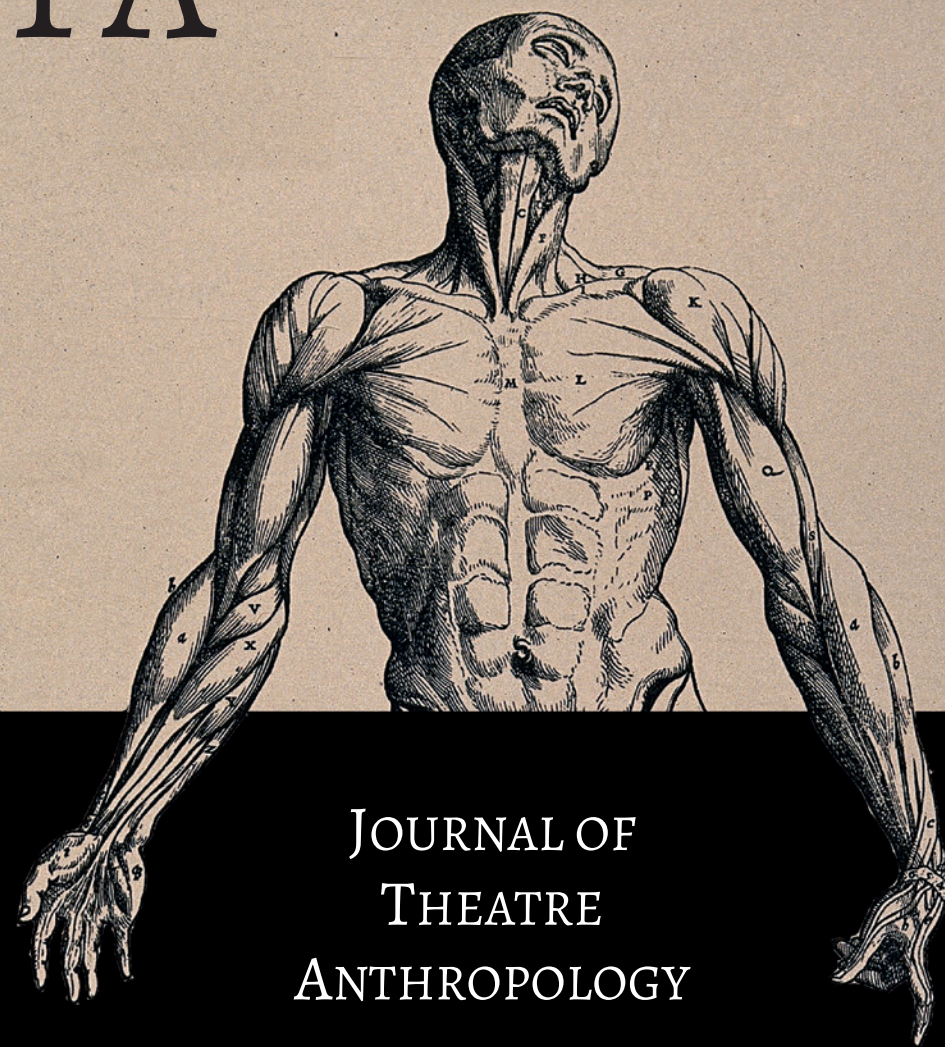




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Editorial correspondence and contributions should be sent
to the managing editor Leonardo Mancini: journal@ista-online.org

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Founded by Eugenio Barba

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Theatre anthropology

singles out the principles which the performer must put to work in order to enable a dance of the senses and mind of the spectator.

It is the performers' duty to know these principles and to explore their practical possibilities incessantly. In this consists their craft. It will then be up to them to decide how and to what ends to use this dance. This is their ethic.

Does theatre anthropology have a scientific nature? It does not take measurements, it does not use a statistical method, it does not try to draw consequences for the performers' behaviour from the knowledge of medicine, biology, psychology, sociology or the communication sciences.

It is based on empirical research, from which it extracts general principles. It takes place in an operative dimension with a view to the effectiveness of scenic action. It defines a field of investigation and forges the theoretical instruments to explore it.

It singles out pragmatic laws.

Is it, then, a science?

Eugenio Barba

Foreword



Pei Yan Ling. ISTA 4, Holstebro, Denmark, 1986 - Photo: Torben Huss

Eugenio Barba Dancing Questions

Am I too old to found a journal of theatre anthropology? I'm 84, 22 books and hundreds of articles behind me. Do I still have something to say? Don't I risk repeating what my experience has made me put on paper so many times in so many different ways?

Yet some questions keep dancing in my head. They are the same ones I asked myself when I embarked on my theatre journey in the early 60s of the last century. Their simplicity fed my insecurity: *what* is the essence of theatre? *Why* do I want to do theatre? *How* can I appropriate theatrical knowledge? They prodded me to look for people who could help me unravel these questions thanks to their familiarity with the history of the profession or their technical knowledge.

I speak of people in plural because, looking back in time, I realise that I have always sought energy from a mosaic of relationships, from the collective discipline of a humble craftsmanship, whose consistency can transcend into a complex experience. My whole theatre biography is made up of questions and the need for answers, partly satisfied thanks to the sharing of thought and action with men and women who are exceptional in my eyes. They constituted particular environments: a team of craftsmen, a collective creative mind of actors, a gathering of master performers from different traditions, an association of inquisitive scholars, capable of discovering what they were not looking for and of knowingly intervening in the reality of ideas and practice.

Eigil Winje's workshop in Oslo where I learned rigorous precision by welding a profusion of metal pieces into a portable heater to warm Norwegian soldiers in Lapland; the crew of Talabot, a merchant ship; the unknown Teatr 13 Rzędów in Opole, Poland, with Jerzy Grotowski, Ludwik Flaszen, Jerzy Gurawski and their actors; the unrivaled group of actors from Odin Teatret; the amazing team of "performer-masters" of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA); the lasting partnership with some scholars, and among them those of the Italian journal *Teatro e Storia* and those of the Institute of Dramaturgy at the University of Århus: my questions have danced with the people of these constellations and nourished my professional and intellectual roots.

It is understandable that today I resume one of these questions that my *daimon* keeps whispering in my mind: *what does the tacit knowledge, the technique, the incorporated know-how of the actor consist of?* And that I face this question together with a group of people who are willing to climb this crystal mountain with me.

Thus, JTA was born, a *Journal of Theatre Anthropology*. From the desire to confront this question once again and scrutinise it also through the gaze, experience and interest of a couple of young scholars - Simone Dragone and Leonardo Mancini - who are on the editorial board together with Rina Skeel and Julia Varley. But I also wished to gather around me the scholarly friends who in the past took my questions seriously. They make up the scientific committee of JTA, inveterate veterans who let themselves be tempted by this new adventure.



So here we are, retracing the stages of the birth of theatre anthropology and reflecting upon this operative science: the scenic anatomy of the actor/dancer.

The first time

Simone Dragone, who presides over OTA, the Odin Teatret Archives, tells me that I used the term theatre anthropology for the first time at the international conference “Theatre Research and Cultural Diversity” organised in Trappeto by Beno Mazzone and his Teatro Libero in collaboration with the Faculty of Philosophy and Languages of the University of Palermo. The title of my speech was “Knowing or Understanding” and it took place on 11 May 1980.¹

There are two possibilities in human life to know and to learn. One through a logical, analytical, linear, intellectual process; the other through experience. They are two equally important ways of coming into contact, of absorbing, transforming and distilling what we live into knowledge. These two ways are so complementary that they cannot be translated into each other's language.

For me, theatre is experience. It is not linear rational knowledge, but simultaneity. It is a dialectic between a series of elements that coexist in the space and time of the theatre performance and make it different from other expressive means requiring linearity: film, writing and verbal language. (...) I began to study oriental theatres and the techniques of their actors. I viewed these theatres as a codified repertoire of styles and conventions, just as western theatre artists had done who had dealt with them before me.

About three years ago, in 1978, a situation arose that shook this imprinting with all the misunderstandings it generates. Some of my actors had gone to Asia and on their return to Odin Teatret they showed their travel experiences. (...) Unexpectedly I saw them perform Balinese dances and kathakali scenes. This surprised me for two reasons: I doubted the usefulness for a western actor of learning codified theatrical forms and reproducing them faithfully; I couldn't imagine how they could be used in practice. They were ornaments, no doubt refined, with which the actors adorn themselves. But if they do not result in a form of understanding that stimulates their personal development rooted in the training of their theatre and their specific historical situation, the forms they had learned were useless.

Seeing my actors' work with Asian styles - implying a different way of using their body - questions began to arise. And these questions have become one of the main themes of my research: theatre anthropology.

The term anthropology, as it was defined at the beginning of the 20th century, is the study of man (*sic*) at a biological and socio-cultural level. Theatre anthropology means the study of man in a performing situation on a biological and socio-cultural level. Is such a science possible?

My lecture ended by introducing my project for a school where teachers teach nothing. It was ISTA, the International School of Theatre Anthropology which took place in Bonn, Germany, during the entire month of October 1980 and continued in November with three one-week sessions in Holstebro (Denmark), Porsgrunn (Norway) and Stockholm (Sweden).

Twenty-five oriental actors are the teaching masters of this school in which we do *not learn to know but learn to understand*. The difficulty is to find pedagogues who do not teach anything so it is impossible to imitate them. Hence my choice of oriental actors. It would be absurd to learn oriental techniques for a short time. What would they do with them afterwards? Oriental actors allow us to understand with the body. We must be able to see not the conventions and styles, but the laws that guide their stage presence, and apply these in our European bodies. Starting from there, one can individually build a new pedagogy that is based on this understanding of certain processes in one's own body.²

In this lecture I also explained that what I called laws were hypotheses. In fact, a week later, on May 19, 1980 in Warsaw, at the 2nd International Theatre Meeting of Akademia Ruchu, I entitled my speech “Theatre Anthropology: First Hypotheses”.³

A short recapitulation

I tested and developed my first hypotheses in the ISTA sessions in an uninterrupted dialogue with artists and scholars involved in this laboratory of pure research on stage presence of the actor/dancer. In 1986, together with Nicola Savarese, I published *Anatomy of the Actor* in French and Spanish thanks to the courage of Patrick Pezin in France and Edgar Ceballos in Mexico who did not hesitate to spread this new field of study. In 1991, a revised and increased edition - *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer*, was published in English by Richard Gough and his Centre for Performance Research. He had to fight at length to overcome the scepticism of Routledge Publishing House about the unheard neologism “theatre anthropology” and the use of the term “dictionary” for such an eccentric publication based on the visual effectiveness of hundreds of illustrations. I dealt with the recurring principles in the actor/dancer's craft in *The Paper Canoe. A Guide to Theatre Anthropology* (1995) analysing them in the light of western theatre reformers' practice - from Stanislavski to Grotowski - and of various Asian acting traditions. In 2008, I summarised what I knew in the preface of a book edited by Clelia Falletti in Italy.

I explained that in addition to cultural anthropology, which today is often referred to simply as “anthropology”, there are many other “anthropologies”: criminal anthropology, philosophical anthropology, physical anthropology, paleoanthropic anthropology. In each ISTA session it is emphasised and repeated that the term anthropology is not used in the sense of cultural anthropology, but is a new field of investigation applied to the human being in an organised performance situation.

The only affinity with cultural anthropology lies in the questioning of what is evident: one's own tradition. This implies the movement, the journey, the strategy of a detour that allows us to understand more accurately our own culture. Through the comparison with what appears foreign, our gaze is trained to become both involved and detached.

No misunderstandings must be possible: theatre anthropology does not deal with those levels of organisation that consent the paradigms of cultural anthropology to be applied to theatre and dance. It is not the study of performative phenomena in those

1. Barba 1983, 26-7

3. Barba 1981, 94-100.

cultures that are traditionally the object of study by anthropologists. Nor should theatre anthropology be confused with the anthropology of performance.

Once again: theatre anthropology is the study of the behaviour of human beings who use their physical/mental presence (body/mind) according to principles different from those of everyday life in a situation of organised representation. This extra-daily use of the body is what we call technique. A cross-cultural analysis shows that the actor/dancer's work is the result of the fusion of three aspects that refer to three distinct levels of organisation:

1. The actors/dancers' personality, their sensitivity, artistic intelligence, social persona: those characteristics that make them unique and uncopiable.
2. The particularity of the traditions and the historical-cultural context through which the actors/dancers' unrepeatable personality manifests itself.
3. The use of the body/mind according to extra daily body techniques based on recurrent and transcultural principles. These recurring principles constitute what theatre anthropology defines as the field of pre-expressivity.

The first aspect is individual. The second is common to all who belong to the same performance genre. Only the third concerns all the actors/dancers of all times and cultures: it can be called the "biological" level of theatre and dance. The first two aspects determine the passage from pre-expressivity to expression. The third is the constant *idem*, that which does not vary and underlies under the individual, stylistic and cultural differences.

The recurring principles at the "biological" level of theatre allow the different techniques of the actors/dancers, that is, the particular use of their stage presence and dynamic composition.

Applied to some physiological factors (weight, balance, position of the spine, direction of the gaze) these principles produce pre-expressive organic tensions. These new tensions generate a different quality of energy and make the body theatrically "decided" and "alive". They manifest the actors/dancers' "presence", their scenic *bios*, attracting the viewer's attention *before* any personal interpretation takes over.

Obviously, this is a logical *before*, not a chronological one. The different levels of organisation are, for the spectator and in the performance, inseparable. They can only be separated by way of abstraction, in a situation of analytical investigation and in the course of technical composition by the actor during the process of creation.

The field of work of the ISTA is the study of the principles of the extra-daily use of the body and of their application to the creative work of the actor/dancer. The result is an expansion of knowledge that has immediate consequences on a practical level. Generally, the transmission of experience begins with the assimilation of technical knowledge: the actor learns and personalises. The knowledge of the principles that govern the scenic *bios* can allow not to learn a technique, but *to learn to learn*. This is of paramount importance to all those who choose or are forced to cross the boundaries of a specialised technique.

A time of shared experience

Western teatrology has generally privileged theories and utopias, neglecting the empirical approach to the actors' material culture and creative processes. ISTA focuses on this empirical territory with a view to overcoming disciplinary, technical and aesthetic specialisations. It is a question of understanding not the technique, but the "secrets" of the technique, which one must embody in order to overcome its mechanical aspects.

Among the different forms of ethnocentrism that veil our eyes there is one that does not concern geographical and cultural areas. It depends on the roles that the theatrical relationship creates. It is an ethnocentrism that considers theatre only from the viewer's point of view, neglecting the complex situation of the ensemble of the actors: the network of their relationships, embodied knowledge, know-how and ways of thinking of which the performance is the fruit.

From all this emerges the importance of a time of shared experience. During this time, while preserving the specificities of the different skills, artists who embody different traditions can dialogue with scholars who set themselves the task of sharpening the tools to understand the multifaceted and multi-layered reality of the theatres and their actors.

In such a confrontation, hypotheses, doubts and questions can intertwine in a common research, discussion and collaboration where the distinction between practical and theoretical specialisation is temporarily suspended. This time of shared experience does not have the task of achieving immediate and unitary results. It offers new starting points and stimuli for subsequent individual research both by those who give life to the performing reality, and by those who are committed to passing on the memory.

It is this tradition of shared experience that *Journal of Theatre Anthropology* wants to extend to the field of reflection and studies. A publication that collects facts, technical experiences, historical reflections and above all questions. Whatever the rhythm - tango, rock'n'roll, legong, waltz, mai, can-can, rumba, cha-cha-cha - dancing questions are welcome.■

Translation: Judy Barba

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Editorial



Julia Varley

Starting a New Adventure

This first issue of *Journal of Theatre Anthropology* takes us back in time, to the origins of theatre anthropology, to the founding of ISTA - International Theatre Anthropology, and to the first ISTA sessions in Bonn, Germany, in 1980, and in Volterra, Italy, in 1981.

Many of the articles have been published before, but we have chosen to include them because re-reading them in a different context and with the awareness of what has been achieved since with theatre anthropology studies, helps give a historical perspective to this field of research.

Some articles are translated, others are in their original language. The languages used are English, French and Spanish. JTA has privileged the translation to English of articles existing only in other languages to expand their distribution and oppose the usual tendency of only translating articles from English.

Language has changed since some of the articles were written. For example, women are now formally included with s/he and her/his and herself/himself forms, and a less euro-centred geographical vision mostly uses Asian instead of oriental when differentiating from the western (European and North American) world. The language of the old articles has been maintained as written at the time and has not been corrected.

The general title of the first issue is "The origins". Reflected in the articles are the themes and discussions of the first years of existence of ISTA: whether theatre anthropology can be recognised as a science or not, the relationship between the Asian and western traditions, the recognition of intercultural principles, and the difference of conception between cultural anthropology and theatre anthropology, and between personal, geographical, genre and professional identities.

Eugenio Barba's and Leonardo Mancini's articles investigate the background that fed into the creation of ISTA and the formulation of theatre anthropology as a study field which should give pragmatic tools to theatre practitioners and scholars. First came the need to learn and exchange and develop an autonomous research process, with the inquisitiveness of making comparisons with the experience of others. Then came the need to point out and understand the principles underlying different acting traditions and conventions, to be used for apprenticeship and for the analysis of documents and



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photographs from the past. Some scholars defined ISTA as a school that taught *how to see*. Theatre anthropology started by concentrating on the first days of the actors/dancers process rather than analysing the results witnessed through performances and texts.

The issue is divided into sections: **Origins, Comments, Reflections and discussions, Recurring principles** and **News**.

The articles included in **Origins** reveal how one of the starting points for theatre anthropology was identifying and sharing questions concerning the craft. Teachers and students alike were treading unknown territories. Eugenio Barba insisted on asking what seemed like naïve questions looking into the details of the first day of apprenticeship and examining the meaning of the words used during the practical work. The artists questioned and rediscovered their art forms while teaching basic techniques. The scholars inquired more and more wanting to discover what lies behind the results they saw.

Theatre anthropology did not appear as a sudden application of an idea but took form slowly after Eugenio Barba's long observation of Odin Teatret's actors' different use of the body compared with similar ways noted in classical Asian actors/dancers. During a period of travel in 1978, Odin Teatret's actors learned foreign codified forms revealing a similarity of principles of their own training with the forms they had learned.

During the first ISTA sessions everyone was discovering. Later ISTA sessions confronted themes and concentrated on participants' experiencing a situation in which they could *learn to learn*. This was facilitated by an environment that was enriched by the high artistic quality of the invited actors/dancers and by the intellectual fervour of the scholars who profited from the possibility of living together for one month during the first ISTA session in Bonn and two months during the second session in Volterra. ISTA was a school to learn to see for actors/dancers who wanted to go beyond the forms and for scholars who had no direct physical experience.

From the articles in **Origins** we learn how Eugenio Barba first spoke about theatre anthropology in a lecture in April 1980 in Palermo, Italy, then again in the *First Hypothesis* during a lecture in May 1980 in Wrocław, Poland, and then when the thoughts became concrete actions with the organisation of the first ISTA session in October 1980 in Bonn, Germany. Eugenio Barba often tells the story of deciding on the name of International School of Theatre Anthropology on a train journey with Ugo Volli on their way to visit Tadashi Suzuki in Toga during a tour with Odin Teatret in Japan in August 1980. He chose it to be a school at a time when theatre groups all over the world preferred to call themselves laboratories giving workshops and seminars. ISTA became a *performers' village* thanks to the deep commitment and adventurous will of people like Hans Jürgen Nagel and Roberto Bacci who managed to find the necessary economic and logistic conditions to make it happen.

Franco Ruffini's article differentiates between rigorous science and pragmatic science. The pragmatic laws - the principles underlying the different genres - explain what to do and how to do it, but not why it happens. The sharing of the questions and not understanding permits to observe the pre-expressive level of presence. The pragmatic

laws of the use of balance, opposition and incoherent coherence, and the pre-expressive level are often written about in the articles, anticipating a centrality of themes in later books and research. The misunderstandings over what the pre-expressive level means have flourished for many years while at the same time becoming a common terminology among many theatre practitioners around the world who are not even aware of the concept's origin.

Eugenio Barba gave the task to two or three scholars, among the founders of ISTA or members of the scientific staff, to make a report of each session of ISTA. The reports include detailed explanations of how the session was organised, with timetables and numbers and groups and space allocation. These reports were widely distributed, allowing theatre anthropology to be introduced in different theatre environments around the world. The report of the first ISTA session written by Jean-Marie Pradier, included in the issue, was sent to Jacques Darcant at the ITI (International Theatre Institute) in Paris and to Alexandre Bloch who directed the culture department of UNESCO.

An image of the day-by-day arrangement of the School is given by Nicola Savarese's photographs. Nicola Savarese accompanied his written documentation with the photographs and thus started a tradition of having photographers following the whole session of the different ISTAs (Fiora Bemporad, Tony D'Urso, Francesco Galli, Torben Huss, Emidio Luisi, Bernd Uhlig) to capture body postures and a dialogue of physical tensions that became apparent during the comparative work. It was also the beginning of a new model of books with information given by images beside the written words, like *The Secret Art of the Performer* and *The Five Continents of Theatre*, both written by Nicola Savarese and Eugenio Barba.

The **Comments** are collected from Asian artists invited to the first two ISTA sessions and from scholars who had been invited to the first symposium in Bonn in 1980. Only at the end of the second ISTA the idea of a permanent school emerges. At first, the Asian artists agree about not understanding exactly what Eugenio Barba's intentions were - as he probably did not know himself at the time - but they trusted his work and found the questions stimulating for their own practice. Their reactions after the first ISTA in Bonn and the second ISTA in Volterra, published in the French theatre journal *Bouffonneries* and re-published here, are evidence of how everyone was advancing confidently in darkness.

Eugenio Barba's meeting with Henri Laborit, facilitated by Jean-Marie Pradier, was influential in creating an understanding of a scientific way of thinking and categorising, and in feeding from other sciences, like biology, to develop the research process at ISTA.

Clive Barker suggests considering the everyday body before analysing the different disciplines at a pre-expressive level. He notices that the weight in classical ballet is placed upwards while the Asian lowered pelvis is found in modern dance postures. In the beginning, it was difficult for everyone to abstract from the aesthetics and recognise the principles independently from how they were applied. Getting caught by the rhythm and composition of movements, make many, like Moriaki Watanabe, notice more differences between the Japanese and Indian classical forms, than between the Indian and European classical dance.

Artists, who were used to learn by imitation, had to explain in order to teach the basic elements of their technique in a short time, thus becoming aware of what they only knew by doing and realising the reasons behind choices that centenary traditions had passed down to them. Augusto Omolu, who joined the ISTA artistic staff in 1994, for the ISTA session in Londrina, Brazil, always used to comment on how teaching at ISTA had allowed him to understand the motives behind certain movements of his Orixá dance, while demonstrating how to hold imaginary props, prepare for battle, or imitate the behaviour of nature.

Intellectuals and scholars coming into contact for the first time with theatre anthropology show a mixture of fascination and scepticism, feeling inspired and doubtful. Raymonde Temkine cannot accept that common traits can exist between Asian and European actors. Thomas Bredstorff says that theatre anthropology should be more appropriately called odinology. In a personal conversation, Janne Risum remembers reacting against theatre anthropology thinking that it corresponded to a certain aesthetic; because of this, she did not consider herself as part of the scientific staff even if she participated in many ISTA sessions. It is interesting to notice that although reactions went in many different directions, the dialogue remained important for Eugenio Barba as he organised open symposiums after the closed sessions and encouraged the guests to send their reactions in writing afterwards.

The section of **Reflections and discussions** includes one of these dialogues: Franco Ruffini, Nando Tavian and Janne Risum establish a chain reaction to each other's writing after the first ISTA sessions. Patrice Pavis also provokes a discussion by writing an article after seeing my work demonstration *The Echo of Silence* in Saintes, France, in 1991. The discussion continued practically by sharing the stage during the symposium at ISTA in Cardiff in 1992 where we spoke about text and subtext, score and subscore. The way of thinking of the actor/dancer and if this can be analysed in the same way as the visible results of performances or teaching methods is a field that Pavis and Ruffini investigate. As a response the actors/dancers tend to bring the discussions down to earth, knowing that the body-mind works as a unity and not a duality.

Actors/dancers embody the principles of theatre anthropology, often without theorising. Their actions explain and few words are necessary. What they write may seem too simple and straightforward, especially in the context of an academic journal. This is one reason for a section of the *Journal of Theatre Anthropology* in which actors/dancers can contribute with their experience directly from a territory they dominate, where they are convincing and convinced. **Recurring principles** is a section devoted to actors/dancers who speak with demonstrations concerning processes of work and how the principles of theatre anthropology function practically. This section allows actors/dancers to present their point of view directly without abstract interpretations that maintain that methods decide the practice instead of the other way round.

In the first issue we include Ana Correa's *Desmontaje de Rosa Cuchillo*. *Desmontaje* is the term used in Latin America for work demonstrations that explain the process of creation of a performance. Many of these demonstrations present physical training,

manipulation of props, montage with text and music, and relationship with space. The terminology includes references to soft and vigorous energy, and more concrete examples of how opposition can be explained through different directions of parts of the body, resistance, impulses and counterimpulses.

Reading the text of the demonstration accompanied by some photographs takes us into the intimate situation experienced during many ISTA sessions when the artists demonstrate their techniques step by step and then suddenly jump to the performance situation in which technique disappears so that the spectators experience a different reality.

At the end, **News** includes information from places where theatre anthropology is a subject at many university theatre departments and part of the practice of theatre groups. There are examples of activities in Greece, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, and the UK. **News** also includes letters to the *Journal of Theatre Anthropology*, a basic bibliography for theatre anthropology, and a short biographic information about the authors of the articles.

One of the aims of the *Journal of Theatre Anthropology* is to stimulate the relationship between theory and practice, between historians and performers, for information that is useful for the craft and words that are rooted in the practice, overcoming specialisations, and allowing for dialogues in which terminology can be enriched by different points of view and experiences. There is not a dominating ideology to defend, but reflections that confront shifty notions like energy and presence, thinking with the feet and shamanism, tensions and trance, tradition and innovation, laboratory and improvisation, science and art, culture and individuality, effort and inspiration, theatre and dance, anthropology and biology...

We look forward to gathering articles for the second issue entitled "Learning to see" in which experiences from more recent ISTA sessions will be included.



Origins

Augusto Omolu, ISTA 10, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1996 - Photo: Fiora Bemporad

Leonardo Mancini

Reading for the "Flying House"

Barba's early research towards theatre anthropology

Abstract: The article examines some of Eugenio Barba's study material now preserved in the Fonds Barba at Odin Teatret Archives (ISTA Series, b. 1). Barba's readings preceding the first edition of the ISTA in Bonn in 1980 trace the development of interests cultivated by the director, from humanities to science (biology, neuropsychology, studies of perception, posturology). Even before developing the theory of theatre anthropology as an autonomous discipline, Barba evolved many fertile perspectives of study on energy, within which he expanded the understanding of presence as a fundamental component of theatre. Barba's reading notes reveal an intellectual approach similar to his artistic work: the accumulation of an overabundance of material, which in the theoretical sphere, too, invert the principle of maximum results with minimum effort.

Keywords: Eugenio Barba, ISTA, Third Theatre, Theatre Anthropology, Odin Teatret Archives

1. Introduction

Forty years after its first edition in Bonn in October 1980, the itinerant International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), founded and directed by Eugenio Barba, boasts a history no less unique than that of its closest relative, Odin Teatret.¹ Compared with the chronological trajectory of the latter, founded in 1964 in Oslo and transferred

1. The stories of Odin Teatret and ISTA follow parallel paths that have often been reflected in studies, too, as is evident in the vast bibliography available today. Consider, among others, the special dossier dedicated to ISTA by the journal *Teatro e Storia* (35, 2014) on the occasion of Odin Teatret's 50th anniversary, entitled *L'altra metà dell'Odin*. It contains the following contributions: Franco Ruffini, *Scuola per attori* (1981) (347-52), Marco De Marinis, *Il processo creativo nel teatro contemporaneo: trionfi e trasmutazioni* (353-79; essay dedicated to Torgeir Wethal), Nicola Savarese, *Avventure di un dizionario. Note dedicate a Nando Tavian con l'aiuto di Angelo Greco* (393-408), Kirsten Hastrup, *The Making of Theatre and History* (1996) (409-419), Jean-Marie Pradier, *Ethnoscénologie. Les incarnations de l'imaginaire* (421-36), Lluís Masgrau, *La vision teatral cifrada en la obra escrita de Barba* (381-92), Peter Elsass, *La presenza assoluta. Uno spazio terapeutico per il teatro e per la psicologia* (437-52). In its first issue of 1986, *Teatro e Storia*, founded by Fabrizio Cruciani, Claudio Meldolesi, Ferdinando Taviani, Franco Ruffini, Nicola Savarese, Eugenia Casini Ropa and Daniele Seragnoli, opened with Ruffini's essay on theatre anthropology, which is now published in English in this issue. For an account by Mirella Schino on the importance of ISTA in the context of her training as a scholar, see the recent essay *Spettatore, spettatori, pubblico* (Schino 2018).



to Holstebro in 1966, the story of the ISTA “flying house”² began fifteen years later and is now in perfect balance between the two centuries. In its fifteen previous editions, held in cities across Europe and South America,³ ISTA has redefined the pedagogical possibilities of the actor’s art in an unprecedented practical and theoretical context, opening a new window of multidisciplinary study on contemporary theatre, in dialogue with, on the one hand, the ‘ancient’ (a notion that, as specifically understood by Odin Teatret, evokes above all the relationship with the ‘ancestors’ of the art⁴) and with extra-European cultures, on the other.

Due to global circumstances associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, the 16th edition of ISTA, which should have taken place in Italy in the summer of 2020, could not be held.⁵ In that year, nevertheless, Barba participated in numerous online initiatives, continued in presence, when possible, the creation of new performances with his actors, and prepared to hand over the direction of his theatre, announced on 29 March 2019, fifty-five years from its foundation.⁶ The animated climate always gravitating around Odin Teatret also favoured the conception of numerous projects: the annual *Journal of Theatre Anthropology*, published both on paper and in open-access format, is one of these new initiatives.⁷

2. The International School of Theatre Anthropology is defined by Barba as a “flying house” in the paragraph on *Transmission of the Inheritance* in the book *Theatre. Solitude, craft, revolt* (“all the Odin actors periodically join the ‘flying house’ amongst masters from other traditions and, together with them, give life to the *Theatrum Mundi* performance”: Barba 1996, 92-8).

3. Among the most important historic accounts of ISTA, see *The Tradition of ISTA* (Skeel 1994; which also appeared in Brazilian-Portuguese in the same year: *A Tradição da ISTA*), *The Performers’ Village. Times, Techniques and Theories at ISTA* (Hastrup 1996), and the more recent *Thinking with the Feet. Actors’ Techniques and Theatre Anthropology* (Cremona, Galli and Varley 2017). Also Franco Ruffini’s *La scuola degli attori. Rapporti della prima sessione dell’ISTA* (Ruffini 1980), followed chronologically by issues of the journal “Bouffonneries”: 4, *Improvisation. Anthropologie théâtrale*, 1982; 15-6, *L’énergie de l’acteur. Anthropologie théâtrale* (2), 1986. Also note publications of the Eurasian Theatre, including, in particular, *Drammaturgia dell’attore* (De Marinis 1996) and the 1995 issue of *Mime Journal*, edited by Thomas Leabhart, *Incorporated knowledge*. For a detailed discussion on theatre anthropology, elaborated by Marco De Marinis after the first five sessions of ISTA between 1980 and ’87, see as well the chapter *Antropologia* in De Marinis 1988, 99-127.

4. Barba names the ‘ancestors’ of the theatre craft, among other occasions, in a passage from his article *Theatre-Culture*, appeared for the first time in *Arte Nuevo* (1979), now in *Beyond the Floating Islands* (Barba 1986, 195-212): “If, looking around me, I try to understand what theatre research became in the Sixties, it becomes clear to me that it has slowly turned in a direction that, at the beginning, none of us expected. A deep connection with a precise history, whose ancestors might be Stanislavski, Meyerhold or Brecht, translated our needs in terms of theatre, of ‘reform of theatrical language’, of its expressive means. Over time and with experience, this connection has gone beyond the profession; it has become an ethical attitude, with its own distinct way of perceiving and acting” (Barba 1986, 206).

5. The theatre company Linee libere directed by Irene Di Lelio had started preparations for the 16th edition of ISTA in the town of Greccio, in the province of Rieti, where it was supposed to take place between 5 and 15 August 2020. Due to its cancellation, the latest edition to date is therefore that of 2016 in Albino, in the province of Bergamo, which reopened the activities of ISTA after the 2005 edition in Wrocław.

6. The letter dated 29 March 2019 in which Barba announced the handover of artistic direction of his theatre, entitled *Eugenio Barba leaves the direction of the Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium*, is available online on the Odin Teatret website (Odin Teatret 2019).

7. The Barba Varley Foundation was established in Rome on 11 December 2020 by Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley with the aim of supporting “fields of action animated by people who are disadvantaged by gender, ethnicity, geography, age, way of thinking and acting inside and outside theatre.” (Odin Teatret 2020). The *Journal of Theatre*

In the antinomy that, still today, opposes exercise of the profession on the one hand and the effort of critical definition on the other, there is evidently a theoretical and practical lacuna that both sides say they can fill. Seen from a historical perspective, this process of separation appears not devoid of links with the phenomena of alienation typical of consumer societies, with the progressive erosion of activities not immediately of financial use, their consequent isolation or hyper-specialisation.⁸ Rethinking what is too easily taken to be an ‘obligatory’ dichotomy between the moment of theoretical reflection and the places of putting it into practice could, on the contrary, encourage the rediscovery of interests in that essential human component which, in the early years of the third millennium, has not always appeared to focus the attention of the vast terrain of theatre.⁹ Lowest in the order of social prestige granted to the arts, ‘theatre research’ deserves, once and for all, due recognition: a recognition based in part on the existential, selfless dedication of its adherents, above and beyond commercial trends.¹⁰

The need for a holistic perspective in the art of theatre, in itself understood as culture in a unified concept,¹¹ had from the beginning driven Eugenio Barba’s endeavours to define the field of research of theatre anthropology. Barba’s work, advocating the coexistence of theory and practice, and based on creative studies, did not fail to provoke scepticism and criticism as well, however, as much research in scientific and historiographical fields. This, in turn, resulted in a considerable growth of interest in how to look at, think and do theatre, whose heritage is alive and current still today. The wealth of knowledge and discoveries acquired by this new branch of learning often attracted subsequent critical debate (both in agreement and disagreement). Now, a fresh look at its premises enables us to better re-evaluate its founding elements, the measure of its cultural substrate and the context in which it matured. In this article, therefore, I propose to analyse some stages in the evolution of Barba’s interests preceding the

Anthropology is the second journal founded by Barba in the course of his career: the first was the famous *Teatrets Teori og Teknikk* (“TTT”), published between 1965 and 1974. For a study of “TTT”, in dialogue with Barba himself, see Rietti 2004. It has to be recalled as well *The Open Page*, founded by Gilly Adams, Geddy Aniksdal, Maggie B. Gale and Julia Varley, active as a journal between 1996 and 2008 as a joint editorial project between Odin Teatret and The Magdalena Project, now freely available at: <https://www.themagdalena-project.org/en/content/open-page> (last access: 23 October 2020). Out of the journal’s working group came the “Open Page Publications”, latest of which to date is *Risking Hope* (Adams, Aniksdal, Gale and Varley, 2019).

8. In the theatre, once the separation between work and specialisation had taken place, Turner says, “special professions” and “vocations” sprang up that severed the ritual from its relationship with society: see Turner 1982, 114.

9. Among the merits of the working methods in ISTA, Taviani highlighted the overcoming of the opposition between the moment of the creative act and that of critical reflection, a separation that “when it is reactivated and emphasized, becomes one of the pillars of theatre as a school of approximation and mediocrity”: see Taviani 2009 (1994). In the ISTA sessions, overcoming the barriers between the knowledge specialisations was abandoned in favour of a hybrid and intercommunicating context; according to the scholar, the daily process of observation, learning and comparison, in fact, required individuals to abandon positions defending their personal notional baggage. See the 2007 interview with Taviani, *Voices from ISTA* by Claudio Coloberti in Århus (also available at Odin Teatret Archives).

10. On the “self-denial” required in a life in theatre, see the paragraph on *The Invisible Spectator* in Barba 1996, 86: “Abnegation is indispensable to a profession which is necessary above all to the one who chooses it”.

11. Barba argues his cultural concept of theatre in “Pueblos”, “cimarrones” in the essay *Theatre-Culture*, already quoted (now in Barba 1986, 195-212; Barba 1999, 175-93).

definition of theatre anthropology, retracing its ‘pre-scientific’ matrices, divided thematically and prior to the theories subsequently formulated.

In order to place the reflections that follow in context, it would be useful to first consider the origins of Barba’s interests. From 1954, when he started work as a welder in Norway, Barba devoted his free time to studying cultural anthropology and history of religions. He strove to understand his condition of emigrant. He was interested in descriptions and analyses of the different ways in which an individual thinks and acts in a certain social and cultural context, and in different states of consciousness, or “energies that determine changes of consciousness”.¹² Hence his readings on Hinduism, which prompted him to work his way as a sailor, to visit India in 1956. In 1964, when he returned to Norway after his theatre apprenticeship in Poland, Barba completed his studies at Oslo University, obtaining a degree in French and Norwegian literature and in history of religions, with a thesis on Sufism and on mysticism in Islamic culture.

The valuable archival material conserved at Odin Teatret, available to researchers thanks to the work of collection and organisation carried out in recent decades,¹³ make it possible to take a close look at the vast extent of Barba’s reading. This clearly reveals the roots of his previous interests in individual and collective behaviour and energy changes on his future research in theatre anthropology. Which fundamental questions drove the director’s research, at first on an individual level, from the second half of the 1970s? In the next paragraph I consider some preparatory material from 1978-1980, examining recurring areas of research that gave rise to this extremely fruitful initiative.¹⁴

2. From third theatre to theatre anthropology

Barba had behind him eighteen years of intense activity forming his theatrical experience (including the periods between January and December 1961 at the Theatre School in Warsaw, and January 1962-May 1964 with Jerzy Grotowski’s “13 Rows” in Opole¹⁵)

12. From a conversation with Barba, 20 December 2020.

13. Mirella Schino, in collaboration with Francesca Romana Rietti and Valentina Tibaldi, coordinated the work of organising the Odin Teatret Archives. For consultation it is now possible to use her precious *Odin Teatret Archives* (Schino 2018). The archive material cited in this article belong to the ISTA Series of the Barba Fonds (Barba-ISTA series, b. 1).

14. For an estimate of the number of people involved in the history of ISTA, I counted a total of 1,333 names enrolled in the list of “participants” in the various editions, from 1980 to 2016, in appearances; if the other categories (artistic staff, scientific staff, special guests, etc.) are added, the number rises to the considerable figure of almost 2,000 (some of whom took part in several editions, as did the participants). The figure is approximate and does not consider the large audience that attended each single symposium, estimated according to Julia Varley at an average of about two hundred people. To all this must be added the participants in the activities of the Eurasian Theatre University.

15. For an account of this period see Barba 1965, 153-65, where the director retraces the essential traits of Grotowski’s archetypal research in those years and declares the need for radical reform of the theatre, lamenting the immobility of the art (“there is nothing creative done on stage - only sterile repetition of worn-out formulas and hybrid styles that try to look ‘modern’ by exploiting the discoveries of other art forms”). In October-November 1978 Barba again renewed his criticism of contemporary theatre: “The ‘science’ of theatre has not yet even had its Copernican revolution. It seems that men revolve around the immovable lands of theatrical aesthetics and ideologies, and not around the men whose concrete history generated them” (Barba 2019, 57).

before he founded ISTA. In the five years before ISTA was formed, Odin Teatret had had its international baptism, following participation in some important events, including the Venice Theatre Biennials of ’69, ’72 and above all ’75. But in an article of 1977, entitled *La mutazione* and published in Turin in the journal *Quarta Parete*,¹⁶ Barba focussed attention on other events involving Odin, especially on time spent in Salento in 1974 and on the journey to South America in 1976.¹⁷ Chronologically, the theoretical formulation of theatre anthropology dates from three years after one of Barba’s most famous short essays, on *Third Theatre*,¹⁸ written during Odin Teatret’s stay in Belgrade in 1976 for the International Meeting of Theatre Research, organised that year by BITEF (Belgrade International Festival) in collaboration with the Theatre of Nations. The essay¹⁹ was swiftly adopted as a manifesto by a broad base of theatre groups and its success bears witness to the strong sense of belonging to a concept of theatre laboratory across various linguistic and cultural areas. It defined a new way of conceiving the professional ideal, and of creating an innovative system of production, not based exclusively on performance.²⁰ After outlining the coordinates of the “archipelago” of groups of the Third Theatre, Barba addressed the fundamental question of the actor’s presence.²¹ In his view, the importance of this element went beyond the time on stage and determined a more concentrated vision of existence: “theatre” - he wrote - “is a means to find their own way of being present [...] seeking more human relationships”.²² Within this context, the impact of *training*, which was elevated to a “spiritual exercise”, worked progressively upon the individual’s life, transforming it from within.

The actors first looked to by Barba were, naturally, his fellow travellers at Odin Teatret; their paths, individual and as a group, wove the network of experiences within which the director’s thinking grew and was tested on a daily basis. Barba has often acknowledged his debt to the actors close to him. In the case of theatre anthropology, he has made it abundantly clear, indicating the essential starting point for elaborating all subsequent

16. The article *La mutazione* is now contained in Barba 2014, 156-60.

17. For a study of Odin’s experience in South America, see Masgrau 2001. In 1987, between 6 and 12 April, the important Encuentro Internacional de Teatro Antropológico was held in the city of Bahía Blanca: a ‘barter’ involving, in addition to Odin Teatret, Teatro Potlach, Grupo Farfa of Iben Nagel Rasmussen and César Brie, the Teatro Tascabile of Bergamo and Richard Fowler’s Canada Project. See de Toro 1988, 91-7.

18. Barba 1999, 169-70. In the afore mentioned *Corsa dei contrari*, after criticising the production system of art (Barba 2019, 47), Barba contextualises his essay on *Third Theatre* as an attempt to interpret the reality of marginalisation of theatre groups and a point of arrival of individual questions gathered up to that moment (Barba 2019, 49).

19. See also Watson 1993 and, by the same author, the chapter *The Third Theatre: a legacy of independence* in Watson 2002, 197-220.

20. In a document presented to the Holstebro Cultural Service in February 2020, entitled *Søgen efter mening og brød* (“The search for meaning and bread”), Barba reaffirmed his concept of Laboratory Theatre as an alternative production system to official theatres, in close relationship with its community and not solely intended for the creation of performances (OTA 2, Odin Collection - Activities-D Series - 2020).

21. For a discussion on the construction of the performer’s presence in theatre anthropology, see the chapter on *Organicity* in the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (Barba and Savarese 2005, 206-14) with essays by Barba (*Organicity, presence, scenic bios*), Mirella Schino (“Organic and natural”) and Marco De Marinis (*At work with physical actions: the double articulation*). *The performer’s bios* was the focus of the 10th session of ISTA in Copenhagen: for an account of this see Falletti 1996, 396-401.

22. See the essay on *Third Theatre* in Barba 1999, 169-70.

theories.²³ If the intercultural perspective had interested Barba from the very start, in 1978-79, before the first session of ISTA, it underwent considerable expansion, thanks to time spent by the actors in various parts of the world (Haiti, India, Bali, Brazil²⁴). Some of those artistic acquisitions went into performances - the musical *à la Odin* of *The Million* (1979-84),²⁵ staged along with *Brecht's Ashes*²⁶ (1980-84).

The synthesis of research and direction, already touched upon in seminars in the 1960s, was given full expression by Barba in the latter part of the 1970s. The vast quantity of material conserved at the Odin Teatret Archives bears witness to intellectual methods of enquiry not unlike those used in working with the actors. Of particular note is the accumulation of a superabundance of preparatory material, beyond all logic of 'production efficiency' or saving, which obliges theorising by excess and overturns the principle of the maximum result with the minimum effort.²⁷ Along the way, an encyclopaedic type of culture was forming, in directions unheard of at the time, in its way of looking at the actor physiology, anatomy, research into the muscular and neurological systems... these were just some of the fields in which Barba read the latest scientific literature, acquiring articles in journals and international convention proceedings in several languages. The numerous underlining and marginal notes on the study material enable us to review the texts in the light of what can be seen as the reader's 'sub-score', so that today we can observe the progressive refinement of themes that were to feature strongly in the writings on theatre anthropology.

The material in the Barba Fonds on ISTA opens with reading notes on *Yoga. Méthode de réintégration* (1951),²⁸ the first book of French historian Alain Daniélou (1907-1994).²⁹ The notes, in English, contain typewritten observations about the art of yoga, which

had interested Barba since his early studies on Hinduism in Oslo (later shared with Grotowski³⁰), and his solo trip to Kerala in 1963.³¹ Barba specifically noted references to the six Daršana, the "points of view, or principal methods as essential approaches to the problem of reality": *sankhya* (cosmological point of view, governed by the method of intellectual knowledge), *vaisheshika* (naturalistic view, method of sensory experience), *nyaya* (logical, dialectic method), *yoga* (re-integrative, method of mental control of the senses and inner faculties), *mimamsa* (ritualistic, based on the deistic study of sacred texts), *vedanta* (metaphysical, method of metaphysical speculation, non-dualistic). In the reading notes, passages are highlighted dealing with the figure of the researcher (*sahdaka*), the apprentice on the pathway to knowledge. Further passages highlight the etymology of the word *hatha* (*ha*: sun and *tha*: moon); the significance of the rhythmic repetition of *mantras* (*japa*) and the identification of the base of the spine (*kundalini*) as the seat of energy; *laya-yoga*, that is the process of awakening energy and its journey through the six centres of the "subtle" body, up to the crown of the head, where the encounter with the Supreme Being takes place; finally, the definition of the teacher (*guru*), which may be rendered as he or she who "dispels the darkness", but also, in Daniélou's study, as a sort of parental figure and sole point of reference for the student, who should listen only to the words spoken by his teacher³² (later, following the lessons of the Balinese dancer I Made Pasek Tempo, Barba was to declare "the guru knows nothing"³³).

A further work of psychological nature, significant for its interest in the figure of the researcher, was a Danish article of 1972 by Ellen Bach, devoted to "creativity in theory and in practice" (*Kreativitet i teori og praksis*³⁴). Here, Barba gave his attention

23. "I would not have understood Asian theatre, its principles, its profound experiences, its 'secrets', without working with the actors of Odin Teatret on a daily basis. It was this constant practice that gave me eyes to see theatrical realities that usually seem too different from our own to be able to dialogue with them" (Barba 2019, 183).

24. See Kuhlmann and Ledger 2019, 169. In that same period, some actors stopped in Struer, fifteen kilometres from Holstebro (see Barba 2019, 18).

25. Conceived between Denmark (Holstebro) and Peru (Lima, Ayacucho), *The Million* was performed 223 times between September 1978 and October 1984, with the participation of a large group of actors who took part: Torben Bjelke, Roberta Carreri, Toni Cots, Tom Fjordefalk, Tage Larsen, Else Marie Laukvik, Francis Pardeilhan, Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Silvia Ricciardelli, Gustavo Riondet, Ulrik Skeel, Julia Varley, Torgeir Wethal.

26. For a study of the piece see, among others, Schino 1999, 186-96. A year after the debut of the performance Barba's book, *Il Brecht dell'Odin* was published (Barba 1981). As Schino noted in 1984, the last year of the Brecht run, two more performances were created at Odin: *El romancero de Edipo*, monologue with Toni Cots, and *Marriage with God*, with Iben Nagel Rasmussen and César Brie (Schino 1999, 193).

27. On "waste of energy" in the actor's work, see Barba 1995, 15. Considering the abundance of reading matter, Barba was rather more frugal in the use of quotations in writing, adhering to a rigorous principle of essentiality and at the same time of creativity. In this regard, Lluís Masgrau has called Barba's writing a "language of stained glass", capable of creating new forms, with every turn of the kaleidoscope: see letter from Masgrau of 8 December 1992 to Taviani preserved at OTAs (Odin-Environment, b. 4; Schino 2015, 203). In the essay *La visión teatral cifrada en la obra escrita de Barba* Masgrau laments the absence of studies dedicated to Barba's "written work" (Masgrau 2014, 381-92); with the exception, adds Masgrau, of Taviani's article, *Premessa cubana. Il 'romanzo che non c'è' e le 'opere scelte' di Eugenio Barba*, in which the Italian scholar identifies the origin of some principles of theatre anthropology in Barba's writing in the 1960s (Taviani 2004, 117-55).

28. See Daniélou 1951 (for the English edition, see *Yoga. The method of re-integration*, Johnson, London 1949).

29. The photocopy of an article in Danish by Ralf Normann, entitled *Strukturalismen*, without annotations or underlining, is conserved as an extract from no. 4 of the 1979 journal *Horisont* (not covered in this article).

30. In his first book of 1965, *Alla ricerca del teatro perduto. Una proposta dell'avanguardia polacca* (Barba 1965, 120), Barba had focused on Hatha yoga and in particular on the "study of the changes taking place in the organism, specifically the study of the relationship between position and movement, breathing, heart rhythm and the search for the balance barrier". In 1963 Barba was particularly active in disseminating Grotowski's ideas across Europe: see Perrelli 2005, 11.

31. Barba's interest in Asian cultures and religions dates from the early years of his emigration to Norway. In 1956 he had embarked as a sailor for India: he wanted to visit Ramakrishna's house in Calcutta, which had become his point of reflection in Oslo after reading the biography by Romain Rolland (*La Vie de Ramakrishna*: Rolland 1929). It was this interest in Hinduism that was the first connection between Grotowski and Barba, who had remained 'indifferent' to the first performance he had witnessed by the Polish director. See Barba 2004, 22-3. In 1963, he had gone in search of 'Indian theatre', which at the time was not very popular in the West, and had 'discovered' the training and performances of kathakali in Kerala. For a reconstruction of Barba's relationship with Asian theatre traditions, see the introductory essay by Lluís Masgrau, *Eugenio Barba and traditional Asian theatres*, in Barba 2015, 9-36. On the evolution of Barba's interests in kathakali, even during the 1980s, see Watson 1988, 49-60 (in particular, 54 et seq.). See also Barba's answer to Kermit G. Dunkelberg on the influence of kathakali on Grotowski, originally published in *Land of Ashes and Diamonds. My Apprenticeship in Poland* (Barba 1999).

32. A discussion of the significance of the master (*guru*), and his relationship with the pupil (*sisya*), occupies the first part of the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, with an essay by Rosemary Jeanes Antze (see *Guru as parent, honoured preceptor; Guru-kula, study in the guru's home; Guru-dakshina, gifts and fees; Ekalavya, disciple extraordinaire* in Barba and Savarese 2005, 28-31).

33. Barba's reformulation of the notion of guru is contained in a passage from *The Paper Canoe* ("the guru knows nothing"), where Barba describes a work session with the Balinese dancer I Made Pasek Tempo, present from the first edition of ISTA in Bonn): see Barba 1995, 92.

34. Bach 1972.

to a chapter on the “responsibility” of the researcher (*Forskeren og hans ansvar*³⁵), containing an examination of four different intellectual typologies. Beyond this classification, the “researcher of creativity” (*Kreativitetsforskeren*) was identified in a completely different, perilous and uncertain path, placed between the theoretical and the practical researcher. Driven by the desire to “see new things and get to know new places”, the researcher of creativity would pursue a type of knowledge whose points of origin and destination were found in his own self. Having decided to explore the possibilities of human beings, in fact, he would find himself involved in the research with his own body and soul, making of himself an investigative laboratory. As for the practical and the theoretical researcher, the author added, both would certainly fail as, in addition to their ever incomplete approach, they would infallibly have an idiosyncratic relationship with thought. While the researcher of creativity risked falling by the wayside, at the opposite extreme there were the ‘safer’ paths of a predetermined research, aimed at satisfying the expectations and opinions of others. Yet such approaches, at best, would lead the researcher along already trodden, short-lived paths; and though he did his utmost to publicise his results, he would see research as a pretext and, ultimately, a pretence or an illusion.

It is often reiterated that theatre anthropology is not a lesser branch of cultural anthropology and should not be confused with it, having its own specific qualities and its own critical autonomy.³⁶ Nonetheless, because of its underlying, vast transversal heritage, it runs across areas of knowledge and establishes interdisciplinary dialogues in many directions. On the subject of ethnology, Odin Teatret’s time spent in the “land of remorse” is well known and documented, from their time in Carpignano (Salento) in 1974 when, after an illuminating experience in Sardinia, the idea of “barter” was developed as a method of exchange between the group and the local community, their hosts.³⁷ In those same years, Ernesto De Martino’s essays were read, from which the Italian director drew inspiration for the cultural rediscovery of his origins.³⁸ It is no surprise therefore, to find among the ISTA material in the Barba Fond, extensive, detailed reading notes on *Il mondo magico* (1948), a work that may certainly be included in the Barba’s list of *libri peculiari*. Here, too, the typewritten notes trace a useful conceptual map within the volume and its prolegomena, underlining its influence on Barba’s interests.

Distancing historicist ethnology from the “futility of purely naturalistic knowledge”³⁹

35. Bach 1972, 9-15.

36. In the opening remarks of *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, Barba specifies the principal field of investigation of the discipline as “a new field of study applied to the human being in an organised performance situation”: see Barba and Savarese 2011, 5. See also Barba 1993, 24: “Let us avoid equivocation. Theatre Anthropology is not concerned with applying the paradigms of cultural anthropology to theatre and dance”. For a reflection on the relationship with cultural anthropology see Giacchè 1995, 37-64.

37. Barba outlined the modalities of barter in an interview for Danish television in 1974, the transcript of which was published in no.10-11 of *Biblioteca Teatrale* that same year (now available in *Due Tribù. Intervista con Eugenio Barba a cura di Stig Krabbe Barfoed* in Barba 2014, 101-103). On Odin’s experiences in Salento, see D’Urso and Taviani 1977. For a recent study of Odin’s experiences in Sardinia and Salento, see Santoro 2017.

38. See on this Perrelli 2005, 5. A new edition of De Martino’s book *Sud e magia* (“South and magic”) (first ed. Feltrinelli, Milan 1959) edited by Fabio Dei and Antonio Fanelli, was reprinted by Donzelli (2015).

39. De Martino 1958, 11.

and participating in the reform of a “wider humanism”⁴⁰ was one of the objectives of anthropological research, affirmed by De Martino and underlined by Barba, who was not unfavourable to a historicist perspective for intangible traditions of knowledge, too. In his reading notes Barba first made a long list of bibliographic references around specific topics of interest, such as, for example, those relating to firewalking in the Fiji Islands in late 19th century sources.⁴¹ Then, regarding methodology, he highlighted the line of conduct postulated by De Martino for the man of science, compared with the empiricist and the epistemologist: “The naturalist must always remain faithful to the great precept that nature can only be controlled by obeying it”.⁴² Lastly, he transcribed a passage from *Il Mondo magico* on the implications of breaking taboos in the religious system of the Inuit and on the consequent restorative action of the shaman, extracting from De Martino’s text the bibliographical source - here, Danish-Greenlandic anthropologist Knud Rasmussen.⁴³

The majority of notes were taken from the second chapter - *Dramma storico del mondo magico* (“The Historical Drama of the Magic World”) - the director focusing firstly on the description of the state of *latab*, as the Malays defined it:⁴⁴ the phenomenon of loss of autonomy of the self by the indigenous for periods “of varying lengths and different degrees”. This was also called *olon* by the Tungus. On the typewritten page, Barba added by hand “holonism: Shirokogoroff” (the Russian scholar who had first proposed that term). Within this state of consciousness, caused by an emotion or a great surprise, the *latab* individual would react to phenomena around him by passively imitating them, with gestures and movements, in a state of “echokinesis” which, in some cases, was even witnessed as a collective phenomenon.⁴⁵ Correlated with and distinct from *olon* was the state of *amok*, “found among almost all Malaysians”,⁴⁶ consisting of a convulsive “storm of impulses”, often at high risk to the safety of others, deriving from the loss of presence. Faced with such psychic states involving the dissipation of presence and the affirmation of a form of *koinonia*, the individual could react with “visible resistance”, produced by a “characteristic anxiety”, which would express “the will to be there as a presence against the risk of not being there”.⁴⁷ In other words, it would have allowed the emergence of a “redeemed and consolidated presence”, configured by the “creation of defined cultural forms”.⁴⁸ In the struggle between abandonment and reconfiguration of the presence, the

40. Grotowski had seen the need for a “renewed humanism” in a generational frame, for those born in the 1930s, through the vision of *Rebel without a Cause*: see Perrelli 2014, 139.

41. On fire ceremonies in the Fiji Islands, Barba annotates from De Martino bibliographic references to Thomson 1894 and Hocken 1898, 667-72.

42. De Martino 1958, 66-7.

43. Rasmussen 1932.

44. At the beginning of his reading notes on *Il mondo magico*, Barba had noted the bibliographic reference to the work of Russian anthropologist Sergei Mikhailovich Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*, (Shirokogoroff 1935), adding the following introductory note: “*Poteri paranormali di conoscenza degli sciamani*” (“Para-normal power of knowledge of the shamans”) (OTA, Barba-ISTA, b. 1, 290).

45. See De Martino 1958, 91.

46. De Martino 1958, 94.

47. De Martino 1958, 94-5.

48. De Martino 1958, 95.

magical world was at work, “in the variety of its cultural forms”, within which “its day in human history” arose.⁴⁹

Barba linked the above quotation to the discussion on *atai* among the indigenous people of Mota, revisited by De Martino from the observations of Codrington,⁵⁰ where the word referred to the “reflection” of the individual: a “second self”, intended both as an experience and as a representation, undergoing emotions of amazement and wonder. The individual and his *atai*, “linked by an intimate solidarity of destiny”, “thrive, suffer and die together”.⁵¹ The redemption of presence was therefore the result of the struggle of being there in the face of risking disappearance and arose “when the presence is called to an unusually high effort”.⁵² The risks inherent in the path of the man of magic, in his “solitary wanderings”,⁵³ were only mitigated by a necessary “cultural creation and using an accredited tradition”: a “fight against the process of disintegration”, summarised Barba.⁵⁴ He then noted the list of six points of the redemption process referred to by De Martino, according to Yamana forms of spontaneous call (from disintegration of the person to the vision shaped by mythical themes, to the choice of a “spirit guide”, with whom to establish socially useful relationships⁵⁵).

The techniques for deliberately provoking the trance state of consciousness were also much underlined. Noting the specific passages in Gusinde and in Shirokogoroff, Barba dwelt particularly on the role of singing as a way of access to the “second personality” associated with a “self-suggestive state, a sort of self-hypnosis, in which the sorcerer achieves the accomplishments of his profession”.⁵⁶ Barba did not record, in this case, the reference to the complementary reaction in the listener,⁵⁷ but moved on to the actual achievement of the sorcerer’s faculties, which was entirely completed when, “after a certain time, it is no longer he [the sorcerer] who sings, but his second personality, which takes over the chanting and continues it, so that the sorcerer lends only his voice for the chanting”.⁵⁸

49. De Martino 1958, 95.

50. Robert Henry Codrington, in whose work, however, De Martino found elements of ethnocentrism and the inability to distinguish the object of research from preconceptions originating in his own culture: see De Martino 1958, 99. The 1990 performance *Talabot* by Odin Teatret, enacting the life of the Danish anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup, did not fail to show the limits and contradictions of anthropology as an exclusive field of study. Note the essay by Hastrup, anthropologist at the University of Copenhagen, on *Talabot* entitled *Out of Anthropology: The Anthropologist as an Object of Dramatic Representation* (Hastrup 1992, 327-45). Her experience, staged by Barba in *Talabot*, was also the subject of a long analysis on the role of the anthropologist in McLean 2017, 3-95.

51. De Martino 1958, 101.

52. De Martino 1958, 104.

53. De Martino 1958, 105.

54. Barba-ISTA, b1, 293.

55. De Martino 1958, 108.

56. Barba notes the bibliographic reference to the essay by Martin Gusinde, *Die Feuerland-Indiäner*, (Gusinde 1935, 753), also mentioned in De Martino 1958, 109. In the context of ISTA, as Janne Risum recalls in her essay *L'acteur dans la savane*, Taviani spoke of the “second nature” achieved by the actor through training: see Risum, 2021, 188.

57. “Even a simple listener felt a nervous excitement during which it seemed that he was losing control of his mind”: De Martino 1958, 109.

58. De Martino 1958, 110 (see also Barba-ISTA, b1, 294).

To enable this, no special facilitations were needed, but a process of inner concentration in which darkness and obscurity also played a useful role (“the presence of darkness has precisely the significance of helping the world to disappear, removing it from sight”; “the shaman’s activities usually take place in the dark”⁵⁹). Following on from this discourse, Barba then highlighted a passage on the importance of tradition, as a guarantee of the stratification over time of techniques acquired, to prevent dissipation of the “experience of various generations”.⁶⁰

Having dominated “evil” (the trigger of agonising instability) by means of the trance (not, however, uncontrolled possession) the magic drama thus allowed *healing*.⁶¹ Within this soteriological perspective, perhaps through a period of solitude (essential condition in the context of theatre-laboratory⁶²), it became a possible way of preparing precisely that instability, from which the process of construction of presence would then take off. Here appears the figure of the intermediary, found across many cultures, also considered and contemplated: he who has a problematic relationship with being, and “who has the power to give himself his own presence”, can reveal to the people the way to salvation. Barba lingered on this passage, observing how De Martino configured the sorcerer in terms of the “magical Christ”.⁶³ As we have seen, theatrical representation of presence, constructed objectively, was also reflected in theoretical sources where it was examined in its absence, as a premise for the birth of culture. Particular attention was given to the notion of “redemption”, consubstantiated in experience and representation, in the face of the fleetingness of presence alone. Barba also recorded De Martino’s critique of the “narrowness of the historiographical horizon”,⁶⁴ noting the content for future consideration. For the anthropologist “the historiographic categories used to understand the historical formations of our civilisation (or of others more or less similar to it) turned out to be inadequate for within the magical world”,⁶⁵ but Barba saw a similar situation as valid for the world of theatre. He said this in 1978, in the paragraph on *Immagini antistoriche* in his essay *Teatro-cultura*, where he first redimensioned the position of critics.⁶⁶ Subsequently, in 1993, in the chapter on *Notes for the perplexed (and for myself)*

59. Shirokogoroff 1935, 363. Darkness is a definite tool in Barba’s practical work. Inspired by the research of Russian neuropsychologist Alexander Luria, the barn on the Holstebro farm was transformed in 1966 into an empty black space, where spectators lost their orientation. For many years, it was the custom at Odin Teatret to work at night when rehearsing a new performance (from a conversation with Barba, December 11, 2020).

60. De Martino 1958, 113.

61. De Martino 1958, 128. On the shaman’s “cure” of the “anguish” of the individual through his own “cultural forms”, see also Berardini 2009, 8. Barba was not interested in the therapeutic aspect, but in the fact that there are latent energies in the individual, and therefore in the actor, which can be activated under certain conditions (from a conversation with Barba, 11 December 2020).

