

Reencuentro Ayacucho '88: The 8th International Gathering of Group Theatre

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Introduction

In late November 1988, Peru was a country in crisis. On the 23rd, the government announced a new economic package which, combined with previous economic measures, increased prices on basic commodities an average of 400%. Inflation was running at more than 2000% for the year. The cities and the countryside were slowly being strangled between the right and left wing violence, with the newspapers reporting indiscriminate killings, bombings of railway bridges and power stations as well as tampering with Lima's water supply. All of these events were attributed to either the Rodrigo Franco Command, an extremist paramilitary group of the right, or Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path), a Maoist guerrilla organization.

At the height of the chaos, from the 19th to the 27th of November, the 8th International Gathering of Group Theatre was held at the Huampaní vacation and conference center in Chaclacayo, 30 kilometers from Lima. Officially called Reencuentro Ayacucho '88 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the first such Latin American gathering in Ayacucho, Peru in 1978, the nine-day meeting became the calm at the eye of a storm. Approximately 40 groups as well as critics and scholars from Latin America, Europe and the United States came together to share their work and ideas in the foothills of the Andes, surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards as grim reminders of Peru's daily reality.¹

The meeting was organized by one of Peru's leading theatre groups, Cuatrotablas (which also mounted the original gathering in Ayacucho), with the help of several other Peruvian groups: Anabasis, La Otra Orilla, Magia, Raíces, Teatro del Sol and Yuyachkani. The director and founder of Cuatrotablas, Mario Delgado Vásquez led all of the groups. The majority of groups came from Lima and the regional centers of Peru; however, the Reencuentro also included groups from Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico,

Denmark, France and Italy, as well as a Chilean group living in exile in Canada.² Although the majority of critics and scholars were Peruvian, a number of specialists from other countries were also invited, including representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Italy and the USA.

The international group theatre gatherings owe their origin to Eugenio Barba, the director of Denmark's Odin Teatret, who organized the first meeting in 1976 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. This meeting was followed by others in Bergamo, Italy (1977); Ayacucho; Madrid and Lekeitio, Spain (1979); Zacatecas, Mexico (1981); Bahía Blanca, Argentina (1987); and Cuzco, Peru (1987). The movement that generated these gatherings is often referred to as the Third Theatre, after Barba's attempt to provide a conceptual matrix for the group theatre phenomena that exploded in Europe, the United States and Latin America in the 60s and 70s. In a manifesto on "Third Theatre" he presented at the Belgrade meeting, Barba characterized the Third Theatre by comparing it with its institutionalized and avant-garde counterparts:

A theatrical archipelago has been formed during the past few years in several countries. . . . It seems to constitute the anonymous extreme of the theatres recognized by the world of culture: on the one hand, the institutionalized theatre, protected and subsidized because of the cultural values that it seems to transmit. . . . on the other hand, the avant-garde theatre, experimenting, researching, arduous or iconoclastic, a theatre of changes, in search of new originality. . . . The Third Theatre lives on the fringes, often outside or on the outskirts of the centers and capitals of culture. It is a theatre created by people who define themselves as actors, directors, theatre workers, although they have seldom undergone a traditional theatrical education and therefore are not recognized as professionals.

But they are not amateurs. Their entire day is filled with theatrical experience, sometimes by what is called training, or by the preparation of performances for which they must fight to find an audience. (193)

As the mentor of the Third Theatre and a friend of Mario Delgado, Barba was closely involved with the organization of Reencuentro Ayacucho '88 and, along with his Odin actors, he played a major pedagogical role during the gathering.

Practical Work

The Reencuentro's program, which included both a practical and intellectual component, was exhausting, beginning at 6 a.m., and ending around

midnight every day. The practical work included performances, training workshops and a creative project in which the directors and actors developed a piece dedicated to Jerzy Grotowski. Grotowski was Barba's first teacher and the father of poor theatre, a concept which has greatly influenced the Third Theatre.³

Performances took up a large part of the daily schedule because, unlike previous Third Theatre gatherings which were mainly concerned with what Barba and his colleagues refer to as process (training and rehearsal) the major focus of Ayacucho '88 was the finished product (productions). In keeping with this orientation, most groups presented examples of their work. These performances ranged from a very moving realistic piece by Quechua speaking Indians depicting life in their Andean home town of Andahuaylas (one of Peru's emergency zones guarded by the military and surrounded by Shining Path guerrillas) to agit-prop works, and pieces that would be at home on the postmodern stages of Europe or the United States.

