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NUMBER 2 - LEARNING TO SEE

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December 2022

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Can the sea rise above the mountains?

It is not enough to see: you need to know *how* to see. The print by the Japanese painter Hokusai shows us how the sea can rise above the mountains. But it also suggests a way to see the impossible by adopting, among the waves, an appropriate point of view. Looking at Hokusai's wave, there are at least four points of view:

1. Children may think that the wave is separate from the water and moving on the surface of the sea: something different from other waves and from the sea itself. But when they are taught to look closely, they discover that the wave is not a distinct thing but is a dynamic phenomenon of the ocean. It makes sense to speak of a "wave", but it is not an entity separate from the rest of the water.
2. The wave is about to hit simultaneously the boats and Mount Fuji.
3. The wave does not hit Fuji because the mountain is far away, although it appears to be under the wave.
4. There is no paper in the boats, in the sea, on the mountain or in the sky. We can look for it but cannot find it. Yet, all of these things are nothing but paper. There is no movement, there is no distance, wet or dry, life or death. Everything is paper: the paper of the drawing. It is the artist's technique that shows us what is beyond reality.

Nicola Savarese

Foreword

Eugenio Barba

From Sight to Vision

The effects of seeing again and again

Do we see with our eyes, our ears, our memory?

In an interview in *Letras libres* of December 2021, the Mexican composer Mario Lavista explains the connecting bridges between music and other artistic fields. What Beaudelaire calls “the correspondence between the arts” occurs for him - a musician - not only with poetry and literature, but particularly with painting. Lavista says: if we look closely, every painting is full of sounds. Music can be heard not only in Degas’ paintings of young ballerinas in which a pianist or a violinist can be glimpsed. Manet’s young flautist in uniform... what tune is he playing?

Some paintings are deafening. In *The Battle of San Romano* by Paolo Uccello we can hear the pawing of horses, the thud of those who fall, the neighing of those dying, spears clashing against armour and the shouts of the attacking soldiers in the background. You want to plug your ears against the noise and sounds that vibrate *inside* the painting.

In *Músicas dormidas* (sleeping musicians) by Rufino Tamayo two young people at sunset are lying beside a flute and a guitar. What melody are they dreaming of? Lavista imagines being able to transcribe it into a score. And so he does. He concludes that many of his musical compositions are an approach to other artistic disciplines through music. It is not a rational approach but a subjective process. The vehicle that allows this approach to be expressed is a knowledge of the rules of music.

Lavista’s ‘musical’ way of seeing is a stimulating didactic key to developing the visual imagination of a young actor. It is a good exercise to engage the faculties of the brain to conjure up and listen to the music of a text by Shakespeare or Beckett, and dance the words to the sounds and rhythms they emanate. Wasn’t this the music and the sound universe that Stanislavski was able to read from Chekov’s *Seagull* when he materialised puffs of wind, rustling of leaves, crackling of crickets, croaking of frogs - his famous Chekovian atmosphere?





Paolo Uccello, *The Battle of San Romano* (1460)

The new is explained by the old

We see through the lens of what we know. The eyes send information to our tripartite brain - reptilian, limbic and new cortex - and each of these parts weighs it independently and reacts on the basis of instinct, cognition, expectation and habit. Each new stimulus is compared to something we have already experienced or are able to imagine. Columbus tasted a pineapple for the first time in the New Indies and described it in a letter to Queen Isabela of Spain as a fruit larger and with a sweeter flavour than an orange from Andalusia. The new is explained by the old.

It is difficult to have virgin eyes, capable of forgetting our conditioned reflexes and mental habits.

Those who define ISTA as “a school of the gaze” are right. It is indeed a situation that teaches how to see. Watching an actor repeat the same scene or a fragment of stage behaviour produces monotony. We are unable to hold the attention and we slip into a mental state of unresponsiveness. Seeing again and again pushes the mind to drift and forces us to overcome the reflex to find an immediate logical justification. Without any guarantee of success, we are waiting to discover other paths, to grasp the tenuous threads that may lead us elsewhere, signs and symptoms that open up to unexpected correspondences. No one has taught us to discern the music of tensions with our eyes, to notice with our nervous system the impulses in the discordant and simultaneous rhythms that make up the flow of the actor/dancer’s presence, or to lead this presence towards gestures and movements from a performance that impacted us and which, like a ghost, haunts our body memory.

The stubbornness or the obligation to see again and again - however uncomfortable this may be for our brain hungry for new stimuli - enables us to overcome the “sound barrier”. It is the transition from sight to *vision*, as when an elderly person is operated for cataracts in the eyes. Suddenly we distinguish outlines and shades. We are able to notice similarities and equivalences in situations that previously appeared to us as separate and mute worlds. It took years for me to orient myself in the intricacy of impulses and tensions that I was unable to distinguish in the expressive dynamics of an actor. Our senses and our brain begin *to see*, thanks to the knowledge that we incorporated during the demanding discipline of seeing again and again.

Emigration and monotony

Vision is knowing how to see, and it is acquired through experience. An important factor for me was my condition as an emigrant in a country where I could neither speak my language nor understand the local one. As an Italian in Norway, the task of making sense of words which were incomprehensible sounds fell on my eyes by focusing on the physical behaviour and body tensions of my interlocutors.

On a professional level I reached the state of *vision* thanks to a particular apprenticeship in the 13 Rows Theatre of Jerzy Grotowski and Ludwik Flaszen in Poland. For nearly three years I was a spectator of two performances that I watched almost every night: *Akropolis* by Wyspianski and *Doctor Faustus* by Marlowe. I knew them down to the smallest detail. I identified kinesthetically with the actors, with their gestures and rhythmic variations, predicting pauses or detecting the slightest discrepancies in their scores. I closed my eyes and, through their voices, my body echoed their dynamics in space. I covered my ears, and my eyes recognised the vocal actions of the actors from the tensions in their faces, hands and spines.

Seeing again and again made me discover the micro-improvisation that every evening enlivens the score of an actor in each scene of a performance. It was the moment when I crossed the “sound barrier”. This awareness deepened with my Odin Teatret actors. In addition to the performances which I attended every evening, following for years their daily training enabled me to perceive the nuances of their *sats*, each change in tension, the synchrony between the accentuation in their speech and in their physical actions. The repetitive observation of the somatic signals (*sats*) in the exercises sharpened my perception and led me to distinguish clearly *the first sign*.

The action that opens a door: the first sign

What do one tree, one billiard ball, one game of chess and one depression have in common? The number one. This aphorism by the scientist and philosopher Jorge Wagensberg seems to challenge our intelligence and our incorporated knowledge.

What do artists have in common - a sculptor, a painter, a composer, a poet and an actor? The *first sign*, the proto-element that makes the hidden reality of the artist’s inner

world perceptible and sensorially manifest to the perception of an observer. It is the physical process of transition from the artist's inner space to the social space shared with others. The intangible and invisible idea is transposed into a real act. The first sign is the action that opens a door.

The first sign is an inner tension that becomes distinguishable to the senses and mind of the observer: the first word written on the paper by the poet, the first brushstroke spread on the canvas by the painter, the first note drawn on the music sheet by the composer, the first chipping away of marble by the sculptor, the first action by the actor. The first sign is the mother cell from which the composite living organisation of the result grows in any artistic process.

For the actor, the first sign is a *sats*, an impulse, a change in tension that can also occur in immobility, but which is felt by the observer's kinesthetic sense. No psychological justification, artistic intention or expressive will: only the action of making a variation in the muscular tone in one's body in order to impact the kinesthetic sense of the viewer.

I cannot help remembering Borges' words: about 300 metres from the pyramids, I bent down, picked up a fistful of sand, let it fall silently a bit further away and said in a low voice: I am modifying the Sahara.

The eye as a microscope

If we wished to establish a science of the creative process, we could think of two needs and two aims:

1. a non-utilitarian need or pleasure in knowing (the aim of pure science);
2. a need or a pleasure in achieving a goal by balancing our creativity between two driving forces: on the one hand our intuition and imagination, on the other, an acquired technical knowledge and reasoned calculation (the aim of applied science).

Any science, however, begins by distinguishing the basic elements from those which are secondary.

From the point of view of theatre anthropology, the basic dynamic element on the first day of an actor's apprenticeship or creative process is the change in tension. Without this mother cell, the development of a complex organism that the spectator perceives as a *body-in-life* is not possible. This first change in tension triggers the actor/dancer's radiating presence that becomes representation, rhythm, energy flow, form and meaning, expression, association and allusion, memory and fantasy. The actor's action is a synonym for a change in tension engaging the whole body. Hence the importance of the feet and the basic stance. Weight is transformed into energy.

Learning to see means being able to analyse and enhance the behaviour of actors/dancers in an ever more detailed way. At the final stage of this analysis we arrive at the *sats*, the elementary unit which constitutes the organic dramaturgy of the actors/dancers: their presence. These minute tonic changes cause an immediate effect in the organism of the observers. The spectators' brains and the cognitive system of their perception are able to anticipate the actor's movements with a neuronal simulation and

with a muscular engagement. This process involves their muscular and mental energy, and a dynamic reactive bond is established with the performers. The actors/dancers must develop a sensory effectiveness regardless of the story they tell. It is their technical skill which generates an *effect of intensified life* in what they are doing. This effect of organicity constitutes their scenic *bios*. Through it, we spectators experience coherence and kinesthetic empathy which persuade our senses.

The sensory dimension of knowledge: structure and movement

The first sign is connected with the origin, with the hidden or conscious motivation that decides our choice to reveal it to others. It is also connected to our ineffable artistic vocation or to our longing to escape from reality. For the actors/dancers, the impulse, the *sats* - this packet of energy - is the first brick in the building of a cathedral: a parallel, *sacred* (which etymologically means separated) space into which the spectator should slip.

The first sign is humble. It is a concrete, measurable, sometimes tangible expression: words on paper, a succession of points evolving into a line on the canvas, a graph of musical notes, a brushstroke that reveals the energy of the hand. For the actor, the first sign is the segmentation of impulses into a behaviour whose forms affect the spectator's perception. Life manifests itself through movement: tensions within forms which change according to a more or less evident rhythm in a determined space. Walking, running, reading a book while sitting or lying down, arguing with someone, peeling a banana are for the actor a proto-form of dance, a progression of segmented movements intertwined with simultaneity and becoming a flow of *sats*, alternation of tensions. The *bios*, the life of the actions does not reside in the external forms of the score but in the forces-tensions that live within it.

In theatre and dance, forms of life spring from two forces: structure and movement. The movement attacks the structure trying to destroy it: the structure defends itself trying to neutralise the movement. The two forces, equally powerful, have different characteristics. Those of movement are spontaneity, the dynamic and powerful capacity to expand and brevity. Those of the structure are elastic inertia, resistance and an ability to survive.

Actors/dancers nurture their *presence* between structure and movement, aware of the profound dissimilarity between seed and fruit, between the result of the process and the idea that originated it. Their presence is the sensorial dimension of a personal knowledge and a historical experience in a subliminal dialogue with the spectators' physical/archaic memory and the maze of their minds. ■

Translation: Judy Barba

Editorial



Photo montage with Richard Cieslak. Photo: Teatr-Laboratorium



Julia Varley

Learning to See

JTA - Journal of Theatre Anthropology no. 2 has grown into a big issue. Wanting to include historical references, interviews, discussions, actors' experiences, articles by people from other professions than theatre, recent events, news and letters has resulted in an issue well beyond the first expectations, also delaying the editorial process. The list of authors for *JTA - Journal of Theatre Anthropology* no. 3 entitled "Theatre Anthropologies" is already decided, making it difficult to move articles for later publication.

As in the first issue, also for the second, some 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* privileges 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. We have changed "masters" when used to designate teachers and artists, a habit coming from Spanish and Italian, but otherwise the language of the old articles has been maintained as written at the time.

"Learning to see" is the general title for the second issue of *JTA - Journal of Theatre Anthropology*. Theatre anthropology has taught scholars to see what is hidden in the documents, directors to see the potentialities of their actors, and actors and dancers to see what can inspire them in other forms. Learning to see has indicated ways to distinguish between the daily and the extra daily behaviour that enhances the energy necessary to be watched by spectators. Learning to see has pinpointed a pre-expressive level within the actors' work corresponding to the needs of the process before the result. In her



article, Cecilia Hopkins reminds how learning to see passes through the perception and thinking of the body. Nicola Savarese and Jacques Arpin insist on the importance of images to read reality and remember. During the ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) sessions learning to see has given the capacity to look beyond the forms and aesthetics to find recurrent principles that could be useful despite the genre and tradition one belongs to.

In Claudio Coloberti's interview, Franco Ruffini says: "Looking is not just an activity of the eyes. Gradually one discovers how this activity, which starts from the eyes, ends up in the mind, in the attention, in the ability to be focused on what you are looking at, even if you often do not understand what you are looking at. One mustn't get distracted by questions and the desire to always have a ready answer. To look passively, but at the same time actively. To look, letting what you look at trigger journeys of the mind, without these becoming digressions that remove you completely from the subject of your gaze: so, the ability to return to the gaze."

This second issue is divided in sections: **Learning to see, ISTA facts and tales, Reflections and experiences, Recurring principles**, and **News**.

In **Learning to see** we get an historical overview going back fifty years as the experience of the first ISTA sessions is still mentioned by various authors. It is recent history, but so much has changed since. The interviews to scholars who were at the first and second ISTA sessions reveal their sense of adventure as they entered unknown territory during the first attempts in the process of learning to see. For the scholars this meant letting go of the confidence provided by previous studies to rebecome beginners and accept their exhaustion. For the artists it meant mostly not understanding what was asked of them even if gratified by the seriousness with which their apprenticeship explanations were received. The interviews clarify how the details of the arrangement of sleeping quarters, meals, timetables, and the mixture of languages had an enormous impact on the research. Many authors underline the importance of their relationship with Eugenio Barba, and the international and intergenerational environment of ISTA. Discipline, self-discipline, acceptance or non-acceptance of authority, discussing concepts only in relation to the craft, created a separate island of research which did not follow the normal rules of social behaviour and dialogue.

In the first issue of *JTA - Journal of Theatre Anthropology* we concentrated on the origins, looking at Eugenio Barba's first definitions and the sessions held in Bonn in 1980 and Volterra in 1981. With the second issue, in the section **ISTA facts and tales**, we are moving to the experience emerging from ISTA sessions in Blois and Malakoff (France) in 1985, Holstebro (Denmark) in 1986 and Salento (Italy) in 1987.

The reproduced documents and the articles remind us of some essential turning points for the research in theatre anthropology. Following the luxurious month-long sessions in Bonn and Volterra, the third session in Blois was short and with fewer invited artists. It established ISTA as a continuative school that gathers periodically. The different organisers for the ISTA sessions belong to the theatre group environment, and this

influences the structure of the teaching and research. From the third session onwards, discoveries become firm experience and new terminology is confirmed and repeated during more organised and coherent work demonstrations. From 1986, with "The female role", the chosen themes are no longer just general investigations of the principles of scenic presence but confront specific questions of the craft.

In 1986, the same year of the ISTA session in Holstebro, The Magdalena Project, a network of women in contemporary theatre, started with an international festival in Cardiff directed by Jill Greenhalgh. The theme of the female role in theatre is talked about in both situations but with a different focus: at ISTA the demonstrations concentrate on the pre-expressive level, comparing soft and strong energies in both male and female performers, while at the Magdalena festival the question was women's autonomous theatre language. In the years to come the environments of ISTA and Magdalena develop in contiguity. Today many of the artists invited to ISTA/NG in 2021 of which Francesca Romana Rietti writes about in this issue when focussing on the younger generation of teachers, were first involved in Magdalena Project activities and only later were included in the ISTA artistic staff. As the heated discussions at ISTA 1986 concentrated on whether the female roles in the different traditions represented were submissive and anti-feminist, Sanjukta Panigrahi, Pei Yanling, Katsuko Azuma and Kahno Azuma - all women - presented soft and strong male roles, and soft and strong female roles. Previous convictions and prejudices made it difficult to see what was being presented.

In 1987, with "The actor's tradition and the spectator's identity", the relationship with the spectators and the practice of barter invades the technical aspects with the complexity of cultural customs anticipating what Eugenio Barba will sustain during the ISTA session in 1996 in Copenhagen: that theatre is the art of the spectator, and that the spectator is the essential aim of theatre. In 1987, Eugenio Barba starts rehearsing and presenting intercultural performances creating the first *Theatrum Mundi* Ensemble event and working on *Faust* in front of the ISTA participants. Narrating the experience of ISTA Salento and the process of *Faust* in his article, in relation to learning to see, Vincenzo Blasi discusses theatre as a place where one sees and performing events as something to see, while Franco Ruffini remembers that the theme of the ISTA in Brecon 1989 on the mental pre-expressive level was first talked about in Salento.

The section **Reflections and experiences** gathers articles that expand the understanding of theatre anthropology geographically and conceptually, ranging from rituals to internet, from science to intuition, from psychiatric sessions to feasts.

It is paradoxical that *absence* emerges as a theme when theatre anthropology usually deals with the *presence* on stage of actors/dancers/performers. Theatre builds *presence* so that the spectators see what is not there, stimulating their imagination and associations to give life to something that exists in their minds and memories. This *absence* assumes another level of meaning when Miguel Rubio writes of the character of a disappeared peasant searching for his absent body in Yuyachkani's performance *Adios Ayacucho* and when Bianca Mastrominico and Luciana Martuchelli reflect on theatre online and film. The covid pandemic has enriched our vocabulary with the word *presential* in opposition to *virtual* as many theatre practitioners resorted to meetings and performances online.

Film has become a technical tool for the stage while at the same time the principles of presence can be used in virtual reality and for film actors. Bianca Mastrominico writes: "Working through digital platforms, the remoteness of the performer-spectator interaction establishes *presence* through what is experienced and perceived as *absence*. This apparent paradox is embedded in the digital encounter and requires experimenting with principles and working techniques that enable performers to embody 'essence through absence' in the digital realm".

While Leonardo Mancini explores Eugenio Barba's interest for science and his meetings with scientists of different fields during the 1980s which are at the root of his conception of theatre anthropology, Miguel Rubio and Mette Bovin search for the principles of theatre anthropology in ancient rituals, religious practices, village feasts and dances in the Andes of Peru and the African Sahel.

Often theatre anthropology is confused with cultural anthropology, especially when Odin Teatret's travels to places without theatre are placed side by side with ISTA's field of research. In 1986 at the ISTA session in Holstebro, Eugenio Barba insists on the fact that theatre anthropology has nothing to do either with the application of paradigms from cultural anthropology to theatre, nor with the study of performative phenomena from those cultures which are normally the object of study by cultural anthropologists and ethnologists. Theatre anthropology is the study of the human being in a situation of organised representation.

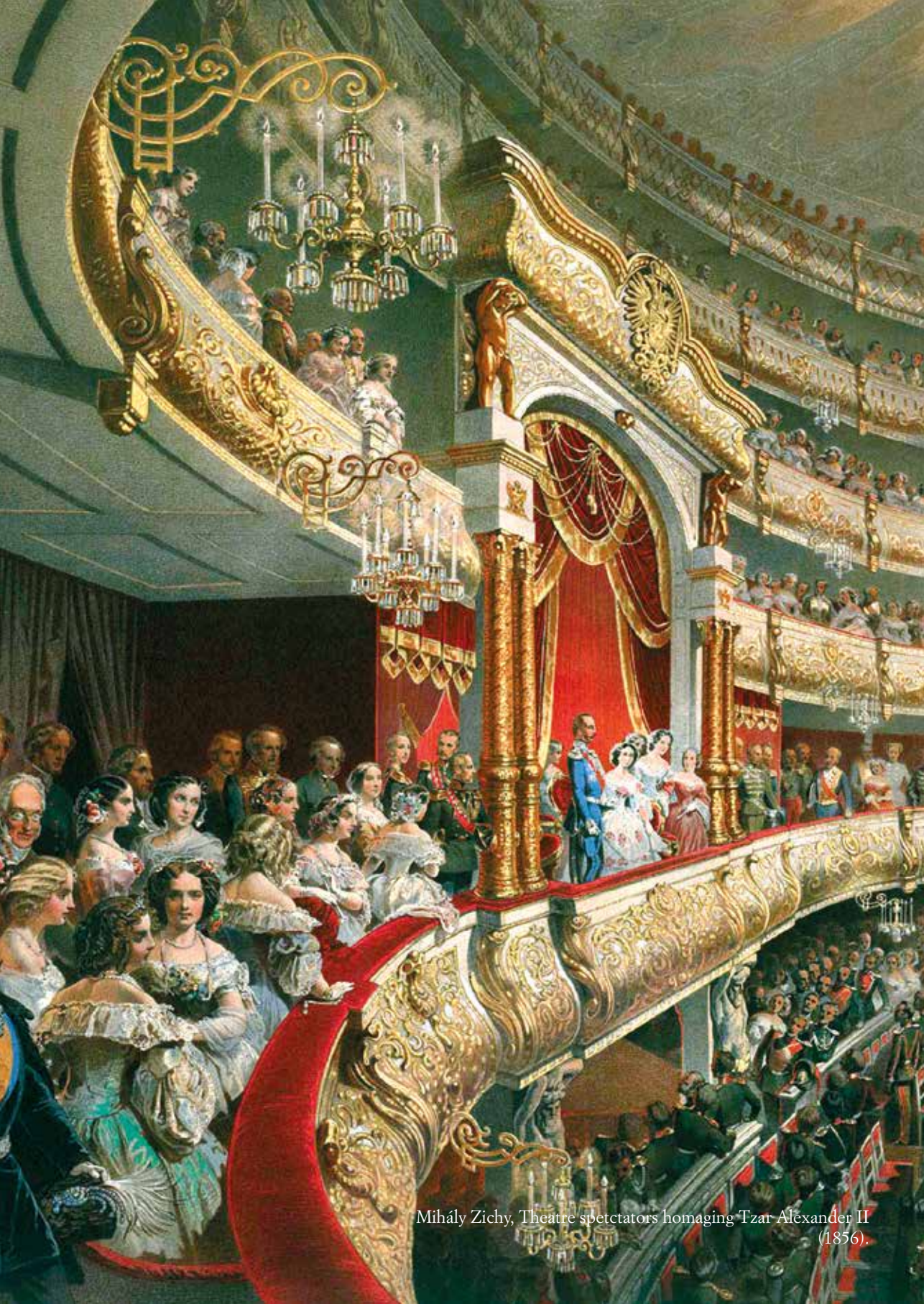
Miguel Rubio's and Mette Bovin's articles refer to dance and shamanistic rituals as organised representation which can enrich the contemporary theatre experience with the practice of modulation of energy, in the capacity to evoke the dead and the close relationship with nature often found in traditional forms of dance and music. This reminds me of how Augusto Omolu (ISTA teacher of the Afro-Brazilian Orixá tradition) would explain that the value of his dances was embedded in the energy employed and independent from the spirituality that concerned onlookers wanted to impose on what they saw. Learning to see also gives the capacity to distinguish the level of organisation we are dealing with when we look at performances, rituals or dances. Here the scientific approach described by Leonardo Mancini meets Miguel Rubio's and Mette Bovin's points of view.

Recurring principles is a section devoted to actors/dancers. In *JTA* no. 2 Claudia Contin Arlecchino presents her journey with Commedia dell'Arte, and the traditional nô actor Akira Matsui in an interview by Jonah Salz tells of his introduction to theatre anthropology. Akira Matsui gives an insight in Eugenio Barba's work as a director who collaborating with artists of different nationalities, traditions and genres would nevertheless insist on respecting the original forms and on avoiding experimentation to adapt to the contemporary themes. Francesca Romana Rietti presents Kapila Venu, a Koodiyattam and Mohiniyattam performer who came to ISTA for the first time in Favignana, Italy, in 2021 and had to learn to teach again. Photographs, which help illustrate the actors' words, enrich this section. The photographs which accompany Claudia Contin Arlecchino's article make technical examples of extra-daily body positions for exercises and characters, while Francesco Galli's images of the 16th ISTA/NG session show situations

that range from practical classes to demonstrations, from exchanges between participants to portraits. For the actors/dancers the work on presence is not only a technical question but it acquires a political meaning, learning not only to see but also to speak an autonomous language and exist.

At the end, the **News** section includes articles from places where theatre anthropology is part of the practice of theatre groups. There are examples of activities in Greece, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Malaysia and Italy. Many of the articles explain the historical process leading up to more recent events. For example, we read how theatre anthropology was first introduced in Brazil when Odin Teatret, Teatro tascabile di Bergamo, and Teatro Potlach where on tour there in the early 1980s. It was in those years that theatre anthropology became an essential tool for local theatre groups, later becoming a regular course at many universities. Jaime Soriano at first met theatre anthropology through his lengthy collaboration with Jerzy Grotowski, to then organise various activities with Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret in Mexico. **News** also includes letters to the *Journal of Theatre Anthropology*, and a short biographic information about the authors of the articles.

We look forward to hearing comments and suggestions from the readers and contributors while working on the third issue with the title "Theatre Anthropologies". ■



Mihály Zichy, Theatre spectators homaging Tzar Alexander II (1856).

Nicola Savarese

The Objectivity of Seeing

Abstract: Nicola Savarese, Eugenio Barba's collaborator for many years, describes the partnership that left the most tangible sign in the elaboration of two books: *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (1982) and *The Five Continents of Theatre. Facts and Legends of the Actor's Material Culture* (2018). In narrating the complex and long gestation of the two books, Savarese points out how the need to have richly illustrated books gradually emerged: a wide choice of images build a convincing visual discourse alongside the words. The effective examples given here underline how the power of images allow readers of theatre history books to see the objective aspect of the subjects dealt with.

Keywords: *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*; *The Five Continents of Theatre*; *Need for visual documentation in theatre essays*; *Illustrated theatre books*; *Barba-Savarese collaboration*

*An image has a life and energy of its own that only an observer can give to it.
It is the attentive observer who gives or takes away meaning from an image.*

Since 1974, the year in which our friendship began, Eugenio Barba and I have collaborated in many situations: in various international tours of Odin Teatret, in ISTA sessions from the beginnings, and in encounters of the University of Eurasian Theatre. But without doubt the most important occasions have been our joint creation of two books: *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* and *The Five Continents of Theatre. Facts and Legends about the Material Culture of the Actor*. During the creation and revision of these two volumes, which took years and years, we learned *how* to show readers the *objective aspect* of the topics covered, an aspect that does not depend on individual interpretation but is a fact. To achieve this result we used countless images, hunted down and found or expressly created, and in all cases indispensable.

To understand this essential aspect of the two books, we must tell the story of our collaboration, the result of determined research, but also of random discoveries, of calculation and of serendipity, the only method that cannot be decided in advance, but that ensures a spontaneous lightness in disseminating complex ideas.

Breaking the rules

I shall begin with the first book: *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*. In spring 1980, Eugenio Barba wrote to me to explain that he could



not accede to my request to attend the first session of ISTA, the International School of Theatre Anthropology, in Bonn the following autumn, because as director of a young theatre group I did not have enough experience. Nor could I go there as a scholar, because I had just become a university researcher and my studies were not specialised enough to be part of the international scientific team of that school which was about to open.

However, added Barba, “since rules exist to be broken, you won’t come as Eisenstein [I had made some videos for Odin Teatret in Sardinia in 1975], but you will be able to participate as Cartier-Bresson.” I had to equip myself with a camera and a tape recorder and I would have to take pictures of what happened every day in the school and follow Eugenio, recording his discussions with teachers, directors, scholars and participants. Then record the work demonstrations, the collective sessions, and the master classes. In short, everything that took place in the form of images and words.

At the time, none of us anticipated that ISTA would have many further sessions in many other countries. I had no idea that I would not only follow all the subsequent sessions, but that I would also write a book together with Barba using many of the photos and texts collected. A successful book that, published several times in numerous languages (listed at the end of this article), is still in demand for translation and publication more than thirty years after the first edition. Are rules made to be broken? Let us follow the story of the many infringements.

What happened at the ISTA session in Bonn (1-31 October 1980), which lasted a month and then moved for four weeks to Holstebro (Denmark), Porsgrunn (Norway) and Stockholm (Sweden)? Barba laid the foundations of the discipline, coining the key terms of theatre anthropology such as pre-expressivity, daily and extra-daily techniques, and recurring principles. We were all amazed by the multiple intercultural links and convergences - never before noticed - between the body techniques of actors from differing geographical and historical origins.

Some behaviours common to theatre traditions very different in terms of history and geography left us literally speechless. The artists invited by Barba - Sanjukta Panigrahi (Indian odissi dancer), I Made Pasek Tempo (Balinese topeng actor), Katsuko Azuma (Japanese buyo dancer), Lin Chun-Hui (young Chinese Opera actress) and her teacher Tsao Chun-Lin - were patient masters, very generous with the school participants. Perhaps they were a little perplexed by the curiosity of Westerners, but they gave incisive explanations on preparation for their profession and on what steps they had taken since the “first day” of apprenticeship with their masters. Eugenio and his group of scholars - Fabrizio Cruciani, Ferdinando Taviani, Franco Ruffini, Ugo Volli, Jean-Marie Pradier and Moriaki Watanabe - all had the impression that these expert masters allowed themselves, for the first time, to reflect on body techniques based on very personal memories.

I collected numerous audiocassettes containing everything Barba said, beginning at six in the morning when he met with the directors, until the evening after dinner when he had the last meetings with the scientific team. I recorded everything he said, usually in English, French or Spanish, including the consecutive translation. I also recorded the lectures of the teachers and their work demonstrations, with Eugenio’s questions and his final remarks. This was a thankless task because, as I was using a recorder with

built-in microphone, questions from afar and words spoken in totally foreign languages (including Japanese, Chinese and Balinese) were lost. There was often background noise and there was often an unbridgeable gap between the people conversing. I could not play back hours and hours of material immediately and so I formed the habit of writing a number on each tape and, in a notebook, beside the number, some personal notes. Needless to say, often these brief notes were not so much a guide to the content of the tape as the only available record of the unattainable material contained within. “A late evening in the future. Krapp’s den [...] on the table, a tape-recorder with microphone and a number of cardboard boxes containing reels of recorded tapes.”

At first I was also unsuccessful with the photographs. ISTA’s location in Bonn was a technical-scientific school, closed for the holidays. In the courtyard there were prefabricated buildings that had become the ‘homes’ of the ISTA teachers. The participants slept in classrooms on the second floor. The third floor accommodated the ‘scientific staff’, the scholars. The classrooms on the first floor were used by the teachers when working with participants. In the chemistry labs we had set up, for the Asian artists and the scientific staff, a do-it-yourself kitchen that worked well enough for daily meals. Everything was necessarily spartan: this was not a holiday and the climate of austerity desired by Eugenio was good for work and favoured concentration. But it was terrible for images! It was very difficult to position subjects. Every photo always included either a blackboard, or a stack of chairs and school desks, sometimes, metal lockers, other times, a long row of coat hooks, or a sink.

The large gym, intended for plenary training sessions and work demonstrations, was slightly better. But even there, the climbing frames, wall bars, poles and basketball hoops conveyed an idea of gymnastics quite foreign to artistic work, and to actors’ training in particular. I was more fortunate during evening performances given to the Bonn public in a real theatre: not only did the masters shimmer in their elaborate traditional costumes, but also there was good lighting.

At the end of this first session of ISTA I found myself with many photographs, especially colour ones. There was a lot of material, but I was not (and am not) a professional photographer. I was therefore extremely doubtful about handing over to Eugenio those photographs, which were of little use for making information folders for journalists or visiting scholars. A selection of the photos taken in Bonn appeared as “notes from a diary” (*caméra crayon*) in a book about ISTA Bonn edited by Franco Ruffini.¹

The turning point

The breakthrough regarding the problem of photos took place at the next ISTA in Volterra in 1981, which lasted two months (5 August-7 October).² Here, I had more time to take the photos I wanted. Here too, the big problem was the backgrounds. We lived and worked in an old convent that had been a boarding school. There were large

1. Franco Ruffini (a cura di) *La scuola degli attori. Rapporti della prima sessione dell'ISTA*, La casa Usher, Firenze, 1981.

2. Organised by Roberto Bacci, Centro per la Ricerca e la Sperimentazione teatrale, Pontedera.

communal spaces, a small theatre even, but the classrooms had peeling walls, horrible concrete floors and, above all, were poorly lit, even under electrical lighting. Here too, old radiators and tall windows everywhere conferred a gloomy atmosphere, somewhat suggestive of confinement.

At the same time, large courtyards adjacent to the leafy garden provided a breathing space for the group of one hundred participants, who were obliged, in addition to shifts of physical work and practical learning, to take turns cleaning all personal and communal spaces (including toilets) and preparing meals for everyone in the kitchens. The sessions of ISTA were extremely proud of their total self-sufficiency and of the strict rules applied to communal life - a practice that reminded me of the discipline of Monte Verità in Ascona or of the Goetheanum of Dornach. However, in Volterra too, one detail often ruined the photos: the grey military blankets used to seat participants on the ground, or to hastily cover gratings, radiators and old doors. I remember the huge difficulty I had when Dario Fo came to talk about improvisation, soon slipping into extracts taken from his performances. The lights were low and the military blankets, clearly recognisable, always popped up in the foreground beside the animated actor.

But in this session of ISTA I also managed to take some decent photos, partly because many sessions took place outdoors in a garden, and also because I asked the teachers to devote some of their time for photography without spectators. Sanjukta Panigrahi put on a beautiful sari to show me the mudra and poses of odissi dance, while Kosuke Nomura, a kyogen actor, came in jeans and T-shirt, as did little Jas, a Balinese girl dancer. These demonstrations in contemporary clothes permitted a more immediate, less oppressive comprehension of their body technique. The “dance of opposites” and the tensions of their bodies were much more evident than with the traditional costume covering the secret of their bodies in action. The gliding walk of Kosuke, the walk of nô and kyogen, performed without kimono, clearly showed the slightly bent knees that favoured the readiness of the body. Jas’s feet, not covered by a costume, showed the big toe very raised up with respect to the sole flat on the ground, testifying to the toe’s function as tie rod for the tension of the whole body.

Ingemar Lindh, mime artist of the Decroux school, had been invited to ISTA and began to explain meticulously the exercises of *déséquilibre* invented by his teacher. He promised me photos (which he faithfully sent me) of Decroux himself when he had visited Sweden to teach Lindh’s group. Ingemar was interested in my work and showed me art books whose illustrations of sculptures and paintings helped him to draw poses and movements of modern mime. I may say that I also learned from Ingemar to look at art history as a great repository of postures, compositions of gestures and attitudes of human bodies. So I was happy to give Frank Camilleri the excellent photos of Ingemar (Table 1) for his book on the deceased master of mime.³

In Volterra there were a very few sessions that I could film using a tripod and a small motor applied to the camera, which accentuated a “Muybridge effect” on the sequences. But these were always short sessions that the artists and I carved out from our brief afternoon rest. Overall, the images were austere, *artistically* not very striking,

3. Frank Camilleri, *Ingemar Lindh's Stepping Stones*, Holstebro-Malta-Wrocław, Icarus Publishing House, 2010.

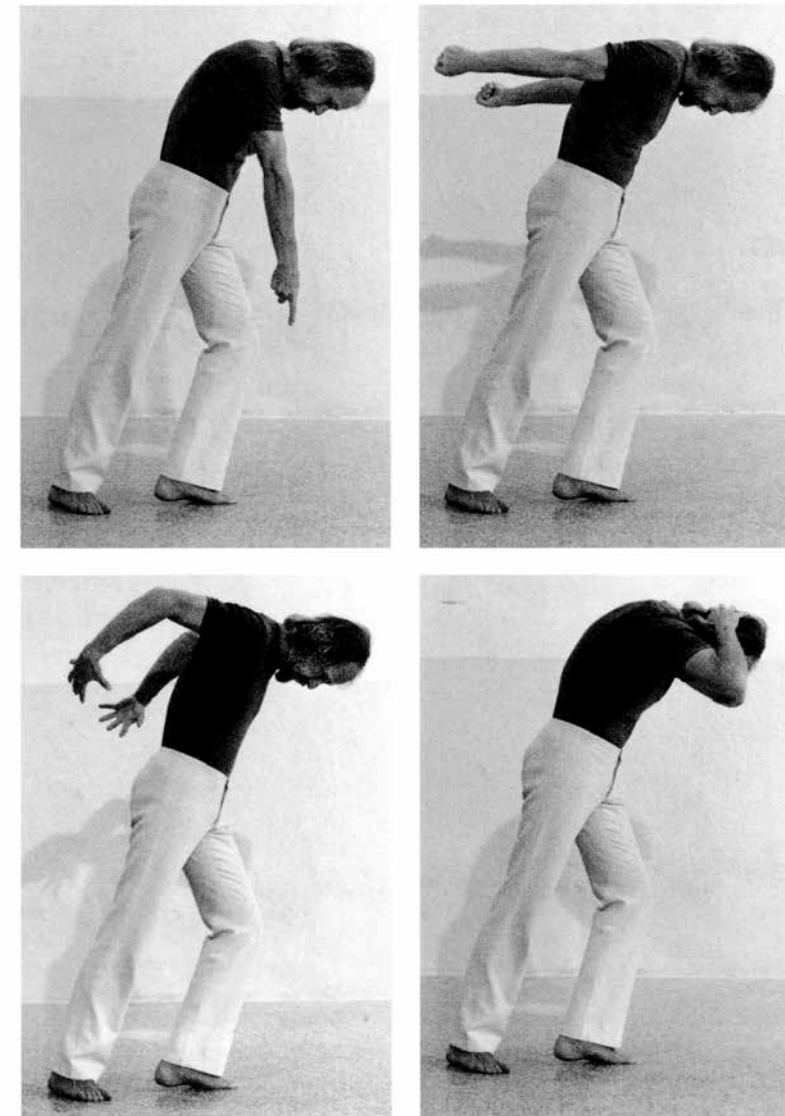


Table 1. Ingemar Lindh

so much so that Eugenio hired another professional photographer for the images to be distributed to journalists. However, it was during this session in Volterra that I realised how effectively my sequences illustrated the new and, basically, elementary principles of theatre anthropology. I did not have my archive of images with me (they were not yet digitised) but I was sure I could find many illustrations from other eras and other countries to juxtapose with my sequences, to show the great new discovery of ISTA: the transversality of body techniques.

I have always loved ‘scraps’ and am an inveterate collector of all kinds of images (postcards, stamps, labels, pages torn from books and newspapers, etc.). As an adult I continued to collect images relating exclusively to ‘theatre’, images from newspapers and magazines, obtained from my own photos, from press clippings, from stage photos, from film frames, from pages of antique books. I also enjoyed cataloguing images and making compositions in the style of *Mnemosyne*, without yet knowing anything about Warburg. Nothing equal to his pictures - just some good matches, suggested recurrences, simply ideas for some surprising comparisons.

I remind the reader that, in the early 1980s, computers were rare and Internet had yet to appear. Search engines (for texts and images) were very far off (they arrived from 1998 onwards). Nowadays we could not even imagine a world without these tools, but then, for visual documentation we used photocopies, microfilm or photos of other photos: physical material, which required folders and binders. It was the golden age of videotapes, of miles of tapes and piles of boxes. These were the legendary days of perfect recording of facts, and when moving an archive was a nightmare! So, this time, I would not have made the mistake of accumulating vast, but then unmanageable documentation. I had to restrict myself not only in *collecting* the documentation but also in immediately *selecting* the collected materials, to integrate with the world I already had in mind.

Images that speak

Theatre anthropology, this new, multicultural discipline, seemed to lend itself well to the use of simple questions. It was clear, because stated by Barba from the start, that in theatre anthropology ‘cultural’ considerations about actors and dancers were to be excluded. He was only interested in the behaviour on stage of the actor’s body, over and above historical studies on theatres, society and their organisation. For those like me who came directly from historical studies on the theatre and were used to contextualising everything, it was a real shock. But at the same time, I appreciated the ‘postmodern’ current that juxtaposed past and recent forms, such as those of centuries-old *nô* theatre with Chinese opera or classical ballet. The revelation that biomechanics showed surprising affinities with Indian classical dances or with kabuki was a discovery that provoked not embarrassment, but encouragement to continue.

Thus it was that, towards the end of the Volterra session, I came up with the idea of a book with my photographs. I did not yet know how to define its outcome, but I was clear on the direction to follow: a book, *highly illustrated*, on theatre anthropology. I began to make concepts. In Volterra in 1981 I did not have my books and, above all, I did not have my ‘scraps’, so I was working completely from memory regarding the illustrations in my collection. It is very important to understand this mental work because then there was no possibility of accessing Internet, clicking on a word and immediately seeing a list of texts and images from which to select what was of interest. This entire task was taking place in my mind, in my memories as an archivist and a collector of ‘scraps’.

During the last period in Volterra I put forward the proposal of a book on theatre anthropology - essentially illustrated, in which all members of the scientific staff could

participate. The scholars of the scientific staff held a short daily meeting and a slightly more detailed weekly one in which we informed Eugenio about our feelings, our reflections on work carried out and proposed ideas for follow-up. There was no lack of suggestions for future studies and research projects, individual and collective. Theatre anthropology had opened up an unexplored vista, that of the “techniques of the actor”, as secret as they were generally ignored by most theatre studies. Like laboratory scientists we spent entire days following the training sessions of teachers and participants, their classes and their demonstrations. We were often overcome by tiredness: the intense physical work of an actor induces a sort of ‘mirror fatigue’ in the spectator. But I was certain of being at the heart of theatre research and it was very encouraging.

So during one of the weekly meetings I came out with the idea of the illustrated book, which would put together the work of my photographs from Bonn and Volterra (the series dedicated to various techniques, images of performances and archive images to be sought out), some texts that Barba was gradually working on, and written analyses left by some guest scholars during their visits. The whole scientific staff could join in with further comments and reflections.

Faced with this project, however, my companions were perplexed. The discussion that came out of it led everyone to the same conclusions: it is very difficult to use images and certain things can only be told in words. Fabrizio Cruciani, expert in the field of studies on schools and laboratories, explained why images are difficult to manage in theatre pedagogy: books on theatre pedagogy had always ‘narrated’ events and used illustrations sparingly. Photographic images might look like ‘recipes’, being misinterpreted as not purely an example, but a practice to be followed and imitated. Perhaps I did not emphasise sufficiently that the images would themselves be ‘text’ and not simply embellishment of the book. In conclusion, for my own good, everyone wanted to dissuade me.

The only one who did not discourage me, because on principle he never has, was Eugenio, who said, “Nicola go ahead, since you feel like doing it. Do the work and then we’ll see what comes of it.” So I returned from Volterra very enthusiastic about the idea of working with all the photographs taken and with the images in my collection.

While I was preparing for this task in winter 1981 (I was then teaching at the University of Lecce), I received a phone call from Claudio Meldolesi, a professor at the University of Bologna, with a proposal. A friend of his, lecturer in Italian at the University of Kyoto, was looking for a replacement because he absolutely had to return to Italy. “I immediately thought of you,” Claudio said. “Of course you go there as an Italian teacher, but in fact you will be in Japan and you will be able to see performances, meet actors and study your Orient as you desire.” Within a few months I found myself catapulted to Kyoto, with a not too demanding university job (teaching Italian to a few people, art historians and students who wanted to become opera singers) and a few ‘months off’ in front of me.

I brought from Italy the ISTA material - photographs, a part of the archive, some books - but I certainly could not bring my entire library. Paradoxically, this lack of sources pushed me to go to Japanese libraries to look for books that I could not read but whose illustrations I could scroll through. Having limited material at my disposal

FEET

Microcosm, macrocosm

All the principles of extra-daily technique, as well as what we have defined as the actor's pre-expressivity (cf. *Pre-expressivity*), can be found in the Balinese and Kathakali performer's basic foot position (ill.1):

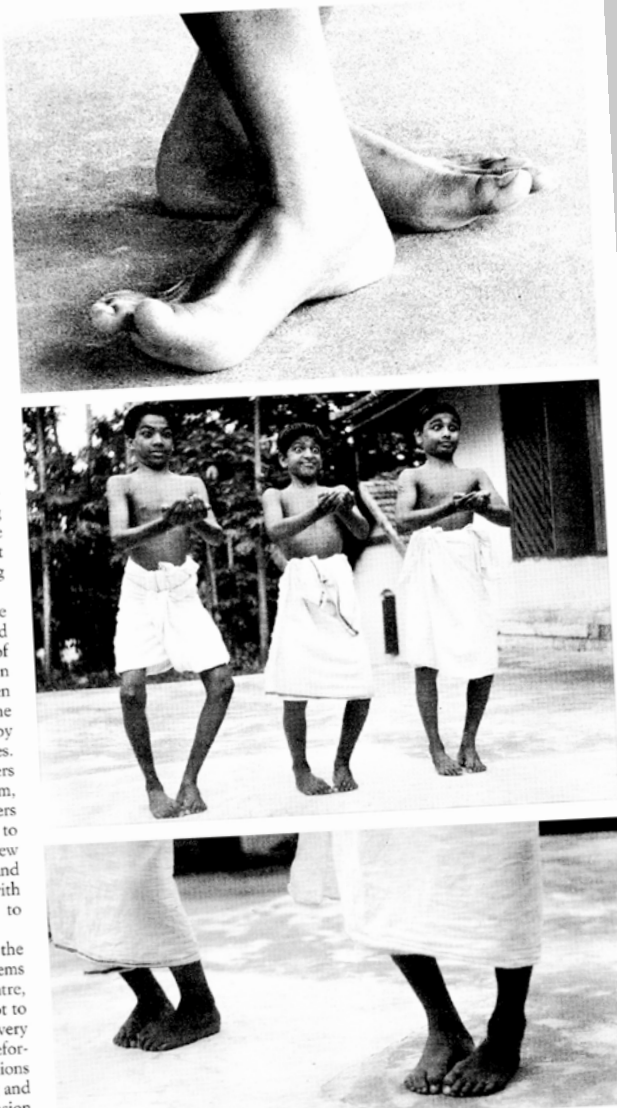
- the alteration of balance;
- the opposition of directions;
- the destruction of the weight and force of inertia by means of the play of *keras* and *manis* tensions (cf. *Energy*) which recreate an equivalent to the tensions of the big toe in daily life.

The foot exemplifies a particular type of life, as if in a microcosm. The life which is continuously flowing through the bodies of newborn babies is clearly seen mirrored in the constant movements of their toes. The foot position taken by the Balinese and Indian performer seems to suggest that he is trying to discover an equivalent to the life he had as a newborn child, when the foot was not acculturated by a way of walking and by shoes.

It is, however, interesting to note how this life has been reconstructed by means of a new acculturation of the foot. It is said that the modern dance revolution was born when dancers began to dance barefoot. The foot's freedom was proclaimed by the abandonment of stiff satin shoes. And so it is: all Indian dancers and actors (kathakali, bharatanatyam, odissi) perform barefoot, as do dancers in south-east Asia from Cambodia to Indonesia. With the exception of a few specific rôles, the feet of Japanese and Chinese actors are covered only with special stockings that allow them to slide their feet.

But we should not be misled by the fact that the bare foot at first seems 'free': in all forms of codified theatre, the bare foot is constrained to adapt to deforming positions as if wearing very particular kinds of shoes. These deformations of the foot result in variations of balance, special ways of walking and the maintenance of a different tension in the entire body.

Whether deformed by special shoes or left free, the feet determine the body's tone and its dynamic in space.



1. (top) Basic foot position in Balinese dance: notice the tension in the big toe, tensed upwards.
2-3. (centre and bottom) Basic foot position in kathakali: notice how the toes are turned in and how the weight is supported on the outside edges of the foot.

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Table 2. Feet section

helped me focus on the task and compose small units of topics. Slowly, some sections of the book took shape. My stay in Japan - as Georges Banu later wrote to me - had given the book "a refined quality". Perhaps. But at the time I was struggling with a task much more difficult than just graphics: that of organising the material in a coherent way. I still had to start from somewhere and reach a conclusion, as in all well conceived books. One usually starts by dividing the material into chapters, but when I did this, the real problem emerged.

If I was talking about one topic, for example *Balance*, this topic also featured in other chapters, for example, in ways of walking and so in the section that I had called *Feet* (Table 2).

How much space did I have to give to *Balance* as a separate subject, with respect to the rest of the topics where the problem of balance was also mentioned? And if most of the topics were connected to each other, that is, they were circular, what was the "first chapter"? Which subject should be preparatory to the others? I couldn't work it out, because every time I tried to put topics in order, something essential had either been previously mentioned or was strongly linked to something that came after. Moving it created further confusion. I had to find a way to show this circularity, while respecting what is inescapable in a book: a consecutive order. You cannot make a round book. I forged ahead with disparate parts, increasingly numerous, and postponed the thorny question of their final composition.

The inspiration of Voltaire

Back in Italy, putting my library in order, Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*⁴ came to hand. When I feel like clearing my head, I usually take up some weighty tome. It absorbs me and in the meantime my mind is cleared and refreshed. Reading the *Philosophical Dictionary* I realised that I had found the solution to my problem. As in the *Encyclopédie*, Voltaire had put together a few essential entries, some written by him, others by friends. He had also used pages taken from works already in print. This was not a treatise on philosophy but a practical ideological dictionary with a few essential entries, a hymn to Enlightenment. The entries are in alphabetical order. You can read the book from beginning to end or vice versa, and nothing prevents you from starting wherever you want.

So I came up with the idea of "a dictionary of theatre anthropology" that had a few entries, with no priority topic. Eugenio's essay *Antropologia Teatrale* (Theatre Anthropology in Italian), the only one that really had to come first, by virtue of its "A" came to be placed naturally at the beginning of the Italian version. The decision was made! At this point the dictionary entries slid magically into alphabetical order - *Apprenticeship*, *Balance*, *Dilation*, *Drama*, *Energy*... - with numerous internal cross references. The book, if not round, was at least circular.

With these materials I went to Eugenio, to Holstebro in Denmark. Eugenio was instantly struck by the lay-out and we decided to go over all the materials, integrating

4. Voltaire, *Dizionario filosofico*, edited by M. Bonfantini, Milan, Mondadori, 1968.

them with his additions and observations. After all, theatre anthropology was his idea and it was right that the materials should be finally reviewed from his point of view. I lived at Eugenio's house. In the morning he went to the theatre for his work as stage and managing director. In the evening he came home and before dinner we spent a couple of hours together in his study, working on the typed notes of the various entries of the dictionary. He had also already prepared a folder with illustrations that he wanted to include, and he looked for others right away on his bookshelves. Sometimes he dictated to me some text or caption, which I then reworked for the following day.

Working with Eugenio was great fun for various reasons. First, he had immediately understood that it was a question of making a 'scrap album'. Starting from the 'scraps', beside the text that I had already written or that we were rewriting, a parallel, visual discourse developed. Those images coming from different cultures, geographies, eras and stories, showed that actors have always worked on the techniques of the body, that they have always been inspired by a few "recurring principles", the same ones that Eugenio had identified as the foundations of theatre anthropology. It was clear that ISTA was primarily intended as a "school of the gaze", that is, a way of seeing, a new way of seeing the actor's work. Secondly, Eugenio began to work exactly as in his role as director-composer: that is, he took the 'materials' (text and images), dismembered them, reduced them, refined them, multiplied them, cut them out and added new ones, until we obtained the best. Unless we changed our mind. This collaboration with Eugenio was therefore fundamental for the outcome of the book, which came out at the end of 1983 titled *Anatomia del teatro. Un dizionario di antropologia teatrale*, with an exemplary layout done by young graphic designer, Andrea Rauch.

In December 1983 in Montepulciano, at the home of Claudio Meldolesi, I met up with Eugenio, and my companions from ISTA Volterra - Fabrizio Cruciani, Franco Ruffini, Nando Taviani and Ugo Volli. This became a regular encounter to understand where Eugenio - and we with him - was going with theatre anthropology. I brought along the book fresh off the press, which naturally attracted attention, and Ugo Volli immediately said that it clearly demonstrated an 'international profile'. This and other compliments from colleagues on the success of the text-illustration ratio were the reward for our vast and hard work. But this was just the beginning. Almost immediately a French edition was proposed⁵ and I had to return to work to change the order of the entries according to the new language and to rearrange the multiple references within the illustrations. I met with Eugenio and Nando Taviani in Rome to make some additions and an overhaul. I remember Nando was strongly opposed to the alphabetical order: a false and artificial order, he said, that did not do justice to the whole. We set to work on inventing a new order but retained the word "dictionary" in the title.

The first thing French readers said was: "Why did you abandon the dictionary format and this French edition has a weird index?" The architecture of the alphabetical order, although artificial, had not been a random choice. It had significance for the circularity of the contents. We agreed with Eugenio that we had made a mistake and went back to

the alphabetical dictionary. Meanwhile, the book was getting requests for translations. So another problem arose. Organising translations into the various languages (Spanish, English and Japanese to begin with) meant changing the order of the dictionary entries. It was also necessary to change the numbering of the 800 illustrations that, by moving page, took on a new numbering. For this reason, the criterion of progressive numbers for images was soon abandoned. Instead of "See figure no. 45" we chose the more flexible "See figure on p. 30, top right". This job took time. Every publisher wanted to get into print fast and this meant, without digital layout software, which did not exist at the time, committing to a gruelling manual task.

A book-telescope

With Eugenio we found an unspoken pact: he would deal with the complex contractual agreements, and I would deal with the technical aspects, how to put together the translated texts for sending to the new publisher on floppy disks, and above all how to collect the 'transparencies' of the illustrations. The 'transparencies', i.e., the transparent films printed with the illustrations, after being used for the book, were disassembled and preserved for re-use in subsequent printing. But it was not an easy operation - irritating traces of glue often remained on transparencies, making them stick to each other, with the risk of them becoming useless. In a normal process, these graphic tasks would be done by a publisher's technical staff. Eugenio and I had decided to favour new publishing firms or small university publishers, often linked to theatre groups, in order to offer them an opportunity and also to maintain affordable prices for the volume. Providing the publisher with good material favoured the success of a good edition.

Given all the above (never again, a book in alphabetical order!), it should be remembered that the title *The Secret Art of the Performer*, inaugurated with the Mexican edition of 1990, slowly retreated to second place on the cover of the book, while its subtitle *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* came to the fore. Publishers and commentators, in fact, continued to point out that it was precisely the dictionary formula that gave the book objectivity and ease of reading. The concept of a 'circular book' remained advantageous, too, when translating into other languages. The curse of redoing the layout every time, however, remained.

We were struck by the comments. The book presented readers with an unusual aspect: it brought together texts and images as two independent collaborating factors. The illustrations were not simply decorative but an authentic visual text, in parallel with the words. In heterogeneous material such as the subjects of theatre anthropology, words and images interacted creating effective short circuits. This ranging across history and geography was one of the qualities of the book most appreciated by students and theatre scholars. They could look for analogies and convergences in the horizon of their experiences to be used in their practical work, as needed. American writer Howard Rheingold wrote in his blog:

5. Eugenio Barba - Nicola Savarese: *Anatomie de l'acteur*, Bouffonneries Contrastes, Cazilhac et Zeami Libri, Rome, 1985. The initiative had come from Patrick Pezin in collaboration with Luca Ruzza.

This book is a treasure house of astonishing and useful lore about how performers perform, everywhere in the world, illustrated by a profusion of equally astonishing and useful photographs and drawings. Mudras, minuets, masks, ritual, biomechanics, dramaturgy, rhythm, staging, improv, semiotics, footwork, make-up, choreography, mythology and other phenomena that reflect different aspects of the full spectrum of human performance are examined with attention to spiritual, communicative, social, and aesthetic meanings of each variety of performative behavior. This book is a vibrant example of what anthropologist Clifford Geertz means by *thick description*.⁶

Of course the dictionary also met with contrasting opinions: because it strove for universality, it appeared as an attempt to hegemonise theatre culture. I beg to differ. Theatre anthropology is not a discipline that Barba invented from scratch but a *way of seeing*, and yes, an unprecedented school of the gaze. Barba *observes* that all theatre cultures have similar behaviours when they must interest the spectator and hold his attention. When, that is, they carry out that fundamental task of theatre, which is: do not bore the public. The great theatre traditions, in the West as in the East, have over time compiled a series of behaviours for actors to make their stage presence more interesting and more alive. The solutions are similar in *all* cultures. These are not 'inventions' by Barba to hegemonise theatre culture. They are observations coming from his long 'activity' of careful onlooker and which, through ISTA, he wants to transmit to new actors, to give them a point of origin.

The dictionary of theatre anthropology, with its collection of evidence from different eras and geographies, functions as a telescope to bring distant actors closer to their common problems. Subsequent editions of the dictionary in the 1990s contained new entries, and a further overhaul of existing ones, with new images and new texts. So much so, that no edition is the same as another. The book was a living, moving affair, just as the ISTA community continued to meet, addressing new topics in further sessions.

Over time we heard that the dictionary had been adopted in theatre schools and universities, that it had been taken up by individual students and theatre groups, by scholars of theatre and even of art history. The effects are still being felt. Even today, forty years after its first edition, there are requests for translation and publication of the dictionary. An affordable edition in Cuba, an edition in Taiwan, two in Turkey; we have reached the fourth edition in English, translated into Portuguese two editions for Brazil, and six in Spanish (three in Mexico, one in Peru, one in Spain and one in Argentina). In European languages, translations in Polish, Czech, Serbian, Greek, Russian, Romanian and Hungarian (full list below). Even the Sultan of Bahrain asked to have it translated into Arabic, which he did (Miracle Publishing) to create a collection of ten books dedicated to ten fields of knowledge.

Although it is widely disseminated, I have only a vague idea of how the book is materially circulated. I remember one episode that perturbed me. I was in the Casa del Teatro in Cuba, where I had given a lecture. I was approached by a small girl, skinny, in a very cheap dress. She had a bundle of worn sheets under her arm and put them in

front of me. They were photocopies of the dictionary in Spanish, practically illegible, faded and worn. The girl asked me if I could sign them. My reaction was one of emotion and sadness. I said I would send her a copy of the book, but she said, "No, you can't send it. They block these shipments and steal them. It will never reach me." She was an actress in a small theatre group in a village to the east of the island, and she had got these photocopies from people who had spent their time making photocopies of photocopies.

This encounter made me realise that around the popularity of the dictionary existed a legend that did not depend on the authors. It was a force that surrounds talismanic books. But the actors' attention to the dictionary was not exaggerated. One of the secrets of the dictionary is the fact that it can be given into the hands of a single individual, self-taught (for lack of schooling, more often by choice) who can delve into it, extracting the content that is most useful for him, that can help his apprenticeship. Eugenio has paid particular care to this aspect and has always chosen plain language, unlikely to be misinterpreted. As might be expected of a self-taught teacher for the self-taught.

Perhaps this is also why the American *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* wrote: "This book on acting techniques is the most important after the publication of *Towards a Poor Theatre* by Jerzy Grotowski." This statement made me smile, because, as is well known, *Towards a Poor Theatre* is a work of which Barba was not only the first publisher, but also a very attentive and appreciated editor.⁷ And this reveals an aspect that is perhaps little known but certainly of interest. Barba is not only a writer capable of gripping his readers, who has used this ability in his life as another branch of his theatrical activity, but he is also a formidable editor, at one and the same time 'unforgiving scissors' and accomplished visualiser. As soon as Odin settled in Holstebro, Barba founded a journal, published from 1965 to 1974, in the Inter-Scandinavian area: *TTT - Teatrets Teori og Teknikk*. This publication had great influence in theatrical circles, already in turmoil in the '60s, and Barba was its attentive translator and editor. He has never stopped practicing this editorial skill on his own writing, as on those of others who submit their works to him. Still today - and the publication of *JTA-Journal of Theatre Anthropology* proves it - this is an aspect of Eugenio's teaching activity that is part of his professionalism, his attention to the footprints to be left *sub specie aeternitatis*.

The work we did together for the dictionary was therefore a real experience of learning, inventions and fun: the pleasure of letting oneself go to "the illusions that awaken".

From this account we can derive the following:

- illustrated theatre books are much more effective;
- in illustrated, effective theatre books, text and images are conceived as complementary;
- the images in theatre books must be *modelled* in various ways (enlargements, colouring, conversion to line drawings, overprinting, etc.) to obtain even greater clarity and incisiveness.

In conclusion, it is not a question of creating "books with illustrated texts" but "books with texts and images on an equal footing".

6. <http://www.rheingold.com/texts/reviews/perform.html>

7. See the fundamental essay by Franco Ruffini, *La stanza vuota. Uno studio sul libro di Jerzy Grotowski*, in *Teatro e Storia*, no. 20-21, 1999, pp. 455-485.



The strength of objective evidence. A doubtful Oedipus crosses his legs before the sphinx (kylix by the "Painter of Oedipus", about 470 BC, Gregorian Etruscan Museum of the Vatican) and a Japanese student does the same before a computer. Body language repeats itself beyond history and geography.

History books that deny the polychromatic reality

The idea that histories of the theatre should be illustrated books is difficult to assert as a necessity. But as Aristotle said from the beginning, *opsis*, the visual apparatus of performance, is a constitutive element of theatre. It must also, therefore, be a requirement of the history of theatre. Yet the histories of theatre in circulation respond mostly to the logic of university or popular manuals, rarely combining scientific interest with visual apparatus.

Histories of theatre might take as examples histories of art, but despite the affinities, the former appear much less attractive because they have few illustrations. On the other hand, histories of art, even when abundantly illustrated, lack adequate didactic content, such as, for example, the dimensions of the artwork depicted, with the result that Antonello da Messina's *Annunziata*, almost a miniature, seems to be the same size as the Sistine Chapel *Judgement*. The book's author certainly knows the difference, but his work is intended, *nota bene*, for those ignorant on the subject.

More serious is the case of scientific deficiencies that require correction. I am thinking, for example, of a clamorous omission regarding ancient Western art: the fact that, in classical times, statues were painted in bright colours, which over time faded or disappeared, due to weather or to the radical cleaning practiced in many museums. Most art histories still ignore this now irrefutable truth. The Parthenon, the Ara Pacis, Trajan's Column - just to mention some well-known monuments - were all brightly painted. As for classical statues, as Paolo Liverani, curator of an exhibition in the Vatican Museums, says, colour was actually essential: "Sculpture [...] was not just painted, but was conceived in such a way that the entirety of the plastic effects, the expressive vividness,

its very meaning and its 'hold' on the spectator were achieved precisely thanks to the collaboration between form and colour."⁸

In short, walking through the streets of Athens or Rome, one did not walk through a world of "snowy marble", as we are accustomed to believe, according to now out-dated traditions of study. It meant wandering through a colourful universe, not unlike the polychrome of Asian cities. There was a difference in building materials - the culture of wood in Asia and that of stone in the West. But both were colourful: a fact of enormous importance, which greatly attenuates that cultural distance proclaimed between East and West. In its use of colour in architecture and sculpture, the Greco-Roman world was not dissimilar to those of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Manuals of theatre history sometimes have numerous illustrations but these dialogue little with the written text, and do not interact and collaborate with it through captions, indications or other instructions necessary for mutual understanding. I remember with distress my discussions with the editorial staff of the publishing house Il Mulino in Bologna, which entrusted me with editing the excellent *Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, with contributions by numerous scholars. Despite my protests and my desire to expand the figurative content, in the Italian edition the illustrations were reduced from five hundred to fifty, and all in black and white.⁹

Then there is the underlying structure of existing theatre histories, which is based on developments in dramatic literature and theatre buildings, the most obvious remains of the theatre of the past. And yet historic theatre cultures - in Europe as in Asia - have left abundant figurative traces that would serve to show the different stages of their material history, the details in which the deep understanding of human and technical phenomena is hidden. I am thinking of Greek vases, of those of Magna Graecia, of the hundreds of terracotta figurines of theatrical characters found in Italic tombs, or of the countless Japanese prints whose most admired subject was kabuki theatre. So when I saw the title *Painting and Performance. Chinese Picture Recitation and its Indian Genesis*, I did not hesitate to order the book.¹⁰ The author Victor H. Mair is an established Sinologist who addresses phenomena and aspects of multiculturalism. In this book he starts from China to follow the secular development of a genre of Buddhist literature popular in China, known as *pie-wen*, tracing its origins to India. These are the origins of the storytellers who hold up to their audience cards with figures painted on them, to accompany their oral narration.

8. From the Introduction to *I colori del bianco. Mille anni di colore nella scultura antica*, edited by Paolo Liverani, Vatican Museums, Vatican City-Rome, De Luca Editori d'Arte, 2004. The abstract dimension of "snowy marble" was established when 18th-century art scholars and artists rediscovered in the Neoclassical age the masterpieces of antiquity, favouring their imitation - think of Winckelmann, Canova or the Danish Thorvaldsen. But this "white and abstract" vision of classical Greco-Roman art was mainly favoured by the German philological school, and therefore by the Italian school, which considered the white of the statues a capacity of abstraction corresponding to that of Greek philosophical thought, indicator of the Aryan cultural domain.

9. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, ed. by John Russell Brown, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 1995 (translated in *Storia del Teatro*, ed. by J. Russell Brown, Italian edition edited by N. Savarese, Bologna, il Mulino, 1998).

10. Victor H. Mair, *Painting and Performance. Chinese Picture Recitation and its Indian Genesis*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1988.

With impeccable philological analysis and Eurasian perspective, Mair shows how this literary form, based on strips of images, illustrated boards and scrolls, has influenced performance and popular traditions in India, Indonesia, Japan, Central Asia, the Near East, and as far as Italy, France, Germany and the rest of Europe. I remembered Mair's book when preparing, with Eugenio Barba, the material for our latest book, *I cinque continenti del teatro. Fatti e leggende della cultura materiale dell'attore*¹¹, first drafts of which date from the mid-1990s.

Auxiliary techniques

After the success of the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, heartened by my growing archive of images, I came up with the idea of organising a book reflecting on the "history of theatres", a collective book, which would not be a chronological history arranged by literary genres or geographical-linguistic areas. I put forward this project to fellow ISTA scholars and this time they listened. We began irregular meetings, discussions, initial projects, possible indexes and even some titles were mooted. It is said that art or archaeology exhibitions are successful if there is the word "gold" in the title - *The Gold of Mexico*, *The Gold of Taranto*, *The Barbarians and the Gold of the Steppes*... I therefore came up with a provisional title: *The Golden Age of Theatre*. After a couple of years, however, out of the twenty initial scholars, Barba and I found ourselves alone. We did not, though, lose heart.

We began to work experimentally on macro-topics, to answer some questions that we considered essential: "When was theatre performed? (celebrations, seasons, special occasions, etc.)" or "How did spectators attend the performance? (standing, sitting, on benches, on masonry structures, in seats, etc.)" How the consistency of the material culture of the actors we sought to *visualise* should be came as we worked around these topics. This new book, too, would be about *techniques*, not those of the body-mind already covered in the *Dictionary*, but all the other techniques that help actors to realise and affirm their work. We defined these other types of techniques "auxiliary". If, on the one hand, theatre becomes reality through the body-mind technique of the actor who establishes a relationship with the spectator, its complementary aspect is the material context and the ways in which this relationship is intertwined.

In their wide variety, "auxiliary techniques" concern the entire universe of theatre: the different circumstances and times that generate theatre performances, the spaces of the actors and those of the spectators, the various relationships between actor and spectator in the stage space, set design, lighting, information to the public (announcements, parades, posters, publications), the financial and organisational aspects of the performances (contracts, salaries, tickets, subscriptions, tours), costumes, make-up, props, and how the actors - and spectators too - travel. All these elements are managed

through techniques or are based on techniques that support the work and talent of the actor and promote the realisation of his profession. A perspective opened up on a "material history of theatre".

Encouraged by the experience of the *Dictionary*, our first concern as authors was to find images suitable for the texts that we were gradually writing or receiving from our group of scholars. In fact, we had decided not to ask for new texts but to select excerpts from their already published articles. The images¹² taken from my archive (by then ten thousand items) had to be complementary or even alternative to the texts, in a history that was not chronological - "from the origins to the present day" - but based on topics of the material culture of the actor, that is, on "auxiliary techniques".

We had to create a narrative in which text and images launched a double challenge, demonstrating that it is possible to make a history of theatre without following the traditional chronological sequence and that it is possible to do it *visually* with great wealth of images. It was a huge challenge and it took us years to get through it, partly because Eugenio and I were busy in our own jobs, as director of Odin Teatret and as university professor respectively. It was exactly the opposite of the previous situation of the *Dictionary*: now we had a method, but we had to establish clearly the "what". One day, at one of our regular meetings, Eugenio said that we had to start from something very concrete. He suggested as a structure the famous five Ws of the English: *Who? What? When? Where? and Why?* We immediately adapted them to theatre: *When, Where, How, For whom and Why* is theatre done?

Thanks to these questions, a way of putting the book together emerged which, Eugenio said, was very similar to preparation for one of his performances. We made improvisations on a technical term, on an aspect of the actor's daily routine, on a particular stage object; these improvisations led to ideas and juxtapositions that we fixed in pages of images or texts; gradually we refined them, some images were discarded, others reappeared in larger format, always in a sequence of constantly changing compositions. For several years we devoted ourselves to putting together a book on the history of theatre, seeking a way to tell it by *visualising* the actors' body-mind and auxiliary techniques.

When the book was finished, I collected the notes of our guiding ideas to select the images and work with them. As our work process gradually defined itself - creating the groups of images and texts for the various topics - I found that our behaviour as *visualisers*¹³ was almost always repeated according to three modes, or rather levels, of images:

- 1 - *iconic images* with purely informative captions (this is a theatre, this is a stage accessory, this is a genre, etc.);
- 2 - *images with doors*, that is with explanatory captions that go into detail about the contents of the image;
- 3 - *images to be interpreted* that are then *rendered* graphically, using signs and text, or colour, in the body of the image.

11. Eugenio Barba, Nicola Savarese, *I cinque continenti del teatro. Fatti e leggende della cultura materiale dell'attore*, Bari, Pagina, 2018. Published in Romanian by Nemira and Teatrul National Radu Stanca, Sibiu (2018), in English by Brill/Sense (2019), in French by Deuxième Époque (2020), in Spanish by Artezblai (2021).

12. I use the term "image" because I have always avoided the word "illustration" which, though used with the best of intentions - to give lustre and splendour to a book - shrinks to the role of marginal extra, almost of filler, before the force of the written word.

13. I borrow this role from the advertising sector: a visualiser is an artist with digital expertise who gives visual form to a starting idea with drawings, sketches, photomontages, rendering, etc.

After a trial period, I began to propose to Eugenio the images separated into groups, each of which had images from all three levels. Again, they were just “guiding ideas” to work on, but they gave good results. I remember a long struggle to create the folder on the use of benches and chairs: where do the spectators sit? And the actors on stage? Were benches, which arrive in theatres before chairs and armchairs, connected with the benches of street acrobats? If so, in which cultures? In China, in Japan, in India, in Africa? And then to find an image showing the Scala in Milan with wooden benches in the stalls, which were removed when the stalls were set up as a ballroom.

I was able to put forward an abundant first choice of images because I could draw on my personal archive. Eugenio supplied me continuously with the most diverse materials, because our images also had to meet other fundamental criteria: to contextualise the contents historically, to take into account an equitable geographical distribution of theatrical forms, to consider masters, artists and ensembles of various cultures, both famous and anonymous, arranging the images by affinity to the text or by affinity between themselves, by contrast or by counterpoint. To give an example of the images that appear in the book - no fewer than 1,400 - I have decided to show here some images that help to understand the logic of the three guiding levels.

I conclude, however, by recalling that during the twenty years it took us to finish *The Five Continents of Theatre*, we authors always measured ourselves against a very real person. He or she was an imaginary Bolivian actor, an ideal reader hungry for practical knowledge and historical truth about the country that is shared by all performers: their own body. Starting from different needs, Eugenio and I were able to tell the history of the techniques of this *body-in-life* from the point of view of the actors, their creative processes and the solutions they invented to overcome the limits imposed by society. A book that ought to become the bible of Third Theatre actors and a challenge to historians.

Iconic images: the form of the evidence

Iconic images are the “level zero” of illustration. They are obvious images, portraying one or more characteristics of the reality they are describing. And at the same time they are an example and symbolic representation of it.

1 and 2 - What to choose to show site-specific theatre, one of the latest frontiers of theatre performance? This practice indicates performances that are given in places that are not theatre buildings, but spaces that the authors explore as a “theatre site”. Site-specific theatre has even become a genre in which the characteristics of the place chosen, and the ability to recontextualise performances in it, can reformulate the way we perceive, and experience, the performance and the “not-explicitly-theatrical place”. This emerges clearly from the two photographs selected. The first is of the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan and shows the performance *Rice* among the rice paddies of Chihshang, in a spectacular natural landscape (2013, photo Liu Chen-Hsiang). The second photo is Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* presented by the We Players of San Francisco



1. Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan



2. We Players of San Francisco

at the foot of the Golden Gate (2014) inside Fort Point, a historic monument dating back to the Civil War. This gloomy building visually expresses the universe of horrors that power produces in those who, ready for anything, pursue it. Performances of site-specific theatre deliberately embody ambiguities, contingencies and the desire to subvert the traditional actor-spectator relationship that must be privileged by choosing places, and therefore images, with immediate visual impact.



3. Bolshoi Theatre

3 - The audience at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow on Coronation Day of Tsar Alexander II, 7 September 1856, clearly expresses the relationship between theatre and power (painting by the Hungarian Mihály Zichy). The spectators, standing in the stalls and in the boxes, turn their backs to the stage and face the ruler and his wife, Maria Alexandrovna, who receive the homage standing in the Imperial box. Theatre, in its many forms, since antiquity and in all cultures, is also a manifestation of power, whose representatives go to the theatre “to see” but also “to be seen”. The lighting, the opulent evening wear and high-ranking uniforms at the Bolshoi show what is the real stage: the lofty royal box occupying the equivalent of three floors of the ordinary boxes.

4 - Icons *par excellence* are the stone carvings of the temple of Chidambaram (Tamil Nadu, India) in which the dancer exhibits three karanas, that is, three of the movements-transitions of Indian dance described in *Natyashastra*. The world's oldest treatise on drama and dance, *Natyashastra* was elaborated in India, a product of Sanskrit culture,



4. Stone carvings of Chidambaram

between 200 BC and 200 AD. In those days writing and reading were privileges of the few and the principles contained in the treatise had no way of spreading to those who wanted to study them to improve their profession as actor-dancers, but could not read. Teaching was only possible directly by masters (guru), strict guardians of the tradition. However, in temples, especially in those where the dancers were sacred prostitutes (devadasi), who attracted crowds of pilgrims thereby ensuring a good income, a way was found to record the poses of the dance, to inspire subsequent generations of pupils. These carvings with the bodies in karana poses can be seen in many temples in India. In the temple of Chidambaram Nataraja, dedicated to Shiva, Lord of Dance, all these poses appear, constituting the entire repertoire that a dancer must learn. What looks like a series of ornamental sculptures, is transformed into an everlasting testimony of teaching by which artists are still inspired today. Sanjukta Panigrahi (1944-1997), the great odissi dancer who taught at ISTA, remembered going from time to time to the temple of Jagannath (12th century), in Puri, Orissa, to ‘refresh’ the poses she had learned as a child during apprenticeship with her guru. For scholars, too, this is an extraordinary historical source on the continuity of the tradition of Indian dance.

Images with doors

An image without its context is a half-told story. Sometimes images need explanatory captions, which derive from in-depth insights made regarding them. In his book with the enigmatic title *Vermeer's Hat*, Canadian Sinologist Timothy Brook analyses paintings by the Dutch artist Jan Vermeer, revealing some unexpected discoveries.



5. Jan Vermeer, *Officer with Laughing Girl*

5 - In the painting titled *Officer with Laughing Girl*, Brook talks about the good relationship between the man and the woman portrayed sitting at a table: a gallant scene, a courtship denoting a free and emancipated society, that of the Netherlands, recently regenerated after the Spanish occupation. What do we see? A soldier, dressed strikingly in a scarlet-red jacket, courting a beautiful girl. Although very specific, the content of the scene effectively represents the time at which Vermeer was painting, since it shows what were, in general, the rules that men had to follow in courting young women of good Dutch society around the middle of the 17th century. A few decades earlier, officers had no opportunity to linger and speak, in this confidential way, with women of good society. The customs of the time did not permit that the wooer and his beloved meet alone in a private setting such as a home. In Vermeer's time the rules of courtship changed, at least in Dutch cities. Good manners replaced soldierly audacity and determination in winning the girl. Gallantry was now the 'coin' with which a woman was conquered, and the domestic environment, the new 'theatre' in which tension and understanding between the sexes was staged. To confirm this historical and social context, Vermeer has placed on the wall behind the couple a map of Holland and Friesland, as if to suggest: "It is here, it is in this rich and beautiful country that this takes place."

But Brook sees in the painting something that particularly attracts his attention, something that goes beyond domestic intimacy, an element that perhaps Vermeer himself had no intention of underlining. The soldier is wearing an imposing beaver fur hat, an animal originating from distant Canada, whose skins the Dutch went as far as North America to buy from the French. Keen to find the mythical "North-West passage" in order to reach China by sailing westwards (I have personally seen evidence of this ambition in a suburb of Montreal called Lachine), the French traded with the Amerindians to cover the high costs of their maritime enterprises. The native Americans were perplexed and amused: "These foreigners are stupid - they said - they give us weapons and beautiful knives in exchange for worthless skins".

In this vein, Brook considers other Dutch commerce at that time, such as tobacco, silver, ceramics, tea and slaves from Africa, and argues that the phenomenon of globalisation appeared for the first time precisely then, in the 17th century. As topical as the subject of globalisation is, it was not the reason for our interest in the book. Timothy Brook offered us an aspect of his working method that can help in reading ancient images when they appear as documents of the history we are researching. Brook invites us to read Vermeer's works in a different way, not as a scholar of art, attentive to light and colours, but as a historian who draws our attention to details. According to Brook, Vermeer's paintings include 'doors' that we must open to reveal realities, details, which the painter had not expressly thought of.

All historical images are windows open on the past but Brook shows how pictorial sources can open doors and passages that lead far away and connect the various regions of the world and of history. Our Eurocentric horizon widens, what we know intersects with other knowledge, until we see not only globalisation, but also an encounter with a global vision. All this happens, it should be noted, not only through the images *tout court*, but through the subversive power of details brought to light out of the background that are able to open hidden roads. Old images of theatre (drawings, paintings, prints,



6. Nakamura Shikan



7. Geisha with violin

engravings) are documents to be seen as "photographs of the past", but they are above all stimuli and incentives. They are bait that leads us to fish in our own, and in the memory of others, for analogies of common practices generated by the material culture of actors.

6 and 7 - We can find examples of these openings offered by images to the reader, in the print portrait of Japanese kabuki actor Nakamura Shikan (1873), interpreter of female characters (onnagata), and in a postcard from the Meiji era (1868-1912) showing a geisha playing the violin. From the print by Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900) we can derive some details to understand the world of kabuki in the decisive transition towards the modern era, when it was feared that Japanese traditions could suffer a severe blow from the predominance of a Western lifestyle that spread across Japan in the second half of the 19th century. The female character played by the actor wears a gorgeous kimono decorated with a tiger. This animal is a sign of the Japanese zodiac but, since it does not live in Japan, the choice of this costume indicates an exotic taste and is at the same time a sign of the 'virile' courage of the wearer. In fact, the female character also carries a sword - we can see the hilt emerging from the belt - an unusual accessory for a woman. The actor is also seen in a typical facial pose (mie), in which the body is blocked, eyes squinting: the strabismus is clearly visible. We are therefore on stage. In this context the presence of the other accessory is surprising - an umbrella in Western style, with iron ribs, not bamboo.

The motif of the Western-style

umbrella is repeated throughout Kunichika's entire series of six prints of kabuki actors, and although it is a veiled satire on Japan's rapid westernisation, the artist seems ready to accept the inevitable changes that lie ahead. The Western umbrella on stage is presented as a new fashion, but also as an element in contrast with previous cultural tradition, now declining. Certainly Toyohara Kunichika had not planned to include this 'door' in his portrait of the actor. It is up to us to discover it and open it. The European violin played by a geisha in the postcard of the same era is proof of this.

Images to be interpreted: rendering

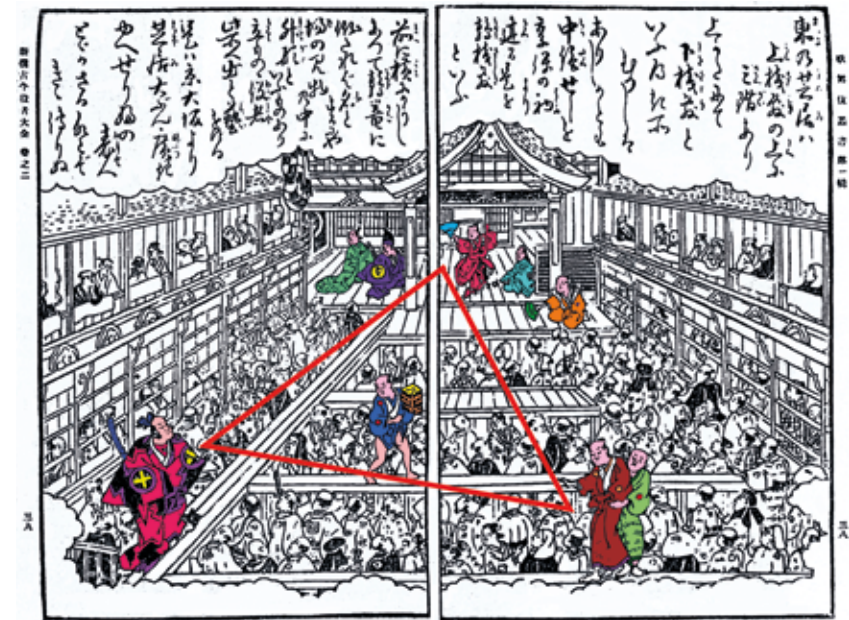


8 and 9. *Annunciation* by Beato Angelico and rendering by Bence Hajdu

'interpretations', we have carried out numerous operations of discovery in our *Five Continents of Theatre*.

10 - With lines superimposed on the original drawing and with colour, we have graphically reworked a scene from a kabuki performance at the Nakamura-za Theatre in Tokyo in 1727, highlighting the relationship between actor and spectator. In the centre, a servant, crossing an intermediate walkway, brings food to spectators sitting

8 and 9 - Digital elaboration by Hungarian artist Bence Hajdu, who has 'interpreted' many famous paintings in his operations of *abandoned paintings*, introduces us to the world of *rendering*, a term whose significance - digitally, of course - is halfway between adaptation and interpretation. By removing the figures from the *Annunciation* of Beato Angelico (fresco in the convent of San Marco, Florence), the artist leaves intact only the architectural scene of the fresco. A meticulous work of photo retouching, pixel by pixel. Emptying famous paintings of their characters, the empty spaces and perspectives are disturbing and the work is completely transformed. Faced with the absence of the characters who once animated the scene, one wonders: where did they go? When will they return? With the help of *rendering*, of



10. Nakamura-za Theatre

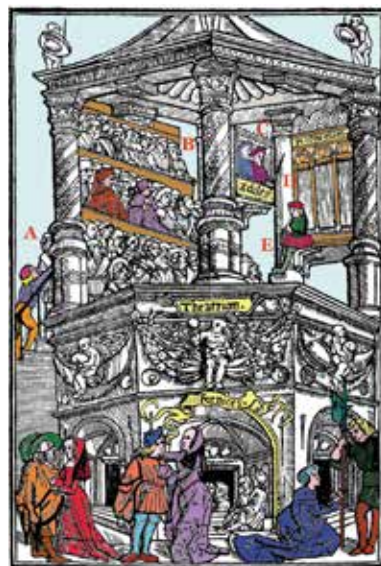
in the boxes. The servant moves about during the show at the same time as the actors, who act walking along other elevated walkways in the hall (*hanamichi*) and they move towards the stage on which another actor dances with a fan. The whole scene is dynamic and a triangulation is formed by the actors located in different parts of the theatre, highlighted by a red line. According to Eisenstein "the first thing we think of by association when attending a kabuki performance is football, the most collective and collaborative of sports. The voices, the clapping of hands, the mime gestures, the shouts of the commentator, the screens opened up, are like so many full-backs, midfielders, goalkeepers and strikers who pass the dramatic ball to each other, pushing themselves towards the goal of the bewildered spectator."¹⁴

11 - The re-elaboration used in the imaginary reconstruction of Roman theatre on the title page of Terence's *Comedies* (Lyon 1493) intervenes on the work of imagination practiced by the artists of the Renaissance, when archaeology had not yet brought to light the remains of the great ancient Roman theatres and there were no concrete references on what a theatre looked like. The anonymous engraver, basing himself on literary descriptions, draws a Roman theatre animated by spectators and visitors, and divides it into two parts. In the upper part are all the elements of a Roman theatre but in entirely unlikely perspectives and combinations, which the engraver had no way of verifying. So the stairs for access to the tiers (A), the audience on the tiers (B), the box of the *aediles*, the commissioning magistrates (C), the stage with the curtains, the *proscenium* (D), the flute player who marked the start

14. Sergej Ejzenštejn, "L'inatteso" in *Forma e tecnica del film e lezioni di regia*, Torino, Einaudi, 1964, p. 21.

of the performance (E) and the large columns supporting the roof, are elements placed side by side, but are unresolved. In the lower part, the engraver draws arches (*fornices*) that support the weight of the tiers. Overall, the building looks more like the Coliseum than a theatre.

Particular attention is paid to the scenes in front of the *fornices*, dark, windowless rooms where prostitutes offered themselves to spectators. At the entrance to the arch a sign announced the name of the woman who lived there, described her attributes and indicated the price of the various services. A tattered cloth concealed the brothel. From *fornices*, of course, derives the Italian verb *fornicare*, literally “to have sexual relations with a person other than one’s spouse”. Looking at the image’s layout - the spectators in the theatre above and the richly dressed individuals in front of the *fornices* in the foreground - the engraver would seem to be much more interested in the licentious aspect of the image than in its main focus.



11. Imaginary reconstruction of Roman Theatre

12 - Representation of a mystery play in the central square of Coventry, in the heart of 14th-century England (drawing by D. Jee¹⁵). Actors and many spectators animate the square. We see the trial of Jesus before the Roman governor Pilate and the Jewish priests of the Sanhedrin (dressed, however, as Catholic bishops). For some time mystery plays had been taking place outside of churches and the stage of this representation is set on a mobile cart (pageant) surrounded by the populace. The non-professional actors were the inhabitants of Coventry themselves, financed by the rich corporations of arts and crafts, who provided the organisation, costumes and everything need to set the stage. The drama lasted several days, during which all work was suspended and everyone could attend the performance. The sacred story does not prevent spectators from chatting (groups on the right) or having work conversations (on the left, a friar talks to a carpenter), while children play with a dog under the eyes of the guards and musicians (centre), or play hide-and-seek under the stage. Many citizens watch from windows and one spectator arrives on horseback. The 19th-century artist has taken the liberty of imagining the scene, recreating it with “plausible fantasy”, full of credible details derived from chronicles of the time. So much so that this image is still often used as if it were a real historical document and not a modern reconstruction. The colours added to the original black and white drawing rework the details, making them emerge, and the image becomes dynamic.¹⁶

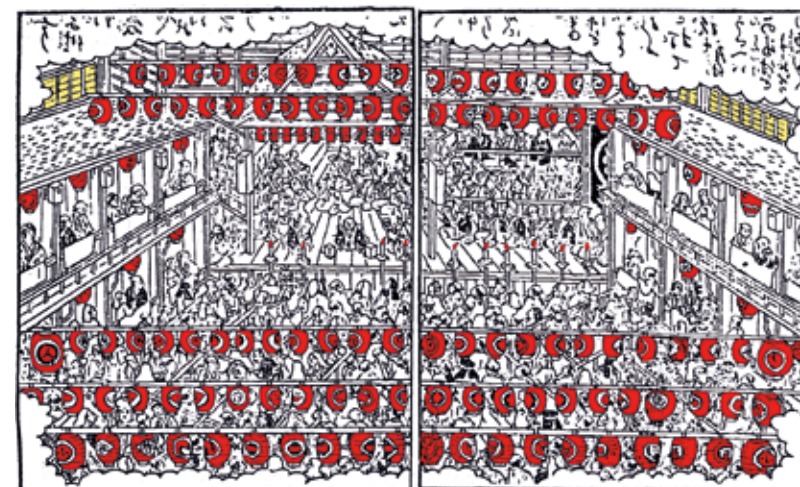
15. Thomas Sharp, *A dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries Anciently Performed at Coventry*, Coventry, Merridew and Son, 1825.

16. On why the use of colours has a dimension of cultural significance see: Riccardo Falcinelli, *Cromorama. Come il colore ha cambiato il nostro sguardo*, Torino, Einaudi, 2017.



12. Mystery play in Coventry

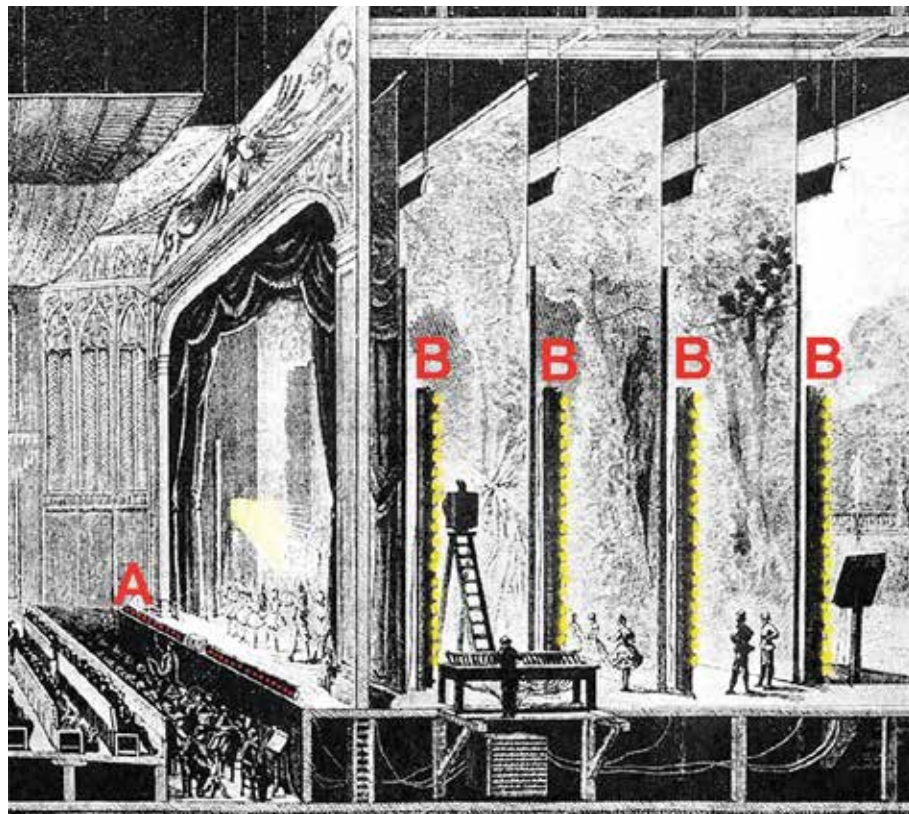
13 - A sea of red lanterns dominates an 18th-century kabuki theatre (popular print). Despite being lit by high windows, the kabuki theatre hall is illuminated by paper



13. 18th-century Kabuki Theatre

lanterns and by a series of candles placed on the proscenium. These many sources of live flame in a building made entirely of wood were a continuous cause of devastating fires, similar to those that periodically also attacked European theatres. According to some scholars, the development of theatre architecture was precisely owing to these constant fires. Colouring all the lanterns and candles on the proscenium red has made the lighting apparatus visible.

14 - Light sources, again, on a stage at the 1882 Munich Electrical Exhibition, one of the first theatre lighting systems using the recently invented incandescent light bulbs (A: proscenium lights; B: wings lighting). The electric light sources that replaced the gas lamps of the proscenium and wings occupied the same position and had the same size, so

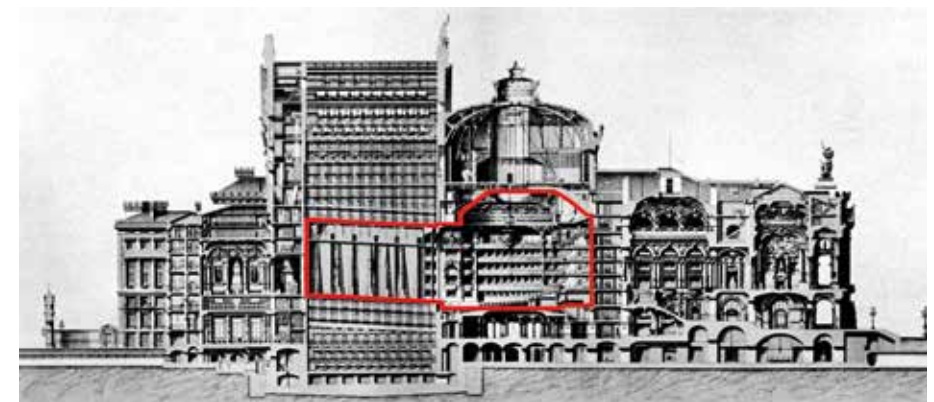


14. Stage at Munich Electrical Exhibition

the shift between the two systems was rapid. Electricity cables replaced gas pipes, which overheated, often making the air unbreathable.

15 - We have kept for last the hyperbolic spaces of the great metropolitan theatres of the 19th century, exemplified by this cross section of the Opéra Garnier, Paris, inaugurated in 1875. A red line marks the boundaries of the stage (60 m. high, 27 m. deep and 48.5

m. wide) and of the hall for the public, so one can clearly see not only how oversized the theatre building was, but also how much 'superfluous' space there was, compared to the needs of actors and spectators alone. These 'extra spaces' - destined as refreshment halls, restaurants, rehearsal room and dressing rooms of singers and dancers, as *ateliers* for costume and set preparation, administrative offices, etc. - were very expensive in terms of management, security and staff costs necessary to keep them going. The costs of these 'superfluous spaces' would make the expenses of the great theatres, which have survived to the present only as metropolitan opera houses, more and more unsustainable. Nowadays, the great theatres are financed only minimally by ticket sales and could not do without the funding they receive from the state, sponsors and patrons. ■



15. Opéra Garnier

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Nando Taviani. ISTA 12, Wrocław, Poland, 2005. Photo: Francesco Galli

Nando Taviani

Casting the Net

Interview by Claudio Coloberti

Abstract: Interviewed by Claudio Coloberti in 2007 as part of a series dedicated to the “Voices of ISTA”, Nando Taviani reconstructs his relationship with Eugenio Barba since the early 1970s. In this text, here published for the first time in an English translation, Taviani follows his collaboration with Odin Teatret from the barter in Carpignano in 1974 to the first session of ISTA in Bonn in 1980, towards the formulation of theatre anthropology in a hybrid context of practitioners and scholars.

Keywords: Ferdinando Taviani; Barbers; ISTA Bonn 1980

CC *How did you meet Eugenio Barba?*

NT My relationship with Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret began in the early 1970s, when he came to Rome with the performance *Ferai*. Ferruccio Marotti, who had seen it at the Venice Biennale, had talked about it at length, and all of us from the theatre department of the University of Rome went to see it. It was a huge shock to me, just as the recent shock of Living Theater had been. I didn't think a performance like *Ferai* was possible. I was left with the desire to see it again, an almost nostalgic feeling; but they went back to Denmark, and there was no longer a way to see something like this.

A connection was established through one of my students who wanted to do her thesis about them, and I began supervising her. Slowly the opportunity arose for a book on Odin Teatret (1975), which I saw again with *Min Fars Hus* (My father's house) at the 1972 Venice Biennale. The bond grew closer after I visited them in Holstebro in Denmark. Barba wanted to spend some time in Southern Italy to rehearse a new performance. I was teaching at the University of Lecce. When he told me about it, the actors didn't know this; it was still an unknown project. He asked me if I was interested. In 1974 Odin Teatret moved to the village of Carpignano for five months and thus another type of collaboration developed.