62. Barba has repeatedly seen in the initial solitude of the theatre-laboratory the necessary prerequisite for development of the profession and acquisition of awareness of oneself and one’s role. See for example the essay on *Corsa dei contrari*, where he states: “my colleagues and I, after years of isolation, of ‘laboratory’, discovered almost suddenly that we meant something that was important to many”: Barba 2019, 83.

63. De Martino 1958, 122.

64. De Martino 1958, 192.

65. De Martino 1958, 192.

66. “Written testimony is often not a testimony to the thing being looked at, an understanding of it. It only bears witness to a way of looking and its conventions. It lasts, however, and for this very fact it prolongs itself

in *The Paper Canoe* he took fresh issue with the generalisations made by the history of theatre, within whose formulas “the sense of irreducible presence” was lost.⁶⁷

The reading notes ended with a textual transcription from the last sentence of *Il mondo magico*, where De Martino had summarised the themes of the battle against alienation, the underlying basis of the struggle against this process and the ultimate goal of presence: “the modern battle against every form of alienation of the products of human labour presupposes as a historical condition the human struggle to save the elementary basis of this struggle, *the presence guaranteed in the world*”.⁶⁸

3. The actor's *bios*

As in his theatrical work, in Barba's readings, too, the physical and the interior levels coexist and intertwine epistemologically. Thus, in addition to essays on the individual's inner life, numerous articles on physiology were scrutinised by the director, the amount of underlining and notes showing the kind of attention that must have been dedicated to them. On the whole, what transpires is an approach nourished by lively curiosity, which does not necessarily aim at elaborating new normative theories of art, but rather seeks ideas and reflections useful for the director's work, in approaching the new scientific discoveries almost with natural wonder, but always in line with his concept of theatre as a way of “being present” and of researching “more humane relationships between man and man”.

Barba therefore proves to be not only to be a protagonist but also an attentive observer of his times, capable of grasping the elements of innovation and of deriving practical syntheses that are useful for his own field. To question its validity, some of his critics, still not completely convinced, had to address the points of interest he had found at the mere level of science, when in any case their function was already complete, and behindhand compared to the progress made by the director. But with the field of action (the theatre) unavailable, every theoretical speculation is forced *in primis* to shift the analysis towards areas extraneous to the terrain on which that discourse was promulgated, losing sight of the inner needs with which the participants had looked at things, from the oscillating and intercommunicating space of their “floating island”.

Within this broad thematic area, Barba was extremely interested in some specific elements. These included the analysis of the complex phenomenon of fatigue, crucial for the director and his actors in the context of the theatre-laboratory,⁶⁹ which could

by imposing its vision. Actors, of course, do not write ‘reviews’ of their audiences, nor do they - as a rule - leave written testimonies about the relationships within the group, about the social dimension of their group”: Barba 2019, 54-5.

67. See Barba 2019, 63. Referring to the categorisations typical of history Barba writes: “Under those formulas, under those collective subjects, the living memory is suffocated. We lose the sense of the presence and full of contrasts of men and women who, by socialising their needs and personal visions, their biographical wounds, their loves and repulsions and even their selfishness and loneliness, invented the sense of theatre, built piece by piece the mental geography and history in which our theatrical ships navigate.”

68. De Martino 1958, 258.

69. Tatiana Chemi has recently related how, in the meetings of the Eurasian Theatre University in Scilla in 2003, Barba had derived the notion of theatre-laboratory from the Latin *labor*, thus indicating a “theatre

be viewed from a wide range of perspectives. In the ISTA sessions, this matter was examined embracing the diverse perspectives of the Asian masters and the participating actors, where the former believed that fatigue should never be shown on stage, while the latter were actually accustomed to showing it, in demonstration of a good job done.⁷⁰

Barba read the latest works, freshly printed in those years, concerning the impact of the automation of work in contemporary society and its effects on the human organism, finding much of interest in a Danish 1978 study in which some significant critical issues were examined in terms of the “interactions between physical and mental tension”,⁷¹ such as the stratification of erroneous postures and the negative influence exerted by monotony.⁷² The technological advances of automation, with ever less involvement of the body (despite overload of some peripheral parts), led to new imbalances, difficult to analyse, given their fragmentary cause,⁷³ with unprecedented repercussions on the nervous system, on the perception of fatigue and on pain. Awareness of this kind of problem, legacy of the social and production systems, gained considerable importance and endorsed the pursuit of a *via negativa* in training actors, whose organicity seemed increasingly undermined by the rhythms and habits of contemporary society.

For an *ad hoc* discussion on fatigue Barba turned his attention to another essay of those years, by C. Cameron and still widely circulating in the literature, entitled *A theory of fatigue*. Published in the journal *Ergonomics* in 1973, it contained numerous reflections on fatigue, understood as a protective function of the organism, and examined, among other aspects, for the role exercised on it by anxiety.⁷⁴ Not only did this state of mind induce an increase in fatigue, but - Barba underlined in the text - it also triggered a vicious circle in the individual that led to increasingly stubborn attempts to repeat the exercise, with a consequent deterioration in the quality of the activity itself.⁷⁵ An interesting hypothesis, reported by Cameron, was that the peak of fatigue might occur after the moment of greatest expenditure of effort, and not during the effort itself. In other words, it was possible *to be too busy to feel tired*,⁷⁶ a conclusion of considerable importance if one thinks of the often exhausting habits typical of theatrical life, but also

of fatigue”: see Chemi 2017, 197-202. In his *Corsa dei contrari*, Barba says of the actors: “I marvel at their continuous research, their stubbornness, their courage to work every day, from morning to night, without, at times, appearing to be a fruit of their labours” (cf. Barba 2019, 84).

70. In his writings on theatre anthropology, Barba offered a further viewpoint on fatigue in the emblematic case of giving thanks in Noh theatre, with the expression *otsukarasama* (translatable as “you tired yourself greatly for me”): see Barba 2019, 31.

71. Saaby 1978, 14.

72. An understanding of the effects of monotony and boredom was also advanced in an older study of 1957 by Woodburn Heron (Heron 1957, 52-6), read by Barba and conserved among archival material relating to the “ISTA Series”.

73. Saaby 1978, 9.

74. Cameron 1973, 67-82. In his “theory of fatigue” Cameron had highlighted the benefit of short periods of interruption between phases of more intense work. Also of crucial importance was the observation that fatigue experienced by an individual should be contextualised in the totality of habits of the person throughout his life, on which it has influence (“the fatigue problem is embedded in the whole life pattern of those who suffer from it”: Cameron 1973, 71).

75. Cameron 1973, 73.

76. Cameron 1973, 73.

of the repercussions in terms of training and exercises. Possible strategies for reducing the impact of fatigue lay in the introduction of new stimuli, in maintaining interest in the subject, and in the challenge posed by new tasks. Thanks to such incentives, the individual would be able to bear the burden of fatigue longer, counteracting its effect.⁷⁷

Some readings on neurology revealed an opportunity for exploration, which at the end of the 1970s, thanks also to a type of discursive writing, appeared less focused on the prevailing use of more recent technicisms. So Barba was able to read the transcript of a lecture at the University of Minnesota in February 1978 by the neuroscientist Marcel Kinsbourne, *Mapping a behavioral cerebral space*, subsequently published as an article in the *International Journal of Neuroscience*. He underlined in pen references to the passage of impulses from one hemisphere in the brain to another, examined as a highly interconnected system.⁷⁸ Then, he noted with interest the mirroring of this complementarity process in the body, too,⁷⁹ and the role played on it by speaking, an act capable of significantly altering balance.⁸⁰ Nor did he fail to notice Kinsbourne's observation that, for example, driving a vehicle - a condition of optimal body use (and here Barba's underlining began) - required carrying out one action with one arm and a different one with the opposite leg.⁸¹

With equal curiosity he also read a study of 1971 on the relationships between *Eye movements and visual perception* by David Noton and Lawrence Stark,⁸² an article full of potentially useful indications for more effectively organising action and space on stage. Not surprisingly, Barba's attention focused on the premise of the study ("[...] the ears accept rather passively whatever signals come their way, but the eyes are continually moving as they scan and inspect the details of the visual world": see Noton and Stark 1971, 263). He then highlighted passages relating to internal representation and the creation of images by the brain ("the memory system of the brain must contain an internal representation of every object that is to be recognised"⁸³). More underlining followed three pages later, on the internal representation of an object as an "assemblage of features"⁸⁴ or, better, a collage "of memory traces of features".⁸⁵

Again, on the subject of physiology, he focused on a discussion on resistance training by the famous New Zealand athlete and coach Arthur Lydiard, contained in his 1978 book *Run, the Lydiard Way* (read by Barba in a Danish translation of 1980⁸⁶), from which he highlighted a passage on breaking through the "steady state" and on the impact on

the organism, through the production of energy.⁸⁷ With keener attention he examined a 1971 article by Jane Winearls, professor of dance at the University of Birmingham: *Posture: its function in efficient use of the human organism as a total concept*, presented on the occasion of the first *Symposium international de posturographie* which took place that year in Madrid. In this work, Barba was firstly interested in the author's professional status ("the point of view of a professor of dance is presented"); then, he lingered on some introductory remarks on the gaps in specialist learning of specific forms of training, from gymnastics to athletics. Winearls confirmed - and this is what seems to particularly interest Barba - that it was her practical experience that led her to the conclusion that the mere learning of physical techniques irremediably lacked the objective of personal growth and maturity in a broader sense (conclusion that led Winearls to abandon gymnastics in favour of dance).⁸⁸

The director also examined the other lectures published in the proceedings of the Madrid posturography symposium of 1971. Thus, in a study by three researchers of the Institute of Hygiene and Labour Protection in Sofia⁸⁹ he found some important considerations on the effect exerted by the movement of the eyes on balance, as a consequence of the redistribution of muscle tone. The study showed, among other aspects, how looking upwards led to an increase in body sway, while closing the eyes led to a forward imbalance; and the tendency of human beings to fix their gaze on an axis inclined at about 30° degrees with respect to the horizontal plane⁹⁰ was confirmed. These observations, and their scientific evidence, could not but be of extreme interest, if one thinks of Barba's recognition of the crucial importance of balance, alterations of which, since Meyerhold, have been identified as one of the basic principles of constructing presence in the work of an actor.⁹¹

Along this line, and perhaps even more stimulating for the type of conclusions presented, was a study by J.-B. Baron titled *Tonic Postural Activity and Motor Imagination*,⁹² presented at the same Madrid Symposium. The author offered new verification and practical application for the model of action-preparation of British scientist Charles Scott Sherrington, who had already demonstrated that muscular activity could also be activated through use of imagination alone. Based on this known fact, Baron had conducted a similar experiment shifting the object of analysis to the spectator, and had found that in the observer, too, it was possible to record postural variations, activated by both active and passive imagination.⁹³ The more practised and predisposed were the observers' bodies, the more frequently was this type of reflex

77. Cameron 1973, 78.

78. See Kinsbourne 1980, 45-50. On the functioning of the brain Barba also read an essay by Michael S. Gazzaniga, *The split brain in man* in "Scientific American" (Gazzaniga 1967, 24-9).

79. See Kinsbourne 1980, 8 (Barba-Ista, b1, 328).

80. In the passage underlined by Barba, referring to an experiment, Kinsbourne wrote: "Speaking and balancing being uncorrelated activities, closeness in functional space is disadvantageous" (Kinsbourne 1980, 8).

81. Kinsbourne 1980, 8

82. Noton and Stark 1971, 263-71 (this article is conserved as excerpted by Barba, who wrote the title of the journal by hand on the first page).

83. Noton and Stark 1971, 263.

84. Noton and Stark 1971, 266.

85. Noton and Stark 1971, 271.

86. Lydiard 1980.

87. See Lydiard 1980, 43.

88. Winearls 1972, 99-101.

89. Gantchev, Draganova and Dunev 1972, 55-60.

90. Gantchev, Draganova and Dunev 1972, 59.

91. A detailed chapter is dedicated to balance in *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (Barba and Savarese 2005, 32-51), where it is discussed through examples from different eras and cultures, from the Commedia dell'Arte to mime, up to Asian dances.

92. Baron 1972, 95-9.

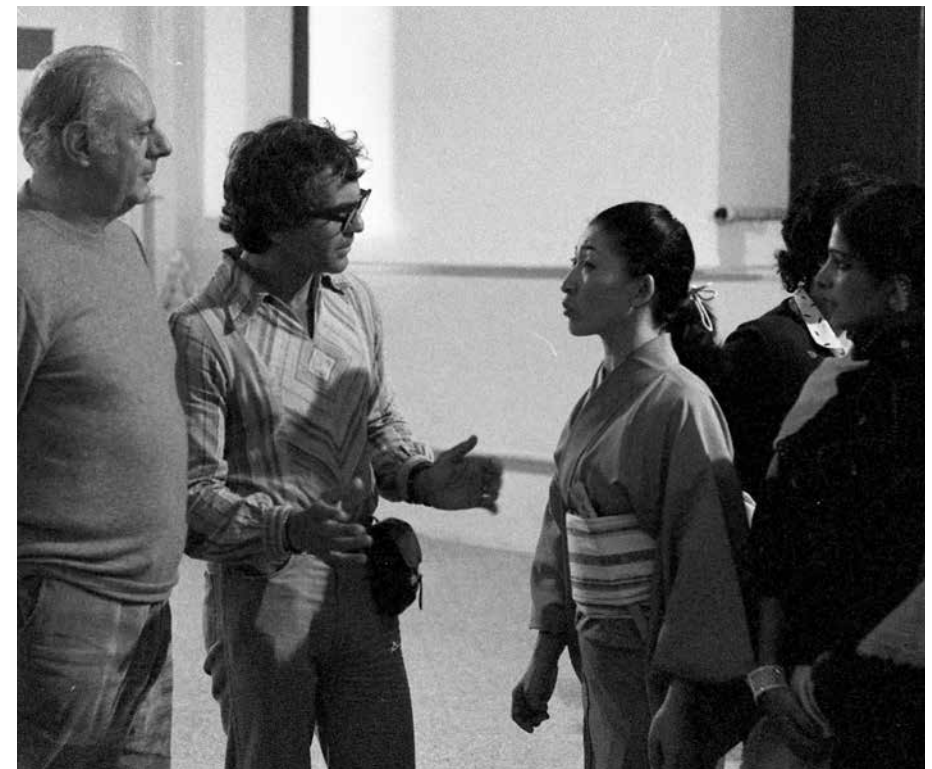
93. Baron 1972, 97.

activation recorded.⁹⁴ Finally, a comparative study by a scholar from the University of Libreville, Monique Berthelot, examined the differences between the tonic-postural activities of European and African individuals, raising the question of the impact of culture and sociology on the postural typologies prevalent in different geographical areas. In the article by the Gabonese researcher Barba underlined “*L’activité tonique posturale est-elle fonction de la culture?*” (“Is the postural tonic activity dependent on the culture?”).⁹⁵

4. Conclusion

The rationale for Barba’s readings should not be sought in a rigid scientific path for art. Rather, what emerges in this ‘preparatory’ phase of defining theatre anthropology is the participatory way in which the voices of different perspectives met, and were listened to. As Barba recalls in his new article, *Dancing Questions*, theatre anthropology was first formulated in Trappeto, Sicily, 11 May 1980,⁹⁶ and was reprised, a week later, in a lecture given at the University of Warsaw. The paper of that conference, entitled *First Hypotheses*, appeared in 1981 in various international publications, including the UNESCO ITI journal *Théâtre International*.⁹⁷ In it Barba discusses the three fundamental laws of “presence”: alteration of balance, the dynamics of opposites and “inconsistent consistency”. Jointly applied, and exemplified in a range of references from Asian theatre (kathakali theatre, Balinese dance, the Peking opera, kabuki and noh theatre), these laws laid the basis for overcoming the ordinary functioning of the human body, towards an extra-daily dimension and, consequently, towards “a whole new level of energy use”.

The ability to accommodate different disciplinary approaches, a hitherto rare combination, significantly broadened the range of horizons within which to consider the actor. A similar situation materialised in the sessions of ISTA, where experts and scholars from various disciplines gathered in conference, in a hybridising environment capable of breaking down the barriers between fields of knowledge. Thus, in the first session in Bonn, the participants received didactic material and bibliographies on various topics: “verbal and pre-verbal communication”, “comparative history of theatre pedagogy”, “sociology of the actor”, “comparative history of eastern and western theatre”, “group psychology”.⁹⁸ The positive effects of this mixing were often verified on both sides. For example, on the one hand, Barba recognised the debt towards theoretical methods used in science (and continued to read scientific essays in the years that followed⁹⁹) while



Dario Fo, Eugenio Barba, Katsuko Azuma and Sanjukta Panigrahi, ISTA 2, Volterra, Italy, 1981
Photo: Nicola Savarese

Henri Laborit, in a speech given in Bonn on 25 October 1980, recounted his amazement aroused by observation of the work sessions.¹⁰⁰

Contacts between Barba and Laborit, emblematic of the encounter between the arts of life and the life sciences, had already begun with the *Colloque sur les aspects scientifiques du théâtre* (Colloquium on the scientific aspects of theatre) organised by Jean-Marie Pradier in September 1979 in Karpacz, just before the creation of ISTA, in which Grotowski also took part.¹⁰¹ From the three levels of the bio-systemic theory postulated

94. Baron 1972, 98.

95. Berthelot 1976, 95-101 (the article also appeared in the “*Annales de l’Université nationale du Gabon*”, 1, 1977).

96. Barba 1983, 24-34.

97. Barba 1981, 11-8.

98. See the summary material on the first ISTA in Bonn, available on the Odin Teatret website: <https://odinteatret.dk/media/6050/1ista.pdf> (last consulted 26 December 2020).

99. Scientific readings occupied Barba throughout the 1980s. In addition to those cited here, see the 1983 essay by Jean-Pierre Changeux on *Homme Neuronal*, examined by Barba in particular for the chapter on the “theory of epigenesis”, within which he found scientific proof of the fact that “apprendre, c’est éliminer” (“to learn is to eliminate”): Changeux 1983, 327).

100. See the typescript, on headed paper of the “Odin Teatret. Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium for Skuespillerkunst”, entitled *Transcription de discours de Henri Laborit, ISTA Symposium, 25 octobre 1980*, 5, preserved at the Odin Teatret Archives (Odin Teatret Collection, Series Activities, b. 44), where Laborit says: “si j’étais resté chez moi, tout un aspect du théâtre oriental m’aurait été caché.” (“if I had stayed at home, a whole aspect of oriental theatre would have been hidden from me.”)

101. For a profile of Laborit, and in particular for the 1979 Karpacz Convention, see Pradier 1995, 13-7. In addition to Barba and Grotowski, also at the Karpacz conference were Włodzimierz Staniewski, Barrie Coghlan, David Goldsworthy, Noah Pikes, Roberto Bacci, Alain A. Barsacq and Janusz Degler. The conference was organised by Pradier in collaboration with Alina Obidniak, director of the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Theatre in Jelenia Góra.

by Laborit in the 1950s,¹⁰² Barba drew inspiration for the “levels of organisation”,¹⁰³ which would strongly influence his conception of the material identity of the theatre, the body-mind of the actor, the technique, dramaturgy and communicative value of energy on stage.¹⁰⁴ The “revelation”¹⁰⁵ of the organisational levels resulting from the decisive encounter with Laborit then found in Pradier, organiser of the Polish conference, a fundamental indirect supporter and important interlocutor in the following years.¹⁰⁶ Still today Barba acknowledges Pradier as an essential “catalyst” figure of theatre anthropology, able to organise productive meetings and dialogues between theatre artists and scholars of various scientific disciplines, including biology, neuropsychology and acoustics. From this multidisciplinary mix, Barba conceived a new vision of theatre that, superseding earlier questions of psychology, sociology and economics, was open to examining the complexity of the development of *life* in the different levels of behaviour proposed by biology.

In addition to all this, a historiographic dimension was added to ISTA, thanks to which, to quote an expression used by Raimondo Guarino, “the historian and the actor stand in front of the wall of time, to interpret it and cross over it”.¹⁰⁷ Inheriting the experience and methods of theatre-laboratory (a theatre that “does not listen to the applause of its time”¹⁰⁸), ISTA extended its unique characteristics by projecting its methodologies, work ethic and objectives within a new research framework. Thus, the daily apprenticeship with the various visiting masters, their technical explanations on improvisation, rhythm or the “sub-score” and the work demonstrations were combined with the characteristics typical of group theatre, such as the drive towards encounter with the other, the need for practical feedback in support of intellectual vivacity, the sharing of moments of life and the creation of a sense of community. Not for nothing Barba defines ISTA as “the military academy of Third Theatre”.¹⁰⁹

The origins of theatre anthropology lie therefore in Barba’s attempt to understand his condition of emigrant through books of cultural anthropology, his interest in the changes

of consciousness and states of energy, the long autodidactic apprenticeship training his own actors and, at least in part, in the attitude of radical scepticism and rejection of the pre-established theatre and social order that has never departed Barba’s thinking. Within this context, the director looked at the ‘categories’, the formulas within which the great ‘ancestors’ had been “dissolved”, and, in return, he reflected on how to bring theatre work back to those enduring points, opening new areas of investigation for an objective construction of presence. Shared solitude and active ‘asociality’ appeared to him as necessary conditions for focusing on his theatre and its position in the world. These conditions also characterised the phases preceding the ‘birth’ of theatre anthropology, those stages whose study, rediscovered in the archives, can today shed new light on the genesis of this fundamental chapter of contemporary theatre.■

Translation: Julia Campbell Hamilton

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102. Pradier 1995, 15.

103. The “levels of organisation” articulate Barba’s well-known, above-mentioned book, *The Paper Canoe*, whose index is structured around various thematic areas (“organic dramaturgy as a level of organisation”, “narrative dramaturgy as a level of organisation”, “evocative dramaturgy as a level of organisation”).

104. In a speech recently delivered at the Honoris Causa ceremony in Greece, celebrated at the Old Parliament of Nafplion on 3 July 2019, Barba placed energy at the centre of theatre, capable of generating a message that, although pre-verbal, kinaesthetic-gestural and subliminal, is itself text and message: “Today I can affirm: theatre is energy. [...] It is a message of energy which cannot be verbalised, and yet we feel it is aimed specifically at us. This message is a text that we decipher with our entire organism and its different memories. This kinaesthetic-gestural and subliminal process corresponds to the different rhythms and natures of energy”.

105. From a conversation with Barba, 11 December 2020.

106. Pradier subsequently created “LIPS” (Laboratoire Interdisciplinaire des Pratiques Spectaculaires) and between the late 1980s and early 1990s organised several encounters in Saintes entitled “Emotions and complexity”. It was during one of these meetings that Julia Varley presented the work demonstration *Écho du silence*, from which Patrice Pavis’ article on the “sub-text” emerged, now republished in the first issue of the *Journal of Theatre Anthropology*.

107. Guarino 2014, 107.

108. Barba 2014, 87.

109. From a conversation with Barba, 11 December 2020.

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At the front: I Made Pasek Tempo, Vicente Revuelta, Santiago García, Masao Yamaguchi.
ISTA 6, Bologna, Italy, 1990 - Photo: Tony D'Urso

Eugenio Barba

How ISTA Came Into Being

Abstract: In this text, Eugenio Barba traces back the origins of ISTA and its first steps. After having directed several international encounters of group theatres in the second half of the 1970s (Belgrade, Bergamo, Madrid and Leiketio), in 1980 Barba was invited to organise a new encounter in Germany by Hans-Jürgen Nagel, head of the Kulturstadt in Bonn. This proposition offered to Barba the opportunity to conceive the first ISTA session in October 1980, just preceded by the lecture in Warsaw where Barba presented his definition of theatre anthropology as a new transcultural field of studies. The article was originally published in The Tradition of ISTA, edited by Rina Skeel (Londrina 1994, 19-20), and in The Performers' Village, edited by Kirsten Hastrup (Drama, Graasten 1996, 24-25).

Keywords: Theatre anthropology, ISTA, Origins

In 1976, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, I had directed an international encounter of group theatres (Third Theatre) organised by BITEF-Theatre of the Nations and patronised by UNESCO. As a result of this, UNESCO asked me to direct two other encounters, one in Bergamo, Italy, organised by the Teatro Tascabile in 1977, and the other in Madrid and Leiketio, Spain, organised by Odin Teatret in 1978.

Hans-Jürgen Nagel, head of the Kulturstadt in Bonn, Germany, read about these encounters in the UNESCO magazine.

In the spring of 1979 he contacted me in Holstebro suggesting a similar initiative in his town. I made a counter-proposition: a situation of comparative research with highly skilled masters from different cultures where fifty actors and directors from group theatres could participate. In spite of the huge cost and the closed character of the event, Hans-Jürgen Nagel accepted.

My desire to scrutinise simultaneously different acting techniques stemmed from my frequent contacts with classical Asian performers. I had perceived in their behaviour on stage striking similarities with the scenic behaviour of Odin Teatret's actors. I was curious to inquire into the validity of this coincidence and to find out if there was a common ground on which every performer built his/her personal or genre-determined technique.

In May 1980 I gave my first public lecture in Warsaw, Poland, about theatre anthropology. My hypothesis was that transcultural principles are at the base of each performative technique.

Yet another factor pushed me towards this investigation.

Since 1973, when I first visited Latin America, every encounter between its actors and directors and the performances of Odin Teatret provoked intense discussions. It was a period when theatre people on that continent were often deeply committed ideologically and socially. The work of Odin Teatret was considered formalistic and alien to the conditions of their reality, an attempt to impose foreign models, an example of cultural imperialism.



Nevertheless in 1978, in Ayacucho, Peru, Mario Delgado and his group Cuatrotablas had organised a “Meeting of group theatres”. He set up the framework for a ‘barter’ of techniques in which Latin American participants did exchanges with Odin Teatret as a professional counterpart.

I was aware that Odin Teatret was the result of particular biographies and specific circumstances. But I was convinced that a professional territory existed where a dialogue with our Latin American colleagues was possible. The necessity to trace this territory where we could interact and reciprocally widen the horizon of our knowledge and experience was the second essential factor which inspired me to create ISTA.

I coined the name of ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) on a train in Japan in June 1980 on my way to visit Tadashi Suzuki in his remote village of Noga Mura. At that time, everybody was creating laboratories and workshops and spoke of research and experimentation. I felt the need for a name which was simple - a school - to recall the basic apprenticeship of the craft.

At the end of September 1980 I was in Bonn ready to start the first ISTA. With me I had Toni Cots from Odin Teatret together with Sanjukta Panigrahi (India), Kat-suko Azuma (Japan), I Made Pasek Tempo (Bali) and Tsao Chun-Lin (Taiwan) who, with openness, dedication and courage trusted and followed me in this unpredictable and still faltering initiative. My invaluable supporters, and at the same time rigorous devil’s advocates, were the Italian university professors Fabrizio Cruciani, Franco Ruffini, Nicola Savarese, Nando Tavian and Ugo Volli as well as the French professor Jean-Marie Pradier. With pride and gratitude I consider all of them, artists and scholars alike, as the founders of the ISTA tradition.■

Translation: Judy Barba



Kanichi Hanayagi, ISTA 9, Umeaa, Sweden, 1995 - Photo: Bernd Uhlig

Eugenio Barba

First Hypothesis

Abstract: Transcription of a lecture by Eugenio Barba in Warsaw in May 1980, originally published in Polish in the journal Dialog (26, 1, 94-100), and soon after in English in the first issue of the journal Théâtre International (1981). Here, for the first time, Barba defines theatre anthropology as the study of the human being in an organised performance situation. He points out three technical principles as ‘laws’ which determine the various acting styles in different traditions.

Keywords: Extra-daily technique, Tribhanga, Koshi, Presence, Shan-toeng.

Originally the word anthropology was understood as referring to the study of human behaviour not only on a socio-cultural level, but also on a biological level. What, then, is theatre anthropology? It is the study of human behaviour on a biological and socio cultural level in a situation of representation.

My research began because of my interest in oriental theatre. I couldn’t understand how oriental actors, even during a cold, technical demonstration, nevertheless retain a very striking quality of presence which inevitably captures one’s attention. In such a situation the actor is not interpreting or expressing anything. Yet he seems to radiate from a kernel of energy - evocative, knowledgeable, and yet unpremeditated - capturing our attention and magnetizing our senses. For years I thought it was a question of technique, understood as skill. But in trying to enlarge this habitual definition I realised that what we call technique is in fact a particular use of the body.

We use our body in substantially different ways in daily life than in situations of representation. In everyday life we have a technique of the body which has been conditioned by our culture, our social status, and our profession. But in a situation of representation the utilization of the body is entirely different. Thus, we can distinguish between a daily technique and an extra-daily technique.

This distinction appears clearly in all forms of codified theatre, especially those of the Orient. It is less apparent in the Occident since, as Brecht asserts, the art of the actor doesn’t exist: there are modes and conventions, but anything arbitrary is possible under the domain of subjectivity, individualism, and lack of technical nomenclature and precise units of judgement. The only exception is classical ballet, whose rules, nomenclature, and codification of acquired results can permit a child of eight to learn and to memorise with his body the entire ‘science’ of ballet, the experience of tens of generations before him.



The scientific method of investigation consists in choosing a field where the repetition of certain phenomena permits the disclosure of certain constants or 'laws'. If we choose oriental theatre as our field of investigation and analyse the oriental actor's utilization of his body, we will immediately discover three 'laws'.

The first is the law of alteration of equilibrium. In Japanese noh theatre, the actor walks by sliding his feet on the ground without lifting them. If one tries this, one will discover that one's centre of gravity, and thereby equilibrium, changes. If one wants to walk like a noh actor, the knees have to be slightly bent. This implies a slight downwards pressure from the vertebral column, and therefore from the whole body. It is exactly the position assumed when ready to jump or spring in any possible direction.

In kabuki theatre, also from Japan, there are two different styles, *aragoto* and *wagoto*. In *aragoto*, the exaggerated style, there is the law of diagonals: the actor's head must always mark one end of a sharp diagonal line of which the other end is the feet. The entire body, in an altered and dynamic equilibrium, is supported on one leg. This position is the opposite of that of the occidental actor who tries to save energy by assuming a static equilibrium requiring the least possible effort.

The *wagoto* style is the so-called realistic style in kabuki. Here the actor moves in a way which is similar to the *tribhanga* of classical Indian dance. *Tribhanga* means 'three arches'.

In Indian odissi, the dancer's body is shaped as if the letter S was passing through the hips, shoulders, and head. In all classical Indian statues, the sinuosity of *tribhanga* appears clearly. In kabuki's *wagoto* form, the actor moves his body in a lateral, wave-like motion. This movement implies a continuous action of the vertebral column which is constantly changing the actor's equilibrium, thereby changing the relationship between body weight and his base, the feet.

In Balinese theatre, the actor-dancer pushes on the soles of his feet, while at the same time lifting his toes, thus reducing his contact with the ground almost by one half. To avoid falling he has to spread his legs and bend his knees. The Indian kathakali actor pushes on the sides of his feet, but the consequences are the same. This new base results in a profound change of equilibrium, the actor standing with his legs spread and his knees bent.

The rules for the only form of European codified theatre, classical ballet, seem deliberately to force the dancer to move within a framework of precarious equilibrium. This begins right away with the basic positions and the whole schema of movements such as *arabesques* and *attitudes*, where the weight of the whole body is supported by one leg, and even on the tips of the toes of one foot. One of the most important movements, the *plié*, consists in dancing with the knees bent, the best starting position for a pirouette or jump.

Why, then, do all the codified forms of representation in the Orient and the Occident contain this constant, this 'law' - deformation of the daily technique of walking, moving through space, and keeping the body immobile? This deformation of the daily body technique, this extra-daily technique, is essentially based on an alteration of equilibrium. By rejecting 'natural equilibrium', the oriental actor affects his environment by means of a 'de-luxe equilibrium', uselessly complex, seemingly superfluous, and costing excess energy.

It could be said that this 'de-luxe equilibrium' leads to stylization and aesthetic suggestively. This phraseology is generally accepted without taking into consideration

the motives which have determined the choice of physical positions which destroy our 'natural being' and our way of using our body in daily life.

What is happening?

We can say that equilibrium - the human capacity for maintaining oneself erect and moving through space - is the result of a series of muscular relationships and tensions within our organism. The more our movements become complex - by taking steps longer than usual or by holding our head more forwards or backwards than usual - the more our equilibrium is threatened. A whole series of tensions is set in action just to keep from falling.

One tradition in European mime uses just this *déséquilibre* not as an expressive means, but as a means of intensification of certain organic processes and aspects of the body's life. A change of equilibrium results in a series of organic tensions which engage and underline the corporal presence, but at a stage which precedes intentional individualized expression.

In noh and kabuki theatre it is said that an actor who has presence, a special quality of energy, has *ko-shi*. *Ko-shi* is Japanese for "hips". When we walk normally, our hips follow the movement of our legs. But if we want to reduce the movement of our hips - that is, create a fixed axis within our body - we have to bend our knees and move our trunk as one piece. In blocking the hips and keeping them from following the movements of the legs, two different levels of tension are created in the body: in the lower part (the legs which must move), and in the upper part (the trunk, and the vertebral column which is engaged by pushing on the hips).

This creation of two opposing levels within the body forces us to adopt a special position of equilibrium involving the head and the muscles of the neck, trunk, pelvis, and legs. The entire muscular tonic of the actor is changed. He utilizes much more energy and must make a greater effort than when walking according to his daily technique.

The word energy is a trap. It is generally associated with an excess of vitality which reveals itself as movement, a muscular activity through space. But...

[long pause]

now, for example, I was not speaking, trying to think of how to confront the problem I want to explain. This was a form of energy: mental energy. My entire body was visibly engaged, even though I was not moving. It is important to understand that the word energy does not correspond uniquely to action and movement through space. Energy is a difference of potential which the different levels of our organism can attain, from the single cell to our organism as a whole.

This specific quality of energy of the different levels of our organism has been perfectly understood by Japanese theatre. In noh theatre one speaks of 'energy through space' and 'energy through time'.

I can engage my energy through space like this: I move my arm, and my hand grasps the bottle which is on the table in front of me. But I can also do this by using my energy through time, rather than through space: my entire body is engaged, I am ready, prepared to act in a precise way, to grasp the bottle. My postural muscles are activated, and there is a slight displacement of my body which, although almost imperceptible, mobilises the same energies which would be necessary for the real action. I am executing an

action, not through space, but through time - that is, I am engaging my postural muscles, but not those displacement muscles which would move my arm, nor the manipulation muscles which would permit my fingers to seize the bottle.

There is a rule in noh theatre which says that three-tenths of each action should happen through space, and seven-tenths through time. Usually if I want to take this bottle, I engage just that energy which is necessary to carry out the action. But in noh, seven parts more energy is engaged, not to carry out the action through space, but to hold it within the actor and retain it (energy through time). This means that the noh actor uses more than twice as much energy as is necessary for the action through space alone. On the one hand the actor projects a quantity of energy through space, and on the other he retains more than twice as much within himself.

This brings us to the second 'law', the law of opposition.

If we want to understand what dialectics are at the material level of theatre, we have to study oriental actors. The principle of opposition is the base on which the actor constructs and develops his action. Once more, I want to take the bottle from the table. I engage my energy through space, moving my arm and using my fingers to seize the bottle. But by using the principle of energy through time and retaining energy within me, I create opposition: on the one hand I push my arm forward, and on the other hand I hold my arm back.

Normally, when I use my extensor muscles, the flexors remain passive, and vice-versa. All forms of muscular activity imply a bio-electrical discharge. In an action through space - for example, the movement of my arm and hand towards the bottle on the table - the bio-electrical discharge corresponds to that produced by the extensors alone. But if I also at the same time use my flexors to restrain this movement and thereby use energy through time, I double the quantity of bio-electrical discharge.

Grotowski went to China at the beginning of the 1960s. When he came back, he told me that the Chinese actor, before carrying out an action, always began with its opposite. For example, in order to look at a person who is seated on his right, an occidental actor would use a direct, linear movement of his neck. But the Chinese actor, and most other oriental actors, would begin as if he wanted to look in the opposite direction. Suddenly he would change direction and lead his eyes to the chosen person. The oriental actor always begins an action in the direction opposite its final destination. According to this principle, if one wants to go to the left one begins by going to the right, then suddenly turns and goes towards the left. If one wants to crouch down one begins by rising on tip-toe and then crouching down. When Grotowski told me this, I thought that it was a question of scenic conventions permitting the Chinese actor to enlarge and amplify his actions, rendering them more perceptible while creating an effect of surprise. This is undoubtedly true. But I now know that this is not merely a Chinese theatre convention, but a rule which can be found throughout the Orient. In oriental theatre, the straight line doesn't exist, or it is used in a very particular way, as for instance in noh.

If you watch a Balinese dancer, a noh actor (even when carrying out the simple gesture of carrying his fan before his face), a kabuki actor of *aragoto* or *wagoto* style, a classical Indian or Thai khon dancer, you will notice that the movements never proceed in

straight lines, but always in round and sinuous lines. The trunk, the arms, and the hands underline this roundness. In the Occident one dances with the legs, and in the Orient one dances with the arms.

One could again talk of scenic conventions and aesthetic rules. But what do these terms conceal?

Let us return to man's biological structure. All muscular activity with its accompanying bio electrical discharge is effectuated through the joints. If I then want to indicate a person on my left, I extend my arm and point my index finger towards him. I execute a movement where the only moving joint is the elbow. But an oriental actor would never move in this way. His hand would start in a curved trajectory in the opposite direction, using three joints: his wrist, elbow, and shoulder. With a sudden diversion, necessitating precise and varying actions from all three joints, he would finish his movement by pointing at the person on the left.

Opposition is thus the second 'law', the first being the law of alteration of equilibrium.

The third 'law' could be defined as the law of 'coherent incoherence'.

It is, for example, totally incoherent, from the point of view of an action, its goals, and economy, for the oriental actor or the European classical ballet dancer to assume positions which seem to hamper his freedom of movement, and to remove himself from the daily technique of the body in order to utilize one which is characterized by its strenuous artificiality and waste of energy. But it is just this extra-daily technique which permits him to attain a different potentiality of his energies. In addition, the actor can transform this incoherence into a new culture of the body through practice and training and by a process of enervation and the development of new neuro-muscular reflexes. The extra-daily technique thus created become extremely coherent. One of the noh actor's most surprising effects is when, while walking with his characteristic sliding motion, he suddenly starts running, still sliding his feet. It is like an impressive flash of lightning, like a snake, like an arrow curving through the air. Even if the actor chooses a starting point which seems incoherent in relation to the daily technique of the body, he can arrive through long training at such a mastery of this extra-daily technique that we view it as spontaneous.

These three 'laws' explain how the actor can attain a different potential of his energies by use of biological processes. Their application leads to a strengthening of physical presence at a pre-expressive stage, before the actor's intention of expressing a personal reaction sets in.

The role of biological processes in the distillation of different qualities or energies shows itself in other ways, such as our manner of looking. We normally look straight ahead and about 30 degrees down. If we raise our view 30 degrees, our head will remain in the same position while a muscular tension will be created in our neck and trunk, in turn creating repercussions by altering our equilibrium.

The kathakali actor follows his hands' *mudras* with his eyes, slightly above his normal field of vision. The Balinese actor-dancer looks upwards. In all of the Peking opera's *shan-toeng* (actor's positions) the eyes look upwards. The noh actors tell of how they lose all sense of space, and how they have difficulties keeping their body in equilibrium because of the tiny holes in their masks. From this stems their explanation for their

special sliding gait, without lifting their feet from the floor - a bit like blind men who slide as if to orientate themselves, but all the time ready to stop in case of unforeseen obstacles.

All of these actors change their field of vision from the habitual in daily life. Their whole physical attitude is changed: the muscular tonic of the torso, the body's equilibrium, and pressure on the feet. A change in the normal way of looking brings about a qualitative change of energy. By one simple change in the daily techniques of looking, these actors are capable of giving impetus to a whole new level of energy which, by biological determination, we are all capable of attaining.

But our occidental civilization seems to neglect and often deliberately to hinder every departure from the 'normal', reacting defensively as if these new energies could become a threat to our comfortably established relationships. Other cultures have understood the different biological possibilities inherent in each individual and have socialised these possibilities.

This extra-daily technique of the body can be found not only in situations of representation, but also in other situations of behaviour - for instance, the martial arts.

The martial arts are not techniques of combat: this is a misinterpretation given to them nowadays, fostered by many films and publications. The origins and development of the martial arts are connected to Buddhist spirituality. The story has it that Bodhidharma, while at the Shaolin Temple in China during the 6th century BC, noticed that his monks frequently fell asleep while trying to meditate. They could not retain the particular state of energy necessary for this state of consciousness different from sleep and wakefulness, and so fell back into their daily consciousness, thereafter, falling asleep. Bodhidharma created a series of exercises whose physical actions were designed to break the automatisms of daily life and stimulate a certain energy whose quality was similar to that of meditation.

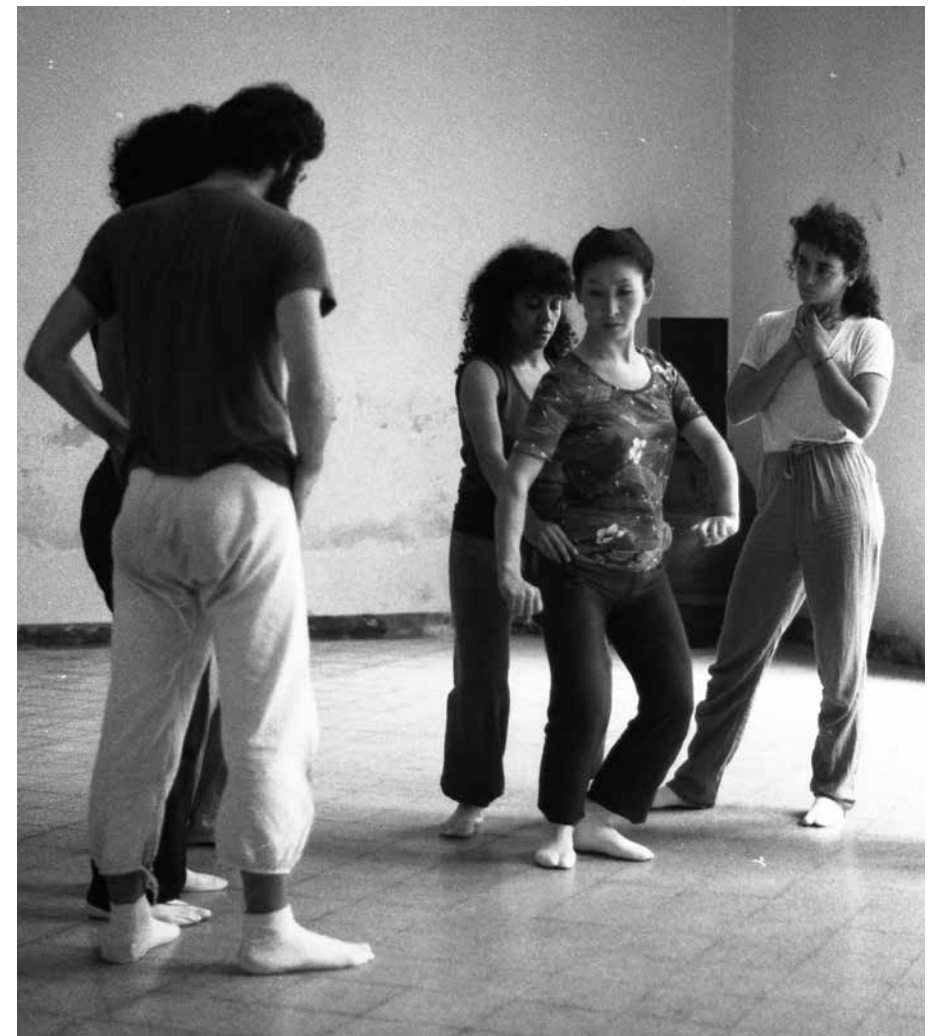
All these are very concrete, physical processes, even if often rejected and defined as mystic. Not only can we measure these processes and explain them with the aid of the natural sciences, but we can also begin using them in a new pedagogical praxis. This praxis would learn to understand our organism's processes, and through this understanding permit us to set these processes in motion, discipline them, and direct them towards a given situation. This can be done in the framework of theatre, school, or whatever social activity.

What are these objective laws which permit the individual to engage his energies organically in the different levels of his organism? Can we use the methods and results of the natural sciences to extend our understanding of the processes which the actor works with? These are some of the questions I asked myself when I began working with theatre anthropology.

This interest has led to the creation of ISTA - the International School of Theatre Anthropology - whose first session in Bonn in October 1980 gathered together a group of scientists from different disciplines and actors from different cultures. Yet ISTA is also a true pedagogical school, where about 50 actors and directors from various countries meet to be confronted with a pedagogical praxis different from the habitual. The goal is to 'learn to understand'.

To this end, the oriental actors working at ISTA, are precisely those masters who are necessary. They can teach very little, for there would be no sense in teaching an occidental actor the kabuki styles or the odissi dance. But these oriental actors can help us to understand how the laws mentioned above are applied in oriental theatre, and how they determine the quality of the energy in our actions and our thoughts. The challenge that remains to men of occidental theatre is for each to learn how to apply these laws within the framework of his own scenic tradition and creative imperatives. ■

Translation: Richard Fowler



Katsuko Azuma's class, ISTA 2, Volterra, Italy, 1981 - Photo: Nicola Savarese



ISTA

International School of Theatre Anthropology

ISTA SESSIONS

Founded in 1979, the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), conceived and directed by Eugenio Barba, is an itinerant institution based at Odin Teatret in Holstebro (Denmark). Over the years, ISTA has been configured as a research laboratory on the actor/dancer's technical principles and on the perception of the spectator. It is a centre for the dissemination of experience and knowledge for actors/dancers, directors, scholars from different countries and specialisations. It realises public sessions organised by national and international institutions, which ensure its administration and funding.

Actors and dancers from western, Asian, and Latin American traditions and genres are part of ISTA's permanent artistic staff. At ISTA, also a group of scholars has found a favourable environment for their research and a stimulus to overcome the boundaries of their respective specialisations.

ISTA does not limit itself to a single perspective and considers the actor/dancer's technical principles in a cross-cultural dimension. This methodological choice is based on an empirical approach and aims at understanding the basic aspects on which the *bios* - the *life* or the actor/dancer's stage presence - are rooted. Given ISTA's comparative-analytical character, the presence in its staff of actors/dancers from Asian traditions is important. These traditions are particularly suitable for a meticulous study since they are organised according to well-established codes and methods of apprenticeship, which are relatively constant over time, and are the result of a long sedimentation of experience. Furthermore, the strict distinction between what is called theatre and what is called dance is unknown to traditional Asian theatres.

Fifteen public ISTA sessions were held between 1979 and 2020, lasting from ten days to two months, often accompanied by a public symposium.

Each session is dedicated to a particular theme. For each session, the place (or places) where the closed and open session took place, the theme of the workshop session, the theme of the public symposium are indicated in the following list.

1 Bonn, Germany - 1st-31st October 1980Theme of the session and of the public symposium: *Theatre anthropology***2 Volterra, Italy** - 8th August - 8th October 1981Theme of the session: *Pre-expressivity/ Improvisation*Theme of the public symposium: *Theatre anthropology***3 Blois and Malakoff, France** - 12th - 26th April 1985Theme of the session: *Dialogue between cultures*Theme of the public symposium: *Le maître du regard***4 Holstebro, Denmark** - 17th - 22nd September 1986Theme of the session: *The female role as represented on the stage in various cultures***5 Salento, Italy** - 1st - 14th September 1987Theme of the session: *The actor's tradition and the spectator's identity*Symposium theme for invited specialists: *Theatre anthropology*Theme of the public symposium: *Semiology of performance and theatre anthropology***6 Bologna, Italy** - 28th June - 18th July 1990Theme of the session: *Performance techniques and historiography*Theme of the 1st public symposium: *Theatre anthropology: ethos and pre-expressivity*Theme of the 2nd public symposium: *Performing techniques and historiography***7 Brecon and Cardiff, UK** - 4th - 11th April 1992Theme of the session: *Working on performance East and West / Subscore*Theme of the public symposium: *Fictive bodies, dilated minds, hidden dances***8 Londrina, Brazil** - 11th - 21st August 1994Theme of the session and of the public symposium: *Tradition and founders of traditions***9 Lövanger and Umeå, Sweden** - 9th - 21st May 1995Theme of the session and of the public symposium: *Form and information: performer's learning in a multicultural dimension***10 Copenhagen and Louisiana, Denmark** - 3rd - 12th May 1996Theme of the session: *The performer's bios: the whispering winds in theatre and dance*Theme of the public symposium: *Theatre in a multicultural society***11 Montemor-o-Novo and Lisbon, Portugal** - 14th - 25th September 1998Theme of the session and of the public symposium: *O-effect: that which is organic for the actor / That which is organic for the spectator***12 Bielefeld, Germany** - 1st - 10th September 2000Theme of the session: *Action, structure, coherence*Theme of the public symposium: *Dramaturgical techniques in the performing arts***13 Seville and La Rinconada, Spain** - 15th - 25th October 2004Theme of the session and of the public symposium: *Flow. Rhythm, organicity, energy***14 Kryzowa and Wroclaw, Poland** - 1st - 15th April 2005Theme of the session and of the public symposium: *Improvisation: memory, repetition, discontinuity***15 Albino, Italy** - 7th - 17th April 2016Theme of the session: *The actor's know-how. Personal paths, techniques and visions*

"Collecting snow in a silver bowl", ISTA 9, Umeaa, Sweden, 1995 - Photo: Bernd Uhlig



Jean-Marie Pradier

The First Session of ISTA

Abstract: Written in 1981 by Jean-Marie Pradier, one of the founding members of the International School of Theatre Anthropology, the article offers a report of the first session held in Bonn between 1-31 October 1980. In the report, Pradier highlights the different composition of the groups who took part in the ISTA directed by Eugenio Barba: on one side about 20 masters of Asian performance traditions who gave demonstrations, classes, workshops and performances; and on the other the scholars joined by guests like Jerzy Grotowski and Henri Laborit. Pradier reflects on the several possibilities opened by theatre anthropology as a new transcultural and interdisciplinary field of studies.

Keywords: ISTA 1980, Bonn, Theatre anthropology

At a time when the crucial question of the training of actors is being posed in new terms, when group theatre is proliferating, and, with only a few exceptions, universities are at a standstill in the field of theatre studies, a German initiative could well provide an original solution.

A year ago (1980), the Kulturstadt der Stadt Bonn asked Eugenio Barba - director of Odin Teatret, inter Scandinavian theatre laboratory in Holstebro, Denmark - to undertake some action in favour of young theatre troupes. Eugenio Barba then came up with a project whose limits soon reached beyond those of a simple one-time event to become something that could ensure the continuation and development of the action undertaken: thus the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) came into being.

Eugenio Barba's past experience led him to try to avoid the dangers that threaten this kind of undertaking: it seemed essential to him not only to offer the participants one type of teaching, founded on models of European acting, but to utilize recent developments in the scientific disciplines which can facilitate the analysis and comprehension of the biological and psychosociological processes underlying expression and communication behaviour. He therefore constituted two teams who work in close collaboration with him.

The task of one of the teams, composed of about twenty oriental masters, is to demonstrate the specific characteristics of their art and to initiate the actors to the basic techniques. The very high level of these teachers acted as a catalyst, with the participants



giving rise to a very productive exchange of views. Five workshops were organised: techniques of the Peking opera with Tsao Chun-Lin and Lin Chun Hui; techniques of the Indian odissi dances with Sanjukta Panigrahi; techniques of Balinese danced theatre with I Made Pasek Tempo; techniques of kabuki with Katsuko Azuma; and techniques of Odin Teatret with Eugenio Barba, Toni Cots and Iben Nagel Rasmussen.

A second team made up of academics - teachers and researchers - formed a scientific committee around Eugenio Barba and was joined by Jerzy Grotowski. If this initiative, although rare, is not new in the history of theatre, it is well worth mentioning because of the customary separation existing between arts and sciences, which is harmful to both parties. Peter Elsass, a Danish neuropsychologist, Henri Laborit, a French biologist, Jean-Marie Pradier, a French psycholinguist, Franco Ruffini, an Italian semiologist, and Nando Tavian, an Italian theatre sociologist, participated in the project and were all involved in its realization.

First of all, a selection of the candidates was made. Often the young people who rush to the doors of conservatories and drama schools are full of an initial enthusiasm that does not always resist the constraints of the learning process. Moreover, expecting a confrontation of mentalities and experiences to take place, while responding to the aspirations of the most motivated actors and directors, Barba, in agreement with the host administration, gave ISTA a truly international character. Thus, 54 actors from 22 different countries found themselves in the huge premises of a modern educational establishment put entirely at their disposal by the city of Bonn, to live together through a hard but fascinating adventure from 1 to 31 October 1980.

Situated in a calm wooded neighbourhood of the federal capital, the Hauptschule an der Dune, where the members of the teaching and scientific teams were housed, was the ideal place for working. The spartan housing conditions were not the least of the paradoxes which contributed to the quality of human relationships.

Up at dawn, the participants started the day with keep-fit training in the neighbouring woods. This was followed by a session of individual training in a large indoor hall under the direction of Eugenio Barba and Toni Cots. Then the participants went, in small groups, to the workshops directed by the oriental teachers to follow the basic physical training of danced theatre. After a two-hour pause, work started again: a meeting in which the evolution of the groups and the problems they met with were evaluated. Demonstrations with commentaries. Improvisation and direction in workshops.

Apart from these daily activities special work sessions were held:

- . presentation of Odin Teatret and the Wrocław Theatre laboratory's teaching films;
- . projections of films on the different theatrical forms;
- . meetings with one of the specialists of the scientific team on a specific theme: pre-verbal and verbal communication, behaviour biology, acoustics, comparative history of theatre performance, sociology of the actor. Documents provided by the French Office of Scientific Research in Film made it possible to conceive an adaptable teaching method, so that the problems tackled were approached with precision and seriousness, without academic formalism. Upon the request of the

participants, written documents and specialised bibliographies were distributed. Personal research and experimentation were also encouraged.

Obviously, such a pace, kept up for a month, six days a week - Monday being a day of rest - was not sustained by everyone: however the rare defections, which usually occurred during the first days, testified to the well-founded principle, even if the first session of ISTA was a small-scale model of what will have to be enlarged upon in the future. In a domain where the criteria of quality are often ambiguous, the acceptance of effort succeeds in creating a community of spirit without which nothing profound can be achieved.

At the same time as its ordinary activities, ISTA organised public sessions at the Bonn Kultur Forum and in various German cities. The most significant event was, however, the symposium held on 24, 25, and 26 October. Entitled "The Look that Can See", this event brought together 45 teatrologues, critics, dramaturgs, and scientists from fourteen countries who were asked to transmit their thoughts in writing later.

At a time when the organisers of the fifth International Symposium of Theatre Critics and Teatrologues in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, have chosen as the theme for their meeting in May 1981, "The Theatrical Performance and Language of the Critic", Eugenio Barba's words seem of particular significance.

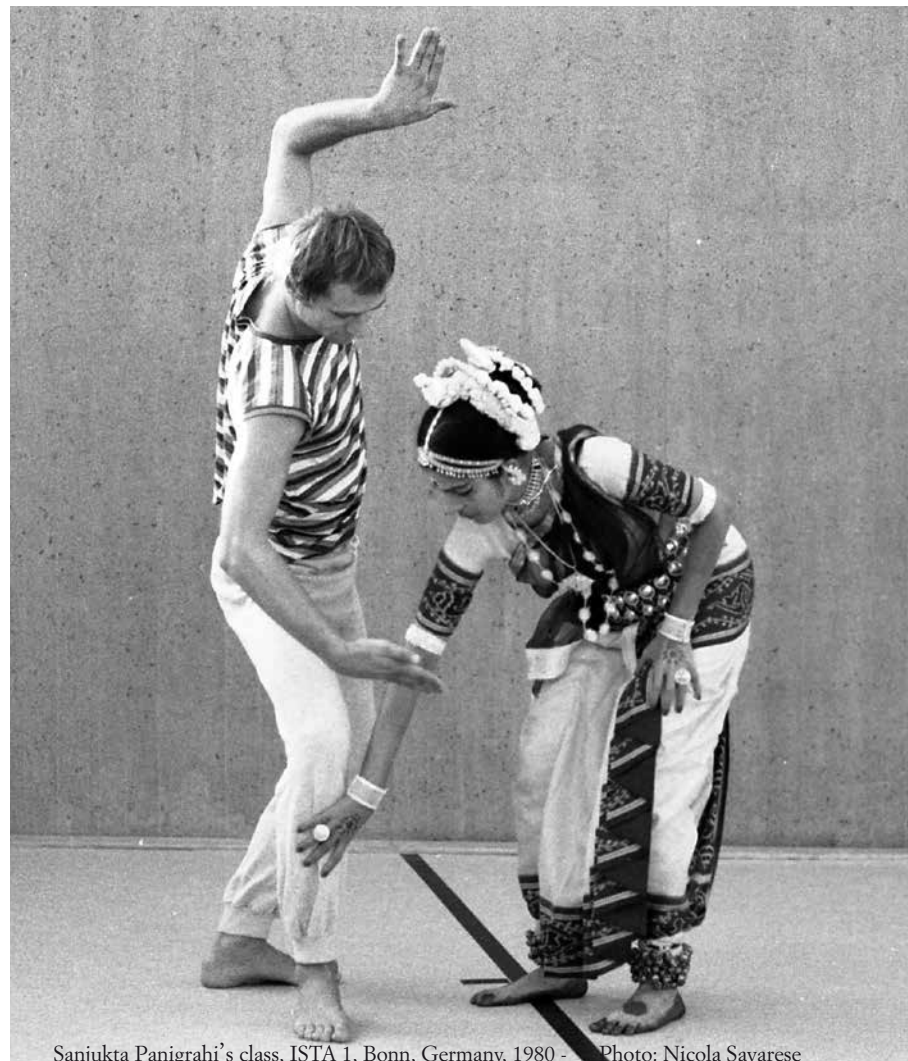
We are all theatre gastronomists and we sometimes deplore that there no longer exists anyone who can cook properly. And even then, the good cooks would need someone who knows how to eat.

This is what the guests in Bonn could read in the introduction to the symposium. Indeed, we often suffer from a kind of cultural blindness which prevents us from seeing and appreciating whatever does not correspond to the usual forms that make up our environment: unconscious blindness, partly determined by biological mechanisms that we can and should master, if we do not want to impoverish our range of consciousness.

The dazzling demonstrations of the Balinese, Chinese, Danish, Indian, and Japanese artists were illuminated by the director of the Odin. He referred to his own personal research and asked for the opinion of the various specialists - who for the most part was caught unawares, so unusual was his emphasis, even today, in approaching the theatrical phenomenon. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it cannot really be grasped without preliminary anthropological investigation, as Dr. Henri Laborit remarked in his address.

The first session of ISTA was financed by the Kulturstiftung der Stadt Bonn, the Sekretariat für Gemeinsame Kulturarbeit Wuppertal, the FRG National Commission for UNESCO, the FRG, French and Italian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Danish Ministry of Culture, and the Japan Foundation. Already those responsible for cultural affairs in Tuscany, Italy, and the Centro per la sperimentazione e la ricerca teatrale in Pontedera are examining the ways and means of organising a second session of ISTA in Italy.

The facts we have referred to - the proliferation of group theatre, the inadaptability of traditional training methods, the fact that theatrical studies in universities are lagging behind - all call for an appraisal of the real value of an event which has the merit of responding to pressing and urgent needs. International and inter-disciplinary, the result of an effective collaboration between theatre practitioners and theorists, between oriental teachers and western teachers, ISTA emerges as a flexible instrument capable not only of bringing a solution to local training problems but also of developing the basis of international co-operation, providing the elements of fresh thinking on theatre, on the most concrete level of its realization: the actor.■



Sanjukta Panigrahi's class, ISTA 1, Bonn, Germany, 1980 - Photo: Nicola Savarese

Peter Elsass, Jean-Marie Pradier, Nando Taviani

Rapport sur la 2^{ème} session de l'ISTA

Abstract: After the end of the 2nd edition of ISTA held in Volterra in 1981 between August 5th to October 7th, Elsass, Pradier and Taviani, members of the scientific staff, report on the activities which took place in the longest session of ISTA. The report was sent to UNESCO and to the International Theatre Institute in Paris in October 1981. The text was originally published in the French Journal Bouffonneries (4, 1982, 109-21). At the end of the document, the authors present the possibility of the creation of a permanent International School of Theatre Anthropology.

Keywords: ISTA 1981, Volterra, Pontedera, Pre-expressivity, Improvisation

1.0. L'ISTA

Conçue et dirigée par Eugenio BARBA, L'INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY est un organisme permanent dont le siège est situé à HOLSTEBRO, et qui réalise des sessions publiques dans des lieux retenus par des institutions nationales et/ ou internationales qui en assurent l'administration.

Laboratoire de recherche sur les fondements du travail de l'acteur l'ISTA est un centre de diffusion d'expériences et de connaissances pour les acteurs et metteurs en scène orientaux et occidentaux. Elle intègre également des équipes scientifiques provenant d'Universités avec lesquelles elle a établi des liens : les chercheurs peuvent ainsi mener à bien leurs travaux dans un milieu particulièrement favorable, et participer - à leur niveau - à la réalisation des sessions publiques.

1.1. Le terme « anthropologie » est utilisé au sens propre, soit: l'étude de l'homme, dans le théâtre. Il ne s'agit plus de se contenter de l'approche psychologique de l'acteur, qui a conduit les études et la pratique théâtrale dans une impasse, mais de décrire les processus de création de l'acteur en ayant recours au savoir des professionnels du spectacle, et aux disciplines scientifiques utiles : biologie, psychophysiologie, linguistique, anthropologie, acoustique...

1.2. La confrontation interculturelle des formes théâtrales permet la mise en évidence de certaines règles biologiques qui sous-tendent le comportement expressif de l'acteur, l'équilibre, le déplacement, l'utilisation de l'espace, les modifications toniposturales induites par les actions visuelles et vocales, la relation au partenaire.



1.3. La première session publique de l’ISTA s’est tenue à Bonn, en Allemagne Fédérale, du 1^{er} au 31 octobre 1980, à la demande du KULTURAMT DER STADT BONN.

1.4. La deuxième session publique de l’ISTA, administrée par le CENTRO PER LA SPERIMENTAZIONE E LA RICERCA TEATRALE de PONTEDERA, en ITALIE, a eu lieu à Volterra du 8 août au 8 octobre 1981. L’entreprise a bénéficié de l’appui de la Région de la Toscane qui a mis à la disposition des organisateurs un budget de 400 millions de liras tiré du poste consacré à la formation professionnelle.

Ont également apporté leur contribution financière :

- la Province de Pise,
- la Commune de Volterra qui s’est chargée de la réfection du Conservatorio di San Pietro, mis à la disposition de l’ISTA.

1.5. Fondé en 1974 par le PICCOLO TEATRO DI PONTEDERA, et dirigé par Roberto BACCI, le CENTRO PER LA SPERIMENTAZIONE E LA RICERCA TEATRALE de PONTEDERA est un centre de recherche sur l’acteur. Organisateur de rencontres, de colloques et de manifestations nationales et internationales, il est devenu le point de référence des théâtres de groupes italiens. On lui doit l’introduction en Italie du nouveau théâtre polonais, la diffusion du théâtre dansé balinais et indien, la réalisation de journées d’études sur des aspects mal connus de la théâtralité: transe, liturgie ... Il met actuellement en œuvre un programme de recherche intitulé: « L’hérésie du théâtre - Stanislavski ».

