

Place and Function
of Art
in Contemporary
Life

*Report
of an International Symposium
organized by Unesco
from 6 to 10 September 1976*

Unesco

SHC.76/CONF. 809/COL. 4
Paris, June 1977
Original: English-French

INTRODUCTION

The place of art in society

It is not easy to define art. The scope of the term varies from one culture to another, and also within a given culture according to period, geographical area and modes of thought. But the concept emerged at the point in time and space when it became possible to separate artistic activity from the religious, social or technical activities whose purposes it served.

An object, as it might be a piece of furniture, a weapon or a cult object, becomes an art object to the extent that it is divorced from its original purpose, just as language becomes poetry when it loses its immediate function of communication. Similarly, dances and songs become ballet and music when they no longer give rise to immediate imitation but are confined to producing effects at the inward level of imagination or dreams. In activities undertaken for other ends - such as warfare, religious ceremonies and festivities - it is sometimes possible to note, recall and isolate a specific activity entailing an obviously undue expenditure of energy in relation to the purpose of the object in question (be it shield, chasuble or amphora) yet executed so skilfully as to eliminate the possibility of clumsiness or error.

Once this activity is isolated and its identification and recognition have become possible, then it is found to occur everywhere. Identification and recognition of the concept came belatedly, in limited areas and at isolated periods in the history of civilization. It was the concept, not the phenomenon, that was limited. Once the concept had been formulated, the phenomenon was found to be universal: art, once defined, has existed at all periods and in all cultural areas. Every human group has produced objects and sequences of sounds and movements which come within the category of art as it is understood today. The question whether these objects, songs and dances came within this same category at the time and in the cultural context in which they were evolved, is irrelevant to their present classification. Obviously, where the category of art had not yet been identified, they came within other categories.

The universality and ubiquity of the phenomenon of art has a bearing on the place and role which is attributed to it.

If art is always and everywhere present, it is because it meets a deep human need common to all mankind. To determine the place and function of art, therefore, we must define this need. It is not a material need, and can, then, only be social or psychological. Analysis of the studies on aesthetics contained in Unesco's work on the main trends of research in the social sciences and humanities reveals two main theories: one in terms of understanding, the other in terms of transcendence.

Whether the artist is the originator of the work or the agent of instinctual, social or linguistic systems to which he gives expression, whether his work is normative or subversive, and whether he stands out as a unique personality or represents the period of a style or genre, his artistic activity creates new and coherent relations between man and his environment. Art is thus the means whereby we can gain an understanding of reality. Its specificity lies in the method by which it affords this understanding; that is, by re-presenting and interpreting reality. Science enables man to master and reorganize reality so as to make it amenable to his purposes. Art enables him to reconstitute the meaningful elements of the world and make it habitable, in other words, to re-order it in accordance with his affects and emotions - his psyche, in the broad sense.

The other theory is that of transcendence. The need that is met by artistic activity is the need to transcend reality, and this is a specifically human need. In terms of the analysis referred to above, this transcendence has three main dimensions. The first is historical and ideological - the need which motivates the material, technical and social development of mankind. The future is its province, and art represents this hope and this future. The second type of transcendence is the religious, and it concerns itself with transcendental truth or a higher reality than the world of the senses. Art fulfils this need by depicting the signs, symbols and lineaments of this transcendental world. The third type is immanent, corresponds to our desires, and is found in the world of dreams: thus on this view the function of art is to give a face and a form to mankind's unformulated dreams.

It should be stressed that in all three dimensions - the futuristic, the transcendental and the oneiric - the methods used are the same as in the case of art regarded as a means of gaining an understanding of reality. Art has the ability to portray tomorrow, the

next world and a dream as though they were present today, in this world and in the waking state. In response to the psychic need for ideological, religious or wishful transcendence, art presents a coherent, immediate pseudo-reality. It lets us see and hear our progress, our gods and our desires as though they were here and now.

For these reasons, the Unesco Secretariat felt able to propose to the symposium a compromise, according to which the function of art is to meet the twofold need of understanding reality and transcending reality.

The first component of this theory, concerning the role of art as a means of understanding reality, has been modified and considerably developed by Professor Marshall McLuhan, who has suggested a physiological basis for artistic activity. Recent research into the functions of the brain has apparently established that the two hemispheres perform different functions, not only in controlling the nervous processes but also in determining the individual's perception of the world. There would thus seem to be a Weltanschauung of the left hemisphere (analytical, sequential, logical and intellectual) and a Weltanschauung of the right hemisphere (synthetical, emotional and intuitive). One result of human evolution⁽¹⁾ was that at a certain point in history (in Greece, about 2,500 B. C.) the triumph of the written word over all other means of notation and communication made the perceptive, analytical, abstractionist left hemisphere dominant for the main purposes of life in society. Consequently the right hemisphere (which controls the left side of the body) found itself frustrated. Art is the reaction of this part of man, rejected or diminished in "Gutenberg's galaxy". It represents a compensatory activity which is nearing its end because the rule of the written word is apparently over. Up-to-the-minute news, the electronic environment, and acoustic predominance in the present cultural ambiance predict the demise of art in the industrialized countries, or at any rate of art as a distinct category, and of the specificity of artistic work. Art, being everywhere, will no longer be anywhere. It will come to mean merely the degree of excellence of any activity, the quality of a communication or the impact of a message.

This thesis was criticized by those participants who gave its full significance to creativity. For them, art is an absolute means of transcendence: it is invention. It creates precisely what does not exist. It cannot be reduced to a compensatory activity, or to the physiological, psychological or sociological level. Its origin is

(1) See hereafter: Professor McLuhan, p. 18.

to be sought in torment. Its methods are the corporate or individual symbolic activity characteristic of the human species. Its field is the world of the imagination. Its times are the crucial moments when society's fundamental myths are seen in perspective, and when the values of organized society no longer cater for people's needs and desires⁽¹⁾. In short, it is a phrenetic activity, anticipating what has not yet happened, what is not yet there and what is not yet known, and foretelling or inventing the shape of things to come by distorting the direction of things as they are. Other participants stressed the common features of the types of transcendence offered or produced by art⁽²⁾ in the direction of freeing man from all his political, social and psychological shackles. Art exalts the human psyche, and therefore represents the supreme form of work.

The function of art in society

The function assigned to art in any society will depend on the system and type to which that society belongs and the ideas that motivate it. As was recalled by A. Carpentier, Paul Valéry used the word "aesthetics" (esthétique) to denote the way a society treats art and the place it assigns to it. Three main "aesthetics" can be distinguished in the world today, corresponding to the three main types of modern society.

In industrialized societies the prime function of art is to maintain a link with the roots of the civilization and the recent or distant past. The gropings of the avant-garde echoed the forms, rituals and games of primitive society: "The invented patterns of the avant-garde represent the normal and natural tribal behaviour of neolithic natives"⁽³⁾. To protect man against the threat of dehumanization by a technocratic society, art even makes use of the refuse of that civilization. In other words, the function of art is to safeguard values, either past or present, jeopardized by present-day trends. It preserves the odd and unusual in a culture dominated by mass production and the mass media. It preserves the sense of fun needed to keep man well-balanced. This function can be thought of in terms either of the old image of catharsis or of the more modern one of the safety-valve. It was suggested that the role of art as a form of protest should be recognized as socially useful, or even necessary. If "an upsurge of irrationality is regarded by any form

(1) See hereafter: Professor Duvignaud, p. 30.

(2) See hereafter: Professor Begic, p.84.

(3) See hereafter: Valladares, p.90.

of organized society as the main threat to its survival"⁽¹⁾, it might be worth setting up a social contract, with rules and machinery still to be worked out, designed to preserve a margin of irrationality.

No participant argued in favour of the complete autonomy of art. On the contrary, in the socialist countries art has great responsibilities towards society. Art there is a reflection of society, but the reflection contributes to the development of society by showing human groups typical pictures which help them to understand themselves and increase their self-awareness. Thus art has a specific role to play in liquidating the cultural monopoly of the ruling classes, in raising the level of the mass of the people, and in training a new intelligentsia. In anthropomorphic terms, it is not so much an instrument of cognition as a means of developing an awareness calculated to ensure man's integration in society. Art will also have a key role to play in respect of communication between individuals and between groups within a society. Through the special deep and emotional message it conveys, it contributes to the dynamic harmony of societies. It is a form of work and, in that it changes the world to bring it into harmony with the human psyche, it must be regarded as the supreme form of work⁽²⁾.

In the less industrialized societies, art reflects the tensions and conflicts peculiar to them. It still retains its traditional function of linking the group with things sacred and expressing the community's primordial myths. But, as a result of the rapid development of these societies, the functions of art tend to be secularized, to become pawns in the ideological and political struggles, particularly the struggle against colonialism and its aftermath, and to be caught up in the general development process which remains the primary concern. These societies are in a historical situation in which artistic creation becomes essential⁽³⁾ for resisting the allogenic pressures that accompany the process of economic and technological advancement. "In the case of the peoples of the Third World, the prime function of art should be to restore man to his full human dignity"⁽⁴⁾. The ways in which art can help towards this necessary restoration are various, but they are all connected with the notions of identity and authenticity. In the struggle against the loss of cultural roots, painting, dance, music, theatre and literature (both oral and written) all help to safeguard and foster the specific values that go to make up the identity of the individual or

(1) See hereafter: Béraud, p. 77.

(2) See hereafter: Professor Begic, p. 84.

(3) See hereafter: Sutherland, p. 51.

(4) See hereafter: Messadi, p. 47.

group. Art, especially the art of oratory, helps to preserve the originality of communication between persons, and hence the authenticity of the groups which those persons compose⁽¹⁾. But this essential function is itself threatened by the process of social change. For instance, the village poet is tending to disappear⁽²⁾. As a general rule, the traditional artist, deprived of his status in the community, needs assistance from the public authorities in order to survive, the more so since art education on the Western model creates confusions which are liable to distract artists and undermine their creativity⁽³⁾. The problem of the secularization of the function of art must be surmounted by an endeavour to reconcile the traditional and the modern, thereby enabling the emergent nations to endow themselves with the arts they deserve, and the artists of the Third World to enjoy the social status they need. This would be the only way of stopping the emigration of talent: the talent drain!

Art and lifelong education

Art has an essential part to play in lifelong education.

By the forms it creates and the original relationships it invents, it modifies man's understanding of his personal life and his life in society, and it enriches the relations of the individual consciousness with nature and with the world at large. Art can and should, therefore, become an excellent instrument of that continuous personal development which is the aim of lifelong education. All the participants stressed the importance of art subjects in the education of the modern man. The hope was expressed that audio-visual courses might be organized, both in school and out of school, so as to "produce a generation conscious of the role of art in its civilization"⁽⁴⁾ and to ensure the preservation and rediscovery of socio-cultural values. The teaching of art is a means of attaining continuous social progress: it promotes the emergence of new social classes⁽⁵⁾. Of particular importance in this context is the Fête, or its modern version the Festival, which provides a background conducive to fruitful exchanges and enriching communication between the participants. Cultural policies should be refashioned so as to associate artists more closely with the work being done in the field of lifelong education. This refashioning presupposes better

(1) See hereafter: Bakomba, p. 64.

(2) See hereafter: Carpentier, p. 39.

(3) See hereafter: Sutherland, p. 51.

(4) See hereafter: Princess Farida, p. 82.

(5) See hereafter: Carpentier, p. 39.

representation of artists on decision-making bodies, particularly in departments responsible for the planning and execution of projects bearing on lifelong education.

Some participants wished to go further and to investigate the role of art and of communication through the medium of artistic creation in a sphere transcending the rational and the conscious. Action at the level of individual or communal dreams has yielded some interesting results⁽¹⁾. Again, the palaver in Africa has made possible communication with elements rejected in a community as insane⁽²⁾, which has widened the experience and understanding of those taking part.

If art can serve in all these ways and in all these spheres the ends of lifelong education, the latter, in its turn, should be mobilized to increase the dissemination and comprehension of art and to preserve its purity and authenticity. To educate the public to a better understanding of traditional and contemporary artistic values should be considered as a priority aim of lifelong education. Such a policy should take account of the evolution of certain societies towards the "leisured society"⁽³⁾. University posts for writers in residence facilitate direct contact between live literature and its readers⁽⁴⁾.

Steps must also be taken by means of lifelong education to safeguard the cultural and artistic authenticity of isolated groups and shield them from economic and technological pressures⁽⁵⁾. This task is particularly urgent in some of the Third World countries, where the performing arts constitute an important vehicle of education. It rests with lifelong education to correct certain excesses in formal education which give rise to distortions and confusions in artistic and cultural models⁽⁶⁾. By watching over the preservation of artistic values, lifelong education can become the guardian of the authenticity of cultures.

Art and the environment

Art has a role of prime importance to play in the creation and visual impact of the environment. Urban and rural landscape can

(1) See hereafter: Professor Duvignaud, p. 30.

(2) See hereafter: Professor Bakomba, p. 64.

(3) "Le public musical de demain", IMC report.

(4) Writers in residence: report by the PEN Club.

(5) See hereafter: Valladares, p. 90.

(6) See hereafter: Sutherland, p. 51.

be improved and humanized through the work of artists. The undue proliferation of advertising signs must be countered by visual art designed to restore the unity and sensitivity of our visual perception. The same applies in regard to sound: the acoustic environment needs to be vigilantly protected, particularly since it has a marked influence on the equilibrium and the psychosomatic well-being of individuals. Participants pointed out that recommendations in favour of "the right to a visual environment" or "the right to silence" have had no effect. Art has, it is true, been introduced in places of work, and particularly in factories, with the aim of improving the environment for manual workers and clerical staff; but it has generally been done too late, as an after-thought, with the result that the artist commissioned has had to adapt himself to an existing situation on which there is no way of imposing his creativity. If art is to be an effective factor in the creation of the environment, it must be brought into play at the drawing-board stage, so as to exert its influence in the direction of good design. The position is especially alarming in countries passing through a stage of radical change, involving in particular the destruction of the original environment and the reappraisal of all the values associated with it.

Mass-production has a deleterious effect on the quality of life; but it can be countered by the creation of unusual objects, designed to restore strangeness and "otherness" to modernity. In the traditional crafts, which are the repository of the values and cultural identity of a community, there is a dangerous tendency for craft objects to be debased into souvenirs for tourists. Efforts must be made to safeguard these artistic values and their natural expressions and, in particular, to protect cottage industries, whose products humanize and individualize the environment.

Architects, town-planners and landscape designers have a key role to play in the laying out of space in towns and the designing of the individual and public environment. Architecture is threatened by financial power, by industry, and even by concern on the part of public authorities for productivity and profitability. It must rediscover itself as an artistic discipline so as to bring order to the chaotic development of our modern towns. The laying-out of gardens becomes all the more important now that jungle and man-made order have exchanged roles: the enemy is no longer the natural jungle but the asphalt jungle, and the human mind, to feel secure, needs the essential harmony of a natural landscape. However, in lighting design⁽¹⁾, glass can play a decisive role in creating an

(1) See hereafter: de Castro, p. 72.

environment suited to a given activity or to a necessary self-communion.

The environment exerts a great influence on human relations and community development. In order to revitalize our social life we must break out of old patterns: in particular, we must get the theatre out of the buildings it occupies and bring it back to the public square and the street. It is important in general to consider the environment and its impact on society, in order to see how artistic events could improve it. The breakdown of morals and religion upsets the workings of society and damages inter-personal and inter-group communication⁽¹⁾; consequently the great conurbations become centres of bewildered apathy, all the more difficult to revitalize in that they encourage passive participation and the dehumanization of the individual into a faceless consumer. Experiments show that music, poetry and the performing arts can create events capable of infusing new life into our cities and re-establishing communication between their inhabitants. It must not be forgotten, however, that the loss of social homogeneity (still occasionally found in isolated traditional societies), largely due to the fragmentation of labour, has resulted in an isolation of the social functions of leadership. Artistic self-expression is no longer practised by society as a whole, but only by certain groups. It may be that Pop Art, festivals and mass culture will enable the arts to break down social barriers and reach the public as a whole. If so, then art with its all-embracing approach might manage to counteract the compartmentalization of learning and the specialization of knowledge brought about by modern science, and recreate an atmosphere conducive to human communication and social harmony.

Art and international co-operation

Ever since the establishment of the Olympic Games and, doubtless, in later times of which history has not preserved the traces, the role of art in international understanding and agreement has been recognized. International co-operation has exerted a major influence on the evolution of forms, of music and of writing: we need only think of the influence of Greek art on North Indian statuary as demonstrated at Gandhara, of Islam on European Gothic, of Negro art on the Paris school, of African and Asian music on contemporary Western music, of the American novel on European writing, of the Japanese theatre, and so on. At various times in history international trends are observable which take no account of political frontiers. At the moment the dominant trend, especially in the

(1) See hereafter: van der Staay, p. 67.

performing and visual arts, seems to be towards a common style resulting from much interchange between artists and much contact with each other's work. This co-operation, this transnational style, is a pointer to the nature of art which, when one looks beyond the multiplicity of concepts and conditions, is the expression of a single truth: "that of man, in all his complexity, striving to understand and fulfil himself and come to terms with himself and his world"⁽¹⁾. It is true, as has been shown at various times in history, that art can be exploited by certain ideologies and political regimes for aggressive ends. The best safeguard against this danger is increased interchange between artists, aimed at achieving mutual understanding of the differing conceptions of the world expressed by the art of different countries.

This is a task to which Unesco can make a decisive contribution. Through its action, art could assume its proper role in the world of today, namely to become a key instrument in the strivings of modern societies to attain to universality, by constituting itself the mouthpiece of the aspirations to liberty, fraternity and peace among men⁽¹⁾.

Artistic events such as Festivals⁽²⁾ can be the means to co-operation between peoples on a much wider front than co-operation in the sphere of the arts, and can exert a profound influence on people's awareness enriched by the differences in cultures and reconciled to the pluralism inherent in the human race.

The role of Unesco

The Unesco Secretariat gave background information on the action taken by the Organization in the field of international artistic co-operation. The participants, while applauding what had been done, unanimously expressed the hope that this work would be diversified and intensified in the context of the general campaign for development and of the new dimension of development. They asked in particular that Unesco should:

1. formulate recommendations intended to guide States in their policy of action on behalf of the arts, on the basis of a coherent international doctrine defining the motives and criteria of a government intervention recognized as necessary for the survival of art in the modern world,

(1) See hereafter: Messadi, p. 47.

(2) See hereafter: Ghossoub, p. 62.

taking account in particular of the role of art in the preservation of cultural identity and of the environment, in life-long education and in international co-operation;

2. increase its aid to non-governmental organizations bringing together artists of different nationalities with the aim of promoting their respective disciplines;
3. draw up an international programme for the preservation and fostering of artistic values, particularly through the education of the public and in the context of lifelong education;
4. intensify its efforts to promote the dissemination of works of art and formulate recommendations designed to ensure the direct participation of the arts, especially of drama, poetry, music and the visual arts, in the everyday life of cities;
5. prepare an international instrument for the protection of the environment from physical and commercial pollution, proclaiming in particular the right to silence and the right to a visual environment;
6. recommend that Member States ensure the protection of artistic values by preserving and updating them, in particular by identifying and publicizing meeting points between the traditional and the contemporary;
7. investigate the feasibility of drawing up a social contract concerning the functions of art in contemporary society;
8. ensure by all possible means, particularly by the preparation of a statute, the political, economic and social protection of artists and more especially of traditional artists;
9. encourage festivals as a means of interchange, co-operation and social progress, particularly by improving co-ordination between existing festivals, by establishing international fairs of arts and crafts, and by "anthological events" designed to display traditional and modern arts for the benefit of specialists (especially ethnologists) and the general public;
10. recommend the institution of systematic and regular exchanges between artists from all parts of the world;

11. investigate the feasibility of establishing a specialized data bank to assist and guide research in the sphere of the arts and letters;
12. compile a list of "living treasures" of artistic activity at the international level;
13. make recommendations with a view to the preparation of a survey of disused premises that could be allocated to impoverished artists or beginners grouped in a community to which would be attached critics equipped with audio-visual equipment (television) to help make these artists known;
14. conduct research into national art dossiers, to which all the non-governmental organizations active in the sphere of the arts would contribute, consisting of written material, records and video-cassettes, designed to acquaint people, especially schoolchildren and university students, with the artistic activities of foreign countries;
15. undertake studies and draw up a plan of action aimed at showing the part played by artistic activities in economic and social development, particularly in the advancement of the developing countries, as well as the economic importance of art industries or their subsidiaries, particularly as regards employment, the training of specialists, overseas trade, etc.;
16. on the basis of research into (a) the relationship between the electronic environment and artistic activity, i. e. between radio, television and creativity, and (b) the effects of this environment on the ability of individuals and groups to express themselves, formulate recommendations to Member States and non-governmental organizations aimed at promoting the decentralization of radio and television networks, so as to put these media at the disposal of local communities, thus encouraging them to express themselves freely and to communicate at national and international level.

