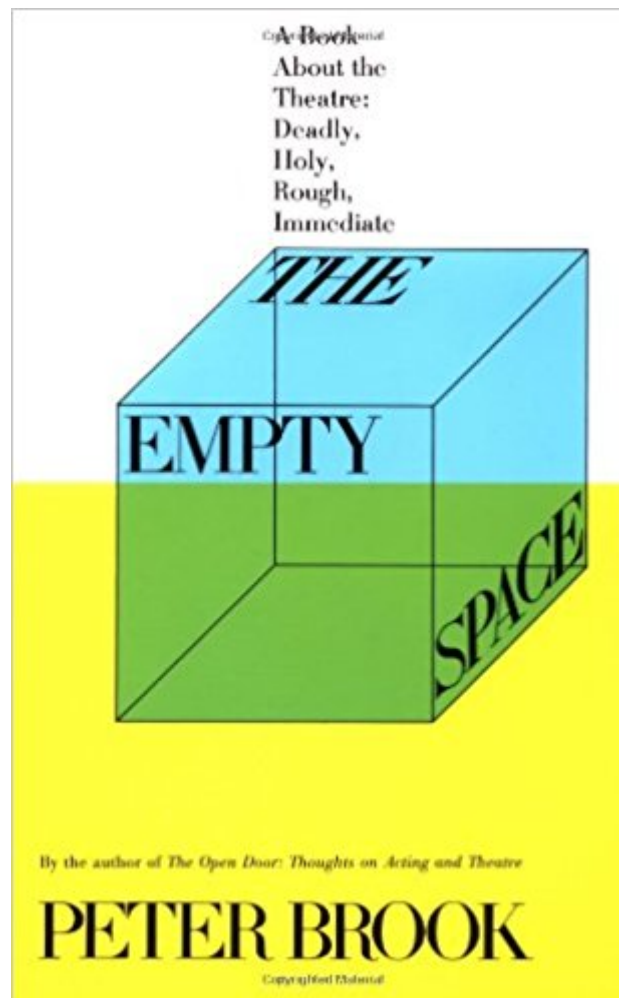




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# The Empty Space: A Book About The Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate



## Synopsis

From director and cofounder of the Royal Shakespeare Company Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* is a timeless analysis of theatre from the most influential stage director of the twentieth century. As relevant as when it was first published in 1968, groundbreaking director and cofounder of the Royal Shakespeare Company Peter Brook draws on a life in love with the stage to explore the issues facing a theatrical performance—of any scale. He describes important developments in theatre from the last century, as well as smaller scale events, from productions by Stanislavsky to the rise of Method Acting, from Brecht's revolutionary alienation technique to the free form happenings of the 1960s, and from the different styles of such great Shakespearean actors as John Gielgud and Paul Scofield to a joyous impromptu performance in the burnt-out shell of the Hamburg Opera just after the war. Passionate, unconventional, and fascinating, this book shows how theatre defies rules, builds and shatters illusions, and creates lasting memories for its audiences.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Peter Brook's career, beginning in the 1940s with radical productions of Shakespeare with a modern experimental sensibility and continuing to his recent work in the worlds of opera and epic theater, makes him perhaps the most influential director of the 20th century. Cofounder of the Royal Shakespeare Company and director of the International Center for Theater Research in Paris, perhaps Brook's greatest legacy will be *The Empty Space*. His 1968 book divides the theatrical landscape, as Brook saw it, into four different types: the Deadly Theater (the conventional theater,

formulaic and unsatisfying), the Holy Theater (which seeks to rediscover ritual and drama's spiritual dimension, best expressed by the writings of Artaud and the work of director Jerzy Grotowski), the Rough Theater (a theater of the people, against pretension and full of noise and action, best typified by the Elizabethan theater), and the Immediate Theater, which Brook identifies his own career with, an attempt to discover a fluid and ever-changing style that emphasizes the joy of the theatrical experience. What differentiates Brook's writing from so many other theatrical gurus is its extraordinary clarity. His gentle illumination of the four types of theater is conversational, even chatty, and though passionately felt, it's entirely lacking in the sort of didactic bombast that flaws many similar texts. --John Longenbaugh

Peter Stephen Paul Brook CH CBE (born 21 March 1925) is a highly influential British theatrical producer and director. During the 1950s he worked on many productions in Britain, Europe, and the USA, and in 1962 returned to Stratford-upon-Avon to join the newly established Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). Throughout the next the 1960's he directed many ground breaking productions for the RSC before in 1970 forming The International Centre for Theatre Research in Paris. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Be careful. This book could change your life. It changed mine. I read *The Empty Space* in 1974. I was so blown away by the ideas within this book, I quit my job, moved to a large metropolitan area, and ended up running a theater, directing plays in other theaters, then teaching theater for the next twenty years. What this book does is teach important lessons in creating and appreciating art. Upon rereading *The Empty Space*, I find some of the writing to be a bit pretentious, but on the whole, the lessons are solid. Whether exploring theater, literature, art, music, or any other creative endeavor, this books shows that experiencing an artistic event can and should be a transformative experience. What is particularly refreshing is it doesn't sugar-coat the arts. There is no formula or how-to instructions on creating good work. Risk is not only encouraged, it is necessary. Brook also shows how the arts can be manipulated to lull and pacify. The four essays/lectures on *Deadly Theater*, *Holy Theater*, *Rough Theater*, and *Immediate Theater* are as fresh to day as they were 40 years ago.

I enjoyed this book immensely when I was young, so I recently gave it to my son, a budding filmmaker. He couldn't stop talking about it. Nice to know it stands up to time and new generations.

I'm a playwright, poet, and novelist (most recent novel is THE MAGIC HOUSE). For any playwright, actor, director this book is essential reading. The notions of immediate and holy theaters are extraordinary, approaching the level of pure poetry. I highly recommend this book.

I bought this book for my daughter. She love the book!

What is great about the empty space is that Peter Brook's theory is relevant to all art forms. The four theatres he describes are basically categories in which all art falls into. This seems odd at first until you see what he is describing. What turns most people off is the idea of over-categorizing art. But Brook's theatres tend to be more or less critiques of individual performances, or what the effect of that performance is on the audience. This is also easy to read. Too much theatre philosophy gets bogged down by either melodramatic thespian writers, or rambling philosophies from those who have not trained themselves to be good writers. With Brook, it is pretty straightforward, not always easy to understand mind you, but straightforward. If you are at all interested in the arts then this is a must read.

Even though the copy is an older one, it's in nice condition. Thank you.

A must read for anyone interested in the theatre! Brook is a master of the art. Although this was written almost 40 years ago, it still reverberates with relevance for the theatre in the 21st Century.

Peter Brook's powerful work is the greatest book written about the theater in recent time. The reading is packed with insights and strong assertions. It cannot be overlooked. Even today, nearly fifty years after it was written, the work compels us forward to a greater understanding of the what theater should be, not what it has become.

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