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THE STATUS OF THE ARTIST

**EXCERPTS FROM A SURVEY ON THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL STATUS OF THE ARTIST IN
THE SWEDISH SOCIETY
(1990)**

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UTDRAG UR KONSTNÄRSUTREDNINGENS BETÄNKAN- DE "KONSTNÄRENS VILLKOR", SOU 1990:39:

THE STATUS OF THE ARTIST

In June 1990 the Swedish Government appointed Mr. Carl Tham, Director General of the Swedish International Development Authority to make a survey on the economic and social status of the artist in the Swedish society.

The intention of the Government was to implement reforms to improve the artist's economic condition and the survey was supposed to give ideas and proposals for such reforms.

It was underlined, in the terms of reference of the survey, that it should concentrate on the "free" artists, i.e. non-employed artists like painters, authors, composers etc. The borderline between "free" and employed artists is however rather vague - the same artist is sometimes employed, sometimes not - and the survey dealt in practice with many groups of artists. The following excerpts give the summary of the basic "philosophy" of the survey and its main conclusions.

2 International Perspectives

2.1 Culture, Economy, and Markets

The limited time at the Parliamentary Commission's disposal made it impossible to carry out close studies of the markets of Art, the economic importance of Art and the status of the artists on the market. Nor was it feasible to make any depth analyses of the policies applied to the conditions of the artists in other countries. Moreover, the absence of accessible international statistics and surveys in this field is remarkable. However, the Commission was anxious to refer to certain financial and international perspectives as a background for its concrete suggestions. This approach is bound to result in a very summarized presentation of problems and trends.

Scenarios

There is a general consensus that the future economy in the well-developed societies will more and more be centred on the production of services and know-how. This is the point of departure of virtually any study of the production systems and the labour markets of tomorrow. These forecasts are based upon changes that have already taken place, such as the increasing numbers of employments in the service and R&D sectors, reduced share for the production of commodities, as well as upon analyses of possible technological and social transformations.

In one of the numerous futurological studies of this tendency, "Lignes d'horizon" by Jacques Attali, the author outlines an admass society, i.e. a society dominated by mass media, entirely based upon completely new, light, portable and rapid products related to information and communication. They will, according to him, revolutionize economy and everyday life in a manner which we cannot anticipate today.

The Japanese economists Kumo and Tanaka discuss a future for which they, referring to Hesse's "Das Glasperlenspiel", predict the emergence of societies where knowledge, information and free creation are the most important "pawns of the power game" nationally and internationally. The most intricate task in this

new society will be how to correctly assess and handle information and exploit it in a creative way, in the humanistic sense of the word.

In these and many other similar studies it is, in fact, the interplay between the hard and the soft sciences (technology & humanities) that is emphasized, thus the importance of artistic activities, too. A good society must be conceived in such a manner that the creative potential of man is utilized to a larger extent. Artistic activities cannot be perceived as isolated from the "real" economy; it is a part of it, contributing not only to the spiritual but also to the economic development of the community.

The Economics of Culture

In most countries both public and private grants of money in favour of the high-quality culture have increased substantially over the two past decades, as well as the number of persons active in artistic work. Modern technology has achieved a revolution in the cultural marketplace. By means of an incisive wording we may say that never before so many individuals were in touch with art in one way or another and never before so many individuals were involved in artistic activities. Without statistics, however, it is impossible to make any closer inquiry into these matters.

The financial impact of art has attracted attention in a number of studies, not the least from the aspects of regional policies. In the so called Kreisky Report on employment in Europe, culture is emphasized as a vital factor with relevance to decisionmaking in conjunction with regional development policies. The traditional, "heavy" industries are gradually losing their importance.

Increased investments in culture will result in a diversified commerce and industry, attracting a welleducated workforce. Culture is also of a great importance to tourism. We know from economic research that investments in various forms of culture (theatre, pictorial arts, dance, music etc.) give a multiplier effect by attracting new investments and promoting local commerce and industry.

