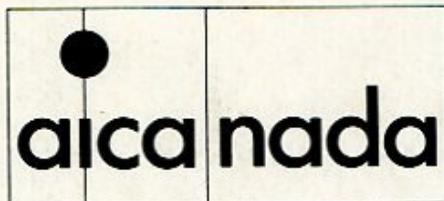


AICA-J009



**Compte rendu du 2e Congrès extraordinaire
Minutes of the 2nd Congress Extraordinary**

**ART ^{et}
and PERCEPTION**

Rudolph Arnheim

Abraham Moles

Harold Rosenberg

Marshall McLuhan

Lawrence Alloway and panel

Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art

International Association of Art Critics

Ottawa, Toronto, août/August 1970

ARCHIVES
DE LA CRITIQUE D'ART
N° 56245
Cote AICA.5009

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ART et/and PERCEPTION

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Abraham Moles	L'esthétique informationnelle de l'espace et la théorie des actes
Harold Rosenberg	Internationalism and Regionalism
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under the auspices of the
National Gallery of Canada

sous les auspices de la
Galerie nationale du Canada

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Avant-propos

Ce recueil de textes est né de la XXIIème Assemblée générale et du 2^e Congrès de l'Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art (AICA) qui ont eu lieu au Canada du 17 au 31 août 1970. Bien présomptueux aurait été celui qui, en 1967, aurait supposé - alors que la section canadienne de l'AICA était des plus embryonnaires - qu'un Congrès international de critiques d'art se tiendrait au Canada quelques années plus tard, qu'il réunirait plus d'une centaine de critiques venus d'une vingtaine de pays et des personnalités telles que Rudolf Arnheim, Abraham Moles, Harold Rosenberg et Marshall McLuhan.

L'audace peut être une méthode.. C'est celle qu'ont adoptée les organisateurs du Congrès qui ont demandé aux congressistes de parcourir 9,000 kilomètres en 14 jours, de prendre une dizaine d'avions, de visiter six villes importantes: Montréal, Québec, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria, d'assister à trois séances d'assemblée générale et de participer à un colloque de deux journées consécutives. L'effort était grand. Les congressistes y ont répondu avec énergie et courage. (Il en fallait!)

Pour le colloque, les Canadiens ont voulu sortir des sentiers battus. Sous le thème Art et Perception, ils ont cru bon de réunir des spécialistes, non de la critique d'art, mais de disciplines voisines, estimant que la multiplicité des

perspectives et que la recherche interdisciplinaire peuvent aider, non point à résoudre les questions qui s'imposent de façon aigüe à la critique d'art actuellement, mais à poser clairement les problèmes et à lancer une invitation à la recherche, sans même présumer de la possibilité des réponses.

"... No art object is ever perceived in empty space, ... it raises wholesome questions about the objectivity of the critic" (Arnheim) - "We live in a time when garbage has become a new art form" (McLuhan) - "L'artiste est ingénieur en émotions et l'art n'existe que dans le temps libre" (Moles) - "The most dependable and most easily accessible of avant-gardism in art is art associated with new technological developments" (Rosenberg); ces phrases extraites des communications présentées par les conférenciers invités au colloque illustrent le répertoire des questions soulevées. Leur complexité, la voici cristallisée par M. René Berger, à la façon précise et nuancée qui lui est habituelle: entre "deux attitudes tranchées ... l'une qui va dans le sens de la société de masse, l'autre qui marque la résistance et non seulement l'existence d'un goût préférentiel, ... il y a non pas une alternative mais une ambivalence profonde qu'il nous appartient d'assumer dans son ambiguïté même".

Sans doute les discussions sont-elles toujours demeurées ouvertes, mais elles étaient toutes propices à stimuler la réflexion et l'imagination des critiques.

Nous espérons que l'art canadien que les critiques ont pu voir à cette occasion, restera tout autant pour eux, source d'intérêt, domaine à ne pas perdre de vue et à explorer. De leur généreuse participation et de leur curiosité, la section canadienne les remercie très chaleureusement.

Le Président de la section canadienne
de l'AICA,
Laurent Lamy

La section canadienne de l'Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art tient à remercier les organismes suivants pour l'aide qu'ils ont apportée à l'organisation de la XXIIème Assemblée générale et au 2^e Congrès de l'AICA, manifestations qui n'auraient pas été possibles sans leur précieuse collaboration:

Le ministère des Affaires extérieures du Canada

Le Secrétariat d'État du Canada

Le Conseil des Arts du Canada

La Galerie nationale du Canada

Le ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec

Le Conseil des Arts de l'Ontario

Le Royal Ontario Museum

L'Art Gallery of Ontario

Le Musée du Québec

Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Le Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal

La Vancouver Art Gallery

L'Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PERCEPTION

Rudolf Arnheim

M. RENÉ BERGER

Madame la Directrice, Mesdames, Messieurs,
permettez-moi de rappeler très brièvement la raison de ce
colloque; vous vous en souvenez que, lors de notre dernière
assemblée générale qui a eu lieu en Scandinavie, nous étions
convenus de susciter un colloque en vue de débattre quelques-
unes des questions fondamentales qui ont trait à notre
discipline. Ce voeu a été entendu par la section canadienne
qui l'a réalisé. Nous avions en effet constaté, au cours des
séances qui se sont succédées, que souvent de trop nombreuses
communications étouffaient le dialogue au lieu de le favoriser.
Le principe a donc été établi de demander, cette fois-ci, à
quatre conférenciers l'occasion d'un débat à la faveur d'une
matière préalablement déterminée. C'est ce qui motive le
Congrès extraordinaire associé à l'assemblée générale de
cette année. Le thème en avait été fixé par nos amis canadiens,
à Oslo: "Art et perception". Le principe était de recourir
à des porte-parole d'audience internationale tels le
professeur Arnheim, le professeur Moles ou M. Rosenberg et
le professeur McLuhan. C'est à eux que vont les remerciements
chaleureux de l'AICA. Un colloque comme celui-ci implique
une organisation considérable. C'est notre gratitude que
j'exprime à nos amis canadiens, à Mlle Jean Sutherland Boggs,

directrice de la Galerie nationale, à Guy Viau, bien entendu, l'un des promoteurs de ce colloque ainsi qu'à Laurent Lamy et, bien sûr, à tous leurs collaborateurs. Le colloque se déroulera au cours de ces deux jours selon le programme que vous possédez; je n'y reviendrai donc pas. L'exposé du conférencier sera suivi d'une discussion réservée en principe aux membres de l'AICA. Des microphones seront mis à votre disposition après l'exposé. Je ne présenterai pas les conférenciers, ce serait présomption de ma part. Vous avez reçu une note qui rappelle les principaux travaux de chacun d'eux.

Celle que vous avez reçue concernant le professeur Arnheim comporte, je suis pédant, une lacune; son dernier livre qui vient de paraître s'intitule "Visual Thinking". C'est la seule omission en l'occurrence, je crois, de ces notes biographiques qui sont parfaitement synthétiques. Je donne immédiatement la parole à Rudolf Arnheim.

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

Ladies and gentlemen, what I have prepared for

you as an introduction will take about half an hour, or even a little less than that; I shall show you a few slides and then we shall open the discussion, which I hope will be as free and as uninhibited as possible.

Charles Baudelaire, in an article, L'oeuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix, notes that "it is possible for a good painter not to be a great painter; but a great painter is by necessity a good painter because a universal imagination includes the intelligence of all the means and the wish to acquire them". I suppose everybody in this room will agree that not only the artist but also the critic must try to obtain this intelligence of all the means -- l'intelligence de tous les moyens -- if he wishes to go beyond the mere description of the effects exerted by works of art upon himself and upon others. The critic wants to know and needs to say what it is that makes one work successful, another one deficient. He needs to know the means.

In addition to the artist and the critic, we are concerned this morning with a third person, who also aspires to the intelligence of the means of art, namely, the scientist, the psychologist active in the field of visual perception. How does the psychologist go about his task? A facile distinction has it that the artist works intuitively, the scientist

intellectually -- which leaves the critic, I suppose, coping with both methods or deprived of either. I shall assume for these introductory remarks that all three characters of our plot -- the artist, the critic, the psychologist -- work intuitively as well as intellectually, and that these two approaches cannot do without each other in any endeavor of the human mind.

Another false alternative must be eliminated for our purposes. It is often said that the intellect deals with generalities, whereas intuition concerns individual phenomena only. This is surely not so. It is true that in evaluating a particular work or the work of a particular artist or cultural period, one examines a unique constellation of factors that will never be repeated; but it is also true that each of these factors constitutes a generality, whose nature must be understood in a broader sense. There are colour relations, form relations, relations between what is seen and what is expressed, which if they hold true for any examples, must hold true for all cases. Intellectually as well as intuitively we recognize these principles in their generality, wherever they apply, and it is only because such general principles exist that we can learn from the many experiences accumulating in the course of a lifetime.

These intuitively discerned and intellectually analyzed general principles are also the common ground on which artists, critics, and scientists can meet and on which they can be useful to each other. The essential difference between us is really one of emphasis only. Artist and critic, interested mainly in particular manifestations of art, make use of principles and perhaps consult the scientist on these principles, in order to elucidate the works that concern them. The psychologist, on the other hand, is interested in general laws of functioning, which hold true for human vision and the human mind in general. He suspects that the particular objects created by the arts may lead him to insights which he could not, or could not as clearly, obtain in everyday experience or from the simple figures he studies in his experiments. He hopes, on the other hand, that his findings may contribute to the understanding and perhaps to the furtherance of the arts.

I shall not attempt in these remarks to give you a survey of the many aspects of the psychology of perception applicable to the visual arts. Such an enumeration would only disperse or dilute our discussion. Nor shall I present to you particular experimental results. Instead I will use a few slides to illustrate quickly two phenomena that may be of some interest to you, one on the relation between appearance and meaning, the other on the visual interaction of pictures.

Lip service is always being paid to the interdependence of content and form. In practice, however, the composition or the formal properties and relations of works of art are often considered as though their visual appearance were totally independent of what they represent or what their function is. My first example is meant to show you that we see a different object, depending on whether we look at the piece of wood on the screen as a clothespin or as a human figure. In the first case, the emphasis is on the legs, which are seen as pressing and holding something in place. The upper part is only secondary, a mere handle. Seen as a human figure, the emphasis of the object is on the knob, which is now a head, the container, transmitter, and recipient of significant forces. The rest of the body and the legs serve now as a secondary support. To say that in these two cases we see the same object and that only the interpretation differs, would be incorrect.

Something similar is true when one sees this other wooden object first as a piece of sculpture and then as a stool. When it is a part of a stool, the duck-like head-piece becomes a concave base, a support for a human body, which is absent, yet present in what we see, and which presses heavily on the wooden seat. The visual forces animating the shape are quite different in the two versions, and these

visual forces are an inseparable part, in fact, the dominant feature of what we see.

To perceive Marcel Breuer's Bauhaus chair as an arrangement of verticals and horizontals, somewhat like a Mondrian painting, is one thing; to see it in its stubborn, rigid resistance to the organic curves of the human body is quite another.

We can try to look at an architectural model by Karl Otto as a piece of abstract sculpture. When we learn of its function as a school, the cubic shapes symbolize now a pedagogical system, which builds from kindergarten by way of the elementary grades to the high school, aided by the auxiliary structures of the auditorium and the gymnasium. Here again, what we know about the architectural function is not a mere addition to, or explanation of, what is seen but modifies the very properties of the visual object.

This very effective perceptual transformation should be investigated systematically. Eero Saarinen's air terminal at the Kennedy Airport in New York becomes a distinctly different object, if it is presented as a work of sculpture, as it is in an entertaining demonstration, drawn by the artist, Robert Sowers. A similarly strong, opposite transformation is suffered by Henry Moore's reclining figure,

which becomes a gigantic hollow container when seen as a building.

If we know what kind of object is represented in a work of figurative art, the memory image of that kind of object becomes a part of what is directly perceived. This makes it easier for Henry Moore to divide a human figure into two or more pieces and yet be sure that we conceive of it as a unitary whole. The contrast between interruption and connection introduces an element of tension, which would be much reduced if one did not view these hunks of bronze as a reclining woman.

Can a painting by John Klinkenberg be seen as a composition of purely abstract shapes? Probably not, but if it can, most of the colored areas will be seen as lying in the vertical picture plane. If you see a coastal landscape, the strong depth effect of the memory image will become a part of what appears to you on the canvas. Also the blue area, which is now substantial water, will become better able to balance the left side of the painting against the right side.

The extent to which subject matter influences the purely visual composition has impressed me in certain works on the borderline between the mimetic and the non-mimetic, notably in certain Kandinskys of the years between 1910 and

1918. As an abstract composition, such a work may strike you as a fairly loose and uneven arrangement. As a landscape, its lower part becomes a foreground, traversed by a winding road; its emptiness is filled with more substance. If the top part of the picture is now a sky and therefore an area of low density, the weight distribution of the whole composition looks more satisfactory. Similarly, if in a work of 1910 one recognizes a battlefield with hills, buildings, a bridge, and fighting figures, the spatial structure of the whole is improved for at least one observer.

After these illustrations of the interaction between subject matter or function and visual appearance, I will conclude my introductory demonstration with a group of six examples, intended to show the visual interaction of paintings. Anybody in charge of hanging exhibitions knows what pictures will do to each other, but a systematic investigation remains to be done. Look at Rembrandt's Polish Rider; the movement of the horse, the spatial relations between foreground and background, and observe now what happens when Jean Dubuffet's Landscape with a Partridge appears next to it. The large textured mass in the frontal plane of the Dubuffet is sufficiently similar to the background of the Rembrandt to put a new and exaggerated emphasis on the latter -- an effect of assimilation by similarity. At the same time,

the closeness of the Dubuffet foreground pushes the backdrop of the Rembrandt too far away from the rider -- a contrast effect. Confronted now with a running chicken by Chagall, the trotting of the horse may look more animated, enhanced by assimilation based on parallelism.

Assimilation and contrast modify the appearance of works of art not only by direct confrontation, but also, less tangibly although with equal strength, by the fact that we look at any work from the station point of our own prior experiences with other works. If you consider a portrait by Modigliani from the point of view of an earlier style of portraiture, a time difference of about twenty years may suffice to make the Modigliani look flat, rigid, stylized, "like a Queen of Spades", as somebody said, I believe, of Manet's paintings. If you compare a Modigliani with a Karel Appel, on the other hand the Modigliani becomes realistic and traditional. You see here the historical prejudice at work; and since no art object is ever perceived in empty space, but inevitably in some physical and mental setting, demonstrations of this kind may raise wholesome questions about the objectivity of the critic.

If M. Berger will be good enough to help me, I shall try to conduct a discussion about what I have said to

you and shown you. It could also concern the more general field of perception in its relation to the arts.

M. LAURENT LAMY

Tantôt, quand vous avez montré les deux tableaux, l'un étant un personnage équestre et l'autre étant une petite poule en course, vous avez dit que lorsque l'on présente la poule au cheval, le cheval semble s'animer davantage. Est-ce que je me trompe en pensant que, dans mon cas, c'est le contraire qui est arrivé?

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

This is perfectly true. Can I answer in English? The gentleman said that the influence is not only of the Chagall on the Rembrandt, but also the other way around. I myself am dealing with these problems from the point of view of Gestalt psychology, according to which the influence would always be mutual. In other words, you cannot expect that the influence will only go one way. It will always go both ways and you get a modification of both works at the same time, so this is certainly a correct observation.

QUESTION

I'm interested in your point about interpretation. You were careful to point out that it's false to say in many cases that we see the same object but we give different inter-

pretations of it. It's that we see two different objects, but I'm worried somewhat by the way you illustrate this claim because it seems to me that just pointing to examples won't do. And I want to find out if you could say a little more about how this question can be decided - whether what we see is the same object, but we give different interpretations.

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

The gentleman agrees that there is a change of what we actually see, influenced by what we know about the object, and the question is how we can prove this. It is not a simple thing to do. The best suggestion I have is the following. I think the real change which occurs has to do with what I call the visual forces. In other words, the object obviously remains the same in the usual perceptual sense. You see the clothespin, see the same shape. What does change, and the only thing that can change, is the visual forces, the difference of accents, of emphasis, of what is primary, and what is secondary. Now, the only way in which you can hope to test this is by trying to make experiments in which you ask people to describe exactly these factors - of how they see the distribution of accents, the directions of visual forces, etc. This is the only way in which I can imagine this experimentation can be done, which is a fairly subjective way of dealing with these things. But what you

find in the psychology of art in general is that, when you try to be exact at all cost, you lose your subject. You are dealing with something too simple, too elementary, and you are no longer really examining the material you are interested in. So we are in sort of a dilemma there.

MR. SVEN SANDSTROM

I take it that the examples you showed were only to indicate that those occurrences, assimilation and contrast, do actually exist and not that only art exerts its influence on art. If we take, for example, the impact made by viewing a rider in nature upon the impression of the Polish Rider of Rembrandt, I think we get into quite another type of problem. Everyone of us has had many such experiences, and I should like to hear to what extent you believe it is possible to determine exact rules for perception which are general, in spite of the fact that our impressions are different.

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

You have two different problems. I guess you said first - and let me make sure that I understood you - that influences are not only visual, but there can also be the influence of verbal description on the images - is that what you said?

I think we have, of course, a much broader range of influences there, not just two images as you say, but the wall around it or any visual object at all will have similar influences. If you put the same picture on a green wall or on a red wall you get a different image. The same is true for any other kind of influences; for instance, verbal description. If you read a description by an art critic or an art historian of how that image looks, how it is composed, where the accents are, you will find that the image changes in front of your eyes. Therefore, we as teachers, as professors, have a great responsibility because you show a picture on the screen and then you describe it. And that description itself changes what is seen. It's amazing to what extent we can talk our students into things which are not there, except in our favorite theories.

There was another thing you said. You talked about the relation between reality and art objects. That, of course, is a very interesting problem. I suppose the most famous presentation of it you find in Oscar Wilde's essay on the imitation of art by nature. He talks about the fact that the fog of London was invented by Turner. In other words, that there is an influence of the art object on the way in which we see the real world, and vice versa. So that if you live in a

certain landscape, I'm sure that if you live in Tuscany, the Pierro della Francesca's look different from how they look if you live in England.

M. RENÉ BERGER

Dans l'exposé que vous nous avez fait, vous nous avez présenté une série d'expériences. A ce propos, les questions que je me pose sont les suivantes: l'augmentation du mouvement ou la non-augmentation du mouvement résulte également, on l'oublie, d'un apprentissage. J'entends que, qu'il n'y a pas de psychologie généralisée. La psychologie, en grande partie, est déterminée par notre apprentissage scolaire tout comme le milieu socio-culturel est à l'origine de cet apprentissage. Enfin, la psychologie elle-même est commandée par la situation politique dans laquelle se trouvent ceux qui sont appelés à apprécier et à interpréter. J'entends donc que l'interprétation me semble ne pas dépendre exclusivement des éléments formels; elle est fondamentalement commandée par un apprentissage. Les travaux du sociologue français Bourdieu sont parfaitement clairs sur ce point. Les gens qui visitent les musées sont ceux qui ont atteint le niveau du baccalauréat. Une expérience comme celle que vous nous présentez serait, sans doute, difficilement compréhensible

pour des gens à l'extérieur de cette enceinte ou qui n'auraient pas reçu l'éducation qui leur permettrait de comparer de tels termes. Il y a là un problème; d'une part, la mise en question de la psychologie universelle, de l'autre, l'examen des psychologies commandées par les différents milieux sociaux, par les différentes formations scolaires et politiques. Est-ce qu'il serait possible d'acheminer une partie de votre réponse dans ce sens?

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

M. Berger has put the problem of mutual influence on the very broad basis which it requires, namely, not only the visual factors themselves, since we are talking about the visual arts for the moment, but also the social and political factors which do influence what we see and how we experience it.

Now, in order not to make this too broad, I have limited my presentation to the actual changes in the visual image itself. But those also are subject to interpretation in a very broad sense. I think it is perfectly clear, if you take something like Manet's Olympia, whether you lived around 1850 and you knew what this image meant esthetically, socially,

what it meant to have this woman lying in this presentation, and what it meant historically to have the image of the Venus translated into a modern image, you would actually see something different. I'm quite convinced, and this is my main point, that these are not only changes of interpretation. Take an example. Take our looking back at the work of Van Gogh. The work of Van Gogh at the time it was done, and the same is true for the work of Cézanne, was rejected because people saw a different image then, than they see today looking at the same works. What they saw around 1890 or 1900 was a patchwork of colours. This we know very well from the descriptions. We have to get used to the fact that the visual image is not what is given on the canvas, but changes perceptually, depending on the base from which one perceives. Now as far as the factors of education and learning are concerned, I think you said that most people who go to museums have their baccalaureate. The question is what level of education is characteristic for the bulk of visitors to museums. I could report, and I think my friends from the United States will bear me out, that a very large number of visitors to our museums are school-children, and these are young children all the way from the age of five to the age of sixteen, who are brought to the museums in large numbers. The same is true in Japan, for instance. In a country like

Japan there are hundreds and thousands of school-children going to museums. There you have an interesting problem, because the child is not a tabula rasa, and neither is the uneducated person. They all come with some kind of base from which to judge. Actually the children, in a sense, are our best, most grateful, and spontaneous judges of modern art. We find that the children take very directly to certain works of modern art unacceptable to their parents. This is very important and I think in the United States it is being used educationally. I'm not sure what the situation in other countries is.

M. LAURENT LAMY

Je veux me référer aux exemples visuels que vous nous avez donnés pendant votre conférence. Les deux morceaux en question étaient des chaises est-ce un effet du hasard? Qu'est-ce qui se serait produit si les deux objets avaient été autre chose que des chaises, de très bons dessins? Et vous avez dit que l'on peut confondre le premier qui est un petit tabouret avec une sculpture. Mais je doute que le tabouret de cuisine puisse être confondu avec une sculpture; tandis qu'un objet beau est en fait apparenté à une sculpture. Est-ce que je me trompe?

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

I would put this somewhat differently. A chair of bad design does not really look like a piece of sculpture, but it does not look like a chair either. A well designed chair looks like a chair and nothing else. Both of the chairs I showed you were selected because they have some ambiguity, the stool more than the Breuer chair. I doubt that I could persuade you to take a truly first-rate piece of furniture for anything but what it is intended to be.

M. RENÉ de SOLIER

Dans la méthode de déchiffrement que vous proposez, j'ai été très frappé par des corrélations entre des images, des "reproductions" qui n'ont peut-être pas de relation entre elles. Je veux dire par exemple Modigliani et Cézanne. En Occident, on est évidemment passionné par des problèmes d'iconologie après Panofsky. Alors, l'un des problèmes qui se pose est celui du décryptement de l'image. Première question: est-ce que vous pensez que deux images mises en relation par l'intermédiaire de la projection s'éclairent l'une l'autre? Est-ce que vous, d'abord, ne croyez pas qu'il serait intéressant de comprendre Cézanne? Vous avez employé une expression sur le plan de l'esthétique et de la philosophie, l'expression d'images visuelles. Je pense qu'en français on dirait plutôt l'image virtuelle. Entre le tableau et devant

le spectateur intervient cette image virtuelle. Alors, premier déchiffrement, ce qu'est le Cézanne en vérité et, deuxièmement, c'est là où l'enquête pourrait faire avancer le problème de la psychologie de la perception, qu'est en réalité cette image virtuelle. L'Européen venant en Amérique ou au Canada est très frappé en voyant l'activité des jeunes enfants qui voient le tableau exposé à hauteur adulte. Ils essayent d'avoir une sorte de vue oblique, de se créer des "travellings". Je me demande ce que voit l'enfant. Alors, conclusion, nous sommes là en présence d'une sorte de mimique gestuelle qui prouve une grande attention. L'autre jour à Bruxelles devant la Tentation de saint Antoine, qui est une très bonne copie, sûrement d'un initié, j'ai été très frappé de voir de jeunes étudiants, sans doute américains, assis et formant l'amorce non pas d'un feu de camp mais étant déjà en méditation. Alors, je crois que le fait de contempler obstinément une oeuvre et sur toutes ses faces me paraît plus éclairant. Enfin, c'est une question personnelle: le fait d'amonceler des images voisines ou proches ne signifiera pas que l'on a compris Modigliani, Kandinsky. Je crois que, sur le plan de l'iconographie, il n'y a rien de plus difficile que le décryptement de l'art et que le déchiffrement de l'image virtuelle. Je serais très intéressé de savoir dans quelle mesure vos travaux, bien sûr ils impliquent une philosophie, mais de quelle philosophie vous rapprochez-vous?

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

You have raised many points and I can answer only a very few. As far as the philosophy to which I am closest, I think I better limit myself to psychology and say that I was raised as a Gestalt psychologist and that, therefore, my approach is one of a Gestalt psychological nature. This, I think, is as close as I can come to answering that question.

I am not sure whether I understood the rest of what you said. You talked about the enormous importance of the deciphering of the image. If I understood you correctly, you said that before we deal with a confrontation, we have to accomplish the deciphering of one image, such as the Cézanne. The point I was trying to make is that the Cézanne image, or any other image never presents itself as such; it always presents itself in a context. This context is brought to the image by the person who is looking with all of his basic background of culture and learning, of which M. Berger spoke before. Therefore, we are never presented with the image as such. This is the disconcerting and exciting aspect of our work. The real problem for the critic, for the philosopher of art, for the psychologist, is what is the image as such, what is that Cézanne as such, as we try to peel off the context which each, as beholder, and each group of beholders, brings

to that image. This is a very limited answer to what you have said and I am sure that I have not done you justice.

DR. PAUL HODIN

We as art critics, and as philosophers of art, are confronted with a creative impulse and its results, and I wonder whether the elements of perception with all their implications of Gestalt psychology, can be used by the artist, (also by the critic), as tools of a creative impulse. I wonder whether this approach of yours, purely scientific and Gestalt psychological as it may be, should not be widened into including creative imagination, the vision which really makes a work of art.

PROF. RUDOLF ARHEIM

Dr. Hodin talks about the ways in which these principally scientific, psychological insights, could be applied educationally and be enlarged to include the creative process more specifically. I think in general you can say that the closer you come to the very secret of artistic creation, the more trouble you have with a scientific procedure. That is, we tend to limit ourselves, by a combination of fear and respect, to the more mechanical, the more external factors. I may be answering part of what you said if I say

that the kind of phenomena of which I have presented to you two examples can be used in teaching, in the training of artists, art historians, and so forth. I, myself, am spending my time on that, teaching mostly art students. The problem you are facing there, of course, is to what extent these generalizations, these rules will help or will hamper the young artist. What we try to do, and what we hope to do, is make sure that these generalizations are not of a nature to destroy what the young artist sees, but rather to open his eyes to visual phenomena which are actually there, and make it easier to deal with them intellectually.

That involves a delicate problem, particularly for the weaker talents; the strong talent cannot be killed by anybody. The weaker talents are the ones which are sometimes disturbed and destroyed by this kind of instruction, and we find that they begin to follow rules instead of following their eyes. That can be a real problem and I think that we ought to be aware of it.

QUESTION

When you were talking about the social, political conditions that would affect the visual image, you said that this was just a change in the visual image, and it was not a change of interpretation. Can you tell us the difference between a change of visual image and a change of interpretation?

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

Some years ago I tried to do a study of Picasso's painting Guernica, and I think the Guernica shows this difference very well. An example of how the interpretation changes the actual image may be found in the figure of the bull in Guernica. The figure of the bull has been interpreted in contradictory ways. Some people have believed, and I am one of them, that the bull is a symbol of the spirit of Spain which cannot be destroyed by an attack of the enemy. There are other people who have believed that the figure of the bull represents the enemy. The Fascist aggressor. If you look into the description of the bull by people with these two different interpretations, you will find that they see a different animal. For one of them the bull is standing there strongly, placidly, unperturbed. For others he is raging with vicious aggressiveness. So there, I think you have a nice example of how you actually have a different image, arriving from different interpretations.

There are cases in which no such notable changes are observed, in which you really have only an interpretation of meaning, which does not change the image in itself.

QUESTION

I was thinking of something more concrete, like a chair. What is one's interpretation of a chair, is it something with four legs, or two legs, that holds one bottom, or what?

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

That is just anatomy. You have to go into the physiology of it.

QUESTION

What would be a concrete example that would perhaps incorporate one's interpretation?

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

If you take a chair, the important thing perceptually is not that it consists just of legs and a seat and a back, but that it is something to be sat upon. This means that in order to see this object as a chair, you see it with the absent person sitting on it. You see it as a chair only if you see somebody who is sitting on it, who is pressing on the seat, who is leaning against the back, and who is being elevated from the floor by means of this object. This is psychologically interesting. It shows you that an object does not consist only of what strikes the retina of the eye, but very often there are factors which are active perceptually, but not actually seen.

QUESTION

So one would have to then use one's ability to symbolize what a chair would be.

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

I do not like the word "symbolize" very much. The main point I am trying to get across is that this is something very immediate. Let me give you one more example. Let us say that somebody very close to you, your wife, your husband, has gone away on a trip and you are alone at home, and you are seeing the chair where your wife generally sits and she is not there. What you see there is not a chair. What you see is a chair on which your wife ought to be, which is a visual experience, and not just a knowledge. It is the emptiness of that chair which is visually and directly present.

That is what we have to do to the psychology of perception. We must not limit it to what actually hits the retina.

MRS. VERA FRENKEL

Am I right in assuming that the second set of slides is an elaboration of the concepts dealt with in the first? For example, the Klinkenberg coastal landscape, which you suggested that we could look at as an abstract or, by attributing to it memory substance, we would see perspective. Essentially you did the same thing with the other works because you organized them in chronological order. So that if one came fresh to the Karel Appel one would view it

quite differently from the way one would view it having viewed the others. I should like to connect that to what was said earlier about children being able to respond to contemporary art whereas adults have more difficulty. Is the implication of that, that the kind of art being produced in our society today makes art historians irrelevant in their ability to respond?

Do you understand the connection that I am making, because you are talking about simultaneity and historicity of response? I should like to compare that with children and the people in this room.

