ISSN 0212-0585 (print)
ISSN 2530-3074 (electronic)

Art, Politicisation and Public Action*

Pierre-Michel Menger
COLLÈGE DE FRANCE / EHESS / PSL
pierre-michel.menger@college-de-france.fr

Received: 23/08/2016
Accepted: 24/10/2016

ABSTRACT
Cultural public action has progressively embraced two very different concepts of Art and culture: one universalist and linking innovation to democratisation; the other, differentialist and relativist, advocating a non–hierarchisable plurality of artistic forms. What happens to these differences within cultural public action and politicisation of the artistic sphere? One of the main aporias of cultural policy is the gap between the artist as an innovator and the general public, which can be seen from both demand (a function of democratisation), and supply (a function of support for creation) sides. This gap has been defended in a pessimistic, aristocratic fashion ('Baudelarian Modernity'), and through politico-aesthetical rationalisation (*avant–garde* in nature). Yet in both cases, it raises the question of the gap between the dynamics of creation and of consumption — a gap that highlights the constant paradoxes that arise from supposing a direct relationship between artistic innovation on the one hand, and socio-political emancipation and progress on the other. Ironically, it is the upper classes that lend the greatest support for artistic daring. For both ideological and political reasons, most of the avant-garde movement was ranged against the bourgeoisie. The duality of the value of originality in Art (the aristocratic heroism of the innovator versus the democratic individualism of the expressive artist) point to two differing standpoints in the politicisation of art. This duality offers two answers, which are now superimposed on this paradox.

Keywords: *arts*, *politics*, *cultural policy*, *cultural democratisation*

Corresponding author: Pierre-Michel Menger. Professeur au Collège de France
Chaire de Sociologie du Travail Créateur, 3, rue d'Ulm, 75005 Paris.
Suggested citation: Menger, P-M. (2016). "Art, Politicisation and Public Action". *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society*, 1, 99–122.

Two conceptions of culture were gradually hammered out over two centuries. One is Universalist and was forged throughout the 18th Century with the philosophy of The Enlightenment. The other was Differentialist and was consolidated in the 19th Century through the legacy of Rousseau and Herder). In the Universalist concept, the advance and broad diffusion of culture in all its forms reveals the emancipating power of a rationally-run society. Here, culture expresses society's quest for greater freedom within the constraints imposed by Nature regarding risks and resources. The emancipating powers of culture are manifested through all kinds of creation (artistic, scientific, spiritual, symbolic and political). The advances achieved by culture help build a social system that is collectively liberating. In the Differentialist concept, the stress is on the spiritual development of individuals, who strive against society's corrupting influence. Here, society is seen as something

* This article was previously published in the Journal Sociétés et représentation, 2001/1, pp. 167–204.

that relentlessly expands the domain of what can be tallied up, bought and sold. In this schema, society relegates people to mere producers and consumers in the thrall of a system bent on foisting ever more new 'needs' and products on its hapless victims. Romanticism, based on the Roussean concept of relations between Nature, Culture, and Society, strongly linked Culture with Religion, moral values with an understanding of inner voice of conscience and individual expressiveness rather than attributing any of these things to the 'civilising power' of society. Primacy is given to the diversity of cultural representations, which in the final analysis stem from the singularity of each individual, and within the context of his or her creative abilities, and from the make-up of each group, the members of which share lasting common experiences.

Art, its social and political power, and its capacity for renewal are conceived differently in each of these systems of representation and interpretation. In the first case, the universalism of a culture and converging views on a limited set of universally-admired works are both values that are highly-prized. Here, Art may make cumulative advances, like civilisation itself and of which it is one of the most powerful symbolic representations. Furthermore, creation has a socially emancipating value, even though it may initially be understood and enjoyed only by an elite. In the second case, a 'differentialist' relativism prevails: artistic expression is very diverse and its hierarchical organisation stresses individual differences. In so doing, it gives life coherence and autonomy, enabling evaluation of the work produced by different groups in the light of social traits, geographic roots (country, region, city, neighbourhood), race, religion, and language. These factors can obviously be combined in any number of ways. The artist shows a general disposition to creativity, and the only aspect that allows one to classify Art and relations between Art producers and consumers is the nature of the shared creativity. An artistic movement is more closely linked to change and modernity than with progress.

Even so, in both conceptions (the Universalist, and the Relativist) of Culture and Art, the relationship between artist and public is a tricky one. On the one hand, unanimous adhesion to the Arts and hallowed artistic values is a postulate that is far-removed from social preferences and practices. The artist elevated to the status of innovator can broadly further the social and emancipatory roles of Art, of which he is supposedly the protagonist. While creativity manifests a general disposition, there is a scale when it comes to artistic success. Here, the market is highly effective at attracting and selecting large numbers of talented people to fuel ever more fleeting fads.

Our analysis seeks to show how public cultural action takes these divergent concepts and their attendant dilemmas into account. Our point of departure is a simple characterisation of the functions of cultural policy and we successively examine the two sides of the market — demand (the object of democratisation) and supply (the object of support and creation). One of the justifications of public action is also one of its aporias: the gap between the innovative artist and the general public. This gap has been defended in a pessimistic, aristocratic fashion ('Baudelarian Modernity') through politico-aesthetical rationalisation (*avant–garde* in nature). Yet in both cases, it raises the question of the divergence between the dynamics of creation and those of consumption. This divergence testifies to the constant paradoxes that stem from equating artistic innovation with socio-political emancipation and progress. Ironically, it is the upper classes that lend the greatest support for artistic daring. For both ideological and political reasons, most of the avant-garde is ranged against the bourgeoisie. In this way, we progressively reveal the dualism of the value of originality in Art (to wit, the aristocratic heroism of the innovator versus the democratic individualism of the expressive artist), showing how cultural policy has assimilated this dualism by superimposing the two conceptions of culture just discussed.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF ARTISTIC VALUES AND INEQUALITIES IN THE CONSUMPTION OF CULTURE

The public cultural policy system focuses on four main objectives: (1) maintaining the cultural heritage; (2) training Art professionals and experts;

(3) supporting artistic production; (4) democratising cultural consumption (in both social and geographical terms). To ensure that works reach a wider public, new channels for accessing oeuvres are invented, broadening the definition of the culture to be fostered and disseminated through cultural actions.

That said, the two most-widely applied measures (namely, support for artistic creation, and democratisation of cultural goods and services) appear to be rooted in two opposing representations of the relationship between artist and society at large.

The principle of cultural democratisation is Unanimist in nature and rests on a representation of society as a unified body, and on the ideal of egalitarian access to a cultural heritage — that is, a compendium of universally-admired works (both material and intellectual).

The simplest version of this Unanimist concept is found in the argument legitimising a public cultural service, namely, that a large slice of cultural offerings cannot be left to the mercy of market forces.

Yet what observation serves as the point of departure? A large chunk of cultural offerings cater to a small slice of society — basically 'The Upper Crust'. Here, we refer precisely those cultural offerings of greatest artistic value (according to today's canons) — classic and contemporary theatre, classical music, opera, dance — and to cultural production and diffusion. Such things cost a great deal of money and require the kind of broad support that only a public body can give. This contradiction raises democratic hackles concerning equity (occasioned by big public spending on the cultural leisure preference of a minority). This in turn gives rise to broader criticism and to two defensive arguments.

THE MARKET AS THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING?

In *The Democratic Muse* (Banfield, 1984), the author applied the principle of market sovereignty, whereby only real consumers should pay. The principle is based on commercial viability under which goods and services should only be produced at a price that consumers are willing to pay, with production continuing only for so long as consumer decide given that they need to set aside money for whatever they choose to buy. Why then should institutions be kept and fed with public funds? Such behaviour might lead one to think that the only reason is that they operate in fields that are economically obsolete and to which they should seek alternatives to survive. Were arguments of this kind put into practice, the lion's share of cultural institutions would vanish overnight, as would the labour market for most actors/performers (given that theatre prices would soar in the absence of subsidies). At this point there is a dilemma between the disappearance of the Arts as we know them or deciding that they deserve patronage. If we decide the latter, a good argument needs to be made for funding them.

Moreover, these considerations may nurture left-wing criticisms of public cultural policy as culturally and socially conservative. In fact, any heritage-based cultural policy is inevitably a conservative one. Hence free-market logic (which is inspired by a political philosophy that diametrically opposes public support) is brutally reductionist. The 'free-market' line can easily be confused with an opposing ideological argument, namely: that the legitimacy of a culture is directly proportional to the share of citizens consuming it. This latter argument is a valid one to the extent that the value set on cultural legacy stems from a time when societies were much more unequal and anti-democratic than they are today. Thus a policy based purely on a free-market approach would lead to cultural support being given solely to artistic practices and productions catering to the upper classes.

The democratisation asymptote

The argument for reducing cultural offerings to its socially-narrow consumer base (or even producer base) can be countered by the following argument. Maintaining cultural activities outside the free market implies finding weighty reasons for overthrowing the basic democratic rights of sovereign citizens

(and in this case, sovereign consumers). This issue goes beyond the purely theoretical one, given that in countries that commonly use referendums, cultural choices tend to fall within the sphere of direct, democratic-decision-making (Frey, 2000). However, the issue not only affects culture. There would be no legal system, education, law enforcement or national defence it the free market had its way. By contrast, if the principle of public service fostering the general interest should be the one that prevails, what level of inequality in access to and consumption of the services offered would be reasonable?

Two arguments play a decisive role at this juncture. The first draws on the distinction between the consumer's formal sovereignty and his real sovereignty. If we describe the market test as a choice in which the consumer can help in deciding which goods should be produced and what amounts, depending on how much they cost him, it is easy to see that not all votes carry the same weight. That is because wealthier consumers exert greater influence over the course of events.

