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Gender, Race and Power in Music : From Stage to Society

Abstract

This course investigates how musical works construct, negotiate, and challenge cultural identities and gendered power dynamics in music, across historical periods, with a particular focus on the [Aix-en-Provence Festival](#), a leading stage for innovative production, and the work of its new general director, Ted Huffman.

Through close analysis of musical rhetoric (?) and staging practices, students examine how opera and musical theatre have shaped cultural narratives about femininity, masculinity, and authority. The course situates opera within broader social debates on identity, representation, and agency. Students also explore intersections of class, race, and sexuality as they appear in operatic storytelling.

Ideas

Every performance is a political act.

graphs

bourdieu charts

tableau 1 – Les préférences en matière de chanson et de musique

appartenance de classe	diplôme	Gofury	P. Chik	Bruaux	Féré	Bau	Durand bleu	Duane du saire	Chavens	Chavens	Chavens	Chavens	Chavens
Classes	sans dipl., CEP, CAP	35	31	38	20	85	28	1	1	1	1	1	1
populaires	BEPC et plus	17	17	61	22	62,5	12,5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Classes moyennes	sans dipl., CEP, CAP	23	29	41	31	64	26	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5
	BEPC et plus dont :	12,5	19	47,5	39	27	16	8	4	4	4	4	4
	- BEPC, bac	12	21	46,5	39	31	17,5	5	4	4	4	4	4
	- études supérieures	17	9	54	39	3	5	21	4	4	4	4	4
Classes supérieures	sans dipl., CEP, CAP	16	44	36	12	17	21	8	8	8	8	8	8
	BEPC et plus dont :	5	17	74	35	16	8	15	13	13	13	13	13
	- BEPC, bac	8,5	24	65	29	14	11	3	6	6	6	6	6
	- études supérieures	4	14,5	77	39	16,5	7	19	15	15	15	15	15
	dont :												
	- petite école	5	20	73,5	32	19,5	5,5	10	18	18	18	18	18
	- licence	4,5	17	71	34,5	17	9,5	19,5	12	12	12	12	12
	- accès : grande école	3	90	49,5	11,5	3	29,5	12	12	12	12	12	12

FIGURE 1 – Chanson (inserted image)

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Sociology of Music sync

Sociology of music

oxford-bibliographies-soc-mus

bla



FIGURE 2 – visualization

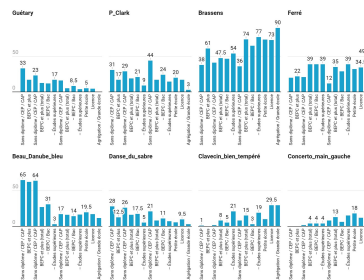


FIGURE 3 – bourdieu's data visualization of social space in datawrapper

what is sociological about music ? William G. Roy

How does music relate to broader social distinctions, especially class, race, and gender

p.26 : How Does Music Relate to Broader Social Distinctions ?

P.33 : however, another segment is marked by its passing familiarity with a wide range of musical genres liked by less privileged groups (van Eijck 2001). The latter segment's *omnivorous* tastes complicate stratification because, for a socially advantaged group of listeners, the alignment between social 33 and symbolic boundaries is more “heterologous” than Bourdieu's argument suggests (García-Álvarez et al. 2007). Even in France, recent survey results “radically eliminate any attempt to map the distribution of musical taste in terms of ... homology : highbrow is no more music of the upper-class than

tableau 4 – La connaissance des compositeurs et des oeuvres de musique

Diplôme	Origine sociale	Nombre de compositeurs connus					Nombre d'oeuvres connues				
		0-2	3-6	7-11	12-66*	Total	0-2	3-6	7-11	12-66*	Total
sans diplôme CEF, CAP	Cl. populaires	69.5	23.5	5.5	1.5	100	32.5	48.5	17.5	1.5	100
	Cl. moyennes	68.5	21.0	8.5	2.0	100	21.0	33.0	19.5	4.5	100
	Cl. supérieures	46.0	39.0	8.5	20.5	100	12.5	33.5	29.0	25.0	100
	Ensemble	67.0	22.0	7.5	3.5	100	24.5	51.0	19.5	5.0	100
	Total	57.5	15.5	23.0	4.0	100	15.5	27.0	30.0	7.5	100
BEP	Cl. populaires	49.5	41.5	9.5	13.5	100	8.5	40.0	34.5	14.0	100
	Cl. moyennes	41.5	41.5	13.5	13.5	100	8.0	31.5	41.0	19.5	100
	Cl. supérieures	44.5	34.0	13.0	8.5	100	9.5	37.0	39.0	14.5	100
	Ensemble	44.5	34.0	13.0	8.5	100	9.5	37.0	39.0	14.5	100
	Total	44.5	34.0	13.0	8.5	100	9.5	37.0	39.0	14.5	100
Baccalauréat	Cl. populaires	11.0	39.5	18.5	11.0	100	3.0	33.0	32.0	15.0	100
	Cl. moyennes	19.0	32.0	38.0	11.0	100	3.5	26.5	51.0	19.0	100
	Cl. supérieures	21.5	21.5	37.5	19.5	100	5.0	19.5	42.5	33.0	100
	Ensemble	18.5	32.5	35.5	13.5	100	3.5	25.5	48.5	22.5	100
	Total	18.5	32.5	35.5	13.5	100	3.5	25.5	48.5	22.5	100
Petite école et supérieures non achevées	Cl. populaires	20.0	-	70.0	10.0	100	-	30.0	60.0	10.0	100
	Cl. moyennes	16.0	22.5	51.5	10.0	100	13.0	19.5	54.5	13.0	100
	Cl. supérieures	17.5	11.5	39.0	32.0	100	11.5	11.5	33.5	43.5	100
	Ensemble	17.5	13.5	45.5	23.5	100	11.0	15.5	42.0	31.5	100
	Total	17.5	13.5	45.5	23.5	100	11.0	15.5	42.0	31.5	100
Licence, agrégation, grande école	Cl. populaires	-	35.0	32.5	32.5	100	-	7.0	66.5	26.5	100
	Cl. moyennes	7.0	15.0	47.5	30.5	100	-	22.0	49.0	29.0	100
	Cl. supérieures	7.5	11.5	44.5	36.5	100	8.0	13.5	38.5	40.0	100
	Ensemble	7.0	16.5	44.5	32.0	100	5.5	15.0	43.0	36.5	100
	Total	7.0	16.5	44.5	32.0	100	5.5	15.0	43.0	36.5	100

FIGURE 4 – compositeurs connus

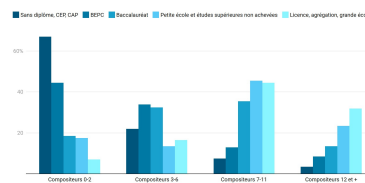


FIGURE 5 – compositeurs connus

pop music the music of the lower class” (Coulangeon & Lemel 2007 : 98-99). However, these omnivorous tastes in musical genres do not mark the end of stratification by any means. Instead, they appear to represent a new form of currency that the advantaged can deploy in highly individualized ways (Ollivier 2008, Savage 2006, Warde & Gayo-Cal 2009).