In addition to these performances, training workshops were led by the more experienced actors, directors and scholars. Delegates, who were free to sign up for any single workshop, had more than a dozen choices, including classes in Balinese dance, kathakali (a traditional form of Indian dance-drama), street theatre skills, acrobatics, corporal mime, dramaturgy, tai chi (a Chinese martial art that demands precise body control), scenic construction, theatricalization of props, story telling and several different voice workshops.

The early morning hours of the gathering were devoted to developing an original work. At the beginning of the Reencuentro, actors and directors were divided into fifteen groups, each headed by one or more directors and made up of actors selected at random. These groups were given a theme by Barba, "a scene of love--the winds of disappearance," and asked to create a five-minute piece over the next five days. Each group worked alone from 6-8 a.m., developing its own performance text from improvisations based on this dual theme. These completed pieces were dedicated to Grotowski, in a quasi-ritual performance, in the ruins of a pre-Inca city on the outskirts of Cajamarquilla, a village thirty minutes from Chaclacayo.

Pedagogy and Criticism

As a balance to practical work, the daily schedule included both pedagogical and critical sessions. Several hours after breakfast each day were given over to a meeting led by Barba called "The Bridge," which centered on creative and/or polemic issues. The meetings dealing with the creative process were essentially teaching sessions which focused on aspects of building a performance text from improvisation. In these lecture/demonstrations, Barba worked with several Latin American actors and members of his own Odin Teatret on topics such as the performer's need to balance body tensions in order to establish the flow and rhythm of an improvisation and how to select

and alter improvisations in order to structure a performer's score and the production montage.

In addition to these lecture/demonstrations, Barba chaired two talks during these sessions, one a debate, the other a lecture by one of Peru's major journal editors, Juan Larco. The debate, between a leading Peruvian theatre critic, Alfonso de la Torre, and the Italian theatre scholar Ferdinando Taviani, focused on an important issue for group theatre: the scripted play versus collective creation. De la Torre, a playwright as well as a critic, defended the interpretive role of the director and actors and the need for a dramatic text to provide a coherent theme and to guide narrative logic. Taviani, meanwhile, a leading expert on *Commedia dell'Arte* and group theatre, advocated a more creative role for the actors and director who would develop their pieces collectively and educate their audiences to an understanding of work that rejects the incremental causally linked plot structure in favor of an intuitive logic developed in rehearsals.

Larco, the editor of the Peruvian weekly, *Quehacer* (comparable to *Newsweek* or *Time* with a leftist slant) challenged delegates in his lecture with a provocative thesis on the connections between violence and theatre in Peru. This talk stemmed from one of Larco's own *Quehacer* articles written after attending a festival of Peruvian theatre in Andahuaylas (1988: 80-86). In his opening remarks, Larco, who is an historian as well as a journalist, attempted to place the recent upsurge of violence in Peru into an historical perspective. He argued that violence has been an undercurrent in Peruvian society since the Incas' slaughter of the indigenous population and the Conquistadores' rape and pillage of the land and its peoples and that this violence periodically rises to the surface, as it has in the late 80s. Based on what he saw at the festival in Andahuaylas however, he pointed out that theatre is avoiding a major aspect of this latest violence. Many of the plays he saw, which included some of those at Reencuentro '88, dealt directly with the violence of the right but ignored leftist violence. Agit-prop pieces, and even the more realistic works he saw, discussed or portrayed military and police violence but did not touch on the violence of the Shining Path.

Larco, a leftist himself, postulated that this omission occurs because Peruvian theatre finds itself in a dilemma. Its stance has traditionally been leftist, that is, against the various rightist military and civilian regimes, so to criticize them is the norm. The upsurge in indiscriminate violence by the Shining Path, an organization which at one time was the champion of the underprivileged, casts its members in the roles of murderers and exploiters that, despite political differences, parallel those of the extreme right. But if one's sympathies are leftist, how does one criticize the left without appearing to support the right? Larco argues that theatre people are ignoring this conflict rather than facing it. They continue to criticize the right and disregard the horrors being perpetrated in the name of an ideology they favor.

With the emphasis on productions at the Reencuentro, organizers felt that in addition to pedagogy, which had always been part of Third Theatre gatherings, there was a need to introduce formal analysis or criticism sessions. These sessions, referred to as "Taxidermia," were led by four critics: Thomas Bredsdorff (Denmark), Patricia Cardona (Mexico), Beatriz Iacoviello (Argentina) and Ian Watson (USA), who gave their opinions of the daily production work and then opened the floor to general discussion. Due to the sheer number of performances and in keeping with the collective spirit of the Reencuentro, Taxidermia tended to focus on problems perceived as common to much of the work presented rather than on specific productions. These "problems" included: the dramaturgy of the actor, production dramaturgy and the role of the director.