To improve the conditions under which the commercial choice is made, the public actor must deal with three inequalities affecting the consumption of the goods and services under consideration. The first objective focuses on correcting geographic imbalances and inequalities at a given point of consumption (for instance, lack of facilities and people to staff them). Education is the second factor affecting the consumption of cultural goods. In fact, all of the sociological surveys reveal the extent to which education shapes the intensity, variety, and audacity with which citizens consume culture. Last but not least, the inequality in individual wealth and families' leisure budgets justifies subsidising cultural facilities to make entry prices affordable and to broaden their range. This amounts to 'positive discrimination' to the point where certain target groups may be admitted free on given days. Egalitarian concerns would largely assuaged by average admission prices set to make them affordable to broad swathes of the population and that boosted the socially disadvantaged's share of total visitor numbers. This shift in demand could be achieved by increasing capacity, diversifying loyalty programmes and familiarising the new consumer segment with cultural offerings.

Yet the relationship between rising visitor numbers and greater social diversity is far from a linear one. Cultural consumption surveys reveal that one of the most important factors differentiating culture consumers is the nature of the facilities they visit. A small minority of consumers often go to the theatre, opera, and concerts. Unfortunately, the figures do not help identify and isolate this minority. That is because the statistics blur the distinction between the total number of spectators and a count of individuals.

In any case, the hypothesis of a gradual but slow reduction in inequalities regarding the consumption of High Culture is hard to prove in the face of two objections that differ greatly in their natures. The first objection is that the hypothesis neither takes into account evolution in the social and cultural setting nor growing diversity (whether potential or real) in the cultural offerings receiving public support. The measures of policy efficiency are diverse and yield conflicting interpretations. Visits to museums and Art exhibitions have risen in France over the last two decades but the number of classical concert-goers has hardly changed.

Reading also reveals a less positive trend than appears at first glance: "France reads more but the French read less" (Dumontier *et al.*, 1990), state the authors of an excellent analysis on a certain disaffection with books.

The statement by these authors can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, between 1967 and 1987 (the dates of the two last surveys on leisure undertaken by France's Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), the number of French readers rose but the number of books they read on average fell. This divergence basically stems from a drop in the reading by regular readers (those who read at least one book a month), as indicated by a small

drop in this group within the French population. On the other hand the nominal trend in the reading index is positive if one considers the number of individuals who have read at least one book in the twelve months before the survey. However, one needs to make corrections to these figures to take account of the social transformations that have taken place over this period. These adjustments can be likened to those made to prices to takeaccount of inflation and yield current prices when looking at consumption figures. In our case, we can measure reading trends by adjusting for education, which is the main determinant of how much people read. Doing so produces a less rosy picture than the raw figures would suggest. The raw data show a rise in readers (those reading more than a threshold figure in a given period). Yet these figures hide a real fall when one adjusts them for the rise in education over the last twenty years.

In principle, this measurement adjustment could be made to all cultural sectors that are heavily dependent on individual educational attainment. Thus one needs to ask whether the frequency with which people consume 'High Culture' has benefited from the spectacular growth in education attainment over the last thirty years. If the answer is less than encouraging (as in the case of reading), we need to ask the following three questions:

1) Is level of education a good indicator of cultural preferences or should it form part of a wider, more complex set of factors, even when it stands out as a determining factor?

2) How should one model competition for leisure? Here, account needs to be taken of how time is split (at individual, family, and social levels) when subsidising more abundant and diverse cultural offerings. Here, one should bear in mind: *(a)* that 'format' may weigh more heavily than content; *(b)* the consumption patterns and forms taken by television, which is now the dominant leisure option.

3) Leaving criticisms aside, is it possible to measure the negative/disastrous impact that a less dynamic cultural policy would have had?

The counter-factual nature of the third question takes us on to a second objection commonly raised to public action: the failure to take Opportunity Costs into account. Here, the argument is based on what efficiency would have been achieved if the resources spent on cultural policy had been spent on something else or had followed other allocation methods. Economic thinking delights in considering other scenarios. Here a model of public action run by Central Government tends to draws fierce criticism for its inefficiency, systematic over-spending, unwanted side-effects caused by 'red tape', being unequal to the task of serving either the public interests or the interests of the artistic community as a whole. Yet the political reasoning used by the Left to counter the democratisation model overlaps to some extent, arguing that public action: yields poor results; only reinforces the status quo and benefits the ruling classes; and is used to legitimise more spending on 'High Culture'. We will come back to this relativistic attack on the foundations of democratisation later on.

The collective benefit of cultural business

The second line of argument rejects economic or political conflation of cultural value (social or economic) with the interests of the majority of consumers (who are thus the most influential). Such an approach, it is argued, cannot justify acting in the name of the public as a whole (or at the least, in the name of those groups that are not direct consumers). Thus the economics of cultural policies considers the Arts as mixed or semi-public goods. In fact, such policies procure cultural goods and services for direct consumers who are willing to pay for them. Yet going beyond direct cultural gratification for the privileged few, subsided cultural production also offers society as a whole a set of indirect benefits that justifies protection from market forces. Here, we refer to the prestige that cultural activities (whether temporary or permanent) confer on a country, Capital, region, city or town. We

should also bear in mind the indirect economic benefits stemming from artistic activities. In fact, surveys on the effects of cultural investments try to measure how far cultural offerings help a town: thrive by attracting tourists and consumers; attract firms to the area; to reap the economic benefit of tertiary activity clusters with lots of innovation potential. Artistic firms also directly and indirectly create jobs. Artistic expenditure, both by businessmen and consumers, benefits a city and its region through direct and multiplier effects on local businesses and trade. The benefits flowing from tourism and related business activities are just two examples of the ways Art and the economy can be reconciled, helping to put State-supported provision of cultural goods and services in context. Furthermore, the arts are interdependent and mutually-reinforcing, sharing opportunities for training, work, and for aggregating consumer segments by 'bundling' various artistic offerings. Finally, future generations will benefit from the efforts made by public bodies to conserve both the artistic heritage and the creators and other staff needed to underpin it and to seek new artistic horizons.

This last argument is particularly valid for the kind of works that require the passage of time to gain traction and become appreciated. History is littered with examples of Art that was derided in its day but which succeeding generations came to prize. Taking the time factor into account, this structural difference between kinds of supply and demand (even where latent) leads to legitimation of the distinction between a cultural policy supporting High Culture and the treatment meted out to more popular, market-based cultural production. These popular productions are short-term undertakings and are regularly changed. Moreover, their financial viability is based on the fact that consumers are directly responsible for their maintenance and evolution. By contrast, High Culture productions, the artist runs the risk of 'soft' present demand and may thus be unwilling to wait for history's uncertain judgment on the value of his work. If public sponsorship did not act to cover this risk, creative activity in the High Culture field might wither away. Future generations would be justified in blaming their forebears for this loss. History abounds with geniuses whose sacrifice was derided in their own lifetimes but whose works have been acclaimed by future ages.

Uncertainty as to which aesthetic values will stand the test of time is sufficient reason for a cultural policy to support systematically innovative artistic creation.

Little by little, the identification of the cultural sphere with easily-identified producers, workers and consumers is fading.

The argument for cultural policy is based on the universality of cultural value by directly or indirectly adding new consumer segments and broadening the temporal horizon. It is an attempt to rebuild the dogma of the universality of aesthetic pleasure and the transcendence of artistic creation — past or present — beyond the socio-historical conditions that gave rise to the works.

One needs to argue the case rather than simply starting from a premise that is clearly misleading — especially when it is passed off as self-evident.

This is the sophistication of the paradox that worried Marx in contemplating the great works of Classical Greece and what they spawned down the Ages.

THE ARTISTIC *AVANT-GARDE* AND ITS OPPOSITION TO THE BOURGEOIS ORDER

We shall now examine the issue from another standpoint — that of the artistic sphere itself.

Can one relate artistic progress to social progress? The traditional explanation given by an all-embracing Social History of Art — especially from Hauser (1984) onwards — consists of relating the commercial system of organising artistic life that gradually took hold in the 19th Century with the politicisation of innovative Art. The key here is the dynamic nature of innovation.

The schema for the systematic progress of the Arts was based on politicisation of the artistic sphere.

Competition between artists drawn from the same generation and relations between generations of artists took the form of successive ruptures and stylistic innovations that led to evolution in the formal resources in each kind of Art.

Competition in the commercial system of aesthetic innovation might be likened to the workings of gravitation, with attraction exerted between different elements. The notion of an *avant-garde* stemmed from the idea that the output of pioneering Art (which was ahead of public tastes) was wholly at odds with the output of conservative Art (meeting existing demand for purely mercenary reasons).

At the same time, Art and its market — the public — became heterogeneous. From the *avant-garde* standpoint, truly innovative Art had a role to play in ending bourgeois power, morality and conformity and in helping the lower classes throw off their shackles.

Under such circumstances, the artist has two options. The first is for him to stay ahead in his field and individually battle against bourgeois values — an option that makes it likely that understanding of his works will come later rather than sooner. The second is for the artist to put himself at the service of the social forces seeking the downfall of bourgeois parties. Here, he risks losing his artistic autonomy in exchange for some recognition.