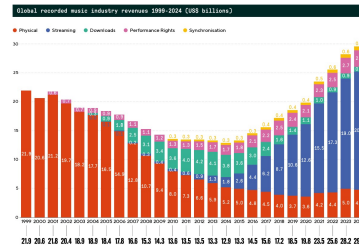
Economics of Aix-en-Provence Festival

economics of the festival

In 2019, the festival had a budget of around €22 million, of which €8 million subsidies[6] and more than 60/100 self-financed by ticketing and sponsoring

Sociology of culture

- [Cultural studies wikipedia](#)
- *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Pierre Bourdieu
- [Distinction Original French version](#)

FIGURE 6 – Music industry in [Global Music Report](#)

- (check bilingual in this folder)
- [Introducing Cultural Studies](#), Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon

Sociology of gender

- [Judith Butler explains gender theory](#)

From Stage to Society : Opera as Social Critique : Brecht/Weill and Offenbach

Die Dreigroschenoper (*The Threepenny Opera*) by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, along with Jacques Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers* (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), exemplify the ways in which the musical stage functions as a space of social critique, where relations of class, gender, and power are staged, exaggerated, and made visible. Far from being limited to an aesthetic or purely entertaining function, these works transform opera into a critical apparatus that connects theatrical performance to the social structures organizing collective life.

In *Die Dreigroschenoper*, the Brechtian strategy of alienation (*Verfremdungseffekt*) prevents any naïve identification between the audience and the characters, instead encouraging spectators to adopt an analytical stance toward the social mechanisms on display. Crime, marriage, respectability, and economic survival appear as practices structured by capitalism, revealing the homology between marginal and bourgeois worlds. This logic resonates with Pierre Bourdieu's theory, according to which cultural fields reproduce and legitimize relations of domination through symbolic

forms. Weill's music, drawing on cabaret, jazz, and popular song, deliberately blurs the boundary between "legitimate" and popular culture, thereby challenging the hierarchy of taste and the presumed aesthetic neutrality of opera. This logic resonates with Pierre Bourdieu's theory, according to which cultural fields reproduce and legitimize relations of domination through symbolic forms. Weill's music, drawing on cabaret, jazz, and popular song, deliberately blurs the boundary between "legitimate" and popular culture, thereby challenging the hierarchy of taste and the presumed aesthetic neutrality of opera.

Female characters—most notably Polly Peachum and Jenny—occupy a central position in this critique. Their social roles illuminate the intersections of gender, class, and economy, a core concern of feminist musicology. Far from serving as mere secondary figures, they embody the structural constraints imposed on women within a system in which moral value is subordinated to market value. The stage thus becomes a site where gender norms are negotiated and exposed, revealing their constructed and historically contingent nature.

Orphée aux enfers by Offenbach, for its part, deploys satire to subvert the dominant discourses of the Second Empire. By transforming the gods into frivolous, self-interested, and corrupt figures, the work ridicules political and moral authority, exposing what Bourdieu would describe as symbolic violence exercised by elites through myth and legitimizing narratives. **The famous "galop infernal," often associated with transgressive collective energy, introduces onto the operatic stage forms of bodily pleasure and social disorder traditionally excluded from serious opera, thereby opening a space for contesting norms of respectability.**

In both works, the movement from stage to society operates through a system of critical mirrors. Musical theater functions as a social laboratory in which relations of domination are stylized and amplified in order to reveal their underlying logics more clearly. By mobilizing Brechtian alienation, Bourdieusian critiques of cultural hierarchy, and insights from feminist musicology, *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Orphée aux enfers* demonstrate that opera is a profoundly political space—one that not only reflects society but also actively participates in questioning its symbolic and social foundations.

Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny - Brecht Kurt Weill

Banned by the Nazi Party

[Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny](#) Add a ref to the [whiskey bar - doors alabama song?](#)

Mahagonny - Kurt Weill and the doors

Among Brecht's friends were members of the Dadaist group, who aimed at destroying what they condemned as the false standards of bourgeois art through derision and iconoclastic satire. The man who taught him the elements of Marxism in the late 1920s was Karl Korsch

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Miscellaneous

- The students use L^AT_EX exclusively to write an academic article.
- During the class, a blind test is organized to assess who can recognize different pieces of music.
- John demonstrates superior knowledge by correctly identifying the artist, the song, the album, and the year of release.
- chinese opera -
- les noces - compte volage -
- travesti - ted huffman -
- opera transgenre -
- [Old Snow White New Snow White](#)
- students in literature, media studies, history, or cultural studies.
- Medium is the message - McLuhan?
- Castrated singers in opera - Farinelli

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other abstracts ?

Gender, Race, and Power in Music : From Stage to Society

This course investigates how operatic works construct, negotiate, and challenge gendered power dynamics across historical periods. Through close analysis of libretti, musical rhetoric, and staging practices, students examine how opera has shaped cultural narratives about femininity, masculinity, and authority.

Special attention is given to the political implications of vocal types, character archetypes, and performance conventions. The course situates opera within broader social debates on identity, representation, and agency. Students explore intersections of class, race, and sexuality as they manifest in operatic storytelling.

Contemporary productions are analyzed for their reimagining of inherited power structures. Multimedia resources highlight evolving directorial strategies that foreground gender critique. By the end of the course, students gain tools for interpreting opera as both an artistic form and a sociocultural force.

Every performance is a political act.

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Gender and Power in Music : From Stage to Society

This course investigates how operatic works construct, negotiate, and challenge gendered power dynamics across historical periods. Through close analysis of libretti, musical rhetoric, and staging practices, students examine how opera has shaped cultural narratives about femininity, masculinity, and authority.

The course situates opera within broader social debates on identity, representation, and agency. Students explore intersections of class, race, and sexuality as they manifest in operatic storytelling.

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Cultural Voices : Gender and Storytelling in Music and Media

This course explores how gender shapes narrative strategies across music, opera, and contemporary media. Students investigate how storytellers use sound, voice, and visual framing to construct cultural meanings around identity and power.

Operatic case studies draw particular attention to the Aix-en-Provence Opera Festival as a site of innovative production.

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Music, Identity, and the Politics of Performance

This course explores how the operatic stage serves as a powerful arena for the construction and contestation of identity. Music, libretto, and staging are examined as forces shaping representations of nationality, race, gender, and class.

Ultimately, the course presents opera as a living art form deeply engaged in pressing cultural dialogues.

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Staging Power : A History of Political Expression in Music and Theatre

How have societies used musical drama to wield power? This course answers that question through a historical survey from ancient Greek civic theatre to contemporary popular performance.

