



Eugenio Barba, LAFIS opening.
Lecce 2023. Photo: Francesco Galli

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Field or Humus? Between ISTA (1980) & LAFLIS (2023)

Abstract: The creation in Lecce (Italy) in October 2023 of the LAFLIS, Living Archive Floating Islands, on the initiative of the Fondazione Barba Varley and the Regione Puglia is discussed in relation to the sessions of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), founded and directed by Eugenio Barba in 1980, and their role as fertile ground for the ethnoscenology manifesto (1995). Dedicated to Barba's work, Odin Teatret and Third Theatre, LAFLIS is a dynamic, original and stimulating installation artwork dedicated to memory, transmission and creation for researchers and artists alike. As a corollary, the lesson that emerges encourages us to reconsider the field diaries of ethnologists and anthropologists, which often give rise to infertile and revealing misunderstandings, as was the case for Bronisław Malinowski.

Keywords: Theatre anthropology, Ethnoscenology, Fieldwork, Diary, ISTA, LAFLIS

My active involvement from 1980 onwards in the sessions of the International School of Theatre Anthropology, better known by its acronym ISTA, whose founder Eugenio Barba (1936) promoted me to the rank of co-founder in 1996,¹ played a fertile role in the conception of the manifesto of ethnoscenology in 1995 and the development of its scientific implementation. I have given an account of this debt in previous publications.² The three-day inauguration of LAFLIS, Living Archive Floating Islands, on 4, 5 and 6 October 2023 in the Biblioteca Bernardini in Lecce, in the Italian Salento region, at the initiative of the Fondazione Barba Varley and the Regione Puglia, convinced me of something obvious. The ISTA sessions had been much more than a surface on which to meet Asian masters and their traditions. We experienced them with little awareness of the Salento roots of their founder and leader, Eugenio Barba himself. The stage - in the sense of theatrical vocabulary - veiled the humus, the organic, throbbing, composite matter that animates the depths.

1. On the occasion of the 10th session of ISTA, held in Copenhagen from 3 to 12 May 1996, E. Barba presented a commemorative plate to the group of 'founders' who had taken part in the first session in Bonn: 3 'masters' - Sanjukta Panigrahi (India), Katsuko Azuma (Japan), I Made Pasek Tempo (Bali), and the 'intellectuals' Fabrizio Cruciani (Italy), Jean-Marie Pradier (France), Franco Ruffini (Italy), Nicola Savarese (Italy) and Ferdinando Taviani (Italy). See: Schino, Mirella, *The Odin Teatret Archives*, (translated from the Italian by Gabriella Sacco), London and New York, Routledge, 2018, pp. 113-114.

2. Pradier 2014, 421-36; Pradier 2022, 77-91; Pradier 2022a, 145-51.



After spending twenty years of study as a 'theatre anthropologist' pursuing the distant and irreconcilable lives of Carmelo Bene and Eugenio Barba, two sons of Salento, Piergiorgio Giacchè writes beautifully that they intersect at least once at one point: "the point of origin (and perhaps of eternal return): the heel of a boot from which only he who can be saved is who is able to escape".³ From a geography so conducive to exchanges, trade, expeditions and invasions, we can surmise the curry of languages, beliefs, influences and adventures embodied in the imaginations that spurred on the founder of contemporary Italian ethnology, Ernesto De Martino (1908-1965), granted the gift of levitation to the humble friar Giuseppe de Cupertino o.f.m., and stimulated artists.

These singular traits led Eugenio Barba to organise the 5th ISTA international session in Salento in 1987, on the theme: "Tradition of the actor, identity of the spectator". He could have added the 'identity' of the theorist. Franco Ruffini, who had just finished writing a 'pretty hefty essay'⁴ on the anthropology of theatre, paying particular attention to the notion of pre-expressivity - one of Barba's key notions - described how our discussions, the sea, the workshops, the bad sleeping arrangements and Sanjukta Panigrahi's dances had given him a corrective to semiotic analysis. In short, the Salento ISTA was a concrete *topos* that taught the body, in other words the mind.

The spectacular return to the point of origin represented by LAFLIS's installation in Lecce is not the fruit of nostalgia in its original sense of 'homesickness', but of serendipity, as evoked at the 7th session of the ISTA, held in Brecon and Cardiff, Wales. The word and its spirit are scattered throughout Barba's autobiographical pages of *On Directing and Dramaturgy. Burning the House*,⁵ as close as possible to the meaning given by its inventor Horace Walpole in a letter to a friend in 1754: "Always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of". The ability to grasp the unexpected, this accidental sagacity had the resilient virtue of transforming what seemed like an ordeal into an opportunity. And so LAFLIS was born, a large-scale project carried out with the support of the Regione Puglia, the Italian Ministry of Culture's Directorate General for Contemporary Creation and a number of enthusiastic partners, in response to a bumptious blunder.

Happy consequence from a disconcerting foolishness

In an interview with influential *La Repubblica* theatre critic Anna Bandettini, Barba briefly recounts the extravagant episode that led to his decision:

I had imagined that my memory would remain in the place that had created it, in Holstebro, Denmark. For years, I had kept my private library in the old farmhouse that I had converted into the Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium in 1966. The academic Mirella Schino, assisted by Francesca Romana Rietti and Valentina Tibaldi, had classified, catalogued and transferred to the Royal Library in Copenhagen the

3. Cf. Giacchè 2012, 321-32.

4. Ruffini 2013, 198.

5. Barba 2009.

first 50 years of original documents and audiovisual material on the Odin's many activities. In 2020, I handed over the reins and my successor made the archive staff redundant, moved the 6,000 volumes in my library and, two years later, made me redundant too. It was a lesson in human nature. It was painful to see how the culture and tradition of our theatre were being destroyed using generational change as an argument.

In the rubble, I was reminded of Nietzsche's words: "In times of mourning, don't pray, bless". From every earthquake springs new life. With the partnership of the Regione Puglia, to which I have donated my library and my artistic heritage, the gods have saved the memory of Odin Teatret that was suppressed in Holstebro, and promise a new spring.⁶

In a sign of the times, when the same criteria for obsolescence apply to art as to a telephone, the affair provoked numerous reactions.⁷ As a backlash, however, it had the advantage of bringing back to its birthplace a theatrical and intellectual creation whose scale and international renown, by uprooting it, risked petrifying it into a bland museum object. Emerging from the Salento soil, making temporary stops around the world - Poland, India, Bali, Japan and China in particular, born in Norway in Oslo in 1964, growing up in Denmark in 1966 in Holstebro, nomadizing in particular in South America, Barba's and Odin Teatret's creation returned to the source to come back to life.

