), as does that spent on wine, whereas an increasing proportion is spent on leaner, lighter (more digestible), non-fattening foods (beef, veal, mutton, lamb, and especially fresh fruit and vegetables).⁸ Because the real principle of preferences is taste, a virtue made of necessity, the theory which makes consumption a simple function of income has all the appearances to support it, since income plays an important part in determining distance from necessity. However, it cannot account for cases in which the same income is associated with totally different consumption patterns. Thus, foremen remain attached to 'popular' taste although they earn more than clerical and commercial employees, whose taste differs radically from that of manual workers and is closer to that of teachers.

For a real explanation of the variations which J. F. Engel's law merely records, one has to take account of all the characteristics of social condition which are (statistically) associated from earliest childhood with posses-

sion of high or low income and which tend to shape tastes adjusted to these conditions.⁹ The true basis of the differences found in the area of consumption, and far beyond it, is the opposition between the tastes of luxury (or freedom) and the tastes of necessity. The former are the tastes of individuals who are the product of material conditions of existence defined by distance from necessity, by the freedoms or facilities stemming from possession of capital; the latter express, precisely in their adjustment, the necessities of which they are the product. Thus it is possible to deduce popular tastes for the foods that are simultaneously most 'filling' and most economical¹⁰ from the necessity of reproducing labour power at the lowest cost which is forced on the proletariat as its very definition. The idea of taste, typically bourgeois, since it presupposes absolute freedom of choice, is so closely associated with the idea of freedom that many people find it hard to grasp the paradoxes of the taste of necessity. Some simply sweep it aside, making practice a direct product of economic necessity (workers eat beans because they cannot afford anything else), failing to realize that necessity can only be fulfilled, most of the time, because the agents are inclined to fulfil it, because they have a taste for what they are anyway condemned to. Others turn it into a taste of freedom, forgetting the conditionings of which it is the product, and so reduce it to pathological or morbid preference for (basic) essentials, a sort of congenital coarseness, the pretext for a class racism which associates the populace with everything heavy, thick and fat.¹¹ Taste is *amor fati*, the choice of destiny, but a forced choice, produced by conditions of existence which rule out all alternatives as mere daydreams and leave no choice but the taste for the necessary.

The taste of necessity can only be the basis of a life-style 'in-itself', which is defined as such only negatively, by an absence, by the relationship of privation between itself and the other life-styles. For some, there are elective emblems, for others stigmata which they bear in their very bodies. 'As the chosen people bore in their features the sign that they were

the property of Jehovah, so the division of labour brands the manufacturing worker as the property of capital'.¹² The brand which Marx speaks of is nothing other than life-style, through which the most deprived immediately betray themselves, even in their use of spare time; in so doing they inevitably serve as a foil to every distinction and contribute, purely negatively, to the dialectic of pretension and distinction which fuels the incessant changing of taste. Not content with lacking virtually all the knowledge or manners which are valued in the markets of academic examination or polite conversation nor with only possessing skills which have no value there, they are the people 'who don't know how to live', who sacrifice most to material foods, and to the heaviest, grossest and most fattening of them, bread, potatoes, fats, and the most vulgar, such as wine; who spend least on clothing and cosmetics, appearance and beauty; those who 'don't know how to relax', 'who always have to be doing something', who set off in their Renault 5 or Simca 1000 to join the great traffic jams of the holiday exodus, who picnic beside major roads, cram their tents into overcrowded campsites, fling themselves into the prefabricated leisure activities designed for them by the engineers of cultural mass production; those who by all these uninspired 'choices' confirm class racism, if it needed to be confirmed, in its conviction that they only get what they deserve.

The art of eating and drinking remains one of the few areas in which the working classes explicitly challenge the legitimate art of living. In the face of the new ethic of sobriety for the sake of slimness, which is most recognized at the highest levels of the social hierarchy, peasants and especially industrial workers maintain an ethic of convivial indulgence. A *bon vivant* is not just someone who enjoys eating and drinking; he is someone capable of entering into the generous and familiar—that is, both simple and free—relationship that is encouraged and symbolized by eating and drinking together, in a conviviality which sweeps away restraints and reticence.

The boundary marking the break with the popular relation to food runs, without any doubt, between the manual workers and the clerical and commercial employees (C.S. II). Clerical workers spend less on food than skilled manual workers, both in absolute terms (9,376 francs as against 10,347 francs) and in relative terms (34.2 percent as against 38.3 percent); they consume less bread, pork, pork products (*charcuterie*), milk, cheese, rabbit, poultry, dried vegetables and fats, and, within a smaller food budget, spend as much on meat—beef, veal, mutton and lamb—and slightly more on fish, fresh fruit and aperitifs. These changes in the structure of spending on food are accompanied by increased spending on health and beauty care and clothing, and a slight increase in spending on cultural and leisure activities. When it is noted that the reduced spending on food, especially on the most earthly, earthy, down-to-earth foods, is accompanied by a lower birth-rate, it is reasonable to suppose that it constitutes one aspect of an overall transformation of the relationship to the world. The 'modest' taste which can defer its gratifications is opposed to the spontaneous materialism of the working classes, who refuse to participate in the Benthamite calculation of pleasures and pains, benefits and costs (e.g., for health and beauty). In other words, these two relations to the 'fruits of the earth' are grounded in two dispositions towards the future which are themselves related in circular causality to two objective futures. Against the imaginary anthropology of economics, which has never shrunk from formulating universal laws of 'temporal preference', it has to be pointed out that the propensity to subordinate present desires to future desires depends on the extent to which this sacrifice is 'reasonable', that is, on the likelihood, in any case, of obtaining future satisfactions superior to those sacrificed.¹³

Among the economic conditions of the propensity to sacrifice immediate satisfactions to expected satisfactions one must include the probability of these future satisfactions which is inscribed in the present condition. There is

still a sort of economic calculation in the unwillingness to subject existence to economic calculation. The hedonism which seizes day by day the rare satisfactions ('good times') of the immediate present is the only philosophy conceivable to those who 'have no future' and, in any case, little to expect from the future.¹⁴ It becomes clearer why the practical materialism which is particularly manifested in the relation to food is one of the most fundamental components of the popular ethos and even the popular ethic. The being-in-the-present which is affirmed in the readiness to take advantage of the good times and take time as it comes is, in itself, an affirmation of solidarity with others (who are often the only present guarantee against the threats of the future), inasmuch as this temporal immanentism is a recognition of the limits which define the condition. This is why the sobriety of the petit bourgeois is felt as a break: in abstaining from having a good time and from having it with others, the would-be petit bourgeois betrays his ambition of escaping from the common present, when, that is, he does not construct his whole self-image around the opposition between his home and the café, abstinence and intemperance, in other words, between individual salvation and collective solidarities.

