Social gravities[1] and artistic training paths: the artistic vocation viewed through the prism of the concept of temporal form of causality

Juan Carlos Pita Castro
University of Geneva (Juan-Carlos.Pita@unige.ch)

Abstract

This contribution is based on a previous research dedicated to the life paths of art school graduates whose empirical data consisted of 13 autobiographical interviews. It cuts these paths into biographical periods and attempts to throw light on the relationships they have between each other. This contribution starts from an observation: in spite of candidates being admitted to an art school and obtaining the same degree, their artistic vocations take several different directions and are highly polarized in terms of social origins. This article brings out this dichotomy through the concept of temporal form of causality. It highlights biographical logics that determine the achievement of the artistic project by articulating archaeological and procedural analysis of the biographies, and it points out a certain number of social gravities that find their origin in the social space and that become significant over the life paths.

Keywords: Biographical research; vocation; identity; life paths; temporal form of causality

Introduction

> *There is a rumor of time which is both sublime music of the spheres and ticking of a time bomb.*
>
> (d'Ormesson, 1998, p.33)

Our work is situated within the field of biographical research in education (Dominicé 1990; Delory-Momberger, 2005; Field, Merrill & West, 2012; Horsdal, 2011). This contribution is based on a previous research dedicated to art school graduate's life paths (Pita Castro, 2013). That initial study aimed at bringing out the processes involved in

becoming an artist. Three steps structured this study: (i) *reconstructing the pathways of young art school graduates by using narrative resources,* (ii) *analyzing these pathways in order to* (iii) *understand some identities.*

This contribution starts from an observation: in spite of being admitted to an art school and obtaining the same degree, the artistic vocation takes several directions for different graduate students. Some identities are marked by suffering, non-recognition and failure, while others are characterized by euphoria, recognition and success of the initial project. Some narratives mingle with the sublime music of the spheres, while others seem to be accompanied by the ticking of a time bomb. This paper questions the biographical logics that put a strain on artistic vocations. It attempts to bring to light the gravities that hinder the achievement of the artistic project and that impact the identities.

The link between life narratives and identity is central in the study on which our contribution is based. It finds its origins in the work of Ricoeur (1990), which is related to the relationships between life stories and identity. For this author, the answer to the question *who am I*? traverses the narrative and suggests to interpreta life as a story. The life story 'redeploys' an identity, which, through the transposition into words, finds an opportunity to assert and to recognize itself (Ricoeur, 2004). It helps us to seize identity as a process and as a product by dialectising 'idem-identity' and 'ipse-identity', thereby moving beyond the classical aporia of identity. Life stories make it possible to access the construction of an identity by linking it to biographical dimensions.

The works of Dubar (2006, 2007, 2010, 2013 in collaboration with Paiva) and of Demazière & Dubar (2007) have also been decisive for the elaboration of this research. The authors deal with identity through a sociological and nominalist approach. This general perspective is valuable inasmuch as it anchors self-narrative, according to the nice formula of Ricoeur (1990), in power and legitimacy relationships that configure the social space. What it emphasizes 'is not the psychological and cultural personality (in the sense of 'basic personality') [but] the symbolic – and most of all language – form in which [people] tell about themselves, argue and express themselves' (Demazière & Dubar, 2007, p. 304). It postulates that 'analysing the "worlds" mentally built [by people] from their social experience [set up a mediation to rebuild] typical identities in a specific social field' (Dubar & Paiva, 2013, p. 99). The concept of 'field' is significant here. It invites us to take seriously the existence of a set of tensions that handle identities according to forms of interaction but also to 'biographical logics'.

The work of de Coninck & Godard (1990), from a sociological perspective, have shown that any attempt to account for life courses assumes that, 'a minima', the links between events and actions are taken into consideration. Biographical research may [indeed] not evacuate 'the question of chronological sequences [...] except for purely and simply being diluted and merged in an exploration of systems of representations, which is not shameful, but is something else' (p. 30). The authors invite us to pay attention to the modes of 'sociological construction of the biographical temporalities and [to] the causality forms that arise from them' (p. 26). It is for this reason that they forge the concept of temporal form of causality. In order to highlight 'biographical logics' that shape the artistic vocation, this contribution has recourse to this concept. It distinguishes, implements and articulates two sub-categories, the 'archaeological form' and the 'procedural form'.

Emblematic courses

The pathways of art school graduates embody and exacerbate a tension between an aspiration for self-realization that configures identities since the advent of modernity and the structural and cultural uncertainty, which is specific to a modernity that can be described as "advanced".

Vocation and self-realization

The works of Schlanger (1997) propose an archeology of the concept of vocation and enable us to grasp the part of originality inherent in this notion in the modern universe. In modernity, vocation is inseparable from a rehabilitation of the personal desire, from a democratic ethos, from a valorisation of the activity and from secularization.

In modernity, the answer to the question 'what will I do with my life?' lies primarily in 'the privacy of the inner-self' (Schlanger, 1997, p. 10). It involves (and requires) that we first look at the inside before looking outwards, while engaging in an activity with which one identifies and which therefore fosters self-realization. It is this 'subjective moment' (ibid.) that helps us to identify the aspirations which life is entrusted with. Modern vocation refers to dimensions that are linked to the person and that characterize him. It is related to expressivism (Taylor, 1998), a particular form of individuation, which increased at the turn of the seventies (Martuccelli, 2002), in which the dimensions that make up the originality of people is supposed to have an impact on the way they build their lives and fulfil themselves.

