

Dear Maria Amélia Campos Loução, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lisbon,

Dear Brian Singleton, President of the IFTR,

Dear António Feijó, Dean of the Faculty of Letters,

Dear Miguel Honrado, from the Municipal Council of Lisbon,

**Dear Maria Helena Serôdio, Chair of the Organising Committee of the of the 52nd
Annual Conference of the IFTR,**

The Ministry of Culture, through the Directorate General for the Arts, has been supporting the Centro de Estudos Teatrais (Centre for Theatre Studies) of the University of Lisbon since 2002.

This support represents the acknowledgment of the importance of reflection, of higher education on Theatre Studies and, naturally, the perception of the role that theatre activity has on arts' structure and social structure.

Our support aims the development of the Portuguese Theatre Data Base, settled in the Centre for Theatre Studies.

If, as Theodor Adorno defended, artistic activity, the artistic object only completes itself, only occurs, in the act of reception, it is true that it only defines itself as an object of long lasting temporality through its documentation and register, through reflection over it.

The implementation of the human sciences' languages, of its methodologies, to the artistic activity is a significant contribution to its construction.

Unlike other fields of activity, there is no doubt that, in the construction of the artistic object, interferes the “long lasting temporality”, the “symbolic densification” that centuries of action, interpretation, connect the artists, critics, researchers and, naturally, the audiences, the viewers, the communities in which the artistic object manifests itself.

The 2009 Annual Conference of the IFTR has chosen the theme “Silent Voices, Forbidden Lives: Censorship and Performance” as a reflection matter.

Being this federation, probably, the most significant organisation meeting forum for Theatre Studies, I have to express, in the name of the Ministry of Culture, our satisfaction and acknowledgement to the Centre for Theatre Studies of the University of Lisbon, represented by Maria Helena Serôdio, Chair of the Organising Committee. I would also like to greet the representatives of the Portuguese Universities in this event.

I also want to greet the Keynote Speakers Luis Francisco Rebello, Alan Sinfield, Vincent Quinn, Jean Graham-Jones, and Nehad Seleiha.

I would like to greet all of the participants of this event in Lisbon.

The reflection on Censorship and Performance in Portugal, a country which has suffered from these circumstances in recent history, is a tribute to the Portuguese who have established a free culture, a culture of perseverance and a culture of hope in a country blocked by censorship at a certain point in History.

It is important not to forget, it is important to convene history to the present time. Forgetting History is also a form of voluntary intoxication, and I do not yearn for this sort of self-mutilation, for this sort of social mutilation.

However, talking about “Censorship and Performance” is also talking about “politically correct”. In European and American societies, and maybe even in other societies of the world, we experience the restriction of the “politically correct”. This, naturally, grants us the problem of knowing what “correct” is.

Nowadays, it is correct not to distinguish genres. It is correct not to make distinctions of cultural roots. It is correct to support Democracy. It is correct to value the environment. It is correct to condemn War. It is correct to condemn the extremists.

I believe that all of us standing in this room identify ourselves with this “correction”.

However, I want to warn you for the censorship outside of this “correction”: sometimes the most balanced discourse is a cover of the balance, is the mountain which overcomes other mountains, where there are many stories to tell, lots of things to discover, lots of situations to denounce.

I plead you not to stay on your working sessions, prisoners of the “correct” agenda, and that you, as researchers, will be able to reflect without prejudice on

the Past, the Present and the Future. All of which are, for us, elements of a single time, the time we are privileged to be able to call “our time”.

Thank you,