



Myths of the Voice
Malérargues, July 4 to 17 2005

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A Forum of Ideas and Discussions

Unless otherwise indicated all texts are by Enrique Pardo (EP)

A note from Enrique Pardo

This forum contains a series of reflections and exchanges towards the 2005 *VOICES* Summer University and its overall theme - *Myths of the Voice* - as it applies to the historical legacy of Alfred Wolfsohn and Roy Hart. In other words, the myths at work in their ideas and practice and in some of the contemporary developments of their legacy – including obviously, Pantheatre's.

The great majority if not all the pages of this forum, assembled in the months preceding the 2005 Summer University, are in fact dedicated to Roy Hart, and engage with his ideas. Interestingly, during the actual debates of the 2005 Summer University most of the time was spent talking about Alfred Wolfsohn, Roy Hart's teacher. Why this happened is a complex matter which merits reflection; it clearly indicates the need for a tribute to the founding 'ancestor'. But it also says something about the polemical nature of Roy Hart's extraordinary drive and ambitions – and of his own very personal (and theatrical) way of reworking Wolfsohn's philosophy.

That Roy Hart's charisma still creates polemics and embarrassed silences 30 years after his death is a tribute to the impact of his personality - but it is a partial and problematic tribute, carrying too many unspoken reverences and resistances. I think Roy Hart and his ideas must be studied and discussed in an in-depth tribute/debate, one that pays credence to his genius and to how he dealt with the ideas of his time, but also one that does not eschew the inevitable shadows and *lacunae* of his enterprise and idealism. These pages are a contribution towards such a tribute/debate. They also come from the my own artistic and biographical position: I started working with Roy Hart in the late sixties and therefore did not meet Alfred Wolfsohn; my engagement with his ideas is therefore more remote and historical.

Sonu Shamdasani* was my main interlocutor in assembling this forum; I consider his position and ideas to be an essential contribution towards a cultural perspective on "myths of the voice". I met with him at length in London to discuss these matters. Extracts of these exchanges are included in this forum. There is also a separate document dedicated to our dialogues : http://pantheatre.free.fr/pages/myth_voices_forum_sonu.pdf

The exchanges with Sonu started before I gave a lecture in Helsinki, on June 7 2005, at a conference titled "Voice, Sound and Subjectivity". Philosophically, I consider the question of **subjectivity** central to my research, and to voice and theatre work. In Helsinki I said that "I argue and work from a position which is rather **contrary** to the esthetical and ethical implications of subjectivity, as this concept has been called upon to rule much of **the justification for acting** in theatre in the 20th century." Extracts of this lecture are included below.

During the 2005 Summer University, our friends Anne Marie Letron and David Goldsworthy presented a rendering of the poem **Biodrame**, written by Serge Béhar for Roy Hart in 1972, and which I had the chance to see Roy Hart perform in Sion (Switzerland) around 1973. In many ways it was the most extraordinarily 'subjective' performance I have ever seen - 'subjective' in the sense that its subject was the subject of the subject of the subject... etc, an abyssal solo display of subjectivity (abyssal in the baroque sense of reflective mirroring). An actor displaying and describing the so-called person who is acting his sense of vitalistic awareness of being alive and acting, etc. Quite an extraordinary poem too in its idealism, in its philosophy of acting and of the voice, which Roy Hart, in many ways, made his manifesto.

The poem is included below in a rough English translation. It is also on Paul Silber's archives on <http://www.roy-hart.com/pauls.htm> (in the original French and in the English translation). There is also a letter Roy Hart wrote on Biodrame where he gives his philosophical understanding of the poem as reflecting his work. It is a remarkable historical document, which I discussed with Sonu Shamdasani (notes on http://pantheatre.free.fr/pages/myth_voices_forum_sonu.pdf) and which were central to our exchanges in London, June 22 23, 2005. Roy Hart's letter is also included in this forum.

Enrique, Malérargues June 20 2005

* Sonu Shamdasani is historian of psychology and Jung scholar, specialist in pre-Freudian voices, great critic of post-Freudian voices. Recent publications: Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology: The Dream of A Science. Cambridge University Press, December 2003. Jung stripped bare by his biographers, even. London 2004. Le dossier Freud: Enquête sur l'histoire de la psychanalyse, Le Seuil, 2005 - with Mikkel Borch-Jakobsen.

Agenda : The Festival, the voice and the Roy Hart Theatre (EP)

The return to Malérargues (the Roy Hart Centre) of the Myth and Theatre Festival is an important landmark in the Festival's history, and in Pantheatre's relationship to Malérargues (though Pantheatre has regularly organized workshops, seminars, conferences, performances at Malérargues during the 15 or so years since the Festival left Malérargues.)

It returns with the theme "VOICES / Myths of the Voice" and its intention to "offer a forum of reflection and practice on the "theologies of the voice" in the broadest sense, that is, on the myths that filter how the voice is conceived of, listened to and used - especially in the arts and in therapeutic practices." (Extract from the official presentation.)

Clearly the Wolfsohn/Roy Hart voice work tradition will be all-present in this first VOICES Summer University. We intend then to continue the themes in Wales and in Italy, broadening the historical prism. Several original members of the Roy Hart Theatre have expressed interest in doing a presentation during the festival. The form can be discussed and adapted to each presenter. Linda Wise and Liza Mayer will also make presentations. I myself intend to propose a series of discussion themes developing the six themes (or "original myths" – see below) in the "Call for Contributions". Other presenters have offered to address the Wolfsohn/Roy Hart tradition, amongst them Amy Rome, Sheila Braggins.

A pitfall to avoid is for the Festival to become an 'internal' retrospective event, although I am strongly for what I call "cultural therapy" - that is a therapy of ideas (by ideas and of ideas.) It is for this reason that I regret the absences of Nor Hall, Sonu Shamdasani.

Nor Hall : I will present how and why her contribution has been so important over the last years, especially in terms of "hearing voices".

Sonu Shamdasani : I intend to travel especially to London on June 22 23 for a series of talks with Sonu, on which I will report in this forum and during the Summer University. He will be, as he put it, "a spectral voice"... A special page is dedicated to these exchanges: http://pantheatre.free.fr/pages/myth_voices_forum_sonu.pdf

Stephen Karcher and **Jay Livernois** will be with us. They will certainly broaden the perspectives, even in terms of what is meant by "voice"!

For a concise set of up to date Pantheatre presentations of Roy Hart Theatre, Roy Hart, Alfred Wolfsohn, Malérargues, check: http://pantheatre.free.fr/pages/rht_gb.htm

I am also undertaking a collection of definitions of the voice - which will be on Pantheatre's website. Contributions welcome.

Enrique Pardo / Nov 27 2004.

The "Six Original Myths" proposal.

The first "Call for Contributions" (outlined in 2004) proposed "six broad encompassing themes in order to organize the thinking on *Myths of the Voice*." These were discussed during the 2005 Summer University – Some we never really got to, others we discussed

1. **Pagan Mythologies of the Voice** – with especial emphasis on the poetics of mantics and the questions: "where does the voice come from?" and "who does the voice belong to?"
2. **Christian Mythologies of the Voice** – the closing of the pagan oracles and the notions of truth, self and individuality.
3. **Soul Mythologies of the Voice** – addressing the much used definition: "the voice is the muscle of the soul", and the differentiation of "soul" and "spirit." Another, more 'orphyic' definition is: "the voice is the mirror of the soul."
4. **Shamanic Mythologies of the Voice** – including the relationship between imagination and healing (the question of therapy.)
5. **Modernist Mythologies of the Voice** – from Nietzsche's singer-dancer and the importance of the myth of Orpheus in late German Romanticism and early modernism, to an artist like Marcel Duchamp whose disenchanting gestures are contemporary of Wolfsohn's philosophy of singing.
6. **Post-modern Mythologies of the Voice** – the status of the voice in contemporary post-modern philosophy, in particular after the late Jacques Derrida's book "La Voix et le Phénomène" (translated into English as "Speech and Phenomena".)

We did not have the time or scope to deal with all six "original myths". Future Summer Universities and special events will go into them in depth. From most exchanges up to now, there are three 'myths of the voice' that need especial attention:

- Myths of soul
- Myths of self
- Myths of healing

Myth and History – and the question of biographies

Sheila Braggins was one of Awe Wolfsohn's pupils. She writes: "Apart from Kaya (Anderson), I am unfortunately the only pupil left who knew him (Alfred Wolfsohn) for 15 years. I have also helped Marita (Gunther) with translating *The Bridge* and have read quite a bit of his other manuscripts." Sheila Braggins offered a lecture on "Alfred Wolfsohn's thoughts on myth, dream, God and the Human being."

EP's advice: "Your lecture does not need to have much historical material; participants are supposed to know who Alfred Wolfsohn was and the basics of his life... We will publish succinct biographies and a bibliography - I will send contributors a technical note on this so that they can include recommendations (important authors for Wolfsohn, for instance) - and, also, how to access what you have written."

Reminder of Linda Wise's warning: "The pioneering research on the extended voice begun by Alfred Wolfsohn and passed on to Roy Hart and the Roy Hart Theatre, has a rich and varied history and, at times, the nostalgia for this legendary past can obscure the depth of current work and new developments. It often seems as if the history is 'the method', and philosophy enough." Paris, September 25, 1998.

Highly recommended: Sonu Shamdasani's "Jung stripped bare by his biographers, even...", just published by Karnac, UK. It raises crucial questions on the "myths of biographies."

Gourdjeff and Aristotle - EP to Ian Magilton

Ian Magilton, one of the members of the original Roy Hart Theatre, has offered to present a reworked version of a paper titled "Identity and Imitation" presented at a voice conference in Stuttgart in 2004. Guidelines from EP:

"My intention as "editor in chief" of the Summer University lectures is to help contributors focus on a specific question regarding Myths of the Voice, within the Wolfsohn/Roy Hart tradition for this anniversary event.

Your paper mentions some of the founding myths (or call them ideologies) of modern thought as they are used within the Wolfsohn/Roy Hart tradition. My advice would be to develop further the central ideas of your Stuttgart paper: "identity and imitation."

Give it more space, time, memory (maybe the quotes you remember) and speculative extensions. The territory of identity needs very careful treading into since it is mined, especially in theatre. All the more when identity comes with its two 'bodyguards': Self and Truth! Sonu Shamdasani (one of the top historians of psychology, and as such, of contemporary philosophical thought, in my view) is known to have said: "I travel light: I have no self", claiming the right to use the terms he chooses to define who/how/what he is. He then of course gives a run-down of how the notion of self was 'invented' in the 19th century. He is number one specialist in Jung today, and raises very interesting questions about Jung's founding ideas and aims, especially in the relationship between religion, the quest for self and the development of personality.

