

**XXXII ANNUAL ICOFOM SYMPOSIUM  
XXXII SYMPOSIUM ANNUEL DE L'ICOFOM  
XXXII SIMPOSIO ANUAL DEL ICOFOM**

**MUSEOLOGY:  
BACK TO BASICS**

**Synthesis of the Symposium Sessions  
1-3 July 2009  
Liège and Mariemont**

**ICOFOM Study Series, N° 38**

This supplement to ISS 38 was drafted following the 32nd ICOFOM International Symposium and Annual Meeting, held in Liège and Mariemont on 1-5 June 2009. It is a report of the talks and presentations given on this occasion as well as of the rich and lively discussions that followed. This supplement shows the main lines of the trends and thoughts that were brought out during the sessions, all of which were focused on the draft of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Museology* to be published in 2010.

*Museology, Institution, Exhibition, Musealization, Profession and Management* are concepts that, far from being stereotyped, were the source of lively discussions. Museology and ICOFOM, through the project of the *Dictionary*, were given the chance to revisit their own bases through constructive and dynamic introspection, in which everyone's participation was and will always be invaluable to the development of the forthcoming *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Museology*.

Blondine Desbiolles

## **SYNTHESIS OF THE ICOFOM SYMPOSIUM**

### **MUSEOLOGY: BACK TO BASICS**

1-3 July 2009

**Blondine Desbiolles  
Royal Museum of Mariemont  
Free University of Liège**

**1 July  
Free University of Liège**

### **SYMPOSIUM OFFICIAL OPENING**

**Julien Anfruns, General Director of ICOM**

Julien Anfruns, General Director of ICOM, presented the current situation of museums in the world through ICOM statistics. He stressed that the world of museums is currently in expansion: in by the time of the ICOM General Conference in Shanghai, in November 2010, an increase of 60% is expected of the number of museums over the three preceding years; museum plans are being launched in Brazil and Russia for the next decade; a reform of the museum profession took place in Portugal; France is undergoing a vast debate on free entrance to museums.

These numerous and varied dynamics confirm the strength of museums, their professions and development throughout the world.

Julien Anfruns suggested five fundamental points to define ICOM:

1. It is an international organization although 80% of its members are European.
2. It is a body that establishes norms of excellence.
3. It is formed by and organizes a network of museum professionals, who are not always represented in the international committees.
4. The mission of ICOM is to provide an international public service.
5. It is a focal point for thought and debate.

### **OPENING ADDRESS**

**Hervé Hasquin**

*“For the progress of human knowledge: show the arts and science in the century of enlightenment”*

Hervé Hasquin described and explained the cultural and political-philosophical context during the emergence of museums in the 17th century. There are several points in

common among the diverse trends of thought that are usually grouped under the concept of *The Enlightenment*, such as the rejection of obscurantism and fanaticism, the concept of religious tolerance developed by Locke, Wolfe, Beccaria and even Voltaire, the affirmation of the superiority of temporal power over spiritual power (although the term “anticlericalism” only appeared in 1870, the concept already existed in the 17th and 18th centuries) and the belief in progress. We must realize that these bonds were built over time and space. The movement known as the Enlightenment is not limited to France, it spread throughout all of Europe from the beginning of the 17th century until the end of the 19th century.

The rationalism of Descartes was no longer in style in the 18th century, which preferred utilitarian and experimental rationalism. On a deeper level, this showed a return to Copernicus who centered importance on man. This is an essential cultural phenomenon of the 18th century, the century of Enlightenment. What counts is not the happiness of man in the afterlife, but on Earth. Thus in England, Francis Bacon, contemporary of Descartes, asserted the principles of experimental research with the aim of improving man’s situation in this world.

In England, the Royal Society, created in 1661, was not only focused on theoretical research but also on applied research. Ashmole, a freemason, was a member of the society and designed its coat of arms in which we recognize the symbols of the setsquare and the compass. It is not by chance that Ashmole, promoter of experimental and applied research, became a museum pioneer, donating his private collections to the public. The museum is, first of all, a place for experience, both scientific and aesthetic.

All these changes are echoed in other parts of Europe. Thus, Diderot and d’Alembert clearly refer to England as a model in the preface of the *Encyclopédie*, which became one of the main driving forces of the Enlightenment movement.

In the 18th century the concepts of education, teaching and instruction are merged into a global conceptualization that does not really distinguish among them. Thus, article 22 of the 1793 *Declaration of Human Rights and the Citizen* states that “instruction is the need of all.”

Another point to bear in mind is the birth of two key words: in 1786 the Marquis of Mirabeau used the term “civilization” for the first time to state that a population can evolve towards a superior stage. In 1760 the term “humanism” is used to identify the wish to understand the nature of man and to make his situation the happiest possible. This concept is associated with that of an efficient State. This second use of the term implies the idea that the emancipation of man, supported by the State, is valuable for humankind.

Thus a characteristic of the Enlightenment is a great movement to popularize knowledge; for example starting in 1735 the Abbot Nollet performed a series of physics experiments on electricity in public, attracting and fascinating a large number of people. This popularization illustrated the idea that it is necessary to see to understand better.

All of these factors lead to a better understanding of the principles of Curiosity Cabinets, which will later become the cabinets of Natural Sciences. The latter showed the concern for methodology and classification that characterize the 18th century. Methodology and classification were, in fact, more responsible for the birth of the first natural history museums than were the curiosity cabinets.

These Enlightenment principles also encouraged the creation of the first public libraries in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, for instance the opening of the *Bibliothèque de*

*Bourgogne* in Brussels in 1772. Its aim was to spread knowledge through experience and to provide people with what had been inaccessible. The same happened with the arts that were shown to the public without exception to social class, as done by Joseph II in Vienna, when opening the Belvedere Palace to the public in 1783. Another example is the public opening of the Vatican museums for political reasons: the affirmation of the power and splendor of the Holy See.

What was happening to museums? This can be summarized in three criteria inherited from the Enlightenment movement:

1. The museum must guarantee the perpetuity of its collections, leading the way to the notion of heritage.
2. It has a public purpose
3. It foresees a building which can house its collections.

The creation of the Louvre in 1793 presents us with a dilemma: France pretended to legislate for all humankind, “to protect the universal heritage of humankind” (*Declaration of Human Rights and the Citizen*, 1793), yet the origins of the museum were spread throughout space (all of Europe), time (from the 17th to 19th centuries), and differed in the trends of thought and specific characteristics of each nation.

We must remember that the Enlightenment is not a movement solely limited to France of the 18th century. On the contrary, since the 17th century several movements of different origins spread throughout diverse parts of the world, paving their own way and following their own paradigms, which were all responsible, with their individual characteristics, for the birth of the modern museum.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME OF THE SYMPOSIUM**

**André Desvallés and François Mairesse, speakers**

### **From the *Thesaurus* to the *Dictionary of Museology***

First of all André Desvallés pointed out the difficulties encountered in writing the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Museology*, difficulties that are tied to the problems of translations and different meanings in the three ICOM official languages, French and English in particular. He gave several striking examples: in English the term *heritage* means “patrimony” while the French term *heritage* is translated into “legacy” and has a legal meaning. Other conceptual difficulties are linked to the translation of the terms used in the *Dictionary*: the French term *muséologie* is translated into English as “museum studies” and *muséographie* is “museum practice,” while the term *museology* in English often concerns everything regarding museums, particularly in North America and Québec.