The *avant-garde* ideologies that sprang up in the 19th Century in the European Arts seemed to have proposed both kinds of response: the politicisation of the Arts and the people's adhesion to the daring experiments in the elitist Arts. Artistic enterprises of a more political kind, though fewer, sought to link artistic production with political purpose. Their purpose was to make innovative Art consistent with the political and social transformations needed to build a truly revolutionary, proletarian culture. A surprising (albeit short-lived) example of this can be seen in the destruction of Russia's post-Leninist Futurist and formalist avant-gardes. This occurred after an initial impetus aimed at sealing the alliance between aesthetic daring and a more radical political movement. The situation of the French Proletarian Literature movement in the 1920s and 1930s revealed the political aporias of such attempts — namely: (a) whether the value of Art should be measured in terms of its power to instruct and mobilise the lower classes; (b) the inability of the most 'committed' artists to use Art to raise the people's revolutionary consciousness (thereby dooming this functional, heteronomous conception of Art as a political instrument). The project of building an anti-bourgeois culture lost credit and steam in the 1930s as French Communist Party's turned to bigger issues (Gaudibert, 1977; Hadjinicolaou, 1978; Ritaine, 1983). These issues were the need to forge alliances beyond the working class to defend the national interest and to fight Fascism. The Communist Party's support for literature and paining in the 'Socialist Realism' style went through several stages — especially in the context of The Cold War in the 1950s. Yet the 'proletarian culture' line was opposed by many and there were many hurdles in the Guesdian [after Jules Bazile Guesde,] and Jaurist [after Jean Jaurès] traditions, fuelling the debate on the contribution of Art to the revolutionary political struggle, beginning with the exaltation of national cultural heritage (something that sparked heated argument) (Matonti, 2000: 405–424).

In fact, almost all the avant-garde artistic movements were organised in spheres far-removed from popular culture. From the Surrealism of intellectual Maoists in the 1970s to Bataille or Dubuffet, the artists who promoted some kind of cultural leftism fought on two fronts to show the revolutionary force of Art. The first front was criticism of what they called the 'Traditional Art' or 'The academic Art production bloc', which continued to pander to majority tastes. The second front was the denunciation of regressive trends in more popular Art forms. The argument of a 'sociological' affinity between artistic struggle and political struggle was based on the following syllogism:

– The Art to the majority's taste is conservative and conformist by nature and defends the established order of values and a fixed vision of the world;

– The domination of the ruling classes extends to the cultural sphere. Market workings ensure that the bourgeoisie (because it accounts for the lion's share of demand) is in a position to impose its tastes and direct artistic production;

– Combating aesthetic conservatism and the inertia of tradition in the strictly artistic sphere implies battling against the bourgeoisie's stranglehold over the arts. That struggle takes the form of criticism of radical innovation. Unlike Proletarian Art, the elitist *avant-garde* achieves political emancipation of the people without renouncing its autonomy.

Thus Art could be politicised in an indirect fashion without betraying itself. Above all, artists could struggle to deal with those aesthetic problems that most closely affected them and that stemmed from competition and conflict. Here, artists' independence and professionalisation were a condition for growing social influence insofar as conflicts were no longer moderated by external considerations (especially commercial ones). If alliances could be forged between artistic forces and socio-political movements, it was because artistic competition produced classification shemes and oppositions similar to those found in the social world.

Yet this self-proclaimed avant-garde policy clashed with a constant paradox: it was the upper classes that showed the greatest interest in aesthetic innovation, even when it took the most radical forms. In fact, the creators who were most aware of the antinomies in the avant-garde philosophy could make an effort to differentiate the elites while opposing the bourgeois commercial, utilitarian approach to catering to the most cultivated market segments. On the one hand, this would suppose defending a restrictive segmentation of the audience for innovative creators. On the other hand, it meant convergence in a formula for aristocratic aesthetism that had little or nothing to do social emancipation. Could it be the syllogism of indirect politicisation condemned artists to an autistic self-satisfaction and in so doing, created the dilemma of the politicisation of the Arts? Furthermore, could it be that the syllogism itself is based on a questionable historicist idealisation of creation, thus rendering its representation of Art and artistic autonomy less than convincing?

At this juncture, one needs to return to the common origins of the 'evolutionist' conception of Art as an activity susceptible to modernisation and teleological interpretation, and to the contribution of Art to political emancipation. Thus the very idea of an *avant-garde* and the value set on the movement itself reveals a paradoxical equating of politicisation with artistic empowerment.

THE ARTIST, PROGRESS, AND THE MOVEMENT: BETWEEN MODERNITY AND THE *AVANT-GARDE*

What is the origin of the *avant-garde* principle? At the beginning of the 19th Century, Art occupied a new place among some of the most influential philosophies of social progress. These included that of Henri de Saint-Simon, with the division of society into classes, attributing supremacy to artists, men of ideas, scholars, engineers and businessmen. The idea of the social power of Art crystallised in the notion of an *avant-garde* — a term lifted from the military world [and whose direct equivalent in English is 'vanguard']. Poggioli (1968), in his analysis of the history of and meanings in the *avant-garde* movement, without intending to pin down a date, nevertheless notes that the first use of the military metaphor was in *De la mission de l'art et du rôle des artistes* [Art's Mission and The Role of Artists], written in 1845 by Laverdant, a fairly obscure disciple of Charles Fourier. In this ideological context, Art is clearly subordinated to political ideals, in which *avant-garde's* value does not affect the internal dynamics of the artistic sphere. Poggioli's indications of the strictly political purpose behind the term makes sense, given that before 1870 there is no aesthetic extrapolation of the notion, only disjunction.

In fact, assigning a political role to Art under the battle flag of a Saint-Simonian [Utopian Socialist] vanguard does not necessary imply innovative or revolutionary Art. Indeed, the Art of followers of Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier was often highly academicist if one is to judge from their aesthetic principles. Thus, aesthetic

innovation does not in the least imply revolutionary political daring.

In Poggioli's hypothesis, the notion of an *avant-garde* takes two forms, one succeeding the other before they intertwined and spawned a host of historical manifestations clouded in ambivalence. The Paris Commune and its political wake were of great importance in intertwining these two strands of the *avant-garde*. The works and deeds of Naturalist writers on the one hand, and the symbolic participation of Rimbaud in the Paris Commune sealed the direct alliance between the Left-Wing, and the Far Left, and certain individuals and currents in Art. However, this did not last long — at least in the hoped-for form of an explicit, systematic relationship. The rift was reflected in the columns of *La Revue Indépendante* in the 1880s, mainly mirroring Naturalism [literary style] and the initial positions taken by the Neo-Impressionist Art movement. When the political and artistic dimensions of the *avant-garde* movement stopped converging, the notion continued to be used in the Arts until it became so diluted in international art circles that it came to stand for whatever happened to be in vogue. Yet its use in politics was both less systematic and less exclusive. This fact, far from simplifying the workings of Art and politics, gave it a complexity and dynamism in the evolving links between *avant-garde* movements and political commitment, given that the values of artistic *avant-gardism* did not automatically translate into revolutionary political Messianism.[1]

Indeed, the anti-bourgeois position struck by many writers and artists in the first half of the 19th Century stemmed more from notions of Art and its paradoxes in a market economy than in drawing up clearly-defined political battle lines.

In a pioneering work, which was often more used than cited, Graña (1964) revealed the meanings underlying artists' tirades against the bourgeois world and the ambivalence of their positions. The attack on bourgeois materialism and mercantilism was largely an attack on the power of the market, which became the dominating force in the organisation of artistic life. The growing power of commercial organisation contrasted with a re-mythification of artistic creation. Exalting genius meant stressing distance and exceptionality. Creation was conceived as something deeply charismatic, and the creator (as portrayed by the Hugolian figure of the poet as inspired demiurge) as someone who should transform society with the ideals of justice, fraternity, humanism, and personal realisation. These ideas were taken on board without demur. Yet, as Graña (1964: 55) notes, this focus on artist's charismatic ego and exemplary nature distanced artists from the rest of society. Thus the double postulation of the creative genius (associated with self-confidence and sometimes insufferable arrogance) and the 'genius' fear of powerlessness and being misunderstood on the other could lead to contempt for 'the system' and feelings of martyrdom.

This was a transposition of the dual identity of Art at the socio-political level. On the one hand, there was the autonomy of the creator (whose work — based as it was on the authenticity of personal behaviour — could not be judged by any ordinary yardstick). On the other hand, the market system attached importance to public recognition of Art. The Artist might prefer not to grovel for such recognition but in any case, an anonymous public would still reward or penalise an artist through its preferences.

In a trilogy dedicated to Romantic and Post-Romantic writers, Bénichou (1973, 1988, 1992) stresses the ambivalence of 19th-Century French innovative writers and poets' social commitment, and the ideological nuancing found in the following proposition: "Not modernity, not anti-individualist, and not unthinking support for the masses". In the first phase, during the triumph of early Romanticism,

1 Some authors, such as Michel Faure (1985), note that a creative, innovative artist may nonetheless hold Conservative or even reactionary political views (Debussy being a case in point), carrying out labyrinthine socio-historical reconstructions to justify these divergences. Such reconstructions are usually of a spectacularly reductionist nature. These singular feats of interpretation are victims of what might be termed 'the clock synchronisation myth', which assumes that artistic movements must be in lock-step with social struggles.

the implicit contradictions in the proposition were solved by glorifying the Poet, putting him ahead of the pack, turning him into a solitary genius who nevertheless drew on the collective conscience to light the path so that others might follow. In the second stage, pessimism and rescinded glorification were used to draw a disenchanted vision of the relationship between artist and society, whereby the relationship was formulated as both a curse and a redeeming sacrifice.[2]

2 Paul Bénichou saw in Vigny someone who was ambivalent to the highest degree. Vigny's of attributing creative genius with historical foresight both brought the artist closer to and distanced him from the people, allowing both facets of the creator's role to co-exist: "A relationship of greater scope [than the immediate application of ideas to things] united the thinker with the public; "the common people cannot do without this individual, and no matter how brilliant the genius, he cannot do without the common people". In this way, Vigny could both affirm that there was a strong alliance between genius and the public, and that the two were estranged: "Public conscience is the judge of everything. There is power in a people. An ignorant public serves the man of genius. How so? The answer is that the genius divines the secret of the public conscience. Conscience (the word literally means "to know with") seems collective". Yet at the same time he considered that "the thinking man can only appreciate his work to the extent that it is not a popular success and that he is aware that his work is ahead of the multitude". This is not a contradiction: the polarity is the ruling principle underpinned is conception of poetic priesthood, which is both reserved and fecund at one and the same time. How can one advance without remaining isolated, even if one knows that one is being followed from far behind? The reconciliation lies with history and the march of the multitude, which ignoring today's lesson, learns that of yesterday" (Paul Bénichou, 1973: 378). While the generation of poets that came after the great Romantics became disillusioned, Vigny's position led to a dissociation of the polarisations between impetus and withdrawal (if one will, the contrast between the activist brilliance of a missionary, prophetic poet in the mould of Hugo, and the painful pessimism of a Baudelaire, tormented by the errors of modernity to the point of turn art into a curse instead of sacred vocationa). "Thus the idea of a poetic priesthood went through various crises in the 19th Century, swinging between impetus and withdrawal. Vigny, from the very start of his career, found an enduring definition that could survive all vicissitudes. The 'embittered knight' begame a thinking herald of progress so that he could survive in this cruel world. He, more than anyone, has kept faith with the poets sacred mission come rain, come shine. His austere approach — a little grey it must be said — impressed less than others but it is the one that best tackled the changing circumstances of the Age. In Vigny, we find a belligerent poet in exile — a Hugo and a Baudelaire but also a man whose rigorous reflection on the poet's conditional stopped him attaining the brilliance of either" (PAUL BÉNICHOU, 1973: 378).

