

PIERRE BOURDIEU

— 1930–2002

Ever alert to and wary of the social consequences of economic origins, Pierre Bourdieu was born on August 1, 1930 in Denguin, France, son of a postman and grandson of peasants in a Pyrenees backwater. He married Marie-Claire Brizard on November 2, 1962, with her had three sons, and died of cancer on January 23, 2002 in Paris, age 71. Through the highly competitive French educational system, by dint of intelligence and work, he raised himself from his origins, beginning by attending the *École Normale Supérieure*, nursery for French intellectuals, taking a degree in philosophy in 1954. He then taught at the *Lycée de Moulins*, and moved to the *Faculté des Lettres* in Algiers, Algeria between 1958 and 1960 where he carried out ethnographic research, resulting in his first book (*The Algerians*, 1962) and giving him a practical basis for his later theoretical speculations. It was his keen sense of particularity based on anthropological study that gave Bourdieu's theory its earthbound quality, and which protected him from the hyper-abstractions of the poststructuralists with whom he competed for the attention of the French intellectual public. At the same time, however, because of the rarefied atmosphere typical of Parisian elite culture, he was also capable of writing works which hovered above the everyday while at the same time claiming to illuminate the quotidian. Bourdieu rose from assistant professor of sociology in Algiers to similar rank at Lille, but ascended to the director of studies at the *École des Hautes Etudes*, culminating from 1981 in his professorship in sociology at the *Collège de France*, the most coveted such position.

Bourdieu's most theoretically adventurous and interesting work is *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972; tr. 1977), which offered his theoretical method for overcoming the vexing dualism of subject-object that had dogged social theory since the 18th century. It is an interesting contrast with similar attempts by Giddens a few years later, as well as Habermas. Another influential work was *Reproduction in Education, Culture, and Society* (1970; tr. 1977; co-authored with Passeron) in which Bourdieu illustrates how social origins mixed with prescribed educational trajectories (at least in France) go a long way toward explaining where and how people end up in their particular niche in the social class system. He developed this in much greater detail in his magnum opus, *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgment* (1979; tr. 1984), from which all the social sciences took his key term, "cultural capital" and lavished upon it the same kind of attention that Habermas received for "legitimation crisis" and Foucault for "episteme." Later in his professional life Bourdieu wrote books about Heidegger, photography, what he called "Pascalian meditations," French literary life in the mid-19th century, the world system, television, the educational upper classes, and what he called *Homo Academicus* (1984), a witty dissection of how the academic system works in France and elsewhere, to the benefit of some and the detriment

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of many. His native suspicion of Parisian elite life, his dislike of French imperialist behavior in northern Africa, and his ability to write with the creative ambiguity so central to French intellectualism in the last 50 years or so gave him a paramount position from which to dominate sociology in Paris during the last 20 years of his life.

OUTLINE OF A THEORY OF PRACTICE, 1972

Structures, Habitus and Practices

The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus. It follows that these practices cannot be directly deduced either from the objective conditions, defined as the instantaneous sum of the stimuli which may appear to have directly triggered them, or from the conditions which produced the durable principle of their production. These practices can be accounted for only by relating the objective *structure* defining the social conditions of the production of the habitus which engendered them to the conditions in which this habitus is operating, that is, to the *conjuncture* which, short of a radical transformation, represents a particular state of this structure. In practice, it is the habitus, history turned into nature, denied as such, which accomplishes practically the relating of these two systems of relations, in and through the production of practice. The "unconscious" is never anything other than the forging of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces into the second natures of habitus: "... in each of these varying proportions, there is part of yester-

day's man; it is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. Yet we do not sense this man of the past, because he is inveterate in us; he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves. Consequently we are led to take no account of him, any more than we take account of his legitimate demands. Conversely, we are very much aware of the most recent attainments of civilization, because, being recent, they have not yet had time to settle into our unconscious."

Genesis amnesia is also encouraged (if not entailed) by the objectivist apprehension which, grasping the product of history as an *opus operatum*, a *fait accompli*, can only invoke the mysteries of preestablished harmony or the prodigies of conscious orchestration to account for what, apprehended in pure synchrony, appears as objective meaning, whether it be the internal coherence of works or institutions such as myths, rites, or bodies of law, or the objective coordination which the concordant or conflicting practices of the members of the same group or class at once manifest and presuppose (inasmuch as they imply a community of dispositions).