LAFLIS, Living Archives Floating Islands

Three clues shed light on the enigmatic and musical acronym LAFLIS and give meaning to the floating islands. They can be found at the bottom of the long banner hanging on the outside wall of the Nicola Bernardini Library in the historic centre of Lecce. The modest lettering reads: "Eugenio Barba, Odin Teatret, Third Theatre".⁸ The majestic architecture of the colonnaded façade of the library overlooks the Piazzetta Giosuè Carducci, bordered by the church of San Francesco della Scarpa.⁹

I had arrived the day before and visited the vast, light-filled interiors, which already house the archives of Carmelo Bene (1937-2002), one of the founders of the 'new Italian theatre', and Silvio D'Amico (1887-1955), founder of the Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Drammatica, a printing museum, thousands of books and reading rooms. Now, upstairs,

6. Bandettini 2023.

7. Several collective letters by international theatre critics and university scholars urging to preserve Odin Teatret's legacy have been sent to the Danish Minister of Culture and to the Mayor of Holstebro, to no avail.

8. The locution 'Third Theatre' is explained in a short text that Eugenio Barba distributed to participants at the Group Theatre meeting in Belgrade in 1976, organised with the support of UNESCO. Now a manifesto, 'Third Theatre' first appeared in *International Theatre Information*, Paris Institut International du Théâtre UNESCO, 1976, Autumn. See Taviani 1978, 8-15.

9. The name of the church - St. Francis of the Sandal - is said to derive from a visit by St. Francis of Assisi, who left one of his sandals here. A pleasant coincidence with the Franciscan sandals worn by Eugenio Barba.

the LAFLIS Living Archives are destined to welcome not ordinary archivists, but those seeking inspiration in a giant permanent interactive installation, lushly evocative of sixty years of theatrical nomadism. Of course, researchers and historians will find it a place to work and write. As a place of memory, its vocation is to pass on know-how and the ability to think, knowledge and models that are not to be copied or imitated, but rather imaginary, with a wilful energy and the perpetual movement of renewal. Here, the islands are twins of the floating gardens built by the Aztecs to survive, and on which they scattered seeds. Today, some Aymara communities on Lake Titicaca are struggling to carry on the tradition of the floating Uros islands, which are popular with tourists, while drought is affecting the growth of the reeds that are essential for their regular upkeep. Eugenio Barba compared the archipelago of stubborn theatre groups, driven by the sole desire to fulfil the dream of building their own lives, to these moving constructions on the surface of the water: the Third Theatre.¹⁰ More than a repository for ordinary historians, the archives should be understood as a reserve of seminal data for future creations, like the Svalbard world seed vault, located on the Norwegian island of Spitzbergen, and the banks of male and female gametes.

The atypical design of LAFLIS lies in the arrangement of elements that do not conform to the classic rules of periodisation, nor to the linear slide show of a troupe or an artist. The intention is to create a mental universe in keeping with the epigraph of the book published for the occasion. It is a phrase by Niels Bohr: "Every sentence I utter should not be understood as an assertion, but as a question". The lesson is not directive. It is part of the epistemological principle that Barba draws from Heraclitus and Niels Bohr: enantiodromy,¹¹ the complementarity of opposites.¹² Thus, paradoxically on the surface, the approach of theatrical anthropology, which aims to identify the universals of the presence of performers, forms a pair with that of ethnoscenology, which focuses on the diversity of embodiments of the imaginary. What is offered to the senses is not limited to sight. The stroll itself inspires astonishment, as visitors come face to face with an apparently disorganised, sumptuous pile of various elements evocative of a person, an episode, a spectacle or a tradition. Unusual, extravagant, clever set design. A glass floor beneath a bed of books, with a life-size effigy of Mahatma Gandhi in one corner, bathing with a book in his hands. There, puppets from the world, masks, balanced on other objects; jars in which appear ironically honorary decorations received by the founder of the Odin; the reconstituted offices of Barba and Julia Varley in Denmark; sarcophagi with flat display cases for documents and photos. Digitalisation, interactive and immersive spaces. Films. An unusual jumble of imprints, remnants of memories that give rise to reminiscences and invent new ones. The whole evokes the clutter of painters' studios, where they revel in it and draw the excitement essential to inspiration.

10. See Barba 1986.

11. Enantiodromy, *ἐναντιοδρομία*, "to run in the opposite direction", taken up by Barba in the article "*La course des contraires*" (Barba 1981, 33-60).

12. At the heart of Niels Bohr's epistemology, the notion of complementarity has given rise to stimulating and conflicting interpretations. See Bohr 2010.

A nomadic and festive inauguration

The programme for the three days devoted to the inauguration can only be sketched out in this article, in order to highlight a few significant features. The first sunny morning in the inner courtyard of the Biblioteca Bernardini gave the floor to the notables, not for the sake of mere protocol, but as a reminder of the delicate exercise of the artist who, for any project, must know how to secure the resources essential to its realisation. In the afternoon, the visit to the past of Odin Teatret, the invention of bartering in Carpignano in 1974, took place in the Sigismondo Castromediano Museum that tells the two-thousand-year history of Salento between land and sea, East and Far East, languages and cultures. In the evening, the Koreja theatre company presented a multi-sensory performance show, with bread and bread-making as the main characters: *Cumpanaggiu - il pane e il resto*. The following day, after a series of encounters, Bergamo's Teatro Tascabile and Teatro Potlach, heirs to the ideal of 'group theatre' performed the overture to LAFLIS in the Piazza Carducci; violin soloist; and magnificently dressed in mordant purple the lively, affectionate and curious Mr Peanut¹³ mounted high by Julia Varley, wandering between hundreds of enormous white balloons. The party was followed by a digital creation by Stefano Di Buduo, an installation introducing the multiple forms of LAFLIS.

On October 6th, leaving Lecce, we were taken to three nurturing smaller towns, each one a living archive of the theatre's floating islands: Gallipoli, Otranto and Carpignano. Gallipoli was his father's stronghold, where Eugenio Barba spent his childhood when he left Brindisi at the time of the war. There is the memory of Emanuele Barba, his great-grandfather who was an erudite doctor, a philanthropic humanist, a friend of Garibaldi and a free-thinker who created a museum to exhibit research into monstrous fetuses. The richness of Gallipoli's past, when it was the world capital of *lampante* olive oil, can still be seen in the hypogeal oil presses, or *trappeto* in the local dialect. It can be seen in the convents, the cathedral and the churches, including that of the Confraternity of Saint Mary of Purity, from which the penitents set off in procession during Holy Week before Easter.

