Mass Culture and Universal Exhibitions

Au Bon Marché Department Store
Paris, France
History 104

Europe from Napoleon to the PRESENT

The first midterm is Monday: 23 February 2009

Format:
4 (out of 8) passages/images on which to comment (each 20%)
   at least a page on each

5 (out of 10) short-answer identifications (each 4%)
   short paragraph on each (list of terms is now on website)

REVIEW CLASS: Sunday, 22 February 2009; 4:00-5:30 here

Final Grades for this course are based on: two midterms (20% each); participation in discussion classes (20%); final exam (35%); reading questions (5%).
What is mass culture? Relation to “modern” Europe?

Forces contributing to the emergence of mass culture in Europe, 1850-1900 are both state driven and loosely socio-economic (remember, though, that being economically competitive was a priority for nineteenth-century liberal states).

See effects on people’s lives in:
- mass politics
- exhibitions
- department stores

Elite Culture and Popular Culture in Early-Modern Europe

Anthony Van Dyck, *Self-Portrait with a Sunflower* (1633). approx. 25” x 33”, oil on canvas

Jane Johnson’s Manuscript Nursery Library (Lilly Library holdings), ca. 1740-1759.

key features: patronage, audience, medium
Mass Culture in Modern Europe

The Bon Marché Department Store, depicted in *L’Illustration* (1880)


markets, audience, and advertising
What is Modern?

**modern politics**
structures that allow for mass participation in public life

**modern society**
(indand economy)
industrialization and mass production
(peasantry replaced by “modern” working class)

**modern culture**
awareness of change, which seems to be speeding up, such that “all that is solid melts into air”* and nothing is left but dizzying excitement of the always new as experienced via mass consumption and mass communication

---

1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man
1832 Great Reform Act (UK)
1848 universal male suffrage (France)
1867 UK electorate doubled
1871 universal male suffrage (Germany)
1878 Socialist party outlawed (Germany)
1906 women’s suffrage (Finland)
1918 all men—and women who own property and are >30—enfranchised (UK)
1801 London Stock Exchange
1918 universal adult suffrage (Germany)
1945 women allowed to vote (France)
1971 women’s suffrage (Switzerland)

1760s-1830s “Industrial Revolution” (UK)
1851 Crystal Palace exhibition
1852 Bon Marché opens
1850s-60s first joint-stock banks in France, German lands
1852-69 “Haussmannization”
1860s-70s Vienna Ringstrasse built
1870-90s “second Industrial Revolution”
1860s-80s trade unions legalized
1882 Married Women’s Property Act (UK)
1930s >50% French population in cities

---

*Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)
Modern and its suffixes

Modernism  modernization  modernity


Gare du Nord (North Station), Paris (built, 1861-1864; recent photo).

... and some prefixes?
pre-modern
post-modern

Eiffel Tower, Paris (built for 1889 World’s Fair).
Modern States and Mass Culture

“The law excludes any particular dogma from the school program and it emphasizes moral and civic education. Religious instruction belongs to the family and to the church; moral education belongs to the schools. In passing this law, the legislature doubtlessly wanted to separate school and church, to guarantee freedom of conscience for both teachers and students.... It does more than that, however: it also affirms our wish to create a truly national education…”

Jules Ferry letter to teachers, 1884.

“Our forefathers, the Gauls…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>94% of drafted men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>30% of drafted men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>50% of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>99% of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>20% of population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mining, Metallurgy, and the “Second” Industrial Revolution (1865-1914)

average annual steel output (in millions of metric tons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Russia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880-1894</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1894</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1904</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>7.71</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1913</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>16.24</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sir) William Henry Perkin and his mauve dye, made from coal-tar derivatives (1856)

factors contributing to emergence of homogeneous, mass culture: industrialization
separate spheres: colorful women and somber men

consumption and production in the era of the second Industrial Revolution
Krupp Family Steelworks

1811  Krupp foundry established

1851  Krupp’s exhibits a steel ingot weighing 2,000 pounds at Crystal Palace Exhibition (2x larger than previous record)

1840s-1860s  increasingly specialized in weapons; cannons and guns for Prussian, Russian, and Turkish armies

1887  20,000 workers at Essen steelworks

factors contributing to emergence of homogeneous, mass culture: industrialization
Urban Population Growth, 1850-1910

Factors contributing to emergence of homogeneous, mass culture: urbanization
Mass Culture and Mass Politics

German Social Democrat Party
1863: Ferdinand Lassalle founds General German Workers’ Association
1869: August Bebel & Wilhelm Liebknecht: Social-Democratic Workers Party
1878: anti-socialist law outlaws party
1890: Wilhelm II allows law to lapse;
1914 over 1,000,000 party members

striking workers and/or socialist activists behind barricade during “Tragic Week” (Barcelona, Spain; 1909)

German Social-Democrat newspaper

mass culture and mass politics… the “mass” can be frightening
Universal Exhibitions, 1851-1914

Crystal Palace, 1851
admission (first month)—5 shillings*
admission “popular” days—1 shilling **

total number admissions: 6,000,000
population of Great Britain: 20,000,000

“Right now, the world is on the move to look at merchandise.”
Hippolyte Taine about 1855 exhibition.

* based on the average-earnings then and now, this is the equivalent of £186 (or US$ 300) today
** £37 (or US$ 50) today [making this conversion on the basis of the retail-price index gives different and lower figures, but this second calculation is a poor indicator of “affordability”]

Universal Exhibitions, 1851-1914

“Pint o’ beer, miss, please.”
“Don’t keep it. You can have a strawberry ice and a wafer.”
(from *Punch* 1851)

Mass Culture and Universal Exhibitions: the exhibitionary complex
New Public Spaces: Department Stores

Au Bon Marché department store in the 1880s

Mass Culture and Mass Consumption?