The Artist in Modern Society

International Conference of Artists, Venice 22-28 September 1952

Unesco
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Introduction

The International Conference of Artists, held at Venice from 22 to 28 September 1952, was attended by over 200 delegates, representing 44 countries and 11 international associations of artists, and by over 150 artists who came as observers. This meeting covered an exceptionally wide field, owing to the great variety of regions, cultures, trends and disciplines that contributed to it.

The authorized representatives of literature and art who met together at this conference were there at the invitation of Unesco. They had been called to Venice in order to discuss some of the numerous problems which arise throughout the literary and artistic world, owing to inadequate legislation, financial difficulties, and indifference or excessive interference on the part of those in authority.

The summoning of this ambitious conference resulted from a decision reached by the General Conference of Unesco at its Third Session, at Beirut in 1948. On that occasion the Director-General was instructed to inquire into "the contributions which creative artists can make towards Unesco's purposes" and "to ascertain what social, economic and political influences now interfere with the performance of the artist's function; the measures that have been or can be taken to remove or lessen these hindrances; and the means whereby the working conditions of the artist can be improved and his freedom assured".

For the purpose of this inquiry, the secretariat of Unesco addressed itself to artists and artists' associations in the Member States of the Organization. A report embodying its results was submitted to the Fifth Session of the General Conference, at Florence in June 1950. After studying this report, the General Conference requested the Director-General to study the planning of an international conference of artists. The Sixth Session of the Conference, held in Paris in 1951, adopted a resolution authorizing the Director-General "to organize, in collaboration with National Commissions and appropriate international organizations, an international conference of artists, which would be held possibly at Venice on the occasion of the Twenty-sixth Biennal, to study the practical conditions required to ensure the freedom of the artist, and to seek means of associating artists more closely with Unesco's work".

After consultations with the Italian Government and the organizers of the Venice Biennal, it was decided to hold this conference at Venice, from 22 to 28 September 1952.
In May 1951, before the opening of the Sixth Session of Unesco's General Conference, a committee of experts has already met in Paris and had outlined the programme of the future Conference of Artists. An organizing committee was next formed, its members being nominated by the International Theatre Institute, the International Music Council, the International PEN Club, the International Union of Architects, the International Congresses for Modern Architecture and the International Association of Art Critics.

This organizing committee held three meetings, in Paris in December 1951 and again in June 1952, and at Venice on 20 and 21 September 1952, before the opening of the Conference. On the recommendation of the organizing committee, an honorary committee was appointed, consisting of the presidents of seven appropriate international organizations and 52 distinguished representatives of the different branches of art and the various cultural regions of the world.

The organizing committee, guided by suggestions from the National Commissions and the international associations of artists, drew up a list of the subjects to be discussed by the different committees (on visual arts, the cinema, literature, music, and the theatre).

It also proposed that certain writers and artists of recognized authority should be asked to prepare, in their respective fields, preliminary reports to serve as a basis for discussion. This proposal gave rise to the general exposés included in the present volume, music being dealt with by Mr. Arthur Honegger, literature by Mr. Taha Hussein, the theatre by Mr. Marc Connelly, the cinema by Mr. Alessandro Blasetti, painting by Messrs. Jacques Villon and Georges Rouault, sculpture by Mr. Henry Moore, and architecture by Mr. Lucio Costa; while Mr. Giuseppe Ungaretti gave a general outline of the problems resulting from the situation of the artist in the modern world.

Each writer was left entirely free to handle his subject in his own way; it was not the organizers' intention to make a systematic survey of the problems to be discussed during the Conference. What they wanted was a spontaneous, and therefore genuine and instructive expression of opinion. The creative artists differed widely in their approach to their subjects, and this accounts for the great variety of attitude and interest displayed in the following papers. The musician speaks of the almost insuperable difficulties that confront a young composer in his efforts to get his work performed or printed. The architect sets forth the problems of present-day building, in the light of the latest technical possibilities and the requirements of up-to-date town-planning. The playwright describes theatrical activity in the different parts of the world. The writer discusses the status of the literary artist, his need of a second string to his bow, and the moral and social responsibility that an author assumes, whether he will or no, by the mere fact of writing. And so on: while one expounds his theories on art, another calls for a clearer definition of artists' rights in their work, and a third complains that the
help which artists need is denied them or is doled out with a grudging hand. In other words, each deals with the subject on which he feels most keenly... whether he speaks of himself, keeping carefully within the limits of his own experience, or whether he confines himself to an impersonal description of present-day conditions.

This system resulted in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence, in which views were frankly expressed and discussion was extremely friendly. Such an atmosphere was essential to the success of a conference attended by people whose natural tendency—owing to the nature of their work, their gifts, their tastes and even their personal qualities—is to shun over-detailed debate. They might have felt ill at ease amid the formality and involved procedure inseparable from the discussion, by so large a gathering, of such varied themes. But they did not. Certainly the setting of the Conference—the island of San Giorgio, the cloisters and inner premises of the Cini Foundation, the hospitality of the Italian Government and the Municipality of Venice—could be relied upon to reassure these artists and to convince them that they had not been assembled with the nefarious intention of enabling governmental and bureaucratic circles to gain a stranglehold over the privileges associated with creative inspiration.

For whether during the discussions in committee or at plenary meetings, in the statements of the rapporteurs and in the resolutions submitted, or in chance conversations in garden or gallery, it was always the same problem, in one or other of its innumerable forms, with which all the participants were concerned. What could be done to protect the artist, to help him, to educate him, while at the same time safeguarding the independence of his art and preserving the originality and authority of this talent? How could the State be asked to foster the arts without setting up a system of official or "directed" art? The questions which were the most vigorously debated were nearly always those in which official action was both desired and dreaded. No sooner had such action been acknowledged as necessary, than those who had called for it began to wonder whether it might not do more harm than good, by substituting tyranny for fecklessness. It suddenly seemed as though the horrors of enslaved art would be worse than the tragedy of abandoned or neglected art. Yet all present felt that some appeal must be made to the State, to help in the training of artists and to protect them when their training was finished, when they were beginning to turn out work on which they depended for a living.

These justifiable apprehensions and this need for assistance are alike expressed in Mr. Thornton Wilder's final report. And the Director-General of Unesco, Mr. Jaime Torres Bodet, in his inaugural address, had already stressed the difficulty, not to say the contradiction, inherent in the present ambiguous situation: "In an age," he said, "when patronage is disappearing, the State should occupy the vacant place by awakening and sustaining the talents which deserve its support. But, on the one hand, the State should remember that it has no title whatever to interfere in the work of creation.
itself, that is to say, in cases where art is the concern of specialists and craftsmen. On the other hand, it must endeavour to obtain for these craftsmen the best possible practical conditions. Its task is not to direct talent, still less to bring it under subjection, but rather to help it flower by increasing the number of schools and museums, study and travelling scholarships. It is for the State to facilitate the training and apprenticeship of the artist, to help him make himself known, publish his works or get them performed. It is incumbent upon it to encourage the dissemination of works of art and to watch over the education of the public in the visual arts, in music and in literature, so that the greatest possible number of human beings may become sensitive to quality, permeable to harmony, and athirst for excellence. If it does this, the State will preserve its citizens from being contented with the all-pervading, mediocre works which are a degradation or a caricature of masterpieces, satisfying at little cost the desire for beauty of those who would know better how to recognize it if pains had been taken to form their taste. To ensure that gifts do not lie fallow because poverty, lack of leisure or want of knowledge prevent their owners from bringing them to fruition—that, it seems to me, is the noblest and most useful task that the State could undertake."

The artists and writers who gathered at Venice seem to have kept this dividing line constantly in mind. They gave the closest attention to the problems they were called upon to consider. They showed great caution, and at the same time great precision. All in all, the resolutions and recommendations adopted by the Conference constitute a detailed list of the principal obstacles by which a present-day artist is impeded in the pursuit of his art. The writers and artists who attended the Conference made practical suggestions for overcoming those obstacles. Censorship, copyright, the domaine public payant, the reproduction and dissemination of literary and artistic works, collaboration among architects, painters and sculptors and among script-writers, directors and producers of films—such were the chief subjects discussed at Venice.

A further task of the Conference was to seek for ways of associating artists with the work of Unesco. The Conference itself provided a remarkable example of such co-operation. The artists it brought together were aware of the importance and novelty of the occasion. They responded by affirming their faith and their confidence in Unesco and its aims. At their last plenary meeting they showed their satisfaction by recommending that Unesco, in the years to come, should encourage and organize international conference of artists on the lines of the Venice Conference.

A concrete and immediate achievement, of great importance in furthering co-operation between artists and Unesco, was the decision, reached at Venice, to establish an International Association of Plastic Arts. Unlike creative artists in other branches of art, the painters and sculptors did not as yet possess any international organization. The secretariat of Unesco had already prepared a report on the subject, after consultation with Member
States and with the national associations of artists which, in these fields, they had designated. During the Conference the painters and sculptors held meetings of their own, and submitted a resolution which was adopted first by the committee on visual arts and then by the whole Conference at a plenary meeting. A preparatory committee was appointed to study the question of an Association of Plastic Arts. The aims of the new association are to encourage cultural co-operation, both between different branches of art and between different countries, and to promote and defend the economic and social position of artists on an international level.

A more ambitious scheme aimed at establishing an International Council of Arts and Letters. The purpose of this council would have been to ensure permanent co-ordination, on the international level, between the various branches of art. It was also to help Unesco in preparing and implementing its programme in the sphere of arts and letters. Several of the conference committees gave vigorous support to this idea. The Conference as a whole appreciated its implications and advantages, but, realizing the difficulties that were involved and preferring to proceed gradually, decided that the time was not yet ripe. While considering—as emphasized in the general report—that the creation of such a council was highly desirable, it took the view that further preliminary study was required for a project of such importance, and that in any case nothing should be contemplated until the International Association of Plastic Arts had been definitely constituted and had started to function.

Writers and artists were thus enabled to exchange information and impressions, compare their views, and inform official circles of the measures they considered desirable. They were united in the determination to defend the independence which is essential to all artistic creation. They carefully specified the points at which, in their opinion, State intervention could be most useful, and, on the other hand, the points at which they felt it to be undesirable. Originating as they did from different cultural regions of the world, and representing a wide range of arts with problems which are by no means identical and with needs which may even be conflicting, they came to realize the similarity of the obstacles by which they were all confronted, and of the fact that they had identical opinions as to what ought to be done.

Quite apart from the concrete results achieved by the Conference, Unesco, ever conscious of its mission, is proud to have taken the initiative of asking the writers and artists when it assembled at Venice in September 1952 to make this joint effort to think out their problems and gain a clear view of them. The Organization's intention was to help those creative spirits towards a keener awareness of their basic solidarity, and to encourage them to co-operate more extensively and more fruitfully. In this it hopes to have succeeded.
List of Participants
and Composition of the Conference

HONORARY COMMITTEE

Patrick Abercrombie, President of the International Union of Architects; Benedetto Croce, President of the International PEN Club; Paul Fierens, President of the International Association of Art Critics; Arthur Honegger, President of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers; Roland Manuel, President of the International Music Council; Axel Otto Normann, President of the International Theatre Institute; Jose Luis Sert, President of the International Congresses of Modern Architecture.

Alvar Aalto
Haaken Ahlberg
Samuel Barber
Kersti Bergroth
Ugo Betti
Alexander Calder
René Clair
Paul Claudel
Halide Edib
Roger Ferdinand
Edward Morgan Forster
Alberto Giacometti
William Gropius
Carl Amedeus Hartman
Taha Hussein
John Huston
Karl Jaspers
Prithviraj Kapoor
Le Corbusier
Fernand Léger
Lin Yu Tong
Francesco Malipiero
Thomas Mann
Walter de la Mare
Marino Marini
Henri Matisse

Mies van der Rohe
Darius Milhaud
Gabriela Mistral
Henry Moore
Giorgio Morandi
Richard J. Neutra
Eugene O’Neil
Auguste Perret
Henri Prost
Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan
Jules Romains
Alfred Roth
Georges Rouault
Denis de Rougemont
Jean Schlumberger
Margaret Storm Jameson
Igor Strawinsky
Prince Wilhelm of Sweden
Jules Supervielle
Rufino Tamayo
Giuseppe Ungaretti
Heitor Villa Lobos
Paul Vischer
Ralph Walker
Thornton Wilder
Frank Lloyd Wright

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Chairman: André Lhote. Rapporteur: Henry Billings

Members
Silvio D’Amico
Jorge Carrera Andrade

Georges Auric
Guillaume Landre
The Artist in Modern Society

Benn Levy
Rodolfo Pallucchini
Ernesto Rogers

Stephen Spender
Pierre Vago
Fritz Wotruba

VENETIAN RECEPTION COMMITTEE

H.E. Dr. Vincenzo Peruzzo, Prefect of Venice, Chairman; Professor Angelo Spanio, Mayor of Venice; Professor Giovanni Ponti, President of the Biennial; Mr. Giovanni Favaretto Fisca, President of the Deputazione Provinciale; Mr. Nino Barbantini, President of the Fondazione Cini; Mr. Andrea di Valmarana, President of the Ente Provinciale per il Turismo; Mr. Giuseppe Segati, President of the Centro Internazionale delle Arti et del Costume; Mr. Concetto Liggeri, Assistant (Tourism).

DELEGATES

Member States of Unesco

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Mr. Colin Colahan
Mr. Douglas Dundas

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Dr. Felix Braun
Mr. Franz Theodor Csokor
Mr. Clemens Holzmeister
Professor Josef Marx
Mr. Alfred Wickenburg

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Mr. Anto Carte
Mr. Albert Guiskin
Mr. Léon Jongen
Mr. Charles Leplae
Mr. Léon Stynen

Bolivia
Miss Marina Nunez del Prado
Mr. Arturo Reque Meruvia
Mr. Juan Valdivia Altamirano

Brazil
Mr. Lucio Costa
Mr. Vinicius de Moraes
Mr. Santa Rosa

Canada
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Miss Pauline Redsell
Mrs. Jeanne Rhéaume
Mr. René Thibault

China
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Mr. Antonio Toro
Mr. Dolcey Vergara

Costa Rica
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Mr. Teodorico Quiros

Cuba
Miss Maria Luisa Caballero de Schasowicz
Mrs. Maria Teresa de la Campa
Dr. Remos
Prof. Emilio de Soto

Denmark
Mr. Adam Fischer
Mr. Hans Hartvit Seedorff Pedersen
Mr. Hans Erling Langkilde
Mr. Richard Mortensen
Mr. Henrik Starcke

Dominican Republic
Mr. Alfredo Fernandez Simo

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**France**
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Mr. Julien Cain
Mr. Jacques-Louis Duchemin
Mr. J. Gabriel Goulinat
Mr. Hans Hartung
Mr. Jacques Ibert
Mr. Jean Lurçat
Mr. Claude-André Puget
Mr. Charles Rohmer
Mr. Jules Romains
Mr. Robert Valcur
Mr. Paul Vialar
Mr. Jacques Villon

**German Federal Republic**
Prof. Otto Bartning
Mr. Wolfgang Forster
Mrs. Marie Luise von Kaschnitz
Mr. Georg Meistermann
Prof. Max Unold

**Greece**
Mr. K. Kitsikis
Mr. Constantine Pangalos
Mr. Evangelos Papanoutsos
Mr. Angelo Terzakis

**Guatemala**
Mr. Enrique Solares

**Honduras**
Mr. Arturo Lopez Rodzno
Mr. Mario Zamora

**India**
Mr. N. C. Mehta

**Iraq**
Mr. Ibrahim Abdul Wahab
Mr. Faraj Naman
Mr. Khalid Rahhal

**Israel**
Mr. Yeshurum Keshet
Mr. Josef Schonberger

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Mr. Yoshinobu Masuda
Mr. Takoo Satow
Mr. Naoya Uchimura
Mr. Yoshio Yoshikawa

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Mrs. Kimmelbong
Mr. Kimsoowon
Mr. Ohyangjin
Mr. Yoenhyojunp

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Miss Nicole Brocard

**Luxembourg**
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Mr. Jules Nicolas Kruger

**Mexico**
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Mr. Luis Sandi

Monaco
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Mr. Marc César Scotto

Netherlands
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Mr. Hans Egge
Mr. Finn Faaborg
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Mr. Eivind Moestue

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Peru
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Mr. Otte Sköld
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Mr. Guido Fischer
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Mr. Emil Oprecht
Mr. Henri de Ziegler

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Mr. Chitra Buabusaya

Turkey
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Union of South Africa
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Mr. F. C. L. Bosman
Mr. A. L. Meiring
Mr. Coert Steynberg
Miss Maud Sumner

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Mr. Henry Moore
Mr. Stephen Spender
Mr. Graham Sutherland
Mr. Ralph Tubbs

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Mr. George Fox
Mrs. Dorothea Greenbaum
Mr. George L. K. Morris
Mr. William Schuman
Mr. Allen Tate
Mr. Charles Thomson
Mr. Ralph Walker
Mr. Thornton Wilder

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Don Ernesto Pinto

Venezuela
Mr. Juan Vicente Iecuna

Yugoslavia
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Mr. Milan Bogdanović
Mr. Marko Celebonović
Mr. Danilo Svara
Mr. Marin Tartaglia

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Mr. Dioclesio de Campos
Mgr. Giovanni Constantini
International Organizations of Artists admitted to consultative arrangements with Unesco

International Congresses for Modern Architecture
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Mr. Le Corbusier
Mr. Ignazio Gardella
Mr. Enrico Peressutti
Mr. Giuseppe Samonà

International Theatre Institute
Mr. Silvio D'Amico
Mr. Bogdanović
Mr. Marc Connelly
Mr. Ashley Dukes
Mr. Roger Ferdinand
Mr. Huisman
Mr. André Josset
Mr. Benn Levy
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Mr. Oprecht
Mr. Kenneth Rae
Mr. Llewellyn Rees
Mr. Torraca

International Music Council
Mr. Jack Bornoff
Mr. Arthur Honegger
Mr. Guillaume Landré
Mr. Francesco Malipiero
Mr. Roland Manuel

International PEN Club
Mr. Jean de Beer

OBSERVERS

Delegates of International Non-Governmental Organizations present at the Venice Conference as observers

International Literary and Artistic Association
Mr. Jacques Duchemin

International Association of Art Critics
Mr. Umbro Apollonio
Mr. Giulio Carlo Argan
Mr. Raymond Cogniat

International Organisations of Artists admitted to consultative arrangements with Unesco

International Congresses for Modern Architecture
Mr. Goffredo Bellonci
Mrs. Kersti Bergroth
Mr. David Carver
Mr. André Chamson
Mr. Kasimir Edschmid
Mr. Taha Hussein
Mrs. Maria Kunczewicz
Mrs. Gabriela Mistral
Mr. Robert Neumann
Mr. Ignazio Silone
Mrs. Margaret Storm Jameson
Mr. Diego Valeri

International Theatre Institute
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Mr. J. H. van den Broek
Mr. Cart de Fontaine
Mr. C. B. Ceas
Miss Jacqueline Feldman
Mr. André Gutton
Mr. William Holford
Mr. Willy van Hove
Mr. Hugo van Kuyck
Mr. Robert Lebet
Mr. Manassavich
Mr. Montuori
Mr. Edvard Ravnikar
Mr. Alfred Roth
Mr. Jean Tchumi
Mr. Paul Visher
Mr. Jean-Pierre Vouga

International PEN Club
Mr. Jean de Beer

OBSERVERS

Delegates of International Non-Governmental Organizations present at the Venice Conference as observers

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Mr. Frederic Laws
Mr. Giuseppe Marchiori
Mr. H. Michael Middleton
Mr. Rodolfo Palluchini
Mr. Herbert Read
Mr. Soichi Tominaca
The Artist in Modern Society

International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers
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Mr. Arthur Honegger
Mr. René Jouglet
Mr. Cesare Giulio Viola

International Council of Museums
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Mr. Julien Cain
Mr. V. Moschini
Mr. O. Skold

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Mr. Giovanni Pellis (Italy)
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Mr. Ebr Poli (Italy)
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Mr. Pierlungi del Prato (Italy)
Mrs. Lea Quarretti (Italy)
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Mr. John Rhoden (United States)
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Mr. Pippo Rizzo (Italy)
Mr. Edwin Roman (United States)
Mr. Alberto Rossi (Italy)
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Prof. Edna Wells Luetz (United States)
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OF THE CONFERENCE AND COMMITTEES

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General Statements
The Artist in Present-day Society

by Giuseppe Ungaretti

I am the first artist to have the honour of addressing this assembly. The Organizing Committee gave me that privilege because I am an Italian, as a further sign of that affection for my country which has led to the choice of Venice as the scene of our first conference.

I should like to thank the committee for this honour, and to give all of you a warm welcome on behalf of the artists of Italy.

We who are meeting here represent, as artists, many different origins, traditions and aims; but what has brought us together, and what unites us, is our realization that underlying all this diversity is the single, unique secret of poetry, which gives and ever will give its impetus to art.

Poetry is a rare breath of inspiration, most fugitive and elusive, and neither unwittingly nor deliberately does it raise individuality of form to the universality of beauty. Its faculty is gradually to reveal the truth of the fleeting historical moment, and to build up that solitude in which a human being is perceived to be identical with his fellows, yet different from them all; and its faculty is, also, to evade perception save as the ultimate goal, higher than solitude or history, since truth can be neither fleeting nor perishable.

Hegel, at one time, believed that he could foresee the death of art. From Nietzsche's day to that of Sartre, men have not shrunk, even, from speaking of the death of God. These concepts are attended, in the minds of those who expound them, with dialectical precautions from which they cannot be separated without distorting their meaning, and I hope no one will find me tactless if I say the very contradiction they imply, makes the use of these terms tiresome.

We know, of course, that the language in which man seeks to capture poetry, giving it a form, is—like our own sojourn on this earth—essentially precarious, ever changing, always too gross, opaque, heavy, defined with too much constraint to be fitted for full union with the infinity of poetry. But the miracle is not language itself, it is the tension that confers nobility upon language, that leads it to create sublime and enchanting themes. And if—by some unhappy chance—that tension were to vanish from man's heart and mind, man would be stripped of his dignity, reduced to the level of the beasts, having lost the power of perceiving in the harmony of created things the hope of that which is high to which Dante refers, or the terrors of beauty of which Leopardi speaks. Even from the first painful syllables of the forest-dwellers, art has been purposed less to circumvent the wiles
and the unknown perils of death, or to imitate the shapes and voices of animals as a ruse by which to trap them the more easily, than to strive, under cover of such practical expedients and urges, to establish contact with the inviolable secret of divine creation. The idea that art has to be judged by standards different from those of practical life is one that has become progressively clearer to men's minds; it is an idea of freedom, carried to its highest possible point by the discussions of the Romantic movement. And, as though the perpetual self-renewal of art, and artistic activity, could ever be replaced by the activity of logic, do we wish—with the paradoxical declaration that God is dead, and through the iniquities into which we might be led by such a paradox—to abolish that freedom which was so magnificently affirmed by the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth? Freedom is indivisible; but to imagine that it could be divorced from art would be an absurd denial of the autonomy of the human being, a denial of the age-old aspirations of mankind—a denial of man, for it would amount to denying his claim to immortality.

We hear much talk about impermanence at the present time, and it is right to talk about it, for impermanence is one element in the relationship which makes the breath of poetry perceptible to man: beauty and death, the infinite and the ephemeral, a relationship which has been described, in the light of the anguish of modern times, by Blake, Leopardi and Baudelaire, so that any other words on the subject would, it seems to me, be superfluous. Something needs, however, to be said regarding the present-day characteristics of this sense of impermanence. Nowadays it gives rise to a kind of fixation which is an inextricable part of our prevailing restlessness, and with which we must deal in our discussions—since it is this confusion that gives rise to the problems whose origin is usually attributed—in rather summary fashion, I think, to the widening of the gap between the public and the artist.

Looking around me in this city of Venice, I see that of all the passions, the ambitions and the glories that made of it for centuries one of the most powerful factors in European political life, there remain to us—making of present-day Venice the incomparable city that it is—its architecture, its statues, and a school of painting that was perhaps the greatest among all those on which mankind justly prides itself. The practical undertakings of the Republic, however bold and splendid, have left no trace except in the evidences of art, which shows that they were impermanent, and that in the long run there remained of them only that breath of humanity which, to assert itself, must break away from them and withdraw into solitude, into wonder, into meditation, into the song of one individual.

Hence the responsibility that devolves, in connexion with art, upon the public authorities. Their duty is to guide the development of art as they must also guide that of science, only more so, because the work of art, while it is a gift to the entire human race, is also, in its spirit, the symbol of that concrete heritage, the heritage of blood, which is formed in the course of
centuries by successive generations of any one nation, following each other under the same sky. The exercise of this duty calls for the greatest discretion, and a just ruler, while doing his utmost to ensure the livelihood of all artists, must make it his aim not to restrict, but to increase the spiritual freedom of each individual. No one can tell what paths art will follow in order to express the poetry of a given day, and no one can foresee who will be called upon to create a work that later generations will venerate. So woe betide those laws that attempt to reduce feeling and imagination to mere opportunist forms of expression. The spirit of poetical invention would not be crushed for ever, because it is not dependent upon man; but if a work of art has to struggle to birth against opposition from interests foreign to poetry, it can do so only by contorting itself into falsehoods that disfigure it and thus degrade mankind. Even amid terror poetry can raise its cry, can denounce intolerance, for it perpetually stimulates the desperate thirst for beauty of those who yearn for it, and never lets slip an opportunity of teaching man to doubt his own powers and to proclaim that mistakes are permissible and that in a well-organized society it is no crime to differ from the opinion of the majority. Human suffering is expressed, and no one who does not feel it within and around him will have any perception of poetry; but poetry has always pointed out where real suffering lay, and suggested the means by which art could reveal its horror.

Valéry said that all the most admirable achievements of art have been created despite the injustice of the social system of successive ages. Homer kept himself alive by begging, Virgil and Horace by flattering a patron, Villon by robbery, Aretino by blackmail. Others were humble teachers of English or Latin; and there were those, too, who had inherited fortunes to squander. But while unfavourable social conditions do not prevent the artist from raising his voice—impelling him to do so, rather, in order to call general attention to those conditions—this by no means justifies the inertia of the public authorities. On the contrary, it further confirms that the public authorities have no right to demand of the artist anything but art.

Time and again Shakespeare reminds us that our span is brief; but he also says: "Yet do they worst, old Time: despite thy wrong, My love shall in my verse ever live young." And cannot the present-day work of art have equal confidence in itself?

One reason why the sense of impermanence has become such an obsession with us present-day artists is that we have seen with our own eyes how works of art, even the sublimest, can perish, not only by the inevitable action of time, but suddenly, in an instant, destroyed by some senseless act of war. This should teach us all a lesson of humility. If only it is finally accepted as such, what a golden age the world will experience! An age more wonderful than any we can imagine as having existed in the past.

But the chief reason why, from the Romantic period until our own day, the sense of impermanence has obsessed the artist, is that he has been constantly obliged to invent a new language in order to express himself.
Plunged more deeply than anyone in the realities of his day, he cannot ignore the perpetual transformations that are thrust upon society as the course of history gathers speed from the technical resources continually made available to man by science. The artist's task has been made no easier by the ever-recurring need to restore, in the spirit of poetry, the balance between the functions of artistic form and the increase in material energy, which has now reached a scale so appallingly vast as to represent an overwhelming peril, is left to grope in blindness. Even architecture, which is closely bound up with technical discoveries, must not forget, if it is still to rank as an art, that in addition to the proportions that can be scientifically calculated there is a proportion, ever varying and ever incalculable, with which the finished work is imbued—one which is visible to the beholder, though it evades any definition that is not inspired by poetical pleasure, by feeling and imagination.

In former times a language would remain unchanged for centuries; and from Petrarch's day to the Baroque period, language was evocative of its absent subject, it was a language of ideas, mental, abstract. It was at the very moment when it became known that the earth revolves around the sun, and that any science founded on truth must necessarily be based on that idea, confirmed by geographical discoveries (which revealed that the sun sets at one spot while it is rising at another), it was at that moment, when the hardest blow was struck at “truth” as apprehended by the senses, that art proclaimed this latter form of truth with a vehemence never shown before. At that moment, after three centuries, language, at the instigation of poetry, transformed itself completely, becoming extremely sensual, extremely violent, through its obsession with death. Remember Don Quixote. The truth of the senses is released from history and revealed in a grotesque and exaggerated form, calling in the imagination, which provides the tormenting passions of the heart with every possibility for contrast; whereas from Petrarch to the seventeenth century, poetry had conveyed a feeling of balance which led it to seek its limits within the infinity of memory.

The rapid, almost abrupt changes that take place in language cannot fail to bewilder the public, and during the century that preceded the 1914 war, the public sank into an attitude of condescending indifference which permitted the development, in opposition to genuine experimentation, of an “official” art which oscillated between Neo-Classicism and Romanticism, and made shift, in course of time, to incorporate in a banal, academic form certain of the daring methods of authentic art. To speak only of painting—from David to Géricault, to Courbet, to Manet, Renoir, Cézanne, Seurat—how many battles had to be fought, how many explanations had to be given before, at the beginning of the present century, its various messages came to be understood. And it was still harder to understand the painters who came later—Rouault, Matisse, Picasso, Boccioni, Braque, Carrà, Klee, Kubin, De Chirico, Severini, Kandinsky, Scipione, Modigliani, Soutine, Morandi, and so on. They are extraordinary personalities, and the public is only just beginning...
to regard them as classics. Certain wealthy members of society have been blamed for paying high prices for the work of these artists, and cries of "snobbery" have been heard. It is, on the contrary, a pity that everyone is not in a position to make such purchases, and it is to be hoped that the public authorities will provide galleries of modern art with the funds they need, so that these works may be readily accessible to anyone who wishes to see and study them. Their value has achieved general recognition today, because everyone perceives the tragic poetry that permeates them, and which each painter reveals in his own way.

