The papers from the Ninth General Conference of Icom

Actes de la neuvième Conférence Générale de l'Icom

The museum in the service of man today and tomorrow

The museum's educational and cultural role

Le musée au service des hommes aujourd'hui et demain

Le rôle éducatif et culturel des musées

The International Council of Museums/Conseil International des Musées

Cover illustration: Woman and child – family group at the exhibition of the work of Sir Henry Moore at the Brooklyn Museum. *(Photograph: Brooklyn Museum.)*

The International Council of Museums is a professional organization dedicated to furthering links between, and the development of, museums throughout the entire world. Originally founded in Paris in 1946 by a small group of far-seeing museum people, Icom now embraces museums of all disciplines in seventy-five countries. It is associated with Unesco as a category A non-governmental organization and still works from Paris from the Unesco building which houses the secretariat and the Unesco/Icom Documentation Centre, the world's largest, freely available collection of museological information.

Further copies of this publication, others on museum matters, and the Icom journal *Icom News* published quarterly with a bilingual text in French and English may be ordered from the Paris secretariat.

ICOM Maison de l'Unesco 1 rue Miollis Paris 15
France

Le Conseil International des Musées est une organisation professionnelle qui se consacre au développement des musées dans le monde entier. Fondé à Paris en 1946 par un petit groupe de professionnels à l'esprit tourné vers l'avenir, l'Icom groupe maintenant des musées de toutes disciplines dans soixante-quinze pays. Il est associé à l'Unesco, en tant qu'organisation non-gouvernementale de catégorie A, et son centre se trouve à Paris, où le Secrétariat et le Centre de Documentation Unesco/Icom sont abrités par la Maison de l'Unesco. Le Centre de Documentation possède la collection la plus importante au monde d'informations muséologiques librement accessible.

Il est possible d'obtenir, en s'adressant au Secrétariat, d'autres copies de la présente publication, plusieurs ouvrages ou périodiques sur les problèmes des musées et le bulletin de l'organisation *Les Nouvelles de l'Icom* qui paraît trimestriellement en version bilingue français-anglais.

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ICOM

The International Council of Museums
Conseil International des Musées

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1 Allocution du Président de l'Icom

à l'ouverture de la neuvième Conférence Générale

A. van Schendel

La France accueille la neuvième Conférence Générale du Conseil International des Musées. Il y a presque vingt cinq ans, ici même, à Paris, l'Icom prit naissance. Dans une salle du Musée du Louvre un petit groupe d'hommes, parmi lesquels le président du Musée de Buffalo, Chauncey Hamlin, et le Directeur des Musées de France, George Salles, se réunirent pour se concerter sur la création d'une organisation internationale de professionnels des musées. Un an plus tard, sous les auspices de l'Unesco, l'Assemblée constitutive eut lieu au Mexique et l'année suivante, en 1948, la première Conférence Générale se déroula ici, à Paris, sous la présidence de Chauncey Hamlin. Paris devint le siège de notre Secrétariat avec Georges Henri Rivière comme Directeur, et l'histoire de notre Conseil fut désormais associée par des liens multiples à l'hospitalité française. C'est avec un très vif plaisir et une profonde reconnaissance que nous avons accepté à Munich, en 1968, l'invitation du Comité national français pour tenir ici notre prochaine grande réunion triennale. Nous savions bien quel serait l'attrait d'un tel cadre pour nos travaux et nos plaisirs. Et nous voici en très grand nombre, attirés par le programme préparé par le Comité français avec le Bureau, dans lequel les séances et les distractions sont judicieusement et agréablement alternées. Je tiens à remercier dès maintenant le Comité national français de l'Icom en les personnes de son très actif président M. Jean Chatelain, Directeur des Musées de France, et de sa charmante et infatigable secrétaire, Mme Régine Leroy Thiébaut. Nous savons combien longs et durs ont été leurs efforts d'organisation. Je saisis aussi cette occasion pour exprimer notre reconnaissance au gouvernement français qui a donné son plein appui à cette conférence, et je pense avec règret au Ministre de la Culture M. Michelet

dont nous avions espéré la présence à cette inauguration. Nous sommes particulièrement honorés que le présent Ministre, M. Duhamel, veuille bien être parmi nous ici, à Paris, marquant ainsi l'intérêt que la France porte à notre action.

Je ne veux pas faire en quelques mots l'histoire du quart de siècle de l'Icom, mais je pense qu'il n'est pas inutile de se demander en ce moment: quelle est notre situation, où en est l'Icom? Après une période de croissance et de consolidation, l'Icom est arrivé au point où ses structures semblent ne plus correspondre entièrement à ses nouvelles orientations et où ses moyens ne suffisent plus à son fonctionnement. C'est peut-être une constatation un peu brutale, mais en voici les raisons.

L'enthousiasme initial qui anima l'Icom et l'intérêt qu'il suscita dans sa première décennie entraînèrent la formation de Comités nationaux dans de nombreux pays et la constitution de groupes de travail spécialisés: les Comités internationaux. Des programmes d'organisation et de recherche furent proposés et adoptés, d'Assemblée Générale en Assemblée Générale. Le domaine d'activités s'agrandit rapidement et les projets à mettre à exécution se multiplièrent. Cependant, l'organe central d'administration et de coordination, le Secrétariat, resta de dimensions très modestes. Les moyens financiers se révélèrent insuffisants, malgré les apports de l'Unesco et de fondations privées. Peu à peu le Conseil Exécutif et le Bureau se virent placés devant le choix difficile de la priorité à donner à tels thèmes d'activités de la plus grande urgence et à la mise en attente d'autres projets du programme. Ce frein imposé à tant d'initiatives intéressantes ne manqua pas de frustrer les membres de l'Icom. Il semble inutile de préparer des projets de développement sans avoir l'espoir de pouvoir les mettre en oeuvre.

Plusieurs tentatives pour améliorer la situation financière et pour adapter le fonctionnement aux besoins du moment furent entreprises. Elles ne furent pas sans succès mais elles ne suffirent pas. Vous connaissez la Fondation Icom, vous savez ce que la Fondation Ford a fait pour nous et vous vous rappellerez aussi nos appels aux présidents des Comités nationaux pour une aide extraordinaire. Nous ne pouvons qu'être très profondément reconnaissants pour les réponses favorables qui nous sont parvenues de beaucoup d'entre vous et nous nous sentons encouragés par cet appui. Mais sur la base des contributions actuelles et du niveau sans cesse accru des dépenses de fonctionnement et d'activités, l'avenir de l'Icom n'est pas assuré.

Cette situation préoccupante a amené le Bureau à se poser la question fondamentale: l'Icom peut-il exister, l'Icom est-il viable? Lors de sa réunion à Séville au mois de juin dernier, le Bureau s'est penché sur cette question en étudiant un exposé sur la situation, préparé par le Directeur, M. Hugues de Varine. Il est encore trop tôt pour pouvoir donner des réponses précises à cette question complexe, mais de l'étude même émergent déjà quelques points essentiels. D'ailleurs, l'étude du problème pourra être reprise et poursuivie en profondeur par le prochain Conseil Exécutif.

L'Icom est devenu beaucoup plus international qu'il ne l'était à ses débuts. Si, dans sa première période, il avait un caractère nettement occidental, on

peut dire que maintenant ses horizons sont bien moins limités. Il est vraisemblable que c'est en bonne partie le résultat des efforts spécifiques du Secrétariat pour activer la collaboration internationale et pour établir des liens nouveaux. Je rappelle les voyages et les missions des Directeurs dans toutes les parties du monde, la fondation de centres régionaux, les séminaires, les réunions professionnelles, la création de nouveaux Comités nationaux. Mais il ne suffit pas de provoquer les premiers contacts et de jeter les bases d'une collaboration: il faut également leur donner une suite. Cela engendre aussi une multiplication progressive d'activités, de travail préparatoire et d'inévitables conséquences budgétaires.

Cette évolution n'est pas du tout anormale, au contraire, elle est logique. Mais elle nous impose le devoir de faire le point au bon moment et de modifier notre course si c'est nécessaire. Il vaut mieux avoir un programme trop grand pour sa bourse que l'inverse. Certes, nous ne sommes pas riches en argent, mais grâce au travail de nos Comités nous ne manquons pas d'idées ni de projets.

Je crois que la crise de l'Icom est surtout d'ordre économique. C'est sur ce point que nous devrons fixer notre attention. Il ne faut pas vouloir des réponses trop rapides et il ne faudra pas imposer des modifications trop violentes. Mais certainement il sera demandé aux membres de l'Icom, à tous les niveaux, leur participation active à la solution des problèmes; il faudra prouver que l'Icom vaut bien un sacrifice.

Pour ma part, je suis profondément convaincu que l'Icom est un bien précieux qui justifie un sacrifice. Tous ensemble nous avons construit cette maison idéale qui nous abrite. Elle offre un toit à tous les membres de notre profession, elle offre la recherche en commun, l'échange d'expériences, la fraternité professionnelle. Selon nos spécialités nous pouvons trouver à l'intérieur de l'Icom des groupements réunissant ceux qui sont orientés comme nous. Avec eux nous pouvons partager nos problèmes et d'eux nous pouvons apprendre leurs réussites et les raisons de nos propres insuccès. Les plus forts peuvent aider les plus faibles. Dans toute notre diversité chacun de nous peut apporter ce qu'il a, pour la cause commune. Il faut le répéter: c'est une question de bonne volonté et de foi.

Dans trois jours nous allons aborder à Grenoble un thème passionnant, le thème de la neuvième Conférence Générale: 'Le musée au service des hommes, aujourd'hui et demain: le rôle éducatif et culturel des musées.' Le choix de ce sujet a été fait à l'Assemblée Générale précédente sur proposition du Comité de l'éducation et de l'action culturelle des musées. Celui-ci en avait traité dans sa réunion à Léningrad et Moscou, en 1967. Dans un monde où le mouvement vers la technocratie semble s'accélérer sans cesse, nous sommes devenus de plus en plus conscients de la tâche éducative et culturelle des musées. Nous reconnaissons qu'il ne suffit plus de simplement exposer des collections quelles qu'elles soient, mais qu'il faut aider leur message à pénétrer en profondeur. Que notre public soit la masse ou l'individu, le jeune ou l'adulte, il doit pouvoir comprendre et sentir ce qu'il voit. C'est dans ce but que nous essayons d'élargir l'action de cette singulière leçon de choses qu'est

le musée. A Grenoble, des spécialistes éminents nous donneront leurs points de vue et définiront les différents aspects de l'action culturelle des musées dans la société. Ces exposés et les échanges d'idées qui pourront leur faire suite sont pleins de promesses. Avec ampleur ils éclaireront ce que nous devrions toujours avoir présent à l'esprit: que le musée s'adresse à l'homme et qu'il devrait être pour lui un trésor familier. Nous, qui avons la responsabilité des musées, qui y avons engagé notre vie, nous espérons tirer de nouvelles forces de cette rencontre, pour mieux défendre la cause des musées au service de l'homme.

Address of the President of Icom

at the opening session of the Ninth General Conference

A. van Schendel

France welcomes the Ninth General Conference of the International Council of Museums. Icom was born almost twenty-five years ago here in Paris. A small group of men, including the president of the Buffalo Museum, Chauncey Hamlin, and the Director of the Museums of France, Georges Salles, met in a room of the Louvre to plan the creation of an international professional organization of museums. A little later, under the auspices of Unesco, a constitutive assembly took place in Mexico. The following year, in 1948, the First General Conference was held here in Paris, under the presidency of Chauncey Hamlin. Paris became the headquarters of our Secretariat with Georges-Henri Rivière as Director, and the history of our Council was henceforward bound together by the multiple ties of French hospitality. It was with great pleasure and deep gratitude that we accepted in Munich in 1968 the invitation of the French National Committee to hold our next trienniel conference here. We knew then how attractive the environment would be for our work and our relaxation, and we have come here in very large number, attracted by the programme prepared by the French Committee and the Board, in which the sessions and the entertainment are fairly and agreeably alternated. I take this opportunity now to thank the French National Committee of Icom in the person of its very active Chairman Mr. Jean Chatelain, Director of the Museums of France, and of its charming and tireless secretary, Mrs. Régine Leroy Thiébaut. We know how long and hard their efforts of organization have been. I take this occasion also to express our gratitude to the French government which has given its full support to this conference, and I think with sorrow of Mr. Michelet whom we had hoped would be present. We are particularly honoured that the present

Minister, Mr. Duhamel, has accepted our invitation to join us here in Paris, thus showing the interest which France gives to our activities.

I cannot in a few words recount the history of a quarter of a century of Icom, but I think it will not be in vain for us to ask ourselves at this time: what is our situation, and where does Icom stand? After a period of growth and of consolidation, Icom has arrived at a point where its structures no longer seem to correspond entirely to its new orientation, and its means are no longer sufficient for its operations. This is perhaps a somewhat brutal statement, but here are the reasons.

The initial enthusiasm which gave life to Icom, and the interest which sustained it during its first decade, resulted in the formation of National Committees in numerous countries and the establishment of specialized working groups, the International Committees. Programmes of organization and activities were proposed and adopted from General Assembly to General Assembly. The field of activities expanded rapidly and the projects to be executed multiplied. Meanwhile, the central structure of administration and co-ordination, the Secretariat, remained very modest in size. The financial means available proved insufficient, in spite of the contributions of Unesco and private foundations. Little by little, the Executive Council and the Board are being faced with the difficult choice of giving priority to certain more urgent activities and of putting aside other projects of the programme. This brake imposed upon so many interesting initiatives cannot help but frustrate the members of Icom. It seems useless to prepare development projects without having the hope of putting them into operation.

Several attempts to improve the financial situation and to adapt working methods to the needs of the moment have been undertaken. They were not without success, but they were not enough. You know of the Icom Foundation, you know what the Ford Foundation has done for us, and you will recall our appeals for special assistance to the Chairmen of National Committees. We can only be profoundly grateful for the favourable response which we have received from many among you, and we are encouraged by that support. But on the basis of present contributions and of rising costs of operations and of activities, the future of Icom is not guaranteed.

This disturbing situation has led the Board to pose the fundamental question: Can Icom exist, is Icom viable? During its meeting in Seville last June, the Board considered this question and studied an account of the situation prepared by the Director, Mr. Hugues de Varine. It is still too soon to be able to give precise answers to such a complex subject, but from the report itself, several essential points already emerge. The study of the problem must be taken up again and pursued in depth by the next Executive Council.

Icom has become much more international than it was at its inception. If in its first period it had a distinctly Western character, one can now say that its horizons are far less limited. This is probably, to a large degree, the result of the specific efforts of the Secretariat to activate international co-operation and to establish new links. I recall the trips and the information missions of the Directors to all parts of the world, the establishment of regional centres,

the seminars, the professional meetings, the creation of new national committees. But the establishment of initial contacts and of a basis for co-operation is not enough; they must be continually consolidated. This engenders a progressive multiplication of activities, of preparatory work and of inevitable budgetary consequences.

This evaluation is not at all abnormal. On the contrary, it is logical. But it obliges us to choose the right moment to initiate our plans and, if necessary, to modify them. It is better to have a programme too large for our purse, rather than the reverse. Icom is poor materially speaking but, thanks to the work of our committees, we are not lacking in ideas or in projects.

I believe that it is above all in the economic sphere that Icom's situation is critical and it is to this question that we must give all our attention. We must neither look for too rapid solutions, nor must we impose too radical changes. But one thing is certain; we shall need the active support of *all* the members of Icom if we are to find a solution to these problems. We must prove that Icom is worth a sacrifice.

For my part, I am profoundly convinced that Icom is indeed worthy. Together we have constructed this ideal house which shelters us. It offers a roof to all the members of our profession, it offers us co-operation in research, the exchange of experiences, and professional fraternity. According to our fields of specialization, we can find within Icom groups uniting those who are oriented as we are. With them we can share our problems and from them we can learn their successes and the reasons for our own failure. In all our diversity each of us can bring what he has to the common cause. It must be repeated: it is a question of good will and of faith.

In three days we are going to attack in Grenoble a passionate theme, the theme of the Ninth General Conference: 'The Museum in the Service of Man, Today and Tomorrow: The Educational and Cultural Role of Museums.' The subject was chosen at the last General Conference on a proposal from the Committee for Education and Cultural Action, the Committee having considered this theme at its meeting in Leningrad and Moscow in 1967. In a world where the movement towards technocracy seems to accelerate unceasingly, we have become more and more conscious of the educational and cultural task of museums. We recognize that it is no longer enough to simply exhibit the collections as they are, but that it is necessary to do the utmost to ensure that their message be deeply assimilated. Whether our public be the mass or the individual, the young or the old, it must be able to understand and to feel what it sees. It is to this end that we try to enlarge the effect of that singular lesson of objects which is the museum. In Grenoble distinguished specialists will give us their viewpoints and define the different aspects of the cultural action of museums in society. These statements, and the exchange of ideas which they can elicit, are full of promise. They will brightly illuminate what we must always have present in spirit: that the museum addresses itself to man and that it must be for man a familiar treasure. We, who have the responsibility for museums and who have pledged our lives to them, hope to take new strength from this encounter, in order to better defend the cause of museums in the service of man.

2 Allocution du Ministre des Affaires Culturelles

Jacques Duhamel

Monsieur le Président, Mesdames, Messieurs,

Je suis heureux de vous accueillir et à plus d'un titre; d'abord bien sûr par amitié, parce que vous avez répondu avec élan à l'invitation que vous faite le Gouvernement français de tenir en France votre neuvième Conférence Générale.

Mais si je suis heureux de vous accueillir, c'est aussi par intérêt. Comme Ministre des Affaires Culturelles, je crois à la vertu de la réflexion collective. J'attends beaucoup de la vôtre. Car la place et le rôle dévolus aux musées dans la société que nous vivons et que nous préparons méritent en effet d'être redéfinis, redessinés, peut-être réinventés.

A travers l'histoire et probablement dans tous nos pays, il y eut des périodes que l'on pourrait appeler classiques où les choses étaient mises en ordre. Le moins que l'on puisse dire c'est qu'elles sont aujourd'hui mises en question. C'est ce que l'on appelait en d'autres temps des périodes baroques ou romantiques. Loin de nous plaindre de vivre un tel moment d'interrogation, il faut au contraire nous en réjouir, même si cela comporte des débordements et partant des mouvements d'humeur. Oui, un peu partout, nos sociétés se cherchent; et cherchent en particulier la culture. Il faut répondre à ce désir par de nouvelles approches.

Dans la société de demain un grave problème me paraît posé, qui englobe la conception que l'on peut avoir du musée: la culture sera-t-elle une consommation ou une participation? Déjà nous savons que dans nos différents pays la part des dépenses de 'culture à domicile', que permettent les équipements modernes et que développent les techniques nouvelles, tient une part de plus en plus grande. Mais de même que le disque conduit au concert,

l'image conduit au musée. Si, au dehors, la culture est simplement livrée, et alors en quelque sorte imposée, il y manquera une part de cette vertu d'échange qui fait que la culture est vraiment source de joie. Il lui manquera cette vertu irremplaçable qui fait que celui qui voit ou qui écoute doit aussi participer et apporter. La télévision ou le livre, le disque touchent l'individu mais doivent lui donner le goût de communiquer. Ce qui manque peut-être le plus à nos sociétés modernes. La peur de l'autre qui se développe ici ou là, la mésentente collective qui progresse insidieusement et sinistrement, c'est cela que nous devons conjurer.

Et je crois honnêtement que ce problème est tellement fondamental qu'il est indépendant des choix sur le régime politique auxquels nous avons trop tendance à tout ramener. Ce n'est pas trop dire, je crois, que d'affirmer que c'est un problème de civilisation. Je ne dis pas cela pour tenter de dépolitiser le débat mais parce que je crois profondément que nous avons à faire dans ce domaine de la culture des choix immédiats qui engagent l'avenir; et je crois que ces choix dépassent de loin nos conflits habituels.

Dans cette perspective, vous avez choisi comme titre à vos travaux 'le musée au service des hommes, aujourd'hui et demain'. Ce titre en deux parties me paraît comporter une évidence et poser deux problèmes. L'évidence c'est que le musée est au service des hommes. Il fut peut-être un temps où les conservateurs voulaient faire que le musée soit leur musée. Mais il y a longtemps déjà que ce qui distingue justement un musée d'une collection est d'être ouvert, j'allais dire offert au public.

Ce qui me paraît une évidence comporte pourtant, sans doute, une interrogation. La notion même de 'service des hommes' n'a-t-elle pas évolué, et beaucoup plus depuis quelques années qu'au cours des siècles précédents? Ne faut-il pas alors concevoir le 'service des hommes' non seulement comme destiné à ceux qui veulent s'en servir, mais comme une recherche difficile de ceux-là mêmes qui n'y viennent pas naturellement?

Sur le plan historique, je ne crois pas me tromper en disant que les musées ont rendu, depuis le dix-huitième siècle qui les a vu naître sous leur forme moderne, et plus encore au cours du dix-neuvième siècle, qui a marqué leur épanouissement, que les musées ont rendu d'éminents services à l'éducation et à la culture. Si je prends l'exemple d'une ville française de moyenne importance, telle que je peux en connaître étant moi-même maire d'une ville de 30 000 habitants, eh bien, depuis cent ans, on y trouve normalement, à côté des écoles ou des universités, trois foyers de culture: le théâtre, la bibliothèque, et le musée. Ce n'est que tout récemment que s'y sont adjointes, dans certaines d'entre elles, des maisons de jeunes ou des maisons de la culture, plus polyvalentes. Ainsi, pour en revenir au thème de vos travaux, il est bien certain que le musée a été conçu pour être 'au service des hommes'.

Mais cette seule constatation des services rendus dans le passé à la diffusion de la culture ne suffit pas à justifier son maintien ou son développement dans les décennies à venir. S'il faut désormais toucher, au sens physique et sentimental du terme, d'autres hommes que ceux qui, plus ou moins

spontanément, viennent au musée, cela veut dire sans doute qu'il faut trouver d'autres méthodes pour d'autres hommes. Et d'abord sûrement pour les enfants qu'il faut atteindre au moment où l'esprit se forme et avant qu'il ne se ferme. Je me souviens encore des premiers contacts qui étaient organisés, pour l'enfant que j'étais, avec tel ou tel musée où l'on entraînait la classe. Je ne dis pas que cela s'apparentait à une punition mais j'affirme que cela ne répondait pas à un désir. Je ne suis pas sûr que la manière dont cela était conçu et effectué suscitait après la première visite le souhait d'une seconde rencontre. Heureusement des méthodes nouvelles dans les musées, et des pédagogies nouvelles dans les classes, ont, depuis lors, profondément transformé cet éveil de l'enfant au musée. Dirai-je ici qu'il me paraît capital que cet éveil se fasse tôt, et dirai-je aussi qu'il me paraît probable que ce soit par les enfants que bien des parents découvrent eux-mêmes l'envie du musée? N'est-il pas vrai que dans beaucoup de nos pays ce sont désormais les enfants qui apprennent aux parents?

Aux jeunes d'aujourd'hui (qui ne serond plus jeunes demain), il me paraît sûr que le musée, par le contact qu'il offre à ses visiteurs pour communiquer avec le passé, le contemporain ou l'avenir en train de se faire, pour ressentir le beau ou plus généralement le concret, qui apaise ou intrigue, constitue un des contrepoids de plus en plus nécessaires à une évolution des conditions de vie souvent trop brutales et à certains égards trop desséchantes. Cette communication est en quelque sorte un antidote grâce à quoi l'homme se sent plus à sa place dans un monde où il serait, sinon, plus désemparé.

Il semble donc que conçue comme un service, l'utilité du musée ne saurait être contestée. Deux questions se posent toutefois: pourquoi y a-t-il une certaine crise des musées? Comment adapter les musées aux besoins nouveaux qui apparaissent?

Il n'est pas douteux en effet que dans presque tous les pays du monde, il existe une crise des musées.

Elle est tout d'abord de nature financière. Que les musées dépendent de l'Etat ou qu'ils relèvent de fondations privées, l'entretien des collections et encore plus leur enrichissement deviennent de plus en plus coûteux. Le souci d'introduire des techniques de présentation plus modernes afin de mieux satisfaire, c'est-à-dire de mieux informer et d'enrichir intellectuellement un public traditionnel, mais aussi de toucher un public nouveau, cet effort met en jeu des moyens financiers de plus en plus considérables.

Il existe en second lieu une crise de personnel. Elle se situe au niveau du recrutement des conservateurs de musée, qui ne sont pas toujours en nombre suffisant dans beaucoup de disciplines, et dont la formation doit être constamment adaptée aux nécessités du moment. N'est-il pas vrai qu'un conservateur doit être aussi et de plus en plus un animateur?

Cette crise est également grave pour ce qui est du personnel de surveillance, et les difficultés récentes que la France n'est pas seule à connaître font apparaître son importance. Il s'agit d'un problème difficile, parce que c'est en grande partie un problème humain, où sont entremêlés les considérations techniques aussi bien que sociales, l'usage d'appareils

modernes, mais aussi la considération nécessairement due à un personnel de condition modeste.

Enfin, apparaît une troisième forme de crise, qui relève du doute sur la fonction même du musée. Il n'est pas exclu – il est même fort probable – qu'une certaine conception du musée soit dépassée. A son rôle traditionnel de conservation des collections, qu'il doit naturellement continuer à assumer, le musée doit de plus en plus ajouter une nouvelle fonction beaucoup plus active. Il doit être le centre où s'élaborent et se renouvellent, par un effort d'invention permanent, les méthodes qui permettent au public de tirer le plus grand profit possible de sa rencontre avec les collections réunies au fil des ans et parfois des siècles.

Comment le musée peut-il répondre aux besoins, aux aspirations des hommes de demain? Je ne pense pas que la réponse puisse seulement tenir en quelques recettes techniques. Je ne veux pas dire par là que les techniques utilisées soient dépourvues d'intérêt ou d'influence, mais vos réunions précédentes, je le sais, vous ont déjà permis de les préciser, de les 'affiner'.

Mais, dans l'ensemble, vous permettrez à l'homme politique que je suis de considérer que l'adaptation du musée d'aujourd'hui à la société de demain ne se pose pas uniquement et pour tout dire principalement en termes techniques. Au reste, ce n'est pas sur eux que cette année portent essentiellement vos travaux. C'est justement, plutôt, sur le rôle social du musée, sur son insertion dans la nouvelle société. Débats autrement complexes et vastes dont je ne vous ai pas caché que pour ma part j'attendais avec intérêt les conclusions possibles. Ce problème – de déterminer la place du musée dans le monde de demain – soulève à mon sens deux ordres de difficultés, d'incertitude: les unes propres aux musées d'abord, mais aussi, d'autre part, toutes celles qui concernent l'évolution du monde.

A l'avenir, nous voulons réaliser une meilleure intégration du musée dans le système éducatif et culturel. Pour y parvenir un certain nombre d'études seront nécessaires. Elles devraient, à mon sens, s'engager dans une double direction. Tout d'abord rechercher à quelle communauté s'adresse tel ou tel musée. Cette communauté, en effet, peut être d'ordre technique – et il s'agira en l'occurrence de savoir quelle catégorie de spécialistes un musée peut toucher, – elle peut être d'ordre géographique – quelle population est susceptible de fréquenter tel musée, – elle peut être d'ordre social – quelles sont les couches de la société qui peuvent être attirées. D'autre part, il faudrait approfondir les possibilités qu'offrent les moyens de communication de masse, et des sciences comme la pédagogie ou la psychologie.

Dans cette action, l'Etat doit jouer, dans notre pays un rôle fondamental. D'abord un rôle d'exemple, par les musées nationaux et les méthodes qu'ils mettent au point. Ensuite, un rôle d'incitation, par la réalisation de quelques projets pilotes; enfin, il a à remplir une mission d'assistance par la formation du personnel ou par la création de centres polyvalents de restauration ou d'installation, accessibles à plusieurs musées et judicieusement répartis sur le territoire.

Il conviendra enfin de développer une action permettant d'évaluer

régulièrement les *résultats* des actions entreprises. Pour tel ou tel musée existant, ou pour telle expérience pilote il faudra, grâce à des enquêtes menées de manière scientifique, recueillir et analyser l'opinion du public afin d'identifier les lacunes et d'entrevoir d'autres possibilités d'action. Après cette consultation des usagers, il sera certainement indispensable de réunir périodiquement les responsables des musées et des experts – et notamment des experts dans des domaines extérieurs à la muséographie, mais dont les connaissances spéciales peuvent être à un degré ou à un autre utiles à l'action des musées. Il y aura certainement là aussi une source considérable d'amélioration de nos méthodes.

Parmi les difficultés que l'on rencontre et propres aux musées j'en relèverai trois. L'une tient à la nature même du musée, la seconde à la variété extrême des musées, la troisième à l'hétérogénéité des publics.

1° La nature même des musées m'apparaît paradoxale. Dès leur origine, les musées me semblent avoir rencontré une difficulté qui demeure fondamentale: n'y a-t-il pas contradiction finale entre les deux missions qui leur sont assignées, et dont la conjonction même sert pourtant à les définir: mission de conservation d'une part, mission de diffusion d'autre part? Toute exploitation culturelle n'est-elle pas en elle-même occasion de détérioration, source de destruction, techniquement parlant?

Il faudrait pour protéger au mieux les oeuvres et les objets de collection, les enfouir dans des caves profondes, les enfermer dans des coffres, à l'abri de tous les périls: la chaleur, le froid, la sécheresse, l'humidité et par dessus-tout la cupidité, la maladresse ou la passion des hommes. Mais ce serait en même temps renoncer à leur donner une utilité, une signification culturelle. Tout musée repose donc sur un compromis: accueillir le plus vaste public, le plus longtemps possible; lui offrir le meilleur contact avec l'oeuvre, mais en même temps protéger celle-ci, c'est-à-dire infliger aux visiteurs des barrières, des vitrines, des gardiens. Il arrive parfois, au cas limite, que le compromis soit impossible, et, dans ce cas, nous pensons, la mort dans l'âme que la conservation doit primer sur l'utilisation. C'est ce qui s'est produit dans les grottes de Lascaux où, quelles que soient les précautions prises, chaque réouverture au public s'accompagne d'une reprise de la moisissure qui ronge les peintures rupestres. Nous avons donc fermé Lascaux sauf pour un nombre limité d'heures, pour un nombre limité de scientifiques et ce par mesure indispensable de sauvegarde. Mais il est bien évident que, si on savait ne jamais pouvoir l'ouvrir à nouveau, il ne servirait à rien de le conserver. Le cas est extrême. Mais nous savons tous que le compromis entre conservation et utilisation culturelle des oeuvres est chaque jour plus difficile; car beaucoup des commodités offertes à l'utilisateur, c'est-à-dire au public, constituent un danger pour la sécurité physique des oeuvres. Un éclairage plus vif permet de mieux voir mais attaque les pigments; le chauffage rend la visite plus agréable mais comporte des risques redoutables. L'introduction du chauffage central dans les musées à une époque où ces dangers étaient mal connus, a dû faire éclater autant de panneaux de bois qu'une tornade ou une guerre. Or sommes

nous bien sûrs de connaître les dangers possibles présentés par les projecteurs de télévision, les flashs électroniques, ou tel nouveau type d'éclairage?

2° La seconde difficulté inhérente aux musées est leur extrême variété. Conçus à partir de collections très diverses, et nécessairement diverses lorsqu'elles reposent sur des pièces uniques ou très rares, les musées sont fondamentalement différents les uns des autres: musées d'art ou de sciences naturelles, musées grands ou petits, musées généraux ou au contraire spécialisés. Peut-être du point de vue qui vous occupe, le rapport entre les musées et le monde moderne, y a-t-il entre eux une distinction plus essentielle: celle entre les musées de chefs d'oeuvre qui présentent des pièces d'art ou d'archéologie, mais toujours exceptionnelles et insignes, c'est-à-dire n'existant qu'à un seul exemplaire, et ceux qui présentent des objets de série qu'on peut retrouver plus ou moins commodément, tels que, par exemple, les galeries de minéralogie. La mise en valeur didactique ou esthétique est fondamentale. Elle est d'ailleurs facilitée dans une certaine mesure par le fait que, les objets présentés pouvant être remplacés, le risque de les altérer ou de les détruire par une technique de présentation trop audacieuse n'a évidemment pas la même importance. En poussant le raisonnement à cette limite, on pourrait être amené à considérer que seul le second type de musée est susceptible de toutes les évolutions, alors que le premier, parce qu'il est limité par le souci de conserver des pièces irremplaçables, est nécessairement marqué par son rôle conservatoire, si bien que le fossé entre l'un et l'autre ne peut aller qu'en s'élargissant. C'est pourtant ce qu'il convient d'éviter. Et tous les musées doivent être des centres où s'élaborent et se renouvellent, par un effort d'invention permanent, les méthodes qui permettent au public d'entrer plus profondément en relation avec les collections présentées, que ce soit par la sensibilité ou par l'intelligence. Cela me paraît aussi vrai pour toutes les catégories de musées que je dénombrais à l'instant.

3° La troisième difficulté propre aux musées me paraît tenir au caractère hétérogène des publics qui fréquentent les musées: la plupart d'entre eux, en effet, ne s'adressent pas à une catégorie unique de visiteurs, mais au contraire à des hommes ou à des groupes très différents les uns des autres: une église est faite pour accueillir des fidèles, une caserne des soldats, une école des élèves, le plus souvent répartis en groupes d'âge et en spécialisations bien précises. Le musée les accueille tous: étudiants ou ouvriers, érudits ou gens simples, amateurs d'art ou touristes. Cette variété de visiteurs oblige sans doute à rechercher, pour établir le contact entre eux et ce qui est présenté, des solutions difficiles à mettre en oeuvre et peut-être des compromis avec tout ce que cela représente inévitablement d'imparfait et de décevant pour ceux qui rêvent de formules idéales.

Je n'en dis pas plus et je m'aventure déjà car vous connaissez mieux que moi et à vrai dire mieux que n'importe qui les différentes difficultés propres aux musées que peut rencontrer la volonté de mieux déterminer leur place dans le monde moderne. Mais encore faut-il alors se demander quel est ce monde ou plutôt quel il peut devenir. C'est la deuxième interrogation que

vous vous êtes vous-même posée, en choisissant le thème et le titre de vos travaux.

Il n'y a pas de réponse certaine; pour personne. La question que vous vous posez en termes de probabilité sur l'évolution de nos sociétés, l'homme politique se la pose en termes de volonté. Quelle société voulons-nous? Quelle société préparons-nous? C'est partout la question fondamentale et vraie qui nous est posée à nous adultes engagés dans les responsabilités publiques. Sans doute pouvons-nous, et devons-nous, y répondre personnellement ou collectivement; sinon je ne vois pas pourquoi l'homme public s'engagerait dans l'action. La vie politique n'a de sens que si elle permet, au moins en partie, de faire la société que l'on rêve, quel que soit son choix.

Mais rien n'est plus difficile que de penser aujourd'hui ce qui se fera demain. On a trop tendance à croire, en effet, que l'évolution suit une courbe linéaire prolongeant en quelque sorte le présent dans l'avenir et l'on a tendance ainsi à projeter le futur antérieur; alors qu'au contraire l'expérience prouve que le changement s'opère suivant une ligne brisée et que l'innovation n'est pas toujours, loin de là, le prolongement.

En évoquant de telles incertitudes, j'ai conscience, Mesdames et Messieurs, d'ajouter encore à la lourdeur de la tâche qui vous attend au cours de ces journées. Mais vous avez voulu qu'elles soient des journées de réflexion et de travail. Et, à quelque pays que vous apparteniez, vous savez d'expérience que le rôle de l'homme politique est de troubler les techniciens en leur transmettant, avec le poids de son autorité et de sa responsabilité, l'interrogation des hommes.

Je voudrais – et je sais en effet que vous vous y disposez – je voudrais que dans vos prochains travaux vous ne vous borniez pas à vous poser entre techniciens des problèmes techniques sur le musée au service des hommes. Parlez plutôt des problèmes tels que se les posent, dans votre domaine, les hommes qui vous entourent et qui attendent de vous plus qu'ils ne le croient.

Permettez-moi alors, pour terminer, d'évoquer trois de ces problèmes:

Le musée face au problème sociologique que pose la jeunesse.

Le musée face au problème technologique que pose l'audiovisuel.

Le musée face au problème culturel que pose le besoin de communication.

La Jeunesse: pendant longtemps être jeune, c'était avant tout assimiler une expérience transmise. Aujourd'hui, être jeune, c'est exiger avant d'accepter, s'étonner plutôt que d'admettre, rejeter plutôt que de consentir. Nous voyons, non sans effroi, la jeunesse qui nous entoure rejeter ou dédaigner le patrimoine que nous avons mis toutes nos forces à lui transmettre. Il serait aussi stupide de s'incliner devant ce refus que de le réprimer. La jeunesse, après tout, est en droit de nous demander des comptes sur le bon usage que nous avons fait de ce patrimoine et sur la valeur réelle que nous lui attribuons. Rembrandt, Turner, ou Cézanne nous apprennent que la création c'est peut-être d'abord un refus dominé, un non qui se change en oui, une responsabilité que émerge d'un désarroi. Il est facile de ne retenir dans les

troubles de la jeunesse que les désordres et les refus. Sachons que la jeunesse a besoin de nos certitudes, moins peut-être pour les prendre à son compte que pour bâtir en contrepoint, et forte de leur appui, ses propres certitudes. Ces valeurs que nous voulons transmettre, sachons être intransigeants dans leur défense – car elles ne vivent que par la croyance que nous mettons en elles, mais sachons être souples, inventifs, généreux dans leur illustration – car la jeunesse a besoin de toute notre compréhension, de notre pédagogie la plus patiente pour les comprendre et les assimiler. Le musée est l'un des exemples les plus concrets de ce dialogue des générations: la confrontation des époques qu'il réalise, gardons-nous de la concevoir seulement en termes historiques: le dialogue visuel entre un Titien et un jeune regard est plus important et plus riche de promesses, tout compte fait, que le dialogue de Ribera et de Goya.

Autre problème: celui que posent les possibilités nouvelles des techniques audiovisuelles. Me plaçant au niveau global de nos communes responsabilités dans la Cité, je veux y revenir un instant. En répandant à l'infini quelque chose de la magie de l'oeuvre peint ou sculpté, en ajoutant au récit muet de l'oeuvre plastique l'accompagnement du commentaire, les techniques audiovisuelles multiplient le sortilège de l'art mais risquent aussi de le dissoudre en le banalisant. Les gardiens du message plastique, que vous êtes, doivent considérer en face cette réalité. Largement tourné vers la diffusion la plus étendue de l'art et disposé pour accueillir avec considération et générosité le plus vaste public, le musée doit demeurer le temple du rare, de l'unique et procurer aux hommes cette émotion mystérieuse que créent les contacts physiques, irremplaçables, avec la main du génie. Le tremblement du sacré qui fait vibrer les toiles du Tintoret, l'ineffable paix qui émane de Raphaël, la plongée vers l'infini qui nous fascine dans les obscurs de Rembrandt, l'audiovisuel peut y préparer, il ne peut s'y substituer. Alors même que la technique moderne permet d'établir une relation – indirecte certes mais certaine – entre un nombre illimité d'objets et un nombre illimité de personnes, le musée ne saurait devenir le magasin prestigieux où l'on conserve et où l'on puise l'objet rare pour que l'audiovisuel le diffuse, je ne dis pas le transmette. Mais ne négligeons pas, pour autant, cette diffusion de connaissance et d'éveil. Ne craignons pas que la préparation didactique affadisse l'émotion de la rencontre. Enfant, je connaissais par coeur le *Don Giovanni* de Mozart; mais j'ignorais le frisson qui m'a saisi lorsque j'ai vu pour la première fois sur une scène mon héros entraîné aux enfers, frisson que je retrouve à chaque représentation – et je crois que le choc que donne la Résurrection de Piero della Francesca n'est en rien diminué par une longue approche de l'oeuvre. Le sacré n'est jamais un accident. L'émotion artistique n'est pas affaire de surprise mais d'amour.

Le problème enfin que pose le besoin de communication. Problème culturel au sens le plus fort du terme. C'est un lieu commun de constater que, dans le monde moderne, l'homme est moins bien environné que dans le passé. Le progrès des techniques de communication s'accompagne d'un déclin de la compréhension des hommes. Plus solidaire, l'homme est aussi plus solitaire. Etrange destin d'un monde perfectionné où les hommes communiquent plus

par leurs phantasmes et leurs frayeurs que par leurs joies et leurs dialogues: l'art abstrait exprime d'ailleurs fidèlement ce tragique défi de l'incommunicable à la recherche du partage. La culture, précisément, consiste aujourd'hui à retrouver le chemin de l'échange, du partage. En cela elle porte l'espoir de l'homme. A l'abri des rivalités nationales – il faut l'espérer – et des contradictions économiques – il faut le croire – elle est la valeur inaltérable, perpétuellement convertible et si elle est flottante, elle flotte selon les pulsations du coeur humain. Si je hasarde ces comparaisons monétaires, de quelque mauvais goût qu'elles soient, c'est que je suis frappé de voir le monde des musées réuni dans la concorde et la sérénité tandis que le monde des monnaies est agité par la tourmente. La comparaison est en effet saisissante et révèle l'espoir que nous mettons en vous. Mesdames, Messieurs, peut-être, comme dit l'Evangile, vous avez choisi la meilleure part, elle ne vous sera pas ôtée, si vous savez la donner en partage.

3 Le musée dans les systèmes éducatifs et culturels contemporains

Stanislas S. Adotevi

Le professeur Adotevi, ancien élève de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris, philosophe, écrivain, poète, après avoir occupé divers postes ministériels au Dahomey, a été pendant plusieurs années Directeur de l'Institut de Recherches Appliquées au Dahomey dont dépendent tous les musées du pays. Il s'intéresse tout particulièrement aux problèmes politiques et culturels de l'Afrique contemporaine.

La vérité de cette fin de siècle, les résultats de la pratique muséale des siècles derniers, les exigences des pays en voie de sous-développement, l'histoire de l'Afrique – celle d'hier et surtout celle de demain – tout réclame la disparition des musées. Je ne peux, évidemment, parler devant une assemblée de spécialistes qu'en tant qu'observateur. Mais j'ai vu des musées en Afrique; d'autres en ont vu avant moi en Europe, et ailleurs, dans le tiers-monde. Je crois que partout le bilan a été fait. Le musée, produit quintessencié de l'enseignement humaniste, n'a rien à voir avec l'argile de la vie humaine. Sans doute on nous reprochera de ne nous accrocher qu'aux détails; de n'accorder de signification qu'à ce qui est manifeste, de négliger la vérité profonde, de confondre le résultat avec le projet. Sans doute. Mais voyons de près les arguments, qui sont au moins de trois ordres.

1. Si, sur le plan personnel, le musée est une source irremplaçable d'enrichissement, sur le plan de la collectivité, le projet qui créa en France, par exemple, les musées, n'était-il pas d'apporter au peuple la connaissance?

2. Connaître d'abord son pays, seule base solide du présent qu'on est appelé à construire, n'est-ce pas là un idéal de vérité à offrir à ces peuples qui cherchent leur voie?

3. Quelles que soient les imperfections, ne devrions-nous pas considérer le musée comme un contact direct avec la réalité que peuvent livrer une amélioration de la présentation et les moyens d'animation, de publicité et de propagande modernes?

Toutes ces questions peuvent aisément trouver leurs réponses. Sans être habilité à parler au nom de la foule des gens qui s'ennuient dans les musées,

on peut néanmoins, à partir de ce qui se fait en Afrique, à travers les nombreux articles des spécialistes tous très éminents, constater qu'il y a un problème. En outre, il y a des titres, comme ceux de notre Conférence, qui sont éloquents: 'Le Musée au service des hommes, aujourd'hui et demain.' Il y a, aussi, des études plus techniques comme celles de M. Duncan Cameron: 'Problems in the language of museum interpretation.' D'autres, enfin, plus proches de nous: 'Les musées, que peuvent-ils apporter? ' Dans tous ces cas on cherchera en vain, au delà de l'ingéniosité conceptuelle, de la rigueur technicienne, de quoi occulter l'incertitude des uns, l'inquiétude des autres. On a beau affirmer péremptoirement, comme on le fait dans le préambule des conclusions du colloque tenu sur les musées en novembre 1969 à la Maison de l'Unesco (une autre institution) que le musée 'par les immenses sources intellectuelles, morales et matérielles dont il dispose. . . constitue, au terme de l'évolution qu'il a subie à travers les âges, l'une des réalités les plus tangibles du monde contemporain', on ne parvient que très difficilement à faire oublier que le musée est l'équivalent du cimetière où l'on vénère ceux qui ont ouvert la voie. Au mieux, c'est le cadre du miroir dans lequel on voit les ancêtres s'épuiser à construire l'existence des vivants. C'est enfin le lieu fantastique où, au milieu des statuettes, des danses, entre deux rythmes, avec des rites, les peuples sans histoire sont appelés à apprendre l'histoire; l'histoire humaine, s'entend. A cette attitude, tout peut se produire. Et tout se produit en effet. Des Dogons aux coups d'Etat il n'y a qu'un seul et même métal, une seule et même culture. L'Education. . . c'est bien cela.

Je ne parle pas encore du Patrimoine. Je parle des phantasmes et je dis, puisqu'il faut s'exprimer à partir d'une certaine vision de l'Afrique, que les statuettes, les rites, les danses, toutes ces réalités qu'on donne pour affirmer notre personnalité, ne se trouvent nulle part dans aucun musée; encore moins dans les musées que l'on rencontre sur le sol africain. Ces choses: les danses, les statuettes, l'héritage, se rencontrent encore en Afrique, mais très loin des centres d'approvisionnement pour touristes et tous autres apprentis de la 'camera'. Les danses, les rites, les masques, la vérité quotidienne, sont vécus de manière réelle sous tous les yeux dans la vie publique, dans chaque geste individuel ou collectif, par des hommes et des femmes en chair et en os, et non pas de manière onirique ou phantasmagorique dans les ouvrages spécialisés d'africanistes et dans les salles d'expositions temporaires ou non temporaires. Pour être encore plus précis, il s'agit de prendre position, ici comme ailleurs, contre tous ceux qui veulent faire du tiers-monde et du continent africain en particulier, un musée, c'est-à-dire, au-dessus de la profusion du sol et du sous-sol, une vitrine de squelettes agiles et de mannequins mortellement ennuyeux. Il s'agit enfin, d'une manière générale, de savoir qu'une nouvelle civilisation s'élabore au moins depuis 1968, en dehors de celle qui s'entête à faire des musées une institution et des hommes une marchandise.

Mais, qu'est-ce donc qu'un musée, et comment, par une pratique muséographique vraiment humaine, aboutir à une culture enfin responsable?

Jusqu'ici, le musée ne tenait sa justification que d'une notion vague à souhait qu'on s'évertuait à appeler la conservation du patrimoine culturel de l'homme. Il se trouvait des gens très sérieux qui en parlaient dans leurs cours, et surtout dans des livres ou romans, à mesure que l'industrialisation révélait ses titres en indiquant ses extraordinaires possibilités. Mais la Culture c'est aussi, depuis au moins Descartes et notamment Kant et Hegel, la foi dans la raison. Or, l'industrialisation, produit de cette même raison, ne peut se reproduire qu'en détruisant les raisons propres de sa propre raison. Pris donc au piège de ses contradictions, l'Européen adulte, raisonnable et raisonneur, civilisé, cultivé et acculturateur, pour justifier son goût réel (ou feint) du passé et son souci réel (et non feint) du progrès, en vint à imaginer cette géniale institution où tout le monde ronfle et que l'Afrique s'est dépêchée d'assumer en même temps qu'elle assurait l'économie de traite et tout le reste.

Création d'un âge pré-industriel, conservé par les tics des littérateurs et les inhibitions des snobs, le musée est théoriquement et pratiquement lié à un monde (le monde européen), à une classe (la classe bourgeoise cultivée), à une certaine vision de la culture (nos ancêtres les Gaulois et leurs cousins, tous grands dolichocéphales blonds aux yeux bleus!) Ce monde est sans doute en train de disparaître, à la fois liquidé par la rigueur interne de la société industrielle et les coups de boutoir d'une histoire récente; mais le musée demeure encore le lieu de la concentration magique des obsessions poussiéreuses d'une classe qui croit toujours à l'extension de son pouvoir. Qu'il y ait beaucoup de monde dans les musées ne change rien à l'affaire. Le fait est que, à cause du monde tel qu'il est au moins depuis dix ans, une nouvelle pratique sociale aussi peu soucieuse de l'homme que la vieille mascarade humaniste, s'édifie cette fois avec la complicité des nègres et des autres qui, dans les escaliers de service, rêvent déjà de souvenirs et de nostalgie! Aussi la question n'est-elle pas ce que les petits paysans du Cantal ou les jeunes nègres de la brousse (les fameuses visites commentées) vont faire dans les musées, mais ce qu'ils y vont voir. Que cherchent-ils? Et quels rapports entre ce qu'ils veulent voir ou croient voir, et l'univers réel du commentaire ou du bavardage instruit? En termes plus précis, qu'est-ce que la visite d'un musée peut rapporter à la Société qui l'organise? Il nous faut, par conséquent, parvenir au fondement théorique de la réalité muséale et comprendre pourquoi le musée s'est barricadé aujourd'hui dans son mythe, et est, de ce fait, menacé d'un effritement interne.

L'existence, de par le monde, de musées vivants, ouverts au progrès, ne modifie rien. L'apparition de ces musées qui ont rompu avec le caractère muséologique traditionnel prouve, au contraire, que l'institution est condamnée et qu'elle est condamnée justement parce qu'elle est contestée par la majorité, c'est-à-dire la génération nouvelle. Contestée à ce point que les muséologues eux-mêmes cherchent à s'affranchir de cette appellation. Il importe de voir que cette contestation n'est pas un simple fait d'histoire, un moment difficile de la pensée muséale bourgeoise, mais une revendication qui s'attaque à la structure, à l'essence, à l'histoire et à la vie d'une institution qui, depuis deux siècles, stérilise la création et freine l'évolution culturelle. En ce

sens, le musée n'est pas, comme on le prétend généralement, coupé de l'enseignement; il est très correctement la matérialisation d'une certaine vision de l'homme à travers les différents systèmes éducatifs et culturels existants.

Le musée, dans sa pratique traditionnelle, est l'aveu même d'un projet: donner à ceux qui n'ont pas accès à la culture, un mythe qui soit à la fois la propédeutique à la conscience qu'ils doivent avoir et la conscience qu'ils doivent avoir pour être ce qu'ils sont, c'est-à-dire paralysés, dociles, soumis, drogués, bref, étrangers à eux-mêmes et mûrs pour assurer la tranquillité sociale sous la protection des grands ancêtres. Dans sa structure latente, le musée est bien dans un rapport de complémentarité et de complicité avec l'éducation. Et si l'éducation interpelle l'individu en sujet, le musée l'interpelle en bon citoyen. Fausse conscience à une situation réelle, le musée répète sur le plan national, pour des personnes d'âge et de niveau inégaux, les cours magistraux des universités. Et, sur le plan international, il ne se contente pas de nourrir l'assistance technique, mais demeure l'âme de ce système raffiné de charité préventive qu'on appelle la Coopération. Sur le théâtre du patrimoine de l'humanité, au nom de la solidarité, on tente de créer chez les peuples qui n'y sont pas préparés, une civilisation de l'Universel dont ils sont encore exclus et qu'on n'a plus la force de réaliser chez soi. On porte enfin la coquetterie jusqu'à enseigner aux populations du tiers-monde, et notamment d'Afrique, leurs propres cultures.

Sans doute les intentions ne sont pas en cause, et on ne peut révoquer l'honnêteté de tel ou tel expert américain ou européen. Mais, justement, toute cette bonne foi indique qu'ils sont insérés dans une structure qui, sous les étendards de la solidarité, masque, par la force des choses et des systèmes, aux populations 'assistées', leurs problèmes et leur condition réelle.