Each agent, wittingly or unwittingly, willy nilly, is a producer and reproducer of objective meaning. Because his actions and works are the product of a *modus operandi* of which he is not the producer and has no conscious mastery, they contain an "objective intention", as the Scholastics put it, which always outruns his conscious intentions. The schemes of thought and expression he has acquired are the basis for the *intentionless invention* of regulated improvisation. Endlessly overtaken by his own words, with which he maintains a relation of "carry and be carried", as Nicolai

Hartmann put it, the virtuoso finds in the *opus operatum* new triggers and new supports for the *modus operandi* from which they arise, so that his discourse continuously feeds off itself like a train bringing along its own rails. If witticisms surprise their author no less than their audience, and impress as much by their retrospective necessity as by their novelty, the reason is that the *trouville* appears as the simple unearthing, at once accidental and irresistible, of a buried possibility. It is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know. The habitus is the universalizing mediation which causes an individual agent's practices, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less "sensible" and "reasonable". That part of practices which remains obscure in the eyes of their own producers is the aspect by which they are objectively adjusted to other practices and to the structures of which the principle of their production is itself the product.

One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a common-sense world endowed with the *objectivity* secured by consensus on the meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world, in other words the harmonization of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals, for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings), of similar or identical experiences. The homogeneity of habitus is what—within the limits of the group of agents possessing the schemes (of production and interpretation) implied in their production—causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted. This practical comprehension obviates the "intention" and "intentional transfer into the other" dear to the phenomenologists, by dispensing, for the ordinary occasions of life, with close analysis of the nuances of another's practice and tacit or explicit inquiry ("What do you *mean*?") into his intentions. Automatic and impersonal, significant without intending to signify, ordinary practices lend themselves to an understanding no less automatic and impersonal: the picking up of the objective intention they express in no way implies "reactivation" of the "lived" intention of the agent who performs

them. "Communication of consciousnesses" presupposes community of "unconsciousnesses" (i.e. of linguistic and cultural competences). The deciphering of the objective intention of practices and works has nothing to do with the "reproduction" (*Nachbildung*, as the early Dilthey puts it) of lived experiences and the reconstitution, unnecessary and uncertain, of the personal singularities of an "intention" which is not their true origin.

The objective homogenizing of group or class habitus which results from the homogeneity of the conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized without any intentional calculation or conscious reference to a norm and mutually adjusted *in the absence of any direct interaction or, a fortiori, explicit coordination*. "Imagine", Leibniz suggests, "two clocks or watches in perfect agreement as to the time. This may occur in one of three ways. The first consists in mutual influence; the second is to appoint a skillful workman to correct them and synchronize them at all times; the third is to construct these clocks with such art and precision that one can be assured of their subsequent agreement." So long as, retaining only the first or at a pinch the second hypothesis, one ignores the true principle of the conductorless orchestration which gives regularity, unity, and systematicity to the practices of a group or class, and this even in the absence of any spontaneous or externally imposed organization of individual projects, one is condemned to the naive artificialism which recognizes no other principle unifying a group's or class's ordinary or extraordinary action than the conscious coordination of a conspiracy. If the practices of the members of the same group or class are more and better harmonized than the agents know or wish, it is because, as Leibniz puts it, "following only [his] own laws", each "nonetheless agrees with the other". The habitus is precisely this immanent law, *lex insita*, laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing, which is the precondition not only for the coordination of practices but also for practices of coordination, since the corrections and adjustments the agents themselves consciously carry out presuppose their mastery of a common code and since undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the habitus of

mobilizing agents (e.g. prophet, party leader, etc.) and the dispositions of those whose aspirations and world-view they express.

So it is because they are the product of dispositions which, being the internalization of the same objective structures, are objectively concerted that the practices of the members of the same group or, in a differentiated society, the same class are endowed with an objective meaning that is at once unitary and systematic, transcending subjective intentions and conscious projects whether individual or collective. To describe the process of objectification and orchestration in the language of *interaction* and mutual adjustment is to forget that the interaction itself owes its form to the objective structures which have produced the dispositions of the interacting agents and which allot them their relative positions in the interaction and elsewhere. Every confrontation between agents in fact brings together, in an *interaction* defined by the *objective structure* of the relation between the groups they belong to (e.g. a boss giving orders to a subordinate, colleagues discussing their pupils, academics taking part in a symposium), systems of dispositions (carried by "natural persons") such as a linguistic competence and a cultural competence and, through these habitus, all the objective structures of which they are the product, structures which are active only when *embodied* in a competence acquired in the course of a particular history (with the different types of bilingualism or pronunciation, for example, stemming from different modes of acquisition).