CC *How did ISTA come into your developing relationship with Eugenio and with Odin?*



NT The relationship had become very close between '73 -'74, after I had invited *Min Fars Hus* to Lecce and after Odin Teatret had discovered and put into practice the "barter" in Carpignano. Then, the book I was writing was also a bridge, for which I collected materials, spoke with Barba, did interviews, and translations.

I participated to all the meetings of group theatres: in Belgrade in 1976 where Barba wrote the Manifesto on the Third Theatre, in Bergamo, in Ayacucho in Peru, and in Spain. These big group theatre meetings were becoming a bit repetitive. Barba was looking for something new.

At one point he had the idea of a tour with a small German equestrian circus that he had met in Munich, during an outdoor festival. The circus performers put on a performance for children every Sunday. A relationship grew up with this tiny family circus. Thus this project, which remained an idea, was mooted: a tour of circus and Odin Teatret. There was this need of his to change. In '79 Hans-Jürgen Nagel, the Director of Culture in Bonn, Germany proposed him to organise a meeting of theatre groups. And there Barba said: "I'll do something else: a length encounter with young directors and actors. I'll invite Eastern and Western artists that I know, and I'll bring together budding professionals, scholars and academics." He christened this project ISTA, International School of Theatre Anthropology.

CC *So you were already aware of the project before going to Bonn?*

NT Yes. This project, at least as I remember it, had some fixed characteristics: bringing together Western and Asian artists with Latin Americans and Europeans from what Barba had called Third Theatre, that is, young people neither from avant-garde theatre, nor from the prevalent traditional theatre. There was this name: International School of Theatre Anthropology. Theatre anthropology as a discipline, as a theory, did not yet exist. First came the name and then, I would say that as a theory it began to develop in Bonn. I was aware of this project - a quite unheard of situation - being shut up together for a month with strict working rules. At the time Barba was very interested in scientific studies, especially biology, hence the idea of having academics from that discipline and scholars of theatre, people who did theatre and the Asian and Western artists, especially of mime. In Bonn Barba laid the foundations of what later became theatre anthropology as a discipline and as a field of study.

The work in Bonn was very hard. What Barba was doing seemed crazy to me. Days began at 5.30/6 in the morning and ended late in the evening. The hours were exhausting, and after three days people were dead on their feet. They were all young, about fifty participants from different parts of the world, so they wanted to be together, to talk. They stayed up late and then the next morning started very early, so there was enormous fatigue.

Late in the evening Barba went around with his notebook, talking, asking questions, especially of the Asians. They were dead tired, Barba was dead tired, I was there with him fighting off sleep, and he had these questions: "How do you say 'energy' in your working language? In how many ways can you say 'energy' in Japanese? What is the difference between this term and the other?" He demanded a literal translation of working words or expressions. "How do you say improvisation? How do you say rhythm?

How do you say resistance? What exactly does this mean? What is the etymology of this word?" I was thinking: what use is all this stuff to him, this kind of lexicon? But this very humdrum path was the one that paved the way for finding recurring technical principles.

This was the interest that Barba had at that time and that he has maintained: to identify a kind of technical root uniting the craft of the actor and the dancer. There was still no theory or system defining theatre anthropology, which grew out of this peculiar curiosity of Barba, and from another singular obsession of his. He decided that the teachers, especially the Asian ones - so fascinating with their incredible knowledge - should teach only their first three days of work at the beginning of their careers. When, as children, they first went to their master, what did they do during these first three days? This they had to teach to the ISTA participants. No alluring scenes or dances, but the most elementary things: the first positions, the first steps, how to place the feet, in which posture, where is the balance. They had to teach the alphabet, the ABC. An extraordinary artist like Sanjukta Panigrahi taught these things when she was giving her classes!

Theatre anthropology begins with these two elements: on the one hand, the search for terms and words to define and understand common recurring elements (despite apparent difference in styles), which Barba has called "the principles that return"; on the other hand, this teaching stripped of all its allure.

At ISTA the Asian artists were present as teachers, but they also put on performances. You saw extraordinary things. For me, personally, the revelation of ISTA was Sanjukta Panigrahi, a kind of bomb - you had the impression of being next to Maria Callas. I thought I was facing some kind of prodigy and I never tired of seeing her. I remember, the entire month in Bonn, I always went to Sanjukta's classes - I didn't really want to even miss a thing. In the evening the Asians gave performances and presented their extraordinary dances and plays, and then during the day, they devoted themselves to this teaching, so humble, so down to earth. I remember Barba explaining to the participants: "You didn't come here to learn styles. What you need to learn is to work alone. Here you will find some foundations on which you can then build. You cannot delude yourself that these artists are teaching you something of their art."

CC *How did these artists, faced with a method that they had never experienced in their own country, react?*

NT Barba knew them personally. He had seen their work in their own countries. He must have understood that they were willing to do this. For the Asian artists it was a completely new situation. They showed a dance, Barba interrupted them and began to question them about a detail: "Where is the balance here? Why do you bend your knees? Why do the arms go to the left and the hips to the right?" All things they had never thought of, because they had learned them since childhood. It's like someone who knows a language well, then you stop him and ask: "Here you use the subjunctive, why? Why don't you use the conditional?" You don't know because you've always used that language without thinking. So the Asians, and we with them, began to see in a total different way physical details and tensions that made their work as actors so effective, so rich.

Almost all of them, in their own countries, had problems passing on their art to pupils. This was a common complaint. People were no longer willing to go to them as children and sacrifice themselves, as they had done to learn. It was very interesting for them to find a way to convey their experience in a non-traditional way. They were really interested in this.

But there was another element: they trusted the guidance of Barba, this strange personality who they might or might not understand, but who gained their trust. This is something that is often not considered: the trust that Barba knew how to inspire in his numerous initiatives with Odin Teatret and even without Odin. In ISTA there was only Barba and one actor, Toni Cots. The whole group joined in much later. ISTA was Barba's personal initiative.

Those who have experienced it don't think about it, but it is very difficult to find a person able to hold together personalities that are so strong and so different, with different experiences and needs. Barba has succeeded in keeping people together who would never have managed it. This is a great gift that is difficult to define and which is typical of Barba. The same thing could be said for Odin Teatret: the fact of keeping people together who have absolutely no reason for staying together. All of ISTA grew up like this, as did everything that came after, like the Theatrum Mundi ensemble and performances. The most impressive thing about Barba - beyond his artistic brilliance, his intuitions, his skills of dramaturgy and direction, all things that we knew and could easily perceive - was this gift: being able to amalgamate a group of people that, it seems to you, could never collaborate, each being a kind of leader in his own world.

The same thing happened with the group of scholars and academics, with people who would never collaborate on their own: they had no common language, no mutual sympathies, and no shared interests. The exchange took place because we were in a surprising environment that stimulated.

CC *How did scholars and academics react to these rhythms of work?*

NT There was no problem as I remember. They were all passionate, interested people, and they reacted well. Bonn was a situation that, when you think about it today, would turn your hair white! Not only were the working hours terrible, you had to do all the cleaning, 6-7 people slept in the same room, you had to cook, you had to do everything. The second ISTA in Volterra was even harder because it was longer - two months. The place was not fit for such a meeting. In Bonn we were living and working in a school, in Volterra we were in a boarding school where the bathroom facilities were dreadful. Those who couldn't cook, like me, had to clean the toilets. But there was never a real problem on this, maybe one or two defections in Volterra and Bonn among the participants. The scholars didn't turn a hair, nor did the teachers.

CC *Were there no moments of tension, difficulty, uncertainty?*

NT No. There were times when the fatigue became a real drag, but this I would say occurred more in Volterra, which lasted two months. The Bonn session lasted one month.

In Volterra, Barba himself reviewed the timetable, because the session had started with the same intensity as in Bonn. It was clear that you could not go on for two months with those rhythms, without moments not of rest, but of variation. In fact, Barba changed the entire working schedule. But I would say that the greatest difficulty was the fatigue; the other things were just minimal.

The only real moments of tension were due to jealousy between teachers, if Barba went to see or talk more with one than with another. Especially among the primadonnas, who were the Indian Sanjukta Panigrahi and the Japanese Katsuko Azuma. But this is just gossip. There were moments of difficulty in making oneself understood, but there was a kind of solidarity that was almost taken for granted.

CC *Were there also moments of theoretical elaboration of what one saw, observed, and intuited, of what was beginning to be built up?*

NT It was as if these moments of encounter with technical exchange and comparison responded to a criterion, to an unspoken law, that sometimes was explicit, too. We were lucky enough to be together for a month, to have set up an organisation and found premises and money to create something before never seen. So we had no time to waste. Everyone did all the reflecting and re-elaborating on their own, at home. At ISTA we had to gather together as much as possible.

If I had to tell you in my own words: ISTA was the time for casting our nets - we weren't concerned whether we caught old shoes, mullet, lobster or inedible fish. This was the time for fishing, and we had to fish. Everyone did the sorting out afterwards, on their own. This was more or less our mindset. In the early days, some felt a need for debate, for a moment of reflection after the work. Then everyone understood that this was not the time. There, you had to observe and then later you reflected. Returning home, theatre workers and scholars alike, each of us reworked things in our own way, alone. The moment of reflection came later. At ISTA you cast your nets, back home you gathered in the catch. So there was no reworking there, it was the time to experience.

In Bonn, there was a moment dedicated to actors, scholars and artists. One of the directors said to Barba: "Is it possible that there isn't a moment for us?" Barba scheduled a daily meeting for directors before starting work: at 5 in the morning. Then he moved it to 6 o'clock. These meetings were tremendously interesting. Barba did not give lessons in directing. He analysed the situation at ISTA: how the work was progressing, how group life was evolving, how the dynamics and moments of togetherness changed, if a crisis was looming, how to avoid it, hasten or block it, which elements could be criticised or were missing. Barba listened to comments and proposals, indicated the negative aspects and their reasons, how to tolerate or modify them, examined the effects of fatigue as well as its usefulness. All this he explained openly and explicitly, using specific examples.

It was as if the directors' meeting was a sort of school for leaders: how to be responsible for a group of people, because if you can't hold them together, you send them to perdition. This, after all, is the condition of a director of an unofficial and unsubsidised theatre. Barba sometimes talked about his artistic choices or the images he followed,

always in a very personal way. He never said, "The director must do this, or that". He imagined the director as someone who leads people, a band of outlaws, a group that is not protected and that can only be safeguarded through internal cohesion and the effectiveness of its results.

In Volterra, there were regular meetings with scholars at the end of the day, late in the evening. It was a situation that today seems crazy. There were university professors, academics, some young people, others who already had their spurs, theatre critics. We had to formulate themes and tasks for the groups preparing an outline for a performance, starting with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Barba commented on how we formulated these themes: "you wrote in an abstract way", "here you use too many words", "an actor's imagination does not begin to fly if you express yourself in this way" "these words are not stimulating", "you must write concise sentences, like a poem", "how should you speak when you give an actor a task". No one ever protested. We all felt we were learning a great deal. We became aware of finding ourselves with people who had quite different needs, a different way of thinking. Suddenly your whole way of speaking, of expressing yourself, of saying things, became sort of shit. It could also be rather hard; in fact it was hard at times. But actually very interesting.

CC *What did ISTA give you - Bonn and then all the following ones, fourteen of them - with respect to your profession as a scholar? How did you make use of this new knowledge that was forming and that was becoming increasingly valuable?*

NT From the outside, everyone told me that I changed a lot. So obviously it gave me a lot. ISTA forced me to realise that there is another way of communicating and relating to the theatre. It brought me slam up against another reality. People who are academics are full of themselves, they always talk to the same type of persons; there are certain topics that are appreciated and you are comfortable on this kind of throne, it is your cradle, your shell.

Suddenly you find yourself catapulted into another world, where people really couldn't care less that you know twenty thousand facts about the history of theatre, because you can't give them anything that stimulates them. So you refashion yourself, you understand that you have some specialities, as everyone has, and that your specialities cannot go outside their small boundary unless you are able to give them another aspect, to find another way. You become aware that certain things that were very important to you are worth nothing. Of course you learn a lot of things, but sometimes it's very unpleasant.

As a scholar, for me ISTA was fundamental because it was a school for looking. You begin to see certain things that before you hadn't the slightest inkling of, and then you realise what questions you can ask of the theatre of the past. If you are a historian, the problem is what questions you ask to the documents. If you haven't the slightest inkling that certain problems exist, you are obviously an incomplete historian.

ISTA obliged one to look, and look again. You slowly understood what is at the basis of the actor's work, at the basis of dramaturgy, what makes it function. Through all the theory you become aware that there are other queries, and you are able to identify and

formulate them. They are not all the same, but the questions are the same, and above all the answers are different. You are able to perceive these queries when you find them in documents, in history, in illustrations and images, in the memoirs and biographies of actors. You begin to see and analyse everything in another way, because you have gone for hours through a filter of monotony or boredom. Sometimes you just didn't know how to set your head in motion, what to think or deduce by watching actors perform exercises for hours, repeating them at different rhythms, repeating how they walked, repeating how they fixed their gaze, how they used their hands or manipulated objects, repeating the same scene as if it were the most usual thing in the world. Then your head starts moving and you begin to distinguish, to notice what it's about. These are elementary, palpable things, but weeks, months pass before you realise it. This was crucial. Here I could use the plural - for us, for a whole group of scholars, it was essential.

CC *This new vision of elements that, as you said, already existed, but that were hidden and you didn't see them, I guess it influenced your profession as a teacher. How did you convey this experience to your students?*

NT When you go through an experience like this certain things become conditioned reflexes. They seem obvious. It is clear that, when you teach, you know how to explain certain things, and you know how to make yourself understood, because it has taken you months and months to understand that it was, in fact, reinventing the wheel. You ask yourself how it is possible that for years and years you had not realised it. But once you've understood it, you can explain it to others in a few days. There's no doubt about this.

There is a certain way of reading Artaud, a certain way of reading things, which perhaps one has read a dozen times and has always seen in one way. Then you realise that Artaud speaks of material and concrete things, of extraordinary and skilful craftsmanship. You had read these texts ten thousand times and they seemed to you poetry, utopia, metaphors, philosophy, and esotericism. They actually talk about material things. This has become an almost automatic reflex. It is evident that it is no longer so difficult to make a student understand when you explain it to them.

CC *In your opinion, has this new knowledge influenced other, perhaps more traditional, theatre people? If so, how?*

NT If you ask me if this has influenced "traditional" or "orthodox" theatre, my first answer is no. For one reason, which is not just Italian, but European: at a certain point there has been a kind of loss of contact between different theatre realities. In the early 1960s, these were still close.

When the Living Theater came to Italy in the 1960s, all Italian theatre people went to see it. The same, when Grotowski's *The Constant Prince* came in 1967, or the first Odin performances in the late 1960s. There were many lines of communication, and one felt that it was something also relevant to those who recited Goldoni or Shakespeare at the Teatro Eliseo or the Teatro Lirico. Then there was a split. Those who gathered in groups

to do theatre did not care about “traditional” theatre, and often they did not even know about it. In the eyes of the other “traditional” side, the new group theatres were almost non-existent. So this exchange did not take place.

As a historian, it was interesting for me to go and look at articles, critiques and radio interviews after *The Constant Prince* by Grotowski at the Spoleto Festival, after *Feraï* by Odin Teatret at the Venice Biennale, after the arrival of the Living Theater in Milan with *The Connection*. Rereading them today, one is amazed: you find influential and sensitive people from “traditional” theatre who are saying: “We should do this, we should learn this, we should teach the actors this regardless of the type of performance one wants to do”. All this disappeared for cultural reasons, partly also political, and some public condemnation began to appear. The most important reasons were not political, but the idea that there is a whole theatre world of no interest to theatre with a capital “T”, and apparently of no appeal.

CC *In Barba's current work, is this research still there or is he following other paths? Is this desire to expand, then, this new knowledge or this new vision of theatre, this aspect of theatre anthropology, still developing, and is it still alive?*

NT The aspect of theatre anthropology that we can rightly call scientific is ended. Theatre anthropology moves on basic elements or principles. Once these basic elements and principles are identified, there is little point in pretending to identify them in other fields.

Sometimes we have tried. I remember brainstorming to find them in dramaturgy, in the mental pre-expressivity, in the voice, but they were plays on words. The strength of theatre anthropology is that it speaks of concrete things: of balance, of energy, of action, of how action moves, of recurring principles and elements. And this is concluded.

The dimension of Eurasian Theatre remains, the unitary vision of codified Western and Asian traditions. The idea of a professional unity still has many points to pursue, especially through detailed comparison based on individual cases. Over and above recurring principles and considering all this as a whole, the idea of a Eurasian Theatre is still very productive and largely to be explored.

In Barba's way of thinking and acting it is difficult to distinguish the need to understand from the need to transmit. For him, they are almost the same: understanding is like transmitting, transmitting means understanding. In him, the scientific dimension and the dimension of transmission are superimposed for two reasons. One is that of his own imprinting, as his own experience was a self-taught one, where understanding meant transmission. The other is his fundamental political position: supporting and transmitting knowledge, legacy, endowing people who want to do theatre and are marginalised. His tireless relationship with the minimal, unknown and obscure theatres is strange if you think that it has never ceased. When Barba talks about transmitting, he doesn't use it in the normal sense of the word. He means: delivering to the dispossessed. In this sense the two things are superimposed.

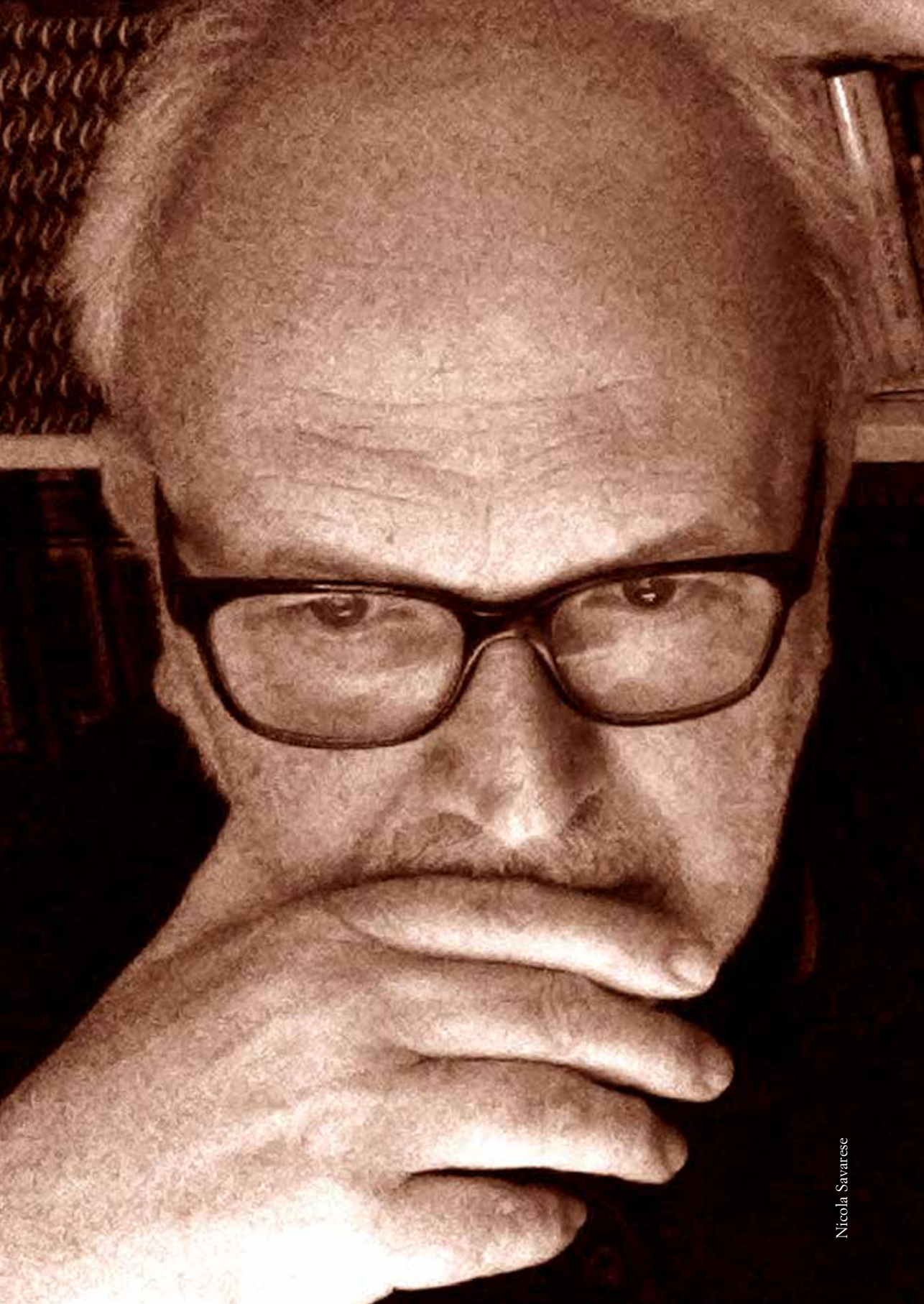
The question is not so much theatre anthropology as a field of study, by now defined and incontrovertible, but how to transmit other things as well. This question continues

for Barba who has concentrated for a long time on dramaturgy, on the way of reading the history of theatre, on the “subterranean history” of the profession, on the creative dynamics of a group as a “collective mind”. For us academics, his questions and his points of view have been crucial in reading the great experiences of the 20th century. Perhaps this relationship with specialist academics was also useful for him. Dialogue takes place because there are complementary needs. He has a whole way of seeing and asking certain questions that enable you to see everything in a different way and also to digest it.

So the field of research increases enormously, but in a restricted sense. What we call theatre anthropology is a field that must continue to be cultivated and explored. It would be foolish to enlarge it and turn it into a metaphor while, as it is today, it is real. Limitation is its strength. ■



Nando Tavian and Jerzy Grotowski. ISTA 10, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1996. Photo: Fiora Bemporad



Nicola Savarese

Nicola Savarese

The Practice of Seeing Interview by Claudio Coloberti

Abstract: Film director Claudio Coloberti interviewed theatre history scholar Nicola Savarese on his 'reporter' experience when he documented the first session of ISTA in Bonn in October 1980 with photographs, recordings of the dialogues and cultural exchanges between the different protagonists. The many difficulties confronted by Savarese due to the absolute novelty of the situation that involved students and teachers from all over the world, and particularly from Asia, made him aware that ISTA was a school that taught to see technical and psycho-physical analogies in the actor's work in different theatre cultures by a continuous interweaving of practice and theory. After following the ISTA in Volterra in 1981, the 'reporter's work' gave way to the elaboration with Eugenio Barba of the successful book A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology.

Keywords: ISTA as a school to learn to see; Technical and psycho-physical analogies of the actor's work; Daily structure of ISTA activities; Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology

CC *How did you meet Eugenio Barba?*

NS My relationship with Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret began in 1974, when the group came to the Teatro Ateneo in Rome with *Min Fars Hus* (My father's house). I was a researcher at the university and I was in charge of organising performances in this theatre that had still not received the official permissions, and I had invented solutions so it did not seem like a public performance.

I was a young scholar, a bookworm, coming from philology, from history and from reading archival documents. The encounter with Odin Teatret made me grasp answers to my questions about theatre that I had not found in books or previous experiences. In 1974 an exchange began with Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret. I wanted not only to see the finished product, but also to follow the work process. I wanted to learn about the dynamics that enabled one to understand how the finished product was the result of various interconnections, and not, as it seems when you go to the theatre, an indivisible whole.

This materialised in two directions: on the one hand, I followed all the practical work done by Barba and Odin Teatret for months in Carpignano in Southern Italy and in Ollolai in Sardinia; on the other hand, I founded a small theatre group, Arcoiris, which



I directed together with a Panamanian girl, Adriana Molinar. These were young people who had gravitated around Odin Teatret and Grotowski and had done seminars with them. I was their director and dramatist, and I immersed myself in a reality that, as a scholar of theatre, I had never experienced: entering the creative process and dynamics of the practical work.

These two situations, following the activity of Odin Teatret and founding a theatre group, had some consequences. In 1980 Eugenio invited me to join an Odin Teatret tour in Japan. Here, for the first time, Eugenio spoke to me about theatre anthropology. I remember perfectly that Eugenio and theatre critic Ugo Volli went to visit Tadashi Suzuki who had just moved to Soga, a mountain village, with his theatre founded in Tokyo. When Eugenio returned he asked me: "What do you think of a field of work called theatre anthropology, where East and West confront each other?" Apparently he thought up the name on the train. This field of study also included my interests, as at that time I was developing an interest in Asian theatre.

This was how the name of ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) came about, and it became reality in October 1980 in Bonn. Then, a year later, Eugenio managed to carry out a second session in Volterra. In the beginning, the conditions were very strange. To begin with, this first session lasted a month. This meant being 'on duty' with participants, professors and masters for quite a long time. Secondly, the working conditions were rather uncertain, because no one knew "how it should be done". In Bonn we all lived in a school with its classrooms, its chemistry labs, its gyms. We slept on the same campus, which had beds and mattresses, but no kitchens. Each group had to cook for itself. So I set up a small kitchen in a chemistry laboratory to prepare, once a day at least, a hot meal. Just to tell you about the difficulties of this first ISTA, whose working conditions no one knew in advance.

Eugenio was keen to have in Bonn people and masters who were truly interested in his search for the technical origins of the actor's preparation in different cultures. He had invited people from Bali, Japan, India and China. Working on Asian theatre I was of course extremely interested. But Eugenio explained to me that I could not take part because I was not yet a professor. However, he sent me a letter proposing an exchange. He downgraded me from Eisenstein, that is, from amateur video, as I sometimes liked to do, to Cartier Bresson, photographer. I had, however, to follow him from six in the morning to eleven in the evening and photograph the activities of ISTA. And what is more, with a tape recorder to memorise everything he said and was told.

I was not an expert photographer, but I could get by. And given my interest in theatre, I didn't think twice about it. Bonn offered me extraordinary possibilities. I photographed performances for the press, work sessions, including the morning training with participants and the encounters where the masters compared their technical procedures. I acquired lots more photos at subsequent ISTAs and these became a key part of a book: *Anatomia del teatro. Un dizionario di antropologia teatrale*¹ was the consequence of my

1. Nicola Savarese. 1983. *Anatomia del teatro. Un dizionario di antropologia teatrale*. La Casa Usher, Florence. This book was reworked several times and twenty years later came to its final version: Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese. 2005. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer*. Routledge: Abingdon.

entering ISTA through a somewhat special door, which was neither that of participant, nor of professor, nor professional photographer.

At ISTA in Bonn, each of us had to do some practical work. I took it upon myself to prepare food for the scholars. I had to do the shopping, go to the supermarket, have the photographs developed and many other practical tasks. Above all, I had to follow the classes of the Indians, the Japanese, the Balinese, the Chinese, the singing and music lessons and Eugenio's morning training sessions with participants. This kaleidoscope, fortunately, lasted a month. If it had lasted a week I wouldn't have gathered anything. But I experienced the discomfort that anyone who works with images knows well: when taking a picture, there are always windows, chairs, heaters in the background, all things that 'spoil' the image. This was a big problem. The school was not a photographic studio.

But there was an even greater one: following the activities without knowing in which direction they were going. In fact, the teachers had to work on what Eugenio has always prioritised - on the experience of their first day, when a pupil introduces himself to the teacher and takes his first steps. These first steps, in Eugenio's vision, represent an imprinting. They contain that *bios*, that DNA which marks the actors, their presence or luminescence throughout their entire life. So, on the one hand, I had to learn to be aware of all this in this initial phase of teaching; on the other hand, first steps always involve some tumbles and you have to be ready to note those too. It is really difficult if you see it for the first time. I have attended all the ISTAs and only after many sessions have I begun to understand, to *see* how all this works.

How did Eugenio behave in all this? In the same way as at all ISTAs, and which is the foundation of his relationship with the teachers and other theatrical realities. Eugenio talked with the teachers after work, in the evening after dinner, stealing time from both his and from the teachers' sleep. He collected what later became key words in the language of theatre anthropology. How did you say "energy" in Balinese? And in Japanese, in Indian, in Chinese... Thus he tried to understand those nodes, those pivots through which the work of an actor is articulated. The master sets them as rules; for a student starting out they are transitions and he must know how to solve a certain problem.

All this is based on the practice of seeing. Hence ISTA as *school to learn to see*, but also of understanding terminology, because there are indications and know-how that are not transmitted by example only, but also with words. Eugenio collected words. He went around with his notebook piling up these foreign words, reworking them and when he spoke to the participants, he tried to bridge the gap between teachers and pupils, bringing these words back to the terminology of the history and techniques of Western theatre, to his experiences with Odin Teatret, to his readings, to Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Vakhtangov and Eisenstein. It was such an ocean of information, and shipwreck was the most beautiful thing you could ever experience, losing yourself in this ocean that for the first time came towards you like a small river. Confronting an ocean, you can only drown. But if the ocean comes through rivers that slowly make it grow, you let yourself go to the dynamics of water, you lose the dimension of geography and you begin to see the drop-lets. You go under a magnifying glass that for the first time reveals to you that life which the normal gaze cannot perceive. This was the most surprising discovery.

At the first ISTA I understood nothing. I remember some very heated discussions, but then everyone went off and drew the conclusions they wanted. It's not that I didn't understand anything. I understood in my own way. I had to elaborate an immense mass of information and experiences, ways of speaking and acting. Subsequent ISTAs were crucial.

This school of seeing made me understand why many people want to return to ISTA. It's like walking into a laboratory every day and putting yourself under the microscope. By dint of dissecting a worm you get to know it and discover more and more about it. This worm lies there, hardly moves, is tiny. But if you are patient, it allows you to trace back to the life hidden behind a routine that apparently seems to have no life: repetition, boredom, everything involved in observing for hours and hours without understanding, for days, and days, and days. You lose the dimension of time, you lose the dimension of work and therefore you lose the dimension full stop. If the flower does not appear, if this life is not seen, it is evident that you think it is a wrong path, as many thought at the time. When at that time there was talk of training, of physical-mental preparation exercises for the actor, many who looked superficially at this central dimension of group theatres, said "it is a waste of time, what use is it?" Others thought it was a secret, that somersaults or walking offstage in a handstand were enough. But this too was the wrong path.

The key to the actor's preparation is this constant drip-drip that begins on the first day and continues throughout life. At eighty you still persist with your practices to elaborate what is no longer there, youth, beauty, the prime of your younger years, when you are simply old.

At first there was uncertainty. Eugenio thought he would develop this research in scientific terms deriving from biology, physiology and physical anthropology. How life is created, how it evolves, how it transforms. He soon realised that this was not the way, because the actor's life is an artificial one. This artificiality is based on rules that the very earliest actors called *techné*, art, technique. They do not constitute an exact science, but a series of assumptions, defined in subsequent ISTAs as "returning principles". They are not laws embodied in fixed legislation, but pragmatic laws, as Grotowski defined them. After the first session, the challenge arose to tackle a different theme each time, because clearly the actor's universe cannot be examined as a single whole. You choose a theme, a point of view, a specific situation that allows you to study and analyse a specific field in depth. This was what Barba, thanks to biology and his encounters with Henri Laborit, defined as levels of organisation, which allow us to study the different elements and layers that make up a complex whole.

At the Bonn ISTA a very strong bond was established, not only between Eugenio and the teachers, particularly with Indian dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi, but also between us academics. One thing struck us: we, interested in theory, asked the Asian masters. "Have you read Zeami (founder of *nô* theatre)? Have you read the *Natya Shastra* (treatise on Indian dance of the 4th century AD)?" The artists responded in a strange way; it seemed that they did not know these foundations of their profession, while they knew everything about their teacher, about the person who had handed the tradition down to them. It was a discovery that opened our eyes since we start from totems, from written books, essential points of reference, starting with Aristotle.

The perspective being outlined at ISTA contained the awareness that it was not necessary to generalise on the basis of a theory, books or hypotheses; it was important to study the actor as a person, as a human being, a craftsperson and a treasure chest of experiences. People who don't know each other have barriers that need to be broken down to make contact and establish an exchange. Much of the effort was devoted to learning and trying to make these artists respond. Our curiosity was unusual, almost forbidden for them, because they would never ask their teacher the questions we were asking. At the same time, when these artists listened to our questions, they themselves became curious. They opened their eyes wide because they discovered that there were people who thought completely differently about their work. So they were interested in this reflection, so different from their own tradition that, at least until a while ago, had been age-old and monumental.

A real exchange was created generated by mutual curiosity. They too asked "How do you do it in your country? How does all this work?" The exchange took place on a basis of practical anatomy, of facts that could be seen, of feet that moved, of legs that stretched, of backs that bent, of spines that took completely different shapes. For the first time you saw the actor's body in its separate parts. You had always seen it in totality, on stage, in costume, with make-up, with the lights, with the music, all the trappings that hide the physical knowledge. For the first time you noticed the real driving force of theatre, powered at times by a few degrees of curve of a spine, on a tension that could be strong, soft, moderate, that was in any case managed by the actor and was not left at all to chance. These discoveries for me remained fixed points, stout moorings. They helped me to understand and enter the theatre by a completely different route. It did not open up theoretical visions to me, but it brought me to see the work process, not from the aesthetic result, which is truly the last datum and is useless when you want to analyse the essence of the actor's art or craftsmanship.

So, human treasure, scientific treasure, worlds that meet and interact. What more do you want?

CC Do you think Eugenio's strategy of working on the "invisible part" of theatre was already clear to him when he put this group of people together or did it develop in subsequent sessions? Or was he exploring blindly?

NS Look, and this was the amusing thing, we were all living in unexplored darkest Africa every day. We encountered this unknown world every day and the further you went, the more you recognised this territory. Like all explorers, Eugenio had compasses. What were they? His apprenticeship in Poland and with Grotowski, his stay in India and his encounter with kathakali, when he discovered a theatre where ten-year-old children woke up at dawn and practised by stamping their feet and moving their eyes - a whole universe that did not exist in Europe. Eugenio's long text on kathakali is the first Western revelation of this form of Indian theatre, with a description of the finer details of the actor's training. In addition, himself self-taught, he had prepared his Odin Teatret actors who had dedicated themselves to him body and soul and who had therefore allowed him experiments, flights, returns, which had become a capital of experience; they invented

trainings, new fields of action for the actor. Eugenio came with very practical compasses. But if he had not had this curiosity that has always distinguished him as a scholar - the other side of his moon - there would have been no such path. He was someone who did theatre and at the same time studied it.

This was the reality of ISTA, an intertwining of practice and theory in which two oxen, technical and historical knowledge, pulled the plough. All this was refined in subsequent ISTAs. Bonn was the revelation that this was the way to follow if you wanted to penetrate the curtain of the visible to enter the invisible.

CC *In your opinion, what was the influence on the Asian masters who, coming from completely different realities, found themselves sharing this unusual situation with you? What was the influence of this ISTA as the beginning, and then everything that followed in the various studies and in the various theatre practices?*

NS I continue with great surprise to discover through their students that these expert Asian artists - and even Westerners such as Ingemar Lindh or Tom Leabhart of the Decroux mime tradition - considered their experience at ISTA to be fundamental. In Asia, they do not ask many questions. I took a Japanese dance class in Kyoto with a teacher because I wanted to understand from her how one learns. At the end of the lesson I asked for some clarification. She replied: "Our students never ask questions of teachers, and the teachers don't answer, because these are things that everyone has to keep inside". When the Asian teachers discovered that inside their work there was a labyrinth, a knowledge that came from different directions and that could be elaborated, it was a discovery for them too. One of the characteristics of ISTA was reciprocity, this exchange between such different people. I repeat: between people - not between organisations, institutions, schools or worldviews. But people who wake up at six in the morning, and accept common rules: silence, do not disturb, walk on tiptoe past the classrooms. This life in common that everyone had to respect seemed to them a dead end, just as it seemed to us. At a certain point you no longer ask yourself questions. The situation itself provides the answers.

There is no doubt that the Asian artists were interested. During the sessions in which I photographed them, not only did they help me by offering new positions, but they also came later with books to explain them to me better. They understood the spirit of ISTA. As if you were with Nureyev who brings you a book on ballet to illustrate his poses. On the one hand, you can only get on your knees and thank the gods for having had such an opportunity; on the other, you open your eyes wide and learn in three hours what you would learn in three months. This energy is so contagious, so evident, that you take giant steps. In one sense, there was a moment of long monotonous navigation; in another, you had *satori*, illuminations, visions that enabled these 'links', these synapses to discover things that you would never have imagined. This is what happened.

CC *This working method is based on accepting the uncertainty of paths of which one can perhaps guess the direction, but not the destination. It consists of putting one's own prestige on the line and agreeing, as a teacher, to put oneself at a common level of experimen-*

tation. This is an attitude characteristic of Odin Teatret's story, of the relationship between Eugenio and his actors. How much has this method influenced "traditional theatre" which is based on certainties? What have been the consequences of the genre of theatre anthropology that considers theatre from a point of view never before applied?

NS I could answer this question on three levels: the influence on traditional theatre, the influence on the theatre that searches without being satisfied with certainties, and the influence on academics and many actors, especially in group theatres.

All this would not have been possible if this communal life at ISTA had not had very particular rules that everyone respected. For example, the rule of silence during the first hour of the morning. The second thing, which did not happen in the first ISTA, but in subsequent sessions, was the constant coming and going between what you see and recognise, and what you do not recognise and do not know. Mindfulness and an effort to take notes were required every day to return home with a full catch.

I haven't the least idea what ISTA has given to traditional theatre. Many actors and directors came from traditional theatre and left with elephant-loads of stuff. In any case, what you took away was pure gold, whether on an industrial scale or as a small ring representing your next move towards the things you wanted to do.

Personally, after taking hundreds of photographs and seeing thousands of poses, I began to think according to my own terms. I am a great enthusiast of images and scraps. I cut them out of newspapers, I copy them from books, I buy prints and reproductions. From my ISTA photos and my collection of images and illustrations, a rather special book matured, which I mentioned earlier: *Anatomia del teatro. Un dizionario di antropologia teatrale*. It was immediately supported by Eugenio, and not at all by other academics who tried to dissuade me of the usefulness of a book on theatre packed full of illustrations. Nothing like it had ever been seen before! This book was my conquest, a work that led me to a personal result. As it was for me, I imagine it was for other people, each at his own level, according to his own questions and interests.

Everyone took something home: Westerners, Easterners and participants. Even those who only came for a short visit, two days, then left. But they signed up for the next ISTA because they realised that those two days weren't enough. You have to go through the fire of experience and burn yourself. There is no other possibility. ■



Franco Ruffini. ISTA 12, Wrocław, Poland, 2005. Photo: Tomasz Hotod

Franco Ruffini

Opening a Mental Horizon Interview by Claudio Coloberti

Abstract: Interviewed by Claudio Coloberti in 2007, the Italian scholar Franco Ruffini narrates his collaboration with Barba and his participation in the first sessions of ISTA (Bonn 1980, Volterra 1981, Salento 1987). In a fertile context of scientific and artistic investigation, Ruffini developed his interests in theatre through a variety of disciplines, in contact with different interlocutors, both scholars and practitioners. ISTA sessions made possible a broader investigation on acting techniques and were the context to explore a living learning process, exercising attention, observation and dialectical reflection.

Keywords: ISTA Bonn 1980; ISTA Volterra 1981; ISTA Salento 1987

CC How did you meet Eugenio Barba and ISTA?

FR I had known Eugenio and Odin Teatret for about ten years, from when he brought *Feraï* to Rome in 1970, and I followed all his initiatives closely. Obviously it didn't even remotely occur to me to turn down the invitation to participate in ISTA in Bonn. Apart from these biographical, emotional and even sentimental aspects, the hypothesis of ISTA was extremely fascinating to me. I have a scientific background and I had much more scientific knowledge than the other participants thanks to my degree in physics, even if in 1980 fifteen years had already passed since I graduated.

According to Eugenio, ISTA wanted to explore the principles of theatre anthropology accompanied by various scientific contributions: from biology to physics, to neurology. There was a whole science background that helped to increase my motivation. None of us knew exactly what was going to happen. We knew that we would meet masters of Asian theatre, that Grotowski would be there, and that some Italian scholars made up Eugenio's 'task force'. For all these reasons, not only did it not even remotely occur to me to say no, but indeed I accepted enthusiastically.

I was curious to see how the principles of theatre anthropology, which we knew through discussions with Eugenio and through the few articles he had written on the subject, would translate into an actual school. At the Bonn ISTA, in addition to the Asian teachers, actors and directors from many countries participated as students. We were interested in discovering how the principles of theatre anthropology - which are



indisputable from a theoretical and historiographical point of view - might find concrete application for participants.

So, on the one hand, affection, on the other, scientific skills, even if they proved to be largely useless, and again, the scientific curiosity to see how theatre anthropology could become an effective practice for actors and directors, for doing theatre as well as thinking about it and studying it.

CC *Do you remember your impressions of the first days?*

FR The first days were something terrifying. I don't remember the exact timetable of ISTA Bonn, but we started very early in the morning with a forty-minute run in which we scholars also had to take part. A series of activities followed lasting well into the evening, sometimes even throughout the night. Furthermore, for us - the group of Italian, French, Danish and other international academics - when the collective commitments ended, we met with Eugenio to plan the programme for the following day, to exchange opinions, advice and impressions.

I remember these first days for the smell of the iodine tincture I used to massage the bruises I got while running and training, which was extremely tiring for the actors who did it, but also for those few of us, me included, who tried to follow them.

Our life was collective. We slept in communal dormitories and there was no possibility of rest, of that kind of break normal for scholars: retreating behind your desk, into your own little room with books to think. The commitment was intense, to the point of causing a kind of physical and mental exhaustion. I must say that the Bonn ISTA lasted a month and after the first days when stress prevailed over all other reactions, each of us was truly able to experience that the 'second wind' is not a figment of imagination. It exists. If one manages to overcome a limit of fatigue that you think you cannot overcome, you find another quality of energy, another *souplesse*. So the days that followed were less tiring than the first ones.

The relationship with the teachers of centuries-old Asian traditions was also rather tiring. At the Bonn ISTA these artists taught the basics of their traditions. It was very hard physical work, not only for the directors and actors who did it, but also for the scholars, who wanted to experience the effects and difficulty of this type of practice on their own bodies.

I take this opportunity to remember with affection Ugo Volli, who was the scholar to follow the students' programme from A to Z. As a privilege, he had received a private room, if that kind of cubbyhole might be so-called. I remember him covered in bruises too, completely exhausted by the fatigue and difficulty of facing a physical commitment inexistent in the practice of Western theatre.

CC *When did it become clear to you that Eugenio Barba was tracing the map of a new pragmatic subject that he called theatre anthropology?*

FR From the programming point of view, this was clear to myself and other academics from the start. In fact, ISTA, as the name itself implies, aimed to be a school for studying the implementation of the principles of theatre anthropology.

At the Bonn ISTA, however, everything was very confusing, and not just for me. Certainly for me it was very confusing, since these principles of theatre anthropology, so recently formulated, appeared with what is the flaw of almost all principles: rigid, with rules that were difficult to trace in the various ways of putting them into practice. I must admit that in Bonn it was not clear to me that a map of a pragmatic knowledge of theatre was being drawn, based on the principles of theatre anthropology. I knew the principles of theatre anthropology as Barba had formulated them in his article¹ "Theatre Anthropology". I knew all the implications that came from in-depth analyses and discussions with Eugenio before the start of ISTA. But these principles, at least to me, but also to many others, appeared convincing at a theoretical level, but extremely nebulous in relation to their possibility of practical application.

I must point out a fact that became clear to me much later, at the 1987 ISTA in Salento. Theatre anthropology rediscovers a foundation of theatre-making that is transcultural and transnational, and that concerns - with different forms, but based on the same principles - all the work of the actor and also of theatrical work. For us scholars, the value of theatre anthropology was fully revealed when we decided to tackle how theatre anthropology could be useful for our historical studies. Useful, that is, to rediscover aspects that were not clear to us before: for example, the work and the 'theoretical' pronouncements of the great masters of the 20th century revolution: Stanislavski, Copeau, Meyerhold, and then on to Grotowski.

We began to study, and often to re-study, historiographical problems that we had previously faced, but with the awareness that theatre anthropology did not invent anything, but clarified and revealed pre-expressive principles underlying any type of work, in any historical and socially relevant context of theatre. These are principles that underlie the actor's work and which are then formulated and oriented according to different poetics, tastes and aesthetic objectives. Until this was evident to us, until we got back to our books, our papers, I don't think the enormous scope of theatre anthropology was clear to us academics. At least for me. I must say that the scope of theatre anthropology, not only for those who apply its principles to their own artistic work, but also for those who study theatre, became clear to me when I started studying Stanislavski again, with this portfolio of knowledge.

CC *Why did you continue to attend subsequent ISTA sessions?*

FR Our great and productive, human and affectionate relationship continued, and I continued to appreciate the artistic quality of Odin Teatret and of Eugenio's knowledge as managing and artistic director. Eugenio maintained - I must say, with great generosity - an intense personal relationship with the scholars collaborating with him, especially the Italians. Whenever there was an ISTA session, Eugenio asked me to participate, and the idea of saying no never crossed my mind. A thought that I perceive better now in retrospect was already maturing: "I don't do theatre on stage, I do theatre on books", according to the well-known distinction made by Nando Tavian: *Uomini di scena. Uomini di libro*. The idea became increasingly clear that everything I studied and was

1. Eugenio Barba, "First Hypothesis", *Dialog* 16, 1 (January, 1981): 94-100.

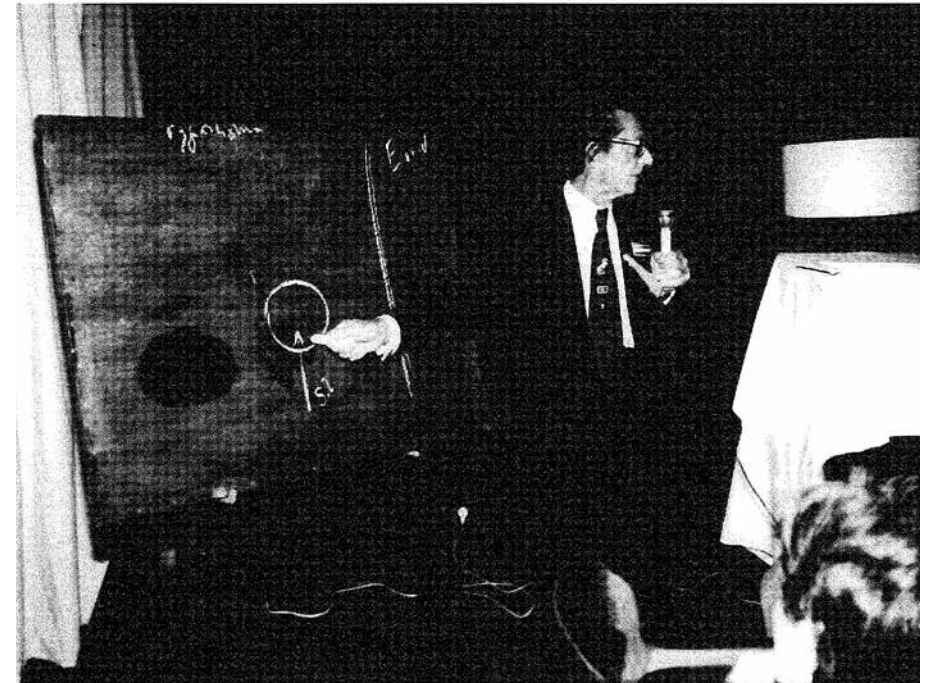
able to verify in the work of the masters and students at ISTA sessions in some way concerned and was also important for my work as an academic of theatre.

All this became evident to me in a conclusive and pragmatic way and, from the 1987 ISTA session, I began studying and writing about the artists who most interested me: Stanislavski and Artaud in particular. There was, therefore, a feeling that slowly, from the enormous effort of ISTA, beyond immediate gratifications (watching Sanjukta Panigrahi or following Eugenio's rehearsals in Bonn and above all in Volterra), I could haul in a net containing fish that were specifically interesting for my own work. This aspect was there, but obscure and hazy.

The Bonn and Volterra sessions were pervaded by Eugenio's scientific passion. One of the stars of the Volterra ISTA in 1981 was Henri Laborit, a famous French biologist who had introduced Eugenio to the principle of the various levels of organisation of living organisms. This principle, that there are different levels of organisation - a cellular level, a level of organs, a level of the complex of organs, up to the global level of the whole organism - is fundamental for those who do theatre and are able to work, isolating one level at a time. When Eugenio works on a performance, he works at the cellular level, at the level of actions and reactions, stimuli and counter-stimuli, of the various parts of the actor's body on the other parts of the body, of each actor on the other actors and spectators, and so on. Then there is the level of interactions and intertwining. Then again, a higher dramaturgical level, of associative meanings and orientations. Knowledge of the levels of organisation is clearly of great importance.

But let me go back to your question: beyond personal motivations and curiosity to see where this story was going. Let's not forget that ISTA was a great adventure. It was a chance to change world for a certain period of time: leaving universities, studying, libraries and entering another planet with a whole different discipline. From a personal and anthropological point of view it was a great experience. Living a collective life never degenerated into a pleasure trip. One sensed that discipline, often based on incomprehensible rules - for example, silence until a certain time - was an essential foundation for effectively undergoing that type of experience. But the real common thread of my motivation was to go beyond the particular ways in which these principles were applied in the different theatrical traditions and to discover how they could function in my field of work. I was looking for a way to use these principles to study history, to understand in depth, to better penetrate a subterranean level of theatrical knowledge which, traditionally, is always studied in the light of theories and various -isms: naturalism, symbolism, expressionism, Stanislavski's psychologism. I had the opportunity to see what "credible body" meant for Stanislavski, what he reacted to when he said his famous "I believe it" or "I don't believe it". Theatre anthropology could be of great help in illuminating this problem. For me at the beginning it was only a notion or, if you want, a hope that pushed me to continue to dig deeper, until all this was finally clarified at the Salento ISTA in 1987.

CC *As a historian and academic, what were the consequences for you of participating in ISTA and learning about theatre anthropology?*



Henri Laborit. Colloquium at Jelenia Góra, 1979. Photo: Archive Jean-Marie Pradier

FR From the various sessions of ISTA and from learning more of theatre anthropology I gained the ability to approach the study of history from a different perspective, with a broader mental horizon than previously. But there is another consequence that I owe specifically to ISTA: the work of looking, the effort of concentration. The academics' role was to be present as observer-participants. For hours and hours the scholars watched. They watched the artists of other traditions at work, they watched the ISTA participants who followed the indications of these artists, they watched the performances of the other traditions that these artists brought to ISTA, they watched Eugenio Barba at work with teachers and participants, but also creating outlines for performances which later became the *Theatrum Mundi*. Watching for hours and hours and hours... This is a specific teaching that I owe to ISTA. Looking is not just an activity of the eyes. Gradually one discovers how this activity, which starts from the eyes, ends up in the mind, in the attention, in the ability to be focused on what you are looking at, even if you often do not understand what you are looking at. One mustn't get distracted by questions and the desire to always have a ready answer. To look passively, but at the same time actively. To look, letting what you look at trigger journeys of the mind, without these becoming digressions that remove you completely from the subject of your gaze: so, the ability to return to the gaze.

This school of learning to see is a lesson in humility for the scholar, especially for someone like me. Of the qualities necessary for studying theatre I tend to privilege

intelligence, in the literal sense of the word, *intelligere*, to understand. For me it is fundamental, even if, in retrospect, I realise that it is wrong. For me the fundamental question is: what does it signify? What does it mean? And the answer to this question.

Of course, when we look at something that is far from our sphere of knowledge, from our competences as spectators, as people who exercise looking, the question of understanding concerns the strangest things. I remember, for example, the Japanese teacher who did not want to pull up her costume to show the tension of the calf muscles because this contravened her concept of decorum, of dignity of the person. All this also flags up the ironic and rather Eurocentric reaction of us Western academics.

So often, what one sees, one does not understand, and you have to nip the question “what does it mean?” in the bud. Without the tools to understand, we inevitably provide answers, because the perverse pleasure of asking ourselves questions is to enjoy how good we are at giving answers. There is this lesson of humility - that to look effectively one must also block questions. Look, look, look and look, until this exercise of looking, with all the related activities I mentioned earlier - including digressions and journeys - gives rise to, I would not say an answer, but a chance to contextualise what one has seen. So create links and bonds that lead one to remember, for example, in the way the Japanese teacher holds her spine, the impression I had watching Eduardo De Filippo in a scene of *Gli esami non finiscono mai* - just to mention something that happened to me personally.

If your question is “what did I get out of ISTA”, I can answer you from the point of view of studies. The opening up of my mental horizon. The idea that this pre-expressive, underground level of theatre not only concerns the practice of Western theatre today and the various Asian traditions, but includes in an almost always unconscious way all the masters of any theatre. So when you are studying these artists, having this mental equipment is a great help.

This was the great achievement of theatre anthropology and of attending ISTA for my work as a scholar. It is an awareness that I owe to the long, very tiring days at ISTA, in which the events to which, as academics, we are invited - conferences, lectures, conversations, participation in working groups - are excluded. Most of the time we looked, and we looked at things that were far from our knowledge, from our experience, from our traditions, from our habit of “watchers”, that is, of theatre spectators. This exercise of the gaze also involves mental discipline, not allowing your mind to blind you with its agility. Because the mind is agile, it asks questions, it formulates answers, it imagines, it is weightless. By contrast, watching is hard going, because one gets bored, gets distracted, falls asleep. Then the mind prevails, to immediately gratify all this effort: “Ah, yes, I understand!” “Ah, yes, this is the question” and immediately after “Ah, here’s the answer”.

The ability to block, to have the patience to experience, albeit in transposed ways, the fatigue of the actor’s work. The body learns slowly, then it doesn’t forget. But it learns slowly. I think that time and the ability not to look for shortcuts is one of the fundamental principles of the actor’s work strategy. As a scholar I rediscovered ‘physical’ work: this long time without looking for shortcuts. This good advice, applied to the work of looking, is a debt I owe to the two most gruelling sessions of ISTA, in particular the first

one, that of Bonn, and then the next one in Volterra. The other sessions seemed much less tiring, both in terms of duration and also in terms of effort required of academics.

CC *Would you like to make a different conclusion?*

FR ISTA has reached its 14th session.² I have attended every session, except the one in France in Blois-Malakoff in 1985 and the other in Portugal in Montemor-O-Novo in 1998.

I look at them from 1980 to 2007, 27 years on, with the risk of nostalgia, sentimentality and fatigue, of knowing that it is unlikely a new session of ISTA will be able to bring surprises or provide methodological and practical conquests of similar importance to past sessions. However, I can say that ISTA has its own structure. The various sessions differ in length, for the geographical and cultural environment in which they take place, for fortuitous reasons. But the structure of ISTA is a mirror of the difficulty and the fascination of studying 20th-century theatre.

The theatre of this century has redesigned the territory of theatre, separating some areas that are within its overall territory. 20th-century theatre has drawn the boundaries of a territory where the actor is undoubtedly protagonist; a territory where the director is the leader; and a territory of the teacher-master, which does not necessarily coincide with the director. In studying 20th-century theatre, the mistake has sometimes been made - and I myself have made it - of believing that these different territories were fighting each other for dominion, one over the other. This was particularly so for the actor’s territory. There is no doubt that 20th-century theatre has constructed a new autonomy for the actor. This autonomy has often manifested itself in studios and laboratory theatres and in the practice of exercises and training, thanks to which actors have found completeness, gratification and a long-lasting strategy for their work, even outside the moment in which their work becomes performance. The actor’s work, for some actors and also for some scholars - myself for sure - has become an autonomous territory of the theatre, while this territory then borders on and mixes with the other territory, which is that of the director, where it is not working for the performance that decides, but working *in* the performance.

At ISTA, one experiences these territories separately: a territory of the actor that is expressed through the work participating actors carry out with the various teachers; a director’s territory that manifests itself through the performance and through the director’s work of Eugenio Barba; and finally a third territory that mixes them both: the territory of the teacher, of one who is neither specifically actor nor specifically director, but who safeguards the value, the transcendence of theatrical work. Participating in ISTA was for me a full immersion, an *in vitro* experience of the theatre to which I dedicate most of my studies: the theatre of the 20th century.■

2. The 15th session of ISTA was held in Albino, Italy, in the period 7-17 April 2016. The 16th session of ISTA - New Generation was held in the island of Favignana, Italy, in the period 12-22 October 2021.



Jean-Marie Pradier

Bananes et mystère

Interview by Julia Varley

Abstract: Julia Varley interviews Jean-Marie Pradier about the circumstances of his meeting with Eugenio Barba in 1975 in Holstebro. At the time he was based in Montevideo, Uruguay, where he had founded an experimental theatre group; Pradier was immediately attracted by the artistic, theoretical and ethical orientation of Barba's research. Pradier invited Barba to speak in September 1979 at the International Colloquium in Karpacz, Poland, on the biological aspects of theatre, in which also Henri Laborit (Albert Lasker Prize for Medicine) and Jerzy Grotowski took part. In turn, Barba invited Pradier to join the founding team of ISTA - International School of Theatre Anthropology, and to participate in its first session in Bonn in 1980. The interview looks back at the intense exchange of these circumstances, and their influence on the creation of ethnoscenology (1995).

Keywords: Theatre anthropology; Ethnoscenology; Art-science; Symbiosis; Vital impetus

JV Quand as-tu connu l'Odin Teatret et Eugenio Barba, dans quelle circonstance ?

JMP J'ai connu l'Odin Teatret grâce aux services secrets turcs. Je venais de faire des recherches dans le Kurdistan d'Irak et j'avais été nommé à l'Université d'Istanbul. Mais j'avais écrit un livre sur la révolution kurde¹, et le Millî Istihbarat Teskilati - MIT - m'a retrouvé. Après un décret pris à Ankara en conseil des ministres j'ai été interdit d'enseignement en Turquie. Le ministère des Affaires Étrangères français m'a envoyé en Uruguay pour y diriger les activités culturelles de l'Alliance Française de Montevideo, et en particulier pour y faire du théâtre. Un jour, une photo me frappe dans le *Nouvel Observateur* et je lis émerveillé un article de Guy Dumur sur un spectacle de l'Odin. Je me dis : il faut que je rencontre ce théâtre. Alors, j'écris à Eugenio : « Monsieur, pouvez-vous me recevoir à Holstebro ? » Il me répond : « Venez ». C'était l'hiver, en 1974-1975.

J'arrive avec ma première femme, Emma, qui était peintre-graveur, et je découvre une petite ville un peu sinistre. Mais coup de foudre avec Eugenio. Il me reçoit très, très aimablement. J'avais un magnétophone et pour l'une des rares fois de ma vie, j'ai su le faire marcher. J'ai encore la bande de l'enregistrement de cette rencontre. J'ai

1. Pradier, Gatti and A Bedir-Khan 1968.



l'impression de me trouver devant un grand frère qui réaliserait ce que moi je rêve de faire mais que je ne peux pas faire. J'étais jeune à l'époque et je lui pose des questions, quelquefois un peu naïves. Je me souviens de l'une d'entre elles : « Eugenio », je lui dis, « ce que vous faites est-ce que c'est du théâtre ou de la thérapie ? » Il me répond par une anecdote : un réfugié vietnamien en Russie Soviétique, pour survivre, donne des cours d'histoire marxiste à l'université. Mais il les fait en vers. Eugenio me demande : « Est ce que c'était de la poésie ou une prise de conscience politique qu'il enseignait ? »

J'étais surtout stupéfait par les textes qu'Eugenio écrivait. De fait en Uruguay, j'avais aussi connu José Ramón Novoa, alors jeune acteur du Teatro Circular, devenu bien après aux États-Unis un réalisateur de cinéma renommé. Élève à Paris de l'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, fondateur de la troupe El Circo, il avait obtenu une bourse du gouvernement danois pour se former à l'Odin Teatret à Holstebro.² Novoa m'avait ramené d'Holstebro du matériel, dont le livre d'Eugenio *Expériences*³, qui est une mine fantastique. Ça a été vraiment une illumination - une adhésion fulgurante - j'ai été étonné de voir mon rêve réalisé. Un rêve que je n'avais ni le courage, ni la force, ni les qualités pour l'accomplir.⁴

JV *As-tu vu des spectacles de l'Odin Teatret ?*

JMP La première fois qu'Eugenio m'a reçu c'était un samedi et il m'a dit : « Demain, dimanche, je vous laisse libre, voyez un peu la ville où nous vivons, promenez-vous et vous comprendrez ». Le dimanche, ma femme et moi nous nous promenons dans des rues désertes. À l'époque, Holstebro, c'était vraiment un petit village. Le lundi il m'a annoncé : « Aujourd'hui nous jouons ». Et j'ai vu le premier spectacle de l'Odin : un spectacle de clown pour des enfants. Mais l'impression avait été beaucoup trop forte pour que je considère ce spectacle comme secondaire. Non, il y avait eu une sorte de coup de foudre. C'est à dire un enracinement. Sais-tu ce que c'est le coup de foudre ? Après on construit là-dessus.

JV *Tu as maintenu ce lien avec Eugenio et tu l'as invité en automne 1979 à un Colloque que tu as organisé en Pologne avec artistes de théâtres et des scientifiques de différents domaines. C'était au Théâtre Norwid dirigé par Alina Obidniak à Jelenia Góra. Pourquoi as-tu pensé qu'Eugenio pourrait être intéressé ? Quelle importance a eu pour toi cette relation entre Eugenio et les scientifiques avant la fondation de l'ISTA, l'International School of Theatre Anthropology un an après.*

JMP C'est une histoire assez complexe. J'avais une formation en psycho-physiologie et soutenu un doctorat de 3^{ème} cycle en ce domaine en prenant pour objet d'étude un groupe de théâtre expérimental que j'avais constitué à Toulouse. Dans mon travail

2. Novoa a été membre de la "Brigata internazionale", séminaire de six mois tenu à Holstebro, à l'Odin Teatret (1974-1975; 1975-1976). Voir : Mirella Schino. *Il libro degli inventari - Odin Teatret Archives*. Roma. Bulzoni Editore. 2015. pp. 69- 87.

3. Barba 1973.

4. Pradier 1975; 1976.

de formateur d'acteurs, j'avais utilisé certaines connaissances en éthologie. Tout en poursuivant cette perspective en Uruguay, j'avais l'habitude de présenter aux comédiens des films scientifiques, non pas pour qu'ils prennent modèle sur la science, mais pour essayer de creuser, d'approfondir la question : Qu'est-ce que c'est un être humain ? L'être humain c'est un corps ; qu'est-ce que c'est que le corps ? Ce n'est pas une notion abstraite, ni de la pure matière.

En Uruguay, à l'occasion d'une de ses missions, j'ai rencontré le Professeur Guy Busnel, un éthologiste spécialiste des dauphins, de la psycho-physiologie de l'acoustique et des langues sifflées... un homme remarquable, un génie et en plus très généreux. Je discute avec lui et je lui ai fait une proposition : « Essayons de travailler ensemble sur cette question de l'éthologie et de l'acteur ». Il était sceptique, et comme tout scientifique, il répondait : « Non, ça n'a rien à voir ». Mais nous avons continué à discuter en échangeant des lettres et en nous revoyant en France à l'occasion de mes congés.

J'ai volontairement quitté l'Uruguay pour être nommé à l'université de Rabat, au Maroc pour y enseigner la psycholinguistique afin d'y achever la rédaction de ma seconde thèse - un doctorat d'État - qui portait sur les aspects biologiques du théâtre. José Ramón Novoa - de nationalité uruguayenne et vénézuélienne - était devenu directeur associé du festival mondial du Théâtre des Nations (UNESCO). En 1978, il m'a envoyé une invitation pour participer à la IV^{ème} session qui avait lieu à Caracas, au Venezuela. Et c'est là, à la porte de son bureau que je rencontre une polonaise francophone, Alina Obidniak.⁵ Nous avons sympathisé et parlé de Jerzy Grotowski dont elle était restée proche depuis leurs études communes à Moscou dans les années 50. Alina dirigeait à Jelenia Góra, le théâtre Cyprian Kamil Norwid que venait de récompenser par un prix l'association des critiques. Elle m'a demandé de venir animer des ateliers pour ses comédiens. Au cours de mes séjours à Jelenia Góra j'ai commencé à lui parler de mes recherches et de mon intérêt pour l'éthologie. Je lui ai proposé d'organiser un colloque international qui rassemblerait des biologistes et des gens théâtre pour les faire dialoguer. Alina était extraordinaire ! Elle a trouvé en Pologne les appuis politiques et l'argent nécessaire. Nous avons conçu la liste des gens que l'on pourrait inviter, et moi j'ai pensé tout de suite à Eugenio. Je lui écris : « Accepteriez-vous ? ». Il m'a répondu positivement. Alina en était très heureuse, car elle connaissait et estimait Eugenio.

Busnel et sa femme Marie-Claire spécialiste de la vie intra-utérine me mettent en relation avec le docteur Henri Laborit, qui est un grand découvreur marginal français, anti-conformiste, pionnier de la pensée complexe, prix Lasker de médecine en 1957, l'équivalent du prix Nobel. C'est lui qui a inventé l'hibernation artificielle et découvert le premier tranquillisant la chlorpromazine - le Largactil - surnommé la « camisole chimique », qui permettait de libérer les malades mentaux de la contrainte de la camisole de force physique dans laquelle on les enfermait. C'est lui qui a révolutionné les techniques anesthésiques avec l'application de l'acide 4-hydroxybutanoïque (GHB) connu dans les milieux francophones sous le nom de gamma OH. A l'époque, il travaillait sur l'inhibition de l'action et venait de sortir un ouvrage important, *L'inhibition de l'action*, chez Masson.

5. Voir l'ouvrage publié par l'Institut Grotowski in Obidniak 2010. Alina Obidniak (29 juin 1931- 29 octobre 2021) a reçu en 1995 le titre de Polish "Woman of Europe" décerné par la Commission Européenne..

Je vais voir Laborit. Un homme curieux, passionné, s'intéressant à tout. Quelquefois mal, mais d'une telle intelligence ! Je lui parle de mon projet. Il me dit : « Mais je connais très bien Jean-Louis Barrault ». De fait, Jean-Louis Barrault, lui aussi, s'est intéressé à la relation entre la biologie et le théâtre. Il avait invité dans les années 60 Laborit à donner une conférence qui a causé un scandale chez certains théoriciens du théâtre. Il faut dire que Laborit était un provocateur, souvent sans le vouloir vraiment. Les hautes instances du corps médical français lui en voulaient beaucoup au point de s'être opposées à sa candidature au prix Nobel de médecine.⁶

Nous nous retrouvons du 12 au 16 septembre 1979 aux pieds des monts des Géants dans un bel hôtel de Karpacz, ville touristique située à proximité de Jelenia Góra. Eugenio, Grotowski, Laborit, Busnel, Janusz Degler, professeur à l'Université de Wrocław, Abraham Moles, des acteurs du Roy Hart Theatre et bien d'autres personnalités. Alina Obidniak, avait rassemblé beaucoup de monde du milieu théâtral polonais. Et là, entente immédiate entre Eugenio et Laborit. Pour la petite histoire, et c'est la petite histoire qui est intéressante car fourmillant de détails masqués, Laborit avait emporté dans ses bagages quelques ampoules de gamma OH qui lui permettaient de récupérer des nuits de sommeil profond. Ce produit exerce une action de relaxation sur les muscles et il est utilisé en obstétrique. Mais en même temps, il a l'avantage d'amplifier le phénomène onirique, c'est à dire de développer le sommeil paradoxal. Au lieu de rêver une période courte, on rêve beaucoup plus, et la récupération psychosomatique se fait beaucoup plus rapidement. C'est donc un produit stratégique qui avait été interdit de vente en tant que somnifère en raison des états euphoriques qu'il provoquait avant l'endormissement. Laborit en prenait régulièrement quand il avait besoin de récupérer. C'est un produit qui te permet de dormir seulement trois heures, tu te réveilles très frais. Aucun effet secondaire, la tête n'est pas encombrée de torpeur.

Laborit était un homme chaleureux et il se trouvait bien avec Eugenio tandis qu'il manifestait une certaine réserve à l'égard de Grotowski. Sans doute parce qu'étant lui-même très narcissique, il n'aimait pas les personnes qu'il percevait comme tel. Il voyait en Grotowski un personnage mystérieux, un peu prophète. Nous étions en 1979 à l'époque donc du théâtre des sources poursuivi par Grotowski qui, je crois, a souffert de cette perception fondée sur les apparences.

Au cours des sessions animées du colloque, nous avons abordé des problèmes de fond. Pour Busnel « la science ne donne pas des explications, elle pose des questions. Elle ouvre des portes que l'on croyait fermées ». Cela plaisait à Eugenio. Contrairement à ce que l'on a pu écrire, notamment certains philosophes français, Eugenio n'est pas un scientifique.⁷ Il demande à la science de nourrir son imagination et de l'aider à poser les questions de façon différente. Laborit d'un autre côté, a exposé la notion de niveau d'organisation en disant quelque chose de très simple : « Il ne faut pas perdre de vue que le vivant, l'organisme, est un système complexe dynamique ouvert, dont les éléments constitutifs se situent à plusieurs niveaux d'organisation. Il convient d'en entreprendre l'étude à partir du niveau le plus élémentaire. Par exemple de la molécule, et petit

à petit, on va complexifier cet ensemble par addition d'éléments en interaction. Les molécules vont parvenir au niveau comportemental, mais en passant par toute une série d'intermédiaires jusqu'au contexte environnemental large ». Pour Eugenio, c'était un modèle épistémologique et non pas une pure abstraction.

À partir de 1979 Eugenio et Laborit vont se voir régulièrement. Quand Eugenio vient à Paris, il rend visite au laboratoire d'eutonologie de Laborit, qui était un laboratoire marginal alternatif situé dans une annexe de l'hôpital Boucicaut à Paris, financé par l'un de ses amis. Le laboratoire d'eutonologie de Laborit c'était l'équivalent de l'Odin Teatret, une sorte de coopérative en labeur constant, avec un grand leader, et avec toutes ses complexités et relations.

JV *Te rappelles-tu si Eugenio à Jelenia Góra parlait déjà d'anthropologie théâtrale ?*

JMP Non, Eugenio n'a rien dit sur l'anthropologie théâtrale à cette époque-là. Il était complètement concentré sur ce dialogue avec les scientifiques et ce qu'ils faisaient, car il imaginait des points de contact. Je me souviens très bien de son intervention dont le thème était proche de son article *Théâtre Culture*⁸ publié la même année à Mexico. Eugenio mettait l'accent sur le fait qu'une véritable histoire du théâtre n'est pas encore réalisée parce que les historiens s'intéressent à l'objet et non pas à ceux qui le font. Ça, je m'en souviens très, très bien. De même que le nom de « jumeaux terribles » qui chuchotaient ensemble, donnés à Grotowski et Eugenio. Tout tournait autour d'eux, c'est à dire le phénomène théâtral.

Au cœur de la rencontre de Karpacz, était le phénomène du vivant. Qu'est-ce qui fait que des êtres humains trouvent du plaisir et la nécessité de se mettre face à face et d'échanger entre gens qui savent et qui maîtrisent quelque chose, et les autres qui acceptent et qui reçoivent. Eugenio m'a raconté par la suite que quand il avait invité Jean-Louis Barrault à l'Odin Teatret après les événements de '68 pour donner un séminaire, Barrault lui avait dit la même chose en des termes plus romantiques. Et il m'a avoué que ce sentimentalisme l'avait irrité.

JV *Octobre 1980, Eugenio organise la première ISTA à Bonn et t'invite à participer. Pourquoi as-tu accepté de rester un mois à Bonn ? Savais-tu ce que Eugenio ferait ?*

JMP On revient à la logique du coup de foudre, qui peut être intellectuel, esthétique et cetera. Quand Eugenio m'invite, je me dis, « C'est extraordinaire. Nous allons réaliser concrètement et en très grand ce que j'avais essayé de faire en Uruguay ». Il me propose d'intervenir librement dans les temps libres laissés aux initiatives : « Tu feras ce que tu veux, comme tu le sens ». Eugenio avait rassemblé autour de lui pour la première fois dans l'histoire du théâtre des artistes, des danseurs, des scientifiques, des psychologues, des intellectuels de tous les pays et de toutes les cultures. Une tribu de gens qui venaient d'horizons différents. Parmi tous ces gens différents je l'étais à ma manière.

6. Anecdote rapportée par Rouleau 1982. p. 184

7. Pradier. 2000, pp. 57-78

8. Barba 1999.

Alors qu'est-ce que je fais avec ma naïveté ? Je rassemble les films scientifiques que j'utilisais en Uruguay. Cela allait depuis un film sur un accouchement, parce que rien n'est plus extraordinaire que de voir une naissance. Quand on parle du vivant, il faut voir cette sorte de moment animal et spirituel très intense qui fait que la vie - le petit humain - sort de la matrice d'une femme. C'est quelque chose d'unique. J'avais pris aussi un film ethnographique très choquant sur l'excision pour montrer comment on pouvait porter atteinte au vivant et notamment les femmes dès l'adolescence. J'arrive à Bonn, et l'on se trouve dans une ébriété totale. Une sorte d'enthousiasme comme tu ne peux pas imaginer, et qui tenait debout grâce à une structure qui est la marque d'ailleurs d'Eugenio, de son Odin Teatret et de l'ISTA. Une structure précise et fervente. Avec des réunions à 6h moins 10 le matin avec l'équipe, où il fallait parler de façon très concise sur les points à régler, qui tenaient autant au contenu, aux activités, à l'organisation, comme aux problèmes personnels et à la communication.

JV *Qui était l'équipe qui participait ?*

JMP Les intellectuels, surtout les amis italiens. Et moi-même qui venait du Maroc. Je me souviens de ces 6h moins 10 où l'on arrivait à la fois très excités, pleins d'énergie et en même temps fatigués parce qu'on s'était couché le soir vers minuit, quelquefois plus tard. Toute la journée il y avait une intense activité. Cela tenait à une sorte de paradis et d'enfer en même temps : le paradis puisque on travaillait dans une sorte d'exaltation, de don - car j'avais la sensation que je recevais énormément - et l'enfer car j'étais trop fatigué pour pouvoir tout absorber. Il y a eu des moments qui se sont gravés en nous, dans notre inconscient, que je retrouve maintenant dans ce que j'écris. Mais sur le moment, j'étais étourdi de fatigue. Je me souviens qu'Eugenio était tendu comme une corde d'acier et qu'il avait même eu des insomnies.

JV *Et toi, tu te rappelles les niveaux d'organisation ? Eugenio a parlé de ça ? Et comment s'est créé la relation entre niveaux d'organisation et la définition d'anthropologie théâtrale qu'il a donné ? C'est déjà dans la première ISTA qu'il a commencé à développer ce concept ?*

JMP Alors là, il y a une histoire très intéressante qui a fait l'objet d'ailleurs d'une partie de la thèse de Raphaëlle Doyon.⁹ Ce sont les différentes définitions de l'anthropologie théâtrale qu'a donnée Eugenio. Sans se rendre compte de ce qu'il pouvait provoquer de malentendus, Eugenio donne comme première définition de l'anthropologie théâtrale, une référence au comportement et à la dimension biologique et culturelle de tout être humain et de l'être en représentation. Cette référence est en fait empreinte de ce qu'il a pu engranger au contact de Laborit et Busnel. A l'époque, « biologie » et « neurophysiologie » chez les littéraires et chez les théoriciens du théâtre étaient des mots obscènes, parce qu'ils sont synonymes de réductionnisme. Laborit, lui-même, dans sa collaboration au film *Mon oncle d'Amérique* d'Alain Resnais donne l'image que les sciences veulent tout régler et expliquer. Ce qui n'était pas du tout l'intention de ces biologistes.

9. Doyon 2008, vol. 1, 197 et s.

Nous sommes des êtres humains, nous nous exprimons quelquefois de façon maladroite et on ne sait jamais comment l'autre va nous comprendre. Eugenio en fait, commence à analyser dans sa tête son travail avec ses acteurs en se référant à la notion de niveau d'organisation. Il en est venu à parler explicitement de la pré-expressivité avec nous les « intellectuels » l'été 1987, lors de la cinquième session de l'ISTA, dans le Salento. Il testait devant nous et avec nous un terme qui en toute logique, devait correspondre dans l'activité de l'acteur au travail du scientifique attentif au domaine de la biologie moléculaire et non pas simplement à celui des « comportements ». Je me souviens de réunions agitées. Cette évidence n'était pas partagée par tous.

Quand Laborit meurt, je publie dans *Théâtre public* un article sur le Colloque de Karpacz et les relations entre Eugenio, la pré-expressivité et Laborit.¹⁰ Dans le même numéro il y a mon ami Patrice Pavis, qui lui, venant d'une formation littéraire, au départ spécialiste de la langue et de la culture allemande, critique la notion de pré-expressivité.¹¹ De même que d'autres philosophes français cependant amateurs de théâtre. Pour quelles raisons ? Parce qu'il a deux logiques très différentes.

La notion de pré-expressivité chez Eugenio est typique de son style d'écriture qui exige de la part du lecteur de connaître le processus de sa pensée. Dans la notion de pré-expressivité, si l'on s'arrête au mot, et bien cela peut paraître une absurdité. C'est ce que relève Patrice Pavis dans son article. Donc, dans le même numéro de revue tu trouves la critique de la notion de pré-expressivité, avec un titre très dur, « Un canoë à la dérive », qui joue sur le titre du livre d'Eugenio.¹² Et puis mon explication qui souligne que ce qui intéresse Grotowski, Barba mais aussi Stanislavski et bien d'autres : ce processus qui fait que par étape tu vois émerger une mémoire presque génétique, établie au fil de millions d'années, qui par complexité croissante se manifeste chez un acteur, une actrice présente sur le plateau et frapper le spectateur.

JV *Dans l'ISTA, ce n'était pas tellement l'Odin Teatret qui était présent, mais les acteurs/danseurs Asiatiques. Qu'est-ce que ça a signifié pour toi leur présence dans tout ce discours ?*

JMP Pour moi l'ISTA a été l'expérience la plus riche de mon existence. Pourquoi ? Parce que je me trouvais en milieu international. Je venais de l'Uruguay, du Maroc, je parlais l'anglais, l'espagnol, il y avait beaucoup de latinos, je pouvais discuter avec eux. Je me sentais bien. Je me sens bien avec les Français, mais je me sentais encore mieux avec des étrangers. La vie était grouillante. J'ai vécu une empathie immédiate, profonde avec les Asiatiques que je connaissais mal ; je connaissais beaucoup plus le Proche-Orient. Avec les Japonais et les Japonaises j'ai ressenti une appétence globale spontanée, à tel point que Barba, qui donnait des tâches à chacun d'entre nous, m'a chargé de m'occuper d'eux qui se sentaient un peu mal à l'aise. Il y a de fait des sensibilités culturelles qui font que, entre l'Indien et le Japonais - par exemple - le courant ne passe pas très bien quelquefois. Les Balinais étaient tout à fait dans leur monde. On était là dans un milieu,

10. Pradier 1995.

11. Pavis 1995.

12. Barba 1993; 2004.

un espace, qui montrait les limites de ce que l'on appelle l'interculturalité. L'important dans les rapports entre mentalités, entre cultures, entre histoires et même peut être entre sexes, eh bien, ce n'est pas la quête d'une fusion de type amoureuse, mais c'est la gestion des malentendus pour les rendre créatifs. C'est à dire ? Travailler sur l'artifice, ce qui n'est pas une notion occidentale, pas du tout puisque pour nous l'artifice c'est le contraire de la vérité. Et travailler sur les codes. Essayer de ne pas s'accepter avec une fausse tendresse, mais tout d'abord savoir se respecter et reconnaître les territoires. Et il y avait ça, à l'ISTA, par le travail, l'œuvre commune.

JV *Qu'est ce qui s'est passé avec les Japonais ? Que faisais-tu avec eux ? Car les Japonais ne vivaient pas dans le même lieu des autres.*

JMP C'est exact. Ils logeaient ailleurs et avaient leur propre nourriture. Ils étaient arrivés avec d'énormes valises sur roues pleines de sachets de poisson séché et de nourriture spéciale. L'une des caractéristiques de l'ISTA, également, c'est le travail à l'excès, des conditions spartiates, quasi monacales, et toutefois un souci de bonne nourriture. Cela me convenait. Je dois dire que dans mon adolescence, j'ai vécu dans un monastère. J'y ai passé une période de ma vie et je crois que si je me suis senti en accord profond avec l'Odin Teatret, c'est qu'en sortant du baccalauréat plutôt que de partir courir le monde, j'ai voulu m'immerger dans un monastère qui m'a accueilli aimablement, alors que je ne voulais pas devenir ni prêtre, ni rien de cet ordre. J'ai vécu chez les Frères mineurs, les franciscains, et, tu vois, j'ai fait l'apprentissage à la fois de la solitude, du métier, et de la révolte. Mais en même temps de l'ordre et de l'auto-discipline. De l'autorité aussi. Autorité qui choquait certains participants nord-américains de l'ISTA.

Pour moi ce contexte était tout à fait naturel. Je me trouvais non pas revenant au couvent, mais c'était presque ça. Une abbaye de Thélème, mixte, où on fait des choses passionnantes qui nourrissent l'imagination, où les chimères ne sont pas interdites, et en même temps tout est ascétique et plaisir, fondé sur des périodes d'exercices réguliers exactement comme la prière dans un monastère. A l'ISTA il y avait des périodes de silence. Quelle merveille ! Un lieu réservé à la méditation et au travail personnel ce qui avait pour effet d'éviter ces relations de fausse convivialité qui naissent tout simplement du gréganisme propre aux festivals et aux colloques. En même temps une sorte d'égalitarisme, car nous logions en dortoir. On voyait donc l'intimité des collègues. A l'époque j'étais jeune, et les collègues aussi. Quand on vieillit, on est plus sur sa réserve. Mais on entendait roter les collègues, ils pétaient la nuit, on les voyait nus ou dans de drôles de pyjama. On les voyait se traîner fatigués, avec les yeux comme ça. Il y avait cette sorte d'humilité. Si j'insiste sur ce détail, c'est que l'ISTA était l'apprentissage de l'humilité. Mais l'humilité est une vertu scientifique.

Nous étions très fatigués et nos fessiers aussi étaient fatigués. Il y avait le matin le training avec Eugenio et Toni Cots, les « maîtres orientaux ». Il y avait les démonstrations qui duraient des heures, c'était très long, tu es là et Eugenio travaillait devant nous sans arrêt. Quelquefois on voyait que ses questions n'étaient pas comprises, mais il s'acharnait quand même. Quelquefois il donnait des consignes qui s'avéraient très rigolotes. Il demanda par exemple à une danseuse Japonaise de réduire un geste, c'est-

à-dire de le miniaturiser en lui conservant la même énergie. Kazuko Azuma, après de longues palabres avec la traductrice, chuchota : « Réduire, mais qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ? » Eugenio expliqua : « utiliser seulement un quart du geste ». Mais pour les Japonais 1/4 signifiait une mesure très précise. Comment peut-on réduire son geste d'un quart ou d'un dixième ou d'un quinzième ? D'un autre côté, il y avait toujours quelques participants qui estimaient que tout cela était absurde.

JV *Et Sanjukta Panigrahi, la danseuse indienne, tu te rappelles d'elle ?*

JMP Ah... Sanjukta ! C'était le côté paradisiaque. Du matin au soir, on était dans la beauté, dans l'esthétique, le *rasa*. On jouissait. C'était un luxe incroyable. Je me disais : « Mais ce n'est pas possible ! ». Vivre avec des Indiens, des Balinais, des Japonais, des Chinois, en entendant les différents musiciens jouer dans leurs chambres. Il y avait Sanjukta qui passait dans les couloirs et même quand elle marchait, elle était séduisante. Dans ses démonstrations, Sanjukta donnait l'impression qu'elle jouait uniquement pour toi. Il y avait la grâce, le caractère extrêmement réservé, aristocratique au sens grec du terme, *aristos*, le meilleur. Il y avait là le meilleur, la simplicité, la perplexité.

Au début, Sanjukta était perdue, elle ne comprenait pas non plus. Personne ne comprenait. Les Balinais étaient dans leur monde, bon ; ils sortaient de leur monde pour faire des démonstrations époustouflantes. Les Japonais se trouvaient en territoire inconnu et dangereux. Eux-mêmes les gens de l'Odin... Je me souviens. Eugenio, disant à Toni, « Bon, Toni » - « Oui ? » - « Fais-moi trois *salto mortale* ». Or, il n'était pas préparé, et ne s'était pas échauffé. Nous-mêmes, nous pensions que Toni allait se rompre le os. Quelquefois, Eugenio appelait son conseiller Nando Taviani, ou l'un d'entre nous et lui demandait d'exposer brièvement un morceau d'histoire du théâtre, une notion. « Nando, viens, parle nous de... » Nous devions être prêts à répondre.

JV *Pendant l'ISTA, vous, les intellectuels, travaillez pratiquement. Qu'est-ce que ça a voulu dire pour ton travail de professeur ? Qu'est-ce que l'ISTA a changé dans ta professionnalité ? Qu'est-ce que ça a signifié pour ce que tu as fait après ?*

JMP L'ISTA pour moi a été une sorte d'apprentissage permanent, en amplifiant tout ce que je savais et en répondant à ce que je voulais savoir. Il y a eu une interaction constante entre mes connaissances et mes recherches purement « scientifiques », et ce que je vivais. A tel point que c'est grâce à l'ISTA qu'en 1995 j'ai proposé la notion d'ethnoscénologie, au cours d'un colloque international à l'UNESCO et à la Maison des Cultures du Monde à Paris.¹³ C'est grâce à la pratique et à tout ce que j'avais pu expérimenter à l'ISTA, cette inimaginable rencontre concrète des incarnations de l'imaginaire engendrées par les cultures du monde, qu'il m'a paru évident qu'il convenait de parler des arts du vivant, et non des arts du spectacle. Entreprendre leur étude sans ethnocentrisme ne pouvait s'effectuer que dans une pluridisciplinarité rigoureuse et méthodique. La position de Barba est très claire : « L'anthropologie théâtrale, c'est pour les acteurs ». Mais ce qui

13. Pradier 1996; 1997; 1998; 2000a; 2001; 2001a; 2001b; 2007; 2014.

est bon pour les acteurs est également bon pour les scientifiques, pour les déranger, pour les nourrir aussi, de même que certaines données des sciences vont nourrir l'imagination des artistes. Donc ce sont des relations de nourriture, tu vois ? Ce qui fait que, progressivement, j'ai intégré mon expérience de l'ISTA, parce qu'on recevait tellement qu'il fallait prendre le temps de digérer. L'ISTA c'était comme un banquet.

En même temps, je me suis aperçu que le phénomène théâtral était autre chose que ce que pensaient la plupart des étudiants, des théoriciens, des scientifiques et moi-même. Quand Laborit est invité à la première session publique de l'ISTA à Bonn les 24 et 26 octobre 1980, au lieu de parler de ses recherches sur l'inhibition de l'action et des aspects biochimiques, qui pouvaient nous faire comprendre la validité de la notion de niveau d'organisation, il préfère parler du théâtre. Et il dit des sottises. Car le scientifique, c'est un spectateur moyen qui projette sur le théâtre ses goûts et son éducation.

A Bonn, Laborit a été ébloui à juste titre. Il y avait en effet cette esthétique du quotidien qui fait que l'ISTA n'était pas seulement une école, mais une totalité cohérente. Cependant, son regard sur les acteurs était moins pertinent que celui qu'il portait sur les animaux de son laboratoire : notre perception est toujours biaisée par nos apprentissages et nos champs d'intérêt. Au cours de la session publique offerte aux invités les spectacles, le symposium, les festins constituaient un apprentissage *in toto*. C'était très neuf. A l'université, tu vas suivre ton cours et puis tu reviens chez toi et tu fais la fête chez toi. Mais à l'ISTA tu as cette ascèse incroyable, tu travailles dans une ambiance multi-sensorielle, et en même temps, tu es immergé dans une esthétique de la vie quotidienne. Même dans le moindre détail, par exemple les nouveaux noms qu'Eugenio donnait à chaque espace de travail, à chaque phase de la journée, ou la mise en scène de certaines rencontres.

A la même session publique de l'ISTA Bonn, est venu un grand psychanalyste français, Pierre Fédida, que j'avais proposé d'inviter. Lui aussi a été ébloui, car après avoir écrit sur le narcissisme de l'acteur, il vit des démonstrations dont la virtuosité l'emportait sur la complaisance à l'égard de soi. Eugenio avait accepté la venue de Fédida - comme celle de Laborit -, parce que tacticien avisé et hospitalier il souhaitait ouvrir le public de l'ISTA et lui en montrer la validité. Je dis toujours à mes étudiants de lire *La terre de cendres et diamants*, qui raconte son apprentissage en Pologne. Si vous voulez apprendre à mener des projets impossibles, lisez ce livre. Vous verrez comment un génie comme Grotowski serait resté dans l'obscurité la plus complète en raison des circonstances historiques du moment s'il n'y avait pas eu Eugenio, ce diable d'homme, qui avait une structure mentale telle qu'il inventait des tactiques de diffusion et d'information pour imposer et faire accepter des recherches quasi clandestines.

Le problème auquel l'ISTA devait faire face, était aussi celui de la justification du coût de l'opération. Un tel événement international coûtait énormément cher. D'ailleurs, au départ, Barba ne voulait pas l'entreprendre. Sollicité après le succès de la Rencontre Internationale de Recherche Théâtrale sur le Tiers Théâtre qu'il avait dirigé dans le cadre du BITEF Théâtre des Nations à Belgrade en 1976, Eugenio avait présenté un projet de budget d'une énormité telle qu'il avait espéré que personne ne serait en mesure de l'accepter. Mais Hans-Jürgen Nagel, le directeur de la Culture de la ville de Bonn, avait trouvé l'argent. Et Eugenio, avec passion, a mis sur pied toute cette organisation

qu'il a appelée ISTA. Comment justifier le déploiement de tant de moyens pour des semaines d'activité qui échappaient aux regards du public, sinon qu'en proposant une partie ouverte à laquelle seraient invitées les grandes pointures du monde intellectuel et artistique et les spécialistes du théâtre.

JV *Mais Laborit a participé seulement à la partie ouverte, non ?*

JMP À la partie ouverte, oui, bien sûr, qui durait seulement trois jours. Tandis que la session « fermée » s'est déroulée pendant un mois. Laborit ne pouvait pas faire autrement. Il n'aurait jamais eu le temps de rester et il n'aurait jamais accepté. Il ne voulait ni ne pouvait pas faire de la pratique. Par ailleurs, ses propres passions étaient ailleurs : un grand scientifique est un obsédé, de même qu'un grand artiste. Il faut tenir compte de cette obsession. C'est Einstein qui répliquait à la fille d'un grand mathématicien qui se plaignait en disant : « Mon père n'a rien trouvé lui, mais vous... » Einstein lui avait répondu : « Votre père n'était pas assez obsédé ? » Eugenio est un obsédé.

JV *Dès la première ISTA à Bonn, tu as souvent écrit le rapport officiel de ce qui s'était passé à une session de l'ISTA et qui était envoyé à l'UNESCO, à l'Institut International du Théâtre (ITI), à beaucoup d'autres institutions et personnalités. C'était Eugenio qui t'a demandé de le faire, c'était toi qui voulais le faire ? Pourquoi cette nécessité de rappeler ce qui se passait là ?*

JMP Les rapports répondaient à plusieurs objectifs. Premièrement, il fallait justifier auprès des autorités le sérieux d'une opération d'envergure ayant pour fin un travail comparatif didactique et de recherche, de caractère international, avec la participation d'une équipe pédagogique interdisciplinaire d'intellectuels et d'artistes, sans précédent. Le rapport avait valeur de faire-valoir scientifique aux yeux de l'administration qui donnait l'argent ; il devait également montrer le bénéfice que les participants en tiraient. Il importait de plus de laisser des traces, et cette revue, le JTA, aujourd'hui en est la preuve. Eugenio a le souci de la trace, de la continuité, de l'héritage et du patrimoine. La trace ne sert pas seulement aux historiens : elle fonde les développements futurs, en tant que modèle d'une utopie artistique et scientifique réalisable et réalisée. Les rapports répondaient à l'ensemble de ces besoins. C'est pour cela qu'Eugenio a demandé aux intellectuels de signer en mentionnant leurs titres universitaires. On ne le faisait pas par vanité, mais pour dire : « Bien voilà, nous cautionnons ». Les mécènes voulaient des preuves du sérieux de l'affaire.

Sur le plan de la mise en forme, j'ai aussi appris une façon de travailler à l'ISTA, qui consiste à mettre de l'ordre dans le désordre. C'est pourquoi, j'ai essayé de rassembler, même de façon schématique, une expérience un peu tumultueuse à la façon d'une infographie. Ma pensée visuelle (je suis peintre) m'a servi à mettre en schéma la dynamique de chaque session. Quand Eugenio m'a demandé d'écrire un rapport, dès la première fois j'ai pensé à la nécessité de clarifier par des dessins et des graphes la dynamique d'ensemble d'un projet qui nécessitait de très longues explications pour ne pas en dénaturer l'ampleur.

Il y a de la part d'Eugenio, un souci d'établir des dossiers, des textes destinés à la fois à la préparation des participants et à l'approfondissement futur de l'expérience par la relecture. La première session publique, extrêmement riche, était précédée de la distribution d'un dossier trilingue intitulé *Le regard qui sait voir*. Il s'ouvrait sur une très belle citation de Voltaire :

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 Épicure.

Il n'y a point de corps disaient les disciples de Zénon d'Élée.

L'introduction s'achevait par une allusion d'Eugenio à l'art du manger :

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 les manger.

Ces propos renvoient à la question de l'unité de l'intelligence sensorielle, cognitive et motrice. Il faut se rappeler qu'à l'époque régnait une approche très intellectualiste du phénomène théâtral. Par ailleurs, et pour revenir aux rapports d'activité, remarquons qu'il y a toujours eu à l'ISTA une part importante réservée aux publications, favorisée chez les intellectuels italiens par le fait qu'en Italie, la politique éditoriale dans le domaine du théâtre souffre moins que chez les voisins. En France il n'y a eu que Patrick Pezin, ce marginal de l'édition qui, dans *Bouffonneries*, a publié plusieurs ouvrages sur les ISTA. C'était vraiment un acte de militance éditoriale.¹⁴ La revue *Théâtre/Public* fondée en 1974 par Bernard Sobel directeur du théâtre de Gennevilliers, a été accueillante aux articles consacrés à l'ISTA et à l'anthropologie théâtrale. C'est peu.

JV *Tu as fondé l'ethnoscénologie. Tu penses que l'anthropologie théâtrale et l'ethnoscénologie ont une importance dans la manière d'enseigner pour le théâtre professionnel en général. Quelle est la différence pour toi entre anthropologie théâtrale et ethnoscénologie ?*

JMP La locution « cognition incarnée » (*embodied cognition*) est aujourd'hui à la mode. Ce qui est au cœur de l'ethnoscénologie, est l'étude pluridisciplinaire, sensible, pratique, des incarnations de l'imaginaire (*embodied imaginary*) dans leur singularité, en évitant les biais cognitifs propres aux ethnocentrismes culturels et académiques. La pluridisciplinarité inclut l'ensemble des disciplines sans exclusion, y compris les sciences de la vie et du langage, l'économie, le politique. Une telle ambition exige la collégialité, la complémentarité des expertises, et la reconnaissance des limites de toute théorie. On ne peut y parvenir qu'au prix d'un programme de formation des chercheurs qui leur permettrait de situer leur espace singulier de pertinence au sein d'un ensemble.