We examine moments where politics and performance converge, including medieval religious drama, absolutist court spectacle, nationalist opera, and modern protest music. Emphasis is placed on the visual, spatial, and institutional contexts of performance, revealing a shared history of artistic and political expression.

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Gender and Power in Music : From Stage to Society

This course examines how operatic and musical traditions construct, challenge, and negotiate gendered identities. Students analyze representations of femininity, masculinity, and authority across historical and contemporary works.

Attention is given to vocal typologies, character archetypes, and staging practices as sites of **ideological meaning**. **Case studies include canonical works and modern adaptations, with particular focus on the Aix-en-Provence Festival and the work of director Ted Huffman.**

Students engage with feminist, queer, and intersectional critiques, developing critical scholarly insight into how music mirrors and shapes the politics of gender in society.

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Gender and Power in Music : From Stage to Society II

This course explores the dynamic interplay between gender, power, and music with a focus on operatic representation. Through analysis of vocal range, orchestration, and libretto, students examine archetypes such as the tragic heroine, the fallen hero, and the authoritarian figure.

Moving beyond the score, the course considers power relations behind the scenes among composers, patrons, and performers. From Baroque spectacle to contemporary reinterpretation, students explore how feminist and queer perspectives reshape canonical works.

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Opera and Beyond : Gender, Performance, and Power

This course explores how opera stages questions of gender, identity, and power from its origins to modern performance.

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data

<https://www.datawrapper.de/>

- [Harvard Dataverse](#)
- [World Values Survey \(WVS\)](#)
- [European Social Survey \(ESS\)](#)
- [General Social Survey \(GSS – USA\)](#)
- [ICPSR \(Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research\)](#)
- [UK Data Service](#)
- [Eurostat – Cultural Statistics](#)

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Sociology

Some sociologists (of culture)

Swidler

[Ann Swidler's videos](#) [Swidler](#)

Geertz

Clifford Geertz on balinese cockfight [Cockfight](#)

Harvey Molotch - NYU

[NYU](#)

Deviance

[deviance](#)

Sociology Father

[Szelenyi](#)

Harvard Pawan Dhingra

[Pawan Dhingra](#)

Bourdieu

Cultural misery ?

misabilisme culturel

A working-class listener who enjoys popular music may :

- feel their taste is “bad” or “not real music” ;
- remain silent in academic or elite settings ;
- defer to critics or institutions they do not fully understand.

They are not incapable of aesthetic judgment — they are denied the authority to judge.

That denial is cultural misery.

Bourdieu bilingual

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

«Vous l'avez dit, cavalier !
il devrait y avoir des lois
pour protéger les connais-
sances acquises. Prenez un
de nos bons élèves par exemple,
modeste diligent, qui dès
ses classes de grammaire
a commencé à tenir son
petit cahier d'expressions,
Qui pendant vingt années
suspendu aux lèvres de ses
professeurs a fini par se com-
poser une espèce de petit
pécule intellectuel : est-ce
qu'il ne lui appartient pas
comme si c'était une mai-
son ou de l'argent ? P. Clau-
del, soulier de satin »

Il y a une économie des biens cultu-
rels, mais cette économie a une lo-
gique spécifique qu'il faut dégager pour
échapper à l'économisme.

There is an economy of cultural
goods, but it has a specific logic.

Cela en travaillant d'abord à éta-

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

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

The relative weight of home background and of formal education (the effectiveness and duration of which are closely dependent on social origin) varies

blir les conditions dans lesquelles sont produits les consommateurs de biens culturels et leur goût, en même temps qu'à décrire les différentes manières de s'approprier ceux d'entre ces biens qui sont considérés à un moment donné du temps comme des oeuvres d'art et les conditions sociales de la constitution du mode d'appropriation qui est tenu pour légitime.

Contre l'idéologie charismatique qui tient les goûts en matière de culture légitime pour un don de la nature, l'observation scientifique montre que les besoins culturels sont le produit de l'éducation : l'enquête établit que toutes les pratiques culturelles (fréquentation des musées, des concerts, des expositions, lecture, etc.) et les préférences en matière de littérature, de peinture ou de musique, sont étroitement liées au niveau d'instruction (mesuré au titre scolaire ou au nombre d'années d'études), et secondairement à l'origine sociale (1).

Le poids relatif de l'éducation familiale et de l'éducation proprement scolaire (dont l'efficacité et la durée dépendent étroitement de l'origine sociale) varie selon le degré auquel les différentes pratiques culturelles sont reconnues et enseignées par le système scolaire, et l'influence de l'origine so-

according to the extent to which the different cultural practices are recognized and taught by the educational system, and the influence of social origin is strongest-other things being equal-in 'extra-curricular' and avant-garde culture.

To the socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. This predisposes 2 / Introduction tastes to function as markers of 'class'. The manner in which culture has been acquired lives on in the manner of using it: the importance attached to manners can be understood once it is seen that it is these imponderables of practice which distinguish the different-and ranked-modes of culture acquisition, early or late, domestic or scholastic, and the classes of individuals which they characterize (such as 'pedants' and mondains). Culture also has its titles of nobility-awarded by the educational system-and its pedigrees, measured by seniority in admission to the nobility. The definition of cultural nobility is the stake in a struggle which has gone on unceasingly, from the seventeenth century to the present day, between groups differing in their ideas of culture and of the legitimate relation to culture and to works of art, and therefore differing in the conditions of acquisition of which these dispositions are the product 2 Even in the class-

cial n'est jamais aussi forte, toutes choses étant égales par ailleurs, qu'en matière de «culture libre» ou de culture d'avant-garde.

À la hiérarchie socialement reconnue des arts et, à l'intérieur de chacun d'eux, des genres, des écoles ou des époques, correspond la hiérarchie sociale des consommateurs. Ce qui prédispose les goûts à fonctionner comme des marqueurs privilégiés de la «classe». Les manières d'acquérir se survivent dans la manière d'utiliser les acquis : l'attention accordée aux manières s'explique si l'on voit que c'est à ces impondérables de la pratique que se reconnaissent les différents modes d'acquisition, hiérarchisés, de la culture, précoce ou tardif, familial ou scolaire, et les classes d'individus qu'elles caractérisent (comme les «pédants» et les «mondains»). La noblesse culturelle a aussi ses titres, que décerne l'école, et ses quartiers, que mesure l'ancienneté de l'accès à la noblesse. La définition de la noblesse culturelle est l'enjeu d'une lutte qui, du XVII^e siècle à nos jours, n'a cessé d'opposer, de manière plus ou moins déclarée, des groupes séparés dans leur idée de la culture, du rapport légitime à la culture et aux oeuvres d'art, donc dans les conditions d'acquisition dont ces dispositions sont le produit : la définition dominante du mode d'appropriation légitime de la culture et de l'oeuvre d'art favorise, jusque sur le terrain scolaire, ceux qui ont eu accès

