



National College of Art and Design

-

Faculty of Fine Art  
Department of Sculpture

-

# The Art not the Artist

by

Laurent Pavesi

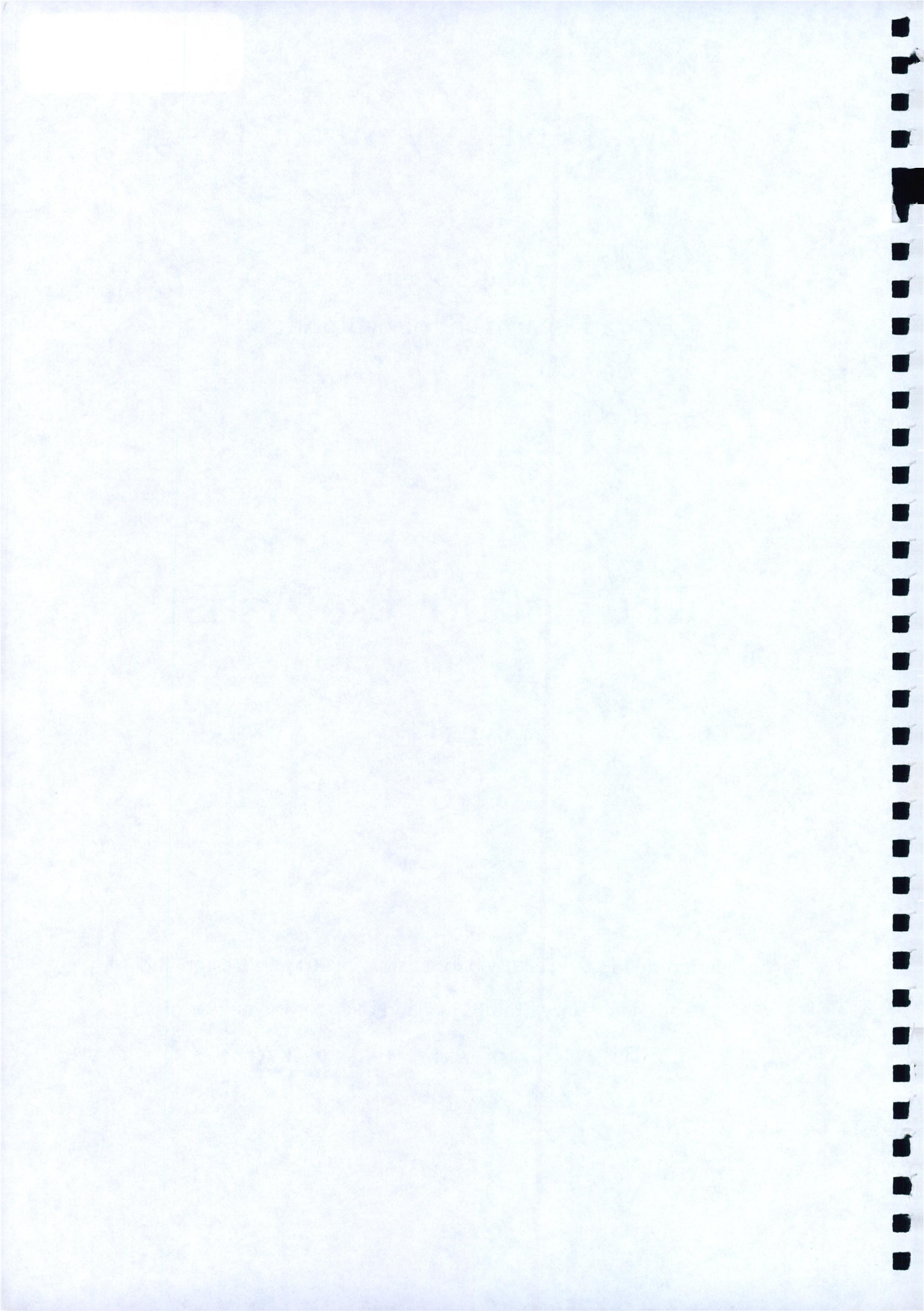
-

Submitted to the Faculty of of History of Art and Design and

Complementary Studies in Candidacy for the degree of

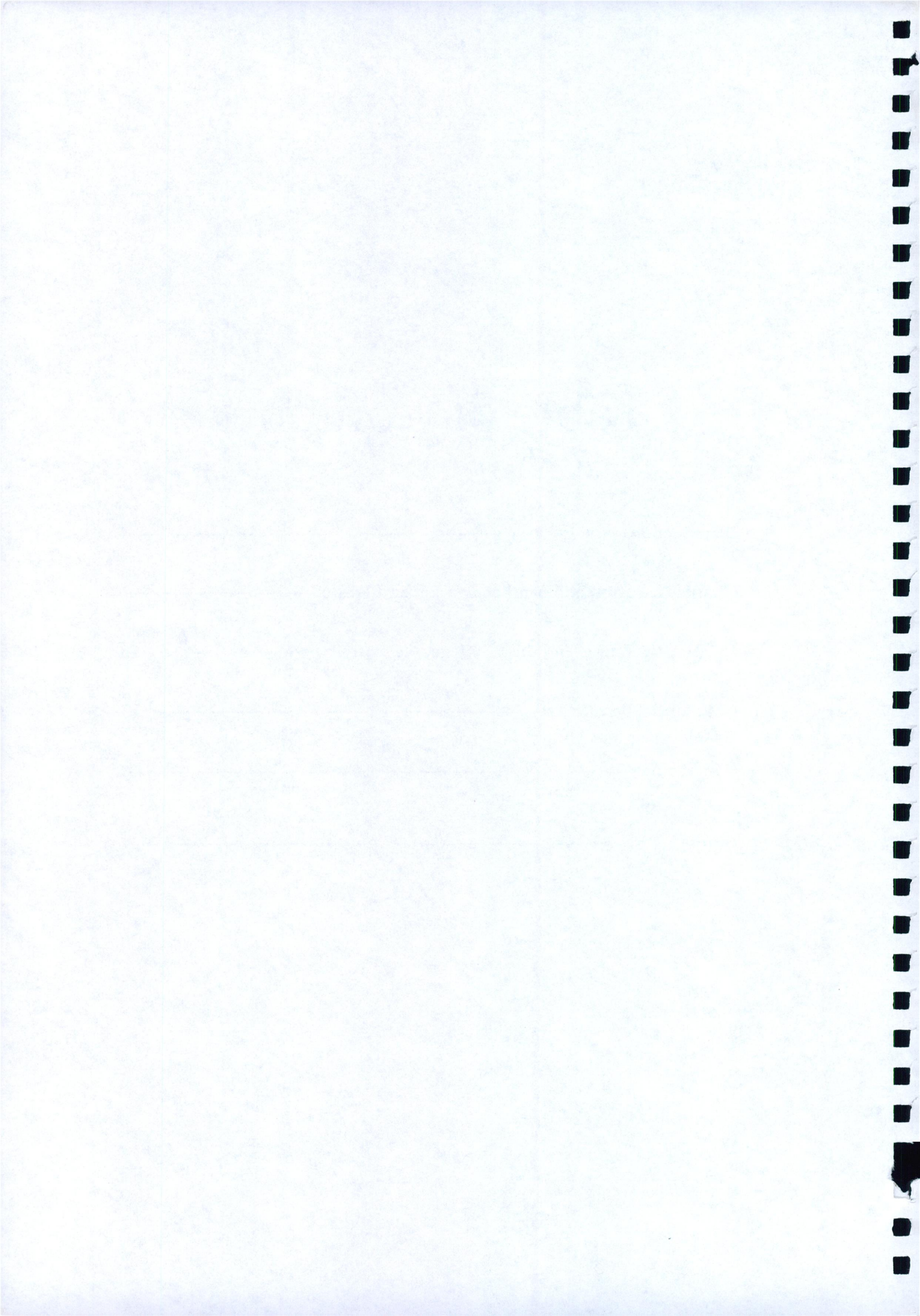
B.A. in Fine Art/ History of Art

1996



# Table of Contents

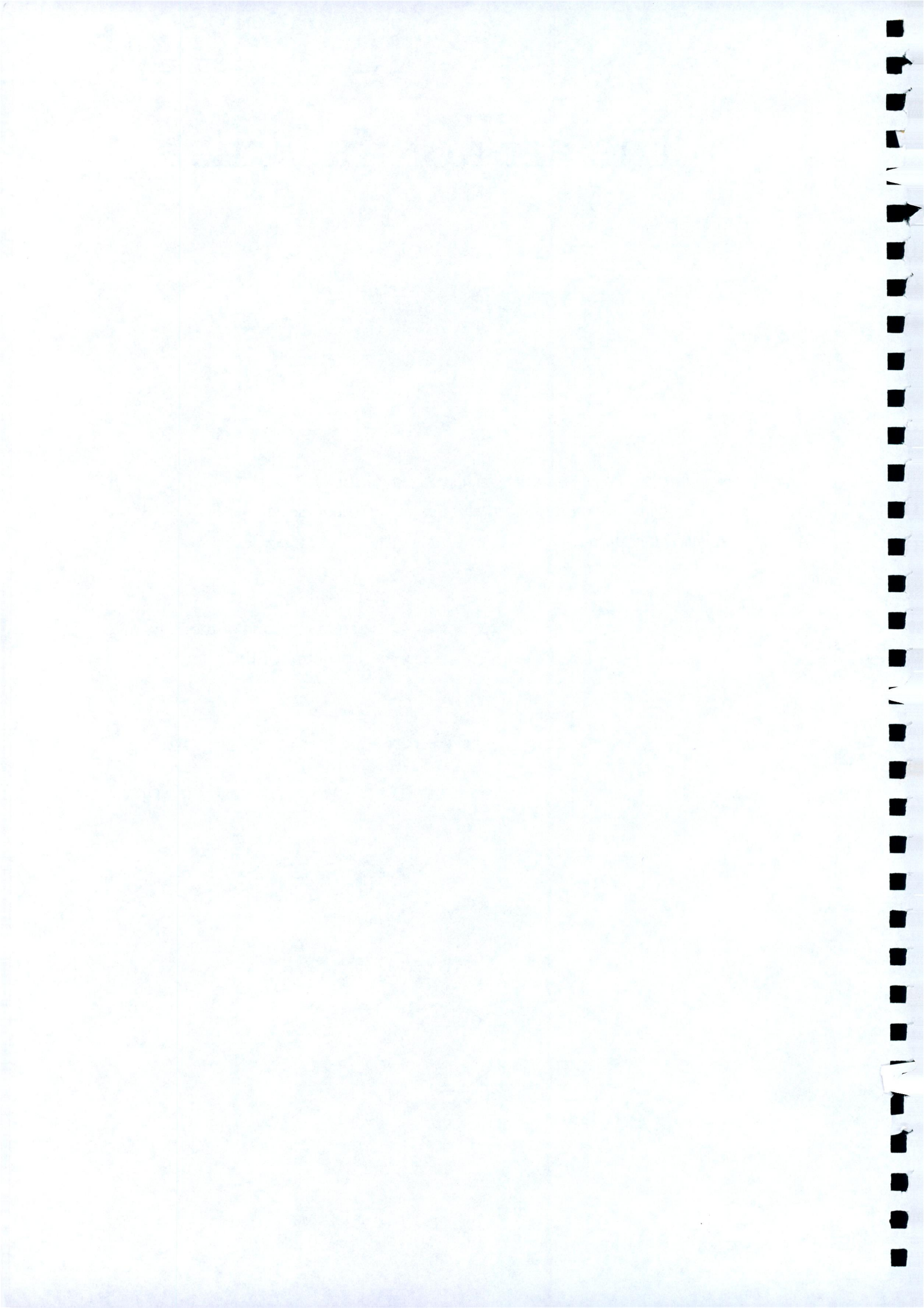
|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction -----                                      | 4  |
| Chapter I: Forum and Market, Market and Forum-----      | 6  |
| Chapter II: Genius and the Privilege of Creativity----- | 15 |
| Chapter III: Private Art-----                           | 23 |
| Conclusion-----   | 31 |
| Bibliography-----                                       | 34 |



# The art not the artist

*The morality of consumption relays the morality of production or interweaves itself with it in the same social logic of salvation.*

J. Baudrillard.  
For a Critique of the Political  
Economy of the Sign

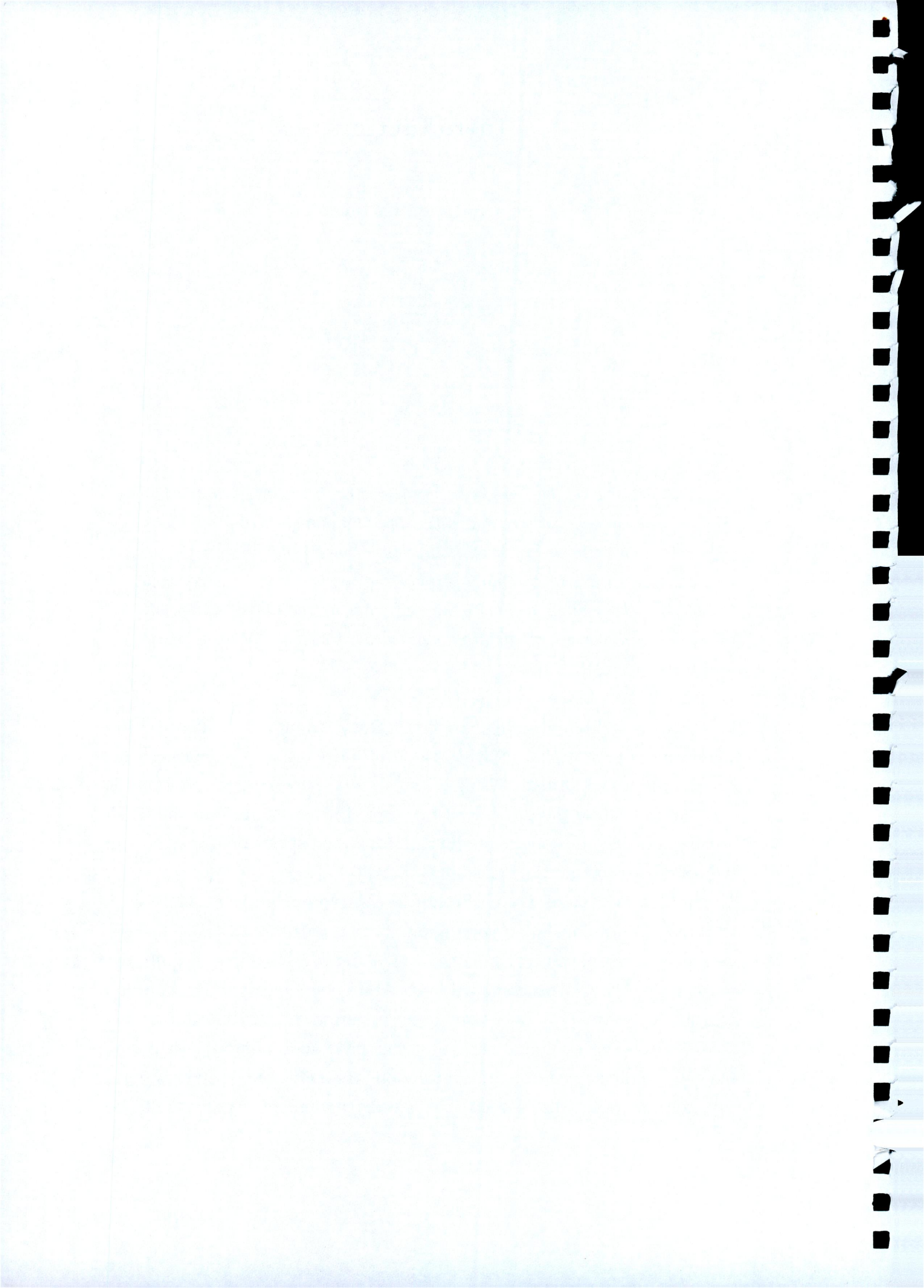


## Introduction

*The art market has an investment in the intentional, authorial presence of the artist, authenticating individual works as their value is transformed from questions concerning the aesthetic and the social, to the purer semiotics of exchange. Yet Warhol constantly aspired to detach himself from a traditional, authorial role, to dissolve himself into an inviolable persona. (Watney, in Garrels (ed.), P. 117)*

In a paper written in 1989, Simon Watney attempts to identify the significance of Andy Warhol with regard to his work, the art market and his notoriety as an artist. Using a similar perspective, the purpose of this essay is to analyse the difficulties that arise in the relationships between artists-producers, the objects that they produce and spectators-consumers in the context of commercial art production.

