

Vers une culture de la fascination Toward a Captivating Culture

Andrée Paradis

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VERS UNE CULTURE DE LA FASCINATION

Au moment où l'on s'interroge sur les moyens à prendre pour rendre accessibles au plus grand nombre les productions culturelles, il y aurait lieu de s'inquiéter des résultats obtenus par des expériences récentes, où l'on a vraiment tenté de réconcilier tous les aspects de la culture traditionnelle, de la culture dynamique et de l'anti-culture, et d'examiner les retombées plutôt inattendues qu'elles produisent.

Les réflexions multiples et contradictoires qui se pratiquent actuellement autour du Centre Beaubourg ne peuvent qu'éveiller la vigilance de tous ceux qui se préoccupent d'assurer, dans leur milieu propre, des conditions de vie où les valeurs culturelles trouvent leur place afin de permettre à chacun de vivre dignement selon ses goûts, selon ses désirs, dans la confiance et dans la connaissance de ses capacités. Tant la culture demeure «un lieu secret de la séduction, de l'initiation, d'un échange symbolique restreint et hautement ritualisé»¹, tant la culture vivante est autre chose que ce qui la refuse, la nie et la piétine, tant la culture est force de résistance, tant elle est une perpétuelle conquête.

Il était évident qu'à l'âge d'or des supermarchés, de la consommation de masse, l'on en vint à appliquer à la culture les mêmes techniques de production axées sur la quantité, la croissance et la commercialisation, utilisant le curieux raisonnement hélas! trop bien connu: produisons, multiplions, exposons massivement, il finira bien par en rester quelque chose. En d'autres termes, manipulons le public dans le sens de la quantité plutôt que dans celui de la qualité, créant ainsi un climat qui n'est plus «celui de l'ordre de la représentation, ni de la distance, ni de la réflexion. Quelque chose qui tient de la panique, d'un monde panique»².

L'action en sphère limitée, circonscrite, à la fois dense et concentrée, peut permettre de rétablir les équilibres. Sous cet aspect, le document de travail 20+5, préparé par un comité du Conseil des Arts du Canada qui établit, après vingt ans d'existence, les perspectives de développement pour les cinq années prochaines, prend une importance considérable. Le Conseil cherche, nous dit la présidente du Conseil, Gertrude M.

Laing, à ouvrir des voies nouvelles tout en maintenant l'appui aux institutions culturelles et aux centres de créativité actuels. Il se propose également d'augmenter l'aide à la mise en marché et à la distribution des produits artistiques. La taille du pays exige que l'on prenne des mesures pour les rendre accessibles au plus grand nombre et impose un plus grand effort d'information et de communication. Les tournées, les expositions, les séances d'information, les rencontres ne peuvent que favoriser l'échange culturel.

On doit se réjouir des programmes d'encouragement et de développement régional qui se réaliseront au moyen d'une assistance accrue aux petites localités. C'est une étape souhaitable à condition que l'on s'assure que l'aide profite surtout au créateur, puisque c'est lui qu'il faut toujours rejoindre en définitive. Ce qui nous amène à continuellement redéfinir la notion de créateur; il serait sans doute souhaitable de créer un secteur permanent de recherche au Conseil sur l'étude des problèmes du créateur et de l'évolution du concept de créativité ou de confier ce programme de recherche à une université. Quant à élargir la place des arts dans le processus éducatif, il va sans dire que c'est d'abord une responsabilité provinciale mais elle a une telle envergure que l'appui des organismes fédéraux et municipaux ne peut que lui être bénéfique. Faut-il rappeler que dix ans après la publication du Rapport de la Commission d'Enquête sur l'Enseignement des Arts (Rapport Rioux), la mise en œuvre des recommandations laisse encore à désirer. Les priorités de la formation artistique constitueraient pourtant un excellent facteur de neutralisation des effets de ventilation superficielle auxquels les sociétés sont de plus en plus exposées. Reste donc la nécessité d'intérioriser à nouveau les notions de culture en tentant de redécouvrir les vertus de l'initiation.

1. Jean Baudrillard, *L'Effet Beaubourg — Implosion et dissuasion*. Paris, Éditions Galilée, p. 18-19.

2. Ibid, p. 38.

Andrée PARADIS

TOWARD A CAPTIVATING CULTURE

By Andrée PARADIS

At a time when questioning is taking place on the means to be adopted to make cultural *productions* accessible to the greatest number of persons, there is reason for concern over the results obtained by recent experiments, where genuine attempts have been made to reconcile all the aspects of traditional culture, dynamic culture and anti-culture, and to examine the rather unexpected consequences that result.

The multiple and contradictory thoughts presently arising around Centre Beaubourg can only awaken the vigilance of all those who are giving their attention to assure, in their own milieu, conditions of life where cultural values find their place in order to give each person the opportunity of living in dignity according to his tastes and his desires, confidently and in the knowledge of his capacities. As long as culture remains "a secret place of enticement, of initiation, of a symbolic exchange limited and highly ritualized"¹, as long as living culture is other than what refuses it, denies it and tramples upon it, so long is culture a force of resistance, so long is it a perpetual conquest.

It was obvious that in the golden age of supermarkets and mass consumption we came around to applying to culture the same production techniques centred on quantity, growth and commercialization, using the curious reasoning unfortunately too well known: let us produce, multiply, exhibit massively, something will surely be left. In other terms, let us manipulate the public in the sense of quantity rather than quality, in this way creating a climate that is no longer "that of the order of representation, nor of distance, nor of reflection. Something that is akin to panic, to a panic-stricken world."