room, the dominant definition of the legitimate way of appropriating culture and works of art favours those who have had early access to legitimate culture, in a cultured household, outside of scholastic disciplines, since even within the educational system it devalues scholarly knowledge and interpretation as 'scholastic' or even 'pedantic' in favour of direct experience and simple delight. The logic of what is sometimes called, in typically 'pedantic' language, the 'reading' of a work of art, offers an objective basis for this opposition. Consumption is, in this case, a stage in a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code. In a sense, one can say that the capacity to see (voir) is a function of the knowledge (savoir), or concepts, that is, the words, that are available to name visible things and which are, as it were, programmes for perception. A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded. The conscious or unconscious implementation of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation which constitutes pictorial or musical culture is the hidden condition for recognizing the styles characteristic of a period, a school or an author, and, more generally, for the familiarity with the internal logic à la culture légitime très tôt, dans une famille cultivée, hors des disciplines scolaires; elle dévalue en effet le savoir et l'interprétation savante, marquée comme «scolaire», voire «pédante», au profit de l'expérience directe et de la simple délectation. La logique de ce que l'on appelle parfois, dans un langage typiquement «pédant», la «lecture» de l'oeuvre d'art, offre un fondement objectif à cette opposition. L'oeuvre d'art ne prend un sens et ne revêt un intérêt que pour celui qui est pourvu du code selon lequel elle est codée. La mise en oeuvre consciente ou inconsciente du système de schèmes de perception et d'appréciation plus ou moins explicites qui constitue la culture picturale ou musicale est la condition cachée de cette forme élémentaire de connaissance qu'est la reconnaissance des styles. Le spectateur dépourvu du code spécifique se sent submergé, «noyé», devant ce qui lui apparaît comme un chaos de sons et de rythmes, de couleurs et de lignes sans rime ni raison. Faute d'avoir appris à adopter la disposition adéquate, il s'en tient à ce que Panofsky appelle les «propriétés sensibles», saisissant une peau comme veloutée ou une dentelle comme vaporeuse, ou aux résonances affectives suscitées par ces propriétés, parlant de couleurs ou de mélodies sévères ou joyeuses. On ne peut en effet passer de la «couche primaire du sens que nous pouvons pénétrer sur la base de notre expérience

of works that aesthetic enjoyment presupposes. A beholder who lacks the specific code feels lost in a chaos of sounds and rhythms, colours and lines, with out rhyme or reason. Not having learnt to adopt the adequate disposition, he stops short at what Erwin Panofsky calls the 'sensible properties', perceiving a skin as downy or lace-work as delicate, or at the emotional resonances aroused by these properties, referring to 'austere' colours or a 'joyful' melody. He cannot move from the 'primary stratum of the meaning we can grasp on the basis of our ordinary experience' to the 'stratum of secondary meanings', i.e., the 'level of the meaning of what is signified', unless he possesses the concepts which go beyond the sensible properties and which identify the specifically stylistic properties of the Introduction / 3 work. 3 Thus the encounter with a work of art is not 'love at first sight' as is generally supposed, and the act of empathy, *Einfühlung*, which is the art-lover's pleasure, presupposes an act of cognition, a decoding operation, which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement, a cultural code. 4 This typically intellectualist theory of artistic perception directly contradicts the experience of the art-lovers closest to the legitimate definition; acquisition of legitimate culture by insensible familiarization within the family circle tends to favour an enchanted experience of culture which implies existentielle» à la «couche des sens secondaires», c'est-à-dire à la «région du sens du signifié», que si l'on possède les concepts qui, dépassant les propriétés sensibles, saisissent les caractéristiques proprement stylistiques de l'oeuvre (2). C'est 2—E. Panofsky, «Iconography and Iconology : An Introduction to the Study of Art», *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, New York, Doubleday and Co, 1955, p. 28. Introduction III dire que la rencontre avec l'oeuvre d'art n'a rien du coup de foudre que l'on veut y voir d'ordinaire et que l'acte de fusion affective, d'*Einfühlung*, qui fait le plaisir d'amour de l'art, suppose un acte de connaissance, une opération de déchiffrement, de décodage, qui implique la mise en oeuvre d'un patrimoine cognitif, d'une compétence culturelle. Cette théorie typiquement intellectualiste de la perception artistique contredit très directement l'expérience des amateurs les plus conformes à la définition légitime : l'acquisition de la culture légitime par la familiarisation insensible au sein de la famille tend en effet à favoriser une expérience enchantée de la culture qui implique l'oubli de l'acquisition et l'ignorance des instruments de l'appropriation. L'expérience du plaisir esthétique peut aller de pair avec le malentendu ethnocentrique qu'entraîne l'application d'un code impropre. Ainsi, le regard «pur» que porte sur les oeuvres le spectateur cultivé d'aujourd'hui n'a à peu

forgetting the acquisition. 5 The 'eye' is a product of his tory reproduced by education. This is true of the mode of artistic percep tion now accepted as legitimate, that is, the aesthetic disposition, the capacity to consider in and for themselves, as form rather than function, not only the works designated for such apprehension, i.e., legitimate works of art, but everything in the world, including cultural objects which are not yet consecrated—such as, at one time, primitive arts, or, nowadays, popular photography or kitsch—and natural objects. The 'pure' gaze is a historical invention linked to the emergence of an autonomous field of artistic production, that is, a field capable of imposing its own norms on both the production and the consumption of its prod ucts. 6 An art which, like all Post-Impressionist painting, is the product of an artistic intention which asserts the primacy of the mode of representa tion over the object of representation demands categorically an attention to fo rm which previous art only demanded conditionally. The pure intention of the artist is that of a producer who aims to be autonomous, that is, entirely the master of his product, who tends to reject not only the 'programmes' imposed a priori by scholars and scribes, but also—following the old hierarchy of doing and saying—the interpre tations superimposed a posteriori on his work. The production of an 'open work', in près rien de commun avec l'«oeil moral et spirituel» des hommes du Quattrocento, c'est-à-dire l'ensemble des dispositions à la fois cognitives et évaluatives qui étaient au principe de leur perception du monde et de leur perception de la représentation picturale du monde : soucieux, comme le montrent les contrats, d'en avoir pour leur argent, les clients des Filippo Lippi, Domenico Ghirlandaio ou Piero della Francesca investissaient dans les oeuvres d'art les dispositions mercantiles d'hommes d'affaires rompus au calcul immédiat des quantités et des prix, recourant par exemple à des critères d'appréciation tout à fait surprenants, comme la cherté des couleurs —qui place l'or et le bleu d'outremer au sommet de la hiérarchie— (3). L'«oeil» est un produit de l'histoire reproduit par l'éducation. Il en est ainsi du mode de perception artistique qui s'impose aujourd'hui comme légitime, c'est-à-dire la disposition esthétique comme capacité de considérer en elles-mêmes et pour elles-mêmes, dans leur forme et non dans leur fonction, non seulement les oeuvres désignées pour une telle appréhension, c'est-à-dire les oeuvres d'art légitimes, mais toutes les choses du monde, qu'il s'agisse des oeuvres culturelles qui ne sont pas encore consacrées —comme, en un temps, les arts primitifs ou, aujourd'hui, la photographie populaire ou le kitsch— ou des objets naturels. Le regard «pur» est une invention his-