Pendant longtemps, les spécialistes qui s'intéressaient au kabuki, au nô, au kathakali et autres analysaient les textes originaux dans le meilleur des cas, dans leurs traductions

dans le pire. La connaissance des textes sanskrits millénaires pour expliquer la situation du kathakali aujourd'hui est nécessaire, mais c'est en même temps une absurdité si l'on ne prête pas attention au processus concret de leur incarnation. De même l'analyse des spectacles s'opérait sans tenir compte des phénomènes perceptifs. En ce qui concerne le travail du comédien, l'ethnoscénologie considère tout d'abord le processus de leur formation en tenant compte de la nature des exercices y compris des plus élémentaires. Eugenio, à ce propos, avait coutume de demander aux « maîtres » : « Montrez-nous votre première séance d'apprentissage ». Lors de la première ISTA, de Bonn, Tsao, acteur de l'Opéra de Pékin faisait travailler les participants avec les exercices de base très répétitifs qui consistent en différentes marches collectives comprenant des levers de jambe et développés pendant des heures. Tu t'aperçois, que ce petit détail microscopique, est le début d'un processus d'élaboration qui va conduire à la perfection du spectacle et à la maîtrise du rythme.

L'ethnoscénologie associe deux savoirs : le savoir de l'expert anthropologue formé à la pluridisciplinarité et l'expertise du praticien. A la différence de l'anthropologie théâtrale dont l'objectif vise la recherche des lois pragmatiques universelles des arts performatifs, en ethno-scénologie, même si on s'intéresse aux lois universelles, la recherche porte sur la pluriversalité, c'est-à-dire la subtilité de l'invention humaine dans sa diversité tant dans l'action du performeur que dans « la tête » du spectateur, à un moment donné, dans un contexte particulier. Qu'est-ce qui distingue par exemple un performeur de nô d'une grande famille traditionnelle d'une danseuse de Bharatanatyam, un mime corporel decrouisien d'une tragédienne nigérienne contemporaine formée à Niamey... Il ne s'agit pas d'opposer ces pratiques, mais de voir les points de contact et d'opposition entre deux domaines d'une extraordinaire complexité. Nous en revenons à l'image de la gastronomie évoquée lors du symposium de la session de Bonn. Il n'y a pas opposition entre l'anthropologie théâtrale et l'ethnoscénologie, mais complémentarité au sens où Héraclite ou Bohr l'entendaient.

L'expérience unique de l'ISTA en tant que brassage des esthétiques plurielles du vivant par la pratique a eu pour écho, dans mon cas, des projets pédagogiques universitaires auxquels Eugenio - et des actrices de l'Odin, comme Roberta Carreri et Julia Varley - ont apporté leur participation et le cadeau de démonstrations et de spectacles : le colloque international « Théâtre et sciences de la vie » en juin 1984, à la Maison des Cultures du Monde de Paris ; l'université internationale d'été « Pratiques spectaculaires et sciences de la vie » en 1989 à l'Abbaye-aux-Dames de Saintes ; la seconde université internationale d'été en 1991 « Émotions et complexité », toujours à Saintes. Actions poursuivies jusqu'à aujourd'hui à la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord, des séminaires à l'étranger, des colloques et des publications.

Pour répondre à ta question, je dirais que la référence conceptuelle cruciale qui prévaut au sein de l'ISTA, mais aussi de l'Odin Teatret, et à laquelle je me réfère avec constance est l'énantiodromie...

JV *La quoi ?*

JMP L'énantiodromie. C'est un terme savant hérité du philosophe grec Héraclite souvent

14. Barba and Savarese 1985; Elsass, Pradier and Taviani 1982.

mentionné par Eugenio : la course des contraires. Dans la physique contemporaine ce principe épistémologique a été repris par Niels Bohr avec le concept de complémentarité, explicité dans la devise de son blason sous sa forme latine *contraria sunt complementa* (les contraires sont complémentaires) adoptée par l’Odin Teatret comme on peut le voir sur l’en-tête de son papier à lettre. J’estime que c’est là le fondement de toute démarche scientifique contemporaine et de toute approche non réductrice du phénomène humain dans son extrême complexité et ses contradictions. A l’envers de l’universalisme occidental eurocentré, ce sont ainsi les qualités, les potentialités universelles de l’espèce humaine qui fondent le monde pluriversel, la multiplicité chaotique de ses actions et créations, entre Eros et Thanatos. L’imprévisible.

JV Pour conclure, peux-tu évoquer une image, une anecdote, le premier jour de la première ISTA. Si tu penses en arrière, quelle est l’image la plus importante, le détail que tu te rappelles avec plus de chaleur, d’émotion ou stupeur ?

JMP Ce sont des bouffées d’images. J’ai mon musée vivant, tu comprends ? C’est aussi difficile que si tu me demandais quelle est l’image la plus frappante de l’enfance de mes deux enfants, Émile - Émile Eugenio Anselme - et Hortense - Hortense Judith Lin. Cela tient à tous ces visages, ces voix et ces corps éblouissants qui apparaissent : *Theatrum Mundi*, Katsuko Azuma, Sanjukta Panigrahi, les Chinois et les Balinais - le gamelan et les danses, mais aussi avec l’histoire ridicule des bananes.

JV Raconte-la.

JMP Les Balinais voulaient manger des bananes, mais il était difficile d’en trouver dans les conditions dans lesquelles nous nous trouvions à Bonn. D’un point de vue anthropologique, humain, c’est ça la question de l’art. Elle se pose chez des êtres humains qui mangent, qui ont des habitudes et dont le comportement sur le plateau va dépendre aussi de ce qu’ils avalent. On avait enfin trouvé des bananes, mais elles ont disparu. Les bananes des Balinais avaient été dévorées par d’autres. De conséquence les Balinais ont protesté, eh oui, c’était un des aspects de l’interculturalité de l’ISTA. Il fallait savoir gérer ça. Et pas de façon autoritaire, mais quand même trouver des solutions, des moyens.

Restons dans le trivial, au risque de dire « Bon ! Pradier ne s’intéresse qu’aux petites choses ». Je me souviens par exemple des Japonais qui avaient loupé leur avion avec des billets qui avaient été achetés sur le budget prévu et devaient prendre un autre avion. Et qu’est-ce que cela voulait dire très concrètement : trouver tout de suite les milliers de dollars nécessaires pour faire venir tout ce monde et commencer à l’heure.

L’éblouissement ? Avec Sanjukta, quand elle terminait une danse, j’avais été transporté - permets-moi, une image un peu osée - à l’expérience de l’orgasme esthétique. Je voulais la revoir pour essayer de comprendre son secret. Jusqu’à sa disparition physique, chaque fois que je la voyais danser, je me disais : « Je n’ai rien vu, c’est la première fois que je vois ça. » C’était l’ISTA : bananes volées, et le mystère de Sanjukta que tu tentes de percer avec ton faible regard.■

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Cecilia Hopkins

Aprender a mirar a través del cuerpo y la voz

Abstract: This article ("Learning to see through the body and voice") presents Cecilia Hopkin's experience on the teachings of theatre anthropology in her activities: journalism, acting and teaching. The wide field that constitutes the terrain of the pre-expressive taught her to observe the body of the performers in search of the poetic aspects of the performance. Cecilia Hopkins learned to watch the performances she had to review as a journalist from the parameters of pre-expressiveness. In training she found different ways of developing her acting, directing and teaching, always taking into account the various levels of the dramaturgy that come together in the body and in the voice.

Keywords: Theatre anthropology and journalism; Group theatres; Escuela Metropolitana de Arte Dramático; Buenos Aires

¿Cómo debía observar un espectáculo, cuáles eran los parámetros que debía tomar en cuenta? Esto fue lo primero que me pregunté el día en que me encomendaron escribir críticas de teatro y yo acepté. Habiendo estudiado actuación y danza, luego de concluir la carrera de Letras, pensé que el periodismo era un buen lugar para conjugar ambos campos de interés. Lo que no había calculado era que lo primero que me pediría el editor serían críticas teatrales y no entrevistas a actores, directores o dramaturgos, como yo deseaba.

¿Cómo se realiza la crítica de un espectáculo? Dado que los periodistas experimentados me aseguraron que se aprendía con la práctica, le puse empeño a la tarea. Así entonces, como cronista de *Página/12* comencé en los años '90 a frecuentar las salas de Buenos Aires como nunca antes lo había hecho. Aunque yo siempre había sido una entusiasta espectadora de teatro, no había llegado a tener tan claro el panorama de la actividad de esta ciudad.

Por entonces, tanto en el circuito comercial o empresarial como en el circuito de las salas oficiales (nacionales o municipales), había ido perdiendo fuerza la tendencia al realismo y al naturalismo y cierta experimentación ya era bienvenida en sus escenarios. La conciencia de los aspectos plásticos y sonoros del espectáculo ya se había desprendido de la tiranía del texto. No obstante, en el campo de la actuación primaban las formas tradicionales.

Los registros de actuación que veía en esos ámbitos me ponían en aprietos: la mayoría ilustraba la obra que había escrito el autor y, por lo tanto, no lograban despertar en



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mí un diálogo posible con otro material, fuese éste de carácter literario, pictórico, cinematográfico o personal.

Por entonces confiaba en la utilidad del estudio que había realizado de libros de autores como Stanislavski, Artaud, Meyerhold, Grotowski o Barba. Pero esos escritos no echaron luz sobre la tarea que debía realizar. Se me hacía muy difícil separar el desempeño físico y vocal de los actores de aquel texto que estaban interpretando. Me era imposible segmentar ese continuum de acciones y de voces para analizarlos por separado. Pero esa imposibilidad de división no obedecía a la efectividad orgánica con que estaban amalgamadas la instancia técnica y la instancia expresiva, sino a que yo percibía que el todo constituía un bloque compacto que tendía invariablemente hacia la lógica de la significación.

A la par de este teatro existía en Buenos Aires -y hasta la llegada de la pandemia fue así- de una intrincada red de pequeñas salas donde se exhibe un teatro de experimentación. Éste último territorio fue el que más me entusiasmó apenas comencé mi tarea periodística: siempre me fascinó el cruce de lenguajes, y estos artistas, la mayor parte jóvenes, echaban mano de todas las artes de representación. Entre las obras de este circuito alternativo al teatro oficial y comercial se encontraba el llamado teatro de grupo. Y éste fue para mí el elegido entre los elegidos.

¿Por qué me llamaba la atención el teatro de grupo? Porque se notaba que sus integrantes trabajaban en estrecha conexión, porque compartían un sistema de signos físicos y gestuales, una forma de utilizar la voz, un modo de manejar los elementos de la puesta. Observando estos espectáculos me era posible diferenciar los diversos niveles de construcción que había creado el director con su grupo. O aquellos efectos que provenían de la opinión que los actores manifestaban acerca del texto, efectos tales como variación de ritmos, texturas y temperaturas en los cuerpos y en las voces. Esa modalidad de actuación rompía -rompe- con la pretensión especular de un teatro conservador que desde siempre escenifica los hechos de la vida, tal como la vida parece hacerse presente. Esos actores -y comienzo a hablar en presente porque pasada la pandemia este teatro continuará- rompen la aburrida tautología palabra/representación. Y hasta abandonan la idea de personaje. Y comprenden el texto desde su musicalidad y hasta dan por tierra las nociones de causa y efecto, resultando así, algunas escenas clave de una obra, de una duración temporal mayor de lo que la lógica del teatro tradicional hubiera tolerado. En ese contexto poético, los elementos humorísticos se convierten en fundamentales. Porque hay situaciones en las cuales es mejor abandonar las palabras y buscar equivalentes risibles, a contrapelo del conjunto, para traducirlas mejor.

Frecuentando esas modalidades de teatro conocí directores que -en ese entonces y también ahora- rechazan todo abordaje psicológico del teatro por considerarlo profundamente antipoético. Para estos artistas, profundizar en la actuación no tiene que ver con desarrollar psicológicamente aspectos diversos de un personaje. Lo que buscan es sumergir al actor en un trabajo específico, a la búsqueda de una pulsión y un flujo de asociaciones que le permitirá luego al espectador ver multiplicadas sus posibilidades de percepción. Estas cualidades de actuación surgen en el tiempo del ensayo, cuando las improvisaciones sobre los textos son utilizadas para descubrir cómo impacta el tiempo y el espacio ficticio en los cuerpos de los actores. Así se va construyendo un trabajo de

artificio, con la conciencia del actor que está siendo mirado y que tiene que tener una conciencia iconográfica, podría decirse, del uso de su cuerpo. Se trata de un actor que crea formas plásticas en el espacio, previo estudio de la mecánica de su cuerpo. Y que desde allí pone en juego diversos niveles de energía física y vocal para manifestarse en una variedad de planos expresivos que van de lo emocional a lo visual, cuyo objeto es la multiplicación del sentido.

Viendo los espectáculos de estos artistas, pude realizar un análisis de los procedimientos que utilizaban en la interpretación. Encontré diferentes modos de crear el material escénico. Me daba cuenta de que algunos directores o grupos optaban por las partituras de acciones surgidas en los ensayos, algo que yo conocía como modo de creación de los actores de Grotowski y del Odin Teatret, en tanto que otros defendían una cierta “temperatura” que el actor había conseguido para abordar cada escena, intentado preservar esas texturas físicas y vocales del comportamiento de cada personaje, sin plasmarlas en un tratamiento que se podría ligar a lo coreográfico.

Volviendo a mi experiencia como espectadora-crítica, con mis lecturas de los textos de Grotowski y, especialmente, de *Más allá de las islas flotantes*, de Barba, ya había descubierto qué es lo que me había maravillado de adolescente al ver a la española Nuria Espert, en *Yerma*, cuando pasó por Buenos Aires, qué era lo que me llamaba la atención de nuestra Cipe Lincovsky cuando interpretaba textos de Brecht. ¿Qué era ese “algo más” que había percibido? Es, y hoy lo sigo constatando, una energía que fluye, aún en pequeñas acciones. Un actor que no ilustra lo que está diciendo, sino que con su cuerpo y con su voz es capaz de despertar estímulos diversos, independientes del texto que está interpretando. Un actor que sorprende al espectador, que agudiza su percepción porque trabajaba con un cuerpo y una mente despiertos a la marejada de sus propias asociaciones.

Años después de mis comienzos en el periodismo, el panorama iba enriqueciéndose. Y desde el atalaya de observación que me ofrecía la tarea crítica, las enseñanzas de la antropología teatral comenzaron a serme de utilidad para descubrir la singularidad de algunos intérpretes, cuyo trabajo se insertaba en este nuevo paradigma. Recuerdo a un actor de reparto que yo destaqué en una de mis críticas, un actor de formación tradicional que construía su presencia en escena trabajando el ritmo de su discurso a contrapelo de lo que su cuerpo manifestaba, tiñendo la situación de un extrañamiento cabal.

Los inicios de mi tarea periodística coincidieron con la disolución del grupo de danza-teatro que integraba como intérprete. De todas formas, sabía que estaba necesitando comprender a fondo lo que podía ver en los escenarios y lo que continuaba leyendo en *Más allá de las islas flotantes*. El estudio de las fotografías y dibujos que en este libro ilustraban los principios de la antropología teatral me fueron dando la ilusión de que estaba descubriendo un sistema de trabajo para mi uso personal. Pensé -al igual que pienso hoy- que esta modalidad de trabajo me acompañaría independientemente de la edad que tuviera. Pero no sabía por dónde empezar.

Por suerte en 1993, el periódico donde yo escribía, *Página/12*, me envió a Santiago de Chile a cubrir el Festival de Teatro de las Naciones que se desarrollaba en distintos puntos del país. Comenzando su gira por el sur, el Odin Teatret presentaba *Kaosmos*

o *El ritual de la puerta*. Pero llegaba a la capital cuando yo ya tenía previsto volver a Buenos Aires. De modo que, a mis expensas, resolví tomar un vuelo a Temuco, para ver el espectáculo y entrevistar a Eugenio Barba. Era la primera vez que veía al Odin Teatret: el mundo por ellos representado se me ofreció como un jeroglífico a interpretar, a fuerza de ir desanudando las tres historias que lo componían. La que más me impresionó fue la leyenda escandinava de la madre que busca al hijo raptado por la muerte, narración que me invitó a relacionarla con los desaparecidos de la última dictadura argentina. Por más, los pañuelos que aparecían durante el armado de las velas de una embarcación me hablaban de los pañuelos de las Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Luego de aquel primer diálogo con Eugenio Barba, le pedí que me contactara con la persona que organizaba las Odin Week en Holstebro, Dinamarca. Así fue como al año siguiente pude participar de esa experiencia de nueve días de duración.

Mi segunda visita a Holstebro fue en agosto de 1995, durante el seminario organizado juntamente con la EITALC¹ que dirigía el dramaturgo argentino Osvaldo Dragún. Hoy leo los apuntes en mi cuaderno de aquellos días y confirmo que esa experiencia fue de vital utilidad para profundizar las nociones básicas de la pre-expresividad, un campo de experimentación que había comenzado a transitar el año anterior.

Mirar mis anotaciones me ubican en la perspectiva que me permitía aprender a ver. Viendo a los maestros se aprende a hacer y también a observar el trabajo de los otros. Resumo mis escritos: comprendo que hay una cantidad de ejercicios que me dan una valiosa información a mi cuerpo. Se distinguen de los ejercicios comunes, aquellos que lo fortalecen o le dan elasticidad. La diferencia es enorme: estos ejercicios me ayudan a dirigir la mirada y a variar sus intenciones conscientemente, a trasladarme venciendo resistencias y a variar la modalidad del movimiento, lo cual duplica las posibilidades expresivas de mis movimientos. Comprendo que la pre-expresividad finalmente sirve a la expresividad: se debe ser expresivo y no querer expresar. Una nueva conquista.

En esos días queda para siempre en mi vocabulario esas dos palabras que provienen de la tradición de la danza india: lo *lasya* y lo *tandava*, lo delicado y sinuoso frente a lo recto y fuerte. En esas prácticas de 1995, unas partes del cuerpo observan un espíritu introvertido y otras, se expanden en sentido opuesto. El paso del samurai que nos enseña Iben Nagel Rasmussen contrasta con el de la geisha y el movimiento en slow motion que nos muestra Roberta Carreri. Ambas nos entrenan en agarrar, soltar y empujar objetos imaginarios tomando en cuenta diferentes ángulos, a danzar ejecutando lanzamientos ilusorios. Cuánta verdad adquieren esas actitudes que tienen su raíz en lo imaginario. El secreto está en la verdad de los obstáculos que nos ponemos al realizar una acción.

Rodillas flexionadas, desplazamientos guiados por la cadera, pisadas con talón o con el empeine estirado, espina dorsal inclinada levemente hacia adelante o hacia atrás, bastones que nos ayudan a conformar acciones que luego abandonamos -aunque nos dejan su huella en el cuerpo-, acciones que se agrandan o se empequeñecen guardando su corazón energético. Y magnético.

Julia Varley nos explica cómo analizar un texto y tomar sus verbos para construir secuencias. Decimos un texto corriendo, saltando, caminando. Lo decimos como si

quisiéramos ser oídos a tres kilómetros de distancia, como si quisiéramos hacerlo rebotar contra el techo o atesorarlo en nuestro corazón. ¿Cuáles son las calidades que pueden modificar nuestra voz? Hablar entre la niebla o en medio de la lluvia, “arrojar” y “recoger” palabras, seguir el vaivén de las olas del mar, imaginar que somos una vendedora de pescado, un gato en celo o que somos una víbora que avanza sinuosa en la hierba. Podemos decir un texto calcando la estructura rítmica de una melodía sin que lleguemos a cantarla.

A la vuelta de mi viaje, pruebo en soledad unir los impulsos vocales con los impulsos físicos, tratando de adecuar ambos ritmos sin que esto implique homogeneidad. Porque también busco saltos y cambios bruscos. Pruebo crear un conjunto de caminatas diferenciadas por “consistencias” particulares. Las combino con ejercicios realizados con bastón a diversas velocidades y tamaños, buscando diferentes acentos y pausas dinámicas. Luego, mi objetivo es ligar las piezas de este rompecabezas que tiene a mi cuerpo como único foco de interés. Pero, ¿Cómo ir más allá de lo mecánico? ¿Cómo reunir cada unidad, cómo borrar esa “costura” para no dejar los pespuntos tan en evidencia? ¿Será la práctica, la repetición, lo que unifica todas las piezas, lo que le da la pátina de naturalidad que estoy buscando?

Sigo trabajando en mi terraza -no tengo un espacio amplio bajo techo y opté por elegir horarios en los que nadie va a colgar la ropa- pensando en lo valioso de estar presente en cada momento. Procuro vivir conscientemente esas micro peripecias que me invento para que la repetición no me abrume. Alguien me critica: “¿No llevás demasiado tiempo trabajando sola? El teatro es para ser visto por otros...” No digo que esa opinión me resulta indiferente... pero algo que no sé definir me hace persistir en aquella tarea. Tiempo después me di cuenta de que mi decisión de sostener en soledad la experimentación del training me llevó a “especializarme” en la construcción de unipersonales, desde la interpretación y desde la dirección. Y hoy lamento haber tenido poca experiencia en integrar grupos y elencos.

Es que la mayor parte de los grupos teatrales que pude haber integrado eran grupos eventuales cuya práctica se circunscribía a la búsqueda de obras. No desarrollaban trainings físicos y vocales. Iban a la biblioteca de Argentores (Asociación de autores dramáticos) y pedían obras que tuvieran la misma cantidad de personajes que ellos tenían de actores. Como actriz nunca me llamó la atención el hecho de “poner obras”. Siempre estuve cautivada por textos narrativos o por la sonoridad de fragmentos de poesías; me fascinaban los collages de materiales diversos que había visto en los teatros de verano en mi infancia y adolescencia.

En 1996, Iben Nagel Rasmussen, actriz del Odin Teatret, dictó un seminario en Tucumán, provincia al norte de la Argentina, adonde viajé. Allí aprendo a pasar una secuencia creada de pie a su equivalente estando sentada. A contar una historia con mudras inventadas. A realizar una danza de desequilibrios y, cuando estoy a punto de caer, a cambiar de frente. A dar vueltas, paradas y contramarchas.

En ese tiempo voy reuniendo textos para construirles “puestas en escena” con materiales de mi entrenamiento. En septiembre de aquel mismo año de 1996, llega el Odin Teatret a Buenos Aires para mostrar su espectáculo *Kaosmos*, el mismo que yo había visto en Temuco. Se organiza un encuentro con grupos de teatro, para mostrar

1 Escuela Internacional de Teatro de América Latina y el Caribe creada en 1988 por La Casa de las Américas, en la Habana, Cuba.

a Eugenio sus entrenamientos. Ese día me animé a hacer pública una breve puesta que realicé sobre un relato literario. Pienso que salió muy mal porque estaba demasiado nerviosa. De todas formas, cuando Eugenio quiso mostrar a los presentes su forma de dirigir actores me llamó al frente y tomó de base mi narración. Me hizo decir el texto como si tuviese enfrente a un niño de tres años y luego, a un extranjero ubicado al fondo de la sala. Me pidió cambiar algún detalle de mi partitura, a “acallar” el cuerpo para darle un respiro al espectador. “Hablo a los demás a través de ti”, no puedo olvidar que me dijo, una frase que, en vez de envalentonarme me llenaba de una responsabilidad que tendía a paralizarme de miedo. En efecto, estaba tan nerviosa que no me era posible disfrutar de aquella oportunidad única.

Cuando esa misma tarde le preguntaron a Eugenio sobre el sentido espiritual del teatro, dijo algo que me hizo comprender y darle valor a mi obcecada determinación de continuar mi trabajo en soledad. Copio lo que escribí en aquel momento en mi cuaderno: “He oído que Cecilia hace su entrenamiento en el techo de su casa, sin que nadie la vea. ¿Qué es eso sino un ejercicio espiritual?” Así, entonces, reforcé mi tarea.

También me dediqué a encontrar mis acciones a partir de la observación de pinturas o fotografías. Y con el tiempo me di cuenta de la importancia de alternar movimientos trabajados en el entrenamiento con actitudes de las llamadas “naturales”. Entendí los beneficios de componer el cuerpo y suspender luego la formalización, porque esto contribuye a airear los movimientos. Hoy también estoy de acuerdo en que es deseable que todo lo que muestra un actor no sea producto del training.

En 1998 pude participar de la ISTA, la sesión de la International School of Theatre Anthropology, organizada en Montemor-O-Novo, Portugal. Allí volví a hacer acopio de otros ejercicios, otras tareas que me sirvieron para forjarme los principios de una dramaturgia actoral, una dramaturgia no relacionada con un sentido narrativo. Encontré nuevos ejercicios que me ayudaron a ajustar la noción de precisión en el tiempo más que en el espacio. A trabajar en pos de un despliegue físico que no implica grandes movimientos sino acciones personales creíbles, verosímiles, convincentes a los ojos de los espectadores. Reales sin ser realistas. “Sendas secretas y personales manifestadas en signos precisos”, como leo en mi cuaderno que definió Eugenio.

En esa ISTA conocí a Etelvino Vázquez, director del asturiano Teatro del Norte, quien había tomado parte en la primera ISTA celebrada en 1981 en Volterra, Italia. Con el tiempo pude asistir a varias de sus demostraciones de trabajo, interpretadas por sus actores o por él mismo: su claridad expositiva la convertían en una herramienta útil para apreciar los diversos modos en que el actor y director español hizo suyos los principios de la antropología teatral. Una vez más, es posible aprender mirando el trabajo de los otros. Transcurrido cierto tiempo, tuve la suerte de ser dirigida por él en dos oportunidades; en *Emma*, obra de Maxi Rodríguez y en *La memoria de Federico*, del propio Etelvino, obra en la que ambos compartíamos escenario, interpretando a Margarita Xirgu y a Federico García Lorca.

Estrenado después de la experiencia de Montemor-O-Novo, mi unipersonal *Lunario* contenía muchos elementos del entrenamiento. El espectáculo consistía en una colección de cuentos de autores argentinos elegidos especialmente para habitarlos con las formas que yo había concebido. Entre otros textos, *El ilustre amor*, de Manuel Mujica Láinez,



Cecilia Hopkins en *La memoria de Federico*. Foto: Eduardo Gutiérrez

como tenía varios personajes me permitía variar mis voces y acentos. Con *Los dos reyes y los dos laberintos*, de Jorge Luis Borges, construí una secuencia seca, compuesta de poses fijas como si conformasen un conjunto de fotogramas. *No se culpe a nadie*, de Julio Cortázar, fue trabajado estando yo sentada, con el movimiento de brazos y ojos, únicamente. Entre un texto y otro intercalaba danzas con elementos que había usado en el entrenamiento, como cascabeles, banderas, abanicos y bastones. Muy Odin. Tal vez demasiado, me digo hoy, sonriéndome. Pero también pienso, ¿Quién no ha imitado a otros en su camino hacia la singularización?

Desde hace 10 años que tengo a mi cargo las materias antropología teatral I y II en la carrera de dirección y puesta en escena de la EMAD, la Escuela Metropolitana de Arte Dramático que depende del gobierno de la ciudad autónoma de Buenos Aires. Se trata de una escuela que también cuenta con una carrera de actuación y de escenografía, además de talleres sobre dramaturgia. En cuanto a su orientación teórica, la EMAD incluyó dentro de sus planes de estudio a dos niveles sobre antropología teatral algunos años después de establecer contacto con el Odin Teatret: en 1986, durante la primera visita a Buenos Aires del grupo, algunos de sus actores brindaron un seminario de entrenamiento a los estudiantes avanzados. Esta experiencia concluyó con el montaje de un espectáculo callejero realizado en el barrio de San Telmo, cerca de donde se encontraba la antigua sede de la escuela. Al año siguiente, cuando el Odin Teatret volvió a Buenos Aires, el grupo también dedicó a los alumnos de la EMAD otro seminario de similares características. Con la llegada del antropólogo Ricardo Santillán Güemes a la dirección de esta escuela municipal se profundizaron los criterios de la orientación pedagógica ligada al campo de la antropología, tarea que continuó Antonio Célico, el siguiente director de la institución.

Además de enseñar las diferencias entre los teatros clásicos de Asia, como el kathakali, la Ópera de Beijing, el nô y el kabuki, con mis estudiantes también hacemos ejercicios de entrenamiento, dirigidos a la comprensión de los principios de la antropología teatral. Intento que aprendan a distinguir los niveles de trabajo que supone este campo de estudios. Que comprendan la utilidad de la práctica de un training entendiéndolo como un laboratorio personal. Así entonces, en estos días de cuarentena continuamos nuestras clases por Zoom, trabajando los principios frente a la pantalla, resignados a disponer de un pequeño espacio frente a la cámara para intentar equilibrios extra-cotidianos o probar relaciones de oposición sentados en una silla.

En cuanto a las tradiciones de Asia, estos estudiantes de Buenos Aires admiran la dedicación artesanal de los actores de aquellos teatros, lo cual los entusiasma e inspira: se interesan en las mudras del kathakali, en las nociones de wagoto y aragoto del kabuki, de los códigos de maquillaje de la Ópera China. Pero si en años anteriores ellos consideraban que la perspectiva de creación que propone la antropología teatral es marginal en la Argentina, hoy se profundiza esta percepción. Incide el auge del streaming. Pero aun pensando en la reapertura de las salas, aparece el mismo razonamiento: quienes han tenido experiencia en el campo de la dirección ya han comprobado que los actores están dispuestos a la experimentación física y vocal solamente cuando un proyecto los convoca. Casi ninguno encuentra la necesidad de realizar un training sin tener a la vista una puesta a concretar. Claro que entienden que en el campo de la danza el

entrenamiento físico es esencial, más allá de funciones y presentaciones. Pero en general no les resulta viable la idea de convocar a un grupo de actores con la idea de conducir un training que perdure en el tiempo, independiente de un proyecto.

Sin embargo, el rechazo al trabajo pre-expresivo también puede estar presente aún en el proceso de ensayo de un espectáculo. En el campo de la dirección me ha sucedido. “Eso no tiene nada que ver con el teatro”, me dijo un actor cuando yo le propuse un ejercicio para comenzar a construir la gestualidad de su rostro. Estábamos empezando a ensayar un espectáculo sobre un texto del siglo XVIII. Nos encontrábamos en el centro de una habitación llena de bibliotecas y mi propuesta era la siguiente: él debía recorrer el espacio con la mirada, “dibujando” estantes y libros, alternadamente, utilizando como “lápiz” su nariz y su mentón, para luego variar el tamaño y la velocidad de sus movimientos. Le expliqué que le serviría de base para luego sobreimprimir el texto a ese material. Y que así podría eludir todo lo que suele imponer en el rostro la lógica del discurso. Le digo que se trata de un trabajo formalista que ayuda a extrañar una situación común y corriente, sin volverla extravagante. Pero no me entiende.

Instruido en un teatro en el cual el movimiento “natural” siempre proviene del texto, el actor me dijo que se veía a sí mismo realizando una acción ridícula y sin ningún sentido práctico. Su resistencia hizo imposible la implementación del ejercicio pre-expresivo. Proponía, a cambio, decir la letra sentado en un banco, en estado de relajación, con las manos libres para moverlas, en caso de necesitarlo. Fue imposible hablarle de la necesidad de aflojar el nexo con el significado del texto. Fue inútil asegurarle que luego realizaría otros ejercicios que iban a contribuir a despertar en él asociaciones personales conjuntamente con una conducta física particular. Y que todo esto despertaría el interés de los espectadores, más allá del tema de la obra.

Tuve que trabajar bastante para que aceptara la idea de descubrir las posibilidades tanto poéticas como autónomas del movimiento físico. Y sobre este punto insistí en que también me estaba refiriendo a los ínfimos movimientos que producen los músculos del rostro o los movimientos de una sola mano. Hubo que presentar batalla, en efecto, pero finalmente lo conseguí: el actor al cual me estoy refiriendo estrenó su unipersonal y hoy sigue comprometido con la necesidad de mantener “vivo” su trabajo recorriendo los laberintos que fue creando en los ensayos. Comprendió que este tránsito le garantiza a su personaje esa dosis de extrañeza que lo aparta de la obviedad. Y que le deja revelar mucho de lo que no manifiesta verbalmente. Por otra parte, vivenció el tránsito del ejercicio hacia la propia experiencia vital. Amplió su poder de asociación y comprobó que son muchos los espectadores que saben mirar a través de su cuerpo, a la búsqueda de las señales que conducen a una miríada de sentidos.■

LE MAITRE DU REGARD

SYMPOSIUM D'ANTHROPOLOGIE THEATRALE

THEATRE 71 MALAKOFF

20 et 21 AVRIL 85



ISTA

Ecole Internationale
d'Anthropologie Theatrale
Direction Eugenio Barba



Bouffonneries

Facts and Tales

ISTA sessions 3 - 4 - 5

ISTA 3, Blois\Malakoff, 1985

Dialogue between Cultures

Introduction

The first symposium on theatre anthropology, in Bonn, in 1980, entitled *Le regard qui sait voir* (The eyes that know how to see) brought together about fifty international experts. One of them was André Helbo, who successively organised the *Colloque International pour la Sémiologie du Spectacle* at the University of Brussels in 1981. André Helbo invited Eugenio Barba to attend the *Colloque* where he met Patrick Pezin, a young French actor and director who had also just founded a publishing house, the journal *Bouffonneries*, and a Training and Research Centre in Cazilhac, France.

Patrick Pezin became Eugenio Barba's publisher in France. Already in 1981, he published *L'archipel du théâtre* (The floating islands) and later most of Barba's books, sometimes in collaboration with other publishers such as L'Entretemps and Deuxième Époque that in 2021 published *Les cinq continents du théâtre* (The five continents of theatre). One of the important outcomes of Eugenio Barba's and Patrick Pezin's friendship was the third ISTA session in Blois and Malakoff in 1985.

After the first and second ISTA, Eugenio Barba had difficulty in finding organisers who could finance a session lasting one or two months. The costs were considerable. In his upcoming book, *On All Forgotten Faces*, Roberto Bacci, the organiser of the second ISTA in Volterra in 1981, writes that the expenses for the session of two months amounted to more than 400 million lire (corresponding to about 823,000 euros today). Moreover, until the seventh session of ISTA, participants did not pay, and the artistic and scientific staff consisted of about fifty artists and scholars.

For Eugenio Barba, ISTA and the field of theatre anthropology had become a theoretical-practical activity that enabled the development of an environment with exceptional



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collaborators: Asian and Western artists with their ensembles and musicians; scholars from different universities who had become fascinated by the new field of study; and above all the possibility of sharing with Third Theatre actors and directors the adventure of “learning to learn” which involved them all at the same level. It was an unprecedented situation of pure research on pre-expressivity, the level of organisation of the actor/dancer’s stage presence.

The collaboration with Patrick Pezin allowed Eugenio Barba to envisage a very short session that would gather ISTA’s environment again, giving it continuity and prospects. The leaflet of the third ISTA in France in 1985 announced a fourth session that would take place at Odin Teatret, in Holstebro, Denmark, the following year.

Compagnie du Hasard, directed by Nicolas Peskine, had been invited to Odin Teatret in Holstebro in 1984. Eugenio Barba and Patrick Pezin managed to involve him in the organisation of the third ISTA session that took place in the historical castle of Chambord in Blois from the 12th to the 18th of April 1985. The theme was “Dialogue between Cultures”.

Edith Rappoport, who knew Eugenio Barba since 1972 and had invited Odin Teatret’s performances to Paris, hosted the third ISTA symposium, *Le maître du regard*, in dates 20-21 April 1985, at Théâtre 71, a theatre that she directed with Pierre Ascaride on the outskirts of Paris.

Sixty participants and a reduced artistic and scientific staff of only 22 people took part in the third ISTA session. However, the organisers - typical representatives of the Third Theatre - managed to activate an impressive list of patrons: L’Etablissement Public Régional de la Région Centre, La Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles de la Région Centre, La Direction du Développement Culturel, L’Action Française d’Action Artistique (AFAA), Le Ministère de la Culture - Direction des Théâtres, L’Office National de la Diffusion Artistique (ONDA), Maison d’édition Bouffonneries-Contrastes, La Compagnie du Hasard, Théâtre 71.

Wanting ISTA to last over time and give it roots as an intermittent tradition-in-life, forced Eugenio Barba to invent a new structure, organisation and time architecture. One obsession remained unchanged: the establishment of a *u-topia*, a non-place, an ephemeral “performers’ village” where different generations, cultures and specialisations could coexist, share and learn.

Few documents exist about this session in Odin Teatret Archives. But this third session is fundamental in the history of theatre anthropology because it relaunched this adventure despite the odds against it. Eugenio Barba had understood that ISTA could not be the consequence of a demand just from the outside. He had to take the initiative to trigger the conditions for new ISTA sessions, thus renewing the interest in the comparative studies of theatre anthropology.

Here the third session of ISTA is presented by an article by Liliana Alexandrescu and a copy of an excerpt of the Report.■

Liliana Alexandrescu

Odin Teatret revisité

Abstract: *This is an excerpt of the article by Liliana Alexandrescu that was published with the same title in the Romanian journal Dramatica 1/2014, “Eugenio Barba. Celebrating 50 years with Odin Teatret.” Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, pp. 157-182. After two meetings with Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret’s actors, in 1976 and in 1981, the author visited Odin Teatret’s home and was fascinated by Barba’s and his actors’ working model. In 1985, Alexandrescu attended the ISTA symposium held in Malakoff, France, 20th-21st April 1985. The paper presents the symposium, enriched by original notes taken by the author.*

Keywords: *Odin Teatret; Eugenio Barba; Actor; Theatre anthropology; Maître du Regard*

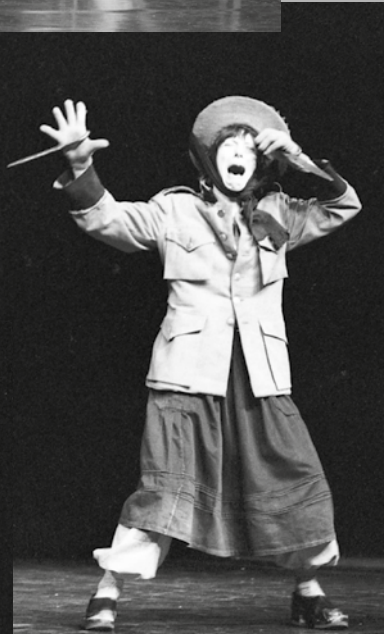
Seules les relations comptent. Ce sont des fils ténus, illusoire, consolidés par les années ou l’intensité d’une rencontre. Elles finissent par construire un pays qu’aucune carte de géographie ne peut représenter et décrire. Solitaires, nous habitons une géographie faite de liens et de nœuds : affections, livres, souvenirs, passions, collaborations qui durent une vie entière.¹

En partant de Holstebro, j’avais le sentiment d’avoir découvert un modèle de travail idéal, un centre d’énergie fonctionnant comme un tout. Pourtant, après l’extraordinaire spectacle qu’avait été *Cendres de Brecht*, certains changements étaient survenus dans le groupe : de nouvelles aspirations, de nouveaux besoins personnels, de nouvelles circonstances de vie. Aussi était-il nécessaire de réorganiser les rapports de forces à l’intérieur et d’élargir le champ d’activité au dehors : « Non plus Odin Teatret avec en sous-titre Théâtre Laboratoire Scandinave, mais Théâtre Laboratoire Scandinave qui regroupait nombre d’activités autonomes parmi lesquelles l’Odin Teatret, Farfa de Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Basho de Toni Cots, l’Odin Teatret Film de Torgeir Wethal et le Canada Project de Richard Fowler ».² *Odin* devenait ainsi plutôt un cri de ralliement, et Holstebro, ancien lieu de réclusion, un centre d’expansion créatrice.

1. Barba 2011, 170.

2. Barba 2011, 203.





1. Toni Cots, Sanjukta Panigrahi;
2. Iben Nagel Rasmussen;
3. Kosuke Namura;
ISTA 3, Blois/Malakoff, France, 1985.
Photos: Nicola Savarese

Eugenio Barba lui-même se lance « dans une aventure solitaire » accompagné par Toni Cots. Ils s'engagent, à partir de 1980, dans un projet de grande ampleur : « Je l'appelai ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology). 'École' parce qu'en ce temps-là tout le monde voulait être un 'laboratoire', alors que moi je voulais indiquer un lieu où l'on apprenait des connaissances de base ; 'internationale' pour souligner une patrie professionnelle sans frontières ; 'anthropologie' parce que c'était un terme qui suggérait des notions de recherche et de sérieux universitaire [...] ».³

ISTA est donc un organisme de recherche et de pratique de l'art de l'acteur, un lieu de rencontre pour les artistes occidentaux et orientaux. Dans le cadre de sessions qui combinent les cours pratiques avec les conférences et les discussions théoriques, sont présentés des spectacles des maîtres du théâtre asiatique ou de certains ensembles venus d'Amérique latine ou d'Europe. On y attire de nouveau l'attention sur le concept de « Tiers Théâtre » avec ses valeurs spécifiques. Nous retrouvons ici l'immense ouverture de Barba envers toute manifestation spectaculaire, de n'importe où, ainsi que sa nostalgie récurrente d'une sorte de village primordial (de nouveau, en transparence, le modèle originaire Holstebro !), un village commun, « un babel de langues [...] » où il n'est pas toujours facile de distinguer les artistes, les techniciens ou les « intellectuels » et où on ne peut plus séparer Orient et Occident ».⁴ La nostalgie d'un espace géographique sans limites, de transition, de circulation, périodiquement réduit à un lieu de rassemblement et d'interférences, se manifeste fréquemment dans les métaphores aquatiques du discours de Barba : l'île, l'archipel, les îles flottantes, les rivages, l'eau qui les relie et les sépare, les navires (Odin est le « vaisseau amiral du Tiers théâtre »), et surtout le fragile, l'indestructible canoë qui vient de ce village imaginaire, « pour ceux qui, même sans le connaître, même quand il n'existera plus, en sentent la nostalgie ».⁵

J'ai de nouveau rencontré Eugenio et les gens de l'Odin en France, quelques années plus tard, à Malakoff (près de Paris), au symposium d'anthropologie théâtrale, tenu le 20 et 21 avril 1985, au Théâtre 71, dans le cadre des troisièmes rencontres publiques de l'ISTA. Ce symposium était organisé par Barba et par Patrick Pezin, ce dernier en qualité de fondateur (en 1980) et de directeur du Centre d'action théâtrale Bouffonneries-Contrastes. Le titre du symposium était : *Le Maître du Regard*. Je cite du cahier-programme : « Le maître du regard est l'acteur. Le symposium développera plus particulièrement le thème de la pré-expressivité de l'acteur. Ce sera aussi une démonstration des principes qui dirigent la recherche de l'ISTA dans le champ anthropologique aussi bien que la pédagogie pour acteurs et metteurs en scène dans un contexte transculturel. »⁶ Une telle confrontation interculturelle directe des formes théâtrales permettait de rechercher et de mettre en évidence certaines règles biologiques qui déterminent le comportement de l'acteur, l'équilibre, le déplacement, l'utilisation de l'espace, les modifications de posture en fonction des actions physiques, la relation avec le partenaire de jeu.

3. Barba 2011, 203.

4. Barba 1993, 8.

5. Barba 1993, 8.

6. Théâtre 71 1985, 2.

Le programme du symposium se déroulait chaque jour de 10 à 13 heures et de 15 à 17 heures, et comprenait le soir un spectacle, couronnement sublime des exercices et des discussions qui avaient eu lieu dans la journée : le 20 avril, buyo-kabuki et kyogen (Japon) interprétés par deux équipes d'acteurs japonais spécialisés dans les genres respectifs ; le 21 avril, une danse odissi (Inde) interprétée par la grande Sanjukta Panigrahi, accompagnée par ses musiciens. Les démonstrations pratiques se déroulaient sur la scène du théâtre, c'est là que se montraient les protagonistes : les maîtres de l'Inde, du Japon ou de l'Odin, jouant un fragment ou une scène ou bien expliquant leurs démarches. Leurs actions étaient constamment accompagnées par les interventions et les commentaires 'sur le vif' d'Eugenio Barba.

Nous, le public, assis dans la salle, avions assez de lumière pour pouvoir noter à la hâte quelques moments des démonstrations, des exercices, des discussions et des interventions de Barba. J'ai retrouvé dans un vieux dossier, parmi les papiers et les dépliants du symposium, mes griffonnages de 1985. (Je pense à un petit chapitre du livre *Brûler sa maison*, qui occupe à lui seul le « Quatrième intermezzo » : *Ce que dit un carnet de travail*. Ces fragiles feuillets, témoins de l'instant, perdus, retrouvés, gardés depuis des années dans un tiroir, Barba ne les a pas brûlés). Je transcris ici, pêle-mêle, quelques-unes de mes notices, fragmentaires, syncopées, dont la cohérence (textuelle) se situe au-delà du vécu immédiat. J'espère qu'elles pourront suggérer tant bien que mal l'effervescence, la richesse d'impressions, les échanges d'idées et d'expériences, de ces deux jours, ainsi que la subtilité et le raffinement de certaines prestations des 'maîtres du regard'. Et j'espère aussi que, dans leur précipitation, elles gardent quelque chose de la qualité de ce désordre positif évoqué par Eugenio Barba comme « l'irruption d'une réalité étrangère et intensifiée », qui bouleverse par moments les points de repère de l'existence quotidienne.⁷

Voici donc les notes:

20 avril 1985

EUGENIO BARBA

Architecture des tensions.

Dynamo-rythme : changement du rythme et du tonus musculaire. On brise le dynamisme du comportement quotidien et on commence à en rebâtir un autre.

(Manipulation du maître : une pédagogie de la 'manipulation physique' et non du 'dire comment').

Travail d'opposition : une partie du corps est retenue, introvertie, une autre extravertie.

Grande vague déclenchée par le 'maître du regard'. Engagement somatique du spectateur.

On apprend à bouger, à danser, à partir de la position 'assise'.

IBEN NAGEL RASMUSSEN (actrice de l'Odin Teatret)

Discipline. Apprendre comment apprendre.

7. Barba 2011, 277.

L'acteur ne doit pas conduire l'exercice, mais bien l'exercice doit conduire l'acteur (frapper, réagir).

Tension, refus (Grotowski - *The cat*).

À l'Odin on ne travaille pas sur le mouvement, mais sur l'arrêt.

EUGENIO BARBA

Moment pré-expressif : l'acteur se concentre, il ne veut pas encore exprimer.

KATSUKO AZUMA (actrice japonaise de buyo kabuki)

(Démonstration) :

La mer, les vagues - avec deux éventails blancs ! À un certain moment elle frappe le sol du pied, elle dit : "Je ne sais pas pourquoi je fais cela".

Deux éventails : la lune, la lumière de la lune reflétée sur le sable, une épée, un casque (tuer, transpercer).

EUGENIO BARBA

L'acteur a une présence très forte, tout en ne sachant pas, à certains moments, pourquoi il fait un geste. Katsuko jette l'éventail. Elle ne doit pas tout justifier ! Pour le public, ce geste acquiert une signification énorme, c'est un choc, une brisure.

KATSUKO AZUMA

(Démonstration) :

L'aube qui se lève d'une nuit de printemps, une mouette, le vent, la vague.

EUGENIO BARBA

Histoire de l'acteur qui décrit et imite : plat ! Chez Katsuko, ces gestes très simples ont une présence (suggestion ?). *Température* unique de cette actrice.

IBEN NAGEL RASMUSSEN (porte le costume qu'elle a eu dans *Cendres de Brecht*)

Les matériaux, les costumes employés pendant le travail d'entraînement, aux répétitions, étaient utilisés aussi dans le spectacle. Elle a commencé son rôle de Katrin, la fille muette de la Mère Courage, par des façons de *marcher*, ensuite de *bouger les bras*, ensuite par des manières de *s'asseoir*. Ces choses elle les a découvertes au cours des exercices, des répétitions. Elle a bâti le costume à partir du pantalon du training. En étudiant le rôle, elle s'est rendu compte que Katrin est muette mais non pas sourde. Elle *comprend*. Elle peut émettre des *sons*. Donc elle a commencé à *inventer des sons*. Elle est allée aux cours du soir des sourds-muets. Elle a commencé à *parler avec les mains*.

[Démonstration] :

À la fin on la met contre un mur, elle récite avec les mains un poème de Brecht.

21 avril 1985

EUGENIO BARBA

Dynamo-rythme : changement de vitesse.

Dilatation : du corps ; de l'être ; des forces d'un individu. L'acteur *fait voir* qu'il est là.

(Démonstration) :

IBEN NAGEL RASMUSSEN et SANJUKTA PANIGRAHI marchent sur la scène (action très simple).

Essayer de relier deux paquets d'énergie, deux phases dynamiques.

SANJUKTA PANIGRAHI (danseuse indienne d'odissi)

(Démonstration) :

Sur la chaise, elle doit donner l'équivalent de sa danse, en se concentrant sur la 'cellule de formation' de la danse, sur l'image mentale et la suite précise des actions.

EUGENIO BARBA

Elle a la mémoire vibrante de sa dynamique.

Comment transmettre l'information au spectateur ?

a) directement : plate, ennuyeuse ;

b) indirectement, d'une manière détournée : le spectateur est surpris, il devient actif. Il se produit donc une *élaboration*, où l'acteur dirige le regard par sa suite d'actions, par ses sauts d'énergie. Le somatique et le mental sont engagés tous les deux. L'acteur doit trouver l'axe, le centre, et puis s'ouvrir à l'espace.

L'improvisation n'est qu'un point de départ, à la recherche de l'intention *profonde*, qu'il ne doit jamais oublier.

TONI COTS (acteur de l'Odin Teatret) et SANJUKTA PANIGRAHI

(Exercice) :

Une table, deux chaises, un couteau dans le vase de fleurs.

Toni : *Hamlet* (scène du couteau).

Sanjukta : *Ramayana* (message au Roi des Singes)

Les acteurs travaillent librement, mais s'adaptent l'un à l'autre. Cela change tout le temps, on passe de surprise en surprise : sauts d'énergie, détours vers un but précis.

EUGENIO BARBA

Comportement somatique et mental, unité du corporel et du psychique.

C'est le grand organisme du théâtre lui-même qui respire.

SANJUKTA PANIGRAHI

(Démonstration) :

Elle danse un épisode de l'épopée sanskrite *Mahabharata*.

Pantomime, chant. Enchaînement et simultanéité : la danseuse joue tous les personnages et toute l'action, elle est crocodile, roi, dieu, danseur pur, conteur, etc. Le chanteur ne raconte rien, il chante la même phrase. L'acteur improvise et construit.

Il n'a donc pas besoin de metteur en scène !

EUGENIO BARBA

Thème : l'*intention* de l'acteur.

Au niveau somatique et *moral*.

Dans le théâtre japonais, rite de passage : lorsque le fils joue pour la première fois un rôle joué par le père.

KOSUKE NOMURA (acteur japonais de kyogen)

(Démonstration) :

Joue *Le vieux renard*. On commence à s'entraîner pour cette pièce un an à l'avance. Au moment où on interprète ce rôle, on est considéré un *maître*.

Pour ce kyogen, il faut maîtriser quatre choses importantes : parler, bouger, raconter, observer (le comportement des hommes et des animaux).

Pouvoir bouger / Ne pas bouger / Ne pas devoir bouger.

Délivrer l'énergie et la faire rentrer à l'intérieur.

Dans un répertoire de 300 pièces kyogen, *Le vieux renard* est le plus grand événement dans la vie de l'acteur. La pièce exige une technique de jeu très avancée, elle est épuisante, psychiquement et physiquement. Un vrai défi pour l'acteur est la scène du renard chez le chasseur : jouer un animal qui se lève de sa position de quadrupède sur deux pattes, terrifié (« plein d'angoisse »). Posture très difficile.

Concentration : une heure avant de jouer, l'acteur, le masque sur sa figure, s'assied dans une loge et regarde la salle.

EUGENIO BARBA

Au théâtre, je voudrais être Caliban et Ariel, épais et transparent.

EUGENIO BARBA (2011)

(En guise de commentaire final : *Ce que dit un carnet de travail*)

Le théâtre permet à l'acteur de devenir un individu "deux fois créé".⁸ ■

8. Barba 2011, 254.

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ISTA
International School of Theatre Anthropology
Director: Eugenio Barba

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AS REPRESENTED ON THE STAGE IN VARIOUS CULTURES

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■ Sonja Kehler ■ Kelucharan Mahapatra, Orissi dance ■
M. P. Sankaran Namboodiri, Kathakali, female impersonator
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Eugenio Barba

ISTA 4 Animus/Anima: The Actor's Energy

Abstract: Text written by Eugenio Barba on the occasion of ISTA 4 to present the theme of the session.

Keywords: *Animus/Anima; Lasya/tandava; Keras/manis; Energy*

Interest in actors who play female roles and actresses who play male roles is periodically rekindled. At such times, one might almost suspect that behind these disguises and contrasts between reality and fiction lie hidden one of the theatre's potentialities.

One also often speaks of the actor's female side and the actress's male side attempting to develop these forthwith by means of suitable exercises.

Certain tensions can be discerned with greater clarity in the world of ideas than in the reality of the theatre. What other hidden tensions, then does this clarity cover?

Sex and profession

In each man there is a woman and in each woman a man. This commonplace - or this truth - does not however help the actor to become aware of the quality of his or her energy.

In many civilizations, it was or is normal that an actor's sex and that of the character he is playing were or are not the same. In our civilization, this occurrence is now an anomaly and therefore becomes significant.

The problem of the actor's natural sex in relationship to the sex of the character he or she is playing is interesting from an historical point of view, as an indication of the customs of an epoch, in the context of the principles and preconceptions of different cultures, their respective tastes and aesthetics. But for the actor searching for empirical elements on which to base his/her work, it can be a false problem. To concentrate on psychological questions, Shakespearian labyrinths, the vicissitudes of repression and emancipation, historical and social problems - all this is useful, but not in order to confront an elementary professional problem: the double-edged nature of the actor's energy implying the existence of an Anima-energy and an Animus-energy.

Anima-energy and Animus-energy are terms used in theatre anthropology and have nothing to do with the distinction between masculine and feminine, nor with Jung's archetypes or projections. They refer to a very perceptible polarity, pertinent to the anatomy of theatre, difficult to define with words, and therefore difficult to analyse,



develop and transmit. And yet, any possibilities which the actor may have to avoid becoming crystallised in a technique stronger than himself depend upon this polarity and the way in which the actor succeeds in dilating its territory.

Like Saint Sebastian, the actors are a target. They therefore try to make themselves invulnerable. They build themselves a cuirass: by means of techniques passed on to them by tradition, or rather by means of the building up of a character, they arrive at an artificial, extra-daily form of behaviour. They dilate their presence and consequently also dilate the spectator's perception. They become a *body-in-life* in the fiction of theatre. Or they aspire to be so.

To this end, actors work for years and years, in some cases since childhood. To this end, they have repeated the same actions over and over, they have trained themselves. To this end, they make use of mental processes, magic "ifs", personal subtexts. To this end, they imagine their body as the centre of a network of physical tensions and resistances, unreal but effective. They use an extra-daily body-mind technique which helps them to become invulnerable.

On the visible level, it seems that the actors are working on their body and voice. In fact, they are working on something invisible: energy.

The concept of "energy" (in Greek, *energeia* = "strength", "efficacy", from *én-érgon* = "at work") is one which is both obvious and difficult to pinpoint when applied to the actor. We associate it with external impetus, with an excess of muscular and nervous activity. But it also refers to something intimate, something which pulses in immobility and silence, a retained power which flows in time without spreading through space.

"Energy" is commonly reduced to imperious and violent behaviour models. But it is actually a personal temperature-intensity which the actor can determine, awaken, mould and which, above all, needs to be explored.

The actors' extra-daily body technique derives from an alteration of their balance and basic posture, from the play of opposing tensions which dilate their body's dynamics. The body is re-shaped, artificially re-built for the theatrical fiction. This "art body" - and thus, "non-natural body" - is neither male nor female. The actor's sex is of little import. Typical male energy and typical female energy do not exist. Or at least, they do not exist in the theatre. There exists only an energy specific to a given individual.

The actor's or actress's task is to discover the individual propensities of his or her own energy and to protect their potentialities and uniqueness.

The actor's origins

The first days of work leave an indelible imprint. The actors in their personal origins, in the first days of apprenticeship, have all their potentialities intact: they then begin to make choices, to eliminate some potentialities in order to develop others. They can enrich their work only by narrowing the territory of their experiences, in order to be able to delve more deeply. This is the period of vulnerability.

In this initial phase of the profession the actors' possibilities to safeguard and reinforce the double profile of their energy are decided. Or else there prevails a unilateral tendency which makes them more secure, stronger, rapidly invulnerable.

In every apprenticeship, every actor who first begins to work, is thus characterised by the acquisition of an *ethos*. *Ethos* as scenic behaviour - that is, physical and mental technique; but also as a work ethic, as a mentality modelled by the *environment*, the human setting in which the apprenticeship develops.

The nature of the relationship between teacher and student, between student and student, between men and women, between old and young, the degree of fixity or elasticity of the hierarchy, of the norms, of the demands and limits which the student is placed under, impregnate an actor's artistic future.

All these factors act upon the scale of balances which equilibrates the weights of two opposing necessities: on one hand, selection and crystallisation; on the other, safeguarding what is essential in the potential richness of the beginnings. In other words: to select without suffocating.

This apprenticeship dialectic is constant, whether in theatre schools or in the face-to-face teaching between master and student, in the actor's practical initiation, from when he first starts to "rise from the ranks", or in autodidactic situations.

Serious impediments, which risk suffocating the actor's future development, sometimes occur for unnoticed reasons. In the period of vulnerability, with unconscious violence or in order to be expedient, the actor or actress often arbitrarily limits the territory in which he or she explores the individual propensities of his or her own energy. The range of the orbit whose poles are Animus and Anima are thus reduced. Some choices, apparently 'natural' become a prison.

When, in the period of apprenticeship, an actor already adapts himself exclusively to male roles, or an actress adapts herself exclusively to female roles, he or she undermines the exploration of his or her own energies on the pre-expressive level.

To learn to act according to one of two clear perspectives which follow the distinction between the sexes is an apparently inoffensive point of departure. There is however a consequence: the introduction, without justification, of rules and habits from daily reality into the extra-daily territory of the theatre.

On the final level, that of results and of the performance (the expressive level), the actor's or actress's presence takes form in a scenic figure, a character, and masculine or feminine characterisation is inevitable and necessary. It is however both unnecessary and damaging when this masculine or feminine characterisation is also dominant on a level in which it does not belong: the pre-expressive level, the level of stage presence.

In the first learning days, in the period of vulnerability, individual differentiation passes through the negation of the differentiation of the sexes. The field of complementarity dilates. This is seen in the West when, in training - work on the pre-expressive level - no account is taken of what is masculine and what is feminine; or in the Orient when an actor explores masculine and feminine roles indiscriminately. The double-edged nature of his or her particular energy becomes tangibly evident. The balance between the two poles, Animus and Anima, is preserved.

In this context, the Balinese speak of a continual interweaving of *manis* and *keras*. The Indians of *lasya* and *tandava*. These terms do not refer to women and men or to masculine or feminine qualities, but to *softness* and *vigour* as flavours of energy. The Indian warrior god Rama, for example, is often represented in the 'soft' manner, *lasya*.

In theatre anthropology Anima (soft) and Animus (vigorous) refer to the two sides

of a pair of scales, a discording concordance, an interaction between opposites which brings to mind the poles of a magnetic field, or the tension between body and shadow. It would be arbitrary to particularise them sexually.

The experience of the flavour

Keras and *manis*, *tandaya* and *lasya*, Animus and Anima do not refer to concepts which are completely equivalent. What is similar, however, in different cultures, is the necessity to define, by means of an opposition, the double nature of the energy which the actors use: that is, the energy which animates, from the inside, their technique.

It is easy to perceive clearly the alternation between Animus-energy and Anima-energy, if one sees Indian, Balinese, or Japanese actors and actresses telling and dancing stories with many characters; or if one sees occidental actors or dancers who have been formed by a training which does not take differences of sex into account. But as happens in these cases, the only words which evoke the experiences we have had seem lyrical or mystical to the layman.

Today, a single word is enough to bring to the reader's mind the taste of ... pineapple. But exactly four hundred years ago, the Florentine merchant Filippo Sacchetti writing from Malabar (now known as Kerala) who wanted to explain to his distant friends the taste of this then unknown fruit, had to describe it as a bizarre blend of strawberry, sugar, and melon.

Just like Filippo Sacchetti, theatre anthropology must make use of abstract hybrids to take into account an experience which is both simple and perceptible.

Venilia and Selacia were two Roman goddesses. One was the goddess of the waves which lap the shore, the other was the goddess of the waves which return to the open sea. Why two goddesses, if the water which comes into the shore and the water which moves seaward again is the same water?

The substance and the force are the same, but the direction and quality of the energy are different, opposite. The same variation in the energy of the wave. the same dance of the two goddesses, can be discovered in the actor's pre-expressive substratum, in the blending of the two profiles of his double-edged energy.

Before being thought of as a purely spiritual entity, before being made platonic and catholic, the soul was a *wind*, a continuous flux which animated the motion and life of animals and humans. In many cultures, not only in Ancient Greece, the body was and is compared to a percussion instrument: its soul is the beat, the vibration, the rhythm.

This wind - vibration and rhythm - can change face, while remaining itself, by means of a subtle mutation of its internal tension. Boccaccio, commenting on Dante and summarizing the attitudes of a millenarian culture, said that when Anima, the living and intimate wind, is drawn towards something external and desires something, it changes into Animus.

One form of essential research, common both to theatre anthropology and the empiricism of our craft, is research into the constant polarities dissimulated beneath the variety and fluctuation of styles, of traditions and different work practices. To give a name to the flavours, to the actor's experiences, to the spectator's perceptions, even the most subtle of them, seems a futile abstraction. But it is a premise which makes it

possible to leap from a situation in which we are immersed and which dominates us to a real *experience* - that is, something which we are able to analyse, consciously to develop and to transmit.

It is the leap from experiencing to having experience.

The wind and the cuirass

In the course of their career, the actors come to realise that their biggest obstacle is not difficulty in learning, but having learned so much that they have become invulnerable.

They have learned a way of thinking and acting which permits them to guide the spectator's attention, even on the pre-expressive level. They know how to surprise, to divert, and to change the rhythm of attention, following principles similar to (even if in a different domain from) those which writers and directors use. They change the directions and the intensity of an action, they cut the action in the middle and jump to the next.

The spectators' perception also changes and jumps. The sense and the meanings glide on the current of this life, which is already fully displayed in its pre-expressive state. The spectators distils a sensory experience into a conceptual experience, not only understanding, but also interpreting and discovering their own personal associations and autonomous reflections.

The actor conducts the game: he is the *maître des regards*, the master of the way of seeing. He senses that his cuirass creates interest, incites respect, dazzles. He becomes, for the observer, a deforming and revealing mirror.

But since he is invulnerable, his shadow has withdrawn into its shell.

The shadow can germinate only from a fracture, when the actors are able to open a vent in the cuirass of technique and seduction which they have built for themselves and expose themselves, undefended, like warriors who fight with bare hands. The actors' strength lies in their vulnerability.

This takes us back to the actor's origins, to the first days of his or her apprenticeship, when the gamut of unrealised and invisible potentialities became marked by the visible work of selection and excavation. Here the invisible - energy, the wind which blows through the cuirass of technique and which animates it from inside - risks becoming tamed by the dominant models of scenic behaviour and acting. The dynamic relationship between the Animus and Anima potentialities, their consonance and dissonance, tends, with time, to become stabilised in a crystallised technique.

But the fracture through which the shadow can leak is caused by the co-existence of Animus and Anima, by the actor's ability to leap from one pole to the other, to show the dominant profile of his energy and also to reveal its double - vigour and tenderness, vehemence and grace, ice and snow, sun and flame.

Thus the spectator discovers the invisible life which animates the theatre and experiences an experience.

The double tension which characterises energy on the theatre's cellular level, the double profile of the wind in the cuirass, is the material source of the spectator's spiritual experience.■



Mei Lanfang, Poster ISTA 4

Simone Dragone

Feminism and Misunderstandings Reactions after the 4th ISTA in Holstebro

Abstract: *The 4th ISTA session, held in Holstebro in 1986, provoked controversies and discussions. In particular, the American scholar Erika Munk and the American professor Phillip Zarrilli argued against Eugenio Barba. The first accused the Italian director of not taking into consideration socio-cultural aspects concerning the representation of women on stage, the second found a lack of reflexivity in Barba's research. Analysing writings and essays published after the session, this article presents the confrontation between the scholars and Barba, underlining how such discussions opened up reflections on subjects hitherto neglected.*

Keywords: 4thISTA; Gender; Feminism; Pre-expressivity; Actor's energy

The 4th ISTA session was organised in Odin Teatret's venue in Holstebro and lasted only six days from 17 to 22 September 1986. It consisted of demonstrations and performances by several Asian artists, Iben Nagel Rasmussen from Odin Teatret and Sonja Kehler, a German performer specialising in Brechtian roles. The largest space available in the Odin house, the Red Room, was set up to accommodate 154 participants. In December 1985, the Municipality of Holstebro had decided to finance the event with 250,000 Danish crowns (about 34,000 euros).

The theme of the session was "The Female Role as Represented on the Stage in Various Cultures".¹ Jean-Marie Pradier, member of the scientific staff, highlighted in his final Report the two specific questions which this ISTA session intended to deal with: « *Comment représenter les personnages féminins et les personnages masculins ? Comment interpréter - pour un même personnage - les deux aspects fondamentaux de sa réalité : masculin/féminin, ou - selon certaines traditions orientales - le fort/doux ?* ».² In the programme for this session, Barba specified that:

Interest in actors who play female roles and actresses who play male roles is periodically rekindled. At such times, one might almost suspect that behind these disguises or these contrasts between reality and fiction, lie hidden one of the theatre's secret potentialities.³

1. Fowler 1986.
2. Pradier 1986, 3. How to represent female and male characters? How to represent - in the same character - the two main aspects of his or her reality: male/female according to certain performing traditions in the East or strong/soft?
3. Barba in Fowler 1986, 3. Barba's article "Male/Female vs Animus/Anima. The Actor's Energy", was published for the first time in the program of the 4th ISTA Session *The Female Role as*



According to Mirella Schino, the presence of Asian traditions was of fundamental importance, since the performer's "natural gender rarely matches the stage representation - something that in the West appears 'natural'".⁴ As Julia Varley remembers: "In 1986, we welcomed the participants and artists of the ISTA session, where American feminists argued animatedly with male Asian actors who personified traditional female figures".⁵

To understand the type of passionate discussions following the work demonstrations, it is interesting to read an article by Carol Martin. The American scholar, although she was not present at that ISTA, tried to reconstruct the quarrel between the Canadian performer Pol Pelletier and the odissi dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi through the video and audio tapes recorded during the session.⁶ Pol Pelletier argued that "when the Asian women at the congress performed female roles they were not free in the way they used space".⁷ In her article, Carol Martin specified that "Panigrahi and other Indian performers, men and women, perform both male and female roles and perform them equally well."

There is an assumption that both men and women can perform male and female roles. An individual may become better at one or the other and this is based upon each individual's ability to produce the appropriate movement quality, not physical appearance or gender. This attitude assumes both sexual dimorphism and the constructed nature of representation.⁸

Furthermore, the American scholar points out that Kelucharan Mohapatra, teacher of Sanjukta Panigrahi, belonged to the gotipua tradition. The tradition in question is represented by pre-adolescent boys who, dressed as women, perform acrobatic dances inspired by the life of Radha and Krishna. So "the female roles Panigrahi plays are male constructions of femaleness."⁹ In conclusion, Carol Martin seems to affirm that behind these assumptions there is no political or social intention, but that "the portrayal of gender roles as opposite or complementary qualities of the same thing does not negate oppression of women and men, but neither does it exclusively signal dominance and submission."¹⁰

In the article in the programme Barba had specified the subject of this ISTA session, freeing it from psychological issues and interests of a political or socio-cultural nature.

It is useful to concentrate on psychological questions, Shakespearean labyrinths, the vicissitudes of repression and emancipation as historical and social problems, but not

Represented on the Stage in Various Cultures, edited by Richard Fowler. Then, one year later, with the title inverted, "The Actor's Energy: Male/Female Versus Animus/Anima", the article appeared also in the journal *New Theatre Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (See Barba 1987, 237).

4. Schino 2018, 122.

5. Varley 2020, 184.

6. Both the audio and the video recordings of the 4th ISTA session are kept at Odin Teatret Archives in Holstebro. (See Odin Teatret Archives 1986 and 1986a)

7. Martin 1988, 35.

8. Martin 1988, 38.

9. Martin 1988, 38.

10. Martin 1988, 38.

when comparing an elementary professional problem: the double-edged nature of the actor's energy, the existence of an Anima-energy and an Animus-energy.¹¹

The director of the ISTA focused on the study of the performer's energy "examining the principles which performers can use to model their muscular and nervous power according to non-daily modalities".¹² The goal of the session was to observe the shaping of the performer's energy, which could be male or female, strong or soft, and which did not depend on the gender of the actor/dancer. For Barba the male/female contrast or *Animus/Anima* represents "the necessity to define, by means of an opposition, the double nature of the energy which actors use: that is, the energy which animates their technique from the inside".¹³

Many American scholars present at Holstebro's ISTA considered female roles only *Anima*, but this observation was incorrect. The poles *Animus* and *Anima* "do not refer to women and men or to masculine or feminine qualities, but to vigour and softness as flavours of energy".¹⁴ In an e-mail exchange with Julia Varley, it emerged that "Sanjukta, the Balinese and the Japanese presented *Animus* and *Anima* energy for male and female roles: that is, there are male roles enacted according to *Anima*-energy and female roles enacted according to *Animus*-energy in their traditions".¹⁵ The affirmation of the Odin actress is strengthened by what Barba had written:

It is easy to perceive clearly the alternation between *Animus*-energy and *Anima*-energy when one sees Indian, Balinese, or Japanese actors and actresses telling and dancing stories with many characters; or if one sees Western actors or dancers who have been formed by a training which does not take differences of gender into account.¹⁶

In an article published in the *Canadian Theatre Review*, Ian Watson clarified Barba's actual intentions. Although many scholars have disagreed with respect to the approach of the Italian/Danish director to the theme of the session "The Female Role as Represented on the Stage in Various Cultures", it must be said that Barba's intention "was to discover if there is anything common to the range of performance genres, independent of their cultural context that form the basis of how the female is portrayed on stage."¹⁷ Not surprisingly, among the Asian performers there were male actors/dancers specialised in the representation of female roles such as the onnagata Kanichi Hanayagi for the Nihon buyo, the Indian dancer Kelucharan Mohapatra of the gotipua tradition, and Mei Bao Jiu, son of Mei Lanfang who, like his father, was a tan actor in the Peking Opera.

The reactions of the American feminists present at the session were outlined by Susan Bassnett who, in her article, quoted Barba's speech on gender and pre-expressivity:

11. Barba in Fowler 1986, 3. Also in Barba 1987, 237.

12. Taviani in Barba and Savarese 2006, 72.

13. Barba in Fowler 1986, 6. Also in Barba 1987, 239.

14. Barba in Fowler 1986, 6. Also in Barba 1987, 239.

15. Julia Varley, mail message to the author, January 13, 2022.

16. Barba in Fowler 1986, 6. Also in Barba 1987, 239.

17. Barba in Fowler 1986, 6. Also in Barba 1987, 239.

On the final level, that of results and of the performance (the expressive level), the actor's or actress's presence takes form in a scenic figure, a character, and masculine or feminine characterisation is inevitable and necessary. It is however both unnecessary and damaging when this masculine or feminine characterisation is also dominant on a level to which it does not belong: the pre-expressive level.¹⁸

Susan Bassnett had just participated in the Magdalena '86, First International Festival of Women in Contemporary Theatre¹⁹ held in Cardiff in August 1986. On that occasion the artists and scholars "wrestled with problems of structure and working methods from a starting point of common sexuality".²⁰ The Magdalena Project, "a dynamic cross-cultural network providing a platform for women's performance work, a forum for critical discussion and a source of support, inspiration and performance training"²¹ originated in that Festival. Unlike The Magdalena Project, which is oriented towards the "search for an autonomous theatre language of women,"²² the 4th session of ISTA "threw into the melting-pot men and women, scholars and performers, East and West, conventionalised theatre and improvisation."²³

Given the theme of the session, the American scholars concerned with theories about gender expected a discourse on the gender of the performer and on the actual representation of women on stage. At ISTA they faced a pre-expressive analysis in relation to the energy of the actor which, according to Barba, is not directly related to gender. Susan Bassnett objected to the Italian director's statement, arguing that she could not deny the fact that she was a woman.

I cannot see how masculine/feminine characterisation can fail to exist on any level. It seems to me that as a woman, with my biological functions intrinsically different to those of men, my menstrual time-clock built into my hormonal system, my lighter weight and stronger heart, my smaller hands and larger pelvis, even without (and I cannot see that such a "without" is possible) the socially-constructed ideas of masculine and feminine, I can never ever be in a position of pre-femininity.²⁴

It was the American scholar Erika Munk who opened a bitter discussion against Barba and the ISTA. Returning to the United States, she published a critical article in the New

18. Barba in Bassnett 1988, 236.

19. The Magdalena Project, "Archive 1983-89."

20. Bassnett 1988, 236

21. "The Magdalena Project is a dynamic cross-cultural network of women's theatre and performance, facilitating critical discussion, support and training. It is a nexus for diverse performance groups and individuals whose common interest lies in a commitment to ensuring the visibility of women's artistic endeavour. The branches of The Magdalena Project extend far and wide: over international borders and across generations. Groups meet in real time and place as well as online to share, engender and promulgate work and ideas. Largely surviving on the goodwill of its members and sponsors, it is a testimony to what we can achieve together in spirit of community and unity. (See The Magdalena Project, "The Magdalena Project. International network of women in contemporary theatre.")

22. Julia Varley, mail message to the author, January 13, 2022.

23. Bassnett 1988, 236.

24. Bassnett 1988, 236.

York weekly *The Village Voice*. Already from the second day, following a work demonstration by Odin Teatret's Iben Nagel Rasmussen

a number of Americans, academic-theatrical feminists, are starting to kvetch quietly: did they come all this way for a conference that doesn't seem to be confronting its subject? The set-up leaves no space for questions, for thought".²⁵

American scholars contested the fact that the demonstrations and speeches they witnessed did not question the social and political role of women in the history of theatre. Erika Munk made other allegations against Barba, mostly concerning socio-cultural issues, complaining finally:

We hadn't talked about the issues; we'd heard only random sentences from people who should have been addressing us seriously; we had seen fear of feminism, of homosexuality, of modernity itself, keep the whole conference from critically addressing its subject.²⁶

Barba replied to Erika Munk two weeks later with an article in *The Village Voice* of November 25, 1986. He emphasised once again the purpose of the ISTA session:

The aim of the conference was to capture a particular process of transition from the pre-expressive to the expressive. Our emphasis was on pre-expressive technique because the pre-expressive realm exists before gender is made into oppositions.²⁷

With this statement, Barba suggested framing the binomial man/woman not as an opposition, but as an energetic polarity enabling the actor to enliven the performing space and to amplify it through pre-expressive techniques. Referring to a demonstration by actress Pei Yan-Ling, impersonator of male roles for the Peking Opera at the Hebei Theatre, Erika Munk had written:

The fact that she's playing a male role has little to do with this brilliance; the dialectic is between convention and invention, life is in the space between the mask and the person showing us the mask.²⁸

In response to this assumption, Barba once again reasserted the principle investigated by the 4th session of ISTA:

Munk perceives the distinction between male and female as an opposition, whereas I am investigating what enables the performer to make the space alive, i.e., the pre-expressive techniques which are neither male nor female.²⁹

The controversy raised by Erika Munk did not stop here. In another article in *Performing Arts Journal*, once again she focused on political and socio-cultural aspects and concluded:

25. Munk 1986, 89.

26. Munk 1986, 90.

27. Barba 1986, 96.

28. Munk 1986, 90.

29. Barba 1986, 98.

What lesson can be drawn from all this? Many obvious ones. That when men are securely in power, they will play women's roles, create the very idea of womanhood, and snugly tap into feminine energy while refusing to allow women to use it.³⁰

With respect to this article, various participants and scholars who had known Barba and Odin Teatret for years intervened in their defence. Among the many reactions, it is worth noting the response of the Danish scholar Janne Risum who, in an article addressed to the *Performing Arts Journal* (which was never published), claims:

With the experience of having worked in the field of women and theatre, I agree with the importance of the questions raised. But in my opinion the proposers failed to consider that women from other cultures might give the technical focus of the conference a higher priority than they did themselves. Women demonstrating an equilibristic control of their craft are remarkable in their own right.³¹

For Janne Risum it was correct that the ISTA session and its demonstrations dealt with technical aspects. The political-social aspects of the role of women, supported by Erika Munk according to a Western vision, would only cause discrepancies in a confrontation between East and West. The objective of the comparison was "an intercultural communication on equal terms, and not just an airing of Western views."³²

Another reaction deserves to be mentioned. It is a letter to the editorial staff of the *Performing Arts Journal* from the Norwegian film maker and theatre director Elsa Kvamme, who had been an actress at Odin Teatret from 1973 to 1975. She had participated in Holstebro's ISTA and she dissociated herself from the controversy sparked by the American scholars.

I was astonished by the way Americans quickly turn such assemblies into a local event, using the same arguments and language as they would have done in New York, quickly attaining a verbal dominance where their points of view, resolutions and manifestations become the main event of the congress.³³

Furthermore, Elsa Kvamme admitted to being embarrassed

[...] by the way Erika Munk ignores and reduces the knowledge and force of the female Asiatic artists present at ISTA. How can that be reduced into "purely technique"? The enemy must be fought, but who is the enemy? Eugenio Barba, inviting to an international symposium upon the female role?³⁴

Male scholars too expressed doubts about this session. One of them was the American Professor Phillip Zarrilli, who conveyed them in an article in *TDR - The Drama Review*. Unlike Erika Munk, the criticisms of Zarrilli concerned some theoretical assumptions introduced by Barba, disapproving the way the debates were conducted during the ISTA. Zarrilli noted a "lack of reflexivity" and reproached Barba for belonging to the

"European pedagogical model" and expounding his ideas in a solitary and authoritarian way.

There were also differing assumptions about what an international congress could/should be. Many American scholars and practitioners assumed there would be forums where various points of view would be expressed. However, ISTA is structured on the European pedagogical model where one voice is predominant.³⁵

The Holstebro ISTA was dedicated to Mei Lanfang, an actor of the Peking Opera belonging to the tan tradition with male actors specialised in female roles. In the programme Barba had written of the repercussions of Mei Lanfang's tours in the US and later in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Traces of his influence were evident in many of the main western theatre reformers of the time.

There is the "visible" evident history of theatre, and there is the "invisible" subterranean history of theatre. The latter contains the roots which nourish and, in the long run, change our art. In the subterranean history of theatre, the presence of Mei Lanfang radiates in all directions. The inspiring energy of this female impersonator has had an intercultural impact which still today subliminally influences our craft and our visions.³⁶

Zarrilli attacked Barba on this front, pointing at the improper use of the terms "visible" and "invisible".

What troubles me is not Barba's poetic turn of phrase *per se*, but the degree to which the lack of reflexivity in his writing mystifies what may be for some Asian performers a "fact" of practice. Using the generic term "invisible" to represent a pan-cultural "energy" suggests that what is specifically indexed within all cultures by Barba's "invisible" is not visible to native informants. What Barba calls "invisible" may be "invisible" only in the sense that the "energy" it refers to is simply an assumption of practice - a commonplace, what one does.³⁷

From the beginning Barba identified theatre anthropology as "the study of the behaviour of human beings when they use their physical and mental presence in an organised performance situation according to principles that are different from those of daily life".³⁸ Therefore, theatre anthropology constitutes an independent field of study, whose only affinity with cultural anthropology "is the questioning of the obvious (one's own tradition)."³⁹

In his article Zarrilli had written:

Barba has yet to reconcile in writing or practical work his particular definition of theatre anthropology with the existing discipline of academic anthropology. Although he has probed Asian genres for years, he says he has never been interested in trying to "fully

30. Munk 1987, 42.

31. Risum 1987, 3.

32. Risum 1987, 3.

33. Kvamme 1987, 1.

34. Kvamme 1987, 1.

35. Zarrilli 1988, 104.

36. Barba in Fowler 1986, 1.

37. Zarrilli 1988, 102.

38. Barba and Savarese 2006, 5.

39. Barba and Savarese 2006, 5.

understand” either the “meaning” or the “execution” of the Asian performers with whom he works, as they are understood by the native performer - tasks appropriate to performance ethnology.⁴⁰

In response to Zarrilli's assertions, Barba wrote an article published as a letter in *The Drama Review* 32, 3.⁴¹ He began by taking up the reproach of a solitary and authoritative conduct of the ISTA session, according to a “European pedagogical model”.

A “European pedagogical model” has not existed for several centuries. On the contrary, there are a variety of European models which differ from each other both in theory and in practice. To define the “European pedagogical model” as that in which only one single voice is predominant can only make a person smile: one need only look around to see what is happening in Europe. ISTA could not be “structured on the European pedagogical model where one voice is predominant” for the simple fact that it is not structured according to a pedagogical model at all.⁴²

Then Barba went on expounding what he meant with “invisible subterranean history of the theatre”. Zarrilli had understood the adjective “invisible” in a metaphysical way, identifying it with a “revivification” of Mei Lanfang. However, with “invisible” Barba referred to the “invisible history of the theatre”. This includes encounters, situations, friendships and coincidences which are not taken into account in manuals and books yet have influenced theories and practices of the theatre reformers of the 20th century. Barba affirmed:

The influence of Mei Lanfang (returning to our example) penetrates contemporary theatre thought and practice through Stanislavski, Tairov, Tretjakov, Eisenstein, Meyerhold, Dullin, Brecht. It does so not as an influence of that generalisation which is “Chinese Theatre” or the genre “Peking Opera”, not as the confrontation between two cultures, West and East, but as a meeting between craftpersons who are different and distant from each other, but who consider themselves - and are - colleagues.

In this sense the history of Mei Lanfang is a subterranean, invisible history which radiates in all directions. Fragments of Mei Lanfang's professional insight reach us having lost every “Chinese” characteristic through the way in which they have been translated into professional practice by other theatre people.⁴³

Still on the subject of the term “invisible”, Zarrilli had written:

Barba's primary concern has become the performer's “presence” or “energy”, what he often calls the “invisible” as opposed to the “visible” dimension of performance [...] ⁴⁴

However, Barba had never said that the actor's energy is “invisible”.

You claim that I define the actor's “presence” and “energy” as the theatre's “invisible”.

40. Zarrilli 1988, 102.

41. Barba 1988.

42. Barba 1988, 8.

43. Barba 1988, 11.

44. Zarrilli 1988, 101.

Once and for all, this is not true. [...] When I claim that theatrical work consists fundamentally in rendering the invisible visible, I am speaking of something completely different. I am investigating that process by means of which mental energy (invisible) becomes somatic energy (visible). It is useless to repeat that the “invisible history of the theatre” is something else yet again.⁴⁵

Barba clarifies explicitly what he meant by “invisible”. It is mental energy that, through the actor's behaviour, becomes “visible”. ISTA investigated the process that makes the actor's energy perceptible, which has nothing to do with the “subterranean history of the theatre”.

Furthermore, Phillip Zarrilli believed that a reconciliation between theatre anthropology and “academic anthropologies” was necessary since, according to what he wrote, this division of fields constituted a scientific problem. Barba once again stressed the irreconcilability of these fields which, although analogous, implemented their research through different perspectives, thus reaffirming the independence of that area of study he had called theatre anthropology.

All researchers are used to partial homonyms and do not confuse them with analogies. Among the various disciplines, in addition to cultural anthropology, there is also criminal anthropology, philosophical anthropology, medical anthropology, physical anthropology... In each presentation of ISTA it is underlined that the term “anthropology” is not used in the sense of cultural anthropology but in the common sense of “the study of man in a theatrical situation”. There should be no misunderstandings: theatre anthropology has nothing to do either with the application of paradigms from cultural anthropology to theatre, nor with the study of performative phenomena from those cultures which are normally the object of study by cultural anthropologists and ethnologists. The problem of reconciling theatre anthropology “with the existing discipline of academic anthropology” is certainly not a scientific problem. It is, if you like, a problem for universities organising their courses.⁴⁶

There were academics and scholars who acknowledged the reasons why Barba had not introduced psychological, social or political problems in the context of this ISTA session. The American scholar Peggy Phelan wrote:

The congress, hosted and organized by Eugenio Barba, was not at all concerned with the politics of representation. Issues of cultural hegemony, as well as issues of gender and sexual dominance/submission were ignored [...] the reasons Barba chose not to pursue these issues are extremely important as an indication of where the European “Third Theater” is (and is not) locating itself. It is unfair to criticize the conference for not doing what it never intended to do. The focus of the conference was on what Barba calls “the actor's energy”.⁴⁷

Phelan compared feminist psychoanalytic theories with those of Barba, and she found a commonality between the pre-expressive level, i.e. “a basic level common to all

45. Barba 1988, 12.

46. Barba 1988, 14.

47. Phelan 1988, 108.

performers”⁴⁸ for which “sex is of little import. Typical male energy and typical female energy do not exist. There exists only an energy specific to a given individual,”⁴⁹ and the concept of “pre-Oedipal” identified by feminist film critic Laura Mulvey, according to which “the pre-Oedipal, [...], is in transition to articulated language: its gestures, signs, and symbols have meaning but do not transcend into the full sense of language”.⁵⁰ For Peggy Phelan, in both theories “that which precedes ‘full sense’ - or full expression - is important because it is in the pre-formed gesture/sound that one can perhaps find a way to rejuvenate and manipulate the rigid coding of performed expression and spoken language.”⁵¹

The debates emphasised a characteristic of the ISTA sessions: the encounter between practice and theory, between performers, directors and scholars. As Ian Watson stated: “The calibre of the participants working, eating, and sharing living quarters together bred a hothouse atmosphere which at the very least identified areas for further research”.⁵² For example, on the last day of the session, Sonja Kehler presented a demonstration of her work by offering a sort of caricature of the nightclub singer inspired by the great Marlene Dietrich. Although some participants judged the demonstration sexist, the German actress pointed out that “[...] the only way she could sing at that time of day was in high heels, because the effect of the heels was to throw her body column out of line, altering the position of the diaphragm and allowing her, vocally, not less freedom but more”. In Sonja Kehler’s demonstration and related a posteriori intervention, Susan Bassnett identified the essence between theatre and feminism:

The image, read through the sign system of 20th century European cinema, turned out to be at odds with the physical needs of the performer: the woman apparently appearing in the garb of the sex symbol declared herself to be a performer consciously aware of her body’s own needs. And in that gap, between what is happening inside and what is perceived through the context in which it is displayed, lies the essence of both theatre and feminism.⁵³

Jill Greenhalgh, founder of The Magdalena Project network was present in Holstebro and, after observing the work demonstrations and performances, she sensed that:

‘male’ actors were not credible in female roles while ‘female’ actors were extremely credible in male roles. The question is whether this credibility is determined by the quality of presence (pre-expressive level) or by the aesthetic form given to the cloying and submissive female roles determined by traditions (expressive or result level in the show).⁵⁴

48. Barba and Savarese 2006, 218.

49. Barba and Savarese 2006, 78.

50. Mulvey 1986 in Phelan 1988, 109.

51. Phelan 1988, 109.

52. Watson 1987, 85.

53. Bassnett 1987, 236.

54. Julia Varley, mail message to author, January 13, 2022.

Although the session was marked by controversy and critical debates, the Holstebro ISTA was an important event. Peggy Phelan’s capacity to find a link between pre-expressivity and “pre-Oedipal”, the observation of Susan Bassnett who in the demonstration by Sonja Kehler found the synthesis between theatre and feminism, and the reactions of Jill Greenhalgh, show a new way of seeing and analysing a situation of comparative technique. The discussions of the 4th ISTA constituted an incentive to investigate problems about the representation of women on stage hitherto largely ignored.■

Translated by Judy Barba

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

Eugenio Barba

The Visible and the Invisible in Theatre

Letter to Phillip Zarrilli

Abstract: This writing is a letter published in The Drama Review 32, 3, 1988 pp. 7-14, through which Eugenio Barba answers to the article "For Whom Is the 'Invisible' Not Visible?", written by Phillip Zarrilli about the 4th ISTA International Session "The Female Role as Represented on the Stage in Various Cultures", published in The Drama Review 32,1, 1988 pp. 95-106.

Keywords: Eugenio Barba; Phillip Zarrilli; Mei Lanfang; Theatre history

Dear Phillip,

Here are my reactions to your article "For Whom Is the 'Invisible' Not Visible?" (TDR 32, no. 1:95- 106) concerning the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) Congress on "The Female Role as Represented on the Stage in Various Cultures", Holstebro, Denmark, 17-22 September 1986.

In our culture, knowledge of the actor has often been blocked by the presumption of knowledge. Critics, teatrologists, theoreticians, and even philosophers such as Hegel and Sartre have interpreted the cultural and aesthetic value of the actor's art by starting from the presumption that they knew what they were talking about. *In reality, they did not know.* They based their writings on conjecture, on vague testimony, on their own impressions as spectators. They tried to make 'science' out of something of which they had no experience.

This form of ignorance, which resembles that of professors who prefer to quote from books rather than to risk looking through Galileo's crude telescope, is also manifest in an indirect and oblique way: the way in which we delegate all authority to science. It consists in the illusion that one is able to understand theatrical behaviour with greater precision if one superimposes upon its paradigms which have shown their utility in other fields of research. For Sainte-Albine and Diderot, it was the mechanics of passion. During the Brechtian period, it was the opposition between rationalism and political irrationalism. Yesterday it was psychoanalysis and sociology, today semiology or cultural anthropology. This scientific "power of attorney" is based on a mental attitude which is profoundly irrational. It causes one to believe that a theoretical paradigm is valid unto itself and therefore is a precise instrument even when it is used out of context.



Interpretative schemas which are valid in one specific context *can* be applied to other contexts. However, the pertinence of such applications must be proved each time, otherwise one ends up in a Tower of Babel: pseudo-scientific discussion which uses precise terminology in an imprecise way, based on individual free association.

In your article there are many definitions, many quotations, many affirmations of principle. Considered one by one, in isolation, they seem appropriate and interesting. In many cases, however, they are superimposed on the subjects upon which they pretend to be a comment or a criticism.

Let's begin at the end. You conclude your article saying: "How many of us need to hear what Barbara Babcock says of reflexivity?". And you quote:

[...] to turn or bend back upon itself, to become an object to itself and to refer to itself. Whether we are discussing things grammatically or cognitively, what is meant is a reflex action or process linking self and other, subject and object.¹

I have no doubt that Babcock's essay, which appeared in the magazine *Semiotica*, is stimulating. But the fragment which you extract and quote is an over-repeated truism. How could you have put this truism at the end of your article, as if one could ever forget it?

You complain two or three times about my "lack of reflexivity". You also complain that my voice "remains single, essential, comprehensive, and authoritarian", or a "solitary universalising voice precluding a dialectical process of investigation". You do not draw attention to these "errors" of mine in a polemical way, but with the sincere concern of someone who seeks to expand theatrical knowledge. I ask myself, however, why is your text supported by arguments which alter the facts?

Among the many possible examples, let's take one apparent detail. In note 3 you say, with respect to the September 1986 session of ISTA:

There were also differing assumptions about what an international congress could/should be. Many American scholars and practitioners assumed there would be forums where various points of view would be expressed. However, ISTA is structured on the European pedagogical model where one voice is predominant.²

I have the impression that you really believe that there exists a "European pedagogical model where one voice is predominant". It may be that in certain books such a model exists. It certainly does not exist in the European reality.

A "European pedagogical model" has not existed for several centuries. On the contrary, there are a variety of "European" models which differ from each other both in theory and in practice. To define the "European pedagogical model" as that in which only one single voice is predominant can only make a person smile: one need only look around to see what is happening in Europe.

But ISTA could not be "structured on the European pedagogical model where one voice is predominant" for the simple fact that it is not structured according to a "pedagogical model" at all.

Our laboratory, Odin Teatret, to which ISTA is connected, is officially recognised as an experimental theatre school. Its principal characteristic is the lack of distinction between teachers and students. According to some, the term "school" (even with the qualification "experimental") is used here in an ironic way. According to others it is appropriate. This - they say - is exactly what a school ought to be: an open association of individuals who are each other's students and teachers. ISTA is a school in the same sense: not because it is a pedagogical project or model, but because it is a group of individuals, without registration or divisions of tasks, who from time to time gather together around a working experience.

The original meaning of the word "school" has influenced us: for the Greeks, *scholē* meant the exact opposite of what the word school means today. It was a collection of people, united by reciprocal choice, who dedicated themselves to research without immediate practical goals. *Scholē* was similar to the Latin *otium*: a word which would be better translated as "cultural experimentation" than as leisure.

It was probably an error to call the public session of ISTA in September 1986 a "congress". Perhaps we were under the illusion of being more known than we actually are. Some of the people participating evidently did not know who the hosts were, and therefore thought that they would be attending a 'normal' congress. Looking at the schedule, for example, they asked themselves: "Where is there room for debate?"; "Who is reading papers on the various days?"; "Who is the moderator?"; "How is the expression of various points of view going to be organised?". What happened, therefore, is exactly what would have happened if, reading "International School", one asked oneself: "Where are the professors?"; "Where are the students?"; "Where are ... the caretakers?" Or what would have happened if one became angry having read Odin *Theatre* and then realised that one could not reserve a box in order to watch the performance. Misunderstandings arise due to ignorance of the context in which certain words are used.

What seems a mere detail is, however, an essential part of the ecology of the research. How does a normal congress function? With the planning of time and space for the various demands (general meetings, presentation of papers, dispensing of information, setting up of committees, round tables, forums). That which is not foreseen is precisely that which one wants to be absent.

Each time that we have organised international meetings, at Odin Teatret or at ISTA, we have always oriented ourselves in another direction: we have tried to provide the greatest degree of stimulus and the optimum number of possibilities for experience, proposals, and work testimonies, but without preplanning everything. Rather we have sought to support immediately anyone who wanted to organise meetings or other activities by gathering together those who shared their interests.

You say: "The conflict at the 1986 ISTA came from an exclusive focus on the practical to the exclusion of the historical and the processual".³

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 to historical, sociocultural, political, and ideological problematics. Neither does this imply a lack of interest in the "process used to make performance".⁴

1. Babcock 1980, 2

2. Zarrilli 1987, 104.

3. Zarrilli 1987, 98.

4. Zarrilli 1987, 98.

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. One of these “spontaneous” forums, attended by approximately half the participants while the others were having a party, lasted almost the entire night. Another such forum took place with the Chinese artists while the majority of the participants in another room were following the work of two Western actresses. 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.

As far as my “voice” is concerned, I know that some consider it as “solitary” and “authoritarian”. For others it is simply responsible. Most people come to ISTA with the desire to be confronted with the research that I am conducting. It would be both comfortable and incorrect not to allow this confrontation to take place in the most profound way possible, giving as an excuse the necessity of a plurality of voices. It would also be both comfortable and incorrect to seek a compromise. My task consists in assuming to the limit the responsibility of answering those who are interested in my work without blocking the initiatives of those who are more interested in other persons or in other experiences.

It is not only a question of an organisational choice, but also of an instrument of knowledge. It implies meticulous attention to the points of departure and a complete liberty with respect to the ways and the goals. It is obvious that someone looking at this from one side only would find an excess of organisation, and someone looking at it from another side, an excess of anarchy. Probably both these “excesses” are present. This is an example of something in which I believe: the way of opposites. It is an essential balance in the ecology of research.

It has taken more than 20 years to weave the complex relationships within which Odin Teatret and ISTA find their continuity. Throughout these years an environment has been created which continuously undergoes transformations and, at the same time, still conserves its precise identity. It is composed of individuals who live in different theatres, who belong to different cultures, who practice different disciplines, who have different *Weltanschauungen*. One cannot expect that at first glance someone new would be able to grasp the dynamics of this environment in life and be able to decipher it for themselves. But one gives into one’s first impression and reveals a “lack of reflexivity” if one reduces ISTA to the bizarre image of a nonexistent “European pedagogical model” characterised by the authoritarian presence of one voice, which precludes a dialectical process of research, and which expresses itself by avoiding that process “linking self and other, subject and object”.

This is not an isolated case. Throughout your article you waver between incomprehension and involuntary parody, such as when you comment on my text on Mei Lanfang.

