

Bourdieu

Distinction

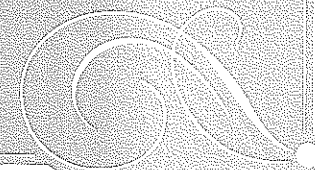
Harvard

Distinction

A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste

Pierre Bourdieu

Translated
by Richard Nice



s at once a vast ethnography of contemporary France
tion of the bourgeois mind. Bourdieu's subject is the
ture, and his objective is most ambitious: to provide an
he problems raised by Kant's *Critique of Judgment* by
y no judgment of taste is innocent.

, rich, intelligent book. It will provide the historian of
ith priceless materials and it will bring an essential con-
sociological theory.”
— Fernand Braudel

more distinguished contributions to social theory and
recent years . . . There is in this book an account of
a methodology of its study, rich in implication for a
ields of social research. The work in some ways redefines
ope of cultural studies.”

— Anthony Giddens, *Partisan Review*

extraordinary intelligence.”

— Irving Louis Horowitz, *Commonweal*

analysis transcends the usual analysis of conspicuous
1 in two ways: by showing that specific judgments and
er less than an esthetic outlook in general and by show-
er, that the acquisition of an esthetic outlook not only
per-class prestige but helps to keep the lower orders in
: words, the esthetic world view serves as an instrument
on. It serves the interests not merely of status but of
es this, according to Bourdieu, by emphasizing individ-
; and 'distinction' and by devaluing the well-being of
hole.”
— Christopher Lasch, *Vogue*

1 was Professor of Sociology at the Collège de France, Paris.

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which they receive their price, cultural competences are dependent on these markets, and all struggles over culture are aimed at creating the market most favourable to the products which are marked, in their manners, by a particular class of conditions of acquisition, i.e., a particular market. Thus, what is nowadays called the 'counter-culture' may well be the product of the endeavour of new-style autodidacts to free themselves from the constraints of the scholastic market (to which the less confident old-style autodidacts continue to submit, although it condemns their products in advance). They strive to do so by producing another market, with its own consecrating agencies, that is, like the high-society or intellectual markets, capable of challenging the pretension of the educational system to impose the principles of evaluation of competences and manners which reign in the scholastic market, or at least its most 'scholastic' sectors, on a perfectly unified market in cultural goods.

II The Economy of Practices

But on things whose rules and principles had been instilled into her by her mother, on the way to make certain dishes, to play Beethoven's sonatas, to 'receive' with cordiality, she was quite sure that she had a right idea of perfection and of discerning how far others approximated to it. For these three things, moreover, perfection was almost the same, a kind of simplicity in the means, a sobriety and a charm. She repudiated with horror the introduction of spices in dishes that did not absolutely require them, affectation and abuse of the pedals in piano-playing, departure from perfect naturalness, and exaggerated talking of oneself in 'receiving.' From the first mouthful, from the first notes, from a simple letter she preened herself on knowing if she had to deal with a good cook, a real musician, a woman properly brought up. 'She may have many more fingers than I, but she lacks taste, playing that very simple *Andante* with so much emphasis.' 'No doubt a most brilliant woman full of parts, but it is a want of tact to speak of oneself in such a case.' 'Possibly a very knowing cook, but she does not know how to do steak and fried potatoes.' Steak and fried potatoes, an ideal competition-piece, a kind of culinary *Pathetic Sonata*, a gastronomic equivalent to what is in social life the visit of a lady who comes for a servant's 'character' and who, in an act as simple as that, can sufficiently display the presence or absence of tact and education.

Marcel Proust, *Days of Reading*

The Social Space and Its Transformations

If the research had stopped at this point it would probably not raise great objections, so self-evident is the idea of the irreducibility of artistic taste. However, as has already been shown by the analysis of the social conditions of the aesthetic disposition, the dispositions which govern choices between the goods of legitimate culture cannot be fully understood unless they are reintegrated into the system of dispositions, unless 'culture', in the restricted, normative sense of ordinary usage, is reinserted into 'culture' in the broad, anthropological sense and the elaborated taste for the most refined objects is brought back into relation with the elementary taste for the flavours of food.¹ The dual meaning of the word 'taste', which usually serves to justify the illusion of spontaneous generation which this cultivated disposition tends to produce by presenting itself in the guise of an innate disposition, must serve, for once, to remind us that taste in the sense of the 'faculty of immediately and intuitively judging aesthetic values' is inseparable from taste in the sense of the capacity to discern the flavours of foods which implies a preference for some of them. The abstraction which isolates dispositions towards legitimate culture leads to a further abstraction at the level of the system of explanatory factors, which, though always present and active, only offers itself for observation through those elements (cultural capital and trajectory in the case analysed below) which are the principles of its efficacy in the field in question.

The consumption of the most legitimate cultural goods is a particular case of competition for rare goods and practices, whose particularity no doubt owes more to the logic of supply, i.e., the specific form of compe-

tion between the producers, than to the logic of demand and tastes, i.e., the logic of competition between the consumers. One only has to remove the magical barrier which makes legitimate culture into a separate universe, in order to see intelligible relationships between choices as seemingly incommensurable as preferences in music or cooking, sport or politics, literature or hairstyle. This barbarous reintegration of aesthetic consumption into the world of ordinary consumption (against which it endlessly defines itself) has, inter alia, the virtue of reminding us that the consumption of goods no doubt always presupposes a labour of appropriation, to different degrees depending on the goods and the consumers; or, more precisely, that the consumer helps to produce the product he consumes, by a labour of identification and decoding which, in the case of a work of art, may constitute the whole of the consumption and gratification, and which requires time and dispositions acquired over time.

Economists, who never jib at an abstraction, can ignore what happens to products in the relationship with the consumers, that is, with the dispositions which define their useful properties and real uses. To hypothesize, as one of them does, that consumers perceive the same decisive attributes, which amounts to assuming that products possess objective or, as they are known, 'technical' characteristics which can impress themselves as such on all perceiving subjects, is to proceed as if perception only seized on the characteristics designated by the manufacturers' brochures (and so-called 'informative' publicity) and as if social uses could be derived from the operating instructions. Objects, even industrial products, are not objective in the ordinary sense of the word, i.e., independent of the interest and tastes of those who perceive them, and they do not impose the self-evidence of a universal, unanimously approved meaning. The sociologist's task would be much easier if, when faced with each relationship between an 'independent variable' and a 'dependent variable', he did not have to determine how the perception and appreciation of what is designated by the 'dependent variable' vary according to the classes determined by the 'independent variable', or, in other words, identify the system of pertinent features on the basis of which each of the classes of agents was really determined.² What science has to establish is the objectivity of the object which is established in the relationship between an object defined by the possibilities and impossibilities it offers, which are only revealed in the world of social uses (including, in the case of a technical object, the use or function for which it was designed) and the dispositions of an agent or class of agents, that is, the schemes of perception, appreciation and action which constitute its objective utility in a practical usage.³ The aim is not, of course, to reintroduce any form of what is called 'lived experience', which is most often merely a thinly disguised projection of the researcher's 'lived experience';⁴ but to move beyond the abstract relationship between consumers with interchangeable tastes and products with uniformly perceived and appreciated properties to the relationship between tastes which vary in a necessary way according to their

social and economic conditions of production, and the products on which they confer their different social identities. One only has to ask the question, which economists strangely ignore, of the economic conditions of the production of the dispositions demanded by the economy, i.e., in this case,⁵ the question of the economic and social determinants of tastes, to see the necessity of including in the complete definition of the product the differential experiences which the consumers have of it as a function of the dispositions they derive from their position in economic space. These experiences do not have to be felt in order to be understood with an understanding which may owe nothing to lived experience, still less to sympathy. The habitus, an objective relationship between two objectivities, enables an intelligible and necessary relation to be established between practices and a situation, the meaning of which is produced by the habitus through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves produced by an observable social condition.

Class Condition and Social Conditioning

Because it can only account for practices by bringing to light successively the series of effects which underlie them, analysis initially conceals the structure of the life-style characteristic of an agent or class of agents, that is, the unity hidden under the diversity and multiplicity of the set of practices performed in fields governed by different logics and therefore inducing different forms of realization, in accordance with the formula: [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice. It also conceals the structure of the symbolic space marked out by the whole set of these structured practices, all the distinct and distinctive life-styles which are always defined objectively and sometimes subjectively in and through their mutual relationships. So it is necessary to reconstruct what has been taken apart, first by way of verification but also in order to rediscover the kernel of truth in the approach characteristic of common-sense knowledge, namely, the intuition of the systematic nature of life-styles and of the whole set which they constitute. To do this, one must return to the practice-unifying and practice-generating principle, i.e., class habitus, the internalized form of class condition and of the conditionings it entails. One must therefore construct the *objective class*, the set of agents who are placed in homogeneous conditions of existence imposing homogeneous conditionings and producing homogeneous systems of dispositions capable of generating similar practices; and who possess a set of common properties, objectified properties, sometimes legally guaranteed (as possession of goods and power) or properties embodied as class habitus (and, in particular, systems of classificatory schemes).⁶

VARIABLES AND SYSTEMS OF VARIABLES In designating these classes (classes of agents or, which amounts to the same thing in this context, classes of conditions of existence) by the name of an occupation, one is

merely indicating that the position in the relations of production governs practices, in particular through the mechanisms which control access to positions and produce or select a particular class of habitus. But this is not a way of reverting to a pre-constructed variable such as 'socio-occupational category'. The individuals grouped in a class that is constructed in a particular respect (that is, in a particularly determinant respect) always bring with them, in addition to the pertinent properties by which they are classified, secondary properties which are thus smuggled into the explanatory model.⁷ This means that a class or class fraction is defined not only by its position in the relations of production, as identified through indices such as occupation, income or even educational level, but also by a certain sex-ratio, a certain distribution in geographical space (which is never socially neutral) and by a whole set of subsidiary characteristics which may function, in the form of tacit requirements, as real principles of selection or exclusion without ever being formally stated (this is the case with ethnic origin and sex). A number of official criteria in fact serve as a mask for hidden criteria: for example, the requiring of a given diploma can be a way of demanding a particular social origin.

One needs to examine what the list of the criteria used by the analyst derives from the state of the struggle between the groups separated by these criteria, or more precisely from the capacity of groups defined by these criteria, to get themselves recognized as such. There would be less likelihood of forgetting that unskilled workers are to a large extent women and immigrants if groups based on sex or nationality of origin had constituted themselves as such within the working class. Furthermore, the fallacy of the apparent factor would not be so frequent if it were not the simple retranslation onto the terrain of science of the legitimating strategies whereby groups tend to put forward this or that legitimate property, the overt principle of their constitution, to camouflage the real basis of their existence. Thus the most selective groups (a concert audience or the students of a *grande école*) may doubly conceal the real principle of their selection: by declining to announce the real principles of their existence and their reproduction, they are obliged to rely on mechanisms which lack the specific, systematic rigour of an explicit condition of entry and therefore allow exceptions (unlike clubs and all 'elites' based on co-option, they cannot vet the whole set of properties of the 'elect', i.e., the total person).

The members of groups based on co-option, as are most of the corps protected by an overt or covert *numerus clausus* (doctors, architects, professors, engineers etc.) always have something else in common beyond the characteristics explicitly demanded. The common image of the professions, which is no doubt one of the real determinants of 'vocations', is less abstract and unreal than that presented by statisticians; it takes into account not only the nature of the job and the income, but those secondary characteristics which are often the basis of their social value (prestige or discredit) and

which, though absent from the official job description, function as tacit requirements, such as age, sex, social or ethnic origin, overtly or implicitly guiding co-option choices, from entry into the profession and right through a career, so that members of the corps who lack these traits are excluded or marginalized (women doctors and lawyers tending to be restricted to a female clientele and black doctors and lawyers to black clients or research). In short, the property emphasized by the name used to designate a category, usually occupation, is liable to mask the effect of all the secondary properties which, although constitutive of the category, are not expressly indicated.

Similarly, when one is trying to assess the evolution of a social category (identified by occupation), crude errors are inevitable if, by considering only one of the pertinent properties, one ignores all the substitution effects in which the evolution is also expressed. The collective trajectory of a social class may be manifested in the fact that it is becoming 'feminized' or 'masculinized', growing older or young, getting poorer or richer. (The decline of a position may be manifested either in 'feminization'—which may be accompanied by a rise in social origin—or in 'democratization' or in 'ageing'.) The same would be true of any group defined by reference to a position in a field—e.g., a university discipline in the hierarchy of disciplines, a title of nobility in the aristocratic hierarchy, an educational qualification in the academic hierarchy.

The particular relations between a dependent variable (such as political opinion) and so-called independent variables such as sex, age and religion, or even educational level, income and occupation tend to mask the complete system of relationships which constitutes the true principle of the specific strength and form of the effects registered in any particular correlation. The most independent of 'independent' variables conceals a whole network of statistical relations which are present, implicitly, in its relationship with any given opinion or practice. Here too, instead of asking statistical technology to solve a problem which it can only displace, it is necessary to analyse the divisions and variations which the different secondary variables (sex, age etc.) bring into the class defined by the main variable, and consider everything which, though present in the real definition of the class, is not consciously taken into account in the nominal definition, the one summed up in the name used to designate it, or therefore in interpreting the relationship in which it is placed.

Typical of the false independence between so-called independent variables is the relationship between educational qualification and occupation. This is not only because, at least in some areas of social space (to which educational qualifications give some degree of access), occupation depends on qualification, but also because the cultural capital which the qualification is supposed to guarantee depends on the holder's occupation, which may presuppose maintenance or increase of the capital acquired within the family or at school (by and for promotion) or a diminishing of this capital (by

'de-skilling' or 'de-qualification'). To this effect of occupational condition—in which one has to distinguish the specific effect of the work which, by its very nature, may demand a more or less great, more or less constant investment of cultural capital, and therefore more or less continuous maintenance of this capital, and the effect of the possible career which encourages or excludes cultural investments likely to assist or legitimate promotion—must be added the effect of occupational milieu, i.e., the reinforcement of dispositions (especially cultural, religious or political dispositions) by a group that is homogeneous in most of the respects which define it. Thus one would have to examine in each case to what extent occupational conditions of existence assist or hinder this effect, which would mean taking into account the characteristics of the work (unpleasantness etc.), the conditions in which it is performed—noise, or silence permitting conversation etc.—the temporal rhythms it imposes, the spare time it allows, and especially the form of the horizontal or vertical relations it encourages at the workplace—during work or in rest periods—or outside.

This effect no doubt explains a number of differences between office workers (ledger clerks, bank clerks, agency clerks, typists) and commercial employees (mainly shop assistants), which are not entirely accounted for either by differences linked to class fraction of origin (office workers are rather more often the children of farmers; commercial employees the children of small employers) or by differences in educational capital (the first more often have the BEPC, the second a CAP).

The commercial employees and the office workers, who are distributed in much the same way as regards sex, age and income, are separated by important differences in dispositions and practices. Office workers are more ascetic—they more often expect their friends to be conscientious or well brought up, more often prefer a neat, clean and tidy interior and like Brel, Guétary, Mariano, the *Hungarian Rhapsody*, *L'Arlésienne*, Raphael, Watteau and Leonardo. By contrast, commercial employees more often look for friends who are sociable, *bons vivants*, amusing and stylish, for a comfortable, cosy interior, and prefer Brassens, Ferré, Françoise Hardy, the *Twilight of the Gods*, the *Four Seasons*, *Rhapsody in Blue*, Utrillo or Van Gogh.

Among the effects which the relationship between class fraction and practices simultaneously reveals and conceals, there is also the effect of the position in the distribution of the secondary properties attached to a class. Thus, members of the class who do not possess all the modal properties—e.g., men in a strongly feminized occupation or a worker's son at ENA—have their social identity deeply marked by this membership and the social image which it imposes and which they have to situate themselves in relation to, whether by acceptance or rejection.

Similarly, relationships such as those between educational capital, or age, and income mask the relationship linking the two apparently independent variables. Age determines income to an extent which varies according to educational capital and occupation, which is itself partly determined by educational capital and also by other, more hidden factors such as sex and inherited cultural or social capital. In another case, one of the variables is to a degree merely a transformed form of the other. Thus, scholastic age (i.e., age at a given educational level) is a transformed form of inherited cultural

capital, and lost years are a step towards relegation or elimination. More generally, the educational capital held at a given moment expresses, among other things, the economic and social level of the family of origin. (This results from a long process which is no way a mechanical relationship, since initial cultural capital may be only partially converted into educational capital or may produce effects irreducible to those of educational qualification, as one finds whenever social origin distinguishes individuals whose qualifications are identical.)

Likewise, in every relationship between educational capital and a given practice, one sees the effect of the dispositions associated with gender which help to determine the logic of the reconversion of inherited capital into educational capital, that is, the 'choice' of the type of educational capital which will be obtained from the same initial capital, more often literary for girls, more often scientific for boys. Again, the relationship of a given practice to age may conceal a relationship to educational capital when age is in fact the key to different modes of access to the position—by qualification or internal promotion—and different school generations and different chances of access to the educational system (the oldest agents have lower educational capital than the youngest), or to social class, by virtue of the different social definitions of precociousness or backwardness in the various areas, particularly in schooling.

In fact, the change in chances of access is only one aspect of a more systematic change which also involves the very definition of competence, and tends to make comparisons between the generations increasingly difficult. The conflicts between holders of competences of different ages and different educational levels—old school-certificate holder versus new *bachelier* (baccalauréat-holder)—centre precisely on the definition of competence, with the old generation complaining that the new generation does not possess the competences formerly defined as elementary and basic: 'They can't spell nowadays', 'They can't even add up'.

And finally, the variations in cultural practice by size of town of residence cannot be ascribed to the direct effect of spatial distance and the variations in the supply of culture, until it is confirmed that the differences persist after discounting the effect of the inequalities in educational capital concealed (even in the occupational category) by geographical distribution. The opposition between Paris and the provinces needs to be analysed in a way similar to that used for the notion of 'educational level'. Relationships involving the variable 'place of residence' manifest not only the effect of cultural supply, linked to the density of objectified cultural capital and so to the objective opportunities for cultural consumption and the related reinforcement of the aspiration to consume, but also all the effects of the unequal spatial distribution of properties and their owners (e.g., possessors of high educational capital), in particular the circular reinforcement each group performs on itself, for example, intensifying cultural practice if it is cultivated, discouraging it by indifference or hostility if it is not.

When, as often happens, the analysis is conducted variable by variable, there is a danger of attributing to one of the variables (such as sex or age, each of which may express in its own way the whole situation or trend of

a class) the effect of the *set* of variables (an error which is encouraged by the conscious or unconscious tendency to substitute generic alienations, e.g., those linked to sex or age, for specific alienations, linked to class). Economic and social condition, as identified by occupation, gives a specific form to all the properties of sex and age, so that it is the efficacy of the whole structure of factors associated with a position in social space which is manifested in the correlations between age or sex and practices. The naivety of the inclination to attribute the differences recorded in relation to age to a generic effect of biological ageing becomes self-evident when one sees, for example, that the ageing which, in the privileged classes, is associated with a move to the right, is accompanied, among manual workers, by a move to the left. Similarly, in the relative precocity of executives, measured for example by the age at which they reach a given position, one sees in fact the expression of everything which divides them, despite the apparent identity of condition at a given moment, namely their whole previous and subsequent trajectory, and the capital volume and structure which govern it.

