

International Theatre Institute ITI

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Pablo Neruda 1971

I saw a play of Arthur Miller's, *'The Price'*, somewhere, in Montevideo or Caracas. I liked it but it hurt: a kind of hard, unbending Chekhov; without a smile.

Leaving the theatre, I left it too, wanting to forget its truth and bitterness.

The same year in Paris I saw something that was unkempt, cynical, frenetic, that I liked for its excess, its electrifying eroticism, the break it portended.

I left the theatre and looked with tenderness at the wintry streets, the immobile trees, simple human activities.

The theatrical violence, the contrived vehemence were already past and soon forgotten.

Our times, I think, oscillate with these fluctuations between a truth that does not satisfy and a hope that has yet to take shape.

From the shell of the immense ostrich egg through which the theatre has broken, the rest of us wait expectantly in our seats, from the first row to the last, for the new fledging to take wing and fly.

We are as bored with the absurd as with old-fashioned serials, and realism has died of age careful, lest it rises from the tomb!

The walls have clearly fallen down and, in the seven islands of the seven seas that make up the world, all want to build, all want to know and recognize, we all want, in the theatre, to see ourselves as we were and as we shall be.

Poetry is my daily bread, a poet only of Chile, I am near to each of you and distant, men and women of the world theatre.

And yet I dare think we agree on what we all want: a theatre that is simple without being simplistic, critical but not inhuman, advancing like a river of the Andes whose only limits are those in itself imposes.