

Meeting an Audience

Peter Brook: You say that you are lucky; we feel very lucky to be here. Very lucky because doing this play, naturally, you want a play to meet an audience, and for years we've had a very, very close, very, very good, warm, intimate relation with Brooklyn, with the Brooklyn Academy. And we've fallen almost into the habit of thinking, ah, New York, Brooklyn. But about a year ago, a very old dear friend, Greg Mosher, got onto us and came over to see the play, and said, "I would like this to be part of this new development in the university of opening Columbia through the arts and through the theater to create a new relation—or in fact a relation that hasn't yet happened—to the Harlem community."

Now at once with this play, a play with an African theme, about Africa, this seemed right. But then when we discovered that it was possible through the university to have much lower seat prices than if it were anywhere else in New York or Brooklyn, this was perhaps one of the most important factors, because we know that nothing is a bigger block to the sort of audience that one wants, young audience, natural audience, is for there to be this barrier of the theater costing too much. And this spoils the theater. The theater really should be something very naturally accessible. And if this is possible for movies, why shouldn't it be the case for theater?

So then when we came over and we had a first meeting with Greg, with his collaborators, in the university, and Voza came and joined us, and we talked about what could be done, that was the beginning of

what is now this meeting today. And the fact that in this way it was possible to meet—what I've always said—for us, both a new audience and an audience that we hope potentially is concerned and interested and touched by the same things that concerned and touched us in doing all this work on this play, brought us very happily to where we are now.