The World of Communication:
Engaged or Excluded?

Guy Jucquois

A freedom under threat

A twofold threat hangs over freedom of communication. In rich countries globalization is leading to standardization of thought via national and international bodies. In the cultural as well as the scientific field, especially the human sciences, diversity is needed for reasons of both survival and democracy. Efficiency and productivity imperatives are sacrificing human diversity for economically cost-effective goals. For instance, in the communication field the merging of publishing functions in all media is an obstacle to the free circulation of ideas because it is channelled into the marketing and sales area. In the countries of the southern hemisphere the absence of media makes communication inaccessible for the majority of citizens. So the lack of ideas comes on top of other shortages of basic needs, health care, food, housing . . . The globalization of trade increases the illusion of a communication which is now accessible to all. But exclusion is increasing because people cannot access knowledge and culture. In fact, in the North as well as the South, the opportunity for everyone to communicate their thinking – their research, their cultural or artistic creations, to communicate a personal experience – is dwindling at the same time as technical progress appears in fact to offer us all the means to express ourselves and have a chance of being heard. The corollary of the creeping globalization of exchanges is that a growing proportion of our contemporaries are put in the position of silent receivers. Indeed the more powerful the media employed, the more those they address become voiceless and passive.[1] Paradoxically, the explosion in communication technology[2] is creating a greater gulf between the well-off and the underprivileged, confining the first in 'single line of thought' and excluding the second from any participation in the dialogue. There is no freedom of thought in a world where only one channel exists, even though it communicates that thought in infinitely varied ways. The consumerist consensus never expresses democratic aspirations, but the self-satisfied stupidity of their apathy.

Sharing thoughts and knowledge in order better to understand the current situation and identify the issues for communication in education, science, and culture is the fundamental idea behind this article, which is based on the conviction that it is possible, as an alternative to the current methods, which tend to be the only ones in use, to develop a way of communicating designed to increase the independence of the southern hemisphere countries and facilitate cultural exchanges in the South and between North and South. This is not the only initiative. There are many that aim to improve exchanges of all kinds between North and South; just as many as the warnings repeated over recent decades of a widening gap between the regions and, within them, between the haves and the have-nots. We shall just raise some questions and refer to a possible approach to answering them. We shall start from facts and the questions they pose. Then we shall attempt to clarify certain points and see the beginnings of a solution to the problems encountered. Our approach will be in questioning mode, as in life, rather than statement mode, which sometimes indicates a static position.

World of knowledge, world of communication?

A knowledge village . . .

For some years now the political world has followed on from scientific, social and economic bodies in proclaiming, together with the media, that the human race has entered a 'knowledge society', a new phrase taken up by the media after the expression 'communication society' launched by Norbert Wiener. The proliferation of exchanges of goods, services and communications (note the plural!) is the context for the explosion in individual and group travel. More than ever it can be said that, as the accepted phrase has it, 'the world is a village'. Communicating from one point on the planet to another happens in real time; written, audio or video material is transmitted instantaneously. In reality, if not in law, transport is frequently rendering borders more insubstantial. The geography of frontiers is being adjusted: in the rich world associations of states are creating common spaces that can be entered by all their nationals without any formalities. New regions protect existing prosperity by erecting borders that are more firmly closed to the outside world, even as they paradoxically act as a powerful attraction for those who are excluded from those prosperous areas.

Thus, despite its popularity, the phrase 'the world is a village' promotes an image that is in many respects deceptive. If the world has become a village, this is so only for some. As in the traditional village, in the world we inhabit not everything is exchanged, not everything is communicated because not everything that is necessary or assumed to be valuable is shared by all. Flows of goods have gone on increasing, resulting in the prosperity of a market economy or more precisely prosperity in a market economy. Indeed, whole regions and continents are only marginally affected, and have to consume only crumbs from the feast and export only raw materials when they are lucky enough to have some.

