

ACTORS' LIFE RHYTHMS IN THE METROPOLITAN ART WORLDS

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Abstract

As in many countries around the world, the French art worlds are concentrated in metropolitan areas. This spatial concentration has inevitable consequences for the lives and rhythms of the individuals who are a part of them. Different strategies are put in place in the face of this concentration. Each requires adaptation and is not without consequences for individuals in their personal lives. Actors and other artists must learn to integrate the various segments of their lives—segments that sometimes pull them in different directions. Family life, alongside the work of incorporating a role, character building, rehearsals, time spent on stage, and social life (which can also provide them with professional opportunities), are all spheres governed by different requirements and divergent schedules.

Key words: actor, concentration, metropolis, rhythm, career, alternation, socialization.

This paper explores the activity of actors in the entertainment industry, following the analysis of Pierre-Michel Menger. We shall examine rhythm issues in the lives of these individuals, considering professional choices and personal adaptations they make with respect to career paths, work rhythms, and professional socialization.

French Art Worlds: Concentrated in the Metropolis

As in many countries around the world, the French art worlds are concentrated in the largest metropolitan areas, especially in and around Paris (table 7-1).

Furthermore, 56% of the artists' total volume of contract work and 65% of their total pay also derives from employers who are themselves established in the Paris region (Menger 2011: 344).

The sector's activity is strongly linked to the density of professionals ... and to the density of production, decision-making and assessment centers (administrations, private and public funding systems, criticism, media and press of national audience.) (Menger 2011: 48)

According to statistics presented by the French Statistics and Prospective Studies Department (DEPS), the Paris area accounts for 58% of French registered professional actors without steady employment. Moreover, if we consider both actors and bit players, 64% of these professionals live in this region (table 7-2).

As is obvious from these statistics, the metropolis is a giant art incubator. In urban areas, artists can find their place, adapting to their work environment by finding work opportunities in diverse professional sectors, though preferably in the arts. The way for an actor to maintain his artistic claim and to be free for potential work in his field is to maintain an "activities portfolio":

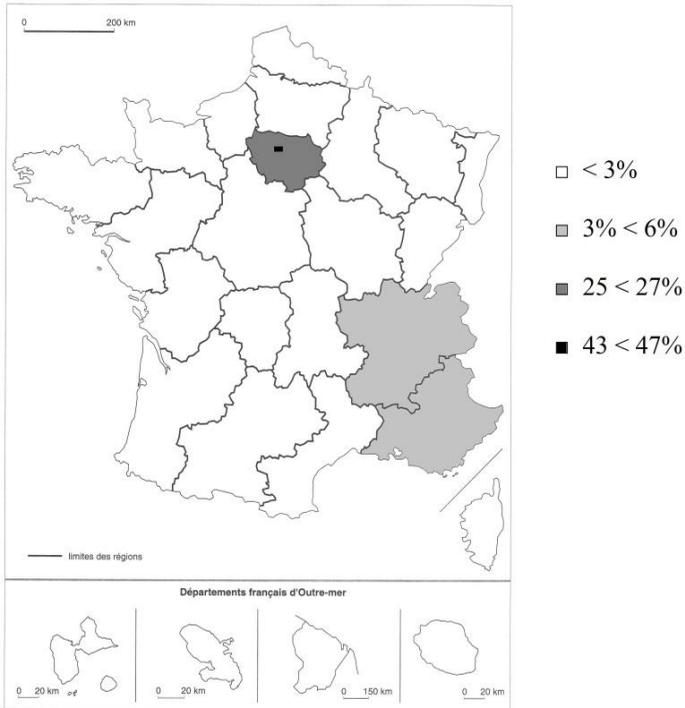


Illustration of Table 7-1.