Thus, when we speak of class habitus, we are insisting, against all forms of the occasionalist illusion which consists in directly relating practices to properties inscribed in the situation, that "interpersonal" relations are never, except in appearance, *individual-to-individual* relationships and that the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction. This is what social psychology and interactionism or ethnomethodology forget when, reducing the objective structure of the relationship between the assembled individuals to the conjunctural structure of their interaction in a particular situation and group, they seek to explain everything that occurs in an experimental or observed interaction in terms of the experimentally controlled characteristics of the situation, such as

the relative spatial positions of the participants or the nature of the channels used. In fact it is their present and last positions in the social structure that biological individuals carry with them, at all times and in all places, in the form of dispositions which are so many marks of *social position* and hence of the social distance between objective positions, that is, between social persons conjuncturally brought together (in physical space, which is not the same thing as social space) and correlatively, so many reminders of this distance and of the conduct required in order to "keep one's distance" or to manipulate it strategically, whether symbolically or actually, to reduce it (easier for the dominant than for the dominated), increase it, or simply maintain it (by not "letting oneself go", not "becoming familiar", in short, "standing on one's dignity", or on the other hand, refusing to "take liberties" and "put oneself forward", in short "knowing one's place" and staying there).

Even those forms of interaction seemingly most amenable to description in terms of "intentional transfer into the Other", such as sympathy, friendship, or love, are dominated (as class homogamy attests), through the harmony of habitus, that is to say, more precisely, the harmony of ethos and tastes—doubtless sensed in the imperceptible cues of body *hexis*—by the objective structure of the relations between social conditions. The illusion of mutual election or predestination arises from ignorance of the social conditions for the harmony of aesthetic tastes or ethical leanings, which is thereby perceived as evidence of the ineffable affinities which spring from it.

In short, the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions—a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relaying the continuous exercise of the law of external necessities (irreducible to immediate conjunctural constraints)—is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis. And it is at the same time the principle of the transformations and regulated revolutions which

neither the extrinsic and instantaneous determinisms of a mechanistic sociologism nor the purely internal but equally punctual determination of voluntarist or spontaneist subjectivism are capable of accounting for.

DISTINCTION: A SOCIAL CRITIQUE OF THE JUDGEMENT OF TASTE, 1979

The Taste for Necessity and the Principle of Conformity

The specific effect of the taste for necessity, which never ceases to act, though unseen—because its action combines with that of necessity—is most clearly seen when it is, in a sense, operating out of phase, having survived the disappearance of the conditions which produced it. One sees examples in the behaviour of some small craftsmen or businessmen who, as they themselves say, 'don't know how to spend the money they've earned', or of junior clerical workers, still attached to their peasant or working-class roots, who get as much satisfaction from calculating how much they have 'saved' by doing without a commodity or service (or 'doing it themselves') as they would have got from the thing itself, but who, equally, cannot ever purchase it without a painful sense of wasting money. Having a million does not in itself make one able to live like a millionaire; and parvenus generally take a long time to learn that what they see as culpable prodigality is, in their new condition, expenditure of basic necessity.

It tends to be forgotten that to appreciate the 'true value' of the purely symbolic services which in many areas (hotels, hairdressing etc.) make the essential difference between luxury establishments and ordinary businesses, one has to feel oneself the legitimate recipient of this bureaucratically personalized care and attention and to display vis-à-vis those who are paid to offer it the mixture of distance (including 'generous' gratuities) and free-

dom which the bourgeois have towards their servants. Anyone who doubts that 'knowing how to be served' is one component of the bourgeois art of living, need only think of the workers or small clerks who, entering a smart restaurant for some grand occasion, immediately strike up a conversation with the waiters—who realize at once 'whom they are dealing with'—as if to destroy symbolically the servant-master relationship and the unease it creates for them. The worker who sees a watch on sale for two million (old) francs, or who hears that a surgeon has spent three million francs on his son's engagement party, does not envy the watch or the party but the two million, being unable to conceive of the system of needs in which he would have nothing better to do with two million francs than spend it on a watch. When there are 'so many things that come first', as they say, 'you'd have to be crazy' to think of buying a two-million-franc watch. But no one ever really puts himself 'in the place' of those on the other side of the social world. One man's extravagance is another man's prime necessity and not only because the marginal value of those two million francs varies with the number of millions possessed. Many of the expenditures that are called conspicuous are in no way a squandering and, as well as being obligatory elements in a certain style of life, they are very often—like engagement parties—an excellent investment in social capital. . . .