A pressing need for communication

Whence comes this pressing need to worship communication? Borrowed from Latin, the word was introduced into French in the late 13th or early 14th century and at first had the general meaning 'way of being together'[3] because it 'was seen in Old French as a superior mode of social relations' (v. 1370). Subsequent and contemporary usage is explained by constant widening, particularly from the metonymic use 'thing communicated' (1507). In other words, from its introduction the word could cause confusion and a kind of social intoxication. This ambivalence is to be found right up to current uses, which reflect the diversity of the possible components of what we do when we communicate. They also highlight how seldom communication takes place in a situation of genuine dialogue, exchange, openness to others, a mutual and reciprocal approach to human diversity. We need only leaf through the great contemporary works dealing with communication science, or observe its day-to-day effects in the media, to note the paradox on which contemporary communication claims to be based and to justify its methods.[4] Communication that does not aim for communion and the full realization of our diverse, multiple identities is deluding both us and itself. Condemned to constantly renew its mask in order to survive, it can deceive only the defenceless and those who are powerless to protect themselves.

Information and knowledge

Information is essential in a knowledge society: those who define and are involved in excellence produce and exchange among themselves the information needed to produce and conserve wealth and the power flowing from it. The importance of communication processes has grown in parallel with the increase in exchanges and technological progress. Alongside the many publications devoted to communication there has been a proliferation of specialist higher education courses. More often than not these developments are characterized by a more or less explicit desire to influence others rather than concern for dialogue and sharing. Courses in communication studies are likely to emphasize teaching methods to be used to persuade or influence. Even in university courses there is very little time given to learning to listen. In the contemporary context a question arises as to how ideas of knowledge and information are integrated into a universe where communication is a central concept.

We often confuse 'communication' and 'information transfer'. The words only partially refer to similar realities. Classical theories even see communication and information as opposites,[5] as container and contained, thus recalling ancient meanings. The two words are also mutually exclusive because 'too much' information kills communication just as 'too much' communication is a barrier to information. Communication is exchange, openness, silence of the self and attention to the other, it implies a to and fro towards the other and the possibility of mutual challenge. Though a communication is generally an information transfer too, nevertheless not every information transfer constitutes a communication in the sense in which we

mean it here. This is so when the parties do not wish it or simply when the information transfer does not require anything more than a mere transfer: this is the case, for instance, with a weather forecast or an announcement.[6]

But for many cases of information transfer there is a wish to communicate. If the parties are sufficiently independent, each has the means to verify the information transmitted, just as each is able to assess the reasons, which may be latent or even unconscious, prompting the information transfer. The attitude of those who hold interesting information that may even be crucial or vital for others clarifies their position as regards communication and their ability to share and be open. Finally a third point arises from the interaction of the first two. A communication may be only apparent and have no other aim but to retain, increase or insinuate influence or domination over those it is addressed to. Of course we think of propaganda speeches, proselytizing or certain kinds of advertising. We must also mention, not simply out of concern to complete the picture, communication that is designed to manipulate or misinform. Spying, which for centuries was limited to the political and military fields, has gradually encroached on the industrial and economic. Information is sought on competitors' manufacturing secrets, then their commercial strategies.

Communication: exclude or share?

Relevant information

The rising importance of possessing relevant information, reservations about free access (simple, cost-free or cheap, etc.), as well as the proliferation of this information, its complex nature and the fact that it comes from many disciplines, form the basis of what is commonly called the 'knowledge society'.[7] Those who are getting ready for the future, and those whose job it is to forecast it, keep saying that access to knowledge and information determines the results of the world-wide race for excellence, the contemporary version of the gladiatorial bouts of antiquity. However, the fortune of those who come first in the race seems to be real and substantial only for them, in the sense that it is matched by the impoverishment and exclusion of the growing multitude of others, who are condemned to the role of silent communicants, subservient yea-sayers or passive or admiring stooges.

In a knowledge society, possessing information may be a way of improving your relative position, widening the social, intellectual, economic, etc., gap between yourself and others. Possessing, if not keeping, information is always the first stage in 'insider trading', which is defined as using for personal ends information obtained in the course of your work or because of your position. So the internet facilitates access to scientific information, but the more important the information is in terms of power, the less easily accessible it is. A single-station subscription to a cutting-edge journal has become too expensive for the various university libraries in rich countries to afford to take out a subscription each. Economics dictates. *A fortiori* it is impossible to allow access from various stations in the same geographical environment. Therefore, reducing costs means restricting access.