Discussions on the question of "imitation" in theatre, which generally derive from Aristotle's concept of *mimesis*, can lead to very 'wooden' (or 'Hollywooden!') distinctions and categorizations. Aristotle's "imitation" is often used as the great enemy in manifestoes of theatre 'truth' - manifestoes that no doubt existed (and still exist?) within the Wolfsohn/Roy Hart legacy.

Two points which I hope someone will pick up:

First: I've indicated often that, as far as Roy Hart was concerned, I felt the model of Gurdjieff was more important and influential than C.G.Jung's. I even remember Roy Hart being quite condescending about Jung.

Second: one can be a great therapist in practice, while expressing beliefs or adhering to ideologies that are quite outlandish. There can be crucial disparities between the way practitioners (therapists, artists, poets, voice teachers, etc) theorize their work and their actual practice. The reverse is also true: holding on to certain ideological myths can have a determining influence on practice. For all these reasons, each presenter must speak in his or her own name and not in the name of Roy Hart or a collective called "Roy Hart Theatre."

Finally, historical and biographical material on Alfred Wolfsohn and Roy Hart should only be included if necessary to the study of ideas. (See "Myth and History" above.)"

Sonidos Negros – La Niña de los Peines

El crítico francés Didi-Huberman presentó en Sevilla una conferencia sobre la relación entre la música y las imágenes en películas de lo que se puede llamar el periodo surrealista. Toca algunos conceptos claves, no solo de la voz o de lo que llama "sonidos negros" (recordemos que el título del libro de Noah Pikes es "Dark Voices", Voces Oscuras) sino también de la relación entre voz e imagen visual, de tanta importancia en nuestro concepto de "teatro coreográfico". Que sirva también de prologo a las conferencias de Nick Hobbs sobre el *Hell Canto*.

"A juicio de Didi-Huberman, la voz desgarrada y oscura de la Niña de los Peines, con su ritmo lento y su textura cavernosa, no funciona sólo como un ornamento sonoro, sino que reconfigura cada gesto y cada movimiento, reinventa el espacio que se filma (marcado por signos de lo contemporáneo: periódicos, trenes, barcos...) y ayuda a crear una indeterminación que nos permite profundizar en la percepción de lo que se muestra. "Es decir, enfatizó el autor de *Invention de l'hysterie*, la voz de la Niña de los Peines hace bailar el espacio". En este sentido, Didi-Huberman recordó la idea de Gilles Deleuze y Felix Guattari de que el sonido (que conciben como "punta de desterritorialización") nos invade, nos empuja, nos arrastra, nos atraviesa, nos permite abandonar la tierra (lanzándonos al cosmos, pero también dejándonos caer en un agujero negro)..., nos hace desear la muerte. "Lo mismo, concluyó Didi-Huberman, que dicen los aficionados al flamenco que se siente al escuchar los llamados sonidos negros"."

Referencias y texto completo: <http://www.unia.es/artpen/estetica/estetica03/frame.html>

Bel Canto & Hell Canto

Women Singers of the *Via Negativa*: the sirens, witches and bitches of *hell canto* Chanteuses de la *Via Negativa* - (voix et voie négative): sirènes, sorcières et chiennes du *hell canto*.

Nick Hobbs presented a 3 days series of lectures, concerts and debates in Paris January 28 29 30, 2005, during

Pantheatre's Professional Workshop. This event was a preparatory one to the Myths of the Voice 2005 Summer University.

Nick Hobbs a été l'hôte de Panthéâtre pendant 3 jours de conférences, concerts et discussions à Paris janvier 28 29 30, 2005 pendant le Grand Stage Professionnel, un ensemble de débats en préparation pour l'Université d'Eté 2005, Mythes de la Voix.

A series of documents constitute this sub-forum :

Un ensemble de documents sont rattachés à ce projet :

- EXCHANGE on Janis Joplin and Tina Turner : http://pantheatre.free.fr/pages/myth_voices_forum_nick1.pdf
- Martha Naussbaum : "Professor of Parody" - critical article on Judith Butler, feminism (and quietism.)
http://pantheatre.free.fr/pages/myth_voices_forum_nick_Martha_Naussbaum.pdf
- Réponse de Maryline Guitton : « Pour une créativité féministe » :

http://pantheatre.free.fr/pages/myth_voices_forum_nick_maryline.pdf

From the Camisards to Soul Music

From the Camisards to Soul Music: the pathways of protestant voices
Des Camisards à la Musique Soul: les voies de la voix protestante

"The protestant influence on singing in LOMP (land of my people) is perhaps not what you might think. Gaelic psalm singing involves a precentor singing the first line of a psalm. Then the congregation improvises, usually extending each note of the original line up to six times. And each person in their own staggered time. It's extraordinary. It is religious spirit music with a passion which puts a lot of other church singing to shame. Anyway it was this form which influenced black American gospel singing. Scottish plantation owners in Carolina had Gaelic speaking slaves who sung in this way. Can't find the references if you don't believe me. But this stuff was recently ratified by the search of a black musicologist who incidentally is an ex-Ellington muso. Always easy to jump to the wrong conclusion about origins and influences. "

from an email from Ken Hyder to Nick Hobbs and Chris Potts, Jan 27, 2004 (an exchange on the voice of Captain Beefheart) Full document : http://pantheatre.free.fr/pages/myth_voices_forum_nick_gaelic.pdf

Orpheus, Abraxas

(addressed to Noah Pikes who has offered to present a talk on Abraxas.)

Mythological figures often appear as passionate standard bearers for thinkers and thought movements. It is the case for instance with Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Freud's Oedipus - or, of course, Pantheatre's Pan.

Orpheus figures prominently in Alfred Wolfsohn's writings (and in many pre-modern or early-modern thinkers and poets - especially poets: think of Rilke!) In the mid-sixties Roy Hart used the figure of Abraxas, presumably picked up in C.J. Jung's Seven Sermons to the Dead.

Sonu Shamdasani mentioned a 1895 book on history of religions titled Abraxas - presumably Jung's source (Abraxas belongs to the same historico-mythological realm as Zarathustra - Zoroaster . . .) He also pointed out the romanesque appearance of Abraxas in Herman Hesse's Demian. Hesse was in analysis with a close collaborator of Jung. Sonu has all the facts at the tip of his fingers, and, most interestingly, how Jung came to write the Seven Sermons - the 'voices' involved. Since Sonu, unfortunately, cannot come to the Festival, I am travelling to London 2 days June 22 for a series of talks with him around these topics, including especially the relations between art, personality development and religion.

Historical archaeology or amplification is not our aim, which is rather to propose answers to: "**why** are these figures invoked, and what bearing do they have on the voice, even on the cultural fantasies that determine what we consider to be the literal physiological voice (for those who consider "the body" to be a cultural fantasy) and all the other voices (philosophical, religious, artistic, etc.)"

In the cases of Wolfsohn and Hart, it would be interesting to ask what interaction there was between theory and practice. Teoria and practice can run parallel sometimes without ever 'bumping into each other', and, like in psychotherapy, one can be an excellent 'helper' while referring to outlandish metapsychological theories.

One last point. One of James Hillman's books is titled (very finely) "Facing the Gods" - i.e. and especially, being able to give them faces, to identify and "see through" the mythical masks activating ideological and/or emotional behaviours. So in our case, only more, since you could say a voice cannot 'sound' without a mask to sound through (*per sonare*), without *persona*. This is crucial to mythical thinking and therefore to a Festival on VOICES. I have chosen a formidable open-mouthed Pompeii mask as logo for PANTHEATRE ACTS (Voice Performance School).

Speculating on a Voice for “Manticians” by Stephen Karcher

We seem to be concerned with “voicing” something that is not normally accessible, with the language of the “ghosts and spirits” (*guishen* , in Chinese, or the imaginal worlds) that somehow lie behind that “voicing,” and with the place and nature of the actor/singer/performer/writer/voice worker through which the “voicing” is (or is not) accomplished. We are surrounded not only by mythologies of the voice, but mythologies of therapy, of culture, of religion, of philosophy, of performance, of language and of mythologies themselves.

I would like to introduce a few ideas into the dialogues. First off, why not create a category for the “non-specific soul and spirit worker” that lays to rest the platitudes of shamanism, spirit-mediums and therapists. I would suggest “mantician” – someone concerned with giving a voice to what is both important and usually neglected in both language and culture. Secondly, how about a necessary quality of that mantician – the ability, so loved by Neoplatonists, of differentiating between the sorts of disembodied spirit voices that are clamouring to find a voice? Who or what is knocking at the door, the threshold of “vocalizing?” Let us “personify” them. Is it my sainted grandmother, my inferiority complex, Jesus the Magician, another bloody animistic shadow, my “real self” or something truly spooky? (In this regard, I bet I am the only one amongst this gathering who was at Altamont when (Sir) Mick Jagger sang Sympathy for the Devil and the Hell's Angels beat someone to death onstage.)

And last, why not ask the “pagan oracles” – supposedly the voices (*orare*) and repositories of available masks – to comment on our endeavour? I did, of course, and will continue to do so. I asked my particular oracle, Yijing or Classic of Change, to comment on this work. It offered an interesting image: the open mouth of the Tiger, the spirit who eats away the corruption and secret sickness of the past and secures the ritual space where we emerge as real individuals - free of both collective “wisdom” and all we hate about our parents and gurus. It is all about what goes in and out of the mouth, not just food, but nourishment and words, the “airs” that rise from the mouth to inspire others. To my mind, this is not a bad image to begin with.

The Protestant and Jewish questions

EP exchange with Noah Pikes (to Noah Pikes) As you know, in this 2005 Summer University I am putting the emphasis on Protestantism, and pointing to the parallels between the theologies of the voice of the Camisards and of the Roy Hart Theatre. If only to respond to the timing and the 300th and 30th anniversaries. As I put it in the press release:

"The coincidences are stronger than one would first expect ! The Camisards who chose exile in London 300 years ago caused a huge sensation (and plenty of controversy), with their 'voice work' ; they became known as the **French Prophets**. The members of Roy Hart Theatre took the reverse path 30 years ago, from London to the Cevennes. In many ways they were the **English Prophets**, and it was their voice work that caused sensation (and plenty of controversy too). Camisards and Roy Hart Theatre had in common a certain idea of the cult of the voice. At its core one finds one of the founding myths of Protestantism : singing as the sublime path towards the divine (an iconoclastic path). Most of the members of the Roy Hart Theatre were Anglo-Saxon of protestant origins; Roy Hart, even though very 'British', was of Jewish origin, as was his master Alfred Wolfsohn."