*

* *

Appended are

- (a) a list of participants and representatives of non-governmental organizations;
- (b) those statements by participants which have been handed in to the Secretariat.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Mr. S. ASANACHINDA
(Thailand) | Theatre and film playwright/
scenarist, director and producer,
First President, The Profes-
sional Artists' Association of
Thailand, Bangkok |
| Professor K. BAKOMBA
(Zaire) | Research worker, actor, Pro-
fessor of Dramatic Art, Aca-
demic Registrar, Institut
National des Arts, Kinshasa |
| Dr. M. BEGIC
(Yugoslavia) | Professor of Philosophy, Faculty
of Philosophy, University of
Sarajevo |
| Mr. D. BERAUD
(France) | Technical adviser, Société
nationale de programme France
régions, FR 3, Paris |
| Mr. S. BENAVENTE
(Argentina) | Set designer, Professor at the
School of Dramatic Art and at
the National University, Buenos
Aires |
| Mr. R. BORDAZ
(France) | President of the Centre National
d'Art et de Culture Georges
Pompidou, Paris |
| Mr. A. CARPENTIER
(Cuba) | Writer, Cultural Attaché at the
Cuban Embassy in Paris |
| Mr. S. de CASTRO
(Argentina) | Artist |

Professor J. DUVIGNAUD (France)	Writer and critic, Professor and Director of the Sociology Centre at the University of Tours-Orléans, and Secretary- General of <u>Cahiers internationaux de Sociologie</u>
Her Highness Princess FARIDA (Egypt)	Painter
Mr. W. GHOSSOUB (Lebanon)	Director of the Baalbek Inter- national Festival
Professor Dr. K. GORANOV (Bulgaria)	Director of the Cultural Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and of the Committee for Art and Culture, Sofia
Dr. E. HELM (U. S. A.)	Composer and music critic, and General Editor of <u>Music and Tomorrow's Public (IMC)</u>
Mr. Y. LYUBYMOV (USSR)	Stage director; Director of the Taganka Theatre, Moscow
Professor Marshall McLUHAN (Canada)	Writer, communications specialist, and Director of the Centre for Culture and Technology, University of Toronto, Toronto
H. E. Mr. M. MESSADI (Tunisia)	Writer, Minister of Cultural Affairs
Mr. I. NOGUCHI (U. S. A.)	Sculptor
Mrs. E. SUTHERLAND (Ghana)	Playwright and director; Direc- tor of the Ghana National Drama Studio, Accra
Mr. HENRYK SZERYNG (Mexico)	Violinist, Cultural Counsellor to the Mexican Permanent Dele- gation to Unesco

Mr. P. TAILHARDAT
(France)

Head of the Audio-Visual Department of the Centre national d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris

Professor C. do Prado
VALLADARES
(Brazil)

Art historian, critic, member of the Federal Cultural Committee, and President of the Rio de Janeiro Chamber of Arts

Mr. A. van der STAAY
(Netherlands)

Director of the Arts Foundation of Rotterdam

Mr. F. WALTER
(Switzerland)

Music critic and Artistic Adviser to the European Association of Music Festivals

LIST OF OBSERVERS

INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International Amateur Theatre Association (IATA)

Mr. W.S. ROBERTS

International Association of Art (IAA)

Mr. D. MARSHALL-MALAGOLA
Secretary-General

Mr. G. PATRIX

International Association of Art Critics (IAAC)

Mr. R-J. MOULIN
Deputy Secretary-General

International Association of Literary Critics (IALC)

Mr. Robert ANDRE, President

International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

Mr. M. PARENT, Vice-
President of the French
ICOMOS Committee

International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS)

Professor J. THUILLIER

International Federation of Actors (IFA)

Mrs. F. DELAHALLE,
President

International Film and Television Council (IFTTC)

Mr. R. RAVAR, Joint President

Mr. P-H. PISANI

International Institute for Audio-visual Communication and
Cultural Development (MEDIACULT)

Mr. P. BEAUD

International Music Council (IMC)

Mr. J. BORNOFF, Executive
Secretary

Mr. Manuel ROSENTHAL

International PEN

Mr. P. ELSTOB, International
Secretary

International Theatre Institute (ITI)

Mr. J. DARCANTE,
Secretary-General

International Union of Architects

Mr. LASSUS

*
* *

EXTRACTS FROM STATEMENTS HANDED TO THE
SECRETARIAT IN WRITING

Professor Marshall McLuhan (Canada)

(a) Brain structure and the arts

The work of Jack Fincher (Human Intelligence, New York: G. P. Putnams, 1976) stresses the absurdity of our current intelligence testing procedures which are designed only for the left hemisphere of the brain, the quantitative side. There are no tests for the right hemisphere, the qualitative and artistic side of the brain. The dominance of the left hemisphere in the First World began with Greek phonetic literacy, and extends in unbroken sequence from Parmenides to the present. The Pre-Socratics, on the other hand, had been entirely right hemisphere philosophers, their meditations being based on a simultaneous and acoustic relation to their consciousness and the world. In our time, the rediscovery of the Pre-Socratics has accompanied a new cultural stress on the right hemisphere. If the dominance of the left hemisphere in the Western world, from Parmenides until Einstein, depended upon a large measure of lineal technology in the human environment (roads, courier systems, and military bureaucracies), just as certainly the new dominance of the right hemisphere in our own time results from the new information environment of simultaneous data. If the keynote of the left hemisphere is lineality, the keynote of the right hemisphere is simultaneity. Moreover, if lineality is the main feature of Euclidean space and logical, individualist man, the main feature of the right hemisphere is the acoustic structure of intuitive, pattern-recognizing and group-oriented man.

When Max Planck broached the theme of discontinuity in matter (1900), he signified the end of the era of left hemisphere dominance such as characterized the Newtonian universe. In "abstracting" connections from matter in 1900, Max Planck was contemporary with cubism which had abstracted the visual connections from space and painting alike. Cubism is the world of multiple and simultaneous points of view. It was in the same year, 1900, that Freud published The Interpretation of Dreams, in which all rational or lineal connections between the conscious and the unconscious were also

abstracted, or pulled out. Visual space, in the sense of something continuous and connected and homogeneous and static, had been born with Euclid, but had been modified and complicated by the non-visual senses of touch and kinesthesia and the haptic modes of religious and iconic and ritualistic art. Nevertheless, visual space was strong enough in the early period of Greek literacy to create the cult of representational art, what E. H. Gombrich in Art and Illusion calls the art of "matching" and of "realism" as opposed to the art of "making" which demanded a large degree of participation from the audience via iconic and sculptural form.

The quality of matching the inner and outer had been the criterion of "truth" in Aristotle and Aquinas. As the visual component intensified in the later Middle Ages, leading to the extreme forms of lineality of Gutenberg and typography, there was an irresistible drive toward private perspective in the arts and in literature. (In contrast to the arts of visual perspective, the Gothic cathedral had never presented a single point of view, as Erwin Panofsky explains in Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism (New York: Meridian Books, 1957).

The individuating power of visual perspective and the printed word are strongly indicated by Montaigne. Donald Frame in his Biography of Montaigne (New York: Harcourt-Brace and World, 1965) helpfully pulls out some of these passages:

I owe a complete portrait of myself to the public. The wisdom of my lesson is wholly in truth, in freedom, in reality . . . of which propriety and ceremony are daughters, but bastard daughters.

(p. 291)

He was also aware of the loneliness of the writer in the sense that he had broken his personal oral bond with his readers:

Amusing notion: many things that I would not want to tell anyone, I tell the public; and for my most secret knowledge and thoughts I send my most faithful friends to a book-seller's shop . . .

(p. 82)

The Gutenberg service environment of lineal typography and information led to the development of many affiliated forms of

lineality such as railways and highways, and these, in turn, created an environment favourable to an increasing dominance of the left hemisphere. Perhaps, significantly, the hardware lineality of Gutenberg and print, as it reached its maximal development, was suddenly accompanied by the telegraph, inseparable from the railway. The telegraph, in turn, by moving information at the speed of light, created new forms of prose, and awareness, and art. The telegraph is the quantum leap that precluded quantum mechanics and relativity theory. The development of the telephone, radio and TV completed the environment of simultaneous information that has had an exactly contrary effect to Gutenberg and lineality. The new instantaneous environment of electric information favoured the dominance of the right hemisphere as surely as Gutenberg had fostered the left.

The Balinese say: "We have no art. We do everything as well as possible", introducing the strange paradox that in traditional societies there is no possible dichotomy between art and technology. The Bambara and Dogon tribes are not unique in seeing the act of weaving as a mime of human utterance:

Among the Bambara and the Dogon, the gift of weaving is closely associated with that of speech. Soy, the Dogon word for cloth, means "It is the spoken word" (Griaule 1948, p.30). Weaving, along with speech, was a gift from the Creator to help man. . . . Among the Bambara, weaving, like the other skills, is referred to as "the words of Faro" (Dieterlen 1951, p. 53). The process of spinning was first revealed to man by the spirit of the crossroads where man would leave his hoe in homage to the god.

Douglas Fraser
African Art as Philosophy
Interbook, 1974, p.88

The "spinner of tales" and the "loom of language" are phrases to remind us of the age-old bond between utterance and weaving. They also serve to remind us that language itself is a technology, and that all technologies are a kind of metaphor (metaferein), transferring human powers from one medium to another. In the age of the computer and information theory we are strangely returning to the most primitive and basic forms of human experience. This situation, however, is not without its eliminating character, for private identity, itself a highly developed cultural form, is now threatened

by the return of corporate involvement and tribal togetherness. The Balinese remark quoted above helps to focus attention on the character of art in the non-specialized Third World as something which is part of everyday life.

As men fragment and specialize themselves, they also push the role of art into a highly specialized consumer category cultivated by the passionate pilgrims of the higher things. Once this specialism develops, art-conscious people become contemptuous of the arts of mass man. Perhaps advertising is an extreme example of this, and here again advertising is a highly specialized activity of highly trained technicians and psychologists who study the make-up of the consumer public with great thoroughness. Public advertising in countries of abundance can quite properly be called "the garment of abundance". This garment is anonymous, like any folk art, and is the product of all the public skills of the community. There is, of course, no motive to create ads in a land where there are only shortages and queues. It follows that the sheer quantity of advertising in the industrial First World is an index of the huge volume of consumer goods available. The advertising bill for North America is 22 billion dollars per annum, and much of this money goes to support the best wordsmiths, the best designers, the best musicians, and the best media directors in the entire land. There is probably not a single talent in any of the traditional arts that has not been sustained and developed in an American advertising agency during his or her formative period. Picasso was an avid student of American popular cartoons and ads. Mr. T. S. Eliot was a fan of Walt Kelly, the comic stripper, and James Joyce was a connoisseur of all the popular forms. This is to say that the boundaries between commercial and "popular" and "serious" art have long been in a complex state of interplay.

A major shift in the art role in the First World results from radio and especially TV, as they tend to structure the tastes and attitudes of the public into Third World patterns. TV endangers even the motor car in America, since it brings the outside world into our sitting rooms, reversing the two-century pattern of preferences. Since Americans have always gone outside to be alone in the style of the hunter and food-gatherer, they have also gone home to be social and congenial. The TV reversal of this pattern endangers the motor car which has long been our main means of going outside to enjoy solitude. The American is being transformed from his extreme individuality and extroversion into a man who enjoys group festivity even away from home. The job is no longer a situation in which to exert his exclusive characteristics of drive and ambition.

Increasingly, the American goes outside to put on corporate roles, keeping his eye on the peer group, rather than the individual rival.

Thus far I have tried to indicate the shifting patterns of hemisphere dominance which result from changes in the man-made environment. There is a sense in which the entire planet ceased to be "nature" at the moment when Sputnik went into orbit in 1957, providing the planet with a man-made environment of instantaneous information. My theme has been that the long neglected right hemisphere assumes a dominant function under these new environmental conditions. This new dominance of the right hemisphere strongly favours the approach to the entire human environment as an art form. Under the old hardware conditions, this was partly achieved by the universality of highways which are probably the typical and most massive architectural form of the twentieth century. Almost equal in scope to the highway has been advertising as an environmental art form in the First World. The role of the fine arts, of music and painting and poetry also assumes new dominance along with the right hemisphere. Our current obsession with ecology is a strong indication of a willingness to design and to programme every aspect of the human environment, both visual and acoustic, as part of a programme of energy conservation and control. Prior to the industrial revolution there had been an acceptance of human scale as a kind of base-line for making and measuring environmental things like buildings and sounds.

In a recent book, The Tuning of the World, Murray Schafer begins by saying:

Now I will do nothing but listen ...
I hear all sounds running together, combined,
fused or following,
Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city,
sounds of the day and the night ...

(Walt Whitman, Song of Myself)

When so much of the sound in the world is of human origin, it is natural to conceive of the possibility of orchestrating these sounds, and such is the concern of Murray Schafer:

Orchestration Is a Musician's Business

Throughout this book I am going to treat the world as a macrocosmic musical composition. This is an unusual idea but I am going to nudge it forward relentlessly. The definition of music

has undergone radical change in recent years. In one of the more contemporary definitions, John Cage has declared: "Music is sounds, sounds around us whether we're in or out of concert halls: cf. Thoreau". The reference is to Thoreau's Walden, where the author experiences in the sounds and sights of nature an inexhaustible entertainment.

(p. 3)

We are moving into a time when a new Orpheus could be born. Schafer offers a large inventory of the natural sounds of the earth which had preceded the industrial time, beginning with the phases of the sea and of the waterfall (including falling rain). There are the phases of the wind and of the forest. The Canadian writer Emily Carr speaks of the forest:

The silence of our Western forests was so profound that our ears could scarcely comprehend it. If you spoke your voice came back to you as your face is thrown back to you in a mirror. It seemed as if the forest were so full of silence that there was no room for sounds. The birds who lived there were birds of prey - eagles, hawks, owls. Had a song bird loosed his throat the others would have pounced. Sober-coloured silent little birds were the first to follow settlers into the West. Gulls there had always been; they began with the sea and had always cried over it. The vast sky spaces above, hungry for noise, steadily lapped up their cries. The forest was different - she brooded over silence and secrecy.

(p. 20)

Schafer contrasts the visual profiles of the mediaeval and the modern city:

Looking at the profile of a mediaeval European city we at once note that the castle, the city wall and the church spire dominate the scene. In the modern city it is the high-rise apartment, the bank tower and the factory chimney which are the tallest buildings. This tells us a good deal about the prominent social institutions of the two

societies. In the soundscape also there are sounds which obtrude over the acoustic horizon: keynotes, signals and soundmarks; and these types of sounds must accordingly form the principal subject of our investigation.

(p. 47)

In terms of human scale, Schafer reminds us that the sound of the church bell is coextensive with the community, and he appends the memorable opening of Johan Huizinga's The Waning of the Middle Ages:

One sound rose ceaselessly above the noises of busy life and lifted all things unto a sphere of order and serenity: the sound of bells. The bells were in daily life like good spirits, which by their familiar voices, now called upon the citizens to mourn and now to rejoice, now warned them of danger, now exhorted them to piety. They were known by their names: big Jacqueline, or the bell Roland. Everyone knew the difference in meaning of the various ways of ringing. However continuous the ringing of the bells, people would seem not to have become blunted to the effect of their sound.

Throughout the famous judicial duel between two citizens of Valenciennes, in 1455, the big bell, "which is hideous to hear", says Chastellain, never stopped ringing. What intoxication the pealing of the bells of all the churches, and of all the monasteries of Paris, must have produced, sounding from morning till evening, and even during the night ...

One of Schafer's themes concerns the "Quiet we call 'Silence' - which is the merest word of all". What interval, or gap, is to space, silence is to sound, and the Chinese and Japanese painters work by means of these carefully ordered gaps. Today it is the same with silence:

Because it is being lost, the composer today is more concerned with silence; he composes with it. Anton Webern moved composition to the brink of silence. The ecstasy of his music is

enhanced by his sublime and stunning use of rests, for Webern's is music composed with an eraser.

(p. 241)

(b) Art as an essential part of human environment

The environment is a difficult thing to grasp. It's elusive and Protean. In our time particularly, the man-made environment far exceeds the natural environment. Starting with Sputnik 1957, the man-made environment enclosed the entire planet, making an information environment for the first time in human history. The information environment created by radio, telephone, telegraph and television creates a new kind of software environment for which the older art-forms seem to have no relationship. The total environment created by information, simultaneous, instant information, seemed to have no rapport with anything hitherto regarded as art-form. Superficially, at least, the information environment would seem to return man to the condition of the primitive hunter. In an information environment, man is once more, primal, primitive and his business is hunting information for survival. I'm not sure whether architecture or any of the familiar art-forms can be said to have any relation at all to the information environment. A more simple form of environment with which to occupy ourselves is the one created by the motor car, the vast architecture of highways, the huge hardware structure - those things make other forms of architecture seem very insignificant. Have artists considered the effect of highways on the human sensibility? What kinds of people result from the use of those forms? They transform human perception and sensibility. And yet they belong to the nineteenth century, they're not twentieth century, they're old forms. The characteristic form of the twentieth century environment is electric information and does not include any hardware at all. All the other art-forms we seem to be discussing here are hardware: painting, sculpture, architecture. Music, of course, finds a natural outlet in the new software environment of radio and television. Music has assumed a vast new dimension under electronic conditions. But let us also consider that electronic forms of radio and television, completely contrasting forms by the way, are new art-forms. They are man-made structures that relate to our human perceptions and they are completely environmental. I wonder why people prefer to think of art as something contained inside something else. Is this the museum mentality? One characteristic of all new forms is that the content is always the preceding form. The content of the movie is the book. The content of television is the movie. The new form

never uses itself, is always a hidden ground and the figure is always the old form. The new environments are always hidden grounds and the content that we perceive is always the old environment, never the new one. The role of the artist would appear to be to make us aware of the new forms rather than to exploit the old ones. I don't know what the artists have done to make us acquainted with the new electronic forms or art-forms of instant information such as have, incidentally, transformed the Third World. The transistors distributed by Unesco to the Third World have had profound political effects because they are an intense hot medium put to the service of people who are already intensively sensitive, in ear perception. I have always considered the radio as a disaster for the Third World. The one thing it did not need was any more hotting-up of its ear. There is more in television for the Third World than there is from radio but that again is an environmental question that we may get around to discussing today.

(c) Art and the Third World

I'm going to try to summarize by tackling some themes that may have been omitted. I was much taken by Mrs. Sutherland's paper on artists and development demands in Africa today, because she confronts the problem of an oral society trying to make itself present to the literate societies of the First World and also the problem of how oral artists shape their own awareness in a world based on completely different principles from their own. I think this kind of issue applies to the First World indirectly because as we have often mentioned, the First World is now in the position of returning very quickly to the conditions of Third World, thanks to electronic technology, which in its very nature is simultaneous and acoustic. Keep in mind that there has been in the First World a considerable absence of interest in the public. The First World instinctively concentrates on the work of art and ignores the people who in effect inspire the artist. The artist is inspired by people who are essentially lacking awareness of the things of which he is intensely aware. For example, if you put it in terms of theories of communication, there has never been written a theory of communication for Plato or Aristotle, or for any major figure in poetry or philosophy, since Plato or Aristotle. Now just why there has been no history or no investigation of their theories of communication is quite simply accounted for by the fact that, to write about Plato's theory of communication is to write about Plato's public. And nobody seems to have paid much attention. The public is that which inspires the artist. Western aesthetics seems to assume that the artist is inspired by transcendental ideas. In fact and in practice, all art is the product of the artist's encounter with his

public. The philosopher is impatient to correct the stupidities and misconceptions of his public and the artist is eager to open the doors of perception for his public, which he feels has been completely deprived of vision. The Polish novelist who wrote in English, Joseph Conrad, has said of his work: "it is above all that you may see" - that I think could be said of any artist. This applies to a considerable degree to the commercial artist; he too is intensely interested in his public and in its problems. I think it is characteristic of the First World's limitations that it is inclined to exclude the commercial artist from consideration. In practice, the commercial artist has to study his public intensively and he has to be able to manipulate them and to make them respond at all times. But the absence of theories of communication in the West is the absence of interest in the public for whom the artist works. There is no mention of the public in the aesthetics of Heidegger or of Husserl, to mention two obvious ones. But Baudelaire paid much more attention to his public. Mr. Eliot said, for example: "I would prefer to have an illiterate audience". His job as a poet was to enable people in the First World to understand the Third World. As a very highly literate and sophisticated man, he saw his job as an artist to open the doors of perception in the First World on to the Third World. He said of Mark Twain, whose great work Huckleberry Finn was abominated by literate and fastidious people, as the work of a non-literate man: "He updated the English language and purified the dialect of the tribe". The phrase is from Mallarmé: "Il a donné un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu". Mark Twain purified the dialect of the tribe by returning English to the conditions of preliteracy. His hero is completely non-literate. Huckleberry Finn has a huge mythic structure based upon the main character, which is the river, the Mississippi. The corporate awareness of Mark Twain in this work was achieved by returning to the conditions of oral culture; in that state, people are intensely aware of the public. Mrs. Sutherland, speaking from the Third World, shows in her paper an intense concern with the problems of oral culture and the public that must be the source of inspiration. The source of inspiration and the group who are to be helped or enlightened are one and the same in an oral culture. We are all familiar with the work called The Singer of Tales, about the conditions of oral composition in the Yugoslav epic. Carey and Lord, the authors of this book, studied the conditions of oral composition, those of Homer but also those of the modern jazz musician. Even in the popular art of jazz, the public is the immediate participant in the composition. There is no written score; there is a vast store of formulas which are used according to the needs of the moment and the particular occasion. Improvisation is the mode of composition. It is only by improvising that the public can participate in Art, in the creative

activity of Art. So Mrs. Sutherland's paper raises all the problems, all the questions that belong to oral culture with its immediate concern with the public as source of inspiration. Just in passing, I was amused to discover that in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, the public appears in the front window of every one of his compositions. There is an inventory of mistakes and difficulties on each of the themes he tackles. The inventory involves all the objections and all the misunderstandings of that issue by the traditional public. He advertises his public intensely at the beginning of every composition, focusing upon them directly. I wish to stress this as a possible way of unifying our discussions about the place of Art in the world; we are also talking about the public to be served. The public is the immediate source of inspiration and its misunderstandings and stupidities are the immediate occasion of inspiration. In my earlier mention of the hemispheres of the brain, I indicated the supreme importance of the Third World in our present world, because our technologies have elevated the right hemisphere to dominance for the first time in 2,500 years, by means of electric information as an environment. It is the environment that affects the hemispheres rather than the inputs or the content. This event, as big an upheaval in human affairs as ever occurred, puts the Third World directly in the centre of the picture as the kind of world we are now beginning to share everywhere, the kind of world we need to understand in order to understand ourselves. I think we should concentrate on that theme: Third World as centre of the picture, because it is now also the First World, since we are systematically transforming the First World into another Third World by our own electronic technologies. If we keep that in mind we can then turn to the Third World for enlightenment, just as Carey and Lord turn to Yugoslavia for enlightenment on the Homeric Epic. They discovered that they performed exactly the same way our jazz musicians perform. Advertising as a Folk Art, advertising is in every sense a Folk Art, because it concentrates in its activities all of the skills of the community. All of the activities of the advertising people are anonymous. All of their activities they wish to keep at a subliminal level. All advertising is subliminal when effective. If you become conscious of an advertisement, it is a failure. This is probably true of Art, that great Art communicates without being understood and communicates most powerfully, perhaps, when not understood, by shaping the deepest awareness, subliminal awareness. The advertisers consciously work on the business of being subliminal, of using the public (we resent this of course), but they consciously keep their advertising below the level of consciousness, in order to be effective. Any propaganda that becomes consciously, oppressively aware, is bad propaganda. It was pointed out that the greatest propaganda in the

world is our mother tongue, that which we learn as children, and which we learn unconsciously. That shapes our perceptions for life. That is propaganda at its most extreme form.

