How can the International Committee for Literary Museums (ICLM) help promote the Memory of the World Programme?

A Sketch of the Presentation by Lothar Jordan and Erling Dahl

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[1.] Introduction.
[2.] The presentation reflects ways and means of giving information about the
Programme through ICLM's MOW working group and its members.
[3.] It focuses on the following questions:
Which role do translations play in the MOW programme?
What kind of information about a registered document would prove useful for journalists,
museum professionals and other users?
What types of presentation (internet, CD, printed matter) and commentary are expedient
for users all over the world to understand the importance, role, and singularity of a MOW
document?
[4.] This presentation develops a three-year plan for realising the objectives and possible
results of the discussion.

[1.] Introduction

ICLM: Present situation, prospects.- [ICLM Newletter 2007/02 with a short history of the
ICLM may be handed out].

Why are Composers´ Museums in an IC for Literary Museums? We will make some
remarks on their role within ICLM. And we will give examples of important documents
and how we and our colleagues communicate them.

Conclusion: ICLM unites knowledge on different arts and scholarly disciplines; the
institutions (museums) represented by its members keep important documents; their staff
know how to handle them professionally, how to conserve and present them and how to
communicate them to the public.

[2.] Ways of Communication

ICLM may pass on already existing information to professional colleagues, journalists –
UNESCO brochures, leaflets, internet addresses.

ICLM may propose to its members linking their homepages to MOW.

ICLM may develop ideas for communicating the MOW programme to different public
groups:
-          semi-expert disseminators, such as journalists, some museum professionals,
university professors [excluding specialists for specific documents], teachers). This

aspect will be discussed in detail in part [3.] of our presentation.
-        a wider general audience,

e.g.:
ICLM may help to arrange special exhibitions on MOW documents, which might be accompanied by socio-cultural events, concerts and other functions. We will give examples in our presentation. How this can be enacted should be worked out by our Committee's MOW working group and be discussed by Committee members on our next annual conference.

ICLM may win outstanding artists (writers, composers, conductors, singers [even pop stars], film makers, etc.) as ambassadors of the World Documentary Heritage. Examples given in the presentation.

ICLM, collaborating with other ICOM bodies, might develop a film or films on the subject dealing with:
-        The memory of the world (that of exceptional ideas, of religious records, works of art, of social and political events, and of personalities) is kept in unique documents stored in archives, libraries, and museums.
-        These documents are often inconspicuous (books, manuscripts, papers, rolls of film, tapes) and very often highly sensitive, but the Memory they keep is authentic.
-        UNESCO's MOW programme aims at keeping these documents safe and at granting access to them to as many men and women as possible. The Programme explains the value of authentic documents for mankind and helps people to understand their importance, their contents, histories, and receptions.
-        The film(s) might show what these documents do mean for us today and point out their relevance for the future.
-        They should present the documents.
-        They should illustrate their contents, show up their value and current importance by presenting them or their realisations or their impacts (in music, rituals, on the stage, etc.), and they should confirm what is shown by interviews with well-known politicians, artists and tell viewers the stories of documents; also, they should acquaint us with people that are interested in this kind of memory.

[3.] Sustaining the MOW Programme: Reflections and Proposals

[3.] Sustaining the MOW programme and its documents includes
3.1   reflecting the role of translations in the communication of documents and taking care that only the best translations will be available,
3.2   giving high quality information to disseminators and providing commentaries which, though research-based, should also be clear, lively, and inspiring,
3.3   giving high quality information with a choice of material and of information levels to a worldwide audience, in a fresh and attractive form,
 using all media, old and new, designed in accordance with the value of the documents
 and applying a MOW (UNESCO, ICOM) corporate design.

ICLM proposes developing (new) standards for the presentation of MOW documents and of applying these standards in concrete forms of mediation/communication.

[3.1]
One important question concerns language and translation; it is basic to all means of communicating MOW documents. For many MOW documents originally not written in English translations into that language, or at least of parts of the documents, are indispensable. (Translations into other languages might also be considered.) As translations of a lesser or even of an average quality can spoil the reception of works and documents, it is important to insist on the best possible translations in the communication of the MOW programme. This specially applies to literary documents, but of course to religious, philosophical, political ones (and others) as well. In such a programme, the translation of documents, or of parts of them, is not only a tool but a demanding synthesis of an original document and a medium of its reception. In some cases this may mean that new translations have to be produced. We should take care of this and work on the subject after this conference.

We shall not delve too deeply into the twilight zone of excellent versus mediocre translations, of artistry versus lacklustre philology, nor into the explanation of what a fine translation is. That said, it is clear that translations must communicate not only semantic equivalents with their originals, but also functional equivalents for prosody and other specific cultural character traits. If a translation merely affords correct data, it does not serve our purposes. But there may be exceptions, e.g. in the domain of juridical documents.

[3.2]
In disseminating information on the MOW programme we first and foremost have in mind groups of multipliers like journalists, librarians, museum professionals, university lecturers, teachers.

For these, we need good reproductions, images, sounds, etc. of the documents, so that these can be seen and heard. And we need comments that are both concise and lively. These should be based on the best scholarly and academic knowledge available on the document. Naturally, the commentaries rely on the most updated critical studies, without leading to unconfirmed interpretations. But the commentators should have in mind that they are not addressing specialists and not just a national or regional public. For many disciplines this is still something new.