In Carpignano, forty-nine years later, we re-enacted the barter of games with some of the people who had interacted with Odin Teatret during its five months permanence. In the street, standing in front of an enlargement of the photo taken by Tony D'Urso in 1974, showing her as a child climbing on the shoulders of Iben Nagel Rasmussen, a white mask with a tear in its eye, and in the same spot, Angela struck a pose again, this time carried by the young Romanian actress from Odin Teatret, Antonia Cioaza. With her back to the bougainvillea of Eugenio's house, a dancer begins to flutter. On the surface, the village preserves the architectural remains of an epic past, and a subterranean world: the Byzantine crypt of Santa Cristina, the oil press accessed by a narrow stone staircase. Places where the ghosts of a world of inhuman work and fat profits remain, echoed today by the olive trees withered by the Xylella virus, witnesses to the ecological disaster.

The third stop was in Otranto, a crossroads port facing Albania. In the port, the memorial to L'Approdo, Work for Migrant Humanity by Costas Varotsos, recalls the

13. Mr Peanut, with his skeleton head, an emblematic Odin character, became Julia Varley's travelling companion. See Varley 2009, 147-56. See also the film *Un personnage qui ne peut mourir* by Claudio Coloberti.

ramming in 1997 by an Italian corvette of the Kateri i Radës, laden with Albanians, and the drowning of a dozen of them. Another disaster, commemorated by pilgrimages to the 800 martyrs whose massacre by the Turks in 1480 haunted Carmelo Bene (1937-2002), who retired to the town at the end of his life. Each of these toponyms, now flattered destinations for industrial tourism, nonetheless retains its alluvial, aesthetic, memorial consistency, entwined in the contemporary, as fragile as the floating islands of the Uros.

The field, the imaginary and its embodiment

It seems to me that a certain preliminary match between the nature of a soil and that of a plant is necessary to ensure that it flourishes. There are fields in anthropology that correspond better than others to the expectations and skills of researchers. The misunderstandings observed during certain ISTA sessions between participants bear witness to this.¹⁴ The confusion was based on an erroneous interpretation of the notion of theatre anthropology, which was nevertheless clearly defined by Eugenio Barba, distinguishing it from cultural anthropology. From his earliest hypotheses, he took an eco-sophical perspective, well before the gradual return of nature to the Western conception of culture, following the historic break between the humanities and the natural sciences:

Originally, anthropology was understood as the study of human beings' behaviour, not only on the social-cultural level, but also on the physiological level. Theatre anthropology is thus the study of human beings' socio-cultural and physiological behaviour in a performance situation. (1983)¹⁵

Barba thus took a stance in favour of the pragmatic path of knowledge in the persistent conflict that pits it culturally against the conceptual filiation of knowledge, without denying their complementarity. He explains this in *The Paper Canoe* (1995), when he revisits the intervention of the British anthropologist and ethno-musicologist John Blacking (1928-1990) at the colloquium "Points of contact: Theatre, Anthropology, and Theatre Anthropology" organised by Richard Gough at the Centre for Performance Research in Leicester in the autumn of 1988. Identifying the polarity of cognitive activity, Blacking proposed distinguishing between performative or sensory-motor thinking - thinking in motion - and conceptual thinking - thinking in concepts.¹⁶ Eugenio Barba was struck by the relevance of Blacking's proposal, which seemed to correspond to his own approach, and quoted him, wondering about the possible translation of motion in French, Spanish, Italian or Portuguese. He retained neither the word 'movement' nor 'action', and concluded: "better not to translate".¹⁷ Nevertheless the notion makes

14. See the polemic introduced by Erika Munk at ISTA entitled *The Female Role Represented on the Stage in Various Cultures* (Munk 1986, 89-90). Answers by Barba are in Barba 1986, 96-98.

15. Barba and Savarese, 1991, 8.

16. Barba 1995, 88-89.

17. Barba 1995, 132.

sense: "I ask myself whether *thinking in motion* might not the best way to define the teaching of 'physical actions' which Stanislavski tried to pass on to the actor, the teaching of which Grotowski is now the true master."¹⁸

Beneath the philological perplexity of the founder of Odin Teatret lies precisely the ambiguity of the notion of action, constantly debated in the field of European philosophy and specialised vocabularies - that of theatre in particular - before the revival brought about by Anglo-American pragmatism. Eight years before the Leicester meeting, Victor Turner (1920-1983) had written a text for his seminar on the anthropology of performance. Developing a conception of anthropology based on experience - a figure of the field work - he came up with the seminal notion of *Homo Performans*¹⁹ as characteristic of the human species in his eyes as *Homo Ludens* had been in 1938 for the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga. It is worth remembering that the theory of performance is a theory of action understood not as an antagonist of thought but as an agent, closer to vitalism than to functionalism. The familiar bipolarity of the Western philosophical heritage has long distorted the translation of Japanese expressions that express the embodiment of learning, through the locution "learning through the body". A major reference in Barba's theatre anthropology, and in the practices of the International School of Theatre Anthropology, *tai toku suru*, 体得する, is not limited to what would be "physical education" (F. Champault).²⁰ Since then, the embodiment theory (embodied knowledge), the concept of enaction, and the notion of embodiment of the imaginary in ethnoscenology have tended to decentre thinking from an old aporia and at the same time revitalise the notion of field work by granting it its organicity.

ISTA, Third Theatre's field

The ISTA sessions were born out of the immoderation of a project that was intended to escape realisation. Once established in Holstebro, Denmark in 1966, two years after its foundation in Oslo, Odin Teatret became an inter-Scandinavian centre for research into the art of acting. The quality of the seminars and workshops led by renowned personalities quickly made it a world reference in the field of training. The masters had a lot to attract: Jerzy Grotowski, Ryszard Cieślak, Etienne Decroux, Dario Fo, Franca Rame, Jean-Louis Barrault, Jacques Lecoq, the Colombaioni brothers, Charles Marowitz, Otomar Krejča, Balinese and Japanese masters, and classical forms from India, including dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi who later became one of the co-founders of ISTA. This incredible effervescence attracted artists and intellectuals - Martin Esslin, Harry Carlson, Stanley Rosenberg, Rénée Saurel, Marc Fumaroli - and American avant-

18. Barba 1995, 88.

19. Turner 1986, 81.

20. Champault 2001, 75: « Il existe en japonais plusieurs expressions, toujours d'actualité et employées fréquemment, qui désignent l'apprentissage par le corps : *karada de oboeru* 体でおぼえる 'apprendre par le corps'; *mi o ireru* 身を入れる mot à mot 'mettre son corps' pour 's'appliquer, s'adonner (au travail)'; *mi o motte shiru* 身をもって知る, 'connaître avec le corps', dans le sens d'apprendre par expérience personnelle; *mi o motte shimesu* 身をもって示す, 'montrer avec le corps', donner l'exemple... Ce qui est assimilé à fond, *mi ni tsukete ira koto* 身につけていること, *taitoku shite ira koto* 体得していること est mot à mot 'ce qui est mis, pris, obtenu dans le corps.' »

garde magazines such as *TDR*. In the effervescence of the 1970s, Odin Teatret held a special place as a free electron that resisted the big institutions and the usual modes of production, while at the same time setting the standard for independent theatre groups, most of them self-taught.