But if art is not to decline into mannerisms, it can never harden into one particular form of expression. When the language of a period has been outstripped by the requirements of expression, either the language changes or it appears outworn, absurd, ineffective. Young, gifted artists come forward every day, and everything possible is done to bring them into contact with the public. While scientific inventions have accelerated time, they also provide means of communication between the different nations by which distance is, so to speak, instantaneously abolished. Radio, the cinema and television enable us to see reproductions of the architecture, sculpture and painting, or to listen to the music or literature, of every country. So far as literature is concerned, there is the drawback of translation; any translation is either unsatisfactory, or else constitutes an entirely new work of art, like Mallarmé's translations of Poe. I do not think anyone has so far produced a satisfactory translation of the *Canti* of Leopardi, the most profound poet of the nineteenth century. Architecture, sculpture and painting have a less treacherous vehicle of reproduction in the camera; but it cannot be called faithful either. Music is more fortunate, and we in Italy, for instance, can hear the most modern music excellently performed over the radio, and accompanied by a careful commentary. Yet so competent an authority as Ernest Ansermet doubts the efficacy of such performances. In his view:

"As false situation is produced, owing to the existence of an immense public which takes no interest in any aspect of music except its actual structure, and receives nothing from it except general impressions or, as they say, emotions and effects. There is enough in that, of course, to hold their attention, as does the plot in a novel; but it falsifies culture. I know a city—a European capital, which I mention only as an example of the kind of thing that goes on almost everywhere—where for the last 25 years or so there has been an intense, feverish musical activity. Every artist of note has passed through there. Yet judging by the public's reactions to the works presented there nowadays, by what is written in the press, by the local musical output and the prevailing ideas, all this activity has had no result whatever, it has merely been so much noise, which dies away without trace."

This is a grave objection, coming from Ansermet. I know the reason for it, but there is not time enough to list the causes here; they may be summed up by saying that there is no reciprocal anxiety between artist and public which the work of art could be called upon to appease. However, it is a very
good thing that concerts, exhibitions, broadcasts and documentary films should become increasingly numerous, and all that remains to be desired is that greater attention may be given to the quality of the works thus brought before the public. It is an error, and an insult to the public, to believe that audiences are indifferent to the high quality of a work. They may not be ready to understand it; they may be estranged from it by political propaganda, they may be attracted to it for social or other frivolous reasons, or by mere curiosity, and not by the desire for poetic enjoyment; but in the long run its quality will have a refining effect upon them and raise the level of public taste. I cannot share Ansermet's ill-humour.

It is, however, indisputable that the relationship of the public to art should be put on the right footing from the start, in the schools. Nowadays, the subjects that schoolteachers are expected to teach their pupils, from the beginning until they enter the university, are innumerable, and new subjects are added every day. What can be done to ensure that the pupils' taste is formed in such a way as to inspire them with a fervent and well-informed interest in art? What can be done to ensure that, trained in the respect of freedom, they will ardently pursue the quest for poetry, refusing to be diverted by considerations of subject, and learn to discern it in the work of art? The subject has nothing to do with the poetic value of a work. That value, I repeat, lies in the strength of feeling and imagination which is poured into the work. It is a serious problem, to which all of us, each in his own section, must turn attention during this conference. It would be a very good thing, in connexion with literary education in particular, if—especially in countries with old-established traditions—a chair were established in every faculty of letters for the study of the writings of the past two centuries, including the most recent.

Nothing, however, can provide such valuable guidance for the public as critical articles in the daily and weekly press. At one time, in Italy, these were published very systematically, regularly and with plenty of space at their disposal: now there is a tendency, in Italy and elsewhere, to give precedence to general news or sport. There should be room for everything, and it is unjust to lay too much blame on the public, which is not so averse from using its thinking powers as some people would have us believe.

The tremendous events of the last few years, the political divergences that have sprouted on all sides as a result of the war and, above all, the general impoverishment, have led, if not to the complete disappearance of the specialized review, at any rate to a decline in its influence in a number of European countries. Yet such reviews constitute, to my mind, the best means of establishing a fruitful contact between the public and art—art seized in the course of its development. If we are to have reviews of the quality that used to be associated with the Mercure de France, the Nouvelle Revue Française, Mesures, La Voce, La Ronda, Solaria, The Criterion or Horizon, there must be similarity of tastes and of aesthetic aims among those who are to collaborate in them. They would be literary or art reviews whose programmes would be laid
down so strictly and so clearly that discussions could never degenerate into
demagogy. As I have just said, the success of periodicals such as these has,
in a number of countries, been hampered by post-war impoverishment, and
they deserve attention and encouragement.

All this can be done. No artist is likely to forget that Rembrandt never
served the public interest more faithfully than at the time when, isolating
himself in his work, neglecting his reputation, disdaining commissions,
offering no resistance when his valuable collections were seized by his creditors
and sold for a song, he wrestled unremittingly with the angel amid privation
and ruin and completed his *Homer* in 1663, his *Saul* in 1665 and his *Jewish
Bride* in 1668. He died contented, on 8 October 1669. During those last years,
when he had cut himself off from the public or the public had rejected him,
he added three incomparable masterpieces to the heritage of mankind.

During the Rencontres Internationales at Geneva in 1948, on which occasion
Ansermet expressed the opinion I have quoted regarding the performance
of contemporary music, Jean Cassou, in the course of his interesting
speech, observed:

"Renoir once said to Vollard: 'We are all men of genius nowadays, of
course; but the fact remains that we have become unable to draw a hand,
and we know nothing about our job.' And Cézanne said in despair to Emile
Bernard: 'I always fall short of my aim. I shall achieve it one day, perhaps,
but I'm old and I may die before ever having reached that supreme perfection
of achievement, as the Venetians reached it.'"

Cézanne and Renoir were only afraid that they might lose sight of the pro-
fundity that art acquires through remaining linked to a tradition. Their skill
was immense, despite the humility of their words, which merely serve to
show the loftiness of their ambition.

We should stop for a moment to consider such problems as this—that
is, to consider how the moderation inculcated by the classics is to be reconciled
with those bursts of expression which it is impossible for the present-day
artist to suppress in himself without departing from his real nature as a man
of his time—just as it would have been impossible for the Venetians whom
Cézanne envied, or for the Quattrocento artists and those of Pompeii, who
so shook Renoir's self confidence.

Those are my suggestions regarding certain problems which we should
try to solve at our meetings.

I have perhaps succeeded in showing the scruples, even the perplexities,
that beset the present-day artist.

This does not diminish the immensity of the work accomplished by artists
from the last half of the eighteenth century to the first half of the twentieth
century which lies just behind us. They realized that language was worn
out, grown old; they felt the weight of 3,000 years slowing down their blood.
They restored memory to its former state of painful significance, and at the
same time they taught themselves, at the cost of agonizing efforts, to break
away from memory and thus enable man to be dazzled once more by freedom. The artists of the last 200 years have remained faithful to the memory that suffering, joy, and the frailty of the flesh will keep alive forever in the inspiration of each individual. They have taught that freedom is poetry, a secret treasure that cannot be described without diminishing its value, but that every-one can measure as his own heartbeats urge him towards infinity.

We have met here to ensure that their lesson shall bear its due fruit.
The Theatre and Society

by Marc Connelly

To understand the position of the theatre in today's world, one should know something of its past. For nearly 2,500 years its relation to society has been controversial. Since its infancy predatory authority has dreaded its power of speech and attempted either to cut out its tongue or burn it at the stake. Even when not threatened by bigotry or political suppression, it has heard its intimate friends lamenting its increasing decay or approaching extinction. Century after century it has faced constantly imminent doom.

But the fabulous invalid of the arts has always managed to rise refreshed from her sickbed or jump up prettier than ever from her burial place at the crossroads. And wherever she appears she continues to fascinate, and humanity in general is so pleased by her presence it doesn't bother to ask why she is so attractive or how she managed to live so long.

Just as most of mankind has welcomed the concept of the phoenix without inquiring into what makes it fireproof, it has been content to enjoy the theatre's bright plumage and gift of flight. The theatre's laughter and excitement and occasionally aesthetic delight are immediate and handsome dividends paid on no greater investment than the willingness to accept them, and can hardly be expected to prompt the casual theatre-goer to examine them. Nevertheless, the sensitive man has always been aware that the theatre offered even more than these benefactions.

Let us look at some of the peculiarities of its hold on us. As a cultural agency, the theatre is generous whether one recognizes its generosity or not. It teaches with imperceptible pressure. In virtually all its shapes and forms of expression it provides man with an instrument by which he can gauge his growth. It invites him to seek truth under happy circumstances. It not only holds the mirror up to existing nature but reflects the possible changes tomorrow will make on moral patterns and ethical concepts. Schiller, the German classical dramatist, called the theatre a "moral institution". But woe the theatre which tries to be a moralizing institution. Pure theatre is amoral in the sense that it never tells man what to think but urges him to determine his own belief. It is never argumentative. It deals in suggestions not statements. Only the didactic, political theatre attempts to cancel man's right to think for himself.

How does the theatre in operation work its benefactions? Let us watch ourselves go to a playhouse where a good play is about to be presented with skill and imagination.
On our way we must stop for a moment to observe a happening to which I shall refer later. On the pavement near the theatre we are arrested by the sound of a man and a woman noisily quarrelling. You and I and all the others within earshot have never seen the man and woman before. During their brief hold on our interest, we are perhaps amused by the absurdity of their conduct, perhaps distressed at their embarrassment on finding themselves conspicuous. Either might prompt in you or me a recognition of facets of character we have seen in people we do know, including ourselves. We or the quarrellers move away.

We present our tickets and enter the theatre. If the play is being offered under conventionally professional circumstances, we obtain programmes and are ushered to our seats. We look around at the strangers who are about to share our experiences, or glance at the names and credits on the programme. The lady with me or the lady with you points out that her favourite scenic artist has designed the settings. You or I speculate on how much our enjoyment of the play is going to be qualified by the elbow of the neighbour in the next seat.

Eventually the lights in the auditorium go down and there is that magical hush that comes before the start of every performance of a play. There goes the curtain and we find ourselves looking at painted scenery. Let us say it represents a library and that it has been done realistically, with current good taste. Perhaps we note its excellence and rate it against the designer’s previous work. The heroine’s dress may send the ladies with us hurriedly to the programme to learn who made it. I may wonder if the actor pretending to be a butler isn’t the one I saw last month playing Mercutio.

The action of the play begins. It consists of physical movements and words being uttered by the actors. We listen and watch, as yet unable to enjoy the necessary “suspension of disbelief” in what is happening before us. Then comes that “quickening” moment, as the Greeks used to call it, and imperceptibly to conscious minds the actors become characters in an incident that we are sharing rather than beholding. The momentum of the action grows greater and our immersion in the play deeper. Our awareness of our own individualities disappears. We are no longer individuals. We are an audience. The women with us have forgotten who made the heroine’s dress. The setting is now a room, not scenery. In fact, all our objective contact with the stage has gone. The elbow at my side is forgotten. I am no longer I in my old relationship with the physical world, and you are no longer you. We have been transformed by the catalysis of the theatre into an audience—a living creature responding in a hypnoidal consciousness to the stimuli from the stage but devoid of cerebration. An audience cannot think in the manner of the normal human being. When one remarks mentally at a theatrical performance that something is good or bad, one is not part of an audience. It is the uncatalyzed individual speaking, a spectator, not a participant.

In a way, an audience is like a new-born baby in that it has no memory. Nor has it any awareness of time, place or life except as it discovers them.
in its only cosmos, the stage. But no baby ever grew so rapidly as the infant audience. In no time at all, through the mysterious collaboration of the creative and interpretive talents involved, the audience within the compass of its existence has found wisdom and become godlike. The inspiration of the ancient theatre's altar, the essential gravity and sacredness behind the capering and absurd humour of the first satyr comedies, the hunger for union with the divine are all contributing now to the audience's estate. A work of art is being realized. The drama, "the thing done", is nobly alive.

How is its divinity manifesting itself in the audience? By the audience's godlike concern with truth and its ability to recognize it. The approach to truth in the theatre is not unlike the approach to it in the other arts. We know it is nearby when we find the rate of our progress increasing because of the lessening pressure and interruptions of the merely clever. When truth is manifesting itself in art, we find an incredible economy of expression. The lightest shadow, the most delicate motion, the faintest breath are all stages of a growing inevitability. Our perception as an audience is immeasurably greater than the perception we brought into the theatre as individuals. And so we sit exalted, sharing the play's disclosure of truth. We are superior gods sublimely engaged in seeing the virtue of humanity defined, and unconcerned with such humdrum things as punishments for departures from virtue. That sort of thing can be left to lesser, punitive gods, like Vulcan and Thor, whose only arguments were thunderbolts. In our microcosmic way we see everything in the play. It is like Dunsany's dewdrop which reflects the whole sky.

In that library before us, a man and a woman begin quarrelling. The overtones of their quarrel are exactly those of the frustrated pair we encountered on the sidewalk. Their dialogue is almost what we heard as individuals and, superficially, there is no greater or less heat to their rancour. But now we, the audience, have been provided with the secret keys of understanding. We know all the factors in the conflict, most of them perhaps unknown to the quarrellers. We are indeed looking at them from heaven.

Of course, it is rare that such an enchantment continues for the entire length of the play. Our emotional bloodstream, our ichor, can be poisoned if the nourishment from the stage fails. Inept acting or direction, obtrusive cleverness or flagging dramatic skill can make the audience ill, and unless corrected, will find it disintegrating poisonously and changing back to its original chemical combinations, you and I and the rest of us. But if our term of godhead runs its full course, we return to earth by that proper device, the descent of the curtain. Thornton Wilder in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* interrupts a quarrel between La Perichole, the actress and her manager to make this parenthetic observation: "We come from a world where we have known incredible standards of excellence. We dimly remember beauties that we have not seized again. And we go back to that world."

Such is the magic of the theatre. That magic withstands all the grandeurs and miseries of this world. It survives wars, air attacks, occupations, defeats
and victories. For no reality, no matter how satisfactory or how dismal can ever destroy man's hunger for that world of dimly remembered beauties.

That is why all the powers and dominions all through history needed the theatre and, perhaps with the sole exception of my own great democracy, were conscious of this need.

In the third century B.C., the republic of Athens granted privileges to its actors, such as exemption from taxes and military service. Moreover, actors were allowed to emigrate and thus to make the Athenian dramatic masterpieces famous all over the known world, which just goes to show that the ways of cultural propaganda are always the same.

The republic of Rome around 200 B.C. offered its citizens theatrical shows on each of the 48 official holy days. Some of the plays they produced were undoubtedly translations from the Greek; for as early as 272 B.C. there lived in Tarentum one Livus Andronicus who became the first theatrical translator. He translated all the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides as well as Greek comedies. It was probably these translations which in a large measure stimulated the writing of original Latin plays by his contemporary, Naevius, a prolific author of comedies, some of which were still popular in Cicero's time.

The Church too had her theatre in the era of her supremacy. Although basically suspicious of the stage as being a device to stir up all kinds of evil affections in the soul, she gave, in the middle ages, her nod to a theatre which was a dramatic extension of the cathedral. This theatre dealt not with man as an individual but with man as species in the confrontation with the divine law. The morality play was in effect a visual and oral transposition of Christian teachings concerning good and evil, heaven and hell, the frailty of the creature and the sublime power of the creator. As in Hoffmannsthal's and Reinhardt's modern version of the morality play, its hero was always "Everyman". Or, if the Church-theatre did not dramatize Christian dicta, it dramatized, in the Passion play, the biography of Christ.

However, it was the monarchy which was most aware of the importance of the theatre and which viewed it both as an ornament and as a measure of its own glory. Nor can one doubt the realism of this view when one considers the extraordinary short-livedness of the conquests of war and of diplomacy. Take Louis XIV of France, of whom Sainte Beuve said "he had only good sense, but he had much of it", and whose reign was one of the longest and most successful of modern times. And yet his intricate system of alliances designed to make France invasion-proof was already challenged in his lifetime and before 100 years were over, his immense effort to conquer and consolidate was entirely wiped out, then rebuilt and once more destroyed. But the theatre which was inspired by his reign and which it adorned, flowers to this day and still reflects its glory upon him. You cannot think of Corneille, Racine, Molière without thinking of the Sun King, just as you can't think of Schiller and Goethe without thinking of the Duke of Weimar.
Now who would have ever heard of the Duke of Weimar had it not been for the fact that Goethe organized and directed his court-theatre, writing for it and encouraging Schiller to write for it? Weimar was one of the many little principalities within the German-Austrian Empire of the eighteenth century, and its duke was not important in the political scheme of things. But the classical German drama which was born in his realm gave him the lasting prestige of a great prince.

All through the nineteenth century, actually up to 1918 and the advent of the Weimar Republic, small and big German princes tried to emulate Goethe's duke. Their Hoftheater was their pride and joy and they made great sacrifices to sustain them. There actually existed a sort of competition between these serene highnesses in getting up the most and the best productions. And they were not above stealing each other's directors, stage designers and leading men and ladies. Some of these court theatres made artistic history. I am thinking specially of the Meininger and Darmstaedter theatres, both of which had great influence on modern directing and acting.

In looking back at royal patrons of the theatre, one should at least pause a moment to regard the effect of the artistically liberal king of Sweden, Gustav III, who, after a visit to the theatre his uncle by marriage, Frederick the Great, had built for the Italian Barberini, decided that the theatre built by one of his forbears at the royal summer residence of Drottningholm, a small island outside of Stockholm, should be employed as something more than the setting for an occasional formal theatrical evening. Within a few years Gustav had converted, the tiny theatre into perhaps the most alive and dynamic in Europe. Gustav's hospitality was welcomed by every dramatist, dancer, musician, actor and scenic artist in the world. All year round the theatre was the scene of exciting experiment and magnificent revival. Toward the close of the eighteenth century, Gustav was assassinated by a political enemy at a masquerade ball. The theatre was closed and forgotten until a young student of Uppsala in the twenties of this century, preparing a dissertation for his doctorate, came to the lovely island of the Queen's castle. It is about 15 minutes outside Stockholm by motocar. Prying through a rubbish-filled foyer, he came across the theatre beyond, intact, exactly as it was the night Gustav was stabbed. The young student, the present professor Agne Beijer, is the curator of that theatre which today presents operas each summer. The music which rang through this theatre in its youth continues to attract an international audience; artists and patrons of the opera. It is one of the world's leading theatrical museums and worthy of any scholar's study.

Dictatorship too was theatre conscious. Napoleon I, for instance, loved the drama and acknowledged its power to enhance and embellish his empire. A case in point is the Congress of Princes he convoked to Erfurt in 1808. It was a grandiose affair, designed to seduce frightened satellites and unwilling allies. To this end, Napoleon brought the greatest French actor, Talma, and the choice ensemble of the Comédie Française for what a witness called a "véritable levée en masse of tragedy". There was just one thing wrong with
that levée en masse: the tragedy all stemmed from the period of Louis XIV; the contemporary French playwrights wrote only the lightest of light comedy. This sorry state of affairs irritated Napoleon very much. He could not understand why he, who provided his people with an era chock-full of drama, should have to put up with the insipid little plays of the prolific Désaugier. What he did not or would not grasp was that the censorship which Fouché and Savary practiced in his name and which even expurgated the subversive lines of Corneille was not conducive to great dramatic writing.

It was at his Congress of Princes in Erfurt that Napoleon had his famous conversation with Goethe, in the course of which he suggested that Goethe ought to write a new Caesar's Death with a more constructive twist. That new Caesar's Death, he said, should demonstrate to the world that Caesar would have brought about the happiness of humanity if only he had been given time to carry out his vast projects. Goethe was a great admirer of Napoleon; in our time he would have probably been condemned as a collaborationist. He professed to find the Emperor's proposition divinely naive and ingenious. Still, he never followed it up.

And here you have in a nutshell the theatrical problem which confronts all dictators and all dramatists working under dictatorships: that is, the chemistry of the drama and the chemistry of political expediency never coincide. That is why dictators never get their money's worth out of their theatre when they subject it to censorship and thought control. And yet they invariably try to do just that.

Hitler was one of those dictators who, though fond of the theatre, signally misunderstood its nature. It was characteristic of his ilk that with the Third Reich hardly under way, he put the German theatre under the control of Dr. Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. He could not have proclaimed his intentions more blatantly; it was to make Schiller's Moral Institution into a political instrument. As was to be expected, it worked only in the negative. That is, no plays could be produced which made fun of the régime or reflected the lurid and tragic conflicts caused by its monstrous principles and laws. But on the other hand, no plays were produced which promoted Nazi ideology; there weren't any. In fact, during the 12 years while the Nazis lasted, not one new play of any interest was created in Germany. Nor did any provocative foreign play reach the German stage—a stage which in general is notably hungry for new things and very catholic in its tastes. Even some of the German classical works were put on the Nazi index—especially Lessing's Nathan the Sage, a play extolling racial tolerance and therefore downright subversive.

Still, there wasn't total censorship. Goebbels thought it inadvisable to forbid Schiller, with the result that the German audiences broke into wildly demonstrative applause whenever they heard Marquis Posa pronounce his famous line, "Sire, give us freedom of thought".

We will have more to say about the totalitarian theatre in another context. But let me note here that while censorship impoverishes the repertoire, it would be a mistake to believe that it kills the theatre. Nothing can kill
theatre. As we said before: no reality is ever so deadening as to end man's hunger for that "world of dimly remembered beauties". Thus, even though the choice of plays was restricted, the Germans flocked to their theatres under the Nazis, seeking solace there from gruelling air attacks and impending defeat.

All of which indicates that the vitality of the theatre borders on the miraculous. At this very moment it is asserting itself all across the world and under the most varied circumstances. In some countries the theatre leads a free and vigorous existence. In other countries it has to put up with ideological corsets which threaten to squeeze the breath out of it. But it is a safe bet that when the ideologies in question will have been long dead, the theatre will still live.

How, more specifically, has the theatre fared in various countries since the end of World War II? And what is its relationship to society.

Let us first take a look at France where theatrical tradition has long been firmly established. It is amusing to contemplate that Napoleon in 1812, while dawdling in Moscow, drew up a plan for the reorganization of the French State theatre. Most historians believe that this was by way of escape: he wished to persuade himself that his ill-starred campaign was progressing according to plan and that this was the reason he pretended to be preoccupied with such unimportant civilian matters as the theatre in Paris. The truth is that the organization of the French State theatre has always been considered very important by the French Government, and the proof is their unperturbable solidity.

There are four national theatres in Paris: the Opéra, the Opéra-Comique, l'Odéon, and the Comédie-Française. They depend on the National Ministry of Education and their deficit is paid by the State. The Comédie-Française, to speak only of the dramatic theatre, excels in the production of the classical French masterworks on which every educated Frenchman or Frenchwoman has been weaned for the past 300 years. At any matinée you can see there groups of young girls supervised by nostalgic lady teachers reverently enjoying the formal splendours of a Corneille tragedy or a Molière comedy. You can also see old men and women, their lips moving in the rhythm of the verse spoken on the stage—verse which they memorized long ago and which has remained alive in their hearts and minds ever since.

One can't know anything of the French without knowing of their classical theatre which forms the language and the mental and emotional attitudes even of the so-called "Common Frenchman". It is not by chance that the servant Françoise in Proust's great novel *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* speaks the pure, noble French of the *grand siècle*.

There also exist four State-subsidized young companies which take plays to the theatre-starved towns in the French provinces. For in the centralized theatrical system of France, all the emphasis is on Paris and even large provincial towns are without a permanent theatre. But the standards of these touring companies are very high. Each does only about four or five
productions a year and plays each production for about a month, mainly on one-night stands. Rehearsals take three to four weeks; they never rehearse and play at the same time.

The commercial theatre, of which there is a plethora in Paris, has a few very great actors and actresses, but minor parts are often indifferently cast and stage sets and direction frequently is mediocre. But the present-day French theatre is exceedingly lucky in that it has at its disposal more gifted dramatic writers than any other theatre in the world. There are about 10 of them who bring out a new play every year, some even more often. I speak of Sartre, Montherlant, Cocteau, Salacrou, Anouilh, Camus, Aymé, Roussin, not to forget that robust theatrical perennial Henri Bernstein and the distinguished, though less prolific Claudel, Mauriac and Gabriel Marcel.

There exists in France, besides the tradition of classical theatre, that other tradition of the "intimate" or study-theatre. It is this theatre which specializes in a fare meant for theatrical gourmets or for those who are prepared to try anything once. These study-theatres provide the stimulus of the new. The most outstanding among them is probably the National Popular Theatre under the leadership of Jean Vilar. He brought to France not only Mother Courage by the German communist writer Bert Brecht, but also the marvellous Prince of Hamburg by Heinrich von Kleist, a German writer of some 150 years ago. It has never been translated into French before. Vilar travels with his ensemble so as to reach a public which cannot come to him. And note this amusing experiment in human-theatrical relations: in order to promote the interest of these new audiences into the modern theatre, he arranges social gatherings where the public meets the artists and even balls where they can dance together.

But it is Germany where the theatre is really part of everyday life. Happily, immediately after the war, the allied occupation authorities understood that to get the theatres running again was as urgent a task as, let's say, restoring the plumbing and much more urgent than the removal of the rubble. It was a tremendous undertaking, considering that every large and almost all smaller cities had their theatres and that 98 per cent of them had been wiped out by air attacks. Among those destroyed were all but two State theatres. Those State theatres were really the old Hoftheater by another name; the individual states had simply taken them over when the princes were deposed in 1918. The organization remained substantially the same through the Weimar Republic and also through the Third Reich. Their administration was a function of the individual state, and it was the states, together with the cities, which paid the deficits.

These State theatres were the very foundations of German dramatic culture, and, defeat or no defeat, the show had to go on. Thus, as early as the summer of 1945, makeshift theatres were in operation in beer halls, clubs, stock exchanges and even in some water-proof ruins. They played everything; the classics, opera and a great many foreign plays.
The Weimar Republic had 257 theatres. Of those, 147 were State and city theatres, 56 were commercial theatres and 54 were specialized theatres. By 1948, the much smaller West Germany alone had 114 theatres of which 88 were subsidized and 26 were commercial. Just because West Germany is devoid of a cultural centre—Berlin today is an outpost but not a capital—the decentralized theatre system which the German Republic inherited from the monarchy has assumed new importance. Some of the most talented German directors have taken over theatres in small provincial towns and bring out remarkable productions. Still, Berlin remains the theatre town par excellence, and the East sector vies with the West sector in theatrical accomplishment. For some time the East sector had an edge on the West, for the simple reason that the Russians themselves have, like the Germans, a tradition of State- and municipality-financed theatre which is foreign to the English-speaking occupants. Thus, all eight theatres of the Eastern sector of Berlin are subsidized by the State or the city or both, while only three theatres of West Berlin receive such subsidies.

The Germans have still some very fine actors and directors but they only have two dramatic writers. One is the communist Bert Brecht who works in the East zone but whose work is performed in the West too. His propaganda is comparatively discreet. His last work, the before-mentioned Mother Courage, is a sample of the so-called epic theatre which came up in Germany almost 30 years ago. Showing the sad fate of the camp-follower “Mother Courage” and her children throughout the Thirty Years’ War, it means to get the point across that war is hell. But it also gets another point across: namely that it doesn’t matter what side you are on in a war—war is still hell. There are indications that the Russians didn’t relish the implications of such total pacifism and that Brecht is under a cloud.

A much greater success with West German audiences was Carl Zuckmayer’s The Devil’s General. Zuckmayer wrote this play on a farm in Vermont during the war, but it captures the sights and sounds and the feel of the Third Reich in a manner which the Germans find uncanny and very exciting. Actually, The Devil’s General is the sort of play the Germans might have written during the Third Reich, had there been no censorship. But perhaps they could not have written it anyway then because they didn’t yet have the necessary distance to events. The play is a free dramatic interpretation of the life and death of a celebrated German Air-General Udet, who was presumably killed by Hitler. This play has been performed thousands of times in Germany during these last six years, both by highly professional casts and by amateur theatres. One of the most moving and realistic performances was that given by the wounded war veterans of a military hospital.

Zuckmayer is the only German dramatist who draws his material from the European reality of the last 20 years. His last play deals with the French resistance. It is astounding that in a country which crackles with drama and tragedy there are no more writers who try to employ such tempting raw material. So far, Zuckmayer has remained the only one. Most of the
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dramatic fare the West Germans get is American. Some of the Broadway hits like *Life with Father* and *Voice of the Turtle* were well received. Others, like *The Women* were successful, but on a dangerously false basis, insofar as they left the German audiences with the impression that such plays revealed how their conquerors lived at home. Actually, some of the plays they get from America are so foreign to the European mentality and ways of life that the Europeans are quite unable to tell reality from satire or fantasy, and they come out of the theatre rather more sceptical of the Americans than when they went in.

Which might lead us to a subject I have no time to develop here. It is an aspect of modern theatre: the challenge faced by the translator of plays of one culture to another. It is an important question and unfortunately will be with us as long as regional cultures produce regional theatre.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to remark briefly on that common complaint which has it that so few good plays are being written and that this signifies the end of the theatre. But when, we wonder, were there more good plays being written than now? Certainly not in Goethe's times. There were long pauses between the masterpieces he and Schiller wrote for the Weimar theatre, and he was quite pleased to fall back on Kotzebue or some other second-rate playwright who turned them out. It would seem, indeed, that, what with the theatre becoming even more cosmopolitan, and theatrical successes being translated and adapted from country to country, the theatres have more interesting, if not great, plays to choose from than at any other period except that of ancient Greece.