Classification is often a good way of turning away from a subject. But the world of advertising is a huge liaison with the Third World, just as the worlds of popular jazz and rock are very manifestly Third World in character. One of the peculiar characteristics of our own First World as subjected to electronic technology is that it translates all the old hardware into software. This is happening at a very rapid speed: all the old hardware has become software, has become information. All the old jobs have been transformed into role-playing. This is the transformation now going on in the First World: all job-holding becomes role-playing. Everything that had been centralized now becomes decentralized. At the speed of light you cannot have centralism. These are structural transformations that occur at the speed of light or at electric speed and they are part and parcel of the reason why we find the Third World in the centre of the picture today. It doesn't require any social research to know that the young generation of our time is Third World and its instincts and preferences are all in the direction of Third World. These are some tentative observations to rehearse or to bring back to mind some of the wonderful things that have been presented to us in this week, from many areas of architecture and music and sculpture. I had had the hope or intention of refocusing some of those things by bringing up this extreme aspect about the public and the Third World. I wish Mrs. Sutherland would shortly rehearse a few of the main problems that she presents in her paper or her brochure because I do think that every one of them are related to the problems of the First World. It is not really the Third World that faces those problems alone. And the question of, for whom does one write in an oral community, is a really tough question. When Sartre raised that question in his What is literature?, his answer was simple: there is no public today to write for. What he meant was, we had become Third World already. But Sartre has a wonderful chapter on "For whom does one write?" in that book What is literature?, and he never succeeded in finding any public in the twentieth century to whom one could speak. He did not look at the popular arts. Mr. Eliot's observation that, "I wish I had an illiterate public" - was realized only too quickly; as you know, in America, the schools are now full of illiterates and they graduate them regularly; the universities graduate illiterates in thousands and thousands, every year. Mr. Eliot said, "I wish I had an illiterate audience", because technically and poetically, he wanted to have a closer relationship with his public. He knew that a literate public stood off at a great

distance and in a state of detachment, and an illiterate public was more participant, more immediately involved in the act of creation. One of Mr. Eliot's great poems is called the Fragment of an agon, in which the speaker is a kind of chorus figure, speaking for the community, and his name is Sweeney. And Sweeney chats in jazz rhythms, some magnificent meditations which include the remark: "I've been born and once is enough/You don't remember but I remember/once is enough/under the bam under the boo under the bamboo tree/two live as one, one live as two/two live as three/under the bam under the boo/under the bamboo tree/where the Gauguin maids and the banyan shades/wear palm-leaf drapery ...". These rather primitive chantings of Sweeney are indicative of what Mr. Eliot meant when he said he wished he had an illiterate audience, one that could participate more directly in the poetic act.

Professor J. DUVIGNAUD (France)

Before I go round the table for the last time, may I make one or two comments? There is of course no question of conclusions, since there can be no end to this debate.

As regards the problems we have been discussing for the last few days, we find that the terms in which they are stated and even the problems themselves are always slightly out of key with actual creative experience. Indeed, the same may be true of creative imagination as of atoms: according to the physicists, it is impossible to perceive both their shape and their motion at the same time, i. e. we are either aware of motion without seeing what causes it, or we see the object stationary. Similarly we can either appraise the worth of culture, its relationship to governments, civilizations and societies, or we can get inside the creative process ourselves and then everything else becomes blurred. Perhaps the very sap and essence of creative imagination is in fact a chimaera which it is quite impossible to pin down and predict.

*

* * *

In listening to Mrs. Sutherland and Mr. McLuhan, an odd parallel came to my mind. I was reminded of Lévi-Strauss's recent ideas about Alaskan Eskimo masks; he said that a mask cannot be reduced to what we ourselves think about it when we see it in a museum, any more than to the possibly explicit beliefs of the wearer. The mask refers to another mask, to be found in some other part of Eskimoland; the face is an integral part of the possibly

unknown system of a particular group or tribe, and is a replica of a face which itself refers to another face likewise situated in another part of the cultural area; and all this makes up a configuration which is independent of individual consciousness. The parallel is obvious: this theory irresistibly reminds one of the unformulated aesthetic of Marcel Duchamp, whose pictures and sculptures seem to refer to figures situated somewhere else, perhaps in Breton's "boundless infinity" - which is in fact bounded by the true potentialities of a given period.

Lévi-Strauss's hypothesis admittedly burkes the question of man's real existence, preferring the combination of abstract shapes. But this replicating pattern of similar shapes interlocking to form a network occupying the whole space of a cultural area puts us in mind of the seeking of the artist who seems to answer questions that have not yet been asked or that relate to figures situated elsewhere but without which they possibly never would be asked at all. A particular piece of work may for all we know gesture in the direction of other pieces, invisible to individuals, whose sum nevertheless makes up the unknown structure of our era, filling the "field of possibility" of man's contemporary inner world, as he gravitates between the microscopic viewpoint of a single culture and a world-wide viewpoint such as we have today.

This ambiguity or correlational character, as a result of which differences are enveloped in the continually changing fabric of relations, may well oblige us to revise some of our accepted ideas, indeed to rid ourselves of some fallacies or illusions.

*

* *

The first of these illusions is our yearning for the "good society", in which culture, in harmony with the State or government, rediscovers the "unanimity" attributed by romantic writers to the Greek city-State - which never knew it. The idea that a particular set of conditions can exist in which creative imagination flourishes belongs in a nineteenth century museum; obviously fiction and creative invention only emerge where men feel most severely the inner conflicts of the world they live in, or else cause other conflicts by evoking emotions which have no place in the accepted code of an era or society. Just as there is a precession of equinoxes, we should speak of a precession of creativity: Shakespeare and Rimbaud came as bolts from the blue, yet the emotions they evoked gradually (often very gradually) won a general footing in the hearts of men.

In one of these "good societies" in which culture, creative imagination, political authority and institutions lived happily cheek by jowl, the artist would be nothing but an illustrator of life, embellishing the drowsy stillness with vague arabesques. In point of fact, creative imagination, by and large, does anything but give a feeling of security: it evokes combinations of emotions very different from those which a society hands on from generation to generation in an attempt to perpetuate - i. e. immobilize - itself.

The second fallacy takes the form of supposing that creative imagination can be reduced to critical utterance, in particular (as the saying went twenty or so years ago) to demystification. This trend was very fashionable in Europe a generation ago, though it looks a little outdated today: and I have seen enough of it to know that demystification is always carried out from a privileged viewpoint - the one the critic arrogates to himself as a platform for his ex cathedra judgements. But the demystifying critic does not outlive his demystification: for his attitude to creative imagination, and his comments on it, are in terms of values, beliefs and ideas which always lag behind the object of his criticism. I remember "demystifiers" of Artaud who claimed to have reduced the poet's ineffable yearning to a few intellectual ideas. But a great piece of creative work is one which cannot be exhausted by criticism of it. And the "demystifiers" are very soon forgotten.

This type of criticism is carried on in the name of a belief as to what "good writing" or "good thinking" should be: and an artist is by definition beyond the range of the ideas in which he is defined. The "potential awareness" of which Lukács spoke in relation to works of art goes beyond the range of particular sets of ideas.

Another fallacy we have come across takes the form of confusing creative imagination with "the arts", i. e. with what the West, in the early years of the free market economy, defined as specialized, mutually exclusive disciplines: dance, poetry, music, painting and so on. I do not believe these cultural institutions can be regarded as co-extensive with the realm of creative imagination. Moreover the entirely justified efforts currently being made by civilizations long dominated by the West (and often still dominated by Western modes of thought) to regain their cultural identity and authenticity - their açala - run directly counter to the - already forlorn - attempt to subsume all artistic life under these separate disciplines.

There is a type of symbolic activity peculiar to all societies, and it does not leave its mark only in the form of mythologies or

organized systems of beliefs. It conjures up images, shapes, acoustic patterns and sign languages which always transcend the static, ossified framework prescribed by tradition. We do not always know in which direction these figures of the imagination are moving, but we can see that they give civilizations their vitality and inner dynamism. Is it not what Paul Valéry called the "phrenetic activity" of artists that tends to subvert the established order?

It is therefore futile to suppose that our "arts" can continue on their European academic way. For the tremendous reserve of energy contained in cultures long forgotten, downtrodden or sidetracked is now beginning to burst to the surface, always in unexpected forms.

What is known as folklore - a word, alas, mostly used to denote the touristic aspects of non-European (or European historical) cultures - is the living expression of an infinite capacity for invention. But this inventiveness is too often kept in leading-strings or repressed, either by the "prestige" of the dominant Western cultures or by the dogmas of the political élite in developing nations, themselves brought up on Western values. What needs doing is not to build museums but to revitalize creative matrices capable of transcending our imaginative limits and renewing our capacity for invention. Malraux has written of "museums without walls"; it is in fact the demise of the traditional museum which enables us at last to hear powerful voices hitherto despised.

*

* *

The real problem is how to eradicate the idea of the universality of Western aesthetic values. This prejudice needs to be destroyed not only in the West, where it is already on the decline among the younger generation, but even more so among non-Western peoples, who are opposed to all forms of discrimination except this one. The only really global contribution made by the industrialized West has been the spread of technical processes usable by anybody - even those without the skills to build or conceive such things. The role of Western culture vis-à-vis the so-called emergent cultures should be to stimulate differences, and on the strength of those differences to bring about a new and effective interaction or dialogue.

Clearly this is not a question of building museums or art schools, or worshipping "raw art" (the meaningless term coined by Dubuffet). What needs doing is to allow the collective symbolism of other, different societies free play to produce art forms with

their own dynamism and valid in their own right, rather than by comparison with the aesthetic gropings of our Western artists.

Collective or individual creative imagination speaks in a muffled, disguised, strangled voice which I call "the lost language". This lost language must be rediscovered; and those who will re-discover it are those who are searching, through symbolic figures irreducible to our conventional art forms, for a new realm of creativity which will find its justification in its independence, and its strength in its ability to communicate and extend the frontiers of experience. It will be a far cry from the souvenirs peddled to tourists from affluent countries, who flaunt their bad taste as they fly from one hotel to another in the Third World; that is how the artistry of Kairouan carpets was ruined, and how Afro-Brazilian music is sometimes debased in the night-clubs of Rio de Janeiro.

There is obviously no point in trying to resuscitate a corpse. What is dead is dead, and art forms rendered sterile by prolonged decline are best consigned to the museums. There exists no Frankenstein capable of grafting living tissue onto art forms which no longer express the common spiritual life of a society.

There are, however, technical methods of helping some art forms to find new life and new inventiveness. They consist in employing audio-visual aids, from the tape-recorder, without which modern anthropology (witness the work of Lewis, Simmons and Myrdal) would not exist, to the camera and the video-cassette. But it must be on the express condition - which users of this equipment never respect - that the object is not "to make a film" or "to write a book". The object must be very simply and humbly to give groups, villages, neighbourhoods, craftsmen, peasants, workers and young people a chance to express what has so far been silenced or repressed.

The psychoanalysts are right: there is a kind of repression which has been and still is kept in being by the various forms of authority. But it is not only speech that is repressed: it is also life, which has not yet found words. A new pitfall in European thought consists of reducing life to speech and regarding what is not spoken, in the sense of a structured language, as part of the unconscious. This is perhaps a colonialist pitfall: it is certainly a dangerous one.

Our technical approach, then, consists of setting out to listen humbly to words badly enunciated and often rambling and incoherent; of giving shape to fantasies, dreams and gestures despised

and suppressed by Western-inspired moralities; and of bringing men, from the poorest fellah and the most poverty-stricken shopkeeper in an Indian or African street to the educated clerk, to terms with the imaginative side of himself - a side which technological civilization, of whatever political colour, has been unable or unwilling to develop.

The object of any creative or cultural activity, provided it is concerned more with the hitherto unexpressed than with repeating the shibboleths of Western schools, must be to get away from this mutilation. Long evenings spent in the company of men and women, collecting the dreams and fantasies of peasants in a village, and then transcribing them and having them recited by real actors (not amateurs) to the people who had so laboriously expressed them: this is one way among many of bringing out the richness of the spoken word and the theatrical form. We have tried it, and I think the experiment was successful and could be used elsewhere. Alternatively, to provide a possibly expensive raw material and so give a dormant craft the chance to go on creating shapes not seen since days gone by: that is another way of achieving modernity in the field of art. But the term "art" is no doubt open to dispute: what we are here concerned with is much more than that.

We have lived on an image of man that was conceived in Europe at a time when Europe, as a result of economic and technological advances, was breaking away from her traditional patterns. It was often a tragic image, sometimes a soothing one when handled by cultural middlemen who reduced it to the code of "the arts". This is the image that has spread all over the world. Nowadays it meets other images of man which its own ubiquity has elicited: they are quite different, and represent the varied attempts made by sometimes slumbering civilizations to face up to the modern world.

And this is where we enter the realm of the unforeseeable.

*
* *
*

One last point. We continually relive the adventure of myth meeting book, of cultures based on symbolic systems reproduced from generation to generation - subject to the modifications due to the concerted or aberrant activity of heretical individuals - encountering a culture rooted in the "literary plane" which came into being with the invention of printing.

What McLuhan calls the "Gutenberg galaxy" was a flaming revolution. The arrival of the universe of books transformed human experience: by generalizing the use of particular signs it made the abstract operation involved in their decoding the foundation of all existence and all imaginative activity.

Books are not merely printed objects produced by an industry which has flourished since the sixteenth century: they are also the vehicle of dreams and fantasies. Alejo Carpentier mentioned here the other day that the earliest Spanish printing presses started by producing romances of chivalry, and not the best of those. The new process served as a vehicle for the magic and fantasy of writers who conveyed a mystical view of the world - the diametrical opposite of the technical view implicit in the invention that made it possible. Technology in the service of magic is still to be found today: on the stage, the magical transformation scenes of opera and the baroque theatre are achieved by primitive machinery designed to use only measurable, material forces. It is also to be found in literature. Even painting and religion remain bound to the "literary plane". Pascal's religion is a bookman's religion, quite different from that of a mediaeval believer, just as Poussin's ideas about painting are different from Fra Angelico's.

The view of the world introduced by books changed man's centre of gravity. All our sensations and (as McLuhan rightly points out) our perceptions were revolutionized. However, that is not all: man's horizon lost its purely spatial character and, doubtless as a result of the non-instantaneity inherent in the very act of reading or writing, also acquired a temporal dimension. Montaigne, Pascal, Descartes and Leibniz are not conceivable without books. The writing of fiction arose out of books. Even the actor is the servant of a written text, and no longer claims to be the inventor and sole custodian of particular movements and gestures, without whom they would never come into existence or would vanish away.

Under the onslaught of this new experience, the myth that had sustained men, whether Greek or Christian - who had known the copyists, but not the "literary plane" - was transmuted, and became an object and a mode of thought. It was also "interiorized": the "inner life", like "depth" and "psychology", emerged with the subjectivity inherent in the solitary act of shared participation that constitutes reading. Philosophy from Rousseau to Hegel explored these newly discovered regions and shifted our centre of gravity. The world of the imagination became an organized structure, that of a coherent language.

No doubt, Israel and Islam were religions of the book - of a Book. But there is no gainsaying that the dissemination of the Bible by means of printing sufficed to bring about a schism within Christianity, between those who preferred individual meditation informed by solitary reading and those who clung to the unanimity of devotional hallucinations. Around the sixteenth century in Europe the city-States were no longer dominated by the Christian myth, oral or visual, but by the intrigues and rational stratagems of a secular power. It is impossible to imagine Machiavelli before the invention of the printing-press. And the mystics who founded States with the Koran in their hand discovered in the works of Ibn Khaldūn, with a flash of inspired foresight, what is nowadays called politics.

Things are changing abruptly. It is no accident that the invention of audio-visual technology is contemporaneous with the emergence of the new nations. Man's experience is no longer purely literary or based on writing. The world of the printing-press is no longer the sole articulation of our scientific experience, actual or potential. The French prehistorian Varagnac wrote fifteen years ago in l'Homme avant l'écriture: "Twenty audio-visual aids have already taken us beyond writing. Young people virtually prefer records or television to reading. The telephone has to some extent superseded letter-writing. This spate of disrupting inventions comes hard on the heels of the ending of illiteracy in industrialized societies. Exclusively writing-based cultures have hardly had time to acquire a popular base, yet the masses are already beginning to desert them". What do our five centuries of experience of books represent in terms of human evolution? A hundred years ago, illiterates were cultural outcasts: we know now that audio-visual participation can give them the elements of a civilization of which we have so far no conception.

Having said this, we feel obliged to stress the abject poverty of current discussions on audio-visual methods. So-called "specialists" in the field babble a few elementary truths and repeat parrot-fashion a few unchanging dogmas. The truth is that we still know nothing about image transmission or implantation. There is room for a new Einstein: just as relatively started with the realization that light-waves could be bent, and that their direct transmission was no longer axiomatic, so audio-visual image theory will start when it is appreciated that the image emitted is not necessarily the image perceived, and that

if the viewer is to be projected on the screen he must be free to use the transmitting equipment as he sees best.

This is what gives modern culture quite exceptional opportunities. When Europe discovered writing and the "literary plane", it also discovered the history and religion of its past, and froze them beyond recall. Today, peoples whom European history has passed by can live their lives in the presence of the image and transcend their past by giving it a communicable existence. Even Europe, saddled with its own inventions, will be revolutionized by this discovery. It is pointless to lament a past that is gone for ever.

There is of course no question of books being superseded by myths. The universe of books cannot die: it exists, and is the basis for our science, our life, our laws, and our politics and economics. But it is no longer the sole basis. It is losing its imperial sway at a time when European imperialism, abolished in its colonialist form, is increasingly under discussion in its structural form. At least books and the myth will coexist from now on as two possible roads to experience. And this brings us to the diversity, the relativism, the recognition of the differences which will henceforth be the basis of human relations.

I mean that the audio-visual must give the "lost language" of dormant or downtrodden cultures a means of expression and communication which writing cannot give it; and that books themselves may be transformed by this tidal wave of revitalized symbols. Ahead of us lies the fascinating world of paradoxical experiences ...

*

* *

One last word. European creative artists have never claimed an absolute value for art, as Mrs. Sutherland seems to think. Poets and painters have never arrogated to themselves the right to interpret the absolute, and it would be hard to find such an opinionated idea in the works of Flaubert, Dostoievski, Manet or William Blake. On the contrary, real creative workers have almost by definition had but a dim awareness of their own role. It is the plagiarists and the sycophants, and often,

I fear, the academics and those everlasting circus-proprietors the organizers of lecture tours, who have invented this ludicrous idea.

Here let me come resolutely to Europe's defence. The best European creative artists have never supposed that they were "making great art" or "revolutionizing culture". They have never pushed themselves forward as warriors fighting in a great crusade. They have approached, and still do approach, the great experience of creative imagination walking backwards, as humbly as any potter or African "griot" - albeit more anxiously.

More anxiously, and today with a keener awareness of what our age connotes: the sublation of seemingly contradictory maxims, if we genuinely accept our differences, the interplay of figures which possibly echo one another, unknown to us, like the Eskimo masks I mentioned earlier, the tensions which, whether we like it or not, go to make up the universal consciousness of our age. There is also its "dread", the dread that brings us right back to the plane of myth, the feeling so well evoked by Hermann Broch when he wrote, soon after the dropping of the first atom bomb and the creation of a brotherhood of fear in the midst of the diversity of possible cultures: "A world that blows itself up is no longer a fit subject for a portrait. The source of its ruin is to be found in the deepest roots of human nature, and that is what needs to be depicted - stripped naked, in its grandeur and its destitution alike. And to do this is supremely the task of myth".

Mr. A. CARPENTIER (Cuba)

If a man went out one Sunday and stood in the Place de la Madeleine with a little list and a suitcase full of books and shouted: "Buy Mallarmé, Apollinaire and Rimbaud, buy Paul Eluard, Robert Desnos, Pronge, Saint-John Perse", he would be regarded as a crank, and he would go home with all his books unsold. I lived for 14 years in Caracas, Venezuela, and I used to go to the market every Sunday: it was a very picturesque place, and there were some extraordinary birds in cages. I happened to stop in front of a stall on which some very well produced books were for sale very

cheap, and the bookseller was shouting: "Buy Ruben Dario and Pablo Neruda, buy Cesar Vallejo, Nicolas Guillen", and all the great names in Latin American and Spanish poetry - for Garcia Lorca was always in the list.