Action within a limited, restricted sphere, dense and concentrated at the same time, can allow the re-establishing of balances. Under this aspect, the 20+5 working paper, prepared by a committee of the Canada Arts Council that, after twenty years of existence, established the perspectives of development for the coming five years, takes on considerable importance. The Council, according to its president, Gertrude M. Laing, is seeking to open new paths while continuing its support to cultural institutions and existing centres of creativity. It intends also to increase aid to the marketing and distribution of artistic *products*. The size of the country demands that measures be taken to make these more accessible to the greatest number of persons and requires a greater effort in information and communication. Tours, exhibitions, information sessions and meetings can only foster cultural exchange.

We should enjoy programmes of encouragement and regional development which will be produced by means of increased assistance to small localities. This is a desirable step on condition that we make sure that the aid will chiefly profit the *creator*, since he is the one who must always be considered, finally. This leads us to continually redefine the notion of creator; it would doubtless be desirable to establish a permanent research bureau at the Council on the study of the creator's problems and the evolution of the concept of creativity, or to entrust this research program to a university. As for enlarging the place of the arts in the educational process, it goes without saying that this is primarily a provincial responsibility, but it has such scope that the support of federal and municipal organizations can only be beneficial to it. We must remember that ten years after the publication of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Instruction of the Arts (the Rioux Report), the implementing of the recommendations still leaves something to be desired. The priorities of artistic education would, nonetheless, be an excellent factor in the neutralization of the effects of superficial vicissitudes to which societies are exposed more and more. The necessity therefore remains of again seeking within ourselves the notions of culture while attempting to rediscover the virtues of initiation.

1. Jean Beaudrillard, *L'Effet Beaubourg — Implosion et dissuasion*, Paris, Éditions Gallilée, pp. 18-19.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

By Monique BRUNET-WEINMANN

Last year the Château De Ramezay reopened its doors, in time to receive the summer wave of tourists that comes to visit the streets around nearby Place Jacques-Cartier, attracted, beyond the municipal parking anachronistic in this ensemble, by the haven of silence and coolness formed behind its gates by the old stone house. The important interior restoration has been completed, but the planning of the places for exhibition must be continued in order to improve the display of objects and renew the interest of visitors by allowing one of the rooms to house temporary exhibitions. As in the case of Château Dufresne, restoration and installation have been made possible due to the patronage of the Macdonald Stewart Foundation, whose president is Mr. David M. Stewart, with the participation of the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Arts Council of the Metropolitan Region of Montreal.

A Manor House of the 18th Century

An ancient past tormented by the constant presence of History rendered impossible the task of restoring its original state to this residence. Besides, we cannot say with certainty whether the house that we visit is the one that Claude De Ramezay built in 1705 in the beautiful wards of that time, Old Montreal to-day, or the one that might have been reconstructed on its site in 1757 by the West Indies Company. The studies undertaken by Quebec Cultural Affairs and by Mr. Peter J. Stokes for Parks Canada agree in recommending more thorough research. Be that as it may, the archives show a 1705 contract for construction that confirms that Claude De Ramezay, then eleventh governor of Montreal, established his official residence on this site. Archaeological search has exposed the foundations of the original building, smaller than to-day's, many changes having been made to fulfill the needs of successive occupants. Again at the beginning of our century, the house was enlarged by the addition of a tower and a wing presently housing the room called the Nantes hall, from the origin of the woodwork with which it is panelled.

While preserving these additions, it was necessary to rid the interior of the changes accumulated through styles and periods. In 1972, the scraping of the structure restored the style of the 18th century to the rooms. In their second phase (1976-1977), the work, coordinated by Mr. Robert Prud'homme, was directed for the Amerindian period and the English rule by Mrs. Ibbie Dobell, former curator of the McCord Museum, in collaboration with Mr. Peter Winkworth in charge of prints, drawings and oil paintings, and Mr. Luc Matter, museum designer. The French period was restored by Mr. Jean Palardy, a well-known expert in antique furniture. Really beautiful pieces are found here, and the ensemble displayed at the museum's entrance is very pleasing to the eye, although one might wish more unity in the furnishing and the fabrics. Actually, there are many styles: Henri II, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, Regency and Louis XV. It could not be a matter of faithfully restoring the interior of one or other of the Château's occupants; it was a question rather of giving a view of what might have been the dwelling of a gentleman of the 18th century in New France.

The West Indies Company

More generally, the purpose was to make the Château a museum on the history of Montreal from the time of its discovery until Confederation, and not to give the exact image of a precise moment centred around an historical figure. A visit concerned with the ensemble of the rooms and the objects opens the imagination on the vast network of exchanges and the land and especially maritime communications of which Montreal was one of the hubs. The Governor's dwelling had a view, at the back, of the river ploughed by the shuttling boats and his office was linked, through intendants, captains, great merchants and explorers, with all of Canada, France, the American islands and Africa; particularly to the trade areas of the Indies Company that had its offices and warehouses there from 1745. The period of the Indies Company within these walls in the second half of the 18th century establishes a meaningful unity between the varied interests of the museum — a unity that the labelling, inadequate and inaccurate at the time of the opening, did not emphasize enough but which the present planning should show to better advantage². From this occupation comes all the significance of the placing in the great hall of the Château of the sculptured mahogany panelling donated by Mr. David M. Stewart, panelling that originated in a private mansion situated at No. 70 Quai de la Fosse at Nantes,