

The parable of the Tuileries

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The parable of the Tulleries, or how to spread doubt with good intentions.

On 9 March 2010, the website of the newspaper *Le Monde* presented a very nice animated film entitled *La parabole des Tuileries ou pourquoi l'économie de la culture a ses propres règles* (*The Parable of the Tulleries or Why the Economy of Culture Has Its Own Rules*).

The animation clearly and educationally demonstrates the importance of culture in daily life and in particular its various economic consequences, all whilst stressing the necessary role of the State as well as the importance of the French influence. However, through trying too hard to do good did the authors not pass the most important issue by? This is what stands out **from Françoise Benhamou's (a specialist of the economics of culture) comments, and more tellingly from those of J.T. Rostan, professor of philosophy and economics** (see below *To go further...* without forgetting to look at internet users comments).

With their intention of defending the teaching of art history throughout secondary school, APAHAU (*Association des Professeurs d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art des Univerisités - the Association of University Professors of Archaeology and Art History*) perhaps passes over the short film's real impact a little rapidly.

Drawing the line at the teaching of art history amounts to forgetting that culture does not involve stuffing students like geese, but rather awakening them to what this word really means. **Behind the word culture, there is not only music, architecture, painting, etc, but there is also observation, method, analysis, a critical mind...** Far from being off-putting, behind the word culture there is a whole world which proves the difference between **passive consumption**, in which the principle of diminishing marginal utility is master, and **active consumption**, for which this principle no longer exists. Why? Because the same object then constantly evolves according to the tools possessed by the individual, thus revitalizing pleasure and desire. Although J.T. Rostan is right to point out that "listening in a continuous loop to the same sonata by Schubert gives less and less pleasure," it is otherwise if I have the means to go beyond simple instantaneous pleasure to make something else of it.

Of course, artistic education is important and should not end with the move into secondary school in order to increase awareness about culture, whether it be French or from abroad, amongst young people from all social classes. Of course, such training is the best way to incite these same young people to visit museums, monuments and art galleries. However, **it needs to be taken further.** We need to go beyond

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passive culture, this consumer culture which often seems so far from oneself. **Young people should be helped to reappropriate heritage through scientific culture, by providing them with the intellectual tools which will allow them to consider art history not as belonging to the past, but as a living subject, a subject which can still be structured to lead to reflection, to exchange ideas, to inspire our future world.**

So the reader is right to ask himself questions as J.T. Rostan does about the ideological character of this animated film. Incidentally, Françoise Benhamou brings up exaggerations caused by the multiplier effect. This is why we find it a shame that the scenario had not been further elaborated because it encourages defiance.

However, we will point out that at a time when History is considered in France as being without interest since the beginnings of its disappearance can already be seen in the form of it becoming an option in the final year of the baccalaureat's scientific cursus, we appreciate the fact that a short film chose to bring into light how this History (implicitly inferred from talking about Schubert and the Sacré-Coeur) actually serves today's economic issues. On the other hand, we regret that the dimension of scientific culture has been ignored, as was that of organisations relating to civil society at the expense of the State.

We uphold that,

Culture is not limited to the performing arts.

Culture also includes scientific culture and recognition of visible and invisible heritage.

Because archaeology is part of culture, ArkéoTopia has signed the manifesto '*Agir pour la culture*' (*action for culture*).

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To go further:

- Visit the [film's official page](#) in french.
- An insight into the short film with François Benhamou on the page ["La culture, plus on la consomme, plus on a envie d'en consommer" \(Culture: The more we've had the more we want\)](#) (by David Castelle-Lopez - LeMonde.fr 09/03/12).
- Insight into the short film with Jérémie T. Rostan on the page ["La 'Parabole des Tuileries' - une critique" \(The 'parable of the Tuileries' - a review\)](#) - 20/03/12.