This cosmopolitanism of the theatre is especially striking in the European North. In Helsinki, in Oslo, in Stockholm you go one night to see a play by Giraudoux, the next to see one by T. S. Eliot and the third to see *A Streetcar Named Desire* or *The Devil's General*. As in Germany, in Scandinavia too the theatre is the daily cultural bread, and the theatrical network covers not only the capitals but the entire countries. Take Sweden; Stockholm, a city of less than 800,000 residents, has 16 excellent theatres, but there are also very good theatres in most of the provincial towns. Besides, there is the National Touring Theatre which plays in more than 300 communities all over the country. These main companies are financed by the State and the municipalities while a few other touring companies and open-air theatres are financed by the trade unions.

And now let's take a look at the English-speaking theatre. Contrary to the prestige which the theatre has long enjoyed on the continent, the English-speaking world has only spasmodically recognized its standing as a respectable art. Neither in England, nor in the United States is the theatre a requirement of cultural life as it is in Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Somehow the puritanical attitude which condemned stage plays during the Commonwealth as "sinful, heathenish, lewd, ungodly spectacles and most pernicious corruptions"—I am quoting William Prynne—still lingers in the Anglo-Saxon subconscious. When, for instance, the Governor of the State of
New York, during a recent coal shortage, considered closing "every theatre, pool-room and bowling alley" in New York City, he clearly ranked the theatre as a diversion instead of recognizing it as a cultural instrument. Still, there is a growing awareness of the theatre's importance to civilization and of the protection it deserves. The interest which the British Government has in recent years been taking in the theatre is a case in point. While British funds spent on the theatre may not compare to those spent by some continental countries, the British Government has established itself as a veritable patron of the theatre, and one which in no way tries to interfere with its free development or use it for propaganda purposes.

Britain does not have a Ministry of Fine Arts or anything of the sort. Instead she operates through the Arts Council of Great Britain to which a Royal Charter was granted in 1946. The Arts Council is a notable institution. Its stated purpose is to develop "a greater knowledge, understanding and practice of fine arts exclusively, and in particular, to increase the accessibility of the fine arts to the public . . . ". While sponsored by the Government and supported by a Government grant, the Arts Council is not a Government department and enjoys full independence. The Arts Council is divided into three departments: drama, music and art. Its annual grant from the British Treasury was £ 675, 000 in 1950-51. The Council, in turn, gives financial assistance to non-profit groups or charitable trusts capable of bringing to the people entertainment of a high standard. The financial agreement between the Council and its "Associated Organizations", as they are called, varies. Sometimes money is lent, sometimes given outright, sometimes a limited guarantee is made against losses. Altogether the Council's policy is to support enterprises rather than to establish Government-run entertainment. The Associated Organizations included in 1950 eight festivals, five theatres, 25 theatre companies, seven opera and ballet companies. Among them were such exalted institutions as the Sadler's Wells compagnies and the Old Vic, Britain's unofficial National Theatre.

The Arts Council also assists the Old Vic School, while the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art receives a direct Government grant. No other British theatre school receives Government help, but local authorities such as County Councils and Borough Councils give scholarships to their more promising students.

There is no doubt that the Arts Council brought a great stimulus to the British theatre, and it is only to be hoped that its constructive activities are not being curtailed owing to cuts in its funds.

And now let us turn to the United States and its theatre. It is unique in that it still relies almost entirely on private financing. Neither the federal Government nor the states nor the cities support it, with the exception of the Barter Theatre of Virginia which receives a state subsidy of $ 10,000 annually. This means that the American theatre must make money or collapse. The result is a theatrical system which radiates from Broadway, in New York—a space infinitely small in relation to the country. The few blocks
which constitute theatrical Broadway, produced in the season of 1950-51
90 plays, both new productions and revivals; 21 other plays were held over
from previous seasons. It is estimated that 9,260,000 people attended the
Broadway theatres in the course of that season, which is an all-time low.

There are many people who look down their noses on the "crass commer­
cialism" of the Broadway theatre. It promotes, they say, the ascendancy
of the most trivial form of theatrical entertainment, the musical comedy. It
is true, musical comedies enjoy great popularity on Broadway and some
of them run for years. But it is also true, as Rosamond Gilder pointed out,
that American musical comedy has become "a true art form which the joint
efforts of highly skilled writers, musicians, artists, choreographers and directors
have brought to high perfection". Some of it is indeed gay and sparkling
entertainment and of vital importance to the harassed humanity of our time.

For the rest, it would seem, the taste of Broadway, its sordid commercialism
notwithstanding, prevails for better or for worse in large parts of the world.
Which is proved by the fact that many Broadway hits are played with success
almost anywhere. I must say here what I have said before: great plays never
came by the dozens and I believe that Broadway produces more than its
share of interesting plays. There are now several organizations such as those
the American National Theatre Association is helping to organize, which
may soon give great assistance to regional theatres in America. ANTA
in its brief existence has presented to her subscription audience, among other
things, a Greek drama and choice works by Ibsen, Lorca and James Barrie.
Moreover, ANTA made possible the visit of Jouvet and his troupe, thus
giving New Yorkers the chance to see this great actor in L'Ecole des Femmes
shortly before he died so prematurely.

The drawback to the American theatre system and its complete reliance
on private financing is not so much in the commercialism of Broadway
as in the fact that there exists virtually no professional theatre anywhere
outside of Broadway. This sad state of affairs is incomprehensible to Europeans
and it seems to indicate that the theatre plays hardly any part in the daily
life of the overwhelming majority of the American people. The conclusion
most frequently drawn is that the theatre has been completely supplanting
by the movie.

The true picture is not quite so dark as all that. There are first of all road
companies which bring the Broadway plays to large and small cities. Then
there are the so-called summer theatres which, between June and October,
attract large audiences in many places. There are also professional winter
stock companies operating in the United States; 30 years ago there were
hundreds of them. Since then the number has decreased to a mere handful
but they have been picking up lately, which is a significant and hopeful sign.

But—and this is something of which few people outside of the United
States are aware—the fact is that theatrical culture in the United States
is carried by the amateur theatre rather than by the professional theatre.
Amateur theatre of all kinds, including community, educational and semi-
professional theatre, has been steadily growing in the last 20 years and at a pace which is staggering to the imagination. If you lump together all the groups which make up the amateur theatre of the United States, you find that it is 50 to 100 times as large as the professional theatre. In a city such as Detroit or Cleveland there are upwards of 500 amateur productions in a season. Tens of thousands of others are being made by nearly half a million groups in the United States. Even in hamlets of 50 people there exists some theatre group. Every high school, every college in the States has its theatre producing unit. Some do excellent work especially with regard to the making of scenery and costumes. There are throughout the country some 300 modern, perfectly equipped theatres which surpass many a professional Broadway theatre in technical refinement. The only trouble with this amateur theatre is that it shows even less inclination to experiment than Broadway. Thus, *A Survey of College and University Play Production* shows that of the 400 productions brought out by 126 colleges and universities in 1948-49, only 11 were original plays and most of those were musical revues. In other words, the colleges and universities are chiefly engaged in producing the warmed-over plays of the commercial theatre. This applies also to the community theatres. A survey for 1949-50 shows that of 879 productions brought out by 185 community theatres only 45 were originals, while 709 were Broadway plays. Where are, one wonders, the hopeful young playwrights who are condemned to silence because the crass commercialism of the Broadway theatre does not give them a chance? Or are the amateur theatres so timid or lacking in originality they cannot identify a talent when it's not consecrated by Broadway?

However, interest in the theatre in the United States is not lacking and, given a modicum of intelligent support, more good professional theatres should be made possible in at least the larger cities. This support should come from the municipalities and from the states, rather than from the federal Government. It is time that the authorities begin to recognize the theatre on a higher level in the framework of American society.

We are beginning in the United States to see that one cannot equate the movie with the theatre. The living actor gives the stage an enormous advantage in audience creation over the more mechanized stimuli of the motion picture. Of course, there are occasional great movies, but the predominant employment of mechanical instrumentation usually leads to a craft rather than to artistic excellence and the deeper satisfactions of the theatre.

And now let's briefly scan the theatrical horizon around the world for a few signs and portents. There is, for instance, Iceland, where the first national theatre was opened in 1950. There is Italy, where the Government subsidizes private theatrical companies to the tune of $383,000, and Belgium, where the Government divides $340,000 between the French- and Flemish-speaking theatre. Theatrical history was made in Thailand when in 1949 a group of businessmen opened a modern theatre in Bangkok, which plays mostly modern plays—translations from Western dramas or Siamese originals.
Turkey is experiencing a veritable theatrical renaissance. New theatres spring up everywhere. The popular interest in the drama is phenomenal. Although most of the plays are imported from the West, especially from the United States, the Turkish dramatists are beginning to build a drama which expresses the life in their own country. In Rio, Brazil, 14 theatres are playing, and one of them, the Theatre of Copacabana, produced during the last season four new works by Brazilian authors. The theatrical activity in Greece is boundless what with 15 companies presenting 60 plays during the last season, among them a few remarkable new Greek creations.

So much to show that all over the free world the theatre is wonderfully alive. The question is, how is the theatre doing in the world which is not so free—the world behind the Iron Curtain?

There is perhaps no other country which has a greater national affinity to the theatre than Russia. The names of a Stanislavski, of a Mayerhoff, of a Tchekov evoke delight in the hearts of all theatre lovers. Up to about 1936, the Soviet theatre functioned in comparative freedom. Theatrical artists enjoyed considerable privileges; they were well housed, well dressed and well paid. The Kremlin, realizing that the Russian theatre enjoyed world fame, took considerable pride in it. It still does, for that matter. Moscow still counts 15 big national theatres, each with its own creative traditions and style. Their production level is still of the highest. But each year thought control and censorship weigh more heavily on these wonderful theatres. Stalin, like other dictators before him, is wildly determined to make the drama into an instrument of political propaganda.

True, the Russians are still allowed to play Gogol, Tolstoy, Tchekov, and even Shakespeare and Calderon. But generally plays which fail to carry the Marxist message are stigmatized as "formalistic", "naturalistic", or "cosmopolitan". "Cosmopolitanism" is the latest and worst criticism which can befall a Russian dramatist. The suspicion that he believes in the universality of art and in the possibility of an artistic rapprochement between East and West makes a writer very unloved all around. Then, too, one can only pity the playwrights who are scolded by Pravda for ignoring themes arising from the great new power- and-irrigation projects, the feats of progressive workers and collective farmers and the growth of Russian culture and living comforts. If only the dictators didn’t confuse theatre plays with propaganda tracts! The result is that the new Russian play-writing is exceedingly poor. But how could it be otherwise?

Poland, Czechoslovakia, and all the other satellites, take their cue from Moscow’s theatre policy. Theoretically, they too see in the theatre an instrument designed to educate the perfect communist citizen and frown on "counter-revolutionary" plays which advocate views contrary to the party line. In practice, however, the satellites still make concessions to the bourgeois taste. In Poland especially, where there reigns an immense enthusiasm for theatre, they still play musical comedies American style. It is interesting to note that Warsaw, with a population of 700,000 people, has 12 professional
theatres and only nine film houses. It is the only large city in the world which has more legitimate play houses than movies, and yet the Poles say that they could easily fill 10 more theatres. In Czechoslovakia, Mrs. Warren's Profession and The Importance of Being Earnest are still hits. But most of the new Czech play-writing is very political and strictly Marxist. Some of the new Czech plays, especially Ota Safranek's The Honorable Lieutenant Baker are outright anti-American propaganda.

As I said before, censorship and thought control stifle the theatre, but they don't kill it. Nothing can really kill it. But we cannot be content with indestructability. We must ask how can it be brought to its most perfect flowering at a time when its spiritual aid is so greatly needed by a suffering humanity.

The old Greeks know the curative effect of the theatre. Up on the hills, overlooking the great hospital city of Epidaurus they built a large theatre. Here the sick who underwent the therapy of the healing waters of the springs also underwent the spiritual therapy of the theatre.

The theatre is still a hospital of the spirit. Both the clown and the poet serve as part of its health-restoring and strength-renewing personnel. Both provide the cleansing, replenishing element of man's examination of himself. This is why the theatre must receive governmental assistance, preferably through regional rather than federal agencies. And it must be free of political control. The theatre is a part of the human rights' objectives to which Unesco is dedicated. The personal and intellectual freedoms of all peoples, the enjoyment of physical and mental health by a peaceful world are merely stages of advance in the preparation of man for his ensuing enrichments from art. In terms of finalities, art is as abstract and intangible as democracy. Democracy is a stream, an urgency toward, and an evidence of, the good in man's spirit. Although by its nature it can never have a definite culmination, a point of final accomplishment where man can someday stand and regard everything behind him as an approach to a realized perfection, it must never halt or civilization will die. The theatre as a form of art sheds light, a light governments should keep burning so that at every pause of his journey man might look at himself, and by what he sees, be encouraged to continue to his destiny.
Is Cinematography a Collective or an Individual Art?

by Alessandro Blasetti

The film, product of an age which is striving, against constant opposition, to work out a basis for practical collaboration between individuals, is the natural expression of that age: it is essentially a collective art.

Now that, at long last, we have disposed of the argument that, because of the "mechanics" entailed, the film forfeits its claim to be regarded as an art at all, the time has come to decide whether, like other earlier forms of art, it should be the expression of a single personality or whether it is to be accepted unreservedly for what it is: the balanced, carefully co-ordinated work of a group.

It is my opinion that, before very long, the aesthetic standards of the film will be based on acceptance of this fact, since developments in art will demonstrate, ever more clearly, the futility of judging films by artistic canons elaborated before the cinema was born. In support of this statement, I propose now to say a few words on what is generally known as the "film story". People tend, as far as I can see, to suffer from two misapprehensions on the subject: firstly to regard the story as of minor importance; and secondly, to think that the director alone is responsible for choosing, composing and presenting it. It is because of these misconceptions, I think, that no progress has been made for some time past in the artistic development of the film.

Before going any further, I must point out that, although I have the signal honour to speak at this conference as one of the film-makers of my country, what I am about to say is my personal opinion only, and in no way represents the views of the Italian film industry.

All the more so since I myself am not a man of culture; and I have too much respect for the world of culture to claim membership, and too much respect for myself to wish to associate with those who, in the cinema world especially, all too readily claim that title by the right of conceit. I am merely a specialist in film direction. I, therefore, need neither references nor bibliographical quotations to keep me to my subject; and I want to make it clear that, if my opinions and conclusions diverge from the accepted canons of aesthetics, it will not be due to any wish on my part to venture into polemics in a field outside my own speciality. My only aim is to give serious students and amateurs of the film not indeed any aesthetic judgments, but merely the confessions of a film director, an account of experience gained in the course of 20 years' work on the conception and development of the art of the film.
My experience may be summed up in a single conclusion: the director is not the only author of a film, though he is the only author of all its defects, since it is he who is responsible for everything. Nevertheless, he is not the only author of all its merits; for many of its qualities, including one that is very fundamental—the human, social and poetical elements of the story—derive not from the director, but from the film’s “text”.

For the text of the film, I use this term in preference to story to describe the scenario at the completion of the final phase, is never the work of the director alone.

Even when the idea is his, he can never be more than a collaborator, powerless to produce the script in its final form without the creative and skilled assistance of the script writer. The script writer still lacks the prestige and authority he deserves, nor has he yet established for his work the right to critical appreciation and aesthetic assessment on its merits.

The importance of the text as one of the bases of film-making must be emphasized. The present tendency to regard the script writer as a minor, secondary collaborator, a writer lent or sold to the cinema, a subordinate working under the only man who really matters—the director—utters the latter into a sort of dictator with absolute power (not, in my opinion, at all a flattering attitude) with disastrous effects on his work, since it encourages him to make mistakes. Nor is this all. The prevailing habit of underrating the importance of the script writer has another, equally deplorable effect: it cuts off the creative writer, who is always, and rightly so, very conscious of his dignity, from the more important phase—the actual production of the film.

This, as I see it, is the main reason for the sudden halt in the artistic development of the film observable nearly all over the world for very many years past; a halt following on the heels of the stupendous burst of creative activity which occurred when the supremacy previously held by the actors was transferred to the film director. The actors are very important, up to a point; but less important surely, than the director, whose job it is to supervise them and harmonize the production as a whole. It was when the role of the director came to be analysed and discussed, and the director became an independent, important figure, that the cinema took the first step towards becoming a genuine art.

The time has come to take the second step. We now no longer dispute that the role of the director is very important, but we have to realize that the text is equally important. It is true that the best of texts can be ruined by a mediocre director; but it is equally true that even the most brilliant director cannot retrieve a mediocre script. In the same way good seed can come to nought if it falls on barren ground, and not even the most fertile soil can render poor seed fruitful. Which means that both are equally essential.

People often say to me, you must have heard it said too, surely a director without ideas for making a film is like a poet who lacks themes for his lyrics? To which I reply: would a man be a poet if he went round asking for suitable
rhymes and words for his verses? Which shows how nonsensical it is to draw a comparison between the art of the cinema and the other arts, tempting though it may be to do so. The fact is that a poet who cannot find themes or words for his verse ceases to be a poet.

A director, on the contrary, may be in need of some ideas, even leading ideas, in order to make a film. We may go further, and say that no director ever has all the ideas he needs for a film. But this does not prevent him from making a film, and deserving credit for it. Though it would be both unjust and wrong ever to give a director the sole credit.

Film-making is not like painting, or sculpture, or music, or literature; the problems involved are more heterogeneous than those of the older arts, to all of which, nevertheless, it is indebted. The film is expected to meet ethical and social demands, to contain elements of both poetry and drama, to solve, in a single work of art, the problems of acting and painting, literature and music. No individual possesses all the creative talents required for making a film, even though one person must, in the final stages, co-ordinate the work of all the participants into a single, unified whole.

The point is that, in wishing to raise the film to the dignity of a true art, we assume that, because of the co-ordinating role played by the director, the film can be measured by aesthetic standards elaborated before the cinema and are not, therefore, intended to be applicable to cinematographic art. It is here that we make our first mistake. Film-making is a collective art, requiring other creative talents besides those of the director. First and foremost come those who see the world in terms of talking pictures, and express their vision in purely cinematic texts having intrinsic value as works of art, even though they need the director to interpret them in terms of films.

Not that I would for a moment deny that the subsequent process of transforming the script into a film is of equal importance, or that the director, by dint of adapting the script to the requirements of film-making, becomes in fact a collaborator, often the most important, in the authorship of the script. What I wish to emphasize is that it is essential, if only in the interests of justice, to distinguish between the work of the script writer and the work of the director, so that credit may be awarded where it is due, and the flagging art of the cinema be thereby revived.

As a general illustration of my theme, I propose to take the post-war Italian films; I choose this example because I belong to that world myself, and can therefore speak of it authoritatively.

The triumph of the post-war Italian films, unprecedented in all the history of international cinema, was a triumph not of means of expression, either technical or human; nor yet was their success due to their casual, documentary-style camera work or to the use of real-life settings and characters. On the contrary, it was the triumph of a moral attitude to life. A moral attitude which led film directors, though not always deliberately, to adopt a certain looseness of technique, to concentrate on characters and settings from real life, and use
non-professional actors instead of keeping to professional actors and the conventions of the traditional cinema.

The key to the success of our films lies in their portrayal of the moral climate of the post-war era, in a country emerging from the senseless disasters of the immediate past and speculating anxiously on the future. Anguish, poverty, shame and remorse were universal; and none could be certain what the future would bring. It was the Italians, reaping the tragic benefits of the greatest disasters, and living in surroundings offering a constant and searing reminder of their sufferings, who were the first to express the universal anguish of the stricken world in terms of the cinema. And it was precisely because they reflected the misery of the period, both in Italy and in the rest of the world, that Italian films enjoyed such outstanding success.

If, to take an absurd supposition, the Italians had applied the same camera work and montage, the same real-life characters and settings, to making love-story and adventure films, no one, today, would be discussing the Italian cinema. All of which goes to prove the decisive importance of the genesis of a film, its theme, its narrative base, in other words, its text.

Since I used just now the word "confessions", I must speak of the texts of my own films. Generally speaking, they may be divided, as in the case of almost all film directors, into two categories: those based on an idea of my own, worked out with the collaboration of other people; and those based on an original idea which was proposed by someone else, which I then accepted and made my own (meaning that, for purposes of the film credits, though without wishing to do so, I usurped the ownership of the idea), and collaborated in the writing of the text. Let me say at once that, in both cases, the contribution of my collaborators has been of the utmost importance; all my films have borne the imprint of their work as well as my own.

And after saying that, I must confess at once that the worst of my films are those of the first group, based on an original idea of my own, because my collaborators, who, in that case, were working under my supervision and to the dictates of my imagination, were robbed of artistic initiative, and contributed merely routine assistance and a few minor suggestions. This amounts to admitting that I am incapable, single-handed, of taking an idea and building it up into a film script. But, as a sop to my vanity, I challenge any director of a film acknowledged by common consent to be worthy of mention in the history of the cinema to deny that the same is true of himself.

It is not only vanity that prompts me to issue this challenge; it is also the desire for confirmation of a conclusion which I have drawn from my own observations, and which I am pretty sure is valid—that the born director, with real creative talent, invariably has to take the ideas for his films from someone else. For the distinction between the writer of the text and the director is not merely an artificial distinction, or a distinction in terms; it is a distinction between two different functions, two different phases in the making of a film, requiring different and complementary gifts.
One of the films attributed to me, for instance, a film for whose success I do in fact feel partly responsible, is *Four Steps in the Clouds* (Quattro Passi fra le Nuvole). I consider myself co-author of this film because I was, in the fullest sense, its director, the person who took the text and, in the light of his own imagination and his individual methods, translated it into living images. But the inspiration of the film was not mine; nor did I contribute at any point to the working out of the plot or the writing of the dialogue. In other words, neither the artistic inspiration of *Four Steps in the Clouds* nor the work of embodying it in a film script was mine.

It was Zavattini and Tellini, assisted later by Aldo De Benedetti, who planned and wrote the whole script for the producer Giuseppe Amato, and the latter then offered it to the Cines Company, which was looking for a new subject for me to direct, a dispute having arisen between the company and myself regarding another script I was supposed to have directed, and the company was anxious not to annul my contract.

I did collaborate at a later stage on the text of *Four Steps in the Clouds*, it was the text that made the success of the film, but my part in it was so small as to be almost negligible. It is true, also, that I did accept this text, whereas I refused to endorse the producer's interpretation of the other script I was to have directed, that I selected it from a number of texts submitted by Giuseppe Amato and his colleagues; that I could not have directed the film unless I had been able to feel it personally, and give it the stamp of my own interpretation and personality; and, finally, that the images I used expressed my view of the world and, therefore, differed from those which would have been used by any other director.

Hence I also am the creator of this film: "I also", but not "I alone". If this film merits the praise and recognition it has received, it is not only unfair, but prejudicial to the future work of the cinema, that I should be given all the credit for it. At least equal credit is due to the co-authors of the text: Zavattini, Tellini and De Benedetti.

In the case of *First Communion* (Prima Communione) the process was different, but the conclusion to be drawn is the same. It was I who asked Zavattini for a script for a film, stipulating the atmosphere and setting, with a view to making certain experiments, and trying out certain means of expression. So the initiative for this film came from me; and it was Zavattini I chose, rather than anyone else, to put it into effect. Thereafter, mindful of my personal experiences, of which I have spoken, I left Zavattini entirely free to work out the plot, create the characters and make any alterations or additions he wished: in short to let his original and vivid imagination play on the idea of the film, as I had sketched it in general terms at the outset.

A month later, Zavattini presented me with the scenario, which was quite new to me and which, from that moment onward he called *First Communion*. It was so essentially Zavattini's work that I had difficulty in finding any traces of my own ideas; it seemed, as indeed it was, something quite different from what I had had in mind. What I now had before me was the work
of Zavattini, and the personality, imagination and philosophy it expressed bore little relation to the theme I had sketched, beyond, perhaps, a certain similarity of approach. And so I had to take this story, the product of another mind, and see how I could make it the vehicle for my own imagination.

Because, different though we were, Zavattini and I had certain moral principles in common, and we both sincerely desired to work out a compromise, we finally succeeded in producing a text satisfactory to us both. But it was always I who, when differences arose, would as a matter of principle defer to his opinion. And I can say with the complete impartiality which is essential if my survey is to be of any value at all, that, although the initiative and the general subject of the film were mine, and although I collaborated actively with him for months, it was Cesare Zavattini who deserves the sole credit for the poetical and narrative qualities of the story of First Communion (as regards the text I can claim responsibility only for mistakes and lapses).

It is not true, as it has sometimes been said, that Zavattini's script was too literary. In a book, words are the sole means of expression; whereas in a film script, words are used for a different, though no less important purpose: to suggest images. And the attitude of the writer will vary accordingly, the script writer having not a literary, but very definitely a cinematic approach. I mean, of course, cinematic in the creative sense, cinematographical fundamentally. And it was for this reason that I decided deliberately to address this Congress, not as the representative of a world of culture, but simply as a professional cinema man, a specialist in the art of film directing.

Allow me to elaborate, and explain more clearly what I mean. The film director is merely an executant. The fact that he may take no part at all in the conception and working out of the text need not detract from his prestige, or affect his claim to respect as a creative artist, provided that he undertakes to direct only such texts as are compatible with his talent. It is at this point that the question of artistic dignity arises, for it is here that personality comes into play. He will agree to work only on scripts which are compatible with his moral and artistic principles and which, generally speaking coincide with, and enable him to express his own views. He will inevitably wish to contribute something of his own also in interpreting the script; and to collaborate in writing it, to some extent. This is legitimate, provided it does not lead to the text being distorted, or robbed of its poetic content or its characteristic features. But no such collaboration can ever justify the director in claiming sole credit for the film.

From my own experience of myself and my colleagues, I would say that the film director only "lights up", artistically speaking, when the "sets" light up, and the takes begin. For it is at that moment, if he has selected and prepared his text aright, that the true director's inspiration, imagination and professional "flair" come into play. Adjusting the camera position, controlling the mood, tone and rhythm of the scene, played by people he himself has selected from amongst throngs of actors or from hundreds of thousands of ordinary people in the street, composing the individual shots
and combining them to build up the general scheme of the film—the film director comes into his own.

In the conception of any film, of course, a certain similarity of outlook between director and script writer is imperative; it is from the contributions of the two, which must be complementary, that the film derives its own specific unity. But it must be remembered that the unity of a film is not the same as that of an individual work of art, and that films must, therefore, be judged by different artistic standards.

Both the script writer and the director must be able to visualize the film before it is made. But whereas the writer's imagination will play on the theme, the poetical and psychological overtones, the action whereby the plot unfolds and the general structure of the film, the director, though he must to some extent share the writer's vision, will concentrate mainly on the individual images for interpreting the story and bringing it to life before the eyes of the spectator.

It is clear that the collaboration between writer and director, far from reducing the distinction between their respective contributions to film production, on the contrary, emphasizes them. And the work of both is of equal importance.

But, you may say, supposing a first-rate text failed to find a director to work it out, of what value could it then be to the cinema, an art whose means of expression is not words but pictures?

I should reply firstly that my personal experience prompts me to challenge the correctness of this conception of the cinema: it is my view that the director is not the sole author of a film since production is merely one of many phases of film work. And secondly I should say that, though the fact of not being produced may detract from the practical value of a film text, its fundamental significance, which is not literary, but, even if only potentially, cinematic (regardless of whether, for the moment, it is translated into film form or not), remains unchanged. It may be produced one day; or it may remain as a telling witness to the creative imagination of film workers at a certain period of the history of the cinema art. There have been countless instances of film scripts lying about in writers' or producers' trays for years before finally being made into films. Their failure to gain acceptance in no way affected their potential value as film subjects.

Or, again, you may point out that there are film directors, including some of the most outstanding—Chaplin, for instance—who execute all the processes in film-making single-handed.

Charlie Chaplin is a very good example: he is in fact the classical example that proves the rule. Charlie Chaplin, whom a writer in a recent number of an Italian intellectual journal, making a survey of film history, cleverly and, in my opinion, very aptly describes as belonging always to the future of the cinema; Chaplin who should be awarded an Oscar in platinum and diamonds for the first half of the twentieth century—Chaplin is indeed an exception, in the true sense of the word. But it is Chaplin, nevertheless,
the one person whose work is acclaimed without reservation all over the world, that I propose to quote in confirmation of my theories.

Chaplin gives us a film once every two or three years; and, in so doing, teaches us the first lesson—that a good film involves superhuman labour, and cannot be embarked on without careful thought and preparation. It teaches something else too, the importance he attaches to the selection of the text. There is no doubt that Chaplin spends much of the time in the intervals between the presentation of his films in seeking inspiration, a suitable subject, for his next production, which in itself proves how essential this is. After all, if any subject could, in his inspired hands, be turned into a Chaplin film, then surely the practical need, not to make a fortune, but anyway to earn a livelihood would induce the great Charlie to grace the cinemas of the world with his productions at much more frequent intervals. Thus Chaplin also obviously attaches importance to the text as such, quite apart from the processes of direction and interpretation.

But now, having affirmed not only my respect and admiration but my deep devotion to Chaplin, I venture to assert with absolute conviction that he never conceives and writes his scripts unaided, although he may indeed plan them completely before starting on production, and introduces alterations as the work progresses. At the very least, he certainly shows his scripts to his friends, and projects sequences and individual shots for them to see; and after hearing their advice, makes alterations, corrections and cuts. And there is no doubt that the collaboration he receives in this way, anonymous and slight though it is, is essential, for all that, as a complement to his own immensely greater powers. If this is true, as logic as well as hearsay indicates that it is, then not even Chaplin can work entirely single-handed. And if this is true of Chaplin, it is doubly true of all other great film directors everywhere and at all times.

Why then, you may ask, if the director conceives and visualizes a film himself, does he seek collaboration in his work? Is he in search of purely technical details, and of help with the setting? Sometimes, yes. But, in my experience, collaboration of this kind is usually relatively unimportant because the director will invariably go and study the background himself, in order to collect impressions and local colour, and familiarize himself with the atmosphere. It is often the setting which gives a director the original idea for his film.