An interesting inquiry into these phenomena was made by John Myerscough (The economic importance of the arts in Britain, Policy Studies Institute, 1989). The purpose of the inquiry is to highlight the economic importance of "art", generally and for specific regions, particularly the Glasgow area. Myerscough uses a broad definition of the concept of "art", including also the private household consumption of radio and television programmes, videoclips etc, and the services produced by certain professions such as journalists and service staff at cultural institutions, mass media technicians etc.

Myerscough's conclusions may be summarized as follows:

Culture constitutes a significant economic activity, representing an annual turnover of 2.5 per cent of the total consumption in the UK, thus comparable to the motorcar and the motorcycle markets. The large cultural sectors are of course film, video, records. This sector employs a total of approximately half a million people, equivalent to 2 per cent of the entire manpower. Furthermore, culture is an expanding part of the national economy. Employment as well as output increased greatly during the eighties. Culture generates substantial export and tourist income: 3 per cent of total exports and 25 per cent of the income attributable to the tourist industry. Investing in culture perceived in this broad sense of the word gives very favourable multiplier effects in regions with employment problems. It also creates spinoff effects to the benefit of other industries: "The fine arts are a source of ideas, stimulus, expertise and training for many of the applied arts, such as fashion, architecture, design, printing and photography ... There is a deep synergy between creative process in the arts and other forms of creative thinking (page 149). Using examples from e.g. Glasgow, Myerscough also wants to demonstrate that public subsidies granted to culture have a very favourable effect on employment and that in many cases it is better to invest in culture than in other jobpromoting endeavours: "The arts are clearly a cost-effective way of cutting the unemployment count. There are reasons why the arts have an advantage in this over most another public services. First they generate income in addition to the grantaid because of their trading activities ... and they also attract significant contributions from private sources. Second, the multiplier effects of arts organisations in the regional economy are high, partly on account

of the large salary component in their expenditure going on local labour ..." (page 108 ff).

There are no reasons to believe that Myerscough's conclusions should not be applicable to other countries and economies. Strikingly enough, many regions and towns do invest in culture as a means of keeping the economy in swing and attracting new enterprises. The connection with the tourist industry is obvious. The evergrowing abundance of festivals in Sweden, too is an indication that culture is being discovered as an economic factor to be taken into account.

Unfortunately, there are no corresponding Swedish studies, but judging from rough estimates of our national culture market we might be allowed to assume that it has the same relative size as the British one, i.e. approximately 2.5 per cent of the total consumption. There is every reason to believe that the multiplier effect of cultural investments could be equivalent. Investments in culture might produce favourable economic effects.

Consumption Patterns

Consumption patterns change in several various ways in a complex interaction with technological changes. For more than one decade sociologists have been assuming that people request more "postmaterial" values when their revenues exceed a certain level. The term "postmaterial standards" was coined. The basic study was made by Inglehart: "The silent revolution". Trends of the eighties did not entirely confirm this assertion; recent Swedish surveys (reported in "80tal, Svensk opinion i empirisk belysning", 1989, i.e. "The Nineteeneighties: Swedish Opinion in an Empiric Light") produce a more ambiguous picture. Nevertheless, the general impression of the results of this research is that there is a definitely increasing demand for those things which the specialists of consumers' behaviour use to call "experience consumption", which refers to all kinds of consumption of imagination, travels etc. Whereas this trend seems to apply irrespectively of sex, education and other social strata, it is still a fact that the "highbrow culture" is more in demand with individuals in the upper education and income brackets.

Popular Culture and Visual Art Culture

In a Unesco Study (Cultural development, Experience and policies, Unesco, 2nd edition, 1983), the enormous importance of the big and expanding culture industry is stressed. It's this industry with its new technology that changed, more than anything else, man's possibilities to devote himself to "imagination" or to the consumption of arts. "The commercial mass culture is the first democratic culture ever experienced by Europe. It is egalitarian in the sense that all the social segments accept it or are involved in it in one way or another." It might be perceived as the antithesis of the highquality culture backed up by the public authorities, but it is also, at an increasing rate, the underlying prerequisite of it.