I mention the Jewish question in passing, and intend to propose it as a working theme in the future, not this time (though I'm sure it will get mentioned - if only because of the question of religious iconoclasm.) Incidentally, Linda and I came across a voice teacher in Scotland, a Jewish actress, who had been to the Drama Academy with Linda, who claims to teach within the Jewish inheritance of Wolfsohn / Roy Hart ! I hope she comes talk with us next year. Penny Rittemberg is supposed to have said that the Roy Hart Theatre became totally Protestant (or Christian) after Roy Hart's death (she left soon after.) Very interesting questions.

You write: "If I were to rewrite Dark Voices I would go much more into the Jewish background of Alfred Wolfsohn and Roy Hart - I believe that culture formed the basics of their minds and sensibilities..."

YES. I would ask: is not culture "mind and sensibility"? That is what the Summer University is meant to be for: cultural studies.

The Voice of Shamanism – by EP

Two important sources I will present at the Festival:

1 – Charles Boer's lapidary (as often) definition: "shamans are only the mystification of puer" (email13/03/2005). In the early 80s Charles Boer gave his famous "Back to School" series of lectures on mythology at Malérargues. If I recall correctly it was in the very first lecture, presenting the Lascaux drawing of the horned figure usually called "The Sorcerer of Lascaux" that he questioned the status of shamanism, and suggested we should not let the model of the shaman replace the model of the actor in our hierarchical fantasies (and this was during the peak of Grotowski's paratheatrical experiments!). He insisted on calling the Lascaux figure "the first actor".

2 – A book which, as far as I am concerned, is THE book on shamanism (or call it neo-shamanism): "The Soul of Shamanism – Western Fantasies, Imaginal Realities" by Daniel C. Noel, Continuum, New York, 1999. Quite an extraordinary book, which takes into account with exceptional earnestness and idealism Charles Boer's dictum. Daniel Noel, to my reading, accepts the idealistic impossibility of the figure of the shaman as it has risen in late 20th century western fantasy, but pleads with all his heart for that very idealism, saying the shaman is the imaginal model that can somehow redeem western imagination (one of his chapters is titled: "Realizing the Radical Legacy of Jung" – referring to the 'suppressed' figure of Merlin in Western traditions of the imagination).

Daniel Noel analyses in detail the raise of the figure of the shaman, especially with Carlos Castaneda's Don Juan (Castaneda never acknowledged the fantasy nature of his writings), and Mircea Eliade's "Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy" (and his very revealing novel "The Forbidden Forest"). Sadly, Daniel, whom I had the pleasure of meeting several times at conferences with James Hillman, died recently. He was a good friend of festival advisor Sonu Shamdasani, and especially of Michael Whan who put him on the track of Jung's take on "Le Cri de Merlin".

A personal note: Daniel Noel recounts an anecdote on Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa (whose books hold a special place in my life since he writes mostly of the Peru I lived in my childhood – I also think he is a great writer.) In a chapter titled "Lying with Shamanovelists", Noel reports a lecture by Vargas Llosa at University of Colorado titled "The Power of Lies", and a discussion on his 1989 novel "El Hablador" (The Storyteller) on the Machiguenga tribe in the Peruvian Amazon. An anthropologist charged at Vargas Llosa: "They say you have misrepresented their culture. They call you "El Mentiroso", the liar. What do you have to say to that?" After a "hushed pause" Vargas Llosa replies quietly: "Thank you."

Finally, a quote from Noel Daniel's book (P65, following the Vargas Llosa anecdote): "But with shamanism a fading memory from Europe's indigenous past, and attempts at outer revivals riddled with unacknowledged fantasy, another step is needed. There is another Otherness we need to honour, an inner Otherness which psychology has emerged, from the midst of modern science, to indicate as a current resource for shamanic reconnection: the imagining psyche as our inner Other, and science's Other as well.

Roy Hart's 1973 letter – to a French television producer.

Dear Sir,

I must assume your program is based on a sincere preoccupation, and not on a wish to be gimmicky. In which case it is necessary to put this program in a proper historic framework. Most so-called avant-garde theatres, operas, etc.. are beginning to recognize the intrinsic significance of what is called the cry: they no longer hear it as mere noise, but as having its own philosophical implications, not only for the evolution of musical theatre, but for people who sing, play, speak, that is to say for the human race. It is therefore necessary that your program should take into full account the way in which RHT, as related to the late Alfred Wolfsohn, has come out of the cry to reinstate the word. We have not outgrown the cry, which we have been practising for over twenty five years, but on the contrary we have absorbed it into every fibre of our being. For us, therefore, the word, i.e. philosophy, must remain paramount.

It is not by chance that in this year 1973 we are currently working on three major productions; "Biodrame" by Serge Béhar, "Mariage de Lux" by Serge Béhar, and "Ich bin" by Paul Pörtner. For us there is no going back to "AND", the performance which we presented last year at the Théâtre des Nations, since these three current works contain the distilled flowering of that which Catherine Backès-Clément attested to in her article on "AND".

Like all great works of art, these three works deal with the transformation of Man. This transformation has a special significance to you and us, since it reflects the need to understand the devastations of two world wars, and possibly even more significantly the apparently complete breakdown which is expressed both on the private scene between men and women, and on the political scene by hijackings, guerrilla warfare and general street violence.

Through the use of the word, and its relevance to the voice and to the entire biological framework and mindscape which make up the individual, Serge Béhar, being a Doctor, poet and philosopher, wrote "Biodrame" in which he has expressed in theatrical terms the central thesis of that which led us to study the cry. The cry as expressed by dying soldiers, babies, human beings in distress, and also manifest in outbursts of joie de vivre. This means that man, as an individual, is the root of society. As a Doctor, Behar has understood that the political body expresses very clearly the biological body; and without a deep understanding of the Inside man, both physically and spiritually, no actor or politician can express so-called objective ideas, except as a projection of this lack of internal knowledge.

Thus, I do not present "Biodrame" as a straightforward, poem, but this solo literally expresses vocally, through a longstanding organic process of integration, the relationship between body control and vocal control, in other words self-control. This reflects the normal state of being, from the internal visceral state of the individual to his awareness of this state and control of it, then to political awareness, that is to say the need for dialogue with another, then with several others, which will lead us to the plays "Mariage de Lux" and "Ich bin".

I send you a copy of "Biodrame", and a kind of "script" to give you some material for work in preparation for our meeting.

yours sincerely

Roy Hart

"BIODRAME ... is somewhat the story of my life".

By Roy Hart

1. When in 1945 I left South Africa to come to London, where I won a scholarship to RADA - "je m'avance" - like all ordinary human beings I did not realise I was in such a state of non-being, of "apparente serenite". (This also reminds me of the Breughel painting "The Fall of Icarus".)

Gifted with a beautiful bass voice, sport loving, full of unconscious frustrated energy, in spite of my need for it ("je m'interroge"), I had not yet started to explore dynamically, with my teacher Alfred Wolfsohn (1898 - 1962) the relationship between internal and external murder. (A film of the autonomic nervous system and of visceral movements should be included here.)

2. This is my first singing lesson. Farts, belches etc. . . are not irrelevant noises, but sounds which belong to the human orchestra. "Le sang clair" is a tenor sound - generally associated with spirit, light, romantic love, femininity. In "la rengaine", the traditional concepts of opera, deep voice means body, depth, masculinity. In Roy Hart Theatre both men and women push their voices beyond bass and soprano in search of the human voice, as opposed to the specialised voice.

"L'inégalité" is the first political statement - direct reflection of the sense of hierarchy between the head and body, the visceral and intellectual functions which influence each other, but which need theatre in order to become complete in a creative synthesis of the extremes - thus nerves are necessary for they put the artist's body into a state of wakefulness.

3. Most actors and singers wear a mask, and their artificial acting only consists in hearing themselves speak a text which they have not digested.

I represent "les cordes" with a multiple sound containing several notes in a chord - we call it chorded sound. This sound fascinates many people, for they think this is one of the only sounds they can't imitate.

I have often been labelled a vocal phenomenon - not to say a monstrous freak that could attract crowds to a circus. Machines of all kinds reflect the internal capacity for vocalisation, and not the other way round. These "générateurs de sons" are not the vocal cords, but all the cells, containing "le grognement", the grunt being the tiniest possibility for cry in the music world they belong to.

"Humbles ou bourgeois" - another political statement, apparently in contradiction with the first, yet balancing it: prince or beggar, artist or not, we all depend on our arterial health. We consider singing as the highest form of liberation of arterial circulation.

"La" is the hypothalamus, at the foot of that step of the spinal column, ancestral inheritance of the old brain. The first *Homo sapiens* is emerging . . .

4. ... and slowly discovering consciousness. It is not enough to cry with the pack, in the street, at the theatre: it is necessary to know why one is crying. Ours is a strict discipline, according to an inclusive but not permissive philosophy.

In response to my first demonstrations, about ten years ago, shocked spectators, including artists who considered themselves as evolved, said my sounds were just fit for the psychiatric hospital, and certainly not for the stage.

"Accaparés par leur texte", conventional actors and singers did not dare to attempt discovering their unconscious. I studied psychology as an actor. Now I believe Roy Hart Theatre has truly outgrown psychodrama, whilst many avant-garde theatres are just beginning to discover it. Many actors only work on their technical capacity to wear a mask in order to hide the blood red substance which frightens them, but which, in my view, should nourish their performance. I believe it is necessary for the actor to contact in himself this capacity for murder, "l'amour et la rage". I discovered my own potential for murder, and the sound expressing it, while working with Alfred Wolfsohn on the scene of Desdemona's murder by Othello - then I no longer needed any decor, costume or prop to give my performance a seeming of truth.

5. Before I realised how much violence was hidden in me, like so many other actors, I was living in my head, "captif"

But this realization gave me the courage of my humanity: real biological revolution which gave body to my need for communion with another individual, "à bras le corps", new political statement. (Mariage de Lux and Ich Bin could be introduced here, for instance in a kind of orchestrated mosaic of these three works.) The cry is important because of the nature of the energy it expresses. Used in a creative flow, this energy becomes life giving; but when it is frustrated it can turn into destructive aggression - one of its forms is then a certain kind of silence, and cancer is another. Also the eyes become "meurtrières", because they haven't yet been unblocked and tamed. It is therefore necessary for the 'I' to make contact with the 'thou'. The human relationship of two people, not in competition, but in co-operation - that is, the couple in the most sacred sense of the word - is the basis of relationships with others, actors then audience. In the Roy Hart Theatre we give a great importance to human dialogue - in private, when for instance friends have tea together in the club restaurant, and in public, in the meetings, the whole group regularly attends - because it is a source of creative substance for our performances which in turn make our so-called private life richer. "Gloire et misère" of our daily routine in which survival is becoming more and more a problem. (A film of our daily life should be included.)

