

Dear Butor:

The bottle which you dropped into the sea has found its way to one of the possible recipients of its message. I have always thought that messages in bottles are a very unique and particular means of communication between shipwrecked persons. This case is no exception. Shipwrecked as we are on our Island and surrounded by the sinister world of communication, where through the most sophisticated technological means, man has managed to achieve the ability to say everything to everyone and, in the end, to say nothing at all while he sinks in a sea of idiocy where words and images are just the flotsam of an unprecedented catastrophe at sea. Have you ever thought, perhaps, that in the Middle Ages man managed to communicate with his brothers in fuller and more efficient ways than today? That enormous bottle in the sea, received by all and understood by all: the work of Dante roars out to us to say that it was so. What to do then? Turn our backs, to be sure, on the disastrous call of the mass media and begin anew from zero. Such a beginning I see as possible, thanks to our Société Imaginaire, which was created (and this is important to keep in mind) by someone who put aside his undeniable possibilities in the world of painting, so that a few of us survivors might begin a dialogue without any other purpose than to share company in truth and courage and to say the two or three things that we need to say; nothing else. We are not going to save the world, nor decipher the role of the intellectual in the modern world; we'll not save the Third World nor the Fourth nor the Tenth. Let us return to the dialogue initiated by the Greeks and carried on, with a little less conviction, by the Romans, and continued to decline through that feeble Century, the nineteenth. As an aside to these comments, I must express my admiration for your work. I speak now to a friend whom I hope someday to be able to address in the familiar tu with the deep sincerity of one who believes that this may be our only way out, the only way to win the game. Do you not see it this way also? I am sure your answer is, Yes. I send my best regards and also send my own, in no way imaginaire, Yes.



Alvaro Mutis

Alvaro Mutis is a Colombian poet.