Access to pertinent information confers knowledge, but a knowledge that is not shared always means power because it is discriminatory. So the knowledge difference, by its very nature, is likely to be increased by a power difference, which gives privileged access to fresh knowledge, which in its turn backs up new forms of power. In this way differences gradually widen; in various areas (from science to politics via economics and culture) studies have provided objective evidence for this and then 'explained' it. Excellence may be only the excellent subtlety of exclusion, hidden but systematic. In the context of the European Union, a burgeoning realization of the dangers that may result from an emphasis on notions such as excellence, knowledge and even information can be detected in phrases such as 'European knowledge society for all' which have appeared in official texts from 1997.

Communicate or domesticate?

Many factors, collective or individual, may limit a person's autonomy: economic, political, social, cultural, religious, etc. The barriers may be common to everyone, they may be subjective or objective, temporary or longstanding. Objectivization of constraints and obstacles is a first consciousness-raising act preceding any genuine communication. Collective memory is likely to forget quickly the conditions typical of totalitarian regimes and associated with communication practices, whatever the medium (radio, television, recording, print, etc.). The authorities, jealous of their prerogatives, have always shown themselves to be punctilious regarding the use of reproduction and dissemination of texts. Under the soviet regime the authorities decided what was to be printed, filmed, recorded, etc., and dictated the fate of texts: print runs, distribution channels, prices, marketing, subsidies, and so on. Those barred from communicating invented and developed the *samizdat*, which was simply typewritten reproduction of a few copies that were distributed secretly then retyped, in fact chain letters for *refusenik* writers.

A recent issue of the journal *Manière de voir* bears the title 'The media empire'.[8] The authors, several of whom have held prominent positions nationally or worldwide, stress how crucial the current revolution in communication will be for the fate of humanity. They point out its dangers but admit they see no solution, in that only market forces are capable of influencing it.

Technological steps forward, humanitarian steps back?

Going forward together

It is agreed that every human being's basic needs should be met. In a way everyone should be given a minimum simply because they are our fellows. Expressed in concrete terms the minimum links into the basic rights recognized by various international bodies. It is thought that everyone should have access, in conditions that guarantee personal development and self-realization, to a certain number of goods and services necessary for growth and survival. These basic needs have to do with

food and a material minimum (housing and clothes), health care (including medicine) and finally access to knowledge and culture.

In spite of solemn declarations on the future of humanity repeated over the last half-century at least, it appears that the basic needs of each human being are less and less likely to be met. In the area of sufficient food of good quality for all, post-war expectations regularly promised by scientific and technological advances have achieved the opposite. The gulf is widening between the satisfied and the hungry, reinforcing the nutritional split between those with full and those with empty bellies. The educational split between literate and illiterate runs parallel to the one associated with satisfaction of clothing and housing needs. The spectacular advances in the field of healthcare and medicines should have brought every human being the care their situation requires. We know the development of the last fifty years has operated in the opposite direction and the medical split is increasing between the healthy and the masses of the sick. So there is a fundamental paradox, if not a veritable contradiction, between the opportunities offered to the whole of humanity by scientific discoveries and the uses to which they have continually been put over several decades. It was probably the same before, but what has changed is that these things are taking place worldwide. The challenges and opposition to certain forms of globalization, the social, economic, political and identity deficiencies they cause result in poverty, suffering, tensions and conflict that will inevitably spread if we do not tackle their deep structural causes.

Constructing exclusion?