What statistics records in the form of systems of needs is nothing other than the coherence of the choices of a habitus. And the inability to 'spend more', or differently, that is, to rise to the system of needs implied in a higher level of resources, is the best illustration of the impossibility of reducing (theoretically) the propensity to consume to the capacity to appropriate or of reducing the habitus to the economic conditions prevailing at a given moment (as represented, for example, by a given level of income). If everything encourages a belief in the existence of a direct relationship between income and consumption, this is because taste is almost always the product of economic conditions identical to those in which the functions, so that income tends to be credited with a causal efficacy which it in fact only exerts in association with the habitus it has produced. The specific efficacy of the habitus is clearly seen when the same income is associated with very different patterns of consumption, which can only be

derstood by assuming that other selection principles have intervened. . . .

The principle of the most important differences in the order of life-style and, even more, of the 'stylization of life' lies in the variations in objective and subjective distance from the world, with its material constraints and temporal urgencies like the aesthetic disposition which is one dimension of it, the distant, detached or casual disposition towards the world or other people, a disposition which can scarcely be called subjective since it is objectively internalized, can only be constituted in conditions of existence that are relatively freed from urgency. The submission to necessity which inclines working-class people to a pragmatic, functionalist 'aesthetic', refusing the gratuity and futility of formal exercises and of every form of art for art's sake, is also the principle of all the choices of daily existence and of an art of living which rejects specifically aesthetic intentions as aberrations.

Thus manual workers say more often than all the other classes that they like interiors that are clean and tidy and easy to maintain, or the value for money' clothes which economic necessity assigns to them in any case. The doubly prudent choice of a garment that is both 'simple' ('versatile', 'all-purpose'), i.e., as little marked and as unriskey as possible ('no-nonsense', 'practical'), and 'good value for money', i.e., cheap and long-lasting, no doubt presents itself as the most reasonable strategy, given, on the one hand, the economic and cultural capital (not to mention time) that can be invested in buying clothes and, on the other hand, the symbolic profits that can be expected from such an investment (at least at work—unlike clerical workers, for example). . . .

Thus, although working-class practices may seem to be deduced directly from their economic conditions, since they ensure a saving of money, time and effort that would in any case be of low profitability, they stem from a choice of the necessary ('That's not for us'), both in the sense of what is technically necessary, 'practical' (or, as others would say, functional), i.e., needed in order to 'get by', to do 'the proper thing and no more', and of what is imposed by an economic social necessity condemning 'simple', 'modest' people to 'simple', 'modest' tastes. The adjustment to the objective chances which is

inscribed in the dispositions constituting the habitus is the source of all the realistic choices which, based on the renunciation of symbolic profits that are in any case inaccessible, reduce practices or objects to their technical function, a 'short back-and-sides' or 'quick trim-up' at the barber's, 'a simple little dress', 'solid' furniture etc. Thus nothing is more alien to working-class women than the typically bourgeois idea of making each object in the home the occasion for an aesthetic choice, of extending the intention of harmony or beauty even into the bathroom or kitchen, places strictly defined by their function, or of involving specifically aesthetic criteria in the choice of a saucepan or cupboard. Festive meals and 'Sunday best' clothes are opposed to everyday meals and clothes by the arbitrariness of a conventional division—doing things properly—just as the rooms socially designated for 'decoration', the sitting room, the dining room or living room, are opposed to everyday places, that is, by an antithesis which is more or less that of the 'decorative' and the 'practical', and they are decorated in accordance with established conventions, with knick-knacks on the mantelpiece, a forest scene over the sideboard, flowers on the table, without any of these obligatory choices implying decisions or a search for effect.