2.0. PROGRAMME DE LA DEUXIEME SESSION DE L’ISTA

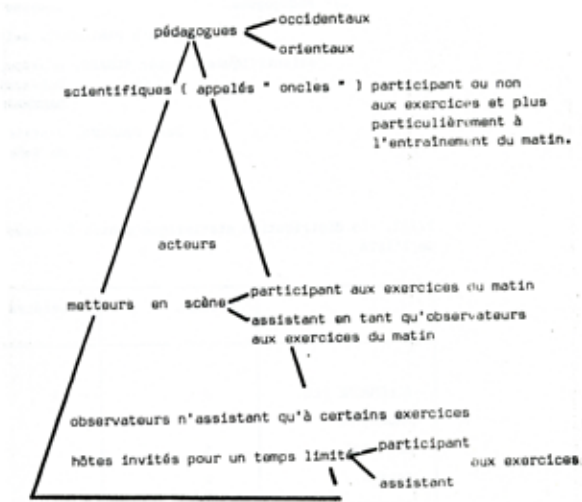
2.1. Principes de départ: Il s’est agi de proposer un cadre d’activités à la fois riche et rigoureux, tout en offrant aux participants la possibilité d’effectuer un choix personnel en fonction de leurs intérêts et de leurs compétences.

La multiplicité des ateliers ne devant pas nuire à l’unité de l’ensemble, il a été prévu un certain nombre de passerelles et des réunions de travail générales sous la direction d’Eugenio BARBA.

2.2. Typologie: Les participants peuvent être classés en 4 grands groupes

- les acteurs
- les metteurs en scène
- les scientifiques
- les hôtes

2.2.1. Afin de conserver à chaque groupe sa propre spécificité, tout en ne créant pas des isolats, l’ensemble des participants a été distribué en 3 « familles ». Chaque famille a été conçue sur le modèle suivant:



Les qualités propres des pédagogues ont donné un caractère particulier à chaque famille :

Famille A

Pédagogues : SANJUKTA PANIGRAHI, maître de danse odissi, Inde; Toni COTS, acteur de l’ODIN TEATRET, Espagne; I MADE PASEK TEMPO, acteur-danseur, Bali. Scientifiques: Nando TAVIANI, Professeur à l’Université de Lecce, Italie; Ugo VOLLI, Professeur à l’Université de Bologne, Italie.

Famille B

Pédagogues : Ingemar LINDH, maître de mime, Suède; Gisela CREMER, actrice, Allemagne; Michi IMAFUJI, maître de chant, Japon. Scientifiques: Fabrizio CRUCIANI, Professeur à l’Université de Bologne, Italie; Franco RUFFINI, Professeur à l’Université de Bologne, Italie.

Famille C

Pédagogues : Katsuko AZUMA, danseuse buyo, Japon; Ragunath PANIGRAHI, maître de chant, Inde. Scientifiques: Peter ELSASS, neuropsychologue à l’Hôpital Universitaire de Copenhague, Danemark; Jean PRADIER, Professeur à l’Université de Rabat, Maroc.

2.2.2. La distribution statistique montre le caractère international de l’ISTA :

Ainsi, 53 participants provenant de 19 pays ont pris part aux travaux.

Allemagne Federale	4
Argentine	5
Belgique	1
Canada	2
Colombie	2
Danemark	1
Espagne	4
Etats-Unis	1
France	4
Iran	4

Israël	3
Italie	18
Japon	1
Nouvelle-Zélande	1
Panama	1
Paraguay	1
Pays-Bas	1
Pérou	3
Turquie	1

2.2.3. L'ISTA a reçu 27 invités au cours de la session, et ce pour des périodes allant de 3 jours à plus d'une semaine :

- Professeurs d'université
- Critiques spécialisés
- Dramaturges
- Metteurs en scène

ont pu ainsi bénéficier de certaines démonstrations, et suivre au sein d'une famille, les travaux des participants.

2.2.4. Les pédagogues orientaux ont été accompagnés par leurs musiciens et des acteurs. Au total :

- 10 balinais
- 6 indiens
- 4 japonais

ont constitué des ensembles qui ont pu donner des représentations publiques de différentes formes du théâtre oriental.

2.3. LA SELECTION des participants s'est effectuée au cours d'une présession réalisée par le CENTRO PER LA SPERIMENTAZIONE E LA RICERCA TEATRALE DI PONTEDERA. Ainsi, Eugenio BARBA a-t-il pu avoir un entretien préalable avec les acteurs et les metteurs en scène candidats.

2.4. Le CONSERVATORIO DI SAN PIETRO, vaste construction historique devenue collège d'enseignement, après avoir été un couvent, a servi de lieu d'hébergement et de travail pour l'ensemble des participants et des pédagogues.

2.5. Le PROGRAMME GENERAL de travail peut être décomposé comme suit:

ACTIVITES COLLECTIVES

- Après le réveil : interaction (sortie par groupes de 3 coureurs)
- Entraînement physique et vocal de l'acteur (en famille)
- Séances de démonstration : analyse des différentes techniques du corps - quotidiennes et spectaculaires - orientales et occidentales
- Cinémathèque: projection de films didactiques et scientifiques.

ACTIVITES PAR ATELIER

- Mime
- Improvisation avec masque
- Entraînement vocal selon plusieurs techniques
- Entraînement au spectacle de rue, techniques orientales
- Acrobatie

ACTIVITES SPECIALISEES

- Pour les metteurs en scène:
 - dramaturgie
 - mise en scène
 - problèmes de direction d'acteur

- Pour les acteurs:
 - entraînement particulier par petits groupes
 - entraînement individuel sous la conduite d'un maître oriental, ou d'un pédagogue

PROGRAMMES SCIENTIFIQUES

- Etudes théâtrales :
 - approche de l'improvisation
- Neuropsychologie : approche de la « présence » de l'acteur
- Psycholinguistique : étude comparative du timbre de la voix de l'acteur en situation normale et dans l'improvisation vocale
- Psychologie : questions de communication non-verbale

ACTIVITES EXCEPTIONNELLES

- Animées par des metteurs en scène ou des spécialistes (atelier de courte durée)
- Activités au bénéfice de l'environnement: spectacles, conférences

2.6. Un thème central : L'IMPROVISATION

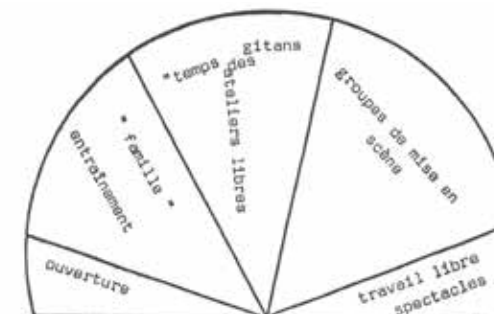
L'improvisation - ses techniques (comme les processus qui sous-tendent sa réalisation) - a été placée au centre des préoccupations des pédagogues, et de l'équipe scientifique. Des acteurs, des metteurs en scène spécialisés ont également exposé leurs techniques. Ces travaux ont donné lieu à un projet de publication sur les différents procédés d'improvisation chez les acteurs occidentaux et orientaux, qui sera pris en charge en FRANCE par le C.N.R.S., et en GRANDE BRETAGNE.

3.0. REALISATION DU PROGRAMME

3.1. Principe de base: Le nombre d'ateliers proposés étant supérieur à ce que pouvait permettre le budget-temps des participants, ceux-ci ont été conduits à organiser eux-mêmes leur programme.

3.2. Comme par le passé, un jour de la semaine - le mardi- a été choisi comme jour de repos hebdomadaire.

3.3. SCHEMATIQUEMENT, une journée type se présente ainsi:



4.0. DRAMATURGIE ET MISE EN SCENE

4.1. Les participants ont été distribués en groupes de travail, en vue de préparer une mise en scène basée sur une adaptation d'HAMLET.

Chaque metteur en scène responsable a été assisté par un ou plusieurs dramaturges - dont les Professeurs d'Université -, et d'autres participants également metteurs en scène.

4.1.2. Des séances de dramaturgie - analyse de textes dramatiques - ont eu lieu au préalable.

4.2. Eugenio BARBA a sélectionné plusieurs acteurs, présentant des problèmes caractéristiques, en vue de réaliser avec eux un travail de mise en scène de la pièce d'Edward BOND: *NARROW ROAD TO THE DEEP NORTH*. Cet atelier a été ouvert aux observateurs : metteurs en scène, hôtes, membres de l'équipe scientifique.

5.0. L'ISTA ET L'ENVIRONNEMENT

5.1. L'ISTA a présenté régulièrement à Volterra, en soirée - sur la place des Prieurs - des spectacles gratuits réalisés par les artistes pédagogues et les participants.

5.2. 45 spectacles ont également été présentés à Rome, et dans la région Toscane, notamment à Pise et à Florence.

5.3. 9 spectacles montés par des groupes de théâtre argentins, danois, japonais, italiens et péruviens ont été présentés aux participants et au public de Volterra.

5.4. Une série de conférences s'est tenue à Florence, avec la participation d'Eugenio BARBA, de Jerzy GROTOWSKI et d'Henri LABORIT. A cette occasion un spectacle intitulé THEATRUM MUNDI a été consacré aux: diverses formes du théâtre oriental et occidental.

6.0. L'ISTA ET LE THEATRE ITALIEN

L'ISTA a reçu des metteurs en scène italiens de renom qui ont animé des séminaires:

- Orazio COSTA, qui fut l'élève de COPEAU et l'un des fondateurs du théâtre italien d'après guerre, avec STREHLER et VISCONTI ;
- Massimo CASTRI, le plus important des jeunes metteurs en scène italiens à travailler aujourd'hui sur le texte.

7.0. SEMINAIRES EXCEPTIONNELS

Outre l'équipe pédagogique permanente, des spécialistes de renom sont venus animer des ateliers et séminaires :

- Jerzy GROTOWSKI (Pologne)

- Dario FO, acteur, metteur en scène et acteur (Italie)
- Keith JOHNSTONE, metteur en scène, Professeur à l'Université de CALGARY (Canada)
- Tage LARSEN, Odin Teatret (Danemark)

8.0. SYMPOSIUM

Un symposium sur l'ANTHROPOLOGIE THEATRALE, s'est tenu à Pontedera, au théâtre de la Via Manzoni, les 2, 3 et 4 octobre, avec la participation de l'équipe pédagogique et scientifique de l'ISTA. Destiné aux acteurs, metteurs en scène et spécialistes, italiens et étrangers, ce symposium a comporté des démonstrations techniques commentées, visant à rendre compte des processus pédagogiques et des résultats de la recherche mis en œuvre au cours de la deuxième session publique de l'ISTA.

9.0. L'ISTA ET LA DEFENSE DU THEATRE

L'ISTA a apporté son soutien aux groupes et aux institutions, souvent menacés dans leur survie:

- A Florence, des spectacles ont été présentés dans le cadre du mouvement de défense en faveur de la LIBRAIRIE DU THEATRE.
- Des spectacles ont également été offerts dans des villages, des villes, des banlieues où travaillent des petites troupes sans moyens.

10.0. L'ISTA ET LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

La présence active d'universitaires caractérise la deuxième session de l'ISTA qui devient un lieu d'observation et de recherche privilégié non seulement pour les spécialistes du théâtre, mais aussi pour des chercheurs appartenant à diverses disciplines scientifiques. Trois projets scientifiques ont été ainsi réalisés :

10.1. Etudes théâtrales: Contribution à l'étude de l'improvisation

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Anna BANDETTINI, Italie | • Jerzy GROTOWSKI, Pologne |
| • Clive BARKER, Grande-Bretagne | • Raimondo GUARINO, Italie |
| • César BRIE, Argentine | • Gerardo GUCCINI, Italie |
| • Sergio BINI (Bustic), Italie | • Keith JOHNSTONE, Canada |
| • Orazio COSTA, Italie | • Henri LABORIT, France |
| • Toni COTS, Espagne | • Ingemar LINDH, Suède |
| • Fabrizio CRUCIANI, Italie | • Claudio MELDOLESI, Italie |
| • Gisela CREMER, Allemagne | • Kosuke NOMURA, Japon |
| • Peter ELSASS, Danemark | • Jean-Marie PRADIER, France |
| • Dario FO, Italie | • Pepe ROBLEDO, Argentine |
| • Richard FOWLER, Canada | • Franco RUFFINI, Italie |

- Nicola SAVARESE, Italie
- Maria STEN, Mexique
- Adelina SUBER, Italie
- Iben Nagel RASMUSSEN, Danemark
- Nando TAVIANI, Italie
- Ugo VOLLI, Italie
- Moriaki WATANABE, Japon

10.2. Etudes théâtrales scientifiques :

10.2.1. Etude neuropsychologique de la « présence » de l'acteur

Peter ELSASS, Hôpital Universitaire de Copenhague, Danemark

10.2.2. Etude comparative du timbre de la voix, chez l'acteur en situation normale, et en situation d'improvisation

Jean-Marie PRADIER, Université de Rabat, Paris VI

10.3. Etudes scientifiques :

Etude interculturelle de l'expression corporelle de l'émotion (communication non-verbale).

Lise HOEFER, Département de Psychologie, Université de Giessen, Allemagne.

BILAN

L'expérience acquise au cours de la première session a permis une meilleure organisation du travail. Une évaluation chiffrée est en cours de dépouillement : elle devrait mettre en évidence les attitudes des participants, tout particulièrement ce qui intervient dans les processus d'apprentissage et dont il n'est pas toujours tenu compte dans les écoles, les séminaires et les centres de formation.

Si l'on s'en tient aux relations déjà publiées dans la presse spécialisée, comme aux rapports présentés par les observateurs, il est évident que le problème de la formation de l'acteur - fondamental en Occident - se pose en termes nouveaux en Orient où l'on assiste à une dégradation notable des systèmes pédagogiques traditionnels.

L'ISTA peut ainsi contribuer non seulement à l'amélioration ponctuelle de la compétence professionnelle des gens de théâtre, mais aussi à l'élaboration de stratégies nouvelles en ce domaine.

Enfin l'ISTA permet une collaboration concrète pour les créateurs - acteurs, metteurs en scène -, les théoriciens, les critiques et les universitaires la plupart du temps isolés et sans réelle connaissance du quotidien de l'autre.

PROSPECTIVE

L'ampleur des demandes non satisfaites lors de la sélection des participants, conduit à penser à l'intérêt que représenterait une Ecole Internationale d'Anthropologie Théâtrale permanente. Il serait alors possible d'envisager un programme à long terme.

Un ouvrage abondamment illustré de Nicola SAVARESE - noir et blanc, et couleur - doit paraître dans quelques mois: il fera le point sur l'expérience de l'ISTA.¹

Dans l'immédiat, le projet de réalisation d'une 3^{ème} session publique de l'ISTA en 1983, à Calcutta est à l'étude.■

1. Nicola Savarese, *Anatomia del teatro, un dizionario di antropologia teatrale*, Casa Usher, Firenze, 1983 (Ed. note).





Toni Cots, ISTA 1, Bonn, Germany, 1980 - Photo: Nicola Savarese

Franco Ruffini

Theatre Anthropology

Abstract: This is the English translation of the essay on theatre anthropology written by Franco Ruffini in 1986 and published in the first issue of the Italian journal Teatro e Storia. Six years after the first session of ISTA, Ruffini analyses the methodological and historical peculiarities of the pedagogical activities, highlighting the cultural connections and differences with other fields of research. In his article, Ruffini offers a detailed account of the main principles of theatre anthropology and its tools for research.

Keywords: Eugenio Barba, Theatre anthropology, Pre-expressive level, Presence of the actor

Foreword

“Theatre anthropology” is an expression that covers very diverse fields of research. Think, for example, of the study of the anthropological aspects of theatre and that of the theatrical aspects of anthropology. “Theatre anthropology” sometimes also refers to the search for the “origins” of theatre: origins, not so much in the historical, as in the philosophical sense.

In this article we will not deal with such areas of research. Theatre anthropology, here, will be understood in a scientific sense. We will try to explain, and to explore, in the most organic way possible, the arguments directly put forward by Eugenio Barba, or developed by other authors in the same direction, whether on the basis of his indications or not.

The choice is not casual, nor arbitrary. Eugenio Barba, theatre director and director of Odin Teatret, has for many years focussed his research on the identification and formulation of a science of the theatre and, in particular, of the actor, and it is he who suggested calling this science “theatre anthropology”.

These are not random observations, but a complex picture for which the four public sessions of ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology: Bonn 1980, Volterra 1981, Paris and Blois 1985, Holstebro 1986) constituted large experimental laboratories, as well as venues of encounter and debate.

Eugenio Barba’s research, as in all sciences, is indebted to other research that, though not sharing the same objective, has explored associated fields. We will mention only Richard Schechner, and above all Jerzy Grotowski who we may say paved the way for theatre anthropology as a science. To speak of nothing else, Grotowski’s notion of *via negativa* (over and above its importance on an aesthetic and operative level) is the methodological cornerstone for research into the actor that aspires to be scientific.

Rigorous science and pragmatic science

Theatre anthropology as a science deals with *the human being in a performance situation*.

Before considering this, however, we must define how the term “science” is used



in this context. We must avoid, on the one hand, accusations of scientism from those (rightly) attentive to the un-formalizable aspects of the actor and, on the other hand, accusations of imprecision from those who consider as subject of a science of acting its exclusively “mechanical” aspects (physiology, biochemistry, etc.).

In an age of “rigorous” science, the term science is in contrast both to the purely intellectual exercise of philosophy, and to the empiricism of ways of knowing which, although based on facts, do not accept (or simply do not use) the concept of *scientific explanation*.

Rigorous science does not state that “from fact *a* we deduce fact *b*”, nor that “fact *a* is associated with fact *b*”. Rigorous science must find that “from fact *a* follows, because of cause and effect, fact *b*”. Identification of the cause (or causes) and understanding how this functions is, in fact, the scientific explanation. In this precise sense, theatre anthropology is not a science. But it is in the sense of a pragmatic empiricism. It was Jerzy Grotowski who drew attention to the pragmatic nature of the laws of theatre anthropology.

We might say that if a scientific law (in the rigorous sense of the term) is validated by showing *why* from fact *a* follows fact *b*, *pragmatic law* is validated by showing *that* and *how* from fact *a* follows fact *b*. Pragmatic law explains what to do and how to do it to obtain a certain result. It does not explain why this happens.

Regarding the notion of law, we can identify two aspects of pragmatic science that mark its difference from rigorous science and which, precisely because of this difference, sometimes lead us to discount their acquisitions and proceedings as scientific (even in their specific sense).

The first aspect concerns the connection between law and facts. Rigorous science gathers facts in order to be able to formulate and verify a law, after which the facts, in a certain sense, are no longer necessary. They are explained and therefore incorporated by the law. The situation for pragmatic science is different. The accumulation of facts is never nullified by the law and, in any case, the phase of collecting phenomena is much longer than in rigorous science.

The second aspect concerns the notions of truth and generality. Scientific law does not admit degrees of truth. Until some fact confutes a law, the law is true. The truth of the law consists in explaining why from fact *a* necessarily follows fact *b*; the various truths in the evolution of the law concern the areas of origin of facts *a* and *b*. A pragmatic law “evolves” in a totally different way - we might say, by successive approximations. The pragmatic law does not state the cause of a relationship but only its existence and its modalities. As the facts acquired increase and change, pragmatic law generalises its formulation, but without ever falsifying previous “approximations”.

In scientific law the facts are arranged vertically; in pragmatic law they are added horizontally. *Deeper knowledge* of the facts can prove a scientific formulation to be false, replacing it with a new, true one. A *broader area* of facts can only lead to a better approximation in pragmatic law.

Pre-expressive level and presence of the actor

Having clarified the meaning of the term “science”, we now come to what may be considered the key notion of theatre anthropology: the *pre-expressive level*.

We are inclined to believe that the actor, in the extra-daily performance situation, is engaged only in the task of expressing (feelings, passions, concepts, etc.). Theatre anthropology has identified a level that does not belong to the everyday, but is neither directly situated at the level of expression. It is the pre-expressive level, in which the actors do not express anything; we might say that they express only *their presence*. This level, therefore, belongs already to the extra-daily situation of performance, but precedes (logically if not chronologically) the task (and the final outcome) of expression.

Let us leave, for now, the word “presence” in all the significance attributed to it in common usage. The presence of the actor strikes us whenever, as spectators, we encounter forms of theatre whose conventions are unknown to us and whose meaning is difficult to understand. Vice versa, the presence of the actor escapes us when it is *covered* by conventions that we know and by meanings that we do understand. Understanding literally relegates the seduction of the actor’s presence “to second place”, until it vanishes. But the fact that the presence (and the pre-expressive level where it is located) escapes us, does not mean that it does not exist or that it is not important, even, for the purposes of understanding, although hidden from us by this very understanding.

It must be clarified that presence has nothing to do with the elements of fascination that the actor may possess in the sphere of everyday life and which, obviously, he maintains (magnified) in the extra-daily situation; nor with the seduction arising from the material fact that the actor is the object of the spectator’s gaze. The presence we are talking about is a fact, something that, pragmatically, occurs under certain conditions and that induces attraction in the spectator, regardless of the actor’s personal sex appeal and the fact that he is out in the limelight. From this point of view we might say that the pre-expressive level is that in which the actor builds his own “intrinsic limelight”.

The pragmatic laws of presence

In over twenty years of exploration of oriental theatre - those theatres in which unfamiliarity with the conventions and incomprehension of the meanings “lay bare” the pre-expressive level - three *laws* (or lines of action) of the actor’s presence have been formulated. It should be remembered that these laws (or lines of action) are pragmatic, so they do not explain why, they state that and under what conditions the presence occurs.

The three laws are: 1) alteration of balance, 2) dynamics of opposites and 3) use of inconsistent consistency.

In everyday life balance is regulated by the principle of minimum effort. We try to increase the area of the base of support as much as possible, to keep the centre of the body well within this area, to ‘reduce’ the height of the body by letting the spine curve according to the force of gravity. While these are the conditions of balance in everyday life, we can observe that, in the extra-daily sphere, the tendency is towards an unstable, precarious balance that, naturally, opposes the principle of minimum effort.

The actors of un-familiar theatres allow us to see some ways in which this precarious, or “luxury balance”, as Eugenio Barba has called it, is achieved. In Balinese theatre, the actors keep their toes raised and tilt the median of the body lifting the shoulders as well.



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1. Harlequin, Recueil Fossard. 2. Iben Nagel Rasmussen. 3. Tom Leabhart. 4. I Made Djimat. 5. Katsuko Azuma. 6. Roberta Carreri and I Made Bandem. 7. Gennadi Bogdanov. 8. Sanjukta Panigrahi.

In this way they reduce the area of the base of support, they bring the centre of gravity to the edges of this area and increase their height. In kathakali they stand on the outer edge of the foot; the *en pointe* position of classical ballet and the *déséquilibre* of mime achieve in different ways the same result.

The fact that these modes are codified in their respective forms of theatre does not imply that they are the only ones possible. On the contrary, their variety, despite the fact they are codified, shows that the same law (the same principle) can be achieved in ways that are very different and are, even, personal for each actor.

Let us go on to the second law: the dynamics of opposites. In everyday life this dynamic is expressed (and manifested) only in those situations that require an exceptional use of energy. Pulling back one's arm to punch forward, for example, or crouching down to leap up and so on. In the extra-daily sphere this dynamic is applied to even the smallest actions, and those that do not require a large investment of energy. Starting from the opposite is a rule of the actors of the Peking opera; and all the dance forms of Balinese theatre are constructed by creating a series of oppositions between *keras* (hard, strong) and *manis* (soft, tender). According to the law of opposites, just as a static position results from the dynamic of opposing forces, so too, movement is regulated by contrasts between acceleration and abrupt deceleration, by sudden changes of direction, and so on.

Lastly, the law of inconsistent consistency indicates that all "incoherent" modes (i.e. illogical with respect to the everyday sphere) that cause alteration of balance and the dynamics of opposites must be used in a 'consistent' way (that is, logical with respect to the illogical sphere of the extra-daily). But to the law of inconsistent consistency which, in a certain sense, establishes the artificial norm of the extra-daily, we shall return later.

Artificiality and artifice

We can now ask ourselves what the actor's presence consists of, and therefore how it might be defined, beyond the generic meaning we have adopted for this word so far.

A parallel with physics might be useful for this purpose. The law of the alteration of balance might be translated (not explained) as an *opposition to the force of gravity*. In everyday life balance is adjusted in compliance with the force of gravity: to the downward pressure it exerts, as already discussed, the response is to broaden the base of support, verticalising the median of the body and decreasing one's height. In the sphere of the extra-daily, balance is regulated by contrasting the force of gravity, opposing it with a resistance that makes balance precarious and unstable.

The law of the dynamics of opposites might be translated as *opposition to the force of inertia*. In everyday life, a resting position derives (basically) from the application of a null force, not from application of several non-null forces resulting in null; and the state of motion tends to maintain its speed and its trajectory, starting from an impulse made in the same direction of the motion: overall, the force of inertia is exploited. In the sphere of the extra-daily, on the other hand, there is a tendency to counteract the force of inertia - dynamising the positions of rest through opposing forces, applying impulses contrary to the direction of motion, changing their trajectory and speed.

We come to the law of inconsistent consistency. This may be translated as the law of *conservation of forces*. Let us try to explain with an example. If a stone is subjected to forces (gravity, inertia, or others), the overall result will give it a certain trajectory. A single, predetermined one. It makes no sense, for the stone, to ask ourselves if this trajectory is coherent: it is what it must be and therefore it is, in principle, coherent. This is because the stone cannot on its own initiative alter the forces to which it is subject: it is obliged to preserve them. The same happens for a "passive" human body, i.e. for the body in the everyday.

But in the extra-daily sphere, the body opposes the forces to which it is subject. The law of inconsistent consistency says that these artificial dynamic conditions must be preserved, so that the "behaviour" (equivalent of the trajectory) is consistent. Barba speaks of a "new colonisation of the body", of "new culture", saying that what matters is for the "anomalous" forces of presence to become a new norm, an "anomalous norm".

What does this translation in terms of physics tell us? Firstly: presence is a condition of artificiality. Secondly: this artificiality is linked to a surplus of energy. Thirdly: this surplus must be controlled and not degenerate into indiscriminate waste.

All this may appear commonplace and insufficient to justify even resorting to the laws of physics. It is evident that the alteration of balance and the dynamics of opposites determine a condition of artificiality for the body; but the ways in which these two pragmatic laws are realised (especially in oriental theatre) could make it seem that this artificiality is only the adjustment to some strange convention. In reality, underneath the various forms in which the pragmatic laws of presence are realised lies a common principle that defines (and qualifies) the artificiality of the body.

This common principle is the surplus of energy. The artificiality of presence, however it is achieved, implies an energetic surplus compared with everyday life. It could be said that presence, its seductive force, is precisely this surplus of energy.

The presence of the actor is uneconomical, it costs more: it is a condition of "luxury". Luxury, however, must not degenerate into ostentation. Expenditure of energy must not become waste. There is economy in the anti-economy of the extra-daily; there is a coherence in the incoherence; a naturalness in the artificiality of the opposition to the minimum effort.

But *artificiality* should not be *artifice*.

Economic anti-economy, inconsistent consistency, natural artificiality: these are still metaphors, small logical paradoxes, whose reality is manifest only when we are faced with the active presence of the actor, when the seduction that he exercises over us spectators does not degrade into pleasure without vigour, nor is exaggerated in provocation. These are paradoxes that exist. Literally, they are the norm in that exceptional situation that is the situation of performance.

Amplification and distortion

Apart from the evidence of one's own eyes, the 'norm' of the energy surplus can be circumscribed by considering the difference between *amplification* and *distortion* of organic tensions. For this purpose we will refer to the article by Taviani, *Un vivo*

contrasto. Seminario su attrici e attori nella Commedia dell'Arte. For brevity's sake we will summarise the points of greatest interest to our discourse. Taviani endeavours to reconstruct the recitative style of the comedians of the Arte of the second half of the 16th century, analysing the illustrations collected by Sieur Fossard. These illustrations, known as the *Recueil Fossard*, from the period between 1575 and 1589, are by different artists, and show the most famous characters of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, depicted in a variety of 'expressions'.

Let us examine Harlequin. Although, as we have said, the character is caught in various stances and despite the drawings being by different authors, in all the illustrations we can see a sort of basic position based on elongation of the neck, on the consequent lowering of the shoulders and on the consequent tension of the spine, which rises in an arc that extends from head to toe when the character is in a standing position, and from head to waist when the character is sitting or kneeling.

This position occurs in all the 'expressions' of Harlequin; just as a completely different basic position occurs in all the 'expressions' of Tristano Martinelli's Harlequin in the illustrations of his book *Compositions de Rhétorique*. Unlike the position of the Harlequin of the *Recueil Fossard*, Martinelli's position is based on the lifting of the shoulders, on the consequent sinking of the neck and on the consequent lengthening of the torso, which is also marked by a belt hung very low.

What can we deduce from these illustrations? For a start, the existence of artificial positions independent of expression. Secondly, the variety of these artificial positions, and thirdly, their energetic character, regardless of their diversity - the surplus of energy they require compared to the relaxed position of the everyday.

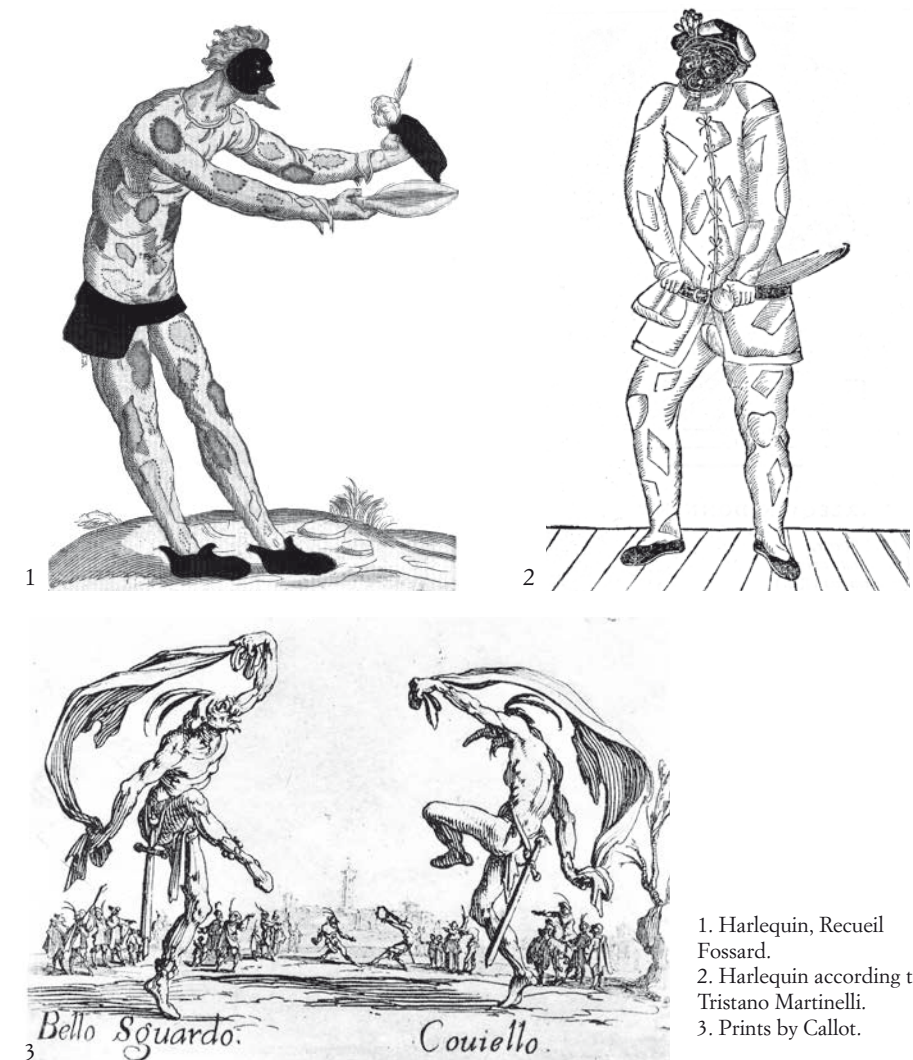
But there is another aspect, which is the most important one at this stage of our argument. If we compare the Harlequin of the *Recueil Fossard* (undoubtedly based on actors actually seen on stage in the first flowering of the *Commedia dell'Arte*) with the Harlequin of *Balli di Sfessania* by Callot (much better known, but an artist's impression), what at first sight strikes us is, for both, the evident artificiality in the arrangement of the body. But on rather closer examination we realise that Callot's imaginary Harlequin *distorts* organic tensions, like a contortionist whose purpose is, precisely, to demonstrate the 'impossibility' of his positions, their almost un-human nature. The artificiality of Callot's Harlequin reveals itself to us by artifice. The Harlequin of the *Recueil Fossard*, on the other hand, *amplifies* organic tensions, and so too, albeit in a different way, does the Harlequin of Tristano Martinelli. Their artificiality is 'natural'.

The norm that prevents the energy surplus from degenerating into waste can be grasped by the onlooker only if compared against an excessive exaggeration, such as that of Callot's Harlequin. But we must bear in mind that the pragmatic laws of presence are *rules for action*, which are not required to *be recognisable in the result*, but only to be *effective for the result*.

The coherent incoherence that the actor builds analytically in his body, and of which the viewer experiences globally the effect of seduction, is the organicity of "dilated body" - a body that, although *opposing* the laws of the everyday, does not *contradict* them. The condition of luxury in presence does not go against nature but is a condition of other nature: literally "second nature".

Presence, expression, acting

We begin to understand that presence, although preceding expression and independent of it, interacts with the expression itself. The isolation of the presence is methodological in nature. From a practical point of view, in the actual performance of the actor, presence is rather the dialectic pole with which expression interacts, giving form to acting. At the same time, from the spectator's viewpoint, reception is not only the understanding (of expression), nor merely seduction (by presence). It is not even a mixture (a blend of theoretical options and/or taste) of the two components. Reception is, also, the result of a dialectic that takes place often unbeknown to the spectator, between understanding and seduction.



1. Harlequin, *Recueil Fossard*.
2. Harlequin according to Tristano Martinelli.
3. Prints by Callot.

Which explains why it is so difficult to discern in the comments of western spectators (even professional ones) information, or even just thoughts relating to the actor's presence. Where this exists outside a specific lexicon and strict codification, it tends to be ignored; or to be seen not as a complementary pole of expression, but as a part of it. Presence is confused with expression, just as seduction is confused with understanding.

In his study, Taviani concludes that the *vis comica* of the comedians of the Arte was based, more than on simple caricature, on the dialectic between a pre-expressive energetic presence and ridiculous expressive gestures. But it is symptomatic that, in order to reach this conclusion, he has had to do exactly the opposite of what the spectator does normally: isolate presence and expression, then inducing its acting result, where obviously the spectator starts from the acting result.

Second nature and training

Let us return to the actor's presence which we have defined natural artificiality, or artificial nature. We have said that the presence of the extra-daily counteracts the conditioning of nature but does not contradict it. This presence is, according to the suggested terminology of Taviani, the stage equivalent of that first nature which, in everyday life, is personal, psycho-physical disposition.

Just as, in the everyday, action comes from the dialectic between acts and personal disposition, so in the extra-daily *stage action* (or *acting*) derives from the dialectic between expression and presence. But presence, in order to fulfil its task, precisely like personal disposition, must not be *switched on and off*, but be *constantly active*.

Presence as second nature (the stress falls here, almost paradoxically, on 'nature'), condemns outright the foolish illusion of being able to instantly create one's stage presence (perhaps by lifting up one's toes and unbalancing obliquely). It shows that the pragmatic laws that determine presence are really, literally, lines of action. The actor must 'recolonise' his body, not alienate it on command. Indeed, alienation on command is a condition against nature and, however exactly the pragmatic laws are followed, the result can only be a *non-organic distortion*, a waste, even if apparently 'saving' one's own energy.

Pragmatic laws, in the variety of ways in which they can be realised, reveal themselves as the analytic equivalent of a continuous practice, independent of expression and, even more so, of the performances in which the actor is or may be engaged. Lines of action: i.e. *lines*, something continuous, uninterrupted, without programmatically terminal points; and *action*, something concrete, that materially requires the actor's activity.

This (macro-) line of action of the actor, this continuous practice independent of performances, has a name: *training*.

There has been a great deal of misunderstanding about training, mainly due to its incorrect association with the external aspects of that particular practice of self-education and identity adopted in recent years by Third Theatre. The athleticism of this training, its spectacular nature, its effective use (sometimes) as spectacle - all these factors (deserving, one and all, of a much more in-depth discussion) have resulted in a widespread attitude among scholars, which we may sum up as follows. Firstly: training is a purely physical

activity, linked to a "theatre of the body" and to a "denial of words". Secondly: training is of no use in performance, so much so that actors in institutional theatres do not practice it.

Regardless of whether these statements have been found to be true in specific cases, it must be said that in general they are both false, and derive from the failure to identify and value the pre-expressive level. Firstly: training is an activity that is also (not only) physical and in any case, in its physical component, it does not at all imply the athleticism found extensively in the training of the Third Theatre. Consequently, training has nothing to do with the poetics of "physical theatre" or of "denial of words", unless it wants to indicate with these poetics the importance of the body in the overall work of the actor. Secondly: training is independent of performances but not useless; on the contrary, acting, every style of acting, is established in the dialectical relationship between expression and a presence that is unattainable, as second nature, without that continuous practice independent of performance that is training. Hence, we must hold that all actors, including those in institutional theatres, practice it, and if anything, the problem will be to identify its modalities, excepting those adopted under the specific name of training by the third theatre.

Physical and non-physical

It might seem, at this point, that training, with its pertinent characteristics that we have identified, overrides, so to speak, the pragmatic laws of presence and, in fact, nullifies them. In other words, if the pertinent element of pragmatic laws is that of continuous (lines) activity (action) aimed at the acquisition of a "second nature", what seems to vanish is the specific content of the laws themselves: alteration of balance and the dynamics of opposites. This is all the more so since the activity that achieves them may not be exclusively physical.

But it should be noted, however, that the relationship between pragmatic laws and presence is not necessarily a biunivocal one. If applying certain laws determines presence, it is not said that this can be obtained only by means of these laws. Secondly: one must consider that the pragmatic laws express only the minimum (and therefore essential) basis of presence - a basis that emphasises as minimum conditions of artificiality those connected with not being subject to gravity and inertia. And thirdly and lastly: one must consider that the pragmatic laws are lines (of action) not only because they are *continuous in time*, but also (perhaps above all) for their *intrinsic cohesion*: a kind of "spinal column", a deep line, in fact, that *gives sense* to, that directs much more diversified activities, including non-physical ones, towards the controlled acquisition and use of the energy surplus that characterises presence.

We touch here on a point of extreme importance. In the end, an element appears which was evidently also present in the initial overall picture, but which is only now clearly visible. This is the *non-physical* or, one might say, the *mental* element. Training (or rather, the level of investigation that focuses on training) reveals that presence, which is physical, has not only physical roots and, in short, that there must be a non-physical, mental correspondence to the pre-expressive level as we have analysed it so far.

In a certain sense, the physical side is just the *visible, exposed tip* of the pre-expressive level. Having penetrated into the pre-expressive level through the *exposed tip* of the physical side, we can realise that there is a *concealed point* on the non-physical side.

On this side is found the current frontier of theatre anthropology. It is a question of understanding that the physical and the mental are only the two opposite sides of the one bridge, and of understanding how the two sides are connected, the structure and the functioning of the bridge.

The physical and mental sides, the bridge that connects them - these are the terms used by Eugenio Barba in tackling this still unexplored field in his recent book *The Dilated Body*¹. Here, we shall limit ourselves to giving some information and suggesting some questions.

At first sight, the mental side seems to emerge by simply transposing the notions related to the physical side. A minimum physical effort exists and we can hold that it is achieved (essentially) by going along with the forces of gravity and inertia; by transposition, a “minimum mental effort” exists and we can affirm, with only a small metaphorical shift, that this too is achieved by going along with “gravity and mental inertia”. One can oppose, on the physical side, the minimum effort: just as one can oppose the minimum effort on the mental side.

Let us move on. Pragmatic lines of action exist to move against the minimum physical effort; and already here transposition to the mental side becomes difficult. What would be the mental equivalents of the laws of alteration of balance and dynamics of opposites? We must beware of facile metaphors that sound good in words but that do not affect the facts. It must be remembered that theatre anthropology is science.

These simplistic metaphors may be checked by an observation: the body, we might say, is by nature under constraint; the mind is naturally in a regime of freedom. Left to itself, the body is *subject* to all its constraints; left to itself, the mind is *subject* to all its freedom. Probably then the “bridge” between physical and mental should be sought by considering not the superficial opposition between freedom and constraint, but the profound identity of subjection.

Both body and mind can be subjugated, this is the key fact about minimum effort: the norm of daily. But the minimum effort of the body is achieved in *subjection to limits* (gravity and inertia are only the most elementary of these limits); the minimum effort of the mind is achieved in *subjection to its total freedom*. If opposition to the minimum effort of the body is obtained by freeing oneself from limitations, one may think that opposition to the minimum effort of the mind may be pursued *by limiting freedom*.

Regarding the mental side of pre-expressive level, Barba talks of “creative pre-condition”. If one places the “dilated body” in the physical pre-expressive, in the creative pre-condition one locates the other side of the bridge, the “dilated mind”. In the creative condition (mental equivalent of physical expression) *orientation* is essential; in the creative precondition the essential is *disorientation*. In the creative condition the essential is *meaning*, while in the creative precondition the essential is *precision*.

1. Eugenio Barba, *The Dilated Body*, Zeami Books, Rome, 1986.

Being dis-orientated, that is, denying the orientation of the creative condition without falling into the “freedom without limits” of the daily, nor in favour of a simply different orientation: “a denial that has not yet discovered the new thing it affirms,” in the words of Eugenio Barba. Giving up meaning without descending into the loss of sense of the “mind in freedom”, but not in favour of meanings that are simply different: in favour, rather, of a condition of significance that allows meaning without (pre-)determining it.

Dis-orientation and precision: how do they relate to that limitation of freedom that we have hypothesized as the condition for opposition to the minimum mental effort? These questions, for now, can only be appreciated for their interest and their power of stimulus, but they do not yet have a scientific answer.

In any case, it is important to have underlined the deep correlation of physical and mental with respect to the actor’s work. In the light of this acquisition we can take a more informed look at the traditional physical/mental (psychic) dichotomy that has divided the ideological options (more than the practical work) regarding the actor. The physical and the mental are not two different paths, but only two *different starting points* that must necessarily join up. It is irrelevant, basically, whether the actor starts from the physical side or the mental side, given that in any case there is no dilated body without dilated mind, and vice versa.

Actor and director, actor and spectator

As far as the production of the performance is concerned, how does the physical performance of the actor correspond with the mental performance of the director? That is, how do they reflect one another and how do they influence each other? As far as the reception of the performance is concerned, how do the physical performance of the actor and the mental performance of the spectator correspond?

Here, as prospective research, a whole field opens up, which overrides dynamics of sender-receiver or cipher-decipher or even fascinating-fascinated. It lays the scientific foundations for exploring that deeper *relationship of consonance* that all spectators experience at least once and that lack of investigation has so far relegated to the level of ineffable, unrepeatable, un-programmable, personal experience.

If consonance between performance and spectator occurs, we must find its pragmatic laws. We need to know *what* to do and *how* to do it so that it happens - even if we still do not know *why*.■

Translation: Julia Campbell Hamilton



Eating an apple according to the kyogen tradition. Kosuke Nomura,
ISTA 2, Volterra, Italy, 1981 - Photo: Nicola Savarese

Franco Ruffini

Theatre Anthropology: 40 Years On

Abstract: For the first issue of the Journal of Theatre Anthropology, which appears forty years after the first session of ISTA in Bonn, Ruffini recalls the original research conducted in the field of theatre anthropology and its professional and ethical implications still valid today.

Keywords: Dynamic of opposites, ISTA, Historiography

1. Theatre anthropology, or pre-expressive level

The pre-expressive level is not an invention, nor is it really a discovery. Rather, it is the simple acknowledgment of something evident. In the case of an action - such as drinking a glass of water - an ordinary person performs it, while “a person in a performance situation” must, in addition, show that s/he is doing it, attracting the spectator's attention to it. The action performed by the actor costs more, in terms of energy, than the same action performed by the an ordinary person. The actor must use a surplus of energy to signal the action s/he is carrying out. It is evident.

But if this surplus of energy is used for the signal - drinking in a strange way, pulling faces and suchlike - the effect obtained is opposite to that intended. The spectator's attention is attracted by the signal, and therefore distracted from the signalled action. To be effective, the surplus of energy must be invested in the action itself. So the action becomes “inconsistent” with respect to the logic of an ordinary person, but vice versa becomes “consistent” with respect to another logic, in which the action is perceived as the re-action to a contrary force. An ordinary person stands, the actor balances, said Meyerhold; and consequently an ordinary person follows a path, while the actor keeps to a path. As if reacting to a force that tends to make her/him topple or stray from the path.

In actual fact, this “dynamic of opposites” exists in the action of the ordinary man, too. It is a law of *bios*. But it is invisible. The principle of minimum effort, which governs ordinary life, acts towards neutralising those forces that unbalance or throw off track. These pressures, naturally, cannot be cancelled out, as bios does not allow it. They can only be concealed, in return for a loss of precision. The action of the ordinary person is generic, virtually corresponding to every here and now; this makes it indifferent, insensitive, to the actual here and now. Absorbed in the action, the counter-actions - which nevertheless remain operative - become invisible.

For the actor it is the opposite. His/her action must be commensurate only with the actual here and now, since the effect of attraction consists precisely in the perception of the “dynamic of opposites”. The surplus of energy must be invested in precision, and this reveals itself in the body but does not originate only from the body.



2. Incandescent filament

The pre-expressive level is something evident, like a light. You just need eyes trained to see. The merit of Eugenio Barba lies in having had this ability to see.

But, once the light has been seen, there is nothing other to be discovered. The same three principles - luxury balance, dynamic of opposites and consistent inconsistency - are nothing 'other'. Rather as the incandescent filament is nothing other than the lighted bulb that contains it. Once the evident nature of light has revealed itself with its principles, it only serves to illuminate what is 'other' than itself.

Hence, as it were, the ecumenical vocation of theatre anthropology. The pre-expressive level sheds light on Asian traditions, as it does on training, on Decroux mime and on Commedia dell'Arte, on the masters of the 20th century - Stanislavski or Meyerhold or Craig - but also on the company actor of the 19th century. More than a new discipline, from the beginning, theatre anthropology has stood as a call to arms to the most diverse of scholars, so that they might look afresh at their respective fields of research in the light of the pre-expressive level. For this call to be effective it was, of course, necessary to create an environment in which to gather those called. Being a far-sighted strategist, Barba knew this. And he invented ISTA, the International School of Theatre Anthropology.

Without ISTA, the evidence of the pre-expressive level ran the risk of having to rely on chance, of an encounter with eyes capable of seeing it, and of looking at the 'other' in its light. ISTA is an environment. The scholars, the teachers and - for the first two sessions - the students should not simply feel called to meet up, as in any residential conference, but truly called to arms. Or even initiated into arms. Hence the operating strategies of ISTA, such as the group runs before dawn, the delivery of silence, and more: in the face of which the alternative to refusal could only be that exercise of freedom and creativity consisting in making one's own will the will of another. And, importantly, Barba was seen as the spokesperson of this other, not as the original initiator.

3. Scholars

The writings of the scholars who revisited their fields in the light of the pre-expressive level testify to the acquisitions made. However, these cannot be considered as contributions of theatre anthropology.

Their value cannot be measured in proportion to a greater or lesser understanding of the discipline. Rather, this value comes from a new attitude towards academic professional ethics, in which knowledge is associated with experience, and the work of the mind with that of the body-mind.

Whatever the words "experience" and "body-mind" might mean in a general dictionary, in the personal dictionary of certain scholars they became the new keywords of their work.■

Nicola Savarese

Photographic diary

First ISTA session, Bonn, 1-31 October 1980

As the days progressed and the work in the school evolved, my task as photographer began to get complicated. Everything was always the same and yet always different. Something was happening that the camera could no longer grasp the way I felt it. I realised that the relationships between the people were changing, between all of us who lived there, each doing their own work. This repeatedly escaped the camera although I took it everywhere with me, quietly accepted by everyone. So, I decided to photograph what for me was the reflection of this new relationship: each of us as the days went by and in the evolution of the work within the school.

Nicola Savarese



Morning run and training



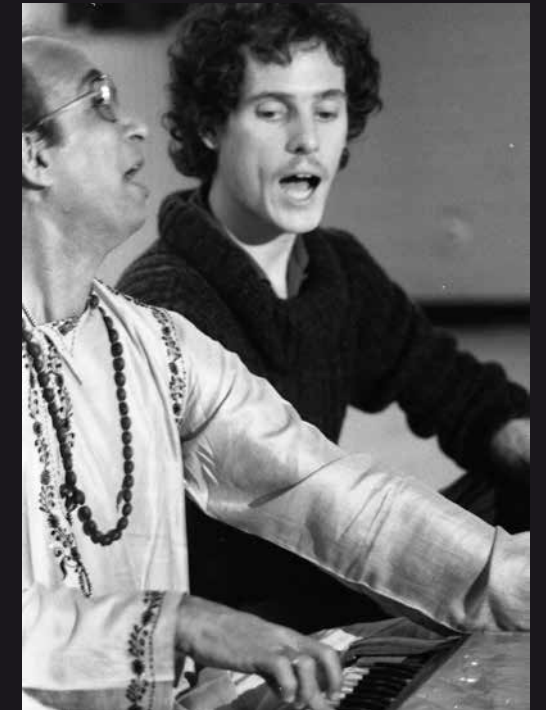
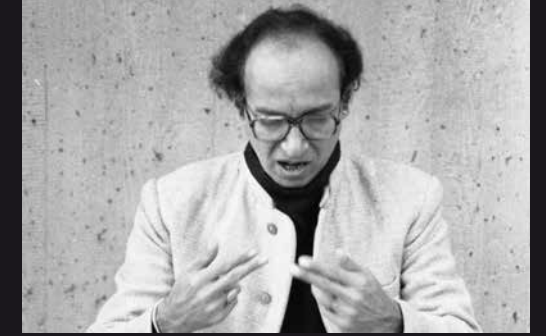
Training guided by Eugenio Barba



Sanjukta Panigrahi's class



Ragunath Panigrahi's class



Katsuko Azuma's class



I Made Pasek Tempo's class



Tsao Chun-Lin's class



Analysing the forms and their tensions



Daily and extra-daily behaviour





Knud Erik Knudsen building Samarkand, Holstebro, July 2003 - Photo: Rina Skeel

Simone Dragone

Giving Life to the Past

Theatre Anthropology at Odin Teatret Archives

Abstract: OTA (Odin Teatret Archives) keeps many documents concerning theatre anthropology and ISTA. After a brief description of the catalogues, the article gives several examples of the varied perspectives of research that scholars, students and theatre practitioners interested in ISTA and theatre anthropology can undertake through the consultation of paper documents, photos and videos stored at OTA.

Keywords: Odin Teatret Archives, Photos, Videos, Theatre anthropology, ISTA

At Odin Teatret's home in Holstebro there is a spacious room called Samarkand. It looks like an attic with a sloping roof into which the nordic light enters from many windows. All the time, from early morning to late evening, there are people bent over books and documents or watching videos. It is the heart of OTA, Odin Teatret Archives.

The project for the realisation of OTA took off in March 2008, led by Mirella Schino, professor at the University of Roma Tre, with Francesca Romana Rietti and Valentina Tibaldi. Assisted from time to time by students, scholars and researchers from different parts of Europe, they catalogued, archived and digitised all kinds of documents belonging to Odin Teatret.¹

This part of the archive is called OTA 1 and contains materials relating to Odin Teatret's first 50 years of numerous and diverse activities as a laboratory (1964-2014). Mirella Schino and her team completed the work in February 2015 when:

[...] the vast majority of the physical documents and a digital copy of photographs and audio-visual documents were transferred to the Royal Library in Copenhagen. All the documents are now accessible from Copenhagen and Holstebro, the Odin home which stores a digital copy of everything that was sent to Copenhagen [...].²

The archiving and cataloguing of documents resulting from new productions, projects

1. Many young people and researchers worked for OTA: Kasia Chojecka, Paula Isiegas, Miguel Jerez López, Sabrina Martello, Sofia Monsalve, Pierangelo Pompa, Lucia Repašská, Gabriella Sacco, Rina Skeel, Ana Woolf, and Odin Teatret's filmmakers Chiara Crupi and Claudio Coloberti. Others should be mentioned: Nando Tavian who often helped for documents and photos descriptions; Lluís Masgrau who worked on Eugenio Barba's bibliography inventing a system to arrange its complex contents; Nicola Savarese who asked Francesco Petroni to give ideas for an archive database.



and tours still continues today. The current archive is called OTA 2 and it stores the material produced since January 2015 until today, both on paper and in digital format.

The complexity of cataloguing and the series ISTA

OTA started in 2004 as a project linked to CTLS (Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies) of the University of Aarhus, taking on an independent life and becoming an archive of relevant historical-theoretical interest for scholars and researchers interested in Odin Teatret and in the laboratory led by Eugenio Barba also beyond its performances. But OTA has also collected an impressive documentation on the culture of group theatre (Third Theatre) that developed after 1968, and on Asian theatres and the techniques of their actors which Odin Teatret divulged with the issues of its journal *Teatrets Teori og Teknikk* (TTT)³ and with the remarkable seminars that began in Holstebro in 1972.⁴

The cataloguing and inventory of the material was not a simple operation for the team led by Mirella Schino. The reason for the cataloguing complexity lies in the fact that Odin Teatret is a theatre laboratory not limited to producing performances, but that has invented and produced other activities:

We have worked to identify and restate not only the existence but also the importance of so many other activities created by the Odin Teatret and of the documents left as their traces.

The range of activities produced or conceived by Odin Teatret [...] is astounding. The theatre pioneered in the elaboration of a form of alternative apprenticeship (the training), as well as in the study of the actor's knowledge of Asian theatres. They [...] facilitated studies and conferences on the actor's techniques - not only of the East and the West but "Eurasian" ones too.⁵

To cope with this complexity, the OTA team relied on the advice of Giulia Barrera from the General Archives Directorate of the Italian Ministry of Culture, who:

[...] taught [the team] the basics of the method for historical archiving, according to which ordering an archive first of all implies the reconstruction and preservation of the original order of papers, as arranged by the institution that produced them. This is not just extra information which should not be gathered or missing: it forms the backbone, the order around which other information should be gathered while revealing the link connecting all the material.

3. *Teatrets Teori og Teknikk* (TTT) was the theatre journal founded by Eugenio Barba and edited by Odin Teatrets Forlag from 1965 to 1974. It was published three times a year, and since 1968, one of the issues was a book. In total, the journal published 23 issues. Three of them were dedicated to Asian theatre: TTT 15 entitled *Skuespillerkunst i Kina og Japan* (The art of the actor in China and Japan) (1971), TTT 16 which was Motokiyo Zeami's book *Den Hemmelige tradition i nô* (The secret tradition of nô) (1971), and TTT 21 entitled *Barong og Kathakali. Om skuespilleren på Bali og Indien* (Barong and kathakali. About the actor in Bali and India) (1974). For more information about TTT, see Rietti 2004.

4. During the 1970s, Odin Teatret organised three seminars dedicated to Asian theatre: *Japansk teater, klassisk og moderne* (Japanese theatre, classic and modern) (1972), *Javanesisk og Balinesisk teater og skuespillerteknik* (Javanese and Balinese theatre and acting techniques) (1974), and *Indisk seminar* (Indian seminar) (1977) concerning several forms of Indian performing traditions. The duration of these seminars was of about one week.

[...] Stories are essential, Giulia told us, "so write down anything that is informative, or interesting. It does not matter if you produce an anomalous inventory, all inventories are anomalous".⁶

Because of this, the Fonds Odin Teatret includes a series called "Activities", which collects the documents of all Odin Teatret's activities not related to performances. In this sense, the challenge was to convey that "... the activities are not important in themselves, but they are important for the way in which they were organised and the ensuing relationships".⁷ ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) is one of these activities, but only a part of the material related to ISTA is found in the Activities series. Two independent series were created for ISTA, one in the Fonds Odin Teatret and one in the Fonds Eugenio Barba. The team led by Mirella Schino made a choice that the scholar herself defines as "discretionary", but correct, since the ISTA sessions "were, beside the performances, one of the most important activities organised by Odin Teatret".⁸

Paper documents and writings about ISTA

The Series ISTA of the Fonds Odin Teatret is divided into two subseries: ISTA and ISTA-A.

The subseries ISTA consists in 29 folders and mainly collects programmes, press reviews, final reports and in some cases the list of participants of the various ISTA sessions. From a bibliographic point of view, the material collected in binder 15 of this subseries is interesting and significant: here, further subdivided into fifteen folders in alphabetical order, we can find, in addition to Barba's writings, articles and essays by scholars from all over the world.

But the most relevant material is to be found in the subseries ISTA-A, which preserves organisational documents, budgets and an intense correspondence between Barba and the Asian teachers. Precisely this correspondence is useful to understand the reaction of the Asians when Barba - already since the end of 1979 - tells them about the creation of an international school of theatre anthropology and asks them if they want to be involved as teachers. Sanjukta Panigrahi enthusiastically grants her availability:

[...] Your enthusiasm and the seriousness for the venture is very much evident from the letter and I am not very surprised to know the positive response that you are getting from other countries for the coming years: as you are behind the project no one can have any doubt about the success and purposefulness of the SCHOOL. As far as I am concerned I assure you once again that I shall be most willing to collaborate with you in my own humble way and within my limits.⁹

Although Barba met Sanjukta Panigrahi a few years earlier - for the *Indisk seminar* (Indian seminar) organised by Odin Teatret in 1977 - this letter is testimony to the con-

6. Schino 2018, 10.

7. Schino 2018, 6.

8. Schino 2018, 20.

9. Panigrahi 1979.

tinuation of a professional relationship destined to last for twenty years.¹⁰

Sanjukta participated as a teacher representing odissi dance in all ISTA sessions until her death in June 1997. Today, among the trees around Odin Teatret's entrance stands a *varde*, a heap of stones that indicates a path in the Scandinavian mountains. For Sanjukta's death, Odin Teatret asked all those who worked with her at ISTA to send a stone: about six hundred stones arrived from all over the world.¹¹ In addition, in the same year, the Odin actors built a tower dedicated to her, which now hosts visitors, meetings, rehearsals and other activities.¹²

From an academic point of view, the subseries ISTA-A is important as it collects interesting material written by the scientific staff present at the sessions. The scientific staff often was made up of significant theatre historians like the Italians Fabrizio Cruciani, Nando Tavian, Nicola Savarese, Franco Ruffini and Ugo Volli, the French Jean-Marie Pradier, as well as Peter Elsass, professor of psychology at the University of Copenhagen. The scientific staff changed over the years and other researchers and scholars in the field of theatre and human sciences joined it.

In the binder 2 of the subseries ISTA-A, entirely dedicated to the ISTA held in Volterra (1981), we find the minutes of the meetings that Barba held at the end of each day with the scientific staff. Problems of a practical nature concerning the work in progress were faced during those meetings, but the talks also addressed issues related to methods, pedagogy, and *how* to make participants understand certain concepts. In one of the minutes, Barba highlights a problem: "In my work now, I am also interested in the problem of how one talks to the actor: that is, to make the directors understand that their language must be extremely practical and at the same time extremely poetic."¹³

This material highlights the importance of the scientific staff and the collective orientation towards a common research that went beyond practical difficulties.

During the 1981 ISTA of Volterra:

the living condition for the participants and the staff were very hard. We could consider this as the most extreme moment for ISTA, for the material living conditions (especially for the duration of the session) and for the scholarly research.¹⁴

This rigour highlighted by Mirella Schino can be found in some anonymous impressions left by the participants:

The first six days were exhausting both mentally and physically. Now I am starting to

feel at ease. I have the impression that I had to destroy my identity. Now I am rebuilding it adapting it to the needs of the place. I think it is a normal adaptation process.¹⁵

Binder 2 of the subseries ISTA-A is significant not only because it is richer than the others, but also exactly because it allows us to contextualise the ISTA phenomenon from several points of view. During the session in Volterra "[...] the depth of the comparative research [...] led to the definition of the concept of pre-expressivity and of the principles of theatre anthropology."¹⁶ To understand the intentions of the research and how the scientific hypotheses were verified practically, it is interesting to read a paper by Nando Tavian, written shortly before the session in Volterra. The Italian scholar emphasises that much of ISTA's research is not limited to the artistic field, but seeks to identify the technical principles of the actors/dancers' presence:

The forms of theatre and codified performance appear, thus, in another light [...] they are also the ways in which a particular way of using the energy of the actor/dancer has crystallised. On one hand, they can be reproduced as works of art, but on the other hand, they can be experimented and studied as living spies that guide us to discover the biological, physical energy of the actor.¹⁷

Tavian's writing is an organisational document¹⁸ by the Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale di Pontedera directed by Roberto Bacci - organiser of ISTA in Volterra - written for Pontedera Provincial Administration. The document highlights ISTA's characteristics: it is not a school in the sense of an academy or building, but a 'philosophy' in which the combination of practical aspects and theoretical research aims at training actors and directors-teachers; it is a place where there is no specific homogeneous teaching imparted to participants in the time frame of a session, but a "search, instead, of the best conditions for the autonomous creative development of each of its participants".¹⁹

An interesting testimony, concerning the search for the best conditions for individual creative development, can be found in the Fonds Carreri, the section of the archive that conserves the diaries of Roberta Carreri, Odin Teatret actress since 1974.

ISTA was Eugenio Barba's project and initially - except for Toni Cots - not all Odin Teatret's actors were involved in it, then "[...] over the years its history has been increasingly intertwined with that of Odin Teatret and, [...], since 1987 the whole group has been involved".²⁰ In fact, the Odin ensemble was partially involved at ISTA in Salento (1987), and as a whole at ISTA in Bologna (1990). At the Bonn session, in 1980, Roberta Carreri followed the lessons of Katsuko Azuma as a participant. The

10. In 1978, Per Moth left Odin Teatret of which he was administrative director for almost ten years, and founded a theatre production agency, Scandinavian Theatre Traffic. It organised important events including a tour of Peter Brook's *Mahabharata* in Copenhagen (1987). However, the first event organised by Moth's agency was a seminar conducted by Eugenio Barba and Sanjukta Panigrahi (March 1979). It was a week-long seminar in Herning (Denmark), financed by DATS, the association of Danish amateur theatres. This occasion allowed the two artists to discover how stimulating it was to work together.

11. Barba, Galli and Varley 2020, 30.

12. Barba, Galli and Varley 2020, 35.

13. In OTA, Fonds Odin Teatret, Series ISTA, Subseries ISTA-A, b.2_4.4A.

14. Schino 2018, 116.

15. *Impressioni e riflessioni dei partecipanti raccolte entro i primi dieci giorni di attività* (Participants' impressions and reflections collected during the first ten days of activity), in OTA, Fonds Odin Teatret, Series ISTA, Subseries ISTA-A, b.2_4.4A.