[Artists] who, temporarily or permanently, do not live off of their vocational profession, must, to remain in the pool of employable artists in search of a breakthrough, compose an activities portfolio (consisting of artistic, semi artistic and non-artistic activities) and resources (by labor, family, spouse, personal or professional circles, public aid, etc.). Obviously, big cities offer the best chance to build up and manage this portfolio, as the size and diversity of opportunities capable of providing new or complementary jobs. The dense interpersonal networks are also providers of information on new projects, support and access to public aid. (Menger 2011: 45)

As the portfolio grows, it increases the chance for individuals to have a real artistic career. As Menger explains, big cities, compared to the countryside or small villages, offer greater possibilities to build this portfolio. There are fewer opportunities to connect with the art world for artists who live outside of urban areas. Metropolitan areas thus appear to be a “natural habitat” for creative work (Menger 2011: 46), especially because freelance work is more readily available.

Entertainment industry concentration	Annual volume of contract work**			Total Amount		
	Thousand days	%		Million Euros	%	
Paris	3,977	43	68	893	47	75
Paris region	2,257	25		519	27	
Total France	9,156	100		1,893	100	

Table 7-1. Source: Caisse des congés spectacles/Cespra/DEPS 2012 (data 2007) **According to the enterprise’s location.

Furthermore, networks are structured by interpersonal relations in the same way that interpersonal relations structure other networks. This is reinforced by the fact that this industry is organized by projects, bringing together several people for one single show or a temporary artistic happening. These networks constitute art worlds, and are therefore the most important part of this system.

Entertainment industry professionals without steady employment	Number of workers	Living in Paris Area %	
Artists	72,197	45	
Actors	22,098	58	64
Bit players	3,269	74	
Managerial staff	23,508	77	
Directors and assistant directors	7,969	79	
Producers	3,306	82	
Other managerial staffs	1,874	85	
Technicians	36,218	65	
Workers	4,969	61	
Others	415	85	
Total	137,307	56	

Table 7-2. Source: Caisse des congés spectacles/Cespra/DEPS 2012 (data 2007)

The existence of networks brings elements of stability that are the necessary counterpart of the constant search for flexibility and reduction of fixed costs ... Concentration of entertainment industry professionals without steady employment in the greater Paris finds its origin here. (Menger 2011: 48)

In this uncertain world, the system's stability is guaranteed by networks sustained by a "reserve" of workers, as well as the constant turnover of decision-makers, ideas, inspirations, and ways to approach social or cultural issues. At the same time, these elements of stability, which maintain the art world and entertainment industry, are built on unstable elements in the lives of the individuals. Especially for artists not yet connected in the workforce, there are pressures to adopt specific strategies in this system, each adapted to the several separate parts of their lives. First of all, population concentration in metropolitan areas has consequences on individual career rhythms. This concentration is seen either as a "necessary step on the way to gain success" or as "something to avoid" (indeed, certain artists believe that their artistic vision of acting should not be linked to something they consider as a herd mentality).

Furthermore, this density can also influence work rhythms, as these geographically concentrated opportunities can sometimes oblige people to live at high speed. In fact, as actors' careers are on the rise, they are unable to organize their schedules in such a way that they decide when to rest and

when to work. Ultimately, this can affect the way they do their job, how they focus on a role, and whether they succeed or fail in the interpretation of a character. Finally, urban concentration may force actors to adhere to specific rhythms of professional socialization. In order to penetrate art networks in big cities, actors have to seize the chance to meet people, especially those who might have a role for them in their next project. The societal expectation placed upon actors forces them to accept special rhythms, not always in synchrony with their way of life.

Career Rhythms: Metropolitan Opportunities

Actors who live in rural areas can modify their lives to the image they have of life in Paris. The first example concerns Norbert, a young actor in Bretagne, who began his career but remains unsure which future is best for him. One thing seems certain: the only route to success runs through Paris. Originally from a small village, he has moved to a bigger town, Rennes, with Paris being a possible final destination:

It's a choice, it's a career choice, either we stay in the provinces, then we continue to make these little plays and be... well, also known, but by... Known by school pupils and teachers... Having moments of grace, having moments of joy with a provincial public... Either we go to Paris, then we try to make great... To become a great actor! (Norbert)

The “great actor” is the one who works in film, with famous directors, sharing the cast of prestigious movies with renowned colleagues, and participates in many festivals. This image of the City of Lights (utopian or realistic?) as an “obligatory step” to reach fame includes a centralizing perspective, and influences the actor in the way he seeks contracts in or near Paris.