This conventionalism, which is also that of popular photography, concerned to fix conventional poses in the conventional compositions, is the opposite of bourgeois formalism and of all the forms of art for art's sake recommended by manuals of graceful living and women's magazines, the art of entertaining, the art of the table, the art of motherhood. In addition to providing a form of basic security in a world in which there can be hardly any assurance, the choice of 'doing the proper thing' or 'the done thing' (the vendors of domestic goods understand the power of 'It's the done thing' over working-class insecurity) has a natural place in an economy of practices based on the search for the 'practical' and the refusal of 'frills' and 'fancy nonsense'.

Even the choices which, from the standpoint of the dominant norms, appear as the most 'irrational' are grounded in the taste of necessity—plus, of course, the entirely negative effect of the absence of information and specific competence which results from the lack of cultural capital. For example, the taste for the trinkets and knick-knacks which

adorn mantelpiece and hallways is inspired by an intention unknown to economists and ordinary aesthetes, that of obtaining maximum 'effect' ('It'll make a terrific effect') at minimum cost, a formula which for bourgeois taste is the very definition of vulgarity (one of the intentions of distinction being to suggest with the fewest 'effects' possible the greatest expenditure of time, money and ingenuity). What is the 'gaudy' and the 'tawdry', if not that which creates a big effect for a small price, the 'follies' that are only permissible so long as you can say to yourself, 'They were almost given away'? Street hawkers and sales-promotion specialists know that they must release the brakes and censorships which forbid 'extravagances' by presenting the forbidden goods as 'bargains'—the unfashionable settee which, if you can forget the colour and just think of the price, is exactly the one you had always wanted 'to go in front of the TV', or the unwearable nylon dress you ended up buying because it was reduced in the sale, though you had 'sworn you would never again wear nylon.'

And if it still needed to be proved that resignation to necessity is the basis of the taste of necessity, one only has to consider the waste of time and energy resulting from the refusal to subject the daily management of domestic life to the constraints of rational calculation and formal life-principles ('a place for everything', 'everything in its time' etc.), which only apparently contradicts the refusal to devote time and care to health ('molly-coddling yourself') or beauty ('getting dolled up'). In fact, in these two features of their life-style, working-class women, doubly dominated, show that they do not set sufficient value on their trouble and their time, the only things they can spend (and give) without counting, to be concerned about sparing and saving them, or, to put it another way, that they do not value themselves sufficiently (and they do indeed have a low value on the labour market, unlike bourgeois women with their skilled labour-power and cultivated bodies) to grant themselves a care and attention which always imply a certain indulgence and to devote to their bodies the incessant care, concern and attention that are needed to achieve and maintain health, slimness and beauty. . . .

The calls to order ('Who does she think she is?' 'That's not for the likes of us') which reaffirm the principle of conformity—the only explicit norm of popular taste—and aim to encourage the 'reasonable' choices that are in any case imposed by the objective conditions also contain a warning against the ambition to distinguish oneself by identifying with other groups, that is, they are a reminder of the need for class solidarity. The gaps between the cultural practices and preferences of the different classes are to a large extent due to the fact that the chances of finding in one's milieu the 'market' in which cultural experiences and the discourses to which they give rise can receive a value vary in much the same way as the chances of having such experiences, and no doubt play a part in determining these chances. The low interest which working-class people show in the works of legitimate culture to which they could have access—especially through television—is not solely the effect of a lack of competence and familiarity: just as supposedly vulgar subjects, such as television, are banished from bourgeois conversation, so the favourite subjects of bourgeois conversation, exhibitions, theatre, concerts or even cinema, are excluded, *de facto* and *de jure*, from working-class conversation, in which they could only express the pretension to distinguish oneself. Perhaps the most ruthless call to order, which in itself no doubt explains the extraordinary *realism* of the working classes, stems from the closure effect of the homogeneity of the directly experienced social world. There is no other possible language, no other life-style, no other form of kinship relation; the universe of possibles is closed. Other people's expectations are so many reinforcements of dispositions imposed by the objective conditions.

The 'Taste of Reflection' and the 'Taste of Sense'

What pure taste refuses is indeed the violence which the popular spectator consents (one

of Adorno's description of popular music and its effects); it demands respect, the distance which allows it to keep its distance. It expects the work of art, a finality with no other end than itself, to treat the spectator in accordance with the Kantian imperative, that is, as an end, not a means. Thus, Kant's principle of pure taste is nothing other than a refusal, a disgust—a disgust for objects which impose enjoyment and a disgust for the crude, vulgar taste which revels in this imposed enjoyment: 'One kind of ugliness alone is incapable of being represented conformably to nature without destroying all aesthetic delight, and consequently artistic beauty, namely, that which excites *disgust*. For, as in this strange sensation, which depends purely on the imagination, the object is represented as insisting, as it were, on our enjoying it, while we still set our face against it, the artificial representation of the object is no longer distinguishable from the nature of the object itself in our sensation, and so it cannot possibly be regarded as beautiful'.