The production costs of highquality art are constantly increasing, partly because of the fact that the artists request a more decent remuneration, and partly in view of the fact that the rising costs cannot be compensated by rationalization. Theatre, opera etc. are inherently awkward activities in so far as their costs and need for subsidies go up when production and demand increase. Largescale production does not give any appreciable benefits in this field, so the need for subsidies is constantly increasing. For this reason, artists have to work for the culture industry, too, in order to make themselves and their art survive.

The industry of Art is multinational but dominated by anglosaxon cultural patterns. The predominance of the US culture industry is so overwhelming that even the national culture industries "imitate" the American output, adapting it to local conditions. This is a global phenomenon.

The Unesco study underlines the importance of a strong national "art production", both "highbrow art" and popular art, that is capable of offering options while still remaining a part of the international markets of culture. The role of the cultural policies is to maintain and to further develop the national artistic potential and performance. Nor should we forget that the commercial culture industry partly thrives on the subsidized art and the public support to artists. Without art schools, symphony orchestras, music halls, theatres and governmental policies promoting artistic creation it would be more difficult for the popular art industries to recruit artists and to maintain their own

performance. There is an interconnection between the popular and highquality cultures.

After the publication of this Unesco study, trends have accelerated in that very direction which had been predicted. The international culture industry is a huge and powerful one, handling a gigantic turnover. The situation of all categories of artists professionally, financially and socially depends to a large extent on this industry, and this applies on national levels as well as worldwide. There is an obvious tendency towards increased uniformity, but there are also many competing lifestyles and approaches to the large output, making the picture less conclusive. The uniformity trend is counteracted by the emerging multicultural societies, enhanced by the rising tide of migration with its inevitable impact on the cultural climate.

It is impossible to analyse the situation of the artists in our society without bearing in mind these major industries and the markets generated by them. They are more important than any governmental culture policies and public support can ever become. The developments in the mass media sector had a tremendous impact on the consumption of culture, including highquality products. Its importance will not diminish in the future. These new technologies are opening up new opportunities for theatre, music and opera, for instance. They also create new outlets for artists, offering them a chance to introduce their art to a very large audience. Popular art, backed up by an extensive financial turnover, may also generate resources likely to promote highquality culture, too.

International outlook

Owing to lack of time it was not possible to examine more closely the various governmental or public efforts in favour of artists in different European countries ("artist policies") as a comparative investigation in view of the situation prevailing in Sweden. However, we feel justified to assume that the Swedish achievements keep up very well with the international "competition".

There is, of course, an extensive spectrum of supports and promotional measures in several countries similar to the corresponding Swedish efforts. Add to that not the least in Germany and France impressive culture budgets generating outlets

and assignments for many artists. Our total schemes including guaranteed remuneration, work awards, public library royalties etc. appear to exist however only to a limited extent outside the Nordic countries. In certain countries, on the other hand, there are other copyright arrangements e.g. the *droit de suite* that are more advantageous from the artist's point of view.

Nevertheless, we take the liberty of quoting the Council of Europe Report on Sweden's culture policy, viz. "we find it difficult to find any nation in Western Europe, except for the Nordic countries, that has done as much as Sweden has in order to improve financial conditions for those who carry on artistic work for a living." Even with due allowance for the customary courtesy in such circumstances, we may conclude that other countries are not further ahead than we are as regards reliable and universally applicable solutions to problems discussed in the present report. Moreover, the Swedish general social security system and, above all, its labour market insurance schemes, do have features which from certain aspects offer the artists a better social security than e.g. Germany, in spite of that country's superiority as regards investments and performance in culture. In Germany, as in most other European Great Powers, competition and markets prevail as the controlling forces, also in the field of culture. Tradeunionist positions are, as a rule, considerably weaker. Private sponsoring is more frequent, which may be both favourable and negative from the artist's point of view. In the linguistically less important regions, e.g. the Netherlands, public support for artists plays a greater role.

