

Propositions

To accompany the thesis of Janna Michael
Negotiating Normalcy and Difference

Discourses on cultural taste and symbolic boundaries

1. A central difference between the groups under study is the importance of morals in their assessment of culture. While the business professionals and lower status group often merge aesthetic evaluations with moral evaluations, the interviewees high in cultural capital were more inclined to apply aesthetic judgements. *(this dissertation)*

2. Not only what culture is consumed, but also the mode in which it is consumed is relevant to understand boundary work. *(this dissertation)*

3. 'The mainstream' remains a social construction that adopts very different meanings in different social groups. *(this dissertation)*

4. Cultural and economic capital, if they have historically walked together as famous sociologists argued, seem to diverge into different spheres of evaluation. Different forms of cultural capital do not function as a universal currency but their exchange-value depends on context. *(this dissertation)*

5. Scholars being unable to produce surveys that capture ordinary people's leisure activities are perhaps a clearer sign of social division than the alleged differences reported in surveys on cultural participation. *(this dissertation)*

6. Independently of the research methods we chose, the results will only be one possible representation of

reality which, nevertheless, has the potential to shape the reality it does and does not represent.

7. Humor is a powerful tool to bond and bridge with some, while excluding others.

8. Cultural sociologists spend a lot of research time chasing and revealing ever-new distinction mechanisms of the upper classes. Publishing these in journals only read by sociologists does little to challenge the reproduction of social inequality through these distinction mechanisms, but at least does not massively increase the speed of new distinction innovations.

9. Europe's population is rather heterogeneous with regard to age, gender, ethnicities, sexual orientation and education. The more public institutions such as museums, universities and health care systems are adapting to the different abilities, interests and needs of different groups, the more equal can the access to and participation in these institutions be. If public institutions are not accessible for wide publics, they struggle with legitimation.

10. The divide between highbrow and lowbrow remains rather present in state subsidized cultural institutions.

11. If someone climbs laboriously
Into the branches of a tree
And thinks himself a bird to be:
Wrong is he. (Wilhelm Busch)