trinsically and deliberately polysemic, can thus be understood as the final stage in the conquest of artistic autonomy by poets and, following in their footsteps, by painters, who had long been reliant on writers and their work of 'showing' and 'illustrating'. To assert the autonomy of production is to give primacy to that of which the artist is master, i.e., form, manner, style, rather than the 'subject', the external referent, which involves subordination to functions—even if only the most elementary one, that of representing, signifying, saying something. It also means a refusal to recognize any necessity other than that inscribed in the specific tradition of the artistic discipline in question: the shift from an art which imitates nature to an art which imitates art, deriving from its own history the exclusive source of its experiments and even of its breaks with tradition. An art which ever increasingly contains reference to its own history demands to be perceived historically; it asks to be referred not to an external referent, the represented or designated 'reality', but to the universe of past and present works of art. Like artistic production, in that it is generated in a field, aesthetic perception is necessarily historical, inasmuch as it is differential, relational, attentive to the deviations (écarts) which make styles. Like the so-called naive painter who, operating outside the field and its specific traditions, remains ex-

torique qui est corrélative de l'apparition d'un champ de production artistique autonome, c'est-à-dire capable d'imposer ses propres normes tant dans la production que dans la consommation de ses produits (4). Un art qui, comme toute la peinture post-3-Cf, M. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy, A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972. 4—Cf. P. Bourdieu, *Le marché des biens symboliques*, *L'Année sociologique*, Vol. 22, 1971, pp. 49-126; *Éléments d'une théorie sociologique de la perception artistique*, *Revue internationale des sciences sociales*, XX, 4, 1968, pp. 640-664. IV La distinction impressionniste par exemple, est le produit d'une intention artistique affirmant le primat du mode de représentation sur l'objet de la représentation, exige catégoriquement une attention exclusive à la forme que l'art antérieur n'exigeait que conditionnellement. L'intention pure de l'artiste est celle d'un producteur qui se veut autonome, c'est-à-dire entièrement maître de son produit, qui tend à récuser non seulement les «programmes» imposés a priori par les clercs et les lettrés mais aussi, avec la vieille hiérarchie du faire et du dire, les interprétations surimposées a posteriori sur son oeuvre : la production d'une «oeuvre ouverte», intrinsèquement et délibérément polysémique, peut être ainsi comprise comme le dernier stade de la conquête

ternal to the history of the art, the 'naive' spectator cannot attain a specific grasp of works of art which only have meaning or value-in relation to the specific history of an artistic tradition. The aesthetic disposition demanded by the products of a highly autonomous field of production is inseparable from a specific cultural competence. This historical culture functions as a principle of pertinence which enables one to identify, among the elements offered to the gaze, all the distinctive features and only these, by referring them, consciously or unconsciously, to the universe of possible alternatives. This mastery is, for the most part, acquired simply by contact with works of art-that is, through an implicit learning analogous to that which makes it possible to recognize familiar faces without explicit rules or criteria-and it generally remains at a practical level; it is what makes it possible to identify styles, i.e., modes of expression characteristic of a period, a civilization or a school, without having to distinguish clearly, or state explicitly, the features which constitute their originality. Everything seems to suggest that even among professional valuers, the criteria which define the stylistic properties of the 'typical works' on which all their judgments are based usually remain implicit. The pure gaze implies a break with the ordinary attitude towards the world, which, given the conditions in de l'autonomie artistique par les poètes et, sans doute à leur image, par les peintres, longtemps tributaires des écrivains et de leur travail de «faire-voir» et de «faire-valoir». Affirmer l'autonomie de la production, c'est conférer la primauté à ce dont l'artiste est maître, c'est-à-dire la forme, la manière, le style, par rapport au «sujet», référent extérieur, par où s'introduit la subordination à des fonctions-s'agirait-il de la plus élémentaire, celle de représenter, de signifier, de dire quelque chose. C'est du même coup refuser de reconnaître aucune autre nécessité que celle qui se trouve inscrite dans la tradition propre de la discipline artistique considérée; c'est passer d'un art qui imite la nature, à un art qui imite l'art, trouvant dans son histoire propre le principe exclusif de ses recherches et de ses ruptures mêmes avec la tradition. Un art qui enferme toujours davantage la référence à sa propre histoire appelle un regard historique; il demande à être référé non à ce référent extérieur qu'est la «réalité» représentée ou désignée mais à l'univers des oeuvres d'art du passé et du présent. Comme la production artistique en tant qu'elle s'engendre dans un champ, la perception esthétique, en tant qu'elle est différentielle, relationnelle, attentive aux écarts qui font les styles, est nécessairement historique: comme le peintre dit «naïf» qui, étant extérieur au champ et à ses traditions spécifiques, reste extérieur

which it is performed, is also a social separation. Ortega y Gasset can be believed when he attributes to modern art a systematic refusal of all that is 'human', i.e. .. generic, common-as opposed to distinctive. or distinguished- namely. the passions, emotions and feelings which 'ordinary' people invest in their 'ordinary' lives. It is as if the 'popular aesthetic' (the quotation marks are there to indicate that this is an aesthetic 'in itself' not 'for itself') were based on the affirmation of the continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function. This is seen clearly in the case of the novel and especially the theatre, where the working-class audience refuses any sort of formal experimentation and all the effects which, by introducing a distance from the accepted conventions (as regards scenery, plot etc.), tend to distance the spectator, preventing him from getting involved and fully identifying with the characters (I am thinking of Brechtian 'alienation' or the disruption of plot in the nouveau roman). In contrast to the detachment and disinterestedness which aesthetic theory regards as the only way of recognizing the work of art for what it is, i.e., autonomous, *selbstständig*, the 'popular aesthetic' ignores or refuses the refusal of 'facile' involvement and 'vulgar' enjoyment, a refusal which is the basis of the taste for formal experiment. And popular judgements of paintings