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

The question starts out from the observation that children are often the best judges and this, of course, brings up the question of whether those people who are the very opposite of children, namely the art historians, are still equipped to deal with works of modern art adequately. All I can say there is what you know anyway, namely, that there are certain art historians who are limited to certain views of the past to such an extent that their eyes are blind to what is going on today.

However, these are the less interesting ones. More interesting are persons who because of their knowledge of the past are capable of seeing the present artistic ex-

pression as the so-far final step of a long development. In such a view, the modern artist appears in his historical context without being falsified by that historical context. Such a well-equipped historical mind does more than the child because he is capable of seeing the work not only in isolation that is, without prejudice, but as the final development of a long story. He sees it more competently. I am trying to describe the difference between the deformation that occurs through the knowledge of history and the enrichment of present experience through knowledge of history. This seems to me the important distinction.

M. ARNOLD KOHLER

Je suis très frappé d'une référence constante à l'expérience des enfants et je crois qu'il y a là quelque chose de fort important, peut-être susceptible de contredire certaines remarques formulées, ou plutôt, de montrer combien le problème est complexe. Je pense notamment à ce que mon ami Berger disait de l'influence de la formation scolaire.

Permettez-moi d'abord de relater une expérience toute personnelle. Elle eut lieu en 1912 et j'avais 12 ans. Ce qui veut dire qu'à ce moment-là, je ne possédais aucune formation au niveau du baccalauréat et que pour moi, enfant de 12 ans, l'art abstrait n'existant pas en tant que tel.

Or, me promenant un jour à la campagne avec un ami, je me suis trouvé devant un arbre. C'était un bouleau et je regardais son tronc blanc taché de noir, se projetant sur un ciel très bleu. À cet instant, je ne l'ai plus vu comme un tronc d'arbre mais comme un cylindre blanc porteur de taches noires, se détachant sur un fond bleu qui n'était point l'environnement du ciel: j'ai eu soudain la révélation absolue de ce qu'était l'art abstrait. Je pense que cette expérience comporte deux conséquences.

La première est que l'enfant perçoit souvent les formes et les couleurs avec une telle violence qu'elles prennent un caractère absolu et qu'il cesse d'interpréter ce qu'il voit en fonction d'un souvenir ou d'un art d'imitation.

La deuxième conséquence va se répercuter sur des exemples que vous avez donnés. J'entends qu'un des éléments fondamentaux dont il faut tenir compte dans l'examen de l'art en général, mais surtout de l'art actuel, est le phénomène de tension. Le choc psychologique que j'avais éprouvé lors de l'expérience évoquée provenait d'une tension entre les formes et les couleurs, d'où l'on revient à ce que vous dites des forces visuelles qui entrent en jeu.

L'application à l'examen de certaines images est aisée. Considérons, par exemple, les clichés que vous avez

projetés, en particulier celui d'un tableau de Kandinsky à propos duquel vous disiez qu'envisagé comme paysage il n'apparaît pas très bon mais que sa qualité est bien meilleure quand la composition est tenue pour abstraite. Pour moi, la distinction n'intervient pas: je constate simplement que l'oeuvre n'inclut ou n'engendre aucune tension et je la juge intrinsèquement mauvaise, indépendamment de toute interprétation.

Je pense avoir mis en évidence un élément de la psychologie de la perception: ce n'est certes pas le seul mais il est fondamental.

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

When you give children freedom in the first years in which they do pictorial work, in nursery school, you find that they do what we would call abstract design. But note that there are three kinds of nursery schools.

The first kind of nursery school is that in which you force children to draw objects, and that is very old-fashioned. Then we have a second kind, where you force children not to draw objects. This is also bad, although it is considered to be progressive. The third category are the good nursery schools, in which you let the children do what they feel like doing. There you find that much of the early work is what we should call abstract, and that gradually

representational factors introduce themselves. I am mentioning that because you can see that to be concerned with shapes and colours as such is something natural to children. Therefore, your experience in the landscape, where suddenly the tree and the sky looked like pure forms without meaning, is something not so far away from the sort of easel painting in simple colours which the children actually do in the third kind of nursery schools, in the good ones.

M. ROLAND BÉCHARD

Je voudrais poser la question suivante: "Est-ce qu'il y a une différence de perception, et est-ce que cette différence influence le type de perception chez l'individu, dans le cas du Rembrandt. Vous avez présenté un Rembrandt. Certaines personnes ont pu y voir, au premier impact, un Rembrandt. D'autres ont pu y voir un cheval avec un cavalier, et troisième possibilité, d'autres personnes ont pu y voir un paysage. Est-ce que ceci influence les images subséquentes qui demeurent chez la personne qui voit une oeuvre d'art?

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

We are again with the problem of what different

kinds of person see in the same object. You really can have great surprises there. I can tell you a story. Not long ago, I was doing the script for a film which had to do with the problem of light, a film made for children. We wanted to show the light effects in Rembrandt. We chose a portrait of the Old Turk, who has a turban on his head, and there is a beautiful light falling on that figure. To us grownups, this seemed an excellent example of the light effect in Rembrandt. When we made the film and showed it to children they said, what does the man have on his head? Nobody saw the light, everybody saw the Turk.

I would like to wind up this discussion of visual factors in art with a remark that might sound reactionary. When we are presented, in very modern art or in not so modern art, with forms that are no longer based on direct visual experience, we are facing a very real problem. The question arises to what extent we can fit into the framework of art objects or events that are not essentially visual. Rather than try to answer this question, I would like to leave you with it.

L'ESTHÉTIQUE INFORMATIONNELLE DE L'ESPACE ET LA THÉORIE DES ACTES

Abraham Moles

ABRAHAM MOLES

Eh bien, la tâche devant laquelle je me trouve est un peu difficile car il s'agit de vous parler de l'esthétique informationnelle de l'espace, c'est-à-dire d'une branche de l'esthétique et, par là même, de la critique d'art qui a été, dirais-je, longtemps négligée ou qui a été ramenée au niveau des attractions de foire.

Pour ceci, le but est de faire une discussion substantielle et, par conséquent, je parlerai assez brièvement. En d'autres termes, je ne parlerai pas de mon sujet, je parlerai d'autres choses, d'un certain nombre de préliminaires à ce sujet. Et le sujet, il est aussi là sur des petits papiers. Alors les petits papiers, vous les voyez, il y a plein de projections dans la boîte de slide projecteur.

Pendant la discussion, si vous en éprouvez le besoin ou le désir, eh bien nous commenterons le problème des arts de l'espace.

Je voudrais tout d'abord, et je crois que c'est peut-être le plus important, dire en quelques mots, quelques remarques qui circonscrivent ce sujet, remarques qui, comme je me trouve être psycho-sociologue, devront adopter un aspect fortement sociologique.

Eh bien, commençons par de grandes généralités.
L'art est une sensualisation programmée de l'environnement.
C'est le point que je voudrais développer aujourd'hui. L'art n'existe que dans le temps libre, le loisir, le temps de la gratuité pour l'homme bien nourri qui dispose d'un surplus d'énergie pour explorer le monde qui lui est offert.

Les arts de l'espace sont ceux qui ne prennent de sens que dans l'espace, non pas l'espace plat et périmé, à deux dimensions du tableau de chevalet, ou du mur ou de la fresque mais l'espace riche, riche en dimensions, à trois, à quatre dimensions. On verra plus tard pour le reste qui posent à l'être dans la société des conserves culturelles de nouveaux problèmes d'esthétique constructive, ceux d'une sensibilité du proche et non plus d'une sensibilité du lointain, je cite Schiller.

Retenons d'abord que peinture et musique ont épuisé leur potentiel de nouveautés. Tout le champ de leur possible est définitivement exploré et jalonné même s'il n'est pas tout à fait recouvert. Il y a sûrement encore de la place pour les bons peintres du dimanche. Si donc le stock artistique de l'humanité s'épuise, il faut donc créer de nouveaux arts. L'espace est encore libre eh bien profitons-en.

Il s'agit donc de promouvoir à la fois, et je pense que c'est le problème qui vous préoccupe ici, une nouvelle

c'est d'appliquer ces règles à un espace du volume, à un
Notre problème, celui que je vous propose pour cette discussion,
règles structurelles qu'a dégagées la psychologie de la perception.
L'originalité du nouveau. Équilibre régulier de multiples
un équilibré heureux entre la banalité du prévisible et
L'œuvre artistique représentative, et c'est bien connu,
volonté.

Les cartes postales, une nouvelle figure de l'homme de bonne
consommateur artistique, celui qui regarde, écoute et achète
provocées et leur disposition dans l'environnement du
le temps. Elle se différencie par l'ensemble des sensations
sensorielle, construction de séquences dans l'espace ou dans
L'œuvre de l'artiste est toujours programmation

Les émotions en sortant du terme cadre des Luna Park.
artistes créateurs à mettre un génie organisateur pour programmer
il s'agit précisément de les y faire rentrer en stimulant les
et en dépit des efforts de quelques surrealistes prescriptifs,
pas encore à l'univers de l'art, ART avec des capitales,
scénic railway des parcs d'attractions et le jekk n'appartenne pas
un peu les rôles, ça ferait du bien. Si le train fantôme, le
motivation. La critique motivante de l'artiste, ça renverse
de nouveaux arts pour lesquels la critique souffre un rôle de
elle ne s'est jamais appliquée jusqu'alors et, en même temps,
critique s'exerçant sur des objets et des phénomènes auxquels

espace rempli d'événements sensoriels programmés dont la fabrication est la nouvelle fonction de l'artiste.

Rappelons d'abord, qu'il lui plaise ou non, que l'artiste est ingénieur en émotions. Il faudra bien qu'il assume explicitement cette fonction, s'il ne veut pas être contraint à l'exercer en contrebande, en se mettant au service de la publicité.

Le champ exploratoire de l'espace, c'est celui de la liberté créatrice. Il y a de la place, je peux marcher à gauche et puis je peux marcher à droite, et puisqu'il y a de la place, qu'il n'y a pas d'obstacle, et bien promenons-nous donc, faisons un petit zigzag, ceci est une oeuvre d'art.

Nous acceptons certes, comme une évidence de la vie, les limitations à notre mouvement propre par les frontières. Les frontières, ça c'est dur, je ne peux pas passer à travers. Ça, c'est une frontière, évidemment je pourrais sauter mais ça sort de mon rôle. Ça c'est une frontière et ça c'est un mur, c'est une frontière.

Donc, ces frontières peuvent être de divers ordres, elles pourraient être légales, par exemple "Défense de passer" "No Parking" "No Loitering" ou bien matérielles, le mur c'est dur, et l'idée de parois est inhérente à la psychologie humaine comme l'a remarqué très explicitement le psychologue Kurt Leving.

Les murs sont durs, impénétrables et nous y croyons dès notre enfance. L'art des sculptures praticables à parois en bulle gomme ou gonflables n'est qu'un sous-produit de l'idée d'une frontière élastique, sensualisée éventuellement, ce qui permet de se poser le problème de la transgression. Quand je pousse le fauteuil, est-ce que je déplace les parois de liberté dans lesquelles j'évolue dans mon appartement?

C'est de l'art. L'homme expérimente avec son corps, il expérimente avec ses gestes et non avec ses yeux. Question. Le catch d'un athlète huilé, bien huilé avec un boa, fait-il partie de cette programmation esthétique dans laquelle le critique veut insérer l'œuvre d'art? L'automobile, par exemple, un objet très connu, est l'amplificateur de l'espace géographique, cet espace des paysages exploité dans une programmation savante et bénéficiaire par les organisateurs de l'agence Cook. Ces derniers seraient-ils aussi, par hasard, des artistes qui s'ignorent ou des ingénieurs en émotions quelque peu aliénés? Question! Je vous la laisse pour la discussion.

En tout cas, vous remarquez que d'ores et déjà nous sommes bien loin ici de l'esthétique ancienne du sublime et de la montagne neigeuse comme canons inutiles d'une esthétique sans spectateur.

Je voudrais maintenant vous parler de l'anthropophagisme esthétique. La société dévore les œuvres. Nous assistons désormais à l'épuisement des arts majeurs, classiques, la

peinture, la sculpture, la musique, il y en a toute une liste, vous connaissez bien, qui ont parcouru en fait, et jalonné disions-nous toutes les étapes du champ que leur propose la dialectique ordre-désordre depuis l'ordonnancement parfait du champ perceptif qui est proposé par exemple par la frise à la grecque, c'est bien régulier, c'est bien périodique. C'est fou comme c'est joli, à la limite c'est un peu banal, mais ça ne fait rien. C'est de l'art, art de second ordre. Ou bien, au contraire, l'amorphie totale de la tache aléatoire, vous savez, on trempe la queue dans l'encre et puis, on projette. Ça fait une oeuvre d'art. Nous avons donc ici proposé deux limites et c'est l'ensemble entre ces deux limites, tout l'espace est franchi.

Cet épuisement par conséquent de l'espace de l'ordre-désordre pictural ou musical nous constraint, dans une société affamée de culture, on a tous faim de culture, puisqu'on consomme la beauté originale, à rechercher de nouveaux arts que justement un pouvoir accru sur la nature va nous permettre de culturaliser. Ça c'est un bon mot bien moderne.

La société consommatrice, consommatrice d'originalités déborde donc les œuvres du passé en les banalisant. Elle absorbe, par la copie sans fin l'œuvre célèbre dans le Kitch du supermarché. L'œuvre d'art, réservoir de formes originales s'use sous les regards. Elle s'épuise dans la copie multiple, elle

est inévitablement vouée au Kitch plus fortement encore, c'est le Kitch du plus grand nombre, à chacun sa petite reproduction, à chacun sa Joconde, on peut la mettre sur les foulards et sur les bas de dames.

À la fin, l'oeuvre d'art se découvre sa mortalité, un temps de vie pour l'oeuvre d'art. Combien vous payez pour un Rouault, 25 ans. C'est donc le problème d'un temps de vie, un temps de dégradation de toute oeuvre, quelle qu'elle soit et aussi de ces arts de l'espace que je veux vous proposer.

À la fin, un chef d'oeuvre, ah! ça c'est un mot dont on s'est beaucoup servi. Les critiques d'art se sont beaucoup occupés des chefs-d'oeuvre autrefois, ça leur donnait beaucoup d'ennuis. Un chef-d'oeuvre n'est plus que la matrice de ses propres copies, en d'autres termes, ce qui est important, ce sont les copies. Quant au chef-d'oeuvre, c'est un petit accessoire.

Si nous avons cru autrefois à l'éternité des chefs-d'oeuvre, ceux du passé, bien sûr, c'est tout simplement parce que ceux-ci étaient grands mais 6 milliards d'insectes heureux les dévorant des yeux et des oreilles finiront toujours par les épuiser. C'est une question de temps.

Les arts, autrefois mineurs, que l'espace à trois dimensions propose à l'homme contemporain, deviendront-ils

à ce moment-là des réserves de sensualité nouvelle, en tout cas mal explorés et très peu maîtrisés, c'est exactement le problème que je vous propose.

Disons quelques mots pour préciser ce mécanisme de la conserve culturelle, "Camp Culture". L'espace disions-nous n'existe dans notre sensualité que par ce qu'il remplit. Il est la somme de nos expériences, de nos mouvements, de nos actes, l'art spatial, par exemple, qui s'adresse à la sensibilité sera expérimentation dans l'espace, découverte permanente du volume offert, espace à jouer plus qu'espace à voir. Ce sont donc les comportements exploratoires qui créent l'expérience de l'étendue. Ils ont tantôt une valeur esthétique de créativité, de spontanéité. Tantôt, il faut bien y songer, une valeur utilitaire ou fonctionnelle d'appropriation de l'environnement. L'habitat, le terrain de chasse, le domaine de famille en sont des exemples. Vous pensez peut-être que je mélange les catégories. Est-ce que je vais vous proposer une esthétique du mobilier? Oui, entre autres, bien sûr, mais ce n'est pas le point important.

L'espace dans son ensemble a tout de même une propriété bien intéressante parce qu'il a trois dimensions au moins, et même quatre dimensions, si on ajoute un emploi du temps. Il reste ce qui échappe le mieux pour le moment à la mise en conserve culturelle. Ceci pour des raisons fort simples, des

raisons de capacité-mémoire des ordinateurs "computer-storage capacity". Nous sommes tout à fait incapables pour l'instant de mettre l'espace en bouteilles et nous ne connaissons en fait de conserve d'espace "canned space" que cette approximation pauvre que fait le cinéma en relief, les devantures de magasins, le modèle réduit de l'architecte ou le stéréoplan de l'urbaniste. C'est un espace un peu poussiéreux. Le problème, l'espace reste donc plus à l'abri que les fameux arts du type Joconde, de la mise en conserve et de l'exégèse inépuisable d'une esthétique critique des chefs-d'œuvre reconnus qui les usent par ses commentaires. En expliquant parfaitement tout ce qu'il y a à expliquer, bien sûr, sans vouloir accepter que ce qui fait l'œuvre, et sa richesse, sa prolixité, sa capacité de submerger l'individu, la réduction de l'esthétique sémantique et la destruction de l'œuvre artistique pour la ramener à une recette socio-culturelle vendable aux marchands de savon. Voir Joconde toujours.

Il reste donc de la place pour l'œuvre d'art submergeante, l'idée de submersion, l'idée d'un bain de beauté, un bain de sensualité, un bain de haine, un bain d'amour, tout cela c'est de l'art.

Tout ceci, on le placera mieux dans l'espace à trois dimensions ou à quatre dimensions, en peuplant ceux-ci de micro-événements. Certes, il faut bien le dire, même dans l'espace,

beaucoup de nos comportements actifs sont stéréotypés, beaucoup des cellules de l'espace quotidien sont quantifiées, modulées en éléments simples de notre expérience du volume. Vous savez le module Le Corbusier, 2 mètre 25 en levant le bras, ou le module des escaliers ou bien le module des chaises, etc.

Les modules, oui ça c'est de la stéréotypie culturelle. Le cube, le couloir appartiennent au culturème, élément de culture, atome de culture de la vie urbaine et les "computers" équipés de "graphic terminals" s'efforcent déjà de les mémoriser pour réaliser l'urbanisme à la machine. Rassurez-vous, ça vient.

Mais, finalement, le volume offert reste pour l'homme, sensuel, sujet privilégié de l'artiste. Héritier du singe qui grimpait aux arbres, une occasion de spontanéité. L'expression de liberté créatrice, le refus d'une stéréotypie des déplacements, une anarchie créatrice à l'intérieur du mouvement. Tout mouvement est créateur dans la mesure où il n'est pas répétition d'actes pré-programmés comme ceux du poste du travail du museum.

L'être bien nourri et j'y reviens, c'est important, c'est ce que l'on appelle le surplus exploratoire, voyez Berlein, titulaire donc d'un surplus de calories énergétiques crée cette race dans le monde par son mouvement à condition de n'être pas trop fatigué. C'est pourquoi il assiège les pistes

de ski ou bien les "scenic railways", ou bien les salles de gymnastique et de boxe, pour rompre avec la monotone course des trottoirs roulants et des ascenseurs par trop, quotidiennement, culturalisés.

Je voudrais maintenant, puisque je vous propose ici une série d'images décousues, préparatoires à une discussion — vous proposer à part de cela, une autre sorte de remarques, sur l'idée de nature. Nous avons cru trop longtemps à la pérennité d'un espace naturel, inspiré de Kant, d'Aristote et des philosophes de la réalité. Mais nous avons désormais créé l'artifice dans l'environnement, des artifices dans l'environnement, beaucoup d'artifices, les planches, je ne parle pas du bois, les planches, le papier, il y en a qui disent que c'est du bois mais je ne m'en suis jamais aperçu, ça c'est un objet fabriqué et ainsi de suite.

Donc, nous avons créé l'artifice dans l'environnement urbain, dans la concentration urbaine. Nous avons introduit la technologie, une technologie totale et un tout petit peu plus, une technologie totalitaire, c'est-à-dire que rien ne lui échappe.

Désormais, la nature est une erreur puisque l'être humain l'a reconstruite, en simili de toutes pièces et qu'il couvre les espaces en béton, des villes en briques avec des plaques de gazon artificiel en matières plastiques.

L'environnement est construit totalement par l'homme et s'il y existe quelques résidus de nature, vous savez, on parle des parcs naturels, les touristes se chargent de les artificialiser.

Les arts, programmeurs des environnements sensoriels, seront faits comme les autres environnements, à l'ordinateur sous la surveillance du critique, rôle du critique, débarrassé soigneusement de tout romantisme Rousseauiste de la nature.

Tout art est désormais voué à l'ordinateur, nous reconstruisons le monde dans sa totalité programmée, les théories structuralistes et informationnelles nous en proposent les moyens.

Peut-on donc, à ce moment-là, situer ces arts de l'espace dont je vous parle, dont plutôt je ne vous parle pas mais je pense que nous en parlerons, les situer par rapport à ces arts majeurs que nous avons tant admirés et qui fuient de tous les côtés comme un bateau qui va couler.

L'exploration du volume s'avère donc être une constante esthétique de l'être négligée par l'art classique qui a imposé par ses succès passés toute une stéréotypie culturelle. Ce sont justement les époques en marge ou en opposition avec l'art classique qui ont su découvrir ces arts mineurs, ainsi appelés parce qu'ils n'ont pas atteint leur majorité. En particulier justement, l'époque maniériste du 16e siècle, plus intéressée

à la manière de faire qu'aux produits, à la combinatoire qu'aux résultats, aux formes de la sensibilité plutôt qu'à leur contenu.

C'est une école maniériste encore qui a effectué la première exploration des arts de l'espace, des jeux de l'homme avec son corps et avec les volumes et qui a mis clairement en évidence, dans un vertige perspectif, l'idée de programmation des micro-événements avec l'émergence de l'opéra et la prééminence donnée à la machinerie de théâtre ou à l'espace de scène sur la pièce jouée.

Ce sera une esthétique informationnelle de l'espace qui permettra aux critiques, autrefois commentateurs de ce que font les autres, désormais phénoménologues de la sensibilité, de fournir à l'artiste, devenu programmateur, programmateur en émotions, les règles pour maîtriser les rapports de l'individu social aux volumes qui lui sont offerts, à des fins esthétiques.

Eh bien, quelle serait finalement une science qui nous permettrait de maîtriser ce phénomène. Nous y avons fait allusion, vous la connaissez bien, elle a fait l'objet de nombreux travaux dans les milieux de critique et d'esthétique, c'est ce qu'on a appelé, d'un terme qui maintenant, se prêterait justement à quelques critiques, l'esthétique informationnelle.

Je voudrais, non pas la développer, car la place doit être laissée à la discussion, marquer simplement quelques-uns

de ses aspects. Elle se propose en tant que branche de la psychologie de la perception, d'étudier toute oeuvre d'art, quelle qu'elle soit, en tant que message transmis par un individu créateur, l'artiste, à un autre individu prélevé dans la masse sociale. J'ai fait un petit dessin là, c'est le premier à gauche. Donc, si vous le voulez, dans ce cercle, le système socio-culturel, c'est grand, c'est plein, dans le système socio-culturel, se promènent en toute liberté des culturèmes, des éléments de culture, des rectangles, des triangles, des arches gothiques, des portes, des escaliers, etc..., qui possèdent en même temps, en commun avec l'artiste, avec le consommateur avant même de commencer la communication. C'est le schéma classique du processus de communication.

Ces signes, ces culturèmes, ces éléments, qu'est-ce que c'est? Il y a n'importe quoi là-dedans. C'est fou ce qu'il peut y avoir comme choses. Il y a des signes, des lettres, des morphèmes, éléments de musique, éléments de mélodie, des positions, des éléments d'architecture, des cinémes - très joli le cinéma - des cinémes, c'est-à-dire éléments de mouvement cinématique - éléments des mouvements des cinémes, nous en reparlerons.

Puis, on peut généraliser, c'est entre autres, le rôle de l'esthéticien de définir l'ensemble de ces répertoires de signes. L'artiste, ou ce qui en tient lieu, l'écrivain,

le peintre, le sculpteur, le danseur, l'acrobate, enfin en tout, quoi, réalise un ensemble appelé message ou oeuvre isolable, c'est-à-dire qu'elle a un commencement et une fin comme une séquence de certains de ces éléments pris dans un certain ordre et prise de culturèmes et les mettre les uns au bout des autres. Selon certaines règles, c'est ça qui est intéressant, les règles de l'art ainsi nommées, ceci précisément, les façons d'assembler ces éléments d'une manière telle, qu'elle apporte à l'individu une certaine quantité de nouveautés, d'originalité mais que cette dernière ne soit pas si grande que le récepteur ne projette, ni ne reconnaisse un certain ordre.

En d'autres termes, que l'individu récepteur ne soit capable d'exercer une certaine prévision sur ce qui va suivre à partir de ce qui précède dans une exploration, "scanning procedure", séquentielle dans la musique, le ballet par exemple, ou spatial, le tableau, la sculpture, etc., qui à ce moment-là est faite à partir de points de fixation hiérarchisés, voir les travaux sur le mouvement des yeux dans la peinture.

S'il en est ainsi, le récepteur perçoit le message comme une Gestalt, une forme originale, une Gestalt qui est la perception d'une forme et conscience de prévisibilité.

L'établissement de ce juste équilibre que je vous ai proposé tout à l'heure entre le banal et l'original, entre

l'intelligible et l'informatif, l'intelligible et le nouveau, entre le simple et le complexe, l'établissement de ce juste équilibre, finalement, c'est très exactement la règle fondamentale de l'artiste. Et ceci a été bien démontré par des travaux récents de l'analyse factorielle.

Et ceci dans la mesure - et ici nous retombons dans la sociologie - dans la mesure où l'artiste s'adresse à un public, c'est pas toujours vrai. C'est ce que Max Bense a appelé l'esthétique des hommes, c'est-à-dire que l'artiste est un homme et que les consommateurs sont des hommes aussi et ils parlent les uns aux autres et l'artiste cherche d'une certaine façon à se faire comprendre. C'est un but un peu trivial, un peu vulgaire, mais enfin ça arrive, ça arrive même souvent.

À la limite, bien sûr, l'artiste peut s'isoler un peu, il peut s'adresser à un seul homme, lui-même par exemple, dans une affirmation gratuite et sans preuve de validité, ou bien, il peut s'adresser à un sous-ensemble restreint de la société, la cité des artistes, un cénacle, un ghetto ou une tour d'ivoire. C'est l'esthétique des Dieux du même Max Bense, en fait, il y a là, une condition d'intelligibilité qui n'est pas toujours suivie. Le jeu plus ou moins subtil de l'artiste pour ruser avec la condition d'intelligibilité est d'une bonne partie du travail artistique.

Cette analyse devrait être poursuivie, mais je ne veux pas y insister, par l'esthéticien informationnel à une série de hiérarchies, de niveaux de la perception de même qu'un gestème est impliqué dans un mouvement, un mouvement est impliqué dans un acte, et ainsi de suite, jusqu'à passer à une tactique et à des comportements globaux. Tout de même, nous devrions dégager des étages hiérarchiques, des structures de création, des structures, des messages et pour chacun trouver les règles, la redondance, l'équilibre, le pourcentage d'intelligibilité, etc..., ce serait, si vous voulez, un cahier des charges du critique esthéticien informationnel.

Eh bien, j'ai déjà parlé très longtemps et notre problème c'est une discussion. Que seraient donc les arts de l'espace? Nous venons de les définir très sommairement, les arts de l'espace ça se passe dans l'espace, ce sont des processus exploratoires, l'artiste est programmateur d'un certain nombre de micro-événements sensoriels dans un espace à deux dimensions, par exemple, ou bien à trois dimensions, je m'excuse on n'a pas mis de trapèze, ou bien à trois dimensions, ou bien à quatre dimensions.

Quatre dimensions, qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? Eh bien, ça veut dire qu'on exploite les trois dimensions selon des conditions d'interdiction d'accès qui varient à chaque instant, qui sont modifiables à une époque déterminée du temps.

Pensons à des portes ouvertes ou fermées. Ces remarques que je vous fais correspondent à des phénomènes extrêmement courants auxquels vous êtes habitués. Le bureau de poste est fermé à telle heure, alors vous pourriez passer par la fenêtre mais comme c'est un phénomène légal, ce n'est pas suffisant de rentrer dedans, il faut rentrer au contact de quelqu'un, la buraliste.

Par conséquent, nous avons donc toute une structure. Qu'est-ce qu'une ville? Une ville labyrinthe à deux dimensions et quand on construit un peu en hauteur, à trois dimensions, une ville avec ses caves, dans les caves il y a de la profondeur, il est bien connu qu'on distingue les pays en voie de développement en deux catégories. Ceux qui ont un Far West et ceux qui n'en ont pas. Il y a les pays avec Far West, c'est la cave, dans la cave, il y a un Far vite,"you can go to it,"et puis vous pouvez descendre, vous pouvez dedans peut-être décrire des trajectoires remarquables qui seraient, si vous voulez, une oeuvre d'art spatial, si vous y mettez des événements sensoriels accrochés par ci, par là. Schéma général de l'oeuvre d'art, ce que j'appellerais "wiggle-worm esthetics".

Trois dimensions, je n'en ai mis que trois sur le papier en perspective parce que je ne suis pas capable d'en mettre plus mais les ordinateurs font cela très bien, et une trajectoire et puis des événements, des événements successifs,

des micro-événements contenus, mesurés, des événements positifs ou des événements négatifs, des événements de plaisir, des événements de sensualité, le train fantôme généralisé. Nous avons donc ici, si vous voulez, l'idée d'une structure d'espace que je me permets de vous présenter, car mon rôle est d'animer une discussion, par conséquent, il faut que moi-même, je sois un peu animé, j'aimerais vous présenter sous la forme la plus paradoxale, dirai-je la plus méthodiquement stupide possible. Je n'atteindrai jamais la géniale stupidité des ordinateurs, il faudrait encore un petit effort, mais je cherche, si vous voulez à vous parler des Luna Parks, à vous parler des promenades dans le mobilier, à vous parler de l'esthétique des vers de terre, à vous parler des problèmes généraux d'une esthétique spatiale, d'événement sensoriels répartis et programmés par un artiste dans l'espace. Du labyrinthe comme forme canonique des arts à trois dimensions et même à quatre car il existe, bien entendu des labyrinthes à quatre dimensions.