In the field of access to knowledge and culture, recent technological progress and especially the promise of the internet are likely not only to widen the gap between the haves and have-nots, as happened with food and medicine, but also to reduce the number of the former and increase the latter considerably. This widening gap is frequently alluded to. In international circles the internet's advance is linked to what is called, in a dangerous stereotype, 'the digital split'. On all sides, questions are being asked about technological developments that facilitate communication to a degree never achieved before, and about ways of involving those who have been on the margins of the progress of recent decades. Indeed it is feared that the publishing world and its growing use of ICT will strengthen monopolies and act as an even greater barrier to access to 'knowledge', and prevent the South importing its own knowledge to the North and even from publishing it itself.[9]

The voguish effect of the phrase 'digital split' runs the risk of masking the extent of the real problem. Indeed we have to explore the computing gap insofar as it parallels all the other gaps we have known about for decades, in the course of which, in spite of being constantly condemned, they have nonetheless got wider. In every field recent technological progress should have enabled us, should today enable us, to close those unacceptable gaps.[10] If the gaps widen the reason, as we all know, does not lie in the inadequacy of progress achieved worldwide but in the use of a surplus value reserved for certain people, who thus claim the monopoly of the benefits to be had from it. At the same time we should not underestimate the importance of splits

that are also occurring in the northern nations between those who represent the peak of the socio-economic hierarchies and those further down the pyramid in their country.[11]

Mass production and inequalities

Over the last few decades at least communication has tended to become a mass phenomenon. The underlying trends of the modern economy were to match and reinforce this development. Whatever the communication technique used, whatever the medium employed, cutting production costs requires an increase in output and a fundamental change in methods of distributing products. The cost of each item has to be drastically slashed to make up for the relatively low profit on each sale. It is essential for the product to be available everywhere, highly visible and touchable to prospective customers. Among the large number of mass-produced communication items only a small percentage reaches the critical sales threshold that covers production costs and makes a profit. The losses made on the other products, which are quickly cleared off the shelves in the stores and destroyed, are balanced by sales of the first ones and production subsidies.

Those who are unable to mass-produce because they lack sufficient material means are de facto barred from communication even if they can still, in the best cases, produce and distribute in small quantities. It is often said that the miracle of the internet will in fact be giving everyone all the texts and information they need or find useful. However, that is not what we find. In truth internet production and distribution of information costs only a derisory amount so that it is virtually free. But it is noticeable that only the information whose holders have an interest in getting it distributed (commercial news, advertising, propaganda, etc.) is widely disseminated, so much so that western states, for example, have taken legal steps to safeguard internet users' peace and security, banning random dispatch of unsolicited texts. On the other hand, if information has a saleable value, or if it can be sold because it brings the person who possesses it some superiority, the product's internet distribution becomes profitable and sometimes goes up to far higher prices than what the same texts cost when they were printed and distributed on paper.

Between two worlds: experiments on the ground

Gaining access to communication

Given these developments our contemporaries have three possibilities open to them: first, accept them and adjust, or even take advantage of them; or combat them and shoulder the inevitable dangers faced by a tiny David fighting a huge Goliath and the risks in opposing, at the same time, the undeniably positive aspects of some changes taking place; and, finally, increase autonomy by improved understanding of the processes at work and create modest networks for trying out concrete solutions.

The experiments briefly detailed below are resolutely part of the quest for alter-

native solutions. With the assistance of well-intentioned people and community groups, the participation of professionals in communication media and in particular written media (publishers, printers, distributors, bookshops, etc.), the project took shape to set up, here and elsewhere, another mode of communication and access to scientific and cultural knowledge. Within the framework of legal forms appropriate to the environment in which they operate,[12] they are filling, modestly and locally, a twofold need. First, facilitating the establishment of small structures to make it possible to publish in all media texts with a scientific or cultural content. The techniques to be used must be adapted to specific needs: regions, climates, available resources and local skills. Of course it is small 'print runs' (from fewer than 100 to around 1500 copies) that are problematic from both the production and the distribution point of view. But these small print runs bring a number of advantages: they tie up less capital, enable more texts to be communicated, support local production and ensure diversity of output and exchange of content. Second, it is important to promote the transfer of texts to be published in all media through agreements with publishers from both North and South, either by adapting copyright payments according to receiver countries or by allowing, with an appropriate legal arrangement, transfers based on the concept of the 'open book' (analogous to open software or freeware) or 'copyleft'.