If one said, for example, that “the spirit of Brecht continues to glide through the theatre more than 30 years after his death”, and if someone else responded with an argument against ... spiritualism, we would find ourselves faced not with a simple case of incomprehension, but with a radical involuntary parody. With Mei Lanfang something very similar occurs.

The way in which you interpret my words on Mei Lanfang is the following:

The cluster of poetically suggestive terms surrounding the “invisible” reifies Mei’s artistic spirit into an enduring substance which itself becomes the “roots” (which are invisible) of Western (“our”) art. The entire world history of theatre is conflated into a single, generic, universal story with a hidden (“subterranean”) dimension encapsulated in the “presence of Mei” (invisible) represented as an inhering force which “radiates” everywhere. Mei’s “energy” (also invisible) is universal and all manifestations of this “energy” share in the common essential substratum which Mei manifests.⁵

And this is what I wrote and what you quote as the basis of your unwittingly self-parodying interpretation.

There is the “visible”, evident history of theatre, and there is the “invisible”, subterranean history of theatre. The latter contains the roots which nourish, and in the long run, change our art. In the subterranean history of theatre, the presence of Mei Lanfang radiates in all directions. The inspiring energy of this female impersonator has had an intercultural impact which still today subliminally influences our craft and our visions.⁶

How did this extract become transformed into what you would like to make it say? You understand the adjective “invisible” in an almost metaphysical way. You confuse normal metaphors with an extravagant mythology and thus you do not realise what the real problem is. It is not that of reifying Mei. It is the problem of a concrete history of the theatre which does not appear in normal theatre history writing. Not because it has been deliberately ignored or censored, but because the nonrectilinear paths of history are different from the a posteriori idea imposed by those who reconstruct the past. This dialectic between the not always decipherable order of events and the necessarily simplified order of history writing is present in the reflections of anyone who is concerned with history. It must be particularly relevant for we who work in the theatre: an art which leaves few traces, which melts in time so rapidly that it cannot claim its own identity without a robust consciousness of its own “ancestors”.

But which ancestors?

Generalisations prevail in the books which relate the history of theatre: one reads of confluences and confrontations of styles, of genres, of tendencies, of poetics, of cultures and nations. The real protagonists of these books are “French Theatre”, “Spanish Theatre”, “Chinese Theatre”, “Commedia dell’Arte”, “Kathakali”, “Naturalistic Theatre”, “Romantic Theatre”, “Stanislavski Method”, “Brechtianism”, “Grotowskian Theatre” and many similar to these. And finally, the most abstract generalisations of all: “Occidental Theatre”, “Oriental Theatre”.

Is it possible to do without these generalisations? Certainly not. But it is also certain that in this way we risk suffocating the memory of the living, contradictory, irreducible presence of those men and women who, by socialising their needs and their visions, their autobiographical wounds, their loves and hates, their egoism and their solitude, have changed the theatre in which *we* live. These men and women, not the great gener-

5. Zarrilli 1987, 101.

6. Zarrilli 1987, 101.

alisations of current theatre history writing, are *our* real past. When I say “we”, I mean all those who live in the theatre, above all those who make a minority theatre and do not accept the norms of the theatre which Julian Beck called “respectable”.

The influence of Mei Lanfang (returning to our example) penetrates contemporary theatrical thought and practice through Stanislavski, Tairov, Tretjakov, Eisenstein, Meyerhold, Dullin, Brecht. It does so not as an influence of that generalisation which is “Chinese Theatre” or the genre “Peking Opera”, not as the confrontation between two cultures, West and East, but as a meeting between craftspersons, different, distant from each other, but who consider themselves, and *are*, colleagues.

In this sense the history of Mei Lanfang is a subterranean, invisible history which radiates in all directions. Fragments of Mei Lanfang’s professional insight reach us having lost every “Chinese” characteristic through the way in which they have been translated into professional practice by other theatre people. This is why I have said that they can “subliminally” influence us, not because I believe in the magic transformation of Mei Lanfang into an “enduring substance which itself became the roots of Western art”!

This process of which I am speaking represents the opposite of the idealisation of Oriental theatre as “Other”. This is an example of how there are levels of theatrical work which can be shared beyond differences between cultures and performances.

Reading the term “invisible” in a distorted manner, as if an invisible history was a “history of the Invisible”, you obtain two results: you make it sound as if I am speaking nonsense and you avoid looking beyond the limits of what you already know.

Does the question which gives title to your article (“For Whom Is the ‘Invisible’ Not Visible?”) indicate a real problem or is it the problem itself? Is it not perhaps the result of a misunderstanding?

Of which “invisible” are we speaking?

You claim that I define the actor’s “presence” and “energy” as the theatre’s “invisible”. Once and for all: this is not true. Nothing is further from my way of thinking and from my experience. For me the actor/dancer’s energy is visible, clearly perceptible. It is in fact the material base of pre-expressivity, which is the level of the performer’s work on which I have been conducting my comparative studies for years, collaborating with dancers/actors/actresses from various backgrounds.

When I claim that theatrical work consists fundamentally in rendering the invisible visible, I am speaking of something completely different: I am investigating that process by means of which mental energy (invisible) becomes somatic energy (visible).

It is useless to repeat that the “invisible history of the theatre” is something else yet again.

With respect to my work at ISTA you pose another question: “Is it possible to understand modes and processes of enactment without examining the historical and sociocultural construction of what is enacted and how we enact it?”⁷

In this case as well the real problem is the misunderstanding which lies behind the question.

The importance of studying the social and cultural contexts of a specific theatre is obvious. But it is also obvious that it is not true that one understands nothing of a theatre if one does not consider it in the light of its sociocultural context. Often, in academic

style, one uses the expression “this phenomenon cannot be understood if it is not examined in the light of. . .”. “It is a way of speaking, not an indication of method. No object of research automatically carries with it an obligatory context. Each object, in fact, can belong to innumerable, diverse contexts, all equally pertinent. A good method is that in which the context is pertinent to the questions which have been put to the object under examination.

It would be foolish to question oneself about the “meaning” of a specific Indian theatre without considering it in the context of the culture in which it is practiced and in which its past is rooted, without having a well-versed knowledge of the literature, social conflicts, religion, history of which it is a part, and above all without a profound knowledge of the Indian languages. But if one questions the influence of certain Indian theatres on European theatres in the 19th and 20th centuries, the tools and the context which must be activated are very different. Context and tools change yet again if one investigates which elements in the practices of the Indian actor/dancer can be useful for other actor/dancers, or that which is common to both and which therefore can be adapted as a pragmatic principle of orientation for any actor/dancer. To consider the problem in this way does not mean that one claims that the actors/dancers of any time or country are *substantially* equal. It means that one recognises the obvious: actors/dancers individualise themselves through profound differences as well as profound commonalities.

This perspective is not limited just to observation of different theatrical practices. It implies, rather, conducting research of a scientific kind which proposes to individuate the principles which *on the operative plane* make theatrical behaviour efficient in a trans-cultural dimension. ISTA was created with this hypothesis in mind insofar as it is based on a Eurasian vision of the theatre. It is not interested in specific study of Oriental theatres in their sociocultural contexts, nor in their myth in Europe and in the Americas. It is not interested in these matters because it is concerned with something else, not because it denies the value of these interests.

A large part of your article is based on incomprehension of this point, which causes you to attribute an ignorance to me which one should not suppose present even in a beginner:

Nor does Barba acknowledge that even in those traditions where he finds his inspiration there are a great number of performers who fail to achieve the high level of “presencing” with which Barba is so fascinated. Nor is there any attempt to articulate precisely how the native performer perceives what Barba receives as “presence”.⁸

This assertion is just as arbitrary (and just as denigrating) as that which immediately precedes it: “Barba’s vision of the ‘Oriental’ actor is a composite devoid of sociocultural or historical contexts”.

In your article there are dozens of assertions of this kind. These assertions are not based on anything I have written or said. They are all based on the misunderstanding

7. Zarrilli 1987, 98.

8. Zarrilli 1987, 102.



Sonja Kehler, ISTA 4.
Photo: Torben Huss

according to which I ignore all that which I am not dealing with *ex professo*. According to this logic you could also accuse me of not knowing that the Sioux Indians are not Hindus!

It disconcerts me to see so many platitudes appearing in your article, since in the past I have often appreciated the precision of your research. You restore what I say with incongruous quotations, making what I said seem bizarre and unreal. When you have then reduced it to an evidently unacceptable discourse, you identify it with the most obvious of erroneous positions, that around which debate has been the most vocal and which has the most extensive bibliography: the reification of the “Other”, the projection of our images, of our nostalgias, of our needs onto an “Other”, rendered ahistorical and transformed into a protagonist of an anthropological novel. This process has been treated critically for several decades by all those concerned with epistemology, cultural anthropology, social sciences, folklore, psychiatry, and the history of religion. I do not deny that the problem continues to be actual. But it has no relationship with ISTA, nor with what I have defined as “Theatre Anthropology”, nor with the reasons for and the means of my collaborations

with dancers/actors/actresses from Japan, Denmark, China, Canada, Bali, Italy, India, Argentina, Germany, and Norway.

I repeat again: I am concerned neither with studying nor with interpreting the various Asiatic theatres (how could I do so since I do not speak any Asiatic language?). I am concerned with something else: I collaborate with certain professionals from different traditions researching certain common principles of theatrical behaviour.

You say: “Barba has yet to reconcile in writing or practical work his particular definition of theatre anthropology with the existing discipline of academic anthropology”.⁹

But why should I do so? What is there to reconcile? Why should two independent lines of research become “reconciled”? All researchers are used to partial homonyms and do not confuse them with analogies. Among the various disciplines, in addition to cultural anthropology, there is also criminal anthropology, philosophical anthropology,

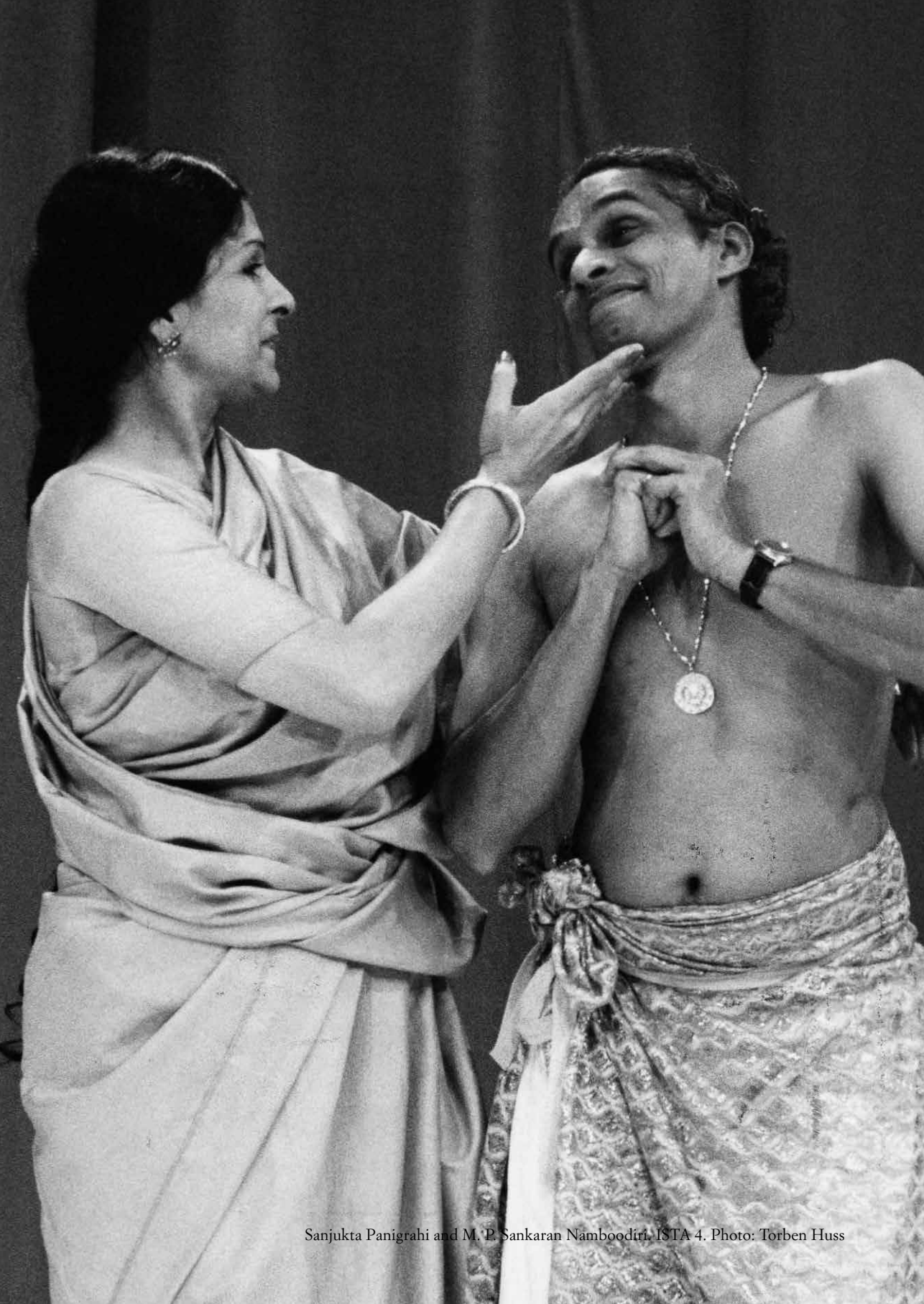
medical anthropology, physical anthropology ... In each presentation of ISTA it is underlined that the term “anthropology” is not used in the sense of cultural anthropology but in the common sense of “the study of man in a theatrical situation”. There should be no misunderstandings: theatre anthropology has nothing to do either with the application of paradigms from cultural anthropology to theatre, nor with the study of performative phenomena from those cultures which are normally the object of study by cultural anthropologists and ethnologists. The problem of reconciling theatre anthropology “with the existing discipline of academic anthropology” is certainly not a scientific problem. It is, if you like, a problem for universities organising their courses.

The many incomprehensions which appear in your article are certainly not caused by private motives, by rivalry or by those jealousies which often spring up between those who are working in contiguous fields. They are not the voluntary incomprehensions of someone who is attempting to hide the weakness of his own method by discrediting the methods of others. They are, rather, incomprehensions which demonstrate how difficult it is to pass from the evaluation of one’s own experience to evaluation of the experience of others. This obliges us to reflect upon the language which we use when we seek to use words to go beyond that which is obviously known about theatre. Precisely that language which to you seems “lyric”, “suggestive”, “emotive”, “intuitive”, and which therefore you reject as an example of “lack of reflexivity”, is at times a language which attempts to escape prefabricated definitions, those verbal networks which are only imitations of the precise language of sciences and which, behind the screen of academic decorum, can increase confusion.

The history of culture, however, shows that every time research is in *statu nascenti*, images, metaphorical and evocative terms, and linguistic inventions abound. The greatest danger does not lie in the necessary approximation or in the unavoidable risk of misunderstandings, but in the appeal to a presumed scientific clarity which exploits that which is already known and spares the researcher making one of the most fertile efforts possible: that of *searching (also) for his own words*.

But this you know as well as I, and your other writings demonstrate it. ■

9. Zarrilli 1987, 102.



Eugenio Barba

Between the Face and the Mask

Abstract: Through this article, first published on the 25th of November 1986 in the American weekly newspaper The Village Voice, Eugenio Barba replied to “Roles and Poles Apart”, Erika Munk’s day-by-day report of the ISTA’s conference The Female Role as Represented on the Stage in Various Cultures, published in the same newspaper two weeks before, on the 11th of November 1986. In her article, the American author accused ISTA director and scientific staff of being sexists and of having neglected the sociological question of gender equality. In his answer, Barba clarified the fundamental principles examined during the conference and the aims of ISTA.

Keywords: Extra-daily technique; Gender stereotypes; Pre-expressive level; Energy; Behaviour

Different individuals see things differently; people from different cultures view things in different ways. This holds true as much for American journalists as it does for Scandinavian theatre directors.

I founded the International School of Theatre Anthropology to help performers regardless of cultural differences. ISTA has centered its work on how their energy potential is manifested at the “pre-expressive” level, by which I mean the muscular and postural dynamics prior to the projection of character or narrative; it is carrying out this fundamental research through a comparative study of Eastern and Western acting techniques, and periodically holds public sessions, where participants observe and contribute. The Congress which Munk attended was the fourth such session. They are designed to see if beyond the differences - even the oppositions - of individual characteristics and cultural backgrounds, it is possible to find a common territory where people can learn from performance techniques not their own.

Over our years of research, we noticed how the use of the body in theatre and dance differs from its “natural” or daily use. Surely, this extra-daily technique contains gender stereotypes, but it also contains principles which may liberate performers from these stereotypes. In all cultures, codified performance genres help us see how a person’s muscular tone and stance are altered to engage her or his energy potential before expressing anything. This is evident in such Western forms as mime, ballet, and modern dance and in such Eastern forms as nô, kathakali, buyo, legong, and Beijing Opera. This refusal to follow the “natural” way of using the body incorporates a refusal to accept how a woman or a man “should” behave, even as these genres create their own gender stereotypes.



The aim of the conference was to capture a particular process of transition from pre-expressive through to the expressive: our emphasis was on pre-expressive technique because the pre-expressive realm exists before gender is made into oppositions. This was accomplished by focusing on different performers' levels of energy. This energy is not manifested as an opposition between feminine and masculine but as a continuum whose two poles are defined in the performance traditions of India, Japan, Bali, China and Indonesia as strong and supple.

This same continuum may be experienced in the West. Charlie Chaplin is a performer whose supple energy suffuses his performances, while Anna Magnani demonstrates a strong energy quality. Yet Magnani is not "masculine" nor is Chaplin "feminine". Unfortunately, these examples are rare in the West, where gender stereotypes carry over from daily to extra-daily activities. On the other hand, in the East, because from the very first day of training the teacher guides the young apprentice's energy into established pre-expressive behaviour without regard to the performer's gender, young girls will learn how to be strong warriors as well as soft gods and young boys will similarly learn roles that are both soft and strong. Later, the maturing performer may choose which energy is best for her or him to underline - as Pei Yan Ling did, becoming one of China's premier exponents of strong energy. Or as is the case of Sanjukta Panigrahi, a performer can use both kinds of energy. The congress closed with Panigrahi dancing *Ardhan arishwara* - a classical Odissi dance where the divinity manifests itself as the conjunction of supple and strong energy.

In referring to a demonstration of a male general by Pei Yan Ling, Munk said that "the fact that she's playing a male role has little to do with [her] brilliance; the dialectic is between convention and invention, the life is in the space between the mask and the person showing us the mask". Munk perceives the distinction between male and female as an opposition, whereas I am investigating what allows the performer to make that space live - i.e., the preexpressive techniques which are neither male nor female.

There are two specific pieces of misinformation in Munk's article. (1) When ISTA learned just four days before the congress that both Bibi Andersson and Franca Rame could not attend, we phoned *all paying participants*, informed them, and offered a full refund. No one accepted. (2) I made an appointment to speak with Munk on the last day of the congress. Munk did not show up. ■

Erika Munk replied:

Barba's exposition of his ideas strategically ditches his dedication to the notion that men impersonating women are the truest portrayals of female roles, and simply ignores the questions that agitated the ISTA meeting. The conference's title promised an investigation that went beyond technique, and many participants wanted to discuss issues ranging from the social and historical to the erotic. They were prevented from doing so. As for the two facts: an enormous number of press people were invited and should also have been informed; I did meet Barba as arranged, in the lobby after the last performance, and he didn't seem interested in an interview. Perhaps this was a misunderstanding; if so, I'm sorry.

Jean-Marie Pradier

Rapport sur la 4^{ème} session de l'ISTA

Abstract: After the end of the 4th edition of ISTA, held in Holstebro in 1986 between September 7th to 21st, Jean-Marie Pradier, member of the scientific staff since the first ISTA edition, reports on the activities which took place in the session. The report, accessible at Odin Teatret Archives, presents in depth the theme of the session, the characteristics of the research and the organisation of the congress.

Keywords: ISTA 1986; Holstebro; The female role; Actor's energy; Pre-expressivity

Holstebro, Odin Teatret / Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium - 7-21 septembre 1986

Le rôle de la femme dans le théâtre des diverses cultures

1.0. L'ISTA

Conçue en 1979 et dirigée par Eugenio BARBA, l'INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY - ISTA est un organisme permanent dont le siège est situé à HOLSTEBRO (Danemark). L'ISTA est un laboratoire de recherche sur les fondements de travail de l'acteur, et un centre de diffusion d'expériences et de connaissances pour les acteurs et les metteurs en scène orientaux et occidentaux.

Elle intègre également des équipes scientifiques attachées aux 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.

L'ISTA a notamment pour mission de réaliser des sessions publiques dans des lieux retenus par des institutions nationales et/ou internationales qui en assurent l'administration.

1.1. Le terme "anthropologie" est utilisé au sens propre, soit : l'étude de l'homme - dans sa dimension biologique et culturelle dans le théâtre.

Il ne s'agit plus de se contenter de l'approche psychologique de l'acteur qui a conduit dans une impasse les études et la pratique théâtrales, mais il convient au contraire de décrire les processus de création de l'acteur et les différents modes d'apprentissage, en ayant recours au savoir empirique des professionnels du spectacle comme aux disciplines scientifiques utiles : biologie - notamment la biologie du comportement, la neurobiologie de l'apprentissage -, psychophysiologie, linguistique, acoustique, ethnologie, sciences sociales.

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 - y compris vocales -, la relation au partenaire.
- 1.3. L'ISTA n'entend pas se limiter à un seul point de vue. Elle se situe dans une perspective interdisciplinaire : ce choix méthodologique lui permet de progresser et d'évoluer au fil du développement scientifique - que, en ayant pour objectif la prise en considération de l'ensemble des éléments qui composent la réalité vivante du phénomène théâtral.
- 1.4. Le choix des formes spectaculaires qui servent de référence aux recherches de l'ISTA est déterminé par la stabilité de leur caractère. Si l'on veut mettre en évidence les universaux du spectaculaire, il est nécessaire de faire porter l'analyse sur des modèles structurés, organisés depuis longtemps selon des principes, des codes, des méthodes de formation de l'acteur bien établis. C'est pourquoi l'ISTA recourt tout particulièrement aux théâtres traditionnels d'Asie. Bien que fort différents les uns des autres, ils ont en commun le fait de bénéficier d'une rigoureuse organisation interne.
- 1.5. L'ISTA a réalisé les sessions suivantes :
- BONN (Allemagne Fédérale) : 1 - 31 octobre 1980
À la demande du Kulturamt der Stadt Bonn
 - VOLTERRA (Italie) 8 août - 8 octobre 1981
À la demande du Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale di Pontedera
 - BLOIS France : 12 - 26 avril 1985
À la demande du Centre d'Action Théâtrale Bouffonneries-Contrastes
- 1.6. La quatrième session publique de l'ISTA, administrée par l'ODIN TEATRET / NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM, a eu lieu à Holstebro du 17 au 22 septembre 1986.
- 1.7. L'entreprise a bénéficié de l'appui de
- Municipalité d'Holstebro
 - Japan Foundation, Tokyo
 - Bureau of International Educational Relations, Taipei
 - Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi

2.0. PROGRAMME GENERAL DE LA 4^{ème} SESSION DE L'ISTA

- L'originalité de la session publique se situe à trois niveaux :
- 2.1. Le Thème. Circonscrit au rôle de la femme dans le théâtre de diverses cultures, il a permis de porter l'attention sur l'un des aspects majeurs du théâtre : La représentation du masculin et du féminin. Les travaux réalisés au cours des sessions précédentes avaient conduit en effet à mettre en évidence une double question - théorique et pratique - :
- Comment représenter les personnages féminins et les personnages masculins ?
 - Comment interpréter - pour un même personnage - les deux aspects fondamentaux de sa réalité : masculin/féminin, ou - selon certaines traditions orientales - le fort/doux.
- 2.2. Les activités. La quatrième session a voulu être une introduction au thème mentionné. Plutôt que de proposer des ateliers de formation qui n'auraient conduit qu'à

un entraînement limité de peu de portée, il a été jugé préférable de présenter des exemples achevés d'interprétation et les techniques pédagogiques qui les fondent.

Le principe anthropologique de l'ISTA a manifesté une fois encore son efficacité. En effet, les artistes orientaux invités appartiennent à des cultures où la représentation du masculin et du féminin a donné lieu à un art minutieusement élaboré : interprètes masculins de rôles féminins - onnagata du Japon, tan de la Chine, kathakali et gotipua de l'Inde -, interprètes féminins de rôles masculins - danseuses de l'Opera chinois, de l'orissi, de Bali et du nihon buyo.

Le travestissement est une sorte de maquette culturelle - de modèle réduit - dont le code livre l'essentiel de ce qui - pour un groupe donné - est reconnu comme étant masculin ou féminin.

De plus, les techniques orientales ont l'avantage d'être depuis longtemps stabilisées, et ainsi, d'apparaître avec plus d'évidence aux yeux de l'observateur.

- 2.3. Les participants. La fonction d'une session publique de l'ISTA n'est pas seulement de constituer l'aboutissement des travaux réalisés par l'équipe permanente avec Eugenio BARBA. Elle doit également être un point de départ pour de nouvelles recherches.

Le caractère particulier de la quatrième session a conduit à accueillir un nombre limité mais varié de participants capables d'enrichir les débats en apportant un point de vue différent. L'aspect international de la rencontre a de plus été à ce propos, d'un avantage évident.

2.3.1. Participants

Pays d'origine			
1. Allemagne	14	12. Inde	1
2. Argentine	4	13. Italie	25
3. Australie	1	14. Mexique	4
4. Belgique	4	15. Norvège	8
5. Canada	7	16. Pays-Bas	1
6. Colombie	1	17. Pologne	1
7. Cuba	1	18. Suède	24
8. Danemark	32	19. Suisse	2
9. Finlande	1	20. Turquie	2
10. France	9	21. U.S.A.	10
11. Grande-Bretagne	2	Total	154

2.3.2. Langues du Congrès International : anglais et français

2.3.3. Catégories socio-professionnelles :

- professionnels du spectacle (acteurs, metteurs en scène)
- animateurs, travailleurs sociaux
- critiques
- universitaires (enseignants, chercheurs)

2.3.4. Pédagogues

KANHO AZUMA, Nihon buyo, Tokyo
KATSUKO AZUMA, Nihon buyo, Tokyo
MEI BAO-JIU, théâtre traditionnel chinois, Pékin
NI PUTU ARY WIDHYASTI BANDEM, danse balinaise, Denpasar
SWASTHI WIDJAJA BANDEM, danse balinaise, Denpasar
CESAR BRIE, théâtre de groupe, Holstebro

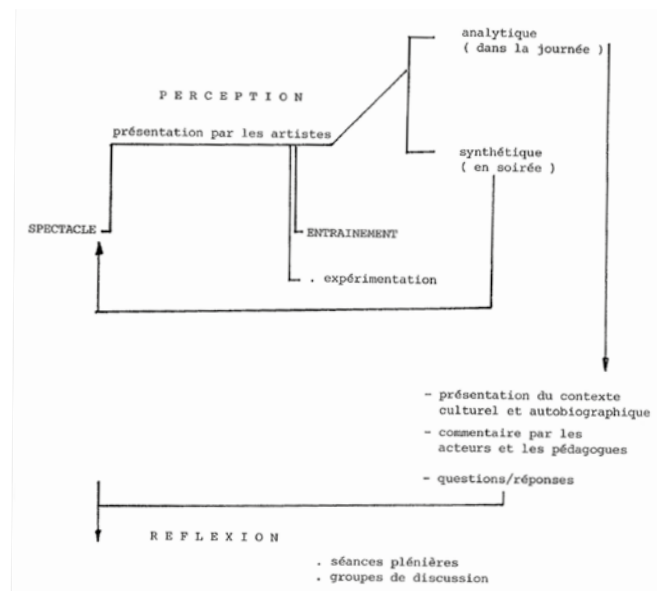
TRACY CHUNG, théâtre traditionnel chinois, Taipei
 HEMANT KUMAR DAS, musique traditionnelle indienne, Bhubaneswar
 GAUTAM, danse gotipua, Bhubaneswar
 KANICHI HANAYAGI, kabuki, Tokyo
 TAKAE KOYAMA, musique traditionnelle japonaise, Tokyo
 SONJA KEHLER, théâtre traditionnelle européen, Berlin Est
 SHIZUKO KINEYA, musique traditionnelle japonaise, Tokyo
 DESAK MADE SUARTI LAKSMI, danse balinaise, Denpasar
 YVONNE LIN, théâtre traditionnel chinois, Taipei
 HELEN LIU, théâtre traditionnel chinois, Taipei
 KELUCHARAMN MOHAPATRA, Odissi, Cuttack
 HANNEM MEULENGRACHT, musique traditionnelle européenne, Odense
 M.P. SANKARAN NAMBOODIRI, kathakali, Cheruthuruthy
 RAGUNATH PANIGRAHI, musique traditionnelle indienne, Bhubaneswar
 SANJUKTA PANIGRAHI, odissi, Bhubaneswar
 GANGADAR PRADHAN, maître gotipua, Bhubaneswar
 IBEN NAGEL RASMUSSEN, théâtre de groupe, Holstebro
 JADGISH PRASAD VARMAN, musique traditionnelle indienne, Bhubaneswar
 K.N. VIJAYAKUMAR, kathakali, Cheruthuruthy
 NI MADE WIRATINI, danse balinaise, Denpasar
 PEI YAN LING, théâtre traditionnel chinois, Hebei
 SUN ZHUNG-SHU, théâtre traditionnel chinois, Pékin

3.0. ORGANISATION DES TRAVAUX

3.1. PRINCIPES DE DEPART. Chaque session publique de l'ISTA présente ses propres caractéristiques. L'ISTA ne dispense pas un enseignement standard qui serait établi une fois pour toutes. Le Congrès International d'Holstebro a délibérément privilégié l'apprentissage perceptif. Tandis que généralement, dans notre culture, le spectacle donne lieu à un discours qui écrase souvent la réalité physique, les participants ont été invités à observer ce qui leur était présenté sans chercher à projeter leurs propres schémas interprétatifs sur ce qu'ils voyaient.

Ce principe nous paraît essentiel dans la recherche anthropologique.

3.2. ORGANISATION DU TEMPS



3.2.1. Temps propre du Congrès International :

Les séances plénières se sont déroulées dans la "salle rouge" du Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium spécialement aménagée, de 08 heures 45 du matin à 18 heures 15, avec des interruptions pour les pauses et les repas, ainsi que pour le travail en groupes.

Les déjeuners pris sur place ont permis aux participants de mieux se connaître et d'échanger leurs points de vue.

À l'exception du premier jour où, à la demande générale, une discussion s'est ouverte en matinée, le temps de réflexion a été réservé à la soirée, ceci, afin d'utiliser au mieux la présence exceptionnelle des artistes réunis pour la première fois en un seul lieu, et surtout pour apprendre à voir avant que de parler.

Il est à souligner que la présence et la participation d'artistes et théoriciens occidentaux impliqués dans le "théâtre de femmes" a enrichi la discussion et la discussion, même si le thème du colloque était circonscrit à l'aspect de la réalisation, au niveau de l'acteur.

3.2.2. Temps public du Congrès International :

Fidèle à sa volonté de favoriser la diffusion des arts du spectacle propres aux différentes cultures, l'ISTA a proposé des soirées publiques, ouvertes aux habitants d'Holstebro.

Ces spectacles présentés après le dîner pris dans un restaurant de la ville, à proximité des "hallen", ont servi de synthèse aux travaux analytiques de la journée.

4.0. GESTION DU THEME DU CONGRÈS INTERNATIONAL

4.1. Par une brochure diffusée au préalable à chacun des participants, Eugenio BARBA a clairement indiqué ses intentions, l'état des travaux antérieurs entrepris à l'ISTA, les principes théoriques et méthodologiques qui devaient servir de guide à l'actuel Congrès.

Ainsi, les participants peu familiarisés avec la recherche anthropologique propre à l'ISTA ont eu la possibilité de se préparer.

De même, la présence de pédagogues orientaux et des conseillers scientifiques qui ont l'avantage de travailler avec Eugenio BARBA depuis la fondation de l'ISTA, a facilité le déroulement des séances d'analyse et d'expérimentation.

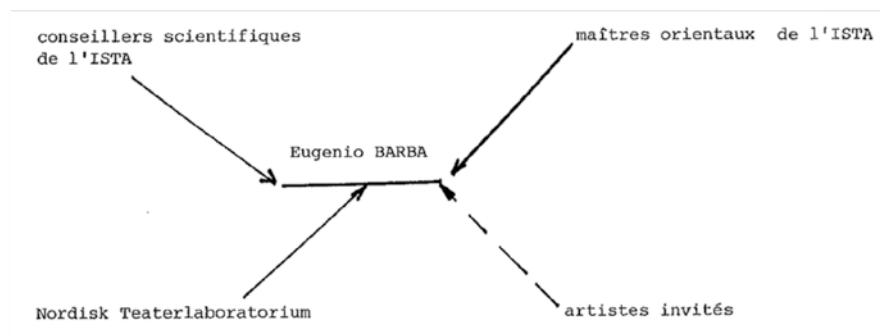
4.2. La méthode de travail adoptée peut être schématiquement présentée :

(A) situation concrète 1 → analyse → recherche des éléments → hypothèse explicative 1 → situation concrète provoquée 2 →
 (B) évaluation de la valeur de l'hypothèse 1 → comparaison de 1 et 2
 (C) proposition d'un principe esthétique et/ou pédagogique pouvant servir à la réalisation

5.0. LA MÉTHODE ORIGINALE DE L'ISTA n'a pu s'établir qu'en raison des relations de travail et de confiance développées au sein de l'équipe pédagogique interdisciplinaire, autour d'Eugenio BARBA.

Cette équipe comprend :

- un animateur coordinateur : Eugenio BARBA
- les maîtres orientaux
- les pédagogues occidentaux (acteurs formés au Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium)
- les conseillers scientifiques des Universités de Lecce de Paris et de New York



6.0. BILAN

- 6.1. Les publications annoncées dans le précédent rapport ont vu le jour. Des versions en langue anglaise, française et italienne ont été publiées.
- 6.2. Les documents vidéo du colloque seront exploités au niveau scientifique et pédagogiques et mis à la disposition des demandeurs.
- 6.3. Le quatrième colloque se situe au moment où l'ISTA a acquis une maturité certaine. Aussi va-t-il donné lieu à de plus nombreuses exploitations que par le passé tant sur le plan artistique que scientifique.
- 6.4. Le thème retenu a permis de clarifier et de développer la notion de pré-expressivité mise en évidence par Eugenio BARBA lors des sessions précédentes. Ce pas en avant a fait atteindre une nouvelle étape : la question de l'énergie de l'acteur. Les premiers éléments de réponse seront publiés dans un numéro spécial de la revue *Bouffonneries-Contrastes* (France), *The Drama Review* (U.S.A.), *Alfabeta* (Italie), *Spillrom* (Norvège).
- 6.5. Il est évident qu'une session de moins d'une semaine ne peut épuiser le thème qui avait été proposé : le rôle de la femme dans le théâtre de différentes cultures. Les travaux entrepris doivent être poursuivis, systématiquement, en tenant compte des différents paramètres qui ont été dégagés au cours de l'analyse. Toutefois l'ISTA n'entend pas faire double emploi avec les rencontres, colloques et congrès qui - avec raison - s'interrogent sur les aspects politiques, économiques et sociaux de l'activité des femmes dans le théâtre. L'ISTA souhaite une collaboration avec les institutions et les groupes concernés, et offre sa spécificité.

La notion retenue par Eugenio BARBA - énergie de l'acteur -, doit être étudiée de façon à montrer les différents modes de gestion du corps dont dispose l'acteur, en fonction de sa réalité biologique. En effet, le féminin et le masculin - dans leurs différences, comme au niveau de leurs ressemblances - se réfèrent tous les deux à

un élément vital, au sens propre du terme : ce qui détermine la survie de l'espèce et de l'individu. Le théâtre - art fondé sur la présence réelle - est l'une des formes esthétiques - sinon la première - qui exalte ce que nous nommons la vie, le bios. Le secret de l'art de l'acteur concerne la restauration des fonctions biologiques : le respect de la vie et son exaltation. L'intelligence des cultures paraît être au service de cette quête : certaines - les cultures orientales notamment - ont inventé un véritable savoir du corps - savoir biologique. D'autres se sont égarées vers la technique et les media qui ont pris le relai des fonctions physiologiques.

Là encore, la rencontre Orient/Occident, sera prometteuse.

7.0. PROSPECTIVE

Le succès enregistré au cours de la quatrième session publique de l'ISTA justifie l'ampleur des efforts accomplis.

L'ISTA ne peut pas toutefois répondre à la totalité des demandes qui lui sont faites, tant par les institutions universitaires, que par les organisations culturelles et professionnelles.

La prochaine session publique de l'ISTA aura lieu en Italie, dans le Salento. Le thème de cette cinquième session a pour titre : rencontres entre théâtres traditionnels d'Orient et le Salento. Il s'agira d'approcher - de façon concrète, en situation réelle - la tradition de l'art telle qu'elle se présente dans les publics populaires et les publics "cultivés".

ISTA 5

The Actor's Tradition and the Spectator's Identity



Vincenzo Blasi

The Spectator's Shadow

ISTA Salento 1987: the practice of theatre dialogues

Abstract: The author summarises the different stages of his continuous research on the 5th session of ISTA in Salento (1987) that he began in 1997. The text throws light on the ISTA participants' group dynamic during the 'closed' part of the session, the variety of 'dialogue-performances' (barter) with the local population during the 'open' part, and quotes several observations by cultural anthropologist Piero Giacchè during his field work which lasted several months.

Keywords: Salento; Spectator; Tradition; Identity; Barter; Intercultural dialogue; Faust; Piero Giacchè

ISTA Salento will take place in the streets and the squares. One of its aims is to study what happens in situations of intercultural dialogue. It will show us how the sense of a performance is transformed in the passage from the tradition of the actor to the personal 'translation' of the viewer who is distant from this tradition.

Eugenio Barba¹

The 5th session of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), which took place in Salento (Apulia, Italy) from 1st to 14th September 1987, was an encounter between two stable yet changing realities: on the one hand the Eugenio Barba's "floating island" with the performers of Asian and international theatre as well as Odin Teatret's actors; on the other hand the Salento "quasi-island" and the complex personality of its inhabitants.

After the session in Volterra in 1981, ISTA came to Italy for the second time. But if in the Tuscan town the work was carried out in an almost monastic way, although with regular openings to the outside world, the session in Salento was distinguished by the abundant offer of performances in various locations like a festival of Asian theatres and in constant relationship with the people of the territory.

On the streets and in the squares, in the courtyards of castles and in public gardens, "theatre dialogues" took place between Asian actors and local musicians and dancers:

1. "Terra d'Otranto" Numero Speciale, Rivista Trimestrale della Camera di Commercio Industria Artigianato e Agricoltura di Lecce, 1987, p. 17.



Indian percussion instruments competed with Salento drums; local voices, songs and dances discovered strange correspondences with Balinese dance-theatre; fairs, religious celebrations and social rituals became places of “barter”, of cultural exchange.

The selected ISTA theme, *Tradition of the Actor and Identity of the Spectator*, constantly confronted the two subjects of the theatre dialogue: the actor, guardian of a specific (professional) *tradition*, and the spectator, guardian of a deep cultural and social *identity*. The ISTA became both the *content* of the activities - practical lessons, work demonstrations, comparative analyses, performances and exchanges/barters between actors and spectators - and the *container* of the event. In the months preceding the session, research on the spectator from Salento had been launched on behalf of ISTA. Conducted by the anthropologist Piergiorgio Giacchè, of the University of Perugia, it lasted well beyond the duration of the session. The investigation allowed the researcher to deal with a territory, balancing between memory and innovation, and with a population in constant relationship with “theatricality” and entertainment.

The session was attended, in the double role of artists and teachers, by the actors-dancers of three prestigious Asian companies: the Indian odissi dance company, led by the actress-dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi and Raghunath Panigrahi, composer and director of the classical orchestra with musicians Hemant Kumar Das, Mohini Mohan Patnaik and Gangadhar Pradhan; the Japanese buyo kabuki dance troupe, which included Katsuko Azuma and Haruchiho Azuma, two Nihon buyo dancers, and the onnagata kabuki dancer Kanichi Hanayagi, accompanied by musicians Shizuko Kinoya and Takae Koyama; the Dharma Shanti dance troupe, from the Indonesian National Academy of Dance (Asti) in Denpasar, Bali, directed by the dancer I Made Bandem. In addition, for the first time in an ISTA session, a few of Odin Teatret’s actors participated. As always, the scientific staff was numerous, consisting of internationally renowned historians, semiologists and anthropologists - some of whom are founding members of ISTA - together with experts and scholars from all over the world.

The organisation was entrusted to Mediterranea Teatrolaboratorio, directed by Giorgio Di Lecce and Cristina Ria, and to Nicola Savarese, professor of History of Theatre and director of the Department of Social Systems and Communication of the University of Lecce. The event was financed by the Apulian Region, the Provincial Administration of Lecce, the Consortium for the Apulian Public Theatre, the Chamber of Commerce of Lecce, with the patronage of the Ministry of Tourism and Performance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The operational venue of the event was a summer camp for children, close to the sea and the Laghi Alimini of Otranto, along the provincial road “litoranea” 366.²

2. For the organisation of the itinerant sessions, ISTA seeks out environments in which the relationships between participants are privileged. Participants are often forced to adapt to structures and spaces that are not intended for the theatre, where teachers and students eat and live in common areas. Moreover, the informal nature of the meetings and community life imply the acceptance and observance of certain rules of behaviour, from the strict rule of silence as soon as you wake up in the morning to the shifts for cleaning the rooms. As Nicola Savarese - a permanent member of ISTA and scientifically in charge of the Salento session - told me in the interview he gave me for my degree thesis, “as soon as they arrived, all the guests - teachers and students, directors and actors, university lecturers and students - were welcomed into the facility and housed in two large dormitories. It was not easy for them to sleep on beds that a couple of months earlier had accommodated school-age children: squeaky cots that were too

Hypothesis for a Faust

Inside the seaside summer camp for children, among the green of the pines and the blue of the sea, a circle of sand had been traced, evocatively named “Epidauros”. Here, for the first five mornings - the so-called “closed week” - around Eugenio Barba and the artists of Asian theatre, sat the fifty participants of the *International Theoretical Seminar on Text and Action in Theatre*, previously selected from actors, playwrights, directors and specialists in various disciplines. They were collaborating with Eugenio Barba on staging *Faust* inspired by the texts of Goethe and Marlowe, or rather on the passage from text to action.³

There is immediately some evidence and a few tacit agreements: Eugenio Barba interacts with the Asian actors-dancers well knowing that their cultural distance from the theme-myth of *Faust* could suggest unprecedented possibilities to approach the text. During the rehearsals only the “insiders” (actors, director, orchestra and chorus) speak. All the others are not allowed to intervene in the work.

The artists actively involved are the Japanese actress-dancer Katsuko Azuma (Nihon buyo) in the role of the protagonist Faust; the Indian actress-dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi from the odissi tradition, playing the character of Mephistopheles; and the Japanese Kanichi Hanayagi, specialised in kabuki female roles (onnagata), playing Margarete. The music and choruses are entrusted to the small Indian orchestra, conducted by Raghunath Panigrahi, together with Balinese, Japanese and Odin Teatret’s actors-musicians.

The result is a sort of work in progress of about 30 minutes or, as Patrice Pavis writes, « *une esquisse rapide qui permet le mieux d'observer la gestation et la fixation progressive du sens dans la mise en place gestuelle, vocale, textuelle, musicale et scénique des danseurs et des musiciens* ».⁴

Preliminarily, starting from episodes or fragments of Marlowe’s and Goethe’s dramas, the participants-observers were asked to propose key scenes or scenarios capable of generating a *physical narration*, not necessarily realistic or anecdotal. From here Eugenio Barba delimited a narrative framework within which the performers could freely improvise to define their own characters, each according to their own style, creating scores of original and coherent actions. The director then transposed them into three main scenes whose gestural and narrative macrostructure was symbolic but recognisable.

short, on which they had to crouch, bend their knees, before resigning themselves to sleeping with their feet protruding from the bed. [...] In a context of community life, the group’s tasks were entrusted to the participants who, in turn, had to clean the work rooms, the large rooms where they slept and the bathrooms. Fernando De Toro, a Chilean University professor who taught in Canada, after reading in the cleaning programme the name of Prof. Marco De Marinis - known in Italy and abroad for his studies on the semiotics of theatre - said that he would offer a dinner to all if he saw him clean the bathrooms. He didn’t want to believe his eyes when, a few days later, he found the Italian colleague standing in front of him holding a bucket and a broom.” (Blasi 1999, 255).

3. The materials on the staging of *Faust* are not many if we exclude notes, diaries and scenarios written by the participants, in which the technical aspects are mixed with personal considerations and suggestions of the results. An excellent synthesis between chronicle and short essay is the text of the semiologist of theatre Patrice Pavis entitled *Dancing with Faust. A Semiotician’s reflections on Barba’s Intercultural Mise-en-scène* (Pavis 1989b), published also in French (see Pavis, 1989a), presented at the *First International Meeting between Semiology and Theatrical Anthropology* (12th September in Bari).

4. Pavis 1989a, 226. Of extreme importance are the videos on the performance and rehearsals of *Faust* (Odin Teatret Archives 1987b and 1987c), the latter a backstage of the mise-en-scène work.

Scene of the meeting. In the background, hidden among the trees, Sanjukta-Mephistopheles cautiously approaches Katsuko-Faust who is at the centre of the space in a long, immaculate white gown. Mephistopheles has a black shawl over a red sari, his (her) raven hair falls heavily down his cheeks and shoulders. He attracts Faust's attention with bewitching, calculated movements of the arms and the whole body. The work on this scene makes it clear that "the assimilation of materials derived from Faust thus occurs through the dancing body and not through a psychological approach to character or a textual approach to the play".⁵ Two fingers indicate the twirling eyes of Mephistopheles. The spectators' gaze fixes on the whites of the haunted eyes, then the arms rise slowly, fingers trembling, and spread above the head before being suddenly directed towards Faust. The latter's body sways in a carefree, unconscious dance before falling into the arms of Mephistopheles. Faust's white garb falls off, revealing a red shirt and a pair of jeans.

Juxtaposition of styles and polarisation of the characters: on the one hand, the extreme mobility of Sanjukta-Mephistopheles, the decisive expressiveness of his/her body and face, the luxuriant black hair and bright colours. The Indian dancer represents the 'masculine' but incorporeal side, the seducer's character. On the other hand, Faust-Katsuko, more measured in his/her torso movements and poses, his/her feet firmly planted on the ground: the Japanese dancer symbolises the 'feminine' but terrestrial element, the fragility of those who fall for seduction.

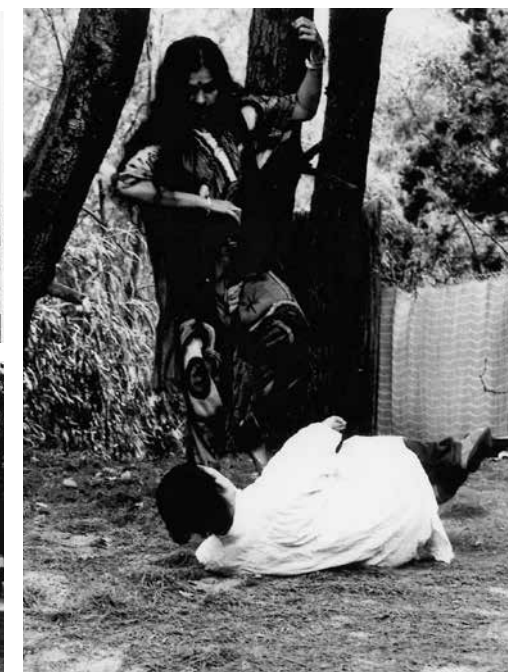
Exhumation scene. In the foreground Faust-Katsuko and Mephistopheles-Sanjukta, both kneeling on the sand, are looking for something. They exhume the corpse of Faust's and Margarete's child. They have conflicting thoughts and emotions. The impressive Mephistopheles takes a handful of sand in his fist and shows it to Faust, the grains of sand fly away as if from a broken hourglass - thus do joys and sorrows pass. Faust pokes at the sand with a knife. Mephistopheles' hands resume digging. They find the swaddling clothes of a new-born baby, a dress, right where Margarete had buried them.

At the same time, behind them, Kanichi-Margarete draws gestures in the air corresponding to the opposite states of mind of the characters in the foreground. The director breaks down the Asian actors' scores and codified actions into small segments to be *reassembled*, on the horizontal plane of *concatenation* and along the vertical axis of *simultaneity*. Thus "three gestural keys, corresponding to three clearly distinct emotional tonalities, are presented to the spectator's comparative perception".⁶

To the western spectator the scene succeeds in arousing pity and horror, old categories of Greek tragedy. The music is intense, the singing obsessive. Faust and Mephistopheles, in the foreground, wrap the child's bones in bandages. On Mephistopheles' lips there is no longer the indulgent smile of a lover or mother, but that of the gods when they contemplate life manifesting itself in death and destruction. Displaying the newly exhumed dirty dress, Mephistopheles' superhuman smile says, "So it is! That's it!" It is one of the most pathos-filled moments. Behind them, not far away, Margarete is dreaming, leans towards a pine tree and falls to the ground. She looks like a spring-dressed girl from

5. Pavis 1989b, 40.

6. Pavis 1989b, 43. Cf. Barba - Savarese 2006, 178-184 (entry *Montage*).



the early 20th century: a straw hat with a satin ribbon, a sleeveless, frilly, embroidered white dress and white high-heeled sandals. She dances her delirium, relives love and abandonment, and has no memory of infanticide. She goes through all the emotional reactions of the characters and of the spectator. Iben Nagel Rasmussen, in the chorus, sings the “lullaby” that Goethe composed for Margarete, the “song of the juniper”, taken from a popular fairy tale that Faust had heard beyond the prison walls. The music is sweet, almost monotonous:

*Bitch of a mother, it was she who killed me.
Wretch of a father, it was he who ate me.
My little sister collected my bones in a fresh grave.
Then I became a little bird of the wood.
Fly, fly away!*

Scene of drunkenness. At other times the spectators are drawn to the burlesque aspects. These happen before the pact between the two characters. Sanjukta is holding a bottle. To represent Mephistopheles’ drunkenness, she redefines the character by improvising “drunken” poses and *mudras*. Similarly, Katsuko acts after grasping the bottle. The entire scene is transformed into a “caricature” of a dance. One actress almost parodies the movements of the other. It is the joyful dance of two drunkards who manage to synchronise their state of intoxication, a scene seen repeatedly in popular comedies or silent films.⁷

At the end, the short performance crystallises around a *Dedication for Faust*, signed and distributed by Eugenio Barba to all the participants. A sentence is added at the bottom that sums up the meaning of the work and, at the same time, the utopia of ISTA: “Faust ovvero il mondo può essere rovesciato” (Faust or the world can be overthrown).

Goethe’s work is an attempt to overthrow the world and its laws: Mephistopheles will provide Faust with the filter of youth and all sorts of worldly pleasures, but only in exchange for his soul; ready to do anything to satisfy his desires, the protagonist will seduce Margarete who, carried away by her passions, will infringe God’s laws.

But this Faust is not content with subverting only the moral order. The games of the imagination and the contradictions of the drama are carried out in the actors’ ability to accumulate and redistribute energy, “with clarity and reason, as one masters a technique and directs a work”.⁸ It is on this ground that distant realities can come closer and opposing principles embrace each other: truth and fiction, Asian theatre and western theatre, “acculturated” actors and “inculturated” spectators.

“Zwei seelen wohnen, ach! In meiner Brust,” (two souls habit my breast), Faust complains, but “if he had known that his breast would one day be a theatre of

interculturalism, God knows whether he would have agreed to sign a contract with the Devil!”.⁹

Dialogues as performances

In the second week, ISTA opened to an audience. On September 6th, in the Church of the Augustinians in the village of Cursi, the first “dialogue-performance” inspired by sacred music was staged. The Indian company, the parish choir of Catholic Action from Andrano, the religious choir from Cutrofiano and Odin Teatret’s Scandinavian actors-musicians took turns at the altar.

On September 10th, in the main square of Nardò, a “dialogue-performance” of popular music took place with the Balinese and Indian actors/musicians, and singers and musicians from Salento with their repertoire of *tarantate* and folk music. Finally, on September 13th, the last three dialogue-performances were staged with the title *The Silk Road*. The first focused on religious music, in the churchyard of Calimera, with the participation of the Indian, Balinese, the Vocal Chorus of Spongano, the cultural circle of Corigliano and the choral group of Maglie; the second one was a contemporary dialogue-concert in the village of Caprarica, with the Indian and Japanese ensembles engaged in a jam session with the Trio Folk del Salento, the jazz duo of Roberto Gagliardi and the group Banda di Aiuto of Toni Robertini and Mino Toriano. Finally a dialogue-performance in Maglie, focused on martial arts: here the Japanese actors had a ‘dialogue’ with the performers of the fencing-dance of Ruffano, to the whirling rhythm of the Salento tambourines.

From 6th to 10th September, every evening, the three Asian ensembles performed in the squares and theatres of Salento and Apulia: in Bari, Lecce, Otranto, Martano, Corigliano, Melendugno, Aradeo and Nardò.¹⁰

The Indian company went on stage with an odissi performance, a form of dance developed in the region of Orissa (north-eastern India) between the 7th and 14th century, with the cult of Shiva and the construction of many temples.

One of the greatest performers of this style is Sanjukta Panigrahi. In her performance, accompanied by the Indian classical orchestra - harmonium, sitar, binka, shabai - conducted by Raghunath Panigrahi, she presented episodes from the Indian epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the ancient poetic hymns of the *Rigveda*. After an invocation to the gods, the performance developed into an alternating series of narrative pieces and ‘pure’ rhythmic dance.

Those who attended the performance saw a combination of the aesthetic principles of

7. The work of scenic composition takes place step by step and thus, as Pavis points out, “The dancer incorporates into her performance and traditional codification those ‘foreign bodies,’ gestures, and rhythms that she had automatically rejected. This appropriation is achieved by way of a sort of ‘gestural graft,’ which she must tolerate without rejection. [...] The two dancers’ appropriation/incorporation of the Faust story is the first stage in the process of acculturation, the movement from Eastern encoding to Western decoding, [...]”. (Pavis 1989b, 41).

8. Cruciani 2006, 100.

9. Pavis 1989b, 54.

10. “The planning and staging of the events were very tight - recalls Nicola Savarese - it was the first time in Apulia that such an organic project of theatrical involvement had been carried out, in a comparison with artistic experiences of international prestige. [...] I do not believe that the organisational aspect can be separated from the artistic one: it is the other side of the coin, since it allows the latter to ‘take off’. [...] Experience has taught me the materiality of theatre: being able to count on group solidarity, exploiting temporariness and the medium term, finding expedients and solutions to guarantee optimal conditions for an event... at least until the curtain falls.” (Blasi 1999, 255-256)

Indian dance - use of the body and voice modulations, dynamic and symbolic use of the hands and fingers (*basta*) in expressive compositions (*mudras*) - with the psychological element of “narration”, the richness of the costumes and the “symbolism” of the make-up.

In the Japanese ensemble, together with the two buyo dancers Katzuko Azuma and Haruchiho Azuma, Kanichi Hanayagi, a kabuki impersonator of female roles (*onnagata*) was performing accompanied by the music of Shizuko Kineya (*shamisen*) and the singer Takae Koyama.

In the first piece, *onnagata* actor Kanichi Hanayagi performed a dance number from the kabuki repertoire called *Okané*, the name of the beautiful girl who lived in the Kyoto region, near the Lake Biwa bridge. With her physical strength she had tamed wild horses and repelled the onslaught of enemies, yet she was too shy to declare herself to the man she loved.

Yashima, the second piece, was a classical Japanese dance, derived from *nô* theatre, with a delicate style (*jiuta-mai*). The famous battle of Yashima was staged, where two factions, the Heike, and the Genji, to whom the hero Yoshitsune belonged, face each other. His ghost appeared at night to narrate the tragic scenes of the battle. The dancer Katzuko Azuma played all the characters: the Buddhist monk, Yoshitsune's spirit and the heroes who faced each other in the battle.¹¹

From a dance of the kabuki theatre came the piece entitled *Sagimsumme* (The young heron girl), performed by Haruchiho Azuma. The ghost of a young woman, killed for having committed adultery, now took on the appearance of a white heron and then that of a white bride. By dancing, the young woman-ghost evoked the rare moments of happiness for a love which bloomed among the cherry blossoms in spring and the pain of the winter landscape.

The fourth piece on the programme, *Ashi Benkei*, narrated the first meeting between two popular Japanese heroes of the 12th century: Yoshitsune (played by Katzuko Azuma) of the Genji faction always fighting against the Heike, and Benkei (played by Kanichi Hanayagi), a cunning and strong warrior monk who became devoted to Yoshitsune.

From the kabuki repertoire came the last piece, *Onatsu*, based on the tragic story of two young lovers, Onatsu and Sejuro, told in the 17th century by the writer Saikaku Ihara. Onatsu (played by Katzuko Azuma), the daughter of an Osaka merchant, fell in love with Sejuro, one of her father's employees. The two ran away and hid in a small village. One day, the young man decided to return to Osaka. Dressed as a peasant, hiding under a straw hat, he arrived in the city but was taken prisoner by the guards and executed. The piece described Onatsu's madness at the news of her lover's death.

11. Sometime later, Eugenio Barba wrote to Katzuko Azuma, recalling her extraordinary performance in Salento: “Dear Katzuko, for many years I have carried in my memory the image of my first experience of Oriental theatre, which occurred in India: I saw a kathakali actor, playing a hero, crossing a forest and becoming the trees, the river, a bird, an elephant. The actor as creator and the created world. Your *Yashima* had the same strong impact on me. You were not only the actor becoming the monk and then becoming the ghost of the warrior. But in this continuously suggestive metamorphosis you also made me forget what it is impossible to forget in Europe: that you were a woman playing a male monk and becoming the ghost of the male warrior. It is an experience in which the perception of the real world is transmuted into an experience of an immaterial spiritual nature. Our art cannot reach higher. With gratitude for having given me this experience, I am respectfully, yours Eugenio Barba.”

The Dharma Shanti company was made up of old and young performers from the Indonesian National Dance Academy (Asti) in Denpasar, Bali. Directed by the dancer and scholar I Made Bandem, it included N.L.N Swasti W. Bandem, Desak Made Suarti Laksmi, Ni Ketut Suryatini, Ni Nyoman Candri, I Wayan Rai, I Nyoman Catra, I Ketut Kodi and Tjokorda Raka Tisnu. For the occasion the well-known master I Made Pasek Tempo, from the village Tampak Siring, and the Italian actor and researcher Pino Confessa, who had been living and working in Bali at the Academy for five years, were added.

The actors presented *kebyar duduk* (sitting dance), *oleg tumulilingan* (bumblebee dance), *terunajaya* (vigorous dance) and *legong kraton* (ancient dance) - and two pieces, *The End of King Dukut* and *The Marriage of Bahula*. The first, of the *topeng Panca* genre, taken from a 16th century Balinese story, narrated the conquest by Jelantik, prime minister of King Sagening of Gel-gel, of the island of Nusa Penda ruled by King Dukut. The second piece belonged to the dance-theatre *calonarang*, telling semi-historical facts from the 11th century in the Kahuripan kingdom of East Java.

The actors, in order to stage the love struggle for the beautiful Ratna Menggali, daughter of the witch Calonarang, impersonated the spirits of black magic in the form of Rangda, the demonic widow (I Made Pasek Tempo), and of white magic, represented by the *barong*, the dragon-lion protector of humans.

On the island of Bali, *calonarang* performances take place in a cemetery, near the temple of death, from sunset until dawn. The spectators take an active part in the performance and at particularly tense moments fall into a trance. In Apulia, the play was performed in the Swabian castle in Bari, in Piazza Duomo in Lecce, in the central square of Corigliano and in the amphitheatre of the public park in Martano.

At the end of two theoretical meetings, the International Seminar of Theatre Anthropology (11th September in Copertino) and the First International Meeting between Semiology and Theatre Anthropology (12th September in Bari), the collective performance called *Theatrum Mundi* was presented to the public. In the courtyard of the Aragonese castle of Copertino and at the Teatro Petruzzelli in Bari the three Asian companies, the actors of Odin Teatret and Cristina Ria of Mediterranea Teatrolaboratorio performed simultaneously.¹² A heterogeneous anthology of pieces and dances - from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to the improvisations of the Odin Teatret actors, from the scores of Indian dances sacred to the god Shiva, to the stylised hieroglyphics of buyo kabuki, from the evolutions of the rutilant Balinese *barong*, to the poses of the mythical Japanese lion-dog *Shishi* - was composed by Eugenio Barba in an organic and unitary structure interweaving colours and sounds, rhythms and energy. Drawn into a sort of popular *happening*, actors and musicians appeared in different places, conquered the spaces, moving across the stalls, up the stairs and through the loggias

12. Nicola Savarese told me that “on the occasion of the *Theatrum Mundi* of Copertino the organisational effort was really enormous: We worked all day long under a burning sun to set up the evening performance in the courtyard of the castle. As if that wasn't enough, the next day, as soon as we arrived at the Petruzzelli in Bari for the repeat performance, Eugenio [Barba], Giorgio [Di Lecce], I and others had to clean the floor of the stage, which was dirty and full of chewing gum. On such a floor the actors certainly couldn't dance barefoot!” (Blasi 1999, 254-255.)

of the medieval fortress in Copertino and the balconies of a traditional theatre in Bari.¹³

The spectator from Salento

Starting from the theme chosen for the 5th session, *Tradition of the Actor and Identity of the Spectator*, the anthropologist Piergiorgio Giacchè, of the University of Perugia, conducted research on the spectators from Salento on behalf of ISTA.¹⁴ The investigation was of considerable relevance, considering that the last important anthropological study on Salento coincided with the ethnographic expedition of Ernesto De Martino in 1959. It was a fundamental date for the meeting between theatrical culture and social sciences. That year saw the debut of Carmelo Bene's *Caligola*, the founding in Opole of Jerzy Grotowski's *Theatre of the 13 Rows*, the renewal of the Living Theater with *The Connection* and the publication of *Everyday Life as a Representation* by Erwin Goffman.

Giacchè's study tries to bring back to more reliable criteria the "dialogue" between the two main subjects of the theatrical relationship. Therefore, it would be the actors who move within a *tradition*, understood as the set of ways of acting and communicating through recognised rites and spectacular forms. It is up to them "the action of *tradere* through the 'Theatrical' - writes Piergiorgio Giacchè - in Latin *tradere* means both *to transmit* and *to betray*." The spectators, on the other hand, would retain "the highest degree of representation and management of *identity* [...], the widest freedom and responsibility of imagination and knowledge, with which to modify, or rather 'invent' their person". They are the holder of cultural and psychological processes, insofar as they are the 'Social'.¹⁵

But what are the *experiences* of theatre for an inhabitant from Salento? To what extent has theatre (or the theatrical) contributed to the formation of his or her personality?

13. "I'm not thinking" wrote Eugenio Barba "of Asian stories interpreted with a western sensibility, nor I'm thinking of techniques to be reproduced, nor of invention of new codes. [...] I'm thinking of those few spectators capable of following or accompanying the actor in the dance of thought in action." (Barba 1999, 254)

14. Giorgio Di Lecce and Cristina Ria - founders of the Mediterranea Teatrolaboratorio and organisers of the public session - and local scholars and intellectuals Rina Durante, Bruna Filippi, Luigi De Luca and Claudio Pedone contributed to the inquiry. It is possible to consult some contributions by Piergiorgio Giacchè which appeared in some journals: *Mémoire sociologique. Extraits de carnets d'une recherche anthropologique sur « L'identité du spectateur »*. (Giacchè 1989, 177-197); "Introduzione all'identità dello spettatore. Una ricerca di antropologia del teatro." [Introduction to spectator identity. A survey of the anthropology of theatre] (Giacchè 1992, 12-19); "Scene e visioni del Salento. Pagine tratte dal diario di una ricerca di antropologia del teatro" [Scenes and visions of Salento. Pages from the diary of an inquiry on anthropology of theatre] (Giacchè 1994, 38-43). These are brief accounts, mostly in the form of a diary, of the experiences and encounters made by the anthropologist from Perugia during the months of his stay and while moving from one place to another in Salento. See also the book: *Lo spettatore partecipante. Contributi per una antropologia del teatro* [The participating spectator. Contributions to an anthropology of theatre], in particular the chapter "Tra attore e spettatore" [Between actor and spectator] (Giacchè 1991, 85-107).

15. Giacchè 1987, 29.

Is there an interdependence between the *activity* of a spectator and the cultural *identity* in Salento? Can the fruition models of the spectator from Salento be generalised by virtue of a redefinition of the contemporary *western* spectator?

Giacchè stayed for several months in Salento. Travelling around the peninsula - Lecce, Otranto, Carpignano, Cursi, Galatina, Cavallino, Melendugno, Torrepaduli - he met and interviewed a sample group of local people from different social backgrounds - peasants, bourgeois, intellectuals - returning several times to them, being accompanied by them to festivals and fairs, then inviting them to attend the performances of the Asian actors-dancers.

At first, information of a socio-cultural nature was collected, useful for proposing an initial definition of the territory in relation to the scope and specific object of the research. After that, fifty subjects were selected to be interviewed, and a questionnaire was administered on their cultural and entertainment consumption, their exposure to the media and their degree of absorption of modern communication languages. This made it possible to make up a representative typology of the Salento 'spectator' from which to extrapolate twenty-four "privileged witnesses" with whom to deepen the research.

The Salento's witnesses included "elderly folk singers" and "disk jockeys", "preachers" and "organisers of a *festa* of a patron saint", "directors and actors in amateur theatre" and "film and music critics", "writers and scriptwriters", "cultural operators" and "subscribers to the local drama and opera season". Others came from more heterogeneous sectors of the entertainment industry such as "opera concerts" or "fireworks", "experimental theatre" or "fashion shows".

The sample of witnesses was assigned two themes. The first collected "the main material of the investigation, i.e., the information and considerations related to the *suitability*



Barber. ISTA 5, Salento, Italy, 1987. Photo: Tony D'Urso

of the spectator. It started from the recording of a sort of “life story” organised on the data and moments of an ideal spectator’s story,”¹⁶ from the first personal experiences of theatre to the more general relationship with the performance. The second theme was to record first-hand reactions and comments at the end of the performance of Balinese dance-theatre, certainly unprecedented for them.

Piergiorgio Giacchè’s first findings were collected in a ‘log-book’ from which a sort of active and sentimental predisposition of the Salentine spectator towards everything *theatrical* emerges. Travelling through the Salento countryside, from town to town, “costs a precise toll - Giacchè wrote on 28th March 1987 - a fair, a festival or just a stroll stops you and explains to you that the ancient suburbia is not made up of secluded places where you can hide away to live, but of an infinite series of public squares or, if you like, of a single great ‘theatre of relations’, where the living also appears.”¹⁷

One of the most popular genres in the region and a much-awaited event, a *fiesta* of a patron saint is a “privileged, if not unique, container of the various types of performances that take part in the tradition: devotional practices and firework displays, folk songs and dances and opera concerts.”¹⁸ It is a good opportunity to *train* the eyes and to *be seen*.

Every town has its own patron saint who is celebrated, venerated, and exalted in a *fiesta* with the engaged participation of the citizens. In Lecce, from 24th to 26th August, Saints Oronzo, Giusto and Fortunato are celebrated, with the characteristic fair of livestock and agricultural products. In Martano on August 15th there are celebrations for the Madonna dell’Assunta with tasting of typical products. In Otranto, the festival dedicated to the Holy Martyrs recalls the massacre carried out by the Turks in 1480. In some cases, the religious mixes with the magical and the irrational: in Galatina, from June 28th to 30th, the festival in honour of Saints Peter and Paul is linked to the rite of healing of the *tarantate*, the women bitten by the tarantula, while in Montesano Salentino (August 6th and 7th), to cure the so called “evil of San Donato”, the intervention of the patron saint of the town is invoked.

These celebrations, while inextricably linking the town or village to its own religious *fiesta*, have some common features: the statue of the saint is carried in procession through the streets, with prayers and songs, with thunderous bangs and huge bass drums. The celebrations of the patron saint require the presence of one or more opera bands and end late at night with fireworks.

In Carpignano Salentino, on July 2nd and 3rd, the *fiesta* in honour of the Madonna della Grotta takes place. The event is part of a cycle of festivities that includes several devotional moments: there are frequent celebrations, inhabitants and people from outside fill the streets of the village during the procession, enter the church to pray in front of the statue of the Virgin or offer ex-votos.

On the first day, at nightfall, the most representative and symbolic moment is the rite of the “exchange of the keys”. The event is sealed by the meeting of two processions: one with the statue of the Madonna della Grotta coming from the sanctuary outside the

village and the other starting from the main church, follows the statue of Sant’Antonio da Padova, the other patron saint of the town. The fireworks, the acclamations of the devotees and the loud music of the bands underline the moment when the two statues come face to face in the crowded square illuminated by an excess of lights. The music falls silent. In this silence full of emotional tension, the mayor, in his official capacity, loosens from the wrist of Sant’Antonio the red ribbon with the “key of the village” and ties it to the hand of the Virgin. The band plays “*Il silenzio*”. Bangs sound and the crowd can finally get rid of their anxiety in a thunderous applause.

Every year tradition and devotion are respected, and so is the spontaneous imagination of the spectators and the dramaturgy of the celebration. During the ritual the mayor is at the centre of the scene. Around him the community - as participating spectators - observes his gestures, identifying themselves with their ‘actor’. Even the religious authorities, in front of the first citizen’s office, remain spectators.

Still in Carpignano Salentino, as for the last fifty years, on the first Sunday of September the *Festa te lu mieu* (wine feast) has been carried out. In this anticipation of autumn, in the square and in the streets of the village, thousands of people taste wine and typical food products, dancing until late into the night to the rhythm of the *pizzica-pizzica* or other popular songs, all in a noisy and orgiastic atmosphere.

Odin Teatret contributed to the rebirth of this event in August 1974, during its five-month transplant from Denmark to Carpignano Salentino. For the occasion, the “Danes” proposed to the population a particular form of barter: their performances in exchange for local songs and dances. The community of Carpignano responded with enthusiasm, organising a village festival with traditional music and dances, typical home-made products, and a lot of local wine. The feast, called *Lu Patrunu*, from the name of a very popular amusement among wine drinkers, was repeated the following year, becoming in time the most important secular *fiesta* of Salento.¹⁹

In Torrepaduli, a hamlet in the municipality of Ruffano, San Rocco, the miraculous protector of plague victims, is celebrated on August 16th. Already on the eve of the *fiesta*, numerous street vendors meet for the fair in his honour, with a variety of merchandise: local handicrafts in terracotta and wrought iron, devotional objects, tambourines from nearby towns and typical dishes.

After the procession, on the square in front of the church, dancers and musicians form a circle (*rota*) in the middle of which pairs of dancers perform for hours. To the obsessive rhythm of the traditional folk music, they perform the so-called *fencing-dance*. The index and middle fingers are used as weapons, extended to simulate a knife with which to ‘touch’ the opponent, ousting him from the circle. The confrontation involves only men. The challengers bring into play their skills as dancers and fencers. What once was probably a real knife fight between ‘men of honour’, ex-convicts or street people, today has become a symbolic and codified combat. Even if it is not a real exhibition - nor a sequence of actions and prefixed choreographic steps - we should not forget we are “on stage”, and “giving a show”.²⁰

16. Giacchè 1992, 15-16.

17. Giacchè 1994, 39.

18. Giacchè 1992, 17.

19. On the stay in Carpignano and Odin Teatret’s ‘heritage’ in Salento, see Santoro 2017.

20. See Ria 1987. A documentary study on the origins and context of the fencing-dance is by Luigi Taranino (2001) with, as an afterword, an interview with Nicola Savarese entitled *Il teatro allo stato nascente*.

What was the first performance you saw? What about your first experience as an actor or spectator? What was your initial *enchantment*? A big bonfire in the middle of the square for the *festa* of Sant'Antonio Abate, patron saint of Novoli or the *vision* of the grandmother who, early in the morning, in front of a white wall in the courtyard and without a mirror, dedicated herself to the daily ritual of combing her hair.

Thus a spectator evokes the first *performance* for his childish eyes: « *Ses cheveux tombaient jusqu'aux genoux, elle avait alors à peu près soixante-dix ans, et il existait tout un rituel, une gestuelle incroyable, une utilisation des mains comme si elle était dans l'obscurité, pour ordonner une chevelure d'un mètre vingt, pour l'enrouler en un tout petit chignon, par une multitude de petites touches, avec une maestria infinie...* »²¹

And for those who lived in Otranto? Their first *experience* must have been the Tree of Life represented on the huge mosaic floor of their Cathedral and which they climbed with their gaze. They were like intruding spectators “who are denied detached and complete contemplation but are allowed the active search for all the figures and the close view of each detail.”²²

Some of Salento's inhabitants continue to use urban spaces - churches, buildings, balconies, windows - to see and be seen. Others try to escape the crossfire of glances, and in the summer move to their house in the country, a place of youth and nostalgia, of invention and improvisation on stage: « *Le soir il y avait de la lumière* - says another of those interviewed - *et nous, les jeunes, nous allions toujours vagabonder et jouer de la musique. S'il avait un accordéon, tant mieux, et sinon on prenait nos tambourins et on allait chanter un peu partout. Quand on passait devant les maisons de ceux que l'on appelait les 'tarantati', alors ceux-ci sortaient à notre rencontre, et cela durait une éternité.* »²³

The first results of the anthropological research seem to disprove the idea of a 'life' of spectators in Salento *only* in relation to the performance and the theatre. In their *activity*, the distinction - already in use - between *performance*, defined as “something to see”, and *theatre*, understood as a “place where one sees”, persists. Although the origin and the energy that nourish their *identity* are found in the experience of the former, one can only find a theatre of the spectator, not a performance that is their own. Their *theatrical* endowment, ‘performed’ in their everyday life, lies in imagining a situation in which one is both actor and spectator. Hence the Salento inhabitants alternate the taste for mean and coded communication with oral extremism and the hyperbole of gestures. Some of them live an existence in the shadows and in the meantime enact life like a carnival script, unable to survive without the lights of the stage, susceptible to applause, whistles, and the opinion of the people. Some look within themselves with one eye and outside with the other.■

Translated from Italian by Franco Zadra

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21. Giacchè 1989, 187.

22. Giacchè 1994, 39.

23. Giacchè 1989, 187.



Sanjukta Panigrahi and Kazuko Azuma in *Faust*, ISTA 5. Photo: Tony D'Urso

Patricia Cardona

Identidad o avasallamiento

Abstract: *The text ("Identity or subjugation") is an excerpt from the chapter América Latina originally published in Spanish in Patricia Cardona's book Diario de una danza por la antropología teatral en América Latina (Mexico City, Quinta del Agua Ediciones, 2012, p. 66-71). It describes the transformative experience of the author during the ISTA session in Salento in 1987 as well as Odin Teatret's impact on the theatre identity of Latin American independent groups.*

Keywords: *Identity; Questioning; Unlearning; Rediscovery*

T. S. Eliot decía que nuestro ser es definido mediante las lecturas de otras culturas. Y épocas. Y territorios. Debemos identificarnos de alguna manera, rendirnos frente al otro. Al hacerlo, nos tenemos que recuperar. Esa recuperación hace que no volvamos a ser los mismos.

Explico: en la inmadurez, un artista poderoso nos avasalla, nos inunda e invade. Pero cuanto más vemos, leemos y crecemos con ello, más firmes son nuestras estructuras, valores y convicciones. Ya no somos invadidos fácilmente. Esto enriquece nuestra conciencia crítica y define nuestra perspectiva de las cosas. La coexistencia de muchas visiones en nuestra mente afirma nuestra personalidad y encuentra un lugar, un espacio en nuestro ser.

Hoy día, la reputación internacional de Barba como un "campeón de los sobrevivientes" en la periferia del teatro oficial, como bien lo ha definido Ian Watson, significa un apoyo psicológico para muchos grupos. "La longevidad del Odin y su continuo éxito se ha convertido en un modelo social y estético". Sin embargo, sólo los grupos más maduros de América Latina tomaron de Barba lo que consideraron pertinente y lo adaptaron a su propia visión del teatro.

Barba lo dijo desde un principio en Bahía Blanca¹ (Argentina): "La identidad cultural debe ser resuelta por aquellos que viven en su localidad. La profesional, es decir, el entrenamiento, la ética de trabajo puede provenir de muchas fuentes, incluso ajenas a la propia cultura."²

¹ Encuentro Internacional de Teatro Antropológico, 6-12 abril de 1987, organizado por Teatro Alianza dirigido por Dardo y Coral Aguirre.

² Watson 2002, 112



He presenciado escenas memorables en los encuentros de la Escuela Internacional de Antropología Teatral (ISTA) donde los nudos de defensas intelectuales frente a los planteamientos teóricos, técnicos y éticos de Barba sólo expresan un choque de identidades. Pero ¿cuánto de todo ese enjambre de conceptos heredados, corrientes del pensamiento, posturas académicas realmente nos pertenece? Me temo que muy poco. Son escasos los teóricos y críticos que han desarrollado una postura persona auténtica a partir de su propia vivencia.

Mi presencia en esos encuentros se ha limitado a observar, escuchar y callar. En un principio fui avasallada por una constelación de experiencias que no sabía como incorporar. Y mucho menos, ¿cómo traducir a mi propio lenguaje? Quería conocer, hasta la médula de mis huesos ancestrales, los principios de la antropología teatral. La evidencia de los resultados era suficiente. Con estos principios un bailarín/actor construye la presencia escénica y dirige la percepción del espectador, no importa su tradición, técnica o estilo de origen.

Me parecía fascinante ver como la bailarina de la India Sanjukta Panigrahi o Akira Matsui, del teatro nô, así como los maestros balineses o los propios actores del Odin resolvían en sus cuerpos las preguntas que brotaban de la calistenia mental de Barba durante las demostraciones de trabajo. La ISTA de Copenhague en 1996 fue especial. Hubo una riquísima variedad de lenguajes, ya no sólo orientales, sino de diversas escuelas escénicas del teatro y de la danza de occidente. Ahí la antropología teatral provocó múltiples reacciones. La que me causa mucha hilaridad es la que Ian Watson registra en su libro *Negotiating Cultures*. Alguien tuvo la ocurrencia de comparar el método de análisis de Barba con “la curiosidad cruel de un niño que quiere arrancarle la patas a una araña para ver hasta cuando ya no puede caminar”. Barba ha contestado a esto que “su método es una manera arcaica de estudiar la anatomía física.”³

Un día me acerqué a Sanjukta y le pregunté cómo vivía ella su experiencia al formar parte del equipo científico de la ISTA. ¿Se sentía utilizada, como implicaban algunos? Consciente de que en oriente, donde se preservan y se honran herméticamente las tradiciones con una reverencia impensable en occidente, me comentó que los métodos de Barba para descifrar la partitura dinámica de la danza odissi enriquecieron su conciencia de la tradición misma. Con esto pudo comprender y preservar aún más la impecabilidad de la estructura profunda de su cultura teatral.

La ISTA siempre ha sido un laboratorio donde los atributos culturales de cada escuela o estilo se van quitando, como las capas de una cebolla para dejar la anatomía esencial que sostiene ese lenguaje o expresión. En el caso de los actores del Odin, lo que desaparecía era el estilo personal. Me maravillaba comprobar como en la biología del bailarín/actor encontramos la unidad de la diversidad universal. Esto tuvo un doble impacto en mí: me libero de todo artificio intelectual con respecto a la danza y me llevo al corazón de la vida escénica. Mientras Barba despojaba a los grandes maestros orientales de sus modelos y códigos culturales, yo me despojaba de mis modelos y códigos mentales. Nada de esto me pertenecía. Vi la estructura de los principios que sostienen la vida misma en cualquier terreno de la expresión humana. Descubrí que la palabra que realmente nos pertenece se incubaba ahí. La soltura y arrojo que más tarde desarrollé en mi escritura fue

gracias a esa base teórica. Tenía una pista sólida desde donde despegar para mis vuelos “críticos” y crónicas periodísticas.

Nada de esto fue fácil de asimilar. Llegar a un lenguaje mas personal, veloz, versátil y rico en imágenes, como lo requería la competencia periodística, exigía vivir mi alquimia personal. Me despojé también de los estereotipos de la crítica escénica que empañan la percepción y la comunicación con el lector. Estaba ante hechos incuestionables biológicos. Y mi mente tenía que someterse a su pulso, a su fuerza, a su propia auto-organización, “la coherencia de la movilidad”, como diría Gastón Bachelard. Años más tarde encontré lo mismo en el comportamiento animal despojado de todo resquicio de civilización. Me sentía como el arqueólogo que busca a la Atlántida perdida en las piedras despojadas de todo barniz.

Gracias a las disecciones “infantiles” y “cruels” de la antropología teatral pude comprender, sin prejuicios de por medio, la eficacia de las técnicas que se aplican en el mundo de la danza. Entendí que todos los debates sobre las preferencias formativas en torno a las mismas -porque también hay feudos del conocimiento en el gremio dancístico- son sistemas de creencias. Llegué a la conclusión de que no hay técnicas formadoras específicas, sino maestros formadores que saben aplicar los principios universales en el bailarín/actor. Principios eficaces que forman cuerpos eficaces.

Fue una liberación proceder a la inversa de todo lo aprendido en los medios académicos. Mejor decirlo así: cuando la vida impulsa al pensamiento y el pensamiento genera nuevas formas de vida, parafraseando a Nietzsche, encontramos el continente sumergido.

Post Data

La memoria es borrosa. Sin embargo, retengo con claridad sin tiempo, como si hubiera sido ayer, los instantes de la ISTA de Salento/1987 que cambiaron mi vida. Para empezar, el silencio como disciplina ejercida en ciertas áreas del centro vacacional en una playa del sur de Italia.

Entrar por primera vez a la nave/dormitorio con hileras interminables de colchones sobre el piso me provocó una contracción muscular en el estómago. Esta sensación se alivió temporalmente al encontrarme con el rostro sonriente de Eugenio Barba, con la ecuanimidad acostumbrada de Nando Tavian y la juguetona mirada de Nicola Savarese. Éste nos explico a la cubana Magali Muguercia y a mí la regla del silencio y nos condujo a nuestro refugio nocturno. Ahí todo instinto de territorialidad o privacidad fue inútil. Entonces entendí la magia poderosa del silencio. Sin paredes, sin divisiones de por medio, la nave abierta permitiría, a la hora del sueño, la privacidad anhelada.

El desayuno y la comida, así como la entrada a la gran nave/dormitorio (a cualquier hora del día) se definieron como los momentos de intimidad rotunda. Luego nos fuimos acostumbrando al péndulo que dirige la vida en una ISTA: del monasterio interior a la reflexión escénica colectiva y, de ahí a la fiesta del espectáculo, para retornar al monasterio interior en el espacio abierto, compartido, de la gran nave del ensueño.

Al término de la ISTA comprobé que al igual que la prueba del silencio, esta

³ Watson 2002, xvii.

convivencia sin refugios sería una de las embestidas más fuertes al *parásito* de la importancia personal, a los vicios de la comodidad. Debo confesar que la contracción muscular en el estomago nunca cedió. Eugenio Barba se encargó, por todos los medios, de que todos viviéramos un noviciado.

El día se iniciaba a las cinco de la madrugada -otro impacto- para ser testigos de un montaje *sui generis* del *Fausto*. Todos participábamos definiendo acciones y resoluciones dramáticas en una síntesis eurasiana de la obra de Goethe. El montaje lo haría Eugenio a partir de las sugerencias del grupo.



Katsuko Azuma, Kanichi Hanayagi in *Faust*, ISTA 5. Photo: Tony D'Urso

A la salida del sol, en un bosque arenoso frente al mar, vimos como la hindú Sanjukta Panigrahi y la japonesa Katsuko Azuma tendrían un duelo de personajes y códigos ancestrales. La primera sería Mefisto, la segunda Fausto. Kanichi Hanayagi (*onnagata*: actor que representa un papel femenino) sería Margarita. La lectura de lenguajes diversos también fue un duelo a muerte con los códigos occidentales. Eugenio Barba unió y editó los gestos silenciosos de manera congruente y verosímil. En el fondo se escucharía el canto de los actores del Odin, así como la música hindú y japonesa de los ensambles invitados.

A media mañana, cuando el sol inclemente del sur de Italia hace que el pensamiento sude al igual que el cuerpo, había un receso. Después de la comida se reanudaban las actividades con demostraciones sobre los principios de la pre-expresividad. El *bios*

escénico lo pudimos descifrar como quien se aprende las letras del alfabeto. Según la cultura particular de los maestros orientales y del Odin, se construirían frases de contenidos múltiples con estos bloques de energía universal.

Los actores de diversas partes del mundo trataron de asimilar esta *pedagogía* desde su inteligencia corporal. Los directores especularon sobre la operatividad de tales conocimientos orientados al teatro realista. Los intelectuales prefirieron la fría inteligencia a confesar la duda. Para la gran mayoría esta experiencia fue audaz, a veces tortuosa. Ya de por sí teníamos que asimilar a un Fausto oriental y femenino, códigos lejanos y a veces herméticos, pensamientos que son golpes de energía, dormitorios colectivos, silencios obligados. Fueron pequeños *hiroschimas* sucediéndose uno tras otro en nuestras sinapsis neuronales. La ISTA no fue fácil para nadie. Conocimiento y desconcierto iban de la mano para obtener resultados concretos, para evitar los estragos del desconcierto mismo. La experiencia tendría que reflejarse en ejercicios, montajes, textos.

Unos tolerábamos las provocaciones porque conocíamos a Eugenio y sus transgresiones. Otros lo resistieron agresivamente. Ahí pudimos medir los narcisismos, la indiferencia, la rigidez o flexibilidad de cada quien, según la necesidad personal y motivos para estar ahí.

Me correspondió trabajar estrechamente con el grupo de intelectuales en áreas encaminadas a cuestionar la validez del pensamiento teórico en relación a la acción práctica del bailarín/actor. En una de tantas sesiones descubrí que escribir me resultaba un hecho más corporal que intelectual. Y entendí el pensamiento como un impulso físico, cargado de energía. El ejercicio que reveló este hallazgo fue implacable. Eugenio pidió que nuestros textos como críticos o teóricos sobre el montaje del Fausto matutino se vieran reflejados en nuestros cuerpos. Pese al *shock* todos seguimos sus indicaciones. Como cierre, nos pidió "bailar" o cantar el texto. Esto sería posible si contenía suficientes verbos que movilizaran las ideas/cuerpo. Y así fue como los amantes de la retórica se vieron entre la espada y la pared. Comprobaron que su lenguaje y su pensamiento están plagados de abstracciones imposibles de llevar a la acción y mucho menos ser asimilados por un bailarín/actor.

Fue bochornoso constatar que quienes viven en su nicho de conceptos platónicos tuvieron que aceptar la pobreza práctica de sus castillos especulativos. Como un rayo que fulmina nuestras mentes, vimos claramente cuál es la palabra/desperdicio frente a la palabra/viva, orgánica. Vimos cuáles textos son innecesarios y cuáles son indispensables para el hacedor del teatro.

Esta experiencia fue un parto de consciencia que opacó, en mí, todo lo demás. No recuerdo como salí de ahí. Sólo sé que en medio del trance provocado por esa *tarantela* pedagógica y curativa pude encontrar una firmeza en el vuelo permanente de la escritura para la danza. ■

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Sanjukta Panigrahi in *Faust*, ISTA 5. Photo: Tony D'Urso

Franco Ruffini

Un coup de pied aux livres

Retour de l'ISTA

Abstract: This text by the Italian scholar Franco Ruffini ("A kick to the books. Return from ISTA"), was originally published in the book Les Voyages ou l'ailleurs du théâtre. Hommage à Georges Banu, edited by Catherine Naugrette (Alternatives Théâtrales, Bruxelles, 2013, pp. 197-207). Ruffini reflects on his personal experiences in the framework of ISTA - International School of Theatre Anthropology, of which he is one of the founders participating as a member of the scientific staff. After the session of the ISTA in Salento in 1987, Ruffini wrote an essay of about sixty pages ("The Actor and Drama. Theoretical Essay of Theatre Anthropology") in which he developed the methodological and ethical premises experienced in the practical sessions of ISTA for his scholarly pedagogical activity.

Keywords: *Observation; Pedagogy; Teaching*

Il y a le voyage qui est un vrai voyage, et le voyage qui est une vacance, ou une « vacance intelligente ». Réduit à l'essentiel, le voyage consiste en un aller et un retour. Dans le voyage-vacance, ce qui compte c'est l'aller ; dans le vrai voyage, ce qui compte c'est le retour, quand les choses n'apparaissent plus comme nous les voyions précédemment.

Le voyage que je m'appête à raconter est une histoire personnelle, pleine de « moi je » : toujours à la première personne. Mais personnel ne veut pas dire privé. C'est le danger de l'intelligence, quand elle prétend se suffire à elle-même ; et difficile est le rapport avec le savoir des livres : tels sont les deux thèmes sur lesquels le récit va se concentrer, deux thèmes cruciaux pour chaque chercheur spécialisé dans le théâtre, quel que soit le champ de recherche et la perspective de la méthode. En découle le problème de la sincérité.

Pour pouvoir affirmer que le récit de faits personnels devient une histoire personnelle, il est obligatoire d'être sincère. Celui qui lit doit avoir la garantie que celui qui écrit dit la vérité. Mais la sincérité est le privilège de l'acteur, sa vérité est la vérité d'un autre. Dans la vie réelle, privée de l'écran du personnage, être sincère équivaut à dire la vérité sur soi-même. C'est pourquoi, la sincérité sur scène suscite l'admiration, tandis qu'hors scène, la plupart du temps, elle suscite l'embarras. Le moyen le plus simple serait de ne pas raconter. Livré ainsi, en ouverture du texte, cet aveu signifie que j'accepterai le défi de la sincérité, sans réserve et sans moyen terme, dans l'espoir que mon récit personnel parlera de moi-même, mais pas uniquement à moi-même.



C'est justement parce que je vais en parler dans une perspective personnelle qu'il est opportun de situer l'anthropologie théâtrale, l'ISTA et ma personne, par la même occasion, dans leur dimension officielle.

L'anthropologie théâtrale est la science (au sens étymologique de *scientia*) introduite par Eugenio Barba, en 1979, de la pratique et de l'étude du théâtre. Il est superflu d'en expliquer le contenu, compte tenu de l'ample bibliographie existant sur le sujet. Je rappelle seulement *L'arte segreta dell'attore. Un Dizionario di Antropologia Teatrale*, édité par Barba avec Nicola Savarese, qui, depuis sa première version en 1982, parue sous le titre *Anatomie de l'acteur*, a été successivement revu et republié dans toutes les langues du monde.¹ Le mérite fondamental de l'anthropologie théâtrale est d'avoir imposé la nécessité d'une « théâtralogie interne », à laquelle il faut intégrer, comme dans n'importe quelle autre discipline humaniste, la recherche historique. L'ISTA est l'École Internationale d'Anthropologie Théâtrale, fondée et dirigée par Eugenio Barba.

Cette École opère de façon continue à travers l'échange de textes et de rencontres, même occasionnelles, entre chercheurs et maîtres de la scène. À l'extérieur, elle se manifeste dans ses sessions publiques. Je suis l'un des fondateurs de l'ISTA ainsi que l'un des membres de l'équipe scientifique et pédagogique.

L'évidence est lumineuse

Au mois de septembre 1987, aux débuts de l'ISTA à Salento, je venais de terminer l'écriture d'un essai assez costaud. Quand il fut imprimé, l'année suivante, sous le titre de *L'Attore e il Dramma. Saggio Teorico di Antropologia Teatrale*, il comptait soixante-dix pages.² Avec un outillage méthodologique pointilleux, faisant appel aux instruments de la sémiotique et de la logique, je soutenais la thèse selon laquelle, je cite, « même pour le drame, on peut parler rigoureusement et utilement de niveau pré-expressif ».

Le niveau pré-expressif est la notion clé de l'anthropologie théâtrale.

Par là, elle affirme que derrière l'expression, il existe un niveau primaire, dans lequel l'acteur élabore de façon cohérente le surplus d'énergie qui caractérise la différence existante entre le milieu de la scène et le milieu de la vie réelle. Pour justifier le passage de l'acteur au drame, j'avais l'argument que la dimension pré-expressive ne se révèle pas, à proprement parler, dans le corps de l'acteur, mais seulement dans sa « composition physique », à partir de là dans d'autres compositions, comme la dramaturgie. De façon plus générale, une fois détaché du corps, il devenait possible de référer le niveau pré-expressif à d'autres objets, qu'il s'agisse de « compositions » ou pas. Sans le contrepoint des faits, la théorie est insatiable. Après le drame, pourquoi pas la pensée ? Le niveau

« pré-expressif mental » fit ainsi son entrée dans les sujets d'études de l'édition '87 de l'ISTA.

Tandis que Barba se réservait une posture d'observateur neutre, je me mis à l'œuvre, avec l'aide de Ferdinando Taviani, pour organiser une rencontre de travail sur le sujet. Ce que signifiait précisément « pré-expressif mental », nous ne le savions pas. À première vue, la notion nous semblait correspondre à ce moment de turbulence déclenché par un problème à résoudre, moment dans lequel naît une confusion de possibilités des plus disparates, qui précède parfois la solution. Pour simuler la situation selon un vrai modèle de laboratoire, nous décidâmes de considérer le groupe qui participait à la rencontre comme une *pensée collective*. Chacun devait écrire sur un feuillet sa propre définition de « pré-expressif mental ». L'ensemble des définitions, que l'on pouvait prévoir très différentes les unes des autres, aurait constitué la turbulence pré-expressive, et c'est en travaillant sur cette notion que la pensée collective aurait finalement trouvé la réponse à la question.

Nous nous assîmes en cercle autour d'un monticule de feuillets posés sur le plancher. J'en ouvris un et lus la définition qu'il contenait. Une discussion s'ensuivit, pas vraiment animée. Les définitions successives ne furent pas capables de la susciter, l'expérience ne décollait pas. De toute évidence, nous avions tous le sentiment que derrière une façade captivante, il n'y avait pas grand chose à découvrir. Le vent donna le coup de grâce. Il faisait très chaud.

Nous ouvrîmes la fenêtre, et une saute de vent bénie souleva les feuillets.

Cette gracieuse voltige représentait plastiquement la seule turbulence dont ces morceaux de papier pouvaient bien être les dépositaires. Les rares interventions conclusives avaient le ton du congé ; nous nous séparâmes du pré-expressif mental. Comme Jean-Marie Pradier conclut, « le pré-expressif mental n'est pas une piste intéressante ».

Et pourtant, ce laboratoire clos dans le néant fut le premier pas du chemin du retour. Je commençai à me rendre compte que dans l'anthropologie théâtrale, ainsi que dans son postulat de base concernant le pré-expressif, il n'y avait rien de théorique. Si on le compare à la vie réelle, *l'homme en situation de représentation doit, de plus, montrer l'action qu'il accomplit. Il doit employer un surplus d'énergie. Et il doit le faire de façon cohérente*, sinon il prend le risque de détourner l'attention de l'action sur laquelle, au contraire, il souhaite l'attirer. Qu'y a-t-il là de théorique ? Rien. C'est une évidence. Évident veut dire que « ça se voit » : l'évidence est lumineuse. Et une fois que la lumière s'est faite, il lui reste seulement à montrer.