In 1976, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Barba directed an international encounter for them. Organised by the Belgrade International Theatre Festival, founded in 1967, which had brought in the Théâtre des Nations, it was so successful that UNESCO asked him to direct two other meetings, one in 1977 in Bergamo, Italy - organised by Teatro Tascabile - and the other the following year in Madrid and Leikeitio in the Spanish Basque Country. The articles published in the UNESCO magazine prompted the Director of the Office of Culture in Bonn - then the provisional capital of the Federal Republic of Germany - to organise an identical event on his territory. In the spring of 1979, Hans-Jürgen Nagel approached Eugenio Barba for what he thought would be a simple workshop. Tired of being reduced to educational activities that consumed time and energy and paralysed the creation of new initiatives, Barba had the idea of accepting, but for a programme such that it could only be realised under financial conditions that were probably far beyond the possibilities of his interlocutor. In reality, Barba's intention was to engage in new research into the traditions of the actor's technique. One day in Holstebro, Barba received a call from Hans-Jürgen Nagel, who told him that he had put together the necessary budget. A date was set: October 1980, the place - an empty school at Bonn at total disposition - with a follow-up in Scandinavia in November.

The previous year, I had invited Barba to take part in a symposium on the biological aspects of theatre, organised in Karpacz, Poland, thanks to Alina Obidniak, director of the Norwid Theatre in Jelenia Góra and a close friend of Jerzy Grotowski. At the time I joined ISTA, I belonged to this Third Theatre archipelago, having founded a teatro laboratorio in Montevideo, after having been expelled from the University of Istanbul because of my support for the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq. In Bonn, Eugenio Barba and his actor Toni Cots had brought together ensembles of Balinese, Indian, Chinese and Japanese artists for a month's internship, along with 'intellectuals' - the name given to academics and scholars - and special guests: 53 participants from 19 countries. Masterfully organised, the programme of activities was particularly dense. The day began in the early hours in silence. We made our way to an open area where Raghunath Panigrahi (1932-2013) and his musicians were waiting for us, seated on a mat on the ground, usually with their shoulders protected from the cold by a woollen shawl. The singer, composer and partner to his famous wife, the Odissi dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi (1944-1997), would then use his left hand to activate the bellows of his harmonium placed in front of him, play the melody with his right and raise a devotional song - *bhajan* - celebrating the dawn. In this way, the holistic innervation of what we call 'physical' or 'bodily' learning took place, while Sanjukta used the term *shakti* to describe the source of the living arts, specifying that it was neither masculine nor feminine. Whatever his/her gender, a performer is always *shakti*, creative energy. An initial one-hour physical warm-up was followed by sessions specialising in the different traditions, demonstrations with commentary, and sometimes lectures. In the evening, there was a

performance or a special activity - a barter, for example. Each closed session ended with an open symposium and the presentation of a performance called *Theatrum Mundi* in which all the invited artists took part.

Even before the normal start of the daily programme, at 5.45 in the morning, small meetings were sometimes held to settle organisational matters. With the exception of the first session, which was held in Bonn, the following sessions took place in buildings and spaces outside the cities and urban congestion, in landscapes and under skies of great variety: Sweden, Brazil, Italy, France, Portugal, Germany, Great Britain. Many of the practical lessons and joint sessions were held in the open air, between trees. Housed on a farm when it first arrived in Denmark, *Odin Teatret* has retained its rural feel, with its beaten earth and foliage, its taste for villages and footpaths. To the point of inventing birthday banquets with tables stretched out on the sand of a long beach, facing the North Sea.

For me, ISTA was the richest field experience. I was in an international environment, active and not a spectator, in a community with many different sensibilities and curiosities, conducive to misunderstandings, questioning and exchanges. Life was teeming. We weren't cultures mixing, or civilisations colliding, but girls and boys, young and old, all with their own particularities. We were in an environment, a space, that allowed us to experiment not in a laboratory, or in an academic dispute, but *in vivo*, with the illusory nature of certain theories, categories and notions.

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Field diary and travel maieutics

Speaking of ethologists who go out to meet primates outside their cages, in their natural environment, Mary Sanders Pollock writes that the field is both a real place and an expression of the human imagination.²¹ This is also true in anthropology, she adds. The founder of transcultural psychiatry, Georges Devereux (1908-1985) was aware that the anthropologist's first field was himself. François Laplantine, who was one of his students, reports that he expected all those who planned to undertake one field work to first engage in an analytical treatment in order to avoid projecting their own fantasies onto others. He complied, and was delighted.²² Is the field work the subterfuge of the cure? Clifford Geertz likens the field diary written by the anthropologist on his return to the novel of sentimental education. It reveals what the unconscious was carrying in germ: the latent intellectual inclination that would later prefer gloss to description, abstraction to the sensory, the office to the journey or, on the contrary, a fertilised, liberated imagination. Though it is impossible to predict the nature of what might emerge when it blossomed. A bibliographical curiosity, according to Vincent Debaene, the accounts, testimonies and diaries that complement the scholarly studies²³ bear witness to the genesic power of decentring, of the physical encounter with an ecosystem and an unknown humanity.

21. Pollock 2015, 89.

22. Laplantine 2007, 12.

23. Debaene Vincent, 2010, *L'adieu au voyage : L'ethnologie française entre science et littérature*, NRF, Gallimard, Collection : Bibliothèque des Sciences Humaines 2010.