Ce point, nous le discuterons tout à l'heure, si vous le voulez, je vous signale incidemment, tout à fait au passage, la différence entre les labyrinthes à plusieurs solutions, il y a plusieurs façons d'aller de l'entrée à la sortie et les labyrinthes à une solution, il n'y a qu'une façon d'aller de l'entrée à la sortie et puis alors, dans toutes les autres façons, on s'est trompé. Alors, comme on s'est trompé, il faut revenir.

Mais tout de même pour que vous ne me preniez pas trop pour un humoriste professionnel, je voudrais quand même marquer une application. Le musée, qu'est-ce que c'est? Bien, un musée, dirait un phénoménologue, c'est des couloirs et des escaliers puis éventuellement des gardiens puis aussi des portes, puis alors dans le musée, on a mis des choses. Quoi? N'importe quoi, enfin c'est l'affaire des spécialistes, il y en a beaucoup dans cette salle, je n'en parle pas. Des choses, des tableaux, par exemple, ça se fait beaucoup, des sculptures, ça se fait aussi. On aurait pu mettre des événements comme des divans en peluche. On en met quelquefois. Des événements désagréables, "Défense de fumer", des événements positifs, la cafétéria. Enfin des événements d'une façon générale, c'est des micro-événements, ils ne sont pas très grands, on peut les acheter pour pas cher.

Mais ce sont des événements et vous vous promenez dans cette séquence en construisant des événements avec les micro-événements. Vous obtenez donc une séquence, un plaisir, une sensualité positive ou négative.

Bon, eh bien, un musée, c'est ça entre autres. Et comment va-t-on l'organiser? Vous le savez bien. La description que je viens de vous en donner, des couloirs, des escaliers, des ascenseurs et puis on met des choses là-dedans. C'est bien de ça que nous parlions tout à l'heure.

Alors, bien sûr, vous pourriez faire un labyrinthe à plusieurs solutions, alors, je situe dans le labyrinthe à plusieurs solutions les choses qui, je suppose, vous importent le plus, à savoir, les œuvres d'art, enfin, les œuvres d'art au sens classique. J'en mets une là, j'en mets une autre là et puis j'en mets une aussi là. Ah! ici, j'en mets une grosse, ça c'est la Joconde, et puis ici j'en mets une petite, ça c'est un petit Vermeer et puis ici j'en mets une grosse, une balançoire pour enfants, puis ici, j'en mets une moyenne et puis encore une petite ici, j'en mets une, elle est surréaliste, et puis ici, j'en mets une et ainsi de suite. Et puis, on peuple, on peuple comment? C'est ce qu'on appellera l'idée de la densité d'événements qui s'étudiera en particulier par la formule de Shannon, parce que la notion de densité doit être remplacée par une notion de complexité ou entropie des événements. Je passe, cela c'est un peu technique.

Mais pensons simplement à la position d'un labyrinthe, le musée comme labyrinthe à plusieurs solutions ou le musée comme labyrinthe à une seule solution. Prenons le deuxième pour commencer.

Le musée comme labyrinthe à une seule solution, donc il n'y a qu'une seule façon de parvenir à la sortie et si on s'engage dans certains couloirs, eh bien on s'est trompé, il faut revenir. Mais en revenant, vous revoyez les œuvres.

Comme cela, vous y passez plus de temps. Et si justement, le conservateur s'était dit: "les gens ne savent pas apprécier cette belle chose, je vais la coller là, c'est un couloir sans issue, il seront obligés de revenir, il faudra bien qu'ils la voient deux fois."

C'est utile, c'est ce qu'on appellera programmation d'événements sensoriels dans l'espace. Ça c'est le labyrinthe à une seule solution.

Le labyrinthe à plusieurs solutions. On fait un grand musée, grand, très grand, il y en a beaucoup au total. Et naturellement, pour bien voir les œuvres correctement, il faudrait en y pensant, soyons gentil, 30 secondes par œuvre d'art. Alors, on fait un marché. En y passant 30 secondes par œuvre d'art, vous comprenez, il y en a 10,000, ça fait quand même beaucoup de temps. Alors, on verra jamais tout ou bien on verra les choses mal.

Le conservateur du musée, ne pourrait-il pas, éventuellement, programmer rapidement le processus et faire un labyrinthe à plusieurs solutions, c'est-à-dire il y a plusieurs façons d'arriver à la sortie, c'est-à-dire de sortir du musée mais, vous pourrez revenir et vous ne verrez pas les mêmes choses.

L'exploitation dans un même espace géométrique d'un grand nombre de trajectoires représentées par des séquences

d'événements esthétiques qui sont différents. Tout ça, ça se calcule, c'est la théorie de l'information qui vous en donne les moyens. Je passe.

Nous avons donc, si vous voulez, esquissé ce que pourraient être des phénomènes importants car enfin, je crois que ces phénomènes ne sont pas toujours dépouvus d'importance.

L'architecture était considéré comme l'art à voir. Le Guggenheim Museum dans lequel vous descendez en hélice les œuvres d'art, vous savez c'est le système des anciennes usines par gravitation. On prend un silo, on monte la charge en haut, et puis, on lui fait subir des opérations de préparation esthétique dans le cours du trajet par gravitation. C'est le principe du musée Guggenheim.

Mais, bien sûr, il y a plusieurs façons de voir les choses. On peut dire que le musée Guggenheim est une belle œuvre architecturale à voir, mais je vous dirais volontiers que c'est une œuvre à pratiquer, c'est-à-dire, je séparerais dans les arts de l'espace deux types principaux d'art. Ceux dans lesquels on fait et ceux dans lesquels on voit. Les arts de l'espace, disais-je, c'était éventuellement la participation à tous ces micro-événements soigneusement programmés par l'artiste. Par exemple, le courant d'air chaud qui vous souffle au scenic railway à tel endroit de la descente en accélération libre. Mais vous avez d'autre part, la possibilité d'avoir de longs trajets uniformes, des montées, etc.

Vous avez, en d'autres termes, une participation. On paie pour entrer, et puis on agit, et puis on fait quelque chose. Incidemment, les ressorts de cette action, voilà un travail pour les critiques d'art.

Quand est-ce qu'on participe et quand est-ce qu'on ne participe pas? Le problème de ce fameux happening généralisé et programmé, le problème de la participation à l'oeuvre, aux œuvres, puisque je vous parle d'une pluralité d'œuvres comme phénomène essentiel. Voilà un problème qui devrait intéresser les critiques d'art. Comment trouver des règles de participation. Ici, il peut s'associer dans un contrat secret avec l'artiste. Ce sera le gang des artistes essayant de séduire ou de violer le public consommateur. Nous avons donc là, si vous voulez, un processus, un problème qui nous estposé.

Art à pratiquer. Si vous voulez, je vous parlais tout à l'heure du catch avec un boa huilé. C'est un art à pratiquer, c'est un peu spécial. Je m'excuse, je vous parle des choses un peu spéciales, des arts mineurs. Mais il y a aussi d'autres possibilités. L'autre type, si vous voulez, ce serait les arts de l'espace à voir. On est assis confortablement dans un fauteuil. Et puis, on vous montre l'espace, l'espace se déplace autour de vous au lieu que ce soit vous qui vous déplacez par une action positive dans l'espace. Vous ne faites ni geste, ni mouvement, vous êtes Carré dans votre

fauteuil, et puis vous regardez. Il y a un processus qui est bien connu pour cela on appelle ça, le cinéma. Enfin, on l'a appelé le cinéma, c'est aussi un art décédé mais on va le remplacer.

Mais expérience de l'espace. Le touriste assis dans sa voiture pour parcourir la route touristique No. 216A dans laquelle on lui a programmé par le trajet des routes et des sens interdits un labyrinthe merveilleux sur la carte lui permettant d'obtenir un certain nombre de paysages dans un certain ordre, avec une densité suffisante pour qu'il ne soit pas épuisé à la fin de la journée.

S'agirait-il d'une oeuvre d'art à trois dimensions? La question est ouverte. Je suppose que vous allez tous unanimement me dire "c'est pas sérieux". Réfléchissons-y si vous voulez, peut-être aurons-nous l'occasion d'en reparler. Mais surtout, il y a là tout un volume de phénomènes. Art total, cinéma total, et je vous proposerai si vous voulez, cette idée des matrices heuristiques, c'est-à-dire des matrices de découverte. Quel est le système de combinatoire d'événements ou d'éléments sensoriels qui peut vous permettre de définir un type particulier d'expériences esthétiques? Eh bien, on prendra la liste des endroits où ça se passe, la liste des événements qui s'y passent et la liste des mouvements possibles, on peut y aller vite, on peut y aller lentement, on peut y aller

en accélérant, on peut y aller en freinant, on peut y aller chaud, on peut y aller froid, etc... ceci pour l'espace du sujet, les arts à pratiquer.

Et pour l'espace du spectacle objet, les arts à voir, position des objets qui nous sont proposés dans un cube, position des objets, caractère sensoriel des formes, seront-elles colorées, animées, olfactives, etc...? Mouvement relatif des objets par rapport les uns aux autres. Ce ne sont pas des dimensions, ce sont des échelles de multiplicité, séparables, répertoriables et que par conséquent, on peut combiner dans une matrice générale des arts de l'espace. Ce serait ici un des outils fondamentaux du critique, de ce critique d'art qui recherche à insérer dans un réseau de raisonnements, l'ensemble des phénomènes sensoriels qui sont proposés et fabriqués par l'artiste.

Voilà donc, si vous voulez, une idée sur ce que pourrait être un univers d'étude des arts de l'espace, arts qui ont été mineurs. Pourquoi? Parce que la stéréotypie culturelle, à laquelle je faisais déjà allusion, a conduit les critiques d'art, les gens qui écrivent sur l'art, les écrivains de l'art et aussi les esthéticiens philosophes, les a conduits à parler du sublime, du beau, des voiles, de l'absolu, du voile de Maya, etc., etc. et d'oublier le train fantôme, le scenic railway, le labyrinthe, le labyrinthe de glace.

Mais, remarquez encore, les surréalistes, toujours eux, les surréalistes sont montés dans le train fantôme des foires en 1928, pendant que les académiciens les regardaient faire. Y aurait-il ici, éventuellement, un nouveau problème qui serait posé? Y a-t-il une récupération nécessaire des arts de l'espace, du fait de l'épuisement des arts conventionnels?

Voilà, si vous voulez, une des questions fondamentales que je voulais vous poser et je terminerai ici cette amorce de discussion, j'ouvrirai la discussion en vous citant Thomas Mann: "Le monde doit ressembler à l'homme et non l'homme au monde." Nous en avons désormais les moyens, ça s'appelle ordinateur, à vous de jouer.

M. BERGER

Merci, Abraham Moles, de nous avoir proposé à la fois le musée comme labyrinthe et, s'il le permet, la conférence comme labyrinthe, vous ne m'en voudrez pas d'ajouter cela. Je dois dire que l'ensemble de l'exposé, non pas de ce qui a été dit, mais l'ensemble de ce qui était prévu, figure dans une brochure (il s'agit de 26 pages multigraphiées en lignes serrées) intitulée Esthétique informationnelle de l'espace et théorie des actes. C'est donc cet ouvrage, fait spécialement pour le colloque, qui est mis à notre disposition. (Si je ne me trompe, c'est à 5 heures du matin que les copies ont été terminées!) Nous n'avons que quelques exemplaires pour l'instant.

Abraham Moles me permettra aussi, avant d'ouvrir la discussion, de remercier les traducteurs. Ils n'ont pas dû avoir la tâche facile!

Cela dit, que ceux qui désirent prendre la parole - ils doivent être nombreux - veuillent bien se placer à gauche et à droite près des micros, pour que nous puissions organiser la discussion.

M. CIRICI

Je voudrais vous poser deux questions. Vous avez parlé d'un élargissement de l'oeuvre d'art à partir de cette oeuvre classique d'imiter jusqu'à cette oeuvre de l'espace nouvelle. Alors, je voudrais vous proposer s'il n'y aurait pas un parallélisme entre cet élargissement et un certain élargissement, qu'il me semble, qui existe depuis l'époque où l'art était l'oeuvre d'un artiste isolé et personnel et génial jusqu'à un certain moment où il y a eu cette tendance à supprimer la frontière entre le créateur et le consommateur par une participation spécialement active?

La deuxième question que je voudrais vous poser. Si vous avez dit que le nouveau rôle des esthéticiens ou des critiques dans ces nouveaux mondes de l'espace est de définir le répertoire, je voudrais vous demander, ça ne serait plutôt pas seulement le répertoire mais aussi et surtout les fonctions?

ABRAHAM MOLES

Je vous remercie de cette remarque qui me montre en tout cas, qu'en dépit de l'aspect un peu labyrinthique de mon exposé, qui avait été naturellement soigneusement programmé, il n'y a pas de souci, le message est passé. Vous voyez, on peut faire passer le message sans respecter les structures syntaxiques de Chomsky et après tout, c'est peut-être mieux comme ça.

Je suis tout à fait de votre avis sur ce point et vous avez cité un parallélisme entre le passage des arts classiques aux arts de l'espace et le passage de l'oeuvre de l'artiste isolé, séparé, ségrégué, enfermé, avec justement une oeuvre où on joue, on joue un peu, d'ailleurs j'ai essayé de jouer avec vous. On joue un peu, c'est-à-dire, on est tout pris dans le système. Je suis totalement de votre avis, si vous voulez. Vous avez précisé quelque chose qui était en filigrane dans tout mon exposé.

Plus précisément, le problème de ce jeu se pose à différents niveaux. Il se pose d'abord avec la fameuse phrase de Marcel Achard "Voulez-vous jouer avec moi?". Et une autre phrase, on répond "je veux jouer" et puis au bout de 5 minutes, on quitte la partie, parce que ça vous ennuie parce que ça a perdu toute son attraction. Voilà peut-être un des problèmes fondamentaux, problèmes qui sont posés actuellement par un très grand nombre d'artistes contemporains. Je pense à la

musique, mais je pense à ces arts de l'espace qui sont justement la construction de labyrinthes, le groupe d'art dans la rue, etc., le happening, etc. Quand est-ce que vous voulez jouer? Quand est-ce que vous êtes fatigué de jouer? Et si vous êtes fatigué de jouer au bout de quelques secondes, doit-on considérer que le jeu proposé est une oeuvre d'art? Voilà une question. Il y a eu à Rettinhausen il y a deux ans, un congrès important, une exposition importante, Kunst als Spiel, Spiel als Kunst. La question était bien posée. Ce qui était très intéressant, c'est que dans cette nouvelle génération des artistes qui travaillent dans l'art comme jeu, de plus en plus, le public marche, si vous me permettez cette expression très folklorique, on marche, c'est-à-dire qu'ils jouaient avec, ils jouaient vraiment, ils jouaient de façon suffisamment longue, en tout cas plus longue statistiquement que le temps pendant lequel ils regardent la Joconde. Donc, c'était une oeuvre d'art comme la Joconde. Vous suivez mon raisonnement, c'est de la logique formelle.

Deuxième question que vous avez posée. Définir ce que doit faire le critique d'art ou l'esthéticien? Vous remarquerez que je les ai un peu confondus. Je ne savais jamais exactement quand je commençais une phrase si j'allais mettre l'esthéticien ou le critique d'art. Mes idées ne sont pas claires là-dessus. Je ne sais pas si c'est bien important.

Je crois que justement le rôle de l'esthéticien ou du critique d'art ou du psychologue de la Gestalt je prétendrai que tout esthéticien ou tout critique d'art doit avoir une sérieuse et solide formation en psychologie Gestaltiste.

Réciproquement et ça serait bien étonnant qu'un bon psychologue de la Gestalt n'ait pas quelques remarques pertinentes à vous faire sur une oeuvre d'art. Ca peut toujours servir, ça ferait partie des sous-produits, on le récupérera comme ça quand il sera en chômage.

Mais, le point important que vous avez remarqué, c'est le rapport entre répertoire et fonction. En fait, là, si vous voulez, j'ai été dans un couloir obscur de mon labyrinthe et je ne me suis peut-être pas bien exprimé. Les tâches dont je voudrais qu'on charge l'esthéticien et le critique d'art, ça fait beaucoup, vous savez. Il faut qu'ils prennent en charge tout, sauf le courage de faire les choses.

À part cela, ça fait quand même beaucoup. Définir les répertoires, définir les signes, définir les échelons de super-signes, définir les règles, définir les codes, définir les structures syntaxiques de l'oeuvre d'art, définir les interdictions, définir les rapports avec la société. Ca fait du travail, il y a de quoi faire et je crois que nous serions bien d'accord, à la fois répertoire et d'autre part l'étude des fonctions.

Vous voyez que j'aurai une attitude très totalitaire vis-à-vis du rôle du critique dans l'art contemporain à partir du moment où dans la société actuelle il y a banalisation et destruction nécessaires des œuvres d'art, où les œuvres d'art ressemblent si vous voulez au réservoir d'essence d'une station service. Quand il y a trop d'automobiles qui sont venues s'alimenter, le réservoir est vide et il faut le remplir. À partir de ce moment-là, l'esthéticien, le distancier, le monsieur loin, le monsieur qui regarde et qui combine des raisonnements peut être utile pour la programmation des ordinateurs avec des règles et pour réaliser, accomplir un certain nombre de fonctions. C'est exactement le rôle qui lui est proposé. J'attire votre attention sur l'importance de l'ordinateur dans cette affaire.

MICHEL RAGON

Est-ce que les Eskimos, avant qu'on leur ait envoyé des professeurs de dessin, les Sauvages de Nouvelle-Guinée, les Noirs d'Afrique, avant qu'on les ait "civilisés", autrement dit, tous les peuples pauvres, tous les peuples primitifs, les mal nourris, les mal logés, ne nous offrent-ils pas l'art le plus riche en émotions?

ABRAHAM MOLES

Ma réponse est tout à fait simple. Vous avez, si vous voulez, poussé mes paroles au-delà de ce que j'ai dit

car je parle un peu à l'imromptu mais précisément, je n'ai pas dit ce que vous venez de me faire dire. J'ai dit, l'oeuvre d'art est actuellement et de toutes façons la chose de l'être bien nourri. Elle l'a été de tout temps. Par bien nourri j'entends, tout d'abord quelque chose qui peut être très rudimentaire. Je faisais allusion, si je cite mes sources, c'est peut-être plus simple, je faisais allusion à ce que l'on appelle "exploratory behaviour", le comportement exploratoire qui est une chose qui a été bien étudiée par les psychologues entre autres. Quand vous mettez un singe dans une cage, puis vous l'avez nourri suffisamment pour qu'il ait de l'énergie musculaire, eh bien au lieu de rester dans un coin de la cage, il l'explore partout pour y chercher des bananes ou n'importe quel produit. Et éventuellement, il fait quelque chose. C'est à ce niveau radiologique, vous le remarquez, que je me plaçais d'abord, je parlais de l'être bien nourri.

Vous avez, vous me permettrez de faire distinction, vous avez replacé l'être bien nourri, c'est-à-dire, dans la société de consommation. Il y a problème, la société de consommation dont j'ai largement parlé mais c'est un problème différent. Dans la société de consommation, c'est l'art du loisir, le temps libre, qui seront ce que j'appellerais être bien nourri en temps libre. Voilà comment je traduirai, si vous voulez, donc vous avez fait une assimilation, je la réduis.

MICHEL RAGON

Vous avez parlé aussi du critique moteur de l'art, ce qui était très aimable pour nous tous. Mais est-ce que l'artiste n'a pas tendance à devenir lui-même actuellement critique, je veux dire à faire une oeuvre qui est foncièrement critique, plus critique peut-être que créatrice, dans le sens où on l'entendait jadis? Il fait des idées pour faire des œuvres. D'ailleurs vous avez longuement parlé de cela dans certains de vos ouvrages. Peut-être serait-il intéressant que vous dévelopez ce thème qui me semble capital, car de plus en plus actuellement, dans les expositions, on trouve effectivement des idées pour faire des œuvres. Pour faire des œuvres telles qu'on l'entendait, du moins autrefois.

ABRAHAM MOLES

Je crois en fait, que vous apportez un complément. Je suis totalement d'accord. Vous me demandez de développer un peu. Je ferai donc si vous voulez, une remarque complémentaire à votre complément.

Je disais tout à l'heure et j'y insiste, ça fait partie justement des conclusions que je voulais marquer dans cette introduction.

L'artiste ne fait plus des œuvres. Il fait des idées pour faire des œuvres. C'est la formule que j'ai employée, n'est-ce pas?

En d'autres termes, et nous connaissons tous les deux, beaucoup d'artistes contemporains qui seraient dans ce cas; ils trouvent une idée, puis ils veulent l'expérimenter au laboratoire de l'art, ça c'est important au laboratoire d'esthétique. Au laboratoire de l'art parce que le laboratoire d'esthétique, ça sent un peu l'université. Dans les universités, il y a de la poussière, c'est pas un bon endroit pour conserver les œuvres d'art.

Mais, ils cherchent, si vous voulez, à l'expérimenter et la question posée, c'est la question de ce que l'on a appelé l'art expérimental. Terme dont vous connaissez bien le problème, on a largement abusé. L'expérience au sens de expérimente et non de Erfang. L'expérience, c'est du travail, c'est fatigant de faire des expériences au laboratoire. Vous faites une expérience et puis ça ne marche pas et puis alors quand ça ne marche pas, il y a au moins deux raisons. C'est que l'idée était mauvaise ou bien que la réalisation de l'idée était mauvaise ou bien que l'idée était mauvaise et la réalisation aussi.

Et je dois dire qu'en général les artistes, et ici je ne pense pas que le critique d'art s'est érigé en censeur de l'artiste, enfin pas encore mais ça viendra. Il faut dire que les artistes quand ils essaient et que ça ne marche pas et bien ils laissent tomber. Vous connaissez ce terme.

Peut-être devraient-ils, après avoir essayé et que ça ne marche pas, élucider explicitement les raisons pour lesquelles ça n'a pas marché. Et puis recommencer, et puis recommencer encore, et toujours jusqu'à ce que ça marche ou jusqu'à ce qu'il a été bien démontré que l'idée était mauvaise et qu'on pense à autre chose.

Dans le domaine des musiques expérimentales, qu'il se trouve que je connais un peu, nous avons vu souvent des œuvres de musique expérimentale dans lesquelles c'était tout simplement un petit essai et puis ça se vendait bien en concert. Et bien ça a continué. C'était inscrit dans le registre, c'était pas une œuvre expérimentale, c'était une œuvre tout court.

Il y a là toute une éthique de la cité des artistes. Donc je vous remercie d'avoir attiré l'attention sur ce point.

QUESTION

Professeur Moles, vous avez esquissé la programmation de l'art dans un exposé particulièrement teinté d'originalité, donc assez informatif, je voudrais vous entendre parler sur le rôle des média d'information, que vous avez d'ailleurs développé dans vos ouvrages, entre autres "Socio-dynamique de la culture" et je voudrais vous voir préciser la relation suivante: Quelle est, compte tenu du fonctionnement spécifique des mass média, des moyens d'information des mass media, quelle est l'influence

de leur action sur l'originalité, l'intelligibilité et éventuellement la redondance de ces événements, de cet univers événementiel et est-ce qu'à votre avis, il y a une façon de les programmer qui puisse accroître l'intelligibilité du spectateur, du récepteur?

ABRAHAM MOLES

Vous attirez l'attention sur un point très important que je n'ai esquissé que d'une façon un peu sommaire tout à l'heure. En gros, pour la thèse que j'ai essayé de vous proposer et peut-être ici je devrais préciser, était la suivante. Nous vivons dans l'univers de la copie généralisée, copie généralisée, et diffusée et étendue par les mass média à la totalité du monde. Si c'est pas encore fait, ça va venir.

Toute oeuvre, par conséquent, est vue par des milliers et des millions d'yeux, surtout vue des milliers et des centaines de fois. Elle se détruit et se décompose progressivement, l'oeuvre d'art s'use sous les regards.

Pour être précis, je dirai que c'est un mécanisme d'une telle importance, d'une telle grandeur, je soupçonne que M. McLuhan demain dira quelques mots là-dessus, une telle importance parce qu'enfin, c'est la fourmi et le rouleau compresseur, pas besoin de lutter. On ne vainc que les lois de la nature physique qu'en y obéissant. Je laisse de côté la nature, qu'en y obéissant, c'est une phrase célèbre du philosophe des sciences, c'est-à-dire en les tournant, pas en les vainquant.

En d'autres termes, nous devons compter avec ça, et c'est justement, les critiques d'art, ou une réunion scientifique comme celle qui se fait aujourd'hui a un but, a un rôle, c'est de bien mettre en évidence les choses, et je vous rappelle la fameuse première règle de tout psychanaliste qui se respecte: "la première chose à propos d'un mal quelconque, en supposant que ce soit un mal, on pourra en reparler, c'est d'abord de le dire et de bien comprendre et de l'expliciter le plus clairement possible". C'est ce que je me suis efforcé de faire. Six milliards d'insectes heureux, dévorant l'originalité, s'abreuvant au tank de la culture. C'est de ça que nous parlons.

Plus précisément encore, je vous propose cet axiome. L'axiome fondamental des conserves culturelles. En tout lieu, en tout temps, pour tous, tout phénomène remarquable du passé est disponible à tout moment, à un prix raisonnable, ça coûte pas cher. C'est à partir de cet axiome que nous devons, si nous voulons faire quelque chose, construire un art contemporain. Eh bien, ce n'est pas facile. Entre autres, et je reprends les lignes que vous m'avez indiquées, entre autres, il s'agit donc d'une préemption perpétuelle des œuvres d'art. Il n'existe plus d'œuvres d'art avec un grand O et un grand A, mais il existe des événements artistiques ou des œuvres artistiques, enfin des petits termes qualificatifs.

Et on recommence et on renouvelle et le problème de l'authenticité de l'art devient une authenticité de situation et non pas une authenticité d'oeuvres. Il n'y a pas de différence entre un Vermeer et un Van Megeren. C'est pas vrai. D'ailleurs on l'a démontré en le refaisant, en confrontant

Je laisse de côté les critiques d'art, parce que maintenant, ils sont par définition axiomatiquement incomptétents. C'est pas vrai puisqu'il n'y a pas de différence, puisque le consommateur consomme. Non, le véritable problème n'est pas celui-là. L'authenticité est une authenticité de situation. Moi, je suis un Kitch, j'achète un Van Megeren, une reproduction, je la mets dans ma chambre et je la regarde, j'ai du plaisir. Tout est bien. J'ai raison, c'est moi qui ai l'authentique et le critique d'art qui me raconte des histoires sur les rapports entre Vermeer et Van Megeren qui n'ont pas vécu au même siècle, tout ça, ça ne me regarde pas.

BERGER

J'aurais à mon tour quelques questions à vous poser. Vous permettez que je le fasse? L'ensemble de la théorie que vous développez part d'un postulat que vous résumez à plusieurs reprises, d'une façon très laconique: l'œuvre d'art s'use sous les regards; le stock artistique s'épuise. Est-ce une évidence, un axiome ou un postulat? Pour ma part, c'est un postulat. Je m'explique. Dans le cas où l'on envisage l'ensemble

des œuvres d'art comme répertorié définitivement, c'est-à-dire constituant un corpus, on pourrait considérer que le stock s'épuise. Mais n'est-il pas singulier de constater qu'au cours des trois dernières décennies, nous avons assisté à l'émergence des primitifs par exemple, à la découverte des maniéristes ou bien à l'émergence des œuvres ethnographiques. C'est dire que le corpus n'est jamais constitué. S'il n'est jamais constitué, cela signifie que l'ensemble ne peut jamais s'épuiser. C'est du moins ma conviction, même si elle est en contradiction avec ce que vous dévelopez; il se peut naturellement que j'aie tort.

Première constatation qui m'achemine à une seconde: le temps statistique dont vous parlez se rapporte à une œuvre faisant partie d'un corpus établi. Or, l'un des rôles du critique d'art, c'est justement d'alimenter ce corpus, qui n'est jamais fermé, qui est toujours ouvert. Il y a donc une différence fondamentale entre le temps statistique, celui de la consommation des éléments composant un corpus fermé, et le temps qu'on pourrait appeler le temps de la découverte, ou celui de la redécouverte, lorsque de nouveaux êtres sont en présence d'œuvres connues ou que des choses nouvelles se révèlent.

Ce qui m'amène à la troisième question: quand vous nous proposiez la théorie informationnelle pour résoudre le

problème de la critique d'art, n'y a-t-il pas lieu de se demander s'il n'appartient pas au critique d'art, non pas de définir l'ensemble, mais d'élaborer l'ensemble en instance de formation? Voilà mes trois questions.

MOLES

Je vais essayer de répondre. Je vous suis très reconnaissant de cette intervention qui me permet, comment dirais-je, non pas de faire amende honorable, n'y comptez pas.

Mais, de reconnaître un certain nombre de points. Je vous dirais volontiers qu'ici, mais je pensais que c'était mon rôle, nous sommes sur ce que l'on appelle le nouveau continent, enfin on dit cela dans l'ancien. Mon rôle, c'était d'être un peu futuriste. Je suis un peu futuriste, j'exagère. Vous savez, Darwin, si je me souviens bien, faisait remarquer que pour amener l'esprit humain du point A au point B, il fallait tenir compte de la viscosité de l'esprit humain. Et que par conséquent, il fallait lui dire "c'est très au-delà de B" de telle façon que, maintenu par sa viscosité, il parvient au moins jusqu'à B. Ce serait donc ma position.

D'autre part, parlons du fond. Je maintiens que l'œuvre d'art, en prenant un certain nombre de ce que l'on appelle entre guillemets "œuvres d'art" et qu'on répertorie dans les catalogues et dans les ventes célèbres, s'use sous le regard. Je le redis, je considère cette formule comme très importante.