Qu'est-ce, en effet, qu'un expert? C'est un homme qui, à cause de sa formation, est appelé à fournir des avis. A partir de constatations clairvoyantes de gens lucides, nous pouvons indiquer brièvement les raisons de son échec et montrer comment, d'importance relative dans le domaine technique – car ici on peut toujours réévaluer, corriger, rectifier, – cet échec est le plus souvent, dans le domaine culturel, catastrophique en tant qu'il crée et développe des mouvements irréversibles.

Homme de qualité, ayant acquis dans un domaine particulier, scientifique ou professionnel une grande expérience, l'expert est chargé de donner des conseils, de préparer des plans et des programmes au bénéfice de collègues moins expérimentés. Dans le cas de la coopération intergouvernementale, l'expert visite brièvement un pays, étudie le ou les problèmes posés, prépare un rapport et le soumet au Gouvernement intéressé. Plus rarement l'expert demeure sur place pendant une période plus ou moins longue, pour suivre la réalisation du projet lui-même. Dans le cas des musées, le projet, d'ordinaire, n'est suivi d'effet qu'exceptionnellement. Les raisons de ces échecs sont de plusieurs natures: l'expert est parfois mal choisi, parle mal la langue du pays visité, n'en connaît que superficiellement les problèmes à la suite d'un séjour trop court, ne peut envisager la culture, les besoins, les conditions pratiques, que de l'extérieur. Son statut de semi-diplomate lui interdit certains contacts,

certaines franchises, le place à un niveau matériel et social comparable à celui d'un touriste. Enfin, une fois chez lui, l'expert, rendu à ses tâches quotidiennes dans sa propre institution, n'est plus en rapport avec le pays où il a effectué sa mission. Plus grave, l'expert, dans son rapport de mission, tend à décrire un type idéal d'institution, celle précisément qu'il souhaiterait avoir chez lui puisque précisément c'est au nom de sa propre expérience qu'on lui demande des solutions modernes et nouvelles.

Quant aux pays demandeurs, l'expérience prouve qu'ils réclament le plus souvent une mission pour dissimuler leur volonté de ne rien changer à la situation existante: les propositions de l'expert seront si coûteuses qu'elles justifieront un attentisme 'raisonnable'. Au reste, la mission est le plus souvent sans intérêt: ou bien le pays, à cause de l'absence de moyens financiers, de l'insuffisance du personnel d'exécution, n'est pas prêt au changement, ou alors il est si engagé dans son propre projet que l'expert n'est appelé que pour confirmer l'essentiel des décisions déjà prises. Dans tous les cas le coût des missions est toujours exorbitant. On remarque que dans certains pays visités, le budget d'une mission (voyage, frais de séjour, honoraires) représente trois à quatre fois le budget annuel de tous les musées. Et l'on est certain que l'expert a un salaire cinq fois au moins supérieur à celui du directeur des musées du pays. Cette situation est d'autant plus regrettable que l'on a déjà vu, en l'espace de deux ans, quatre à cinq experts visiter des pays voisins appartenant à la même région et ayant souvent des problèmes similaires. Sans oublier les missions dans le même pays, à peu d'intervalle, d'organismes rivaux ou différents pour résoudre le même problème. D'une manière générale et sans préjuger du fond, de telles missions sont, soit par manque de coordination, insuffisance de moyens, absence de sérieux, sans aucun rapport avec la réalité et par conséquent condamnées à une très grande inefficacité. Et, pour le fond, elles visent objectivement à faire prévaloir la supériorité du modèle culturel européen. Ainsi, par la force du système et sous le prétexte de l'art, l'expert finit par défendre la suprématie culturelle des pays industrialisés, confirmée par la puissance économique, technologique et. . . idéologique. L'internationalisation du concept de patrimoine de l'humanité n'est donc pas seulement factice, mais dangereuse dans la mesure où l'on surimprime un ensemble de connaissances et de préjugés dont tous les critères sont les expressions de valeurs élaborées à partir de données esthétiques, morales, culturelles, bref de l'idéologie d'une caste dans une société dont les structures sont irréductibles à celles du tiers-monde en général, et de l'Afrique en particulier.

Qu'y a-t-il, en effet, de commun entre la vision de l'art dans l'Afrique traditionnelle, et celle que l'Européen a de ses productions artistiques? Rien, sinon qu'on commence seulement à admettre l'existence d'un art en Afrique. Or, pour l'Africain, il n'y a pas de plus normal que l'activité artistique. L'art peut mourir parce qu'il participe de la vie humaine; ce n'est pas la figure d'une réalité hypostasiée, c'est l'écorce de la vie. Dans l'assiette du temps, l'art est mortel précisément parce qu'il indique, comme le remarquait Hölderlin, pour le poète, que c'est artistiquement que l'homme habite sur

cette terre. C'est, par conséquent, une chose sérieuse et redoutable d'être artiste. Ben Enwonwu écrit:

> Dans le vieux contexte social africain, la conception africaine de l'art s'identifiait avec toutes les autres conceptions de la vie. Elle n'était ni objective, ni analytique. Les réalités de la vie s'exprimaient à travers la structure symbolique de l'oeuvre d'art, l'image servant de lien. La conception de l'art ne jaillit pas de l'art lui-même, mais de l'ensemble d'une idéologie socio-religieuse de l'art adoptée par une même communauté spirituelle. . . L'art africain est tellement intégré à des conceptions socio-religieuses qu'il donne spontanément sa pleine mesure à travers des activités récréatives.

En conséquence, l'artiste n'est pas un observateur étranger. Il est dans l'image représentée, il est créateur de société, producteur d'histoire. Et l'art, varié, multiforme, divers, évolue constamment pour s'adapter aux conditions nouvelles de la société. Depuis les représentations les plus réalistes jusqu'aux symboles les plus symboliques: l'administrateur colonial et son casque.

On perçoit, dès lors, ce qu'il y a d'incongruité à placer dans les musées, en singeant l'Europe, tout élément culturel original; à étiqueter, conditionner, comme s'il s'agissait d'un coléoptère éclatant de lumière, une pièce vidée de sa substance vivante. On comprend enfin pourquoi ce qu'il y a encore d'Africains en Afrique s'amusent toujours follement lorsqu'on les entraîne dans 'nos musées'. Pour eux, l'objet défonctionnalisé, désacralisé, banalisé, dans le musée, n'est guère que le produit des déviations intellectuelles d'éléments étrangers à leur culture: une conscience étrangère plaquée sur une condition réelle. Et ils en rient parce que, eux seuls, possèdent encore, d'instinct, cette puissance Brechtienne de distanciation qui leur permet de distinguer le drame du mélodrame, les problèmes des vieilleries rances, la scène de l'histoire des oripeaux d'emprunt. Quant à ceux qu'on nomme les élites, ceux qui, dans les salons des chrétiens progressites, sociaux-démocrates et tous communistes en rupture de ban, font des plans de développement entre deux whiskies et plusieurs compromissions avec l'impérialisme, – tous, plus ou moins dénaturés par les bibelots de la négritude, au lieu de préparer l'avenir, nous nous installons avec extase et délice dans ce monde d'alibis, de subterfuges, de sublimations et de mensonges de la société de consommation. Tant que le nègre sera dans la Négritude, nous sommes assurés qu'on ne le lâchera pas contre le mouvement des Banques! Dans cette conscience empruntée du dehors nous réclamons des musées pour montrer, comme l'avait vu Césaire, que nous aussi nous avons une culture. A l'abri du monde, prenant le tapage pour le destin et son épuisement pour la pensée, nous créons les musées pour déchaîner toutes les formes fantastiques de l'aliénation moderne. Nous croyons jouer les grands rôles, mais dans ce rapport quasi-nul d'une conscience travestie, inadéquate à la situation réelle, nous n'occupons, à la vérité, que les bas-côtés d'une histoire qui parvient à nous envahir et dominer. 'Il est assurément très déplacé de voir vos bonnes oeuvres s'asseoir carrément, en pleine réception, à votre droite.'

Vraie partout, cette constatation d'Althusser l'est encore davantage pour l'Afrique. Une conscience aiguë des implications singulières d'une politique de domination économique devait nous conduire à vouloir autre chose que ces magasins de dépôts où sont stockés des objets sans vitalité, arrachés aux profondeurs de tradition et qui ne sont là que pour exorciser les crimes des autres.

Car ce n'est pas un hasard si l'Europe n'arrive pas à sauver ses propres musées du naufrage dont ils sont menacés. Les maisons de la Culture, en France, ne font que confirmer en les vidant de leur substance, en les anémiant, que les musées sont bien mûrs pour les coups de trique de la démolition. Et si, enfin, l'humour britannique, pourtant si fécond, n'a pas encore trouvé de terme de substitution, c'est parce que ce monde qui a enfanté les musées n'envisage pas encore de modifier la théorie sur laquelle repose sa stratégie de narcissisme liquidateur. Les expériences exceptionnelles faites par des hommes de premier plan qui ont acquis leur formation en dehors des musées, qui ont de l'homme une vision moins pathologique; celles réalisées dans des pays qui ont tenté de donner à la culture une autre définition; les solutions apportées par les musées de Mexico, celui de Niamey, du Musée Communautaire d'Anacostia dans un monde sous domination blanche; et tous ceux d'autres pays comme l'Inde, la Scandinavie, et plus systématiquement les pays socialistes, tous ces cas d'espèce prouvent qu'une nouvelle pratique muséographique ne doit et ne peut surgir que du *fracas de la Muséologie.*

On ne peut continuer de prendre les effets pour les causes, l'apparence pour la réalité. Il est temps d'aller à la racine de toutes ces déviations cérébrales et morales de l'homme pour appréhender comment les responsables des musées, souvent coupés de leur propre culture par leurs études scolaires et universitaires, vivent, pour la plupart, dans une triple solitude physique, intellectuelle et morale, par rapport aux activités des autres sciences, et sont incapables de savoir dans quelle direction se placer, quels mouvements il faut effectuer pour changer avec le monde. Comment enfin, loin de considérer le musée comme *une allusion*, ils se détruisent en pensant la réalité avec des concepts tombés du ciel de l'abstraction universitaire. Prenant les vessies pour des lanternes, l'exprimé pour l'expression, avec des concepts intérieurement déséquilibrés, leurs efforts après leurs rêves se fracassent sur le dur silex de la vie.

Car, en effet, un musée en soi n'est rien. En soi, le musée ne veut rien dire. Ce n'est qu'un concept qui indique une action à accomplir; un concept pratique signifiant que pour rencontrer et trouver la réalité à laquelle il fait allusion, il faut chercher, non plus dans l'homme abstrait, mais dans l'homme réel, dans l'ensemble des rapports sociaux et humains de l'homme. Le musée n'est donc pas une cambuse de reliefs abstraits, c'est *un panneau indicateur, un signal.* Un signal qui, à l'aide de signes, indique en quel lieu l'homme s'est essoufflé, quels gestes il lui faut encore faire et quels mouvements il faut

effectuer pour passer à l'humanité sur cette terre, tout en contemplant dans le firmament les étoiles infinies de la destinée. En dernière instance, les objets des musées n'ont jamais représenté que les manifestations tangibles, palpables et matérielles de l'existence spirituelle et morale de l'homme. L'homme, dans son environnement, ses traditions, sa vie, comment il a transformé la matière, intériorisé et assimilé les apports extérieurs, comment enfin il a assumé sa culture, c'est-à-dire assuré son développement. Par les objets muséographiques, nous savons que la culture prend racine dans un contact permanent entre le passé et le futur, dans un dialogue souvent furieux entre la tradition et le mouvement. La culture, c'est la réponse au delà de toutes possibilités à une situation précise de l'homme. C'est l'ensemble de toutes ces possibilités. En un mot, la culture, c'est le développement de l'homme: l'homme sans limites, limité seulement par les limitations qu'il s'impose en limitant son voisin. Le vrai développement est donc bien la culture humaine assumée. Aussi, en tant que membres d'une société qui aspire au développement, qui aspire tout simplement à une vie humaine, devons-nous faire obstacle par tous les moyens conceptuels et pratiques (les deux dans la mesure du possible), à tout discours muséologique visant à la production de succédanés de civilisation, la monopolisation de la culture par une élite d'analphabètes et l'appauvrissement du présent.

Pour nous, le développement procède de la culture comme le fruit de l'arbre. La culture est la condition de possibilité du développement. C'est l'effort humain constitué de l'ensemble des réponses intellectuelles, scientifiques et technologiques données par l'homme aux questions de sa vie matérielle et spirituelle. Réponses données de l'intérieur, reçues de l'extérieur et qui, visualisées et actualisées, forment les cadres d'une praxis enrichissante et poussent à la récupération de ce qui est explosif dans la tradition, pour un développement qui réduise les tensions du gaspillage humain.

Il s'ensuit que toutes propositions tendant au développement des musées en Afrique, ou ailleurs dans le tiers-monde, aboutissent pratiquement en entretenant la confusion sur la tradition, à transformer en plasma psychologique l'élan révolutionnaire des idées et à dérouter les énergies dans le miroir à mirage d'une civilisation occidentale qui ahane. C'est, de fait, un seul et même discours qui, sous les apparences de la contradiction, sur cette même trajectoire qui va de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre aux planificateurs des décennies du développement en passant par Huxley, Bernanos et les pontifes d'une certaine Négritude, décrète que la tradition est hostile au développement, mais nécessaire à la réconciliation de l'humanité avec elle-même. Il faut bien que les Nations qui travaillent trouvent un coin de tranquillité, de beauté et de volupté; un coin de détente et de calme à l'abri des pollutions de la civilisation. Puisque le développement c'est la création des loisirs, les Nègres, par leur folklore, participent déjà à cette civilisation. En les aidant, par nos projets, à mieux danser et chanter, en conservant par la climatisation leurs statuettes qui font la joie de nos enfants et de nos ethnologues, nous sommes assurés qu'après quelques aménagements intérieurs, quelques réfrigérateurs sous les paillottes, après deux ou trois

décennies du développement, nous fêterons avec eux la Parousie de l'Universel. La muséologie, en Afrique, c'est le couronnement de l'édifice des congés payés. Elle prétend fournir des éléments pour rattraper les pays riches; en réalité, elle fait des Africains des consommateurs passifs, des clients surveillés. La statuette Dogon, loin de la vie, loin de soi, n'a plus la force aujourd'hui de faire de nous des concurrents dangereux.

Il est clair que le musée, lieu du discours imposteur de la muséologie européenne, doit disparaître, chassé de la scène par une rupture qu'impose une pratique muséographique nourrie de l'expérience de ces milliards d'hommes qu'on continue d'ignorer et qui, chaque jour, davantage, savent qu'ils ont à proposer d'autres modèles que ceux légués par la Grèce classique et la Renaissance. La conscience de cette réalité est explosive. Elle entraînera, de gré ou de force, la muséographie à se manifester dans sa fonction critique de culture, sa fonction véritable de savoir, par une adéquation à la réalité quotidienne, l'adhésion à une histoire expérimentale. Le musée doit céder la place aux Centres de Formation et de Recyclage Historique.

Noyaux d'inspiration, centres énergétiques, ils seront des lieux où profuse la culture; des matrices fécondes d'où fusent toutes les théories humaines du développement. Sans lieu ni logement, le Centre de Formation ne tire son être que de la nécessité d'une structure idéologique propre à véhiculer le message humain. Il doit être dans les écoles, les maternités, les salles de projections, dans toutes les institutions, dans toute la vie nationale. Ce qui revient à dire que tout: les principes, la présentation, la méthodologie, la formation des muséographes, doit être repensé et exprimé en termes de développement à partir de la culture. A la fois, école, théâtre, place publique, lieu de récréation, ce Centre de Formation se sert des anciens musées comme d'un laboratoire où les réserves sont récupérées pour un enseignement, lui-même considéré dans ses cycles ou phases comme des moments d'une démonstration utile. Il rompt enfin, dans les principes comme dans les formes, avec les musées de la sérénité, en essayant d'attirer sur la terre tout ce qui tient au ciel et à l'invisible. Il condamne enfin la muséographie à devenir un instrument de connaissances.

Une telle vision des choses ne peut reposer que sur les principes suivants:

1. Que le développement n'est pas seulement un phénomène économique mais un moment de la création continuée de l'homme par l'homme dans toutes ses dimensions, 'depuis la croissance économique jusqu'à la conception du sens, des valeurs et des fins de la vie'.

2. Que la croissance pour la croissance n'est pas un critère éprouvé du développement.

3. Qu'il n'y a pas d'étalon unique de civilisation et qu'on ne peut définir de critère à partir de la trajectoire du développement d'une seule civilisation.

4. Que tout critère est intérieur à chaque civilisation dans un rapport spécifique de l'homme avec le monde et l'histoire.

5. Qu'à l'heure où des milliards d'hommes à qui l'on a refusé jusqu'ici la qualité d'hommes sont, malgré les traquenards, en train de défricher le sol sur lequel poussera l'autre homme; à l'heure, aussi, de la mutation scientifique et technique, il nous est impossible d'aborder la solution des problèmes qui sont posés à tous les hommes à l'échelle planétaire à partir du seul provincialisme européen.

6. Que toute forme de colonialisme culturel, même tempéré du paternalisme des institutions culturelles internationales, est mortel pour le tiers-monde, appauvrissant et fatal pour l'Europe.

7. Qu'il doit y avoir un dialogue des civilisations, soutenu par une démarche non plus rétrospective, mais prospective, qui vise au développement de l'histoire en train de se faire et aboutisse au développement des sous-développés en contribuant au développement des développés qui n'admettent qu'un seul critère de développement.

En d'autres termes, il faudrait, dans l'enseignement donné aux muséographes, rendre possible la confrontation des cultures par une distanciation de chacun par rapport à ses propres idéaux. En décentrant la conception traditionnelle de la culture par une mise en question de l'exceptionnalisme européen, on doit obtenir une remise en perspective du passé qui permette de dégager les grands moments de la symphonie humaine. Ce qui impose universellement pour tous les muséographes:

1. L'acquisition de solides connaissances en:

   Anthropologie culturelle et sociale.

   Sociologie, psychologie, économie, histoire (notamment ancienne et médiévale).

2. Des bases solides dans l'étude de la méthodologie:

   Du travail multidisciplinaire.

   Des communications de masse.

   De la pédagogie, des enquêtes d'évaluation.

3. Des connaissances importantes dans l'élaboration des techniques de développement.

Quant à la formation plus spécifique des muséographes du tiers-monde, il faudrait réduire la fréquence des réunions internationales qui, pour des raisons financières et politiques propres à nos régions, n'apportent presque rien à nos délégués. Au cours des rencontres pour des échanges d'expériences, on cherchera surtout à fixer les règles éthiques et les normes internationales pour protéger contre les razzias des marchands de produits tropicaux. C'est dire que l'essentiel ne peut résider dans ces seuls contacts qui ne doivent être qu'épisodiques. Comme il ne peut se limiter à l'octroi de bourses de voyages d'études ou de stages. Les bourses, les stages, les études à l'étranger, doivent être considérés comme des palliatifs. De même que sont douteux les critères de sélection des étudiants, de même il est très absurde d'envoyer des futurs muséographes africains apprendre dans les musées européens l'ethnologie

africaine. La coopération internationale, si elle veut faire oeuvre utile, devra s'employer à utiliser tous les moyens pour réaliser:

1. Une formation sur place avec l'aide des gouvernements intéressés, cette formation articulée avec les programmes des centres régionaux.

2. La création de grands centres dans chaque continent (Afrique, Asie, Europe).

3. Un système permanent de recyclage ou de perfectionnement du personnel existant; des séminaires nationaux et régionaux réguliers, etc.

4. Un dialogue permanent entre tous les muséographes, par les canaux habituels de l'information.

Tout cela, bien entendu, n'est qu'indicatif et vise à énoncer l'ensemble des tâches qu'il faut accomplir pour modifier complètement l'institution, intégrer la pratique muséographique dans la communauté nationale d'abord, humaine ensuite, adapter les activités, les méthodes de présentation et d'animation aux conditions particulières de chaque peuple, pour bâtir sur des subjectivités parallèles la communauté humaine. Il s'agit, à tout moment, par le livre, le photographie, le diagramme, le film, d'appréhender l'héritage visible de l'homme. Ce retour au réel par une auscultation constante de l'objet interdit la spécialisation: archéologie, musée d'art moderne, etc. Tout cela n'a pas de signification réelle. Ce ne sont pas les fouilles qui fondent l'archéologie, mais la géographie, la climatologie, l'histoire naturelle, l'histoire économique, la démographie, la toponymie, les objets de fouilles. L'archéologie vient après les fouilles. Elle est l'un des moments de l'histoire expérimentale. En ce sens, la spécialisation est un non-sens. Il n'y a pas d'objets anciens ni d'objets modernes. Tout objet exposé appartient au passé. Or, l'objectif est de démontrer la continuité par des références constantes au présent, le chemin de l'évolution par les différences, la permanence par les ressemblances: ville ancienne et ville moderne, techniques anciennes et actuelles, les transformations économiques, les courants d'échange, l'histoire des relations humaines, les rapports sociaux et économiques. Bref, dans un 'dialogue constant des civilisations', parvenir à véhiculer le message fondamental. Et, par un spectacle permanent, grâce à la convergence des moyens audio-visuels, les techniques actuelles de l'ubiquité, créer une structure émotionnelle permettant à quiconque, quel que soit son niveau de culture, non seulement de déchiffrer le message, mais de le vivre effectivement. Il ne s'agit pas de juxtaposer des oeuvres, mais de rendre directement sensible le fait que, depuis la naissance des civilisations dans les grands bassins limoneux de la Mésopotamie, du Nil, du Fleuve Jaune et de l'Indus, il s'est constamment produit des migrations, des conquêtes, des échanges, des rencontres, des fécondations réciproques, et que la moindre statuette témoigne de cette extraordinaire odyssée humaine.

Ainsi donc, culture et savoir, dans un contact charnel entre l'homme et l'objet-produit humain, la muséologie sera le lieu où décroît la possibilité d'être dupe des mots, d'être crédule aux mensonges. Elle aidera l'Europe

donatrice à être plus modeste, à mieux connaître l'histoire de l'humanité en oubliant celle qui faisait de la civilisation occidentale le seul centre d'initiative historique et de création de valeurs. Elle chantera l'étendue et la diversité du monde, l'avenir de l'homme, ses pulsions les plus sombres et ses actions les plus lucides. Enfin, à l'heure où une nouvelle mutation scientifique et technique accélère vertigineusement le développement pour créer par l'écart entre les deux mondes un conflit haletant qui ne peut s'abolir jamais que dans la paix d'une catastrophe, elle fixera dans sa devise la vérité de ce proverbe malien:

> Si tu creuses la tombe d'un plus faible que toi, fais en sorte qu'elle soit grande, car tu ne sais pas s'il peut t'entraîner dans sa chute.

La nouvelle pratique muséologique doit préparer à l'avènement d'une culture vraiment responsable. Elle ne peut le faire qu'en prenant les choses à la racine. Or, nous dit Marx, pour l'homme, la racine, c'est l'homme lui-même. *La muséologie sera donc radicale ou ne sera pas.*

The functions and aim of museums

Grete Mostny

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One of the most challenging facts of our time is the existence of great masses of population, whose yearly increase is calculated at 65 million human beings, so that by the end of the century, barely twenty-nine years ahead, a world population of about 7,000 million may be expected. This is a completely new phenomenon, defying all historical experience and still without the perspective of a solution to all the problems that arise from the sheer quantitative factors.

Humanity, anxious for progress, and in the euphoria of the technological advances of this century, has forgotten that the planet it inhabits is limited in space and resources. Part of this humanity is literally suffocating in the midst of the abundance and material well-being it has achieved, while the other part is starving and in need of the most essential goods that dignify human existence. On the one hand it claims imperiously, based on its numerical strength, access to and participation in public, national, and world affairs, and on the other hand each of its individual components feels lonely and isolated in the midst of his equals and asks for individual attention and consideration.

This humanity is made up of heterogeneous societies of differing cultural and technological development, each subject to constant social changes, that express themselves through creeds, convictions, and governments.

Museums are supposed to serve these societies by creating adequate techniques and integrating their activities with those of other institutions which, in their field of action, are also designed to be of service to local, regional, and world communities. This social diversity obliges the museum to find approaches and solutions adapted to each one, which implies the creation of manifold and flexible museologies in order to be able to adjust to

the continuous changes that affect and are brought about by mankind. This means that museums must maintain a constant vigilance in order to be up-to-date and that they must do their utmost to anticipate, if possible, social and cultural orientations and events, expressing, by means of their exhibitions and research activities the most important problems that affect their communities. If they do so, they will become a means of mass communication, attracting great numbers of visitors that will come in search of information and orientation. They will also become important agents of influence on public opinion and be able to build up a public conscience.

This is what is expected from museums regarding the conservation of natural resources in this critical time of worldwide devastation. Through museums of natural sciences, technology, art, and history, a deep consciousness should be created in the community about the urgency of preserving the renewable and non-renewable natural resources on which the survival of humanity depends. It is superabundantly known that these resources are limited and that the moment of their exhaustion and depletion is coming nearer and nearer. Nevertheless, the majority of the members of society seem to believe, if they consider the thought at all, that natural resources can be replaced in the same way as manufactured goods, by buying new ones, when the old ones have been spent or become obsolete. By the same measure that man separates himself from nature, he visualizes her with the mentality of a consumer society. It is one of the most important and urgent services the museums of the whole world can render to their public, and through them to society, to change this mentality for a consciousness of responsibility in everyone towards the tree that takes fifty years and more to grow to splendour; towards water and air which we pollute; and towards the equilibrium of ecological cycles that are endangered or destroyed by the impact of human exploitation or by new technologies with their marginal effects on their surroundings. In order to offer this service to the community, museums must employ all their means to co-operate with universities and other scientific centres, with international organizations, such as the United Nations, and the Organization of American States, etc. They must undertake their own investigations and make their results widely known in order to impress their public with the dimensions of the impending danger, showing at the same time ways and means of avoiding it.

This mission of creating a public conscience with regard to natural resources which the museum owes to society, is also important with regard to cultural treasures which are in danger of disappearing or being destroyed.

The conviction that the enjoyment of cultural goods is the right of each member of a society and not only of an élite, moved the owners of great collections, in past centuries, to open them to the broad public until finally they became the property of public institutions and governments. The same convictions and considerations have made it possible in the last decades to save the Egyptian monuments of Aswan and Nubia and to conserve and restore Venice and Florence. In these enterprises, museums worked as partners with Unesco and other national and international institutions.

During the decades that have passed since the end of the Second World War a vigorous cultural tourism has sprung up that brings to museums an international public which is eager to know other people, other cultures, and other ways of life. This phenomenon, which moves millions of people across continents, has been the theme of various conferences and meetings of national and international organizations in Europe and America because it not only brings about a better understanding of people, but it is also of the greatest economic interest to the countries concerned. As a matter of fact, in many countries tourism has become the most important 'industry' that gives employment to a considerable part of the population due to the necessity for an efficient infrastructure involving roads, accommodations, specialized staff and handicrafts, etc. This cultural and scientific tourism signifies also a spontaneous step towards regional, continental, and world integration. Among the chief attractions and 'musts' for tourists, museums enjoy a high priority, serving for the mutual comprehension of people and influencing favourably the economy of their countries.

In order to make it possible for that part of the population which is unable to travel to participate in cultural affairs, circulating exhibitions are organized in and outside different countries. The importance of the role of museums in these cultural undertakings has been recognized by national and international organizations. These try to facilitate the exchange of scientific and artistic collections by means of Customs' agreements (GATT), and international legislation which allows free entrance and exit of exhibitions and gives special facilities to travelling lecturers and scholars.

Besides the contribution made by museums to the economy of their countries through their importance for touristic activities, they are also involved in the development of other national resources and industries through their scientific research. They co-operate actively in projects of applied science, orienting their investigations towards the needs of their country's exploitation industries, such as fisheries, petrol, mining, and others.

With this we come to consider the functions of museums, whatever their type, the means by which they are able to be a service to man and society. There are several of them, all of which bear a common seal that sets them apart from those of other institutions; museum functions gyrate around that which is essential in a museum, the real and original object.

Collecting, therefore, is a basic function of the museum. According to its sphere of interest, this means the collection of natural specimens, archaeological or palaeontological excavation material, ethnographic expedition specimens, and the buying or exchange of works of art and technology. It goes without saying, that the person in charge of collecting must be a specialist who knows what he wants, how to get it, and how to evaluate it. Through collecting the museum is able to gather a great assortment of objects which constitute a representative sample of the natural and cultural manifestations of a region, one or more countries, or the whole world, and which are at the same time the 'raw material' for museum work. It is of the utmost importance that the person in charge of acquisitions be an expert in

his speciality, because the times have long passed when it was sufficient for an object to be a curiosity in order to find a place in a museum. Today's public is sophisticated and far more educated and interested than it was thirty or fifty years ago. It is a public always eager to raise its level of knowledge and it is not satisfied by looking at and admiring indiscriminately that which is put in front of it in the showcases.

The apparently innate tendency of man to collect has received a strong impulse thanks to the steady rise in his cultural level, and the 'hobby' of collecting is far more general now than it was ever before. At the same time the quality of collected items also seems to improve. These collectors, whatever their cultural or financial capacity, have developed a strong personal relationship with the museum because they recognize in it a potential source of information and in its curators souls akin to theirs. The museums, for their part, should foster the friendship and trust of amateur collectors, because they are also for the museologist potential sources of information.

Research in museums is based on the collections. This is the original and unique quality of museums and of investigation in museums. Objects are studied from every aspect, for their intrinsic value as well as for their documentary value, which is given by the object's context. In this way, through the study of natural specimens, an ecological synthesis is reached, and through the study of cultural objects a sociological one. In other words, through the study of objects an image of the surrounding world should be achieved and offered to the visitor. A *conditio sine qua non* is the high scientific solvency of the museum's staff, whose members, in the case of the more important museums, also belong generally to the teaching body of a university. Another condition, often forgotten, is the necessity to offer a maximum of facilities to visiting scientists or artists, facilities which not only include free access to the collections, but also adequate working and living conditions at the museum, because each collection and each object gains in value according to the number and quality of scholars who study it.

As in the case of collecting, there is also an increasing demand by the public for participation in research activities. When private collectors, youngsters and adults, approach the scientists of the museum asking for information, the museum should give it; unfortunately, the scarcity of scientific staff does not always allow for this service.

Another basic and traditional function of the museum, as old as the museum itself, is conservation. Each object needs care and protection to assure its continued existence. The methods of preservation, conservation, and documentation (the latter can also be ascribed to the task of investigation) have changed in the course of time, employing more and more specialized procedures. These demand a high scientific and technological ability from the experts in charge and the installation of expensive equipment.

The majority of museums, with the exception of the greatest, experience most of their difficulties in the field of conservation. While in research work there is always a possibility of counting upon scientists from other

institutions (universities, foundations, academies), the techniques of conservation are so specialized and so adapted to the needs of the collections, that museums are obliged to train their own experts and install their own laboratories.

With that we come to the question of the training of personnel for museums. This problem has to be approached on two levels: at one level for postgraduate personnel with a university degree who require postgraduate or in-service courses at a museum or institute of conservation, as at the Unesco Centre in Mexico or the Intergovernmental Centre at Rome, or in specialized schools as in the Department of Museum Studies of the University of Leicester and the school of the Louvre or at Leipzig; and a second or medium level, for the training of technicians who are capable of working independently or under the supervision of high-level specialists in museums that cannot afford costly installations and expensive conservation staff who would be capable of doing their own research in the field, but which nevertheless need permanent personnel to take care of their collections. In the long run, more personnel of this latter type will be needed and it is therefore necessary to create more centres for the technical teaching of museography at this medium level in different parts of the world, especially in developing countries. By the way, until now, in the creation of regional institutes for conservation, preference has been given to those dealing with cultural objects, without any provision being made for institutes which conserve natural science specimens. This fact is also symptomatic of our tendency of estrangement from nature.

A museum that has at its disposal staff and equipment for conservation, preservation, and restoration, is also able to render a service to the community in this field, offering facilities at low cost to private collectors who generally lack the necessary knowledge to do a competent job themselves and who cannot afford to pay for it in commercial establishments. Again the service will be mutual, because it will allow the museologist to become acquainted with objects which otherwise might never come to his attention.

If the museum has several functions it has but one aim, that of education. We consider that education means everything that serves to give an individual more knowledge about the world he lives in, independently of the way in which this is accomplished.

The form in which museums offer education is totally different to the teaching given in schools; there is only a coincidence of purpose and it is important to work towards a complementation and not a duplication of efforts. The factor of coercion that still exists in the traditional school curriculum must be completely absent from the museum. Here the spontaneous interest of children and adults should be stimulated so that they work in entire liberty in the field of their personal interests. In an analysis of the projects presented at a Scientific Youth Fair in Santiago (Chile) it was seen that only 41 per cent of them had any relationship with the school curriculum. The majority was freely selected by the participants in fields that

do not even figure in school teaching. He who enters a museum, does so as a free individual, without the obligations or pressures that exist at school or at work. He is a king who orders the objects to talk to him; that their language be intelligible is the concern of the museologist.

The enormous amount of knowledge humanity has accumulated in all fields obliges schools to present to the pupil only a selection of that which the educators deem will be most useful to him, preferably in those sciences in which it is supposed that major progress is to be expected during the next decades. This selection obliges the teacher to eliminate most detailed knowledge, which formerly had to be learned by heart, in favour of the teaching of general processes. Unfortunately this kind of teaching tends to become very theoretical, and it is too often forgotten that these processes take place in or concern real beings or objects and are not mere abstractions. On this point the museum enters the scene of education; apprenticeship at a museum is based on original objects and the chemical formula turns out to be a precious stone, the alimentary chain is composed of plants, insects, and animals that the student is familiar with, and ecological equilibrium concerns the river or forest he knows.

Above all, education at the museum takes the shape of the exhibition of original objects. In the course of recent decades exhibition methods have been depurated by eliminating the crowding of objects which only confused the visitor and by presenting groups with an internal cohesion. A good exhibition is a narration based on objects, where the labels and written information should not be more than a kind of prologue. The story itself is a dialogue between the object and the imagination of the observer. Just as an object is always related to other things in the real world, so must it also be shown in its ecological and social context in the museum, without being forced into the rigid compartments of different disciplines which are only an abstraction of reality.

Exhibitions are permanent, temporal, or circulating and should be complemented by guided visits, lectures, films, and tape-recordings. In order that a dialogue can develop, the scientist, the educator, and the designer of the museum must create special techniques, their own museographic language, which has to become a new, easily understood means of mass communication. This is a difficult task, a challenge to museologists, who should concentrate all their efforts on its solution. This may mean that they have to free themselves from a deep-rooted conviction, which perhaps is a mere prejudice, that the written word or text is essential for communication among educated people. Each museum has to execute these exhibitions in the measure it is able to, always trying to teach wider circles of the community and present the chosen theme in such a way that faithfully reflects reality, even if it comprises only a small fraction of a larger unit. The approach which is chosen depends on the intention of the scientist and the educator, who have to take into account the educational needs and interests of their community.

In spite of innovations and improvements in exhibition techniques

museums had felt that they still did not offer enough and that they were considered by their public as places of transit, incapable of producing a permanent and active relationship with them. For this reason museums have tried during recent years to introduce new aspects into their activities, in the hope of attracting a larger number of people. Unfortunately many of these extension activities have been completely foreign to the functions of a museum, and have transformed them into clubs and places of entertainment, in which the collections and objects have become mere adornments without transcendency, pushed into a second or third plane, thus denaturalizing the museum and robbing it of its uniqueness as a place that offers authentic objects. The desire of attracting at any cost has encountered a vigorous reaction on the part of most conservators and now again there exists a major discrimination regarding museum activities and the museum public. Out of the experiment 'museum at any cost' crystallized the conviction for a 'museum for everybody'. The higher educational level of the population and the greater amount of free time, together with the constant information handed out by means of mass communications has enlarged everyone's interest in the world they live in so that they turn to the cultural institutions best able to satisfy this interest. But this public is no longer passive, satisfied to look at what is exposed in the showcases, it is an active one, that wants information and participation in scientific and cultural affairs.

In this eagerness of the community for additional and more active education, lies the future orientation of the museum. Many museums have already surrounded the nucleus of their traditional activities with scientific and artistic youth groups, patronizing their fairs and exhibitions, and putting at their disposal specially trained teachers. Others offer or consider offering the same facilities to adults by means of scientific and artistic workshops, where the working population can dedicate their leisure time to scientific research or artistic and technological creation under the guidance of teachers and specialists. Courses for scientific, artistic, and technological initiation, lectures and colloquies offered by museums, attract a steadily growing public. To satisfy this demand, museums need more space, more laboratories, and more staff and first of all opening hours adapted to the needs of the working population. For their part, museums will have the satisfaction of training enthusiastic collaborators, who will help to enlarge their collections and in more than one instance co-operate on the basis of voluntary work to overcome the shortness of staff from which all museums suffer.

Besides these extra-curricular educational and leisure-time occupations, museums are ideal collaborators for formal school teaching. Most of the major museums have educational departments staffed by teachers who attend to school groups and guide them through the exhibition halls, complementing the always more or less theoretical teaching of the classroom with first-hand contact with natural and cultural reality. Through these visits, the children's interest in science and arts should be awakened, motivating them to form for themselves collections of objects in their schools. For these school collections there should be rules other than those for the public museums. The children

themselves should decide how to study, classify, and exhibit such collections, thus allowing them to order the world which surrounds them after their own fashion. If this could be done, professional museologists and educators should visit these children's museums often and I am sure we could all learn a lot from them. These activities of the children will be at the same time a powerful incentive for them to come to the public museum in order to make comparisons with their own work.

In developing countries museums have still another field of activity to enter: that of the production of didactic material. It is well known that the fabrication of didactic material constitutes one of the largest industries in the world because more than half of the world's population is of school age. Certainly museums should not transform themselves into factories, but they should consider the elaboration of pilot-projects which could be transformed into mass-produced articles by the industrial sector of society. This might be another way for museums to foster economic development in their countries.

All this shows clearly that museums are far from outmoded and obsolete either in the present or in the future. On the contrary, they will exist and be important as long as there exist original objects and it is to be expected that their importance will increase. In their aim to be of service to man in a multiple and expanding society, they have to satisfy not only a reduced élite as before, but also the whole community, whose cultural level is constantly rising. If this rise is good for the society, it is also good for the museums. It is at the same time a great challenge to museologists, who will have to increase their activities, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. They must no longer improvise or depend entirely on their intuition, but create a solid basis for their profession; they must elaborate a philosophy or science for their service and consolidate it with techniques created in museological research institutes and museographic schools for specific functions.

The prospects for museums in the future are good, if the museologists are good.

Museums and environment

B. Hubendick

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Introduction

I have been asked to discuss museums and environment and, I suppose, their bearing on each other. Then the first question is: What is a museum?

A museum, in the strict sense, is an institution which continually documents the course of development within its field by means of three-dimensional objects and of all sorts of data enriching the information content of these objects. (Museums in a broad sense, include, of course, almost all institutions presenting information by means of exhibitions.)

There is only one thing which principally distinguishes man from animals. That is his cumulative tradition and his capacity for maintaining a specified information flow. Without his inheritance of tradition a human being is nothing but an intelligent but inexperienced animal. Man became man in a broader sense just through his cumulative tradition. Today the cumulative tradition, this fast-growing amount of experience which has to be carried over the generations, has become a necessary burden. Special institutions are employed to carry this burden, archives for the written, today even spoken, word; libraries for the printed word; and museums for, in the first place, three-dimensional objects. Today computers, annexes to our brain, participate. Computers can hardly be regarded as particularly human gadgets. Nevertheless, as databanks are not, like the brain, limited to a single generation, they represent, together with museums, libraries, and archives, the purely human more than anything else by helping to carry the cumulative

tradition from one generation to the next. Animals eat and breed but they do not have cumulative tradition.

In short, museums are more fundamentally human than almost anything else.

Next question: What is environment?

Environment in a strict sense is nothing without a subject in the centre. Man has put himself in the centre and regards everything around him as *his* environment, as something created for *his* benefit. This is particularly true for man of Western culture dominated by a humanistic and Christian outlook. The drawback of this outlook is just that anthroprocentric attitude which puts man in the centre of creation.

Today man in the centre of creation is an inadequate description of the situation of man. The animal in the periphery describes better his true present situation.

Man's intelligence and insight have enabled him to step aside from nature's balanced ecological system, within which he was originally evolved. In all the animal kingdom, man alone has been able to deliberately manipulate the designs of nature. Symbolically, man has thrown a spanner into nature's delicately adjusted machinery. In doing so he has not only upset the balance of nature, he has lost his own balance also. This is one reason why man can today be described as the creature in the periphery.

Another is that the artificial environment created by modern civilization has relentlessly driven man to exist closer and closer to the limits of his endurance. The anthroprocentric attitude of man is to some extent responsible also for this. Man has not willingly understood or acknowledged the fact that he is an organism with biological needs and limitations, a fate he will never escape.

I said earlier that environment in the strict sense is nothing without a subject in the centre. This of course, is rather philosophical and related to man as a self-conscious being. But I have also explained how man has put himself in the centre of the environment in a very concrete way. He has regarded himself as the owner of the world and behaved as if nature is indestructible and has no limit to her resources. This behaviour is the background of the serious environmental situation today. It is the background of the fast-changing world man is living in today, and to which he is hardly able to adapt biologically. The natural selection, by means of which man originally evolved, has been replaced by an artificial, partly destructive, selection, or rather lack of selection. Adaptation is today brought about primarily by technical means, which makes man more and more a slave to his technology. It is also brought about by mobilization of man's complete range of tolerance. Man is forced to live more and more in the fringe of his tolerance.

Man remains in the centre of his world, not as owner but as the sole creature who is able to consciously influence or adjust his surroundings. If man wants to continue his materialistic and soulful existence he has to use this power not for shortsighted benefit by plundering the natural resources, but for restoring his ecological balance. This cannot be done unless he

understands the intricate interrelationships between himself and his environment, unless he regards himself as an organism involved in the complicated ecological system or, in short, unless he understands human ecology.

To summarize: Man has not realized in time that he is integrated into his own surroundings. This has caused the destruction of his natural environment.

Man has not realized in time his own biological limitations and needs. This has been a contributing factor in his creation of unsatisfactory artificial environments.

Both these phenomena have exposed man to a rapidly changing environment.

The realization today that man's environment is rapidly deteriorating makes the environmental problem one of man's primary concerns.

This is the background we have to keep in mind when we discuss museums and environment.

General museum responsibilities related to human ecology

The essential factor contributing in the destruction of our natural environment and the deterioration of our artificial environment is the process of acting for short-term economic benefit or profit without calculation of the costs of the long-term indirect influence on the environment. In order to break this trend and to improve the environmental situation it is necessary to employ a broad, long-term perspective in formulation of goals, in planning, and in activities which affect the environment. It is particularly important that political leaders apply this sort of perspective. However, the dilemma is that, for certain reasons, politicians are very often inclined to employ a particularly shortsighted perspective. In order to change this situation the politicians need the support of a broad, well-informed, and responsible general public.

Museums, due to their specific function, are particularly aware of and concerned with the fact that our present is only a moment linking up the past with the future. For this reason a museum is in a good position to present a perspective extending into and benefiting the future. The various activities of museums are well suited to foster and support the understanding for an employment of a long-term perspective. Documentation, research, exhibition work, and other activities may all contribute. In the following pages I shall try to show how this can be done in museums engaged in different fields of experience.

Specific museum responsibilities related to human ecology

Documentation

The relationship between man and his environment has been continuously changing. At present it is changing at a fast-accelerating rate. A change or a trend is observed by comparison between the past and the present. Its details

Fig. 1. Storing material which provides a continuous documentation of evolutions, man-made and others, in our natural environment is important. Such material is necessary to form a basis for comparison and for continuous evaluation of human effects on our environment, i.e. our basis for existence, and, also, to secure material for retrospective methods and techniques yet to come.

can be analysed by the study of documents covering the course of time. Objects stored in the museums give us today possibilities of analysing development trends. Further continuous collection of representative objects will give future generations the possibility of analysing trends during the then past times, and to do so from an outlook which is unknown to us. Our generation has invented new methods and techniques for analysing objects. Future man will do the same and it is impossible for us to foresee with completeness and accuracy what sort of objects will be of particular importance to him when he analyses the past. This is the main reason why museums must aim for a universal coverage when collecting and conserving documentation.

The older collections in natural history museums have rarely been gathered for the purpose of saving bits of undisturbed nature for a time when such nature is almost nonexistent. Nevertheless, such items have proved to be of great importance. They present a reference basis with which subsequent

conditions can be compared. The study of mercury poisoning in birds can be chosen as just one example. A few years ago alarming observations were made of poisoning in birds in Sweden as well as in some other countries. Dangerously high levels of mercury in hens' eggs were also observed. It was suspected that certain agricultural practices were involved, but the connection was not quite understood. In this situation the museum collections of bird skins were consulted. A series of bird feathers from different periods of time were analysed with regard to their mercury content. Even material from the preceding century, when artificial mercury contamination did not occur, could be analysed. The findings led to the solution of the problem and subsequent legislation.

The capacity of bird feathers to register effects of pollution is nothing unique. It has recently been discovered that mosses accumulate airborne lead and thus can be of assistance in registering the spatial spread of such pollution. Preserved material of mosses records changes of lead dispersal with time and also secures a reference level from the time when artificial lead contamination did not occur.

These fairly recent experiences emphasize the importance of continuous documentation of natural history objects in order to secure material for retrospective methods and techniques to come. Series of single objects, be it plants, animals, rock and soil samples, core samples, etc., are not enough. It is equally important to collect and store samples of populations or even associations of organisms, for example, samples of plankton or soil organisms. Such samples are necessary to document synecological changes within populations or in the relationships between different types of organisms. Such relationships, in their turn, may be indicative of certain environmental changes, either man-made or natural.

The main reason for continuous documentation in the field of natural history stressed here, i.e. to secure material for retrospection in the future, is valid also for museums of other fields. However, the retrospection based on material of these other fields predominantly concerns other problems although some overlapping occurs.

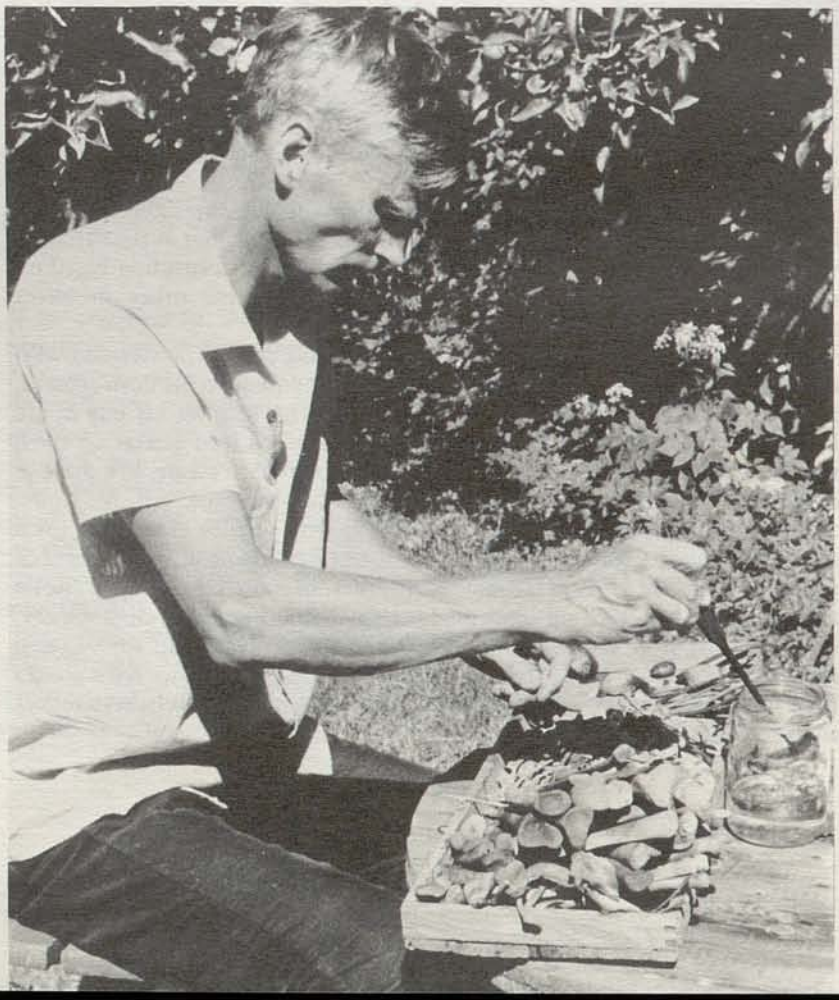
Museums of prehistoric archaeology are, in this context, concerned with material elucidating the evolution of man's relationship to his environment, i.e. the prehistoric evolution of human ecology. This involves his way of life in relation to changing natural resources as well as his own effects on these resources or, in other words, how man has contributed to create, in a positive or negative way, his own environment during prehistoric time.

Historical museums, be it museums dealing with agrarian ethnology, town museums dealing with various aspects of urban development, or museums of technology, have a similar function to that of museums of prehistoric archaeology. They, too, are concerned with man in his changing environment, but in historical or modern times. They particularly document the material results of human activities throughout the ages. These activities have always been influenced by the environment, and the documents thus help to reflect characteristics of this environment.

The same is true for the material dealt with by the art museums. Works of art normally reflect the emotional experience of the individual artist. The environment certainly stamps a heavy imprint on the artist's mind and is transmitted to the work he creates. Above that, pictorial art often directly depicts human environments of various times and locations and also indirectly presents a picture of man's attitude to his natural and cultural environment during different periods of time.

Museums of general anthropology, finally, are concerned with human life in different environments, but not primarily with a time aspect. Such museums explicitly deal with comparative human ecology. They have secured material elucidating so-called primitive cultures, i.e. cultures adapted to and in balance with nature. They have secured material from cultures adapted to widely different natural environments. Today such independent cultures are practically extinct, and the current documentation compiled by museums of general anthropology is primarily concerned with the expressions and

Fig. 2. Technical treatment of bone material from archaeological excavations makes it possible for the osteologist to draw conclusions about the human environment during prehistoric time. Many museums of natural history provide this service to the archaeologist.



manifestations of mixed cultures. This largely means the influence of the Western way of life on various cultures. It is obvious that a thorough knowledge and understanding of such phenomena are unavoidable prerequisites for successful aid programmes to the developing countries.

Research

The handling of documentary material, its selection, its classification, and the treatment of accompanying data, involves a considerable amount of research work. This type of research work must necessarily be given priority in the museum routine in order to secure the documentary material for the future. It is time-consuming and the museum personnel often has difficulty in finding enough time for this task. With the increasing interest in and demand for the educational services of the museum it has in many cases been even more difficult for the museum staff to fulfil its routine research responsibilities. This is particularly true in medium-sized and small museums where the same personnel has to carry out both research and, for example, exhibition work, and where the increase of educational activities has not been accompanied by an appropriate increase in personnel.

The routine type of research mentioned above has to continue. Therefore other research work, research which is based on a more comprehensive study of the material, has almost ceased in many museums. In certain local museums research work is even regarded as being outside the responsibility of the museum according to municipal or other regulations. These circumstances make it important for museums to function at least as material banks for research carried out elsewhere, for example, at university or other research institutes.

The research, beyond the routine research connected with acquisition of material, that should be carried out and based on museum material, concerns human ecology in several ways. This has already been indirectly explained above under Documentation. It means, as far as natural history museums are concerned, in the first place the recording of change, both apparent and hidden, in the human environment, particularly in the living environment or biosphere of which man is actually an integral part. It means, as far as museums of prehistoric archaeology, history (in a broad sense), and general anthropology are concerned, primarily the undertaking of research leading to an increased understanding of man's relationships to and dependence on his natural and artificial environment.

