power over the vision of the world, and in which one has no choice, if one seeks to exercise it (rather than submit to it), other than to mystify or demystify.

11

Social Space and the Genesis of 'Classes'

The construction of a theory of the social space presupposes a series of breaks with Marxist theory. It presupposes a break with the tendency to emphasize substances – here, real groups whose number, limits, members, etc. one claims to be able to define – at the expense of relations and with the intellectualist illusion which leads one to consider the theoretical class, constructed by the social scientist, as a real class, an effectively mobilized group; a break with economics, which leads one to reduce the social field, a multi-dimensional space, to the economic field alone, to the relations of economic production, which are thus established as the co-ordinates of social position; and a break, finally, with objectivism, which goes hand in hand with intellectualism, and which leads one to overlook the symbolic struggles that take place in different fields, and where what is at stake is the very representation of the social world, and in particular the hierarchy within each of the fields and between the different fields.

The Social Space

To begin with, sociology presents itself as a social topology. Accordingly, the social world can be represented in the form of a (multi-dimensional) space constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active in the social universe under consideration, that is, able to confer force or power on their possessor in that universe. Agents and
groups of agents are thus defined by their relative positions in this space. Each of them is confined to a position or a precise class of neighbouring positions (i.e. to a given region of this space), and one cannot in fact occupy — even if one can do so in thought — two opposite regions of the space. In so far as the properties chosen to construct this space are active properties, the space can also be described as a field of forces; in other words, as a set of objective power relations imposed on all those who enter this field, relations which are not reducible to the intentions of individual agents or even to direct interactions between agents.

The active properties that are chosen as principles of construction of the social space are the different kinds of power or capital that are current in the different fields. Capital, which can exist in objectified form — in the form of material properties — or, in the case of cultural capital, in an incorporated form, one which can be legally guaranteed, represents power over a field (at a given moment) and, more precisely, over the accumulated product of past labour (and in particular over the set of instruments of production) and thereby over the mechanisms which tend to ensure the production of a particular category of goods and thus over a set of revenues and profits. The kinds of capital, like trumps in a game of cards, are powers which define the chances of profit in a given field (in fact, to every field or sub-field there corresponds a particular kind of capital, which is current, as a power or stake, in that field). For example, the volume of cultural capital (the same would be true, mutatis mutandis, of economic capital) determines the aggregate chances of profit in all games in which cultural capital is effective, thereby helping to determine position in the social space (in so far as this position is determined by success in the cultural field).

The position of a given agent in the social space can thus be defined by the position he occupies in the different fields, that is, in the distribution of the powers that are active in each of them. These are, principally, economic capital (in its different kinds), cultural capital and social capital, as well as symbolic capital, commonly called prestige, reputation, fame, etc., which is the form assumed by these different kinds of capital when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate. One can thus construct a simplified model of the social field as a whole, a model which allows one to plot each agent's position in all possible spaces of the game (it being understood that, while each field has its own logic and its own hierarchy, the hierarchy which is established between the kinds of capital and the statistical relation between different assets mean that the economic field tends to impose its structure on other fields).

The social field can be described as a multi-dimensional space of positions such that each actual position can be defined in terms of a multi-dimensional system of co-ordinates whose values correspond to the values of the different pertinent variables. Agents are thus distributed, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of the capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the composition of their capital — in other words, according to the relative weight of the different kinds of capital in the total set of their assets.

The form assumed, at each moment, in each social field, by the set of the distributions of the different kinds of capital (whether incorporated or materialized), as instruments for the appropriation of the objectified product of accumulated social labour, defines the state of the relations of power, institutionalized in durable social statuses that are socially recognized or legally guaranteed, between agents who are objectively defined by their position within these relations; this form determines the actual or potential powers in different fields and the chances of access to the specific profits they procure.

Knowledge of the position occupied in this space contains information on the intrinsic properties (i.e. condition) and the relational properties (i.e. position) of agents. This is particularly clear in the case of those who occupy intermediate or middle positions — those which, apart from the middle or median values of their properties, owe a certain number of their most typical characteristics to the fact that they are situated between the two poles of the field, in the neutral point of the space, and are balanced between the two extreme positions.

**Classes on Paper**

On the basis of knowledge of the space of positions, one can carve out classes in the logical sense of the word, i.e. sets of agents who occupy similar positions and who, being placed in similar conditions and submitted to similar types of conditioning, have every chance of having similar dispositions and interests, and thus of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances. This 'class on paper' has the theoretical existence which belongs to all theories: as the product of an explanatory classification, one which is altogether similar to that of zoologists or botanists, it allows one to explain and predict the practices and properties of the things classified — including their propensity to constitute groups. It is not really a class, an actual class, in the sense of being a group, a group mobilized for struggle; at most one could say that it is a probable class, in so far as
it is a set of agents which will place fewer objective obstacles in the way of efforts of mobilization than any other set of agents.

Thus, contrary to the nominalist relativism which cancels out social differences by reducing them to pure theoretical artefacts, we have to affirm the existence of an objective space determining compatibilities and incompatibilities, proximities and distances. Contrary to the realism of the intelligible (or the reification of concepts), we have to affirm that the classes which can be carved out of the social space (for instance, for the purposes of statistical analysis, which is the sole means of demonstrating the structure of the social space) do not exist as real groups, although they explain the probability of individuals constituting themselves as practical groups, families (homogamy), clubs, associations and even trade-union or political ‘movements’.

What exists is a space of relations which is just as real as a geographical space, in which movements have to be paid for by labour, by effort and especially by time (to move upwards is to raise oneself, to climb and to bear the traces or the stigmata of that effort). Distances can also be measures in time (the time of ascent or of the reconversion of capital, for example). And the probability of mobilization into organized movements, endowed with an apparatus and a spokesperson, etc. (the very thing which leads us to talk of a ‘class’), will be inversely proportional to distance in this space. While the probability of bringing together, really or nominally, a set of agents – by virtue of the delegate – is greater when they are closer together in the social space and belong to a more restricted and thus more homogeneous constructed class, nevertheless the alliance of the closest agents is never necessary or inevitable (because the effects of immediate competition may get in the way), and the alliance of the agents that are most separated from one another is never impossible. Although there is more chance of mobilizing in the same real group the set of workers than the set of bosses and workers, it is possible, in the context, for example, of an international crisis, to provoke a grouping on the basis of links of national identity. (This is in part because, due to its specific history, each of the national social spaces has its own structure – for instance, as regards hierarchical divergences in the economic field.)