CONSTRUCTED CLASS Social class is not defined by a property (not even the most determinant one, such as the volume and composition of capital) nor by a collection of properties (of sex, age, social origin, ethnic origin—proportion of blacks and whites, for example, or natives and immigrants—income, educational level etc.), nor even by a chain of properties strung out from a fundamental property (position in the relations of production) in a relation of cause and effect, conditioner and conditioned; but by the structure of relations between all the pertinent properties which gives its specific value to each of them and to the effects they exert on practices.⁸ Constructing, as we have here, classes as homogeneous as possible with respect to the fundamental determinants of the material conditions of existence and the conditionings they impose, therefore means that even in constructing the classes and in interpreting the variations of the distribution of properties and practices in relation to these classes, one consciously takes into account the network of secondary characteristics which are more or less unconsciously manipulated whenever the classes are defined in terms of a single criterion, even one as pertinent as occupation. It also means grasping the principle of the objective divisions, i.e., divisions internalized or objectified in distinctive properties, on the basis of which the agents are most likely to divide and come together in reality in their ordinary practices, and also to mobilize themselves or be mobilized (in accordance with the specific logic, linked to a specific history, of the mobilizing organizations) by and for individual or collective political action.

The principles of logical division which are used to produce the classes are of course very unequally constituted socially in pre-existing social classifica-

tions. At one extreme, there is the simple existence of the name of a trade or 'social category', the product of classification by a governmental agency, such as INSEE (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques), or of the social bargaining which leads to industrial 'collective agreements'; and at the other extreme, there are groups possessing a real social identity, recognized spokesmen and institutionalized channels for expressing and defending their interests etc. The secondary principles of division (such as country of origin or sex), which are likely to be ignored by an ordinary analysis until they serve as a basis for some form of mobilization, indicate potential lines of division along which a group socially perceived as unitary may split, more or less deeply and permanently. Because the different factors in the system of determinations constituting a class condition (which can function as real principles of division between objectively separate or actually mobilized groups) vary greatly in their functional weights and therefore in their structuring force, these principles of division are themselves set in a hierarchy; groups mobilized on the basis of a secondary criterion (such as sex or age) are likely to be bound together less permanently and less deeply than those mobilized on the basis of the fundamental determinants of their condition.

To account for the infinite diversity of practices in a way that is both unitary and specific, one has to break with *linear thinking*, which only recognizes the simple ordinal structures of direct determination, and endeavour to reconstruct the networks of interrelated relationships which are present in each of the factors.⁹ The structural causality of a network of factors is quite irreducible to the cumulated effects of the set of linear relations, of different explanatory force, which the necessities of analysis oblige one to isolate, those which are established between the different factors, taken one by one, and the practice in question; through each of the factors is exerted the efficacy of all the others, and the multiplicity of determinations leads not to indeterminacy but to over-determination. Thus the superimposition of biological, psychological and social determinations in the formation of socially defined sexual identity (a basic dimension of social personality) is only a particular, but very important, case of a logic that is also at work in other biological determinations, such as ageing.

It goes without saying that the factors constituting the constructed class do not all depend on one another to the same extent, and that the structure of the system they constitute is determined by those which have the greatest functional weight. Thus, the volume and composition of capital give specific form and value to the determinations which the other factors (age, sex, place of residence etc.) impose on practices. Sexual properties are as inseparable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon is from its acidity: a class is defined in an essential respect by the place and value it gives to the two sexes and to their socially constituted dispositions. This is why there are as many ways of realizing femininity as

there are classes and class fractions, and the division of labour between the sexes takes quite different forms, both in practices and in representations, in the different social classes. So the true nature of a class or class fraction is expressed in its distribution by sex or age, and perhaps even more, since its future is then at stake, by the trend of this distribution over time. The lowest positions are designated by the fact that they include a large—and growing—proportion of immigrants or women (unskilled and semi-skilled workers) or immigrant women (charwomen).¹⁰ Similarly, it is no accident that the occupations in personal services—the medical and social services, the personal-care trades, old ones like hair-dressing, new ones like beauty care, and especially domestic service, which combine the two aspects of the traditional definition of female tasks, service and the home—are practically reserved for women.

Nor is it accidental that the oldest classes or class fractions are also the classes in decline, such as farmers and industrial and commercial proprietors; most of the young people originating from these classes can only escape collective decline by reconvertng into the expanding occupations. Similarly, an increase in the proportion of women indicates the whole trend of an occupation, in particular the absolute or relative devaluation which may result from changes in the nature and organization of the work itself (this is the case with office jobs, for example, with the multiplication of repetitive, mechanical tasks that are commonly left to women) or from changes in relative position in social space (as in teaching, whose position has been affected by the overall displacement of the profession resulting from the overall increase in the number of positions offered).

One would have to analyse in the same way the relationship between marital status and class or class fraction. It has been clearly shown, for example, that male celibacy is not a secondary property of the small peasantry but an essential element of the crisis affecting this fraction of the peasant class. The breakdown of the mechanisms of biological and social reproduction brought about by the specific logic of symbolic domination is one of the mediations of the process of concentration which leads to a deep transformation of the class. But here too, one would have to subject the commonsense notion to close analysis, as has been done for educational level. Being married is not opposed to being unmarried simply as the fact of having a legitimate spouse to the fact of not having one. One only has to think of a few limiting cases (some much more frequent than others), the 'housewife', the artist supported by his wife, the employer or executive who owes his position to his father-in-law, to see that it is difficult to characterize an individual without including all the properties (and property) which are brought to each of the spouses, and not only the wife, through the other—a name (sometimes a distinguished 'de' as well), goods, an income, 'connections', a social status (each member of the couple being characterized by the spouse's social position, to different

degrees according to sex, position and the gap between the two positions). The properties acquired or possessed through marriage will be omitted from the system of properties which may determine practices and properties if, as usually happens, one forgets to ask oneself who is the subject of the practices or, more simply, if the 'subject' questioned is really the subject of the practices on which he or she is questioned.

As soon as the question is raised, it can be seen that a number of strategies are concretely defined only in the relationship between the members of a domestic group (a household or, sometimes, an extended family), which itself depends on the relationship between the two systems of properties associated with the two spouses. The common goods, especially when they are of some economic and social importance, such as the apartment or furniture, or even personal goods, such as clothing, are—like the choice of a spouse for son or daughter in other societies—the outcome of these (denied) power relations which define the domestic unit. For example, there is every reason to suppose that, given the logic of the division of labour between the sexes, which gives precedence to women in matters of taste (and to men in politics), the weight of the man's own taste in choosing his clothes (and therefore the degree to which his clothes express his taste) depends not only on his own inherited cultural capital and educational capital (the traditional division of roles tends to weaken, here and elsewhere, as educational capital grows) but also on his wife's educational and cultural capital and on the gap between them. (The same is true of the weight of the wife's own preferences in politics: the effect of assignment by status which makes politics a man's business is less likely to occur, the greater the wife's educational capital, or when the gap between her capital and her husband's is small or in her favour.)

SOCIAL CLASS AND CLASS OF TRAJECTORIES But this is not all. On the one hand, agents are not completely defined by the properties they possess at a given time, whose conditions of acquisition persist in the habitus (the hysteresis effect); and on the other hand, the relationship between initial capital and present capital, or, to put it another way, between the initial and present positions in social space, is a statistical relationship of very variable intensity. Although they are always perpetuated in the dispositions constituting the habitus, the conditions of acquisition of the properties synchronically observed only make themselves visible in cases of discordance between the conditions of acquisition and the conditions of use,¹¹ i.e., when the practices generated by the habitus appear as ill-adapted because they are attuned to an earlier state of the objective conditions (this is what might be called the Don Quixote effect). The statistical analysis which compares the practices of agents possessing the same properties and occupying the same social position at a given time but separated by their origin performs an operation analogous to ordi-

nary perception which, within a group, identifies the parvenus and the déclassés by picking up the subtle indices of manner or bearing which betray the effect of conditions of existence different from the present ones or, which amounts to the same thing, a social trajectory different from the modal trajectory for the group in question.

Individuals do not move about in social space in a random way, partly because they are subject to the forces which structure this space (e.g., through the objective mechanisms of elimination and channelling), and partly because they resist the forces of the field with their specific inertia, that is, their properties, which may exist in embodied form, as dispositions, or in objectified form, in goods, qualifications etc. To a given volume of inherited capital there corresponds a band of more or less equally probable trajectories leading to more or less equivalent positions (this is the *field of the possibles* objectively offered to a given agent), and the shift from one trajectory to another often depends on collective events—wars, crises etc.—or individual events—encounters, affairs, benefactors etc.—which are usually described as (fortunate or unfortunate) accidents, although they themselves depend statistically on the position and disposition of those whom they befall (e.g., the skill in operating ‘connections’ which enables the holders of high social capital to preserve or increase this capital), when, that is, they are not deliberately contrived by institutions (clubs, family reunions, old-boys’ or alumni associations etc.) or by the ‘spontaneous’ intervention of individuals or groups. It follows from this that position and individual trajectory are not statistically independent; all positions of arrival are not equally probable for all starting points. This implies that there is a strong correlation between social positions and the dispositions of the agents who occupy them, or, which amounts to the same thing, the trajectories which have led them to occupy them, and consequently that the modal trajectory is an integral part of the system of factors constituting the class. (The more dispersed the trajectories are—as in the *petite bourgeoisie*—the less are practices reducible to the effect of synchronically defined position.)

The homogeneity of the dispositions associated with a position and their seemingly miraculous adjustment to the demands inscribed in it result partly from the mechanisms which channel towards positions individuals who are already adjusted to them, either because they feel ‘made’ for jobs that are ‘made’ for them—this is ‘vocation’, the proleptic assumption of an objective destiny that is imposed by practical reference to the modal trajectory in the class of origin—or because they are seen in this light by the occupants of the posts—this is co-option based on the immediate harmony of dispositions—and partly from the dialectic which is established, throughout a lifetime, between dispositions and positions, aspirations and achievements. Social ageing is nothing other than the slow renunciation or disinvestment (socially assisted and encouraged) which leads agents to adjust their aspirations to their objective chances, to espouse their condition, become what they are and make do with what

they have, even if this entails deceiving themselves as to what they are and what they have, with collective complicity, and accepting bereavement of all the ‘lateral possibles’ they have abandoned along the way.

The statistical character of the relationship between initial capital and present capital explains why practices cannot be completely accounted for solely in terms of the properties defining the position occupied in social space at a given moment. To say that the members of a class initially possessing a certain economic and cultural capital are destined, with a given probability, to an educational and social trajectory leading to a given position means in fact that a fraction of the class (which cannot be determined a priori within the limits of this explanatory system) will deviate from the trajectory most common for the class as a whole and follow the (higher or lower) trajectory which was most probable for members of another class.¹² The trajectory effect which then manifests itself, as it does whenever individuals occupying similar positions at a given time are separated by differences associated with the evolution over time of the volume and structure of their capital, i.e., by their individual trajectories, is very likely to be wrongly interpreted. The correlation between a practice and social origin (measured by the father’s position, the real value of which may have suffered a decline concealed by constant nominal value) is the resultant of two effects (which may either reinforce or offset each other): on the one hand, the inculcation effect directly exerted by the family or the original conditions of existence; on the other hand, the specific effect of social trajectory,¹³ that is, the effects of social rise or decline on dispositions and opinions, position of origin being, in this logic, merely the starting point of a trajectory, the reference whereby the slope of the social career is defined. The need to make this distinction is self-evident in all cases in which individuals from the same class fraction or the same family, and therefore presumably subject to identical moral, religious or political inculcations, are inclined towards divergent stances in religion or politics by the different relations to the social world which they owe to divergent individual trajectories, having, for example, succeeded or failed in the reconversion strategies necessary to escape the collective decline of their class.

This trajectory effect no doubt plays a large part in blurring the relationship between social class and religious or political opinions, owing to the fact that it governs the representation of the position occupied in the social world and hence the vision of its world and its future. In contrast to upwardly mobile individuals or groups, ‘commoners’ of birth or culture who have their future, i.e., their being, before them, individuals or groups in decline endlessly reinvent the discourse of all aristocracies, essentialist faith in the eternity of natures, celebration of tradition and the past, the cult of history and its rituals, because the best they can expect from the future is the return of the old order, from which they expect the restoration of their social being.¹⁴

This blurring is particularly visible in the middle classes and especially

in the new fractions of these classes, which are grey areas, ambiguously located in the social structure, inhabited by individuals whose trajectories are extremely scattered. This dispersion of trajectories is even found here at the level of the domestic unit, which is more likely than in other classes to bring together spouses (relatively) ill matched not only as regards social origin and trajectories but also occupational status and educational level. (This has the effect, among other things, of foregrounding what the new vulgate calls 'the problems of the couple', i.e., essentially, the problems of the sexual division of labour and the division of sexual labour.)

In contrast to the effect of individual trajectory, which, being a deviation from the collective trajectory (that may have a zero slope), is immediately visible, the effect of collective trajectory may not be noticed as such. When the trajectory effect concerns a whole class or class fraction, that is, a set of individuals who occupy an identical position and are engaged in the same collective trajectory, the one which defines a rising or declining class, there is a danger of attributing to the properties synchronically attached to the class, effects (e.g., political or religious opinions) which are in reality the product of collective transformations. The analysis is complicated by the fact that some members of a class fraction may have embarked on individual trajectories running in the opposite direction to that of the fraction as a whole. This does not mean that their practices are not marked by the collective destiny. (It is questionable, for example, whether craftsmen or farmers whose individual success seems to run counter to the collective decline cease to be affected by that decline.)¹⁵ But here too one must avoid substantialism. Thus, some of the properties associated with social class which may remain without efficacy or value in a given field, such as ease and familiarity with culture in an area strictly controlled by the educational system, can take on their full force in another field, such as high society; or in another state of the same field, like the aptitudes which, after the French Revolution, enabled the French aristocracy to become, in Marx's phrase, 'the dancing-masters of Europe'.

CAPITAL AND THE MARKET But everything would still be too simple if it were sufficient to replace a factor, even a particularly powerful one such as socio-occupational category, which derives a major part of its effects from the secondary variables it governs, by a system of factors fundamentally defined by its structure.¹⁶ In fact, what is determinant in a given area is a particular configuration of the system of properties constituting the constructed class, defined in an entirely theoretical way by the whole set of factors operating in all areas of practice—volume and structure of capital, defined synchronically and diachronically (trajectory), sex, age, marital status, place of residence etc. It is the specific logic of the field, of what is at stake and of the type of capital needed to play for it, which

governs those properties through which the relationship between class and practice is established.

If this double correlation of each explanatory factor is not performed, every sort of error is likely, all of them resulting from ignoring the fact that what is 'operative' in the factor in question depends on the system it is placed in and the conditions it 'operates' in; or, more simply, from failing to raise the question of the real principle of the efficacy of the 'independent variable', by proceeding as if the relationship found between the factor—designated by what is usually no more than an indicator of it (e.g., educational level)—and this or that practice (e.g., the rate of response to political questions, or the capacity to adopt the aesthetic disposition, or museum-going etc.) did not itself have to be explained.

To understand why the same system of properties (which determines and is determined by the position occupied in the field of class struggles) always has the greatest explanatory power, whatever the area in question—eating habits, use of credit, fertility, political opinion, religion etc.—and why, simultaneously, the relative weight of the factors which constitute it varies from one field to another—educational capital being most important in one area, economic capital in another, and so on—one only has to see that, because capital is a social relation, i.e., an energy which only exists and only produces its effects in the field in which it is produced and reproduced, each of the properties attached to class is given its value and efficacy by the specific laws of each field. In practice, that is, in a particular field, the properties, internalized in dispositions or objectified in economic or cultural goods, which are attached to agents are not all simultaneously operative; the specific logic of the field determines those which are valid in this market, which are pertinent and active in the game in question, and which, in the relationship with this field, function as specific capital—and, consequently, as a factor explaining practices. This means, concretely, that the social rank and specific power which agents are assigned in a particular field depend firstly on the specific capital they can mobilize, whatever their additional wealth in other types of capital (though this may also exert an effect of contamination).

This explains why the relationship which analysis uncovers between class and practices appears to be established in each case through the mediation of a factor or particular combination of factors which varies according to the field. This appearance itself leads to the mistake of inventing as many explanatory systems as there are fields, instead of seeing each of them as a transformed form of all the others; or worse, the error of setting up a particular combination of factors active in a particular field of practices as a universal explanatory principle. The singular configuration of the system of explanatory factors which has to be con-

structured in order to account for a state of the distribution of a particular class of goods or practices, i.e., a balance-sheet, drawn up at a particular moment, of the class struggle over that particular class of goods or practices (caviar or avant-garde painting, Nobel prizes or state contracts, an enlightened opinion or a chic sport), is the form taken, in that field, by the objectified and internalized capital (properties and habitus) which defines social class and constitutes the principle of the production of classified and classifying practices. It represents a state of the system of properties which make class a universal principle of explanation and classification, defining the rank occupied in all possible fields.

A Three-Dimensional Space

Endeavouring to reconstitute the units most homogeneous from the point of view of the conditions of production of habitus, i.e., with respect to the elementary conditions of existence and the resultant conditionings, one can construct a space whose three fundamental dimensions are defined by volume of capital, composition of capital, and change in these two properties over time (manifested by past and potential trajectory in social space).¹⁷

The primary differences, those which distinguish the major classes of conditions of existence, derive from the overall volume of capital, understood as the set of actually usable resources and powers—economic capital, cultural capital and also social capital. The distribution of the different classes (and class fractions) thus runs from those who are best provided with both economic and cultural capital to those who are most deprived in both respects (see figure 5, later in this section). The members of the professions, who have high incomes and high qualifications, who very often (52.9 percent) originate from the dominant class (professions or senior executives), who receive and consume a large quantity of both material and cultural goods, are opposed in almost all respects to the office workers, who have low qualifications, often originate from the working or middle classes, who receive little and consume little, devoting a high proportion of their time to car maintenance and home improvement; and they are even more opposed to the skilled or semi-skilled workers, and still more to unskilled workers or farm labourers, who have the lowest incomes, no qualifications, and originate almost exclusively (90.5 percent of farm labourers, 84.5 percent of unskilled workers) from the working classes.¹⁸

The differences stemming from the total volume of capital almost always conceal, both from common awareness and also from 'scientific' knowledge, the secondary differences which, within each of the classes defined by overall volume of capital, separate class fractions, defined by different asset structures, i.e., different distributions of their total capital among the different kinds of capital.