Exhibition work

Up to fairly recent times the extrovert side of museum activity, at least in most European museums, was limited to more or less permanent exhibitions. They often gave the public the impression of dull and dusty arrangements with but a feeble attraction to the visitors. The main reason was that the scientists trained to take care of the museum collections were entrusted also to do the exhibition work. Sometimes it was well done but more often not. The scientists made displays suitable for other scientists. The displays spoke

with a language which did not and could not be comprehended by the general public, still less be enjoyed, or assimilated as an informative and/or emotional message. The reason, of course, was that the aim of the exhibition was grasped either vaguely or not at all. Today the situation has changed drastically in many museums.

The aim of museum exhibitions is, naturally, to broaden and deepen both knowledge and emotional experience in the mind of the general public. When focusing on the human environment the aim of the exhibitions, in accordance with what has been said earlier in this paper, is to foster and support the understanding for and employment of a long-term perspective on the interrelationships between human beings and their environment.

What does that mean in realistic terms? It means making the visitor aware of the disastrous consequences of modern trends in development which are promoted by human activity and the necessity of changing these trends immediately. Among such trends are the exponential growth of population, the uninhibited consumption of natural resources and the production and disposal of waste leading to worldwide pollution. The consequences and the background of these serious phenomena have to be explained. This should be done first of all by means of local material which strongly engages the interest of the visitors. Their attention awakened and their engagement mobilized they may be open to receive information on the wide-range and long-term aspects of the problems. At this stage the importance and necessity of a long-term perspective on the problems and on their consequences as well as the urgency of their solutions may be obvious. Countless ways of rooting the problems in local incidents, occurrences, or developments are normally available.

The examples of exhibition content given so far are primarily the concern of the natural history museum or department, but can probably in many cases also very naturally be included in the programme of other museums. Man himself, his biology and ecology, and, above all, his biological needs and limitations are subjects, which, in a strict sense, fall into the field of the natural history museum. However, the biological needs and limitations of man are fundamental for his relation to his various environments, i.e. his ecology, and can be well illustrated by material in museums of prehistoric archaeology as well as of general anthropology.

The task of historical museums (taken in a wide sense and including museums of technology, nautical evolution, commercial life, etc., besides the history museum in a strict sense) is to deal with human responses to artificial environments. To the extent that these responses are biologically determined they fall under the subject of human ecology. However, we know little and only guess or feel more as far as casual connections in the field of human urban ecology are concerned. In exhibitions such supposed connections can be called into question and discussion stimulated. Items of controversy connected with city planning, industrial location, etc., may incite museums to ask questions with their temporary exhibits. The artificial environment as a base of reference for human behaviour does, of course, not only include

physical environment but also other qualities such as population structure, social order, and economic and cultural potentialities. Art museum material can elucidate these problems congenially but on quite a different level.

The content of the exhibitions has thus been accounted for. How should it be displayed? An efficient exhibition is correct in its message, taciturn in wording, temperate in number of objects, associative and otherwise mentally stimulating by means of, for example, amazing comparisons and shocking devices, and arranged with full freedom as regards means of expression and design. The framing arrangements should assist in clarifying and underlining the message and should not compete with it. Aestheticism is no end in itself, but should function as a lubricant facilitating the visitor's assimilation of the message.

Correctness in message can seemingly be inconsistent with a good popularization. This often demands a renouncing of completeness and of exactness as to detail. However, as long as the correctness is maintained in the general message carried forth by the various details the aim of the exhibit is fulfilled. The exhibit is not built for the specialist who already knows the subject and might observe necessary simplifications, but for the layman who knows little and needs to be taught the essentials.

Finally, without developing the subject, I only wish to remind of the self-evident fact that the spread of the message carried by an exhibition can be efficiently supported by various means such as pamphlets, demonstrations, questionnaires, competitions, public discussions, happenings of various sorts, etc.

Other services

In connection with area development for housing, industries, road construction, etc., it is important to thoroughly examine the area and catalogue its objects beforehand with regard to the fields covered by the museums of prehistoric archaeology, history, and natural history. This belongs among the primary responsibilities of museums as institutions for documentation. A close contact and co-operation between the museums and the planning authorities is important for securing a smooth routine. In some places at least a vestige of such a co-operation has been established for some time. However, the services of the museums in connection with area development should not be limited to that.

The result of the investigations carried out by the museums provides a basis for evaluation of the ground and what it carries or hides. Therefore, the museum personnel acquires a capacity for important contributions to the base material underlying the planning of ground usage. This capacity should be employed in parallel and on an equal level with that of technical and other experts. Procedures to this effect are gradually coming into practice in Gothenburg, Sweden. Even if this means defending controversial viewpoints and a little fighting on the part of the museum official, it is certainly worthwhile. The standpoints defended by the museums often represent some badly needed counterweight against the shortsighted economical interest.

Apart from safe-guarding irreplaceable cultural and natural values the standpoints defended by the museums are generally in favour of a more tolerable human environment.

Speaking about services it should also be mentioned that scientific services which necessarily employ voluminous or delicate comparative material are commonly attached to museums. Museum collections in general function as tools for scientific services, but in certain instances this is particularly obvious because the service is to a great extent directed towards other fields of science. As an example, osteological collections can be mentioned. They function as a tool not only in connection with, for example, ecological studies but also assist and enrich investigations in the field of prehistoric and historic archaeology. And all these investigations are of course important to deepen and broaden the understanding of the relationship between human beings and their environment, i.e. of human ecology in a broad sense.

Finally, one rather amazing point should be added. Supposing that human populations one day will have to live in harmony with their natural environment and natural resources, then there will be great difficulties in redeveloping practices allowing this. The keys to such redevelopment are stored in the museums of anthropology and ethnology.

The museum as an environment

Today man lives in a strange and a fast-changing world. The last and the present generations have become accustomed to living with continuously accelerating changes. They have been indoctrinated to accept this as a normal and reasonable condition. They have become speed-blinded.

The population growth, the energy consumption, and many other variables show a development which can be geometrically expressed by exponential curve lines. It is simply impossible for a trend of that type to continue forever. Two possibilities remain: to change the trend or to wait for the catastrophe. The tepid attitude to and the limited consciousness of this fatal choice may be due to the fact that most human beings grasp but a tiny section of the curve line. Most human beings have a narrow outlook and a short perspective.

Museums as institutions that bridge the gaps between generations (and also gaps between different groups within mankind) are particularly suited to help people to broaden their outlook and lengthen their perspective. This task should not be fulfilled only for the purpose of visitors with grim reality. It should also have the aim of helping people to anchor their existence in time and space. Today many people have lost the aid of religion in this matter. Museums should try to offer an atom of compensation.

Thus, the museum as an environment should be something people experience as a mixture of serious information and joyful comfort.

Museums and scientific knowledge

Shri S. K. Ghose

Shri S. K. Ghose, a telecommunications engineer who completed his postgraduate training in control engineering at Harvard University is at present engaged in research at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. He joined the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum in 1958 and since 1965 he has been devoted to the work of taking the museum out to the people and to organizing extensive educational and popular programmes.

Museums depict the story of evolution; evolution of life and culture. Many exhibits displayed in an archaeological museum date back to that age when man first tried to express himself; the writing on a stone slab, a few sketches. To a modern museologist these exhibits are useful for depicting man's past. The exhibits in a natural science museum are still older. They predate the age of man when the earth was trudged by gigantic reptiles or even predate life itself. Compared to the age of its exhibits, an archaeological or a natural science museum is much younger, since the idea of collecting arrived at a much later date when man started individual collections of jewellery and art treasures.

Science museums, a term which generally excludes natural science museums, are markedly different from other museums in this respect. Present-day science largely emerged out of the great Industrial Revolution in Europe, or from the Renaissance in a broader sense. The exhibits are therefore much younger than the contents of an archaeological museum. They belong to a recent past, in most cases to the present. Because of the continuous development of science and technology, collections go side by side with inventions and their application. This particular aspect has made science museums more dynamic in approach. The future developments of science are predictable in many cases and so are the exhibits in a science museum. The model of a Wankel engine is placed in a museum gallery even when it is under development, and a model of a proposed lunar observatory is suited to any of the science museums in the USA or the USSR. More important in a science museum is the elucidation of various theories and the explanation of scientific phenomena with the help of specially designed demonstration exhibits.

A science museum, therefore, does not live on materials collected from nature alone, but has to create its own exhibits in many cases. Such a creation relates to the events of the past, present, and sometimes of the future. The term 'creation' does not mean replicas or models that can be prepared in any kind of museum if so desired, but to new kinds of exhibits, not existing in nature, but originating in the brain of an ingenious curator or designer for the purpose of translating theoretical ideas into three dimensional working exhibition form.

This extra scope and facility for creating new exhibits is a vantage point for the dissemination of scientific knowledge in the community.

History versus teaching

To visitors, a museum is intended for the dissemination of knowledge through objects displayed chronologically, thus presenting a sequential story as far as possible. A science museum is similarly required to preach the history of science, no matter from where this history starts. To a museum curator however, the exhibition of collections is the last part of his duty. Primarily, the museum is required to preserve the national heritage of the country and in a broader sense the heritage of mankind, whilst the primary duties of a museum curator are collection, conservation, and research of objects. Until the end of the Second World War there was no other concept.

With the advancement of science and technology in almost all countries and with better understanding between nations a new movement for the popularization of science has sprung up and science museums came to the forefront as the best medium for mass education. In order to achieve a rapid industrial and economic growth all countries felt the need for creating a broad scientific outlook among the common people and making them conscious of the latest developments. This needed a direct approach to mass education rather than the passive dissemination of knowledge through objects in a conventional museum. The doctrine of preaching history of science yielded constantly to the teaching of science under the pressure of this new demand. There are now curators who believe in education being the guideline for all museum activities. They argue collection for education, conservation for education, research for education, exhibition for education, and finally educational activities for education. They firmly believe that no country can afford to have a museum these days which is not directly useful to all sections of society.

Type of visitors

Even if the balance has already leaned towards the teaching role an important question remains–for whom is this education meant? Is the museum an abode of learning for researchers and specialists or some sort of a kindergarten for adults? When we say that the museum must be useful to the people, what kind of people do we mean? They might be children, the

unproductive old, the illiterate, or highly educated scholars. They might belong to the lower socio-economic groups to whom visiting a museum is still a luxury, or they may be ladies under the veil who constitute 50 per cent of the population of many Asian countries. The public may be of heterogeneous composition and how can one single museum cater for the needs of the people in general? Before forming our conclusions let us take a look at the *Smithsonian Visitor*, the report on the visitors' survey conducted in the Smithsonian Institution in 1968-9. From this data, the profile of the Smithsonian visitor begins to emerge; he is white, middle-aged, in the upper middle income bracket with an above average education, and he is at the Smithsonian museums for enjoyment with friends or family.

Comparisons with other museum surveys, including that undertaken in the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, Calcutta in 1970-1 (the report on which was put before the Icom International Committee for Education and Cultural Action in August 1971), shows that many of the characteristics of the Smithsonian visitor belong also to the museum visitor in general, with the exception that in the BITM, students below the age of 25 years constitute a large proportion of visitors. The museum visitor is, broadly, either a school or college student who can comprehend the subjects, or an adult with above average education and a general intuition for grasping the subject properly. It is seen that persons belonging to the lower socio-economic group, having less or no education do not generally visit a museum.

So the problem is already reduced to a simpler form. The museum in its present form is visited by students and adults of good education, hence the acitivites of the museum should aim at this level. The museum is not visited by the non-privileged class of people and a different but effective programme has to be chalked out for attracting them towards the museum.

Classification of objects

Though lectures and film shows are often organized in a museum, it is the display of exhibits which serves as the main vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge. Exhibits now being shown in various science museums can be broadly classified in the following manner:

Original objects. In every museum such objects are the pride of curators and form the nucleus around which the museum is built up. The display of such original objects poses a problem for the curator. Presentation of a series of original exhibits, which are necessarily kept non-working, often makes them completely uninteresting for the visitor. The exhibits could be displayed in small groups, preferably singly, with working demonstration exhibits in each group to explain the function of the object and with attractive and illustrative drawings, preferably with some anecdotal reference to the inventor. These arrangements will bring such original exhibits into the limelight. In the recently opened gallery on popular science in the BITM, where 80 per cent of the exhibits are working, visitors were asked to cite the five most interesting

exhibits. Many of them cited a non-working gramophone recording machine, only because the machine was displayed with a prominent photograph of the Nobel laureate poet Tagore which mentioned that Tagore was the first person to record one of his songs on this recording machine in 1932.

Replicas. The countries where scientific innovations did not take place are not so fortunate in acquiring original objects. This is the reason why science museums in Europe are far richer in collections of original exhibits than the museums of the USA and other countries. For depicting the landmarks of the development of science exact replicas are acceptable to museums. Such replicas, quite different from scale models, are exact representations of the original in size, shape, colour and material, and function with, of course, an honest statement that the thing is a replica and not the original. Display of replicas in the galleries needs careful attention by the artist, as in the case of originals, so that they do not escape notice.

Scale models. Scale models are used where it is not possible to show the original in its actual size. Scale models may be reduced as for large ships, engines, aeroplanes, etc., which cannot be accommodated in an ordinary museum gallery, and can be of enlarged size for models of the eye, a fly, or an atom, which cannot be shown to the public in the original. A curator has to be judicious in determining the optimum size of the model he desires for his gallery. This will depend on the available space, nearby exhibits, the degree of importance of the particular exhibit, etc. A scale model may be working to make it more attractive. The model may be partly or wholly sectioned, or put inside a transparent cover with internally illuminated parts, or in some cases in dismembered parts which could be put together. Replicas and scale models should be prepared only when it is not possible to show the original. Too much dependence on models and a fascination for them often makes a curator disinterested in collection, which is his primary duty.

Layout model. Large chemical plants, power stations, industrial processes, etc., are represented by layout models which do not keep to a uniform scale. The location and function of various units of such plants are more important and in preparing the models the vertical scale is blown up and in many cases no scale is prescribed. Otherwise a layout model can be classified as a scale model.

Demonstration exhibits. As discussed earlier, science museums have to create some exhibits in order to explain basic scientific phenomena like Archimedes' principle, Faraday's electromagnetic induction, etc. These exhibits are exclusively created by curators and bear testimony to their ingenuity. In museums devoted to teaching science, such exhibits play a dominant role. For all extension activities which supplement science education in schools and other institutions and popularize science in the community as a whole, this type of exhibit is most effective. The design of these working exhibits requires clarity in expression, attractive operation, precision mechanism, and

sometimes fairly complicated circuitry. Some of the exhibits are attractively humorous, some show a chain of actions, but all create a dramatic or lasting effect on the minds of the visitors.

Dioramas. Dioramas are extensively used in natural science museums where surroundings play a vital role in the life of the objects in the foreground. In applied science museums dioramas are used in agriculture or similar galleries. Otherwise dioramas are used scantily only when the presentation of surroundings is required, for example, in an oilfield or a shipbuilding yard. Dioramas of larger size are always spectacular but smaller dioramas with working mechanisms are also attractive. Illumination plays a vital role in creating the desired effect and the display artist is the key man here.

Graphics. Attractive and colourful illustrations can be used to highlight any non-working but important exhibit in a science museum. Good illustrations can eliminate texts in labels to a great extent, and help uneducated people to better understand the exhibits. Illustrations or charts can be animated with the help of moving lights or optical illusions. Similar animation can be used in scale models and layout models. Various methods employed in animation are mentioned in the Appendix to this paper.

Labels. The essential tool for interpreting an object in the galleries is the label. In fact the label is a curator's representative. Always present in the gallery it explains his ideas about the exhibit and is the medium through which a curator can reach his visitors. The quality of a good label lies in brevity, clarity in expression, and in its scientific content. While a label should contain all essential information and a proper explanation of the scientific phenomena it should not assume a formidable volume in any case, though it is difficult to define any optimum level in this regard. The texts of labels in a science museum are likely to be longer because they contain scientific explanations in addition to the historical background, and the curator has to overcome the temptation of elaborating too much. The visitors' survey carried out in the BITM has clearly shown that a long academic label is not only uninteresting to visitors in general but even repulsive. In a multilingual country like India the problem is far greater. The mother tongue of the people frequenting museums in Calcutta, Bangalore, or Bombay is predominantly divided into two or sometimes three major languages other than English and translation of labels in three languages poses a problem for the curator and the exhibition officer. Such a translation will take enormous space on the background panel and will make the smaller exhibits insignificant. On the other hand, curtailment of texts in order to reach a reasonable size of label will entail the elimination of useful information. Use of illustrative pictures as much as possible in place of written texts is a good solution. This also helps the uneducated visitors in backward areas but imposes a heavy burden on the exhibition officer or the display artist.

Research in museums and publications

This, the crown of all educational activities, is deplorably neglected in science museums in general, possibly on the presumption that the research benefits the scholastic profession only and since the museum is intended for the benefit of the mass, curators need not bother about research. Few science museums collect research data from other organizations, still fewer engage themselves in active research. Since curators are the custodians of the national heritage it is obligatory for them to investigate all available information about their objects in order to analyse and interpret them in the most authentic manner possible and to publish the findings not only for the learned men in the profession but also for the common people. Regular publication of useful information obtained from a co-ordinated research programme can enlighten the people, if the articles are published in a popular way. This increases the curiosity of the people and encourages them to frequent museums. A few museums, devoted to academic studies, pursue active research on the history of science particularly relating to the achievements of their own country, but a general interest is still lacking.

In many science museums curators are engaged in the design of new demonstration exhibits, new driving mechanisms, control circuits, and animation techniques. Many such exhibits implicate ingenuity in ideas, design, and presentation and require a lot of useful experimental work. This type of work can be construed as applied or developmental research and should be encouraged at all levels, since it results in more effective exhibits for the interpretation of science and goes to the direct benefit of the people.

Creation of exhibits for demonstration

Icom, while celebrating its Twentieth Anniversary, announced several slogans for museums: 'look and learn', 'visual university', etc. Mere presentation of exhibits does not help visitors much in learning in a science museum where the subjects and their interpretation may seem completely alien to a man not having a scientific background. Engagement of guide lecturers and arrangements of guided tours are essentially required in a science museum for the proper interpretation of objects. But an educator in a science museum should not remain content with this alone. Quite often it is said that a museum is carrying on its educational activities through guided tours in the galleries, film shows and publication of brochures, pictures, picture cards, slides, etc. The term mass education, mentioned vaguely in such cases, deceives the museum educator more than anybody else. However well organized the gallery may be, it can never be possible to present a subject in its complete form with a limited number of exhibits in the gallery. Normal demonstration in a gallery can be augmented by science demonstration lectures with the help of specially created exhibits which will supplement those placed in the gallery. Demonstration lectures should examine in depth a narrow subject rather than covering a wide area. The lecturer should be

properly trained for oratory and presentation so as to leave a lasting impression on his audience. Several museums, including the BITM, in Calcutta have been running regular school programmes with such activities. The BITM not only organizes such lectures in the museum auditorium but also sends out mobile vans to rural schools. Each lecture is demonstrated by about fifteen working exhibits, all designed and fabricated in the museum workshop and lectures have been developed in eight subjects on physics, chemistry, and geography. Details of this programme have been published in the report on the Leningrad-Moscow seminar, 1968, of the Icom Subcommittee on Education and Cultural Action.

Demonstration lectures could also be tried for organized groups of adults. One such lecture was successfully introduced in the BITM on 'Our eyes and colours'. For educated adults and students, popular lectures are organized by many museums. Such lectures, without any demonstration but occasionally with slides, often fail to arouse interest in the public, even though they are called 'popular'. Choice of subjects of current interest makes such lectures successful. A lecture on a seemingly dry subject like molecular biology was well attended in the BITM because the lecture was arranged just after the Indian-born US-domiciled scientist Professor Khorana was awarded the Nobel prize. Similarly, all lectures on space flights arranged in the last two years were attended by a full audience.

For school services 'loan exhibits' are prepared and circulated by some natural history museums. These exhibits are collected or specially prepared to demonstrate a particular theme like that in a demonstration lecture and sent to schools in small and handy crates. Museums of science and other kinds are yet to introduce this very useful means of reaching schoolchildren.

Hobby centres for students and adults

Dissemination of scientific knowledge always demands some kind of practical work in addition to lectures and demonstrations. Inspired by some museums in the US the BITM in Calcutta started a Creative Abilities Centre for school and college students in 1966. Within the broad subjects of physics, astronomy, mechanics, chemistry, electronics, and electrical engineering, the students are given full liberty to choose a topic and pursue some kind of practical work or investigation. Some are interested in copying a precision instrument or work done by a pioneer, some others may like to spend time in casual investigations. Many students ask for ideas at the outset and possible projects are kept in mind for this purpose. Some students drop out but others complete most encouraging projects. The students work for two hours every evening and for four hours on Sundays. On the basis of this Centre, run in the museum in Calcutta, twenty-five other centres have been gradually built up in rural schools of different districts under the supervision of the museum staff. Similar activities are being pursued in England under the name of project technology but not through museums. Several other museums in different countries are doing this work in the same isolated manner as in the BITM. A

well co-ordinated drive using a large number of museums in different areas of a country seems to be the only effective way of creating an overall interest in the student community.

Hobby centres and training programmes are run during vacations in some museums. Such programmes include vocational training, art appreciation, collection of natural science materials, photography, electronics, etc. The same defect lies everywhere in that activities are taken up in an isolated manner without any follow-up and are thus lacking in total effect. The BITM started to organize several small district science fairs and an annual competition for all students working in different corners of the country. Attractive prizes and scholarships are awarded to successful participants in the competition. Large numbers of students each representing a school participate in these science fairs, which vary from three to ten days in duration, and the cost of their stay in the museum is borne by the museum. This sort of annual competition serves two useful purposes. First, the students of different parts of the country find a chance to see each other's work for comparison, and secondly, such exhibitions are well attended by other students and their guardians, thus creating a general interest.

The Birla Planetarium at Calcutta conducted a series of evening courses in Astronomy which were attended by persons from 20 to 65 years of age. The participants in these courses attended the sky observation programme in the BITM. This resulted in so great an enthusiasm that some non-scientist adults started making a reflecting telescope in the museum. Refresher courses connected with hobby centres on specific subjects like astronomy, photography, electronics, etc., are bound to attract a large number of common people to the museum.

Teachers' training programmes

It is beyond the capabilities of a single museum, or even of a group of museums, to cover every school and all corners of the country with demonstration lectures and hobby centres as described earlier. On the other hand a total effect can be perceived only if a total campaign is launched. A step-by-step training of personnel was envisaged in the BITM for this purpose. Curators first train education assistants, then train a large number of science teachers of secondary schools and the teachers in turn train their boys and girls. Through these steps the ideas and efforts of a single curator reach thousands of students in rural areas. A teachers' training programme is conducted in Calcutta and in various district towns about ten times in each year by taking not more than twelve teachers from six schools in each group and giving training lasting for ten working days. The teachers learn about the use of common tools and make, from the supplied drawings and prototypes, some demonstration exhibits and hobby kits. The training is conducted in consultation with the local district inspector of schools who chooses the trainees from promising schools who are likely to start hobby centres on completion of the training.

Other programmes

Competitive science seminars for students, science quiz contests, projection of films, temporary exhibitions on topics of current interest, are some of the activities quite common in modern museums. All such programmes are aimed at students and educated adults. Now we shall have to consider some effective programmes for attracting the non-visitors to the museum.

Mobile science museums

In modern civilization most of the privileges of society cling to big cities, leaving a vast majority of the people in the countryside lacking communication, knowledge, and appropriate standards of living, particularly in developing countries. In Asia and Africa few such people go to school, fewer to college, and most of them spend their life just for bread. They still believe in medieval heritage with unlimited supersititions and terrible ignorance about the facts of life. They not only require a freedom from hunger but also freedom from darkness. They scarcely visit a museum because very few of them can afford to come to the city and even if they do come they are afraid of museums. Some of them, coming as tourists, visit a museum like a shrine, or, on the other hand, like a circus if the exhibits are funny and they fail to see it in its proper perspective. The main complex from which they suffer is that the museum is a learned place which they cannot possibly reach with little or no education. This is also true for persons living in the 'ghettos' of big cities, even in the most enlightened countries. The recent survey in the Smithsonian Institution shows that only 8 per cent of coloured people visit the museum compared with more than 65 per cent coloured population in the city of Washington.

If such people, by circumstances, cannot reach the museum, the museum will have to reach them, not only physically but also by changing the nature of exhibits. Instead of making such people museum-minded the museums will have to become people-minded. Let us change our exhibits to a simpler form, showing objects familiar and perceptible to them, introducing the history, culture, economics, and science of their own society: industrial safety to coalminers, public health in city ghettos, mechanized agriculture in villages. These exhibits will be designed in a different line; exhaustive but compact, sturdy but portable, working but with simple mechanisms, striking and attractive. Demonstration exhibits, scale models, and animated charts may be used with labels written in simple, small sentences, essentially in the local language. The exhibits must be sent to deep interior areas, mines, industrial belts, and ghettos in big cities.

One way to reach the people is through mobile museums on wheels. A few museums in almost negligible proportion to the actual requirement, have been giving this service. The BITM put its first mobile unit on the road in 1965 and at present, three buses are operating within a 300-mile radius, holding exhibitions at intervals of about ten to twenty miles, and staying for three

Fig. 1. The new trailer bus showing exhibits on 'Light and Sight', which travels throughout West Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa up to 400 miles from Calcutta and holds exhibitions in interior villages. Three such units are now being operated by the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, Calcutta.

days in every place. The units have a high degree of mobility and can reach every interior corner of the country. Details of these units have been published in *Museum* (1968), vol. xxi, no. 4. Another way of sending exhibits is by truck or railway. The exhibits are mounted on display stands which can be set up in any school or community centre in a short time. Everything is packed in crates of uniform size and can be transported by any kind of carrier.

It is far more difficult to maintain a mobile unit by arranging continuous programmes throughout the year than to fabricate exhibits and buses. The project is expensive, both initially and continually. Each unit needs a driver, a mechanic, and a lecturer for proper operation and maintenance. It is therefore absolutely necessary to formulate a comprehensive programme considering the total utility before launching any ambitious programme.

Regional science museums

For socio-economically backward areas small regional museums with exhibits in line with mobile units and associated activities in line with the central museum are very helpful. Such regional museums are necessarily set up right in the heart of backward localities, with adequate local publicity and sometimes persuasion. The alarmingly low percentage of coloured visitors to the Smithsonian museums led to the decision to set up such a regional museum, the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, only three miles away but in the centre of a coloured area. This museum is visited mostly by coloured

people. Though other Smithsonian museums do not have any mobile school exhibits programme, the Anacostia museum runs a small mobile unit for sending exhibition panels to neighbourhood schools. Activities are restricted to the Anacostia region only and hence all schools can be covered in a short time. This small museum with its unsophisticated exhibits attracts many visitors who would never think of visiting the big Smithsonian museums, even though they are less than three miles away.

The operation of the mobile units of the BITM in rural areas of Bengal actually induced a proposal from a school to start a museum there. The school authorities desired to have a sustained activity in their district rather than just a mobile unit for a short period. The school provided a separate building, free of rent, and the first Regional Science Museum of the BITM started functioning in Purulia, about 220 miles from Calcutta, in January 1968. It contains about forty working exhibits which are changed once a year and runs regular science demonstration lectures, creative abilities centres, teachers' training programmes, competitive science seminars, and science fairs for school students, teachers' seminars, film shows, and all other activities normally organized in the central museum in Calcutta. The programmes are restricted to the particular district and a local advisory committee formulates the annual programme. On demand from the local authorities the regional museum was renovated and expanded in November 1969, when it was visited by the members of the Icom Subcommittee no. 1. The BITM is now running two other regional museums in other district towns. All three districts were chosen on account of their backwardness in education, industry, and economy.

Fig. 2. A village farmer is enthusiastically explaining to his family members about what he has understood in the Mobile Science Exhibition on the 'Transformation of Energy'. Such people are usually non-visitors to a big city museum. Only mobile exhibitions and small regional museums can attract them.

Requirements and assessments

The choice and display of exhibits and extension activities as described earlier cannot be standardized for every museum and a curator must apply his own judgement to determine the specific regional requirements. Any kind of unsolicited and unplanned activity may lead to huge unfruitful expenditure and wastage of time and labour. The science demonstration lecture in the BITM was started on request from a local schoolteacher who expressed her difficulty in explaining the principles of the electric generator in her class without a three-dimensional model. The work was taken up experimentally on a modest scale and gradually expanded on demand from the users. The teachers' training programme was initiated from requests from some rural schoolteachers. The mobile exhibition was first started with crates transported by a hired truck. Later, as the demand increased, a Museobus was purchased and two more trailer buses were added to the fleet. The regional museums were initially set up on a very modest scale with extra temporary displays, inexpensive exhibits, and with no infrastructure. These are still in the process of development according to needs. No idea can be transplanted without verifying the fertility of the soil.

While collecting and selecting objects for displays in the museum gallery or organizing any extensive activity, a curator has always his own fancy for specific items. The objects and programmes are chosen by the curator who often looks at things as a specialist with a pair of critical eyes and not always as a lover of art and culture. A specialist in a particular branch of art or science is likely to elaborate his subject more than the common visitor likes and thus unwittingly creates boredom in the visitor. While the collection should not be restricted as a general policy, if the storage space and money are adequate, the selection of exhibits for galleries or mobile units should always be made with an eye to the visitor. It is also true that by yielding to the choice of the visitors, in general a curator could inadvertently lower their receptivity and taste while his duty is to uplift their intellectual standards by skilful and unobtrusive pushing of appropriate exhibits and programmes before them. It is clear that any type of sweeping comment on either side will do more harm than good and in order to reach a balance in approach, the visitors' reaction to the existing exhibits and programmes has to be carefully studied. For long, the study of the visitors' reaction has been looked down upon by museum curators as a decorative frill like many other public relation activities. This is most important work, as important as the very existence of the museum. Any developmental work, without an assessment of the problem, can be termed as unplanned and unless some sort of regular assessment is taken up earnestly, museums in general will soon fail to meet the needs of the people and will remain as the dumping grounds for the old fossils and skeletons of human civilization.

APPENDIX

Technical aids to museums

For working exhibits

Mechanical, electromechanical, and electronic operating circuits, time-delay and synchronized switching circuits—designed according to the specific requirements.

For animation (one or a combination of some of the following methods)

1. Moving light by rotary multi-contact selector switches.
2. Moving light by contacts placed on a rotary drum or disc.
3. Light and shade by putting dark bands of appropriate design on rotating drums or discs.
4. Illusion by the use of polaroid strips cut at different angles and rotating polaroid discs.
5. Illusion by the reflection on glass tilted at an angle of 45 degrees.
6. Illusion by concave mirrors and convex lenses.
7. Actual movement of the light.

For demonstration lectures

1. Slide and filmstrip projectors (manual and automatic).
2. Standard tape-recorders—sometimes coupled with a slide projector with synchronized switching for commentary.
3. Endless tape-recorder, specially made—sometimes coupled with an automatic slide projector.
4. Epidiascope.
5. 8-mm and 16-mm movie sound projectors—sometimes with endless filmstrips, or with a wide-angle lense for a short projection space.
6. Overhead projector with Fresnel lens.
7. Microprojector.

General programmes

1. Audio Guide for demonstration of exhibits.
2. Movie camera and film projector—for recording museum activities and using them in lectures.
3. Closed-circuit television inside the museum.

4. Video tape-recorders—for recording museum activities. Though expensive, this appears to be the most effective audio-visual means for exchanging ideas between museums of different countries and communicating with the people in all corners of the country. This is very useful in demonstration lectures and teachers' training programmes.

Le musée et l'éducation esthétique

M. Alpatov

Le professeur Alpatov est membre de l'Académie des Beaux-arts de l'URSS. Célèbre pour son enseignement et ses publications touchant l'histoire de l'art et l'esthétique, il a toujours posé un oeil critique sur le musée, reconnaissant ses possibilités et regrettant certains défauts dans la conception statique de l'exposition et du commentaire.

Tout musée d'art, du fait même qu'il fonctionne, joue un rôle actif dans la formation esthétique du public. Mais est-ce suffisant? Le temps nous paraît venu de songer à la façon dont on pourrait relever encore cette mission du musée, ayant surtout en vue l'éducation esthétique des jeunes, dont notre avenir dépend si étroitement. Ce terme d'éducation doit être pris au sens le plus large. Ce n'est pas seulement la connaissance de l'histoire de l'art et de l'art moderne, l'éducation du goût artistique. C'est aussi la promotion spirituelle du public, qui est invité à entrer de plain-pied dans les arcanes de l'Art avec une majuscule, à s'acquérir une certaine morale, une sensibilité, un sens des responsabilités. C'est enfin un moyen d'éveiller en chacun l'artiste, le créateur, sans même être obligé pour cela de manier le pinceau ou le crayon. Or, généralement, on s'inquiète surtout de la façon dont les musées modernes répondent à la demande esthétique du public.

Nous aurions mauvaise grâce à nier l'importance de l'étude statistique de l'opinion des visiteurs. Nous dirons même qu'il est nécessaire de perfectionner encore les investigations sociologiques et les enquêtes. Mais avec cette nuance qu'il importe à nos yeux de faire la démarcation entre la satisfaction des besoins esthétiques et la formation esthétique. Ce sont là deux propos intimement dépendants, mais en aucun cas similaires. On pourrait certes s'en tenir à la seule satisfaction des besoins esthétiques, mais uniquement si l'on était sûr que le public contemporain est suffisamment préparé pour décider lui-même de ce qu'il veut trouver au musée. Or, nous sommes loin d'en être là. Dans la plupart des pays, l'école secondaire fait trop peu, et parfois ne fait rien pour la formation esthétique de la jeunesse. De ce fait, les musées sont les

seuls foyers – ou peu s'en faut – de l'éducation esthétique des citoyens. Or un musée doit avoir pour vocation non seulement d'offrir au public ce qui répond à sa demande, mais également de contribuer à l'épanouissement de cette demande. Voilà comment nous concevons la mission essentielle des musées d'art en matière d'éducation esthétique.

En Union Soviétique, cette mission, s'agissant surtout de la jeunesse, bénéficie d'une attention spéciale et c'est à quoi se consacrent en premier lieu nos musées. S'y joignent d'autres établissements et l'on peut dire que dans ce domaine, beaucoup est déjà fait. En revanche, tous les problèmes n'ont pas été résolus, toutes les difficultés n'ont pas été surmontées, et nous avons encore bien du travail devant nous.

Lorsqu'il est question d'éducation esthétique, on évite difficilement d'évoquer certains des esprits éclairés qui se penchèrent sur la question par le passé, tels Platon, les philosophes anglais – Shaftesbury en tête – ou Schiller. Certes, nous ne pouvons affirmer avec la belle certitude des Grecs que les jeunes seront beaux et sains au contact des belles formes et des belles sonorités. Envions-leur tout de même cette sensation concrète qu'ils avaient de l'influence bienfaisante de l'art sur l'éducation. Platon parle d'une bouffée de vent venue d'une contrée salubre. Saluons également la candide droiture d'un Schiller persuadé que la simple contemplation 'des oeuvres d'art authentiques' suffit à engendrer 'une grande harmonie spirituelle, la liberté d'âme unie à la force et à l'allant', et que l'éducation esthétique a le pouvoir de résoudre toutes les contradictions sociales.

De nos jours, cette dernière se conçoit comme la mise à la portée de chacun du meilleur de ce qu'a produit l'art universel. Dans cette optique, le musée devient le foyer de l'information plastique la plus complète et la plus authentique.

Le patrimoine muséologique ne se borne pas à fournir une matière à ceux qui étudient ou consomment l'art. La plupart des musées ont depuis longtemps dépassé ce stade du 'conditionnement' et de l'exposition. Ils deviennent des 'consortiums' artistiques réalisant un vaste travail d'étude et de diffusion. Au Louvre, à l'Ermitage de Léningrad et quelques autres grands musées, fonctionnent par exemple des écoles et studios d'histoire de l'art, qui sont de véritables établissements d'enseignement.

L'initiation à l'histoire de l'art est le fondement de toute formation esthétique. Elle ouvre l'horizon, inculque le respect pour la création des ancêtres et des peuples du monde entier, éveille l'intérêt pour la création artistique. En notre temps de prédominance et même d'hégémonie de la technique, les bases classiques de l'instruction esthétique ont une portée toute particulière. La formation de la personnalité de l'homme d'aujourd'hui doit se faire au contact de tout ce que l'humanité a donné de meilleur au cours des siècles.

L'éducation esthétique ne saurait se limiter à une *information historico-artistique*. Tel peut étudier de façon fondamentale les époques, les styles, la topographie et la chronologie de l'art, son évolution historique, etc., et rester insensible au message, passer à côté de ce qui en art est essentiel.

Pour beaucoup de ceux qui s'intéressent sincèrement à l'art, qui sont attirés par lui comme la plante verte par le soleil mais n'en reçoivent pas ce qu'ils attendent, cette barrière intérieure peut devenir une source de graves conflits moraux. Un érudit de ce genre fait songer à un chef de gare qui est attaché au quai de sa station, en face duquel passent des trains qui vont au pays des merveilles et qui ne peut que les accompagner d'un regard nostalgique, car il lui est interdit de faire partie du voyage.

Nous disons donc qu'un musée doit introduire ses visiteurs dans le monde de l'art, éveiller chez lui non seulement l'intérêt mais aussi une active sympathie, enseigner à concevoir les questions de l'art d'une façon autonome, développer le goût, éveiller le besoin de jouissance esthétique, un besoin que rien d'autre ne peut satisfaire.

De quels moyens dispose-t-il pour y parvenir? Tout d'abord de l'oeuvre elle-même, car ce n'est qu'au musée que s'établit le véritable commerce avec la génie de l'artiste. Mais, tombé au milieu des trésors que le musée lui jette au visage, le visiteur profane a tôt fait de s'y perdre. La parole, simple et accessible, suffira alors à dissiper son premier embarras. Elle pourra intervenir de diverses façons: une excursion guidée à travers les salles, une conférence, des renseignements muraux ou présentés dans un guide, et, plus généralement, quelques mots d'explication donnés par un compagnon mieux averti. L'important, c'est que la chose ne soit pas formelle, que cette parole sache toucher à la véritable valeur artistique de l'oeuvre. Bien souvent, un regard éloquent, un geste de la main indiquant certain détail significatif, ouvrent au profane la porte du Saint des Saints.

Il reste que la parole ne doit en aucun cas se substituer à l'art. Je me suis laissé dire qu'à l'église Santa Maria della Grazie, à Milan, un groupe de touristes attendait son guide, le dos tourné à *La Cène* de Vinci. Comme on demandait à ces braves gens le pourquoi de leur étrange attitude, ils répondirent qu'ils ne voulaient pas voir quoi que ce soit sans leur cicérone et qu'ils attendaient son arrivée pour recevoir une information complète sur la fresque du génial Léonard. Plaignons ceux qui ne font pas confiance à leurs propres yeux. Pour que ceux-là commencent enfin à voir, il faut littéralement *les pousser dans l'art*, comme on pousse le nageur débutant dans l'eau. Mais cette 'poussé' doit faire la part de l'action du guide conduisant son groupe et de la liberté qui est laissée au visiteur, auquel il est donné d'errer à son gré dans le dédale des cimaises et de cueillir selon sa fantaisie l'information esthétique qu'elles lui offrent.

Souvent nous entendons les conservateurs de musée nous dire qu'ils préfèrent de beaucoup avoir affaire aux enfants qu'aux adultes. Les enfants, en effet, ont une réaction beaucoup plus spontanée. Voilà qui signifie que la tâche du mentor, une mission difficile mais importante, consistera à se fier d'abord à la faculté du profane de réagir spontanément, à la façon des enfants, à l'oeuvre d'art, sans pour autant mésestimer le bagage esthétique que le visiteur apporte toujours avec lui.

Le visiteur sensible et réfléchi n'a rien de l'appareil photographique dont le but est de fixer en toute circonstance tout événement qui vient à passer

devant l'objectif. Une visite au musée est un dialogue entre l'amateur et le tableau.

Gardons-nous d'oublier la nature dialectique de la perception artistique. L'une des premières choses que le visiteur doit faire au musée, c'est de coordonner les idées et les connaissances qu'il a du monde de l'art (aussi modestes soient-elles) avec les impressions directes qui l'assaillent depuis les cimaises. Il doit garder les yeux grands ouverts, il doit être tout entier à ses impressions. Mais nous ne disons pas qu'il lui faut en ce lieu oublier tout ce qu'il a appris de l'autre côté de la porte. Qu'en permanence sa pensée fasse la navette du général au particulier et vice versa, et l'art lui apparaîtra soudain comme une source illimitée de réflexion enrichissante, de jouissance. Nous ne pensons pas exagérer en affirmant que c'est de là que doit partir tout le travail d'un musée. C'est à cette condition que l'art trouvera une place dans le monde spirituel de chacun.

Les plus importants musées s'attachent à créer dans leurs expositions la vaste fresque du développement artistique de l'humanité. Ils nous informent sur les types, les genres, les styles artistiques, sur les courants et les tendances. Sans quitter le musée de l'Ermitage, le visiteur peut se faire une idée assez complète du développement général des arts, depuis le paléolithique jusqu'aux courants contemporains. Tout ceci est fort bien. Mais ayons garde d'oublier que toute oeuvre d'art constitue un monde particulier, parfait en son genre. C'est comme si le visiteur se voyait soumettre une sorte de microcosme. La formation esthétique consiste ainsi, selon nous, non seulement à saisir l'ensemble du développement de l'art universel mais à toucher aussi au noyau poétique de l'oeuvre singulière. Au travers de l'objet exposé (au mérite souvent plus que modeste), nous avons la possibilité d'aller à la compréhension de tout l'art, de toute la création humaine.

Comprendre l'art est toujours difficile. La chose exige du savoir, de l'entraînement, de l'expérience et un effort considérable de l'esprit et des sens. Le spécialiste lui-même a peine à en toucher toutes les profondeurs. Qu'allons-nous faire, dans ces conditions, pour ouvrir cet univers à une personne non préparée, qui ne sollicite les arts qu'aux rares heures de loisir, bref, pour laquelle l'art est une occupation de dilettante? Dans notre pays où la démocratie s'installe dans tous les secteurs, cette question acquiert une portée spéciale. Les musées de la capitale voient affluer un public qui n'était jamais venu là, qui n'avait jamais mis le pied dans un musée quel qu'il soit. De fait, nous ne tenons pas que l'art soit le domaine privilégié d'une élite. L'art appartient au peuple, c'est-à-dire à des individus d'origines et de professions les plus diverses. Et il doit être accessible à tout un chacun.

C'est sur quoi Lénine insista en son temps et c'est ce qui oriente aujourd'hui toute la politique culturelle de l'Etat soviétique.

Mais comment réaliser ce droit du citoyen à la jouissance artistique? Comment faire pour que ce que nous disons ici se concrétise dans les faits? Certains pensent que l'art que l'on destine au profane doit être adapté, préparé, vulgarisé, qu'il faut sélectionner en lui ce qu'il comporte d'universellement accessible parce que les couches sous-jacentes ne sauraient

être entendues. D'autres estiment qu l'intérêt de ce même profane peut être capté par une manoeuvre 'dilatoire', en lui parlant par exemple de la vie et de la destinée de l'artiste. Nous croyons, quant à nous, que l'un et l'autre ne peuvent que dévoyer l'amateur.

Celui qui prétend adapter l'art au niveau du visiteur non préparé le prive de ce qui forme son âme. En art, les succédanés sont inadmissibles. Et en premier lieu ce qu'on appelle 'l'art de masse', la publicité moderne, les affiches, les 'comics' qui, tout en étant d'un abord facile et universellement consommé, ne valent rien du tout pour l'éducation esthétique et ont au contraire l'action la plus néfaste. Le musée doit savoir conduire son visiteur dans les arcanes de l'art véritable, du *grand Art*, de ce qui en constitue l'essence irremplaçable. Il est inadmissible de réduire l'art au rôle d'illustration de textes faciles, d'hybride historico-culturel. Sa tâche consiste à lui ouvrir le monde des arts, les voies qui permettent d'en gravir les plus hauts sommets. Il faut faire confiance à la faculté naturelle de l'homme de reconnaître le Beau authentique. Le regretté professeur Bakouchinski, qui a fait énormément pour populariser les musées d'art d'Union Soviétique, ne disait-il pas que les gens simples et peu préparés s'avèrent souvent plus sensibles que les personnes instruites, ou plutôt demi-instruites qui mêlent à quelques connaissances artistiques éparses une foule de préjugés tenaces.

L'initiation aux arts est régie par cette loi imprescriptible: aller du simple au complexe. Les aspects les plus achevés et complexes de l'art peuvent émouvoir d'une façon identique des individus de formations très différentes. Les marbres grecs, les masques nègres, la *Trinité* de Roublev, la *Madone Sixtine*, le *Retour de l'enfant prodique* de Rembrandt, le *Balcon* de Manet: que l'on songe à la somme de travail que ces chefs-d'oeuvre réclament du critique pour parvenir à une interprétation valable! Et ce spécialiste lui-même a conscience de n'en pouvoir épuiser les mérites. Néanmoins ces oeuvres-là touchent le spectateur le moins préparé, l'écolier qui franchit pour la première fois le seuil d'un musée. C'est cette propriété irremplaçable de l'art que nous avons le devoir d'utiliser aussi largement que possible.

La question se pose alors de savoir si les musées sont en mesure de donner à leurs visiteurs une initiation reposant sur l'analyse scientifique des oeuvres? Nous ne pensons pas qu'il y ait de nos jours un conservateur pour oser affirmer que l'interprétation de l'art concerne uniquement le milieu restreint des guides et des critiques, tandis que la masse du public vient au musée simplement pour jouir de ses expositions. Mais comme dans la pratique courante de notre travail les guides sont obligés de s'en tenir le plus souvent à une rapide excursion en surface, on en vient à penser qu'une telle analyse n'est pas obligatoire et peut-être même qu'elle est superflue. Serait-il nécessaire, pour déguster une cuisine de qualité, de jeter un coup d'oeil au fourneau et de s'informer sur la recette? se demande-t-on. Cette conception a ses défenseurs et le résultat c'est que la propagande intelligente de l'art est remplacée par un récit anecdotique sur la vie de l'artiste, sur le motif de l'objet d'art. Quant à son fonds artistique, le visiteur est libre de le deviner lui-même, et s'il n'en est pas capable, de quitter le musée comme il y était

venu. Non, une telle conception de l'éducation esthétique ne nous convient pas. On ne peut confesser deux vérités en art: l'une pour les doctes spécialistes, l'autre pour le reste des mortels.

L'analyse critique est certes une affaire difficile. On ne s'y forme pas de but en blanc, de même que l'artiste d'obtient pas le résultat voulu au premier jet. Mais se dérober à cette analyse, c'est commettre un déni de conscience. L'initiation esthétique, qui ne doit pas être assimilée à la science de l'art, doit néanmoins reposer sur une étude rigoureuse, et s'intégrer les principes essentiels de notre discipline.

L'analyse de l'oeuvre d'art sera fructueuse à condition de progresser selon deux voies simultanément: du général au particulier et du particulier au général, mais de sorte que les deux nous conduisent au même but: une appréhension harmonieuse de l'objet d'art dans toutes ses corrélations avec la vie.

La voie qui va du général au particulier est celle qui nous fait pénétrer dans l'ambiance historique où oeuvre l'artiste. Imaginons que nous voici devant la toile d'un maître. Toute notre attention est captée par ses mérites plastiques. Ceci ne nous empêche pas d'évoquer par la même occasion tout ce que nous savons de l'époque où elle fut peinte, des événements de la vie sociale, de l'art de ce temps. Dans une certaine mesure, le tableau lui-même suscite en nous ce genre de souvenirs et d'associations. Cette explication par l'histoire s'impose avec une telle évidence qu'il ne nous paraît pas nécessaire de la justifier spécialement. Au fond, nous sommes incapables d'appréhender l'oeuvre d'art sans rattacher l'impression que nous en retirons à ce qui nous est connu de l'auteur et de son époque.

Mais cette démarche historique soulève également une masse de difficultés. Elle ne fournit en effet qu'une plate-forme générale d'interprétation plastique, or les faits d'histoire sont nombreux, ils concernent des strates de vie bien différentes, tandis qu'il nous importe d'y retrouver celles qui sont effectivement capables de nous donner la clef de l'artiste et de son oeuvre: dans toute la somme des préalables historiques, il s'agit de découvrir les éléments décisifs au plan de l'art.

Prenons l'exemple de l'art italien de la première Renaissance. Au début du quinzième siècle se produisent à Florence des artistes comme Masaccio, Donatello et quelques autres, qui sont entrés dans l'histoire comme les 'pères de la Renaissance'. Que se passait-il en ce temps-là à Florence? La grande bourgeoisie prend le pouvoir, préparant le règne de Côme de Médicis. Un historian comme Antal sacre Massaccio, sans autre forme de procès, peintre de la grande bourgeoisie. Mais quand on voit dans la chapelle Brancacci ses robustes apôtres aux apparences de simples pêcheurs, on saisit aussitôt, qu'une telle étiquette n'explique rien de l'humanisme démocratique du grand peintre. C'est un regard beaucoup plus large qu'il faut donc jeter sur la marche du développement historique des cités italiennes, sans oublier que la tendance démocratique se perçoit vivement à travers toute l'évolution culturelle du quinzième siècle florentin, envers et contre le courant patricien.

L'histoire est donc conviée à nous aider à comprendre le sens interne de

telles oeuvres d'art. Mais cela ne veut pas dire que l'on s'intéressera uniquement au reflet direct, à la reproduction des événements réels. On sait que les musées reçoivent régulièrement la visite de groupes d'écoliers venus y chercher une sorte d'illustration concrète du cours d'histoire. Bien entendu, il n'est pas interdit d'utiliser l'art dans ce but. Mais il faut bien se dire que cette pratique a bien peu de points communs avec l'explication historique de l'oeuvre d'art. Un tableau comme la *Reddition de Breds* de Vélasquez est une source bien incertaine pour juger de la puissance militaire de l'Espagne de Philippe IV (laquelle, soit dit à propos, allait alors vers un déclin catastrophique). Mais à l'instar de quelques autres chefs-d'oeuvre de ce peintre, telles *les Ménines* et *les Fileuses* plus tardives, elle fournit une certaine idée de la vision du monde et de l'idéal esthétique des Espagnols de ce temps.

Sur le chemin qui conduit à la perception de notre objet principal: l'oeuvre d'art, l'historique de l'oeuvre joue également un rôle considérable. Les journaux, les brouillons, les croquis que nous ont laissés Vinci, Raphaël, Rembrandt, Poussin, Alexandre Ivanov, Répine nous donnent la possibilité de pénétrer en quelque sorte dans le laboratoire du peintre et d'assister à la naissance même, à l'élaboration de son dessin. Ceci nous permet de suivre comment ce qui n'est d'abord qu'un embryon, se transforme en l'organisme évolué de l'oeuvre finie.

Les dessins préparatoires de Poussin, ces chefs-d'oeuvre du graphisme de tous les temps, montrent comment le maître travaille parfois en totale rupture avec sa propre doctrine classique. C'est comme si nous entendions le murmure de la Muse qui l'inspira, comme si nous assistions au travail secret de son imagination.

Mais tous ces faits d'histoire, ce processus historique, ces informations sur le travail du maître ne sont encore que les marches, les propylées, rien de plus. Pour toucher à l'art proprement dit, il faut franchir un pas de plus, qui peut être un bond audacieux, voire même risqué.

Qu'on se le dise bien: si jusqu'à présent nous progressions vers le phénomène particulier à partir de concepts généraux, élaborés par un vaste labeur antérieur, le nôtre et celui d'autrui, désormais il s'agit de se laisser envahir par le particulier, par un détail, un atome, et se plonger dans telle oeuvre d'art en faisant abstraction de toutes les autres. Ceci peut ne durer qu'un bref instant, mais il faut le faire, il faut pénétrer dans l'univers qu'imagine l'artiste.