Like ‘being’ according to Aristotle, the social world can be uttered and constructed in different ways: it can be practically perceived, uttered, constructed, in accordance with different principles of vision and division (for instance, ethnic divisions), it being understood that groupings founded in the struggle of the space constructed on the basis of the distribution of capital have a greater chance of being stable and durable and that other forms of grouping will always be threatened by splits and oppositions linked to distances in the social space. To speak of a social space means that one cannot group together just anyone with anyone else while ignoring the fundamental differences, particularly economic and cultural differences, between them. But this never completely excludes a possible organization of agents in accordance with other principles of division – ethnic, national, etc. – though it should be remembered that these are generally linked to the fundamental principles, since ethnic groups are themselves at least roughly hierarchized in the social space, for instance, in the USA (by the criterion of how long it has been since one’s family first immigrated – blacks excepted).4

This marks a first break with the Marxist tradition: this tradition either identifies, without further ado, the constructed class with the real class (i.e., as Marx himself reproached Hegel with doing, it confuses the things of logic with the logic of things); or else, when the tradition does draw the distinction, opposing the ‘class-in-itself’, defined on the basis of a set of objective conditions, to the ‘class-for-itself’, based on subjective factors, it describes the movement from the one to the other, a movement which is always celebrated as a real ontological advance, in accordance with a logic which is either totally determinist or on the contrary fully voluntarist. In the former case, the transition appears as a logical, mechanical or organic necessity (the transformation of the proletariat from a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself being presented as an inevitable effect of time, of the ‘maturing of the objective conditions’); in the latter case, it is presented as the effect of an ‘awakening of consciousness’, conceived as a ‘taking cognizance’ of the theory which occurs under the enlightened leadership of the party. In both cases nothing is said about the mysterious alchemy by which a ‘group in struggle’, as a personalized collective, a historical agent setting its own aims, arises from the objective economic conditions.

By a sort of sleight of hand, the most essential questions are spirited away: first, the very question of the political, of the specific action of agents who, in the name of a theoretical definition of ‘class’, assign to the members of that class the aims which officially conform most closely to their ‘objective’ (i.e. theoretical) interests, and of the labour through which they succeed in producing, if not the mobilized class, a belief in the existence of the class, which is the basis of the authority of its spokespersons; and second, the question of the relations between the supposedly objective classifications produced by the social scientist, similar in that respect to the
zoologist, and the classifications which agents themselves continually produce in their ordinary existence, and through which they seek to modify their position in the objective classifications or to modify the very principles in accordance with which these classifications are produced.

**The Perception of the Social World and Political Struggle**

The most resolutely objectivist theory must take account of agents' representation of the social world and, more precisely, of the contribution they make to the construction of the vision of this world, and, thereby to the very construction of this world, via the labour of representation (in all senses of the term) that they continually perform in order to impose their own vision of the world or the vision of their own position in this world, that is, their social identity. The perception of the social world is the product of a double social structuring. On the 'objective' side, this perception is socially structured because the properties attached to agents or institutions do not make themselves available to perception independently, but in combinations whose probability varies widely (and just as feathered animals have a greater chance of having wings than furry animals, so the possessors of a substantial cultural capital are more likely to be museum visitors than those who lack such capital); on the 'subjective' side, it is structured because the schemes of perception and evaluation susceptible of being brought into operation at a given moment, including all those which are laid down in language, are the product of previous symbolic struggles and express, in a more or less transformed form, the state of symbolic relations of power. The fact remains, none the less, that the objects of the social world can be perceived and expressed in different ways because, like the objects of the natural world, they always include a certain indeterminacy and vagueness — because, for example, the most constant combinations of properties are never founded on anything other than statistical connections between interchangeable features; and also because, as historical objects, they are subject to variations in time and their meaning, in so far as it depends on the future, is itself in suspense, in a pending and deferred state, and is thus relatively indeterminate. This element of risk, of uncertainty, is what provides a basis for the plurality of worldviews, a plurality which is itself linked to the plurality of points of view, and to all the symbolic struggles for the production and imposition of the legitimate vision of the world and, more precisely, to all the cognitive strategies of fulfillment which produce the meaning of the objects of the social world by going beyond the directly visible attributes by reference to the future or the past. This reference may be implicit and tacit, through what Husserl calls protension and retention, practical forms of prospection or retrospection excluding the positioning of past and future as such; or it may be explicit, as in political struggles in which the past, with the retrospective reconstruction of a past adjusted to the needs of the present ('La Fayette, here we are!') and especially the future, with the creative foresight associated with it, are continually invoked, in order to determine, delimit, and define the ever-open meaning of the present.

To point out that perception of the social world implies an act of construction is not in the least to accept an intellectualist theory of knowledge: the essential part of one's experience of the social world and of the labour of construction it implies takes place in practice, without reaching the level of explicit representation and verbal expression. Closer to a class unconsious than to a 'class consciousness' in the Marxist sense, the sense of the position one occupies in the social space (what Goffman calls the 'sense of one's place') is the practical mastery of the social structure as a whole which reveals itself through the sense of the position occupied in that structure. The categories of perception of the social world are essentially the product of the incorporation of the objective structures of the social space. Consequently, they incline agents to accept the social world as it is, to take it for granted, rather than to rebel against it, to put forward opposition and even antagonistic possibilities. The sense of one's place, as the sense of what one can or cannot 'allow oneself', implies a tacit acceptance of one's position, a sense of limits ('that's not meant for us') or — what amounts to the same thing — a sense of distances, to be marked and maintained, respected, and expected of others. And this is doubtless all the more true when the conditions of existence are more rigorous and the reality principle is more rigorously imposed. (Hence the profound realism which most often characterizes the world view of the dominated and which, functioning as a sort of socially constituted instinct of conservation, can appear conservative only with reference to an external and thus normative representation of the 'objective interest' of those whom it helps to live or to survive.)

If the objective relations of power tend to reproduce themselves in visions of the social world which contribute to the permanence of
those relations, this is therefore because the structuring principles of the world view are rooted in the objective structures of the social world and because the relations of power are also present in people’s minds in the form of the categories of perception of those relations. But the degree of indeterminacy and vagueness characteristic of the objects of the social world is, together with the practical, pre-reflexive and implicit character of the patterns of perception and evaluation which are applied to them, the Archimedean point which is objectively made available to truly political action. Knowledge of the social world and, more precisely, the categories which make it possible, are the stakes par excellence of the political struggle, a struggle which is inseparably theoretical and practical, over the power of preserving or transforming the social world by preserving or transforming the categories of perception of that world.