The café is not a place a man goes to for a drink but a place he goes to in order to drink in company, where he can establish relationships of familiarity based on the suspension of the censorships, conventions and proprieties that prevail among strangers. In contrast to the bourgeois or petit-bourgeois café or restaurant, where each table is a separate, appropriated territory (one asks permission to borrow a chair or the salt), the working-class café is a site of companionship (each new arrival gives a collective greeting, 'Salut la compagnie!' etc.). Its focus is the counter, to be leaned on after shaking hands with the landlord—who is thus defined as the host (he often leads the conversation)—and sometimes shaking hands with the whole company; the ta-

bles, if there are any, are left to 'strangers', or women who have come in to get a drink for their child or make a phone call. In the café free rein is given to the typically popular art of the joke—the art of seeing everything as a joke (hence the reiterated 'Joking apart' or 'No joke', which mark a return to serious matters or prelude a second-degree joke), but also the art of making or playing jokes, often at the expense of the 'fat man'. He is always good for a laugh, because, in the popular code, his fatness is more a picturesque peculiarity than a defect, and because the good nature he is presumed to have predisposes him to take it in good heart and see the funny side. The joke, in other words, is the art of making fun without raising anger, by means of ritual mockery or insults which are neutralized by their very excess and which, presupposing a great familiarity, both in the knowledge they use and the freedom with which they use it, are in fact tokens of attention or affection, ways of building up while seeming to run down, of accepting while seeming to condemn—although they may also be used to test out those who show signs of stand-offishness.¹⁵

Three Styles of Distinction

The basic opposition between the tastes of luxury and the tastes of necessity is specified in as many oppositions as there are different ways of asserting one's distinction vis-à-vis the working class and its primary needs, or—which amounts to the same thing—different powers whereby necessity can be kept at a distance. Thus, within the dominant class, one can, for the sake of simplicity, distinguish three structures of the consumption distributed under three items: food, culture and presentation (clothing, beauty care, toiletries, domestic servants). These structures take strictly opposite forms—like the structures of their capital—among the teachers as against the industrial and commercial employers (see table 1). Whereas the latter have exceptionally high expenditure on food (37 percent of

TABLE 1
Yearly Spending by Teachers, Professionals, and Industrial and Commercial Employers, 1972

Type of spending	Teachers (higher and secondary)		Professionals		Industrial and commercial employers	
	Francs	% of total	Francs	% of total	Francs	% of total
Food ^a	9,969	24.4	13,956	24.4	16,578	37.4
Presentation ^b	4,912	12.0	12,680	22.2	5,616	12.7
Culture ^c	1,753	4.3	1,298	2.3	574	1.3

Source: C.S. II (1972).

a. Includes restaurant or canteen meals.

b. Clothes, shoes, repairs and cleaning, toiletries, hairdressing, domestic servants.

c. Books, newspapers and magazines, stationery, records, sport, toys, music, entertainments.

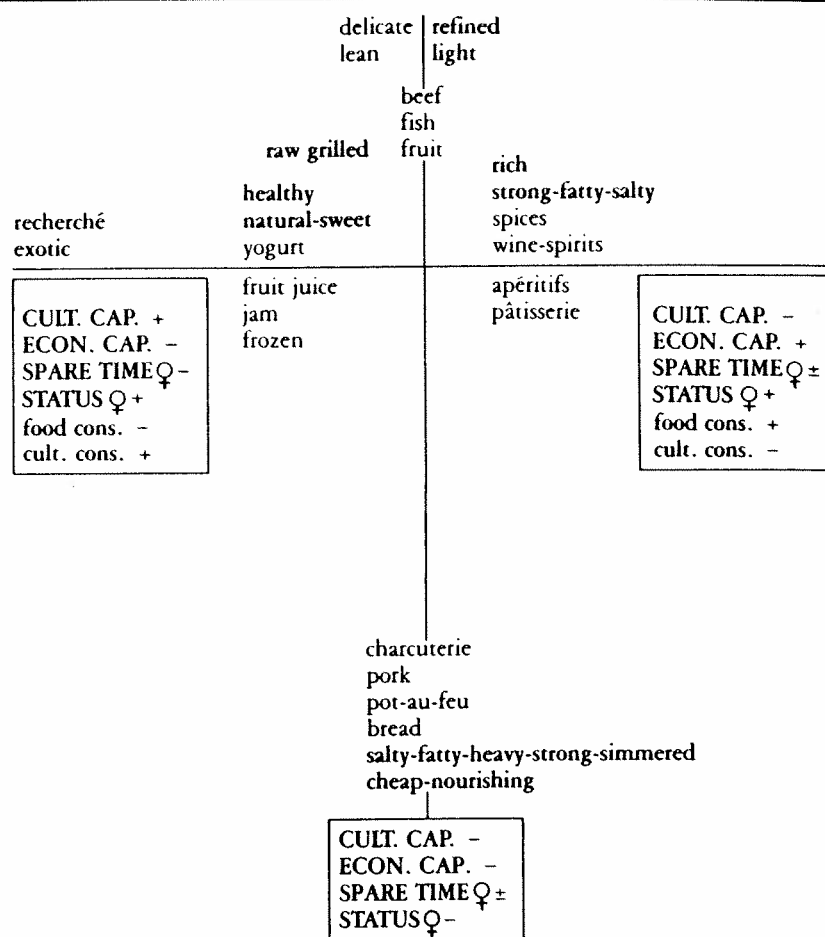
the budget), low cultural costs and medium spending on presentation and representation, the former, whose total spending is lower on average, have low expenditure on food (relatively less than manual workers), limited expenditure on presentation (though their expenditure on health is one of the highest) and relatively high expenditure on culture (books, papers, entertainments, sport, toys, music, radio and record-player). Opposed to both these groups are the members of the professions, who devote the same proportion of their budget to food as the teachers (24.4 percent), but out of much greater total expenditure (57,122 francs as against 40,884 francs), and who spend much more on presentation and representation than all other fractions, especially if the costs of domestic service are included, whereas their cultural expenditure is lower than that of the teachers (or even the engineers and senior executives, who are situated between the teachers and the professionals, though nearer the latter, for almost all items).

The system of differences becomes clearer when one looks more closely at the patterns of spending on food. In this respect the industrial and commercial employers differ markedly from the professionals, and a fortiori from the teachers, by virtue of the importance they give to cereal-based products (especially cakes and pastries), wine, meat preserves (foie gras, etc.) and game, and their relatively low spending on meat, fresh fruit

and vegetables. The teachers, whose food purchases are almost identically structured to those of office workers, spend more than all other fractions on bread, milk products, sugar, fruit preserves and non-alcoholic drinks, less on wine and spirits and distinctly less than the professions on expensive products such as meat—especially the most expensive meats, such as mutton and lamb—and fresh fruit and vegetables. The members of the professions are mainly distinguished by the high proportion of their spending which goes on expensive products, particularly meat (18.3 percent of their food budget), and especially the most expensive meat (veal, lamb, mutton), fresh fruit and vegetables, fish and shellfish, cheese and aperitifs.¹⁶

Thus, when one moves from the manual workers to the industrial and commercial employers, through foremen, craftsmen and small shopkeepers, economic constraints tend to relax without any fundamental change in the pattern of spending (see figure 4). The opposition between the two extremes is here established between the poor and the rich (*nouveau riche*), between *la bouffe* and *la grande bouffe*;¹⁷ the food consumed is increasingly rich (both in cost and in calories) and increasingly heavy (game, foie gras). By contrast, the taste of the professionals or senior executives defines the popular taste, by negation, as the taste for the heavy, the fat and the coarse, by tending towards the light, the refined and the delicate (see table 2). The disappearance of

FIGURE 4
The food space



economic constraints is accompanied by a strengthening of the social censorships which forbid coarseness and fatness, in favour of slimness and distinction. The taste for rare, aristocratic foods points to a traditional cuisine, rich in expensive or rare products (fresh vegetables, meat). Finally, the teachers, richer in cultural capital than in economic capital, and therefore inclined to ascetic consumption in all areas, pursue originality at the lowest economic cost and go in for exoticism (Italian, Chinese cooking etc.)¹⁸ and culinary populism (peasant dishes). They are thus almost consciously opposed to the (new) rich with their 'rich food', the buyers and sellers of *grosse bouffe*, the 'fat cats',¹⁹ gross in body

and mind, who have the economic means to flaunt, with an arrogance perceived as 'vulgar', a life-style which remains very close to that of the working classes as regards economic and cultural consumption.