On the contrary, it is the professional collaboration of his colleagues that he needs, and the help of their artistic rather than their technical skill. He has little need of technical help, but he does need help in preparing the text, in the creative work of drawing living people, defining the outlines of the action, and finally, polishing the dialogue which needs handling with consummate skill if it is to convey the subtle psychological nuances of his characters. But it is always the director, in the final analysis, who bears the blame if a false note is allowed to creep in, and it is he who takes the credit for brilliant suggestions; since it is in his power to accept or reject.
For many years my own conscience and my devotion to the cinema have forced me to ponder over this question: why is it, I repeat, that my films have always borne the stamp of my collaborators, and why has their success —when they have been successful—always been due to the fact that these collaborators have worked under conditions enabling them to make an independent and personal contribution of their own? A glance at the work of my colleagues shows this to be true of their films also. It is my considered opinion, therefore, that it is essential, in the interests of the future work of the cinema, that script writers should enjoy greater prestige and respect and work in conditions assuring them greater creative independence.

I am sure that, in the future, when the art of the cinema has emerged from its adolescence, as some years ago with the “discovery” of the film director it emerged from its infancy, the cinema, like the theatre, will have its own special texts. When this time comes, though individual productions of certain texts may be scrapped, it will be unheard of for the texts themselves—which may one day, under different conditions, represent a valuable human record of another age—to be left to rot away in the rubbish bins of some large production firm.

I am fully aware that, at the present time, at the present stage in the development of film aesthetics, especially since, when we talk of artistic films, we mean simply and solely documentary films, a statement such as this may sound like ignorant heresy.

But it would have sounded equally heretical and ignorant if, pardon my presumption, anyone had foretold the drama of Sophocles and Euripides at the time of the first miming dances, or visualized productions of the twentieth-century theatre in the days of the strolling players.
I have been asked to write a report on the "status of the musician in the world today". This is a very broad subject, covering as it does the position of the performer and the composer, the singer and the music teacher alike. But in modern society, the composer is obviously in the most vulnerable position in this year of grace or, if you like, disgrace—1952; he has to contend with countless difficulties in bringing his works before the public and in having them performed and published, and his livelihood has become extremely precarious.

I should like to begin by defining what I understand by the word "composer", a title which is given to two categories—I might even say two classes—of producers of musical works, now more sharply distinguished than they used to be.

To the first belong authors writing facile, everyday music for which there is a steady demand, in other words, light music, dance music, songs and Unterhaltungsmusik intended for the entertainment of the public, at dinner dances, cabarets, night-clubs, music-halls, café-concerts and other such places. We may also include in this category most of the music accompanying films and a few lavishly produced light operas, owing little to the art of Euterpe.

Those of our colleagues who have specialized in all these forms might be called music manufacturers or producers. I assure them that I do not use the words in any derogatory sense, since great technical skill, talent and inventiveness are often needed for the creation of such music.

I shall therefore reserve the title of composer for the second type of creators—for those whose aim is not to cater for the public's taste in everyday enjoyment but, first and foremost, to create a work of art, to express some thought, some emotion, to crystallize their attitude to aesthetic or purely human problems. They wish to earn a place in the history of music as worthy successors to the great masters of the past. A man with such an ambition is an idealist, which nowadays means a harmless type of lunatic.

As there is a regular demand for light music, it may be likened to other forms of commercial production. The man who produces an article for which there is a steady market may or may not be well paid, but he is usually guaranteed a bare livelihood at least. In the field of music, he is in close contact with the performers of his compositions, and, in fact, is frequently himself a performer or the leader of a group of instrumentalists. Thus we find the accordion-player or the conductor of a jazz-band performing his own works. In such cases, the commercial efficiency is higher: the manufacturer sets
off the performer, and the performer the manufacturer. Music of this kind is brought to the public ear every day; and when the public ear is won, a handsome profit can be made. If a manufacturer's music scores greater and greater success, he prints it himself, augmenting his earnings as composer and performer by his earnings as publisher. In course of time, he finds himself obliged to open an office, organize publicity, and supervise the export of his goods to foreign countries. This leaves him no leisure to write his music himself. No matter. He hands over that task to other musicians, whose gifts have impressed him but on whom fortune has not smiled so brightly, while he himself, merely acts, in future, as director of production.

I do not wish to appear censorious of these practices—for one thing, because they have come down from the past, and it is our duty to respect our ancestors; and for another thing—and this is more important—because, having nothing to do with art, but belonging solely to the domain of trade and industry, they have often helped talented musicians in the early stages of their careers.

None of us would, for a moment, expect Mr. Packard or Mr. Citroën, with their own hands, to fit the engines into the cars that bear their names.

Such methods are in current use in the production of film music, where they operate in certain countries such as, principally, the United States, with the perfection of a conveyor-belt, smoothly, steadily, and with a satisfactory output. Just as a motor-car factory has its assemblers, electricians, fitters and testers, so a well-organized music studio has its melody-writers, harmonists and orchestrators, all specialists of undoubted skill. It is, surely, only reasonable that the abilities of all these experts should be put to the best use.

The drawback is, of course, that music manufactured in this way rarely brings fame to its author. Very few people could say who wrote the latest song hit that "everyone" is humming or whistling! Still, the royalties earned are in direct ratio to the number of hummers and whistlers.

Very different is the position of the composer—the poor lunatic who nurses the illusion that his contemporaries will be in the least interested in what he has to offer them. He is at grips with every kind of material difficulty, and finds it even harder than it was for his forerunners to overcome the obstacles that constantly arise to cut off his compositions from their potential audience. It is of him that I wish to speak now.

The distinguishing characteristic of the composer is that he is a man whose whole effort and overriding concern is to produce a commodity for which there is no demand. He may be compared to a manufacturer of old-fashioned bowler hats, button-boots or "mystery" corsets. We all know how heartily the present-day public despises these objects which, in the recent past, were the hallmark of elegance. In music, and this is where my comparison breaks down, the public wants only what was written 100 years ago. It regards the art of music as consisting in the performance of classical and romantic works, with the possible addition of a few more modern compositions which have
waited an appreciable time in outer darkness. The modern composer is a kind of gate-crasher, forcing his way into a party to which he has not been invited.

We are thus faced with the fact that music must be 100 years old, or, at least, have reached a sufficiently respectable age to ensure that the majority of listeners will, I do not say "understand" it, for that word is meaningless in connexion with music, but at any rate listen to and enjoy it.

What is the reason for this state of things? The average listener is really interested only in music that he has had occasion to hear frequently. New works therefore arouse an instinctive mistrust, which the average listener expresses by keeping away from first performances. Experience has shown, however, that the more often the listener hears a good composition, the more he wants to hear it. So what keeps the public away is not only, as the critics try to make out, the "modernism" of a work, but chiefly its unfamiliarity.

Here is a case in point. Ravel cannot be regarded as a "classic" in the ordinary sense of the word. He wrote Daphnis and Chloe in 1912. For some 30 years it was seldom performed. Then, after a particularly brilliant rendering by Charles Munch and the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, it was suddenly "launched". Since when, this Second Suite has been constantly played at concerts and over the wireless (I have seen it announced nine times in a single week). It has as great a success, and draws as large audiences, as Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. And quite rightly. Here is another example: a few years ago, Toscanini brought back to light La Scala di Setta, a charming little overture by Rossini. With Toscanini as its conductor, it was bound to have a great success, and since then it has been included in the repertory of many other conductors. Whereas William Tell and Semiramis, having been forgotten by Toscanini, are left to the male-voice choirs.

This is the tragedy of the present-day situation. People are no longer interested in listening to music, they merely come to admire its execution. The number of concerts given increases day by day, but the number of works performed diminishes year by year. This applies equally to the innumerable recitals given by pianists, who confine themselves strictly to the three "accepted" composers. The work itself is of no importance—that is a fact that cannot be too often repeated—it is merely an instrument enabling the virtuoso to show off his skill, an opportunity for the display of mechanical perfection or choreographic gesture by the executant.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the contemporary leaders of musical life are the famous conductor and the celebrated performer.

The great conductor may come once or twice a year to give a gala performance. Naturally, his programme consists of those works which have earned him most success throughout the world. For 40 years (or more) he will conduct Schumann's Fourth, "in which he is unequalled by any rival". Or it may be the Pathetic Symphony.

If a conductor unexpectedly lapsed and tried to introduce a new work into his programme, the impresario would throw himself at his feet in tears.
"You want to play X's Symphony, instead of the Brahms that everyone expects from you? There wouldn't be a soul in the house, it would be the ruin of me! Maestro, I pay you a huge fee in order to fill my hall. No eccentricities, I implore you. Why change from the works you know so well, and which you can conduct by heart?"

The same applies to the great international soloist who, every year, announces his "Third one-and-only Recital of the Season". The complete works of Chopin by the celebrated Malicutzo. There are about 50 of them who go from one town to another giving the same programme.

Let us now consider the permanent symphony orchestras. There is one in almost every major city in the world. Here again, the programmes hardly vary at all. Tchaikowski and Sibelius have gained ground with English and American audiences, while Brahms, a much later arrival, now reigns supreme in France, where he has been installed by the German conductors together with Richard Strauss—a composer whose works set off not only the conductor but the orchestra. These orchestras are run by committees, which help the conductor to draw up the programmes and prevent him from doing anything rash. The programmes are based on the most classical repertory, since that is what brings box-office success. Such contemporary works as are included owe their presence to a government subsidy, which is more than recovered by the State through the "entertainment" tax levied, in many countries, at any rate, on all performances. In any case, these subsidies are given for "first performances". The intrinsic value of the work is therefore of little importance, and even if it is well received, it will be a long time before it is heard again.

Committees, very naturally, represent the interests of the members. Everybody likes and admires Beethoven. So there has to be a Beethoven series. After that, they go back to the programme of previous years. And everyone is satisfied, except the new composers, who consider themselves meanly treated. Why?

There are no longer performing rights to be paid on a famous symphony, and the score is in the society's library. As it is constantly being played, few rehearsals are required. A new symphony needs more rehearsals, being more difficult and less familiar to the performers. In addition to this, there is the cost of hiring scores. The classic symphony fills the hall. The new symphony empties it.

In Haydn's and Mozart's day, the public clamoured for new works. That accounts for the vast output of these composers. Nowadays, I repeat, the public does not go to listen to a work, but to witness the performance of a work it knows already.

Let us turn to the opera. This is practically defunct in all countries except Germany and Italy. There the last war destroyed a considerable number of opera houses. They are not being rebuilt, for opera never pays. Garages or cinemas will be put up in their place.

In France, it must be admitted, the serious situation of the opera is attributable to the system adopted. No costly new work was ever put on unless
it was unavoidable—that is, unless it bore the signature of a member of
the Institute, of a man with political influence, or of someone whose position
made it impossible to refuse him. No one believed in its chances of success,
but, for politeness’ sake, a virtue had to be made of necessity. If by any chance
some work by a gifted musician found its way into the repertory, nothing
was done to help it. The opera is notoriously old-fashioned; it has sunk
to the level of a fancy-dress concert, whose music consists of barrel-organ
tunes. “If we want the Opéra-Comique to pay its way,” someone said to
me once, “we should have to give Carmen every night”. Young people
leave this kind of entertainment to their elders, to whom it brings back
memories.

The situation is much the same in the United States of America and Latin
America. The Metropolitan in New York, as old-fashioned as the Gaîté
Trianon and the Colon in Buenos Aires, performs operas from the Ricordi
repertoire which are sung by a handful of surviving stars.

Towns which still have an “Opera” cling to it out of cultural vanity,
so to speak; the idea is that the town would be incomplete without one.
It is used for the old tried and tested repertory. The production of a new
opera today costs a fortune and places a crippling burden on the management.
So, as there is no public demand for new operas, they are not produced.
If the public wants something new, it looks to films or the theatre—not
even to the ballet, where interest is focused on the dancers instead of on the
works themselves.

Light opera, too, is a thing of the past; its place has been taken by the
music-hall type of entertainment. The titles are changed from time to time,
but the show stays the same. It includes parades of costumes, the French
canCan, a flight of pigeons or an all-in wrestling match, all of which has a
far surer appeal to the crowd than an operatic performance, even if given
by a popular tenor, who in any case can be heard over the wireless.

Lastly, provincial opera-houses are dying a slow death, with the steady
withdrawal of subsidies, which are now not enough for the maintenance
of an orchestra.

A familiar figure in novels, plays and films is the composer who becomes
famous because of his natural genius; he marries the girl he loves and lives
in a luxurious private mansion, far removed from all material cares. I have
already protested vehemently against these incitements to launch out into
the musical world, for which ignorant writers are to be blamed. One success
at the opera, and there you are, rich and famous! This may, perhaps, have
been possible once. About half a century ago a fortune could be made by
writing operas. Massenet in France, Richard Strauss in Germany, and Puccini
in Italy did so. We need only remember that, under his contract with his
publisher, Massenet received 150,000 francs a year in gold, not to mention
his royalties. The Khedive of Egypt paid the same amount to Verdi for
Aida, which was composed for the opening of the Cairo Opera-House.
Tantalizing thought.
As for the royalties received for symphonies, quartets, sonatas, songs and other trifles, we know that Gabriel Fauré, the Director of the Conservatoire and a Commander of the Legion of Honour, the musician whose magic touch opened up undreamt-of vistas, was unable, for all his fame, to raise the sum needed for admission to life membership of the Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers of Music, and he died at the age of 79.

I have already spoken my mind on the subject of virtuoso concerts, where the programmes are eternally the same and only a few celebrities draw audiences and make profits. Chopin, Chopin and Liszt or Beethoven are all one ever hears from pianists; and violinists, 'cellists and singers, too, cautiously keep to the same few favourites. No other instrument has any chance of trying its luck. The flute, clarinet and horn are relegated to the full orchestra.

Chamber music ensembles, quartets, quintets and trios are likewise practically never heard these days. While the takings have to be divided between several performers, each one has to pay the same travelling and hotel expenses as the single artiste. It is, therefore, a material impossibility for such ensembles to pay their way, even when they choose the safest of programmes, since the audience for such performances has also fallen off considerably.

The Big Festivals

The last few years have seen a great increase in the number of big summer festivals. The first, such as the Salzburg Festival in 1921, were intended to bring new music to the fore, and to them we owe the establishment of the International Society for Contemporary Music. The competition soon became really formidable, much to the detriment of contemporary music, since the very latest novelty had, at all costs, to be performed. Gifted composers were overwhelmed by the spate of mediocrity and quietly disappeared. The public followed their example.

Nowadays, most of these festivals are organized as tourist attractions, always exploiting the same names—Mozart and Wagner for the opera, famous conductors and soloists for the concert hall.

It was originally excessive taxation which, by a happy turn of events, suggested the holding of these festivals. People preferred to throw away their money by giving a few really fine concerts rather than to have it taken away directly by the revenue authorities. The tax collector is none the worse off, since he ultimately recovers his dues from the artists performing at these festivals. This may be all very well but it is of no real benefit to music. Those who profit are the railway companies, hotels and restaurants.

Films

For some time, films came to the composer's rescue. The breakdown of the opera and chamber music, the miserable returns from symphonic works, and the practical impossibility of getting music published, made composers
turn to the films, where, backed up by some of that industry’s most enlightened representatives, they finally found a livelihood.

None the less, a few years ago, when a group of composers specializing in film music drew up a draft standard contract for the organizing committee of the film industry (which, incidentally, never received official consideration), it contained the following sentence: “The name of the composer must figure on posters in letters at least as large as those used for the humblest actor.”

Which goes to show that these composers cherished no illusions about the importance of their share in the creation of great films. They had long been accustomed to being treated as poor relations and were perfectly well aware that no one goes to the cinema to hear music, and that no one hearing it really listens to it.

Thus there was a rapid reversion to the old practices—to the industrial manufacture which I have already described—and as the production situation becomes more critical, non-organized manufacturers fall out of the running.

Publishing

There is a great difference between the publication of literature and that of music. It is easy to get a book published, because there is a steady market for books, whereas fewer and fewer people buy music, which has become increasingly difficult to read. It is also very expensive. Fifty years ago, all middle-class homes had a piano and kept a collection of classical sonatas, together with the pianoforte and vocal scores of the best known operas. Things are very different now; people have so much more difficulty in sight-reading and playing music that the sale of these scores has dropped to practically nothing. This is partly because the old lovers of chamber music have become radio listeners in this field. From the publisher’s point of view, it is an act of sheer philanthropy to publish a new quartet or quintet, as there are no buyers, and the few professional ensembles who are willing to make the effort of including such works in their programmes naturally receive them free of charge.

The initial outlay for a symphonic work is increasingly heavy and can only be recovered after many years, and then only if the composer is known and his works played abroad.

The hire of scores may cover part of the expenses incurred by the publisher. A table prepared by the Durand firm, showing the rate of sales of a few pieces of contemporary music, makes interesting study in this connexion.

On the other hand, a literary work by a young and unknown author has been known to sell 150,000 copies, in the year of its publication.

We come up against exactly the same set of problems with regard to records; in other words, there will be 10 editions of Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony with different conductors and orchestras, whilst it is impossible
to secure modern works, or even classical works which are not in the regular repertory.

However, there is room for optimism; the long-playing records at 33 r.p.m. may develop the music lover's taste for collecting, so that he will build up a kind of music library comparable with that of the humanist. Unfortunately, the high price of those records limits the number of those who can afford to buy them. One very important field still remains to be discussed—broadcasting. But I think it better to hold this over until we come to the subject of remedies. I shall first say something about the responsibility incurred by the composers themselves.

There is no point in dwelling on the recurrent complaint of tunelessness, which is reiterated whenever the harmonic process changes or when composers return to a more horizontal style.

In my opinion, what has estranged the music-lover from the contemporary composer is the latter's rather childish pretentiousness in expressing himself in a deliberately complicated form. As sight-reading is already none too easy, there is no need to add to its difficulty. It is, however, far harder to find a clear than an ultra-subtle form of expression, and all too often the composer yields to the temptation of writing in a style that appals the performer. He lightly imagines he is showing transcendent skill by changes in time, torrents of notes and chords piled up like sky-scrapers. Mere childishness! Today every stage in the production of music costs a fortune. It is a foolish offence to waste time and money by such writing, which no longer impresses the simple but is a sure sign of incompetence.

There is no denying that the effort needed to bring a new work before the public is out of all proportion to the number that are of any real value. Under a kind but misguided policy, all too many mediocre works get performed once, thus giving a certain rash satisfaction to one person and doing disservice to the general interests of young composers.
Now, our aim is to discover how we may improve the lot of the composer, especially those of proved talent, as any benefit will redound to the advantage of the whole body of composers and make the beginner’s career easier.

We have seen how insignificant a place is allotted to contemporary music in the world today.

How can we remedy this situation?

Some of the remedies which have been suggested to me are listed below.

1. Education, starting in the primary school, by making music a compulsory subject like drawing

I agree that a love of music should be instilled in children, but am not in favour of forcing them to take music analysis lessons and to learn dates for the history of music.

What is needed is to bring music to the children—either by direct performance, or through the gramophone or radio—and, above all, to begin with contemporary composers and work gradually back towards the classics. The living language, that of the listener’s own period, should come first, then the study of the languages out of which it developed. The foremost concern should be to train listeners, “consumers” of music, eager students of the musical art, not would be professionals, such as the academies of music turn out.

It is these establishments, and those who teach in them, who are chiefly to blame for the present lack of interest in music. The students practise the technique of performance, not the “art of music”.

As a test, take 20 pianists who have won first prizes. They will all show a remarkable turn of speed when called upon to play a Chopin study or the finale of a Beethoven sonata. But, faced with a score such as that of Ariane et Barbe Bleue, for instance, they will be unable to read eight bars without stumbling.

They have never been taught to read music. They have been forced to thump out tunes, to rattle off scales and arpeggios until their wrists ached on the key board.

People are more reasonable with regard to sport. There are cyclists who enjoy their Sunday run without feeling the urge to enter for the Tour de France. The virtuoso is a rare creature. Yet every young pianist is put into training as though he were expected to become a virtuoso. A good sight-reader is infinitely more valuable to the art of music than any champion in the Chopin-Liszt contest.

It would therefore seem highly desirable, to restrict the flood of first-prize-winners that gushes out every year from the various academies of music, each one of whom, in virtue of his award—which has, in fact, like an inflated currency, lost much of its value—claims to give yet another Chopin recital, resulting in yet another embittered failure.
What we should do is to train sight-readers, who will spend their spare time in deciphering a Schubert sonata or a Poulenc impromptu for their own pleasure, or perhaps even in playing a sonata with a 'cellist friend.

But we should take no steps to encourage the budding virtuoso. He and his kind are only too numerous, and do more harm than good to the cause of music.

2. Increased grants to symphony orchestras, and compulsory inclusion of one modern work in every programme except those of festivals devoted to a single composer

I am, of course, most sympathetic towards the idea of the State's being made to pay more substantial grants. But yet I have my doubts, for while this might give temporary relief, there is always much more danger of the authorities' reducing subsidies wrested from them against their will.

Roger Fernay's most interesting report tells significantly how the budget for fine arts in France has been progressively slashed since the end of the last war, in order to aid preparations for the next.

We know that in the provinces, the theatre, and above all, the opera, is being gradually starved out of existence.

The subsidies granted by the authorities have been reduced as follows: 240 millions in 1948, 120 millions in 1949, 80 millions in 1950, and 46 millions in 1951.

State aid may act as a soporific, preventing the patient from suffering in his death-throes; but it will not cure his illness. I must repeat, because it can never be said too often, that the only possible cure is a public demand for new works.

The compulsory inclusion of a new work in any programme is no reliable remedy either. It will not mean a single Beethoven festival the less, and the new works will meet the same fate as most of the "first performances" that State-subsidized orchestras are required to give. They will be executed, sometimes in the most violent sense of the word, and that will be the end of them. The problem of quality really must not be overlooked. If a work has vitality and merits support, it requires to be brought before the public not once only, but a number of times. There must be no more string-pulling out of friendship, no more intrigue and influence; what is needed is courage to put off those composers who are no good, in favour of those who have some chance of winning the public ear. Who is to be responsible for this? The critics, the musicians, or the People's Commissars? Here again, whether we like it or not, the last word must be left to the public, after they have been given a chance to compare the different works. The Concerts Pasdeloup have tried to do this, and the public's judgment was found not to differ so very widely from that of the adjudicators.

At all events, it would be preferable to withhold all grants until the end of the season, and then proportion them to the efforts of the individual orchestras.
Certain orchestras are supported solely by private music-lovers, with no recourse to the public authorities; one of these is the Basle Kammer Orchester, which has just celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation. Not a single Beethoven symphony has been performed by the orchestra in the course of those 25 years, while they were continually included in the programmes of all other orchestras. This particular group has confined itself to the presentation of classical works disdained by others, and modern compositions. The early period was difficult, of course; but an ever-growing audience has been induced to take an interest in works with which it was unfamiliar, and to listen to the music instead of comparing the idiosyncrasies of the performers. This is an instance of artistic education.

In my view, it would be only fair that, where subsidies exist, they should be given to chamber orchestras as well as to symphony orchestras. Chamber music is one of the purest and finest types of music, and therefore appeals to a relatively small public. It is highly desirable that it should be saved from extinction, firstly, in the interests of listeners and secondly in the interests of composers. The performance of a new quintet involves less expense than a symphony, but we have seen above that the need for help in forming a small orchestra (quartet or quintet) is keenly felt, because of the constant rise in concert costs.

Another advantage of subsidies would be to give some security of livelihood to performers who, though not top flight soloists, could, with regular practice, form first-class chamber orchestras, and compete successfully with the virtuosos. This has happened (and still does, but under enormous difficulties) when orchestras like the Jachim, Capet, Calvet and Lowenguth quartets, and others like the Cortot, Thibaud and Casals trios, played chamber music exclusively. That was really music.

3. Commissioning of works by the State for the theatre, schools and radio: competition pieces for academies of music

The competition system has been in operation for some years but its effect in improving the lot of composers is negligible. Otherwise, it is unusual for the State to commission musical works. Wartime slaughter is glorified by heroic statues erected above rolls of honour: not by cantatas. In any case the commissions would be given to "recognized" composers and not to young musicians. It would be difficult to make a fair division between the twelve-tone school and even more advanced composers.

We have seen that it is rather late in the day to commission operas—a proceeding which would, incidentally, involve governments in most unaccustomed generosity. The Verdi Prize in Italy was worth 4 million lire. But the award entailed an obligation to produce the work which cost 30 million lire.

Ballet. Since the days when Diaghileff brought ballet to fame and fashion, the importance of the music has steadily declined.
We are coming back to the athletic virtuoso performance. Often the music accompanying those performances is classical: *Invitation to the Waltz*, pieces by Chopin, fragments from Tchaikowski arranged for a second-class orchestra. Nowadays only the great State-subsidized theatres can play proper scores.

In order to retain complete freedom, choreographers are more and more inclined to use music which was not written for ballet: classical symphonies, symphonic poems, or even oratorios. So the modern composer is deprived of another outlet for his talents.

Films. For the past 20 years, musicians have been interviewed on the subject of "Music and the Cinema". Their answers have always been the same; but so far no lasting improvement has followed. In a budget of millions there is never a penny for the composer. For the orchestra or conductor, yes. They come on to the salaries bill. But musical composition? That could only figure as a series of noughts, or lead to undignified haggling among the sort of business gentlemen who deal in copyright. And this, as I said at the beginning, is a very different business from composing music.

I am not so naïve as to suggest a reduction in taxation at a time when every country is making all possible efforts to extract the maximum from its citizens. Authors, composers and other unattached workers without proper "trade unions" are naturally the first to be sacrificed. I know that it is quite as vain to hope for an increase in royalties, although this is essential in some countries. Industries closely connected with the Government, or which are in fact run by the Government, do not attempt to hide what a nuisance they find the rights connected with a long-outworn conception of freedom, and especially the much-talked-of moral right whereby the author has sole power to decide what shall be done with his work. By open and underhand methods, the author's right to a livelihood from his work is challenged and attacked on every side. We must have the courage to see things as they are, instead of relying on the airy assurances of after-dinner speeches at congresses and other convivial gatherings.

It is just the same with broadcasting and it will be the same with television. Someone said to me: "All your jeremiads fall flat before the work that is being done in broadcasting. What does it matter if concert societies and opera-houses disappear, so long as there is broadcasting and it can afford—since most broadcasting stations are State-owned, and therefore are the State itself—to pay all deficits out of your pocket? But I am not at all sure that this tap which is always turned on, pouring a ceaseless stream of noise over mankind, is good for the art of music. A man left too long in too bright a light goes blind. Modern life is becoming more and more noisy. Soon we shall all go deaf because of the noise in which we have to live. Your concierge's or your neighbour's wireless pours out a flood of noise from dawn to midnight. It may be the *Mass in B* or the wild wailing of accordions. You will find the same noise everywhere—in streets, stores, cafés, restaurants, even taxis. It is forcibly inflicted in factories. Can you imagine a man who has
perhaps heard the *C Minor Symphony* six times during the day rushing to a concert in the evening where he will have to pay a comparatively high price to hear it again? Many schoolchildren and students do their mathematics homework with the wireless on. They get used to thinking of music as a "background noise" to which they pay no more attention than they do to the colour of the walls.

Let us read over Stravinsky’s very apt comments in his *Poétique musicale*: “To spread music by every means is an excellent thing, in itself; but to do so indiscriminately, offering it at random to the general public, who are not ready to hear it, is to expose them to a very grave risk of saturation. The days are past when Johann Sebastian Bach would cheerfully make a long journey on foot to hear Buxtehude. Today the wireless delivers music at home at any time of the day or night. The only effort the listener has to make is to turn a knob. But musical appreciation comes, and grows, only with practice. In music, as in everything else, the faculty atrophies unless it is used. Heard in that way, music becomes a form of drug, paralysing and deadening the mind instead of stimulating it. With the consequence that the very people who are trying to cultivate an appreciation of music by broadcasting it more and more, often end by making those whose interest and taste they wish to develop lose all interest in it.”

Lastly, let us think clearly what would happen under the omnipotent dictatorship of a single organization. Naturally the ultimate object of a broadcasting station is to become the sole source of transmission, with the widest possible listening range. The result will be that provincial stations, necessarily of poorer quality, will shortly go out of business. (This will automatically mean the end of local orchestras and, still more, local opera-houses.)

For years societies of authors and composers have been fighting to raise royalties, the French rate being one of the lowest in the world. The State, as the only authority, will force them to accept unconditional surrender. We should also remember that broadcasting has its personal tastes. One composer is played very often, another less often, a third rarely, a fourth never. What will happen to the latter when all other openings have disappeared? We shall soon arrive at one of those totalitarian systems, whose blessings we have already experienced and can still see.

**CONCLUSIONS**

1. First of all, the young composer must be made to realize that he cannot earn his living by composing, save in exceptional circumstances and late in life. Until then he must have a second profession or a private income. Towards the end of the last century this was already the case with most poets (Verlaine, Mallarmé, Valéry, Claudel, and so on).

2. No attempt should be made to "discover" talented young composers.
It would be better to discourage them. There are already too many for the market. On the other hand, all possible help should be extended to those who have already given proof of their talent, so that they are not overwhelmed by unfair competition from the great classical composers.

3. Musical education should be directed towards creating an audience for modern music. Music should be defended against the exploitation of virtuosity in every form.

4. In this way, the public should be led to take the same interest in new aspects of music as in literature, drama, films and painting.
The epoch in which our lot has been cast—particularly the present "summer" of the twentieth century, as Denis de Rougemont calls it—is, it seems to me, characterized chiefly by a deeply uneasy conscience, whether individual or, to use a favourite current expression, collective. Never before has there been so much speculation as to the mysterious destiny of man. The "anguish" expressed by Kierkegaard—though its source lies, surely, much further back in time—has bitten into our souls, and while human beings have pondered since the remotest past over the purpose for which they exist on this planet, we have to admit that the triple question: "What are we? Whence come we? Whither go we?" is nowadays of a painful and tyrannical urgency. We are like Orpheus in Monteverde's opera, when the nymph comes to tell him of Eurydice's death and he asks her: "Whence comest thou? Whither goest thou? Nymph, what dost thou bring?" And we feel within us an obscure but imperative need to reply, to justify ourselves, like those Kafka characters who realize their guilt without knowing what they are accused of.