Nathalie belongs to a small company in the French provinces which managed to defeat the odds and produce a play in Paris, and she shares a similar point of view. Her company performed their show three times in the French capital, but as Parisian networks and the public were not informed, the show was a commercial failure. After returning home, the image of a company having performed in Paris turned the failure into a success and improved the company's reputation:

And I must say; this is nonsense, eh. Here... in our little corner, the fact that we played in Paris... it's all “ou-la-la Oh my God!” While frankly, we did not change anything! But uh... it sounds impressive. We were in Paris... There's still a bit of the “that's the capital, that's nice” while the

audience is the same. For me, whether I play for a Parisian audience, or somewhere... deep in the bush, it's the same! ... And it is true that the first time, I was very anguished because, in my head, maybe I had the same idea. And then I was a little bit angry with myself. It's Paris indeed... It's silly! People are the same! But hey, it will probably remain with us... It's probably in our genes! (Laughs). (Nathalie)

A vicious circle thus appears: concentration feeds on itself and generates still more concentration, building reputations and affecting careers. Living near the French capital allows for more reactivity. One is able to approach directors and producers (who also live in the region, see table 7-2), to introduce oneself more easily into the Parisian network. All these considerations give the impression that the easiest way, if not the only way, to gain success is to go there, in order to experience living, studying, or performing, even only once. For some French actors, the “mythical city” of Paris represents the fast track to great success. This preconceived notion appears to be fully justified, even if this sketch is overly simplistic. For the same reasons, many actors from the provinces “go up” to Paris to study in prestigious theatre schools or classes, like the CNSAD (Superior National Conservatory of Dramatic Art) or the *Cours Florent*. They can be taught by famous professors, expecting the best instruction, and draw benefits from the address books of these institutions. Obviously, these choices have a price, and they reveal personal ways of conceiving career paths. This concentration often goes hand-in-hand with an intense and unstable work pace, but it also offers stable opportunities: even a medium-sized structure can rely on a substantial audience.

Personal adaptations to these more-or-less atypical rhythms (which definitely characterize the art worlds) depend of the way actors consider their professional activity and how they define success. These different professional rhythms have consequences on their personal everyday lives. A volatile professional life can be linked to a personal choice, a preference for this kind of life or an aversion to a lifestyle considered being too typical. Félicia expresses her loathing for excessive stability in everyday life, where she feels oppressed by a way of living that she considers full of pettiness and lack of interest in the world and for others:

I had the incredible luck to work internationally and it's an openness that seems fundamental to me for an actor, in the sense of being curious, being interested in everything. You know, once on the radio I heard a guy say, it was very nice, “you must be curious in the sense, *curarsi il mondo*,” take care of the world. The Italian word “*curare*” is to take care, and you must be curious in the sense of taking care of the world. But yes, because we are otherwise, closed in our little lives, we eat, we go to work, we sleep...

Careful, if there are people who are happy like that; that's fine! If they haven't opened up all the little drawers, but they are very happy, well, it's possible to have a wonderful life... You can be someone great while having a small life, you know, I don't want to sound pejorative. (Félicia)

Félicia explains why she enjoys touring from one metropolis to another. It is first an artistic project and as such a source of pleasure and enjoyment. International tours especially may bring about international success. Other elements of seduction also have their importance: travelling around the world, visiting nice places, and discovering the cultural treasures of many countries:

In England, Judy, our wonderful tour manager, I called her my Nicole Kidman, she... She always paid careful attention to the comfort of the actors, that we felt good, uh, in such an elegant way. I mean, when the tour was much too long, she managed to find us apartments, beautiful apartments you see ... we saw beautiful houses with big screen TV in the living room, you know, the kitchen, like in American films, with all, all the equipment for cooking, beautiful, trendy, or... it was beautiful equipment, all these things. You'd say to yourself, wow, great luxury. ... In Japan, we visited the temples; suddenly when you're in such places... changes in culture, this is splendid, too, you think: What a gift! Having all this... all this free time to visit the city, to uh... On top of that, there is... This is great luxury because everything is paid for you, so you are free of worries, you're in the finest hotels, you can afford to go in the very, very best restaurants, although some unpretentious little restaurants are sometimes magnificent, you know? (Félicia)