Among the difficulties which this model aims to account for in a unitary and systematic way, the most visible is the observation, which others have often made (e.g., C.S. VII), that the hierarchies, both in the dominant class, between the executives and the employers, and in the middle class, between the junior executives and the craftsmen or shopkeepers, vary according to the activity or asset in question. This effect seems to support the relativistic critique of the social classes until it is seen that there is a relationship between the nature of these activities or assets, for example, theatre-going or possession of a colour TV, and the structure of each group's capital.

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

The industrialists, who are grouped with the commercial employers in surveys by representative sample because of their small number, declare considerably higher incomes than the latter (33.6 percent say they earn more than 100,000 French francs, as against 14.5 percent of the commercial employers). Those classified as industrialists in the INSEE survey (C.S. I) are much closer to the new bourgeoisie than are the commercial employers: many more of them declare salaries and investment income, many fewer declare industrial, commercial or non-commercial profits. For the working classes, who are strongly ranked by overall capital volume, the data available do not enable one to grasp the differences in the second dimension (composition of capital). However, differences such as those between semi-skilled, educationally unqualified, provincial factory workers of rural origin, living in an inherited farmhouse, and skilled workers in the Paris region who have been in the working class for generations, who possess a 'trade' or technical qualifications, must be the source of differences in life-style and religious and political opinion.

Given that, as one moves from the artists to the industrial and commercial employers, volume of economic capital rises and volume of cultural capital falls, it can be seen that the dominant class is organized in a chiasitic structure. To establish this, it is necessary to use various indicators borrowed from a survey which has the advantage of distinguishing between public-sector and private-sector executives (C.S. V) to examine, successively, the distribution of economic capital and the distribution of cultural capital among the fractions; the structures of these distributions must then be correlated.

Although it is self-evident when one considers indicators of wealth (as will be done later), the hierarchy of the class fractions as regards possession of economic capital, running from industrial and commercial employers to teachers, is already less visible when, as here, one is only dealing with indices of *consumption* (cars, boats, hotels) which are neither entirely adequate nor entirely unambiguous (see table 6). The first (cars) also depends on the type of professional activity, and the other two depend on spare time, which, as one learns in other ways, varies inversely with economic capital. Home ownership also depends on stability in the same place of residence (lower among executives, engineers and teachers). Incomes are very unevenly underestimated (the rate of non-declaration may be considered an indicator of the tendency to under-declare) and very unequally accompanied by fringe benefits such as expense-account meals and business trips (which are known to rise as one moves from teachers to private-sector executives and employers).

As regards cultural capital, except for a few inversions, which reflect secondary variables such as place of residence, with the corresponding supply of culture, and income, with the means it provides, the different fractions are organized in an opposite hierarchy (see table 7). (Differentiation according to the type of capital possessed, literary, scientific or economic and political, is mainly seen in the fact that engineers show more interest in music and 'intellectual' games such as bridge or chess than in literary activities— theatre-going or reading *Le Figaro Littéraire*.)

These indicators no doubt tend to minimize the gaps between the different fractions. Most cultural consumption also entails an economic cost: theatre-going, for example, depends on income as well as education. Moreover, equipment such as FM radios or hi-fi systems can be used in very different ways (e.g., classical music or dance music), whose values, in terms of the dominant hierarchy of possible uses, may vary as much as the different types of reading-matter or theatre. In fact, the position of the different fractions ranked according to their interest in the different types of reading-matter tends to correspond to their position when ranked according to volume of cultural capital as one moves towards the rarer types of reading, which are known to be those most linked to educational level and highest in the hierarchy of cultural legitimacy (see table 8).

One also finds (C.S. XIV, table 215a) that the over-representation of teachers (and students) in the audience of the different theatres steadily de-

Table 6 Some indicators of economic capital in different fractions of the dominant class, 1966.^a

Indicators of economic capital	Teachers (higher and secondary)	Public sector execs.	Professions	Engineers	Private-sector execs.	Industrial employers	Commercial employers
Homeowner	51%	38%	54%	44%	40%	70%	70%
Luxury car owner	12%	20%	28%	21%	22%	34%	33%
Boat owner	8%	8%	14%	10%	12%	14%	13%
Hotel holidays	15%	17%	23%	17%	21%	26%	32%
Median annual income (thousands of francs)	33	32	41	36	37	36	33
Rate of undeclared income	6	8	27	9	13	28	24

Source: C.S. V (1966).

a. In each row the italic figures indicate the strongest tendency.

Table 7 Some indicators of cultural practice in different fractions of the dominant class, 1966.^a

Indicators	Teachers (higher and secondary)	Public sector execs.	Professions	Engineers	Private- sector execs.	Industrial employers	Commercial employers
Reading books other than for job ^b	21%	18%	18%	16%	16%	10%	10%
Theatre- going ^c	38%	29%	29%	28%	34%	16%	20%
Listening to classical music	83%	89%	86%	89%	89%	75%	73%
Museum visits	75%	66%	68%	58%	69%	47%	52%
Art gallery visits	58%	54%	57%	45%	47%	37%	34%
Own FM radio	59%	54%	57%	56%	53%	48%	48%
No TV	46%	30%	28%	33%	28%	14%	24%
Reading <i>Le Monde</i> ^d	410	235	230	145	151	82	49
Reading <i>Le Figaro</i> ^d	168	132	131	68	100	64	24

Source: C.S. V (1966).

a. In each row the italic figures indicate the strongest tendency.

b. 15 hours or more per week.

c. At least once every two or three months.

d. Per thousand.

Table 8 Types of books preferred by different fractions of the dominant class (%), 1966.^a

Type of book	Teachers (higher and secondary)	Public- sector execs.	Professions	Engineers	Private- sector execs.	Industrial employers	Commercial employers
Detective stories	25 (6)	29 (1)	27 (4)	28 (3)	29 (1)	27 (4)	25 (6)
Adventure stories	17 (7)	20 (3)	18 (6)	24 (1)	22 (2)	19 (4)	19 (4)
Historical	44 (4)	47 (2)	49 (1)	47 (2)	44 (4)	36 (6)	27 (7)
Illustrated art books	28 (2)	20 (3)	31 (1)	19 (5)	20 (3)	17 (6)	14 (7)
Novels	64 (2)	68 (1)	59 (5)	62 (3)	62 (3)	45 (6)	42 (7)
Philosophy	20 (1)	13 (3)	12 (5)	13 (3)	15 (2)	10 (7)	12 (5)
Politics	15 (1)	12 (2)	9 (4)	7 (5)	10 (3)	5 (6)	4 (7)
Economics	10 (1)	8 (3)	5 (6)	7 (5)	9 (2)	8 (3)	5 (6)
Science	15 (3)	14 (4)	18 (2)	21 (1)	9 (7)	10 (6)	11 (5)

Source: C.S. V (1966).

a. The figures in a given row show the percentage of each category of respondents who included that type of book among their favourite types (italic figures indicate the strongest tendency in the row). The figures in parentheses show the rank of each class fraction in that row. Books

on economics and science are set apart on the grounds that interest in these types of reading-matter depends on secondary factors, in one case occupational activity (hence the rank of the private-sector executives and employers) and in the other, academic training (hence the rank of the engineers).

clines and the over-representation of the other fractions (employers, senior executives and members of the professions, unfortunately not distinguished in the statistics) increases as one moves from avant-garde or reputedly avant-garde theatre to classical theatre and especially from classical to boulevard theatre, which draws between a third and a quarter of its audience from the least 'intellectual' fractions of the dominant class.

Having established that the structure of the distribution of economic capital is symmetrical and opposite to that of cultural capital, we can turn to the question of the hierarchy of the two principles of hierarchization (without forgetting that this hierarchy is at all times a stake in struggles and that, in certain conjunctures, as in present-day France, cultural capital may be one of the conditions for access to control of economic capital). We may take as an indicator of the state of the power relation between these two principles of domination the frequency of intergenerational movements between the fractions.

If we use as indices of the rarity of a position (or, which amounts to the same thing, its degree of closure) the proportion of its occupants who originate from the dominant class as a whole and from the fraction in question, we find that the resulting hierarchy corresponds fairly exactly, for both indices, to the hierarchy by volume of economic capital (see table 9). The proportion of members of each fraction who originated from the dominant class, and the proportion of individuals who originated from the fraction to which they now belong, decline in parallel as one moves from the industrial employers to the teachers, with a clear break between the three higher-ranking fractions (industrial and commercial employers and the professions) and the three lower-ranking fractions (engineers, public-sector executives and teachers).

The use of these indicators may be contested on the grounds that the different fractions have very unequal control over the conditions of their social reproduction, so that the high proportion of endogenous employers may express nothing other than the capacity of these fractions (or at least of a proportion of their members) to transmit their powers and privileges without mediation or control. Indeed, this capacity is itself one of the rarest privileges, which, by giving greater freedom vis-à-vis academic verdicts, reduces the necessity or urgency of making the cultural investments which cannot be avoided by those who depend entirely on the education system for their reproduction. The fractions richest in cultural capital do in fact tend to invest in their children's education as well as in the cultural practices likely to maintain and increase their specific rarity; the fractions richest in economic capital set aside cultural and educational investments in favour of economic investments—industrial and commercial employers more so, however, than the new bourgeoisie of private-sector executives, who manifest the same concern for rational investment both in economic and in educational matters. The members of

Table 9 Social origin of members of the dominant class, by class fraction (%), 1970.^a

Father's class fraction	Son's class fraction						
	Industrial employers	Commercial employers	Professions	Engineers	Public-sector executives	Teachers (higher and secondary)	
Industrial employers	33.5	2.8	2.3	6.1	4.4	1.5	
Commercial employers	1.9	31.0	0	1.8	5.0	0.8	
Professions	0.6	0.9	20.0	0.9	2.4	7.6	
Engineers	0	0	6.4	6.7	2.3	4.6	
Public-sector executives	1.9	3.3	9.9	13.2	14.2	7.6	
Teachers (higher and secondary)	0.6	0	2.9	2.7	0.3	6.1	
Whole class	38.5	38.0	41.5	31.4	28.7	28.2	

Source: C.S. II (1970).

a. In each row the italic figure indicates the strongest tendency.

the professions (especially doctors and lawyers), relatively well endowed with both forms of capital, but too little integrated into economic life to use their capital in it actively, invest in their children's education but also and especially in cultural practices which symbolize possession of the material and cultural means of maintaining a bourgeois life-style and which provide a social capital, a capital of social connections, honourability and respectability that is often essential in winning and keeping the confidence of high society, and with it a clientele, and may be drawn on, for example, in making a political career.

Given that scholastic success mainly depends on inherited cultural capital and on the propensity to invest in the educational system (and that the latter varies with the degree to which maintained or improved social position depends on such success), it is clear why the proportion of pupils in a given school or college who come from the culturally richest fractions rises with the position of that school in the specifically academic hierarchy (measured, for example, by previous academic success), reaching its peak in the institution responsible for reproducing the professorial corps (the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*). In fact, like the dominant class which they help to reproduce, higher-education institutions are organized in accordance with two opposing principles of hierarchy. The hierarchy dominant within the educational system, i.e., the one which ranks institutions by specifically academic criteria, and, correlatively, by the proportion of their students drawn from the culturally richest fractions, is diametrically opposed to the hierarchy dominant outside the educational system, i.e., the one which ranks institutions by the proportion of their students drawn from the fractions richest in economic capital or in power and by the position in the economic or power hierarchy of the occupations they lead to. If the offspring of the dominated fractions are less represented in the economically highest institutions (such as ENA or HEC) than might be expected from their previous academic success and the position of these schools in the specifically scholastic hierarchy, this is, of course, because these schools refuse to apply purely scholastic criteria, but it is also because the scholastic hierarchy is most faithfully respected (so that the science section of the ENS is preferred to Polytechnique, or the Arts faculty to Sciences Po), by those who are most dependent on the educational system. (Blindness to alternative ranking principles is most nearly complete in the case of teachers' children, whose whole upbringing inclines them to identify all success with academic success.)

The same chiasmic structure is found at the level of the middle classes, where volume of cultural capital again declines, while economic capital increases, as one moves from primary teachers to small industrial and commercial employers, with junior executives, technicians and clerical workers in an intermediate position, homologous to that of engineers and executives at the higher level. Artistic craftsmen and art-dealers, who earn their living from industrial and commercial profits, and are close in

those respects to other small businessmen, are set apart from them by their relatively high cultural capital, which brings them closer to the new *petite bourgeoisie*. The medical and social services, drawn to a relatively large extent from the dominant class,¹⁹ are in a central position, roughly homologous to that of the professions (although slightly more tilted towards the pole of cultural capital); they are the only ones who receive not only wages or salaries but also, in some cases, non-commercial profits (like the professions).

It can immediately be seen that the homology between the space of the dominant class and that of the middle classes is explained by the fact that their structure is the product of the same principles. In each case, there is an opposition between owners (of their own home, of rural or urban property, of stocks and shares), often older, with little spare time, often the children of industrial or agricultural employers, and non-owners, chiefly endowed with educational capital and spare time, originating from the wage-earning fractions of the middle and upper classes or from the working class. The occupants of homologous positions, primary teachers and professors, for example, or small shopkeepers and commercial entrepreneurs, are mainly separated by the volume of the kind of capital that is dominant in the structure of their assets, i.e., by differences of degree which separate individuals unequally endowed with the same scarce resources. The lower positions—and, correlatively, the dispositions of their occupants—derive some of their characteristics from the fact that they are objectively related to the corresponding positions at the higher level, towards which they tend and 'pre-tend'. This is clearly seen in the case of the wage-earning *petite bourgeoisie*, whose ascetic virtues and cultural good intentions—which it manifests in all sorts of ways, taking evening classes, enrolling in libraries, collecting stamps etc.—very clearly express the aspiration to rise to the higher position, the objective destiny of the occupants of the lower position who manifest such dispositions.

To reconstruct the social conditions of production of the habitus as fully as possible, one also has to consider the social trajectory of the class or class fraction the agent belongs to, which, through the probable slope of the collective future, engenders progressive or regressive dispositions towards the future; and the evolution, over several generations, of the asset structure of each lineage, which is perpetuated in the habitus and introduces divisions even within groups that are as homogeneous as the fractions. To give an idea of the range of possibilities, it need only be pointed out that an individual's social trajectory represents the combination of: the lifelong evolution of the volume of his capital, which can be described, very approximately, as increasing, decreasing or stationary; the volume of each sort of capital (amenable to the same distinctions), and therefore the composition of his capital (since constant volume can conceal a change in structure);

and, in the same way, the father's and mother's asset volume and structure and their respective weights in the different kinds of capital (e.g., father stronger in economic capital and mother in cultural capital, or vice versa, or equivalence); and therefore the volume and structure of the capital of both sets of grandparents.

To account more fully for the differences in life-style between the different fractions—especially as regards culture—one would have to take account of their distribution in a *socially ranked geographical space*. A group's chances of appropriating any given class of rare assets (as measured by the mathematical probability of access) depend partly on its capacity for the specific appropriation, defined by the economic, cultural and social capital it can deploy in order to appropriate materially or symbolically the assets in question, that is, its position in social space, and partly on the relationship between its distribution in geographical space and the distribution of the scarce assets in that space.²⁰ (This relationship can be measured in average distances from goods or facilities, or in travelling time—which involves access to private or public transport.) In other words, a group's real social distance from certain assets must integrate the geographical distance, which itself depends on the group's spatial distribution and, more precisely, its distribution with respect to the 'focal point' of economic and cultural values, i.e., Paris or the major regional centres (in some careers—e.g., in the postal banking system—employment or promotion entails a period of exile).²¹ Thus, the distance of farm workers from legitimate culture would not be so vast if the specifically cultural distance implied by their low cultural capital were not compounded by their spatial dispersion. Similarly, many of the differences observed in the (cultural and other) practices of the different fractions of the dominant class are no doubt attributable to the size of the town they live in. Consequently, the opposition between engineers and private-sector executives on the one hand, and industrial and commercial employers on the other, partly stems from the fact that the former mostly live in Paris and work for relatively large firms (only 7 percent of private-sector executives work in firms employing from 1 to 5 people, as against 34 percent in medium-sized firms and 40 percent in firms employing more than 50 people), whereas the latter mainly run small firms (in the 1966 survey by SOFRES [Société française d'enquêtes par sondages]—C.S. V—6 percent of the industrialists had from 1 to 5 employees; 70 percent, 6 to 49; 24 percent, more than 50; in commerce, the corresponding figures are 30 percent, 42 percent and 12 percent) and mostly live in the provinces and even in the country (according to the 1968 census, 22.3 percent of the industrialists and 15.5 percent of the commercial employers lived in a rural commune, 14.1 percent and 11.8 percent in communes of less than 10,000 inhabitants).

The model which emerges would not be so difficult to arrive at if it did

not presuppose a break with the common-sense picture of the social world, summed up in the metaphor of the 'social ladder' and suggested by all the everyday language of 'mobility', with its 'rises' and 'falls'; and a no less radical break with the whole sociological tradition which, when it is not merely tacitly accepting the one-dimensional image of social space, as most research on 'social mobility' does, subjects it to a pseudo-scientific elaboration, reducing the social universe to a continuum of abstract strata ('upper middle class', 'lower middle class' etc.),²² obtained by aggregating different forms of capital, thanks to the construction of indices (which are, par excellence, the destroyers of structures).²³ Projection onto a single axis, in order to construct the continuous, linear, homogeneous, one-dimensional series with which the social hierarchy is normally identified, implies an extremely difficult (and, if it is unwitting, extremely dangerous) operation, whereby the different types of capital are reduced to a single standard. This abstract operation has an objective basis in the possibility, which is always available, of converting one type of capital into another; however, the exchange rates vary in accordance with the power relation between the holders of the different forms of capital. By obliging one to formulate the principle of the convertibility of the different kinds of capital, which is the precondition for reducing the space to one dimension, the construction of a two-dimensional space makes it clear that the exchange rate of the different kinds of capital is one of the fundamental stakes in the struggles between class fractions whose power and privileges are linked to one or the other of these types. In particular, this exchange rate is a stake in the struggle over the dominant principle of domination (economic capital, cultural capital or social capital), which goes on at all times between the different fractions of the dominant class.