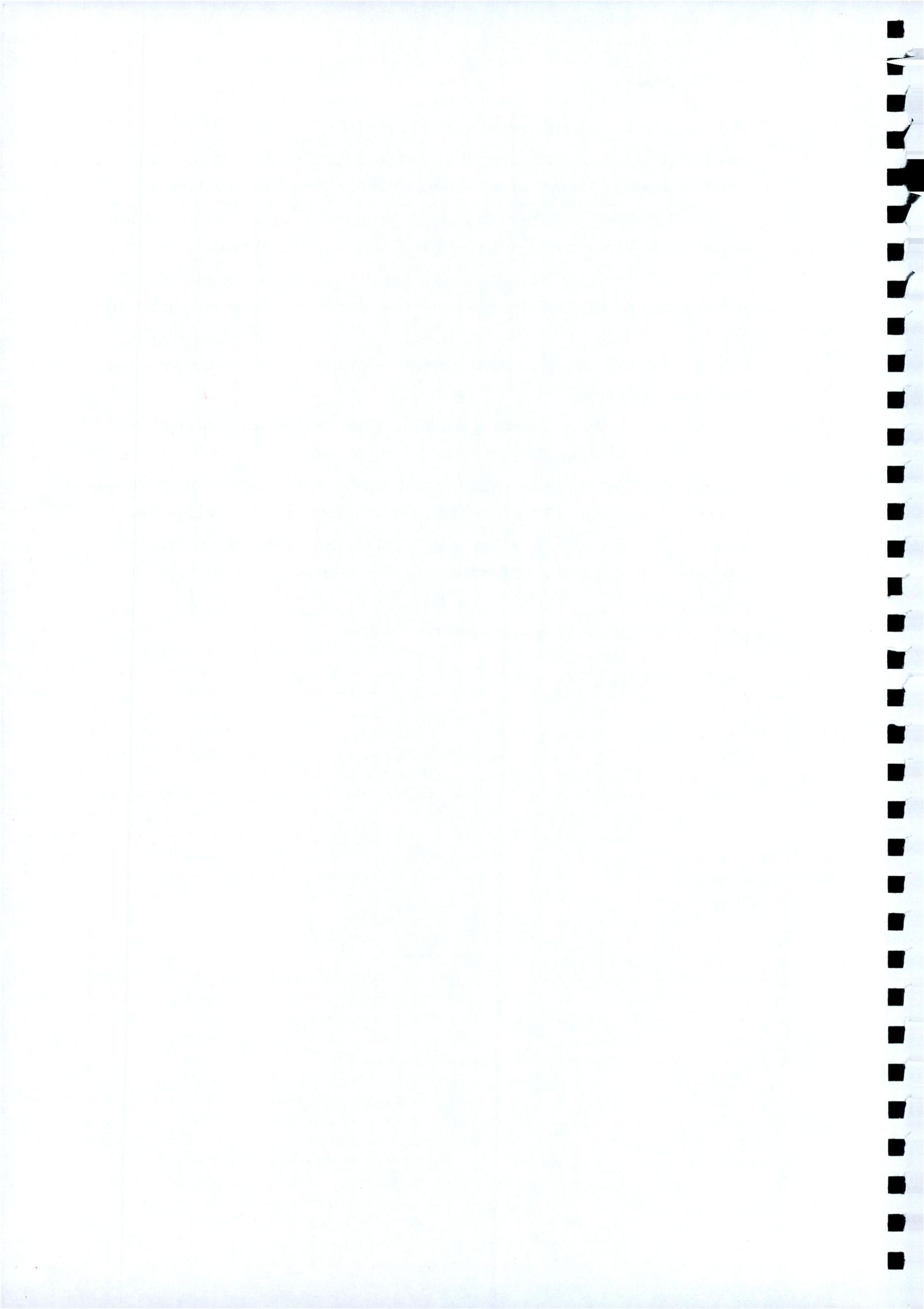
The producers of culture of past centuries used to remain largely unknown to the spectator-consumer population. Today, artists, creators, fashion designers, etc... have become better known and can sometimes acquire the status of celebrity. This essay will proceed first by looking at the evolution of artistic production over the modern period. It will examine the consequences this evolution has had on the perception of art and artists by the general public and how this perception reflects in some instances upon the consumer. In the second chapter, the notion of Genius will be





examined with regard to the role it has played in giving a privileged position, first to art in the market place and secondly to the artist amongst other producers. Finally, I will discuss the consequences of these various factors in relation to a notion of art as an agent of social transformation requiring the active participation of the viewer. This will be done in order to try and assess which obstacles are found in our contemporary predicament and which strategies are available to help creativity play an effective part in the purpose of changing the nature of social relationships in our society. The role of the artist as producer will be emphasised throughout the essay.

This discussion by no means intends to apply peremptory judgments of value on the contemporary art scene. The notion of value will itself be probed. This essay is merely concerned with pointing to a few critical difficulties and crucial paradoxes that the condition of this market entails. The objective is to defend a comprehension of art as *preceding* the market. No one will deny the importance of the market, it is an inevitable actuality, however it will be argued that it is by no means sufficient for the production of socially relevant artistic activities.



# Chapter I

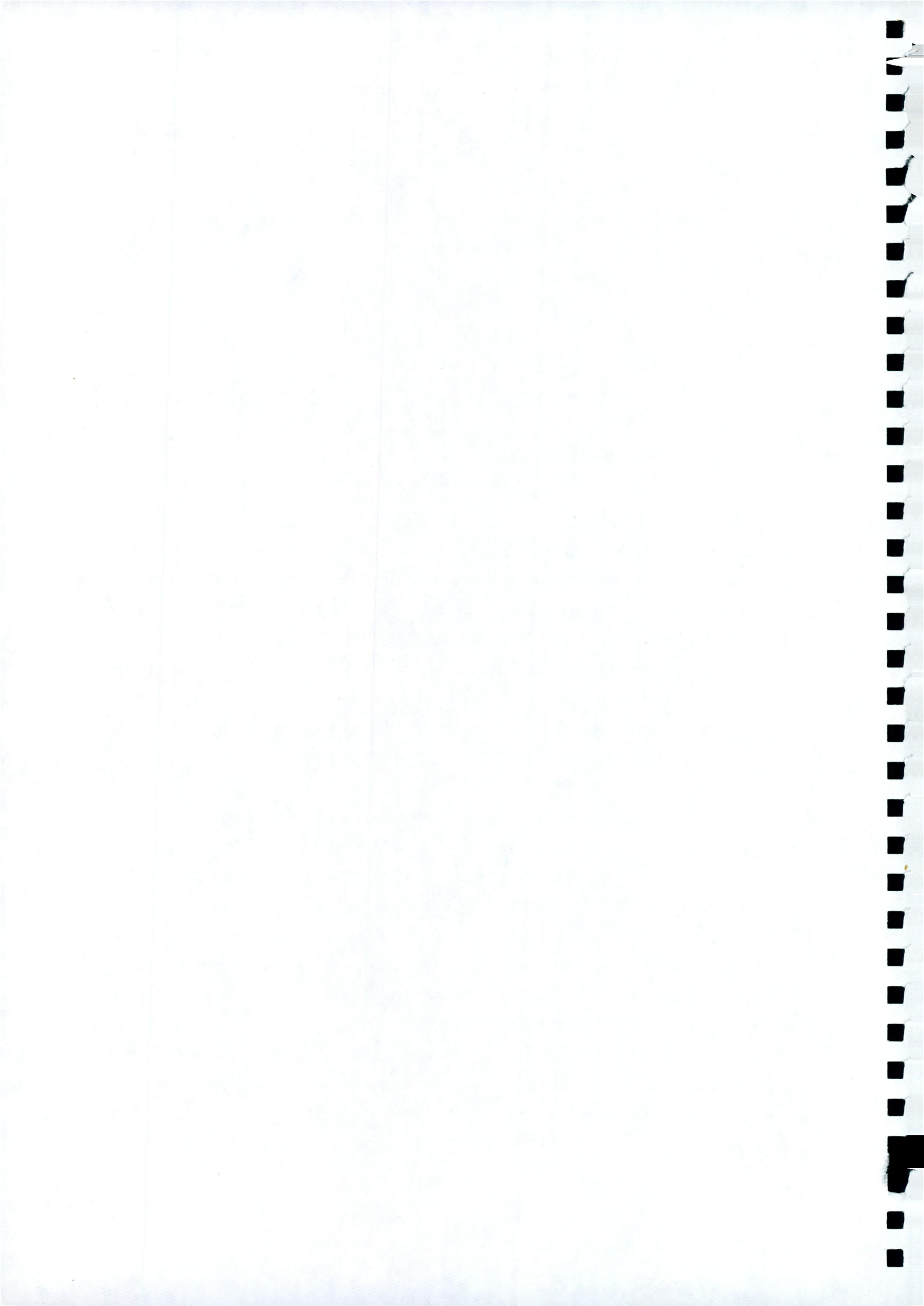
## Forum and Market, Market and Forum

### I. Compartmentalization

In contemporary western society, the artistic production of the past hundred and fifty years has been historically differentiated from its past as the *modern period*. The technological discoveries and industrialization that characterise this period are perceived as being the primary reasons for changes in social structures. Private ownership, free enterprise and the resulting growth and expansion of the middle classes witnessed the beginning of a process often referred to as the *fragmentation* of traditional communities. Social fragmentation implies a fragmentation at all levels of production, including the artistic one which is to be discussed here. In order to set the scene for this essay, I will explain why, instead of fragmentation, I prefer to refer to this process as *compartmentalization*.

For us to understand this process we have to refer to history, and more particularly to the discipline of Art History which focused on the fine arts among other human creative activities.

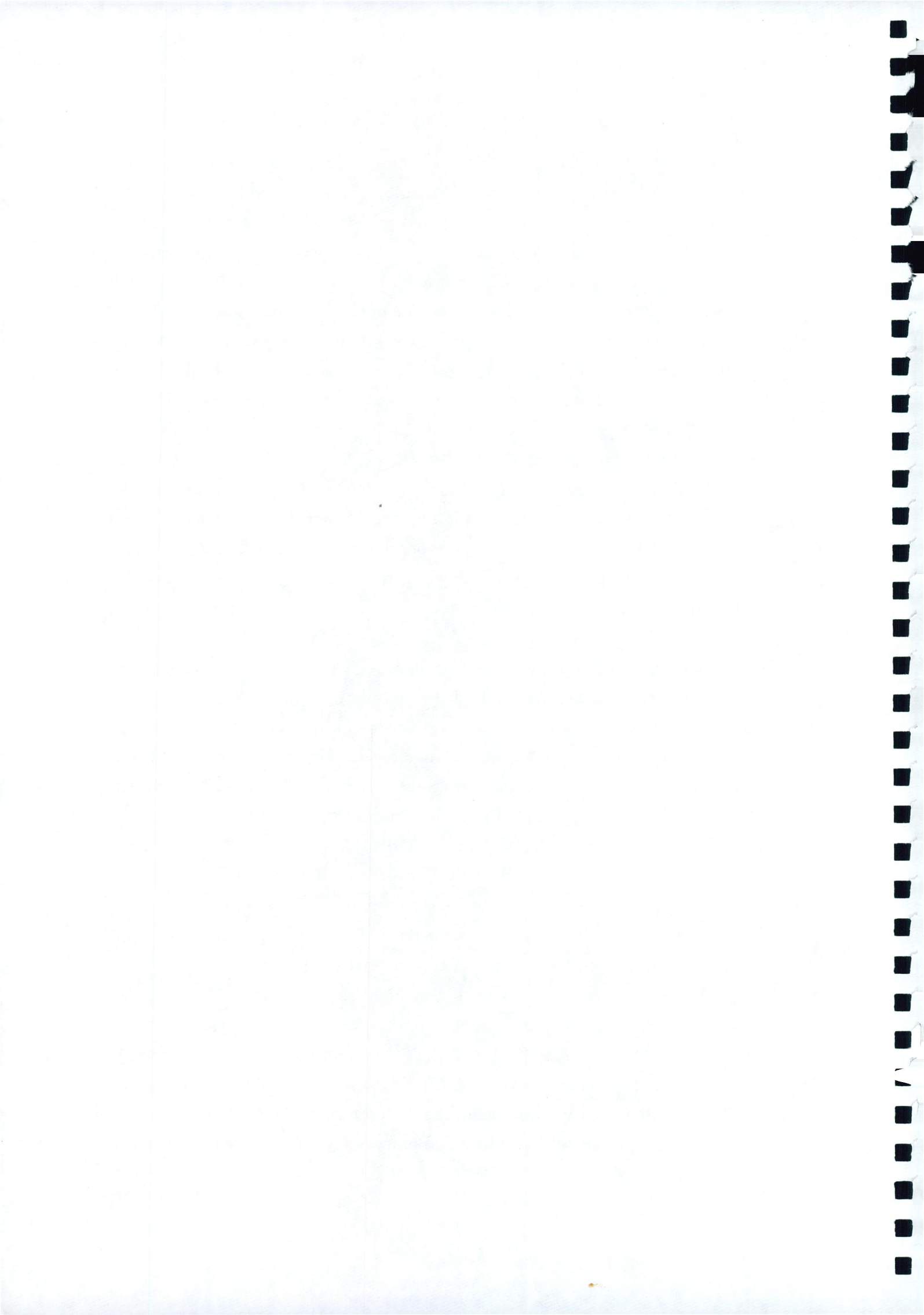
Perhaps because superficially they offered the most graphic representations of the past and its actors, the fine arts became the visual instruments that helped us in understanding, *in getting a picture of*, the structures and organisations of past eras and the functions of people, sites and objects within them. Concurrently, Marxist theory critically established that what and who is depicted as well as the way they are depicted are very much determined by a power superstructure. This very superstructure was undergoing significant changes by the middle of the nineteenth



century which affected the art that was presented to the public in some of the world art centres and more particularly Paris. Pictures began to be exhibited in salons, private galleries and museums. The form, the nature of these pictures and their subjects also evolved. The public that came to see and appreciate them underwent a similar mutation. The "Salon des Refusés" in the Paris of the 1860s was one of the first alternative art venues where some of the artists who were dissatisfied with the art production and the structure of the art world, had access to an arena where they could voice statements *in opposition* to the accepted forms of art which they felt did not accurately reflect the social situation of their times, or at least were privileging a dominant mind set. We can see the "Salon des Refusés" as a first step in a process of compartmentalization in the modern art market. This initial breakaway led to a plethora of further separatist movements the sum of which make up the modern period as we know it. This compartmentalization has today developed into a range of possibilities for the artist and operates mainly at two distinct but closely linked levels: a *formal* level and a *structural* level.