Modern vocation is associated with a certain utopia: it claims that happiness lies in productive activity where desire and disposition are intertwined and it audaciously bets that happiness will one day be the fate of all. This utopia and this bet, however, fail to address the conditions that are necessary for the democratization of the particular form of individuation that it proposes.

An open vocation

Lives devoted to art have become since the advent of modernity 'an extreme and highly valued type of individual existence' (Schlanger, 1997, p. 13). The artistic professions offer an 'approximate housing' (Schlanger, 1997) to the individual who seeks his way in the world. This vagueness is part of their power of attraction. They allow themselves to be configured by whoever invests in them. They just indicate a way of being and an activity. 'Instead of ready-made positions that involve set beforehand tasks obliging people to be adjusted with' (Sapiro, 2007, p. 5), these professions are primarily 'positions to do' (ibid.), to build and to develop by whoever is dedicated to them.

Regarding this aspect they differ from highly organized and hetero-determined professions. They step back from the application of rules, standardization, imitation and conformity. They give priority to singularity and personal distinction.

Empirical investigations show that the number of art schools students has increased. Art studies became accessible to everyone. Today, everyone can identify with art, aspire to become one day an artist, expect to confirm the belief in their personal identity (Dubar, 2007), incarnate this identity in the world and be socially recognized (Honneth, 2000). However, inequalities persist, determinisms keep acting, even though the idea that 'one was born as an artist' prevails in a vocational meaning (Heinich, 2005). Beyond this representation, we must consider that 'one becomes an artist' and that 'biographical logics' and socially configured inequalities occur within this process.

Uncertain careers

Building a career in the art is an uncertain project. Social objectification of the artistic value is done through a series of competitions (Menger, 2010) and this value is therefore revealed retrospectively. It is due to the lack of absolute criteria for determining the artistic value beforehand (Heinich, 2005).

An excess of human resources is essential for the proper functioning of this sector, and it has an impact on the careers and destinies of the artists or those who aspire to become one. Aesthetic innovation is achieved at the price of 'a growing inequality between those who make a benefit from their reputation [...] and those who are used as an extra strength' (Menger, 2010, p. 66).

Investment in artistic activity is most likely not to lead to success. In the arts, inequalities are considerable, all of them being (and this is the paradox) 'under the painless and exciting appearance of a ring of stars' (Menger, 2002, p. 35) where 'the most amazing apology of inter-individual competition' (ibid.) takes place.

The artistic vocation is certainly an opportunity for anyone who wants to accomplish. Getting involved in this project, however, means engaging in a career whose outcome is uncertain. The projection of an artistic career path is particularly delicate. Yet some engage in this direction and choose artistic training, guided by the desire to have their identity confirmed and achieved. They plan to 'accomplish in the uncertain' (Menger, 2010).

Identity and autobiography, identity and ordeal

Identity and autobiography

A series of works, inspired by Berger & Luckman (2006), consider language as a key in building and maintaining the social. In this perspective, the social is defined as 'a set of meanings, beliefs, attitudes, action orientations that are internalized by individuals-subjects but also potentially expressed by individuals-authors of their works and their words' (Dubar, 2006, p. 208).

Identity can be considered as a reflective face of the self (Berger & Luckman, 2006), as the answer to the question 'who am I?' which is inseparable from a place in the social world. Identity then implies a transposition into words, which uses and organizes outstanding and variously valued categories (Dubar, 2007).

In accordance with the interactionist paradigm (Menger, 2010), this contribution studies the identity building process within two axes: diachronic/biographical and synchronic/relational. It thus proposes to consider social space and individual time (Pita Castro, 2014a), with regard to its narrative reorganization, in the analysis of the construction of identities. It takes into account a double interaction: between oneself and others, and between oneself and oneself.

Identity construction involves two types of acts giving shape to identity configurations (Dubar, 2010), in other words, to an architecture of categories. Acts of assignment/proposal of "virtual" social identities (identities for others) lead to transactions in synchronic/relational terms between assigned/proposed identities and assumed/incorporated identities.

Acts of belonging to "real" social identities (identities for oneself) lead to transactions on the diachronic/biographical axis between inherited/acquired identities and aspired identities. The first act, derived from the perspective 'for others', defines who you are. The second one, derived from the perspective 'for oneself', defines who you want to be or think you are. It implies reading one's trajectory from a biographical perspective. Between these two types of acts, once the primary socialization (dominated

by the logic of internalization) has been completed, harmonious relations are not self-evident.

The relational transaction leads either to (1) relational regimes of cooperation-recognition, or to (2) relational regimes of conflict-non-recognition. Biographical transaction leads on its side either to (1) an interpretation of one's biographical trajectory in terms of continuity-reproduction, or to (2) an interpretation of one's biographical trajectory in terms of rupture-production (or even a rupture without production in case of crisis).

This paper makes use of autobiography, which implies a reflexive activity, a retrospective look and the creation of an intelligible story. It is the narrative of the development of an individual personality (Lejeune, 1996). It involves exploring and crossing a diachronic axis according to the current narrative. It thus puts in tension the identity of the narrating person with the identity of a main character, who changes and transforms as the story goes and who is none other than himself. It unfolds a current identity in order to reflect its construction.

The autobiographical activity requires a periodization in the biographical flow (Lejeune, 1996). In each period, a 'world' (in the text) is stabilized and a subject (the main character) takes shape and finds its place (or is assigned one). Every period thus proposes a periodised identity. The different periods of the narrative are connected with each other by continuities and ruptures that determine the permanence and the change occurring in the identity of the narrator.