Eating habits, especially when represented solely by the produce consumed, cannot of course be considered independently of the whole life-style. The most obvious reason for this is that the taste for particular dishes (of which the statistical shopping-basket gives only the vaguest idea) is associated, through preparation and cooking, with a whole conception of the domestic economy and of the division of labour between the sexes. A taste for elaborate casserole dishes (pot-au-feu,

TABLE 2
Annual Household Expenditures on Food: Fractions of the Dominant Class, 1972

Type of Food	Teachers (higher and secondary)			Senior executives			Professions			Engineers			Industrial and commer- cial employers		
	Average exp.		As % of all food exp.	Average exp.		As % of all food exp.	Average exp.		As % of all food exp.	Average exp.		As % of all food exp.	Average exp.		As % of all food exp.
	Francs	exp.		Francs	exp.		Francs	exp.		Francs	exp.		Francs	exp.	
Average number persons per household		3.11		3.6		3.5		3.6		3.6		3.6			
Average total household expenditure (francs)		40,844		52,156		57,122		49,822		14,339		14,339			
Average total household expenditure on food (francs)		9,969		13,158		13,956		12,666		16,578		16,578			
Expenditure on food as % of total expenditure		24.4		25.2		24.4		25.4		37.4		37.4			
	Average exp.		Average exp.		Average exp.		Average exp.		Average exp.		Average exp.		Average exp.		
	Francs	exp.	As % of all food exp.	Francs	exp.	As % of all food exp.	Francs	exp.	As % of all food exp.	Francs	exp.	As % of all food exp.	Francs	exp.	
Cereals	865	8.7	7.5	1,011	7.2	7.2	951	7.2	7.5	1,535	9.2	9.2	1,535	9.2	
bread	322	3.2	2.6	326	2.3	2.3	312	2.3	2.5	454	2.5	2.5	454	2.5	
cakes, pastries	452	4.5	4.1	548	4.0	4.0	539	4.2	4.2	989	4.2	4.2	989	4.2	
rusks	16	0.2	0.2	33	0.2	0.2	28	0.2	0.2	29	0.1	0.1	29	0.1	
rice	35	0.3	0.2	62	0.4	0.4	41	0.3	0.3	53	0.1	0.1	53	0.1	
flour	40	0.4	0.2	41	0.3	0.3	31	0.2	0.2	28	0.1	0.1	28	0.1	
Vegetables	766	7.7	7.7	1,100	7.9	7.9	899	7.7	7.1	1,222	7.4	7.4	1,222	7.4	
potatoes	81	0.8	0.7	95	0.7	0.7	98	0.7	0.7	152	0.8	0.8	152	0.8	
fresh vegetables	555	5.6	5.5	811	5.8	5.8	647	5.1	5.1	915	5.1	5.1	915	5.1	
dried or canned	131	1.3	1.4	216	1.5	1.5	154	1.2	1.2	153	0.8	0.8	153	0.8	
Fruit	632	6.3	6.6	990	7.2	7.2	864	6.8	6.8	877	5.2	5.2	877	5.2	
fresh fruit	295	2.9	3.1	586	4.2	4.2	424	3.3	3.3	547	3.1	3.1	547	3.1	
citrus fruit, bananas	236	2.4	2.6	303	2.2	2.2	324	2.5	2.5	256	1.4	1.4	256	1.4	
dried	102	1.0	0.9	98	0.7	0.7	116	0.9	0.9	72	0.4	0.4	72	0.4	
Butcher's meat	1,556	15.6	18.0	2,552	18.3	18.3	2,073	16.4	16.4	2,323	14.0	14.0	2,323	14.0	
beef	814	8.1	9.8	1,291	8.7	8.7	1,144	9.0	9.0	1,273	7.2	7.2	1,273	7.2	
veal	335	3.4	3.4	452	4.5	4.5	402	3.1	3.1	377	2.3	2.3	377	2.3	
mutton, lamb	156	1.6	2.3	315	3.2	3.2	242	1.9	1.9	390	2.2	2.2	390	2.2	
horse	31	0.3	0.3	49	0.3	0.3	37	0.3	0.3	94	0.5	0.5	94	0.5	
pork (fresh)	221	2.2	1.7	239	1.7	1.7	247	1.9	1.9	187	1.3	1.3	187	1.3	

Pork products	634	6.3	741	5.6	774	5.5	705	5.6	812	4.9
Meat preserves	336	3.4	350	2.6	233	1.7	310	2.4	1,362	8.0
Fish, shellfish	336	3.4	503	3.8	719	5.1	396	3.1	588	3.5
Poultry	235	2.3	311	2.4	399	2.8	310	2.4	333	2.0
Rabbit, game	36	0.3	97	0.7	148	1.1	89	0.7	289	1.7
Eggs	149	1.4	172	1.3	190	1.4	178	1.4	185	1.1
Milk	299	3.0	271	2.0	249	1.8	287	2.3	309	1.9
Cheese, yogurt	692	6.9	776	5.9	843	6.0	785	6.1	1,090	6.5
Fats	399	4.0	564	4.3	525	3.8	504	4.0	551	3.3
butter	320	3.2	408	3.1	379	2.7	371	2.9	405	2.4
oil	66	0.6	136	1.0	132	1.0	103	0.8	112	0.6
margarine	12	0.1	17	0.1	12	0.1	29	0.2	19	0.1
lard	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	13	0.1
Sugar, confectionery, cocoa	304	3.0	395	3.0	265	1.9	327	2.6	407	2.4
Alcohol	711	7.1	1,365	10.3	1,329	9.5	937	7.4	2,218	13.4
wine	457	4.6	869	6.6	899	6.4	392	3.1	1,881	11.8
beer	82	0.8	91	0.7	40	0.3	184	1.4	93	0.5
cider	13	0.1	12	0	0	0	8	0	5	0
apéritifs, liqueurs etc.	157	1.6	391	3.0	389	2.8	352	2.8	237	1.4
Non-alcoholic drinks	344	3.4	342	2.6	267	1.9	295	2.3	327	2.0
Coffee, tea	152	1.5	215	1.5	291	2.1	178	1.4	298	1.8
Restaurant meals	829	8.3	1,863	13.0	1,562	11.2	1,372	10.8	1,179	7.1
Canteen meals	745	7.5	562	4.0	221	1.6	773	6.1	299	1.8
Miscellaneous	264	2.6	379	2.7	258	1.8	432	3.4	324	1.9

Source: C.S. II (1972).

blanquette, daube), which demand a big investment of time and interest, is linked to a traditional conception of woman's role. Thus there is a particularly strong opposition in this respect between the working classes and the dominated fractions of the dominant class, in which the women, whose labour has a high market value (and who, perhaps as a result, have a higher sense of their own value) tend to devote their spare time rather to child care and the transmission of cultural capital, and to contest the traditional division of domestic labour. The aim of saving time and labour in preparation combines with the search for light, low-calorie products, and points towards grilled meat and fish, raw vegetables ('*salades composées*'), frozen foods, yogurt and other milk products, all of which are diametrically opposed to popular dishes, the most typical of which is pot-au-feu, made with cheap meat that is boiled (as opposed to grilled or roasted), a method of cooking that chiefly demands time. It is no accident that this form of cooking symbolizes one state of female existence and of the sexual division of labour (a woman entirely devoted to housework is called 'pot-au-feu'), just as the slippers put on before dinner symbolize the complementary male rôle.