Formally, the compartmentalization can be illustrated by a list of *isms* superseding each other throughout the modern period. A great number of styles and schools developed and created autonomous doctrines for themselves. Romanticism emerged as a reaction to materialism and acted as a precursor to the modernist impetus which was initiated by Realism and followed by Impressionism, Pointillism, Cubism, Futurism, Functionalism, Constructivism, Expressionism, etc... Nowadays, an artist can choose to operate within the respective particular ideological frameworks that these various movements have established.

Structurally, the working artist who wishes to make his/her production public is today presented with a spectrum that goes from state funded art galleries or museums, down to non-profit associative art exhibitions via privately owned commercial galleries and subsidized art spaces. Artists also have the alternative to show their work sporadically in non art-related spaces. The range of possibilities in the modern era has been further multiplied by the development of mechanical reproduction and new media: photography, radio, cinema, television, video, and more



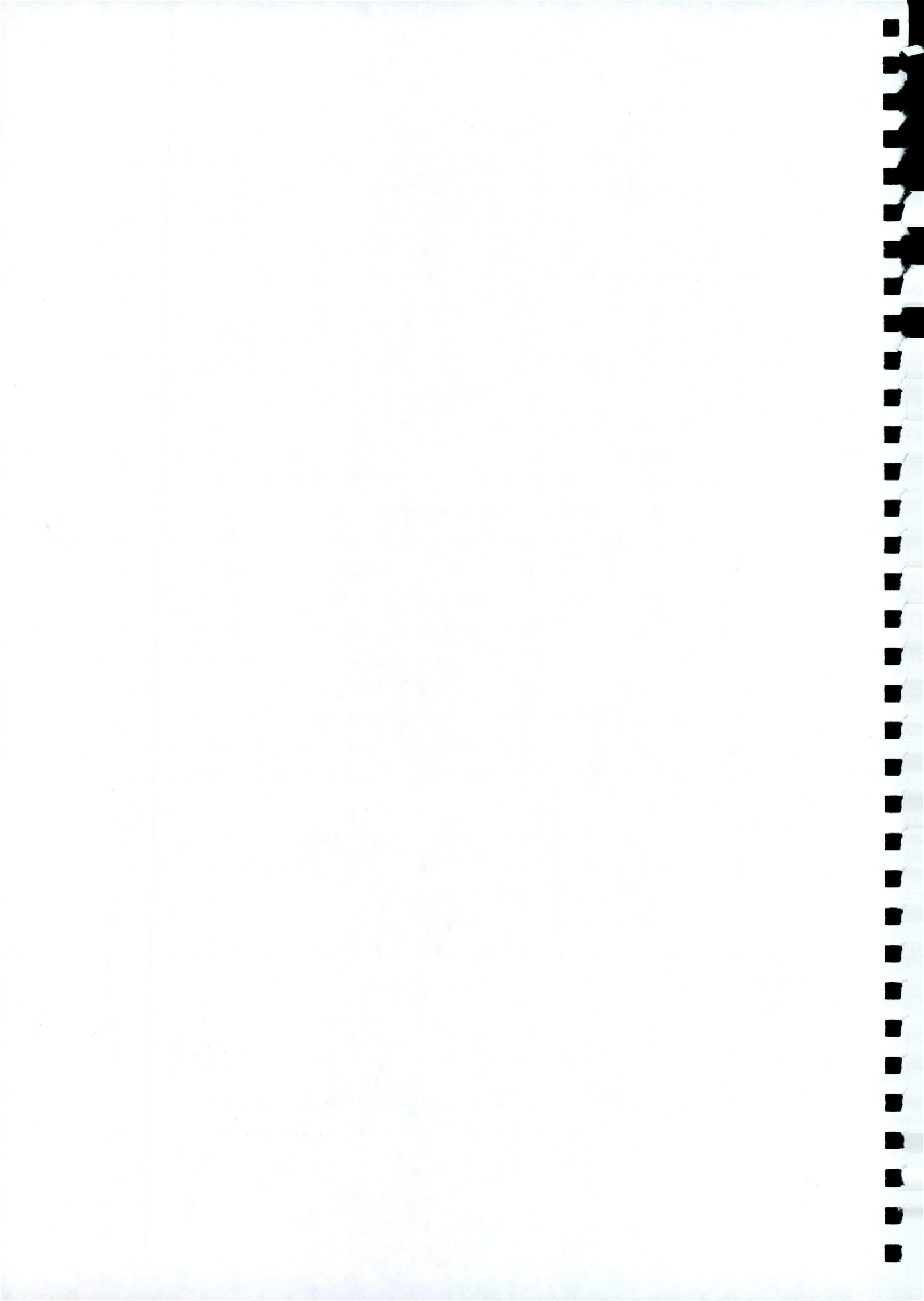
recently, computer aided graphics.

In such a framework, any artist presenting virtually any kind of art can find an outlet for his/her work. Each artistic community seemingly has the freedom to define its own set of aesthetic values, its own political coherence etc... thus composing a self-contained benchmark for quality. There are nevertheless tensions between these various forms of art, between their respective outlets and between the artists and administrators within them. These tensions within the range just described are due to the formation of a hierarchy largely related to issues of funding and power. In political terms this acknowledgement is not without its problems in a debate about the social value of art.

As mentioned above, the modern era has increased the possibilities of communication. In the same process, various media have become accessible to a greater number of people, thus multiplying the potential for intervention of the individual. Undeniably, a process of democratization has taken place. However, the compartmentalization of creativity mirrors the competitive nature of a market and establishes art as a currency first and foremost, turning works of arts into commodities which are valued according to their marketable potential. This constitutes an evaluation that brings about the notion of success for the art and its maker. On the wide spectrum of available media, competition defines commercial success for the best part as harmonious with the technological and social nature of the system at a given point, thus attesting that successful art (popularly or critically) is the symbolic mirror of the dominant system. However and paradoxically, the experience of creativity, including its critical experience, could not be shared outside the public forum that the very market provides. It is *also* the market that dialectically gives value to other forms of artistic creation; especially those that are inscribed in the logic of opposition or resistance which is to be examined later in this discussion.

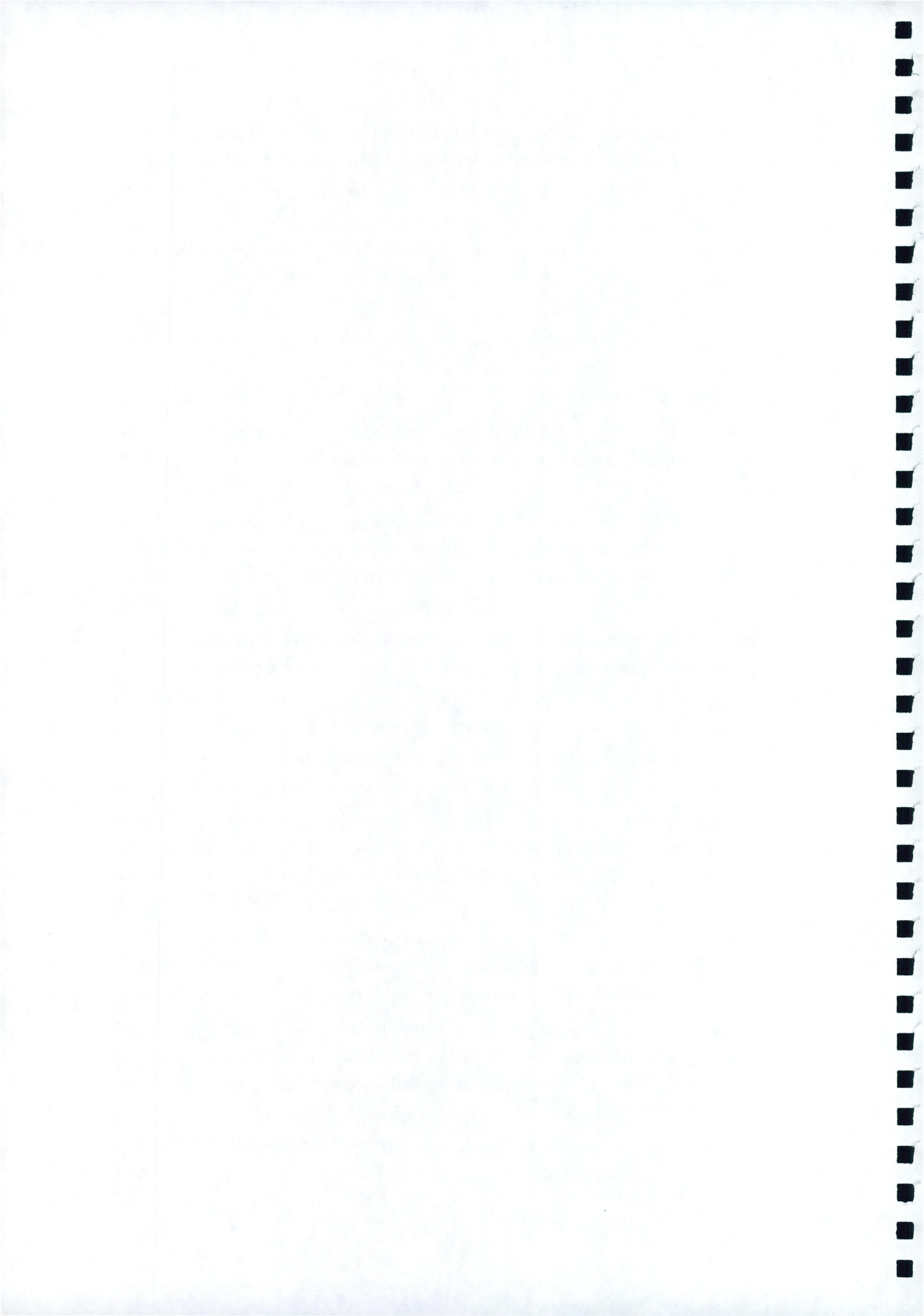
## **II. Personalization**

Within the context outlined above, it is important to situate the role of the artist as subject. The subject is primarily a person (the artist) who is being



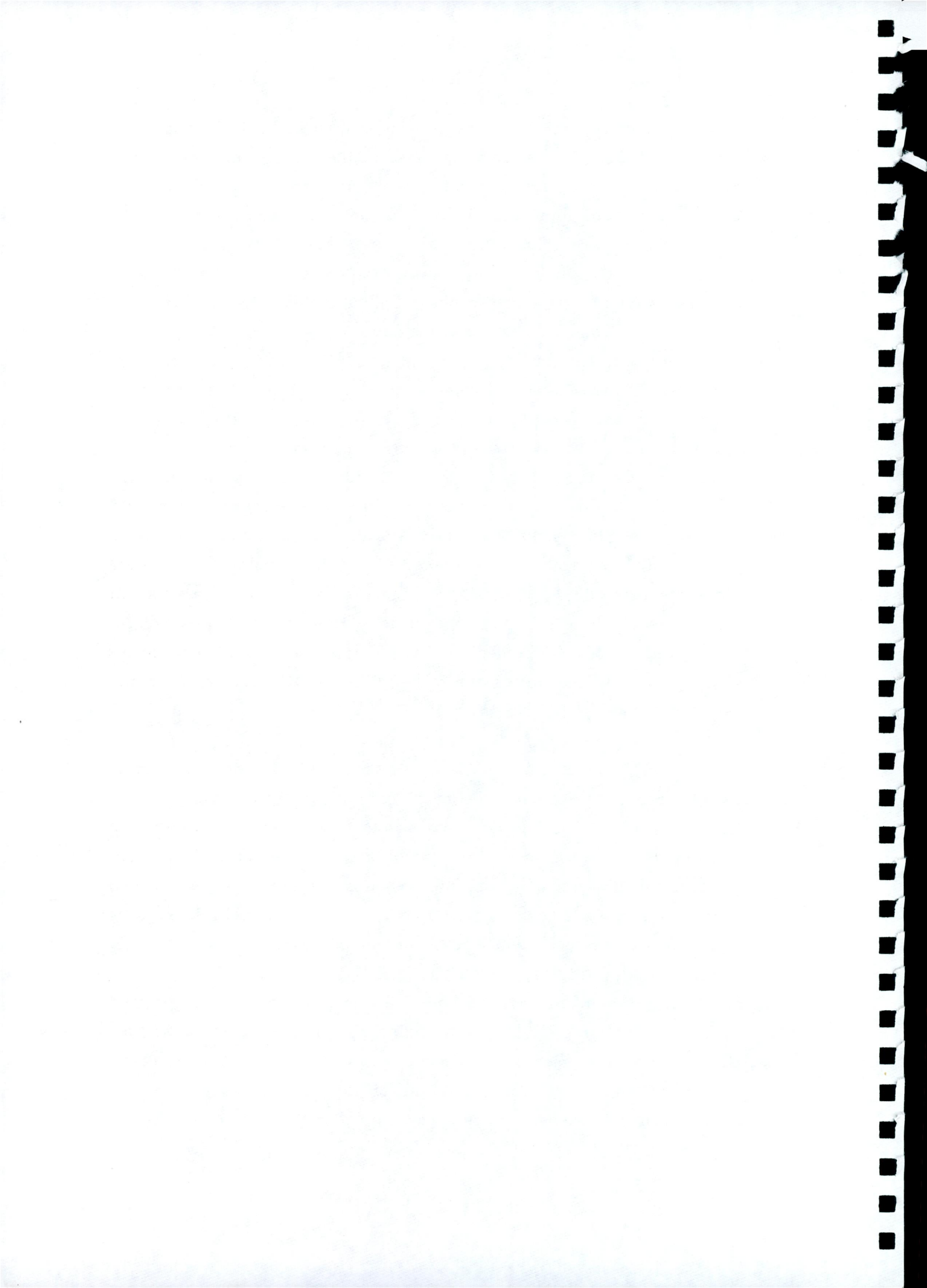


examined and studied in separation from and in relation to his or her art, but also as a source of opinions and ideas generated through creation and for the gaze of others, in other words the artist as *subjectivity*. However, an interesting paradox should be taken into account: in the general post-structuralist view, this subjectivity is devalued, the subject is said never to have really existed. Postmodern theorists (Hirsch, Derrida) argue that we are still suffering from a mystification that, in the modern period, persuaded us that everyone possessed a unique personal identity that could be affirmed through a symbolic construction (art, creativity, action). This glorification of the individual and the *inner self* is now coolly looked back upon as a myth or guiding narrative when situated in its own modernist context. But it can also be judged as a mystification or as outdated when removed from this context and identified as still current in the postmodern world. Individualism -and that is where the paradox lies- has been the very generator of competition within the art market and indeed within the entire economic framework from Manet to this day. The concepts of Originality and Novelty that partake of the same competitive pragmatism have been promoted as two of the essential prerequisites for successful art that the individual artist has to incorporate in his/her work. As part of the same process of compartmentalization, the modern era has witnessed a phenomenon of specialization (division of labour) imposed by an imperative of profitability within a professional context. In the work of an artist, the limitation in skill, form and subject matter is by no means compulsory but in order to make the work more readily identifiable and durably marketable, the artist is encouraged to incorporate a set of stylistic *distinctions*. Today we are dealing in terms of *finding a niche* for a particular type of activity in the market. That is not to say that a characteristically personal and identifiable way of working becomes one of the conditions of artistic success. The specialization that we are dealing with can consist in the ability to imitate previous or current forms of successful art for which there is a consistent demand. The educational system itself, while presenting the various options, is forced to impose a technique-related specialization designed to produce professionals who will be skilled in the various areas of the professional market. Now if we accept the idea that art has been commodified through a



market-orientated logic as a result of individualization, we can see that today artistic forms have increasingly become the emblems of certain ideas of culture. From this point of view, the art of the past becomes, in terms of mass communication, the mere visual accompaniment or illustration of a narrative, less than a trace of a defined ideology. Art can be appropriated for commercial purposes or derived from its original form for a market of nostalgia (such as these billboards advertising a washing powder which conspicuously used the styles of Van Gogh, Gauguin and Cézanne or the countless TV ads which resort to the American 1950s consumer's paradise style). These phenomena certify to an estrangement from the past. In an era of specialization, the digestion and comprehension of the process of modernization of art is left to a comparatively small community that must strive to correct this discrepancy. In their relationships with sciences, humanities and technology, the languages of art have become more and more specialized and obscure, fragmented or synthetic to the general public. Outside a number of aesthetic systems stripped of their discourses, little has filtered into the readily available popular culture. The artistic image or object reproduced as posters or looted for advertising becomes an interchangeable *signifier* that is the vehicle of fashion; the most direct and readily exploitable conveyor of *The New*.