Actors' Dramaturgy

Barba distinguishes between the dramaturgy of the actor and production dramaturgy. The latter refers both to the structure of the individual scenes and to the way in which they are linked in the performance text, while the former refers to the individual actor's physical and vocal scores that are the basis of each scene. This distinction is especially pertinent in the type of collectively created works which dominated the Reencuentro--that is, pieces developed by actors and directors without the help of writers--because the production texts for these works owe their origin to improvisation, to the actors' dramaturgies, rather than to the interpretation of a dramatic text. The actors' dramaturgies in these works take on an added significance because they are not only the sum of each actor's physical and vocal scores but also the raw material of the production text itself.

In the Taxidermia sessions the critics expressed several concerns about the performers' dramaturgies. They noticed that in many of the productions actors tended to use excessive physical and vocal tension, failing to realize the importance of balancing intense and soft energy tensions in order to establish dramatic rhythm in performance. The critics pointed out that this "inverted energy crisis," as it was referred to, fails on at least two counts: first, just as people generally tend to avoid pain, audiences tend to withdraw from excessive displays of tension; and secondly, contrary to what one might think, a constant demonstration of high energy leads to monotony, detracting from an actor's stage presence rather than enhancing it.

Another area of the actor's dramaturgy touched on by critics was the problem of using process as product. Due to lack of funds and based on the model established by Barba, most groups at the meeting follow the Odin Teatret system of autodidactic training.⁴ Rather than attending drama schools or studying with a master for many years, the actors teach themselves. Armed with a basic set of skills, each actor develops an individualized training program (in a constant state of flux), based on improvisation, explorations of

rhythm and various psycho-physical exercises in which imagery is used for exploring physical and vocal expression. Ideally, this training is a point of departure for developing performance material. In a number of pieces at the gathering, however, training exercises such as basic acrobatics, which in this approach are frequently used to develop physical control and explore individual rhythm, were incorporated directly into performances.

Production Dramaturgy

To a foreigner, the two most obvious influences on productions at the Reencuentro were European: Brecht and Barba. Brecht's dramaturgy and theories were evident in the large number of agit-prop pieces in which non-realistic staging, caricature, signs, music and songs were combined to highlight social and political injustices in Latin America.

Unlike Brecht's indirect influence through his plays and theoretical writings, Barba's impact on group theatre in Latin America stems from his personal contact with Latin American colleagues. This impact is particularly strong in Peru due to a combination of factors. Barba's first direct contact with South America was in 1976 when he and his Odin Teatret were invited to perform at the Caracas Festival in Venezuela. A relatively young Peruvian group, Cuatrotablas, was invited to the same festival, and Barba and the group's director, Mario Delgado, became firm friends. Barba invited Delgado and his group to attend the first gathering of Third Theatre he was organizing for later the same year in Belgrade. The following year Cuatrotablas was invited to the second Third Theatre meeting in Bergamo, at the conclusion of which Delgado announced that he and his group were going to host the first such Latin American Encuentro in 1978 at Ayacucho, Peru.

Ayacucho was a milestone in the history of Peruvian theatre in that it laid the foundation for much of today's group theatre. This heritage owes its origins to Delgado's insistence on teaching at the Encuentro. Having been exposed to Barba's ideas and painfully aware of the inexperience and isolation of many Latin American groups, Delgado asked Barba and his actors to conduct workshops on improvisation techniques, training and ways of developing performance texts. These workshops exposed many of what have become Peru's leading groups to Barba's methodology and esthetics. These groups and others formed since that have been nurtured by Cuatrotablas and/or others of the Ayacucho generation have incorporated and adapted these ideas and in doing so have developed a style and approach that has roots in the 1978 gathering but that is also uniquely their own.

The most obvious influences of Brecht's and Barba's dramaturgies on the material presented at Reencuentro '88 were the rejection of realism and of the Aristotelian model of incremental plot development. Both the agit-prop and Barba oriented works ignored narrative structures with a recognizable beginning, middle and end that build to a climax through a sequence of

causally connected scenes. In part, this rejection emerged because, as was already mentioned, few of the groups work from scripts with the guiding rationale of the writer's mind, preferring instead to develop their material collectively through improvisation. In much of this material, especially that influenced by Barba, the emphasis shifts from plot narrativity to what the Polish critic Andrzej Zurowski has called the visual narrative--or what might more appropriately be termed the visual/oral narrative--wherein the work focuses on the development of visual imagery and the accompanying paralinguistic musicality, rather than on a dramatized story (1985: 364-368).