Reconversion Strategies

Reproduction strategies, the set of outwardly very different practices whereby individuals or families tend, unconsciously and consciously, to maintain or increase their assets and consequently to maintain or improve their position in the class structure, constitute a system which, being the product of a single unifying, generative principle, tends to function and change in a systematic way. Through the mediation of the disposition towards the future, which is itself determined by the group's objective chances of reproduction, these strategies depend, first, on the volume and composition of the capital to be reproduced; and, secondly, on the state of the instruments of reproduction (inheritance law and custom, the labour market, the educational system etc.), which itself depends on the state of the power relations between the classes. Any change in either the instruments of reproduction or the state of the capital to be reproduced therefore leads to a restructuring of the system of reproduc-

One of the difficulties of sociological discourse lies in the fact that, like all language, it unfolds in strictly linear fashion, whereas, to escape oversimplification and one-sidedness, one ought to be able to recall at every point the whole network of relationships found there. That is why it has seemed useful to present a diagram which has the property, as Saussure says, of being able to 'present simultaneous complications in several dimensions', as a means of grasping the correspondence between the structure of social space—whose two fundamental dimensions correspond to the volume and composition of the capital of the groups distributed within it—and the structure of the space of the symbolic properties attached to those groups. But this diagram does not aim to be the crystal ball in which the alchemists claimed to see at a glance everything happening in the world; and like mathematicians who also treat what they call 'imagery' as a necessary evil, I am tempted to withdraw it in the very act of presenting it. For there is reason to fear that it will encourage readings which will reduce the homologies between systems of differences to direct, mechanical relationships between groups and properties; or that it will encourage the form of voyeurism which is inherent in the objectivist intention, putting the sociologist in the role of the lame devil who takes off the roofs and reveals the secrets of domestic life to his fascinated readers.

To have as exact an idea as possible of the theoretical model that is proposed, it has to be imagined that three diagrams are superimposed (as could be done with transparent

sheets). The first (here, figure 5) presents the space of social conditions, as organized by the synchronic and diachronic distribution of the volume and composition of the various kinds of capital; the position of each group (class fraction) in this space is determined by the set of properties characteristic in the respects thus defined as pertinent. The second (figure 6) presents the space of life-styles, i.e., the distribution of the practices and properties which constitute the life-style in which each of these conditions manifests itself. Finally, between the two previous diagrams one ought to insert a third, presenting the theoretical space of habitus, that is, of the generative formulae (e.g., for teachers, aristocratic asceticism) which underlie each of the classes of practices and properties, that is, the transformation into a distinct and distinctive life-style of the necessities and facilities characteristic of a condition and a position. The figures presented here are not plane diagrams of correspondence analyses, although various such analyses were drawn on in order to construct them, and although a number of these are organized in accordance with a similar structure (including the analyses of the survey data which are presented below).

Among the limitations of such a construct, the most important are due to the lacunae in the statistics, which are much better at measuring consumption or, at best, income (setting aside secondary and hidden profits) and property than capital in the strict sense (especially capital invested in the economy); others are due to the inadequacies of the analytical categories. These are very un-

equally homogeneous even as regards the pertinent criteria and, in the case of the industrial and commercial employers, make it impossible, for example, to identify the holders of a capital that can exert power over capital, i.e., big business. (For lack of rigorous indicators of the dispersion of the different categories, the economic and cultural dispersion of the most heterogeneous categories—farmers, industrial and commercial employers, craftsmen and shopkeepers—has been indicated by writing the corresponding names vertically between the extreme limits defining the group.) It has to be remembered that the position marked by the names always represents the central point in a space of variable extent which may in some cases be organized as a field of competition.

In the absence of a survey (perhaps impossible to carry out in practice) that would provide, with respect to the same representative sample, all the indicators of economic, cultural and social wealth and its evolution which are needed in order to construct an adequate representation of social space, a simplified model of that space has been constructed, based on information acquired through earlier research, and on a set of data taken from various surveys, all done by INSEE and therefore homogeneous at least as regards the construction of the categories (see appendix 3). From the INSEE survey of 1967 on leisure activities (tables relating to men) I have taken indicators of spare time such as length of the working week (C.S. IV); from the 1970 survey on vocational training (tables relating to men) I have taken data on the father's occupational category (social trajectory), the father's educa-

tional level (inherited cultural capital) and the subject's educational level (scholastic capital) (C.S. II); from the 1970 survey on incomes, I have taken information on total incomes, rural and urban property, shares, industrial and commercial profits, wages and salaries (economic capital) (C.S. I); from the 1972 survey on household consumption, data on the total amount spent, possession of a washing-machine and telephone, forms of tenancy of main and second residence (C.S. III); and from the 1968 census, data on the size of the town of residence.

For each of the groups represented, I have also indicated, firstly, the distribution of the occupants of each group according to the social trajectory which has brought them there, with histograms showing the proportion of each group having come from each of the different classes. For the sake of legibility, these histograms are reproduced only for a few illustrative categories. They suffice to show that the proportion of individuals from the dominant class (black) rises strongly, while the proportion from the working classes (white) declines, as one moves up the social hierarchy. (The histogram for the 'semi-skilled' workers, not reproduced here, is intermediate between those of the unskilled and skilled workers.) For the upper and middle classes at least, one really needs to be able to give the distribution by fraction of origin.

Secondly, I have indicated the history of the group as a whole. This is shown by the arrows, pointing up, down or horizontally, which indicate that between 1962 and 1968 the group in question expanded (by at least 25 percent), contracted or

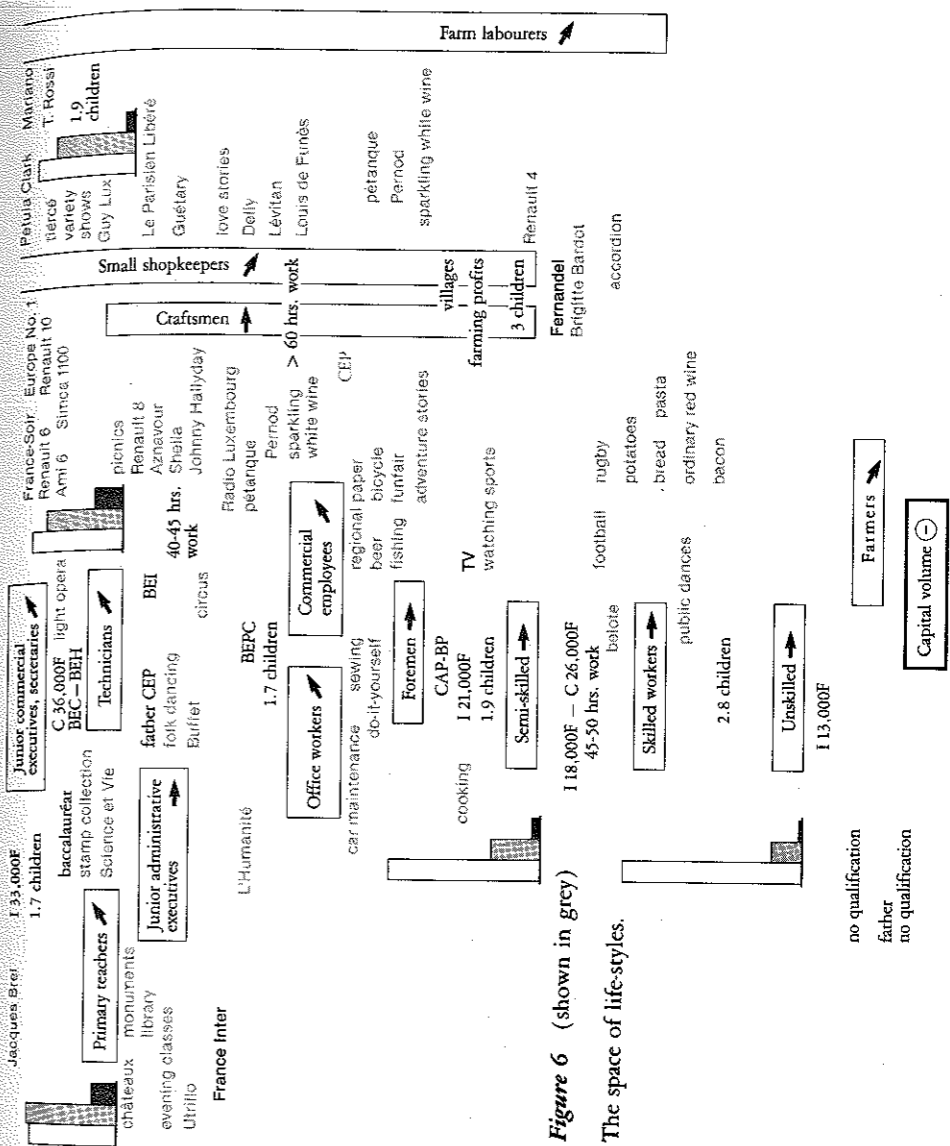
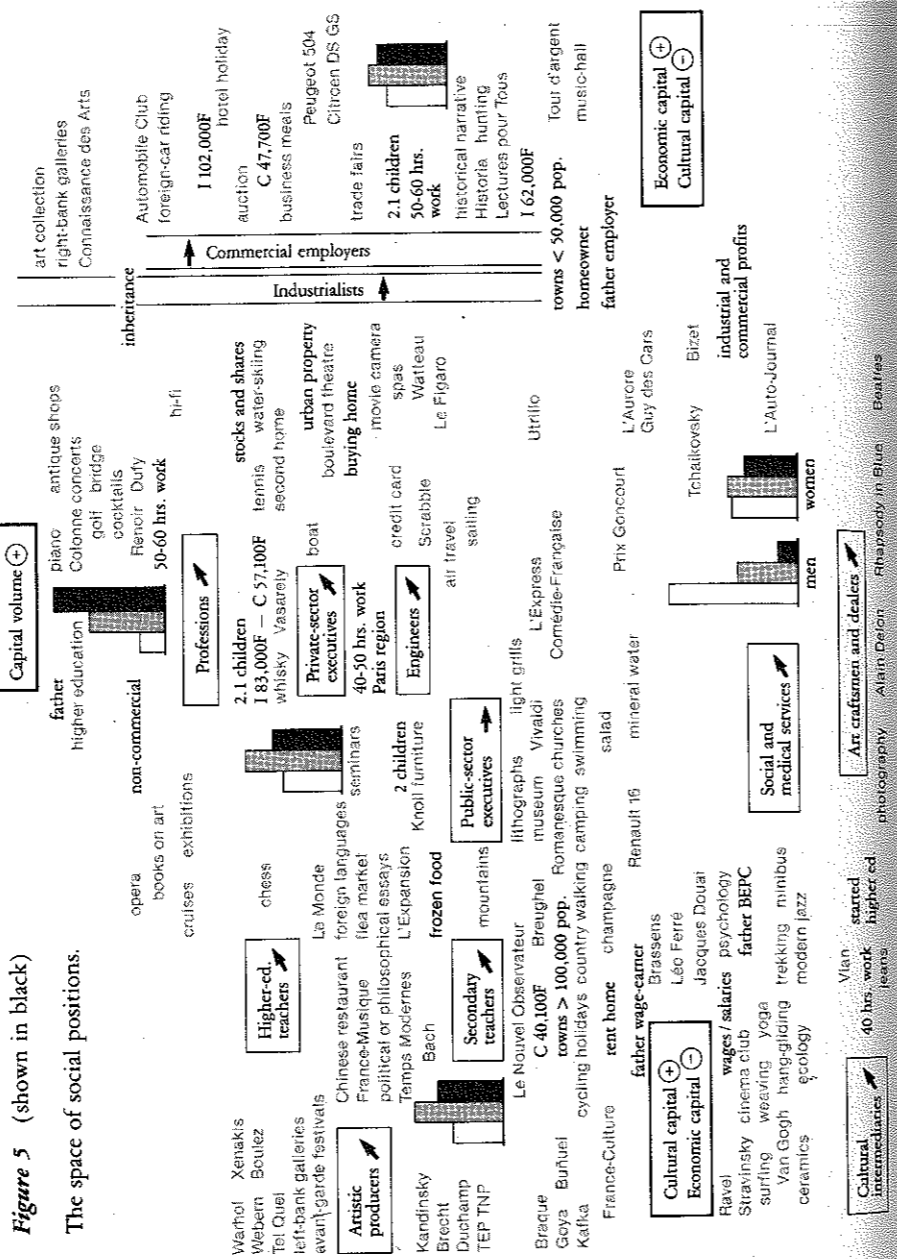


Figure 6 (shown in grey)
The space of life-styles.

remained stable. They thus make visible the opposition between the new, strongly growing fractions and the established, stable or declining fractions. I have thus endeavoured to show both the state of the power relation between the classes which constitutes the structure of the social space at a given moment and also something which is simultaneously an effect of and a factor in the transformation of that structure, namely the reconversion strategies whereby individuals (and groups) strive to maintain or improve their position in social space.

The synoptic schema, by bringing together information from areas which the usual classificatory systems separate—so much so that they make mere juxtaposition appear unthinkable or scandalous—and so making manifest the relationships among all the properties and practices characteristic of a group, which are perceived intuitively and which guide the classifications of everyday life, forces one to look for the basis of each of these systems of 'choices', on the one hand in the social conditions and conditionings characteristic of a given position in objective social space, which are expressed in those choices but in a misrecognizable form; and on the other hand, in their relationship to the other systems of 'choices', by reference to which their specifically symbolic meaning and value are defined. Because life-styles are essentially distinctive, a number of features do not take on their full significance until they are brought into relation not only with the social positions they express but also with features appearing at an opposite pole of this space. This is the case, for example, with the oppositions which are established primordially between the

positions most remote from each other in one or both of the fundamental dimensions of social space (i.e., with respect to volume and composition of capital): Goya and Renoir, avant-garde theatre and boulevard theatre, Jacques Brel and Tino Rossi, France-Musique and France-Inter or Radio Luxembourg, cinema clubs and variety shows and so forth.

In addition to the information gathered directly by the survey, I have used a number of indices of cultural consumption, such as possession of a piano or records, TV-viewing, visits to museums, exhibitions, variety shows and the cinema, membership in a library, evening classes, collections, sports, all taken from the 1967 INSEE survey on leisure activities (C.S. IV); information on the consumption and life-styles of members of the dominant class (hi-fi equipment, sailing, cruises, bridge, picture collections, champagne, whisky, sports etc.) from surveys by the SOFRES and CESP (C.S. V and VI); information on theatre-going from a survey by SEMA (Société d'économie et de mathématiques appliquées) (C.S. XIV); on favourite actors, from the surveys by IFOP (Institut français de l'opinion publique) (C.S. XIV); on the reading of daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, from the surveys by the CSE (Centre de sociologie européenne) and CESP (C.S. XXVIII); and on various cultural activities (ceramics, pottery, funfairs etc.) from the survey by the Ministry of Culture (C.S. VII).

In the resulting figure, each pertinent item appears only once and is therefore valid for a whole zone (of varying extent depending on the case) of social space, although it

most strongly characterizes the category to which it is closest. (Thus the item 'wages/salaries', marked half-way up the left-hand side of figure 5 and opposed to 'industrial and commercial profits', is valid for the whole of the left-hand side of the social space, i.e., for the university and secondary teachers, senior executives and engineers and also the primary teachers, junior executives, technicians, clerical workers and manual workers. Similarly, the item 'stocks and shares'—top right—applies to employers, the professions, private-sector executives and engineers.) It can be seen immediately that possession of a piano and the choice of the *Concerto for the Left Hand* are most typical of members of the professions; that walking and mountaineering are particularly

characteristic of secondary teachers and public-sector executives; or that swimming, placed half-way between the new petite bourgeoisie and the private-sector executives or the engineers, belongs to the life-style of both these sets of occupations.

Thus, grouped around the name of each class fraction are those features of its life-style which are the most pertinent because they are the most distinctive—though it may in fact share them with other groups. This is the case, for example, with the use of a library, which appears in the area of the junior executives, primary teachers and technicians, although it is at least as frequent among secondary and university teachers; but the latter are less marked by the practice since it is part of their occupational role.

tion strategies. The reconversion of capital held in one form to another, more accessible, more profitable or more legitimate form tends to induce a transformation of asset structure.

These reconversions correspond to movements in a social space which has nothing in common with the unreal and yet naively realistic space of so-called 'social mobility' studies. The same positivistic naivety which sees 'upward mobility' in the morphological transformations of different classes or fractions is also unaware that the reproduction of the social structure may, in certain conditions, demand very little 'occupational heredity'. This is true whenever agents can only maintain their position in the social structure by means of a shift into a new condition (e.g., the shift from small landowner to junior civil servant, or from small craftsman to office worker or commercial employee).

The social space, being structured in two dimensions (overall capital volume and dominant/dominated capital), allows two types of movement which traditional mobility studies confuse, although they are in no way equivalent and are unequally probable: vertical movements, upwards or downwards, in the same vertical sector, that is, in the same field (e.g., from schoolteacher to professor, or from small businessman to big businessman); and transverse movements, from one field to another, which may occur either horizontally (a schoolteacher, or his son, becomes a small shopkeeper) or between different levels (a shopkeeper, or his son,

becomes an industrialist). Vertical movements, the most frequent ones, only require an increase in the volume of the type of capital already dominant in the asset structure, and therefore a movement in the structure of the distribution of total capital which takes the form of a movement within a field (business field, academic field, administrative field, medical field etc.). Transverse movements entail a shift into another field and the reconversion of one type of capital into another or of one sub-type into another sub-type (e.g., from landowning to industrial capital or from literature to economics) and therefore a transformation of asset structure which protects overall capital volume and maintains position in the vertical dimension.

The probability of entering a given fraction of the dominant class from another class is, as we have seen, in inverse ratio to the position of that fraction in the hierarchy of economic capital. (The only exception is the 'liberal professions', which tend to transmit both economic and cultural capital and have the highest rate of endogenous recruitment.) Similarly, major sideways movements within the class (industrialists' sons becoming secondary or higher-education teachers, or vice versa) are extremely rare. Thus, in 1970, the probability of becoming an industrial or commercial employer was 1.9 percent for a professor's son, and the probability of becoming a teacher was 0.8 percent for an industrialist's son and 1.5 percent for a commercial entrepreneur's son. The probability of becoming a craftsman or shopkeeper was 1.2 percent for a primary teacher's son, and the probability of becoming a primary teacher was 2.4 percent for a craftsman's son and 1.4 percent for a small shopkeeper's son (C.S. II, secondary analysis).

CLASS MOBILITY AND MOBILE CLASSES The recent changes in the relationship between the different classes and the educational system—with the 'schooling boom' and the accompanying changes in the system itself—and also the changes in the social structure resulting from the new relationship between qualifications and jobs, are the consequences of intensified competition for academic qualifications. One important factor in intensifying this competition has doubtless been the fact that those fractions of the dominant class and middle class who are richest in economic capital (i.e., industrial and commercial employers, craftsmen and tradesmen) have had to make greatly increased use of the educational system in order to ensure their social reproduction.