Dans quel ordre ce travail d'analyse doit-il être entrepris? Par quoi commencer? Quelle chronologie présidera à l'examen des composantes? Voilà des questions qui ne comportent guère de réponse universelle. S'il faut commencer par quelque chose, c'est par un examen impartial. Ce ne sera ni le regard du restaurateur qui juge de l'état de l'oeuvre. Ni celui du conservateur de musée qui s'interroge sur l'école. Ni celui de l'historien d'art à la recherche du maillon manquant d'un système patiemment monté. Le regard de l'amateur qui se propose d'*entendre le message artistique* de l'oeuvre, de l'apprécier sur le plan plastique, doit lui permettre d'en découvrir le sens

intérieur, l'unité et l'interaction des éléments, exactement comme les instruments de l'orchestre exécutent chacun leur partie mais tous ensemble jouent une symphonie. Son propos doit être de trouver l'épine dorsale comportant la vertèbre maîtresse qu'il importe de saisir.

L'idée, le thème, le sujet d'un tableau de la Renaissance ou des temps modernes sont presque toujours porteurs d'une signification déterminée, et ce peut être là le point de départ d'une analyse. Mais gardons-nous bien de lui substituer une banale description de ce qui se passe sur la toile, une redite verbale de ce qu'exprime le langage des couleurs. L'analyse d'un tableau n'est pas une liste d'inventaire où figurent tous les objets qui permettraient, le cas échéant, d' 'identifier' l'oeuvre disparue. Une telle description est totalement impuissante à faire comprendre et évaluer la part d'art que contient l'oeuvre. Cela ne veut pas dire non plus que la description doive être à tout prix littéraire, quelque chose comme l'élégante relation du tableau de Greuze *Jeune fille pleurant son oiseau mort* que Diderot a incluse dans ses 'Salons'. Oui, Diderot a fait assaut de maîtrise avec son peintre favori, et l'a même surpassé, mais son article ne peut en aucun cas passer pour une analyse sérieuse. Goethe, par contre, donne une excellente description du *Bon Samaritain* de Rembrandt. Le grand écrivain a sans doute quelque peu outré l'épouvante du blessé croyant reconnaître dans la figure qui se dessine dans l'ouverture de la porte le brigand qui l'a détroussé. Il reste qu'il a vu juste quant au contexte dramatique de cette toile.

Au dix-neuvième siècle, on estimait couramment que le message de toute image plastique se réduit à l'objet qu'elle est censée représenter. Nous savons pourtant que la Renaissance et le dix-septième siècle laissaient une grande place au message sous-jacent. La polyvalence de l'art (sa polysémantique, disent les érudits) reçoit maintenant l'attention qu'elle mérite dans l'iconologie de la critique d'art contemporaine. La signification de l'image s'en est trouvée étendue, enrichie de sous-entendus, d'associations et d'analogies, à peine perceptibles parfois, mais réels. L'art des Boticcelli, Raphaël, Michel-Ange, Rubens, Rembrandt, Vélasquez et de bien d'autres maîtres ne saurait être déchiffré en dehors des multiples réflexions signifiantes que renvoient les oeuvres qu'ils ont créées.

On ne parlera donc de l'idée, du thème, du sujet qu'en s'attachant à bien souligner qu'en art, la pensée est inséparable de la forme dans laquelle elle s'exprime. Pour la peinture, cette forme d'expression se trouve dans la composition, l'espace, le dessin, le coloris; pour la sculpture, elle est dans le volume plastique. Comme un gant le fait de la main, la forme habille le projet de l'artiste, mesure son efficacité et exerce aussi une action en retour.

L'âme de l'oeuvre peinte est inséparable de sa matière picturale, dirons-nous. Le titre que porte le Rembrandt moscovite: *Assuérus, Aman et Esther* livrait à lui seul, de son temps, et sans émotion particulière, la trame dramatique de cette oeuvre. Mais de nos jours, on risque à trop approfondir le récit biblique de perdre de vue la signification intemporelle de la peinture de ce grand maître. Son monde, en effet, n'est qu'un calque lointain de la Bible. La facture picturale en dit infiniment plus long que les trois personnages qu'il

nous campe. La figure fragile de la femme se fond dans la masse du tableau, dont elle occupe une bonne moitié. Au-delà, lourde nuée, se déploie la cape somptueuse. Le rouge éclatant de la robe lance des reflets inquiétants, des taches de blanc percent à travers le vermeil des pierreries. La silhouette féminine se confond presque avec l'énorme forme trapue et immobile du roi, au centre de la toile, qu'un halo doré semble envelopper. Deux personnages s'attaquent au troisième. Lui tête inclinée dans une attitude soumise, la coupe du destin entre les mains, est baigné de ténèbres, sans couleur, ombre désincarnée. Dans ce tableau de Rembrandt, les couleurs vivent de la vie des diamants non encore pétrifiée, qui s'allument et se remplissent d'ardeur et débordent, tantôt s'éteignant et se consumant, tantôt s'épaississant et se figeant. Le regard a peine à s'arracher à ce brasier de couleurs où dansent des langues de feu. Par une espèce d'entente tacite avec le peintre, nous percevons dans la vie de cette matière exaspérée l'essence même du drame humain.

Comment donc n'être pas reconnaissant au musée pour l'initiation au monde du Beau qu'il apporte à notre public! Il est pourtant une autre 'supermission' qu'il lui revient d'assumer en matière d'éducation esthétique: il faut encore que l'art *pénètre la conscience de chacun*, qu'il devienne un élément inaliénable de son existence. Le visiteur doit emporter de son séjour une joie précieuse, mais aussi un certain quota de richesse spirituelle, qui lui permettra ensuite d'exister, d'agir et d'oeuvrer en dehors de ce lieu privilégié. Car le musée est à même d'éveiller dans chaque conscience des potentialités cachées d'artiste. Après une visite à la galerie de Dresde où il put admirer la peinture de genre des petits maîtres flamands c'est d'un tout autre oeil que Goethe observa l'artisan qui travaillait dans l'atelier d'une ruelle voisine. Marcel Proust évoque, lui aussi, cet instant de son enfance où il reconnut dans une modeste domestique quelque chose de ce que Giotto avait campé dans ses Vertus de la Chapelle de l'Arène.

Bien entendu, tout ce que nous avons dit jusque-là ne donne encore qu'une idée très générale de la mission d'éducation esthétique qui incombe au musée. Il est certain que cette éducation doit revêtir des formes diverses selon les pays, selon les conditions locales et les traditions. Dans ce domaine, il ne peut y avoir de nivellement, non plus que de normes et de lois obligatoires: l'objectif final de l'éducation esthétique n'est-il pas former un être harmonieux et complet?

De nos jours, sa portée acquiert une importance particulière. Auparavant, il s'agissait surtout de combattre le mauvais goût, l'art bourgeois des salons, l'académisme aride et sans vie. Aujourd'hui, l'art se heurte à un adversaire infiniment plus dangereux, et qui n'hésite pas à s'annoncer comme tel: l'anti-art. Il n'y a pas lieu de s'arrêter ici sur un phénomène qui lance un véritable défi à la culture humaine. Disons seulement que l'aspect le plus inquiétant de l'anti-art vient précisément de son hostilité déclarée pour l'art, et de ce qu'il se trouve même des gens pour lui ouvrir les musées. Nous voyons ainsi cohabiter sous le même toit ces deux extrêmes: l'art authentique et son antipode. Si une telle chose est devenue possible, c'est parce que dans certains musées on a tendance à oublier le principe de *valeur artistique.*

Celui-ci est remplacé par le fétiche du modernisme, de la mode. Que devons-nous donc changer dans la structure même des musées et de leurs expositions pour rehausser leur rôle dans la diffusion culturelle?

On sait que les plus grands musées de notre temps se sont formés à l'origine comme des succursales des palais des souverains. Les oeuvres y furent réunies non dans le but de magnifier l'art, mais de glorifier ses propriétaires portant couronne, de faire parade de leur richesse et de leur pouvoir. De nos jours, cette situation s'est renversée. Avec le triomphe du principe historique, les trésors des musées sont devenus une espèce de matériel didactique placé au service de l'histoire de l'art, ce qui les a singulièrement rapprochés des objectifs de la formation esthétique. Comme seul vestige du passé, nos grands musées ne paraissent avoir conservé, curieusement que le principe de l'enfilade.

Nous voulons dire par là que la structure des nouveaux musées devra subir de substantielles rectifications. Il ne faut pas que le visiteur soit entraîné dans cet engrenage fatal qui l'oblige à lécher les murs, littéralement, il ne faut pas qu'il ait l'impression de se trouver dans un couloir dont il doit, coûte que coûte, atteindre le bout. L'idée à mettre en valeur, c'est que le musée est un lieu de séjour, que dans ses salles chacun peut s'arrêter afin de rêver sur telle oeuvre, comme ce fut le cas jadis de la galerie de Dresde, où la *Madone Sixtine* était présentée devant un véritable amphithéâtre de sièges.

Qui ne s'extasie devant la richesse des grands musées mondiaux? Les peuples en tirent à juste titre un vif sentiment de fierté nationale. Et néanmoins l'aspect colossal de ces établissements hypertrophiés, qui nous apparaissent comme la juxtaposition de plusieurs musées, est déjà un sujet de préoccupation.

Il y a maintenant plus de cent ans qu'Alexandre Hertzen expliquait que l'abondance des tableaux aux cimaises nuit à la perception esthétique, et que l'ordre chronologique est en divorce avec les nécessités de l'art. 'Un tableau agit de façon infiniment plus active quand il est à sa place et seul', disait-il.

De fait, un sentiment ambigu s'empare de nous dans nos vieux musées géants. D'une part un élan de reconnaissance infinie pour ceux qui ont réuni en ces lieux tant de chefs-d'oeuvre; d'autre part, le dépit d'être hors d'état de les appréhender comme ils le méritent. Mentalement on peut certes découvrir une chronologie historique, reconnaître des groupes, mais les sens sont frappés de paralysie, la faculté de jouissance esthétique est oblitérée. On a beau aérer l'exposition, on a beau accroître la surface dévolue à chaque toile, l'ordre reste le même, celui d'une collection de papillons ou d'un alignement de verres d'apothicaire.

Que pouvons-nous donc faire pour sauvegarder l'individualité du tableau, de la statue? Certaines tentatives, souvent heureuses, ont déjà été faites en ce sens. On expose un tableau ou quelques tableaux seulement, ce qui suffit à les arracher à la fourmilière du musée. D'un autre côté, on réunit en un tout les éléments épars d'un ensemble, par exemple les icônes d'un autel ou d'une iconostase, et c'en est fait du nivellement désastreux auquel ces oeuvres étaient astreintes pour les besoins du musée. Le déplacement des pièces (qui

est d'ailleurs combattu, et non sans motifs, par les conservateurs) permet de les exposer dans des contextes divers, dans des situations variables: les oeuvres revivent sous un jour nouveau, leur impact esthétique croît singulièrement.

Bref, et pour finir, constatons qu'une exposition de musée ne saurait s'appuyer sur la seule information scientifique fournie par l'histoire de l'art, qu'elle a un besoin vital de retrouver le *facteur créateur* dans son agencement.

4 The third dimension in education: chance and task of the museum

Klaus Von Dohnanyi

Private collections had their roots in feudalism, and they breathe on capitalism. Museums have their origin in enlightenment, and they cannot function without a social and a democratic concept. When social structures change, collections, like private teachers, can remain unaffected, maintaining a maybe odd, but nevertheless functioning élite relationship. Museums, however, like schools and general education, must follow the change of times to fulfil their function. Great changes in society must, therefore, inevitably lead to just as great changes in museum structure.

There are two major elements in the social role of the museum: research and education. The two are, of course, never completely separable from each other; there is always learning in research and vice versa, research in teaching. The contributions to the Eighth General Conference of the International Council of Museums dealt at length with this phenomenon. These two elements, research and education, sometimes call for diverging museum policies: they not only complement each other, they also are occasionally in conflict. And there can be no doubt that the emphasis of contemporary criticism of the institution museum focuses on shortcomings of the education element in present museum policy. Today all countries are deeply engulfed in debates about changes and reforms of their educational system. And the museums are part of this system, or at least should be.

The apparent reasons for the debate on education in East and West are: Rapid developments in science, technology, and the economy have resulted in very fast social changes and in corresponding requirements on education. Desire for education opportunities and demands on the facilities are growing. Since expansion of education and training absorbs ever larger shares of the

national income, education has become a problem not only of great social, but also of economic, financial, and political implications. Thus the public debate.

Economic aspects probably have contributed to the fact that the debate on reforms in education is predominantly quantitative and organizational. How many children should have a ten-year school period, and for how many children should we build facilities to go on from there? How many students does the society need—how many students can the society support, and what should they study? How should directors of schools be selected, who should participate in the selection (or election) process? To what extent should students take part in decisions on appointments of professors and in the formulation of research projects?

These are the types of questions that we find in the newspapers. Of course, there are also other problems: people ask whether our educational system is socially productive or whether science projects are 'socially relevant'. And there is an important debate going on about educational methods: in particular, how much authority do teachers need and what should the relationship be between the educators and those that are being educated? But these discussions are carried on largely from an organizational angle, although there is much more behind the issues raised.

Another area of education gains still less publicity; it is left more or less to the experts. It deals with what is called the 'curriculum', which means more or less the contents of teaching and learning.

The debate about the curricula is very important, because it decides upon what is being transmitted to the young people in our countries. But again the major part of this debate deals only with semi-qualitative aspects: questions, such as whether one needs as much history of language as was taught in the past, or whether one should teach more how to speak living languages. Or whether it is really necessary to know all the rivers of certain regions, particularly if this means that one has little time to learn anything about the historical development and the social structures of these regions.

Where the technicians discuss curricula, the issue is not, in general, what kind of world we want to produce with our learning, but rather what we must learn in order to maintain and develop the kind of world we have.

I believe that the curriculum-issue in its core is much more basic. At the heart of every curriculum are the social values which are transmitted. And the most urgent problems of our times indeed are connected very directly with the values in our traditional body of learning. Yet there is comparatively little debate about those values. We seem to assume that in order to improve the quality of life and to avoid serious dangers, all we have to do is to improve our methods: more planning, more equality, more happiness, would seem to be the equation.

But this, I am afraid, will turn out to be a great error. While man fought successfully the threats of nature, famine, disease, and climate, he slowly got used to the fact that at the same time man himself became a growing danger; wars became more fatal than plagues. This threat of arms reached a horrid

climax at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But in the post Second World War period, it seemed that this deadly threat of overkill contributed, however dangerously, to a very fragile world peace; at least as far as large, organized, industrial wars are concerned.

Nature seems to be tamed; arms dangerously deadlocked: suddenly the man-made industrial world itself, built to tame nature, threatens human existence. Certainly, for the time being, our comparatively peaceful and well-to-do life is only occasionally interrupted by irritating pollution news, etc. But the problems, no question, are on the march!

The complexity of industrial life, its dependence on a nature-destroying industrial production, are beginning to become clear to us. We begin to talk seriously on forecasts of overpopulation and undersupply of water and clean air.

Do we really? Do we realize that the world we complain about is the world we have made ourselves? Because now it is no longer 'nature' which is threatening man: it is mankind which is making life on this earth more and more dangerous for mankind. And since there is nothing man does, which is not part of his education, we must also recognize that the industrial world which is beginning to threaten us is the product of our own values.

We seem to discuss major issues of our times, the armaments race, the environment threat, and education, as if the three had nothing to do with each other. In our debate about reforms in education the questions of educators–What for? With what aims?–remain more or less undebated. In taking our values for granted, do we not try to defeat the threats with always more education of the very kind that produces our problems?

What are our values? In a very simplified way, education in our industrialized world teaches how to use tools. Tools to control and tools to manipulate nature, tools to control man-machine systems, tools to be efficient and productive. There can be no doubt that such tools are necessary and that the industrialized world has given human life more security and new, fascinating dimensions. This is the reason why to change the world we need also efficiency and achievement factors. And any kind of 'back to nature' move is not only utopian from a political point of view, but also questionable in terms of values. The accumulation of knowledge not only enables man to lead a life of greater wellbeing, but also could (and I say could) give man the opportunity of a life based on greater insight into human possibilities.

I mean, let us not fall into any romanticism: romantics would not be the kind of emotional power that would turn the trend. We cannot turn 'back to nature', but perhaps we could turn forward towards a world where man *and* nature can live.

What can be done? During the period when the ground was laid for industrial development and wellbeing, the predominant emphasis on tools and manipulative abilities in education was of great importance. And this may explain why over a period of some hundred years education has, step by step, moved all other aspects of life into a secondary position. Even today, after the ideal of equal chances in education and democracy has become an

important element in the reform of education systems, the major goal seems to be to make all members of society fit for competition within the same industrial system of achievement. And societies which call themselves socialist, are not different in that respect. Indeed, in those societies where aspects of equality have particular importance, the competition within the system also seems to be particularly tough. It is at least my impression that in the Eastern European countries and in the Soviet Union education is today directed, even more than in Western Europe, towards the use and development of tools for the control of nature. I think our values do not differ significantly in that respect: industrialization demands its price.

Thus the values of industrialized countries today–and these values rapidly expand into cultures of developing countries–are largely measured in two dimensions: facts and faculties. Facts, in particular facts of natural science, which one must know, and faculties, which have to be trained in order to apply these facts to industrial progress. But there is in all industrialized countries a striking lack of what one may call the 'third dimension' in education: I mean aspects of imagination, of the poetic perspectives of life and of understanding nature not as an enemy or servant, but as a partner of human beings. Such aspects used to take an important place in Western education and even played a predominant role in other cultures.

I am quite sure you agree with me that this third dimension in education is indispensable for human happiness. But even if we now begin to realize that some developments of our industrial system are becoming increasingly questionable, we do not realize that these problems directly result from our fixed values. Social systems tend to take themselves for granted, even more than individuals do. In individuals, there is occasionally a recognition for the need to change in order to achieve personal happiness. But society tends to change too late and only under the forces of tremendous tension, because only then people seem to be willing to question their traditional values.

The elements of aesthetics, of life and nature, of human history and human future, will have to regain weight in education if we want to improve the quality of life. We know this, even though we have as yet no concept of an industrialized society in which, on the one hand, facts and faculties play an important role, but on the other hand, human relations. The relationship between human beings and nature, aesthetics and poetics are of much greater significance than we can today imagine. Where will achievement rate? What will be the criteria of selection in social leadership? But maybe such a rational concept of change is not to be expected, because basic social changes are never produced by articles, speeches or statistics: numbers, letters and words are themselves 'two-dimensional'. They have limited effect upon our basic attitudes and values. We may, of course, with our present purely rational approach correct things in one spot and solve burning problems in another. But the data we produce on the crisis of the industrial system and the analyses we write, will, viewed from a long-range perspective, remain patchwork, unless our aims and values take a new direction.

If in the final analysis numbers, letters, and words cannot alone change the

course of history towards more happiness for the many and better qualities of life, then what else could help? In my opinion, a new confrontation with nature, with aesthetics, with human history is required. Not only the rationale, but also the sense must be engaged. I have been asked to give an introductory speech on the community and the museum: here the museum, and I mean the museums in every community, could make a contribution. The debate about reforms in education can be enriched by this element of a 'third dimension'. And I believe that those who have come together for this Ninth General Conference should include this aspect in their discussion.

Schools, and mass media, generally do not have the opportunity of confronting students or adults with a three-dimensional reality. There will always be description, copies, and imitation. Even television, as important as its information qualities are, will never be a substitute for the direct impact of three-dimensional reality. The museum with its authenticity, where the time spent on certain objects is solely controlled by the visitor, the museum with its originality offers a particular opportunity for such confrontation. And the chance to arrange things so as to show the *gestalt* of a complex matter and its interdependence with other realities, offers an important opportunity for human reflection.

Does the museum live up to this opportunity? Of course, we will know better after this Conference. But if I would draw conclusions from the debate in my country, I would say that today museums have not yet fully grasped their possibilities.

Of course, museums, I suppose not only in my country, complain about the lack of money. And museums, I admit, are here perhaps in a particular situation: their lack of integration into the educational system keeps them outside of a major money stream which goes into education—and the very reason for this situation is that the museums have no chance to prove what role they *could* play in education.

Since I hold part of the responsibilities for education planning in the Federal Republic of Germany, I do not want to deny the responsibility people like me have for the situation as it is. We are, as I pointed out, pressed by quantitative problems in education and we have in our own timing and priorities probably not yet the right place for the museum function. As a matter of illustration: In connection with the long-range plan, which we are presently developing in the Federal Republic for education (*Bildungsgesamtplan*), there was a discussion whether the museums should be included or not. Eventually, largely for practical reasons, the museums were not included. At the same time, however, a committee on co-ordination for cultural affairs in the Federal Republic was initiated and the museums are now figuring in that jurisdiction. Today I personally wonder whether this solution was right.

But this is the situation as it is, according to my information, more or less in all industrialized countries. What can be done? Let me list some preliminary suggestions:

1. Museums must be organized so as to invite a wide public. This is accepted today. But even though there are other institutions (for example schools)

which should try on their part to initiate a better use of the museum, there is no question that many museums could and should organize and present themselves more clearly as places for interesting learning, for pleasure and sensory enjoyment. Museums still too frequently make the impression of banks, where one whispers in awe, overpowered by the *value* of things.

There has recently been carried out in West Germany the first part of a major museum-consumer study which shows that even though about 90 per cent of the population has been at least once in a museum, about 40 per cent attended museums only during their school time. But the potential interest in the museum according to this study could be greater: more than 50 per cent said museums could be interesting for everybody, and among the reasons why people do not go to the museum the question of expert help and explanation rated comparatively high.

In this connection I doubt whether suggestions to make the museum more comfortable, to have more elevators, etc., really go to the heart of the problem. I would personally believe that a certain amount of easy improvisation would help the museum better to establish continuous connections with the general public.

2. The museum itself must try to get into the curriculum of schools and other institutions of learning. I know that this is not only a question for museum management but also for the educators. Yet museums could take a more aggressive position. I believe that documents like the one that the Wallraf Richartz Museum in Cologne produced—where schools can see easily *how* the museum could fit into certain curricula—can be helpful.

3. The particular potential for a direct confrontation with reality in the museum should be exploited to show the *interdependence* of social developments. Museums of natural history, for example, must deal with current problems of environment; museums of anthropology should deal with problems of minorities and the consequences of colonialism and imperialism. And even museums of art should, in my opinion, try occasionally to include other exhibitions, which could make the cultural role of art more clearly understood. I believe that there is a great demand for such 'interdisciplinary' exhibitions, since everybody feels that we have lost the potential to see the 'totality of life'.

4. If confrontation with reality, without focusing primarily on facts and faculties, could be a major and general function of the museum within the system of education, then this confrontation should be made possible not only for people in the metropolitan areas. Museums must reach all regions in the country. Our museums policy must be directed towards decentralization, towards regionalization. And this means not only exchange, but also long-term lending of exhibits into regional museum locations. At the same time we would then need a central co-ordination policy. Co-operation between museums should get the active help of government agencies.

This means that we must also reconsider policies of maintaining museum material primarily for research purposes in large stocks in the basement of the

museums. Research people can travel more easily than the average population. And a policy of 'exhibits first' may also require certain corrections in connection with the use of duplicates, copies, and prints.

5. There is no doubt that all museums must turn more from an introverted to an extraverted policy. This means also that museums have to deal more clearly with problems of exhibition technique. But I would warn those who claim that for this purpose museum management needs a new type of career, new types of diplomas, etc. First, we may have to wait too long, and second, I believe that museum management could study such techniques under a concept of postgraduate professional training.

Let me conclude. Since people responsible for schools and universities today are pressed by urgent quantitative problems, the museums themselves must take such steps towards integration. The money question should not become a vicious circle: as in other areas of great change, imagination, improvisation, and not perfection, will decide the battle.

Up to this point I have not talked about personal experiences, although I am a rather regular 'museum-consumer' myself. Among the museums of art which I know best, I naturally also have my personal preferences. And among the many museums I admire, there is one that I have established a personal love with: I mean the Swedish Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm. Simply as a consumer it may be interesting if I explain why. I have come to the conclusion that the major reason for this particular attraction is just the *lack of perfection* in this museum; or the fact that this museum looks and feels less like a bank than any other museum I know of. The Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm has become a place where I feel one can live, enjoy–and nobody seems to raise the finger to say learn! I feel that at Stockholm the 'third dimension' is really accomplished. Because I believe it is living what we have to learn.

Le musée, un centre d'animation culturelle

Jean Favière

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Il semble bien qu'avec cette neuvième Conférence Générale du Conseil International des Musées un pas décisif soit franchi. Proclamer face aux plus hautes autorités '*le musée au service des hommes, aujourd'hui et demain*', c'est aussi reconnaître, au nom de notre profession toute entière, qu'issu de la Société et nourri par elle, le musée doit répondre à ses légitimes exigences. C'est affirmer que tout en demeurant comptables de la constitution, de l'étude et de la transmission de l'immense patrimoine qu'elle nous confie, nous considérons de notre devoir de lui en assurer le revenu toujours plus substantiel et, ceci, à chaque génération d'hommes.

Depuis de nombreuses années, déjà, la contribution fournie par le musée à l'enseignement et à l'éducation a été attentivement étudiée aussi bien par nos institutions internationales – Unesco et Icom – rappelons les stages d'Athènes, de Rio, de Mexico et les réunions de Paris en 1964 et 1969 et de Moscou en 1968 – qu'au sein des organisations professionnelles nationales. Dans la plupart des pays du monde, expériences et réalisations se sont multipliées. Une grande partie de nos séances de Grenoble sera consacrée à en faire le bilan critique. Mais pour importante que soit cette contribution des musées à la vie sociale, on doit constater qu'elle ne s'adresse qu'à une fraction, certes importante, de la communauté. Devons-nous en rester là pour

avoir bonne conscience et ne pas chercher à étendre encore notre action au bénéfice de tous?

Le musée a l'extraordinaire privilège de tenir un langage direct, à la portée de chacun. Les objets qui sont sa matière fondamentale parlent à tous les sens. Leur pouvoir d'évocation est immense, qu'il s'agisse de montrer aux hommes où et comment ils vivent, comment ont vécu ou vivent d'autres hommes. Le musée peut jouer le rôle d'un révélateur et donner aux hommes les moyens concrets de multiples prises de conscience. Par le rapprochement des objets, il peut rendre sensible aussi bien les constantes de l'intelligence humaine que l'évolution cumulée du progrès technique ou le merveilleux épanouissement de l'imagination créatrice. Il devrait permettre à chacun de se situer dans la société humaine, de comprendre ses raisons d'agir, de mesurer les pressions que le passé, la nature, les hommes aussi font peser sur lui. Le musée détient les moyens pour tout homme 'd'établir des rapports profonds et exacts' avec son milieu et de 'considérer sans prévention, ni réticence les autres hommes éloignés de lui dans le temps comme dans l'espace' (1). Aussi est-ce en plaçant ses entreprises dans cette perspective qu'il donnera aux hommes les références nécessaires pour participer lucidement à la vie du monde contemporain. Favorisant sans contrainte, l'épanouissement de l'homme par une meilleure connaissance de lui-même, de ses oeuvres, quotidiennes ou exceptionnelles, de son environnement naturel et social, il fait oeuvre de culture et devient un réel facteur de développement au service de tous les hommes, de ceux d'aujourd'hui comme de ceux de demain.

A quelles conditions le musée pourra-t-il remplir cette fonction originale et être un des supports essentiels des politiques culturelles, qu'elles soient nationales, régionales, ou locales? Deux conditions me paraissent primordiales et leur réunion constitue le préalable de toute action. En premier lieu, afin d'éviter toute confusion, il est indispensable que nous ne perdions pas de vue nos responsabilités en matière de collecte, de conservation, d'étude et de présentation des biens naturels et des biens culturels. Elles demeurent, quelles que soient la nature de nos entreprises, le fondement même de la notion de musée. C'est à partir des matériels qu'il recueille et qu'il utilise que le musée agit. Sans l'objet qu'il détient, le musée ne serait qu'un 'centre culturel' comme beaucoup d'autres, simple 'lieu' de présentation et d'accueil. N'oublions pas que là résident son originalité et sa force; la connaissance précise de l'objet authentique et de son contexte, fruit souvent de son propre travail de recherche, est la caution de la qualité de son action.

Deuxième condition non moins essentielle: avoir la ferme conviction de notre solidarité avec la communauté dont le musée est l'émanation et qu'il a pour devoir de servir en l'aidant à mieux connaître et à mieux aimer la nature et l'homme. Pour que les musées ne soient pas 'des îles dans l'espace', selon l'expression d'Alma S. Wittlin (2) et que soit rompu l'isolement dans lequel ils se sont longtemps complus pour en faire 'un lieu de vie active et permanente ouvert sur l'avenir' (3), il est nécessaire d'abattre les barrières qui longtemps l'ont séparé, et souvent le séparent encore de sa communauté. Pour cela, il faut, tout d'abord, que nous entreprenions de connaître celle-ci dans son

étendue géographique, dans ses structures sociales et économiques et dans ses comportements culturels pour estimer ses besoins et répondre à ses aspirations. Il faut, d'autre part, que nous tenions compte de l'existence d'institutions, d'organismes, de groupements, qui, parallèlement au musée, contribuent, directement ou indirectement, au développement culturel de la communauté. A nous de leur apporter notre concours, de les provoquer à des entreprises concertées, de susciter, éventuellement, la constitution de structures de coordination, dans une perspective de complémentarité et de juste équilibre.

Ces conditions étant remplies, aussi bien en esprit que, peu à peu, dans les faits, la porte est ouverte à l'imagination pour que le musée soit un instrument de promotion culturelle à la fois lieu d'attraction, de rencontres et d'échanges et base de rayonnement. C'est qu'en effet tout 'centre culturel' et plus particulièrement le musée peut développer deux types d'actions: *une action centripète* qui en fait le point de convergence où le public est invité à *venir* participer à ce qui lui est offert et *une action centrifuge* qui, s'exerçant à l'extérieur, *le rapproche* du public pour susciter et soutenir, dans les lieux de loisir comme dans les lieux de travail, de multiples initiatives. Traditionnelle, la première, apparemment plus riche de matière en raison de l'immobilisation dans le musée des matériels les plus précieux, les plus rares ou les plus fragiles, ne s'adresse principalement qu'aux catégories de public privilégiées par la proximité. Elle est généralement propre au domaine urbain car elle exige du musée des moyens qui ne se rencontrent que très exceptionnellement dans ces secteurs ruraux. Elle est caractérisée par l'importance souvent prise par l'exposition permanente et son exploitation. Celle-ci est-elle, comme d'aucuns l'affirment, un des facteurs essentiels de l'immobilisme et de la sclérose du musée? Faut-il en réduire l'importance pour réserver des espaces plus vastes à des activités temporaires permettant un renouvellement fréquent de l'intérêt et, dans le cas de nouveaux musées, modifier le rapport traditionnel des espaces qui accorde la plus grande place aux présentations permanentes? Une telle question mériterait, si elle ne l'a jamais été, d'être amplement débattue, car de la réponse peut dépendre l'orientation de la politique du musée et, de ce fait, les données des programmes architecturaux. Nombre de musées récents ont tendance à inverser le rapport, mais on peut se demander s'il s'agit, de la part de leurs promoteurs, d'une intention délibérée ou seulement d'une situation imposée par le petit nombre d'objets leur appartenant en propre. D'un autre point de vue, on doit convenir que, parmi les musées, en dehors de ceux où le public est attiré par des bâtiments ou des objets-vedettes, les plus fréquentés sont en général ceux qui multiplient manifestations temporaires et activités annexes. Il est certain, d'autre part, que la possibilité donnée de coopérer à la construction et à la constitution du musée, ainsi qu'à l'organisation de manifestations diverses, comme en témoignent les récentes expériences des musées de quartiers aux USA et des musées frontaliers du désert mexicain, suscitent un intérêt réel parmi les membres de la communauté immédiate. De telles formes d'association du public ne peuvent être mises en oeuvre dans des musées de type ancien,

détenteurs de collections importantes, qu'au prix de la transformation très difficile de locaux ayant souvent de plus un intérêt historique en eux-mêmes. Néanmoins des formules devraient être recherchées et, dans toute la mesure du possible, les espaces trouvés qui permettraient à certains groupements particulièrement dynamiques d'adultes et de jeunes de contribuer par leur présence et leurs apports à l'enrichissement et à l'animation du musée. A défaut de locaux dans le musée même, une disponibilité suffisante du personnel devrait, par des conseils scientifiques et techniques, par des concours matériels, contribuer à faire de ces groupements de véritables cellules d'animation périphériques.

C'est dire quelle importance peut revêtir pour les musées, mais plus particulièrement pour les musées prisonniers de structures anciennes, une action centrifuge. C'est pour eux le meilleur moyen, sinon le seul, d'atteindre une communauté élargie et d'établir 'des contacts avec les publics urbains que certaines prévention et inhibition tiennent à l'écart. . . ainsi que de publics ruraux que la distance maintient éloignés' (4). Par une politique continue de présence, s'établit une intéraction permanente entre le musée et le milieu. Les activités peuvent alors se développer en liaison étroite avec le cadre de vie et plus particulièrement avec la vie professionnelle et ses organismes particuliers: syndicats, comités d'entreprises en milieu urbain, centres de promotion agricole, coopératives en milieu rural. Les pressions exercées peuvent conduire au plein emploi de locaux disponibles; que, par cette action conjointe, elles soient convaincues des nouvelles possibilités d'utilisation ou qu'elles ne puissent plus s'abriter derrière des règlements périmés, les autorités sont contraintes d'en permettre l'accès. L'intervention du musée, qu'elle suscite ou soutienne une initiative, peut entraîner le déblocage culturel d'un secteur: elle favorise le regroupement des bonnes volontés; elle leur permet de prendre conscience de leurs possibilités d'action commune en même temps que du micro-climat culturel sur lequel celle-ci se fonde. L'action centrifuge du musée est capitale; elle contribue à amorcer le désenclavement de communautés en état de sous-développement culturel, nombreuses même dans les pays dits développés, et tout particulièrement sensibles au contact avec l'objet original et à toutes les informations qu'il fournit sur le passé comme sur le présent.

Comment, concrètement, un musée peut-il intervenir dans la vie culturelle d'une communauté jusqu'à en être, dans certains cas, le support principal? Les modes d'actions sont évidemment très différents selon qu'il s'agit d'un musée important à rayonnement national situé dans une capitale ou une grande ville, comme le Victoria and Albert Museum, ou du musée d'une ville de province, petite ou moyenne. De même, il n'est pas possible pour un musée d'agir de la même façon, s'il est la seule institution culturelle de la communauté ou si d'autres, Maisons de la Culture, théâtre, bibliothèque existent aussi et rendent logique la recherche d'une coopération. Il peut aussi à la limite n'être qu'un élément parmi d'autres au sein d'un vaste complexe culturel et être amené à tenir compte d'orientations collectives, ainsi en est-il du Musée de Randers au Danemark.

Toutes proportions gardées et compte tenu des situations locales, il est possible de répartir les activités culturelles observées dans un certain nombre de musées selon plusieurs fonctions.

Une fonction d'accueil. Le musée peut être le cadre d'activités que certains auteurs ont qualifiés de 'périphériques' (A. S. Wittlin): représentations théâtrales, récitals de musique, de poésie, spectacles de danse, présentations de mode, causeries sur les sujets les plus imprévus; c'est le cas très fréquent aux USA. La plupart de ces activités n'ont qu'un très lointain rapport et, parfois, n'ont aucun rapport avec le musée, son contenu et ses perspectives propres. Elles sont pour lui, en sus de leur apport culturel spécifique, un moyen d'attraction. Il arrive que le musée soit aussi une sorte de foyer qui met des locaux à la disposition de groupements divers. Ainsi le musée de Livingstone, en Rhodésie du Nord accueille-t-il sociétés de musique, ciné-clubs, clubs de photographies, associations d'amateurs d'histoire qui y tiennent leurs réunions et peuvent y venir travailler.

Une fonction d'information. Le musée est une tribune, plus ou moins largement ouverte; principalement par le moyen de l'exposition permanente ou temporaire, accessoirement par des conférences, des cours et des publications, il joue, comme le souligne Lennart Holm, président de la commission gouvernementale suédoise MUS. 65, 'un rôle semblable à celui d'autres moyens de grande information; en raison des connaissances qu'il diffuse et des émotions qu'il peut susciter, il contribue à influencer l'opinion' (5).

Le musée-laboratoire, cher à Georges Henri Rivière, se doit d'être la tribune des acquisitions les plus récentes de la recherche. Il revient aux musées de sciences naturelles de tenir le public en alerte face aux menaces qui pèsent sur la conservation de l'environnement et aux musées d'anthropologie et d'ethnographie de l'éclairer sur des questions aussi délicates que la génération humaine ou 'l'anéantissement de la culture des petits peuples' (6). Il est des musées locaux qui ont ouvert publiquement le débat sur l'urbanisme et l'avenir de leurs villes. La fonction du musée d'art moderne est toute d'information. Quelles sont les limites de cette fonction d'information: des controverses qui se sont élevées en Suède, il y a peu, à propos d'une exposition mise en circulation par l'Office national suédois d'expositions itinérantes, ont amené nos collègues à s'interroger sur l'opportunité de présenter dans des musées 'des expositions consacrées à des sujets d'actualité présentés sous l'angle de la critique sociale', les uns soutenant que cette exposition 'marquait une date dans l'histoire culturelle de la Suède', les autres refusant de l'accueillir (4). Peut-être devrions-nous, au sein de l'Icom, amorcer une réflexion sur ce problème? La fonction d'information du musée est étroitement liée à son rôle éducatif. Elle le désigne notamment pour être un des instruments les plus efficaces de l'éducation permanente. La valeur éducative d'expériences du type du Musée de quartier d'Anacostia, à Washington DC se confond étroitement avec leur portée culturelle (7).

L'exercice de cette fonction n'est évidemment pas limitée au cadre du

musée lui-même, mais elle peut s'exercer en dehors de celui-ci à la faveur d'entreprises de diffusion, notamment sous la forme d'expositions itinérantes.

Une fonction d'assistance qui peut revêtir diverses formes.

Le musée peut fournir à une autre institution une prestation totale, telle qu'une exposition conçue, préparée et réalisée par lui, les deux établissements travaillant en étroite coopération; il peut bénéficier de prestations équivalentes de la part de son partenaire. Ainsi a pu s'instaurer une action culturelle commune entre la Maison de la Culture et les Musées de Bourges.

Pour modeste qu'elle soit en général, une autre forme d'assistance, celle-ci sans contrepartie autre que morale, est celle donnée par le musée à des associations ou à des groupes spontanés désireux d'approfondir la connaissance de leur environnement naturel et culturel et d'y associer leur communauté. Le musée reste un conseiller discret; il guide les premières démarches, se bornant à donner orientations et informations; puis il suit de loin la quête des objets et des documents, aidant, seulement, si cela est nécessaire, à leur identification; il laisse enfin toute liberté d'initiative aux promoteurs de l'opération quant à la présentation des résultats de leurs recherches, sauf à leur apporter une contribution complémentaire sous la forme de prêt d'objets ou de matériels, dans le cas d'une exposition. L'assistance ainsi fournie par le musée favorise une action culturelle à deux niveaux: au niveau de l'équipe organisatrice qui développe ses possibilités créatives et fait l'apprentissage d'une responsabilité collective tout en acquérant plus d'intimité avec le milieu; au niveau de l'ensemble des membres de la communauté à qui elle donne la possibilité d'accéder à une connaissance renouvelée de son cadre de vie.

Les quelques indications qui précèdent ne peuvent prétendre donner un tableau complet des recherches et des tentatives faites par les musées pour polariser autour d'eux tout ou partie de la vie culturelle. On doit regretter que, si généreuses et originales qu'elles soient, elles demeurent souvent à l'état d'expériences et qu'elles parviennent rarement au niveau de généralisation souhaité par leurs promoteurs. Presque toujours, elles sont réalisées avec des moyens modestes, parfois même au détriment d'autres activités du musée. Leur développement normal exigerait un accroissement corrélatif des moyens alloués par les collectivités qui en bénéficient.

Pour obtenir ces moyens, il nous faut convaincre les autorités que la participation des musées à la vie culturelle d'un pays est une réalité devenue quotidienne et que nous-mêmes, gens de musée, en avons fini d'entrer dans l'avenir à reculons, le regard exclusivement braqué sur le passé de nos institutions, pour être solidaire des hommes qui nous entourent et pour chercher à pressentir les exigences du monde de demain. Comment y parvenir? Dans ce domaine, comme dans bien d'autres, seule l'action est payante: auprès d'elle, les discours sont de peu de poids. Dans un monde où l'éphémère est devenu la loi quotidienne, nous disposons d'atouts inestimables: les objets et toutes les informations qu'ils contiennent et qui les entourent. A nous de savoir jouer la partie.

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Problems in the language of museum interpretation

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The rejection of the traditional museum and especially of many of our truly great art museums by those desperately concerned with social change is, on first consideration, enigmatic. Museum audiences are growing at impressive rates in many parts of the world. Never before have governments and public agencies made such demands for services nor have they been willing to support museums financially as they now do or promise to do. And yet many artists, intellectuals, students in protest, minority groups, and governmental and para-governmental agencies concerned with the critical problems of our great, sick cities identify us as dinosaurs, much too expensive to feed or even tolerate.

The reasons for this may be many but it is suggested here that a primary cause is that we have failed to use our resources—our collections and our knowledge of them—in a manner which is either comprehensible or useful to many of the publics which we would serve. To some we serve only to perpetuate bourgeois and aristocratic values. We are enemies of the 'revolution'. To others we are mere playgrounds for the power élites. To yet others we are no more than publicly accessible extensions of power structures which either threaten them or have failed them: the physical scientists of 'The Bomb'; the creators of frightening new technology that is changing their lives and has denied their right to self-determination; the natural scientists who have failed them in preserving the environment. Some of us are seen to

have lied about our history, denied some their true heritage by forcing another upon them. We are identified as collaborators in the dealer-museum-collector-critic conspiracy to corrupt art in the market place. We belong to the cartel and the artists are our prisoners. It is, at least in the Western world, an 'us' and 'them' situation which is regrettable, perhaps unrealistic or perhaps well-founded.

But what, you might ask, of the great efforts of museums to reach out into their communities? What of the store-front museums, the museumobiles, the travelling exhibits designed for the smallest centres and the so-called culturally deprived communities? Democratization of museums and programmes of decentralization; little bits from the great treasure troves for everyone, share the wealth–is that not the trend as well as a politically astute answer to the museum's opponents? The answer is 'No'.

Not only have the out-reach programmes frequently been unrelated to any *bona-fide* museum function and not only have they again and again been politically expedient programmes which failed to attack the real problems of the people to which they were offered, but also, and more important, museums have continued to transmit their messages in the same, incomprehensible, irrelevant, and at times offensive languages which created the opposition in the first place. Where we have attempted to interpret cultural heritage to minorities it has too often been in terms of the dominant majority culture. Attempts to break the vicious art market cartel have been only attempts at pacification rather than the making of new allies. Similarly where museums have turned their attention to current social issues, they have too often preached too little, too late and to the converted. And the liturgy is still in Latin.

In any flood of generalizations such as this I must ask the reader to believe that the exceptions are recognized and the dangers of generalization are understood. The purpose of this paper, however, is to describe some general problems within the world of museums and to attempt to explain them if not to provide answers.

The root of the problem appears to be that the essential nature of the museum as a unique medium of communication, dependent on the non-verbal language of objects and demonstrable phenomena, is too often forgotten.[1] The museum, unlike any other medium, transmits its messages through the object or phenomenon in such a way that the object (I shall use this word to represent object, artifact, artwork, and phenomenon) speaks for itself. To paraphrase Marshall McLuhan, the medium is the message, the message is the object, the object is the medium.

It is doubtful that there is a more difficult medium in which to work, or one about which less is known. For this reason, perhaps, we have denied the museum visitor his right to communicate with the object by setting in his path the label, the graphic, the photograph, slide, film, or videotape, all in an attempt to say what we think the object ought to say, in our terms, by our values, in our language.

1. *Curator*, vol. xi/1, pp. 33-40.

We have also avoided the task of letting objects speak for themselves by turning our museums into all-purpose cultural centres, community centres, concert halls, ballrooms, school classrooms, luncheon clubs, and fun palaces. Rather than educate a public to use the object as a source of data, and to make the object a comprehensible source of information, we have overwhelmed the object with the fashionable media of our time so that it need not be encountered at all. We have avoided the non-verbal, visual, and tactile encounter of man and object.

If there is validity in what has been said rather harshly thus far, what then is the nature of this non-verbal object language and what do we do that makes it incomprehensible. In brief, and as explained at greater length elsewhere[1] the language of the museum depends upon the object as noun, the relationships between objects as verbs, the groupings or displays of objects as cohesive statements (patterns rather than sentences or paragraphs), and in all of this the supplementary media of print, graphic, photograph, film, and the line, colour and form of the object environment are the adjectives and adverbs. Syntax is based on *gestalt* perception or, if you prefer, on pattern recognition.

This latter point calls for comment. When the museum visitor moves from the familiar world of the street towards the museum an initial statement is made by the setting and architecture of the museum building itself. It is not the elegant poster advertising a special exhibition which speaks to him but is rather the sum total of all that he sees, an information display. As he moves towards the entrance (and the fact that museum visitors are moving in relation to static environments is important in this discussion) the pattern changes and the initial or introductory message is modified. Through the foyer, past the guards, on through galleries or exhibits of no immediate interest, all this while the visitor is receiving messages from a constantly varying information display. He is storing cumulative data which will provide a context or mind-set within which he will receive, and within which he must integrate, the messages of the particular exhibit which is his goal or, more often, his happenstance discovery.

As he approaches a particular exhibit it may be from the left or the right, at the planned beginning or the end. The 'Enter Here' sign will neither control him nor deter him from responding to the exhibit as an array of information. The so-called 'lock-step' exhibition design will not guarantee his obedience to linear, sequential, and 'logical' organization of the objects. He is in a three-dimensional world of visual stimuli 'in-the-round'. It is a discovery environment in which, with his every step, the display of information changes. (Two visitors, walking side by side, have two different experiences, seeing different patterns change and shift.) No matter to what degree we design our museum exhibitions as three-dimensional textbook pages, the visitor will not accept them as such. He will walk around and through our logic, receiving messages that we may never have intended to transmit and missing what we may have regarded as our most important statements. And

1. *Curator*, loc. cit.

all of this because we are using what has been called the *curatorial language*.

The argument that we employ a special curatorial language is based on the premise that the curator, being a specialist in an academic discipline, has learned an approach to art and art history, one of the sciences, history, or folk culture which is specific to the discipline. It embodies not only a particular set of values but also systems of classification which are not generally understood outside of his discipline. Thus, when faced with the problem of selecting some objects from among many for inclusion in an exhibition he exercises taste (a specific and more or less in-group value system) or assesses historical importance (in accordance with a particular theory of history) or seeks to present the most complete series possible (by some classification system of his discipline). When organizing the materials spatially, he continues to rely on the same values and systems and will probably use what he sees as a logical arrangement in the sense of linear and sequential organization.

In making the selection of objects, the curator consciously or unconsciously encodes them with messages which can only be decoded by those sharing his particular code. His organization of the material on exhibition is similarly encoded in a private language. The museum visitor who is not privy to the particular academic code employed will, however, 'read' the exhibit decoding both the pattern of objects and the objects themselves in terms of his own code. Distortion of exhibit intent is inevitable for the majority. The minority able to decode the curatorial language will tend to be those with high educational achievement levels, a group which correlates in even the most advanced societies with upper socio-economic levels and thereby with the middle and upper-middle class.

The problem is compounded when it is realized that the popular non-verbal languages being employed by the visitors outside of the cognoscente will be many. They will vary by cultural origin, age, socio-economic level, sex, and education. One cannot be more aware of this than by working in an institution such as the Brooklyn Museum. It serves a community of over two-and-a-half million people of whom a million speak Spanish, the majority of the remainder are Black Americans, and there are substantial communities of a dozen different cultural backgrounds including long-established Italian and Jewish populations and an entrenched White American middle class deeply involved in the Museum both as its users and its supporters.

As if the problem of clear communication through the museum object to a heterogeneous audience did not already appear impossible, there are two further complications. The first is that the curator, already indicted for using private codes, has no feedback loop built into his communications system. He does not have any way of learning from his audience what distortions occur in his intended messages between transmission and reception and therefore cannot modify transmission to minimize interference. The second problem occurs when the curator encodes the objects in the course of selection but the

exhibition designer, working with a quite different set of values and aesthetic criteria, organizes the chosen objects spatially.

Students of retail merchandizing have learned much about the ways in which different conformations and concentrations of objects for sale attract different kinds of buyers. Students of non-verbal communications in everyday life have identified the object/collection conformations and their symbolism by studying the organization of materials arranged throughout private houses. The professional exhibition designer is likely to be aware of these findings and apply them. The curator is usually neither aware of nor concerned with such matters. Whether or not the curator and designer can communicate between themselves to achieve the use of the latter's insights in the service of the former's intent remains, at this point, an open question.

What does remain clear is that we have our Tower of Babel. Our detractors might well cite to us Genesis 11: 4-6:

> Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of the men had built. And the Lord said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.'

And the Lord made a confusion of languages which frustrated the plans and destroyed the power of those who had been too proud.

So much for threatening power élites and their establishment institutions say our critics. But it was the Lord who confused the language of those who would have built a tower into the heavens. We seem to have brought the problem upon ourselves.

It may be presumptuous to suggest solutions to the problems already described for there surely can be no easy answer nor magic formula, but there are, in my opinion, a number of avenues to be explored. The objective, of course, is not to build the tower into the heavens (there has been too much of that already) but rather to find museum languages and modes of interpretation that will make our resources not only understandable in the many tongues of our publics but also meaningful in their lives.

A first step in moving towards these goals is the creation of feedback loops in our museum communications systems. By this it is meant that the curator must have a continuing feedback of response from his intended audience, from those for whom he created the exhibit. He must be clear in his own mind what his intended message is so that he can later compare what was transmitted with what was received. Only in this way can he modify transmission. Only in this way can he learn the public codes or languages being used to decode his messages. In this connection it is probable that he will require an interpreter.

The term 'interpreter' has been previously used in the jargon of museums

to mean everything from a docent or museum teacher to an exhibit designer or technician. Here it refers to a new breed of museum specialist, probably trained in socio-linguistics and the social sciences generally, whose task is to collect audience feedback data, interpret its significance, and communicate to the curator the precise nature of the static and interference in his transmission of messages. The interpreter, in this sense, may well become one of the key figures in breaking down our language barriers for it is also his function to retranslate the curatorial messages into codes that can be deciphered by the intended audience.

The term 'intended audience' was used because, recognizing the heterogeneous nature of museum audiences, it becomes pointless to seek out a universal museum language which will be understood in the same way by all ages and socio-economic groups, visitors of varying cultural origins and backgrounds, and by those of different sex and of different degrees of education. Exhibits must have target audiences even though it can be hoped that they will communicate effectively far beyond the limits of the defined target. An exhibition of Bambara art designed for white, middle-class connoisseurs is different from one designed for white, middle-class children, is different from one designed for the Black American ghetto children, is different from one designed for the Bambara people. Not only does the audience create a different context for the objects and are the appropriate museum languages different, but also the visual and informational context created for the objects must vary in each instance.

(At other times I have argued against the principle of planning exhibits for particular schooling levels, i.e. school grades 8-10, for such planning erroneously assumes (*a*) that there is a learning mode common to children because they are in those grades and (*b*) that groups of grade 8-10 children are a homogeneous audience in other respects. The present discussion should not be confused with my opposition to proposals to design museums for an 'average' visitor, often equated in America with those in their early secondary education.)