It seems to me that the contrast between the remoteness of poetry in Europe and its immediacy in Latin America is a matter of special concern to the culture of the continent I shall be speaking about, that is to say my own continent, Latin America. Something that is a necessity for us has become a luxury for you Europeans. To repeat myself, I cannot imagine anyone here in Paris offering poems by Eliot or Eluard or Apollinaire for sale in the street, as is done in some Latin American cities. Moreover although there are great differences between Latin American countries (despite the common language, which means that one can cross some 20 odd with nothing but Spanish), it is rare to find a village in any country that does not have that socially prized individual, the poet. I have been to remote villages in the Andes, in the back of beyond, where there was a man called the poet whose job it was to spend the evenings with a few friends reciting poetry. Amazingly, this poet is usually completely illiterate. And which do you suppose are the favourite themes of these completely illiterate poets? The Chanson de Roland and the sack of Troy. I have heard popular versions of them in Venezuela, just as I have heard the history of King Lear told as a story in the countryside in Cuba. I certainly do not propose to give a history lecture: Latin American history is too intricate, and Europeans in general know very little about it. Let me simply say, so that certain things may be clear, that it is important to appreciate one fact about the history of South America. Latin America, as it is usually called, was discovered by the Spanish: for the first two generations those in power were Spaniards, but after that the third, fourth and fifth generations consisted of men and women born in Latin America of mixed Spanish-Indian or Spanish-Negro parentage. The word they used of themselves (if I am not mistaken, it appears for the first time in a work dated 1576 on the geography of Mexico) was Creole. The Creoles very soon became the big landowners and property owners, while the Indians and Negroes made up the proletariat. It would be fair to say that until the beginning of this century there was no middle class in Latin America. Then between 1900 and 1920 towns and capitals that had remained static began to grow at an amazing rate, and within a few years became cities of one, two or three million people. Some ended up as vast conurbations like Mexico City, which now has a population of over ten million. The growth of these towns, of course, produced the class that had been lacking, viz. the middle class, the class of small professional men,

academics, white-collar workers in banks, business and so forth; and it was to some extent this class that was responsible for the extraordinarily vigorous upsurge of culture in our continent. For the rich bourgeoisie were indifferent, indeed had nothing but contempt for writers and artists, and the ordinary people were completely illiterate. In my country, for instance, the slave trade went on until 1882, and continued in a clandestine form until 1891. When I was a child in Cuba, I knew old Negroes who had come from Africa as slaves and had never managed to learn Spanish properly. Throughout the Andes too the mass of Indians is uneducated, and furthermore speaks very little Spanish, having its own dialects. In Mexico there are hundreds of dialects, while all along the Andes Quechua is spoken.

It seems a little odd, therefore, to consider the cultural problems of a continent like Latin America in the same terms as those of a continent like Europe. People tend to think that if certain cultural phenomena occur in Europe they also occur elsewhere: whereas in fact everything is different outside Europe, because of the different acculturation process our peoples have undergone.

Let me first give you some little known facts. We have heard much in the past few years about painting and the crisis of painting. A famous art dealer said to me recently: "People no longer buy paintings. Think of the rue de la Boétie as it was between the wars, with the Kahnweiler, Rozenberg and Percier galleries; remember the great Zborowski Galleries, Zack, and the rest of them, and the hundreds of galleries there used to be in the St. Germain-des-Près area. They were all well stocked. Now many of these galleries have disappeared. There are none left in the rue de la Boétie. The public is not interested in exhibitions". Now I have just come back from a visit to Venezuela, after an absence of 17 years, and there I saw an absolutely incredible sight. In the centre of Caracas there are five or six official museums showing permanent exhibitions on Sundays - either exhibitions by living painters, or retrospectives, or contemporary artists, or nineteenth century painters; and in addition there are between 20 and 23 private galleries also open on Sundays in the city centre. People flock to the exhibitions. On Sunday mornings in Caracas there's a real holiday atmosphere. People go to the exhibitions and buy pictures according to their means. Nowadays painters in Caracas can live on their painting: people buy pictures, and there are collectors at all levels. In this way a pictorial culture has grown up in Venezuela; there is an interest in painting among ordinary people, among the masses, among the public at large, to which there is no parallel in Europe.

So much for painting in Venezuela. I do not propose to give an account of what goes on in every Latin American country, but I will tell you about the countries I know really well and visit regularly. In Mexico City, which as I mentioned has a population of over ten million, there used 45 or 50 years ago to be small publishing houses which brought out a book every so often (the best books in Spanish, of course, came from Spain). As a rule the absolute maximum print order for a book by a well known author in Mexico City was 2,000 copies. Nowadays Mexico City is an enormous publishing centre: you can find Spanish translations of German, Russian and Italian books that are only just beginning to be translated into French. The normal print order now for a well known author in Latin America is at least 50,000 copies. When a book runs to 50,000 copies in Paris or some other European centre nowadays, it is regarded as a best-seller and something exceptional. To take only one example, you probably all know the fine novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez called A hundred years of solitude. Well, he has just written another book called The autumn of the Patriarch. I must say that it is not an easy book, indeed it is difficult to read because of the way it is written. It is a work of consummate craftsmanship. Now, how many copies do you think were printed for the South American market? 350,000! So you have an extraordinary book production and an extraordinary production of paintings in Latin America at present; and it is entirely due to the admirable middle class, which is growing and becoming the most important class in Latin American society.

People often say, and you often read articles in newspapers in Latin America saying: "The mass media are terrible: television and radio cut down the number of people who read". The truth is that I have never seen people in Latin America put off buying a book by the mass media. Allow me to digress for a moment. The phenomenon of the mass media and their impact on people, and that certain loss of artistic quality that goes with the mass media: these are not something new. If you have ever read an extraordinary book by an American professor called Irving Leonard, The Books of the Conquistadors (i. e. the books brought to the New World by men like Pizarro, Hernando Cortez and so on), you will have noticed a remarkable thing, namely that the invention of printing reduced the quality of literary material available to the public. It really is a remarkable thing. At a time when books were copied in manuscript, 550 copies of the first Western encyclopaedia, by Saint Isidore of Seville, were in circulation throughout Europe, just as manuscript copies of all the Latin classics were in circulation throughout Europe; and the day that printing started in the Spanish-speaking world, through the medium of the Krombergers'

printing-press at Seville, what happened was that the biggest output was of bad romances of chivalry. Not The Knights of the Round Table, which is a masterpiece, nor the Breton cycles, but mediocre little tales, rather on the level of the worst sort of detective story today. So a drop in quality was brought about by the mass medium of a printing-press, the equivalent in a way of radio and television today. Anyway, this did not prevent the appearance of Cervantes and all the great poets and writers of the Spanish golden age; and it did not really bring the level of culture plummeting down. So to get alarmed about these matters from time to time is nothing new; and in any case, given the growth in the size of the reading public, no great harm is done. To confine ourselves to specific works, take for instance the introduction to Anatole France's four-volume La vie littéraire, published around 1890. You will find Anatole France throwing up his hands in horror and saying: "What on earth are we going to do with this flood of print that comes out in France every week? We are going to the dogs!" At about the same time his contemporary the great Spanish novelist Perez Galdós was saying exactly the same thing in Nazarin (which has been made into an excellent film, by the way). Now we have seen how book production in France and everywhere else has increased since the days of Anatole France and Galdós: and now it is happening in Latin America. The fact is that there are readers for everything and all types of literature. If someone had suggested to a person of my father's generation that he should read a book on political economy, Marxism, sociology, ethnology, archaeology or anthropology, my father and the men of his generation would have answered that that sort of thing was alright for economists, archaeologists and anthropologists: i. e. it was regarded as specialist literature. Nowadays everybody reads it, on the grounds that history cannot be understood without studying economics; everybody knows that it is essential to understand Marxism; everybody reads every kind of writing, and books proliferate all over the world.

Turning now to the general problems of the artist in society and his role and place in society, there is a basic flaw in the way the question is formulated. It consists in considering a constant (the artist) in relation to a highly variable and continually changing background, i. e. society and milieu. When I say that the artist is a constant, I need not tell you that if you read the letters of artists at various periods of history, the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci or the writings of the Impressionists, Paul Klee and so on, you will find that in the last analysis, leaving aside the odd bias in one direction or another and the odd difference of emphasis, the essence of artistic creation is nearly always the same. The artist, with his anxieties and torments, the birth pangs of creation, the nagging

desire for perfection, is a man who more than anything else is an artist, wants to be an artist and has the vocation of an artist. His role in society, however, is determined by the way he is received and treated by society: for a work of art offered to an indifferent public which cares nothing for creative activity is doomed to silence and failure. We can all think of perfectly respectable nineteenth century composers who were highly regarded by the public, and then suddenly their names stopped appearing in concert programmes and not another note of theirs was heard. It is as though they had died. Others, on the other hand, are acclaimed with greater enthusiasm every year, indeed every day: they come more and more to life, or are reborn after a long silence - as happened in the case of Mahler. (I remember that when I arrived in Paris as a young man in 1928, if you talked to young composers about Mahler's period you were simply taken for an idiot. Nobody talked about Mahler: he was an indigestible, impossible giant. And look where Mahler is now!) There are periods when, to explain the frequent crises that occur in Europe, the word "decadence" is used. It is ludicrous, for it has invariably been applied to artists who have tried to do something new and different. There are several musicologists in my audience, whom I need hardly remind of the rubbish that was talked about Beethoven, Berlioz and Wagner, who were "decadents", and about Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky, who were also all "decadents".

So if from time to time artistic crises occur in Europe, let us remember that in centres such as I have mentioned - Venezuela for painting, Mexico City for literature and publishing - it is quite another story. As one centre declines, others grow in geometric progression: these are fast becoming great artistic centres to rival London, Paris and the other European capitals.

Let me tell you of my own experience. For four-and-a-half years I was Director of the State Publishing House in Cuba, and during that time I published 73 million volumes, beginning with Don Quixote, after which came Robinson Crusoe. The fourth book we published (this was decided in committee) was Balzac's Le Père Goriot. We brought out a lot of Balzac, a lot of Stendhal and a lot of Flaubert, and then we came on to Joyce - The Artist as a Young Man - Proust and even Robbe-Grillet, the nouvelle vague and so on. When our political system changed completely on 1 January 1959 with the victory of the Cuban revolution, we had more than 23% of illiteracy in Cuba: in other words, virtually one Cuban out of four could not read. There was a very commercial-minded, money-grubbing bourgeoisie in Cuba, with a complete contempt for the artist. We had some great painters between about 1940 and 1959/1960,

and before the Revolution they never sold a single canvas. A very great painter named Ponce died of poverty. Wilfredo Lam, who is now known throughout the world, did not sell three canvases in Havana before he came to Europe, because he was there in the days of this all-powerful bourgeoisie, with its contempt for the artist. We have a painter at the moment called René Portocarrero, a splendid original artist at present working in decoration - his last piece of work was a mural in the Palace of the Revolution measuring 70 by 8 metres, a magnificent synthesis or symbiosis of tropical forms. Before the Revolution, he lived in abject poverty. But when the Revolution came the middle class I mentioned earlier, which was our best asset, came to the top and began to promote art as hard as it could. Moreover at the end of an eleven-month campaign against illiteracy which was a tour de force we had not one single illiterate left. Then publishing began to boom, and from that time on we too began turning out editions of 40,000, 50,000 and 80,000 copies. Writers like our national poet Nicolas Guillen - a book of his was brought out by the State Publishing House in an initial edition of 100,000 copies, and his books sell out in four or five days. You may say: "That cannot be the explanation. If beforehand your editions were of 1,000 - 2,000 copies at most, then one man in four learning to read cannot have caused this great leap forward. It is absurd, impossible". Very well. But other factors entered into it. The mass media, i. e. radio, television and the hoardings, all espoused the cause of books and reading: space previously devoted to advertising toothpaste, detergents and brassières is now used to advertise books, encourage reading and display book covers. Then too, because books pass through no middleman they are extremely cheap: a hardback printed on splendid paper costs the equivalent of 10 or 12 French francs - 15 at the outside. So books are easily available and prominently promoted - quite apart from the fact that people who have newly learnt to read (there are no illiterates any more) can acquire books to suit their interests and cover the subjects they want to study. So by ending illiteracy, and publishing and promoting books, we have joined the ranks of countries with a high level of book production. Let me tell you that my country (and this fact has been recognized in a Unesco report) now has the highest per capita level of book production in Spanish of the whole Latin American continent, not excluding even such countries as Mexico and Venezuela.

Unfortunately in many other Latin American countries there is a literate middle class but it is outweighed by far too high a proportion of illiterates. For whereas Cuba used to have over 23% illiteracy, there are some Latin American countries - with otherwise admirable records, having produced excellent scientists, poets and

musicians - where unfortunately the illiteracy rate is 30, 40, 50, 60 or 66%. There is even one country, with a brilliant past, where the rate is very close to 80%. This being so, it is difficult in some Latin American countries to speak about the artist in society: the milieu changes but the artist stays the same. The artist remains: he is the constant, surrounded by variable environments. So for instance in Cuba before the Revolution the artist was regarded as an outcast, and nobody cared about the situation of painters, poets, writers or novelists: yet not far away you have Mexico, always distinguished for its respect for artists. We need only look at great Mexican writers such as Amado Nervo, Alfonso Reyes and Torres Bodet. At present Carlos Fuentes is the Ambassador in Paris, and he and Octavio Paz have represented Mexico as Ambassadors in various countries. Is this because they were career diplomats? Not at all. It is because they were great writers. They were respected and trusted for their high intellect; in other words, it was the exact opposite of the principle under which people say of a man: "He is a poet: he has no practical sense: he would be no good for the job". That is quite wrong. In many Latin American countries we consider a poet perfectly capable of fulfilling a mission: he would tend to be more intelligent than others, would have a much greater power of expression, and would be suited for many important tasks. In these countries where artists are respected, where the illiteracy rate is relatively low, and where there is a large, well educated middle class, it can therefore be said that culture is developing under entirely favourable conditions.

I have perhaps gone on too long, and must draw to a close. I should like to end by telling you a story. I do not know whether Mr. McLuhan is with us, but I believe he might enjoy it. When I lived among the Amazonian Indians, I had some little opportunity to study their oral literature. These were the Piaroa Indians, a magnificent race and one of the so-called "primitive peoples". They are virtually without clothing; they possess the rudiments of painting, a cosmology and so on; but in addition they have the poet, the story-teller. In the evenings, when the tribe gathers round and the shadows begin to draw in (night is the enemy of forest-dwelling primitive man), the story-teller tells his tales. And I noticed with great interest, that these people's idea of a narrative is quite different from ours. For us a narrative or story must have an end and a moral; it must be rounded off. Not so with them. With them the story-teller starts on a story and makes it up as he goes along: then six or ten or fifteen days later, when he is tired of it, he stops short. For some reason I suddenly found myself thinking that the Iliad and the Odyssey have no end

either. It is somewhat the same. Then (these are my last words) there was a story that struck me very much, and I have recently been able (for, as you know, the Congress of Americanists is going on at the moment) to compare it with a narrative collected in northern Paraguay by a specialist in the Guarani Indians. And we had found the same story! I had heard it in Venezuela, in Amazonia, a long way from Paraguay, where he heard it. Generally these stories, told by the tribe or clan poet, start from a fixed element and are made up from there on. And the story we had heard, found in both these countries, goes like this. Two brothers say goodbye to their father, for they are off to see the world, and walk away along opposite banks of a great river. One is an imaginative man, the other a logical person. Throughout the journey the one on the left bank calls across the river: "What can you see?" The other brother tells him what he can see: "I see an animal looking like so-and-so, and it is such-and-such a colour, and so on". And the one who has not seen the animal gives it a name and a character and enters it in a sort of catalogue of the wonders of the world. Well, these two brothers walking along their separate banks remind me very much of Professor McLuhan's right and left hemispheres. And I wonder whether one day the logical brother, the one who says "I think with my left hemisphere, therefore I am", and the emotional brother, who says "I think with my right hemisphere, therefore I am", will not, as a result of the elimination of illiteracy and the spread of culture, meet at the mouth of the river: and they will then both be able to say quite simply, "I think, therefore I am".

H. E. Mr. M. MESSADI (Tunisia)

I should like to throw into the discussion one or two simple ideas that came to my mind at the outset of our deliberations - and I speak as a person, a writer, from a Third World country - simply as a result of reading the papers sent us by the Unesco Secretariat. These first thoughts mainly have to do with the problems subsumed under items 1 and 2 of our agenda: I offer them to you now for what they are worth.

I should first like to remind the meeting of the following paragraph from one of the resolutions recently adopted by Unesco's Executive Board, of which I have the honour to be a member: "Cultural studies should increasingly aim at asserting the specificity of each culture on the one hand, and cross-cultural co-operation and comparison on the other". Now the concept of art obviously varies according to the type of culture or society, and diversity of cultures

does not necessarily mean conflict between them. Conflict arises as the result of conflict between different types of society. It might therefore be wise to retain the differences which exist between the various theories about the place and function of art, as enriching factors. As the poet said, let us enrich ourselves by our mutual differences. Disparity and diversity should not be mistaken for incompatibility, and if we are to achieve better understanding between peoples it is important not to regard them as sources of conflict. This idea of conflict, by drawing a hard and fast line between differing views of the same reality seen from what are bound to be different angles, opens the way to all kinds of misunderstandings and doubtful value judgements.

The essence of art is its capacity to portray man face to face with his destiny and shouldering the burden of his humanity. The incentives to creative artistry, whether rooted in historical or personal transcendental urges or serving ideological ends, represent in every case an attempt by man to adapt to historical situations and the demands made on him by the adventure of life. Furthermore the complexity of our society, which is in a continual state of flux, is such that states of mind representing all age groups and shades of opinion can coexist within a single culture or civilization without any one of them permanently getting the upper hand. Indeed, it is often possible to distinguish disparate elements in a single piece of work, arising from different influences or stimuli.

The plurality of conceptions of art, and its place in life, is a measure of the richness of our world. It is in the last analysis the expression of a unique truth, that of man, in all his complexity, striving to understand and fulfil himself and come to terms with himself and his world. Transcending all differences and all barriers of time and space, man's quest remains the same. Artistic endeavour is only really human to the extent that it overrides the quirks of history and succeeds in raising its essential symbolism to a universal plane where men of all periods and all countries find their own image.

There is, however, one situation in which opposition between different theories can have negative results. This is when the distinctions they give rise to become no longer cultural traits, or characteristics of a particular approach to artistic creation, but serve the ends of political propaganda. History tells us of régimes that have sponsored particular artistic theories to the exclusion of others, and even gone so far as to proscribe certain forms of expression for ideological reasons. Let us not forget the catastrophe

of Abstract Art under the Third Reich in Germany, which sealed the doom of an institution as prestigious and dynamic as the Bauhaus.

The danger thus lies not so much in differences between conceptions of art as in their being taken over by certain ideologies and political regimes for aggressive purposes. The best safeguard against excesses and wrong judgements is increasing contact and interchange between artistic systems. In this area as in others, the worst enemy is ignorance and lack of mutual understanding.

There was a time, now happily past, when a serious encyclopaedia could write of the music of a non-European country that it was blaring, strident and offensive. We need to stop looking at other people's reality through the distorting prism of our own, and adopt a frank, understanding attitude to other people's cultural realities. To this noble purpose Unesco with all its authority could make an outstanding contribution.

Turning now to the function of art in society, I should like to say first that in any given society the function of art is obviously determined by the place assigned to it in that society. Nevertheless, whether its function be ritual, ideological or simply entertainment, art is always one expression of the ephemeral nature of the human condition, and portrays human perceptions, vicissitudes and aspirations accordingly. Whether it sets out to be an instrument of social change, the guardian of threatened values, or merely an ivory tower of contemplation and dreams, art always shows us its own image of man. Transcending systems and conventional values, it testifies to the richness and complexity of his experience and the strains and stresses, or moments of harmony, marking his relationship with reality.

I was tempted to stop at this view of the portrayal of humanity as the essential function of art and the only one that counts in universal terms. For to consider art under all the different forms it takes in society, so as to define its function more explicitly, would not lead us to any universal truth applicable to society as a whole. What function are we talking about, and in what society? There are as many societies as there are conceptions and functions of art. We could go on for ever talking about the need to give art this or that specific function in a particular field, without arriving at anything more positive than an entirely theoretical list of the best ways of using art in society. Variations between human communities, and their disparate needs and degrees of economic and social development, require not that we should refuse out of hand to consider these functions, as being of only minor interest, but rather that we

should deal with them as individual questions to be looked at one by one in the light of circumstances.

At the risk of being still somewhat vague, I would say that for me the essential functions of art in society are those concerned primarily with rescuing man from individual and collective dehumanization. More specifically in the case of the peoples of the Third World, the prime function of art should be to restore man to his full human dignity - which has long suffered through centuries of decadence and the dark ages of colonialism. So before getting down to specific applications of art, we ought first to consider whether or not artistic endeavour helps to reinforce man's creative role and safeguard him from cultural isolation and dispossession. In many Third World countries this question arises sharply, and the need to reply to it is seen as necessary and even vital. For not content with regaining their political sovereignty, these countries are striving to recover what remains of their cultural identity, which colonialism (and neo-colonialism) for obvious reasons sought to blur and hide under a veneer of its own culture. This return to their own, needless to say, is obviously legitimate. A people deprived of its culture would be nothing; cut off from its roots, it would be barren, and could make little fruitful contribution to civilization. Thus for these peoples at any rate art is most of all a factor in promoting cultural identity, both for individuals and for communities. This is its essential function and its most practical purpose: to liberate man from the pangs of frustration and alienation and allow him to achieve complete fulfilment of his creative faculties and come to terms with the world and with himself. Only then will he be able to burst his cultural shackles and raise his artistic activity to the level of a truly universal vocation.