Closely linked with interactionism, which considers the individual as the synthesis of distinct and distant successive 'selves' (Menger, 2010), the use of autobiographical narratives is then supposed to help recover the layers that constitute the individual in this reflexive dimension of identity.

Identity and ordeal

These various periods, cut into sections by the narrator in the flow of his/her experienced life, end up being precariously balanced. The autobiography is indeed marked by imbalance. It focuses on turning points in lives, on rupture and change, on moments from which shaping processes emerge (Baudouin, 2010).

Periods (with identities) do not indeed define the basic structure of the autobiographical narrative. This structure lies on the side of the ordeal. Every narrative includes a self-structuration via narrative codes inside the discourse (Ricoeur, 1983). The ordeal is the basic unit of narrative economy. Telling one's life then means managing and organizing a number of ordeals within various periods that the narrative cuts in the biographical flow. Autobiography is the verbalization of successive ordeals that have marked the author and that have contributed to his development. They allow understanding the construction of the main character (Greimas, 1970; Propp, 1965) and seizing the identity transactions that lead to biographical and relational regimes, which characterize the various biographical periods.

Any ordeal has been the subject of a neat narrative treatment. With reference to the narratological work of Genette (1983), we can propose a strong link between narrative treatment modalities and speed of the narrative. The slower is the speed of the narrative, the more it develops episodes, which, from the author's point of view, have marked one's life path. The objectification of the speed of the narrative, which could be represented in a graph (see Pita Castro, 2014a), facilitates the identification of moments that determined the construction of identities.

Time and causality

Narrative and retro-diction

The work of Ricoeur (1983) reveals to us that narratives work on and with time. Narrative is a chain of events and actions, and it seeks a certain number of narrative patterns from which it connects these events and actions in order to offer a story heard as an intelligible whole.

Narratives massively invokes the subordinating conjunction, 'the because', articulating consecution and consequence (Paluku Tsongo, 2013). It makes work together chronological links and logical links. As a seasoned historian, Veyne (1971) points out that 'it is vain to oppose a narrative story to another that would have the ambition to be explanatory; explaining more means telling better, and in any case we cannot tell without explaining' (pp. 131-132). Finding the causes means 'telling the fact in a more penetrating way' (p. 131) and thus 'exposing non-event aspects' (ibid.) that the narrative organizes and updates in its specific temporality.

The narrator of a story uses a logic of retro-diction. He goes back in time and offers a reconstruction 'of processes that have contributed to the production of what actually happened and that prevented the other options from coming true' (Grigon, 2008, p. 85). Biographical research cannot therefore escape from the description and analysis of the sequences that configure individual lives and that are reflected by narratives in their own way.

Temporal forms of causality

Biographical research works on and from the narrative reconstructions, articulating consequence and consecution. It therefore cannot omit a chronological perspective and a formalization of links.

Speaking of causality does not mean here yielding to the temptations of determinism and positivism. In a logical-experimental framework, causality is realized in a closed model. Since A and B are both isolated and temporally remote events, A is the cause of B provided that A is prior to B, that no other event comes between them and that the conditions remain constant. In this context, time is not considered and the master of all variables is presupposed. What is, however, forgotten here is the fact that 'historical observation [...] can never end up in an experimental situation which cuts the observed variables' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 24) and the fact that it is dealing with phenomena stuck in (and made up by) time.

The concept of temporal form of causality takes seriously the time variable and is especially accurate when the researcher holds the empirical basis of life stories. However, it implies abandoning the opposition between "ballistic" approaches and the ones based on meanings built by the actors for the benefit of their articulation. De Coninck & Godard (1990) identify three additional models to account for life paths from a sociological perspective. We consider two here.

The archaeological model

The first model used in this paper is the one called the 'archaeological model'. It is unique in that it involves locating a point of origin from which 'other events will take place' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990). It assumes the possibility of 'finding an initial state' from which it is conceivable to point out the temporal relationship between events. In this model, everything arises from this initial point. In its strong version, it makes the hypothesis of a causal engendering, by derivation, of the destinies. The life paths are (with more or less emphasis) 'under the control of forces that derive their properties from the past' (Menger, 2010, p. 36). With this model, ballistic metaphors are

on the horizon. In order to account for the life courses, he proposes to proceed by summarizing 'previous causalities' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990) until reaching the shooting parameters that are behind the projection.

The perspectives opened by the school of Bourdieu belong to this model. They pose an internalized past working in the present and imposing its inertia. The concept of habitus accounts for this presence and perseverance. It formalizes the existence of a past, which is rooted in the present and determines the future by dictating its 'way of being', daily or by 'successive fits and starts' (ibid.). These perspectives enact agents who are more or less consciously 'haunted by their past' and dominated by a tendency to reproduce what a 'symbolic freezer' (ibid.) holds beyond the passing of time.

In this context, early socialization acquires considerable explanatory power. It stands out as the guarantor of 'the strength and [of] the longevity of internalization effects' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 37). Time is then conceived as 'an updating time of the potentialities contained in the origin' (ibid.).

The procedural model

The second model used is the procedural model. It refers to a dynamic causality. It claims to describe the 'process itself' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990). When we have to formalize the processes taken and realizing over time, we must at least use this model. It is indeed 'through the formatting of the studied process, through the construction of the logic of progress or of the chain of events that causal connections will be drawn' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 34). This model does not attempt to identify a cause entirely contained in the past. It rather focuses on evolutions over a 'process in the making'. It thus invites us to implement longitudinal studies[2].