16. Schino 2018, 116.

17. Tavian 1980, 10.

18. See Schino 2018, 120.

19. Tavian 1980, 11.

20. Schino 2018, 114.

pages of Roberta Carreri's diary report in a technical and meticulous way the physical exercises and describe in detail the process of learning the dance of the lion, a sequence of movements belonging to the Japanese kabuki tradition. From the dance of the lion, Roberta Carreri developed a sequence that became part of Odin Teatret's performance *The Million*.²¹

Toni Cots, Odin Teatret actor since 1976, was Eugenio Barba's close collaborator in organising the first three ISTA sessions. In the series ISTA, subseries ISTA-A, binder 1, there are numerous letters with which Toni Cots replies to those who have asked to participate in ISTA. Reading this very intense correspondence is useful to understand the complexity of the organisational dynamics of the first sessions. In a letter, dated July 26, 1980, Toni Cots wrote to Gilla Cremer, a German actress who was studying for a period of time in Bali. In agreement with Eugenio Barba, Toni Cots offered Gilla Cremer to participate in ISTA, asking her in exchange to take care of the logistical and organisational aspects for I Made Pasek Tempo and the whole Balinese ensemble, who had to face a long journey from Denpasar to Bonn:

There are two things you should do for us concerning Tempo:

First, accompany Tempo and his group on their travel from Denpasar to Frankfurt, where Eugenio Barba will be waiting for them [...] what we need from Tempo and his group is again all their names and addresses so we can order the tickets [...].²²

Gilla Cremer was a very useful contact; she knew the Bahasa Indonesian language and was a translator for the Balinese ensemble led by I Made Pasek Tempo. After the Bonn session, the German actress remained in close contact with ISTA: she participated in the Volterra session in 1981 leading a 'family'²³ together with the Swedish mime Ingemar Lindh and the Japanese singing teacher Michi Imafuji, and took part in the sessions of Holstebro (1986) and Bologna (1990).²⁴

There is a Series ISTA also in the Fonds Eugenio Barba. The first folder is interesting as there are many scientific articles from different fields, collected by Barba himself "for the founding of ISTA and the first session in particular".²⁵ The underlining and annotations on the articles allow us to understand Eugenio Barba's interest in the biological aspect of the art of the actor/dancer. Barba wanted, and even managed this, to involve in a common research scholars, related to theatre history or performance theories on one side and experts in biology, physics and neurology on the other - people who would otherwise never have collaborated with each other.

Noteworthy in this folder is the programme of the *Colloque sur les aspects scientifiques du théâtre*, which took place in Jelenia Góra (Poland) in September 1979, organised by Jean-Marie Pradier, and which counted with the presence of important scientists,

21. In OTA, Fonds Roberta Carreri, b.16.

23. The 2nd ISTA Session, held in Volterra in 1981, was organised with a division of participants into three 'families'. Two or three teachers (both Asian and western) and two members of the scientific staff headed each 'family'. Cf. "Rapport sur la 2^{ème} session de l'ISTA." Published in this issue (Elsass, Pradier, and Taviani (1981) 2021, 62).

24. Gilla Cremer is today a well-know actress and is director of Theater Unikate in Hamburg (Germany). See <<https://www.gillacremer.de/en>> and <<http://www.theater-unikate.de/>>.

25. Schino 2018, 265.

including Henri Laborit. In that context, Laborit's talk, *Le théâtre vu dans l'optique de la biologie des comportements*,²⁶ impressed Barba who then invited the French biologist to the symposium held during the first ISTA session, in Bonn, on October 25, 1980. A transcription of Laborit's speech can be found in the Fonds Odin Teatret, Series Activities, binder 44.²⁷

The Series Activities of the Fonds Odin Teatret contains useful material to underline the kind of relationship established between scholars and the most assiduous participants of ISTA. Here we find interesting articles or drafts of articles, talks held on various occasions and symposia, often commented and backed by a quite dense correspondence. These sources highlight above all a cohesion in defence of a common research, as in the case of some letters in response to "The Rites of Women", an article by Erika Munk which appeared in the *Performing Arts Journal*. The American scholar, who participated in the 1986 ISTA in Holstebro whose theme was "The female role as represented on the stage in various cultures", accused ISTA of sexism, criticising its research methodologies:

What lesson can be draw from all this? Many obvious ones. That when men are securely in power, they will play women's role, create the very idea of womanhood, and snugly tap into feminine energy while refusing to allow women to use it.²⁸

The ISTA in Holstebro "irrespective of cultural and historical differences - gave way to numerous discussions, violent at times, and disputes".²⁹ Many participants, including Sanjukta Panigrahi, took sides through letters or publications against Erika Munk's article, in defence of the research they had conducted and the established evaluation.³⁰

The 1986 Holstebro session generated many misunderstandings. In an article published in *The Drama Review* Phillip Zarrilli wrote:

Although it may occasionally be necessary to put aside the social and political debate regarding the representation of gender in order to examine a specific problem in performance, to summarily do so in an open international congress was, I think, a mistake...

The conflict at the 1986 ISTA came from an exclusive focus on the practical to the exclusion of the historical and processual.³¹

In a later issue of the same journal, Barba replied to Zarrilli:

This is true. At ISTA the focus is on the "practical exploration" of theatrical work. But it is not done in an exclusive way. Above all, this does not imply any conflict with attention

26. Laborit 1980a.

27. Laborit 1980b. For more information about Laborit's influence on Barba, see the article by Leonardo Mancini "Reading for the "Flying House" (1979-80). Barba's early research towards theatre anthropology." Published in this issue (Mancini 2021).

28. Munk 1986, 42.

29. Schino 2018, 122.

30. The correspondence against Erika Munk's article is available for consultation in OTA, Fonds Odin Teatret, Series Activities, b.43.

31. Zarrilli 1988, 98.

to historical, sociocultural, political, and ideological problematics [...]

In reality there were several forums at the 1986 ISTA organised by one or another of the participants, in addition to those which had been provided for in the program [...]. In spite of this, some continued to complain about the small amount of time provided for debate. They did not take into consideration what actually took place. Paradoxically, the activities which were freely organised appeared to them to be non-existent.³²

In reference to actor's apprenticeship, Barba wrote in the programme of that ISTA, "The first days of work leave an indelible imprint". But the Italian director was not thinking of a psychological level of learning. Rather he was referring to the fact that the actor-apprentice should not fossilise on his gender to perform only male roles if he is an actor or female roles if she is an actress, because this "undermines the exploration of his or her own energies at the pre-expressive level". S/he has to have "an interaction between opposites which brings to mind the poles of a magnetic field, or the tension between body and shadow."³³

The main concept is not the actor's gender but the energy that emerges from the actor at a pre-expressive level. This assumption was well understood by Peggy Phelan who, regarding the Holstebro ISTA in 1986, wrote:

The focus of the conference was on what Barba calls "the actor's energy". Barba believes that a study of the use of the actor's energy on a "biological" level [...] permits us to make an intercultural examination of the various theatrical traditions, not as historically determined systems but as [physiological] technique." Energy exists at a visible and invisible level; Barba is interested in the "invisible" energy which emerges on (and in) the "pre-expressive level".³⁴

Analysing better, 1986 ISTA clearly did not want to put under the magnifying glass a study on gender, on the hegemony of men over women, on cultural, political and social aspects of the *way* in which the female role was represented on stage in various cultures. It was not even a psychological analysis of the actor/actress in relation to the interpretation of a female role. Barba wanted to emphasise practice and the possibility for a performer of any culture to use an "energetic polarity" already present at a "pre-expressive" level.

ISTA through images: seeing the principles

OTA's Photographic Fonds collects more than 6,000 ISTA photographs. The folders are sorted by sessions, from Bonn in 1980 to Albino in 2016. Each binder is subdivided into photographers.

The photographs give a clear idea of the everyday life and of the activities happening during the different sessions. The peculiarity of the photographs lies in the camera itself being used as a means for research starting from the actor's body. Interesting is a series

of photographs by Nicola Savarese, depicting a sequence of movements by the Swedish mime Ingemar Lindh. Savarese took these photographs during the ISTA in Volterra, while Lindh was doing his work demonstration.

Savarese created a real visual memory of the first two ISTA sessions with his images. The hundreds of photos he took show the 'biological' sense of the research that required effort and organisation. In fact, during the session in Volterra, Savarese asked the teachers to repeat at least part of their work demonstrations dressed in contemporary clothes during the breaks to better catch their positions:

[...] I asked the teacher to dedicate some of their time to me without spectators. Sanjukta Panigrahi showed me the *mudras* and odissi dance poses wearing a beautiful sari, while Kosuke Nomura, a kyogen actor, and little Jas, the Balinese child dancer, came in jeans and a T-shirt, preferring contemporary clothes for their demonstrations, giving a more immediate and less solemn reception of their technique. The dance of oppositions and physical tensions was more apparent than in the traditional stage costume. Kosuke's gliding gait, without kimono, clearly showed the slightly bent knees which give alertness to the body. Not covered by the costume, Jas's feet showed the big toe lifted above the foot on the ground, indicating its function as a tension rod for the entire body.³⁵

Although Savarese initially considered these photographs "unadorned, *artistically* not very incisive", he noted at the same time how "the sequences were effective in illustrating the new and, ultimately, elementary principles of theatre anthropology". Starting from the photographs taken in Volterra, Savarese came up with the idea of compiling a book in which these images, combined with illustrations from other eras and countries, would constitute the visual nerve of the "transversality of techniques".³⁶

Published in Italian in 1983 with the title *Anatomia del Teatro*³⁷ (Anatomy of Theatre), Nicola Savarese partnered with Eugenio Barba for a deeply restructured second edition: *Anatomie de l'acteur*³⁸ which appeared in France and in Mexico in 1985.³⁹ The two authors further developed their book in 1991, giving it a new title *The Secret Art of the Performer. A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, published in 1991 by Richard Gough and his Centre for Performance Research in collaboration with Routledge.⁴⁰ In 2005, Barba and Savarese updated their work with three new chapters and agreed that the British publisher could turn around the title to *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer*.⁴¹ One of the versions of the *Dictionary* has been published worldwide in more than 15 languages.

For a scholar or a practitioner interested in theatre anthropology, ISTA's photographs are extremely useful, since they visualise concepts that are difficult to seize just by reading.

32. Barba 1988, 9.

33. Barba wrote the article "Male Female Versus Animus Anima. The Actor's Energy" as a presentation of the 4th ISTA International Session held in Holstebro in 1986, in Fowler 1986, 3-9: 6. With the title inverted, the same article was published also in the journal *New Theatre Quarterly* (see Barba 1987).

34. Phelan 1988, 108.

35. Savarese 2014, 396-97.

36. Savarese 2014, 397.

37. Savarese 1983.

38. Barba and Savarese 1985.

39. Barba and Savarese 1987.

40. Barba and Savarese 1991.

41. Barba and Savarese 2005.

The same principle applies for the Audio-Visual Fonds, with more than 130 hours of films of symposia, interviews, work demonstrations and performances. The videos are organised chronologically, and their index consists of two numbers: the first is the year and the second is a serial number.

Four extensive video interviews with Nando Tavian, Nicola Savarese, Franco Ruffini and Jean-Marie Pradier made by Claudio Coloberti are of huge relevance to identify the origins of ISTA and capture its particularity, from both the pedagogical and the research point of view. The complexity of the school can be deduced from the interviews. The difficulties faced by scholars of different fields and performers of distant traditions in order to find a common language and interact with each other are apparent especially during the first sessions. Their descriptions enable us to imagine what ISTA was and the consequences for those who participated. A passage of the interview with Tavian gives us an idea of what Barba means by his pedagogical paradox *learning to learn*, arguing that ISTA is not based on the study of technique but intends to identify the *secrets of technique*:

[...] They [the Asian teachers] showed a detail of their dance. Barba stopped them and started inquiring. “Where do you place your balance?” Things they had never thought of, because they had learned them since childhood. It is like someone who speaks a language and knows it well, and then you stop this person and ask: “Here you use the subjunctive, why? Why do you use the conditional in your next sentence?” and they do not know what to answer because they have always used the language without thinking. They realised it was another way of seeing [...].⁴²

Scholars have often defined the ISTA as a “school of the gaze”. A researcher who visits the archive is able *to see* the concepts and this makes it easier to understand what Barba and the scientific staff have written. For example, video 87-01b presents a workshop held by Barba during the ISTA in Salento in 1987. Barba asks Sanjukta Panigrahi to show the participants first her ordinary walk and then how she walks in performance. From a very simple assumption - the change in behaviour that emphasises the different ways in which Sanjukta places her weight on the floor - Barba outlines the two opposite and complementary concepts of technique: *acculturation* and *inculturation*.⁴³

Other material in the Audio-visual Fonds is useful to understand the *Theatrum Mundi*, “[...] the mixed performance with Odin Teatret actors and Asian actors created by Barba for the closing of ISTA sessions, since ISTA Salento in 1987.”⁴⁴ In fact, the first *Theatrum Mundi* dates back to ISTA Volterra in 1981 and initially consisted of “[...] a succession of scenes by different artists”.⁴⁵ However, the *Theatrum Mundi* at the end of ISTA Salento represented a substantial turning point for this activity linked to ISTA:

The lines of the first scene of *Hamlet*, the songs and the presence of the Odin actors mixed with the Balinese Barong, the mythical Japanese lion Shishi and the theatrical

fragments of the other Asian artists. Barba merged these scenes into a unitary framework, infusing in them the rhythm and energy of a homogenous performance, something carnivalesque, hilarious and ritualistic.”⁴⁶

The video *Theatrum Mundi in Copertino*⁴⁷ well reproduces the carnivalesque and ritualistic atmosphere mentioned by Tavian. It does not limit itself to bringing out the characteristics of the different Asian traditions but makes “the unitary tradition of ISTA”⁴⁸ recognisable.

Conclusions

OTA contain essential material for the studies of theatre anthropology, enabling us to study the ISTA sessions from various perspectives. The themes of the sessions were always different. I have happened to welcome to the Archives researchers more interested in the network of relationships that ISTA generated than in the performers’ technical know-how. Other times I have dealt with scholars focussed on the organisational aspect, while others are concerned with the reaction towards Asian theatres in Europe or with their influence on individual western actors or theatre groups. It is even possible to trace a history of Barba’s interest in Asian theatres⁴⁹ and to look for the path leading him to found ISTA.

The perspectives regarding the sessions of ISTA are endless, and the documents stored at OTA often amaze and gratify the expectations of scholars, students and practitioners who arrive to Holstebro to carry out their research.

OTA are open all year round and are always accessible.■

Translation: Julia Varley

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42. Tavian 2007.

43. Odin Teatret Archives 1987a.

44. Schino 2018, 394.

45. Tavian 1996, 71.

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Omar Khayyam's tower leading to Odin Teatret Archives - Photo: Francesco Galli

Comments

Franco Ruffini, Moriaki Watanabe A Dialogue Between East and West

Abstract: This article presents an English translation of an interview by Franco Ruffini to the Japanese scholar Moriaki Watanabe during the first session of ISTA in 1980, originally published in the French journal Bouffonneries 4, 1982 (57-61). Starting from research and pedagogy in the framework of ISTA, Ruffini and Watanabe discuss about their respective traditions of studies and performing cultures.

Keywords: Moriaki Watanabe, Franco Ruffini, Historiography, Performing studies

FR *There are two complementary aspects in ISTA, research and pedagogy. Could we talk about the research part, trying to better understand what is its aim and purpose?*

MW We must refer to the reasons that led me to come to ISTA, accepting the invitation of Eugenio Barba. I met him last year, in Tokyo, and I was struck by his different way of taking an interest in Asian theatre. I have met many western theatre directors who took an interest in the traditional forms of the Far East and Japan; there is a long list, starting with Claudel passing through Artaud to Jean-Louis Barrault and Peter Brook. I also studied some of these. I found that the fascinations of these men of theatre were sincere, but they risked remaining mere fascinations. They wanted to form their visions starting from these completely instinctive fascinations without looking farther.

Claudel, for example, was a very instinctive, a less theoretical theatre man if you compare him with Jean-Louis Barrault, yet he had immediately noticed that dance in the East, and in particular in Japan, starts from the hips. It is a remarkable way of seeing and understanding precisely because it was formulated by a westerner, since a westerner imagines dance, exactly like Paul Valéry (*Les fusées*), as an upward aspiration (dance in the west is always jumping), while on the other hand in all experiences of the Far East, dance is a sort of rootedness to the ground. Some celestial power descends to earth and remains there for a moment, and whose energy men want to capture.

It is not a simple problem of technique: theatre people, for their practical concerns, too often reject theoretical reflections in favour of techniques. They think that here we are dealing only with problems of techniques, whereas in reality what is called technique must involve at the same time the totality of the individual body and the totality of the



culture in which this individual body is inserted. Both factors and their relationship must be thoroughly understood. But it is a discourse that would take us too far.

When I met Barba, he said he wanted to “learn to understand”. He didn’t want to simply learn the technique, but learn to understand what it consisted of, in what cultural context it was formed, what it corresponded to. Above all, he wanted to know what this transformation of energy consists of, as he himself says, in the bodies of the actors.

I too, as a historian of ancient theatre, but also as a contemporary director (when I was studying I also acted), I know the technical problems. I am concerned on a theoretical, critical and practical level, to delimit these intermediate areas, very difficult to conceptualise but which certainly exist, between the daily body and the body integrated in a given fiction - the body of the character. Modern western theatre is based on the identification of the daily individual body and the fictional body of the character. It is thought, or at least it was thought, that only these two levels exist. In most traditional forms of Japanese theatre, however, one easily notices an intermediate level between the actor’s daily body and the imaginary body, so to speak, of the character.

Let’s take a simple example. When a noh actor leaves the scene, because the performance in the proper sense of the term is finished, he has a strange practice: he goes out very slowly, as if this exit were an integral part of the performance. But he is no longer the character, because the character’s action is already over, however the actor is not yet in his reality and in his daily status. It’s exactly something between the two, and this state can last a minute. In some way, the actor enacts his own absence; but absence counts as a performance and therefore is a present absence. It sounds like a paradox; but in practical reality it is evident. Even in kabuki it happens, the actors must not cancel themselves, but rather show themselves and keep themselves in a *fictive* state.

These examples and others, and my experience as an actor and director, found correspondence in what Barba was looking for from the first time I met him: the enigma of the actor’s presence. There is no Japanese term that matches it; we know the phenomenon, but we express it with the French word *présence*. As a man of modern theatre I experienced the actor’s *présence* on the stage, and as a spectator I reflected on the practice of noh and kabuki and the other arts. I thought there must be an area between the actor’s everyday body and the character’s body. In an arbitrary way, because I could not find more precise words, I spoke of *fictive* body: not dramatic fiction, but the body that engages in a certain fictive area, a *fictive* body that pretends not a given fiction but a sort of transformation of the everyday body, at a pre-expressive level. *Corps en fiction* is the title I gave to my writings on theatre, and the French expression *corps fictif* has been successful. It is exactly, I think, the same thing that Barba calls the pre-expressive state of the body.

FR *This notion of a fictive body offers the possibility of many reflections and allows us to return to the question of ISTA as a research centre. It can be hypothesised that the object of research is precisely this intermediate state between the everyday and the theatrical fiction of the character, what we must unfortunately limit ourselves to calling présence, since not even in Japanese there is a more exact word.*

How the actor can have a présence, how to attract the attention of the spectators? How

can the actor be looked at not as one looks at the man on the street, without seeing him, but as if the gaze were forced to go towards him? When I saw the exercises of the oriental pedagogues here, I saw, with my western eyes, a kind of gymnastics, perhaps a little strange gymnastics, but gymnastics nonetheless. Yet my gaze was drawn to those bodies.

This is the research field of ISTA. What then, in your opinion, are the means used in oriental theatres, and in particular in Japanese theatre, to obtain this présence? And furthermore: how can westerners, in such a short time, possibly use these techniques to obtain, by their own means, their style, their culture, this presence?

MW It’s a big question mark for me too. The Asians begin to learn these techniques very young and train for a long time every day, until death. Here at the ISTA you learn some rudiments of these body techniques and moreover you pass from a Japanese to the Balinese, to an Indian, to the Chinese... Furthermore, if Sanjutka’s demonstrations seem strange to you westerners, for us Japanese there are many things in Sanjutka’s acting that are closer to western art, starting with the way of codifying the acting, which is closest for us to your ballet. In the four traditions of oriental theatre present at the ISTA, there are common points, but also of course great differences. That Indian dance is closer to western ballet is shown, for example, by the excellent use of certain Indian techniques (*tribhanga*, for example) in certain Béjart’s ballets, such as *Le sacre du printemps*. But when Béjart imitates Japanese dance it is catastrophic.

But this concerns the level of expression. The question on which Barba focuses is instead the pre-expressive state. At this level there is a whole process that consists in a certain utilisation of the body not very different in all traditional oriental stage arts. On this, I agree, and this is why I immediately sympathised with Barba, since up to now westerners - as well as the Japanese - have limited themselves to being fascinated by the level of expression. Then the finished product was imitated, the finished forms, without deepening the research. In this Barba is right.

The notion of body and pre-expressive state must engage us in a reflection on the notion of character. In the West, at least from the time of Shakespeare, there are only characters on the stage, people on stage are just characters. No machines are seen, no prompter is seen, etc. It is different with us. This is why I spoke of an intermediate state. The actor who is on the stage is not necessarily a character. In Barba’s conception, the pre-expressive body is linked to the actor’s work, work that is not necessarily seen on the stage, and even before expression, although it is the necessary condition for expression.

The starting point of this research can have many consequences, not only on the work of the actor but, for example, also on the dramaturgy. I tried to make it happen when staging Genet’s *The Maids*. I tried to keep the actors in this intermediate, potential zone, so to speak. It is through this potentiality and virtuality that I have sought the *fictive* body. It is not the fiction that matters, it is this virtuality.

FR *Your staging of The Maids - about which you have extensively told us - shows a possible deep level of the relationship between eastern and western performing arts concerning the pre-expressive level and the multiple consequences it entails. Consequences on the staging but also on the dramaturgy, understood not only as a text but also in the broadest sense of*

the word. It is a problem of great interest, starting from the conviction that only through the actor's expressive presence (a necessary but not sufficient condition) it is possible to reach dramaturgical depth in a performance. What repercussions can such research have on the pre-expressive field for dramaturgy? Staging and dramaturgy, both written and performed, as well as the acting of the actors, can receive impulses and clarifications if the pre-expressive state can introduce an intermediate state in the daily person/character duality.

MW It is the same thing, both for the dramaturgy and for the actor's work. These are different levels. In the dramaturgy and scenic aesthetics of our theatre, there is a kind of discontinuity at the level of the signifier. For example, in Indian music and Balinese music there is a continuity. There are breaks, of course, but they are precisely breaks; in practice the code can be constituted starting from the sound produced, which is the rule of the codification of music.

But if you apply this rule to noh, what do you get? You have sounds produced in a completely discontinuous, even different way: the written music does not represent the musical tempo of the noh. With other music, the sound produced counts, but here the production of the sound involves a whole body work. It is not only the voice that utters the cry, not just the finger that strikes, but a kind of integral bodily tension that is engaged in producing the sound, and it is precisely this tension that matters and that translates into the sound produced and into a kind of a break. It is like in zen painting: you have a huge white picture, which has value as "white", and signs that are traced on it - mountains, trees, etc. But it is not the drawn lines and forms that count, it is the use of the large white surface that is the aim of the painting. In the noh, there is not only an aesthetic sense, but also rather an ethical sense: it is the artist's improvement that is in question, and this is the origin of this discontinuity of the signifier. The work in noh and kabuki consists of a kind of concentration of integral body energy. A comparison can be made with contemporary music, with Cage, for example, who understood that it is the musician's work that matters, not the result.

I have called this work the "intermediate stage". Even in Barba's performances you can experience it, when the actors remain 'present' on stage without carrying on the action, yet having a meaning. For them we can speak, somewhat metaphorically, of a kind of empty-fullness. Theatre is clearly lagging behind other contemporary arts, music, painting, etc., which know this sort of neutrality. At the level of the actor, of the actor's body, the problem is precise: it is necessary to create a kind of availability of the actor so that he can do everything, choose anything.

For this purpose, the relationship with the East becomes useful. In Japan, for example, the code is not, as in the West, at the level of expression. For this reason, the presence of Asian teachers at ISTA is quite right for western actors who are looking for a work on their body. I myself had some doubts before. Then I saw Barba rehearsing with Madame Katsuko Azuma and noticed that she really taught something fundamental in the extra-daily practice of her body, from breathing to hip position.

I agree with Barba when he explains that there is a dramatic tension in the use of the body. Eastern theatre cannot be analysed on the basis of certain western historical categories, such as the psychological conflict which belongs to the bourgeois drama. As

a spectator of the kabuki theatre, I know that the dramatic moment lies in this kind of sudden stop of a river of energy; if this is not understood, kabuki is not dramatic. Kabuki cannot be conceptualised according to a western terminology, which is not universal and moreover is conditioned by a certain conception of European theatre determined by an era. I myself was unable to use any other conceptualisations than western ones. However, after the 1960s, there has been a deep change, and we understand each other better. ■



1. Katsuko Azuma, I Ketut Jas Tempo, Ingemar Lindh, ISTA 2, Volterra, Italy 1981 - Photo: Nicola Savarese
2. Eugenio Barba, Moriaki Watanabe, Tadashi Suzuki. Symposium on noh theatre at Hosei University, 1980, Tokyo, Japan - Photo: OTA

Franco Ruffini
Sanjukta Panigrahi
Katsuko Azuma
Tsao Chun-Lin
I Made Pasek Tempo



ISTA 2, Volterra, Italy 1981 - Photo: Nicola Savarese

Franco Ruffini
Interviews with Asian Artists

Abstract: Franco Ruffini speaks with Sanjukta Panigrahi, Katsuko Azuma, I Made Pasek Tempo and Tsao Chun-Lin, the Asian teachers who took part in the first ISTA session in Bonn in 1980. The interviews were published in La scuola degli attori, edited by Franco Ruffini (Firenze 1981). At the end of the Volterra session in 1981, Franco Ruffini asked two questions to the Asian teachers who had also participated at the first session in Bonn. The interviews were published in Bouffonneries 4, 1983.

Keywords: Sanjukta Panigrahi, Katsuko Azuma, I Made Pasek Tempo, Tsao-Chun-Lin



I Made Pasek Tempo, Franco Ruffini, ISTA 6, Bologna, Italy, 1990 - Photo: Tony D'Urso



Bonn 1980

SANJUKTA PANIGRAHI, odissi dance, India



FR *Let us imagine that you must give some general advice to your pupils before the end of this ISTA session. What would you say?*

SP Two things: never show tiredness. When you do your exercises, do them in a dynamic and disciplined way, as if every movement was an example of what this month of work meant to you.

FR *This rule about tiredness is strange for us.*

SP Yes, I know. For me it is strange, for example, to see a European actor who shows tiredness. If my teacher told me that he could see I was tired, I felt humiliated. My teacher said, are you tired? All right, but then go home and go to bed. Your tiredness is your private concern, it is not of interest to the spectators, and its place is not on the stage.

FR *But tiredness can also be something other than a private concern. It can have a strong theatrical value. Iben Nagel Rasmussen, for example, at the end of her work demonstration Moon and Darkness, turns her tiredness into something very dramatic.*

SP It is true. When I saw Iben, at first I was embarrassed, suddenly I felt tired too. Then I understood that tiredness has a precise value, even though it was the opposite of everything I was taught.

FR *Can you give me any more examples like this?*

SP Yes. For example, I was very surprised to see the actors breathing with their mouths open in the course of the work. For us, one of the first rules is never to open our mouth, otherwise you lose strength. I want to discuss this with Barba.

FR *Here in ISTA you have found yourself in special pedagogical situations. For example, in the morning you intervened on the individual training of the actors. Isn't there a risk of indianising their individual training, so to speak?*

SP No, I do not think so. I believe that as a teacher I can intervene in the work of an actor without reducing it to my style. In the individual training the actors built their own exercises themselves. In that case, the function of the teacher consists in helping the actor to make their movements clearer, to project them into space, to give them greater strength. After all, the deepest nature of Indian dance consists in making the movements more beautiful. We speak of *lokidharmi* and *natyadharmi*: the first indicates the way of moving in daily life, the second the way of moving in dance. The second is not entirely different from the first, it is rather an idealisation or its own discipline. And for this, I believe, someone who is expert in Indian dance also knows, sometimes intuitively, the criteria according to which any movement can be disciplined and made more effective, even in the individual training of a European actor. This awareness was one of the discoveries I made in ISTA.

FR *And the others?*

SP In India dance is taught by imitation. The teacher shows something, and the students try to imitate him or her. Therefore the teacher does not always know how to explain why and how he does certain things. Or rather, he does not think about it, because he does not need to explain it. But here if I want to pass on some basic positions of odissi dance to the different groups in a week's course, I must explain all the time how to do it. I became aware of something I knew very well before, but only by doing it. So, I realised there were other possibilities and had to change the pedagogical method to adapt it to the needs of non-Indian students. This change will also affect my way of teaching in India.

FR *What did you try to teach the ISTA participants?*

SP I did not want to teach them dance fragments. For what purpose should they learn Indian dance pieces? What I hope they will remember, however, is where the tensions are in their body, finding the same strength, not letting the body do as it wants.

FR *During the work, to explain to a pupil that his position was wrong, you would say to him: "The way you are doing it is easier."*

SP Yes, because my teacher always told me, while I was learning, that if assuming a posture was not hard, if it did not put tension on the body and cause a little pain, then it meant that the movement was wrong.

FR *So, through your specialisation in odissi dance, you did not teach odissi.*

SP Exactly. ISTA participants will be able to take advantage of what I have taught them

only if they find in their own work the problems of tension, control and balance, which they have experienced with me.

FR *Does this mean that your participation at ISTA is starting to be that of a teacher who can work in a western perspective of theatre pedagogy?*

SP Sure, since I work with western actors.

FR *But does this not mean endangering your specificity, your tradition?*

SP I do not think so. I have always tried to push the limits of my tradition. I began to study dance against my father's will, because in those days it was thought that dance, which is fashionable in the upper classes today, was not an honourable activity for a girl born in a brahmin family. Later, I was the first to create dances to songs written in a language other than that of my region, Orissa. Traditionalists said I betrayed my tradition. Today they realised that I was strengthening what was essential in it. My teacher and I have been accused of introducing non-traditional movements and postures into my dances. Those who said this were connoisseurs who made themselves jealous guardians of tradition. Then my teacher asked them to point out one of the gestures or positions that was outside the tradition. And the connoisseurs who seemed so confident could not point out a single one to him. Now I am part of the ISTA team. I accepted to work with Barba for a while in order to find new possibilities. I do not think this work can threaten my tradition. But if that happens, if it threatens it, then I will back away.

FR *Some have said that ISTA is built on a bizarre contrast: some of the most experienced and professionally recognised artists isolate themselves for a month to teach theatre group actors who are often marginalised and whose professional training is precarious.*

SP I am devoted to the god Jagunath. He is an egalitarian god, the only one in whose temples the untouchables can eat by putting their hands in the same dish as the brahmins.

FR *Did you always teach the same exercises to all four groups which worked with you?*

SP No, depending on the difficulties that arose, I tried to find exercises which, without saying it, could help to solve certain blocks. With one of the groups, who was particularly interested in rhythm, I did not work starting from odissi, but from some folkloric dances.

FR *Barba did some work demonstrations with you. What do you think about that?*

SP It was, perhaps, the best situation. Through Barba's explanations, the spectators could see what lies behind the beauty of the dance, they could understand the different tensions of the body, how the dance is constructed.

FR *That is, the technical background.*

SP The technical starting points. I have had two teachers; the first was Rukmini Devi, she was perfect in technique, she was famous because her students did not have the slightest weakness, no one could find the smallest error in them. But I felt that something was missing. My second teacher, Kelucharan Mahapatra, says that the most important

thing is not technical perfection, the feeling you feel, the emotion you provoke in the spectators, but what comes after. He says that the great artist is the one who manages to transform whoever sees him, and not just please him. The dancer who masters technique in order to forget it.

KATSUKO AZUMA, Buyo Kabuki (Nihon Buyo), Japan



FR *Today you witnessed the studies on Hamlet by the ISTA participants. What is your impression?*

KA Some I liked, others I did not.

FR *Are you interested in modern theatre?*

KA I have not seen much of it. In Japan, modern theatre is really hard to understand. The different theatrical genres are separate: noh on one side, kabuki on the other, and modern theatre even further away. The last time I saw modern theatre was fifteen years ago, when I was a student. And I did not like it. But now, when I go back to Japan, I want to go to see it. During my work in ISTA, many questions have arisen which, when I return to my country, I must try to resolve. I want to start studying the new problems.

FR *Were you not disturbed, during the performances shown by the participants, by their way of using the body without the energy, the "power" that characterises Japanese theatre, that is, without ki ai?*

KA This way of using the body bothers me when I see it during our hours of practice. In performances it does not bother me. When they talk, they begin to breathe well.

FR *What do you mean by breathing well?*

KA In Japanese theatre, breathing must begin in the abdomen. However, many of the ISTA participants tend to breathe with the upper part of the chest. These two different ways of breathing result in two different ways of moving. In the performances we have seen today, when the actors were just doing movements, their breathing was not good. But when they started talking, they also began to find a better way to move.

FR *Can you explain it more specifically?*

KA When they talk, they need more air, and then they start breathing from the abdomen. I was amazed to see how the pupils, in ISTA, could quickly speak with a deep voice. In Japan it can be reached, after a long training, by actors, shamisen and drum players, and by those who practice martial arts. Abdominal breathing is also important for those who practice the art of calligraphy. Only when an actor speaks with his abdominal voice can he move well and overcome obstacles. High tones must also come from the abdomen. If the rhythm of normal breathing is changed, there is a change in the way the body moves. By inhaling and exhaling very slowly, all the rhythms of the movements are changed. The problem is that the actor then must find the rhythms he started from, which had been destroyed by the change in breathing.

While working at ISTA I discovered the difference between Japanese actors on the one hand, and Indians and Balinese on the other. We try to maintain strength; we do not move the upper body. For space is always in front of us and the hips remain fixed. I asked Sanjukta Panigrahi how she breathes, and she replied that she breathes with the upper part of the chest. Then I began to understand: Sanjukta, as well as Iben, move according to a rhythm which is that of the heart. But the Japanese actors try to go against the rhythm of the heart. This is not stated explicitly, but now I realise that it is what all the teachings are aimed at in Japan. My teacher, for example, said that if you lose the right tension while working, then you fall into a repetitive rhythm, and it is this repetitive rhythm that the actor must break. Everything aims at this: a breathing that goes against the rhythm of the heart.

FR *Did you know other theatres from Asia before joining the pedagogical team of ISTA?*

KA No, I had only seen the Peking opera when it came to Japan in 1979. Here in ISTA, both I and the musicians who are with me got tired while watching the Balinese and the Indian performances. The dancers were extraordinary, but the rhythm of their movements was like a “biological pain” for us. It is as if we were using a rhythm that was against the rhythm of the body, because the body, unwittingly, always follows the same rhythm. It is torture for us when we see a performance in which rhythmic patterns are repeated. It is another conception of theatre. In European theatre the actor usually moves without rhythm. The Balinese and Indian actors follow the rhythm of their own body. The Japanese actors hold their breath and oppose this rhythm. After these experiences, I realize that Japan is further away from other Asian theatres than these are far from European ones.

FR *And the Chinese theatre?*

KA We are also distant from the Chinese theatre. There, too, they follow the rhythm of the body and do not oppose it.

FR *How did you judge the individual training that the students did in the morning?*

KA The first impression was of amazement. I still cannot understand how it works. It was interesting to see how people fought for something.

FR *Barba, during the Symposium, spoke about many points that the different Asian theatres have in common.*

KA I disagree. Or rather, I have seen the differences. But when I go back to Japan, I want to study this problem. In Japan we specialise, everyone is deeply involved in his specific field. Now, however, I begin to see my theatre from the outside.

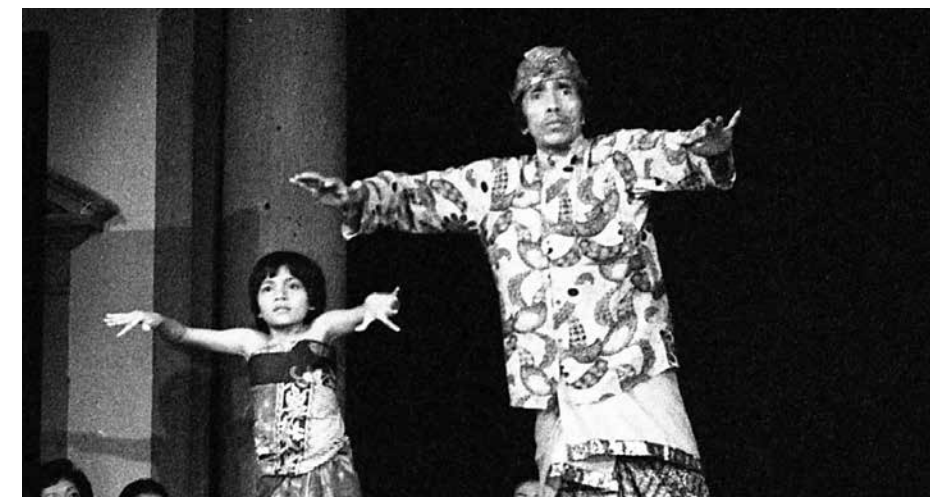
FR *Did you find particular resistance in working with students in ISTA?*

KA They worked a lot. But even with all their willpower, they almost never managed to find true mental energy. But even when I work with Japanese actors, I encounter the same difficulty.

FR *What does this mental energy consist of? What is it actually about?*

KA My teacher used to say that you have to find your strength. This is like a steel ball that is in the centre of an imaginary triangle with its apex in the anus, and its base in the pelvis and the navel. The actor must be able to rest his balance on this strength. If he finds it (but it is difficult, I still cannot always find it today), then all his movements gain strength. But this force does not mean being tense, it is not violence. My teacher used to say that the steel ball is covered with a layer of cotton, and then another layer of cotton, and so on: it is something soft that only in its deep centre hides something hard. Thus, the movement of the actor can be slow and sweet and hide his strength, as the pulp of a fruit hides the stone.

I MADE PASEK TEMPO, Topeng and Baris, Bali



FR Do you know anything about European theatre?

PT Yes, I saw ballet, in Paris.

FR What did you think?

PT That it would be very difficult for me to dance ballet. I talked to people who are part of ballet: it is a very codified theatre tradition; you must start learning it from an early age. When a child decides to learn ballet, he must stay at school all day. In Bali, on the other hand, those who want to learn to dance go to the teacher for two or three hours a day, then return home.

FR But did you like ballet?

PT I liked it, even if I did not understand the movements and the music. I was amazed by the skill of the dancers, especially when they were doing pirouettes.

FR In ISTA, you were able to see the performances of the Indians, the Japanese, the Chinese. What do you think?

PT Sanjukta's Indian dances are the closest to Bali. I understand them. The stories they tell come from the same books that the Balinese dance stories come from. Their music is very different from ours, but I understand it. Least of all I understand Japanese dances.

FR Like the ballet you saw in Paris?

PT Yes. I was very impressed by the Japanese lion dance, when Katsuko Azuma swung the lion's head with its long mane. But the other dances were very slow, almost motionless. I understood where this character of theirs comes from: it comes from Buddha. Buddha is a very different god from Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu: much less vital than them.

FR What about the Peking opera?

PT The Peking opera is also quite understandable for me. It is about warriors. Dancers are always *keras*,¹ even when their movements are slow, their chest centre is always *keras*. Peking opera is *keras* inside and *manis* outside. Japanese dances, on the other hand, are *manis* inside and out. The Balinese and Indian ones are neither *manis* nor *keras*, they are something that always changes, that moves continuously, like living beings. There is a lot of difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. But Hinduism and Buddhism meet in Bali. We do not have the images of our gods, as the Indians do. But people still believe in gods. The Chinese, on the other hand, only believe what they see.

FR You said that Japanese dances are *manis* inside and out. Instead, those who dance them are aware that there is a lot of *keras*.

PT If there is, you cannot see it. The *keras*, then, will probably be very deep, surrounded by something that is *manis*.

1. *Keras*: vigorous, *manis*, soft. Balinese dancers say that their dances are based on the alternation of *keras* and *manis*, of strong moments and soft moments, as well as on contrast between parts of the body that are in tension and others that are relaxed, between energetic movements and soft movements, etc.

FR What exactly did you teach at ISTA?

PT I also learned many things. Seeing other Asians, I experienced new things. It is important that different groups come together and cooperate. In Bali, on the other hand, people tend to collaborate only within their own *benjak*.² My group, however, in my village, in Tampaksiring, is made up of people of different *benjaks*. Twenty-five people are permanently part of my group, but on the occasion of ceremonies and performances we include others, and we arrive at forty-five. For me it is important that people go to different masters, and that masters from different places come together. For me, one of the most interesting things about ISTA was the discipline: the precision of the timetable, for example. I think I will also ask my Balinese students to be disciplined in this regard.

FR In Bali, you often have students who come from Europe and North America. Is there a big difference between them and the ISTA participants?

PT Yes, a big difference. They come to Bali to learn dances, such as Baris or Topeng. They do not come to ISTA to learn our dances.

FR And what do they learn then?

PT The basis of certain movements. ISTA people know a lot more about energy, about the different central points of the body. They do not want to learn the dances, but they want to understand the technical reasons behind the different dances. Among the ISTA participants there are people of different languages and traditions. It is a good thing that Barba brought teachers from different languages and traditions.

FR In what does the biggest difference consist between the Balinese and European pupils?

PT For the Balinese too it is hard to learn dance movements. No less hard than for Europeans. But the Balinese immediately understand what the basic positions consist of, they are used to seeing them from an early age. For Europeans, understanding these movements is much more difficult.

FR What do you think about the demonstrations Barba did with you? Did you understand what Barba is searching for?

PT Not exactly. But he certainly knows. It is evident that he always distinguishes precisely the things that may interest him from those that do not interest him. But why are you asking me all these questions?

FR It is to collect written documentation about the ISTA. Did we bother you?

PT Guru Kakul, from Batuan, was one of Bali's greatest gurus. Now he is very sick and there is nothing left of his teachings. On the other hand, I can write. Since I was sixteen, I have written in a diary everything I learn and know about dances.

2. The Balinese villages are divided into several *benjaks*, clans or associations of neighbours who have in common ceremonies, meeting places and civil responsibilities. (Ed. note)

TSAO CHUN-LIN, Foo Hsing Opera, Taiwan



FR *Do you want to introduce yourself?*

TC I was born in 1917 in the province of Hu-well, near Beijing. At the age of six, I began my apprenticeship as an actor. At that time there were still no schools, so I was a pupil of several teachers. I studied for 13 years in different cities, Beijing, Tien-Tsin, Shanghai.

FR *At that time, the apprenticeship of children who wanted to become Peking opera actors was very hard. If you compare it to the way future actors train in the theatre school today, for example yours in Taipei, do you see any differences?*

TC Current students are not subjected to the same harsh discipline as in my time. Today I teach at the Foo Hsing School in Taipei. In my time the pupils had to obey blindly. This is no longer the case today.

FR *When pupils do not show willingness or hesitate to obey, what do you do?*

TC I try to repeat the instructions, to speak, explain, convince. I cannot insult them or beat them.

FR *Did this happen when you were a student?*

TC Yes, my teachers were not for the subtle. I considered myself lucky if they only covered me with insults every time I made a mistake or didn't show the right attitude to work. But above all they beat me, here on the thighs and arms, with a bamboo cane.

FR *What do you think of this change in the pedagogical relationship?*

TC I think it would not hurt to hit the students from time to time.

FR *Working here in ISTA, what difference did you see between western actors and your Chinese students?*

TC The biggest difference is that Chinese students are studying all the time to specialise in Peking opera. In ISTA my work was just one of the fields of experience for western actors. They did not just learn "Chinese style".

FR *Were there other differences as well, such as greater or lesser interest or concentration in work?*

TC Yes, even in this there was a notable difference. When they start at the Peking Opera School, the children are only ten years old. They do not understand what it is, what exactly they are learning, they cannot get a general picture. They imitate one by one the gestures and movements that the master teaches. Only after six or seven years, when they are about to leave school which lasts eight years, then a motivation begins to appear, they begin to understand and know what they want. Therefore, some do not continue as actors at the end of school. But the western actors at ISTA were all adults, all showed great interest and willingness to work, as if they were more motivated. It was easy for me to explain and realise that they understood what I meant.

FR *Is this your first time teaching westerners?*

TC Yes. What struck me was seeing the rigidity of their bodies, their legs seemed almost unable to move. It was as if their body was not prepared or did not know how to work. Perhaps because they were already adults. Or perhaps because the tradition of western theatre is different from the Chinese one, where from the first day we start by teaching the entire technical basis of the actor in a physical way.

FR *Have you seen western theatre before?*

TC Yes, in America where I toured with Foo Hsing opera, and in Japan.

FR *In Taiwan there are groups of young people who do western theatre. What do you think of these young people who do not follow the tradition, but want to apply a style and model that come from outside?*

TC Taiwan is full of films that come from abroad. Theatres from other countries regularly tour there. Everyone has their own style. And in every style, there are good things. Chinese theatre has a very strong tradition that goes back in time. All these influences can very well not only coexist but also merge and agree with our tradition.

FR *Here in ISTA you had the opportunity to follow from the inside and for a long time the work of Balinese, Indian and Japanese actors and dancers. What impressions did you have from this knowledge not only of their performances, but also of the individual ways of working out the technical bases?*

TC I had already seen Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Thai performances. But here in ISTA I realised that Peking opera is not based on dance like Balinese or Indian theatre. We are not dancers; our body does not move according to the principles of dance. I must admit that I was very impressed with Sanjukta's work and performances. I find that Indian theatrical forms are a lot more elaborate, more refined than the Peking opera. The control of every small part of the body, the coordination of the different movements,

which are often mutually contrasting, and above all the way of using the eyes is truly extraordinary. And the complex play of the individual fingers.

FR *Do you already have an opinion about the possible consequences that the experience of ISTA will have on your work?*

TC The most interesting was having to teach in a completely new situation, with people and students very different from my usual ones. This situation in itself requires a new way of teaching, I would say that it also teaches the teacher. On my return to Taiwan I want to be much stricter, more energetic with my students, they must really apply themselves. In ISTA it was above all the discipline and the will to work, of both students and of the other teachers, which struck me the most.

FR *You left China to move to Taiwan in 1937. Your parents died and, while on tour in Taipei, you decided to stay there. Did you ever see or meet Mei Lan-Fang when you were in China?*

TC I have seen him several times on stage. I only met him once in 1932 in Shanghai. He was an extraordinary actor. I do not think it will be possible to see such actors in China right now. Circumstances have changed profoundly. Students are no longer forced to study hard and to live the hard life of an apprenticeship that lasts many years. It is this hard life that makes an actor excellent. Mei Lan-Fang went through this internship. He was not afraid to devote himself. Today, the relaxation of the discipline results in a lowering of quality. I do not think we will be able to see actors like Mei Lan-Fang again.



Volterra, 1981



At the end of the Volterra session Franco Ruffini asked:

- 1) *What is the difference for you between the ISTA session in Bonn and that in Volterra?*
- 2) *What was your reaction when Eugenio Barba offered to take part in the ISTA pedagogical team?*

SANJUKTA PANIGRAHI

1. The work of this second session was less hard and much more reasoned than that of Bonn. The fact of collaborating daily with a western teacher (Toni Cots, Odin Teatret actor) and having the same students for two instead of one week, allowed me to maintain a closer relationship and be more effective with the participants. Above all I understood better Eugenio's project. Here in ISTA, we must not only teach, but we must also first and foremost be aware of the different learning methods in order to be able to contribute to the work of the teachers who come from other traditions.

2. When Eugenio invited me to collaborate in ISTA, I was very happy to be able to contribute to the influence and dissemination of the odissi dance to which I have devoted all my life. I now know that by staying true to my tradition, I can also commit to following a road that is common to all those who express themselves through performing. There are laws that are valid for everyone.

KATSUKO AZUMA

1. I noticed a big difference between the two sessions. For me, last year was the first time I went abroad. Secondly, the organisation and even Eugenio, his role and the way he works have changed a lot. In the first session, the two moments, practical and theoretical, were quite distinct. This year, in Volterra, with the daily encounter which was called the “family time”, we could talk more directly with people. For two months we could even trigger conflicts and struggles which are always very useful in a teaching situation.

2. When Eugenio invited me to Bonn, I was interested in his proposal and in the contact with western actors that the school would allow me to establish. In general, Japanese actors and masters do not like to leave their country and tradition and are not interested in confronting other forms of acting. In this regard, I am very different. Already last year, in the first session, I followed with such attention the work of other Asian teachers and Odin actors, to the point that an Odin actor called me the curious child of ISTA. Here in Volterra, I paid close attention to the work of Tage Larsen. Thanks to ISTA, I have become more precise in my body. Those who have seen me dance after Bonn have said that the way I dance has changed. My long apprenticeship in Japan as well as my teaching of Japanese students were based on an automatic physical transmission of dance. In a different context like this, by explaining the technique from a practical point of view, by returning to these sources, I became more aware of my heritage from a theoretical point of view, and more precise in my demonstrations. On my return to Japan, I will take Zeami and the other classical texts on Japanese theatre to reread them, to better understand them and rework them according to the principles and experience I acquired in ISTA.

I MADE PASEK TEMPO

1. This year, Eugenio and the teachers knew better what they wanted, and the work was easier, thanks to the experience. I am more satisfied with the work accomplished at the Volterra session than with that of the Bonn session, because I was simply a theatre man alongside other theatre people. The fact that there is a particular teaching or learning situation is foreign to my culture. During this session in Volterra, I gave a lot of performances and the Italian audience seemed very different from the German one. There are two kinds of extreme reactions: in Italy indifference or enthusiasm, in Germany a more uniform response, but less warm.

2. I am not so much interested in the business of theatre anthropology and the use that Eugenio may have made of my skill. I am still very happy to have been able to work for ISTA, either as a teacher or as an actor. For the first time I felt that others recognised the importance of my personality. ■

Translation: Judy Barba

Interviews photos: Nicola Savarese



Nando Tavian, Eugenio Barba, Franco Ruffini, Mirella Schino, Nicola Savarese,
ISTA 13, Seville, Spain, 2004 - Photo: Fiora Bemporad



Ingemar Lindh and Katsuko Azuma, ISTA 2, Volterra, Italy 1981 - Photo: Nicola Savarese

Clive Barker

Developing a New Language

Abstract: Originally published in Théâtre International (1, 1981. 19-22) by the English actor, director and scholar Clive Barker (Rose Bruford College, UK). In the article, Barker welcomes the new proposal of theatre anthropology launched by Barba and offers historical and theoretical keys of reflection inspired by the work conducted at ISTA. Barker also addresses the possibility of coexistence between practical research and its theoretical output.

Keywords: ISTA, Performing studies, Asian cultures, European theatre

Dear Eugenio Barba,

I welcome the inauguration of the International School of Theatre Anthropology. Nothing but good can come of it. The laboratory work led by yourself, Grotowski, and Brook during the last twenty years has materially enriched the resources of the theatre and many have been stimulated to pursue similar lines of research. Now that some way will exist for exchanging ideas and participating jointly in laboratory work in a practical situation rather than passing on information through the printed word, an opportunity will exist for rich cross-fertilization. I am particularly enthusiastic about the participation of theatre scholars in the school as a further step towards bridging the gap between practice and the critical understanding of it. I look forward to following the future work of the school and to participating in it.

In the meantime, there are a number of comments I would like to make on your paper, which I found very stimulating and educative when it draws my attention to the oriental theatre, but which contains certain features which I find difficult to accept. I offer these comments in a contributory spirit and not as negative criticism.

1. I do not know how easily the oriental masters can make their experience available to us, but I am concerned about making the results of the research available without the direct help of those artists. Expressive stage movement, or performance movement of any sort, must move beyond the 'everyday', but I am not sure that for us it can achieve that except through the coordinated awareness of the 'everyday'.

Perhaps your research will convince me, and I will learn new approaches, but at this stage I worry about approaching high-level skills without removing the habitual mal-coordinations and resulting tensions in the individual. In this I follow people like Alexander and Feldenkrais in seeing the first necessity as establishing the harmonic and hygienic use of the connections between head, spine, and pelvis before moving on to higher levels of



movement. Laban used oppositional and contrasted movements in different parts of the body, but only after neutralizing habitual usage in the body and 'centering' it.

You quite rightly point to the difficulties of taking over oriental techniques into occidental theatre. The oriental actor, and the classical ballet dancer, are trained in a particular technique, which may simply be too rigid for us to absorb. Some years ago, a choreographer here put eight ballet dancers into hospital on one production by asking them to do things which their training didn't account for. I have always worked on the principle that one has to release movement in space before beginning to subject it to discipline: one moves from anarchy to control. Otherwise the individual puts tension-stops along the path of the movement.

Crucial to your thesis is the ability to fall over before one puts the body in states of disequilibrium. The actor has to be able to cope with the problems that result from losing balance before he or she can find the confidence to go to extremes of balance. Otherwise, in my experience, the actor takes out 'insurance policies' against falling over, which manifest themselves as destructive and inhibiting tension-stops along the path of the movement. You get your oppositions, but they aren't necessarily the ones you are looking for.

2. I think certain questions arise when you couple oriental theatre and classical ballet. The comparisons you make are interesting but there are crucial differences. Classical ballet has built into the technique the "raised pelvis". The *plié* is not achieved by the same means as the bent legs in the Japanese theatre. The Japanese, and Balinese, must make extensive use of the muscle groups just above and inside the knee. Classical ballet dancers do not develop these muscles very strongly.

I wonder whether it might not be more profitable to take note of modern dance work, which does utilize the dropped pelvis and is based not so much on the total maintenance of equilibrium as on disturbance and recovery of equilibrium, as a means of approaching oriental theatre - there are stylistic connections through Denis-Shaun to Graham taken from oriental dance techniques.

3. Overall, what it seems to me you are seeking is kinetic energy. Potential energy which does not find its total outward expression. In my own work, I've always gone for giving the movement full range so that the actor experiences it, and then trying to get the actor to maintain the impulse towards the full range whilst making the restrained gesture.

You illuminate Japanese acting for me. What I have always seen was a group of people who must have trained to be able to perform the most extraordinary physical feats of strength and agility but who only use the ability on almost minimal movements. I regret my ignorance of their training methods, which being master/apprentice-taught have never been adequately set down. A good reason for pursuing the work you set out.

F. Mathias Alexander has a series of exercises and practices which might help. To correct habitual mal-coordinations, Alexander worked on isolating actions and then running through all the chain-of-command short of making a movement. The patient/student then chose on what occasion the movement was to be fully followed through to completion. The practices were mainly designed to coordinate mind and body and to give control over specific actions whilst inhibiting inessential or contradictory movements, but the kinetic processes might be built upon.

4. The terminology of "When we walk normally, our hips follow the movement of our legs" distresses me. All movement should be initiated at the base of the spine. We don't have to bend our knees at all to create a fixed axis within our body. There is a naturally fixed axis if we wish to use it. If we take a vertical passing through the ear to the anterior of the ankle joint and a horizontal forward from the point where the spinal column enters the pelvic cradle, we arrive at the natural centre of gravity of the human body. This is best experienced for me by taking a line backwards halfway between the top of the pubic hair and the navel as the centre of the body, from which the upper torso and lower limbs articulate.

No doubt your research will find this out, but I've always felt that the Japanese drop this slightly and use as a centre the absolute tip of the spine, just to the rear of the rectum, whilst certain Chinese positions in the women, and Indian dancers, raise it slightly. There is no doubt in my mind that the Chinese men are working from bang on it. They would have grave difficulties in doing their movements any other way. In this they are close to certain western clowns.

5. The law of opposition is there in Meyerhold. All actions have a preparation, an action, and a recovery (which is usually the preparation for the next action). In the western mime the action is often made clear by stressing the preparation - which I think is what the Chinese are also doing, but in a different stylized manner. A lot of this has to do with the way the impulse is released from the preparation, and how the recovery is controlled. Western theatre movement constantly inhibits the strength of both the preparation and the recovery, and the action itself is consequently weak - often, one would say, weaker than a corresponding action in 'everyday' life.

6. I have a feeling that everything you are looking for is there in another source, which is much more accessible to occidental cultures. Most of what you seem to be looking for, beyond the examination of oriental theatre forms (which is valuable for its own sake and may be valuable for ours), is there in Buster Keaton. And Keaton, in his hey-day, could obviously turn it on and off like a tap.

Keaton gets the kinetic energy and spatial economy from concentrating his work in the immediate present. There is no reflection - what we get is the present process of reflection, but the actor does not reflect on the past. There is no intending into the future in the actor - what we see is the physical representation of intending, both in time and space. But the actor remains in a heightened present tense. And that is what gives him the kinetic energy charge.

All of what I have written may be relevant to the projects you set out in your paper, or not. Indeed, all you set out in your paper may be of the greatest possible importance, or illusory. The only way we will find out is by testing it in practice, and practice will push us to develop the language through which to define concepts and activities more clearly in our theoretical writings. ■



International School of Theatre Anthropology
Director: Eugenio Barba

Le regard qui sait voir

Die Sicht, die zu sehen weiss

The look that knows how to see

SYMPOSIUM INTERNATIONAL D'ANTHROPOLOGIE THEATRALE

Bonn, 24 - 26 octobre 1980

De même que nous ne savons pas ce que c'est qu'un esprit,
nous ignorons ce que c'est qu'un corps.
Nous voyons quelques propriétés; mais quel est le sujet en
qui ces propriétés résident ?
Il n'y a que des corps, disaient Démocrite et Epicure;
Il n'y a point de corps disaient les disciples de Zénon d'Elée.

(VOLTAIRE, Dictionnaire Philosophique, " Corps")

oOo

CALENDRIER :

- Vendredi 24 octobre 20 h. Première rencontre
- Samedi 25 10 h. Séance de travail
13 h. Déjeuner
15 h. Séance de travail
19 h.30 Dîner
- Dimanche 26 09 h.30 Séance de travail
12 h.30 Déjeuner
14 h. Henri LABORIT : réflexions
16 h.30 Epilogue
19 h.30 Dîner

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Le Symposium se terminera là où généralement commencent les autres.
Théatologues et scientifiques sont invités à voir pour prendre
ultérieurement la parole : mais, quelques jours après la

Correspondence to:

□ Direction: Odin Teatret - Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, Box 118, DK-7500 Holstebro, Denmark. Tel. (07) 42 42 12

□ Administration: Kulturamt der Stadt Bonn, Kurfürstendamm 2-3, 5300 Bonn 2, Federal Republic of Germany. Tel. (02221) 83 06 23

fin du symposium, et, par écrit.

Nous souhaitons qu'ils choisissent, indépendamment du
volume de leur contribution, les conventions du style
épistolaire, plutôt que celles des articles spécialisés
et des monographies scientifiques.

Nous sommes tous des gastronomes du théâtre et nous
déplorons parfois qu'il n'existe plus personne qui
sache le bien cuisiner.

Encore faut-il que les bons cuisiniers aient quelqu'un
qui sache comment manger.

