

International Theatre Institute ITI

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Iakovos Kampanellis 2001

I believe that Theatre will never cease to exist. I think, even if this might sound paradoxical, that this ancient Art is also an Art of the Future. Not because of the will of those who create Theatre—playwrights, actors, directors—and all the other factors that contribute to a performance, but because you, the people, the audience, will still want it to exist in the future.

On what do I base this optimistic prediction about Theatre's future? On the belief that the creation of Theatre stems from a person's psychical need, a need that will never be eradicated.

I invite you all today to share some thoughts that would seem to justify my point of view. The fact that Man walked on the Moon seems already an old story! It no longer impresses us that a spaceship went to planet Mars and brought back samples of its soil! A huge space station providing accommodation for space tourists and young couples on their honeymoon is already under construction and spaceships exploring distant planets and sending their photos back to Earth are now an everyday occurrence!

However, although we are living in a time when humanity is conquering space, we still continue to go to the Theatre, and find ourselves in a space belonging to an Art that has existed and functioned with the same simple means, ever since measuring time with a sundial was thought to be a great technical achievement. In my view, this evident, timeless relation between human beings and theatre is an eternal one. This is because I believe that while Theatre evolved into a social phenomenon, it was, at the beginning, a natural one. Theatre dates from the time that the first human beings began to memorize their experiences and represent them in imagination, from the time that human beings began to plan their actions, imagining how to accomplish them. The first theatre company and the first theatrical performances took shape in the minds of men and women. Every person has an innate need and ability to create performances. Have you ever realized that each of us, without exception, has at his or her disposal a private theater company, in which we ourselves play the leading role while at the same time being our own audience? Very often, we are also the playwright, the set designer of this company. How and when does this occur?

Isn't this in fact what we are doing, when, preparing ourselves for an interested or crucial meeting, we imagine the whole scene in order to decide how we will behave. Aren't our memories and even our dreams, actually performances of our private company?

I think, therefore, that Theatre will never cease to exist because I believe that men and women will never stop living without the agony of self-knowledge, without the existential need to become spectators of their actions, that is to say, without those elements of the human psyche from which the Art of Theatre emerged, from which it has been re-created

for thousands of years and from which it will continue to be reborn as long as human beings remain the natural fruit of love.