In the Socialist thought of the Age and in Karl Marx, the power of the bourgeoisie proved useful in the course of history. The bourgeoisie, it was held, had brought the world universalism and emancipation, sweeping away the Old Order, with its religious orders and local aristocrats. In this respect, the bourgeoisie's ability to see the world in more objective terms and to exploit the progress laid the foundations for scientific and technical progress. Yet, went the argument, it would be this self-same progress that would dethrone the bourgeoisie in turn and lead to social justice. Among innovative artists, the criticism of the bourgeoisie was not based on purely political reasoning. Among innovative artists, criticism of the bourgeoisie was not directly political. For artists, the bourgeois world enshrined utilitarianism, hypocritical moralism, self-interested rationalism, and an ever-present materialism. Against this, artists set their own egotistical traits: anti-rationalism, the force of soaring imagination, free expression that went (far) beyond conventional bounds, and idealism based on the cult of the genius whose exceptionality exemplified the liberating power of creativity. Yet was it sufficient for the bourgeois to enshrine all that "the artist discovered to be its opposite"[3] (in Paul Valéry's words); for Art to embody the power of social transformation?

Charles Baudelaire and Gustave Flaubert criticised industrialisation, mechanisation, modernity, and all the forces (including the revindication of democratic equality) that placed society in the thrall of strictly materialist hopes framed in terms of well-being and quantifiable happiness. Hence their aversion to the masses, 'massifying' progress, and the aestheticisation of their social ideals. Here, an intelligentsia and creative output were to be the only bulwark against an insipid, worthless world. Graña noted that this aversion to the masses, vulgarity and above all, the bourgeoisie, was founded in nothing more substantial than ideological positions:

3 Cited by Compagnon (1990: 28).

> While Flaubert and Baudelaire were not Conservative in the true political sense of the term, neither were they modern Machiavellis occupied with the subtleties of power as politicians are. They were not interested in the deliberate use of power, putting a social ideology into practice, or setting up a political party. They considered that the purpose of power was to surround the elite with a *cordon sanitaire* that allowed it to carry out intellectual tasks without being bothered by the masses (Graña, 1964: 121).

The cult of singularity (and its exaltation of ideosyncrasy, dandyism and 'larger-than-life' Bohemianism) as the only answer to the gap between artist and public gives a double meaning to the arguments and techniques for 'aristocratising' the writer. The first is the fostering of a non-conservative individualism to (aristocratically) protest against the bourgeois, materialist order. The second is the rejection of a teleological philosophy of history that confuses novelty/the creator's originality with progress (conceived as a collective desire to do better). An analysis of the ideology of *avant-garde* Art in France before 1870 reveals the first strands of artistic modernity. These were to interveave like a DNA Double Helix, spawning what came after. One strand was the artist's autonomy. This autonomy justified the full realisation of a creative project, understood as a tool for radical criticism of the bourgeois order. That is to say, it was a utilitarian argument that eradicated singularity. However, the temporal philosophy of artistic innovation had to satisfy the idea of movement without mechanising invention. That was because such mechanisation would impose a rationalised, obsessive approach to scaling new artistic heights and in so doing, would kill the very originality it sought to channel.

For Baudelaire, this duality was a source of a host of errors and splits, as Compagnon notes. Modernity, constituted by contradiction — modernity is fleeting and unchanging, contingent and eternal, forged by critical rejection, anti-bourgeois, useless and indeterminate in its meaning, reflexive, self-critical, self-referencing in its works and in the artist's lucid irony. In short, the Baudelairean philosophy of creative achievement rejected the temporalisation of novelty and celebrated the present. It was not a question of ignoring the temporal aspect of any deed or act but rather of rejecting the notion that the Past should determine the Present. This decision applied to both the Past considered as a reserve of meaning and value conserved in the Present, and to the Past as the embodiment of everything that must be rejected or systematically excelled. The Past was seen as a "succession of singular modernities",[4] and linking it to the Present would shackle it and eliminate it in the same way that the concept of the Present as permanent progress shackles it, consigning it to a perpetual future. A discontinuist conception of novelty can only conserve mistaken ideas of the beautiful, the ephemeral, and the eternal.

For the *avant-garde* to take off in the artistic world and create the conditions needed for equating aesthetic innovation with socio-political progress, critical rejection had to lead to rupture. This rupture was needed to place novelty on a time line of cumulative ruptures with the Past and to invent a cult of the Future, in which any creative act or expression only made sense if it was different from a rejected, criticised Past and anticipated a historicist contribution to a new perpetuity (a notion wholly opposed to Baudelairian

4 When take Antoine Compagnon's (1990) formulation and analysis: "Modernity, understood as the sense of the present, annuls any relationship with the past, conceived as merely a succession of singular modernities, lacking any value for discerning 'the nature of present beauty'. Given that imagination is a faculty that is sharpened in the present, it supposes forgetting the past and concentrating on the here and now. Modernity is thuys awareness of the present as such, without past or future and whose only link is with eternity. In this sense, modernity makes a heroic choice by rejecting refuge in or deception by history. Baudelaire opposed the eternal or timeless to modernity's irresistible perpetual motion and its self-consuming thralldom, the constant obsolescence of a constant stream of fleeting innovations and that denied any past innovation. Modernity treated the Ancient, the Classical, the Romantic as empty of substance. Modernity sought recognition of the twin nature of beauty, that is to say, the twin nature of Man" (Compagnon, 1990: 30-31).

eternity). Avant-guardism, which equated aesthetic innovation with progress, fostered a teleological concept of the increasing autonomisation of Art. It sought to impose an ideologically-inspired deterministic framework on the future of Art and to re-evaluate Art's Past. The movement's Art works were significant here insofar as they spread awareness of this historical need. It was a sovereign principle of progressive reduction of innovation to a quest for the formal properties of each Art (and which it was supposed constituted the quintessential uniqueness of each art), which had no link to any other structure or reference. This principle was put into practice in the abandonment of natural representation in painting, the ditching of the tonal range in music, and of conventional grammar in novels and in the simple expressive transcription of feelings in literature.

We shall now present an intermediate evaluation. The historicist concept of novelty as systematic improvement oriented to a given aim provides an argument for forging alliances based on similar positions. The innovative artist and his *mileu* battling against conservatism and the established order were, it was felt, were part of the same revolutionary struggle as that of the working classes against their bourgeois masters. In this case, the question is just how effective this aesthetic radicalism was. Could such an alliance offer the artist more than merely lending indirect support to the social movement? Could the artist play a Messianic role when his art was placed within the imperative framework of aesthetic originality? Would the artist sooner or later win over those who did not understand his Art, bringing them into his charmed circle as he enjoyed ever greater freedom in pursuing his aesthetic quests?

What kind of individual is the artist? A teleological concept of history, such as that held by Theodor Adorno, makes an artist great when he assumes 'objective tasks' in the Hegelian sense. Such tasks might be those history obliges the artist to solve so that society can attain greater aesthetic autonomy, which itself goes to make up true historical development. This concept also opposes the false identification of the artist with the triumphant singularity of the creator, which is no more than an extravagant, ideosyncratic epiphany. According to Theodor Adorno, being a true artist means ditching this false individualism, which is no more than the outward show of the publicity and the pseudo-teleological traits of the bourgeois world. The artist's mission is "to solve problems" that make artistic experience "the contrary of freedom linked to the concept of the creative act". The explicitly Hegelian scheme of the individual is transfigured when he (or she) becomes the tool of historical necessity:

> As Hegel knew, the most valuable works are those in which individual effort and the individual himself is subsumed in meeting an artistic need. Its very success turned it into a need (Adorno, 1994: 180).

This heightened the social and ideological contradiction: the principle of originality, with its teleological orientation (innovation to achieve systematic, cumulative improvement) is tantamount to a paradoxical exhortation to differentiate each creator from all the rest. Dictating creative individualisation leads to a competitive system that is hard to distinguish from the market system in the cultural sphere. Nevertheless, liberty to systematically seek original solutions would mean ruling out applying a collective regulating norm to artists, even if its purpose was to foster differentiation.