The question of context is equally as important as that of feedback and the role of the interpreter. The latter is largely dependent upon the application of the methods of the social sciences and communications theory, but the former context requires in addition a profound sensitivity and creative imagination. The problem is to put the object in such a context that the visitor is able to make immediate linkages with his own experience and life style, on the one hand, and can accept the object on its own inherent terms, regardless of its original place in time, space, or culture, on the other. Some simple and rather obvious examples may make this more clear.

In the decorative arts where collections tend to be drawn from the high style of a period and from bourgeois and aristocratic sources, the context must establish not only the objects' place in time and their cultural origin but also must relate them to the popular or peasant culture of the period and to the folk arts that were their companions in time and space. Where the source is an alien or exotic culture then the technique of analogy must be employed.

Contemporary objects, familiar to the visitor, can qualify the museum object through supplementary graphic media.

During that strange period not long ago when American automobiles were super-elaborated with wing-like fins and chromium trim, I observed a museum teacher working with a group of children in a gallery of arms and armour. She led them from the weapons of war and the protective suits of steel armour through to the glories of ornate parade armour and ceremonial weapons. Only by inference had she spoken of the functional and non-functional aspects, of utility and ostentation, yet unprompted the youngsters made the linkage. They spoke of the new cars, of their unimportance as transportation and their status value. By what magic I do not know she was providing context.

A group of Black American youngsters were recently being taught in a gallery which contained a superb collection of African primitive art. At the end of the class it was apparent that they knew nothing of modern Africa and could not relate what they had seen to anything but the present. Even more disturbing they could not integrate the select museum objects into an understanding of tribal life style. And most alarming, they had failed to grasp any personal sense of heritage in what they had seen for the context was White American culture. This was true in part because the objects and their organization were in terms of the Euro-American view of primitive art and in part because the museum as an environment was *in toto* a white middle-class domain.

What little information we have about public attitudes towards modern art tends to support the hypothesis that there is a fifty-year or at least a generational gap between creative innovation and general acceptance (understanding?). To the majority of art gallery visitors and certainly to the majority of non-visitors, the painting and sculpture of the first two decades of this century might as well have been executed in a fit of madness yesterday. We provide no historical context, no links between painting or sculpture and the time and place from which they sprang.

This year an exhibition, 'Russian Art of the Revolution', was picketed at the Brooklyn Museum. Although it was the work of the late teens and early twenties, the evidence of a revolution in art that failed, it was understood by protesters *who had seen the exhibition, and who were university students*, to be the latest, up-to-the-minute, cultural exchange exhibition of contemporary Russian art, direct from Moscow. The exhibition had no context that was either appropriate or enlightening.

The danger, of course, is that context can become content, that the supplementary media can overwhelm the object. The dangers are ever present. I will never forget a gallery containing a superb collection of Greek vases that was given a frieze, in the style of the vase painting, which depicted life in the Greece of the period. The palette for the frieze was as that of the vase painting except that the colours were fresh, and I suppose were to suggest what the objects must have looked like when first made. The effect was a gallery with a frieze. You never saw the collection! Have we not all seen film as the focus of an exhibit with the objects in the shadows? How many labels

Fig. 1. In the Brooklyn Museum's rotunda near the department of ancient art, children improvise a ritual after an early visit to the collection. The twenty-odd children were part of an experiment in which the museum was used as a theatre environment. (*Photograph: Lawrence J. Howell.*)

answer so many questions that all the object can do is sit there, mute and redundant?

Earlier I spoke of the importance, in fact the necessity, of using the museum object as noun and of limiting the function of supplementary media to those of adjective and adverb, where the relationships of objects were as verbs. Perhaps now the adjectival and adverbial function of modifying and qualifying to create context is more clear.

Given solutions to the two principal problems I have been describing, encoding in a language shared with the visitor by the introduction of feedback loops, interpreters and re-encoding, and the provision of contexts appropriate to target audiences, there remains one more of many dilemmas upon which I will comment here. While the middle-class visitor, whose education has given him the key to curatorial codes, arrives at the exhibit with preknowledge, the remainder too often arrive with preconceptions which are misconceptions.

Being dragged to an exhibition of modern art by one's wife is being forced

to go and see so-called art that might have better been executed by chimpanzees. The history museum is just another bit of flag-waving about the revolution or the fathers of our country, but you have to go because the kids want to see it. Another exhibit of primitive art–savages once, savages always. Our visitors bring their preconceptions with them and too often I fear we re-enforce those preconceptions rather than dispel them. Research in the areas already discussed may aid in this but more, I feel, we must find ways of making the visitor aware of his preconceptions, of helping him to discover his own often suppressed feelings, before he encounters the object.

Several weeks ago I observed a preschool child alone in a museum gallery of African art in which masks were the dominant objects. The youngster had moved, only a month before, from a predominantly white community but was now living in a multiracial community with a large black population. She was still at the stage of asking, 'Mommy, why is that lady's skin so black?'

As the youngster entered the exhibit she was at first startled and a little frightened, I suspect by the unfamiliar facial forms, the threatening if not nightmarish expressions and by the blackness of the masks themselves. But in a moment she began to laugh. She grimaced, gesticulated, distorted her mouth, nose, and eyes, with her fingers and, in fact, was making faces at the masks. I asked what she was doing and what she was seeing. 'They're for Halloween,' she said. 'They are making faces at me and I'm being a clown at them.'

Upon encountering the unfamiliar, with no clues as to context, the child had been forced to make the only linkage within her experience–the mask as a part of what was for her a gleeful, play occasion. And I wondered how many of the child's uninhibited series of responses were in reality a part of my own despite my intellectualizations. This incident has led to a research project which I believe has promise.

This summer past, Brother Jonathan Rinkamp, a teaching brother, has been working with twenty-odd young people, 14-18 years of age, chosen from a school district in Brooklyn, New York City. It is a multiracial group but what they have in common is an expressed interest in improvizational theatre. The Brooklyn Museum was offered as a theatre environment and in early July they set to work in a large, open space adjacent to the Brooklyn's famous collection of Egyptian art. The intention was that they should use objects in the collection as stimuli for their improvised dance, song, and theatre. Their initial responses to the objects were free, uninhibited, and in the absence of any instruction as to Egyptian culture and history, they responded to the objects in their own cultural terms. As the days went by the young actors, having observed each other, became more curious about the powerful images in the galleries which they knew were expressions of an alien culture. Questions were asked and answered. The theatre pieces began to take on form. The actors turned to poetry as well as dance and mime to express their responses. And the end-result was a sophisticated and unbelievably sensitive statement.

Observation of this six-week experiment supports, for me, the hypothesis

Fig. 2. Theatre pieces took on form as the children in the experiment showed growing interest in Egyptian culture and became more familiar with it. (*Photograph: Lawrence J. Howell.*)

that if we can first express our own culturally and individually induced feelings about the unfamiliar (especially exotic or alien cultures as well as expressions of subcultures in our own society) then and only then, are we free to encounter honestly that which is unfamiliar.

Thus we are proposing that through children we can find the natural responses of museum visitors to the objects which we present to them. If, on film or videotape, we record these free responses and can present them to the more inhibited adult visitor, then he too may be able to recognize his real but hidden feelings which he brought with him to the museum. And if, through juxtaposition in film editing we can animate the same museum objects in terms of their inherent messages, we may be able to prepare our visitor to move forward to the encounter with the object, ready to accept it in its own terms. He will first see and feel in all innocence, as the child does, and then explore, discover, and achieve understanding as the child does also.

You may feel that I am grasping at straws in the wind. There is no pretence that I have answers. But I will insist that we have problems, of

language, of interpretation, of context, and of preconception. Unless we attack each of them with vigour and accept the solutions as our responsibility, then we must admit to building a tower with its top in the heavens and await the inevitable, for we build in the service of none but ourselves.

Listen to the written word

Gerard J. van der Hoek

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The written word in a museum is there to be read.

People go to a museum to see things.

A museum, as a source of information, is different from what books, radio, films, or television can often be, because in a museum the things that interest people are right there in front of them, in life-size proportions, and they can sometimes even be touched. Because the things are in a museum, they are in a field of tension that lies between the museum scientist and the museum visitor. The scientist wants to impart as much as he can of his tremendous fund of knowledge; the visitor, whose knowledge, in this field at least, is more restricted, usually wants to learn something or other about what he is seeing. The visitor has a certain need for information; he wants to learn something, but usually not as much as the museum man wants to tell him.

The visitor to a museum finds himself in what Professor Screven of the University of Wisconsin calls 'a learning environment'.[1] As long as this is only one of the things he considers a museum to be, I shall go along with him. For I consider that a museum is also a place to spend your leisure time, a place to visit for a pleasant few hours, without having to be taught anything, without having to feel more learned when you leave. But here I shall, in fact, confine my remarks to the museum as a learning environment. The elements of this environment are not just the exhibits; words have been added to the exhibits, the written word. And these words are meant to be read. This is yet another point where the museum differs from the more usual mass media: here, reading and viewing are enacted simultaneously.

1. *Museum News,* June 1969.

In many cases the words are those of a museum expert: a curator, a person specialized in a particular field. It is customary in most museums for this specialist to discourse upon his exhibits, preferably in the very near vicinity of the exhibits, for the benefit of often small groups of interested and initiated people. The scientist's (spoken) word turns up on inventory cards and in scientific publications, sources to be drawn from when labels have to be prepared. Lots of labelling is proof of the élite-like contact between museum and visitor. After all, the visitor was always an initiate, and he is still treated as such: a word or two was sufficient for him: 'Antwerp, early XVII.' But for the visiting and reading public, the words on the labels ought to be different from those used on inventory cards or in scientific catalogues. I was in a Dutch provincial museum once and came across a dark grey glazed jug with an ornamented neck and pressed-in feet, and on its label was the following text: 'Dark grey glazed jug with ornamented neck and pressed-in feet.' At an exhibition in a German museum I saw a bronze statue of a nude woman. It was accompanied by the following words: 'nude, bronze', and then the date. The label-writer apparently thought we could see for ourselves that it was a woman. This kind of announcement is added to exhibits in much the same way as a name is given to an individual at birth; but it does not really tell us anything about the actual person. Titles like these do not add anything more to our store of knowledge than the exhibit itself does. So they are simply a waste of time, space, and effort! But then, titles like these are not provided from any educational viewpoint. Most of the people working in a museum, including those of the educational service, know very little of what happens to visitors in terms of education—whatever that might mean exactly.

As an educationalist, I am much more interested in the visitor—the visitor who reads—than I am in the museum man who writes. And, that is why I am now going to shift the emphasis from the written word to the word that is to be read.

Texts meant to be read are prepared for the reading museum visitor. Yet the entire complexity of psychological and physiological problems surrounding text-writing and text-presentation forms no part whatsoever of the museum man's discipline. Schools know a thing or two about the didactics of teaching children to read. But concerning the phenomenon of reading in general, psychology, for instance—in this case auxiliary science to didactics—knows very little, as we shall show. And that even less is known of that particular situation of an adult reading in a museum will be obvious.

In professional museum journals we often read articles by museum specialists, hence laymen in the field of reading, in which they remark in passing that the texts on labels should contain the vital facts, should be brief, their language simple, etc., etc. But more than these few matter-of-fact remarks we are not given. What I miss in museum circles is the contribution by specialists from other fields, in this case the field of reading. I would advocate that at congresses like Icom 71, and on commissions like those set up by Icom, more experts from outside be drawn in to think along with the

museum people. Such experts would then be able to give guidance and leadership in those areas inadequately covered by the museum people's own know-how, an inadequacy that is obvious from their often amateuristic efforts. Museum people have got to admit that there are some things they know nothing at all about.

Even here it is an amateur speaking, just another museum specialist, an educationalist. I thought it would therefore be a good idea to take stock of what some non-museum specialists have to say on the subject, and in this way to show how contact with the expertise of others can be of benefit.

I propose to deal in turn with neuropsychological research into normal reading, experiences concerning the optical readability of text presentation, and an evaluation of an exhibition by psychologists, pedagogues, and didacticians. All three articles were originally written in Dutch. I thought it was a good opportunity of presenting experiences gained in a language area not usually accessible to most of my museum colleagues.

As I said earlier, it is not only the museum man who is ignorant in the field of reading. Even an expert like Dr. H. Bouma of the Institute for Perceptional Research (IPO) of the Eindhoven University of Technology had to admit[1] that no one claims to be able to specify what processes of the visual system form the foundation of reading. On the visual aspects of normal reading, certain physiological and psychological experiments have supplied only the very beginning of an insight into processes of the nervous system that form the basis of visual recognition. Bouma, however, does have something to offer us on this subject. Tests made to measure the abrupt movements made by the eyes have provided an insight into the quantity of stimulus information absorbed at one time. In another line of investigation, the IPO is trying to find out which stimulus information a reader normally uses and which he disregards because his knowledge of words and language enables him to be satisfied with a fairly small amount of stimulus information.

In the same article Dr. S. G. Nooteboom talks about the linguistic aspects of normal reading. He states that with normal reading the reader draws greatly from his implicit knowledge of language. Questions like how this implicit knowledge is organized in the brain, and what processes come into play in using this knowledge, seem to him utterly impossible to answer in neurophysiological terms at the present time. This is not the right place, nor am I the right person, to delve deeply into this medical specialism. I have mentioned it to show that there are specialists engaged in fields that also involve some practical museum work. It seems to me that museum people are not acquainted with even that little bit of knowledge acquired by these specialists on the subject of reading.

The Department of Medical Illustrations of the Faculty of Medicine at the Roman Catholic University of Nijmegen operates on the basis of applied science. Acting on orders from a principal, who is usually a lecturer in medical science, this Department has the task of putting the principal's ideas across within the college room scene. In a paper explaining the philosophy

1. *Netherlands Journal of Medicine*, 113, no. 37 (1969).

that prompted the permanent exhibition on readability, the practitioners of this Department have listed a number of factors that determine the effectiveness of a presentation at an exhibition–and that of text presentation in particular. Readability is what they are concerned with.

They define readability as the interaction of factors that make it possible for a piece of information or an idea to be transferred by means of a visual device. This, therefore, goes further than just simply reading letters. The transfer itself happens during a reading process that can be regarded as a learning process. In that reading/learning process they distinguish four phases: looking, seeing, understanding, knowing. The decisive factors of the various phases are analysed in detail: the object to be read must function as a stimulus; it should therefore be attractive; it should be absorbed within a certain time, and the predisposition of the viewer must be considered. The size of the letters, the clarity of the text (screens), the contrast formed by the elements, the prior knowledge of the viewer on which the presentation can be based–these are all factors that the exhibition builders take into account. As producers of the reading objects, they attempt to design them in such a way that optimum reproduction by the viewer is possible. But this phenomenon is precisely what the physiologist I quoted earlier was entirely unaware of.

During discussions I had with the designers of Nijmegen, it appeared that many of their activities are based on trial and error, and they state that they are badly in need of some kind of scientific basis, if only to provide a quick solution to new problems that arise. This does not alter the fact that they have acquired so much experience that their presentations do indeed excel in their readability.

It is significant of the ignorance that surrounds, for instance, the field of form and colour when the range of colours suggested by Nijmegen is compared with a note to an article in *Museum*.[1] The Nijmegen exhibition designers use a contrast scale in which they number readability from its highest degree to its lowest as follows (the first colour is for the letter, the second for the background): 1. Black on yellow. 2. Green on white. 3. Blue on white. 4. White on blue. 5. Black on white. 6. Yellow on black. 7. White on red. 8. White on green. 9. White on black. 10. Red on yellow. 11. Green on red. 12. Red on green. *Museum* quotes from *La Conquête de la couleur.* Maurel and Brunais, the authors, suggest the following, without indicating any order of preference: black on yellow, black on blue, red on white, blue on white, green on white, yellow on black, white on blue, white on red, red on yellow, white on black, and green on red.

The researchers of the Nijmegen University consider that the ultimate aim of an exhibition, of the presentation of ideas, is that the viewer will become acquainted with what is being offered, or in other words, that he will have the subject matter at his mental disposal. I do not feel that the designers should be given the job of finding out whether this aim has been achieved or not. They must, of course, know whether the way an idea has been presented has proved effective, but I think it is wrong to have an exhibition evaluated by

1. Vol. xviii (1965).

the same team that was responsible for setting it up. Evaluation, too, is a speciality and it should be carried out by people competent in this field, naturally with the advice and aid of those requesting the evaluation.

In 1967 the Institute of Pedagogics of the University of Groningen was requested by the Netherlands Minister of Social Services to undertake the evaluation of a vocational guidance project that travels throughout the Netherlands (*Beroepenvoorlichting in de basisschool, verslag van een onderzoek*). The project consists of an exhibition and accompanying booklets for teachers and pupils. The investigation comprised an analysis of the subject matter, of the way in which the children were shown around the exhibition, and a determination of the teaching results, using, among other things, a specific didactical system of categories developed by Professor L. van Gelder.

The aim of the exhibition, to prepare primary schoolchildren for their future working life, need not concern us any further. What interests us here is that the methodology and the form and the content of an exhibition, presented and operated by vocational guidance experts–professionals in the one field–were analysed by professionals from another field, pedagogues, psychologists, didactitions.

With regard to the content of the exhibition, it was possible to establish a disassociation index. This expresses the degree to which the subject is brought within the scope of the exhibition's visitors, here, primary schoolchildren, the point of departure being the children's experience of life. The pedagogues found that 50 per cent of the subject matter, presented by vocational guidance experts with no special training in didactics, lay fairly far beyond the scope of a child's experience.

At the exhibition, one of the ways in which information was provided was by means of screens. The investigators found that the text on these panels functions as catchwords only: the text panels could not function independently. Someone had to go round with the children in order to explain to them. Observations made during the exhibition proved that if the children simply wandered freely around the exhibition, they absorbed very little and the exhibition must be considered a failure. This technique of presentation thus influenced the exhibition in the direction of lecturing and explaining. And it appeared that the written words on the panels, the names of the trades and professions, were precisely the words that the lecturers and explainers used the most. The form of presentation steered the exhibition in a direction that was quite different from what was originally intended.

Another feature of the exhibition was a booklet, and the investigators examined the sequence in which the book was presented–before or after a visit to the exhibition–as far as it affected the learning balance. This simply means the difference between what the children knew before and after the exhibition and it is determined by pre-tests and post-tests. It appeared that if the book was read beforehand, it meant very little, compared to the impact of the exhibition itself. If it was read after a visit to the exhibition, the results were significantly better. The exhibition provided the motivation to read the book more thoroughly.

It was considered that the exhibition did not achieve the results it should have, since the learning balance was rather on the low side. Some children even managed to get a worse result in the post-test than in the pre-test! This led the investigating team to the opinion that the exhibition had a confusing effect, and they blamed this on an excess of information. The evaluators urged that the entire complex of information be presented in a sample form and that there should not be too much of it. The booklet should be more simple and concise and brought down to the level of the pupils. Finally, the material should be independent of the need for someone to explain it; the exhibition should be more self-supporting, which would make it possible to create differentiated teaching situations, learning situations, and visit situations.

We have had three reports—all to do with the phenomenon reading, and all from different scientific and practical points of view—but not one of them provides us with any definite, reliable knowledge about what is happening to a person reading in a museum. There are, of course, one or two pointers, a fact here and there found from experience, that show the paths that should be followed in presenting a text. But what does emerge clearly is that producing reading objects, providing information, is a specialism. For that reason, museums that can afford it should make use of a text-writer, a rewriter, either permanently employed by the museum or not, and either forming or not part of the educational service. And here we enter a new terrain of tension.

Exhibiting in a museum takes place on the basis of years of unwearying toil by specialists in a certain (museum) field. Such a specialist has acquired a vast amount of knowledge and this material has, as it were, become part of his life. His identification with his subject is often so intense that he can hardly bear the thought that a third party might come between his work and the people who come to look at it. Yet it is wrong to think that the bearer of knowledge should also be the one to pass on that knowledge, that he is the most obvious candidate for the job. This task should be left to specialists, who would, of course, work in close collaboration with the specific knowledgeable person in that particular field.

In the Netherlands there is a very popular—and very inexpensive—radio course entitled *Openbaar Kunstbezit* (*Art in the Netherlands*) which has been broadcasting weekly programmes for the last fifteen years and has 100,000 participants who are sent 40 excellent reproductions each year—*and* 40 texts written by museum specialists. In the *Museum Journal*[1] I suggested that the basic information for these programmes should certainly be supplied by the specialist in a certain field, but that this material should then be passed on to the copy-writers of, for instance, the very successful advertisements of a large chain of department stores (although any other similar suggestion would be welcome), and that the text they produced should be presented by a professional radio commentator. It did not do any good: the experts are apparently so attached to their material that, understandably but

1. Series 4, no. 3 (1958), pp. 57-8.

erroneously, they want to be its author and announcer too. What is more, the programme people apparently operate on the mistaken premise that the public likes to get its information straight from the horse's mouth, from the great man himself.

It is more or less by accident if articles like those I quoted above are seen by museum people. After all, medical journals, and reports of the Ministry of Social Services are not the regular reading matter of museologists. But such an article in a medical journal does show how important it is to maintain organized contact with specialists engaged in perception research. What we should do is to request such people to carry out research, particularly in the field that is the subject of this paper, and possibly financed from a common fund. The results of this research should be published in museum journals and in this way made available to museum specialists.

The evaluation of the vocational guidance exhibition shows that it might be a good idea to bring evaluation technicians into museum work. Collaboration with psychologists and sociologists has been proposed more than once, but anything more than merely accidental, haphazard contact I do not think has ever been applied.

From the moment that the museum allows people to enter its rooms, lets visitors into the house, the museum man needs guidance in his contact with them, aid that should be provided by specialists from the field of human sciences.

From the articles I have quoted from, written by 'outsiders', we can derive some pointers about what to do and what not to do. When the 'readability experts' speak of the size of the text that is presented, they are concerned with what the eye is capable of seeing, and provide us with measurements–letters of 0·08 mm at a distance of 25 cm. The lettering of a typewriter satisfies the requirements for reading a business letter. Anyway, in that particular situation the reader can easily adjust the reading distance. Many museums use a typewriter for the texts on the labels attached to their exhibits. In the light of what we have just learned, it is, of course, completely wrong to use the type of letter that happens to be available on an instrument intended for the writing of letters, for presenting information on museum exhibits. Here too, of course, the reader can decide what reading distance suits him, but it requires a bit more effort on his part–he approaches, bends over, straightens up, backs off. It makes it just that much harder for him to get the message.

The experts from Nijmegen, grown wise with experience, tell us that an overloaded label or text panel has a double negative effect: too many elements repel the reader, and the time needed for him to absorb the message will be unduly long. But they still have not managed to fix exactly how many is 'too many' and how long is 'unduly long'.

The same applies to the evaluating team from Groningen, who say that the text should be presented simply and that there should not be too much of it–without specifying exactly what they mean.

If that same team of investigators discovers that reading the exhibition booklet after the visit to the exhibition produces significantly better results in the learning balance, this should certainly have an effect on publications intended to guide the public. Such books will have to be written much more with the idea in mind that they will be read after the objects have been viewed. If we follow this line of thought, we shall certainly place the sales desk at the exit of an exhibition!

It looks as though, for the time being anyway, texts to be read will form an essential accompaniment to exhibits. The objects do not speak for themselves, although some people claim, rather haughtily, that they do. Besides, the public is eager to learn, more or less.

It is clear that the degree of the public's eagerness to learn differs. If we can measure eagerness to learn by time, we could divide the public roughly into three categories: those who visit quickly and/or superficially, those who do so at a normal rate and/or with normal interest, and those who look slowly and/or profoundly. (I keep writing and/or because, by definition, speed and intensity are neither contradictory nor analogous.)

When information is provided in a museum, it ought to cater for the three types of visitors. There ought to be information for those who rather hurriedly want to know what is going on, for those who want to know a bit more, and for those who want to be deeply involved with the subject. The phenomenon of the disassociation index provides yet another motive for differentiated information.

The length of a visit is determined not only by the degree to interest, but also by the amount of time that a person has to spare. Those people with little time for looking should not be forced to sacrifice some of that limited time to reading irrelevant texts. Trying to pick up some information from large quantities of it will frustrate them and the alternative will be that after having run up against this once or twice, they will abandon any further attempts to read. It is a waste of time if you find out you are continually reading what you can also see. People presenting texts will have to keep this in mind, and it would not be a bad thing if museums were to follow the example provided by the layout of modern newspapers. Such newspapers have headlines and sub-headlines for people who are in a hurry, or who do not want very much, or who just cannot be bothered at the moment. Headlines allow the reader to make a choice from one type of heavy letters. These are followed by an introduction: lines in heavy print covering several columns, summarizing the article to follow. The reader might leave it at that, but then again headlines, sub-headlines, and introductions might arouse his curiosity to such an extent that he reads the article in its entirety. In practice, reading a newspaper is seldom confined to hurrying through the headlines. This form takes into account (or is it the cause of?) the defective way in which people read. It would appear that there is frequently a great lack of any eagerness to read, a fact proved often in radio and television quiz shows in which questions are asked about current events which the newspapers are full of.

The texts in a museum ought to be presented in the same way. The

viewing line—the order in which the visitor should or can look—is not always clear. The train of thought followed in setting up an exhibition does not simply show the way by itself. It would therefore seem proper that, parallel to the viewing line, a reading line be added, shown in headlines. One obvious way is to follow a chronological order that can be indicated with XV, XVI, and XVII, while sub-headlines provide more details. The remaining text presentation should be dissociated from the place of presentation: detailed texts would be more effective presented in a separate room or in a separate publication.

Museums do, in fact, keep in mind that not every visitor avails himself of all the information provided. They always have fewer catalogues printed than the number of visitors they expect. They know that there is a certain ratio (p.e. 1:4 or 1:8). With this system, the visitor does actually suffer from a shortage of information, since the usual sources of information, which are still the scientific catalogues, seldom mean an extension of the basic information that satisfies the normal visitor.

At the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam the Educational Service has instituted a staggered supply of information in a number of visiting units. A visiting unit means a limited, though complete in itself, part of the collection. A visiting unit allows the visitor to choose one particular part of the collection, disregarding the rest. It might be called an exhibition within the normal exhibits. In this way, one selects and visits not just a certain department of the museum, but a section complete in itself, one possibly spread over several departments.

A visiting unit consists of a number of successive parts—you can listen, you can look, you can read—and in each of them you can absorb a certain amount of information. A certain order is laid down and each successive part contains additional, more profound information. The publications in and around a visiting unit are attuned to one another, contrary to the various museum publications on the same subject that are usually independent of one another. There is a fundamental integration. Each successive part contains the information of its predecessor, and at the same time, extends it.

At the basis of the visiting unit is the slide-show. The accompanying text, which is recorded on tape, takes up about half the time of the show: visual information is the main feature. (Icom's publication on the meeting of the Committee of Education and Cultural Action held in the USSR in 1968 contains an article I wrote on the questions surrounding the slide-show.)

Following the slide-show, if possible and necessary, the visitor is shown the route he has to follow through the exhibits he has already met during the slide-show. He is given a route-map, a floor-plan, showing where to go. This involves his first additional information since he is now given the titles of the paintings or objects, the names of the artists, the dates, and so on.

The third stage is a slightly more advanced monograph on the same subject. This booklet contains the entire text spoken during the slide-show and the information given in the route-map. The individual paragraphs of the slide-show text are reproduced, and to each paragraph, one by one, extra

information is added. This text goes more deeply into what the slide-show merely touched upon. The book is not written or intended for use during the actual tour of the exhibits. The tour must provide the impetus to read the book afterwards. It offers to those visitors who have no intention of consulting the scientific library, information that is rounded off, that is complete in itself. After this does indeed come the library and the scientific catalogue, but these are outside the field of action of the educational service. I know hardly any fellow educationalist who regards the catalogue as a suitable accompaniment to a visit. A catalogue is the result of the scientific work surrounding the permanent collection or an exhibition. As such, it has its place. From my angle, I see no need to alter this in any way. But here, at this Congress where we are concerned with the educational role of the museum, I consider the catalogue need not be discussed further. And about that rather nasty technique of promoting catalogue sales by merely numbering the objects and then referring them to such catalogues, I refuse to say one word!

A closely allied problem is formed in the matter of communicating non-collection information to the visitor when this is to be done with symbols only. Take the arrow, for instance, which is the simplest, most common and generally understood sign. It is in fact the only symbol used to show the way in museums. Words are usually employed to show where the Restaurant is, the Toilet, the Telephone. There is no uniformity, not international, not national, not local, not even in museums. It does exist to a great extent in European railways. Many railway companies have adopted one system of pictograms. Signs denoting Entrance, Exit, Information, Magazine Kiosk have been hung in all stations of many countries. The system has been adopted along the motorways–Camp Sites, Petrol Pumps–and at the Okura Hotel, under construction in Amsterdam, carpenters and bricklayers are reminded by a pictogram that wearing their helmets is compulsory. A similar kind of system was used at Expo 70. A worldwide system would be hard to realize because of the wide differences in symbol language. In museums it would be even more difficult. As long as it is just a matter of indicating where to go, the railway system could be adopted, with the addition of the more specific museum items like 'Projection Room'. It gets more difficult when exhibitions or particular departments of a museum have to be signposted.

It might be worthwhile recommending that an Icom Committee be set up, and given the task of designing (or having designed) a series of pictograms that could be adopted by all the museums of the world.

Presenting an idea in objects, symbolizing it, and then transferring that visualized idea to others would seem virtually impossible without the addition of words. This is very clear indeed in museums where, with objects, deliberately patronizing, didactic, or indoctrinating activities are practised. Arrangements there use (even) more text than museums where the presentation is not based on such considerations. Presentations of this kind, symbol plus word, also seem to make very frequent use of the conducted tour, with the guide explaining what can be seen and read. It seems that such

Fig. 1. The pictograms with general information are European standardized; the specific museum-symbols are sketches, made by Beate Gleistein, assistant of the Education Department of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. These museum-pictograms are experimental, and not yet used.

presentations always have to be accompanied by the spoken word (either with or without the aid of modern audio equipment). This fact was also noticed when the vocational guidance exhibition was being evaluated. And here the evaluators even added the interesting observation that the words that were spoken consisted largely of the words that had been written and were meant to be read at the exhibition. This is precisely the same technique, and this time the museum led the way, used in television commercials (I am speaking here of my experience with Dutch and German television). Many of the texts appearing on the screen can also be heard through the voice of an announcer. Texts and words projected at the rate of speech. Producers of such commercials have informed me that they imagine that the impact is greater through this twofold presentation. Yet they were unable to prove their assertions by, for instance, quoting increased or decreased sales figures of articles offered in this way.

This approach, employed by both the television and the museum, certainly shows a certain disinclination towards a text that has to be read. The pre-ordained inadequacy seems to lie in the texts themselves, or in the ability of visitors to absorb their contents, or in the reluctance of viewers to read. And so, intruding between the visitor and the written word is the spoken word, or rather, instead of words to be read, there are words to be listened to. An appeal is made not only to a person's sense of sight, but also to his sense of hearing. This proves the truth of the conclusions drawn from the vocational guidance exhibition of a moment ago that only a one-sided use is made of human abilities; visitors must be able to do more than just use their eyes.

This is why a little earlier I was able to say that the written and to-be-read texts will be unavoidable *for the time being*. Supplying information that visitors can listen to has been made possible by great advances in technology, and, to my mind, this provides better techniques and methods with, at any rate, a greater impact.

Some interesting remarks were published in *Museum News* of June 1969. These were made by the earlier mentioned psychologist C. G. Screven and concerned the guidance of the public in the Milwaukee Public Museum. In his museum as a learning environment, he finds an unsatisfactory learning situation. Most visitors spend less than 48 seconds on average at any exhibit and gain little substantive knowledge. There appear to be obstacles to efficient communication which cannot be cleared away by improving texts. He believes that the solution lies in not allowing the informative contact between visitor and exhibit to take place by way of the word that has to be read. Questions are presented to visitors and answered by means of taped voices that give brief messages and answers (5-20 seconds). There are devices that answer with colours, lights, with a bell, or permission to move on to the next exhibit. And as some of the machines are coin-token, they even allow museums to make money from education!

It is possible to programme visitor motivation in this way because the visitor can test his knowledge. He obtains his answers from slides, presenting

shapes, pictures and, last but not least, from words. So it is apparent that even with this system, which will probably cause art museum people to shudder in horror, texts will continue to be presented in a form that has to be read.

The very ultimate in this most recent innovation of information supply, in which the word to be read is introduced in the final stages only, could be seen in many of the pavilions at Expo 70 in Osaka, Japan. There were numerous places where information was provided by means of pictures: films projected on to enormous screens–in front of, behind, and above the visitors–multi-screen slide-shows on dozens of screens at once, pictures on television monitors sometimes in batteries of a hundred at one time, eye-catching light shows, moving auditoriums or moving projection screens. Visitors were carried past the exhibits on a kind of conveyor belt, accompanied by lots of projection, and were given flashes of informative commentary. And everything adapted to the speed of the conveyor belt.

The next stage of informing would then usually consist of the written–and thus the to-be-read-word concerning the pavilion visited. This paper information was handed to the visitor as he left, and only if he asked for it. Information was presented on paper in many and various ways. There were vast amounts of material providing small bits of information on subjects that were interesting to Japanese visitors. For instance, the British pavilion had cards showing the times of their BBC broadcasts to Japan.

One thing I found striking was that the purely audio devices were little used. Telephones with folk songs from a certain country, or giving general items of information, standing in the middle of an open space and unaccompanied by any visual exhibit, were scarcely ever lifted from their receivers.

Thus in the main, stress was placed on visual information. This was also true for the Netherlands Pavilion. There was scarcely any text at all in that three-storied building, but visual information was everywhere. Visitors were conveyed from one floor to the next by escalators: they were, admittedly, manipulated. But they would arrive at a platform where they were at liberty to view the exhibits once more, of their own free will, of their own choosing, at their own pace. Here a person was allowed to be an individual.

And after all, what we are concerned about is the transfer of ideas from one individual to the other. Which is exactly why we shall have to choose the proper means of transport to enable us to reach that object of all our solicitude: the visitor to a museum.

5 Le musée et la société

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Le sujet proposé pour la discussion: 'Le musée au service des hommes aujourd'hui et demain – le rôle éducatif et culturel du musée', est d'une grande importance car, tel qu'il est formulé, il est imprégné d'humanisme et tourné vers l'avenir.

Nous apprécions également la possibilité qui nous est donnée d'exposer nos idées sur le thème: 'Le musée et la société' et de faire part de notre expérience en matière de muséographie.

Le sujet de la Conférence soulève des problèmes d'une grande signification sociale. En effet, la nature et l'étendue de l'activité éducative et culturelle des musées sont tributaires des conditions sociales, de l'état de la science et de la culture spirituelle de la société. Il y a tout lieu de croire que le rôle des musées au sein de la société – si l'on adopte une attitude optimiste quant à l'évolution de la société (et c'est ainsi que nous voyons l'avenir) – sera de plus en plus important et va s'enrichir de caractéristiques nouvelles.

Dès maintenant, l'institution appelée musée est à nos yeux un établissement très haut placé parmi les autres types d'établissements scientifiques et culturels. Les musées sont capables d'exercer une énorme influence éducative et culturelle sur la société.

La noble mission des musées consiste à contribuer à la formation d'un homme humaniste, rejetant toutes les formes d'oppression sociale, plein de respect pour les réalisations de son peuple et d'autres peuples dans le domaine de la culture et pour les véritables progrès de l'humanité tout entière.

En même temps, les musées sont les gardiens des valeurs scientifiques, des vestiges nationaux et historiques, des trésors artistiques.

Dans notre pays, il existe une tradition bien ancrée d'estime pour les

musées et de compréhension du grand rôle qu'ils sont appelés à jouer dans l'oeuvre d'instruction et d'éducation de la population. Cette tradition repose sur les documents exposant le programme du parti communiste et sur l'idée que Lénine se faisait de la révolution culturelle. On sait que le fondateur de l'Etat soviétique, Vladimir Lénine, portait un grand intérêt aux musées. Partant de l'idée que l'édification de la nouvelle culture socialiste doit comprendre l'étude et l'assimilation de tout ce qu'il y a de mieux dans le patrimoine culturel de l'humanité, Lénine considérait le musée comme un outil précieux servant à conserver et à transmettre ce patrimoine aux générations futures.

C'est pourquoi, en Union soviétique, le développement des musées est devenu une affaire nationale. Et c'est pourquoi les musées jouissent dans notre pays d'une telle popularité.

La grande révolution socialiste d'octobre a transformé tous les musées, monuments, trésors artistiques et valeurs scientifiques de l'URSS en propriété de tout le peuple.

On lit dans un des premiers documents émanant du pouvoir soviétique qui est l'appel 'aux ouvriers, paysans, soldats, matelots et tous les citoyens de la Russie', datant de novembre 1917:

> En plus des richesses naturelles, les masses laborieuses ont hérité des richesses culturelles, des édifices d'une grande beauté, des musées pleins d'objets rares et beaux, instructifs et relevant l'âme, des bibliothèques qui conservent d'immenses valeurs spirituelles, etc. Tout cela appartient désormais véritablement au peuple. Tout cela permettra au pauvre de surpasser par son instruction les anciennes classes dominantes, l'aidera à devenir un homme nouveau, dépositaire de la culture ancienne, créateur d'une culture nouvelle inconnue jusqu'ici. Camarades, il faut veiller à sauvegarder ce patrimoine du peuple.

L'Etat soviétique a créé tout un système de lois en matière de protection des monuments et des musées, et cette législation est constamment perfectionnée. Grâce à cela, les musées de l'Union soviétique fonctionnent sur une base juridique ferme: ils se sont vu attribuer les meilleurs bâtiments, dont plusieurs anciens palais, hôtels particuliers, châteaux, propriétés. Ils reçoivent de l'Etat des fonds pour entretenir leur personnel et leurs bâtiments, pour acquérir des collections. L'Etat s'occupe de la formation des cadres pour les musées.

Au total, l'Etat a sous sa garde plus de 83 000 monuments historiques et culturels 'immobiles' et plus de 36 millions d'objets conservés dans les collections des musées. Récemment, le gouvernement de l'Union soviétique a promulgué des dispositions spéciales en matière de mise en ordre, d'étude et de catalogage scientifique de l'ensemble des richesses muséales de l'Union et de recensement des monuments historiques et culturels.

La concentration de toutes les richesses des musées entre les mains de l'Etat et des organisations sociales permet de développer de façon planifiée le réseau de musées, de créer de nouveaux musées, de procéder, s'il y a lieu, à

des transmutations d'objets, de prévoir l'agrandissement des collections.

A la lumière des dispositions gouvernementales, qui vont dans la voie tracée par Lénine, les musées sont considérés *comme dépôts d'Etat destinés à sauvegarder les monuments de la culture matérielle et spirituelle et les collections scientifiques, comme institutions de recherche et comme établissements d'enseignement.*

Se trouvent ainsi légalisés l'union entre *les fonctions de recherche scientifique et les fonctions éducatives et culturelles des musées*, leur place dans le système d'établissements scientifiques, leur tâche unique qui consiste à répertorier et à conserver les vestiges de la culture, leur rôle spécial qui est de satisfaire les aspirations spirituelles du peuple et d'instruire les masses.

En même temps, on tient compte chez nous de la spécificité de chaque musée particulier, et tout le système muséal du pays se présente comme un phénomène encyclopédique, intéressant une multitude de domaines de la science, de la culture, de la production.

La croissance du réseau de musées dans notre pays depuis l'avènement du pouvoir soviétique s'est poursuivie à un rythme prodigieux: avant la révolution d'octobre, il y avait en Russie quelque deux cents musées. Actuellement, le réseau de musées de l'Etat compte plus de mille deux cents unités.

Cela signifie que, dans leur majorité écrasante, les musées ont été créés de façon planifiée sous le pouvoir soviétique. En quoi consistait ce caractère planifié?

Tout d'abord, il fallait créer dans les centres administratifs ou culturels de chaque république, de l'Union ou autonome, de chaque région ou contrée, un musée régional pluridisciplinaire, réunissant dans ses collections et exposant les matériaux relatifs à l'histoire, à la nature et à la vie de la région. En plus, on a créé des centaines de musées locaux dans des centres des circonscriptions et dans des villes.

Parmi les musées historiques, dont le nombre dépasse 300, on compte des musées aussi remarquables que le Musée Central de la Révolution de l'URSS, le Musée Historique de l'Etat, les Musées du Kremlin, le Musée ethnographique des peuples de l'URSS, etc.

Parmi les musées des beaux-arts, l'Ermitage, la Galerie Tretiakov, le Musée des beaux-arts Pouchkine, le Musée russe.

Presque tous les grands centres administratifs et toutes les villes importantes possèdent un musée des beaux-arts. Ces musées sont aujourd'hui au nombre de 127 (avant la révolution d'octobre, il y en avait 15).

Il y a de nombreux musées commémoratifs, créés surtout à des endroits qui ont été le théâtre d'évènements importants, ou sont liés à la vie ou à l'activité des grands représentants des peuples de l'Union soviétique. Il existe actuellement plus de 250 musées de ce genre.

Les musées Lénine à Moscou, à Oulianovsk, à Chouchenskoïe, à Léningrad et ailleurs jouissent d'une immense popularité: plusieurs millions de personnes les visitent chaque année. La reconnaissance que la population voue aux révolutionnaires s'est traduite par la création des musées consacrés à

Radischtchev, aux Décembristes, à Tchernychevski, et à d'autres personnalités. Les grands exploits de la guerre patriotique sont immortalisés par les musées de la forteresse héroique de Brest, par le Musée de la Guerre Patriotique de Minsk, par des musées dans une série de républiques.

Des musées consacrés à des écrivains, savants, artistes perpétuent le souvenir du patrimoine culturel. Ce sont les musées Mendéleev, Tsiolkovski, Pouchkine, Tolstoï, Dostoievski, Tchekov, Gorki, Tchaïkovski, Stanislavski et bien d'autres.

Le système comprend en outre des musées de lettres, de théâtre, de musique, des musées de sciences naturelles, des musées techniques, etc. La variété et la diversité sont parmi les principales caractéristiques du vaste système de musées de l'Union soviétique.

L'Union soviétique est un Etat multinational. Une grande attention est prêtée chez nous au développement des musées dans les républiques, régions et contrées, en particulier là où le niveau économique avait été bas avant la révolution d'octobre. Dans la république soviètique d'Azerbaïdjan, où aucun musée n'existait avant la révolution, le quarante-et-unième musée vient d'être ouvert au public. En Bielorussie, il y avait auparavant 3 musées; aujourd'hui, il y en a 51. En Géorgie, avant la révolution, il y avait 3 musées; aujourd'hui ils sont au nombre de 72. La création d'un vaste réseau de musées dans toutes les républiques nationales joue en rôle important dans le développement de la culture socialiste nationale et de la conscience d'appartenance nationale.

A notre avis, l'expérience acquise au cours de l'implantation des musées dans les républiques nationales pourrait présenter de l'intérêt pour les pays en voie de développement.

L'Etat soviétique organise de façon planifiée le système de musées, en dirigeant le développement du réseau en fonction des besoins scientifiques et culturels de la société. Les transformations sociales et économiques qui ont modifié tout le visage de notre pays ont ainsi trouvé leur reflet sur le plan des musées également.

Aujourd'hui de nouvelles perspectives s'ouvrent devant les musées. Dans les résolutions du vingt-quatrième congrès du parti communiste, dans le nouveau plan quinquennal, une place extrêmement importante est réservée au développement de la culture, à l'instruction et à l'éducation de la population. Le réseau d'institutions culturelles – dont les musées font partie – va s'élargir notablement, on procèdera à la construction de nouveaux bâtiments modernes, à Moscou notamment: pour le Musée central Lénine, le Musée central de la révolution de l'URSS, la Galerie des beaux-arts, et pour d'autres musées encore. Les possibilités matérielles et techniques des musées vont encore augmenter. Il y aura 135 musées nouveaux de divers types.

La concentration de la gestion de tous les musées entre les mains de l'Etat permet de diriger leurs activités dans l'intérêt de la population.

La société contemporaine a à sa disposition une grande variété d'établissements scientifiques et de moyens d'éducation et d'enseignement.

La société soviétique tient à ce que chacune des institutions dont elle dispose profite au maximum à la population. Pour cela, il est indispensable d'avoir un inventaire des possibilités inhérentes à leur nature même.

La caractéristique essentielle du musée, c'est qu'il collectionne les monuments authentiques de la culture matérielle et spirituelle, des objets créés par la nature – source première de toutes les connaissances.

Or, le musée ne se limite pas à accumuler des matériaux authentiques, reflétant toute l'expérience historique de l'humanité depuis les temps les plus reculés à nos jours et l'évolution de la nature. Il 'documente' les processus et les interprète, il organise toutes ces richesses de façon scientifique, s'inspirant des conceptions idéologiques ce qui permet de tirer parti des valeurs muséales pour atteindre des objectifs scientifiques et éducatifs.

La tâche de la politique gouvernementale dans le domaine de la muséologie en Union soviétique consiste à mettre en valeur ces particularités spécifiques des musées. Tous nos musées sont édifiés sur des bases rigoureusement scientifiques.

D'une part l'activité scientifique des musées dépend de leur caractère et est coordonnée avec le système des établissement scientifiques appropriés existant dans les domaines de l'histoire, des lettres, des sciences naturelles, etc. D'autre part il existe un système d'organisme de direction qui élabore la méthodologie destinée spécialement aux musées: les méthodes de conservation, d'entretien, de restauration, les méthodes de description scientifique des objets exposés sont élaborées dans un institut de recherches spécial, l'Institut de la Culture, dans des laboratoires de recherches et aussi dans les plus importants musées centraux, compte tenu de l'expérience de tous les musées. Auprès du Ministère de la Culture de l'URSS, fonctionne un organisme scientifique consultatif sur les questions de muséologie.

Le musée a été surnommé – de façon imagée – 'le Grand Livre d'Or de l'humanité'. Les musées forment un remarquable outil permettant de fixer l'expérience historique des hommes sous forme d'objets. La conscience d'être héritiers de l'expérience des générations a, comme on sait, une valeur éducative incomparable. Le sentiment de participer à l'histoire, le respect pour le passé progressiste, pour la culture, recèlent un immense potentiel social et éthique, sans lequel l'éducation de la jeune génération serait impensable.

Une des particularités du travail éducatif – et que nous considérons comme remarquable – tient au fait que les musées soviétiques ont affaire à une société unique, ayant la conception commune du monde, élevée par l'Etat dans l'esprit d'une amitié sincère entre les peuples.

Les musées soviétiques ont accumulé une grande expérience positive en ce qui concerne le travail éducatif et culturel, l'art de présentation, d'exposition, de visites et d'autres activités.

Une des formes essentielles du travail éducatif sont les visites guidées des expositions permanentes et temporaires. Elles sont basées chez nous sur des principes scientifiques; on tient compte des intérêts des visiteurs, de la psychologie de la perception. En même temps sont pratiquées de nombreuses

activités auxiliaires: conférences à l'Université de la culture, cercles, séminaires, etc.

Une grande importance est attribuée aux rapports entre les musées et les établissements d'enseignement secondaire et supérieur, au travail avec les jeunes. Ce sujet, à lui seul, demanderait une communication spéciale.

Les musées s'efforcent d'assurer un service différencié selon l'âge et la catégorie sociale des visiteurs. Une attention particulière est consacrée aux collectivités ouvrières et paysannes (*kolkhoz*). En particulier, on s'efforce d'organiser le plus possible d'expositions itinérantes. Des expositions muséales voyagent en voiture, en train, en bateau. De nombreuses autres initiatives intéressantes – et qui se propagent rapidement – seraient à signaler. Les musées soviétiques attachent une grande importance aux échanges de valeurs culturelles entre les pays pour permettre aux peuples de mieux se connaître mutuellement. Ils participent activement à ces échanges et organisent de nombreuses expositions à l'étranger. Dans la seule année 1970, il y eut 73 expositions dans divers pays. Une place à part revient aux expositions consacrées à Lénine dont le centenaire fut célébré dans le monde entier comme ene date marquante dans l'histoire de l'humanité.

De leur côté, les musées soviétiques accueillent les expositions venant de l'étranger. Nous sommes heureux, en particulier, de mentionner les succès remportés par l'exposition récente des impressionnistes français, par l'exposition 'Trésors de l'art hongrois', par l'exposition des oeuvres de Van Gogh dans la collection du Musée hollandais Kroller-Müller, par l'exposition de l'art roumain, etc.

Passons maintenant au problème discuté dans les milieux des musées, celui de la transformation des musées en établissements 'pour tous'.

Voici les données sur la fréquentation des musées en URSS: en 1913, environ un million de visiteurs; en 1950, 16 millions; en 1970, 100 millions.

Au cours des vingt dernières années, le nombre de visiteurs a sextuplé, en cinquante ans il a presque centuplé. La fréquentation augmente rapidement dans tous les musées de notre pays. De nombreux musées sont devenus de véritables lieux de pélerinage. Ainsi, le Musée Central Lénine reçoit chaque année plus de 2 millions de visiteurs, l'Ermitage environ 3 millions, la Galerie Tretiakov 1½ millions, le Musée Russe plus de 900 000; le Musée de la Révolution de l'URSS plus de 700 000; les villes-musées de Vladimir-Souzdal 650 000; le Musée régional de Tatarie à Kazan (sorte de réserve nationale) 640 000, etc. Mais ne nous laissons pas éblouir par ces chiffres et ne les attribuons pas aux seuls progrès et croissance des musées.

Nous voyons dans l'intérêt croissant pour les musées, en premier lieu l'indice du relèvement du niveau de l'instruction, de l'ascension spirituelle de nos citoyens, l'indice du bien-être économique, de l'augmentation des loisirs. C'est là un des résultats des transformations sociales, économiques et culturelles survenues dans notre pays.

Nous tenons constamment compte dans notre travail des modifications radicales qui se sont produites dans le niveau d'instruction de la population de l'Union soviétique. Actuellement, pour 1000 personnes de tout âge, il y a 483

personnes ayant reçu l'enseignement secondaire ou supérieur; le chiffre pour la population active est de 653.

En même temps, il est important de comprendre pourquoi les musées attirent tellement les gens. Pourquoi les anciens moyens de la culture, et les moyens modernes – le cinéma et la télévision – n'ont-ils pas fait diminuer l'intérêt pour les musées? Pourquoi, malgré l'extension du réseau des musées, une 'pénurie de musées' commence-elle à se faire sentir, pourquoi les salles des musées ne peuvent-elles plus contenir tous les visiteurs, pourquoi fait-on la queue devant l'entrée? Nous voudrions exposer nos idées sur les causes de la popularité croissante des musées à notre époque.

Avec le développement de la culture de la société, les fonctions sociales des musées et leur place parmi les autres institutions culturelles sont de plus en plus mises en évidence. Les musées répondent aux aspirations spirituelles les plus élevées de l'homme, et plus le niveau d'instruction est haut, mieux les gens peuvent tirer profit des musées. Les liens entre les musées et les établissements d'enseignement secondaire et supérieur se resserrent de plus en plus. Plus le système d'enseignement populaire se développe, plus on ressent le besoin de musées. Les musées ne font pas que participer au processus d'enseignement, ils en élargissent le cadre, ils enrichissent le processus. Le rôle des musées dans le développement spirituel de la jeunesse estudiantine, dans son éducation esthétique et éthique va croissant.

Nous assistons actuellement au renforcement de l'information indirecte que l'homme reçoit à travers les 'mass média', presse, radio, télévision, etc. Dans ces conditions, l'authenticité, les 'leçons de choses', acquièrent une importance nouvelle. Un vieil adage dit: 'mieux vaut voir une fois qu'entendre cent fois'. Plus il y a de reproductions d'originaux, plus les gens ressentent le désir – très normal – de prendre contact avec les originaux eux-mêmes. Les musées, qui disposent de matériaux authentiques – objets, oeuvres d'art, documents – se trouvent alors nécessairement au premier plan. Leur rôle n'est pas seulement de promouvoir directement la connaissance, mais encore d'agir sur les sentiments de l'homme et de renforcer ainsi l'aspect 'cognitif' de la perception.