Consequently, and beginning with the compartmentalization originating with the modern period, it is the *name* and notoriety of the artist that has taken over the substance of the discourses that the modern movement as a whole sought to bring into the public arena. One could once again compare this phenomenon to fashion, where a particular style is attached to the name of a designer. I would go further and parallel this with the *product brand name* with which we are so familiar today. As with foods or household products, the various social strata consume *culturally* affordable forms of fine art. Some of them are more economically and readily available: reproductions of all kinds: posters, postcards, calendars, etc... Often, these mention the name of the artist in large type on a strip underneath the image (thus becoming an integral part of it or rather adding up to a whole new image). This happens notably to artists of great



reputation: painters such as Picasso, Renoir, Dali, Matisse, Mondrian; sculptors like Rodin, Moore, Giacometti but also photographers: Evans, Porter, Mapplethorpe, Avedon, Doisneau, Ronis, etc... This type of image, in its abundance, contributes to give the masses a particular, limited and exclusive idea of art and culture.

But this device is not the monopoly of the famous. It is also used in other posters or reproductions of the works of lesser known contemporary artists, Ray Massey, Shotwell, Antonio, etc... This, in order for the art to be associated with a name, a directly and discursively identifiable sign; a word that sums up an entire aesthetic entity and makes all its diverse commercial forms more directly recognizable and consequently more readily consumable. Because these images circulate within the public space (streets, cafés, restaurants, shops) and can also be purchased by a large number of individuals they become the idea of culture in relation to which other forms of artistic processes are going to be judged. That is, they are going to be judged according to their consumable potential. An interesting and significant phenomenon also occurs. It follows the market in commercializing images of the stars of popular culture ranging from actors and actresses to sport heroes, rock groups and teen idols: in this phenomenon, fine artists now appear on posters and postcards while reproductions of their work or of their styles are utilized for advertising or promotional purposes. The photograph that was originally a document becomes itself the receptacle of artistic contemplation: a black and white picture of Picasso posing in front of his painting with a cigarette in his hand and staring at the lens; a photograph of Matisse in his studio in the throes of creation; a picture of Samuel Beckett at the terrace of a Parisian café. The name of the artist who is depicted is inscribed in all these pictures. What were once exhibition posters designed to advertise now become fixed icons, outliving their sell-by-date. In these examples, art is either partially or wholly removed to make room for the artists, their faces, their names.



### III. Proliferation and confusion

After examining the conditions that a competitively induced fragmentation imposes, it is important to observe what consequences this has on the perception of works of art by the public. First of all, a definition of what we understand by *the public* is necessary. For we are here again confronted with the effect of fragmentation: a phenomenon that has transformed the person into a spectator instead of a participant. There was between classical artists and their viewers a set of well defined and understood conventions that were related to particular liturgies and rituals. The art that was commissioned by royalty and clergy was meant to elicit a particular social behaviour. Through the modern period, there is a multiplication of approaches. The masses have only superficially been able to experience all these various forms of creativity. The understanding, the digestion and critique of modern art has therefore remained the privilege of an élite. There has been a delay between the production of art at given points in time and their eventual acceptance by the masses. It is a mere statement of fact to say that modern art and what even fewer people now recognize as postmodern art have failed to be paralleled by an educational system that would endow the viewers with the necessary tools to take a more active part in the experience of contemporary art.

As a result, the gallery, the art space or the museum of contemporary art or even their relaying through the mass media, often set up confrontation between a variety of languages. A crude example: in a contemporary art museum, we can find, in the same space, an oil painting and an interactive video installation. Their respective subject matters may also be different. Their confrontation transforms the space and the way these works can be read individually. Even for the expert, there is a Tower of Babel phenomenon that can dim or cancel the works' meanings, reducing them to separate clusters of signs stripped of a direct *referent*. What is being addressed here is this crucial area where the accommodating concept of compartmentalization ceases to be satisfactory. This does not by any means advocate that a return to the unified forms of art that academies demanded would solve these problems. It could simply be argued that encouraging some form of public response would prevent some of the





sense of alienation that various groups within the socio-professional spectrum experience towards each other. This exposure must be operated within the public sphere, if we want the public arena to signify something for individuals as a social body.

If we admit that the value of art must be assessed partly through its context of presentation, the disruption of an attempted cohesion within the piece by the *presence* in the same space of other modes of representation and metaphorical processes leads to a lessening if not sometimes a dilution of integrity in the piece. Meaning can only be extracted from within the integrity of a system of illusions conjured by the artist. It is not only, to take up Baudrillard's point, the mere proliferation of signs that brings about meaninglessness but their relentless and numbing clashes.

What Baudrillard refers to as *obscenity* in the modern and postmodern society in general is the fact that the boundaries between objects (this means images as well) and reality have been blurred to the extent that objects become our reality by being removed from the embedding framework (Obscene=absence of stage) that is necessary for their appreciation.

As a result, one can doubt the part played by the unrefined notion of general public; that is to say persons discretely transiting through the "art-space", exiting it in a state of bewilderment with a sense of frustration and vague amusement that nevertheless quickly dissolves; not to return until the next visit. One can be skeptical indeed about the degree of meaningful residue that artistic production leaves with the majority of viewers, about the ability of art to raise a certain awareness beyond those who already possess it and which precisely enables them to decipher the significance of a particular piece of work. For this reason, much art seems eventually forced back into the aesthetic realm; all political implications then reveal their truly nominal nature and expose artistic production as the seat of social change that it *cannot* be. Under those circumstances, art is left only ever to operate as testimony and subsequently as trace.

*Looking at* art can become an alienating experience when the subjectivity of the artist faces the subjectivity of the viewer in an uneasy and intense spectacle of difference. That is when process is erased and a common vehicle for understanding has been removed from the wide public sphere.



Whether the work is an aesthetic riddle, a technical *tour de force* or an obscure *in media res* spur for debate, that gaping chasm may well be the one that, in 1995, still has newspapers printing titles such as "but is it art?" over a picture of Marcel Duchamp's urinal/fountain of 1917 on the occasion of its umpteenth retrospective showing. That chasm is also one that lets in the personal, the anecdotal and the complacent. One may yet regard this as the imponderable nature of artistic creation in the modern period: yet art can still be seen, even now, as a mediated forum for impressions, opinions and ideas. The debate becomes distorted when ideas contained in art are submitted to the law of exchange-value. In other words when economic contingencies pull the entire debate to one side. In the case of contemporary art production, the gallery or the museum are the locales where value is constructed; whether for exchange or aesthetic purposes this value is certainly conditioned and varies from one given period of time to another, and according to economic and technological circumstances. It requires an informed and disciplined approach of the viewer in order to comprehend and learn lessons from this process. That is still only the privilege of an élite.



## Chapter II

### Genius and the privilege of creativity

*We do not in logical terms need just that unique embodied creator or creative ensemble, or just those historical circumstances, which were in fact responsible for the discovery, invention or theoretical formulation in question. Even if those persons or circumstances had never existed it is quite conceivable that, in due course, some other gifted creator or ensemble would have lived under conditions which would allow the very same discoveries, inventions or theoretical formulations to be made. (Crowther, 1991, P.304)*

#### I. Defining Genius

Kant defines genius as an excess of intuition channelled through creativity. If we look through history for all the artists that have been described as endowed with this divine inspiration, we will observe that the very notion of Genius is very much dependent on certain conditions: gender, class, wealth, being related to someone established in the profession; also location, exposure and financial success; these parameters are critically inseparable from the notion of Genius.

From the relative anonymity, the mediocre social status and the adherence to the strict demands of commissions of the Pre-Renaissance court artist (who was in many ways the figurehead, the director and administrator of a whole workshop of assistants and apprentices), to the high profile and advocated individualism of the modern artist, even within particular movements (if we except the Bauhaus and Constructivism with their



emphasis on functionality, and De Stijl's insistence on a rigorously pared down vocabulary of form), we can see that the definition of Genius shifted from being the intuitive skill to imitate nature in the most illusionistic and convincing manner to being the intellectual ability to precisely translate an inner subjective world into images. The (German) Expressionist movement presents the paradigm of that notion of Genius (Egon Schiele). American Abstract Expressionism has its own tortured heroes (Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko). Simultaneously the advent of book monographs and private gallery exhibitions operated as a form of promotion as well as deification of the now individualised artist (contemporary as well as classical). Often congratulatory and sometimes ridiculously hyped, these enterprises superimpose a modern myth and a classical one and thus recreate the art of the past as an epic saga with the melodrama and the romanticism that contemporary art, perhaps too close at hand, can only lack. The history of art as represented by the mass media has encouraged us, trained us to look at art *unframed*, decontextualized, providing us with a commentary devoid of historical circumstances and laying emphasis on the surface of the art itself.

Late capitalistic western society, with the individual empowerment that characterizes it perpetuates the myth of genius. It has maintained its existence but shifted the features of its definitions to terms of pure success. The idea of a private, mad, "genius" is a misnomer, its very own formulation depends on a reappraisal that takes place in the public eye. Exposure and recognition are the conditions *sine qua non* of Genius. Vincent Van Gogh, for example, though a pauper all his life enters history by the back door through the posthumous triumph of his *œuvre*, itself partially due to the highly dramatised and mediated versions of his life story. From that respect Van Gogh is a successful artist; that his fame and fortune should have come after his death becomes irrelevant in the context of history:

*The subject [Van Gogh] constructed from the art work is then posited as the exclusive source of meaning, i. e.: of art, and the effect of this is to remove art from historical or textual analysis by representing it solely as the expression of the creative personality of the artist. Art is therefore neither public or a product of work. (Pollock in Hayward (ed.), P.76)*

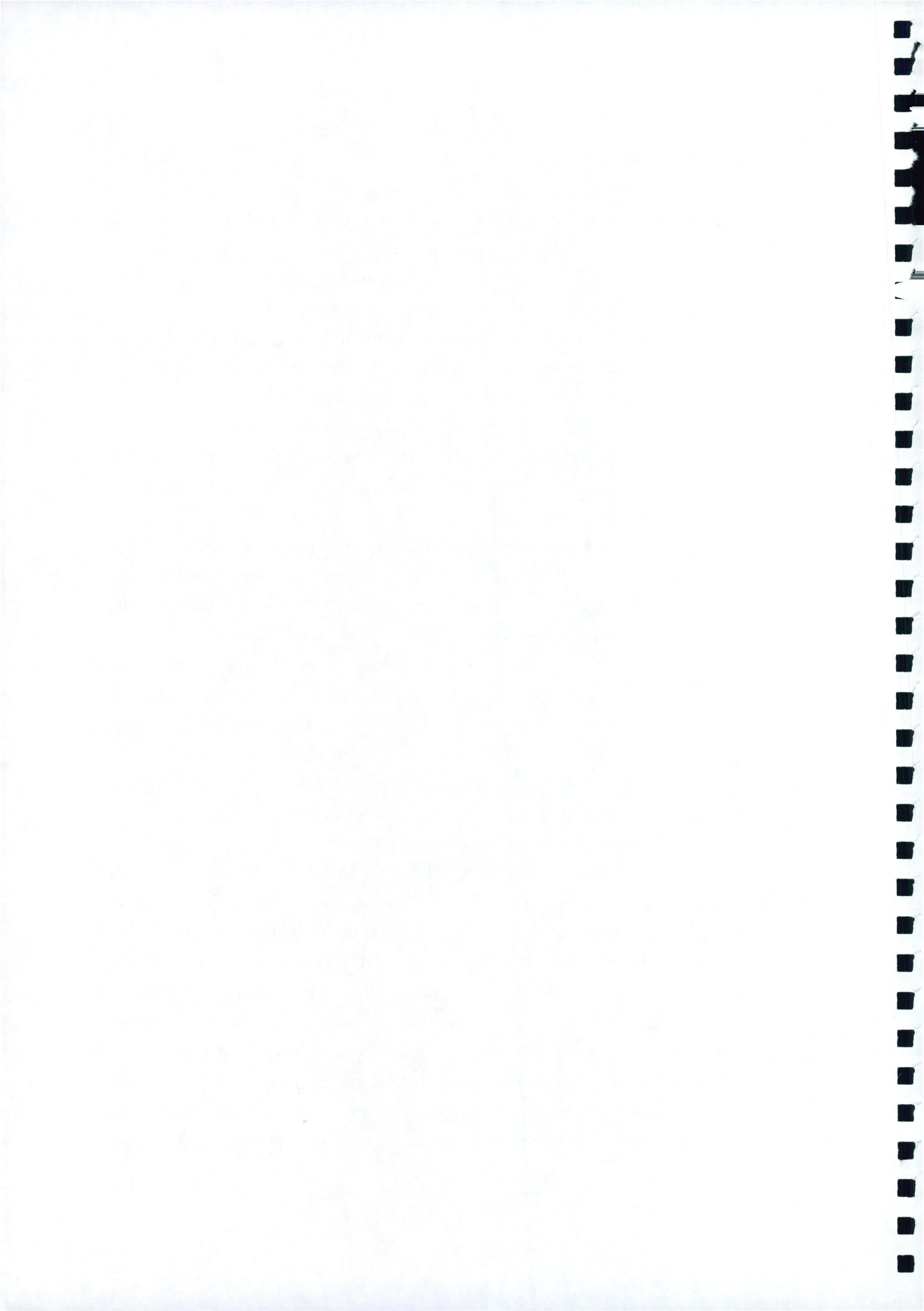




The image itself of the artist has been exploited and sold as a peripheral source of marvel since Vasari through to Andy Warhol via Biographies, Catalogues Raisonnés, television programmes and romanticised Hollywood biopics. In the postmodern age, artists would be able to momentarily sweep aside all the various items that made their reputations (their creation, their art) to personally embody and present the myth in an unmediated manner, to become the art in person: this occurred with Andy Warhol, Joseph Beuys and more recently with Jeff Koons. By abandoning some of the conventions that brought them onto the map of the art market, these artists contributed to make of these new approaches preponderant conditions of success for the artist. These approaches or strategies would have an influence on the very form and nature of contemporary art production.

I would now like to reiterate the paradox mentioned in the first chapter, a paradox lying in the discrepancy between a postmodern theoretical strand (that is, if we include the three artists mentioned above in postmodernism) that encourages us to abandon the idea of the author (by debunking the myth of the self), and relinquish the concept of authorial authority in order to consider and judge the work of art as an autonomous social construct, as a source of meaning independent of a creator, and the fact that much of it precisely refers to an intense, self-conscious subjectivity that is furthermore emphasised and cultivated by a whole industry of promotion and mythication that is at the very centre of its discourse.