Disgust is the paradoxical experience of enjoyment extorted by violence, an enjoyment which arouses horror. This horror, unknown to those who surrender to sensation, results fundamentally from removal of the distance, in which freedom is asserted, between the representation and the thing represented, in short, from *alienation*, the loss of the subject in the object, immediate submission to the immediate present under the enslaving violence of the 'agreeable'. Thus, in contrast to the inclination, aroused by the 'agreeable', which, unlike beauty, is common to humans and animals, is capable of seducing 'those who are always intent only on enjoyment' and 'immediately satisfies the senses—whereas it is 'mediately displeasing' to reason—'pure taste', the 'taste of reflection' which is opposed to the 'taste of sense as 'charms' are opposed to 'form', must exclude interest and must not 'be in the least prepossessed in favour of the real existence of the object'.

The object which 'insists on being enjoyed', an image and in reality, in flesh and blood, neutralizes both ethical resistance and aesthetic neutralization; it annihilates the distancing power of representation, the essentially human power of depending immediate, animal attachment to the sensible and refusing submission to the pure af-

fect, to simple aisthesis. In the face of this twofold challenge to human freedom and to culture (the anti-nature), disgust is the ambivalent experience of the horrible seduction of the disgusting and of enjoyment, which performs a sort of reduction to animality, corporeality, the belly and sex, that is, to what is common and therefore vulgar, removing any difference between those who resist with all their might and those who wallow in pleasure, who enjoy enjoyment: 'Common human understanding . . . has the doubtful honour of having the name of common sense . . . bestowed upon it; and bestowed, too, in an acceptance of the word *common* (not merely in our language, where it actually has a double meaning, but also in many others) which makes it amount to what is *vulgar* (*das Vulgare*) what is everywhere to be met with—a quality which by no means confers credit or distinction upon its possessor'. Nature understood as sense equalizes, but at the lowest level (an early version of the 'levelling-down' abhorred by the Heideggerians). Aristotle taught that different things differentiate themselves by what makes them similar, i.e., a common character; in Kant's text, disgust discovers with horror the common animality on which and against which moral distinction is constructed: 'We regard as coarse and low the habits of thought of those who have no feeling for beautiful nature . . . and who devote themselves to the mere enjoyments of sense found in eating and drinking'.

Elsewhere Kant quite directly states the social basis of the opposition between the 'taste of reflection' and the 'taste of sense': 'In the beginning, the novice must have been guided by instinct alone, that voice of God which is obeyed by all animals. This permitted some things to be used for nourishment, while forbidding others. Here it is not necessary to assume a special instinct which is now lost. It could simply have been the sense of smell, plus its affinity with the organ of taste and the well-known relation of the latter to the organs of digestion; in short an ability, perceivable even now, to sense, prior to the consumption of a certain foodstuff, whether or not it is fit for consumption. It is not even necessary to assume that this sensitivity was keener in the first pair than it is now. For it is a familiar enough fact that men

wholly absorbed by their senses have much greater perceptive powers than those who, occupied with thoughts as well as with the senses, are to a degree turned away from the sensuous.' We recognize here the ideological mechanism which works by describing the terms of the opposition one establishes between the social classes as stages in an evolution (here, the progress from nature to culture).

Thus, although it consistently refuses anything resembling an empirical psychological or sociological genesis of taste, each time invoking the magical division between the transcendental and the empirical, the theory of pure taste is grounded

in an empirical social relation, as is shown by the opposition it makes between the agreeable (which 'does not cultivate' and is only an enjoyment) and culture, or its allusions to the teaching and educability of taste. The antithesis between culture and bodily pleasure (or nature) is rooted in the opposition between the cultivated bourgeoisie and the people, the imaginary site of uncultivated nature, barbarously wallowing in pure enjoyment: 'Taste that requires an added element of charm and emotion for its delight, not to speak of adopting this as the measure of its approval, has not yet emerged from barbarism'.