As a factor making for self-awareness and liberation, art naturally attains its full responsibility in the service of just causes, such as struggles for emancipation, dignity, human freedom and the continuing improvement of the human condition. Thus we arrive at the function of art in the context of the international community: here it can stand out, in the name of civilization, against abuse and injustice throughout the world, and so give expression to the universal desire for freedom, peace and brotherhood and the preservation of human dignity. Unesco can do much in this direction by continuing its policy of co-operation with international non-governmental organizations of artists (such as IAA, IAAC, IATC, IMC, ITI etc.) which exist to promote their respective disciplines at all levels. Art can play a distinguished role in the international field, provided always that artists can be guaranteed greater freedom and effective protection against oppression, high-handedness and subjection to

authority. The artist must be able to create and express himself freely, no longer going in fear for himself or his works, as is indeed the aim of the draft international regulations on the status and social position of the artist which have been submitted to Unesco's Executive Board.

Mrs. Efua T. SUTHERLAND (Ghana)

Studying the Unesco paper "The Artist in Contemporary Society", I find the contributions from African participants in the symposium which it summarizes most instructive. These statements are representative in revealing the polarity between those who do not even want to countenance the notion of an "artist" having a role to play in society, and those who see themselves under an obligation, consciously to harness their artistic practice to the social and material developmental needs of their societies. The two positions are familiar. I know many in Ghana who will readily line up as supporters on either side of the argument implied. But, another position does exist which surmounts this polarity, and, in effect, effaces its implications.

There are several "artists" who are not even thinking in these terms. Surprisingly enough, many self-declared protestors against commitment to a role, have a confusing tendency to defect to the other position when offered a chance to apply their skill in given social contexts. For example, they would design a poster for a national health campaign, co-operate with a national arts festival, or agree to represent their country in person and through their works at some international forum on the arts. Given this fact, the realistic situation seems to be that basically, contemporary African "artists" are, in their numbers, most sympathetic to aspects of national aspirations which project a common desire and will to improve the welfare of their societies generally; to enrich them, and to elevate their status in the world today. However much any of them may find cause to fume against, or condemn artistically or in person, internal issues that irk them, they seem, nevertheless, disposed to be motivated more strongly in their artistic practice by a consciousness of the common need; the need to strive to free African existence from retarding factors which are used to justify designations such as "underdeveloped" or "backward" or even "newly developing".

My observation, then, is that a scattering of individuals apart (and these too serve a function), African countries today can count

on a nucleus of an artistic manpower pool (whatever its strength from country to country), which is disposed to be co-operative in contributing towards development in several ways. That naturally prompts curiosity about whether, on the other hand, policy-makers and planners of development are conscious of this manpower asset; whether they have evaluated artistic contribution, real and potential, to development; and to what extent, and how strategically this manpower is being deployed, utilized, motivated, cultivated and rewarded.

The first indication that consciousness in these terms at the planning level cannot be taken for granted is that statistical data from which to draw conclusions are in many areas absent, scanty, scattered and unco-ordinated. I have had to conduct a series of interviews with people in artistic practice in private and public industry, trade and commerce, as one means of finding some authentic and realistic answers to such an inquiry; for there is no point in discussing "artists" and their contribution to development on a national scale without a body of such data for a basis. Guided by a study entitled "Sponsorship for Development in Art and Culture", which I found necessary to compile in 1974, I have been able to select where to go and who to consult with minimum doubt, and I consider it appropriate to quote a section of the introduction to that document in this paper at this point.

"The subject of art and culture grows more and more prominent in African affairs, surfacing at national, inter-African and international forums of all kinds. Its vibrations are influencing, and indeed compelling the development of national cultural policies. Simultaneously, they are causing an unprecedented build-up in scholarly research, educational programmes and publishing interests, for example, in several European countries and in America. Governmental agencies and private foundations in those countries are at pains to initiate, discover and fund projects responding to the momentum, both in their home bases and in Africa. Unesco is organizing conferences with all-African and international participation on various pertinent problems and issues; funding research, supplying equipment and fielding consultants for a variety of projects, including publishing.

On the African front itself so far, the most conspicuous evidences of governmental engagement seem to be:

- (a) the formation in some countries of national dance troupes (with consideration for their usefulness to cultural exchange interests);

- (b) the institution of spectacular forums for the exhibition of African art and culture:

The Festival of Negro Arts (Dakar, Senegal; 1966);

The First Pan-African Festival (Algiers, Algeria; 1969);

Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa (Accra, Ghana; 1975);

The Black Arts Festival (to be held in 1976 in Lagos, Nigeria).

Several governments are also paying attention to development programmes by promoting for example, internal arts festivals; university level schools of art, music, dance and drama; education in art and culture in primary and elementary schools; film production.

These developments are exerting pressures which are both exciting and challenging. Insistently, they are demanding particular services, supplies of manpower, and the artistic and other materials which give content to programmes of art and culture. But generally, national cultural policies are as yet too nebulous and do not reflect realistic provisions for the management, care and support of routine resources for meeting these new demands.

In the final analysis this impinges on the artists and other people who are ready to be involved beyond the level of strictly individualistic preoccupation. However willing, there are operational problems in the African situation today which they cannot solve on their own entirely, if at all. Too many of them are finding themselves trapped in the gap between demand and support for routine productive work. The consequence, unfortunately, is a creeping frustration in some, and outright disenchantment in others; a counter productive phenomenon which must be halted.

This paper attempts to identify aspects of this problem which are incipient in the Ghanaian situation. It sets them against a background of the country's assets and potential for achieving further gains in the development of its art and culture. Ultimately, it singles out for urgent attention the issue of sponsorship for development, suggests a framework for a policy, and identifies a number of projects into which aid could be channelled with advantage to the country as a whole".

The universal problem of artists in need of support is possibly one of the world's most enduring clichés; and so is the tendency to play it down, or to consign it casually to the periphery of attention on the grounds that the artistic being can thrive on non-material satisfactions. But humanity's instinct or hunger for an artistic dimension to social existence, and reliance on the service value of the material products of arts and crafts also being enduring, "artists" and their practice continue to be essentially insinuating in the affairs of society generally. Furthermore, societies do reach phases in their evolution when artistic creativity becomes vital to one aspect or another of their corporate lives, under threatening pressures generated by social and technical development problems. It happens to be in the nature of people of artistic disposition to sense the advent of such an era quickly, often acutely, and ahead of the generality of their societies; to be agitated by the phenomenon; to desire to probe it, and to engage creatively with it. All too evidently, all African societies emergent from a traumatized, colonized past, pressured by world economic forces to programme for "modernization" through technological advancement, and having to grapple with ensuing internal social problems, have been overtaken by that phenomenon. Thus, that is the context in which to assess and consider the necessity to pay vigorous attention to artistic production, and the common fretting of "artists" about the slow flow of supportive funds for the purpose, or inadequacies in infra-structural and policy provisions.

It was, thus, a timely and significant move of the times to convene African States to deliberate on their artistic present and future at an intergovernmental conference on cultural policies in Africa in 1975. Of the many orientative attitudes given exposure there, the most valuable was the mutual tendency to view the subject of the conference and its implications in broad political and developmental terms; on the same lines of thought as are surfacing in the discourse at the planning forums on the festival of art and culture due in Lagos. The various national policies and the conference report should be disseminated - as a necessary follow-up exercise - to practising and student "artists" who need the information to allay their anxiety, and the orientation as a frame of reference for chartering their artistic paths in thought and practice. They are the manpower on whose responsiveness and imaginative productions the expectations these documents contain must depend.

It is timely too to raise a caution about a disturbing confusion concerning who qualifies for the designation "artist" in contemporary African society, and what the term should imply.

Confusion about what the English term "artist" implies and who can claim it, is widespread, and this is being borne out constantly in the following major ways:

- (a) by statements coming directly from people who qualify themselves as "artists"; a claim which matched against activity or performance deserves to be dismissed as a delusion;
- (b) by the incomprehension of the term, of all manner of people in African society (those who speak English included), because of its foreignness;
- (c) by evidence that even in the ranks of high level policy-makers and development-planners, there are too many for whom the term has little meaning; for many, it represents no more than a vague abstraction of something or other with which they find it difficult to come to grips, and which, therefore, they have difficulty slotting into a precise administrative context; consequently, they normally regard it as a humbug if faced with an occasion to deal administratively with the practical requirements of "artists";
- (d) by evidence that most students taking courses in the arts in our universities and other institutions have a real problem interpreting the term with precision, and in their particular case, a whole gamut of similarly foreign terminologies and definitions of art, artistic thought and practice on which their teachers practically solely rely.

Lack of clarity about who is an "artist" and the accompanying unprecisions in the "language" of his thought and practice represent a new problem in Africa. A retarding and wasteful problem it is the direct result of the effects of formal education and culture contact. It must also be seen as a reflection of the grave diminishment of self-confident creative will and initiative which is the most fundamental of all problems challenging post-colonial African societies in their pursuit of solutions to their new social and material development needs. Those who project this problem are "modern", not traditional "artists"; and they are the products of formal educational processes which did not reckon with this beleaguered era in which Africa needs a solution-providing artistic manpower, fully orientated for freedom and relevancy of artistic thought and practice.

Without doubt, the problem of confusion which "modern" African "artists" acquire through education, diminishes creativity or retards it; it misleads talent and wastes it; in many cases it directs attention from the realistic demands of "art" today in Africa itself. Since all this amounts to a considerable loss of artistic production of importance to development, the problem should not be allowed to persist; and any tendency to shrug it off smugly as merely a phenomenon of transition and culture contact should be challenged because something can be done to eliminate it. It can be done by (a) education, and (b) the artists themselves.

Currently, there is an explosion of educational criticism by African scholars and educationists who are reviewing the policies, concepts and programmes of education in Africa in order to revise or renew them for relevancy as the pressures of contemporary, post-independence realities dictate.

The revolution swept the universities of East Africa like wild fire. English literature which had hitherto been studied almost exclusively was pushed to the periphery, where it belongs, and African literature took its rightful place at the centre.

It is important to remember that the literary revolution was not an isolated development. This is part and parcel of the fundamental changes that African universities are undergoing everywhere on the continent; a response to the need to Africanize, to make relevant, not only the teaching staff, but also the syllabus. An African university cannot afford to indulge in irrelevant research and teaching. The universities are maintained at very great sacrifices by the poor taxpayers; this makes it a moral duty that the interests of African development should be uppermost in all our endeavours ... The revolution in literature is probably most advanced in Nairobi where it originated. But Makerere has leaped one giant step ahead with the establishment of a sub-department of music and dance. I hear they still waste time teaching some meaningless European dance movements; but the most interesting and exciting development there is the ambitious programme of filming and recording of Ugandan music and dances. Makerere has also embarked on assisting the advancement of writing through their "writers-in-residence" programme.

In Nairobi the Institute of African Studies, through its music and dance project is engaged in a similar activity. But there is a yawning gulf between the Institute and the Department of Literature, which makes it almost impossible for the students of literature to

benefit in any way from the rich facilities being offered by the Institute. There is a need to consciously close the distance.

Inquiry and observation indicate strongly that it is at the secondary level of education where the practical exercise of vetting curricula and syllabuses should be concentrated. It seems to be the level where potential "artists" come more strongly under influences which cause the problem of confusion in them; where the programming of subjects which contribute to the moulding of the artistic mind and attitude has been most resistant to necessary change; a notorious example being the prolonged resistance to the admission of African literature.

Solution through educational reform will be a long-term process. Meanwhile the onus is primarily on "artists" with the problem of confusion to resolve it themselves. From several angles of inquiry it comes through that many of them also suffer the frustration of not feeling well accepted in their societies. Some are quick to blame this on official inattention. Some loftily assume that the public have a long way to go to catch up with them. They may not be completely unjustified on either point, but the fact also remains that due to their own confusion they are unable to achieve the clarity of artistic expression and communication to which their societies would respond. What they can do to minimize their discomfiture is to admit that their problem, born of education and culture contact, is simply one of confusion by language; and rid themselves of it in order to liberate their artistic thought to operate by a more authentic frame of reference that reckons with the cultural predisposition of their societies.

Educationists have identified the neglect of the mother tongue as a fundamental flaw in the educational process precisely because it impedes the free flow of African thought and sensibility.

Traditional artists provide an object lesson of great import on this issue, demonstrating unequivocally that an African "artist" does not have to be frustrated by a problem of confusion by language. For in contrast: (a) they have no difficulty identifying themselves with clarity and precision; they do so in their mother tongue, using terms of identification and qualification which their societies, in their majorities, thoroughly comprehend. There are clear criteria, therefore, for endorsing or disputing their claims to designations equating to "artist"; (b) practically all terminologies defining the artistic practice, creative concepts and processes, aesthetic standards, and the materials and tools used by traditional "artists" are in their own language. When the times introduce into their life

and practice, new terms, tools and materials of foreign origin, they do not hesitate to assimilate these linguistically, and absorb them without confusion to their artistic thought, or to the societies whom they service.

Without doubt, this self-confident employment of the mother tongue for artistic thought and practice, for the identification of the "artist", is the foundation of the authenticity traditional artists achieve in their works. And it is on the strength of this authenticity that the communicational relationships between traditional "artists" and their societies are so succinct, so profound, and so powerfully effective. The lesson to learn is that African societies have long-established conceptions of the artistic being and of what constitutes "art"; and they are predisposed by this to expect an "artist" to be a person of skill whose imagination excites, and whose creation supports, amplifies, enobles, decorates and illuminates their way of life. The achievement of traditional artists in satisfying this expectation comprehensively, stands as the principle "modern" African "artists" must aim for. The closer they go to it, thereby widening their address internally and minimizing the gulf in communication between them and their own societies, the better will be their chance to fulfil themselves. The alternative is to deserve to keep hanging loose on the fringes of public and official attention. It is a society's privilege to say who is an "artist".

The social environment with which "artists" in Africa today have to engage is complex and fraught with puzzling contradictions of all sorts, and values in a high state of flux. "Modern" African "artists" are vitally exercised by the nature of the complexity, and the contradictions as reflected on the one hand in personal behaviours, attitudes and life-styles; and on the other hand, in the political action and development pursuits of Africa's new national States. For these are the issues providing the primary motivations for their artistic thought and practice, and moulding the concepts, content, forms and aesthetic qualities of their artistic expression in every medium.

This conditioning environment must be posed as a background to all discussions of their artistic works and of artistic criticism.

Dr. P.A. Twumasi, a sociologist of the University of Ghana, stresses that: "The basis for the development of the individual in the modernization process is the home, the family unit. This unit must be strengthened; a uniform family system must be found for the nation. We need strengthened marriage ties, a viable inheritance pattern, the elimination of obsolete rules and customs".

On a daily basis, African newspapers fully authenticate and expand his analysis, often in distressing detail. In effect, he has identified to a large extent the sources of themes, plots, subject-matter, characterization, moods and presentation forms being adopted by the new generation of African "artists" of all types. "Artists of this description stand next to politicians as interpreters and critics of the disintegrative and discomfiting factors operative in the contemporary African social scene. The problem exercising them most is the confusion in value systems, a main feature of the built-in contradictions referred to. Described more passionately by the bewildered as a "chaotic state of flux in standards and values" that problem has provoked much artistic criticism in literary works. Manifested in a variety of dual stances in social behaviour, life-styles and tastes, the factor of contradictions makes it more difficult for "artists" to determine how to trend their work and which social grouping to address when such selectivity is necessary. Even in drama, the grounds for which artistic expression should be assumed to be surer because of its longer indigenous and more tenacious history, Africa's new playwrights are not finding it easy to charter approaches for the variety of new theatre audiences evolved by social change.

Confrontations in the contemporary social situation are manifold for artists of all types. A significant symptom of the dilemmas they breed is the subconscious nostalgia, traceable in the works of different types of "modern artists", for the firm moorings of "art" in the established religious, political and social orders and practices of traditional African societies; for the connectedness of traditional artists, in other words. In fact, though some may not admit it, many of these "artists" are subtly traumatized by an awareness that they do not have the same umbilical connectedness for their practice, into their new socio-cultural frameworks. Hence, in part, the diffidence in approaches to artistic thought and practice which has been identified earlier in another connection as lack of self-confidence. Hence, also the emergence in the ranks of "modern artists", of new individualist or isolationist stances; a desirable development in fact, since it may lead to creative discoveries which will expand the boundaries of "art" in Africa.

The concepts, forms and socio-cultural function of "art" are undergoing change and evolution in this movement responding to the necessity to seek new points of connectedness for artistic practice. Interacting with new social groupings, organizations, residential and behaviour patterns and related problems; and with institutional and technological facts of the modernization process, this movement comes under pressure to respond to another phenomenon

of import to Africa's artistic future, namely the secularization of her arts and crafts. Neither the "artists" nor their society seem to feel at ease about some of the innovations enjoined by the secularization process. Internal criticism (as opposed to criticism from non-African sources) is the proof of this unease. It is quite passionate when such innovations seem to violate cherished cultural concepts, principles and values in general, and more so when religious sensibilities are at stake; or, if they fail to satisfy basic expectations of an "art" inherent in the artistic predisposition of the society. The secularization process is a critical complication on which hangs the destiny of Africa's artistic future.

Some "aimless drift" is inevitable, and hopefully may do no serious harm. But I believe that artists should consider it a duty to endeavour to prevent a negation of Africa's genius for integrating the arts and crafts for exciting multi-media expressions in artistic communication - an achievement demonstrably satisfying to their societies, and which the international world is now disposed to study and applaud.

Already, however, there is evidence of some satisfying artistic production. It means that some "modern artists" have succeeded in breaking through the complex of confrontations. Their works reveal that they have viewed the new social situation as offering them opportunities for necessary artistic criticism, and positive, creative assertion or endorsements of proven, enduring values. I observe that several of these successful "artists" have been motivated by such considerations to think of themselves in very much the same terms as are articulated in the viewpoint following below, which is expressed at my request in a paper entitled "The Artist in our Society". The author, Dr. Jawa Apronti, a linguist of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, is a representatively new generation African, a literary critic and creative writer.

Creator of beauty, hopefully of permanent beauty, the artist should have a position above the ordinary run of mortals in any society which aspires to do more than vegetate. Since so few people seem to have any capacity for transcending the humdrum preoccupations of life, and since so many people (especially these days) find that the business of keeping body and soul together is becoming a full-time affair, I consider that the artist's duty to society assumes an urgent importance.

The artist is seer and liberator. Seer in the perceptions that his extraordinary sensitivity endows him with. And at the same

time a liberator in that he uplifts the rest of humanity by the sheer force and beauty of his very best work.

An interesting common denominator among successful artists is that they are investing, to various extents in their creative works, artistic forms and materials extracted from their heritage. This may or may not be a conscious compensation of their nostalgia. What is of consequence is that by this means they provide the necessary cultural signposts or points of reference which enhance their societies' understanding of their works however innovative they may be in other respects. They are also contributing through the practice of forging creative links with their heritage, towards a realization of the common aspiration for cultural continuity in the "arts". For these reasons, they represent the best examples of the artistic manpower required today.

I have collected a variety of viewpoints through interviews with or about several such succeeding artists. These are very illuminating on the practical ways in which they are responding to social change confrontations of all kinds. For example, the following facts:

The necessity for a large supply of artistic manpower for Africa's education system in terms of teaching staffs, and in terms of producers of the wide range of educational materials with which to effect essential revision in education for real relevancy tops the list of priorities.

The art forms that are having difficulty drawing a social following are typically those which are most distanced from persisting socio-cultural inclinations. Painting, and modern sculpture have the greatest difficulty. Very few Africans are as yet inclined to acquire paintings to hang on the walls of their homes, or in public buildings; and sculpture without ostensible politico-religious meaningfulness, or utility value, does not rate as an essential artistic commodity as yet. There is considerable response to the application of the graphic arts to the servicing of industrial production, commercial advertising interest, and of national public information projects. But paintings (pictures to hang on walls) and modern sculpture are art forms in waiting for social readiness to receive them at home base. Meanwhile, the fact that Africa stands to lose the best products in these fields of art is of great concern to the artists; for they are being purchased and taken away to Europe and America, for instance, on an increasing scale. The artists are passionate in their pleading that national governments take steps to stem the tide of this drain.

In contrast to the problem above there is maximum communicational relationship between textile artists and all sections of their societies. Both handmade and industrial textiles are highly well received. This is not just because textiles as a commodity are indispensable. It is also because textile designers, especially for clothing textiles, are very mindful of relating to their societies' enduring cultural sensibilities; for example, about colour symbolism; communicative design i. e. designs that are language connected, that carry a message; that define social status or announce a life-cycle condition such as motherhood or bereavement. In consequence, textiles draw the most articular, finely-nuanced criticism and aesthetic appraisal from the public at large. Thus, art relating to the textile industries is flourishing above all others.

Architects are in a quandary about how to reconcile functionalism and aesthetics. They are, in the main, capitulating to the dictates of the former although many are aware that the neglect to invest aesthetic grace in the architectural environment is of serious consequence. Many are also worried about the near compulsive manner in which most architects follow the trend of imitating European structures, and about the high import content of the materials they use to the neglect of the development of local resources. But what is of greatest social concern is the proliferation of housing structures that violate their people's natural inclinations in home occupancy and cultural living. Architectural practice in Africa is, in these and other ways, subversive of expressed aspirations for cultural, artistic and economic development.

