

International Theatre Institute ITI

World Organization for the Performing Arts

UNESCO, 1 Rue Miollis, FR-75732 Paris Cedex 15

info@iti-worldwide.org / www.iti-worldwide.org



Peter Brook 1988

Have artists all over the world anything in common? Surprisingly, yes. Each, in his way, aspires to express a truth. For a long time it has been believed that the way to arrive at truth is to be grounded in one tradition, in one culture, to have one's roots in one soil. In various travels and exploration I have been led to another conclusion. In many countries, outside the Western world, my discussions with theatre colleagues inevitably led to one critical issue: how to respond to Western influences and pressures. Should one imitate, the West? Should one return to one's traditional forms, one's ethnic roots? Should one disappear into another culture, or disappear into one's own? I believe in another way. I think that the truth to be found, the truth that touches us, that shakes us exists not through stylistic traditions, ways or means. The valid truth is the truth of the moment. When many influences interact through their converging rays, through their friction a new view can emerge, fresh, surprising.

A collision of particles creates illumination in the past, a good theatre company was built upon strongly contrasting types and ages within one culture; today, we can make these theatrical opposition even more vivid by bringing together actors from boldly different origin. This process also corresponds to a world where most audiences are composed of an ever-richer mixtures of races—and where even within a single culture each individual is conditioned by an ever-wider mixture of global influences. As cultures intermingle on the stage the audience is brought together before precise, yet universal truths.

The International Theater Institute and I have the same theatrical age. We both began after our world had almost been destroyed by the attempt to impose a single master-culture.

The work of linking and informing theatre people of one another's existence has the same logic as the missions of UNESCO and of the United Nations itself. Perhaps the abiding value of the International Theatre Institute throughout all the forty years is that its truth also emerges from the infinite combinations and interactions that it makes possible among the cultures of our world.