INDIVIDUALISM AND ORIGINALITY

It is not our intention to exhaustively compare the scope for innovation under the various systems for organising artistic production. As the most suggestive studies in the Social History of Art show, the common distinctions between these forms of organisation stem from stylisations. The real world never neatly fits the classification schemes we try to impose on it. This makes us think that an artist's influence is based on his reputation. In fact, the artist's powers of negotiation to expand control over his work wax

as he becomes famous. The ways in which an artist's reputation is forged vary among systems. Thus there are differences between a system of royal/aristocratic patronage, a commercial system, public patronage, control by an academy/professional grouping with a monopoly over the award of prizes, qualifications, and appointments. Yet in all cases, the innovative artist finds himself negotiating and fighting to build a reputation and in finding ways to turn the rules of a given system to his advantage, and to change them when he can. This entails freedom to negotiate prices, access to the patronage system, free competition in cases of commercial monopoly, and double-dealing under totalitarian systems of control. This quest may be especially based on competition among existing organisation systems. Raymonde Moulin puts it thus:

> None of the ways of professionalising in the Arts goes out of use. At any given moment, the proportion of the population involved in artistic activities and its professionalisation pose the biggest hurdles in the competition among artists to achieve social recognition and earn their daily crust (Moulin, 1995: 94).

By contrast, it is clear that the need for originality was linked to an object-oriented philosophy of history and opens the debate on the meaning of individualism, of which the artist is one of the most expressive symbols. In the first place, the debate bears on artists and their world. Vincent Descombes (1987), in a book on Proust, delves into the contradictions of Art modernity and asks what happens when the artist is obliged to be original. Baudelaire's analysis on this point again proves more enlightening: the individualistic system of creation involves a contradiction in terms. This is because most artists cannot hope that their work will resolve the equation between successful individualisation and emancipation, autonomy, and self-realisation. Under pressure to be creative, most artists face 'doubts', 'creative poverty' and 'the chaos of a wearying, sterile freedom' because they have not shown a recognised form of originality. Because of one of these paradoxes that are so common in artistic competition, artists who try to be singular spend their time prosaicly imitating the innovative work of others and thus become 'artistic Monkeys' through their own self-loathing and the public's alienating admiration of the more inventive work of their colleagues, whose *oeuvre* both stimulates them and destroys these unfortunate 'monkeys' at the same time.[5] We can consider artistic production and the evaluation of artists from a complementary perspective: that of the market. In a market economy, competition fosters innovation but it also leads to spectacular differences in success and greater volatility in artistic careers. What value should be attached to these inequalities? Are they the result of the public's blindness (with Art market entrepreneurs shaping public taste at whim)? Do they reveal an objective hierarchy of competing talents, whatever the determining factors of the hierarchy may happen to be? Could the excessive rise in the (limited) differences in artists' talents be largely due to the impact of modern technologies for

5 The analysis that Vincent Descombes dedicates to Charles Baudelaire deserves citing at length: "Baudelaire saw [...] that being a happy artist is harder today than in the past. [...] In yesterday's world, there was a collective style, that is to say, one that belonged to a group (a 'school', and beyond schools, a society). [...] In such an artistic system, less original individuals found their 'rightful place' by performing another function: 'obeying the norms set by a powerful leader and helping hi in all their tasks' (Baudelaire, *Salon de 1846). In this sense, nobody felt obliged to be original. However, the system changed. In the post-revolutionary Art system, the collective style was not only missing in fact, it was also excluded on principle. Above all, the same style for everyone had to be avoided at all costs. Any project for 'a return to order' [...] is (rightly) construed as tyrannical usurpation. What possible justification could there be for certain individuals imposing their stylistic preferences on others? Could it be justified by arguing that the age of experiment and inventions had come to an end? Nevertheless, Baudelaire asks us to consider the other side of modernity — the price exacted by glorification of the individual. 'Individuality — this small trait — has done away with collective originality (Ibid) [...] In a holistic Art system, the originality of solutions to artistic problems is of a collective nature. In an individualist system, everyone is forced to provide a new solution to problems that become ever harder due to the 'infinite division of the Art field'. Baudelaire saw that glorification of the individual engenders 'doubts' and 'poverty' in most people, who are incapable of demonstrating personal originality. In this case, such an individual has to content himself with the originality lent by someone else. Here, the lack of a powerful collective style dooms most artists to vulgar imitation. Such artists become mere 'Artistic Monkeys' [singes artistiques]. Instead of submitting to the legitimate guidance and direction of a Master in a school, 'Artistic Monkeys' submitted to the demeaning domination of a more powerful character" (Descombes, 1987: 142-143).*

disseminating and reproducing works — something that greatly broadens markets and widens the gap when it comes to success? (Rosen, 1981). From the choice of answer, one can deduce a different representation of what the artistic community is and what its collective ideals compatible with the imperative of aesthetic originality may be.

The debate also has a wider social and political dimension, given that it a question of discovering whether the artist seeking originality may constitute a social model. In this case, one has to separate individualism from one of its representations: the bourgeois. Non-conformism serves as the basis for an expressivist conception of individuality. The values of originality, authenticity, and personal sincerity belong to what Taylor calls "subjective change" (Taylor, 1994) or "expressivist change" (Taylor, 1998: Chapter 21) in modern European culture (which this author sees as the continuation of Rousseau and Herder's work). From this standpoint, people are naturally innovative and their individuality arises from personality traits that need protection from imitation and the influence of others. Each person tries to connect to his deep inner being through reflection on the conscious ego and inner dialogue. Authenticity adds reflexive control to level with oneself, recognising the originality of each individual kind of existence, which is the source of a rhetoric on difference and diversity. Here, ideally self-realisation should not be hindered by social conformism, or by inequalities that make it impossible to recognise the true value of each individual's personality and to foster its full development. If one accepts that everyone is unique, then each individual has to 'discover himself' — a process for which there is no model. The reference to Art, and the artist as a model for defining himself is fundamental here:

> In Herder and his expressivist concept of human life, this relationship [between self-discovery and artistic creation] is a very close one. Artistic creation becomes the paradigm for defining oneself. The artist is raised to the status of a model human being, as the agent of an original definition of himself. From 1800 onwards, there was a tendency to make the artist a hero and to see his life as the essence of Man's condition and to venerate him as a prophet and creator of cultural values. [...]
>
> If we become ourselves through the expression of what we are and what — in principle — is original and does not depend on what went before, then what we express os not an expression of what went before but rather a new creation. In this respect, we see imagination as a creative force.
>
> Let us examine this example more closely, which has become our model and in which I discover myself as an artist through my artistic creations. This self-discovery stems from creation, from creating something new and original. I invent a new artistic language — a new painting technique, a new metre, a new approach to novel-writing — and with this new language (and only with this) I realise my inner being (Taylor, 1994: 69-70).

Yet how do we take the step from expressive emancipation to individual behaviour to collective life? Does the value of originality constitute the social norm for self-realisation? As Taylor points out, the conjunction between authenticity, originality and freedom is based on a concept that is directly opposed to moral obligations and the utilitarian, rational order of modern life: technical progress; the industrialisation of the Machine Age; organisation of social relations following the rules laid down by the majority, including democracy itself. In this case, how can one consolidate a group around the highly differentiating principle of individual authenticity?

Following Comagnon, the first instance of artistic modernity stressing the role of the *avant-garde* appropriated the value of originality without submitting it to a historic teleology. The expressivist conception of self-realisation took the capacity for self-realisation for granted: only external obligations could prevent individuals fully developing their originality. This explains an aristocratic, relativistic variant of this modernist position. In the first variant, the ability to achieve only seems to be within

the grasp of a few extraordinary individuals who are willing to bear witness (even at the cost of great pain or tragedy) to their own brilliance in a grey world ruled by dull conformity. In the second, this ability to achieve embodies a new (almost anthropological) situation that legitimises the expressive differences of behaviour and commitment without relating them to a model setting norms for individual practices and representations.

The principle of the *avant-garde* simultaneously invoked critically surpassing any achievement and in dogmatically declaring the superiority of the future and thus making the movement committed to permanent innovation:

> We often confuse [...] modernity and the *avant-garde*. While both are paradoxes, they do not face the same dilemmas. The *avant-garde* is not simply modernity in more radical and dogmatic guise. While modernity identifies with a passion for the present, the *avant-garde* supposes a historical consciousness of the future and a desire to be ahead of one's time. The paradox of modernity is based on its erroneous relationship with modernisation whereas the paradox of the *avant-garde* depends on consciousness of history. In fact, these two contradictory factors constitute the *avant-garde*: destruction and construction, negation and affirmation, nihilism and futurism. [...]
>
> When the first modernity stopped being understood, modernity and decadence became synonymous. This was so because the implication of incessant innovation can be likened to the sudden onset of adolescence. The jump from the new to the out-of-date was instant from then on. In fact, the *avant-gardes* had conjured up this awful fate (and thereby dooming themselves to permanent obsolescence) by treating incessant novelty as critical improvement. To restore a little common sense and to draw a distinction with decadence, renewal needed to identify with a path towards the essence of Art through a process of reduction and purification (Compagnon, 1990: 48–49).

Raised to the status of doctrine, the critical liquidation of the past and any kind of conservatism paraded an undisciplined non-conformism that was unstructured by notions of aesthetic improvement and that easily tended to anarchy, revolt and irony. On the other hand, the channelling of artistic advances tyrannically imposed an evolutionary model on the creators banded together in groups, circles, schools and so on. Leading artists and their followers formed these groups to ensure the viability and systematic exploitation of those innovations considered most fertile. The systematic aesthetic alliance and organisation of hierarchical groups led to authoritarianism, aesthetic dogmatism, and using 'science' to brow-beat members. The 'Master' exercised a charismatic domination over his fellow creators, who were either temporarily or permanently reduced to the status of disciples. These 'camp followers' found themselves forced to be 'original' in terms of their group's canons.

Non-conformism and the idea of a co-existing system in *avant-garde* concepts of artistic innovation at the end of the 19th Century gave rise to divergent oppositions to the established order at different times: Cubism; 12-tone Music; Russian Constructivism; Dadaism and Marcel Duchamp's provocative works; Satie and surrealist poetry, full of critical irony or nihilism, challenging convention at every turn. After The Second World War, there were the currents of: Abstract Art; Serialism (in music); formalist subversion in literary novels in the *nouveau roman* movement; the compositions of Cage; the marginal art of Dubuffet; Pop Art; the works of *Collège de Pataphysique* [an absurdist, pseudo-scientific literary trope invented by French writer Alfred Jarry].