LES CONVIVES :

- | | |
|--|---|
| Antonio ATTISANI, Théatologue, Italie | Alina OBIDNIAK, Teatr Im.C. Norwida, Pologne |
| Monique BANU, Théatologue, France | Zbigniew OKSTURA, Architecte, Pologne |
| Reiner BOEHKE, Théatologue, Allemagne | Wilfried PASSOW, Théatologue, Allemagne |
| Elias BOSBOOM, Théatologue, Pays-Bas | Jean-François PEYRET, Théatologue, France |
| Mette BOVIN, Anthropologue, Danemark | Jean PRADIER, Psycholinguiste, France |
| Manfred BRAUNECK, Théatologue, Allemagne | Kostanty PUZYNA, Théatologue, Pologne |
| Ranka BILELJAC, Biologiste, Yougoslavie | Enrico REGAZZONI, Théatologue, Italie |
| Eugenio CASINI-ROPA, Théatologue, Italie | Nicole REVEL MACDONALD, Anthropologue, France |
| Frank COPPIETERS, Théatologue, Belgique | Franco RUFFINI, Sémiologue, Italie |
| Fabrizio CRUCIANI, Théatologue, Italie | Nicola SAVARESE, Théatologue, Italie |
| Jean-Jacques DAETWYLER, Physicien, Suisse | Klaus R. SCHERER, Psycholinguiste, Allemagne |
| Barry EDWARDS, Théatologue, Angleterre | Mirella SCHINO, Observateur, Italie |
| Xavier FABREGAS, Théatologue, Espagne | Peter SCHUBERT, Medecin, Allemagne |
| Pierre FEDIDA, Psychanalyste, France | Maria STEN, Théatologue, Mexique |
| Stefano GERACI, Observateur, Italie | Adele SUBER, Observateur, Italie |
| Robert GUNTER, Ethnomusicologue, Allemagne | Ferdinando TAVIANI, Sociologue, Italie |
| Stig KRABBE BARFOED, Critique, Danemark | Raymonde TENKINE, Théatologue, France |
| Jerzy GROTOWSKI, Pologne | Toni TORDERA, Sémiologue, Espagne |
| André HELBO, Sémiologue, Belgique | Ugo VOLLI, Sémiologue, Italie |
| Henri LABORIT, Biologiste, France | Christel WEILER, Théatologue, Allemagne |
| Günther LOHR, Théatologue, Allemagne | Maria BERWID OSINSKA, Théatologue, Pologne |
| Eduardo MANET, Dramaturge, France | Zbigniew OSINSKI, Théatologue, Pologne |
| Claudio MELDOLESI, Théatologue, Italie | Jean-Pierre THIRAUDAT, Critique, France |
| Renata MOLINARI, Théatologue, Italie | |

LES CUISINIERS :

• De L' Inde : Orissi Dance

Sanjukta Panigrahi

et

Raghunath Panigrahi

Jagdish Burman

Ganqadar Pradhan

Bishnu Mohan Pradhan

• De Japon : Buyo Dance (Kabuki)

Katsuko Azuma

et

Michi Imafuji

Shizu Kineya

• De l' Indonésie : Théâtre et danse de Bali

I Made Pasek Tempo

et

I Wayan Suweca

I Wayan Punia

I Gusti Nyoman Tantra

I Dewa Ayu Ariani

Desak Ketut Susilawati

Desak Putu Puspawati

Wayan Gatri

Ni Made Putri

Ni Made Wati

• De la République de Chine : Peking Opera

Tsao Chun-Lin

Lin Chun-Hui

• De l' Odin Teatret

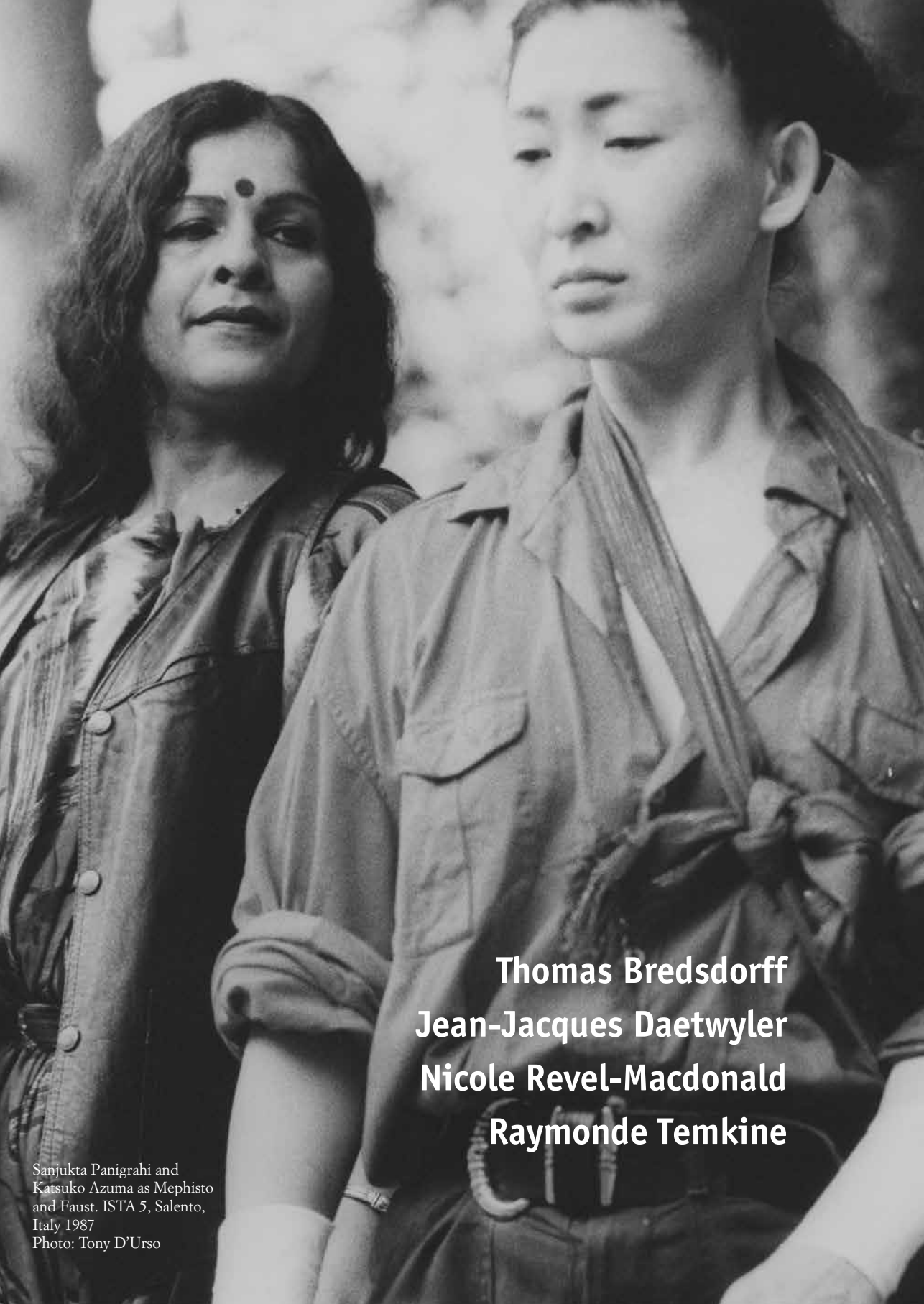
Toni Cots

Iben Nagel Rasmussen

Eugenio Barba



Valentin Temkine, Raymonde Temkine, Leif Bech, Desak Ketut Susilawati, Kostanty Puzyna, Toni Cots, Richard Fowler, Walter Ybema, Eugenio Barba, Symposium ISTA 1, Bonn, Germany 1980 - Photo: Nicola Savarese



Thomas Bredsdorff
Jean-Jacques Daetwyler
Nicole Revel-Macdonald
Raymonde Temkine

Sanjukta Panigrahi and
Katsuko Azuma as Mephisto
and Faust. ISTA 5, Salento,
Italy 1987
Photo: Tony D'Urso

Letters after the First ISTA Symposium

Abstract: For the Symposium organised during the first session of ISTA (Bonn 1980), Eugenio Barba asked the guests to write their comments on what they had seen. The letters by Thomas Bredsdorff, Jean-Jacques Daetwyler, Nicole Revel-Macdonald and Raymonde Temkine, presented here in an English translation, were originally published in La scuola degli attori, edited by Franco Ruffini (Firenze 1981).

Keywords: Thomas Bredsdorff, Jean-Jacques Daetwyler, Nicole Revel-Macdonald, Raymonde Temkine.

THOMAS BREDSORFF

The Theatrical Theory of Gravity

A comment on theatre anthropology

Dear Eugenio,

As you know, I have followed your work over the years with keen interest, sincere respect and some reservations. We have very different points of departure. But as the times change, so do differences. I take your present venture into what you have chosen to call theatre anthropology and your invitation to comment upon it as a welcome opportunity to reformulate our differences as I see them today, at the beginning of the '80s.

In one of the papers introducing your new project you have defined the science you wish to found, as follows: "It is the study of human behaviour on a *biological* and socio-cultural level in a situation of representation." I have italicised the term to which I want to pay particular attention.

"Anthropology" is a hospitable and all-embracing concept which lends itself to many uses. Not only the sociologists and the ethnographers use it. Also the theologians, the philosophers, and the historians of ideas have adapted it in a variety of contexts, whose only common ground is "knowledge about man". So there is no reason why it should not also be used by students of the theatre.

You have, however, something much more specific in mind when introducing the term "anthropology", so far unknown in histrionic studies. Your emphasis, as far as I was able to detect from your writing, your talks, and your demonstrations with the four groups from Japan, China, India, and Bali, is on the biological or quasi-biological basis for theatrical representation. In what follows I shall concentrate on that particular emphasis.

We all have a body, actors and spectators alike. The human body is essential in the theatre. Non-corporal theatre is nonsense. You can accept, or actively search for, many kinds of poverty in the theatre. But you cannot conceive of a theatre without the human body or (as in puppet theatre) its representative.



The body has a number of basic needs. It must eat, sleep, drink, shit. It also needs various kinds of support in order not to collapse. By manipulating this latter need, the actor can create wonders.

The meeting of the basic needs, apparently, obeys certain natural laws. The obvious corollary is that the secondary needs - those in effect during corporal representation - must also obey certain laws. The actor who holds our attention does so in accordance with certain biological laws. Your theatre anthropology sets out to decipher and codify such laws.

The endeavour among artists and scholars to pin down universal principles of art can be traced back at least to the fabulous success of the natural sciences in Post-Renaissance times. Mechanical laws of insurmountable beauty and simplicity were shown to govern both the terrestrial bodies and the planets in the sky. The falling apple and the revolving moon both followed the principle of gravity as gradually revealed by Copernicus. Kepler, Galilei, Brahe, and finally expressed by Newton.

The success of the scientists was beyond dispute and became the object of a never ceasing inferiority complex on the part of the scholars. The rift between the "two cultures" gave rise to two lines in post 17th century scholarship and thinking about the arts: one line emphasised the incompatibility between the humane branches of knowledge and the natural sciences; the other one tried to emulate the sciences by imitating their reductionism and search for simple universal categories. I need only remind you of the title of the work of Charles Batteux to illustrate briefly what I have in mind. He called his product of many years of research *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (1746), which indicates his attempt to do to the arts what Newton had done to the motions of physical bodies.

The principles to which the arts have been reduced have varied over the years from that of Batteux (which was a mimetic one) to that of A. J. Greimas in his *Sémantique structurale* (1966) (which is one of universal contradictions), but the search for universal constants regardless of ideological and cultural meaning has remained with us ever since at least the 18th century and has been productive in the thinking of creative artists from time to time as well, notably with the late 19th century naturalists.

Le roman expérimental by Zola is a manifest not simply about new and hitherto unseen art forms (as the much-misused term "experimental" has come to mean in modern journalese), but about artistic work modelled on the scientific laboratory experiments with their carefully controlled conditions. Zola and his co-naturalists wanted to demonstrate scientifically and non-subjectively how human beings behave when exposed to the dual set of objective social conditions and *les fatalités de leur chair* (preface to *Thérèse Raquin*, 1868).

The contrast, however, between the success of the natural sciences and the very limited success of the scientifically minded humanities is striking.

When a Newton is outmoded by an Einstein, it is not in the sense that the older findings are discarded. They still apply to the kind of observations on which they were founded, but new evidence is introduced and older theories are modified and enlarged upon so as to cover evidence that was experimentally inaccessible in older times.

When a Batteux is outmoded by a Zola, and a Zola by a Greimas, something totally different happens. What to one age and one social class appeared to be the nature of art,

is done away with as unconscious ideology by the next. This is not to say that everything is equally true in artistic matters, but rather that art and artistic theory is a seemingly ceaseless demasking by one generation or social class of what appeared to be nature by the previous one.

Hence most attempts at pinpointing the nature of this or that in the history of the humanities have failed. Hence so many definitions of the nature of art have proved, in hindsight, to be little more than historically determined experience ballooned into universal law.

Your attempt to detect the biological Laws of representation seems to me to carry much resemblance to such predecessors. Provided that there is some truth in this observation, you are subject to some of the same risks.

"Man has no nature, he has a history," said Ortega Y Gasset. Of course man has a nature. Nevertheless his statement is, I think, a sound one.

The body needs eating. But it can do without - or with unhealthy and 'wrong' nutrition - for an incredible length of time. The same is true of any of the other basic needs. How much more true, then, is not this modification of so-called natural laws concerning human beings when we get to such secondary natural laws as those governing theatrical representation. Man is the only unspecified animal, who has proven himself adaptable to the most unbelievable conditions anywhere on the planet - end even outside of it.

What you are detecting (and most skilfully demonstrating) in your Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Balinese actors, then, is not, as I see it, basic biological conditions of representation, but artistic principles which you in your work have found productive, notably the principle of withheld energy, the principle of reduced support of the body, and the principle of contrast or discrepancy between the various elements of representation.

"Anthropology", then, to my understanding of your present project, may be a misleading term. It has little or nothing to do with laws of human nature which everybody - and every body - has to obey now and forever. Rather it is a useful shortcut to a textbook of the Odin Experience, i. e. a way of making your own insights and achievements understandable and accessible to a new generation of theatre-makers and theatre-watchers.

Theatre can be made the way these four groups do it. It can be made the way Odin Teatret has done it. There are striking resemblances between some of the principles in their acting and in that of your actors, though much else can be detected in the way your guests act. But the similarities and the way you demonstrate them are eye-opening.

Seen in this light, I think your project is a sound one. It is important that a teacher who has something very important to teach should make himself as lucid as possible, in order that his students can know as clearly as possible what they can either learn from or depart from. You have said so yourself, in one of our conversations, and I could not agree more. Every pedagogue who has reached the age that you and I have reached, ought to do so. It is not an act of imposing oneself on one's students. It is much rather an act of liberating the students, of setting them free to choose for themselves, because it enables them to know exactly what they can obtain from this particular teacher.

Provided, that is, that the terms are quite clear. I have written this letter in an attempt to clarify the terms as I see them, and particularly because the concept of "anthropology",

with its added aura of universals and biological necessity, seems to obscure the terms a little.

Perhaps Odinology would be a more appropriate term.

All the best, Thomas

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JEAN-JACQUES DAETWYLER

Dear Eugenio,

You have asked us to react to what we have seen and understood at the Bonn Symposium. I respond to this invitation, not so much out of a sense of duty, but motivated in distilling all that struck me during those days, treasuring strong memories, like when I was in Carpignano, Belgrade and Bergamo.

But I will not dwell on everything I have learned during this exciting and stimulating meeting. Rather through this letter, I send you a disorderly mass of questions and doubts.

1. Laboratory work

Studying the work of actors in 'chemically pure' states, undoubtedly constitutes the condition for rigorous, scientific analysis. But this way of proceeding also involves risks:

- If you focus on certain aspects, you forget the context. This criticism was made several times during the Symposium. In fact, this is a challenge for all science since the fate of the scientist is to limit the field of investigation so as to grasp it with sufficient clarity and not get lost in a general blur. But you must pay the price. The ecological disaster is a consequence of this way of proceeding: focusing on the details has made us lose sight of the whole; and too many essential links and cycles have been ignored. From this point of view, theatre anthropology, as I understood it in Bonn, does not seem to me to be very 'ecological'. But the interdisciplinary character of the encounter was certainly a way of attenuating the division into compartments, and ensure attention to the multiple aspects of the context. The difficulty will perhaps lie in making this multidisciplinary structure work.

- Highlighting fundamental laws in performing can significantly increase the effectiveness of the actor's training. But perhaps this also involves the risk of a theatre centred on performance, as in the case of competitive sport, which is also based on scientific acquisitions. I know very well that this danger is completely absent at Odin Teatret. But discoveries mostly escape who makes them - as the latter is not responsible for the use that others make of them.

- The danger of reductivism should also be underlined: the temptation of placing theatre phenomena under the laws that concern the 'mechanics' of the performing body.

2. Energy

Do the actor's extra-daily techniques imply a greater expenditure of energy than common techniques? An objective answer would require measuring and quantifying this

energy, in a calorimetric room like for example the one used by Professor E. Jéquier in Lausanne. But as you rightly said, what counts is *how* the energy is put into form, and at times *how* the energy is distributed in different parts of the body. Training means acquiring the ability to mobilise one's energy and develop the in-formation processes of the body. Henri Laborit arrives at this idea with the metaphor of the car (the tank is full of petrol, but to start the car you need to insert the key and give this small element of energy that contains information).

3. Teaching without breaking the personality

Yes, seeing the very different moods of Iben Nagel Rasmussen's and Toni Cots' presentations at the Symposium, really makes me believe that this is achieved at Odin Teatret.

4. Dynamic balance of odissi dance postures

The painters and plastic arts experts, absent in Bonn, might have had something interesting to say. Analysing the refined compositions that Sanjukta Panigrahi achieved with her body, you made a good parallel with cubism. For my part, I could not help thinking of the concepts that Paul Klee develops in *Das Bildnerische Denken*.

5. The laws of extra-daily use of the body

Having identified these laws is an important achievement for science and a very useful contribution to theatre pedagogy. But I ask myself two kinds of questions:

- a) Spectators can be fascinated by an oriental performance, even if they are alien to the culture the performance belongs to and do not understand anything of what is being represented. Are your laws enough to explain this fascination? Hasn't the question just shifted? Why does the implementation of these laws create a feeling of fascination? What clicks in the spectators when they unconsciously 'see' that these laws are respected? Is the universal character (the same laws in different traditions) a sufficient explanation? Being fascinated implies an identification with the object of fascination, that in some way there is a phenomenon of 'resonance' between the actor performing and the spectator watching. But to speak of resonance means using a metaphor, a 'trap' word, a notion that has a very precise meaning for physicists in an analogical sense. What is the true nature of this 'resonance'? What process does this intense communication establish? Henri Laborit attempted an answer by developing the theme of narcissism. But even this is not entirely satisfactory, because then what is the place of the three laws in theatre anthropology in this psychoanalytic model? How do these laws which you have pointed out work in this context?
- b) Are we sure that these three laws are comprehensive? Aren't there others? As a physicist, I am surprised, for example, by the absence of the notion of space (apart from the specific expressions of 'energy in time' and 'energy in space'). Can we conclude that, for the actors, space is something too obvious to talk about, or that it is simply a 'container' they do not think they can grasp. From the point of view of physics, this would be considered as an illusion since different theories refer to different kinds of spaces. Is this problematic entirely foreign to the domain of

theatre? Doesn't the actor's performance create space or at least make it exist? And do the actors create an extra-daily space through the extra-daily use of their body? And what characterises it?

Another notion was absent: that of weight. This is certainly linked to the notion of space, but it implies the idea of inevitable constraint. How does one react to this constraint according to the extra-daily use of the body? Does the change of balance law fully answer this question?

Here are the observations I wanted to make. They are often inspired by a physicist's point of view: they are, perhaps, 'narcissistic', or I could say 'imperialist'. It is the risk of interdisciplinarity. But perhaps also its strength: by underlining the contrasts, real or illusory, we define sensitive areas, the delicate passages on which bridges need to be built.

All the best
Jean-Jacques

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NICOLE REVEL-MACDONALD

Dear Eugenio Barba,
I told you that I was stunned by Sanjukta Panigrahi's perfection, wisdom, and beauty, after watching the four hours of her marvellous demonstration. I felt equally stunned at the end of Iben Nagel Rasmussen's demonstration. However, each of them acted on me in a totally different way.

Sanjukta made me perceive the harmony emanating from the fusion with Nature in its material and spiritual totality, and this through a technique, a terminology, and a deeply precise and coherent representation of the world. Nevertheless, everything was overcome by what, in the West, we have the habit of calling 'inspiration', and which is rather an element that refracts the truth. In the oriental Buddhist traditions, pupils should rid themselves of intentions and individuality to become a master in their art.

But it is precisely an intention that characterises Iben's practice. It is an extremely acute and moving projection of the self that Iben performed, with powerful and vigorous gestures which she developed and which she elaborated observing the body techniques of masters from different Asian cultures.

It seems to me that, in the arts, body techniques have no other purpose than to be forgotten to allow the passage to a supreme and transcendental state.

Sanjukta is capable of giving her ceremonial dance something of her own inner life, but in so doing she seems to me in some way to be transported by her dance and therefore reveal all the theatrical, philosophical and religious tradition of her culture.

With her interpretation of Brecht's Kattrin and the South American shaman's drum dance, Iben is capable of giving a powerful expression of her inner life with each of her gestures, and her acts of interpretation seem to be experienced as a release of emotions

and impulses in full consciousness. But in doing so Iben manifests an entirely different cultural orientation, inherent to western behaviour and deeply self-centred. During her demonstration I wondered about the emotions and sensations that the Asian masters might feel while looking at her. Because, beyond herself, she was revealing a whole culture to them. A culture which I feel is that of anguish, violence, revolt, and despair.

Sanjukta's is the dance of the smile, Iben's is the dance of the scream, and the trait that unites them - beyond certain body techniques - is the intensity of truth.

I would now like to address another aspect of what these two days of demonstrations and your talks have allowed me to see: the law of opposition.

I think you touch a fundamental point there, not only concerning body techniques, but also for a way of thinking; a law that the humanistic sciences have discovered and explored since the beginning of the century. I will start from my fields: linguistics and anthropology.

Ferdinand de Saussure, who possessed the exceptional art of clarity and of concise metaphorical formulation, said while teaching: "In language there are only differences" and "what is important is the game of linguistic oppositions". In choosing the term "game", he was thinking of chess and consequently of combinatorics.

After Saussure, the Prague school with Nikolaj Trubetskoy, Roman Jakobson and many others discovered that the structural principle supporting and organising the sounds of languages is based on the law of oppositions, and that the fundamental tool for highlighting phonemes is a game of phonic changes in units endowed with meaning.

Later the linguists extended the method to all levels of the language oppositions, not only to morphosyntax, but also to semantics.

The essential contribution of Levi-Strauss lies, I think, in the transfer of the analytical methods of structural linguistics to the institutions and creations of human societies (the system of kinship, rituals, myths...), given that the opposition is a keystone in human logical activity. It is not surprising that eastern wisdom and sciences have equally discovered, expressed and implemented opposition in the arts. I am thinking of dance, but also of martial arts (archery, swordsmanship), calligraphy, floral composition, and the art of gardens.

I remember my surprise when I visited the famous gardens of Su-Zhou. I noticed with amazement that there were never straight lines in the avenues. One side was lined with walls covered with quotations and poems that favoured reflection and meditation, while the other was lined with light, almost transparent walls, with stucco lacework, which revealed the landscape behind as a succession of paintings where the eyes of those who walked there could rest, according to their pace and mood.

I asked our Chinese hosts: "Why the broken lines?" One of them replied: "The broken line relaxes the spirit while the straight line tires it". This answer seems to indicate a whole psycho-physiological dimension of the law of oppositions, like what you tried to show us through the gestural aesthetics of the theatre artists you gathered at the ISTA session in Bonn (I think you used the term conflict).

I would like to add that I have noticed elsewhere in Asia - in animistic societies in The Philippines that do not emphasise representation arts - that a similar process is happening in oral art and, in particular, in the rhetoric of customary law. You pointed

out: “To jump I have to bend down; to point towards the right the movement originates on the left; to hit I withdraw to give shape to the blow”, etc. And you showed the very rigorous application in Peking opera of what, according to Grotowski, you called the “Chinese principle”.

I notice a similar procedure in the art of the formal wording, in the rhetoric of customary law. All the figures of speech that Fontanier refers to in the 18th century in France, and which are designated as ‘word flowers’ in the oral tradition societies that I study, seem to me subject to analogous laws: the law of opposition, the law of tension. And when I heard you speak of upward and downward positions, of diagonals, as gestural expressions of drama, I had the intuition of a correspondence at the level of the formal wording which only specialists manipulate with skill to highlight and try to resolve the conflicts that oppose people in their life in society.

An example: in Palawan society, when a village chief needs to reproach a respectful group of fellow citizens, he begins a calm monologue accusing himself. He absolutely avoids attack. With this expedient or inversion, he allows the people to become aware of their guilt without humiliating them, and his self-accusation triggers a recognition of their own mistakes. I have many other examples.

This perhaps will allow you to demonstrate in another register what you present at the level of the logic of the *bios* and that I cannot demonstrate because I still know very little about biology. Because of my ethnolinguistic orientation until today, I mostly research the cultural specificity of the societies I know and that I am responsible for describing.

One of my favourite exercises when travelling on foot or by bus is to try to identify the socio-cultural background of the people I meet. In the multi-ethnic small streets of Palawan, I can identify the Jama Mapum Islamic group living on the coast, the original Christian inhabitants, the immigrants and the indigenous *palawalls* who are animists from the mountains, by looking at the silhouettes, ways of walking or clothes. I recently became aware of repeating what Marcel Mauss taught me in his article “Techniques of the body”. Without having been a direct pupil of Mauss, I think that his teaching, with the notion of “total social fact”, has shaped the entire French school of anthropology for two generations.

So, as an anthropologist, I felt troubled and surprised by your attempt to create a school of theatre anthropology. In this attempt of transplantation an essential element was missing: language as a guide to social reality. This point of view was defended by Sapir in the USA. Without the whole authentic context, the dances lose their social and philosophical function.

But, as an anthropologist, I think that the observations you have triggered and which you will develop in the future, as well as the problems you have raised in my conscience, are fundamental and deserve all our attention and analytical efforts.

Linguists and anthropologists aim to describe and analyse exemplary societies. This first phase of their work leads them to a monography. However, their thinking opens up after accumulating observations, experiences and knowledge while searching for universal values. I think the “pre-expressive level” that plagues you and that is still so difficult to express in our languages, is part of this type of research.

I still cannot find an answer to many problems: energy, localisation, movements,

relations with the universe... However, the two days in Bonn were full of light and joy. I returned to Paris invigorated, and for this I thank you.

Nicole

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RAYMONDE TEMKINE

Dear Eugenio,

The exchange or ‘barter’ is also practiced by the guests and participants at the Bonn Symposium. Let's make a barter, then.

We saw Odin Teatret (with Toni Cots and Iben Nagel Rasmussen), and the *how* and *why* of their work, like a specialist looking at a machine to understand how it works, and we saw the theatre practice of performers from Bali, China, Japan and India.

Comparing eastern and western theatre practices made me wonder what each form demands from the other. On reflecting on what the Chinese performers, and then Iben, showed us on the same day, I concluded that no barter is possible between these two theatrical expressions; one can benefit the other, but reciprocity is not true.

The young Chinese girl was in the hands of her teacher, who literally shaped her *perinde ac cadaver*, as if she were a corpse (this was even more evident in the film about the dance training of the Balinese children). It will take many years for her body to accumulate, store, and embody the techniques that will be the basis of perfect acting, equalling that of her teacher, who in turn learned from a teacher. And one day she too will have pupils (who will later have pupils) to whom she will pass on this precious and immutable heritage. Which of our western techniques could she use, that hasn't already been codified by Chinese theatre: a new way of advancing by sliding on the floor, a new way to roll the eyes?

On the contrary, the western actors aim at originality and being oneself, rather than perfection. If they are proud of having had teachers, it is because they have freed themselves from them. They don't try to reproduce given signs, but to invent new ones; teachers stimulate, rather than proposing or imposing models. So, the technique wisely elaborated from generation to generation in the East has a lot to teach the western actors, enriching their means or, even better, showing them how to master their body and make use of its possibilities.

In these two tendencies - the eastern and western - we can see two sides that are as dissimilar as, for example, Catholicism and Protestantism. Catholics are faithful to the teaching based on the Holy Scriptures and on tradition; every modification is heretic; the received load must be transmitted intact. Protestants interpret the Bible in their own way. Calvin can separate himself from Luther, and each can form his own model, his ‘reading’, just like the western artists who ‘read’ the received tradition in their own way, interpreting and adapting it.

Another surprise: the similarity between certain typical traditional characters in Bali and in the Commedia dell'Arte: the *capitano*, the arrogant, etc.

How did these contaminations occur? Or through which archetypes? We leave these questions to the specialists.

Raymonde

Translation: Julia Varley



Augusto Omolu in *Orô de Otelô*, ISTA 11, Montemor-O-Novo, Portugal 1988
Photo: Fiora Bemporad

REFLECTIONS and DISCUSSIONS



Gennadi Bogdanov, Thomas Leabhart, ISTA 14, Wrocław, Poland, 2005 - Photo: Francesco Galli



Pei Yan Ling, actress of Hebei opera, in a male role. ISTA 4, Holstebro, Denmark 1986
Photo: Torben Huss

Nando Tavianì

The Energy of the Actor

Abstract: In this article of 1987, the Italian scholar Nando Tavianì offers a view of the actor's "energy" as a "premise" for artistic and theoretical research. Elaborating the fundamentals of theatre anthropology and replying to common objections, Tavianì defines theatre anthropology as a "hand-made theory". Ian Watson later considered this definition as one of the most successful. Tavianì also discusses the relationship of theatre anthropology with science and the complementarity of energy as animus and anima according to Barba. The article was originally published in French in the journal Bouffonneries (15-16, L'énergie de l'acteur. Anthropologie Théâtrale 2, 1987, 23-32).

Keywords: Actor's energy, Theatre anthropology, Hand-made theory

1. When we ask ourselves about the energy of the actor we immediately encounter two objections:

a) how is it possible to carry out objective research into such a delicate phenomenon, in such a vague field?

b) *cui prodest?* - and if research is possible, for what purpose?

A third objection is not formulated in words, but results, rather, in an attitude of disparagement. When the researcher is an artist, that is, someone who has experience in the field of phenomena s/he is investigating, the reaction of some is to consider it pointless to discuss the objective value of his or her findings. They seem to say: "The artists' words interest us solely as an expression of their individual theory of art, as a demonstration of their inner world. Let's stop at this and let's not bother going beyond."

This is an attitude typical of those who work in the theatre as historians, critics, or journalists. They often fall into the trap of giving more credit to a theoretical framework that neatly mirrors other theoretical frameworks (semiology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc.) than to a theory born with its own language from reflection on a wide field of experiences.

2. The first objection derives largely from the fact that "energy" is one of the terms commonly used to indicate a certain 'something' pertaining to actors, the heart of their art and of their charm. It is a question of words. The actor's "energy" is nothing inexpressible or secret. The word is often used rather vaguely to indicate a phenomenon that is difficult to analyse conceptually. An actor or actress is said to have "extraordinary energy" in the same way that they are said to have charm, seductiveness, or genius. When discussing a good actor, one soon reaches the barrier of that 'something' difficult or impossible to define, clear to experience, but obscure when one tries to put it into words.



This 'something' escapes analysis, not because it transcends physical reality, but simply because it transcends the plane of analysis. Like any other art, that of the actor too cannot be - even mentally - dismantled and reassembled. Its results are organic, not mechanical units: the synthesis of the various elements composes a new element. Theatrical action, like the images analysed by Roland Barthes, can possess a "third sense", which escapes the critical meta-language and even renders it sterile. But this is not what we mean, when we ask ourselves, in a scientific way, about the energy of the actor.

The actor's energy is something precise, recognisable by all: it is his or her muscular and nervous strength. It is not the pure and simple existence of this force that interests us - by definition it exists in every living body. We are interested in how it is modelled. And we are interested in a very particular perspective: at every moment of our life - whether conscious or not we model our force. In the theatre there is, however, something more: not to move, act, be present and intervene in the surrounding world, but to act, move and be present in a theatrically effective way. Studying the actor's energy means, therefore, asking questions about the underlying principles on which actors model their muscular and nervous force, in a way that is different from what happens in everyday life. The various constellations of these principles form the basis of different techniques: of Decroux or of kabuki; of noh or classical ballet, of Delsarte or kathakali. Or different individual techniques: of Buster Keaton and Dario Fo, of Totò or Marcel Marceau, of Ryszard Cieslak or Iben Nagel Rasmussen.

Underlying all these differences are there any constant factors?

Eugenio Barba asked himself this question. He created the conditions in which to physically compare actors from different traditions. He set up, as in any good laboratory, experimental situations. And he succeeded in identifying a transcultural dimension of the actor's work: the pre-expressive level. This dimension does not underestimate the importance of expressive differences and different codes, nor does it ignore the profound variety of cultures, societies and histories. It does not affirm a concept of actor in the singular, whose essence would always be identical in any country or era. The transcultural dimension of the actor concerns the pre-expressive level.

We must, indeed, become accustomed to considering the actor's work as a complex organism, in which different levels of organisation can be discerned. The pre-expressive level of organisation is the one that enables the actor to capture and direct the attention of spectators through his own stage presence, even before expressing or performing anything. "Even before" must be understood in a logical, not chronological sense, because it does not necessarily indicate a moment that can be isolated in time.

There are many examples of an actor-spectator relationship based on the pure pre-expressive level. Think of certain situations where the actor fascinates even the spectator who knows nothing about what s/he is representing, who does not know the story, nor the language, nor the conventions the actor is using. Or think of some examples of pure dance, where it is not the music, but the physical score of the actor-dancer that charms the imagination of the observer and launches it on a particular voyage. In the light of these considerations, our answer to the first of the two objections mentioned should be sufficiently clear: the phenomenon is perhaps delicate, but it is certainly not imprecise.

3. Occasionally someone asks: "But is the transcultural dimension of the actor's work more or less important than the heritage of this or that civilisation, doctrine, convention or artistic personality?"

This is a very fallacious way of reasoning. Historical and personal distinctions are the most important from the point of view of result. They make it exist in the sense that they individualise it, they determine its value and its expressive force. General and transcultural principles governing the energy of the actor at a pre-expressive level are, on the other hand, the most important from the point of view of process, in the sense that they are its seed: the identical seed of various individualities and lineages. We can study how and why this happens. This does not mean ignoring the many other things happening in the theatre, between the actor and the spectator. No research ever aims to diminish the value of what it is not researching.

I have heard some actors and some enthusiastic spectators say, about this kind of research: "Yes, but that's not the most important thing!". It's true. Rain is the most important thing for those who are thirsty, not the water tank. And this is also true: many water tanks carefully built to last remain dry and empty. On the other hand, without channels and water tanks, the water - if it comes - is dispersed.

4. The second objection - *cui prodest?* for what purpose? - relies on the separation (frequently seen) between the theories and the practice of theatrical work. Hence the disinterest, uneasiness or suspicion around questions that seem too intellectual and abstract. "What is the point - the objection goes - of asking what the actor's energy consists of, given that the results will be subtle, abstract knowledge, a 'philosophy' suitable for book-learning, but which will not give the actor any practical hints, or concrete working method?" Some people wonder: "Why does a master like Eugenio Barba let himself be caught up by abstraction and pure research, instead of continuing to dedicate himself to intensive and personalised pedagogical activity?"

The history of 20th century performance contains at least one other similar case: that of Eisenstein and his writings on the theories of "non-indifferent nature" and montage. Although everyone recognises their importance, these writings are still received today with a certain unease and continue to be undervalued in the imaginary order of bibliographies. They do not simply enunciate the artist's personal visions; they do not reconstruct his system (as in the case of Decroux's *Paroles* on mime or Bresson's "notes" on cinema); but neither do they use the language and structure of the scientific treatise. They are not based, in fact, on an objective, geometrically ordered structure, or on a general theory, but on the narrative of actual, and therefore personal, experience. But neither are they "how-to" manuals that transmit techniques. They speak first and foremost to the artists, but to drown them, paradoxically, with waves of disparate examples, to persuade them of the existence of certain fundamental rules, which return in different forms in different artistic contexts: Eisenstein jumps from cinema to architecture, from architecture to figurative art, from figurative art to the novel.

The term "hand-made theories" has been given to this kind of approach, perhaps because, like an artisanal product, it bears the mark of the craftsman, and because it establishes a dialogue with the reader based on hints, suggestions, fractures.



Torgeir Wethal as Faust and Kanichi Hanayagi as Margaret, ISTA 6, Bologna, Italy, 1990.
Photo: Tony D'Urso

“Hand-made theories” do not provide global interpretations, but constellations of principles, systems of orientation, which, as such, transcend the various technical paths and individual experiences.

Abstract principles but practical ones, as they derive from practical experiences: they filter the broad learning hidden in sectorial knowledge. Techniques transmit an aggregation of innumerable experiences - the *map* of an explored country. Defining systems of orientation transmits the tools for opening a *path* through different, unknown territories.

The former teach already acquired knowledge; the latter teach how to learn. This, in short, is their usefulness.

It therefore follows that orientation systems are principles of transformation. And every transformation, to succeed, needs a pivotal centre, something that remains constant throughout changes - otherwise it would mean wandering about aimlessly.

The research that Eugenio Barba conducts through ISTA on the pre-expressive level of actors/dancers and on the various aspects of their energy, leads to results that have all the characteristics of a “hand-made theory”. The oriental masters who have been part of the ISTA team for six years testify to the importance of the discovery of a transcultural orientation system for their professional identity. It is the bridge across which they can open up to experiences different from their tradition, without straying even an inch from their own artistic orthodoxy. It allows them to pass on to others, especially to westerners, not the rudiments of a tradition that practically no one would manage to master, but the translatable core of a knowledge that can become common.

Anyone with experience of the misunderstandings arising from contact (albeit unavoidable) between theatre people from the East and the West, will not underestimate the importance of similar principles of conjunction and transformation. Nor will it be underestimated by those who know the price of the rigidity that the custodians of traditions are often obliged to pay, though their profound wisdom arouses the admiration and envy of those who look at them from afar.

The western tradition, marked by the schism between theatre and dance and by the emphasis on the actor's originality and individuality, often exaggerates, by contrast, the importance of techniques, pedagogical methodologies and artistic doctrines.

Aspiring actors, forced to teach themselves even when attending schools, often vacillate between a naïve exaltation of talent and of ‘inspired’ liberty, and the equally naïve consolation of faithfully performed psychophysical exercises.

From this point of view, the utility of simple, clear systems of orientation, capable of supporting the actor/dancers' way of thinking, even before their way of behaving, is even more evident. It is an objective guide for their personal path. It is in this sense that the term “science”, applied to theatre anthropology, shows at the same time its general and specific validity. General validity, because theatre anthropology is *scientia* (knowledge) as indeed, above anything else, are all the “sciences”. Specific validity, because this general *scientia* serves, pragmatically, to construct individual paths.

5. A feature common to all “hand-made theories”, whether of Arthur Koestler, Eisenstein or Barba, consists in defining the principles by applying them in passing from



1. The Indian odissi dance female impersonator Kelucharan Mahapatra. 2. Laksmi Desak Made Suarti in a vigorous *keras* position (Bali). 3-4. Kanichi Hanayagi, buyo kabuki, as *onnagata* and samurai. ISTA 4, Holstebro, 1986, Denmark - Photos: Torben Huss

one level of experience to another. In his essay “The Dilated Body”,¹ Barba applies to dramaturgical composition the principles he identified as the bases of the pre-expressive work of actors from different cultures. In other words, he takes them from the physical to the mental plane.

The research then enters a border zone. The physical equivalent of the modelling of energies, its mental counterpart, resembles what the Greeks called *rythmós*, which characterises life, distinguishes it, and gives it an individual imprint.

Another procedure typical of “hand-made theories” consists in unexpectedly combining artisan elements and mental perspectives. These juxtapositions go against academic *bon ton* and sometimes arouse reactions of rejection from those who distrust any contact between the physical and the metaphysical, even though these ‘rough’ combinations often create valuable working tools.

The rigorous division between the sphere of craft and technique and that of the imaginary (an activity which is itself also a technique) is not a requirement imposed by work or rational justification. This division is imposed by convention, by timidity of thought and by the fear that a scientifically defined principle will lose its strength when it comes into contact with an analogy based on intuition. The actor’s energy, if one follows it in its transformations, reveals certain characteristics and polarities of its own that can serve as a starting point for new orientations.

In his pedagogical practice and in his theoretical writings, Eugenio Barba constantly warns against the error of identifying energy with muscular tension or nervous contraction, with a show of vigour or rapidity of action. In some demonstrations, Barba indicates how energy can be ‘absorbed’: the inner mobilisation of an internal force remains the same although it is manifested in increasingly intense actions and in actions increasingly confined in space.

Many masters, in particular Etienne Decroux and the actors of the various Japanese theatre traditions, underline the importance for the actor/dancer of this mobilisation of energy which serves, not to create movement, but to resist another force, real or imaginary. Underlying the principles that govern the actor’s pre-expressive work there is, therefore, an implicit polarity between forces of movement and forces of resistance. If we look closely at this polarity, we will see that it suggests at its two poles two different ‘colours’ of the same ever-changing energy. The transition from one of these two ‘colours’ to the other, through the entire range of shades in between, is what Barba calls the “dance of energy”.

Two other poles, two other qualities of the actor’s energy, much more difficult to define, manifest themselves in the discrepancy between gender and temperament. They can be glimpsed, but they do not identify with this discrepancy any more than they determine it. Barba speaks of an *animus* quality and an *anima* quality of the actor’s energy. For him the difference and the fundamental identity between these two aspects, or these two ‘colours’, could be compared to what in the classical period and in the Middle Ages was defined as the difference and the fundamental identity between two aspects of the same vital principle. The distinction between two facets of strength, one ‘vigorous’,

1. Eugenio Barba, Nicola Savarese, *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer*, Routledge, London and New York, 2006, 52-61. (Ed. note)



1. Kanichi Hanayagi in a female role and Katsuko Azuma in a male role. 2. Mei Lan-Fang's son, Mei Bao-Jin, in a *dan* female role. 3. K.N. Vijaya, kathakali, in a female role, ISTA 4, Holstebro, 1986, Denmark - Photos: Torben Huss

the other 'soft' (very close to the distinction between an *animus* energy and an *anima* energy) illustrates a technical principle specific to various theatre traditions. It is part of the vocabulary used by actors/dancers to distinguish the various elements of their work without identifying with a male/female distinction, neither regarding the gender of the actor, nor that of the character.

When we talk about polarity for the actor's energy, we are talking about cultural and unnatural phenomena. The research is not about what an actor's energy is, but what it can be when it is artificially modelled. Being able to name the various faces of energy and therefore differentiate them is an essential prerequisite if we want to be able to consciously shape and control them. When Barba talks about the "dance of energies" he is not using a metaphor, as if he were talking about the dance of a ray of light on water. He is speaking literally of an actor or actress who gives form, rhythm, and variety to their own energy flow and then dances, even at the level of the pure and simple use of their forces. Certain actors and actresses, helped by circumstances, by so-called 'talent' or 'instinct', or even guided by long professional experience, know how to enhance their stage presence - the pre-expressive level - without resorting to a system of conscious differentiations. But in most cases it is necessary to know how to distinguish in order to control one's behaviour, to artificially reconstruct it until it again becomes alive, organic and thus theatrically effective.

Certain moments and certain episodes in the history of the theatre allow us to understand logically this delicate work of the actor, which consists in the analysis of his own stage energy in order to be able to interpret it and enrich it with variations. In many cases, behind the discrepancy between the gender of the actor-actress and the gender of the character lies - more or less explicitly - the technical (but not only technical) need to broaden the field of the persona. This need can be seen in a context of social conditioning, theatrical conventions, mentality and culture, in different countries and at different times. But it can also be considered in the context of the elements that remain constant as actors, traditions and theatres change. Similarly, the way in which the role of women is defined in the most diverse theatres can be seen as an index of customs, social and cultural codes but also as a result of the play between 'soft' energy and 'vigorous' energy, between *anima* and *animus*.

This latter perspective is certainly not the only correct one. Yet it is probably one of the most useful and stimulating, if only because it is less used than the other. It is in any case situated on the level of objectivity, that is, of dialogue and comparison and is not an expression of a personal artistic vision. It can therefore be tested, both through practical experimentation, through theoretical analysis, and through historical research. Historical phenomena so far apart as the Commedia dell'Arte and kabuki can reveal one thing in common: the concern of the artist to distinguish and put on stage the two poles of energy. ■

Translation: Julia Campbell Hamilton



Katsuko Azuma, Kanichi Hanayagi,
ISTA 4, Holstebro, Denmark, 1986
Photo: Torben Huss

Franco Ruffini

Le Milieu Scène Pré-expression, énergie, présence

Abstract: In this essay, Franco Ruffini introduces and applies the notion of the savannah for theoretical and practical research within theatre anthropology, offering a wide spectrum of methodological and essential tools for inquiry. Among others, the elements discussed by Ruffini concern reality and levels of analysis, the relation with Asian cultures, energy of the actor and pre-expression, presence, second nature, adaptation, score. This article by Ruffini was originally published in Bouffonneries (15-16, L'énergie de l'acteur. Anthropologie Théâtrale 2, 1987, 33-52).

Keywords: *Theatre anthropology, Savannah, Pre-expression, Presence, Energy*

En termes techniques, la savane est un milieu géomorphologique qui se définit par un ensemble de caractéristiques botaniques, zoologiques, climatiques et autres. On rencontre ce milieu en diverses zones géographiques et « culturelles » du globe dont les plus importantes sont l'Afrique et l'Amazonie. On peut donc dire que la savane africaine et la savane amazonienne, géomorphologiquement parlant, sont un seul et même milieu bien qu'elles soient « culturellement » parlant, deux milieux différents.

Considérons maintenant les habitants de la savane. Il est évident que les caractéristiques botaniques, zoologiques, climatiques, etc. impliquent une « dotation de base » par laquelle se définissent les individus aptes à vivre dans ce milieu. Par exemple un certain type de résistance à la chaleur et à l'humidité, un certain type d'aptitudes alimentaires, etc. Il est tout aussi évident (ou pour le moins est-ce une hypothèse raisonnable) que cette « dotation de base » est commune à tous les habitants de la savane et sert de base à leurs comportements observables.

Mais l'habitant de la savane en tant que tel n'existe pas et ne peut donc faire l'objet d'une observation. Il existe l'habitant de la savane amazonienne, celui de la savane africaine et seuls ces habitants spécifiques et leurs comportements spécifiques sont observables. Les comportements de l'habitant de la savane amazonienne, par exemple, sont certes conditionnés par la « dotation de base » a-spécifique mais pour le reste ils sont définis les caractéristiques culturelles, sociologiques, anthropologiques, etc. spécifiques non pas de la savane mais de l'Amazonie. On peut faire les mêmes remarques pour l'habitant de la savane africaine.



Les comportements observables sont toujours et uniquement des comportements « culturalisés »¹ et donc différents (et parfois très différents) d'une culture à l'autre, en dépit d'une base pré-culturelle (et trans-culturelle) que l'analyse ne peut ni isoler ni observer directement.

On ne peut étudier les caractéristiques a-spécifiques des habitants de la *savane pré-culturelle commune* qu'en observant les caractéristiques spécifiques des habitants des *différentes savanes culturelles*.

Ce propos sur la savane, les savanes, leurs habitants, leurs caractéristiques spécifiques et a-spécifiques peut sembler incongru mais il est fondamental pour comprendre, débarrassé des préjugés et des méfiances, le secteur de recherche de l'anthropologie théâtrale que propose Eugenio Barba et l'ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) qui en est le laboratoire.

Acceptons comme base de notre recherche le préliminaire suivant : *la scène est un milieu dont les habitants sont les acteurs*.

L'anthropologie théâtrale postule, comme hypothèse constitutive, que les diverses scènes culturelles sont un seul et même milieu pré-culturel (et trans-culturel) de la même façon que les savanes amazonienne et africaine sont toutes deux le milieu savane. S'agissant des acteurs, c'est à dire des habitants de la scène, l'anthropologie théâtrale postule, comme hypothèse constitutive, qu'au-dessous (ou mieux à l'intérieur) des divers comportements culturels (des différents types de jeu théâtral) il existe une base commune pré-culturelle. Cette dotation de base pré-culturelle est au cœur de la recherche de l'anthropologie théâtrale.

En quoi consiste cette dotation ? Au-delà des diverses cultures scéniques, quelle est la base pré-culturelle qui permet de définir et d'identifier l'habitant du milieu-scène c'est-à-dire l'acteur ? Ce sont des questions qui n'ont rien à voir avec les aspects culturels des acteurs des différentes scènes (les acteurs kabuki, les acteurs kathakali, le mime traditionnel, etc.) et qui pourtant doivent partir précisément et uniquement de ces aspects culturels pour fonder leur légitimité et trouver leurs réponses.

Convenons maintenant d'appeler *expression* les comportements « culturalisés » des acteurs ou de groupes d'acteurs spécifiques (c'est à dire des habitants de *scènes spécifiques*); et d'appeler à l'inverse *pré-expression* la base pré-culturelle commune à tous les acteurs (c'est à dire aux habitants du *milieu scène*).

La pré-expression est à la fois l'hypothèse constitutive globale et le secteur de recherche de l'anthropologie théâtrale.

Enfin, pour éviter toute confusion, nous appellerons *acteurs* (a minuscule et pluriel) les habitants de scènes spécifiques et *Acteur* (A majuscule et singulier) l'habitant de la scène considérée comme un milieu.

Les acteurs expriment, l'Acteur pré-exprime.

Réalité et niveaux d'analyse

Mais l'Acteur n'est pas une réalité concrète différente des acteurs. A proprement parler on peut même dire que l'Acteur n'est pas une réalité en soi. *Seuls* existent les acteurs de

la même façon que *seuls* existent les habitants de la savane amazonienne *ou* de la savane africaine. L'Acteur constitue l'un des niveaux d'analyse des acteurs de la même façon que la pré-expression constitue l'un des niveaux d'analyse des différentes expressions.

Faute d'avoir précisé ce point d'une importance fondamentale on a créé (et on continue à créer) d'innombrables équivoques. Pour être extrêmement précis, l'Acteur et la pré-expression sont des abstractions méthodologiques.

Revenons un instant à la savane et aux savanes et supposons que l'une des caractéristiques trans-culturelles des habitants des différentes savanes soit la résistance à la chaleur. Nous ne pourrions jamais observer l'habitant du milieu-savane mettant en œuvre son comportement a-spécifique de « résistance à la chaleur »; en revanche nous observerons les habitants de savanes précises dans leurs comportements spécifiques et ce n'est qu'en traversant, à la lettre, ces comportements que nous pourrions éventuellement abstraire, induire cette aptitude première a-spécifique. Les comportements qui s'offrent à l'observation sont, à l'évidence et par situation de fait, des comportements « culturalisés »; les individus qui assument ces comportements sont, à l'évidence et par situation de fait, des individus qui vivent une culture spécifique sur laquelle ils modèlent leurs comportements. Et cependant, à l'intérieur et au-delà de leur diversité, ce sont les habitants d'un même milieu; leurs comportements, à l'intérieur et au-delà des diversités culturelles, renferment une même base pré-culturelle. *En tant que niveau d'analyse*, l'habitant de la savane trans-culturelle existe à l'intérieur de chacun des habitants des différentes savanes culturelles.

Revenons au théâtre : les acteurs des diverses scènes renferment l'Acteur du milieu scène; leurs diverses expressions renferment une pré-expression commune. Mais ni l'Acteur ni la pré-expression n'existent isolément en tant que « chose »; ils n'existent et ne se concrétisent dans l'analyse *qu'à travers*, respectivement, les acteurs et leurs expressions spécifiques.

L'Acteur ne précède pas chronologiquement ou hiérarchiquement les acteurs; la pré-expression ne précède pas, chronologiquement ou dans la prestation réelle des acteurs, l'expression. L'Acteur et la pré-expression sont des réalités cognitives, heuristiques : elles servent au chercheur pour comprendre et à l'homme de théâtre pour orienter son travail. Ce travail, de toute façon débouchera toujours sur une expression, marquée par tous les conditionnements culturels de la situation concrète où il se déroule. L'Acteur se tient derrière les acteurs mais dans un sens qui n'est ni spatial ni temporel : « se tenir derrière » désigne plutôt une situation d'occultation. De la même façon, la pré-expression se tient derrière l'expression comme une présence cachée, qui n'apparaît qu'en termes de connaissance dans l'analyse et jamais isolément dans une scène concrète.

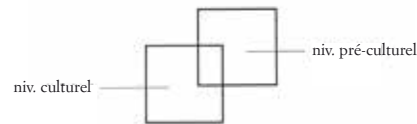
Il convient d'insister sur ce statut cognitif, « abstrait » de l'Acteur et de la pré-expression. Mais cette insistance peut, à son tour, donner lieu à une équivoque. On pourrait penser en effet que l'Acteur et les acteurs, pré-expression et expression s'opposent comme deux « choses » différentes, séparées, que l'on peut expérimenter de diverses manières, l'une sans l'autre. En réalité pré-expression et expression s'opposent comme en chimie l'élément s'oppose au composé.

La pré-expression fait partie de l'expression, dans un sens doublement littéral, c'est à dire dans le sens statique d'être une « partie » de et dans le sens dynamique de « faire » partie de.

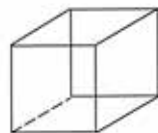
1. Nous avons été amenés à créer ce néologisme un peu barbare pour suivre l'auteur dans la distinction qu'il établit constamment entre culturel et « culturalisé ». (Note du traducteur)

La pré-expression est active dans l'expression. Elle *n'est* pas une partie isolable de l'expression mais elle y participe, à la lettre elle en fait partie. Si paradoxalement on retirait de l'expression cette partie qu'est la pré-expression, on en retirerait par la même occasion l'effet actif de *faire*. L'expression ne s'en trouverait pas diminuée mais détruite.

A la session de l'ISTA de Blois (1985), Nicola Savarese a proposé une image singulièrement efficace du rapport profond entre pré-expression et expression. Si on représentait par deux carrés le niveau culturel et le niveau pré-culturel du comportement des acteurs :



le résultat de leur rapport, à savoir l'expression, se représenterait ainsi :



La pré-expression qui constitue la face postérieure du cube, est cachée. Mais l'ayant isolée par l'analyse, si nous l'isolions dans la réalité, le cube perdrait son caractère constitutif tri-dimensionnel. L'habitant de la savane amazonienne montre à travers ses comportements « culturalisés » spécifiques le résultat d'une dialectique avec la base pré-culturelle commune à tout habitant du milieu savane ; de la même façon les acteurs, s'exprimant selon les modes spécifiques de leurs cultures, montrent le résultat d'une dialectique avec la pré-expression a-spécifique de leur milieu commun. L'expression est manifeste et constitue une totalité, la pré-expression est cachée et constitue une partie (active) de cette totalité.

Comment donc étudier la pré-expression de l'Acteur ? Comment explorer la face cachée du cube ? On ne peut pas la découvrir en éliminant matériellement la face qui la cache mais seulement en en faisant abstraction mentalement. Il ne s'agit pas de repérer les comportements communs aux acteurs des différentes scènes mais au contraire d'abstraire la base commune de ces différents comportements. Les comportements communs, s'ils existaient, seraient manifestes et seraient, en tout état de cause, des expressions ; leur base commune est cachée et elle est pré-expressive.

Il ne s'agit donc pas d'*extraire* par confrontation mais d'*abstraire* par confrontation.

L'anthropologie théâtrale et l'orient

Ce travail d'abstraction par confrontation a été mené par Eugenio Barba et par l'ISTA surtout à partir d'acteurs des grandes traditions scéniques orientales. Ceci a donné lieu et continue à donner lieu à de nombreuses méprises. Certains observateurs extérieurs ont estimé que cette prédilection pour les acteurs traditionnels orientaux équivalait

à poser comme hypothèse qu'eux seuls (ou qu'eux surtout) étaient dotés d'une pré-expressivité. Ils ont en outre objecté que la forte codification culturelle de ces scènes orientales empêcherait de découvrir par derrière le niveau pré-expressif.

Aucune de ces deux critiques n'est fondée. La première parce que l'hypothèse est formulée par les censeurs et non par l'anthropologie théâtrale. La seconde mérite quelques mots de plus. Elle part d'un raisonnement apparemment légitime que nous pourrions résumer ainsi : nous explorons la pré-expression qui est la face cachée de l'expression ; elle se cache donc d'autant mieux (et elle est donc d'autant plus difficile à appréhender) que, dans les comportements des acteurs qu'on observe, la couche culturelle est plus « épaisse », que l'expression est plus codifiée comme c'est le cas des acteurs des scènes orientales traditionnelles.

Comme nous l'avons dit, le raisonnement est apparemment légitime mais il est substantiellement erroné. C'est moins l'épaisseur de la couche culturelle que son *instabilité* dans le temps et dans l'espace qui rend malaisée l'exploration de la pré-expression. Chez les acteurs occidentaux, les codes culturels sont certes moins forts et moins envahissants mais justement à cause de cela le niveau « culturalisé » de leurs comportements (bien que probablement moins « épais ») varie d'une période à l'autre et d'un individu à l'autre au point d'être souvent méconnaissable en tant que tel. En Orient on peut opérer la confrontation entre plusieurs traditions alors qu'en Occident il faudrait la faire entre chacun des individus ; même dans ce cas l'analyse serait théoriquement vaine tellement le niveau « culturalisé » de leurs comportements est insaisissable.

Le premier caractère que l'on exige d'un objet d'expérimentation est d'être défini, stable, d'être le plus représentatif possible de la classe d'objets à laquelle il appartient : ceci est vrai dans tous les domaines de la recherche scientifique. Si on veut étudier les caractéristiques des corps solides, on évite généralement de prendre comme spécimen la glace qui est bien un corps solide mais de façon instable et selon des modalités spécifiques par rapport aux autres corps solides.

Pré-expression et énergie

Le résultat du travail d'abstraction par confrontation entre les acteurs des grandes traditions scéniques orientales peut se résumer ainsi : la pré-expression de l'Acteur est liée à un principe général, le principe d'altération, qui a souvent été présenté dans la littérature sur le sujet et dont nous reprendrons l'analyse.

- 1 La position d'équilibre vertical des acteurs permet d'abstraire (induire), à travers des modalités culturelles extrêmement différenciées, un principe pré-culturel de base : l'équilibre apparaît altéré par rapport à l'équilibre défini par la relation normale entre les lois de la physique et le fonctionnement du corps humain.
- 2 La condition de mouvement des acteurs permet d'abstraire (induire), une fois encore à travers des modalités culturelles extrêmement différenciées, un principe pré-culturel de base, qu'on peut lui aussi résumer comme une altération par rapport aux conditions de mouvement définies par la relation normale entre les lois de la physique et le fonctionnement du corps humain.

- 3 Si on analyse le rapport entre énergie et travail (au sens scientifique des deux termes) c'est à dire le rapport entre l'énergie investie dans une action et la quantité de mouvement de l'action elle-même, on s'aperçoit que chez les acteurs ce rapport est altéré si on se réfère à la dynamique normale du corps.

Mais en quoi consiste, synthétiquement et analytiquement, une telle altération ? C'est ici qu'apparaît une caractéristique spécifique et fondamentale de la scène en tant que milieu, que nous pouvons énoncer ainsi : la scène, à la différence de tous les autres milieux entendus au sens propre, est un milieu discontinu. En d'autres termes les habitants du milieu-scène (c'est à dire les acteurs), tous et de façon continue, habitent simultanément un autre milieu : celui du quotidien.

Ce milieu quotidien est spécifique à chaque catégorie : le milieu quotidien japonais pour les acteurs de la scène kabuki, le milieu quotidien indien pour les acteurs de la scène kathakali etc. ; mais tous ces milieux spécifiques relèvent du même milieu spécifique (le *milieu* quotidien), que les acteurs *en tant que personnes* habitent de façon continue. La scène est bien un autre de leurs milieux communs, mais précisément de façon discontinue.

Cette constatation peut sembler banale mais c'est elle qui rend scientifiquement pertinente et nécessaire la confrontation entre ce qu'on a induit par rapport au milieu scène et ce qu'on peut induire par rapport au milieu du quotidien.

La pré-expression *doit* être confrontée avec l'*in-expression* si on peut appeler ainsi le niveau pré-culturel des comportements dans les différents « quotidiens ».

Les acteurs, outre leur statut d'acteurs, sont des personnes. En tant qu'acteurs de scènes spécifiques, leurs expressions ont un niveau pré-culturel commun qui est la pré-expression; en tant que personnes dont l'activité se déroule dans des contextes spécifiques, leur comportements sont liés aux diverses configurations de l'action quotidienne : le niveau pré-culturel commun à ces multiples configurations est l'*in-expression*. En confrontant les différentes scènes, on peut par abstraction isoler la pré-expression mais, pour ainsi dire, dans son état phénoménologique. Ce processus permet de *décrire* la pré-expression mais il ne permet pas de l'*interpréter*.

Pour l'interpréter il faut saisir la différence spécifique avec le niveau pré-culturel des comportements du quotidien.

Revenons donc aux résultats de l'abstraction par confrontation entre les acteurs des différentes scènes. Considérons par exemple l'altération de l'équilibre : dans le quotidien et abstraction faite des différences culturelles c'est-à-dire à son niveau in-expressif, la position verticale d'équilibre est régie par le rapport entre la force de gravité et la recherche du moindre effort : on essaie d'élargir la surface de la base d'appui, d'y faire entrer largement le barycentre, de réduire la hauteur; on écarte les pieds, on colle les plantes des pieds au sol, on rapproche le plus possible de la verticale la ligne médiane idéale du corps, on fléchit l'épine dorsale. Dans l'ensemble on essaie de ne pas contrarier la force de gravité. Sur la scène, la phénoménologie de l'altération révèle une tendance diamétralement opposée. La base d'appui se rétrécit et/ou adhère moins au sol, la ligne médiane du corps tend vers l'oblique, l'épine dorsale est dressée, les épaules soulevées parfois : dans l'ensemble on tend à contrarier la force de gravité.

Passons à l'altération du mouvement. On peut résumer le niveau in-expressif des comportements du quotidien en disant qu'on essaie de ne pas contrarier la force d'inertie. Le mouvement tend à maintenir sa vitesse et sa trajectoire, à s'étirer jusqu'à l'épuisement de la force initiale et enfin à orienter son énergie dans la direction où le mouvement se déploiera dans l'espace. Sur la scène la phénoménologie de l'altération révèle, dans ce cas aussi, une tendance diamétralement opposée : mouvements discontinus aussi bien dans leur trajectoire que dans leur vitesse, brusques arrêts et reprises brutales, amorces de mouvement qui contredisent sa direction ultérieure : globalement, on essaie de contrarier la force d'inertie.

Quand au rapport entre énergie investie et quantité de mouvement, le niveau in-expressif du quotidien révèle une tendance à utiliser *toute* l'énergie sous forme d'énergie cinétique, c'est-à-dire sous forme de mouvement. A l'inverse, dans la pré-expression on peut observer un critère de « condensation » et/ou d'« omission » en fonction duquel *seule une partie* de l'énergie investie dans une action est transformée en mouvement.

Cette analyse sommaire nous permet de conclure que le niveau in-expressif du quotidien répond au critère du moindre effort tandis que le niveau pré-expressif de la scène correspond au critère d'un *excès d'effort*. La différence spécifique et fondamentale entre pré-expression et in-expression réside dans le fait que la première implique un *surplus énergétique* pour des objectifs matériels identiques : maintenir une position d'équilibre vertical dans le milieu scène *exige davantage* que dans le milieu du quotidien ; se mouvoir *exige davantage* soit à cause de l'effort déployé à contrarier la force d'inertie soit parce que seule une partie de l'énergie est investie en quantité de mouvement.

Nous pouvons dire que la condition d'Acteur implique un excès d'énergie par rapport à la condition de Personne Quotidienne.

Sur l'énergie de l'Acteur

La confrontation entre in-expression et pré-expression nous permet de préciser ce qu'il faut entendre par surplus énergétique (ou énergie) de la pré-expression. Il faut d'abord l'entendre au sens littéral et ceci constitue un premier niveau de réflexion qui permettra de libérer notre recherche de connotations ésotériques ou abusivement métaphoriques.

L'Acteur, l'habitant du milieu-scène, dépense plus d'énergie que la Personne Quotidienne. Il dépense plus d'énergie au sens littéral et matériel. Du point de vue de la physique, s'opposer à la force de gravité, ou à la force d'inertie, signifie investir une plus grande quantité d'énergie. D'autre part, si une partie seulement de l'énergie investie dans une action se libère en mouvement, il se produit un gaspillage matériel par rapport à l'économie du mouvement lui-même.

L'insistance sur le point de vue de la physique tend à souligner que l'énergie de l'Acteur est, en première instance, une donnée objective. Mais on doit tout autant insister sur le fait qu'il s'agit là d'un niveau élémentaire de la réflexion sur l'énergie de l'Acteur : nécessaire et fondamental, mais élémentaire. Un second niveau, plus élaboré, devrait par exemple considérer le passage de la physique à la physiologie. Il faudrait examiner la dynamique musculaire et organique au sens large qui provoque ce gaspillage énergétique.

Un troisième niveau devrait probablement examiner le rapport entre le « tonus musculaire et nerveux » lié au surplus énergétique et un « tonus psychique » correspondant.

Ce sont là des questions ouvertes et qu'il n'est pas question de développer ici. Il faut néanmoins souligner que l'énergie de l'Acteur, quelles qu'en soient les articulations et les dynamiques, est à la base une énergie au même titre que l'énergie chimique ou électrique ou cinétique ; elle est énergie au sens strict.

La seule différence est que cette énergie est en excès compte tenu des résultats qu'elle obtient. La pré-expression exige davantage que l'in-expression correspondante. Le surplus énergétique lié à l'altération de l'équilibre ne sert pas pour se tenir mieux ou plus longtemps en équilibre ; le surplus énergétique lié à l'altération des conditions de mouvement ne facilite pas et/ou ne prolonge pas le mouvement et ainsi de suite. Si on prend comme point de départ la situation du quotidien, le surplus énergétique ne peut être perçu que comme *gaspillage*.

Pré-expression et présence

Mais s'agit-il vraiment d'un gaspillage ? Ou ce gaspillage n'est-il qu'un « effet d'optique » provoqué par le point de vue de l'observateur ? Pouvons-nous supposer que ce qui nous apparaît comme un gaspillage du point de vue du milieu quotidien peut être l'économie normale si on le regarde par rapport au milieu-scène ?