5 Basic Considerations

5.1 Orientation of Cultural Policies

The cultural policy guidelines laid down by Parliament at various parliamentary sessions represented the natural point of departure for the Parliamentary Commission's work. The fundamental objectives are to protect the freedom of speech and to create the practical conditions for the utilization of this freedom, to promote cultural and artistic renewal, to counteract the negative effects of commercialism, and to safeguard our cultural identity. The support granted in favour of artistic creation is a part of this policy. The Parliamentary Commission's

Report on Artists in Society ("*Konstnärerna i Samhället*", SOU 1975:14) drew up the corresponding guidelines. The declarations of principle made in this Report were later confirmed in several parliamentary sessions. The Commission stressed the importance of promoting free artistic work, pointing out that the principal possibilities of improving the financial conditions of the artists "are to enhance the prerequisites for the utilization of the capability of the artists and to make use of their works, thus meeting collective and individual needs. This applies both to the traditional artistic activities and sectors and to new ones." Furthermore, the Report pointed out that "the artists must be better remunerated for the utilization of their works than they used to be." We share this opinion, but there will always be necessary to provide a direct support during periods of variable duration.

5.2 The Artist: a bohème, an entrepreneur or an employee?

The way we look upon the artists is still influenced by the outlook on Art that emerged in the course of the 19th century. The Artist was or at least wanted to be outside the bourgeois society and yet he remained dependent on it. The free life of the artists life formed a glaring contrast to the disciplined working life that gradually imposed itself on the entire industrial civilization. The professional artist thrived on the bourgeoisie while he despised it or felt alienated from it. For this reason the conflict between Art and Society, "Spirit and Reality", was a frequent theme in pictorial arts, literature and theatre right from the beginning of the 19th century. The censure and resistance of the general public became a part of the artistic development, but also influenced the image of the artist and his self-perception. Aesthetical Modernism constantly burst and expand the artistic means of expression. The educated public, constituting the artist's market, accepted gradually the new means of expression and the alienation of the artists.

It is the artists themselves, their reviewers and public who determine, in a symbiotic interaction, what Art is. Artists have an inherent ambivalent attitude towards the market and the demand which in such an eminent degree define the nature of "Art" and, also in such an eminent degree, determine the financial conditions of the artists. For the artists that saying does hold true, viz. that you bite the hands that support you. This may refer to the private sponsor, the middle-class theatre audience or the administrator of cultural affairs. Art is

obliged always to maintain a distance between its own endeavours and the market that conditions its existence.

However, at the same time the artist has to assert himself on the marketplace, acquire recognition and make money. Thus, the freelance artist is also an industrialist in that very respect that he has an actual interest in make his production yield a revenue. The markets of Art have changed parallel to technological and social transformations. New media have brought about new outlets. As already shown, the culture industry has gained strength. In the opening chapter we recalled the substantial increase in the consumption of enjoyments and imagination. This applies to the demand of artistic culture, too. Never before so large a part of the population got in touch, in one way or another, with various manifestations of culture. There is an increasing interest in personal participation, an amateur culture, and judging from the priorities set by young people there is a great number of young persons who would prefer to devote themselves to a creative activity.

The markets of Culture form a huge marketplace where artistic and popular culture sometimes interlock. Popular culture has become a part of the lifestyle and symbols of the society in question. In the "Dagens Nyheter" of April 9th, 1990, the writer Göran Greider explains: "In the very heart of our society, mass culture lives its diversified, throbbing life; nobody escapes it, each one of us is forced to extract one's own meaning out of it". There must be a necessary distance to that which, somewhat vaguely, is referred to as "quality culture" or "highbrow culture", which different epochs define in their own way. The artist continuously aims at preserving that distance, but allows himself to be influenced by the visions and the language of popular culture; occasionally he even exploits them.