The capacity for bringing into existence in an explicit state, of publishing, of making public (i.e. objectified, visible, sayable, and even official) that which, not yet having attained objective and collective existence, remained in a state of individual or serial existence – people’s disquiet, anxiety, expectation, worry – represents a formidable social power, that of bringing into existence groups by establishing the common sense, the explicit consensus, of the whole group. In fact, this labour of categorization, of making things explicit and classifying them, is continually being performed, at every moment of ordinary existence, in the struggles in which agents clash over the meaning of the social world and their position in it, the meaning of their social identity, through all the forms of speaking well or badly of someone or something, of blessing or cursing and of malicious gossip, egology, congratulations, praise, compliments or insults, rebukes, criticism, accusations, slanders, etc.

It is easy to understand why one of the elementary forms of political power should have consisted, in many archaic societies, in the almost magical power of naming and bringing into existence by virtue of naming. Thus in traditional Kabylian, the function of making things explicit and the labour of symbolic production that poets performed, particularly in crisis situations, when the meaning of the world is no longer clear, conferred on them major political functions, those of the war-lord or ambassador. 

But with the growing differentiation of the social world and the constitution of relatively autonomous fields, the labour of the production and imposition of meaning is performed in and through struggles in the field of cultural production (and especially in the political sub-field); it becomes the particular concern, the specific interest, of the professional producers of objectified representations of the social world, or, more precisely, of the methods of objectification.

If the legitimate mode of perception is such an important stake in different struggles, this is because on the one hand the movement from the implicit to the explicit is in no way automatic, the same experience of the social being recognizable in very different expressions, and on the other hand, the most marked objective differences may be hidden behind more immediately visible differences (such as, for example, those which separate ethnic groups). It is true that perceptual configurations, social Gestalten, exist objectively, and that the proximity of conditions and thus of dispositions tends to be re-translated into durable links and groupings, immediately perceptible social units such as socially distinct regions or districts (with spatial segregation), or sets of agents possessing altogether similar visible properties, such as Weber’s Stände. But the fact remains that socially known and recognized differences exist only for a subject capable not only of perceiving the differences, but of recognizing them as significant and interesting, i.e., exists only for a subject endowed with the aptitude and the inclination to establish the differences which are held to be significant in the social world under consideration.

In this way, the social world, particularly through properties and their distribution, attains, in the objective world itself, the status of a symbolic system which, like a system of phonemes, is organized in accordance with the logic of difference, of differential deviation, which is thus constituted as significant distinction. The social space, and the differences that ‘spontaneously’ emerge within it, tend to function symbolically as a space of life-styles or as a set of Stände, of groups characterized by different life-styles.

Distinction does not necessarily imply, as is often supposed, following Veblen and his theory of conspicuous consumption, a quest for distinction. All consumption and, more generally, all practice, is conspicuous, visible, whether or not it was performed in order to be seen; it is distinctive, whether or not it was inspired by the desire to get oneself noticed, to make oneself conspicuous, to distinguish oneself or to act with distinction. Hence, every practice is bound to function as a distinctive sign and, when the difference is recognized, legitimate and approved, as a sign of distinction (in all senses of the term). The fact remains that social agents, being capable of perceiving as significant distinctions the ‘spontaneous’ differences that their categories of perception lead them to consider as pertinent, are also capable of intentionally
underscoring these spontaneous differences in life-style by what Weber calls ‘the stylization of life’ (Stilsierung des Lebens). The pursuit of distinction – which may be expressed in ways of speaking or in a refusal to countenance marrying beneath one’s station – produces separations which are to be perceived or, more precisely, known and recognized as legitimate differences – most frequently as differences of nature (in French we speak of ‘natural distinction’).

Distinction – in the ordinary sense of the word – is the difference written into the very structure of the social space when it is perceived in accordance with the categories adapted to that structure; and the Weberian Stand, which people so often like to contrast with the Marxist class, is the class adequately constructed when it is perceived through the categories of perception derived from the structure of that space. (Symbolic capital) – another name for distinction – is nothing other than capital, of whatever kind, when it is perceived by an agent endowed with categories of perception arising from the incorporation of the structure of its distribution, i.e., when it is known and recognized as self-evident. Distinctions, as symbolic transformations of de facto differences, and, more generally, the ranks, orders, grades and all the other symbolic hierarchies, are the product of the application of schemes of construction which – as in the case, for instance, of the pairs of adjectives used to express most social judgements – are the product of the incorporation of the very structures to which they are applied; and recognition of the most absolute legitimacy is nothing other than an apprehension of the everyday social world as taken for granted, an apprehension which results from the almost perfect coincidence of objective structures and incorporated structures.

It follows, among other consequences, that symbolic capital is attracted to symbolic capital and that the – real – autonomy of the field of symbolic production does not prevent this field from remaining dominated, in its functioning, by the constraints which dominate the social field as a whole. It also follows that objective relations of power tend to reproduce themselves in symbolic relations of power, in visions of the social world which contribute to ensuring the permanence of those relations of power. In the struggle for the imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world, in which science itself is inevitably involved, agents wield a power which is proportional to their symbolic capital, that is, to the recognition they receive from a group. The authority which underlies the performative effectiveness of discourse about the social world, the symbolic force of visions and pre-visions aimed at imposing the principles of vision and division of this world, is a percipi, a being known and recognized (nobilis), which allows a percipere to be imposed. It is the most visible agents, from the point of view of the prevailing categories of perception, who are the best placed to change the vision by changing the categories of perception. But they are also, with a few exceptions, the least inclined to do so.