Likewise, the French term *exposition* can be translated into English as “exhibition” as well as “exhibit”; here we see the difficulties encountered in adapting translated terms into the concepts we are trying to convey.

Editing the *Dictionary* cannot be summarized as the explanation of the terms we have listed, but it also implies conceptual and semantic considerations in order to distinguish among the different meanings accorded to each of the terms.

François Mairesse reviewed the recent origins of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Museology* that go back to the Calgary Meeting in 2005, where a new work project was

launched on the definition of museum. This project led to the publication of *Vers une redefinition du musée?* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2007) which presented and explained different trends concerning the concept of museum in articles by several ICOFOM authors.

The authors of the proposed *Thesaurus of Museology* (developed from an ICOFOM project led by André Desvallées since 1995) decided to select 20 concepts, identified by one term, which would become the framework of the future work, now renamed *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Museology*. As each term refers to many other notions, it was decided to dedicate a second part of the *Dictionary* to 300 additional museological terms linked to these 20 first concepts.

The goal is to publish the frames in which each of the 20 concepts is defined (each frame is about 1 to 1 ½ pages) in four languages for the ICOM General Conference in Shanghai 2010. These definitions, as drafted at the time of the meeting in Liège, are given at the beginning of *ICOFOM Study Series 38*.

François Mairesse pointed out that if even if *ISS 38* introduces these 20 especially selected terms, as well as the documents presented by various authors, and if the ICOFOM Symposium this year refers to the fundamental concepts covered by the *Dictionary*, it is precisely because the public, whether professional or not, is a major player who must be at the heart of the debate and cannot be forgotten when editing the *Dictionary*.

## **SESSION 1: MUSEOLOGY, MUSEOGRAPHY**

### **Peter Van Mensch, speaker**

Peter Van Mensch opened the session with the image of the Bird of Paradise, which was thought not to have any legs. In fact, these were cut off when the bird was stuffed and sent to European natural history museums. The Bird of Paradise was musealized in a way that did not correspond to reality. This made it part of a universe far more phantasmagoric than scientific. It was always imagined in flight, without ever perching. Thus, museology consists in identifying this process of musealization and the modifications introduced in the museal object.

This immediately tells us that what is seen as evidence of the past has already been manipulated and “produced” by the process of musealization. Likewise, the Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci seems to be, and is assumed to always have been, as it is currently seen, but its paint and varnish have taken a patina and have turned yellowish. If we were to reveal the original colors, it would probably seem less a testimonial of the past...

The heart of museology consists in understanding this manipulation and going back to the objects as they are, behind their restoration. For instance, museology must try to explain and understand why “a tiger in a museum is a tiger in a museum and not a tiger” (Kenneth Hudson). In other words, according to the Czech school, museology consists in trying to understand how reality is perceived and documented. This depends on the different policies, interferences and the process of musealization.

According to Peter Van Mensch and following the example of the tiger in the museum, the museum is not interested in the utilitarian value the objects, but in their representative and documentary value. This is known as the “museological context”.

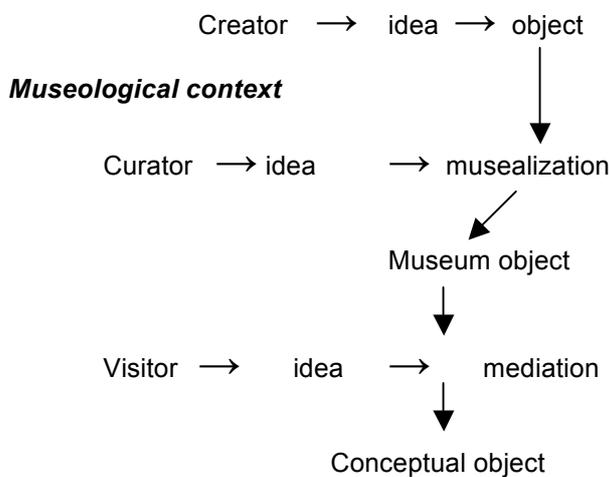
He proposes the following diagram to summarize museology:

Musealization → Museality = Museology

Museology encompasses the process of musealization and the museality generated by musealization.

Both a bond and a differentiation take place simultaneously between two contexts: the primary context in which the creator (*maker*) expresses an idea which leads to the object and the museological context in which the curator communicates an idea that leads to the musealization of the object created in the primary context. In this way the latter turns into a museum object. The museological context also includes the visitor, who also generates an idea that leads to the mediation process that transforms the museum object into a conceptual object.

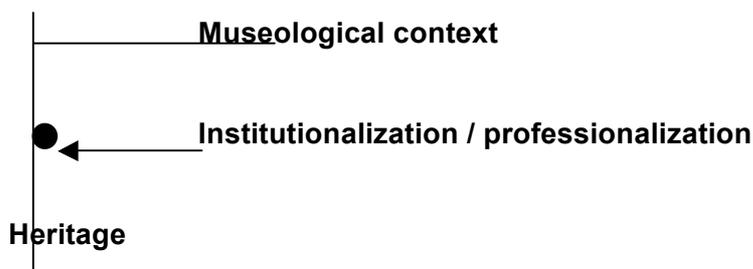
### **Primary context**



Peter Van Mensch reminded us that heritage (see Laurajane Smith, ed., *Cultural Heritage*, Routledge, London, 2007) is considered a “culture process or performance, that is concerned with the production and negotiation of cultural identity, individual and collective memory, and social and cultural values” and is more general than the museum itself. The cultural values of a society form its heritage (sites, objects, etc). He fully agrees with Laurajane Smith who states that “all heritage is intangible”.

He proposed the following diagram:

### **Society**



### **Environment**

Van Mensch presented another diagram, proposed by Kathy Gee, showing the different institutions identified as related to heritage, as well as their objects and

functioning. This diagram allows us to define their different elements: heritage, functions, institution and society.

The speaker then asked the question: why do we need the term “museology”? The reason, he believes, is the need of a theoretical perspective. This issue is then in knowing how far we are able to define a theoretical framework for society, institution, museum functions and heritage, as well as justify the process of musealization in a more global perspective.

For instance, many publications refer to museum management, but there are few that consider the theoretical and scientific character of museology. Peter Van Mensch closed by hoping that the following debates and museological analysis should take this direction.

## DISCUSSION

The discussions followed two major themes: in the first place, the inversion in the order of terms and the process suggested by Peter Van Mensch, which reopens the debate on the existing or non-existing relationship between the museum and other heritage institutions such as libraries and archives. In fact, instead of going from the terms to analyze the processes, we move from the processes to the conceptual definitions, and we can see that the museological thinking at work regarding these different institutions is very similar, even though its practical effects might be divergent.