Archaeological model and procedural model deserve to be articulated. We can indeed (1) only report a process in reference to its initial state and to the causes that have initiated it, but (2) these causes are "acting" in changing conditions. The agent is of course haunted by his past, but his story has to be considered as a capital to invest or to achieve over time.

The procedural model particularly turns its attention to the 'passages' between 'states'. Several subfamilies can be distinguished. Two of them explicitly raise the issue of sequences. The first one, called bifurcative, looks to 'disruptive moments in themselves' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 34). The second one, called energetic, focuses on 'investments needed to produce these ruptures' (ibid.).

The bifurcative perspective conceives existence as divided 'into calm sections, where things are on-going, and into decisive moments where everything is put back into play' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 36). Between two bifurcations, 'an archaeological logic prevails [in that] the output of the last bifurcation defines the relevant initial conditions for the next section' (ibid.).

The energetic perspective postulates the existence of probable fates (dependent on archaeological logic). The agent can, however, avoid them by investing energy in moving against inertial forces.

Presentation of the corpus

Our contribution considers thirteen pathways: six are from Fine Arts school graduates and seven are from fashion design school graduates. Three of them come from an upper social class (two Fine Arts graduates and a fashion design graduate), four of them are from a popular social origin (fashion design graduates) and six of them come from a

middle class (Fine Arts graduates). The art school is public and is located in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Its admission implies competitive entrance exams.

The life stories collected were (co-)produced in an interview situation. They were produced within two and five years after the end of the initial artistic training. Young people were between 25 and 30 years old.

They were invited to focus on events, meetings and actions that they found significant throughout their pathway in the arts. Instructions given proposed to invest the genre of autobiography: 'I ask you what your autobiography is'. Interviews thus unfold identities throughout the academic-professional axis (Galland, 2007), whilst redeploying the dynamics between innovation and sedimentation that contribute to the construction of personal identity (Ricoeur, 1990).

The narratives were cut into three periods: the artistic vocation, the artist's training and the professional integration of the artist. The first two periods explore the archaeology of the art school graduates. The period of vocational integration crosses the ordeal of the transition from initial training to the working world (Pita Castro, 2014b) with the archaeology of the art school graduates.

Elements of analysis

Linking identities and social origins leads to a polarization statement. Identities of the young people who come from a upper social position (three fashion design and Fine Arts graduates) articulate biographical regime of continuity and relational regime of recognition. All these young people continue to subjectively feel like artists after completing their training and they are integrated into professional legitimized networks of arts.

They define themselves as artists and carry out a socially recognized artistic activity. The situation is completely reversed in the case of young people who come from popular social classes (four of them, all choosing fashion design training). These young people are indeed subjectively distant from the artistic project and/or do not get integrated into professional legitimized networks of arts. In this case, identities articulate biographical regime of rupture and relational regime of non-recognition. For the other young people (middle social classes), no logic is observed. Situations and identities are various.

How to bring out the polarization of the fates when we consider the two extremes of the social space? Can we settle kinds of springboards and gravities that are put together, concentrated and updated by the pathways of these two extremes? How to understand that the fates of young people who followed the same training and were validated and certified by the same training institution are dichotomized at this point within a period between two and five years after training? This is what this paper attempts to enlighten with the help of some research results and under the light of temporal forms of causality seen above.

The archaeological or the shooting settings

The biographical period preceding the entry into the art school helps us to reconstruct the meanings attributed to the artistic project. These meanings appear largely correlated to their original environment. The analysis of this biographical period thus allows the formalization of 'shooting settings' that are put into words by narratives, giving access to the archaeology of the artistic project.

Figure of inheritance: appropriation and continuity

> Our inheritance is not preceded by any testament. (Char, 2007)

The figure of inheritance has been reconstructed from the narratives of young people coming from upper social classes[3]. It is inseparable from a process of appropriation of a heritage, which suggests standing out and being assertive. This figure brings together narratives from Fine Arts graduates (two of them) and fashion design graduates (one of them) belonging to families where *art* and *intellectual* categories are connected between each other and valued. The artistic project articulates these two categories.

The family invites here to a 'personal affirmation' and to 'experimentation'. A pathway corresponding to its aspirations has to be found.

> We do not come from a family where money is important. The aim is to find yourself, to be happy and to live your passion. The notion of money comes next. (Camille, a fashion design graduate)

In this figure, the 'you will be an artist is an implicit invitation that springs from a trans-generational underground path' (Delcourt, 2013, p. 46). Art is also "part of life". Young people are thus impregnated with it since their childhood (books, paintings, exhibitions, events, lifestyle).

> If I had to start my "Once upon a time", I think I would maybe start with my family! [...] There are art books everywhere at home. There are paintings. There is always a piano. Art is part of life in fact! (Christophe, a Fine Arts graduate)

In these families, one parent is or has been an artist, as some notable predecessors. Art always takes the 'characteristics of [one or more] tutelary figures' (Ravet, 2007, p. 63).

> Closer to me, my mother is a Tibetan art and civilization historian. She is a Tibetologist. But before that, she was an artist. If you want, she is from the generation of the New Yorker artists in the seventies. She knew John Cage, all those people! (Christophe, a Fine Arts graduate)

In the project of becoming an artist, there are significant others (Berger & Luckmann, 2006) with whom the individual identifies. This project is part of a shared 'world' that gives form to the hard core of self-definition. The person internalizes this 'world' during the primary socialization, and a set of validations helps him to consolidate it.