6. My "cheminement" of over 25 years since my first singing lesson is a biological process which organically fills the gap between theatre and reality.

Its fruit is "ce que je crie, c'est l'amour". My performance reflects how I make love and vice versa.

Paradoxically, my vocal range of about eight octaves now seems less sensational, "sans emphase", because the sounds I sing without a mask contain all the other sounds and notes I have embodied and filled with meaning during this endless search of pioneer in the desert, "petit point en suspens" . . .

7. Thus I can contain with a certain calm, positively "indifferent aux lumieres eteintes", the anguish I am surrounded by.

To find again the true nature of performance, the simplicity of the little children of the Bible, a lot of time and sacrifices are necessary, for the cry is not an end in itself but a means, "rivés sur mes songes", a sublime hallucination, and the cry loses its significance if this aural vision is allowed to die.

8. I am also sending you a recording of our rehearsals of Paul Portner's Ich Bin, as an example of what I mean by the word reinstated in its true value in relationship to the cry. It is not necessary to understand German in order to abstract its meaning, since, as all great works of art, it is about transformation. Let me repeat that this transformation requires an immense control of the body which must be attacked to overcome it:

- "Sans mon corps je ne suis rien
- et pourtant
- avant de disparaître
- j'ai dépassé mon corps
- Je l'ai agressé
- pour me rapprocher
- de toi."

Note: below (P 22) I comment a series of extracts from this letter of Roy Hart's. EP

Exchanges with Sonu Shamdasani

Sonu Shamdasani is presented in the 2005 Summer Festival brochure in the following succinct terms: Historian of psychology and Jung scholar, specialist in pre-Freudian voices, great critic of post-Freudian voices.

He is one of Pantheatre's *Myth and Theatre* main advisors, having contributed to most festivals over the last 20 years. We owe him the phrase, crucial for our events: "the dance of ideas."

Recent publications: Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology: The Dream of A Science. Cambridge University Press, December 2003. Jung stripped bare by his biographers, even. London 2004. About to be published: Le dossier Freud: Enquete sur l'histoire de la psychanalyse, Le Seuil. With Mikkel Borch-Jakobsen

These exchanges make reference to:

A 1973 letter written by Roy Hart to a journalist who had proposed to record a film or television programme on his work. Roy Hart uses a poem he was performing at the time as reference in his response. The poem is titled "Biodrame". (the letter is above – the poem, in an English translation, at the end of this forum.)

Biodrame : a poem written by Serge Béhar in 1972 for Roy Hart – Both Roy Hart's letter and Biodrame are available on Paul Silber's archives on : <http://www.roy-hart.com/pauls.htm>

Psychologies as ontology-making practices: William James and the pluralities of psychological experience. A lecture by Sonu Shamdasani. Available on request from pan@pantheatre.com

Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion. James Hillman, Spring Publications, 1985. www.springpublications.com

The following are a series of questions and reflections exchanged with Sonu Shamdasani. They make reference to Biodrame, a poem written by Serge Behar, playwright and medical doctor, as well as one of the leading figures in the French Massonic movement at that time (I think this has its importance in terms of ideas, ideologies and idealisms).

Dear Sonu, to start: would it be fair to sum up your position by saying that, at least as far as CG Jung and the impact of his work is concerned, much of 20th c. psychological thinking, of the psycho-therapeutic or analytical kind, has been caught in the shift from religion to therapy, replacing the enterprise of "saving your soul" with that of "finding your self", and that you are very reserved as to the foundations and implications of this move.

You have been heard to say: "I travel light; I have no self", mainly in relation to the right each person has to auto-definition and to the use of constructs such as "soul" or "self" in defining their sense of being and identity. Is this because you consider that the notion of "self" and the operation of "finding one's self" is still somehow within the realm of religion? The question of identity is one of theatre's central "subjects"; in this, like in other areas, theatre reflects and plays with the dominant ideologies of its time, sometimes to perform and sacralize them, sometimes to defy or attack them. Roy Hart's letter is a case in point where the time's major concepts are used, admittedly in a somewhat circular manner, but with a tremendously earnest and dynamic feeling of integrity and altruistic ambition.

Note: it is important here to state that, especially in artists, theory and praxis do not necessarily coincide; an artist can invoke theories that do not do best justice to his or her work. There can be contradictions and even delusions, for instance in terms of inspiration: an artist can attribute his or her inspiration to a false or erroneous source. This happens especially for ideological reasons. It's often the case also in therapy: a therapist's meta-psychological language and declared theoretical systems can be quite outlandish, even irrelevant, while his or her practice is thoroughly grounded and effective. "It works", but not necessarily for the reasons the healer gives. Or maybe "it works" precisely because of the authorities invoked, the diplomas and the masters, but not particularly because of the practice. At the coming July Summer University we will be organizing for instance a seminar with Noah Pikes to discuss the relative influences on Roy Hart's voice work of the ideas and concepts of CG Jung on the one hand, and on the other hand the model of "consciousness" and initiatory teaching of Gurdjieff.

My second preliminary question concerns what I would call the "philosophies of the body". To practitioners, mainly, who claim to "think with their bodies" and who tend to treat the word "intellectual" with a pejorative connotation, you reply by pointing to the wonder and pleasure of the "dance of ideas". We know that discussions opposing "head" and "body" can be terribly sterile, because too often "murderously" opinionated, especially in artistic circles. But let me ask you to venture into it once again, especially in order to tackle the question of "subjectivity".

It seems to me that in Roy Hart's letter there is a claim to objectivity at the core of subjectivity: the thesis being that if, through voice work, you have achieved psychological AND biological self-knowledge, involving the enterprise of control and transformation, you can use and relativize your "subjectivity" and attain something like psychological objectivity. You can say you are transformed or 'evolved' enough to be objective, or at least more objective than the average other (I know this is a tricky question but it must be tackled since it is implicit, and sometimes explicit in Hart's statements.)

In line with the credo of psycho-analysis, you can unmask unavowed subjectivities, your own to begin with, then those of the persons facing you in dialogue, and then those of society at large. The letter mentions this progression from self to other to society as including a project of political commentary and intervention.

Note 1 - Politics enters this scheme through self-knowledge and the control of subjectivities, postulating that one can reach something like an objective voice, and presumably, but much more complicated, an objective vote. This socio-political attitude was quite in vogue during certain periods of the 20th c., especially in artistic circles, and especially in the 1960s and 70s. It claimed that personal and artistic transformation had an impact on the transformation of society. The maxim was: "transform yourself and you will transform the world". This was one of the reasons Roy Hart gave for his performing: to display the achievements of personal experimentation and transformation, and thereby have political impact. His ethical-political argument went something like this: it is not just "what you say", but "who you are" that matters, and that has the real political impact. I.e. The quality of your presence, what was called "embodiment": "Are your ideas embodied?", and ultimately, in the largest sense, "is your "voice" embodied?" (Nota: the value of one's ideas was therefore linked to this notion of "embodiment", which implies that somehow one has 'lived' the ideas in one's 'flesh' as it were; giving 'flesh' is here akin to the bible's "le verbe s'est fait chair" (not sure of the English translation...) And of course, what transforms the "verb" (ideas) into 'flesh' is the voice. One of the most damning judgements at the time was: "your ideas are not embodied" – i.e. you do not 'know' what you are saying ...)

Note 2 – (Note: After a digression on politics and the May 29 French referendum)... I'll close the digression by pointing out, nevertheless, that I consider Hillman's take on CJ Jung's notion of *anima* to be one of the most subtle and insightful psychological renderings of the mechanisms described as *subjectivity*, especially in the interplay between ideas and emotions, the interface between rational passions and manifestations of moods. The notion of *anima* informs and puts into question constructs such as "individuality" and "self", especially when these constructs are loaded with the value of truth: like in "finding one's true self", or acting according to true self... (Hillman: Anima – The Anatomy of a Personified Notion)

But let us return to Roy Hart's more straightforward militant claims that by activating, through the voice, the body's "biodrama" – its emotions, plots and characters - and thanks to what he called the "aural vision" that guided his work, he had reached a higher, or deeper, or more comprehensive (here one is again tempted to say "more objective") degree not only of self-knowledge, but of "control of self" ; this "control" being equated with the project of "transformation". An example he uses in the letter is the "potential for murder" : "Many actors only work on their technical capacity to wear a mask in order to hide the blood red substance which frightens them, but which, in my view, should nourish their performance. I believe it is necessary for the actor to contact in himself this capacity for murder." As you can imagine this claim has crucial implications, for instance for the type of **sounds** involved in the work, let alone for how his peers must have felt at these claims!

What Hart meant by "aural vision" is in my view linked to what I described in an 1984 article in Spring Journal as the "root metaphore" of his voice work, which is quite simply the notion of "singing". In a voice performance, you do not cry a cry, or scream a scream, you 'sing' it. This has to be heard metaphorically, although the singing is also literal, because acted out. Roy Hart's central operating or performative point - inherited to a great degree from his master Alfred Wolfsohn, states with deceptive simplicity (one that can sound almost mystical) : singing is the artistic transformation of sound. Very simple; yet, what idealism! Especially if you think of applying it to psychology or politics! Since Roy Hart's death in 1975, 30 years ago this year, the world has gone through enormous changes and the impact of what has been called the "end of ideologies", with the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, has made everyone very wary of idealisms. In the last 30 years there has been much revisioning, criticism, rejection, revivals of what different individuals consider to have been Roy Hart's legacy. For my part, I find his statements in this letter, once one has relativised the period's defiant "avant garde" prophetic tone, very moving and impressive in its ambitions and generosity. I also find it particularly relevant today: I think our times need a salutary injection of idealistic screaming. I shall return to this in a section entitled "Cri, crise, critique, crime", of particular importance for someone who is launching a "Voice Performance School".