Small industrial and commercial employers, the incarnation of the 'grocer' traditionally execrated by artists, are the category who most often (60 percent) say they change into their carpet slippers every day before dinner, whereas the professions and the senior executives are most inclined to reject this petit-bourgeois symbol (35 percent say they never do it). The particularly high consumption of carpet slippers by working-class women (both urban and rural) no doubt reflects the relation to the body and to self-presentation entailed by confinement to the home and to domestic life. (The wives of craftsmen, shopkeepers and manual workers are those who most often say that their choice of clothes is mainly guided by a concern to please their husbands.)

It is among manual workers that most time and interest is devoted to cooking: 69 percent of those

questioned say they like doing elaborate cooking (*la grande cuisine*), as against 59 percent of the junior executives, 52 percent of the small shopkeepers and 51 percent of the senior executives, professionals and industrialists (C.S. V). (Another indirect index of these differences as regards the sexual division of labour is that whereas the teachers and senior executives seem to give priority to a washing machine and a dishwasher, for the professionals and industrial or commercial employers priority seems to go rather to a TV set and a car—C.S. II.) Finally, when invited to choose their two favourite dishes from a list of seven, the farm workers and manual workers, who, like all other categories, give the highest rank to roast leg of lamb, are the most inclined (45 percent and 34 percent, as against 28 percent of the clerical workers, 20 percent of the senior executives and 19 percent of the small employers) to choose pot-au-feu (the farm workers are almost the only ones who choose *andouillette*—pork tripe sausage—14 percent of them, as against 4 percent of the manual workers, clerical workers and junior executives, 3 percent of the senior executives and 0 percent of the small employers). Manual workers and small employers also favour coq au vin (50 percent and 48 percent), a dish typical of small restaurants aiming to be 'posh', and perhaps for this reason associated with the idea of 'eating out' (compared with 42 percent of the clerical workers, 39 percent of the senior executives and 37 percent of the farm workers). The executives, professionals and big employers clearly distinguish themselves solely by choosing—from a list which for them is particularly narrow—the dish which is both relatively 'light' and symbolically marked (in contrast to the ordinary routine of petit-bourgeois cooking), bouillabaisse (31 percent, as against 22 percent of the clerical workers, 17 percent of the small employers, 10 percent of the manual workers, 7 percent of the farm workers), in which the opposition between fish and meat (especially the pork in sauerkraut or *cassoulet*) is clearly strengthened by regionalist and touristic connotations (C.S. IV). It is obvious that the imprecise classifications used in this survey prevent one from seeing the effects of the secondary opposition between the fractions, and that the tenden-

cies observed would have been more marked if, for example, it had been possible to isolate the teachers or if the list of dishes had been more diversified in the sociologically pertinent respects.

Tastes in food also depend on the idea each class has of the body and of the effects of food on the body, that is, on its strength, health and beauty; and on the categories it uses to evaluate these effects, some of which may be important for one class and ignored by another, and which the different classes may rank in very different ways. Thus, whereas the working classes are more attentive to the strength of the (male) body than its shape, and tend to go for products that are both cheap and nutritious, the professions prefer products that are tasty, health-giving, light and not fattening. Taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is, embodied, helps to shape the class body. It is an incorporated principle of classification which governs all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests and digests and assimilates, physiologically and psychologically. It follows that the body is the most indisputable materialization of class taste, which it manifests in several ways. It does this first in the seemingly most natural features of the body, the dimensions (volume, height, weight) and shapes (round or square, stiff or supple, straight or curved) of its visible forms, which express in countless ways a whole relation to the body, i.e., a way of treating it, caring for it, feeding it, maintaining it, which reveals the deepest dispositions of the habitus. It is in fact through preferences with regard to food which may be perpetuated beyond their social conditions of production (as, in other areas, an accent, a walk etc.),²⁰ and also, of course, through the uses of the body in work and leisure which are bound up with them, that the class distribution of bodily properties is determined.

The quasi-conscious representation of the approved form of the perceived body, and in particular its thinness or fatness, is not the only mediation through which the social defi-

nition of appropriate foods is established. At a deeper level, the whole body schema, in particular the physical approach to the act of eating, governs the selection of certain foods. For example, in the working classes, fish tends to be regarded as an unsuitable food for men, not only because it is a light food, insufficiently 'filling', which would only be cooked for health reasons, i.e., for invalids and children, but also because, like fruit (except bananas) it is one of the 'fiddly' things which a man's hands cannot cope with and which make him childlike (the woman, adopting a maternal role, as in all similar cases, will prepare the fish on the plate or peel the pear); but above all, it is because fish has to be eaten in a way which totally contradicts the masculine way of eating, that is, with restraint, in small mouthfuls, chewed gently, with the front of the mouth, on the tips of the teeth (because of the bones). The whole masculine identity—what is called virility—is involved in these two ways of eating, nibbling and picking, as befits a woman, or with whole-hearted male gulps and mouthfuls, just as it is involved in the two (perfectly homologous) ways of talking, with the front of the mouth or the whole mouth, especially the back of the mouth, the throat (in accordance with the opposition, noted in an earlier study, between the manners symbolized by *la bouche* and *la gueule*).²¹

This opposition can be found in each of the uses of the body, especially in the most insignificant-looking ones, which, as such, are predisposed to serve as 'memory joggers' charged with the group's deepest values, its most fundamental 'beliefs'. It would be easy to show, for example, that Kleenex tissues, which have to be used delicately, with a little sniff from the tip of the nose, are to the big cotton handkerchief, which is blown into sharply and loudly, with the eyes closed and the nose held tightly, as repressed laughter is to a belly laugh, with wrinkled nose, wide-open mouth and deep breathing ('doubled up with laughter'), as if to amplify to the utmost an experience which will not suffer containment, not least because it has to be shared,

and therefore clearly manifested for the benefit of others.

And the practical philosophy of the male body as a sort of power, big and strong, with enormous, imperative, brutal needs, which is asserted in every male posture, especially when eating, is also the principle of the division of foods between the sexes, a division which both sexes recognize in their practices and their language. It behooves a man to drink and eat more, and to eat and drink stronger things. Thus, men will have two rounds of aperitifs (more on special occasions), big ones in big glasses (the success of Ricard or Pernod is no doubt partly due to its being a drink both strong and copious—not a dainty ‘thimbleful’), and they leave the tit-bits (savory biscuits, peanuts) to the children and the women, who have a small measure (not enough to ‘get tipsy’) of homemade aperitif (for which they swap recipes). Similarly, among the hors d’oeuvres, the *charcuterie* is more for the men, and later the cheese, especially if it is strong, whereas the *crudités* (raw vegetables) are more for the women, like the salad; and these affinities are marked by taking a second helping or sharing what is left over. Meat, the nourishing food par excellence, strong and strong-making, giving vigour, blood, and health, is the dish for the men, who take a second helping, whereas the women are satisfied with a small portion. It is not that they are stinting themselves; they really don’t want what others might need, especially the men, the natural meat-eaters, and they derive a sort of authority from what they do not see as a privation. Besides, they don’t have a taste for men’s food, which is reputed to be harmful when eaten to excess (for example, a surfeit of meat can ‘turn the blood’, over-excite, bring you out in spots etc.) and may even arouse a sort of disgust.