Peter Van Mensch’s talk implies an inversion of values, apart from shifting these definitions after analyzing the processes. Every definition is based on values; if a definition no longer commands understanding of these processes and instead simply flows from them, these values lose their ideological impact. Thus, Ann Davis brought up the following issue: should we still talk of values or rather of “information” in the Anglo-Saxon sense of information studies”? What distinctions can be made between these notions?

Marc Maure reminded us that whatever the concepts handled by museology, we must avoid the tendency to separate museum from society. The museum is always enclosed within society, it is an instrument of construction and identification of the memory of a given society. Therefore, when talking of a process, it is fundamental to consider new museology (*la nouvelle muséologie*) since this is a process in itself; it is a museology of action, a method of work used to reintroduce society in the museum.

The second main theme of the discussions was the danger of standardization. In other words, the eventual normative character that the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Museology* might take or has already taken, in the view of some. Peter Van Mensch stressed the risk caused by letting the *Dictionary* become a norm in itself.

Pascal Griener replied to this concern by referring to the *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* by Barbara Bassin. There are terms that cannot be translated into other languages without losing part of their meaning and therefore forcing them to adopt a significance lent by another language. This is by no means normative; we must just be aware of the difficulties of translation and clearly state them at the beginning of this work.

Tereza Scheiner added that museology is a discipline under construction, it is a “work in progress” that for the moment could not possibly be standardized. Rather, terms that could be defined in a potentially normative way must encourage discussions and

debate and consequently lead to a conceptual and theoretical work. The *Dictionary* is crucial to starting this process, it is the corner stone of developing museology.

Appolinaire Kaji from the *Blackitude Museum* in Yaoundé, brought out what he considers a lack in both the *Dictionary* and the discussions: the proposed typology of museums. In fact, he stated that the museums in Africa have few points in common with western museums; most of them are community museums, created in the spirit of new museology, and are often deprived of objects, since these are either sacred or/and in use, or both. The fear that the international museological debate might limit itself to the occidental world, ignoring its African peers in particular, is added to the danger that the *Dictionary* might present a normative character.

Julien Anfruns, the General Director of ICOM, stressed the fact that if these fears are justified, we should bear in mind the fact that the *Dictionary* can only provide an answer to part of the needs and matters brought forward in museology. He suggested making a map of these matters to show that the *Dictionary* will be inevitably based on a relatively reduced portion of the entire “theoretical planisphere”.

## 2 July Royal Museum of Mariemont

### **SESSION 2: MUSEUM, MUSEAL, INSTITUTION Pascal Griener, speaker**

Art and history museums are undergoing an identity crisis. Pascal Griener presented them with humor in contrast to the *Musée des Grenouilles d'Estavayer* (the Estavayer Frog Museum) which offers neither discussions, nor studies nor expertise. He describes it as a kind of paradise for the museologist.

Griener would first, referring to the *Dictionary* concept of *institution*, explain that difficulties could be due to the fact that this museum analysis often depends on the French socio-historic paradigm while the English model can be much richer in contributions and even be the real museological paradigm of the 17th and 18th centuries. He invited us to make a shift of paradigm and history towards England in order to re-explore the concepts and origins of museum, museal, and institution, emphasizing the close relationship that binds history and concepts.

First he examined the museum approach, as proposed by Poulot or Pommier who, according to him, over-magnify the French paradigm in spite of its numerous qualities. Nevertheless, England and its concept of museum had a great influence on Europe since it proposed an idea of public property completely different to the one inherited by France, with the *Act of Parliament* in 1747 in particular, which expressed the collective rather than the individual will to define, guarantee and develop public property. Likewise, Joseph Addison's *Essay on the pleasures of imagination* had an important impact upon the French intellectuals of its time, reaffirming the aesthetic capacity of man.

Griener reviewed numerous French thinkers of the 18th century, such as La Font de Saint Yenne, who found inspiration in the English model for a proposal of another approach to the patrimonial and pedagogical ideal. Years before the French Revolution, La Font de Saint Yenne demanded that the royal collections be exhibited for the general public and congratulated the Regent Philippe d'Orléans for his Public

Museum, the *Palais Royal*. The public character of the collection of this museum was based on the English model. Philippe d'Orléans was close to Great Britain and was opposed to the French model of his time.

Griener then examined the example of the Ashmolean Museum (opened in 1683, donated by Elias Ashmole), based on a division between the commercial city (town) and the academic city (gown). This museum was the first monumental evocation of the *Republic of Letters* representing the academic city, while opening to the “commercial” city, that is, to the public, who paid for the visit according to the time spent in the museum. In this way, England proposed the first transactional approach to the museum, according to which the individual becomes an amateur of arts and letters and is initiated to the Muses from the moment he pays for the ticket.

Griener further gave the example of the Museum of French Monuments of Alexandre Lenoir (*Musée des Monuments français*). This museum was originally a storage area. The purpose of Lenoir was to tell the history of France according to the English model – the Westminster tombs can be seen as a monumental and dramatic presentation of the past. This project strongly conveys the idea of the nation as a body. The nation is represented by the king's symbolic body in the monuments on display, which creates a plural identity. Lenoir developed this idea from the model of the Catholic mass, establishing a true communion between the spectator, France and its history. The museum does not say “this is the body of Christ”, but “this is the tomb of fire ...”. These are monumental relics offered to the visitor from a national and partly religious perspective.

Pascal Griener examined the *museal* concept in the *Dictionary* and the importance given to Malraux. In his view, Malraux has obscured more than enlightened the concept of museum, in which he depends on the idea of a co-presence between the imaginary museum and the real museum, ignoring their true interaction. The matter consists more exactly in knowing what value to grant to the analytical, cognitive and substitutive images within the museum.

Griener referred to Quatremère de Quincy, who described two types of art historians: the ones that describe real monuments and the ones that work on texts and images. According to him, this is an example of a true English division of labor. However, this division is a dialectic relationship to work: in fact the object and the images are necessarily themselves in a dialectic relationship; one cannot differentiate competing museums, as in the case of the museum of monuments and museums as books.

Pascal Griener gave as example the attitude of contemporary young people towards museums: first they log onto the museum web site and then they check to see how the images proposed on the Internet and those shown in the museum relate. In his opinion, this is not a deviation in their relationship with the museum, but a fundamental hermeneutical operation.

## DISCUSSIONS

The talk by Pascal Griener opened a debate on two closely linked fundamental points: the issue of paradigms and the concept of institution.

In reaction to Griener's talk, Peter Van Mensch stated that there are other museum models apart from the ones Griener named. He mentioned the Netherlands as an example, where hundreds of private collections are open to the public. He therefore brought up the issue: do we specialists, professionals and museologists define what is considered as museum or is it the people themselves, in other words the public, that does it? Martin Schärer agreed, and added as an example that when Erasmus died, his

personal belongings were bought by the city and displayed to the public. Thus, it is the private collection that turned to the public. The museum is not necessarily originally defined by its status as a public institution. In other words, the paradigm of the public museum is not enough to make a complete typology of museums.