Two world wars in less than 50 years are enough to account for this urge to define our position. All established values were overthrown in the course of that tragic half-century. And while fire, sword and bloodshed have once again "transformed the face of the earth", our inner life has inevitably felt the violent repercussions of those terrible years. One need not be a philosopher or a moralist in order to attempt, at this juncture, to draw certain conclusions, to chart a course through the profound intellectual and emotional darkness in which we are so distressfully groping.

Political instability, social unrest, disturbed economy, the crisis in morality—these lamentable results of our fratricidal strife could not fail to make their mark in the once so carefully guarded preserves of the mind. The twentieth century is not only the age of the machine, and therefore of materialism; it is also the age of metaphysical doubt. This had been realized by some thoughtful spirits even before the Danzig crisis. Some 15 years ago there were writers, or rather intellectuals, in each of the five continents, who were concerned for the future of literature. During the summer of 1937, the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation arranged a "discussion" at which Paul Valéry took the chair; it was devoted to "The Immediate Future of Literature". So the problems that disturb us today are not new; but the frightful war through which we so recently passed has increased their already considerable
importance, to a point at which their immediate and generally satisfactory solution becomes, in the public interest, imperative.

Therefore, before discussing the role of what have been called "secondary professions", or analysing the situation of the writer in present-day society, we should examine the results achieved during the meeting of these men of good will, who were entirely disinterested, intellectually honest, and clear-sighted in the highest degree. The mood of the debates, which were continued for several days, was one of extreme pessimism. It was pointed out that literature was in peril. On the one hand, readers were either too few or too numerous, a vast number of people could read and write, but rare indeed were those who took a genuine interest in worth-while writing; true culture was increasingly neglected. On the other hand, the present-day public has been turned aside from reading by the rapid succession of astounding discoveries in the technical sphere, the tremendous speed with which applied science has advanced, and the amazing inventions of this inhuman age. Books no longer provide the only intelligent or agreeable means of passing the time; rivalled first of all by the unprecedented expansion of the daily press, then by the cinema and the radio, they are now challenged, in addition, by television, which is steadily gaining ground in the English-speaking countries. All these diversions attract people by pandering to their natural laziness, whereas the reading of a book (especially a worth-while book) is a difficult matter and calls for effort. Serious reading requires persistence and thought; a good writer demands not merely the reader's time, but his close and active co-operation.

Moreover, a writer who wishes his work to be accessible to a reading public which is vast and whose number, despite all obstacles, is increasing, is faced with the necessity of "writing down" to that public. This is the greatest danger that threatens his integrity as a writer. For it tempts him to relax his careful selection of the words and phrases that come almost unbidden to any self-respecting craftsman fully alive to the strict demands of his craft. If an author makes it his inflexible rule to think clearly and express himself well, so that his work may be of value, if he refuses to admit anything that is slipshod or commonplace, he will have to meditate over his book for a long time, planning it with care. The writing of it will therefore be a most exacting task, and he must run the risk of setting this carefully-tended fruit of his labours before readers who will fail to understand it, who will greet it with indifference or even hostility, lacking the patience to retrace the devious development of an original idea or to await the deliberately slow unfolding of a meticulous style. So the writer has to wage a positive battle with his conscience, when about to deliver his message or simply to express what is passing through his mind; afterwards comes a battle between the author and the public, the former wishing to gain a hearing, the latter refusing its attention; and finally a third battle, between writer and middleman—publisher or bookseller—because readers are now needed, not only that the writer's ideas may be known and accepted, but also that he may earn enough to ensure him at least a decent level of subsistence.
As early as 1937 then, two years before the outbreak of the recent war, we find this complicated problem coming up before the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation. How were the moral duties of the writer to be reconciled with his material needs? How could he write independently and honestly without endangering his livelihood? In short, what was the common denominator between soul and body?

In the old days, as participants in this discussion on "The Immediate Future of Literature" pointed out, there was a system of patronage in operation. A patron would provide the writer or artist with the means of existence so that, thus relieved of mercenary cares, he could devote himself with full relish to the sometimes painful joys of creative work, not stinting the time required to achieve perfection. But a Maecenas or a Louis XIV is seldom met with nowadays. The writer is left to his own resources; he has to earn his living like everyone else, more or less; so if he wishes to achieve work of lasting value and yet not die of starvation, he must divide his time and energies between the disinterested pursuit of literature and the fulfilment of some more remunerative task. This raises the natural question of an appeal to the State: should the government be asked to help the writer or artist by granting him a subsidy or pension? The State is a dangerous master, for it gives nothing for nothing! The independence of the writer, poet, painter or composer will inevitably be jeopardized, and this—if we accept the view that there can be no genuine artistic output without freedom—will mean the death of art and of the intellect.

There, briefly summarized, we have the somewhat depressing conclusions reached 15 years ago by a number of distinguished leaders of thought who had foregathered from Europe, Asia, America and Africa. Such pessimism is not surprising. The man of letters (an expression I do not greatly care for), whether he be prosewriter or poet, dramatist or novelist, essayist or philosopher, or the artist, whether he be painter, sculptor, architect, medallist, decorator, musician or producer, is invariably in a state of discontent, dissatisfied with himself and everyone else. For the writer or artist never attains his ideal; to one so exacting, the finished work will always fall short of that ideal, exciting him to rage against himself. As for other people, they either do not read him or, worse still, read without understanding; or else, and this is the last straw, they understand but fail to appreciate; hence his indignation against the reading public. As for patrons, if any still exist, they are either exacting or capricious, seldom worthy of their protégés; which accounts for the writer's irritability towards his government, his sovereign, or his wealthy friend. Volumes could be written about the complaints of writers and the lamentations of artists regarding the environment in which they are forced to live and the stifling atmosphere generated by their fellow men! Not all poets have been as wonderfully fortunate as Horace, and the lines learnt by heart at school, Maecenas, atavis edite regibus..., refer to an isolated phenomenon. In the Arab world, for instance, a whole body of poetic literature has grown up around the idea that writers in general, and poets
in particular, are doomed to a wretched existence. The story of 'Abdellah Ebn-el-Mou'taz is typical. At the beginning of the ninth century, that prince, who was also a great poet, was chosen for the office of Caliph at Baghdad. Unable to maintain control, he was stripped of his authority and assassinated by his enemies. But his contemporaries, when lamenting his fate, did not attribute it to his lack of political ability, or to the incompetence of his supporters; they put the blame on his Muse, finding it quite natural that his career as a man of letters should have led him to disaster.

It may be said, therefore, that literature and calamity have always gone hand-in-hand. This may to some extent account for and in some cases justify the system of patronage, which we will now discuss briefly before going on to examine the merits and drawbacks of the "secondary profession".

To begin with, patronage is a system, or rather a practice, which is highly variable and hard to define or to trace through history. It makes its appearance at certain epochs and in certain countries, and then vanishes for an indefinite period, but one can never be sure that it has really died out. We have already referred to the court of Augustus, to the court of Baghdad and to that of Versailles; but as the centuries went by, many other centres of artistic life came into existence and had their day; for proof of this we need only remember the great cities which have flourished simultaneously or successively in different parts of the world. In Damascus, Cairo, Madrid, London and Moscow — to mention only a few — kings, princes or great noblemen have often surrounded themselves with writers and artists to whom they granted pensions, not always on a generous scale. But side by side with this official and frequently ostentatious protection, we find wonderful developments in literature and art which owe nothing to patronage. There have been great men who declined such material and moral support, or who managed to exist without it. And it would be unjust to maintain that all the masterpieces which hold our admiration owe their origin to the far-sighted generosity of intelligent patrons. For while patronage may be the gratifying product of a well-organized civilization, it may also be the rather sour fruit of rivalry among the great. It is a disturbing fact that patrons are nearly always to be found in periods of tyranny, despotism or dictatorship. That is why many writers and artists have had to pay dearly for such burdensome assistance. What does that matter, we may ask, since it did not prevent them from creating fine work! Virgil wrote his Aeneid and Racine his tragedies. But we should perhaps rather ask ourselves whether, though the form of their art does not seem to have suffered, they may not have had to fight terrible battles with their conscience. It cannot have been very pleasant for a writer, whose self-respect was perhaps his dearest possession, to bow continually to the will of a king, however magnificent, to the whims of a tyrant, however good-natured, or to the wishes of a nobleman, however broad-minded. The deal is based on a swindle: the patron gives money, which the writer spends as it comes in; whereas the writer gives his art or his ideas, which cannot be expended. That probably explains why certain names have won an undeserved immortality. It is in vain to protest...
that patronage fostered artistic and literary output for centuries, that, for instance, Diderot could never have completed the *Encyclopædia* without the help of Madame de Pompadour: we are left to wonder how much greater might have been the achievements of the men who, despite constraint or because of it, succeeded in saying what they had to say and in giving adequate expression to their secret thoughts. The death of patronage—if it really is dead, which I do not believe—would therefore give no great cause for regret; I am inclined to think, on the contrary, that it would mark an appreciable advance in human dignity and would tend to raise artistic and intellectual life to a nobler level. We must remember, too, that many writers and artists who were not in favour with the authorities and enjoyed no benefits from those in high places succeeded, nevertheless, in achieving a respectable and even comfortable standard of life and in writing as they wished, without the help of State, government, or rich man. How did they manage this? They tried to earn a living, either by selling their books or by taking up some form of work which, far from hampering their intellectual activity, enabled them to deal with literature and with life at the same time.

**THE SECONDARY PROFESSION**

It should be said at once that there is nothing new in this idea either. A glance at history, in no matter what country and at no matter what period, shows us that it has nearly always been customary for writers and artists to have a secondary profession, or to be more exact, *a* profession. For I refuse to apply the term “profession” to the inspiration that visits a man and forces him to think and to write. We should avoid playing with words, as the charming sophists and persuasive orators of the present day are rather too apt to do! We must make no confusion between profession and vocation, profession and apostleship, function and mission, situation and inner drive, duty and gift, the mere post to be filled and the dictates of heart or mind. No writer worthy of the name will write in order to make money, amass a fortune and acquire property. He has no real reason to reject such things if they should present themselves, of course, but they will never represent a goal for him. And if he happens to hold the view that literature and art are essentially spiritual matters, and that the writer should be a kind of saint, or at least an ascetic, he will even refuse to admit that the transcendental value of his works can ever be expressed in terms of money. It is the same in other professions, a real doctor does not take up medicine because it pays well, and a sincere barrister does not accept a brief because of the large fee his client promises him.

So it seems to me that this question of the “secondary profession” has been approached from the wrong angle. It is a question not so much of having “another” profession, as of having *a* profession. Which means: can a writer or an artist take up some profession (for the problem still belongs, for the time being, to the realm of possibilities, and not to that of rights
The Artist in Modern Society

or duties?), or may he, by so doing, risk compromising literature and art? If we look carefully into the life-histories of many writers and artists, of whatever period and in whatever country, we soon realize that most if not all of them had some profession, which was often very little connected with literature or art. And they certainly did not feel in the least degraded by this, nor, for that matter, did they think of it as anything to boast about. Aristotle was tutor to Alexander the Great, the younger Pliny was a high-ranking civil servant of the Roman Empire, Bacon was a statesman in Elizabethan England, Chateaubriand was an ambassador of France, and later a cabinet minister, Mallarmé was a schoolmaster, Giraudoux a diplomat. . . . Many other writers were monks, magistrates or doctors, sometimes even soldiers, like Cervantes and Agrippa d'Aubigné.

That being so, we might well turn the question back to front and ask whether a writer should be satisfied with being merely a writer, whether an artist is entitled to do no more than chip marble or lay colours on canvas. Surely this is a purely twentieth-century phenomenon, that there is really a genus "man of letters", whose members do nothing but write, and expect to be rewarded with a prominent place in civic life and with privileged treatment from society? Stated in this way, the problem becomes quite a different one. Far from being an evil, or a painful necessity, the so-called secondary profession is seen to be a heaven-sent blessing! For it enables the writer or artist to retain his entire freedom and his independence of spirit. Whereas the real misfortune for the writer is to be dependent for a living on his literary work, since art will admit of no compromise, no aim save that of its own perfection. To expect intellectual activity to provide its author with the means of subsistence, is merely to stultify it. It does, indeed, sometimes happen, fortunately, that a good book is widely read and universally applauded; in which case the author may gain some financial profit from it, or even a great deal of money, if it sells well and is translated into several languages. We are no more entitled to object to the fortune brought to some excellent writer, such as André Gide, by the world-wide sale of his books, than to grumble at the wealth amassed by a great surgeon. But we must clearly realize that it was not Gide's fault, if I may so express it, that certain of his books took the fancy of a very large public. We can only be gratified to see a good writer gaining the audience to which he is entitled, and finding, without difficulty, cultivated readers who are worthy of him. So, while no author should write for the express purpose of selling his work on the commercial market and being paid for his pains, it is an excellent thing for him to obtain good sales now and then, and thus earn some money by his writing. And if his sales are stopped or slowed down by bad luck, unfavourable circumstances, inefficient advertising, and so on—what matter! He has thought his thoughts, he has set them down, he has given the best that is in him. His only justifiable regret will be that others have failed to profit more fully by it.

We thus find ourselves confronted by three clear-cut possibilities. Either the writer (and this applies equally to the artist or the philosopher) is wealthy;
or he has a profession; or he has to live by his pen. Naturally, it is more agreeable for a man of letters to have no financial worries, so that he can follow his inspiration untrammelled. It has, indeed, often been seen that the intellect, far from being paralysed by a certain amount of practical anxiety, is stimulated by it; but it would be mean to wish that he might be visited by such difficulties, or to strive to perpetuate them! A writer whose circumstances are easy from the start has every chance of building up an interesting body of work; if he fails to do so, there will be no sympathy for him, as he will have deliberately thrown away his best cards. As for the writer who accepts outside aid to help him out of the rut, he is unlikely to do distinguished work, since he has fettered himself and surrendered his independence to the State or to his patron. But any writer who, like the majority, earns an honourable and sufficient livelihood by taking up some profession, can and should achieve valuable results in the intellectual sphere as well. Examples of this have been frequent in past centuries; today it is almost a general rule. Rabelais was a physician, Paul Valéry worked on the staff of the Havas Agency. Moreover, a man with no private means and no hope of inheriting a fortune must not shrink from working for his living like anyone else. For if he puts forward the plea (often unjustified) that he is only fitted to be a writer, and that any other form of activity would distract him from his life's work, he is only too likely to sink into the condition of a useless and obnoxious parasite, all the more harmful to society in that his attitude tends towards a confusion of values, sets up false problems, and is harmful in various ways to the reputation of literature.

For a little thought will lead us to the conclusion that this "secondary profession", which, properly considered, is really the "main profession" of the writer, if not his primary concern, carries with it definite and appreciable advantages. In the first place, it provides the diversion which is so necessary to every intellectual. However intense the writer's concentration on literature, however absorbing the artist's passion for form and colour, however complete the composer's abandon to rhythm, the moment inevitably comes when he must stand back from his work so as to let it rest and ripen, and so that he may gain an impression of its present development and future course. We all know that it is easier to resume a piece of work after having set it aside, for a period which must vary according to the individual. That is what the painter is doing when he gets up and looks at his picture from a distance, as though to judge its effect. And here the secondary profession may furnish the mind with an inexhaustible source of valuable experience. Furthermore, it forms a channel of communication between the writer and that outside world which is, after all, the object towards which his meditations and his spiritual progress are directed, or at any rate the subject with which they are constantly concerned. The famous "ivory tower" may sometimes be useful in old age, but even that is doubtful! No one can cut himself off from the world and its inhabitants at the very outset of his intellectual career; later on, perhaps, disillusioned and satiated, he may yield to the momentary temptation
of physical and moral isolation. But apart from the fact that one can always feel alone amidst a crowd, I do not agree with Pascal's opinion that man owes all his misfortunes to his inability to stay in his own room. That statement could only come from one who was thoroughly familiar with the world and had long rubbed shoulders with his fellow men. The writer cannot draw all his material from within himself; he cannot do without other people and, if he asserts that he can, that is mere conceit and affectation. An author who is a doctor, like my friend Georges Duhamel, a lawyer like Montesquieu, a university professor like Forster, a librarian like Leconte de Lisle, or a diplomat like Petrarch, has a multitude of points of contact with the life of his day and sets up a many-sided relationship with his contemporaries. The resultant give-and-take between the writer and the outside world cannot fail to be profitable to his mind, to enrich his heart and spirit. The benefit, of course, is not entirely one-sided. There is a genuine exchange, in which the writer gives to society quite as much as he receives from it. Publication is not the only means by which a man can help his fellows, and an original thought, a marked individuality, can find very satisfactory expression in direct activity, whether of a political, social, economic, moral or even emotional nature. After all, if a man has a message to deliver to the world, his method of delivering it is of minor importance; and perhaps there is no hard-and-fast rule for conveying it. We are many-sided creatures: a man who believed his only means of expression to be poetry may prove to be an excellent administrator; and a man whose fingers have until now only held a scalpel may discover that he can handle a pen with the greatest skill!

The outstanding advantage of the secondary profession is that it ensures the writer's entire freedom, which is what he essentially requires if he is not to spoil his gifts and waste his abilities.

The most frequent objection to the secondary profession is that in some cases it may distract the writer or artist from his true and sacred mission. This does not strike me as proven. So far as I am aware, no man possessed by a passion or craze for writing has ever failed, sooner or later, in one way or another, to satisfy his longing and fulfil his literary destiny. I have never heard of a secondary profession preventing a writer from saying what he had to say; checking any talent in its spontaneous outpouring; frustrating any genius in its expression; or delaying, hampering, slowing down or cutting short any intellectual output.

It may, of course, be asserted that a schoolmaster or professor, in his non-academic writings, will adopt a didactic, sententious tone, that he tends, perhaps, to be dogmatic, dry, pedantic, to split hairs or, on the contrary, to be over-emphatic and pompous. Someone is sure to say that when a journalist writes a novel it betrays haste, that he is apt to scamp his chapter-construction and his conclusion, or to overdo the racy, impersonal style often adopted by the hurried reporter or the objective, cool-headed editor. It will probably be pointed out that a doctor will analyse his romantic characters with scientific precision, and that a magistrate will have leanings towards
the detective story; it will also be maintained that a script-writer can write nothing but screen treatments. But all these charges have yet to be investigated and proved. Then it might be discovered that the teacher's style is extremely whimsical, that the gossip-writer is "precious" and mannered, the physician vague and careless about details, the judge a specialist in countryman's stories or tales of great lovers. . . . And this would lead us to another advantage of the secondary profession (since we have to call it that!), which is that it lends itself admirably to escapism. On the one hand it gives scope for objectivity; but on the other it allows free play for many secret, suppressed tendencies, and provides many outlets which self-discipline would perhaps never have granted in the ordinary way.

Now, however, we come to the drawbacks of this secondary profession. Like all things which are human, and hence imperfect, its virtues are accompanied by vices, its qualities by defects, its merits by drawbacks. As we have already said, in some cases it may distract the writer or artist, perhaps for quite a lengthy period, from his real purpose in life. There is a danger of its leading him into any number of errors and disappointments. A man of letters in the relentless toils of some public office, a sculptor harassed by all kinds of administrative responsibilities, a philosopher whose entire attention is devoted to certain political events, may thus run the risk of betraying his ideals, of giving the best that is in him to some worthless cause, or at least to a task less noble and enduring than the landmarks of eternity which his mind can construct in the silence of his own study, or his heart create in the auspicious calm of his studio.

To this charge there are several replies. In the first place, as we have pointed out, nothing has ever prevented a genuine writer, a veritable artist, from saying what he had to say. In the second place, man's nature is dual: many a poet can easily undertake some other occupation and be none the worse for it as a poet. Necessity knows no law, and it is no doubt possible for the writer, as a man, to obey the dictates of necessity without quenching the divine spark within him. Honesty compels us to admit that the dramatist does not spend 24 hours out of the 24 in writing plays. The logician, even if he possess outstanding powers of concentrated thought together with a phenomenal working capacity, does not devote every moment of his to methodology and reasoning. The portrait-painter sometimes puts aside his palette and brushes. We often lay down our pen, even if there is no necessity to do so. And this brings us to another problem, a more serious problem this time, with far wider implications. We have seen that it is not harmful for a writer to have a regular profession—on the contrary; but it is harmful for that profession to absorb him completely, and this contingency must be avoided. The difficult question of choice thus arises. Discernment is a delicate and subjective affair. There can be no general criterion in such matters, and what suits X, the author, may not prove at all suitable for Y, the musician. Undoubtedly there are some professions that are conducive to literary output, and some form of employment that are detrimental to it. If we question 10 writers, we shall
receive 10 different replies; one will sing the praises of manual labour, another will describe the advantages of some “liberal” profession, a third will prefer the civil service. I should be inclined to think that the best occupation for a writer was the one furthest removed from his personal tastes, if this theory were not so frequently disproved in practice! It has at least the advantage of leaving the intellectual a greater measure of detachment than would any of the tasks usually regarded as suitable for his purpose. The writer who becomes a bricklayer or an admiral has the best chance of retaining his alertness of mind when he sits down to write. Whereas if he chooses some occupation which is closely allied to literature, such as journalism, film or radio, he may be in some danger of sliding imperceptibly from one to the other; his profession may to some extent become mixed up with his art.

Just now we considered the example of the journalist: speed, simplification and punctuality are at once his qualities and the defects of those qualities; his rapid methods provide an excellent approach to a reading public that is calculated in hundreds of thousands, or even in millions, but they are ill-adjusted to the leisurely progress and freedom to meditate which are indispensable to anyone who aims at producing a book of real substance. It must be added, however, that a number of excellent writers contribute to one or more newspapers without sacrificing any of their own individual qualities. The writing of articles may well, on the contrary, be of value to an author, since it constitutes an exercise in style and requires a certain intellectual flexibility, in addition to providing him with a well-earned income. The advantage to the readers is certainly considerable; they have the opportunity of reading worth-while articles or reviews, which are naturally to be preferred to hastily-scribbled columns in which grammatical errors are not entirely unknown. I do not think, however, that a genuine writer can force himself to daily work as a journalist, obliged to hand in copy at any cost; that occupation is all-absorbing, not to say all-devouring, and if the job is to be done properly there will be no time left for disinterested study or for the detached, creative life of the mind. Let no one suppose that this is meant as a criticism of journalism! On the contrary, I hope journalism will rise to even higher honour, and will always maintain that independence which is essential to its reputation. My only fear is that it may sometimes encroach upon provinces that are not its own. And though it seems to me that regular collaboration between journalism and literature should be perfectly possible, I am distressed to note the constant danger of one engulfing the other.

The same is true of the cinema. It seems to me to be an excellent, even a necessary, and often a productive step to enlist a writer’s help in the preparation of a film. The successes scored by Jean Cocteau, Graham Greene and—if I may venture the name—Shakespeare, go to prove that literature can be of service to the cinema, which, in its turn, has something new and original to offer to the writer. Films reach an even larger public than do newspapers—many people who cannot read go to the cinema—and thus provide a powerful and effective means, not of merely amusing the spectators, nor of
exploiting them by sapping their intelligence, but of educating them and bringing them gradually to an appreciation of beauty. There can be no doubt that “the masses”, as they are usually called (I wonder why?), have a claim to the work of good writers. And the writers have their claim too; they are entitled to demand the audience, the attendance thus provided, and to receive their share of the money that this public pays into the box-office. Does this mean that a writer runs no risk in devoting himself body and soul to the “seventh art”? In my opinion, it does not. Once and for all, a genuine writer cannot and must not give himself up entirely to anything except literature. He can offer his collaboration to the cinema because it offers a means—not the only, nor necessarily the best means—of making contact with his fellow men, guiding them intelligently and enriching their minds. As for radio, it is so closely related to journalism, that there is no need to make any very searching investigation into the manner in which the writer should or could work with it. We may note, however, that, while the cinema, whose appeal is mainly to the eye, provides considerable scope for the writer (dialogues, synopsis, script, etc.), the radio, paradoxical as this may seem, affords him much smaller opportunities; for while its appeal is to the ear, the tastes of its listeners are such that music takes precedence over the spoken word—for every 10 or 15 minutes of Victor Hugo we are given 30 or 45 minutes of Beethoven.

I suggested a short while ago that the secondary profession was a term which involved approaching the problem from the wrong angle—in the first place because it is, more often than not, the “primary” and in fact the only profession; in the second place, because the writer’s difficulty lies not in having a profession, but in selecting one. I have attempted to indicate the merits and the drawbacks of some of these professions—journalism, cinema, radio, teaching. And this leads me to the conclusion, though it is not a final conclusion, that the chief requirement is that the writer’s “profession” should not completely absorb his mind and heart. He must not give up all his time to the film studio, the lecture-hall, the workshop, the editorial office or the shop. However, as we have seen, a man who has nothing to do in life except write would, as likely as not, never produce a single line. In one sense, therefore, a writer needs some profession in order to be able to write. And this brings us, it seems to me, to the heart of the problem, which is entirely an internal and moral one. In the last resort, it relates entirely to the writer’s attitude towards himself and other people. He has to make rules for himself, to discipline himself, from the strictly intellectual point of view, so that he may give the due share of attention to his obligations as a writer on the one hand, and his duties as a statesman or carpenter on the other. At all costs he must avoid sacrificing one of these activities to the other, must learn to judge the moment when he should give more to literature and less to his profession, and the moment when the contrary is required. This will probably lead him to the discovery that nothing is completely incompatible with art or literature, provided he has his personal standards to guide
him in avoiding the traps that beset his path, and to reveal to him the often mysterious and intricate course by which that path leads to harmonious fusion of thought and action.

I use the word "action" with some reluctance, for in association with the word "writer" it opens up fresh horizons. I will return to this question in the second part of my statement, which deals with the writer's social role. But before dismissing this illusory problem of the secondary profession, I should like to define the principle on which, in my view, the personal standards of the present-day writer should be based. It seems to me to be entirely a matter of remembering to keep his distance. I do not mean, by this, to plead for the "ivory tower". Alfred de Vigny himself looked out, from his tower, on the world of his day; and however contemplative the writer may be, however contemptuous of mundane things, his tower will always have a little shot-window through which he can cast a sidelong glance at what is going on outside. But without retiring into haughty isolation, the writer must remember to maintain a certain distance between himself and everything unconnected with literature, thought, and art. This is merely like the painter who steps back to get a clearer idea of his subject, or the pilot who flies low to obtain a bird's eye view of the landscape and learn its contours. It is perfectly possible to do one's work conscientiously, yet with detachment.

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF THE WRITER

The writer has always played a social role. It may be asked why. The fact is recognized; it has long been accepted so completely that no one nowadays thinks of disputing it. Throughout history and all over the world there have, of course, been men—writers themselves, for the most part—who have striven to define the social role of the intellectual. The latter realizes that he plays a leading part in the life of his day, and he accepts both the honour and the inconvenience that this involves. For, while well aware that he holds an important place among his contemporaries, he does not deny that his privileged position carries with it certain obligations. These duties have bred in him a feeling of responsibility. The explanation of this is, perhaps, that once any man realizes he is not alone on the surface of the earth, he develops a social sense; he cannot get along without his fellows, so he is obliged to think about the relationship he intends to have with them; that is the starting-point of any system of ethics. Men accept the fact that they all have rights and duties, and are thus obliged to bring these into harmony.

It is possible, even likely, that intellectuals have concerned themselves more deeply than ordinary men with these questions. But here the lion's share falls to the philosophers, and above all to the theologians. In ancient times, incidentally, there was not very much distinction to be drawn between the poet, the prophet and the sage.
It is hard to imagine a civilized society without writers. Long before the present century, which is apt to regard itself as the age of all inventions, literature was taken for granted as a social phenomenon. At some point in the existence of a community, a man began to sing. The others listened, liked his song, and wanted to hear it again. He, for his part, was glad to have an audience, and did not wait to be asked twice. A relationship was thus established between the singer and those around him, and a social institution had come to birth. The performer's duty was to sing or recite; the duty of his audience was to listen. But what did he take as his theme? In all probability, the life going on around him—his own life and theirs. And they enjoyed recognizing themselves in his talk and his songs, which reflected them like a mirror. Later, much later, the poet turned from singing to writing, and the public from listening to reading. Writing became so necessary that no one could get along without it. Poets, prose-writers and orators became the spiritual guides of the society in which they lived. When any difficulty arose, it was they who, as a matter of course, were called upon to solve it. Thus the writer's influence, and therefore his responsibility, date from the remote past. He has influence because he is indispensable; and he has responsibilities, because he is in some sort the spiritual and moral leader of society, whether that society be a nation, an ethnic group, a religious community or a political party.

All studies of the moral, political, social, religious or economic ideas of the great writers of past centuries provide proof, if proof were needed, of their considerable influence. Each of them held up before mankind a certain ideal such as the Humanist of the Renaissance, the Sage of ancient Greece, the "Honnête Homme" of the French seventeenth century, the Philosopher of the eighteenth century, and the Cabalist (Occultist) of the nineteenth; while as regards famous names we have only to think of Plato, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Pascal, Goethe, Aboul 'Ala El-Maarri and Rabindranath Tagore.

But we cannot isolate the social role of the writer from his relationship to active life. This question has never been more keenly debated than at the present time. A writer's active life begins when he takes up his pen. Anything beyond that statement seems to me to verge upon the over-subtlety, the affectation, characteristic of our over-intellectualized century. Who would be so bold, nowadays, as really to assert that the writer writes only for himself, for his personal satisfaction and selfish pleasure? Some people think so, of course, and many say so, but it is my firm belief that every writer sits down to work with, consciously or unconsciously, "the idea at the back of his head" (to use Pascal's phrase) that sooner or later he will find readers. I do not think that this idea can fail to visit the mind of anyone who sets out to write a book or undertakes any form of literary work at all. And the fact of his writing for other people renders him responsible for the possible influence of his work upon those who read it. Even a man who withdraws into the loftiest and most impregnable of ivory towers will continue to exert a certain
influence, because someone may notice the tower and wonder who lives in it and why, and what he is doing there.