Strictly biological differences are underlined and symbolically accentuated by differences in bearing, differences in gesture, posture and behaviour which express a whole relationship to the social world. To these are added all the deliberate modifications of appearance, especially by use of the set of

marks—cosmetic (hairstyle, make-up, beard, moustache, whiskers etc.) or vestimentary—which, because they depend on the economic and cultural means that can be invested in them, function as social markers deriving their meaning and value from their position in the system of distinctive signs which they constitute and which is itself homologous with the system of social positions. The sign-bearing, sign-wearing body is also a producer of signs which are physically marked by the relationship to the body: thus the valorization of virility, expressed in a use of the mouth or a pitch of the voice, can determine the whole of working-class pronunciation. The body, a social product which is the only tangible manifestation of the ‘person’, is commonly perceived as the most natural expression of innermost nature. There are no merely ‘physical’ facial signs; the colour and thickness of lipstick, or expressions, as well as the shape of the face or the mouth, are immediately read as indices of a ‘moral’ physiognomy, socially characterized, i.e., of a ‘vulgar’ or ‘distinguished’ mind, naturally ‘natural’ or naturally ‘cultivated’. The signs constituting the perceived body, cultural products which differentiate groups by their degree of culture, that is, their distance from nature, seem grounded in nature. The legitimate use of the body is spontaneously perceived as an index of moral uprightness, so that its opposite, a ‘natural’ body, is seen as an index of *laisser-aller* (‘letting oneself go’), a culpable surrender to facility.

Thus one can begin to map out a universe of class bodies, which (biological accidents apart) tends to reproduce in its specific logic the universe of the social structure. It is no accident that bodily properties are perceived through social systems of classification which are not independent of the distribution of these properties among the social classes. The prevailing taxonomies tend to rank and contrast the properties most frequent among the dominant (i.e., the rarest ones) and those most frequent among the dominated.²² The social representation of his own body which each agent has to reckon with,²³ from the very beginning, in order to build up his sub-

jective image of his body and his bodily heixis, is thus obtained by applying a social system of classification based on the same principle as the social products to which it is applied. Thus, bodies would have every likelihood of receiving a value strictly corresponding to the positions of their owners in the distribution of the other fundamental properties—but for the fact that the logic of social heredity sometimes endows those least endowed in all other respects with the rarest bodily properties, such as beauty (sometimes ‘fatally’ attractive, because it threatens the other hierarchies), and, conversely, sometimes denies the ‘high and mighty’ the bodily attributes of their position, such as height or beauty.

Unpretentious or Uncouth?

It is clear that tastes in food cannot be considered in complete independence of the other dimensions of the relationship to the world, to others and to one’s own body, through which the practical philosophy of each class is enacted. To demonstrate this, one would have to make a systematic comparison of the working-class and bourgeois ways of treating food, of serving, presenting and offering it, which are infinitely more revelatory than even the nature of the products involved (especially since most surveys of consumption ignore differences in quality). The analysis is a difficult one, because each life-style can only really be constructed in relation to the other, which is its objective and subjective negation, so that the meaning of behaviour is totally reversed depending on which point of view is adopted and on whether the common words which have to be used to name the conduct (e.g., ‘manners’) are invested with popular or bourgeois connotations.

Plain speaking, plain eating: the working-class meal is characterized by plenty (which does not exclude restrictions and limits) and above all by freedom. ‘Elastic’ and ‘abundant’ dishes are brought to the table—soups or sauces, pasta or potatoes (almost always included among the vegetables)—and served

with a ladle or spoon, to avoid too much measuring and counting, in contrast to everything that has to be cut and divided, such as roasts.²⁴ This impression of abundance, which is the norm on special occasions, and always applies, so far as is possible, for the men, whose plates are filled twice (a privilege which marks a boy’s accession to manhood), is often balanced, on ordinary occasions, by restrictions which generally apply to the women, who will share one portion between two, or eat the leftovers of the previous day; a girl’s accession to womanhood is marked by doing without. It is part of men’s status to eat and to eat well (and also to drink well); it is particularly insisted that they should eat, on the grounds that ‘it won’t keep’, and there is something suspect about a refusal. On Sundays, while the women are on their feet, busily serving, clearing the table, washing up, the men remain seated, still eating and drinking. These strongly marked differences of social status (associated with sex and age) are accompanied by no practical differentiation (such as the bourgeois division between the dining room and the kitchen, where the servants eat and sometimes the children), and strict sequencing of the meal tends to be ignored. Everything may be put on the table at much the same time (which also saves walking), so that the women may have reached the dessert, and also the children, who will take their plates and watch television, while the men are still eating the main dish and the ‘lad’, who has arrived late, is swallowing his soup.

This freedom, which may be perceived as disorder or slovenliness, is adapted to its function. Firstly, it is labour-saving, which is seen as an advantage. Because men take no part in housework, not least because the women would not allow it—it would be a dishonour to see men step outside their rôle—every economy of effort is welcome. Thus, when the coffee is served, a single spoon may be passed around to stir it. But these short cuts are only permissible because one is and feels at home, among the family, where ceremony would be an affectation. For example,

men vs women

eat (TV) / serving / (need)

to save washing up, the dessert may be handed out on improvised plates torn from the cake-box (with a joke about 'taking the liberty', to mark the transgression), and the neighbour invited in for a meal will also receive his piece of cardboard (offering a plate would exclude him) as a sign of familiarity. Similarly, the plates are not changed between dishes. The soup plate, wiped with bread, can be used right through the meal. The hostess will certainly offer to 'change the plates', pushing back her chair with one hand and reaching with the other for the plate next to her, but everyone will protest ('It all gets mixed up inside you') and if she were to insist it would look as if she wanted to show off her crockery (which she is allowed to if it is a new present) or to treat her guests as strangers, as is sometimes deliberately done to intruders or 'scroungers' who never return the invitation. These unwanted guests may be frozen out by changing their plates despite their protests, not laughing at their jokes, or scolding the children for their behaviour ('No, no, *we* don't mind', say the guests; 'They ought to know better by now', the parents respond). The common root of all these 'liberties' is no doubt the sense that at least there will not be self-imposed controls, constraints and restrictions—especially not in eating, a primary need and a compensation—and especially not in the heart of domestic life, the one realm of freedom, when everywhere else, and at all other times, necessity prevails.

In opposition to the free-and-easy working-class meal, the bourgeoisie is concerned to eat with all due form. Form is first of all a matter of rhythm, which implies expectations, pauses, restraints; waiting until the last person served has started to eat, taking modest helpings, not appearing over-eager. A strict sequence is observed and all coexistence of dishes which the sequence separates, fish and meat, cheese and dessert, is excluded: for example, before the dessert is served, everything left on the table, even the salt-cellar, is removed, and the crumbs are swept up. This extension of rigorous rules into everyday life (the bourgeois male shaves and dresses first

thing every morning, and not just to 'go out'), refusing the division between home and the exterior, the quotidian and the extra-quotidian, is not explained solely by the presence of strangers—servants and guests—in the familiar family world. It is the expression of a habitus of order, restraint and propriety which may not be abdicated. The relation to food—the primary need and pleasure—is only one dimension of the bourgeois relation to the social world. The opposition between the immediate and the deferred, the easy and the difficult, substance (or function) and form, which is exposed in a particularly striking fashion in bourgeois ways of eating, is the basis of all aestheticization of practice and every aesthetic. Through all the forms and formalisms imposed on the immediate appetite, what is demanded—and inculcated—is not only a disposition to discipline food consumption by a conventional structuring which is also a gentle, indirect, invisible censorship (quite different from enforced privations) and which is an element in an art of living (correct eating, for example, is a way of paying homage to one's hosts and to the mistress of the house, a tribute to her care and effort). It is also a whole relationship to animal nature, to primary needs and the populace who indulge them without restraint; it is a way of denying the meaning and primary function of consumption, which are essentially common, by making the meal a social ceremony, an affirmation of ethical tone and aesthetic refinement. The manner of presenting and consuming the food, the organization of the meal and setting of the places, strictly differentiated according to the sequence of dishes and arranged to please the eye, the presentation of the dishes, considered as much in terms of shape and colour (like works of art) as of their consumable substance, the etiquette governing posture and gesture, ways of serving oneself and others, of using the different utensils, the seating plan, strictly but discreetly hierarchical, the censorship of all bodily manifestations of the act or pleasure of eating (such as noise or haste), the very refinement of the things consumed, with quality more im-

portant than quantity—this whole commitment to stylization tends to shift the emphasis from substance and function to form and manner, and so to deny the crudely material reality of the act of eating and of the things consumed, or, which amounts to the same thing, the basely material vulgarity of those who indulge in the immediate satisfactions of food and drink.²⁵