When the authors themselves re-read their texts decades later, it is striking to note that they bring to light the maieutics of the journey that led them to choose both an 'object of research' and a way of studying it. Policed by the literary exercise, or raw materials found by chance, these field narratives constitute a neo-terrain whose examination brings to light unexpected elements that encourage ongoing deciphering.²⁴

Fantasies are not the only ones projected onto foreigners. Ethnologists travel with a great deal of cultural baggage, including, in the West, the theatre, an object so familiar from school that it becomes an optical system through which they perceive in the world the countless analogies borne by the metaphor of the *Theatrum Mundi*. Michel Leiris's *L'Afrique fantôme*,²⁵ published in 1934 on his return from the Dakar-Djibouti mission (1931-1933) led by Marcel Griaule, is one of the most vivid illustrations of this. Unwelcome by his peers, who, like Marcel Griaule, saw it as a provocation, these early confessions have given rise to a rich exegesis.²⁶ For ethnoscenology, they are a precious element in the study of the construction of the word theatre as a universal concept and heuristic device. Two years after the publication of his diary, in February 1936, Leiris presented a paper to the Société de Psychologie in which he outlined a theatrical theory of the practices associated with belief in the "Zar" genies in northern Ethiopia.²⁷ Twenty-two years later, embracing the aetiological myth of the ritual origin of theatre, he took up and developed his thesis in a scholarly book: *La Possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Ethiopiens de Gondar* (1958).

Leiris was not an isolated case. Alfred Métraux (1902-1963) and André Schaeffner (1895-1980), students of Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), adopted the cultural referent of theatre in their analysis of cults with a spectacular dimension, such as Vodou. Schaeffner joined the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro in 1929 to look after the collections of musical instruments, and later became head of the musical ethnology department at the Musée de l'Homme. Influenced by his master's denial of history, he moved from metaphor to the invention of the uchronic, Euro-centric theory of pre-theatre.²⁸ Gilbert Rouget (1916-2017), his assistant, would introduce it into his sketch of a general theory of the relationship between music and possession.²⁹ In the United States, the young Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) undertook his first fieldwork in Bali (1957-1958), adopting the grid and vocabulary of theatre in his analysis of the symbology of power and his commentary on the famous Balinese cockfight.³⁰

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) had a very different theatrical experience when, in the late 1930s, he became an ethnologist and embarked on a journey of initiation into the indigenous societies of central Brazil. The travel book he wrote was intended to be

24. This approach has been widely adopted in the literary world but is less familiar in the sciences. Adell Nicolas (ed.), *La vie savante. La question biographique dans les sciences humaines*, Paris, PUF, 2022.

25. Leiris Michel, *Phantom Africa*, (transl. Brent Hayes Edwards), London, Seagull Books, 2017.

26. Debaene 2010; Debaene 2015, 260-75.

27. Leiris 1938, 108-25. The paper has become a book: Leiris 1958.

28. Schaeffner 1980.

29. Rouget 1990, 226-27, 248-49.

30. Geertz 1980, 102-04; Geertz 1973, 1-37.

a novel. At Jean Malaurie's request, it was reprinted in a scholarly style for the Terre Humaine collection he had just founded in 1954, but it retained the chiaroscuro of its original title - *Tristes Tropiques* - and the substance of an apprenticeship novel. Its literary quality made the Académie Goncourt regret that it escaped its notice on the pretext that it was about ethnology. Thirty years after its publication, in an interview remarkable for its freedom of tone,³¹ Lévi-Strauss recalled the depressive episode specific - in his eyes - to ethnographic research, which cast doubt on his ability to practise in the field. He notes at the end of the volume: "In practising this profession, the investigator gnaws at himself."³² Isolated in Campos Novos, wondering what he had come there to do, disappointed and discouraged, he found consolation in the practice of dramatic writing: "it seemed to me that the problems that tormented me provided the material for a play".³³ Far from being an adventurous exploration of the classics, this was the result of a well-rounded education: "My play was entitled *The Apotheosis of Augustus*, and was presented as a new version of *Cinna*".³⁴ In response to a final question from Bernard Pivot, Lévi-Strauss summed up the interest of his work, now presented by its publisher as "the great book of contemporary ethnology". "Ultimately," he replied, "*Tristes Tropiques* reintegrates the observer into his object of observation, preferring to the field the indispensable work of the armchair anthropologist who puts in order the superabundance of data collected by those who are not armchair anthropologists".

The declaration that opens the book is no flashy mannerism: "I hate travel and explorers". The young Brazilian ethnologist Luiz de Castro Faria who accompanied him on his expedition to the Mato Grosso reported in his own diary Lévi-Strauss' lack of interest in practical, objective, everyday questions and his taste for philosophical digressions.³⁵ For us, his readers, the account of the fieldwork forms an inverted ethnology, outlining the components of the author's perception and intellection. The chronicle of the Campos Novos incident is significant. Lévi-Strauss talks about classical theatre, dialogical writing that he distinguishes from the theatrical phenomenon as understood by performers. Consolation comes from writing, not from acting and the biological, cognitive and emotional relationship with the other, partner or spectator. This is borne out by his admission of his allergy to the theatre in an interview with Georges Charbonnier in 1959: "I am - I apologise - allergic to the theatre (...) the fact that it is men and women of flesh and bone who walk around the stage, whereas I ask art to make me escape from the society of men to introduce me into another society."³⁶

From *ethnos* plurality to *anthropos* monism

In 2007, on the 30th anniversary of its publication in the United States, Paul Rabinow

31. Lévi-Strauss interviewed by Bernard Pivot (1984).

32. Lévi-Strauss 1984 [1955], 450.

33. Lévi-Strauss 1984 [1955], 452.

34. Lévi-Strauss 1984 [1955], 453.

35. Castro Faria 2001 (translated in English by David Rodgers: Castro Faria 2003).

36. Charbonnier 1960: 102-03.

(1944-2021) prefaced the republication of his reflections on his first fieldwork in Morocco by concluding: "The strengths and shortcomings have become apparent to me over the ensuing decades as I have pursued fieldwork in philosophy in my own idiosyncratic manner. No doubt, many others have found things to enrich, infuriate, and contest in *Reflections*. To the extent those experiences have led them to question *anthropos* and *logos* (in whatever vocabulary these topics are framed), then the book of a fledgling anthropologist still deserves to circulate and be taken up in expected and unexpected ways. What else, after all, is critical thinking about?".³⁷

Now regarded as one of the major contributions to reflexive anthropology, *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977) was not confined to an account of his experiences in Morocco. The author declared it to be an essay on ethnology and hermeneutics. For us, it marks the beginning of the author's move away from *ethnos* and towards the study of the discourse on the human being - *anthropos+logos* - in a development stimulated by his proximity to Michel Foucault. In 1974, even before its publication, the writing project was criticised. The moods of a young anthropologist mattered little, whereas a critical look at experience was the job of older anthropologists who had proved themselves. Clifford Geertz, his thesis supervisor, had assured him that publishing such a manuscript, which had been rejected by several academic publishers, would ruin his career. However, Robert N. Bellah, leader of the interpretative social sciences ISS, managed to get it accepted by the University of California Press in 1977, and wrote the preface. This preface disappeared from the French edition in 1988, replaced by one by Pierre Bourdieu, whose orientation - according to Rabinow - took the opposite view.³⁸ The initial terrain explored by the doctoral student is that identified by Paul Ricoeur, whom he quotes as saying: "the understanding of the self obtained through the diversions of the understanding of the other".