The disparity between the scholastic capital of the adults of a class or class fraction (measured by the proportion who have a qualification equal or superior to the BEPC) and the schooling rate of the corresponding adolescents is much more pronounced among craftsmen, shopkeepers and industrialists than among office workers and junior executives. This break in the usual correspondence between the children's educational participation rates and the parents' cultural capital indicates a profound change in dispo-

sitions towards scholastic investment. Many fewer small craftsmen and shopkeepers aged 45-54 than office workers have at least the BEPC (in 1962, 5.7 percent as against 10.1 percent), but their 18-year-old sons are equally likely to be in school (42.1 percent and 43.3 percent in 1962). Similarly industrialists and commercial entrepreneurs have less educational capital than technicians and junior executives (20 percent and 28.9 percent respectively have at least the BEPC), but their sons are equally likely to be in school (65.8 percent and 64.2 percent). The same process has begun among farm workers, as is shown by the rapid rise in their children's schooling rate between 1962 and 1975.²⁴

When class fractions who previously made little use of the school system enter the race for academic qualifications, the effect is to force the groups whose reproduction was mainly or exclusively achieved through education to step up their investments so as to maintain the relative scarcity of their qualifications and, consequently, their position in the class structure. Academic qualifications and the school system which awards them thus become one of the key stakes in an interclass competition which generates a general and continuous growth in the demand for education and an inflation of academic qualifications.

To the effects of the competition between groups struggling for 'upclassing' and against 'downclassing' (*déclassement*), a competition that is organized around the academic qualification (*titre*) and more generally around all the 'entitlements' by which groups assert and constitute their own scarcity value vis-à-vis other groups, must be added the effect of what might be termed a *structural* factor. Generally increased schooling has the effect of increasing the mass of cultural capital which, at every moment, exists in an 'embodied' state. Since the success of the school's educative action and the durability of its effects depend on how much cultural capital has been directly transmitted by the family, it can be presumed that the efficiency of school-based educative action tends to rise constantly, other things being equal. In short, the same scholastic investment becomes more profitable, a fact which no doubt contributes to inflation by bringing diplomas within reach of a greater number of people.

Bearing in mind that the volume of corresponding jobs may also have varied over the same period, one may assume that a qualification is likely to have undergone devaluation if the number of diploma-holders has grown more rapidly than the number of suitable positions. Everything seems to suggest that the *baccalauréat* and lower qualifications are the ones most affected by such devaluation. To this must be added the less obvious devaluation resulting from the fact that if the number of corresponding jobs does keep pace, the positions themselves are likely to lose some of their scarcity value. This is what has happened, for example, to jobs at all levels of the teaching profession.

The very rapid growth in girls' and women's education has been a sig-

nificant factor in the devaluing of academic qualifications. Because the image of the division of labour between the sexes has also changed, more women now bring academic qualifications onto the labour market which previously were partly held in reserve (and were 'invested' only in the marriage market); and the higher the diploma, the more marked this growth has been (see table 10). Just as all segregation (by sex or any other criterion) tends to slow down devaluation by its *numerus clausus* effect, so all desegregation tends to restore full strength to the devaluing mechanisms; and, as an American study of the effects of racial desegregation has shown, the least qualified are the ones who feel the effects most directly.

Indeed, it presents no paradox to suggest that the chief victims of the devaluing of academic qualifications are those who enter the labour market without such qualifications. The devaluation of diplomas is accompanied by the gradual extension of the monopoly held by academic-qualification-holders over positions previously open to the academically unqualified, which has the effect of limiting the devaluation of qualifications by limiting the competition, but only at the cost of restricting the career openings available to the unqualified and of reinforcing the academic predetermination of occupational opportunity. In certain areas, particularly the civil service, this leads to a decline both in the dispersal of the holders of the same qualifications among different jobs and in the dispersal of the qualifications of holders of equivalent jobs, or, in other words, a reinforced correlation between academic qualification and job occupied.

The market in jobs open to formally qualified candidates has grown constantly, inevitably at the expense of the formally unqualified. Universal recognition of academic qualifications no doubt has the effect of unifying the official set of qualifications for social positions and of eliminating local anomalies due to the existence of social spaces with their own rank-ordering principles. However, academic qualifications never achieve total, exclusive acceptance. Outside the specifically scholastic market, a diploma is worth what its holder is worth, economically and socially; the rate of return on educational capital is a function of the economic and social capital that can be devoted to exploiting it.

The change in the distribution of posts among qualification-holders

Table 10 Rate of employment of women aged 25-34, by education, 1962 and 1968.^a

Year	CEP	CAP	BEPC	Bac	>Bac
1962	43.8	59.7	59.8	67.1	67.9
1968	46.3	60.6	63.5	74.3	77.5

Source: 1968 census.

a. It was not possible to isolate women without qualifications.

which results automatically from the increased number of formally qualified agents means that at every moment a proportion of the qualification-holders—starting, no doubt, with those who are least well endowed with the inherited means of exploiting their qualifications—are victims of devaluation. The strategies by which those who are most subject to devaluation endeavour to fight against it, in the short term (in the course of their own careers) or in the long term (through the strategies they employ for their children's schooling), constitute one of the decisive factors in the growth in the volume of qualifications awarded, which itself contributes to devaluation. The dialectic of devaluation and compensation thus tends to feed on itself.

RECONVERSION STRATEGIES AND MORPHOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The strategies which individuals and families employ with a view to safeguarding or improving their position in social space are reflected in transformations which modify both the volume of the different class fractions and the structure of their assets.

Table 11 has been constructed so as to give at least an approximate idea of these transformations. Since it was not possible (though it would have been desirable) to establish in narrowly defined categories the changes in total income and income structure for the period 1954-1975 (instead, table 12 indicates these changes, in broad categories, for the period 1954-1968), I have indicated the distribution by source of income and the total income declared to the tax authorities, the source used by INSEE. It is known, however, that the degree of underestimation varies greatly. According to A. Villeneuve,²⁵ wages and salaries should be multiplied by 1.1, farmers' profits by 3.6, investment income by 2.9 and so forth. Once these corrections are applied, the members of the professions, and especially the farmers, craftsmen and small shopkeepers, return to their real places.

The categories (relatively) richest in economic capital (as represented by indicators such as stocks and shares, rural or urban property etc.) tend to regress very sharply, as is shown by the decline in their volume (in the case of the farmers, craftsmen, shopkeepers and industrialists) and by the fall or relatively small increase in the proportion of young people. (The fact that this has not occurred in the 'small shopkeeper' and 'craftsman' categories is explained by the coming of a new style of shopkeeper and craftsman.) Part of the apparent increase in the educational (and, no doubt, economic) capital of these categories is probably due to the fact that the reduction in their numbers chiefly concerns their lower strata.

By contrast, the fractions richest in cultural capital (measured by educational qualifications) have greatly expanded. They have acquired more young people, a higher proportion of women, and a higher rate of educational qualification. The categories most typical of this process are office workers and shop workers, technicians, junior and senior executives, primary teachers and especially secondary and tertiary teachers (in the last case the interlinked changes are particularly intense). Among engineers, how-

Table 11 Changes in morphology and asset structure of the class fractions, 1954-1975.

Class fraction	Index of change in volume, 1954-1975 (1954 = 100)				Change in educational capital, 1962-1975 (by % of qualification-holders)				Economic Capital				
	Proportion of men in 1975 (%)				In 1962				Sources of income in 1970 (by % of households)				
	All ages		Ages 20-34		Higher-ed. diploma		BEP/C Bac		Average house-hold income in 1975 (francs)	Wages, salaries	Indust. and commercial profits	Urban property income	Stocks and shares income
	Men	Both sexes	Men	Both sexes	Higher-ed. diploma	Bac	BEP/C						
Farm workers	375,480	32	33	27	27	0.5	0.2	0.1	27,740	86.0	1.5	0.8	6.3
Farmers	1,650,865	65.7	46	26	31	0.9	0.5	0.2	22,061	19.3	5.3	6.4	16.5
Unskilled	1,612,725	61.9	115	146	108	0.4	0.1	0	27,027	93.4	1.3	2.3	3.3
Semi-skilled	2,946,860	73.2	162	167	185	1.0	0.2	0.1	35,515	97.7	2.2	2.4	3.6
Skilled	2,983,865	86.5	112	126	120	2.1	0.5	0.1	39,527	98.2	2.2	2.7	3.6
Foremen	443,305	94.1	191	141	218	6.0	1.7	0.5	56,692	99.5	1.4	4.1	6.7
Office workers	3,104,105	35.0	167	138	183	11.5	2.9	1.2	42,785	98.8	2.1	5.1	8.6
Commercial employees	756,595	40.6	71	77	81	8.8	2.8	1.0	46,196	97.5	3.4	8.9	9.5
Craftsmen	533,655	88.1	73	78	73	4.7	2.4	0.9	50,335	34.1	96.9	12.9	14.2
Small shopkeepers	970,185	55.1	182	132	218	15.2	20.1	11.6	60,160	24.3	93.2	20.2	19.2
Junior admin. executives	758,890	85.6	393	367	417	16.3	7.0	2.7	73,478	99.3	4.0	11.1	17.5
Technicians	298,455	21.0	269	261	345	9.7	7.7	6.1	59,003	98.5	2.4	5.8	8.7
Social and medical services	737,420	36.5	66	71	66	8.5	6.7	7.5	53,450	84.2	0	10.0	12.4
Primary teachers	59,845	86.5	103	100	98	9.5	9.0	7.3	54,013	96.7	0.9	7.6	10.4
Industrialists	186,915	69.2	236	217	293	25.4	15.3	18.9	132,594	83.0	26.0	34.7	40.0
Commercial employees	653,755	83.9	338	305	272	26.3	7.3	9.0	132,435	64.0	47.5	29.7	30.2
Senior admin. executives	256,290	95.6	469	402	612	51.7	2.7	10.8	107,342	99.6	3.6	15.2	27.7
Engineers	377,215	53.0	143	130	145	13.7	4.5	10.3	105,989	98.7	2.1	10.4	21.0
Teachers (secondary, higher)	172,025	77.8	143	130	145	13.7	4.5	10.3	87,795	97.6	2.1	10.4	21.0
Professions									150,108	41.0	17.5	30.3	40.6

Sources: INSEE, *Censuses, 1954, 1962, 1968, 1975*. For changes in educational capital: INSEE, *Recensement général de la population au 1/20ème pour la France entière: Formation (Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1971)* (this volume also gives data on education and training from the 1962 census); and INSEE, *Tableau de la population totale de plus de 16 ans par*

catégorie socio-professionnelle, âge, sexe, diplôme d'enseignement général (forthcoming; data supplied by L. Thévenot). On incomes: INSEE, *Enquêtes revenus 1975 et 1970* (data supplied by A. Villeneuve [1975 survey] and P. Ghigliazza [1970 survey]).

ever, the process seems to have stopped, since the rate of increase is lower for the youngest generation than for the group as a whole. Another remarkable feature is the relative stability of the 'liberal professions', whose deliberate policy of *numerus clausus* has prevented numerical growth and feminization and helped to maintain scarcity value.

The new reproduction strategies which underlie these morphological changes are seen partly in the increased importance of salaries in the income of the traditionally 'self-employed' categories and partly in the diversified assets and investments of the senior executives, who tend to hold their capital in both economic and cultural form, unlike the employers, who mainly hold economic capital. Salaries and pensions, as a proportion of employers' incomes, rise from 12.9 percent in 1956 to 16.4 percent in 1965; in 1975, with new classifications, they make up 19.2 percent of the income of craftsmen and small shopkeepers and 31.8 percent of the income of industrialists and commercial entrepreneurs. (By contrast, among farmers, the proportion remains much the same: 23.8 percent in 1956, 23.5 percent in 1965 and 24.8 percent in 1975.) In 1975, the proportion of income derived from investment in land, buildings, stocks and shares is much higher among private-sector than public-sector senior executives (5.9 percent and 2.7 percent respectively).

The reconversion of economic capital into educational capital is one of the strategies which enable the business bourgeoisie to maintain the position of some or all of its heirs, by enabling them to extract some of the profits of industrial and commercial firms in the form of salaries, which are a more discreet—and no doubt more reliable—mode of appropriation than 'unearned' investment income. Thus, between 1954 and 1975 the proportion of industrial and commercial entrepreneurs fell sharply, whereas there was a very strong rise in the proportion of salary-earners, who owed their position to their academic qualifications—executives, engineers, teachers and intellectuals (although, at least in the case of private-sector executives, a significant proportion of total income may be derived from shares, as table 13 indicates). Similarly, the disappearance of many small commercial or craft firms conceals the reconversion work which individual agents perform, with varying degrees of success, in accordance with the demands of their particular situation, and which results in a transformation of the relative weight of the different fractions of the middle classes (see table 14). Here, too, the decrease in the proportion of small shopkeepers, craftsmen, and farmers has been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of primary-school teachers, technicians, and the personnel of the medical and social services.

Furthermore, the relative morphological stability of an occupational group may conceal a transformation of its structure resulting from the conversion in situ of agents present in the group at the beginning of the period (or their children) or their replacement by agents from other groups. For example, the relatively small decline in the overall volume of

Table 12 Changes in morphology and asset structure of the class fractions, 1954-1968.

Class fraction	Volume in 1968			Index of change in volume, 1954-1968 (1954=100)		Index of change in number of under-35s, 1962-1968 (1962=100)	Educational capital, 1968, by % of male qualification-holders		Annual income (francs), 1965 (primary income) (2)	Average household assets (francs), Jan. 1, 1966 (3)
	Both sexes (1)	Men only (1)	Women only (1)	Both sexes (1)	Men only (1)		BEPCC (1)	Bac (1)		
						(1)				
Farm workers	588,200	527,200	54	51	54	67	1.0	0.4	9,859	—
Farmers	2,459,840	1,527,780	65	62	65	72	1.6	0.7	23,854	35,000
Manual workers	7,698,600	6,128,840	119	119	123	116	2.3	0.4	14,811	46,000
Clerical and commercial	3,029,900	1,188,300	146	146	121	133	14.0	3.7	16,149	92,000
Junior executives	2,014,000	1,197,360	177	177	168	151	19.0	16.5	26,887	—
Craftsmen	622,800	532,340	88	85	88	109	4.1	1.5	—	—
Small shopkeepers	1,028,160	515,440	81	81	85	107	6.7	2.8	—	—
Big commercial employers	213,300	143,840	116	116	110	148	12.1	8.0	—	—
Industrialists	79,160	68,940	93	93	93	98	10.8	6.1	—	—
All industrial and commercial entrepreneurs	1,943,620	1,360,560	86	86	96	110	6.4	3.0	45,851	—
Professions	142,520	114,920	119	119	112	122	5.1	6.3	58,021	214,000
Senior executives	840,280	691,680	196	196	183	144	12.6	13.3	—	—

Table 12 (continued)

Farm workers	10.2	2.3	—	—	—	59.5	29.8	9.2	1.5	96.7	95.9	1.4	1.8
Farmers	27.6	5.2	—	—	—	6.9	10.9	78.5	3.7	23.8	23.5	16.4	9.9
Manual workers	4.8	2.9	3.2	3.2	39.0	66.7	27.9	4.6	0.8	98.0	97.5	0.8	0.8
Clerical and commercial	11.8	6.0	6.6	6.6	40.8	69.6	23.2	5.4	1.8	95.9	95.9	2.6	2.1
Junior executives	14.0	8.1	8.5	8.5	50.3	73.1	18.5	6.8	1.8	91.6	94.4	4.9	2.1
Craftsmen	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Small shopkeepers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Big commercial employers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Industrialists	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
All industrial and commercial entrepreneurs	28.6	20.7	—	—	—	7.1	6.4	79.2	7.3	12.9	16.4	7.0	6.7
Professions	38.2	18.9	33.1	33.1	66.3	56.5	9.6	28.9	5.0	71.8	73.0	9.4	6.0
Senior executives	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Sources: (1) INSEE, *Censuses*; (2) H. Roze, 'Prestations sociales, impôt direct et échelle des revenus', *Economie et Statistique*, February 1971; (3) P. L'Hardy, 'Les disparités du patrimoine', *Economie et Statistique*, February 1973; (4) G. Bandetier, 'Les revenus des ménages en 1965,

'Collections de l'INSEE, M 7, December 1970; (5) P. L'Hardy, 'Structure de l'épargne et du patrimoine des ménages en 1966,' *Collections de l'INSEE, M 13, March 1972.*

Table 13 Morphological changes within the dominant class, 1954-1975.

Class fraction	Structure (% of dominant class in each fraction)			Annual rate of variation (%)				Proportion of women per fraction (%)			
	1954	1962	1968	1975	1954-1962	1962-1968	1968-1975	1954	1962	1968	1975
	Commercial employers	22.0	17.0	16.4	11.0	-1.5	0	-4.2	29.2	30.2	32.9
Industrialists	11.0	7.9	6.3	3.5	-0.6	3.3	-1.7	14.9	14.2	13.7	13.5
Professionals	14.6	12.3	10.9	10.1	0.5	2.0	2.9	15.6	17.3	19.3	22.2
Senior admin. executives	33.5	37.0	35.3	38.3	3.9	3.1	5.3	8.6	11.1	13.4	17.1
Engineers	9.2	13.5	14.5	15.0	7.8	5.1	4.7	2.1	3.2	3.4	4.4
Teachers, literary and scientific occupations	9.7	12.3	16.6	22.1	5.7	9.3	8.5	39.9	43.0	44.7	47.0

Table 14 Morphological changes within the middle class, 1954-1975.^a

Class fraction	Structure (% of middle class in each fraction)			Annual rate of variation (%)				Proportion of women per fraction (%)			
	1954	1962	1968	1975	1954-1962	1962-1968	1968-1975	1954	1962	1968	1975
	Craftsmen	14.6	11.2	9.3	6.6	-2.1	-0.5	-2.1	18.3	16.0	14.7
Small shopkeepers	24.1	20.0	15.4	11.3	-1.2	-1.7	-1.7	51.7	51.3	50.2	48.2
Commercial employees	8.5	9.0	9.4	9.1	1.9	3.4	2.4	52.0	57.0	57.7	59.4
Office workers	31.3	33.2	35.7	38.5	1.9	3.9	3.0	53.0	59.4	61.9	65.0
Junior admin. executives	10.2	11.0	11.1	12.0	2.0	2.8	3.9	24.6	31.9	34.9	44.9
Primary teachers	7.4 ^b	7.4	8.4	9.1	4.1 ^b	4.9	4.0	68.3 ^b	65.1	62.7	63.5
Technicians	3.7	6.1	8.0	9.4	7.5	7.5	5.2	7.1	7.9	11.3	14.4
Social and medical services	c	1.9	2.6	3.7	c	7.8	8.1	c	84.8	83.2	79.0

Source: L. Thévenot, 'Les catégories sociales en 1975: l'extension du salariat,' *Economie et Statistique*, 91 (July-August 1977), 4-5.

a. It is known that the structure of the working population changed considerably between 1954 and 1975. The proportion of agricultural workers (farmers and wage-earners) fell from 36.7% to 9.5% and the proportion of industrial workers rose very slightly (from 33.8% to 37.7%), whereas the middle class as a whole increased considerably (from 27% to 37% of the working population)—as a result of the growth of the wage-earning sections of the class, as this table shows—and the dominant class rose from 4.3% to 7.8%.

b. Includes Social and medical services.

c. Included under 'Primary teachers'.

the category 'shopkeepers', consisting very largely (93 percent) of the owners of small individual firms which have been able to withstand the crisis partly because of increased household consumption, conceals a change in the structure of this occupation. The stagnation or decline of small food stores, particularly hard hit by supermarket competition, and small clothing stores has almost been balanced by a growth in the retailing of automobiles, domestic equipment (including furniture, interior decorating and so on) and especially sports, leisure and cultural goods (books, records etc.) and pharmaceuticals. It may be assumed that, even within food retailing, the figures tend to conceal changes that have led to a progressive redefinition of the occupation: the closing-down of small grocery stores and rural bakeries may coexist with the opening of shops selling diet foods, 'natural' regional products and health foods, or of bakeries specializing in old-style bread.