Given the basic opposition between form and substance, one could re-generate each of the oppositions between the two antagonistic approaches to the treatment of food and the act of eating. In one case, food is claimed as a material reality, a nourishing substance which sustains the body and gives strength (hence the emphasis on heavy, fatty, strong foods, of which the paradigm is pork—fatty and salty—the antithesis of fish—light, lean and bland); in the other, the priority given to form (the shape of the body, for example) and social form, formality, puts the pursuit of strength and substance in the background and identifies true freedom with the elective asceticism of a self-imposed rule. And it could be shown that two antagonistic world views, two worlds, two representations of human excellence are contained in this matrix. Substance—or matter—is what is substantial, not only 'filling' but also real, as opposed to all appearances, all the fine words and empty gestures that 'butter no parsnips' and are, as the phrase goes, purely symbolic; reality, as against sham, imitation, window-dressing; the little eating-house with its marble-topped tables and paper napkins where you get an honest square meal and aren't 'paying for the wallpaper' as in fancy restaurants; being, as against seeming, nature and the natural, simplicity (pot-luck, 'take it as it comes', 'no standing on ceremony'), as against embarrassment, mincing and posturing, airs and graces, which are always suspected of being a substitute for substance, i.e., for sincerity, for feeling, for what is felt and proved in actions; it is the free-speech and language of the heart which make the true 'nice guy', blunt, straightforward, unbending, honest, genuine, 'straight down the line' and 'straight as a die',

as opposed to everything that is pure form, done only for form's sake; it is freedom and the refusal of complications, as opposed to respect for all the forms and formalities spontaneously perceived as instruments of distinction and power. On these moralities, these world views, there is no neutral viewpoint; what for some is shameless and slovenly, for others is straightforward, unpretentious; familiarity is for some the most absolute form of recognition, the abdication of all distance, a trusting openness, a relation of equal to equal; for others, who shun familiarity, it is an unseemly liberty.

The popular realism which inclines working people to reduce practices to the reality of their function, to do what they do, and be what they are ('That's the way I am'), without 'kidding themselves' ('That's the way it is'), and the practical materialism which inclines them to censor the expression of feelings or to divert emotion into violence or oaths, are the near-perfect antithesis of the aesthetic disavowal which, by a sort of essential hypocrisy (seen, for example, in the opposition between pornography and eroticism) masks the interest in function by the primacy given to form, so that what people do, they do as if they were not doing it.

The Visible and the Invisible

But food—which the working classes place on the side of being and substance, whereas the bourgeoisie, refusing the distinction between inside and outside or 'at home' and 'for others', the quotidian and the extra-quotidian, introduces into it the categories of form and appearance—is itself related to clothing as inside to outside, the domestic to the public, being to seeming. And the inversion of the places of food and clothing in the contrast between the spending patterns of the working classes, who give priority to being, and the middle classes, where the concern for 'seeming' arises, is the sign of a reversal of the whole world view. The working classes make a realistic or, one might say, functionalist use of clothing. Looking for substance and func-

tion rather than form, they seek 'value for money' and choose what will 'last'. Ignoring the bourgeois concern to introduce formality and formal dress into the domestic world, the place for freedom—an apron and slippers (for women), bare chest or a vest (for men)—they scarcely mark the distinction between top clothes, visible, intended to be seen, and underclothes, invisible or hidden—unlike the middle classes, who have a degree of anxiety about external appearances, both sartorial and cosmetic, at least outside and at work (to which middle-class women more often have access).

Thus, despite the limits of the data available, one finds in men's clothing (which is much more socially marked, at the level of what can be grasped by statistics on purchases, than women's clothing) the equivalent of the major oppositions found in food consumption. In the first dimension of the space, the division again runs between the office workers and the manual workers and is marked particularly by the opposition between grey or white overalls and blue dungarees or boiler-suits, between town shoes and the more relaxed moccasins, kickers or sneakers (not to mention dressing-gowns, which clerical workers buy 3.5 times more often than manual workers). The increased quantity and quality of all purchases of men's clothing is summed up in the opposition between the suit, the prerogative of the senior executive, and the blue overall, the distinctive mark of the farmer and industrial worker (it is virtually unknown in other groups, except craftsmen); or between the overcoat, always much rarer among men than women, but much more frequent among senior executives than the other classes, and the fur-lined jacket or lumber jacket, mainly worn by agricultural and industrial workers. In between are the junior executives, who now scarcely ever wear working clothes but fairly often buy suits.

Among women, who, in all categories (except farmers and farm labourers), spend more than men (especially in the junior and senior executive, professional and other high-income categories), the number of purchases increases

as one moves up the social hierarchy; the difference is greatest for suits and costumes—expensive garments—and smaller for dresses and especially skirts and jackets. The topcoat, which is increasingly frequent among women at higher social levels, is opposed to the 'all-purpose' raincoat, in the same way as overcoat and lumber jacket are opposed for men. The use of the smock and the apron, which in the working classes is virtually the housewife's uniform, increases as one moves down the hierarchy (in contrast to the dressing-gown, which is virtually unknown among peasants and industrial workers).

The interest the different classes have in self-presentation, the attention they devote to it, their awareness of the profits it gives and the investment of time, effort, sacrifice and care which they actually put into it are proportionate to the chances of material or symbolic profit they can reasonably expect from it. More precisely, they depend on the existence of a labour market in which physical appearance may be valorized in the performance of the job itself or in professional relations; and on the differential chances of access to this market and the sectors of this market in which beauty and deportment most strongly contribute to occupational value. A first indication of this correspondence between the propensity to cosmetic investments and the chances of profit may be seen in the gap, for all forms of beauty care, between those who work and those who do not (which must also vary according to the nature of the job and the work environment). It can be understood in terms of this logic why working-class women, who are less likely to have a job and much less likely to enter one of the occupations which most strictly demand conformity to the dominant norms of beauty, are less aware than all others of the 'market' value of beauty and much less inclined to invest time and effort, sacrifices and money in cultivating their bodies.

It is quite different with the women of the petite bourgeoisie, especially the new petite bourgeoisie, in the occupations involving presentation and representation, which often im-

pose a uniform (*tenue*) intended, among other things, to abolish all traces of heterodox taste, and which always demand what is called *tenue*, in the sense of 'dignity of conduct and correctness of manners', implying, according to the dictionary, 'a refusal to give way to vulgarity or facility'. (In the specialized 'charm schools' which train hostesses, the working-class girls who select themselves on the basis of 'natural' beauty undergo a radical transformation in their way of walking, sitting, laughing, smiling, talking, dressing, making-up etc.) Women of the petite bourgeoisie who have sufficient interests in the market in which physical properties can function as capital to recognize the dominant image of the body unconditionally without possessing, at least in their own eyes (and no doubt objectively) enough body capital to obtain the highest profits, are, here too, at the site of greatest tension.