Mais, le corpus se renouvelle. Sur ce point, vous avez tout à fait raison. L'émergence des primitifs, citiez-vous, l'art ethnographique, enfin, le néo-réalisme, le pop, enfin, on en fait comme ça, il en sort périodiquement, il en sort même beaucoup.

C'est exactement le mécanisme que je vous ai proposé. On fabrique de nouvelles idées pour fabriquer de nouveaux arts, de temps en temps, on fait aussi des œuvres, enfin quelques-unes. Alors de temps en temps, sur la quantité, il y en a qui sortent du tamis. On les colle dans un musée et puis elles deviennent un peu poussiéreuses, au sens moral s'entend, et à ce moment-là ou bien on en rajoute d'autres ou bien on les met dans les stocks.

Bien sûr, il y a des monstres sacrés. C'est pour cela que j'ai cité la Joconde. Il y a des monstres sacrés. Je soupçonne qu'un jour, ils se feront démythifier. Ça risque de durer. Il y a beaucoup de gardiens au Louvre mais ce n'est pas, je crois, le vrai problème. L'autre problème ce serait par exemple, ce point évident, c'est que la 9^e symphonie n'a jamais été aussi belle que dans les disques de la Deutsche Gramaphon Gesellschaft sous la direction de Karajan. Elle est en tout cas très supérieure à celle de Beethoven, de toute évidence. La meilleure preuve c'est que vous pouvez essayer de la reproduire dans les conditions où vous jouiez autrefois Beethoven. Mais on dira, c'est extraordinaire, le plus grand orchestre des temps modernes. Un petit exemple entre parenthèses.

Plus profondément, vous avez raison. Le corpus se renouvelle. Il se renouvelle partiellement. La question que je pose est une question qui devrait théoriquement se poser en termes de chiffres et sur ce point, je dois vous avouer, que bien que j'aie mis sur pied les éléments d'une mesure du phénomène culturel artistique, cette mesure vous le savez bien ne reste presque que purement théorique, car les données numériques qu'on doit y faire entrer sont mal connues et par conséquent, la mesure est assez défaillante. Assez défaillante, mais on en reparlera dans quelque temps.

En gros, le problème quantitatif. Oui le corpus augmente mais en même temps, il s'épuise de l'autre côté et par conséquent vous avez un balayage de nouvelles œuvres, le stock ne monte beaucoup moins vite qu'il ne montait autrefois dans d'autres domaines. En d'autres termes encore, je cherche à bien préciser les points de votre remarque, à chaque instant on change, certains types d'art s'épuisent. Les œuvres d'art s'épuisent mais la mentalité artistique, le plaisir artistique non seulement ne s'épuise pas mais devient de plus en plus grand au fur et à mesure que dans la société de consommation à laquelle faisait allusion M. Ragon, au fur et à mesure que les gens, étant un peu mieux nourris, ont un peu plus de temps pour avoir droit à la beauté. Il leur faut de la beauté, il faut les nourrir en beauté et par conséquent, il faut faire des provisions de beauté.

C'est exactement ça, essayons de fabriquer des conserves. Voilà, si vous voulez, le point fondamental sur lequel je voulais insister. Renouvellement du corpus. Je demande est-ce que ce corpus sera à la hauteur des 6 milliards d'insectes heureux? C'est la question quantitative.

RENÉ DE SOLIER

Nous avons tous connu, à des âges divers, je ne veux faire aucun procès, bien entendu mais j'espère que la contestation peut venir de n'importe quel âge et à n'importe quel âge. Nous avons tous connu un défaut, qui, pour ma part, est inquiétant et qui s'appelle le canular. Je suis français et j'ai connu ce genre d'esprit en Kâgne. La contestation est-elle en train de griller le professeur? C'est la première question que je me pose.

Deuxièmement, étant écrivain, c'est-à-dire ayant quitté l'enseignement il y a fort longtemps, en 1945 pour être précis, tenant l'écriture pour chose sérieuse, je suis très malheureux, à la fois amusé et inquiet devant ces sortes de parades. Je vais vous dire exactement pourquoi. L'art est chose sérieuse et chose joyeuse. L'art en question, il n'est pas question pour nous, écrivains et critiques, de découper en petits morceaux, et d'avoir un classique, un ancien et un surréaliste. Et je suis bien étonné de vos références. Vous parlez de la 9^e Symphonie mais vous ne parlez pas de Nicolas de Staél. J'avoue avoir un goût préférentiel pour les contemporains tout en aimant beaucoup Jérôme Bosch, c'est-à-dire un art crypté.

Or, seconde question, vous employez le labyrinthe, je regarde vos graphes, je crois connaître les synthèses du labyrinthe en graphes, pour parler comme le docteur Lacan qui est éminentissime, et bien je vous assure que si, vos graphes, on les regarde, on ne risque pas de s'égarter. C'est du dessin avec des trucs de couleurs, mais à partir de là, quant à un labyrinthe, je crois qu'il faudrait en parler sérieusement.

Troisième point, l'œuvre d'art est labyrinthique, d'où le défaut de l'esthétique de langue française - je ferai une grande différence, sans instruire d'ailleurs aucun procès, entre esthétique et critique. Pour moi, ce qui compte lorsqu'on parle de critique, c'est ce qui est écrit. Comme disait Balzac "l'art c'est quand ça tourne". Et bien la critique, c'est quand c'est écrit, et quand ça tient.

Donc, entre les paroles, celles que nous échangeons en ce moment, et celles peut-être aussi que je voudrais faire venir en réaction contre cette espèce de numéro de cirque, je voudrais bien que ces paroles soient aussi une critique. Je veux bien qu'on s'amuse mais qu'on ne perde pas de vue que la folie de Van Gogh ou la folie de Nietzsche sont comme les grands signaux ou les grands drames qui annonçaient en un sens peut-être les effarantes difficultés de maintenant, au sein de l'art de maintenant, tel que le vivent les artistes. Alors, dans cette dichotomie entre œuvres d'art, et il faudra bien qu'un jour, on nous dise lesquelles, je vous ai donné un nom parce que ce

fut un drame pour les hommes de notre génération. Mais il n'y a pas de débat possible sans référence à des œuvres d'art mêmes fragiles, mais à des œuvres d'art de maintenant.

Conclusion, je crois que les choses auxquelles nous croyons dans le domaine de l'art et dans le domaine de l'écrit sont suffisamment graves pour que le tour d'esprit ne soit pas constamment comme une sorte de voltige. Nous ne sommes pas au cirque, il n'y a pas d'Auguste et il y a des écrivains pour qui la critique d'art est une chose extrêmement sérieuse et qui se contentent de quelques notes. Je songe à un ancien maître, qui est Fénéon; à toute une catégorie d'écrivains, Pierre Francastel, Jean Grenier. Je vous assure que je préfère infiniment ce sérieux-là.

MOLES

Bon, je crois que la contestation s'est manifestée de la façon la plus nette. Visiblement, il y a des points sur lesquels nous ne serons pas d'accord et peut-être jamais d'accord, car il y a là-dedans des attitudes d'esprit et ces attitudes d'esprit sont peut-être, je crois, irréductibles. Il y a des terrains de conflit ou de combat dans les domaines intellectuels, vous le savez bien.

Donc, sur les remarques que vous avez faites, les premières remarques que vous avez faites, je crois qu'on pourrait poursuivre la discussion indéfiniment et je dirais volontiers sans profit.

Peut-être peut-on la poursuivre en privé avec profit. En public, je pense qu'on risque de tourner sur des attitudes personnelles. Par contre, il y a d'autres points qui sont peut-être constructifs pour l'auditoire. Vous n'êtes pas le seul à penser comme vous l'avez exprimé. Je dois vous dire qu'on ne doit tout de même pas confondre quelqu'un qui fait un schéma au tableau pour expliciter sa pensée d'une façon brève, et une représentation quelconque d'une réalité.

On peut aussi faire autre chose mais ce n'était pas le propos ici. Donc, si vous voulez, labyrinthe, on pourrait en étudier d'autres, on pourrait étudier les lois des labyrinthes, on pourrait étudier ce que signifient l'angoisse ou l'anxiété à l'intérieur d'un labyrinthe. On pourrait étudier si elle se relie à des facteurs numériques, on pourrait parler à longueur de journée, de la théorie de la complexité des labyrinthes, on pourrait fournir des formules; je pense que ce n'est pas la place ici, il suffit d'indiquer que c'est possible.

Sur ce dont vous avez parlé, vous avez fait quelques remarques sur l'attitude et le style. J'assume mon style, je pense que de temps en temps, ça sert. J'ai eu l'occasion d'en avoir quelques preuves, c'est tout ce que je peux vous dire pour ma défense. Je ne dirai rien d'autre.

Sur le problème justement des rapports entre une esthétique et une critique, sur ce point peut-être, pourriez-vous

éclairer ce que vous en pensez. Je vois surtout et dans les expressions que je vous ai fournies, aussi catégoriques que possible, je veux surtout l'idée très explicite et si c'est pas encore assez clair, je le répète, de la récupération d'arts qui ont été trop, autrefois, considérés comme mineurs au moment où un certain nombre d'autres phénomènes deviennent trop usés, à la fois par la critique, et, d'autre part, par la connaissance générale qu'en ont les gens. Et nous vivons l'époque de la consommation et ce qui me paraît important, c'est de dire qu'est ce qui peut être proposé pour remplacer finalement ces musées saturés dont nous connaissons quelques-uns et qui tombent dans une sorte de phénomène fondamental que j'appelle Kitch universel, c'est-à-dire l'aliénation touristique.

On voit, si vous voulez Vénus, de telle oeuvre, par exemple de Kranach ou un autre, on la voit parce que notre programme est au programme de la visite touristique au lieu de la voir avec un plaisir et un effort. En d'autres termes, la destruction de l'effort, c'est la destruction de l'oeuvre et ça m'étonnerait que sur ce point, vous soyez totalement en désaccord.

Je crois que c'est tout ce que je peux vous dire brièvement. Si vous voulez, on peut lancer le débat.

QUESTION

Vous avez cité l'exemple de la 9^e symphonie en faisant allusion à la possibilité technique, technologique

de reproduction, le média en somme, le médium. J'ai été un peu insatisfait de la réponse que vous m'avez donnée à ma question de tantôt. Vous avez refilé un peu le problème à notre cher McLuhan, je répète la question. Est-ce que, compte tenu de la spécificité technologique de ces média d'information, voyez-vous une plus grande possibilité d'intelligibilité pour le récepteur?

MOLES

Je n'ai pas voulu interférer, c'est pourquoi j'ai répondu d'une façon sommaire mais vous me posez une question relativement précise et je vais essayer à peu près d'y répondre. Tout d'abord, sur ce problème de l'intelligibilité, on doit augmenter la redondance, c'est bien connu, c'est à dire la prévisibilité relative des éléments, ou bien l'ensemble des règles de contraintes qui les dominent. Tout ça, c'est du classique, c'est tout à fait connu, cela n'en est qu'une application.

J'ai pris comme exemple, on me l'a reproché tout à l'heure, l'idée d'un labyrinthe comme une sorte de forme canonique des arts à trois dimensions et j'ai cité l'exemple du musée comme un labyrinthe qui est un problème dont on parle pas mal dans les milieux artistiques. Que signifierait disons augmenter l'intelligibilité du labyrinthe? Ca consisterait à y mettre un certain nombre de voies qui sont mises en parallèle

et perçues comme telles parce que si elles ne sont pas perçues, c'est comme si ce n'était pas le cas. Ça signifiera donner des explications à leur sujet, par exemple, le long des couloirs par exemple, les colorer d'une couleur différente, suivez les flèches rouges, et ainsi de suite.

Dans le domaine d'une société de masse, vous agitez un problème qui, je crois échappe un petit peu au cadre de cette conférence. C'est le rapport entre ce que l'on peut appeler redondance structurelle du milieu récepteur, c'est-à-dire cette masse sociale constituée d'un grand nombre de gens, reliés par un certain nombre de facteurs et d'éléments et par conséquent, dans laquelle il y a une structure. Vous savez peut-être qu'on analyse la complexité d'une structure sociale d'un état, d'une société, d'une couche sociale, d'un groupe, d'une ville et ainsi de suite.

On l'analyse en fonction du nombre de rapports qui sont échangés. Eh bien entendu, si la redondance structurelle augmente, on peut se permettre, c'est l'essai de réponse que je voudrais vous fournir pour ne pas vous laisser sur votre faim, on peut se permettre une originalité, une intelligibilité un peu moindre, une originalité un peu grande dans le message injecté en un point quelconque de notre société.

Alors, tout ça, ça s'étudie et ça se démontre. Nous serons un petit peu plus pratique d'en parler en privé. Je

craindrais d'être beaucoup trop technique si j'allais plus loin mais j'ai eu le temps d'essayer de vous fournir un fragment de réponse positive.

GEORGES BOUDAILLE

Je voudrais revenir sur un point qu'a déjà abordé notre ami, René Berger. C'est la notion de l'épuisement de l'oeuvre d'art que vous avez, bien entendu, déjà développée et sur laquelle, en tant que critique d'art, je ne suis pas tout à fait d'accord.

Vous trouvez qu'actuellement, l'oeuvre d'art dépérît par la multiplication, par la reproduction. Moi je trouve d'abord qu'il n'y a que les mauvaises œuvres qui souffrent et que l'on consomme relativement très peu d'œuvres d'art car malgré la multiplication des reproductions des œuvres d'art, celles-ci ne touchent qu'un public très limité.

D'autre part, dans cette société dite de consommation qui consomme beaucoup en effet (elle consomme mais elle ne déguste pas), prenons l'exemple du café. Moi, je suis un amateur de café, c'est pour cela peut-être que j'aime tellement l'Italie et pour d'autres raisons aussi. Une petite tasse de café se déguste. Ici, sans en faire grief à nos amis Canadiens, vous avez peut-être, bien la quantité, mais... excusez-moi!

Or, je pense qu'il y a une masse de public qui croit consommer une oeuvre d'art mais qu'en fait il ne fait que l'effleurer et qu'il lui manque le temps de la réflexion, de l'appréciation...

À nous, critiques d'art, il arrive de voir une oeuvre s'épuiser sous nos yeux comme si nous l'usions et parfois, nous sommes déçus par un artiste. En effet, à force de consommer ses œuvres, nous nous apercevons qu'elles se vident. Mais ce n'est pas le cas de toutes les œuvres qui résistent au temps et dont le contenu est si riche qu'il semble se renouveler avec les générations.

MOLES

Je vous remercie de cette intervention. Tout à l'heure, une intervention qui a eu lieu à ce même micro s'opposait très très fortement à mes affirmations. Naturellement, je suis content que vous me permettiez d'être un peu précis sur ce point. En gros, je suis d'accord avec ce que vous dites. Il ne faut pas confondre, et on me l'a reproché, il ne faut pas confondre une présentation paradoxale essayant de marquer un certain nombre d'idées forces avec ce que je vous dirai en privé, si vous voulez, dans une conversation, dans laquelle, au contraire, on s'efforce de respecter les normes de la raison. Je crois que c'est un tout autre problème. Vous avez raison, en d'autres termes, je voudrais bien souligner les points sur lesquels nous sommes d'accord puisque c'est une discussion.

D'abord, ce sont surtout les mauvaises œuvres d'art qui souffrent de la reproduction à très grande échelle. Vous avez tout à fait raison, c'est un complément à ce que je dis, ça n'amène en aucune façon une opposition, nous n'avons pas matière à discuter. Je vous remercie de cette précision.

D'autre part, en fait, on consomme peu. Ça c'est plus important. On consomme peu mais j'ai l'impression que pour cela, il faudrait définir une échelle de quantité de consommation, par rapport, par exemple, aux paysans du 15e siècle. Voilà une chose qu'il faudrait faire. Bon, ça paraît bien difficile.

Le sens de l'ensemble des remarques que je vous ai proposées, c'est de voir si dans les mécanismes de la vie quotidienne qui sont justement de ces processus que nous n'étudions pas suffisamment, il n'y a pas une promotion de la vie quotidienne, un enrichissement de sa subtilité, un repli de l'individu sur sa sphère personnelle le conduisant nécessairement à valoriser certains éléments.

Donc, entre autres, soit à consommer plus, consommer au sens où l'on consomme de l'œuvre d'art, dans ce sens un peu vulgaire qui est bien celui que je vous ai marqué. On consomme, on va voir beaucoup de musées, on va voir beaucoup de films, on achète beaucoup de cartes postales mais enfin, regardez-les les gens à la sortie des musées, vous le savez bien, je crois que sur ce point, nous sommes tous d'accord.

Un point important, tant de réflexions. Sur ce point, je crois que vous avez raison. On consomme plus et on consacre du temps de réflexion plutôt moindre. Ce qui revient à dire que l'on devient superficiel. Nous vivons dans la superficialité et cette superficialité, finalement, comment peut-on y remédier? C'est tout un problème sur lequel j'ai insisté, par allusion, deux fois, en disant "avoir du temps libre, combien ça coûte?" disais-je à un quelconque moment et je mesurais cela en heures ou en années.

Parce que le mot "combien ça coûte?" signifie à notre époque, une tout autre chose que ce qu'il a signifié au 19e siècle. Au 19e siècle, ça se mesurait en francs, en lires ou en dollars. Maintenant, "combien ça coûte?" ça se mesure en minutes ou en heures ou en années et je pense que nous serons tous les deux d'accord, l'œuvre vaut par le temps. L'investissement temporel et psychologique que vous y avez mis.

Donc, c'est plutôt, si vous voulez, des modalités de réponse qu'une opposition quelconque à ce que vous avez dit.

QUESTION

Je me demande si la théorie de l'information n'a pas sa première application au niveau de la diffusion et beaucoup plus de la création. Alors, à ce sujet-là, j'ai deux questions. Première question qui a rapport à ce qu'on vient de dire. Je me demande si, disons, par les techniques de la théorie de l'information, on ne crée pas une espèce d'aménagement de la

consommation esthétique. Vous parliez des trajets possibles dans un musée, du choix des œuvres en fonction, disons, du degré d'information de ces œuvres et le reste, alors je me demande si toutes les techniques, ça n'est pas fatalement voué au piège de la consommation. Alors, on en fait un consommateur qui consomme bien parce qu'on lui fait un parcours agréable et on prévoit pour lui justement.

Deuxième question: À toutes les époques on a créé des choses plus ou moins indépendamment de la connaissance de la perception du spectateur. Alors, je me demande s'il est vraiment nécessaire que l'artiste soit au courant des théories de l'information, des règles de la perception, pour produire des choses?

MOLES

Vous faites une remarque très juste. La théorie de l'information a commencé dans l'univers de la diffusion et ce n'est que depuis peu de temps qu'elle s'applique au problème de la création. Mais, il y a quand même un point, vous avez cité un exemple et c'est peut-être par cet exemple que je voudrais vous faire saisir plus clairement. J'ai cité tout à l'heure, cette idée d'un conservateur de musée aménageant le musée comme un labyrinthe. Cette idée n'est pas spécialement de moi, elle est assez courante. Et le conservateur, par conséquent, serait conduit en utilisant les lois de la redondance, de la répétition,

enfin, de choses qu'on peut vaguement mettre en formule ou en tout cas en modèle analogique. Il serait conduit justement à manipuler l'ensemble des éléments de son public dans le meilleur des buts, mieux diffuser et mieux faire connaître certaines œuvres d'art qu'il considère comme intéressantes, et on peut penser qu'en première approximation, il a raison. En tout cas, on ne le discute pas.

Et vous avez dit 'on' et c'est là, que je voudrais rebuter. On, on, qui? Et bien, on, c'est le directeur du musée, qui est artiste, le conservateur du musée est artiste en programmation d'événements sensoriels dans le musée. Il est tout seul, il programme un grand nombre de gens pour un certain nombre de phénomènes indépendamment justement des œuvres, je les ai très nettement séparés. Il est artiste, il fait partie de l'esthétique des Dieux de Max Bense et comme il a l'esthétique des hommes, il l'utilise. L'artiste, l'artiste courant doit-il connaître la théorie de l'information? Celui qui travaille dans un bon nombre des œuvres des écoles actuelles de l'art, peinture, sculpture, etc. et même architecture.

Non, ça c'est un peu pédant, c'est très compliqué, c'est pas utile. Mais ce dont je parle et j'ai insisté plusieurs fois et personne n'y est revenu. Ce dont je parle, c'est ce qui va se passer d'ici une dizaine d'années. L'artiste comme programmateur dans tout le sens du mot, y compris le sens technique. C'est-à-dire sur la réalisation des œuvres à partir

de ce qu'on a appelé une allégorie ou une idée par programmation sur machine "computer" "hardware", la chose, et par conséquent, à ce moment-là, il lui faut des règles, règles sur la quantité de perception. J'ai parlé des arts mineurs et ça été mon sujet explicite. En prétendant que ces arts mineurs deviendront majeurs sur le plan sociologique. Je ne veux pas discuter des autres, je n'y connais rien.

Donc, si vous voulez, il nous faut bien des techniques et ces techniques nous sont fournies, entre autres, par la théorie de l'information que je vous présente plus spécialement, comme étant la chose importante. Mais il n'y a pas que ça. En d'autres termes, pour être encore plus net, le monde de l'artiste va devenir de plus en plus scientifique, de plus en plus abstrait, de plus en plus distancé, de plus en plus presque mathématique, dans certains cas. Quels artistes? Peut-être pas le peintre tachiste, mais les autres, y compris ces artistes que vous méprisez peut-être, qui sont des graphistes, qui travaillent pour une agence de publicité.

On peut programmer d'ores et déjà des affiches à la machine, de temps en temps, on se trompe mais on rectifie. Vous connaissez le grand axiome de la vie moderne. Nous ferons mieux la prochaine fois. C'est l'axiome de la technologie.

BERGER

Mesdames, Messieurs, le propos d'un colloque c'est d'échanger des idées et non pas, bien sûr, d'arriver à une conclusion. En l'occurrence, nous avons vu se dessiner deux attitudes tranchées. L'une va dans le sens de la société de masse et met l'accent sur la réalité statistique, elle essaie de valoriser ou de promouvoir toute une série de manifestations qui, jusqu'à présent, ont été considérées comme mineures: la publicité, l'ameublement, le Kitch, etc...

D'un autre côté s'est manifesté une seconde attitude, celle que défendaient René de Solier, Georges Boudaille en particulier, et qui se fonde sur l'existence et la légitimité d'un goût préférentiel. Reste à savoir, c'est la question qui est posée à notre époque - si nous allons dans le sens d'une existence statistique ou si subsiste l'expérience personnelle. Je pense qu'il n'y a pas une alternative, mais une ambivalence profonde qu'il nous appartient d'assumer dans son ambiguïté même.

INTERNATIONALISM AND REGIONALISM

Harold Rosenberg

MISS JEAN SUTHERLAND BOGGS

One of the things I feel happiest about is to be here this morning and to be able to say to you most genuinely and most warmly how very moved we are at the National Gallery to have so many distinguished visitors here from so many different parts of the world. From Peru, from Japan, from Poland, from Czechoslovakia, from Romania. It is extraordinary from how many countries all of you have come. And we are also very much impressed to have names like Georges Boudaille, or Cirici, or Celant, or Mme Martin-Mery, to indiscreetly choose any among you. And it is for us a very great honour. We are also very conscious that this has only happened, this extraordinary event has occurred, because of the efforts of the former Deputy Director of the National Gallery, Guy Viau.

I also wanted to mention how grateful we are to the speakers who have made this session so important. To Mr. Arnheim, to Mr. Moles, to Mr. Rosenberg, about whom we shall speak later, and Mr. McLuhan, who is actually with us this morning.

Before I introduce Mr. Rosenberg to you, I want to pay tribute to my own staff. I'm proud of many works of

art in the National Gallery and naturally, too, I'm most conscious of those we acquired most recently, like the Mondrian, or the Klimt, and the Sandback. I'm also delighted to be reminded by your enthusiasm of the marvels of the Filippo Lippi, the Chardins, the Piero di Cosimo which we have had for a long time. But I'm equally proud of the staff which has made acquisitions like the Mondrian and the Klimt and the Sandback possible. I wanted to mention those who have been working valiantly for this conference. Most of you know Sherrill Moseley, our co-ordinator of Ottawa Exhibitions, who has been working with Mary Fletcher. Or Pierre Boutin who accompanied the conference from Montreal and arranged a Maclaren evening for you there. I would also like to mention four secretaries who made certain that Professor Moles' other address, the one he didn't give, will appear in print. One stayed up until after 1:00 in the morning, the other spent the whole night here, and left at something like 7:00 AM. My executive assistant Richard Grayburn has worked at many menial tasks and some which are more immediately rewarding, like the dinner party last night. Two staff members, Joanna Marsden, who is our co-ordinator of International Exhibitions and a member of AICA, and Brydon Smith, our curator of contemporary art, were particularly interested in this conference and made suggestions to Guy Viau on its program. There are many others who have been just as enthusiastic about making you welcome here. And of course everything they

have done has been co-ordinated, inspected and transmitted by that marvel lent to us by Canada's Department of External Affairs, Mary Fletcher.

I can't leave this subject without mentioning two others, Laurent Lamy, the president of Canadian AICA, whose enthusiasm for this Association has been contagious, and who has been able to arouse everyone's support in Canada for this conference. And of course your president René Berger, who has been so consistently courteous, thoughtful, and eloquent during this congress. I can't emphasize enough how much I have been impressed by the consistency of his performance. He's in retirement this morning. It was, in fact, M. Berger who has given me the honour this morning of introducing Harold Rosenberg to you. You may know him as the author of two significant essays, "American Action Painters" in 1952, "The Tradition of the New", 1959. Or his books, The Anxious Object and Art Works and Packages. You may remember his book on Arshile Gorky and will be glad to know that he is to publish one soon on the work of a good friend of his, Willem de Kooning. You may have followed his reviews in magazines like the Art News, Esquire and The New Yorker. If you have, you will realize the warmth of what he has written, that it comes from a sense of the individual artist as a human being

in a situation which is fundamentally humane. When I asked my curator of contemporary art, Brydon Smith, about Harold Rosenberg, he described him as the conscience of the art world, and told me recently that, when Rosenberg was thinking about stopping writing for The New Yorker its Editor said: "Somebody ought to keep an eye on it"! Rosenberg a moral man, a man of conscience, a man who asks awkward, embarrassing questions, which means, of course, that he has his detractors. But it is because he is these things that I am proud to be able to introduce him this morning, speaking about a subject which is particularly meaningful in Canada, "Internationalism and Regionalism". Mr. Rosenberg.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

Thank you Miss Boggs. I'm aware that I've been assigned the hottest topic of this conference. It's one that practically verges on politics. However, as M. Berger said a few minutes ago when we were talking privately, there's no way of avoiding this it gets right into the point. Internationalism and regionalism are today almost part of the very material of painting and sculpture.

Everyone here, of course, is an internationalist, but on the condition, naturally, that his own place or region

be regarded as equal to or superior to any other region.

Regional equality is in especially sensitive issue in Canada, in its being a neighbour of Big Brother.

Some of the sensitivity about the status of different regions is owing, I believe, to confusing the situation today with internationalism in art before the war. The old internationalism was centered in particular capitals; one could make a list of them going back to the Renaissance. In the first part of this century the capital of international art was, indubitably, Paris. The notion that any place today might aspire to be what Paris was in our youth makes people uneasy.

Thirty years ago any artist who failed to absorb a good deal of what was going on in Paris laboured under a handicap that was all but insurmountable. U.S. artists, for example, invariably went to Paris to learn how to paint American scenes. Not only that, but foreigners who came to New York as immigrants would be sent to Paris to learn how to paint like Americans. Such was the overwhelming influence of Paris, which most of us here may still be able to remember.

In the modern era space had coalesced with time. There were spots where the new was concentrated. Such a spot was Paris. In this respect the old internationalism demanded

of the American, the Turk, the Japanese, a surrender of part of his original identity in order to achieve the superior identity of the Paris avant-garde.

School of Paris painting superimposed itself on New York street scenes and Russian landscapes. You were shown yesterday an example of the visual ambiguity of a landscape by Kandinsky, which was the result of a contact between the Russian countryside and Paris School abstraction.

For more than half a century, an identification existed between Paris and the concept, Modern Art, and this was true regardless of where or by whom the work was actually created. Picasso and Juan Gris belonged as completely to Paris as Matisse and Braque.

Some critics have claimed that since the war New York has inherited the role of Paris as the privileged locus of the new. Exhibitions have been organized around the idea that the great avant-garde movements, from Impressionism to Surrealism, by which Paris art was enlivened, have culminated in what is called New York painting and sculpture.

The notion that New York today has the kind of monopoly on the contemporary sensibility that Paris had before the war is an upsetting notion. Is it necessary for artists (this is the practical question), is it necessary for artists

to migrate to New York and stay there for a substantial period of time in order to absorb the painting culture of the present day? That's the big question. And I shall add that you ask the same question whether you are in Jerusalem or in Kansas City. This is not a question that is essentially related to America. It is a question related to New York -- just as in the days of the School of Paris the question was not whether you went to France but whether you went to Paris. United States artists are confronted with the same question as people from abroad. If they happen to live more than three hours, or even two hours, away from 8th Street.

There's no doubt that many artists in many parts of the world are convinced that such a pilgrimage is necessary. At the same time, the thought that the United States is now the home of international art -- as it is the site of the UN -- causes resentment.

Actually, however, it is pointless to compare New York today with Paris of yesterday. The relation between creation and place has undergone a profound change. Paris itself could no longer fill the old role of Paris. Art has become international to such a degree that no city can leave its mark on it, much less supply its dominant mood.

The old type of located internationalism in art has been dead since the War and perhaps in the decade before the war. It has been superseded by a global art whose essence is precisely the absence of qualities derived from any geographical location.

Art today whirls in the orbit of a communications system that touches all parts of the world simultaneously. Its influence even reaches behind the Iron Curtain. Canvases and constructions seen in Chicago, Mexico City, Tokyo, or Rotterdam appear to have originated in the same workshop and are appreciated by audiences of the same mental composition.