Thinking big, acting small

Two associated projects are helping to achieve the dual objective described. First, in the North, an infrastructure has been put in place for producing, circulating and managing scientific or cultural documents and reducing to a minimum the economic contingencies affecting publishing which is intended to be cost-effective. Second, the pluralistic apolitical association 'Interlignes' wishes to encourage wider dissemination of cultural knowledge and content in both rich and underprivileged countries. The association aims to achieve three objectives: reflect on all the practices connected with the communication and publishing professions; promote communication quality with regard to the value of texts distributed, the methods and media through which they are distributed; and develop communication with the countries of the South by providing local partners with the structural means to enable them to build on-the-spot units for producing and distributing cultural and scientific knowledge. In this article we focus on issues connected with communication difficulties in the poorest countries. Whole populations do not have access to a form of communication appropriate to their culture both within their communities and with the outside world. When we become aware of this situation, which is deteriorating year on year, we need to develop in various countries a network of local partners based on contact points in Belgium and Europe. At each point in the network, with the assistance of private individuals, professionals, associations and institutions, we are attempting to develop small-scale information and reprographics structures.[13] The equipment is mostly recycled material from countries in the North: a complete PC configuration refurbished by a local social economy company, which also has internet access and a printer on the side; photocopying, reprographic or offset[14] equipment

can be recovered and renovated here; slightly damaged rolls of paper can be cut up into sizes that mean they can be reused; ends of lines of paper and consumables can be bought cheaply, etc. In this way small-scale reprographics structures are created that mean books, brochures, CDs and DVDs, etc., can be produced on the spot. Distribution can be carried out with the collaboration of transport firms, for instance by using the unused portion of quotas booked by them on long-distance sea and air routes.

And so the first point of the programme is to provide a reliable, long-term partner in a country in the South with the equipment required to produce communication media.[15] The choice of partner requires considerable care. Indeed they must be able house the machines and operate them for the benefit of all in economic conditions that have been jointly set out. Apart from the partner's personal qualities, it is equally important for them to be part of an environment that offers every chance of continuing long-term. The local partner makes a financial contribution in accordance with provisions defined in each negotiation, but the most important thing is for them to manage quickly to self-finance operating the machines and eventually replacing them. Training is provided on the spot when the equipment is installed and later as needed. The purpose of the small-scale reprographics structures is first to enable texts to be produced in the required quantity and format: books, brochures, CDs and DVDs, leaflets, photocopies, fliers, etc. The service allows texts to be produced for local, scientific, teaching and cultural (in the widest sense) needs. Local centres also aim to print and publish texts produced by local communities in order to contribute to developing a scientific, literary and cultural life in the region by giving local researchers and authors the chance to be published on the spot and participate in exchange of ideas.

In a subsequent phase of development local partners may suggest to network partners texts published initially in the South. When they have been contacted, various Belgian publishers have signalled their agreement to giving up the rights they hold on titles in their catalogue in favour of southern publishers. The latter have to commit to reproducing the works they want to produce in a local edition exclusively for their country or region, at a local price relative to the country's GDP and the true cost.[16] Transfer of rights takes place via payment of a global price calculated on the receiving country's GDP.

Locally, based on the simple structures put in place and in collaboration with the other points in the network, people take care to reproduce the books and brochures, sent to them in pdf format, just as they are published in their country of origin (the same volumes, covers, presentation, etc.). Each local outfit is affiliated to the network, from which it receives a start-up grant to set up the firm and gets the texts to be published. It also becomes a centre for receiving locally texts to be published and sending them to other network members. Partnership agreements between all the members have to be negotiated and signed. They include methods of transferring equipment and texts, an agreement on moral and commercial principles based on solidarity, and a protocol overseeing the whole business.

For the project to work beyond the current cultural areas, we must also arrange to cooperate on translation. Some texts can be distributed locally in the great international languages or languages that are widely used in the region. Other texts have

to be translated because their content is aimed at other sections of the population who cannot be expected to have sufficient knowledge of foreign languages.