The entire art market and many artists still today thrive on the mystique of the Genius artist (Koons, De Kooning). The ability to produce what comes to be labelled as art continues to be largely perceived as a gift, as a privileged endowment which coincides with the notion of spiritual élite mentioned earlier. The one that prompts such reactions as, "I couldn't do that, how does He do it", etc...; this aspect of the art market is parallel to the commodified aesthetics that we find in mass culture, it mirrors symmetrically the myth of beauty that keeps the fashion industry booming. Charisma, Talent, Genius, all partake in the great illusion that consists of turning a rarefied item into a fetish, in infusing an object with a rhetorical charisma. This is partly what restrains art into an intellectual, academic



and commercially alternative environment, presenting it as an activity that requires the stamp of approval of a whole specialised hierarchy and decides what is good and bad in art. In other words, an approach that encourages and promotes the idea of *taste* as defined by Bourdieu, that is to say as a social construct. The notion of *Taste* here echoes the notion of *style* examined earlier.

This state of affairs does not prevent the same market to recuperate aesthetic elements that were foreign to it, provided they can be channelled through the right candidate: a case in point would be Haitian-American painter Jean-Michel Basquiat who was hailed in the early '80s by the New York merchants as introducing graffiti and "street art" into the private and then the public gallery. However the medium of graffiti, the subversive and confrontational attitude and subsequent discourse that generally went with it were lost once transferred from the pages of the comic strip book or the subway wall onto the surface of the canvas, thus cancelling the direct originally oppositional nature of the activity, whether intended by the artist or not, and turning it into a purely cultural phenomenon rather than a directly political one. The art market when it operates in this manner is not an industry that mostly stultifies creativity and eradicates dissent it promotes personalities as figureheads and luminaries, these become the embodiments of art creating themselves as art *idols* like so many teen-idols.

## II. Selling and Buying Genius.

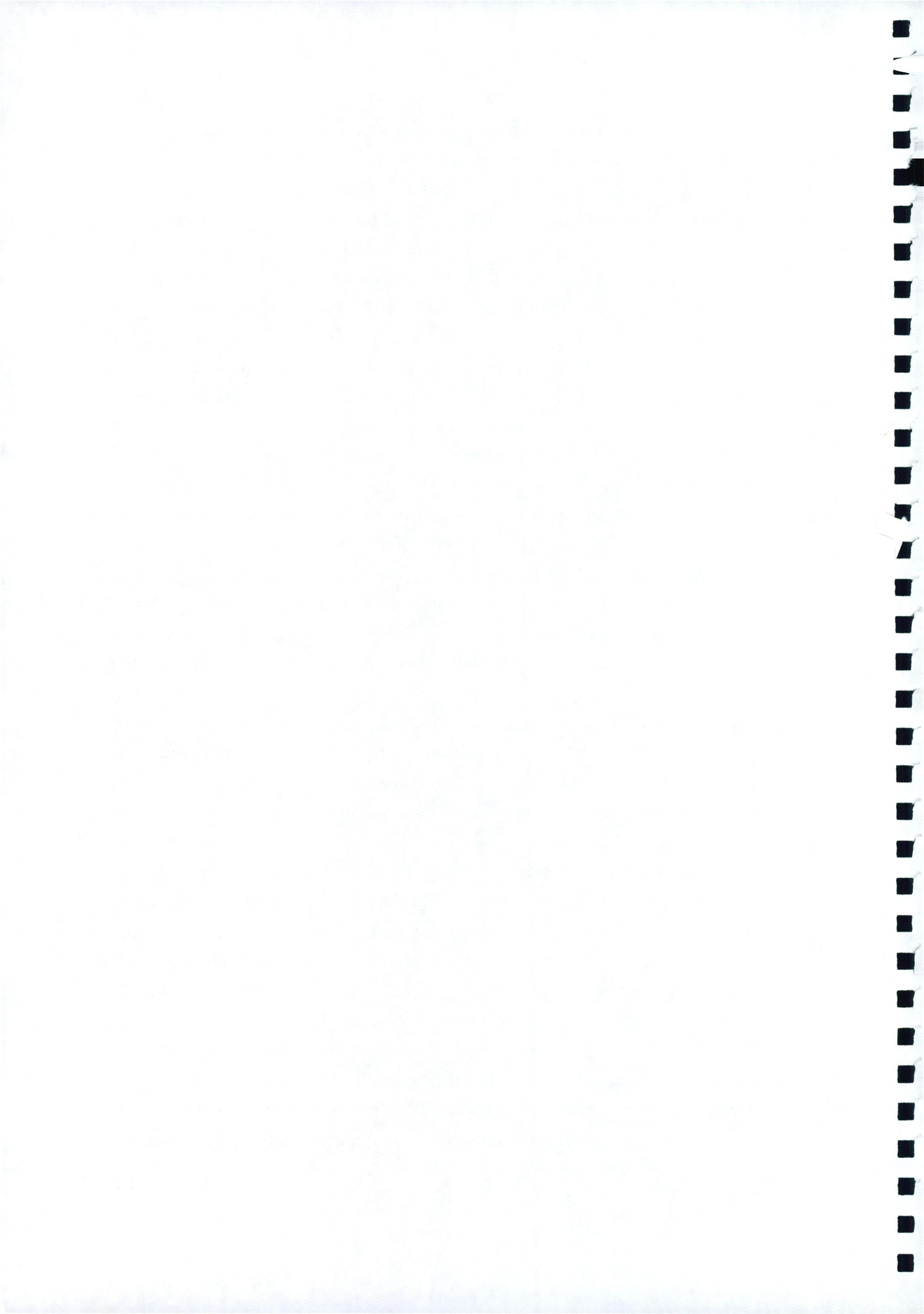
With the modern period, art fades from imitative representation with a perennial allegorical value into being a practice of individual identity on the same paradigm of novelty that rules the capitalistic market and the technology that it depends on. In the late 1950s, the idea of personal development and individual empowerment through an aesthetic involvement appeared to be the most consistent and received ideological residue of the experience of the various incarnations of modernism up to that period. Most of the successive strategies of modernism strove for an ideal of aesthetic consistency and self containment. Each was the vehicle



and the often literal illustration of a discourse related to a parallel critical and ideological body. Postmodernism as first embodied by Pop Art presents a further degree of self-consciousness for the human being in his/her relation to nature. It noticeably abandons the divorce from social and political environment advocated by modernist theorists and consciously introduces capitalistic contingencies such as mass production and design (Jasper Johns's beer cans, Andy Warhol's Brillo boxes and paintings of Campbell soup cans) in a manner that could only have appeared as crude to many modernist critics at the time when they were laying all the emphasis on style. The incorporation in the realm of art of comments on mass consumption was at odds with and undermined the formal restrictions imposed by modernist theorists (Greenberg or Rosenberg). The use of commercial mass produced objects (a device invented by Duchamp: the ready-mades) also constituted a critique of consumer's society as much as a critique of the isolationism of modern painting theory. Art could be used as a means of critique again. Critique could become part and parcel of an art that offered a self scrutiny partially removed from formalism and interested in the social and the cultural with some of the same tongue-in-cheek and self-derisive manner that Dada used almost fifty years before.

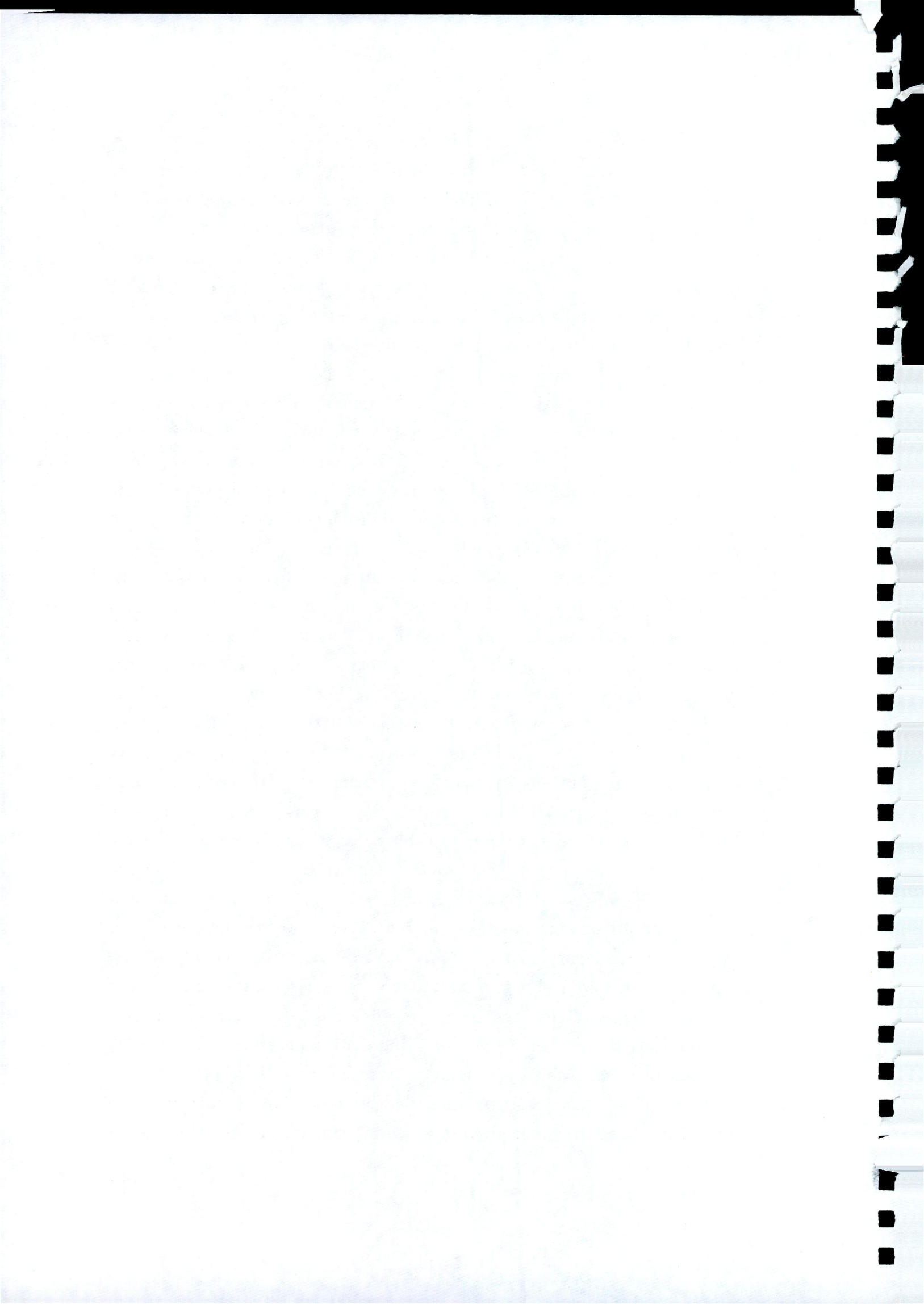
Bearing these remarks in mind, it is interesting to take a look at Alan Bowness's 1989 essay "The Conditions of Success" where he attempts to present a summary of a process of emergence and prominence. Although it is by no means a prescriptive project, (he implies that the most important condition of success is this very conveniently vague assumed prerequisite: Genius), Bowness contends that art can only exist in one arena: the art market. *Good* art, therefore, can only be assessed if placed in that framework and according to a very variable and mysterious conversion chart that translates form into financial terms. Bowness outlines four stages in his ascending scale: 1, Peer recognition, 2, Critical recognition, 3, Patronage by dealers, 4, Public acclaim. Never in his essay is there mention of a broader context, relevance, validity or awareness.

Success ultimately means *financial* success. And in the art market only. Two important points here are worth noting that will be developed later; first, that in terms of communications, it is mostly the art that operates



within a prestigious commercial framework that can acquire the privilege of media exposure. An artistic activity that is not inscribed in a commercial framework is less likely to acquire currency in the eyes of the majority of viewers. This has contributed to give a falsified image of art as an activity, and to give the impression that the importance and the value of art depends on its degree of fame. Secondly, Bowness swiftly mentions the paramount importance of two conditions in his idea of the recognition of good art; contacts (friendship with dealers) and location/relocation: the same old world centres for art: New York, London, Paris, Barcelona, Milan. Bowness's approach and agenda is admittedly purely curatorial. His judgment of art is entirely regulated by commercial parameters. What he seeks in art is a particular salability. This attitude, even if we accept that the social and the economic are prominent envioning factors in the definition of art, asserts that the placement of the work of art in the market place is a gesture that is essential to the activity of creation.

The consequences of this attitude can be easily illustrated. It is for example, the name Barnett Newman and all that it conjures up that sets his art apart from the indistinguishable mass of followers whose names are invested with less cultural capital. It is the name Philip Guston and the idiosyncratic approach of his late period, his early career as New York-based painter of social murals and his participation in the Abstract Expressionist movement that endows him with the credit and the currency that less geographically pertinent but perhaps as aesthetically relevant artists may have. It is the name of the artists and the contextualization of their work that make it possible to extract meaning. The history of High Art in the modern as well as in the classical age is a history of the converging points of its international exchange. It is a history of notoriety. This situation remains unaltered in the current postmodern era. The capital cities and particularly New York, Paris and London remain the sites where decisions about a particular type of production gives art in general a certain image and direction. It leaves all indigenous artistic activities to be peripheral, anecdotal and only valuable if they enter the realm of the international art market, losing in the process most of their local relevance. Art finds itself classified by a *hierarchy of exposure*. The difficulty is to reconcile centralization with a practical idea (or ideal) of art

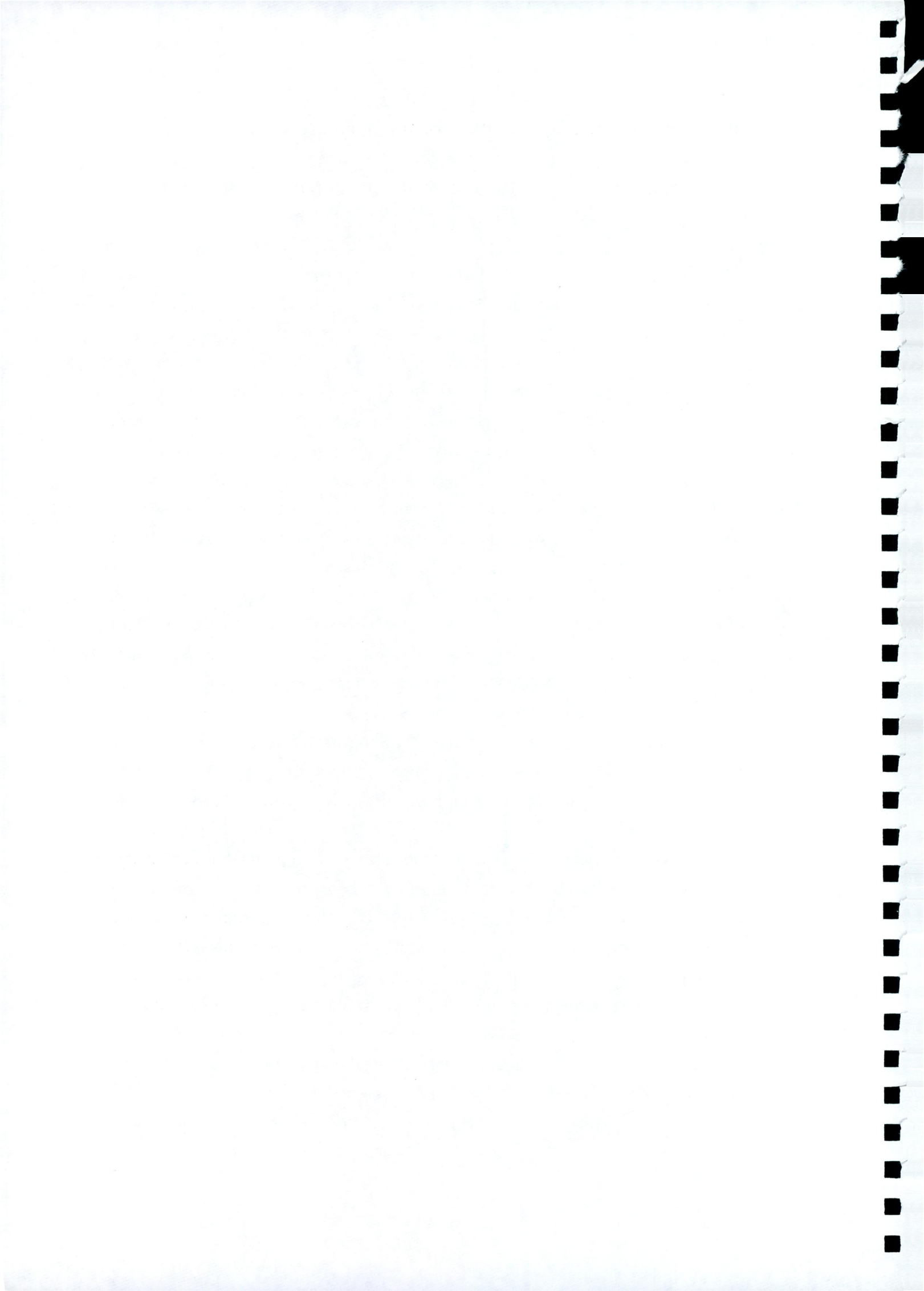




as being part of life that this condition permanently contradicts or prevents.