This is an 'implicit transmission [that], beyond an opening to [arts makes] evident' (Delcourt, 2013, p. 46) the will of becoming an artist. By taking back to him 'a piece of [that] history' (ibid.), the person can 'express his way in a serene climate' (ibid.). The family does indeed not manifest any opposition to the artistic project. It is an 'unconditional support'. Young people are also here familiarized with the gravities of the artist's life and with values and standards that govern the world of art.

> [My parents] warned us! There was no secret. They warned us that it was a little harder [financially] at this time. [...] We did not have the same timetables as the other children, because they took us with them everywhere. (Camille, a fashion design graduate)

On the biographical axis, the figure of inheritance is characterized by a regime of continuity-reproduction. Inheritance is however not passively received nor continued.

Active appropriation is indeed at the heart of this figure. It is necessary to assert oneself in a singular way by taking inheritance back to its own account. The significance of the artistic project lies in the process.

Figure of countered vocation: reappropriation and rupture

> This feeling, this invincible desire to return, immediately reveals to him the existence of the past, of his past; in the house of his life, windows appeared. (Kundera, 2000, p. 76)

The figure of countered vocation includes all the narratives (the four of them) of young people from popular social classes. All are stylists. These people come from families for which the categories of *work*, *gold* and *stability* are central. In these families, a qualified artistic activity is present in childhood.

> I always liked to have fun with my mum by making carnival costumes. I have a grandmother who sews, I have a mother who sews, but for pleasure. I have a great-grandmother who crocheted, too! There are still in the family some people who were in, well, not professionally, but in that context. (Fanny, a fashion design graduate)

This activity, however, is linked here to the categories of *pleasure* and *leisure*. *Art* cannot constitute a "real job anyway". The family is opposed to such a project. In contrast to the figure of inheritance, opposition to the project of becoming an artist comes from the close entourage. A whole 'world'—the one, which the person belongs—delegitimizes the project of turning *art* into a profession (these two categories cannot be articulated here).

> I wanted to go to the Arts Deco after compulsory school. [...] But I was very influenced by my father at that time. It was for him that I got my diploma as a sport saleswoman. He disliked the artistic dimension. (Ileana, a fashion design graduate)

We find in this figure a cleavage between work (related to a constraint) and leisure (linked to pleasure), which is characteristic of the lower social classes (Negroni, 2007). This cleavage structures the 'world' to which the person belongs, his essential own home.

The person first accepts this dichotomy. *Art* cannot be a real job... It is obvious. He then embarks on a vocational path, which is defined as *pragmatic, serious*. But he will get lost in a pathway that was not his but for which he says he was always made. This path can be completed (saleswoman, trading), but these young people are actually waiting for something else. The artistic project continues to live clandestinely. The person accepts his/her fate, but keeps a certain distance. Total adherence is impossible. In the narratives, it is an unexpected event that will give rise to 'diving into the world of dreams, of childhood' (Negroni, 2007, p. 129). It will enable the artistic project to resurface, to win through the strength of the evidence. This is then the "click".

The heart of this figure lies in the re-appropriation of that dream, assuring a reflective unit to the identity. The choice of an artistic training is required here as a bifurcation which originates with an earlier passion which surreptitiously continued. The re-appropriation of the project and the identity affirmation here imply a radical break with the original environment and a considerable expenditure of energy. It is indeed in this figure that the energy expenditure accompanying the artistic project is the most intense. It is proportional to the fate that the person said they had to break with in order to finally be themselves.

However, the person is isolated in his/her aspirations. The family does not support them. It is vigorously opposed to them. The theme of the social place and its recognition permeates this figure. Getting into the art school means reaching the place that socially defines the person and then eventually being "somebody". It means being recognized, validated and supported, and no longer being alone against all. It means becoming the "artist" that one always has been.

> It is being someone. I have a little problem with self-confidence, with being someone for others, you know? Then, well, being an artist, I was someone in another's eyes, and then consequently in my mind. (Ileana, a fashion design graduate)

The admission to an art school establishes a regime of recognition-cooperation, which is awaited and finally realized. It gives rise to reinsurance and to confidence in the validity of the project. At this time the person can socially exist as an artist.

This figure is particular in that the artistic project finds its completion with the admission to the art school. Young people do not indeed formulate any clear career plan. Everything happens here as if the confrontation between opposites amplified a phenomenon of 'identity overbid' (Martuccelli, 2002) and exaggerated the notion that one was born to this. Entering an art school means finding a favourable context to affirm what kept being denied. This admission gives consistency to identity and concludes the process.

> I did not project myself after training. In fact, I had no idea of what I would do in fashion design. But it was really a dream! It was pretty confused. It was a bit the ideal image of a stylist. However it was not a very concrete idea, not a realistic one. (Helen, a fashion design graduate)

Retrospectively, the person who tells his life story says that choosing the artistic path was inseparable from an imaginary of glossy paper, made of glitter and glory. When young people describe their social background, they speak of it (afterwards) in terms of *simplicity*, *honesty, authenticity,* which are positively valued. Autobiographical narratives recount a gradual distancing from the world of art...

Emancipation from a trajectory and from an environment characterizes this figure. The idealization is particularly strong here. It is proportional to an initial distance and to a lack of knowledge. The project outlines are particularly unclear. Narratives characterized with this figure reveal the clarification and the progressive awareness of an impossible identification with the world of art.