André Gob linked the concept of the paradigm with the concern of seeing the *Dictionary* acquire a normative character. He considers art and art history the worst points of view to grasp the concept of museum since they limit it to a small sphere. Gob would like to see all existing museums integrated into the *Dictionary*. Griener then reminded the participants of the essential distinction between scientific work and ideology, which we should be wary of, since ideology can lie hidden behind several concepts that seem scientific. Griener concluded, sharing Gob's wish to incorporate as many types of museums as possible in the *Dictionary*, by quoting Condorcet: "all human works are comparable as witnesses of humanity". What is universal will only be assured when its creation is shown as a result of work done in the open.

The concept of the term *institution* also prompted much reaction. Martin Schärer was the first to challenge it and explained that he prefers the term "place", considering it broader and therefore less restrictive. Tereza Scheiner strongly agreed in specifying the need of understanding the term "place" in its philosophical sense. The concern was expressed that a Francophone paradigm might stifle other ways of conceiving the museum and reduce it to a strictly defined category, although Mairesse considered that the concept of institution is more elastic and flexible than one might ordinarily think.

Jean Davallon pointed out that this concept raises problems because it is often used as a synonym for organization in its Anglo Saxon sense. Martin Schärer suggested that we think about an English term that would match the term *institution* in its social, political and etymological sense, since the main cause of disagreements on this matter is an issue of translation.

Mr. Ziva, from the Angola Heritage Institute, stated that an organization underlies every institution and although we want to define the institution beyond its administrative, bureaucratic or financial aspects, its organizational character is still essential and should be recognized at its real value. He also pointed out that every organization is a result of a long-term social agreement at a given period. In other words, referring to the institution can be considered a way of agreeing to call a museum a museum over a long period of time.

These discussions once more showed the concern that ideology might suffocate the freedom of the museological discipline, and emphasized the diversity of the museal landscape in the world, as well as the conceptual difficulties linked to the problems of translating and accepting terms, principally between French and English.

### **SESSION 3: EXHIBITION, EDUCATION, ARCHITECTURE, COMMUNICATION Michèle Antoine, speaker**

Michèle Antoine talked about her approach to the concepts of *exhibition*, *education*, *architecture*, and *communication*, as a "museographer", in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the term, that is to say hands-on rather than theoretical

Architecture originated from emptiness, which is not nothingness, but rather an enclosed empty structure, defined by its outer envelope. Every building has its individual characteristics. She gave the example of the Gallery of Evolution in the Natural Science Museum in Brussels, which is a long hall with one route for the visitor

above and another below. The structure of this hall forced us to work on the long stages of evolution. This demonstrates that architectural space is a fundamental fact in museum communication. It is an emptied space, rather than an empty space, which makes use of external elements while ordering the exhibition layout.

Next Michèle Antoine addressed the concept of exhibition from the definition given by Martin Schärer in the *Dictionary*. She focused on two problematical points in the definition of *exhibition*: first, the word “visualization” overvalues the senses of sight. She suggested saying that an exhibition “puts the visitor into a sensory relation” with the understanding that the exhibition might appeal to other senses such as the sense of touch and hearing. She also rejects the “explanatory” character given to the exhibition. In her view explanation does not entirely encompass what an exhibition can provide to the visitor. She gave as an example the museum of Insel Hombroich (in Neuss, Germany), where the works of art are displayed with no order, direction or explanation, its only aim being the aesthetic experience.

Michèle Antoine also has doubts about the object’s ability indicate a meaning, to reflect absent facts. She considers the exhibition a device that allows us to think about a reality which is different, rather than absent, as Martin Schärer suggests.

Regarding the concept of *communication*, she considers that this has to do with trying to determine whether museum communication should or should not be unilateral. Even while considering the existence of a certain asymmetry, one must not forget that the museum is also composed of its audience, too. We cannot control the route the visitor will take, nor the experience he will gain from the museum. Moreover, the public is varied. She raised the importance of introducing the web to establish a dialogue between the different protagonists of the exhibition, which she feels is extremely positive. She takes the Science Gallery of Dublin as an example and its goal of becoming a place “where ideas meet and opinions collide”, where valuable work is being done on communication and exchanging ideas with visitors.

She insists on the importance of introducing and recognizing subjectivity in exhibitions since this allows the visitors to say “I” while the authoritarian “we”, commonly used by museums, works against any interchange.

## DISCUSSION

Michèle Antoine’s talk raised four points debated by several participants: the concepts of interpretation, exhibition, education and finally pleasure.

Peter Van Mensch addressed the issue of language and interpretation. He stated that we definitively need to learn more about the languages of others; apart from bearing in mind the semantic, cultural and *geographical* aspects, we need to consider the *chronological* aspect as well. He was surprised by the sore absence of contemporary references in the *Dictionary* and the preference given to dated references.

Martin Schärer replied to the criticism and suggestions of Michèle Antoine regarding the terms *architecture* and *exhibition* in particular. He admitted that the word “visualization” limited the scope of exhibition. On the other hand, he did not accept the expression used by Michèle Antoine to define the exhibition: “to think about reality in a different way”, considering it too broad. This definition could just as well encompass theatre and music and dilute the singularity of a museum exhibition.

Raymond Montpetit opened the debate on the link between exhibition and education, requesting some clarification on how these two concepts fit together. Michèle Antoine replied that educational services were born much earlier than those of exhibitions;

these two concepts are intimately linked but have a “hierarchy” that is the opposite to what is commonly believed.

François Mairesse returned to the suggestion of Michèle Antoine of reintroducing the concept of museum subjectivity in the definitions, wondering about the possibility of associating the educational aspect of the museum with entertainment. Michèle Antoine considers that museums change together with their audience and even if they obviously cannot turn into amusement parks, they must nevertheless adapt to what the public wants, which includes certain forms of leisure and entertainment.

Pascal Griener replied to this concept of pleasure, recalling that one of the principle characteristics of the movement of the Enlightenment, anticipating the birth of the museum, was the insistence on man’s happiness in this world. This confirms that *aesthesis* is fundamental in museal planning and this must consider sensory pleasure. Regarding this subject, Jennifer Harris stated that the Anglo Saxon concept of “affect” is central to the sensory experience of the museum visitor.

Damien Watteyne continued the debate on the concept of education, asking to know the difference with the concept of teaching. He associated this with that of pleasure within the museum: are not exhibitions usually more often determined by the pleasure of the designer, based on his desire to teach, rather than on the pleasure of the visitor?

Peter Van Mensch ended the debate, pointing out that there is no opposition between learning and pleasure, and evoked the importance of evaluation and the necessity for museologists and museum professionals to study learning theories and different types of learning, in order to understand these questions from the public’s point of view.