But these metropolises also generate alienation, contrasting with the freedom and successful image of an "international career." Thus, Félicia also realizes that some rhythms are difficult to follow. The instability of the life on tour can lead people to lose landmarks or points of reference, especially in the big metropolis, where the global codes and rhythms have invaded most areas:

I have found myself, you know, in France, Italy, England, Switzerland, Spain... I was on tour, I lived a life, there, it was very difficult, I must confess, I had a little moment where I was a little bit... when suddenly, also relating to my personal life, that is to say, you live a parallel life, you're always on the road, all the time in hotels ... In all cities, you have a downtown, and in the city center, you know, this uniformity that is found more and more, all the same chain stores, these big chains, there, that you find, ... Starbucks!... These things... the first time I saw it in England, then I saw it everywhere, in Paris, in southern Italy, there's even Auchan! [A French chain store] ... I personally had this feeling that I was exhausted

from touring, I was ashamed, uh, but I could not go on tour anymore. I wanted a break, I dreamt of having ramen at home ... Oh yes! *Home sweet home* [English in original]. (Félicia)

In comparison to the destabilizing international level, the spatial concentration of the art world can also offer a secure environment. The population concentration in big cities offers a steady audience to the shows, which allows for stability and regular work opportunities. Saturnin has established his work stability through a theatre company that allows him to raise his children quietly. The company is situated in the Paris region, and Saturnin performs at least three different shows a year. His wife is also an actress, and the choice of this quiet life, far from the cinema spotlight, seems to be an acceptable option to him. He remembers the time when he chose that life, turning his back on the possibility of a brilliant Parisian career, to put his children first:

These children can ask themselves about the balance between career and private life, career and family; as in, I believe, all professions, well, all the professions, I don't know... I feel, in many professions anyway. And I observe my coworkers. I see those who devote themselves more to their private lives or more... Fully to their careers, and then I have... I chose my camp... My job, as I practice it, suits me. Actually, at one point I had... a desire for glory and wealth. And actually uh... The little that I saw of glory, little eh, having articles in national newspapers... Well, actually I moved on very quickly, I realized that, to have these items, you must: play, well, obviously in a good show; in Paris, and I remember, at that time I didn't earn a dime! That is to say that... Having to perform in Paris, I received, I remember, a nice article in *Libération*, I was very happy, a full page with my picture, I was very happy, but uh... it only lasted a day, as it's a daily newspaper. And then, I quickly came back here. Here, I don't remember having had an article in the national press, but... But it allows me to live and support my family and actually it makes me... it allows me to be... to focus on what is really of interest to me in this profession. That is to try to do this job as intelligently as possible. (Saturnin)

These different career choices are based on personal needs and preferred paces of life. The social context often influences these choices as they define personal rhythms, and the time one has to interact with neighbours, friends, and family imposes time constraints. Saturnin can be there regularly for his children, for a family life, stable enough to coincide with his family project. Félicia can go on tour, with irregular frequency, as her personal and familial projects allow her to do so. These various attachments emanating from social obligations have been analyzed with respect jazz musicians by Howard Becker:

The family then, as an institution that demands that the musician behave conventionally, creates problems for him of conflicting pressures, loyalties and self-conceptions. His response to these problems has a decisive effect on the duration and direction of his career. (Becker 1963: 119)

These choices are specifically linked to the concentration of opportunities offered in large cities and the different rhythms that they involve. It is manifestly complex for an actor to decide which opportunities to forgo and which to accept in order to stay true to himself and his various commitments.