**The Symbolic Order and the Power of Naming**

In the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for the monopoly of legitimate naming as the official – i.e. explicit and public – imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world, agents bring into play the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles, in particular all the power that they possess over the instituted taxonomies, those inscribed in people’s minds or in the objective world, such as qualifications. Thus all the symbolic strategies through which agents aim to impose their vision of the divisions of the social world and of their position in that world can be located between two extremes: (the insult) that idios logos through which an ordinary individual attempts to impose his point of view by taking the risk that a reciprocal insult may ensue, and the official naming, a symbolic act of imposition which has on its side all the strength of the collective, of the consensus, of common sense, because it is performed by a delegated agent of the state, that is, the holder of the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence. On the one hand, there is the world of particular perspectives, of individual agents who, on the basis of their particular point of view, their particular position, produce namings – of themselves and others – that are particular and self-interested (nicknames, insults, or even accusations, indictments, slanders, etc.), and all the more powerless to gain recognition, and thus to exert a truly symbolic effect, the less their authors are authorized, either personally (auctoritas) or institutionally (by delegation), and the more directly they are concerned to gain recognition for the point of view that they are seeking to impose. On the other hand, there is the authorized point of view of an agent who is personally authorized, such as a great critic or prestigious preface-writer or established author (Zola’s ‘I accuse’), and above all the legitimate point of view of the authorized spokesperson, the delegate of the state, the official naming, or the title or qualification which, like an educational
qualification, is valid on all markets and which, as an official definition of one's official identity, saves its bearers from the symbolic struggle all against all. By establishing the authorized perspective, the one recognized by all and thus universal, from which social agents are viewed. The state, which produces official classifications, is to some extent the supreme tribunal to which Kafka was referring when he made Bloch say, speaking of the advocate and his claim to be among the 'great advocates': 'any man can call himself 'great', of course, if he pleases, but in this matter the Court tradition must decide.' The truth is that scientific analysis does not have to choose between perspectivism and what has to be called absolutism: indeed, the truth of the social world is the stake in a struggle between agents who are very unequally equipped to attain absolute, that is, self-verifying, vision and pre-vision.

One could analyze from this point of view the functioning of an institution such as the French national statistics office, INSEE, a state institute which, by producing the official taxonomies that are invested with a quasi-legal authority, and, particularly in the relations between employers and employees, that of a qualification capable of conferring rights independent of actually performed productive activity, tends to fix hierarchies and thereby to sanction and consecrate a relation of power between agents with respect to the names of professions and occupations, an essential component of social identity. \(^1\)

The management of names is one of the instruments of the management of material scarcity, and the names of groups, especially professional groups, record a particular state of struggles and negotiations over the official designations and the material and symbolic advantages associated with them. The professional name granted to agents, the title they are given, is one of the positive or negative retributions (for the same reason as one's salary), insofar as it is a distinctive mark (emblem or stigma) which takes its value from its position in a hierarchically organized system of titles, and which thereby contributes to the determination of the relative positions between agents and groups. As a consequence of this, agents resort to practical or symbolic strategies aimed at maximizing the symbolic profit of naming: for example, they may give up the economic gratifications assured by a certain job so as to occupy a less well-paid position, but one which is endowed with a more prestigious name, or they may orient themselves towards positions whose designations are less precise, and thus escape the effects of symbolic devaluation. In the same way, in the expression of their personal identity, they may give themselves a name which includes them in a class which is sufficiently broad to include agents occupying positions superior to their own, such as the 'instituteur' or primary-school teacher who calls himself an 'enseignant'.

But the logic of official naming is most clearly demonstrated in the case of the title - whether titles of nobility, educational qualifications or professional titles. This is a symbolic capital that is socially and even legally guaranteed. The nobleman is not only someone who is known, famous, and even renowned for his good qualities, prestigious, in a word, nobilis: he is also someone who is recognized by an official authority, one that is 'universal', i.e. known and recognized by all. The professional or academic title is a sort of legal rule of social perception, a being-perceived that is guaranteed as a right. It is symbolic capital in an institutionalized, legal (and no longer merely legitimate) form. More and more inseparable from the educational qualification, by virtue of the fact that the educational system tends more and more to represent the ultimate and unique guarantor of all professional titles, it has a value in itself and, although we are dealing with a common noun, it functions like a great name (the name of some great family or a proper name), one which procures all sorts of symbolic profit (and goods that one cannot directly acquire with money). \(^1\)

It is the symbolic scarcity of the title in the space of the names of professions that tends to govern the rewards of the profession (and not the relation between the supply of and demand for a certain form of labour). It follows that the rewards associated with the title tend to become autonomous with regard to the rewards associated with the work. In this way, the same work can receive different remunerations depending on the titles and qualifications of the person doing it (e.g. a permanent, official post-holder as opposed to a part-timer or someone acting in that capacity, etc.). The qualification is in itself an institution (like language) that is more durable than the intrinsic characteristics of the work, and so the rewards associated with the qualification can be maintained despite changes in the work and its relative value; it is not the relative value of the work which determines the value of the name, but the institutionalized value of the title which acts as an instrument serving to defend and maintain the value of the work. \(^1\)

This means that one cannot establish a science of classifications without establishing a science of the struggle over classifications and without taking into account the position occupied, in this struggle for
the power of knowledge, for power through knowledge, for the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence, by each of the agents or groups of agents involved in it, whether they be ordinary individuals, exposed to the vicissitudes of everyday symbolic struggle, or authorized (and full-time) professionals, which includes all those who speak or write about social classes, and who can be distinguished by the extent to which their classifications involve the authority of the state, as holder of the monopoly of official naming, of the right classification, of the right order.

While the structure of the social field is defined at each moment by the structure of the distribution of capital and the profits characteristic of the different particular fields, the fact remains that in each of these arenas, the very definition of the stakes and the trump cards can be called into question. Every field is the site of a more or less openly declared struggle for the definition of the legitimate principles of division of the field. The question of legitimacy arises from the very possibility of this questioning, from this break with the doxa which takes the ordinary order for granted. That being said, the symbolic force of the parties involved in this struggle is never completely independent of their positions in the game, even if the specifically symbolic power of naming constitutes a force which is relatively independent of the other forms of social power. The constraints of the necessity inscribed in the very structure of the different fields still weigh on the symbolic struggles which aim to preserve or transform that structure. The social world is, to a great extent, something which agents make at every moment; but they have no chance of unmaking and remaking it except on the basis of a realistic knowledge of what it is and of what they can do to it by virtue of the position they occupy in it.

In short, scientific work aims to establish an adequate knowledge both of the space of objective relations between the different positions which constitute the field and of the necessary relations that are set up, through the mediation of the habits of those who occupy them, between these positions and the corresponding stances, i.e., between the points occupied in that space and the points of view on that very space, which play a part in the reality and development of that space. In other words, the objective delimitation of constructed classes, of regions of the constructed space of positions, enables one to understand the source and effectiveness of the classificatory strategies by means of which agents seek to preserve or modify this space, in the forefront of which we must place the constitution of groups organized with a view to defending the interests of their members.