The objective of cultural policy is to prevent the quality culture from being swallowed up by the popular culture or from perishing on the tough marketplace. These policies aim at stimulating and widening the demand as well as give the artists tolerable working conditions. An important point of departure will then be that society must support such categories of artistic activities which would have great difficulties in surviving on the market without help. A great number of artistic forms of expression are bound to remain as narrow as they

always were. We cannot just sit down, letting the market decide which products and which artists should be given a fair chance to live on. A combination of markets and organised support is necessary. The Economy of Culture has to be a mixed economy.

Popular art and quality art are interdependent. Artists and institutions within the quality culture sector, subsidized through public means, are utilized also by popular culture. And, conversely, popular culture may contribute to the prosperity of quality culture by providing outlets and expanding the market. Popular music adds to the revenues of the composers of serious music. Best-seller writers support, through the public library lending royalties, those authors whose books are published in limited editions only.

The principle of granting aid for all kinds of artistic products cannot apply indefinitely. Anybody producing works of art without any response with critics or the public is not a misunderstood genius, heading for the posthumous appreciation lavished on him by a grateful posterity. Support given to artists may be regarded as a kind of grants for the benefit of scientific research, where we have to be generous and prepared to assume risks. A thousand flowers must be allowed to come into blossom. Yet, any support, whether in favour of individuals or institutions, will ultimately have to be confronted with other perspectives. There has to be an assessment of quality, a critic's view. There has to be some kind of public feedback, an interest. And the pros and cons have to be carefully weighed up by a comparison with other urgent needs in the field of culture.

The importance of official support varies from one marketplace to another. In certain sectors, direct support from official institutions is crucial if the activity in question is to survive at all. This is the case of e.g. opera or symphony orchestras. Also the high-quality theatre or ballets could hardly be expected to carry on without subsidies. In other fields, this official support is certainly important but not decisive. For instance, Sweden's bookselling business has an annual turnover of approximately SEK 2,000 million, educational textbooks not included. Copyright royalties amount to approx. SEK 150 million. Governmental grants to writers - mainly the public library lending royalty - amount to approx. SEK 67 million and the support for the promotion of fiction is nearly SEK 36 million. All

this represents a non-neglectable income in addition to the accumulated royalties, but is not decisive for the existence of fiction-writing.

The pictorial art market might have an annual turnover of SEK 1,500 million. It is, however, quite clear that only a tiny share of it goes directly to the artists concerned. The overall public spending in the shape of direct support to painters and sculptors amounts to approx. SEK 50 million, which is an important contribution, but for the individual artist the revenues from sales are the primary source of income.

It is essential to recall that the public interest in various forms of culture and art is not exclusively a function of cultural policies. Other factors are equally important. Changes in aesthetical standards, lifestyles and consumers' behaviour are not subject to controls. General trends in economy and social development have a substantial impact.

The nineteen-eighties turned out to be a prosperous decade for the pictorial arts. However, the powerful expansion is not only correlated to governmental cultural policies, but far more to the general business cycles, expansionist trends on the international markets of art, fiscal legislation, bulging profits etc.

The growing interest in music was admittedly promoted by the improved musical education, but the decisive factor was of course the emergence of the gigantic international music industry and the new media that constitute its market makers.

The onsetting recession and the financial troubles now facing our local authorities might be detrimental to organized cultural activities. The financial situation of the private households is of great importance, too. "Can we afford culture?" is a question put forward not only by politicians but also by families with young children. Essential criteria are, moreover, the balance between leisure time and working hours, and the value attached to artistic creation and culture by the private man, institution and businesses.