A ce stade de la réflexion la confrontation entre le milieu-scène et le milieu quotidien peut nous aider une fois encore. A leur niveau in-expressif, les comportements quotidiens se fixent des objectifs précis, discernables et intrinsèques, et rien d'autre. L'équilibre vertical d'un japonais cultivé poursuit l'objectif intrinsèque de maintenir debout la personne en question mais aussi de mettre en évidence sa « culture quotidienne » dans tous les sens de ce terme. Mais au niveau in-expressif l'équilibre vertical vise ce seul objectif : maintenir la personne en position debout par le moindre effort compatible avec la force de gravité. L'énergie investie se mesure seulement par rapport à cet objectif : tous les objectifs « culturels » sont étrangers au niveau in-expressif qui, rappelons-le est un niveau pré-culturel.

L'équilibre vertical de l'acteur kabuki vise de la même façon à maintenir debout l'acteur mais aussi à mettre en évidence sa « culture scénique » dans tous les sens de ce terme. Au niveau pré-expressif l'équilibre vertical semblerait avoir la même finalité que s'il s'agissait de la personne au quotidien : tenir debout. Comment se fait-il alors qu'il exige davantage ?

En réalité l'équilibre vertical pré-expressif réalise deux objectifs : maintenir l'acteur en position debout et en plus montrer l'acteur en position d'équilibre vertical. Le milieu-scène (et non les scènes singulières et spécifiques) par rapport au milieu quotidien (et non aux contextes quotidiens particuliers et « culturalisés ») présente cette particularité constitutive : outre leur objectif intrinsèque les actions ont en plus celui de s'offrir au regard de quelqu'un d'extérieur au milieu-scène.

Il n'y a là aucune implication esthétique ou philosophique. Nous pouvons dire que le statut ontologique du milieu-scène se définit précisément par le fait que les actions qui

s'y déroulent sont des actions et, *en plus*, des *actions montrées*. Renoncer à ce postulat équivaldrait à détruire le concept même de scène. En disant que les actions du milieu-scène sont (aussi et en plus) des actions montrées, nous ne disons rien sur la dynamique acteur-spectateur : nous soulignons simplement un postulat conceptuel sans lequel tout propos sur la scène serait vain. Le spectateur peut très bien ne pas être présent concrètement ou être présent (comme cela se produit en fait) selon les modalités les plus variées et les plus éloignées des conventions théâtrales traditionnelles : dans tous les cas l'action en scène (dans le milieu-scène) est une action montrée. Ou plus précisément une action et, *en plus*, une action montrée.

Le surplus énergétique de la pré-expression paie précisément ce « plus », ce fait d'« être montré ». Il s'agit de gaspillage si on part de la situation d'un milieu (quotidien) dont le niveau pré-culturel exclut tout objectif qui ne serait pas l'objectif intrinsèque de l'action elle-même (mouvement = déplacement donné dans l'espace) : il s'agit d'économie si on part de la situation d'un milieu (la scène) dont le niveau pré-culturel pose comme intrinsèque à l'action l'objectif supplémentaire de « se montrer » (mouvement = ce déplacement donné dans l'espace *plus* le fait de montrer ce mouvement).

Le surplus énergétique de la pré-expression (par rapport à l'in-expression) sert à alimenter la *présence* de l'Acteur ; c'est à dire cette différence spécifique et fondamentale avec la Personne Quotidienne par laquelle l'Acteur agit et *en plus* se montre (se pose potentiellement comme objet au regard) pendant qu'il agit et en tant qu'il agit.

Tout ceci, il faut le répéter encore, n'a rien à voir avec les niveaux « culturalisés » du milieu-scène (*les* scènes) et du milieu quotidien (*les* contextes socio-culturels). Il arrive que dans les contextes socio-culturels quotidiens la personne agisse et se montre en train d'agir (d'où l'expression « jouer la comédie ») : indépendamment de cette situation particulière, l'action a toujours dans les contextes socio-culturels quotidiens des finalités qui s'ajoutent à ses finalités intrinsèques : révéler son propre statut social, influencer les autres etc. Cependant, à un niveau pré-culturel, in-expressif, il n'existe que l'objectif intrinsèque pour l'action quotidienne. De la même façon dans les scènes, l'action comporte toujours des finalités supplémentaires : en premier lieu exprimer, mais aussi afficher un certain style, une invention personnelle. Mais au niveau pré-culturel, pré-expressif, l'« action scénique » par rapport à l'action quotidienne correspondante a pour seul objectif supplémentaire de se montrer, d'attirer l'attention.

Le surplus énergétique du milieu-scène par rapport au milieu quotidien (de la pré-expression par rapport à l'in-expression) est la « mesure » de la divergence constitutive entre action montrée et action pure.

La présence n'a donc rien d'ésotérique ou même de mystique. C'est une chose intrinsèque, *intérieure*, à toute « action scénique ». De la même façon que nous ne voyons jamais *à nu*, isolément, l'Acteur ou la pré-expression, nous ne voyons jamais *à nu* le surplus énergétique ou la présence. L'Acteur est l'un des niveaux de l'analyse des acteurs : la pré-expression est l'un des niveaux de l'analyse de l'expression ; et de la même façon nous devons dire que la présence est l'un des niveaux de l'analyse du spectacle.

A ce niveau de l'analyse, le surplus énergétique (par confrontation avec l'in-expression) peut être saisi concrètement dans sa dimension quantitative, et la présence peut être perçue concrètement comme le « chapitre dépenses » de ce surplus énergétique. La

pré-expression de l'Acteur coûte plus d'énergie que l'in-expression de la Personne Quotidienne : voici un résultat objectif de l'analyse. Par rapport à l'action in-expressive correspondante, l'action pré-expressive a pour objectif supplémentaire et constitutif de se montrer : voici une autre donnée objective. Si nous appelons *présence* la réalisation de cet objectif supplémentaire et constitutif, nous pouvons en conclure que le surplus énergétique sert précisément et objectivement à alimenter la présence.

Mais de quelle façon ? Il faut dire ici que la base quantitative de l'énergie se situe à un niveau élémentaire de la réflexion sur l'énergie et que de la même façon le rapport direct entre surplus énergétique et présence constitue un niveau tout à fait rudimentaire de la réflexion sur le fonctionnement efficace de l'habitant de la scène. Nous avons dit que la dimension physique de l'énergie doit être élargie à sa dimension physiologique et cette dernière à une dimension psychique et mentale. Ainsi le rapport dépense-profit entre surplus énergétique et présence n'est qu'une base élémentaire (mais concrète) pour explorer les dynamiques perceptives, kinesthésiques, psychiques et mentales qui rendent « présente » pour le spectateur la présence scénique.

L'anthropologie théâtrale invite ici à entreprendre une recherche approfondie sur le niveau pré-culturel du spectateur. Les spectateurs, comme nous l'avons dit pour les acteurs, sont les habitants de milieux « culturalisés » spécifiques que nous pourrions appeler *le parterre*. Le Spectateur habitant le milieu-parterre serait le pendant de l'Acteur habitant le milieu-scène. Si les spectateurs exercent des facultés perceptives et mentales spécifiques, il nous faut peut-être supposer, du moins comme hypothèse de travail, une base pré-réceptive commune où le Spectateur est attiré et « modulé » par la présence de l'Acteur. Il est évident que ce Spectateur pré-culturel (et trans-culturel) ne serait à son tour que l'un des niveaux de l'analyse des spectateurs : et sa pré-réceptivité un des niveaux de l'analyse de la réceptivité.

Quel pourrait être chez le Spectateur, la contrepartie de la présence de l'Acteur ? Nous suggérons l'*attention*. L'attention comme partie intégrante de la réceptivité globale, comme la face cachée d'un autre cube que l'analyse peut isoler mais qui n'a aucun sens et aucune efficacité sinon précisément comme face bi-dimensionnelle d'un cube à trois dimensions.

Présence, seconde nature et adaptation de l'Acteur

Nous ne pouvons donc pas dire grande chose du surplus énergétique de l'Acteur. Nous savons qu'il existe concrètement et que c'est lui qui alimente la présence. Là où une énergie donnée permet, au niveau in-expressif, de développer une action, le surplus énergétique permet *en plus*, au niveau pré-expressif, de la montrer, de l'offrir à l'attention du spectateur.

Mais nous pouvons ajouter quelque chose. Il est important de comprendre que la pré-expression n'est pas un ensemble défini de comportements (se placer en équilibre précaire, dynamiser les mouvements, etc.) mais qu'elle est cette dotation de base qui permet d'habiter efficacement *n'importe quelle* scène c'est à dire la scène en tant que milieu.

Dans *une* scène spécifique aucune action n'a pour finalité la pré-expression (la présence) ; c'est plutôt l'inverse qui est vrai : la pré-expression permet à l'action de prendre forme par une combinaison dialectique avec les modalités « culturalisées » de cette scène. La pré-expression est une espèce de tempérament psycho-physique qui (abstraction faite des variantes personnelles) peut être considéré comme caractéristique des habitants d'un milieu donné.

L'habitant de la savane africaine n'agit pas *pour* acquérir et/ou montrer son tempérament psycho-physique d'habitant du milieu savane : c'est au contraire sur la base de ce tempérament commun à tous les habitants de toutes les savanes qu'il conforme ses comportements observables spécifiques.

Nous retrouvons ici l'importance heuristique de notre choix de départ : considérer la scène comme un milieu sans jamais oublier les différences irréductibles. Dans la mesure où la scène est un milieu analogue à d'autres milieux la pré-expression est à la base des comportements culturalisés : autrement dit l'équivalent d'un véritable tempérament psycho-physique.

Mais la scène est un milieu particulier. Les acteurs l'habitent de manière *discontinue et en tant qu'individus* alors qu'ils habitent de façon *continue et en tant que membres de groupes humains* les milieux quotidiens. En d'autres termes les acteurs ont évidemment, en tant que personnes, leur propre tempérament psycho-physique : ils ont déjà une *première nature*. S'ils veulent habiter efficacement et de *surcroît* le milieu-scène, ils doivent construire en plus de cette première nature, une *seconde nature*, un tempérament psycho-physique artificiel.

La pré-expression est précisément cette seconde nature.

La définition de « seconde nature » (un terme que Nando Tavianini a introduit dans le lexique de l'anthropologie théâtrale) est particulièrement pertinente. Le terme « nature » permet de cerner le caractère pré-conscient du tempérament psycho-physique : on n'agit pas pour construire son propre tempérament, on ne l'active pas consciemment au moment de l'action. Le terme « seconde » rend compte de son caractère artificiel, au sens propre arte-fact, mais aussi du fait qu'elle doit se « superposer » à la première nature du quotidien.

La seconde nature (de l'Acteur) a une *norme énergétique* supérieure à celle de la première nature (celle de la Personne Quotidienne). Le surplus que nous constatons en confrontant la pré-expression (scénique) et l'in-expression (quotidienne) indique simplement que la seconde nature de l'Acteur, son tempérament psycho-physique artificiel, implique un niveau énergétique plus élevé.

La présence est la condition *normale* d'un acteur qui a su « s'adapter » de façon efficace au milieu scène : nous pouvons dire qu'il s'agit du résultat *nature* d'une adaptation *artefact*. On pourrait penser qu'il s'agit là d'un jeu de mots gratuit, mais il n'en est rien : l'acteur bien adapté au milieu-scène est naturellement présent, l'acteur mal adapté *cherche* artificiellement sa présence.

Le processus artificiel par lequel l'acteur s'adapte au milieu-scène est le *training*, entendu comme un exercice continu, prolongé, cohérent et indépendant (en principe) des spectacles dans lesquels s'est engagé l'acteur pendant la même période. Les spectacles concernent une scène spécifique, le processus d'adaptation concerne le milieu-scène :

c'est dans ce sens que nous avons dit *qu'en principe* le training est indépendant des spectacles. Mais *dans la pratique* il peut s'y intégrer, il peut même être la préparation du spectacle. L'acteur ne joue pas après s'être adapté ; tout son travail *est aussi* un processus d'adaptation: indépendamment du fait qu'il applique une attention consciente à ce processus.

Le training a suscité de nombreuses équivoques. L'entraînement athlétique pratiqué à une certaine époque par les acteurs du Tiers Théâtre a même tenu lieu de poétique théâtrale. L'intérêt porté à l'entraînement des acteurs orientaux traditionnels a été taxé d'exotisme ou de moralisme ou au mieux perçu comme une tentation simpliste de transplanter dans des contextes étrangers des disciplines nées pour d'autres contextes et dans d'autres contextes.

Mais le problème est tout autre. Il n'existe pas un processus d'adaptation défini mais simplement la nécessité et la logique d'un tel processus : on sait vers quel but il doit tendre, on ignore de quelle façon et selon quelles modalités on peut y parvenir.

Le training des acteurs traditionnels orientaux ne nous dit pas comment faire pour « coloniser » une autre fois le corps : il montre ce que font les habitants de certaines scènes dont nous expérimentons de manière empirique mais indéniable la présence, autrement dit la réussite de leur adaptation. Abstraction faite des modalités spécifiques nous pouvons au moins en déduire que la durée, la continuité, le contrôle, la discipline (au sens pragmatique et non moral) sont des éléments sinon nécessaires du moins suffisants pour forger ce tempérament artificiel qui « s'exprime » naturellement dans la présence.

Lorsque le chercheur analyse le training des acteurs orientaux, lorsque, ce faisant, il s'attache à ses caractères de continuité et de discipline plutôt qu'à ses modalités spécifiques, il contribue à porter un nouveau regard sur les scènes qui ne comportent pas de processus conscient d'adaptation (d'entraînement).

En 1803, lorsqu'il dictait ses *Règles pour les acteurs* pour l'Hoftheater de Weimar, Goethe écrivait au chapitre *Comportement de l'acteur dans la vie courante* :

- Il (l'acteur) doit se garder des gestes, des positions et des attitudes routinières car si pendant la représentation son esprit est occupé à éviter les habitudes acquises il est par là même détourné de l'essentiel.
- Il est absolument nécessaire que l'acteur soit libéré de toute habitude afin que pendant le spectacle il puisse penser à son rôle et que son esprit puisse s'investir tout entier dans son personnage.
- Dans la vie quotidienne, l'acteur devrait avoir pour règle de donner à son corps, à son comportement et à toutes ses actions une allure telle qu'elle puisse pour ainsi dire lui servir d'exercice constant.

Si l'on entend par « vie ordinaire » un domaine étranger à l'exécution et à la préparation spécifique du spectacle, l'« exercice constant » dont parle Goethe qu'est-il donc sinon le training ? L'acteur doit se libérer des conditionnements quotidiens, acquérir d'autres automatismes qui lui permettront d'être artificiellement naturel sur scène, c'est-à-dire d'agir selon la *seconde nature* qu'il a fait sienne comme tempérament scénique.

Il est certain que la seconde nature, la pré-expression, est le fruit d'un processus d'adaptation qui ne suit pas le cours phylogénique d'une espèce ou d'une race (comme

cela se produit pour les milieux au sens strict) ; l'acteur est obligé de condenser ce processus dans le temps relativement bref de son travail.

L'altération de l'équilibre, la dynamique des oppositions, le critère de condensation et ou d'omission sont le résultat évident de ce processus et pas simplement sa base active. En d'autres termes chaque acteur construit son propre processus d'adaptation.

Le training n'est pas un ensemble de règles : il est essentiellement pragmatique. Il ne peut pas être *théoriquement exact* : il doit être *efficace dans la pratique*. Et son efficacité se mesure substantiellement au degré d'adaptation que l'acteur acquiert peu à peu, au degré d'artifice *mais* de nature dans cet artifice que son corps parvient à s'approprier.

Le tempérament scénique doit avoir une « cohérence incohérente » selon la définition d'Eugenio Barba.

On pourrait plutôt réfléchir sur le caractère de ce tempérament scénique ; ce n'est pas par hasard que nous l'avons constamment qualifié de psycho-physique. Par confrontation avec l'in-expression le surplus énergétique de la présence se laisse appréhender dans sa dimension physique. Mais le tonus musculaire et, partant, le tonus nerveux (nous y avons déjà fait allusion) a une corrélation certaine avec un tonus psychique ; on peut supposer qu'il existe un training psychique de l'acteur ou du moins que le processus d'adaptation au milieu-scène dont la dimension est manifestement physique, comporte (implique) aussi une dimension psychique.

Il est probable enfin que dans certaines cultures scéniques les proportions et les positions soient inversées, autrement dit que la dimension psychique soit prioritaire et manifeste et que la dimension physique qui lui est reliée soit réduite et moins évidente. Nous pensons aux acteurs des théâtres de prose occidentaux : le travail « mental » sur les différents personnages, l'enchaînement d'images amorcé par ce travail, les micro mouvements réels ou seulement prévus pour le moment du spectacle, tout cela peut et doit être considéré comme un processus d'adaptation au milieu-scène, comme un véritable training, à la condition qu'il implique une durée et une discipline personnelle cohérente.

Mais il est évident que la dimension psychique, mentale, du training, hypothèse légitime à notre avis, reste un domaine quasiment inexploré. Il est certain qu'il n'existe pas de corrélation mécanique et exclusive entre le principe d'altération (de l'équilibre, des conditions de mouvement, etc.) et la seconde nature de l'acteur. Comme nous l'avons déjà remarqué le surplus énergétique que comporte le principe d'altération apparaît davantage comme un résultat de l'analyse que comme une cause mécaniquement et pratiquement déterminante. En d'autres termes l'acteur ne s'entraîne pas à gaspiller et en gaspillant de l'énergie il faudrait plutôt dire que la « re-colonisation » psycho-physique de la personne, si elle est cohérente dans son incohérence, produit naturellement un « tonus énergétique majoré » qui englobe aussi dans l'exécution de l'action la « majoration » de la présence.

Présence et mise en forme de l'énergie

La « re-colonisation » de la personne, l'adaptation progressive au milieu-scène, l'élaboration d'une seconde nature ou d'un tempérament scénique, tous ces procédés par

lesquels nous avons désigné le processus d'acquisition de la présence sont, en dernière analyse, un *travail sur l'énergie*, un travail de *mise en forme* de l'énergie. De ce travail de mise en forme nous ne connaissons que le *quid* quantitatif, le surplus énergétique de la pré-expression par rapport à l'in-expression comme valeur ajoutée par le fait de se montrer en train d'agir.

Certes il est difficile de découvrir dans l'*ictus* pré-culturel typique de l'habitant de la savane le processus énergétique qui est à la base : l'intensité particulière des rayons solaires; les modalités spécifiques de la photosynthèse, liées au type de végétation, au climat, etc. ; le déroulement particulier de la chaîne alimentaire qui sélectionne un type d'aliment plutôt qu'un autre; les transformations biochimiques internes au corps qui déterminent des aptitudes aux dépens d'autres; les échanges intérieur-extérieur qui caractérisent ce milieu, et ainsi de suite. Pourtant l'*ictus* pré-culturel est précisément et exclusivement le résultat de ce processus de *mise en forme de l'énergie*.

La comparaison avec l'acteur ne semblera pas aussi disproportionnée qu'il y paraît si on se souvient que l'acteur, en tant qu'habitant d'un milieu discontinu doit condenser dans sa personne et dans le temps très court de son adaptation, le processus énergétique qui pour l'habitant de la savane peut s'étirer dans l'écologie plurielle et millénaire de la phylogénèse.

Pendant toute la durée de son training et à chaque instant, l'acteur doit organiser son « énergie solaire », la transformer en aliment, l'absorber, l'échanger avec l'extérieur. Il ne s'agit pas là d'une métaphore ou d'une « image poétique » mais de la cohérence incohérente de la seconde nature. Quelque chose que l'on n'atteint pas soudainement au terme fixé d'un processus, mais progressivement au cours du processus lui-même.

La présence que l'acteur « exprime » peu à peu est chaque fois la *forme finale* du processus, et non sa *fin*. Mais en même temps, chaque « passage de forme » est présence. La présence est ce même processus de mise en forme de l'énergie c'est à dire le corps-en-vie dont parle Barba, *bios* au sens strict.

L'énergie et sa mise en forme sont une seule et même chose. Il est réconfortant de trouver ici, comme pour le surplus de la pré-expression, un point commun avec les sciences exactes. Dans le domaine scientifique on parle différemment de « forme d'énergie » ou de « transformation de l'énergie » mais on sait qu'il ne s'agit que de conventions lexicales. Les formes successives de l'énergie au cours d'une opération, ses transformations sont, d'un point de vue quantitatif et conceptuel, la *même chose* que l'énergie. Dire que l'énergie *change de forme* équivaut à dire que l'énergie *existe*. En ce sens, le surplus que nous pouvons associer à la présence n'est pas un *quid* statique : la localisation d'une énergie implique la localisation de sa mise en forme. Expérimenter la présence c'est expérimenter un *bios*.

Comprendre le statut, intrinsèquement, constitutivement dynamique de l'énergie de l'Acteur ouvre à la recherche et aux interrogations un horizon qui est pleinement cohérent et à la fois absolument neuf. Nous nous bornerons ici à y faire une simple allusion en référence à la dernière session publique de l'ISTA (Holstebro, 1986) consacrée au *rôle de la femme* dans le théâtre.

L'essai de Eugenio Barba "Animus-Anima : énergie", écrit pour cette circonstance, est une première tentative d'exploration précise et explicite des *formes* de l'énergie de

l'Acteur. La *forme animus* et la *forme anima* sont les pôles d'une orbite à l'intérieur de laquelle se transforme, c'est à dire « se met en forme », *c'est à dire vit*, l'énergie de l'Acteur.

L'énergie *animus* correspond à ce que nous percevons, au niveau in-expressif, comme « le masculin » et l'énergie *anima* comme le « féminin ». Mais il faut insister sur le fait que la corrélation avec le masculin et le féminin n'a de sens *que* si on considère ces deux notions au niveau pré-culturel du quotidien.

L'énergie *animus* et l'énergie *anima* n'ont rien à voir avec les comportements quotidiens « culturalisés » des hommes et des femmes. Ils correspondent à deux polarités qui sont dans le milieu quotidien, l'homme et la femme à leur *niveau in-expressif* : le niveau où se situe la base commune à *toutes* les femmes (ou à tous les hommes) de tous les contextes culturalisés spécifiques.

Les contextes quotidiens nous lient (de manière plus ou moins forte) au sexe physiologique : les hommes ont tendance à ne développer que la forme masculine de l'énergie et vice versa. Le milieu-scène nous libère de ce lien et tout particulièrement les scènes spécifiques où le sexe des acteurs peut être différent de celui des personnages. Une fois encore la « convention » et la « codification » des scènes traditionnelles orientales, bien loin d'occulter la dialectique *animus-anima*, nous permettent de l'observer comme dans un laboratoire.

Le viril acteur « en tenue de ville » n'est pas la contre-figure schizophrène de la fragile jeune fille maquillée et costumée : il constitue plutôt l'autre pôle, son double sexuel, mis à nu. Sur la scène l'*onnagata* n'est ni homme ni femme, ou plus précisément il est homme et femme ; l'orbite énergétique de sa présence peut se déployer jusqu'au limites de l'*animus* et de l'*anima*, du masculin-en-scène et du féminin-en-scène ; ou encore du *masculin rendu présent et du féminin rendu présent*.

En parcourant cette orbite, la transformation de l'acteur atteint ses lointaines racines étymologiques : l'acteur se trans-forme réellement. En modulant des formes antagonistes de l'énergie, il montre, comme s'il découvrait une blessure, le feu et la glace de la vie-en-scène, totalement présente et infiniment lointaine pour le spectateur.

Transformation et fiction donnent à voir, l'espace d'un instant et sans métaphores, leur commune semence de vérité.■

Traduction: Eliane Deschamps-Pria

FREDERIK SCHYBERG

Skuespillerens Kunst



Janne Risum

L'Acteur dans la savane - et sur scène

Un voyage dans l'univers conceptuel de l'ISTA

Abstract: *In dialogue with contributions by the Italian scholars Nando Tavian and Franco Ruffini, Janne Risum discusses the historical and methodological features of theatre anthropology and questions some of its key arguments. In this context, notions such as the cultural, sociological and anthropological aspects of the actor can be analysed in a unique concept of "cultural savannah", where the phenomena are all observable phenomenologically. For the original Danish version of this article in French translation: see Janne Risum, "Skuespilleren på savannen - og på scenen. Et besøg i ISTA's begrebsverden" in At synliggøre det usynlige: En antologi, ed. E. E. Christoffersen (Århus: Institut for Dramaturgi, 1987), 35-56 (texts by K. D. Kjeldsen, E. Christoffersen, E. Barba, J. Risum, R. Schechner, E. Thomsen).*

Keywords: *Theatre anthropology, Historiography, "Cultural savannah"*

Dans cet article, j'analyserai des exemples venant de la méthode élaborée et développée depuis 1979 par Eugenio Barba et son équipe de chercheurs en théâtrologie dans le cadre de l'International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) afin de parvenir à une meilleure compréhension de la spécificité de la nature de l'acteur. Cette initiative est la bienvenue. Comme le montre le Danois F. Schyberg dans son traité historique sur *L'Art de l'Acteur (Skuespillerens Kunst, 1954)*, ce n'est qu'au siècle dernier, comme l'avancent quelques théoriciens européens, que l'art théâtral est un genre créatif autonome requérant donc ainsi sa propre science. Nous n'avons toujours pas vu les totales conséquences de cette prise de conscience. Que signifie donc le terme « anthropologie théâtrale » et pourquoi l'ISTA choisit-il précisément ce point de vue ?

Ces dernières années, l'ISTA a publié toute une série d'études à ce sujet. L'anthologie *Anatomie de l'acteur. Un dictionnaire d'anthropologie théâtrale* (1985) en constitue un rapport très complet où les contributions de Eugenio Barba sont les plus importantes. La rédaction de l'ouvrage a été assurée par Eugenio Barba et Nicola Savarese. Une autre série de contributions est publiée dans le premier numéro thématique de *Teatro e storia* (1986), qui a pour rédacteurs Claudio Meldolesi et *alii*, ainsi que dans le numéro thématique *L'énergie de l'acteur*, 15/16 (1987), de la revue *Bouffonneries*, dont le rédacteur est Patrick Pezin.



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L'acteur-artisan

Avant de partir à la découverte, je m'arrêterai un moment. Il me semble en effet important de préciser quelle est la conception de l'art de l'acteur que j'emporte avec moi puisqu'elle sera soumise à épreuve pendant ce voyage. C'est un sujet complexe comprenant de nombreuses facettes ; toutefois, une caractéristique - une seule mais relativement exhaustive - de l'art de l'acteur, c'est de le considérer comme un artisanat particulier, produit selon des traditions locales déterminées, transmises de génération en génération. On peut mentionner la tradition de la Commedia dell'Arte, la tradition du kathakali, la tradition naturaliste, etc. Contrairement à, par exemple, un sculpteur ou un menuisier, ce qui est particulier dans la pratique par l'acteur de son artisanat, c'est que l'acteur crée, et avec son corps, et avec sa psyché ; il est donc simultanément et l'objet et le sujet de la production, aussi lorsqu'il s'agit de jeux de masques ou de théâtre en costumes et avec accessoires. Le sculpteur ou le menuisier, par contre, ont chacun un outil et ils produisent quelque chose qui leur est extérieur, par exemple des sculptures ou des chaises. L'acteur est à lui-même son propre outil comme l'a remarquablement noté l'acteur français Constant Coquelin en 1887 :

L'objet de son art, ce avec quoi il doit travailler et qu'il doit façonner pour réaliser son idée, c'est son propre visage, son propre corps, sa propre vie. Il s'ensuit donc que l'acteur doit posséder une double personnalité. Il a son premier moi qui est l'acteur, et son second moi qui est l'instrument. Le premier moi conçoit la personne à créer... et l'être que voit l'acteur est représenté par son second moi. Cette double personnalité est la caractéristique de l'acteur (Cole and Chinoy 1964, 196).

La compétence artisanale de l'acteur disparaît en même temps que lui. C'est ce qui rend les traditions théâtrales si vulnérables face au changement ou à l'oubli. Ils partagent leur destin avec d'autres traditions artisanales, vivantes ou par endroits disparues, telles que le souffleur de verre, le tourneur, le tonnelier ou le narrateur homérique. Tous appartiennent à des cultures traditionnelles où le travail mécanique n'a pas encore refoulé l'art artisanal où il ne l'a pas enfermé dans des recoins ou des niches par exemple sous le nom d'artisanat local. Il existe de nombreuses cultures traditionnelles sur notre globe. De la même façon, l'artisanat de l'acteur, tout comme celui du chanteur ou du danseur, semble résister assez bien à l'évolution industrielle. La technique théâtrale est actuellement hautement technologique - mais elle n'a pas pu remplacer les acteurs, les danseurs et les chanteurs. Ce qui donne à ces derniers un champ d'épanouissement personnel et relativement autonome parce que le dialogue constitutif du théâtre est bien celui que les acteurs instituent avec les spectateurs. C'est un ancrage et une autonomie qui font penser à ce que Walter Benjamin a décrit à propos du conteur dans la culture traditionnelle :

Le récit, tel qu'il a longtemps prospéré dans les milieux artisanaux - paysan, maritime et plus tard urbain - est en soi une forme artisanale de communication. Il ne prétend pas transmettre les faits bruts et réels de l'histoire, son *an sich* sous forme d'information ou de rapport. Il laisse les choses pénétrer la vie du conteur pour aller, ensuite, les y rechercher. C'est pourquoi la trace du narrateur subsiste dans le récit tout comme celle de la main du potier sur sa poterie (Benjamin 1977, 447).

Donc : le travail d'un acteur avec soi-même face à des spectateurs, tout comme Stanislavski aussi appela son projet. L'acteur laisse son empreinte dans son jeu et dans la mémoire des spectateurs.

Terminologies et empreintes

L'un des chercheurs de l'ISTA, Franco Ruffini fait remarquer que l'expression « anthropologie théâtrale » recouvre des domaines très différents de la recherche : d'abord, l'étude des aspects anthropologiques du théâtre et celle des aspects théâtraux de l'anthropologie, mais aussi parfois, la recherche de « l'origine » du théâtre dans une perspective philosophique plutôt qu'historique ; et enfin le domaine de recherche concrètement délimité auquel se consacrent les chercheurs de l'ISTA : l'étude de l'acteur en action.¹

Lorsqu'on désire étudier une, ou plusieurs traditions théâtrales, et bien évidemment aussi, entre autres, la terminologie propre à ces traditions pour ce qui concerne le travail de l'acteur, on se trouve face à ce problème que toutes les expressions utilisées par chaque tradition constituent une terminologie particulière différente de celle de la tradition scientifique. Une exception existe avec la tentative de systématisation faite par Stanislavski, tout comme avec celle de Decroux dans le domaine du mime. La terminologie n'est conçue que pour fonctionner dans sa propre tradition, donc localement, et il ne peut ainsi pas être directement comparé à celui des autres traditions. Il faut aussi s'attendre à ce que des significations disparaissent et que d'autres apparaissent au cours de l'histoire de ces traditions.

L'anthropologue Claude Lévi-Strauss a désigné ce genre de systèmes de signification par le terme de « bricolage » qui se différencie de la précision plus artificielle du langage scientifique. Lévi-Strauss considère le bricolage et la science comme deux formes également valables de la connaissance, deux formes complémentaires. Car elles ne peuvent pas faire la même chose : le « bricoleur » n'est pas un ingénieur. La différence linguistique se manifeste dans l'emploi soit du mot « signe » soit du mot « concept ». Le mot *lazzi* par exemple est le signifiant d'une très grande quantité de courts numéros comiques. La signification réduite du signe est rattachée à l'observation personnelle des manifestations locales et concrètes alors que la signification illimitée du concept obtient le statut généralisant de l'abstraction en perdant tout l'ancrage matériel du signe. Le bricoleur, c'est-à-dire nous tous contrairement au langage scientifique, travaille continuellement à la construction et à la destruction du signe en s'aidant d'« un ensemble à chaque instant fini d'outils et de matériaux, hétéroclites au surplus » et c'est « le résultat contingent de toutes les occasions qui se sont présentées de renouveler ou d'enrichir le stock, ou de l'entretenir avec les résidus de construction et de destructions antérieures ». Il s'agit ici d'une forme concrète de la connaissance dont chaque élément, le signe, « se situe à mi-chemin entre le percept et le concept ». La pensée mythique travaille de cette même façon.²

1. Cf. Ruffini 1986, 3.

2. Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1962, 31.

Le problème fondamental est donc de savoir comment la praxis et la terminologie des traditions théâtrales peuvent rencontrer leurs correspondantes scientifiques. C'est l'objectif de l'ISTA. C'est volontairement que l'ISTA commence ses recherches concrètes au simple niveau du sol : lorsque nous observons un acteur en action, il y a dans ce qu'il/elle fait quelque chose qui peut être considéré comme étant commun à tous les acteurs et ce, quelle que soit leur culture : comment le désigner ? Bref, que se passe-t-il quand le metteur en scène Eugenio Barba s'associe à un groupe de chercheurs italiens en théâtralogie, formés en sémiologie, afin d'entreprendre une telle recherche ?

Dans l'un des articles, Nando Tavianini compare les réflexions de Barba sur l'acteur aux théories d'Eisenstein sur l'art et sur le montage filmique. Il s'agit, selon lui, de *hand-made theories* peut-être parce qu'elles conservent, tout comme un objet artisanal, l'empreinte de la main de l'auteur. Elles ne fournissent pas d'interprétations globales mais des myriades de principes, des systèmes d'orientation emplis de principes « abstraits » fondés sur l'expérience pratique individuelle et dirigés vers le non-encore connu. La valeur des facultés d'orientation et de combinaison de ces artistes se trouve donc précisément, selon Tavianini, dans leur grande compétence au bricolage, et aussi dans leur compétence à se frayer un chemin dans l'apparement impossible ; mais il ne mentionne ni Lévi-Strauss, ni son concept.

Si l'on place ces trois publications l'une à côté de l'autre, on est frappé de constater combien les chercheurs de l'ISTA restent discrets pour ce qui concerne le fondement de leurs pensées ou pour ce qui est de savoir dans quelle mesure ils utilisent les concepts scientifiques établis. L'appareil conceptuel de l'ISTA devient ainsi plus un système d'orientation que ce que Tavianini appelle la carte finie « d'un pays exploré » (Tavianini 1987a, 28-9).

Je comprends bien cette fascination et ce dilemme. Si le bricolage est aussi fascinant, fécond et accommodant, c'est sans doute parce qu'il provoque d'incontrôlables mouvements dans la conscience et que, en tant que processus, il se rapproche du langage artistique, peut-être même qu'il constitue le point de contact, entre la conscience de l'homme de la rue et celle de l'artiste. Et, impossible d'y échapper : la recherche théâtrale doit être en contact avec la terminologie technique du théâtre. Mais si le bricolage est l'expression de toutes leurs créativité, il ne pourra alors jamais être détruit ou « retiré » du théâtre, de l'acteur ou du chercheur simplement parce que nous désirons aussi créer, dans des domaines plus strictement délimités, des concepts scientifiques exacts susceptibles d'être généralisés. Le bricolage et la science sont des connaissances complémentaires précisément du fait de la différence existant entre le signe et le concept.

Comme le dit clairement Franco Ruffini, l'expression « anthropologie théâtrale » signifie une quantité de choses, et probablement aussi au sein même de l'ISTA. On peut suivre la pensée artistique du fondateur, Eugenio Barba, ou la systématisation plus abstraite de Ruffini, ou encore la façon plus historico-culturelle dont Tavianini considère les choses. Tous utilisent les mêmes noyaux conceptuels. L'absence de références conceptuelles, ou de définitions différentielles clairement indiquées donne parfois l'impression de se trouver face au langage auto-référentiel d'un groupe où les créations originelles de signification en un mouvement d'enthousiasme bien compréhensible envers leur

matériau, se seraient transformées en un code fermé qu'il ne serait plus nécessaire ni de discuter, ni de prouver. Ce qui avait commencé comme un fécond bricolage peut ainsi aboutir à une mythologie conceptuelle stérile.

Le non-encore exprimé

L'ISTA a déjà entendu cette objection ; c'est sans doute pour cette raison que Franco Ruffini a récemment précisé ce qu'étaient les fondements épistémologiques de l'anthropologie théâtrale. Il la caractérise comme étant l'exercice d'une science pragmatique dans la meilleure tradition de l'empirisme, c'est-à-dire qu'elle pose une hypothèse et qu'elle tire des conclusions concernant son objet : l'acteur en action, et ce, au moyen d'approximations successives de la description par rapport à son objet (la méthode hypothético-déductive) :

Il faut se garder des métaphores faciles qui mettent tout en mots mais qui ne sont pas basées sur des faits : souvenons-nous que l'anthropologie théâtrale est une science (Ruffini 1986, 19).

Le deuxième article de Ruffini « Le milieu-scène : pré-expression, énergie, présence » (dans *Bouffonneries*, 15/16), dit parler au nom de l'ISTA et nous offre un exposé systématique de l'appareil conceptuel de l'ISTA. On est déçu si l'on a considéré le premier article comme une promesse car les concepts n'y sont que très vaguement rattachés à leurs affinités avec la recherche et avec le matériau lui-même. Il faut plutôt dire que les concepts sont « adoptés » ou « engendrés » par l'ISTA, apparaissant ainsi comme étrangement a-historiques dans leur présentation.

La formulation de l'hypothèse peut être formulée ainsi. Je modifie un peu l'ordre de la présentation mais pas sa logique : le point de départ semble en être l'anthropologie structurale (Lévi-Strauss) ou un autre système analogique d'analyse d'oppositions binaires.

1) Tout d'abord, une différenciation est opérée entre des milieux ou scènes culturels différents. Il est important de noter que les deux termes sont utilisés comme synonymes. Par exemple, Ruffini parle de « la scène culturelle » (*ibid.*, 35) et du « milieu-scène » (*ibid.*, 36 ; ainsi que le titre). Les hypothèses ultérieures sont ainsi apparemment immunisées contre la constitution d'une différenciation analytique entre la réalité et la fiction, le profane et le sacré ou bien le quotidien et la fête. Ce point de vue me rappelle celui que l'on trouve dans les jeux de rôles dans les sciences sociales récentes, mais il est certainement plus fondamental comme nous le verrons.

2) Une différence est ensuite posée entre deux types de milieux-scènes : les cultures continues, comme par exemple, les cultures des savanes en Afrique ou en Amazonie, et les discontinues, comme par exemple « le milieu-scène » (*ibid.*, 40).

3) Les différences entre les cultures des savanes des deux continents permettent une nouvelle différenciation. D'un côté, il est possible de rassembler les différentes caractéristiques culturelles, sociologiques et anthropologiques des cultures des savanes sous le concept de savane culturelle, où les phénomènes sont tous observables

phénoménologiquement. De l'autre, certains chercheurs (les références sont absentes) avancent que les cultures des savanes possèdent aussi des traits communs par-delà les continents, comme par exemple, un certain type de résistance à la chaleur ou à l'humidité, un type d'aptitudes alimentaires etc., que l'on peut tous regrouper sous le concept de savane pré-culturelle ou savane trans-culturelle, termes qui renvoient donc à des traits géo-morphologiques ou phylogénétiques présumés dans les caractéristiques purement physiques des habitants des savanes. Il n'est pas possible d'observer isolément ces traits des savanes culturelles mais il est possible, indirectement, de reconnaître leur existence en s'aidant d'une abstraction méthodologique, dit Ruffini. La « savane pré-culturelle » est une réalité cognitive basée sur l'interprétation et rien d'autre, alors que la « savane culturelle » peut être décrite directement (*ibid.*, 34-35).

Hic Rhodus, hic salta ! Dans une fable d'Esope, un homme se vantait du saut exceptionnel qu'il avait effectué à Rhodes. Ce qui lui valut cette remarque de l'un de ceux qui l'écoutaient : « Rhodes est ici, saute ici ! ». Probablement un empiriste avant l'heure.

4) Le saut effectué par Ruffini généralise par contre son hypothèse sur la savane :

L'anthropologie théâtrale postule, comme hypothèse constitutive, que les diverses scènes culturelles sont un seul et même milieu pré-culturel (et trans-culturel). (*ibid.*, 35)

5) Que ceci concerne aussi les acteurs est maintenant une simple conséquence. L'ISTA pense que, derrière les différentes traditions théâtrales, il existe une base commune « pré-culturelle » et « cette dotation de base pré-culturelle est au cœur de la recherche de l'anthropologie théâtrale » (*ibid.*, 35).

6) Une dernière différenciation logique consacre cette « base pré-culturelle » des acteurs. Tout acteur ou groupe d'acteurs spécifique, « c'est-à-dire des habitants de scènes spécifiques » a un comportement « culturalisé » observable que l'ISTA propose d'appeler « expression ». La base générale « pré-culturelle » supposée commune à tous les acteurs, « c'est-à-dire aux habitants du milieu-scène » reçoivent à l'inverse le nom de « pré-expression » (*ibid.*, 36). C'est donc ici que se trouve Rhodes. L'acteur est séparé en deux : l'un s'écrit avec un « a » minuscule, l'autre avec un « A » majuscule :

Les acteurs expriment, l'Acteur pré-exprime (*ibid.*, 36).

Il existe de nombreux exemples de milieux d'acteurs qui fonctionnent comme une sous-culture à l'intérieur de la « grande » culture dans laquelle ils vivent, mais Ruffini ne nous explique pas pourquoi l'ISTA, de tout ce qui compose la vie de l'acteur, du training à l'ingestion et à l'amour, choisit de n'appeler comportement culturel que la seule manifestation scénique. Il n'explique pas non plus en quoi l'expression des acteurs se distingue de celle par exemple des habitants de la savane qui pourtant, nous l'avons appris auparavant, habitent une « scène culturelle ». Je ne peux y trouver qu'une seule explication : c'est que l'ISTA a) d'un côté opère une distinction entre la fiction et la réalité et b) de l'autre, il refuse cette distinction. Les problèmes fondamentaux tels que réalité-fiction, quotidien-fête et profane-sacré semblent continuer à exister en tant que principes directeurs souterrains dans l'appareil conceptuel de l'ISTA.

Il s'agit d'une construction de ressemblances et de différences purement sémantiques (linguistiques) conçue pour regarder par-dessus l'empirisme. « La scène est un milieu dont les habitants sont les acteurs » (*ibid.*, 35) et la « base » générale particulière de ces habitants est « la pré-expression ». Pour atteindre le but, on a effectué deux sauts logiques, de la savane au monde et ensuite à l'acteur. Mais pourquoi utiliser des déductions fausses ? Elles sont tout à fait superflues car une seule chose est clairement postulée : une ontologie. Sa dichotomie religieuse pose une différence entre le visible et l'invisible dans la conception même de l'homme. Rien n'est à prouver mais tout pourrait être dit de façon plus directe.

Summa theologiae est un ouvrage théologique essentiel pour l'église catholique. Il a été écrit par le scolastique Thomas d'Aquin en 1275 environ. Thomas d'Aquin y abandonne l'idée d'une preuve de l'existence de Dieu et il neutralise la querelle entre la foi et la connaissance en divisant l'existence en deux couches. La raison doit toujours elle-même prendre son point de départ dans les phénomènes réels mais lorsque les limites du raisonnement s'éloignent alors la révélation apparaît à la rescousse. La « base pré-culturelle » sous la culture apparente est, chez Ruffini, une tentative semblable pour réunir des extrémités contraires, mais comme science *empirique* attestée. Contrairement aux précédents scolastiques, Thomas d'Aquin rejette précisément cette idée parce que la raison n'est pas en mesure d'être Dieu. Les points de vue de Ruffini dans ses deux articles sont inconciliables et il vaut mieux le juger sur ce qu'il fait plutôt que sur ce qu'il dit qu'il fait. Quand la recherche s'identifie d'abord à ses propres concepts, elle n'est plus recherche mais ontologie ; et la physiologie des habitants de la savane n'est alors qu'un exemple pédagogique indirect qui nous conduit au problème de l'ontologie. Cette profession de foi - car ce n'est rien d'autre - se fie à Dieu et au théâtre. L'église a disparu, laissant un vide dans lequel apparaît le théâtre.

L'expérience

Pour les chercheurs, les perspectives offertes par les travaux de l'ISTA me semblent se trouver dans deux autres choix. Premièrement, l'évidente conception de l'art théâtral en tant qu'art créateur autonome dont il est possible de dire beaucoup plus de choses, artistiquement et philosophiquement, que ne l'ont supposé un Stanislavski ou un Brecht. Deuxièmement, leur modèle concret d'organisation : depuis 1979, une série de séminaires consacrés à l'étude de l'art théâtral où se rencontrent directement tant des acteurs venant de traditions différentes qu'une équipe pluridisciplinaire de chercheurs. La théâtrologie est pluridisciplinaire si elle veut arriver à quelque chose, comme l'a souligné, dès sa fondation au début de ce siècle, Max Herrmann à Berlin.

Il est incontestable que les perspectives internationales et pluridisciplinaires de l'ISTA, en ce qui concerne la singularité de l'art théâtral, doivent à Eugenio Barba et son point de vue et son organisation pluridisciplinaire. Le point de vue peut être considéré à part ; cela ne change rien au fait que le travail pluridisciplinaire en action à l'ISTA est en soi un modèle.

Il s'agit d'un travail de laboratoire expérimental qui existe depuis neuf ans. Ruffini justifie avec raison le choix, du fait de leur stabilité, des traditions orientales. Leurs

codes culturels ne dépendent plus des caractéristiques individuelles, non plus que des conditions matérielles des représentations. Ils peuvent être réunis et comparés, et il en existe un grand choix. « Le premier caractère que l'on exige d'un objet d'expérimentation est d'être défini, stable, d'être le plus représentatif possible de la classe d'objets à laquelle il appartient », souligne Ruffini (*ibid.*, 39). Si l'on désire étudier un ensemble des corps solides, c'est une mauvaise idée que de commencer avec un bloc de glace. Les sciences humaines ne peuvent évidemment pas poser de telles exigences scientifiques très longtemps ; à moins, bien sûr, qu'elles n'acceptent de se limiter à l'étude de milieux relativement fermés et stables que l'on trouve en général dans la culture consacrée, mais pas dans les cultures populaires. Par exemple, la délimitation par la culture consacrée de la recherche sur la Commedia dell'Arte a provoqué un violent décalage traditionnel dans la mesure où, avant le XXe siècle, on a seulement étudié les mieux transmises des sources, c'est-à-dire celles où la Commedia dell'Arte fut en contact avec la culture de la cour de l'époque et fut par là-même considérée comme une documentation valable ; on a de cette façon tout simplement ignoré une quantité d'autres troupes moins célèbres en Europe.³ La sélection de l'ISTA est donc légitime, ou plutôt « *a dignified project* » ainsi que le formula Richard Schechner en 1986 lors de sa conférence à l'Institut d'Études Dramaturgiques de l'Université d'Aarhus, mais orienté, il est vrai, vers les traditions théâtrales orientales reconnues par la culture consacrée : legong, kathakali, odissi, nihon buyo, l'opéra de Pékin... Quant à l'importance du choix de cette sélection pour les résultats des enquêtes, c'est l'éternel problème de l'empirisme, tout comme pour les journalistes de radio ou de télévision.

Depuis 1979, l'ISTA s'est surtout consacré aux manifestations corporelles de la « pré-expression de l'Acteur ». Et peut-être est-il vrai que les abstractions, vaguement reliées, prennent ici leur élan dans quelque chose de très concret, c'est-à-dire qu'elles s'identifient à la perspective vécue personnellement par l'acteur du morcellement de sa journée. L'acteur, comme tout un chacun, accomplit une série d'actions quotidiennes pour, à certains moments, donnés, s'entraîner ou bien accomplir une série d'actions fictives sur une scène. Mais ces deux éléments sont la réalité tangible de l'acteur, et aussi la double nature de son jeu dont parle Coquelin. L'ISTA distingue justement ici le quotidien du scénique en tant que domaines d'action ; il parle du « comportement quotidien » de l'individu, c'est-à-dire, d'un point de vue physiologique, sa « dynamique corporelle normale » (« normale » n'est pas explicité) et du « comportement extra-quotidien », le scénique justement. Comme on le constate, la distinction n'est justement pas faite entre comportement réel et comportement fictif.

L'étude comparée de la dynamique corporelle de l'acteur dans les traditions orientales sélectionnées, a abouti à un résultat de nature physiologique : quels que soient leur rôle ou leur tradition, ces acteurs utilisent une énergie maximale dans le jeu et ce grâce à trois principes : 1) l'équilibre s'oppose à la force de gravité, 2) le mouvement s'oppose à la force d'inertie, et 3) seule une petite quantité de l'énergie est utilisée comme énergie de mouvement, le reste étant « omis ou condensé » dans le corps (*ibid.*, 42). Il s'agit d'un « principe d'altération » corporel (*ibid.*, 40). Cela est repris dans une analyse d'images

dans *Anatomie de l'acteur*, et dans l'étude de Nando Taviani « Un vivo contrasto. Seminario su attrici e attori della commedia dell'arte » ;⁴ dans une version abrégée « *La fleur et le guerrier : les actrices de la commedia dell'arte* ».⁵

Cette analyse physiologique relativement élémentaire fonctionne remarquablement pour une comparaison entre les traits communs et les différences physiologiques des diverses traditions théâtrales ; elle peut aussi être utilisée pour comparer des acteurs appartenant à une même tradition ; mais en réalité, elle fonctionne en soi, c'est-à-dire indépendamment des autres concepts de l'ISTA. Si je compare à un acteur au repos, la différence est claire.

L'interprétation

Comment donc interpréter ces observations ? Taviani est sans doute celui qui parle le plus librement, c'est-à-dire le plus concret historiquement, du concept de « pré-expression » :

Acceptons implicitement ces trois principes. Ce sont des « filtres » appropriés pour trier parmi un grand choix de représentations. Mais pour les chercheurs en histoire du théâtre, c'est le concept même de travail pré-expressif de l'acteur qui est la plus importante conquête. (Taviani 1986, 46)

Il définit en réalité le concept à partir de sa propre histoire culturelle, comme étant la désignation du travail tout en contrastes de l'acteur dans son jeu. Il trouve dans les silhouettes représentées, un contraste entre les positions du corps, qui se rattachent aux danses de cour, et l'expression populaire et grotesque de la représentation du personnage. Il n'a en réalité nullement besoin d'un concept à ce sujet, mais enfin, il l'appelle « le substrat pré-expressif, noble et majestueux, et le résultat expressif, comique et bouffon » ; donc, une utilisation consciente de la « dissonance » ou du « contraste vivant » (*ibid.*, 51, voir le titre).

Il invite les lecteurs à participer à « une petite expérience » à l'aide des illustrations du Recueil Fossard, une source essentielle parue dans les années 1575-89 :

Tentons une petite expérience : prenons l'un de ces Pantalons dans le Recueil Fossard et couvrons-lui tout le visage ; sans l'image du visage, du masque et de la longue barbe blanche, il ne reste rien du « vieillard à la barbe blanche ». [...] Continuons l'expérience : masquons les visages et les têtes des petites silhouettes des caricatures de Callot dans *Balli di Sfessania*, elles conservent pratiquement toujours leur allure comique. Si l'on effectue la même opération avec les Arlequins du Recueil Fossard, une toute autre réalité scénique apparaît : lorsque notre attention n'est plus absorbée par les visages des zannis qui déterminent tout le comique de la silhouette, nous découvrons un ensemble de positions énergiques qui ne sont en aucun cas comiques. Si nous pouvions par l'imagination libérer le serviteur de Bergame de son costume rapiécé, nous le verrions, de par l'attitude de son corps, se transformer en un personnage tragique :

3. Voir Münz 1979.

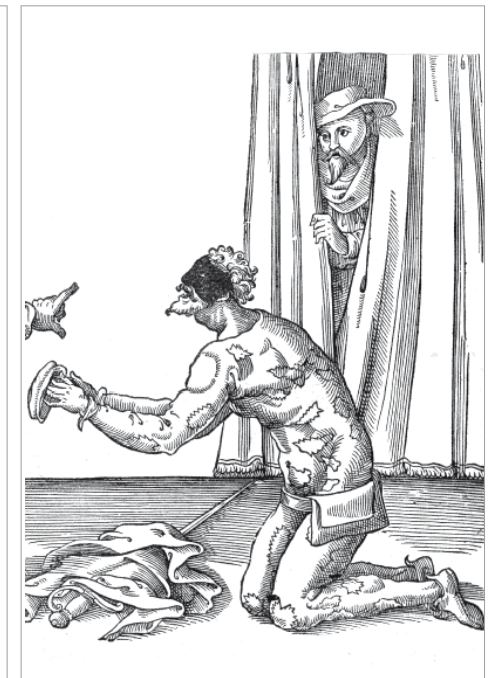
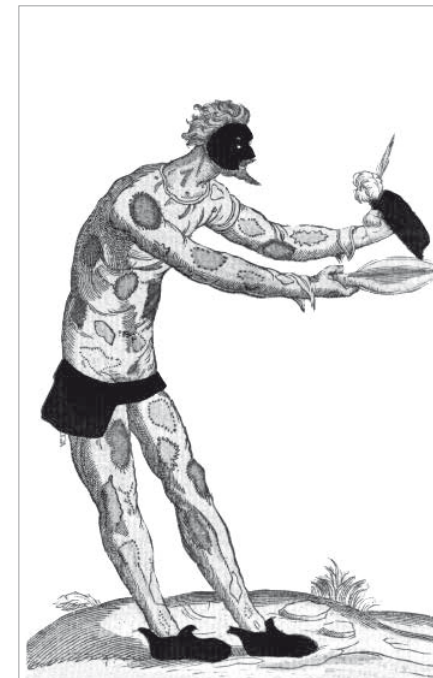
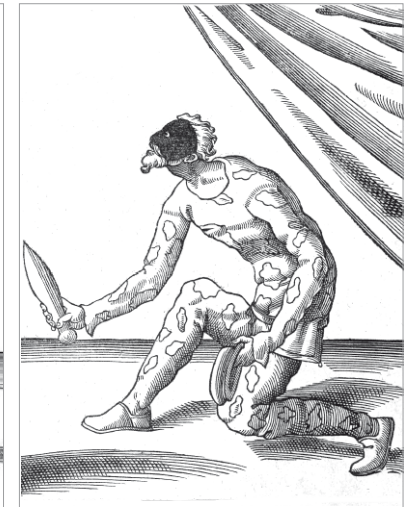
4. Taviani 1986, 25-75.

5. Taviani 1987b, 61-93.

Le corps entraîné et le personnage : Pantalon (Recueil Fossard)



Le corps entraîné et le personnage : Arlequin (Recueil Fossard)



nous pourrions voir un héros mourant, amoureux, suppliant ou querelleur mais pas Arlequin. (*ibid.*, 55-56)

Taviani interprète ce contraste entre le masque et le corps comme étant le contraste observable entre l'expression exigée par le personnage et la pré-expression du « langage énergétique du corps ». Une interprétation aussi littérale impliquerait que l'acteur ne pourrait pas laisser le langage de son corps suivre celui du masque s'il devait représenter un Pantalon ou un Arlequin. Si je pose mon doigt sur les illustrations de Taviani, plusieurs d'entre elles s'opposent en fait à son interprétation. Tant Pantalon qu'Arlequin peuvent présenter, de façon fort peu héroïque, un ventre bien proéminent devant et un dos bien arrondi derrière, qui fait que tout le torse dessine un « S » inversé. La différence entre eux, c'est que les hanches d'Arlequin sont plus souples, représentant le ventre éternellement affamé du serviteur, alors que celles de Pantalon sont enfermées dans la position avancée des organes sexuels, bloquant ainsi ces derniers, ce qui correspond à l'éternel problème de l'impuissance de l'homme. Par contre, sur les gravures sur cuivre de Callot, le corps correspond toujours au masque ; il est donc possible que la liberté artistique de Callot ait plutôt consisté en une accentuation de ce qui était déjà un tableau grotesque produit par des acteurs athlétiques. Taviani a utilisé les concepts comme « filtres », mais dans un deuxième temps, c'est ce qui dirige l'analyse.

Ruffini et Taviani sont donc tout à fait d'accord pour utiliser « la pré-expression » comme un modèle descriptif supérieur, mais leurs interprétations en sont contradictoires. Ruffini refuse par principe une interprétation isolée :

L'Acteur se tient derrière les acteurs mais dans un sens qui n'est ni spatial ni temporel : « se tenir derrière » désigne plutôt une situation d'occultation. De la même façon, la pré-expression se tient derrière l'expression comme une présence cachée, qui n'apparaît qu'en termes de connaissance dans l'analyse et jamais isolément dans une scène concrète. (Ruffini 1987, p. 37)

Taviani est en principe d'accord avec Ruffini, mais il s'en écarte lorsque, dans ses matériaux empiriques, il trouve *son* Rhodes :

Il faut en effet s'habituer à considérer le travail de l'acteur comme un organisme complexe constitué de plusieurs niveaux d'organisation distincts. Le niveau d'organisation pré-expressif est celui qui permet à l'acteur de capter et de diriger l'attention des spectateurs à travers sa propre présence scénique avant même d'exprimer ou de représenter quoi que ce soit. « Avant même » doit être entendu au sens logique plus que chronologique car il n'indique pas nécessairement un moment isolable dans le temps. On pourrait citer de nombreux exemples d'un rapport acteur-spectateur fondé sur le simple niveau pré-expressif ; il suffit de penser à certaines situations où l'acteur fascine même le spectateur qui ignore tout de ce qui est représenté, qui ne connaît, ni l'histoire, ni la langue, ni les conventions dont l'acteur se sert. Mais aussi à certains exemples de danse pure où ce n'est pas la partition musicale mais la « partition physique » de l'acteur-danseur qui subjugue l'imagination de celui qui regarde et l'entraîne au fil d'un courant très précis. (Taviani 1987a, 27)

Bref le concept s'échappe, devient flou ; chaque chercheur en donne sa propre définition à lui et le concept ne peut donc plus décrire son matériau de façon univoque. Lorsqu'un concept n'est alors ni rejeté, ni révisé, c'est que, pour une raison ou pour une autre, il est considéré comme étant évident et qu'il fonctionne alors comme signe de quelque chose d'autre.

L'équilibre vertical d'un Japonais cultivé

Revenons à l'étude de Ruffini. La « dépense », ou le « gaspillage énergétique » particulier qui caractérise l'emploi par l'acteur de son énergie corporelle, selon les trois principes pré-cités, révèle d'après l'ISTA, non seulement que cela « coûte plus » à l'acteur en-jeu de conserver son équilibre dans la position verticale tout en bougeant que cela ne le fait dans son « comportement quotidien », mais aussi que ce surplus énergétique peut être déterminé relativement précisément au niveau physiologique (*ibid.*, 42).

Mais qu'est donc cette dépense apparente, incluant un surplus énergétique, si ce n'est précisément ce déploiement d'énergie nécessaire pour alimenter la « présence » scénique de l'Acteur (*ibid.*, 44) ? Ce n'est que maintenant, et présenté comme une sorte de conséquence de l'étude sur la « pré-expression », c'est-à-dire de « l'existence pré-culturelle de l'Acteur », qu'apparaît, indirectement, l'appareil conceptuel concernant *la scène en tant que communication concrète*. Le surplus énergétique vient de ce que l'acteur joue, représente des actions :

En réalité, l'équilibre vertical pré-expressif réalise deux objectifs : maintenir l'acteur en position debout et *en plus* montrer l'acteur en position d'équilibre vertical. Le milieu-scène [...] présente cette particularité constitutive : outre leur objectif intrinsèque, les actions ont *en plus* celui de s'offrir au regard de quelqu'un d'extérieur au milieu-scène.

Il n'y a là aucune implication esthétique ou philosophique. Nous pouvons dire que le statut ontologique du milieu-scène se définit précisément par le fait que les actions qui s'y déroulent sont des actions et, en plus, des actions montrées. Renoncer à ce postulat équivaldrait à détruire le concept même de scène. (*ibid.*, 43-4)

Je le crois volontiers, pour ne pas dire plus ; je m'étonne que la définition constitutive du théâtre apparaisse si tard dans la conceptualisation et presque comme si elle en était un résultat. J'ai été transportée dans un cercle logique porté par la vitesse de la pensée. Et de là, je peux un instant apercevoir, tout en bas, l'île de Rhodes : c'est une île sinueuse toute en longueur.

La « pré-expression » doit-elle donc être comparée à « l'expression » ? La réponse est non. La conséquence logique de cette bipartition du monde conceptuel et de ce modèle du monde scénique est alors que « la pré-expression doit - décide Ruffini sans se justifier - être confrontée avec l'*in-expression* si on peut appeler ainsi le niveau pré-culturel des comportements dans les différents « quotidiens » (*ibid.*, 41). A son « niveau in-expressif », le comportement « quotidien » se fixe « des objectifs précis, discernables et in-

trinsèques et rien d'autre » (*ibid.*, 43). L'équilibre vertical d'un Japonais cultivé peut être décrit au « niveau in-expressif » comme une « consommation énergétique minimum » contrairement au gaspillage énergétique qui caractérise l'équilibre vertical des acteurs du kabuki. Ainsi, les trois principes énergétiques de « l'in-expression » s'opposent aux trois principes de « la pré-expression ». Ce sont : 1) l'équilibre se conforme à la force de gravité, 2) le mouvement est conforme à la force d'inertie et 3) toute l'énergie est utilisée sous forme d'énergie cinétique (sous forme de mouvement) (*ibid.*, 41-2). « La pré-expression de l'Acteur coûte plus d'énergie que l'in-expression de la Personne Quotidienne : voici un résultat objectif de l'analyse » (*ibid.*, 45).

Ce dernier point ne peut bien évidemment être rejeté. Si l'ISTA avait plutôt choisi de considérer l'art théâtral comme un travail, comme le fit Coquelin, et s'il était parti d'un concept de travail au lieu de partir d'un concept de culture scénique, il lui aurait seulement fallu montrer de quelle façon particulière fonctionne le corps de l'acteur en action. Ce Japonais debout qui est décrit de façon purement physiologique peut tout aussi bien être un spectateur pendant l'entracte dans un théâtre kabuki, mais il n'est pas comme l'acteur de kabuki en plein travail, il n'a pas non plus de problèmes de miction et il ne bouge pas (essayons d'analyser un pas). Les problèmes apparaissent dès que Ruffini le considère au « niveau expressif culturel » :

Il arrive que dans les contextes socio-culturels quotidiens la personne agisse et se montre en train d'agir (d'où l'expression « jouer la comédie ») : indépendamment de cette situation particulière, l'action a toujours dans les contextes socio-culturels quotidiens des finalités qui s'ajoutent à ses finalités intrinsèques : révéler son propre statut social, influencer les autres etc. (*ibid.*, 44).

L'île vient certainement de sauter toute entière ! La personne est incontestablement libre, mais il s'agit aussi d'une ontologie pessimiste où, dans son fondement ontologique, l'individu apparaît isolé et où ce n'est que dans des actes socio-culturels qu'il se trouve avec d'autres personnes, pour qui il joue la comédie, ou en tout cas à qui il montre son statut. Il s'agit là d'un couplage de la physiologie et de la théorie des rôles. On comprend pourquoi un acteur, devant une telle perspective, choisit de partir en exil dans l'espace de liberté qu'est le « milieu-scène » afin d'y pouvoir là réaliser son « fond » ontologique : *montrer*, c'est-à-dire *communiquer*. Le problème est de savoir où se dirige la science. La théorie qui appelle milieu la fiction scénique ressemble à une stratégie de survie qui oublierait volontiers ce qu'elle a abandonné et par quels mots elle a rendu réel son exil. La construction du système est ambivalente et engage doublement. Parfois, on refoule la différence entre le réel et la fiction, d'autres fois, on l'établit. Dans la comparaison entre le Japonais « in-expressif » et l'acteur du kabuki « pré-expressif », aucune explication ne nous est donnée de l'écart entre les niveaux qui consiste en ceci que la « Personne Quotidienne » montre au « niveau expressif culturel » alors que « l'Acteur » montre au « niveau *pré-expressif* ». L'Acteur « est » simplement, dans un lieu autre où existent d'autres lois. Dans un avant-Rhodes qui n'a pas encore ancré son île dans la mer.