### 3 July Free University of Liège

#### **SESSION 4: HERITAGE, PRESERVATION, RESEARCH, OBJECT, COLLECTION, MUSEALIZATION Jean Davallon, speaker**

Jean Davallon proposed working on museology as a system of knowledge through three possible approaches: the technological approach, characterized by a practical, reasoning process, the scientific approach which aims at the production of knowledge, and the normative approach that establishes the rules and values shared by a community. The scientific approach consists of the analysis of museological processes, finding more interest in the study of the semiotic and social functioning of, for example, the exhibition. The technological approach analyzes how to optimize the processes of production; regarding the exhibition it studies the use of communication strategies. Davallon also mentions in passing the social science approach, which studies the consequences of these different processes, doing for example an historical analysis of exhibitions.

The problem lies in alternating these three approaches. Davallon suggested that the structure of the future *Dictionary* integrates first of all the scientific approach, followed by the technological and normative approaches.

He suggested starting with the article *Research* and emphasized that it is important to make a distinction between museology and the study of collections. The first should not

be mixed with the second. This matter could be summarized in the following: when referring to an ethnological museum, is the emphasis on “ethnological” or on “museum”? Museology is less interested in the collections that are held than in the museum itself, its processes and its functioning. According to Jean Davallon, this matter should be stressed in the article.

With regard to the article on *Object* the concept of the object is established by society, rather than by the study of the object’s production. Every object is representative of its primary context, in other words of the context of its origin, the world it belonged to when it was still in use.

A general upheaval, or a change in paradigm in the words of Pascal Griener or Raymond Montpetit, is happening in museology over the matter of the authenticity of objects. More exactly, there is a split between those for whom authenticity is the essence itself of the objects and their museality – in other words, an object is in the museum because it already has museal qualities – and those for whom it is the museum that transforms the object’s status in order to incorporate it. Thus, in this approach, museality is produced by museal functioning itself. Can we describe this process scientifically?

Semiotic theory identifies three types of signs:

1. Icons: the signs are signs because they look like what they represent.
2. Symbols: these are signs by common agreement.
3. Signs produced by causality, for example an imprint.

Museum objects have the status of *indicia*, they are identifying marks that belong to the category of signals produced by causality. They are imprints of their world of origin, of their primary context.

On the other hand, substitutes first say something about their creator and the way in which they were created. Only afterwards do they reveal something about the world of origin of the authentic object which they substitute.

Davallon would establish a parallel with testimony: the value of the testimony relies on the witness himself and on the fact that his declarations are socially certified. The same happens with the objects: every authentic object becomes an element in an indicial relationship to its original environment; it is a witness that must be socially certified.

Davallon considered that the nature of the museum object does not belong to ontology, the study of the nature of being. Its museality does not lie in its own authenticity, but rather in a process of transformation and social certification.

This process is musealization: it consists in transforming the status of the object into a museum object. This change of status is a scientific operation on the one hand, and it is certified by institutional accreditation on the other.

To conclude, Davallon said that musealization is a form of patrimonialization – an object of any nature becoming part of the “heritage”. If we consider the opposite, that is to say that patrimonialization is a form of musealization, we run the risk of losing some patrimonial processes that do not have a museal character, such as the ones performed by archives, libraries, opera, etc.

Therefore, we can say that while the object has the character of an indicator, it is also a document because of it is studied scientifically; therefore, it is a semaphore, a carrier of meaning with identifiable values.

Davallon described in more detail the concept of heritage. In his view the characteristic of patrimony is a status, not an essence, because of the musealization phenomenon. We should remember that in Roman Law, public or sacred property were referred to as *extra patrimonium* while the term heritage (*patrimonium*) was used to identify private property that could be transmitted by inheritance. Today these terms mean the opposite, but we should be aware that there is still ambiguity between the terms of public property and transmission. According to the Davallon, the current definition of heritage continues being normative since it is established as a way of recognizing heritage. Even UNESCO proposes a normative definition rather than a scientific one.

Regarding conservation and collection, Davallon introduced the issue of hierarchy of these concepts. They belong to technology but not to a scientific level. For instance, conservation deals with the technological conditions needed to preserve an object.

Davallon again emphasized the fact that the collection is far from being the basis of the museum, but is rather a means of presenting the objects.

In conclusion, what does the scientific analysis of processes consist of?

He defined three points:

1. Putting aside what is normative.
2. The analysis of the museal process, which is part of the analysis of the patrimonial process.
3. The need to rethink the position of the museum within society and to analyze museality or patrimoniality, starting with the players themselves..

Since scientific analysis is needed, it is necessary to observe what others think of museological study. The anthropological status of museum objects is one last issue that can be raised from a scientific point of view.

## DISCUSSION

The wealth of ideas in the presentation by Jean Davallon opened lively debates on the concepts of sense and meaning, of paradigm and especially of musealization, which showed some divergences. Gliding between musealization and paradigm is necessary since the different meanings of the former depend on what theoretical context is the point of departure.

The participants addressed two perspectives regarding the meaning of objects: one according to which the objects are signals in themselves, and the other according to which they are carriers of meaning assigned *a posteriori* by interpretation. Martin Schärer returned to the term *semaphore*. In his opinion the object could not possibly become a carrier of signals since it is a signal in itself. It is carrier of meaning, that is to say a *nouophore*. Martin Schärer here based his ideas on the thesis of Waidacher.

Schärer brought up a second issue: the distinction between the object in the collection and the one in the exhibition. The former refers only to itself while the latter refers to another meaning, according to the multiple possibilities and choices made prior the exhibition.

Jean Davallon explained his position, considering that the object acquires one or more meanings through the process of musealization; in other words the object has a meaning from the moment it enters the museum and forms part of the heritage. The

museum suggests an interpretation that can vary according to the exhibition choices but the object nevertheless continues to be dependant on the museum for its meaning.

The debate developed the concept of musealization: is an object already museal due to some its qualities that would predestinate it to the museum, or does the museum really change the status and meaning by the process of musealization? What is musealization, and how does it differ from patrimonialization?

Martin Schärer said that musealization, being a process, must be reversible. An object can be completely demusealized and become what used to be. He uses the example of the soup bowl that can be musealized, exhibited, listed in an inventory but can also be taken from the display, even deaccessioned, and once more work as a container for a specific purpose. He adds that an object can be musealized by someone without being seen as “musealizable” by others. Thus, objects of worship in a church can be considered by the visitor as carriers of a museal value, but the worshipper may not accept this status and will continue considering them both usual and sacred.

Jean Davallon explained that, according to him, musealization does not reside so much in the exhibition itself, and in the meaning assigned to the objects, but rather in the previous processes (inventory, photography, restoration, etc.)

Martin Schärer disagreed since he understands the term “musealization” in a broader sense. According to him, everyone musealizes, even at home: an object placed on a shelf, a framed photograph are musealized objects since they have an aesthetic and sentimental value apart from their practical value. Thus, to musealize is to give objects other values apart from their mere practical value.

Raymond Montpetit reacted to this last statement; in his view, the meaning that Martin Schärer grants to musealization corresponds to patrimonialization, which is more general and not specific to the museum alone. It is necessary to understand the process of musealization as explained by Jean Davallon, considering it a specific form of patrimonialization done by the museum.