These changes in the nature of retail firms—which are related to changes, over the same period, in the structure of household consumption, themselves related to the growth in incomes and above all to the increase in cultural capital resulting from the upward shift of the structure of educational opportunity—are dialectically linked to a rise in the cultural capital of their owners or managers.

Everything suggests that the 'craftsman' category has undergone changes very similar to the 'shopkeeper' category, with the decline of the most exposed strata of traditional craftsmanship being offset by the boom in luxury and 'aesthetic' crafts, which require economic assets but also cultural capital. This would explain why the fall in the volume of these middle-class categories is accompanied by a rise in cultural capital as measured by educational level.

Craftsmen and tradesmen specializing in luxury, cultural or artistic items, managers of fashion 'boutiques', retailers of 'famous maker' clothes, traders in exotic garments and jewels or rustic objects, record dealers, antique dealers, interior decorators, designers, photographers, restaurateurs, managers of trendy 'bistros', Provençal 'potters', avant-garde booksellers, all those vendors of cultural goods and services seeking to prolong the fusion of leisure and work, militancy and dilettantism, that characterizes the student life-style, use their ambiguous occupations, in which success depends at least as much on the subtly casual distinction of the salesman as on the nature and quality of his wares, as a way of obtaining the best return on a cultural capital in which technical competence is less important than familiarity with the culture of the dominant class and a mastery of the signs and emblems of distinction and taste. Because this new type of culture-intensive craftsmanship and commerce enables profit to be drawn from the cultural heritage transmitted directly by the family, it is predisposed to serve as a refuge for those sons and daughters of the dominant class who are eliminated by the educational system.

TIME TO UNDERSTAND Among the effects of the inflation of qualifications and their associated devaluation, undoubtedly the most important are the set of strategies whereby the holders of devalued qualifications have sought to maintain their inherited positions or to obtain from their qualifications the real equivalent of what they guaranteed in an earlier state of the relationship between diplomas and jobs.

It is clear that what an academic qualification guarantees is much more than, and different from, the right to occupy a position and the capacity to perform the corresponding job. In this respect the diploma (*titre scolaire*) is more like a patent of nobility (*titre de noblesse*) than the title to property (*titre de propriété*) which strictly technical definitions make of it. So one can well understand that the victims of devaluation are disinclined to perceive and acknowledge the devaluing of qualifications with which they are closely identified, both objectively (they constitute an important part of these people's social identity) and subjectively. But the concern to preserve self-esteem, which encourages attachment to the nominal value of qualifications and jobs, would not be sufficient to maintain a misperception of this devaluation, if there were not also some complicity from objective mechanisms. The most important of these are, first, the hysteresis of habitus, which causes previously appropriate categories of perception and appreciation to be applied to a new state of the qualification market; and, second, the existence of relatively autonomous markets in which the value of qualifications declines at a slower rate.

The hysteresis effect is proportionately greater for agents who are more remote from the educational system and who are poorly or only vaguely informed about the market in educational qualifications. One of the most valuable sorts of information constituting inherited cultural capital is practical or theoretical knowledge of the fluctuations of the market in academic qualifications, the sense of investment which enables one to get the best return on inherited cultural capital in the scholastic market or on scholastic capital in the labour market, for example, by knowing the right moment to pull out of devalued disciplines and careers and to switch into those with a future, rather than clinging to the scholastic values which secured the highest profits in an earlier state of the market. By contrast, the hysteresis effect means that the holders of devalued diplomas become, in a sense, accomplices in their own mystification, since, by a typical effect of *allodoxia* ('misapprehension'), they bestow a value on their devalued diplomas which is not objectively acknowledged. This explains how those least informed about the diploma market, who have long been able to recognize a decline in real wages behind the maintenance of nominal wages, can nonetheless continue to accept and seek the paper certificates which they receive in payment for their years of schooling (despite the fact that they are the first victims of diploma devaluation, because of their lack of social capital).

This attachment to an anachronistic idea of the value of qualifications

no doubt plays a part in the existence of markets in which diplomas can (apparently, at least) escape devaluation. The value objectively and subjectively placed on an academic qualification is in fact defined only by the totality of the social uses that can be made of it. Thus the evaluation of diplomas by the closest peer groups, such as relatives, neighbours, fellow students (one's 'class' or 'year') and colleagues, can play an important role in masking the effects of devaluation. These phenomena of individual and collective misrecognition are in no way illusory, since they can orient real practices, especially the individual and collective strategies aimed at establishing or re-establishing the objective reality of the value of the qualification or position; and these strategies can make a real contribution toward actual revaluation.

In the transactions in which the market value of academic qualifications is defined, the strength of the vendors of labour power depends—setting aside their social capital—on the value of their diplomas, especially when the relationship between qualifications and jobs is strictly codified (as is the case with established positions, as opposed to new ones). So it is clear that the devaluation of academic diplomas is of direct advantage to the suppliers of jobs, and that, while the interests of qualification-holders are bound up with the nominal value of qualifications, i.e., with what they guaranteed by right in the earlier situation, the interests of job suppliers are bound up with the real value of qualifications, in other words, the value that is determined at the moment in question in the competition among the candidates. (This is a structural de-skilling [*déqualification*] which aggravates the effects of the de-skilling strategies that firms have been using for a long time.) The greatest losers in this struggle are those whose diplomas have least relative value in the hierarchy of diplomas and are most devalued. In some cases the qualification-holder finds he has no other way to defend the value of his qualification than to refuse to sell his labour power at the price offered; the decision to remain unemployed is then equivalent to a one-man strike.²⁶

THE CHEATING OF A GENERATION In a period of 'diploma inflation' the disparity between the aspirations that the educational system produces and the opportunities it really offers is a structural reality which affects all the members of a school generation, but to a varying extent depending on the rarity of their qualifications and on their origins. Newcomers to secondary education are led, by the mere fact of having access to it, to expect it to give them what it gave others at a time when they themselves were still excluded from it. In an earlier period and for other classes, these aspirations were perfectly realistic, since they corresponded to objective probabilities, but they are often quickly deflated by the verdicts of the scholastic market or the labour market. One of the paradoxes of what is called the 'democratization of schooling' is that only when the working classes, who had previously ignored or at best vaguely

concurrent in the Third Republic ideology of 'schooling as a liberating force' (*l'école libératrice*), actually entered secondary education, did they discover *l'école conservatrice*, schooling as a conservative force, by being relegated to second-class courses or eliminated. The collective disillusionment which results from the structural mismatch between aspirations and real probabilities, between the social identity the school system seems to promise, or the one it offers on a temporary basis, and the social identity that the labour market in fact offers is the source of the disaffection towards work, that *refusal of social finitude*, which generates all the refusals and negations of the adolescent counter-culture.

This discordance—and the disenchantment it engenders—takes forms that are objectively and subjectively different in the various social classes. Thus, for working-class youngsters, the transit through secondary schooling and through the ambiguous status of a 'student', temporarily freed from the demands of the world of work, produces misfirings of the dialectic of aspirations and probabilities which led their predecessors to accept their social destiny, almost always unquestioningly, and sometimes with positive eagerness (like the miners' sons who used to identify their entry into manhood with their first descent into the mine). The disenchantment with their work that is felt and expressed particularly acutely by the most obvious victims of downclassing, such as *baccalauréat* holders obliged to take jobs as factory workers or postmen, is, in a way, common to a whole generation. It finds expression in unusual forms of struggle, protest and escapism that the organizations traditionally involved in industrial or political struggle find hard to understand, because something more than working conditions is at stake. These young people, whose social identity and self-image have been undermined by a social system and an educational system that have fobbed them off with worthless paper, can find no other way of restoring their personal and social integrity than by a total refusal. It is as if they felt that what is at stake is no longer just personal failure, as the educational system encourages them to believe, but rather the whole logic of the academic institution. The structural de-skilling of a whole generation, who are bound to get less out of their qualifications than the previous generation would have obtained, engenders a sort of collective disillusionment: a whole generation, finding it has been taken for a ride, is inclined to extend to all institutions the mixture of revolt and resentment it feels towards the educational system. This anti-institutional cast of mind (which draws strength from ideological and scientific critiques) points towards a denunciation of the tacit assumptions of the social order, a practical suspension of doxic adherence to the prizes it offers and the values it professes, and a withholding of the investments which are a necessary condition of its functioning.

So it is understandable that, not only within families but also in educational institutions and political or union organizations, and above all



*The new
production lines*

Disenchanted

'First I did market research surveys. I had a friend in L. who was into that. I got a list of all the research firms in Paris. After two months phoning and writing, finally I got something. Then, several months later, they still hadn't got in touch with me. They weren't doing any more surveys. I was entitled to unemployment benefit, a thousand francs a month. We lived on that for seven months, then we did two months' grape-picking. Then I went back to surveys for seven months, working free-lance. Then I quit; the place was full of lesbians and they gave out the work to their favourites, so I got out. Anyway, we each work a bit in turns. In this sort of society, work isn't the main thing in life. Now, if things were run the way they are in China, I might want to work ten hours a day' (F., age 24, baccalauréat and a few months in an Arts faculty; father: private means).

'Once you've flunked your bac, you're already in the shit. There are no possible careers and the jobs you can find are completely useless.

'All the jobs I did were boring, so I saved up some money so I could stop working for a few months. Anyway, I prefer to stop once in a while so I don't get into a rut.

'After I failed the bac, I spent the summer working as a monitor in a vacation camp. Then I got a job with a newspaper in Dreux. I was a trainee sub-editor but after two months it was time to take out my union card so I went free-lance. But I didn't seem to fit in. Everything I wrote, they went through with a

fine-tooth comb. I did photos, too. But there was a power struggle in the paper. I couldn't be bothered to fight. After six months, they stopped giving me work, so I left. I got taken in by the "public service" myth and I signed on at the Post Office. I was on sorting for three weeks. I couldn't take any more. It was a work environment I'd never known before. It wasn't so much the people that got up my nose as the relations between them, the tale-telling. There was no solidarity. After three weeks I chucked it in. There were five of us auxiliaries, one was fired on the spot for taking fifteen minutes' extra break, so we all walked out. The worst of it is that you flunk your exams, you hated school, and you end up being treated as an intellectual.

'Next I got a job through the employment agency, as a clerk in an office dealing with wholesale beef. There was a row about a bonus that wasn't given to everyone. There was a slanging-match and I got out. I'd been there two and a half months. In September I picked grapes and then I went back to the employment agency. I was a courier on a scooter for six months. That was the craziest thing I've ever done. It's a ghastly job, you get completely paranoid on your scooter, imagining they're all trying to run you down. I chucked it in, I couldn't take any more.

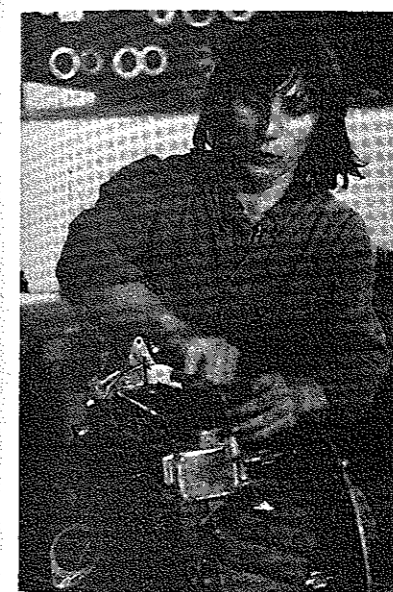
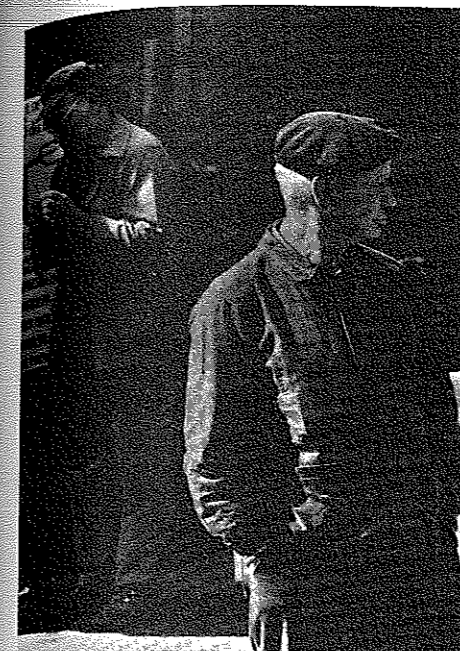
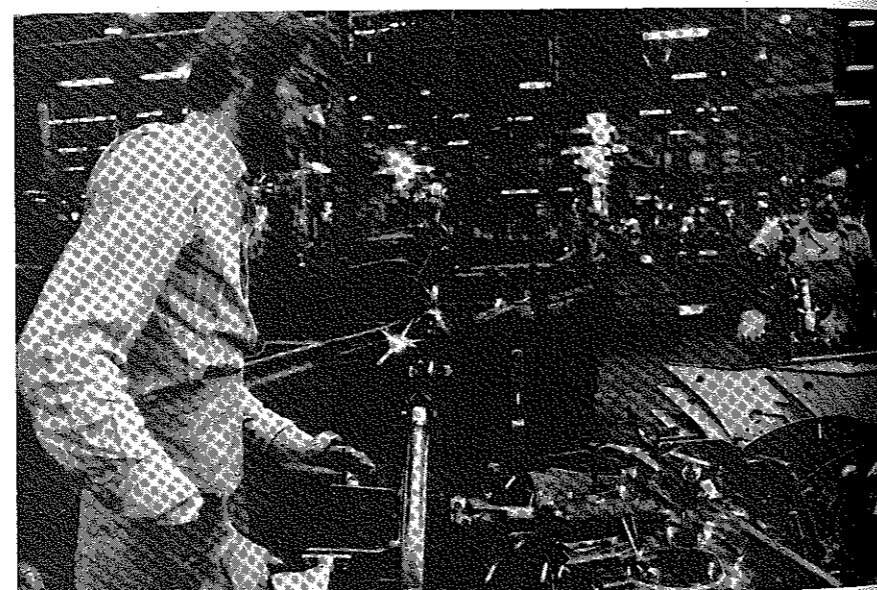
'After two months on the dole, I got a temporary job, just for the holiday period, on the railways. I was on electronic reservations, "operator" they called it, or something like that, and I stayed for four

months. I left because I wanted to live in the country, and that's how I ended up here' (G., age 21, failed baccalauréat; father: policeman; mother: charwoman).

Extracts from C. Mathey, *L'entrée dans la vie active*, Cahiers du Centre d'études de l'emploi, 15 (Paris, PUF, 1977), 479-658 passim (interviews with 50 unemployed young people).

in the work situation, whenever old-style autodidacts, who started out thirty years earlier with a *certificat d'études* (CEP) or a BEPC and boundless respect for culture, come into contact with young *bacheliers* or new-style autodidacts, who bring their anti-institutional stance with them into the institution, the clash of generations often takes the form of a showdown over the very foundations of the social order. More radical, less self-confident than the usual form of political contestation, and reminiscent of the mood of the first Romantic generation, this disenchanted temperament attacks the fundamental dogmas of the petit-bourgeois order—'career', 'status', 'promotion' and 'getting on.'

THE STRUGGLE TO KEEP UP The specific contradiction of the scholastic mode of reproduction lies in the opposition between the interests of the class which the educational system serves *statistically* and the interests of those class members whom it sacrifices, that is, the 'failures' who are threatened with *déclassement* for lack of the qualifications formally required of rightful members. Nor should one forget those holders of qualifications which 'normally'—i.e., in an earlier state of the relationship between diplomas and jobs—gave access to a bourgeois occupation, who, because they do not originate from that class, lack the social capital to extract the full yield from their academic qualifications. The overproduction of qualifications, and the consequent devaluation, tend to become a structural constant when theoretically equal chances of obtaining qualifications are offered to all the offspring of the bourgeoisie (regardless of birth rank or sex) while the access of other classes to these qualifications also increases (in absolute terms). The strategies which one group may employ to try to escape downclassing and to return to their class trajectory, and those which another group employs to rebuild the interrupted path of a hoped-for trajectory, are now one of the most important factors in the transformation of social structures. The individual substitution strategies which enable the holders of a social capital of inherited 'connections' to make up for their lack of formal qualifications or to get the maximum return from those they have, by moving into relatively unbureaucratized areas of social space (where social dispositions count for more than academically guaranteed 'competences'), are combined with collective strategies aimed at asserting the value of formal qualifications and obtaining the rewards they secured in an earlier state of the market.



Whereas in 1962 only 1.5 percent of semi-skilled workers aged 15-24 had the BEPC, and 0.2 percent the baccalauréat or a higher diploma, in 1975 the corresponding percentages were 8.2 and 1.0. Among white-collar workers, where by 1962 even in the oldest age-group there was a relatively high percentage of diploma-holders, the proportion of the very highly qualified rose faster among the young, so that by 1975 a larger proportion of them had higher qualifications than did the older workers (in 1962, 25.0 percent of office workers aged 15-24 had the BEPC, 2.0 percent the baccalauréat, and 0.2 percent a higher education degree, compared with 38.0 percent, 8.0 percent and 1.0 percent in 1975; the corresponding figures in 1975 for older staff members were 16.1 percent, 3.3 percent and 1.4 percent). In addition to all the changes in the relations between colleagues of different generations that are implied in these statistics, one has to bear in mind the changed relation to work which results from putting agents with higher qualifications into jobs that are often de-skilled (by automation and all the forms of job mechanization which have turned white-collar staff into the production-line workers of the great bureaucracies). There is every reason to think that the opposition between the somewhat strict and even stuffy rigour of the older staff and the casual style of the younger workers, which is doubtless perceived as sloppiness, especially when it includes long hair and a beard (the traditional emblems of the bohemian artist or intellectual), expresses rather more than a simple generation gap.

The combined effect is to encourage the creation of a large number of *semi-bourgeois* positions, produced by redefining old positions or inventing new ones, and designed to save unqualified 'inheritors' from downclassing and to provide parvenus with an approximate pay-off for their devalued qualifications.