Eugenio Barba parle de « re-coloniser le corps » par le training. C'est une bonne métaphore et une stratégie pour réaliser une rupture culturelle. Ruffini continue : « la

re-colonisation psychophysique de la personne » (*ibid.*, 49). Mais la re-colonisation a déjà son histoire à moins que l'on ne pense que l'on ne peut se re-coloniser, soi-même et son propre appareil conceptuel, qu'en partant en exil. Mais tous les exilés le savent, le véritable abandon des exilés, c'est que les lignes de mire s'éloignent, s'embrument et coûtent énormément.

Les frontières de la physiologie

C'est Nando Tavian qui a introduit dans le vocabulaire de l'ISTA le concept de *seconde nature* pour une approche plus claire de la « pré-expression ». Participant quotidiennement à une culture continue, les acteurs possèdent, en tant que personnes, une « *première nature* » d'ordre psycho-physique ; et en tant qu'acteurs dans le « milieu-scène » discontinu, ils créent grâce à un training continu leur « seconde nature » ou « nature scénique », qui est provoquée de façon artistico-artificieuse (*ibid.*, 46-7).

Le modèle en est le classique *Règles pour les acteurs* (1803) de Goethe qui dit que l'acteur doit s'approprier si bien les principes des positions et des mouvements scéniques que ceux-ci lui deviennent une *seconde nature* (§34) ce qui, selon Goethe, signifie une nature idéale unissant le vrai au beau (§35).

La « re-colonisation » est un projet plus âpre et plus audacieux que la seconde nature de Goethe qui ne serait plus aujourd'hui qu'une nouvelle colonisation. Mais qui nous a colonisés ? Le psychologue social différencie la première socialisation dans la famille de la deuxième hors de la famille, recevoir une formation professionnelle par exemple. L'expression « re-colonisation » dit que la recherche et l'apprentissage doivent repartir à zéro sur la base des compétences propres à chaque individu. Le training de l'acteur devient alors le début d'une « nouvelle culture » (Barba) et peut-être une culture future. Barba considère d'ailleurs la tradition théâtrale classico-naturaliste de l'Occident comme stérile. Où donc commencer ? « L'évolution des cinq sens couvre toute l'histoire de l'humanité » est toujours une phrase remarquablement dynamique. Elle a été formulée par Karl Marx, qui lui aussi concevait le travail comme quelque chose qui, étrangement, contribuait au développement de l'individu. Ce qui ne saurait surprendre l'acteur, tout habitué qu'il est à travailler avec ce délicat instrument qu'il est lui-même :

Le travail est de prime abord un acte qui se passe entre l'homme et la nature. L'homme y joue lui-même vis-à-vis de la nature le rôle d'une puissance naturelle. Les forces dont son corps est doué, bras et jambes, tête et mains, il les met en mouvement afin de s'assimiler des matières en leur donnant une forme utile à sa vie. En même temps qu'il agit par ce mouvement sur la nature extérieure et la modifie, il modifie sa propre nature, et développe les facultés qui y sommeillent. (Marx [1867] 1963, 727)

Quelque belle que soit l'expression, la sueur n'en coule pas moins sur le visage de l'acteur. L'acteur est, d'une certaine façon, et son propre chercheur et son propre philosophe. La fascination de l'ISTA pour la « pré-expression » aux multiples noms est tout à fait compréhensible, mais une plus importante re-colonisation serait de prendre Aristote

au mot lorsqu'il dit que la faculté de représenter, la faculté de la mimésis, est innée et étroitement rattachée au plaisir de la connaissance. Pour bizarre que puisse être ce que l'acteur entreprend, ce n'est cependant pas la multiplication des pains sur la montagne.

La recherche théâtrale doit s'engager dans une étude sur ce que l'acteur en action *fait réellement et totalement conscient* de ce qu'il produit une fiction ; l'ISTA a fait, à ce sujet, de nombreuses et intéressantes observations. Je ne crois toutefois pas que la recherche théâtrale puisse faire l'économie de la construction d'une conception herméneutique globale qui comprendrait le travail de l'acteur avec lui-même, à la fois sujet et objet devant le spectateur, non plus que d'une écoute de la terminologie propre à l'acteur.

Ruffini avance cette remarquable idée supplémentaire, que les études de l'ISTA sur le « milieu-scène » se seraient jusqu'à présent limitées aux aspects physiologiques de la création théâtrale alors que ses aspects psychiques n'auraient pas encore été pris en compte. Si, de plus, l'on considère la représentation comme un tout, l'enquête devrait alors aller jusqu'à inclure les spectateurs. Parallèlement au « milieu-scène » et à l'« Acteur », on pourrait donc parler du « parterre » en tant que « lieu pré-culturel (et trans-culturel) » particulier du « Spectateur » s'opposant aux cultures spécifiques des spectateurs venant de diverses traditions théâtrales. De même que pour la distinction entre « expression » et « pré-expression », on pourrait, en tant que « spectateurs/Spectateur » parler d'une « *réception* » commune et d'« *une base pré-réceptive* » où le Spectateur est attiré et « modulé » par la présence de l'Acteur. On pourrait alors parler de « l'attention du Spectateur » corrélative de la « présence de l'Acteur ». (Ruffini 1987, 45-6)

Il est clair qu'une analyse purement physiologique ne peut pas étudier la façon dont l'acteur en action contrôle son comportement scénique *comme sujet* et qu'elle ne peut qu'obtenir des résultats physiologiques partiels dans son étude de l'art théâtral. Pourquoi donc alors partir, selon les mots de Taviani, de « l'énergie de l'acteur *comme prémisses* ».

La question subsiste de savoir comment cette focalisation, presque systématique, sur l'énergie de l'acteur a pu étayer un aussi important réseau d'hypothèses et de suppositions comme c'est le cas ici. L'ajout des nouvelles hypothèses de Ruffini poserait à la définition de la « pré-expression » de nouvelles questions. Ces questions ne sont pas nouvelles pour la sociologie du théâtre non plus que pour l'analyse de la représentation, excepté la graphie particulière et la problématique qui leur ont été ajoutées. L'ISTA est une organisation groupée autour de conceptions particulières du théâtre et de l'homme. Pourquoi ne le serait-elle pas ? Mais dans la mesure où les chercheurs en théâtralogie de l'ISTA offrent un appareil conceptuel propre à l'organisation ainsi que des résultats d'enquête comme contributions à la recherche théâtrale, ils se doivent, aussi à eux-mêmes, de répondre aux questions non résolues qui s'y rattachent. Dire de l'art et de la science que ce sont des domaines complémentaires n'appelle pas leur fusion, mais plutôt à l'art très précis de l'équilibre.

Le simple et le complexe

L'équilibre, l'art même de l'équilibre chez l'acteur, était toutefois le point de départ de toute l'entreprise. Et c'est l'étude des nombreuses attitudes physiologiques et

significations culturelles qui font de l'anthologie *Anatomie de l'acteur* un catalogue à la fois très riche et très hétérogène. Tout y est, mais sous la forme un peu décousue d'extraits de carnets de voyages provenant d'une expédition commune à tous leurs auteurs. Le noyau linguistique de l'expédition se trouve dans les textes d'Eugenio Barba. En 1982, il écrivit que le point de départ de l'anthropologie théâtrale est de savoir comment *un acteur occidental* peut (à nouveau) faire évoluer le fondement matériel de son art :

L'anthropologie théâtrale ne cherche pas des principes universellement vrais mais des indications utiles. Elle n'a pas l'humilité d'une science, mais l'ambition de repérer les connaissances utiles au travail de l'acteur. Elle ne veut pas découvrir des « lois », mais étudier des règles de comportement. [...]

À l'origine, on comprenait le terme « anthropologie » comme l'étude du comportement de l'homme non seulement au niveau socio-culturel mais aussi au niveau physiologique. L'anthropologie théâtrale, par conséquent, étudie le comportement physiologique et socioculturel de l'homme dans une situation de représentation. (Barba 1985, 4)

Tel était le projet artistique face à un avenir ouvert. Et si l'on pose l'ensemble des revues de l'Odin Teatret, *Teatrets Teori og Teknikk* (Théorie et Technique du Théâtre) ainsi que les écrits de Barba à côté d'*Anatomie de l'acteur*, on constate clairement combien cette étude de la spécificité de l'acteur a été logique dans ses questions et dans son exploration des traditions théâtrales. Elle révèle l'existence d'un axe Grotowski-Barba, comme Barba lui-même l'a toujours fait remarquer. Le projet artistique qui est le fondement des études de l'anthropologie théâtrale repose sur la vision du théâtre que l'on trouve clairement exprimée dans le *via negativa*, la voie négative, de Jerzy Grotowski :

La réflexion sur l'anthropologie théâtrale commence en prenant ses distances par rapport aux traditions théâtrales occidentales. Cela ne signifie pas qu'on se tourne vers les traditions des théâtres orientaux mais qu'on s'éloigne de ce qui a été, depuis près de deux siècles, l'objet exclusif de la réflexion et de la recherche « scientifique » concernant l'acteur, c'est-à-dire la sphère psychologique de ce dernier... Fonder le travail de l'acteur sur des bases psycho-techniques supposait et suppose le choix d'une orientation précise de l'acteur : celle du *vouloir exprimer*. Mais cette orientation esquive un problème fondamental : les bases pré-expressives de l'acteur.

L'expressivité de l'acteur découle - presque *malgré lui* - de ses actions, de l'usage qu'il fait de sa présence physique. Les principes qui le guident dans les actions constituent les bases pré-expressives de son expressivité. Ce sont nos actions, qui malgré nous, nous rendent expressifs. Ce n'est pas le *vouloir exprimer* qui détermine les actions de quelqu'un. Le *vouloir exprimer* ne décide pas *quoi faire*. C'est le *vouloir faire* qui décide de l'expression. (Barba 1985, 22)

Ou, comme le disait Grotowski, il faut « refuser ce qui nous empêche d'agir ». L'expression arrive alors de façon aléatoire. Et ainsi, à l'aide du corps, les blocages peuvent être éliminés. Cependant, la psycho-technique et la physico-technique ne sont que des extrêmes quand on les isole. Il doit y avoir plus de choses à dire pour ce qui est de la participation de la volonté et des sentiments dans l'équilibre psycho-physique de l'acteur que ce que, de chaque côté, cette différenciation en saisit.

Une voie est possible : celle de laisser la psychologie individuelle céder le pas à la physiologie et à la recherche sur le comportement mais toutes les voies, un jour, s'arrêtent. Au bout de la voie négative se trouve un homme qui me tourne le dos : est-ce pour se cacher ou pour se montrer, ou pour les deux ? Je ne le saurai pas en regardant ce dos expressif, et d'ailleurs peut-être ne le dois-je pas. Mais je ne peux pas non plus entrer en contact avec l'acteur qui veut seulement me dire - non la signification de son dos, mais *comment* il/elle travaille avec soi pour obtenir précisément cette position. Car la « pré-expression » se referme sur la réponse.

Nous avons toutefois de bonnes raisons de nous poser cette question : quel est donc ce personnage que Barba et l'ISTA, de façon malgré tout très convaincante, mettent physiologiquement à jour ? Se rattache-t-il aux traditions étudiées, du moins sous cette forme, ou bien existe-t-il sous une forme ou sous une autre dans tout art du théâtre ? Plutôt que d'une pré-expression, énergétique c'est vrai mais abstraite, il me semble justement qu'il s'agit d'un personnage hautement expressif qui se montre « derrière » la fiction, au sens restreint du terme, et qui parfois aussi se révèle dans ses lézardes. Il semble que ce personnage possède une identité en partie dissimulée. Celle précisément de l'acteur dans son existence scénique, l'acteur-en-jeu. Je n'entends pas par là l'acteur en tant que personne privée ou en tant que « conteur » brechtien, mais l'acteur comme personnage scénique dans tout le jeu dialectique complexe existant entre son état psychophysique et la fiction (au sens restreint du terme) en fonction de la façon dont ce personnage-acteur a été façonné dans les diverses traditions théâtrales.

Par leur mise à jour des trois lois physiologiques permettant aux traditions orientales étudiées de créer une présence scénique maximum, Barba et l'ISTA esquissent les contours physiologiques d'un personnage-acteur en mouvement et travaillant de façon systématique avec des tensions contradictoires. Ils le décrivent à l'aide du terme énergie, qui vient des sciences de la nature, et ils donnent ainsi, comme tous les autres, leur propre empreinte à leur œuvre personnelle. Si l'on cherche de l'énergie, on trouve surtout de l'énergie. Mais considérer l'énergie de l'acteur comme prémisses est un point de vue qui repose déjà lui-même sur une prémisse plus importante. Je pense ici à l'acteur en tant que prémisse.

Barba a, à un autre endroit, décrit de façon tout à fait convaincante l'acteur en action comme étant un *body-in-life*, un *dilated body* qui peut rappeler le monstre de Frankenstein (*The Dilated Body*, 1985). La séismographie physiologique de Barba est une notation très fine de la très complexe totalité psycho-physique, qui est apparemment tout aussi irréductible que la constante de Planck. Les descriptions des lois internes des mouvements de l'acteur-en-action peuvent clarifier des aspects partiels vitaux mais le langage de la description s'attachant à la connaissance même limite cette dernière. C'est évidemment le cas avec tous ces termes provenant de paradigmes utilisés dans les sciences de la nature : objet, instrument, physiologie, énergie. Ce sont tous des conventions approximatives. L'art théâtral accepte les généralisations scientifiques, mais les évite aussi. La question est donc bien plutôt de savoir quels sont les aspects que l'on désire révéler, et à quels autres aspects on désire les rattacher.

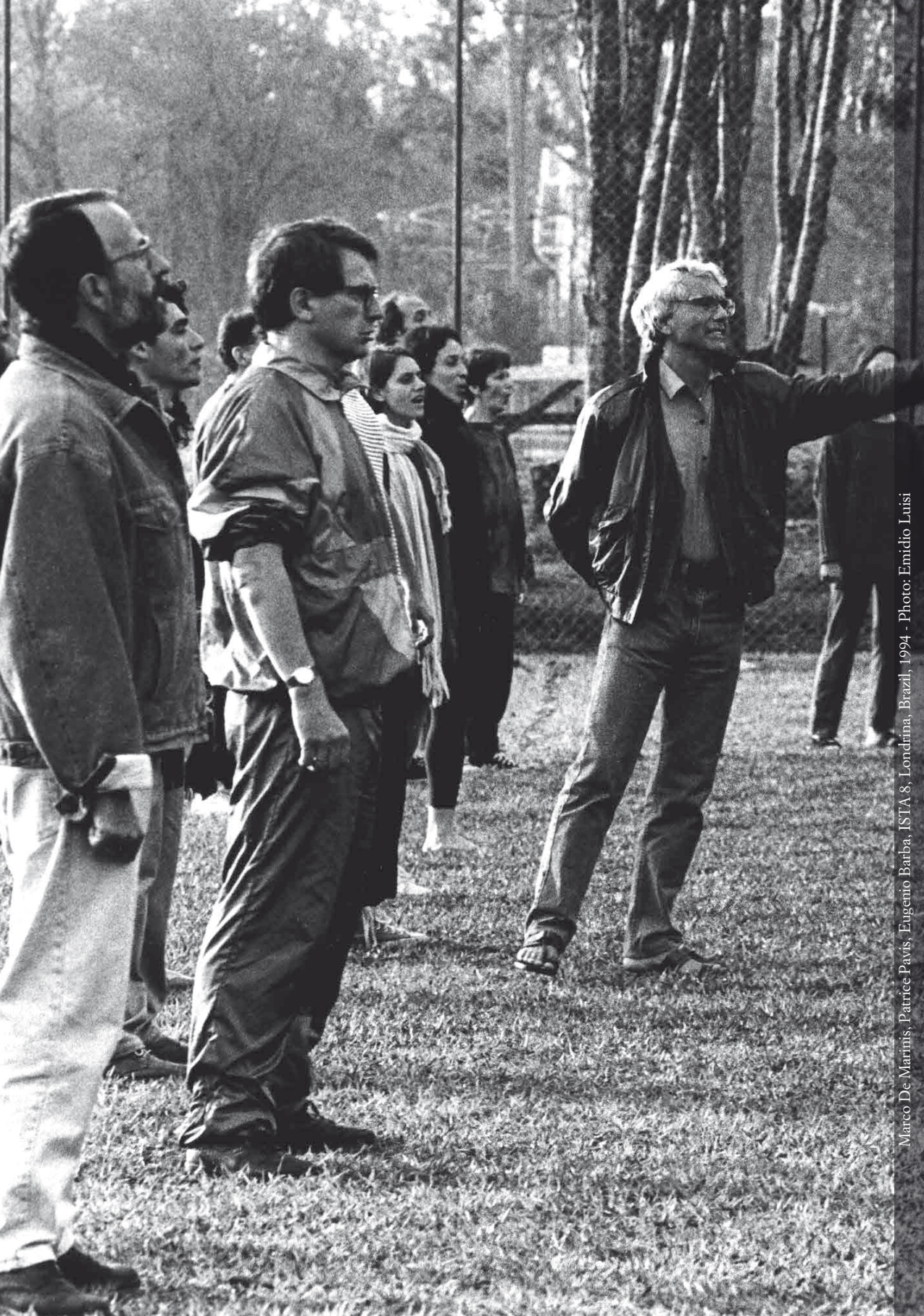
Dans sa présence scénique face au public, le personnage-acteur est le fondement de la fiction mais il est aussi lui-même une partie de sa complexité. Dans quelle mesure cette duplicité réciproque est-elle ancrée dans le corps de l'acteur, grâce à un travail

systématique sur le jeu des contradictions dans le corps, c'est là, me semble-t-il, qu'il faut insister sur l'intérêt de ces études physiologiques. Elles sont, du moins physiologiquement, une mise à jour de l'identité propre à l'art théâtral : vouloir agir, là où la psychotechnique de Stanislavski laissait, à l'opposé, la préparation de l'action s'estomper dans d'invisibles cercles concentriques. Dans la fable d'Esoppe sur l'incomparable saut, Rhodes était une scène pouvant se situer n'importe où. Ici par exemple. Dans la fable personnelle de Barba sur le théâtre, c'est une île flottante. Mais, dans les deux cas, l'île se trouve là où l'acteur est en action.■

Traduction: Françoise Arndt

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Marco De Marinis, Patrice Pavis, Eugenio Barba, ISTA 8, Londrina, Brazil, 1994 - Photo: Emidio Luisi

Patrice Pavis

La dramaturgie et les textes de l'actrice Questions à Julia Varley

Abstract: Patrice Pavis reflects on the relation between the actor, the text, and the sub-text, after a work demonstration by Julia Varley entitled The Echo of Silence, which took place in Saintes (France) in 1991, in the context of a series of meetings organised by Jean-Marie Pradier ("Emotions and Complexity"). A fertile discussion with Varley and other scholars too (Ruffini, Taviani, Risum) led to a broader analysis on the issues of text, subtext, score and subscore. The article was published for the first time in the journal Degrès (97-98-99, 1999, e1-15).

Keywords: *Dramaturgy, Text, Actor's work*

« Knowledge that has not passed through the senses can produce nothing but destructive truth » (Leonardo da Vinci, cité par Julia Varley).

En marge du colloque « Emotions et complexité » organisé en juillet 1991 par le LIPS (Laboratoire interdisciplinaire des pratiques spectaculaires) de Jean-Marie Pradier, Julia Varley effectua une démonstration de travail intitulée *L'Echo du Silence* (et qui existe depuis en vidéo). La circonstance de la présente réflexion est dictée par la séance de dramaturgie appliquée en avril 1992 à Cardiff au cours de la conférence de l'ISTA au Centre for Performance Research, où Julia Varley expliqua de quels textes elle a besoin pour théoriser sa pratique. Cette étude sur la genèse d'une démonstration de travail est menée aussi dans la perspective de sa réception par le spectateur et de la description du jeu de l'actrice.

Le travail d'Eugenio Barba consiste aussi - on l'oublie parfois devant l'extrême diversité de ses tâches - à former des actrices et des acteurs qui soient capables non seulement de jouer dans ses mises en scène à l'Odin, mais de développer une méthode de travail autonome dont ils se nourriront ensuite dans l'élaboration de leur propres spectacles. Ainsi en va-t-il des démonstrations de travail d'Iben Nagel Rasmussen, de Roberta Carreri ou de Julia Varley. C'est en observant la genèse de leurs spectacles, en écoutant les explications illustrées de leur démonstration de travail, qu'on comprend le mieux l'esthétique et la dramaturgie de Barba. Le mode de préparation de l'acteur, son entraînement tout comme sa démonstration de travail, débouchent imperceptiblement sur une mise en forme artistique : on est loin des exercices des années 60 d'inspiration grotowskienne et qui visaient seulement à entraîner l'acteur à toutes les réactions possibles. A présent, la



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démonstration de travail ou l'improvisation conduisent tout naturellement à l'élaboration d'un spectacle à un ou deux acteurs, puis, par accumulation et confrontation, à la mise en scène des grands spectacles de Barba, ceux qui font appel à tous les acteurs de l'Odin.

D'où vient la partition physique ?

Au début de sa démonstration de Saintes, Julia Varley exécute à deux reprises une courte séquence gestuelle qui correspond à ce que lui suggère le texte de la chanson « Le temps des cerises ». Cette séquence est une partition physique, en ce sens qu'elle est minutieusement fixée dans le détail, et donc répétable, ancrée dans l'espace-temps selon un rythme et une énergie donnés, aussi précise et fixée que pourrait l'être une partition musicale. Elle forme la base gestuelle indispensable et immuable qu'elle a déjà parfaitement mémorisée et qui lui sert de point d'appui et de repère pour le travail ultérieur. Ainsi procède Barba avec ses acteurs : au cours des répétitions, ils mettent au point une série de partitions physiques et vocales qu'ils connaissent par cœur (ou plutôt « par corps ») et qui leur permettent de retrouver immédiatement le moment de la séquence, la chaleur d'une situation, la précision d'un détail, l'enchaînement psychique et formel de leur présentation. Selon Barba, « le sens de sécurité doit être recréé à l'intérieur de la situation artificielle qu'est la situation théâtrale. Il nous faut donc éliminer le blocage objectif du texte qui peut se produire si l'on est continûment forcé de se le remémorer ». (1979:69)

Pour Julia Varley, la première phase ne concerne que l'établissement de la partition gestuelle. Celle-ci tonne une base indépendante des langues et des cultures où elle pourrait trouver à se concrétiser : la partition physique ne dépend pas de la mélodie des langues, de leur plasticité et de leur syntaxe, elle est le moule incassable préexistant où celles-ci viendront se couler, le garde-fou dans la mouvance des diverses langues dans lesquelles l'actrice polyglotte est en mesure d'exécuter sa démonstration (anglais, italien, espagnol, français, etc.).

Mais d'où vient cet objet trouvé que nous offre l'actrice en déroulant sa partition scénique ? Difficile à dire. Julia précise seulement que la chanson « Le temps des cerises », ses allusions à la résistance française, aux Allemands, à l'envie de cueillir des cerises en dépit du danger, a été le déclencheur de son improvisation, ce qui ne veut pas dire pour autant qu'elle connaisse cette chanson ou qu'elle veuille l'imiter. Rien n'est dit sur l'essentiel : pourquoi ces gestes tantôt mimétiques (cueillir, fuir), tantôt abstraits (sauter, se retourner), par quels indices du récit sont-ils motivés, et surtout dans quel ordre, selon quelle combinatoire, étirés, ponctués, figurés ou « tremblés » ? Là-dessus, Julia reste muette. Il fallait s'y attendre et le contraire eût été étonnant et périlleux : imaginons qu'elle eût justifié tout épisode de la séquence en révélant à quoi elle fait allusion : n'aurions-nous pas protesté de l'intentionnalité trop analytique et mimodramatique de sa démarche ? Heureusement, le refus - et l'impossibilité - de répondre à la question posée indique que le travail de l'improvisation se livre comme un matériau brut, dont on ne retrouve pas la trace, consciente ou inconsciente, matériau qui a été livré (et délivré) dans l'inconscience affichée de l'acteur « créateur ».

Pourquoi ces choix plutôt que d'autres ?

Et pourtant, nous n'échappons pas complètement à la lancinante question du pourquoi, d'autant que nous sommes conditionnés par notre habitude de rapprocher le dire et l'agir. Car dans cette chanson, il nous semble bien que la phrase linguistique (lorsqu'on l'entend dans la version « intégrale ») se traduit immédiatement dans des épisodes gestuels assez « parlants ». Certes, le geste ne mime pas le discours comme dans une pantomime à la Marcel Marceau, mais un lien mimétique ne cesse de s'affirmer : cueillir les cerises et les placer dans son tablier, jeter un regard furtif sur les poursuivants, sont autant d'actions qui se concrétisent autant dans le texte que dans le jeu. Dès lors, la question surgit : pourquoi telle mimétisation de tels éléments plutôt qu'un autre ? Comment éviter les représentations déjà codifiées et stéréotypées (cueillir des fruits, se retourner, etc.). Nous ne nous contentons plus alors de la réponse classique des artistes sommés de justifier le choix et la figuration de leurs actions, et qui « savent non pas nécessairement parce qu'ils sont capables d'expliquer, mais parce que tous les souvenirs, sentiments, images sont directement transformés en action d'une manière que nous pourrions nommer intuitive » (Varley, 1990:6). Cette intuition est pour l'observateur ou le théoricien d'autant plus imprécise et insuffisante qu'il voit bien, dans le cas de cette chanson « jouée », que l'actrice reprend des éléments figuratifs et ne s'est pas lancée dans l'improvisation sans un projet, une réflexion, une recherche d'effet qui trahit une certaine intentionnalité et qui s'effectue exclusivement dans le sens texte-jeu, comme pour illustrer et ancrer le récit grâce à la partition scénique.

La partition physique est-elle immuable ?

Sur cette partition physique fixée, ou plus exactement à l'intérieur d'elle, l'actrice greffe le texte et le travail vocal. Ce faisant, elle ne tient pas compte de la spécificité rythmique, de la syntaxe et de la diversité phonique et sémantique de chaque langue ; elle fait entrer la nouvelle langue, de gré ou de force, dans le moule de la partition et la séquence gestuelle reste le moule et le point de repère qui détermine tout le reste. Les linguistes protestent contre ce procédé quelque peu mécaniste : une nouvelle langue amène nécessairement une rythmique différente et le corps, donc la partition, s'en trouvera ébranlé. Ce qui a changé, c'est le verbo-corps (Pavis, 1990 : 151-156), l'intrication spécifique de la langue et du corps. On a peine à concevoir que la mémorisation du texte nouveau passe exclusivement par le repérage de la partition fixée une fois pour toutes, quel que soit l'investissement de la langue. D'où peut-être l'inconfort, la violence faite à la voix qui doit se couler dans le lit moyen, abstrait et universel d'une partition immuable. Les trous de mémoire de Julia (qui « a joué la même partition en espagnol deux semaines auparavant et a du mal à lui substituer la version française ») s'expliquent peut-être aussi par la négligence de la physique de la langue, de l'effet de feed-back qu'elle exerce sur la gestuelle trop figée. La mémorisation de l'ensemble geste/texte s'effectue non exclusivement par les automatismes du corps, mais par un schéma rythmique où langue et geste sont imbriqués de manière spécifique à chaque aire linguistique et culturelle.

La mémoire est-elle seulement corporelle ?

La mémoire ne serait donc pas seulement celle d'un automatisme des gestes, de leur mise en séquence, de leur stratégie, comme c'est le cas pour la danse où le danseur est bien en effet livré à la merci d'un programme chorégraphique qui le meut et le déroule comme un tapis rouge sous les pieds d'un chef d'état... La mémoire de l'actrice parlante (ou simplement de l'actrice soumise à une fable figurative qui raconte une histoire) est aussi liée à la cinesthésie de la langue, à son imaginaire rythmique, pulsionnel, à la pragmatique de la langue en question, à ses appuis autant physiques que logiques et mentaux. L'actrice s'acharne à faire comme si la nouvelle rythmique verbale se subordonnait automatiquement à sa trajectoire pré-fixée et l'on peut supposer qu'elle se fait violence à elle-même, et aussi à ses articulations - celles de son corps comme celles de sa phrase. Elle bloque l'énergie mentale dégagée par la rythmique de son texte et ne lui permet pas de trouver des articulations souples et efficaces, ni de modifier la séquence gestuelle en fonction des nouvelles exigences physiques de la langue employée.

Garder l'essentiel, est-ce perdre l'accessoire ?

Cette hypertrophie du gestuel considéré comme partition surtout visuelle et extérieure au corps parlant, n'empêche pas que l'actrice propose des improvisations où elle réduit la séquence dans son ampleur spatiale et temporelle : réduction proportionnelle qui selon elle - et nous n'avons ni le moyen ni la raison d'en douter et encore moins d'en effectuer la vérification - maintient intacte l'intensité intérieure qui préserve l'« image schemata » (Johnson, 1987) originale. Cet exercice, classique depuis Stanislavski et souvent proposé par Barba, qui consiste à réduire et intérioriser au maximum une improvisation gestuelle, est censé, selon Julia, renforcer la force et la cohésion de la séquence en la transférant du mouvement extérieur vers une énergie mentale (ainsi les sportifs pour mieux se figurer leur mouvement le repassent-ils minutieusement dans leur esprit). Mais en gardant l'essentiel, Julia sacrifie aussi du même coup l'« accessoire », qui n'est rien moins que le détail concret du travail. Il convient, à tout le moins, de distinguer le point de vue de l'actrice, qui est pré-expressif et lié au processus de préparation, du point de vue du spectateur, qui est expressif et lié au résultat : perspectives incommensurables. (Insistons sur ce point : selon nous, pas d'étude de l'acteur sans aussi une étude du spectateur, de sa manière de « lire » l'acteur). L'accessoire - ici l'ampleur et l'étalement démonstratif du geste - est pourtant hautement signifiant, tout comme sont pertinents le détail et la spécificité des formes expressives, même si on veut, dans l'esprit de Barba, insister sur les principes pré-expressifs universels qui les régissent. Perdre l'accessoire, n'est-ce pas alors se priver de l'essentiel ? Ou pour le dire en termes para-barbesques : à force de rechercher des principes universels et essentiels, ne va-t-on pas en oublier d'analyser sémiotiquement les formes expressives réalisées par chaque tradition et par chaque séquence performée par les acteurs-danseurs ; à force d'étudier le processus de la création de l'acteur, ne va-t-on pas omettre d'inclure le regard du spectateur sur le résultat ? (Pavis, 1995)

Les textes ont-ils tous la même logique ?

Fort heureusement, nous n'en sommes pas là ! Car Julia Varley conçoit sa partition physique comme un moyen d'abandonner la linéarité (supposée) du texte écrit et de « s'aventurer dans une logique qui comme le film peut sauter d'un endroit à l'autre, un gros plan à un plan d'ensemble, d'une temporalité à l'autre » (Varley, 1990:6). Dès lors, le risque de réduction essentielle à un fil monologique banal est très mineur, d'autant plus que la séquence réduite pourra être immédiatement « étirée » et remodelée et un de ces détails gonflés à l'extrême : bref, la réduction n'exclut pas l'agrandissement du détail. Le fil gestuel de la partition scénique garde donc son caractère morcelé, discontinu, spatial, éloigné de la logique discursive et du texte linguistique qu'elle conçoit comme linéaire. Mais, la question n'est pas d'opposer essentiellement le texte linguistique au texte gestuel (ou scénique), elle est de distinguer divers types de textes et d'observer s'ils ont tendance à rester dissociés et distincts ou à se regrouper et s'homogénéiser dans le travail de l'actrice, qui comme une araignée fait passer l'ensemble de ces fils textuels à travers son corps.

Là encore, la perspective varie radicalement selon qu'on se place (1) du point de vue de l'actrice tissant tous ces textes (texte au sens sémiotique du terme) et donc les regroupant et les manipulant d'une manière ou d'une autre, ou (2) *du point de vue du metteur en scène*, en l'occurrence ici Barba, qui a le pouvoir de maintenir distincts tous les textes.

L'actrice regroupe et intègre les textes, à commencer - comme on l'a vu - par la séquence des actions physiques (le texte gestuel) et la vocalisation (le texte de la chanson). Certes, dans toutes les impros de Saintes, le ton et le mouvement varient avec une extrême rapidité et virtuosité ; mais le lien entre les deux textes reste le même : plutôt iconique, explicatif, redoublé, redondant, au point - et c'est le but déclaré de Julia - qu'on passe sans effort du *talking* au *walking*, de la vocalité à la gestualité, comme pour mieux signifier que la voix est le prolongement du corps en mouvement.

Le metteur en scène, par contre, qui pose un regard extérieur sur l'acteur, est responsable des divers systèmes de signes ; il est en mesure de dissocier et distinguer les divers niveaux. Comme l'observe Ian Watson, « dans la dramaturgie de Barba chaque 'surface' - la partition physique, le texte parlé et la musique - est distincte, mais chacune est posée sur l'autre, comme les surfaces d'un objet » (1991:319). Dans la mise en place finale des différentes « surfaces » par l'entremise du metteur en scène, les textes restent distincts, et bien souvent sans rapport direct les uns aux autres. La cohésion du spectacle est d'un tout autre ordre : elle réside dans sa texture, sa tonalité (au lieu de la totalité), sa lisibilité autant horizontale (selon la fable) que verticale (selon le réseau des renvois thématiques et formels). Barba veille à ne jamais confondre ou assimiler les divers niveaux, notamment les textes *gestuel* et *linguistique*. Le *texte gestuel* est donné dans la phase initiale du travail, de façon à ce que l'actrice réalise physiquement un parcours où le lien entre psychique et physique est forgé une fois pour toutes et où l'armature de la partition physique sert de rail indéfectible à toute l'improvisation. Le texte linguistique, souvent livré ultérieurement et sans rapport apparent avec la gestuelle, est celui du déroulement de la chaîne verbale, laquelle trouve à s'ancrer rythmiquement dans l'espace-temps-action du jeu.

L'actrice et quels textes ?

Outre ces deux textes, Julia Varley énumère et décrit trois autres notions, celles de pré-texte, contexte et sous-texte.

Le *prétexte*, explique-t-elle, est constitué par tout ce qui vient avant le jeu et sert d'excuse pour déclencher le processus de travail, de tremplin pour lancer la création artistique et de justification pour saisir la motivation et la finalité de l'entreprise : il est proche de la notion d'*underscore* (la sous-partition qui précède et sous-tend le texte et la scène).

La question est de savoir s'il faut rechercher dans le processus de travail comme dans la résultat la trace de l'impact intertextuel de ces influences antérieures, leur inscription textuelle, bref leur participation à un processus intertextuel observable. Il s'agit donc d'établir si le prétexte est réductible à un processus sémiotique, une mise en signe de la culture, des motivations, des influences, qui soient suffisamment précises et malléables et dont on puisse observer l'impact intertextuel sur la création du texte gestuel ou vocal. Julia ne précise pas quels différents pré-textes elle utilise. Elle dit vouloir préserver à l'acteur et donc à son travail, une part de secret. Qui l'en blâmerait, hormis un théoricien indiscret ? Et d'ailleurs, ce ne sont pas les secrets biographiques qui intéressent le théoricien, ni les sources où l'artiste puise ses motivations personnelles, ses intuitions, ses mensonges, ses illusions ; ce serait plutôt la mise en forme de ces informations dans la gestuelle et la parole de l'acteur.

Le *contexte* est ce qui entoure les abords immédiats du texte, ce qui fournit les « circonstances données » (Stanislavski) dans lesquelles il est prononcé, la situation d'énonciation qui éclaire et même constitue les énoncés. Toute phrase prononcée n'est compréhensible que selon son contexte : cela la linguistique et la dramaturgie occidentale le savent depuis longtemps ; mais, seul le théâtre oriental et l'actrice d'une de ces traditions extra-européennes sont capables de manipuler et de se mouvoir par rapport au contexte. Dans le village professionnel eurasien dont rêve Barba (1992), l'actrice est en mesure de créer et de modifier constamment le contexte de son action : « L'acteur ne reste pas sous le joug de l'intrigue, il n'interprète pas un texte, mais crée un contexte, tourne autour et à l'intérieur des événements, à d'autres moments il se sépare d'eux, les commente, se hausse au-dessus d'eux, les attaque, les refuse, suit de nouvelles associations et/ou saute vers d'autres histoires » (Varley, 1990:6).

Dans sa démonstration de travail, Julia Varley change constamment les données en imaginant les situations et les styles de jeu les plus divers : image d'une langue classique, image de différents animaux, changements constants de l'émotion sans qu'il soit possible de déterminer ce qui varie au juste dans la situation contextuelle. Telle quelle, la notion de contexte éclaire mal comment une situation d'énonciation peut être formalisée et en quoi elle détermine la lecture du texte. Comme pour le prétexte (et le sous-texte), le contexte est constitué par la série des circonstances que l'on peut résumer à des textes (au sens sémiotique du terme), afin de pouvoir examiner leurs rapports sémiotiques au texte à dire. Tant que la codification et la formalisation du contexte ne seront pas réalisées, on ne peut espérer examiner l'impact symbolique et le processus de contextualisation/décontextualisation qui donnent la clé de l'échange entre texte et contexte.

Le *sous-texte*, notion de Stanislavski inventée et employée à propos de Tchekhov, est pour Julia la manière dont les actions physiques et les circonstances données nous poussent à dire le texte. C'est l'ensemble des mots non prononcés qui exercent sur les mots prononcés une telle pression que ceux-ci en reçoivent les vibrations et en acquièrent un sens profond et indirect. Employée par Julia, la notion perd toute connotation psychologique de sous-entendu, d'atmosphère, d'allusion vague, pour devenir, de manière beaucoup plus sémiotique, la caisse de résonance du texte prononcé, le système des renvois qui irrigue le texte de surface, bref l'intertextualité cachée, la série des actions antérieures sur lesquelles elle s'appuie, l'*underscore* (souspartition). Par exemple, le fragment gestuel signifiant l'exécution du partisan, l'élévation des bras, renvoie peut-être à l'image d'une flamme vacillante, d'une dernière élévation de l'âme avant le coup de feu et l'écroulement du corps. Le « sous-texte » dont parle Julia (que nous préférons nommer ses points d'appui ou son *underscore*, sa souspartition) est constitué par la série des représentations de la martyre qui meurt debout, dont le corps tente une dernière élévation vers un principe supérieur, avant de se replier dans la mort. Tout ce qui se cache sous les gestes visibles est indispensable pour saisir ce qui porte et presse le geste et l'action visibles, ce qui les prépare et les rend possibles.

Les notions utilisées par Julia sont indispensables pour comprendre sa conception du processus d'élaboration des séquences gestuelles, vocales et narratives. On pourrait lui proposer de les compléter par les concepts suivants qui théorisent d'autres aspects de la textualité.

L'*intertexte* : ou réseau des autres textes (au sens sémiologique) auxquels renvoient le contexte et le sous-texte. L'intertexte relie le jeu et la représentation à une série illimitée d'autres façons de jouer et de représenter : il éclaire l'inscription de tout élément dans une culture. La mise en scène porte la trace d'autres mises en scène, à travers le réseau des emprunts, allusions, réminiscences à tous les niveaux (jeu l'acteur, scénographie, technique de mise en scène, etc.).

Le *métatexte* : ou système de choix, de directives, d'options que la mise en scène du moindre fragment présuppose implicitement et inscrit plus ou moins directement dans la mise en scène. Ce texte sur le texte centralise toutes les directives, donne à lire la mise en scène comme tissu cohérent. Il est en perpétuelle élaboration, mais fonctionne comme un guidage implicite de tout nouveau matériau. Même si l'actrice n'en prend conscience qu'en fin de processus et si elle n'en est pas la seule porteuse, il est indispensable à son inventivité et à son orientation. Pourtant, il n'est pas rare qu'elle s'en sente comme spoliée par le metteur en scène, propriétaire des options et des idées recueillies ensuite par l'historiographie : l'actrice n'a plus qu'une mémoire corporelle des actions scéniques et elle ne sait comment les transmettre à une postérité dépassant le cadre des spectateurs réellement « touchés » par sa performance fugitive. La recherche en danse réclame d'ailleurs la même référence à l'expérience et à la mémoire corporelle des spectateurs : « La méthode historico-critique avec ses nombreux centres d'intérêt est très fréquemment utilisée, du fait de sa genèse philologique ; elle évalue les mouvements corporels en danse comme produit d'un processus complexe d'élaboration. La méthode analytico-critique exige des expériences corporelles pratiques et une certaine dose de training corporel ; elle

reçoit les moments corporels comme des éléments du déroulement moteur, dont se compose la danse ». (Jeschke, 1190:160)

Le *mégatexte* serait le schéma narratologique global, le système reconstitué et abstrait du récit, l'articulation de la fable considérée comme phrase minimum du récit. Dans l'exemple du « temps des cerises », ce pourrait être: « elle cueille tout de même les cerises et s'enfuit ». Julia, à la manière de Barba, choisit des textes où les verbes sont des verbes d'action transitifs, car elle trouve plus facile de leur prêter une action gestuelle concrète et directement réalisable.

Le *surtexte*, ce serait le contraire du sous-texte qui cache son jeu et presse souterrainement contre le texte perceptible. Ce serait l'accumulation des citations, des commentaires, des allusions, des renvois ironiques ou parodiques, des lectures déjà existantes, autant d'alluvions textuelles qui se sont déposées sur le texte proprement dit et dont la connaissance est indispensable pour apprécier le texte que l'on croyait original. Il s'agit donc d'un intertexte plaqué sans management sur le texte proprement dit. Julia y a souvent recours lorsqu'elle parodie une manière de parler, les assonances d'une langue ou un style déclamatoire : des effets de surjeu signalent que le texte est cité, persiflé et commenté par la comédienne.

Construire le personnage ?

Ces outils suffisent-ils à décrire la genèse et la construction du personnage et ensuite sa description et sa déconstruction par le spectateur ? Il faudrait d'abord s'entendre sur l'expression, reprise un peu trop servilement de Stanislavski, ou du moins du titre simplificateur de sa traduction en anglais (*Building a Character*) ou en français (*La Construction du personnage*). Or, à proprement parler, l'actrice ne construit pas son personnage comme l'architecte construit l'édifice ou le sculpteur sa statue : cela valait, à la rigueur, pour le personnage naturaliste que le comédien s'efforçait de suggérer par des processus intérieurs du revivre et par une mise en forme extérieure du rôle provoquant de forts effets de réel : personnage assimilé à la personne et à l'individu unique, personnage occidental bien limité et dont Barba se demande « pourquoi, en occident, l'acteur tend à s'enfermer pour chaque spectacle - dans la peau d'un seul personnage, pourquoi on néglige d'explorer la possibilité de devenir le contexte d'une histoire entière avec de nombreux personnages, des sauts d'un niveau à l'autre, du général au particulier, de la première à la troisième personne, du passé au présent, du tout à la partie, des personnes aux choses ». (1992:98)

Julia Varley construit-elle un personnage ? De son point de vue, non. Elle n'a pas en vue la reconstitution d'une personne, mais elle s'inspire des acteurs-danseurs orientaux qui obéissent à de toutes autres règles que celles d'une mimesis psychologique et psycho-somatique de véritables individus : elle crée bien le contexte de toute une histoire et ses évolutions, gestuelles et vocales, exécute les sauts et provoque les ruptures qu'une construction classique du personnage interdit formellement. Construire, c'est pour elle ne pas partir d'une intentionnalité, d'une figuration globale donnée d'entrée et qu'on se contente ensuite de raffiner, c'est s'en remettre à une logique du processus qui ne se

préoccupe pas d'autre chose que de proposer des matériaux qui ne figurent pas encore une personne et une figuration humaine. Le personnage n'est identifié et nommé que par le regard extérieur de Barba et plus tard lors du spectacle, par le spectateur, qui ne peut pas ne pas voir derrière l'actrice l'esquisse d'une personne, et finalement par l'actrice elle-même qui donne un nom et donc toute une biographie à un personnage encore grandement amorphe et atone.

Comment trouver sa voi-x/e ?

Car le morceau de corps dans l'espace-temps sur lequel l'actrice travaille ne semble pas, du moins à en juger par la démonstration faite à Saintes de sa labilité et sa virtuosité vocale, avoir trouvé une voix définitive et assurée. C'est même la dernière chose que l'actrice pourra trouver : ne rejoue-t-elle pas dans son mode de travail son propre parcours autobiographique, sa difficulté à travailler et trouver sa propre voi-x/e ? Toujours est-il qu'elle choisit de tracer d'abord la voie de son personnage atone, pour mieux y caler ensuite - non sans le doux délice de la virtuosité et du pastiche - un essai des voix les plus diverses, pour finir par trouver au terme des improvisations une voix acceptable par elle-même et par son personnage. Mais cette acceptation par l'actrice de sa voix et de la voix de son personnage (*Her mistress' voice*), c'est surtout le signe d'une découverte de soi, de l'être unique que constitue toute personne et que la voix symbolise le mieux, pour l'autre et pour soi-même. Dès lors, se produit un inattendu retournement, un véritable retour du refoulé de l'actrice de type stanislavskien : le personnage s'identifie à l'actrice chargée de le représenter. Ce n'est plus l'actrice qui s'identifie à la figure, mais la figure qui s'installe en l'actrice en s'identifiant, à savoir en déclinant son identité et en se donnant à reconnaître comme voix intime.

Joue-t-elle le jeu ?

D'ailleurs, c'est une voix entièrement contrôlée dans la mesure où le sujet qui la contrôle (appelons-le J.V. sorte de SARL ou Sujet à Responsabilité Limitée) semble en mesure d'arrêter ou d'impulser l'émission vocale et de changer de registre en une fraction de seconde. Cette voix tenue en laisse ne « rebondit » pas et ne se modifie pas à la suite d'un changement dans la tenue du corps (la composition physique). L'actrice se trouve ici dans la situation décrite par Barba qui constate la difficulté physique ou en termes de froideur ou de chaleur maîtrise ou de sensibilité (Diderot): « Si l'acteur travaille par exemple sur l'expression du visage ou sur les possibilités de la voix, il s'aperçoit qu'il ne parvient pas à bien distinguer ce qui est *froid* de ce qui est *émotif*. Les résonances sont immédiates : la composition physique engendre immédiatement une résonance émotive et, inversement, chaque mouvement intérieur semble se projeter directement sur l'écran du visage et dans les vibrations de la voix » (1989:1). Il est bien difficile en effet pour l'acteur comme pour le spectateur de savoir s'il est « froid » ou « chaud » (on voit combien le paradoxe de Diderot paraît oiseux et peu pertinent pour la théorisation

actuelle). Julia précise qu'elle n'a pas à partir ou à se réclamer d'une image ou d'un souvenir pour ensuite l'exprimer gestuellement et vocalement. Il semble que les vibrations de sa voix ne soient pas la conséquence ou la projection incontrôlée d'une émotion, d'un « mouvement intérieur », mais plutôt le décalque fidèle de sa trajectoire physique (un de ses exercices consiste à faire se mouvoir « en attelage » le déplacement physique et le placement de la voix). Joue-t-elle alors le jeu de la résonance ? Ne bloque-t-elle pas d'entrée les réactions de la voix, une voix qui reste pré-visible, pré-audible, comme trop arrimée au rail de sécurité de la trajectoire physique ? Comme si elle avait décidé de n'être (plus) jamais prise en défaut par sa voix, en suivant une voie trop bien tracée, voie de chemin de fer où les wagons sont sagement attachés les uns aux autres et foncent dans la nuit comme wagons plombés, mais wagons toujours contrôlés par une locomotive qui ne « perd jamais les pédales ». Ou bien si - comme il est probable-elle modifie tout de même, dès qu'elle change de langue ou de voix, sa trajectoire gestuelle, sur quoi se fondent les changements et qu'est-ce qui les motive ?

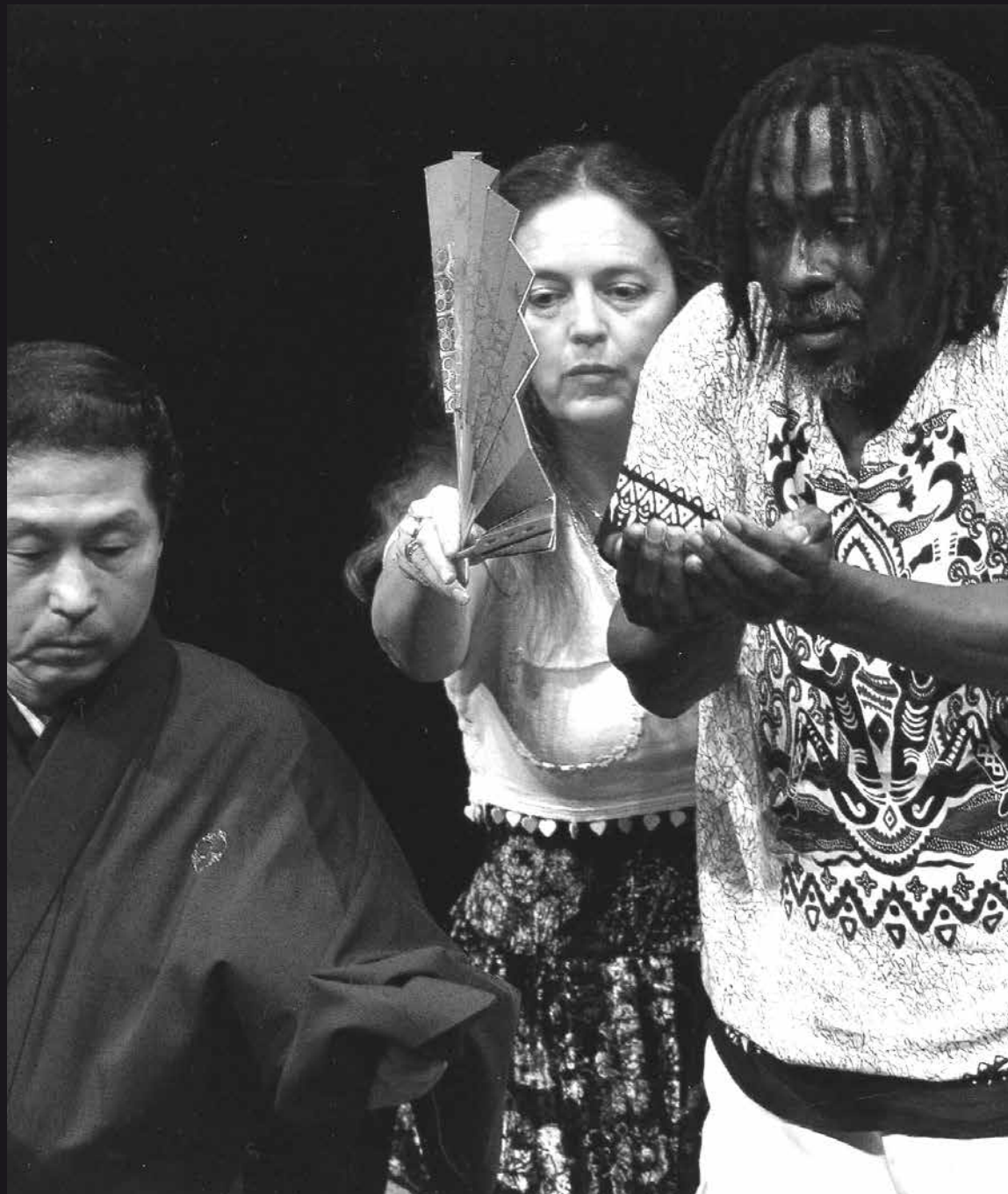
L'actrice occidentale peut-elle déconditionner son corps ?

Le problème est de savoir si l'actrice ou l'acteur occidental(e) est en mesure, à partir de son corps inculturé, c'est-à-dire façonné par une série de déterminismes culturels qui pourtant lui paraissent un comportement spontané, d'acculturer son corps à la manière des performers orientaux. C'est apparemment ce qu'elle fait : elle tente d'échapper au rendu mimétique et vraisemblable de l'actrice naturaliste, pour formaliser son mouvement et sa vocalisation selon une codification et une esthétisation qui réloignent de la vie quotidienne. Mais, en réalité, elle est très réceptive aux lieux communs, à ces façons quotidiennes de marcher et de parler, même si c'est toujours sur le mode parodique à travers ses improvisations qui pastichent des types de langues, de situations, de comportements. Elle a donc beaucoup de mal à acculturer son corps en se débarrassant de la spontanéité inculturée pour lui faire acquérir des techniques extra-quotidiennes. Ce qui lui manque, c'est précisément ce vers quoi elle tend (et cette tension est évidemment le moteur de son art) : une inculturation vocale et chorégraphique qu'elle aurait reçue lors d'une formation au chant ou à la danse classique (par exemple). Ce qu'elle gagne, par contre, c'est la capacité de l'artiste occidentale à raccrocher toujours son art au réel, pour mieux connaître ce réel encore. Dès lors, elle perçoit et donne à percevoir au spectateur une unité entre partition physique extérieure et émotion intérieure, entités qu'il est désormais impossible de séparer. Le corps artificiel, monté et démonté au gré des répétitions des mêmes actions, devient au bout d'un moment un corps « naturel », une « seconde nature », autant pour l'actrice que pour le spectateur ; le montage le plus arbitraire, la greffe la plus improbable entre un corps et une voix, entre une partition physique et un texte, deviennent une nature parfaitement organique. Ce que donne l'actrice J.V. au spectateur X, c'est donc un double regard - sur les formes et sur les contenus, la discipline et la spontanéité, une vision à la fois morcelée et organique. « Le spectateur n'est plus frappé par l'étrange dynamique que l'acteur lui montre mais par le caractère organique qui s'en dégage »

(Barba, 1989:313). C'est une nouvelle organicité que le spectateur finit par découvrir, à condition d'avoir su d'abord deviner et reconstituer tout le travail qui précède la représentation, d'avoir fait l'expérience quasi physique de la sous-partition sur laquelle repose tout le travail, d'avoir apprécié la dramaturgie de l'actrice.■

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Akira Matsui, Julia Varley and Augusto Omolu, ISTA 14, Wrocław, Poland, 2005 - Photo: Francesco Galli

Julia Varley

Score and Sub-score

A useful but wrong word

Abstract: Julia Varley reacts to the questions addressed to her by the French scholar Patrice Pavis during a lecture which was held in 1992 for the 7th session of ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) in Brecon and Cardiff. Reflecting on her work as an actress, Varley interrogates crucial aspects such as the observation of other's work, professionalism, theatre craft, acting techniques, mental process. Furthermore, Varley addresses the notion of "sub-score", beyond "sub-text", discussed by ISTA participants and scientific staff. Originally published in New Theatre Quarterly 11, 42, 1995: 166-74.

Keywords: Theories of acting, Sub-text, Sub-score, Practice, Technique

An aura of mystery and respect, which irritates me at times, is fashioned around an actress's way of thinking. This *terra incognita* becomes a mirage that blinds those who observe it. I sense that occasionally my presence in a performance fills with magic and that this happens quite independently of the constant level of professionalism I demand of myself. It is a magic that I cannot control. It is this kind of magic that causes the mirages.

In theatre anthropology the word "sub-text" has been replaced by "sub-score", a more appropriate term for the not necessarily text based forms of theatre in which an actress builds her stage presence with a kind of vocal and physical behaviour called a "score". The term "sub-score" includes all the mental and psychic processes on which an actress bases her work. Mixed in this concept are personal techniques, elements of support that keep the score alive, starting points for creating material, the actress's thoughts before and during the performance, a character's motives, the inner world, emotions, energy, memories, sensations, and everything that cannot be conceptualised.

In my work as an actress there are places where I do not care to venture with too conscious an eye. I want to preserve the possibility of letting myself be guided by forces which I do not control, as I know that they collaborate with my creative process. Only in this way do I feel that the magic - which illuminates the unique moment when my necessity as an actress meets with my experience - can be released. But there are also ways of working with the sub-score that are deliberate, looked for and led by the practice of the craft. If as an actress I manage to absorb the methods and rules, exercises and training, and turn them into a personal technique, I also locate a pragmatic strategy which helps me achieve results.



Eugenio Barba uses the image of a “blind horse” when he describes the part of himself that conducts his creative work on a performance. To try and understand the way that the “blind horse” thinks is not useful, but it is important to know *how* to let the horse work. This presupposes a personal technique that does not need to be analysed, but that can allow space for a gallop. The subscore is for me this personal technique, this disposition to follow or determine the mental processes that will support my actions.

The subscore is not restricted to a conscious mental process based on images. The course which a subscore follows can be linked to physical sensations, abstractions, information processed in different ways by the brain and remembered/forgotten by a memory which I place in my cells rather than in my thoughts. As an actress I choose the way which best suits my professional and personal curiosity and the needs of the role at that moment. The subscore is for me an invisible physical/mental process which accompanies, both in a fixed and fluctuating way, the actions which the spectator sees.

The paper song

At Brecon, in Wales, during the 7th session of ISTA in 1992, my ‘paper song’ prompted a discussion. When I was asked to create a sequence of actions on the basis of the title “the book”, my first concern was not to repeat myself.

On that occasion, in the big sports hall where we worked in Brecon, I did not have anything with me except my notebook. So I translated “book” into “paper”. I ripped a piece of paper out of my notebook and reacted to whatever I could make it do, using the sounds it produced, the shapes it took, the resistance I felt while tearing it, the direction in which I threw it or made it fly. The torn, folded, crumpled, flapped, gnawed paper, and the way I used the paper to blow through, dry, cut, became the points of reference for creating a sequence of physical actions. I simply responded to the stimuli I received from the paper/book.

It was difficult for some observers to accept and hear my ‘paper song’. That I worked in such a way, with a process that did not resort to the deep emotions of a first love or a dying father, caused animated discussion. Once again I had to listen to the assertion that, as an actress, in order to provoke emotions I should experience them and that communication with the spectator depends on the depth of my feelings. It is true that to create dynamic material, the information I start from should be important and dense, but this for me means rich in details.

It was interesting to note how the critical observers saw *results* which did not function for them instead of material in the first phase of a *process* which still needs to be elaborated by me as actress and later by the director. The noise of a piece of paper tearing could reawaken the deep echoes of a lived experience: a letter arriving too late, the possession order demanding the furniture belonging to my home when my father could not pay his taxes, my first drawing, a poem by Montale... Why should I have to be able to consciously recognise and describe these deep echoes of experience that

had been transformed into actions through my technique as an actress? Why is it so difficult to understand that the body remembers and that an action contains so much more information than consciousness can master?

I was reading an article on the 1992 war in former Yugoslavia. In the text I found the word “omission”, which had recently been used in a letter I had received from a person who is not fond of me. Two unpleasant experiences were linked. I can recognise this association now, but I would not be able to point out the numerous connections that are part of my fund of knowledge. Yet it is precisely these short circuits of experience that are essential in imparting a certain quality of colour, rhythm and intensity to my actions. It is not necessary for my mind to be aware of these passages separately, but for my actress’s integral body/mind to use its particular intelligence in actions which already contain them. During the work process, as an actress, I am not interested in an introspective journey of self-knowledge. I prefer to protect the incomprehensible way of thinking of the cells and to concentrate on how to open up spaces for that thinking to flow. I would rather deflect the attention away from my person, without explaining what I feel to myself, so that I can dedicate myself to the steps which are necessary for the work and in order that what I produce is able to speak to me.

Thought

The idea that an actress has to be totally present in the action, at one with what she is doing, gives a picture of a body/mind in which thought is indissolubly bound to action; as if I ought not think of anything else. Nevertheless, during a performance, while present in my action and totally concentrated, I discover the simultaneous presence of other thoughts: technical observations, practical considerations, new interpretations of the performance. I can think: “Why hasn’t the light come on?”, “T’s zip is broken, I’ll let him know in the next scene”, “I’ve forgotten to put the shawl in its place”, “We are slowing down the rhythm”, “The tone is too high”. I can think: “I’ve got a stomach-ache”, “What a nice old man in the third row”, “The restaurant is closed tonight”, “We have to strike the set afterwards”. I can think: “Those are the coins which paid Judas” (while looking at Tage Larsen, who as the Great Inquisitor in *The Gospel According to Oxyrhincus*, throws away the bracelet of coin charms and rubs his hands), “This is the sound of a rocking chair on which an old person in a home waits for a relative to visit” (while, as Doña Musica, sitting on the stool during *Kaosmos* I grumble and wait for the Man from the Country after having just said “And there he stayed for days and years”), “Ah! But I am addressing Death, not a person. . .” (while as the girl dressed in white in *The Castle of Holstebro* I recite a poem by Sappho with my arms stretched out towards Mr Peanut, the character with a skull head).

Do all these thoughts have any influence on the spectators? I think that I can be *occupied* by different thoughts without these detracting from my presence on stage, but I cannot be *preoccupied* by them. The thoughts must not be at the centre of my attention, nor should they determine the accent of the whole picture. Most importantly, I should not think about the score and thus create a separation within me as an actress, so that

I remember, decide and perform the action, instead of being action. When my mind flows with the action, concentrated and free to venture in different directions, ready to discover, to comment and take decisions, I know that I have managed to build a situation in which I fight against the danger of becoming a robot that only follows its established course. My thoughts are free even if deeply rooted and present in the action.

I am ready to react to anything that happens; I am present through the precision of the score that I have incorporated not absent in a schematic structure that hides the surroundings from me. The body is intelligent, ready, not mechanical, after it has liberated itself from the difficulty of remembering.

So those exciting moments of enlightenment, when two elements suddenly meet and I think I have grasped something, can occur as flashes during the performance. To achieve this state of being for me it is necessary that the score has been memorised so completely that it can be forgotten, that continuous repetition has turned upside down the freshness of the first time and now returns it, and that the restriction of the fixed components has been transformed into a well of as yet unknown visions. To achieve this state of being I work obsessively on details during rehearsals and until I have played the performance at least thirty times.

As an actress I pass through various phases, and each phase has particularities that keep the work alive and interesting for me. At first it is the difficulty of remembering, the emotion and fear of encountering the spectators. Then it is the difficulty of adapting to new venues on tour. Next, when the certitude of repetition is achieved, I confront new tasks in performance or choose a parallel activity during the day that might act as a stimulus. In every performance I discover unexpected perspectives, new stories, relationships and meanings, details hidden in the actions that have been repeated in the same way for years.

The sub-score of creation

I should take a step back to focus on the sub-score at the stage when the first material is created and then elaborated. This is the only way to understand how the sub-score in performance embraces all the information from the distinct phases of the process in an indissoluble and coherent texture that forgets and remembers, and goes forwards and backwards in time.

During my first year of work at Odin Teatret training, improvisations and performance belonged to separate worlds for me. Only after Eugenio Barba's long and patient work on one of my improvisations, during which he adjusted each movement a few centimetres, did I realise that the 'I' who was learning to be present on stage, to mould her energy and make her actions 'real' through the training exercises, was the same 'I' who needed to shape my inner images in an improvisation and adapt them to the conditions imposed by the performance.