In this approach, the linear narrativity of Aristotelian drama is replaced by what might best be described as a fragmented dramaturgy. This dramaturgy elaborates fragments of events from different perspectives that are ordered intuitively rather than causally, in an attempt to tap the material's thematic essence directly rather than indirectly through the outer shell of a narrative. Thus, unlike plot oriented dramaturgy which gradually reveals its theme through an unfolding narrative that invariably builds to a climax and denouement, fragmented dramaturgy uses visual imagery, vocal techniques, sound effects and music to present aspects of events from different perspectives, revealing simultaneously their component parts and thematic sources.

Due to the lack of a linear plot that focuses the spectator's attention on an unfolding story, fragmented dramaturgy, based on visual/oral narrativity, tends to draw the audience's attention to its two dominant modes of communication: semiotics and synaesthetics. Semiotic communication is the channel of signification, the signs and symbols incorporated into the performance text that are intended to convey meaning. These signs and symbols can be at both the visual and auditory level and include elements such as physical and psychological action, scenic and costume design, the spoken text as well as music and sound effects. The synaesthetic channel, on the other hand, is more concerned with sensory than rational communication, with the central nervous system rather than the intellect. Apart from its importance for even those aspects of a production which are semiotically loaded (Brecht's songs convey both meaning and have an emotional impact, for instance), this channel includes aspects of performance such as the architecture of physical and vocal tensions underlying the actors' scores, the rhythm of individual scenes and the production montage and the paralinguistic and paraphysical interrelation of the actors. In short, the synaesthetic channel includes those features which convey what is often referred to as the "feel" of a particular production.

The critics focused on both of these aspects of dramaturgy in their discussions, pointing out that many of the performances at the Reencuentro shared similar problems at both the semiotic and synaesthetic level. Critics felt that too little thought was given to semiotic clarity in some of the works and that the structure of both the fragmentation and visual/oral narrative

were often not thought through fully during the creation of the performance text, leading to a lack of clarity in the final production.

Similarly, the critics felt that the synaesthetic level of communication often had not received the attention it might, leading to weaknesses in productions. The lack of rhythm in the performers' physical scores was cited as one problem in this area, as was the lack of editing, evident in overlong scenes in which the visual/oral narrative ceased to hold the spectators' attention. Critics also pointed to the problem of production montages in which individual scenes, based on extensive improvisation, were linked with perfunctory passages, clearly designed as mere bridges between scenes rather than as integral parts of the production's rhythmic and dramaturgical structure.

The Role of the Director

Implicit in these discussions of the production and performers' dramaturgies is a criticism of the director because, in most of the Reencuentro's work, the director was both dramaturg and the director, ultimately responsible for the entire production. This dual role is difficult since the director not only must select raw material for new works (based on the group's research and the performers' improvisations), but also must create and structure the scenic and production montages into a performance text and develop the *mise en scène*. The range of skills demanded by these tasks combined with the relative isolation of many Latin American groups highlight a lack of training, an ongoing problem for many of the continent's directors. Unlike the actors, who have a regimen of daily training based on their autodidactic tradition, the directors have little training and no access to it beyond working with their group, which is often done in the provinces with infrequent visits to theatre centers such as Lima or with only intermittent contact with other groups.

Observations

Providing an alternative to the relative isolation of most Latin America groups is one of the aims of gatherings like Reencuentro '88. Apart from bringing together theatre people who share similar concerns and philosophies, these meetings are a source of training, a place to share work methods and production concepts and the basis of a support network which stretches beyond the confines of one's immediate locale. The Bridge sessions and the critics' observations were not designed to focus on what is "wrong" with group theatre in Latin America. In the spirit of the Third Theatre, they were intended as seeds for future growth, ideas planted among the groups that can be rejected or accepted and adapted to the exigencies of their particular circumstances.

These particular circumstances cannot help but give food for thought to those from the relatively stable countries of Western Europe and North

America. This theatrical hiatus at the "eye of the storm" had to come to an end, and the Latin American groups had to return to the economic and life threatening hurricanes that engulf countries like Peru. Given the difficulties of merely surviving on meager salaries in a climate of hyperinflation, and the very real danger of being beaten, tortured or even murdered for taking a stand against either the right or the left, why return to making theatre? Why continue to work at something which is invariably a second job, from which it is impossible to make a living and which must be subsidized from already inadequate earnings? Why continue to create works in which you must either ignore the realities of the world around you or, more often the case, in which you take a stand and expect a "knock at the door" any moment? The answer lies in a somewhat different view of theatre than those most commonly found in Euro-America.