The strategies agents use to avoid the devaluation of their diplomas are grounded in the discrepancy between opportunities objectively available at any given moment and aspirations based on an earlier structure of objective opportunities. This discrepancy, which is particularly acute at certain moments and in certain social positions, generally reflects a failure to achieve the individual or collective occupational trajectory which was inscribed as an objective potentiality in the former position and in the trajectory leading to it. When this 'broken trajectory' effect occurs—for example, in the case of a man whose father and grandfather were *polytechniciens* and who becomes a sales engineer or a psychologist, or in the case of a law graduate who, for lack of social capital, becomes a community cultural worker—the agent's aspirations, flying on above his real trajectory like a projectile carried on by its own inertia, describe an ideal trajectory that is no less real, or is at any rate in no way imaginary in the ordinary sense of the word. This impossible objective potentiality, inscribed at the deepest level of their dispositions as a sort of blighted hope or frustrated promise, is the common factor, behind all their differences, between those sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie to whom the educational system has not given the means of pursuing the trajectory most likely for their class and those sons and daughters of the middle and working classes who have not obtained the rewards which their academic qualifications would have guaranteed in an earlier state of the market—two categories who are particularly likely to try to move into the new positions.

Agents who seek to avoid downclassing can either produce new occupations more closely matching their pretensions (which were socially justified in an earlier state of relations between qualifications and jobs) or can refurbish the occupations to which their qualifications do give access, redefining and upgrading them in accordance with their pretensions. When agents start to arrive in a job who possess qualifications different from those of the usual occupants, they bring hitherto unknown aptitudes, dispositions and demands with them into their relation with that job, in terms of both its technical and social definition; and this necessarily causes changes in the job itself. Among the most visible changes observed when the newcomers have high qualifications are an intensified division of labour, with autonomous status being given to some of the tasks previously performed, in principle or in practice, by less qualified jacks-of-all-trades (e.g., the diversification of the education and social welfare fields); and, often, a redefinition of careers, related to the emergence of expectations and demands that are new in both form and content.

To make clear the break with the realist, static model implied in certain traditions of the sociology of work, it has to be emphasized that the post cannot be reduced either to the theoretical post, i.e., as described in regulations, circulars or organization charts, or to the real post, i.e., as described on the basis of observation of the occupant's real function, or even to the relationship between the two. In fact, posts, as regards both their theoretical definition and their practical reality, are the site of permanent struggles, in which position-holders may clash with their superiors or their subordinates, or with the occupants of neighbouring and rival positions, or amongst themselves (old-timers and newcomers, graduates and non-graduates and so on). Those aspiring to or holding a position may have an interest in redefining it in such a way that it cannot be occupied by anyone other than the possessors of properties identical to their own. (Consider the struggles between graduates of ENA and Polytechnique or, in the middle classes, between different generations of nurses.)

There is every reason to suppose that the job redefinition resulting from a change in the scholastic properties of the occupants—and all their associated properties—is likely to be more or less extensive depending on the *elasticity* of the technical and social definition of the position (which is probably greater at higher levels in the hierarchy of positions) and on the *social origin* of the new occupants, since the higher their origin, the less inclined they will be to accept the limited ambitions of petit-bourgeois agents looking for modest, predictable progress over a lifetime.

These factors are probably not independent. Whether led by their sense of a good investment and their awareness of the opportunities awaiting their capital, or by the refusal to demean themselves by entering one of the established occupations whose elementary definition makes them invidious, those sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie who are threatened with downclassing tend to move, if they possibly can, into the most indeterminate of the older professions and into the sectors where the new professions are under construction. This 'creative redefinition' is therefore found particularly in the most ill-defined and professionally unstructured occupations and in the newest sectors of cultural and artistic production, such as the big public and private enterprises engaged in cultural production (radio, TV, marketing, advertising, social science research and so on), where jobs and careers have not yet acquired the rigidity of the older bureaucratic professions and recruitment is generally done by co-option, that is, on the basis of 'connections' and affinities of habitus, rather than formal qualifications.

This means that the sons and daughters of the Paris bourgeoisie, rather than directly entering a well-defined and lifelong profession (e.g., teaching), are more likely to enter and to succeed in positions, half-way between studenthood and a profession, that are offered by the big cultural bureaucracies, occupations for which the specific qualifications (e.g., a diploma in photography or filmmaking, or a sociology or psychology

degree) are a genuine ticket of entry only for those who are able to supplement the official qualifications with the real—social—qualifications.²⁷

The relative weight of the different categories involved in the cultural production system has radically changed in the last two decades. The new categories of wage-earning producers created by the development of radio and television and the public and private research bodies (especially in the social sciences) have considerably expanded, as has the teaching profession, especially in its lower strata, whereas the artistic and legal professions, that is, intellectual craftsmanship, have declined. These changes, together with new ways of organizing intellectual life (research committees, brain trusts, think tanks etc.) and new institutionalized modes of communication (conferences, debates, etc.) tend to encourage the emergence of intellectual producers more directly subordinated to economic and political demands, bringing new modes of thought and expression, new themes and new ways of conceiving intellectual work and the role of the intellectual. The main effect of these developments—together with the considerable growth in the student population, placed in the position of apprentice intellectuals, and the emergence of a whole set of semi-intellectual occupations—may well be to have provided 'intellectual production' with something once reserved for 'bourgeois art', namely, an audience sufficiently large to justify the existence of specific agencies for production and distribution, and the appearance, on the edges of the university field and intellectual field, of a sort of superior popularization—of which the *nouveaux philosophes* are an extreme case.²⁸

But the site par excellence of this type of transformation is to be found in the group of occupations whose common factor is that they ensure a maximum return on the cultural capital most directly transmitted by the family: good manners, good taste or physical charm. This group includes the aesthetic and semi-aesthetic, intellectual and semi-intellectual occupations, the various consultancy services (psychology, vocational guidance, speech therapy, beauty advice, marriage counselling, diet advice and so on), the educational and para-educational occupations (youth leaders, runners of day-care centres, cultural programme organizers) and jobs involving presentation and representation (tour organizers, hostesses, ciceroni, couriers, radio and TV announcers, news anchormen and quiz show hosts, press attachés, public relations people and so on).

Public and, especially, private bureaucracies are now obliged to perform representational and 'hosting' functions which are very different in both scale and style from those traditionally entrusted to men (diplomats, ministerial attachés and so on) often drawn from those fractions of the dominant class (the aristocracy and the old bourgeoisie) who were richest in social capital and in the socializing techniques essential to the maintenance of that capital. The new requirements have led to the emergence of a whole set of female occupations and to the establishment of a legitimate market in physical properties. The fact that certain women derive occupational profit from

their charm(s), and that beauty thus acquires a value on the labour market, has doubtless helped to produce not only a number of changes in the norms of clothing and cosmetics, but also a whole set of changes in ethics and a redefinition of the legitimate image of femininity. Women's magazines and all the acknowledged authorities on the body and the legitimate ways to use it transmit the image of womanhood incarnated by those professional manipulators of bureaucratic charm, who are rationally selected and trained, in accordance with a strictly programmed career-structure (with specialized schools, beauty contests and so on), to fulfil the most traditional feminine functions in conformity with bureaucratic norms.

The most indeterminate sectors of the social structure offer the most favourable ground for the operations which, by transforming old positions or 'creating' new ones ex nihilo, aim to produce areas of specialist expertise, particularly in the field of 'consultancy', the performance of which requires no more than a rationalized form of competence in a class culture. The constitution of a socially recognized corps of experts specializing in advice on sexuality, which is now coming about through the gradual professionalization of voluntary, philanthropic or political associations, is the paradigmatic form of the process whereby agents tend, with that deep conviction of disinterestedness which is the basis of all missionary zeal, to satisfy their group interests by deploying the legitimate culture with which they have been endowed by the education system to win the acquiescence of the classes excluded from legitimate culture, in producing the need for and the rarity of their class culture.

From marriage counsellors to the vendors of slimming aids, all those who now make a profession of supplying the means of bridging the gap between 'is' and 'ought' in the realm of the body and its uses would be nothing without the unconscious collusion of all those who contribute to producing an inexhaustible market for the products they offer, who by imposing new uses of the body and a new bodily *hexis*—the *hexis* which the new bourgeoisie of the sauna bath, the gymnasium and the ski slope has discovered for itself—produce the corresponding needs, expectations and dissatisfactions. Doctors and diet experts armed with the authority of science, who impose their definition of *normality* with height-weight tables, balanced diets or models of sexual adequacy; couturiers who confer the sanction of good taste on the unattainable measurements of fashion models; advertisers for whom the new obligatory uses of the body provide scope for countless warnings and reminders ('Watch your weight!' 'Someone isn't using . . .'); journalists who exhibit and glorify their own life-style in women's weeklies and magazines for well-heeled executives—all combine, in the competition between them, to advance a cause which they can serve so well only because they are not always aware of serving it or even of serving themselves in the process.

And the emergence of this new petite bourgeoisie, which employs new means of manipulation to perform its role as an intermediary between the classes and which by its very existence brings about a transformation

of the position and dispositions of the old petite bourgeoisie, can itself be understood only in terms of changes in the mode of domination, which, substituting seduction for repression, public relations for policing, advertising for authority, the velvet glove for the iron fist, pursues the symbolic integration of the dominated classes by imposing needs rather than inculcating norms.

CHANGES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM Clearly it would be naive to see a merely *mechanical* process of inflation and devaluation at work. The massive increase in the school population has caused a whole set of transformations, both inside and outside the educational system, modifying its organizations and operation partly through morphological transformations at all its levels but also through defensive manoeuvres by its traditional users, such as the multiplication of subtly ranked paths through it and skilfully disguised 'dumping grounds' which help to blur perception of its hierarchies. For the sake of clarity, one may contrast two states of the secondary school system. In the older state, the organization of the institution, the pathways it offered, the courses it taught and the qualifications it awarded were all based on sharp divisions, clear-cut boundaries; the primary/secondary division produced systematic differences in all dimensions of the culture taught, the teaching methods used and the careers promised. (It is significant that the division has been maintained or even strengthened at the points where access to the dominant class is now decided—that is, at the point of streaming for the baccalauréat, and in higher education, with the division between the grandes écoles and the rest.) In the present state of the system, the exclusion of the great mass of working-class and middle-class children takes place not at the end of primary schooling but steadily and impalpably, all through the early years of secondary schooling, through hidden forms of elimination such as repeated years (equivalent to a deferred elimination); relegation into second-class courses, entailing a stigma that tends to induce proleptic recognition of scholastic and social destiny; and finally, the awarding of devalued certificates. (It is remarkable that just when the division into two streams—strictly speaking, there were always three, with 'higher primary' education and the whole set of internal training courses and competitions offered by all the major government departments—was tending to disappear and to be reconstituted at another level, Christian Baudelot and Roger Establet discovered this dichotomy, which no one would have thought of denying since it was the clearest manifestation of the scholastic mechanisms of reproduction.)²⁹

Whereas the old system with its strongly marked boundaries led to the internalizing of scholastic divisions clearly corresponding to social divisions, the new system with its fuzzy classifications and blurred edges encourages and entertains (at least among the new 'intermediaries' in social space) aspirations that are themselves blurred and fuzzy. Aspiration levels are now adjusted to scholastic hurdles and standards in a less strict and

also a less harsh manner than under the old system, which was characterized by the remorseless rigour of the national competitive examination. It is true that the new system fobs off a good number of its users with devalued qualifications, playing on the faulty perceptions that are encouraged by the anarchic profusion of courses and diplomas which are difficult to compare and yet subtly ranked in prestige. However, it does not force them into such abrupt disinvestment as the old system: the blurring of hierarchies and boundaries between the elected and the rejected, between true and false qualifications, plays a part in 'cooling out' and in calm acquiescence in being cooled out. The new system favours the development of a less realistic, less resigned relationship to the future than the old sense of proper limits, which was the basis of an acute sense of hierarchy. The *allodoxia* which the new system encourages in innumerable ways is the reason why relegated agents collaborate in their own relegation by overestimating the studies on which they embark, overvaluing their qualifications, and banking on possible futures which do not really exist for them; but it is also the reason why they do not truly accept the objective reality of their position and qualifications. And the reason for the attractiveness of the new or renewable positions lies in the fact that, being vague and ill-defined, uncertainly located in social space, often offering (like the occupations of 'artist' or 'intellectual' in the past) none of the material or symbolic criteria—promotion, benefits, increments—whereby social time, and also social hierarchies, are experienced and measured, they leave aspirations considerable room for manoeuvre.

They thus make it possible to avoid the sudden, final disinvestment imposed by occupations that are clearly delimited and defined from recruitment to retirement. The indeterminate future which they offer, a privilege hitherto reserved for artists and intellectuals, makes it possible to treat the present as a sort of endlessly renewed provisional status and to regard one's 'station' as an accidental detour, like the painter who works in advertising but continues to consider himself a 'true' artist and insists that this mercenary trade is only a temporary expedient that will be abandoned as soon as he has put by enough money to be independent.³⁰ These ambiguous occupations exempt their practitioners from the work of disinvestment and reinvestment that is implied, for example, in switching from a 'vocation' as a philosopher to a 'vocation' as a philosophy teacher, or from artist to publicity designer or art teacher—or at least allow them to defer their transfer indefinitely. It is not surprising that such people should be drawn to schemes of 'continuing education' (*éducation permanente*), a perpetual studenthood which offers an open, unlimited future and contrasts diametrically with the system of national competitions designed to demonstrate, once and for all, and as early as possible, that what is done cannot be undone.³¹

Again, it is understandable that, like artists, they should so readily embrace the aesthetic and ethical modes and models of youth: it is a way of showing to oneself and others that one is not finite, finished, defined. In

place of abrupt, all-or-nothing breaks, between study and work, between work and retirement, there is an impalpable, infinitesimal slippage (consider all the temporary or semi-permanent occupations, often taken by students approaching the end of their course, which cluster around the established positions in scientific research or higher education or, at another level, consider the phased retirement now offered by the most 'advanced' firms). Everything takes place as if the new logic of the educational system and economic system encouraged people to defer for as long as possible the moment of ultimate crystallization toward which all the infinitesimal changes point, in other words, the final balance-sheet which sometimes takes the form of a 'personal crisis'.

It goes without saying that the adjustment between objective chances and subjective aspirations that is thereby established is both more subtle and more subtly extorted, but also more risky and unstable. Maintaining vagueness in the images of the present and future of one's position is a way of accepting limits, but it is also a way to avoid acknowledging them, or to put it another way, a way of refusing them. But it is a refusal in bad faith, the product of an ambiguous cult of revolution which springs from resentment at the disappointment of unrealistic expectations. Whereas the old system tended to produce clearly demarcated social identities which left little room for social fantasy but were comfortable and reassuring even in the unconditional renunciation which they demanded, the new system of structural instability in the representation of social identity and its legitimate aspirations tends to shift agents from the terrain of social crisis and critique to the terrain of personal critique and crisis.

COMPETITIVE STRUGGLES AND DISPLACEMENT OF THE STRUCTURE It can be seen how naive it is to claim to settle the question of 'social change' by locating 'newness' or 'innovation' in a particular *site* in social space. For some, this site is at the top; for others, at the bottom; and it is always elsewhere, in all the 'new', 'marginal', 'excluded' or 'dropped-out' groups, for all those sociologists whose chief concern is to bring 'newness' into the discussion at all costs. But to characterize a class as 'conservative' or 'innovating' (without even specifying in what respect it is so), by tacit recourse to an ethical standard which is necessarily situated socially, produces a discourse which states little more than the site it comes from, because it sweeps aside what is essential, namely, the field of struggles, the system of objective relations within which positions and postures are defined relationally and which governs even those struggles aimed at transforming it. Only by reference to the space in the game which defines them and which they seek to maintain or redefine, can one understand the strategies, individual or collective, spontaneous or organized, which are aimed at conserving, transforming or transforming so as to conserve.

Reconversion strategies are nothing other than an aspect of the permanent actions and reactions whereby each group strives to maintain or change its position in the social structure, or, more precisely—at a stage in the evolution of class societies in which one can conserve only by changing—to change so as to conserve. Frequently the actions whereby each class (or class fraction) works to win new advantages, i.e., to gain an advantage over the other classes and so, objectively, to reshape the structure of objective relations between the classes (the relations revealed by the statistical distributions of properties), are compensated for (and so cancelled out ordinally) by the reactions of the other classes, directed toward the same objective. In this particular (though very common) case, the outcome of these opposing actions, which cancel each other out by the very countermovements which they generate, is an overall displacement of the structure of the distribution, between the classes or class fractions, of the assets at stake in the competition (as has happened in the case of the chances of university entrance—see table 15 and figure 7).

Table 15 shows the relationship between morphological change in the different classes and class fractions and the extent to which the members of these classes and class fractions make use of the educational system. The volume of the groups whose social reproduction was based, at the beginning of the period, on economic inheritance tends to decline or remain stationary, while, over the same period, their children—who will, to a large extent, join the wage-earning categories at the same level of the social hierarchy—make increasing use of the educational system. Those class fractions which are expanding, which are mainly rich in cultural capital and which used the educational system as their main means of reproduction (junior and senior executives, clerical workers) tend to increase their children's schooling in much the same proportion as the self-employed categories occupying an equivalent position in the class structure. The reversal of the relative positions of the commercial employers and clerical workers, and also of the farm workers and industrial manual workers, is explained both by the intensified schooling that is forced on the numerically declining categories (commercial employers, farm workers) and by the rise in the overall statistical characteristics of these categories (seen, for example, in their educational qualifications), resulting from change in their internal structure—towards less dispersion—and, more precisely, from the fact that their lower strata have been particularly hard hit and have disappeared or reconverted.

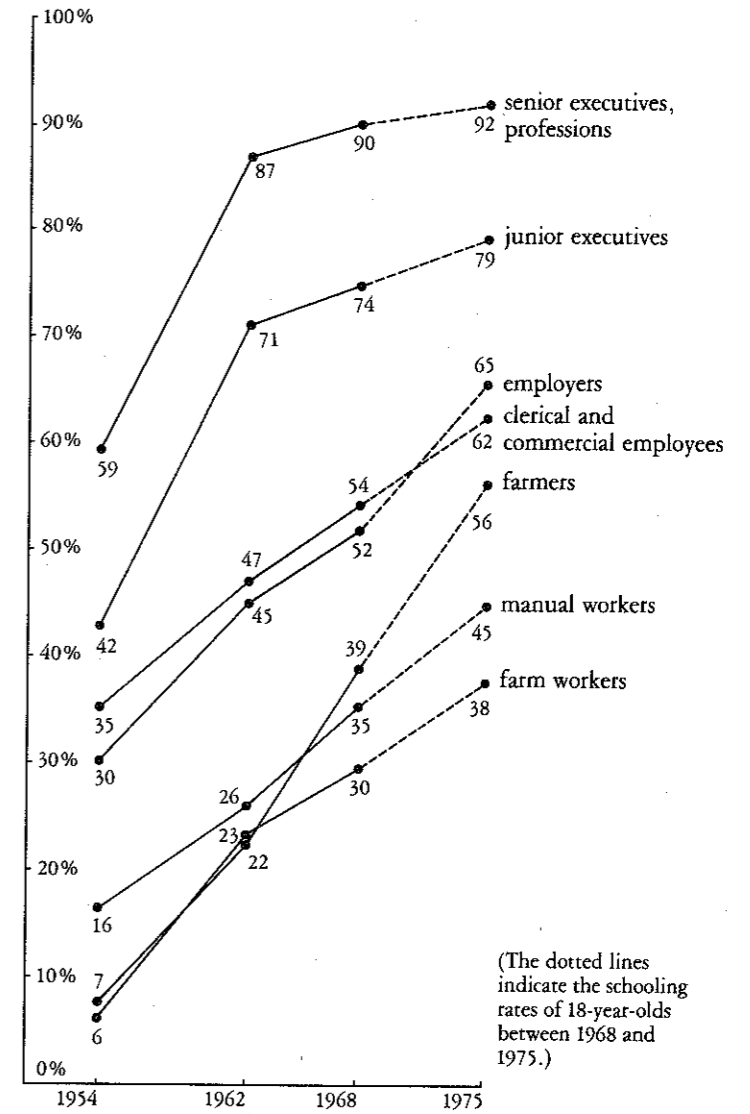
The schooling rates shown in the graph are probably overestimates, since the statistics only take account of young people living at home, more especially, no doubt, at lower levels of the social hierarchy. The slight narrowing of the range which is apparent in the most recent period is due partly to a saturation effect in the highest categories and partly to the fact that the statistics ignore the distribution of adolescents from different classes between academic courses that are themselves strongly ranked. Between 1968 and 1977, the proportion of industrial workers' children (who made up to 40.7 percent of the 17-year-old age groups in 1977) in the fifth grade of

Table 15 Changes in class morphology and use of educational system, 1954-1968.