Dans le flot d'informations qui s'abat sur l'homme contemporain, il y a malheureusement beaucoup de productions de mauvaise qualité. L'Etat soviétique protège la société par tous les moyens contre la littérature et les films de bas niveau, contre la pornographie, l'étalage d'horreurs, contre toutes les excroissances difformes – de caractère commercial – de la pseudo-culture de masse.

Les musées parlent, dans la langue des documents authentiques, du passé glorieux et du présent héroïque. Ils offrent un sol fécond à la connaissance, au plaisir esthétique puisé dans les oeuvres d'art et, plus généralement, dans toutes les oeuvres créées par l'homme. Nous parlons bien entendu des musées basés sur des principes scientifiques. C'est là que réside la principale force éducative des musées, leur signification pour le vrai progrès; les musées aident les hommes à connaître leur propre pays et à créer des liens d'estime mutuelle entre les peuples. C'est là la raison de leur popularité croissante.

Mais il existe un problème sérieux qui doit être résolu sur les plans matériel, technique et muséologique. Le musée devient, et deviendra de plus en plus, une institution qui s'adresse à tous. Avec le développement des échanges culturels internationaux et du tourisme, il devient le bien, non seulement des hommes de la nation, mais de ceux du monde entier.

Surgit donc la tâche complexe de l'adaptation des bâtiments des musées à leur nouvelle place dans la société, correspondant à leur caractère de masse. Le temps est proche notamment où il va devenir nécessaire non seulement de montrer dans des expositions permanentes une petite partie des chefs d'oeuvre conservés dans le musée (comme cela se pratique habituellement), mais d'ouvrir largement les collections entières sous forme de 'réserves ouvertes'.

Cela appelle une transformation radicale des idées sur l'architecture des musées et sur l'art de la présentation dans les musées de tous genres. Le problème de la présentation basée sur des principes scientifiques est un problème capital, car c'est par le truchement de la présentation que le musée communique, en premier lieu, avec la masse des visiteurs.

Pendant des siècles, les musées existaient pour une élite: nous nous sommes efforcés de créer les conditions sociales qui nous ont vraiment permis d'ouvrir les musées à tous. Nous sommes convaincus que cela ne fera pas perdre aux musées leur haut niveau culturel ni leur caractère scientifique et intellectuel.

Evidemment l'exploitation des musées en tant qu'institutions de masse pose des problèmes méthodologiques complexes qui doivent être résolus, en ayant recours à toutes les connaissances et à tous les talents, par des spécialistes muséologues, en collaboration avec les architectes, les artistes et les représentants des nouvelles branches de la technique.

Le développement de la théorie de la muséologie et de l'habileté technique des muséographes sont des facteurs très importants qui contribuent à rehausser le rôle des musées dans la société.

Un autre problème important est celui de développement des fonctions sociales du musée moderne.

Le musée a toujours été et demeurera une collection d'oeuvres authentiques. Mais il serait faux de considérer le musée comme une institution immuable et pétrifiée. On ne peut pas ignorer les tendances de notre époque, les modifications que les dernières décennies ont apportées dans les fonctions des musées, en élargissant et en enrichissant l'idée que l'on s'en fait. Nous n'en citerons que quelques-unes.

De nombreux spécialistes ont estimé jusqu'à présent que le musée est une institution qui reflète uniquement un passé lointain. Nous ne pouvons pas nous déclarer d'accord avec les muséologues qui continuent à affirmer que, dans un musée, seul est valable ce qui est bien oublié. Nous sommes persuadés de l'intérêt de tout ce qui est véritablement nouveau. Nous pensons que les liens entre le musée et la vie contemporaine sont multiples et indispensables.

Le musée doit être moderne sur deux plans différents; d'une part, quelle que soit l'époque qu'il présente conformément à son but particulier, le musée doit toujours répondre de façon scientifique aux besoins et aspirations contemporains des visiteurs; d'autre part le musée ne peut et ne doit pas se limiter aux matériaux des époques passées. L'actualité vivante représente un champ d'action très vaste, non seulement pour le politicien et le sociologue, mais aussi pour le muséologue. Nous n'en voulons pour preuve que l'expérience de la plupart des musées soviétiques qui accumulent dans leurs collections et reflètent dans leurs expositions les époques les plus récentes et la vie contemporaine. Tous les musées régionaux, musées de la révolution, musées historiques possèdent un département d'histoire de la société soviétique. Les visiteurs témoignent d'un vif intérêt pour les monuments, pour les vestiges de la révolution d'octobre, de la guerre civile, pour tout ce qui touche à la vie actuelle. L'expérience du Musée de la conquête du cosmos, récemment créé, comme celle des nombreux musées historiques et régionaux montre que l'actualité trouve son expression dans toutes sortes d'objets authentiques qui deviennent de véritables objets de musées.

L'art nouveau pour les musées des beaux-arts, les nouveautés dans la vie de la société pour les musées historiques, régionaux et locaux, les nouveautés dans la littérature pour les musées de lettres, etc., voici un champ extrêmement important pour toutes les activités de collection, d'étude, et d'exposition.

Les rapports entre les musées et la vie moderne ne sont pas seulement importants pour le travail éducatif direct des musées. Les musées des beaux-arts, par exemple, exercent une forte influence sur le développement des arts plastiques. Le musée peut influencer l'évolution de l'art en encourageant, en soutenant tel phénomène de la vie artistique ou, au contraire, en ne l'encourageant pas. Sélectionner, reconnaître les phénomènes qui représentent un véritable progrès dans l'art moderne, y initier le spectateur, voici une fonction importante du musée dans le développement de l'art moderne, dans l'évolution de la culture artistique.

L'‘intrusion’ de l'actualité dans le musée est un facteur qui modifie l'idée que l'on se fait du musée.

Au cours des récentes années, on a souvent entendu dire que les musées pourraient perdre leur importance en raison de la propagation de la télévision, du cinéma, de la radio. A notre avis, ces craintes sont sans fondement. Mieux, en adoptant une attitude correcte on peut et on doit mettre ces moyens à profit pour renforcer l'intérêt pour le musée.

Quelques mots au sujet des musées en tant que gardiens et promoteurs de certaines traditions modernes. Nous allons citer un exemple concret. Il existe en Russie un lieu sacré: le Musée Pouchkine, au nord du pays (région de Pskov), dans la propriété où le plus grand poète russe a passé quelques années en exil (de 1824 à 1826), propriété qui a été conservée en entier dans son état originel.

Pendant les dernières décennies, d'abord des milliers, puis des dizaines de milliers de gens y affluaient spontanément, sans aucune organisation, le jour anniversaire du poète. Aujourd'hui ils sont plus de cent mille, venant de toutes les régions du pays et de l'étranger. Cette fête populaire, baptisée 'fête nationale pouchkinienne de la poésie', s'est étendue à d'autres lieux. On la célèbre à Léningrad, à Moscou; les musées Pouchkine en forment les centres. Elle s'enrichit d'un contenu nouveau, se transforme en une revue des réalisations du pays en matière de poésie. Cette manifestation a une énorme valeur éducative. Nous avons cité un exemple mais on pourrait en citer beaucoup d'autres.

Les traditions nouvelles naissent surtout dans l'entourage des musées historiques, historico-révolutionnaires et régionaux. C'est là qu'ont lieu des rencontres avec les vétérans de la révolution, les héros de la défense de la patrie, de l'édification du socialisme. Des marches sont organisées sur les lieux d'exploits militaires ou révolutionnaires. Chaque année, des millions d'écoliers, garçons et filles, participent à ces pélerinages. Ils découvrent des endroits mémorables, ils font connaissance avec les survivants des grands évènements, ils recueillent des matériaux pour les musées populaires, scolaires et nationaux, ils remettent en état les sépultures des héros. L'usage s'est établi de faire le point de toutes ces expéditions à la Forteresse de Brest, où les meilleurs parmi les participants se réunissent pour rendre hommage à l'exploit de la garnison héroïque de cette ville-forteresse pendant les années terribles de la grande guerre patriotique.

Mais Brest n'est pas la seule ville à accueillir dans ses murs les écoliers, la jeunesse, les jeunes militaires. Partout, les vétérans transmettent aux jeunes le flambeau des traditions.

Une partie intégrante du travail éducatif des musées est l'organisation de soirées, de rencontres avec les savants, les artistes, les musiciens, les écrivains, les poètes. Le thème de ces travaux vivants reste en général en rapport étroit avec l'orientation du musée et ils ont pour base les collections du musée.

Face aux initiatives prises par de nombreux musées, face à l'intérêt dont ils font preuve à l'égard des besoins du public, les anciennes règles d'école qui gênent le développement naturel de l'action culturelle, scientifique et éducative des musées ne sont plus de mise au stade actuel de l'évolution.

Lorsqu'on parle du 'musée dans la société', il convient de s'arrêter sur le rôle du public dans l'activité des musées.

Une manifestation remarquable du processus de démocratisation du musée, de renforcement de son caractère public, est, en dehors de l'accroissement énorme de la fréquentation et de l'élargissement du cadre de ses activités, le développement rapide de la participation directe du public à la vie et aux activités du musée.

En Union soviétique, cela se traduit par une participation volontaire et bénévole de milliers de gens d'âges et conditions sociales divers au travail scientifique des musées, à l'enrichissement de leurs collections, à leurs

activités éducatives et culturelles. Ce processus se traduit par la création de milliers de musées populaires, dus entièrement à l'initiative de la communauté, à son enthousiasme, à ses forces propres. De tels musées existent – et continuent à naître – dans les usines, dans les kolkhoz et les sovkhoz, dans les établissements d'enseignements. Ces musées font un énorme travail de préservation des vestiges historiques, propagent les bonnes traditions et les valeurs culturelles. Chaque village, chaque ville, chaque usine, école ou kolkhoz garde ainsi pour la postérité le souvenir des activités méritoires des citoyens.

Une autre forme de participation du public à l'activité des musées est la création auprès des musées d'Etat d'organismes consultatifs composés de savants, de sociétés d'Amis du musée, etc.

Il n'existe actuellement en Union soviétique aucun musée qui ne soit pas aidé – à titre bénévole – par un important groupe de personnes se recrutant parmi le public. Ce phénomène est entré dans les moeurs et a trouvé des formes d'organisation concrètes. L'aide populaire élargit sensiblement les possibilités des musées dans tous les domaines de leur activité.

Est également très proche des musées l'activité des sociétés de protection des monuments et de la nature, qui comptent plusieurs millions d'adhérents. Citons en particulier les sociétés bénévoles – elles existent dans toutes les républiques, de l'Union et autonomes – pour la protection et la mise en valeur des monuments historiques et culturels.

Il importe de souligner que la participation du public ne diminue en rien l'importance de la formation professionnelle des spécialistes muséologues. Le public a besoin de l'appui des muséologues pour se rendre maître des tâches difficiles du travail muséal. La formation planifiée d'un personnel spécialisé, capable de mener le travail à un niveau professionel élevé, pose des problèmes extrêmement complexes. Ce sujet mérite, à lui seul, une discussion spéciale.

Pour terminer, nous voudrions formuler les propositions et les voeux suivants à l'adresse de l'Organisation internationale des musées, en liaison avec le sujet de la Conférence:

Il nous semble que l'Icom doit continuer à suivre attentivement les problèmes de l'action éducative et culturelle des musées. Il y a lieu à ce propos de souligner le caractère utile du travail et des initiatives du Comité de l'Icom pour l'éducation et l'action culturelle.

Il est souhaitable d'élargir nos connaissances sur l'expérience des musées dans le domaine de l'éducation, d'en faire le point et de diffuser le plus possible les résultats; d'organiser des conférences spéciales consacrées à ce sujet; d'assurer un large échange d'informations. De nombreux musées ont accumulé une vaste expérience dans ce domaine.

En raison de l'importance exceptionnelle de la présentation au musée, nous estimons que l'Icom doit s'occuper sérieusement du problème de l'activité des musées de tous types en matière de présentation.

Il est urgent que l'Icom entreprenne l'étude de la façon dont les musées peuvent exploiter les moyens techniques modernes pour faire connaître leurs richesses dans un but éducatif.

Il est souhaitable que l'Icom élargisse sensiblement l'aide internationale aux pays en voie de développement, pour contribuer efficacement, par le truchement des musées, à l'oeuvre de développement des cultures nationales, de l'instruction et de l'éducation.

Les musées constituent, à notre avis, un des secteurs les plus prometteurs dans l'évolution spirituelle de l'humanité. Nous pensons qu'à l'avenir toutes les valeurs artistiques et historiques essentielles du pays seront concentrées dans les musées, et qu'il appartiendra aux musées d'assurer l'étude attentive, la mise en relief, la sauvegarde et la diffusion de tout ce qui sera cher au peuple dans cent ans et dans mille ans. C'est une tâche grandiose.

Nous voyons l'avenir des musées dans le renforcement continuel de leur rôle au sein de la société. Les musées revendiqueront de plus en plus le rang de principaux centres culturels. Ils deviendront les lieux d'hommage au génie des peuples du monde, à leurs valeurs historiques. Ils resteront donc toujours d'actualité.

Nous voyons l'avenir des musées dans le relèvement du prestige de la muséologie et dans ses progrès en tant que science.

Nous sommes résolument optimistes sur l'avenir des musées. Nous sommes convaincus que leur intérêt pour les hommes ne passera pas.

Nous sommes convaincus que les musées sont appelés à jouer un rôle de plus en plus grand dans le progrès social et culturel de l'humanité.

The museum and the adult

Kazimierz Zygulski

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Introduction

This paper sets out to examine the place of the museum in the life of our adult contemporaries and the part it has to play in that life, before going on to deal with prospects for the future development of museum activities for this section of the public. The writer, who is a specialist in the sociological aspects of culture, has based his remarks as much on his own research material and findings as on such other sources of information as were available.

The paper is in four sections, i.e.:

1. Introductory remarks covering the background to the problem.
2. An analysis of the relations between the museum and museum activities and the adult population.
3. Concrete examples taken from the cultural life of Poland at the present time to illustrate the conclusions drawn from the above analysis.
4. General conclusions on the future of museum activities for adults.

We shall be keeping in mind both the historical origins of the museum as a cultural institution and the nature and whereabouts of the world's existent museums, and our remarks will thus be intended to cover both societies possessing a high degree of economic, social, and technological development and those which are still in the process of developing. It is only on this basis, and by limiting our subject-matter, that we shall be able to present some fairly general conclusions and suggestions. We feel, in effect, that despite the

political, social, and cultural differences which exist in the world there are nevertheless trends common to different societies which stem from certain common aims, and in particular from the desire for economic progress. The pursuit of similar aims everywhere produces similar phenomena, whether positive or negative, and, while the pursuit of economic progress means improved standards of living, the spread of education, better standards of health and the advancement of certain social groups which were previously underprivileged, it also means the destruction of man's natural environment, the threat to life and health born of mechanization (and in particular of motorization), a growing number of psychological disorders and difficulty for young people to adjust themselves in society. The speed and extent of all these transformations–especially in highly developed countries where the scientific and technological revolution is in progress–leave their mark on cultural life as a whole. Mass culture, which is a product of the mass media networks, and the unprecedented size of the television, radio, cinema, newspaper, and music audiences have in all countries alike shaken the foundations of the systems which existed in the old days.

The resultant new situation is not identical in countries where mass culture is a matter of private commercial enterprise and in those where such media, and cultural activity as a whole, are in the hands of the socialist state. Yet while we must firmly stress this distinction, we must not nevertheless overlook the phenomena common to all cases where mass culture is bound up with industrialization, the growth of the towns, increases in income and in leisure, the use of up-to-date technical devices in everyday life, and the emancipation of women and young people. The main consequence of the development of mass culture is the general feeling that traditional cultural institutions need livening up, if they are not to lose their influence. One of the ways in which this is generally done is by diversifying the activities which are to attract the public; libraries, for example, now organizé exhibitions, and film-shows, while museums hold concerts. In the face of this completely new state of things, cultural institutions, and museums among them, generally turn to the sociologists for guidance in their own activities. The remarks contained in this paper are those of a sociologist who is not directly connected with museums on the professional level but is an observer of contemporary cultural processes as a whole. His object is to supplement the experience of the museologists and thus give a more complete picture of the problems in all their complexity and facilitate the making of practical decisions.

The museum and the adult

The close connection between the museum and the life and needs of adults is the result of the way it originally came into being; in daily practice the contemporary museum primarily serves schoolchildren. The children normally visit museums in groups under the care of adults, as provided for in the school syllabus, one of the guiding principles of which is that the facilities

of the museum should be used in the same way as those of a library. The comparison here is not fortuitous; statistical analyses made over a number of years in the Polish public libraries (of which the number showed a marked increase in the years immediately following 1945) reveal that the principal users of these are schoolchildren and that the books most in demand are of the school-age level.

The first question we shall be dealing with is that of the adult as museum-organizer. It is the adult who creates the museum, initially in the light of a given attitude in relation to the past; his aim is to store away in a safe place and maintain in a stable condition those relics of past history to which he ascribes artistic, historical, or scientific value. In this connection it might be upheld that the development of the museum as an official institution collecting and protecting things of the past and carrying out research on them has a close correlation not only with the development of modern scientific thought and ideas about the world, but also with the progress of secularization. The museum in fact takes over many of the functions of the places of worship of the past (whose premises it frequently inherits) while it also houses a large number of cult objects.

Interest in the past is an adult characteristic, but it is not an essential or constant one. Research in the area of cultural anthropology and of ethnography teaches us that the need to know the past is often completely satisfied by simple myths and that primitive societies live from day to day without concerning themselves with anything beyond their daily needs. In the case of modern and highly developed societies, a distinction may be drawn between those which, at least in part, take a lively interest in their past and feel a reverence for it and those which are indifferent to their own history or even hostile towards it. We should realize that there exist whole spheres of society, as well as narrower groups, such as certain artistic circles, where there is a readiness to subscribe to the famous manifestos calling everything in question, and approval—at least in theory—for the burning-down of museums and libraries as though they served to house nothing but useless lumber. Trends of this sort appeared, notably, during what is known as the 'Cultural Revolution' in China, between 1966 and 1969; in this instance they may be considered as a reaction against the traditional conservatism of Chinese society in cultural matters.

Hostility towards the past is sometimes expressed in more moderate or even veiled terms, through radical proposals for the modernization of a museum. But if, for the sake of experiment, a museum were modernized to such an extent that its galleries were made to contain nothing but objects relating to contemporary artistic, scientific, or social life, it would then be no different from a trade fair; the word 'museum' would have lost its special connotation and the institution would have lost its function.

Our thesis is that the setting-up of a museum originates in the requirements typical of adults with their understanding of the importance of the historical perspective and that young people would never spontaneously organize such an institution. Museum activities for young people are therefore

always a dialogue between the generations, with all the difficulties this implies. In modern societies this kind of dialogue is mainly carried on in those institutions which prepare young people for their role in adult life, i.e. the schools and other educational institutions (including the Army), and in youth organizations supervised by grown-ups; the museum, from this point of view, may be considered as one of the instruments at the disposal of the educator.

If we wish to pursue this idea further to a logical conclusion, we must observe that museum activity for adults will be a dialogue between adults. Its usefulness will depend on the existence of a common language, and this cannot be imposed as it could be in the case of young people. In this connection the results of an inquiry recently conducted in Toronto are extremely interesting; it revealed among other things a distinct difference between the language of the museological specialist and that of his adult public.

The man who organizes a museum creates it not only for educational purposes (too generally thought of as merely involving the acquainting of the public at large with great works of art), but also for purposes of scientific research. It would be easy to conceive of a museum designed purely as a research centre for a small circle of specialists, completely cut off from the general public. In fact museums are organized and run by a relatively very small number of professionals, though the latter must be possessed of a high level of culture. According to information published in France,[1] the total number of scientific and educational staff in all French museums (national or 'classified')[2] does not exceed 200. With the growth of cultural institutions and the increasing degree of professionalism in the cultural field, typical of present-day developments (and particularly noticeable in the socialist countries), there tends very naturally to be an increase in the total numbers professionally employed in the cultural world. The more numerous these people are, the more they strive to defend their logical interests by broadening the network of cultural institutions, museums included, and their activity bears the stamp peculiar to that of pressure-groups.

The majority of adults are thus users of museums and do not run them or work for them, and we are therefore going to deal with their requirements as users. The first group with which we are concerned is composed of those adults who use museums for their professional work. In so far as this type of user has a stable profession providing a firm link with the institution in question, his need for it will be a constant one. Let us start by mentioning the teachers at the various educational levels; in this category, the use of the museum will depend on the branch of study, and the biology teacher will not need the same museum as the teacher of history of literature. Since all modern educational systems recognize the importance of museums, official regulations governing their use are issued by the various authorities concerned, and the museums themselves go a long way towards meeting the

1. *Développement culturel. Bulletin d'Information du Service des Etudes et Recherches du Ministère des Affaires Culturelles,* n° 8 (April 1971).

2. 'Classified' museums in France are those whose staff enjoys Civil Service status.

needs of the teaching world by developing all possible forms of co-operation with the schools: sometimes they actually organize given work in a school with the aid of the teaching staff.

Research-workers form another professional category for which the museum represents a permanent need. For many research-workers the museum is the principal place of work, and may be the only feasible one, for they may be researching on material not to be found elsewhere. This most frequently happens in the case of certain branches of history, and primarily in the case of the history of art. Further, present-day systems for the popularization of culture, through networks of institutions of the 'cultural centre' variety, run by professional organizers such as are to be found in the socialist countries, have led to a new type of research and a new type of professional career, and those whose regular job is the dissemination of culture likewise need the museum for professional purposes.

Particular problems arise in connection with the attitude towards museums of professional artists working in the fine arts, the cinema, television, or the theatre. Their use of the museum is closely linked to the early training which many of them have had in their particular line, and they subsequently look to museums for models, inspiration, and stimulants to creativeness. It has been noticed, however, that relations between members of the art world and museums are sometimes ambivalent or even negative; this may perhaps be explained among other things by the mixed feelings which the artist will have about an institution housing the masterpieces of the past which is at the same time responsible for choosing contemporary works and thus for the privileged place awarded to those which it selects. An artist, if he is to be successful, and develop his own individuality, must free himself from the all-pervading influence of his great predecessors and cease to be their mere successor; it is natural for him to abhor all criticism or selection according to supposed merit. The public generally tends to prefer the academic in art, and one way of attempting to win it over is to suggest, by proclaiming the worthlessness of all the art of the past, that the moderns are the only artists capable of producing works of value.

The development of mass culture, with the insatiable appetite it creates for new works and new ideas, in applied art as elsewhere, is a source of serious problems for the artist, who is thus obliged to draw on the cultural heritage of various periods of history for models to imitate, adapt, or stylize. And here the museums, particularly the larger ones with their miscellaneous collections, are of enormous importance.

The problems connected with the applied arts and with organized culture bring us to a further and still larger professional category which needs museums to a certain extent; this is composed of the technicians employed in industry. The development of modern industry is closely linked to product-design, and industrial designers have as much need as other artists for the forms and inspiration frequently to be derived from objects belonging to cultures of the past. Even in the area of technical innovation and improvement, notwithstanding the immense progress of recent years and

despite the holding of regular exhibitions and demonstrations illustrating the most up-to-date achievement, exhibits shown in museums specializing in the techniques of the past may still sometimes be of use.

The scope of this report is necessarily limited, and I must therefore conclude this summary account of the professional needs which take adults to museums. However it is perhaps worthwhile to draw attention to one characteristic result of present-day professionalism. Members of all professions, particularly those whose traditions, in Europe, go back to the guilds of the Middle Ages, are proud of their trade and convinced of the importance of their role in society, and are thus naturally interested in their past and in the history of that trade. There is abundant literature on the crafts, but there are also museums or departments of museums which are devoted to them; a pharmaceutical museum, for instance, will have a special significance for any pharmacist. Museums of a similar type have been set up on the premises of old-established industries; there may thus be a mining museum near the salt-mines, a museum of glass products on the premises of a glass-works or a boot and shoe museum on those of a shoe-factory (as at Gottvaldov in Czechoslovakia).

Another important class of needs providing a link between adults and museum activities arises out of adult participation in the life of society through membership of a nation, a social class, a political or military organisation or any similar large community or association. The major museums of our time are the National Museums, whose origin dates back to the eighteenth century and to the creation of the modern nation, the national frontiers and patriotism of which while they formed a link uniting the population of the day and making for a centralized conduct of affairs, were primarily a reflection of a past history common to all alike. These museums have become a sort of national sanctuary, for they house the most important monuments and other relics testifying to that past. The links between them and the adult population will depend on individual character, degree and nature of patriotic feeling, and sense of attachment to any one country. Life in our day cannot be reduced to fit in with a single formula; whereas in some societies the adult population shows cosmopolitan tendencies and patriotism is considered as a sign of backwardness, in others we find that patriotism has become more intense and that new national museums are being set up and are certain to attract a large public.

In this context we should mention the latter-day effects of the Second World War. In countries like Poland, where the war involved heavy sacrifice and enormous effort, the generation which lived through it feels a strong need to preserve the traces of so terrible a nightmare and a museum of a particular type has thus grown up; located on the spot where mass persecutions took place, or in a former prison or concentration camp complete with its cremators and gas-chambers.

A recent example taken from Poland may illustrate the force of the influence exerted by the feelings of the masses. The decision to rebuild, by public subscription, the royal palace of Warsaw which the Nazi army had

destroyed aroused a most enthusiastic response among the population and the funds came pouring in. Now it is nearly two hundred years since Poland ceased to be a monarchy, and the country has been socialist for a quarter of a century; yet the royal palace is felt to be an important part of that national heritage which the occupant attempted to destroy. It is clear from public opinion polls and correspondence in the press that the vast majority of those consulted would like the palace to house the future museum of the national cultural heritage.

All modern nations are born of the union of several elements representing separate geographical areas, and in many countries in Europe and elsewhere strong local patriotism has survived until the present day; regional museums are the expression of such links between people and their local traditions.

In the world of today an important part is played by forces which, over and above those deriving from a sense of identity as a nation and of direct participation in that nation's historic destiny, are embodied in class and revolutionary movements and fights for independence. Such movements, the aim of which is to overthrow the old order of things, create new relationships and unite those who are their active members or otherwise take part in them in a community of ideas and emotions. The desire to preserve the records of such movements gives rise to the creation of museums of revolutionary history, and this has been found to be a regular phenomenon in countries where the revolution has triumphed and the desire exists to keep its traditions alive. There are obviously no such museums and no need is felt for them in countries whose history has not been marked by upheavals of the kind; this is the case, for example, in countries where the monarchy has survived, just as there are no museums devoted to atheism in countries where religion is the dominant force in the social awareness.

Outside his regular work and his participation (either voluntary or as a matter of law and custom, in the life of the community) the adult at the present day enjoys a large amount of leisure. He may occupy it with a variety of games or other amusements, with the pursuit of aesthetic or intellectual emotions, or with attempts to improve his own level of education. His work and the duties to society which derive from his role in the larger and smaller social structures are in reality the essence of adult life, and are the characteristic which distinguishes it from the life of the young people who will be taking over later on; yet in all modern countries the time devoted to leisure activities is on the increase. Most cultural activities belong to the part of life given over to leisure, and we may ask ourselves here to what extent and in what manner leisure requirements create a link between the adult and the work of the museums.

All those who have carried out research on the subject agree that the need for amusement, recreation, rest, and play is the principal factor determining the way adults spend their leisure. Their needs in this field are met by the mass media, by organized cultural activity, and by cultural institutions. Tourism on a mass scale, which is constantly on the increase, has become a form of recreation for millions of adults, and a visit to a museum famed for

its exhibits has become a typical feature of every tour, especially if organized by a travel agency. Such tours may similarly include a visit to a town 'by night' or a local celebration or festival. The museums which happen to be on the most popular tourist itineraries are visited, as part of the programmes of the coach-tour organizers, by an enormous number of adults.

This is a phenomenon on its own, since here the museum visit is part of a whole in which the dominant need is the thirst for travel and ordinary tourist amusements. The inclusion of a museum among the attractions worthy of the tourist's attention naturally means that those in charge have a chance to show their exhibits to very large numbers of people, but the conditions are very different from those recommended by the educationalists. Research shows that the average member of a large party of tourists has very limited possibilities of taking in what he is shown; the speed with which the visitors are taken round, the inadequacy of their basic information on the question, the difficulty they have in following the explanations given, their lack of interest in the subject of the exhibition, and so on, combine to prevent them from assimilating the contents of what they see. Yet even if he visits the museum as a tourist, the greater the degree to which the adult identifies himself, culturally and intellectually, with what he is seeing, the more substantial and lasting will be the effects of his visit. A group of tourists from across the Atlantic who are visiting the land of their European forbears and feel themselves ethnically and historically linked to their ancestral homeland will, when they visit the national museum, satisfy needs of a completely different nature from those experienced by other tourists from the same place whose racial origins, religion, and traditions are quite different; for this latter group the symbols of the nation's past, or even perhaps the whole of its cultural background, will be entirely foreign.

Tourism, however, is a separate question which has been only superficially dealt with here; there are other reasons and other requirements of a typical nature which lead the adult to avail himself of museums in his leisure moments. In the first place, he will take his children there before they are old enough to go there by themselves. This is an instance of an effort made by the family to supplement the education the child receives at school and also of a desire to preserve a certain general cultural tradition. The adult will show the child not those exhibits recommended by the school syllabus, but whatever there is in the museum which he himself particularly appreciates. This tendency arises out of the increasing importance for the adult, as he grows older, of hobbies and individual amateur pursuits of all kinds. Some adults have a passion for collection, and in that case the museum will be an unrivalled source of information and will provide a basis for assessment and comparison. Generally parents wish to pass their hobby on to their children, and their visits with them to the museum are connected with this desire. When children are taken to history museums the aim is a different one; the adult frequently attempts to win over the child visitor to accept a given tradition or an idea to which he personally subscribes, though it may not belong to the official school programme.

A certain number of adults—usually educated people—consider the museum as a a superior sort of amusement, an intellectual or artistic adventure, and enjoy it purely as such. This brings us back to the problem of mutual understanding and to the difference between the appreciation of museum professionals and that of the cultured public, which refuses to have imposed on it tastes and opinions which it is unable to understand. Sometimes this public surprises the organizers of exhibitions. It might even be claimed that for public opinion leisure pursuits, as opposed to one's daily work or responsibilities in society, are more and more a matter for complete freedom of choice, with a complete absence of compulsion of any sort, for whatever reason.

We often find, however, that those in charge of museums, as is absolutely natural, are convinced that they embody the only possible correct opinions and judgements and their attitude is thus too much imbued with a sense of their special mission.

To bring to a close this survey of the requirements of adults in the area of museum activities, attention should be drawn to the consequences of modern trends in education in general and professional training in particular. The adult is becoming more and more frequently obliged to brush up his knowledge, for what he has learned becomes obsolete, loses its practical value, and requires bringing up to date. Here the same phenomenon occurs, though in a different context, as in the case of the use of the museum by the schools. Now, any educational system contains a degree of coercion, but in the case of adults such coercion must be limited; here the problem of the authority of the teacher and the pupil's capacity or desire to learn has nothing to do with a schoolmaster-pupil relationship. In his work entitled *The Role of Museums in Adult Education*, H. L. Zetterberg draws attention to these particular aspects of adult education.

Concrete examples

Let us now try to illustrate our arguments by some concrete examples. The author made a special analysis of the activities of a group of museums in Lodz, which, with a population of 800,000, is the second largest town in Poland. The problem in which he was particularly interested was that of knowing whether, and to what extent, the research carried out by sociologists over a number of years showed that adults availed themselves of museums, and who these adults were. The choice of the town of Lodz was motivated by the fact that it is an industrial centre which has developed over the last hundred and fifty years out of a small country town; it has no very ancient historical traditions, architectural monuments, or long-established museum collections, and holds no attraction for tourists. For the reasons given below, Lodz may be considered to be a typical example of a town belonging to the age of industrialization:

1. As a big industrial centre of international importance (particularly in virtue of its textile and machine-tool industries), Lodz has a large built-up

area with a population of workers and technicians, i.e. of those professional categories characteristic of modern societies born of industrialization, urban development, and technical progress in everyday life. Hence its situation is a typical one.

2. As a result of the efforts made by the socialist state to modernize and intensify industrial activity, Lodz, which up to 1939 had no institutions at all for higher education, has in the course of the last twenty-five years acquired a big university centre, with a school of technology, two medical schools, and three schools for the visual arts, one of which—the college for cinema and television specialists—is the only one of its type in Poland. Lodz is also a big centre for research, particularly in industrial problems. An educational policy of this nature is generally accepted as a necessity in the world of today.

3. After the Second World War, Lodz was the scene of large-scale migration. A high percentage of the original population had been massacred by the Nazis, and their place was taken by a big influx of people from the suburban agricultural areas, attracted to the town by its industries. Historically speaking, these areas represented the region which saw the birth of the Polish nation in the Middle Ages; theirs is a peasant population possessing an original and still lively folk culture. The situation thus created may therefore likewise be described as typical, involving as it did large-scale migration from country to industrial town and the clash between two types of culture—the urban culture of the big towns and the rural culture of the countryside.

Lodz at present possesses five museums, with collections which, compared with those of other Polish museums, may be considered as of only medium value. In practice, and taking things in general, this is again a typical situation and will remain so, since it can with difficulty be supposed that it would be possible to open a large number of museums able to vie with the principal ones in the country or the most famous museums in the world. The five museums in question are:

1. The Museum of Fine Arts, founded in 1911, which is the oldest.

2. The Textile Industry Museum, housed in the premises of one of the first textile factories, now scheduled as a historical monument.

3. The Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, which possesses valuable collections of regional folk art.

4. The Zoological Museum.

5. The Museum of the Revolutionary Movement. This is housed in a hundred-year-old prison where the Czarist Russian authorities who occupied the area at the time used to confine their political prisoners. (Lodz is one of the traditional centres of the socialist movement in Poland and it was in the streets of Lodz that there occurred the dramatic events of the 1905 Revolution.)

If we allow for all the activities organized by the Lodz museums in the last few years, the over-all number of visitors may be said to amount to about 600,000. Seventy per cent of these came in organized groups, and 90 per cent

of the members of such groups were schoolchildren; these figures amply confirm the thesis that the museum has a part to play as an adjunct to school education. Of the adult individual visitors the majority (80 per cent) belong to the intelligentsia. Peasants were the least frequent visitors, accounting for no more than 0·5 per cent of the total. This is a highly typical phenomenon, and it should be remembered that Lodz is also a market-town of importance which regularly attracts large numbers of peasants from an extensive agricultural area. Research shows that these peasants readily avail themselves of other cultural institutions, the cinema, for example.

It must in fact be frankly admitted that the museum and the requirements it creates are essentially urban in character. During the past twenty-five years enormous efforts have been made in Lodz to interest the working-class public in museums, by 'taking the museum to the factory', holding exhibitions on factory premises and encouraging both group and individual visits. Results have been modest, but at least have served to reveal the preferences of this sector of society. Of the visitors to the Fine Arts Museum–which possesses among other things a collection of modern paintings unique in Poland–only 3 per cent are workers, whereas workers account for 14 per cent of all visitors to the Museum of the Revolutionary Movement. The industrial workers who have visited this latter museum are in the habit of commenting to the museum staff on what they have seen and sometimes tell them of actions and events in which they themselves took part. They donate to the museum such personal souvenirs as postcards sent from prisons or concentration camps, letters, decorations, and photographs. The experience acquired at this type of museum has revealed the strength of the personal ties between the adult and the kind of exhibit it has to show, and also of the ties between the adult generation and its history as recorded in the museum.

Of all the museums in the town the one in which the adults are most interested, by reason of their own professional activity, is the museum which tells the story of the textile industry. This museum possesses among other things samples of all the fabrics produced by the industry during the last hundred and fifty years. Its facilities are used by a large group of technicians, most of whom are designers of projects or of fabrics.

A final remark is that elderly and retired people make up scarcely 0·5 per cent of the total number of visitors. It should be stressed here that the various figures for Lodz are very similar to those for other towns in Poland and even elsewhere. Thus, for example, according to the French bulletin quoted earlier, 78 per cent of the public visiting French museums possess at least a secondary education.

Final conclusions

In the light of the above data and arguments, what prospects are there for the development of museum activities for adults? In the opinion of the present author, these prospects may be enumerated as follows:

1. For certain categories of adults the museum is a necessary instrument for

the practice of their profession. The more professions there are—whether in the traditional fields of human sciences or in that of science and technology—which avail themselves of the museum in one way or another, and the larger the numbers of people who work in them, the more numerous these regular users will become. The rise of professionalism in cultural life, the growth of education and the growing number of careers requiring a sound secondary education and permanent access to scientific data, all of these are factors making for an increase in the need for the services museums can provide.

2. The museum, as far as adults are concerned, is an institution which fulfils needs arising out of membership of society on a class and national level at the present day, and also one of participation in the experience of a given generation. The stronger the links and feelings within the society the more important will be the role of the museum exhibiting objects of historical interest. In a great many countries in Europe and elsewhere the history of the last thirty years has created new and intense needs for museums among those who have taken a direct part in that history and those who have been affected by it. In other countries where there has been less violent social tension in the recent past the history museums are likely to become of less importance for the adult generation.

3. Museums are an essential part of adult leisure occupations, in so far as they are a part of tourist programmes. Outside the sphere of tourism, when we come to that of hobbies, private study, or the search for aesthetic or intellectual emotions, their importance is restricted to a limited sector of society whose main distinctive characteristic is its high level of school education. This circle is now tending to widen owing to the increase in leisure time, in travel and in the number of institutions for higher education; nevertheless, if the museums wish to retain their present character and do not wish to go in for other types of activity (such, for example, as concerts of pop music) capable of drawing a large public, they must continue to content themselves with a very modest number of visitors, most of whom will be tourists or schoolchildren.

There remains a problem which is still unsolved and which, in the light of probable population figures for industrial societies, is still a very real one. This is the problem of people who reach retiring age; what is to be done to encourage them to become museum visitors?

The museum and youth

Peter Cox

Peter Cox, a graduate in history of Cambridge University, is principal of Dartington College of Arts in Totnes, Devon, where he started working in 1940. Since that time he has devoted his whole career to building up and establishing the enterprising activities of both the College and the Dartington Arts Centre. Whilst being personally involved in the teaching of environmental and historical studies to art students and in organizing exhibitions, he is a member of Devon County Council and Exeter University, Institute and Faculty of Education, and Director of the Schools Council Curriculum Study, 'Arts and the Adolescent'.

In the past he has worked for Julian Huxley on the Arts Enquiry Report on the Visual Arts, *which was sponsored by PEP (Political and Economic Planning) and included a study of British museums, and also on small commissions for Huxley at Unesco including one with the late René d'Harnoncourt of the Museum of Modern Art.*

Most of the contributions to this conference will be from experts in the museum world who have special achievements to their name and good advice to offer. I am afraid I can only speak as an outsider, an educator who gratefully uses the varied services which museums offer.

Let me explain where I come from and what we do. Dartington began forty-five years ago as an experiment in rural reconstruction, founded by Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst, and deriving its inspiration not only from England and America but also from India through a long-standing connection with Rabrindranath Tagore. It has become a federation of activities, some profit-making (agriculture, forestry, textile manufacture and building construction); some educational and cultural (a coeducational boarding school and a college of arts).

The College of Arts, for which I happen to be responsible, is something of a unique institution. All sorts of exciting arts activities had happened at Dartington before the war—we had artists from Cornish School in Seattle, the Ballet Jooss and its dance school as refugees from Nazi Germany, and Micael Chekhov who was formerly with the Moscow Arts Theatre. These people all departed with the outbreak of war and we were faced in 1944 with a cultural vacuum and a new beginning.

Museum curators working out in rural areas or small towns will understand our problem. We had some resources, indeed very good ones—a beautiful fourteenth-century manor house as our base, an endowment fund, and a body of Trustees who expected a great deal of us. But even with these resources we felt isolated in a part of England where few cultural facilities existed, where few artists or experts then wanted to come and work. The official bodies seemed to think we had no place in their plans; the locality were suspicious because we had been supporters of foreign cultures.

We took a long-term view and made our first aim that of becoming an arts centre for the locality—a place where people could listen to music, see works of art, enjoy theatre and dance, act in a play, paint, or make pots. It took us a long time to achieve what we wanted, but now many people come to Dartington to enjoy a wide variety of cultural activities.

We would never have got to this point had we tried to do this in isolation, but realizing that many people like to come to Devon because it is one of the most beautiful parts of England, and that they also enjoy our ancient buildings, we organized a number of special occasions and exhibitions which raised the whole level of what we were trying to do. Now, with our Summer School of Music and other more occasional ventures, artists from all over the world come to perform and teach, and people come from all over the country to enjoy them.

We also recognized that we had a training function to fulfil. We were encouraged to think that our situation was ideal for training artists outside the hurly-burly of a city. This seemed an exciting prospect, but we decided that it would have little relevance to our purpose unless we created an organic connection between the artists we were training and the community in which we lived and worked. So we set out to build up courses which could train artists who wanted to become teachers—we saw them in some measure as apprentices to the work we were trying to do in the community. We were very much criticized for this—it was thought that the training in the arts would be debased if we admitted that we were training teachers. Meanwhile, educationists thought us hopelessly ill-equipped to train teachers without a battery of experts to teach all the 'isms' of education.

However, we persevered, and we went into our local schools and built up a partnership with them; we helped them to do work which was beyond their normal range of thinking and then to bring it to Dartington to share with us and other schools in a festival we ran at Christmas. We also set out to create a system by which teachers could come into Dartington for short courses, some run by us and some by other people, so that they could learn from us and we from them.

Gradually, after nearly thirty years, Dartington has become not so much a college but a centre. It is a place where people come to enjoy the arts and study them in varying degrees of depth, and from which people go out refreshed to make a contribution. We have had to work hard to achieve this and to enter partnerships with our local university, teacher-training colleges, education authority, and other organizations who help to provide the

structures and finance in which we operate. But for all that we retain the essentials of independence. We remain, proudly, local; and we are now accepted by our own community. We also serve the wider region and make occasional contributions to both the national and international scene. Though many of the things that we do are not as good as we would like them to be, the total adds up to make a lively and outward-looking atmosphere through which many people pass in any one year.

I have given this long introduction to what I want to say about museums for two reasons. I want to feel associated with museums and other cultural institutions who, like us, have to fight to establish themselves against great difficulties. And because most of the really significant work comes from breaking across traditional boundaries of nationality and institutional function. Much of our speciality comes from our American and Indian sources of inspiration and from mixing up and interrelating the functions of being a training institution, providing exhibitions and performances and working within a community dedicated to a wide sociological purpose.

In our work we make constant use of museums, both as a source for special exhibitions and as a point of departure for all sorts of creative ventures. While most of our exhibitions are straightforward ones of contemporary art, the landmarks in our exhibition programme have always been ones of a special kind which have been conceived as part of some larger educational objective. Let me give three examples.

In 1949 we were asked by the women's organizations of Devon to do something about public taste and to run an exhibition of what was good and bad in design. The more we looked at the proposal the less sensible we thought it to be. We came up, however, with the idea of an exhibition–*Made in Devon*–of things chosen for their beauty or good design from our own county and from all periods of history. It included an extraordinary range of medieval carving, sixteenth-century silver, harvest pottery, agricultural tools, fishing tackle, examples of modern crafts, and products of present-day industry. The difficulty, of course, came with finding good modern things which could stand up to the traditions of the past. But the interest caused was tremendous–11,000 people came to the exhibition and saw for the first time something of their own heritage brought together alongside that of artists and craftsmen working in their midst. The catalogue remains the best record of craftsmen working in the area at that time; alas, many are no longer alive and have not been replaced.

Another year we gathered, with the help of a number of interested experts, a collection of contemporary work in textiles and pottery by British artist/craftsmen. This exhibition was designed to travel and went later on to London, Birmingham, and the Edinburgh Festival. While it was at Dartington we had an international conference of craftsmen coming from twenty or more areas of the world: they included the late Dr. Yanagi and Shoji Hamada from Japan, both of whom made a tremendous contribution. This meeting of East and West and of European, African, and Mexican, with a national exhibition as a jumping-off ground, was extraordinarily stimulating and we

still get requests from all over the world for copies of the conference report.

Only recently we have had an exhibition of Indian Miniatures, and by involving students and local schools ahead of time in a study of Indian art, music, and philosophy, we were able to put on or get an audience for a number of concerts and special events in which celebrated Indian artists could perform, or speak. This, and indeed an exhibition of West African art we had with objects borrowed from the Horniman and Exeter museums, stimulated deep interest, not just in the art of another civilization, but in the social and educational problems of another part of the world, and of the place of the artist in another type of community.

Another direction in which we have used material from museums is to stimulate creative work with children. In the festival we used to run with our local schools, we often initiated the whole project with sources of inspiration drawn from museums. For example, we wanted to launch a project on giants and we wanted the teachers and children to make giants, but not the grotesque kind of objects they would have been if they had to draw on normal commercial sources. Thanks to the help we received from the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, we got some magnificent photographs of African rain gods and warriors, and combining these with photographs of Romanesque sculpture, also from France, we were able to get across to the more sensitive teachers the basic, aesthetic principles on which large static figures could be created.

The most important area of our work in which we need museum collaboration is in the training of teachers in the arts. Here, it is not a matter of arts scholarship but primarily one of cultivating the powers of perception. So many of our students who enter our college seem to have had an education which has killed off latent ability to take in things freshly through their eyes or their ears, i.e. to make proper use of direct experience.

When I was first at Dartington I often showed our medieval banqueting hall to groups of young children. I remember one party in particular. The children had been told by the teacher not to touch anything, and how beautiful it all was because it was old and handmade. Escaping from the teacher, they darted in all directions to finger and explore the Spanish furniture—the little doors in the gothic cupboard, the metal catches and hinges on the jewel cases, the iron candlesticks with their spikes, the crumbling stone, the blackened fireplace. There were two who climbed inside a travelling trunk and had to be got out before the teacher saw them. After such visits, I used to get back from the children pictures and writing, often all mixed up together like a medieval manuscript, revealing an incredible recognition of shape, texture, and decorative detail. By being left free to explore, and through the stimulus of the occasion, their sense of perception had been greatly heightened.

Only the occasional student arrives at our college having retained this sense of wonder and excitement. If they are asked to study the banqueting hall, they want the guide-books to know who built it and when, and will spend some hours copying out paragraphs or even drawings. At first they find little

to excite them in the direct experience of exploring the texture of the stone, wood, or metal, or in the way the light falls through the gothic windows, or in all those things that have happened to the hall during five hundred years of use. They accept that they should know about the building, that is educationally respectable, but they do not believe that a first-hand exploration of it, through careful looking and touching, could enrich their own work.

We have found that the same applies to looking at painting that is more than a few years old. Students are happy to be lectured to on the history of art; they will read books and make notes, even discuss. But it is more a form of relaxation than grist to the creative mill. Faced with this problem we have tried several ways of getting the students much more deeply involved in art of the past. For example, one year we asked the National Gallery in London to make us a collection of photographic enlargements of eyes taken from figures in paintings. We pinned these up and asked the students to list them in chronological order and to decide what they thought each painter had been interested in. After a good deal of protest that nothing could be done without knowing the painters' names and having recourse to books, they discovered far more than they ever dreamed could be discovered from direct and personal observation. The study from books, which followed, became a real experience.

On another occasion, when there was a chance to visit the National Gallery, we prepared the way by studying six or seven different colour reproductions of Rembrandt's *A Woman Bathing*. They discovered how fantastically varied these reproductions were and they made colour charts which they could then compare with the original. This led them not only to spend a long time in front of the painting, but it became a personal and worthwhile discovery of the truth.

On one such visit we were allowed to visit the restoration department, and I remember the students' surprise at seeing the three panels of Uccello's *Rout of San Romano*, which they had seen so evenly and shiningly reproduced in books, standing there stripped right down, revealing bare patches and indications of how pieces had been cut off and others added on. The students became aware of the nature of old master paintings to an extent that would not otherwise have been possible.

I have mentioned these experiments and could add others because I think they reveal the need to involve young people in processes of discovery. I believe that museums are probably doing too much to present the finished article, and this is one of the things that is failing to satisfy young people. As J. T. Hall in his book, *The Hidden Dimension*, says of the Japanese, 'The study of Japanese spaces illustrates their habit of leading the individual to a spot where he can discover something for himself.' If we want young people to use the museums they too must make their own discoveries. As an exhibitor or a teacher, this of course is a very much harder and more subtle a thing to do.

In this respect museums could, I believe, do more to help young people if

they set out to create circumstances which are actually designed to heighten the audience's perceptive awareness. I remember so clearly my first visit to the Ducal Palace of Urbino: moving from room to room each with its contrasting dimension and subtle change of colour, was a drama in itself and constantly refreshing, quite apart from any enjoyment of the exhibits themselves. The few folk museums I know, scattered in parks, also have had this quality: they involve one's senses wholly, just as that marvellous museum at the Grande Chartreuse does–no distance from Grenoble itself. If we want to attract our young people to museums, we must lead them towards an emotional as well as an intellectual experience.

Going back again to the young child, it is important to remember that he does not categorize his discoveries or his ways of expressing them. It is not for him art or science or history. He will express his findings in writing or visually or in drama, or in all of these media together. But after a secondary school education where art is in the art room with the art master, and science in the laboratory with the scientist, this totality of approach is usually lost. Basically, however, most students seem to want to regain it; they feel and express this need in terms of seeking 'relevance'. But it is not easy to offer them this since, unlike the folk artist or the young men and women of the Renaissance, they rarely have the skills or the resources to achieve this aim.

Like many other arts institutions we have been trying to put students out in 'non-art' situations in order to increase their powers of perception: in quarries, brickworks and foundries, to discover and record the people, the processes, the tools, the sounds, and the language. The first results are often disappointing, but when they begin to discover that the textures and materials and craftsmanship they find there have relationship to their own work, something begins to happen. It is then possible to lead them back through history to Abbot Suger in the twelfth century collecting his timber in the forest of Iveline, or to Michelangelo writing home from the Carrara quarries about the quality of the marble and the problems of transporting it to Rome.

I am sure that many museums, at least in the UK, have much to learn in this direction. Only recently I visited one with very fine collections. Having adolescent children with me we explored the section concerned with mines and quarries, full of beautifully made models with clear and long explanatory labels. They were attracting the interest of a number of boys but they left me and my daughter cold. They had none of the visual excitement I had found wandering through the quarries at Carrara last summer, nor did they evoke the atmosphere of Bill Brandt's photographs of Nottingham miners recently shown in England by the Arts Council. In order to satisfy the needs of my senses I had to go to the art department in another part of the building. There I found a wonderful collection of contemporary paintings, acquired, presumably, from the profits of the industry I had been seeing, but maintained for a different kind of public. How splendid it would have been if the scientists of the museum had used the creative artists whose work was being shown in the art gallery to give a background to their work, instead of

the services of those whose taste and techniques were derivative and out of date.

This making of connections–between the arts and the sciences, between old and new, between one civilization and another–is vitally important to the young. The relation of subject matter to personal and spiritual values is the essence of the relevance they seek. Great writers, like Andrée Malraux, Lewis Mumford, Siegfried Giedion, and Philip Henry Lang have led the way and provide syntheses on which staff and students can build. We now need in our schools, colleges, and museums, more resources which allow young people to develop these lines of thinking and make a wide variety of connections for themselves.