La théorie engage une observation toujours plus approfondie, à la recherche de ce qui gît derrière chaque énoncé pré-expressif du drame, de la pensée, et ainsi de suite ; l'évidence nous engage seulement à regarder autour de nous. Il fallait seulement renverser la perspective. L'ISTA n'est pas un lieu conçu pour l'étude de l'anthropologie théâtrale à la lumière de l'entraînement ou des théâtres orientaux. Au contraire, elle est un lieu conçu pour étudier l'entraînement ou les théâtres orientaux à la lumière de cette évidence qu'est l'anthropologie théâtrale. L'entraînement et l'Orient, mais aussi les maîtres de notre vingtième siècle occidental qui avaient été ma passion cachée jusqu'alors.

1. La version finale de ce livre a été publiée avec le titre *L'énergie qui danse* (2008. *Les Voies de l'acteur*. Collection dirigée par Patrick Pezin. Montpellier : L'Entretemps). Des mêmes auteurs, aussi sur l'anthropologie théâtrale, voire *Les cinq continents du théâtre. Faits et légendes de la culture matérielle de l'acteur*. (2020. *Les Voies de l'acteur*. Collection dirigée par Patrick Pezin. Lacoste : Deuxième époque).

2. Ruffini, Franco. 1988. "L'Attore e il Dramma. Saggio Teorico di Antropologia Teatrale". *Teatro e Storia* n. 2, 177-247.

Le poids des livres

Le siège de l'ISTA à Salento était un vieux bâtiment, situé au bord de la mer. Pendant les séances, nous en entendions le bruit, et sentions son parfum mêlé à celui des pins et des eucalyptus surgissant ça et là aux alentours. Un dépôt saumâtre se posait sur les objets et, au-delà de la gêne occasionnée, le rappel tactile du toucher venait s'ajouter à tous les autres sens. Pour ceux qui, comme moi, en sont amoureux, la mer nous dédommageait de tous les malaises liés vraisemblablement à une cohabitation inhabituelle.

Mais le soir, quand l'heure d'aller se coucher arrivait, l'enchantement marin prenait fin. Nous étions les hôtes d'une crèche, abandonnée pour les vacances d'été, et les lits étaient évidemment à la taille des enfants.

Même pour un normotype méditerranéen, trouver une position confortable et sans douleur représentait une entreprise d'envergure. Imaginez un peu le sort des morphologies longilignes. De plus, les sommiers, avachis par le temps et un usage prolongé, cédaient sous le poids, creusant des remous au centre des parties du corps que l'adulte, hôte incongru, essayait de faire pencher hors champ. Presque tous finirent par renoncer au sommier, et par poser le matelas directement sur le plancher. Quant aux chambres à coucher, au pluriel s'entend, elles n'existaient pas tout simplement. Il n'y avait qu'une seule chambrée, avec une soixantaine de lits, qui composait notre cantonnement pour la nuit. Sans distinction de sexe, âge et habitudes précédemment contractées.

Au lit de Procuste et au manque de *privacy* s'ajoutait encore pour les chercheurs - les *pundits*, comme Barba nous avait baptisés à l'indienne - le problème des livres. Entre les livres requis pour les tâches au programme, les livres de chevet et ceux en cours de lecture, chacun de nous en avait emporté au moins une dizaine. À l'intérieur du dortoir, il n'y avait, *cela va sans dire*, même pas un semblant de table ni d'étagères. Une fois les livres du programme glissés dans le sac de travail, les autres livres restèrent pour la plupart enfermés dans la valise, ou finirent amoncelés à côté des grabats. Récoltant poussière et dépôt saumâtre, plutôt que laborieuse attention.

Le monde peut être renversé

Par chance, la nuit était courte. La première semaine : petit déjeuner à six heures et, juste après, rendez-vous à :

Epidauro

Pour les répétitions de

FAUST

Ou bien

Le monde peut être renversé.

Je mets en page sous forme d'affiche, car chacun des trois éléments - lieu, titre et sous-titres - mérite une présentation à part.

Epidauro était le nom que Barba avait donné à l'espace où son travail de mise en scène se déroulerait. Il s'agissait d'un petit cercle de sable, délimité vers l'intérieur des

terres par des eucalyptus, occupé pour les trois quarts par les spectateurs qui participaient à l'ISTA, et pour le quart restant par les acteurs et les musiciens. La mer était face aux spectateurs, derrière le dos des acteurs. Epidauro dévalait vers la mer suivant une pente douce le long de laquelle surgissaient des pins.

Le thème choisi pour la mise en scène était Faust. Sanjukta Panigrahi, danseuse odissi, jouait le rôle de Méphisto ; la Japonaise Katsuko Azuma, danseuse buyo, celui de Faust. Kanichi Hanayagi, onnagata spécialisé dans les rôles féminins du théâtre kabuki, jouait Margherita. L'orchestre comprenait les musiciens indiens du groupe de Ragunath Panigrahi, mari de Sanjukta, une chanteuse et une musicienne de shemisen japonais, ainsi que d'autres musiciens occidentaux. Une babel de langues, traditions théâtrales, vêtements, physionomies et sonorités, formait un mélange compact dans lequel ne pouvaient certes pas pénétrer la sonde subtile des paroles d'un texte, et encore moins celle des concepts philosophiques ou des motivations psychologiques. Seule l'action physique pouvait prétendre atteindre ce but.

Le sous-titre *Le monde peut être renversé* sortait de la proposition de l'un des *pundits* et, si je m'en souviens bien, était d'ailleurs la seule suggestion à avoir été acceptée. Barba avait demandé à chacun de nous de rafraîchir au préalable sa lecture de Goethe et de Marlowe et de lui signaler toute référence dont nous avions connaissance. Une fois arrivés à destination, il nous avait invités à collaborer à la mise en scène en proposant de courtes scènes écrites. Concrètes, souligna-t-il, fondées sur des actions. Divisés en groupes, nous travaillâmes avec un engagement sans faille, mais les feuillets remis à Barba contenaient surtout de la pensée et de l'introspection psychologique, peu d'actions ou presque. Pour des *pundits* professionnels, pour la plupart universitaires, les mots ont peu à voir avec le corps.

S'engager pour trouver derrière les mots le « programme d'action », selon la définition d'Eisenstein, était une véritable obsession à l'ISTA Salento. Ferdinando Taviani la prit au pied de la lettre. Un soir, pendant que nous étions réunis pour dîner, il arriva dans la salle à manger transporté sur une sorte de civière, et recouvert d'un journal. Quand il se trouva bien en vue, visible de tous, il souleva le journal et le montra. C'était une copie du *Monde*. Il le tourna sens dessus dessous, proclamant avec une voix solennelle : « Le monde peut être renversé ». La trouvaille de Taviani, elle aussi, contribua à m'ouvrir les yeux. Après le naufrage du pré-expressif mental et la réduction des livres à leur poids, ce fut un pas nouveau sur le chemin du retour.

La reine dit non

À l'ISTA, il y a un commandant en chef, bref un chef, et un souverain.

Le chef, c'est Eugenio Barba, le souverain ou plutôt la souveraine est - était - Sanjukta Panigrahi. Sanjukta a été, jusqu'à sa mort en 1997, la reine incontestable de l'ISTA. Entre chef et souverain, je ne sais quel type de rapport est déterminé par les ordonnances de l'État qui disposent des deux figures. En ce qui concerne l'ISTA, je le formule ainsi. Du chef et du souverain, on exécute les ordres. Mais tandis que le chef a le devoir de les impartir, le souverain a seulement le plaisir de les voir exécutés sans avoir à les donner.

Sanjukta a fait naître la tradition de la danse odissi en Inde et l'a amenée à une perfection absolue, sans jamais en rester esclave. Son ouverture - dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage - à des théâtres différents du sien était généreuse et, en même temps, exigeante. À l'ISTA, Orient et Occident sont seulement des points d'orientation différents pour cette unique boussole qu'est le corps vivant du comédien/danseur. Collaborer avec Barba dans une école semblable était quelque chose de naturel pour Sanjukta.

Je ne sais comment leur collaboration fonctionnait en privé. En public, on détectait seulement le rôle du chef. Barba donnait les ordres, et ceux à qui ils étaient adressés, les exécutaient. Y compris Sanjukta : même si parfois on avait l'impression qu'entre ordre et exécution se déployait un territoire d'oubli supérieur, de liberté insondable. Je crois que pour Barba, le défi de la collaboration avec Sanjukta avait été de pénétrer dans ce territoire, et de découvrir les réponses insoupçonnables que ses questions pouvaient recevoir en retour. Je n'avais jamais vu Sanjukta opposer un refus à Barba, mais ce jour-là, pendant les répétitions du *Faust*, cela se produisit. La reine dit non. Après avoir déposé un livre sur le sable d'Epidauro, Barba demanda à Sanjukta-Méphisto de lui donner un coup de pied. Sanjukta simplement ne le fit pas. Dans sa culture, dit-elle, les livres sont sacrés. Barba comprît qu'insister n'aurait servi à rien.

La scène du coup de pied au livre n'apparut pas dans le spectacle auquel nous assistâmes, au bout des cinq jours de travail. Mais dans le théâtre de la mémoire, cette scène reste. Sanjukta-Méphisto immobile à côté du livre posé sur le sable, une voix off qui ordonne de lui donner un coup de pied, et elle toujours là, immobile. Ce fut, et c'est encore pour moi, la scène mère. Celle qui accouche d'une avalanche de questions pour le spectateur, bien après le spectacle.

Fidélité et loyauté

Quand j'ai commencé à travailler à l'université dans le domaine du théâtre, je sortais d'une maîtrise de physique, obtenue en 1964, et de douze ans d'enseignement des mathématiques à l'école secondaire. Ensuite - ce sont les hasards de la vie, beaucoup de chance et l'explosion de la sémiotique, qui permettait de parler la langue des sciences exactes - en 1976, j'obtins une charge non rémunérée en « Sémiologie du spectacle » au DAMS de l'Université de Bologne. En attendant, je continuais à être prof de maths.

On peut enseigner à titre gratuit, mais il est difficile d'en vivre.

Je me souviens encore avec terreur des premières fois où j'entrai en classe pour donner mes cours. Ma compétence dans le domaine du théâtre était celle que l'on peut imaginer au vu de l'anomalie de mon curriculum, même s'il avait été « normé » par le fait que j'avais été impliqué pendant une longue période, paradoxalement grâce à ma connaissance des mathématiques, dans un projet complexe de recherche historico-documentaire. Mais si je ne pouvais plus me dire débutant, j'étais encore novice. J'essayais d'approfondir ma formation en étudiant sans cesse, utilisant chaque minute de mon temps libre. Mon rapport aux livres était décidemment ambivalent, on peut le comprendre. Mettant à nu mes lacunes, les livres pointaient contre moi leur arme mais, au fur et à mesure que je colmatais ces mêmes lacunes, ils fortifiaient ma cuirasse contre

leurs propres coups. Je les craignais et j'étais obligé de les aimer, je les ai mais et j'étais obligé de les craindre. Plus j'en mettais en mémoire, plus mon désir de les ranger tous dans un grenier et d'oublier leur existence, croissait.

Il était difficile de se libérer d'un tel *imprinting*. Il se présentait maintenant sous la forme d'une autre question - non plus savoir s'il fallait étudier, mais plutôt combien il fallait demander aux livres - et, après tant d'années, à l'ISTA Salento, le poids de cet *imprinting* pesait encore sur mes épaules. En attendant, Sanjukta-Méphisto restait là, immobile, face au livre par terre, à m'accabler de questions. N'était-ce pas donner un coup de pied aux livres que de s'enfermer dans un cercle de sable surnommé Epidauro, pour interpréter un démon occidental, sous la direction d'un metteur en scène italo-danois, avec une danseuse buyo et un onnagata kabuki, devant un groupe de témoins cosmopolites, ayant chacun son bloc-notes à la main ? Méphisto voulait dire à Faust que, pour toucher la chaleur de la vie, il faut se débarrasser de la rigueur des études. Sanjukta avait compris que donner un coup de pied aux livres ne signifie pas les attaquer à coups de pied.

Avant même d'être interdit, le geste que Barba lui demandait était superflu.

Toucher avec le doigt

Il était fatal qu'à partir des feuillets pré-expressifs voltigeant dans la turbulence du vent, du monde-journal et du non d'une reine, bref, qu'à partir de tout cela j'en arrivasse à Stanislavski. Stanislavski clone le lecteur, et à chaque ligne il le repousse. Pour justifier les préceptes du théâtre, il en fournit la preuve, avec la même urgence, dans la pratique de la vie.

La mémoire émotive, nous dit-il, est utilisée par l'acteur et l'aide à pleurer avec sincérité de fausses larmes, mais cela vaut même pour le plus commun des hommes et l'aide à attribuer aux choses qu'il lui est arrivé de vivre la dignité du vécu. Les livres de Stanislavski peuvent peser à cause du poids des pages de papier, ils ne pèsent certainement pas à cause des pages de mots.

Une fois terminé le travail de Faust, le rendez-vous matinal de la deuxième semaine fut consacré à un séminaire sur le processus créatif, dirigé par Barba, et réservé à ceux qui, parmi les *pundits*, souhaitaient y participer. Le temps était mesuré par l'ombre projetée sur la paroi du parapet de la fenêtre, ouverte en direction du soleil. Se soulevant sur l'horizon - la mer regardait à l'orient - la ligne d'ombre se déplaçait vers le bas. Quand elle rejoignait le plancher, la session de la journée se terminait. Il n'était pas permis de porter des montres.

Si je commence par ce qui pourrait apparaître comme une touche de folklore, c'est pour que le lecteur d'aujourd'hui soit plongé dans la même alternative que le participant d'alors. Étions-nous convoqués à une activité d'« animation intelligentem », ou bien à un vrai travail sur le processus créatif, selon ses principes propres ? L'amputation de la montre est une pratique courante dans les animations intelligentes. Mais dans ce cas elle fait partie de la chorégraphie, dans le processus créatif elle fait partie du travail. Le processus créatif, par définition, ne s'oriente pas vers un résultat prévu par avance. Le

sien n'est autre qu'un temps, le temps de l'attention, de la vigilance. De l'attente. Ne pouvant pas fixer la correspondance entre ligne d'ombre et aiguilles d'une montre, la demande du Damoclès du processus productif, c'est-à-dire le respect du programme - combien de temps me reste-il ? - reste sans réponse, et bientôt s'évanouit, même en tant que question.

Il était demandé à chacun des participants de créer une séquence personnelle d'actions physiques, puis de la danser en chantant une mélodie propre sur un texte poétique personnel. Retirer des tiroirs les poèmes de jeunesse, adapter au besoin des chansons d'auteur, choisir l'immobilité avec l'excuse que la danse est avant tout mouvement intérieur : la tentation de se garantir un résultat a priori et bon marché était forte. Je ne nie pas l'avoir connue. Toutefois, la certitude que je ne pouvais pas perdre cette occasion qui m'était offerte de façon inattendue, fut encore plus forte. Barba nous braquait avec des demandes continues de modifications, de coupes, de nouvelles soudures, de changements de rythme. Cela ne voulait pas dire qu'il était insatisfait du résultat. Il voulait juste que le résultat, même provisoire, ne bloque pas le processus. Il nous obligeait à rester concentrés, concrètement engagés sur le présent. Je continuais à travailler mon texte pour le mettre en poésie, éliminant des jeux de mots vides, des oripeaux, des figures rhétoriques : dégraissant jusqu'à l'essentiel. C'était la première fois que j'écrivais quelque chose qui ne trouvait pas sa justification dans les idées ou dans la forme ou dans l'auto-complaisance, mais plutôt dans la nécessité. Parallèlement, je travaillais mon chant et ma danse. Le dernier jour arriva. Et quelqu'un, pas moi, non, quelqu'un ou quelque chose chanta et dansa ma poésie.

À le dire ainsi, cela sonne comme une de ces choses qu'en vérité « on ne dit pas ». Mais le défi de la sincérité n'admet pas les demi-mesures. L'expérience que j'ai racontée, je crois qu'elle est arrivée à tout le monde. La différence est que cette fois-là, pour moi, il y avait eu un travail conscient, patient et attentif - on pourrait dire technique - qui avait rendu cet effort propice. Le processus créatif peut être gouverné et il peut donner accès à ce que Stanislavski appelle la « condition créative » : faire ce qu'avec peine on a appris à faire, comme si c'était la première fois, oubliant la « mémoire des muscles ». Non que la condition créative soit sommée d'arriver par devoir de preuve : elle est un don. Mais si elle arrive, elle est la preuve reine.

J'avais pu la toucher du doigt. Avec un seul doigt, et pour un bref instant. Mais j'avais pu la toucher, concrètement.

Histoires souterraines

Un moine est en chemin vers son monastère, où l'attendent l'étude et les activités quotidiennes de la dévotion. Il s'arrête dans une auberge. Il est très fatigué, demande un bol de riz et, pendant qu'il attend, il pose la tête sur sa main et s'endort. Il reprend son voyage, et après beaucoup de temps, les desseins insondables du destin font de lui un empereur. Il parcourt en long et en large le territoire dont il est le chef, prend connaissance des misères et des injustices, les répare par des lois équitables et, quand il le faut, par la force. Le voilà assis sur le trône, épuisé mais satisfait par ce qu'il a accompli : ses

ministres pourront s'occuper de l'administration courante. Il ne lui reste qu'à attendre la fin de sa vie. C'est presque avec gratitude qu'il accueille la mort qui lui touche l'épaule et le réveille de la torpeur à laquelle il s'était abandonné. Quand il rouvre les yeux, il voit à ses côtés le patron de l'auberge, un bol de riz à la main.

Plus ou moins adaptée aux circonstances, c'est là l'histoire du drame nô *Kantan*. Barba nous la raconta le dernier jour de l'ISTA Salento, après nous avoir convoqués l'après-midi sur la plage. Une fois le récit terminé, il nous dit de plonger dans la mer pour pêcher nos perles. Nous le fîmes tous sans dire un mot, heureux de ne pas devoir rester là à faire les comptes, avec l'émotion certes sincère que nous éprouvions, mais sans comparaison avec la parabole du moine empereur. Couper court à l'émotion par une belle nage, et que cela se termine ! Le temps viendra de repenser à tout cela, après.

Dans le numéro de *Bouffonneries*, édité pour cette session de l'ISTA, j'ai écrit que Barba nous invita à plonger dans la mer « comme le pêcheur de perles de Karen Blixen ». Je ne me souviens pas si c'est lui qui l'a dit ; il est plus probable que c'est moi qui pensais qu'il l'avait dit. Cela n'a pas d'importance, l'histoire de surface ne change pas. Ce qui compte c'est l'histoire qui coule en dessous. Après tant d'années aux côtés de l'Odin, j'aurais dû savoir depuis le début que Barba ne se détache jamais de sa patrie spirituelle et que, sous les épisodes de surface, il finit toujours par parler de lui et de ses frères de rébellion : Dostoïevski, un chamane, Brecht, Admète ou Antigone, Kaspar Hauser ou une amie des oiseaux ... Et dans ce cas précis Copeau qui, après l'essai d'école sur *Kantan*, ferme le Vieux-Colombier et fuit en Bourgogne, pour pêcher avec ses jeunes élèves les perles de la vie. Copeau qui, pour être loyal jusqu'au bout au théâtre, décide d'être infidèle à son théâtre.

*

Je voulais terminer avec le texte de mon poème, le seul document qui reste de ce séminaire sur le processus créatif, mise à part l'expérience vécue. Je ne me le rappelle pas. C'est la vérité : j'ai cherché parmi les vieux papiers, mais malheureusement je ne l'ai pas retrouvé. Ou, peut-être, heureusement. Le titre était *Un Coup de Pied aux Livres*.■

Nicola Savarese, Peter Elsass, Jean-Marie Pradier

Report on the 5th Session of ISTA

Salento, Italy 1st-14th September 1987

The 5th public session of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) was held in Otranto - a region of Salento, Italy - from September 1st to September 14th, 1987. This session was the conclusion of the research which began with the foundation of ISTA in 1979 and constitutes the point of departure for further work.

Faithful to its principles, ISTA organised the 1987 session in a way that allowed for the integration of past experience with new methodology and practice. This integration was realised through a combination of specialised work sessions and encounters with different peoples of the region. In this way, ISTA was able to enter into the living cultural weave of its host, Salento. Preparatory work, as well as scientific and artistic projects, helped ISTA meet the local culture in a manner which was neither abrupt nor artificial.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY (ISTA)

ISTA, which was founded in 1979 and is directed by Eugenio Barba, is an international and interdisciplinary research and pedagogical organisation that is based in Holstebro, Denmark. A research laboratory focusing on the fundamentals of the performer's work, ISTA has become a center for the diffusion of Eastern and Western performance knowledge. It holds public sessions at the request of national and international institutions which then take on its administration. ISTA does not use conventional teaching methods: each session leads to the elaboration of a range of themes and an original pedagogy which synthesise past work and create new research perspectives.

In addition to performers from different cultures, ISTA gathers a scientific team of specialists from different disciplines who are drawn from the various universities with which it maintains contact.

THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY

There is no longer any value in trying to come to terms with the actor's behaviour and performing from the point of view of psychological introspection: we know that this kind of approach has led theatre studies and theatrical practice to a dead end. Drawing upon various useful scientific disciplines (from ethology to ethnology, from history to

linguistics), theatre anthropology explores the actor's creative process and his various ways of learning by examining the empirical knowledge of performance professionals, particularly those whose culture has provided them with a precise repertoire of theatrical know-how.

Theatre anthropology is the study of the cultural and biological foundations of man in an organised performance situation. In this situation, the *actor-dancer* manifests and organises his physical presence according to psycho-physiological principles and processes which differ from those that he uses in daily life. This extra-daily activation of the body corresponds to what is called "technique".

ISTA has released various publications on its work and has organised the following public sessions:

- Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany: October 1-31, 1980
- Volterra, Italy: August 8 - October 8, 1981
- Blois and Malakoff, France: April 12 - 26, 1985
- Holstebro, Denmark: September 17 - 22, 1986

GENERAL THEME OF THE FIFTH SESSION

The 5th session was organised on the central theme of Dialogue of Theatres: The Actor's Tradition and the Spectator's Identity. According to the intentions of the director and founder, Eugenio Barba, this session provided "the empirical circumstances for experimentation with the energy that results from the difference between the cultural identity of the spectators and the traditions of the actors". The fruit of various theatrical traditions Indian, Japanese, Balinese, ODIN TEATRET - was transposed into different contexts and among spectators who, although possessing a different cultural identity, were nevertheless able to make an exchange. Transposition and dialogue led to definitive work and public meeting.

This was the second time that a public session of ISTA was held in Italy. The 5th session, in contrast to the Volterra meeting, which was held in a closed, quasi-monastic environment, took place in a variety of very public spaces: villages and small town squares, churches, historical castles, streets, and municipal theatres.

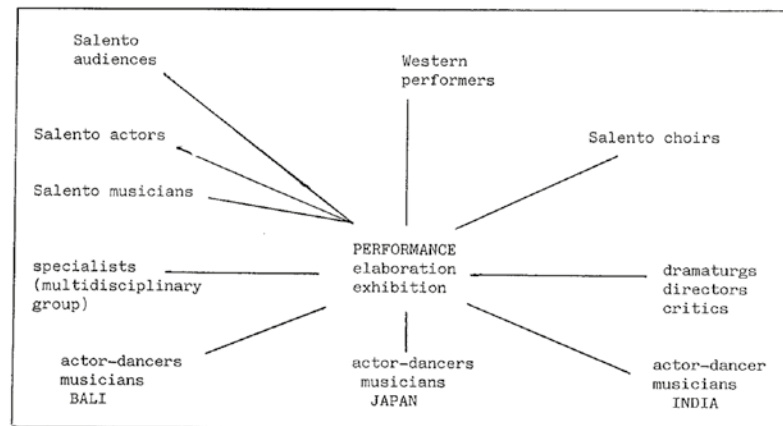
JUSTIFICATION

The 5th public session of ISTA was the occasion to pass from the theoretical level - established by the permanent team throughout the previous years - to the practical level, that is, from the realm of ideas to the stage, from the simplicity of rational hypothesis to the complexity of actual experience. This transition was primarily realised through the contributions of Sanjukta Panigrahi and Katsuko Azuma, two masters capable of working from the richness of their cultural origins and at the same time, of exploring the transcultural dimension of their own knowledge. Also important was the participation of actors, directors, dramaturgs and literary and performance specialists from different disciplines.

Even though ISTA'S public sessions are the results of years of research, they are not demonstrations of definite conclusions. Even though their sessions incorporate various performative elements they are not only performances.

PEDAGOGY

Differentness, difficulty in understanding the unfamiliar, and the surprise of images from distant lands, do not result in a loss of cultural identity. Rather than being obstacles, they become a source of stimulation. The result is not the estrangement of antagonists, but a stronger meeting.



The performances, both during their process of elaboration and when exhibited as aesthetic product, constituted the epistemological and pedagogical space of the meeting. It was in this space that the exchanges between different cultural groups were made. Each performance was an interactive process rather than an end in itself. All of these performances allowed for mutual discovery by providing the opportunity for each of the protagonists to express his own identity and to reinforce or, if necessary, modify it through contact with the other.

The contacts between the different cultural entities were not limited to a linear level. On the contrary, they were interwoven through the performances, on the basis of the performer's original techniques. The absence of "original techniques" would have made dialogue impossible. When the Salento musicians listened to their Balinese counterparts they were aware of difference, but at the same time, the trance-inducing dances from Italy and Bali revealed a strange familiarity between the two cultures.

THE NOTION OF IDENTITY

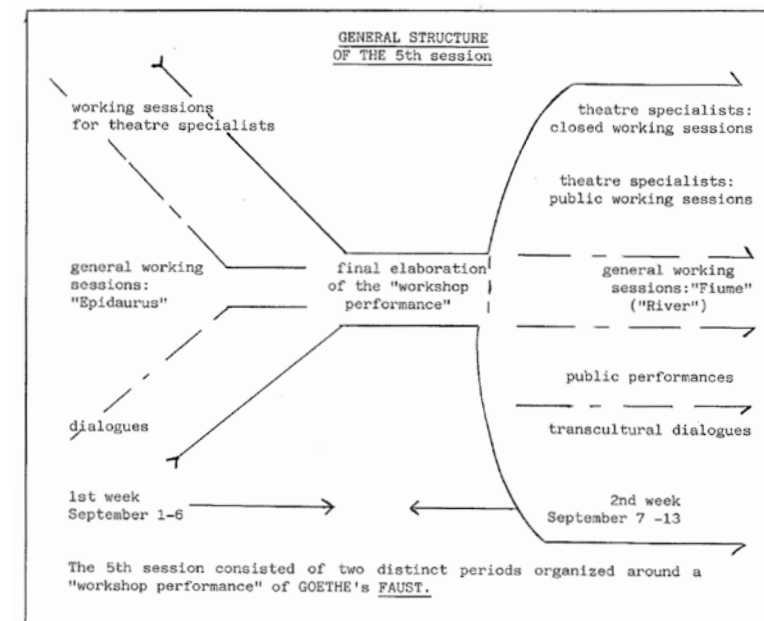
It was evident that this work was not confused with exoticism the wonderfully foreign - nor with syncretism - the amalgam of genres. On the contrary, the question of identity remained central throughout the sessions and followed on from a scientific project started many months before the congress, under the direction of an anthropologist, Piero Giacchè. The principles and the methods of this research were presented at a public seminar on September 12th, in Bari.

The notion of identity adopted at Salento corresponded to the one used by Levi Strauss: identity is the way in which one organises those features that one perceives

as characteristic of oneself. It was a matter, therefore, of assembling the elements of autodefinition via methodological procedures that are different from those used in the cultural market and from those that tend to establish a quantified cultural profile of a given population.

Piero Giacchè's central hypothesis takes into consideration the privileged relationship between the actor and spectator. The performance promotes an autodefinition thanks to cultural contrasts. His investigation does not, however, limit itself to an analysis of audience reactions. On the contrary, when the performance time allows for the organisation of a certain type of response, that becomes part of the complex weave which is the culture of a given region. The study of the regional context - Salento - has benefitted from the contributions of local specialists who, through their writings, revalidate and transmit an oral culture which is several centuries old. The use of questionnaires, informants, and follow-up verification after the performances provided a body of data which will require many months of analysis. The results of this research will be published in the course of 1988.

As to the actors and the specialists, both Eastern and Western, the question of identity was treated pragmatically as is evident in the session's program.



There were two working groups:

- Actors and directors
- Theatre specialists, each observing and analysing activities on the basis of his or her particular discipline.

This distinction allowed for greater collaboration between practitioners and theorists, and gave rise to further dramatic activities outside the general working sessions, based on the contributions of both groups.

PARTICIPANTS

Country of origin and number of regular participants:

Federal Republic of Germany	..1	France	1
Argentina	2	Great Britain	1
Canada	1	Greece	14
Chile	1	Italy	46
Cuba	1	Mexico	1
Denmark	1	Turkey	1
Spain	1	U.S.A.	3
		Jugoslavia	1

Total: 67

In addition to the regular participants, there were also visitors and members of the theatre groups (from Italy, Colombia, Hungary, Malta and Switzerland) who participated in the session in Copertino on September 11th.

First week

GENERAL WORKING SESSION: TEXT AND ACTION

During the first week all participants met each morning at 6 a.m. in an outdoor space called “Epidaurus”. Everyone was involved in developing a “workshop performance” or short “frontier production”, based on Goethe’s FAUST. Two actresses-dancers, the Japanese Katsuko Azuma (buyo dance) and the Indian Sanjukta Panigrahi (oddisi dance), a Japanese kabuki actor, Kanichi Hanayagi (onnagata), an orchestra composed of Indian musicians led by Raghunath Panigrahi (flute, sitar, percussion, harmonium), a Japanese singer and a shamisen player, and Western musicians (guitar, flute, violin, choir), worked on three scenes under the direction of Eugenio Barba.

The Faust theme was retained due to its importance and because of the quality of the dramatic works it has generated. Each participant was asked to prepare for the session by at least reading Marlowe’s and Goethe’s FAUST prior to their arrival in Salento. This previous preparation continued at ISTA through sessions of collective analysis and workshops.

The work on Faust evoked echoes that reverberate throughout our dramatic literature:

- the visible, the invisible, the metamorphosis of the character - Mephisto
- the pact, its stakes and consequences
- the quest for knowledge and power
- the love relationship, and manipulation (Margareta’s character)
- identity

Barba’s approach consisted of developing a performance text which used the

contributions of participants as a point of departure. The participants were divided into groups, each of which was asked to propose a sequence of scenes that they considered essential to the plot, and for which they were to provide possible corresponding physical actions. Barba then worked on the transformation of this “global text” - anecdotal, dramaturgical propositions - into precise theatrical action.

The ensuing vigorous elaboration led to an inversion of the traditional way of developing a dramatic narrative in which the actor illustrates reality through the portrayal of redundant stereotypes that mask the richness of meaning. Barba’s reversal of the approach involved drawing a series of actions from within the text which, when distilled, generated a non-realistic - or “non - anecdotal” - physical narration far removed from redundant illustration.

The entire workshop process consisted of developing this “other text”, and culminated in a final run of some 30 minutes duration which ended with the reading of Goethe’s Dedication from the first volume of his Faust.

ACCULTURATED ACTORS

For an actor, acculturation corresponds to the mastery of specific body techniques which are different from those used in daily life.

Inculturation, which begins at birth, proceeds, on the contrary, by means of a process of passive sensory-motor absorption of the daily behaviour patterns of a given culture.

By acculturated actor, one means the actor who has undergone an apprenticeship which has profoundly modified his “natural” daily behaviour.

The choice of Eastern performers came from a hypothesis that had to be tested.

The acculturated actor’s mastery of the pre-expressive level of performance induces a particular intelligence about dramatic situations so that the creative process, that is, the realisation of the performance, is made possible even if its point of departure - theme, text, intrigue, situation - is absolutely alien to him. The actor’s professional identity, which is concretely incarnated in a codified virtuosity built up during his apprenticeship, permits him to perceive the thematic identity of a piece of work that does not belong to his culture.

The mastery of precise corporal techniques characterises traditional Eastern performers (formed according to their respective traditions) and Western performers who work according to analogous principles, such as those from the ODIN TEATRET. This mastery gives them an evident pre-expressive quality (presence). Similarly, a performer’s physical intelligence is accompanied by an understanding of particular dramatic situations. Confronted with a subject alien to their culture, the Faust, directed by a theatre director who did not speak their language, Barba, the Japanese and Indian artists were capable of creating new combinations of their traditional pre-expressive and expressive “knowledge” and of transforming them into extremely suggestive contemporary forms.

For the Western “inculturated” performer, accustomed to illustrating dramatic situations in a realistic fashion, the lesson is important: it is not the “truth” of the illustration that matters, but the quality of what precedes it, the way of giving life to the body before giving it the word.

RESULTS

The fundamental principles that support the actor's performance were extracted progressively during the course of the work. The process of exploring and developing the staging was analysed from the first work on the text and/or theme up to the final public performance.

It was possible to answer questions that all performers put to themselves:

- How to avoid submission to stereotypes?
- How to reconcile technique and imagination?
- How to guarantee the actor's identity, the spectator's identity?

Obviously, theatre cannot be reduced to technique nor to concepts such as extra-daily behaviour. The principles that were applied constitute neither knowledge, orthodoxy, nor "school". Consequently, the question of identity did not become a matter of revindication or simple affirmation. The performer's and the spectator's identities are founded on an apparent paradox: individual cultures can dialogue insofar as they know how to activate their transcultural components. The quality of the fecund, living, physical presence of the actor is made possible through the most abstract of exchanges, that between cultural systems. The training that allows one to analyse action also allows one to imagine more subtle game combinations. If the actor wants to surpass the elementary stage of undifferentiated emotions, he must rediscover the knowledge of physical presence which is a universal given that belongs to all human beings.

WORK SESSIONS FOR THE THEATRE SPECIALISTS

Additional daily work sessions combined theatre specialists and experts from other disciplines. During these meetings conducted by Barba, the relationship between theory and theatrical creativity was explored.

Second week

TRANSCULTURAL DIALOGUES

ISTA's Eastern artists gave several performances (transcultural dialogues) in conjunction with local musicians and singers:

- September 6th, Cursi: religious music
- September 10th, Nardò: popular music
- September 13th, Calimera: contemporary music
- September 13th, Caprarica: religious music
- September 13th, Maglie: martial arts

BALI

The Balinese troupe Dharma Shanti, from the National Academy of Balinese and Indonesian Dance, directed by Professor I Made Bandem, joined the Indian, Japanese and European groups at the end of the first week.

The company participated in both the public and the closed ISTA meetings.

PUBLIC SEMINARS

In the mornings of the second week Barba conducted practical work sessions with the theatre specialists.

In addition to these meetings, seminars dealing with theoretical questions relevant to the theatre were held, such as the one in Copertino on September 11th on theatre anthropology and the first international meeting between semiology of performance and theatre anthropology in Bari on September 12th, attended by all the guest specialists.

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES

Performances were presented in various towns of the region:

- September 6th
 - Otranto: Buyo Kabuki (Japan)
 - Lecce: Odissi Dance (India)
 - Bari: Dance Theatre of Bali (Indonesia)
- September 7th
 - Martano: Dance Theatre of Bali (Indonesia)
 - Lecce: Buyo Kabuki (Japan)
 - Bari: Odissi Dance (India)
- September 8th
 - Otranto: Odissi Dance (India)
 - Lecce: Dance Theatre of Bali (Indonesia)
 - Bari: Buyo Kabuki Theatre (Japan)
- September 9th
 - Corigliano: Dance Theatre of Bali (Indonesia)
 - Melendugno: Buyo Kabuki Theatre (Japan)
 - Aradeo: Odissi Dance (India)
- September 10th
 - Nardo: Buyo Kabuki Theatre (Japan)
- September 11th
 - Copertino: THEATRUM MUNDI (India, Japan, Indonesia, Europe)
- September 12th
 - Bari: THEATRUM MUNDI (India, Japan, Indonesia, Europe)

"FIUME" (River)

A general session was conducted each morning, following Barba's meetings with the specialists, in which he explored the first week's hypothesis also with Western acculturated performers. In these sessions Roberta Carreri and Iben Nagel Rasmussen (ODIN TEATRET), as well as the Orientals, improvised and worked under Barba's direction following much the same methodology used in the previous week in his work on Faust.

ORGANISATION

The organization of the 5th public session of ISTA was the responsibility of:

- MEDITERRANEA TEATROLABORATORIO, Lecce, directed by Giorgio Di Lecce and Cristina Ria.

- Nicola Savarese, director of the Performance Section of the Department of Social Systems and Communication of the University of Lecce.

BUDGET AND FINANCING

The 5th session was made possible thanks to financial contributions from: the Puglia Region, the Provincial Government of Lecce, the Puglia Public Theatre Consortium, the Lecce Chamber of Commerce, under the auspices of

- The Ministry of Performance and Tourism
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

INVITED ARTISTS

INDIA

Sanjukta Panigrahi (odissi dancer)
Raghunath Panigrahi (musician and singer)
Hemant Kumar Das (musician)
Mohini Mohan Patnik (musician)
Gangadhar Pradhan (musician)

INDONESIA

The company Dharma Shanti from the National Indonesian Academy of Dance (ASTI) from Denpasar, Bali.

Artistic Director: I Made Bandem

Swasti W. Bandem, Desak Made Suarti Laksmi, Ni Ketut Suryatini, Ni Nyoman Candri, I Wayan Rai, I Nyoman Catra, I Ketut Kodi, Tjokorda Raka Tisnu, with the participation of I Made Pasek Tempo from the village of Tampak Siring and Pino Confessa from ASTI, Denpasar.

JAPAN

Katsuko Azuma (Nihon buyo dancer)
Haruchiho Azuma (Nihon buyo dancer)
Kan-Ichi Hanayagi (onnagata kabuki actor)
Shizuko Kineya (musician)
Takae Koyama (singer)

OTHER COUNTRIES

Toni Cots	Spain	BASHO
Gisela Cremer	Germany	TILBUT THEATER
Lena Bjerregaard	Denmark	NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM
Cesar Brie	Argentina	NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM
Roberta Carreri	Italy	NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM
Jan Ferslev	Denmark	NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM
Richard Fowler	Canada	NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM
Naira Gonzales	Argentina	NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM
Iben Nagel Rasmussen	Denmark	NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM

CONCLUSION

The results obtained are indicative of the effectiveness of the method used: an intensive project led by highly qualified actor-dancers in full command of their technique.

This type of session would appear to be extremely useful not only for performance professionals but also for theoreticians and theatre specialists wishing to analyse their practices and knowledge.

PROSPECTIVE

In the coming months, ISTA's permanent research team will publish the results of the work undertaken during the session. In addition, future projects are under consideration in Mexico, Japan and Great Britain. Finally, the new aspects of theatrical practice which appeared during the session will give rise to further new research by the members of the permanent team.

Reflections and Images



Eugenio Barba in his office in Holstebro. Photo: Fiora Bemporad

Leonardo Mancini

Through a Scientific Lens At the 'origins' of theatre anthropology

Abstract: This article is based on the broad network of interests established by Eugenio Barba in the first decade of ISTA with the world of science: a fertile, lively relationship with figures inside and outside the world of theatre. With the contribution of archival documents preserved in the Odin Teatret Archives, the article focuses on certain artistic and intellectual episodes that exemplify the relational dialectics of interpenetration, exercised in two opposing tensions (one of approach outwards, the other of attraction inwards), implemented by Barba in a vast knowledge-seeking project, unprecedented in the history of the theatre. It was also based on these premises that Barba promoted the concept of theatre anthropology as a plural, interdisciplinary and intercultural living discipline: a discipline founded on the study of human beings and the history of cultures, combining a purely humanistic approach with new research from the so-called hard sciences. The impact and wide range of interaction of theatre anthropology as a new subject in the field of knowledge subsequently gave rise, over following decades, to ample literature hosting a lively and constructive debate.

Keywords: Theatre historiography; Cognitive sciences; Odin Teatret Archives; Social psychology

In a 1986 article titled “Theatre Anthropology”, which appeared in the Italian journal *Teatro e Storia*,¹ Franco Ruffini considered the new field of theatre anthropology studies within research aimed at investigating the origins of theatre, understood, the author said, not only in the strictly historical sense of the word, but also in the “philosophical” one.² Within this perspective, an expansion of understanding developed along lines of research covering the arts throughout the 20th century. In theatre, too, with a new awareness, it was held that consciousness and knowledge should broaden to give expression to what until then had been unexpressed. Theatre anthropology, as a new discipline, placed the actor’s work at the centre of its attention, by means of a dual analysis that, in Eugenio Barba’s view, takes place both in pre-representative processes and in relation to the perception of spectators. Underlying this discipline was first and foremost an empirical, practical approach, based on the body, able to lay down new principles of authenticity and open up a whole array of question marks.

1. Ruffini 1986, 3-23. Ruffini’s article “Theatre anthropology” was also published in English in the first issue of the *Journal of Theatre Anthropology* (Ruffini 2021, 71-83).

2. Ruffini 1986, 3; Ruffini 2021, 71.



A historiographical framework for the “problem” of origins was suggested by Fabrizio Cruciani in some illuminating articles published starting from 1989 onwards in *Teatro e Storia*.³ If theatre is a set of relational dialectics, according to Cruciani, then so too is the thinking about the theatre. If every new theatre is, historically, a re-founding of the history of theatres, retrieving its own dimension of idea and “place of possibilities”,⁴ then historiography should be a search for the movements and processes within which these reforming instances are developed. It is not, therefore, a question of developing a rigidly rule-bound historiography, experienced as “alibi”, “refuge”, or “explanatory principle”,⁵ but rather a living and plural discipline, a “body-in-life”⁶ centred on a dialectical relationship. For Cruciani, in theatre, dialectics is not a way of knowing, but is its very substance.

As a concrete example, Cruciani addressed the idea of “*tradition de la naissance*”⁷ by Jacques Copeau, who had outlined the possibility of a rediscovery, “of new life”, of the theatre of Molière. It is interesting to note that starting from the late 1915, as Aliverti has written, “the idea of improvisation, in Copeau, moved from literature (the plot determines the action) to pedagogy, centred on the actor’s body (the body and the action determine the plot)”.⁸ Facing an already strongly felt cultural loss in European theatre, Copeau formulated, thereafter, the need for a rediscovery that could only take place “within us, to respond to a need, to an inner aspiration [...]. One must reject all that is artificial and scholastic, all bibliophile forms of knowledge”.⁹ According to Copeau, as Cruciani highlighted, to preserve the “tradition of an artist” it was necessary to seek “the tradition of his creative path”.¹⁰ It was therefore a question of “investigating the movement that presided over the work”,¹¹ restoring “to tradition (to the past) its present, that is, to restore it as its place of possibilities and choices”.¹² In 1983 Cruciani published his study on *Teatro nel Rinascimento. Roma 1450-1550*, inviting readers “not

3. See Cruciani 1989, 3-17 and Cruciani, 1993, 3-11. Unless otherwise indicated, the translation of the original texts is my own.

4. Cruciani 1989, 3.

5. Cruciani 1993, 10.

6. Years later, Barba would adopt the term “Living Archive” for the Odin Teatret Archives, as Mirella Schino recalled (Schino 2014, 415-23); on the same subject, Annelis Kuhlmann considers the archive as a place not only for preserving the past but also for building the future (Kuhlmann 2013, 105-20).

7. Cruciani 1989, 3-17. The article was recently mentioned by Raimondo Guarino in his recent contribution on theatre in the Renaissance (Guarino 2020, 426-27). About the “tradition de la naissance”, and for some possible ambiguities in Copeau, see also Aliverti 1997, 90.

8. Aliverti 2009, 35.

9. Copeau 2009 (1916), 161 (also quoted in Consolini 2018, 245).

10. Cruciani 1995, 246 (also quoted in Schino 2003, xviii).

11. Cruciani 1989, 11; while it is interesting to observe that in the interview collected by G. Berr in 1922, Copeau (1976, 73-74) spoke literally, not metaphorically, about the need “to resurrect the movement in which the play had been performed” (“Pour ressusciter le mouvement dans lequel la pièce avait été représentée, il m’a paru bon de concevoir une disposition scénique qui engendrât forcément le mouvement”).

12. Cruciani 1989, 13.

to base one’s knowledge on the certainties accumulated by historiography, undisputed interpretations that have become truth”, but “to restore to the hypotheses their level of possibility”.¹³ It was thus necessary to clear away the obvious, the acquired meanings, and to regain a sense of effervescence and renewal.

At the same time Cruciani warned against possible misunderstanding deriving from the use of notions such as birth and origin, where birth, for example, was not for him a question of origins. Speaking of the “origin” of Renaissance theatre was in itself an ambiguity leading to errors, since “what we call origin, in culture, is a simplifying abstraction”.¹⁴ Besides, the Third Theatre was already configured, in the intentions of Eugenio Barba, as a search for a “dual identity”, manifested in the fourth ‘reflection’ delivered by him at the *Rencuentro Ayacucho* ‘88: “The Third Theatre’s search is for identity. An identity with two faces: one looking to our specific historical, social, and cultural context; the other to the professional that unifies us, despite different languages, traditions and origins. The work in the profession is what allows us to develop our differences. The goal of these meetings is to compare these differences”.¹⁵

1. Voyage dans les hémisphères

In the artistic and intellectual movement that preceded and accompanied the beginnings of theatre anthropology guided by Barba, the sciences played a conspicuous role, examined from a dual perspective. On the one hand, there was a conscious attempt to found a new *scientia* of theatres, outlined by Nando Taviani in a 1990 article dedicated to the late Ryszard Cieslak on June 15 of that year: a science, that is, founded on the ability to “succeed in combining research into techniques with historical research, without merely accepting the loophole offered by a ‘history of techniques’”.¹⁶ On the other hand, there was an interest in science, through multiple directions, and in opposition to the strictly literal idea of ‘science’ from which Grotowski had already distanced himself in

13. Cruciani 1983, 7.

14. Cruciani 1989, 13 (see also Marotti 1992, xxxi).

15. Barba 2002, 219-20. De Marinis wrote that the “third identity” is for Barba the professional one, following the personal and the cultural identities (see also on this De Marinis 2012, 61). In some writings, for example in “The House with Two Doors”, Barba has spoken of two poles: “Our identity is, on the one hand, individual, deriving from our biography, from the space and time in which we live. On the other hand, it must be a professional identity connecting us to the people of our profession beyond the limits of time and space. It is a question of two poles, each very different to the other, but one cannot exist without the other” (Barba 2014, 197-98).

16. Taviani 1990, 17; for the same passage, see Savarese 1992, 451 and Barba and De Marinis 1994, 239-57, where De Marinis’ response is given to the long letter sent to him by Barba as his reading notes on the book *Mimo e teatro nel Novecento*, published in 1993. On Barba’s definition of the idea of a “science of theatre”, see also Schino’s observations from the 2004 Aarhus conference: “[Barba] suggested looking at the most subtle and unstable of disciplines: ‘theatre science’ – the science that seeks to investigate principles that, if not eternal, are at least recurring in the fragile art of the theatre. [...] This science makes an attempt to systematise this art in formulas, theories and know-how that can be transmitted.” (Schino 2020, 62).

1963, in his interview with Barba, later published in *Alla ricerca del teatro perduto*.¹⁷ For Barba too, theatre was a profession inspired by craftsmanship, and the primary source of learning remained the work of the actors, above all of those in his Odin Teatret.¹⁸ On the same subject, just before ending his considerations on *The Paper Canoe*, in 1992 Barba stated:

The drift of the exercises; their progressive and never definitive separation from the continent of rehearsals and performance; training as a score of actions, in relationship with a particular moment in the performer's research and experience; its personalization; all of this, and not Asian theatre, constitutes the historical context of the genesis of Theatre Anthropology.

It does not constitute, however, its only objective. Experience of the relative autonomy of exercises with respect to work on performance has led us to think of the pre-expressive as a separate level of organization. And this way of thinking leads elsewhere.¹⁹

In the early 1980s, Barba embarked on his voyage into the sciences accompanied by a network of leading correspondents, from whom he drew inspiration and useful information. A fundamental intermediary for him was Jean-Marie Pradier,²⁰ who, before ISTA Bonn (1-31 October 1980), had organised in 1979 in Karpacz the "Colloque sur les Aspects Scientifiques du Théâtre". This was also attended by Grotowski and enabled the brilliant encounter between Barba and Henri Laborit.²¹ From that experience Barba drew some important elements, including the "levels of organisation",²² found in the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, in the chapter on "the pre-expressive",²³ and

17. Barba 1965, 80. The text of the interview appeared in the journal *Sipario* in September 1963.

18. Barba 2019, 183 (first edition 1981).

19. Barba 1995, 111.

20. Barba has several times named as his key interlocutors Peter Elsass, professor of clinical psychology at the University of Copenhagen, and Jean-Marie Pradier, for studies in the psychological field and for the method of scientific research respectively: see Schino 2020, 61. Mirella Schino's testimony refers to what Barba said at a conference held in Aarhus in 2004, also of particular importance here for the details given regarding the "period of intense research" that he had undertaken between about 1979 and 1991 into the functioning of the human brain, scientific research and biology (Schino 2020, 62).

21. For a full account of the 1979 Karpacz colloquium, see Pradier 1995, 225-29 (in particular for the "levels of organisation", with reference to "systemic theory", see 228). The list of speakers participating in the session of 12-16 September 1979 is conserved in the folder used for this study. It contains the following names and titles: Prof. René G. Busnel, CNRS-INRA ("Réflexion sur certains aspects biologiques des danses"); prof. Henri Marie Laborit, Hôpital Boucicaud ("Le théâtre vu dans optique de la biologie des comportements"); prof. Abraham A. Moles, Université de Strasbourg ("Théorie des actes et espace théâtral"); prof. Jean-Marie O. Pradier, Université de Rabat ("Vers une nouvelle évaluation de l'Information suprasegmentale dans la communication parlée"); Alain Alexis Barsacq, IRCAM ("Espace de projection de l'IRCAM"). The texts of the lectures, in the same folder, are heavily underlined.

22. It is interesting to observe that in the abovementioned article on the "problems of historiography of performance", which appeared in *Teatro e Storia* in 1993, Cruciani also affirms that "a complex entity such as theatre, which is a system of relations and organisation of levels, requires complexity of knowledge: which is, in its substance, dialectic" (Cruciani 1993, 4).

23. Barba and Savarese 2006, 218: "When we see an organism alive in its totality, we know from anatomy, biology and physiology that this organism is organised on various levels. Just as there is

later used in the index of his book *On Directing and Dramaturgy*. But even before that encounter, Barba had experienced for himself that "spirit of Copenhagen" emanating from the Niels Bohr Institute²⁴, so much so that he decided to adopt Bohr's motto *contraria sunt complementa* for his theatre.²⁵

Observing the wide range of readings undertaken by Barba in his forays into science, it could be said that he was embarking on a "journey into the hemispheres": both across the globe, from northern to southern hemisphere, with numerous and continuous journeys into theatre cultures,²⁶ and by interesting himself in research into the hemispheres of the human brain. Indeed *Voyage dans les hémisphères* was the title of a September 1989 article studied by Barba, by Richard Delrieu, French pianist, composer and musicologist, member of the Laboratoire d'anthropologie of the University of Nice,²⁷ where Delrieu had graduated with a thesis on the relationship between brain function and musical practice.²⁸ Thanks to Delrieu's article, Barba was able to delve into new areas of research relating to brain function that, in the wake of early 1970s studies carried out by Paul Donald MacLean, "suggest fascinating applications at the level of creation, of learning and above all of human exchanges".²⁹ It is interesting to observe that in this article Barba's attention fell precisely on a passage in which Delrieu summarised research by MacLean, creator of the triune brain theory, around three "fundamental stages" of the brain, the result of human evolution: the "reptilian" complex (more ancient and anatomically deep), the "limbic system" (more recent), and finally the cortex (dominant in the human species, also called "cold brain", repository of symbolic and abstract functions).³⁰ This classification was dear to Barba, above all for his understanding of the dimension of the spectator, an essential figure whom he likes to address, speaking to the "indissoluble angel", that is to his own *shadow*. Proof of the persistence of these interests, across disciplines, is found in the speech delivered by Barba on receiving the *honoris causa* degree conferred by the Academy for Performing Arts of Hong Kong on 7 July 2006.

a cellular level of organisation and a level of organisation of the organs, and of the various systems in the human body (nervous, arterial, etc.), so we must consider that the totality of a performer's performance is also made up distinct levers of organisation."

24. "*Kopenhagener Geist*": expression adopted, as Pradier recalls, in 1930 by the German physicist Werner Heisenberg, corresponding not merely to an epistemological point of view, but to a certain notion of international collaboration (cf. Pradier 2013, 175).

25. On Bohr's motto juxtaposed with the yin-yang symbol, see Kuhlmann and Ledger 2018, 159.

26. In one of the latest publications about ISTA, Julia Varley has recently narrated the importance and the continuity of Barba's travels during the first years of ISTA: "In the first decade of ISTA, I remember that Eugenio Barba would travel every year to the Asian countries to meet and talk with the masters, observe their work day by day, and prepare with them the next ISTA session. He had got to know them previously in Europe or in Asia, establishing a personal relationship with each of them based on friendship and affinity." (Varley 2017, 53-54).

27. Delrieu 1979, 69-80.

28. Later, between 1990 and 2010, Delrieu went on to do research and teach at the Japanese universities of Kobé, Nagoya and Kyoto, investigating in particular the relationship between Eastern and Western musical systems and language writing systems.

29. Delrieu 1979, 69.

30. Delrieu 1989, 69 (among other publications by the American scholar in those years, see MacLean 1973).

Angelanimal is the name of a spectator. Or better, a way of naming a facet of the complex set of intellectual, emotional, critical, rational and instinctive reactions that compose the collective noun 'spectator'. It is the name that I give to the animal hiding in the depth of my brain as well as to the indissoluble angel that hovers as a shadow in the empty space above or under it. People of science could perhaps attribute to Angelanimal a precise abode in the macrocosm of our skull, between the reptilian and the limbic brain.³¹

A craftsman, therefore, but not devoid of interest in multiple directions offstage that broaden knowledge of mankind and of art. Among other French texts, Barba carefully read a 1982 study by Canadian Derrick De Kerckhove entitled "Écriture, théâtre et neurologie", published in the journal *Études françaises* dedicated to the "Anatomie de l'écriture".³² In reading this article Barba dwelt in particular on the historical reconstruction of the process of the evolution of writing in the Greek language. A first, scantily documented archaic phase was followed by a second phase known as "boustrophedon" writing, widespread in the 6th century B.C. in Attica (*bustrofedón*: writing alternating from left to right and from right to left with the letters flipped over, like the path of oxen when ploughing, without interrupting the movement of the hand). About fifty years later, in Attica, this writing evolved into writing only from left to right, in the so-called *stoikédón* style (vertical and horizontal alignment of the letters, without spaces between words).

It is interesting to note that, in the context of this reconstruction, Barba was particularly interested in the process of "radical reorganisation" that led the Attic Greeks, in the small 'university city' of Athens, to deliberately adopt "the opposite direction from tradition",³³ compared to the Phoenician script that had been the model. Thus Barba underlined the hypothesis, considered as very plausible by De Kerckhove, that "the adoption by the Athenians of a uniform left-to-right script may correspond to a non-aesthetic but biologically determined selection of the direction favourable to the left hemisphere":³⁴ i.e. the hemisphere responsible for sequential analysis, a specialised function made necessary by the practice of writing in an area of the brain different from that in which spatial analysis takes place (the right hemisphere, "seat of non-verbal modes of representation, probably of images: visual, tactile, kinesthetic, auditory, etc.").³⁵ Historically, writing had established itself as "exploration and maximal exploitation of the principle of sequence and linearity".³⁶ Within this context, the theatre was studied by De Kerckhove as a "psychological model of literate consciousness":³⁷ from the alphabet, theatre derived the linear sequentiality and the ability to separate meanings

from each other for the benefit of the gaze. From the fragmentation of meanings came the passage from rhythmic organisation of the epic word to the appearance of a critical faculty as a result of separating the subject from the object (from the one who knows, to the thing known), opposite to the bardic process in which the auditorium was involved "in a single multisensory medium governed by the rhythmic *mimesis* characteristic of the recitation of epic poems".³⁸

An echo of all this is perceived in Barba's paragraph on "actions at work", in the chapter on "dramaturgy" in the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (published in France in 1986 as *Anatomie de l'acteur*), where Barba overcomes the dichotomy of a theatre based on domination by text as against a theatre of mise-en-scène, no longer seen as contradiction but as complementarity. In fact Barba writes "the problem is not, therefore, the choice of one pole or another, the definition of one or another type of theatre. The problem is that of the balance between the *concatenation pole* and the *simultaneity pole*".³⁹ Thus, an imbalance in the performance in favour of a text of only words leads to a loss of equilibrium in which prevails the "prevalence of linear relationships (the plot as concatenation). This will damage the plot understood as the weaving together of simultaneously present actions."⁴⁰

When, years later, Barba created the performance *Mythos* (1998-2005), centred on the poetic texts of Henrik Nordbrandt, the characters represented were Oedipus, Medea, Cassandra and Daedalus (played by Julia Varley, who had initially worked on Clytemnestra)⁴¹ and Orpheus. It is interesting to note that the choice of Cassandra (entrusted in *Mythos* to Roberta Carreri), next to the initial one of Clytemnestra,⁴² finds a curious anticipation in Barba's reading of the article by De Kerckhove, where he had paid particular attention to the opposing interpretation given to these two mythical figures. The clairvoyant oracle is in fact situated in the domain of multi-sensoriality and pre-verbal knowledge. Opposite Cassandra, "incarnation of tribal knowledge and the ancient condition of thought"⁴³ stands the figure of Clytemnestra, "incarnation of the visual and rationalist perception of the world, little affected by temptations or the

31. Barba and Savarese 2019, 294 (for the corresponding Italian text see Barba 2006, 21).

32. De Kerckhove 1982, 109-128. By the same author Barba also read a paper entitled "A Note on Psychotechnologies" (s.l.) and the article "A Theory of Greek Tragedy", which appeared in 1981 in the journal *Substance*.

33. De Kerckhove 1982, 112.

34. De Kerckhove 1982, 115.

35. Gallin 1974 quoted in De Kerckhove 1982, 124.

36. De Kerckhove 1982, 116.

37. De Kerckhove 1982, 117.

38. De Kerckhove 1982, 118.

39. Barba and Savarese 2006, 67.

40. Barba and Savarese 2006, 67.

41. Julia Varley has narrated in detail her acting work in *Mythos* in the paragraph "Dramaturgy according to Daedalus" from her book *Notes from an Odin Actress. Stones of Water* (Varley 2010, 114-129). For Varley the same approach to dramaturgy proceeds along a path similar to that of Daedalus: "The path Daedalus was leading me into was seductive: at a distance it looked mysterious and it was easy to get lost once on it. I would be forced to defy closed roads, to turn back and start the journey all over again." (Varley 2010, 115)

42. Regarding her decision to work on Daedalus, after abandoning the figure of Clytemnestra, see Varley 2010, 117: "When one of the actresses left the group, which changed the balance of the characters since there were now fewer females who had committed a crime, the director proposed that I should play Daedalus. I immediately recognised the possibility of flying like a bird and of translating the theme of the Greek myths into the world of 'nature' in which I was interested. I accepted."

43. De Kerckhove 1982, 127.

refuge of mythical interpretation”.⁴⁴ Clytemnestra and Cassandra are analysed by De Kerchove as two different and opposite “constituted cognitive models”⁴⁵, where the first embodies the *hypokritès* actor, in the late Hellenistic and already derogatory meaning of the term (no longer as “he/she who answers”, but rather as he who “juge en-dessous, qui réserve sa parole”).⁴⁶ If Cassandra “is possessed by language” (from the archaic *logos*), Clytemnestra “possesses language, [...] speaks by implication, says one thing and at the same time thinks another”.⁴⁷

Returning to the cognitive sphere, Clytemnestra’s dimension corresponds to the domain of the left hemisphere, responsible for linear and sequential analysis, while Cassandra thinks in “visual, tactile, kinaesthetic images”, does not reason by deduction and is “open to all ‘informative’ *stimuli* from the environment”.⁴⁸ In carrying out her clairvoyance, Cassandra embraces “time in its immobile entirety, without segmentation”⁴⁹: an immobility made evident also in spatial terms and which, in *Mythos*, is reflected in the physical score of Roberta Carreri, who recorded that the character had to act in a very small “*lebensraum*”.⁵⁰

But even more than for the purposes of performance, the hemispheric specialisation was among the interests cultivated by Barba for a broader understanding of the functioning of the actor as a human being. In this regard, it is worth remembering that Barba read the article *L’Homme neuronal* by Jean-Pierre Changeux, 1983. He focused in particular on the chapter on the “Theory of epigenesis for selective stabilization”,⁵¹ in which, starting from embryological theory, specialised functions such as language and writing were examined with reference to the hypothesis of selective stabilization.⁵² This

44. De Kerchove 1982, 121. In the book *The Five Continents of the Theatre*, in the chapter on “the fascination of public punishment”, there is an image of a Greek cup of 430 B.C. depicting the massacre of Cassandra at the hands of Clytemnestra (Barba and Savarese 2019, 386).

45. De Kerchove 1982, 120.

46. De Kerchove 1982, 122.

47. De Kerchove 1982, 123.

48. De Kerchove 1982, 123.

49. De Kerchove 1982, 123.

50. In one of her articles in *Teatro e Storia* Roberta Carreri says: “In *Mythos*, Cassandra is a character ‘apart’, an idiot (from the Greek *idiotes*, a private person, inexperienced, unfit for public office and communication). For the first part of the performance, Cassandra sits isolated in one of the ‘towers’ of the set. Her *Lebensraum* is very small. From there I must radiate my presence throughout the room, so I work on the implosion of energy. Eugenio has forbidden me to perform recognisable actions. My images are very precise and Cassandra realises them in her own way. Her interaction with the other characters is minimal, which gives me great freedom. But I could only exploit this great freedom of Cassandra’s when I found her nature: her physical dynamics” (Carreri 1998-1999, 256). On immobility, cf. also the chapter on balance in the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, where a quotation from Matisse states: “Immobility is not an obstacle to the feeling of movement. It is a movement set at a level which does not carry the spectator’s bodies along, but simply their minds.” (Barba and Savarese 2006, 39)

51. Changeux 1983, 301-30.

52. In the dissertation, Barba underlined what Changeux said regarding so-called “*situs inversus*” mutation: an uncommon condition, found in one in about ten thousand individuals, there was a mirror inversion not so much of specialisation in the cerebral hemispheres, but of the visceral organs.

dissertation was developed - and was thus read by Barba - in two paragraphs dedicated respectively to “cultural imprint” and to the concept that “learning means eliminating”. These resonated strongly with some fundamental themes of theatre anthropology, if one considers that, as Nicola Savarese recalled in 1983, “learning to eliminate” had already been the motto of the first two ISTAs.⁵³

According to neurobiologist Changeux it was possible to observe how the physical and social environment exerted a progressive “impregnation” on brain tissue. This was similar to Jakobson’s findings in linguistics in *Language of Children and Aphasia*. Before learning to speak the language of adults, the infant (like crickets and sparrows, according to further research) accumulated “an overabundance of wild sounds” far superior to the few syllables used later on, following the process of “crystallisation” of growth. It had, however, been demonstrated that through education it was possible to teach, “artificially, a notable diversification of song”,⁵⁴ going beyond the abilities favoured by culture.

So what role did culture and specialisation play? First of all, Barba underlined Changeux’s statement that “it is not possible to describe an organisation except to the extent that it reproduces itself from one individual to another”⁵⁵ noting in the margin: “*only in the pre-expressive*”.⁵⁶ With respect to the main traits established by genes, a significant variable was contributed – this was Changeux’s hypothesis – by the “theory of an epigenesis of neurons and synapses”, the result of complex processes, active from birth to puberty, over long periods critical for the development of the individual.⁵⁷ At stake was an intricate, profound process of simultaneous growth and epigenesis, developed over time, which difficult analysis suggested the existence “of a continuous increase in the order of the system following an instruction from the environment”.⁵⁸ According to this hypothesis, activity influenced the “arrangement of neurons and pre-existing connections with respect to interaction with the external world”.⁵⁹ This led to the conclusion that “to learn is to stabilise pre-established synaptic combinations; it also means *deleting* the others”.⁶⁰ The interest of these formulations, applied transversally to stage behaviour, appears evident in research carried out by theatre anthropology and later by ethnoscenology. If indeed for Grotowski “The actor is a man who works in public with his body, offering it publicly”,⁶¹ for “the biological theory of Barba”, as Claudio Meldolesi wrote, “the theatre does not progress linearly, but rather by neutral zones, within which this or that line of research can be established; transculturality is, therefore, the basis for becoming theatrical”;⁶² or for Pradier, as summarised by Marco

53. Savarese 1983, 89.

54. Changeux 1983, 321.

55. Changeux 1983, 321.

56. OTA, Barba, ISTA, b. 1, 263.

57. Changeux 1983, 327.

58. Changeux 1983, 329.

59. Changeux 1983, 329.

60. Changeux 1983, 329.

61. Barba 1965, 89.

62. Meldolesi 1993, 345.

De Marinis, stage behaviour is conceived “as the result of a *highly specialised elaboration of innate faculties and needs*, genetically determined, based on cultural learning”.⁶³

2. Social psychology, emotions as complex systems and communication

The links between performing arts, psychology and cognitive sciences became, at the beginning of the 1980s, the subject of a new line of studies, with which - as the archival evidence shows - Barba kept up to date. If Pradier had been his point of reference for scientific research, in the cognitive field it was Peter Elsass, professor of clinical psychology at the University of Copenhagen, who offered the opportunity for a timely and stimulating exchange.⁶⁴

Within this field, Barba read a 1985 article titled *The Psychology of Performing Arts*, by New Zealander Glenn Daniel Wilson of the University of Canterbury.⁶⁵ Here, Barba focused in particular on the fifth chapter, entitled “Social Processes in Theatre”.⁶⁶ Starting from the premise that drama is not only action, but action capable of arousing attention in the eye of the beholder, the chapter examined how three main categories, indicated by the scholar as part of the event on stage - creators, performers, spectators⁶⁷ - participate in this complex mechanism. Regardless of the type of interest that theatre aims to provide, whether more intellectual or more emotional, it remains, for Wilson, a form of social interaction, analysis of which could arrive at new understanding thanks to cognitive studies.

It is interesting to observe in retrospect the attention paid by Barba to the points in this article. One topic of striking interest is Wilson’s interesting observation, based on numerous experiments conducted with groups of children and adults, that learning is facilitated within large and non-restricted groups (“whatever the precise reason, large classes engender some kind of social energy that promotes performance”).⁶⁸ This circumstance, made possible both by the “contagious” effect of the attention of others, and by the maintaining of socially shared attitudes, is also of potential interest for meetings of group theatres and above all of ISTA, whose teaching could accommodate

larger groups of people than was possible in laboratory theatre. For different reasons, relative to what were defined as “cognitive dissonance effects”,⁶⁹ Wilson reported the (uncontested) finding that maintenance of the user’s interest often appeared proportional to his expenditure of money, suggesting a curious parallel between theatre and psychotherapy (in both cases, one of the variables for patient satisfaction with treatment, or for that of spectators with a performance, seemed to be the amount of money invested).⁷⁰

Processes of “contagion” between actors and spectators, within the public itself, in the context of theatrical performance, were shown to be fundamental. Compared to what theatre has already acquired around the idea of contagion (from Stanislavski to Artaud, among the most important),⁷¹ Wilson brought a new, scientific-laboratory approach external to the stage. Following pioneering research on emotions and facial expressions by the American Paul Eckmann, Wilson noted in this regard the common tendency of individuals to mimic the emotional expressions of those close to them, with similar repercussions on the nervous system.⁷² In the specific case of laughter and the comic, for example, Wilson defined laughter as a “social process” and a “communication device”,⁷³ an analysis valid, too, for coughs commonly heard at the theatre (“social coughing”), symptomatic both of a sign of social disinhibition and a symptom of boredom. Research into the emotions, focus of analysis for new trends in biology at the end of the 1970s, offered stimulating reflections for the theatre. Barba’s acquaintance with Susana Bloch Arendt, whose 1989 article “Emotion ressentie, émotion recrée”⁷⁴ he read, falls within this context. From Arendt he also received in July of that year in Saintes another work on “Effect or patterns of basic emotions: a psychophysiological method for training actors”. In this case it was therefore a question of readings subsequent to what Barba had already identified in *The Secret Art of the Performer* regarding emotions: the actor’s task was to reconstitute, through an activation process of at least five levels, “the complexity of the emotion, and not a vague feeling”.⁷⁵

63. De Marinis 2012, 93. De Marinis discussed Pradier’s theories with particular reference to his writings from the early 1990s (Pradier 1990, 86-98).

64. Among Peter Elsass’ works, I would mention his article “La presenza assoluta. Uno spazio terapeutico per il teatro e per la psicologia”, published in *Teatro e Storia* 2014 (Elsass 2014, 437-52).

65. Wilson 1985 (second edition 2002).

66. Wilson 1985, 55-67. The chapter contains discussions on crucial aspects such as “identification”, “audience feedback”, “timing and applause”, “social facilitation”, “emotional contagion”, “laughter contagion”, “social cough”, “compliance and claque”, and finally “prestige suggestions”.

67. Wilson’s practice as a baritone led him to analyse the performing arts starting from the functioning of the musical world, in which composers and performers are often separate figures. For him a performance has three components (creators, performers, spectators), while in the performing arts the essential condition for theatre to take place is considered to be two distinct groups (actors-spectators).

68. Wilson 1985, 61.

69. According to the definition adopted in a reference study for the field by Brehm and Cohen 1962, titled *Exploration in cognitive dissonance* and cited, among others, by Wilson.

70. Wilson 1985, 61-62.

71. For a concise, constructive discussion of the notion of contagion in the modern idea of theatre, see Perrelli 1993, 197 (“The challenge of so many oppositions [...] cannot be superficial spectacularisation; instead, it is all oriented towards ‘emotional contagion’, an expression of Stanislavski, which might have been said by Artaud. If we wanted to condense into a single concept the vast research of Eugenio Barba’s ISTA, we should recognise that it is a question of a euphoric ‘waste of energy’ able to connect the actor to the spectator”).

72. Wilson 1985, 62.

73. Wilson 1985, 63. Empirical evidence of “comic contagion” was also the observation that individuals rarely laugh at something they consider comic or funny when they are alone; or, the fear of an actor or comic writer that the public will not laugh (the so-called “stage flops”).

74. Bloch 1989, 68-75.

75. Barba and Savarese 2006, 114. Emotion is defined by Barba as “a complex pattern of reactions to a stimulus”, on five levels (“a subjective change”; “a series of cognitive evaluations”; “the manifestation of involuntary autonomous reactions”; “an impulse to react”; “the decision on how to behave”).

3. Interactional synchrony and kinaesthetic capacity

In the ISTA dossier of the Barba Collection at Odin Teatret Archives is a separate section covering the vast extent of Barba's readings around interactional synchrony and kinesics. It contains themes towards which Barba paid very great attention - important for the actor's work and for the spectator's perception, but also for the work of the director. They have impact across numerous areas, including the spheres of actions, balance, design of exercises, rhythm, and the relationship between actor and spectator. In the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* this notion, presented alongside Rudolph Arnheim's theory on *Art and Visual Perception*, is introduced as "the inner perception through muscle sensitivity".⁷⁶ But Barba's study materials contained much more scientific literature on the subject and included abundant references to the latest studies published at that time.

These included a study published in 1981 in the *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* by American scholars John B. Gatewood and Robert Rosenwein.⁷⁷ They particularly rejected the reduction of interactional synchrony, recently advanced in contemporary studies by McDowall,⁷⁸ to mere "noise", simply predictable within social interaction. Gatewood and Rosenwein's starting thesis was, instead, that non-verbal behaviour was an extremely complex process, result of stratified processes of temporal organisation of movement units relating to the body (*motions*). A unit of movement/behaviour was defined by recording time segments, observed by scholars with increasing numbers of frames per second. Passing from time to space, non-verbal behaviour was thus analysed in search of increasingly detailed "anatomical principles"⁷⁹: at the maximum level of this analysis (i.e. at the smallest observation point), was found the "process unit", understood as "a bundle of body parts which (empirically) change and sustain inertial states with one another for a given duration".⁸⁰

These units, acting simultaneously and with variable duration, gave rise to what had been called the "stream of behaviour".⁸¹ From the 1960s some scientific studies, carried out using new research methods, had already shown that human beings not only organise integration between speech and body movement according to a principle of

self-synchrony, but that this process is also applied in the presence of other people, giving rise to forms of interactional synchrony. So in 1981, Gatewood and Rosenwein were extending to the body and movement what, in science, had already been commonly accepted for sound (in the field of sound, in fact, the discourse is based on a type of human interaction, result of auditory perceptual processes). Furthermore, the listener's kinesic behaviour seemed to correspond to the speaker's discourse, according to pervasive models of interaction based on interactional synchrony, as already discovered by Condon and Ogston.⁸² These findings opened up the way for new understandings of the communicative function of the phenomenon of kinesic behaviour, defined by Adam Kendon as an authentic "body language".⁸³ Starting from a synopsis of the specialised scientific debate, these were some of the elements on which Barba focused in his reading with greater attention, selecting the points that most interested him. Thus, he underlined the expression "dancing the other's dance" formulated by researchers to define that "mirror image"⁸⁴ which seemed to characterise the listener's kinesic behaviour with respect to that of the speaker, even if non-verbal.

Along the same lines was his reading of another article from 1974 by William S. Condon and Louis W. Sander on the synchrony between the movement of infants and the speech of adults, thanks to processes observable from the earliest days after birth. Within this work Barba found confirmation of what was argued in the previous article on so-called "units of behaviour")⁸⁵ and the interaction between movement of the body and act of speech (observable both in speaker and listener), involving several parts of the body simultaneously, even when receiving. Similar phenomena, not perceptible under normal communication conditions, were normally acted out by individuals in unconscious ways, but could be understood and analysed at laboratory level through "microkinesic segmentation".⁸⁶ One surprising thing that emerged from this type of analysis was the observation that, in newborns, the correspondence between speaking and movement was manifested on occasions when the child was already in motion, and much less easily from a state of immobility. This type of research revealed how the individual, from infancy, performs movements according to precise movement patterns shared with organisation of the speech structures typical of his own culture, before embarking on an authentic unconscious apprenticeship made up of sociobiological entrainment processes in millions of repetitions of linguistic forms, which ultimately lead him to his own capacity of expression and communication. The demonstrated existence of a synchrony between the behaviour of adults and the movement of children ultimately suggested - this was the authors' conclusion - that the bond between human beings should be studied as an expression of participation that is not individual but collective in shared forms of organisation. This consideration, aside from the fact itself,

76. Barba and Savarese 2011, 83. Arnheim's quote cited in the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* is taken from "The kinesthetic image of the body" in the chapter on "Movement" of the 1954 book *Art and visual Perception* (Arnheim 2005, 330-32). In another context, with reference to the "illusion of unified development" offered by historiography, Taviani, too, referred to Arnheim, and in particular to a quotation by the latter of a notion proposed by Albrecht von Haller, 17th-century Swiss naturalist: "Nature connects her species in a network, and not in a chain; men [however] can only follow a chain, since with words they cannot express several things simultaneously" (Taviani 2006, 50; the quote from Albertus Von Haller is contained in Arnheim's *Visual Thinking* of 1969).

77. Gatewood and Rosenwein were at the time affiliated to the Department of Social Relations at Lehigh University in the state of Pennsylvania, where they are now both emeritus professors. A handwritten note on the second page of the article indicates that it was intended for Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, Director of the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

78. McDowall 1978, 936-75.

79. Gatewood and Rosenwein 1981, 14.

80. Gatewood and Rosenwein 1981, 15.

81. Gatewood and Rosenwein 1981, 12.

82. See Gatewood and Rosenwein 1981, 13 (reference is to Condon and Ogston 1966, 342).

83. Gatewood and Rosenwein 1981, 17. The authors build on Adam Kendon's early studies on coordination of movement in interactional synchrony (Kendon 1970, 101-125).

84. Gatewood and Rosenwein 1981, 18.

85. Condon and Sander 1974, 99.

86. Condon and Sander 1974, 100.

resulted in Barba's typical marginal note: "the 'link' between spectator and actor!".⁸⁷

Barba was an attentive reader of all these articles and more, which I have briefly discussed. With openness of interests and with keen curiosity, as we have seen, he did not hesitate to delve into scientific and specialist dissertations, in sectors apparently distant from theatre, but whose points of interest he could nevertheless determine and trace with keen observation.

4. Conclusion

Science, conscience, and knowledge: in Barba's unitary, non-specialist project of knowledge, on which he constructs theatre anthropology as an open building, multiple cultural instances and dialectical processes coexist, along diverse, sometimes unexpected, directions. In this sense, theatre anthropology offers evidence of the fact that theatre can be considered through sectorial associations, but without losing sight of the intrinsically plural cultural unity that underlies it. Barba's books constitute the landing points of a continuous, underlying process of knowledge. Within such a research path, Cruciani's warning reminds the risks of a concept for which "in the name of results, reasons are lost": in other words, losing sight of the conditions of necessity and urgency within which the paths have developed. In the fertile and vital path traced by ISTA, the archival heritage and theoretical research do not disavow craftsmanship but highlight its broad value, even beyond theatre, rejecting attempts at compartmentalisation. It is no coincidence that in his book *The Paper Canoe*, Barba founded theatre anthropology not as advice on ethics, but as a premise for them:⁸⁸ the theatre, analysed with an openness of interest towards the sciences, remains for him a human process and, ultimately, "transcendence".⁸⁹ Since every action is transcendence, when it is not mere repetition or false movement, truth is always sought in the beyond, art touches the eternal and is itself the sentiment of the sublime: it is therefore a transcendence within experience, a transcendence which is like a progress and which can be investigated through multiple approaches. Art and life,⁹⁰ for their part, are like climbing up a staircase, in which each step is both the previous step and the next one. Each step is a pause and a next step - the shape of the lower step and the material of the next one. ■

87. Condon e Sander 1974, 101.

88. Barba 1993, 39.

89. Barba 2014, 21.

90. Cf. Barba 2010, xvi: "There is an ancient saying: *ars longa, vita brevis*. The idea that life is short depends on how we see it. That our attachment to art is long-lived is something we cannot change. And to work just for the beauty of theatre is not worthwhile".

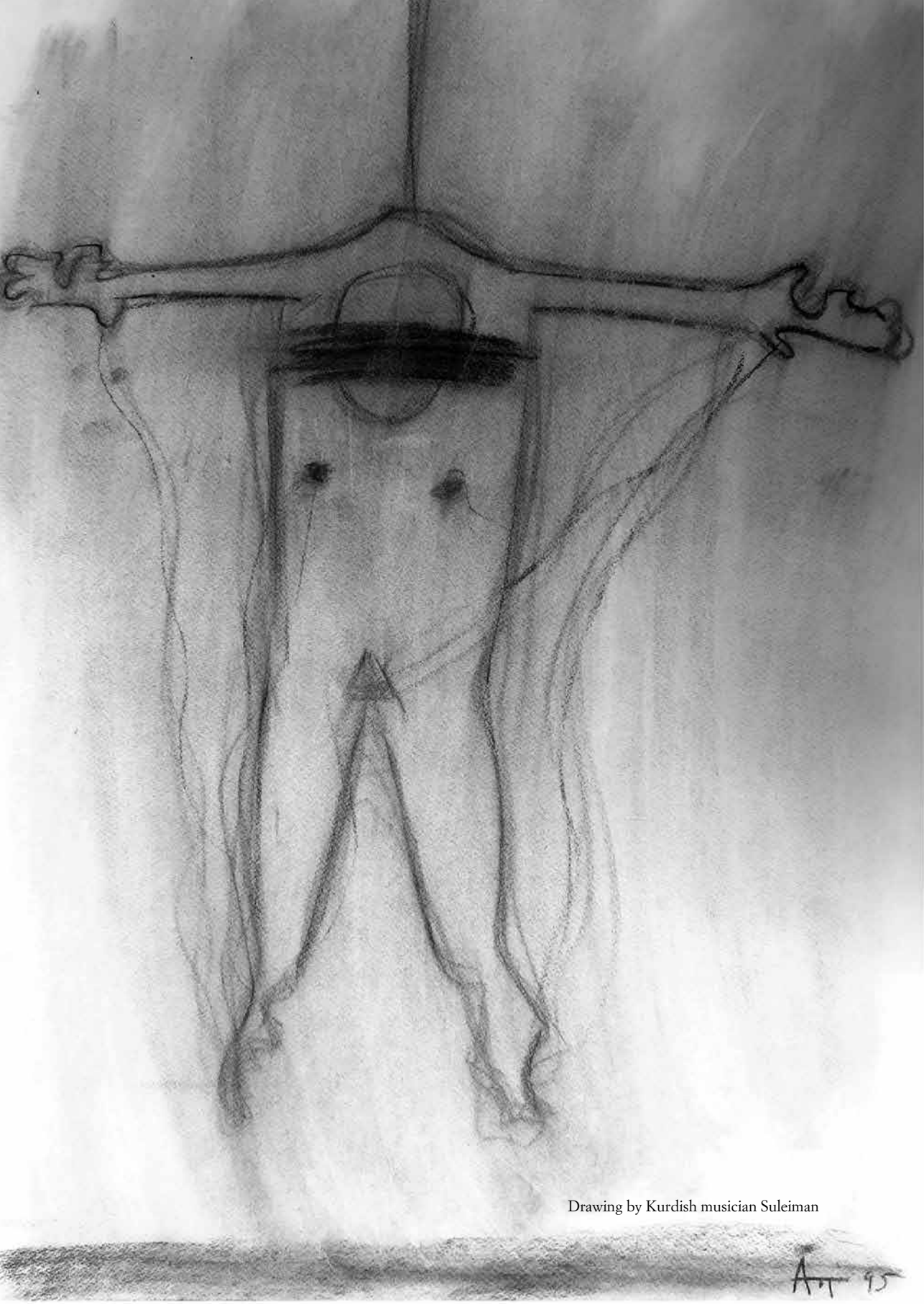
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Eugenio Barba with the academic toga as Honorary Doctor from Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (2006). Photo: Rina Skeel



Drawing by Kurdish musician Suleiman

Jacques Arpin

The Pen and the Katana

Drawings as testimony

Abstract: This article presents eight drawing montages which illustrate eight moments where Eugenio Barba's theatre anthropology met cultural psychiatry in Jacques Arpin's personal and professional life. The principals of theatre anthropology are developed into therapeutic processes in collaboration with performing artists from other cultures.

Keywords: Jacques Arpin; Drawings; Theatre anthropology

Foreword

Always in the front row. Always.
Much to some spectators' resentment.
My drawing book, an alibi, my ally.
I also take pirate photos - no flash.
All you need is scotch tape over the film's code bar.
Tungsten, not digital.
Tony d'Urso, Odin Teatret's photographer
taught me that
a good researcher must be able to transgress.
Sometimes.

This is an excerpt of my road film as an observer at some ISTA sessions, seeing Odin Teatret's performances in Holstebro and on tour. These eight drawing montages illustrate eight moments where Eugenio Barba's theatre anthropology met cultural psychiatry in my personal and professional life, much to the satisfaction of many patients and to the total incomprehension of others.

Beware of observers. They look, listen, take notes and draw. They remember.

At the age of eight, my body was challenged by polio and encephalitis, a double virus that affects peripheral nerves and causes inflammation of the brain. No vaccines nor treatments were available. My doctor wisely sent me to a professional dancer and child therapist. She managed to open a door to my paralysed left side, leaving a dancing trace.



Paper, notebooks, pens, pencils, ink with feathers, twigs and my fingers had me drawing, and learning how to play guitar completed the recovery programme. I realised that imitating and repeating was a way to learn. Sitting close to the musicians at The American Folk Blues Festival, eyes glued on Lightnin' Hopkins' guitar, I learned chord positions as I drew them, and music as I felt it.

One - 1992, ISTA session in Brecon, Wales.

Theme: Working on Performance East and West/Subscore



The drawing: I Ketut Suteja in *sldek* postural apnea - Swashti Widjaja Bandem's back.

And beyond: Here I was, discovering body as codified learning; as *keras/manis* contrast; as master and student, one-to-one; as transformation, the fictive body. All of these within seconds, a shock summarised by *sldek* (onomatopoeia).

Swashti Widjaja Bandem was not in Brecon. I met her two years later: it is her presence that "supervises" Suteja - my imagination.

All my receptors were open. My proprioceptive system went into overdrive. Standby mode was impossible. I had to document, write, draw, take photos, stand up and imitate the dancers. Total agitation, the result of my avid curiosity and will to

learn quickly to catch up with all the teaching I had not had so far. In clinical terms, I now call that the *sldek effect*.

I found myself holding a bundle of keys - so many possibilities, so many doors to open. Overwhelmed.

At that time, I was working in transcultural medicine and psychiatry and involved in migration and health programmes. Only now did I understand something I had read about, yet not grasped.

The Culture and Personality studies, in 1920-1950 anthropology stated that, in some instances, culture *is* personality, which confers a sort of group body identity, corporative, national, populations of warriors, peasants, artists. That was square, too simplistic. The studies evolved proposing that culture *stages* personality. Culture gives directions of what to do and what not to do. However, if you must transgress, this is how...

Brecon was a session for directors. All these bodies staged by their respective cultures.

The coordinating director had all participants working in a coherent form. I understood that I had found a new opening. As a healer, I could be a director for my patients, enabling them to evolve through their itineraries like Suteja and the other traditional performers at the session.

Did I say "I understood"? Wrong, my hands did. Drawing these codified bodies imprinted in my own body memory messages that I would later decypher and put into practice when I myself started dancing Indian kathak, Balinese topeng and Japanese buyo.

I left Brecon with the conviction that I could apply such learning to patients, their bodies in whatever condition they might be.

Two - 1994, ISTA session in Londrina, Paraná, Brazil

Theme: Tradition and Founders of Traditions



The drawing: Sanjukta Panigrahi offering her body experience to a raped woman's maimed body. War and peace, body exploded vs body centred.

And beyond: It takes few lines to translate the dance master's presence and energy. I drew what I saw. I drew this raped woman, a patient, "under dictation". She described her body as she felt it had become after the abuse.

I realised that such a master could act as a co-healer at my consultation. I met bharata natyam master, Sujatha Venkatesh in Switzerland, with whom I have collaborated for over 25 years.

After the Brecon *sldek effect*, shock, I moved on to Londrina's structural approach which gave me the opportunity to have a go at each tradition with guest masters from India, Bali, Japan, Brazil and the

Odin. Upon my return to Geneva I noticed a poster proposing a Japanese traditional dance workshop. This was the beginning of my adapting ISTA to my professional activities while training in Indian kathak, Balinese topeng and Japanese buyo. At my master Keiko Sugawara's class, one of the first orders I heard was "Do what I do; don't listen to what I say". I had moved into disciplinarian training work that I could adapt and use when working with patients.

When doing my morning initiation within the Odin Teatret tradition, Roberta Carreri demonstrated the dance of a snake at the entrance to a night-club, undulating, reacting. Then she said: "Your turn". After we had done our best, she walked towards me, stood a few inches away and said: "Have you looked at yourself?! The upper and bottom parts of your body are not connected; they don't work together - you've got to do something about it". That was a door-opener and the beginning of a friendship.

And then, I started my journey in dance classes.

In periods of acute uprooting through wars, disasters and other causes for PTSD, the codified body learning can be useful as a structural method. The Founders of Traditions' theme, illustrated by Sanjukta Panigrahi's reviving the odissi dance form, an inspiration to encourage and enable patients to revisit their traditions shaken by traumas, not through theories but with techniques and tools. From this moment on, in Londrina, my consultation stopped being a specialty. Keys were available, opening doors to holistic interactions enabling patients to learn how to master their bodies.

THREE - 1996, ISTA session in Copenhagen, Denmark

Theme: The Performer's Bios



The drawing: Eugenio Barba lecturing.

And beyond: Documenting the Dancing Barba "I dance with my eyes".

Yes, but your postures, your choreography and this right hand that always seems to carry some torch, or dagger, or hand grenade, what about that? Have you become some hybrid of your guests' expressed traditions?

I have watched and drawn him at introductions, 5:00 PM talks during Odin Weeks, directing the composite Theatrum Mundi.

Learning by imitation and repetition is a conducting thread in all these teaching methods. It is not just copying; it is reconstructing the paths that have lead to what I was seeing now.

Reading bodies, journeying through their training years, being in their villages with their families, their masters.

Reading Barba directing the Odin, seeing demonstrations about the creative processes (for example, *Letter in the Wind* for Salt¹).

1. *Salt*, Odin Teatret's performance directed by Eugenio Barba, text adapted by Eugenio Barba from Antonio Tabucchi's *Si sta facendo sempre più tardi*. Actors: Roberta Carreri, Jan Ferslev. Music: Jan Ferslev.

Reading patients' bodies beyond their verbal narrations, beyond their clinical pictures and beyond the medical formatting of these stories to allow for multi-dimensional case histories.

Narrative is not the monopoly of words and verbal forms. Consider the many layers of body language, the personal, social and cultural connotations often obscure at the beginning. Imagine being able to see through the many illustrated boards of a kamishibai story or the painted layers of matte film decor.

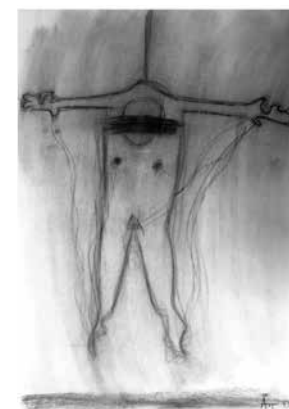
The layered narrative strategy makes many so-called clinical stories look like Akira Kurosawa's tacit scenes in *The Seven Samurai*: no words, so much eloquence.

Patients may have a sense and perception of these layers, but it takes a director/healer to help them establish some form of a collage for their stories to come together. In my practice I sometimes allow myself to trade places with patients. This is entirely collaborative and the director I have become must keep in mind that a patient is both author and actor.

Visuals and drawings are indispensable here.

Watching and drawing Barba's interventions, I am an observer as well as an interacting spectator. I navigate between theatre performance and the performance of illness and care.

FOUR - 1980s, somewhere in Turkish Kurdistan and at my consultation's stage



The drawing: Suleiman by himself and by me "under dictation"

And beyond : "I can't draw. Anyway, I couldn't draw myself; it's too anguishing. It's like I have become a stranger to myself."

OK, I said, I will draw what you describe - the "under dictation" technique I use when documenting a case of history's excruciating layers, hidden and distorted

memories buried behind and under walls of defense.

An illustration of pain.

Looking fit and handsome, active as a Kurdish touring musician, Suleiman had deep horrific layers. Drawing him was not enough. I needed more details, adding a second sketch to make it clear, visually. Tied to a wooden hanger, head sunk into his thorax, emphasis on genitals and nipples, feet so dysmorphic he wouldn't even be able to stand. And these lines around him. I learned that they were electric wires through which flowed the shocks aimed at his most sensitive areas.

Suleiman is a hybrid made of flesh, wood, and electric wires. To treat him I first had to undo these elements to place the human being on one side and the torture instruments on the other.

When treating traumatised patients, you are never alone with them. There is always the child, the one who never managed to be heard and who appears. Mentioning to a patient that this child-self is in the room sounds unreal. It is real. The grown-up and the ghost child are two of the many layers in this history's montage.

To cope and evolve towards resilience, such patients may create a body-healing "methodology", revisiting what they have lost and what's still intact in order to visualise the situation. Watching ISTA masters, I felt that if they could meet my patients, they could give them guidance and training towards becoming autonomous in mastering their conditions.

At this moment a new project started taking shape: The Masters of Their Conditions. Patients can master their condition the same way a dancer, an actress, a musician can master their repertoires. Conditions, not illnesses. I didn't want to limit the project to a medical concern and approach. All people with conditions are not necessarily patients.

I built a stage at my consultation and started this theatre laboratory.

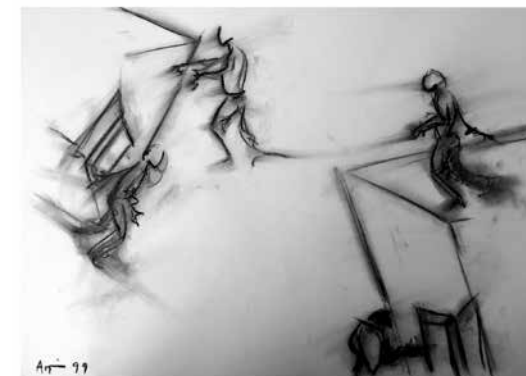
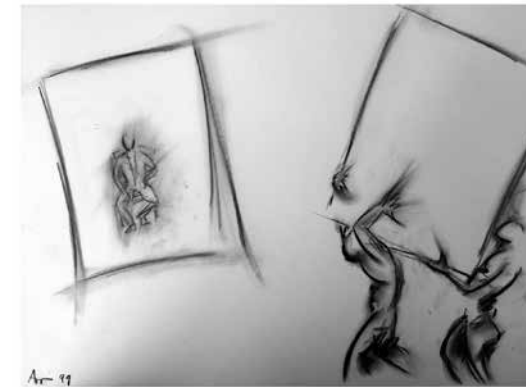
When a friend of mine started showing signs of a stiff form of Parkinson, she was first treated by a neurologist. Then I took her to my Japanese dance master to complete the adaptive body work. She became a graceful dancer, fluent and flexible while still having to undergo allopathic treatments and successful brain implants.

FIVE

The drawing: Building a set - from carpenter's workshop to theatre stage.
(Odin stages, ISTA accommodation, for example, Londrina's *Praça Vermelha*)

And beyond: Clinical snippets and reconstructing strategies - After years of trekking through medical, surgical and psychiatric services, this carpenter who had fallen from scaffolding had lost all self-confidence. He was on the sinister path to chronicity, mostly the making of professional overzealous measures. I directed him back to his peers, carpenters and other construction workers, so he could remember how his body had been trained. Most important, he could trade this chronic patient label for a restored artisan identity.

Artisans and crafts in the performing arts - I have spent a lot of time as an observer of the training and performances at circus schools, studying these bodies learning to manage heights, balance, cohesion, precision. Working on the floor (calisthenics, juggling), under the ceiling (trapeze, mast) and in-between (ropes, silks, trampoline), groups of corporate performers become recognisable through common points in their body training techniques. The same goes for carpenters, masons, crane operators and other workers and craftspeople whose bodies carry traditions, as in Asian dance forms and other crafts. They all become living treasures.



Codified training shapes bodies - Mannerisms and imitation may create the impression there was a learning method behind this corporative repertory of postures and gestures: for example, politicians addressing a crowd, in television debates, surgeons in operating rooms, lawyers in courts, rock'n'roll attitudes.

Corporations and ethnic communities offer precious material for observation on how to approach migrations and migrants.

In my Japanese buyo classes, I learned the dance of the tea ceremony, of the public writer, of the sword's blacksmith, which are professional activities. In the same way, Etienne Decroux choreographed the mimes of the carpenter and the washerwoman. Dario Fo's *gestualità del lavoro*, reminded me of a stone cutter in my village where I would meet his peers, the *Compagnons*, who toured France and neighbouring countries.

I became acquainted with Dario Fo's *Il corpo mediterraneo* during my professional life, working with construction workers (Italians, Kosovars), with hotel personnel (Portuguese), with other groups of foreign people in post-disaster group

therapies.

From treating personal traumas to collective ones, wars, disasters, epidemics, medicine and psychiatry benefit from artists who research and illustrate physical work in professions (*métiers*) and cultural communities.

And this is how a patient was able to once resume his identity as a carpenter.



SIX - 1994-1998, Mythos one of my three series

The drawing: Scenes from Odin Teatret's *Mythos*. Iben Nagel Rasmussen as Medea, Tage Larsen as Oedipus.

And beyond: I got on the Odin train in 1988. Between Barba's lecture and the performance *Talabot* in Geneva and my first ISTA session in Brecon, in 1992, I had three years to catch up with the earlier years of Odin. I "read" the history through the photos of Tony d'Urso, amazed by his skill in framing his subjects into wordless narrative (yes, somehow like Kurosawa). I got to know Torgeir Wethal as a documentary filmmaker and editor, for example with *The Two Banks of the River*, with its dynamic and

rhythmic groove, alternating storytelling and images as in a concept music album.