Reply from Sonu Shamdasani

Email ven. 27/05/2005

Self and Soul. I consider the 'self' to be basically a soul-concept, and heavily laden with theological baggage, not least of which is dualism. One of my favourite essays is William James' 'Does consciousness exist?' where he writes that consciousness is "the name of the nonentity, and has no right to a place among first principles. Those who still cling to it are clinging to a mere echo, the faint rumour left behind by the disappearing 'soul' upon the air of philosophy." In terms of the status of the self as articulated in psychology, a critical issue here is the status of psychological language in terms of the general failure of psychology to constitute itself as science or universal discipline. I enclose my last attempt to articulate these issues. In the light of the failure of psychology to establish its concepts as a general ontology, each individual should be free to take up any terms they choose for their experience. In this sense, what I write out about in this piece in

terms of 'non-ontological language' use could have some connections to theatrical practice - one can animate whatever notions one chooses given that it is not as if there is a real set of notions lying somewhere else. This links what you are saying about artists being able to invoke whatever theories they like to inform their work. My own preference is based on my sense that hermeneutic systems, with their promise of enriching experience, end up impoverishing it. I prefer the richness of the language which already exists. Thus if one speaks of one's 'heart' instead of one's 'self' there is less of a tendency to objectify the notion and deny its metaphorical character. I spent years thinking my way into so many systems, and then even more years thinking my way out of them, preferring to wake up with less clutter, and less limitation on where my thought might go. There is a line in Nietzsche which goes something like 'Banish the inner world - there are too many will o'the wisps in it! Thought and sensation are enough for me.' The question of religion is a trickier. That a number of secular therapies have a soteriological function goes without saying, but I prefer to keep out of the evaluative discussion of therapies, etc. Also, historiographically, there has been a tendency to overplay the secularisation hypothesis - as to what extent what has gone by the name of religion has declined is a moot point.

2. Body. What to say? The Body is an abstract concept. This comes out clearly in Béhar's Whitmanesque poem, where one finds the somewhat jarring juxtaposition of the valorisation of immediate bodily authentic experience, with biomedical descriptions culled from an physiological text book, which couldn't be further from any direct experience. Historically speaking, that a reevaluation of the body was necessary after the sway of the promoters of the soul or self, goes without saying - and here again, Nietzsche's Zarathustra is the opus classicus. However this still remains within a theological and historical trajectory, which misses possibly the more important target: dualism. Perhaps one could say, if one has 'got rid' of the 'soul' one needs to get rid of the 'body' too? In Béhar's text, one sees the cult of authenticity switching from the soul to the body. Substitute soul for body and one could be in the realm of Christian mystical ecstasis.

3. Roy Hart's letter. He speaks here of the existence of a knowledge which one must be in possession of. But what is the status of this knowledge, and why does an actor or politician need it? In the face of this, one wants to celebrate the artifices of the Baroque. In terms of the body, etc, it seems that one of the services of science studies over the last few decades has been to call into question the objectivity traditionally ascribed to such knowledge, and there is good work in the anthropology of medicine which has been relativising the status of biomedicine. The basis of Roy Hart's claims to objectivity are not clear to me. That he might have obtained a significant self-transformation is one thing, but the claim that this gives skills that are transferrable to other spheres of activity is something else. One thing I am wary of is noetic claims of insight based on the attainment of particular states, and the claim that these should be binding on others.

"On Subjectivity"

Extracts and notes from

"Speculations on the subject, object and abject of voice performance"

By Enrique Pardo

a lecture presented at the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki

as part of a conference titled "Voice, sound and subjectivity"

Organized by Pentti Paavolainen of Finland's Theatre Academy, in collaboration with Sibelius Academy of Music and Pythagoras Institute for Music Research

Helsinki, Finland, June 6 to 8, 2005.

The invitation : Pentti Paavolainen

The main focus is in the multiple approaches on the phenomena of singing, speaking, producing sound, manipulating the sounds/voices, and all what follows to the notion of subject: whose sound, whose voice, what is present, what is absent etc. Partly with sophisticated theoretical discussion, partly with artistic/practical examples.

One day of the conference will be dedicated to spoken voice or "human sound". You as the "next generation" of the Roy Hart tradition, in the Pantheatre would be the key person especially to hear from, with your approach also to the psychic

.....

SUBJECTIVITY

The notion of subjectivity opens a monumental, massive, dizzying portico into the palaces of philosophy. The specific portico that has “subjectivity” written over it is possibly THE grand entrance into the fortresses of ontological thinking, where, in my baroque fantasy at least, daunting old philosophers spiral into abyssal discussions on the subject of the subject of the subjectivity of the subject’s subjection to subjectivity, etc. etc...

In the speculative manoeuvres I am about to undertake, subjectivity and my own position will be often changing sides, finding themselves at odds with each other, but sometimes in the same camp facing some common enemy. Subjectivity is a conceptual tool used to stir the subjects, objects, abjects, and projects of voice performance.

Also, when one stands in front of a construct such as subjectivity, one starts to see double as the concept splits before one’s very eyes for we tend to wear dualistic, oppositional spectacles in order to create, consider and think through such concepts. One cannot tackle subjectivity without its twin or Siamese brother appearing immediately: objectivity. Furthermore these constructs sometimes fuse or swallow each other, appearing as guest ghosts in each other’s domains or entrails. One hears that there is objectivity in the deepest subjectivity, though one has to ask what depth is, and where it is. Conversely, one of the main leitmotifs of today’s epistemology seems to be that so-called objective experimentation is influenced by the observer’s subjective gaze. One is constantly facing not one but two figures, a tandem of intimidating and feuding constructs. It remind me, again in my baroque fantasies, of the palaces around the Sforza castle in the centre of Milan with their sombre, massive, grave and heavy doorways, and the sculpted grotesque faces of aggressive old men glaring and shouting down at you from the overbearing decoration motives, clearly meant to intimidate and impress you. Once the threshold crossed one can of course very easily get lost, hypnotized, brain-washed, converted. But in the corridors, chambers and chapels of philosophical thinking, in the halls of mirrors, trap-doors, cul-de-sacs, ivory towers, cellars and attics, there is a trove of crucial challenges, cultural reflection, and artistic inspiration.

With this architectural fantasy I am giving away the plan of this presentation, somewhat labyrinthical, sometimes abyssal in its baroque meanderings, not a straightforward promenade, nor even an organized guided tour, but more like a visit to an archaeological site, or to the foundations of a laboratory in the making. As the title I proposed indicates I am taking the opportunity to **speculate** on some of the basic premises – subjects, objects, and abjects – of what I am calling “voice performance”.

Cards down

I will put my cards down from the start in relation to the position I tend to take towards the notion of “subjectivity”, and how I use it to further the points I want to make. I argue and work from a position which is rather **contrary** to the esthetical and ethical implications of subjectivity, (((contrary and not opposed))) ...as this concept has been called upon to rule much of **the justification for acting** in theatre in the 20th century. This is a militant artistic biased point of view.

When I say that subjectivity “has been called upon to rule much of the justification for acting in theatre in the 20th century” I am pointing to the question (or call it the “subject”) of **identity and identification** in creating a psychological entity, singular and unified, and therefore “un-divided”. This “undivided entity” is the so called individual. Subjectivity becomes the animating singular principle of the individual, as he or she appears on stage, mostly within a naturalistic-realistic world view. Acting

becomes the identification interface between at least 2 subjects: the actor and the character. Theatre is understood as a dialogue of subjectivities. I am rephrasing in a rather lapidary manner the definitions of what we tend to call “traditional theatre”.

Kantor and Castellucci

Two notes on this. The first address two artists for whom I have enormous respect and admiration, maybe the greatest I have seen in theatre: the late Tadeuz Kantor and Romeo Castellucci. Both, like many other recent and contemporary theatre artists, made moves which are also “contrary” to traditional “identity theatre” and therefore to the opening afforded to acting, or one could say, to acting as the interplay and display of subjectivities by the actors on stage. Kantor said as much: “I am looking for a theatre without acting”. Castellucci does everything he can not to have actors acting in his performances – transforming them often, not unlike Kantor, into semaphoric token figures, ghosts of a kind, underworldly shades. I mention Kantor and Castellucci because I feel in my work I go along with them in their reactions to the value of “subjectivity acting”, hunting for the same artistic and philosophical treasure, but while moving with them, I feel I am looking in a different direction, as if though I want, like them, to “**objectify emotion**” but with the full **presence** of the actor, or rather, with all the levels of presence an actor can constellate. This presence, or ‘presences’ represent something fundamental for me, and I feel like using here a philosophical enormity like “dasein”, the dreamer caught, and therefore **present** in the dream. Kantor of course was on stage, very present in his performances; this factor played an enormous part in the fascination his performances provoked. In the context of this conference I would add that that presence represents what I would call “the voice”.

“The Narcissism of Subjectivity”

I saw Romeo Castellucci's “Gilgamesh” in 1990 and was able to invite him to Pantheatre's 1991 Myth and Theatre Festival on Dionysus. (1st to France! 5 times at the Avignon Festival !) Let me quote from the closing section of an article I wrote on his work. The section is titled “**The Narcissism of Subjectivity**”. In the section leading up to this extract I analysed some of the mechanisms of image-making in Castellucci's performances and their relationship to narrative in what I called a “mythographic approach to theatre”.

The Narcissism of Subjectivity

“The second fulcrum of resistance to (Castellucci's) mythographic approach to theatre comes from one of the most firmly entrenched **humanistic paradigms** in modern traditions in theatre, art and psychotherapy, what I will call **the narcissism of subjectivity**. It implies that the ultimate value in a performance is **inside the performer**; that the performer, as human **subject**, is the subject and object of the performance, the embodiment of fiction. Theatre, ideas, characters, plots, images, emotions are funneled through the subject and re-emerge as re-lived, re-presented, per-formed subjective expression. The key words in this subjective implosion are “**identity**” and “**expression**”. Identification implies the introspective conjunction of subjects: finding the character (the literary subject) in one's self. This process of identification is considered to be the core of performed fiction, with its logical corollary: self-expression. The obvious danger in this therapeutic drift, under the protection of that massive contemporary totem called “the self”, is that personal catharsis swallows all meaning. What is performed is not **so much meaning but ‘meaningfulness’**: a display of personal sensitivity. Art becomes a humanistic personal achievement, linked to psychological concepts such as *individuation*. The performer is considered the depository, the embodiment of values worth displaying: **a higher achiever**. It is this subjectivity that we are actually being called to contemplate in the performance, not the ideas, not the myth, not what I would call the objective image. What comes across is the performer as:

a/ the depository of beauty: perfected bodies, amazing voices - each with his or her own (usually fundamentalist) esthetic canons.

b/ the depository of intelligence and cultured sensitivity. I have been heard to say that “I hate ‘intelligent’ actors”, because they let me see that they know their text beforehand, and that they are ‘giving me the book’, handing down an interpretation, delivering a lesson in how things should be done, said, and felt. Theatre turns into didactics; there is no sense of imaginal adventure. I, as spectator, am not invited to imagine, to share in the dreaming, the risk, and the discovery. I ingest. The performer hands down a form, per-forms for me. I would go as far as to say that there is a usurpation of imagination, and that this ‘subjecting’ of culture to personally lived “high art” is one of the main reasons why people turn away from theatre and prefer to stay home and read the play (or watch TV)

c/ most important of all, the performer as **the depository of emotion**, within a humanistic definition of emotion as something not only human, but actually inside humans (“my emotions”); emotion as confined to subjects, to identities. ... In Castellucci’s work the performers seem to almost push you away from emotional identification - they certainly do not call pathos towards them selves. They can appear to be cut off from emotional involvement - mechanized even. I see this as an aggressive bias against the narcissism of subjectivity, as Castellucci’s way of going at the mythical dimensions of image. ...