If e.g. the private companies allocated one per cent of their capital expenditure in the artistic decoration of their buildings and plants, this would of course have a

major impact on pictorial arts and the art handicraft. If the nation-wide popular movements actively invested in pictorial arts, musical performances and theatre, that would have a major impact. Furthermore, local authorities might see to it that the public buildings for everyday use become the object of embellishments of quite another magnitude and, generally, change the municipalities into local communities where artistic activities and aesthetical concerns are a part of everyday life.

There is, moreover, a very direct correlation between scientific research and higher education on the one hand and the artistic vitality on the other hand. Universities and colleges could be the natural centres also of artistic activities. They could in different ways encourage the activities carried out by the students themselves and also - what is actually done in many other countries - grant the aesthetical education a larger share of the curriculum. Schools could do a lot more than they do now. All this would promote the general interest in the fine arts as well as create outlets and incentives for professional artists.

Although the demand for works of art and cultural events did increase, the number of artists went up still more. There will always be a larger supply of individuals wanting to devote themselves to artistic activities than the market can absorb, and this will hold true even if official and private support may expand. The widespread interest among young people in artistic and creative activities, which we have noted previously, is an encouraging phenomenon in many ways, both to society as a whole and to the individual. However, a great number of those who really want to make a living out of their artistic work must be prepared to cope with a tough competition and accept a modest life income.

Generally speaking, artists occupy a weak position on the markets, particularly in relation to the different actors at the entrepreneurial side of the scene, i.e. the publishing companies, producers, art-gallery owners, critics etc - except the great and recognized names. Fees paid to free artists are often low. As can be seen from Chapter 4, many artists have a very low income. Although it may be true that the actual income is not really as low as that, since there obviously exists a black market for works of art where a part of the commerce takes place without any fiscal control, only the really successful and recognized artists are self-supporting without financial assistance in one way or another.

The Artists are the underdogs, since they are so committed to their artistic work and their need to express themselves that they are prepared to sell the results of their work also at a low price. Trade-union action proved fairly unsuccessful in bringing about a change in this respect. This state of affairs concerns above all the freelance artists, where the financial discrepancies between the successful artists and the less successful ones are extremely wide. The situation of those artists who work in collective groupings as employees is somewhat different, owing to the fact that they no doubt enjoy a financially more secure situation. They are in a status to exercise a traditional trade-union based pressure by negotiating their remunerations and other labour-related conditions with their contractual counterparts.

Even if we assume intensified future action by the public authorities in order to promote "production", there will always be a need for direct grants to artists, particularly young artists who must be given a chance to establish themselves, as well as artists who must, for a couple of years, be given a chance to fully devote themselves to their creative work. The grants may be used for travels, projects, studio equipment etc.

Certain improvements are feasible, and this Report contains a few suggestions in that direction. However, it's a realistic forecast to presume that a large number of free artists - writers, pictorial artists and composers - will face considerable difficulties when trying to manage on the revenues derived from their artistic work. There will also be unemployed actors, musicians, miming artists and dancers, above all in the big cities. Several artists or persons wishing to be artists will most probably have to rely on other sources of income parallel to their artistic work in the strict sense of the word. In addition, the adjoining markets might grow, inter alia through modern massmedia expansion and by means of policies aimed at a systematic widening of the Artist's traditional labour market. This was the basic principle behind the efforts made by the Swedish Labour Market Board in this field, and they will have an equivalent importance in the future, too.

5.3 Aim and Main Direction of the Parliamentary Commission

Suggestions and ideas described in the present Report derive from the basic considerations commented on earlier in this document; they may be summarized as follows:

1. The first point was our emphasis on efforts likely to improve the working conditions of the artists and to boost demand for their artistic work. These efforts are bound to be rather limited, but might have a great importance. This particularly applies to the narrow, underfed areas. In this connection we would like to pay a specific attention to some categories of artists, viz. choreographers and dancers as well as pictorial artists, craftsmen and photographers in particular.