The self-assurance given by the certain knowledge of one's own value, especially that of one's body or speech, is in fact very closely linked to the position occupied in social space (and also, of course, to trajectory). Thus, the proportion of women who consider themselves below average in beauty, or who think they look older than they are, falls very rapidly as one moves up the social hierarchy. Similarly, the ratings women give themselves for the different parts of their bodies tend to rise with social position, and this despite the fact that the implicit demands rise too. It is not surprising that petit-bourgeois women—who are almost as dissatisfied with their bodies as working-class women (they are the ones who most often wish they looked different and who are most discontented with various parts of their bodies), while being more aware of the usefulness of beauty and more often recognizing the dominant ideal of physical excellence—devote such great investments, of self-denial and especially of time, to improving their appearance and are such unconditional believers in all forms of cosmetic voluntarism (e.g., plastic surgery).

As for the women of the dominant class, they derive a double assurance from their bod-

ies. Believing, like petit-bourgeois women, in the value of beauty and the value of the effort to be beautiful, and so associating aesthetic value and moral value, they feel superior both in the intrinsic, natural beauty of their bodies and in the art of self-embellishment and everything they call *tenue*, a moral and aesthetic virtue which defines 'nature' negatively as sloppiness. Beauty can thus be simultaneously a gift of nature and a conquest of merit, as much opposed to the abdications of vulgarity as to ugliness.

Thus, the experience par excellence of the 'alienated body', embarrassment, and the opposite experience, ease, are clearly unequally probable for members of the petite bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, who grant the same recognition to the same representation of the legitimate body and legitimate deportment, but are unequally able to achieve it. The chances of experiencing one's own body as a vessel of grace, a continuous miracle, are that much greater when bodily capacity is commensurate with recognition; and, conversely, the probability of experiencing the body with unease, embarrassment, timidity grows with the disparity between the ideal body and the real body, the dream body and the 'looking-glass self' reflected in the reactions of others (the same laws are also true of speech).

Although it is not a petit-bourgeois monopoly, the petit-bourgeois experience of the world starts out from timidity, the embarrassment of someone who is uneasy in his body and his language and who, instead of being 'as one body with them', observes them from outside, through other people's eyes, watching, checking, correcting himself, and who, by his desperate attempts to reappropriate an alienated being-for-others, exposes himself to appropriation, giving himself away as much by hyper-correction as by clumsiness. The timidity which, despite itself, realizes the objectified body, which lets itself be trapped in the destiny proposed by collective perception and statement (nicknames etc.), is betrayed by a body that is subject to the representation of others even in its passive, unconscious reac-

tions (one feels oneself blushing). By contrast, ease, a sort of indifference to the objectifying gaze of others which neutralizes its powers, presupposes the self-assurance which comes from the certainty of being able to objectify that objectification, appropriate that appropriation, of being capable of imposing the norms of apperception of one's own body, in short, of commanding all the powers which, even when they reside in the body and apparently borrow its most specific weapons, such as 'presence' or charm, are essentially irreducible to it. This is the real meaning of the findings of the experiment by W. D. Dannenmaier and F. J. Thumin, in which the subjects, when asked to assess the height of familiar persons from memory, tended to overestimate most of the height of those who had most authority or prestige in their eyes.²⁶ It would seem that the logic whereby the 'great' are perceived as physically greater than they are applies very generally, and that authority of whatever sort contains a power of seduction which it would be naive to reduce to the effect of self-interested servility. That is why political contestation has always made use of caricature, a distortion of the bodily image intended to break the charm and hold up to ridicule one of the principles of the effect of authority imposition.

Charm and charisma in fact designate the power, which certain people have, to impose their own self-image as the objective and collective image of their body and being; to persuade others, as in love or faith, to abdicate their generic power of objectification and delegate it to the person who should be its object, who thereby becomes an absolute subject, without an exterior (being his own Other), fully justified in existing, legitimated. The charismatic leader manages to be for the group what he is for himself, instead of being for himself, like those dominated in the symbolic struggle, what he is for others. He 'makes' the opinion which makes him; he constitutes himself as an absolute by a manipulation of symbolic power which is constitutive of his power since it enables him to produce and impose his own objectification.

The Universes of Stylistic Possibles

Thus, the spaces defined by preferences in food, clothing or cosmetics are organized according to the same fundamental structure, that of the social space determined by volume and composition of capital. Fully to construct the space of life-styles within which cultural practices are defined, one would first have to establish, for each class and class fraction, that is, for each of the configurations of capital, the generative formula of the habitus which retranslates the necessities and facilities characteristic of that class of (relatively) homogeneous conditions of existence into a particular life-style. One would then have to determine how the dispositions of the habitus are specified, for each of the major areas of practice, by implementing one of the stylistic possibles offered by each field (the field of sport, or music, or food, decoration, politics, language etc.). By superimposing these homologous spaces one would obtain a rigorous representation of the space of life-styles, making it possible to characterize each of the distinctive features (e.g., wearing a cap or playing the piano) in the two respects in which it is objectively defined, that is, on the one hand by reference to the set of features constituting the area in question (e.g., the system of hair-styles), and on the other hand by reference to the set of features constituting a particular life-style (e.g., the working-class life-style), within which its social significance is determined.

Sources

The survey on which the work was based was carried out in 1963, after a preliminary survey by extended interview and ethnographic observation, on a sample of 692 subjects (both sexes) in Paris, Lille and a small provincial town. To obtain a sample large enough to make it possible to analyse variations in practices and opinions in relation to sufficiently homogeneous social units, a complementary survey was carried out in 1967-68, bringing the total number of subjects to 1,217. Because the survey measured relatively stable dispositions, this

time-lag does not seem to have affected the responses (except perhaps for the question on singers, an area of culture where fashions change more rapidly).

The following complementary sources (C.S.) were also used:

I. The 1966 survey on 'businessmen and senior executives' was carried out by SOFRES (Société française d'enquêtes par sondages) on behalf of the Centre d'études des supports de publicité (CESP). The sample consisted of 2,257 persons aged 15 and over, each living in a household the head of which was a large industrial or commercial employer, a member of the professions, a senior executive, an engineer or a secondary or higher-education teacher. The questionnaire included a set of questions on reading habits and the previous few days' reading of daily, weekly and monthly newspapers and magazines, use of radio and TV, standard of living, household equipment, life-style (holidays, sport, consumption), professional life (conferences, travel, business meals), cultural practices and the principal basic data (educational level, income, population of place of residence etc.). I had access to the whole set of distributions by the socio-occupational category of the head of household or individual.

II. The regular survey by INSEE (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques) on household living conditions and expenditure was based in 1972 on a representative sample of 13,000 households. It consists of a survey by questionnaire dealing with the characteristics of the household (composition, ages, occupation of the head), accommodation and facilities, major expenditure (clothing, fuel etc.), periodic expenditure (rent, service charges etc.), combined with analysis of account books for current expenditure, left with each household for a week, collected and checked by the interviewer. This survey makes it possible to assess the whole range of expenditure (except certain major and infrequent items such as air travel, removal expenses etc.), as well as items of consumption not preceded by purchase (food in the case of farmers, items drawn from their stocks by craftsmen and shopkeepers), which are evaluated at their retail price to allow comparison with the other categories of households. This explains why consumption is considerably higher than income in the case of farmers and small businessmen (categories which are always particularly prone to under-declare their income). For the overall findings, see G. Bigata and B. Bouvier, 'Les conditions de vie des ménages en 1972', *Collections de l'INSEE*, ser. M, no. 32 (February 1972). The data presented here come from secondary analysis of tables by narrow categories produced at my request.