We want to show this for the philological disciplines:
Editorial scholarship in the modern languages can be understood as a modified extension of classical and biblical philologies; thus the works of our canonical authors may be considered secularized versions of sacred texts. The philological tradition has long since left romanticism behind; with its idea of the synthesis of people, language, and poetry, critical editions preserve the "canonical authors" of national literatures for a future time. To wit, general editorial scholarship of modern literatures is an integral part of a national philology, even if the author whose works are being edited boasts international repute, has a worldwide readership, and resides far from his or her native soil. In most

cases, editorial scholarship is concerned with a single author's writings in specific languages. At times, we come across more than one language in these editions, depending, naturally, on the writer's biography and the events informing about his time period. In the European Middle Ages, for instance, bilingualism or multilingualism was rather a matter of course than an exception, with Latin and a vernacular language vying for hegemony. Immigrants traditionally are bi- or multilingual; an apt example is a twentieth-century author who begins his career in Russian (Vladimir Nabokov and Joseph Brodsky come to mind), emigrates to the west and pursues a writing career in English. Another source for bi- and even multilingualism can be found in literary translations. In some cases, translations are crucial variations of original works. Such is the case with Heinrich Heine, who, as a German immigrant in Paris, spoke and wrote French without hesitation, and produced French-language texts in France before these were published in a German version in the writer's homeland. In all of these instances, bi- or multilingualism occurs by chance, depending on whether the author employed a language he preferred, and regardless of the editor's approach or editorial criteria. Furthermore, there are additional elements of internationalism and multilingualism in so-called traditional editions. To edit Shakespeare is to edit for a worldwide audience, so that commentaries may and should include source references in languages other than English. Let us take the bard's *Hamlet* as an apt example: Latin was the language of Saxo Grammaticus in his *Historiae Danicae,* and French that of Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques,* both important source works for Shakespeare's intellectual history. Internationalism and multilingualism derive, in this instance, not from editorial principles, but rather from contingent factors in the genesis of the text and/or of the writers edited.

At the methodological and disciplinary levels the need of commentaries for the MOW programme could lead to testing the possibilities of combining scholarly editing and comparative literature or general literature as a new field of enquiry. As long as the desired (i.e. global) readership is a major factor in our work, this will also have an impact on the commentaries on MOW documents. As a matter of course, this readership m u s t have an impact on the commentaries.

 Some questions posed are the following: Should commentaries contain mere facts? Should they deal with the history of the genesis and ownership of the document? Should the sources of the document, its cultural context, its relations to other works or documents be explained, clarified, and elaborated? Is it necessary to sketch the documents´ history of reception?

To make it a real project for a series of comments on every MOW document, a model has to be developped. We need parameters or criteria to be used in commentaries, in each single presentation of the document in this ´series´. These criteria should echo those of inscription into the register. Thus, to reflect criteria for the commentary may have an interaction with the inscription criteria as we want to stress value (aesthetic, philosophical, historical importance) and impact of the document as: authenticity, uniqueness, representativeness, achievements, form and style, etc.

 We are now leaving the academic part of our presentation and work on MOW commentaries and come to form, style, and the design of the presentations and commentaries.

The potential readers of commentaries significantly influence the content and style of commentaries. Yet there is one type of readers for whom commentaries of MOW documents are definitely not meant: the academic colleague who is an expert on specific documents. This requires our presentations not to be not too faddish, yet readable, clear, concise and to the point. What we need is a more essayistic style, a lively way of speaking about the documents – using, if necessary or inspiring, images, pictures, and sound. Examples of this will be given in our presentation.

If we have a list of criteria applicable in making commentaries, we should aim at emphasizing what is most important and then try to include as many other criteria as possible, but with lesser intensity. Although the list of criteria should be right before us, it is not necessary to apply them each time in the same order, which would make commentaries boring (with little exceptions, like a short bibliography, internet addresses, etc.).

As these texts are made for disseminators, they should be quotable or, in fact, offer quotations. In the commentaries, stories should be told concerning the history of a given document or its reception or the social group to which it belongs. Again, examples will be given in our presentation. The commentary of each document might include a short essay by or an interview with a famous artist (writer, painter, conductor, film director) or a politician of great international renown (see above: [2.] "ICLM can win famous artists…").

Pragmatically speaking: whether booklet or homepage, things should look very attractive, and yet they should not be too expensive.

[3.3]
Whereas the readership we expect for publications/commentaries [3.2] is the group of disseminators, those commentaries put on the internet should be conceived for all. Essentially, the problems posed by translations [3.1] and the criteria just discussed will remain the same and thus at the core of our explanations and commentaries, but we are freer in showing more, putting in more images, sounds and texts, interviews and statements. And we can bring in links to the best internet sites on the documents and their contexts, and on the museums, libraries, and archives they are kept in.

Both [3.2 and 3.3] should be produced for every document in the register. It may be necessary to find sponsors for both segments of the programme. Definitely, they are not replacing special editions or research and conservation projects for single documents. But we need an inspiring *basic promotion* for all documents, with about the same size and effort for each and every document.

[4.] Three-Year Plan to Achieve Objectives

March/April 2008
Information of ICLM members about the results of the Canberra MOW conference and set objectives.

Summer 2008
Developing a script for a promotional film on the MOW programme.

September 2008
ICLM Annual Conference
1. will be discussing special exhibitions on MOW and/or single documents,
2. will reflect on the name of the MOW programme: Memory of the World – World Documentary Heritage.

3. ICLM's MOW Working Group
prepares a meeting/conference on different forms/ways of mediation/communication of the registered documents.

March 2009
Conference (ICLM together with ICOM [Paris] and bodies of the UNESCO MOW programme) on standards, parameters, criteria, and types of edition, presentations and comments on MOW documents (print and internet).
Issue: Preparing models of mediation/communication (internet; print, CD, etc.).

June 2009
Showing up prototypes of these editions/comments.
Showing a first version of the MOW programme promotion film.

Autumn 2009
Start of exhibitions on MOW documents.

2010
Starting publication of MOW documents on the internet and of other, e.g. printed forms of mediation/communication.
Presentation of promotional film (draft title: "MOW and its documents").

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