à l'histoire propre de l'art considéré, le spectateur «naïf» ne peut accéder à une perception spécifique d'oeuvres d'art qui n'ont de sens que par référence à l'histoire spécifique d'une tradition artistique. La disposition esthétique qu'appellent les productions d'un champ de production parvenu à un haut degré d'autonomie est indissociable d'une compétence culturelle spécifique : cette culture historique fonctionne comme un principe de pertinence qui permet de repérer, parmi les éléments proposés au regard, tous les traits distinctifs et ceux-là seulement, en les référant, plus ou moins consciemment, à l'univers des possibilités substituables. Acquis pour l'essentiel par la simple fréquentation des oeuvres, c'est-à-dire par un apprentissage implicite analogue à celui qui permet de reconnaître, sans règles ni critères explicites, des visages familiers, cette maîtrise qui reste le plus souvent à l'état pratique, permet de repérer des Introduction V styles, c'est-à-dire des modes d'expression caractéristiques d'une époque, d'une civilisation ou d'une école, sans que soient clairement distingués et explicitement énoncés les traits qui font l'originalité de chacun d'eux. Tout semble indiquer que, même chez les professionnels de l'attribution, les critères qui définissent les propriétés stylistiques des oeuvres-témoins sur lesquelles s'appuient tous les jugements, restent le plus souvent à l'état implicite. Le re-

or photographs spring from an 'aesthetic' (in fact it is an Introduction / 5 ethos) which is the exact opposite of the Kantian aesthetic. Whereas, in order to grasp the specificity of the aesthetic judgement, Kant strove to distinguish that which pleases from that which gratifies and, more generally, to distinguish disinterestedness, the sole guarantor of the specifically aesthetic quality of contemplation, from the interest of reason which defines the Good, working-class people expect every image to explicitly perform a function, if only that of a sign, and their judgements make reference, often explicitly, to the norms of morality or agreeableness. Whether rejecting or praising, their appreciation always has an ethical basis. Popular taste applies the schemes of the ethos, which pertain in the ordinary circumstances of life, to legitimate works of art, and so performs a systematic reduction of the things of art to the things of life. The very seriousness (or naivety) which this taste invests in fictions and representations demonstrates a contrario that pure taste performs a suspension of 'naive' involvement which is one dimension of a 'quasi-ludic' relationship with the necessities of the world. Intellectuals could be said to believe in the representation of literature, theatre, painting—more than in the things represented, whereas the people chiefly expect representations and the conventions which govern them

gard pur implique une rupture avec l'attitude ordinaire à l'égard du monde qui, étant donné les conditions de son accomplissement, est une rupture sociale. On peut croire Ortega y Gasset, lorsqu'il attribue à l'art moderne un refus systématique de tout ce qui est «humain», c'est-à-dire générique, commun —par opposition à distinctif, ou distingué, à savoir les passions, les émotions, les sentiments que les hommes «ordinaires» engagent dans leur existence «ordinaire». Tout se passe en effet comme si l'«esthétique populaire» (les guillemets étant là pour signifier qu'il s'agit d'une esthétique en soi et non pour soi) était fondée sur l'affirmation de la continuité de l'art et de la vie, qui implique la subordination de la forme à la fonction. Cela se voit bien dans le cas du roman et surtout du théâtre où le public populaire refuse toute espèce de recherche formelle et tous les effets qui, en introduisant une distance par rapport aux conventions admises (en matière de décor, d'intrigue, etc.), tendent à mettre le spectateur à distance, l'empêchant d'entrer dans le jeu et de s'identifier complètement aux personnages ou à la désarticulation de l'intrigue romanesque opérée par le Nouveau Roman). A l'opposé du détachement, du désintéressement, que la théorie esthétique tient pour la seule manière de reconnaître l'oeuvre d'art pour ce qu'elle est, c'est-à-dire autonome, *selbstän-*

to allow them to believe 'naïvely' in the things represented. The pure aesthetic is rooted in an ethic, or rather, an ethos of elective distance from the necessities of the natural and social world, which may take the form of moral agnosticism (visible when ethical transgression becomes an artistic *parti pris*) or of an aestheticism which presents the aesthetic disposition as a universally valid principle and takes the bourgeois denial of the social world to its limit. The detachment of the pure gaze cannot be dissociated from a general disposition towards the world which is the paradoxical product of conditioning by negative economic necessities—a life of ease—that tends to induce an active distance from necessity. Although art obviously offers the greatest scope to the aesthetic disposition, there is no area of practice in which the aim of purifying, refining and sublimating primary needs and impulses cannot assert itself, no area in which the stylization of life, that is, the primacy of forms over function, of manner over matter, does not produce the same effects. And nothing is more distinctive, more distinguished, than the capacity to confer aesthetic status on objects that are banal or even 'common' (because the 'common' people make them their own, especially for aesthetic purposes), or the ability to apply the principles of a 'pure' aesthetic to the most everyday choices of

dig, l'«esthétique» populaire ignore ou refuse le refus de l'adhésion «facile» et des abandons «vulgaires» qui est, au moins indirectement, au principe du goût pour les recherches formelles et, comme le disent les jugements populaires sur la peinture ou la photographie, elle se présente comme l'exact opposé de l'esthétique kantienne : pour appréhender ce qui fait la spécificité du jugement esthétique, Kant s'ingéniait à distinguer ce qui plaît de ce qui fait plaisir et, plus généralement, à discerner le désintéressement, seul garant de la qualité proprement esthétique de la contemplation, de l'intérêt de la raison qui définit le Bon ; à l'inverse, les sujets des classes populaires qui attendent de toute image qu'elle remplisse explicitement une fonction, fût-ce celle de signe, manifestent dans leurs jugements la référence, souvent explicite, aux normes de la morale ou de l'agrément. Qu'ils blâment ou qu'ils louent, leur appréciation se réfère à un système de normes dont le principe est toujours éthique. En appliquant aux œuvres légitimes les schèmes de l'ethos, qui valent pour les circonstances ordinaires de la vie, et en opérant ainsi une réduction systématique des choses de l'art ou choses de la vie, le goût populaire et le sérieux (ou la naïveté) même qu'il investit dans les fictions et les représentations indiquent à son confrère que le goût pur opère une mise en suspens de l'adhésion «naïve» qui est

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

une dimension d'un rapport quasi ludique avec les nécessités du monde. On pourrait dire que les intellectuels croient à la représentation —littérature, théâtre, peinture— plus qu'aux choses représentées, tandis que le «peuple» demande avant tout aux représentations et aux conventions qui les régissent de lui permettre de croire «naïvement» aux choses représentées. L'esthétique pure s'enracine dans une éthique ou, mieux, un *ethos* de la distance électorale aux nécessités du monde naturel et social qui peut prendre la forme d'un agnosticisme moral (visible lorsque la transgression éthique devient un parti artistique) ou d'un esthétisme qui, en constituant la disposition esthétique en principe d'application universelle, pousse jusqu'à sa limite la dénégarion bourgeoise du monde social. On comprend que le détachement du regard pur ne peut être dissocié d'une disposition générale à l'égard du monde qui est le produit paradoxal du conditionnement exercé par des nécessités économiques négatives —ce que l'on appelle les facilités — et propre de ce fait à favoriser la distance active à la nécessité. S'il est trop évident que l'art offre à la disposition esthétique son terrain par excellence, il reste qu'il n'est pas de domaine de la pratique où ne puisse s'affirmer l'intention de soumettre au raffinement et à la sublimation les besoins et les pulsions primaires, pas de domaine où la stylisation de la vie, c'est-à-dire le pri-