Today there is no such thing as foreign art. Nor are there foreign artists. Which is a reverse way of saying that there are no regional artists. Who would consider Matta or Marisol as a stranger in New York, or Riopelle or Jenkins as an alien in Paris?

Artists are at home in all the capitals of the world and their works are at home even where their creators have failed to establish themselves personally.

Local traits - ethnic, traditional, cultural - are bleached out by the incessant deluge of new modes in art, on the one hand, and the uniformity of the art world on the other.

The global unity of art has caused abstract forces to replace the stylistic heritage of cities and regions. I shall mention three of these forces: ideology, art history and technology, including the world's news-transmission systems.

Paintings today are both created and classified in terms of aesthetic ideology. For example, colour-field painting, minimal sculpture, earthworks. These categories by themselves, by the way, are quite sufficient to call up the images of most of the works that one will see produced within them. That is: the ideas by which styles or modes are named today have an almost material existence.

Regardless of where the works are created, works in the same mode are being produced elsewhere at the same moment -- and their creators are related to one another across the distances by their common outlook. On the other hand, artists working in the same city, or even in the same building, but in different modes, cannot appreciate each other's works and their mere spacial contiguity fails to relate them to one another. Ideology is both the unifying element in contemporary art and the basis for the intellectual exchange out of which new art arises.

The concrete form of ideology in art is art history, i.e. the ideology of futurism can be acquired through works by Severini and Balla, as well as through studying manifestos. Released from place and from the sensual, political and cultural ties imposed by local tradition, art increasingly derives from the scrutiny of art. Reproductions, slides, art publications and, to a lesser degree, the world-wide circulation of accredited works themselves, draw the artist, wherever situated, into an immediate response to the global art gallery. A menu of styles is available, each item with its background of logic and illustrative masterpieces. Purged of local and individual attributes, works old and new are seen in terms of what they appear to disclose about the evolution of art -- that is, in terms of their most easily definable, interchangeable, and professionally functional elements.

The most dependable and most easily accessible form of avant-gardism in art is art associated with new technological developments. In all countries advanced art enjoys the sponsorship of the social layers dedicated to intellectual and scientific progress. Even in the Soviet Union, in periods of relaxation from government pressure, the audience for what is called "formalist" art in Soviet criticism -- by which they mean all their modernist schools -- is made

up of the technological intelligentsia. The "accursed" bohemian and self-exiled visionary seeking spiritual compatriots in the cracks of society has become a figment of the past; today the artist and his art are integrated into the global dive for modernization. A modernist painter or sculptor in the most backward areas of Latin America or Africa is synchronized with a world system to the same degree as the local oil refinery or airport.

Has art become too international?

The notion of an excessive universality has to do with the problem of content in art, once localism has been left behind. For earlier avant-gardists, art has been a means of investigating reality, cultural, visual, psychological, formal.

Works of art moving in the orbit of the communications system and tending to merge with it -- as, for example, when artists exhibit paintings copied from photographs or adapted from reproductions -- hardly contribute much to grasping reality. Paintings come to relate to one another rather than to any visual or intellectual perception. The term for this is Academicism.

Global Academicism is furthered both by the elimination of the estranged or bohemian artist and by the dependence of the artist on technical mechanisms and institutions

to keep in touch with art. Works of art related exclusively to other works of art fail to engage themselves with the actual historical moment in which the artist lives. The artist as individual becomes obsessed by the tyrannical pace of world art, and fears falling behind. One of the perils of globalism is a depersonalizing futurism that destroys the individual mind as a witness of what is.

The virtues of the globalization of art lie mainly in the development of a universal aesthetic vocabulary and in its promise of a united human culture at some time to come. Obviously painting and sculpture cannot return to earlier forms of cultural segregation or to national or regional style. Even the all-powerful Soviet Communist Party has difficulty in driving Russian artists back from what they call "cosmopolitanism".

But art and culture have had to pay for the new universalism by an impoverishment of content. An experience of pictures, especially of pictures reproduced in art books, is not equivalent to the unique experience of one's living time and place. It is this kind of experience, not borrowings from engineering and electronics, that has on occasion given body to international art, whether in the work of Picasso, Giacometti or de Kooning. I think criticism ought to keep emphasizing this. Thank you.

PROF. RUDOLF ARNHEIM

It seemed to me that the admirably clear presentation which we have had from Mr. Rosenberg left us essentially with a negative picture and I think there is certainly plenty of justification for this negative picture of an international Academicism. It seemed to me on the other hand, that I have seen at least in some places, some very hopeful possibilities of connecting the traditional style of a country with the modern international style. I remember, for example, in Japan that I saw some very exciting connection between the tradition of calligraphy the pure formal tradition of calligraphy, or the textures of traditional pottery in Japan, which fed directly into a very modern style and which animated it in a very beautiful way. And I wonder whether you don't see some hopeful signs of this nature also in other places.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

I don't know how hopeful those signs are. I've seen a lot of things that are done that way over the years. In fact you might say the most conservative position in art in the past 50 years has been to attempt to be modern without going the whole way. An example is what we used to call in the politically-conscious thirties "petty bourgeois abstraction". That is, some guy would go to Paris - he didn't want to drop the regional thing, so instead of painting a man

with a blue guitar like Picasso, he would paint him with a banjo, and this made him an Americano. The style was the style of the avant-garde, and the subject matter was the subject matter of the region. I really can't be enthusiastic about that, because if there is an irreconcilability, that is, if modernism is actually a different outlook, the attempt to rivet it somehow to local style only produces what is known as "airport" art. For example, in Israel I saw quite a lot of stuff in the Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv and in art colonies that would fit your description. I'm not condemning work which I haven't seen -- but the attempt to make a synthesis of regional and modern styles has, so far as I have seen, tended to produce the kind of stuff sold to tourists. I'm sure you mean something else, but so far I'm not aware that anyone has managed to do it. I would add this - that there is the individual and the world and there is almost nothing in between. This is the source of tension in modern art. If one were to argue that New York is the art centre of the world, one could only establish that on the basis of the fact that the shakiness of art was more apparent in New York than any place else.

MR. LAURENT LAMY

You said at the beginning of your statement that Paris was the art centre and all good American painters went to Paris to be in the mood of painting, and that even immigrants,

European immigrants to the States, also went back to Paris or to Europe to get inspiration. Now, is that an influence of painters? What influences painters to go to New York from Europe now? A lot of European painters go to New York, and is it not a trend created by artists, or is it the artists who respond to a trend, to a place where one has to be at a particular time?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

Do I understand your question to be why artists go to New York today?

MR. LAURENT LAMY

Yes. Why did the centre move to New York? There are a lot of European artists; if they don't go, they want to go. Is that a trend that is created by artists or is it a trend that is general or something like a place where one has to be at some time in his life?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

Well, I think there are probably several motives -- because individuals have different reasons for going. Many Europeans who are not artists find New York a very exciting place for no other reason than the dynamism and quantitative pressure of this economic and cultural centre.

There is no doubt that many European artists come to New York just to take a look at it. Let's put it that way. On the other hand, I think that, during certain moments since the war, there was an excitement in New York, just as there have been excitements elsewhere. What I was suggesting is that it is not necessary to be in New York in the same sense that it used to be necessary to be in Paris. Paris had a specific sensibility which was identified with the most important schools of modern art. That is, you couldn't understand the art without grasping the particular touch or the aroma that was contributed by Paris. (You could not, for example, get this quality in reproductions). This is not true about New York. An enormous excitement was generated after the war by Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting in four or five blocks of Greenwich Village. I mean if you happened to land on 42nd Street you wouldn't have gotten it. You had to be on 8th Street between 5th Avenue and University Place in order to get it. Now that was very important and I think a great many European artists came to sniff that. They felt that that was going on. Once that vanished, or faded, the art movements once again took up, in a much more dynamic way, an orbital relation. For example, if you wanted to see Pop Art you could have got it just as well in London or in Italy. On the other hand, some of the new technological art sprang up in Yugoslavia and in West Germany. Actually the whole thing keeps spinning around this way, and I don't mean

that New York can be compared to prewar Paris at all. It's a question of quantity -- you get more for your cultural money in New York. That's about it -- you can perhaps get it cheaper elsewhere.

MRS. CAROL ZEMEL

I'm a little confused, Mr. Rosenberg, about your definition of experience, your saying that there is an impoverishment -- I don't understand exactly the reasons that you see an impoverishment of content in the art world. You seem to say that, the one specific I think you cited, artists were using other works of art or photographs as sources for their own work and this somehow removes them from some kind of form of experience which you suggest is the only valid experiential source of inspiration. In that sense we have to dismiss an awful lot of art. I think you have to dismiss Manet for being subject to the same kind of academicism for being inspired by Spanish art and Renaissance art and Titian. Why is the photograph, for example, not a direct experiential source of inspiration? And why does it result in impoverishment of content?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

Well, are you comparing a reproduction with an original painting? Do you think they are equivalent to each

other? I think you do. It sounds to me as if you thought that a painting, and a reproduction of a painting, have an equal density of experience. Is that true?

MRS. CAROL ZEMEL

No. I'm interested in a work of art that is produced in the long run. I don't care what inspires the artist -- if it's a photograph or a reproduction -- if the work that he produces is fine that's enough to satisfy me. But as I understood you, you suggested that there was some kind of divorce from reality, isn't there the experience of a photograph? Where do we see this in any event?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

Let me answer your question negatively. That is, we are talking about internationalism and regionalism. What I am suggesting is that there are elements in the individual imagination which are accretions of his time and place. A great deal of important work of avant-garde art, whether you are thinking of futurists or surrealists or Dadaists, consists in trying to dig out that accretion. Now, what I mean by impoverishment is very simple. If you never start digging in your own -- what's that nice phrase of Yeats -- rag-bag; if you never start digging there and you are always involved with art, as I have found to be the case in the movements of the past ten or fifteen years

MRS. CAROL ZEMEL

May I ask how so?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

What?

MRS. CAROL ZEMEL

May I ask how so? And specifically what artists
and what movement?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

I'll give you an example. There was a show at the Museum of Contemporary Art a couple of years ago in which a young woman presented a work called The Book which was a tremendous assemblage. She had all kinds of data about her own life. She had a telephone in the work of art. She had a bathroom. She had works contributed by painters who are friends and so on. This work was presented as breaking-down (I'm quoting the museum director now), "Breaking down the barriers between art and life". Here is a woman giving you the meat of her existence in this work of art. Now, as I looked at it, it seemed to me to do just the opposite. There wasn't one detail of her life that had not been assembled into art Art consciousness has reached such a point that it is impossible for many painters to think about anything but

painting. Now, I have seen the effects of this on quite a number of leading young artists, who after a while simply find it impossible to do anything but think about what's going on in art. If you don't recognize this, I'm afraid it would not be possible to provide demonstrations for you here. But I do suggest this as something that you can think about.

MRS. CAROL ZEMEL

I think that it is certainly happening. I suggest that it is not necessarily a negative force because Manet's Olympia is Titian's Venus and we can't dismiss it because it is Titian's Venus.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

What has Titian's Venus got to do with it?

MRS. CAROL ZEMEL

With Manet's Olympia?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

I wasn't talking about the influence of paintings on artists. I was talking about the influence of reproductions of paintings, which to me is quite different. I asked before whether you regarded these things as synonymous.

MRS. CAROL ZEMEL

Well, I'm interested in the end result. If it's a work of art, it's a work of art. I don't care what the source is.

MISS JEAN BOGGS

Here comes an author of airport art which you will see in Vancouver, Guido Molinari.

MR. GUIDO MOLINARI

Mr. Lamy had asked before what were the reasons which led New York to become the art centre and you have answered that maybe Abstract Expressionism was one of the reasons. I should like to ask you, if you don't think that the reason is that by the nature of Abstract Expressionism, I mean that this movement - contrary to cubism, had in it a trend, for example, from Pollock to Newman, Rothko, Gottlieb, Clifford Still, which are in a certain sense very different approaches to art - comparable to some extent, to a number of movements originating in Paris. I am referring to painters like Kandinsky, Mondrian, and other painters like Picabia, who are more or less formalists. There were a certain number of masters, in New York from all over the world right after the war, and we began to hear about them. David Smith and Pollock were the most important. And is it not this agglomeration of so

many giants which determined that New York should become the centre. Had these men been in Rome or Buenos Aires, one of them would have been the centre. And, of course, there was a market in New York, but that also, I think is the other reason. And also the fact that New York is the centre of communication. If you are working in Dusseldorf, the news goes to New York and then is spread over again. While, if you were right in New York, you gained time. That might be the reason why artists want to go to New York, instead of going to Dusseldorf or Paris. Because it is the centre of communication.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

You really have two questions there. One is whether the real basis of New York's importance wasn't this assembly of important artists. The other one is whether, since New York is a communication centre, it made it easier for those artists to become well known. I'll answer your second question first. The Americans, as you know, used to go to Dusseldorf, and in those days communications were even more difficult than they are now but they heard about it. I think what you say is right, that is, that the reason New York did become a centre at that time was that these very important new artists showed up there in a considerable number and created a new kind of idea in art. I'll go further. I'll say that there

was something in that idea itself, that is in the Abstract Expressionist attitude, which exactly fits the problem that I was talking about. That is, that you had individual artists who were confronted with the world and had no regional or stylistic background. In fact, the big talk that used to take place among these artists in New York was their antagonism to style, which was a very new thing and it was also a thing which was forced upon them by their predicament, which was that the United States didn't have any style. There was another element which I didn't go into, which I don't mind talking about, and that is that a lot of these artists, these very important artists -- not all of them, but a considerable number of them -- were immigrants. They were people who had come to New York. They didn't bring anything with them, in the way that artists in the nineteenth century would come to America and paint British portraits or do Italian sculpture. These were artists who had come not as artists but as immigrants. They came to live, in other words, not to be artists. They discovered that they wanted to be artists. Many of them became artists because of the WPA, the Works Progress Administration program in the thirties. As de Kooning used to say, he discovered, by being on the WPA art project, and being paid \$23.86 a week that it cost \$23.86 a week to be an artist. Up to that time he had thought an artist had to have a rich father. The discovery that for \$23.86 one could be an artist, and this material fact, suddenly offered hundreds of people an opportunity

to work at art like working men but do their own work. All of this converged into a very powerful movement. Except that I must make one correction -- New York artists didn't become "giants" until the sixties. All these fellows had a very hard time. They were not given the advantage of the communications system. The fact of the matter is that Pollock was first shown in London, I think, in 1957. Up to that time, very few people actually knew their work. This whole excitement about Abstract Expressionism is of comparatively recent date. One of the reasons for this, by the way, is the fact that New York dealers didn't want to split commissions, so they didn't send any works abroad. People heard about these guys but they never saw their actual paintings. This had been largely true about de Kooning, for example, up to the time when he had a circulating retrospective a couple of years ago. Very few people in Europe had ever seen any de Kooning's. Actual art does not get much advantage from this great new communication system of ours. But the reproductions of these artists did circulate, quite early.

MR. GUIDO MOLINARI

But also you were mentioning the fact that reproduction causes a degradation in communication, and I think that this is another factor. Abstract Expressionist paintings, due to their size and to the very way that they are made, had to be experienced in reality.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

That's right.

MR. GUIDO MOLINARI

And I think that's what happened; that when people from Canada or from France or Italy had seen the work they really had had an experience. That's what they brought back with them to their own country. They stressed that these works were so large and so vital that they have to be experienced right there. And I think that that is another reason why it was necessary to go on a pilgrimage to New York to see these works. I think that is the whole nature of Abstract Expressionism.

Another question I wanted to ask you - Do you think, if there were not as many important artists in New York today, that there would be more artists elsewhere, that the centre would move?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

I think a group of artists could spring up in most capitals. We cannot anticipate where an art movement will develop. What you say is perfectly true, I mean, it's quite possible that there will be significant groups elsewhere than in New York. We had a somewhat significant group in Los Angeles a few years ago. The problem for people who are in favor of regional art, as you know, is that as soon as an

artist reaches a certain degree of eminence he leaves. That happens in American cities all the time -- artists spring up and go to New York. So that there is a kind of vacuum that sucks people out of places where they are and brings them into one place, where they can either become very significant or get lost.

We have no statistics on how many people get lost because of premature flight to the capitals. It would be an interesting thing for some Ph.D. candidate to investigate -- to find out when people left for New York and when they disappeared. What percentage of people didn't disappear but got bigger and bigger and also what happened to them after they got big. These are all problems that we don't know anything about.

MISS JEAN BOGGS

Could I say a couple of things quickly? Mr. Moles, you are going to be second speaker, Mr. Ostiguy is first, that is the first thing. The second thing is that Guido Molinari is not just an airport painter, he is a good painter, and there are three beautiful canvases hanging in the gallery down here you can look at and realize what you can look forward to in Vancouver. And the other thing is that Pierre Théberge, who is beside you, is an expert on regional art. He's the expert on one region in Canada - London, Ontario. All right, Jean-René Ostiguy.

M. JEAN-RENE OSTIGUY

Mr. Rosenberg, je me demande si vous pouvez expliquer ce fait que nous rêvons tous d'internationalisme mais que quand même, il y a des valeurs, il y a des hommes qui ne passent pas, je dirais surtout d'un continent à l'autre. Par exemple, je crois que Yves Klein n'est pas passé aux Etats-Unis. On l'a connu très tard. En critique d'art, pendant 10 ans, j'ai jamais entendu parler de Pierre Francastel en Amérique du Nord. Comment se fait-il qu'à certains moments, il y a des valeurs essentielles qui ne passent pas et qu'on regrette plus tard de ne pas avoir vu passer. Où est-ce que je cite un des cas qui sont vraiment inconnus.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

It seems to me that Yves Klein was well known in New York at about the same time that he got to be known in Paris. And Yves Klein himself was a perfect example to me of an internationalist artist who took off from action Painting and proceeded to do a great many things, derived from it, like rolling ladies in blue paint and using them as a stamp to make paintings. I should have chosen Yves Klein as a perfect example of the fact that everything is known everywhere simultaneously. There was hardly a thing that Klein

did that didn't seem completely familiar to everybody in New York and he was a great success in New York. As a matter of fact, he had a show at the Jewish Museum, a very extensive show, and he was a very young man when he died. So that actually, if there was a time lag there, it must have been extremely short.

M. JEAN-RENE OSTIGUY

I'm quoting from memory, but I think that the retrospective exhibition of Yves Klein at the Jewish Museum was in 1964 and also I do not know whether it was in the catalogue of the exhibition that it is quoted that, unfortunately, he was not known in the States at the time of his very first experiments. I think it may be also in Quadrim, which year I forget, where there was an article by a French curator from Paris, whose name I also happen to forget, who said that the situation regarding Pop Art and Minimal Art might have changed if Yves Klein had been known earlier in New York.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

I would take the privilege of doubting that. Yves Klein had a lot of friends, a lot of Americans who knew him in Paris.

M. JEAN-RENE OSTIGUY

I know that. But let's forget Yves Klein and let's think of other cases that might be similar. For instance it is, mind you I'm just quoting something that I notice all the time, when an American speaker speaks about art he limits his references to a certain group of artists. If you have a Frenchman he has another group of familiar references. There are names that I never hear in a North American context but that I hear very often in a European context. I'm not for regionalism. I understand exactly what you said; at least I agree with what I understood. But I see that we always hope for internationalism, that we progress in it; but just the same there are things that do not pass -- values, persons -- and I wanted to know whether you had thought of this fact and had found an explanation for it.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

That's a good question, as a matter of fact, and what you say is perfectly true. I, myself, have done this, just what you are talking about, and people have accused me of chauvinism, although I don't think they were right. I'll give you my reasons for mentioning the names that are known in, you might say, the New York art world, and not mentioning the names of Italian, French, or Spanish artists who might be just as pertinent to the question being discussed. The

reason is simply a rhetorical one. You write for an audience that knows these references; you don't take it for granted that everybody knows everything. I would also agree with you further on a more profound level that our internationalism is full of flaws. We do not have a total knowledge. It is not a completely equalized consciousness that we possess. You are absolutely right about that. And we do tend to limit our view. The point is whether in doing so some kind of vital information escapes us for a long time. I should be inclined to feel that some kind of vital information does escape us, but I don't know for how long. And consequently there is no doubt that we can't have an international centre of criticism. I think it would be false to assume that any critic deals equally with the work of people all over the world. I know I don't. I just don't know enough about what's going on in any given place unless I happen to go there, and that's largely a question of accident. The point that I was making, which isn't in conflict with that, is that the information which we do get is rather thin, since we're getting it through the world media of communication. My suggestion is that you do have to be there. You really do have to know what's going on in a given place. You have to know what's going on not only in the local art gallery but in the studios. I have suggested that art news should be art news of studios not art news of galleries and of museums. The less you filter out the experience of the artist, the

more you know, and the more you experience art. Nobody can be every place at the same time, so there is no doubt that our internationalism is full of cracks - it is a weak kind of internationalism. It's, as I said, highly abstract, and the very fact that we have an international outlook which is so abstract becomes a force against the artist. This is one of the points that I was making. We assume that we are familiar with all the styles that occur and everything that is going on. This very assumption weighs against the individual who is working in a very particular locality. So I'm glad that you brought that up, because that certainly needs to be there as a corrective.

PROF. ABRAHAM MOLES

It has been demonstrated in the field of scientific information, and to some extent in the field of artistic information through publications, that you have a time-lag of four to five years in what is called the "index of quotations". When quotations are made by an artist or scientist, they come in general from other authors or journalists, and they come at a certain rate a month or a year. One can study the curve of this and this curve is known, it has been studied by Koestler at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and this curve shows a maximum around four to five years. Which

means that the time-lag between what's done and what's known is around these limits. The curve is an exponential one and it decreases after. On the question that has been raised by Mr. Molinari, there's also in social geo-culture a factor which is well known. That is the question of creativity. General creativity of a group of people is more or less in high correlation to the density of transactions. Transactions being the connections of one person to another through any kind of motivation. For instance, just buying something or selling something, and I think of the role of art galleries, are connections. Tea parties or cocktail parties and so on are sociometric interactions. So if we would like to build somewhere a new centre for creative art we should take this factor into consideration. And I would like to know what is your opinion about the role of New York in this aspect, especially due to the fact that there are so many possible transactions. When you go over this optimum then efficiency decreases. So one should have to realize this optimum condition of transactions to get the maximum of creativity in a centre of art.

I would like to know your position about New York in this respect. You mentioned a very important point just a moment ago in your speech. You said that ideology is the unifying element in art. And you connected this factor, which

is a very important one, to the history of the movement. Now, I am not perfectly satisfied with historical explanations and I would like to ask some more details about it. Sometimes people say that a historical explanation is to say, well, you see, it so happened because it happened so. I should like to know whether sociological factors are not more relevant to the problem than historical ones. I think, for instance, of Pop Art, of Op Art, and of a number of modern ideologies, which are very much connected to the position of the artist regarding the society in which he lives. And especially a mass-consuming society. Could you explain?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

I understood that you said there was a time-lag of four years in science. Is that the case? I know you would be disputed about science, because there are many scientists who claim that the time-lag could have taken a generation at least.

But let's not talk about whether we can estimate the time-lag in art, which I don't think we can. I'll tell you why. First of all, nobody could say definitely that they have caught up with Rembrandt. There's a movement of reducing Rembrandt which has overtaken Rembrandt specialists and every year Rembrandt has painted fewer and fewer pictures. I was

talking to one of the great Rembrandt scholars recently and he said, well, we can expect that to change, it seems to have reached its leveling-off point and probably there will begin to be a rise in Rembrandt attributions in a few years. The reason that I mention that is that, even with somebody like Rembrandt, the experts and certainly the public haven't totally caught up. In art there is an endless lag.

What I'm talking about in relation to the communication system therefore, is what you get when real appreciation has been prevented. That is, you have two factors. You have the actual time-lag in the appreciation of the artist; as against this, you get the popular version of the artist, the mass media version of the artist. The mass media version begins to function actively in creating impressions in people all around the world which we heard about from some of the other speakers before. What you get is another Pollock. If you don't get Pollock, you get a different Pollock. You don't get nothing. With the mass media it is impossible to get nothing. You are always getting whatever is going on, but the question is what do you get. You have two time rhythms here, both the lag and the filling-up of the lag, and so that is part of the contemporary situation.

Now, the second question. Do you think New York has reached an over-density of interaction; is that the idea? Well, I don't think so. As a matter of fact, I don't think

that New York has reached a top level of density in regard to ideas. It may have reached a top level of noise density, which is one of the problems of pollution. Besides, I don't believe that so far as intellectual activity is concerned there is such a thing as over-density. You can't have too many ideas around because, at most, if they squeeze against each other they'll divide and that's good. So, the only thing you can have is an over-density of noise or of comment about ideas by people who don't really know what they are about; so we get back to the first question, which has to do with what you get when you're not getting it.

As far as the third point is concerned, I completely agree with you. That is, I feel that social factors are always present in these art movements and that the substitution of art history for history is a disaster for art. We could prove that by going through a number of the developments of the last 15 years. What I meant to point out was that the medium for ideological transmissions to artists in concrete terms has become art history. Let me give you an illustration. We get a work that to even the most sophisticated observer doesn't look like anything; it may look like a box or a series of boxes. The first thing that happens is, that to legitimize that work as art a series of causalities are established which take it back, let's say, to Mondrian,

or take it back to Seurat. Having established that this set of boxes is now legitimized by art history, the question as to the social and psychological significance of somebody looking at that group of boxes is excluded as unnecessary. Now, I still want to talk about the boxes, although I will give you one general rule of art today and that is, one should never compare anything to what it looks like. If you do that you are guilty of a terrible vulgarism and it's obvious at once that you don't know anything about art. Because if you know about art you are supposed to talk about something other than what the object looks like. So if you want to go into this type of criticism, where you say a box is a box or a spade is a spade, you have to do it in a very circumspect way, because otherwise your prestige or status will suffer a lot and what you say will be regarded as totally insignificant.

MRS. REA MONTBIZON

In a less sophisticated way than Dr. Moles and M. Ostiguy, I should like to continue a little bit on that question that was brought up and ask rather bluntly, whether we do not owe ourselves, as critics, a certain de-mystification of this phenomenon of the shift of the centre of art from Europe to New York or precisely from Paris to New York. And I'm wondering whether we are not dealing here with a very complex

situation in which we have got to distinguish between marketing and promotion as a very clear force which has led to mass movements which did not originate as movements with artists, but which have become movements because the originators of certain ideas were joined by masses of artists who, on their own, did not have much to say, but realized their socio-economic force in joining ranks behind someone. In other words, I think in good American, one says by jumping on the band-wagon. And this has created a very complex, and I think extremely dangerous, situation.

Now, a parallel movement has hit us, that is the fear of élitism and the democratization of art; we no longer dare to discriminate. In other words, we no longer give credit to the individual artist originator who has arrived out of the inner necessity, according to Kandinsky, to his style and his expression, but have started to accept masses of artists who did not go through these evolutions but have very simply taken a final stage of one artist as their point of departure, which they were able to perfect in a way that perhaps has given to their final product of a more accomplished and a more polished and altogether more elegant appearance. Now, it seems that we are giving credit to second and third issues of these really genuine works of art, and that this is one of the main problems which as critics we have the responsibility to disentangle. I should like to ask Mr. Rosenberg's advice on this question.

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

Well, you've raised about four questions. As a matter of fact, it occurred to me that we should perhaps change the format and people who have more than one question should ask one question, and we will answer that. Then they ask the next question, so we should be able to deal with each one separately.

I like the word de-mystification. It's one of my favourite words. I was very pleased to hear it. What specifically did you have in mind that you wanted "de-mystified"?

MRS. REA MONTBIZON

My first question is do we not as critics owe ourselves de-mystification of that belief that the shift of the centre of art to New York is a genuine thing, and is, this shift not perhaps a product of marketing and promotion rather than a genuine shift of focal point of creation?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

As far as the shift is concerned, I want to go back again to what I said when Mr. Molinari asked his question. This took quite a while to occur. Now that we look at it, it looks as if New York came on right after the war boom and took off with the art world. Which isn't true at all. It took about 15 years. That is, it was only in the late fifties

that people like Pollock and de Kooning, to speak of two outstanding reputations, began to sell at all. So that the notion that there was a big promotion behind all this then is simply inaccurate. That is, de Kooning's first big successful show was 1959, at which point he was 55 years old. This is not what I should call an artist who had been put over by a big scheme. The process was very slow. One of the important exhibitions that called attention in New York to this new movement in art was a show put on by the artists in an empty store on 9th Street. It was probably the most important exhibition of these people. Somebody had an empty store and a few of the boys from the artists' club negotiated with this guy to rent the store from him for a week or two, for \$30.00 and they just hung up everything, and that made a tremendous difference in the public relations of the downtown artists. This is not a big promotion. In fact I would go so far as to say that the leaders of American art, that is the museum people. Alfred Barr for one - never liked that art movement. They never cared for Abstract Expressionism. They didn't like Pollock, they didn't care for de Kooning either, personally. They were not the kind of artists that were supposed to be around in prominent positions, especially in America, which had a genteel tradition. These were kind of roughneck types, you know, who took everybody by surprise.

Furthermore, there was an enormous concentration of

thinking and skill in those people. This is again something you need to remind everybody about.

Now we get to the question of band-wagons. I can't think of a period in art since the Renaissance when there wasn't a band-wagon. In fact, creation depends on the band-wagon. You get one big personality and he inspires a whole lot of other people and most of them are bound to be mediocre because that's the nature of mankind. I remember, for example, when James Joyce' Ulysses came out. Everybody began to write in "stream of consciousness". There was a band-wagon. It didn't produce very much that was good, but everybody was very sincere. They saw a new kind of reality that could be rolled out like that.

So, the band-wagon you won't get rid of. But your raising the question put me in mind of something else that has been happening that's much more serious and much newer. And that is that movements are being stimulated by people who are not artists. This is a phenomenon of recent development and it is not restricted to the United States. The idea has come into existence that artists really don't know what they are doing, and that the people who know what artists should be doing are art critics and historians. Consequently, projects have begun to be organized by people who are critics, museum curators, historians, who literally tell the artist what to

paint, and what to make. I could give you a number of illustrations of this but I don't think it would serve much purpose. I'll give you one. For example, the organization of the Los Angeles County Museum Curator of a project of artists working with industry, which involved about 20 leading American artists. And they were all brought into this program by the curator. This affected their work. They began working with engineers, chemists, soundmen, all kinds of people.