Analysis of the struggle over classifications brings to light the political ambition which haunts the gnoseological ambition to produce the correct classification: an ambition which properly defines the rex, the one who has the task, according to Benveniste, of regere fines and regere sacrarum, of tracing in speech the frontiers between groups, and also between the sacred and the profane, good and evil, the vulgar and the distinguished. If social science is not to be merely a way of pursuing politics by other means, social scientists must take as their object the intention of assigning others to classes and of thereby telling them what they are and what they have to be (the idea lies all the ambiguity of forecasting); they must analyse, in order to repudiate it, the ambition of the creative vision, that sort of intention originarius which would make things exist in conformity with its vision (the idea lies all the ambiguity of the Marxist conception of class, which is inseparably both a being and an ought-to-be). They must objectify the ambition of objectifying, of classifying from outside, objectively, agents who are struggling to classify others and themselves. If they do happen to classify – by carving up, for the purposes of statistical analysis, the continuous space of social positions – it is precisely so as to be able to objectify all forms of objectification, from the individual insult to the official naming, without forgetting the claim, characteristic of science in its positivist and bureaucratic definition, to arbitrate in these struggles in the name of ‘axiological neutrality’. The symbolic power of agents, understood as a power of making people see – theorein – and believe, of producing and imposing the legitimate or legal classification, depends, as the case of rex reminds us, on the position they occupy in the space (and in the classifications that are potentially inscribed in it). But to objectify objectification means, above all, objectifying the field of production of the objectified representations of the social world, and in particular of the legislative taxonomies, in short, the field of cultural or ideological production, a game in which the social scientist is himself involved, as are all those who debate the nature of social classes.

**The Political Field and the Effect of Homologies**

We must examine this field of symbolic struggles, in which the professionals of representation – in every sense of the term – confront one another in their debate over another field of symbolic struggles, if we are to understand, without succumbing to the mythology of the ‘awakening of consciousness’, the shift from the
practical sense of the position occupied, which is itself capable of being made explicit in different ways, to properly political demonstrations. Those who occupy dominated positions in the social space are also situated in dominated positions in the field of symbolic production, and it is not clear whence they could obtain the instruments of symbolic production that are necessary in order for them to express their own point of view on the social space, were it not that the specific logic of the field of cultural production, and the specific interests that are generated within it, have the effect of inclining a fraction of the professionals engaged in this field to supply to the dominated, on the basis of a homology of position, the instruments that will enable them to break away from the representations generated in the immediate complicity of social structures and mental structures and which tend to ensure the continued reproduction of the distribution of symbolic capital. The phenomenon designated by the Marxist tradition as that of ‘consciousness from outside’, that is, the contribution made by certain intellectuals to the production and diffusion, especially among the dominated, of a vision of the social world that breaks with the dominant vision, cannot be understood sociologically without taking account of the homology between the dominated position of the producers of cultural goods within the field of power (or in the division of the labour of domination) and the position within the social space of the agents who are most completely dispossessed of the economic and cultural means of production. But the construction of the model of the social space which supports this analysis presupposes a definite break with the one-dimensional and one-directional representation of the social world underlying the dualist vision in which the universe of the oppositions constituting the social structure is reduced to the opposition between those who own the means of production and those who sell their labour-power.

The failings of the Marxist theory of class, above all its inability to explain the set of objectively observed differences, result from the fact that, by reducing the social world to the economic field alone, it is condemned to define social position with reference solely to the position within the relations of economic production. It thus ignores the positions occupied in the different fields and sub-fields, particularly in the relations of cultural production, as well as all those oppositions which structure the social field and which are not reducible to the opposition between the owners and non-owners of the means of economic production. Marxism imagines the social world as one-dimensional, as simply organized around the opposi-

tion between two blocs (one of the main questions thus becomes that of the boundary between these two blocs, with all the ensuing questions – which are endlessly debated – about the ‘labour aristocracy’, the ‘bourgeoisie’ of the working-class, etc.). In reality, the social space is a multi-dimensional space, an open set of relatively autonomous fields, fields which are more or less strongly and directly subordinate, in their functioning and their transformations, to the field of economic production. Within each of the sub-spaces, those who occupy dominant positions and those who occupy dominated positions are constantly involved in struggles of different kinds (without necessarily constituting themselves thereby as antagonistic groups).

But the most important fact, from the point of view of the problem of breaking out of the circle of symbolic reproduction, is that, on the basis of homologies between positions within different fields (and because, too, there is an invariant or even universal element in the relation between the dominant and the dominated), alliances can be set up which are more or less durable and which are always based on a more or less conscious misunderstanding. The homology of position between intellectuals and industrial workers – the former occupying within the field of power, that is, vis-à-vis the captains of industry and commerce, positions which are homologous to those occupied by industrial workers in the social space as a whole – is the source of an ambiguous alliance, in which cultural producers, the dominated among the dominant, supply to the dominated, by a sort of embezzlement of accumulated cultural capital, the means of constituting objectively their vision of the world and the representation of their interests in an explicit theory and in institutionalized instruments of representation – trade-union organizations, political parties, social technologies of mobilization and demonstration, etc. 13

But one must be careful not to treat homology of position, a resemblance within difference, as an identity of condition (as happened, for instance, in the ideology of the ‘three Ps’, patron, père, professeur – ‘boss’, ‘father’, ‘teacher’ – developed by the ultra-left movement in France in the late 1960s). Doubtless, the same structure – understood as an invariant core of the forms of different distributions – recurs in different fields, and this explains why analogical thinking is so fertile in sociology. But the fact remains that the principle of differentiation is different each time, as are the stakes and the nature of the interest, and thus the economy of practices. It is after all important to establish a proper hierarchization of the principles of hierarchization, i.e. of the kinds of capital. Knowledge of the hierarchy of the principles of division enables
us to define the limits within which the subordinate principles operate, and thus to define the limits of those similarities linked to homology. The relations of the other fields to the field of economic production are both relations of structural homology and relations of causal dependence, the form of causal determinations being defined by structural relations and the force of domination being greater when the relations in which it is exercised are closer to the relations of economic production.