Opposite to the narratives from which the figure of inheritance was forged, the artistic project is revealed in its fragility. It is not securely connected to the primary socialization. Some values are barriers and some skills are missing. By contrast, heirs have always been impregnated and, like 'Obelix, [...] fell into the pot when he was very small' (Péquignot, 2009, p. 46). They are identified with inherited values that are consistent with the world of art, and they master the necessary skills to become an artist.

The updating of the archaeological, or from where social gravities emerge
Figures of countered vocation and inheritance focus on, collect and polarize elements situated on the basis of trajectories that partially parameterize the achievement of the artistic project. These elements, referring to what can be described as archaeological, occur throughout the narratives.
The procedural model helps us to formalize self-updating times. The objectification of the speed of autobiographical narratives allows us to identify the moments when, in the

stories, crucial events happen. This paper focuses on three of them that are decisive and that are reconstructed from a comparison of all the collected narratives.

In the case of young people from popular social classes, this self-updating is done by successive fits and starts (crises are indeed narrated there). In contrast, for people from upper social classes, it is rather the logic of constant and daily strengthening that dominates, whilst art school contributes to reaffirm and to keep the world and the identity internalized in primary socialization. In our corpus, the stories of young people from popular (but also middle) social classes reveal then inequalities and implicit evidences that are partially conditioning the artistic vocation.

The artist (also) participates to a world

One of the key moments relates to the discovery of the world of art, values and norms that organize it and on which the *participation* to a common world is based. This discovery is enhanced by the training system, as the art school gives access to professional worlds of art and ways of being an artist (Mill, 1992) to be explored.

This discovery can have destructive consequences. Because of it, the artistic aspiration can literally disappear. It is particularly devastating in the case of young people whose stories have been grouped under the figure of the countered vocation, as the distance between their social background and the world of art is important for them. These narratives strongly emphasize a distance, which has always been present, underlying and suddenly revealed in the narratives. Ileana notes, for example, that point.

> I think I had always had a kind of dilemma. I have never loved, even when I entered the fashion design school! (Ileana, a fashion design graduate)

In all these narratives, the world of art is opposed to the values, which the person has inherited and which are deeply rooted in his original social background.

> It is futility and "show off" above all. [...] An overplayed world, completely supernatural and completely light years away from my values. [...] Simplicity, authenticity, job well done. The world of fashion is completely the opposite, it is a world made of "showing how one is the best, the most stylish". It is a world of big mouths. (Ileana a fashion design graduate)

Workshops, competitions and guest artists contribute to this discovery. A revelation occurs; the distance is insurmountable. Personal identification with the artistic project may cease. In the narratives, a subjective distance with the artistic project takes then shape. The person becomes aware of a possible affiliation. He can certainly continue his studies, but something definitively breaks in himself while facing 'reality'.

> [About a competition] I was put in the middle of journalists. I really felt very small. And I said to myself: "It's not me here, it's really not me!". I am a simple person. (Fanny, a fashion design graduate)

This experience 'disgusts*'* her. She finds 'people who did not fit me'. The same distance is posed in the narratives of Ileana, Juliette and Helen as a result of experiments confronting the professional world of art and the ways of being an artist. At that time all of them are aware of an *arrogant, overplayed* and *superficial,* a world of *jackals* and *sharks*.

On this occasion, the 'self' is captured in its differences, but it claims having always resided in the distance. It cannot identify with this world because the distance is too

important, and in fact it was already on-going. A dilemma was acting beneath the surface, until "clicks" and "evidence" occur.

The art school is a secondary socialization scheme (Berger & Luckman, 2006). What is at stake here is the continuation of what primary socialization has started shaping. The greater the distance is, the greater this secondary socialization requires a reconstruction work and the deeper it involves revisiting one's identity, rebuilding one's house and reconfiguring the core of self-definition. In the case of young people whose narratives have been grouped under the figure of the countered vocation, it requires a real identity conversion. In the light of our narratives, it however appears impossible. The world of art is too heavily hitting the core of self-definition, and socialization processes do not seem accurate to accompany this conversion.

This is the first social gravity, which is given here to see. The seeking artist from popular social classes who once aspired realizes that he does not really belong to this world, and that he cannot join it. For young people whose stories have been grouped under the form of inheritance, proximity is much stronger. Training forces to an articulation between primary and secondary socialization, but it is easier for them. The modifications are carried out at the margin. They do not have to revisit the foundations of their house (Berger & Luckman, 2006).

The artist is (also) an intellectual

Training paths biographies are marked by a strong requirement: to intellectualize artistic productions leading to a reversal onto oneself. This is a consequence of customization and swelling discourse occurring in the arts as well as of evaluation criteria that have become fuzzy (Heinich, 2005).

> We are asked to draw on our guts, on what we have! We were asked to focus on our own navel, to put out what we had in our guts. (Camille, a fashion design graduate)

The art training system forces to put into words the coherence and the meaning of productions that are connected to the personality and interests of the junior artists, and it concerns narratives of Fine Art graduates as well as the ones of fashion design graduates.

> They asked me to really think about my work. [...] I had no self-reflection about that... I was asked to put things into words and to be able to explain and justify myself. (Helen, a fashion design graduate)

The trainee artist cannot then be satisfied with a simple expressivity, nor can he/she be satisfied with *doing* or *technical* mastery. All the narratives clearly distinguish the *talking* from the *doing*, as they distinguish what concerns the 'ego' from the *technical*. Training systems value the 'ego' and the *talking* and neglect or even devalue the *doing* and the *technical*. In order to be a fully qualified artist and to succeed his training, the person must articulate the 'ego' and the *talking*, which means intellectualizing a job that has its source in itself.

