

independent activity or sometimes as a pursuit, supporting some social action, which acquires additional symbolic power through artistic gesture. As much as the “nature” of art changed through the period of modernism, this change provided new readings of whichever art considered as classical art. Therefore, Bourdieu’s interpretations of Flaubert’s literature represent a new instance of a reflection on art, which consequently enables artistic practice to work with social facts as its “material”. Our starting point in Bourdieu’s explanation of his approach, however, does not imply that we are about to undertake a “sociological” research; I am just aiming at taking a point of view in accordance with the above mentioned transformations in modern history. What I have in mind is much more an implication of a founding of the need for exposing the singular (work of art) in its meanings, positions, intentions, readability, paradoxes, and so forth in order to grasp an artist and their work of art as an object in the framework of aesthetics. Of course, this framework is changing through time. Especially after Benjamin’s intervention in the field of theory of mass culture, the framework is expanding by widespread usages of the methodologies of multi-disciplinary theory. So Bourdieu’s positioning of *science* in a rapport to art gives way to a positioning of art, or at least of a particular work of art in the order of politics within a social space. This claim should be read as the hypotheses, upon which I am continuing to discern particular features of the politics of art.

Reversal of a Perspective

Are we nowadays abandoning all links between art and human happiness? It looks very much so that one can never get rid of ethics. The perspective taken by Bourdieu – and not only him – does not abolish all these aspects; it actually puts a stronger emphasis on them. However, one question remains pertinent in its radical articulation in the last instance: have artists ever really existed, or were they just figments of theoreticians’ and critics’ imagination? The answer depends on historical moments and on social changes as well as on the shifts in economic and political (power) structures. On this background, another question arises as well: who believes that art has ever been truly defined and clearly determined? This, on the other hand, does not mean that art “functions” without definitions. On the contrary,

- 1 It would also be a rather disputable matter to reduce the complexity of Bourdieu’s theory to “sociology” as it is designated in more mundane terms in other contexts, where sociology quite often happens to be deprived of a serious theoretical framework.