We would have to analyse the specific interests which representatives owe to their position in the political field and in the sub-field of the party or the trade union, and show all the 'theoretical' effects that they produce. Numerous academic studies of 'social classes' - I have in mind, for instance, the problem of the 'labour aristocracy' or of the 'managerial class' (cadres) - merely elaborate the practical questions which are forced on those who hold political power. Political leaders are continually faced with the (often contradictory) practical imperatives which arise from the logic of the struggle within the political field, such as the need to prove their representativeness or the need to mobilize the greatest possible number of votes while at the same time asserting the irreducibility of their project to those of other leaders. Thus they are condemned to raise the problem of the social world in the typically substantialist logic of the boundaries between groups and the size of the mobilizable group; and they can try to solve the problem which forces itself on every group anxious to know and demonstrate its own strength - and thus its existence - and let other people know it too, by resorting to elastic concepts such as 'working class', 'the people' or 'the workers'. Moreover, as a result of the specific interests associated with the position they occupy in the competition to impose their particular visions of the social world, theoreticians and professional spokespersons, in other words, all 'party officials', are inclined to produce differentiated and distinctive products which, because of the homology between the field of professionals and the field of consumers of opinion, are as it were automatically adjusted to suit the different forms of demand. Demand is defined, in this case more than ever, as a demand for difference, for opposition, which these professionals themselves help to produce by enabling it to find expression. It is the structure of the political field, that is, the objective relation to the occupants of other positions, and the relation to the competing stances they offer which, just as much as any direct relation to those they represent, determines the stances they take, i.e. the supply of political products. By virtue of the fact that the interests directly involved in the struggle for the monopoly of the legitimate expression of the truth of the social world tend to be the specific equivalent of the interests of those who occupy homologous positions in the social field, political discourses are affected by a sort of structural duplicity: while they are in appearance directly aimed at the voters, they are in reality aimed at competitors within the field.

The political stances taken at any given moment (electoral results, for example) are thus the product of an encounter between a political supply of objectified political opinions (programmes, party platforms, declarations, etc.) linked to the entire previous history of the field of production, and a political demand, itself linked to the history of the relations between supply and demand. The correlation that can be observed at any given moment between stances on this or that political issue and positions in the social space can be understood completely only if one observes that the classifications which voters implement in order to make their choice (left/right, for instance) are the product of all previous struggles, and that the same is true of the classifications which the analyst implements in order to classify, not only opinions, but the agents who express them. The entire history of the social field is present, in each moment, both in a materialized form - in institutions such as the administrative organization of political parties or trade unions - and in an incorporated form - in the dispositions of agents who run these institutions or fight against them (with the effects of hysteresis linked to questions of loyalty). All forms of recognized collective identity - the 'working class' or the CGT trade union, 'independent craftsmen', 'managers', 'university graduates', etc. - are the product of a long and slow collective development. Without being completely artificial (if it were, the attempt to establish these forms would not have succeeded), each of these representative bodies, which give existence to represented bodies endowed with a known and recognized social identity, exists through an entire set of institutions which are just so many historical inventions. A 'logo', sigillum authenticum as canon lawyers said, a seal or stamp, an office and a secretariat endowed with a monopoly over the corporate signature and the plena potestas agenti et loquendi, etc. As a product of the struggles which occurred within and outside the political field, especially concerning power over the state, this representation owes its specific characteristics to the particular history of a particular political field and state (which explains, inter alia, the differences between the representations of social divisions, and thus of groups represented, from one country to another). So as to avoid being misled by the
effects of the labour of naturalization which every group tends to produce in order to legitimize itself and fully justify its existence, one must thus in each case reconstruct the historical labour which has produced social divisions and the social vision of these divisions. Social position, adequately defined, is what gives the best prediction of practices and representations; but, to avoid conferring on what was once called one's station, that is, on social identity (these days more and more completely identified with one's professional identity) the place that 'being' had in ancient metaphysics, namely, the function of an essence from which would spring all aspects of historical existence - as is expressed by the formula operato sequitur esse - it must be clearly remembered that this status, like the habitus generated within it, are products of history, subject to being transformed, with more or less difficulty, by history.

**Class as Will and Representation**

But in order to establish how it is that the power of constituting and instituting is held by the authorized spokesperson - party or union boss, for instance - is itself constituted and instituted, it is not enough to explain the specific interests of the theorists or spokespersons and the structural affinities which link them to those whom they represent. One must also analyse the logic of the process of institution, ordinarily perceived and described as a process of delegation, in which the representative receives from the group the power of creating the group. If we transpose their analyses, we can here follow the historians of law (Kantorowicz, Post, etc.) when they describe the mystery of ministry - a play on words dear to canon lawyers, who link mysterium with ministerium. The mystery of the process of transubstantiation, whereby the spokesperson becomes the group he expresses, can only be explained by a historical analysis of the genesis and functioning of representation, through which the representative creates the group which creates him. The spokesperson endowed with full power to speak and act in the name of the group, and first and foremost to act on the group through the magic of the slogan, is the substitute of the group which exists only through this proxy; as the personification of a fictitious person, of a social fiction, he raises those whom he represents out of their existence as separate individuals, enabling them to act and speak through him as a single person. In return, he receives the right to take himself for the group, to speak and act as if he were the group incarnate in a single person: 'Status est magistratus', 'l'État, c'est moi', 'the union thinks that . . .', etc.

The mystery of ministry is one of those cases of social magic in which a thing or a person becomes something other than what it is, a person (minister, bishop, delegate, member of parliament, general secretary, etc.) able to identify and be identified with a set of people (the People, the Workers) or with a social entity (the Nation, the State, the Church, the Party). The mystery of ministry is at its peak when the group can exist only by delegating power to a spokesperson who will bring it into existence by speaking for it, that is, on its behalf and in its place. The circle is then complete: the group is created by the person who speaks in its name, thus appearing as the source of the power that he exerts over those who are its real source. This circular relation is at the root of the charismatic illusion which means that, ultimately, the spokesperson may appear to others as well as to himself, as causa sui. Political alienation results from the fact that isolated agents - and this is all the more true the more they are symbolically impoverished - cannot constitute themselves as a group, as a force capable of making itself heard in the political field, unless they dispossess themselves and hand over their power to a political apparatus; they must always risk political dispossession in order to escape from political dispossession. Fetishism, according to Marx, is what happens when the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own; political fetishism lies precisely in the fact that the value of the hypostatized individual, that product of the human brain, appears as charisma, a mysterious objective property of the person, an elusive charm, an unnameable mystery. The minister - minister of religion or minister of state - is in a metonymic relation with the group; as part of the group, he functions as a sign replacing the group as a whole. It is the minister who, as an entirely real substitute for an entirely symbolic being, encourages one to make a 'category mistake', as Ryle would put it, rather similar to the one made by a child who, after having watched a procession of the soldiers forming the regiment, asks where the regiment is. By his more visible existence, the minister constitutes the pure serial diversity of separate individuals into a moral person, transforms the collectio personarum plurium into a corporatio, a constituted body, and he may even, through mobilization and demonstration, make it appear as a social agent.