André Gob stated that the difference between musealization and patrimonialization is not so great; he considers them activities that are complementary and parallel. Lynn Maranda added that musealization is not always present; some objects can have a museal value without need of musealization in the strict sense of the word. On the contrary, Jennifer Harris considers that musealization is not only an *a posteriori* process, some objects are originally made for the museum.

Jean Davallon felt that although the existing understanding of the process of musealization is relatively shared by all, the disagreement lies in defining the terms and the whether the objects that enter the museum already have museal quality or not.

Because of these divergences of views the debate turned to the issue of paradigms. Pascal Griener said that museum geometry must change in order to avoid these theoretical pitfalls; the object is not and can no longer be considered the centre of the museum. The latter must change its paradigm and be renewed. Marc Maure stressed that museums cannot entirely been seen as scientific initiatives and gave as an example Scandinavian museums that planned open-air museums without any *a priori* theory. André Gob was interested in the concept of “the transfer of scenes” explained by Wan-Chen Chang, describing an aesthetic approach rather than a scientific approach to the landscape, which is related to the position adopted by the museum of Insel Hombroich.

Jean Davallon once more directed the discussion to the importance of values. There is no musealization or patrimonialization without social or individual interests. Nevertheless, the concepts of certification and knowledge are always added to these values (interest alone is not enough without a social and/or scientific consent). Institutional guarantees are necessary to validate the knowledge that is carried forward or presented.

François Mairesse illustrated another link between the concepts of musealization, institutionalization and accreditation, one that is partly carried out by management. Davallon agreed, reminding us that the museum institution has a fundamental but often all too forgotten principle: the obligation to preserve.

Mónica Gorgas added that we must not forget that political aspects can be decisive in a great number of institutions, apart from values, knowledge and processes. Tereza Scheiner added that values are always the ones we build and therefore differ from country to country and from one culture to another. No object could possibly possess a value in itself, independent of human reasons that form and recognize it.

Appolinaire Kaji summed up what he considers to be musealization, suggesting that we bear in mind another museal paradigm such as the one established in Africa. He identified four elements: the recognition of testimonies (witnesses of a culture in any form), their appropriation by the museum, their guarantee of perpetuity, and finally their dissemination for the benefit of society. The intangible that characterizes African cultures is not excluded in this definition by insisting on the concept of “object”, as criticized by Pascal Griener. In fact, François Mairesse pointed out that the principle of musealization has not only to do with human reason; there is an aesthetic dimension as well that can extend beyond the object in order to encompass its context, its use, its sacred character, etc. This aesthetic dimension is fundamental in every approach to art (cf. Baumgarten, Sulzer). Pascal Griener added that the obsession for what is documentary evidence greatly reduces the status of the object; aesthetics must be accorded their just value. We must remember that in the 18th century, building the first theories of the process of musealization was born with the first theories of aesthetics.

## **SESSION 5: MANAGEMENT, PROFESSION, AUDIENCE, SOCIETY, ETHICS. Raymond Montpetit, speaker**

Raymond Montpetit presented a study of exactly what fundamentals of museology we are talking about.

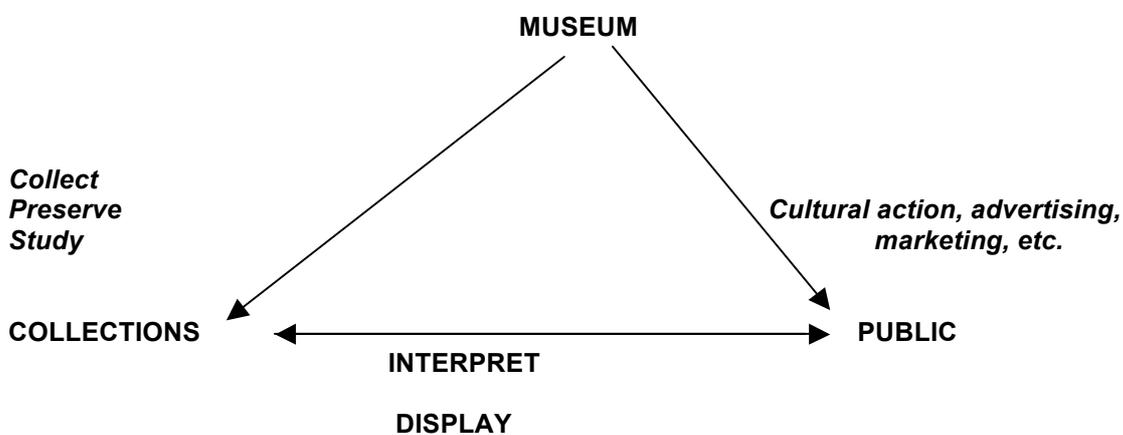
First he analyzed the *Dictionary* as it is today, defining museology as an emerging discipline, which we can see as new museology university degrees surface and develop, and in the increase in publications, associations and Ministries. This shows that museology is taking shape and becoming established. We are also seeing its professionalization. All this is taking place in a context of deconstruction of meta-narratives (tales within tales), of postmodernism, of decolonization, of cultural diversity and a spectacular growth in tourism.

It is imperative to make a declaration of principle at the beginning of the *Dictionary*, making clear that the presentation of the concepts as proposed are part of a history of where they have been appropriated in multiple ways. It is necessary to clarify the specific origins of these multiple concepts. The diversity of these different concepts leads to different theoretical approaches to the museum in general. Although we think of the museum in a Francophone sense of the word, that it is a public, permanent, non-

profit institution, there are other origins of the museum that contradict this idea. For instance, Peale's Museum created in 1786, long before the Louvre, was an educational museum founded on the idea of entertainment and not the least business. In fact, Peale's Museum was a capitalist museum, for profit, as Peale wished to earn a living while becoming a benefactor of society.

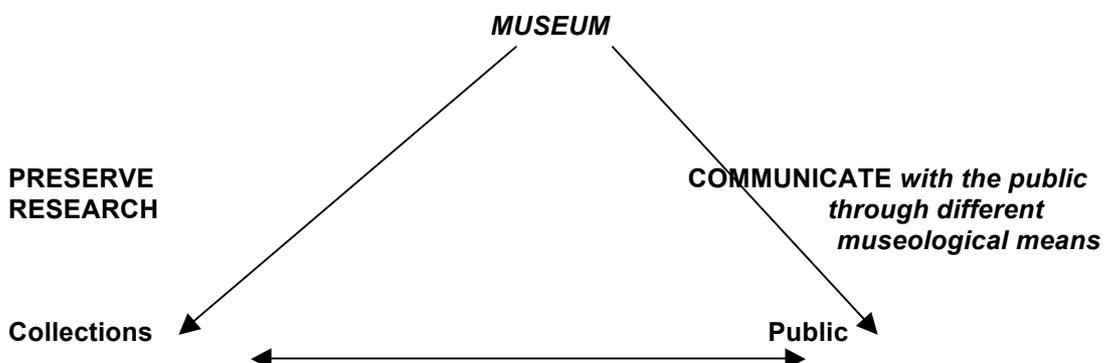
Montpetit then reviewed the twenty fundamental concepts presented in the *Dictionary*, asking us to keep in mind that the concept of "museum" has been embodied in diverse historic forms, as explained previously.

