

Data and Culture

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October 24, 2022. Antinomies of Taste.

paper I: what matters

- ▶ choice of object (a historical digital archive)
- ▶ use of evidence
- ▶ clear interpretive claims
- ▶ specific evidence
- ▶ evidence is also important

review

- ▶ making documents digital
 - ▶ textuality: problem of variants
 - ▶ editing and markup
 - ▶ “dirty OCR” and surrogacy
- ▶ organizing culture
 - ▶ library systems and classification
 - ▶ digital archives, searchability, access

review

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- ▶ now let's think about *pattern*

exercise: handout, pt. I

Well-Tempered Clavier: <https://youtu.be/xCqWH9bKzQE>

Blue Danube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRidg_bgegg

Rhapsody in Blue: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cH2PH0auTUU>

hit “like” if you agree

The first commonplace of taste is contained in the proposition by means of which everyone who lacks taste thinks to defend himself against criticism: **Everyone has his own taste.** That amounts to saying that the determining ground of this judgment is merely subjective (gratification or pain), and the judgment has no right to the necessary assent of others...

One proposition is missing, which is not, to be sure, a proverb in general circulation, but which nevertheless everyone has some sense of: **It is possible to argue about taste** (but not to dispute). But this proposition implies the opposite of the first proposition above. For wherever it is supposed to be possible to argue, there must be hope of coming to mutual agreement.

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (1790; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 214, §56.

“basic”

- ▶ Data & Culture Day I review: **culture** as artistic/intellectual works **or** intellectual cultivation **or** whole way of life

The survey sought to determine how the cultivated disposition and cultural competence...vary according to the category of agents and the area to which they applied...

Two basic facts were thus established: on the one hand, the very close relationship linking cultural practices...to educational capital...and, secondarily, to social origin; and on the other hand, the fact that, at equivalent levels of educational capital, the weight of social origin...increases as one moves away from the most legitimate areas of culture. (Bourdieu, 13)

Of all the objects offered for consumers' choice, there are none more classifying than **legitimate** works of art (Ibid., 16)

exercise: handout, pt. 2

- ▶ top hits on Insta?

exercise: handout, pt. 3

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

custom and fashion

If these forms [clothing, etc.] are stable and unchanging, then by definition they are not fashions. Rather, these are styles or customs that may even distinguish subsets of a population from one another. (Lieberson, 34)

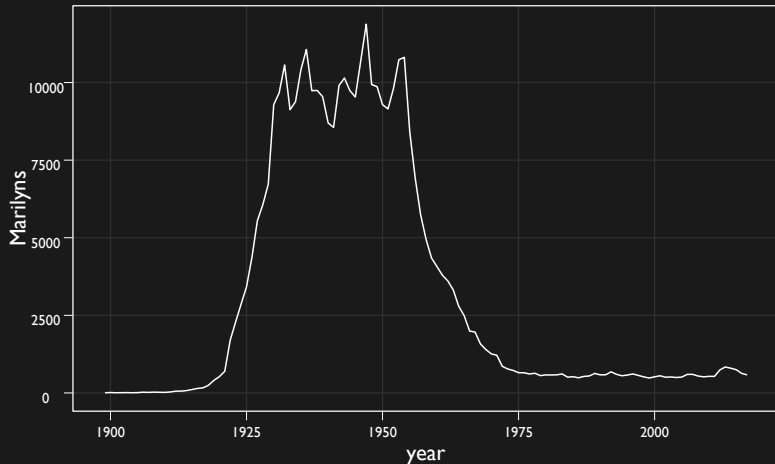
A simple measure used to gauge the level of fashion in a nation and changes over time is: the rapidity with which the leading name are replaced. (36)

external and internal

There is a disposition to explain changing tastes by looking at social and cultural developments in the surrounding society...Less obvious is that tastes have their own internal mechanisms that cause fashions to change in specific directions. (xiii–xiv)

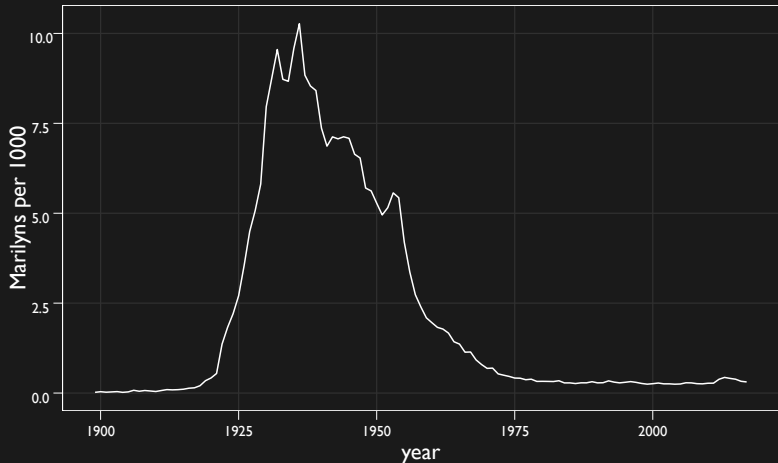
If a taste changes in a certain direction—rather than always vacillating in a random manner—the ratcheting mechanism suggests that this movement could occur without substantive meaning. (98)

Marilyn

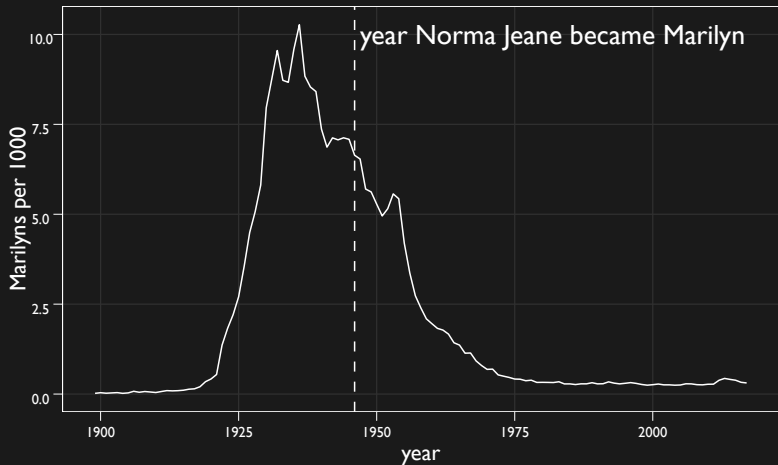


U.S. girls named “Marilyn” registered with the Social Security Administration, by year of birth.





Number of girls named Marilyn (registered with SSA) per thousand U.S. social security registrations.



putting it together: discussion

How are Bourdieu and Lieberson making use of the *multiplicity* of their data? How is this different from individualized explanation?

false and true objectification

How could this naming pattern be explained? It seemed, in a certain sense, like the ultimate example of a social process. (Lieberson, xii)

Here the sociologist finds himself in the area par excellence of the denial of the social. (Bourdieu, 11)

There is no way out of the game of culture. (Bourdieu, 12)

setting up for next time

- ▶ install R, RStudio

```
install.packages("remotes")  
remotes::install_github("agoldst/dataculture")
```

- ▶ try R!...but don't spend more than an hour

- ▶ <https://dc22.andrewgoldstone.com/2022/10/23/r-warmup/>