Yesterday I was very amused at the fact that our first speaker, Professor Arnheim, found that the machinery didn't work, and he said that that had been his experience - whenever you start talking about visual or oral data, the machinery breaks down. Well, the artists discovered this too. They've had show after show with EAT, that is a combination of artists and engineers. They've had shows put on by the Architectural League having to do with light-sound-combinations and so on. The machinery rarely works. There have been laser-beam shows -- always out of order.

This is called Environmental Art. I wrote a piece about this some years ago and I pointed out that an environment is an environment even if it doesn't work. So, in a sense, it's not a failure. But as far as the machinery is concerned it usually doesn't work. And, anyway, why any-

body who has such a reliable medium as a piece of paper and a pencil should start fooling around with far-out electronics that nobody knows much about is beyond me. But, nevertheless, the pressure to create new movements, and pressure put on by people who are not themselves artists, has been overwhelming, and in many cases irresistible.

In Italy I had an argument with an art critic who claimed that art history is made by art historians and that artists should put themselves at the disposal of art historians because otherwise they are likely to run up the wrong path. In which case they will fall off the edge, like in 1492. So today it's only a Columbus that dares to venture on the seas of art history without being guided by an art historian.

This is a new situation. I don't know of anything like it since, perhaps, Gothic times, when patrons used to come and fool around with materials of the artist and help him out once in awhile, and then sign the paintings, by the way.

M. RENE BERGER

Si vous me le permettez, j'aimerais présenter quelques observations ou impressions. Je me permets de le faire en français pour être plus précis. Lorsqu'on parle du déplacement des centres, qu'il s'agisse de Paris à New York où de tout autre direction de la sorte, on commet peut-être une erreur

en considérant qu'il s'agit d'un phénomène quasi naturel. En fait, ce qui se produit de Paris à New York correspond à un phénomène totalement nouveau. Jusqu'au début du 20e siècle, les lieux de création étaient indissociables d'un champ de diffusion restreint. Aujourd'hui, pour la première fois, dans une mesure semblable, il y a un champ entre la création et la diffusion. Or, le champ n'est pas un phénomène naturel, c'est un phénomène sociologique et technologique, des conditions matérielles sont à l'origine de ce champ. J'en prends un exemple, la facilité actuelle des moyens de transport permet pour la première fois des expositions itinérantes. Ceci brièvement pour les conditions matérielles. Mais le champ de "création-diffusion" est aussi constitué par les agents de transmission que sont, d'une part, les galeries, les marchands, mais aussi bien les musées, d'autre part les collectionneurs et les critiques. Si on veut avancer il faut examiner les positions, non pas dans l'absolu, mais dans les conditions matérielles, sociologiques, techniques et politiques, qui constituent notre situation. Le public a peur d'être la dupe des marchands. Appréhension souvent légitimée par certains comportements ou d'artistes ou de marchands. N'oublions pas non plus, que quelques-unes des expressions artistiques les plus connues - le Pop Art, par exemple, - ont bénéficié de la focalisation des moyens de diffusion due aux prix de la Biennale de Venise. Il s'ensuit

pour moi deux problèmes importants: le premier, c'est que je ne pense pas que nous allions vers un appauvrissement nécessaire. Je crois, au contraire, à une nouvelle forme de création ambiguë, dans laquelle les artistes tiennent à la fois compte de la nécessité de créer, et des conditions de la diffusion de ce qu'ils créent. Ce qui peut aboutir, pour les mauvais, à l'exploitation de la publicité, pour les bons à découvrir quelque chose de nouveau. Second point: pour la critique, et nous sommes là dans un congrès de critiques d'art, il s'ensuit une responsabilité accrue. Il n'y a pas si longtemps encore, chacun de nous pouvait être proche du créateur qu'il connaissait, du musée qu'il connaissait, des organisateurs qu'il connaissait. Aujourd'hui le voilà, submergé par une information globale, souvent de seconde main, par des reproductions innombrables, car aucun d'entre nous ne peut courir le monde pour voir toutes les œuvres, tous les artistes. Le danger, c'est, pour être au courant, de feindre de connaître tout ce dont on parle. C'est pourquoi je parle d'une responsabilité accrue. Pour la première fois le critique d'art doit avoir le courage de placer sa réflexion dans un domaine entre la création et la diffusion en veillant à cet engagement nouveau dont dépend une partie de l'orientation de l'art qui, sinon, sera à la merci des promoteurs ou des producteurs intéressés.

MRS. MARGUERITE PINNEY

With regard to your major point, you said that you felt that the time and place were important for the artist to define and that with communications so often the artist was merely repeating what the world was saying. And I want to say to you that in North America the artist has a term which is "space" - "Are you in my space"? - the word "space" defines a time and place which is in the head. All of us have a space in our head which is exactly as real as the outside world; in fact, we really don't know what is real.

Professor Arnheim said yesterday that you look at a clothes-peg and is it a clothes-peg or something else. What was it? What is inside your head is just as important as what is outside. The bad art which is just reproductions of reproductions, let's face it, that is bad art, and there is always bad art. But the best art, which is international, is about what is inside everybody's head today and, therefore, it does define the time and place because it is everybody's time and place. And perhaps the regional thing could be - for instance I'm from Vancouver - that our artists have some influence on the country because the country is so enormous, and on the East because we are so close to the East. And that is the regionalism. But the space is what concerns all of us today, so that all of us today here have somewhat of the same

space inside our head, even though we come from all over the world. And I think that's important.

And one other thing I want to say is this. You quoted Yeats so I quote Yeats again, that "the centre cannot hold". This discussion about New York and Paris - it's dead ten years ago. Today what we're concerned with is what happens and what's happening in Turin with Arte Povera, that's important here and everywhere, and it's not a centre. Turin is not a centre, Vancouver is not a centre, because the centre cannot hold everywhere. Whatever is happening, it is good, it is happening, and who cares where it happens?

MR. HAROLD ROSENBERG

You have just heard the regionalist speech. If the speaker was wrong, I think we should all feel very sad. I've been hearing that speech, and every one of them always original, for years and years in the U.S.A. and it means that I don't want to go to New York I have found damn good reasons why I should stay where I am. Now, the reasons could be, we got something here that's really cooking, or it could be, well, there's nothing over there that's really cooking. It doesn't make any difference. The main thing is that I'm going to stay here and fight it out. Your question is whether it's become more possible, and I hope it has. I mean, one of the advantages of the communication system is that theoretically

regionalism could be more possible. Fifty years ago you would have been wrong. Today you may be right, in which case that would be a terrific thing, wouldn't it?

We used to know a fellow in Seattle who would always feel that he was in Japan, because of the landscape on the West Coast. You know, it has cliffs and little trees growing out of the cliffs and so on. He felt he was so close to Japan he didn't have to bother about New York at all.

A GARBAGE APOCALYPSE

Marshall McLuhan

We live in an age of innovation when we are surrounded by so many scrapped cultures that ruins, junk, and garbage have become a new kind of environment. Every innovation scraps the preceding environments created by preceding innovations and this prepares the ground for new cultural figures to emerge. The Greeks abstracted phusis as a visual figure from the ground of the surrounding barbaric cultures, sunk in their non-visual existential modes. Thanks to the new art of phonetic writing, the Greeks were able to establish a new order of classified and conceptualized art structures which gradually became consolidated as Nature. To the Greeks, phusis or "Nature" was abstracted from the huge existential mass of oral culture and magical practises by which the pre-Socratic world had established its relations with the ground of existence. The pre-Platonic world was auditory, tactile, and kinetic, anything but visual in its patterns of order. The entelechies of man and society in the pre-Socratic world were resonant and auditory rather than visually classified. With the new phonetic writing, with its drastic separation of sign and semantics, the Greeks were able to make a complete divorce between the old pre-literate cultures and their own Euclidean order. Euclid himself had consolidated the new abstract, visual space, retaining as little as possible of the old kinetic aspects of land measurement in the organization of his formal structures. It was not, however, until printing

that geometers were able to reduce the kinetic character of geometry to an absolute visual minimum. (See Art and Geometry by Wm. Ivins Jr.)

To the Greek of this early time it seemed plain enough that he was creating an order of phusis, or physics, or "Nature" from the huge midden-heap of confused barbaric cultures. What eventually emerged from this "garbage" of destroyed cultures was a highly selective abstraction of classified conformities and patterns which the Greeks called phusis, or physics, and which gradually became familiarized in the Western world as "Nature." In the age of non-Euclidean geometries (later 19th century and since), it is quite easy to see that the Greeks had separated out visual space from the many other kinds of space in setting up geometry. Visual space has the unique properties of uniformity, continuity and connectedness. These properties do not belong to the kinetic or auditory or tactile spaces. Only phonetically literate man has ever sufficiently separated out the visual sense from the perplex of all the other senses in order to create a merely visual order in art and knowledge. Pre-literate man lives primarily in the audile-tactile world of the resonant interval which is now familiar to us from the new quantum mechanics. (See The Nature of the Chemical Bond by Linus Pauling.)

The world of play, celebrated in the study Homo Ludens by J. Huizinga, is a world of the resonating interval such as we experience in the relation between wheel and axle. It is play rather than connection or logic that makes possible both wheel and axle. Logic is known only to the visual man who looks for connections rather than for play and metamorphosis. The artist, however, must always prefer the world of play and metamorphosis to the world of visual continuity and logical connection.

The Greeks, having created phusis from the huge midden-heap of surrounding barbaric cultures, proceeded to study the entelechies of their newly invented "Nature." The processes within the structure of classified data and which they had included in their rigorous selections from the existential world outside themselves, they studied as vortices of power which they called energeia, or entelechy. Somewhat strangely, they excluded from this entelechizing process of observation and formulation all those forms of energy generated by the extension of man's own being. Even language, itself the divine Logos as resonant in human speech, was given scant attention as a form of magical energy. The pre-Socratics seem to have been much more aware of the entelechies of language than the literate Greeks. It was surely writing itself that dictated this preference for the visual rather than the auditory manifestations of the word. Civilization has been reared upon techniques that suppressed the resonant and the

magical forms of language and other technologies.

May it not have been their Greek satisfaction with the massive artefact of their phusis that made them feel exempt from the task of discerning the entelechies of human technologies? How else is it possible to account for this huge hiatus in Western philosophy and science? Oriental, and also pre-literate societies around the world have always felt awe in the presence of the entelechies swarming from and around human artefacts. Only visual man has stood aloof and scornful of all the magical powers exerted upon us by our own ingeneous innovations, whether weapons, clothing, utensils, or vehicles.

Today in the age of Sputnik when the planet itself has been enclosed in a human artefact, Nature, whether the nature of Euclid, Plato and the Greeks, or that of Newton and Adam Smith and Marx, has been scrapped. The planet, enclosed in a human artefact, has become itself a vast garbage apocalypse. The instant environment of electric information made possible by the "wired" planet, has restored the pre-literate ecology of the pre-Socratics to the Western world. The Orient never did abandon the non-visual modes of magic and ecology. It is only visual, logical, and abstract Western man who has prefered to have "a place for everything", and "everything in it's place", and "one thing at a time." Such an order, and the processes that are compatible with such an order, can scarcely co-exist with the electric all-at-once patterns of awareness.

It was in the mid nineteenth century that poets and artists began to explore the entelechies of human arts and technologies. Edgar Allan Poe and Baudelaire and Mallarme were foremost among those who began a new approach to the arts and artefacts of man. They proposed the strategy of studying not causes, but effects. With Poe this meant the study of every kind of process, but especially the artistic and cognitive processes. In the art of poetic making, Poe recognized that order was related to effect and considered it necessary to start with effects rather than causes, with perceptions rather than concepts. This had been the hiatus of the preceding centuries since the Greeks. Concepts and classifications had been the supreme mode of studying Nature. Systems of thought and philosophy stood out as figures against the ground of "Nature." Today when "Nature" has simply been scrapped by electric technology, it is obvious that we have returned from the ground of Nature to the ground of existence itself. Existence is enormously greater than anything included in any philosophical system, since a system, as such, must be exclusive rather than inclusive. For most people the return from the Greco-Roman visual order of Nature to the audile-tactile resonance of existence, is nothing less than a garbage apocalypse.

LAURENT LAMY

You said something about A.T.&T., American Telephone and Telegraph. I wonder if we let the A.T.&T. people do the

news, and listen to the telephone and telegraph all the time, that might be more fun.

MR. McLUHAN

I am not sure what is involved there, in your mind. I am not sure what you mean by A.T.&T., doing the news. They do it now. What do you want them to do? It is their technology that does it now. They are the ones who have wired the planet.

Incidentally, when you have wired the planet for this type of service it becomes mandatory to make sure that your wire installations remain unviolated by other political forces so that the wires have to remain clear. You could say that the United States, or whatever powers have undertaken this wiring, feel obliged to keep other people out of the way of their wiring system. This, I think, may help to account for the strange contradictory policies, so that what is really a technological precaution for protecting a huge wiring system, seems utterly inconsistent with the old hardware, weaponry, goals, territorial and other objectives from a previous age. I think the United States is probably caught completely between these technologies, and has not a clue what to do with the new in terms of the old anymore than our postal department knows what to do with the old hardware technology in relation to the new software.

What would happen, for example, if video phones were to come in. You would scrap the old telephone. If you brought in video phone you would scrap the person-to-person character of the telephone, and you would bring in everybody. The video phone would not permit a person-to-person call but everybody would be there. Here comes everybody instead of just the person you want to speak to.

The telephone is famous for this person-to-person character. It enabled people to speak person-to-person for the first time in the world. You were there, they are here, whereas the old letter, which you would send to correspondents, did not permit you or they to transfer your position. You stayed in your corner and the sender stayed in his. The telephone enables you to be there and the person to whom you are speaking to be with you. Now with video phone the person-to-person character of telephone would disappear instantly. The whole environment would be there, the whole surrounding in which you were speaking would be there, and all the people in the room with you would be there, and the person at the other end would be with you. You can image the chaos that the telephone system would undergo with video phone. The telephone people are terrified of the video phone possibility, just as the educational establishment is paralyzed by cassette ideas. It is too much to make this transition from classrooms in which people stay in one position to a world in which everybody can be everywhere, instantly and simultaneously. Nobody has ever tried to devise a curriculum where everybody

can be everywhere. The answer, by the way, to those types of problems is that the answer is already here. In fact, the curriculum that takes over at that point is that the environment itself becomes educator as it was for primitive man, the hunter.

The primitive hunter used the environment itself as a trainer of perception, not concepts. That is why under electric conditions concepts become useless. For example, the man who is up against the telephone problem or the mail strike problem, is up against a technological problem that has nothing to do with unions. Nothing to do with salaries. The educator who is up against an electric environment suddenly discovers that concepts are no use. He has to use percepts instead. The man who is trying to solve the video phone problem will find concepts, ideas, of just no use at all. He has to know what is happening and what is going to happen.

In the environment of the hunter of the new Paleolithic age in which we live, percepts are prior. Concepts are pushed into the background again, as nuisance. They get in the way of percepts.

That is what I meant earlier when I said that we had moved into the age of the hunter again. The hunter is a man who cannot afford concepts, he has to use his senses. He has to perceive his world immediately and directly as a survival kit.

I do not think there are very many concepts that have the slightest relevance under these new instant conditions. The concepts that were built up laboriously over centuries of literacy, all the concepts turn out to be classifications. Filing systems for information, and they are of no use in an age of instant retrieval and instant exposure to everybody.

I do not know whether this has any relevance to the question about A.T.&T., but A.T.&T. has wired the world, they have already done the job referred to superbly and perhaps irresponsibly in the sense that they are not answerable to anybody. Nobody asked them to do it. People have not taken enough interest in what is going on to know what is involved and what was done.

Those sounds which we just heard, I do not know whence they come, but they remind me of the primitive sort of animal cries. When you are at a loss for words you tend to resort to gestures, and grunts, and like I mean, man. Have you not noticed that language is disappearing very rapidly? In the new electric age the Marcel Marceaus have it all over us. We have returned to the age of mime, gesture, the verbal universe has been scrapped too. It is part of the junk heap, witness Finnegan's Wake. Finnegan is one of the great testimonies to the scrapping of the languages of the world, tossing them onto a junk heap as new resource material for poets. All of the languages of the world are now available simultaneously as poetic resource. We know more about

languages than ever, but we have not decided what to make of them. Finnegans Wake takes language as itself, material to be manipulated into art, possessing all the clues as to the inner structures of our own beings and also the inner history of our psyche.

Finnegan is a new electronic use of language as gesture, language as resonant interval, pun. Joyce uses the pun to release the enormous stored perceptions of language. Every word ever introduced into any language represents millions of perceptions of millions of people, over long periods of time.

Language as codified experience of many, many generations can be released only by puns. The pun is a kind of interface or interval which enables the stored perception of words to be released. Literary people who are accustomed to imposing semantic definitions on words are baffled by this use of the pun as a trigger for releasing experience in language. All language resonates with total perception of the race. The literary artist is a person who seeks to arrange it in forms which will release that power.

In our time advertising slogan-makers and label-makers have spent more energy trying to release the magical powers of language than any other group in the community. They are, to our shame, the most active artists in the verbal field that we have. The rock bands do not make very many syntactical statements. They, too, are mainly concerned with

rubbing words together to see what they are made of. They do not have much semantic or intellectual curiosity about them at all. Somatic rather than semantic, is the new thing, where it is at.

I am very interested in the phrase "where it is at." It is a new dimension of perception in English because "it" does not refer to anybody or anything. It means everybody and everything, and "at" is a very strange word indeed. There is a kind of consensus and a consensuality, everybody and all our senses simultaneously concentrated in a single moment of awareness in that phrase. There is a new - it is not avant garde at all - there is a new feeling of need to know where it is at--and I would toss that one to Mr. Rosenberg. I would suggest that where it is at is a very much more complex and difficult approach to human awareness than anything that the artist had ever thought of in the avant garde period.

It certainly is not a task for a private artist to tackle, to discover where it is at.

M. ALAIN DESVERGNES

Vous avez dit un jour qu'un de vos amis, ingénieur du son newyorkais a rapporté cette remarque d'un policier de New York, qui lui disait, "Lorsque vous avez des problèmes, n'apellez pas à l'aide maisappelez au feu parce que l'aide

est une chose froide qui ne donne pas envie de s'en mêler, alors que le feu est chaud, en donnant l'impression qu'on peut faire quelque chose très vite". Je veux vous poser la question, dans cette idée de critique d'art et de 'hunter' et de 'hunted' la question de savoir si le critique d'art va être, tandis que vous vous êtes créé une situation prophète un peu dans le domaine, avec tous les alias que ça comporte, est-ce que vous croyez que le critique d'art va être du froid ou du feu, de l'aide ou du feu, "of the outer trip or the inner trip?"

MR. McLUHAN

A critic after all, like anybody else, thinks of himself as speaking to somebody. Montaigne, when the book was new, said there was nobody to speak to. It is very interesting to go back to the 1500s and see the strange efforts that people made in that period to find a public. Now, the medieval writers had tiny little publics, maybe a few dozen people at most, because the manuscript could not be read very quickly and it could not be read by very many people. But with print came the possibility at least of hundreds of readers and then thousands, and so on. There was nobody who knew how to write for the printing press for a long time. Montaigne thought of himself as putting messages in bottles and throwing them in the ocean. Montaigne thought of the book as a message in a bottle, he did not believe

that it could actually reach anybody, except by chance.

Think of what your problem would be if in some African community you were the only person who could read and write and you had a great masterpiece in mind and you wrote it and got it published, in English or in your own African dialect. Who would it be for? Actually, you cannot even begin to write until you have in mind a public. The public is a producer, not a consumer. For the painter, too, and for the art critic, the public is a producer, not a consumer.

Today we are in a very good position to realize that. We have scrapped all the publics and the consumers have all become producers by virtue of Gallop polls and various investigatory committees. The whole world audience is now being used as a resource for research and this is one function of the computer, to store data about everybody, and to make it available to anybody, for a small fee.

When you asked about the art critic then, you have to say, who was the public for whom the painter worked, and then again, in a very subsidiary sense, who was the public for whom those art critics wrote about those painters?

Mr. Rosenberg can answer those questions very well, having worked in that field for a long time. Notice that the New Yorker and Esquire, for which he wrote, were fun magazines, and that light-hearted magazines of that sort should be the vehicles of serious art criticism is itself rather strange. Where else would you print serious art criticism except in

a comic magazine? This is one of the hang-ups of the art critic.

When you asked the question about the art critic, who is the art critic for the rock bands today, who are the people who do the evaluating and the standard making for the big bands? This is worth looking into because what function these bands perform for their audiences, artistically, is certainly an important question. They do a profound amount of educating of the young. Their credentials as educators have never been examined except by whom? I do not know. I am not sure that the art critic has a future in that kind of world. On the other hand, notice that you have a very high level of virtuosity, of discrimination and awareness among the consumers of rock music. The audiences are very critical. They are many of them participants. This is a new situation. It is like the old Homeric rhapsodists who were the professional performers of the poems, the harpists, the bards, their audiences were participants too, and knew every trick in the game.

I think art criticism, in the sense of high standards of awareness of what is going on, probably is going to go up, up, up, in the pop art world but just what that might portend, I am not sure.

MRS. WEELEN

Mr. McLuhan, earlier in your talk you said that the camera is an eye turned towards the world and that the television eye can be compared to the eye of the blind man turned in an inner quest. I wonder if you would mind elaborating on that because, of course, at first sight it seems very contradictory since the journey made inwardly by the blind man would seem to be rather the opposite of what takes place with a spectator watching television. I would like to ask if you can elaborate on that.

MR. McLUHAN

It is not an easy matter. I referred already to this book of Lusseyran. Jacques Lusseyran wrote a book called And There Was Light. It is in English and is about 1964, I think. Having gone blind he became intensely conscious of the change in his sensory life and it is one of the best studies of the inner trip undergone by a blind man that I have ever read. In the ancient world, the seer, the one who knew, was portrayed as a blind person and he explains that sort of thing very well in this book. He also explains the enormous stepping up of the senses of touch and hearing resulting from blindness. So, in a sense, in the television age of the inner trip, the other senses have become enormously more keen. The visual sense has gone down but the other senses have come up into a higher --

MRS. WEELEN

You mean the watcher? The senses of the watcher of the television?

MR. McLUHAN

Yes. His touch and taste and smell and hearing have got much more sensitive than they had been before. The watcher of television, of course is mostly watching old movies but the fact is that they are translated into a television form of experience by the medium. That is, a movie put on television is not a movie anymore, it is television, and television goes into you. It is like a drug. It is an immediate injection into your system, your nervous system. That is not a figure of speech. It is literally an injection into your nervous system and the Krugman experiments revealed this.

MRS. WEELEN

Yes. But surely all thought process is stopped there, whereas the blind man presumably -

MR. McLUHAN

Thought is again something subject to amazing

varieties depending upon cultural set-ups.

The idea that the body itself might be turned into a means of intellectual awareness is now an everyday fact under electric conditions. Now again, it is very difficult to evaluate these things but it is very different from the sort of thinking that went on in the age of concepts. I can only suggest that that might be one place at which to begin to study it, study the nature of preconceptual thought, you might go back to the pre-Socratics, or preliterate thinkers, and see how they encountered their world. But we are post-literate and more primitive than the pre-Socratics ever dreamed of being.

MRS. WEELEN

Thank you.

MR. McLUHAN

I think we will let it go at that.

M. BERGER

Nous allons mettre un terme à cette conférence,
par là même à notre colloque. Chaque colloque est une manière

de pari qu'on ne gagne jamais pour la bonne raison que chacun aurait aimé manier les dés d'une autre façon. Reste l'expérience d'un jeu, expérience féconde! Aussi dois-je, au nom de l'AICA, dire ma gratitude à tous ceux qui ont eu l'obligeance de participer, à M. Arnheim, M. Moles, M. Rosenberg, M. McLuhan. Chacun a posé le problème à sa manière, je n'aurai garde d'oublier le cinquième partenaire, l'AICA, j'entends tous ceux qui parmi nous ont la parole, ou auraient voulu prendre la parole, ou prendront isolément ou en petits groupes ultérieurement la parole. Car il est clair qu'aucun colloque, aucun conférencier ne conclut ni ne résout un problème. Aussi n'est-il pas étonnant qu'à la suite de la conférence du professeur Arnheim nous soyons nombreux à nous demander s'il existe une psychologie absolue, ou s'il n'y a pas aujourd'hui une "psychologie relativisée" par les conditions mêmes dans lesquelles nous vivons. Aussi après la conférence du professeur Moles sommes-nous en droit de nous demander si le processus créateur correspond totalement ou non au processus de la communication. Aussi sommes-nous, à la suite de la conférence de Harold Rosenberg, mis en demeure d'exercer une vigilance accrue, après le brillant exposé de McLuhan, en demeure de nous demander si le monde électrique correspond à la réalité totale ou si la panne - nous en avons eu des exemples - les grèves - nous en avons tous les jours - la contestation, ne correspondent pas à des phénomènes humains qui limitent la partie de toute affirmation, la probabilité de tout colloque, et découvrent par là même, la noblesse de l'incertitude.

THE CRISIS IN CRITICISM

Lawrence Alloway

Mr. Mario Amaya

As moderator and chairman, I thought I might say a couple of words if you will bear with me. I found, looking through some books this morning, a couple of quotes which I would like to repeat to you. In a book that Jerome Melquist wrote on an exhibition, which tried to prove that critics of the 19th century were almost invariably wrong about the artist that they wrote about, he asked the question, "Should the art critic bay and bluster like a Samuel Johnson, or don the legal robes like a judge, or merely sit in the bleachers cheering, or hooting as the occasion demands, or should he attempt to drench the subject with light?" On another occasion of a symposium of art criticism in the sixties, at Brandeis University in 1967, the New York critic, Max Kozlov, found criticism "so terribly wanting in professionalism now-a-days" and he said "the work we do now stands simply in itself as a critique of our predecessors and mentors". On the same occasion Sidney Tillim found that pop art had been the new liberator of modern criticism. And he put it "generating talk after 2 decades of apocalyptic utterances and self-conscious formalism created a new, fresh idea".

With some of our colleagues' remarks, I wondered myself whether the topic of this talk is right. I mean, is it the crisis in criticism today or is it more a question of the critic himself in a crisis? Critics I suppose, have always felt they were in a crisis, but perhaps they are critics by the very fact they can predict, or focus, not only on the crisis of their time, but the crisis within their profession, and in their ranks.

If we can lay any special claim to any special kind of crisis

today, perhaps that crisis is born out of the art of our era, which obviously reflects anxiety, uncertainty, dramatically changing moral and social values. The real problem, perhaps is that critics are no longer writing for a public, and perhaps are writing only for each other. In other words, is the audience for criticism now a days only other critics, or is the role of the critic still one of a proselytizer, the man who explains, who elucidates, for his society?

One of the more significant changes in criticism, perhaps, is a specialization whereby the old amateur aesthete, the literary figure as he was once, is now the expert. Critics are hardly attached any longer to the literary world, as they were once - as poets, as novelists - now they seem to be museum officials or exhibition organizers.

With these few random ideas thrown at you, I am sure our distinguished panel will all have some tack of their own which they wish to pursue. If I may introduce them to you, we have at the end of the table Mr. Greg Curnoe; next to me Mr. Ronald Bloore, both artists - Mr. Curnoe from London, Ontario, Mr. Bloore from Toronto; on my right Mr. Barry Lord, who was the founding editor of Arts Canada, who has currently been appointed the education co-ordinator at the National Gallery in Ottawa. At the end of the table on my right, our special guest Mr. Lawrence Alloway, who has prepared a paper on the topic under discussion which he will be reading in a moment.

Mr. Alloway hardly needs any further introduction. He is credited with having invented perhaps the most famous art label of the

decade, Pop Art. He was a curator from 1962 to 1966 at the Guggenheim Museum. He was Deputy Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, has written several books, and has organized many exhibitions. He is now the professor of art history at State University, Stonybrook, New York. May I give you, Mr. Alloway, please.

Mr. ALLOWAY

"The Crisis in Criticism Today" was given to me as a title and so the first thing I did was look up "crisis". Let me give you some dictionary definitions of "crisis". A crisis is "a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events is determined, a turning point". In an illness a crisis is the point of decisive change, leading either to a decisive recovery or to death. A crisis is a condition of instability leading to a decisive change.

It is my belief, arrived at under pressure of preparing an article, a text, for this conference, that art criticism is under pressure in two ways at the moment. Though I wonder whether decisive changes will follow this pressure, given the lethargy of our profession, I rather doubt it. Even though pulse-taking is not always reform-inducing, it is a pleasant thing to consider the ways, when one is under pressure, it confers prestige, to have a crisis. So I want to talk about what I think might be ours.

First, let me propose what I think the kind of thing art criticism is. I think ours is an informal mode, it is neither art history nor aesthetics. It is somewhere between date organization and

theoretical projection. We are lucky, we are spared the art historian's obligation to be factual, and we are not under the obligation of the aesthetician to generate statements. Is is an informal mode then, between data organization and theoretical projection.

One other definition, one other quibble, before I really get into a little detail about the forms of these 2 crises. Much of what passes as art criticism today is only exhibition reviewing. I think we should regard exhibition reviewing as something different from art criticism. It is an adjunct, and we have all done it, to marketing. Given its relation to advertising revenue and the magazine for which one is writing, and given the fact that an exhibition reviewer accepts the gallery schedule as a unit of measurement-actually, gallery schedules are entirely arbitrary; have nothing to do with the speed at which artists produce, or the rate at which they develop and change - exhibition reviewing has set up the gallery appearance, with, I think, a false authority. I think that exhibition reviewing services the gallery, whereas art criticism should service the artist. The kind of service that the art critic can perform for the artist is, I think, to increase public understanding about his work. Thus, somewhere between the historian's scrupulous sense of fact, somewhere between the aesthetician's power to generate statements, I think we have a service function, and it is better formed in relation to the artist than it is in relation to the market.

