

Današnji je svijet razapet podjelama i antagonizmima. Svud oko nas su lideri i strategije koje nastoje okrenuti ljude jedne protiv drugih, na temelju rase, jezika, kulture, ekonomskog statusa, spola, seksualne orijentacije, lojalnosti ideji, pripadnosti ili ne ... Skoro svaki aspekt naše čovječnosti netko je iskoristio da unese veću podijeljenost i izgradi više zidove sumnje i mržnje. Kao rezultat toga, čini se da smo okrenuli leđa Ubuntu, afričkoj filozofiji koja kaže: "Ja jesam zato što ti jesi" i "osoba je osoba kroz odnose s drugim ljudima."

Kako možemo djelovati da poništimo ovu veliku nepravdu koju činimo našoj djeci i, zapravo, sebi? Djeca moraju biti u mogućnosti uživati u trenucima zajedništva u kojima ih se podsjeća na ono zajedničko, pri čemu mogu uvažavati različite stvarnosti onoga što znači biti čovjek. Potrebni su im prostori u kojima mogu istraživati nove načine razmišljanja koji dovode u pitanje one antagonističke govore, prostori u kojima osjećaju suosjećanje za one koji se najviše razlikuju od njih samih. Djeca trebaju konkretna iskustva zajedništva u zajednici da ih se podsjeti na radost i ljepotu koju svijet može ponuditi.

ASSITEJ vjeruje da kazalište otvara mnoga vrata koja nam pomažu da osjetimo veću povezanost s drugima, a što je najvažnije – i s nama samima.

Nedavno je The New Victory Theatre u New Yorku objavio rezultate petogodišnjeg istraživanja o dobrobitima kazališta za djecu i mlade. Jedan od ključnih neočekivanih rezultata bio je da je posjećivanje kazališta toj djeci dalo veću nadu u budućnost. Ti su rezultati bili uspoređeni s kontrolnom skupinom. Utvrdilo se da oni, koji nisu bili na kazališnim predstavama i radionicama u istom razdoblju, manje vjeruju u svoje perspektive u smislu mogućnosti studiranja i rada.

Zašto je nada toliko važna? Nada stvara pozitivnu energiju koja se pretvara u samopouzdanje, snagu volje, otpornost i konačno u konkretne akcije kako bi se promijenilo nešto u vlastitom životu i u životima drugih. Svako dijete treba imati nadu.

Obvežimo se stoga da ćemo danas u kazalište povesti dijete ili mladu osobu i prikupiti potrebnu podršku kako bi se osiguralo da svako dijete ima pristup umjetnosti i kazalištu, bez obzira na njihove osobne ili socijalne prilike. A za one od nas koji radimo u struci, obvežimo se da ćemo pružiti kvalitetna iskustva koja će činiti razliku u tome kako mlađa generacija doživljava svijet – u ime današnjice i sutrašnjice.

Yvette Hardie  
Predsjednica ASSITEJ-a

JOYEE: (8 years old)

Everything is connected to theatre. I was born in a place where theatre was very special. In India. And even though I was in an orphanage, I knew theatre was important there. My mum is part of theatre. I'm part of theatre. I do House of Muchness which is a type of theatre – we put on shows. Stuff like that. Every child has the right to do fun things. Like House of Muchness. I do Bollywood too because it goes with where I came from.

Everything is theatre. It's hard to explain. I wouldn't try to explain it to someone who didn't understand, I would just take them, show them, and they could see for themselves.

Theatre is you. Whatever you do is theatre. Everything around you is theatre. You are theatre. All your body works together like a theatre. To make one big show. And that show is your life.

Without theatre, there would be no imagination. Everyone wouldn't be able to be themselves. Without stories, everyone would be bored all the time. A bit gloomy – they wouldn't really feel very nice. It would be like the moon. No one could actually communicate with each other because of the big hats.

If you have no imagination, well, the only thing to fix that is theatre. It makes you learn things. It can teach you about love. How it looks in different ways. And how different people who might not know if they can love each other, well, they can. If it's a really powerful story, it can actually change us. Theatre is special and good and beautiful. And we have to have all the feelings – if a show makes us feel sad, then it can also make us feel hopeful – that a good thing can happen after. And most of the time it does.

JOJO: (11 years old)

I'm 11 and I'm dyslexic. I'm a person who swears a bit. I like people who understand me, as me. I want to be a part of something. I'm a person who wants to change the world. I'm in the Children's Party which is about children and ideas and politics in a theatre show. I might start to change the world that way. Theatre is important because it shows stories. Stories show generations and generations of people what's going on. Where they've come from, why they're here, and how they're here. Things we need to know. Then we can understand people and their ways.

My first show was actually a music festival in Adelaide when I was in my Mum's belly. The first theatre show I remember was an opera. Because Roger's cousin is an opera singer. Roger was my grandfather. I love theatre where you have to use your imagination, your own imagination which is different from everyone else's. Because the things in the show are hard to see or aren't there, you have to imagine them. You make them up. And then you can see them really well. But people might have a different story or pictures in their head compared to what's in my head.

If you don't take kids to the theatre, then theatre will stop. Theatre shows lives and hearts and souls in actions. If I was taking a child to the theatre, a little child, I wouldn't explain or tell them anything on the way. They would watch it and then they would explain it to me.

If I was told I couldn't see any more theatre, it would make me sad, it would make me angry.

If I hadn't seen some of the things I've seen in the theatre, I wouldn't be me.

And I like me.