In any case, we incur responsibility from the moment we communicate with other people, by whatever means. It is vain to proclaim that we are independent and solitary, to disclaim all duty towards society, and to refuse all contact with the outside world; we are "engaged", whether we like it or not. You can, of course, hug the illusion that you are still "disengaged", but that makes no difference whatever. No one asks your opinion, and you are "involved" from the mere fact of being read and listened to. I am greatly struck by the amount of attention people give to this state of things. In former times the matter was self-evident; writers would never have dreamed of escaping from their magnificent responsibilities, on which, indeed, they prided themselves, as tokens of their lofty authority and potent dignity. Are we to be forced to the conclusion that twentieth-century writers, and more especially those of 1952, are crushed by this moral obligation and anxious to be rid of it? Why this horror at the notion that, in deciding to become a writer, one perhaps incurs a duty? Is it that we have a guilty conscience and fear to be accused of responsibility for certain sombre episodes of human history? In any case, why should a writer have all the privileges and none of the duties? Now, I think, is the moment to remind those who are in danger of forgetting it that the clauses of this unwritten "social contract" are still valid.

The greater a writer's influence, the greater, of course, will be his responsibility. It may be objected that the nature of this responsibility has still to be defined! Very well—the writer is responsible, but to whom and for what?

In my opinion, he is responsible to his own conscience in the first place; and I could wish that his responsibility ended there. A writer has no means of forcing anyone to read him, let alone to follow him; and this, to my mind, is what constitutes his real freedom. If the public feels free to read his work or leave it unread, to heed or ignore what it contains, then logic requires that he himself be free to write as he chooses. But it is at this point that the writer's responsibility becomes involved, for that is just what never happens! The case of Socrates is there to prove it; freedom cost him his life. Society has laws which oblige it, in certain circumstances, to defend itself, and this it can only do by putting a certain restraint on the relative freedom of its individual members. Whatever privileges he may enjoy, the writer is bound to submit to the laws that govern his community, and this entails some restriction of his freedom. Consequently, he is confronted by two forms of responsibility; one is sovereign, since it arises from within and is governed by his own conscience; the other is alien, being thrust upon him from without. It is this latter responsibility for whose recognition society calls, and that the writer must take as the touchstone of his work. So long as a liberal system is in force, no problem can really be said to exist; the writer is at ease, and his talent or genius can develop unimpeded. But where the laws in force are stringent, literary life is less simple. For the writer can no longer think of his work alone; he has to make a considerable effort to avoid or moderate
the rigour of those laws, and it is in such circumstances, perhaps, that his merit is the greatest. Much has been said about the flourishing condition of literature under many an authoritarian or despotic government. But has there been sufficient appreciation of the tremendous efforts that writers have been obliged to make in order to protect their work from the whims of tyranny and save it for posterity? We are told that “golden ages” of literature have often coincided with police or dictatorial régimes; sometimes there is even a misleading attempt to establish a “cause and effect” relationship, on the theory, for example, that without Augustus there would have been no Virgil, and without Louis XIV no Molière. It is far more likely that if those two rulers had been of a different stamp the literature of their time would have assumed a different and probably even more remarkable form, and exerted a far stronger influence. For after all, our admiration is aroused not so much by the fidelity with which the literature of those epochs reflects their stiffness and lack of heart, as by the fact that, despite the oppressive atmosphere in which it was created, it succeeded in evading control to some extent, and managed to strike a note of exultant liberty. Credit for the success of the Encyclopaedia is due not so much to Madame de Pompadour as to Diderot, who succeeded in persuading or hoodwinking that great lady.

Here, therefore, as in the case of the secondary profession, the whole question is a moral one. If there is real solidarity between the writer and the society in which he lives, there will be rights and duties on both sides.

The writer’s duty, though not easy to fulfil, is perfectly simple to state: it is to preserve his integrity. To do this he must be honest with himself and with others. He must unhesitatingly reject any interference with his literary and artistic ideals. He must ignore threats and promises alike. In these circumstances he will soon come to realize that he must be at the service of truth, and of truth alone. A writer loses his integrity if he flatters those in authority, whether because he is afraid of them or because he has something to ask of them.

A well-organized, not to say ideal society would, of course, recognize the duty of protecting the writer against either intimidation or the need to placate authority. There is no cause for exaggerated pessimism with regard to this possibility, for it is something that has been achieved in the past and will be achieved again. We have come to Venice to discuss the methods whereby society can enable the writer to preserve his integrity; that is, in fact, the subject of the work plan now before us, which we are to debate.

The modern writer can play an important part in society only if both he and the public are clearly conscious of their respective duties and are prepared to waive, at any rate for the time being, some portion of their rights. Then the writer will, in Dante’s description, be like a man going forward through the darkness with a lantern hanging at his back—lighting the path for those who come after. They will follow his light with full confidence, and he will advance without fear, for none of those he leads would fail to fly to his aid if he were in peril.
The Architect
and Contemporary Society

by Lucio Costa

Two themes have been prescribed for the report which follows. The first, "The Multiple Housing Unit", is limited in scope; the second, and major theme is the extremely wide subject of "The Architect and Contemporary Society". The two subjects are, so to speak, complementary: the object implicit in the modern concept of the multiple housing unit—the group dwelling, in the conception and construction of which the governing consideration is not profitable letting but a better and a harmonious life for the occupiers and their families—coincides, in essence, with the prime aspect of the architect's task, the allocation and arrangement of living space with a view not merely to its most efficient utilization technically, but even more to the well-being of the individual "consumer". In this content, incidentally, "well-being" will not be restricted to mere physical ease but must also cover psychological comfort to the extent that the architectural planning may have contingent reactions upon it.

There is therefore nothing unsuitable in beginning by considering the indisputably topical question of the so-called "multi-housing unit", since this preliminary appreciation of the actual state of affairs today, from a precise and objective illustration of it, will provide both the necessary background and the right perspective for the broader considerations arising in connexion with the general theme common to the reports of all sections of this conference.

The principle behind the new concept of the multiple housing unit is that of the concentration of residential accommodation by building upwards, in independent blocks. These must be of sufficient size to allow of the provision of the general services and other conveniences needed by the groups of families occupying them. At the same time their space-saving ground plan will free extensive areas around them for planting as parkland, thus affording all households relief to the eye and thereby an enhanced feeling of privacy, despite their close physical proximity in a new size of unit.

The idea is an application, or more accurately—as will be shown below—a development of modern industrial technique and was first evolved in its full perfection by the forward-looking genius of Le Corbusier more than 20 years ago, though it is only now that, under the supervision of its originator, it has borne its first fruit in the admirable Marseilles scheme.

This experiment is one of exceptional significance and, even if criticism could be levelled at it in certain respects—for failings due not to errors in conception, design or execution, but to the fact that a scheme designed for
residents of specific living habits is now within the reach exclusively of a public of entirely different social aspirations—this would in no sense imply the condemnation of the doctrine in question, since the latter is founded on principles of indisputable validity.

It should next be pointed out that we are not concerned to argue the case between the detached individual residence and the multi-residence housing unit. Obviously, given a choice in these simplified terms, anyone would be bound to prefer a handsome, comfortable house, standing in its own grounds, with its own garage and garden produce. Thus a preliminary point to be grasped is that there is no correspondence between the ideal answer to individual housing problems considered in terms of a privileged minority and the practicable answers to the same problems considered in terms of the general population.

Even were it possible to provide actual detached houses of simple design for every household of the urban population, the vast amount of building land required, the distances to be travelled, and the miles of roadway, cable and piping needed would brand such a course as costly madness, of which the end result would merely be to crowd the people uncomfortably on cramped sites miles from anywhere in tiny houses overlooked by every neighbour. The current solution, in the shape of unsuitably sited tenement blocks without the convenience of the general services and other shared facilities, is even worse, since it deprives the tenant of the slight advantages of a small house, even overlooked and distant from the centre, without giving him anything in lieu.

Reconsideration of the question in terms strictly of the technical problems and human values involved, will logically result in preference being given to the multiple housing in view of the exceptional advantages which it offers for well-balanced and successful family life, by making it possible to reconcile the claims of the individual with his family’s demands on him. Incidentally this choice will also sound economically and financially if the job is tackled on the requisite scale.

To resume, a wide range of age groups is represented in the average family—children, adolescents, parents and grandparents. These age groups have different interests and in the small suburban one-family house, the lack of space and suitable accommodation for the pursuit of their respective interests, inevitably creates an atmosphere of tension in the home, so that it seems overcrowded, and hence causes the gradual break-up of the family. In the multi-family unit, on the other hand, the high degree of spatial concentration of the residential accommodation allows of the building of premises specially planned to cater ideally for the diversity of interests and activities in question and the legitimate desires of the residents for space and freedom are met, on lines appropriate to the age or preferences of each, within the actual residential unit—as it were, in an extension of the home.

Such annexes or extensions of the home proper make an harmonious and healthy family life a possibility by abolishing the normal domestic congestion
and restoring to the *domus* its unique quality as the natural focus of attraction on which the family spontaneously centres.

These are thus sound reasons for a sympathetic view of the advantages presented by the new idea of group housing.

In the first place, given acceptance of the principle of concentration by vertical expansion, the site area can be greatly reduced compared to that normally needed for the siting of some hundreds of houses for tenants of a given income level. Thus an extensive belt of grass and trees can be retained around each block to afford all tenants a pleasant outlook and the benefit of privacy, while the system of uniform apartments in a multi-storey structure allows of all being orientated for optimum aeration and insolation in terms of the local climate. Thus, while the suburban zone will be appreciably reduced in extent, it will give an impression of much greater spaciousness thanks to the wide stretches of grass and trees separating the individual residential “units” or “vertical wards”.

Further, experience shows firstly that there are extrovert families, who like the sight and sound of other families around them, and introvert, who are set on edge by noise and bustle, and secondly that differences in temperament, or merely in age, may produce a similar incompatibility of tastes within a single family, causing constant friction and discomfort all round. In the first of these cases, an adequate remedy is to hand in the sound-proofing of floors and party walls, which is easy enough if the task is tackled on scientific lines. It is to the second problem, of incompatibility of tastes within the family, that the group housing unit as such will furnish the ideal, and hence the final, answer in the provision—on the ground floor or entresol or elsewhere in the building itself, on its flat roof, or in the form of annexes distributed freely about the park—of facilities for the various types and forms of association and community life or for such residents as may need personal privacy and freedom from interruption. These facilities will range from the park itself, with swimming pool and playing fields to readily accessible accommodation within or adjoining the block, set aside for a variety of purposes, e.g. children’s playroom, young people’s club, gymnasium, an old people’s common-room, a reading room with private cubicles for individual work, a workshop and hobbies room comprising various sections for Sunday amusement, a day nursery, kindergarten and primary school, an out-patients’ clinic, infirmary and dispensary, a bar, tea-room, and restaurant, plus the “neighbourhood” type of small shop selling every-day necessaries—baker, off-licence, butcher, delicatessen, greengrocer, etc.

In this way the progressive reduction in the residential area which has taken place as a result of the adoption of modern industrial techniques and in response to the social necessity of extending the right of essential comforts to ever broader strata of the population, has created the necessary conditions for the acceptance of a new formula of housing, offering such advantages that even the favoured strata, accustomed to standards of self-contained comfort, will also be led to prefer of their own accord, the multi-household
unit, co-operatively organized on a basis of shared amenities, to their present apartments which lack the conveniences only attainable in large-scale structures following the new concept.

The fact is that modern techniques of industrial production, with their high standards of design and execution, are rapidly rendering obsolete the costly household equipment and complex installations reserved for privilege; the handling and use of modern mass-produced equipment is so much more efficient and convenient as to render the gradual abandonment of the elaborate and costly "custom-built" gear of yesterday inevitable.

Thus, then, the mere consideration of a specific and topical instance such as the multiple housing unit demonstrates clearly what is the prime function of the architect in contemporary society. In him are combined the technologist, the sociologist and the artist and the very nature of his profession and lines of his training make him the person best able to reach, from precise technical data, the solutions desirable and plastically valid in the light of the ineluctable physical, social and economic factors involved, and to give the result concrete shape in the form of plans.

As a technologist the architect must show the practicability, through modern mass production methods, of providing a solution to the problems of housing and rural and urban town planning which will really be the ideal one for the whole population.

On the sociological side he must show frankly and without suppression or political bias, the causes of the present maladjustment, the reasons for the widespread failure to grasp the problem, and why the solution, already worked out in all its details, is still delayed.

As an artist, he must demonstrate how the new functional premises on which building design is based and the plastic forms resulting from this revival of integrated architectonic treatment will open the way to the recovery of beauty in detail, harmony in the whole design and dignity in layout.

As yet the remorseless efficiency which is the fruit of the tremendous progress of modern technology has not been applied as wholeheartedly to the problems of civil building as in the remaining sectors of industry. The reason is the inhibiting effect on technologists of the full architectonic concept: they realize that they are dealing with a major art of a scope transcending their own province (it is of course the architect's business to lay down the proper weight to be given to technological considerations, to enable the engineers and others concerned to produce, efficiently, cheaply and on an expanding scale, both the new materials and prefabricated parts and the fixed and mobile equipment needed). However, the foregoing notwithstanding, present-day building technique and architectonic planning have long since reached a stage allowing of the full solution for all sections of the population of the problems of personal and community well-being and comfort.

It is, then, technically feasible, to provide by degrees ideal housing, ideally sited, for the whole population within a relatively short period; nothing, however, is being done. Why?
While the immediate reasons which will later be shown to be instrumental, in hindering the rapid adoption of the new technique in its present functional and artistic form, are various, nevertheless an underlying cause for the delay must not be lost sight of.

Today, just as much as 20 years ago, when it first fell to the writer to deal with the subject, there are certain aspects which the rules of tact require to be handled with prudent discretion. With an adult audience however, there would seem to be no reason for omitting the consideration of the main cause of the contemporary crisis in architecture and town planning—the more so, as we are not here concerned to discuss the question from the angle of any specific philosophical or political ideology but simply to note certain facts of a technical nature arising out of the modern evolution of industry, and to exhibit the solutions which follow logically from that same evolution and will inevitably have to be taken into account by the ideologies or political systems which are to survive.

It is therefore proposed to state the point simply and directly, perhaps even bluntly, for a little plain speaking will do no harm at a time when a tendency to word-juggling sophistication obtains in so many sectors of modern life. Briefly then, the pace of social readjustment in the modern world is still leisurely and it has never speeded up to the quicker beat of the process of swift transition initiated by the industrial revolution, when the traditional craft techniques of manufacture yielded to the industrial technique of mass production.

For thousands of years the necessarily limited potential output of hand manufacture was only sufficient to provide comfort for the few, who were thus a privileged minority; the lot of the vast majority was to work in the various trades to supply a necessarily restricted quantity of highly finished articles designed on the elaborate lines distinctive of the various stages in the evolution of craftsmanship. The ineluctable character of the limitations on output made any aspirations for social levelling on other lines than those of a return to the primitive way of life purely Utopian.

Then, in the course of a few decades only, the seemingly "natural" order of milleniums was turned upside down by the truly limitless possibilities of mass production. Instead of the efforts of all being necessary to meet the requirements exclusively of a few, relatively few men and the necessary machinery are now in many instances all that is needed to provide enough for all. However the almost miraculous ability to mass produce the commodities and equipment now essential to the well-being of the civilized man predicates, as its corollary, the necessity for distribution on a similar massive scale; and with purchasing power still distributed in conformity with a social pattern which is itself the product of the limitations inherent in the traditional craft techniques of manufacture, the fact is that, even stretched to the maximum, the market is incapable of absorbing what industry can produce. It is not that genuine over-production of anything is even possible but simply that there are far too many people without the purchasing power to buy what they need.
Thus the very structure of society, by making it impossible to achieve distribution on the scale essential, hinders the full development of modern productive capacity. At this point the problem passes from the technical, to the social and economic realm and thus lies outside the terms of reference of this conference. This does not, however, mean that it ceases to be of direct concern to technicians whose function it is to plan in the light of their appreciation of future developments. At present all rational planning, from the technical and human angles, on the broad lines desirable is invariably inhibited by the limitations consequent on the survival of a social order long since rendered obsolete by the potentialities within our grasp and therefore incompatible with the age as stopping the natural rhythm of its evolution. Accordingly, the widespread desire among architects and town planners for some solution of these problems is entirely understandable.

While the foregoing are the basic considerations of which the significance must ever be kept in mind, there are also other factors of a different order, as already indicated, which play their part in delaying, if not actually blocking the implementation on a general scale of the new architectonic and town planning ideas.

In the first place the very population groups concerned know nothing about either the principles on which the new town planning is based or the solutions, general and detailed, which modern technology offers for the housing question and they therefore, lack the wherewithal to form a really clear and objective picture of the consequences of the new ideas in a changed style of living, balanced and serene, and the antithesis of the feverish bustle wrongly associated with the notion of "modern life". What they cannot imagine they cannot desire; and lacking desire they will have no reason to claim what is already due to them of right. Obviously, the lack of any pressure of public opinion makes for indifference on the part of those responsible for the planning and execution of such work whether for official bodies or private firms.

Clearly then, the enlightenment of the people is a task of capital importance and for it there are two media with great possibilities—films and toys. So far neither has been tried but they could be now, under Unesco's sponsorship and the personal supervision, among others, of Le Corbusier himself.

In the first case, a series of films could be made which were sound on the technical principles involved, but devised less on strictly "educational" lines than as idealizations to show the masses the possibilities of, and awaken their desire for, a style of daily life which may seem Utopian but is in fact attainable.

With the second medium, their play could acquaint the men and women of tomorrow with the new style of life through models or constructional games on various scales. The latter could range from town, village or factory estate "town planning sets" with model trees, trunk roads, viaducts, car parks, etc. to sets for making scale models of multiple housing units to be assembled from girder, flooring, party wall and outer wall sections of wood, plastics, or metal and even larger scale sets for building individual apartments.
and the social dependencies peculiar to this type of housing, the whole
with suitable "built-in" and ordinary furniture and painted in colours—all of which would give the last type an appeal for girls as well. In this way,
in place of the precocious brutalization caused by hateful warlike toys, children
would grow accustomed from their earliest years to think of the home and
the community in other terms and would grow naturally into the true
modern spirit of the industrial age.

There is, however, another factor, more serious than popular ignorance
and consequent lack of desire, which today plays a part in frustrating, all
too successfully, the early application of the new principles of planning,
layout and construction and thereby prevents the natural evolution of taste.
This is the general acceptance of the new aim from which a different plastic
notion of architectural beauty should follow. It is that much professional
and with it the bulk of cultivated opinion still either does not accept or
actively disbelieves in the validity of the new principles; and its attitude is
therefore uninterested when it is not definitely hostile.

Such an attitude is justifiable in part in face of the swelling flood of examples,
glaring and otherwise but all detestable, of pseudo-modernism. It springs
in most cases from a knowledge of the real bases, aims and scope of the
renaissance now in progress, which is at best superficial and partial. Now
the new combined architectonic-town planning concept is an indivisible
whole: its component ideas cannot be taken out of their context to be accepted
or refuted separately since the final conclusions derive from the first premises
in an unbroken logical chain. With a complex question like this, one must
have all the data before one for its apparently contradictory or irrelevant
elements to fall into place and become intelligible; out of their context they
make precisely as much sense as the scattered pieces of a jigsaw.

Those concerned being almost always capable professionals or laymen
of distinction and good faith, it is high time to get at the real cause why the
lack of understanding persists. Such people occupy the executive, advisory
or policy making posts alike in public administration, in State-owned under-
takings and in private business; and this creates a state of affairs liable to
hamper, if not block entirely the free use of those modes of architectonic
expression whose characteristic features have their origin in the way of
working peculiar to the industrial era and are thus ultimately the style of our
age.

Various reasons are advanced for this negative attitude, of which the prin-
cipal are the following: (a) the markedly different appearance of modern
architecture constitutes a breach of the natural laws of evolution; (b) modern
architecture does not respect national tradition; (c) lastly, its eminently
utilitarian and deliberately functional character is incompatible with archi-
tectural expression and makes it incapable of producing the impression of
dignity which is desirable.

Now with regard to these arguments, the various "styles" of the past,
despite the marked and sometimes even radical differences between them alike
in plastic aim, structural principles, and building procedures, in all cases exhibit certain common features giving them a measure of mutual homogeneity—namely the general type of materials used and the traditions and techniques of the crafts involved. In just the same way contemporary architecture, in so far as it conforms to modern principles of construction and stability, is the logical sequel to the use of new materials and new building techniques. And the latter, being developments of the new methods brought in by the industrial revolution, are in no respect an evolution of the traditional techniques—just as the aeroplane and motorcar were in no sense evolved from the horse carriage. In either case we have a thing different in kind; and for that very reason it must necessarily be different in appearance.

On the second point the world-wide adoption of building techniques with a modern industrial basis has as its logical consequences not merely the creation of a uniform vocabulary of plastic forms, as happened with the Romanic and Gothic of the Middle Ages or the classical orders during the Renaissance, but the gradual and inevitable abandonment of regional techniques. However, notwithstanding the universal nature of modern architecture, “native” variants are already appearing presenting appreciable differences in style though following the same basic principles and utilizing similar materials and methods. The reason is not merely that, as Le Corbusier himself advises, a deliberate attempt is already apparent to revive, after adapting them to the new ideas, such general features or details from the body of past traditions as are still valid, but even more that the national personality breaks through in the architectural design of its true artists, thus preserving the most genuine and irreducible part of the imponderables which give each people its distinctive character.

Both in this connexion and as regards the modern architect’s appreciation of the fact that he is an artist, the presence here of a witness of the architectural experiment launched a few years back in Brazil is of some significance as placing squarely before the conference the questions of the plastic quality and the lyrical and emotional impact of a work of architecture. These points are important because such work will have to survive into an age when functionally, it is no more use; it must so survive not simply as an example, for instruction of an outmoded building technique nor as a monument of an outworn civilization, but survive in a deeper and more permanent sense as a plastic creation which is still alive because it still has power to move the feelings.

The grasping and formulation of the concept of plastic quality as an essential element in architectural design—though always subject to the limitations arising from the eminently utilitarian nature of the art of building—is undoubtedly the task to be given priority by architects, and professional education for the final overcoming of the misconceptions responsible for the survival, in so many quarters, of the lack of understanding earlier described.

The work of CIAM and UIA has restored the sound functional basis of architecture. With few exceptions, however—the most notable being
Le Corbusier whose whole work is instinct with plastic sense but whose clear and insistent demand, from the first, that architecture be recognized as something more than merely utilitarian, does not yet appear to have been grasped—architects have still to accord unequivocal and long overdue recognition to the legitimacy of the plastic intention, conscious or not, implicit in any work of architecture worthy of the name, whether it be popular or with aspirations to style.

To arrive at a correct appreciation of how and how far the plastic aim should enter into the complex process leading to the finished architectonic concept, a necessary preliminary is a properly objective definition of what architecture really is.

It is building first and foremost, but building designed to order space for a particular purpose and in a particular spirit. It is in respect of these two considerations that architecture is seen to be a form of plastic art in addition. The broad lines of a design will be dictated by engineering and technical considerations, the setting, the function to be served or the programme. Nevertheless within the range of values delimited by these major factors, the selection of the appropriate plastic form for each detail in terms of the ultimate unity of the conception, is still left to the subjective choice of the architect, and on that account he must rank as an artist.

It is the plastic aim which such a choice implies which distinguishes architecture from mere building.

In the second place architecture is also necessarily conditioned by the age, by physical and social environment, by the techniques imposed by the materials used, and lastly by the objects in view and the finance available for the execution of the work, i.e. by the programme proposed.

It may therefore be defined as building informed by the notion of ordering the space plastically in terms of a given epoch, setting, technique and programme.

We thus see that there is a necessary relation between plastic intention and the other factors involved; and it may further be noted that both categories of consideration are constantly and simultaneously in mind from the first beginning of the architectural plan to the final completion of the work, thereby justifying the traditional classification of architecture as one of the fine arts. With that point settled, we can now subject the question to more detailed consideration with a view to elucidating, from historical examples and from contemporary experience, how the architect sets about conceiving and planning his works.

The first thing to note is the existence of two distinct, and a first sight mutually incompatible approaches to the problem. The first is the organic-functional in which the prime consideration is compliance with the functional imperatives and the work develops like a living organism; the architectural expression of the whole depending on a rigorous process of selection of the plastic forms of the parts which constitute it and the way in which they are combined. Against this we have the approach in terms of the plastic ideal, which, while not going to the extreme (academism) of providing for, or
adjusting the functional factors in terms of preconceived plastic forms, does imply the prior intention, while handling the functional aspect logically, to secure ideal or plastically pure, free or geometrical forms.

In the first type, the beauty burgeons like blossom, the most significant historical example being the Gothic type of architecture; in the second type the beauty is disciplined and restrained like a cut crystal and the purest type of it is still classical architecture in the strict sense.

The distinctive features of modern constructional technique are the independence of the framework in relation to the walls and cantilever flooring giving complete freedom in the layout of the floor plans on "physiologically functional" lines exclusively (i.e. in terms of future use) while allowing of relatively independent, or plastic-functional treatment of the façades. The effect of this will be to make it possible, for the first time in the history of architecture to achieve full reconciliation of the two approaches instanced, which have hitherto been mutually incompatible and therefore rightly regarded as irreconcilable. Conceived of, from the beginning as a living organism, the general design of a building is formulated and the details worked out in strictly functional terms, i.e. with scrupulous regard for the considerations of engineering calculations, constructional technique, the physical and social setting, and the general programme; but the organic unity facilitated by frame construction and the ensuing relative freedom in design and composition allow of the pursuit, in addition, of an ideal plastic purity.

It is in the combination of the two approaches, with balanced interplay of free or geometrical forms, whether now flowing, now restrained, achieved incidentally or aimed at deliberately that the attraction and the virtually unlimited possibilities of architectural expression in the modern idiom reside. No question, of course, arises of any pursuit of originality for its own sake and at all costs, nor of wasting time on a foolish search for the "daring" solution, the converse of real art, but of innovation on legitimate lines exploiting the full potentialities of the new technique in pursuance of the sacred obsession, distinguishing all truly creative artists, to reveal as yet unsuspected realms of plastic form.

Thus, then, while architecture in practice is, and is becoming increasingly, a science, there is nevertheless, a fundamental distinction between it and the other applied sciences in that the subjective feeling of the design is constantly in play. As we have seen, it becomes operative at the stages of planning and execution alike, in the repeated choice, between two or more possible answers to any question of general or detailed design—of equal functional validity in terms of the techniques involved, but differing in plastic quality—of that which best accords with the original conception. This choice, which is the very essence of architecture, is made by the architect as an artist exclusively since from the technological point of view any of the solutions, considered in its basic material aspects, would be equally satisfactory.

Recognition of the legitimate place in the functional concept of modern architecture of plastic intention, operative simultaneously with the other
considerations determining design, can contribute decisively to the resolution of the false dilemma which occupies the minds of so many critics and artists, namely, whether art should be exclusively either purposive or its own justification. If the principle enunciated is valid for the most utilitarian of the arts, it must be all the more so for painting and sculpture, both of which are inherently less prone to the overriding of artistic by non-artistic considerations; there is thus no incompatibility between the modern notion of "art for art's sake" and that of "social art".

In this context, however, a distinction of primary importance is that between causation and essence, as in this preliminary differentiation there lies the key to the problem before us. From the point of view of causation art is indisputably a dependent phenomenon, its manifestations being always governed by factors external to itself, as in the specific case of architecture where they are the physical, social and economic setting, the age, the technique employed, the resources available and the programme adopted or imposed. It is, however, equally true that as regards its "essence"—the quality which distinguishes it from other human activities—art is independent of extraneous considerations. The creation of a work of art is ultimately reducible to a series of choices between two colours, two tonalities, two forms, two volumes, two alternatives already reduced to their purest functional terms and both equally suitable for the end in view and in that final choice the only consideration operative is the artistic—art for art's sake.

Although artistic creation is a spontaneous activity of man and, as such, an integral and significant element in the collective "culture" developed by the social entity to which the artist belongs, its truly idiosyncratic nature necessarily makes it a thing of a different kind from the other facets of the culture and sometimes, accordingly, rebellious against the rigid frameworks of philosophical systematization.

The point is that, whereas "original" science is the revelation of part of an always greater whole transcending the scope of intelligible delimitation and the scientist accordingly a kind of accredited intermediary between Man and the rest of Nature, "original" art—or, better, the work of a particular artist—is a self-sufficient whole and the artist the true creator and sole lord of what is a separate and personal world, since it did not exist before him and will never be repeated in that identical form. Hence on the one hand the underlying humility, real or feigned, of the scientist's attitude, and on the other, the egocentricity and innate pride, overt or concealed, which are the basic qualities in the personality of every genuine artist.

It is useless too, to seek a basis for discrimination by asking for whom the artist is working: whether he serves a cause or a man, and whether his motive be profit or the pursuit of an ideal, at bottom, if he is a true artist, he will be working for himself, for however much he may pant for the stimulus of recognition, understanding and applause, it is from the exercise of his creative powers that he really draws life.
The idea that art for art’s sake is necessarily the antithesis of social art is as meaningless as the commonly assumed antinomy between figurative and abstract art. The term has long since lost its seemingly inherent romantic, "anti-society" implications, to signify the clear and austere impression of the values in which the essence of a work of art consists.

All genuine plastic art must always be primarily art for art’s sake since the note which will distinguish it from the other elements in the culture will be its disinterested and irresistible urge to express itself in a particular plastic form.