AN UNCOMFORTABLE ENTHUSIASM: THE SOCIAL ELITES AND ADVANCED ART

Each of the *avant-garde* forms of surpassing tradition supposes sufficient familiarity with the artistic past being criticised and relegated so that *avant-garde's* daring experiments and provocations could be understood. This approach was particularly marked in the case of extreme nihilist works — as in the case

of Duchamp and Dadaism, whose *oeuvres* seem to embody arbitrariness and even insignificance unless accompanied by a persuasive interpretation. Such extravagance only served to distance *avant-garde* experiments from the masses that most innovative artists hoped to emancipate through the originality of their creations.

This begs the following question: How can bourgeois society accept the cultural and artistic protests against its domination of innovative Art? Here, one should recall bourgeois power to 'make' artists, turning them into the heroes of museums, exhibition halls, the opera, concerts and festivals while overlooking their criticisms and extreme positions. This was a question that also occurred to many artists, aesthetic theorists and authors who were aware of the social contradictions of their cultural activities. Likewise, how could artists accept the embarrassing enthusiasm of the elites for their revolutionary, audacious works? At a more general level, at whom is Art aimed in a system of aesthetic innovation that challenges the social order? Who does the State really represent in playing its role as cultural provider when it 'corrects' or even reverses the sanctions of the market? Does it act in the name of public bodies, supporting and preserving what (at least in theory) will become the common heritage in the long run? Or do its actions merely further the interests of a 'cultural class' or even simply those of Art professionals in the name of legitimate autonomy in the artistic sphere?

Without a doubt, the upper classes have always lent the most effective support for radical artistic innovations. Yet, as Crane highlights in a study on the pictorial *avant-gardes* in New York after 1940 (Crane, 1987), it is worth characterising the first audiences of these movements as 'constituencies'. These constituencies were found in: organisations (government, companies, foundations); members of professional sub-cultures (experts, critics, conservationists, art dealers, artists, Professors of Art); networks of collectors and intellectuals. The constituents acted independently within diverse groups and were competitors, whether directly or indirectly. As artists saw it, once their works had gained wider fame and status, any reservations by the social minority on the value of rebellious Art vanished.

Bourgeois delight in anti-bourgeois Art gave rise to all kinds of arguments to explain away the paradox. One was that the full innovative scope of the works could not be understood by bourgeois philistines unless they were simply confused or affected by 'class contradictions'. Another equally ingenious one was that placing innovative works in commercial channels and public programmes did not nullify their long-term critical, revolutionary power one iota. Thus by a cruel twist of fate (or historical providence), the bourgeoisie would be hoist by their own petard.

We shall now refer to two politically opposed analyses of the social contradictions of the *avant-garde* movement, one by Bell and the other by Adorno. Bell's analysis measures the *avant-garde's* impact from the standpoint of members of the bourgeoisie seemingly hell-bent on putting an end to their social and economic power through their pursuit of a culture of hedonist nihilism. Adorno's analysis describes the aporetic consequences of the *avant-garde* movement.

Bell sets out to write the second part of a sociological history of the influence of ethics on the evolution of Capitalism (Bell, 1979). Yet Weber shows that the cult of work and individual effort, rewarded by social and financial success and prospects of eternal salvation, had been key to Puritan Morality's embrace of Capitalism. Bell highlights the extent to which values in the cultural sphere (especially self-realisation without reference to the collective) gave rise to an individual hedonism that progressively weakened the foundations of the Capitalist system. The Marxist concept of the bourgeoisie as a class that "could not exist without constantly revolutionising the means of production, which means the conditions of production and all social relations".[6] Bell superimposes one of the original elements in the Saint-Simonian

6 Karl Marx, cited in Bell (1979: 27).

concept of the *avant-garde* whereby entrepreneur and artist share the same obsession with novelty (thus legitimising both as historical players). Yet everything that entrepreneurs and the bourgeoisie foster in economic terms, they frustrate in the moral and cultural spheres. Entrepreneurial individualism is needed to develop economic liberalism and is lauded when it is pragmatic, utilitarian and rationalist. Yet the same individualism is reviled when it is expressive and anti-rationalist. It thus makes no sense to attribute cultural results that are the fruit of groupings of free, self-determining initiatives to the domination of the bourgeoisie.

Bell's analysis contains typically Durkheimian elements without explicitly referring to Émile Durkheim. For Durkheim, Art illustrates the risks of giving free rein to disorderly individual passions since there are no limits to desires (Menger, 2001). Art systematically appears in Durkheimian analysis when describing and conjuring the intemperance of these desires and their pathology — an unbridled exertion of effort on the superfluous. In fact, according to Durkheim, what defines Art, and cultural creation and consumption is the rejection of limits and obligations and hence — as Durkheim would have it — the negation of a central mechanism for social balance. Art therefore embodies and heightens the ambiguity making up individualism. The positive dimension of individualism's development is that it is based on the "progress of the individual personality", with the social benefits that accrue therefrom. After all, individualism and artistic expression surely flow from the same spring (the quest for originality). This quest in turns spurs innovation among competing individuals. Faithful to Rousseau, Durkheim repeatedly recalls that without imagination (the creative faculty *par excellence*) individuals would not be driven to constantly invent and to seek new solutions to meet new needs — that is, to progress.

Yet the perils of this social dynamic should not be under-estimated. The growing differentiation of social activities makes each individual increasingly autonomous and artistic activity merely strengthens this trend. Thus the artist symbolises the risk of 'egoism', the desire for free self-determination and the rejection of collective duties. Durkheim's distrust of Art was clearly linked to this vivid representation of individual disorder turned into a profession. Bell is not far removed from this concept of the individual as shaped by two forces: unbridled desire on the one hand on the other, dependency on the group, with its powers of coercion to ensure group survival. The bourgeoisie's change of heart and willingness to go the whole hog is explained by a shift in the composition of two opposing forces:

> A look back over history reveals that bourgeois society has twin roots and a twin fate. Capitalism had both Puritan and Liberal variants. The Puritan variety was not only linked to business activity but also to the formation of character (sobriety, integrity, hard word). The Liberal variety was inspired by the philosophy of Hobbes and involved radical individualism: Man had boundless ambitions that were limited in the political sphere by the sovereign but were given free rein in the economic and cultural spheres. Both trends formed an awkward whole and, in the course of time, their links were sundered. We have seen in The United States how Puritanism became debased, leaving behind only a narrow-minded, surly mentality that put respectability first and foremost. Hobbes' principles nurtured the essential ideas of modernism, namely a ravenous appetite for unlimited experiences (Bell, 1979: 90).

Given that the individual's desires are not limited by social or economic obligations, by morality or spending justly, the hedonist culture centred on immediate gratification of the individual's desires in a spiral of endless novelties that were every emptier of meaning and doomed to ever-faster obsolescence. For Bell, the development of credit was the instrument that was the Protestant Work Ethic's nemesis. That is because it allowed immediate material reward for one's labours and broadened the right to create pleasures, which

the Capitalist machine strove to multiply in order to foster a production based on innovation and what Schumpeter calls 'creative destruction'. According to Bell, bourgeois society was undermined by the triumph of individualism (of which the artist was the most successful exponent). This individualism and the cult of an 'infallible cause' (the *avant-garde*) comprised the following components: ego-worship; rebellion as a cult; amoral personal liberation; a cult of opposition to the bourgeoisie; the quest for impulsiveness as a behaviour pattern; 'institutionalisation of the pursuit of self-interest'.

While Bell stresses the devastating effects of the adoption of a hedonistic, nihilist culture for bourgeois society, Theodor Adorno was mainly concerned about the disastrous effects of acclimatisation to innovation for artistic creation. His argument ran as follows: the critical power of modern works is basically manifested in the liberation from forms and the rejection of traditional aesthetic solutions, which hide social contradictions beneath a seemingly delightful, harmonious artistic unity. According to Adorno, this critical power was doomed to be wielded in a negative fashion when it came to inherited codes of artistic construction and meaning. This was so because there was a desire to ditch a dialectic willing to consider all artistic options and aspects. Here, one can draw a parallel with the *avant-gardes*' concept of 'the general interest' and 'bourgeois interests' in the political conception and management of the world. Adorno considered that authentic works of Art could only manifest what the dominant ideology concealed — namely, the ever-deeper economic and social crises that were destabilising Capitalist society (and concomitant suffering, affliction, pain, and the revolt against the established order). Under this scheme, Art was distanced from common categories of aesthetic perception and in the end, from protest. The same bad habits in contemporary creation manifested the 'diabolical catastrophe' that lay in store as a result of Capitalism's contradictions. Yet innovation always runs the risk of contemplating its own navel, becoming systematised and falling for the latest novelty even if it is devoid of any social meaning. This dynamic arises because the market reaches agreement on methodically exploiting the cycle of innovations, no matter how radical or unacceptable works seem at the outset. Provocative innovations become commonplace and widely-accepted after being put into economic circulation, losing their provocative connotations.[7]

Likewise, the development of the administration of Art and its professionalisation is revealed by Theodor Adorno as the two most effective ways of neutralising Art. In addition, a historic stage in Western societies that tried to put an end to economic crises and social conflicts through bureaucratic organisation, technocracy, and planning served to boost consumption of the arts. In the process, society assigned entertainment roles to the arts and turned them into ideological vehicles for domination. If the conservatism of listeners and spectators dominated by consumption habits and manipulated by cultural industries confined progressive artists to painful social isolation, their position on the fringes seemed sufficiently perilous for bourgeois society to try to neutralise their impact by absorbing their creations in the culture management sphere.