Mr. W. GHOSSOUB (Lebanon)

I have listened in the last few days to some very complicated things about art, life and so forth, such as for instance that the Arts are not, or no longer, art, and then again, surprisingly, that everything, including talking, walking and breathing, is art. This does not exactly help to narrow down the problem or its definition.

I must pay tribute here to the valuable working document by the Secretariat, which represents a really remarkable synthesis of differing and opposing views on a highly complex and thorny problem. It has been a great help to us, a refuge in a stormy sea of ideas, and for me personally a lifebuoy.

I have been amazed by the diverse and sometimes contradictory views held by a group of brilliant men about art and its place and function. How does it come about that these great intellects, all likewise eager for the truth, do not in the end agree in their analysis and definition of the universal phenomenon of art? The answer that has come to me, as it were out of the blue, is possibly oversimplified, and for this I must apologize. Given that art, however defined, does not spring from the intellect (the famous left hemisphere), but puts down roots into the shadowy, miasmatic region below the volcano - the magma, if you will, of atavistic individual, group and race fantasies and drives - derives its being from it and reflects it directly or indirectly, then presumably our opinions on an activity that affects us as intimately as this cannot be cool and objective. They are necessarily charged with the emotive potential of the phenomenon they aim to analyse. We may think that our opinion or opinions on "art and its place and function in society" are the result of abstract thought, but in fact they are the rationalized reflection of individual subconscious, emotive reactions to a mysterious inner phenomenon, like the glimpse of an unknown godhead.

We cannot hold cool, objective views or carry on cool, objective discussions on a subject - art - with which we are so deeply involved. Any opinion is bound to be tendentious. This has an important bearing on our work here. Whatever opinions we may manage to pin down and collect together on "The place and function of art in contemporary life", they will never be anything like the end result of a comparable conference on, say, "The place and function of the atom in nuclear physics". They will be a compendium of brilliant but entirely subjective ideas and viewpoints on a fascinating topic. But perhaps that is after all the object of this symposium.

*

* *

My country, Lebanon, is going through a critical period in its history. If the worst were to happen and it were to go under (which I do not believe), it would mean the end of one of the most striking examples of cultural syncretism and international artistic co-operation.

Situated at the crossroads of East and West, Lebanon has throughout its history welcomed widely differing peoples; and they in their turn have left their mark on it in the shape of their religious beliefs and their political, economic and social institutions - in other words, their culture. Its heritage is the richer for their

distinctions and differences. The end result is the nation to which I belong, and as a Lebanese I accept this heritage. It predisposes me to welcome, assimilate and integrate anything that will help me on the road to fulfilment and development towards full manhood, true universality. While not rejecting or denying any of my own characteristics, I wish to take into myself the greatest possible portion of humanity. It was in this spirit that we established the Baalbek Festival. We wanted it to be like Lebanon herself: open, liberal, welcoming. All the stage arts in all their forms, from the established to the embryonic, have been presented at Baalbek. We wanted it to be international. All cultural and artistic regions have been represented at Baalbek. In its twenty years of existence the Baalbek International Festival has been a notable centre of cultural influence in the Middle East. It has been one of those special places where all cultures were duly honoured, and new constellations were born of their meetings. Many young people have found their artistic vocation at Baalbek and later gained a wide following in the Arab world. Baalbek has thus played a seminal role. Since the Festival was founded there has been a renaissance in the Arabic theatre in Lebanon; and there has also been a revival of Lebanese folklore, which on the strength of its credentials from Baalbek first gained acceptance in Beirut and other Arab capitals and later spread throughout the world.

By fostering the Lebanese cultural heritage and the international cultural heritage in Lebanon, and through the mutual enrichment born of the resulting cross-fertilization, the Baalbek Festival has been a real living illustration of the principle of international artistic co-operation. It is the best sort of evidence of what can be planned and achieved by men of goodwill who sincerely believe in this principle.

Professor K. BAKOMBA (Zaire)

If there are societies or communities without art, then I am from one of them. But do such things really exist? Or is it a purely theoretical idea - or simply that the hyper-industrialized, hyper-civilized societies like to call things by their name, even unconsciously?

I spoke this morning about the art of oratory. We use words every day of our lives for all kinds of purposes: joking, persuasion, mere chat. But our purpose is always the same: to communicate, to make ourselves understood by "the other" no matter

whether "the other" is a person or a community. Talking - or if I may use the term in everyday usage in Africa, "palavering" - is itself an art. It is no easy matter to be a good talker, for in Africa talking, in the shape of the palaver, is an art involving other arts - music, dancing and fighting (at least as far as fighting is itself one of the "martial arts").

My father, who died four years ago, was a nut-cutter by trade, and hence a wine-bottler at the same time. He had his own special way of building a hut, so much so that my father's handiwork was known and recognized throughout the village. He put his own characteristic hallmark on his work. Was this art? Perhaps you will tell me once I have finished. Certainly as a cutter of palm-nuts and a wine-bottler he had his own special way of cutting a palm tree. His style was distinctive, particularly by comparison with my uncle's, which was more delicate. Likewise when there was a dispute in the village, and the assembled judges used to settle it by talking it out, here again I know that when my father joined in the discussion he had a particular way with him. What was my father doing? What was each of the judges doing? Were they practising an art, and if so which one? These are questions that I am still asking myself. So can it be said that there are societies without art? The building of a hut, a way of cutting a palm tree, a way of joining in a discussion - these are all elements of art that every man carries within himself, though perhaps sub-consciously. However transient these skills may be (for that is all they are), they link up with the world of the imagination at an obscure point which may or may not be perceptible to man. But at the centre of all these activities is man. What more can be asked of societies without art, as not so long ago was asked of societies without culture?

The purpose that brings us here today and for the next few days (and may even bring us together) is perhaps to reintegrate man into this world of art from which machine civilization has shut him out. Here is a proper task for Unesco: to do all it can to see to it that man regains his place in a society (or perhaps I should say a community) that has become both hostile and alien to him.

*

* *

I had been haunted for some time by the idea of building a play round the strange character of the madman in traditional society; particularly since African countries are experiencing a proliferation

of psychiatric centres, asylums and other similar institutions designed supposedly to protect society from the attacks of the mentally deranged.

So I asked myself a series of questions. How had traditional African society reacted to the presence of the madman? Indeed, did madmen exist, and if so how did society look after them? Where did it put them, since apparently there were no lunatic asylums? Above all, what place did the madman occupy in traditional society? These questions brought me round a table with my post-graduate drama students: there were eight of them, which was the ideal number. For we had to work it out with great care. We had to create a scenario around a chosen topic, the whole thing resting on the framework of the palaver. For this we needed to invent a dispute. Each student had to think in his own mother tongue, and it soon became clear that this was a difficult task: the majority of these students had only a smattering of their mother tongues, at most. So I sent them off to inquire from their parents, neighbours and friends. That was stage one.

Stage two was to invent the plot of a fireside intrigue in the little world of an African village. This called for a large number of other characters, major and minor: the madman's family, with the two clans on his mother's and his father's side, his father and mother, his maternal uncle and other members of the family; the village headman, who plays a key role in the settlement of disputes in the village; the elders, who directly advise the headman; the sorcerer, a peculiar ambivalent character who can bring or take away bad luck; the soothsayer, also a none too reputable character, who reveals the origin of any evil that has struck the community; and finally the inevitable character found in almost every African village who is either a drunkard, a womanizer or simply a buffoon. Each student actor was asked to choose a character with whom he felt in sympathy and whom he to some extent resembled; and having done so, to invent lines for him and put the flesh on the bare bones of his individuality. Next each character had to be defined in terms of his relationship to the others he was concerned with, so as to produce "situations".

At this point we moved from the work table to the stage and began to improvise. We eliminated all duplication and hesitation in the lines, went over them again, and settled on a text. In the following session I got each actor to carry on a dialogue with the other characters in a given situation.

Since there was a dispute which had to be resolved through talking (the definition of a palaver), we needed to use legal dictums, and formulas and songs befitting each situation.

The result was an unassuming little piece that we christened in turn Madness colonized, Madness, or an evening of proverbs and The palaver. This is what it was about.

Djangi son of Mwimpa has disappeared in broad daylight. The village is stricken, for he was the one who brought back game for the whole community. One morning, in a typical village scene, the headman is sitting in conclave with the elders when the news is brought that Djangi is back. But he is not the same: the boy is ill. The two clans, on his mother's and his father's side, each blame the other - to such good effect that the dispute erupts in violence. The matter is brought before the headman, assisted by the elders and the traditional judges. The origin of the evil is sought and revealed, and the boy is cured by the sorcerer. There is rejoicing in the village. When the festivities are at their height and everyone is dancing, singing and eating, a shadowy force with many faces suddenly halts the celebrations, seizes the boy, and drags him off - to the asylum, prison or death, according to the way each spectator enters into the drama. On the stage the members of the community stand helpless, and the tom-tom, symbolizing the interrupted and abandoned festivities, lies lifeless. (Lifeless? Yes indeed: for the tom-tom is a character too, and speaks the lines its player gives it). This is the end. The play runs for an hour: but it is an hour of throbbing life, an hour of invigorating exposure to proverbial wisdom, an hour of love and peace - but also, strangely, of anguish shared.

Mr. A. van der STAAY (Netherlands)

Experiences

We conceived of three rather vague lines along which Rotterdam culture should develop.

The local situation should become firmly attached to international culture. Direct links with the outside should be established. With a world culture in the making across the frontiers and an international harbour as our main economic basis following the old scheme of local/national/international had little attraction.

Secondly, what kind of culture? We thought it should be classless in its style. This was not born out of hatred against anybody. But we thought culture should speak to everybody, and class barriers should not come in.

Thirdly we wanted to concentrate on culture of today.

Many traditions of culture in Rotterdam had been destroyed. Nobody gave much thought after the war to rebuilding the city in the old way. A modern, functional, rather empty city had come about. The best thing we thought we could do was accept this as a challenge and make new too. Our policy should be frankly avant-gardistic.

The three points, avant-gardism, egalitarianism, and internationalism made up quite a programme to achieve under local conditions. But something of everything was achieved. This did confirm our belief that cultural development was, in some way, a fruitful undertaking.

To link up with the international creative scene we technically turned to organizing international festivals as a first step. So we started annual festivals for poetry, contemporary music, and non-commercial films. We also changed an old building into a multi-purpose arts laboratory, which did become a familiar word to international dance and theatre groups. At the same time an experimental exhibition service was started, of which I spoke at the German Unesco meeting about the social role of the museum in 1974.

I think plugging in on the international scene and by-passing national levels was one of our easiest tasks, at least our most successful one. We soon got accustomed to having friends all over the world. In some respects Rotterdam became as much eye and ear of Holland as Amsterdam traditionally is.

Our objective to bring about a classless culture was of course not to be achieved. One cannot merely by cultural policy change the habits of ages. But I think we at least did develop certain ways of including the public that were so general as to be acceptable to everybody interested. Negatively we refused to play upon the prestige aspects of cultural gatherings. Positively we tried to make people of very different walks of life feel at home. So sometimes an informal, egalitarian way of participating in culture did develop, that is modern, and that will make it possible for workers and intellectuals, children and elderly people, to be together. Projects were undertaken to break down class barriers, enlarge the public and reach out into the so-called non-public. Here it would lead too far to elaborate.

Certainly the third objective proved to be the most exacting. As you will recall we would concentrate on modern culture. By this we meant creating new things in Rotterdam, finding new talents there, tackling new problems. Something like an appeal goes out from us to join in the mobilization of creative effort. But the avant-garde and in the general the professional artist did not prove very interested in our call for a local renaissance. More or less reasonably, they went their own ways.

This of course threw us into a re-examination of our role as organizers, even if only unconsciously so. What role did we want to play? Did we want to follow artistic creation or also lead? And if we would also lead, where would we lead? What culture did we say yes to? Looking back, part of the responses seem just negative reactions to what we found in existence.

In the Netherlands the creative artist is fairly well protected against poverty, but he is kept at a low level of income and esteem, and his general position is still uncertain and dubious. The professional artist is a relatively isolated figure, a specialist, not very well integrated into a larger community, if only be it his audience. I personally felt shocked at the lack of interplay between the artist and his public, the anonymity of the bureaucratic process surrounding him, and the general lack of critical appraisal in public opinion.

So we launched ourselves into all kinds of projects that would link the artist to more concrete responsibilities in the population. Composers were given commissions for festivals, for amateur music, and for teaching purposes. Their compositions were to be used in existing situations. Theatre and dance groups were asked to perform in the city centre, in festivities of the population. Theatrical talents were used to organize neighbourhood happenings and magic mystery tours and pageants. Visual artists were asked to advise people how to change their surroundings, while they themselves decorated lamp-posts, and railway bridges, and trams, and walls. Poets spoke on the subway communication system and we had a poetic telephone service. Writers taught children how to write poems, and immigrants were helped by them to express their experiences.

But one should not overestimate the impact this made. It was hardly perceived in the artistic community. Though for the population it became an everyday thing to meet culture where it had not been before, little headway was made to convince the artist. Our successes did remain marginal, sometimes even symbolical. The role of the artist at the local level and his integration in community

life is still to be invented. A state committee is studying this aspect in the Netherlands now.

Analysis

We became sharply aware that our wishes about culture were slightly anomalous. We were in opposition to the spirit of our age, our public and our artists. We did not drift with the general lines of cultural development. These lines, as I see them today are:

the development of individual and group nomadism

the development of consumerism

the development of individual alienation

the development of electronic participation

the development of organizational centralism.

Against these trends we reacted with romantic, nay, reactionary Utopias. Against the trend to nomadism we proposed respect for and rediscovery of the sense of place, against consumerism we were furthering the spread of free concerts, plays, free culture in public places. Against isolation we pressed festivals and workshops. Against electronic participation we opposed the case for life events, happenings and performances. Against organizational centralism we furthered self-help, amateurism, the delegation of responsibility, the right to make experiments. We clearly belonged to the inebriated sixties, with their optimism and dreams of Utopia and wide vistas of change. The political people had money to back us and the town made decisions easily in the direction of "ludic" culture.

Now, in the seventies, not all the gains of the sixties may be written off as lost causes. We recognize that much was ephemeral and marginal, but we still hope it is possible to consolidate and start afresh. Political decisions should be made again, but on the sober basis of knowing that they are up against great odds. They should no longer only be naive acts of faith.

To consolidate and have a basis for a new departure that will be sounder, two conditions must be fulfilled. The first condition can only be provided by an act of enlightened self-destruction. The central state government should hand over its money and decision-making power to the lower, regional and local bodies. One should recognize cultural autonomy at the local level as a precondition for cultural growth of the world culture age. The abolition of ministries of culture on behalf of local cultural development is not as Utopian as it may seem. Norway is taking definite steps in this direction.

Trends in this direction are running strong in several parts of Europe. State culture should become obsolete. But what will culture at the local or regional level be like. One can only give it some "raison d'être" if it is a corrective to the trends of mass society. As such it may well be called reactionary or revolutionary, as it stands in opposition to the status quo. If the cities and regions however do not take account of the great tides they are up against, they might as well abdicate their cultural pretences and not make decorative fools of themselves. The shaping of an alternative cultural policy at the local level is my second condition sine qua non.

Prospects

I have a strong intuition that this reaction against modern culture should itself be modern, and not just a restorative action. The population, which is the only real object of cultural policy as I see it (not art, nor the artist) will not be fooled by unmodern pretences. Our populations know that the one integrated, religious or ideological system has been morally destroyed. The expressive symbolism of the church, the state or the party has been finished off by its lack of natural roots in the emotions of the people and by the work of the avant-garde, those scavengers of dying symbols. No image of god, or hero, or order, or myth can today be more than a private mythology or a personal ritual element.

Communication is becoming direct, and the skill of the artist becomes the skill of communication between people. Disk-jockeys and answering men, and monitors on TV with telephone feedback are our expressive symbolists and innovators. Does the artist as a personality have something to say for himself in this new situation? I think the answer may be yes, if we see him as the actor of his private myths. The public still desires to go beyond itself to people that live better or understand things better than they do. The talent of the artist in bringing out the best in man confronts new tasks.

Besides, the public has a deep desire to hold its own in a situation of technological and social change. It can do this by turning to personalities that will not be swept off their feet by problems. Probably these people will not only have strong characters, but also strong cultural traditions to sustain it. The rediscovery of our fathers today takes special relevance. We turn far back to remain sane. Avant-gardism could well lie in the reconquest of what was rashly forgotten in the creativity of the gospel-singing sixties.

Again I do not think the tradition is something that can be safely returned to. For instance I think that the tradition of Africa is doomed to disappear. But I do also think that everybody in the future will be held responsible for his selection of those answers of the past that will make men survive as expressive beings. No new religion will come to answer questions globally. But there is a chance that out of the communication among millions of people sound life-styles of world culture may emerge.

Mr. S. de CASTRO (Argentina)

1. In view of section I, paragraph 3 of the agenda for this symposium ("It - viz. art - may spring from a sense of religion or holiness and be concerned with a truth or a transcendent reality"), plus the many points raised by section V, "Art as an essential part of the human environment", I have decided to show you some slides of the two pieces of work I have done in the field of modern architecture. They are two stained-glass windows, the "Creation Window" for the Benedictine Convent of the Holy Sacrament at Couvrechef-La-Folie, Caen (1956-1958) and the "Redemption Window" for the Dietrich-Bonhöfferkirche at Hamburg-Duisburg (1968-1969).

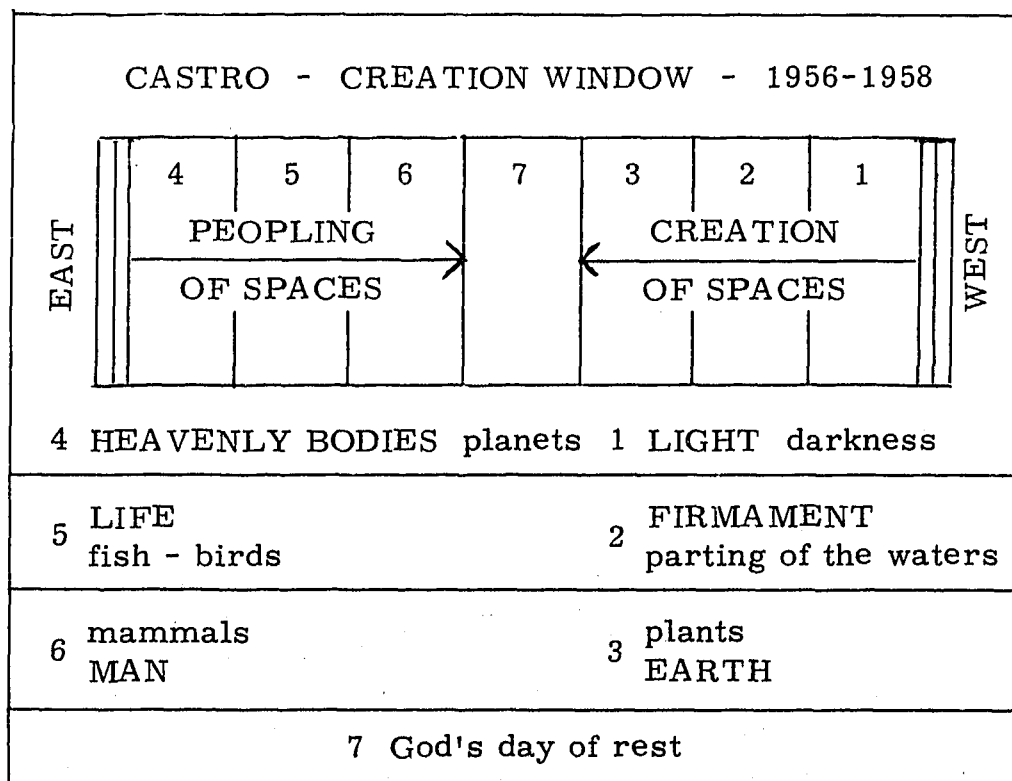
They were designed for very different environments. The first was for an enclosed community of nuns, i. e. people who had deliberately shut themselves off from the world; the second for a place of public worship in a poor, heavily-populated area. In each case the function which the architect⁽¹⁾ assigned to the window is crucial: it is both the only source of light and the only area perceptibly of symbolic character. This is why I endeavoured in each case to make the window convey as many different things as possible, both in purely visual terms and also in terms of religious symbolism. I have also in both cases made simultaneous and intensive use of representational, non-representational and alphabetic elements.

2. Obviously a window is first and foremost a source of light; but it is one which modifies and transmutes natural light in rather the way that a dam transmutes water into energy. Obviously, too, a work of art does not set out to prove some artistic or philosophical point: it is an infinitely subtle combination of very varied and obscure phenomena. The abstract and the realistic have always

(1) Jean Zunz for Couvrechef, Gerhard Laage for Hamburg.
Master glassmaker: J. J. K. Ray (Paris).

gone together, and they are essential to anything worthy of the name of art. If we were looking at one of the windows you would not get a word out of me: for in that case it would be our eyes that would need to be listening attentively to the light. Here, however, I should like to give you a few facts about the construction of the Cuvrechef window and the thinking that lay behind it. If time allows I will do the same for the Hamburg window.

3. The church of the Convent of Cuvrechef is 50 metres long by 10 metres wide and 16 metres high. The "Creation Window" is 6 metres high by 20 metres wide, and is placed high up on the South wall near the South East corner, lighting up the nuns' choir like a great diadem. A raised walkway five metres above floor level, under the spring of the North roof, allows it to be viewed on parallel sight-lines along its whole length through narrow slits in the stonework.