In much of Latin America, the social value of theatre far outweighs its economic and esthetic importance. Except in very large cities, such as Buenos Aires or Mexico City, commercial theatre, as we in Euro-America know it, does not exist. The concept of theatre as a commercial venture in which a producer mounts a work for profit is economically impossible in most of the continent.

Aesthetics, on the other hand, are more relevant to much of Latin America's theatre since even most of the politically committed groups give some consideration to questions of dramaturgy, design and the quality of performances. This relevance has its limitations, however, in societies in which daily survival is a major concern for many. Art-for-art's-sake, the self-referential paradigms of the avant-garde in which exploring the "new" takes precedence over everything else, is understandably viewed as indulgent by many in societies on the verge of bankruptcy, with fragile democracies or torn apart by political repression.

In discussions with many of the delegates at the gathering, it became clear that, whether expressed in these terms or not, the vast majority view theatre as a social tool. Theatre constitutes for the participants not merely a means of social commentary, also common in Euro-America, but also as a means of social action. This social locus is best summed up in the title of one of the precursors to Reencuentro '88, a meeting of Peruvian groups organized by Yuyachkani called Encuentro de Teatro por la Vida (Theatre Gathering for Life). No matter how difficult to realize, theatre is a means for people to create material together, a means of uniting individuals through a common goal of collective creation. This unity is a source of social strength since each member is no longer merely an isolated individual but the member of a group: a collective with the strength to articulate protest against socio-political injustices that could crush ordinary citizens taking a stand alone. Theatre is one way in which people can retain their dignity before forces that seem overwhelming for them as individuals. This approaches theatre's social role

from a vehicle of social commentary directed toward the spectator to an equally important social dynamic in the lives of those who make it.

All this is not to say that theatre is a panacea. It remains on the fringes of society in Latin America, as it does in most of the rest of the world. Mario Delgado, the director of Reencuentro '88, characterized the situation in his opening address when he stated: "Theatre is an act of faith in Peru." One can only hope that events such as the one he was so instrumental in organizing can give strength to the faithful, not only in Peru but throughout Latin America.

New York

Notes

1. Needless to say, the armed guards were not in Huampaní to protect theatre people or tourists. Their main function was to protect a hydro-electric scheme that is part of the complex.

2. Groups taking part in the encuentro included from Lima: Cuatrotablas, Centro de Comunicación de Villa El Salvador, Magia, Raíces, Teatro del Sol, and Yuyachkani; from the Peruvian provinces: Algovipasar (Cajamarca), Arlequín (Huánuco), Audaces (Arequipa), José María Arguedas (Andahuaylas), Olmo (Trujillo), and Yawar Songo (Ayacucho); Brazil: Centro de Pesquisa da Linguagem Teatral, Galpão, Kairos, and Laboratório UNICAMP de Movimento y Expresión; Canada: Teatro del Exilio; Colombia: Papaya Partia, Teatro Itinerante del Sol, Teatro Taller de Colombia, and Vendimia Teatro; Costa Rica: Diques Tiques; Denmark: Farfa, and Odin Teatret; France: Atelier du Chaudron; Germany: Marburger Theaterwerkstatt Feurzunga, and La Otra Orilla; Italy: Anabasis, Potlach, and Tascabile di Bergamo; Mexico: Teatro del Cuerpo, Teatro Laboratorio La Rueca, and Taller de Investigación Teatral UNAM; Switzerland: Teatro Delle Radici.

3. Grotowski coined the term poor theatre to describe a theatre which is reduced to its essential components, the actor and audience. Poor theatre is the antithesis of what Grotowski calls rich theatre, that is, the theatre of lavish sets, expensive costumes, and pyrotechnical wizardry. For more information on the concept of poor theatre, see Grotowski, 1968.

4. For more information on the Odin Teatret's training methods see: Watson, 1988.

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Appendix

Two Documents: *

1. Reencuentro Ayacucho '88 was dedicated to Jerzy Grotowski. Unfortunately, Grotowski could not attend the meeting as he explained in a letter to Mario Delgado. This letter was read publicly at the gathering's opening meeting.

2. Eugenio Barba wrote a short manifesto which was handed out to delegates at the final meeting of the Reencuentro.

* Both documents were originally written in Spanish.