The 'I' is not the purely cerebral *cogito* of the Cartesians, nor the deep 'I', the psychological 'I' of the Freudians, he writes, "but rather the 'I' which, mediated by culture and situated in relation to History, is immersed in a world of constant fluctuations". In 2007, aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the early days, Rabinow continued his fieldwork in the field of philosophy, in his own way.³⁹ A critique without denial, as can be seen from the return of Robert N. Bellah's preface at the beginning of the book, and the relocation of Pierre Bourdieu's at the end. No doubt Rabinow had taken account of the pages devoted to him by Clifford Geertz, alongside Claude Lévi-Strauss, Bronislaw Malinowski, Edward Evans Pritchard and others, in a work that emphasised the literary nature of anthropological writing. Piquantly, Geertz had evoked the field through the novelistic image of "*l'éducation sentimentale*".

37. Rabinow 2007, XXV.

38. Rabinow 1988.

39. 2007, XXV: "The strengths and shortcomings have become apparent to me over the ensuing decades as I have pursued fieldwork in philosophy in my own idiosyncratic manner. No doubt, many others have found things to enrich, infuriate, and contest in *Reflections*. To the extent those experiences have led them to question *anthropos* and *logos* (in whatever vocabulary these topics are framed), then the book of a fledgling anthropologist still deserves to circulate and be taken up in expected and unexpected ways. What else, after all, is critical thinking about?".

The situation is radically different when a raw pre-literary material is found in the researcher's personal belongings after his death. The curtain rises on a fantastic world left to the reader's interpretative imagination, logic and fantasies. The war waged by the old and new critics in the 1970s opened up a general crisis in commentary, depending on whether one favoured the explicit nature of the text, in the name of clarity of the obvious, or whether one questioned the very act of writing. The intolerability of situations, chaos and confusion, and sexuality are difficult to accept in the name of taste and seriousness in a communication that claims to be scientific but is not explicitly literary. The tumult of affects only becomes socially acceptable when the primacy of style prevails, or within the confines of psychoanalysis, once condemned by the old critics. At that time, Roland Barthes replied to Raymond Picard: "If psychoanalysis is condemned, it is not because it thinks, it is because it speaks".⁴⁰

The Malinowski's hullabaloo: a diary in a queer sense of the term

In 1967, the Anglo-American translation of the true-false field diary of Bronisław Malinowski (1884-1942), published almost fifty years after it was written and twenty-five years after his death, was greeted with an uproar of commentary brimming with misunderstanding and ignorance, between churlishness and quarrels among peers, prudery and ethnocentrism. The initiative came from an English painter and sculptor, Anna Valetta Hayman-Joyce (1904-1973), alias Valetta Swann, his companion whom he had married in 1940, when he had recently emigrated to the United States and been appointed Professor of Anthropology at Yale University in New Haven. Two years later, Bronisław, in frail health, died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 58, even before embarking on a third field trip to Mexico, in the Oaxaca region, with his wife and youngest daughter Helena.⁴¹

On hearing of Malinowski's death, Feliks Gross (1906-2006), a friend and former student of his,⁴² was among the first to visit Valetta Swann, offering to look after her husband's personal affairs. At Yale, he found a small black notebook in his office containing a kind of handwritten diary written in Polish, which was sometimes difficult to decipher. Gross translated a few extracts for Valetta, who kept it carefully and took it with her to Mexico, where she decided to live in 1946.⁴³ After the war, in 1949,

40. Barthes 1966, 25.

41. Helena Malinowska Wayne (1925-2018) the youngest daughter, born of his first marriage. A journalist, she has contributed to the documentation of her family's history. Wayne 1984, 189-203.

42. Polish and Jewish, Gross was able to find refuge in the USA at the time of WW2, where he pursued a brilliant career as an anthropologist. During the occupation of Poland, the Nazis implemented a plan to exterminate the Polish elite.

43. Born in 1904 in Sussex, Valetta Hayman-Joyce chose painting against her mother's wishes. Divorced, she met Bronisław in Europe in the 1930s. Moving to Mexico after his death, she remarried in 1958 to Mexican engineer and anthropology student Luis Bolland. Among her principal works, appreciated by Diego Rivera, *Las delicias* (1964) is exhibited in the restaurant of Mexico City's National Museum of Anthropology. The painting was inspired by his first stays in Oaxaca in the company of Bronisław Malinowski.

Sir Raymond William Firth, a New Zealand anthropologist and ethnologist who had succeeded Malinowski at the London School of Economics, sent her other similar documents from London.

Composed in the solitude of his early island fieldwork, these early texts were more akin to those of the writers who scandalised puritan America than to the academic style. Inspired by the narrative model of the Polish writer Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski (1857-1924), who wrote in English under the pseudonym Joseph Conrad, Malinowski's notebooks contained ideas, erotic fantasies, affects and family stories, mixed with observational notes taken from everyday life. At the end of the 1960s, Valetta contacted one of Bronisław's publishers in New York with a view to publication. She felt that these graphic, manic, liberating impulses would provide students and colleagues, trained in the surface urbanity of academic studies, with the elements they needed to understand the autobiographical foundations on which all research rests. For Valetta Swann, an independent woman, affiliated to the Mexican artistic milieu rather than to the Anglo-Saxon university, these texts, freed from the usual hypercorrection of diaries, were an invitation to penetrate the labyrinthine space of the scientific creation of a man twenty years her senior and Polish by birth. The times seemed to lend themselves to the deconstruction of conventions. Legacy of the Beat Generation, underground, avant-garde, movement for the defence of civil rights and cultural and sexual minorities, liberation of morals. The new physics, popularised in particular by the lectures and articles by Niels Bohr (1885-1962) at symposia of psychologists and anthropologists, had contributed to the acceptance of the complementary relationship between rationality and instinctive life, while showing the limits of the causal thinking inherited from Western metaphysics. The diary could bear witness to this by revealing the passionate backstage of academic seriousness, the limits of the relationship with the other and the fact - according to François Laplantine - that "an ethnography of the intimate calls for a polygraphy".⁴⁴ In consultation with Firth, Valetta Malinowska edited certain passages, compiled a montage of the corpus and entrusted its translation to Norbert Guterman (1900-84), a contributor to the Marxist-oriented magazine *Monthly Review*. Assuming the risk of depreciating her husband world fame by the uproar that would inevitably arise among readers, Valetta Malinowska took the initiative and fully assumed her decision to publish these notebooks: "I am therefore, solely responsible for the decision to publish this book."⁴⁵ The very title of the work indicated the nature of its content. Since the term 'diary' designates a polymorphous literary genre with a plural language (R. Barthes),⁴⁶ it was decided to add a qualifier: *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*.⁴⁷ In the introduction to the first edition, Raymond Firth was careful to emphasise the diary's supplementary nature in relation to the scientific work.