As a college specializing in four arts, we are very much concerned with the provision of resources which will help students studying one art to make connections with other arts, with non-European civilizations and with their own environment. For example, we like to feel that our musicians will know how to use visual material in the classroom. Here we have made good use of the enlarged details of musicians and musical instruments from old master paintings offered by the National Gallery. We like to get all our students interested too in the music and art of the East, and here again enlargements from Indian miniatures have been helpful. But this sort of resource is, for the most part, extraordinarily difficult to come by. A tremendous amount could be done by museums, working together with inspired teachers, to produce and release new kinds of raw material for the pinning boards of the studio and classroom.

When it comes to the study of the environment museums can offer invaluable material, but here again there is a case for a new look. Two years ago we decided to explore the concept of 'the River', and took as our point of departure the River Dart. There was already much known about the Dart, but, instead of imparting this information, we felt personal involvement was more important to begin with, and, with the aid of boathouses, tents, and sleeping-bags, the students spent two nights out sleeping beside it to discover its changing moods. This led to all sorts of discovery and adventure. The work that came out of this was extraordinarily personal, with a sense of individual discovery, essentially seen through the eyes of young people. I realize now, looking back on it, that most of the work has disappeared with the students who have left: how valid this record was, how valuable it could be for the future as an understanding, not only of what the river was in 1969, but how a set of young people experienced it.

It seems to me that this is an area where the museums have an immensely important part to play with its combination of scientific and artistic expertise; to encourage exploration through the eyes of young people, to exhibit it as work in progress, to keep the best of it as a permanent record.

The museum, schoolchildren, and teachers

Ayala Gordon

Mrs. Ayala Gordon is an educationalist who completed her training with an MA in the Department of Fine Arts and Archaeology in the University of Columbia, USA. After varied teaching experience where she developed intense interest in the educational potential of the museum, she is now Curator of the Youth Wing of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Her publications are numerous and are all dedicated to children, being either illustrations for children's books, or children's stories or museum publications prepared specifically for children.

The basic difference between the traditional curator and the educator in the museum is that one focuses his attention on the object while the other on the people who will view the object. The educator must therefore be interested in the whole process which leads a child from the moment that he is born through a variety of experiences at home, in the street, and in school, until finally he comes to the museum and is able to appreciate a work of art.

Many questions must be asked: Do the schools prepare the child for his role as a consumer of art? What should the museum's role be at the different stages in the life of a growing child? Should the museum serve the child through the schools or independently after school? What is the museum's responsibility toward the parents, teachers, artists, or even toy manufacturers? Can the museum have an impact on life in the street or park?

These were some of the questions which we asked ourselves five years ago when the Israel Museum opened a special wing for children called the 'Youth Wing'. The museum itself had been inaugurated a year earlier; its collections, the biggest in the country, include archaeology, ethnography, Judaica, painting, and sculpture. It is the national museum located in modern Jerusalem; thus its services are rendered not only primarily to the 300,000 inhabitants of the city, but extensively to the whole country as well, with a population of three million.

Israel has quite successfully overcome the initial problems of education which arose when its population doubled some twenty years ago. Many of the immigrants and refugees who had come to Israel were illiterate. The first problem was to eradicate illiteracy. Under the circumstances art-education

was relegated to a very minor role, with children receiving some painting lessons between the ages of 10 and 14. There is practically no spontaneous activity before 10, and art-history is not included at any age. There are exceptions, notably in the kibbutzim, but this is the general situation. The average teacher in Israel tends to use abstract verbal methods of teaching, and is not accustomed to using visual aids.

Over the years nearly fifty local museums have developed throughout the country; a few of them started educational work on their own initiative. Recently the Ministry of Education and the municipalities have started to aid such programmes. This is the background against which our activities must be viewed.

We are located in the main building of the museum and our facilities include exhibition space, an auditorium, and four spacious studios. Our programme includes guided tours, special exhibitions, and studio work as well as many other activities. Here I shall discuss exhibitions and studio work only.

Exhibitions

How does an exhibition affect the local community as compared to the national scene? When we put on an exhibition called 'Make your own puppet show', our aim was to focus attention on a creative medium, unfortunately neglected in our country, yet important for developing a wholesome personality in a growing child. On one level the exhibition was oriented toward the children; it was arranged as a playpark in which many stages of puppetry were scattered. The visitors, most of them local children, could manipulate the puppets and actually create whole dramatic shows. As far as the children were concerned, the exhibition showed how to make and how to manipulate puppets. As it turned out, not only young children enjoyed the show but teenagers and adults also mobbed the exhibits. It was a continuous 'Happening'. The educational impact was nationwide. Through the aid of the Ministry of Education, the booklet accompanying the exhibition was sent to all the schools of Israel, together with a special manual for teachers. The manual stressed the meaning of play in the development of children, and the fact that puppetry, the most comprehensive of the creative arts, was a natural form of play for children. A competition was announced among the schools for the best puppeteer group, which was invited to perform in the museum. A few hundred teachers from all over the country participated in several seminars held at the museum, on the making and use of puppets in the classroom. When the exhibition closed, it was offered as a loan exhibition to other museums, for example, Kibbutz Kfar-Menahem showed it in its museum.

In another exhibition called 'Illustrated books for children', we aimed to examine art in the home. Illustrated books are the first art forms that a child sees. Again the exhibition offered a variety of activities for the children, such as writing and illustrating their own books, printing and setting type letters,

Fig. 1. The printing corner of the exhibition 'Illustrated books for children'. (*Photograph: Israel Museum.*)

and using a hand press to print illustrations. At the same time the exhibition was aimed at parents, teachers, artists, and publishers. The books were arranged according to age-levels and supplemented by an exhibit of choice illustrations from all over the world. The catalogue was written for the adults. Again, a special seminar for librarians from all over Israel was held in the museum, in co-operation with the Hebrew University and the Ministry of Education. Needless to say, Israel is a small country and all the communications media are national, not local; thus it is simpler to work on a national level than it would be in a big country. Nevertheless, the co-operation of the Ministry of Education is vital if an exhibition is to have a broad impact.

These two exhibitions dealt with the problems of very young children. Other shows are aimed at the 8-15-year-old age-group and they fall into two categories: (1) Exhibitions dealing with basic themes as an introduction to the museum, such as 'The materials of the artist', or 'What is archaeology?' and (2) shows dealing with a specific historical period, not represented in our collection, such as 'Life in ancient Egypt' or 'Classical Greece'. These are offered as visual tactile aids, first to the children of Jerusalem, and after closing they are available as loan exhibitions.

In mounting all exhibitions the problem is how to present the main ideas accurately, and at the same time meet the emotional needs of children. It is important that rational and emotional needs do not clash. I would like to mention briefly some of the emotional aspects which may determine the impact of an exhibition.

In the first place we attempt to create a *total environment*, and an over-all tone through the use of colour, light and sound, and spacial arrangement. This creates an *atmosphere* in which the child is immersed. If possible, we create *real environment* (such as a real dig in the 'Archaeology' show). If this

is not possible, we aim at creating an *aesthetic whole*. Likewise we try to create full *gestalts* out of separate didactic elements. Secondly, we attempt to have *activities which explain processes* (not activities for their own sake), as described above in the puppet and book shows, and as achieved in all our other shows as well. For example, in the archaeology show, a game on an overhead projector explains how a Tell develops, and how the archaeologist digs. Thirdly, we try to *let artists prepare models and examples*. The result is that the models are more profound, they show imagination, and are not dry didactic tools. A model of a potter in ancient times was prepared by a potter. It showed not only how the potter's wheel was used in antiquity but how a modern potter builds sculpture on the wheel. Similarly, in the 'Book' show, a realistic corner depicted a typesetter. It was imbued with a mood similar to a Seghal sculpture, thus was more haunting than reality.

These three ideas of environment, activities, and artist participation will be especially stressed in our coming exhibition, 'Games of sculpture'. All the sculpture-games will be prepared by artists, they will be installed in our sculpture garden and flow into the museum entrance. This will be the first exhibition originally designed for children which has been endorsed for the adults as well. Finally, we try to include in our exhibitions *examples related to the lives of children, and examples made by children*. Identification and empathy make these examples more meaningful to children. For instance, when explaining the origin of pigments, we showed a painting made by children who used ordinary earth mixed with egg. When showing life in ancient Egypt we exhibited models made by children from photographs of the Egyptian grave-models. Originally we did so because of lack of funds; then we observed the added dimension which these models aroused.

Studio work in the museum

There were many reasons for opening children's art classes in the museum. As mentioned before, art education is offered in Israeli schools for four years only, and there are few after-school activities; thus there was a real need to provide such classes. In addition, we thought that by enabling children to study in the museum, its image as a forbidding place would be transformed. Today every child in Jerusalem knows that if he so wishes he may come and join one of the classes. Last year some 1,200 children participated. For them the museum is simply a place where it is fun to be. Each of these children is a living link between the museum and his family and friends. A museum which offers classes is no longer an impersonal, cold institution.

For the child who participates it is an important experience. He passes through the museum at least twenty-four times a year on his way to the studio, thus enriching his visual vocabulary. Being exposed to real art is a completely novel experience to most of these children. In addition, the child sees the museum living from within: the care of objects and the installation of exhibitions. He may have a chance to meet an artist whose works are on display; for instance, some children were privileged to meet Sir Henry Moore,

who even visited their class. In the studio the child works with a teacher who is himself a creative artist, and who encourages imagination and personal expression. The teacher provides guidance to familiarize the student with materials; moreover, he will often refer to the museum collections for examples and explanations of aesthetic problems. This is therefore the ideal environment, and it is not surprising to find that the works of the children are rich in content and form. The educational work done with these children is incomparably richer, and the experience is much deeper than it can be for a casual visitor to an exhibition.

The participants are aged from 6 to 18 years; by having the whole range of ages we can attempt a sequential programme. Subjects offered are in all the arts, including painting, ceramics, and sculpture as well as photography, drama, and film-making. Our major goal is to explore new ways for teaching the arts, particularly how to integrate the creative work of children with the aesthetic study of art-objects. This is a basic point of contention among art educators throughout the world, and a museum cannot remain indifferent to this issue. The problem which has to be studied is that of how creative activities lead to a better understanding of what is art.

At the end of each year we mount an exhibition of the works of the children, hoping to provide inspiration to children and encouragement to art teachers. Visiting children may not only see the works of others but they may also actively participate. Tables with materials, and a teacher, are available in the exhibition; every visitor may paint murals on the walls of the adjacent yard (which are whitewashed once a week). It is amazing how these surroundings stimulate children of all ages, from tiny 3-year-olds to teenagers.

Out of these activities there developed the idea to include a *free activity corner* in every exhibition, irrespective of its theme.

When we collected the drawings which were made at the play corner during the summer, we discovered that nearly half were made by children from out of town. Others were by underprivileged children who preferred drawing in the exhibition to joining the studio. Still others were made by tiny children whose parents brought them regularly to the museum because of the activity corner. When we closed the corner (at the time the 'Archaeology' show opened) letters of protest arrived from parents. In one case I was confronted with a kibbutz family who had travelled especially all the way from northern Israel because their daughter enjoyed the drawing in the museum so much that she wanted to come again (this in spite of the fact that the kibbutzim have the best art rooms and good teachers). In short, by popular request a free activity corner is now a constant feature in all our exhibitions. This allows a measure of the intimate studio experience to be shared by every visitor.

One may describe the impact of the museum on the community by means of concentric circles. The widest circle encompasses some 60,000 out-of-town children who receive a general tour on their first visit to the museum; their experience is the most shallow. The second circle consists of some 14,000 children who come with their classes for a specific study-tour, complete with

Fig. 2. Children painting on the walls of the yard of the Youth Wing, Israel Museum. (*Photograph: Israel Museum.*)

questionnaires, objects to be touched, and souvenir-pictures of the objects discussed; theirs is a deeper experience, and still it may be an isolated event. Then comes a group of about 5,000 children who are members of the museum and who come regularly to a variety of events. The smallest circle and the most intensive is that of the children who participate in the studio. However, the small studio circle may have a wide-ranging impact outside the museum. Last summer our studio theme was 'Let's make Jerusalem beautiful'. The children and their teachers went into the main streets of the city. On neglected walls they painted big murals; they decorated park benches and garbage pails. The activity aroused their sensitivity to their surroundings and a sense of responsibility for their city. It was important not only for the participants; the news media picked up the story and publicized it widely.

Finally, I should like to discuss briefly a special aspect of our studio: our art-history classes. This is our oldest programme, begun some eleven years ago in the old museum. It is offered to children aged 10 and over, and deals with the same historical periods studied in school. Thus fifth-graders are offered the art of ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia, sixth-graders the art of Greece, and so on. Each subject is studied for a whole year through a variety of activities. As an introduction *slides and sometimes objects are discussed*. Then typical structures–furniture, boats, or sometimes whole *scenes of life*–are

reconstructed in a variety of materials. An attempt is made to be as faithful to the original as possible. This is a playful form of *involved observation*. In other cases the children may experience the aesthetics from within; for example, they may learn flower arrangement when studying Japan, or the use of the Chinese brush when studying China. Likewise children studying the Renaissance learned to draw from nature according to the different stages described in Cennino Cennini's book; they also brought eggs, prepared their own tempera, and painted profile portraits of each other. In other words, they *studied the aesthetics through first-hand experience*. At other times the cultural background of a particular culture *was used as a source of inspiration for more imaginative work*. A class studying the art of classical Greece made a film based on the story of the *Iliad*. The children, aged 12, first looked at Greek black-figure paintings, and then, inspired by them, prepared a shadow-puppet theatre which was photographed on film. The children wrote and recorded verses to accompany the film, adding the sound effects spontaneously. This was a creative effort which required some research into the past but primarily demanded imagination and inventiveness in making an original project of their own.

Needless to say, the children become deeply involved in these projects. We hope to carry some of these ideas to enrich our exhibitions and tours. On the other hand, we hope to prepare teachers to work in this project method outside the museum. This will require a great effort in training, for most artists are unable to approach the cultural-historical aspects seriously, and most historians are unable to guide and inspire children through a creative project. Training in both art and art-history will be needed, as well as a rich experience in art-education. Only then will the teacher be able to strike a balance between the love of children and the love of art.

Summary

The question which underlies much of our work is whether the creative activities can lead to a deeper understanding of art. The need for play is natural to children; if the museum provides meaningful play situations in special exhibitions or in the studio, it becomes part of the real life of children in and after school. In the studio the use of the museum object becomes an organic part of the play situation: the object is both a source of inspiration and an object of curiosity, and a gap does not exist between creativity and learning, which are part of the same process. There are probably many other ways in which the museum can become part of the life of children. I have presented here some of our experiments in the Israel Museum. Perhaps some of them are applicable to learning outside the museum as well as within, and perhaps some are not useful in other museum situations. I wonder whether tying the museum experience to the lives of children is not the problem with which all of us are struggling.

6 Intermediaries between the museum and the community

John Kinard

John Kinard is Director of the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in Washington DC. A graduate of Livingstone College, in Salisbury, North Carolina, he later studied for a degree in theology and became one of the first students to participate in Operation Crossroad Africa, as a result of which he spent two summers working with students on community projects in Tanzania, Kenya, and Zanzibar. The following years he was appointed East African Co-ordinator for all projects from Cairo to Rhodesia.

Although not originally a resident of Anacostia, John Kinard is well and actively acquainted with the area through his association with many community organizations. Prior to being appointed Director of the Neighborhood Museum, he was with the Office of Economic Opportunity where he provided leadership and assistance in community programmes on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

The museum serves man if, in fact, it concerns itself directly with the man of today and tomorrow. Granted that it has established its official position through the years in acquiring, preserving, studying, interpreting, and exhibiting objects of the past, by no means can we conclude that in so doing it has met its responsibility in the broadest sense.

I fully appreciate all that the museum has contributed to man's knowledge. There is no question but that research, new discoveries, and the preservation of the past, both recent and remote, must never cease. I am aware also of the deep resistance in most human beings against change: in ourselves and in our institutions.

Museums are the depositories for objects and records that testify to man's progress through the ages, but museums themselves resist progress. What I am affirming is that although this vast contribution has been the unceasing effort of hundreds of years, evaluated in terms of today it is only a beginning. If we are to serve man today and tomorrow, we need to concern ourselves with the problems of today and, in doing so, demonstrate how man ought to live.

The great historical and scientific truths of the past mean nothing to the average man unless they are shown in relationship to what is happening today

and what may happen tomorrow. The vast numbers of people who visit museums need much more.

Museums can no longer serve only the intellectually élite, the art connoisseur, and the scholar. Our visitors can no longer be limited to the enlightened, the educated, and the well-to-do. Any institutions that call themselves museums and do not note with great care the overwhelming possibilities for service to the community should rethink their position so that there can be no undue criticism of these respected institutions and their traditions. Museums must be sensitive to the cries of modern man for a more perfect way to live and to know the truth.

It is the museum's responsibility to discover the truth, to collect and analyse the data, and to interpret the findings in a way that all men can understand. The time has come to discard the sterile and fanatical adherence to exhibit techniques of past generations. We need to make use of every new technical device to absorb the attention of the masses.

The cultural contributions of minorities must be dealt with and understood. Because some society refuses to respect the black man, the red man, and the brown man, this is no reason for museums to blank them out as if they did not exist. In the USA this is an acute problem.

Unbelievable as it may seem, there are many people in the USA who can go back no further than two generations to trace their family history. They do not know where they came from or where they are going. They share no common history of working together as a unit for a mutual cause with the exception of their church or social group.

In some instances the museum has accepted the culture of its minorities as museum curiosities but rejected the people who created these cultures. We accept African cultural objects as art while disdaining as primitive the culture itself and the people from whom these objects drew their life.

In the USA this problem is illustrated by the fact that you would never know from visiting the average American museum that the black man exists in America and has made significant contributions toward the development of our country. The USA would not be what it is today, economically or culturally, were it not for the black man's labour.

You may search in vain in our museums to discover with what great esteem the black man is regarded, what the black man contributed to civilization, how he lived, and what he was forced to suffer. Believe me when I say the American museum has ignored the Black American, and it is only recently that a few art museums have shown the works of black artists.

In those rare instances where there is an exhibit that has to do with minorities it is designed in a fashion that represents the white man's interpretation of the particular minority. How can it be otherwise since museums have refused to hire minority people in any significant capacity? I acknowledge that there are exceptions; however, this is the general practice on the American scene.

Now this is nothing new. Innumerable position papers have been written not only by museum professionals but also by authorities in other fields reaffirming that we must expect more from our museums. We need museums

that are designed to take risks: to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, between those cultures that have been favoured and those that have been neglected, between great art and popular art.

They must change from passive collectors and narrowly specialized scholars to active participants in meeting today's challenges. They must employ not only new methods but also a new intermediary that will be unafraid to face the complex problems raised by racism, material affluence, poverty, poor housing, unemployment, drugs, deteriorating cities, urban planning, education–all aspects of human existence–and to find the answers. Exhibits should be designed to present these controversial problems side by side with their counterparts in history, correlating current issues with historical facts. Our museums should be the leaders in the forefront of change rather than following the dictates of past generations.

Museum authorities may feel it is unreasonable to expect them to do this kind of thing, asserting that these issues are not their concern or responsibility. To do so would be to cease being a museum. I do not think this is a unanimous opinion.

If the museum itself, the established institution, cannot break with tradition, cannot follow this new direction, then perhaps it can be made to realize the need to sponsor a supplementary agency which will serve as an intermediary between the museum and the community. From one point of view, it may not be unreasonable to place this responsibility on the doorstep of the museum. Realistically, because of their history, definition, and focus, can museums foster the development of an intermediary agency? I think they can if, with their sponsorship, museums give support, no matter what the risk, while permitting the intermediary to develop freely without interference in its efforts to meet the needs of the community it serves. Only with that kind of commitment can the intermediary be successful in establishing a style of its own and move toward fulfilling its potential as the museum of the future.

The intermediary cannot be oblivious to the past or the present but must have the courage to raise questions about unpopular causes; to tell the truth about war and its menacing, savage consequences; to present controversial issues in all their harsh reality. The intermediary makes use of the sponsoring institution and its rich resources for its interpretation, analysis, and correlation of information. It makes use of the museum's expertise but is by no means less scientific or knowledgeable in its presentation of current problems.

Since the intermediary is the agency that exists between the community and the sponsoring museum, we need to define the kinds of communities we are referring to. Communities vary in degree of complexity and have different problems–cultural, economic, social, or political. If we are referring to the world community, what are our responsibilities? Does a local community have the same problems as all other communities in the world?

In the USA these problems are aggravated by differences in race or national origin, affecting those people who make up America's minority groups. In those countries facing a transition from an agricultural to an

industrial society these same problems are related to the status of the rural poor who crowd the cities in search of a living. Their problems are not unlike those of the USA's minority groups in that they, too, lack vocational training and need various kinds of assistance. Not the least of their needs is the opportunity for greater recognition as people who have made a contribution to their country.

The enormity of these questions poses the problem of redefining the mission of the museum as it faces its obligation to serve the man of today and tomorrow.

As research is undertaken, it becomes apparent that these social problems have been with us in one form or another since men began to live together in a communal society. It is not enough for us to place objects in a case or write a paper; we must draw conclusions, provide solutions, and interpret the issues to every man in language he can understand. In short, to motivate him to think–an achievement not to be under-estimated.

Where I come from, a small community in Washington, DC called Anacostia, the world's first intermediary museum was established as an extension of the Smithsonian Institution. As everyone knows, the Smithsonian is a giant in the museum world. Less well known is the fact that it is a long-established giant willing to take a risk. The timing was right and the dedication to foster change was present. This renowned institution willingly moved into a completely unexplored area, without expertise and without overwhelming endorsement, but firmly resolved to accomplish its purpose.

The Smithsonian Institution's pioneer effort could be among the most significant advances in the museum world. Its effect, not only on museums in the USA but also the world over, is yet to be estimated. How did it begin?

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum began in an abandoned movie theatre located across the river about a mile and a half from the Smithsonian on the Mall, but light years away as far as visitors from Anacostia were concerned. When the Smithsonian announced its interest in taking museums to the people and its plans to open such a museum, requests came in from a number of low-income communities in Washington. Smithsonian representatives held informal but constructive and exploratory discussions with a number of these groups. Although small in area, Anacostia was selected because it represented all of the urban ills prevalent in modern cities of America. In cities around the world the specific problems might be different, but there are needs wherever people live together.

An advisory council made up of all segments of the Anacostia community–civic and youth groups, tenant councils, schools, the police, the clergy, and others was formed. These people met with Smithsonian staff during the winter and spring of 1967. The Museum opened the following September. Some of these same men and women are now on the Museum's Neighborhood Advisory Committee which provides the impetus behind the entire idea of community participation.

We must realize that the Smithsonian could not have been successful had it not been for those community leaders in Anacostia who seized the moment,

saw a golden opportunity for a new lease on life in their area, and who, through their persistent efforts, were able to show good reason why the world's first neighbourhood museum should be established in Anacostia.

The neighbourhood museum exists to serve the people of the area of which it is a part. At the same time that it is dependent on the sponsoring agent for its needs, it is independent in its operation. It determines its own priorities in regard to personnel policies, exhibits, educational programmes, and all other activities. As a free agent, it invites its neighbours to serve on an advisory committee.

The neighbourhood museum concerns itself with an analysis of the community and its history. It poses such questions as where did we come from, who are our heroes, what is our heritage, who are we as a people? What have we done to better ourselves and the community in which we live? What are our social, economic, political, and educational assets and liabilities?

The focus is on the problems, aspirations, hopes, fears, difficulties, and dreams of its constituents. As the museum increases its understanding and awareness of its function and purpose, the community also begins to discover its identity through the museum and to take pride in that identity. Their sense of community broadens.

People who have no decent place to live or lack educational skills have no interest in air pollution or Graeco-Roman civilization or even African culture. They are forced to concentrate on the struggle to survive, to house and clothe and educate their families. So we must begin with where the people are in the circumstances in which we find them. The urban industrial centres have their own history. In Anacostia it is one of crime, drugs, unemployment, inadequate housing, sanitation, rats, to mention but a few of its problems.

The intermediary cannot afford to hang paintings on its walls unless they demonstrate the condition and offer hope of something better. How can they exhibit historical objects that bear no relationship to the social issues and that people cannot identify with because they have no base of reference and there is no interpretation given in terms they can understand.

The neighbourhood museum begins by collecting, analysing, and studying the data and interpreting the findings by posing the problems together with alternative solutions. The end result is the exhibit which is the medium whereby people are obliged to see themselves as they are, what they can become, and what action they can take.

The Anacostia Museum dealt with a serious environmental problem in its exhibit on rats. The idea developed from discussions with the children and teenagers who visit the museum and who have first-hand experience with rats. It was felt that the problem as it exists in our cities and on our farms is a historical one that demands attention. We need to know how man dealt with this problem in the past; whether there have been societies that never had rats and rat-borne diseases and why; and what benefits, if any, are derived from these rodents? We need to analyse the social, political, and economic consequences of neglecting this problem and the results to be gained by dealing with it.

As the local people speak, the museum is the listening ear. It may not

always reply in a scholarly fashion, but it can point out opportunities for people to 'do their own thing' in the way that suits them best. The staff is available to pose alternatives, to provide technical know-how, and to offer training and opportunities for the community to develop its own institution and, in the process, enhance the quality of life for its residents.

The museum must be a living institution. It must provide a place where neighbours are encouraged to meet and talk; call attention to urgent problems; inspire people to do the best they can; sponsor programmes in the performing and visual arts; and participate in the development of a variety of interests from alcoholism and local archaeology to ornithology and urban planning.

The founders of the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in years to come can look back and be thankful. They did the best they could with what they had to insure for their community a place in the history of man. Their dedicated concern was not for themselves or an act of selfish aggrandizement. It was for the people of Anacostia and, ultimately, people the world over. Those of us who are fortunate to work at the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum are, in fact, servants of the people of Anacostia.

The neighbourhood museum can be a rewarding undertaking for the sponsoring museum: not by way of an apology for past omissions but as a challenging opportunity to become involved in a new, creative way. Museums will need to decide, either individually or collectively, whether to broaden their interests, expand their functions, and redefine their reason for being.

In the USA we have made a humble beginning. It is our hope that museum intermediaries will make a significant contribution in the service of man–today and tomorrow.

Educational work: the collective responsibility of all museum personnel

Mahmoud Mesallam

Dr. Mahmoud Mesallam Hasan is Director General of the Museum of Science and Technology, Ministry of Scientific Research, Cairo. A chemist and educationalist, he was formerly a science teacher and inspector of science teaching in high schools under the Ministry of Education in Egypt. As a recognized expert in the field of diffusing scientific knowledge both inside and outside schools, Dr. Mesallam lectures at the University of Al Azhar and since 1967 has been Chairman of the UAR National Committee for Icom.

1. When creating a museum many questions arise. Which sector of the public is to be served?

a. Children who must be prepared to carry out their future social responsibilities?

b. University students and research workers who will make use of the museum's rich collections in their studies and research work?

c. Farmers and workers who have missed the opportunity of modern education but who are nevertheless living and important components of the community and responsible for raising the national standard of living?

d. The general public which must be continuously informed about important national projects and national and technological achievements?

e. All these sectors of society at one and the same time?

2. Is it possible to have a comprehensive museum covering the needs of all, although as such it would be lifeless? Or is it possible to aim for the creation of an ideal museum while realizing that such an aim is unattainable?

3. Where should the exhibits be assembled? Outside the museum or in the museum workshops, under the supervision of specialists?

4. Are the assembled exhibits to be kept until they are worn out or should they be changed so as to maintain the interest of the public and to keep up with the rapid social changes of life?

5. Should we give priority to those exhibits which concern only the needs of the community served by the museum or must we also consider links with

other communities in other countries? In other words should exhibits concern only national culture or may they include aspects of foreign cultures?

6. Is it preferable from the educational point of view for visitors to passively listen to explanations from guides or should we encourage them to be active and discover things by themselves? Should exhibits be self-explanatory or do they need lengthy written explanations?

7. Does the educational value of a museum lie in big halls crowded with collections or in simple but well-displayed exhibits that can tell a story?

8. Will the exhibits be expensive, and if so can a country afford to have more than one museum? If not, in what way can the museum's services reach other communities where there is no museum?

9. How can museum exhibits and methods of display be evaluated so as to be improved in order to meet the continuous changing needs of the community?

10. The building up of exhibits that simplify scientific principles and interpret scientific research needs high experience. Can experienced personnel be easily found? What kind of experience is needed: specialist experience in collecting or in educational theory or in both? Or should all museum personnel have basic educational training?

11. Much time is needed in training personnel to carry out such work and to build up exhibits of educational value. How can this difficulty be overcome?

These questions and possibly others appear as concrete obstacles to people who are thinking of creating or improving a museum.

Let us now try to throw some light on the problems involved and discuss ideas which may lead to answers for these questions.

1. Which sector of the public is to be served?

a. Children are the men of the future. They must learn and understand basic principles. They should practise solving problems. Learning through play is the most effective means of education. Exhibits for children should therefore be of a kind to arouse their interest and their creative instincts. They must ask questions, and the answers they receive should encourage them to do things by themselves.

Certainly it will be impossible for the exhibits in any museum, however big it is, to cover all the interests and activities of children. Theatres in museums may help, particularly by demonstrating principles that touch the school curriculum and widen the horizons of knowledge.

Outdoors activities sponsored by the museum are very important, for example:

i. Camps and trips.

ii. Science or art clubs.

In Egypt the Science Museum, Cairo, in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth is planning a summer camp for youths up to the age of 18. The children will be taken in groups to camp on the seaside in certain places in the Western desert. Each group will be divided into subgroups of a maximum of eight. Each subgroup will have its own tutor and will be supervised by a professor.

The first of the subgroups will collect minerals, identify and analyse them, and report on their composition and origin.

The second will collect medical plants, make coloured transparencies, showing sections of the plants and their habitats, extract drugs from them and study their economic value.

The third will use various apparatuses to measure temperature, pressure, humidity, etc., give data to subgroup 2 and study with them and other subgroups the effect of atmospheric factors on plants and animals.

The fourth will study the structure of the soil, analyse samples, report on the structure, again give data to subgroup 2, and participate in discussions.

The fifth will collect economic insects, preserve, identify, and classify them, and study their life cycles.

The sixth will collect birds and animals of the district including reptiles, snails, and fishes, preserve, identify, and classify them, and study their economic value.

Other subgroups will carry out artistic activities, making graphite drawings and paintings.

All these activities will take place in the morning. In the afternoon and after enjoying swimming, the subgroups will meet to discuss what they have done in the morning with their professors and specialists. After dinner there will be film-shows.

Study of the social life of people living in the district is important and meetings with them will be organized in the evenings. Through these meetings much can be learnt about their habits, customs, songs, and dances and valuable material gathered for activities in folklore art.

On their return from the camp the young people will have many things to do. They will feel the need to consult books, to complete their experimental work, to prepare their collections to be displayed in museums they set up in their schools. The clubs are the correct places for such extra activities. The museum has set up five science clubs in its building, with trained teachers in club-work and now there are hundreds of clubs in Egypt and their number is increasing rapidly.

The interests of children are guided towards national economic development. To give an example, some children interested in art joined our ceramic club. They were faced with the problem of a lack of imported materials and they therefore had to go to the laboratory and work on and improve local clays, after analysing both local and imported materials. They also had to produce local glazes.

In the club the children learn how to make ash-trays, vases, etc., in the shape of dinosaurs and other extinct animals. To do this they must study

geological periods and eras, where and when extinct animals lived and what they used to eat. Production of ceramics requires knowledge of kilns and firing techniques and, in the case of electric kilns, of electric currents, resistances, meters, etc.

It is clear from this example that the clubs are multipurpose and that science and art are complementary although experiencing scientific thinking is one of their principal aims. As an example may I quote from a report written by a group of youngsters of 15 years of age, who were encouraged to work as a team.

> When we were wandering about in the desert our attention was drawn to a pile of sand near a bulbous plant. The pile indicated the presence of a rat, a blind rat. We removed the sand and waited for about fifteen minutes when the rat came out of its hole. We carefully hunted it as it has two very sharp upper teeth which can cut one's finger. We asked why the rat came out after the removal of the pile of sand? The answer was 'The rat does not like light'. But the rat is blind, how can it detect light? Has it some sort of antennae or electromagnetic wave detector?! This needs careful examination of its head and some consultations with text books and specialists.
>
> What does the rat eat? 'The bulbs of the plant form its food.' But the bulbs of the plant are known to be poisonous. How does the rat eat poisonous bulbs and not die? Perhaps some materials are secreted by certain glands in the digestive canal which react with the poison, thus stopping its killing action. The rat has to be dissected, the secretions analysed, some thin coloured sections of the digestive canal should be made to examine its structure.

Each club has archives in which are kept files containing the children's reports and activities to help follow up future results. To help clubs in towns and villages scientific kits are prepared by the museum and circulated to schools to enable children to carry out laboratory work.

b. Children grow up, some will be university students and then research workers. In science museums therefore, there should be rich and complete collections of minerals, rocks, fossils, birds, reptiles, mammals, insects, etc., scientifically classified. These should cover samples and species from all over the world and this cannot be possible unless there is continuous exchange and co-operation between museums in different countries. In return, university students and research workers who benefit from such museum collections act as tutors to children on their trips and in their clubs.

c. If the museum does not play an important role in economic development it will be an ineffective museum. Farmers and workers are among the majority who have either missed the opportunity of a good education or have little general knowledge, especially in developing countries. Production depends on many factors, one of the most important being man himself. Diseases and nutrition should be given much stress. Mobile simple exhibitions and coloured cartoon films have proved to be very effective. It is

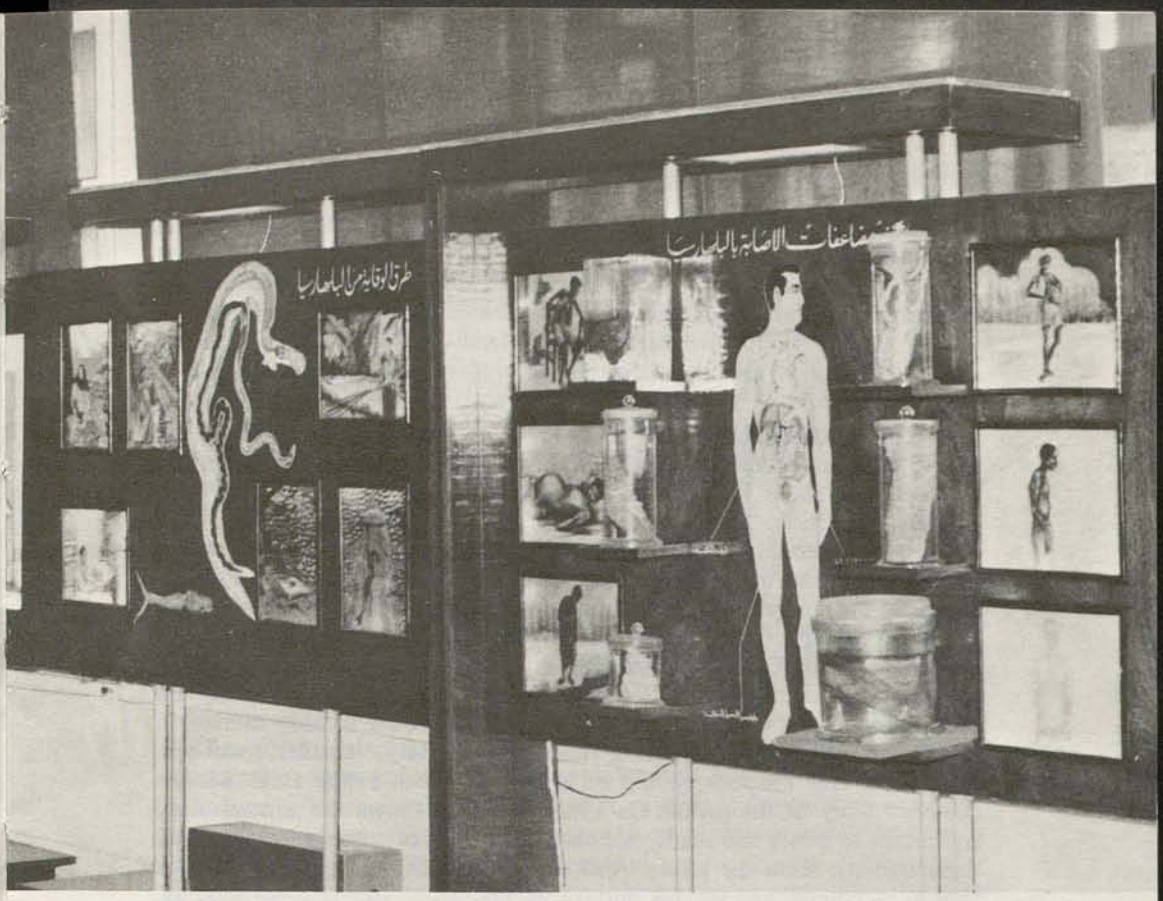

Fig. 1. Simple mobile exhibition units on tropical diseases for circulation to farmers in villages. (*Photograph: Museum of Science and Technology, Cairo.*)

advisable that youth from the village should be trained for a short period to act as demonstrators for these exhibitions and film-shows as they are the only people who can speak to their relatives in a language which can be understood and to whom the villagers can give their full trust and attention. Exhibitions should be preferably of the kind that fill the villagers with fear of diseases and encourage them to start asking about protection against these diseases. As an example take the use of a projection microscope to let a villager by himself take a drop of water from a nearby canal on a slide, see what it contains on a screen and repeat the experiment after boiling the water or adding a tablet of bleaching powder, or let him take a sample from between his teeth and see what it contains both before and after brushing the teeth with toothpaste. In this way he will learn to trust in and follow the advice given by experts and become more aware of the dangers disease can cause to him and his family.

One other important factor is the clear understanding of improvements and new methods and techniques of irrigation, agriculture, fertilizers, and pest-control, in order that the best use can be made of the tools available for protection against these dangers. Thus the villagers and workers will realize the importance of new methods and techniques which have to replace primitive ones.

Villagers have also to be made aware of healthy breeding techniques in cattle and poultry. They may be advised on the advantages of modern beehives which not only provide them with honey but also increase the productivity of their crops since bees act as carriers of pollen among flowers.

The mobile exhibitions and films are not the only means whereby museums can help. Art can take part. Songs, plays, and paintings may play a very effective role.

d. The general public is the taxpayer. All people have a right to know about national industrial, agricultural, cultural, and socially important projects, also about scientific and technological achievements which help increase production.

From the preceding paragraphs one can conclude that the museum should help all categories of people. It is advisable that every member of a group, especially the family group, should find something that interests him.

For an example let me briefly outline what I imagine the exhibition halls of our national, Coptic, and Islamic art museums could be like. A hall showing a certain historic period may have decorations demonstrating the social life of that period. The exhibits which would include mummies, statues, buildings and building materials, pottery, textiles, writings, metalwork, and weapons, would be arranged in such a way as to tell the complete story of the period. On a map would be shown the minerals used and places of mines and roads, and then the means of transport that carried these minerals from the mines. Also exhibited would be the different kilns used in metallurgy and making pottery, techniques of spinning and weaving, tools and machines, the chisels used in cutting stone and in carving; an analysis of these chisels could show the composition of their alloys and the analysis of the dyes used in making fabrics, their chemical origin. Musical instruments, birds and animals, crops, money, etc., would all play a part in provoking this interest.

Historic buildings are usually incomplete. They do not give the visitor a true impression. If dioramas are used to show the buildings as they actually looked during the period, the story becomes clearer.

Again, musical instruments, garments, rings, and bracelets when shown in showcases have no meaning. If, however, there are small theatres on which plays, music using ancient instruments, dances, and songs are performed by friends of the museum and members of the museum club wearing similar clothes and using models of ancient ornaments, the museum will be a very attractive place and visitors of all tastes and interests will have a better and deeper understanding of everything. In other words, the museum will be a true, effective educational institute.

2. Is it possible to have a complete museum or an ideal museum?

It is nearly impossible to have in one museum, especially in museums of science and technology, exhibits to satisfy the needs of all. Many think that the value of the museum rests in the number of exhibits and in the size of its

exhibition areas. But perhaps a small number of exhibits well prepared and arranged will give a better idea. These, if so, will pave the way of the visitor for further reading and deeper study.

One should not be proud of a large number of exhibits, or crowded exhibits which give the terrible sensation that the museum is merely a store. But, one can be proud of the clear story that a carefully selected exhibit will give. One should stick to well-defined educational aims. In one of the biggest agricultural museums in the world one can see collections of birds, not scientifically arranged, collections of insects, collections of rocks and minerals, and collections of animal horns of the same species. What is the aim here? What is the idea behind these collections mixed one with the other? One can understand that such collections would find a place in a natural history museum. But only birds and insects which have a relationship to agriculture either by helping increase production or destroying crops can find a place in the agricultural museum. There is no place for minerals and rocks as minerals and rocks, but only as part of the composition of the soil. The horns have no meaning even in a natural history museum but some can be included under a heading 'How animals protect themselves against enemies'.

The world is always changing and changing rapidly, social needs change accordingly and what looks interesting at one time will not necessarily appear so in future. There should be special areas set aside in the museum to present whatever new knowledge appears since progress in science and technology is moving very quickly. Research work should not be shielded in laboratories but should be interpreted to the public in order that it might fully live in its own time and be prepared for the future. Continuous preparation of new exhibits is needed and until these new exhibits are prepared, lectures with short films and coloured slides on important current events should take place.

Exhibits

Exhibits differ from one kind of museum to another. Science museums' exhibits are preferably the simple, push-button type, self explanatory, sectioned, full of life with lights and attractive colours. Explanations when needed should be of few words, the visitor has no time to stand reading for long. Perhaps some have heard of the story told about a museum which used to write thousands of words to explain one exhibit. Someone had written below one of these descriptions: 'Those who come to the last word please pay a visit to the director's office for a prize of £10.' In two years nobody had paid that visit.

From the educational point of view one learns and understands if one has the chance to actively practise something. If such a chance is given to the visitor to discover all or some of the knowledge about the ideas the exhibit shows, the result will be far more beneficial. If the exhibit deals with disease, the life-cycle of insects, or the structure of plants, the presentation may be made in plastics with coloured transparencies. No word is written to show names or structures, but there are buttons and words beside them. The visitor looks for the part he wishes to know more about, pushes its button and the

part is illuminated. Following a group of such exhibits there is a board with questions and answers arranged haphazardly. The visitor is invited to test the knowledge he has gained. One pushes the button of the first question and the question is illuminated, if then he chooses the right answer and pushes its button, and the answer is correct, he hears a sound, the sound of applause for instance. Experiments with this type of exhibit have shown great success. Crowds of visitors, schoolchildren, adults, and parents try to discover knowledge for themselves and test their retention of that knowledge. This takes some time, but fruitful time, the visitor coming back time and time again to gain more and more knowledge.

Where to build the museum exhibits

It appears that exhibits should be built in museum workshops at all times under the inspection of specialists and educationalists. But the building of so many exhibits takes a lot of museum time. It is supposed that scientific, industrial, agricultural, and health organizations should take part in spreading scientific knowledge, and give the necessary and full information about their important national projects. Science museums are in fact only the mirrors that reflect the activities and progress of a country. Accordingly these other organizations should work in complete co-operation with the museum and build some exhibits in their own workshops. They should also co-operate by giving necessary facilities to circulate duplicates of exhibits to different towns and villages. In Egypt a Supreme Council for the science museum has been recently created under the presidency of His Excellency the Minister of Scientific Research. The members of this council are responsible people representing different organizations who plan co-operation between museums and their organizations and follow up the results.

In science museums some exhibits should be permanent. These are exhibits which show scientific principles since these principles do not change; however, new ones can be added. Such exhibits are preferably made of durable materials although there is need to change the method of presentation so that the eyes do not become weary of seeing the same thing for too long a time. Other exhibits should change continuously and be replaced by those which meet changing social or community needs. They should not be expensive to construct.

No perfect development or progress can be achieved if a country is completely or partially isolated from other countries. Science, art, and culture are universal, they have no particular home. The exhibits therefore should not be restricted to reflect national characteristics but should show the art, culture, and scientific and technological achievements of other countries. There should be co-operation between museums of the world either in exchanging exhibits or in the setting up of temporary exhibitions.

Evaluation of exhibits

We should keep in mind that exhibits are not built to satisfy those who design them but to satisfy the interests of the general public. They must therefore be

under continuous revaluation. We must listen to what the visitor has learned and understood and evaluate what has been seen, listened to or experienced. Continuous questionnaires should be evolved for this and according to the results displays should constantly be remodelled.

How to get the museum services to reach other communities where there is no museum

Although the population is concentrated in the big cities there are others in small towns and villages who have the same right to equal opportunities in museum educational services. In Egypt we have created science centres in some provinces which act as science museums and from which light exhibitions, kits, and scientific films circulate to the nearby villages and towns. It is hoped that these centres will cover all provinces in the near future.

Museums can also prepare television programmes which may include films to show the museum objects.

The museum personnel

This very long introduction in examining the educational role of the modern museum brings us to our main topic, for:

Who is going to follow the results of scientific research, digest the information and interpret it in a simple, clear, understandable way?

Who is going to create the designs for attractive exhibits which simplify facts and ideas and who will execute them and give them life?

Who is going to carry out studies of social change and new needs, both national and international, so as to keep pace with these changes and satisfy the needs?

Who is going to be in continuous contact with the various communities, and put into effect museum projects which interest the members of these communities?

The character, behaviour, and interest of children change as they grow; who is going to follow these changes and interests and conceive methods of display parallel to those changes?

Who is going to evaluate the different services given by the museum and offer new ideas to improve exhibits and methods of display? The answer is clear. The museum personnel.

But how can they carry out all these responsibilities. A museum can employ curators, educationalists, designers, and public relation officers, but how can they co-ordinate their thinking and co-operate in bringing scientific, social, historic, and artistic ideas and facts to the public in the way they should be? How can they be trained in such a wide field?

In fact it is essential that all museum personnel should have an educational basis. In Egypt many of those who have a Bachelor of Science degree join a Faculty of Education for one year and from these we choose our museum

personnel. Most of them are sent abroad to visit other museums to seek different ideas and on coming back they remodel these ideas to meet community needs.

Faculties of education give specialist courses in museology not only to provide museums with trained personnel but also to provide schools with teachers who have some grounding which will enable them to make good use of museum exhibits in their teaching. Teachers are also prepared for school museum exhibits and planning programmes for clubs and outdoors activities. A trial course began this year in the Faculty of Education at El Azhar University.

It is well known that there are some countries who have no museums, or museums which are not effective. These museums have to be developed to meet the present and future needs of the community. Some countries have the space and money to do this but lack the experience.

Icom has had and will continue to have an effective and practical role to play in helping countries create new museums and develop existing ones. Museums are now growing in importance. Universities train specialists in important but narrow fields and their services are restricted to small groups of citizens, on the other hand museums are the universities which prepare the general public for life with its unlimited problems. They act as a link between the results of research and the needs of the community. They are the educationally effective institutions which prepare youth for their future responsibilities in scientific research. They are an important part of a healthy environment for man of the future.

It is proposed that:

1. A working group be set up from chosen experts in museums. Its duties can be summarized as:

a. Studying the needs of museums in different countries.

b. Suggesting suitable exhibits for a museum or a group of museums and giving ideas for improving the museum.

c. Preparing designs for the proposed exhibits.

d. Preparing practical training courses for museum personnel.

2. Regional centres should be selected where training courses can be given. Through these courses exhibits can be built for the participating museums.

3. If this is not possible financially a central training unit should be created.

4. Developed countries must be persuaded to prepare temporary exhibitions which could circulate in developing countries. This should be done in co-ordination with Icom and Unesco, enabling as many countries as possible to participate in each exhibition. The exhibition should preferably be accompanied by experts who would guide a seminar in building up and developing museums. Scientific film-shows are also needed.

The training of museum educators

Harry S. Parker III

Harry Parker, a qualified museologist from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, is Vice-Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in charge of education. He is particularly concerned to see the establishment of a full-time course at university level for museum educators.

In museum circles in the USA today, we are becoming used to a revolution of rising expectations from a strange new breed of museum professionals proclaiming that education is the key role in the twentieth-century museum. They are still working out of basement offices for the most part, but they have a shine of the future around them, because from their bailiwick seems to come the beginnings of answers to nagging questions like, 'Are museums useful to society at large?', or 'Can museums relate to the needs of the average man?' These new museum men lay claim to a new expertise not about objects, but about people. But, behind the glossy surface, the new men are uneasy, more often than not, and defensive. Expectations are high, but ambition is outstretching self-confidence.

Now seems the right time for museum educators in the USA to become serious and to realize that this moment in the sun is the time to create more solid underpinnings for a profession, to attract a sure and steady flow of talent, to develop a literature, and open up communication routes to one another.

At the heart of the identity problem of museum educators is the absence of common training. I know several curators who shifted into education jobs, several more schoolteachers who switched; there are a few business administrators and perhaps a film-maker or two, but I can think of not a single head of an American education department who was formally trained to be one.

Young people beginning their work in museums as lecturers, planners of educational exhibitions, administrators of programmes with the schools, or advisors and even managers of community projects and mobile museums, are

commonly thrust on their own resources to figure out what to do, or are asked to perpetuate programmes that no longer make sense. Only rarely do they have the chance to learn from creative and experienced museum educators, largely because so few such people exist, or to draw upon the growing body of knowledge about education in general, largely because there is neither the incentive nor the time to do so.

Yet, increasingly, both non-verbal and non-formal education of the kind museums are able to offer is an experience that many professional educators and critics of education are calling for today, at almost every level, from early childhood to the adult years. Museum educators are already in considerable demand; they will be even more so as museums take on a larger role as part of the nation's whole educational resource. It is time for museum educational staffs to be as well qualified and trained for their jobs as the best educators anywhere.

At the Metropolitan Museum we are considering a proposal to establish a museum education training centre. Such a centre would be designed to train both young people and more experienced educators as employees and directors of community centres, neighbourhood museums, community art projects, as well as educational programmes in large urban museums themselves.

A proposed course of study

Since museum education as a field of study is still not well formulated, and since most museum educational programmes that go beyond the lecture and guided tour are still relatively experimental, a course of training for museum education should be based not so much on the transmission of information as on the encouragement of independent inquiry.

In his book, *The Sacred Grove*, Dillon Ripley notes that museums ought to have a special attraction for students of education and that 'one of the most cogent subjects for inquiry' within them should be 'the study of the awakening of interest'. He goes on to say:

> At the root of most of our troubles as human beings is the lack of any sort of interest at all except for self-preservation. Of what use are any of the proposed panaceas for the preservation of evolved civilization or the maintenance of cultures, if the majority of living people simply don't care? If the education industry does not create people who are interested in the world about them during their one single life, then education is, above all, a failure.
>
> I would contend that museums are the greatest available laboratory for studying the problem of how to create interest, and that this problem is central to our quest for survival as people.

To accept Ripley's challenge, that the museum is a 'laboratory for studying the problem of how to create interest', it is proposed here that the

method of inquiry for a museum education training course consist of a series of laboratory experiments, conceived and conducted by the students, covering a variety of educational situations both within the museum and outside it. The experiments would be undertaken within a general framework of seminars, tutorials, observation, and participation.

The training programme would proceed on the assumption that most of the trainees would have sufficient grounding in art, art history, the humanities, or social studies and similar related subjects so that the substantive content of their experiments could be researched by the students and would not require special course work. Particular attention, however, would be given to filling out trainees' experience in these areas:

1. **Educational theory.** Those trainees without a background in education would be given a reading period early in the programme during which they would cover the best of contemporary thinking about the learning process and have a chance to discuss it with both educational theorists and experienced teachers. For all students the reading should include as well the new literature of museum education, and discussion of it should be arranged with educators in the museum field.

2. **Classroom observation.** The Metropolitan would make arrangements with a variety of elementary, intermediate, and high schools, community colleges, and vocational schools in the city for each trainee to spend up to six weeks with one class. The aim of this exercise would be, in part, to help the student without teaching experience to become familiar with the classroom process and, perhaps, its peculiar limitations; and, for all students, to prepare the ground and begin research on a long-term project or series of projects with an individual school, classroom subject, or a particular group of young people.