Its shape - not very inspiring, as you can see - was definitely settled, and the component rectangles already cast in concrete, when I was invited to design the window. It has six horizontal registers along its full width, divided into seven large vertical bays. I have added pieces of ironwork to give the illusion of extending the width of the vertical bays into the top and bottom

registers. The result is 169 panels forming seven areas, plus the East and West borders.

4. My window contains the text with symbolic commentary of the opening two quatrains of the seven Hymns for Vespers by Saint Ambrose according to Genesis I. The text is set out vertically from top to bottom, each verse in one column, producing the effect of a great wall of letters. They are arranged in 22 horizontal registers, recalling the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Happily the proliferation of rectangles containing letters has the effect of relieving the original rectangular shape. I have tried through colour and shape to give the letters of the Roman alphabet a connotation wider than the mere letter itself. Sometimes this is done through symbolism, as for instance with the letter "O": on the first day it is like a set of rings, on the third it suggests flowers, on the fourth bright stars. Or it may be related to the music, by trying to make the tonic stress coincide with splashes of colour. The seven large vertical bays open seven "windows" onto this sprawling flood of letters, the "windows" providing appropriate visual commentary for each of the hymns. The windows are always in the centre of the seven areas (corresponding to the seven days of the Creation) and are flanked on the left by the first quatrain of each hymn and on the right by the second.

5. The opening sentence of Genesis "In the beginning God made Heaven and Earth" puts the heaven-earth dualism right at the root of the Creation. This essential dualism is represented in my window by a corresponding visual dualism: a strongly structured rhythm - the wall of letters - stands for Heaven, whilst a freer, more decorative rhythm - the seven windows - stands for Earth.

Genesis I is divided into two cycles of three days each, plus God's day of rest. The first cycle, "creation of spaces", is arranged in the window from right to left, i. e. from West to East: Sunday (first day), Monday (second day) and Tuesday (third day). The second cycle, "peopling of spaces", is arranged from left to right, i. e. from East to West: Wednesday (fourth day), Thursday (fifth day) and Friday (sixth day). God's day of rest, Saturday (seventh day), occupies the centre of the window. This symmetrical convergent arrangement EAST 4 5 6 7 3 2 1 WEST emphasizes the correspondence or parallelism between the two cycles. The first cycle, on the right, creates spaces: the second, on the left, peoples them. We are inescapably reminded of the fascinating talk we heard yesterday from Marshall McLuhan about the functioning of the two hemispheres in the human brain; and also of the story recorded by Alejo Carpentier about the two brothers walking

along the banks of a river, the one on the right bank seeing things and the one on the left bank naming them. Anyway, to come back to Moses and Couvrechef: the creation of Light (on the right, first day) is paralleled by that of the heavenly bodies (on the left, fourth day); the creation of the Firmament dividing the lower from the upper waters (second day) is paralleled by that of the creatures of water and air (fifth day); and the creation of Earth and plants is paralleled by that of mammals and man (sixth day).

6. We may also note from the window that on the first day all expansion is contained, the shapes are under great tension, and the colours are cold - blues, greens and violets. By contrast on the fourth day dilatation is at its maximum, the shapes are full and rounded, and the colours are warm - reds, oranges and coppers. On the seventh day the light is at its brightest. It is no accident that St. Ambrose, in the fragments of the hymns I have chosen to display, uses the key word LUX only for the first, fourth and seventh days.

Looking now at the borders, we see that the Western one (before the first day) represents primordial chaos, while the Eastern one (before the fourth day) is divided into two vertical areas: the left-hand one retains the feeling of the third day, thus recalling the inversion in the succession of days, while the right-hand one depicts a great blaze of heat preceding the creation of the heavenly bodies. Thus the sun is depicted at the point where it appears on the horizon each morning.

7. Here in more detail is what the seven windows portray. Right-hand side, first day: newly created Light (on the left, moving towards the centre of the window) is separated from Darkness (on the right, lowering). Second day: the ovoid shape of the Firmament in the centre, and above and below it the primaevial waters. Third day: the valleys from which the waters are receding (on the soffits, top and bottom); and in the window proper: below, the trunk of a tree, under a grey and white sky, sending its roots down into the ground; in the centre, a branch of a tree bearing leaves and fruit; and above, a flower. Left-hand side, fourth day: the flames of the heavenly bodies (on the soffits, top and bottom); and in the window proper: below, standing out against a quartered ground, three phases of the moon; in the centre, the sun, incandescent and dazzling, with its rays; and above, seven planets. Fifth day: water (on the bottom soffit) and air (on the top one); and in the window proper: below, fish and the eddying depths; above, birds and the daily course of the sun. Sixth day: in the window proper, below, the serpent, dissident; above, the face of Man; between them,

the silhouettes of sacrificial animals in the religions of antiquity, from top to bottom, lamb, bull and ram; on the top soffit, Man's conscience (here, flames fiercer than those of the heavenly bodies, water or air); on the bottom soffit, a devil mask. In the centre, seventh day: a void with four little white pillars spaced across it, and a kind of veil like those at the centre of iconostases, behind which God is hiding.

In the seven windows the designs are: A non-representational; B geometric symbolic; C geometric representational; and D realistic representational. A and B the first, second and seventh days; A, B and C the third, fourth and fifth days; A, B, C and D the sixth day.

The window was made from 18 tons of different types of glass. Each day is bathed in an aura produced by the glow of several types: eight for the first four days, nine for the fifth and sixth days, and ten for the seventh. Without wanting to go into the question of colour symbolism in general, or that of the Creation Window in particular, I should like to draw your attention to the resultant optical combinations, which produce a flow of light from both ends towards the centre. It is a jerky flow for the first cycle, on the right, and a smooth flow for the second, on the left. This great double movement of light is paralleled by the continuous glow emitted, from one end of the window to the other, from the third register (counting from the top) upward and downward.

One last point, out of the many I should like to make. There is a sort of progression of shapes in the design of the letters, syllables, words and verses. On the first day, bathed in an aura of cold colours, each of the rectangles corresponding to a letter is still imprisoned within a patch of darkness represented by a triangle of violet (the positioning of these triangles would be a matter for separate study on its own). On the second day, when red and blue are in balance, each letter occupies its own rectangle. On the third day, when the dark greens and earthy shades appear, each syllable makes up a single shape. On the fourth day, when the colours are fiery and incandescent, each word stands out against a background of a single colour. On the fifth day, when carmine and green are in balance, the quatrains are edged and as it were ruffled by a ribbon of lace. On the sixth day, when the whites take over, each verse is a Solomon's pillar whose background, consisting of two colours, emits a single light: from left to right, red, blue, gold and green pillars for the first quatrain, and green, gold, blue and red pillars for the second. On the seventh day - the most luminous and peaceful in the whole window - the verses are

separated by little white pillars, and each word is in a single colour:

O orange LUX red BEATA yellow TRINITAS red
ET green PRINCIPALIS cobalt UNITAS green
JAM yellow SOL orange RECEDIT green IGNEUS red
INFUNDE red LUMEN cobalt CORDIBUS yellow

TE orange MANE cobalt LAUDUM red CARMINE green
TE cobalt DEPRECEMUR yellow VESPERE orange
TE green NOSTRA red SUPPLEX cobalt GLORIA yellow
PER yellow CUNCTA green LAUDET orange SAECULA red

Mr. D. BERAUD (France)

Throughout history the practice of art has occupied an important, indeed a crucial place in human society. Much can be written about it, all kinds of explanations thought up, and any number of guesses put forward: the fact remains that art, or what passes for art, has always been recognized as a specific form of activity.

So much is indisputable. Where controversy can and frequently does arise, is as to the economic and legal standing of this activity. Whichever way this question is approached, the twofold conclusion is the same: that in developed and developing societies alike artistic activity occupies a highly precarious place in society, and that its products are at the mercy of patronage, market forces and the whims of bureaucrats.

We seek to compensate for our subconscious feeling of collective guilt at this unhappy situation by endowing creative artistry with an aura of mystery and romance. The upshot is that some artists become rich on fashionable snobbery, whilst others are driven by material and psychological deprivation to madness or despair.

However, let us not give way to pathos. The only way to avoid doing so when pondering so crucial a question is to refocus our thinking on the function of art and artistic activity in urban and other societies. It seems to be an essentially ambivalent function, since it aims at something and also at its opposite: i. e. whatever artists do to and in their environment, they tend both to organize and disorganize it. The architect, for instance, subverts the natural order or disorder and builds into it his own individual order

or disorder, which is determined by economic factors, the state of technology and the hardness of his materials. Every artist exerts on his environment at the same time a normative, organizing pressure and a subversive, disorganizing pressure: and this is true at all levels of social organization. This is why the practice of art inextricably entails both integration and subversion: but (like all human activity) it does so in unequal proportions and erratically, according to whether the artist is inspired and impelled more by rational or irrational urges. For it is clear from recent scientific research that the structure of human brain tissue shows a dualism, the left hemisphere being the seat of an urge or propensity towards the rational and the right of an opposite propensity towards the irrational. This is an oversimplification, for the reality is more complex. But the point is broadly speaking valid, and throws useful light on the problem.

Modern sociologists, notably Marshall McLuhan, tell us that for at least 25 centuries the Western world has lived under the domination of the left hemisphere, and hence of a preponderant propensity towards the rational. This too is something of an oversimplification, and does not take account of all aspects of the situation; but it is highly relevant, and helps to explain the distortion to which artistic activity is subjected in most contemporary societies. These societies, dominated as they are by the urge to rationality, favour the normative, organizing function of the practice of art. The opposite function they, at best, tolerate: they would rather get rid of it, or reform it, and really only accept it as some kind of crazy aberration. Thus they mutilate or disguise it, or reduce it to deceit or self-destruction. We can of course accept this state of affairs, accept that deceit is the best approach for artists, that it is and will remain unavoidable, and that therefore we must adapt to it. The alternative is to regard it as no more than a palliative, the only safety valve available in the modern world for the pressures generated by that exploration of the irrational which the practice of art necessarily entails. We may think that as an escape hatch it is inadequate, and that the fact that it has persisted for 25 centuries is no reason to stop trying anything different. We can look for other ways and advocate other approaches. We must no doubt bear in mind that an upsurge of irrationality is regarded by any form of organized society as the main threat to its survival. History shows that any experiment likely to lead to society's losing control over the irrational is almost certain to be rejected by the collective consciousness and reduced to the opposite of what was intended.

It is probably in terms of this idea of control and the necessity for it that we ought to rethink the inextricably dual function of the practice of art. Control implies a contract. Role and counter-role (the etymological derivation of the word) are in a synallagmatic, i. e. contractual relationship. Throughout history, creative artistry has always been the subject of a de facto if not a de jure social contract. Examples to the contrary are so rare as to be negligible. By far the commonest were de facto contracts, which had the great drawback of leaving complete freedom to some high-handed person in authority. Legal contracts are too rare; and oddly, most artists are against them: yet they constitute the only defence against arbitrary authority and the only remedy for the extreme precariousness of the artist's position in society. If the persons most concerned are often opposed to such contracts, it is because in general they merely reinforce the mutilation of art's dual function. They only take account of its normative, rationalizing potential, and ignore the opposite element, which is just as much a part of it.

All contracts in this field ought to be the controlled and controllable expression of this fundamental duality: and for this purpose recourse must be had to the opposing yet complementary operations of social demand as a result of which certain things are indicated as socially desirable and others as undesirable.

I have only been able to touch on this highly complex question. To go into it more fully is in any event somewhat out of keeping with the historic pattern of our thinking, and would require much effort and patient research.

Unesco would probably be well advised to consider setting up a multidisciplinary study group to tackle this as a long-term task. The specific aim would be somehow or other to codify the functions of artistic activity in our present-day societies. Such an approach might perhaps allow us to hope for a change in the role of art and artists from what they are at present, such as to make them agents of communication rather than the reverse. There are many other changes that are needed in our society; but failing this particular one there is probably little to be expected from artistic activity in the modern world.

*

* * *

Life nowadays tends to be dominated by the electronic environment. Television and radio exert a powerful influence; and yet the

relationship between them and creative artistry has yet to be evaluated, particularly in terms of content. The question tends to be seen as one of programme quality, which itself introduces a source of confusion.

In the majority of industrialized countries television programmes come in three basic models only: utility, normal and de luxe. They adjust their respective output to conform with conventionally accepted standards. Attempts to assess the quality and artistic content of programmes get bogged down in comparisons between these three models and the question of the balance between them. They never go beyond the anecdotal, or explore in depth the close relationship there is (or should be) between artistic creativity and the electronic environment. Our present state of knowledge and our research methods are such that we cannot, at least for the moment, evaluate this relationship; we can only grope our way.

We can, however, talk meaningfully about the universal aptitude for self-expression. This is not to be confused with the practice of art, still less with its end-result - though works of art are the result of self-expression. In order to canalize self-expression we need to mitigate the standardizing, indiscriminate effect of the big national and/or commercial television channels. This means adopting a policy of "dismantling", based on the decentralization of the means of production: this would allow smaller groups to express themselves and develop their powers of self-expression, which in turn would give increased scope for artistic activity and its influence on communications and communication.

But let us not deceive ourselves about the consequences of such a step, some of which may well be counter-productive. In particular, such a policy might lead many communities to turn inward on themselves, thus resulting in a set of ghettos hemmed in within their stereotypes: each one, out of fear of change or uncertainty, turning out a standard product, and hence unable to communicate with its neighbour. Hence groups expressing themselves as the result of a "dismantling" policy would need also to have the will to communicate among themselves. For similar reasons the resultant material would need to be given access to national and international networks, by reserving periods in programmes catering for the widest public.

These ideas are easy enough to put on paper, but complicated to put into practice. Decentralization in any field has its complications, for it brings out differences and introduces sources of

conflict. But without the will to decentralize there is probably little to be hoped for from creative artistry: it will be swamped by the universal tendency for all means of expression and communication to be vested in the mass media.

*
* *

These ideas are not original. They are even being tried out in some countries, but too often on a commercial or exclusively competitive basis which defeats their own object. In others they are tolerated or fostered, and Unesco might well help with a comparative study of the methods adopted.

They should not, however, be confused with various attempts that are being made throughout the world to exploit the possibilities of community television and local radio. Many of these are useful, though far from fulfilling the hopes they arouse. They are and will probably continue to be moulded by the national channels and satellite transmissions and the fact that they are deliberately geared to large audiences. The only remedy with any chance of success seems to be a "dismantling" arrangement within these major channels themselves: always provided that it is accompanied by genuine decentralization of planning and decision-making and tightly controlled by qualified professionals - without whom it will founder in an inchoate welter, excluding any possibility of genuine communication.

Unesco could do a useful job by drawing up suggestions in this important field calculated to influence the governments of Member States and the non-governmental organizations which it supports.

Mr. P. TAILHARDAT (France)

I have for some time been bothered by an urge to be destructive. This is only one of the possible approaches to art that have not yet been mooted here: the rejection of it.

My destructiveness will take the form of following in Mr. McLuhan's footsteps and announcing here new scientific discoveries which serve to bear out my own ideas.

Speech experts have at last discovered

- (a) that talking may perhaps be a substitute for action, or even a brake on it;

- (b) that it is only after far-reaching theoretical investigations and massive research that we are able to define the rules that govern action. In other words, big speeches are an essential preliminary to doing anything.

Western societies and those of the Third World and the Eastern countries are what they are. But whatever they are they are alive, i. e. they face up to real life. So to my destructive mind (and please believe me, I am not setting out to attack any of the speakers in this symposium) what matters is getting down to practicalities.

The theoretical competence of this gathering is not in doubt; but I think that as regards the theory of the role of art in society we could have arrived at quite a different one. Our real purpose here is to work out policies and practical steps such as can form part of Unesco's overall programme.

Unesco has given us an opportunity, and the honour, to bring together a remarkable gathering of people, including government representatives and people responsible for practical action in the cultural field. I am surprised that for three whole days we have not bothered to ask these people about the practical ideas they aim to carry out within the cultural policies they control.

I should like to see the emphasis put on practical solutions.

What really determines the character of societies - all societies - is education. This is what produces the predominance of political power and of logic over art (or, as Mr. McLuhan would say, of the left hemisphere over the right). This is the point I should like to see looked at first and foremost.

It may perhaps be my involvement in a practical event, the establishment of the Georges Pompidou Centre, that has brought me to speak as I have, Mr. Chairman. But what I want to impress on you, and the other participants, is that actual experience provides a better guide than mere talking about experience.

Her Highness Princess FARIDA (Egypt)

I have asked to speak in order to comment on some of yesterday's contributions, and to add some personal remarks.

Mr. Patrix was right to criticize art which professes to be at the service of mankind when all history shows that art was never so perfect as when it was dedicated to the exaltation of divinity, polytheist or monotheist. I should also like to say that it is not quite right to assert that the objects found in ancient Egyptian tombs were for the use of the dead person and hence of man. The Pharaohs' lives were entirely centred round the exaltation of religion, for Pharaoh was the representative of God on earth. His life was spent glorifying Him, and his death prepared him to meet Him face to face. Ancient Egyptian art is centred on everyday objects, but exalts the divinities. Amenophis IV's Hymn to the Sun is but one example.

Egyptologists are only just beginning to appreciate the deep spirituality and inwardness of ancient Egyptian art. Up to now they have mainly seen only its artistic, glorificatory side, i. e. the glorification of man. Pharaonic art contains the seeds of all the monotheistic religions that were to follow the interim period of colonization by ancient Greece and Rome.

I should like to thank Unesco for inviting practising artists (painters, sculptors and musicians) to take part in this symposium.

As a painter myself, I have got out of the habit of making speeches. Indeed, we painters, sculptors and musicians need silence to listen to our inner voice, whether you call it muse or inspiration. We need to plumb the depths of our being in order to get to know ourselves without false modesty or shame. Our heightened sensitivity is pained by commercialism, violence, injustice and the sufferings of the weak and dispossessed, and we should like to reform the world - or rather man, to whom God has given the beauties of nature, intelligence and love, and who seems to have completely forgotten the fact.

I should like to end, Mr. Chairman, by making some suggestions.

Would it not be possible to explore new ways of helping artists materially - to break new ground, so to speak? Let me explain. Every time an interesting project is put forward, especially if it is ambitious, it runs up against financial difficulties. There is no money for it. But there could be special agencies, perhaps inside Unesco, to investigate and keep a register of disused or derelict premises that could be handed over without charge to struggling young actors, musicians, film directors and painters. These agencies would have volunteer art critics attached to them who

would talk about what they were trying to do, and their views would be publicized by the mass media. It would only need a quarter of an hour or so of television time. In this way they might at last have a chance to make a name for themselves. There would of course have to be no favouritism or discrimination.

I should like to ask Mr. Walter whether it would be possible to bring about closer collaboration between the European festivals and the African and Asian ones, so as to increase the amount of interchange and improve understanding between the continents. While on the subject of Asian festivals, I should like to draw the attention of the symposium to the positive features of the Shiraz festival: the audience consists mainly of young people, from a town with two thousand years of tradition, an association with great mystical poets such as Hāfiz and Sa'di, and a modern university.

One last suggestion for the governments of the Third World, through Unesco's good offices. Audio-visual courses on the artistic aspects of culture should be organized in schools, starting with infant classes, so as to produce a generation conscious of the role of art in its civilization. Even though it is too late to improve our own generation, we might perhaps educate the one that is now coming up.

Dr. M. BEGIC (Yugoslavia)

The place of art in society

It seems natural, indeed inescapable, that those taking part in this meeting on the place of art in society should base themselves on their own experiences, i. e. on their historical, cultural and individual backgrounds. At the same time they have as their starting-point the ideas and arguments developed in the circulated Unesco document. As this document points out, we must endeavour to arrive at common, mutually acceptable ways of speaking and thinking.

Our first two topics concern respectively the place and the function of art in society, thus covering the whole of the problem. But the first topic, the place of art, is of fundamental theoretical importance. The document seeks to define the essential utility and necessity of art as found in all types of society and all cultural areas, irrespective of the political, economic and social system. The necessity for the existence of art is said to flow from the fact

that it meets some of man's essential needs: the urge to grasp reality (perception?) and the urge to surpass himself, at the biological, physical, historical, social, psychological, intellectual and ethical levels. These two aspects to my mind furnish a complete definition of art: but they call for some clarification and possibly some additions and prior definitions.

It is rightly pointed out that the knowledge of reality furnished by art is of another order from scientific knowledge. But art captures and materializes its perception of reality, and objectivizes it in the form of a work of art of a given shape; it involves the totality of man's mental and psychological equipment, whether in creating or in assimilating an image.

Man's urge or yearning to surpass himself is said to manifest itself in three possible directions, of equal axiological significance: the historic or ideological, the transcendent or religious, and the immanent or oneiric. It may reasonably be asked whether these three fields of human aspiration exhaust man's relationship with art in society, and whether they are really equally essential and characteristic of man and society today.

Religion, which is a form of ideology, was dominant in the past; but it is far from playing the same part in man's aspirations today. Furthermore there are some civilizations in which religious needs run counter to artistic aspiration, the latter being regarded as wicked and heretical. It is difficult to generalize about Christian civilization, which (especially in the Middle Ages) produced a great artistic flowering. But the full flowering of man's nature and his physical and material existence, which is the basis not only of Greek art but also of modern post-Renaissance art, is often inhibited by religious asceticism.

