

REQUISITE VARIETY.

‘As we shall see, the mean information of a message is defined as the amount of chance (or randomness) present in a set of possible messages. To see that this is a natural definition, note that by choosing a message one destroys the randomness present in the variety of possible messages.’ David Ruelle: *Chance & Chaos*.

The big exhibitions were held in the spring of each year. On these occasions the largest crowds gathered, although the interest generated continued for long afterwards, ensuring that the prominent artists always excited a flurry of attention whenever they were shown. It was hard to tell what exactly it was that the crowds came for - women, men, teenagers, pensioners, parents, gays, straights, workers, managers, professionals, the unemployed, Africans, Asians, Europeans, Americans, people of all ages and types. For the younger ones it was perhaps to feel a part of something that was not already digested, something that they could try and claim as their own. Though even this is not wholly true, often they too felt left out.. As for the older citizens, certainly they valued what the artists did and believed in the possibility that it could be important. But most of the time it was hard for them to know what to think. There wasn't any lack of skill on the part of the artists and the exhibition halls were beautiful – walking through them was particularly calming. At the same time there was also something unsettling about it. It had to do with the works on show. Sometimes there was a scandal and certainly some amongst the crowds only came to be offended. The vast majority, however, would have been disappointed to be certain of what they saw or if they knew for sure what to think. They wanted the artists to leave open the very possibility that brought the people there in the first place, the possibility that what the artists did could be important. They didn't want to be excluded but neither did they really want to be included. Somehow it was the keeping alive of that possibility, in all its varieties, that they were looking for.

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