

151. Many African artists are Western trained or have attended Western-type art schools in their country. They have a realistic view of the internationalism of contemporary art which has no firm boundaries. These artists tend to be confined by the economic realities of the region, to the field they are trained in, to studio art with superficial knowledge of art history, aesthetics or criticism. These aspects of art education are neglected. That is why there are hardly any art critics in Africa.

152. The art critic has a powerful and responsible role as a link between creator and consumer, between artist and public. He must inform, educate and champion the cause of art and artist. In his criticism, he must be honest and factual. There is a pressing need for an art critic (i.e. an interpreter, instructor, intermediary) today when so much is happening so quickly in the many-sided field of art.

153. Professor Wangboje concluded by saying :
« **For the minority and the culturally disadvantaged majority, who have something valid to say about their plight in a world that appears not to treat them justly, it would seem reasonable to support the artist who is concerned in such a sensitive issue as national identity and whose only weapon is his art. It is a potent weapon for, through its communication value and universality, the power of the image, it can say so much with so little. It is the voice of reason and it should be listened to and heard.** ».

154. Professor **Ullrich Kuhirt**, German Democratic Republic, then addressed the audience. He said :

« Whatever we call the relation between artist and art critic, — a dialogue, a confrontation, — it is always communication. We can say that sometimes this communication is too infrequent, sometimes it takes place on different levels. In this communication the artist tells the critic about his work, how and why he created it. The critic's task is to analyze, criticize and evaluate. The third important party is the consumer. The art critic is an intermediary and interpreter between the creator and the receiver of a work of art. Introducing contemporary art to the great public is one of the important duties of an art critic. The dialogue between the art critic and the public is social communication. A work of art is brought into relation with its community and social background.

155. « Communication between artist and art critic is communication between two professionals working in the same field. The artist is the maker. His view is synthetic, not analytic. The critic has more theoretical knowledge of art history and of making art. His way of perceiving art is considerably different. He does not know the process of creation with its intuitive and sensitive aspects. A certain essence of a work of art will always remain unknown to the critic. The critic, on the other hand, knows more about what is going on in the world of art, what the reactions of the public are, etc.

156. « Both artist and art critic benefit from this dialogue of « friendly confrontation ». There are many ties between the two parties and many things of common interest, e.g. the search for cultural identity and how to make the mass media a helpful means in this search ».

157. Professor **Hédi Turki**, Tunisia, then mounted the rostrum. He pointed out that art critics were quite powerful people. They had considerable influence on the artist, his work and career.

Art critics were, at least partly, responsible for a phenomenon that Mr Turki called « **The recent emergence of pseudo-artists and pseudo-critics** ».

158. **Dr Jabra I. Jabra**, Iraq, artist and art critic, said that a critic, too, is a creative person. He is not only an intermediary interpreting the artist's message. The creative part of a critic's work is to get insight into the work of art, its message, social and cultural background. To become a critic is a long process of education, expertise and creativeness. Artists need critics, but critics are not there to teach artists.

Dr Jabra said he agreed with Mr Siikala on his view of the peripheries and the importance of the art created in them. The artists in the peripheries are not alienated or anomalous, but creators of genuine art with which they can enrich the art of the centres. For example some 90 per cent of the artists present at this meeting came from the peripheries !

159. **René Berger**, Switzerland, offered some short and precise comments :

1. All works of art are beautiful but always commercial !

2. Identity is not a homogeneous single phenomenon. There are ambiguities. Planetary powers control it. Identity is stratified with tensions within.

3. Can certain phenomena in the peripheries have a universal effect ?

160. **Morris Kestelman**, UK, commented on the relation between artist and art critic and wondered if these two could ever be equals working in the same field. He did not want to underestimate a critic, but asked all the same : « **Who remembers the names of great art critics ?** » Critics are in a position of power now; for example galleries and museums ask art critics to select works of art for them.

161. **Yeoh Jin Leng**, Malaysia : Mr Leng agreed with Mr Berger on the idea that cultural identity is more than just one phenomenon. Our world of values can be based on many different cultural and spiritual identities. There are also new identities and values recently evolved.

162. **George Koch**, USA : Mr Koch said that we were all still too prejudiced. The first step towards solving any social problem was to get rid of our prejudices and engage in an honest conversation.

163. **Solomon Wangboje**, Nigeria : Professor Wangboje remarked that Europe still keeps on exporting traditions and contemporary art to Africa. Africans do not understand European contemporary art. Professor Wangboje wondered whether this art export had any diplomatic or political connections. He did not deny the fact that an individual artist can do a lot in establishing good relations between Africans and Europeans.

164. **Mr Haulica** brought the discussion to a close by thanking the speakers for their sincere contributions. He said that in our conversations we tend to be too critical towards ourselves, we often accentuate the negative aspects, we are on the defensive. For example : not the whole of Europe had been colonialistic, not every European has to go round with a bad conscience. The countries in Europe are different, so are the various centres and peripheries ! We just have to learn to accept difference and to see enrichment in diversity.