function. The science of taste and of cultural consumption begins with a transgression that is in no way aesthetic: it has to abolish the sacred frontier which makes legitimate culture a separate universe, in order to discover the intelligible relations which unite apparently incommensurable 'choices', such as preferences in music and food, painting and sport, literature and hairstyles. This barbarous reintegration of aesthetic consumption into the world of ordinary consumption abolishes the opposition, which has been the basis of high aesthetics since Kant, between the 'taste of sense' and the 'taste of reflection', and between facile pleasure, pleasure reduced to a pleasure of the senses, and pure pleasure, pleasure purified of pleasure, which is pre-disposed to become a symbol of moral excellence and a measure of the capacity for sublimation which defines the truly human man. The culture which results from this magical division is sacred. Cultural consecration does indeed confer on the objects, persons and situations it touches, a sort of ontological promotion akin to a transubstantiation. Proof enough of this is found in the two following quotations, which might almost have been written for the delight of the sociologist: 'What struck me most is this: nothing could be obscene on the stage of our premier theatre, and the ballerinas of the Opera, even as naked dancers, sylphs, sprites or Bacchae,

mat conféré à la forme sur la fonction, à la manière sur la matière, ne produise les mêmes effets. Et rien n'est plus classant, plus distinctif, plus distingué, que la capacité de constituer esthétiquement des objets quelconques ou même «vulgaires» (parce qu'appropriés, surtout à des fins esthétiques, par le «vulgaire») ou l'aptitude à engager les principes d'une esthétique «pure» dans les choix les plus ordinaires de l'existence ordinaire, en matière de cuisine, de vêtement ou de décoration par exemple, par une inversion complète de la disposition populaire qui annexe l'esthétique à l'éthique. En fait, par l'intermédiaire des conditions économiques et sociales qu'elles supposent, les différentes manières, plus ou moins détachées ou distantes, d'entrer en relation avec les réalités et les fictions, de croire aux fictions ou aux réalités qu'elles simulent, sont très étroitement liées aux différentes positions possibles dans l'espace social et par là, étroitement insérées dans les systèmes de dispositions (habitus) caractéristiques des différentes classes et fractions de classe. Le goût classe, et classe celui qui classe : les sujets sociaux se distinguent par les distinctions qu'ils opèrent, entre le beau et le laid, le distingué et le vulgaire, et où s'exprime ou se traduit leur position dans les classements objectifs. Et de ce fait, l'analyse statistique montre par exemple que des oppositions de même structure que celles qui s'ob-

retain an inviolable purity.'⁷ - 'There are obscene postures: the stimulated intercourse which offends the eye. Clearly it is impossible to approve, although the interpolation of such gestures in dance routines does give them a symbolic and aesthetic quality which is absent from the intimate scenes the cinema daily flaunts before its spectators' eyes . . . As for the nude scene, what can one say, except that it is brief and theatrically not very effective? I will not say it is chaste or innocent, for nothing commercial can be so described. Let us say it is not shocking, and that the chief objection is that it serves as a box-office gimmick. . . . In *Hair*, the nakedness fails to be symbolic.'⁸ Introduction / 7 The denial of lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile—in a word, oatmeal—enjoyment, which constitutes the sacred sphere of culture, implies an affirmation of the superiority of those who can be satisfied with the sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, distinguished pleasures forever closed to the profane. That is why art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences.

servent en matière de con- Introduction VII
sommations culturelles se re-
hy peuvent aussi en matière de consom-
mations alimentaires : l'antithèse entre
la quantité et la qualité, la grande
bouffe et les petits plats, la substance
et la forme ou les formes, recouvre
l'opposition, liée à des distances in-
égales à la nécessité, entre le goût de
nécessité, qui porte vers les nourri-
tures à la fois les plus nourrissantes
et les plus économiques, et le goût de
liberté —ou de luxe— qui, par op-
position au franc-manger popu- laire,
porte à déplacer l'accent de la matière
vers la manière (de présenter, de ser-
vir, de manger, etc.) par un parti de
stylistique qui demande à la forme et
aux formes d'opérer une dénégation
de la fonction. La science du goût et
de la consommation culturelle com-
mence par une transgression qui n'a
rien d'esthétique : elle doit en effet
abolir la frontière sacrée qui fait de
la culture légitime un univers séparé
pour découvrir les relations intelligibles
qui unissent des «choix» en apparence
incommensurables, comme les préfé-
rences en matière de musique et de
cuisine, en matière de peinture et de
sport, en matière de littérature et de
coiffure. Cette réintégration barbare
des consommations esthétiques dans
l'univers des consommations ordinaires
révoque l'opposition, qui est au fon-
dement de l'esthétique savante depuis
Kant, entre le «goût des sens» et le
«goût de la réflexion» et entre le plai-

sir «facile», plaisir sensible réduit à un plaisir des sens, et le plaisir «pur», qui est prédisposé à devenir un symbole d'excellence morale et une mesure de la capacité de sublimation qui définit l'homme vraiment humain. La culture qui est le produit de cette division magique a valeur de sacré. Et de fait, la consécration culturelle fait subir aux objets, aux personnes et aux situations qu'elle touche une sorte de promotion ontologique qui s'apparente à une transsubstantiation. Je n'en veux pour preuve que ces deux jugements, qui semblent inventés pour le bonheur du sociologue : «Ce qui nous aura frappé le plus en définitive : rien ne saurait être obscène sur notre première scène, et les ballerines de l'Opéra, même en danseuses nues, sylphes, follets ou bacchantes, gardent une pureté inaltérable» (5) ; «Il y a des attitudes obscènes, ces simulacres de coït qui choquent le regard. Certes, il n'est pas question d'approuver, encore que l'insertion de tels gestes dans des ballets leur confère un aspect esthétique et symbolique qui manque aux scènes intimes que le cinéma étale quotidiennement sous les yeux des spectateurs (...) Et le nu ? Qu'en dire sinon qu'il est bref et de peu d'effet scénique. Je ne dirai pas qu'il est chaste ou innocent, car rien de ce qui est commercial ne peut être ainsi qualifié. Disons qu'il n'est pas choquant et qu'on peut surtout lui reprocher d'avoir servi de miroir aux

alouettes pour le succès de la pièce (...). Il manque à la nudité de Hair 5—O. Merlin, «Mlle Thibon dans la vision de Marguerite», *Le Monde*, 9-2-1 065. VIII La distinction d'être symbolique» (6). La négation de la jouissance inférieure, grossière, vulgaire, vénale, servile, en un mot naturelle, qui constitue comme tel le sacré culturel, enferme l'affirmation de la supériorité de ceux qui savent se satisfaire des plaisirs sublimés, raffinés, désintéressés, gratuits, distingués, à jamais interdits aux simples profanes. C'est ce qui fait que l'art et la consommation artistique sont prédisposés à remplir, qu'on le veuille ou non, qu'on le sache ou non, une fonction sociale de légitimation des différences sociales.