Work Rhythms: Acting and Alternating Activities

Actors make choices in their careers and have to experience particular life rhythms. As we have seen, to maintain a stable situation, acceptable by the social standards and by the actor himself, the worker must sometimes go away for a few weeks or even a day to gain a contract. In metropolitan art worlds, hiring periods, as well as working times and patterns, are fast-paced. Jojo, a Parisian actor, had been offered work in a famous French TV show which is shot in Marseille, the largest city in the south of France. When he went there to shoot some episodes, even though for only a few weeks, he left behind his home and his family, as an actor on tour would do, and then moved on to other projects. Alternating this way can be hard to sustain when too many different offers arise at the same time. And all these opportunities must be considered carefully. Actors have to maintain a high level of activity because employment is always likewise uncertain. As a substantial portion of projects are cancelled before reaching production, they have to maintain sufficient activity around the strongest projects, namely those which are linked to the strongest networks. This is why an actor such as Corentin (who also lives near Paris) has so many different projects in development:

Okay, if for any reason you're unavailable, don't hesitate to tell me, there's no...

Yes, yes, yes, no, but anyway, you know, I'm still working against the clock, since I left you a message, I have two plays coming up, so there I... I'll play Caligula by Camus all of June in a Parisian Theater, so... Uh... I'm starting rehearsals, I'm trying to learn the text and I begin the rehearsals at the end of the month, and then I move on to the theatre of the "Deux-Anes" with a comedy duo, and so I'll do a reading session Tuesday because the text hasn't been finished yet, so, well... You see, I... (chuckle)

Ah, well that's great! Many projects...

I don't have time to spare

So it's a theater focus that's emerging,

Excuse me? Ah, ah yes, yes, quite...

Because you told me also that you had writing projects, this was the thing with the "Deux-Anes"?

Not at all, writing is something I am doing myself, in fact I'm still writing it, I made some adaptations. For the theater I did a reading session with an actress, a thing I adapted from "L'amour en toutes lettres," I did that two or three weeks ago. After that I did an adaptation of a book too, but for that, they don't want me to play it, because they want "a name" and then... They offered that I direct but... And then I was taken for this play because I had done one in Vendée. I don't know if I had told you, so here you have it. And the only other thing I also wrote is a short film but I have not... uh, I'm on the third version but I was forced to put that aside with everything going on... All that work, so. (Corentin)

This variety of projects also means that the actor must be able to switch quickly between different activities, or to be ready to move on very quickly to the next project, the next character he has to build. Going back and forth is sometimes difficult to support, not only technically but also physically, as it mandates travels and physical effort. Norbert, the young actor from Bretagne, often travels hundreds of miles (over 800 kilometers round trip, between Rennes and Paris) to work for a single day as an extra on a famous TV show. This allows him to earn money enough to pay for the travel and a little bit more. It's also this job that might finally give him an entry into the Paris network. But a single day of work also increases both mental and physical fatigue. Personal clocks are affected by these work obligations and this influences sleep patterns. The Circadian rhythms of being awake and sleeping can be disturbed by the need for nocturnal activity. For these reasons, Norbert explains that he must adapt his own biological rhythms to the professional rhythms and only sleep when nobody needs him. For example, he did sleep in a pub during a night shoot:

It takes a long time, it's during the night, I remember that I was falling asleep, at 2am, I was falling asleep in a booth, it was in a pub, in Quimper, and I fell asleep. Well yes, because I had to go back to Rennes in the night, immediately after, and I thought I'd get some sleep ... They won't forget

me, they'll wake me! And I was not alone; we all slept a little, in the booths at the pub. But I do not remember having slept that much. That is to say that sometimes this is not necessarily... This is particular. (Norbert)

And these particular rhythms, where he must make do with tiredness, are also enforced by the waiting and the aspects of the work that are sometimes boring:

I remember a job as an extra, I arrived at 6pm ... we waited, at 8pm we were told to go to dinner. We ate for half an hour. We returned to set and waited. At 10:20pm, they told us that we were needed. We shot for 15 minutes, then they said; it's enough ... we waited and waited ... at 2am someone came and told us: "we will shoot one scene and after that it will be your turn." And finally, at 3:30am, the man came back; "I'm sorry, in fact the scene which you had to play in, we won't be shooting it. So, you're free." So, for nine and a half hours being on the movie set, I actually worked for 15 minutes. And I'm not sure I'll even appear in the movie. ... Oh, yes, it's easy money, but I was still bored. ... you should always have a good book in case you're in it for the long haul! (Norbert)

As they don't know how long they can focus on other things, it isn't always easy to keep busy during down time and actors must use these moments to work on other projects, learning a text or reading a book, which nourishes their inspiration, even if a current project would thereby be interrupted. Furthermore, in theatre, cinema or television projects, the tension between quietness and activity is hard to organize, and the specific activity of acting means that there are several phases where concentration is needed every time. Social moments alternate with loneliness, when the actor faces the role directly, in a strange solitary relationship because of the closeness to yet strangeness of the character. These moments of inspiration can't be called up at will. Most often, actors have to deal with personal feelings and physical needs and never stop working:

There's a big problem, we forget that the comedian's a job, yeah, we have to learn it. It takes time, needs patience, work, work... It doesn't come like that ... and that's ... You can't just arrive and say: ok, I know how to act. Oh, I know my text—so I can act—no, no, you have to work hard, to do it over and over again... (Norbert)

In the construction of the character the actor gives existence to an imaginary person, and incrementally builds up his character. The actor progressively gains experiences, becomes impregnated with feelings, with perceptions, which will be sources of inspiration from which to create the substance of the characters he will play. He also has to manage personal

rhythms between activity times and resting times. An actress testified that she used her time off to feed her inspiration and, as she noted, these moments can't be considered times of inactivity. When the actor has a break, his body remains attentive.

These moments of break allow the actor to stay in sync with reality and to give the characters this famous "naturalness," this realism which takes root in real life. Through this nourishment of the character, the link between the person of the actor and the character he embodies allows bridges disturbing the strict separations between fiction and reality. (Langaret 2009: 99)

However, if rest and leisure are necessary for actors, a difference must be made between an actor who takes the time for recreation, in a healthy work/life balance, and another who is inactive because he is unemployed, and doesn't have anything to do. The fact is that someone who looks like he's unemployed isn't attractive to employers. And as it is very difficult to remain in an employer's mind, it is better to appear in demand. The complexity of actors' activity rhythms is therefore related to both these critical needs: the absolute necessity of devoting time to working on a part and feeding it by discovering other social realities, and the imperative of cultivating a network in which the actor has to appear to be very busy. As it is important to show the quantity of work he is offered, it is also good to be seen sharing opportunities. This accelerates professional relationships and the rhythm of the actor's activity. Oliver, a Parisian actor, speaking about the importance of appearance, told this joke:

You know the famous joke?

Two actors meet. The first says to the other: what are you doing, right now? —Oh my, well right now, listen, I, hum, I had a one shoot for a TV movie, I'm... I'm preparing a reading for a play for the festival of Uzès, and, then, uh... I'm doing a theatre research lab with some friends and then, oh, yes, so I have been offered a TV movie in 2013, there which is... Yeah that's really interesting. Yes, that's it, and you? —Oh, me... just like you, nothing! (laughs)

This describes being an actor rather well. You inflate information, to convince others. But in fact, it's really nothing. Sometimes it's something, sometimes it's great, but often it's only a facade... It's the appearance. (Oliver)

Because they need to see themselves as active workers, actors sometimes need to convince themselves that they are in high demand. If it is actually the case, there are no questions; the self image, as the public

image, is good because the telephone is ringing. And if it doesn't ring, then actors have to make the calls themselves, or know where to be seen, just to remind people that they're still available. These obligations sometimes suggest a bad theatre play, where everyone could have a part, but nobody has the lead. So we can wonder what part of appearance and what part of real cooperation takes place in the development of an artistic project.