44. Laplantine 2020, 152.

45. Malinowski 1989 [1967], IX.

46. Barthes 1966, 49.

47. Malinowski 1989 [1967] (also translated in 1985 into French, by Tina Jolas, under the title *Journal d'ethnographie*. Paris: Seuil).

Micro history and macro-anthropology

Bronisław Malinowski (1884-1942), praised as a model fieldworker and pioneer of field research as close as possible to the people who live there, both indigenous and nomadic, paradoxically attributed his anthropological vocation to reading *The Golden Bough* by James Frazer (1854-1941), who is sometimes caricatured as an armchair anthropologist. It was Frazer whom he asked to write the preface to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), a work⁴⁸ which, in a way, for James Clifford, served as the founding charter of 20th century anthropology [53]. For the first time, the study included a systematic approach to fieldwork, advocating physical and cognitive empathy with the "subjects of study" [54] in order to understand their point of view without hypostasizing them. Frazer's laudatory preface emphasises the fact that Malinowski lived there like a native among natives for several months at a time, day after day, conversing with them in their own language without an interpreter. In this respect, Frazer assures that the Polish fieldworker is for him closer to Shakespeare and Cervantes than to Molière:

It is characteristic of Dr. Malinowski's method that he takes full account of the complexity of human nature. He sees man, so to say, in the round not in the flat. He remembers that man is a creature of emotion at least as much as of reason, and he is constantly at pains to discover the emotional as well as the rational basis of human action. The man of science, like the man of letters, is too apt to view mankind only in the abstract, selecting for his consideration a single side of our complex and many-sided being. Of this one-sided treatment Molière is a conspicuous example among great writers. All his characters are seen only in the flat: one of them is a miser, another a hypocrite, another a coxcomb, and so on; but not one is a man. All are dummies dressed up to look very like human beings: but the likeness is only on the surface, all within is hollow and empty, because truth to nature has been sacrificed to literary effect. Very different is the presentation of human nature in the greater artists, such as Cervantes and Shakespeare: their characters are solid, being drawn not from one side only but from many.⁴⁹

An erudite Polish outsider

Malinowski's first immersive expeditions to New Guinea on Mailu Island in 1914-1915, then to the Trobriand Islands in 1917-1918, were an ordeal he endured in spite of himself, as a solitary bachelor, while the First World War was bloodying Europe.⁵⁰ A Polish native, Malinowski was an Austrian subject because he was born in Krakow, the cultural and artistic centre of dismembered Poland,⁵¹ the son of a philologist father

48. Malinowski 1922.

49. Frazer 1966 [1922], IX.

50. See: Young 2004.

51. Poland was then divided between Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. It did not regain its independence until 1918.

who was a professor at the city's prestigious university, and a mother who inherited the *kultura szlachetna* - aristocratic culture.⁵² A polyglot and cosmopolitan by upbringing, his youth in Cracow immersed him in the artistic and philosophical modernist movement Young Poland (*Młoda Polska*), which was neo-romantic and sensualist, focusing on the imagination, art for art's sake and passion for love. Frail and obsessed with poetry,⁵³ he preferred study to excess. His dearest friend, the painter, playwright, essayist and novelist Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885-1939) - Witkacy to the Poles - portrayed him in a painting he entitled "Malinowski afraid of life", before transforming him in 1910 as the Duke of Nervermore in his autobiographical novel *622 Upadki Bunga, czyli Demoniczna kobieta*.⁵⁴

As a student of physics and mathematics and a doctor of philosophy of science under the *auspiciis Imperatoris*⁵⁵ of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow since 1908, and as a post-doctoral researcher, he benefited in Leipzig from the lectures of Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), creator of the first laboratory of experimental psychology and theorist of *Völkerpsychologie* - people's psychology -, as well as from the teaching of Karl Bücher (1847-1930), head of the school of history of political economy.⁵⁶ After graduating, stimulated by his discovery of Frazer's *Golden Bough*, a research grant enabled him to leave for England in 1911, where Charles G. Seligman (1873-1940) taught at the London School of Economics. Seligman (1873-1940) at the London School of Economics. Malinowski was a scholarly and polished 'outsider' as defined by H. Becker.⁵⁷

Leaving for a conference in Australia in the spring of 1914, he offered to his friend Witkiewicz (1885-1939), who was gravely depressed by the suicide of his fiancée, to join him in London for this venture. They were in Australia when the First World War broke out. Witkiewicz left to fight in the Russian army.⁵⁸ Malinowski obtained permission to continue his research in the Trobriand Islands in New Guinea. In two periods - the first from 1914 to 1915, the second in 1917 and 1918 - he tried to live as close as possible to the people, immersed in their environment with the inevitable hazards of promiscuity and discomfort. He did not shy away from biocultural issues,⁵⁹

52. See: Young 2004; Figeac and Dumanowski 2006.

53. Dragani 2018.

54. Witkiewicz's novel based on autobiographical material – *622 upadki Bunga czyli Demoniczna kobieta*, was not published until 1972 in a critical edition, and then translated into several languages: *622 Falls of Bungo or a Demonic Woman*.

55. Austria's highest doctoral award.

56. His latest research, undertaken in Mexico with his wife Valetta Malinowska, will focus on the rural economy.

57. Becker 1963.

58. Witkiewicz, alias Witkacy, was born in Warsaw and is a Russian national. Philosopher, essayist, playwright and painter, he is a central figure in Polish culture. Author of some thirty plays, and theorist of "pure form", his influence is particularly noticeable on Tadeusz Kantor and Krystian Lupa. On the relationship between the two friends, see the special issue of the Polish magazine *Konteksty* - Malinowski - Witkiewicz, 1-4 (148-251) 2000, in particular the article by Janusz Degler, a Professor at the University of Wrocław and a specialist in Witkiewicz's theatre.

59. About biocultural theory related to anthropology, see Hruschka, Lende, and Worthman 2005: 1-19.

such as sexuality, later developed in *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*,⁶⁰ a seminal work that linked him to the protagonists of sexology, the sexual liberation movement and queer anthropology.⁶¹ After a period of teaching and research at the London School of Economics, marked by the death of his first wife, the Australian photographer and writer Elsie Rosaline Masson (1890-1935), he left for the United States at the end of 1938 on a sabbatical. When the Second World War broke out, he was advised to settle there, where he was joined by Valetta Swann.