He therefore proposed to group the twenty terms identifying fundamental concepts into six general categories: the area, the building, the regulations, the practices of collecting, and dissemination and the beneficiaries. The museum manifesto proposed in 1970 by Joseph Veach Noble is still fundamental today: "the museum collects, preserves, studies, interprets and displays testimonies". Can we link these six criteria to the twenty fundamental concepts?



It is important to bear in mind that management is not limited to accounting. The Management Committee also establishes the main policy outlines of the museum.

Following the more modern redefinition of the museum in three main points proposed by Peter Van Mensch, Raymond Montpetit presented another diagram incorporating Van Mensch's PRC model: preserve, research, communicate.



Montpetit defined two main poles according to these two diagrams: communication and preservation. An example is the *Musée des Civilisations* in Gatineau (Québec), where part of the work is devoted to exhibitions and part to conservation and research.

We must not forget that the museum is an institution, in the broader sense of the term, that has its place in a society that is in constant evolution.

Nevertheless, museal activity is generally focused on musealized objects, especially when these are added to the inventory. Montpetit asked us not to forget the visitors. When referring to the public, we exaggerated the role of “knowledge”, yet the sensory experience, pleasure is very important as well. Society is not only the beneficiary of museal action, it is also the source and the framework.

Montpetit analyzed the change in the museum paradigm, which he considered essential to understanding current processes and definitions. He referred to the work of Gail Anderson on this development: *Reinventing the Museum* (Altamira Press 2004).

Several sectors are affected by this change of paradigm:

- The role of the museum: the museum must remain relevant.
- The role of the public: it is essential to include the visitors' perspective when they enter the museum.
- The role of public service: today there is an evolution in exhibitions and public programs; exhibitions also involve the overall programming of a given establishment.
- The role of the objects: the “stewardship” of the museum and the issue of cultural responsibility.
- The role of leadership and governance.

Raymond Montpetit commented on the five major themes referred to in his presentation.

Ethics: He considered that contrary to what is stated in the *Dictionary*, today it is more or less accepted there is no longer a “transcendental moral”. He preferred to return to the museum definition established by the Museums Association (UK) in the *Code of Ethics for Museums* adopted in 2006 which states:

*Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artifacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.*

and the *Code of Ethics for Museum Workers* of the American Association of Museums dating from 1925, which states that museum workers have “the commitment to serving people, both present and future generations.” These codes underline the responsibility of museums.

Management: the question to ask regards management in relation to other functions of the museum. In *The handbook for museums* (1994), Gary Edson and David Dean write that management comprises administration, conservation, and actions such as public programs, to which Montpetit adds governance as well as technical services.

Profession: Montpetit deplored the use of the term “profession” in the singular, because there are many museal professions. He also raised the question: Who is a museologist? The museologist is the person who has an overall vision of museum work; museologists are not limited to universities, there are museologists among professionals too, for example curators. We must take into account different languages with regard to other professions: the term *museography* is not frequently used in English, but rather “exhibit design” or “exhibit development”.

Public: Some museums are clearly in the field of museums of popular education. On the other hand, museums of fine arts develop less the educational aspect and attract



view, it is necessary to differentiate between elitism and populism in order to avoid falling into one of these two excesses that would be fatal to the museum.

Jean Davallon answered that the larger role of the public is already causing a change of paradigm, which cannot be ignored. We must find a balance between how much attention we must pay to this change, and especially not forget that there is relationship between museums and society, beyond the visitors themselves.

Tereza Scheiner brought up again the concept of profession and explained that the status of museologist is much clearer in Brazil. There the term museologist covers the whole gamut of museum professions, from museography to museology (in the French meaning of the term) including management, documentation, interpretation and conservation. The museologist is the museum professional in all aspects of museum work. This profession has been recognized and protected by law since 1934 and requires a four year course, where all the necessary museum management activities (in the broadest sense of the term) are studied. The museum profession, as it is conceived, is more comprehensive in Brazil than in Europe. It is acknowledged and developed along multiple fundamental lines, nor is the profession limited to its purely university acceptance.

The debate concluded with the following question: does the change of paradigm, recognized and admitted by all, mean that museums have entered an era of management by the public?

### ***From Oppression to Democracy*** **Vinos Sofka, speaker**

Vinos Sofka introduced one of his major projects: to help former totalitarian countries open up to democracy through the rediscovery, understanding, transmission and debate of their past, of their culture and values with other democratic countries. Today museology is no longer a discipline only for professionals, but rather can be an important process of pacification, tolerance and opening to culture.

Global heritage and the memory of the past must be the core elements in the processes that facilitate the transition of the current generation to other systems of governance, and their transmission to future generations.

Sofka stated that it is necessary for a great number of institutions, universities in particular to collaborate with each other. All the institutions that affect the heritage must understand the following aspects: the memory of their totalitarian past, the intangible heritage that created it, and its documentation, which should be as rich as possible. All the cultural aspects must be considered when offering both formal and informal education in post-totalitarian countries.

This project started to take shape in the year 2000 with the creation of the international movement: *From Oppression to Democracy*. This movement encourages collaboration between the population and the institutions that work within the cultural and heritage ambit. Its activity covers two main points:

- Collaboration between all the institutions that affect heritage matters.
- Communication with the public and the establishment of activities on the bases and methods that each society may choose (conferences, publications, films, Internet sites, exhibitions, etc.)

### **Marc Maure, speaker**

Marc Maure presented his exhibition project on the Soviet Gulag in association with *Memorial*, an organization based in Moscow. This exhibition is a genuine work of memory on the Gulag and the post Soviet situation, which had never been done before and still continues to be censored by the Russian political power. He explained that *Memorial* is an organization that does a gigantic work of compiling of all types of material (photographs, texts, archives) contributed by individuals from around Russia and the former Soviet empire, but unfortunately a large part of its archives were recently confiscated by the Russian police. This demonstrates that museological work is inevitably linked to geopolitical and political matters, which is often disregarded in the western world, where they rarely come across this type of difficulty.

As regards the exhibition in itself, Marc Maure believes in a return to the genuine bases of simplicity and emotion. His exhibition is designed to be mounted anywhere and easily dismantled. For example, pictures are hung on layers of cloth and the lighting is intimate. The arrangement of the different elements of the exhibition suggests a more popular, familiar atmosphere, which requires a particularly bare, uncluttered choice in mounting and exhibition design. Marc Maure's work is in opposition to block-buster exhibitions as developed today and, trying to enhance with approaches via mediation, prefers a simple, direct, modest and exciting work on memory.