Politics of taste

Consent vs coercion (Gramsci's key move)

Gramsci distinguishes between :

- Domination → rule by force (police, law, violence)
- Hegemony ([cultural hegemony](#)) → rule by consent (culture, norms, meaning)

Modern capitalist societies rely more on hegemony than repression.

The most effective power is the one that does not appear as power.

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Adorno on culture industry

philosophy of new music

Ethnomusicology

Chinese opera

Simhra Arom Pygmees

<https://youtu.be/JrajWGCjaUA>

FIGURE 7 – Pygmees (Simha Arom).

identity - travesti

'I dress up as taliban, as salsa man, as hip hop, as jazzman, as classical musician.'

'rap Iam '

Like Venables.

medieval mystery play

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Cultural studies

[cultural studies](#)

Introduction : Defining the Field

Definition [Cultural Studies] : *A critical, interdisciplinary academic field that investigates how **culture**—understood broadly as systems of meaning, representation, and practice—creates, maintains, and transforms individual experiences, social relations, and structures of power.*

Cultural Studies emerged from several intellectual traditions in the mid-20th century, particularly in Britain at the BIRMINGHAM CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL STUDIES (CCCS). It represents a deliberate departure from :

- Traditional literary criticism's focus on *high culture*
- Anthropological approaches treating culture as static and holistic
- Positivist social science methods claiming objective neutrality

Core Characteristics & Principles

Interdisciplinary Nature

Cultural Studies deliberately crosses disciplinary boundaries, synthesizing approaches from :

Discipline	Key Contributions
Sociology	Class analysis, social structures, institutions
Literary Theory	Textual analysis, semiotics, narratology
Marxist Theory	Ideology critique, political economy, hegemony
Feminist Theory	Gender, patriarchy, intersectionality
Postcolonial Theory	Colonialism, race, diaspora, hybridity
Media Studies	Audiences, production, digital cultures
Anthropology	Ethnography, everyday practices, material culture

Interdisciplinary foundations of Cultural Studies

Political Commitment & Critical Stance

Principle [The Political is Cultural] : *All cultural phenomena are understood as inherently political—sites where power is exercised, negotiated, and resisted.*

The field maintains an explicit commitment to :

- **Critique** of dominant power relations (capitalism, patriarchy, racism, colonialism)
- **Intervention** in social and political debates
- **Emancipation** and social justice as normative goals

Key Theoretical Concepts

Fundamental Binaries & Their Deconstruction

Cultural Studies often works through deconstructing binary oppositions :

High Culture	↔	Popular Culture
Producer	↔	Consumer/Audience
Text	↔	Practice
Structure	↔	Agency
Domination	↔	Resistance
Global	↔	Local

Central Theoretical Frameworks

Hegemony (Gramsci)

The process by which dominant groups secure consent through cultural means rather than coercion alone :

$$\text{Hegemony} = \text{Domination} + \text{Consent} + \text{Negotiation}$$

Circuit of Culture (du Gay et al.)

Culture operates through interconnected moments :

Representation → Identity → Production → Consumption → Regulation

Articulation (Hall)

The temporary, non-necessary connection between different elements within cultural formations :

$$\text{Ideology} \bowtie \text{Social Forces} \bowtie \text{Cultural Forms}$$

Major Schools & Thinkers

The Birmingham School (CCCS)

The foundational institution establishing Cultural Studies as a distinct field :

- **Richard Hoggart** : *The Uses of Literacy* (1957)—working-class culture
- **Raymond Williams** : "*Culture is ordinary*"; structures of feeling
- **Stuart Hall** : Encoding/decoding model; articulation theory; race and identity
- **Paul Willis** : Ethnography of working-class youth subcultures

Key Theoretical Influences

Thinker	Key Concept	Application in Cultural Studies
Antonio Gramsci	Hegemony	Analysis of popular consent to power
Michel Foucault	Power/Knowledge	How discourses produce subjects
Roland Barthes	Myth & Semiotics	Reading cultural texts as sign systems
bell hooks	Intersectionality	Race, class, gender interconnections
Edward Said	Orientalism	Colonial representations and power
Judith Butler	Performativity	Gender as cultural performance

Major theoretical influences on Cultural Studies

Methodological Approaches

Cultural Studies employs diverse, often combined methodologies :

Textual Analysis

Critical reading of cultural "*texts*" (films, advertisements, fashion, architecture, etc.) as structured systems of signs.

Ethnography & Audience Studies

Investigating how people actually **use** and **makes sense** of cultural products in everyday contexts.

Historical Materialism

Situating cultural forms within their specific historical conditions of production and consumption.

Discourse Analysis

Examining how language and representation construct social reality and subject positions.

[Chttps://youtu.be/3RpqgsW6aKQ](https://youtu.be/3RpqgsW6aKQ)

[The Fagotts and their friends](#)

[The Fagotts and their friends 3](#)

[The Fagotts and their friends 2](#)

[fagot book](#)
[les oiseaux](#)
[Brecht 4 sous par Ostermeier](#)
[picture a day like this](#)
[picture - crimp](#)

Conclusion : Why Cultural Studies Matters

Cultural Studies remains vital because it insists on asking the crucial questions that other disciplines often avoid :

- Whose interests does this cultural form serve?
- How are identities (racial, gender, class, national) constructed and naturalized?
- Where are the spaces for resistance, negotiation, and alternative imaginaries?
- How does culture both reflect *and* shape material social relations?

As Stuart Hall famously argued, culture is not a reflective mirror but a "*constitutive force*" in society—it makes the social world as much as it expresses it.

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Ted and Friends

Ted Huffman

[Ted Huffman wiki](#)

poppea

Baker - Venables

[Below the belt](#)

Baker/Huffman

Lighthouse

[lighthouse review - Maxell Davies](#)

[lighthouse trailer 2009](#)

The opera opens with a prologue in which three officers (tenor, baritone and bass) address a board of inquiry. They relate their voyage to the dark lighthouse and the discovery that the crew was missing, but become increasingly nervous answering the questions put to them by the orchestra's French horn and begin to contradict each other on details. Nevertheless, an open verdict is recorded and the trio sing of the ghost's modern robot replacement.

4.48

[4.48 Psychosis](#)

Venables/Huffman

4.48 Psychosis

[trailer Bayerische Theatrakademie](#)

[Alice](#)

-> verbatim theatre

[4.48 Psychosis - Sarah Kane](#) -> mental illness - [Durkeim le Suicide](#)

The Fagots and their friends

We are the lucky ones

[trailer interviews](#)

Denis and Katia

[Denis and Katia](#)

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Elements of reading list/bibliography

General

- *Gender, Power and Music* – Judith Koskoff
- *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* – Judith Butler
- Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality - see also Bell Hooks
- *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* – Tricia Rose

Syllabus

- *Gender, Power and Music* – Judith Koskoff
- *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* – Judith Butler
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