

idea. In many places in this country theater is already being brought into the schools, occasionally and in small amounts. We were not content with that. We said that the theater belongs in the schools as a co-curricular activity—not as an extraordinary, esoteric, and invited guest who can be brought to the table at 3:30 in the afternoon and kept very separate from everything else there was to learn. We asked that we might bring carefully designed theater into the high school auditorium to support the curriculum because the high school student has been *studying* theater as though it were a book, a record, or a film. The theater is none of these.

The theater involves the impact of the performing human being—the reach, if you will. We have had our most magnificent, rewarding, and exciting impact when we have performed in the so-called culturally disadvantaged areas because the reach there is difficult. To reach across apathy, across distrust, across a kind of closing off and alienation, you need the kind of impact that makes the connection. The performing arts are interactive, and they do make that connection. The reaching that we talk about in the theater is the kind of reaching that connects the performance to the human being sitting out there in the audience.

We all play roles; and somewhere along the line you must learn to use words in their natural form. We discovered when we performed in these culturally disadvantaged areas that many of the students had come from homes where a kind of guttural exclamation took the place of words. Often too, their words were in no way connected with the emotion that was appropriate to them. There was no way for these children in their day-to-day lives to come to understand the beauty and magnificence of words.

Again, somewhere along the line, as well as learning the ritual of the society out of which you come, you have got to understand what is the role of the human being, who you are, what *connects* you to—and what separates you from—every human being who has ever lived. And this is *one* of the things the theater can do for you. Because, when a man stands on the stage and talks to you about war and about war being the destruction of the human race, and you suddenly remind yourself that he is using words that were written in Greece two and a half millennia ago, it gives you a sense of the fact that there may be some continuity to life after all.

We say that there have to be *live* actors performing this classic literature which educators have agreed belongs in the education of the human being. For the theater is the only art form where man stands on

a stage and talks to man on *behalf* of man. And the theater is the art form devoted to, built on, and structured around behavior—the role of the human being, the study of man, and the explanation of man.

When we go into the high schools, we work in two ways. In the first, we put into the auditorium a stage set, complete with lighting and sound equipment, so that every performance can maintain the same high standard of excellence. Our performances run from an hour and 15 or 20 minutes to an hour and a half; they are designed to fit into two periods, back to back, not after school, not before school, not on Saturday—but during the schoolday. Our performance may consist, for example, of some scenes from *Richard III* linked to some scenes from Shaw's *St. Joan*. The theme running through this is: There are assassins among us, and there are powerful people among us. How can we tell who they are? What makes the difference between a man like Richard III, who obviously went to hell, and a saint like Joan? They were both powerful. They both could use people. What was the difference?

The second way we work is to take performers and bring them into the History and English classrooms. When I speak of bringing actors and actresses into the classrooms, I am speaking of people who are extraordinarily trained and educated, and who have this rare thing which is called talent, the talent to create while you watch them. They come into the classroom as specialists directly illuminating the educational material which the student has to study.

We do scenes from Shakespeare; we do dramas from all the dramatic poets; and we present the poet as a writer of direct communication, as a resource in the educational process. And we hope that what we are doing is illuminating for these students not just the moment that we are there, but that after we go, they look again into poetry because someone has come in and done something that has gotten them scared or happy or excited. They thought poetry was something that a lot of jerks did, with long hair, sitting under a big apple tree, in the garden. They suddenly find masks in poetry—vigorous poetry, live poetry, reflective poetry. Or they find that history is exciting and absorbing. There have been many history classes where the students have gone to the teacher after one of our performances and said such things as: "Now, listen, we've studied those Lincoln-Douglas debates, but we never got any of this. Could we read aloud some of *Washington's* speeches?"

This is what happens when you perform the characters honestly. You make them come alive, and sud-