The public and by this I mean everybody, cognoscenti as well as profanes, has been brought to perceive and take for granted art as an individual endeavour and the product of *an* individual; monographs, one man/woman shows but also prizes, awards and the adjectival consecration: Duchampian, Beuysian, Warholian, Koonsian, all point towards the individualisation and the individual realisation of the artist. There is here a new development in the process of fragmentation that originally typified modernism. Offshoots became movements in their own terms and their various exponents. Now a single artist can represent his/her own movement. Once successful the artist can capitalize on the aura of his/her work and be perceived as a Genius, a title that gives him authority. The association for the viewer of a new piece of work with the name and the face of the artist conjures up a whole familiar history that creates a comforting impression. No matter how different the new or unknown work may be, the name of the artist still provides a known set of references that directs the viewer towards certain initial readings. This constitutes a base from which to decipher the departure from or obedience to a particular canon. Aside from aesthetic considerations, it becomes clear that for the artist as well as any other entrepreneur, the notion of success becomes paramount, not only success in the aesthetic resolution of the piece (the element of technical innovation will count as a great factor in cultural capital) but also in its topical value which will, in turn, rate its exchange value.

The self-consciousness induced by modernism and made acute by the strategies of the avant-garde permanently asked the artist to come clean about his position and status in society. To achieve this, the artist can retreat into the personal and choose to expose himself/herself to the scrutiny of others. These situations can be set up to conjure a certain self-image, a self image spawned strategically in relation to a solipsism that is variably defined (Francis Bacon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Jeff Koons again). The hierarchy of vice-virtue is abolished and the artist becomes the Genius of a cosmology of his/her own making, removed from a direct social environment within the insulating frame of the gallery. This of course



often fails as much to account for economic and cultural parameters and too often concentrates on highlighting the accomplishment of the artist within the boundaries of the art scene, in the context of his/her art and the strategies used to justify *the act of being an artist* .

#### IV. The critical bias of success

Quite apart from platonic removes, the personalization of art can nullify its experience. When the imagination of the viewer is channelled through the label adjacent to the work within the space or the caption in the book or magazine, boundaries are imposed on the untrammelled view of the work which prompts a neutral judgment. This does not mean that one can necessarily approach art effectively without any prior knowledge of its process, but that the stifling mythical authority of representation and the reduction of contextualization to a name and a date diminishes a critical viewing.

One may read in this a very textualized view of art. An art that would be framed by the written or the spoken word. That is not the point being made. One can only observe the alienation from past works of arts through the unawareness of the circumstances they were created in. In this light, a museum policy may therefore be perceived only as the sterile hoarding of cultural capital.

There is a permanent feature in both modernist and postmodernism Art History. It is a history of figures, of luminaries, of heroes, of pioneers, the acquaintance or knowledge of their work represents a cultural asset subject to fluctuation. And although it is important that individual artists and their achievements should be mentioned and examined, it is the glorification of their personalities rather than an insistence on the processes of their artistic achievements that is often promoted. This encourages the product of their work to be consumed as a *fetish* and estranges the ordinary person from the practice of art as it also encourages the idea that art practice is the privilege of a rare innately endowed élite. It detracts from the idea of art as practice and distorts the general view of the function of art in society.



## Chapter III

### Private art

*Artists with different agendas and diverse political associations strove to revolutionise art and in many cases, everyday life. Many of these movements saw themselves as instruments of social change and as well as continuing to make paintings and sculpture they also produced magazines and books, held exhibitions, shot films and photographs, designed new kinds of buildings, products, typography, graphics and clothing and they wrote manifestos (Staniszewski P.242)*

#### I. The transformative power of the mainstream

Here we must discuss an important point and ask the question: is the idea that art can change people and their lives a lie, an obsolete myth or is it simply that social circumstances fundamentally prevent art from operating as a vehicle of social change? When modernist artists such as Mondrian or Le Corbusier believed that their art could do exactly that, were they grossly mistaken or were they going about it the wrong way?

As the fine arts become part of a much larger industry of entertainment, they enter the category of Pascalian *divertissement* or distraction from important issues. The fine arts as we find them in galleries and museums fail to present themselves as effective agents of social change.

As far as the desire to alter society is concerned, popular culture presents the advantage of mobilising a large number of people. What we refer to as the mainstream is nevertheless concerned with a limited range of media:



television, radio, cinema, recordings, the press. We also have seen how the mainstream can validate certain new developments as the suitable vehicles of the logic (capitalism) that it is a symptom of. From this point of view, it is as difficult to imagine how popular culture could be an agent of social change anymore than the avant-garde. Reaching the masses inevitably requires abandoning the complex (radical, subversive, sometimes confrontational) strategies of the latter and undoubtedly run the risk of falling into populism.

However, we must acknowledge the fact that what we may perceive as the accessible (but also often facile and hegemonic) conventions of popular culture that we find exemplified in mainstream light entertainment such as Hollywood movies or Pop records (the standardization of plot lines, dialogues, arrangements of songs and harmonies) are the result of a stratification of once innovative or revolutionary artistic processes. The best example would be cinematographic *montage*. It is a process that a film viewer now takes completely for granted but which required at the time of its invention in the 1910s, a particular intellectual effort in order to understand the meaning involved in a succession of sequences of moving images of various lengths and subjects. This particular grammar evolved throughout the history of film making, seeping into other areas of artistic production. Our exposure, in the West, to this sort of medium has given us a visual literacy that we rarely ever consider and question. The conventions of communication in the mass media (as well as in alternative frameworks but to a lesser degree) have undergone a process of standardization. In televisual or cinematic terms, formats and conventions are very restrained and limited because of the commercial imperatives that regulate those industries. These restraining conditions are the mark of a certain cultural hegemony. However, television, cinema and all other forms of artistic production are as always influenced by the new technological developments that occur in the world of media.

From this point of view, it may be interesting to look at a very contemporary phenomenon and observe it in the light of what has been discussed so far.

In the late 1960s Marshall McLuhan predicted a cultural revolution that would use electronic means of communication as its main tool. Today, the

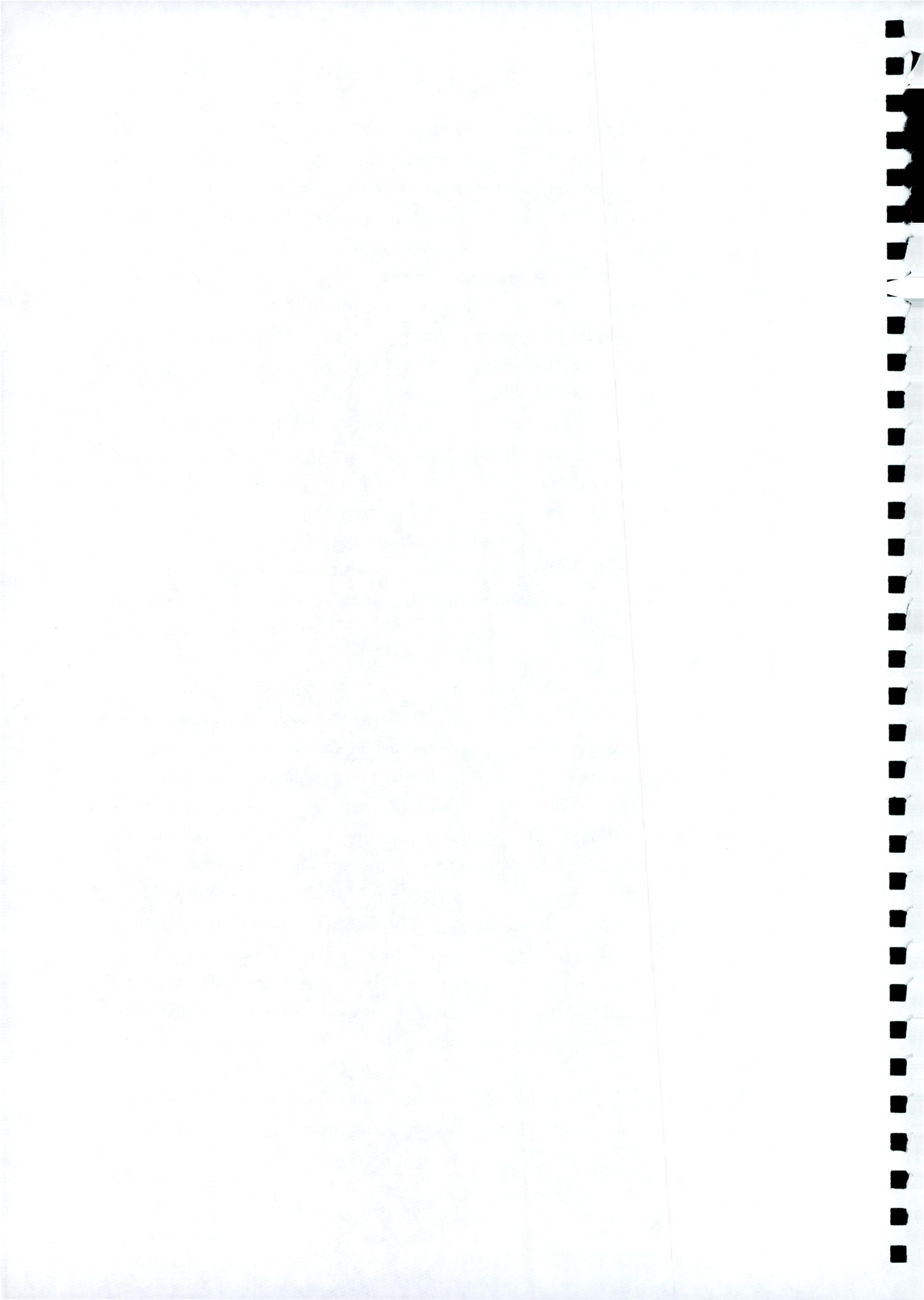




proverbial Global Village is taking on a more and more defined shape. As E-Mail and the Internet become increasingly democratized, they have so far been little more than a new medium for the circulation of information. However, and even if we choose to ignore the overwhelmingly commercial nature of the products on offer over the Internet, it is easy to recognise that it does operate as a means of demobilization and by and large does not offer the wide framework for action that it professes. Yes, people are able to broadcast their opinions directly over electronic circuitry, yes, the Internet enables access to documents and literature or opinions not readily available elsewhere; yes, people are also able to create images and music through this medium. It will, from a purely aesthetic point of view, be interesting to see if this very medium affects the form of artistic productions at large, but the Internet does not by any means represent a form of individual empowerment. The promotion of the Internet as such is first and foremost a commercial enterprise that seeks to sell a new medium for its own sake. (Most of the so-called interactive software available, selling us the idea of a means of creation and communication only ultimately offers the same limited range of possibilities as provided by other media, i.e the book or the board game.)

Despite its stress on communication and exchange, the nature of the information that is being transmitted is rarely discussed within the far from virtual framework that the Internet makes up. It therefore, at least so far, fails to meet the democratic agenda that its exponents have assigned it and remains largely within the area of *divertissement*. It also perpetuates a modernist myth by seeking and pretending to value the individual's voice in encouraging it to access this new medium as a means of personal assertion and liberation. It could even be said that the Internet represents a further and rather advanced stage of compartmentalization where individuals are able, through this medium, to accommodate certain desires and aspirations. The whole notion of resistance through these media is turned on its head as they are revealed to be some of the very instruments in the validation of a power structure.

Lukács, Adorno, Benjamin and Brecht have all deplored the divorce of art from the praxis of life. This is a condition imposed by the capitalistic

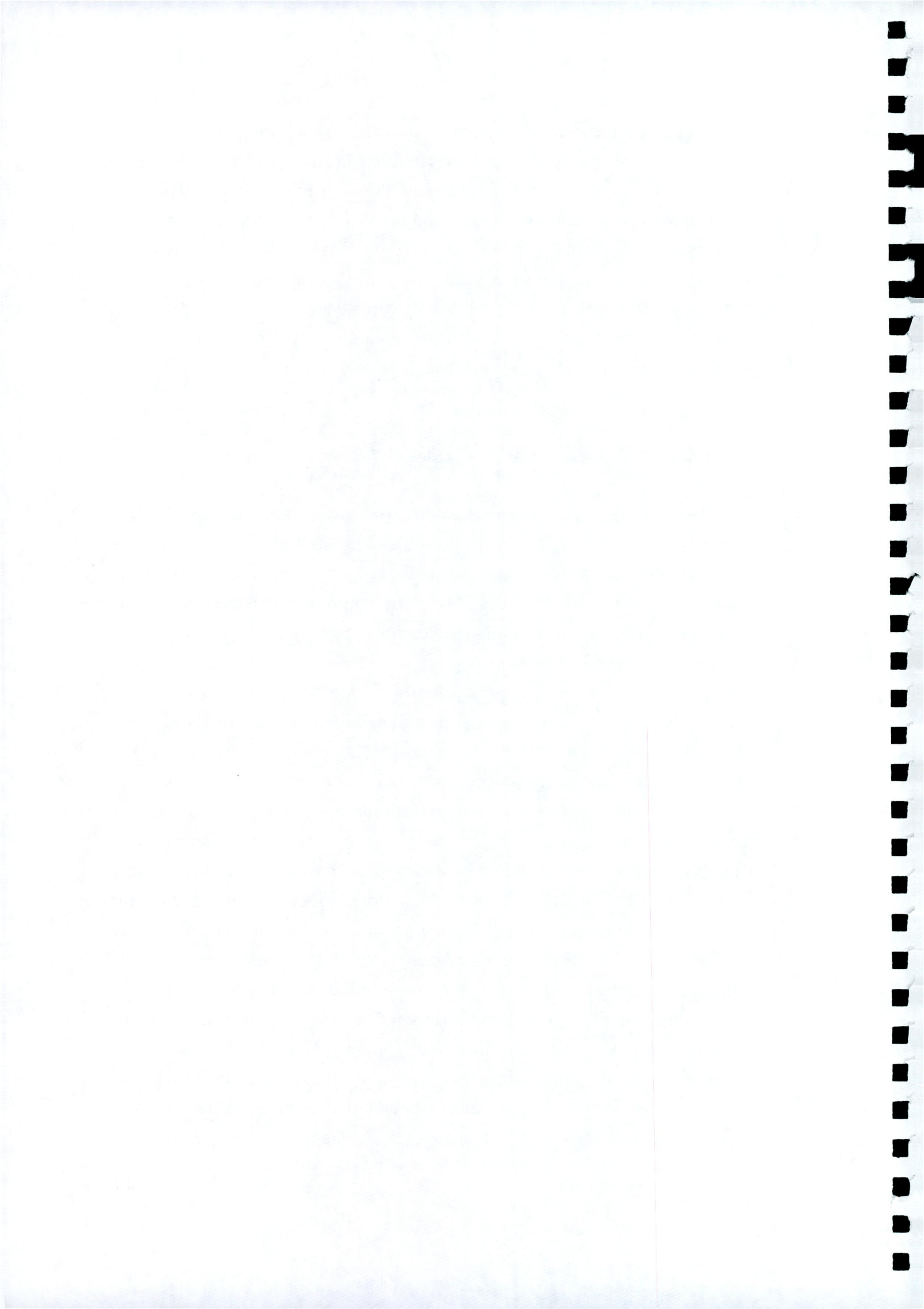


paradigm in which art has become the vehicle of commercial interests in the wide public sphere. Artistic creation has been commodified not only in advertising and fashion but equally as much in the areas of popular music and mass media. It has also commodified itself within galleries and all the other bases that can present or represent it. Emphasis is rarely ever put on the very practice of art itself and on the value of creative processes but rather on their end products and their potential exchange/cultural value. Art has now to compete first and foremost in a market place that defines its aesthetic development.