Judging that it is on the spot that we have the most chance of finding people able to translate texts into regional or local languages, we contact higher education institutions where the great lingua francas are taught and the main local languages are used. The aim is to get the relevant departments of higher education institutions which specialize in language study to suggest that final-year students should translate a scientific or cultural work as an end-of-course task. Because the work would be done under the supervision of the tenured lecturer and would possibly be supplemented by a booklet of comments on the translating task, this solution might satisfy the requirements of both training students for a profession and ensuring the quality of a usable translation adapted to its audience. Thus the educational establishments would be working on training students as well as improving access to international knowledge.

The Benin endeavour

For various practical reasons the project's first test is currently taking place in Benin,[17] more particularly in the Songhai Centres (Porto-Novo), a partner with all the requisite features. The choice was made collectively after several visits and a study of the concrete situation regarding methods of media reproduction in the country. In Benin, as in other southern countries, in many places, especially on the outskirts of cities such as Cotonou, printing businesses of varying sizes have been set up. They range from the small firm where the 'boss' does everything: receiving customers, layout, pre-press work, printing, admin, etc., to the company that operates with a large staff and a more substantial outfit.

Most printers, if not all, work with machines that are old but more often than not well maintained and in working order. Printing is done mainly by offset on Heidelberg machines from the 1960s. Most local printers have been unable to invest in machines that can work on four-colour printing; lacking the finance they make do with single head machines. Consequently, to get four colours printers have to work step by step. Affected by the inks, the papers stretch unevenly and superimposition of colours, which is essential for successful four-colour printing, becomes random. Customers may complain and compare the quality obtained there with products turned out on machines with four heads, particularly abroad. However, lower quality is not due to lack of skills but lack of finance. Despite their equipment's age local printers turn out work of acceptable quality. Of course there are qualitative differences between work carried out there and in western countries. But it is not possible to say that in this area there is a 'split' between North and South.

Nevertheless, in addition to the technical drawbacks there are handicaps in production and distribution. Indeed, even with a low wage bill, offset printing becomes cost-effective only when the print run is 3000 copies or more, a run that represents a large investment which is seldom justified and often unachievable for local publishers, especially considering that local sales are likely to be low and the risk of being left with many unsold copies is high. The difficulty of producing books in

small runs on the spot hamstrings African publishing and often forms an insurmountable obstacle for southern countries.

Therefore we have to put in most effort on this area. The paper medium is still crucial, especially in southern countries. In those countries, when the medium is a book or brochure, it suffers from difficulties in addition to those of production. Indeed, the book market is very small but the finance required is substantial in proportion, so it is natural that professions associated with books are less attractive and not very healthy. Furthermore, the problem of training professionals in the book trade is present in an acute form.[18] In southern countries most books are imported. Their price makes them inaccessible to local consumers, whose buying power is particularly low. As an example, in the context of aid to French-speaking African countries, publishing projects such as 'Nouveaux Horizons' and 'Programme PLUS'[19] mean that western books are imported at preferential tariffs. According to surveys, the reductions so given are between 40% and 60% of the original price. However, the financial effort required of Africans is often beyond their means. The system of subsidies is only a palliative, since it prolongs dependence on western publishing companies and indirectly but inevitably holds back local production.[20]

Basis for a charter

Appearances notwithstanding, the difficulties encountered in the southern hemisphere probably arise from causes identical to those that produce difficulties in the northern hemisphere. This explains why we need to examine rigorously the issues raised by contemporary communication techniques (long print runs, international mergers, pyramid distribution, aggressive, deceptive marketing, commodification of science and culture, etc.), even if they seem restricted to the North or to affect the South only marginally. The situation merits consideration by all of us. The risks are already being felt in the countries of the South, where precariousness of political and economic independence is reinforced by insecurity or lack of funding for communication media. Therefore it is important to expand the countries' independence so that they can communicate with one another, communicate their thinking and enter into a process of exchange with countries of the North. These two elements form the basic objectives of action to improve communication between our contemporaries.