The incomprehensible din of ethnocentrism

The reception of the *Diary* ignited a firestorm of critical comment, blame and irony. Some of the reviews had the air of a settling of scores, spiced with the pleasure of destroying the prestige of a charismatic, caustic and occasionally stormy master. Clifford Geertz, a young university professor, was an opponent of the Malinovskian perspective of the field, to which he opposed influential metaphors of culture as 'text'. He published a casual paper in the influential New York Review of Books, which was more akin to thin description - weak description - than to the principles of thick description - dense description - borrowed from Gilbert Ryle and which he popularised.⁶² Entitled *Under the Mosquito Net*, and illustrated with a caricature of Malinowski by the talented David Levine, the article touches on a "very curious document, which its editors have decided to call *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, apparently in an effort to communicate that it is a diary in a queer sense of the term."⁶³ The author sketches his victim without taking account of translation problems, neglecting the historical and geopolitical context and above all the Polish substance of the writings. Reducing Malinowski's work to the single point on which he has been unanimously and unreservedly praised, that of being an incomparable fieldworker, Geertz sets out to demonstrate its falsity. Malinowski was "a crabbed, self-preoccupied, hypochondriacal narcissist, whose fellow-feeling for the people he lived with was limited in the extreme"; a long-distance lover "frozen in timeless attitudes which, in anxious self-contempt, he obsessively contemplates". As for the evocation of Witkiewicz, it is reduced to being nothing more than a childhood friend with whom he quarrelled.

Twenty years later, Raymond Firth took stock of the episode in a new introduction to the second edition, offering a rich corpus of interpretations, indicative of the state of the discipline and its evolution. In fact, Geertz, now in his sixties and inclined towards multidisciplinary, had come to see the *Diary* as a precious document revealing the backstage work of research, and the inseparable nature of scientific writing and literary narration; our double helix,⁶⁴ he acknowledged in 1988 in a work that regarded the

60. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

61. Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) refers to Malinowski in his works, starting with the expanded versions of *Die funktion des orgasmus* (1927).

62. Geertz 1973, 7-8.

63. Geertz 1967.

64. Alluding to the discovery in 1953 by Crick, Watson and Wilkins of the 'double helix' structure of DNA, deoxyribonucleic acid, the substance that contains the entire hereditary code. Awarded the Nobel

anthropologist as an author.⁶⁵ According to Geertz the *Diary* is disturbing not because of what Malinowski confesses, but because of what it says about being there: in the field. James Clifford is more explicit: the *Diary* is a document of capital importance for the history of anthropology, not because it shows the reality of the ethnographic experience, but because it forces us to understand the complexity of these encounters and to consider all written accounts of fieldwork as partial constructions."⁶⁶

The land of origins

It is the research and publications of Polish anthropologists and specialists in Polish language and culture that have reduced the clutter of misunderstandings and misrepresentations in which Bronisław Malinowski's work and personality had found themselves. Geopolitical developments in the aftermath of the Second World War did little to facilitate exchanges with Poland and knowledge of its artistic, philosophical and literary history. As a result, Polish artists - Jerzy Grotowski, for example - have sometimes been attributed influences from the West - Antonin Artaud at the expense of Witkiewicz⁶⁷ - even though their roots were nourished by Polish soil.⁶⁸ In October 1984, the international colloquium organised in Krakow to mark the centenary of Malinowski's birth provided an opportunity for an important clarification.⁶⁹

The critical edition of the *Diary* in its original language was not published in Poland until 2002, with an introduction by Grażyna Kubica, an anthropologist at Jagiellonian University and the author of numerous articles and books devoted to Malinowski's Polish roots.⁷⁰ From the perspective of the anthropology of aesthetics, and ethnoscenology, Malinowski's relationship with Witkiewicz⁷¹ as well as the artistic and amorous adventures of his youth deserve attention insofar as they outline the prolegomena of an ethnography of carnality, distinct if not in opposition to an anthropology of textuality. Today, the *Diary* 1967 affair is a textbook case.⁷² How is it that most anthropologists of the time were so indifferent to the essential question of language and translation, and to the historical, cultural and impulsive context of enunciation, which lay at the heart of Malinowski's approach, even in dialogue with linguists?

The notion of phatic communion⁷³ which he had intuited was taken up by Roman Jakobson and became the source of subsequent developments in the understanding of

Prize for Medicine and Physiology in 1962, this discovery played a major role in the development of molecular biology.

65. Geertz 1988, 75.

66. Clifford 1988, 97-105.

67. Degler 1986, 45-67.

68. Kosiński 2008, 136-60.

69. Kubica 1985; Ellen, Gelineer, Kubica, and Mucha (eds.) 1989.

70. Malinowski 2002.

71. Saignes and Jasionowicz 2021, 199-26.

72. Landsdown 2017, 181-200.

73. Malinowski 1989 [1923], 296-336.

the dynamics of the aspects of language that are more complementary than rivalrous: the cognitive and the emotional, the discursive and the capacity to perform, phonology and musicology, enunciation and motricity. Phatic communion suggested that language could also be considered as a mode of action, and as a tactile experience that went beyond the expression of thought. As a contribution to the theoretical perspective of performance,⁷⁴ phaticity invites the researcher to go beyond the mere quest for informative linguistic data, and to get as close as possible to the performers, without claiming to be reading over their shoulders (C. Geertz) some kind of culture-book. The director and theatrical scholar John Emigh, who teaches performance studies at Brown University, criticises Geertz for favouring a semiotic approach to networks of meaning in his study of Bali. He quotes the Sri Lankan anthropologist Gannath Obeyesekere: "If you read Geertz, you see webs everywhere, but you never see the spider."⁷⁵

ISTA, LAFLIS and the *Diary*

If the present can only be understood by considering the past that gave rise to it, it would seem that the past can only become intelligible if the present is questioned. What's more, the flesh-and-blood beings who live and make history are not asexual abstractions above ground, but elements of a complex living system in perpetual interaction. Between ISTA and LAFLIS, a soft terrain is emerging that is all the more fertile for academic research and artistic creation as it navigates between complementary poles whose common trait is the ceaselessly renewed achievement of the impossible.

The floating islands of theatre must stubbornly renew themselves in order to exist. Consequently, they cannot ensure their survival by relying on dogmatic, fixed, petrified doctrines. They need to find the nutrients they need to procreate. The stirring of memories that gives rise to invention. The field is both a revelation of the self and a driving force for the discovery of otherness.

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74. Pradier 2013, 284.

75. Emigh 2008, 61.

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