And the Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology's rich iconography.

I was there:

Kaosmos performances in Londrina and its reduced version *Inside the Skeleton of the Whale* in Holstebro's white room. *Mythos* in various places. *Andersen's Dream*, as the opening of the Odin Week Festival. *The Chronic Life* and *Festuge* (Festive Week) at Odin Teatret's 50th anniversary. The chamber performances *Itsi Bitsi* in Brecon and further occasions, *Judith* in Holstebro, *Ester's Book* at a Festuge, Mr Peanut's and Doña Música's adventures, *Salt* and its process demonstration *Letter in the Wind*. The master classes and the collective demonstration *The Whispering Winds in Theatre and Dance*. *Ode to Progress*, barters, parades and the Odin musicians with and without the group.

Clear Enigma, Odin Teatret's 50th anniversary performance with scenes from all previous productions, during which the making of past drawings came back into my hands, alive. Hands remember what they have drawn. They may even make spontaneous corrections.

Exchange:

Odin Teatret and theatre laboratories inspired my own stage work at my consultation. After having digested and incorporated what I had learned, I was ready to use it.

When "directed" by their illness or other conditions, patients may get into an equivalent of character acting, depending on how well they fit the syndrome and its

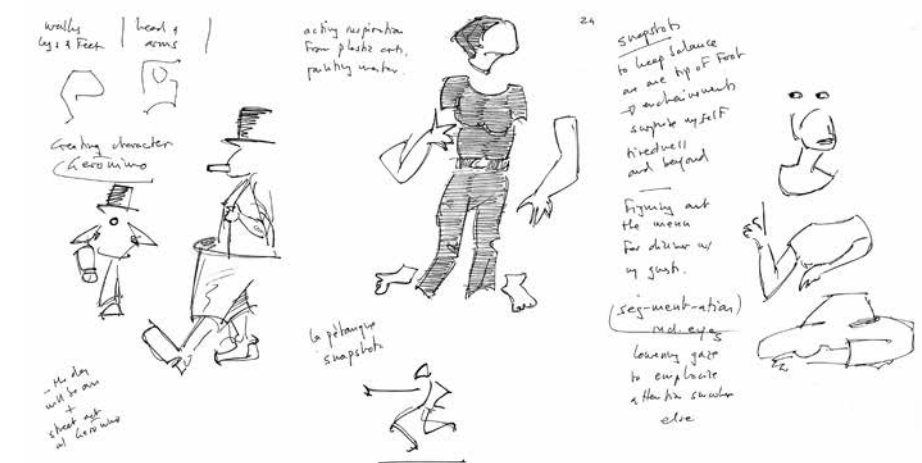
manifestations. Patients may then elaborate a performance of their condition to be complemented with the performance of care.

Encouraged to move out of Holstebro and to collaborate with foreign performers, the Odin actors have pursued personal projects in Brazil, Cuba, Japan and other places. These projects compare with migration and health programmes as well as general health issues concerning body representation, cross-cultural interactions, and more clinical situations. Comparative ethnology blends with medicine and psychiatry.

SEVEN

The drawing: A montage of Roberta Carreri's work demonstration *Traces in the Snow*.

And beyond: In her work demonstration, Roberta opens every chapter with: "At the Odin, ... This is how we do it. There are other approaches, but this is what I learned, and this is where I learned how to develop my self-exploration, the score of an actress."



It was contagious. After the direct approach about "Have you looked at yourself?" in Londrina, I did something with myself. Creating a mini-ISTA network, starting classes in Asian dance forms and bringing these masters to my consultation's stage to work with my patients.

I wanted to focus my observation on Roberta's various incarnations: the Odin actress, in ensemble plays and other performances.

Cassandra in *Mythos*; her history among the Odin repertory since her beginnings. Molly Bloom in the collective demonstration, *The Whispering Winds in Theatre and Dance*. The research on butoh with Natsu Nakajima. The solo actress in *Judith* and author in *Flowers for Torgeir*. In a duet with Jan Ferslev for *Salt* and its process demonstration

Letter in the Wind. The street parade character, Geronimo, seen in barbers and other outdoor acts.

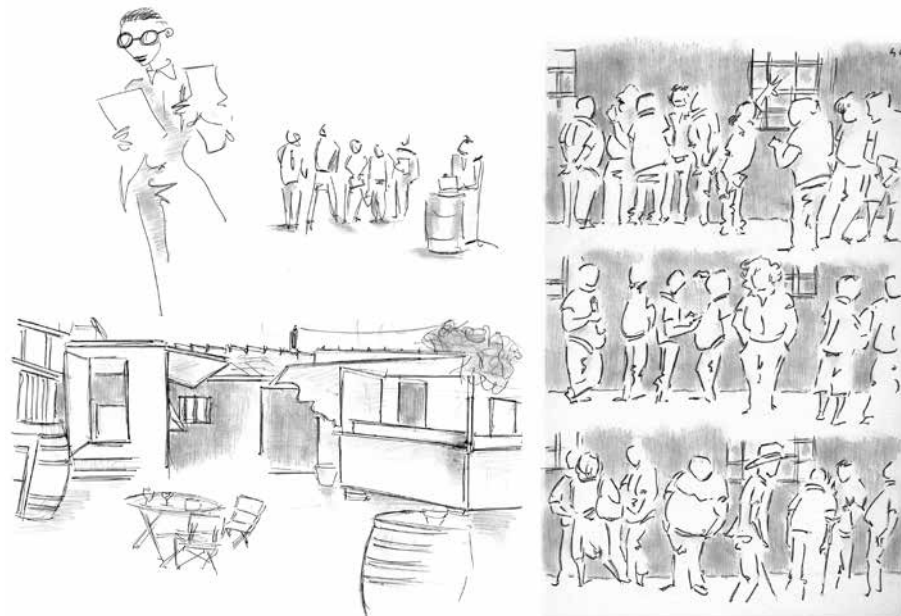
At the work demonstration she shared with Torgeir, *Nora's Way* on *A Doll's House*. In August 2010, two months after Torgeir's passing, Roberta performed this duet alone, yet with the same set the couple used on stage, two tables, chairs.

Grief is not an illness, yet its effects upon a person's stability is such that it is a medical issue. I realise that, presenting this demonstration she presented a montage. At the same time, she was also performing a debriefing about her loss, that can be explained through several layers: Roberta who had lost Torgeir. The Odin actress who had lost her acting partner. Ibsen's Nora who had lost Torvald.

Wishing to move beyond one-dimensional psychiatric circles, I presented my work in public theatres as lecture-performances: *The Masters of Their Conditions* (At the crossroads of health, culture and the performing arts. With Sujatha Venkatesh). *The Dancer, the Carpenter and the Seven Samurais* (about body learning as in traditional codified methods. The performers learn and train their own bodies). *The Prosthesis, the Actor and the Performance* (about body modified by external intervention, no previous training. Bodies not learnt or "unlearned" by technologies, plastic and cosmetic procedures).

EIGHT

The drawing: A spot, random individuals, framing an action (i.e. an empty space; personae dramatis; stories).



And beyond: Theatre as the spot from where to see the action: *Teatro della Piazza*, *Théâtre du Bistrot*, Marketplace Theatre and other scenic environments where the observer becomes a detecting device - all receptors open.

I, the observer, am now a director sitting in the tenth row during rehearsals, a board covered with notes, phones, laptops. Now he looks at the stage, set, actors; make-up artists, costume-makers in the wings, in their workshops; stage regisseur and props; light and sound engineers; builders, technicians. Behind and elsewhere, publicity, ticket sellers, ...

Pre-production is a must. I am on location beforehand (and after performances) to feel the scenic environments and notice the changes.

Doing pre-montage, scouting, for example accompanying Julia Varley as she checked accommodations in Londrina days before the session. Then meeting the venue's personnel, technicians, asking for stories, explanations, and gossip. This is a whole construction, parallel to the event's organisation. Sources of information are there - the observer must go and get them.

Thanks to years of dancing, my body has acquired skills and presence.

I accept that my mind, my intellect cannot do everything. I delegate tasks to my body. Dance and other adaptive body work gave me postural and gestural confidence.

Drawing is one form of testimony. It is a responsibility

I am the pen when my hands react more promptly than my mind; I am the katana when drawings need to be weapons.

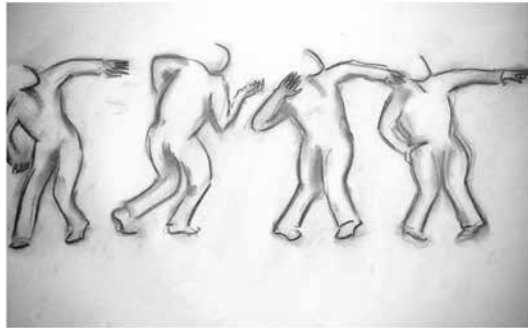
Annex: Further inspiration and clinical applications

Within ISTA and along my own paths, I have met other inspirations that I could immediately plug into clinical applications. In previous writings I have discussed body performers, namely Marina Abramovic, Orlan, Franko B. and Stelarc, developing my observation of Olivier de Sagazan and more body experimental performers.

Completing this presentation's eight chronological steps into ISTA and Odin Teatret and how these influences have imprinted my clinical practice, here are four more montages, two from ISTA and two from other observations.

Sequences or “forms” in martial arts and dance

The drawings: top Balinese dancer, bottom Gennadi Bogdanov - biomechanics.



After observing the Asian masters available at ISTA sessions, I wondered about Western equivalents of codified body learning and its organisation into an architecture, a grammar of posture and gestures. Demonstrating Meyerhold's biomechanics, Gennadi Bogdanov elaborated such a sequence, here contrasting with that of a Balinese dancer. Grammars of codified postures, like an Edward Muybridge studies in motion has resonance into Japanese *kata* and other sequences in martial arts, dance forms and other professional performances, carpentry, masonry. This is how the teaching gets into the students' proprioceptive memory. Applications for patients occur when the above artisans consult as construction workers and/or

immigrants whose bodies need reorganising.

I have also sought inspiration among circus artists who have their *kata* in trapeze, juggling, calisthenic. Street artists may blend their arts with the natural environments such as with *parkour* users of urban furniture and landscape, a form of training that proves useful when reintegrating patients back into life after illnesses and hospitalisations, such as elderly and/or disabled persons.

Creating a space of defense and action

The drawings: left abused child - no defense, right mime Thomas Leabhart with hands.

Abused patients have integrated into their bodies all mistreatments, tortures, rapes that have literally penetrated their memory without encountering any resistance. Bad learning and good learning proceed the same way - no space of defense. Theatre has a responsibility of resistance and must be a refuge for all in need of, in this case, a structural

learning system. Therefore, I have sent many patients to basic martial arts training classes, and so do associations such as rape victims' associations in Geneva. The art forms I explored after my ISTA initiations also have such learning systems.

Scenes of combat are present in various forms such as Japanese buyo or nô theatre.

I was impressed by Thomas Leabhart's mime of the four stages of anesthesia, a direct link to my clinical training, as well as his demonstrations of Etienne Decroux' *études* of



artisans, carpenter, washerwoman, a direct link with my migration and health concerns. Creating virtual spaces in mime inspired my orientating patients into considering their everyday life scenography, building confidence (as with *parkour*) and protective spaces to reinforce their body integrity.

Butoh and the naked body

The drawings: left Daisuke Yoshimoto performance, right patient at hospital's emergency ward.

Tatsumi Hijikata's research was basically avant-garde experimentation. It has wrongly been associated with a re-enactment of Hiroshima. Yet, the connection is interestingly relevant. The body of the butoh, bare, naked, covered with clay, later grease paint is the ghostly transmitter of the dance of darkness. The whole setting has always fascinated me. I saw Kazuo Ohno, Carlotta Ikeda, Sankai Juku, visited the butoh archives at Keio University with anthropologist Keizo Miyasaka. This plate represents Daisuke Yoshimoto in a series of excruciating performances that reminded me of the ordeals of victims



of mistreatments, Ryszard Cieslak's *Constant Prince*, for example, but also patients at a hospital ward, brutally undressed to their barest selves. Examined like mannequins, even if there is empathy, the procedure may be disorientating. I have been into such nudity exercise during my own experience of cancers. I can use it now with patients, guiding them as both ex-patient and doctor and within the actions of interest groups. The wounded healer gets into a position to share the adventurous paths of illness and care with patients.

Distorted body and space

The drawings: background Francis Bacon imitation, inclusions scream one and two - distorted by anguish.

In a BBC documentary, Francis Bacon gave some hints about his observation and painting methods: direct paint, no previous pencil drawing; looking at people in pubs, through his glass bottom, deformed as in some mirrors. He hijacked Velazquez' painting of Pope Innocent X, revealing, perhaps, a silent scream from inside of the subject memory. An open mouth for silent scream made me think of the Barba & Savarese's reference to Brecht actress Helene Weigel as Mutter Courage's scream of pain as she hears her son being shot by soldiers.

The invisible pain, verbal, non-verbal, often not even told within the patient's case-history making. The silent complaint may take a clinician on many wrong paths before understanding where to go to find the pain, the anguish, the terror that may have built a whole clinical body, creating illness through years of enduring and not exorcising. This is what takes me to further investigations as a clinical and therapeutical sleuth.■





Ory Sacramento, Eberto García
Abreu, Nitis Jacon looking at
Augusto Omolu,
ISTA 7, Londrina, Brazil, 1994.
Photo: Emidio Luisi

Julia Varley

The Times of ISTA

Abstract: This article recalls the importance of the organisers and schedules for the development of theatre anthropology during the ISTA sessions, and presents the different generations of teachers.

Keywords: Hans Jürgen Nagel; Nitis Jacon; Roberto Bacci

The evolution of theatre anthropology as a field of study instigated by Eugenio Barba was determined by many factors: the constant succession of ISTA sessions, how they came into being, their flexible structure, the personality of the invited artists/teachers, the organisers - institutions, theatre groups or individuals - who managed to find the financial support, and the participants. Such factors, as well as hundreds of small circumstances, have contributed to what theatre anthropology is today. Similar to a creative process for a theatre performance, simultaneity, contiguity, serendipity, chance, constraints, necessities, interests, obsessions and above all relationships and commitment of scholars, artists and participants have played a fundamental role during the searching process to uncover and delineate the principles of pre-expressivity which are at the basis of theatre anthropology.

In the appendix of *Thinking with the Feet* (2017), a book about the 16th ISTA session in Albino, Italy, in 2016, there is exhaustive information about the shaping of the particular environment for each session: the daily programme, the description of the session's theme, the names of organisers, artists, scholars and participants as well as those given to the different spaces and the various times of day. These names change for each session, following references which may be geographical, mythical, historical or biographical. Time and space must change within the ISTA island of research for unexpected breakthroughs to appear. The extra-daily behaviour and way of thinking is not only a technical tool for the actor/dancer's stage presence; it is a premise for discovery.

The organisers

For me, learning to see also means understanding the consequences of the persistence of Jean-Marie Pradier (organiser of an encounter between theatre practitioners and scientists



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in Jelena Góra, Poland, in 1979), of the trust of Hans Jürgen Nagel (organiser of the 1st ISTA session in Bonn, Germany, in 1980) or of the dedication of Nitis Jacon (organiser of the 8th ISTA session in Londrina, Brazil, in 1994). They affected the future of theatre anthropology. Jean-Marie Pradier, Hans Jürgen Nagel and Nitis Jacon were not aware beforehand of the magnitude of their choices, but their endurance made it possible for the unforeseen to happen. Does learning to see mean foreseeing the unforeseeable?

At Jelena Góra, during a meal, the biologist Henri Laborit explained to Eugenio Barba that it was impossible to discuss with theatre practitioners since they incessantly jumped from one level of organisation to another: they spoke of the need for a new actor, then of a renewed social function of theatre, and soon after of the necessity for original playwrights. Eugenio Barba couldn't understand what he meant by level of organisation. Henri Laborit went on to explain that any complex organism, for example the human body, is subdivided into different levels of organisation: of the cells, organs, systems and social relationships... One must know on what level one is concentrating!

Was it sitting at a table and eating Polish pierogi that the idea of the pre-expressive level was born in Eugenio Barba's head? Probably not. It was the combination of this new knowledge together with years of looking at the training of Odin Teatret actors, his fascination of Asian traditional theatre forms, and his wish to find a way to communicate with Latin American theatre groups that accused Odin Teatret of cultural imperialism, and much more. There is no order of time nor consistent logic to follow, only an unending preparation, learning often for learning's sake, as a law of life or a need to remain alive - and letting concrete circumstances provoke reactions, so that motivation and knowledge decide and not abstract theories.

Hans Jürgen Nagel wanted an international meeting of theatre groups to happen in Bonn like those which had taken place in Belgrade in 1976, Bergamo in 1977 and Madrid-Lekeitio in 1979. Hans Jürgen Nagel was an expert in classical music and in charge of the cultural activity in Bonn. He had read of these meetings in the UNESCO journal. He contacted Eugenio Barba proposing such an event in his town. But Eugenio was not particularly motivated, he thanked and told Hans Jürgen that he was involved in another huge project which obliged him to concentrate on finding financial backing. Hans Jürgen asked how much this project would cost. Eugenio answered 200 million Italian Lire (about 488.000 euros today). "I can find this money", Hans Jürgen replied. What is your project? Thus Barba imagined an international school which did not teach a method, but gathered friends and other people who had inspired him and would certainly inspire the fifty directors from the Third Theatre groups whom he intended to invite. This story has been told many times and belongs to the ISTA mythology. But the motivations and facts hidden behind it are not often revealed. I would like to ask Hans Jürgen Nagel how he managed to find the funds and which arguments he used to convince politicians to support a project he knew nothing about. Why did he trust Barba, to him a totally unknown person? Was it a time when individuals and their personalities and imaginative energy counted more than sustainable budgets, imposing cultural plans and well-formulated projects?

I would like to ask Roberto Bacci the same questions. He was the director of Piccolo Teatro di Pontedera and of the Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale in Italy. Which strong motivation pushed him and his small theatre group to cover the

expenses of a 60-day session of ISTA in Volterra in 1981? He found 400 million Lire corresponding to double the cost of the ISTA in Bonn! For two whole months Roberto Bacci hosted 45 artists and scholars and 64 participants from all over the world to do research in theatre, without any promise of results or a public outcome. It was not easy to get money for such projects. The proof is that for three years no other institution or individual was interested in a new ISTA session, until another audacious outsider, Patrick Pezin, Eugenio Barba's publisher-actor, helped realise a session in France.

What were the reasons that pushed individuals with few means to confront obstacles and the apparent impossibility by organising an ISTA? Insurmountable hurdles to finding the necessary funds and the material conditions had to be faced by Patrick Pezin and Nicholas Peskine in 1985, by Odin Teatret in 1986, by *Mediterranea Teatro Laboratorio* and Nicola Savarese in 1987, by Pietro Valenti and Renzo Filippetti of *Teatro Ridotto* in 1990, by Richard Gough and Judie Christie of *Centre for Performance Research* in 1992, by Nitis Jacon in 1994, by Sven Sahlström and Chris Torch in 1995, by Trevor Davies, Lene Thiesen and Kirsten Hastrup in 1996, by Marco Abbondanza in 1998, by Siegm Schröder and Theaterlabor in 2000, by Ricardo Iniesta and Atalaya Teatro in 2004, by Jarosław Fret and Grzegorz Ziółkowski of the Grotowski Institute in 2005, by Alessandra Pozzi and Fabrizio Persico of *Associazione Diaforà* in 2016, by Irene Di Lelio of *Linee Libere* and Vincenzo Mercurio of *Teatro Proskenen* in 2021.

All these people did not belong to centres of power, but to the periphery, where Third Theatre groups flourished accompanied by a few scholars who were seduced by the energy of their alternative activity. Often the driving force was a former ISTA participant who wanted to share this experience with her or his own context. It was the same ripple effect that happened with *The Magdalena Project*, the network of women in contemporary theatre. These individuals had to contact politicians and make alliances with sensible and sensitive civil servants working in institutions and government offices who didn't know much about theatre anthropology. The decision of realising an ISTA session was the result of an excess of passion, an obsession which possessed the organisers. They spent hours, days and months convincing officials that this initiative, which was not a festival but a closed research event, was a realistic project and would reap a future harvest and a viable outcome. To sow technical seeds of knowledge was not a dream, but an investment in the potentiality of each participant.

Economic conditions influence any form of research. If the participants are invited as guests or if they pay gives them different expectations and commitment. If we sleep in shared rooms in an empty downtrodden building or in a hotel with individual rooms and bathrooms affects relationships and the intensity of their experience. If a simultaneous translation is made by an official interpreter in a box or by a simple volunteer, this alters the sensorial dimension of the communication. If the artists come with their own musicians or have to perform accompanied by recorded music, our experience is modified. If we eat tasty or boring food, this increases or decreases our well-being and energy. If there is time to dance and sing together more lasting friendships arise. The last session in Favignana in 2021 remains emblematic because it was the first time we could share the space with other performers after two years of pandemic restrictions. The pleasure of being close together enhanced the energy during all classes and demonstrations.

Nitis Jacon accomplished the feat of organising the first ISTA session in Latin America in 1994. Before this the participants were invited and did not pay. For the session in Brazil, we asked participants to give 100 US dollars to cover the travel of those who could not afford it. Nitis insisted that a Brazilian performing tradition should be represented at the ISTA session in Londrina. Although Brazil is rich in dance and theatre expressions, only an artist who possessed the power of seducing spectators, the humility of teaching the first steps, the capacity of repeating fixed scores, the enthusiasm of participating in a group experience and adapting to uncomfortable conditions, could become a teacher at ISTA. It was not a question of being Brazilian or of representing a particular genre; it was the personality and the motivation that made each ISTA teacher irreplaceable. Eugenio established a personal and professional relationship with each of them.

Nitis urged Eugenio to travel to many places in Brazil to see performances, rituals, celebrations and dances. We were lucky and thanks to our friend the director Paulo Dourado we met Augusto Omolu in Bahia. He was trained in classical ballet and modern dance and had absorbed the essence of the orixá dance from the Candomblé culture to which he belonged. Eugenio and I were mesmerized when we saw his class where he shifted suddenly from the soft energy of Oxum to the vigorous energy of Ogum which reminded us of what only Sanjukta had made us experience before.

The artists

ISTA has had different generations of teachers. They marked the ISTA sessions with their temperament. Each one of them has contributed to changing the course of events. The first generation included Sanjukta Panigrahi, Katsuko Azuma and I Made Pasek Tempo. Theirs was the time of nobility. Then came Kanichi Hanayagi, I Made Djimat with I Wayan Bawa, Tom Leabhart and Augusto Omolu. Theirs was the time of passion. Then came Ana Woolf, Cristina Wistari and Ileana Citaristi. Theirs was the time of the foreigners. Then came Parvathy Baul and Keiin Yoshimura. Theirs was the time of women. Alício Amaral and Juliana Pardo of Mundu Rodá, and Alessandro Rigoletti, Caterina Scotti and Tiziana Barbiero of Teatro tascabile di Bergamo mark the time of theatre groups. Last is Kapila Venu and hers is perhaps the time of the future.

I have not mentioned Odin Teatret actors in this list because their presence came late. The first ISTAs were Eugenio's independent project and only Toni Cots from Odin Teatret accompanied him. Some of our actors - Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Tage Larsen and Roberta Carreri - spent a few days of the symposia or longer periods for a particular kind of teaching or learning. Some ISTA participants and collaborators became Odin actors: Richard Fowler, Gustavo Riondet and Augusto Omolu. When Toni Cots left Odin Teatret in 1987 a consistent number of Odin actors participated for the first time in the ISTA session in Salento. The whole group was in Bologna in 1990 when the *Theatrum Mundi* - ISTA's final performance - became more structured with scenes that would develop over time in future sessions.

In Bologna, Torgeir Wethal created a love scene with Kanichi Hanayagi. I first worked on a grotesque love scene with Tjokorda Raku Tisnu and developed it later with I Made

Djimat. Roberta Carreri improvised a clown sequence with Shogo Fujima and a love scene with I Nyoman Budi Artha. In the most recent ISTA sessions, Odin Teatret's solo and ensemble performances have been part of the programme. At first, we Odin actors felt young and small in comparison to the Asian artists. Later we became the experienced generation that was even able to inspire the Asian artists. With time and the death of the first generation of ISTA 'masters', the position of the Odin Teatret actors within ISTA was reversed.

The structure

Eugenio tends to resist fixed schedules because he enjoys the freedom to pursue what emerges from the work. Yet time schedules have been necessary since the beginning to solve practical questions like meals and rest periods, the sharing of information and the exchange of personal professional experience.

Since the first ISTA session in Bonn Eugenio had to be careful to pay equal attention to Sanjukta Panigrahi and Katsuko Azuma to avoid jealousy. Planning demonstrations and symposia, he was attentive to give space and time to every teacher.

During the second session in Volterra the participants and teachers were divided into families, and since then groups have been organised for the practical work to happen with smaller numbers of participants. Only when the ISTA sessions had more than one hundred participants, as in Holstebro in 1986 and in Copenhagen in 1996, did all the work happen in plenary sessions through demonstrations. When the participants are 50-60, the daily programme begins in silence at dawn broken by a song as the sun rises, followed by breakfast, practical work in smaller groups, demonstrations and professional biographies, lunch, rest, exchanges among the participants, comparative seances on technical principles with Eugenio, supper, and performances. The local eating habits, the time of sunrise and sunset, if performances were open to public or not, and if they took place within the closed ISTA venue or outside, if the session was accompanied by a symposium or not, if the participants rehearsed to be on stage for a *Theatrum Mundi* performance - all of this influenced the rhythm of the ISTA sessions' daily programme.

Every time on the schedule has a name, often in reference to the session's theme, as do the groups and the spaces. Part of the process of preparation consists in transforming the venues and adapting them to work necessities favouring intimacy, focus, meetings and individual concentration.

Many remember particularly the time and the zone of silence. One reason to expect people to be quiet when they sleep together is practical, so as not to disturb the others. But demanding silence is also a way of inducing communication through behaviour instead of words and placing everyone in the same position. When silence is broken by a song, this introduces everyone to an emotional atmosphere of work with extra-daily conditions and values. A special rhythm is built through punctuality, making sure that nobody comes late to classes, by sharing the cleaning jobs, by offering a space to exhibit personal work documentation, by retiring into a room where books brought by every participant have built a shared ISTA library.

Anecdotes

Each ISTA session leaves its own memories.

In Umeå it was the snow. It was May 1995, and we were sleeping in a village of small huts built originally for Sami gatherings for church services and market days. We woke up with the whole village covered in snow. The Brazilians, Indians and Balinese had never seen snow before and were convinced that work would be cancelled. They could not imagine walking through the forest to reach the working space. We made them change their mind by organising a snowball fight. Snow was also used by Eugenio in his closing speech: he gave a fistful of snow to each participant as a token of the knowledge they had received and which would melt in their hands.

At the ISTA session in Salento, scholars learned to draw an elephant. They had to count their impulses while tracing the line, becoming aware of each time they lifted their pencil. It was a way to explain the segmentation process and the sats. There, for the first time I Made Bandem fell into a trance during a barter dancing on broken glass. His bare feet started bleeding.

In Montemor-o-Novo it was the convent we lived and worked in; a beautiful building, but with no doors, no toilets, no showers, no kitchen, no theatre. Arriving there in advance to prepare it for the session, I remember thinking the only solution was to call the firemen. I ended up sleeping in an attic, sharing it with bats. In Montemor-o-Novo all the teachers worked on the same exercise called Tre-Tre. It had been invented by three Odin Teatret actresses and it was re-shaped according to the different traditions. It was the first ISTA session without Sanjukta. A cancer had taken her away a few months before. The final Theatrum Mundi performance, *Four Poems for Sanjukta*, was dedicated to her.

In Bologna Nitis Jacon arrived late and had to climb over the high metal fence to enter the Villa Guastavillani where we all worked and slept. Part of the time was concentrated on voice, trying to understand if one could apply the same principles of the pre-expressive level to vocal expression. The Theatrum Mundi performance in Bologna ended with fireworks thrown out by a dancing Pupa puppet from Abruzzo creating a fountain of sparks. Mr Peanut, Odin Teatret's Death character, still has holes burnt in his coat.

In Londrina, the Japanese ensemble led by Kanichi Hanayagi wanted to impress everyone. For their astonishing kabuki performance, they had brought with them stunning costumes, props and wigs at great expense. The explosion of the spider's web of red or white threads became a fixed scene of the Theatrum Mundi that in Londrina was performed on a floating stage on a lake built by Fernando Jacon.

In Sevilla, the flamenco demonstration introduced a new genre to the ISTA research. Four years had passed since the ISTA in Bielefeld in 2000, and a new generation of teachers came to the session in Spain. Some of them had chosen to specialise in a genre far from the country where they were born. This provoked discussions on culture and authenticity which I tried to answer with a letter to the participants of ISTA in Wrocław in 2005 and published later in *Thinking with the Feet*.

From the ISTA in Copenhagen, my memory of improvising with Carolyn Carlson is as strong as the impression at seeing I Made Djimat's baris and his way of teaching his

daughter Ketut through an infusion of energy from body to body.

From Holstebro in 1986 I remember assisting Pei Yan-Ling with her performance. She was warming up stretching a leg on top of a table. She told me how her teacher would stay with her in the room as she kept each leg in that position for half an hour. It made me think that if teachers could dedicate time to their pupils to such a point, the results would be different. Pei Yan-Ling's performance of the male character of a general totally fulfilled the expectations generated by Eugenio telling us of his emotion seeing her in Beijing. She seemed so strong on stage and so vulnerable in her loneliness.

In Favignana it was the sea, rough or calm, welcoming us early in the morning and letting itself be heard during the performances in the evening. Even if nobody had the time to swim.

Themes

The first ISTA sessions were a time of discovery. Eugenio and all the artists and scholars tried to understand what theatre anthropology was for themselves, before explaining it to others. The term pre-expressivity was applied for the first time, provoking discussions, scepticism and controversies. Then came the time to demonstrate all that had been discovered by explaining the concepts and showing the results of the comparative analysis of the "first day" of apprenticeship in the different performing traditions.

The themes changed from general research on the principles of scenic presence to specific questions on the craft. In Holstebro it was the modulation of energy, in Copenhagen the relationship between theatre and dance, in Montemor-o-Novo the organic effect, in Bielefeld dramaturgical techniques, in Brecon the subscore (taking up the theme of mental pre-expressivity first talked about in Salento), in Seville the flow, in Krzyżowa improvisation. Ten years later, in Albino, it was time to go back to the beginning so that a new generation of participants could experience the first general principles of stage presence explained once again. Only those who had never before participated in an ISTA session were admitted.

Each session required its time of preparation. Eugenio spent months visiting the artists in their different countries, looking and learning to see, and asking questions which he would repeat again and again during ISTA sessions when he visited them in their sleeping and rehearsal quarters. The questions were apparently simple, even petty, expressed time after time to go deeper until reaching the essential. During these meetings Eugenio prepared the artists for a special way of teaching their "first day" to participants coming from different parts of the world, who did not share their terminology or sense of music, rhythm and movement.

At ISTA it was never a question of talent, but always one of know-how, of technical principles that could help everyone in any theatre or dance form. It was a time for sowing the seeds of personal knowledge which would accompany the growth of each of us - actor, dancer, director or scholar. ■



Three Wodaabe male dancers in 1976. Photo: Mette Bovin

Mette Bovin

Stories in Between Anthropology and Theatre

Abstract: : In this article, Mette Bovin narrates her experiences and anthropological fieldwork among different African peoples since the 1960s. Her research brought her to meet the Mumuye people in Nigeria, and the Wodaabe people in Niger. In 1982 Mette Bovin invited Roberta Carreri to West Africa where they started the project on Bartering performances in Niger and Burkina Faso. The author also describes her personal experience as a participant during nine ISTA sessions and the impact of those encounters on her life.

Keywords: Mumuye animists; Burkina Faso; Roberta Carreri; "Charlot, Charlot"; Barbers

In Niger and Burkina Faso

In 1981 I asked Eugenio Barba if his nine Odin Teatret actors would like to travel to Niger and Burkina Faso with me to make cultural barbers¹ in villages and deserts. Eugenio Barba suggested Roberta Carreri could accompany me: one actress and one anthropologist vis-a-vis African performers and spectators. Nobody at Odin Teatret had ever been to Africa, so it was a completely new experience for Roberta Carreri. It turned out to be very interesting for both of us, and for hundreds of African participants and spectators.

I made a 16 mm documentary film about our experiences, *Dances in the Sand - A Meeting between Europe and Africa* (Actress: Roberta Carreri; Director, researcher and producer: Mette Bovin; Camera: Jean-Pierre Kaba; Sound: Moussa Hamidou; Editor: Grete Møldrup; 16 mm Film Production: Mette Bovin Film. 1982-83, DVD available in Danish, English, French, and Italian at Odin Teatret Archives, Holstebro, Denmark). I also described the barter between Roberta Carreri and the people of Dori in Burkina Faso in an essay.²

1. Cultural barbers by Odin Teatret have been applied in different circumstances and analysed in many publications, see among others: D'URSO, Tony and Eugenio Barba. 2000. *Viaggi/Voyages with Odin Teatret*. Milano: Ubulibri. RASMUSSEN, Iben Nagel. 2012. "Bytthandler i Danmark?" In *Den fjerde dor. På vej med Odin Teatret*. Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck A/S, pp. 148-184. VARLEY, Julia. 2019. "Holstebro Festuge: Re-thinking Theatre." In *Caravan Next. A Social Community Theatre Project*, edited by Alessandra Rossi Ghiglione, Rita Maria Fabris and Alberto Pagliarino. Milano: Franco Angeli, pp. 218-224. WATSON, Ian. 1993. "Barter." In Ian Watson, *Towards a Third Theatre. Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret*. Foreword by Richard Schechner. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 22-30. WATSON, Ian, Maria Shevtsova, Eugenio Barba, et.al. 2002. "II Barter: Performance as cultural exchange." In *Negotiating Cultures. Eugenio Barba and the intercultural debate*, edited by Ian Watson. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, pp. 94-167.

2. Bovin 1988, 21-41.



I prepared our journey by studying the ethnographic reality: which ethnic groups were present and how could we ask both sedentary peasants, half nomadic, and truly nomadic people to perform for us after Roberta's performances. Roberta had prepared seven different short performances. The barter was peaceful and enjoyable in the summer of 1982.

Before Roberta Carreri and I left for Burkina Faso, we talked about what we should do if we earned some money with the performances. I didn't think we would, but Eugenio Barba suggested that if we did, we could give the money to the local mosque, or distribute free condoms. I shook my head. As it turned out, we didn't earn anything. I paid Jean, the young man who was our interpreter between several local languages and French. My tape recorder was stolen; and I was very sorry to lose the recording of the beautiful singing by a blind muezzin in Dori. Maybe I should have given back more to Dori or the 200 boys who ran after Roberta shouting "Charlot, Charlot", but, unfortunately, I had no money to give. Our hired Land Rover was old and rusty and did not belong to us. But we had a car, nice clothes, a still camera and two 16 mm cameras, so Roberta and I were rich Tobago (white people) from Denmark, compared to the villagers in Dori and surroundings.

In 1986, my son Jakob, who did fieldwork with me, and I travelled from Denmark to Niger and Burkina Faso taking with us the French version of the 16 mm film. We worked for six months in Niger and Burkina Faso among true nomads, the Wodaabe (egalitarian lineage society) in Niger, and with the agropastoral half-nomadic Fulbe (with a hierarchical social structure) in the Dori region of Northern Burkina Faso.³

We went to the same Dori region where Roberta had performed four years earlier. I wished to give back the results of our fieldwork, showing the film *Dances dans le sable. Une rencontre entre l'Europe et l'Afrique*.

My informants in Dori and other villages asked where the 'Crazy One' (Roberta) was. They wondered why I had not come with the 'Crazy One' like before, they missed the woman who stared up in the air when she danced, like crazy people do. They were a little afraid of the Dancing Tobago. They had discovered that Europeans also have male and even female *griots* (professional *troubadours*, performers, poets, storytellers, praise-singers in the courts of chiefs, sultans, kings, dancers, and also beggars). The *griots* form a special social caste who only marry within themselves. People are always afraid of them, because if you don't give them enough money, the griots will sing and slander and scorn you publicly.

My son Jakob was 13 years-old in 1986. He also spoke some Fulfulde language and could communicate with the agro-pastoralists in Burkina and the true nomads in Niger. We had both looked forwards to the evening when we were going to give the 16 mm film as a gift to the people of Dori. The projection went all right, on a huge open-air screen on the market-place wall. I listened to the comments of the Dori people about the film. The blacksmith's son was happy to be on a big film using the bellows with his father.

But after the film had finished, the poorest boys started to throw stones at Jakob. We didn't understand why. Jakob quickly jumped up on the roof of the rented Land Rover to avoid the stones. I also jumped on the car-roof to protect Jakob. They kept on throwing stones at us. I had to call the driver to take us away fast.

3. Bovin 1990, 103-20.

Perhaps the hundreds of boys running in the market-place shouting "Charlot Charlot!" in 1982 had enjoyed that day. But now, after four years, they had had time to think about their roles. Perhaps they thought that people who appear in a film should earn money. I shall never know. I had no money to give to 200-300 young boys. The poorest people think that Tobago always have money. In fact, I was forced to sell my house and car in Helsingør, back in Denmark, to pay for our project in Burkina Faso 1982 and for the production of the film in 1982-84.

That evening in Dori was a big disappointment, since we thought that we had a good relationship with the town, and suddenly we realised it was not so. I wondered where a barter ends. The day that Roberta ended her last dance, or the moment when Mette and Jakob gave the film to the whole town in 1986? Or when stones were thrown at us that evening? Where did I stand as an anthropologist without the power of theatre?

On the mountains of Nigeria

In 1964 - the same year Eugenio Barba started Odin Teatret - I started my anthropological fieldwork in Africa. I went to Northern Nigeria to study The Mountain Pagans as white missionaries called them. Mumuye was how they called themselves. Mumuye were neither Christians nor Muslims, they were "animists" because they believed in the spirits of nature. The Middle Belt in Nigeria separated the Muslims in the north from the Christians in the south. Many Mumuye had not seen a European woman before; and some ran away when I came close to their village. They had only seen one male Catholic priest from Portugal and another one from Ireland.

I often danced with the Mumuye women, in Zing, the village where I lived. They dragged me into the line of the circular dance. The older women always danced in the front of the circle while the youngest girls danced behind. The woman who dragged me into the circle was called Mahæ or Dance Sister. I could rely on Mahæ to help and guide me. We exchanged food. It was very useful to have this social bond for a 21-year-old foreign single girl in Mumuye land.⁴

At that time, the highest political leader in Mumuye land was the Rain King. With my Mumuye interpreter, one day I climbed the steep blue mountain, where the big Rain King lived with his bodyguards, his five



Mette Bovin and her Mumuye Land Dance Sister, Mahæ. Photo: Mette Bovin

4. Bovin 2011, 364-84.



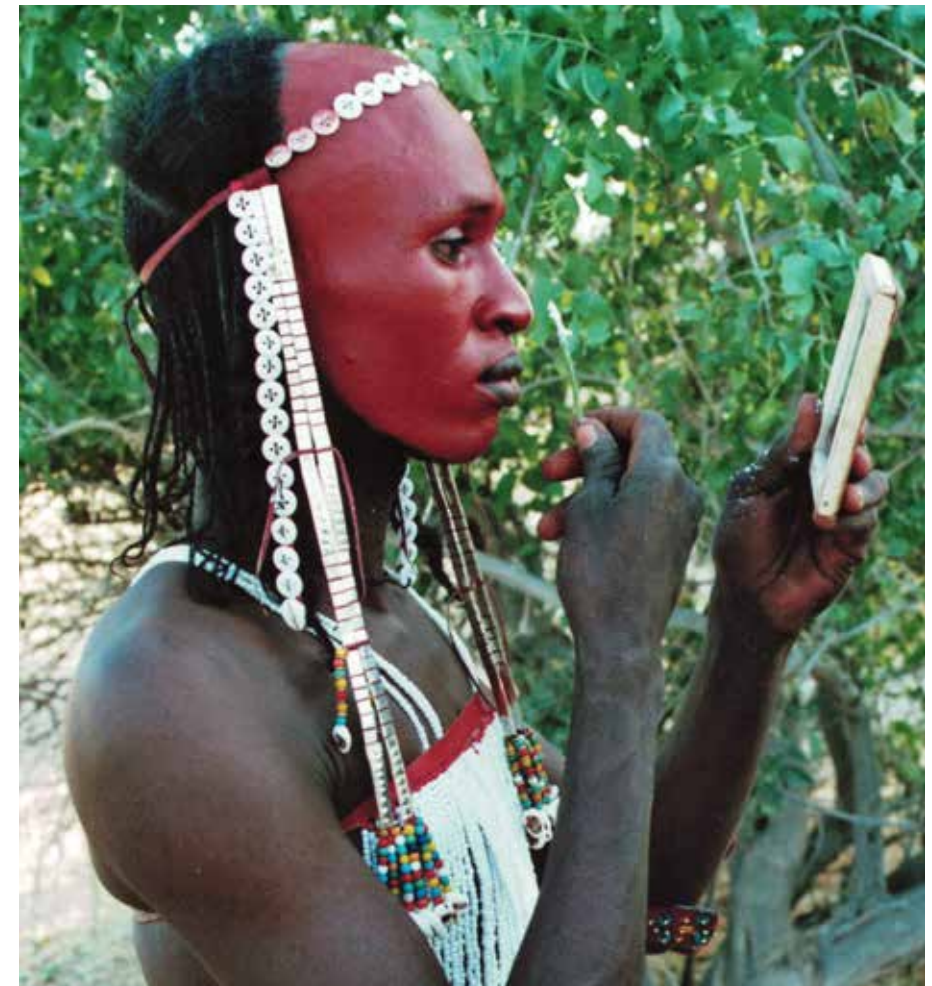
The Rain King, Matakön, on the top of a blue mountain, Nigeria 1964.
Presents given by Matakön to Mette Bovin: iron bars and a handwoven burial cloth. Photos: Mette Bovin

wives and many children. When I arrived, I waited three hours for the Rain King to receive me. He appeared on a stage like cliff. He had eagle eyes and emanated respect and authority. I did not look at him straight in the eyes. His name was Matakön, which means respect. I was allowed to ask questions, but I could not enter the Rain Ritual Hut. The Rain King explained in words what happened inside: "I sacrifice goats and chicken and other animals and let the blood run down on many objects, while I utter all the prayers to Kpanti-La, The Honourable Sun God, and then the rain starts falling in Mumuye land". He said he had only once before hosted a white man. After having told me how he made rain, a mystical figure came out to greet me, a tiny little ritual hunter. The figure uttered a sound, like a strange whistling, and then disappeared.

Matakön gave me some gifts: two iron bars and a handwoven burial cloth, valuable Mumuye objects that functioned as 'primitive money' (as they were called in academic language at the time I received them). Two iron bars were normally given by young Mumuye men to young girls as a marriage proposal. The Rain King had given me the two essential things for life's two main rites of passage - marriage and death. Back in Denmark I gave the gifts to Moesgaard Museum in Aarhus together with the 400 other Mumuye objects. Ever since I sat bartering with the Rain King on top of that blue mountain in 1964, I have been vividly interested in exchange of magical objects, dances, songs and images. It is when I started being aware of the communicative strength of performance.

In the Sahelian Desert

In 1968 in the Niger bush a group of nomadic Wodaabe people came to my hut and presented themselves to me. They were seven boys and girls, all related, cousins. We became friends immediately. They were proud to look like us Europeans, who they called Nazara. One of them, Amina, asked me one day with gestures and mimic: "How do your people dance?" "I will show you," I answered. I showed Amina and two other nomadic girls, Tã'bã and Yi'di, the dances I had learned at dancing schools in Denmark and other places: classical ballet, waltz, foxtrot, and jive. Then we changed roles: Amina showed me the nomads' dances: Ruume (the rainy season happy dance), Moosi (which means smiling, during this dance spirits sit on the dancers' shoulders, and they fall into trance), and Yaake dances. Then I danced calypso, mambo, rock & roll, and



Jodi, a young Wodaabe man, finishes his make-up before the Jeerewol dance. Photo: Mette Bovin



Wodaabe youth under umbrellas, in 1992. Photo Mette Bovin
Jeerewol dance, with the long line of young men in the beauty parade. Photo Mette Bovin

high life music that I had learned in Nigeria in 1964. The dances were the beginning of a friendship that lasts until today, confirming my belief in body language.

ISTA

I have participated in nine ISTA sessions (Bonn, Germany, and Holstebro, Denmark 1980; Volterra, Italy 1981; Holstebro, Denmark 1986; Brecon, Wales UK 1990; Umeå, Sweden 1996; Copenhagen, Denmark 1996; Wrocław, Poland 2005; Favignana, Italy 2021), learning many tools for my work as an anthropologist.

Ever since participating in ISTA sessions, I have spoken of the principle of stage presence when talking to informants in many West African countries. I also learned about presence and situational awareness from Africans in the bush, for instance when hunting dangerous animals and having to mobilise the utmost possible presence to stay alive.

Learning to use my voice with power and with resonators helped me in Niger when I had to address 200 people in an African village with my speech in Kanuri language, a Manga dialect. I had to explain to a whole village near the Niger-Nigeria border, about a future drinking water project for their village. At other times, in closer social situations, I chose to whisper. For example, when for anthropological research I would sit among women and girls only, apart from the group of men. I was among Muslim Manga and Kanuri in Niger, far away from Mecca in Saudi Arabia. My research showed that the Manga social structure had been more matrilineal earlier and only when Islam came from the north through the Sahara desert around 900 A.D., the Manga became more and more patrilineal and their family structure changed.

Escape

Once I used all I had learned at ISTA to save my life in West Africa. It was in 2011. I sensed something was completely wrong. As I walked alone, I felt that I was being spied upon and followed. Someone had given me the wrong information on how to find a French internet-café while another person was filming me from a distance.

I called the Danish Consul in Niger, but he scornfully said that many people take videos in the streets of this town. I packed my bag in five minutes, left my little hotel through the back door and fled to another hotel where I locked myself up in a little annex room, without water and food, for two days. I called the Danish Consul on my mobile again and he excused himself because two young French had been taken as hostages by Al-Qaeda and I was their third target.

For the terrorists, we were a handful of stupid Europeans, while I was in Africa to do cultural studies and anthropological work among the Wodaabe nomads I knew so well, for an exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada. I had collected women's and men's everyday clothes and feast costumes. Sometimes peaceful work can be dangerous. Miraculously I managed to change my flight and get back home.

Dance

Often during my twenty-four years in West Africa, I have been asked by Europeans who had just arrived: “When is the theatre performance beginning?” I had to answer: ”The dances are the theatre! The dances are the performance!”

From 1968-2011, I studied nomadic Wodaabe culture in the bush of Niger, Nigeria, Cameroun and Tchad. Wodaabe are certainly professional dancers. From the age of one a Wodaabe boy is taught by his older brothers, father and uncles to move the eyes in a special way. Dance is a serious matter, not done for fun or as a game. When a boy turns 15, 16 or 17 the most holy dance called Jeerewol happens. The boy goes through a kind of exam judged by the Wodaabe spectators and critics. The boy’s chances to find a girl to marry depend on his performance during the long Beauty Parade. The young men stand on a long line, trying to move the eyes correctly and attract young girls. Often those who dance in a feminine way win the beauty competition. Dance is the social network and the way to show charisma and seduce a girl by magic, maybe even steal a woman from the opposite clan. Also the young girls begin to train the dance steps and movements and specific songs early. Dance is everything to the nomads. All their cultural objects and magic and money and music is embodied in the main dances.

I believe that the Wodaabe would not have survived the years of drought, loss of cows, crickets eating the bush, and Boko Haram terrorist killings, if they did not have their dances to practice and look forwards to in times of hunger.

When I studied Wodaabe performances I often thought about the knowledge of principles which I had learned at ISTA. I observed the performers’ presence, their balance and movement in space and the ostrich feather in the turban. My two worlds of anthropology and theatre came together. It was not a technical awareness like the one studied by theatre anthropology, but an experience that allowed me to see an essence beyond the form; an experience that keeps me alive.■

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Miguel Rubio Zapata

Retejiendo la raíz rota

Por las rutas de la antropología teatral

Fotografías: Pilar Pedraza

Abstract: : In this article Miguel Rubio Zapata presents his personal point of view on theatre anthropology as a field of observation through which to relate to other cultures and theatre traditions from different parts of the world. The article also presents a detailed report of the traditional Fiesta de la Virgen del Carmen (Paucartambo, Perú) and its different dances, masks and characters.

Keywords: Community theatre; Fiesta de la Virgen del Carmen; Perú; Yuyachkani

Tengo memoria viva desde casi mediados del siglo pasado, desde una práctica sustentada en la reivindicación de un teatro nuevo, insurgente, que reclama invención y rechazo a la herencia colonial. Así ha sido este andar y persistir; sin embargo, pienso que todavía hay mucho que labrar en ese terreno. Las urgencias surgidas de las permanentes crisis políticas y la precariedad en la que nos movemos, si bien nos ha permitido dar señales de vitalidad en la respuesta, siento que hay algo que todavía nos espera.

Cuando me aproximo a teatralidades de culturas lejanas, en las que sin embargo puedo reconocer similitudes, pienso que nuestros teatros de grupo de Latinoamérica no han alcanzado todavía el esplendor que merecen. Hay una raíz rota, que acaso debemos retejer para reconciliarnos con el origen, para superar ese salto negador que nos ha llegado como imposición y que nos impide mirar de dónde venimos. Se hace indispensable reconocernos de manera integral, crear con libertad y sin prejuicio, asumiendo plenamente el mandato de nuestros maestros para inventar nuestro teatro. Desde esta perspectiva, es preciso revisar la herencia colonial que ha normado lo que entendemos por teatro.

La antropología teatral sitúa un campo de observación cuyo objeto de estudio es transversal a las prácticas del actor en diversas tradiciones y culturas del mundo. Por tanto, nos permite confrontarnos con otras maneras de entender, asumir y organizar el acontecimiento teatral. La antropología teatral, si bien esta centrada en el actor y es para el actor ya que: “Es el estudio del comportamiento escénico preexpresivo, que se encuentra en la base de los diferentes géneros, estilos y papeles de las tradiciones personales y colectivas”. Esto abre una perspectiva de campo que nos invita a dialogar con sofisticados principios y procesos de simbolización y de representación, presentes en teatralidades culturales diversas, en las que no necesariamente está de por medio una finalidad estética.

De pronto, nos encontramos con una diversidad de *actores danzantes* que accionan



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interrelacionados con un poderoso entorno de teatralidades comunitarias, muchas de ellas enraizadas en una memoria ancestral que ha viajado en el tiempo resignificándose y que se mantienen vivas, renovadas y legitimadas por sus comunidades de origen.

Aunque la antropología teatral tenga un campo específico de estudio es, de todas maneras, un gran estímulo para pensar en el teatro de manera integral, con todos los componentes que lo hacen posible. Eugenio Barba de manera muy explícita ha señalado que: "... la antropología teatral no se ocupa de cómo aplicar al teatro y la danza los paradigmas de la antropología cultural. Ni es el estudio de los fenómenos performativos de las culturas que normalmente son objeto de investigación por parte de los antropólogos." Sin embargo, entendemos que la antropología teatral tiene necesariamente conexiones con la antropología social y cultural, disciplinas con las que mantiene un diálogo estrecho y de evidente influencia. En términos prácticos, esto puede significar un cambio radical en los procesos de creación. Poner al actor en el centro, no excluye considerar de manera integral todo el proceso de producción: pedagogía, dramaturgia, tratamiento del espacio, uso de accesorios, entrenamiento físico y vocal, etc.

Lo podemos comprobar en la moderna tradición de teatro surgida en América Latina y el Caribe, afincada en los teatros de grupo en donde se ha generado una cultura de actor, una identidad de oficio y de afirmación de su condición creadora a partir del entrenamiento como atributo primordial, con categorías o principios muy precisos para su formación. Este actor ha sentido la necesidad de encontrar un soporte técnico. Desde su entrenamiento desata su impulso creador que lo dispone a realizar operativos para apropiarse de algo que no ve pero que sabemos que está allí. Hemos ejercido este entrenamiento situándolo en nuestro contexto cultural y social.

El actor que danza

La antropología teatral pone en el centro al actor creador como artífice esencial del hecho escénico. Se ocupa de estudiar los principios comunes presentes en diferentes culturas de actor en los teatros del mundo. Cuando se refiere al actor, Barba dice: "... se deberá entender 'actor y bailarín', sea mujer u hombre; y al leer 'teatro', se deberá entender 'teatro y danza'." Desde este lugar cómo no pensar en un actor inmerso en las teatralidades de nuestras culturas, en las que el danzante es el principal animador del acontecimiento representacional.

En un territorio en el que se baila desde siempre, no podemos sino hacer propia esa condición de *actor danzante*. Esta es una categoría que nos ha sido indispensable para reconocer organicidad y escritura corporal. La noción de *actor danzante* encuentra sentido y verificación en las expresiones tradicionales, donde encontramos un danzante cuyo cuerpo porta memoria que se escribe en su danzar. Esta ha sido una ruta integradora de dos caminos que suelen aparecer separados también: actor y danzante. Un actor, en el contexto de la cultura peruana, no tendría que ser concebido como declamador o solo intérprete, alguien que convierte el texto verbal en el componente esencial de su condición.

Encontrar el camino del *actor que danza*, para nuestro grupo teatral Yuyachkani, ha sido recuperar un eslabón perdido; trabajar desde el cuerpo, evocando una memoria lejana para despertar su impulso creador que lo lleve al sitio inesperado. Tener una

mirada integral de la teatralidad nos permite tomar en cuenta otras fuentes presentes en el comportamiento y la representación de roles en lo festivo-religioso, la dramaturgia de espectáculo que opera y especialmente en aquella presencia de un bailarín que danza en el Perú desde los orígenes mismos de nuestra civilización.

Todavía nos esperan estudios precisos para encontrar, en estas y otras prácticas dancísticas, las maneras cómo operan los principios que propone la antropología teatral para estudiar el comportamiento escénico pre-expresivo. Por ahora, podemos señalar rutas, pautas de indagación frente a un torrente de información en las que las técnicas del *actor danzante* se nos presenta amalgamado y parte orgánica del contexto en el que aparecen tanto en el quehacer de los teatros de grupo como en las teatralidades de las culturas tradicionales.

Nos corresponde reconocer las huellas que nos anteceden, la herencia que recibimos y cómo reaccionamos frente a ella. Es vital, para que esto suceda, mirarnos en el bosque de las culturas teatrales del mundo. Dialogar con ellas, construidas de innumerables fuentes, ha significado para nosotros en Yuyachkani asumir el desafío de romper límites y acercarnos mas bien a fronteras porosas de saberes diversos: el descubrimiento de lugares imprevisibles. Ese es el puente que teje la antropología teatral y que nos permite llegar a esa otra orilla donde las diversidades se confrontan y reconocen sus particularidades.

La ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology), en las sesiones prácticas que suele realizar, propone encuentros de intercambio entre diversas culturas de actor. Un diálogo en el que se exhiben y comparan múltiples maneras del oficio y al mismo tiempo, en esa diversidad, se hacen evidentes los principios comunes al actor. El efecto de este nivel pre-expresivo del actor se puede ver también en el "Theatrum Mundi", espectáculo que se presenta para la ciudad donde se realiza el evento con los insumos de tradiciones diversas en la ISTA.

En nuestros teatros de grupo, las obras han sido creadas alejadas de los parámetros del teatro hegemónico o en discusión con ellos. Este enfoque ha permitido que nuestras fronteras escénicas estén saludablemente removidas y suficientemente contaminadas para enfrentar una pregunta fundamental: ¿Desde cuándo podemos reconocer indicios de teatro en el Perú y en la América Latina? ¿Cómo estamos dialogando con las teatralidades de las culturas?

El teatro del padre y el teatro de la madre

El teatro que llega de España es el teatro del padre, que vino y se impuso ante las teatralidades de nuestras culturas originarias. Al que podríamos llamarle el teatro de la madre es el de la América prehispánica. Muchas de estas manifestaciones encontradas, reprimidas violentamente, fueron asociadas a prácticas consideradas idólatras. Sus personajes sufrieron transformaciones y han ido cambiando de sentido a lo largo de su paso por la historia. Generadas en contextos rituales, celebraciones, juego, danza, enmascaramiento; estas formas de presencia y simbolización han dejado evidencias que podemos encontrar en tejidos, máscaras, murales, cerámicas, etc. Indicios de actos de representación, muchos de ellos han cruzado el tiempo y son parte de nuestro presente.

El teatro que llega con la conquista europea ha sido impuesto bajo paradigmas hegemónicos de occidente; incluso los rituales, fiestas, ceremonias encontradas fueron leídas desde estas categorías y valoradas como tales. Entonces es pertinente preguntarnos ¿Qué hemos heredado? ¿Sobre qué bases edificamos nuestros teatros hoy?

Tenemos por delante una tarea integradora que nos revele un espíritu similar al que poseen los teatros afirmados en sus culturas de origen y desde allí crecer. Por tanto, si nos preguntamos sobre nuestros orígenes teatrales, tanto en Perú como en cualquier país de América Latina, veremos que no es suficiente pensarlo desde la escritura literaria. Es menester rastrear el acontecimiento, las situaciones representacionales en los orígenes mismos de la civilización americana, criterio que, por cierto, nos parece más adecuado para países de culturas originarias ágrafas que aún hoy ostentan elevados índices de analfabetismo.

Reducir nuestra visión del teatro al predominio literario es negarnos a descubrir fuentes insospechadas de teatralidad. Es preciso entender el teatro como construcción cultural que nace de valores determinados, de acuerdo a la comunidad donde se genera, responde a relaciones sociales específicas que operan en diferentes momentos de la historia y se convierten en memoria activa. Cambiar el enfoque significa asumir el teatro como una totalidad integradora y no limitarlo a alguno de sus aspectos. La literatura dramática, desde donde suelen partir los estudios de los orígenes del teatro en el Perú, deja de lado el carácter efímero, irrepetible y con diversidad de componentes del teatro y sobre todo al *actor danzante* como centro y artífice esencial del acontecimiento escénico.

Por tanto, es preciso poner atención a la teatralidad presente en lugares de encuentros comunitarios donde confluye el rito, la oralidad, la música, la danza, eventos que se realizan para llevar y cumplir acuerdos, afirmar una costumbre, una fiesta para expresar adhesión, respeto, reciprocidad con toda la naturaleza, celebrando algo acordado por la comunidad y que genera la necesidad de encontrarse.

El accionar de Yuyachkani, como grupo de teatro peruano, está inmerso e interrelacionado con estas prácticas culturales. No lo imagino sin este indispensable diálogo con el que construimos nuestra cultura de grupo.

Teatralidad y fiesta o los otros viajes

Cuando empezamos a viajar por el Perú, especialmente por el Valle del Mantaro, la sierra central del Perú, nos encontramos con el esplendoroso mundo de la fiesta tradicional andina, la música, la danza, el vestido, la máscara. Nos hemos sentido seducidos por estas prácticas de un compartir comunitario. Fue allí que empezamos a mirar en el danzante una fuente esencial de aprendizaje para nuestro teatro. En el aprender de la danza, fuimos al encuentro de un cuerpo festivo, carnavalesco, y de esas otras escrituras presentes en el cuerpo que danza.

Tentar un entrenamiento, a partir de los principios de la antropología teatral, fue el inicio de un proceso que se fue haciendo complejo cuando encontramos que más allá de las formas, lo que sustenta ese danzar es una cosmovisión en la que coexisten tres mundos, de manera paralela, simultánea y relacionada: el *Uku Pacha* es el mundo interior, el *Kay Pacha* es el mundo de acá, y el *Hanan Pacha* es el mundo de afuera. Entonces, el aprendizaje de las danzas, en este encuadre nos permite indagar desde el

cuerpo, flujos, tensiones y calidades de energía distintas, presentes en la corporalidad de las danzas tradicionales.

Estas tres *Pachas* que habitan entre nosotros (el *Hanan Pacha*, *Kay Pacha*, *Uku Pacha*) pueden ser fuente para generar ejercicios equivalentes y generadores de presencia y comportamiento. Maestros bailarines suelen decir que en el danzar podemos encontrar diferentes maneras de acariciar y comunicarnos con la madre tierra. Este encuentro con las danzas y los maestros me remite a tradiciones teatrales de Asia, a la importancia que le dan al trabajo de piernas y de pies. Es desde el contacto con la tierra de donde se armoniza todo el cuerpo.

En los orígenes de algunas tradiciones teatrales está presente este vínculo estrecho con la tierra, el danzar y golpear para convocar el espíritu de los muertos y dialogar con el ancestro. En tradiciones nuestras, el danzante construye su presencia en relación mediadora con una deidad tutelar encarnada en un cerro, una laguna, un lugar sagrado, un animal, etc. Esta vía de poner el cuerpo para recibir entidad distinta nos permite también generar, a partir de este principio, un valor equivalente en nuestros trabajos.

En la obra de Yuyachkani *Adiós Ayacucho*, basada en la novela homónima de Julio Ortega, un campesino masacrado, muerto y mutilado decide emprender un viaje de Ayacucho a Lima para recuperar la parte de sus huesos que le faltan para darse sepultura y tener derecho a una “muerte digna con entierro propio y de cuerpo entero”. En la novela solo se escucha la voz del protagonista, la pregunta que inevitablemente aparece es: ¿en el teatro como sería posible representar esta situación de cuerpo ausente? Propusimos un velatorio sin cuerpo, solo con ropas, como se hicieron muchas veces frente a los cuerpos desaparecidos. Indagando el principio mediador vino en nuestro auxilio, la presencia de un danzante tradicional (el *Qolla*) que al poner el cuerpo recibió la información contenida en las ropas del ausente. De esta manera, nuestro personaje tuvo voz y cuerpo.



Augusto Casafranca en una escena de *Adiós Ayacucho* dirigida por Miguel Rubio. Foto: Teatro Yuyachkani

La fiesta de la Virgen del Carmen Un principio de equivalencia activo

Paucartambo, un pueblo serrano en la región de Cusco, es una fuente de inspiración a la cual mis compañeros de Yuyachkani se acercaron por primera vez en los años '80. Yo fui más tarde, y hace 25 años que no he dejado de ir. Cada año, entre el 15 y el 18 de julio, se celebra una de las fiestas más importantes del sur andino, en honor a la Virgen del Carmen. Participan en ella alrededor de veinte grupos de danzantes enmascarados, pertenecientes a diferentes sectores sociales del pueblo. Las danzas contienen memorias y narrativas propias, particulares a su historia y al segmento social del que provienen.

En esta singular manifestación de teatralidad, en la que concurren signos del pasado y del presente, los protagonistas son dos grupos de danzantes que se enfrentan porque ambos reclaman que la Virgen del Carmen de Paucartambo les pertenece. El vasto escenario que da lugar a la fiesta incluye toda la geografía del pueblo serrano: la plaza principal, el atrio de la iglesia, la casa de los cargos, el cementerio, las calles mismas, son intervenidos por un constante devenir de actores-danzantes accionando en grupo o de manera individual.

Un pueblo apacible durante casi todo el año ve alterada su cotidianidad durante los tres días y tres noches que dura la fiesta. Durante esos días, la vida cotidiana transcurre impresionada por la presencia y la actividad de actores danzantes enmascarados que recorren el pueblo en grupos, o fuera de ellos, caminando, generando "relaciones" entre la gente. Asistimos a un explosivo desborde de teatralidad viva y en movimiento, en donde se mezclan signos del pasado con otros de origen más cercano. En ese contexto de interacción entre actores, pobladores y visitantes, se produce una convivencia performática de gran estímulo para los sentidos que nos recuerda que el teatro es un juego de convenciones y relaciones con muchas posibilidades. Es lo que sucede en Paucartambo donde se rompen jerarquías y se borran fronteras entre actores y espectadores.



Paucartambo genera un abanico de teatralidades a través del comportamiento y la representación de roles que la fiesta asigna. Autoridades civiles y religiosas, pobladores y visitantes se ven involucrados en las secuencias que propone el guión de la fiesta, animada por los actores danzantes. Todos los que allí estamos formamos una comunidad efímera marcada por el juego de las representaciones y por los diferentes tipos de relación que propone el actor que danza frente a ese "otro", que encuentra su lugar como espectador y/o participante. Ese actor tiende puentes entre el cuerpo fisiológico y el cuerpo social de todos los allí presentes, activando flujos de energía comunitaria.

Esta fiesta escénica posibilita reconocer un vasto entretejido de teatralidades originarias y contemporáneas. Me acercaré a estas teatralidades problematizando la relación entre acontecimiento, historia oral, guion de las acciones y, especialmente, desde su indispensable componente efímero, ritual, sagrado, profano y enmascarado, que tiene en el cuerpo del actor-danzante las señales de una historiografía del acontecimiento.

En viajes sucesivos, año tras año, me fui acercando a la compleja organicidad escénica que ocurre en esta fiesta. Acompañé cada vez a diferentes grupos de danzantes, escuchando a la gente y sus diversas razones para asistir a la fiesta, las distintas narrativas que guardan las danzas en sus desplazamientos y sus trajes, así como lo que se cuenta de la llegada de la Virgen al pueblo.

Mucho que aprender en esta "fiesta madre". Me detengo en la experiencia, en la que los espectadores y danzantes compartimos el mismo espacio, todo acontece entre los allí reunidos. Todos somos parte del acontecimiento. Esto nos ha permitido encontrar un principio equivalente en lo que hemos indagado en algunos espectáculos recientes en nuestra sala, en la que el dispositivo ha sido organizar la acción en el espacio entre todos los que estamos reunidos. Esta ha sido la pauta de nuestra dramaturgia de espectáculo.



Dos vistas de la Plaza principal de Paucartambo. Una en el Día de la guerrilla de la fiesta de la Virgen del Carmen.

Dramaturgia de la fiesta

Los Qollas: En la noche del “Qonoy” (fuego) llegan los Qollas a Paucartambo con el propósito de robar a la Virgen del Carmen, para lo cual intentan incendiar el pueblo. Pero no lo logran y son sofocados por el rey Ch'unchu y su ejercito.

Según la tradición, el culto de los Ch'unchus a la Virgen del Carmen se inicia luego de una acción que realizaron contra los hacendados o grandes terratenientes, en la selva. En medio del ataque, los nativos hirieron la efigie de la Virgen y ésta fue arrojada al río. Este agravio significó muerte y enfermedades entre los Ch'unchus. A partir de este acontecimiento y guiados por sus sueños en los que se les aparecía la Virgen señalándoles el camino para encontrarla, inician su peregrinar. Al llegar al pueblo de Paucartambo, encuentran a la Virgen y deciden quedarse con ella para siempre como sus fieles guardianes.



(Arriba) El rey de los Q'hapac Ch'unchu y sus seguidores.
(Abajo) Los Q'hapac Qolla intentando incendiar el pueblo.

El ataque incendiario de los Qollas y los espectadores protegiéndose del fuego.

En el día final de la fiesta en honor a la Virgen del Carmen, en Paucartambo, Cuzco, sucede el desenlace de un conflicto desarrollado durante tres días con sus noches y que ha tenido como escenario toda la geografía de ese pueblo serrano. Dos grupos de danzantes, los Q'hapac Qollas (personas del sur de los Andes) y los Q'hapac Ch'unchu (indígenas de la selva) se enfrentan en encarnizado combate.

Esta pugna tiene antigua data, se remonta a un conflicto étnico, de origen prehispánico, que hoy vemos transformado en lucha por la posesión de la Virgen del Carmen. El momento crucial es “la guerrilla”, que sucede alrededor de la plaza. Al final los Qollas serán vencidos y expulsados del pueblo, hasta el próximo año cuando regresarán a intentarlo nuevamente.



Los Saqras: En el contexto de la fiesta, los Saqras adoptan el rol de confrontación de poder frente a la Virgen. Su lugar predilecto son los techos de las casas, pero también danzan en medio de la gente. Hay momentos de la danza en que los Saqras se acercan a los espectadores emitiendo sonidos onomatopéyicos.

Las máscaras de los Saqras representan diablos traviesos. Los personajes están contruidos como un híbrido antropomorfo, encarnan una dualidad: hombre-felino o ave de rapiña. Son similares a las representaciones de deidades

encontradas en diversas iconografías de las civilizaciones del Antiguo Perú.

Durante la procesión, algunos toman los techos de las casas paucartambinas, desde donde cubren sus rostros y se retuercen al paso de la Virgen para no ser seducidos por su belleza. A la vez, tratan de tentar a sus fieles y devotos desde los balcones, techos y postes.



La China Saqra (mujer que acompaña al Caporal) es el personaje más popular de la danza, lleva una falda de seda con los colores del arcoíris.

En la Guerrilla, momento culminante del argumento de la fiesta, los Saqras aparecen cuando los Q'hapac Qolla son abatidos y recogen sus cuerpos muertos en su “nina-carro”, o carro de fuego, para llevárselos al infierno.

Kita Qolla, el personaje disidente: La danza reproduce la forma de convivencia de las llamas. Éstas van en grupo y así como tienen un líder también hay una llama rebelde, que se escapa, pero siempre regresa. Al igual que en la recua de llamas, el Kita Qolla es un actor danzante de la comparsa que tiene autonomía para jugar libremente. El Kita Qolla es un personaje disidente dentro de su propio grupo. Este comportamiento remarca la condición opuesta y complementaria, dualidad característica de los Qollas.





Chucchus o palúdicos:

Los danzantes de Chucchus o palúdicos son campesinos andinos que se fueron a trabajar a la selva y se enferman de paludismo, arriban a la fiesta de Paucartambo cada 15 de julio. Sus máscaras amarillas dan señas de su procedencia. Sus rostros exhiben heridas y picaduras de insectos, algunos están tuertos o hinchados. Llegan danzando su historia, van a la fiesta para pedir a la Virgen del Carmen que los cure.

Doctorcitos: Las máscaras de los Doctorcitos tienen cejas gruesas, anchos bigotes, patillas pobladas y ojos grandes para representar a los tinterillos, jueces, abogados y abogadas, personalidades del poder judicial. Como accesorios, portan látigo o bastón y sostienen un libro llamado “caracho” o, en algunos casos, viejos pergaminos bajo el brazo en alusión crítica a los trámites y papeleos que implican los procesos judiciales. En el contexto de esta danza se realiza una parodia de juicio donde los doctorcitos juzgan a un humilde campesino y lo golpean con un libro inmenso titulado “El peso de la ley”.



Máscaras y danzas

Asistir varias veces a la fiesta tradicional de Paucartambo fue una verdadera escuela para nosotros de Yuyachkani. Nos permitió relativizar “criterios universales y hegemónicos” y valorar la singularidad de teatros sustentados en dinámicas de juego que en muchas culturas son la base del acontecimiento teatral, a partir de la asignación de roles, convenciones que destilan exquisitas “situaciones de representación”. La observación de la máscara y el estudio del danzante enmascarado se volvió un eje transversal en nuestro colectivo. Nos ha inspirado en las creaciones de máscaras para nuestros espectáculos y en establecer una relación entre estas caras fijas y el dinamismo del comportamiento escénico individual.

El danzante enmascarado es el principal animador de los contextos de celebración del Perú andino. A través de los tiempos, aparece vinculado a su comunidad como parte de una concepción de la vida articulada en relación a los ciclos de la tierra y su calendario. En el principio, danza, teatro y canto eran factores constitutivos de un mismo evento.

Desde tiempos inmemoriales, las máscaras cuentan y siguen contando historias entre nosotros. Ser portador de una máscara convierte al danzante en oficiante de una liturgia, con el poder de tener la ventaja de observar sin ser observado. El espectador orienta su mirada hacia los ojos de la máscara; pero el danzante lo mira, a su vez, con sus propios ojos, como quien atisba por una ventana. La mirada, entonces, se vuelve esencial para la interacción entre danzante y espectador. Es por eso que los maestros artesanos de la máscara saben que en los ojos se concentra la vida. Sin embargo, el enmascaramiento involucra no solo el rostro sino todo el cuerpo, que se transforma con el vestuario y se convierte en la piel del personaje. Intervienen, también, accesorios como pañuelos, pelucas, sombreros, bastones. La máscara convoca y confirma la aparición de un cuerpo nuevo dispuesto a revelar historias.

Su danzar casi siempre tiene que ver con una fe y una promesa que cumplir, por eso no escatima ningún esfuerzo ni dinero para concretar su participación. Paga por ello invirtiendo en su traje y máscara, así como en la organización de la fiesta (comida, banda de músicos, arreglos del templo y otros). Esta actitud está emparentada con la de la comunidad, también movida por una fe y un diálogo ancestral con la naturaleza y las deidades tutelares.

El cuerpo es el lugar

El teatro hegemónico con el que nos confrontamos suele tratar la corporalidad del actor separada de la mente. Frente a esa insostenible dualidad “mente-cuerpo”, nuestro trabajo propone una ruta integradora. Ese ha sido, de alguna manera, el camino que iniciamos hace cincuenta años. Me siento privilegiado de haber podido acompañar a mi grupo Yuyachkani en largos procesos de trabajo físico y mental, orientado a modelar y recibir esa nueva dimensión de su “estar” en la acción, en el sitio primordial de su condición y de su oficio.

El reconocimiento de una dramaturgia de actor ha sido también una manera de preparación para indagar el cuerpo codificado de las danzas tradicionales peruanas. Esto ha sido posible después de lograr un entrenamiento base, de reconocer la codificación corporal que tuvo como referencia ejercicios, teatros y danzas asiáticas de los maestros de la ISTA. Fue como irse lejos para reconocer ese otro cuerpo desconocido que habita en nosotros, para luego ir al encuentro de nuestras propias danzas personales y tradicionales, accediendo a ellas de manera sistemática, organizada y metódica.

De esta manera, han proliferado caminos escénicos diversos que están a la vista en propuestas que registra la historiografía teatral de nuestros grupos en la América Latina.

Dramaturgias

Llamar *acción escénica* a lo que hacíamos fue la manera de dar nombre a nuestras prácticas, a nuestras intervenciones en espacios cerrados o abiertos, con o sin texto previo. El término nos dio libertad para reconocernos abiertamente en una zona de frontera donde confluyen teatro, música, danza, narración, performance. Fuentes de diferente origen, reunidas y mixturadas entre sí, desafiando maneras convencionales de lo que suele entenderse por dramaturgia, en las que la escritura literaria es el elemento determinante. No se trata, por cierto, de desconocer la literatura dramática sino más bien valorar los otros componentes que concurren en el acontecimiento teatral.

Las prácticas de los grupos teatrales autodidactas nos han ido demostrando, en el tiempo, cómo la fricción de materiales de diferente origen reunidos en escena puede generar otras categorías dramáticas y no solo las provenientes de la palabra escrita, el habla o la narrativa. Es aquí donde aparecen otras posibilidades de vínculos. Finalmente, hacer dramaturgia es tejer relaciones, en este caso, a partir de la reunión de materiales diversos que posibilitan otras conexiones con el espectador. De pronto, en este discurrir, aparece lo imprevisible y ello demanda también una nueva actitud del espectador, al ser reconocido en su condición de creador, interlocutor activo en el evento. Hemos creado acontecimientos escénicos con diferentes componentes. Nuestros grupos en Latinoamérica han nacido y crecido en espacios alternativos, inventando nuevas posibilidades de teatro, accionando en escenarios muy diversos y en contextos muy difíciles también.

El viaje de la presencia

“Presencia” podría ser el hilo conductor y la palabra clave para señalar el camino de aprendizaje que han seguido los integrantes de Yuyachkani desde el inicio. Es un camino que ha tenido acentos y particularidades acordes a nuestra vida de grupo. Lo que buscábamos corporalmente, durante los primeros años, era un cuerpo especialmente tenso y categórico, de alguna manera contrapuesto a la presencia que buscamos ahora, sustentada más bien en la circularidad.

La presencia ha sido nuestro eje, el punto de partida, la palabra clave que ha sabido guiar el sentido de nuestra técnica desde los inicios, mutando con acentos particulares en cada momento de nuestra historia grupal y personal.

Este trabajo no ha sido sólo físico, ha sido social y político.

Por tanto, las técnicas y los caminos de la corporalidad han estado condicionados por las maneras cómo hemos interactuado con nuestro contexto social. Esto se ve reflejado en las formas de construir presencia y así encontramos un “cuerpo heroico”, tenso, de puño en alto; un cuerpo festivo, carnavalesco; un cuerpo de actor que danza; un cuerpo simbólico, metafórico; un cuerpo en resistencia; un cuerpo ausente en tiempos de la violencia; el cuerpo personal, fisiológico que se une al cuerpo social.

Este proceso ha devenido en gestar una cultura de grupo que se sustenta en los actores investigando, aprendiendo a aprehender, encontrando la técnica necesaria para despertar su impulso creador. El resultado de esta indagación se concreta en una identidad personal de actor en el reconocimiento de sus herramientas de trabajo. Alimentado por una perspectiva más bien multidisciplinar y no sujeta a parámetros pre-establecidos y orientados a repetir un ritual pre-determinado por el teatro hegemónico.

Desde nuestra cultura de grupo de teatro dialogamos con estas teatralidades en las que prima el acontecimiento efímero, reconociendo en ellas cómo operan sus principios en diferentes aspectos que nos emparentan. Especialmente los comportamientos del danzante como operador del acontecimiento.

Regreso al inicio de estas notas para reafirmar la necesidad de transitar rutas integradoras que nos permitan reconocernos en nuestra diversidad. Por eso la necesidad de “retejer” esa trama perdida. Ir al encuentro de la raíz rota no tiene nada que ver con la nostalgia ni con la evocación de un pasado idílico. Sin embargo, este reconocimiento nos es indispensable para repensar nuestro teatro y sus múltiples construcciones, las conocidas y sobre todo las desconocidas, que vinculen tradición y contemporaneidad en diálogo con las culturas teatrales del mundo.

Tendríamos que decir que, para nosotros como grupo, la antropología teatral ha sido una base fundamental en la formación de una cultura de actor creador, con principios concretos de trabajo y al mismo tiempo ha despertado nuestra mirada hacia el *danzante* en sus múltiples comportamientos representacionales. La antropología teatral es un soporte conceptual liberador para reconocer origen y seguir inventando el teatro que nos hace falta. ■

Ejemplos de personajes en la teatralidad andina del Perú

Taqui: *Taqui*, palabra quechua de origen remoto que quiere decir “bailar y cantar”, es un género asociado a la representación, a soltar el cuerpo y la voz en comportamientos simbólicos para celebrar la siembra, la cosecha, la marca de animales, los ritos de fecundidad y las faenas colectivas vinculadas a la tierra, al agradecimiento a las deidades y a la despedida de los muertos. Toda esta práctica de representación la podemos seguir viendo en las fiestas tradicionales que se dan en todo el Perú.

Desde los orígenes mismos de nuestras culturas ancestrales, la danza y el canto aparecen como componente fundamental de nuestra condición. Por tanto, no podemos dejar de pensar desde ese lugar que entendemos por teatralidad.

Taki, nos remite a bailar y cantar, y *Taki Ongoy* hacia los límites de bailar para resistir.

En celebraciones tradicionales andinas, en los *Takis* de hoy, podemos encontrar personajes que han atravesado el tiempo y han sobrevivido resignificándose en el camino. Siguen allí, conteniendo viejas señales que coexisten con las nuevas, se mantienen vivas y renovadas. Como el *Kusillo* (mono), danzante enmascarado, que sigue bailando en las fiestas del altiplano, se dice aparecía cual bufón en la corte del Inca. También el *Machutususq* (danza de viejos) que exaltaba los valores de la ancianidad en el mundo prehispánico y luego se convirtió en personaje satírico del viejo conquistador. El *Huakón* que sigue danzando en Mito, su comunidad de origen, los primeros días del año. De este personaje se dice también que es sacerdote del milenario dios volador Kon, identidad asumida por el danzante para representar la dualidad de un Hombre cóndor.

Diablada: La china diablo, personaje que aparece en la región Puno (sur andino) en la fiesta en honor de la Virgen de la Candelaria, es parte de la celebre danza de la diablada. Los orígenes de esta danza se remontan a un ritual prehispánico para pedir permiso a una deidad tutelar del mundo de abajo, llamado Anchanchu, para extraer minerales. Dicen que el Anchanchu tiene la cara de un venado viejo, por eso la máscara que los representaba tenía unos pequeños cachos. Los conquistadores interpretaron la presencia de los cachos como la representación del diablo. Este podría ser el origen de lo que hoy conocemos como Diablada, representada por danzantes portando inmensas máscaras. La memoria ancestral se junta con el presente.

La danza de la Huaconada: Los primeros días del año en la comunidad de Mito, Valle del Mantaro en la sierra central del Perú. Los Huacones se erigen como la máxima autoridad del pueblo; son el espíritu de las deidades tutelares de la montaña fusionadas con el cóndor: hombre – ave sagrada. Este rasgo se hace evidente en la máscara tallada en madera, cuya prominente nariz se asemeja al cóndor, al igual que los movimientos de los brazos que bailan aleteando, pegados a la cintura, como regresando de un vuelo cercano a los dioses del mundo de arriba. Para convocar al personaje, los danzantes se dirigen en la madrugada a las afueras del pueblo para luego hacer su ingreso totalmente transformados, portando látigo en mano.



Diablada



Danza de la Huaconada





Diablicos: En Túcume, Lambayeque, en la costa norte del Perú donde floreció la cultura Moche, se encuentra el Valle de las Pirámides. Dicen, sus habitantes, que antiguamente, en la parte más alta de una de las pirámides - conocida como Cerro Purgatorio - se veía una inmensa hoguera de fuego que era atizada por el demonio. Desde allí bajaban los curas disfrazados de diablos para asustar y evangelizar a la población. Esa historia la cuentan los Diablicos de Túcume, con sus grandes máscaras, cuando bailan paa la Virgen cada febrero. El auto sacramental que les dio origen ha ido desapareciendo.

La Tunantada: Esta danza aparece cada 20 de enero en la provincia de Jauja, region Junín, en la sierra central del Perú.

Posiblemente sus orígenes se remontan a las fiestas coloniales, a las que llegaban visitantes de diferente procedencia, que siempre terminaban en baile. Esta elegante danza posee también una connotación satírica en la que se recrean posturas de ibéricos y andinos en tiempos de la colonia. También es llamada danza-drama por la diversidad de sus personajes.



Ukukus, enmascarados peregrinos: Desde tiempos remotos las montañas han sido motivo de adoracion y peregrinaje El nevado. Ausangate en la region Cusco en el sur este del Perú, es el escenario de esta multitudinaria peregrinacion. Los Ukukus son los hijos dilectos del nevado situado a cinco mil metros de altura. Su vestuario está realizado en base a fibra de alpaca y de llama, portan una máscara, son los que posibilitan el enlace entre los peregrinos, usan voz de falsete para no ser identificados, son rigurosos cuidadores de la disciplina en el lugar.

Mas de cien mil peregrinos asisten a las fiestas del Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i (nieve resplandeciente). Los Ukukus son los principales animadores de este peregrinar, de origen prehispánico, al nevado Sinakara. Estos personajes están relacionados con el Hanan Pacha o mundo de arriba, son los únicos que pueden acceder al nevado. Chakri Wayra es la danza ceremonial, bailan para subir a más de cinco mil metros de altura, en un terreno difícil; la danza esta diseñada para poder avanzar y cansarse menos.





Bianca Mastrominico

Embodying Essence through Absence

Performance practice and pedagogy through digital platforms

Abstract: In this article Bianca Mastrominico focuses on how to embody liveness through digital platforms within the framework of theatre anthropology, looking at how remote performers and spectators interact through screen technology to discern principles and techniques that can guide online training, and creating work for a digital spectator. Her conclusions envisage a soft technology which fosters participatory practice and includes the non-human in creative processes.

Keywords: Theatre anthropology; Digital performance; Online theatre; Performer training; Screen technology

Flanker Origami



During the Covid19 pandemic many practitioners encountered an organic digital shift in their performance practice. With the attempt to resume and revert to more usual in-person working dynamics, it would be tempting to dismiss these shifts as a temporary solution to a moment of crisis. Live online performance making - as distinct from broadcasting or live streaming of in-person events - is rapidly changing conceptual and practical notions of spectatorship and participation for artists who had never experimented within the digital field before the pandemic. It is also paving the way towards innovative training and performance practices, and the intimacy with new technologies is redefining the meaning of embodiment and liveness in the context of digital creativity. To discuss the current online shifts, I will use the framework of theatre anthropology, a field of investigation based on empirical performance research developed by the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) founded in 1979 by Eugenio Barba. In the first issue of the *JTA - Journal of Theatre Anthropology* Barba (2021, 12) recapitulates its origins and defines it as an “operative science”, which is concerned with “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”.

To help my analysis, I will attempt to apply some key principles of theatre anthropology to the context of my current practice research, which seeks to explore strategies of performance making, training and pedagogy through digital platforms. I also refer to my experience of participation in the digital course of the International School of Theatre



Anthropology/New Generation (ISTA/NG) in October 2021, in order to elaborate on my research findings and evaluate the impact of the course within the hybrid conditions of in-presence activities in Italy. To begin with, I will focus on the migration of my training practice onto the Zoom platform in the context of Digital HotSpot, a research collective which aims at exploring the soft boundaries between spectatorship and performance on digital. I will then consider the live online adaptation of my performance work through Organic Theatre's digital performance *Flanker Origami*. These ongoing practice research projects are shared with my working partner John Dean, as co-creator, researcher and performer, and have been supported by and developed as part of the research activities of the "Practice Research Cluster: Finding and Understanding Creative Knowledge" within the Centre for Communication, Cultural and Media Studies at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland.

In order to look at "the galaxy of the digital" (Barba 2021, email message to author, September 5, 2021) through the perspective of theatre anthropology, I will follow the praxis of studying what Barba (1991, 8) refers to as "the human being's socio-cultural and physiological behaviour in a performance situation". In enquiring how my experience of digital (dis)embodiment is impacting on my performance processes, I will refer to the pragmatic laws of presence, energy, the dramaturgy of the performer, and montage in relation to the use of screen technology, to discuss the perception of both performers and spectators that derives from working on specific video applications. I am interested in the challenges and the stimuli provoked by the friction between my embodied practice and digital technology, and to this purpose I question how practical knowledge can be transmitted through the immateriality of the internet, and which kind of corporeality and performer's *techne* can be generated through observing the effects of online performance behaviours. I also aim to demonstrate that digital performance making can produce charged creative spaces-in-between, and that investigating the know-how of working with and through new technologies can have a positive impact on sustaining training and performance practices in a digital context and beyond. Finally, I suggest that through engaging creatively with new technologies and intermedial practices we can reframe our anthropomorphic and anthropocentric gaze on the technology itself, expanding and innovating creative approaches.

Shifting to the Zoom window

For those practitioners world-wide who suddenly lost their creative contexts, working spaces and networks of professional support, shifting practice online was a forced yet conscious decision to retain an artistic continuity, as well as to find a personal space for self-expression within the social restrictions of the lockdowns. At the onset of the pandemic, alongside the professional and high-tech broadcasting of recorded shows, a global proliferation of livestreamed performances began to occur on video conference applications such as Zoom, as pop-up digital theatres, in which the domestic spaces of performers were converted into virtual stages beamed directly into the houses of disembodied spectators. As a performance maker, I too embraced my living space as

a site for digital performance, attending online theatre workshops from home, as well as developing online training in my living room. At that stage, the crucial concern in migrating my own performance practice onto the digital medium became how to retain liveness and keep collaborative processes alive in a way that would contain the essence of the creative conditions I would normally experience in person.

Provoked by the constraints of the pandemic, these alternative home spaces for on-line performance making contributed to altering the experience and the perception of the ways we communicate with one another through our bodies and our senses. However, as dancer, filmmaker and screendancer practitioner Clare Loussouarn (2021a, 73) states "the Zoom environment was used as a replacement for physical gathering without much reflection on how social interaction and body perception are distorted through the prism of the screen". Therefore, in order to assess how digital platforms can influence performance processes, it is necessary to look at how performers and spectators perceive each other's bodies (as well as their own) through the digital screen, and what sort of behaviour and communication emerges from interacting through the Zoom window. Equally, in examining notions of embodiment and energy transmission through the digital frame, I will seek to discern what technical principles can be found and developed to maintain a level of affect and connection through screen technology, when utilized as a tool for performance making.

Digital presence and spectatorship

To start my analysis, I will refer to "the actor's presence and the perception of the spectator" as the theme of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA/NG), which was addressed and discussed by Barba in collaboration with the ISTA performers and teachers. While observing Alessandro Rigoletti from Teatro tascabile di Bergamo (Italy) in his demonstration of a cycle of dance movements from the Indian kathakali dance-drama, Barba (2021a) spoke about awakening "the kinaesthetic sense of the spectator" and stimulating their nervous system through the "archaic technology of the [performer's] body". He then gave a precise indication of what is programmed to "move" the spectator in the codified scenic behaviour of the kathakali performer: building continuity within the dance sequence in order to disrupt it and make tonic changes in the dancer's body, which in turn affect the spectator's perception (Barba 2021b). According to this, activating the kinaesthetic sense through changes in the muscular tone rests on the assumption that the body-mind is in a performative state. On the Zoom platform, there is a tendency to limit the performativity to the fixed headshot and to the "talking heads" of performers, mainly concerned with an exchange of words (Loussouarn 2021b, 73). Therefore when bodies are passive in online communication, the possibility of stimulating the spectator's kinaesthetic sense decreases.

In the light of Barba's indications, the feeling of disembodiment and disconnection, often considered as an intrinsic dilemma for the creative use of corporate platforms such as Zoom, appears to be characterised by online performers disengaged from their bodies, and therefore refrained by the digital settings in modelling their "natural and

daily behaviour into extra-daily scenic behaviour” (Barba and Savarese 1991, 189). The habit of using digital platforms uncreatively, and mostly for work meetings or for virtual visits to family and friends, seems to hinder the possibility of (re)creating the biological flow of the body in action, which could instead overcome the perceived restrictions of the frame. As Jean-Marie Pradier (as cited in Barba and Savarese 1991, 215) describes “the perception of bodies in movement induces a kind of echo of subtle tonic variations in the observers, who respond to their perceived movement with their own body”. Therefore, performance makers who oblige themselves to fit the standard requirements of a video call, renouncing their whole body as a tool for communication, will inevitably become introverted, collapsing into their soma, which in turn will prevent them from engaging the digital spectator kinaesthetically.



Illustration 1

Digital HotSpot: performer training through screen technology

As a performer on the Zoom platform, it is crucial to firstly address how one can break the passivity that sits between the technology and the body, in order to acquire a believable state of digital presence. In the first sessions of my research collective Digital HotSpot, training focused on bypassing physical timidity in front of the screen, also searching for ways to (re)create physical connectivity between participants. Activities designed to imagine oneself going through or beyond the screen were invented, such as an exercise of blowing each other over, based on simple action-reaction tasks which worked to trick participants’ brains into believing that there was no screen barrier in front of them. The use of the breath to trigger physical reactions in digitally connected bodies operates as an “extra-daily body and mind technique” (Barba and Savarese 1991, 77) which allows performers to mould and play with their energy online, while sensing the screen not as a barrier, but as a porous membrane one could pass through. The process of connecting with the breath through the action of blowing - which in this context also requires an act of our imagination, a Stanislavskian ‘magic if’ - triggers participants into a holistic, somatic responsiveness to the in-between spaces of the technology. To further explore physical and vocal reactivity on the platform, other imaginative triggers are employed in order to create lists of actions via the Zoom chat. For example, using an improvisation technique borrowed from the pioneering experiments in network performance by Desktop Theater, a digital performance project created by Adriene Jenik and Lisa Brennels that ran between 1997 and 2002, performers are asked to complete the sentence “what would happen if we...” several times and post them on the chat, as shown below:

- 14:36:30 From Participant 1: What would happen if we tried to stand on our heads?
- 14:36:37 From Participant 2: jump up and down
- 14:36:43 From Participant 3: flew to the moon
- 14:36:59 From Participant 1: What would happen if we were sick in front of people?
- 14:37:00 From Participant 3: screamed blue murder

- 14:37:07 From Participant 2: kiss the wall
- 14:37:13 From Participant 3: mistrusted each other
- 14:37:24 From Participant 1: What would happen if we mistakenly believed we were world leading pianists?

(John Dean, Bianca Mastrominico and Madeleine Worrall, July 24, 2020, Zoom meeting, Digital HotSpot)

This task invented for a digital ensemble reflects what Barba (as cited in Barba and Savarese 1991, 250) says, that for the quality of training “it is less the exercise itself than the temperature of the process which is decisive”. The timings of the entries, as well as the pauses and the thinking lapses between posts, expose intellectual and creative impulses in completing the sentence, alongside the act of bouncing off each other’s ideas. In replicating a cyber-improvisation originally intended for avatars - that is, electronic images representing computer users, who may manipulate them, as in a game - and injecting human energy in embodying the suggestions, participants are compelled to activate their physical intelligence to overcome disembodiment and remoteness on Zoom. While watching each other in the act of *doing on screens*, the ensemble slowly drifts from training into a performance mode. These instances of performativity on the digital medium, generated by exercises intended for experimenting with “the performer’s scenic bios” (Barba and Savarese 1991, 188), blur the boundaries between *being* and *doing* on the platform, creating what I define as “an ecology of becoming” (Mastrominico 2021), where participation and creation is fluid and accepting of the online working conditions.

Digital spaces as online stages

In breaking the passive stance and focussing on interactions through the digital platform, the work of the Digital HotSpot collective investigates how we perceive and create space online, as well as how the digital and the physical space connect. Individual houses become domestic spaces of transformation and imagination, and the way they are perceived by the digital spectator, as well as what they communicate, are aspects to bear in mind when working on self-specific sites which are full of our subjectivity. Performers exploring hidden corners and atmospheres within their homes play with light and darkness, using the torch in their phones to create shadows, as well as detached light bulbs and desk lamps to isolate themselves or part of their bodies. Reframing private habitats as a shared digital set, found objects and somatic exploration of the physical space produce filmic imagery, which elevate the creative potential of the Zoom window. Working on the theme of “living solo”, three clown-like figures slowly show themselves through



Illustrations 2, 3, 4



Illustration 5

the gaps of a barrier they have built in front of the camera eye with discarded pizza boxes and Lego pieces, toying with the idea of home privacy in a voyeuristic Zoom environment. The addition of randomly selected music styles played by Alexa, a voice-based AI [Artificial Intelligence] digital assistant which works by giving it spoken commands, provides another layer to the improvisations and incorporates the non-human alongside human performers in the digital process. The dialogue between body and space through digital technology, which is played against the domestic and daily life of the performers - often literally through the kitchen and the living room - could be defined as “poor (digital) theatre” in homage to Jerzy Grotowski, as this poverty of means is also what characterises the theatrical strengths of working through the digital frame. As Barba (2021, Zoom conversation with author, December 1, 2021) observed while commenting on the techniques adopted to develop *Flanker Origami*:

What I find very interesting in all this is that if, on one hand what we are doing is typical of theatre because it's done with very little means - there are no special effects here that blow up an entire city - here there is only a wig, I will take it off and I transform myself [...], on the other hand one has this great vehicle of the digital image which means that I can get closer [...] and all that is close up has a very strong effect on the perception of the spectator.

Therefore low tech solutions - often discovered by accident in workshops and retained while improvising - can be consciously employed to sustain and enhance the live dimension of the digital.