The question goes well beyond a matter of excellence and craft, where, as a performer, I refine and groom my body as my working tool. It transposes a humanistic, self-centered model to theatre, with implications of spiritual progress (finding and being true to one’s self) and of personal therapy. In this sense Castellucci’s work is a radical cure, bringing us back to an imaginal dimension of theatre (he often calls it “pre-tragic”), where bodies, voices, musics, objects (and in my case, texts) are all elements in the reality of imagination. Theatre as an underworld democracy of objectified images.”

End of quote

.....

What is psychology? (note, aside)

The second note or card that I wish to put down concerning the take on subjectivity I am proposing, addresses **psychology** and what is understood by psychology – a term most contemporary artists tend to be allergic to, and to which they oppose often imagistic and musical theatre. This is something I do not necessarily go along with, mainly because I fear the baby is being thrown out with the water, and that all forms of language are identified with attitudes that are psychological in a reductive way, which is didactic, pedantic, academic. Possibly this reflects the presumptuous superiority of what we have seen in too much of psychological talk, the claims of its “talking cure” and its reductive haughty case-history literature. I think too often the logos of Psyche has been thrown away in this move, the logos of psyche as it can express itself in what I would call **language-voice**. I detect in what most artists call psychology what I would call “the dramaturgy of subjectivity”, and the enshrinement and domination of which I spoke earlier when I said that subjectivity “has been called upon to rule much of the **justification for acting** in theatre in the 20th century.” What is this psychology? To put it bluntly, it is the literal and literary plots that have come out of Freudianism. I say “Freudianism” not to necessarily blemish Freud himself – though a massive critique is on its way from contemporary historians, amongst them Sonu Shamdasani whom I will introduce later. Freudianism leads to living-room subjectivity, to inter-personal stories that claim the foundation of personality in family plots, in the dialogic mechanisms of Mummy and Daddy, in a humanistic reduction of the dimensions for instance of the Oedipus myth. Subjectivity is bound close to biography, and biography to the family myth, often to the child cult, and to an affordable, controllable small cast of cultural figures. **Film**, not to mention television, has made this its daily bread. My opinion is that film has made theatre a favour by eloping with *Lady Subjectivity*; film deals so much better with her and with her need for close-up biographical revelations, moments of ‘truth’, of

inarticulate feeling and image lulled by musical affect, and all this in the intimate anonymity of collective black-rooms, with the thrill of post-freudianist gossip. Film and subjectivity are an unbeatable couple; theatre can get on with other things.

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PHILOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS

Before entering more specific and practical aspects, and without wanting to involve us in the philosophical history of subjectivity, there are two schools of thought, or rather specific figures within those two schools that I want to mention. The first ones refer to contemporary philology and hermeneutics, and to the work of Peter Szondi and Jean Bollack, whose definitions tend to abstract subjectivity and make it a principle of hermeneutics in ways that are not unlike some of my proposals here, and in particular when working with texts, and what I would call the voice of texts. Szondi and Bollack propose that there is subjectivity in a text (one must keep in mind that they speak from within the fields of philology and hermeneutics), the moment “there is something to interpret”, that is, the moment there is a voice to be heard (or to be deciphered) in the text itself. French philologist Denis Thouard, in speaking of Szondi’s and Bollack’s points of view and what is known today as the school of critical hermeneutics (*herméneutique critique*) speaks of the subjectivity of the text itself the moment it have been written, as separate from the standard hermeneutic references, especially of author and context. He puts it this way: “Autant un texte est interpretable, autant il interprète lui-même, autant il a de subjectivité”: “To the degree to which a text is liable to interpretation (or offers a potential for interpretation), to that same degree it is itself the interpreter, and has subjectivity” (my translation). I bring these thinkers in because of the way *subjectivity* is depersonalized, decontextualized, or even “deterritorialized”, to invoke Gilles Deleuze’s much used aphorism of particular relevance to the exploration of the voice of texts and its place in choreographic theatre. In choreographic theatre, texts are as it were invited into theatre with no strings attached, especially the strings that link them to ‘the book’, to authorial and cultural references; texts are in a sense voided of their *genetic* references, and invited to speak in alien territories, in new and foreign contexts, contexts or territories that do not bow to the text’s authorities, (contexts that are not as it were ‘colonised’ by the text, or built on the texts specifications), but contexts in which a “dance of ideas” can take place, a dance between text and context, where the text’s “other” subjectivities can find their voices.

I said texts are “voided” – of course this is impossible; in fact it is not desirable. If as a spectator I know the actor is speaking a text by Sarah Kane, for instance, Sarah Kane and her ghosts will be present in the fantasy and cultural contexts we as spectators associate with her. My point is precisely that they are there as ghosts, as shadows, as underworld figures, and not as the main bodies of fiction.

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GENIUS (notes)

When deciding about the content of Pantheatre’s new flyer, I was quite adamant that the main declaration, as it were, had to include the word GENIUS. Here is the phrase describing PANTHEATRE ACTS Voice Performance School:

Voice performance training involves a dynamic blend of technical finesse and expressive risk.

It also seeks the affirmation of **personal genius** - character and musicality - and a commitment to the relevance of what one has to voice,

be it in speech, song, scream, silence, image or movement – or their synthesis in **choreographic theatre**.

You can imagine the discussions: **a school for genius!** YES, but lets qualify the word “genius” – I did not mean outstanding exceptional beings à la Einstein or Mozart (though great if they come work with us!) == “Native intellectual power of an exalted type” where you get the connotations of inborn exceptionality.

It gets closer when it is defined in terms of “instinctive and extraordinary ability, skill, wit, intelligence, intuition, etc.” I meant genius as in “original, personal creative factor”.

In terms of schooling – one can associate *genius* with ingenious and with engineer. (and “ingenuous” i.e. *ingénue* – inborn, free-born, not slave... and hence the pejorative opposite of “guileless” = artlessly innocent, or “natural”) (The French call “Le Génie” the army division of corps of Engineers, trained in engineering work, build bridges in one hour, setting up landing ports, airports, etc...) Their job is to be ingenious about engineering: the choice of materials, the intelligence and applicability of concepts, a great capacity for improvisation and *ad hoc* invention, for construction and composition. I like the idea of a school where you “engineer you genius” = because it calls in a quality of sagacity for dramaturgy, how to adapt, give value, even exploit your genius, how to “set it up”.

With the notion of genius we also pass over into the domain of myth, where we meet the figures said to construct the subject and manage its destiny. You could say “the figures who engineer subjectivity”.

OED Genius: “With reference to classical pagan belief: The tutelary god or attendant spirit allotted to every person at his birth, to govern his fortunes and determine his character, and finally to conduct him out of the world.”

In a polytheistic logic (a “mytho-logic”) all the Gods and Goddesses have some form of bearing on the subject, some Gods appear close and active, for or against, others are more distant and uninvolved; some never cross our paths and might go totally unknown. There are Gods and modes of behaviour we never get to know. Mythological fantasy personifies these equations into a figure called *genius*. The genius of myth is to allow us to relate to a broad theological picture, and to have a mytho-poetical understanding of our make-up, or more precisely, of how a voice is made and made to sound through a human being, as the potential subject becomes a person – a *per-sona*, a “through sound”, how the original sound becomes voice, how a person acquires a voice.

The etymological root of “genius” links it with *genus* and “generation”, i.e. with creation and creativity. It also links genius with “genes”, with the idea of conception and concept, and with the individual *genius* ADN codes – or as James Hillman would put it with the “The Soul’s Code: In Search of Character and Calling”.

Interestingly, *genius* is linked with appetite; it is certainly a question of individual or individualized taste, (what we taste like!) I see also genius as ambition (historically it is linked with festivities to propitiate the *genius*, to make offerings to it, to dedicate the performance to it.) Genius implies ambition, maybe even greed, and a determination to state, to have a voice.

Posit: “**your voice is your genius**” or maybe better “**your genius is your voice**” - but voice has to be understood here in a very broad-minded way, not only referring to the voice you are using, but more, in Giorgio Agamben’s sense to which we will come presently, to the voice **in** what you are saying.... That is why the statement on the leaflet says that “voice performance” requires

“a commitment to the relevance of what one has to voice be it in speech, song, scream, silence, image or movement – or their synthesis in **choreographic theatre**.”

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Definitions of the Voice

The genius of the concept of the “8 octave voice” developed by Wolfsohn and Hart is that it is both metaphorical or even allegorical (8 octaves “embodying” the full span of human expression, as it were), and literal – their vocal work was about “extended ranges”, literally aiming at those 8 octaves. Nevertheless, the fixation on the physical voice can, as it were, literalize the literality, and generate forms of “**voice idolatry**” that do not remind themselves that the voice is a medium, a metaphore, an instrument for expression and speech. It is for this reason, obviously, that both Wolfsohn and Hart insisted on the philosophical implications of their work, what Hart called the “aural vision”, and developed their own ethics of the voice and of singing. I shall return to this.

At the other end of the philosophical spectrum, we must mention the late Jacques Derrida’s 1973 landmark book, in many ways the emblematic foundation of post-modernity: “**La Voix et le Phénomène**” (“Voice and Phenomenon” - although translated into English generally as “Speech and Phenomena”). To summarize it with a bias towards its relevance in this conference on “Voice, sound and subjectivity”, one could say that Derrida deals with the role that the voice plays in the conveyance of language and in the structure of thinking itself. He uses the voice as a philosophical category, as a metaphore of transitional territoriality, as the conceptual filter in a given place and time through which language (including concepts like communication and expression) has to pass in order to materialize itself and exist as a voice and constitute itself as a body of thought. Derrida does not refer to the voice as a literal phenomenon – there hardly is any mention of physiology or biology in his book, and even the concept (the “construct”) of body is “deconstructed” as one more category of thought.