Politics is the site par excellence of symbolic effectiveness, an activity which works through signs capable of producing social
entities and, above all, groups. By virtue of the oldest of the metaphorical effects linked to the existence of a certain symbolism – that which enables one to consider as existing everything which can be signified (God or non-being) – political representation produces and reproduces, at every moment, a derivative form of the argument of the bald King of France so dear to logicians: any predicative statement with ‘the working class’ as its subject conceals an existential statement (there is a working class). More generally, all statements which have as their subject a collective – People, Class, University, School, State, etc. – presuppose that the question of the existence of this group has been solved and conceal that sort of metaphysical fallacy which has been criticized in the ontological argument. The spokesperson is the person who, speaking about a group, speaking on behalf of a group, surreptitiously posits the existence of the group in question, institutes the group, through that magical operation which is inherent in any act of naming. That is why we must proceed to a critique of political reason – a reason which is inclined to commit abuses of language which are abuses of power – if we want to raise the question with which all sociology ought to begin, of that existence and mode of existence of collectives.

A class exists in so far as – and only in so far as – representatives with the plena potestas agendi may be and feel authorized to speak in its name – in accordance with the equation, ‘the Party is the working class’, or ‘the working class is the Party’, an equation which reproduces that of canon lawyers, ‘the Church is the Pope’ (or the Bishops), the Pope (or the Bishops) is (or are) the Church. In this way, a class can be given existence as a real force in the political field. The mode of existence of what is these days called, in a great number of societies (with variations, of course), the ‘working class’, is completely paradoxical: what we have is a sort of existence in thought, an existence in the minds of many of those who are designated by the different taxonomies as workers, but also in the minds of those who occupy the positions furthest removed from the workers in the social space. This almost universally recognized existence is itself based on the existence of a working class in representation, that is, on political and trade-union apparatuses and on party officials who have a vital interest in believing that this class exists and in spreading this belief among those who consider themselves part of it as well as those who are excluded from it; who are capable too of giving voice to the ‘working class’, and with a single voice to evoke it, as one evokes or summons up spirits, of invoking it, as one invokes gods or patron saints; who are capable, indeed, of manifesting it symbolically through demonstration, a sort of theatrical deployment of the class-in-representation, with on the one side the body of party officials and the entire symbolic system that constitutes its existence – slogans, emblems, symbols – and on the other side the most convinced fraction of the believers who, by their presence, enable their representatives to give a representation of their representativeness. This working class as ‘will and representation’ (as Schopenhauer’s famous title puts it) has nothing in common with the class as action, a real and really mobilized group, imagined by the Marxist tradition; but it is no less real, with that magical reality which (with Durkheim and Mauss) defines institutions as social fictions. This is a true mystical body, created at the cost of an immense historical labour of theoretical and practical invention, starting with that of Marx himself, and endlessly re-created at the cost of innumerable and constantly renewed efforts and acts of commitment which are necessary in order to produce and reproduce belief and the institution designed to ensure the reproduction of belief. The ‘working class’ exists in and through the body of representatives who give it an audible voice and a visible presence, and in and through the belief in its existence which this body of plenipotentaries succeeds in imposing, by its mere existence and its representations, on the basis of affinities which objectively unite the members of the same ‘class on paper’ as a probable group. The historical success of Marxist theory, the first social theory to claim scientific status that has so completely realized its potential in the social world, thus contributes to ensuring that the theory of the social world which is the least capable of integrating the theory effect – that it, more than any other, has created – is doubtless, today, the most powerful obstacle to the progress of the adequate theory of the social world to which it has, in times gone by, more than any other contributed.
socialist's ambition: namely, the obligatory recitations of canonical
texts on social classes (ritually contrasted with the statistical census) or,
at a higher level of ambition and in a less classical style, the prophecies
announcing 'new classes' and 'new struggles' (or the inevitable decline
of 'old classes' and 'old' struggles), two genres which occupy a large
place in so-called sociological production?

The reasons for the spontaneous repugnance felt by 'scientists' for
'subjective' criteria would deserve a long analysis: there is the naive
realism which leads one to ignore everything that cannot be pointed to
or touched; there is the economism which leads to failure to recognize
any determinants of social action other than those that are visibly an
integral part of the material conditions of existence; there are the
interests attached to the appearances of 'axiological neutrality' which,
in more than one case, constitute 'all the difference between the
'scientist' and the militant and which forbid questions and notions
counter to the proprieties from being introduced into 'scientific'
discourse; there is, last and by no means least, the scientific point of
honor which leads observers - and this is probably all the more
the case the less sure they are of their science and their status - to
multiply the signs of a break from the representations of common sense
and which condemns them to a reductive objectivism, which is perfectly
incapable of including the reality of common representations in the
scientific representation of reality.

Marxist research into the national or regional question has been
blocked, probably right from the start, by the combined effect of
international utopianism (supported by a naive evolutionism) and of
economicism, not to mention the effects of the strategic preoccupations
of the moment which have often predetermined the verdicts of a
'science' oriented towards practice (and lacking both a true science
of science and a science of the relations between practice and science).
The effectiveness of these factors taken all together is often clearly
seen in the typically performative thesis of the primacy -
which is so often contradicted by the facts - of class solidarities over
'ethnic' or national solidarities. But the inability to historicize this
problem (which, to the same degree as the problem of the primacy of
spatial relations or social and genealogical relations, is raised and
answered in history) and the constantly asserted theoretician pretention
to designate 'viable nations' or to produce scientifically validated
criteria of national identity (see G. Haupt, M. Lowy and C. Weill, Les
marxistes et la question nationale (Paris: Maspéro, 1974)), seem to
depend directly on the degree to which the regal intention to rule and
direct serves to orient the royal science of frontiers and limits: it is no
coincidence that Stalin is the author of the most dogmatic and most
essentialist 'definition' of the nation.