This constraint reveals a second social gravity. In the autobiographical narratives from which the figure of countered vocation was formed, there are moments that shed light on this social gravity. In these narratives, the relationship between the 'ego' and the *talking* is problematic. Confronted with this requirement, these young people struggle. This is the case of Helen, who cannot articulate her productions with her discourse.

> I do not feel in my place! I eventually wondered what I was doing there, why others succeeded there and not me. It was quite confusing in the sense that it was a self-questioning based on my abilities, on what I'm really made for, because I could not see what was wrong. (Helen, a fashion design graduate)

It is also the case for Juliette, who refuses to intellectualize her work, thus opposing the *doing* to the *talking*, as Ileana and Fanny did.

> When you take a concept, it takes over from the object itself, and then, quite quickly, it was really the object that was missing, we were too much in the intellectualization of the object, which in the end is a garment, I mean. (Juliette, a fashion design graduate)

In order to explain this difficulty and this refusal, archaeological reasons are required for the analysis. The figure of the countered vocation had dissociated *art* and *intellectual*. In these narratives, ordeals are related to moments when articulation has to be done.

These narratives tell a break, unlike those from which the figure of inheritance was forged. In them, the period of the vocation was indeed characterized by an invitation to find oneself, to explore, to experiment, but also by a valuation and a familiarity with intellectual dimensions, which have always been present alongside the artistic dimensions. In these narratives, the artistic project (as a reflection of primary socialization) is consistent with what the training requires. There is continuity between past and present, between exigencies of the training and skills that are developed during primary socialization.

The requirement of turning towards oneself and putting things into words is easy there, as a logical continuation of a past, which prepares for success. On the opposite, all the narratives from which the figure of countered vocation was developed enlighten a past that does not prepare for success. There is more than anywhere else doubt, wandering and difficulty. These young artists succeed in getting graduated by the art school, but are overtaken by a subjective non-membership with a vision of art which is too *intellectual*, away from "job well done" (aggregating and articulating the categories *doing* and *technical*).

The artist is (also) relational

Another key point concerns what can be designated as 'professional meetings'. The analysis of the processes involved in becoming an artist highlights the importance of these meetings. Training systems, by inviting renowned artists and offering participation in competitions, offer a favourable context for these meetings. They open networks, allowing the insertion of the aspiring artist. On this point the narratives thematise a before and an after.

> [Referring to the contrast between before and after the art school] We lose [the opportunity] to attract the right people. At school everyone speaks with you, that means curators, art critics, intermediaries, mediators as well. Because they are paid. Afterwards, there is nothing anymore. Because you are in a fairly big vacuum, where you have to find your place. (Henry, a Fine Arts graduate)

Within the limits of our corpus, the one who becomes an artist finds his first insertion when he is in the art school, thanks to professional meetings it promotes. This is the case of Camille, Christophe and Henry.

[On the occasion of a competition] My mom sees the pair of shoes, it is called Moebius, the shoes are called Moebius! And she tells me in front of the guy: "Hey, look Camille, it is the name of your cat! ". So I get to know the guy. I tell him it is the most beautiful pair of shoes I have ever seen. He tells me he is the one who made it. He tells me he loves my dress, that it is incredible. I tell him that I made it by myself. And then he shows me a small demonstration of shoes on a screen display, then you know. And all the demonstration of the Moebius strip. It is a shoe, which is made of a single strip. And I tell him it's amazing, my dress, it's made of the same approach! [...] I let him my contact information. He contacts me several weeks later. He is going to open a fashion design studio in China and he proposes me to come live with him, to set up a clothes department there. (Camille, a fashion design graduate)

This meeting allows a smooth transition from school to work. It reduces the ordeal constituted by this transition (Pita Castro, 2014b). Entering the 'big'[4] art network helps to become an artist. When entering into this wider network, the aspiring artist gains in surface (Castel & Haroche, 2001) as well as in identity consistency (Roulleau-Berger, 2007). After completing the training, professional meetings are more difficult or impossible. In our corpus, professional integration is realized during the training period, never after. Everything happens as if it were too late once training is behind. The opportunities have gone.

Through the analysis, a statement is clear (it converges with a set of researches dedicated to life paths of art school graduates): Narratives of people who come from popular social classes never describe a decisive meeting which would lead to a professional network, while all the narratives of the heirs account for such a meeting (Péquignot, 2009). The heirs succeed in 'opening the right door at the right time' (p. 46), unlike the narratives from which the figure of countered vocation was built. In these, the network, the large one, remains closed. Reaching it is impossible.

These meeting moments reveal a relational competence (necessary to become an artist) shown by the heirs. It is a kind of interpersonal skills, an ease to sell oneself and to talk about oneself and one's job. We guess here a third social gravity. The heirs know and master the 'explicit and tacit rules' (Péquignot, 2009). They are aware of the importance of networking and they know how to take profit from it. They also benefit from (socially constructed) self-confidence and from the upgrading of an artistic project that has been validated by their families. This 'persistent support from the family' (Ravet, 2007) feeds a self-confidence that must be considered as a decisive factor of success.

Conclusion

The sociological and historical works related to identity models converge toward a definition of the pre-modern identity as 'established and predefined from outside' (Rosa, 2010, p. 278, underlined by him).

The consideration and the description of the individual are correlated with his place as well as his inclusion in a social order, which is relatively stable and perceived as immutable. It is with modernity that a first crack occurred. It contributed to build a gap between the self and the world (Martuccelli, 2010) and initiated a process of individualization. It is only then that identity could become self-determined and constitute a reflexive project, and that the modern figure of vocation found a space for its diffusion while being run through by a utopian democratization.