In line with Derrida’s philosophical speculations, here is a concise and wonderfully elegant definition of the voice, by contemporary Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (I have it in French, from a French journal): “**La recherche de la voix dans le langage, c’est cela la pensée**” (The search for the voice in, inside language, that is what thinking is all about” In English you would probably bring in the word “mind”). Giorgio Agamben, in *La Fine del Pensiero*, Le Nouveau Commerce, n° 53-54, Paris, 1982, quoted in Jean-Luc Nancy, *A l’écoute*, n° 45, Editions Galilée, Paris 2002.

My particular stand, research and pedagogy calls on the voice within the reality of the imagination, within **image-making**, or if we want to be more specific and technical, within the concept and strategies of **choreographic theatre**. It calls on the voice literally, using the voice as sound, including the 8 octave ambition, the voice as music, and the voice as conveyor of words and loquacity. But the main use of the idea of voice is **metaphorical** and in line with a definition such as Agamben’s: the voice as thinking, **the voice as the mind of image**, be it reasonable mind or wild mind. This is, again, what is implied in the phrase that speaks of

“... a commitment to the relevance of what one has to voice, be it in speech, song, scream, silence, image or movement – or their synthesis in **choreographic theatre**.”

It expresses clearly that we are not necessarily and only talking of the literal, physiological voice.

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The Voice / The Cry / Roy Hart

A series of extracts quoted from Roy Hart letter of 1973 on Biodrame (see P.10), followed by notes by Enrique Pardo

For the full text of the letter and of Biodrame see Paul Silber's archives <http://www.roy-hart.com/pauls.htm>

Q1 “Most so-called avant-garde theatres, operas, etc.. are beginning to recognize the intrinsic significance of what is called the cry: they no longer hear it as mere noise, but as having its own philosophical implications, not only for the evolution of musical theatre, but for people who sing, play, speak, that is to say for the human race.”

EP: The importance of the artist's subjectivity – exploration of the extremes dimensions of life, and its implications, especially of **violence**. Latter on: “attack”. Transformation through expression: voicing as a means of conquering and transformation.

Q2 “Like all great works of art, these three works deal with the transformation of Man. This transformation has a special significance to you and us, since it reflects the need to understand the devastations of two world wars, and possibly even more significantly the apparently complete breakdown which is expressed both on the private scene between men and women, and on the political scene by hijackings, guerilla warfare and general street violence.”

EP: The introduction of the man/woman dynamic (“complete breakdown”!) – would take us too far away from our subject. Note the importance of the couple mechanisms in Roy Hart's teaching dynamics (guru in this sense). How Gender Studies and Gay Studies have addressed these questions in the past 30 years.

Q3 “Biodrame” in which he (Serge Béhar) has expressed in theatrical terms the central thesis of that which led us to study the cry. The cry as expressed by dying soldiers, babies, human beings in distress, and also manifest in outbursts of joie de vivre. This means that man, as an individual, is the root of society. As a Doctor, Béhar has understood that the political body expresses very clearly the biological body; and without a deep understanding of the Inside man, both physically and spiritually, no actor or politician can express so-called objective ideas, except as a projection of this lack of internal knowledge. “

EP: Today this is very polemical in its claims (and maybe dated): “deep understanding of the Inside man... “, in line with a certain ideology of artistry of the 20th c. that implied two claims: first, that artists are visionary prophets who can change society. Second that if you change your self you are changing the world. Hugely debatable today – but my admiration for Roy Hart's ambition and generosity remain.

Q4 “...this solo literally expresses vocally, through a longstanding organic process of integration, the relationship between body control and vocal control, in other words self-control.”

EP: One of the questions here is the relationship between the notion of “self-control” and artistry – in other words “what is being voiced?” The question would be: is “self-control” the subject? I write on this evaluation of subjectivity and on the actor as subject, as exemplar (various recent articles.)

In Roy Hart Theatre both men and women push their voices beyond bass and soprano in search of the human voice, as opposed to the specialised voice.

EP: This is the more classic understanding of the work of the Roy Hart Theatre and of the eight octave voice.

Q5 “Most actors and singers wear a mask, and their artificial acting only consists in hearing themselves speak a text which they have not digested.”

EP: Roy Hart's very important use of the concept of EMBODYMENT. Questions like: can you “give body” to the ideas you entertain? Implied: can you live up to them? Have you “worked them through” your body? Have you done in your psyche and body the revolution you are preaching? Etc. This implies a visit to the psychological forces at play in order to achieve “giving them voice”. The concepts of “ingesting” and “digesting”...

Q6 “We consider singing as the highest form of liberation of arterial circulation.”

“... and slowly discovering consciousness. It is not enough to cry with the pack, in the street, at the theatre: it is necessary to know why one is crying.”

“conventional actors and singers did not dare to attempt discovering their unconscious. I studied psychology as an actor. Now I believe Roy Hart Theatre has truly outgrown psychodrama, whilst many avant-garde theatres are just beginning to discover it. Many actors only work on their technical capacity to wear a mask in order to hide the blood red substance which frightens them, but which, in my view, should nourish their performance. I believe it is necessary for the actor to contact in himself this capacity for murder...”

“...real biological revolution which gave body to my need for communion with another individual...”

EP: The key word here is “liberation”: the link between subjectivity and philosophies of emancipation, especially of personal, “self” emancipation. Emancipation from *anthropos* drawbacks (biological archaisms). Roy Hart’s proposal imply transformation – he claimed them to be different for instance from Janov’s Primal Scream, which are release philosophies. The difference is subtle: embodiment through singing as a musical discipline (the musical control of the scream.) Expression with musical control – akin to the notion of “self control”. The marked difference between the 60s and 70s “emancipation philosophies” (and liberation politics) and current **tragic** philosophies (certainly in my and Pantheatre’s work.)

Q7 “the cry is not an end in itself but a means, “*rivé sur mes songes*”, a sublime hallucination, and the cry loses its significance if this aural vision is allowed to die.”

EP: This raises the link between singing and sublimation. This is a Artaud-like statement. Linked also the the Festival’s exploration of the importance and the impact of Protestantism in the link between singing and sublimation and in the value given to the voice (as opposed to visual image.) Jewish too.

Q8 “...as all great works of art, it is about transformation. Let me repeat that this transformation requires an immense control of the body which must be attacked to overcome it...”

Quote from a letter to Sonu Shamdasani:

“What Hart meant by “aural vision” is in my view linked to what I described in an 1984 article in Spring Journal as the “root metaphore” of his voice work, which is quite simply the notion of “singing”. In a voice performance, you do not cry a cry, or scream a scream, you ‘sing’ it. This has to be heard metaphorically, although the singing is also literal, because acted out. Roy Hart’s central operating or performative point - inherited to a great degree from his master Alfred Wolfsohn, states with deceptive simplicity (one that can sound almost esoteric) : singing is the artistic transformation of sound. Very simple; yet, what idealism! Especially if you think of applying it to psychology or politics! Since Roy Hart’s death in 1975, 30 years ago this year, the world has gone through enormous changes and the impact of what has been called the “end of ideologies”, with the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, has made everyone very wary of idealisms. In the last 30 years there has been much revisioning, criticism, rejection, and revivals of what different individuals consider to have been Roy Hart’s legacy. For my part, I find his statements in this letter, once one has relativised the period’s defiant “avant garde” prophetic tone, very moving and challenging in its ambitions and generosity. I also find it particularly relevant today: I think our times need a salutary injection of idealistic screaming. I shall return to this in a section entitled “Cri, crise, critique, crime”, of particular importance for someone who is launching a “Voice Performance School”.”

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THE VOICE OF TRAGEDY

(Enrique Pardo. Extracts from the Helsinki lecture, 2004)

Furthermore, and as far as I am concerned, the main performing framework within which the voice speaks its mind is the model of **tragedy** (including its satyric counterpart). Tragedy is a conception of existence where there is little or no room for human victory, certainly not over death, but where, nevertheless, there is one crucial element of freedom: the voice. The voice is free, free to think, free to express, free to speak its mind, be it in a litany of lamentations, in a cry of despair or in an articulated discourse of defiance. The heroes and protagonists of tragedy, its subjects, are made to submit to the overwhelming power exerted by the forces of destiny personified by the Gods; they are ‘subjected’. Tragic heroes have little or no impact on the course of reality, little or no liberating power, except in the ideas and feelings that they *voice*. Tragedy subjects them as physical (and

grammatical) subjects, turns them into *objects* of destiny, but in doing so challenges them, and us, to voice our deepest forms of '*subjectivity*'.

The vision of subjectivity that prevails especially in actors' training, tends to be one that is filtered through what I would describe as ego-centered (or possibly 'self'-centered), and mostly rose-tinted glasses (spectacles) – “rose-tinted” because often tinged with a sentimental and sometimes inflated sense of self importance. Subjectivity tends to be a kind of preciously protected secret garden, the ultimate pristine preserve of private reasons, an inner refuge where the seal of 'individuality' is kept, the ontological sanctuary that holds the secret to a self-justifying uniqueness. I am not saying that each one of us is not unique, and I would agree that uniqueness is the point of subjectivity.

If one puts the tragic spectacles that I am proposing, subjectivity becomes something like the capacity and manner in which one constitutes oneself as a subject in tragic subjection, the way one realizes (realizes and voices I would add here) one's inherent subject-hood in the confrontation with those external referents called Gods. The more subjectivity, i.e. capacity to be subjected, the more subject can be created as it were. To take a substantial speculative leap I would add: “the more Gods there is, the more subject there can be, the greater the subjectivity, the more voice there can be.”

This is of course not the usual take on *subjectivity* nor the usual way of defining it. It leads to speculative definitions that are intentionally polemical, militant and therefore, to some degree, intentionally 'contrary', opposed to its predominant contemporary use. It is a move that addresses theatre (but not only) and in particular the way the voice is conceived of in theatre – you could say: the dominant myths of the voice. Such a tack on subjectivity has critical implications for the training of actors, mainly in terms of the mechanisms of inspiration, the approach to interpretation, and the relationship to emotions. I cannot develop all of these aspects in this one lecture but will try and point at some of them.