3. **Museum observation.** In order to establish the habit of analysing visitor reaction and to help develop a sensitivity to museum audiences, trainees would be asked to spend a period of time watching visitor behaviour in a museum, interviewing visitors in some depth, observing museum educational activities, and scrutinizing exhibitions from the viewpoint of different kinds of audiences. Research here, too, should form the basis of later experiments.

4. **Perception.** The study of how people see, what effect visual phenomena have on them, and how they can be made more visually sensitized is basic to all educational activity in a museum. Work now being done in this field at Yale and other universities should be studied by trainees in museum education, and experiments should be organized to discover how research in perception and visual education might best be applied to visitors' needs.

5. **Exhibition construction.** Each student should be given experience in conceiving and organizing educational exhibitions for use in a museum, a classroom, or a community centre. He should learn to devise simple

techniques for building exhibitions out of inexpensive materials, for putting across a theme or point, and for testing its reception.

6. Visual technology. Trainees would be asked to make a study of the use of such technical devices as films, filmstrips, slide tapes, and television cassettes in visual education and to work out at least one experiment in which these techniques are employed. Again, students would be expected to measure the results, perhaps comparing them with other kinds of educational methods, such as exhibitions, lectures, books, guided tours.

7. Testing and evaluation. Several weeks should be set aside during the training period, before students begin their experiments, to study techniques for measuring the results. These sessions might be conducted by representatives of such organizations as the Educational Testing Service in Princeton. The training here should be highly profession, and even innovative, so that the evaluations students learn to make of their own and other experimental programmes in museum education will begin to set new standards of programme measurement for museums throughout the country.

8. Community projects. Because nearly all museums have begun to take on programmes outside their walls in neighbourhoods sometimes far removed from the central collection, it is essential that trainees in museum education receive as much exposure to community work as they can be given. This would mean observing community projects in several other cities and analysing their results.

Trainees might also take up residence in an urban neighbourhood, as students in several schools of architecture are now doing, and studying at first hand the habits and cultural needs of the people living there. In addition, all students should be given experience working with the Metropolitan's mobile unit, 'Eye-Opener', as well as with its several other community projects.

The choice of trainees

In general, this kind of museum training programme, like others offered by museums of art, will probably be naturally attractive to students of art and art history. The administrators of the programme, therefore, will have to make a special effort to bring other kinds of students into it: teachers and students of education, graduates in the humanities and social sciences, students of architecture, and in some cases young people who have not earned college degrees but might be promising contributors to museum education programmes. The programme should also be open to museum personnel, experienced teachers, and other professionals interested in changing their career or an aspect of it.

Special efforts must be taken to attract members of minority groups into the programme. We will do so not only because it is morally necessary to integrate our profession, but because communication is the essence of

museum education and we observe that communication is more effective when racial identity between student to teacher is possible.

Staff

The programme would have no stable faculty, but would instead draw upon several kinds of experts who would conduct seminars, help students construct their experiments, and be available to the students and administrative staff for consultation. The head of an education department from a nearby museum, for example, might be asked to lead two or three seminars during a six-week course in perception. A highly professional community worker in a New York borough might be available for consultation over a term of six or eight months.

Since students would perform their work either independently or in teams of two or three, the continuity and co-ordination of the training programme would be invested primarily in a small, highly qualified administrative staff. It would be the responsibility of this group to control the course of student research, to assemble seminar leaders and consultants as they are needed, and to arrange the logistics of student movement from one project and one location to another.

Accreditation

We are exploring various ways to offer accreditation for the programme, quite probably through a relationship with one or more universities. It may be, too, that other museums will wish to co-operate on the programme by accepting internships and providing other learning opportunities. From the student's point of view, the biases of one institution might possibly be corrected by exposure to the programme of another.

At this international conference one is reminded that basic training for museum educators is likely to be a problem not only in the USA. I am sure that to a greater or less degree, it exists as a problem around the world. In the Metropolitan's programme there must be provisions for visiting lecturers from abroad and, of course, fellowships for foreign students. International exchange in this area would seem to me even more feasible than international exhibitions and art exchanges.

I would venture that museum educators probably have more common concerns around the world's museums than even their curatorial colleagues. It is our *strength* that our work is constantly susceptible to improvement and change, while all care must be taken to assure that the work of art remains unchanged. For this reason, we must look to each other for ideas and examples and learn enough about our audience and ourselves that we do not hesitate to claim museum education as our profession.

The teacher and trainee-teacher

Helmut Holtzhauer

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The problem

Co-operation with teachers is one of the most effective of the many forms of contact into which museums enter for the purpose of placing their treasures and the live force of museum workers at the disposal of society. The teacher is in close contact with youth and thus, to put it simply, with the future. He is responsible for much, if not all, of the knowledge and ability of the young people entrusted to his care. In small and out-of-the-way places the teacher, together with the engineer and the doctor, represents the intelligentsia, and the stimulation of after-school further training and the content and form of the intellectual life of his community is generally part of his duties. If it is possible to persuade the teacher that the museum is indispensable for him and for the pupils entrusted to him if they are to expand their knowledge and keep abreast of the times, then one of the most important stimuli towards linking the museum with daily life has been brought into play.

But there are two problems to be considered here: the museum must be one of the partners ready and willing to co-operate and the teacher the other. Tradition, habits, and circumstances are not such as to permit us to assume a symbiosis or at least co-operation as a matter of course or as an assured point of departure for our remarks. In our case it is expected of museum workers that they supply teachers with everything they need to make visits to a museum as fruitful as possible. The museum worker becomes the teacher's trainer; we shall therefore make a few remarks about the museum here.

The first question we must ask is whether the museum occupies an assured place both within the system of science and education of society and also in the intellectual life of the community or territory in which it is situated, or

whether it stands outside. I also consider it as standing outside if society is organized in such a way that the conventions, previous education, daily habits, and position in life of the mass of the population in practice preclude visiting and taking advantage of the museum, or if the number of museums is so small that the distance to be travelled and the expense involved keep the majority away from them. In the German Democratic Republic there are more than 600 museums of many kinds, although there is still much to be done in the arrangement, organization, and distribution of these. Eighteen million visits to museums were recorded in 1970–with a total GDR population of 17 million. This appears to me noteworthy in this connection. The museum has long been an important factor in the system of science and education in the GDR and its importance is steadily increasing.

The position of museums and the public interest shown in them depends primarily upon what they contain, upon the way in which they exhibit their treasures and upon their own activities. The better a museum satisfies the scientific and aesthetic needs of the people of our day the easier it is to establish a social contact. Now the term 'people of the day' is so ambiguous that opposites and even things which are mutually exclusive can be understood by it. I think of people of our day as the socially decisive mass of working people who determine the future of mankind: workers, farmers, and intellectuals who have also become aware of their role in history. These are the people the museums must cater for, whose interest they must win.

This relationship depends on the awareness of the working people on the one hand and on the awareness of museum workers on the other. The museum worker must be at the top of his profession and must feel a political need to work with and for the working people in all fields from research to general education. Marx once said that a person who had the privilege of doing scientific work also had the duty to spread this scientific knowledge and to place it at the disposal of human progress. Progress, stagnation, or retrogression depend very largely upon the character of the situation in which a society, a country, or a people finds itself. Society will pay the attention to science and education, embodied by the museum, which accords with that situation. The socialist society of the GDR devotes close attention to museums and promotes them to the best of its ability and possibilities, so that very favourable conditions exist for a partnership between museums and teachers.

It is easy to see in the light of these remarks that the question of co-operation between the museum and the teacher, the museum and the public, cannot be dealt with in the abstract but only concretely, and that the answer to the questions put forward depends upon the social order, upon the stage of historical development reached in a country, upon the status of the museum, and upon the two partners in their relationship as teacher and trainee-teacher.

The task

The museum wishes to expand the scope of its effectiveness, the teacher to give his lessons vividness and to add to them. The partners meet in their efforts. Does this mean that the content of their intentions coincides from the outset? This cannot be assumed. The museum worker's point of departure is his museum's subject of research; he is a natural scientist, a technician, an ethnographer, a historian, or a literary scholar. He tries to deal with current problems in his field of science through his material and he wants to pass on the results of his work to others. He prepares a plan for this passing on of information which includes the most varied forms of communication of knowledge and also of aesthetic enjoyment.

The teacher, whose subject is also a natural or a social science, has a teaching plan, an exactly worked-out syllabus and timetable, and he wants to prepare himself better and in greater detail to fulfil this timetable, or he wants to offer his pupils more than lessons alone permit. Thus the museum is for him a further training centre, a centre which offers him the opportunity to catch up with the latest research results, which in its turn improves his lessons, and which is also a training centre for pupils. In practice, school lessons cannot be used for visits to museums, although if the museum is in the neighbourhood a free afternoon may be used for this purpose, but the time allowed for excursions is available for museum visits and demonstrating on practical objects what cannot be fully dealt with or illustrated during lessons.

The two plans, that of the museum worker and of the teacher, must now be co-ordinated, for they are of course not identical. The school syllabus is laid down by the Ministry of Education, the training plan of the museum by the museum worker; this plan must take two factors into account: broadening the teacher's scope of vision and advanced training for lessons. In both cases it is necessary to check up on the suitability of exhibits and installation and to have these available. An example taken from a museum of the history of literature and biography may illustrate this. In the autumn of 1971 Goethe's *Faust* is to be dealt with in the syllabus for the tenth year of polytechnical high school in the GDR. What could be more important for a Goethe Museum than to provide teachers with a knowledge of various new aspects under which this work is seen by us today and to give them a graphic picture of this to supplement lectures and reading?

For this we make use of the most important means at our disposal: the annual summer course for teachers. About two hundred teachers from all parts of the Republic attend this eight-day course. In addition to four lectures and seminars which throw light on the various aspects of the work, the course concentrates on discovering what the museum exhibits and what the objects and documents taken from the stores, archives, and library have to say on this subject.

Despite their knowledge of the human problems brought up in the tragedy, those who took part in the course were amazed at the vivid picture which emerged as soon as the work was not considered in isolation but in

connection with the culture and society of Goethe's century and when original evidence was brought forward in studying it. The drama now emerged in its timelessness and was thus taken out of a certain neutrality and restored to its original contemporaneity and partisanship. The work was revealed as a contemporary play and those who attended the course were impelled to consider which of its problems had already been solved and what remained urgent in our own times.

Thus one task of the museum today is to act as a further training centre for teachers. And the National Goethe Museum is in fact an institute recognized by the Ministry of Education for the teacher's optional postgraduate studies of German literature and culture from 1750 to 1850.

It is clear that teachers not only wish to expand their own knowledge, but they also expect to get advice on teaching methods. This is also taken into account to some extent. But above all, and this is the other task, the museum worker wants to enable teachers to acquaint pupils with the museum, its exhibits, and also its special characteristics.

The way

The example mentioned above leads us to the form of museum education to which we devote the closest attention–the teachers' holiday course. Between 100 and 200 teachers meet four times a year in Weimar to brush up and expand their knowledge of the history of classical German literature by visiting the museum and archives, libraries and research centres and taking part in their work. (I may perhaps assume that you know that the National Goethe Museum includes thirty museums and memorial centres devoted to the life and work of Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and other writers and to German culture between 1750 and 1850.) The ideal would be to give teachers inspiration in their thinking and their work through which they would be drawn into scientific work in various partial fields. But here we come up against limits which can so far hardly be exceeded.

The museum worker plans his syllabus for teachers mainly from three points of view: he wishes to put teachers in a position to move independently in the systematically arranged exhibition rooms and in the cultural history centres, mainly rooms–in their original state–in which the poets and thinkers lived and worked, and to understand in all aspects what the single objects and the ensemble have to tell us. In this way a teacher will be able to act as mentor to his pupils when he visits the museum with them. Nothing can be less useful than a visit to a museum by a group of children whose teacher knows no more than they do. The museum worker cannot bridge the gulf between exhibits and viewers as easily as would be desirable, because he is not familiar with the specific conditions, level of knowledge, degree of receptivity and staying power and the like–all circumstances which must be taken into consideration. But the teacher is familiar with all this.

Advanced training constitutes the other part of the museum worker's plan. He must be familiar with the level of education and knowledge of the teacher,

he must know where he trained–usually a university–and must keep himself up to date with the help of the appropriate literature and through attending the necessary consultations. He does this, too, as member of the Institute for Teachers' Postgraduate Training. The excellently equipped library and especially the studios for art and literature and for the natural sciences (Goethe, as a natural scientist in many fields, was in the vanguard of the natural science revolution of the early eighteenth century) provide an opportunity to give a vivid picture of the epoch and what was going on at that time experimentally through the demonstration of rare and extremely valuable documents.

We attach special importance to these studios because they make it possible to do intensive work in groups of about twenty. These groups also visit the rooms in the museum which have the most to impart on the subject under consideration, so as to study on the spot the origin and effect, content and form of a work of art or literature under the special influence of the museum. There is enough printed material available for everyone attending to have the necessary literature in front of him when he sits down on his folding chair.

The third part of the plan includes all aspects of didactics and method. What can and must one demand of a pupil when he visits a museum? What accords with the interest and knowledge of the different age-groups? Where is it possible to link up with things he already knows, from lessons or from daily life? A walk through a museum is tiring. A rapid decline in concentration can be observed when a museum is taken room by room, exhibit by exhibit, no matter how well the collections are arranged from the point of view of variety and artistry. It is therefore necessary to make a very careful choice. But the best thing is to encourage pupils to be independent, that is, to give them the chance to arrive at their own conclusions step by step. This also applies to the teacher, of course, and that is why we attach such importance to the study group. The teacher not only works out his own progress through the museum but also the methods of passing on what he has seen and learned in the classroom or when he takes pupils through the museum.

One of the most successful ways of finding out what has been achieved is the history of literature diary or, at a higher level, the end-of-the-year essay. Over a longer period of time the pupil collects material in pictures or in writing–and for this purpose there are available hundreds of postcards, slides, small charts, and guides. Catalogues are generally beyond the needs or horizon even of pupils in higher forms. But even students and teachers can make use of this material to advantage; this represents the third stage in the system of introduction into the field of museum science. The first and basic stage is the choice and evaluation of the message of exhibits, which must be characteristic. The second stage leads to the ways and means of presentation which make a museum a museum and not simply a collection of more or less relevant cultural exhibits of objects. Included here is the writing of texts to describe the exhibits (which seems to us only suitable in the arranged museum rooms, not in the original interiors). Texts must be short. At the

entrance to each room there is a short account of its place within the whole, but it must be sufficient to inform the thinking visitor adequately. The guide or catalogue satisfies more advanced needs and provides detailed knowledge.

Parallel to these three stages runs another system with which teachers are familiarized. It begins with slide or film lectures which either provide a general survey of the nature of the museum in question or welcome the visitor. Content and form coincide with the intention of the slide series or film.

The slide (more than the film, which is too much of a technical instrument) is also one of the most important aids in the museum's educational plan; in the museum of history of literature gramophone records are also used. The slide makes it possible not only to take a single object out of its context, and also to concentrate on a single detail which could not otherwise be recognized so clearly, it can also show the context, the general view, which is so important. Generally speaking; personal explanations especially intended for teachers are also given. Co-ordination of slides and explanations has the advantage that a teacher is provided with a model on which to base his own lectures or explanations of the same slide series; the museum thus has an additional, long-distance effect.

Mobile exhibitions specially prepared for the use of teachers (and, of course, other categories of educators, youth leaders, etc.) are extremely helpful. By mobile exhibitions we mean small exhibitions on restricted subjects which are easy to handle. Numbered charts 60 X 45 cm in size are packed in five cases; the charts contain the most important information, in text and pictures, about the subject in question. They can be set up or hung in any classroom. They help the teacher to prepare a visit to a museum or analyse it afterwards. The museum worker who sends his museum travelling in this way need have no fear for his exhibits, since they are, of course, only good reproductions of the actual objects in his museum. A small accompanying pamphlet provides further information. Slide lectures and mobile exhibitions are amongst the most popular aids used by teachers. But smaller museums of an allied kind eagerly take advantage of these exhibitions to supplement their own exhibits and other activities.

Less often, and only in Weimar, educational exhibitions are held. These are mainly exhibitions specially prepared for teachers which are not only the results of a long period of development, showing for instance the best achievements of an epoch, but also provide visitors with an insight into the origin of single works, into social interrelations and processes of development within a specific period and country. Thus we are at present working on an exhibition dealing with art and literature in Germany at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The group working on this proceeds from two angles: they ask themselves what visitors, especially teachers, expect of this exhibition, what previous knowledge can be assumed and what must be presented clearly and convincingly and they also consider what objects can best be used in explanation. Great value is attached to sketches in the art of this period for example, but these works can hardly satisfy us today

Fig. 1. A visiting group of students in front of Goethe's house in Weimar. (*Photograph: National Research and Memorial Centre of Classical German Literature, Weimar.*)

and they have certainly contributed to the derogatory remarks about 'cold Hellenism' and the unimaginative nature of the art of that period. But if one recalls that these folios were primarily thought of as aids to memory by the numerous travellers to Italy and that the problem of contour played an unusually important role at that time—influenced by Winckelmann—things take on an entirely different aspect. The fact that, as so often happens, what was thought of as serving a special purpose and fitting into a special context soon became an end in itself and thus lost its original meaning is quite another thing.

Or let us take the invention of the lithograph and its role both in the distribution of works of graphic art and in the reproduction of paintings. A technique here took the place of the copper-plate which not only opened up

new artistic possibilities but also, and primarily, satisfied the needs of the masses. The lithograph opened up the world of art to new strata of the population. Although this process appeared to have its roots only in technique, it brought about a greater change in art than the invention of the copper-plate–in a negative sense, too, since it smoothed the way to trivial art. The literature of that period is full of reviews of lithographs and remarks on the prospects of the new technique. One need only think of the lithographs of Strixner in Munich, which made Dürer's drawing for Maximilian's prayerbook known to a large number of people, of the effect of the lithographs by Speckter and Herterich of Hamburg, or recall the article by Heinrich Meyer 'On lithography and lithograph leaves' which appeared in Goethe's journal *On Art and Antiquity*.

Contexts of this kind, the position in the history of art and the cause and effect of art works, are stressed in the educational exhibitions. In order to achieve the best possible effect, experts and educationalists already work together on planning the exhibition. Here we mean not only schoolteachers

Fig. 2. In the studio of art and literature. (*Photograph: National Research and Memorial Centre of Classical German Literature, Weimar.*)

but also museum workers entrusted with the task of working with teachers and with visitors in general. The National Goethe Museum in Weimar gathered together a group of colleagues fifteen years ago which, following a German tradition, is called the 'Arbeitsgruppe Volksbildung'–general education team. The group consists of eight museum educators some of whom are literary and art experts and some former teachers particularly interested in museum work who were trained in the museum itself. This team also organizes the teachers' holiday courses and its members act as mentors there; it also conducts all other educational events.

Permit me to mention a few of these educational events–those for which educationalists outside the museum are enlisted and prepared. This is mainly a question of studio work. The National Goethe Museum has individual studios for art and literature and, to correspond with Goethe's achievements in these fields, for the natural sciences, philosophy, and politics. These studios contain exhibition stores and modern aids, for example physical instruments to demonstrate phenomena of Goethe's chromatics which, as we know, was written for artists. The playing of records and showing of pages of graphic art and other exhibits out of Goethe's own or later cultural history collections provide many opportunities to penetrate into a cosmos which bears Goethe's name.

Apparatus which can be used independently is of course also available in the natural science studio.

Consultations and seminars, a form of education familiar to teachers in the GDR, are also held in the studio rooms, insofar as the museum rooms themselves are not more suitable for this purpose. In an effort to get schoolchildren to take as active a part as possible in the work, they are encouraged to ask questions, even of a complex nature. If these questions on some special point in literature, art or the general culture of the period dealt with by the National Goethe Museum are sent in in advance, a museum worker prepares the answers as fully and as graphically as possible with the help of contemporary documents.

It is clear from this that the correspondence with teachers in all fields and on all problems is voluminous. But neither teachers nor museum mentors would care to dispense with this. Mentors have at their disposal the circulars printed from time to time and the monthly information bulletin issued for the Friends of the National Research and Memorial Centres, but this is not enough in view of the manifold contacts between the museum and teachers, between the museum and the public. Museum workers will therefore remain in contact through letters and personal talks, just as they are frequently invited to give lectures. But time is limited and anyone who wants to give must also be able to take, that is, the museum worker who is an educator must have time and opportunity to develop himself and arrive at new ideas and insight in his field of work. The teacher of teachers must also learn. You can see that from this point of view, too, the museum offers an extremely interesting and inexhaustible field of work of its own kind which museum directors should never tire of cultivating.

Results

What is interesting now, of course, is the question of results. It is not possible to give a complete answer, since this would call for more comprehensive questioning than can at present be undertaken. The figures which I shall give are also incomplete, since they only cover a fraction of the people concerned.

The teachers' holiday courses which I have stressed as the most important link in the chain between museum and teacher and thus to young people, too, take place four times a year during school holidays, in Stages I to III and in the form of a summer course. The courses take place parallel to the compulsory courses conducted by the Ministry of Education, and are classified by the authorities as follows:

> This optional further training course is conducted on the basis of programmes coordinated with the Central Institute for Further Training of Teachers. There are courses lasting up to 6 days or one-day courses, which take place mainly in the winter and summer holidays. Teachers interested should take advantage of these opportunities for optional further training if they are not taking part in the system of further training in their schools. Attendance must be approved by the Head of the School and by the district education officer and should be arranged by direct communication with the appropriate institution.

The result is that about 100 to 120 teachers, that is, 400 to 500 each year, attend the courses. So far 4,800 teachers, almost all of whom came to Weimar in four successive years, have attended the courses and subsequently brought their pupils, mostly tenth- to twelfth-year pupils, to visit Weimar. A certificate is presented to teachers who complete the course.

It is interesting to hear from those who have taken part how they make use of the museum as a result of the course. A small percentage already had contacts with the museum during studies (here we do not mean simply a visit to the museum but systematic professional co-operation with it). After the Stage I course 69 per cent of those attending made use of the museum for their work, after the Stage II course 72 per cent and after the Stage III course 89·2 per cent. This means that only 11 per cent of the teachers who took part in the Stage III course did not pursue close contact with the museum.

This satisfactorily rapid progress and also the point of departure can be explained by the fact that groups of students are constantly at work, for weeks at a time, doing the practical work connected with their studies. They are given a great deal of educational work to do, especially in connection with events intended primarily for young people—such as 'Easter in Weimar', 'Youth Days in Weimar' or holiday visits to the museums. For each of these events about 2,000 young people visit Weimar for a week at a time in order to make a more detailed study of the museums of literary history and the memorial centres.

Museum workers also devote a considerable amount of their time to about twenty-three consultations held each month. Orders for printed matter,

which can be ordered direct or through the bookshops, can also be regarded as the result of co-operation with teachers. We may add that, since the National Goethe Museum is a department of the National Research and Memorial Centres, the work done by other departments of this institution also flows into contact with teachers and other sections of the public, through the *Library of German Classics* with its 4½ million volumes or the research studies published in the *Contributions to German Classical Literature*. There is a symbiosis of museum, research institute, library, and archives in Weimar, which gives museum work and its public influence its special, perhaps unique character.

7 Conclusions

Ulla Keding Olofsson, Coordinateur de la Conférence

Ulla Keding Olofsson, spécialiste d l'éducation, est Chef du Département de réalisation d'expositions au 'Riksutställningar' (Service d'expositions itinérantes du Gouvernement suédois) à Stockholm. Comme coordinateur d'Icom 71, elle a joué un rôle actif dans la liaison entre les rapporteurs de la Conférence durant la préparation de leurs rapports, et a dirigé les séances de travail qui suivirent leur présentation. Elle est membre du Comité international de l'Icom pour l'éducation et l'action culturelle et membre du Conseil Exécutif de l'Icom.

Si l'on veut résumer les quatre journées de travail d'Icom 71, à Grenoble, on retiendra l'impression de vitalité donnée par la contribution aussi bien des participants que des orateurs. Faite pour la première fois sous forme de brefs commentaires généralement suivis de projections de diapositives ou de films, la présentation des rapports, aux réunions du matin, a fourni une bonne base aux discussions de celles de l'après-midi. Par ailleurs, tous les délégués avaient pu étudier les textes à débattre, distribués en versions française et anglaise avant les séances de travail. D'autres innovations apportées aux méthodes de travail ont également permis, aux séances de l'après-midi, des discussions fructueuses: les séances d'information avec projection de diapositives ou de films, que tous les participants pouvaient tenir et qui donnaient l'occasion de débats libres; Info-Expo, l'exposition 'Faites-le vous même', où, sur de grands panneaux de carton blanc, chacun pouvait afficher des informations concernant son musée, ses problèmes professionnels, poser des questions, échanger des idées avec d'autres, prendre des contacts avec des collègues d'autres pays, etc. Le troisième élément de ces discussions d'après-midi, élément que reflètent et ces conclusions et la résolution 1, a été apporté par les orateurs de premier plan invités officiels à la tribune. Leurs discours, moins concis que les rapports et les diverses interventions, n'entraient pas dans le cadre des débats des séances de travail, en vertu du règlement de la Conférence; leurs thèmes n'en furent pas moins l'objet de discussions de caractère officieux à la demande de nombreux participants.

La neuvième Conférence Générale de l'Icom avait pris pour thème général de ses travaux 'Le musée au service des hommes, aujourd'hui et demain – Le rôle éducatif et culturel du musée.' D'autre part, comme on s'en aperçoit à la lecture de ce compte rendu d'Icom 71, chaque journée était consacrée à un thème particulier donné par l'un des orateurs officiels dans son discours et treize sujets différents ont fait l'object d'études, par treize spécialistes de l'éducation et de l'action culturelle. On ne peut s'étonner si l'on retrouve dans un ensemble de treize communications d'experts traitant de divers aspects d'un même grand problème, certains retours sur un point particulier, certaines répétitions, mais, la façon personnelle de considérer les questions contrebalance, dans une grande mesure, cet inconvénient.

Pour des raisons d'ordre pratique, nous présenterons nos conclusions suivant une double perspective. Dans la première, s'inscrit le rôle éducatif du musée et les conséquences qui découleront de l'évolution prévisible des systèmes d'enseignement dans le monde entier; une société future, où l'éducation sera permanente, obligera à trouver les moyens d'intégrer les musées dans le système d'enseignement; elle leur procurera ainsi les ressources économiques nécessaires pour satisfaire une demande croissante des services qu'ils sont appelés à rendre. Dans la seconde perspective, nos conclusions se rapporteront au musée, centre d'action culturelle. Les grands changements que l'on constate dans la société ont amené à soulever trois questions essentielles au cours des séances de travail: faut-il nécessairement donner une nouvelle définition de la mission du musée? Devons-nous concevoir des méthodes de présentation nouvelles pour atteindre un public nouveau ? Avons-nous besoin d'un nouveau type de musée ou, peut-être, d'un intermédiaire entre le musée et la société?

Le renouvellement du système d'éducation dans de nombreux pays a eu pour conséquence de réduire sinon d'écarter nombre d'obstacles d'ordre pratique sur lesquels achoppaient souvent les efforts tentés pour une collaboration entre le musée et l'école. Des horaires plus souples permettent aux musées d'étaler sur toute la durée de l'année scolaire les visites d'élèves. Les programmes d'enseignement font une place à des sujets intégrés à un ensemble de connaissances relatives à un centre d'intérêt et, par là, mettent en jeu des méthodes permettant une plus large utilisation des techniques muséales. La visite ne se fait pas par 'classe' de 30 à 40 élèves, mais soit par petites équipes de 4 ou 5 d'entre eux, soit par grands groupes de 100 à 150 enfants, selon les cas. Les nouvelles méthodes exigent de plus en plus des procédés auxiliaires d'enseignement bien adaptés à leurs besoins et des équipements afin de permettre une participation active de l'enfant au travail scolaire, des petites enquêtes en utilisant diverses sources d'informations, et même la conduite de travaux de recherche élémentaires. On peut par exemple mesurer les conséquences pour les musées de cette évolution de l'enseignement en lisant l'inquiétante description que fait le rapport Belmont, publié en 1969 par l'Association des musées américains, d'une institution dont les ressources financières et le personnel ne s'accroissent pas en proportion avec la multiplication des services qui lui sont demandés. Cette

explosion de l'enseignement exige une révision des idées et des habitudes mentales non seulement des muséologues spécialistes des services éducatifs mais encore des hommes politiques. Comme en prend note l'Assemblée Générale de l'Icom dans sa Résolution 1, 'les musées ne bénéficient pas des ressources financières qui sont habituellement accordées aux institutions traditionnellement reconnues comme étant de caractère éducatif.'

Autre conséquence des changements sociaux et éducatifs dans la société: l'adoption par de nombreux pays d'un système d'éducation permanente fait éclater la notion selon laquelle le travail de l'enseignement ne s'adresse qu'à certains groupes d'âge. Cela est moins vrai que jamais.

Naturellement, les communications des spécialistes et les discussions qui les suivirent au cours d'Icom 71 montrent que ces tendances nouvelles se font moins sentir dans certains pays que dans d'autres. Il existe encore nombre de nations où le travail éducatif au sein même du musée reste le principal moyen d'action. Les méthodes traditionnelles, telles les visites guidées, devenues cependant, des 'dialogues guidés' ont encore leurs défenseurs et de nombreux participants, intervenant dans le débat, mettent en garde contre une généralisation trop hâtive en matière de méthodes d'éducation. Comme le disait l'un d'eux: 'nous devons résoudre les problèmes qui se posent dans nos pays'. On a également mis l'accent sur la valeur éducative de diverses activités créatrices, de caractère ludique et faisant pleinement jouer les facultés intellectuelles qui trouvent leur place naturelle au musée même. Nombre d'interventions ont souligné l'importance que présentent pour l'éveil et le développement de la perception chez l'élève la participation à la découverte et les conclusions personnelles qu'il peut tirer de ses observations. Dans cet ordre d'idées, on a reproché, y voyant un danger, la présentation dans les musées d'objets 'achevés', situés, expliqués, qui ne laissent à l'élève qu'un rôle passif de récepteur d'un enseignement pré-digéré. Toujours à propos de présentation, on a remarqué également la valeur éducative d'un rapprochement d'objets exposés qui permet à l'écolier d'établir toutes sortes de relations entre l'art et la science, le passé et le présent, des civilisations différentes, etc. et l'on a montré le grand l'intérêt d'expositions interdisciplinaires.

Mais dans de nombreux pays, quel qu'y soit le système scolaire en vigueur, le travail d'éducation réalisé par un musée reste, pour des raisons géographiques, inaccessible à une énorme majorité des groupes auquel il est destiné. Il devient alors absolument nécessaire de rechercher de nouveaux moyens pour utiliser le potentiel éducatif que représentent la richesse des collections du musée, la somme des connaissances amassées et la compétence de son personnel. A cet égard, l'un des participants, dans son intervention, a fait état des 'camps de vacances scientifiques' (fouilles, enquêtes, travaux de recherche sur le terrain) comme d'une activité permettant à des élèves de mener à bien leurs recherches et de constituer leurs collections. Au cours du débat, d'autres ont recommandé la sélection par les musées de quelques matériaux bruts et leur mise à la disposition des élèves qui les travailleraient sous la direction de professeurs dévoués et compétents, membres du

personnel du musée. Dans ce domaine, on a suggéré l'établissement de véritables programmes à long terme permettant à partir d'un projet pilote de créer autour du musée et sur son initiative un véritable artisanat concourant à l'économie de la communauté. Mais l'un de nos collègues qui a acquis une grand expérience en la matière, a mis en garde les participants contre les déceptions qu'apportent ces activités lorsqu'elles demeurent isolées et il a insisté sur l'importance du contrôle continu qu'elles nécessitent.

La réalisation et la mise en oeuvre de divers types de petites expositions itinérantes, de collections destinées à être prêtées aux écoles, aux organisations culturelles, de marmottes – inspirée de ces valises-présentoirs des commis-voyageurs – ont fait l'objet de maintes discussions aussi bien en séances de travail qu'en réunions d'informations avec projections ou non. En fin de compte, on a décidé de créer au sein du Comité pour l'éducation et l'action culturelle, un groupe de travail spécialement chargé de réunir puis diffuser des informations relatives à ce genre de mallettes d'exposition, l'importance d'échanges d'observations sur les expériences menées en ce domaine et même d'échanges d'expositions entre musées intéressés, ayant été soulignée à plusieurs reprises.

A propos d'échanges, on a suggéré de procéder à celui des spécialistes, dans le cadre des programmes de formation du personnel éducatif de musées; dans l'esprit des collègues qui exprimaient ce désir, une telle initiative est d'une réalisation bien plus facile que les échanges internationaux d'expositions. Il apparaît que la plupart des participants constatent entre les muséologues des services éducatifs de partout bien plus de points communs qu'il n'en existe entre les conservateurs de musées. D'aucuns affirment d'ailleurs que bien des problèmes concernant le rôle éducatif et culturel des musées seraient résolus si tous les muséologues possédaient une formation de pédagogue; en tout cas, ce serait le moyen de combler le fossé qui, a-t-on dit, existerait dans de nombreux musées entre les membres du personnel éducatif et les conservateurs.

La mission culturelle du musée, second des deux grands thèmes de la Conférence Générale de l'Icom, est étroitement liée à son rôle éducatif, ainsi que le souligne la résolution 1:

> par le fait d'accepter les fonctions essentielles de réunir, de conserver, d'étudier, et d'en présenter ensuite des résultats à la société, le musée a pour but la transmission de l'information et de la connaissance par tous les moyens dont il dispose, particulièrement de manière éducative, étant avant toute chose au service de l'humanité.

L'une des communications d'experts, traitant de cette mission, affirmait que le musée devait se transformer en instrument de promotion culturelle, lieu de réunion attrayant, centre d'influence. 'Mais pour qui? ,' demanda-t-on au cours des débats. Pour le 'visiteur de la Smithsonian'? L'habitué des musées? Selon une enquête de la Smithsonian, faite en 1968-9, le visiteur type des musées de cette institution est un blanc, d'âge mûr, d'un revenu supérieur à la moyenne, d'une instruction également supérieure à la moyenne

et qui va satisfaire son sens esthétique dans les musées, en famille ou avec quelques amis. Or, les participants estiment que le musée ne peut plus rester domaine réservé de l'élite intellectuelle, de l'amateur d'art fortuné, de l'érudit. Le public ne doit plus se limiter aux gens cultivés et possédant une aisance confortable, la résolution n° 1 le rappelle: '...le public qui visite le musée ne constitue pas nécessairement la totalité du public que le musée devrait servir.'

Les grands changements que connaît la société doivent entraîner des changements tout aussi grands dans les structures du musée, a-t-on dit. L'heure est venue de donner une nouvelle définition de sa mission, de renouveler les méthodes de présentation et, peut-être de créer un nouveau modèle de musée ou un lien intermédiaire entre lui et la communauté. On doit pouvoir attendre beaucoup plus de l'institution que ce qu'elle donne actuellement et de collecteur et conservateur passif d'objets, il lui faut se transformer en participant actif à la vie de la communauté en concevant des expositions présentant des problèmes d'actualité controversés, en faisant appel à l'histoire pour montrer les faits historiques en relation avec ceux du temps présent; ou encore en traitant de la contribution culturelle des minorités à la civilisation auxquelles elles appartiennent. On a maintes et maintes fois souligné l'importance d'une interaction permanente du musée et de son environnement qui se manifesterait par des activités dans le cadre de la vie quotidienne, professionnelle, plus particulièrement en collaboration avec des organismes tels que les syndicats, les organisations ouvrières en milieu urbain, les centres de promotion agricole et les coopératives en zone rurale.

Selon l'un de nos collègues, le musée pouvait être considéré comme un environnement en soi dans la mesure où il aide les gens à se situer dans l'espace et dans le temps à une époque où beaucoup d'entre eux ont perdu le secours de la religion, et cela parce que le musée offre à la fois une information sérieuse, un réconfort et une joie de l'esprit.

Au cours de ces journées de débats, on s'est demandé si l'accent mis sur les expositions permanentes ne se trouvait pas à l'origine des accusations de stagnation et de sclérose portées contre les musées. La nouvelle définition de la mission de l'institution ne conduirait-elle pas à réduire l'importance accordée à ces expositions à l'avantage des activités temporaires qui renouvellent plus fréquemment l'intérêt du public pour le musée? Le temps est-il venu de refuser un conformisme aveugle, stérile aux méthodes d'exposition des générations passées? Faut-il nécessairement utiliser tous les nouveaux moyens techniques que le progrès met à notre disposition afin d'attirer et de retenir l'attention des masses? Autant de questions sur lesquelles les opinions divergent.

On a avancé qu'au fond du problème se trouve, bien souvent, l'oubli de la nature essentielle du musée, moyen de communication sans équivalent qui dépend du langage des objets et des phénomènes démontrables. On a transformé les musées en centres culturels à buts multiples, en lieu de réunion de la communauté, en salles de concert, de bal, en clubs, en parcs d'attraction. L'objet a été dominé par les moyens de communication à la

mode si bien que l'on n'éprouve plus la nécessité d'un tête-à-tête avec lui. Puisque la discussion portait sur les expositions permanentes, on a signalé combien celles-ci se trouvaient déviées de leur but et on a voulu voir dans cette déformation de l'intention première qui présidait à leur réalisation, une conséquence du langage dit 'de conservateur'. A ce propos, on a estimé qu'il était aussi très important de trouver une langue muséale et des modes d'expression qui non seulement rendront compréhensibles au public les richesses du musée, mais encore feront prendre pleinement conscience au visiteur de la place qu'elles occupent dans sa vie. Un autre participant recommande l'appel à des spécialistes dans d'autres domaines, rédacteurs, 'rewriters', etc., ou les efforts des muséologues sentent trop souvent l'amateurisme. En conséquence, on a souligné dans la résolution 1 que 'trop de musées n'ont pas jusqu'à présent exploité l'immense potentiel d'expériences et de savoir que l'on peut trouver dans d'autres secteurs de la communauté'.

A propos des techniques de présentation, on a également dit que si le musée veut toucher ceux qui ne le fréquentent jamais, son effort ne doit pas seulement être matériel, mais aussi plus fondamental en se portant sur la nature même des expositions, qui exigent des modifications radicales. Plutôt que d'amener le public en puissance au musée, le musée doit aller à ce public. 'Donnons à nos expositions une forme plus simple, montrant des objets dont tous connaissent l'usage, le sens, parce qu'ils leur sont familiers, et prolongeant cette connaissance utilitaire par celles de l'histoire, de la culture, de l'économie et de la science qui ont abouti justement à les familiariser avec ces objets; en somme, à travers le banal et le quotidien aidons-les à voir le passé qui a fait leur présent, leur milieu, leur société: que l'exposition traite, par exemple, du problème de la sécurité dans les mines dans un pays de charbonnage, de l'hygiène publique dans un ghetto urbain, de la mécanisation de l'agriculture dans au village.' De telles expositions demandent toute une gamme de méthodes différentes dans leur conception: elles exigent de traiter le thème à la fois de manière exhaustive et avec un minimum d'éléments, un enchaînement simple, explicite et concis; elles doivent être solidement réalisées et cependant facilement transportables; enfin elles doivent frapper l'imagination et rester attrayantes.

On a présenté également les muséobus comme l'un des moyens d'atteindre de nouvelles couches de population. Mais cette formule est onéreuse et elle nécessite une étude minutieuse, la mise au point d'un programme général avant de se lancer dans une entreprise quelque peu ambitieuse. En tout état de cause, on l'a bien souligné, dans toutes initiatives en ces domaines, la décentralisation et la régionalisation prennent une très grande importance; parallèlement, tout aussi importante est la nécessité d'une politique coordonnée par un organisme central, qui peut, parfois, être d'Etat si celui-ci apporte une aide active à ces réalisations.

Si le musée ne peut rompre avec la tradition et s'engager dans une nouvelle voie, il sera sans doute amené à comprendre la nécessité d'un autre type de musée, une sorte de prolongement qui servira d'intermédiaire entre lui et la

communauté. Ce relais pourrait être par exemple ce que l'on a appelé les musées de quartier ou de communauté qui, dans un secteur limité, analysent les origines, l'histoire, les moeurs, les coutumes du genre humain que forment ses habitants, aident ceux-ci à prendre conscience de leur identité en tant que communauté et suscitent en eux les sentiments de solidarité et de fierté que tout être humain éprouve normalement à appartenir à une collectivité. Ces débats trouvent leur écho dans l'un des alinéas de la Résolution 1: 'Chaque musée doit accepter comme étant de son devoir de s'efforcer de servir le mieux possible l'environnement social au sein duquel il fonctionne'.

Permettez-moi en conclusion de citer les deux derniers paragraphes de la Résolution 1, résolution vivement débattue, légèrement révisée avant d'être adoptée par la dixième Assemblée Générale de l'Icom:

> L'Icom *demande instamment* à tous les musées:
>
> 1. De réexaminer à tout moment et sous tous leurs aspects les besoins du public qu'ils servent.
>
> 2. D'entreprendre avec l'aide de l'Icom un programme de recherches et d'études systématiques basées sur les résultats obtenus et de mettre au point des moyens d'action qui, dans l'avenir, permettront aux musées de remplir plus efficacement leur rôle éducatif et culturel au service de l'humanité.

Conclusions

Ulla Keding Olofsson, Co-ordinator to the Conference

Ulla Keding Olofsson, an educationalist, is head of the production department of 'Riksutställningar', the travelling exhibitions service of the Swedish Government in Stockholm. As co-ordinator to Icom 71, she played an active role in the liaison between the conference speakers during the preparation of the papers and guided the working sessions which followed their presentation. She is a member of the Icom International Committee for Education and Cultural Action, and a member of the Icom Executive Council.

In summing up the four days of working sessions during Icom 71 in Grenoble, the lasting impression is of the vitality which characterized the contributions from both speakers and participants. The speakers' presentations of their reports in the mornings–during this Conference for the first time in the form of short comments, usually followed by slide-shows or films–gave good starting points for the afternoon discussions. (The reports were distributed in English or French to all participants to be read by them before each working session.) Other innovations in working methods during the Grenoble days also made for fruitful afternoon discussions. These included the information-projection sessions, where all participants were welcome to show slides or films and engage in informal discussions, and Info-Expo, the do-it-yourself exhibition, in the form of large white cardboard screens, where everybody could put up information about their own institutions, ask questions, exchange ideas, and make contacts with colleagues from other countries. A third element in the afternoon discussions, which is reflected in the following conclusions and also in resolution no. 1 is the contributions made by the so-called keynote speakers, speakers who were invited to give longer formal speeches, which according to the rules of the Conference were not supposed to be discussed within the framework of the working sessions. On the demand of many participants, however, informal discussions were arranged in connection with these speeches.

The main theme for the Ninth General Conference of Icom 1971, was

'The Museum in the Service of Man, Today and Tomorrow–The Museum's Educational and Cultural Role'. There was also a theme for each day, introduced by the keynote speaker, as can be seen in this publication, and finally thirteen different subjects covered by thirteen specialists taken from the fields of 'education and cultural action'. There is a certain overlapping and repetition in these specialist papers as could be expected, but that is to a great extent balanced by the personal ways in which the subjects are treated.

The following conclusions are for practical reasons built up along two main lines. The first one is the museum's educational role, and the consequences which will result from the changes to be foreseen in educational systems all over the world: a future society of permanent education will make it necessary to find ways of integrating museums into the educational systems, thereby giving them economic resources to meet the growing demand for services. The second one is the museum's role as a centre for cultural action. Against the background of the great changes in society three main points were raised during the working sessions. Is there a need for redefining the mission of the museum? Do we need new presentation methods to reach a new public? Do we need a new type of museum, or perhaps an intermediary between the museum and society?

One consequence of the new educational systems introduced in many countries is that many of the practical obstacles which earlier faced many of the efforts for co-operation between museums and schools are more or less disappearing. Timetables are more flexible, allowing museums to spread school visits over the whole school year. School subjects are integrated into so-called project-areas, giving room for broader approaches to museum material. The unit 'school class' of 30-40 pupils is succeeded by smaller units of 4-5 or larger groups of 100-50 pupils, according to the teaching situation. The demand for new kinds of teaching aids adapted to the new teaching methods, concrete material allowing pupils to work and co-operate actively, to collect information from all kinds of sources, and even to do some simple research work, is constantly increasing. The consequence for the museums can be studied in the Belmont Report, for example, published by the American Association of Museums in 1969. It gives an alarming description of what happens when the demand for services from museums is growing faster than the museums' resources of personnel and money. This educational boom calls for rethinking not only among museum educationalists, but also among politicians. 'Museums have not benefited from the financial resources which have been made available to traditionally accepted educational institutions', as noted in resolution no. 1.

Another consequence of social and educational change is that a system of permanent education has been introduced in many countries. This means that educational work in museums is less than ever something to be carried through only for certain age-groups.

Of course the specialist papers and the ensuing discussions during Icom 71 reflected that these trends within education are not as strong in some countries as in others. For many countries educational work within the

museum's walls is still the main way of action. Traditional methods such as guided tours, this time modified to 'guided dialogues', still have their spokesmen, and many speakers warned against generalizing statements regarding educational methods. 'We have to fight our own problems in our own countries', as one speaker expressed it. Otherwise the main stress was laid on different kinds of creative activity within the museum, meaningful play situations as ways to learning. The importance of heightening the pupils' perceptive awareness, involving them in discovery, letting them draw their own conclusions was pointed out by many speakers, and a warning was raised against presenting only 'finished articles' in museums. The educational value in presenting museum material to pupils so as to allow them to make all kinds of connections, between art and science, old and new, one civilization and another, was brought up, as was the usefulness of interdisciplinary exhibitions.

But in many countries, the school system being old or new, the educational work carried on within a museum can reach, for geographical reasons, only a very small percentage of the groups it is aiming at. It is therefore essential to look for new ways of using the museum's resources of objects, knowledge, and personnel. In this respect 'science camps' were described by one speaker as activities that allowed pupils to make their own collections and carry out research work. Other speakers recommended that museums produce new kinds of 'raw material' together with inspired teachers, and even elaborate pilot projects which could be transformed into mass-produced articles. However, a speaker with long experience of this kind of museum education warned that isolated activities in this field were lacking in effect, and underlined the importance of continuous assessment.

The construction and use of different kinds of small travelling exhibitions, loan collections, or 'kits' was dealt with on many occasions during the working sessions and the information and projection sessions. A special working party was finally created within the Committee for Education and Cultural Action with the specific purpose of collecting and later distributing information about all kinds of such 'kits', the importance of exchanging experiences on this subject and even exchanging the exhibitions being stressed many times.

An exchange of museum educators, within the framework of training programmes, was suggested as being still more feasible than the international exchange of exhibitions. It was supposed that educational personnel had more in common than museum curators although there were those who claimed that all museum personnel ought to have educational training. This was seen as a possible way of bridging the gap which was said to exist in many museums between educators and curators.

The museum's cultural role, the second main theme for the Ninth General Conference of Icom, is closely linked to the educational one. As stated by Icom in resolution no. 1:

> having accepted the primary functions of collecting, preserving, studying and thereafter presenting the results of this action to all

sections of society, the museums' aim is to facilitate the transmission of information and knowledge by all the means at its disposal insofar as the museum is first and foremost in the service of all mankind.

In one of the specialist papers dealing with the museum's cultural role it is maintained that the museum must be turned into an instrument of cultural promotion, an attractive place in which to meet and a centre of influence. But for whom, it was asked during the discussions. For 'the Smithsonian Visitor', familiar to museums in many countries? According to a survey conducted at the Smithsonian Institution in 1968-9 the typical museum visitor is white, middle-aged, in the upper-middle income bracket with an above-average education, coming to the Smithsonian museums for enjoyment with friends or family. No, it was said, museums can no longer serve only the intellectual élite, the art connoisseur, and the scholar. Museum visitors can no longer be limited to the enlightened, the educated, and the well-to-do. '... the museum-visiting public is not necessarily the total public which the museum should be serving', as expressed in resolution no. 1.

Great changes in society must lead to great changes in museum structure, it was said. The time had come to redefine the mission of the museum, to change the presentation methods and perhaps to introduce a new kind of museum, or intermediaries between the museum and the community. Much more had to be expected from museums. They had to change from passive collectors to active participants, by designing exhibits presenting a controversial problem side by side with its counterpart in history, by correlating current issues with historical facts, and by dealing with the cultural contributions of minorities. The importance of a permanent interaction between the museum and its environment in the form of activities within the framework of everyday life, for example, in particular professional life, with institutions such as unions, workers' groups in urban factories, centres for agricultural promotion, and co-operatives in rural areas, was stressed over and over again.

The museum as an environment in itself, was put forward by one speaker, an environment helping people to anchor their existence in time and space in a time when many have lost the aid of religion, offering a mixture of serious information and joyful comfort.

It was asked if the importance given to permanent displays could be the reason why museums were accused of stagnation and sclerosis. Would the redefining of the museum's mission lead to a reduction of the importance paid to these exhibitions in order to leave wider space for temporary activities which create a frequent renewal of interest? Had the time come to discard the sterile and fanatical adherence to exhibition techniques of past generations? Was there a need for making use of every new technical device to absorb the attention of the masses? Opinions differed here.

The root of the problem, it was argued, was that the essential nature of the museum as a unique medium of communication, dependent on the non-verbal language of objects and demonstrable phenomena, was too often forgotten. Museums were turned into all-purpose cultural centres, community centres,

concert halls, ballrooms, school classrooms, luncheon clubs, and fun palaces. The object was overwhelmed by the fashionable media of our time so that it need not be encountered at all. At the same time the problems of distortion of exhibit intent were pointed out, a result of the so-called curatorial language. It was regarded as important to find museum languages and modes of interpretation that would make the museum resources not only understandable to the public but also meaningful in their lives. Contributions by specialists from other fields, such as text-writers, rewriters, copy-writers, were recommended by another speaker to help the museum people in their often amateurish efforts. In resolution no. 1 it is subsequently noted, 'that museums have not taken advantage of the wide range of expertise and knowledge which exists in other sections of the community'.

On the subject of presentation techniques in the museum it was also said that if the museum wants to reach all those who never go to a museum it has to do so not only physically but also by changing the nature of exhibitions. Instead of making such people museum-minded the museum will have to become people-minded. 'Let us change our exhibitions to a simpler form, showing objects familiar and perceptible to people, introducing the history, culture, economics and science of their own society–industrial safety to coal miners, public health in city ghettos, mechanised agriculture in villages.' Such exhibitions would have to be designed on different lines: exhaustive but compact, sturdy but portable, striking and attractive.

The possibility of reaching a new public through mobile museums on wheels was presented, but characterized as an expensive project, which makes it necessary to formulate a comprehensive programme considering the total utility before launching any ambitious programme. The importance of decentralization and regionalization in many countries was underlined, as well as the need for some central co-ordination policy, sometimes perhaps in the form of active help from government agencies.

But if the museum itself could not break with tradition, and follow the new directions, then it could perhaps be made to realize the need for a new kind of museum, a supplementary agency which would serve as an intermediary between the museum and the community. It could be a so-called neighbourhood museum for example, concerning itself with an analysis of the community and its history, helping the community to discover its identity, and take pride in that identity. These discussions are summarized as follows in resolution no. 1: 'each individual museum must accept that it has a duty to evolve means of action specifically designed to serve best the particular social environment within which it operates'.

Let me conclude by citing also the final paragraphs of resolution no. 1, a resolution which was eagerly discussed, slightly revised, and finally adopted by the Tenth General Assembly:

> Icom *urgently requests* that all museums:
>
> 1. Undertake a continuous and complete reassessment of the needs of the public which they serve.

2. Through the medium of Icom, undertake a programme of systematic study and research based on the results obtained, and evolve methods of action which will in future more firmly establish their educational and cultural role in the service of mankind.