Glitches and backgrounds: an aesthetic of approximation

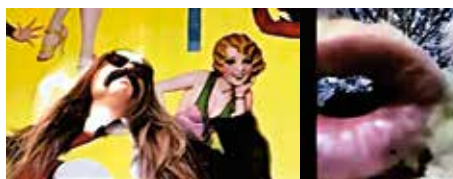
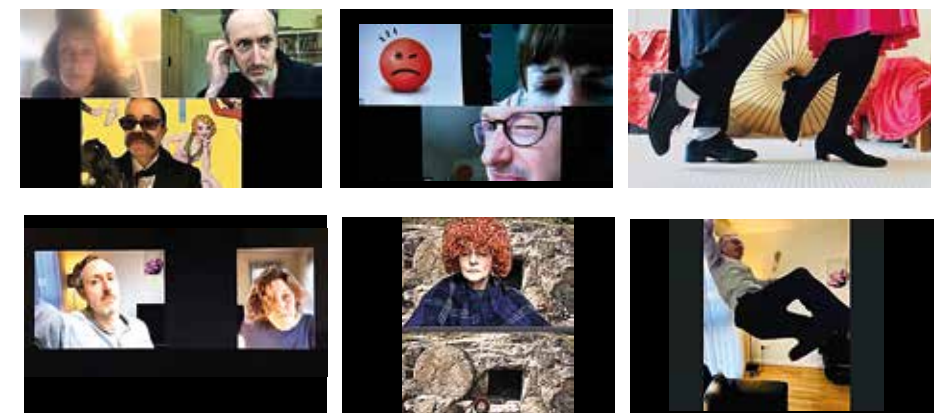


Illustration 6

Working intentionally without being bogged down by the technology also involves being aware and in acceptance of any technical glitches, which can be disruptive of the space-time continuum in digital processes. As Matthew Causey (2016, 434) states, the glitch is “a momentary fault in the system, an aesthetic of failure, disruption, noise, and interference that promotes spontaneity and randomness”. Therefore, glitches can either be considered as a digital defect or as an opportunity, which can be fruitful to performers who are willing to explore them creatively. Glitches on a digital platform can also be provoked by human action - in holding devices and becoming physically

attuned to the technology, any roughness in the framing or handling of the camera will become visible on screen. However, it will not necessarily be perceived as a human error, but as part of the performer's kinaesthetic behaviour through framing themselves and the space around them. The glitches, either technical or provoked by the performers, correspond to an aesthetic of approximation and to dramaturgical ruptures of the flow in digital interactions, which stimulate the brain and refocus the spectator's attention, functioning similarly to the change in the sequence of the kathakali performer, as highlighted by Barba during ISTA/NG. Thus the digital glitch creates a tension and a suspension in meaning, while on the other hand human disruption can be defined and perceived as a glitch in a dialogical exchange through screens. This works as a rupture in the dramaturgy, perturbing the status quo: for example, the heightened presence of a performer disrupting the credible Zoom interaction of an arguing couple.

In the awareness that the performer's body itself can be perceived as *glitchy* in relation to the screen, Digital HotSpot sessions also focus on exploring the frame as an immersive environment which merges with the somatic appearance of the performer. The screen-stage is tested through isolating actions in close-ups, using emoticons as triggers for facial expressions or exposing only one segment of the body to break from the typical Zoom framing of the performer as a talking head. Entrances and exits from all directions of the frame allow to sense the threshold between being *in* and *out* of the screen, as well as the edges and the peripheral space around the window. Backgrounds change the content and context of what the spectator sees in the frame, and a digitally constructed environment overwrites real places, suggesting different locations or a shared space for the performers to inhabit. Images can be static or in motion, working as layers and as backdrops in which the performers display but also displace themselves. Changing the proxemic relationship with the camera gives the illusion of tridimensionality, and of defying gravity. Backgrounds not only create a digital immersive space, but they can also work as a *prothesis*, which “assists the performer's body, dilate it and conceal it while continuously transforming it” (Barba and Savarese, 1991, 219). In this way, a Zoom frame subjected to constant metamorphosis also enhances the performer's process of building their digital presence.



Illustrations 7 to 12

Embodying essence through absence

In the context of theatre anthropology, the performer's presence is a core area of investigation related to the pre-expressive level, which as Barba and Savarese (1991, 188) indicate "deals with how to render the actor's energy scenically alive" in order to make the performer become "a presence which immediately attracts the spectator's attention". Working through digital platforms, the remoteness of the performer-spectator interaction establishes *presence* through what is experienced and perceived as *absence*. This apparent paradox is embedded in the digital encounter and requires experimenting with principles and working techniques that enable performers to embody "essence through absence" in the digital realm (Barba, 2021, email to author, September 5, 2021). Embracing the lack of bodily presence is a *modus operandi* (a way of working) of digital performance practice, which if acquired, learned and practiced through the medium, can lead to the realisation that corporeal absence can generate a *different* state of presence. This is intended as the outcome of an interpersonal need for communication established between two or more individuals *through* the technology, which according to Frank Camilleri (2019, 92) forms part of the sociomaterial dimension for that interaction to happen "within the bigger picture of [...] a sociality big enough to include the role played by non-humans".

Mirror-screen and self-image

Digital presence splits simultaneously between the physical space of performers, their images on screens and the shared online stage. This leads us to acknowledge the impact of screen technology on how performers perceive themselves - or their self-image - through the mirror-screen, also in relation to their embodied experience. Watching oneself performing on the Zoom screen can be compared to the experience of looking into a non-reversing mirror, or *true mirror*, through which, according to the website of the True Mirror Company as of December 23, 2021, "self-communication is enhanced greatly because reflected expressions match what is real". The moving image of the performer is continuously reflected and played from the mirror-screen back into the physical space and then beamed into the screen again, through a pattern which gives way to a gradual process of self-recognition, in that performers witness themselves playing in the moment. In reflecting their image back to them in real time, the digital screen - as a true mirror - turns performers into spectators of themselves, generating a peculiar type of mirror-response. As performance maker Ellie Higgins (October 7, 2021, Zoom meeting) commented during a Digital HotSpot session: "It's like seeing yourself and someone else at the same time. It's really bizarre, it's like looking in a mirror, but actually I am not looking at me."

The split in the visual perception of oneself on the Zoom screen is linked to what Philippe Rochat (2001, 205) calls the "self-other paradox" of the mirror reflection, which is "paradoxical in the sense that what is seen in the mirror is the self as another person". This leads to the consideration of how performers perceive their moving image

on screens as *otherness*, and how their behaviour (auto)stimulates their own kinaesthetic sense, as well as that of the spectators. Due to this, it is challenging to pinpoint exactly where the opportunity lies in triggering the kinaesthetic sense of digital viewers, when we are continuously both *seeing* and *being seen*, in a state of self-awareness which fluctuates between performing within the frame and spectating through it. This shows that navigating screen technology requires a specific understanding of how to bring our vision from the eyes into the whole body, and not to rely exclusively on our sense of sight to orientate ourselves. As Loussouarn (2021,78) puts it, "a dissociation seems to happen between what I'm focusing my attention on visually on screen and what my body is sensing, what I'm experiencing in my body and around it". When working with the digital frame, it is therefore useful to be aware of the constant risk of a narcissistic attraction to our own self-image through the mirror-screen.

Digital dramaturgies and auto-montage

For Digital HotSpot participants, the mirror-screen also works as a compositional tool, according to how the individual dramaturgy of performers evolves through *responsive interaction* with the partners and the medium. The process through which performers weave their actions in the physical space in relation to the screen, as well as how they handle the camera to frame themselves, become part of what Barba (1991, 68) refers to as "drama-ergon, the *work of the actions* in performance". While incorporating the camera - or multiple cameras - into their actions, performers manipulate devices and change the point of view of the camera as part of their digital corporeality, generating a kinaesthetic dramaturgy which *embodies* the technology. In the attempt to inhabit the physical and digital space at the same time, performers develop the ability of reviewing, adjusting and editing their self-image through a process of *auto-framing*, creating a self-montage of their own score, while *being decided* by their actions on camera and how these look on screens. In the process of becoming the camera operator, the performer gains experience of how to put into vision the essence of an action.

To further analyse how performers might compose and elaborate on Zoom, it is useful to consider the distinction that Barba (1991, 69) makes in theatre anthropology between developing the plot - in the meaning of actions - through "a concatenation of causes and effects" or "by means of simultaneity" of several actions at once. As Barba writes, these are "the two poles whose tension and dialectic determine the performance and its life". While these poles can be woven together and find a balance in the performance text staged in person, several actions at work on multiple screens risk producing cacophony, as the perception of the viewer is split between each separate digital stage-screen. Moreover, unlike cinema, it is up to each individual performer to create the logic, becoming "the eye-filter which selects close-ups" (Barba, 1991, 67) and framing each one of their actions for the viewer in real time on separate screens. Therefore, to compose action "into a synthesis which is far removed from a daily way of behaving" (Barba, 1991, 70) the digital performer needs to work with the third pole of a montage technique which is self-directed, and sits between the theatrical and the cinematic. In

this montage, the dramaturgy of the digital performer resists the process of structuring pre-existing material - as would happen in a physical rehearsal space - as performing online is reconfigured into a constant exercise of 'becoming' in front of the camera.

Flanker Origami: leaping into a digital abyss



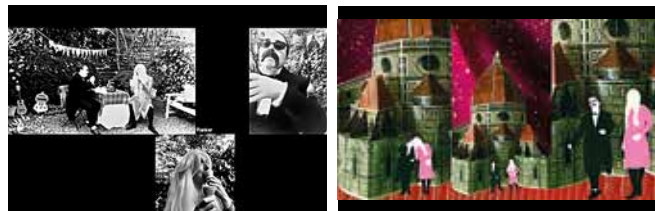
Flanker Origami
@EdFringe
30.9.21

Illustration 13

These working principles were further explored in the composition of *Flanker Origami*, a live online performance first shared with digital spectators at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2021. As a practice research project, *Flanker Origami* is the study of the performer's body in collision with digital technology, and of the dynamics at play in meaning-making through the Zoom platform, with a focus on the immediacy of the experience for digital spectators. Unlike Digital HotSpot, which usually takes place within a Zoom call, *Flanker Origami* is livestreamed from home on a webinar used as a digital stage, made of two (or more) screens manipulated directly by the performers during the livestreaming. In generating scores on two different frames, Dean as Origami and myself as Flanker decided to explore screen technology throughout the devising process, to evaluate how it would influence our individual dramaturgies, as well as to exploit the self-directorial impulse through the mirror-screens. Here is an example of the pre-set list which shows how the performer's attention is split between organising and taming the technology in order to transform the home environment into a digital stage:

Rename Origami [on the Zoom screen] / Gallery view/ Cam & mic off/ No background / Set chat to 'attendees'/ Volume to medium/ Alexa & 2 computers Wi-Fi off / Phone airplane mode / Ice pack, cloth, text in kitchen / Headband on other bathroom door / Bulb and book in cupboard, with text / iPad stand on dining table / Bike gears to 2, tyres pumped / Stool, bike wheel stand [for iPad] (John Dean, WhatsApp message to author, August 30, 2021)

In encountering the medium, we had to confront the impact of disembodied interactions, and of remoteness as a perceived obstacle to *liveness*. As a result, one of the strategies adopted to overcome our cautiousness was to define what was live and what wasn't in the performance, by adding scenes recorded on multiple screens and re-creating our-selves as 2D



Illustrations 14, 15

ating our-selves as 2D rotoscope animations. Designed in collaboration with artist and illustrator Cristiana Messina and inserted in the final montage,

the animations were instrumental in refocusing the attention of the spectator through breaking the rhythm of the 'live digital action'.

During the runs of *Flanker Origami*, while performing through screens, at some stages Dean and I experienced a split in consciousness and an *out of the body* sensation. The dialogue with the invisible spectators felt dematerialised to the point that, on camera, we were confronted with what Dean refers to as "a whole reality [which] opened up, and it was like leaping into an abyss" (John Dean, Zoom conversation with author, December 1, 2021). As performers we became sensitive to the absence of the spectators in our physical space, only being able to mentally evoke them, but unable to experience their presence emotionally or sensorially, which led us to refuse the emptiness of the non-human. As according to Schechner (1985, 37) "restored behaviour involves choice", in order to confront the anxiety and resist the impulse to quit the webinar and walk out of the performance altogether, Dean and myself held strongly to 'the illusion of choice'. We both kept performing our scores on our two screens, understanding by instinct that we needed to abide to the 'ritual by contract' to make the digital abyss retreat.

Discussing the risks involved in performing on digital, Odin Teatret actress and director Julia Varley observes how one can give the spectators "the awareness of the enormous effort which one has to make in order to work through digital platforms". This highlights the perceived difference between performance in presence, where "you feel that they [the actors] are risking something because they are there in front of you" and that on digital, where Varley says "it seems to lack or is very banal, because it is about the Wi-fi connection or glitchy backgrounds" (Julia Varley, Zoom conversation with author, December 1, 2021). A digital technology which doesn't run smoothly appears malfunctioning, however in *Flanker Origami* to make the risks visible the decision was to expose the mechanism and the glitches. This fluid relation with the technology echoes the cyberformance practice of Helen Varley Jamieson (2008, 38) which "does not pretend to be real", and where "the technologies employed in the performance are not hidden, they are integrated into the whole", instead of trying to dissimulate them through high-tech perfectionism.

Online participation and embodied pedagogies at the ISTA/NG digital course

In order to explore the crossovers between the embodied pedagogy of theatre anthropology and my practice research, I attended the digital course of the International School of Theatre Anthropology / New Generation (ISTA/NG) held between 12-22 October 2021 on the island of Favignana, off the western coast of Sicily in Italy. The course programme offered a combination of educational films created by Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley in collaboration with Claudio Coloberti. These were broadcast on Vimeo, alongside livestreaming of in-presence masterclasses and activities by Barba and the artist-teachers (also on Vimeo), with the addition of daily interactive Zoom meetings between some of the ISTA/NG performers and the digital participants. During the online sessions facilitated by Leonardo Mancini, scholar and managing editor of the

JTA Journal of Theatre Anthropology, participants were able to meet and listen to the performers and teachers who were working in Favignana, and ask them questions on video or via the chat. While the meetings started with discussing what actor's presence is in a live material space, it soon became apparent that in using the Zoom platform to generate regular online encounters between remote participants, a live space emerged due to the immediacy of the interaction through technology. For example, in the session with the Balinese dancer and performer I Wayan Bawa, we were able to experience embodied transmission of practice on digital through his impromptu demonstration of mask work. Bawa's decision to break the passivity of the body allowed him to perceive, with his physical intelligence, the potential of the mirror-screen for interacting with online spectators, and to play it to his own advantage in the communication.

When explaining the use of the mirror in his process of embodying the facial expression of his masks, Bawa said "I ask the mirror how I can make my face alive or I look myself in the mirror and express myself" (I Wayan Bawa, October 16, 2021, Zoom). He then put a mask on and instinctively used the screen as a mirror through which he adjusted himself to the mask, entering into a dialogue with us in character and interacting *as if* the screen was not there, or as if it was just a stepping-stone to reach us *on the other side*. Without rationalising the process, or showing a cautious attitude towards the digital platform, Bawa's embodied pedagogy shifted organically into performance behaviour. His response to the mirror-screen and to the digital participants also reverberated within the reaction of participants in-person, who hovered around and witnessed the online encounter in what, as Mancini (2021) notices, became "a warm living contact with those who were participating online, so that instead of talking of pure digital presence what was happening was blended learning, in which some kind of flipped activities were taking place". In this instance the Zoom platform also served to blur the boundaries between in-person and digital participation at ISTA/NG, generating curiosity towards hybrid forms of engagement with embodied practice and pedagogy. From this experience, it is evident that a digital space which is *live* and *alive* is therefore a space for participation, which acknowledges digital participants, while stimulating them kinaesthetically through screens. Thus, if participation is guaranteed, liveness is also present on the digital medium in a way that, according to Christina Papagiannouli (2016), is "directly connected to the interactive and participative character of the Internet". These forms of participation can result in instances of *active spectatorship* through the technology, while in their liminality, online spaces of apprenticeship and pedagogy have the potential of "creating a mindset of remote proximity, [in order] to appreciate each other's online presence, despite openly questioning notions of embodiment, both theoretically and in practice." (Mastrominico and de Roza, 2021)

Towards a soft technology and hybrid practices

By working through the framework of theatre anthropology, I have investigated how performers can build and sustain their scenic bios online, and how the making process and the performance can stay alive on digital. Through Digital HotSpot I engendered

an online context for performer training and pedagogy, which engages with the pre-expressive level of the performer, who aims to acquire "a *decided body* ready to leap and act" (Barba and Savarese, 1991, 197) through digital platforms. In devising *Flanker Origami* I tested the creative potential of the platform and my ability to conceive performance through subverting expectations of the Zoom format. When I began my online experimentations, it soon became clear that treating performance on digital platforms as a reproduction of theatre forms, or as a purely filmic experience or an imitation of television were not viable options, but it was crucial to look for working attitudes which were specific to the interface. In provoking a shared online experience between the performer and the spectator, I learned that the goal is to address digital platforms as creative vehicles for effective (and affective) human communication and artistic exchange. This might imply a search for a soft technology, which can generate spaces of creativity and participation no less real or alive because experienced on a digital medium, while considering the work of ground-breaking digital artists and the "long and rich history of online performance, which stretches back to the earliest days of the Internet" (Abrahams, Jamieson and Fuks, 2020).

As we are living immersed in a postdigital culture which forces us to think digitally (Causey, 2016, 432), in shying away from assessing the role of digital technology in our creative practice, as performers and makers we might risk fostering an ontological 'absence' from the 'essence' of innovation, which we need to explore in order to counteract the power of control and exploitation which the digital can also unleash. As the digital medium drives us to reformulate the way we approach our know-how and our role as artists in society, instead of feeling de-humanised by technology, perhaps it is about acknowledging to what extent we are interconnected with the non-human, and how we can give space to hybrid practices and a more balanced relationship with the culture of our times. ■

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Luciana Martuchelli's parents: Gê Martu and Gisele Lemper. Photo: Personal archive

Luciana Martuchelli

Poetics, Borderlessness, Frameworks

Principles of theatre anthropology in film

Abstract: In this article Luciana Martuchelli presents her theatre poetics in dialogue with historical figures and film acting techniques, with examples of the principles of theatre anthropology she has used in her work as acting coach for films.

Keywords: Acting techniques; Luciana Martuchelli; Acting coach; Film making; Brazil

POETICS

The Ugly Duckling and her flight school

“The Ugly Duckling”, by Hans Christian Andersen, beyond symbolical aspects of rejection and wounded narcissism, speaks of the creative nature that struggles to stay alive when forced to face adverse circumstances. In my case, I refer to the various worlds and fields of knowledge in which I wandered for almost thirty years to stimulate my curiosity, as well as my creative and pedagogical nature, in a constant anthropophagy of techniques and principles.

I am daughter of theatre and film actors, artists active during the Brazilian dictatorship period (1964-1985). I grew up in this environment and turned it into the raw material of my values and languages. My parents’ lifestyle and artistic entropy made me a kind of “expressive polyglot”, but I was also regarded as different and inadequate since an early age.

As a child, I did not understand that it was precisely the diversity of my expressive qualities that generated rejection. I never belonged to any place, school, method, group or tradition, and thus I had to seek and create my own anthropophagic world without aesthetic, geographic, moral, dogmatic, physical and mental boundaries.

“She belongs to the theatre,” say those from cinema. “She belongs to the cinema,” say those from theatre. Loneliness taught me that, when you do not belong to anyone and nothing, you are free.

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Web: <https://jta.ista-online.org/> DOI: 10.7413/2724-623X044 - © 2022 Author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution, Non Commercial, No Derivatives License (CC-BY-NC-ND).



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Some decades and winters passed before I met Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley. I was ready to hear Eugenio's words. Julia's plural presence on stage shattered the enchantment or a mild lethargy I was struggling to maintain.

I was already used to this kind of event, a sort of internal death to the emergence of a new world. I had lived this 'death' with Antunes Filho, Aderbal Freire-Filho, Jean-Claude Carrière, Peter Brook, Tizuka Yamasaki and Liu Pai Lin. They are all masters and polyglot mirrors of art without whom I would not have reached where I was. So I recognised the opportunity and took off my sandals to step barefoot on the sacred ground of the encounter between master and disciple.

Truth is what brings us comfort

This article about the construction of authorial dramaturgy for the camera based on the principles of the theatre anthropology, would be completely different if it had been written before the pandemic.

When the pandemic started, we floating islands were dragged out to the sea, floating on top of our costumes and prop boxes with no exchange value. My group and I had to close the doors of our theatre, cancel seasons, festivals, workshops and tours, migrating to the online reality. From there, we try to connect and deduct resources to survive until we can open-up again. While the pandemic isolated us and closed geographic borders, it opened virtual and virtuous borders.

Artists from theatre and cinema, both students and professionals, asked me to continue to work online in the expectation that, when the pandemic passed, they would be alive, believable and active. They did not want to lose the richness of their experience. Many were scared, subsided, spending hours in front of television and social media, consuming impotence. And I wondered, "What can I do to help them? How to explain that this catastrophe is also a golden moment, that we cannot shut down or distract ourselves?"

It was not just a matter of talking, moving, recording or transmitting, but of building new presence, dramaturgies, rhythms and relationships in this space for the spectators to see and get associations through the use of the camera. The power of technique erupted against useless information, life trivialisation, and the current lifestyle colonised by electronic devices and the advance of its social values. Before I knew it, in combination with the teaching of the use of technologies, an abundant authorial and unprecedented creation emerged from the elaboration, refining and exchange of contemporary poetics in multimedia communication.

Months later, numerous grants and laws for online creation, theatre and film festivals came about. A Brazilian television channel bought one of my theatre performances. And, like many of my colleagues, I attended festivals without leaving home.

In 2020, I also convinced Eugenio and Julia to realise the 13th edition of The Secret Art of the Performer remotely, achieving a virtual experiment with one hundred artists from all over. I was aware of the importance of their words for the floating islands in the pandemic context. Managing to get Eugenio and Julia to accept this possibility encouraged me even more.

Perfectionism is aseptic and life contaminated

*Novelty landed on the beach
With the rare quality of a mermaid
Some wishing for her goddess kiss
Others wishing for her tail at supper*

The poem above is the lyrics of the song "A Novidade", by the Brazilian music group Paralamas do Sucesso. It talks about a mermaid that appears on the beach and provokes a duel between the poet and the starving, ripping and shattering the miracle. During the pandemic, something similar happened in the virtual world between purists and those hungry in body and soul. Artist friends said that theatre could not exist or happen without present audience. I had similar thoughts, but this was not useful to me. I needed to create, so I was not interested in the words and concepts that did not help me. Many of the artists I admire could afford to wait for things to get back to normal. I could not. Neither did I want to.

As if it was not enough being unable to meet and perform, another type of virus was emerging, that of asepsis and boycott of resilient creative processes. It emerged not as a debate, but as censorship and ideological patrolling in the face of endless artists' reactions on virtual media: what is right or wrong in art, is it theatre or not, is it film or not. And although the pandemic was a blow also to my personal and professional life, something in me - perhaps the expressive and polyglot bastard of the clans - saw everything as an opportunity.

Finally, what are artists doing during the pandemic? Theatre or film? Filmed theatre or theatrical cinema? For scholars, this debate has great value. But it is not very useful in practice. My focus, and that of many, was that it should work, that artists and audiences should transform and that everyone could be touched in the process. It was important that we were on our feet and skilled when the pandemic passed, that this unique wealth of modern-day productions would make our lives healthier. And, too, that it would immunise us against impotence, thus increasing our humanity. I do not know where we were nor how to call what we were doing, but I felt at home.

Syncretism was my birthplace. I was baptized in the Catholic Church and also in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé religion. At home, I always learned different names for the same saints: Our Lady of Conception is Oxum and Saint Barbara is Iansã. I have always lived in the shades of grey between white and black, in the space of unthought-of possibilities and in the comparative studies that exist between film and theatre. I needed bridges between theatre and my interest in psychology, neuroanatomy, mythology, martial and plastic arts, and dance. I needed to put together knowledge from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, Peter Brook's empty space, Antunes Filho's blank canvas, Eugenio Barba's pre-expressivity, Liu Pai Lin's Taoist presence, Tizuka Yamasaki's relationship of the actor and the camera, as well as Brazilian soap operas and American, Asian, European, Hindu and Latin American films.

BORDERLESSNESS

*There is no such thing as a theatre, film or television actor.
The professional actor modulates according to the customer.*

The sentence above by Japanese-Brazilian filmmaker Tizuka Yamazaki guided me for over a decade in search of references that would help me break the mental cages of theatre actors who attributed to the camera the lack of vigour and charisma of their performances. The truth was harder and more liberating at the same time: in addition to their lack of knowledge in media codes, what prevented their performances from being believable were taboos, resistance, prejudice and an apparent absence of fair-play and “presence”. The latter was the most enlightening to me. These aspects were perhaps already manifest in their theatre performances, but only catalysed and unmarked before the camera.

The camera does not lie. It is just a magnifying glass of what is already there. Whether I am nervous and anxious, or my eyes are full of intent and humanity, it does not matter: the camera will reveal both shamelessly. It is up to me to take control of what I want it to capture and convey, using it as a bridge between the spectator and myself. But presence is not something we are taught or that is easily cultivated. Presence in life and art requires training, alertness and constant choice. I approached film and camera research in search of presence.

The study of the states of representation through physical and mental presence in an organised structure became an obsession of my personal and artistic pursuits. The presence in everyday life and the presence of the actor on stage are where the compass of my work points at, a sort of filter over traditions to find new names for old knowledge. Pedagogically, I started to use the camera to trigger and enhance the states of presence and to amplify the performances, while I researched known methods and developed new exercises.

Many acting methods for actors in theatre have developed since this trend took place. All bring a great diversity of styles, forms and functions, rooted in recurrent psycho-physical impulses and principles. Most film actors’ techniques are metamorphoses of systematised approaches to actors’ theatre training. I only bring up the relevant cardinal points that repel or create magnetism towards film and my pedagogical and professional practice within it.

The atheist fundamentalism

One of the best-known practices incorporated in film doubtlessly has been Stanislavski’s System, which aimed at extracting maximum realism from the actor. The actors need to seek the refinement of concentration, voice, physical skills, observation, emotional memory, as well as elements in common with the character for a more accurate representation. The System continued to be revised by Stanislavski throughout his life but was first taught in North America in the 1920s by former members of the Moscow Art Theatre,

the Polish theatre director and filmmaker Richard Boleslavski and Russian actress Maria Ouspenskaya, who also acted in film, both Stanislavski’s direct disciples.

Boleslavski and Ouspenskaya’s bond with film is not a detail: the “system”, still under construction, travelled in the luggage of these artists to the cradle of the United States, where the film industry had the wind in their sails. Thus, it germinated in a hybrid way, both on stages and in cellulose nitrates. Stanislavski’s insights and practices would survive for generations, despite telling his pupils not to slavishly depend on these practices, but to build something that worked for them. And that is what happened. Among the many metamorphoses it underwent, his System would give life to the technique called The Method.

The Method began as a substrate of the System, developed and credited to Lee Strasberg (1901-1982) and members of his theatre group. Actors Sanford Meisner, Robert Lewis and Stella Adler helped him develop this acting technique focussing on the practice of connecting to a character through personal emotions, helped by a set of exercises including sense memory, substitution, and emotional memory. The emphasis on reconstructing the actors’ personal experiences for use in the theatre - an aspect that Stanislavski himself had already discarded - was just what interested artists such as Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, responsible for introducing The Method in the productions of the new North American dramaturgy at the time.

Sanford Meisner (1905-1997) created his dissent by not wanting the actors to focus on themselves, but on others, as if only that moment existed. Focussing on impulses, he asked actors to listen to each other and react, rather than thinking about what to say and do, responding freely and spontaneously, both physically and vocally.

Stella Adler (1901-1992), actress and teacher, who had been a direct pupil of Stanislavski, would also break away from The Method, developing a unique style of acting, centred more on the actor’s imagination. She believed that focussing on personal memories and emotions was not a healthy way to approach the art of acting. “Drawing on the emotions I experienced - for example, when my mother died - to create a role is sick and schizophrenic. If that is acting, I do not want to do it,” she said.

Robert Lewis (1909-1997) was one of the greatest propagators of the System in the United States. He was an actor, director and playwright and was directly influenced by Michael Chekhov, a Russian actor who Stanislavski himself considered one of his most brilliant students. Lewis, who also disagreed with The Method’s approaches because he considered its interpretation of Stanislavski’s ideas wrong, founded the Actors Studio. Later, with Lewis’ departure, Strasberg would assume the artistic direction, integrating The Method into the training centre. The Actors Studio became one of the main schools of the Method and Stanislavski’s System, from which some of the most influential artists of American theatre and film in the second half of the 20th century have emerged. Aside from his artistic career, Lewis gave a series of lectures on the misunderstandings between the System and The Method, entitled “Method - or madness?”

I put birth and death dates next to the names to pinpoint how the people and their methods survived into the 80s and 90s, going through two wars, silent and talking film, technological changes, the advent of television up until today’s film industry. The uninterrupted pedagogical action of its living founders adds power to this longevity that

would educate practically all coming generations of artists. The stereophony of these methods took root and unfolded and like all charismatic knowledge, it obviously also created dogmas, influencing aesthetically and morally North American film, its actors and schools wherever it reached.

Another relevant factor is that, for years, many of us did not have access to film production from other countries as we received high doses of American production. Meanwhile, actors and actresses in these productions have become icons and their interpretations, coveted references. What methods did they use? What schools did they attend? Who were their teachers? What books did they read? The limited offer of diversity tends to create a conducive environment to colonisation.

Since the beginning until the present day, little vocabulary has been added to the qualification of film actors. About 90% of current training is interpretation left from The Method or the System. Their apparent sense of renewal and personalisation is given by the cyclical reinterpretation or exclusion of the original principles which, nevertheless, do not hide their worn-out aspect. This sterility is evident in the crises and creative blocks of many contemporary actors who seem to want something different.

No knowledge is better than any kind of knowledge

Times have changed. Currently, fewer actors and actresses spend years studying the same technique until taking it to its ultimate consequences, transmutation or authorship. Recipes for immediate success and reward sell the least effort for the maximum result. Throughout my career, I have spent a lot of time correcting misunderstandings and unblocking professional actors whose techniques did not give them freedom or pleasure in their craft. For nearly three decades, I have seen an exodus: entire generations of actors robbed of the transgressive experience of learning to learn. Looped, stagnant careers. They sought freedom and excellence, but they were content with compilations, a delivery of exhilarating fragments of the craft and knowledge that did not become experienced, leaving them with an excess baggage of little practice, conflicting theories and anxiety.

Drenched in precepts about the effectiveness of emotional memory, the first question many film actors ask me is: "How can I cry?" It is not "How can I interpret a text?" or "How can I move in space?" or "How can I create a character?". It is: "How can I cry?" So, understanding what constitutes emotion was the first of my technical immersions in film.

In acting coaching for film, the theme of emotional memory and other psychological, substitute and cathartic contiguities epitomise the "methods", almost like a taboo, taking away, in my view, the essential focus and watershed of Stanislavski's main legacy: the physical actions and how they lead us to emotion. And not the other way around.

Like Stella Adler, I also rejected the processes that proposed that actors should have a miserable life to lend truth and tone to their characters. In my practice, I identify with Stanislavski when he claims that imagination is much more powerful than memory. He considered emotional memory a useful technique for a while but stopped using

it due to the many problems it caused. Sooner or later, anyone using this resource discovers this.

This important redress, where Stanislavski talks about the damage and poverty of the use of emotional memory as a strategy, remains ignored by many for the most diverse reasons. Obviously, there are those who defend the use of emotional memory, disagreeing on its removal from the System. What I look upon critically is the use of the weight of Stanislavski's name by fundamentalists who hide this information in order to continue practicing and spreading a fragmented and expired theory.

*Knowledge that does not pass through the body
can produce nothing but destructive truths.*

For me, the actor's dramatic and empathic process needs a great deal of physicality: It needs a more social than biographical structure, and, above all, a repeatable structure. In general, in theatre, life on stage is like a huge wide sequence shot. In film, on the other hand, we work in a non-linear way and a scene itself is often made up of several takes, filmed from different angles. If I choose to film a dramatic and emotional scene with multiple shots - wide, medium and close-up - I will need the physical actions to be the same in all shots to ensure continuity. In editing, the shots must merge into a single scene giving coherence and fluidity. The same applies to emotions. We cannot afford for an emotion to be one in the wide shot and another in the close-up, or to be burnt like petrol after each take, or, even less, that the actor ends up emotionally massacred.

When Julia Varley is asked about the use of emotions, she replies that, in her acting work, emotions are not the starting point. Rather, they are the consequence of something that happens, reactions to a physical or vocal action.

The word "emotion" comes from the Latin "movere", which means to move outwards, movement, commotion, the act of moving or moving away. From the perspective of neuroanatomy, our emotional system corresponds to a functional concept in which various structures and neural networks are included. The processing of these aspects is based on various systems, the limbic, chemical and somatic, that is, the physical. All are related to memory and motivation, which is what drives us to act differently.

Emotions such as anger, fear, sadness, disgust, anxiety and joy have roots and inductions in the body; they comprise physical manifestations, such as fighting, fleeing, withdrawing, teeth grinding, smiling, screaming and even crying, but also a myriad of timeless organic responses that carry together physical dilations, breaths, melodies and distinct timbres.

We have a repertoire deposited in our bodies. And because it is repeatable, it can be systematised in compositional strategies. Like a 7-octave piano, actors can reproduce incredible harmonies regardless of their mood. Which is to say that emotions, once mapped, can be handled physically, through concrete internal or external stimuli, in a technical and lyrical way. Their manifestation, from the perspective of composition, goes beyond the psychological field and can obtain much more surprising and multiform nuances than those of everyday life.

To actors who ask me how to cry, I answer: "Start from the opposite, from not want-

ing to cry, and see what happens.” Meanwhile, I remind them that nothing is worth anything if the audience is not moved.

My mother, who was an actress and writer, used to say that words have trapdoors. We have to get inside them. Alone, they invariably do not want to say what they say. We actors say what we want the words to say. My mother, as a poet, in her immense mastery of the Portuguese language, used to play with words, turning nouns into verbs and vice-versa. As an actress, when I start from the text in search of new dramaturgy, I do not go from the text to the text. This only offers me predictable images. I start from the text to the imagination or the body; this is a journey through paradisiacal landscapes.

The word “drama” means “action”. It is wonderful that, in film, the director says to the actors: “Action!” Our job is clear: to act. To act like, when, for what and why. To be. Or not to be. Verbs contain the action’s cognitive gene. They retain in their semantics the conflict’s plot. I propose a constant physical and linguistic investigation of the verb in the creative process, instead of surrendering to it on one’s knees and obeying its commands. It is like a corporeal verbiage, capable of releasing the subject - the character - from our anxieties, tendencies and projections. The verb reveals the oppositions, tensions, active and latent possibilities that constitute the human being.

Exploring the verb as the DNA of action in drama pushes us to stop being ourselves, in the sense of taking distance from our pre-constituted identity and give a demiurge step towards the scope of the persona that we were invited to give body and voice to. In the context of acting, this filters the abstraction and melodrama of nouns and adjectives, embodies chaos, polishing our tenacity, exorcising the Dionysian until the Apollonian can shine.

*From the path comes the “one”,
from whose consciousness the “two” arises,
of which the “three” is implicit.*



Luciana Martuchelli working with a student. Photo: Filipe Lima

Tai Chi was one of the traditions I discovered outside acting and that offered me direction to experience in my body the theories hovering in the air as part of my actress training for more than a decade. My Taoist master Liu Pai Lin told me that, in order to find presence and control energy, I needed to beat movement through stillness, hardness through softness, speed through slowness. From the years I followed him, I will mention only the basic aspects that guided me in building a practice for actors, that I still use today. Master Liu Pai Lin and Antunes Filho were the first teachers of whom I was a pupil in the etymological sense: one who gives continuity to the work of another person.

The training consisted of learning sequences that worked with organised elements in pairs of oppositions: sky and land (north and south), mountain and lake (northwest and southeast), fire and water (east and west) and thunder and wind (northeast and southwest). My practice of these trigrams, which at the beginning had only the ambition of surviving the pressure of a film set, consisted of actions around the Tai Chi symbol: how to divert, roll, press, push, pull, divide, advance and look. But presence is like being in love: no one can tell you whether you are or are not. You simply know it. It corrupts, addicts like the legitimate stillness and understanding of the complementary opposition couples. It becomes an inclusive *modus operandi* that acts like a kind of Samadhi, breaking the sterile poverty of the excluding merely dual binary. It was a logic that would forever change my way of seeing, thinking, creating and being.

Rodin of ourselves

The principle of opposition is present in all methods I studied. This applies both to physical actions and to characters’ internal images. It is a creative logic necessary for the actor: to think and react in categories of pairs of opposites. Every action hides a non-action; every “yes” has a “no” inside; the bow must be drawn back as far as possible for the arrow to hit the target ahead; every villain carries a hero within and every hero acts of villainy. Statements full of affirmation and actions obviously showing their intentions without hiding oscillations and contradictions are amalgamated in a goo of stereotypes, reinforcing clichés. It is through this tug of war composed of opposing forces that the spectator relates to us. This understanding and its effective use in the character’s physical actions, text work and dramatic composition ensure that the germ of ideas displaces the spectator’s perception and penetrates to deeper and more effective levels.

Thus, I continued to develop exercises and tools to integrate this knowledge and resources in the acting coaching and authorial creation for theatre and film. This way of thinking about presence and repertoire, interrelating them with different physical practices and the values of a wild and voracious labour market, led me to seek increments in techniques that dialogue with similar interactions. The Method and its variations continue to be useful to many styles of film, but I see them limited in the face of the growing and unprecedented spectacular and multicultural demand of film that requires openness and disciplinary mutation from actors to remain “extra” ordinary, which means surprising and beyond the ordinary.

My dissatisfaction brought me to Antunes Filho's powerful and rigorous theatre. There I found for the first time a set of palpable theatrical tools that had the purpose of stratifying our pseudo spontaneity, giving room to a body and voice aware of the nexus of spectacular perception. Antunes abominated those who exchanged the sacred stage space for the gains of media visibility; those who treated theatre as a television factory for actors. He looked at me with love and mistrust for belonging to these two worlds. When I decided to spend time in Africa coaching the cast of the early Angolan soap operas, he did not forgive me.

Upon returning to Brazil, the repercussion of the actors who had attained concrete results through my work led me to teach at the Academy, where the heterodox clashed with the orthodox. This would only be alleviated after my encounter with Peter Brook and Eugenio Barba and their pedagogical and aesthetic arsenals of absurd impact on the spectator. That would depurate my mestizo alphabet, a collage of recurring principles, towards an artistic concentric scope.

FRAMEWORKS

*Comprehending what someone else feels, is to be them.
And being someone else is of great metaphysical utility.*

In 2017, I was invited to participate as an actress in the film "Por Que Você Não Chora?" directed by Cibele Amaral. She called me precisely because she knew about my physical work; she wanted a film actress with an extra-daily physicality. The character was the mother of the protagonist, a borderline girl called Jessica. I would be part of two universes: one in Jessica's real life and another in Jessica's nightmare. My character was very different from my reality: a strict, bitter, dry, laconic, countryside evangelical lady who had absolutely no physical love for her daughter and, most of all, who had never really seen her. I was the mother without eyes.

To create the character in Jessica's real life, I took inspiration from the dry trees of the *cerrado*, a woodland region of Brazil, where life is contained within and seems dead from the outside. One morning, while filming in the streets of a provincial town, I observed women who, despite being relatively young, seemed older because of the punishing weight of expressionless relationships and lack of freedom. With my spine I worked on a lizard, to give my neck and eyes a certain lack of mobility but with a dynamism of flight or attack.

The biggest challenge was the mother of Jessica's nightmare. In this scene, the mother literally had no eyes. I spent about five hours in makeup to cover my eyes. I was led then to the set in total darkness. There, I had to count the steps that separated the window from the camera's close-up point, and the distances between the wall and the cupboards. The director led me telling me where my hand should be and where to position myself to create silhouettes. Because I was blind, I had to have a millimetre precision of the actions in space, without bumping into the set.

This experience encouraged me more and more to share and teach my experience of physical theatre also to film actors.

One of the actors I have recently coached was Gabriel Santana, for the film "Made in Favela" (2021) directed by Izaque Cavalcante and Cristiano Vieira. He played the Brazilian rapper Hungary Hip Hop who, in addition to being alive, was very successful and well known. I told him that, even if he had to play a character existing in real life, the important thing was to remember that, in film, other laws govern the impact of a story; the goal is to take the real story into a realm of archetypes and masterpieces.

I especially remember the most important scene in the film: with the death of his best friend, he considers giving up being a musician. It was a scene of mourning, something Gabriel, at the age of 21, had not experienced yet. Gabriel worked with opposites all the time: we built on good memories, which acted as barriers to the perception of the loss. We created exhalation and physicality points of departure from animals.

This quality of dilatation raised new centres of gravity, responses to stimuli, behaviours, rhythms and, above all, equivalences and a repertoire of physical actions. Six shots of the scene were taken in midday light in a public square, in an very exposed environment unfavourable to concentration. In all of the shots, Gabriel's interpretation, emotion and actions were identical and equally poignant. I felt we had done a good job when I realised that the crew and film directors were emotional at the end of the filming.

In theatre, when we create an improvisation, it comes full of vigour. But we know that, by repeating it, it will gradually lose its lustre and flavour, thus becoming sterile. It is a natural, inevitable process. However, we must keep repeating it until the original life completely dies and another life blows its breath into the scene. Actors used to this logic know that doing this in theatre is the fruit of years of work. This reconstructed life in film does not enjoy the time theatre has. Doing the same in film requires a fine tune between body and mind, presence and agile perception.

Actor Victor Abrão, when shooting the same scene various times for the film "Campus Santo" (2016) directed by Marcio Curi, had to keep a choreographic precision: repeat the same actions in an identical way and, at the same time, organically, always as if it were for the first time. The scene, which was shot from multiple angles, began with his character at the bar, picking up two bottles of beer and taking them to friends. As pouring the beer, Victor had to talk with the friends. Victor had to be aware on which side the label of each bottle was, how many steps he had to take to reach his friends, the height of the bottles in relation to his body during his lines, how his hands carried them and when and how to drink. In the following scene, when his character was drunk, instead of looking for psychological tones to give likelihood, he worked with his axis and feet in precarious balance in order to give a sensation of dizziness to the spectator, in sync with the camera.

The aim of the project "Performer Lab" (2021) with actor Gustavo Araújo was to merge theatre, cinema and performance and describe the process that integrates and distinguishes these languages. He wanted to give life to the character of Shylock from Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice". I had already mapped this environment with my performance "Shakespeare's Dreams" (2016). The performance was the result of an immersion in the principles of theatre anthropology and designed to be an installation that flirted with performance and cinema.



Luciana Martuchelli working with Gustavo Araújo before shooting. Photo: Sylvio Lima

At “Performer Lab”, Gustavo and I worked on the construction of the character using action techniques and physical scores extracted from the verbs in the text and their antonyms. In order to create new associations for the scene, we tried the score with four different objects: a bench, a sheet of paper, a purse and a candlestick with candle. To get closer to a cinematographic tone, we reduced the physicality, keeping the oppositions in the spine and modulating the actions in different equivalences. Thus, the same sequence of physical scores gave rise to four different scenes.

The preparation for the short film “Redenção” directed by Kleber Macedo, in December 2020, was permeated by a series of challenges, starting with the restrictions imposed by the pandemic: actors Bernardo Felinto, Rebeca Reis and Mateus Ferrari had been in social isolation for nine months, only training in their apartments and through remote conference apps, where meetings and rehearsals took place. Their minds were heavy and their bodies rusty, but they needed to work together. Besides the action scenes in the script, the characters bore intense conflicts, which involved loneliness, rejection, betrayals, addictions and mysteries.

In the first online meetings, we analysed all the verbs in the script, to understand what the characters said and what they did, how they expressed themselves throughout the story by means of actions. They had to find unusual reactions and physical alternatives different from their personal tendencies. These verbs were a “mine map” to identify physical actions inherent to the characters, where they could anchor the work and create their own colour. In the face-to-face preparation, each one built an individual series of

Kempo katas that functioned as exhaustion exercises, expanding energy and achieving an alert stillness. On the set, I would tease the actors, using breathing and corporeality, allowing these universes to emerge and activate the images before the “action!” call.

Nautical Chart

“You have all the time in the world to be a teacher. You can do that when you are 80, if you still want to. But the time to be an actress and director fully is now.” My mother told me this when I had to choose between becoming the coordinator of a Master’s degree in film at an important university, or going to Denmark and continuing for the next few years learning and working with Eugenio, Julia and a huge artistic family from Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Germany, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Japan and Taiwan. Our flights together give me vitality and a sense of belonging to a whole, spurring me on to encourage artists to transgress boundaries that threaten to blur freedom of expression and authenticity, so they can make discoveries that might offer hard-to-reach goods to the world, such as humanity and empathy.

All my work with actors in theatre and with the camera involves teaching them not to direct themselves, not to plan discoveries but to flow in the face of them. In its preparation process, the actors must do all the hard work prior to the moment of filming, in order to open their vision and presence to the poetic dimensions and, thus, gather new insights. The sum of their expertise and openness to the freshness of the moment takes them to where unthinkable worlds reside.

A floating island by itself is not aware that there are other islands or even continents, until an explorer or castaway visits it and tells stories about other islands and habits. This feeds the curiosity of exploring life overseas, of uprooting ourselves in pursuit of diversity. That is what the whole study of theatre anthropology means to me: a treasure map, a nautical chart of floating islands. And the treasure is the existing civilization awaiting us. It is like finding an entire Atlantis, just within reach to be touched by the very experience of the body. ■

Translated from Portuguese and revised by
Filipe Lima, Rebeca Reis, Alejandro Garcés, Andrew Hopper, Julia Varley



Claudia Contin Arlecchino. Photo: Fausto Tagliabue

Claudia Contin Arlecchino

The Motherland of Arlecchino

Abstract: In this article the Italian performer Claudia Contin Arlecchino reflects on her personal and artistic experience with the masque of Arlecchino (Harlequin) acquired in 35 years of practice, teaching and research. Working on different “archetypes” of Commedia dell’Arte (Zanni, Pantalone, Balanzone, Arlecchino, Brighella, Lovers, Captains, Servants, Courtesans, Pulcinella), and interrogating fundamental aspects of her own techniques and training, the author offers an insight into several components of the performer’s craft, such as the body, gymnastics, acrobatics, dance, impulses, rhythm, and exercises. What is at stake is the reconstruction of an extra-daily behaviour, which allows to give new life to an acting technique based on tradition.

Keywords: Harlequin; Arlecchino; Commedia dell’arte; Actor’s training; Extra-daily techniques

Whatever I narrate about the amazing Land of Arlecchino (Harlequin) is concrete and realistic, tales truer than truth. They are so true that they do not correspond to ephemeral reality or the passing of time.

Commedia dell’Arte is not based exclusively on the masks and costumes that tradition has handed down to us, but also on actor’s work which puts the body with its movement and deformations at the centre of the attention. Actors must be willing to redesign their bodies according to non-naturalistic postures, movements and behaviours, strongly marked by anthropological and archetypal inspiration stemming from at least five centuries of selection and theatrical stylisation of very complex human behaviours.

I have been performing on stage as Arlecchino and as an expert in Commedia dell’Arte since 1987. The first question I ask myself is: “What is the basic training an actor must undergo to aspire to become an inhabitant of the amazing Land of Arlecchino?”

During my long teaching experience, I have elaborated a form of pre-warm-up and actor’s training. I have dealt with extra-daily body languages with strong components of physically deformed postures, as for example in Commedia dell’Arte.

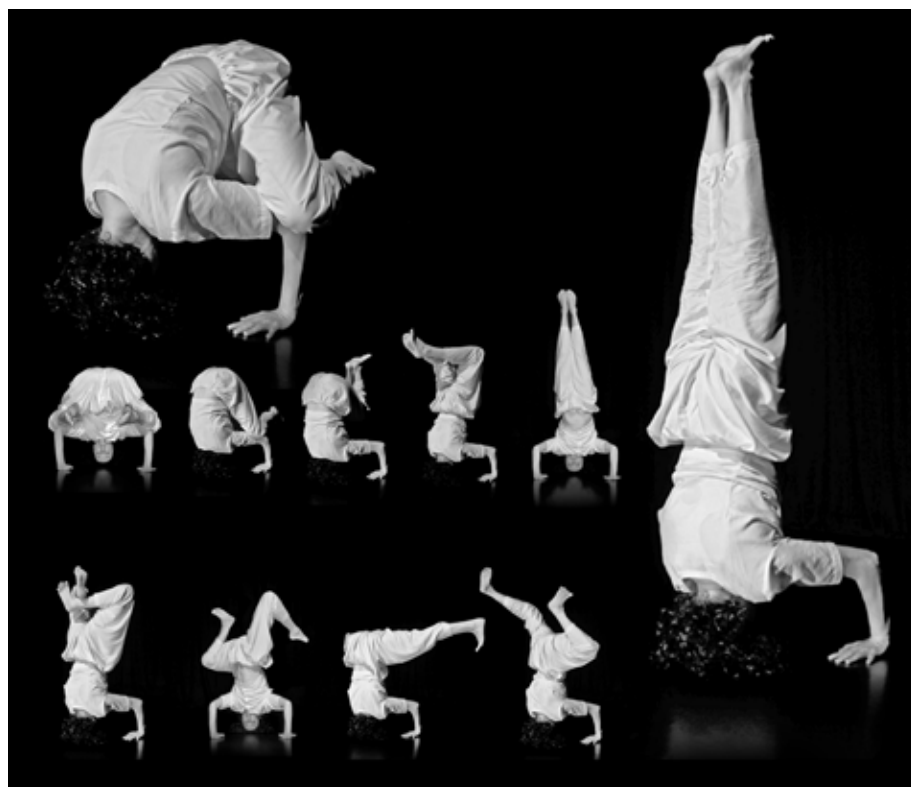
The fundamental aim of this learning path is the actor’s “dilated body”, which is to say the rediscovery of an amplified body through stage presence. The training uses the reconstruction of a “grotesque-popular” behaviour inspired by the Commedia dell’Arte masks and the iconography of the multifaceted theatricality developed in Italy since the 16th century. The principles of gestural exaggeration and grotesque distortion of the postures characteristic of the ancient Commedia dell’Arte masks allow us, even today, to imagine and reconstruct distinct amplified characters with a strong physical impact.



The typology of the exercises included in my pre-warm-up come from different theatre, gymnastic, martial and circus codes. During the process, the forms and characteristics of the Italian tradition's masks are rediscovered and continuously reinvented in a timely dialogue with theatre anthropology's understanding. Specific exercises result from the comparison with theatre traditions of other cultures, such as kalarippayattu and kathakali from southern India, Beijing and Hebei Opera from China, topeng and baris from the island of Bali in Indonesia, the Egyptian belly-dance and more.

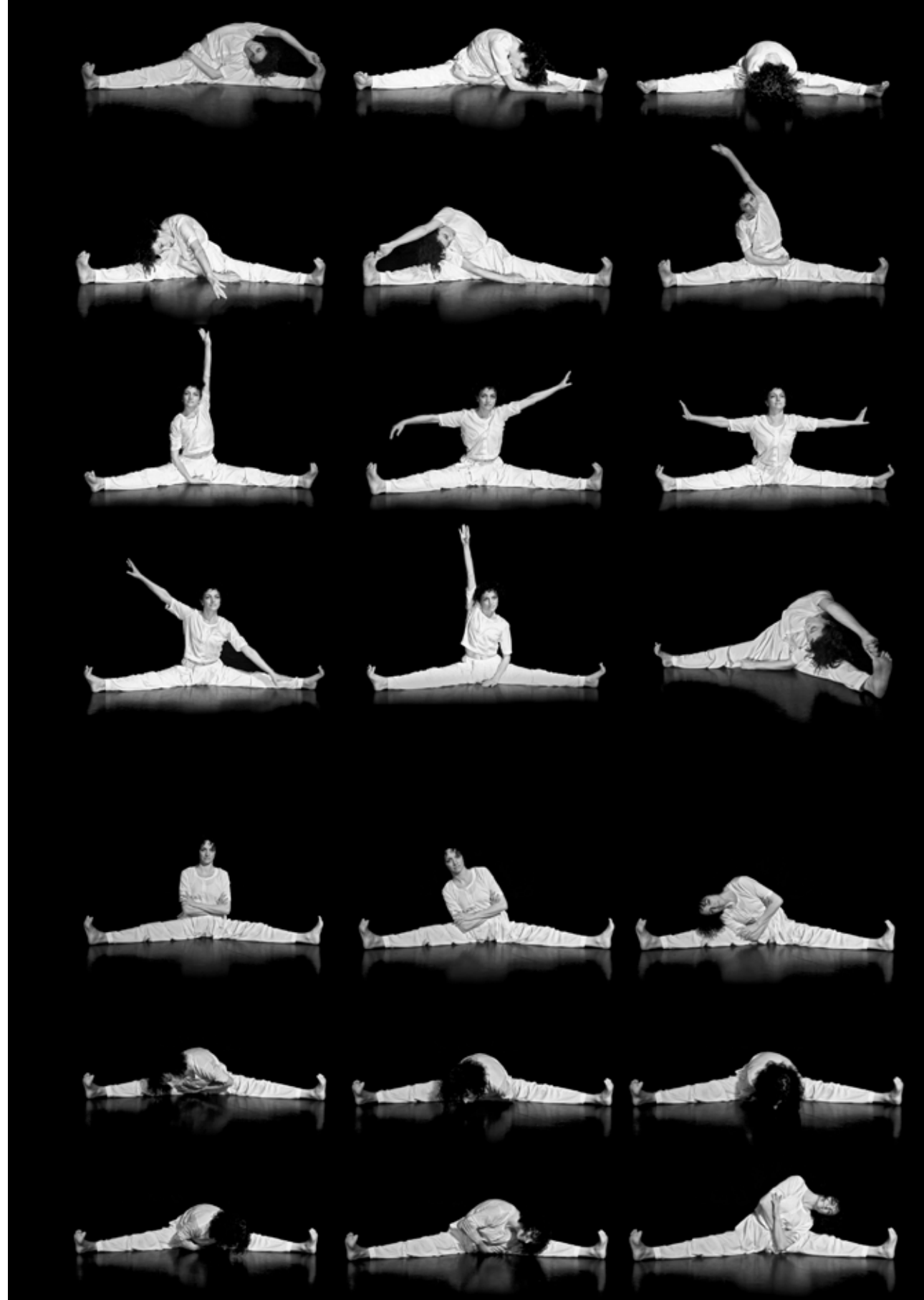
I call this warm-up and actor's physical preparation "contortionism of deformations". It takes place before confronting training, rehearsals or performance. A gradual work with the sequence of "contortionism of deformations" resumes and develops the functionality of forgotten muscles, for a healthy Commedia dell'arte restoration of possession" of the body. The sequence functions as preparation and safeguard of muscles and joints before facing gymnastic and acrobatic acts, as well as all the complex movements and postures of the art of the actor.

I have summarised the main phases of the sequence in photographic tables:



Contortionism

P. 298: The world upside down. - P. 299: Water salutation. Photos: Vene Vieitez



One of the fundamental and most effective exercises is the one I call “the whip”.

I imagine standing in front of a wall, leaning one part of the body on it. I start from the knees that protrude and touch the imaginary wall. Then I let the thighs slowly slide forward until revealing the pelvis, while the knees straighten and retract. Then I push the abdominal muscles and the bottom ribs forward until showing the solar plexus, while the pelvis retracts at the same time. I continue to push forward the upper part of the chest and the base of the neck until placing the chin against the imaginary wall, while the chest retracts. Then I let the chin slide downwards, as if caressing the wall with the nose, the forehead and then the skull cap, until suddenly the knees snap forward again and the head relaxes backwards. From here I start another wave of the body repeating the passages more and more fluidly until obtaining only one wave movement that rises quickly from the bottom until the head springs forward. These curves that travel along the spine are like those that run along a whip when we make it snap.

Once the ability to “snap” the spine like a whip is obtained, I can try the opposite path, backwards, starting from the head until the wave is unloaded on the ground. Or I exercise lateral whips, which develop the ability of the spine to flex and wave laterally.

Hands and arms drawing in the air

In the techniques of corporeal mime, great importance is given to the movements of the hands, which become capable of drawing in the air non-existent objects, spaces and settings. I achieve this mimic ability through specific exercises.

For example, to place a hand on an imaginary surface I divide the movement in three basic phases: a *counterimpulse*, moving the open hand away from the chosen point of arrival, with the fingers straightened backwards; a *support*, with a quick forward movement of the hand that stops at the chosen point; a *relaxation*, which allows me to detach the hand from the support without losing the illusion of the surface being there. I obtain this by retracting the hand while the fingers relax instantly.

A useful exercise for the training of the mime's hands is the “glass wall”. I imagine having a transparent glass wall in front of me and I search for the edges of the wall with my hands. The rest of the body can move a bit, but the palm and fingers of both hands must remain placed on the imaginary wall at the same point in space, otherwise the mimicry illusion vanishes. I can remove one hand and place it on a different point of the wall, then I move the other hand, and so on. The more plausible the illusion becomes, for the viewer or for the actor identifying in the action, the more the exercise is well done.

Another useful exercise to develop the arms flexibility, based on imitation, is called “bird flight”. I should organise the work of my arms as if they were wings, involving the three ‘hinges’ of the upper limbs, all the pectoral and dorsal muscles, of the trapezium and neck. Initially, the exercise should be done by keeping each segment of the movement separate: I lift the shoulders as much as possible; I keep the shoulders up and lift the elbows to the same height; holding the elbows up I lower the shoulders rotating them slightly backwards, keeping the elbows still I lift the wrists; holding the wrists in place I rotate the elbows downwards, I unroll the hands along all the finger joints while

lowering the wrists. At this point I lower the hands with the fingers pointing upwards until the arms are almost resting on the hips; I execute everything with effort, as if the claw-like bent fingers were scratching two vertical side walls.

I obtain the effect of a flying body by jumping higher and higher at the same time as I lower the upper limbs energetically. Thus, I can build different flying styles: the broad and violent one of the eagle, the wide and quiet one of the seagull, the more clumsy and heavy one of the pigeon, the messy and jittery one of the chicken, the short and rapid one of the sparrow, and so on.

All these exercises are important for the comic actor who needs to develop the elasticity of the hands for the rich expressive and narrating gestures required by the characters of the Commedia dell'Arte.

I consider the body as an assortment of combinable elements, upon which it is possible to graft analytically a whole series of postures, figures, movements, forms of behaviour for a future character.

Before being able to construct a new theatre character with my body, I must free myself from the everyday person, from those behavioural habits that are naturally inscribed in me, which tell my story and present my private personality. To understand the meaning and expressiveness of a stage behaviour, I need to strip my body of all private attitudes that life has designed on us, to build a sort of neutral body, rich in energy and stage presence and ready to accept the many nuances of a future theatre character.

To produce this stage presence, I need a particular extra-daily tension in my body. I must always move on stage with a greater tension than what I need to act and move in everyday life. For this reason, I assume a basic neutral posture in my stage behaviour. The “neutral” body of the actor is not naturalistic but built on precise rules. It does not consist of a spontaneous position in space but must be carefully designed with a geometry of micro-positions and a balance of small internal tensions.

I obtain a good basic neutral posture by positioning my feet perfectly parallel, neither pointing out nor pointing in, neither too far apart nor too close together, the same distance apart as the distance between my two hips and aligned perfectly perpendicular beneath them. My pelvis must be well centred, the centre of gravity lowered, the knees slightly bent forward to be aligned perpendicularly with my toes; the leg muscles should be ready to leap, the buttocks contracted and solid. The upper part of my body should, instead, appear to be relaxed, particularly the shoulders and arms; the shoulders must be lowered, the arms parallel to the sides, the sternum slightly raised, the chest open, the neck straight with an upward tension in the nape of the neck, the chin slightly lowered, the eyes wide open, the face without tension.

The imperturbable stillness of an immobile mime artist is obtained by a knowledgeable balancing of internal tensions: the downward tension of the pelvis corresponds to an upward tension of the nape, as if the actor's spine was being pulled in two opposite directions; the contraction of the buttock muscles corresponds to a dilation of the pectoral muscles; the tension and power of the lower limbs correspond to the flexibility and softness of the upper limbs.

Similar principles of inner opposition between various parts of the body are used in a more apparent and amplified ways in the basic postures of other theatre and dance

techniques. The many ways in which the body can be used are perceptible not only to the eyes of the spectators, but also through the physical impact that the actor's body produces directly upon them.

In Commedia dell'Arte, as also in clown and corporeal mime techniques, the actor's body is divided into sections or fundamental "psychosomatic segments". Each one of these sections is linked to an emotional or personality feature of a character. The language of the body segments is extremely varied. I will make only a few examples: section of the head and neck, of the chest, shoulders, pelvis, legs, hands and feet.



Pelvis section: atavistic hunger. Photo: Orlando Sinibaldi

Zanni, Pantalone, Balanzone, Arlecchino, Brighella, Lovers, Captains, Servants, Courtesans and Pulcinella are like milestones for the reconstruction or reinvention of Commedia dell'Arte. These ten basic character archetypes, apart from having reached us through a selection that has made them more famous than others, have become so distilled through the centuries, that it is possible today to catch their essence and re-contextualise them. Through these archetypal behaviours we can construct the corresponding masks, which are understandable and useful, communicative and immediate not only in Europe, but also in relation to more distant cultures.

The appeal of the grotesque, the strong deformation of the body, movement and voice, the precise codes of behaviour and action, are all elements that contribute to a distillation of the ten archetypes.

Archetype examples



First archetype: Zanni
The gait of the Zanni-thief
Photo: Daniele Guidetti



Second archetype: Pantalone
Pantalone's gait: heel kick
Photo: Daniele Guidetti

Third archetype: Balanzone
Balanzone's gestures with lateral bending of the upper torso
Photo: Daniele Guidetti

Fourth archetype: Harlequin

Arlecchino's striking out with heels: counter-impulse for a throw
Photo: Daniele Guidetti



Fifth archetype: Brighella

Positioning and movement of Brighella's arms.
Photo: Daniele Guidetti

Positioning and movement of Brighella's arms.
Photo: Daniele Guidetti



Sixth archetype: Lovers

Lover fainting
Photo: Gianluca Minuzzi



Seventh archetype: Captain

Cowardly Captain basic posture
Photo: Daniele Guidetti

Cowardly Captain basic posture
Photo: Daniele Guidetti

Eighth archetype: Female servant

Servant exposes her butt
Photo: Enzo Mirone

Servant exposes her butt
Photo: Enzo Mirone



Ninth archetype: Courtesan

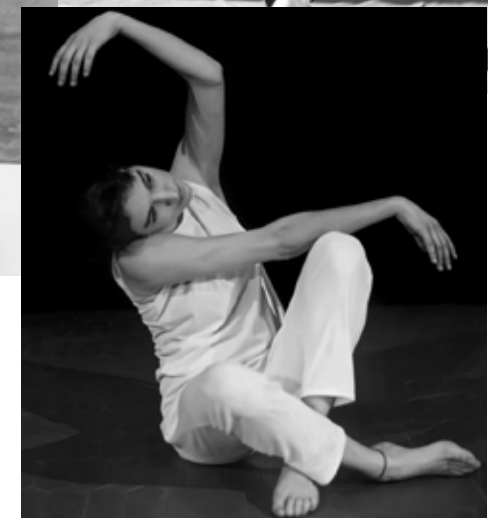
Courtesan's elegance: ankle.
Photo: Hector González De Cunco

Courtesan's elegance: ankle.
Photo: Hector González De Cunco

Tenth archetype: Pulcinella

Pulcinella sleeping on the ground
Photo: Daniele Guidetti

Pulcinella sleeping on the ground
Photo: Daniele Guidetti



Codifying a new language for Arlecchino

In the reconstruction of an extra-daily behaviour, such as that of a Commedia dell'Arte mask, there are no gestures left to chance. This rule is not to mortify the immediate creativity of the actor, but rather to avoid inserting in the mask's behaviour daily, naturalistic or habitual gestures. A lot of time and training is necessary before the actors develop a reflex that allows them to invent on the spot new coherent gestures, for example, with Arlecchino's codified behaviour.



Arlecchino sleeping

Photo: Daniele Guidetti

It is said that the Arlecchino of the past had at least forty different ways of moving the head, just as many for the legs, and even more for the hands.

I must look for a precise way of using the double-step, and the various fast, gallant, angry and sad gaits, in which the quick movements of the feet and legs draw different trajectories each time: I need to define all of the ways of skipping, jumping, dancing, kicking, even of wagging my tail, choosing the torso's torsions, postures and

impulses; deliberately re-elaborating many acrobatic sequences for Arlecchino's body; reinterpreting different folk dances from all over Italy, the Mediterranean, or more distant parts of the world with the deformation of his body.



Examples of Arlecchino's dances: Brazilian frevo

Photo: Daniele Guidetti

Arlecchino's most characteristic feature is undoubtedly the double-step. Therefore most of the actor's training must focus on mastering the ease of feet and legs in this unusual and apparently unnatural way of walking.

Through training in Mediterranean folk dances and meeting ethnic groups from different cultures, I have codified different ways of using Arlecchino's double step, dividing it into various gaits.

Slow gaits are used not only to correctly learn the double-step, but also to know how to apply all the virtuosities of the harlequinesque strides during the agile and limping gait. The step is done in a 4/4 time, with three bars for the double-step and a pause in suspension for the foot change. The reference rhythm is from lively Hungarian dances. It is important to have a good heel support, while the toes are often lifted off the ground, as in the Balinese baris and topeng dances.

Fast gaits use a very fast double-step, which allows Arlecchino to run swiftly. To achieve the fast coordination, I must eliminate the dead pauses of the foot change every



Examples of Arlecchino's gaits. Photo: Daniele Guidetti

two steps. With speed, the reference rhythm is a 3/4 beat. With a very high speed, the time is perceived as a 12/8 beat and the rhythm switches to close triplets, as happens in the *ciceri* of the tambourines in the tarantella and in the pizzica from Salento.

Gallant gaits have a heavier, more primitive, flat and downwards step executed on a 4/4 beat, characterised by typical strides of one leg in front of the other before the change of weight. Each elegant stride is matched by a small proud burst of the chest.

Angry gaits also use a 4/4 beat but they are cruder and heavier. Arlecchino removes his hands from the hips, holds his fists downwards beside his body, with the elbows pointed upwards. The smile turns into a growl and the forehead lowers as if showing horns. The stride moves laterally to the body, with the knee lifted and the heel almost hitting the inner thigh of the same raised leg. Grunts accompany the aggressive gait of an upset Arlecchino.

Sad gaits are used when very rarely Arlecchino is sad, becoming a sort of lightweight puppet hanging from the strings of fate. The elbows are lifted above the shoulders and the hands open in a sign of surrender or surprise. The dancing gait of his sadness is characterised by the feet alternating and crossing quickly on half toes, while the body seems suspended and weightless. When stopping to run, the body returns to a low and heavy centre of gravity and the feet leaning on the heels first. In the shift of direction of these lateral runs, it is possible to include nervous leaps taken from the Brazilian frevo dance which produce joyful hops and trembling ankles, heels and half-toes.

Parade gaits are very slow and majestic walks, which move Arlecchino's body as if he were a huge king puppet of the carnival. When Arlecchino cannot trigger his quicksilver energy and must adapt to the rhythms of the other masks on stage, he increases the complicated composition of his contortionist skills. The strides become wide drawings of the leg in the air, with small kicks or final accents; the chest makes circular, ellipsoidal or upside-down figure of eight movements; the hands and the head draw in the air with curved movements as in Chinese tai chi. The orchestration of all these movements of the various parts of the body comes from the techniques and choreography of the kathakali dance-theatre of Kerala in south India. These triumphal parade gaits can be very useful when Arlecchino disguises himself as a host, ceremonial officer or magician, sorcerer's apprentice and charlatan.

I have tried to reconstruct the codes of such a refined art through a patient work of definition and recodification: for example, fixing the gestures of the arms and the hands of Arlecchino in supports, squashes, grabs, torsions, jerks, etc.

Supports: elaborated from exercises of corporeal mime, the supports are actions of the hands and arms in relation to invisible surfaces in space; while doing the exercises, the hands push with the palms outwards, as if to lean on the surfaces, in different directions, frontally, laterally, upwards, downwards, diagonally, vertically, sideways or horizontally; following the torso torsions to the right and left, the supports are shown first at mask height, then at the chest middle height level and at the pelvis lower height level. These exercises done at an accelerated speed develop Arlecchino's gestures when, for example, he wants to direct his stories as a leader-comedian and reassure the spectators that everything is going well.

Squashes: here it is no longer Arlecchino who leans on invisible surfaces in space, but rather those surfaces that lean against his hands and forearms, squashing them onto



Examples of Arlecchino's arm movements: the squashing. Photo: Daniele Guidetti

his body; the squashes can come from all sides and angles, so the arms and hands must almost do a work of contortion around the torso. The rhythmic execution of all the possibilities teaches Arlecchino to shelter himself from the (real or imaginary) beatings of life.

Grabs: are characterised by asymmetric arm movements like hugging the air in different sizes, being careful to keep the elbows slightly bent outward and to move the forearms towards the centre as if wanting to squeeze something with the hands. The hands are open, with the fingers

wide as petals, like in the Indian dance mudra of the Alapadma lotus flower. This kind of gesture is used by Arlecchino when he tells of exaggerated dreams, epic feats, grotesque situations and fantastic, lush countries.

Torsions: the position of the hands remains that of the dilated Indian mudra Alapadma, but the arms are more angular and shrunk into the body, with sharp angles at the elbows and wrists. The joints perform snap reverse twists opposite to each other. It is a particular gesticulation like a wooden puppet, dry and nervous, that Arlecchino uses when his reasoning becomes more twisted and tortuous.

Jerks: it is the most complex system of Arlecchino's gesticulation, since it combines the looseness of the joints in the torsions with the contortionism of the arms in the squashes, adding sudden jerks and exasperated bending of the wrists. This time, the hands have the fingers closed, as if they were glued together, like in the wooden hands of glove puppets. This gesticulation is used by Arlecchino in all scenes of evocative, shamanic, magical, illusionistic characters, in which he is transformed into a tarot's fool, a dancing jester, a frantic, funny devil. These coordinated sudden movements of the hands have anthropological reference in many African dances, particularly those of Senegalese culture.

All of these codified items are like the words of a new vocabulary, of a new physical language: "Arlecchinese" (Harlequinese). When learning a new language, it is not enough to learn the vocabulary by heart; one must also know its grammar, in our case composed of physical actions and phrases, of a character's rhythm and speed, of pauses and progressions in movement, of accents and weight.

For the actor the possibility of often discussing in Arlecchinese (Harlequinese) is the training, that is, a particular kind of daily routine that is not exclusively gymnastic. It is rather a free composition where all the physical, codified and learned words, are composed by the actor into a sort of dance that is always different, but that is still coherent with the physical language of the mask.

It is a physical improvisation in which the sequences of movement are not fixed, but



Arlecchino's training. Photo: Tony D'Urso

the single elements that compose them are. The actors speak Harlequinese linking one to another actions and postures that they know and reproduce in infinite possibilities of composition.

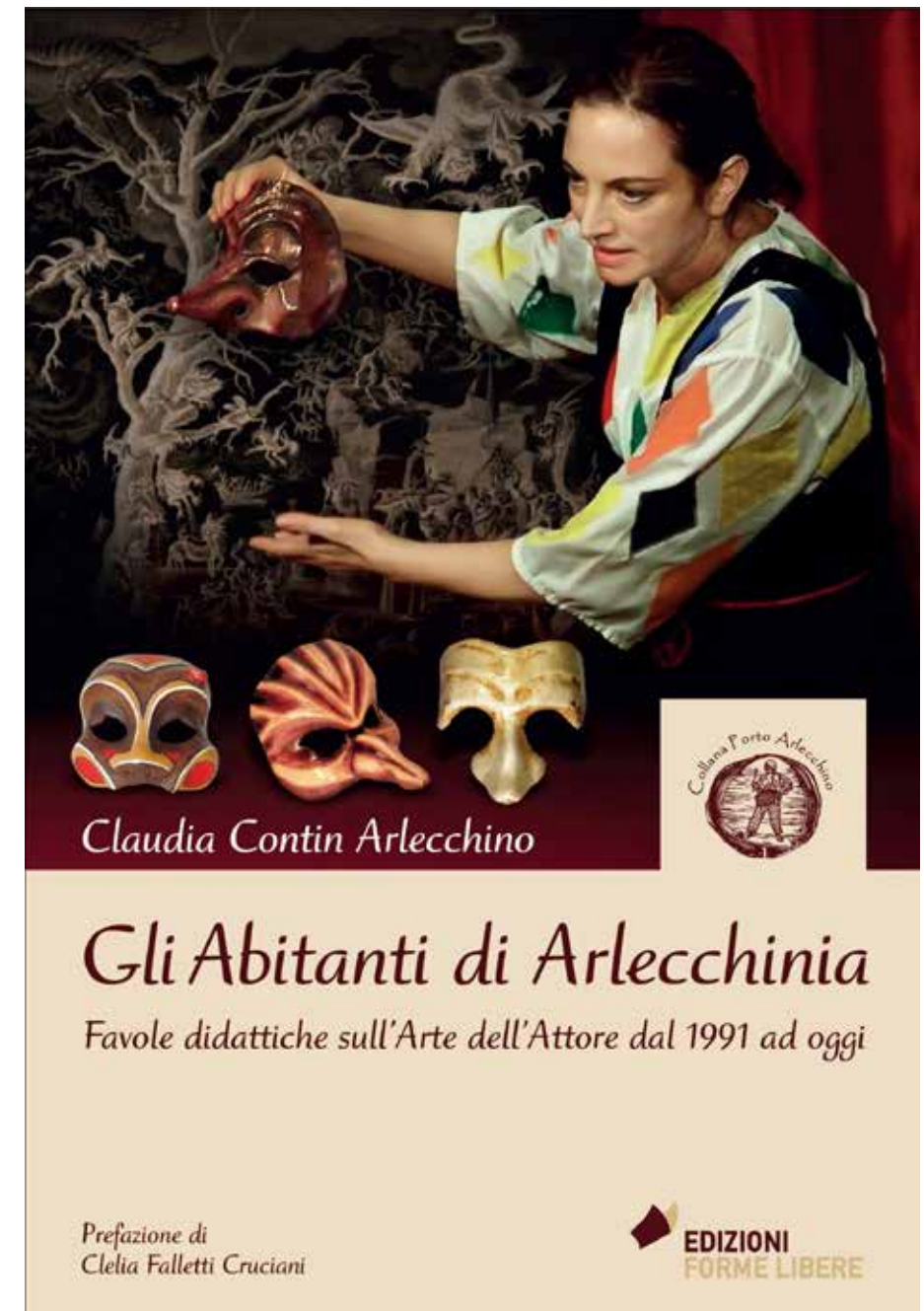
As my teachers told me in the '80s: "Commedia dell'Arte is not for everyone! Only those who are willing to serve it for the rest of their lives and honour it with a death worthy of being remembered, can approach it." They meant that Commedia dell'Arte requires dedication, attention and a deep sense of belonging to the tiny Fraternal Companies spread all over the world in all times.

The Land of Arlecchino is not for everyone, but it addresses everyone with healthy and vivifying energy like that of the didactic tales of our grandparents and ancestors, capable of awakening a joyful and cathartic dance between vices and virtues, in equal dignity between the best and the most fragile sides of humanity.

In short, in the Land of Arlecchino natural selection seems not to choose the strongest but the most cheerful. ■

Footnote

JTA thanks the publishing house Edizioni Forme Libera (Trento, Italy), for the authorisation to translate and publish this text which takes up themes and contents from the book by Claudia Contin Arlecchino, *Gli abitanti di Arlecchinia* (2019). The translation from the original Italian was by Luca Fantinutti, subsequently revised by Julia Varley, in dialogue with the author.



Cover of Claudia Contin Arlecchino's book



Akira Matsui

Odin Actors Were My Rivals!

Interview by Jonah Salz

Abstract: The Japanese nob actor Akira Matsui is interviewed by Jonah Salz in August 2021 about his encounters with Eugenio Barba reflecting on his decade-long collaboration with ISTA and Odin Teatret in Spain, Bali, Italy and Denmark. Akira Matsui reflects on the intercultural experience of performing Ur-Hamlet as part of the Theatrum Mundi Ensemble directed by Eugenio Barba, having to interact on stage with performers of other traditions.

Keywords: Ur-Hamlet, Nob theatre; Intercultural performance; Akira Matsui; Eugenio Barba

First encounters

AM: The first time I met Eugenio Barba¹ was in India. He was conducting some sort of workshop there with performers mainly from Suzuki Tadashi's Waseda Theatre Group. But he doesn't remember me being there. I knew he didn't really like traditional Asian actors who had gone overseas and done things as I had. He didn't think such foreign influenced actors could work well with his troupe. He communicated via Mark Oshima and other interpreters and he brought to Odin Teatret and ISTA artists like Nomura Mannojo and his son Kosuke and other performers. So, I had no direct interaction with him, although I knew his name and what he looked like.

Until Jonah Salz introduced me to Eugenio at Bielefeld in 2000, I had only encountered him as a participant in his workshop. I was in Germany for another project with Axel Tangering at the Meta Theatre in Munich, and I stopped at the Bielefeld ISTA with Jonah. I wasn't on the official programme since I was there as an observer. But I guess it was a kind of audition for me, because suddenly Eugenio had me doing many things. He asked me to teach the ISTA participants nob chant and dance every day for a week. Suddenly he put me in a group with other participants to prepare a scene for a play, *The Castle* by Franz Kafka. And once, he abruptly invited me to improvise with

1. From data in Eugenio Barba, *The Moon Rises from the Ganges. My Journey through Asian Acting Techniques*, Icarus Performing Enterprise/Routledge, Holstebro, Malta, Wrocław, London, New York, 2015; Vicki Ann Cremona, Francesco Galli, Julia Varley, *Thinking with the Feet. Actor's Techniques and Theatre Anthropology*, Odin Teatrets Forlag, Holstebro 2017.



Kanichi Hanayagi, a nihon buyo dancer who had also trained as an onnagata (female impersonator) in kabuki. I was so tense, trying to figure out on the spot how to match my noh with his kabuki buyo timing. I am sure Kanichi felt the same, he didn't know so much about noh either. So even though it wasn't a *pas de deux*, we since each had to figure out an effective way to improvise on the spot.

For the Kafka piece, Eugenio hadn't given us any script at all. The only text we received was a short parable from *The Trial*, "Before the Law". Each group of the international mixed participants prepared a scene about asking admission to the law and Eugenio adapted these scenes in a final montage that he directed. He chose certain members from each group to make an ensemble play. I don't remember much except that one actor recited a text from *Macbeth* ("Tomorrow and tomorrow") in front of the gate. Eugenio made us do this very challenging exercise as a kind of audition. So going from observer to teacher, to demonstrator and to auditioning actor - the first time I participated at ISTA - was rather sudden and shocking!

Ur-Hamlet: the challenges over time

JS: During intensive periods of rehearsals in Bali and Italy from 2004-2006, Matsui joined the large cast of international actors and musicians for *Ur-Hamlet*, the production Barba was preparing with the ISTA *Theatrum Mundi* Ensemble and Odin Teatret's actors. During the rehearsals, Matsui's role changed from the ghost of Hamlet's father to the character of *The Queen of the Rats* who brings the plague to Hamlet's castle, and simultaneously, with many variations in between, to the foster-brother of Hamlet enacted by the Afro-Brazilian dancer Augusto Omolú.

AM: With ISTA, I never knew what to expect. The same was with *Ur-Hamlet*: I never knew what would happen. The actors were gathered, the rehearsal times fixed, but the script wasn't there! First, I became the ghost of Hamlet's father, then the Queen of the Rats who brought the plague, then Hamlet's foster-brother or right-hand man. My role changed on a daily basis! Other cast members' roles were set. Mine was the only one that kept changing. So, I had to think up something new every day!

While Eugenio never criticised what I was doing, on the other hand he never complimented me. But I knew that he was watching me very closely. I remember feeling that it was a good thing that he never said anything to me. Because he got truly angry with some people. Once he became furious with a Taiwanese girl. And once, although I shouldn't boast, he suddenly announced: "Everyone, watch the way Akira is doing this." He never got angry with me, but he never praised me either. Sometimes he told me things like: "Try using that fragment of what you did yesterday". So I realised that he had been watching me carefully.

He kept checking with me to see whether what I was doing was traditional noh. That was challenging. Because as you know, there are very few *kata* (forms) in noh that express particular actions through realistic mime. Most are abstract expressions that go with many types of plots. There's *shikakehiraki*, the simple stepping forward to point

the fan, and other forms such as triangles and circles. But noh is not like nihon buyo classical dance which uses *kata* (forms) closer to mimetic gestures. So when Eugenio saw me executing a gesture or dance, he would ask: "Is this noh?" And then he would be irritated if he discovered that I had tried to create a *new* noh-like form to suit the action. He didn't want me to try to match the other performers by acting with expressive gestures. In other words, he did not want me trying to be an actor. He had a lot of good actors with Odin who could perform in their own more realistic style. He didn't want me to try to alter my abstract patterns to conform with them. But as an actor, of course I wanted to enter into the action of the story and adjust to the performers I was with. So naturally I invented some new forms. But he kept asking me, "Is this noh?" and rejected them. That was challenging for me as a performer.

One of the most difficult things during rehearsal was figuring out how to react during the Balinese and Japanese *tachimawari* (fighting scenes). Eugenio told us to try to use the fighting *kata* of the two traditions to create the battle scene at the end. But no matter how slowly and carefully I tried to rehearse the sword strikes and parries, the Balinese always had a faster tempo, and so we could never adjust to each other. Eugenio wanted a more slow-motion battle of controlled formality but, when excited, the Balinese always grew faster and faster, with an uncontrolled tempo. So, they never meshed with my more measured crescendo. Finally, Eugenio gave up and had me match the Balinese speed.

As for my own role, Eugenio changed my choreography every day. He would throw out most of the movements I had developed earlier, but continued to have me use those elements that he felt worked. But while we were rehearsing, he wouldn't tell me whether



Akira Matsui and Kanichi Hanayagi. ISTA 12, Bielefeld, Germany, 2000. Photo: Fiora Bemporad

my new forms were any good or not. Sometimes I would create something that I thought was good, but it would be rejected the next day. And I didn't know why. Every night, Jonah and I would watch videos to try to figure out what I did that day, since the next day Eugenio might compliment me for something, but I would already have forgotten how I had created it. But usually all those preparations were worthless since he would change it completely the next day, and every day! It was very hard to keep up with. When I improvised forms that he felt were good, I couldn't remember how to repeat them, and those that I invented in advance to show what I thought were good, he would reject them.

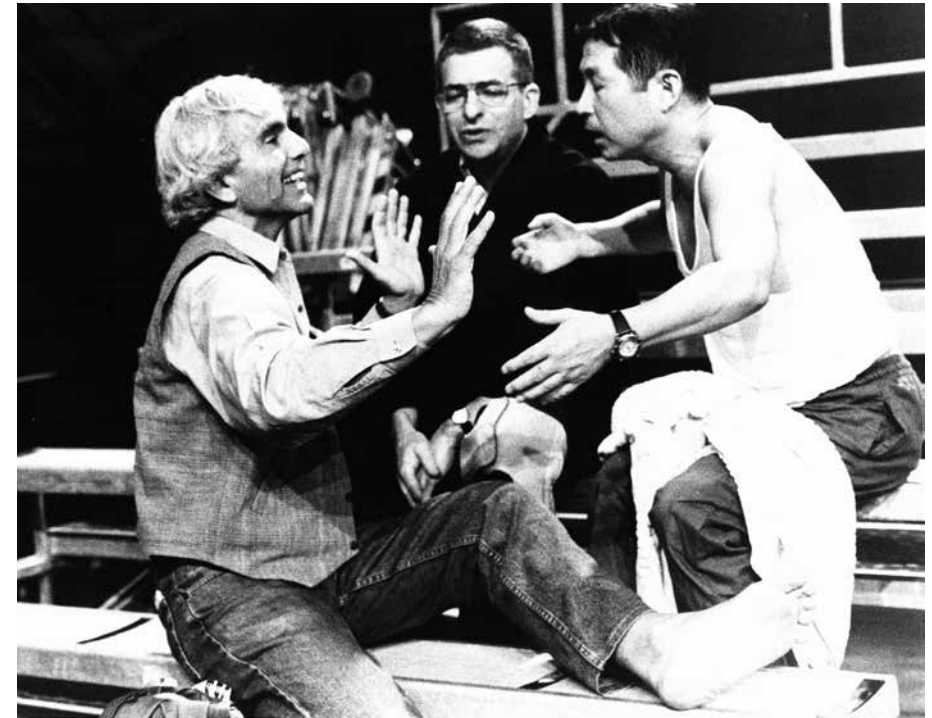
Gradually, I came to understand why Eugenio chose Indian, Balinese, and Japanese performers. He would use performers who would not become actors. Mostly they were masters of forms with dance as a base. I was basically performing using dance for expression rather than as an actor interpreting a scene, even as the Queen of the Rats.

But I am a noh actor. So as performer, I was always trying to walk the delicate line between acting and dance. And it was right on the line that Eugenio seemed always to be aiming for. And if I leaned too far into acting, that was no good, and on the other side, pure dance would be bad as well. Eugenio always wanted something that didn't destroy the noh form through acting in a realistic manner, but on the other hand he didn't want me merely to reproduce forms from noh. So, it was hard for me to find that middle ground. I could see that he was employing the Balinese and the Indian performers in the same way. Walking atop the fence, one has to balance on the very top of the boards. As we struggled through our rehearsals, the music grew into a powerful force. The musicians were developing along with the performers in the same way.²

Eugenio's directing style

AM: Eugenio's directing style was always astonishing. In the ancient *Ur-Hamlet* story, he brought me in as the Queen of the Rats who spreads the plague, exterminating refugees who had invaded Hamlet's castle. There was a long wedding scene with a bride and a groom, the burial of the corpses carried away by a bulldozer, an old woman pushing a baby pram like in *Rosemary's Baby*, and all sorts of contemporary scenes woven together in a complicated way. I had seen at other ISTAs Eugenio's *Theatrum Mundi* productions and Odin Teatret's performances such as *Andersen's Dream* which used the same sort of directing. The *Theatrum Mundi* performance *Ego-Faust* was hard to follow, even though there were performers of Japanese *nihon buyo* in it. The story was difficult to make out, although the performers' movements told the story. The plays with just the Odin actors were really difficult for me to understand: sitting at a long table, just talking. When I watched the solo performances, I could understand them, and they were interesting, more or less. But when they performed as a group, the plot was too complicated and without much movement, so I couldn't make sense of it, or figure out where the climaxes were.

2. The orchestra was composed by a 22 people Balinese gamelan, an Indian flutist, four Odin musicians, an Afro-Brazilian atabaqui drummer, and singers from France, Denmark and Bali.



Eugenio Barba, Jonah Salz and Akira Matsui. ISTA 13, Sevilla, Spain, 2004. Photo: Fiora Bemporad

Interweaving genres

AM: In most performances I have been involved in, such as Yeats or Beckett with Noho Theatre (directed by Jonah Salz) or Theatre Nogaku (directed by Richard Emmert), META Theatre (Axel Tangering), Jin Hi Kim's Asian musical *Dragon Bond Rite*, Korean-Chinese-Japanese collaboration *Forgiveness* directed by Chen Shi-Zheng, there is usually a text to begin with. The stage directions were written, so the director just choreographed the movement. We were moved around the stage like pieces in a chess game.

A director cannot know too many details about each genre. When Jonah directs a piece for the Noho Theatre, you might know about *kyogen* plays and movement, but you don't know the detailed *kata* information about noh plays. If you are directing kabuki, you wouldn't know which parts of the acting and dance you could extract from them to use. It would be hard for you to direct performances from a different *kyogen* family, like the star Nomura Mansai. He would say: "This form doesn't exist in *kyogen*, at least not in the Izumi school," so it would be hard to work with him. He would just show off his own form, and not want to go beyond his own box. So, there is no bond between the performers; each would be playing to their own genre. In such kinds of productions, Balinese are doing their own style, all united by their common dance. That's true for

Balinese dance, kathakali or Brazilian capoeira, etc. For *Dragon Bond Rite*,³ everyone performed inside their own frame. There was no bond! The Chinese and Korean and Indonesian performers just performed according to their usual traditional expression.

I once wrote something about this practice of merging forms, regarding *manga*, Japanese comic books. Long ago, they used to say: “Hey, you’re reading *manga* comic books? Why are you reading such silly things at your age? It used to be for kids.” But when I saw the Broadway Disney musical *Lion King*, with those animated characters brought to life, I thought: “Perhaps that’s how Japanese theatre will develop from now.”

Noh started like *manga*. Each pose and gesture were carefully constructed within a frame. But when those individual scenes are strung together, you have a play - like flipping through a book of drawings. So I have been thinking that in this age when performance is made like pictures that come to life, noh is still a vital art form. Noh doesn’t have to develop into anything as complicated as *Lion King*, where you’re not sure who’s human, what’s a puppet, or animation, and what’s a real animal. You don’t need to mix it with CG effects, but perhaps it can develop into something else, maybe even a Noho performance.

In that sense, Eugenio does a great job of stitching the best parts of various traditions together to create something new. There’s a good structure and balance. I wonder whether the same could be done within the genre of noh itself. But sometimes directors say, let’s add noh here, let’s put in more noh-like elements here. They are not so interested in creating new forms, but a kind of shortcut of patching old ones together. In that case, isn’t it better for spectators to just watch the real thing?

Ur-Hamlet as a long-run

AM: Most of the performances I have been involved with are over after one or two shows. *Forgiveness*, involving a Chinese Peking Opera star and Korean p’ansori singer, was like that. So, repeating *Ur-Hamlet* over many years was unusual, and gave us a chance to have fun with our parts.

There were three different productions of *Ur Hamlet*: the Ravenna Festival in Italy, Kronborg Castle in Elsinore in Denmark, and Wrocław in Poland. The last was best, as the actors had become accustomed to their roles. For the first two, held outdoors in spaces that were sometimes difficult to move within, there were always challenges. At the beginning, things changed all the time, but once we got to Wrocław, we all could play a bit inside our roles. And Eugenio no longer had the leeway to tell everyone what to do from scratch. We already had the costumes, and knew the general choreography, so we had a bit more independence. He couldn’t change much, although the performance got faster as we got used to it. I guess it was shorter too, as we learned to create a good tempo.

3. Jin Hi Kim’s cross-cultural mask dance drama (1997), featured musicians and dancers from India, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Tuva and the USA.

Learning to be stricter at ISTA⁴

AM: I performed a one-man show at Seville, *Women in Circles*, including Samuel Beckett’s *Rockaby* and *Utoh* (Blood-birds), based on the noh play about a cormorant-fisher in hell, employing projections of woodblock prints of Munakata Shiho. I danced twice, first as the fisherman, then showed slides in between as I dressed, then I came on again as the Ghost. I remember Seville the best; afterwards I went twice for workshops and performances there, invited by the Spanish director Ricardo Iniesta. In that sense, ISTA gave me a great opportunity to network with performers and producers outside Japan.

Although I have been giving noh workshops since the 1960s at American colleges and theatres, I learned something new from Eugenio: to be stricter. I gave noh workshops, and I recall Eugenio telling me I shouldn’t be so forgiving of those students who couldn’t kneel for singing lessons. In America, the teachers organising the workshops would just say, “*shikata ga nai*,” (it can’t be helped). I became accustomed to that way of thinking, and when I was teaching, students could stand or lie American-style! But when Eugenio observed my first class at ISTA, he was a bit annoyed, and spoke to me afterwards. He wanted me to teach the authentic, formal way of taking a lesson. So that even if students couldn’t kneel on the floor to bow, they had to sit cross-legged or on cushions in a way that they could breathe and sing as if kneeling. And I realised that the etiquette of bowing and humbly receiving and thanking the teacher for lessons was important too. While I was teaching, he would peek in occasionally, and I didn’t have to explain unnecessarily. In that sense, Eugenio was far more conservative than I, who am much more flexible.

Eugenio’s demonstration improvisations

AM: Even when Eugenio suddenly called me out in front of everyone to do an improvisation or show a certain stance, I could quickly pull something out from my repertoire. That was because of my early training. Since I had grown up at the *iemoto*’s⁵ house since the age of 11, I learned that I had to be ready to show something I had been taught at a moment’s notice. So I was always on my toes.

I saw a lot of shows when I was young: Japanese traditional theatre of course, but also ballet, opera, and musicals. So I had no problem when called upon to show something from my memory. And I thought about what I could do that Eugenio wouldn’t recognise as being not noh. I took some good parts from kabuki and made them more noh-like. And I took the arabesque or other forms from ballet and did

4. At ISTA, Matsui was asked to teach noh song and dance, present work-demonstrations, and rehearse Theatrum Mundi productions with Odin actors that would eventually lead to the *Ur-Hamlet* project. He participated in ISTAs held in Bielefeld (Germany), Krzyzowa/Wrocław (Poland); Seville/La Riconada (Spain).

5. *Iemoto*: Japanese term referring to the founder or master of a certain school of traditional Japanese art.

them in noh style. With all the instructions he gave, I was forced to think outside the box. “Do this in a noh way,” so I couldn’t just stand there and say, “This is the truest noh movement, just standing still!”



Akira Matsui, Eugenio Barba. ISTA 14, Wrocław, Poland, 2005. Photo: Tomasz Hotod

What do you think about the ISTA experience?

AM: Although for participants in a residency for ten days may normally be a bit expensive considering housing and food, it seems that Eugenio chooses places for holding ISTA where there is a low cost of living. So that makes it affordable even for young artists and researchers. Members of a small theatre company can step out of their own world by learning all these different styles, from Asia and elsewhere. It’s important that they recognise that there are these other streams of theatrical knowledge.

I shouldn’t denigrate myself, but I am not very popular in Japan. However, I am often asked to go abroad to participate in workshops and collaborations. I have always been interested in such things. So, when I was young, if I weren’t already a professional noh actor, I think I would have tried such a program like ISTA.

What can participants take away from ISTA after learning noh or Balinese dance for only a few weeks? Of course, they can’t be expected to remember everything they learned, or to become a professional Balinese dancer or noh performer. They have to continue working within their own genres. But through ISTA, they have the opportunity to taste a great variety of other disciplines in a short time, at least on a superficial level.

And they learn from commonalities, for example the low center of gravity both in Indian dance and in noh’s *suriashi* (sliding feet).

So why not study more intensively in Japan? Discovering those fundamental principles of performance is not something that I myself can teach; I can only do noh. Eugenio has the theory, and it’s that perspective that makes the noh practice meaningful to various artists. Usually when I go abroad, I only have an interpreter or a Japanese literature scholar hosting a physical workshop, so we cannot get to that level of abstract understanding. So those theoretical discussions and sudden improvisations that Eugenio elicits during ISTA were certainly useful to performers and scholars, because of that intellectual framing.

Personally, I can’t really apply what I learned at ISTA to my own art, noh. There is little room for “acting” in noh. But my sensitivities as a performer changed from these experiences. I could see, “Oh, so there is *this* kind of timing,” different from the one I was accustomed to. And when I performed in Noho performances or in other non-noh productions overseas, I could employ some things I had observed at ISTA. I think my own performance deepened from the experience. It was useful when I tried to do things outside my noh traditional forms. Instead of just imitating the puppet-style (*ningyoburi*) in classical Japanese dance nihon buyo or a kabuki form (*kata*), or merely presenting a gesture I knew from the Western theatre, such as ballet or modern dance, I was internalising it in a more profound way before expressing it. When I experimented this way, if audiences were happy, I was satisfied, and if not, then I could return to doing it in strict noh style. This sort of experimentation became a part of my career adventure.

In fact, there were times that I thought of leaving noh. I’m 75, there are only five or so more years when I’ll really be able to move on stage. So, if I do something that gets me excommunicated, it doesn’t really matter at this point. As far as the future, I don’t really have any hope that my way of experimentation and intercultural performances will continue. Although it’s perhaps contrary to expectations of generational shifts, I am the innovator, and my son has no urge to experiment. He is much more conservative than I am.