11 Social Space and the Genesis of 'Classes'

1 One can imagine that one has broken away from substantialism and
introduced a relational mode of thought when one is in fact studying
real interactions and exchanges. (In fact, practical solidarities, like
practical rivalries, linked to direct contact and interaction - proximity -
may be an obstacle to the construction of solidarities based on
proximity in the theoretical space.)

2 Statistical investigation can grasp this relation of power only in the form
of properties, sometimes legally guaranteed by titles of economic
property, cultural property (educational qualifications) or social
property (titles of nobility). This explains the link between empirical
research into classes and theories of social structure as a system of
'grades' as described in the language of distance from the instruments
of appropriation ('distance from the focus of cultural values', in
Halbwachs's terms), that Marx himself uses when he speaks of the
'mass deprived of property'.

3 In certain social universes, the principles of division which, like the
volume and structure of capital, determine the structure of the social
space, are reinforced by principles of division that are relatively
independent of economic or cultural properties, such as ethnic or
religious affiliation. The distribution of agents appears in this case as
the product of the intersection of two spaces which are partly indepen-
dent of each other, since an ethnic group situated in an inferior position
in the space of ethnic groups can occupy positions in all the fields, even
the highest, but with rates of representation that are inferior to those of
an ethnic group situated in a superior position. Each ethnic group can
therefore be characterized by the social positions of its members, by the rate
of dispersion of these positions and finally by its degree of social
integration despite dispersion. (Ethnic solidarity may have the effect of
ensuring a form of collective mobility.)

4 The same would be true for the relations between geographical space
and social space. These two spaces never coincide completely; how-
ever, a number of the differences which are usually associated with the
effect of geographical space, for example with the opposition between
the centre and the periphery, are the effect of distance in social space,
i.e. of the unequal distribution of the different kinds of capital in
geographical space.

5 General Pershing's remark on landing in France in 1917 (tr.).

6 This sense of realities in no way implies a class consciousness in the
social-psychological sense, which is the least unreal sense one may give
to this word, i.e. an explicit representation of the position occupied in
the social structure, and of the collective interests that are correlative
with it; even less does it imply a theory of social classes, i.e., not only a
system of classification based on explicit and logically coherent princi-
plexes but also a rigorous knowledge of the mechanisms responsible for the distributions. In fact, to put an end to the metaphysics of the ‘awakening of consciousness’ and ‘class consciousness’, a sort of revolutionary cogito of the collective consciousness of a personified entity, we need only examine the social and economic conditions which make it possible for this form of distance from the present moment of practice to exist, a distance presupposed by the conception and formulation of a more or less elaborate representation of a collective future. (This is what I sketched out in my analysis of the relations between temporal consciousness, including the aptitude for rational economic calculation, and political consciousness among Algerian workers; see P. Bourdieu, Algeria 1960, tr. R. Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).)

In this case, the production of common sense consists, essentially, in the constant re-interpretation of the common stock of sacred discourses (proverbs, sayings, gnostic poems, etc.), in ‘purifying the language of the tribe’. By appropriating the words in which everything recognized by a group is deposited, one gains a considerable advantage in struggles for power. This is clear in struggles for religious authority: the most precious word is the sacred word and, as Gershom Scholem observes, it is because mystical opposition to established religion has to reappropriate established symbols in order to achieve recognition that it is ‘recovered’ by the tradition. As stakes in different struggles, the words of the political lexicon carry a polemical charge in the form of the polysemy which is the trace of the antagonistic usages that different groups have made, or make, of these words. One of the most universal strategies resorted to by the professionals of symbolic power – poets in archaic societies, prophets, politicians – thus consists in putting common sense on your side by appropriating the words that are invested with value by the whole group because they are the repositories of its belief.

As Leo Spitzer has clearly shown with regard to Don Quixote, in which the same person is given several names, polyonomiastia – the plurality of names, nicknames and sobriquets attributed to the same agent or the same institution – together with the polysemy of words or expressions designating the fundamental values of different groups, is the visible trace of struggles for the power to name, struggles which occur in all social universes (see L. Spitzer, ‘Perspectivism in Don Quijote’, in Linguistics and Literary History (New York: Russe! and Russe!, 1948)).


The directory of trades and occupations is the realized form of that social neutralism which cancels out the differences constitutive of the social space by treating uniformly all positions as professions, at the cost of a constant shift from the definitional point of view (titles and qualifications, nature of the activity, etc.). When people in the Anglo-

Saxon world call doctors ‘professionals’, they are emphasizing the fact that these agents are defined by their profession, which is for them an essential attribute; on the other hand, someone who hitches carriages together is hardly defined at all by this attribute, which designates him only in so far as he performs a certain kind of work. As for the teacher who has passed the agregation exam, he or she is qualified, like the hitcher of carriages, by a task, an activity, but also by a qualification and title, like the doctor.

11 Entering a profession with a title is increasingly dependent on the possession of an educational qualification, and there is a close relation between educational qualifications and professional remuneration. The situation is quite different in unqualified occupations in which agents performing the same work may have very different educational qualifications.

12 Those who possess the same title tend to constitute themselves as a group and to provide themselves with permanent organizations (the association of doctors, associations of alumni, etc.) aimed at ensuring group cohesion (with periodical reunions, etc.) and at promoting the group’s material and symbolic interests.

13 The most perfect illustration of this analysis can be found, thanks to the fine work done by Robert Darnton, in the history of that sort of cultural revolution that the dominated figures within the emergent intellectual field – people such as Bросл, Mercier, Desmoulins, Hébert, Marat, and so many others – carried out within the Revolutionary movement (destruction of the Academies, dispersion of the salons, suppression of pensions, abolition of privileges). This cultural revolution sprang from the status of ‘cultural pariahs’ and its first priority was to attack the symbolic foundations of power, contributing, by its ‘politicopornography’ and its deliberately scatological lampoons, to the task of ‘delegitimation’ which is doubtless one of the fundamental dimensions of revolutionary radicalism. (See R. Darnton, ‘The high Enlightenment and the low-life of literature in pre-revolutionary France’, Past and Present, 51 (1971), pp. 81–115; or the exemplary case of Marat, who, as people often forget, was also – or initially – a bad physicist; see also C. C. Gillispie, Science and Polity in France at the End of the Old Regime (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 290–330.)