Socialization Rhythms: Metropolitan Networks

The concentration of artists in metropolitan areas also has consequences for how to insert oneself into the art networks. As analyzed by Menger, the way these metropolitan art worlds operate generates inequalities and makes accessing them more complicated:

the fragmentation and dispersion of employment relationships generate considerable inequalities between those who are at the heart of the densest networks of interpersonal acquaintances and of information exchange, and those without a large part of this essential and immaterial resource. They are less famous, younger and in the process of integration, as well as not mobile enough or too indifferent to the social games that support and that orchestrate these information exchanges and employment promises. (Menger 2011: 46-47)

As Norbert earnestly explains, a large network doesn't mean that actors can easily find work opportunities. It just means that there are lots of people concentrated in the same area working in the same field:

It's much more... This is very difficult now. This is very difficult, there's so much... there's such a concentration of actors in Paris that ... And then, for having contacted casting directors... they are overwhelmed! They told me: "Oh no, we do not have time, we receive applications by... truck loads of applications. There are so many candidates." (Norbert)

And employers don't have enough time to consider each candidate, especially if they don't know them personally or if they aren't recommended. Jojo, a Parisian actor, testifies to these very difficulties:

This is hard because nowadays people are so... must recognize that, also, that is to say, filmmakers, directors, producers, they are in such demand, they receive so many invitations, they cannot go to the theatre every night, they cannot uh... and so it's really hard to get noticed because... first there

are directors who never go to the theatre, and production people who never go there either. (Jojo)

Socializing becomes a real job, if not a full-time job, which involves refining knowledge and constantly training. Theresa explains that she is not yet good enough at this socializing exercise, not good enough at complimenting and smiling without always thinking of what to say, compared to some of her friends:

There are some, who are pretty average, and they manage to work very regularly, because there's all this kind of stuff, flattery... I have a friend like that, and she never stops working. And yet I think she's an actress who is very very very average... Very average. And I tell myself but how does she do it? But me, I don't know how to sell myself, and then I don't go to premières, and then I'm not there: Oh, hello, oh, great, and everything... And it works! Flattery, it does work, all the time! This is it... (*So why don't you do so?*) Yeah... no... but then, you need to know how... and then, it must be done in agreement with yourself also, you must not lie, you have to... You know what I mean? You must not be at the extreme opposite and everything. Perhaps me too... With time it will come... But it's true that flattery does work, that is to say that people, you tell them that's great, everybody believes in you. But it's funny, the fable of the crow and the fox; that's true, it's so true, it's so true! The cheese falls each time. (Theresa)

This disillusioned way of considering interactions between artists or between artists and employers shows the way these networks are perceived. Actors appear to be well aware that the hiring process isn't always based on their skills and performances. The only way to obtain jobs is to enter these coteries, as Becker had already described with jazz musicians:

A network of informal, interlocking cliques allocates the jobs available at a given time. In securing work at any one level, or in moving up to jobs at a new level, one's position in the network is of great importance. Cliques are bound together by ties of mutual obligation, the members sponsoring each other for jobs, either hiring one another when they have the power or recommending one another to those who do the hiring for an orchestra. The recommendation is of great importance, since it is by this means that available individuals become known to those who hire; the person who is unknown will not be hired, and membership in cliques insures that one has many friends who will recommend one to the right people. (Becker 1963: 105)

It seems that this concentration and this abundance of pretenders involves a specific method of selection. Art projects require cooperation based not only on the formal definition of the division of labor and the specific definition of roles, but also on practical and spontaneous relationships. It has to work well for the cooperation to be successful. These types of relations, ties, and personal feelings play a major role in constituting trustful relationships and effective networks. Norbert evokes an example of these long evenings or whole days spent around a project with other actors with whom he could foresee other projects, becoming friends in the end:

Sometimes we have fun because we meet another actor we know, or people with whom we sympathize, and then we spend the evening together, the day together, talking... So, there, sometimes it's fun. (Norbert)

These relationships, affinities, common values and practices are important in this profession. They facilitate communication, which is the most important thing in an artistic project. This ability to communicate is important for beginners or extras, as they don't have an important part. It becomes crucial with a lead actor. Pierre Bouvier evokes the preexisting reality of these relations in the constitution of population ensembles, based on cultural groupings:

Thus, a "heuristically constructed relation to the world" is being established as of the moment frictions of values and practices induce a specific meaning for individuals and when it begins to be designated as such by the relevant parties. (Bouvier 2011: 15-16)

Although these bonds and ties are indeed necessary to make a collective project possible, it seems that sometimes the formality of the connection supersedes its content, creating collaborations not based upon relationships, but upon strategic alliances. This type of social connection, which can induce professional cooperation in a metropolis such as Paris, is deemed as suspicious by some actors. They believe these coteries of people sharing mutual advantages are sometimes constituted, at the expense of others, by promising future collaborations to one another. As regards this, Jojo draws a parallel between the way he worked on a TV show produced in a big town of the south of France that he describes as "professional," and the way he worked in other shows with the Parisian network:

For example, on the Marseilles TV show, they don't have enough time to... cheat, to be in the emotional, or to be in that quite phony Parisian relational

thing, which takes so much time! ... and so, there's no cheating and I thought it's quite sound. Because, in France it's often the opposite ... Before going into this show, I did some other work on ... some *Josephine*, some *Nestor Burma* [French TV shows]... My brother was, and still is, a very good director and assistant director. And he personally arranged for me to find lil' stuff. But I didn't have to audition. Yeah. I find that pretty bad. If there were more auditions, more people could work and the turnover would be much better. (Jojo)

Besides the importance of interpersonal links which underlie an artistic collaboration (described by Bouvier as a precursor to any collective *constructed relation to the world*, the basis of any social or cultural group), the links also involve an excluding aspect. Bouvier (2005: 256) uses the term “acclusion” to express these mechanisms of both control over inclusion and an informal exclusion process:

The term “acclusion” designates the situation of men and women living in precarious conditions, between the punctual reintegration into the workforce and remaining for long periods of time outside the production-consumption framework. It refers, in anthropology, to the notion of acculturation. ... Here and now, there is no opposition between two types of societies, but an internal situation in the social whole. Acclusion means, more or less extreme poverty leading eventually to exclusion. (Bouvier 2011: 45-46)

Thus, the density of the metropolitan art world networks entails as much inclusion opportunities as occasions for exclusion. Coteries and acquaintances prioritize existing networks and may slow down their renewal, even if this perpetuation sometimes stifles creativity. The commitments contracted by some people to others in these coteries have consequences on the renewal rhythms of the art worlds, as social obligation and conventional behaviours linked to family or friends have consequences on rhythms of individuals' careers. In fact, individuals in these networks are bound by these attachments to each other, and the coterie, as an institution, demands that they behave conventionally. These networks are limited to specific geographic areas, which include the largest amount of contract work (on its own, Paris accounts for 43% of the country's total activity, as table 7-1 has shown). We can only guess about the proportion of actors who have access to this activity, and about the rhythm of these networks' renewal. The renewal of dominating networks may go hand in hand with the renewal of creative people. On the other hand, the acclusion of other actors, those who haven't yet had a noteworthy career, helps maintain a “dominating class” based on relatively

stable networks. We could wonder about how to participate in democratizing the access to art networks and disengaging from metropolitan networks games. Pirani and Varga propose that we consider

How do identities, bodies and real spaces become remade by the textual, aural and visual technologies of screens and keypads that populate mobile phones, Internet cafés and PC-based virtual communities and cities? ... A virtual online common, like absolute space, would offer an infinitely extensible grid for the potential re/unification of separate individuals, with plenty of room for commerce as well. (Pirani and Varga 2008: 11)

Indeed, the potentiality of virtual (but very real) networks could constitute a possible way out of the metropolis that scholars should explore. Initial analysis reveals that the Internet doesn't always replace the coterie function, but this new tool also classifies people in terms of being part of a virtual "social network". It seems to follow some essential rhythms and rules of real socialization, including acclusion. Nevertheless, these new technologies may follow specific codes, since faster and easier communication between individuals can facilitate connections. They provide a new way of sharing information and discovering new talents.

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