If all the other factors directly or indirectly necessary for the production of a work of art, including the social factor, are present in full measure but the disinterested and irresistible urge to adopt a particular form is lacking, the resultant work may well be a sound exercise in anything you like, but it will not be of major significance as art. That then, is the differential factor which, in the final analysis, distinguishes the work of art. It is the work's informing principle, its vital spark, and not, as is so often supposed, a kind of quintessence; and, as has been pointed out already, it is the quality which will ensure a work’s survival, not as testimony to an outworn civilization but as something living and eternally significant when the other factors which presided at its inception have lost their relevance.

Modern superations of the contradictions implicit, for instance, in the traditional antagonism, now overcome, of the "plastic" and "organic-functional" concepts of architecture or in such false antinomies as that between art for art’s sake and social art are not merely happy accidents. They are, on the contrary, items in a general process of polarization tending to the resolution of the whole tangle of long-standing contradictions which, though varying in nature, all have their origin in the limitations imposed by the technique of "craft" production. The origins of this process are social and economic and it is a function of the productive capacity of the still newborn industrial age in which, for the first time in human history, it is physically possible through mass production, to resolve the basic dilemma of the clash of interests between the individual and the community. Mass production not merely permits but demands, on pain of loss of full potential yield, that the question of individual well-being be envisaged no longer in terms of the few but of all, and to such a point the notion of the general interest no longer implies that of sacrifice by the individual for a long-term object but becomes paradoxically identical with the permanent personal interests of each individual.

The true industrial age will come to pass not on the basis of willed charity and solidarity between mankind but on the material plane through the imposition on the world of modern mass production technique. The shape it will take is visible to anyone with the objectivity to rise above the calculated alarmism of the daily press; and at the very moment when the contradictions of the modern world seem to be swelling to a climax, it foreshadows an early trend towards a new balance of forces in obedience to a process of gradual
approximation; a happy term for it might perhaps be the theory of convergent consequences.

Thus, to take an example, the bases for the multiple isolationisms of the modern world are group common denominators—American enterprise, the vast effort of the Soviets, the zeal of the Church in defence of her spiritual prerogatives, British experience and common sense, French discernment, the culture and mental acuteness of the Latin peoples, Germany's amazing resilience, the natural balance of the Nordic peoples and the new spirit of Islam and the Orient. At present all these groups see themselves as incompatibles, each seeking in some way to oppose or absorb or isolate another. Yet, despite the seeming impossibility of reconciling them, the truth more probably is that all are converging on a common meeting ground and towards a new and world-wide synthesis.

The evolutionary process will then shift to another plane, to the healthy rhythm of a cycle without precedent—the most productive and the most human in history,
I have been asked to address you as a sculptor and it might therefore be appropriate if I began by trying to give you some idea of my own attitude to the art I practise. Why have I chosen to be a sculptor, or why has the art of sculpture chosen me as an exponent of its special aims? If I can answer that question satisfactorily I may be in a better position to answer some of the specific questions which are before this conference.

Some become sculptors because they like using their hands, or because they love particular materials, wood or stone, clay or metal and like working in those materials—that is they like the craft of sculpture—I do. But beyond this one is a sculptor because one has a special kind of sensibility for shapes and forms, in their solid physical actuality. I feel that I can best express myself, that I can best give outward form to certain inward feelings or ambitions by the manipulation of solid materials—wood, stone, or metal. The problems that arise in the manipulation of such materials, problems of mass and volume, of light in relation to form and of volume in relation to space, the problem of continually learning to grasp and understand form more completely in its full spatial reality, all these are problems that interest me as an artist and which I believe I can solve by cutting down, building up or welding together solid three-dimensional materials.

But what is my purpose in such activity? It might, of course, be merely a desire to amuse myself, to kill time or create a diversion. But then I should not find it necessary, as I do, to exhibit my sculpture publicly, to hope for its sale and for its permanent disposition either in a private house, a public building or an open site in a city. My desire for such a destination for my work shows that I am trying, not merely to express my own feelings or emotions for my own satisfaction, but also to communicate those feelings or emotions to my fellowmen. Sculpture, even more than painting (which generally speaking, is restricted to interiors) is a public art, and for that reason I am at once involved in those problems which we have met here to discuss—the relation of the artist to society—more particularly, the relation of the artist to the particular form of society which we have at this moment of history.

There have been periods—periods which we would like to regard as ideal prototypes of society—in which that relationship was simple. Society had a unified structure, whether communal or hierarchic, and the artist was a member of that society with a definite place and a definite function.
There was a universal faith, and an accepted interplay of authority and function which left the artist with a defined task, and a secure position. Unfortunately our problems are not simplified in that way. We have a society which is fragmented, authority which resides in no certain place, and our function as artists is what we make it by our individual efforts. We live in a transitional age, between one economic structure of society which is in dissolution and another economic order of society which has not yet taken definite shape. As artists we do not know who is our master; we are individuals seeking patronage, sometimes from another individual, sometimes from an organization of individuals—a public corporation, a museum, an educational authority—sometimes from the State itself. This very diversity of patronage requires, on the part of the modern artist, an adaptability or agility that was not required of the artist in a unified society.

But that adaptability is always in a vertical direction, always within a particular craft. One of the features of our industrialized society is specialization—the division of labour. This tendency has affected the arts, so that a sculptor is expected to stick to his sculpture, a painter to his painting. This was not always so. In other ages—the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, to mention only European examples—the artist's talent was more general, and he would turn his hand, now to metalwork or jewellery, now to sculpture, now to painting or engraving. He might not be equally good in all these media, and it is possible, that we have discovered good reasons for confining our talents within narrower bounds. There are certainly painters who would never be capable of creating convincing works of art in three-dimensional forms, just as there are sculptors who could not convey the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two dimensional surface. We know now that there are specific kinds of sensibility, belonging to distinct psychological types, and for that reason alone a certain degree of specialization in the arts is desirable.

The specialization, due to psychological factors in the individual artist, may conflict with the particular economic structure of society in which the artist finds himself. Painting and sculpture, for example, might be regarded as unnecessary trimmings in a society committed by economic necessity to an extreme utilitarian form of architecture. The artist might then have to divert his energies to other forms of production—to industrial design, for example. No doubt the result would be the spiritual impoverishment of the society reduced to such extremes, but I only mention this possibility to show the dependence of art on social and economic factors. The artist should realize how much he is involved in the changing social structure, and how necessary it is to adapt himself to that changing structure.

From this some might argue that the artist should have a conscious and positive political attitude. Obviously some forms of society are more favourable to art than others, and it would be argued the artist should on that account take up a position on the political front. I would be more certain of his duty in this respect if we could be scientifically certain in our political analysis, but it must be obvious, to the most superficial observer, that the relation
between art and society has always been a very subtle one, and never of the kind that could be consciously planned. One can generalize about the significant relationship between art and society at particular points in history, but beyond describing such relationships in vague terms such as “organic” and “integrated”, one cannot get near to the secret. We know that the Industrial Revolution has had a detrimental effect on the arts, but we cannot tell what further revolution or counter-revolution would be required to restore the health of the arts. We may have our beliefs, and we may even be actively political on the strength of those beliefs; but meanwhile we have to work, and to work within the contemporary social structure.

That social structure varies from country to country, but I think that broadly speaking we who are participating in this Conference are faced with mixed or transitional economies. In my own country, at any rate, the artist has to satisfy two or three very different types of patron. In the first place there is the private patron, the connoisseur or amateur of the arts, who buys a painting or a piece of sculpture to indulge his own taste, to give himself a private and exclusive pleasure. In addition there are now various types of public patron, the museums or art galleries that buy in the name of the people: the people of a particular town, or the people of the county as a whole. Quite different from such patrons are those architects, town-planners, organizations of various sorts who buy either from a sense of public duty, or to satisfy some sense of corporate pride.

This diversity of patronage must be matched by a certain flexibility in the artist. If I am asked to make a piece of sculpture for (a) a private house; (b) a museum; (c) a church; (d) a school; (e) a public garden or park, and (f) the offices of some large industrial undertaking, I am faced by six distinct problems. No doubt the Renaissance sculptor had similar problems, but not of such a complexity; whereas the medieval sculptor had to satisfy only one type of patronage—that of the Church. Flexibility was always demanded by the function and destination of the piece of sculpture, but that is a difficulty which the artist welcomes as an inspiration. The difficulty that might cause the modern artist some trouble is due to the shift, at a moment's notice, from the freedom of creation which he enjoys as an individual working for the open market of private patrons to the restrictions imposed on him when he accepts a public commission. It is usually assumed that if sufficient commissions were forthcoming from public authorities, all would be well with the arts. It is an assumption that takes no account of the fact that the tradition of modern art is an individualistic one, a craft tradition passing from artist to artist. We have only to look eastwards, beyond the Iron Curtain, to see that State patronage on an authoritarian basis requires quite a different tradition—a tradition in which the State that pays the artist calls the tune, in other words, determines the style. I am not making any judgment of the relative merits of the two traditions, but I think it should be made quite clear that the transition from private patronage to public patronage would mean a radical reorganization of the ideals and practice of art. We have to choose
between a tradition which allows the artist to develop his own world of formal inventions, to express his own vision and sense of reality; and one which requires the artist to conform to an orthodoxy, to express a doctrinaire interpretation of reality. It may be that in return for his loss of freedom the artist will be offered economic security; it may be that with such security he will no longer feel the need to express a personal philosophy, and that a common philosophy will still allow a sufficient degree of flexibility in interpretation to satisfy the artist's aesthetic sensibility. I think most artists, however, would prefer to feel their way towards a solution of this problem, and not to have a solution imposed on them by dictation. The evolution of art cannot be forced, nor can it be retarded by an obstinate adherence to outworn conventions.

We already have considerable experience in the State patronage of art, even in countries which are still predominantly individualistic in their economy. I have myself executed various pieces of sculpture for public authorities—schools, colleges, churches, etc.—and although I have had to adapt my conception to the function of the particular piece of sculpture, I have been able to do this without any surrender of what I would regard as my personal style. Such pieces of sculpture may meet with violent criticism from the public, and I might be influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by such criticism. That is my own look-out, and I do not suggest that the artist should be indifferent to such criticism. But the public is also influenced by the work of art, and there is no doubt that the public authority which has the vision and the courage to commission forward-looking works of art, the work of art with what might be called prophetic vision, is doing more for art than the public authority that plays for safety and gives the public what the public does not object to. But can we rely on such courage and initiative in public bodies in a democratic society? Isn't there a primary duty in such a society to make sure that the people have the interest and eagerness that demand the best art just as surely as they demand the best education or the best housing? It is a problem beyond the scope of this address, but not beyond the scope of Unesco—the renewal of the sources of artistic inspiration among the people at large.

I turn now to technical matters more within my special competence as a sculptor. When sculpture passes into the public domain, the sculptor is then involved, not merely in a simple artist-patron relationship, but also in a co-operation with other artists and planners. The piece of sculpture is no longer a thing in itself, complete in its isolation, it is a part of a larger unit, a public building, a school or a church, and the sculptor becomes one artist in a team collaborating in the design as a whole. Ideally that collaboration should begin from the moment the building is first conceived, and neither the planner of the town nor the architect of the particular building, should formulate their plans without consulting the sculptor (or the painter if he too is involved). I mean that the placing of a piece of sculpture, in a public square, on or in a building, may radically alter the design as as whole. Too often in modern building the work of art is an afterthought, a piece of decora-
tion added to fill a space that is felt to be too empty. Ideally the work of art should be a focus round which the harmony of the whole building revolves, inseparable from the design, structurally coherent and aesthetically essential. The fact that the town planner or the architect can begin without a thought of the artists he is going to employ to embellish his building shows how far away we are from that integral conception of the arts which has been characteristic of all the great epochs of art.

Assuming that such co-operation is sought and given from the beginning of an architectural conception, then there are many considerations which the sculptor must bring into play. He will want to consider both external proportions and internal spatial volumes in relation to the size and style of sculpture that might be required, not merely the decorative function of sculpture in relation to formal quantities, but also the possibility of utilitarian functions. Utilitarian is perhaps not the right word, but I am thinking of the didactic and symbolic functions of sculpture in Gothic architecture, inseparable from the architectural conception itself. The sculptor will also want to consider his own materials in relation to those to be employed by the architect, so that he can secure the effective harmony or contrast of textures and colours, or fantasy and utility, of freedom and necessity as one might say.

These are perhaps obvious rights for a sculptor to claim in the conception and execution of a composite work of art, but nothing is such a symptom of our disunity, of our cultural fragmentation, as this divorce of the arts. The specialization characteristic of the modern artist seems to have as its counterpart the atomization of the arts. If a unity could be achieved, say in the building of a new town, and planners, architects, sculptors, painters and all other types of artist could work together from the beginning, that unity, one feels, would nevertheless be artificial and lifeless because it would have been consciously imposed on a group of individuals, and not spontaneously generated by a way of life. That is perhaps the illusion underlying all our plans for the diffusion of culture. One can feed culture to the masses, but that does not mean that they will absorb it. In the acquisition of culture there must always be an element of discovery, of self-help; otherwise culture remains a foreign element, something outside the desires and necessities of everyday life. For these reasons I do not think we should despise the private collector and the dealer who serves him; their attitude to a work of art, though it may include in the one case an element of possessiveness or even selfishness and in the other case an element of profit-making, of parasitism, nevertheless such people circulate works of art in natural channels, and in the early stages of an artist’s career they are the only people who are willing to take a risk, to back a young artist with their personal judgment and faith. The State patronage of art is rarely given to young and unknown artists, and I cannot conceive any scheme, outside the complete communization of the art profession such as exists in Russia, which will support the artist in his early career. The present system in western Europe is a very arbitrary system, and entails much suffering and injustice. The artist has often to support himself for years
by extra artistic work, usually by teaching, but this, it seems to me is prefer­able to a complete subordination of the artist to some central authority, which might dictate his style and otherwise interfere with his creative free­dom. It is not merely a question of freedom. With the vast extension of means of communication, the growth of internationalism, the intense flare of publicity which falls on the artist once he has reached any degree of renown, he is in danger of losing a still more precious possession—his privacy. The creative process is in some sense a secret process. The conception and experimental elaboration of a work of art is a very personal activity, and to suppose that it can be organized and collectivized like any form of industrial or agricultural production, is to misunderstand the very nature of art. The artist must work in contact with society, but that contact must be an intimate one. I believe that the best artists have always had their roots in a definite social group or community, or in a particular region. We know what small and intimate communities produced the great sculpture of Athens, or Chartres, or Florence. The sculptor belonged to his city or his guild. In our desire for international unity and for universal co-operation we must not forget the necessity for preserving this somewhat paradoxical relation between the artist’s freedom and his social function, between his need for the sympathy of a people and his dependence on internal springs of inspiration.

I believe that much can be done, by Unesco and by organizations like the Arts Council in my own country, to provide the external conditions which favour the emergence of art. I have said—and it is the fundamental truth to which we must always return—that culture (as the word implies) is an organic process. There is no such thing as a synthetic culture, or if there is, it is a false and impermanent culture. Nevertheless, on the basis of our knowledge of the history of art, on the basis of our understanding of the psychology of the artist, we know that there are certain social conditions that favour the growth and flourishing of art, others that destroy or inhibit that growth. An organization like Unesco, by investigating these laws of cultural develop­ment, might do much to encourage the organic vitality of the arts, but I would end by repeating that by far the best service it can render to the arts is to guarantee the freedom and independence of the artist.
The Painter
in Modern Society

by Jacques Villon

At Geneva, in 1948, under the auspices of the Rencontres Internationales, an important discussion was held on the position of the artist in contemporary society. The discussion was opened by a number of persons of distinction, qualified to speak with authority on the subject: Messrs. Jean Cassou, Thierry Maulnier, Ernest Ansermet, Elio Vittorini, Charles Morgan, Gabriel Marcel, Max Pol Fouchet, Adolphe Portmann. They analysed the vast and intricate question of art and artists, in harmony with or at variance with society, from all possible points of view. The discussion was pursued on a high philosophical level.

The present Conference has been convened under the auspices of Unesco, and it is Italy we have to thank for the magnificent setting in which we are now assembled. We can never adequately express our gratitude. Our contribution will inevitably be a humbler one, for we cannot hope to emulate the achievements of the Geneva Conference.

We shall leave aside general ideas, and confine ourselves to discussing the position of the painter and the sculptor in contemporary society from a purely practical standpoint; we shall try to define their relations with: (a) the public authorities; (b) the intermediaries—art critics, art dealers, etc.; (c) the general public.

The artists assembled here hail from various countries and continents and, though it may be true that problems differ according to geographical conditions, some are nevertheless common to artists all over the world. I am therefore confident that my experience as a painter—I have lived in France—will be similar to that of artists from other countries. I propose to deal mainly not with artistic creation and its underlying philosophy, but rather with the material factors which influence the development of art.

In France, around the turn of the century, it was the fashion amongst young painters and sculptors to demand that the fine arts be freed of all connexion with the State. Every artist, we used to say, must face certain risks, and provide as best he can for his material needs. In the world of today, now becoming more and more highly organized, such a position is no longer tenable. Whether they like it or not artists, like the rest of their fellow-men, are being forced more and more, as time goes on, to resort to trade unions, social insurance schemes, etc., to all the guarantees and means of protection, in fact, which the tenor of modern life renders essential. As a result, there can be no doubt that we shall be forced, before long, to unite in defence of
our interests, and appeal for State support. Not to ask the State to become our patron—for that would interfere with our freedom of conception and execution—but only to support us financially, and take the place of our wealthy contemporaries, potential Maecenases, who might, in the ideal society, have become disinterested art lovers.

Artists have always been the chroniclers of the society in and by which they have lived. They represented society and knew that they did. Their art has never been used for championing protests or claims, but for giving, expression to the lofty spiritual aspirations of their contemporaries. Artists have always taken it for granted that they should form part of society.

All artists, great and small, answered the needs of anyone requiring their services. Theirs was a practical trade, and they would turn their hand to the task of the moment, undertaking to paint anything from portraits to wall panels, from decorative figures to imitation marble. Those who, unlike Rubens or da Vinci, were unfitted for diplomacy or the study of ballistics, applied themselves to such minor tasks untroubled by qualms or false pride.

Artists were legion, and they painted pictures of all kinds at a low price, some getting their mothers or wives to do the first rough sketch for them. Then gradually, towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, painting and sculpture ceased to be a trade. The professional artist was no longer a craftsman. Lithographers and photographers became more and more numerous. Gersaint was no more alone in distributing the manna of beauty; he received the active assistance of the colporteur.

In our times, with the exception of those who are already firmly established, the artist’s struggle to earn a livelihood is becoming so desperate that it can no longer be ignored. We cannot allow the great artistic heritage of the past to be lost; it is our duty to preserve it and hand it down to future generations. The Church, the Court and the rich private art patrons have disappeared, and we must find someone to take their place. So it is that we call on the State for increased support for artists. It is now on the State that we are forced to rely.

But who is to be eligible for State aid?

Here we come up against the question of how to select the members of the artists’ profession; and it is here that the real difficulty begins. In France, for example, several formulas have been proposed for definition of the professional artist.

The Commission on Intellectual Workers in the Ministry of Labour gives the following definition: “A professional artist is one who devotes his life and work to art.”

The artist’s position in relation to the obligations of society, are defined as follows: “A professional artist, from the point of view of society, is one who, after spending a great part of his youth on the study of his art, often under great difficulties, then devotes the best years of his life to the exercise of this thankless profession, which seldom, enables him to provide for his old age, and entitles him to none of the advantages provided by the State.
to other categories of workers." The ironical note in this lengthy definition is sufficient indication that the position of the artist in society is that of a "poor relation".

Our colleague, the painter Yves Alix, proposes this definition: "The professional artist, in the visual arts, is the artist who alone, and without assistance, conceives and executes original works of art, and whose main activity is devoted to art."

From the fiscal point of view, the professional artist, in the eyes of the tax inspector or collector, should be the one who, by the exercise of his profession, runs the risk of his professional outlay in some years exceeding his professional income. In such cases, he can survive only by drawing on savings. In essentials, in fact, "the professional artist is one who lives by his art".

For a small minority of free-lance artists, living in the rue de la Boétie and thereabouts, the position is clear. It is clear, too, for a number of teachers, who are chosen for their talent, and devote themselves to passing on to others their experience and their knowledge of art. But even they must possess creative talent. Those who spend their time reproducing, adapting or transposing into the same or another medium works neither conceived nor inspired by themselves are classed as craftsmen, technicians, copyists, or artists' assistants, and are protected by existing laws. Nevertheless, many of them have a struggle to exist, and have to take up a subsidiary occupation to make ends meet. The important point is that this subsidiary occupation shall not prevent the recognition of their true vocation.

We are all of us, more or less, familiar with each other's work. And we can usually assess those whose work we do not know sufficiently accurately from one example to decide whether or not an artist should be accepted in our midst. In France, a commission for assessment of professional skill has been established for this purpose by the Ministry of Labour, and it considers each individual case in the light of the applicant's replies to a detailed questionnaire. The purpose of the commission is to control the application of the old-age pension regulations. Obviously all schools should be represented, and every member of the commission should strive to appreciate even works with which he is out of sympathy.

The first results of the census show that the number of professional artists is relatively small—three or four thousand painters, a thousand or so sculptors. Young artists, just beginning their career, are to be classed as students; and are to be entitled to the same aid, up to the age of 30, and the same assistance; and on becoming painters, they will (if these measures are ever applied) be exempt from all taxes during the first three years of the exercise of their profession.

For students of the main art schools, the problem is thus a simple one. But what about self-taught artists? Before they can be granted the same privileges as art students tested by examination, they will be asked to submit work proving their ability, together with testimonials from established painters. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, most artists would prefer to leave
the selection and approval of young artists to their older colleagues, and that membership of one of the accepted art schools should not be compulsory. Young art students are entitled to social security. Why should they be denied the benefits of free medical service and social insurance?

In defining the artists' profession, therefore, it must be very clearly specified that his subsidiary occupation, on the proceeds of which he lives, is secondary. Also that the talent of the applicant must be proved.

In addition to these questions, there is the question of the professional card. It is dangerous to apply this system, tempting though it may be, for it would play into the hands of the majority, condone irregular trafficking, overt or concealed, open the door to claims, and leave a loophole for unfair discrimination in the issue of cards. It would be fatal if art, so entirely a matter of discrimination and imponderables were to be classified alphabetically, or commissions be given to artists by the drawing of lots. For art, after all, is much more than a mere profession.

The artists' profession, once it is clearly established, must be considered from three different aspects, the social, the fiscal, and the aesthetic. Socially, the main consideration is that of security; financially, certain adjustments will have to be made: abolition of licences, spreading of receipts over several years, increased allowance for professional expenses. Aesthetically, there can be no kind of control except perhaps a stipulation that some attention be paid to the work of accepted masters. As we have already said aesthetic impartiality is a sine qua non; the first consideration must be professional talent.

Another point: artists incur risks, and are entitled to compensation. Whilst other professions have their social insurance schemes, old-age pensions and health insurance, artists have none. Not that we are not entitled to it—we are; but before we can claim it, we have to pay the employer's contribution, which places an excessive burden on us. Could the State not pay it for us? It has been suggested, in France, that the employer's contribution might be paid from the public domain, from which an artist's fund would be built up. Fifty years after an artist's death his work falls into the public domain, which is exploited at present by art dealers and timid publishers who scorn to build for the future, by giving effective support to the spiritual heirs of past glories. The exploitation of works which have fallen into the public domain would cease to be free, and the percentage paid on the work of dead artists would be used to confer on live artists the dignity which is theirs by right. For it is the artists, after all, who constitute a country's spiritual wealth, who win for it sympathy and friendship, and perpetuate the memory, of its glorious past. To take a common example: the glory of Greece, Egypt, and Persia to this day derives from their artists, whereas, if the exploits of their generals had not been recorded, even their names would by now have passed into oblivion.

Unfortunately, there are too many vested interests involved: those of the publishers, the art dealers, and the antique dealers. (Although, before 1801, antiquarians were subject to a 4.75 per cent sales tax.) A solution could be
reached if all who had the benefit of paintings, sculptures, drawings, etc., made a contribution to an "arts fund"—which, incidentally, they would probably be prepared to do. On the other hand, tax exemption, equal to the value of the gift, should be granted to all donors to museums and galleries. Note that, in France, the fine arts budget allocates 50 million francs annually for commissioning works of art and purchasing paintings and sculptures.

As regards family allowances, artists could join the free professions fund, and pay a contribution based on their declared income. A mutual insurance scheme, such as that already existing for the teaching profession, could be organized.

It must be admitted, however, that, in France at all events, the Ministry of Labour does not help matters by peremptorily condemning the exercise of a subsidiary profession: "What is this casual profession, with no official status?" We are reminded of Joseph Prudhomme, who wrote: "Artists should be forbidden to exercise such a profession. Of what use is it?" The fact is that this subsidiary profession serves the very vital purpose of enabling artists to work and live. In the case of France, it is the artists who win for our country friendship; it often stands us in good stead in times of crises, and our ambassadors—the professional ones—sometimes fail to preserve it.

In defining the relations between officially accepted artists and the public authorities, the following points, amongst others, will have to be touched on: (a) State purchases; (b) compulsory allocation of works of art to public buildings; (c) measures to promote the production of works of art and their distribution; (d) State recognition of the artist's status in society.

How can the public authorities support and assist artists?

Firstly by purchases, commissions, study and travel fellowships, orders for decoration, tapestries and stained-glass windows; and by the institution of a national prize. But is not this what France is already doing? Orders placed by the State would be paid for out of the fine arts budget, by a compulsory one per cent tax on State orders. At present, only work done in buildings used for educational purposes is subject to this tax; but it could be extended to all artists' work paid for by the State, to provide means of promoting the production and distribution of works of art. The important point is that a favourable attitude must be created, so that the artist may no longer be haunted by a feeling of insecurity.

As there is a special budget for tapestry work, large numbers of designs could be sent to the Aubusson, Gobelins and Beauvais weavers for execution. The one per cent tax on orders given to architects working on buildings belonging to State educational establishments is used to cover important work commissioned from sculptors and painters. Many municipal authorities, in particular the Paris municipality, commission monuments and paintings, and purchase works of art. The big shipping companies and industrial firms are also generous patrons of the arts. The scheme whereby the Director-General for Arts and Letters receives the proceeds of a one per cent tax on
work done in buildings belonging to the Education Ministry could with advantage be extended to other ministries.

Finally, as regards the status of the artist in society, a card index with photographs should be drawn up. All artists, moreover, should have easy access to information on the social benefits provided by the State for their advantage.

Each country has different views about a statute for artists, and the attitude of governments varies considerably; some countries possess a large body of legislation concerning the arts, others have none at all; others again delegate their powers in this field to technical organizations. According to the information I have been able to gather (I must apologize for any inaccuracies) America, for example, does not automatically recognize copyright, except when a work is specifically registered. On the other hand, there are in America trade unions whose sole purpose is to provide material assistance for artists; as well as other unofficial organizations such as Artist's Equity Association, American Artist's Association, etc., museums purchase works from everyone. Every town has its arts club associations. Artist's Equity requires its members to reply to a questionnaire giving all details to an office, where this information is treated as confidential. This office will then solve any disputes which may arise, and will even determine minimum sale prices for works of art.

In Czechoslovakia the trade union is all-powerful; and it is impossible to buy canvas or paints without a professional card. In England the powers of the State are delegated to the Arts Council. In Belgium, the organization is the same as in France, although there appear to be a large number of people in favour of professional cards for artists. In Scandinavia, artists receive from a special bank advances on paintings and sculptures commissioned. (These advances might be compared with the advances given in France by the Crédit Municipal.)

In Switzerland it is sufficient to subscribe regularly to a special fund to have the right to receive a pension at a certain age. In Russia the artist is protected but has to put himself at the disposal of the State. Furthermore there exists in almost every country associations which take care of the interests of artists, such as syndicates. In France, the Society of Professional Painters and Engravers, the Society of Professional Sculptors, the Arts Syndicate, the Union of Plastic Arts, the National Syndicate for Creative and Professional Artists, Creative and Decorative Artists.

It would be extremely useful if an organization, with a wider scope, could be created, such as a federation comprising all professional artists. This organization, of an international character, would be like the one which groups musicians, architects, dramatic authors, writers, at an international level, outside of any political point of view. This prominent organization which comprises all national association would be recognized of public utility and could receive gifts and legacies. Other funds could be found by sales, lotteries, should it be necessary to use such means of fortune.
A few words now about the relations between creative artists and the intermediaries between them and the general public.

The role of the State, acting as patron, must, as we have seen, be completely devoid of all prejudice, either economic or aesthetic. The State must remain neutral. The ideal art dealer would have a lofty conception of his role and regard himself solely as a distributor of beauty; but we cannot in practice expect him to adopt the disinterested attitude of the princes and art patrons of the past, dealing with artists direct and paying them pensions.

As for the art critics, they are answerable only to their consciences. Some will be competent and honest, others ignorant and banal. The public will have little difficulty in recognizing them for what they are. It is the art dealer who has now become the chief intermediary between the artist and the art-loving public whose tastes he can guide. But the dealer will expect to retain his independence, for a dealer who took orders on how to spend his money would be reduced to the function of a State official. It might be possible to pass laws designed to control the activity of critics, and induce dealers to treat artists honestly, but I do not consider it desirable for the State to intervene in this way. Nevertheless, the artist alone is powerless, for it is only the dealer who can organize one-man or group exhibitions throughout the year, to reinforce the influence of the salons, which are too numerous and too crowded to leave a very definite mark on public taste.

Ingres, in a magnificent report to the Government in 1848, predicted the "Indépendants" by demanding access to the salons for all artists on condition only that their work did not offend the canons of public morality. There should be no jury, but only a commission to select works, to be grouped according to their tendencies. In view of the numerous salons existing in France this proposal is a tempting one. A single salon, whether permanent or periodical, would be preferable if it were possible to exclude from it all amateur painters, except those of real talent.