Personal reflections on Odin Teatret

AM: For the decades that we worked together, Eugenio was always kind to me. His relations with me were always very friendly and open; I never considered him a fearful director. He seemed to treat me specially compared to other performers, letting me bring my own costumes, at some expense, and so forth. I knew where I stood because there was always a clear hierarchy in the group: students ate last, after teachers, and shared rooms whereas we had private rooms. And I always had an interpreter, so that I could fully participate. There was always a budget for specialist interpreters like Jonah Salz, not just someone who could speak Japanese, and that allowed me to relax.

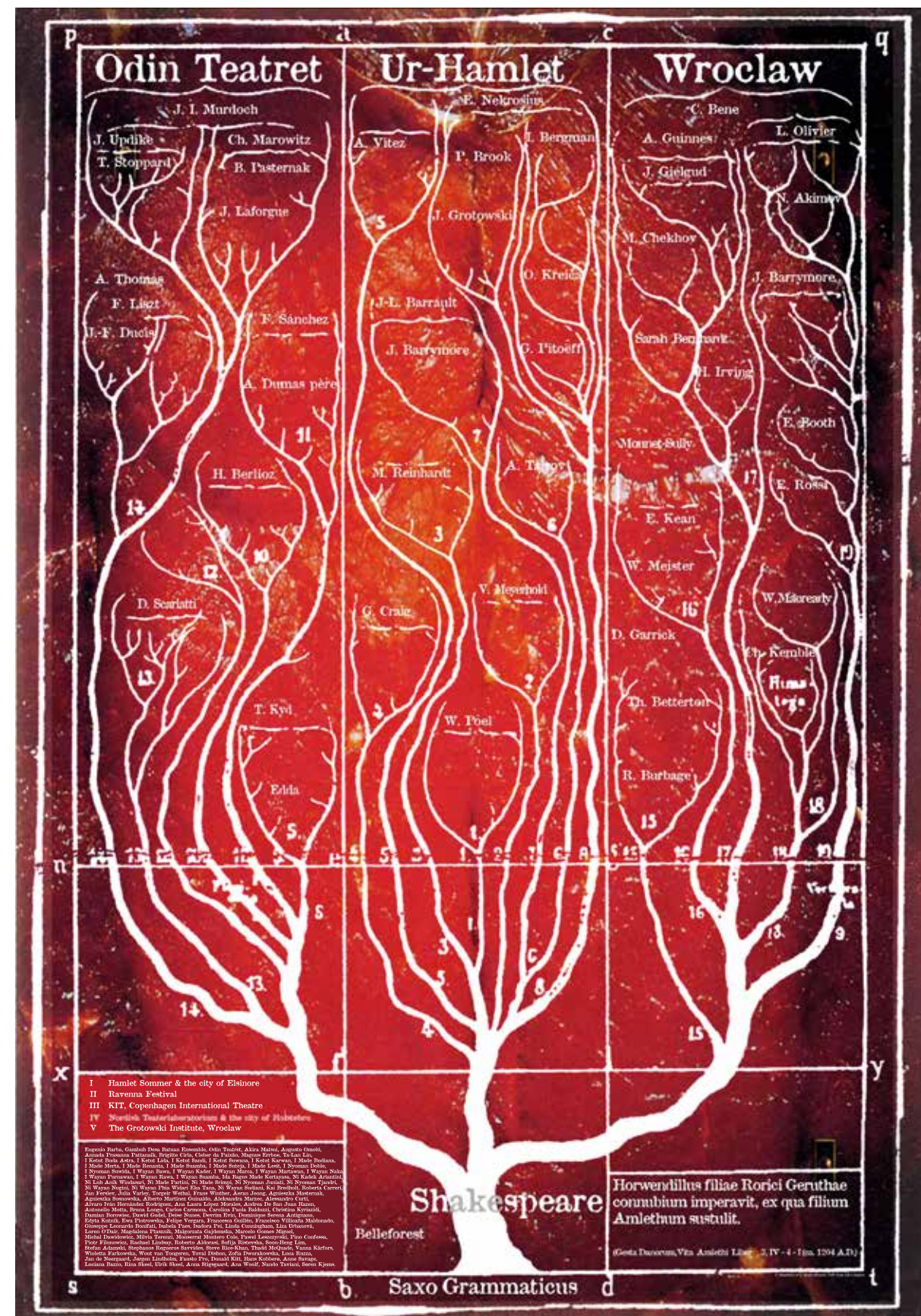
Everyone at Odin was very kind to me, Julia Varley and Roberta Carreri, Kai Bredholt and Torgeir Wethal and Augusto Omolu, individually. I got along with everyone, but especially with the musicians. I thought the composer and conductor Frans Winther

was especially watching me carefully all the time. I got along with the actors, but they were in a sense my rivals for Eugenio's attentions, and on stage! The fact that they lived together and worked together for so many decades is proof of the trust that developed in the group. It is sad that some of them passed away.

I was happy to discover that Eugenio had contributed to my 70th birthday and honorary doctoral commemorative pamphlet for my London performances. He wrote that he had been told I couldn't speak English, but when I sometimes laughed before I heard the interpretation, he wondered whether I was just pretending not to understand English. But I'm an actor, so it might have been a false laughter, who knows? Joking aside, it was important to have proper translation since I was working as a professional. I couldn't get by on just superficial understanding of what was said in English.

Please convey my wishes to Eugenio to enjoy in peace healthy, continued activities with Odin and ISTA. And also to Julia. ■

Poster *Ur-Hamlet*. *Ur-Hamlet*, based on *Vita Amlethi* by Saxo Grammaticus (1200 A.D.). On stage: Akira Matsui (Japan), Cristina Wistari Formaggia (Italy/Bali), Ni Nyoman Candri, I Wayan Bawa (Bali) and 32 performers and musicians from the Gambuh Pura Desa Ensemble (I Made Suamba, I Wayan Naka, Ni Wayan Sudiani, Ni Wayan Nugini, Ni Nyoman Jumati, Ni Kadek Ariantini, Ni Luh Nik Windasari, Ni Made Srimpi, Ni Made Partini, Ni Wayan Pia, I Ketut Karwan, I Nyoman Doble, I Wayan Purnawan, I Wayan Martawan, I Made Suteja, I Wayan Suamba, Ida Bagus Negara, I Wayan Lesit, I Ketut Rida, I Wayan Merta, I Ketut Suana, I Wayan Sandi, I Made Budiana, I Wayan Lambih, I Wayan Rawa, I Made Renanta, I Made Geten, I Wayan Berata), Brigitte Cirila (France), Augusto Omolu e Cleber da Paixão (Brazil), Annada Prasanna Pattanaik (India), Magnus Errboe (Denmark), Yalan Lin (Taiwan), Odin Teatret's actors (Kai Bredholt, Roberta Carreri, Jan Ferslev, Mia Theil Have, Julia Varley, Torgeir Wethal) and the Foreigners' chorus (43 performers from 21 countries). Music: composed and arranged by Frans Winther, classical Balinese and Indian songs. Scenic space: Luca Ruzza. Costumes: Jan de Neergaard and Odin Teatret. Light design: Luca Ruzza and Odin Teatret. Sound: Cy Nicklin. Production director: Patricia Alves. Production assistants: Emanuela Bauco, Anne Savage. Photo and video: Claudio Coloberti and Torgeir Wethal. Poster: Luca Ruzza. Technicians: Hans Kobberø, Fausto Pro, Oscar Alonso Sánchez, Stefan Tarabini, Søren Lykkeager. Director's assistants: Julia Varley, Cristina Wistari Formaggia, Ana Woolf. Administrative director: Søren Kjems. Literary adviser: Nando Tavian. Dramaturgy and direction: Eugenio Barba.





Simone Noris and Alessandro Rigoletti from Teatro tascabile di Bergamo with Eugenio Barba.
ISTA 15, Favignana, Italy, 2021. Photo: Francesco Galli

Francesca Romana Rietti

Learning to Teach

Chronicle from the ISTA/NG 2021

Abstract: The article aims to evoke the atmosphere and work environment of the theatre experiences the author encountered as an observer participant of the 16th session of ISTA/NG (International School of Theatre Anthropology/New Generation). Held in Favignana, Sicily, from 1 to 22 October 2021, the session was renamed ISTA/NG, as part of a knowledge sharing project promoted by the Fondazione BarbaVarley established in December 2020. Beside the narration of the events, the article includes questions concerning the pursuit of a language that tries not to betray the complexity of a practical adventure that involves both cognitive and sensorial spheres. Particular attention is given to the presence at ISTA/NG of Kapila Venu, an Indian teacher who found herself working with Eugenio Barba for the first time, having to learn how to teach all over again. Kapila Venu becomes the focus to analyse the material and immaterial dimension of the pedagogical tradition founded by theatre anthropology that concentrates on the first day of work. According to Eugenio Barba, it is in that first moment of learning that the physical and ethical foundation is put for the future theatre profession.

Keywords: Eugenio Barba; Learning; Origins; Teaching; Kapila Venu

Draw up a plan of your wish and live this plan within a norm of beauty.
Federico García Lorca, letter to Jorge Salamea, 1928

ISTA New Generation

The last session of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), number 16, added the suffix NG - New Generation - to the acronym according to the wish of its founder Eugenio Barba. It was not a change of nomenclature, but the final stage of a transformation process that has matured over the last few years and which has resulted in a broad project of sharing knowledge on training and the transmission of acting technique promoted by Fondazione Barba Varley.¹

¹ Among the initiatives promoted by the Fondazione as part of the project of sharing knowledge, it is worth pointing out the films *Ten Lessons on Theatre Anthropology. Learning to See*. Realised by Eugenio Barba, Julia Varley and Claudio Coloberti, the films are partially based on the abundant audio-visual and photographic documentation on the ISTA sessions preserved in Odin Teatret Archives in Holstebro, Denmark. For more information visit: <https://fondazionebarbavarley.org>



The first edition of ISTA/NG was held in Favignana from 12 to 22 October 2021 and was entitled: *Presence of the Actor and Perception of the Spectator*.

The roots and the flight

How to give words to hours and hours spent observing? How to give thanks for having been able to attend, for whole days, the work of actors and actresses who, by means of technique and practice, seem to set out in search of beauty? They don't contemplate it for aesthetic purposes, they put it into shape, modelling it into infinite expressions. They investigate its material and 'immaterial' foundations, experience an immense fatigue that at times borders on nonsense and to me, a spectator and scholar, they seem to stubbornly protect the potential enabling their practice to affect reality by generating forms of personal transformation.

How do I make writing become a tool through which to objectify and communicate an experience full of seduction and ambiguity, fuelled by personal questions that have accompanied me for years? What remains of a practical adventure of knowledge that has spoken to my senses? How can I relate it? In what terms? Will the use of evocative language compromise the understanding and transmission of the events I have chosen to narrate? Do I risk distorting the facts and making them non-objective? Who am I telling them to? To those who are approaching theatre studies and practice? Those who are doing research? Those who pass on knowledge and techniques? To a beloved person for whom we write in secret?

What will this experience linked to flight and its roots become, once I let it land on paper?

The spaces of flight and roots

I keep on looking at the photographic report of ISTA/NG days by Francesco Galli. He is a photographer of theatre and architecture and became responsible for the photographic documentation of ISTA since the session in Krzyzowa and Wrocław (Poland 2005), although his collaboration with Odin Teatret dates back to 1998.

I began to think about possible ways to archive this huge iconographic legacy. I fantasized about combinations of non-linear images, free from the canonical logic of the documentation of the working days which are marked by a dense, precise and necessarily repetitive program. The stories and images, the photographer's gaze and my reflections turned out to be the threads with which to start weaving a possible narrative.

The stories I will try to tell have dreamlike substance and power: they continue to dance in front of my eyes and in my mind. Yet, they all belong to an event that really happened and is now history.

We were in Favignana, on the largest of the three islands of the Egadi Archipelago, a butterfly-shaped strip of land in the Sicilian Channel and on whose slopes the profile of the Castle of Santa Caterina stands out.

Barbers, interactions and fusions at the *tonnara*. Photo: Francesco Galli



In 1874 the entire island was bought by a wealthy family of industrialists, the Florios. Having definitively taken possession of an immense building, which they had already used for the slaughter of tuna fish, the Florio family entrusted its renovation to the architect Damiani Almeyda who transformed it into a splendid example of industrial architecture for tuna fishing and conservation.

Its activities ceased around the 1970s due to the decrease in tuna in the Mediterranean. The buildings remained in disuse until 1991 when the Sicily Region acquired and restored them. Reopened in 2009, the former Florio factory has since been a multifunctional cultural and exhibition centre with large open spaces and huge halls.

In October 2021, the Mayor Francesco Forgione opened the doors of the *tonnara* to welcome the ISTA/NG. During ten days, a small transitory community settled on the island and established their own living and working norms, different from the ones that govern daily life. Thus, as is the practice at ISTA, an environment was created that imagined its own way of using the hours of the day and discovered new forms of inhabiting some of the places in Favignana.

Within the *tonnara*, various venues were temporarily destined for new uses or, according to an established tradition of ISTA, took on their own names: a practice that helps to give places a life of their own and trigger the imagination. Thus, a passage room was used as a library, Alexandria; five rooms were dedicated to different aspects of the theatre work - pedagogical training, interactive presentations of artistic creations, exchanges between practical, historical and theoretical knowledge - named after as many cities in which previous ISTA sessions had taken place. The two green areas have been renamed the gardens of Alhambra and Babylon; finally, the huge central court - which hosted group-singing rehearsals, impromptu meetings, small discussion groups, frugal lunches and chance encounters - took the name of the African Kalahari Desert, one of the largest in the world.

Linee Libere and Teatro Proskenion

ISTA/NG is a pioneering experiment in a transcultural dialogue, a tradition of research invented by Barba and kept alive since 1980 by a team of scholars and artists from various theatre and dance traditions. The working methods, the scientific and pedagogical approach and the networks of professional and human relationships during the ISTA sessions have generated a significant interest in theatre anthropology. University courses and the performances by Eugenio Barba with the multicultural ensemble Theatrum Mundi at the end of the ISTA sessions, have enthused numerous theatre people and specialists. A huge amount of documents is kept in the Odin Teatret Archives in Holstebro: photos, drawings, diaries, reports, articles, books, essays and monographic journals of notable historical and scientific interest.²

2. The volume by Mirella Schino containing the inventories of the various paper Fonds (Schino 2018) is particularly useful for learning about the wealth of documents kept in Odin Teatret Archives. Selections of documents are contained in an essay by the same author in *Teatro e Storia*, entitled "ISTA-balena. Documenti e riflessioni sull'International School of Theatre Anthropology" (Schino 2016, 207-39).

There have been recurring cycles of didactic and scientific meetings. The most striking examples are the University of the Eurasian Theatre, founded in 1992 by Eugenio Barba and which, after the first two sessions of 1992 in Padua and 1993 in Fara Sabina, was organised between 1996 and 2009 by Teatro Proskenion in Scilla (Italy); the FLIPT, Intercultural Festival Laboratory of Theatre Practice at Teatro Potlach in Fara Sabina from 2007 to the present day; and from 2008 the annual A Arte Secreta do Ator of the Yinspiração Company by Luciana Martuchelli in Brasília.³

In 2016, at the end of the ISTA session in Albino (Italy), Irene Di Lelio, a 26-year-old Italian director, founder of the Roman company Linee Libere, expressed to Eugenio Barba the desire to make accessible to the young generation the knowledge she had experienced. In 2019, this small company on the edge of the official theatre started the realisation of an ISTA session by allying itself with another group, Teatro Proskenion directed by Vincenzo Mercurio, and with the support of the Fondazione Barba Varley. Overcoming obstacles of all kinds - including two earthquakes and a pandemic - they finally landed on the island of Favignana.

Here from 12 to 22 October 2021 Barba, approaching his 85th birthday, pitched his tent. It is here that, alongside his wealth of knowledge, research, myths and, to use his own terminology, superstitions, he welcomed fifty-two participants from twenty-one countries as well as twenty-four collaborators from the pedagogical and organisational staff.

The architecture of time. Learning to learn

In Favignana, activity began at dawn in silence - an ancient tradition dating back to the first sessions of ISTA - broken by a song by the sea of one of the teachers or participants. It went on until late in the evening with performances and then dinner. Between the beginning and the end, a kaleidoscope of activities.

During the first section of the morning, the four groups of participants - named after the late ISTA teachers Sanjukta Panigrahi, Katsuko Azuma, I Made Pasek Tempo and Augusto Omolu - underwent three hours of practical "learning to learn". They were working in rotation with the members of an artistic team that Eugenio Barba had formed over time in several previous sessions: Julia Varley (Denmark/UK, Odin Teatret, ISTA 1990), I Wayan Bawa (Bali, ISTA 1995), Ana Woolf (Argentina, ISTA 2004), Keiin Yoshimura (Japan, ISTA 2016), Parvathy Baul (India, ISTA 2016), Caterina Scotti and Alessandro Rigoletti (Italy, Teatro tascabile di Bergamo, ISTA 2016), Alício Amaral and Juliana Pardo (Brazil, 2014).⁴

On these occasions Barba explained the reasons for his interest in their first days of work, enabling the performers to become aware of the shared basic principles on which their technical experience was based; he guided them in the search for those

3. For more information, refer to the sites created by the three organisers: <https://www.proskenion.it/teatro-eurasiano>, <https://www.teatropotlach.org/flipt>, <http://artesecretadoator.com.br>.

4. Founders of the theatre group Mundo Rodá in São Paulo, they participated in the Symposium on theatre anthropology "The Performer's Embodied Knowledge. A Dialogue between Techniques" directed by Eugenio Barba at the Shanghai Theatre Academy in November 2014.

tools necessary to see through the repetitiveness of the scenic action; he identified the principles enabling the performers to become familiar with the pre-expressive level, to shape their energy and discover the different qualities of their stage presence.

The second part of the morning - called "Origins: memory and discontinuity" - was dedicated to the presentation of the private and artistic biographies of the individual teachers. This was the time in which *the first day* was brought into focus, stressing the importance that the first steps assume for personal awareness and knowledge. In the terminology of theatre anthropology, the origins correspond to the space-time in which an essential core of principles is incorporated and around which the complex system of the performing body will gradually be organised. The return to the land of their professional origins as presented individually corresponds here to a conscious scrutiny of the principles behind the different qualities of energy determining stage presence, and then relating them one to another.

In the afternoon the working section of "Barbers, interactions and fusions" was under the guidance of Ana Woolf. For two hours the participants, in a search for knowledge, had a double possibility: extra time to work with teachers, or an opportunity to exchange their personal wealth of experience.

Then Eugenio Barba took over with "Learning to see. Presence of the actor and perception of the spectator". It was a dialogue 'in action' with the teachers displaying the performer's sensorial effects on the viewers' kinesthetic sense. In this section, three invited external artists presented the roots of their work: Tiziana Barbiero, actress since 1978 with Teatro tascabile di Bergamo, a specialist in Indian odissi dance; Lydia Koniordou, a renowned interpreter and pedagogue of ancient Greek dramas; Kapila Venu, Indian dancer of mohiniyattam and kutiyattam.

The working day ended with a performance from each of the performing traditions practiced throughout the day.

I have followed Eugenio Barba, Odin Teatret and ISTA since 1990, the year I began my university studies at La Sapienza in Rome. In 1996 I moved to Holstebro and spent several months ordering and cataloguing the plentiful materials preserved in the theatre's video archive. In 2004 I started the process which developed into the extraordinary Odin Teatret Archives, OTA. I attended my first ISTA session in Seville in 2004. Today, as a scholar, what did it mean for me to participate in this session in Favignana?

It was an immersive experience even for me who took part as an observer, often plunged into a state of apnea. It was an adventure with each of my senses subjected to an authentic bombardment of stimuli. In this personal and professional journey, I could invent and carve out a path for myself, even though each activity took place within a strongly organised structure.

Caring for the ability to weave a network of relationships and exchanges is fundamental and demanding. The surprise of what could happen during the meetings in free moments - when eating or taking short breaks - gave continuous forays into states of elation. I somewhat lost the sense of belonging to a physical geography, to a linguistic, cultural and anthropological dimension but rooted in the present. Yet the rhythm of the days was marked in such a way as to generate the constant need to return to the time and space of common work in which the programme continued undaunted in all its intensity.

Learning to teach

It is in the interregnum between these two dimensions - physical and metaphysical at the same time - that the figure of Kapila Venu moved. I met an artist in Favignana who, despite her great pedagogical and stage experience, faced an unexpectedly disorienting "first day" of work. It was not only her first collaboration with Eugenio Barba, but also her original encounter, in the field of practice, with the working language of theatre anthropology. This language is made up of research, analysis and transmission of those transcultural principles that govern stage presence and regulate its different temperatures and energy qualities. In the specific context of ISTA, Kapila Venu is a real representative of the New Generation.

Teaching at ISTA means, among other things, learning from scratch. To do what? To be observed by Barba's surgical eye scrutinising and analysing the work of the teachers. His gaze offers them the opportunity to look at their incorporated pedagogical practice from an estranged point of view and, in the light of this knowledge, re-read, redesign and go through their familiar technique dominated for years. They are again beginners, and become aware of how the body's inner organs work. Thus, they return to their well-known practice by asking new questions. It also implies the invention of a physical and verbal working language, at times technical, at times more evocative, always aiming at precision and effectiveness in transmitting an individual and personalised knowledge.

Coming from Kerala, a southern Indian state, the cradle of ancestral dance and theatre forms, Kapila Venu embodies two different forms, both inherited from her parents. She was trained by her mother, Nirmala Paniker, a dancer of mohiniyattam who initiated her as a child to this classical dance; and she studied with her father, G. Venu, a great expert of kutiyattam, the oldest living theatre form in the world. She continued her long training under the guidance of recognised artists such as Madhava Chakyar and Ushu Nangiar. Today Kapila is a dancer and a teacher of international renown.

In the frame of the well organised activities in Favignana, Kapila Venu inhabited an anomalous space which makes it a particularly interesting subject for study. Her exceptional presence was explained by Barba himself on presenting her at the opening meeting on 12 October when the teachers had ten minutes available to introduce themselves to the participants.

"I and Julia Varley, responsible for ISTA, received a letter from Ana Woolf who regretted the absence of Kapila in our pedagogical team. My first reaction was: we already have a sufficient number of teachers; we cannot add one more. Keep in mind that I know Kapila even before she was born. I met her through her father, a great researcher of kutiyattam, who visited Odin Teatret in the early 1970s. A few years ago, when I went to visit him in India, he received me with a performance by Kapila who enthralled me. But as I have already told you, after Sanjukta Panigrahi's death, I could not take any more⁵ ... When Ana wrote to us, I understood that the time of mourning was over and that Kapila

5. An outstanding Indian dancer of odissi style who contributed to its rediscovery and revitalisation. Sanjukta Panigrahi had collaborated with Barba since 1977. She was one of the co-founders of ISTA in 1980 and participated in ten sessions until her death in 1997 at the age of fifty-three. Since then, no Indian-born artist from traditional forms of dance-theatre has taken her place. Only in 2016 Eugenio Barba invited as teacher Parvathy Baul, a singer, painter and storyteller born in West Bengal, self-trained in the living Baul tradition.

should join us in Favignana. There was no space for her in the already fixed programme, so I proposed that she come as an active guest and make her knowledge available in the short fragments of free time. She accepted. Thanks, Kapila and welcome.”

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers

Kapila is given great freedom. She will have to invent a path within which to present her work and transmit that heritage of traditional knowledge she has learned since she was a child. However, there are obstacles to this freedom: she will have to do it within a pedagogical and research context for which she does not know the codes. She will have to deal with Barba who embodies a figure of a teacher completely different from the one she is used to. He does not pass on traditional knowledge and does not observe and then correct her, but he transforms her into a real object of study. He talks to her, solicits her to repeat over and over again a sequence of movements, asks her constant questions, often incomprehensible or absurd - especially if one thinks of the performing tradition from which she comes - but for which Barba still awaits an answer from her.

Kapila's first teaching participation in ISTA exposes her to a large amount of stimuli and indications that move her away from the paths she recognises, disorienting and confronting her with situations and questions that reveal how unarmed she is. Thus arises the need to grasp firmly at her roots and start again from there. This is the pedagogical process in ISTA for teachers who are preparing to undertake a difficult and delicate operation: to return to learning in order to teach according to a new logic made up of results, paths and discoveries that surprise them too.

I imagine that Kapila in Favignana experienced the amazement of often going back in time, and returning to inhabit the land of her professional origins where she took her first steps which, today, are the “mother cell” of her stage life. Following in the footsteps of my memory and photographic chronicle, I have so far tried to outline the experience of that island within an island which the 16th ISTA session was for me. I would like to highlight some of the phases through which I saw Kapila Venu's journey - so personal and so communal - take place. In retracing her steps, I find her essentially present in two work situations I have already mentioned: those established by the programme in which her double artistic profile emerged as interpreter of mohiniyattam and kutiyattam; and those which she herself created, giving life and conquering a pedagogical space of her own in the afternoon section of “Barbers, interactions and fusions”.

In spite of the undoubted differences between these two situations, I believe there is a red thread that links them: a constant and multiform dialogue that Eugenio Barba had woven with her. In the afternoons, while he observed Kapila's classes, he was a vigilant and silent presence. Only at the end did he approach her to ask her about the work she had done or to give some suggestions for the next day in relation to the pedagogical line she had undertaken. On the occasion of the presentation of her artistic biography on the 18th of October, Barba, on the contrary, intervened actively, often interacting with her to make more evident the gradual apprenticeship process through which she had passed. He invited her not to speak, in order to avoid anticipating and verbally explaining what she had to show by acting. In other cases, Barba's language became more abstract and



Eugenio Barba and Kapila Venu. Photo: Francesco Galli.

metaphorical: “Let me hear your mother's voice”. He wanted simultaneously to see both the learning child and her mother acting as her first teacher.

According to a well-established tradition at ISTA, in weaving his plot with Kapila, Barba went in search of those tools capable of evoking the precision of the given circumstances in which her training process took place. At the same time, he was looking for ways to present principles, forms and senses in her acting which are alive in the memory of her body-mind, despite their distant temporal roots and the fact that the actor had undergone multiple mutations.

We have witnessed a process between pedagogy and creation, the growth of a cognitive awareness in which we acknowledged the difficulties that the absence of a previous shared work can entail. We have been able to realise how unpredictable the number and shape of the paths are in order to overcome them. And how curiosity and willingness to get naked are fundamental in the process of research and knowledge.

Two qualities, in my eyes, characterised Kapila's attitude in her first ISTA: her embodiment of a physical and ethical stance, and her predetermination to maintain it. In spite of all the difficulties and obstacles, these elements struck me most about her person, more than the undoubted fascination due to her great enactment and deep knowledge behind the formal beauty, the technical refinement and the evocative power of her stage presence. I felt that it was her ability to preserve this particular predisposition that allowed her to ‘use’ the curiosity with which Barba analysed her work as an opportunity to re-read her own practice and technique. Above all, to question from a new point of view the millenary stage culture to which she belongs.

Kapila spoke about all this when answering a question from a participant who asked her what she was feeling in measuring herself for the first time against the investigation implemented through the tools of theatre anthropology. She declared that for someone like her who is completely immersed in the practice of a traditional technique, the encounter with such research is equivalent to the possibility not so much of making it



Kapila Venu repeating the fragment from *Kalyanasaugandhikam* on a chair. Photo: Francesco Galli

survive by passing it on identical to itself from generation to generation, but of revisiting it through a process of regeneration and analysis of the very principles on which it is based.

It is on this fertile ground of exchange and dialogue that I will conclude with a last episode. During Kapila's first classes, organised in the framework of the afternoon

"Barbers, interactions and fusions", she had chosen to teach the participants various types of walking and some of the basic exercises on which is based, in the traditional forms of Indian dance-theatre, the expressive impact of the eyes (*netra abhinaya*) and the hands (*hasta abhinaya*). At the same time, she introduced the *rasavayu* technique by which emotions can be evoked through a particular alteration in the breathing.

At the end of the class on October 16th, Barba proposed Kapila to enact the next afternoon a short story from her kutiyattam repertoire. She chose a fragment from *Kalyanasaugandhikam* in which Prince Bhima crosses the jungle in search of the divine flower Saugandhika and witnesses this scene: an elephant is attacked on one side by a python who tries to swallow it and on the other by a lion who jumps on its forehead, tears it open and drinks its blood. The elephant succumbs. Bhima, while observing the scene, declares that the jungle is not a place for cowards, but only for brave souls like his.

The afternoon of October 17 we saw Kapila enter the jungle where, without the help of text, make-up, costumes and rhythmic and musical accompaniment, she gradually transformed herself into each of the different characters that populate the story: from Bhima to the elephant, and from the elephant to the python and the lion who kills it with unmatched ferocity, and then returned again to the figure of Bhima who contemplates the agonising and helpless body of the victim.

As soon as this scene ended, Barba approached Kapila and offered her a chair. Almost whispering in her ear so as not to break the charm of her being inside the jungle, he asked her to tell exactly the same story, but seated. Before us, the intensity of the scene grew, condensing itself into the essential frame of the incredibly expressive quality of Kapila's eyes and face. A power, which despite being still, reverberated throughout the totality of her body. We entered the jungle once again, witnessing an exemplary story of artistic courage.

At the end of the work, Barba got up and, approaching Kapila, he thanked her with these words: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers".

The stories I watched in Favignana gave me a sensorial understanding of that underground that runs through the pages and voices of those who, over a long period of time, have participated in the adventure of ISTA, both during its foundation and its growth. In an indescribable way, it is an environment whose physical and inner geography is made up of deep landscapes that change together with the pace and gaze of those who cross them.

The photographic report by Francesco Galli reminds us happy few of a truth that cannot be understood, only lived. ■

Translated from Italian by Judy Barba

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Francesco Galli

Photographic Report

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Work demonstrations



Page 338: Parvathy Baul; I Wayan Bawa; Ana Woolf; Alessandro Rigoletti.

Page 339: Lydia Koniordou; Kapila Venu; Alicia Amaral; Julia Varley; participants with Eugenio Barba.



Page 340: Keiin Yoshimura; Tiziana Barbiero; Caterina Scotti; Juliana Pardo.
Page 339: ISTA/NG artistic staff and participants.



Learning to learn

Every day ISTA/NG participants worked practically with the artistic staff.

1. I Wayan Bawa; 2. Julia Varley;
3. Lydia Koniordou;
4. Alicia Amaral and 5. Juliana Pardo;
6. Parvathy Baul; 7. Caterina Scotti;
8. Ana Woolf; 9. Alessandro Rigoletti;
10. Keiin Yoshimura;
11. Kapila Venu.



News



Singing with Teatro Proskenion.
ISTA/NG Favignana 2021. Photo: Francesco Galli.

Sabera Shaik (Masakini Theatre, Malaysia)

Theatre Anthropology and Training at Studio Ramli Hassan in Kuala Lumpur

Well before my studio came into being, rehearsals and training have been in any hall or walkway we could find to realise our performances. Sometimes we worked “under the stars” with the rain threatening to dampen our spirits or if we had extra money, we would build a makeshift rehearsal space in my parking lot and warn other staff our covered makeshift theatre must be relieved of their cars at a certain time in the evenings. Inevitably training begins with stamina work - either a run around the block so to speak, and immediately after stretches came body work.

I knew what I wanted from my actors - an extra daily body (this term I am to learn after my introduction to theatre anthropology and Odin Teatret in 2007) to inhabit the acting space. I did not have the tools for a system but having been a sprinter all my life till age 52, and trained in tai chi, silat and dance, I could only use these ideas and techniques as the basis of training for my actors.

However, the gentle yet focused shift of energy in tai chi, the bursts of energy of silat finally found their articulation in Eugenio Barba’s and Nicola Savarese’s *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*¹ which together with some DVDs have become the bible for a much more systematic method of training for my actors. The book has become my go-to bible when I am at a loss on how to articulate or to give ideas on expression.

Training techniques at Grotowski’s Teatr Laboratorium in Wroclaw have become the basis of body work for actors at Masakini thanks to a DVD about physical and plastic training I purchased from Odin Teatret. The stress here is suppleness and to know the musculature, how and what muscles are used for a certain movement. The physical training - isolation work, control, finding rhythm and energy expansion and retreat are all music based.

Angin (energy) in our language has many meanings both in performances and healing rituals. The *keras* (power) in silat and the constant need to keep the body in full awareness is a primary training tool. Working with a partner is crucial for both actors - one assuming the part of the aggressor - as they get to exchange techniques. Knowing how to harness power, how to use it in the minutest of gestures gives the actor an edge in skill and technique. It teaches control as silat is precise and intentions must be hidden from your opponent.

Balance and the centre of gravity is another crucial point of study for my actors. Our martial arts which are very grounded, teach us to rotate and manipulate the centre of gravity for that “extra daily” balance. A silat master teaches this once a week. After they have mastered the techniques of silat, performing randai, a folk-dance tradition that incorporates music, dance and martial arts, becomes easy.

The Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology has given me an understanding of how

1. 1991, *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer*, London and New York, Routledge

to superimpose the techniques of our own traditional forms of performance into the “secret art” of the performer.

Hand gestures in our old Tari Gamelan Trengganu (The Gamelan Dance of Trengganu), like the mudras in Indian dance have their own meaning. Eventually, we would like to be able to incorporate all of these - silat, randai and gamelan - into our performances in the hope of giving them a more Malaysian feel complete with our own language and terms of reference.

Gregorio Amicuzi, Teatro Residui (Italy/Spain)

Territorios Teatrales Transitables

Hace siete años, para festejar los quince años del Laboratorio internacional Residui Teatro, decidimos hacer un evento para volver a encontrar amigos, colegas y maestros. Una ocasión para volver a hacerse las preguntas del principio, para confrontarse, encontrarse una vez más y para tejer nuevos caminos juntos.

El encuentro tomó sus propias dimensiones y (re)descubrimos la adaptabilidad, la diversidad y la transversalidad que estuvimos “tejiendo” en los años. Diferentes disciplinas, distintos países y, sobre todo, distintas culturas teatrales. Sin saberlo, hemos estado habitando territorios distintos, pero al mismo tiempo, abiertos a la confrontación, en donde tanto maestros como alumnos podían transitar, sin prejuicio, la diferencia.

Así nació en 2015, Territorios Teatrales Transitables - Encuentro internacional sobre teoría y práctica de las artes escénicas. El primer TTT se abrió con una gran inauguración en la RESAD (la academia de arte dramático de Madrid) e involucrando más de 10 espacios escénicos de la capital española.

El TTT no es un festival, es un encuentro, un territorio necesario para confrontar, analizar teorías y técnicas del quehacer teatral y tejer a través de los principios de la antropología teatral, los puentes posibles entre las distintas disciplinas y tradiciones teatrales.

En las tres ediciones, hemos recibido maestros y maestras de distintas tradiciones culturales y teatrales de Europa, Asia y América Latina, buscando la posibilidad de escribir y analizar puentes de unión, encuentros y desencuentros, pero, sobre todo, enfocando nuestra atención al “transitar”, desde una técnica a otra y de un territorio a otro. En ese desafío, la lupa de los principios de la antropología teatral -concepto elaborado por Eugenio Barba- se vuelve una herramienta necesaria y práctica para acercar lo aparentemente y culturalmente lejano, y volver esas diferencias algo práctico al servicio del performer.

La primera edición se abre con un acto performativo en donde Parvathy Baul, maestra de la tradición india del canto Baul y maestra en las últimas dos sesiones de la ISTA, junto con Viviana Bovino, fundadora de Laboratorio Internacional Residui Teatro y parte de la red internacional Magdalena Project, danzan y cantan el encuentro a través de lenguajes escénicos que, aunque en las diferencias y las peculiaridades de cada una de sus “formas estéticas”, logran dialogar juntas.

Después, Eugenio Barba abre la ronda de intervenciones de los invitados hablando de la importancia de transmisión de la herencia teatral y presentando una Masterclass junto a la actriz Julia Varley.

En este marco, destacamos también la presencia de Keiin Yoshimura, maestra japonesa de Kamigata-mai y maestra en las últimas dos sesiones de la ISTA. Keiin Yoshimura dirige la co-producción con Residui Teatro -*White Bird*- resultado de los encuentros que desde el 2013 la maestra lleva haciendo con Viviana Bovino. En el espectáculo se reconocen los “principios que danzan”, que se vuelven puentes entre las dos culturas y se traducen en herramientas concretas para el cuerpo de la performer europea Viviana Bovino, para entender, decodificar y dejarse habitar por las formas de la tradición japonesa.

En la misma edición, el actor, bailarín y director balinés I Wayan Bawa, también maestro de la ISTA, presenta además de su taller, su demostración de trabajo *The Total Actor*. Comienza el espectáculo con una ofrenda y un extracto de Gambuh, la forma más antigua de la danza-teatro de Bali que data del siglo 15. Se presentan algunos de los principios básicos del teatro balinés; danza, música y técnicas vocales: postura, pasos, *manis* y *keras* (suaves y fuertes), composición y sentimientos, tanto en personajes masculinos y femeninos.

También en el TTT es muy fuerte la presencia de maestros y maestras de América Latina, entre ellos Miguel Rubio, director de Yuyackhani. En ese marco cabe destacar la presentación de su documental *El gran teatro de Paucartambo - Tradición y contemporaneidad en los Andes*, una mirada sobre un evento escénico, fiesta popular, representación organizada de la realidad, en donde los análisis de los “performers” hecha bajo la lupa de la antropología teatral, puede abrir reflexiones interesantes para el trabajo del actor bailarín.

En la última edición del 2019, destaca la presencia de Rewanta Sarabhai, hijo de Mallika Sarabhai y nieto de Mrinalini Sarabhai, de la academia de artes escénicas Darpana Academy of Performing Arts de Ahmedabad en la India. Él encarna la tradición del bhratanayam que se encontró con la danza contemporánea europea en sus largos estudios en Londres. Rewanta Sarabhai junto con Viviana Bovino presenta una performance, un diálogo escénico de ritmos, acciones en movimiento y culturas que abren esta última edición, puertas que abren caminos de reflexiones prácticas en la sala.

La próxima edición tendrá lugar el 2022 y se enfocará al Teatro de Grupo. Contará con la presencia de maestros y maestras que en su trabajo ofrecen un espacio de investigación para la antropología teatral, cuyos principios son herramientas prácticas para directores y actores. El encuentro se realizará en Madrid del 15 al 19 de septiembre y contará con la presencia, entre otros, de: Eugenio Barba y Julia Varley (Odin Teatret, Dinamarca), Ricardo Iniesta García (Atalaya Teatro, España), Iben Nagel Rasmussen, (Odin Teatret

y El puente de los vientos, Dinamarca), Horacio Czertok (Teatro Núcleo, Argentina-Italia), Caterina Scotti y Alessandro Rigoletti (Teatro tascabile di Bergamo, Italia), Luis Ibar (Cartaphilus Teatro, México), Viviana Bovino (Laboratorio Internacional Residui Teatro, España).

El TTT es posible gracias a la sinergia, colaboración y disponibilidad de un equipo humano y el apoyo de distintas entidades y grupos y colectivos como: Universidad de Antioquia (Medellín-Colombia), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (España), Universidad de San Carlos (Guatemala), Transit Next Forum (Dinamarca), A3 (Polonia), Abraxa Teatro (Italia), Teatr Brama (Polonia), Teatro Núcleo (Italia), Fabrika Athens (Grecia), Il Melograno (Italia), Isola di Confine (Italia), Teatro a Canone (Italia), Teatro del Norte (España), Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo (Italia), Zid Theatre (Holanda), Teatro della Fortezza (Italia), Protagon Theatr Aktion (Alemania), Grenland Friteater (Noruega).

Nos vemos en Madrid, con una lupa en la mano hacia la antropología teatral, campo abierto de reflexiones e investigaciones, por un lado, y mirada fina y precisa para dibujar ejercicios y prácticas en la sala de trabajo.

Jaime Soriano (Mexico)

En el pueblo secreto del Odin Antropología teatral y Teatro de las Fuentes

El 18 de enero de 2022 me reuní con Eugenio Barba en la Ciudad de México con la finalidad de grabar una entrevista para el programa de televisión online “Perfiles en Acción” conducido por mí. Esta reunión representó la culminación de las actividades del Encuentro Confluencias, organizado en la Ciudad de México por el Laboratorio de Artes Escénicas Jerzy Grotowski, con la participación de dos actrices del Odin Teatret: Julia Varley y Else Marie Laukvik, ésta última acompañada por Julia Filippa, actriz del Itinera Teatro de Italia.

En esta reunión Eugenio me dijo: “Así que tú perteneces a lo que llamo 'El pueblo secreto del Odin', y además eres un espectador *anormal*, una persona que ve y ve el Odin: un adicto.”

En este artículo intentaré hacer un breve recuento historiográfico del viaje que me ha llevado a pertenecer a este pueblo secreto del Odin Teatret y las probables razones de mi inevitable “adicción”.

El impulso que me ha sostenido en este viaje de encuentros con el Odin Teatret

viene probablemente de mis aprendizajes y colaboraciones con Jerzy Grotowski, de mi experiencia en la danza-drama kathakali de la India, de mi participación como integrante del Seminario de Investigaciones Etnodramáticas de la UNAM y las conferencias y talleres organizadas en el mismo con Jean-Marie Pradier y Richard Schechner; de los talleres y encuentros creativos con los grupos italianos Teatro Tascabile y el Teatro Potlach; de mi pasión como espectador de espectáculos del Odin Teatret como *El Millón*, *Cenizas de Brecht*, *El Evangelio de Oxyrhinchus*, *Talabot*, *Kaosmos*, *Mythos*, *El Castillo de Holstebro*, *Judith*, *Itsi Bitsi*, *Ave María*, todos ellos vistos en la Ciudad de México; de mi labor como realizador de los videos que grabé en México de los espectáculos/demostración de trabajo de Julia Varley, Roberta Carreri, Torgeir Wethal, de los múltiples talleres que tomé con el mismo Eugenio Barba y con actores del Odin Teatret, de mi participación en la XII sesión de trabajo de la ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) en Alemania; y más recientemente del seguimiento y divulgación sistemática de las actividades en línea que el Odin Teatret organiza desde su ingreso al mundo digital del streaming.

Pero, principalmente, este impulso proviene de mi propia línea pedagógica y artística en el trabajo del actor como creador desde que fundé en 1986 el Laboratorio Universitario de Antropología Teatral en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México y que a partir de los años noventa se transformó en una iniciativa independiente que ahora lleva por nombre Laboratorio de Artes Escénicas Jerzy Grotowski (LArtEs) y con un camino recorrido de casi cuarenta años como director y facilitador de procesos de aprendizaje en el arte de la creación escénica actoral.

Este itinerario me lleva inevitablemente a tener que hacer un recuento historiográfico de los antecedentes que considero fundamentales para ubicar las circunstancias que marcaron profundamente mi interés en el Odin Teatret y en la antropología teatral.

El Taller de Investigación Teatral de la UNAM

Mi primer acercamiento a la actuación, a la edad de 19 años, fue en el año 1975 con Nicolás Núñez en el Taller de Teatro de la Casa del Lago de la UNAM y que posteriormente definió su nombre como Taller de Investigación Teatral (TIT-UNAM) donde permanecí por 11 años.

Además de mi aprendizaje en las técnicas actorales que en ese entonces manejaba Nicolás Núñez, derivadas de sus estudios en el Old Vic de Inglaterra y el Actors Studio de Lee Strasberg en Nueva York, tuve la oportunidad de conocer a Jerzy Grotowski gracias a sus gestiones y que hicieron posible sus visitas a México en 1980, 1981 y 1984. En esos años, yo trabajé en el TIT-UNAM como actor y asistente de dirección en varios eventos de teatro participativo como Tloque Nahuque, Tlahuiltepec (ascensión al Monte Análogo) y Aztlán.

En 1986 dirigí un proyecto de investigación etnodramática en Oaxaca y que tuvo como resultado el evento de teatro participativo “Pitao Zig, Corazón del Mundo”, en el cual se vio reflejado mi trabajo con Grotowski en Italia y EEUU.

El Teatro de las Fuentes de Jerzy Grotowski

El 12 de enero de 1980 me integré, junto con otros siete mexicanos en un trabajo de

campo, junto con parte del grupo Intercultural del Teatro de las Fuentes compuesto en ese momento por ocho integrantes y dirigido por Jerzy Grotowski en una expedición a San Andrés Cohamiata “TateiKie” (en idioma huichol Wixárika) que es una localidad que está situada en el municipio de Mezquitic (en el Estado de Jalisco en México).

Tenía 24 años cuando mi camino por el teatro, como lo había conocido hasta entonces, dio un vuelco, en el inicio de esta experiencia que aparentemente me alejaba de todo lo que había aprendido desde mis inicios como aprendiz de actor cinco años atrás, en el Taller de Teatro de la Casa del Lago de la UNAM.

Antes de partir a este viaje, había tenido que pasar por lo que pensábamos que sería una “audición” en la que se seleccionaría a los ocho participantes en un “Taller” con Jerzy Grotowski y su grupo. Ya desde el lugar donde ocurrió la prometida audición, en un rancho en los llanos del municipio de Apan, Hidalgo, era claro que no habría lugar para refugiarnos en nuestros espacios seguros y conocidos, como el escenario o el salón de ensayos.

Después de una breve entrevista con Grotowski, donde le narré una experiencia que había tenido en las montañas de los huicholes pocas semanas atrás, en las que había vivido una larga caminata, guiado por un viejo wixárika, me comisionó salir a una caminata por los llanos, acompañado por Jairo Cuesta, su colaborador colombiano. Era solo la acción de caminar, mostrando la técnica de caminata que había aprendido del viejo guía que nos llevó de regreso a San Andrés Cohamiata en esa exploración preparatoria que hicimos antes de la llegada de Grotowski a México.

Mi “audición” con Jairo se limitó a mostrar una técnica de caminata.

Al día siguiente, supe que había sido seleccionado para integrarme al grupo que viajaría a la Sierra. Fuimos un grupo de 16 personas que viajó a San Andrés Cohamiata, ocho mexicanos y ocho extranjeros provenientes de Polonia, Italia, Estados Unidos, Colombia, Haití y Japón. Meses después, en abril de 1980, llegué a Polonia para integrarme al grupo de co-realizadores del programa del Teatro de las Fuentes.

Puedo decir que este periodo marcó el inicio de una década dedicada al aprendizaje y exploración en aspectos muy concretos relacionados con el uso del cuerpo en situación de relación con su entorno y con los otros. El proyecto en Polonia terminó antes de lo previsto, por circunstancias sociopolíticas que nos obligaron a abandonar apresuradamente el país. Pocos meses después, Polonia sufriría un golpe de estado asestado por el general Wojciech Jaruzelski.

El teatro kathakali de la India

Yo pude refugiarme en París, en casa de mi amigo Pierre Guicheney, integrante del grupo de Grotowski. Gracias a ello, y por intermediación de la actriz Catherine Schaub Abkarian conocí el “Centre Mandapa” creado en 1975 por Milena Salvini y Roger Filipuzzi. Fue ahí donde tuve mi primer acercamiento al teatro kathakali de la India con Karunakaran Nair Kalamandalam, quien, después de algunos meses de entrenamiento en las técnicas preliminares de este complejo arte actoral, me promovió para ir a estudiar un periodo intensivo en la Academia Kerala Kalamandalam, y que actualmente es una Universidad de Arte y Cultura por el Gobierno de la India. Allá mi maestro (Asham) fue John Kalamandalam, un joven actor de mi edad encargado de atender a los estudiantes

extranjeros. Fue allí donde conocí a Beppe Chierichetti (1948-2020), actor del Teatro Tascabile, con quien establecí una entrañable amistad.

A mi regreso a México monté un espectáculo/demostración de trabajo sobre las técnicas de entrenamiento de kathakali.

El Seminario de Investigaciones Etnodramáticas de la UNAM

Mi primera experiencia con Grotowski en Polonia y el encuentro con el kathakali, definieron mi trabajo actoral y mi labor pedagógica en los cursos y talleres que comencé a impartir y que posteriormente se orientaron hacia mi integración en el equipo de instructores del Seminario de Investigaciones Etnodramáticas (SIED) de la UNAM, dirigido por Gabriel Weisz, Oscar Zorrilla y Nicolás Núñez entre 1981 y 1983.

Fue en este periodo donde conocí las primeras hipótesis de la antropología teatral de Eugenio Barba en el número 33-35 (junio-agosto 1981) de la Revista de Teatro *La Cabra* y en la primera edición del libro *Las islas flotantes* (1983), ambos publicados por la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

En 1982, en el marco del SIED, tuve la oportunidad de participar en un curso sobre fonética acústica impartido por Jean-Marie Pradier, profesor de la Universidad de París VIII e integrante del corpus académico de la ISTA, Escuela Internacional de Antropología Teatral dirigida por Eugenio Barba. Sobre esta visita de Jean-Marie Pradier en el Colegio de Teatro de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la UNAM, se publicó un ensayo de su autoría titulado “El aprendizaje del actor visto desde una perspectiva neurobiológica” en la revista *Escénica* 4-5 (septiembre 1983).

El taller con Jean-Marie Pradier y su artículo tuvo una gran resonancia en mis exploraciones.

Encuentros con el Odin Teatret en México y la antropología teatral

En 1982, tuve mi primer encuentro de aprendizaje en un taller con Eugenio Barba y con el trabajo actoral de los integrantes del Odin Teatret a través de todos los espectáculos y demostraciones de trabajo mencionadas al inicio de este artículo.

Influenciado por mis lecturas acerca de la antropología teatral y este primer encuentro con Barba, en el otoño de 1983 impartí el taller “El entrenamiento del actor desde una perspectiva antropológica” en la Casa del Lago de la UNAM. En una nota aparecida el 10 de octubre de ese año en el periódico *UnomásUno* se puede leer: “El objetivo central es introducir al participante en algunas hipótesis de antropología teatral de la ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology), utilizando los instrumentos de las ciencias biológicas y antropológicas del teatro; y por otro, encontrar una nueva forma de pedagogía en el entrenamiento de actor. El curso ha sido diseñado siguiendo los lineamientos teóricos surgidos de (los preceptos de) Eugenio Barba y Jean-Marie Pradier.”

El Proyecto Drama Objetivo de Jerzy Grotowski y el Workcenter

Del 5 al 30 de marzo de 1984 Jerzy Grotowski regresó a México a dar un taller junto con su equipo de colaboradores del Programa Drama Objetivo, que en ese periodo

se encontraba realizando en la Universidad de California, Irvine. Fui seleccionado para participar en esta experiencia en una bodega de mis amigos Esperanza Rascón y Alejandro López Lopez en las faldas del volcán Iztaccihuatl en Amecameca, Estado de México.

Al término de este taller, Grotowski me invitó como consultante y participante del Programa de Investigación Enfocada en Drama Objetivo en California, EEUU durante los meses de abril y mayo de 1985.

De junio a agosto de ese mismo año me integré al equipo técnico del recién fundado Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski, en Pontedera, Italia, invitado por Grotowski. Fue en este periodo donde pude profundizar en dos áreas del trabajo: el training y la creación actoral unipersonal.

De esta residencia artística, Jerzy Grotowski me acompañó muy estrechamente en la creación del espectáculo unipersonal *Alas en los pies*. Fue un intenso trabajo de colaboración con Grotowski en el Castello di Nipozzano, en el que me sometí al rigor de un trabajo intenso que realicé en el Workcenter.

Transcribo la guía de actividades de este proyecto, extraídas del folleto informativo titulado Centro di Lavoro di Jerzy Grotowski / Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski, publicado por el Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale di Pontedera:

Relación: precisión / organicidad.

Relación: tradición / trabajo individual.

Relación: ritual / drama.

Danza y ritmo.

Canto.

Vibración de la voz,

Resonancia corporal y resonancia espacial,

Respiración.

Sentido de alerta en el espacio y capacidad de reacción a sus elementos constitutivos.

Improvisación: los impulsos / la mente vigilante.

Improvisación dentro de la estructura.

Montaje de acciones físicas.

Montaje con miras a una obra y/o con miras al trabajo en el rol.

Exploración en una línea precisa y lógica de impulsos y acciones físicas: la partitura.

El Laboratorio de Antropología Teatral de la UNAM

Bajo estas premisas, en 1986 decidí fundar el Laboratorio de Antropología Teatral de la UNAM, razón por la cual no me fue posible trabajar con Grotowski en las actividades posteriores del Workcenter. Pero acordé con el maestro en participar en las diversas sesiones del Seminario Drama Objetivo en la Universidad de California que se realizaron en los meses de mayo a julio de los años 1987 a 1989, año en el que Grotowski me invitó a llevar mi trabajo como director de escena con el montaje del espectáculo *El umbral del espejo*.

Mis últimas reuniones de trabajo con Jerzy Grotowski ocurrieron en periodos de dos a tres meses en este seminario en la Universidad de California hasta el año 1990. Fue en

ese periodo en el que decidí tomar la vía independiente y mi proyecto cambió de nombre por el de Laboratorio Arte Escénico.

El Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos de Antropología Teatral - Escenología

En diciembre de 1992 fui invitado a trabajar en la coordinación académica del Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos de Antropología Teatral - Escenología, el cual fue inaugurado con la presencia del Odin Teatret y con el taller “Energía y pre-expresividad” impartido por Eugenio Barba. Esta visita del Odin nos permitió organizar varias presentaciones de espectáculos, conferencias y demostraciones de trabajo. En un convenio firmado con Torgeir Wethal, se me permitió grabar los espectáculos demostraciones de Julia Varley, Roberta Carreri y el mismo Torgeir. Material videográfico que fue donado por mí al Odin Teatret Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium en febrero de 2020.

La Escuela Internacional de Antropología Teatral (ISTA)

En el año 2000 participé en la XII Sesión de la ISTA, Escuela Internacional de Antropología Teatral, en Bielefeld, Alemania, apoyado por el Centro Nacional de las Artes de México. A partir de esa experiencia, y con todo el legado que recibí de mi relación de trabajo con Jerzy Grotowski, mi proyecto pedagógico y artístico se consolidaba cada vez más en mi labor como maestro y director de escena.

Nueve años después surge el nuevo nombre del Laboratorio de Artes Escénicas Jerzy Grotowski (LArtEs), en honor y memoria del maestro, cuando la Organización de Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura declaró el año 2009 como Año de Grotowski.

Encuentros con Eugenio Barba y Julia Varley (2020 - 2022)

En enero de 2020 participé en la clase magistral “Pensando en acciones” conducida por Eugenio Barba y tuve la oportunidad de ver el espectáculo unipersonal *Ave María* de y con Julia Varley en el Teatro Helénico de la Ciudad de México. En el contexto de esta visita, pude entrevistar a Julia para un programa de la serie de televisión online “Perfiles en Acción”, para charlar acerca del proceso creativo de su trabajo como actriz en dicho espectáculo.

Han transcurrido 42 años después de mi primer encuentro con Jerzy Grotowski en una relación de trabajo intermitente de más de diez años y 40 años de aprendizajes con Eugenio Barba y el Odin Teatret en diversas oportunidades en México y que recientemente culminaron en enero del 2022 al tener la oportunidad de organizar con el Laboratorio de Artes Escénicas Jerzy Grotowski las actividades del Encuentro Confluencias, las cuales consistieron en talleres, charlas y espectáculos/demostraciones de trabajo, con el valioso apoyo de la Fondazione Barba Varley.

Agradezco a Julia Varley la invitación para colaborar con este modesto artículo historiográfico en la nueva edición del JTA, *Journal of Theatre Anthropology*, cuya motivación fue relatar muy someramente mi camino en la antropología teatral y que me han llevado ahora a descubrirme como un habitante viajero del “pueblo secreto del Odin”.

Priscilla Duarte, Ricardo Gomes (Brazil)

To Those Who Will Come After Us

Odin Teatret's first trip to Venezuela in 1976 in order to participate in the Caracas Festival marked the beginning of the group and Eugenio Barba's strong and long-lasting relationship with Latin America. Odin's first contact with Brazil took place in 1978, when group members Roberta Carreri and Francis Pardeilhan came to Salvador (Bahia) to study capoeira and the dances of the Orixás, as part of their creative process for the performance *The Million*.

However, it was the presence of Eugenio Barba, accompanying the groups Farfa and Canada Project, in 1987, during a trip to São Paulo, Campinas and Rio de Janeiro, which made a profound impact on a young generation of Brazilian theatre practitioners. The performances, lectures, film exhibitions and workshops organised by Barba and the members of Farfa and The Canada Project¹, alongside the presence of the Italian groups Teatro tascabile di Bergamo and Teatro Potlach (who also visited the country during the same year), introduced Brazilian artists to the field of theatre anthropology and the concept of Third Theatre for the first time.² The impact was such that a number of groups were formed or developed new approaches to their work.³ Since then, the reference to theatre anthropology became an integral part of the practices of many Brazilian theatre groups and scholars. Exchanges and barter between Odin Teatret and Brazil have multiplied, highlighting the vocation of Barba and his actors in terms of creating artist networks.

This historical first meeting was marked by the 'political opening' of the military dictatorship that had governed Brazil from 1964 to 1985. This 'slow and gradual' opening was determined by the generals, and was not the 'ample and unrestricted' process of democratisation demanded by civilian society. The opening had been preceded by the harshest period of the military regime, including the violent repression of the student

1. The groups Farfa (directed by Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Odin Teatret actress) and The Canada Project (directed by Richard Fowler) were part of Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, alongside Odin Teatret.

2. These tours across Brazil, undertaken by Eugenio Barba and the groups Farfa and The Canada Project, in June 1987, and Teatro tascabile di Bergamo and Teatro Potlach, in May 1987, were an initiative of Luis Otávio Burnier, founder and first director of Lume Teatro, based in Campinas (SP), who had convinced the Italian Culture Institutes of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo to sponsor the events. In 1988 and 1989, Tascabile, Potlach, and also Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale di Pontedera, another Italian group connected to the Third Theatre, performed throughout Brazil, not only in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, but also in cities like Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), Salvador (Bahia), Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais) and Belém (Pará).

3. Another significant moment was the 8th session of ISTA - International School of Theatre Anthropology, in Londrina (Paraná), in 1994 - until today the only of the 16 sessions of ISTA to be held outside of Europe. On this occasion, Eugenio Barba began his collaboration with Brazilian dancer Augusto Omolu (1963-2013), who remained a member of the artistic staff of ISTA and, in 2002, became an actor of Odin Teatret.

movement of 1968. As is customary under dictatorships, artists had been censored, silenced, persecuted, banished from the country, exiled and even murdered; many theatre groups were destroyed. On this scorched earth, Brazilian theatre was reborn from the ashes. While the groups that had made history in the 1960s no longer existed or were scattered, the new groups that would strike out fresh paths over the following years, many of them severely marked by the experiences of 1987, were taking their first steps.

We were young students on the Performing Arts Undergraduate Programme at UNIRIO, in Rio de Janeiro, and felt immersed in a theatre environment drained of its liveliness. Our contact with the ideas and practices of Odin Teatret and the Italian groups introduced us, and many of our generation, to the tenets of Group Theatre. This had a major impact on the history of Brazilian theatre, introducing new practices and theatrical concepts, such as theatre anthropology, training and the dramaturgy of the actor, and inspired us to look afresh at the embodied techniques of our own culture. Encouraged to follow these paths, some Brazilian artists, including the authors of this text, went to visit the teachers in their home countries. Some of us stayed for brief periods, others for many years, and a select few moved permanently abroad.⁴ The groups and artists that developed their professional careers back home continued to encounter Odin Teatret and other European Third Theatre groups thanks to the many Brazilian tours these groups undertook over the years.

In 2021, stemming from the professional network established over many years by Odin Teatret and Brazilian groups, artists and scholars, we organised a series of online meetings. During a dramatic year, in which Brazil suffered from the disastrous handling of the COVID-19 pandemic by the government, compiled by a chaotic political, economic and social situation leading to severe shortages in terms of healthcare, culture, education, environmental practices, citizenship, human rights, food insecurity, a theatrical event appeared on the horizon like dry land (or perhaps a floating island),

4. Some few examples of these travels back and forth of Brazilians in direct contact with European groups, strictly connected to our experiences, with no pretension of painting a complete picture of this reality (that would demand historical research which isn't within the objectives of this account). In 1989, the authors of this article left Rio de Janeiro for Bergamo (Italy) for an informal internship at the Teatro tascabile di Bergamo. It was the beginning of a relationship in which the teachers, over the period in which we worked with the TTB (1989-1994; 2003-2007), became friends and colleagues. This relationship has been maintained by our group, Teatro Diadokai, founded in 1996, in Rio de Janeiro, whose debut performance *Pedro e o Lobo*, drew on the Indian theatre-dance techniques learned at Tascabile and in India.

Teatro Potlach organised an eight-month long workshop at their headquarters in Fara Sabina (Italy), between 1987 and 1988, for ten young actors, four of them Argentinean and six from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Marcus Acuan, Gilda Cuzzi, Júlio Adrião, Aglaia Azevedo, Flávio Kactus and Dinah Kleve. Júlio stayed in Italy for many years and collaborated with the group Abraxa Teatro. Gilda and Marcos settled in Italy and were, for some time, part of Teatro Potlach. After years with his own company, Garagipau, Marcus Acuan has recently reignited his collaboration with Teatro Potlach.

Luiz Carlos Vasconcelos, born in Umbuzeiro (Paraíba), participated, in 1988 and 1989, in two workshops, one lasting one month and another lasting three, with Roberta Carreri, at Odin Teatret, in Denmark; later, in 1992, he directed, with his Grupo Piolin, from João Pessoa (Paraíba), the play *Vau da Sarapalha*, based on the short story *Sarapalha*, by Guimarães Rosa, bringing theatre anthropology into dialogue with Brazilian cultural references.

somewhere theatrical travellers could shore up and recharge their energies, before launching back onto a sea of uncertainty. The event's title summed up its objective: "Encounters in Third Theatre and Theatre Anthropology - a tribute to Eugenio Barba: 85 years of life, 60 years of theatre and 34 years of encounters in Brazil".⁵ Stemming from a wish to pay tribute to Barba as a living master, celebrating his birth and his artistic path, the "Encounters" gained such momentum that they veritably came to life. As soon as the first guests were invited, the 'good news' spread, and the Encounters were embraced by a number of other enthusiastic artists, groups, teachers and scholars, expanding on the event's initial schedule of activities.

As was *de rigueur* during the pandemic, the Encounters took place online, through a video-conference platform, with simultaneous broadcasting via live streaming. This way, we could count on the remote participation of the public (both live and through later viewings) while still trying to recuperate some of the heat of a proximal event, allowing guests to participate in the live video-conference and interact with the presenters. If, on one hand, these new means of communication diverged from the potency of in-person events (which, lately, seem like a vague memory), on the other hand, they enabled the Encounters to take on unprecedented dimensions. It would have been impossible to gather such a large and diverse array of participants at the same event, without remuneration, counting only on our own scarce monetary resources. There were 97 participants in all, amongst artists and scholars, including: 29 Brazilian theatre groups, 4 foreign theatre groups, 1 local and 3 international artistic networks, 12 Brazilian universities, 8 foreign universities, 17 cities from 4 different Brazilian States, 13 cities across Italy, Denmark, Peru, Argentina, Belgium and Scotland. The Encounters were held in three blocks, each lasting for five days, over the last weeks of September, October and November, with two to three activities per day, divided into the following categories: conferences, panels, work demonstrations and commented film screenings. Each block of activities was inspired by a different theme: Third Theatre (9/27 to 10/1), Theatre Anthropology and Identity (10/25 to 29) and Cultural Action and Artist Networks (11/22 to 26). The ability to ensure that the activities were available online immediately after taking place both created a historical archive and broadened our audience-base emphatically.

Each day of the Programme was incredibly rich and frequently surprising: meetings took place between artists who often had not seen one another for a very long time, artists that had not previously met struck up connections, and the memory of shared experiences would often elicit a strong emotional response. During the Encounters, the complex and diverse realities of different participants were revealed, yet despite these differences, it was possible to observe common traits in terms of ethical and political positions, poetic languages, aesthetic choices, pedagogical approaches and survival strategies. It was possible to bring together young and veteran groups, local collectivities

5. The event was held with General coordination by Ricardo Gomes (Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto and Teatro Diadokai); Coordination and curatorship by Ricardo Gomes, Gilberto Icle (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Universidade Nacional de Brasília and UTA - Usina Trabalho do Ator) and Fernando Mencarelli (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais); Coordination assistance by Priscilla Duarte (Teatro Diadokai).

and international networks, permanent headquarters and nomadic occupations, the construction of identity and the necessity for alterity. We were invited to think of Group Theatre as a form of *aquilombamento*⁶ and to articulate the cultural action with the singularity of the territory in which one acts as an agent of transformation, and going beyond it.

Through the prism of realities represented, it was possible to gain a greater understanding of counter hegemonic theatrical movements, particularly in a country where support and access to culture are so unequal. We brought together groups from small towns such as Alta Floresta (located in the State of Mato Grosso, in the Mato Grosso Amazon, in Central-Western Brazil) and Petrolina (located in the State of Pernambuco, on the margins of the São Francisco River, in the Brazilian North East), with others from large urban centres such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Thus, though many artists were not included in this first edition of the event, as is inevitable in any curatorship, it was possible to bring together a very significant sample of theatre practitioners who identify in some way with the tenets of theatre anthropology and the Third Theatre.

In the wake of the Encounters, the energetic quality produced by the exchanges that took place continues to reverberate, creating successive ripples, like a stone thrown into water. A movement was produced: a desire for continuity and shared experience.

As artists, we are used to this sensation at the end of a (proximal) theatre festival, where groups meet and share both knowledge and affection. But, we have also all seen, on certain occasions, that a sudden enthusiasm can be akin to a bonfire, that consumes itself and extinguishes. It is necessary today, more than ever, to join forces in an exhausted world in which many seem to conspire against our existence as human beings and as artists, to ensure that the lit flame does not die out. The development of events is promising: after the Encounters, participant artists and scholars met remotely and gave the emerging movement a name - *Terceiro Teatro Brasil* (Third Theatre Brazil). Many pathways to concrete actions were discussed, and an ample network of artists, groups, scholars and universities emerged.

The Third Theatre Brazil movement has come to life, thanks to the teachings, rebellion and non-conformism of a bunch of young misfits - an immigrant director and his aspiring actors, who had all been rejected by the local theatre conservatory. This group, Odin Teatret, emerged in Oslo, in Norway, and established itself in Holstebro, Denmark, in the 1960s. Today, the reasons for non-conformism and restlessness may

6. The term "*aquilombamento*" refers to the quilombos (communities formed in colonial Brazil, stemming from situations of territorial, social and cultural resistance of black enslaved peoples that fled for freedom and organised in autonomous communities) and is a variant of the notion of "quilombism", formulated by Abdias do Nascimento: "The Quilombo doesn't mean escaped slaves. The Quilombo means fraternal and free reunion, solidarity, coexistence, existential communion. We repeat that the *quilombola* society represents a step in human and social-political progress, in terms of economical egalitarianism. The known historical precedents confirm this statement. As an economic system, quilombism has been the Brazilian adaptation of communitarianism and/or the African tradition of ujamaaism. In such a system, the production relationships differ basically from those prevalent in the spoliative work economy we call capitalism, founded on the reason of profit to all cost, especially the profit obtained from black African enslaved blood." (Nascimento, Abdias. *Quilombismo: um conceito científico histórico-social*. In: Nascimento, Abdias. *O quilombismo: documentos de uma militância pan-africanista*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1980, p. 263).

be driven by different factors, but the fundamental questions remain the same. When? Where? How? What for? Why do we make theatre? It is our responsibility to search for our own answers, in resonance with the values of this strange art that has resisted so many adversities, uniting those of us present today with the ones who will come after us.

Translated by Maria Duarte, reviewed by Patrick Campbell

Antonis Diamantis, Irene Koutsaki (Omma Studio Theatre, Crete, Greece)

Centre of Theatre Anthropology

2nd International Conference of Theatre Anthropology

On Saturday the 28th of August 2021, the presentation of the 2nd International Conference of Theatre Anthropology took place online because of covid restrictions. The Conference was organised by the Centre of Theatre Anthropology (Crete, Greece) and was realised in collaboration and with the support of the Technical University of Crete, TUC/MUSIC, Laboratory of Distributed Multimedia Information Systems and Applications; TIM-Theatre in Mathematics, an Erasmus project that aims at the creation of a teaching methodology integrating drama and mathematics; The Hellenic Theatre/Drama and Education network, an association of teachers and artists for the promotion of research and practice of theatre, educational drama and other performing arts within formal and non-formal education. Its dual aim is to promote the performing arts in order that they can gain a central role in schools and to contribute to the development of approaches and techniques, viewing theatre as an art form, a learning tool and a tool for social intervention. TENet-Gr was founded in 1998 in Athens as a network of teachers and artists and is registered as a non-profit organisation.

The conference started with a short speech by Nektarios Moumoutzis, on behalf of the Technical University of Crete. The professors and MA in Theatre Studies that spoke at the conference were: Ioanna Lioutsa (PhD Theatre Studies, School of Arts, University of Peloponnese), Katerina Papageorgiou (MA of the programme “Theatre and Society: Theory, Scenic Action and Didactics”, School of Fine Arts, University of Peloponnese), Aggeliki Kassola (actress, director), Alessandra Rossi Ghiglione (director of SCT Centre/UNITO, professor at the University of Torino, Department of Humanistic Studies), Irene Moudraki (professor at the Theatre Department of the University of Athens, founder of the Greek Play Project and Headmaster of Dramaturgical Department and Library of the National Theatre of Greece), Saritsami Maria (actress, MA of the

programme “Theatre and Society: Theory, Scenic Action and Didactics”, School of Fine Arts, University of Peloponnese), Naya Boemi (Educational Coordinator at Theatre Education), Giannis Mitrou (professor of the Department of Visuals and Applied Arts of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Performance Artist, Artistic Director of the International Laboratory of Performing Arts Alma Kalma, Psychoanalyst). At the end of the conference, the film director Magdalene Remoundou presented her documentary *Who is Eugenio Barba*.

Book presentation:

The Blind Horse. Dialogues with Eugenio Barba and other writings by Iben Nagel Rasmussen

On Monday the 17th of January 2022, in Athens, the Centre for Theatre Anthropology and Dodoni Publications, invited Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Odin Teatret actress and teacher to present the Greek edition of her book: *The Blind Horse. Dialogues with Eugenio Barba and other writings*, translated by Antonis Diamantis and Irene Koutsaki. The book was introduced by Manolis Seiragakis, Assistant Professor of Theatrology at the University of Crete and excerpts from the book were read by actor Aris Biniaris, director Antonis Diamantis, actor Irini Koutsaki, and actor and director Georgia Karlatira.

Luciana Martuchelli, Filipe Lima (Brazil)

A Arte Secreta do Ator, 2021

A Arte Secreta do Ator is a masters-in-residence created 15 years ago and, until 2019, it was always realised in Brazil. We annually welcomed about 30 artists from all parts of the world, who had the opportunity to live together with Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley and learn about theatre anthropology from those who created it.

Many of these directors and actors who have been at A Arte Secreta do Ator have created group and solo performances, theatre festivals and other connections. Since 2020, the residence became a way of resisting. The internet, which was very attacked during the pandemic, was the only space of connection we had.

Isolated at home, we could connect and break geographical and aesthetic boundaries, thoughts and taboos. Getting Eugenio and Julia in this virtual space for our event was a real necessity for us.

But Eugenio told us: “I don’t know if it’ll work. If I speak online for people it won’t be the same thing as being present.” We replied: “Eugenio, people need to listen to you. They need to know how you are dealing with the pandemic so they can get inspired by

it.” When Eugenio said yes, we made the second online edition of A Arte Secreta do Ator last year. We created a format of talks and performances on video.

In conversations with Ricardo Gomes, we decided to make The Secret Art Festival in the future. Therefore, in 2022, we intend to create a meeting where directors from various parts of the world and in dialogue with theatre anthropology can talk after the performances and share the insights, training methods, dramaturgy and group culture.

This plurality was evident in the recent online meeting of the Third Theatre, which gave us a cut of the immense theatrical legacy to meet and protect. We proposed to Eugenio the creation of a school that had the perfume of A Arte Secreta do Ator, to take care and enhance his legacy and to open doors. We gave it the name ELAAT - Latin American School of Theatre Anthropology.

For A Arte Secreta do Ator, this is the legacy of theatre anthropology: when everything is too difficult, we need to do something bigger. It is not only about enhancing what has been done in the last 14 years.

Julia Varley (Odin Teatret, Denmark)

ISTA/NG (International School of Theatre Anthropology/New Generation)

ISTA/NG session on the island of Favignana

The ISTA/NG (International School of Theatre Anthropology/New Generation) session, directed by Eugenio Barba, was held on the island of Favignana (Italy), in the period 12-22 October 2021, with the theme “Presence of the Actor and Perception of the Spectator “. The session was organised by the Fondazione Barba Varley in collaboration with Linee Libere and Teatro Proskenion (Italy), Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium-Odin Teatret (Denmark) and The Grotowski Institute (Poland). The teaching staff consisted of Eugenio Barba, Keiin Yoshimura (Japan), Parvathy Baul (India), I Wayan Bawa (Bali), Alício Amaral and Juliana Pardo (Cia. Mundu Rodá, Brazil), Lydia Koniordou (Greece), Kapila Venu (India), Alessandro Rigoletti, Caterina Scotti and Tiziana Barbiero (Teatro tascabile di Bergamo, Italy), Julia Varley (Odin Teatret, Denmark), Ana Woolf (Argentina).

Artists from different traditions of theatre and dance, in collaboration with Eugenio Barba, worked with 53 participants from 21 countries on the pre-expressive level of their styles, which is to say on the level of stage presence. In the ISTA/NG session, theatre and dance teachers from different traditions retraced the first steps of their apprenticeship.

Throughout the day they exemplified with practical work and demonstrations, how they learned and embodied their specific technique. Participants had the opportunity to experience the “first day” by becoming aware of the principles that animate the physical and mental know-how of an actor/dancer. During the demonstrations and biographical stories, the participants had the opportunity to learn about personal and intercultural paths of the social presence of the actor/dancer artists. Each teacher presented a performance to which the local population was invited. For participants and artists, this presential encounter after two years of restrictions due to the pandemic was an experience that instilled a lot of energy.

A digital course: ten films on theatre anthropology

ISTA/NG took into consideration the economic contingencies created by the coronavirus, and proposed a digital course in theatre anthropology for those who could not participate in person to the session in Favignana. The ten-lesson digital course was entitled: “Learning to see, Introduction to Theatre Anthropology, The Presence of the Actor/Dancer and the Perception of the Spectator”.

The course, conceived and directed by Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley, consisted of ten lessons for a total of fifty hours. Each lesson was introduced by Eugenio Barba and included a part with archive material and videos of the previous ISTA sessions, a part with live streaming of the lessons, explanations and theoretical-practical demonstrations during the ISTA/NG session in Favignana, an interactive part of an hour of dialogue with the artists present in Favignana directed by Leonardo Mancini. The ten lessons dealt with the main themes of theatre anthropology: the technical principles common to actors and dancers of different cultures, the difference between everyday behaviour and extra-daily behaviour, the pre-expressive level and the construction of stage presence, animus/anima (strong and soft energy), the actor/dancer’s strategies to capture the attention of the spectators and the effect on their kinesthetic sense and on their perception.

The course included ten films on theatre anthropology by Eugenio Barba, Claudio Coloberti and Julia Varley which were ready in a first version in October 2021 and will be ready with subtitles in English, Italian and Spanish for May 2022:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Lesson 1: | ORIGINS OF THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY
Learning to learn, The kinesthetic sense |
| Lesson 2: | THE PRESENCE OF THE ACTOR AND DANCER
The pre-expressive level |
| Lesson 3: | DAILY BEHAVIOUR and EXTRA-DAILY BEHAVIOUR |
| Lesson 4: | PRINCIPLES OF THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY
Alteration of balance, oppositions, consistent inconsistency |
| Lesson 5: | THE CONSTRUCTION OF FORM
Apprenticeship as acculturation |
| Lesson 6: | THE TEMPERATURES OF ENERGY |
| Lesson 7: | THE DANCE OF ENERGY
Sats, resistance, absorption |
| Lesson 8: | THINKING WITH THE FEET
Action and effect of organicity |

- Lesson 9: EURASIAN THEATRE
Theatrum Mundi
- Lesson 10: ORGANIC DRAMATURGY
Artificiality and transparency

ISTA/NG in Hungary

ISTA/NG (International School of Theatre Anthropology/New Generation) will hold the 17th session specially for Theatre Olympics in Hungary in the period 7-21 May 2023 with the title "Pre-expressivity - Composition - Montage".

The 17th ISTA/NG will admit 50 participants (20 from Hungary, 30 from the rest of the world). The artists will give concerts, work demonstrations and public performances and Eugenio Barba will direct a special production of Theatrum Mundi to be presented in Budapest entitled ANASTASIS/RESURRECTION.

The artistic staff will consist of: Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley (Denmark), Parvathy Baul (India), Keiin Yoshimura and So Sugiura (Japan), Mundu Rodá (Brazil), I Wayan Bawa (Bali), Alessandro Rigoletti and Caterina Scotti (Teatro tascabile di Bergamo, Italy), Kapila Venu (India), Ana Woolf (Argentina), Yalan Lin (Taiwan).

Ana Woolf (Argentina)

CATA (Centro de antropología teatral en Argentina)

Se ha fundado en 2021 el CATA, sede itinerante de la Fondazione Barba Varley como Espacio Crearte (Escuela de formación de niños y adolescentes con dirección de Cecilia Ruiz), Espacio LAT (Espacio permanente de Laboratorio de antropología teatral con dirección de Ana Woolf y coordinación de Cecilia Volken, Mónica Marraffa, Viviana Quaranta), Espacio Lilekenun HRL (Red de formación integral de lengua de señas con coordinación de Natalia Tesone, Daniela F. Lynch), Espacio publicaciones asociado a Ediciones del Camino (Alejandro Ruso) y publicaciones propias. Colaboradora internacional es Francesca Romana Rietti y nacionales son Natalia Marcet, Silvia Pritz, Víctor Hernando (mimo escuela de Ángel Elizondo).

Declarando su deseo de ser portavoz de la Fondazione Barba Varley en Argentina, adhiriendo al proyecto que proclama la utilización del teatro para las causas y los valores de una tradición de lo imposible. CATA es un espacio en alianza con otros espacios,

células autónomas, dedicadas en primera instancia no al espectáculo teatral, sino a la creación de un ambiente de posibilidades donde muchas veces lxs sin nombre puedan pasar de la invisibilidad a la visibilidad y construir redes solidarias que se materialicen en proyectos artísticos, culturales y políticos.

Las actividades de CATA para el 2022 incluyen la creación del posgrado en Antropología Teatral. En primera instancia para los egresados de la Escuela de Formación Teatral Crearte. El curso será de dos años. En el 2022 se realizarán tres seminarios intensivos, práctico-teórico. Se prepara la publicación y presentación de la Revista de Antropología Teatral (online) y del libro de Eugenio Barba, *La conquista de la diferencia*.

En diciembre 2022 se realizará en Santa Fe, Argentina, el proyecto CAMPING transmisión, una experiencia de residencia y convivencia con Eugenio Barba y Julia Varley. encuentro donde se reflexionará práctica y teóricamente acerca del concepto de transmisión del conocimiento de nuestro oficio.

Posgrado en Antropología Teatral

Para alumnxs egresadxs de la Escuela Crearte y para aquellxs personas interesadas con una formación base ya de teatro. El posgrado está pensado como un sistema de módulos, tres por año, con una carga horaria de 14hs cátedra por módulo. A través del entrenamiento creado por Ana Woolf prevé un acercamiento práctico a los principios de la antropología teatral estudiados por Eugenio Barba durante cada una de las sesiones de la ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology).

Se prevé un acercamiento teórico al estudio de la antropología teatral, se pondrá a disposición de lxs estudiantes libros y material especialmente preparado y elaborado para este fin y la proyección de las 10 lecciones/videos sobre antropología teatral (ISTA/NG).

About the authors

Liliana Alexandrescu (Romania) is a researcher and theatre director. From 1976 to 2001, she was co-editor of the FIRT/SIBMAS Information Bulletin, which appeared in English and French in Amsterdam, where she directed the university theatre group FRI at the University of Amsterdam. In the theoretical field she has worked on modern and post-modern literature and theatre, as well as on contemporary ritual theatre. She has published articles and essays in reviews and books in Romania, amongst which her translation of Eugenio Barba's *The Paper Canoe*.

Gregorio Amicuzi (Italy) is the director of Residui Teatro and artistic director of Territorios Teatrales Transitables, Encuentro Internacional sobre Teoría y Práctica de las Artes Escénicas (an international encounter about performing arts theory and practice). He has directed workshops and performances in Asia, Europe, America, and Africa. In 2014, he was the assistant of Eugenio Barba for *Clear Enigma*, presented during Odin Teatret's 50th anniversary. In 2020/2021 he was a teacher at Actor's Atelier organised by the Grotowski Institute (Poland) and directed by Jaroslaw Fret.

Jacques Arpin (Switzerland) is a cultural psychiatrist. He studied medicine at Genève University and at McGill in Montreal as well as anthropology and sociology at the Universidade da Bahia and at Tulane in New Orleans. Upon his return he launched cultural psychiatry in Switzerland creating a Migration and Health programme in Geneva and within international associations. His personal experience with polio, encephalitis and cancers opened new perspectives in his professional role as a healer, occasional patient and director for his patients' narrations, dramaturgy, and montage within the various medical situations.

Eugenio Barba (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.

Vincenzo Blasi (Italy) is a teacher of Italian Literature. He graduated in 1999 in History of Theatre and Entertainment at the University of Lecce with a thesis on the 5th public session of ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) in Salento, Italy in 1987, and he joined the 12th session in Bielefeld, Germany in 2000. Over the years he has been interested in theatre anthropology and ancient Greek and Roman

theatre. He has published *Il teatro romano di Lecce* (*Dioniso*, n. 1, 2002, p. 172-179), *Da Sabratha ad Aspendos. Due teatri ai confini dell'Impero* (*In scaena. Il teatro di Roma Antica*, edited by Nicola Savarese, Rome, Electa, 2007, p. 56-61), *Teatri greco-romani in Italia* (Cue Press, 2019).

Mette Bovin (Denmark) is an anthropologist and a film director. From five years onwards she chose the meaning /core of her life: Antiracist Work. She was the first anthropologist at the Aarhus University in 1962 (Ph.D. in 1970), encouraged to create ethnographic museum exhibitions at the University Museum for the three ethnic group: Mumuye (pagans, Nigeria), Manga (Muslim, Niger), and Wodaabe (Muslim light, Niger) - all West African peoples. Mette Bovin spent 24 years doing fieldwork among these West African peoples. In 1979 she met the Odin Teatret and she tried to combine anthropology and theatre in her own way. In 1988 she started the amateur theatre in Helsingør called The Indigo Theatre Group, performing in her own museum exhibitions until 1990. The group consisted of seven actors of three generations. She joined ISTA from the first session in 1980. Mette Bovin has published fourteen books, all on West Africa, and 97 articles; she has realised eight museum exhibitions and twelve documentary films.

Patricia Cardona (Mexico) as a researcher at the Centro de Investigación de la Danza José Limón from 1990 to date, she has published 16 books on topics such as dance criticism, the perception of the spectator, the dramaturgy of the dancer and the poetics of teaching. From 1992 to date she has visited the entire Mexican Republic and much of Latin America (Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia and Costa Rica) giving workshops, seminars and lectures while working with dancers, actors and teachers interested in the poetics of teaching as a liberating power of the imagination and creativity in the training processes.

Claudio Coloberti (Italy) has studied film and television and has a degree in architecture. From 1976 to 1996 he was chair of Cine TV in Milan. He has collaborated with various Italian and European theatre groups for the lighting design and audiovisual material. From 1987 to 1991 he co-owned the cine-tv production company, MAMAGRANDE Ltd. of Milan. Since 1999 he started an ongoing collaboration with Odin Teatret for the realisation of films and video documentation of performances and events, creation of interactive DVDs, digitization and restoration of audiovisual archive material. Since 2003, he is responsible for Odin Teatret Film.

Claudia Contin Arlecchino (Italy) is an Italian author, actress, director and figurative artist known all over the world as the first woman to interpret the male character of Arlecchino since 1987. She has already published several theatrical texts, essays and theatre anthropology researches, translated into various languages. From 1990 to 2016 she was co-founder and didactic director of the Scuola Sperimentale dell'Attore. From 1997 to 2018 she was artistic director of the annual international festival *L'Arlecchino Errante*. In 2007 she founded the Porto Arlecchino art and craft workshop, in collaboration with the graphic designer, photographer and musician Luca Fantinutti. Since 2015 all Claudia Contin Arlecchino's performances and educational projects of have been produced and distributed by the Ortoteatro cooperative in Pordenone.

Priscilla Duarte (Brazil) is an actress and costume designer. **Ricardo Gomes** (Brazil) is an actor, director and scholar. They started their partnership in 1984 at the Undergraduate Course of Performing Arts at University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), concluded in 1987. They worked at Teatro tascabile di Bergamo (Italy) from 1989 to 1994 and from 2003 to 2007. Since 1996 they have been working in Brazil and in Italy with their own group, Teatro Diadokai. Ricardo has a PhD in Theatre and Spectacle (2007) from Sapienza University of Rome (Italy) and Priscilla has a PhD in Arts (2019) from Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brazil). Since 2008, Ricardo has been a professor at Federal University of Ouro Preto (Brazil).

Simone Dragone (Italy) is a PhD student in Digital Humanities Arts, Performing Arts and Multimedia Technologies at the University of Genoa, Italy, and is responsible for OTA (Odin Teatret Archives) based in Holstebro (Denmark). He graduated in Modern Literature and Performing Arts in February 2018 at the University of Genoa, with a thesis on the performance *The Million* by Odin Teatret. He is one of the founders of Il Falcone, Genoa University Theatre, for which he was producer until April 2019.

Peter Elsass (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) and *Kunsten at være alene* (The Art of Being Alone, Gyndeldal, 2016). He is the director of several documentary films, including *Jorden er vores mor* (The Earth is our Mother, 1987) and *Rejsen tilbage* (The Return, 1993) about the cultural resistance in Colombia of the indigenous Arhuaco people.

Francesco Galli (Italy) has photographed in Italy and abroad in the following fields: anthropology, architecture, archaeology, landscape and theatre. He graduated in Architecture at La Sapienza University in Rome. In recent years his research has focused on urban and natural landscapes. Among others, he has worked for Fondazione La Biennale di Venezia, Università La Sapienza di Roma, Università della Tuscia, Kent University, British Columbia University, The Grotowski Institute, Teatro di Roma. Francesco Galli collaborates with Odin Teatret since 1993, photographing performances in Holstebro and on tour, ISTA and The University of Eurasian Theatre sessions, Holstebro Festuge and barbers. Francesco Galli follows all the meetings of the Bridge of Winds directed by Iben Nagel Rasmussen.

Cecilia Hopkins (Argentina) was born in Buenos Aires. She is a journalist, actress and teacher. She currently teaches Theatre Anthropology I and II at the EMAD (Metropolitan School of Dramatic Art) in the Staging Career. Her latest works as a performer and director are *Gemma Suns* (2013), based on texts by Maxi Rodríguez, *La cabeza de Acevedo* (2014), *Zona de oscuridad* (2015) and *Cielo con diamantes* (2019), written by her, and *La memoria de Federico* (2016) that premiered in Spain with the support of Iberescena.

Filipe Lima (Brazil) is an actor of Cia. YinsPiração, singing and theatre teacher, producer and assistant director. He is producer of A Arte Secreta do Ator, Brazil, a residential

workshop with Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley in Brazil. His main performances are: *Mare Serenitatis* (2019), *The Tightrope Walker* (2015), *Shakespeare's Dreams* (2015), *The Big Heart & Eros* (2014) and *Elizabeth Tudor Can* (2011). He has worked in the following films: *Eco Crazy People*, *Help Won't Come*, *Pureza*, *A Cisterna* and *Jeitosinha*.

Leonardo Mancini (Italy) is currently Research Fellow in Theatre Studies at the University of Turin (Italy). He has obtained his PhD in Letters at the University of Turin, with co-tutorship at Université Paris 8, and he has been DAAD fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin (Institut für Theaterwissenschaft). His research focuses on the history of 19th and 20th century Italian theatre, declamation on stage, actor apprenticeship, and theatre anthropology. Among his recent publications are the monographs *Carmelo Bene: fonti della poetica* (Mimesis Edizioni, Milano-Udine 2020) and *Luigi Rasi. La declamazione come scienza nuova* (Mimesis Edizioni, Milano-Udine 2021).

Luciana Martuchelli (Brazil) is an actress and acting coach in Brazil. She is a theatre, music, film and TV shows director. Founder and director of TAO Filmes - a stage research studio, film producer company and acting and singing school since 1994. On TV, she has worked with soap opera director Reynaldo Boury, preparing miniseries for TPA (Televisão Popular da Angola). She was also assistant to Walter Carvalho, Daniel Filho, Cecil Thiré and Lucas Bueno (Globo Network). She is the creative director of the theatre company Cia. YinsPiração Poéticas Contemporâneas; of the international theatre festival Solos Fértis; and of the masters-in-residence The Secret Art of the Performer with Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley.

Bianca Mastrominico (Italy-UK) is a performance maker, author/director, researcher and pedagogue currently based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Born in Naples, she grew up in a historical theatre family and received her first apprenticeship through the work of her parents, Pina Cipriani and Franco Nico. In 2002 Bianca founded Organic Theatre with John Dean, an international performance laboratory rooted in ongoing training and research for innovative practice and pedagogy. Bianca is Programme Leader for MA Digital Performance and BA(Hons) Performance at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, where she also teaches Theatre Anthropology as well as Theatre Laboratory and Devising Practices. Bianca has published for *The Open Page*, *Total Theatre Magazine*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, and *Body, Space and Technology*, amongst others.

Akira Matsui (Japan) is a professional nô actor of the Kita school, based in Wakayama, central Japan. A first-generation performer, he began amateur lessons at age seven before becoming a live-in apprentice to Kita Roppeita XVth in Tokyo. Returning to Wakayama at age 30, he began offering lessons and created annual performance opportunities in Wakayama. His interest in Western musicals and dance led him to teach at American universities and theatre studios since 1976. He was awarded a doctorate from the University of London in 2016. Matsui's career spanning has been uniquely international in the six-hundred-year history of the art. He has collaborated with ISTA since 2000 and is a permanent member of the Theatrum Mundi Ensemble.

Pilar Pedraza, (Peru) is a photographer who has exhibited images of the Paucartambo Virgen del Carmen Feast at the Museo de los Pueblos de Paucartambo in 2016

and 2019, donating the permanent displays to the museum. She has created three individual exhibitions in Lima and was invited to the Hay Festival in 2018 with the photograph exhibition “Qonoy”.

Omma Studio Theatre (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.

Jean-Marie Pradier (France), a founding member of ISTA, is Professor Emeritus at the Theatre Department of the University of Paris 8. Founder of ethnoscenology (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).

Francesca Romana Rietti (1970, Italy) has obtained her PhD in Theatre and Performance History, Theory and Technique at La Sapienza University of Rome and has published the book *Jean-Louis Barrault. Artigianato teatrale* (Bulzoni, Roma, 2010). In 2004 she was a postgraduate research assistant at the Department of Dramaturgy of the University of Aarhus. From 2005 to 2021 she was part of Odin Teatret’s staff and in 2008, together with Mirella Schino and Valentina Tibaldi, she founded the Odin Teatret Archives, based in Holstebro. From 2006 to 2021 she was also a lecturer of Theatre History in different Italian Universities and from 2022 she develops an independent activity of pedagogy and research. She is editor of *Il Ponte dei Venti. Un’esperienza di pedagogia teatrale con Iben Nagel Rasmussen* (Bologna, I Quaderni del Battello Ebbro, 2001) and of *Tracce. Training e storia di un’attrice dell’Odin Teatret* by Roberta Carreri (Corazzano, Titivillus, 2013 [2007]). Since 2014 she is a member of the editorial board of the journal *Teatro e Storia* and since 2015 she collaborates with the monthly review *L’indice dei libri*.

Miguel Rubio Zapata (Peru) is a founding member and director of the Yuyachkani Cultural Group (1971). His experience is based on the investigation of Peruvian culture and its application in contemporary artistic expressions. He has published *Notas sobre el teatro*, Lima, 2000; *El cuerpo ausente*, political performance, Lima, 2008; *Raíces y semillas, maestros y caminos del teatro en América Latina* Lima, 2011; *Guerrilla en Paucartambo*, Lima, 2013; and *Habla el rey Ch’unchu*, 2021. In 2019, he received the National Culture Award in the “career” category, by the Peruvian Ministry of Culture.

Franco Ruffini (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 focusing, 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 has been translated into English (Icarus-Routledge, 2014). Founding member of the journal *Teatro e Storia* (1986).

Jonah Salz is co-founder with Akira Shigeyama of the Noho Theatre Group (1981-) and Traditional Theatre Training (1984-) in Kyoto. He teaches comparative theatre and traditional Japanese theatre at Ryukoku University, and directs plays, many featuring Akira Matsui, by Beckett, Yeats, Shakespeare, and original adaptations of Japanese and Western authors. Jonah Salz received his PhD in performance studies from NYU, writing on the “roles of passage” of a contemporary kyogen family. He edited *A History of Japanese Theatre* (Cambridge University Press, 2016). Jonah Salz assisted and interpreted for Matsui in rehearsals for *Ur-Hamlet* in Spain, Bali, Italy, and Denmark. In March 2022 he marked the 40th anniversary of Noho by directing *Under an Umbrella, in the Rain*, by novelist Yuten Sawanishi, and featuring Matsui and his son Shunsuke.

Nicola Savarese (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 focuses 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*.

Sabera Shaik (Malaysia) is a Theatre Arts graduate from Penn State University and has been acting, producing and directing for more than 40 years. She teaches acting courses to the young and old and directs mainly contemporary shadow theatre pieces with her group of actors. Her constant interactions at Odin Teatret and attendance in workshops there have changed her outlook to theatre in more ways than one. She is currently engaged by the National Theatre to direct a dance-drama about the ancient kingdom of Langkasuka.

Jaime Soriano (Mexico) has a degree in Art Education from the Superior School of Arts of Yucatan (ESAY). He is a teacher in acting, training and stage acting creation and has worked as a director for his own artistic creation projects since 1977. He was a collaborator with the Polish director Jerzy Grotowski from 1980 to 1990, in Mexico, Poland, the USA and Italy. He studied Indian kathakali dance at the Mandapa Centre in Paris and the Kerala Kalamandalam Academy in Southwest India. In 1986 he founded the UNAM University Laboratory of Theatre Anthropology at Casa del Lago in Mexico City, which, years later, became the Jerzy Grotowski Performing Arts Laboratory.

Ferdinando Taviani (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).

Julia Varley (Denmark) 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).

Keiin Yoshimura (Japan) is a performer, choreographer and art director of Kamigata-mai dance and of Yoshimura Keiin Kamigata-mai Studio and of Kamigatamaitomonokai, based in Tokyo, Japan. Keiin started to practice both Japanese traditional kabuki dance and western classical piano playing at five years old. In 1974, she graduated from the Musashino University of Music. She has practiced kamigata-mai with Yukio Yoshimura and Kisho Yoshimura, nô theatre with Hideo Kanze and Izumi Mikawa, and the traditional martial arts kendo and kyudo. In 2000, she started the Japan-India traditional performances exchange programme and since 2011 she is a Yoga Siromani (a teacher of yoga) and a teacher of Motoyama Merdien Exercises for Ki Practice.

Ana Woolf (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/NG session

PRE-EXPRESSIVITY - COMPOSITION - MONTAGE

7-21 May 2023

Pécsvárad-Budapest (Hungary)

Organisers: Theatre Olympics 2023 and Fondazione Barba Varley
in collaboration with
National Theatre of Budapest and Sinum Theatre Laboratory

More information: fondazionebarbavarley@gmail.com

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