

Propositions to accompany the PhD thesis of Julian Schaap

Elvis has finally left the building?

Boundary work, whiteness and the reception of rock music in comparative perspective

1. The emergence of rock music and its enduring association with whiteness can only be understood by grounding the idiosyncratic stories of key individuals such as Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley in the social and institutional contexts which forged them (this thesis).
2. Classification in rock music reception – and many other cultural genres – is still heavily influenced by race/ethnicity, despite the fact that ethno-racial attributes are typically non-related to music itself (this thesis).
3. Often without being aware of it, people use relatively stable classification styles that contain racialized properties which assist in authenticating, classifying and evaluating cultural products, producers and consumers (this thesis).
4. Nondeclarative knowledge, slowly enculturated over time, provides the understructure for the maintenance of ethno-racial boundaries. This explains why the numerical and symbolic dominance of whiteness can remain relatively intact despite the prevalence of good intentions towards ethno-racial diversity (this thesis).
5. Apart from linguistic particularities and variations in national ethno-racial constellations, the continued usage of ethno-racial attributes in everyday boundary work is similar in the Netherlands and the United States (this thesis).
6. Quite some sociological paradoxes can be understood by theoretically and empirically differentiating between declarative and nondeclarative knowledge, and subsequently analyzing the weak ties between these forms of knowledge.
7. Studying popular culture can be as relevant in understanding social divisions as studying ‘serious’ social realms such as politics, law, labor or business – at times even more so.
8. It’s wrong to abstain from trying to understand someone else’s position out of disinterest. It is equally wrong to say it is pointless to try and understand someone else’s position because one doesn’t have any lived experience in it.
9. As per ancient recipe, one still only needs two ingredients to produce excellent education: intrinsically motivated students and engaged teachers.
10. (Self-)doubt is a valuable academic trait to be treasured, not a personal problem that needs fixing.
11. Together, snowflakes can make avalanches.