Should artists themselves help to promote the distribution of their works? Certainly they should. Unfortunately, the project for discussions and meetings to be held in a Maison des Artistes is still only at the initial stage. Critics would do well to encourage this plan. We all remember a similar project before the 1914 war, owing its inspiration to the group formed by Apollinaire, Maurice Raynal, André Salmon and the cubists; to say nothing of the Tuesday gatherings of the Closerie des Lilas, presided over by Paul Fort, and the Dîners de Passy. In any case, we are no longer living in the era when Claude Monet, in answer to a question from Walter Pach, the American artist and art critic, could reply: "Painters should paint and keep their mouths shut."

Once the artist's profession is organized, what will be his relation with the public? To influence public taste by means of meetings, visits to studios, exhibitions and journals? It may be objected that all this is already being done. That is true, but not in an organized way. Under present conditions, many
would-be helpers, particularly amongst the young, cannot help improve the situation as they would like to do.

But the chief link between art and the general public must always be architecture, which provides the setting for our everyday life, and into the pattern of which the work of the painter and sculptor will be fitted. Architecture, as the frame for our existence, exercises a direct educational influence.

The most effective means of increasing popular understanding of art is by wide distribution of reproductions, to acquaint people with works of art which are scattered among numerous collections and museums. But reproductions, although they can give an idea of the original, should never attempt to replace them, owing to inevitable differences of material and even of size. As regards modern art, we must take care lest only the works of artists under contract to dealers secure general distribution. It should be possible for an impartial board of established painters, such as I have referred to, to decide that a particular work of art by an unknown artist discovered in a salon or even in a studio, is entitled to reproduction and world-wide distribution.

Finally, we should emphasize the importance of a work of art from the point of view of its universal message. For this reason, it is essential that artists all over the world should establish permanent contacts to permit the exchange of ideas, works and persons. Also artists should, if possible, maintain relations with the main international organizations which would be the aim of an International Artists' Association for the Plastic Arts. I consider it therefore indispensable and urgent to establish such an association, in co-operation with national groups and with the support of outstanding artists. Artists unwilling to join a national association would no doubt agree to join a wider and more representative group.

An association of this kind would have an important part to play in establishing permanent contacts between the artists of various countries and representing them in the large international organizations. Examples of similar associations are provided not only by Unesco but by a number of professional organizations such as the PEN Club, the International Music Council, the International Theatre Institute, the International Association of Art Critics, the International Union of Architects, the International Museums Council, and the International Congresses of Modern Architecture. In this context, I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of permanent contacts between painters, sculptors and architects; and these can only be established internationally by means of suitable organizations. It would also be good to set up a documentation institute to centralize all contemporary and past artistic activity.

I need not mention museums, which must obviously play an all-important role in artistic life. You may remember Renoir's reply to someone who asked him where young artists should get their training: "But in the museum, bless my soul." And it has been so, in past ages, churches and palaces formed regular museums.
Some of the problems I have mentioned have been partially solved already in France and Italy; their methods might be taken as the basis for an improved international system. That is what we are about to discuss. I hope our discussions will lead to the desired results, and that the measures we propose may be applied throughout the world for the benefit of both artists and the general public.
The Painter's Rights in his Work

by Georges Rouault

To make this report as matter-of-fact as possible I will only mention the risks and dangers to which, in my 84 years of life, I have seen painters' work exposed, and even their dignity as human beings. These risks have become clear to me in litigation which I myself have been forced to embark upon as well in that where the work or reputation of certain of my colleagues was at stake, on the death of a wife, or in the event of marital separation, or from some other cause. Some of these dangers came to my knowledge during the time I was curator of the Gustave Moreau Museum, some during the 1914 war, when I had to put the late Ambroise Vollard's collection into safe storage at Saumur.

So here is the way in which, to my mind, the rights of the artist in his work can be stated.

THE ARTIST'S RIGHTS IN HIS WORK
BEFORE SALE

A work of art remains entirely a part of its creator until the day that it is detached from him by a voluntary act, freely agreed. At this moment it enters the commercial field, becomes a piece of property, and may become the subject of a contract for its sale or publication.

The artist's sovereign right to alter or destroy his work regardless of any expert's opinion lasts at least until the time when he surrenders it, thereby renouncing it and, by the same token, renouncing his option to keep it indefinitely, which derives from his complete control over it. From that moment the artist has only certain rights which I will refer to later, but I insist—and there is abundance of fact to justify me—that the creator of a work of art does retain "spiritual" rights over his works which are nothing to do with certain unscrupulous dealers.

Until the moment he hands over his work, thus exercising his moral right for the last time in a positive manner, the artist cannot admit that his rights are in any way shared or limited. That is to say—a work of art, as long as it is not detached from the person of its creator—should constitute an irremovable, inalienable asset, like his sketches in his studio which are in truth his tools of trade. Sale under distraint results in works entering the market against the artist's wish, before he would have consented to their
being seen by the public, and possibly before they have reached completion of which he is the sole judge.

Similarly in case of divorce or separation, no matter under what law the marriage was contracted, the artist should not be forced to part with one fraction, no matter how small, of his unpublished work for the benefit of his wife, or of her heirs if she is dead. Even if it is normal for the proceeds of a work sold during marriage to form part of the joint estate, it is intolerable that, if this comes to be divided, a painter should be forced to include in it works which were in his studio, since these are usually unfinished, or not altogether successful or kept simply as sketches. His right not to make his work public, which should be exercised with no reservations or limitations, would thus be nullified. Even in the case of finished works, their inclusion in the joint estate and their allocation to the wife could result in canvases being put on the market without the painter's express consent.

To avoid all ambiguity on this vital and difficult question in the lives of artists, it would be enough to lay down that the work itself, canvas or manuscript, never forms part of the joint estate, that it belongs to the artist alone because it is in a special sense a part of him, and that only the proceeds of works sold or published during marriage are inheritable assets which can be added to the joint estate under the terms of Common Law. The exclusion of such works from the joint estate should not oblige the artist to make monetary compensation for them when a division of the estate is made.

It is virtually impossible to place an exact value on works which may be destroyed or remain unfinished, or even not find purchasers, assuming that the artist should decide to publish them or put them up for sale. Few creative artists are in a financial position to buy back in advance, as it were, works that are destined to be destroyed or sold “for a song”. Therefore the only solution compatible with the artist's rights is to keep his creative work completely separate from the joint estate.

It is the only solution by which an artist who inherits from his deceased wife can avoid paying succession duty on his own works, the only solution that can avoid the absurd situation which can prevent a man and an artist like Pierre Bonnard from the charge of being a receiver of “stolen” goods in the form of work of his own that he was in the course of creating. Of course, if the artist made a gift to his wife or his children of specified works, such gift would not be questioned; if need be, a simple signed statement by the donor would be sufficient proof.

DROITS DE SUITE

I have said that in handing over his work the artist can retain certain rights in it. I must now state exactly what they are. Some, like the droit de suite have been established by various laws or conventions to which the artist endeavours to refer. I will only express one hope in the matter: that this right should
come to be respected in all other countries, and particularly in the United States, just as it is in France.

The right of the artist to retouch a work which is no longer his property remains to be defined—a complicated matter, it seems to me. This complexity is mainly due to the fact that a picture can never be exactly and in every way compared with a musical or literary work. When the creative artist alters these the original version can always continue to exist, whilst a picture may be changed in such a way that nothing is left of the original version but some inadequate sketches.

I can only ask the conference to examine this delicate question and to find a solution acceptable to all—which seems extremely difficult, since some styles of painting are idiosyncratic and what may suit one artist cannot be the rule for another.

REPRODUCTIONS OF THE ARTIST'S WORK

I will here confine myself to making a few suggestions about reproduction and exhibition rights. The moral right to see that no alteration is made to an artist's work, to safeguard each in its entirety, is usually exercised by controlling reproduction. Too often reproductions, particularly "colour" reproductions, that are complete travesties, are printed in large quantities. And it is even true that the larger the printing the greater is the risk of it being mediocre, and the more difficult becomes the fight against this mediocrity. Inadequately armed as he often is to defend himself even in his own country, once across its borders the artist of today is generally powerless.

Nothing short of an international agreement, completely binding and carrying the certain threat of severe penalties against publishers who do not have reproductions passed for the press, will put an end to practices which cheat the public by presenting them with masterpieces that have been distorted purely for the benefit of dishonest business men.

I know that critics are justifiably reluctant to waive their right to quote. That is another possible subject for consideration by the conference, which might set limits to the exercise of this right.

Using works of art for film purposes also raises very delicate problems. Although the painter is not a scenario-writer and cannot be asked to lay down the law on an art that he does not practise, yet everything in the production of a film, that might redound to the discredit of the works reproduced or might falsify their plastic value, ought to be submitted to him for examination and approval. The artist should have a right of veto over films based upon or consisting in reproductions of his works when his consent has not been obtained or when his observations have not been heeded.

Provision could be made for arbitration in case of persistent disagreement between painter and producer, but in settling such disputes, it must be
remembered that the matter is primarily a problem in plastics. Therefore the arbitrators must be specially chosen and the corresponding weight be given to their vote.

**EXHIBITIONS**

There is no law which authorizes an artist to oppose the exhibition of his works, he has therefore transferred their ownership. Neither his permission nor, *a fortiori*, his co-operation is required for exhibitions, the object of which is sometimes ideological or purely commercial, or which claim to classify artists, or even group them according to more or less questionable criteria.

It appears strange, then, that a painter may find himself thus styled under labels which he finds ridiculous or absurd, or associated with manifestations distasteful to his inmost feelings, or again the involuntary instrument of movements which dare to use his name even though he disapproves of them. It is essential therefore to assure the painter of the legal possibility of giving or of refusing his agreement and of making his protest heard in cases where, contrary to his intentions, use has been made of his person or of his name.

There remains to be considered the case of exhibitions without any ideological tendency or doctrinal pretensions, which offer the public, through some art gallery, collections which are insufficient, badly selected, or badly presented. A painter must be able to oppose artistic manifestations made in his name in material conditions apt to distort the meaning and result of his work; or at least when the organizers of these manifestations consider that they may dispense with his opinion, they should be required to indicate clearly on all announcements that the collection has been built up on the sole responsibility of the organizers. Should the artist not be able to obtain every reasonable satisfaction he desires from private exhibitions, he should at all events have the absolute right to refuse to take part in "salons" whose official nature cannot be contested and to which he has declined to contribute.

Lastly, instead of being obliged to go to law when another artist uses an identical surname and christian name, an already established artist should have the right to insist that a man who uses the same name be obliged to add the second christian name appearing on his birth certificate.

**RIGHTS OF HEIRS AND EXECUTORS**

With regard to works which have already passed to the public, the painter's heirs or the executors appointed for the purpose, exercise the moral rights in their defensive aspect of entitlement to ensure that a work's integrity is preserved, to oppose detrimental alterations to it, and to prosecute those responsible. Heirs and executors hold a position of prime importance in the matter of the publication of hitherto unpublished works.
The artist's absolute right to publish or withhold must necessarily pass to his continuators to enable them to decide the fate of works about which he gave no explicit instructions before his death. It is hard to conceive who, apart from the artist's natural heirs if he died intestate, or his appointees for the purpose if he left a will, could decide what should be preserved or destroyed or what should be published or withheld.

If the artist has not appointed by will persons he trusts to take the decision as to destruction or publication, the grave duty of making this delicate decision and seeking the necessary powers for the purpose will devolve upon his lawful heirs, in whom alone his legal personality survives and who inherit both his rights and his obligations. Provision might be made for direct intervention by the State when warranted by the incapacity or notorious unworthiness of the heirs; in such cases the State would impose some degree of trusteeship.

In this whole connexion it should be recalled that in the case of an author it is his heirs who are recognized by the law as entitled to take the decision as to posthumous publication. In this matter, the object should be to comply with the wishes of the artist. His decision must be respected when he designates explicitly those who are to exercise a part of his absolute rights after him. If he leaves no word, it is in accordance with an established tradition that his natural heirs should be called upon to perform this task.

THE FATE OF WORKS OF ART IN CASE OF WAR

I can never forget the anxiety caused me during the 1914 war by the formidable task of safeguarding the collections of the late Ambroise Vollard, containing, amongst others, very important works of Cézanne, Degas, Renoir, Bonnard, Picasso—I have already mentioned this. It was with the thought of some of those august predecessors of mine, and especially for their sake, that I sought and succeeded in finding the house to receive the 80 packages; the matter was urgent, so the Minister had said to Ambroise Vollard, who telegraphed to me to take immediate steps to find a place of safety.

During the last war I know that efforts were fortunately made, in France at least, to shield our national heritage from bombardments, not only State collections but those in the possession of private owners as well. It would be desirable, without waiting for such crises to arise, for every country to make provision in time of peace for the harbouring in suitable conditions of the works to be saved from total destruction in war; it would amount to a "spiritual" Red Cross, such as might have been created before 1871, 1914, or 1939. The works in question could be submitted to a jury, who would decide in due time, according to the importance of the items, the action it would be appropriate to take. Once it had been decided that the works could be put in a place of safety in the event of war, the person in possession of them
would be given an official mobilization order which, should the occasion arise, would enable him to deposit the works in the appointed place.

I must add that there are other dangers than that of destruction. During the recent conflict we saw others resulting from the tyranny of occupation. I myself was a victim, though many others suffered far more loss than I did. A civilization may be judged by the way in which it tolerates the destruction of masterpieces and accepts a return to the excesses of brute force without corrective and without taking any protective measures. Art is a deliverance even in the midst of suffering, but to those who have no feeling for intellectual freedom, art is a crime! The artist a madman? Wiser he is in truth than king or emperor!

The painter with a genuine love of his art is a king in his own right, however diminutive his kingdom, however small his own stature. This is true royalty, and cannot be wrested from you, Chardin, Corot, Cézanne. You need never abdicate the throne that you won without violence, and you will leave a happier memory than many a crowned monarch, for people will understand your work and feel its message, for all time, perhaps. For such artists it is not force, but love, that rules the world.

Were I able, I could say much on this subject, quoting many examples. A learned man once declared that the world held no more mysteries! Which goes to show that one can be very learned and yet very foolish.

In those realms of the spirit where the artist roams, everything is imponderable; yet subject to a stricter law than that of weight and measure, for it is a law inspired from within, not imposed from without. The artist can be at one with the people and with the nobility. Aloof though he may stand, there are hidden links that bind him to mankind more closely than the men of action so alien to him. In this mechanical century, surely art can sometimes be called a miracle?
Final Reports
General Report

by Thornton Wilder

There have been many international conferences for writers; there have been some for architects and artists working in the theatre; there have been few or none for painters, sculptors, composers and creative workers in the cinema. Here, for the first time, a truly international company of artists has met together. They are united here to study all the external conditions which obstruct the artist and to initiate action which may correct them. Above all, however, they have wished to reaffirm two principles which the world is in constant danger of forgetting: that the artist through his creation, has been in all times a force that draws men together and reminds them that the things which men have in common are greater than the things that separate them; and that the work of the artist is the clearest example of the operation of freedom in the human spirit.

It is most appropriate that this conference has taken place in Venice, for Venice is peculiarly the work of man and of the artist—without his energy and creativity this marvel of the world would be a marsh.

During our first three days here we were all filled with anxiety or enormous expectations: so many men and women, extreme individualists by the nature of their vocation, of such diverse traditions—would we be equal to the responsibilities each of us felt and which were expressed by the Director-General of Unesco in his address on the opening day? After the first two plenary sessions we separated and withdrew into the rooms reserved for the several committees and the anxiety increased.

Your general rapporteur was privileged to move from committee to committee several times a day. In this way he gradually became aware of what is, for him, one of the two most important facts about this conference. We have written resolutions expressing our sincerest convictions and hopes. We have enjoyed personal contacts with artists of other lands and others arts. But, above all, we have shown that we can triumph over certain dangers that threatened the very idea of such a conference. These reunions have taken the form of a spiritual progress, a development, and of a test or trial. After some insecurity in method and focus, after some false starts, we have shown that we can think internationally and that—extreme individualists though we are—we can think and plan and act co-operatively.

The other important fact of this conference was the discovery that when the artist discusses his problems at the international level certain clarifications
and solutions present themselves which were not apparent when we con­
dered them from the solely national point of view.

Before I begin a description of the progress through our committees of
certain ideas of deep interest to us all, I wish to make a prefatory remark.

During this conference each of us has made and has heard a hundred
times certain impatient exclamations: "Let us begin doing something
practical. Let us get down to concrete facts. Let us put an end to these gener­
alities."

That is in large part because we are artists speaking. Artists spend their
lives in making the ideal concrete, and as artists we have this impatience. In
the international conferences of diplomats, of professors, and even of scientists,
there is less of this irritation at what we have been calling at San Giorgio
"vague generalizations". We are at the beginning of a great work. We are
laying the foundations. It is enough for the present that we state certain
truths correctly. There is a constellation of basic principles which are the breath
of life to artists. Let us not be afraid to say them over and over again. Do not
despise them because they appear to be simple and self-evident. To the world—
to the non-artist—they are not self-evident, and that is why we are here.
Let us control our impatience as artists and believe in the structure that will
slowly but surely rise above the corner stones which we have been placing
here.

What is the constellation of ideas which most absorbed the attention of
this conference? Let us leave aside for a moment the resolutions which were
of interest to one or two committees only, or those problems, such as contracts
and relations with publishers, dealers, and purchasers—problems which
present a different aspect in each of the arts.

One is the problem of censorship. Our committees on the theatre and
literature based their position on the last sentence of the Oslo Convention,
that is, a condemnation of censorship in all its forms. In committee, however,
they acknowledged certain reservations which are not present in their resolu­
tions. They conceded there that exceptional cases of obscenity or slander
can be dealt with by local regulations, that is to say, by the police. The Theatre
Committee adds that it condemns the fact that drama is so much more strictly
censored than other forms of literature. The Literature Committee adds
that it particularly condemns any official confiscation of books prior to a
decision by a competent court of justice. The Cinema Committee expressed
itself in camera with particular indignation, yet its resolution may seem to many
of us to be relatively inconclusive. It recommends that "all cases of violation
of existing laws may be submitted to the impartial arbitration of courts"
and that "the protection of the public interest should be entrusted to the
judicial authorities". The rapporteurs of the committees concerned (whose
work you have approved and whom I here wish to thank for their admirable
assistance) tell us that these findings were not arrived at without long debate.
The problem of censorship is a singularly difficult one. Many delegates believe
that submission to established laws is too simple an answer. It is the virtue
of courts to be conservative; it is the virtue of artists to reveal new modalities of the true and the beautiful before the majority of men are aware of them. May our successors at these conferences discover ever more precise definitions in this matter.

The artist's relation to government was a second problem that received much attention. The need for financial subsidy accompanied a large number of the projects discussed: money to raise the standard of film production, to furnish travel and living expenses for young artists, to maintain theatres. In the instances that I have cited it is specifically stated that appeals for these funds be made to the member governments of Unesco. In other cases the governments are not named as donors, but they are certainly implied. The Theatre Committee inserts a note of caution: it warns that "theatrical companies in receipt of assistance from public funds must rest immune from any political or ideological influence", and I have been told that such caution was frequently expressed in committee—very particularly in the Literature Committee, although it has not found its way into the resolutions before you. Those discussions revealed wide differences in the extent to which delegates of the various countries placed confidence in their governments as competent to regulate in matters of art.

A striking fact emerges, however: committee after committee exhibited an unquestioning confidence in the competence of Unesco to collect and allocate funds, to select committees for their distribution, to supervise a wide variety of projects. Is it not a gratifying aspect of this conference that we feel that if an authority is international in character, its judgment in matters of art tends to inspire a greater confidence? Cannot we say that in an international organization of artists—as long as it remains truly international and as long as its administrative bureau remains profoundly attentive to the desires of creative and practising artists primarily—artists have found an external and concrete expression of the function of universality which has been attributed to them in all times?

The President of the Committee on Resolutions will speak to you next, treating of these and other resolutions which have been passed by you, but there remains one more subject in what I have called the constellation of problems, which most concerned us. It concerns the various proposals for an organization within Unesco serving all the arts represented here today.

In his address to us the Director-General asked us to explore the possibility of such an International Council of Arts and Letters "completing", as he said "the network of professional organizations capable of promoting and developing international co-operation". He pointed out, however, that it would first be necessary to establish an international association of the visual arts, on the level of the corresponding associations for writers, musicians and architects.

Our colleagues in the visual arts have responded to this wish: this association has been created here this week; a preliminary committee and a secretariat have been set up. As you have heard during the reunion this
morning, the International Council of Arts and Letters, which in principle we wish to see in existence, awaits further study in regard to form.

A number of declarations, resolutions and communications are of interest to us all.

The resolution, first presented by the PEN Club, that a purse, or fellowship, be accorded to a writer has been increased by the Literature Committee to 10 such fellowships. All will agree with Maestro Carrà that these be distributed among artists of all the disciplines.

The communication presented to us this morning by Mr. Le Corbusier is a notable example of the stimulation afforded by such a conference as this; it envisages an international activity and it calls upon the co-operation of several arts, including literature.

We have not heard the Spanish language here. Our President has expressed in a letter to our Latin American colleagues his regret that an earlier notification had not prepared the organizing committee to attempt some modification in the established rules for this conference. Many must share with me the regret that we have not heard in this hall the noble castellano.

The communication introduced by the Italian and French delegations concerning all cultural associations reminds us that we have somewhat neglected the moral responsibilities of the artist.

We are not insisting upon freedom for freedom’s sake—as thoughtless adolescents do, as criminals do. Freedom presents itself to an artist not as a void but as a severe summons. Of all men, artists and men of religion have the clearest vision of what freedom is; and we live in fear lest we abuse it. No one commands our laborious hours; no one can help us. The only freedom we desire is a servitude to the truth. For the interior struggles of the artist we can do nothing.

Let us hope that on the island of San Giorgio we have made some advance in correcting these evils; so that thousands and thousands of artists—living, and still unborn—may figure before the world as representatives of the fraternity of all mankind and of the moral responsibility which is inseparable from freedom and from art.

The second part of this report to you is a presentation of the resolutions. This will be submitted by the President of the Committee on Resolutions.
The International Conference of Artists, meeting in Venice from 22-28 September 1952, desires, at the conclusion of its work, to congratulate Unesco on its felicitous decision to convene this important assembly. The Conference would also like to offer its heartiest congratulations to all those who have contributed in any capacity to the task of organizing this meeting.

The Conference wishes once again to express its deep gratitude to the Italian Government for its generous hospitality; and to the city of Venice whose warm welcome and artistic beauty will long remain associated in the minds of the delegates with their stay on the shores of the Adriatic.

The Conference is very gratified that it has attained the ends visualized by its organizers, and that its first meeting was characterized by so marked a spirit of co-operation, solidarity and fraternity amongst artists from all parts of the world—an encouraging omen for the future. Not only did this Conference, as someone put it, represent a kind of review of the situation, but it also marked the first stage of a continuing programme of action.

The Conference would be remiss not to pay tribute to the spirit of freedom and respect for human dignity which are essential conditions for all creative activity and for the very life of the artists, and which must underlie all aesthetic theories.

Remembering the lofty and stirring ideas so eloquently advocated by Messrs. Arthur Honegger, Taha Hussein, Marc Connelly, Alessandro Blasetti, Jacques Villon, Georges Rouault, Henry Moore and Lucio Costa, which from the very beginning placed the discussions on such an exalted level, the Conference wishes to thank these and all other speakers for their contribution to the atmosphere of cordial understanding which has reigned throughout these memorable days.

The Conference hopes that the memory of the stimulating atmosphere in which this week on the Island of St. Giorgio was spent, will not be lost, and that all delegates, observers and others who attended the Congress will cherish the memory of the animated discussions which took place in the cloisters of the Cini Foundation, where hundreds of artists, representing thousands of their colleagues, concentrated upon organizing and consolidating the peace of the world.

Analysing the resolutions put forward by the Literature, Visual Arts, Music, Theatre and Cinema Committees, the Conference observes that many
of them are very similar, which suggests that they represent the assembly’s main problems. These concern freedom of creative activity, respect for copyright, the establishment of a domaine public payant, and the institution of a fund to enable as many artists as possible to travel abroad.

The Conference therefore hopes that all countries will refrain from imposing any form of censorship upon artistic production, from taking any measures designed to restrict the freedom or offend the dignity of the creative artist, and from placing any obstacles in the way of the free movement of works of art.

The Conference likewise hopes that all possible measures will be taken to increase protection of the rights of authors over works conceived or executed by them.

In this connexion the Conference notes in particular the solemn declaration made at the beginning of September in Geneva to the effect that the so-called Universal Convention was never intended to replace, even in the distant future, either the Berne or the Pan American Convention, and that therefore all rights and obligations laid down in the Berne and other international conventions remain in force.

As some delegations pointed out, the Geneva Convention can be no more than a starting point for those countries where copyright has hitherto never benefited from any protection. It represents in fact, the beginnings of a truly universal system of protection.

However there can be no question of considering that all that is necessary has been accomplished in this field. The aim must be to do everything possible to tighten up the application of the Geneva Universal Convention and explicitly to ensure complete protection of the moral right to which the creative worker is entitled.

As regards the domaine public payant the Conference hopes that especially in all those countries which have not yet evolved such a system, the enquiry undertaken by Unesco will lead to a prompt solution of a problem which is unanimously agreed to be urgent.

The Conference recommends both Unesco and the governments concerned to provide more opportunities for artists to make contact with other countries and with artists from different cultural backgrounds, since travel is the best way of developing a love of art and improving international understanding, devoid of all considerations of propaganda other than for friendship and culture.

With this end in view, the Conference recommends the institution of a special fund and the award of fellowships for the purpose of promoting more and more such contacts.

The Conference endorses the recommendations of the Working Committees concerning the establishment of an International Council of Arts and Letters.

The Conference strongly endorses these two resolutions, considering in fact that their practical realization will provide convincing proof of the success of the Venice meeting.
Closing Address

by Mr. Ildèbrando Pizzetti, President of the Conference

I should like to say a few words to you at the conclusion of this great Conference. That is the privilege of a President. It is also his duty—a duty not always unattended by danger.

This Conference would have given grounds for satisfaction even if it had done no more than establish contact between artists from more than 40 States, enabling them to become acquainted, to exchange ideas and express their views regarding the particular art in which each of them specializes. All the artists concerned would owe thanks to Unesco, first and foremost, for having conceived and carried out the idea of the Conference; to the Italian Government authorities and this marvellous City of Venice for their cordial and hospitable reception; and to the Cini Foundation for having put at their disposal the magnificent palace which, thanks to the energy, devotion and good taste of Vittorio Cini, has arisen from its ruins, more beautiful and majestic than ever before.

But the Conference has produced more than this; for artists taking part in it have been led to realize how many aesthetic, moral and practical aspirations they have in common. This proves, on the one hand, that the most enlightened artists all over the world are deeply conscious of the fundamental importance of art as the loftiest expression of a universal sense of humanity; and, on the other hand, that despite certain differences of aesthetic outlook and working methods, all artists have a feeling of close spiritual relationship.

Having followed the work of the various committees, I have been able to perceive both by reading the reports put before me and by listening to some of the discussions, that the members of those committees have given serious consideration to the most important social and economic questions, and problems of professional organization, connected with the arts and their right to a place in the life of mankind.

One of the most important questions is that of art education for young people, primary school children and university students alike. One day, for instance, I entered the room where the Committee on Architecture was meeting. I heard a speaker asking, very rightly, that the universities should give greater prominence to the subject of the plastic arts, either by introducing new courses on the history of art or by helping to bring students into touch with the leading contemporary artists. I also read with the greatest attention the part of the Music Committee's report which is devoted to the musical education of young people in general, a subject already dealt with by that
great musician, Arthur Honegger, in his preliminary exposé. I am obliged to admit—with great regret and some shame—that in this field my country falls behind many others in Europe and America. There is still a very great deal to be done for the musical education of young people in Italy, and we hope it will be done as rapidly as possible.

But while I am the first to admit this state of inferiority, which we Italian musicians so much deplore, I am entitled to point out—and I am proud to be able to do so—that, generally speaking, our contemporary Italian artists have unfailingly maintained or defended their freedom of thought and action, even in the difficult years of the recent past, and have steadfastly refused to sacrifice it in response to certain political suggestions or relinquish it for material considerations or advantages. We are well aware that absolute, unrestricted freedom is possible only in theory. But we feel that it should be for the artist, and for him alone, to set limits to his own freedom, if he thinks fit to do so, to keep it within the bounds imposed by his religious convictions, his moral sense or his aesthetic tastes, as the case may be. The political authorities are not, and must not be, entitled to restrict the freedom of the artist by means of legislation. Laws should rather be used as a means of recognizing and protecting those moral rights of the artist or the work of art which have been so frequently referred to in the meetings of the different committees of this Conference. It should not be tolerated, for example, that jazz music, and music arranged for the cinema, should include distorted versions, purveyed by conscienceless profiteers or hangers-on of the musical world, of works which we musicians regard as sacred. But I must not take advantage of your indulgent attention. I will end these brief remarks by thanking Unesco whole-heartedly, once again, for having conceived and organized this Conference. I should also like to thank Ambassadors Mameli and Migone and the other authorities of the Italian Government and the City of Venice for the keen interest they have taken in the tasks we have been carrying out to the best of our ability. I must also thank the rapporteurs of the different committees, and the General Rapporteur, that great writer and poet, Thornton Wilder.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to take leave of each other. We are returning, each of us, to our ordinary work, the work we have chosen and chosen freely.

I feel that none of us will ever forget these days of common effort. They have helped us to realize the strength of our love for art, that love which gives us the energy, determination and joy to continue working, now and in the future, till the end of our days, as true artists—that is, as free artists and free men.
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