Class fraction	Index of morphological change (1954=100)	% of men holding BEPC and above		Chances of access to higher education (%)			% of 16-18-year-olds receiving education						
				1961-1962		1965-1966		1954		1962		1968	
		1962	1968	1961-1962	1966	1961-1962	1966	1954	1962	1954	1962	1968	
Farm workers	53.7	0.8	1.6	0.7	2.7	0.7	2.7	8.0	23.3	8.0	23.3	29.7	
Farmers	65.2	1.6	2.7	3.6	8.0	3.6	8.0	7.5	22.5	7.5	22.5	38.8	
Manual workers	122.8	2.0	2.9	1.4	3.4	1.4	3.4	16.3	26.1	16.3	26.1	35.4	
Industrial and commercial employers	89.0	8.5	11.3	16.4	23.2	16.4	23.2	30.0	45.0	30.0	45.0	51.7	
Clerical and commercial	120.4	14.7	19.2	9.5	16.2	9.5	16.2	34.9	47.0	34.9	47.0	54.3	
Junior executives	168.3	39.9	43.3	29.6	35.4	29.6	35.4	42.6	71.0	42.6	71.0	74.6	
Senior executives, professions	167.8	69.5	73.4	48.5	58.7	48.5	58.7	59.3	87.0	59.3	87.0	90.0	

Sources: INSEE, *Censuses 1954, 1962, 1968*; INSEE, *Données sociales*, 1973, p. 105; P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron, *The Inheritors* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 4; Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction* (London and Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1977), p. 225.

Figure 7 Displacement of schooling rates of 16- to 18-year-olds, 1954-1975.



Sources: INSEE, *Censuses 1954, 1962, 1968, 1975*; INSEE, *Données sociales*, 1973, p. 105; P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron, *The Inheritors* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 4; Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction* (London and Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1977), p. 225.

state secondary schooling remained constant (25.7 percent and 25.9 percent respectively), whereas the proportion of senior executives' and professionals' children rose from 15.4 percent to 16.8 percent. Moreover, in 1977, in this grade, 57.6 percent of the senior executives' and professionals' children were in section C (scientific), compared to 20.6 percent of the farm workers' children and 23.5 percent of the industrial workers' children. Conversely, only 9.8 percent of the senior executives' and professionals' children were in a 'technical' section, as against 24.6 percent of the farm workers' children and 28.7 percent of the industrial workers' children. Similar tendencies are found in higher education, where students of working-class origin are increasingly relegated to the arts and science faculties or to short technical courses, whereas the upper-class students tend to be in the grandes écoles, the medical faculties or, if academically less successful, in the minor business schools.

In the case of the social sciences, scientific discourse cannot ignore the conditions of its own reception. This depends at all times on the state of the prevailing social problematic, which is itself at least partly defined by the reactions to an earlier form of that discourse. Those who oversimplify the arguments of my earlier works, *The Inheritors* and *Reproduction*—which subsequent research has shown to err on the side of simplification—share with those who criticize them without understanding them a taste for simple truths and an inability to think relationally. Ideological stubbornness is not a sufficient explanation for naiveties such as that of referring to a 'rise in middle-class recruitment' to universities between 1950 and 1960 and concluding that the bourgeois university had been transformed into one 'dominated by the middle classes'.³² One only has to look at the position of the faculties—especially those of arts and science—in the hierarchy of higher-education institutions by social origin of their students to know what to think of such a statistical analysis (highly praised by Alain Peyrefitte, who regrets that it has not had the success it deserves, thereby giving further proof of his great knowledge of university matters).³³ These faculties, which are situated at the lowest point of a field naturally dominated by the grandes écoles—and now even lower, to judge from the economic and social value of their diplomas, than the least prestigious and most recent of the business schools that have proliferated in recent years—have all the characteristics of dumping grounds, not least their level of 'democratization' (and feminization). It is as if the 'democratization' of secondary education were to be measured in a technical high school in an industrial suburb. Nor could anyone speak of a 'middle-class-dominated' university unless he had, consciously or unconsciously, confused the level of representation of the middle classes in the faculty-student population with the chances of faculty entrance for the middle classes—in other words, confused change in the social composition of the faculties with change in the structure of probabilities of schooling, a structure which has been shifted upwards without real transformation.

A similar process of homothetic development seems to take place whenever the strengths and efforts of the groups competing for a given type of asset or entitlement tend to balance one another out, as in a race in which, after a series of bursts in which various runners forge ahead or

catch up, the initial gaps are maintained; in other words, whenever the attempts of the initially most disadvantaged groups to come into possession of the assets previously possessed by groups immediately above them in the social hierarchy or immediately ahead of them in the race are more or less counterbalanced, at all levels, by the efforts of better-placed groups to maintain the scarcity and distinctiveness of their assets. One thinks of the struggle which the sale of letters of nobility provoked among the English aristocracy in the second half of the sixteenth century, triggering a self-sustaining process of inflation and devaluation of these titles. The lowest titles, such as esquire or arms, were the first to be affected, followed by the rank of knight, which was devalued so fast that the oldest holders had to press for the creation of a new title, that of baronet. But this new title, which filled the gap between knight and peer of the realm, was seen as a threat by the holders of the higher rank, whose value depended on maintaining a certain distance.³⁴ Thus the newcomers conspire to ruin the existing holders by acquiring the titles which made them rare; the surest way to devalue a title of nobility is to purchase it as a commoner. The existing holders, for their part, objectively devalue the newcomers either by abandoning their titles to them in order to pursue rarer ones, or by introducing differences among the title-holders linked to seniority in accession to the title (such as the manner of possessing it). It follows that all the groups involved in the race, whatever rank they occupy, cannot conserve their position, their rarity, their rank except by running to keep their distance from those immediately behind them, thus jeopardizing the difference which distinguishes the group immediately in front; or, to put it another way, by aspiring to possess that which the group just ahead already have, and which they themselves will have, but later.

The holders of the rarest titles can also protect themselves from competition by setting up a numerus clausus. Such measures generally become necessary whenever the statistical mechanisms 'normally' protecting the group are found to be inadequate. The *laissez-faire* which is maintained so long as it discreetly protects the interests of the privileged group is replaced by a conscious protectionism, which calls on institutions to do openly what seemingly neutral mechanisms did invisibly. To protect themselves against excessive numbers, the holders of rare titles and rare jobs must defend a definition of the job which is nothing other than the definition of those who occupy the position at a given state of the relationship between titles and jobs. Declaring that the doctor, the architect or the professor of the future must be what they are today, i.e., what they themselves are, they write into the definition of the post, for all eternity, all the properties it derives from its small number of occupants (such as the secondary properties associated with severe selection, including high social origin), that is, the limits placed on competition and on the changes it would bring.

In place of statistical boundaries, which leave groups surrounded by

the 'hybrid' zone of which Plato speaks apropos of the boundary of being and non-being, and which challenge the discriminatory power of social taxonomies (Young or old? Urban or rural? Rich or poor? 'Middle-class' or 'lower-middle?'), the numerus clausus, in the extreme form it receives from discriminatory law, sets sharp, arithmetical limits. In place of principles of selection, of inclusion and exclusion, based on a number of fairly closely interrelated and normally implicit criteria, it sets up an institutionalized and therefore conscious and organized process of segregation and discrimination, based on a single criterion (no women, or no Jews, or no blacks) which leaves no room for misclassification. In fact, the most select groups prefer to avoid the brutality of discriminatory measures and to combine the charms of the apparent absence of criteria, which allows the members the illusion of election on grounds of personal uniqueness, with the certainties of selection, which ensures maximum group homogeneity.

Smart clubs preserve their homogeneity by subjecting aspirants to very strict procedures—an act of candidature, a recommendation, sometimes presentation (in the literal sense) by sponsors who have themselves been members for a certain number of years, election by the membership or by a special committee, payment of sometimes very high initial subscriptions (5,000 francs per person at the Cercle du Bois de Boulogne in 1973, 9,500 francs at the Saint-Cloud Golf Club in 1975), plus the annual subscription (2,050 francs at Saint Cloud) and so on. In fact, it would be pointless to seek to discover whether the formal rules, which aim above all to protect the group against outsiders (not so much other classes, which are excluded from the start, as other fractions of the same class, or even parvenu members of the same fraction) and which generally prove superfluous, are intended to disguise the arbitrariness of election, or whether, on the contrary, the conspicuous arbitrariness which makes election a matter of indefinable flair is intended to disguise the official rules. 'We take you if we like the look of you (*C'est à la tête du client*),' said one club chairman; and another: 'There are clubs where you need two sponsors and they accept almost anyone; there are others with two sponsors where they're very choosy.' Besides, everything depends on the quality of the sponsors: 'Normally you have to wait two or three years; with good sponsors, you don't wait at all' (a member of the management committee, Cercle du Bois de Boulogne). Similarly, although membership is not officially hereditary, a young woman who applies to join the Cercle du Bois de Boulogne will be asked if her father or elder brother is a member. All the evidence suggests that although a number of them are officially organized around some rare, selective activity, which is often a mere pretext (golf, polo, hunting, riding, pigeon-shooting, sailing etc.), smart clubs (*les clubs chics*) are opposed to specialized clubs, whose members are defined by possession of a common property (for example, a yacht in the case of the Cercle de la Voile de Paris), in that they take account of the whole social person; and the more prestigious they are, and the more concerned they are to achieve a total harmony of interests and

values (for example, the Jockey Club, the Cercle du Bois de Boulogne or Le Nouveau Cercle), the more this is the case.

Because the social reality of the criteria of selection can only come from outside, that is, from an objectification of what is refused in advance as reductive and vulgar, the group is able to persuade itself that its own assembly is based on no other principle than an indefinable sense of propriety which only membership can procure. The miracle of mutual election achieves perfection with groups of intellectuals, who are not so naive as to concede the minimal objectification required to form a club. Because they place their trust in the quasi-mystical sense of participation which does indeed define the participants, the excluded outsiders (who cannot even prove the existence of the exclusive group except involuntarily, through their denunciations of it), end up tilting against windmills when they attempt to point out the invisible barriers which separate them from the elect. Intellectual groups, particularly the most prestigious ones, are extraordinarily immune to objectification. This is not only because one has to belong in order to have a practical mastery of the mechanisms of membership; it is also because one cannot objectify the intellectual game without putting at stake one's own stake in the game—a risk which is at once derisory and absolute.

The dialectic of downclassing and upclassing which underlies a whole set of social processes presupposes and entails that all the groups concerned run in the same direction, toward the same objectives, the same properties, those which are designated by the leading group and which, by definition, are unavailable to the groups following, since, whatever these properties may be intrinsically, they are modified and qualified by their distinctive rarity and will no longer be what they are once they are multiplied and made available to groups lower down. Thus, by an apparent paradox, the maintenance of order, that is, of the whole set of gaps, differences, 'differentials', ranks, precedences, priorities, exclusions, distinctions, ordinal properties, and thus of the relations of order which give a social formation its structure, is provided by an unceasing change in substantial (i.e., non-relational) properties. This implies that the social order established at any given moment is also necessarily a temporal order, an 'order of successions', as Leibniz put it, each group having as its past the group immediately below and for its future the group immediately above (one sees the attraction of evolutionist models). The competing groups are separated by differences which are essentially located in the order of time.

It is no accident that *credit* is so important in this system. The imposition of legitimacy which occurs through the competitive struggle and is enhanced by the gentle violence of cultural missionary work tends to produce pretension, in the sense of a need which pre-exists the means of adequately satisfying. And in a social order which acknowledges that even the most deprived have the right to every satisfaction, but only in the long run, the only alternatives are credit, which allows immediate enjoy-

ment of the promised goods but implies acceptance of a future which is merely the continuation of the past, or the 'imitation'—mock luxury cars, mock luxury holidays and so on.

But the dialectic of downclassing and upclassing is predisposed to function also as an ideological mechanism, whose effects conservative discourse strives to intensify. Especially when they compare their present conditions with their past, the dominated groups are exposed to the illusion that they have only to wait in order to receive advantages which, in reality, they will obtain only by struggle. By situating the difference between the classes in the order of successions, the competitive struggle establishes a difference which, like that which separates predecessor from successor in a social order governed by well-defined rules of succession, is not only the most absolute and unbridgeable (since there is nothing to do but wait, sometimes a whole lifetime, like the petit bourgeois who acquire their own houses at the moment of retirement, sometimes several generations, like the petit bourgeois who extend their own foreshortened trajectories through their children) but also the most unreal and evanescent (since a person knows that if he can wait, he will in any case get what he is promised by the ineluctable laws of evolution). In short, what the competitive struggle makes everlasting is not different conditions, but the difference between conditions.

Collective and individual delay has social consequences which further complicate this process. Relatively late arrival not only reduces the duration of enjoyment; it also implies a less familiar, less 'easy' relationship to the activity or asset in question, which may have technical consequences—e.g., in the use of a car—or symbolic ones—in the case of cultural goods. It may also represent the disguised equivalent of pure and simple privation when the value of the asset or activity lies in its distinguishing power (which is clearly linked to exclusive or priority access) rather than in the intrinsic satisfactions it gives. The vendors of goods and services, who have an interest in these effects of allodoxia, exploit these lags, offering, out-of-season (e.g., in the case of holidays), or when they are out of fashion (clothes, activities), things which have their full value only at the 'right' time.

Once this mechanism is understood, one perceives the futility of the abstract debates which arise from the opposition of permanence and change, structure and history, reproduction and the 'production of society'. The real basis of such debates is the refusal to acknowledge that social contradictions and struggles are not all, or always, in contradiction with the perpetuation of the established order; that, beyond the antitheses of 'thinking in pairs', permanence can be ensured by change and the structure perpetuated by movement; that the 'frustrated expectations' which are created by the time-lag between the imposition of legitimate needs ('musts', as the marketing men put it) and access to the means of

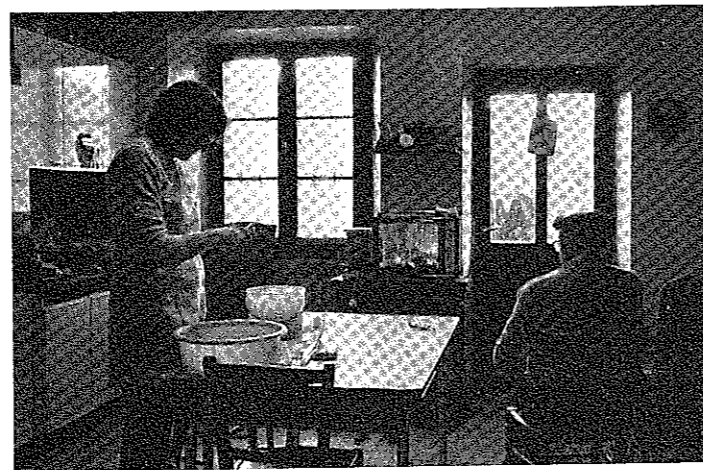
satisfying them, do not necessarily threaten the survival of the system; that the structural gap and the corresponding frustrations are the very source of the reproduction through displacement which perpetuates the structure of positions while transforming the 'nature' of conditions.

It also becomes clear that those who point to what might be called 'cardinal' properties and speak of the 'embourgeoisement' of the working class, and those who try to refute them by pointing to ordinal properties, are equally unaware that the contradictory aspects of reality which they isolate are in fact indissoluble dimensions of a single process. The reproduction of the social structure can take place in and through a competitive struggle leading to a simple displacement of the structure of distributions, so long and only so long as the members of the dominated classes enter the struggle in extended order, that is, through actions and reactions which are compounded only statistically, by the external effects which the actions of some exert on the actions of others, in the absence of any interaction or transaction, and consequently in conditions of objectivity, without collective or individual control and generally against the agents' individual and collective interests.

The limiting case of these processes of statistical action is panic or rout, in which each agent helps to produce what he fears by performing actions inspired by the feared effect (as in financial panics). In all these cases, the collective action, the mere statistical sum of uncoordinated individual actions, leads to a collective result irreducible or hostile to the collective interests and even to the particular interests pursued by the individual actions. This is seen clearly when the demoralization produced by a pessimistic picture of the future of a class contributes to the decline of that class; in a number of ways, the members of a declining class contribute to the collective decline, like the craftsmen who push their children through school while complaining that the educational system discourages young people from entering the trade.

Competitive struggle is the form of class struggle which the dominated classes allow to be imposed on them when they accept the stakes offered by the dominant classes. It is an integrative struggle and, by virtue of the initial handicaps, a reproductive struggle, since those who enter this chase, in which they are beaten before they start, as the constancy of the gaps testifies, implicitly recognize the legitimacy of the goals pursued by those whom they pursue, by the mere fact of taking part.

Having established the logic of the processes of competition (or rout) which condemn each agent to react in isolation to the effect of the countless reactions of other agents, or, more precisely, to the result of the statistical aggregation of their isolated actions, and which reduce the class to the state of a mass dominated by its own number, one can pose



the question, much debated at present among historians,³⁵ of the conditions (economic crisis, economic crisis following a period of expansion and so on) in which the dialectic of mutually self-reproducing objective chances and subjective aspirations may break down. Everything suggests that an abrupt slump in objective chances relative to subjective aspirations is likely to produce a break in the tacit acceptance which the dominated classes—now abruptly excluded from the race, objectively and subjectively—previously granted to the dominant goals, and so to make possible a genuine inversion of the table of values.

3 | *The Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles*

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

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