It is essential to understand from an interdisciplinary perspective the current working methods in all kinds of communications areas. Understanding is the vital stage in building alternatives to the present systems. With a change of attitude and structural assistance, finance, however modest, will allow us to expand opportunities for communication. The subjects it is important to understand better include: the conditions for acquiring knowledge in the contemporary publishing context and the consequences of present practices for the scientific world and the countries of the South;[21] looking more widely at ways of accessing reading or cultural life in all its forms; opportunities for everyone, even in countries and under regimes where there is free speech, to access information and the means of self-expression. Human societies are built on communication. For development of the self and the group everyone must be able communicate absolutely freely with his or her fellows. In a

democracy progress depends on dialogue and tolerance, as well as expression of varying views while respecting others.

And so the chief features of the partnerships that 'Interlignes' intends to form in both North and South have been outlined. 'Interlignes' has developed and wishes to publicize an ethical charter which expresses some emphases that are gradually emerging and are shaping the principles that should guide professionals in the field:

- *Partnership within a network*: the mutual choice of stable, reliable partners demands full attention being paid to the projects carried out together to subsequently develop autonomously and be incorporated into many networks of partnerships.
- *Appropriate and temporary joint financing*: depending on their means each partner contributes financially to the project which, eventually and following a jointly agreed timetable, is intended to be self-financing.
- *Autonomy in solidarity*: setting up a project increases all the partners' autonomy, which also creates solidarity towards third parties.
- *Disparities to be evened out*: paying attention to local, regional or continental disparities reduces gaps, locally as well.
- *Local prices within everyone's reach*: products are sold at local prices that result in self-financing and produce a profit designed to finance the business.
- *Transfers between regions*: transfers of texts and ideas, sharing and opening out to other ways of being human are facilitated by appropriate production of media and translation.
- *Diversities to be developed*: exchange and communication remain at the heart of communication processes that aim to transfer information and foster dialogue.

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Guy Jucquois
University of Louvain, President of Interlignes
Translated from the French by Jean Burrell

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Notes

1. A recent email was sent to people or bodies interested in these issues in the following words: 'The publishing industry is experiencing merger problems. The wild hordes of Nazi followers who burnt books in the 1930s were merely playing at it. Today being publishers does not release us from the duty of facing up to the same demons, for the auto-da-fé now consuming us seems to be far more effective, if more subtle. The conversion of the book, all books, into commodities. The marketeers who today dominate book production are the modern inquisitors. By restricting books to a purely commercial role they are putting the torch to the bonfire. They publish millions of books that swamp the bookshop shelves. Their armies shoot with ads, and buddy contacts in the mass-circulation papers. The result is that editorial dissidence is being sidelined and biblio-diversity threatened. In order to score a complete victory that army does not hesitate even to market criticism of commercialization and hence capitalism, provided it sells. As merger follows merger, and without arousing any huge revolt or protest, we witness a big arms manufacturer taking over the prestigious company Editions Maspero (publisher of Malcolm X, Fanon, Guevara, Guerin, Lissagaray . . .) and sell it, without the blink of an eye, to Baron Seillière, the former company directors' leader and no doubt a great revolutionary manqué.'
2. And more particularly the internet, whose chief purpose is officially to be world-wide!
3. Rey et al. (1998).

4. There are very few authors who include in their books the dialogue aspect or openness to the encounter. Winkin (1996) outlines the crucial dual dimension of 'practice' and theory.

5. Cf. Bougnoux (1996), which stresses the relationships and oppositions between the two words.

6. Some regimes that wish to control all information exchange may paradoxically end up arousing such mistrust among their citizens that they get to the point where they even reject weather forecasts, suspecting propaganda.

7. In a recent framework programme the European Union intends to mobilize its research capacity in the human and social science fields to focus on relations between citizens and governance in the knowledge society. Even more than in the past the Union is concerned about the factors making for integrated and lasting economic and social progress that is based on values of justice, solidarity and diversity within an even wider Europe.