## CONCLUSIONS TO THE SYMPOSIUM

The 32nd ICOFOM International Symposium brought together more than sixty museum people who participated in lively debates. Its success was partly due to the fact that it was based on, and examined, a "work in progress" to which each speaker, author and participant greatly contributed. François Mairesse reminded us that, in fact, the connecting thread of the discussions was the 20 fundamental concepts of the future *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Museology*. Editing this work is an enormous job that is far from finished, as we could see during the discussions: there are issues of translation which emanate from problems of interpretation and even conceptualization, from paradigms that we must be aware of, and the position of museology in time and space to which the *Dictionary* refers, are complex parameters that must be considered and clearly expressed. This is also what makes writing the *Dictionary* so exciting, as we can see from the interest and passion shown by all the symposium participants.

Editing a dictionary also implies taking other matters into account as well, which are more related to form than to content: what audience does the *Dictionary* aim at? museum professionals? public opinion? scientists? These questions require a choice; a dictionary cannot be edited in the same way for knowledgeable museologists, an amateur public, museum professionals or students. In order to publish the 20 concepts in the year 2010, the editing team must tackle this meticulous job with patience, continuously re-evaluating their own choices, reviewing all criticism and suggestions.

Regarding the talk of Peter Van Mensch that introduced Session 1 on *museology* and *museography*, and the debates that followed, François Mairesse raised two main points: first the real importance of museology, and next the need to define its position in relation to other sciences. According to Van Mensch it is necessary to adopt a strictly scientific view of museology itself to begin with, and then establish its status as its own discipline. Then, and this is also why he stressed this need of a scientific point view, it is fundamental to avoid that the *Dictionary*, and consequently museology, become normative. More precisely, the *Dictionary* must not be normative because then it would promote, and practically establish in a totalitarian way, a museology frozen by its own definitions, whereas in fact there are multiple variations of museology in time and

space. The first session of the symposium thus placed the following debates in the realm of scientific will and the refusal of normativity.

Making an assessment of Session 2 on *museum*, *museal* and *institution* that was introduced by Pascal Griener, André Gob raised two important considerations. In the first place, the need to extend the scope of the *Dictionary* by taking into account the cultural paradigms at work, or those that were omitted, when editing the definitions. This need of opening the *Dictionary* to other conceptual frameworks is illustrated in the request to consider private collections, brought up by Peter Van Mensch. Even though these collections do not make a real museum, they have some interesting characteristics. Pascal Griener also pointed out the need of to expand some definitions to include art museums when the definitions mention only museums of natural history and science, and vice-versa.

Another sensitive debate revolved around the concept of institution, or rather the meaning that must be granted to this concept. The disagreements regarding the definition of *institution* showed, beyond what is at work at a conceptual level, the matter of the plurality of meanings and interpretations, which can hold up but also enrich the editing of the *Dictionary*. Session 2 vigorously stressed the fact that the *Dictionary*, while implying paradigms, is a paradigm in itself; it questions the legitimacy of the different conceptual and theoretical choices, and is a discussion open to other concepts, to other interpretative choices that call for an awareness of the diversity of approaches

Session 3 on *exhibition*, *education*, *architecture*, and *communication*, introduced by Michèle Antoine, covered other fundamental and more practical elements for the *Dictionary*. Noémie Drouguet commented that the presentation emphasized the concept of architectural emptiness, which does not refer to nothingness but to a potential emptiness that calls for fulfillment. Using the words of Bernard Deloche, she said that this potential emptiness would be more of a virtual fullness. Michèle Antoine also raised the question of the public, up to now absent from the theoretical debate: the exhibition must consider all of the visitor's senses, providing a global experience. The museologist, the museographer, and the architect must consider the visitor as a starting point (he too a "potential emptiness") and consequently accept that there will be the unexpected.

Mónica Gorgas then stated that the use of the *Dictionary* is similar to that of the exhibition: it is a subjective and partial opinion, showing only current museology. Michèle Antoine agreed with this, saying that all exhibitions have a part of subjectivity; the visitor must be able to affirm his or her "I". Noémie Drouguet made a connection between the *Dictionary* itself and the subjectivity of its articles: it is a dictionary of contemporary Francophone museology which must be considered and treated as a matter for thought, flexible and open to questioning and revision. While a characteristic of architecture is that allows moving within the exhibition and can organize its message in space, the same parallel can be made with the *Dictionary*: its architecture, seen as a system of articulated concepts, creates a path resulting from previous choices which organize museological concepts according to a precise intellectual road of which we must necessarily be aware.

Finally, the concept of pleasure must be integrated and taken into account in encyclopedic thought, because it is an element of the museum in its own right, including how the museum should be understood.

The topics of Session 4 on the terms *heritage*, *preservation*, *research*, *object*, *collection*, and *musealization*, and Session 5 on *management*, *profession*, *public*, *society* and *ethics*, summarized by Martin Schärer, pursued the same line of thought:

the conceptual interpretation of terms and the dilemma of incorporating them in the *Dictionary* or leaving them out. Jean Davallon reminded the participants that museology can adopt several different intellectual approaches and that the choice for a scientific approach requires a complete definition of terms, leaving aside any intent of normalization. He also pointed out the linguistic ambiguity of some terms such as “patrimony” and “heritage” or the common confusion between “patrimonialization” and “musealization”, which surfaced in the debates.

Raymond Montpetit, pursuing the analyses of Pascal Griener and Jean Davallon, added that Museology is currently going through a paradigm change and therefore some terms must be added to the *Dictionary* or at least explained more clearly in order to avoid a normalized amalgam. The concepts of public, management and profession have expanded and it is therefore necessary to take this into consideration and open as a broad spectrum of these concepts as possible. The last sessions of the symposium closed the loop by returning to the initial debates: the matter of the standardization, paradigms, and what is scientific character.

The presentations of Vinos Sofka and Marc Maure went two steps further: on the one hand the international and political opening with Vinos Sofka’s project *From Oppression to Democracy* that placed museology within scientific, political and social dynamics. On the other hand, there is a social and aesthetic dimension presented by the exhibition on the Gulag done by Marc Maure, which displayed the memory of populations oppressed by the Soviet regime. The theme is expressed by returning to simplicity and emotion, the fundamental bases of every exhibition.

The 32nd ICOFOM International Symposium was a journey in rethinking museology through museology for museology by means of examining the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* project, all the while questioning it with a scientific and critical approach. All the participants expressed their wish to take different paradigms into account, and review the issues of interpretation and conceptual interpretation, and the origins of the museum and museological thought, in a theoretical introspection. Every science that disregards this runs the risk of going off course towards normativity, even cultural ethnocentrism.

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To further consult the documents of the meeting, the power point displays of the speakers and the recording of the talks by Michèle Antoine and Pascal Griener, visit the site of the Musée de Mariemont (accessed 30 September 2009):

[http://www.musee-mariemont.be/accueil/activites/colloques/xxxii\\_colloque\\_international\\_de\\_licofom/](http://www.musee-mariemont.be/accueil/activites/colloques/xxxii_colloque_international_de_licofom/)