If you look up old art criticism it is fascinating. If you look up old exhibition reviews they are extremely uninformative. I know when I

was at the Guggenheim preparing exhibitions I used to wade through old reviews on the artists that I was preparing an exhibition of, and they were, without exception, useless. So, it is art criticism I am talking about this afternoon.

The first crisis is, I think, a crisis of self awareness. There is, I think, an increased sense of art criticism as itself a form. I know, in a sense, everyone who writes has this sense. They are not only saying something but they are accepting the dictates and the pressures of the form within which they write. I think that the self awareness of art critics has intensified in the last ten years. I think the case could be made by references to the art criticism of many countries, but since I live in the United States now, let me take my examples from there. In 1962 Clement Greenberg wrote an attack on Harold Rosenberg, called "How Art Writing Gets its Bad Name"; Leo Steinberg wrote a sympathetic piece concerning contemporary art and the plight of the public, and naturally the critics, dilemma of being caught between the art and the public; and Max Kozlov published a criticism in Art International of Clement Greenberg.

By themselves, none of these events are of great consequence, but I think they add up to something. In 1964 Michael Fried defended formalist criticism and in the same year John Coplans attacked it. In 1966 I think the interest in criticism, qua criticism, was sufficiently general. I know that in that year I wrote a couple of things. I did a catalogue of an exhibition called "Systemic Painting". I also wrote an article about Op Art, and in both cases I ignored the artists almost completely and concentrated on the options taken by the critics who were

writing about these forms of painting.

Starting in 1967 and still sort of limping on, dragging on, is the series of problems of criticism in Artforum. It began in 1967 with Robert Goldwater, Clement Greenberg, Max Kozlov, Barbara Rose and so on.

As I say, not a single item there is of overwhelming significance but, nevertheless, they are a lot of small straws in the wind. I think, aside from the fact that art critics were suddenly very aware of reading each other's criticism and writing about it, there is an additional factor. It is this. It is the sudden availability of the past art-writing of the world. In some places, like Paris, I guess it has always been more or less available, but it was not available in English-speaking countries before. Let me give you just one example out of very many, just one typical example. I won't list all of them. Consider H. W. Jenson's paperback series "Sources and Documents in the History of Art." These paperbacks make available, even to monolingualists, the past literature of art. For example, Greek and Roman writers on art are easily available for \$1.00 or \$2.00 in paperback, and so, for example, are the writings of mid-sixteenth century Venetian art critics. I did not know before I got that paperback that there were 16th Century Venetian art critics but now I take them very seriously - I take Pallo Pino, Ludovico Dolci, Aretino.

Information of that kind piling up behind one begins to have an effect. Maybe the Venetian example does not seem too formidable, but what about the case of Benedette Vachi. Vachi, a Florentine in the middle of the 16th Century, issued the first questionnaire to artists. I cannot

resist reminding you who the questionnaire went to - it went to Buonsegna, Cellini, Michelangelo, Pontormo, Francesco da Sangallo, Tasso, Treboli, Vasari. Certainly that document published in 1549 is the ancestor to Gene Swenson's interviews with pop artists in Art News, and many other interview forms.

We, as art critics, not only developed an increased susceptibility to what the others were doing, comparing ourselves in a horizontal way, we also, I think, began to acquire a past.

I think that modern art criticism took its form, I am sure that we can agree on this, from Diderot. It was Diderot and his Salons 1759, 1781, who developed that going to an exhibition and walking, seeing, thinking, all in one operation, which is basically the procedure of an art critic still. That form, I guess, began a couple of hundred years ago, but the deeper historical background is present as a source of doubt. Let me indicate the kinds of doubt which I have felt now that I can read freshly-translated past documents. 16th Century art criticism, for instance, has set topics, and these set topics are now very, very clear. For example, they occur over and over again in one writer after another. The comparison of the arts is one set topic. Everybody had to take a stand on the relation between painting and sculpture or between the visual arts and literature, for instance.

Another set topic was the respective merits of inspiration and study. Which was best, the creative burst or the patient preparation?

Another set theme was the antagonism of technical virtuosity and fidelity to Nature. How could you combine working quickly with really translating what you have learned from Nature into adequate artistic form?

They are not exactly the problems which are most consuming now, but they are recurrent problems of the time. I must say my awareness of them has given me the feeling that art criticism still revolves around a few traditional famous questions which we repeat more than we advance or develop in our writing. I think we have a center of topics which we go round without a great deal of development in many cases. I hope you will provide other examples, but the few famous questions I jotted down include: the death of easel painting, which has been expiring since at least Wagner; there is the work of art defined as an object, since Whistler and Walter Pater, at the very least, and Gauthier also; and that theme, the definition of the work of arts as an object, stated with absolute completeness by Pater, Gauthier and Whistler, is still with us. I think Roger Fry modified it. I think Clem Greenberg's version of it is less subtle and intelligent than the form in which it began.

Another famous question is the rapprochement of art and technology. This is another traditional still center we keep going dizzily around. In terms of handcraft we have had it since William Morris. In terms of mass production, since futurism and Malevich.

If I am right, art criticism, art history, is influencing the art critic in perhaps two ways. I think that the use of art historian have made of documents has influenced us by making us more aware of

the nature of our own writing as documents. It sharpened our sensitivity to what other critics are doing. We are aware of the nature of our own activity much more than I think we were 10 years ago.

Also, art history has influenced the art critic in another way - by complicating the reactive eye, when we used to pretend all the critic needed was a good eye. Pure visibility has lost its prestige, I think. As we have come to recognize hidden topics in past art criticism, as we become aware of the repetitions and failure to develop our own pet set ideas, I think historical complexity has, in terms of documents, influenced the art critic also.

I think we have lost the innocence of just pretending we were a naked eyeball responding to what is out there, and we have a greater obligation to factual and historical data which art historians have always dealt with.

Those are my proposals to the first crisis, the crisis concerning the crisis in our definition of self-awareness.

The second crisis is a political one, and I am sure that from whatever country we come, we all have versions of this crisis. I come from New York so I will give you a few details on how I think the crisis there has affected, and will continue to affect, critics. I know the French version, which was earlier than the New York version, is also important. I just came back from Columbia, in South America, and there is a version of this crisis in Columbia, too.

Perhaps what is happening is that topicality is no longer

attached simply to style but to commitment which means that artists are becoming political faster than the art critics are becoming political.

In a way, I think perhaps one can find a parallel as far as our professional problems are concerned, with the problems of activist journalism. An activist journalist can be described in a double way; on the one hand he has his convictions, the beliefs that make him an activist; on the other hand, he has a story which has to be told "accurately" and "fairly". I know that in fact accuracy and fairness are rare in reporting but they are present as desirable targets. We, as art critics, have no comparable basis of objective fact.

The variables and the unknowns are so numerous in the field of art, and the connection between the parts of the system, between one part of the system and another, are so tangled and elusive that we have very few objective points of reference. How then is the art critic to link his utterance with the polemical assertion of the constitutional right to free speech, since most of the things we say have never been taken very seriously by a large audience outside our own field anyway?

One sign of the form of this problem occurred in May this year in New York when New York University arranged a seminar on "Art Criticism and Art Education." Two critics in particular, speaking separately, displayed the same problem. They were Barbara Rose and Max Kozlov. They both said that after the invasion of Cambodia by the United States, after the deaths of students at Kent State University campus, after this, art criticism is insignificant. They considered alternatives. Barbara Rose thought that maybe rock and roll music criticism would be more relevant. And Max Kozlov considered

maybe film criticism would be more relevant. I suggest that neither of them has been reading much rock and roll writing and certainly no film criticism lately, if they think that those fields show superior commitment to ours. Nevertheless, it shows the kind of restlessness some art critics are faced with at the present moment.

The protest against the political situation had been anticipated by many French critics; by Michel Ragon. This is what Ragon wrote after the events of May 1968 in Paris. He said "How, after 70 cars were burned in the Latin quarter, and their carcasses long remained on exhibition in the unpaved streets, will Arman still be able to exhibit burnt pianos in picture galleries?" Well, the arguments sounds all right but what about the wrecked trucks that line the road into Jerusalem? The British bombed the supply convoys going into Jerusalem, during the War of Independence, and as a monument on that winding road going in the trucks are just pushed to the side of the road, sprayed against rust, and left there. I think that beats the motor show of 1968.

This is a problem. There is a temptation, I think. An art critic deals a great deal of the time with topical issues. The art critics is tempted to the creation of instant relevance that students have. French or American students have had all the pleasures of instant commitment , instant relevance, and it is a lure of art critics who have long been resigned to a peripheral role in our society.

Let me give you an example from New York of how artists have tried to act politically. There have been several occasions. One case

was after the Democratic convention in Chicago. The artists' objections to Mayor Daly after he supported the police riot took two forms. First of all, there was a boycott. A group of artists said, we will no longer exhibit our works in Chicago and, of course, that is not a move calculated to influence Mayor Daly at all. If he noticed, he would probably be pleased. The only people to be irritated by that, to suffer from that, would be Chicagoans who probably deplored the police riot also. Their boycott was not sustained very long.

The second move was Protest Art. That is to say, a series of satirical paintings, against Mayor Daly. Barney Newman did a Newman with barbed wire instead of the usual materials. People adapted their regular styles for the purposes of satire.

In the first case the work of art, as it already existed, was used as an instrument of power. In the other case, new works were created with a satirical target. Neither had a great deal of impact but both, I think, both techniques are going to be heard of a great deal more. If both modes of protest continue, if they gather momentum, as they seem sure to do, I think we, as critics, will have a crisis.

For example, the crisis can take this form. Editors and publishers are much less tolerant than art dealers. Leo Castelli needs Robert Rauschenberg much more than Alvin Denick needs me to write for Arts magazine, for instance. We are much more expendable than the artist.

Who among us right now, who has discussed the aesthetics, who has made an aesthetic appraisal of the works of the Women Artists in Revolution in New York? W.A.R. is the shortening for it - Women Artists

in Revolution. Who has discussed black artists in terms of their aesthetic quality at the moment? This is definitely an area in which our margin of embarrassment is going to grow because nobody wants to be against women and nobody wants to be against the liberation of the black people, but when art becomes used as an instrument of power, what is our position to be?

In Paris first, and now in New York, the artists are attacking in ascending order, the art market, consumer society, and the military-industrial complex. The art market is a symbol of the larger areas, I think, and has the advantage of being within reach of physical action. I think that is the meaning of - drawing my examples from New York because I know it best - the Art Worker's Coalition, harrassment of the Museum of Modern Art, and this summer's New York artist's strike, and now the Emergency Cultural Government.

The Emergency Cultural Government was formed to deal with the crisis of the American artists withdrawing from the American pavilion of the Venice Biennale, but it soon ran into its own crisis, and was sundered. A black splinter group has separated out from the original Emergency Cultural Government.

As these problems, symbolized by these revolutionary groups, continue, I think our position is going to need increasingly clear definition. The artists themselves are adapting the pure revolutionay stance - you are for us and if you are not for us you are against us. If you keep quiet you are assumed to be on the side of Mr. Nixon. I know this is increasingly tempting critics to instant relevance. I think

as art critics we are subject to the pressure because of the short-term objectives of a lot of us, I think, have been dealing with what is new, and now what is new is the revolutionary stance. The artists, who are the people closest to the critics, very frequently expect the art critic to signify commitment and usefulness. The extent to which we ought to do this is, I think, our crisis now.

I think there is a lobby of short-term causes and these short-term political causes may usurp the two best things that art criticism can do: one celebrate new arrivals. The celebrative function of criticism, is, I think, very important. And two our evaluative ambitions as critics. We need to find a way, I think, to combine the celebrating and the evaluating functions along with the pressure for short-term political commitments. This, I think, is not easy. I hope maybe the people here with experiences in other countries will be able to indicate ways out of what I think is something of a dilemma.

One way, maybe, would be a slight enlargement of our traditional topics. Such topics we might spend more time on are things like this: consider ways to expand the distribution system of art; consider the status of multiples; possibly revive and discuss past forms of protest art, for example, the Dreyfus Affair novel involves numerous artists. It would be timely, I think, to be reminded of the position that different artists took and whether they tried to use their work as an instrument of power or as an instrument of comment. Another theme, I think, is to consider ways to mitigate speculation and make a more equitable distribution of the money that is made out of art.

The art market is part of the real world in a way that a campus is not. I think our problem is to find a way to write about present tensions without the primitivism that protects many student reforms from seriously being implemented. What we write will be tested in the situation of the real world.

Those are the two forms of the crisis that are on my mind at the present moment and which I would like to present to you for discussion - the professional crisis and the political one. I think I should stop there.

Mr. AMAYA

Thank you, Mr. Alloway, for a fascinating talk. Before we throw the discussion open to the floor we thought it might be a good idea to give each member of the panel here a few minutes to express some personal point of view on this topic. Could we begin with Mr. Lord please?

Mr. Barry LORD

I would like to follow right along from Mr. Alloway's excellent introduction of the topic. I am primarily concerned, as I suppose most of you know, with the second crisis which he outlined, the political crisis.

I would like to begin by resurrecting the sub-title that was originally suggested for this panel by Anne Brodzky, the editor of Arts Canada, which was "Art Critics, Liberators, or Oppressors?" That is to say, are we as critics to serve the growing forces of oppression? This question seems to me to have been largely ignored until this

section of the conference and I think it is one that we want to look at in terms of this present conference - to see how much attention we are paying to it. My general impression, if I were an outsider accompanying the Ottawa section of the conference, would be that most art critics see themselves continuing in the role of oppressors. The force of Professor Arnheim's talk, for instance, to me, was to divide our community of consciousness into perception of different worlds, different things, instead of retaining a unified world of consciousness with different interpretations. Both Professors Moles and McLuhan seemed to me to stress the control of technology over people's lives rather than the opposite reality, the ability of people to resist, to rebel, and to control their technology. The question, vis-à-vis the role of technology in art, of who owns the machines, was one that was never brought up. Who controls them? In whose interest in the technology being used? Particularly Professor McLuhan's references to the postal strike, for instance, as a conflict of new technology and the old, ignoring the reality of people involved in that postal strike, the oppressed postal workers struggling against their oppressing employer, the Government of Canada. We were very far from the quotation, which is one of my favorites, from Mao Tse Tung, "in the long run the people, and only the people, make history." I would apply that to art history as well. It is certainly very far from another of Mao's major contentions that down through history it has always been said, it is justified to oppress but now we say for the first time, it is justified to rebel. What does that mean for the New York-centered art world of Harold Rosenberg as it was presented to us in Ottawa? There we proceeded without any reference, without any direct reference, to the

very significant factor of U.S. Imperialism, replacing the worn out Imperialism of Continental Europe. That seems to me to go a long way towards obviously explaining one of the central points in the question period, the transfer of the center of the art world from Paris to New York 1940.

What is the standpoint the critics must take today? It seems to me we must be examining contemporary art, as far as we can, from the standpoint of the very near future, which I would say is a post-revolutionary standpoint, that is, after the fall of the United States Empire with all its oppression, racism, sexism, etc. Let us look at it from a post-revolutionary standpoint and then see what is the status of this New York centred art world.

For me it seems to be increasingly necessary, now and in the future, to emphasize content as opposed to form. The correction must be in the direction of content. I want to, now and in the future, write every line, if possible, from a pro-people point of view, from an anti-imperialist point of view. I want to see if we cannot, as critics, apply a class analysis to culture. The visual arts establishment, more than perhaps any other, certainly more than, say, rock and roll or film, is a ruling - class culture. I would like to see if we can seek out some of these pro-people elements in artists' work, artists who are caught inside the ruling - class culture which surrounds them, who are nevertheless trying to make work which communicates with people. That is one of our crucial foci that we do not seem to have heard very much about.

We need a pro-struggle culture along with a pro-people culture. A pro-struggle culture, a criticism that finds favor in all those aspects of the arts which are for struggle. The culture of individualism seems to me to be one which is very much suspect now. The possibilities of developing, and I am sure all of you can think of examples, developing a communal culture, as opposed to an individualistic culture.

The necessity to struggle against the very counter-revolutionary attitudes that are very popular in many places these days, is summed up, for instance, in something like the Beatles song "Let it Be," that kind of thing. It seems to me that we must precisely oppose, letting it be.

I wonder if we could not, as critics, in conferences, now and in the future, see if we can find real value in the culture of people as opposed to the establishment culture which we have around us; not only, say, African, Asian, people, but also directly in our own neighborhood where we live, in whatever cities we live, as opposed to the elitism of this New York - dominated culture.

I would like just bring into this conversation the quote from yesterday's papers, being of instant relevance, the remark from the top line of the Toronto Star, "Sisters we are all beautiful." What does that do to criticism from the point of view of criticism, if we apply that sisters and brothers we are all beautiful, if we think of Andy Warhol's remark, "you can't take a bad photograph"? The attitude towards the world which resists the elitism of the critic, the distance between the critic as a judge, making judgments, as opposed to the other attitude

which is one of finding value in people as they are, finding out where people are, and finding what good things there are among the people. If we take that point of view then we are going very much against the kind of attitude which, for instance, Professor Rosenberg passed off, and I think nobody seriously questioned, that there are always in history at any given time only a few really significant artists and the rest, unfortunately, are all followers. I am very much interested in the opposite alternative, that is, that there is value in every struggle of every working person, of every person who is doing productive labor and wants to find the value in the person's work. That is the kind of criticism which seems to me to be some kind of solution to the crisis.

Obviously, this also involves a certain attitude towards aspects of the technology and emphasis on the culture of the original, individual experience.

Finally, I just want to suggest in these couple of minutes, that in conferences like this conference, we should be hearing from committed people, whether, obviously in the visual arts, or in fields very far removed from us. Hearing from committed people who are involved in progressive cultural development, culture being defined as widely as possible, referring simply to the labour of people on the earth who are producing something which is of interest and of value to us. I would be interested in hearing from the most committed people working in those directions as opposed to this kind of listening to the judgments of experts on the situation, the heavily value-judgment-oriented kind of person.

In summation, I want to get away from a criticism of value judgment, I want to get over to a criticism of document. I want to get away from the elitist kind of criticism we have had and get over to a criticism which will really take the efforts of working people seriously and identify the artist as a worker.

Mr. Ronald BLOORE

I find myself in rather curious company this afternoon, seated here with 3 friends who have had close connection with Pop Art, two of whom as critics have made the profane sacred. My apologies, Mario.

First, I would like to read a paragraph from Sir Joshua Reynolds' Sixth Discourse which he delivered to the assembled Royal Academy students December 10th, 1774. "From the remains of the works of the ancients the modern arts were revived, and it is by their means that they must be restored a second time. However it may mortify our vanity, we must be forced to allow them our masters and we may venture to prophesy that when they shall cease to be studied, arts will no longer flourish and we shall again relapse into barbarism." Or, in contemporary jargon, that might be relapse into tribalism. The global center of dispersal of tribal art is New York City or should it be the tribal center for global art is New York City? I overheard this one in the john cubicle, so I do not know, I cannot attribute it to anyone, but the quote goes this way, "I don't know anything about art criticism but I know what I art". That with my apologies to the translators and to those who can understand English.

I think art criticism is divorced from art precisely because it is only concerned with art. Here is a possible unnecessary ad for Scientific American. Why do more artists read Scientific American than Artforum? Self-conscious instant history is history falsified. I like reading Vasari, Reynolds, and I guess that Lorenzo Ghiberti was the first artist to write his own press release.

Formalist art critics paint by proxy. Primacy of invention is historical fact and not necessarily value judgment. Every artist is a genius. Art critics smother art with blind affliction. If art is moving from elitist art galleries into the streets, then art critics must exploit the media of the streets. Fundamentally I believe that critics should find the common bond of all humanity behind the many styles. Thank you.

Mr. Greg CURNOE

This is about Ernie Simmons who was a farmer who lived south of Tillsonberg, Ontario. It says here that Ernie Simmons led a strange, lonely kind of life. Some say he was a nut. Who else would buy 48 war-surplus airplanes and then keep trying to sell them back to the government? It is about a mile walk back into his farmhouse. Amid sagging tobacco kilns, and assorted barns and sheds, are piled the cars, trucks, motorcycles, Bren-gun carriers, airplanes, and thousands of other items that mark the kind of life he led. He also kept a journal. I will read you one short thing from that. "Dad's last trip to the barn and milked cow. Walt Kennedy and boy paid me \$80.00 for cow. Load cow on truck. Bell rattled as he started off. I stopped

him and took bell off cow. Told Dad sold and gone after he through his supper. He shot. Thankful he could go to bed and not go out to the cold barn and milk. Ma and I plenty glad too. Heard gnawing at my bedroom door bottom. Someone installing bugging equipment?"

There are a few other things I want to say. I have been listening to alot of Newfoundland music lately and I think probably the best band in Canada is a band led by a guy named Wilf Doyle. I have recently picked up a 3-record set from the Six Nations Reserve of the dance songs. There is a real revival happening there. There are a lot more songs that are being written.

What I am trying to talk about is the whole culture. I do not think that criticism deals with it, and in Canada particularly. It does not deal with Canadian culture. Through listening to Wilf Doyle and listening to accordion music, violin music, made in Canada - in Quebec, in the maritimes, out West, we tried to get up to the Shelburne North American fiddle championships and the car broke down. The champion is from Toronto, named Graham Townsend. You go up to Goderich, north of London, and come upon a sculptor. There are real connections between his work and the work of Camille Renault. Concrete figures all over his fields. He has been dead for about 20 years now. You see, I do not think anybody is looking at his stuff except the people who experience it. You know, the people who go to hear music. But I do not think there is anybody around, or very few people, who are talking about his stuff as being our culture and this is not being related to our experience.

I have more to say but that is basically the point I would like to make and I think that this is the crisis which we are all facing. We do not know what we are.

Mr. AMAYA

Thank you very much. We would like to throw the discussion open to the floor now.

M. CIRICI

Vous avez soulevé deux questions qui me semblent très importantes. La première s'est de présenter la critique du moment actuel comme quelque chose qui tourne en rond comme s'il n'y avait plus d'évolution dans notre système de travail.

La deuxième, c'est la question politique.

Pour moi, ces deux question sont une seule question et la question que je voulais vous poser, c'est: "Ne pensez-vous pas que dans ces dernières années, pendant les années 60, il y a de nouvelles disciplines qui sont venues compléter notre façon de travail et nous donner des ressources pour un travail plus scientifique?

Ici, il y a eu des considérations. On a parlé des critiques comme des mauvais artistes, on a parlé des critiques comme des littérateurs des gens qui écrivent, mais je n'ai pas entendu un mot, qui est le seul que je crois, convient: c'est que les critiques d'art sont des scientifiques, sont des gens qui étudient une réalité avec une méthode. Appliquer une méthode à la réalité, c'est avoir une théorie et vérifier jusqu'à quel point les données que l'on obtient de l'expérience

s'accommodent à cette théorie.

Alors, il me semble que ces dernières années, il y a eu un grand avancement dans les disciplines de sciences humaines, du moment où la linguistique nous a donné les premières méthodes d'étudier d'une façon jusqu'à un certain point quantitative, mesurable, les données humaines, et il me semble que l'application de la problématique et des procédés, des techniques de la linguistique à la critique d'art, ouvrent de nouvelles perspectives très fécondes dans notre travail, ce qui fait que maintenant il ne tourne plus en rond mais il s'avance en flèche avec l'utilisation de ces méthodes. On a déjà obtenu des découvertes importantes, des aperçus sur la façon dans laquelle la signification apparaît, et la façon dans laquelle les connotations apportent un sens qui se produit. Tout cela nous donne une méthode pour reconnaître les nouveaux procédés de communication et aussi nous apercevoir de la dégradation des formes ainsi créées, par l'usage.

D'autre part, la sculpture que cette analyse révèle est une sculpture qui est parallèle au système d'échanges dans la société dans laquelle nous vivons. Puisque le critique, en faisant ses études, donne de la valeur aux choses, et puisque la valeur, ce n'est que l'image de procédé de circulation des échanges, c'est-à-dire au fond, une valeur commerciale même si nous parlons de culture, ça fait que l'apparition de ces valeurs nous donne la mesure des rapports d'échange propre à notre civilisation, c'est-à-dire une image fidèle de notre organisation sociale. C'est pourquoi ce procédé est non seulement un procédé objectif, il sert non seulement pour l'étude scientifique de l'art, mais aussi pour une prise de conscience de son parallélisme avec

des situations politiques, économiques et sociales. Nous pensons que la prise de conscience de cette situation ne peut qu'aider à ces changements de structures que tout le monde désire.

Mr. ALLOWAY

I am not sure that I am going to be able to answer that adequately because I think you got ahead of the translator in a few points. So I may not be answering you to the point. I hope that you will tell me if I am not.

Basically, yes. I would agree with you that there have been new developments, post-World War II developments. I think I would want to include not only structural anthropology, I would want to include information theory and sociology as well. But I think that there is no doubt that the communication sciences and the human sciences, as they have expanded since World War II, certainly do indicate the possibility of a more holistic view of art than we, as art critics, have in the past attempted. The only thing I would say is, I do not think art critics have made very much sustained use of the information of the systems which are available. If I am not answering to the point, please tell me, and would you indicate to me critics of art, who in the context of writing about art, have adequately used, for example, linguistics.

M. CIRICI

Il faut avouer que quand je vous ai parlé dans ce sens, je pensais comme vous que ce n'est pas très fréquent de rencontrer l'utilisation de ces disciplines dans la critique de l'art visuel. Mais nous avons d'excellents exemples dans les gens qui sont des spécialistes

dans les arts de la langue c'est-à-dire de la critique littéraire, chez lesquels on trouve souvent des références au problème visuel. Il y a par exemple des textes de Foucault qui sont vraiment très lucides. Il y en a aussi de Roland Barthes.

Je disais que si j'ai cité des textes des écrivains ou des penseurs qui travaillent surtout à propos de la critique littéraire mais chez lesquels on trouve de très intéressants morceaux où ces disciplines linguistiques sont appliquées à la critique d'art, aux noms que j'ai cité, comme ceux de Barthes ou de Foucault, je pourrais ajouter, par exemple, Umberto Eco, Dorfles, etc. Sanguineti, etc.

Mr. ALLOWAY

Thank you. Yes, I agree, except Dorfles. I think Dorfles is very superficial in his understanding, about what information theory is. But otherwise, d'accord.

MRS. VERA FRENKEL

I am looking at my notes and I see that the 3 panelists, in addition to Mr. Alloway, have distilled what they have to say. I do not agree with all of what each of them said but I would like to ask the following question. Barry Lord, who talks about the people as separate from him, as the people, and establishment culture. Whenever Barry talks about the people I wonder if he includes himself in it. You have also said, Barry, that a critic should examine art from a post-revolutionary standpoint, and Ron ended by saying the critic should find a common basis of humanity, a bond of humanity behind the masks and

many styles, and Greg Curnoe said critics should, and do not, deal with culture as related to our experience. So we have three major recommendations there, and I would like to ask the three of you and Mr. Alloway if, briefly, you could outline what your ideal critic would be and how you would make him happen, how you would create an environment in which people would fulfill the kinds of needs that you are describing that you lack. Have I made myself clear?

Mr. BLOORE

I think fundamentally Greg, Barry, and myself have been saying the same thing, just shifting our language, shifting our terminology. I think I tried to suggest what I felt that the critic should do, must do, inevitably has to do, in this revolutionary, or post-revolutionary period, and that is to go out into the streets and use the media of the streets. Art critics are fundamentally wrapped up in Artforum, which happily their postcards has thrown into the wastepaper basket. Art critics are caught in Studio International. I frankly do not, as a painter, read art criticism. As an academic, yes, I do, read art criticism and peace to Lawrence over there, I do read art reviews. I do find them historically valid, and useful for, again, academic purposes. I think what we are simply saying is the art critic must get out and communicate with the people. The artist is theoretically, at least, involved with communication.

Mr. LORD

I think Ron is right in saying that there is a kind of main line that we are all concerned with. Having just recently finished

writing for the Toronto Star, and gotten away from daily newspaper criticism, toward the gallery field, the museum field, I can certainly agree with his sentiment but I find it difficult to put into practice.

It seems to me, in answer to Vera's question, that the position of the critic is quite clearly that of petit bourgeois intellectual. Especially the freelance critic, more than any other, is totally exposed. I think there is no more contradictory term than that of free lance critic. It certainly is not a position of freedom. It is a position of total dependance on sources like Artforum and Studio International, or the Toronto Star. I think we have to quite honestly admit that that is the economic, social reality of the critic in our society, whether we like it or not. He cannot help that kind of alienation from the people, and that is why I use the term "the people" in that sense. On the other hand, it is with trying to break through that kind of barrier that, it seems to me, a conference like this should be concerned trying to get away from our limitations because of our petit-bourgeois intellectual position and go over to a real identification with the people, to learn from working people. What Greg is talking about, the culture of Canada, is the working-class culture of Canada. I would say those of you from other countries who come here, if you learn anything about the culture of the working class of Canada, I will be amazed. If you have, you have certainly done it on your own. That is a real problem. It is not only a problem for us in Canada, but is is a problem for this kind of conference and for critics in general. We have to begin to respect the productive labours of people as a whole, and start to learn their culture, instead of playing around with this tiny elitish fragment that most of us

spend our time writing about.

Mr. CURNOE

I think it has something to do with specialization and it has something to do with the fact that there are a lot of very specialized areas from which we can get information. It seems to me that a lot of the most relevant writing being done about the culture would be published in Sunday supplements, say Toronto Star. In a recent one, I remember reading about the different kinds of beer brewed in Canada, and that kind of article just has a lot of information in it-much more than most art criticism does. I think art criticism is written in a very limited area and it does not have the qualifications that the sciences do. I think to be relevant criticism must be written by a person who is an amateur at many things, rather than a professional at one thing. For that matter, I think that is rapidly getting to be the case for artists as well. It seems to me that professionalism among artists is becoming very suspect, I think the same thing applies to the kind of criticism that will be written. When I am talking about culture, I am talking about the fact that there are many people in Canada who are ignored, who are creating very original things. One area where this really comes out is in the area of people putting messages in bottles, for instance, and letting them float and somebody else picks them up, or writing their name on a dollar bill. I mean, this is really something.