SUBJECT, SUBJECTION, SUBJECTIVITY

Subjection implies dependence, and even forms of enslavement; it points to enforced subjugation, to domination; to be subjected is to relinquishing freedom and power, and – and here comes one of the crucial words in the move I want to make : the relinquishing of authority. Now, if one speaks of authority in theatre, one of the main implications is the question of 'authorship': who has the authorial power in the hierarchies of theatre? Or, to enlarge the scope and make things more explicit: who has the authorial power in the hierarchies in “image making”? Who are the authorities of and in image? Where is the source and seat of this authority, of authorship, especially in the actor, or rather **for** the actor? Our 20th century cultural and political sensitivity sees *subjection* mainly as a form of invasion, as an intrusion, an external imposition, possibly even as a form of rape – the rape of the inviolable sanctuary of our identity and dignity, in other words of that which constitutes us a subjects – certainly political subjects. Subjection means vassality: a loss of freedom. It is opposed to the chart of 'human rights' – or call them here, rather, “humanistic rights” - if one thinks of humanism as putting the human being at the centre of the world, or at least at the centre of the scale of values. But then, of course, the mechanisms of tragedy cannot be described as *humanistic*, and anyway, what would be the point of brandishing a chart of humanistic rights when facing the Gods? There is a point, of course, and that is: the voice: the actor as subject **to** tragedy tell us, voices what “Facing the Gods” implies and feels like. The actor 'voices' the human condition. I qualified specifically “the actor as subject **to** tragedy”, since he is not in this view the subject **of** tragedy, the existential and grammatical subject, the 'first person' originating and in control of action. He is subject to: he is subjected.

.....

Subjectivity, seen through tragic lenses, would be something like the personal grit and intelligence, the character, or tragic genius that raises with subjection, with the way in which we, as subjects, face and react to subjection and to the realization that to be a subject is, by definition (or at least by

mythological definition) to be subjected. This is a good moment to remind us of the etymology of *subject*, *subjectivity*, *subjection*. *Sub jectare*, *sous jeter* in French, *sotto gettare* in Italian: literally “to throw under”, “to cast below”. The problem with this over and under scheme is of course that if the subject is seen as being below, as standing under and “understanding”, its position can be interpreted in two opposite ways:

In a heroic understanding, which we could call the Atlas or Herakles mode, the subject is underneath holding up the world. The subject is the source, support and foundation, the will, the muscle that lifts and holds up the reality of meaning. Presumably without Atlas or Herakles, the humanistic enterprise, the conception of the world which places man as its centre, would crash and shatter. In this type of epic, heroic story, the Gods are usually not around - or no longer exist. In mythology they are having a party in Ethiopia, and they do not look at all concerned. It is even probable that, maybe with the exception of Hera, they have all forgotten about Atlas, Herakles, and the likes of Prometheus, mostly titanic heroes who are going to lay the foundations of the kind of humanistic fantasies that will lead mankind to forget or deny their existence. Heroic vocal modes tend to be anticipatory, life-full, vitalistic, full of enterprise and idealism, optimistic, and, of course, “up-lifting” – how could it be otherwise? Interestingly, the Spanish give *subjection* a twist; *sujetar*, as in *mantener sujeto* (to hold as a subject), which means: “to hold so that the subject does not collapse, fall or fly off” !

In the tragic mode, on the other hand, the subject has been ‘thrown’ underneath. Maybe he or she is simply “hanging under”, holding on for his life, and, in the precarious danger and transience of his position, realizing where he is, where he has been ‘landed’, and what it all means - what is it that he is hanging on to, or what is it that is, as it where, ‘flying off’ with him. Notice the emphasis I make constantly on myth-like external factors. During this whole process, our subject is, of course, vociferously letting us know, (and the Gods - if they are within reach), what he thinks and feels about it all. These imaged descriptions may help comprehend something of the way in which I approach the voice in choreographic theatre. I tend to say that: **“If you find your place, you will find your voice”**. In other words, “if you understand your position, you will know what to voice”. The practical implications are physical, vocal and philosophical, which is the point of choreographic theatre. The dictum or aphorism ““If you find your place, you will find your voice” also plays on a notion that we hear constantly in vocal work: the question and practice of “placing your voice”. I am once again here emphasizing the external factors, the understanding, as opposed to self-instrumental practices, necessary as they are in training, because of the danger that self-instrumental practices become self-centered and self-expressive philosophies, and do not tune us as responders to the world. For me it is also a question of political response-ability.

The tragic mode that I seem to be promoting tends to be reflective, even in its violence. It is *post-factum* and therefore usually late - as when I tell actors ***never to come in on cue***: “delay reaction, so that it includes some realization, a time for Echo; so that it is not just percussion but waits for re-percussion”. This tragic mode tends to include the kind of pessimism that makes us love (and regret) life all the more, and, like its Athenian original model, it is intrinsically ‘tragi-comically’ married to the satyric mode and to the necessity of thinking and feasting through humour and laughter.

.....

This ‘subjecting’ or subjectivity is of course far from being always passive, accepting or resignation. It is a fighting one and includes rebellion, refusal, invective, as we know from the passionate tirades and outbursts of tragedy, but it is clearly mined and hollowed by the realisation of failure, of a mortality that can achieve no literal victory. It has only the voice and the words, the mind that can articulate higher ideals, and the desire to implement these ideals, in spite of it all, in this world.

.....

Subjectivity carries the tragic understanding that rises from a particular destiny; it has its own ways of acting and reacting from a position of subjection, or sub-mission, accepted or not. Sub-mission implies a lower, perhaps deeper 'mission', one below or underneath the protagonistic, heroic stand on the stage of the world. This take on "subjectivity" gives it a particular twist; to use an old English meaning to the word, it 'wrongs' subjectivity away from the precious and often self-righteous sense of intimate and unique identity. It gives it a bitter twang or "wrang", as well as a wry bent direction that curves our complaints, and our screams, back towards us in the classic whiplash that happens over and over in tragedies, when the sentimental and innocent complaint of the hero-subject boomerangs back on him.

BIODRAME (Very rough English translation)

Entrance on the stage

I advance

In the apparent serenity
before the acting of my body
and of my voice

my light walk

my head ringing with the music

of a thousand little aggressions

my eyes wounded by the light

spotlights like suns

my ears giddy

with the confused murmuring

of a sea

of whispers,

I question myself

my muscles contract

in dispersed ranks

without haste

life turns

nonchalant

vegetative rhythm

of cells organising their existence

banal anabolism

daily catabolism

cold divisions of nuclei and of protoplasm

daily marshes

of the ages

mires of lymph

meres asleep

flux

of slow blood

mingling

to its flux

corpses of globules

treasures of rubbish

and records of life

in my mysteries

as yet unexplored

still calm and quiet.

II

BIRTH OF ACTING

Then I discover

a sly agitation

of organs bound to anomaly

from my viscera

springs

a blood heavy

with carbon monoxide

but upstream

the clear blood

gorged with oxygen

was singing its joy

its old story.

So that's what it was

new blood faded blood

and already the inequality

of viscera poor or cosy

small or big

Nobles or peasants

of highly qualified circumvolutions

settled in their mandarin

and lower

the kidney reduced to the role of filter

contrasts

viscera below

viscera above

playing to complement each other

on both sides of the waist

playing battle as brothers

the accelerated heart

precipitates my shortened

breathing
which oppresses me
at the deepest of myself
it is the acting of confrontation
a whole theatre
of irresistible movement
of contradiction
of simulated agreement of diffident actors
I have come to play my body.

III

ENTERING THE LISTS

Now that the acting has begun
I hear my voice saying the text
the timbre of my voice
of the cords and of the oboes
generators of sounds
of grunts
of a world of music
I shout
I feel beating in me
my heart
my sex
palpitations
erections
gigantic
cavernous sinuses
surging
projection of sperm
or of words
compact like freestones
giving my battle.
I move my hands
my arms
heavy with dreams
and with memory
brain lungs
humble or bourgeois

all reduced
to dependence on their arterial wet nurses
I lift up my head
crowded with labyrinths
or tortuous circulation
love hate
the death of my dead loves
close by, there
behind the door
maybe at the foot of this step
of the setting
of this spiral staircase
emerged since when

ghost of the mists
for the soaring
of my body.

IV

ACTING

The interference
the least perception
a noise
a secretion of a chemical mediator
adrenaline
serotonine
will make me shout
beyond my strength
beyond my frontiers
of my back
will make me laugh
showing the whole of my teeth
like a neighing horse
and one will say
schizophrenia
beautiful label
which they will stick
on the body that stands here
on the body of me
padded with
oscillatory aspirations
of beaming actor
of incantatory realities
of regained illusions.

Theatre science of my body
and of his reptations
hidden underground
as I am walking on stage
my mind monopolized by the text
by my gestures
and the timbre of my voice
soar high shrieks
spurt out of each of my cells
to each one
of their transformations
to each one of their infinitesimal mechanisms
of oxydo-reduction

love
and rage
born out of my cells
come out of the dendrites
of my neurones
and suddenly
my body

unveils up to the most infinitesimal
secret
of my biology
of my intimate existence.

V

LIBERATION

I do not want to be a prisoner any longer
out of my shell
I dash towards the voices
coming from the other prisoners
in front of me.
Brother in misery
and in glory
I come towards you
hugging with both arms
embracing life
I shout my remorse
and I bite
the flesh of your body
to solder it
to mine
your eyes are the loop-holes
of your fortress
of your secret theatre
thou and I
alone
were made to mingle
one to the other
in the unfathomable union
of the fascination
I have been alone
for too many nights
rehearsing my gestures
tonight
I throw them at your face.

Your silence
your distance
your indifference
is answered by

my own unique shout for thou only
thou and I we are several
giving each other
a performance
through the mirror
of the apostles of life
of the body
of laughter
and of tears
of love

and of death
which roam about the world

seeds
happy
of embraces
of intersection
for the imprint
which I will stamp on thee
and which thou will leave on me.
Liberated from my body
I perform thy image to thee
thou perform my mirage to me
we are together

V I

C R E A T I O N

What I shout
is love
not the struggle for life
love
not the bite of destruction

and of death
but the aggression
of newly arisen facts
of the music
of our bodies
and of our voices.

From our hands that are coming closer
to the point of nearly touching each other springs
the fire
of creation
of theatre
of solemn feast
the carnal pleasure
of tracing
new tracks
so that the action
desperate
with anguish and ecstasy
and tears
and smiles
may proceed without bombast
down with masks, with mirages
we are playing
with our bare hands
the shapers of our clay
to transfigure
the images
which we reflect to each other.

VII
AFTERWORDS

For thou and I
I have come out of myself
small dot
in suspension
on the surface
of the globe
indifferent
to the extinguished lights
to the end of the embraces
and of the spasms
and of the orgasms

I
actor of my volitions
I have come out of myself
with my body
under my arm
to perform life
without mask
with my bare hands
my feet bogged down
in the earth
my eyes rivetted on my dreams,
I have spent my time
ousting my life
forcing it out of its hiding place.

My aggressed body
before meeting
dust again
stealthily
propelled me towards surpassed frontiers