8. No. 63 (May–June 2002). The journal, edited by Ignacio Ramonet, reprints recent articles from Le Monde diplomatique.

9. These factors have been stressed recently by UNESCO and were at the heart of discussions at the 'World Summit of the Information Society' held in Geneva in December 2003 and the discussions beginning in Tunis. But it is important to carry out a proper analysis and think up appropriate remedies.

10. The G7 meeting in Brussels on 25 and 26 February 1995 about information highways did not even refer to the idea of a 'digital split', which had nevertheless been foreseeable earlier and furthermore already forecast. Technological prophetism and the mythology of the excellence of the few leading to progress for all fulfil their reassuring function.

11. In the northern countries too the splits are getting wider; just one example is the poor diet we know is rife the lower the socio-economic level. The external signs of the obese seem to be the opposite pole to the signs displayed by the undernourished from the South: but both bear on their bodies the marks of their social position. And as a 'sign' obesity is arriving in the emerging countries, witness China, Mexico and Egypt where the problem is of concern to the authorities. To quote from Arte-Newsletter of 17 May 2005: 'While 800 million suffer famine, 300 million are recognized as obese, almost half of them in the so-called "developing" countries. In 20 years the number of obese people worldwide has doubled. And the figure for this infectious overeating keeps increasing.'

12. The NGO 'Interlignes – pour une communication scientifique et culturelle', a not-for-profit association in Belgian law, which up to now has been run only by the generosity of its members and the little company 'InterCommunications' (SPRL or limited liability partnership) together with EME ('Editions Modulaires Européennes'), a social economy company whose small capital consists of unsecured personal loans. Rather than building a hierarchical centralized system it seems preferable to put in place structures each of which would be autonomous and adapted to its own purpose, but which would all share the same philosophy, would be closely linked one with another and would assist each other as far as their means allowed.

13. To take part in this project it is better to be working within an institution (university, teaching, research, cultural, community service, etc.).

14. Offset equipment is not used much both because of the technical skills it requires and because it is more suitable for large print runs.

15. Apart from the basic computing equipment, the basic equipment consists of a copier, possibly with colour drums, a collator-folder-stapler, a guillotine, a glue machine. According to need and available finance this equipment may also include, for example, a good ink-jet printer and a solid photocopier.

16. The retail price in the region is calculated on a coefficient including the true cost, the GDP of the country of reproduction multiplied by a coefficient reflecting the printing, publishing and distribution costs on the ground. Thus the same book will cost, for instance, 20 euro in Belgium or France, but only 2 euro in Rwanda or 1 euro in Pakistan, etc.

17. For reasons of convenience and immediate effectiveness, but also because of the present concrete situation in the countries of the South, it was gradually decided to make the first attempts in the countries of French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa. Taking advantage of trips to Benin in September 2002, in the context of a joint meeting between the ICPHS, UNESCO and the African Centre for

Advanced Studies, and to Gabon in March 2003 for a meeting of French-speaking countries, I spent two brief periods in Benin, a country that maintains close bilateral relations with Belgium and France and which Belgian higher education staff visit regularly. At the 'Interlignes' general meeting on 5 April 2003 it was decided to examine the conditions for setting up a regional operation in West Africa and Benin was chosen because the country possessed the best conditions for the success of the enterprise: political and social stability, steady economic and social progress, a central position in the region, characteristics which were in addition to the special links mentioned above that united our two countries. In this context it was decided that the precise form of the set-up in Benin would be one or several printing and publishing businesses.

18. As far as bookshops are concerned the Association of French-language Bookshops, chaired by Philippe Goff, who is a member of our association, works very closely with local bookshops, in particular with Agnès Adjaho (Cotonou), to improve training in and expansion of the profession in sub-Saharan Africa. Similar work must be carried out in the field of publishing and printing, as well as for media.

19. This may involve western editions with a label showing the reduction agreed, or (parts of) special print runs bearing the indication that the books are to be sold in Africa.

20. The analogy with other types of exchange could be pointed to: subsidies received by northern publishing houses with a view to supporting exports to the South are profitable only for the North while prolonging the exclusion of the South

21. Cf. the recent statements from UNESCO and Geneva in this area; the principle of 'universal access to knowledge' is not yet being applied.

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