

International Theatre Institute ITI

World Organization for the Performing Arts

UNESCO, 1 Rue Miollis, FR-75732 Paris Cedex 15

info@iti-worldwide.org / www.iti-worldwide.org



Humberto Orsini 1995

When humanity created the Gods and began to converse with them, the earliest notion of theatre was born.

Later human beings went in quest of spiritual happiness and used theatre to seek the source of life. From this sprang the conflict between fiction and reality, between being and non-being, between truth and falsehood, between life and mere appearance, between light and darkness. In this paradoxical struggle it was discovered that being falsehood there was truth, behind death there was life, behind fiction there was reality, and finally, that behind this apparently distorted mirror that is the theatre, could be seen the clear image of man.

The theatre, this marvelous act of love and passion, has the happy virtue of discovering the universal human being through the lives of common mortals, of revealing the workings of the inner self hidden behind a mask of lies. It has unveiled the cruel and merciless image to the powerful, and the passivity-not always a mark of resignation- of the oppressed and has finally made history out of the most significant events in which humankind has been the protagonist.

In their eagerness to build worlds different from those they knew and to give free reign to their dreams, human beings invented utopias. But since sometimes "dreams are only dreams" they found upon waking that the curtains of the imagination had come down, confronting them with a real world where good was indeed present but where at the same time, humanity was trapped in a net of terrible and painful realities.

Only those plays which succeeded in interpreting their epoch and the essence of humankind at a particular moment, those that managed to get to the heart of social upheaval, are the ones that have reached us across the barriers of time, ideologies, and thought. These works still live each evening on the stages of the world. On the other hand those, which remained on the surface or indulged in intellectual games, have been diluted by time or now gather dust on library shelves.

Today the theatre seems to be neglecting the opportunity it has of interpreting our times, and the storms, be they social or human, local or universal, that we are enduring. It is clear that the theatre does not make revolutions but it helps humanity to understand them and give them life and heart.

On this 27th March 1995, I would like to appeal to theatre people of the world to restore to the theatre its marvelous power to entertain, to move our hearts, to wake up our consciences to the terrible state of injustice in which people of this planet live and to stop the wrath of warriors fighting to conquer pieces of other people's land. Let the theatre transport us, even if only for a few hours, to that still unknown world deep within us and let us discover new languages through theatre, which will make possible a more effective dialogue between human beings.