## II Ghosts of the Historical Avant-Garde

The avant-garde has not failed in its attempts to change the way art operated in society. Over the years, an increasingly larger public has become aware of the work that the art movements known as the historical avant garde have tried to develop. Contemporary artists smile at the naiveté of would-be revolutionaries as much as they still try to emulate their epic drive and idealism.

The avant-garde, by arrogating an unofficial moral authority, disturbs the idea of order but also re-presents the mystification of this order by operating on its margin and reframing it. The avant-garde points to the very mechanics that propel it and predicts its own annihilation. For all its whimsicality, its eccentricity, its anarchism and its erratic activity, it has developed into a tradition which has in turn inevitably been sucked into the structures of the market. These structures have become increasingly competitive ones, which represents a radical change, a contradiction for the avant-garde artists. They have had to come to terms with it. The only way for the contemporary avant-garde artist to be effective is to be culturally successful. It has become an imperative. This success is first and foremost commercial, it cannot go against the rules of the dominant logic without marginalizing subversion as an unfortunate but inevitable by-product. This conclusion does not in itself present anything new. Money and relocation have always been essential elements in success, my point is to underline that the changes in strategies, forms and attitudes

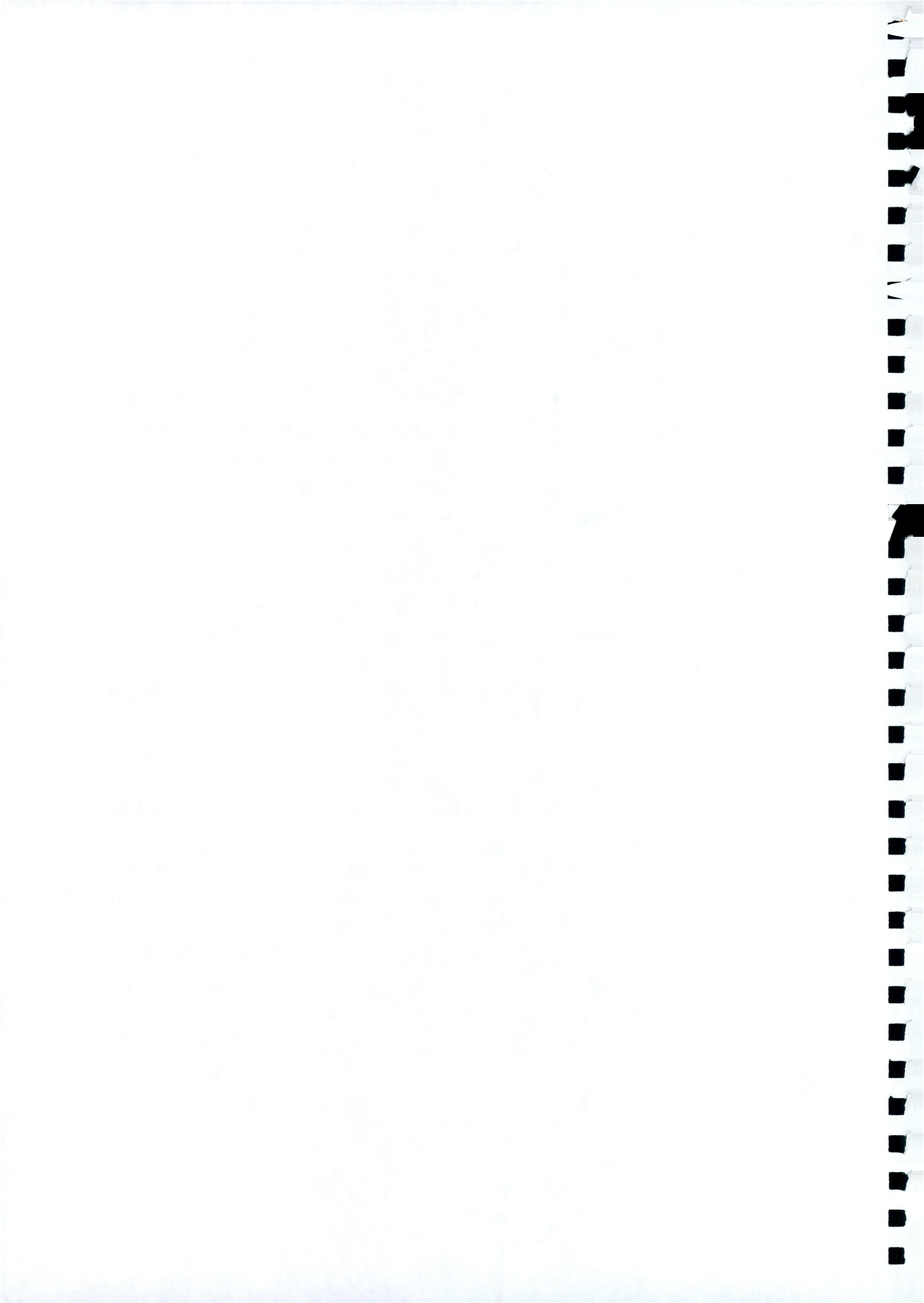


have not altered the nature of the system art is inscribed in.

That is why the avant-garde has sought in the past three decades to place itself not outside but within the mainstream. Pop art is, from that point of view an absolute success.

Yet it may be argued that contemporary avant-garde still seeks to alter the nature of social relationships. It does so by allying itself with popular culture, infusing the mainstream with sporadic injections of controversy, attempting to defuse mass entertainment by pretending to expose its vacuity. However, the mainstream is simultaneously its very lifeline. In order to enter the mainstream, the avant-garde has to see its actions and proposals rearranged for mass audiences and its purpose consequently defeated. Two conclusions can be reached from observing this state of affairs: first the organization of society at the beginning of the century did not allow the margins to be left unaccounted for to the same degree, a much higher level of integration was required. Therefore, the actions of the historical avant-garde had a much more oppositional effect. Secondly in a contemporary compartmentalized society supposedly based on the possibility of alternatives, the individual urge for discovery, innovation and change is permanently overtaken by the demand to inscribe oneself within a lucrative social activity. By doing so one is at least enabled to carry on taking an active part in the evolution of society instead of simply witnessing oneself moving within it, as it mirrors everybody's actions but fails to alter positively the nature of individual relationships.

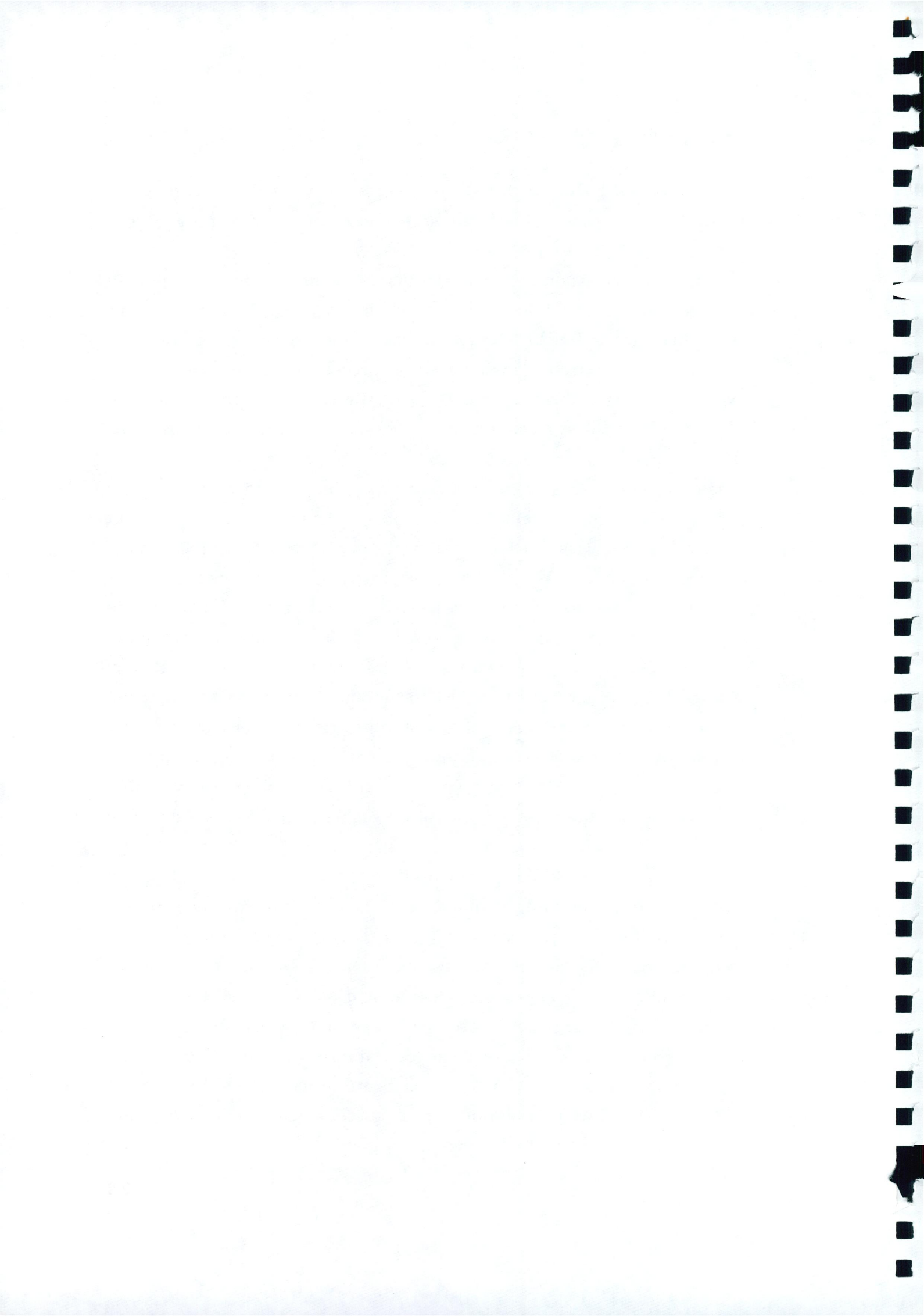
However, on the positive side, what alternatives forms of art ( those that do not operate within the mainstream) *do* achieve is to maintain a certain dialectical distance from the mainstream. However, the fulcrum of this fragile equilibrium has put pressure on representation. Because we live in societies where images proliferate, images with different purposes and objectives, an artistic activity that seeks to criticize a social and political system is in danger of being thoroughly swallowed by the structures it sets itself against even in order to survive as subversive force. Strategy becomes paramount to give representation the weight that this very proliferation has contributed to erode, making images lose their power, reducing them to objects mirroring the real and in turn becoming the real (Baudrillard 1981).



### III. Social stagnation

In the colourful history of the western world, one has never witnessed a society so perfect that it would elude dissent or one so controlled that it could crush rebellion. Yet we can only observe the desire to systematize within many civilisations. It is agreed that modernity cannot be identified as a phenomenon *ex-nihilo* emerging nebulously somewhere between the Italian Renaissance and the British Industrial Revolution, yet it gradually came to articulate itself as what a lot of theoreticians now regard as the myth of *progress*. However, it is the achievement of the philosophers of the Enlightenment to have adequately questioned the social organisation of their times and provided new myths for the people. As a result, our sense of judgment has been affected. The gradual consideration given to individual concern and minorities, the abandonment of a feudal system and of Divine Right and Divine Authority are direct results of the ideas of the Enlightenment. Considering these changes as beneficial does not prevent one from observing that the myth(s) that fuelled them can no longer operate in the same manner because the condition that they. Therefore recognizing the notion of progress as a myth does not detract from its value in creating a social momentum. Now if we do admit the impossibility of a totalization of society through mythology we can only acknowledge, from our observation, the necessity of reorienting its organization. When the very structures prevent this reorganization, protest comes about as a very logical consequence. This protest can of course be articulated through art.

As society grew more individualistic and commodified the philosophy inherited from the enlightenment lost momentum throughout the twentieth century and its myths lost credit. They were undermined by the economic crises of the past twenty five years. Modernism's gradual replacement by a postmodern ethic (an ethic directly dictated by the ever changing condition of society) reveals an important feature: the realization of the irreversibility of the capitalistic logic and the paralysis of the social. Hence, from a dynamism promoting change (the modernist movements), we have emerged into a philosophy of reconciliation with the status quo. My argument is that the values of modernism and the avant-garde





still guide many artists today. The necessity of change, if not progress in the modernist sense, is more than ever felt by large portions of the population. This point of view provides us with some distance and perspective and enables us to regard postmodernism as a phase in a greater process.

The sense of existing in a capitalistic lock is what brings about frustration. Minority or oppressed groups who have achieved recognition or social advancement (in terms of race, gender, or social background) could not escape riding the capitalistic paradigm. Every minority that has acquired social respectability has had to come complete with its own economic contribution and tackle the problems of competition and productivity that a liberal pluralistic democracy does not so much allow as it demands, this in order to acquire cultural kudos. The multiplication of lifestyles largely contributes to a fragmentation of traditional society which replaces the frontier-based fragmentation formerly imposed by economic national boundaries, now broken down by a world wide open market. This fragmentation benefits to various degrees the marginalized parties that only succeeded in staking a social claim by primarily resorting to strategies of cultural capital later or simultaneously translated, as they must be, into their economic counterparts. Art is symptomatic of this social fragmentation through the plethora of movements that make up what received art history regards as the International Avant-Garde.

The art market in its postmodernization has had to adopt the lucrative formulae of popular culture and welcome artists that would use these methods in the context of fine art. Many references were made in 1995 to a new trendy sexy art that is easily accessible, mass orientated, fresh, unpretentious, uncomplicated and unintellectual. Advocating a desire to reach out to a wider audience, to the masses, barely disguises an economic fact: a desire to make art a more readily consumable and profitable activity for practising, individual working artists. The personality cult witnessed on the pop scene, now affects the visual arts where artists come and go, up and down a chart, here today, gone tomorrow. The harshness of competition only allows for those desperate fifteen minutes of fame. Despite the emphasis on the individual it is still the law of numbers that the organization of society follows.