The definition of who you are no longer only proceeds from the outside, and does not only come from a relatively fixed past, but largely depends on the way life is organized and on the choices that govern this organization. With modernity, the self and the reflexive project fit together, and the horizon becomes charged with alternatives considered as feasible.

It is within this general framework that we must situate the evolution of the theme of vocation. Like the Calvinist vocation (Weber, 1904-1905/2003), the modern vocation is linked to worldly order and working life. In the Calvinist conception, however, work through which people have to be fulfilled is inseparable from a condition that must be accepted. This form of vocation perpetuates the social baggage. Modern vocation demands a certain affinity between doing and being, as well as the ability to choose.

Modern vocation is crossed by this democratic utopia. It exacerbates the ethical model that shapes our contemporary societies, where 'nothing is worse than the feeling of having wasted your life [and where] nothing, at first, [is] more accessible in appearance than this objective: all individuals can realize their life' (Martuccelli, 2006, p. 361). In this model, everyone is responsible for the success and failure of his life. It carries the representation of a society composed of individuals, blind to the collective dimensions that configure inequalities.

The field of art is particularly concerned with this ethical model. Nowadays it is considered as disconnected from inheritances. It describes itself as 'open to all', provided that people have got a gift and a talent whose origin is always more or less mysterious. This semantic masks what overflows and precedes the artist and, eventually enables his affirmation, his self-realization. In this context, failure cannot be attributed to the deficiencies of the individual. This article has some criticism intentions: to emphasize what overflows and precedes the individual.

Art studies have become democratized. The figure of the countered vocation carries echoes of this opening. It makes a radical and profound break with an initial background. The identities on the basis of this figure are however marked by suffering, difficulty and failure. They testify to the inertia of trajectories. The aspiring artists from a popular social class fail to be an artist in spite of the determination they have shown, despite the energy needed to break away from their destiny. All these paths lead to failure, but also to the feeling of being responsible for this failure. They carry social gravities that are occulted by the discourse of the gift and talent.

Without abandoning the openness to the possible and the self-affirmation, the figure of the countered vocation forces to look toward the past, the internalized categorization grids and the skills that are there developed or not. These narratives rehabilitate ballistic metaphors (Bidart, 2010). They show the weight of the initial conditions. They give to see a past that holds and prevents the full realization of a desired and envisaged possible, despite an admission and a diploma narrated as strong signs of achievement and recognition.

By mobilizing the concept of temporal form of causality, our research has taken seriously the time variable identified in the narratives, while honouring at the same time the non-event. It considers the inequalities that are distributed in social space but also the processes that make them acting. It points out what is related to initial conditions in the life courses, but also the way these initial data are updated over time within autobiographical narratives. The analysis considers that 'archaeological variables make sense when being involved in the process' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 48-49). Nevertheless, throughout narratives, the social space, which was already there makes its comeback. This paper has highlighted the modalities of this comeback.

This contribution proposes three social gravities. They are updated within the training system. They give to see the importance of primary socialization and pose the problem of its articulation with the secondary socialization process that is implemented by the art school.

The project to become an artist is triply threatened, by the discovery of a world of art which is too distant from inherited values, by a conception of the artist seen as an intellectual, and by the weight of interpersonal skills, self-confidence and confidence in one's project. These social gravities are concentrated in narratives belonging to the figure of the countered vocation, while a certain number of springs emerge from the narratives characterized by the figure of inheritance.

Art has throughout its history been distinguished from craft and profession. Artistic skill requires a talent above all learning and teaching (Heinich, 2005). The training system is expected to provide the conditions for revelation and deployment of artists who have to break with their inherited institutions and frameworks.

In this particular context, teaching and practice cannot on their own guarantee the artistic skill. The training systems that we analysed primarily require an 'identisation' (Tap, 1980). They request that the aspiring artist builds a singular artistic positioning, and for this work, history and personal values are decisive (Pita Castro, 2013). The accompanying actions are central. They allow the interpretation of 'technical choices and constraints in terms of intention, self-expression and emotional involvement' (Menger, 2010, p. 247).

The analysis of the narratives imposes an observation: the training systems studied are focused on the construction of this singular artistic positioning but they largely abandon the management of the effects that the discovery of the professional worlds of art and the construction of a professional network have on the students. For heirs, the discovery of the world of art requires marginal changes. They also feel at ease when they have to build a network. For those who are grouped under the figure of the countered vocation, discovering the world of art emphasizes the need for a substantial change. They have to manage a distance, strangeness. They also feel very uncomfortable when they have to build contacts that will open networks.

Accompaniment should probably be strengthened and expanded. We should not only support the construction of a singular artistic positioning but also accompany (i) *the elaboration of a professional identity which sometimes involves managing a distance and* (ii) *the construction of the professional network*. In the training systems studied, accompaniment seems to be required to achieve a real democratisation of the possibility to become an artist.

Notes

[1] In this contribution, the term 'gravity' is related to the weight that social background exerts on the individual's biographical trajectory.

[2] By configuring long temporality, life narratives open to a longitudinal approach. They are divided into periods and propose transitions between these periods.

[3] Figures refer to typical identity configurations that are forged through comparison, nomination and translation work (Demazière & Dubar, 2007).

[4] We have indeed to distinguish the institutionalized and recognized 'big' artistic network from the 'small' artistic network, which is marginal, situated at the periphery and inseparable from a discourse made of suffering and shortcomings.

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