To Mario Delgado

Jerzy Grotowski

Pontedera, November 11th, 1988

I cannot be there physically with you. I know you will understand the reasons: when a living process is in progress, it cannot be abandoned, even if those calling are the closest ones.

It is not possible to penetrate the depths without care, time and isolation. One's first responsibility is toward his/her chosen road.

I also feel responsible toward you. You have dedicated your meeting to me. I wonder what this means. For some of you, I am just a name, somebody whom you've read or heard about. It is many years now that my road does not imply the need for creating performances. Nevertheless, you have dedicated your meeting to me: is this in the name of what I've represented in the past, or does it relate to the way in which I am present today?

Each person travels his/her own road differently. However, there is a way of journeying that helps us identify our fellow travellers. Someone's actions may echo in another's actions. They can stimulate and be stimulated in that deep part of ourselves that does not take time, distance or artificial boundaries into consideration.

It is essential to get rid of the spirit of our time that wants us to produce immediate results which are then submitted to a *contra natura* growth that generates abortions.

Concentrate with patience and for a long time in this work process that *only belongs to you.*

I am a "*teacher of Performer*." The Performer is a man of action. He is not somebody who plays somebody else's role. I don't want to discover anything new but something forgotten instead. This is something so old that the distinctions among esthetic genres are no longer valid.

Does this concern the theatre at all?

The more I've travelled my own road which seems to get distant from the theatre, the more I've experienced Stanislavsky's presence. This is why, despite the distance, I know I am present and I feel present among you.

Jerzy Grotowski

Translated from Spanish by Susana Epstein

Eugenio Barba

REFLECTIONS

upon the

8th International Meeting of Group Theatre

REENCUENTRO AYACUCHO '88, 19th-27th of November, 1988.

Lima, Peru

1. Third Theatre culture does not depend upon styles or fashion. It relates to an attitude that does not rely on the rules of conventional productions. It is a theatre that runs parallel to the prevailing theatre or to the kind of theatre that is respected the most by cultural institutions and the press. Given the dramatic situation in which certain countries find themselves, these theatres may be a form of civil resistance against personal humiliation, social and economic injustice, underdevelopment, fanaticism and violence. This was reaffirmed at the "8th International Meeting of Group Theatre"--"Reencuentro Ayacucho '88," which took place in Lima, Peru, from November 19th to 27th, 1988. A gathering that was an homage to Jerzy Grotowski whose example of intellectual, emotional and professional awareness served as a model for the previous meetings in Belgrado (1976), Bergamo (1977), Ayacucho (1978), Madrid (1979), Zacatecas (1981), Bahía Blanca (1986) and Cuzco (1987), all of which have left traces in the development of group culture that has modified and enriched contemporary theatre.

2. The Third Theatre highlights a reality which requires the overcoming of theatrical ethnocentrism in order to be understood. It also relates to all the scenic "anomalies" that constitute our century's tradition of theatrical reforms, from Stanislavsky to Brecht and Grotowski, while fulfilling those personal needs that call for alternative human relationships through working in the theatre.

3. Group theatre may look exceptional or marginal within the theatrical landscape, but it reveals aspects of performance that belong to the very nature of theatre: a collective art, which like all art, involves a search. Third Theatre's search, however, is collective.
4. The Third Theatre's search is for identity. An identity with two faces: one looking on to our specific historical, social, and cultural context; the other on to the profession that unifies us despite different languages, traditions, and origins. The work in the profession is what allows us to develop our differences. The goal of these meetings is to compare these differences.
5. Theatre Anthropology, in the sense of "the study of human behavior in a performance situation," might link diverse theatrical traditions to specific individual and group traditions, but while this link unifies, it differentiates and is the opposite to the process of homogeneity.
6. The different types of groups that constitute the Third Theatre and the variety of works they produce make it a true social laboratory. This Group Theatre can be experienced as a mirror that puts the hesitations, dangers, and utopias that define and threaten us into perspective. It allows for the dialectics between cultural and professional identity. It places what is different about the groups into a social context through the multiple relationships it generates between them and their spectators.
7. Contradictions and discrepancies are a necessary condition to grow. Those that were discussed at Reencuentro Ayacucho '88 generated a framework for auto-reflection. Critics and scholars who consider this parallel theatre as a relevant artistic and social manifestation also contributed to this process. They treat it as the most respectable theatre while maintaining a coherent line in their professional ethics. Future meetings must keep and deepen the dialectics between reflection and action.

Translated from Spanish by Susana Epstein