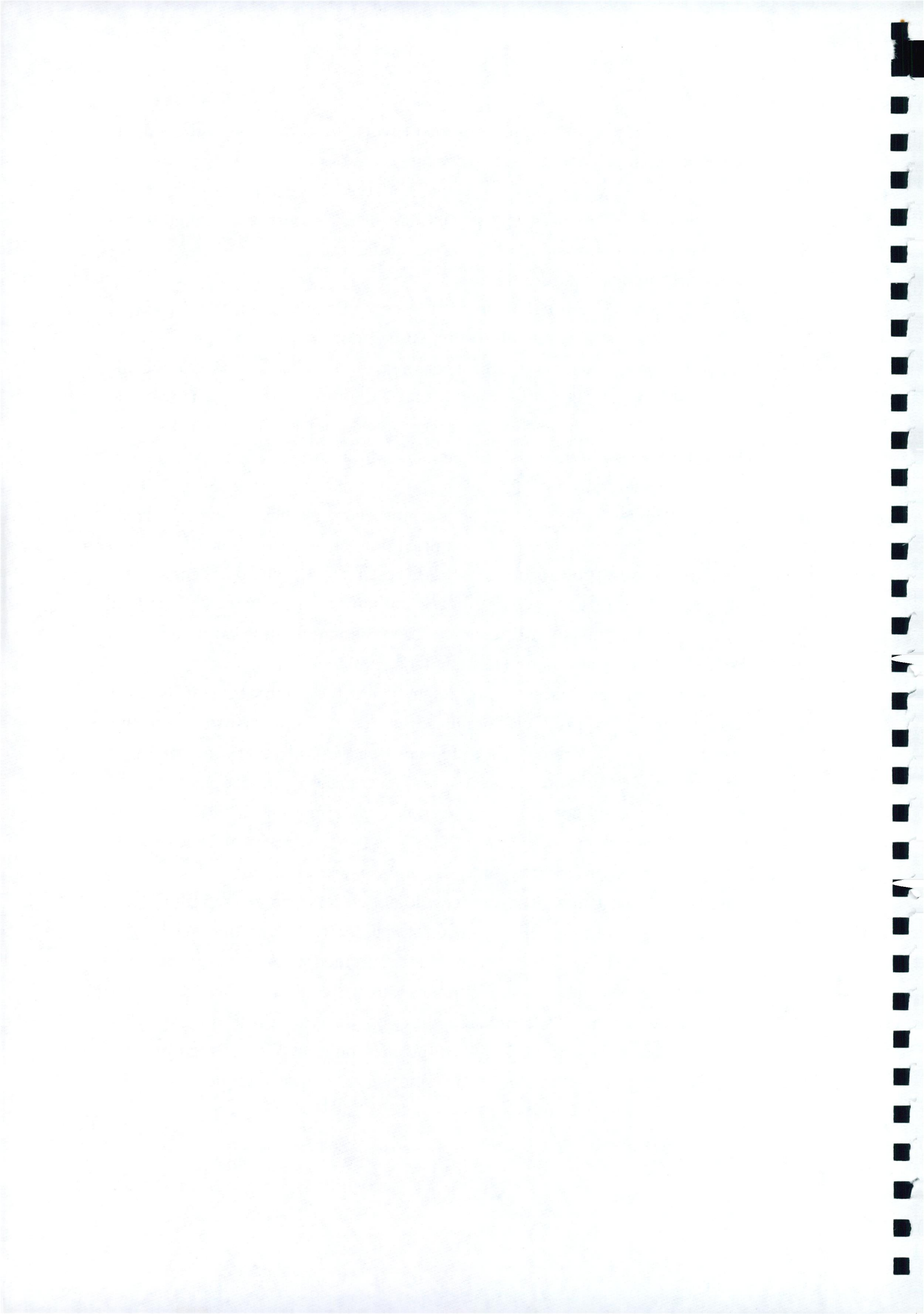
If popular culture and high modernism work supposedly together in the postmodern supermarket, the exchange-value of objects is still defined by the criteria of fashion, rarity, prestige and publicity. But the exclusively capitalistic logic imposes that modernist tactics should be brought into popular culture instead of having popular culture injected with the values of the avant-garde; the international avant-garde did not have any binding values except that of promoting an unconditional if sporadic opposition, a position difficult to uphold if it does not evolve.

Acknowledging the fact that works of art are organised in categories corresponding to respective classes that are prepared to invest in it the credit that they claim does not detract from the power they have to bring about awareness. Whether it is mediated through television or the white cube, it is the power of the messages to mobilize and inform us that matters. However the very contents of the messages have to be criticized. As another result of compartmentalization, the proliferation of various forms of artistic production and the necessity for them to be consumed cancels the idea of value. For Adorno both autonomous works of art and mass cultural forms such as cinema "bear the stigmata of capitalism" (in Wood, Frascina, Harris and Harrison (eds.)1993).

That is why it appears as important to stress the importance of art as a practice; for it is precisely practice that finds itself distorted by the repercussions on everyday life of the laws of a market that are seemingly independent from art but determine the currencies of its various forms.

The understanding of ideas and complex metaphorical devices may be what enables a part of the middle class viewers to reestablish a balance between themselves and the upper-middle classes.

The early enthusiasm shown for technology by Marx and exalted by at least two generations of modernists proved to be detrimental to the social bond and to the idea of socialism as a whole. The media revolution (the mass availability of television and telephones, etc...) created a similar pattern at the beginning of the '60s, coinciding with Pop and Youth culture, and today the same beatitude is returning with the electronic revolution, regarded by its advocates as the ultimate form of individual empowerment.



## Conclusion

When Saint-Simon in the early nineteenth century had his idyllic visions of art as the motor of social change and artists as its operators he could not have planned that the fragmentation and compartmentalization that took place in the last hundred and fifty years would have led to the predicament that artists find themselves in today. The important question is what can artists do outside abandoning themselves to the cynical realisation that art cannot fulfil the mission it was traditionally, almost *classically* assigned. Jean-François Lyotard's disappearing Meta-narratives (myths or guiding narratives) are replaced by fragmentary, isolated, domestic and discrete and flimsy *mystiques* (Lyotard 1979). Madan Sarup refers to Marcuse in his essay on Lyotard's postmodernism and helps visualize the function that art has now assumed :

*All those needs that cannot be satisfied in everyday life because the principle of competition pervades all spheres, can find a home in art , because art is removed from the praxis of life. Values such as humanity, joy, truth solidarity are excluded from life and preserved in art In bourgeois society art has a contradictory role It projects the image of a better life and to that extent protests against the bad order that prevails. (...) art thus stabilises the very social condition against which it protests. (Sarup, P. 141)*

The reality for art and the artist is that they cannot exist in a romantic definition of nature that advocates a dissociation from social patterns.

Indeed industrialised society is the very fountainhead of modern practice and of its revaluating aporias right from its earliest romantic and realist stages. This argument finds its own reiteration in the overwhelmingly urban framework that modern and postmodern art proliferate in. If this assertion seems to be in opposition to Greenberg's formalist definitions, one cannot remove from them a certain pertinence as these focus on the quintessential elements of representation, on *the actual practice of art*. It is, still today, the effective and coherent organisation and choice of *form* that constitute the insight that art can conjure up. Once created, art objects are fused into this fluctuating reality which is simultaneously tapped for (re) representation. Consequently, whether or not the ideas dealt with in a particular piece of work happen to hit the zeitgeist's bull's eye remains mildly interesting. What is revealed is that art has to be permanently reinvented, reconstructed.

Ultimately the aim of this essay was to locate certain problems with which contemporary art is confronted in the way it is perceived and in the way it can operate. The use of art through history shows us what significant part it has played in the enforcement of power. It shows us how powerful a weapon it can be when controlled. I think that we can still establish art as a vehicle of awareness if we can reconcile ourselves with its transient and disposable nature. Art in contemporary practice cannot burden itself with an historicization that regularly makes it redundant; it must regard its ultimate redundancy as part of its instrumental nature and concentrate on a pragmatism and morality of the moment. The advocacy of a desirable perennality for the work of art partly excludes topical intervention and engagement. This was during the entire classical period one of the prerequisites in the production of art and the precise tenets that the historical avant-garde was working against. Today, it is the sporadic albeit erratic, unnerving yet contextualized experience of art that gives it strength.

If capitalistic values are illusory, they nevertheless dictate the way we must conduct our lives to survive; alternatives may appear as utopias only if one regards the capitalistic option as realistic; capitalism has only *imposed* itself as natural order. Today more than ever this system mirrors a Darwinian nature in its reified version of the survival of the fittest. The

apparent choice resulting from compartmentalization has played a part in promoting an idea of freedom that is oblivious to the confusing implications of this condition on the way communities perceive their political and social environment. The division and confusion that Late Capitalism creates is its own very engine and the nature of contemporary artistic production is only one symptom of this state of affairs. In this context, the avant-garde (in historical terms) can only hope to grind at the interlocking complexity of our condition. For the contemporary artist, these words of Adam Smith find a particularly ominous echo :

*The merchant, in seeking profits, is led by an invisible hand to promote an end that was no part of his intention ...pursuing his own interests he frequently promotes that of a society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it.*

Indeed, for the artist, the situation is reversed. He/she is forced to become merchants in order to promote their true intentions.

As Carter Radcliff underlines it in his critique of Smith (Radcliffe P.143) this *invisible hand* is the secular version of providence and applies to artists as well as everyone else.

The aim then becomes to writhe art out of the entertainment paradigm that regulates most of it and attempt to reintroduce it into social practice. Using the framework of the entertainment industry has proved detrimental and largely ineffective. This has also produced a so-called alternative public sphere that replicates the economic apparatus of the dominant one. The way forward seems to be an attempt from artists to integrate the social in their practice, to facilitate action and most importantly, simultaneously disappear. This is where Beuys partly failed by intensifying the personality of the artist and not removing it. This is also where we can skim some value from the arguments of Baudrillard and the transparency of the symbolic mirror that estranges the real (and us) through the objectified nature that it imposes. Art therefore must be seen as a practice and a process. The objective is to rebalance and reduce, if only sporadically and erratically, the tremendous momentum of an unstoppable capitalistic paradigm by always proposing an alternative to the idea that the market is the natural state of society.

## Bibliography

ARONOWITZ, Stanley, *Dead artists, Live Theories and Other Cultural Problems*, New York and London, Routledge, 1994.

BARTHES, Roland, *Mythologies*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1957.

BATTERSBY, Christine, *Gender & Genius*, Cornell University Press, 1993.

BAUDRILLARD, Jean, *Le Système des Objets*, Paris, Denoël/Gonthier, 1968.

BAUDRILLARD, Jean, *La Société de Consommation*, Paris, Denoël, 1970.

BAUDRILLARD, Jean, *Pour une Critique de l'Economie Politique du Signe* Paris, Gallimard, 1972.

BAUDRILLARD, Jean, *Simulacres et Simulation*, Paris, Galilée, 1981.

BAUDRILLARD, Jean, "The Masses: The Implosion of the Social in the Media", in *The Polity Reader in Cultural Theory*, London, Polity, 1994.

BENJAMIN, Walter, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in FRASCINA. F. and HARRISON. C. (eds.) *Modern Art and Modernism , a Critical Anthology* , London, Harper and Row, 1982.

BENJAMIN, Walter, "The Author as Producer" in FRASCINA, F. and HARRISON, C. (eds.) *Modern Art and Modernism , a Critical Anthology* , London, Harper and Row, 1982.

BOWNESS, Alan, *The Conditions of Success: How the Modern Artist rises to fame*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1989.

BURGER, Peter, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Manchester, Manchester University Press/University of Minneapolis, 1984.

BUCK, Louisa & DODD, Philip, *Relative Values or What's Art Worth?*,





London, BBC Books, 1991.

CROWTHER, Paul, Creativity and Originality in Art in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol.31 , No 4,1991,301-309.

EASTHOPE, Antony, *British Post-Structuralism since 1968*, London & NewYork, Routledge, 1988.

FEATHERSTONE, Mike, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, London, Sage, 1991.

FISCHER, Ernst, *Marx in His Own Words*, Harmondsworth Middlesex, Penguin, 1970.

FISCHER, Ernst, *The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach*, Harmondsworth Middlesex, Penguin, 1963.

GAMSON, Joshua, *Claims to fame, Celebrity in Contemporary America*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London,University of California,1994.

GARRELS, Gary (ed.), *The Work of Andy Warhol*, Seattle, Bay Press, 1989.

GENDRON, Bernard, "Theodor Adorno meets the Cadillacs" in Tania MODLESKI (ed.) *Studies in Entertainment : Cultural Approaches to Mass Culture*, Bloomington & Indianapolis , Indiana University Press,1986.

GOTT, Richard, "Where the Art Is" in *Weekend Guardian* , 7th October 1995.

GUERLAC, Suzanne, "Transgression in Theory: Genius and the subject of *La Révolution du Langage Poétique*" in OLIVER, Kelly (ed.) *Ethics ,Politics and Différence in Julia Kristeva's Writing*, New York &London,Routledge, 1993.

W.F. HAUG, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality &*



*Advertising in Capitalist Society*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1986.

HEBDIGE, Dick, "After the Masses", in Stuart HALL & Martin JACQUES (eds.), *New Times the Changing Face of Politics in the 1990's*, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1989.

HUYSEN, Andreas, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture and Postmodernism*, London, Macmillan, 1986.

JAMESON, Fredric, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" in FOSTER, H.(ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture*, Seattle, Bay Press, 1993.

JAMESON, Fredric, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural logic of late Capitalism" in *The New Left Review*, No 146. 1993

KESTER, Grant, Rhetorical Questions, the Alternative Arts Sector and the Imaginary Public *Afterimages* Vol 20 No 6. pp. 37-44. PP. 37-44

LASH, Scott, *Sociology of Post-Modernism*, London, New York, Routledge, 1990.

LECHTE, John, *Fifty contemporary Thinkers from structuralism to Post-Modernity*, London, New York, Routledge, 1994.

LYOTARD, Jean-François, *La Condition Post-Moderne*, Paris, Les éditions de Minuit, 1979.

MACLUHAN, Marshall; FLORE, Quentin, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*, London, Penguin, 1967.

NOCHLIN, Linda, "Why have there been no Great Women Artists? " in *Women Art and Power and Other Essays*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1991.

POLLOCK, Griselda, "Artists, Mythologies & Media-Genius. Madness & Art History "in HAYWARD.P. *Picture This: Media Representations and Visual Art & Artists*, London.John Libbey, 1988.

RACHMAN, John, Postmodernism in a Nominalist Frame, *Flash Art* no 137 (Nov-Dec 1987)

RADCLIFF, Carter, "The Marriage of Art &Money", in SMAGULA, Howard (ed.), *Re-Visions: New Perspectives on Art Criticism*, Englewood Cliffs New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1991.

ROBERTS, John, "Postmodernism,Television and the Visual Arts a Critical Consideration of State of the Art" , in *Screen*, V.28 Spring 87 p.118-119,1987.

ROSLER, Martha, "Place, Position, Power, Politics" in Carol Beeker (ed.) *The Subversive Imagination: Artists,Society and Social Responsibility*, London and New York, Routledge, 1994.

SARUP, Madan, "Lyotard and Post-Modernism" *An Introductory Guide to Post -Structuralism and Post modernism (2nd Ed.)*, Hemel Hampstead Herts., Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.

SMITH, Bernard, *the Death of the Artist as Hero*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988.

STANISZEWSKI, Mary Anne, *Believing is Seeing: Creating the Culture of Art* , London, Penguin, 1995.

WOLLEN, Peter, *Raiding the Icebox: Reflections on Twentieth Century Culture*, New York, Verso, 1993.

WOOD, Paul, FRASCINA, Francis, HARRIS, Jonathan, HARRISON, Charles, *Modernism in Dispute, Art Since the Forties*, The Open University 1993.