The refinements of Adorno's dialectic reasoning, as in Baudelaire, took a wholly pessimistic tone. For him, the social essence of the *avant-garde* lay in its autonomy, which of itself was a protest against Capitalism's groping tentacles in every sphere of life. There could be no escape from those tentacles save through 'Passion' (in the religious sense) for truly innovative Art.

For Adorno and Bell, the success of the innovators and the public acclaim of their *avant-garde* provocation had pernicious consequences for diametrically opposed reasons. According to Bell, they were bad for Capitalist society, whereas Adorno thought they were bad for truly innovative creators. Yet in both cases, the question of the social and political power

7 It would be worth considering the future of the analytical scheme giving 'Capitalism' a remarkable ability to chew up, digest and render harmless all kinds of protest after first taking advantage of them.

of artistic innovation remains an impenetrable aporia. Either innovation is diluted in a hedonistic 'democratisation of genius', to use Bell's controversial term for the phenomenon, or it leads the artist to bear the cross of painful revelation all by himself.

Both readings of innovative Art's socio-political precepts beg some searching questions. What autonomy can there be in an innovation system in which the market is so easily accommodated that it becomes the driving force behind *avant-garde's* development (even if public cultural policies and their expert advisers partially substitute for private demand)? What difference separates the world of elitist Art on the one hand and *avant-garde* experiments on the other? Here, one might reasonably ask how the *avant-garde* could hope to both establish a monopoly of artistic expressiveness and aesthetic originality and to tear down the hierarchical divisions between autonomous Art and heteronomous Art without giving rise to formalist excesses.

The evolution of cultural policy revealed that the two vectors of artistic originality (the creator's aristocratic heroism and the democratic individualism of the expressive subject) had come to co-exist and lend credibility to two systems of public action. The equating of "support for radically innovative offerings/ stimulating cultural demand" was to be the backdrop against which public action projected a relativising fragmentation of the cultural sphere (Menger, 2001).

IN THE WAKE OF POLITICISATION, POLICY: THE SECULARISATION OF THE *AVANT-GARDE*

Internal rivalries in the artistic world involved fierce battles between old and modern, conservatives and progressives. Yet going beyond the rivalries between groups and trends, the *avant-garde* found a strong incentive to radicalise. Its politicisation of daring aesthetic experiments and criticism paid handsome dividends. The social and political content of true novelty often proved highly unpopular. In such cases, the *avant-garde* could take solace in the argument that the public was prisoner to aesthetic conventions and ignorant of its own alienation. More than a consoling rationalisation, this kind of reckoning was based on the potential universal appeal of any creation. Yet such potential could only be realised if the right social transformations occurred. If they did, it was expected that the whole community would end up rejoicing in the values enshrined in the Art. When the creation entered in the artistic circuit managed by public bodies, it provided a doctrine of public action in a secularised version of said transformations: namely, cultural democratisation, greater cultural education and hence higher cultural aspirations. The spatial metaphor of the *avant-garde* banalised the lag in demand with regard to supply, turning it into a structural feature of artistic markets, in which there is a flood of innovations. Here, public action might help shorten demand's structural lag behind supply. The beginning of democratisation is akin to this secularised version of the *avant-garde*. Gradually, the critical and provocative value of mould-breaking innovations becomes the general state of affairs in artistic life, following the Art world's competition rules and in which each wave of innovations racks up its own successes and symbolic representations to be compiled and disseminated through the usual channels.

From the 1960s, European public cultural policies accompanied growing funding of creative activities with rising support for the most innovative ones. With their ever-deeper pockets, cultural bureaucracies not only used their rising discretionary powers but also increasingly delegated protagonism in aesthetic battles. Once monopoly control by an academy had been ruled out, the public agent called for representatives of the 'artistic community' to carry out selective choices. Yet, as Urfalino notes:

> The State could base its delegation of powers neither on the consensus of an artistic community nor on authority with monopoly jurisdiction over principles of cultural legitimacy and the consecration of artists and their works. (...) To delegate choice, the State had

> no alternative but to use the protagonists' institutional mechanisms and their battles to its own ends. The State thus sought to substitute for the market yet uphold the autonomy of Art, while overseeing self-management of Art by a community of 'leading lights'. (...) The impossibility of the State making the choice and giving putting a sole authority in charge of artistic activity meant that it helped create "invisible academies" (Urfalino, 1989: 100–101).

That said, by bringing in a wide range of agents into the public art arena through mechanisms for delegating choices, the cultural policy established the legitimacy of unrestricted access. This in turn meant that any kind of evaluation or choice was shrouded in mystery with regard to both present and future outcomes. This also introduced the seed of relativism. How could one hope that the arts and cultural productions would gain lasting, general recognition if a restricted definition of arts and culture was used when widening the circle of those making 'public' choices?

Second, cultural policy had maintained obsessive, indefinite conservation of the past yet also set great store by novelty. Through a readily understood transferral mechanism, museum sacralisation and broad diffusion of masterworks of the past inexorably conferred prestige on all those who could claim to be creators. The process was speeded up as daring works of Art were consecrated by public institutions. This in turn superimposed a short-term system of public recognition system on long-term selective evaluation. Hence the twin postulates of public action: (1) establishment of rigorous terms for the defence and protection of relatively stable artistic and heritage values that had withstood the test of time; (2) action on the volatile, uncertain values of the present on the basis of what the future might hold ("Public institutions will not fail to give support for and recognition to artists whose future importance we can only speculate on today"). Such an approach meant that the authorities delegating choices on artistic funding and support ran the risk of unfairness in the short term and ineffectiveness in the long run.

Last, the public policy of supporting Contemporary Art established a more complex relationship with the market. Raymonde Moulin has shown how, in certain sectors of production, the agents of public cultural entities were ahead of the market in discovering, launching and valuing artists and innovative movements, and in consolidating market shares in other segments (Moulin, 1992). This relationship between public policy and the market was transformed through international competition among the nations with the greatest output of Art and artists. Thus public investment imposed a new logic and rationality as public and quasi-public institutions disseminating Art grew apace (museums, Contemporary Art centres, private foundations attracted by the generous tax breaks given for Art sponsorship).

What does the imperative of 'democratisation' mean in cultural policy organised in this fashion? We have already mentioned cultural policy's poor performance in relation to democratisation. The aim was to broaden audiences in the main fields chosen for cultural initiatives. It would be easier to ask below what threshold cultural elitism persisted thanks to social privilege and above which cultural heterogeneity was acceptable to audiences. It would also be easy to ask to what extent democratisation was a realistic, credible aim. Indeed, the objective was clearly beyond reach given that the determining factors in cultural practices and the mechanisms driving cultural inequalities give very little scope for public action. In reality, the democratisation principle tends to be identified with organising the production of cultural goods and services at set prices. Accordingly, the policy tends to be measured in quantitative terms: the more products and services are subsidised by a public entity, the greater the justification for the policy. Egalitarian concerns are met by the hypothesis that the social diversity of audiences grows along with the consumption of cultural goods and services.

The results of this system seem pretty unimpressive[8] when one considers its almost negligible impact on the cultural industries serving the mass market. The limitations of attempts to democratise 'High Culture' are revealed by strategies for segmenting offerings depending on the key factors of demand (especially age) in the cultural industries (music, audiovisual, cinema, multi-media). Cultural policy since 1980 has not renounced the principle of regulatory interventions in these markets. However, it has learnt some lessons regarding the implicit segmentation of targeted markets. Indeed, subsidised offerings in the 'High Culture' field are pitched at 'serial consumers' who make up the lion's share of demand and who are drawn from a narrow section of society. The explicit segmentation is the result of deliberately building a 'selection' of target markets by the producers of films, records and TV programmes. Rather than placing all its bets on the costly long-term (which would imply converting the masses to consumption of 'elitist' arts), public action has plumped for a relativist defence of cultural pluralism. Here, one should acknowledge that the public sector has acted as a safety net for 'High Culture', often in the teeth of opposition and entrenched hierarchies.

The cultural policy has resorted to: (1) various forms of support and recognition; (2) launching and re-appraising education programmes; (3) funding and distribution of products; (4) enhancing the status of artists; (5) promoting heritage works, archives and conservation in both commercial and non-cultural ways. Here, cultural policy has waged a two-pronged battle against the monopoly of the Fine Arts. The first prong is the re-activation and funding of activities, products and creators through the cultural policy. Its beneficiaries campaign to lower the barriers between: art and crafts: aesthetic invention and 'know-how; Fine Arts and Applied Arts. Thus photo journalism (and not just Art Photography), artistic profession such as fashion, advertising, industrial design, the circus, puppet shows, and cooking all appear in the catalogue of promoted sectors. Mass-consumption sectors (such as pop music, rock music, so-called amplified music, comics) also benefit from direct and indirect public support.

The second prong and the other exercise in relativism (raised to the status of political dogma) involves a sweeping re-evaluation and revitalisation of cultural practices in the anthropological sense. Here, culture embraces: community and regional languages, and cultures; rites; customs; knowledge and 'know-how' expressed in traditions, teachings, lessons and skills whether of an individual or a collective nature. These practices form and re-form the unity and identity of social groups, places and regions. In this case, relativism takes an open-handed approach to manifold cultural idiosyncrasies that would otherwise be confined to small pockets in worker, rural, immigrant, rural, and youth cultures.

In this way, contemporary cultural policy unfolds to follow two approaches in which the historical analysis faces the same dilemma. The first approach consolidates the power of creative professionals by prescribing: democratisation (that is, mass conversion to 'High Culture'; support for the renewal of cultural offerings. The second approach fosters the birth of a cultural democracy, the dismantling, abolition or reversal of hierarchical division on which the domination of 'High Culture' is based (Pure Art versus Functional Art; Original Creation versus Imitative Culture; Autonomous, Universal Culture versus Local, Heteronomous Culture). This is an approach that celebrates individual intervention and amateurism, egalitarian relativism, and co-existence instead of fostering competition among cultures.