In concrete terms, this means that we emphasize the importance of employment promotion which will be dealt with in the following chapter. Labour market and regional policies weigh heavily in this context. However, we are anxious to try to reduce the excessive dependence upon unemployment benefit societies and relief work schemes of certain artist groups, so we suggested increased production promotion on the one hand and measures designed to secure acceptable revenues for qualified artists (income guarantees) on the other. Incentives to boost demand are very important, too, e.g. efforts to raise the general public's artistic awareness, to enhance the presence of culture in working life etc. In many cases, the short time at our disposal made it impossible to carry out close analyses and to prepare practical proposals. This is meant to be indications for more profound investigations or consideration by the National Council for Cultural Affairs.

The remunerations paid to the artists for their works are conditioned by the market and the contracts which the artists manage to conclude with employers, publishing companies or buyers of art. Copyright-related royalties are statutory. Matters related to copyright are the object of a separate investigation incumbent on another Parliamentary Commission - the Parliamentary Commission on Copyright Matters - but nevertheless we take the liberty of addressing certain aspects of them. Taxes to be paid by artists deserve, quite naturally, a particular attention in this context. No doubt, artists do face certain fiscal problems calling for solution, which, in our opinion, is feasible without giving rise to precarious

fiscal policy precedents or without necessitating irregular exceptions. Fiscal policies are to facilitate the professional activities of the artists, not to counteract them. Our suggestions in these respects were previously submitted to His Majesty's Government in a memorandum dated December 1989. Certain points raised in it were attended to in the budget proposals recently presented to Parliament by the Government. Other suggestions in this memorandum were, however, not addressed in the budget proposal in question, so we will sum them up once again.

We will also discuss the financial support and remuneration for artists, and suggest certain reinforcements, above all as regards income guarantees.

In this connection we would like underline the considerable influence that our regional and local authorities may exercise by facilitating and supporting the work of the artists. Naturally, we do not only refer to direct grants to theatrical and musical events, but also to the purchasing policies of the local authorities, financial support for the maintenance of studios etc. For pictorial artists e.g., municipal grants designed to promote exhibitions would be very valuable (by putting a municipal, non-lucrative gallery at the disposal of artists or similar measures). Thus, the local cultural policies represent an important sector although they are dealt with very lightly in this Report which primarily concerns governmental obligations and legislation.

2. The second key aspect is the stress laid on quality criteria in the general culture policy. In this matter we would like to remind those concerned of the fact that the Report on Swedish official cultural policies published by the Council of Europe - which broadly speaking gives a very high rating with regard to the efforts made - raises some points of criticism from this aspect. The experts and authors of the report are of the opinion that the attitude of the Swedish State is too passive and taciturn as regards the artistic performance, in view of the fact the Governmental authorities are, after all, the primary sponsors of a lot of cultural activities.

The authors consider the governmental "culture bureaucrats" to be too afraid of interfering in aesthetical discussions and of raising the standards in terms of

quality. "We would perhaps exaggerate if we said that the subject of quality was a taboo topic, but it was not easy to have any exchanges of views in these matters going on when we visited various Swedish regions", the authors declared. Far too much of the checking and selection work is left to the artists themselves, acting as intermediaries when passing on orders for work to other artists. The authors of the report think that there ought to be more discussions and that the sponsors should request financial reports on the results of the distributed grants.

We do not share all the opinions put forward by the authors, but their main impressions are confirmed by the analyses and interviews we made. Several artists, too, have a critical attitude to a phenomenon which they perceive as an absence of quality criteria, although the considerations preceding any decision on contributions and grants - to institutions as well as to individuals - is a matter of great delicacy. However, in my opinion it is the quality requirement that should be given a higher priority. This has a bearing on the premium programme structures and on the choice between the options of either granting many artists a limited support or giving a restricted number of persons substantial contributions. The insistence on a dialogue has an impact on the organisation of the National Library Fees Agency and the National Artists' Board. We must aim at an equilibrium between the various requirements.