The other surveys consulted are simply listed below. These studies, almost always devoted to a particular area of cultural activity, are generally based on relatively limited samples. They mostly use a classification which groups the occupations into five categories: (1) *agriculteurs* (farmers and farm labourers); (2) *ouvriers* (industrial manual workers); (3) industrial and commercial employers; (4) clerical workers and junior executives; (5) senior executives and the 'liberal professions'.

III. INSEE, 'La consommation alimentaire des Français', *Collections de l'INSEE*. (The regular INSEE surveys on eating habits.)

IV. SOFRES, *Les habitudes de table des Français* (Paris, 1972).

V. SOFRES, *Les Français et la gastronomie*, July 1977. (Sample of 1,000.)

Notes

1. The gaps are more clear-cut and certainly more visible as regards education than income, because information on incomes (based on tax declarations) is much less reliable than information on qualifications. This is especially true of industrial and commercial employers (who, in the CESP survey—C.S. I—provided, along with doctors, the highest rate of non-response to the questions about income), craftsmen, shopkeepers and farmers.

2. It follows from this that the relationship between conditions of existence and practices or the meaning of practices is not to be understood in terms either of the logic of mechanism or of the logic of consciousness.

3. In contrast to the atomistic approach of social psychology, which breaks the unity of practice to establish partial 'laws' claiming to account for the products of practice, the *opus operatum*, the aim is to establish general laws reproducing the laws of production, the *modus operandi*.

4. Economic theory, which treats economic agents as interchangeable actors, paradoxically fails to take account of the economic dispositions, and is thereby prevented from really explaining the systems of preferences which define incommensurable and independent subjective use-values.

5. An ethic, which seeks to impose the principles of an ethos (i.e., the forced choices of a social condition) as a universal norm, is another, more subtle way of succumbing to *amor fati*, of being content with what one is and has. Such is the basis of the felt contradiction between ethics and revolutionary intent.

6. 'Bourgeois' is used here as shorthand for 'dominant fractions of the dominant class', and 'intellectual' or 'artist' functions in the same way for 'dominated fractions of the dominant class'.

7. F. Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht* (Stuttgart, Alfred Kröner, 1964), no. 943, p. 630.

8. Bananas are the only fruit for which manual workers and farm workers have higher annual per capita spending (FF 23.26 and FF 25.20) than all other classes, especially the senior executives, who spend most on apples (FF 31.60 as against FF 21.00 for manual workers), whereas the rich, expensive fruits—grapes, peaches and nuts—are mainly eaten by professionals and industrial and commercial employers (FF 29.04 for grapes, 19.09 for peaches and 17.33 for nuts, as against FF 6.74, 11.78 and 4.90 respectively, for manual workers).

9. This whole paragraph is based on secondary analysis of the tables from the 1972 INSEE survey on household expenditure on 39 items by socio-occupational category (C.S. II).

10. A fuller translation of the original text would include: "les *nourritures* à la fois les plus *nourrissantes* et les plus *économiques*" (the double tautology showing the reduction to pure economic function).' (Translator's note.)

11. In the French: 'le gros et le gras, gros rouge, gros sabots, gros travaux, gros rire, grosses blagues, gros bon sens, plaisanteries grasses'—cheap red wine, clogs (i.e., obviousness), heavy work, belly laughs, crude common sense, crude jokes (translator).

12. K. Marx, *Capital*, I (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976), 482 (translator).

13. One fine example, taken from Böhm-Bawerk, will demonstrate this essentialism: 'We must now consider a *second* phenomenon of human experience—one that is heavily fraught with consequence. That is the fact that we feel less concerned about future sensations of joy and sorrow simply because they do lie in the future, and the lessening of our concern is in proportion to the remoteness of that future. Consequently we accord to goods which are intended to serve future ends a value which falls short of the true intensity of their future marginal utility. *We systematically under-value our future wants and also the means which serve to satisfy them.*' E. Böhm-Bawerk, *Capital and Interest*, II (South Holland, Ill., 1959), 268, quoted by G. L. Stigler and G. S. Becker, 'De gustibus non est disputandum', *American Economic Review*, 67 (March 1977), 76–90.

14. We may assume that the deep-seated relation to the future (and also to one's own person—which is valued more at higher levels of the social hierarchy) is reflected in the small proportion of manual workers who say that 'there is a new life after death' (15 percent, compared with 18 percent of craftsmen and shopkeepers, office workers and middle managers, and 32 percent of senior executives).

15. It is not superfluous to point out that this art, which has its recognized virtuoso, the 'life and

soul of the party', can sink into the caricature of jokes or remarks that are defined as stereotyped, stupid or coarse in terms of the criteria of popular taste.

16. The oppositions are much less clear-cut in the middle classes, although homologous differences are found between primary teachers and office workers on the one hand and shopkeepers on the other.

17. *La bouffe*: 'grub', 'nosh'; *grande bouffe*: 'blow-out' (translator).

18. The preference for foreign restaurants—Italian, Chinese, Japanese and, to a lesser extent, Russian—rises with level in the social hierarchy. The only exceptions are Spanish restaurants, which are associated with a more popular form of tourism, and North African restaurants, which are most favoured by junior executives (C.S. IV).

19. *Les gros*: the rich; *grosse bouffe*: bulk food (cf. *grossiste*: wholesaler, and English 'grocer'). See also note 17 above (translator).

20. That is why the body designates not only present position but also trajectory.

21. In 'The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges', *Social Science Information*, 26 (December 1977), 645–668, Bourdieu develops the opposition between two ways of speaking, rooted in two relations to the body and the world, which have a lexical reflection in the many idioms based on two words for 'mouth': *la bouche* and *la gueule*. *La bouche* is the 'standard' word for the mouth; but in opposition to *la gueule*—a slang or 'vulgar' word except when applied to animals—it tends to be restricted to the lips, whereas *la gueule* can include the whole face or the throat. Most of the idioms using *la bouche* imply fastidiousness, effeminacy or disdain; those with *la gueule* connote vigour, strength or violence (translator's note).

22. This means that the taxonomies applied to the perceived body (fat/thin, strong/weak, big/small etc.) are, as always, at once arbitrary (e.g., the ideal female body may be fat or thin, in different economic and social contexts) and necessary, i.e., grounded in the specific reason of a given social order.

23. More than ever, the French possessive pronouns—which do not mark the owner's gender—ought to be translated 'his or her'. The 'sexism' of the text results from the male translator's reluctance to defy the dominant use of a sexist symbolic system (translator).

24. One could similarly contrast the bowl, which is generously filled and held two-handed for unpretentious drinking, and the cup, into which a little is poured, and more later ('Would you care for a little more coffee?'), and which is held between two fingers and sipped from.

25. Formality is a way of denying the truth of the social world and of social relations. Just as

popular 'functionalism' is refused as regards food, so too there is a refusal of the realistic vision which leads the working classes to accept social exchanges for what they are (and, for example, to say, without cynicism, of someone who has done a favour or rendered a service, 'She knows I'll pay her back'). Suppressing avowal of the calculation which pervades social relations, there is a striving

to see presents, received or given, as 'pure' testimonies of friendship, respect, affection, and equally 'pure' manifestations of generosity and moral worth.

26. W. D. Dannenmaier and E. J. Thumin, 'Authority Status as a Factor in Perceptual Distortion of Size', *Journal of Social Psychology*, 63 (1964), 361-365.