Yet what does this unfolding of public cultural action have to do with the results of a rise in funding? Here, one should note that *ipso facto*, more resources leads to greater diversification in interventions and a

8 The uncertainty of a relativist appreciation can be summed up thus: following the reasoning set out in the first part of this article, it is logical to think that without public intervention, whole fields of artistic creation and diffusion would have vanished, especially those with most prestige. Yet these fields only exhibited a marginal increase in their social base. Above all, a re-allocation of resources might have boosted innovation covered the preferences of consumers of 'High Culture'.

broadening of beneficiary categories and means that supported sectors do not have to compete for funds. It has been noted that both cultural action strategies co-exist peacefully when public funding for culture is plentiful (Mulcahy and Swaim, 1982). Under such conditions, cultural policy is reduced to: pragmatic skirmishing over budgets; rejection of arguments over doctrine; realistic management of diversification; greater relativism or (framed in more conventional terms) more demands for pluralism. The coincidence of political and ideological opposites will be included in future public management, whose features are thrown into sharper relief when funding is plentiful. Thus, when the following characteristics are ascribed to public action in the cultural sector, there seems to be an irresistible temptation to throw the rules governing the rest of public expenditure to the winds. The singular treatment accorded to culture is seen in the ever-greater number of activities, spheres and forms of intervention, and more heterogeneity in additional activities. To make matters worse, there is indifference, impotence or even outright hostility to any proposals for rationalising cultural management (such as, setting specific goals and priorities, proper resource management, methodical evaluation of results).

Burgeoning budgets for cultural policy undoubtedly favour the expression and revindication of divergent issues and arguments, driven by a growing variety of constituencies and professional groupings rejecting any restrictive or monopolistic definition of culture. Nevertheless, the growth in funds is not sufficient by itself to explain the relativistic decentralisation of public action.

In many respects, the *avant-garde* movements have led to relativisation of their ideas by becoming the heralds of 'officially-recognised' Art. The scheme of innovation's indirect social and political influence has sustained formal quests for innovation and a professionalising concept of expert invention. In the process, it has relegated popular forms of artistic creation to mere surrogates for enriching cultural entrepreneurs and mercenary artists and confused consumers. Yet the limits to cultural democratisation and the growing gap between autotelic aesthetics and the rest of cultural offerings has raised serious questions. One is that the current cultural policy is both ineffective and revolutionary in the long run. The argument is that formalist aesthetic innovation runs the risk of appearing as a flimsy ideology designed to allow a specialised group of artists to act in harmony with the history of their Art but outside the historical context.

What can one say about the growing sacralisation of artistic autonomy? The creation of 'High Culture' requires cross-fertilisation with popular art forms. Traditional European and non-European cultures showed that autonomous creation is rooted in collective myths — something that only part of the *avant-garde* wanted to keep and nurture to ensure the survival and integrity of their formal revolutions. Furthermore, some of the most influential *avant-gardes* and some of the most iconic innovations in the programme of radical rupture adapted to aesthetic relativism in various ways (nihilist, ironic, humorous, and militant ones). Again, we find a second wave of artistic innovations such as those of Duchamp, Schwitters, Dubuffet, Warhol, Satie, Cage, who questioned the frontiers that separate elitist Art from other kinds of Art.

The relativist de-hierarchisation of culture greatly shifted the social and political meanings of Art. This shift affected: (a) artistic authenticity; (b) the sincerity of artists' self-realisation; (c) what constitutes Art; (d) what Art questions; (f) the forces, authorities, norms, obligations, and injustices hampering artistic expression. Perhaps this relativistic de-herarchisation was only so easily superimposed on the traditional doctrine of social and individual emancipation through the cult of 'higher values' (as contemporary cultural policy would put it) because both were based on a common idealisation of youth. Public intervention suggests the introduction of a more tranquil, secularised alternative to revolutionary, *avant-garde* or populist ideologies, that drew on the identification between cultural development and new generations. Cultural policy thus freed itself of

the socio-political content and now seems to take its cue from the behaviour of Art markets. Surely such a public policy equates aesthetic innovation with business inventiveness and drive, which is expressed in every shorter production cycles and reduces artistic consecration to a one or two-year fad? Does it not contribute to naturalising an arbitrary succession of innovations that merely seek novelty for its own sake (contrasting starkly and none too favourably with the political and ideological justifications used in the past)? Could it be that the institutional triumph of the *avant-gardes* doomed them to decomposition and diverse forms of syncretism and ecclecticism that have been labelled 'Post-Modernist' and that reject the teleology of self-proclaimed, cumulative ruptures?[9]

9 We cannot undertake an analysis of this kind of improvement given that the very idea of improvement has been overturned (or the ideologeme family) in Post-Modernity. Richard Shusterman (1991) began a lucid discussion (albeit, not lacking in aporias) to determine how a socially progressive aesthetic swept away traditional hierarchies between High Culture and the Culture of the Masses without succumbing to populism. The advent of Post-Modernity was the death knell for the concept of Art as either an autonomous sphere or one that was increasingly autonomous. Yet the proposal to hierarchise Pop Art to separate the wheat from the chaff and, by so doing, strengthen the value of Pop Art and to introduce sound criteria clashed with the aim of de-hierarchisation and to adapt to an unsustainable functionalism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should like to thank Frédérique Matonti for his invaluable observations and suggestions on the first draft of this text.

REFERENCES

Adorno, T. W. (1994). *Introduction à la sociologie de la musique*. Geneva: Éditions Contrechamps.

Banfield, E. C. (1984). *The Democratic Muse*. New York: Basic Books.

Bell, D. (1979). *Les Contradictions culturelles du capitalisme*. Paris: PUF.

Bénichou, P. (1973). *Le Sacre de l'écrivain*. Paris: Corti.

Bénichou, P. (1988). *Les Mages romantiques*. Paris: Gallimard.

Bénichou, P. (1992). *L'École du désenchantement*. Paris: Gallimard.

Compagnon, A. (1990). *Les cinq paradoxes de la modernité*. Paris: Seuil.

Crane, D. (1987). *The Transformation of the Avant-Garde*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Descombes, V. (1987). *Proust*. Philosophie du roman. Paris: Minuit.

Dumontier, F., De Singly, F. and Thélot, C. (1990). La lecture moins attractive qu'il y a vingt ans. In *Économie et Statistique*, 233, 63–80.

Faure, M. (1985). *Musique et société du Second Empire aux années Vingt*. Paris, Flammarion.

Frey, B. S. (2000). *Arts and Economics: Analysis and Cultural Policy*. Berlín: Springer Verlag.

Gaudibert, P. (1977). *Action culturelle: intégration et/ou subversion*. Brussels: Casterman.

Graña, C. (1964). *Bohemian versus Bourgeois*. New York: Basic Books.

Hadjinicolaou, N. (1978). Sur l'idéologie de l'avant-gardisme. In *Histoire et critique des arts*, 49–76.

Hauser A. (1984). *Histoire sociale de l'art et de la littérature*. Paris: Le Sycomore.

Matonti, F. (2000). Les intellectuels et le Parti: le cas français. In Dreyfus, M. et al. *Le Siècle des Communismes* (pp. 405–424). Paris: L'Atelier.

Menger, P-M. (2001). Durkheim et la question de l'art. In Fabiani, J.L. (dir.) *Goût de l'enquête. Mélanges en l'honneur de Jean-Claude Passeron*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Menger, P-M. (2001). Culture. In De Waresquiel, E. (ed.). *Dictionnaire des Politiques Culturelles de la France depuis 1959*. Paris: Éditions Larousse.

Moulin, R. (1992). *L'Artiste, l'institution et le marché*. Paris: Flammarion.

Moulin, R. (1995). De l'artisan au professionnel: l'artiste. In Moulin, R. *De la valeur de l'art*. Paris: Flammarion.

Mulcahy, K.V. and Swaim, R. C. (dir.). (1982). *Public Policy and the Arts*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Poggioli, R. (1968). *The Theory of Avant-Garde*. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press.

Ritaine, E. (1983). *Les Stratèges de la culture*. Paris: Presses de la FNSP.

Rosen, S. (1981). The Economics of Superstars. In *The American Economic Review*, 71, 845–858.

Shusterman, R. (1991). *L'Art à l'état vif*. Paris: Minuit.

Taylor, C. (1994). *Le Malaise de la modernité*. Paris: Cerf.

Taylor, C. (1998). *Les Sources du moi*. Paris: Seuil.

Urfalino, P. (1989). Les politiques culturelles: mécénat caché et académies invisibles. In *L'Année sociologique,* XXXIX, 100–101.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Pierre-Michel Menger studied Philosophy at *l'École normale supérieure and then Sociology at EHESS (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales) [School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences] where he began his doctoral thesis under the direction of Raymonde Moulin*. He began his research career in 1978 as a CNRS researcher and completed his doctoral thesis at *La Fondation Thiers* before being recruited by the CNRS [French National Centre for Scientific Research] in 1981. He pursued his career at CNRS until May 2013, when he was admitted to the prestigious *Collège de France*. Menger directed CNRS – EHESS from 1993 to 2005. In 1994, he was appointed Director of Studies at EHESS, having taught sociologist methods and theories since 1987. He also gave courses on the sociology of consumption, life-styles and work for several years at the *Institut d'études politiques de Paris* [Paris Institute of Political Studies]. He has written numerous books on the Sociology of The Arts, work, and creativity, among which *Le travail créateur* [Creative Work], published by Gallimard-Seuil in 2009, is particularly noteworthy. He is also co-Director of the journal *Revue française de sociologie* and member of the Scientific Council of the journal *Revue économique*.