3. The third principal field of attention is the strong accentuation of the international outlook and the need for an intense exchange of cultural impulses. Giving and taking are the obvious prerequisites of a vital culture. In a national culture is to reach a reasonable level of quality it must stand up to comparisons and assert itself internationally as well - just about the way scientific research has to. Swedish artists of all kind must be given a fair chance to train themselves and introduce their art abroad. The Swedish national culture must be given a fair chance of renewal and be stimulated by appearances of foreign guest artists and groups and visitors.

That goes without saying in certain sectors. No one could imagine a book market without translated foreign literature, but in other fields of art the systematical exchange of cultures with the world around us is not that obvious.

The authors of the Council of Europe report seem to have found the indications of an insular attitude, not the least in the field of pictorial arts. They did not hesitate to use the phrase "a closed market for the works of art". The fact that Sweden, in spite of being a country with open frontiers, still did not succeed in attracting the very best representatives of European stage artists. There is, so the authors believe, a certain lack of contacts with the artists and the artistic supply in other countries. Furthermore, it is difficult for individual artists to finance stays abroad for the development of their artistic skills. In addition to all the other financial concerns there is the often very parsimonious behaviour of our fiscal authorities.

In our opinion it is of utmost importance to break this trend, opening Sweden to the cultural influences of other origins. This is vital for individual artists as well as for the overall quality and incentives of the Swedish national culture. The liberation of Eastern and Central Europe and the current European integration are also powerful arguments in favour of an intensified cultural exchange. However, our horizon must not stop at the external borders of Europe. Contacts with Third World cultures are equally important.

This makes it natural to remind our readers of the decision made by the Coordination Committee for the United Nations Decade of Culture, viz. to make the Multicultural Society a Swedish theme. The contents of this was described in Chapter 2. Today's Sweden is a multicultural society, but the participation of the immigrants in the national culture is comparatively limited. This refers both to artistic activities and to the attention paid by the general public. In our opinion it is of crucial importance to change this state of affairs in several ways, and to this end we would like to make separate suggestions designed to function as incentives for immigrating foreign artists.

In the foregoing paragraphs we referred to certain cultural policies of the European Communities. As can be seen, the Community policies in the fields of Culture is vague, mainly focusing mass media and education, which, admittedly, may have a considerable impact on the consumption of culture and communication in the long run.

If the freedom of movement beyond the national borders applies to artists within the entire EC area or possibly in a wider European economic area, this will not mean that the links to specific languages or nations are bound to vanish. These deeper borderlines condition the very existence of that cultural diversity which Europe, according to a virtually unanimous opinion, must maintain and which many persons consider to be the very distinctive feature of European culture. So, an overall, transnational coordination programme might then appear to be a very doubtful method to promote artistic creativity. Nor do hardly any such ambitions exist.

On the other hand, it is possible that some of the suggestions in the EC report "Culture and the European Citizen in the year 2000", on, inter alia, the establishment of a cultural fund of a considerable size may materialize. This could result in more offensive cultural policies in the EC Member States. Whatever the outcome may be in this respect, it is obvious that there is a pronounced Swedish interest in participating, as far as possible, in European cultural manifestations. This will be of utmost importance for the individual artists as well as for cultural policies as a whole; and it will of course take on an even greater significance if the suggestions on the various European cultural centres are implemented.

In an integrated Europe competition between the most successful artist in any sector might get tougher. Some of them will be able of conquering a vast European market, but the majority is most likely bound, as previously, to rely on the respective original areas of culture. The discrepancies - or if we put it more bluntly: the exclusion of the less successful competitors - will probably appear more clearly on this expanded marketplace, which would mean that the need for support to artist not enjoying commercial success will by no means diminish. The implications for the EC Member States of a "harmonization" of social legislation and of labour markets - and to Sweden in the case of our adherence - are hard to assess today, and this uncertainty is of course relevant to all the sectors of society. However, culture and the situation of our artists is no doubt a particularly sensitive matter, deserving close attention in the oncoming European negotiations.

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