Mr. AMAYA

I am all for that stuff, who is not?. But I am not sure that as an art critic I want to have to spend all my time on the messages in

the bottles and the other things. I accept them. I think they are relevant to our holistic definition of culture, which I would like to consider I subscribe to. But, on the other hand, I do detect a slight drift among a couple of the speakers towards a kind of homogenized distribution system. I believe that one's culture has a unity, that between the high art and the popular, themal manifestations exist. I am sure that is right. Greg Curnoe, I am sure, is telling the truth.

All the same, I like specialized journals. I do not believe that the people who are interested in the tempera painting on panel have to read journals on acrylic paint. I do not believe the people who love museums have got to read about folk activities, no matter now vivid. In fact, I think that vitality of the separate areas of the folk arts, of the popular arts, and of the elite'sactivities, if that is what you want to call them, I think they prosper in terms of a certain kind of specialization. A Sunday supplement is not my idea of how to learn about kinds of beer making or getting the news about art.

Mr. LORD

I was trying to emphasize not so much the links between the high art and the popular culture, but rather it seems to me we should be emphasizing the conflict which is real between what we can call ruling class culture, Imperialist art, and the roles of museums and galleries in acting, as one artist in the Art Workers' Coalition put it very clearly, acting as branch banks, to insure the capital value of this material. The conflict between that and, on the other hand, the reality of working class

culture, which includes the work, say, of the Greg Curnoes, or the Ronald Bloores, in their studios, as artists, as working artists, as the reality of working artists, also includes people such as the one Greg was describing, and the vast majority of people who are involved in productive labour which I would oppose to the ruling-class culture towards which it seems to me there is a lot of attitude of acceptance.

Mr. AMAYA

I understand and that is okay. But there was a feeling that the only way to get this information was somehow in a homogenized way in an area of agreement. I think the way to get this kind of information is by having, the way we have now, absolutely incompatible systems of messages. I would hate any reduction of the number of kinds of message. I want the kinds of fantasy that a daily paper has, compared to the kind of stances of gravity that a weekly assumes, and so on. I just have a feeling you had a kind of welfarish notion of all the information coming together. I would hate to see any reduction of the size of the switchboard. As a matter of fact, I have given up Scientific American too. I would recommend, as much more hip than Scientific American, Technology Review. It is published by M.I.T. and you cannot buy it on newstands.

Mr. CURNOE

I am talking about the situation that exists. The situation you are talking about is ideal. But the situation that exists in Canada, the kind of things that I am talking about, the kind of cultural manifestations I am talking about, are literally ignored in this country. It is a special situation. In the United States, or in Europe, there are

terms like "the bricoleurs." There is a certain regard for different types of folk activity; although I do not like to distinguish between folk activity, for instance, and high and low art. I do not like those terms, but in any case, in Canada there is a special situation where we have systematically ignored our culture. So I have put it in those terms.

M. BÉCHARD

Je voudrais tout simplement rappeler une parole de M. McLuhan que le public n'est pas un consommateur mais il est un créateur, un producteur, et je voudrais mettre cela à côté de la discussion que M. Curnoe a mis, comme nous ne savons pas ce que nous sommes, et comme la diffusion de la culture se faisant au Canada d'une façon négligeable ou peu importante.

M. CURNOE

Again, I was speaking of a very special situation because I am talking to a very special audience and I feel that it is audiences like this that do not know Canadian culture. Now, that is to say, that the people who go up to Shelburne to listen to the old-time fiddlers, know all about it. And the people in Newfoundland who know Wilf Doyle, they know what it is, but we do not. Maybe I should not speak for myself, but I have just found out about this stuff recently.

M. BECHARD

Et une autre dernière question, est-ce que le consommateur, la personne qui achète des œuvres d'art est une personne qui lit les critiques dans les journaux, les revues, les magazines?

Mr. CURNOE

I would think that in speaking of a band that plays at dances in a specific area and is very popular, it is very hard to distinguish between, in the total experience, or in the art form, whatever you want to call it, it is very hard to distinguish between the people dancing to that band and the whole event. Who do you call the artist? I do not know if that is a direct answer but it is about the best I can do.

Mrs. REA MONTBRIZON

I am wondering, since you are hosting an international organization, whether it is the time to examine, rather self-consciously, our Canadian identity, as being Canadian by volition and conviction. I feel free to say that I think it is not the time. I think we should perhaps deal with these matters that are before us on a more universal plane. In this spirit, I should like to direct my question to Mr. Bloore, which is this - which came first, the chicken or the egg? Who has forced esotericism upon the critic and how could the critic otherwise try to interpret the works that were put before him for the last decade or so but through resorting to the kind of vocabulary that the artist himself has suggested to him?

Mr. BLOORE

That is a chicken and egg question. I think that you raised the problem of self-consciously raising Canadian identity problems here. I think that at least Barry, Greg and myself are again stressing the fact that aspects of culture are indigenous, there are local factors

governing and controlling the appearance of style in any given location. We are objecting to the elitist culture view, the Madison Avenue view, of Artforum etc, in which most of the "influential" writing takes place. I think by raising these problems we are stressing the fact, the hope, that the global village is actually a factual thing, and that it does have its own hierarchy and that you, as critics, if you look carefully and search even within your own countries, as we must search within our country, you can begin to find things which do not smack of the international main-line stream, however, that happens to be dictated at the moment out of New York City.

Mr. LORD

I would like to just put a rider on that, Ron. It seems to me that internationalism, correctly understood in our present situation, is to say anti-U.S.-imperialism, which in the Canadian situation, culturally and every other way, boils down to some kind of concern with one's own culture which, if you like, you can call a kind of nationalism. I am for that internationalism which is internationalism of a real brotherhood of people. I am absolutely against the phoney internationalism which is called the international style which actually is U.S. imperialism. And being against that and for the other kind of internationalism it seems to me one becomes what can be called a regionalist or nationalist or whatever you like.

Mr. ALLOWAY

. I just wanted to say that it is definitely a Canadian problem.

Every time I come here somebody brings up how terrible it is to live in the United States. I think it must be terrible to have to live here if all you have to tell each other is how terrible it is to be down there.

QUESTION

I would like to ask Mr. Alloway to clarify a point that he made in his speech. He said that one of the points of crisis in the art world, is that art became a commodity for financial speculations. I wonder how you propose to do something about this as an art critic?

Mr. ALLOWAY

This is one of the themes that the Art Worker's Coalition has emphasized, the unsatisfactory organization of the art market right now. As an art critic what can I do about it? Less than, I think, the artists can do about it in relation to their galleries but, nevertheless, once the theme has been brought up it seems to me that as an art critic I ought to be able to consider alternative methods that have existed historically of distributing art. The gallery system was developed in the late 19th Century and has existed this far. So far none of the proposals made by the Art Workers's Coalition, seem to me as good as the system they proposed to replace. Their alternatives are very primitivistic. They would result in the distribution of fewer pieces which I do consider to be a bad thing. I think that the gallery system, although it has excluded a number of artists, has been remarkably successful in getting art around. I do assume that that is a desirable state of affairs.

I would not want to back a system of distribution of art which meant that fewer people were going to see fewer paintings. As an art critic, one of my subjects might be to point out the inadequate nature of the Art Workers' Coalition's proposals to galleries. They made a list of demands which could only have been sort of written in the middle of the night, you know, after a lot of wine. I think that was unserious. As an art critic I could try to put that on a serious basis. I have not done but I am planning to do so. This is the kind of thing - one intervenes, but in terms of ideas that they bring up, and sometimes one can bring some art history or just some plain economics into the argument. Would that be an answer?

Mr. LORD

I think that is a question which is really a political and economic question concerned with the art market. I think we make a great mistake if we think that artists and critics can change society by themselves. The new form of distribution of art will follow on the revolution which is a building. It will not precede it. We cannot get to the new form of art distribution until we get the new society. When capitalism as a whole is dismantled, is discarded, then the new form of the distribution of the works of art will follow on that. I think we should have a post-revolutionary stance. I think we should attempt to see what is coming, to look at areas that are changing, but I do not think we can anticipate it here and now.

Mr. AMAYA

Picking up from what you said, I think Michel Ragon makes a

very nice point. Like multiples, our thoughts are to be a bit of grease on the way toward more equality. He says they are democratic, not revolutionary. It would be nice to see the aesthetic status of multiples considered in relation to a change in the distribution system, or whether it is just within the system. Those are the kind of problems that as critics we could get into, I think.

M. RENÉ BERGER

La crise de la critique d'art, elle est illustrée par le fait même de notre présence, j'entends des membres de l'Association internationale des critiques d'art qui se trouvent ici. En effet l'oeuvre d'art elle-même est en question. Or, il s'agit de savoir de quoi nous parlons, si nous voulons faire avancer un colloque, ou si nous voulons faire avancer une conversation ou une discipline, il faut en connaître l'objet. Or, précisément, nous ne pouvons plus donner aujourd'hui une seule définition à l'objet de la critique d'art. C'était la question, l'une des questions posées en l'occurrence par M. Cirici-Pellicer: l'oeuvre d'art où l'art resortissent à des disciplines différentes. J'aimerais préciser un premier point: lorsqu'on dit "critique d'art", lorsqu'on dit "l'oeuvre d'art," on s'enferme dans une pensée conceptuelle qui permet de longues discussions mais qui ne fait pas véritablement avancer la connaissance. S'agit-il de l'art qu'on découvre? Car il y a une critique de la découverte, de la recherche; plusieurs dans cette salle font un travail extrêmement considérable pour détecter, découvrir et mettre en circulation, une oeuvre qui était inconnue auparavant. À une

deuxième étape, il s'agit d'une autre forme de critique, de celle qui approfondit une connaissance déjà établie. Il y a également ici parmi nous plusieurs essayistes ou écrivains qui font ce travail d'approfondissement. À une troisième étape enfin se manifeste la réflexion critique et théorique. Jusqu'à présent on pouvait distinguer en gros deux systèmes principaux: premièrement, l'histoire de l'art; deuxièmement, l'esthétique. Mais à cette troisième étape se dessinent aujourd'hui toute une série de disciplines scientifiques qui ouvrent des perspectives nouvelles dont nous n'avons pas encore entendu parler à cette table: linguistique, structuralisme, sociologie, psychanalyse, sémiologie, d'autres encore bien sûr. Il serait donc souhaitable de savoir à quelle étape nous parlons et à quel niveau nous nous situons. S'il s'agit de problèmes de découvertes, approfondissons ce plan; s'il s'agit de problèmes théoriques, ne négligeons pas les questions précises qui sont posées. Le propos d'un panel de toute discussion, n'est pas d'arriver à une solution, mais d'examiner une problématique, c'est-à-dire la possibilité d'envisager un objet sous différents angles d'attaque. Enfin cette problématique doit-elle être rigoureuse. Je compte sur vous, M. Amaya, pour "utiliser" les membres de l'AICA dans ce sens. Merci.

M. RENÉ DE SOLIER - PARIS

Vous connaissez l'histoire de la muraille de Chine; alors nous sommes venus au Canada pour apprendre qu'une autre muraille existe entre les critiques depuis leurs différents langages. Les Français, enfin dans ce parti, ne connaissent pas l'anglais et les Anglais,

enfin ceux de langue anglaise, dont vous faites partie ne connaissent pas le français. Alors nous découvrons à notre grande surprise, je veux bien découvrir l'art canadien puisque deux artistes sont là, ce n'est pas assez d'ailleurs, alors nous allons découvrir une nouvelle fois l'art canadien, à Toronto, et en votre ville, dans votre ville, nous découvrons que les critiques de langue anglaise ignorent tout à fait ce qui se passe en Europe. C'est ça l'histoire de la muraille de Chine ou si vous voulez de la muraille de l'Atlantique ou de la muraille du Pacifique. Tout à l'heure dans l'une des questions posées en ce qui concerne la critique, il m'a semblé ressentir, et M. Cirici-Pellicer en a fait état, un très grand manque d'information en ce qui concerne ce qui se passe, disons, l'art, en ce qui concerne la critique en Europe. Je m'explique: si nous continuons les uns et les autres par nos langues nationales à nous ignorer, si par exemple vous ne savez pas qui est Michel Foucault et si ici on ne sait pas qui est McLuhan, d'ailleurs je ne les mets pas du tout en comparaison, je veux vous dire que la critique se nourrit d'idées, elle se nourrit d'oeuvres. Alors premier point et première question: oeuvre d'art, qu'entendez-vous par oeuvre d'art? Est-ce que vous nous avez montré des œuvres d'art qui s'appellent des œuvres d'art. Bon. Première question. Deuxième question en ce qui concerne la critique telle qu'elle est définie maintenant, et le mot anglais à ma connaissance c'est "criticism," tente à devenir comme hypercriticisme en français. Alors si ce que vous venez de nous dire constitue un hypercriticisme critiquant la critique occidentale, je vous dis non. Nous sommes sur des bateaux différents ou des aéronefs comme vous voudrez et l'art proposé parfois ne concerne en rien ce que nous avons d'une part envie de voir et ce que nous aimerais écrire. Conclusion, la critique

écrite qui n'appartient ni au journalisme ni à la radio ni aux moyens audio-visuels dont on nous parle tant, ni à la parole, mais qui appartient à l'écriture, je ne situe pas l'écriture d'ailleurs dans un autre secteur, mais cette écriture je crois qu'elle ne parvient pas jusqu'à vous. C'est comme si nous étions en Afrique.

MR. AMAYA

I do not know if I really agree with some of the remarks you make. Like Mr. Alloway I have lived on both sides of the ocean and I feel that any value I can give to the institution I work for is that I may be familiar with what Europeans are thinking as well as what Americans are thinking. I think at this particular conference, it seems, the American speakers particularly have loaded their remarks in one direction only. I think there is a very good reason for this. I think they are worried about where they are, the effects of the kind of capitalism that Mr. Lord speaks about, - although I would not be as hysterical as he is about it, - I think it is creating quite a serious effect on the art community and the art world in America. In Europe, where you have a grander concept of socialism now, I think particularly in France and England, you do not have the same pressing problems that exist on this side of the ocean.

If I could just answer you and say, now that I am on this side of the ocean again, may I apologize if you think that we have just dwelled too much on our own problems and have not looked at the larger picture.

M. DE SOLIER

Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait d'excuses à présenter de part et d'autre mais l'un des problèmes qui nous intéresse en critique concerne des problèmes dits de sémantique. Je ne suis pas tellement spécialiste du langage, mais on parlait beaucoup de sémantique dans des congrès où les gens attablés près des micros étaient plus âgés que vous. Alors si maintenant vous nous parlez de critique révolutionnaire, post-révolutionnaire ou si vous citez Mao Tse Tung je me demande pourquoi nous ne vous citerions pas Engels ou Karl Marx. N'est-ce pas, c'est là où intervient cette sorte de dichotomie. D'abord le mot 'révolutionnaire' dans un pays capitaliste je me demande ce que cela veut dire. Je crois que je vous poserai seulement cette question.

MR. LORD

Literally that is one of the most mis-used words, the word revolutionary. Let me just get to that by picking up a few things. You mentioned about living in Canada as being even worse than living in the United States. I think it is absolutely true. Here in Canada we are the best paid whore in the American brothel. That kind of level of contradiction is much more intense, much more oppressive even in certain ways, certainly in the terms of the consciousness of someone trying to exist as a critic, as an art critic. It gets pretty grotesque, schizophrenia is the natural humain response to that kind of situation. I am glad every time you come to Canada you get that message because that is the way it is.

Similarly, talking about hysteria from Mario's point of view. I simply feel that I am responding to the situation as it is, to the situation as in New York at the moment. It seems to me hysteria is the norm now and anything less than hysteria is being a bit sleepy. Organizing yourself out of hysteria and into some kind of revolutionary attitude, seems to me to be positive.

I was trying to point out in reference to the question about the new forms of distribution of art and so on, and for that matter new forms that art may take, it seems to me very important that we do not try to pretend that we already have the revolution, or that we can use the word revolutionary, in a capitalistic society, in the same way that it can be used in a post-revolutionary society like that of China, for instance. I think it is very important to make that kind of distinction. At the same time it seems to me that if we are going to be of any value at all, certainly if we are going to be read in another 20 or 30 years, that we have to act and write with the certainty that we are going to be read by post-revolutionary people. That is what I mean by taking a revolutionary stance. That leads to a lot of changes, it seems to me, in the kinds of things we write, and the kinds of things we write about.

MRS. JOAN LOWNDES

I am working in the mass media on a newspaper very sympathetic to art in the streets and to what the Canada Council in a horrible phrase calls "the democratization of art". My question to you would

be, Barry, I think that people are terribly conservative and in our efforts in Vancouver to place art in the streets, in the parks, on the beaches, we have found either outright indifference or vandalism. I would quote the case of the Carl André which I thought was beautiful. I would have liked to see it bought by the city. It was 4 times disturbed and finally we had to put a sign up which said "This is a work of art". What is the problem? You try to write to help more people to enjoy art and you find this terrific rejection.

MR. LORD

I will answer that in just about 2 sentences. I do not think that people are very conservative, I think that people are very oppressed and, to quote Mao again, pardon me, "all oppression leads to rebellion". One form of rebellion, which is not a revolutionary form, is vandalism. That seems to be quite clear. Vandalism against works of art, particularly, identifies, shows, that the vandal knows that the work of art is, in fact, a vestige, an example, an object of ruling-class culture.

MR. AMAYA

After you had put the sign up saying "this is a work of art," did the vandalizing go on?

MRS. LOWNDES

No, it did not. But I was very sorry to see that it had to go up because we were attempting to take art out of the art gallery, out of the sacred place.

MR. CURNOE

Maybe I could say something about that, too. It is possible that the people who were vandalizing that particular work of art had more valid forms that they were using themselves all the time.

QUESTION

I want to direct my question, I believe, to Mr. Lord. What is a post-revolutionary person and how does he differ from a person today? Perhaps I ought to introduce myself, I am not an art critic, I am an art historian, and was teaching at the University of Illinois. I want to know how people today are different from the people you envision as post-revolutionary.

MR. LORD

I think a new man is arising in our time, the 20th Century. I think a new kind of human being is coming about. I think one can see him most clearly in places like the People's Republic of China, as

opposed to other places. But in general, to answer your question far too simply, I would say that the main characteristic of post-revolutionary man is his getting beyond the limitations of self, the limitations of self in every sense. Now, for the first time, getting beyond the limitation of self is possible in a material, political, social, real way, in our real world. That is the kind of thing that we see arising. And we see it arising where we have not had a revolution, we see it arising in the culture, in areas like rock music. Where we have had a revolution we can see it arising in the economy. Those are the kinds of things that I see as the new man coming along.

MR. AMAYA

I think that post-revolutionary man is a kind of short-hand, as Mr. Lord uses it, for the artist who is supposed to participate more completely in art works than you are supposed to when you go to a museum. Participation, according to this notion, is low in museums but high in discotheques and the idea is, like the oceanic discotheque feeling, somehow going to be attached to works of art, but as are shared together. I am kind of skeptical of the notion but I think that this is the sort of thing he had in mind. Am I wrong?

MR. LORD

No, that is quite a good description, I think, for the society we are in now. I think the forms this is going to take are going to be very different, going to be very different indeed. Let

me give you a very simple example. I remember at the Cuban pavilion discussing with a Cuban writer there, the Cuban pavilion at Expo 1967, about the fact that he went out and cut cane. I said you did not do that before the revolution. He said, no. I said, why did you not do it before the revolution? He said, well, now I understand that the sugar belongs to me. His consciousness had changed quite radically. That seems to me to be a change that happened in him which is getting him closer to the kind of new man we are talking about.

MR. BLOORE

Perhaps, again, we are all talking around the same essential thing. I think I would like to make one or two comments. Fundamentally, I believe Mr. Lord is suggesting that happily, as artists, as art critics, in whatever kind of society, pre-post -, or during - revolutionary one, that we will gradually work together to form a culture in which art is no longer a commodity, a specific thing, that we wish to have an integrated kind of culture, the kind of art that did not exist but made, in our terms, ancient Egypt great, the kind of art which we admire so much today from Black Africa which was not art, but was an essential part of the culture. It spoke, it communicated, at a variety of levels. This is the kind of thing that you and I can do, to work together to create that situation in which Joan Lowndes' and Toronto's 1967 problem, of art being vandalized, happens. We are trying to make the things a little more meaningful to integrate society. And, by the way, that is not a very original concept for the 20th Century, it is certain Mondrian had it, Malevich had it, and so on.

QUESTION

It seems to me that what we have really been wanting to talk about today is the problem of crisis of criticism, and really the role of critics today. Judging from what the panel has said thus far there seems to be very little confidence in the means of communication that the critic is using today. The public, the artists, find that the critics, means of communication, i.e. through the art journals, is totally irrelevant. What I would like to question you, as panel, is what you feel might be a relevant form of communication for our present day world and whether, for example, using techniques of television or filming as a tool of art criticism, whether this might be a relevant way of communicating what the art critic wants to communicate. I think we have to think to the future and I think that the tool of writing, although an important aspect of communication, that in terms of what may be happening tomorrow, this may not reach more than a few people who may pick up journals such as Artforum, and so on. My question is, how you, as the panel, feel that these new means of communication might be used or whether it is a totally threatening thing and, in other words, writing is the only solution for the art critic.

MR. LORD

Can I just put in a few sentences on it and then get off the mike? I think the technology that the critic uses is much less important than the content. I think you are derailing it a little bit to say that we should be using film, as opposed to the typewriter.

I am certainly interested in using either or both but I think what is vastly more important is what you are working with, is not the isolated object, is not the merely empirical object that is supposed to be the focus of the critic. Instead of which, it seems to me, our focus must be people. I would say that the primary medium is neither television nor writing, but people. Working with people is really what seems to me to be most significant.

MR. ALLOWAY

I would like to say something about the technology involved. One of the advantages about writing to an art critic is that it is pretty much under control, with a little editing, you can usually tolerate it. Once you get into electronic media, once you get in front of the camera, you do not have the same amount of control. For example, if you compare hand-written type-set articles by Alan Solomon with the series of films he made on New York artists you can see the difference between what Solomon can say when his ideas were accessible to him, and what he could say when he was working, even for educational television, with the artist right there. The interviews came out as normal interviews with artists, but as far as content goes, they had less than the type-set articles of Solomon. It is the same on television. Whether I have made all the points I have wanted to or not, you have given me a chance to make them this afternoon, here talking. I had to do a bit for radio and a bit for television before coming in and so one has to make up something cute, and amusing and lively. One knows one can be cut before the thing goes out, but that is okay.

It is why I think that the other media certainly supplement art criticism, but I do not think that in any sense they replace it. I still think there is a great advantage about having articles on art in art journals, as well as in other places. If Max Kozlov writes an article in Yachting World, I will probably never see it, unless he gives it to me, but if it is in an art magazine I am likely to find it. There is a question of articles reaching other people in the field and other people in your field are also people, I think, in Mr. Lord's definition. Some of the messages are not intended for the maximum audience. As far as argument and control of idea is concerned, I do not think that the camera or television has yet the advantages that a written script has, though I have no hostility to them, it is just that they are less efficient for most purposes that I am interested in as a critic.

QUESTION

If I might just add to that, Mr. Alloway. What I would be curious to know then is how you feel that your writing in art criticism can be made more relevant to a wider public and to the people that perhaps we have been talking about this afternoon.

MR. ALLOWAY

I do two things, I write and I teach, and I suppose my relevant contribution is mostly taken up by the teaching - I teach in a state college, not a small one - so I suppose that is probably the

area that scores highest for relevance. I also write two ways: one, for art magazines; but also for The Nation which is a small circulation, general magazine. It does not owe me a captive art audience there. That is all that I can say.

MR. AMAYA

I would think probably all 3 writers on this platform communicate in another way, working with a gallery or with exhibitions, producing things which the public can see - probably far more relevant than our writings which we most likely do just to amuse ourselves.

SVEN SANDSTROM

I think that the theme of this discussion has been the crisis of art criticism, and I also think with a few exceptions for the last dialogue, that most things which have been discussed have to do with the crisis of our time and not with the crisis of art criticism. I also think that many of the viewpoints coming from the public, and from the other side of the ocean, have to do with this fact, and not with the fact that we in any way should generally disagree with your idea about the problems of our time. It looks funny, indeed, that the discussion is so little technical, I mean, if we really have a crisis in which many art critics have taken a part, there should be much concern of how an art critic could function. I get a very primitive idea about a critic who is throwing away all his means except the pen to tell people what he personally believes in, instead of trying to

use all those very good new means which exist, to make precise and to analyze, to make people understand not only what art critics want but what art wants and what it is good for. I really want to stress this observation, that there are a lot of new means in communications theory and aesthetics coming out from that in art history which has already been touched upon but not used in this discussion and that there is a change, not only on the way, but already here. Thank you.

MR. JAFFE

Two of the gentlemen of the panel stressed the fact that art criticism should be therapeutic, as much health-bringing as art could be. It has not yet come out of the panel discussion sufficiently and I would like you to go on that point. And there I come back to the president's vote: why the basis of this therapeutical activity, health-bringing to society, should not be diagnostic, that is methodical, objective, and precise. Thank you.

MR. LORD

I would just like to use the word "document" also referring to the last question there. It seems to me that criticism now is aspiring to the condition of document. That is the kind of direction I am trying to go in my own writing. To add to the adjectives you gave us, Mr. Jaffe, that "documentary" is the kind of thing that I am now interested in trying to write. It seems to me the only possibility for criticism.

MR. JAFFE

If criticism wants to bring to humanity that new attitude which the two gentlemen stressed so much, then it should start from a method, from an objectivity, and not from a more or less arbitrary and personal choice. The techniques of diagnostics which are essential when you want to heal a patient whom you think in a crisis, and in danger, can be found in methods which Cirici-Pellicer and De Solier have quoted. And I do not believe that criticism which could be a kind of medical discipline, can do without the precise objective and techniques of diagnostics. That has not yet come forward.

MR. LORD

Can we agree that the whole notion of criticism which proceeds from subjective interpretation, or subjective preference, is one which is dead, which does not have any life. I would agree with that.

MR. ALLOWAY

The things that Mr. Jaffe said are too interesting to leave in the air. My own notion is not that art criticism is therapeutic in function. I think, however, it is useful in as much as in an informal area between art history and aesthetics, it is an early verbal form. The best art criticism, I think, is not the kind that is written after you see an exhibition in a gallery but the kind of art criticism that comes out of contact with the artist in other situations. Therefore, it seems to me that the main usefulness of the

art critic has been his topicality, the extent to which he is able to bring reliable, verbal cues as to the nature of new visual entities, the information collected frequently in the studio and from association of the artists is, I think, the index of his value. I have no belief that any kind of writer can cure our society, and art critic least of all, because I think we are among the least coherent of professions. I have to take an American example I am afraid, because I am more interested in Anglo-Saxon culture than in French culture. I think the reason everyone hates Artforum is that Clement Greenberg has had a strong influence on the magazine, and that magazine represents those American critics who have tried most systematically to make art criticism an orthodox and systematic routine. I think that on the whole, this approach does not produce very useful criticism any longer. I think rather it is in figuring out ways to stay topical in a harmonious relationship with freshly produced art work that an art critic finds his value.

MR. AMAYA

I would second that. Furthermore, I would say also that I find that many methods, formal laws or rules, quite often can create terrible problems for you and in the end destroy some of the freshness in your ideas and opinions and what you see in a work of art.

MR. LORD

I would just put in that the characteristics of Artforum which you have just described are the characteristics of that so-called international style, which is really U.S. Imperialist art, and the criticism that goes along with it. For instance, it concentrates its vaunted empiricism in the formal attributes of the work. This is endemic to that whole imperialist stance in that it makes it impossible to look at the aspects of the work which I would associate with people rather than with objects. We are not criticizing objects. That seems to me to be a beginning of a new kind of criticism.

MISS GAIL DEXTER

I was very happy to hear our European guest chastise us somewhat on not being specific enough in our critique, political or otherwise, in the crisis of criticism. I would like to throw the question back to some of them. I firmly agree that there has to be a scientific, analytical, and objective basis for developing some conceptions of how art can best serve the interest of the masses of the people of this world and not the ruling classes. I also am aware that there are many great scholars in France, specifically Paris, and other places in Europe, that have used such tools as linguistic analysis and so on, that perhaps we are not that familiar with, that they can bring to bear on some of the questions I will ask, since our panel is discussing other things. For example, how would we arrive at

a class analysis of art, a stylistic analysis, that will let us know something about what classes are involved? We can look at art that way. How are we going to arrive at a structural analysis of the artistic audience, the art market, and relate that to actual style, to actual content. Hitherto, we have had something called iconography, and we have had something called formalist criticism, both of which have had their center, for one reason or another, probably having to do with U.S. Imperialism, in America. Now, there must be some way that that tradition, which I think is ultimately quite abstruse, and possibly irrelevant, but has certain useful methodological aspects, can be brought to bear on questions that are socially relevant - having to do with revolution, social class, modes of expression of a mass level, folk art if you like, as well as court art, which I am afraid is what all of us in this room deal with all the time, and I would like a few suggestions from our guests here.

MARIO AMAYA

I am afraid that time is running out because I know they planned a tour around the Science Center for us and there is dinner as well planned. I think maybe we will just have to, like the Perils of Pauline, leave us all hanging on a cliff. One could not even attempt, I think, to sum up what has happened here today except, as many people pointed out, the crisis seems to be in society itself, and it is certainly reflected in our attitudes and our concern, as we expressed it from the platform, as you expressed it from the audience. I do not think we are going to come to any conclusions which are quick,

nor are we going to find the answer in certain social clichés, or revolutionary clichés either. I think in the end maybe we will all have to go to ourselves and the individual works of art. Thank you.