During the early years, I wanted to be expressive and I created material with conceptual images and linear stories. The resulting material, even though it made sense to me, often failed to surprise me or function in the process of building a performance. Today I

know that the pragmatic rules and pre-expressive principles - the work on presence, on how to be credible for the spectator independently from what is represented - determine both what I say in an improvisation and the meanings that the spectator will take from the performance.

In rehearsal, elaborating a sequence of actions, the strong or soft quality of energy, fast or slow rhythm, extrovert or introvert characteristics, different directions in space, kinds of balance, the chosen framework, will all weave into variations and oppositions which make the stage behaviour organic. Following these principles, in an improvisation or a composition, a character's way of being, the meanings or feelings, are not pre-conceived, but something which can surprise me. I discover that *I am told*, when I abandon the perspective of the person who *wants* to tell.

As an actress I lean on the sub-score first to create material, then to keep it alive, and later still to feel alive. To create a character, embody a text or a choreography, resolve a technical demand, the issue is always *how* to translate the task, theme, imaginary person, word or concept into a tangible form of behaviour that will give a sensation of fullness and life.

The sub-score becomes the personal strategy I choose to create references to which I can react. I can decide to analyse a character's traits to influence the way it walks or to walk in a certain way to build a character's traits, but the creation of rooted material always entails a process that branches out into details. To generalise does not help me. At the end of the process there will no longer be a 'psychological', 'physical' or 'distanced' actress, but a character which, if believable to the spectator, contains all the contiguous and contradictory aspects of a human being.

I have followed many different procedures and the logic of the sub-score used at the moment of creation has changed a lot over the years. With *The Million*, the material was built from a dance in which a couple never let go of each other's hands, the discipline of European ballroom dancing, marching rhythms, from the real fear I felt, and from wanting to show off a beautiful Mexican dress. *The Castle of Holstebro* was born by letting Mr Peanut - the stilt character which already existed in the street performances - speak in a work demonstration.

I have made improvisations in which, after being given a theme, I begin by letting my mind become immersed in a flow of associations. I then start to move following clear images and sensations, with a commitment to continue without stopping until I have finished. I have built sequences of actions from verbs in a text, from ways of sitting on a chair, from the opposition between head and eyes, from walking across stepping stones in a river, from the impudence of youth, from ten ways of holding a handbag or infinite ways of using a handkerchief. I have created characters starting from the opposite of their known characteristics and I have let divergent material create nameless roles. To improvise without a theme I have substituted the flow of music or the dynamism of certain paintings, the intonation of a song or the rhythm of a text for sequences of images and associations. The pleasure of dancing, the sensuality of energy that vibrates and breathes, or the beauty of a movement that finds its strongest expression can become references which help me find and fix the score during the phase of creation.

Chaotic order

But still the question remains: listening to that music, thinking of that theme, looking at that painting, why is the consequence this particular action and not that? Different factors decide: received information, the principles which vitalise my stage presence, and chance. In the same way that the colour red is troubling and blue gives a sense of tranquillity, a musical phrase determines a certain kind of movement, the dynamism of a painting makes me follow certain lines in space, the implicit knowledge of a theme provokes certain associations that I manifest through actions which for me are linked to the point of departure.

The actions are induced by a logic that can only be personal, which transforms and translates at the same time as reacting to the information received. But even when the starting point is detailed and precise, and even when the principles of stage presence are respected, there are still thousands of actions which could result. At this point it is chance that decides, I say to myself, following the same chaotic order that rules the universe, the order that makes a hurricane depend on a butterfly's wing beat.

I do not dispute chance. After the action is chosen and I have done it for the first time, I try to be faithful to it. I find it again, look after and repeat it until the time comes to change it during the process of elaborating a character or performance. This moment only arrives when I have incorporated both the original material and its motivation - the score and its subscore. During rehearsals the material can be cut, reduced, transformed, manipulated until it is almost unrecognisable. But the final result will contain all the previous information and every phase, enriching the texture of impulses and intentions. The original motives, the new meanings which emerge, the actions which no longer exist, the contradictory information and the logic which belongs to different stories: all this experience is part of the final result and is remembered/forgotten by the action.

The sub-score of repetition

Once the score is created and fixed, my problem is to keep it alive and appealing. As an actress I am and, at the same time, I represent. Improvising around details that don't change the score but enrich the references I lean on, I find it useful to jump between these two levels: to be possessed by the action and to comment upon it. Identifying and creating distance are points of view and ways of proceeding that converge in the action and are necessary to one another. I work with the consciousness of having and of being a character.

In *Talabot*, for example, in the divorce scene during which I had to destroy a nest, the interrupted rhythm with which I spoke the text, the tiredness caused by the previous scene, the tickle in my throat provoked by inhaling the thyme that covered my face, resulted in feeling like someone who first tries to control tears and then lets herself go, giving in to depression. When repeating this scene I tried to keep it alive by controlling the breath that had been broken by the rhythm of the text, the itching thyme and by in-



Julia Varley as Kirsten Hastrup in the divorce scene, *Talabot* - Photo: Jan Rütz

terpreting the destruction of the nest with a greater or lesser hand pressure. To underline the desolation I could let out all my breath in the pause in which the text changed from information to comment or reproduce in one word the moaning tone with which some Norwegian children speak. I could cry, let myself cry and sing the crying.

I find it difficult to believe these motivations as I write them down. The written words, like rational thought, are too slow for the time available to me as an actress when I am on stage. In that situation which I don't know quite how to reproduce on paper, these inner references travel at a higher speed than that of the scene, they co-exist and come into being by themselves. The sub-score that keeps the fixed score alive is a jungle of motives, sensations and opinions which precede thought.

Repetition can have a negative influence on the ability to keep the score alive when the performance is presented regularly for two, three, four or even ten years. To help prevent this deterioration I have either given myself new tasks or created processes that are independent from the performance. For example, the change of language when we play in different countries gives me an obstacle to overcome. I can oppose the established features of a character with tiny, new aspects, render the obvious expressions slightly ambiguous, give value to each syllable rather than only to the words of the text, look for any remaining dead moments in the performance and introduce some postures or miniscule movements. I can let the presence of the spectators and of other characters influence my perception of the scenes more or I can enrich the general symphony of the performance by introducing small sounds.

Independently of the performance, at other times during the day, I can dedicate myself to other activities which have a complementary kind of energy. This revives my motivation and resolution to continue playing.

The sub-score of performance

It is my precision as an actress that allows the spectators to endow an action with meaning and awakens reactions, sensations and emotions in them. When it is the body/mind that thinks, this same precision fills the score with meaning and affectivity for me as well. Precision provokes different reactions in the spectator and in me. While I am on stage, precision also triggers reactions in me which are not always the same.

Precision - giving life to a gesture that can only be so, an action which contains all its intentions - is the only real foundation on which I can always lean, even though I know that sometimes the aura that reverberates from it will be full of magic and at other times only of professionalism. Precision is my actress's 'intelligence' which doesn't know if the intention or the action comes first: it is the score which has become sub-score and vice versa. I attain precision when the question of whether it is determined by an inner motivation or by an exterior physical movement is redundant, when these terms are no longer relevant and the technique has become stage life.

After the years in which I had to learn to be visible on stage came the years in which I worked on veiling technique. Then I only wanted to be a dance of energy and my ideal was a butterfly. I had thought of entitling this chapter "Sub-score: Under the Skin of the Action". Then, reading a book on biology, I remembered that in modern science one no longer thinks in terms of inside or outside, over or under, but that everything is matter in borderless communication, a continuous flow and interchange. So all I can say is: sub-score, another useful but wrong word.■



Julia Varley in *Doña Musica's Butterflies* - Photo: Jan Rüz

Recurring Principles

Eugenio Barba

The Two Lungs of the Actor

Introduction to Ana Correa's work demonstration

Abstract: *Eugenio Barba introduces Ana Correa's creative process for the performance Rosa Cuchillo. El desmontaje de Rosa Cuchillo was created by the actress and director Ana Correa, member of the Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, founded in 1971. Reflecting on Correa's creative process, Barba stresses the importance of the "two lungs" of the actor: on one side body/mind knowledge, which comes from training and the objective demands of the craft, and on the other, the actor's personal mythology, her political and cultural beliefs as well as her commitment to the community s/he belongs to.*

Keywords: *Ana Correa, Yuyachkani, Peru, Principles*

As an actress I had to translate words into actions. I had to find the equivalence in my body to incarnate the worlds that the novel *Rosa Cuchillo* had revealed to me. And that is why I convoke all the arts and cultures that I have accumulated in my work from my physical and vocal training.

Ana Correa

The expressive range of an embodied technique seems infinite. Impulses and changes in tension seem to be traversed by the speed of thought, and the muscles of the body extending and flexing in a variety of shades reveal the rhythm of the muscles of the imagination.

The variations in the pressure of a guitarist's fingers, the finger beats of an Indian tabla player (one hand pressing on the drum changing the skin tension, and the other hitting the taut leather and making it sing in a wealth of vibrations) become *thought-action* that acts on the nervous system, mind and memory of those who see and hear.

The dancing feet of a soccer player, and the fantasy of *sats* - of impulses - of a handball player who, hovering in the air, manages to surprise opponents who jump in front of him/her in an attempt to create a barrier to the shot that will become a goal; a carpenter's way of planing, the hammer blows of the blacksmith who forges a glowing piece of iron, the rhythmic accuracy of the mason marrying one brick to another with a quantity of cement weighed by his hand, the powerful behaviour of an actor/dancer who intensifies the life of the stage reality: all this is technique learned through a long apprenticeship. It is know-how guided by experience and principles, operational dictates and practical precepts. They are *methods*, ways of proceeding that lead towards the effectiveness of an intention.

Ana Correa in *Rosa Cuchillo* in
the market of Abancay Apurímac
Photo: Fidel Melquiades



The path to embodied knowledge is a meandering that begins as a contradiction. The first steps of children in classical ballet take place in stillness, statues that learn five different ways of standing, apparently static, but discovering new dynamisms thanks to *principles* that intensify their presence. In India, children learning kathakali and other dance/theatre forms are crouched on the ground as they engage their torso, arms and fingers in a subtle dynamic web of twisting and tension. The master-mason builds the cathedral that will soar towards the sky, but he begins by digging the foundations deep into the earth.

But every incorporated know-how and every way of thinking with the entirety of the body/mind are mute without an inner vision that belongs to the individual (*in-divisus*, not divided). This vision can be called professional ethics, personal mythology or metaphysics, a dimension beyond the physical. It is an inner world of values, fantasies, wounds, longings and ambitions that are often ridiculous or incomprehensible to common sense: a vast mental and spiritual macrocosm rooted in a vision of the world and of history, of the past and of actuality, reaching out towards a purpose that words formulate sometimes in a naive and meaningless way for the listener. Once, a young actor whose tenacity and results I admired confessed to me: I try to act so that horses too can understand me.

The words of the Peruvian actress Ana Correa about her creation process clearly witness the integration of the two lungs necessary for this process: a knowledge that the body/mind has acquired through laborious discipline, and the source that nourishes this knowledge: the 'truth' of the actress, her mythology or metaphysics, the Andean cosmology and culture, her political commitment, her integrity as an artist.

It is worth noting, in Ana's work process, her cold blood and patient consistency in her procedure, the reverent caution towards the smallest detail, the respect in sensing and re-creating the space, the loving attention to the objects she uses, the aesthetic awareness that yearns to extract beauty from every movement and posture.

All this transpires from the crystalline and concrete language of the actress when she explains how she literally *breathed life* into the character of Rosa Cuchillo, a mother in search of her disappeared son. If magic is an operative science that acts on another person through gestures and formulas, then the white image of Ana Correa/Rosa Cuchillo appears as the archetype of the powers of the archaic technology of the human being at the time of artificial intelligence, drones and upcoming human clones.■

Translation: Judy Barba

Ana Correa

El desmontaje de "Rosa Cuchillo"

Abstract: El desmontaje de Rosa Cuchillo (*The deconstruction of Rosa Cuchillo*) presents the process of creation of a performance by Ana Correa, an actress of the Peruvian theatre group Yuyachkani. The text gives an account on the artistic choices and elements of training, dance, martial arts and improvisation at the base of the work. Ana Correa reflects on her condition as an actress in the context of her family and society.

Keywords: Ana Correa, Yuyachkani, Peru



Soy Ana Correa actriz creadora, integrante del Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani que tiene 49 años de trabajo teatral ininterrumpido. Nacimos cuando el Perú conmemoraba el sesquicentenario de la independencia. Eran épocas de dictaduras militares. Decidimos ponernos un nombre en quechua por la identificación que tenemos con nuestra cultura ancestral. Yuyachkani significa "Estoy pensando" "Estoy recordando". Me asumo como una actriz creadora porque nuestras obras son fundamentalmente de creación colectiva en diálogo permanente con nuestra realidad. Un maestro del teatro latinoamericano nos decía que la creación colectiva es una actitud o disposición en el proceso de invención que tiene como condición el respeto al otro, a la otra, saber oírlo, entenderla y lo más importante, encontrar en grupo las soluciones o los hallazgos.

En los años 90, además de crear obras teatrales, empezamos a realizar demostraciones de trabajo, porque partíamos del principio que el espectador o espectadora que viene a vernos en el teatro o en espacios abiertos, estaba interesada no solamente en los espectáculos sino también en conocer los procesos.

Queríamos que ellos y ellas conocieran lo que su presencia motiva en nosotros, y como no podemos imaginar un espectáculo, sin imaginar un espectador. Para esa

Fotogramas de *El desmontaje de Rosa Cuchillo*: Ministerio de Cultura del Perú.
Dibujo del *kintu*: Octavio Felipe.



comunicación trabajamos, para que exista ese momento que hace posible que el hecho teatral sea posible.

Hoy quiero compartir con ustedes mi proceso de trabajo para la creación de una acción escénica para mercados andinos. Ahí utilicé un espacio de dos por dos metros, como lo hacen las mujeres vendedoras en las ferias andinas, cuando instalan sus pequeños puestos ambulantes. A las 5 de la mañana íbamos a alquilar esos espacios.



La tradición escénica

La tradición escénica de Yuyachkani ha sido y sigue siendo dialogar con nuestro tiempo. En los años del conflicto armado interno¹ no dejamos de crear y en el 2000 encontramos una novela que iba acorde con lo que hacíamos en ese momento, *Rosa Cuchillo* del escritor Ancashino Oscar Colchado Lucio.

La novela es la historia de amor de una madre que busca a su hijo desaparecido más allá de la muerte, recorriendo los otros mundos de la cosmovisión andina: el “Kay Pacha”, nuestro mundo; el Mundo de Abajo, el “Uqhu Pacha”; y el “Hanaq Pacha”, el Mundo de Arriba.

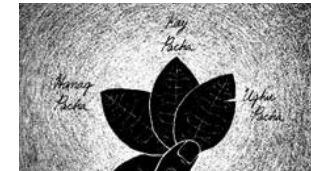
El intercala el derramamiento de sangre por la violencia política de esos años, con el paso a la vida después de la muerte, transitando entre estos mundos. Colchado cuenta que el relato que sería la semilla de *Rosa Cuchillo* se lo escuchó de su tía materna Ana Lucio quien le contó un sueño que tuvo en donde ella se veía caminando por el mundo de los muertos. Eso lo animó a narrar de qué manera el hombre y la mujer andina conciben el mundo del más allá.

El diálogo con los mundos que me revela la novela

La novela de 270 páginas y 64 eventos ha sido hecha para ser leída y su narración despertara en el espectador una serie de imágenes, situaciones y paisajes. En la novela todo es posible, todo se puede describir, todo está dicho. Sin embargo, cuando hacemos la adaptación a la escena, yo debo encarnar los pasajes que seleccione de ella.

1. De 1980 al 2000 el Perú vivió un conflicto armado interno cuando grupos subversivos (Sendero Luminoso, Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru y otros) intentaron destruir al estado democrático e instaurar un estado socialista. (Ed. note).

Como actriz tenía que trasladar la palabra a la acción. Tenía que buscar la equivalencia en mi cuerpo para encarnar los mundos que la novela me revelaba. Por eso convoqué todas las artes y culturas que había acumulado en mi trabajo de mi entrenamiento corporal y vocal.



Este es un **Kintu**, formado por las tres hojas más hermosas de la Mama Coca. Cada una de sus hojas representa un **Pacha**. Un Pacha es el espacio tiempo, la vida en movimiento que renace permanentemente como el ciclo de la naturaleza, los ciclos de la vida. Es la semilla, el crecimiento, la maduración y la muerte. Puede ser tan grande como una constelación de estrellas o tan pequeña como una gota de rocío.

Dentro de mi cultura de actriz yo me he entrenado no solamente en las danzas nacionales sino también en las danzas de las artes marciales, las cuales yo considero sumamente dramáticas porque hay una oposición entre ataque y defensa, pero además son movimientos limpios y precisos. Recurrí entonces a la danza del qigong wu qin xi, el juego de los cinco animales, para empezar a entrenarme y convocar la energía de los animales.

[danzo]



Las culturas ancestrales se encuentran en sus principios

Dentro de mi trabajo de entrenamiento encontré mirando los principios de las danzas orientales, los mismos principios en las danzas ancestrales de nuestros pueblos. Por ejemplo, la danza de los “Qapaq Chuncho” de Paucartambo, que utilizan plumas gigantes y que dan saltos permanentes en búsqueda del encuentro con la divinidad de la Virgen y para mí en búsqueda del Mundo del Hanaq Pacha, del Mundo de Arriba. O de los “Huacones de Mito”, los danzantes antiguos que tienen en sus indumentarios elementos de los tres mundos: sus látigos son hechos con cuero de serpiente, sus máscaras de madera que están talladas como si fueran los picos y la cabeza de los cóndores, y sus zapatos de cuero de chivo, animales reconocidos por su contacto con el mundo de abajo.

Creo que la condición de actriz/actor “solo con cabeza y separada del cuerpo” es una concepción occidental que no nos corresponde; sobre todo en el Perú en donde somos un país que tenemos tanta memoria, tanta escritura en el cuerpo y teatralidades

originarias. Hay que volver a mirar, imaginar o pensar en una actriz o un actor que va a pasar por las fronteras o las cercanías de una actor o actriz danzante.

[danzo accionando]



Un alma viva que camina en el mercado protegiendo

Al final de la novela Colchado cuenta que Rosa Cuchillo en realidad era la diosa Cavillaca y había reencarnado en mujer y había venido a la tierra para ver cómo vivían las comunidades indígenas. Ella había atravesado los mundos. Y pensé entonces que podía llevar una vara de caminante. Cuenta Colchado en la novela que un mundo de otro está separado por ríos. Antes de entrar al Uqhu Pacha, el mundo de abajo, vamos a encontrar el Wañuy Mayu, el río de aguas tormentosas y negras que separa a los vivos de los muertos. Pero también más adelante, con la venia del Hatum Rumi, la gran piedra, va a atravesar el Koyllur Mayu, el río de aguas lechosas y tranquilas que surca los luceros y las estrellas.

Con esta idea, me puse a improvisar, ¿cómo podría ella atravesar estos ríos, estos mundos? Cada mundo tiene un Punku, una Puerta y para atravesarla debía pasar por un umbral de tinieblas.

[entrenamiento con la vara de caminante]



Nos preguntamos también como era la gestualidad de sus manos. Y esta la encontramos dejando la vara y quedándonos con la herencia de sus movimientos. Lo que el entrenamiento de la vara había despertado en mis manos, en mis brazos, en mis hombros.

[herencia de la vara]



Rosa lleva el apelativo de un arma de defensa, el cuchillo. Yo no había trabajado nunca con un cuchillo o con una daga. Había si, dentro de mi entrenamiento, trabajado con espadas de dos filos. Recuerdo el día en que mi maestra Xin Pim me entregó la espada y yo tuve que extender mis dos manos para recibirla. Luego me dijo: “Agarra la espada con tu mano derecha. Con la otra junta tus dedos índice y central y abraza el mango con los dedos pulgar, anular y meñique. Baja el brazo con la espada. Ahora pon la misma posición, el mismo mudra en tu mano derecha. Tienes ahora dos elementos, complementarios y antagónicos. Con la espada puedes hacer daño, pero este mudra te va dar tranquilidad, te va permitir respirar, pasar tus pensamientos por el corazón.” Y eso me pareció maravilloso.

Si bien yo llegué a las artes marciales, al malabarismo o a las danzas nacionales interesada por mejorar mi presencia, para tener más herramientas corporales y vocales y poder en las calles o en las obras atraer la mirada del espectador, tener un cuerpo dispuesto para poder recibir otros personajes, fui siendo cautivada por la energía. Y justamente a través de estas danzas fui verificando las tres energías. La energía ordinaria o cotidiana que utilizamos para comunicarnos, la energía sutil o extracotidiana que es la que se utiliza para poner en forma la representación y la energía sublime que va brotar más adelante con la práctica.

[danza de taichí con espada de dos filos]



El comportamiento escénico

Como actriz yo tengo que ir acumulando entrenando, transformando estas secuencias que me aprendo de tanto pasarlas, buscando la limpieza, la precisión e ir construyendo a partir de este material nuevas improvisaciones. Yo debo tener el sentido de la continuidad, pero el director tiene el sentido de la selección. No podíamos olvidar que la acción iba ser en el mercado, no tenía un espacio de 8 x 8 como en la sala de Yuyachkani, lo tenía que hacer en un espacio de 2 x 2. Además, subida en una tarima de un metro de altura.



Las personas van al mercado a comprar y yo en este mercado iba a realizar una pequeña acción, entonces tenía yo, que además de atraer, hacer que lo que yo hiciese fuera atractivo para que esa compradora, ese comprador se detuviera unos 15 o 20 minutos a ver la acción, tenía también que condensar, condensar el espacio, la historia y a partir de pequeño lugar irradiar en todo el mercado, entonces estas secuencias las fuimos trabajando e hicimos una síntesis que quedó en tres partes:

1. Rosa Cuchillo en el Kay Pacha, este mundo.
2. El Uqhu Pacha, el Mundo de Abajo, en donde se va encontrar con personas mitad animales, mitad gente. Algunos la van a ayudar, otros van a ayudarla, otros van a hacerla correr espantada.
3. El Hanaq Pacha, el mundo de los dioses, en donde Rosa Cuchillo se encuentra consigo mismo, siendo la Diosa Cavillaca, pero también encuentra a su hijo Liborio.

Como era un espacio tan pequeño, cada elemento que pusiéramos tenía que tener un sentido y un significado. Habíamos visto en el mercado como las señoras, las vendedoras tenían pequeños bancos. Vimos que yo podía también tenerlo, me iba a ser útil. Y diseñamos el banco para aquellos que tienen “ojos de ver”, que vivieran y conocieran la cosmovisión andina. Pusimos tres patas por los tres mundos y al final le tallamos las patas de los pumas, de los otorongos. Amarraba estas tres patas, tiene tallada dos serpientes como representantes del mundo de abajo, y en el asiento tiene tallado dos pájaros como representantes del Mundo de Arriba. Pero además debajo del asiento, de manera secreta, tiene tallada una cruz del sur, una *chakana*, el símbolo sagrado de las culturas de origen en el Perú, entonces esta banca entra en la acción como uno de los elementos principales.

El otro elemento es un *kero*, con el que yo al final de la acción realizo un florecimiento. Este *kero*, es tomado de las mesas chamánicas de las culturas originarias en el Perú. Es ancho en su base, delgado en el centro y vuelve a ancharse, porque está tomando energía del Uqhu Pacha y del Hanaq Pacha. Tiene además un dibujo que pugna por dejarse ver, o esconderse, un pequeño diseño que encontré en una cerámica de la cultura Vicus en Huamanga que muestra un camino sinuoso sin fin donde hay pies de tres dedos y otros de cuatro que para mí eran los tres mundos y los cuatro suyos. Entra en la acción conteniendo las aguas florales y con pétalos de las flores que le dan nombre a la protagonista, la rosa.

Otro elemento importante es la vara que tomé de un artista de la selva, que tiene la forma de una serpiente.

Y el elemento que le da nombre al personaje, el cuchillo. Este cuchillo va a ser el último elemento que yo voy a encontrar para la mesa. Inicialmente habíamos conversado con Miguel Rubio, director de la acción, que quizá el cuchillo pudiera semejarse a un *tumi*. Un antiguo ceremonial de oro que fue sustraído del museo de Arqueología y lo fundieron. Desapareció. Mi acumulación la hice con un cuchillo de metal a pesar de que el cuchillo debía ser del mundo de abajo. Pero por esas causalidades, cuando ya todo estaba listo para confrontarse, me fue entregado de regalo este cuchillo tallado en cartílago de tiburón espada. Esto me sobrecogió porque Pachacamac, el Dios del Uqhu Pacha, es de las profundidades de la tierra, del mar.

Cuando llegó a mí empecé a entrenarme con el y a pedido del director, empecé a trabajar la danza de espada de dos filos, con la daga en posición sentada.

[danza de la daga]



Son entonces estos tres elementos que se van a componer esta mesa y eso también es muy interesante. Si bien era una mesa y estoy sobre un pequeño tabladillo de una mesa de 2 x 2 y un metro de altura. También el término mesa se utiliza cuando el maestro de energía extiende en el suelo una manta de justamente este tamaño y ahí coloca sus elementos en las mesas chamánicas de sanación.

Ahora quiero compartir con ustedes mis propios secretos mientras me caracterizo, me maquillo y termino de vestirme para hacer la última escena de la acción.

Los secretos de las mujeres de mi familia

En esta obra están también las mujeres de mi familia. Mi abuela paterna de Rosa Obregón, al igual que Oscar Colchado el autor de la novela, nacieron en Ancash. Esta coincidencia y el nombre Rosa Cuchillo influyeron en mi decisión de hacer la versión teatral. Rosa, mi abuela, trabajó en el mercado cuando migró a Lima, y allí conoció a mi abuelo Lorenzo que era policía municipal. Por eso, como un homenaje a mi abuela y a las mujeres dadoras del mercado, decidí hacer la acción allí, como parte de la recuperación del espacio público como un espacio de diálogo, cuestionamiento, debate y denuncia.

El diseño del vestuario que llevo pertenece al vestuario tradicional de Carhuaz, el pueblo donde nació mi abuela Rosa. Los vivos colores originales del vestuario han sido cambiados por el color hueso. Rosa Cuchillo, el personaje, es un Alma Viva. Es una mujer que busca a su hijo desaparecido más allá de la muerte.

Mi otra abuela, mi abuela materna Paula Sánchez, nació en Huánuco, y allí se hizo curandera de niños y niñas. Les pasaba el huevo para quitar el ojo y el susto. De niña ella nos limpiaba de malas energías con aguas florales, con baños de hierbas, con sahumerios de palo santo y limón.

Recordando sus olores perfumados de flores decidí terminar la acción en el mercado limpiando, floreciendo para que, como yo de niña, pudieran sentir el consuelo, la ternura y calmaban sus miedos.

En la época en que yo creaba esta obra que nos habla de la vida después de la muerte, mi mamá, Victoria Clotilde, partió como un pequeño rayo de luz, así como están partiendo hoy tantas bellas personas en el mundo. La obra y la cosmovisión andina me reafirmaron en que volveré a verla, en que volveremos a estar juntas.

El cuerpo de los animales, las diferentes energías, las danzas de armas tradicionales, los objetos como prolongación del cuerpo, la memoria ancestral, los motivos e historias personales, los desaparecidos en el conflicto armado interno, las danzas tradicionales, la música con silbadores e icaros, la novela, me dieron un camino para danzar la historia. El Arte desde lo simbólico me permite seguir contribuyendo en la reconstrucción del tejido social de mi país, de mi Perú. ■



Ana Woolf

El valor político de la antropología teatral

Abstract: Ana Woolf, Argentinian actress and director, proposes an account on her relationship with theatre anthropology, since she very first 'discovered' it in the early 1990s, and its effect on her personal artistic work. In the article, Ana Woolf explains how theatre anthropology acquires social, political and intercultural functions in the Latin American context.

Keywords: Laboratorio de Antropología Teatral, Argentina, Ana Woolf.

La primera vez que escuché acerca de la antropología teatral fue en un seminario en el teatro municipal San Martín, en Buenos Aires, Argentina. El seminario estaba coordinado por Alberto Isola, un actor y director parte de los grupos e instituciones culturales independientes peruanos.

Estábamos casi a inicios de 1990 y yo tenía alrededor de 20 años. Isola nos pasó algunas imágenes de los films del Odin Teatret *Sobre las dos orillas del río* y *Anabasis*, nos habló del Tercer Teatro y de islas flotantes, del Encuentro de grupos de teatro en Ayacucho, de la ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology), nos nombró también un libro: *Anatomía del actor. Un diccionario de antropología teatral*, de Barba y Savarese, el cual no demoré en conseguir, por ese entonces en circulación mayormente en forma de fotocopia.

Años más tarde, mientras observaba cómo Eugenio Barba trabajaba y montaba espectáculos con artistas lejanos entre sí geográfica, social y culturalmente, descubría que una de las atracciones más grandes para mí de la antropología teatral era el hecho de que no era una teoría nacida de una reflexión en un escritorio, sino una formulación que venía directa y sin filtro de la observación práctica del actor-bailarín. Una observación y reflexión basada en temas de investigación (cada ISTA se centra en un tema que será abordado durante el período del encuentro) flujo, energía, presencia, o-effect... La libertad más grande que percibía al ver el trabajo de Eugenio Barba con los maestros y maestras de la ISTA estaba relacionada con un permiso que parecía otorgado por el hecho de saber que estudiábamos antropología teatral: poder mirar los cuerpos en acción, hacerlos detener y preguntar por qué haces esto o lo otro, insistir sin pudor en las preguntas y en la mirada sobre el/la otra, hasta comprender la lógica de un pensamiento en acción.

Mirar, estudiar y mantener la diferencia era un valor en medio de un contexto socio-político latinoamericano donde el cerco impuesto por continuas dictaduras militares traía como mensaje una falsa y forzada igualdad. En una Argentina de torturas y desapariciones, de quema de libros y de salas teatrales, de exilio y ausencias, ese era el valor que ponía en escena la antropología teatral: el valor de un cuerpo/voz absoluta y completamente presente, incluso trabajando la ausencia. Un valor político sin hablar de política.

La antropología teatral me ofrecía también no una técnica sino principios con los cuales podía finalmente crear mis ejercicios, mis juegos escénicos y un sentido de dignidad al dignificar el trabajo del actor/actriz en sala, allí es donde debemos estar, en trabajo constante en busca de una acción concreta a través del cuerpo y de la voz.

Gracias a la técnica del maestro y director japonés Tadashi Suzuki conocía ya estos principios pero no podía expresar en conceptos lo que sucedía en mi entrenamiento ni



ser consciente de lo que estaba haciendo en esos ejercicios: un paso que terminaba un poquito más lejos que donde termina mi paso normal al caminar, un desplazamiento de peso de talón a metatarso, un fuera de equilibrio, una oposición al máximo o absorbida, buscar la incomodidad, sentarme en la punta de la silla, salir hacia la izquierda cuando la puerta está a la derecha, caminar y cambiar la dirección sin que se vea, sin anticipar, pensar que mido diez centímetros más, mirar por encima de las cabezas de los espectadores... Podía probar todo eso en mi cuerpo y más adelante observar lo que pasaba en los cuerpos de mis alumnas y alumnos. Y algo pasaba, para empezar al menos: algo cambiaba en la energía psicofísica de mi cuerpo, y se alteraba la percepción del espectador.

Escribir lo que pasa con el camino de la antropología teatral en Latinoamérica no es algo que se pueda hacer rápidamente. Hay mucho camino recorrido aplicando sus principios y también partiendo de ellos para seguir su propio recorrido (como cuenta Miguel Rubio, director del grupo cultural peruano Yuyachkani, y las actrices de su grupo Ana Correa y Teresa Ralli, el actor Augusto Casafranca, quienes siempre se refieren a las enseñanzas recibidas en la ISTA), y también a través de los libros y encuentros con Eugenio Barba.

La antropología teatral es el campo de estudios que me aloja desde hace muchos años. Hablo de ella en mi espectáculo demostración *Detrás del telón* dirigido por Julia Varley, y enseño bajo ese título desde 1995. He introducido sus formulaciones en forma de teoría y de manera práctica en cada oportunidad que he tenido, sea en espacios universitarios en Latinoamérica como en Europa y Asia, como en grupos de teatro independiente con los cuales colaboro hasta llegar a la creación específicamente de mi grupo de trabajo LAT (Laboratorio de Antropología Teatral) en la ciudad de Santa Fe con el cual trabajo ya desde hace nueve años de manera ininterrumpida.

Otros espacios en los cuales los principios de la antropología teatral me han permitido trabajar y empoderar a personas no relacionadas solo y específicamente con el ámbito teatral y ofrecerles la posibilidad de construir un cuerpo presente sólido para sus diferentes circunstancias escénicas fue por ejemplo en Serbia con militantes activistas en lucha por la igualdad de género y la no violencia contra las mujeres; en Bolivia, Brasil, Colombia y Perú en situaciones de teatro social el trabajo realizado fue con lideresas campesinas; en Cusco organizo junto a Tania y Lucho Castro (familia de arte y teatro quechua hablante), el Encuentro de Antropología Teatral llamado *Teatro en los Cerros*; en Colombia junto a la actriz Sofía Monsalve, y a la actriz y antropóloga Lavinia Fiori organizamos el Encuentro de Antropología Teatral *Teatro a la Mar* en las islas del Rosario (Cartagena), donde nos encontramos con artistas locales y su tradición de música y danza afrodescendiente entramándolos con el trabajo de participantes de distintos países durante siete días.

En *Detrás del telón* digo: “La técnica es mi capa y mi espada para salir a enfrentar al toro, al espectador. Para protegerme de lo espontáneo y del deseo vicioso tan repetido en nuestro teatro latinoamericano: el querer expresarlo todo.” La antropología teatral me ofrece elementos para construir y deconstruir algo que transformaré en mi propio lenguaje. Es mi forma de estar presente en un espacio escénico, en una situación de representación. Desde este punto de vista, para mí se vuelve un arma fundamental en un contexto político latinoamericano en primer lugar y en lo que se refiere a un contexto de política de género. Me permite crear a través de la construcción de una presencia escénica sólida, entender de forma práctica lo que significa *estar decidida*. ■

News



Theatrum Mundi Ensemble, *Ur-Hamlet*, Kronborg, Denmark, 2006 - Photo: Francesco Galli

Omnia Studio Theatre (Greece) Centre of Theatre Anthropology

In 2020 Omnia Studio Theatre established the Centre for Theatre Anthropology that aims to study the behaviour of the human being in a organised situation of performance according to principles which are different from those used in daily life. With the creation of a network of Greek and foreign universities, the Centre aims to cover theatre anthropology research in our country, to document and publish papers by scholars and presentations by performers concerning the extra-daily use of their body and the technique which governs their presence.

The first idea of establishing a Centre of Theatre Anthropology in Greece arose during the honorary tribute to Eugenio Barba by the European Cultural Centre of Delphi. The Centre hosted a variety of demonstrations by Odin Teatret for three days (4-7 July 2019), in Delphi, under the title "Odin and Dionysus - The Spirit of Laboratory". Antonis Diamantis, actor and director of Omnia Studio Theatre was among the invited speakers. He proposed to Eugenio Barba to establish a Centre of Theatre Anthropology in Greece. Eugenio immediately asked scholars who were present to help realise this idea. Nicola Savarese, Marco De Marinis, Piergiorgio Giacchè, Tatiana Chemi, Adam Ledger accepted to send their books and articles to Omnia Studio as a starting point for the activities of the Centre.

The Centre of Theatre Anthropology was established in February 2020 in Heraklion, Crete, Greece, and Eugenio Barba accepted to be its honorary president. The Centre's first planned activity was an international Conference of Theatre Anthropology in July 2020 in Heraklion. Because of the Covid 19 pandemic the Conference was finally realised on the 29th of August 2020 in the city of Rethymno, Crete, in collaboration with the Theatre - Cinema - Music Laboratory, Department of Philology of Crete University, in the Student Cultural Centre Xenia.

Some of the presentations were live and some digital. Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley opened the conference with their digital messages, and Irene Koutsaki, an actress of Omnia Studio Theatre, presented a work demonstration entitled *Theatre. A separate reality*.

In 2021, the Centre will publish a journal both in digital and printed form, with the talks of the invited professors. This will be sent for free to all libraries of the theatre departments of the Greek and Cyprus Universities. The professors and MA in Theatre Studies who spoke at the conference were:

- Manolis Seiragakis, Assistant professor of Theatrology at the University of Crete, actor, director, Head of Theatre - Cinema - Music Laboratory.
- Korina Apostolopoulou, Actress, PhD Theatre Studies, Open University of Cyprus.
- Dr Adam J. Ledger, FHEA, FRSA Reader in Theatre and Performance, co-artistic director of The Bone Ensemble, University of Birmingham, Great Britain.
- Maria Fragi, PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies, theatre director, special teaching staff in the Department of Theatre Studies, University of Patras.
- Avra Sidiropoulou, Assistant Professor and Academic Head of the M.A Program in Theatre

Studies, Open University of Cyprus.

- Tatiana Chemi, Ass. Prof. / Dept. of Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University, Denmark.

- Mirjana Poptesin, MA in Theatre Studies.

- Ioanna Tefiki - Cooper/ Postgraduate Student, Dept. of Philology, University of Crete.

- Nektarios Moumoutzis, Lab teacher at the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering of the Technical University of Crete.

A network of theatrology departments of Greece was created to host future conferences in their facilities. Members of this network are the theatre departments of the University of Crete, University of Patras, University of Thessaloniki, University of Peloponnese, and University of Cyprus. Conferences are scheduled for August 2021 at the Technical University of Crete, and for August 2022 at the Theatrological Department of the University of Patras. Until now 50 artists and scholars from Greece and abroad have accepted to become members of our Centre.

The Centre of Theatre Anthropology in Greece has also established a network of scholars, directors, theatre teachers and actors in order to organise Odin Teatret's future activities in Greece. This 'movement' is creating a digital platform made by the Theatre Department of Patras University with useful information about theatre anthropology in collaboration with ISTA. Our aim is to circulate the spirit of theatre anthropology in Greece through translations of books and articles on this subject for students and the public.



Conference of Theatre Anthropology - Photo: Omnia Studio Theatre

Luciana Martuchelli (Brazil) Theatre Anthropology in Brasilia

A Arte Secreta do Ator is a high-quality professional residence with Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley on theatre anthropology. Lasting four days, it has been organised every year since 2008 by Cia. YinsPiração Poéticas Contemporâneas in Brasília (Brazil) for only sixteen active actors and ten observers, directors and scholars from Brazil and the rest of the world.

In addition to the basic principles of theatre anthropology as well as acting and dramaturgical processes, A Arte Secreta do Ator offers lectures, international performances and work demonstrations, debates, barbers, film presentations, poetry soirées and book launches.

During the residence, it is possible to follow the thinking of Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley, from the perspective of theatre anthropology, while they work on the development of scenic material presented by the participating actors. The training includes physical and vocal actions as well as the relationship between the dramaturgy of the director, the author and the actor during the process of developing and selecting the final material for performance.

From 2008 to 2020, the training residence was attended by actors and directors from all the Brazilian states and from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, France, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela.

With a different theme for each session, A Arte Secreta do Ator seeks various paths for the creation of a theatre dramaturgy: in 2008 “A Dolls’ House” by Henrik Ibsen; in 2009 “Suddenly in the Depths of the Forest” by Amos Oz; in 2010 “The Flower of Ages”, with its reference to poetry by Persian Omar Khayyam; in 2011 “Love Stories”; in 2012 “A Smiling Woman, Carrying a Burden on Her Shoulders, Moves towards the Abyss”; in 2013 “The Architecture of Sunset”; in 2014 “Who Will Pay for Coffin and Flowers if I Die of Love?”; in 2015, “From Joining Mouths Came Foam. From a Still Moment Came Drama”; in 2016 “Memory Flies Far Away with Autumn Birds”; in 2017 “The Red Clouds of Ithaca”; in 2018, “Blood is Sold, Blood is Bought”; in 2019 “Flight and its Roots”.

In 2020, due to the pandemic, the first online session of A Arte Secreta do Ator was held with the theme “Principles of transformation: starting points to find what you are not searching for”.

Cia. YinsPiração Poéticas Contemporâneas was created by Luciana Martuchelli in 2002 and focusses on the technical training of the actor, on mythology and the states of male and female archetypal representation. Filipe Lima and Juliana Zancanaro are among the long-time collaborators.

The open air working space of A Arte Secreta do Ator, outside Brasília - Photo: Ricardo Calixto



Linda Cunningham (UK) Expanded Theatre Anthropology

Expanded Theatre Anthropology is first and foremost the unexpected rain that fell on a then younger hybrid head, in a different time-space, many years ago, that led to an unexpected and ongoing (re)search. Expanded Theatre Anthropology does not seek to oppose that which is theatre anthropology - it is to use the motto from Niels Bohr's coat of arms and that of Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium (NTL), a *Contraria sunt Complementa* (Opposites are Complementary) in its truest form. Expanded Theatre Anthropology, proposes an expansion, and not a Post Theatre Anthropology.

Contraria sunt Complementa is also a term used in the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) to describe pre-expressivity, what makes a human being more watchable or more present in performance (Barba and Savarese, 1991, 8). However, in *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, on the topic of set and costume, it is written that one cannot say that the costume itself is pre-expressive, as it is the actor who is giving it life (Barba and Savarese, 1991, 225).

Expanded Theatre Anthropology does not argue against a human actor giving life, but instead expands on this, and proposes that life is also given from the more than human beings to the actor whom it is in relation with/to. If theatre anthropology is, as proposed in *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: the Secret Art of the Performer* (Barba and Savarese, 1991), some good bits of advice that can be taken on board or disregarded as one sees fit in order to make the [human] performer more watchable and present in performance practice, Expanded Theatre Anthropology is, as proposed by the one who felt the unexpected rain on her head (Cunningham, 2005), good bits of advice that can be taken on board or disregarded as one sees fit, and proposes that it is the human, in relation with the more than human being(s), that also makes the human more watchable and present in performance practice.

Nana Sodré (Brazil) O Poste School of Theatre Anthropology

According to the researcher Cristina Tolentino, the recurrent principles of theatre anthropology researched by Eugenio Barba in various cultures underline the uniqueness of each actor, group, and cultural historical horizon: the discovery of the common principles of scenic presence is applied to one's own research identifying with a theatrical, transcultural history, built by masters or creators of other cultures.

The O Poste Group, which has been working with these training principles and techniques since 2009, has maintained contact with Eugenio Barba and had the opportunity to invite him and the actress Julia Varley to Recife, Brazil, in 2016 to share Odin Teatret's experience.

In the framework of the principles of theatre anthropology, the group researches the African matrix and conducts a training process of ancestral exercises based on the movements and energies of the Orixás (Orixás Dance Dramaturgy and Body Turning on Stage). The O Poste School of Theatre Anthropology is a project created by the O Poste Group in 2018. Students get to know important local cultural expressions such as cavalo marinho, maracatu rural, capoeira and orixás dramaturgy, as a source of training and technical and identity development. Experiences of different techniques from other cultures, such as belly-dance, haka and tai chi chuan, are also part of the School's programme. In addition to the above-mentioned experiences, the students practice training techniques based on Eugenio Barba's, Michael Chekhov's and Jerzy Grotowski's exercises.

To enrol, students send a letter of intent and a curriculum to be analysed by the O Poste Group. The course lasts eight months and the project counts on eight teachers/researchers. The students receive pedagogical material, a certificate and at the end of the course they present a performance as public proof of the School's result within the principles worked on. The last two productions were directed Samuel Santos assisted by Naná Sodré and Agrinez Melo.

The following subjects are taught at the School: "The affirmative body in clown acting" with Arislon Lopes; "Capoeira in actor's play" with Orun Santana and Gabrielle Conde; "Jungle traditions: cavalo marinho and maracatu de baque solto in the actor's work" with Andala Quituche; "Orixás dramaturgy and body turning on stage - Ancestral training practice of O Poste Group" with Agrinez Melo; "Work dance world - Exclusive method of world dance work" with Sylvya Olyveyra; "Physical awareness: martial art as a tool" with Manoel Ramos; "Contemporary theatre history" with Nana Sodré; "Creative voice - Vocal equivalence" with Nana Sodré; "Interpretation" with Samuel Santos.

Letters to JTA

Jean-Marie Pradier (France)

Paris, 8.2.2021

Cher Leonardo Mancini

Merci pour ce message, le document joint, et bravo pour ce projet.

Quarante ans après ce texte je m'aperçois que - comme le disait Eugenio en 1979 à Karpacz, et qu'il avait écrit dans son article « Teatro-Cultura » la même année - ce rapport peut être un piège pour les « intellectuels » - ou les futurs chercheurs - qui ne connaissent pas la réalité des pratiques, au plus près des praticiens et des praticiennes, les acteurs et actrices. Je comprends pourquoi certains universitaires extérieurs ont accusé l'ISTA d'être « scientifique » et positiviste: ils sont pris par le piège des mots imprimés qui restent de glace pour parler du feu.

Ce rapport avait pour intention de démontrer le sérieux d'une extraordinaire aventure artistique, humaine, intellectuelle qui coûtait très cher. Il expose également l'ambition d'une utopie internationale unique, seule à avoir été réalisée et maintenue aussi longtemps. Aventure qui a changé des vies. Comment rendre l'effervescence, les relations entre les personnes, l'engagement absolu, le rêve devenu réalité ?

L'ISTA a été le croisement et la rencontre de ce qui, et de ceux et celles qui, se tiennent étrangers, inconnus, rivaux dans la vie courante : Heureuse BABEL où nous pouvions jouir de plusieurs langues, partager des intuitions, des projets, des raisonnements et des actions concrètes.

Quant à l'annonce de l'ouvrage de Nicola Savarese, il convient d'ajouter qu'elle est devenue un exploit éditorial international, qui s'est poursuivi jusqu'à aujourd'hui avec la publication des Cinq Continents du Théâtre.

Très cordialement

Jean-Marie Pradier

Letters to JTA

Nicola Savarese (Italy)

Carpignano, 14.2.2021

Dear Eugenio,

reading the proofs of the first issue of JTA provokes a continuous stream of memories. Some articles date back more than 40 years, which is to say, more than a generation. They still affect me but how do they affect young people? How will they read this "history" today?

The only example I have comes from my own experience when I read your book about Grotowski in 1965, In cerca del teatro perduto (In Search of a Lost Theatre). I was confronted with a terminology that I did not know, with an idea of a theatre that was unimaginable at the time, with formulations for which I was completely unprepared (self-penetration, the holy actor!) and I felt that they pushed me away.

I had to get to know you first-hand, to face the problems directly, and follow all the sessions of ISTA to make me change my mind about the new concreteness beyond the words. Theatre anthropology introduces many concepts, and pre-expressivity is one of the newest and most original.

I don't know exactly what the first issue of JTA is lacking, but it would be useful to emphasise this change of language. Clive Barker's article mentions this, but in my opinion it is not enough. It is not a question of establishing a specific section about it, but of warning about this new language and the advantages of SEEING and FOLLOWING closely the actor's process.

Hugs

Nicola

Letters to JTA

Rustom Bharucha (India)

Calcutta, 20.3.2021

Dear Eugenio,

Thank you for sharing the first issue of the Journal of Theatre Anthropology. It's a gift. May I share it with others? There are younger artists who need to be made aware of the care and rigour with which you have been able to inventory your process and practice. This is not an easy task. From glancing through the pages of the journal, I can sense the density of the 're-livings' and 'observations' from another point in time. You have done a great job in providing a pedagogy that is both historical (in the fully 'lived' sense of the word) and inspirational.

With your characteristic humility, you ask in the opening pages, why you continue to do theatre and what is it about this increasingly strange and precious phenomenon in the age of the Digital and the Anthropocene that still stimulates your curiosity. I think the pages that follow offer ample evidence of what continues to fire you.

Some questions that haunt my own thinking of theatre, sparked in part by my forthcoming book on 'Performing the Ramayana Tradition', co-edited with the Ramayana scholar, Paula Richman - I will send you a copy when it comes out in July 2021:

1. *Vacika* - not just the text or narrative, but all those dimensions of orality/aurality in relation to breath, chant, cadence, texture, rhythm of the voice and the listening process. It's so hard to find a language for this very tactile experience - not just 'seeing' the Ramlila, but listening to it.

2. *Spectatorship* - I still feel that this is one of the most neglected areas of theatre research. It's one thing to study it at a sociological level, but an anthropology of spectatorship is a more elusive task. I see myself as a spectator - and, as you are well aware, in the Indian tradition, there is no hierarchy between 'actor' and 'spectator'/'auditor'. There is interdependence and co-creation. Once again, it's very hard to find the words to describe this process.

3. *Zoonosis* - the body in relation to disease and the alchemy of multiple forces. The epidemiology of theatre transmissions. I've been very charged in this regard by learning about the mysterious (and deadly) transmissions of the virus via zoonosis. In these transmissions one is alerted to the roles played by animals, insects, plants and other organisms that are

Letters to JTA

often not recognized in our anthropocentric preoccupations. How can we really put into practice an ecology of theatre?

During the lockdown in Calcutta, where I am based, I embarked on a strange experiment in which I began to reflect on theatre in the larger context of the coronavirus. What emerged was a 9-episode video lecture on 'Theatre and the Coronavirus.' I was not consciously researching the subject; rather, I simply allowed the coronavirus to act as some kind of a catalyst on my already existing, internalized, thoughts on theatre. What emerged was a series of reflections on social distancing, online performances, the future of theatre architecture, learning to live with ourselves, public assemblies like Black Lives Matter and the Shaheen Bagh movement in Delhi, along with reflections on the plague in Shakespeare's time, the Spanish Influenza and Artaud. In episode 9 I draw on some of your research (along with Nicola Savarese's) on the 'silent scream' in relation to Picasso. Here is the weblink to the speech-act.

<https://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/en/v/interweaving-performance-cultures/online-projects/index.html>

Stay well, Eugenio, guru/friend/interlocutor, your journey continues to inspire,

Rustom

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Selected books and articles on theatre anthropology

For a complete bibliography including articles and interviews please see:

<https://www.ista-online.org/>

Odin Teatret Archives can be consulted at Odin Teatret in Holstebro, Denmark and at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark. For those who are interested in comprehensive research, Odin Teatret Archives comprises films, photographs and documents of all ISTA sessions, The University of Eurasian Theatre sessions, Theatrum Mundi productions and material concerning the ISTA teachers.

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About the authors



Katsuko Azuma (1935-2001, Japan), a founder member of ISTA, started dancing at the age of five in Tokyo as a pupil of Tokuho Azuma, head of the renowned Azuma Dance School. In 1962, she started her own group Kutsunu-kai, for which she choreographed many performances. She studied and performed with kabuki actors Kichiemon Nakamura and Tomijui Nakamura, and studied many years with kyogen actor Mannojo Nomura. She taught at the Azuma School and was a master in her own right with her own school.

Eugenio Barba (1936, Italy) created Odin Teatret in 1964 in Oslo, Norway, and in 1966 moved with it as a theatre laboratory to Holstebro, Denmark. In 1980 he founded the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA). He has directed 79 productions with Odin Teatret and the intercultural Ensemble Theatrum Mundi. Author of twenty-four books; his latest publication, in collaboration with Nicola Savarese, is *The Five Continents of Theatre. Facts and Legends of the Material Culture of the Actor* (Brill/Sense, 2019). He is the recipient of honorary doctorates from thirteen universities.

Clive Barker (1931-2005, UK) joined Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop in 1955. He directed in Germany, the US and in Colombia, where he was Associate Director of the Teatro Libre de Bogotá. From 1966-1974 he was Lecturer in the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts at Birmingham University and Senior Lecturer in Theatre Studies at the University of Warwick until his retirement in 1996. He was a trainer of actors and author of the seminal book *Theatre Games* (Bloomsbury-Methuen, Drama, 2010). A founding editor of *New Theatre Quarterly* until his death.

Thomas Bredsdorff (1937, Denmark) theatre critic at the daily newspaper "Politiken" and professor in Nordic literature at the University of Copenhagen from 1978 to 2004. He has written extensively on Danish authors. He focused on theatre in *Magt-spil* (Power Play, Gyldendal, 1986) about drama and the actor's subtext, and in *Med andre ord* (In Other Words, Gyldendal 1996) on the poetic language of the Danish poet Henrik Nordbrandt. Since 1998, he has served as dramaturg for Odin Teatret.

Tsao Chun-Lin (1933-2007, China), Peking opera actor in Beijing, he moved to Taiwan where he continued to perform at the same time that he taught at the Experimental Opera School of Foo Hsing in Taipei. ISTA was his first meeting and experience with performers from other Asian and western traditions.

Ana Correa (1953, Peru) is an actress with the leading Peruvian theatre company, Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, since 1979. Yuyachkani base their productions on authentic Peruvian traditions and in 2000 they won Peru's National Human Rights Award.

Ana is also a teacher of martial arts, a director and a teacher at the theatre school of the Universidad Católica in Lima. In 2012 Ana was named Meritory Personality of Culture by the Peruvian Culture Ministry.

Linda (Lyn) Cunningham (1983, Ireland) is a feminist, queer and environmental activist and a Ph.D. researcher at De Montfort University (UK). She has worked and trained as a performer, deviser, director, technician, designer, operator, scenographer, filmmaker and lecturer for various companies and institutions both nationally and internationally. She founded the performance company, Light Being Performance in 2004. She is an active member of The Magdalena Project; co-founder of 1001 Fires and a member of NTL groups The Parliament of Practices and Cross Pollination.

Jean-Jacques Daetwyler (1947, Switzerland) is a science journalist and a professor in physics at the University of Bern. Among his publications: *Sciences et arts* (La Baconnière, 1972) and *L'Odin Teatret et la naissance du Tiers Théâtre* (Palindrome, 1980).

Simone Dragone (1990, Genoa) is a PhD student in Digital Humanities Arts, Performing Arts and Multimedia Technologies at the University of Genoa, Italy. He is responsible for OTA (Odin Teatret Archives) in Holstebro. He graduated in Modern Literature and Performing Arts at the University of Genoa. He is one of the founders of Il Falcone, Genoa University Theatre (2016), for which he was producer until April 2019.

Peter Elsass (1947, Denmark) professor in Clinical Psychology at Copenhagen University since 1966 and member of ISTA scientific staff. He supplemented his traditional studies with interdisciplinary research areas in anthropology, philosophy and history. He is author of over one hundred articles and numerous books, including *Håndbog i kulturpsykologi* (A Handbook on Cultural Psychology, Gyndeldal, 2003). He is the director of several documentary films, including *Rejsen tilbage* (The Return, 1993) about the cultural resistance of the indigenous Arhuaco people in Colombia.

Luciana Martuchelli (1968, Brazil) is an actor, director, composer and film maker. She is graduated at Faculdade de Artes Dulcina de Moraes in Brasília (Brazil), where she also became professor. In 2002 she founded Cia. YinsPiração Poéticas Contemporâneas and in 2008 she created The Secret Art of the Performer, an annual masters-in-residence with Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley. She is the director of Solos Fértis - International Festival of Women in Theatre, connected to The Magdalena Project in Brazil.

Leonardo Mancini (1987, Italy) has obtained his PhD in Letters at the University of Turin, in co-tutorship at the Université Paris 8. He has been DAAD fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin (Institut für Theaterwissenschaft). His research focuses on the history of the Italian theatre between 19th and 20th centuries, declamation on stage, pedagogy of the actor. Among his publications, *Carmelo Bene: fonti della poetica* (Mimesis, Milano 2020).

Sanjukta Panigrahi (1944-1997, India), a founding member of ISTA, was one of the foremost exponents of odissi dance. As the first woman to embrace a regional dance in Orissa, India, she was decisive in transforming it into a classical dance, ensuring

its revival. In recognition of her contribution to the art of dance, she was honoured with one of India's highest awards, the Padma Shri (1975). She is also recipient of the Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1976.

I Made Pasek Tempo (1929-1993, Bali), a founding member of ISTA, participated in its sessions until his death. A renowned performer of topeng, he was a teacher with many students from his village of Tampaksiring. His master was I Wayan Kakul from Batuan. He had toured extensively abroad and participated in 1974 in the Javanese/Balinese seminar at Odin Teatret in the company of the choreographer Sardono Waluyo Kusumo.

Patrice Pavis (1947, France) is Professor of Theatre Studies at the universities of Paris 8, Kent in Canterbury (UK) and the National University of the Arts in Seoul (Korea). He has written extensively about performance, focussing his study and research mainly on semiology and interculturalism in theatre. He was awarded the Georges Jamati Prize in 1986. His publications include *Le théâtre au croisement des cultures* (Jose Corti, 1990), *The Intercultural Performance Reader* (Routledge, 1996), *La mise en scène contemporaine: origines, tendances, perspectives* (Armand Colin, 2007) and *Dictionnaire de la performance et du théâtre contemporain* (Armand Colin, 2014).

Jean-Marie Pradier (1939, Morocco), a founding member of ISTA, is Professor Emeritus at the Theatre Department of the University of Paris 8. Founder of ethno-scenology (1995), dedicated to the study of performance practices. Scientific director of the journal *L'Ethnographie*, and a member of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord. Among his many publications: *La scène et la fabrique des corps. Ethnoscénologie du spectacle vivant en Occident* (PU Bordeaux, 2000) and *Fànic, Fàlic, Fàtic - Vers una teoria neurocultural dels espectacles vius* (Universitat de Valencia 1998).

Nicole Revel-McDonald (1942, France), Senior Researcher Emeritus, CNRS, Paris, started doing fieldwork in the Philippines in 1970 as a linguist and an anthropologist. Responsible during six years for a series of lectures on Voice at the Centre de Recherche sur l'Oralité, INALCO. Editor of *Pour une anthropologie des voix* (L'Harmattan 2004). From 1990 to 2000, she coordinated an International Seminar on Epics in "The Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue", under the auspices of UNESCO. Since 2011, she is a member of UMR 7206 Éco-anthropologie et ethnobiologie at Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris (MNHN).

Janne Risum (1947, Denmark), Associate Professor Emeritus of Dramaturgy at Aarhus University, is a member of the Universities' Commission in IFTR (International Federation for Theatre Research). She was co-editor of *Dansk teaterhistorie* (Danish Theatre History, Gyldendal, 1993). She has followed the work of ISTA for many years. She has published widely in English and other languages on past and present theatre in Europe and Asia. From 2002 to 2006 she directed the CTLS, Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies, created by Aarhus University at Odin Teatret in Holstebro. Her Ph.D dissertation in English on the Soviet tour of Mei Lanfang in 1935 and its effects, "The Mei Lanfang Effect" (2010), was based on extensive archive studies in Russia.

Franco Ruffini (1939, Italy), a founding member of ISTA, has written extensively on theatre anthropology. He is Professor Emeritus of the University of Roma Tre. He taught

physics and mathematics before devoting himself to theatre history focussing, among other things, on Stanislavski, Artaud, Decroux and Grotowski. His numerous books deal mainly with the reformers of the 20th century theatre. His latest publication is *Grotowski e Gurdjieff* (Editoriale Scientifica, 2019). His book *Theatre and Boxing. The Actor Who Flies* is available in English (Icarus-Routledge, 2014). Founding member of the journal *Teatro e Storia* (1986).

Nicola Savarese (1945, Italy), a founding member of ISTA, was Professor of Theatre History at the University of Roma Tre and guest lecturer at the Universities of Kyoto, Montreal, and Sorbonne III. He travelled widely in Asia and lived two years in Japan. His research focusses on the encounters between Asian and western theatres. His books include *Eurasian Theatre* (Icarus Publishing Enterprise, 2010) and, in collaboration with E. Barba, *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (Routledge, 2005) and *The Five Continents of Theatre. Facts and Legends of the Material Culture of the Actor* (Brill NV/Sense, 2019). He is a founding member of the journal *Teatro e Storia*.

Nana Sodré (1975, Brazil) is an actress, director, cultural producer and teacher of Performing Arts, formed by UFPE, an institution in which she was also a teacher in the years 2008 and 2009. In 2004, she founded the group O Poste, an artistic group focussed on researching African roots and the visibility of black people in art and in life. In 2011, she won the Best Actress award for *Cordel do Amor Sem Fim*, in 2013 the award for supporting actress for *Anjo Negro*, and in 2015 she got nominated for best actress for the solo *The Recipe*.

Omma Studio Theatre (1991, Greece) is a theatre group directed by Antonis Diamantis and Irene Koutsaki, founded in 1991 in Athens and now situated in Heraklion, Crete. Omma in ancient Greek means eye or gaze. Omma Studio Theatre performs in non-theatrical spaces and makes research on actors' techniques and training. In 2019, Omma Studio Theatre established a network for the divulgation of theatre anthropology in Greece.

Nando Tavian (1942-2020, Italy), a founding member of ISTA, Professor Emeritus in theatre history at the University of l'Aquila. Since 1975, literary advisor to Odin Teatret about which he wrote *Il libro dell'Odin* (The Book of Odin, Feltrinelli, 1975). His research and publications on Commedia dell'Arte are considered points of reference in the international bibliography on this subject. Some of his writings about Grotowski are to be found in *The Grotowski Sourcebook* (Routledge, 1997). Founding member of the journal *Teatro e Storia* (1986).

Raymonde Temkine (1911-2010, France) was theatre critic at the daily newspaper "Combat" and the journals *Europe*, *Théâtre/Public*, *La quinzaine littéraire* and others. She was among the first to discover the young Grotowski's theatre in 1963 and she wrote a book about him. Among her publications are *Grotowski* (La Cité 1968), *Théâtre au présent* (Contrastes 1987) and *Le Théâtre en l'État* (Theatrales, 1992).

Julia Varley (1954, UK) since 1976 is actress at Odin Teatret. Since 1990 she has been involved in the conception and organisation of ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology). She is active in The Magdalena Project, a network of women in contemporary theatre of which is a founding member. She directs Transit International

Festival and is on the editorial board of *The Open Page*, a journal devoted to women's work in theatre. Author of numerous articles and essays and has published five books, among which *Stones of Water. Notes of an Odin Actress* (Routledge 2011).

Moriaki Watanabe (1933, Japan) is Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo and Paris III, theatre director and artistic director of the Japanese Company Kuchuu teien (The hanging gardens). He has directed plays by Racine, Genet and Kyoka Izumi among others. He has translated Racine, Claudel, Barthes and Foucault into Japanese. He accompanied the Japanese Ensemble of Nihon buyo who participated in the first ISTA session, and his role as interpreter specialising in theatre was fundamental since the Japanese performers and musicians spoke only Japanese.

Ana Woolf (1967, Argentina) is a teacher, actress and director, and co-founder of Magdalena 2a Generación, a Latin American Network of Women in Contemporary Arts. In 1999 Ana Woolf moved to Denmark to study with Julia Varley who directed her in two performances and a work demonstration. She worked as assistant director for Eugenio Barba in three international projects and for Odin Teatret's 50th anniversary. As a director, she has worked with professional actors in different countries, and six of her productions are presently on tour. .



International School of Theatre Anthropology

Next ISTA session

The presence of the actor and the perception of the spectator
Italy, 12-22 October 2021

Organisers: Linee Libere, Teatro Proskenion
Information: Irene Di Lelio (lineelibere2015@gmail.com)



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