It seems to me that we ought not to think of man's urge to surpass himself as mere escapism, nor as a negation of human nature. The Unesco document quite rightly says that art is anthropocentric, and this idea needs to be developed. In essence it comes down to the humanization of the world, both nature and society. Art cannot possibly be other than humanist, linked as it is to the condition of man in nature and society. This humanism shows itself in a manner peculiar to art: aesthetic, creative, and a powerful socializing force. Art satisfies man's universal need either to create configurations or to take part in one way or another in the act or atmosphere of creation in order to fulfil himself as a consciously creative being. Aesthetic need, which is as valuable for individual fulfilment as for social intercourse, entails setting free the imagination,

overcoming the obstacles to realization of the beautiful, the harmonious and the humane. This naturally means progressively removing the political, social and psychological shackles which still hold men in thrall. It has been said that art is the greatest joy man can give himself. It exalts the aspiring, radiant side of the human psyche. This does not mean that contrary elements such as sorrow, pain, death, fear, distress, crime and poverty have no place in an artist's work. Rather, they are used and transmuted to produce artistic harmony, which is all the more striking and worthwhile for having scoured the depths of existence.

Though qualitatively distinct from productive work, art is the supreme form of work. It produces meaningful, polyvalent objects whose humanizing influence knows no bounds in either space or time.

Artists are part of the world of work. Not only must they be active and make physical and mental efforts, but this activity is often inseparable from other forms of work which are necessary adjuncts to their purpose.

Mr. S. ASANACHINDA (Thailand)

So long as art attempts both to achieve its aim of "profit first and foremost" and also to conceal the truth, it will be difficult to claim that while it stems from inspiration on the part of an individual, a community, a nation or a wider ethnic group, its vocation is to become an instrument of peace and to reflect the common concerns of all mankind.

What Unesco absolutely must do is the following:

- (a) Make provision for "artistic creation in common". For this a work of art must be free of prejudice. Art must be created only for art's sake.
- (b) Facilitate contacts between artists and craftsmen, so that they may forget they belong to a country and a political system (the artistic unity of all mankind must be the goal). In this way we may perhaps break down the artistic barriers that divide us. Other countries' art and traditions must be welcomed and studied with equal respect and enthusiasm.

If all the artists in the world agree that solidarity between them is also a form of art, then art can play an important part in furthering peace.

As to what Unesco can do, it can organize meetings to achieve this end.

A massive life-long education programme, comparable to that in the developed countries, is being undertaken in Thailand.

Thailand is a country with an ancient culture and a rich artistic heritage, as demonstrated by the variety of its crafts, particularly the potteries at Ban Chiang (Udom Thanu province) in the north east of the country. The Thai people have always preserved and venerated the art of their ancestors.

In reply to the question what part art can play in a lifelong education programme, I should like to make the following points. A lifelong education programme should

- (a) foster artistic tradition, both locally and nationally, with the object of restoring its prestige;
- (b) accept the instruction and/or advice of those who have gone before; and
- (c) recognize their wisdom and skills.

In reply to another question about how artists are to be "brought into activities concerned with lifelong education", it seems to me that a lifelong education programme should be instituted in a small number of countries from the nursery school onward, the curriculum to include education in art at each level and each stage, so as to foster mutual understanding.

In Thailand the King is the protector and patron of Thai art. He has given 65,000 baht (US \$3,250) to build a centre for the promotion and study of Thai arts. This huge programme will cost in all between nine and ten million baht.

What is Unesco's role in this field?

I should like to suggest that to the extent that its resources permit, Unesco should take the initiative in promoting a lifelong education programme designed to facilitate the preservation of artistic activities of all kinds within Member States. Unesco

should also give some Member States financial help to enable them to foster various artistic activities and disseminate the results throughout the world.

In regard to its aim of bringing together mankind's artistic heritage under the banner of mutual understanding, Unesco must recognize that the criticisms often levelled at art can constitute a constructive factor rather than a negative one.

In reply to the question whether any solution is possible given that there seems to be no critical activity in Africa or in some Asian countries, I would like to say that certain Asian and African countries, though not politically subservient to the West, are under its cultural domination. Thailand, though always politically independent, has been under the cultural domination of the West for 200 years.

So in reply to the question about Unesco's role in this field, I suggest that travelling art exhibitions should be organized in the great capitals of Asia such as Bangkok, Peking and Singapore, or in Africa. In the longer term these exhibitions would be assigned permanent homes, which would become standing centres of art in the various countries.

Finally, if the development of art is the aim, then criticism from whatever quarter is worthy of attention.

Everyone acknowledges the all-pervading impact of modern technology, but for technology to become a force for progress it needs to be backed by the influence of art in society. Yet technology transforms the springs of art and contaminates it with the impurities of modern society.

The artist must resist the evil influence of modern technology and endeavour to produce art ideally adapted to a human environment. The architect must not only build concrete tower blocks: he must also be capable of recreating nature around them.

Unesco should distribute films and recordings of songs to indicate to artists throughout the world the sort of work to produce if ancient and modern are to coexist harmoniously.

A. Art as a factor in development

In the developing countries the output of modern media such as radio, television and the cinema is often inspired by exclusively

commercial aims. Programmes are mediocre and lacking in artistic value, such as Kung Fu and sex films. In Thailand radio and television have become propaganda tools for unscrupulous politicians. Television stations design their programmes more with an eye to pleasing their sponsors than to creating artistic productions for the public at large.

I wonder whether in developing countries such as Thailand Unesco would be able to separate politics from art and make them distinct entities, so as to prevent politics from destroying art.

B. The influence of example and the role of the artist as a factor for change in the social and cultural field

Modern media such as cinema and television could be used to disseminate artistic productions calculated to eliminate hatred and ill-will. For example, documentary films about each country's national heritage and art treasures are a valuable aid to mutual understanding between peoples. There should also be films made by Unesco-approved camera teams to show life inside a country, and they should be distributed solely in order to make the traditions, culture and art of each country better known in other countries. Books and films about well-known artists, living or dead, should also be widely disseminated. Steps should be taken to encourage the interchange of artists between Member States. Unesco should also undertake a comparative study of art in schools. Finally, it would be a good idea if an international association for the creation and protection of art were to be set up.

The steps that need to be taken may be summarized as follows. Everyone should do what he can to understand others, so as to help one another more effectively. We should also help others to enjoy the benefits of modern technology geared to the service of art.

Efforts should be made to restore arts and crafts to their rightful position. There is still time to organize an International Arts and Crafts Fair, which would bring together craftsmen from Asia and Africa. This is surely something that falls within Unesco's purview; and an interest taken by Unesco in arts and crafts might ensure their survival and development.

Professor C. do PRADO VALLADARES (Brazil)

I. The place of art in society

Question: Are there other important theories?

Yes, the anthropological type of theory, under which certain aspects of communal life in primitive societies are likened to situations and modes of operation similar to those suggested by the avant-garde movements.

Does this outline of present thinking about contemporary art cover all the relevant points?

Art is contemporary if it represents a mode of expression essential to contemporary society. But in addition we also need to note the survival of religious forms and modes of expression assimilated into the society of a subsequent period: thus we come across observances and visual symbols today which originated in primitive religion, but have been assimilated and used by more sophisticated societies.

Is there a conflict between these theories?

Yes, a conflict of concept and terms. Contemporary society conceives of art largely in terms of the thinking of the Renaissance, separating "the arts" by categories and techniques. This same contemporary society looks to art not for a portrayal of the real world, but for an aesthetic which will operate, like the various religious observances (especially fetishisms) and sports and pastimes, without bothering about a concept of art.

Is there room for action by Unesco in this theoretical field?

It is the responsibility of Unesco - or any other cultural institution - to investigate and record what happens in practice and analyse it in the social context, without interfering or engaging in cultural planning. The features of a culture arise spontaneously, develop, and disappear in the same way. To preserve cultural patterns at any price, as though they were sacrosanct, is seldom anything but romanticism.

II. The function of art in society

4. I do not agree that in modern society art tends to become desacralized and dependent upon ideologies and political conflicts.

All that changes is our religious values. Committed, proselytizing, sanctifying art is less likely to be accepted as an aesthetic than the art of protest and confrontation.

5. "Cultural revolution" does not necessarily mean raising the artistic level. It cannot be the cultural prerogative of the ruling classes. They can have a monopoly of all information and erudition, for they are good at exploiting civilization, but not of culture. Indeed, in most societies the most valid culture is that which is closest to the people.

6. In Brazil, among the most primitive communities on the fringe of the technocratic world, art takes the form of using up the leavings, i. e. the rubbish, of civilization. Everything is salvaged and remade by hand into new utensils, enriched with an artistic quality. The peasant craft of the Brazilian sertao is an example of how to "preserve what is singular": in Brazil this lends a ludic quality to the production of ordinary everyday objects, and helps to prevent man's alienation.

Is it possible to define the function of art in society more clearly?

Yes, I consider that art springs from two sources in relation to society. One is something that arises spontaneously as an extension of the actual basic society, and must be accepted and retained until its cycle has run its course. The other is a matter of erudite art in the service of the community, viz. the mass media, town-planning projects like Brasilia, the landscaping of towns and roads, and nature reserves. The leaders of modern society have a duty to facilitate the mass consumption of scenic and audio-visual art. Private traditional art nowadays fixes its scale of values entirely according to the market that is open to it.

Does art have specific functions in the field of education and culture and in the preservation of the environment?

Yes. I believe in the function of art as a means to education, culture and the preservation of original values. In my country, Brazil, all the collective folk art forms (music, dance, theatre, etc.) are in fact educational systems. I do not include under this heading the syncretist native and Afro-Brazilian religious sects, but only folk festivals and celebrations.

The bumba-meu-boi of the north calls for long practice in stage recitation and the art of the monologue; the maracatu of the north east is a highly elaborate theatrical performance; and lastly there

are the samba schools, groups which take almost eight months to rehearse the music (samba-enredo), with costumes and choreography, for one evening of Carnival in Rio.

But whenever tourist organizations come along and try to develop a cultural event into a folklore attraction, the loss of authenticity is immediately observable; it may even jeopardize the continuity of the popular event.

III. Art and lifelong education

Question: How can art be integrated into lifelong education?

We are concerned only with the visual arts, one of the most awkward areas of art in lifelong education. From a sociological point of view we may wonder to what extent it is worth disseminating erudite art, the hallowed art of the élite, among communities that are still more or less closed to world culture but are rich in authentic, traditional artistic events. In my country, Brazil, large areas of authentic culture have come under attack from the bludgeon of image and message wielded by the audio-visual media. Twenty years later it becomes clear that the communications media cannot obliterate local modes of expression, but merely contribute an ingredient to the acculturation process. Radio, television and the cinema have given rise to a plethora of new forms, which have become acclimatized in song and popular music, in speech, and in design, painting and the performing arts.

Many people have criticized this process as a form of cultural alienation.

In terms of the sociology of art, the sum total of acquired knowledge does not obliterate the basic culture. The outward appearance may change but the general shape remains the same. What destroys authenticity is a change in working methods resulting from the market forces introduced by industrial and technological civilization. This is because man no longer has the same relationship with his milieu, spends his day according to a new pattern, and sees his spare time swallowed up in the world of the consumer society.

The result is an increased need for lifelong education in those milieux where features of the basic culture have been lost as a result of the inroads of industry. For these people, who expressed their culture in an artistic language all their own, and are beginning to lose it, what is needed is a widening of horizons. They must

be helped to play a greater part in time, both present and historical, and to go deeper into space, i. e. the space represented by other milieux. Only in this way can man in modern society become aware that he is part of a whole that goes far beyond his original world, and part also of the balance, the essence and the future development of this whole.

Lifelong education according to us means finding one's complete identity as a member of the human race.

In some countries such as Brazil, non-formal education and its ancillary, audio-visual programmes, are officially organized. Some of these programmes, particularly the radio programmes, are of little interest to people in the big towns, but they are essential for people in the country such as farmers and women working at cottage crafts. Given the way of life of the rural population, it is only natural that the tools of lifelong education should not be books or classrooms but transistor radios.

We are left with the question of how to achieve lifelong education through the visual arts. This question falls to be dealt with under the next item on the agenda of this symposium.

IV. The role of criticism in the development of art and in the aesthetic education of the public

Question: Does criticism perform its role satisfactorily?

To hold that "The purpose of criticism is to keep the public informed and to guide and shape its taste" is to go back to arguments characteristic of the Renaissance and the era of court art.

Nowadays criticism means bringing out the historical process and being aware of the present. The critic's role is to help the public, the artist, and even the anonymous artists of the community at large, to be aware of their own times - the times in which they live.

In historical terms, artistic creativity has performed two tasks: it has produced art destined to be private property, saleable for its market value in accordance with the tariffs of court art, and it has produced art as a collective activity, generous, secular and ephemeral, on the pattern of the circus. Sport is an art - indeed is identical with art. If you study the aesthetic context in which primitive tribes live, you find in their everyday practices an echo of all the concepts of the avant-garde: body art,

land art, arte povera, op art, bodily expression, conceptual art and so on.

The XINHU TERRA exhibition held in connection with the 13th International Biennial at Sao Paulo demonstrated this very clearly: the invented patterns of the avant-garde represent the normal and natural tribal behaviour of neolithic natives.

Criticism must take the sociological road, not the road of exaggerated aestheticism which fosters the values of the market place - the "star system" and the cult of artistic personality. The latter cuts the artist off from his roots and his background, distracts him from his mission - which is to mirror the community - and ruins his work by making it unduly subjective.

As I see it, Unesco has little reason to concern itself with elitist aesthetic criticism, but much to hope for from the sociology of art.

V. Art as an essential part of the human environment

Question: How can new techniques be used to preserve ancient or modern artistic values?

Perhaps I may allow my recent experience and the work I have done in this field to speak for me.

The Minister of Education and Culture in my country asked me to look into the position of the four Federal museums, namely the National History Museum, the Imperial Museum at Petropolis, the National Fine Art Museum and the Museum of the Republic.

I had previously read a long paper to the National Council of Cultural Committees on "The integration of museums into popular education"; and I also put forward my proposed reorganization in my capacity as a member of the Art and Culture Committee of the Sao Paulo Biennial Foundation.

My thesis starts from the fact that it is not possible to assemble a new collection of treasures to stock the many museums up and down the country. By means of modern audio-visual techniques, in particular wire-relay television and video-cassettes, any modest museum in a small town can have access to data about a great many collections both at home and abroad. However, the main object is not passively to reproduce dreary little displays, which would be of little interest in such widely differing circles.

It was then that the possibility arose of using the large expanse of the Ibirapuera Pavilion, site of the Sao Paulo Biennial, and 26 years' experience of organizing exhibitions, for a regular biennial programme of events in the form of anthological exhibitions covering each and every form of artistic expression.

Every two years the Ministry of Education and Culture, or some other body, would be responsible for setting the theme for these anthological events, as it might be the native ethnography of Brazil, Afro-Brazilian culture, the baroque of the State of Minas Gerais, the baroque of the north east, and so on.

During the two-year period, specialists will undertake research in the various States and collect material for the anthological exhibition; and the result will be the publication of books and definitive monographs and the employment of all modern techniques from the audio-visual to video-cassettes. In this way all the museums of Brazil will be stocked.

If Unesco adopts this system, we should really be able to widen man's horizons.

Steps should be put in train, under the auspices of the world organization (Unesco), to circulate films, tapes and cassettes, and to plan themes two years ahead. I am suggesting the Brazilian model for the anthological events, to be based on the Sao Paulo Biennial Foundation; but it would be for Unesco to take the initiative in extending it world-wide.

The important thing is to discover how to record for all time the main events, which should not just evaporate like ephemeral episodes. And the plan as I have outlined it is fully in keeping with the possibilities of modern technology.

I think that these replies to the symposium's questionnaire about the place and function of art in contemporary life also cover sections VIII, IX and X.

Mr. F. WALTER (Switzerland)

I could not attend the first two days of this symposium, but I listened with interest to yesterday's two sessions. And since the topic of international collaboration is on today's agenda, I have in mind to tell you about the European Association of Music Festivals,

particularly since it was partly as artistic adviser to that body that I was invited by Mr. Jack Bornoff, Executive Secretary of the IMC, to take part in this symposium.

The European Association of Music Festivals (EAMF) will be celebrating its 25th birthday during its annual General Assembly meeting, to be held at Strasbourg from 11 to 13 October next. Its members will then be taking stock of the experience of 25 years.

The EAMF was thus founded in 1951, at a time when some people were already worried that the proliferation of festivals threatened to abase and devalue the term "festival". Its promoters aimed to group together what were considered the most representative European festivals, and by pooling information about them to present the best possible image of festival Europe. It was hoped that exchanges of views and perhaps projects, and contacts between directors, would help to foster healthy competition and maintain the high artistic level of the festivals. The members meet once a year at their General Assembly to discuss problems concerning the festivals, particularly their future development.

Looking back at the European origins of the international festival in the modern sense (Bayreuth and later Salzburg were of course for long the lonely twin beacons), I am tempted to use the word "élitist". I use this neologism (which I can find in none of my dictionaries) advisedly, since it is a word in increasingly common use that was originally intended to be pejorative. Festivals certainly started as gatherings of an élite of artists before an élite audience at a time of year when there were many tourists. If this definition is increasingly and sometimes violently challenged, it is because the élite audience is seen above all as an élite of the purse - a charge that is not without foundation. But over the years festivals have been of all kinds, and it is no longer possible to think in terms of a standard type.

These changes in the character of festivals have also been regularly discussed at the meetings of the EAMF, and the discussions could be subsumed under the rubric "democratization of festivals". Returning for a moment to the "élitist" festivals, i. e. those reserved for a privileged few, there has clearly been a degree of democratization as a result of the influence of the mass media. When I got back from Bayreuth (I was one of the privileged few), which could this year have sold all its seats five times over, I was struck by the number of people who were talking about the festival almost as though they had been there. Radio and television, and, not far behind, records - to say nothing of the press - have

made it a public spectacle. This is not, of course, an ideal solution, and cannot take the place of actually attending. But it is worth noting that it is only the élitist nature of these festivals that ensures them such wide coverage.

Much has been said here about pollution. The technology of the mass media produces its own form of pollution. Let me give but one example. One day I was at one of the events organized at Aix-en-Provence under the name "Music in the streets" (presumably a form of popularization), and I was horrified to hear a Mozart quartet and other chamber pieces being broadcast over loudspeakers against the noise of the traffic with the sound completely distorted. There is, I think, little need for me to dwell on this question of the way in which works of art are distorted and butchered by the mass media.

There is another important factor that militates against the élitist type of festival, and that is the awakening of local consciousness, already referred to here. The so-called international festival can no longer be completely isolated from the local inhabitants. But the fact is that there has been a subtle change in the meaning of the epithet "international": a festival is normally international in the sense that it attracts an international audience, but it can also be international in the sense that it brings local people events of an international character to which they would not otherwise have access.

Striking a balance between these two trends constitutes a basic problem for most festival organizers. There are now few festivals, for instance, that do not encourage young people to attend, or put on events open to a new and wider public. These two trends - élitist festival and local involvement - ought to be complementary, and are tending to become so: but nevertheless they are often inimical to one another. Somebody was telling us something about musical activity in Rotterdam, and this brings me to the subject of the Holland festival: this is no doubt one of the ones that are trying to strike the balance I have just mentioned, but one sometimes gets the impression that the antagonism is there.

In this connection I should like to recall something that struck me forcibly during our discussion here on the role of television. We were told of a peasant family who put on their Sunday best when watching television together - a simple-minded way of showing respect for a form of culture. Respect of this sort is becoming increasingly obsolete. Our society is often criticized for setting up taboos, but the reaction to them is counter-taboos: an example

is evening dress, which has become a hated symbol. But though casual attire is perfectly appropriate in some situations, equally obviously in others it strikes a jarring note. I only mention this as an illustration - and to make the point that democratization ought not to lead to lowering of standards.

I should now like to tell you in rather more detail about the European Association of Music Festivals and something of what it is doing. The EAMF has paid particular attention to ways of supporting new music and young artists - quite apart from the preferential admission prices which most festivals operate for young people, especially members of musical youth movements. The EAMF has particularly tried to encourage young performers. It approached the Federation of International Music Competitions (which, like the EAMF, is a member of the IMC) with the suggestion that it should each year nominate one or two prizewinners regarded as particularly brilliant, the idea being that with the EAMF's support they would have the entrée to the world of festivals. But the Federation was unable to take the responsibility of nominating individual prizewinners. The EAMF then tried to get the individual competitions to give the names of absolutely outstanding prizewinners; but here again there was opposition in some quarters to the names proposed. A different sort of initiative was then put forward. The idea was to leave it entirely to the festivals which are members of the EAMF to nominate a particularly talented young chamber music ensemble. An ensemble was preferred rather than a soloist, since soloists have plenty of scope for attracting attention anyway through the medium of festivals. The EAMF undertook to find ten or so engagements among its members for the ensemble chosen. This system operated for a few years, but then had to be abandoned in its turn. The fact that the ensembles were introduced to members at the General Assembly meant that some festivals could not engage them for the following season because they had already finalized their programmes. Moreover the ensembles nominated did not always meet with the approval of all the members, some festivals preferring to engage young people of their own choice. The result was that after some years there were still too many of these ensembles left which had not yet had their ten engagements, and for whom jobs would still have had to be found. So it would seem that co-operation in this field is not always easy, and that individualism can be an obstacle. But it is not impossible that other formulas may be found.

Since we have now reached the stage of suggestions and requests to Unesco, there is one I should like to put forward. One of the projects the EAMF has cherished since its inception is the making

of joint productions. It has also turned out to be a difficult project to put into practice. There have been one or two successes, but generally involving co-operation between only two festivals. Could not Unesco contribute to a joint production suggested to it by several festivals - which would make it possible, for instance, at the same time to encourage a modern piece of work? It could be a work that did not present too many production problems, and that could be given on stages of different sizes.