

Chapter 3

A reflexive theory on dramaturgy

Eugenio Barba

Analysis of an Aesthetic Hierarchy

In 2010, Eugenio Barba published a seminal book¹: *On directing and dramaturgy*. It is a retrospective manifestation of a lifelong occupation with theatre. This book is a rare and important example of a contemporary reflective theory on dramaturgy, and as such, a vital work to observe and analyse. My aim is to show how Eugenio Barba constructs an art-system based exhaustive reflective theory of dramaturgy. Furthermore, it provides me with an exemplary object that will allow an enquiry of how an aesthetic hierarchy is constructed, how it functions, and why it is of such central importance for understanding dramaturgy.

Reflexive theory (systematic)

As an important preamble, I would like to make a couple of remarks to the distinction between *scientific* and *reflexive* theory in the terminology of the systems theoretical dramaturgy. The book we are about to analyze is written by a man of many talents. He is both a scholar and an artist. In order to appreciate the work we need to identify its status. The book is not presented as a scientific paper or a dissertation; it is an artist's attempt to describe central elements in the artistic processes in an extraordinary kind of theatre. The book is an art-system *intern* reflection on how to conceptualize dramaturgy. It is not a scientific paper with footnotes, exact references and clearly stated hypothesis. It is a reflexion of the aesthetic hierarchy at work in the rehearsals and performances. Such books are rare, and it is even rarer that they present a coherent theory on dramaturgy that allows the reader to discover "logic" in the artistic processes. Only few artists combine scientific practises with their art, and even fewer write about it. Eugenio Barba (1936) has received

¹ Barba, Eugenio (2010): *On directing and dramaturgy. Burning the house*. Routledge, London, and New York.

several doctorates (honoris causae), at the University of Aarhus as well, and his research in modern theatre world wide, is indeed impressive and innovative. This is the first main reason for choosing Eugenio Barba's book.

Within a collective and performative art form as theatre the *reflective* theory can cover a wide range of issues. How is the work of art supposed to communicate to and affect the spectator? The answer to such questions of reception will inevitably contain views on art and its function in society, identifying elements that can be seen as the topmost part of an aesthetic hierarchy. Further it will present reflections on the rehearsals and the programme that governs the production-process. How will the process manage to arrive at the envisioned theatre performance, and how are the preferred methods of directing and acting articulated? How does the collective arrive at the theme for the given performance, and what kind of audience is in mind? In addition the aesthetic hierarchy points at those parts of the world that is considered worth while to engage with. The processes of production and reception takes place inside an organisation, how does the reflective theory consider the impact of this? A reflective theory can of course focus on one or more of the special functions i.e. directors directing, actors acting or playwrights' playwriting, however, when the reflexive theory is concerned with the totality of the process, it reflects dramaturgy. It is by establishing many diverse programmes articulated in aesthetic hierarchies that the art-system evolves and maintains a dynamic relationship with society and its complex reality. The attempt to develop a scientific theory of dramaturgy must contain concepts and methods with which such reflective theories can be adequately analysed. To do this, I have chosen a systems theoretical position, which introduces the work of art as *communication* that *evolves* inside a specific *system*. So in order to make a detailed and comprehensive description of the art-system and its coupling with society, the scientific dramaturgy needs to analyze a multitude of such programmes. Programmes can be understood as specific *norms* applicable to the production and reception of an artefact.

Here it is important to underline, that we are speaking of “local” norms, norms without universalizing intentions, applicable in principle only to the single work of art. The reflective theory on aesthetic hierarchies makes it possible to mark and protect the system and its differentiation, without constantly having to re-name and re-question the central elements. The art system gains by having the meaning of the diverse programmes enhanced², and it also stabilizes the reflection theory, when it is able to point at and clarify the internal norms. The attempt to describe and develop these norms into a solid reflexive theory, leads us towards an understanding of one set of positive values: one possible way to identify “good art”. It goes without saying that inherent in this you will also find hints at what the programme might accept as art, but would deem “bad art”. The investigation of the art of Odin Theatre is a possibility to study a unique and rare species in modern theatre.

Reflexive theory (historical sketch)

The reconversion of society and the functional differentiation during the two hundred years from mid 17th to mid 19th century created an increased need for art system-intern reflection. When studying the art-system and the development within the dramaturgical reflective theories, we can follow this process of differentiation from some of the earliest texts e.g. Denis Diderot (1713-1784) and G.E. Lessing (1729-1781). Diderot and Lessing provide us with early examples of modern dramaturgies. We can read them as attempts to describe and elaborate the function of art in a society in midst of rapid change, the consequences of which not even Diderot or Lessing could foresee. In the aesthetic hierarchy of Lessing, we find the process of enlightenment at the core. There is a profound belief in reason and in the possibility to educate man through complex stories of individual fates. Thus, Lessing clarifies how he envisions art’s function in an autonomous system among other systems of a society in upheaval and as such, it unfolds one possible way of

² Luhmann, Niklas (1990): *Die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, p. 324

construing art. In order to go against the tradition of the French neo-classical concepts of tragedy, Lessing had to re-read Aristotle and combine him with Shakespeare, in order to construct a powerful background for his own dream of a new German bourgeois tragedy. Thus, a new way of appreciating a work of art was established. The art-system reproduces itself by self-referentiality in this way. The art-system orients itself recursively according to the works of communication the system itself has produced. *The further differentiation of society results in a corresponding differentiation of the semantics in reflective theories.* New reflective theories are constructed in order for the system to be able to regulate to new forms in works of art. The function of a reflexive theory is to point at, and clarify the identity of the system seen in distinction to other systems. It is worth remembering that every single artwork contributes to the creation of the system: the artwork, in this terminology, is a communicative operation. However, when the system observes and describes itself, it is already too complex to reach any form of exhaustive knowledge about itself. A system is in the end intransparent for itself. "The system does not reach cognition or controlled direction of its own behaviour through reflexion; it just adds an extra factor in the dynamics of the system³." Lessing could not on his own redirect the German theatre. He had to rely upon his reflexions and his works and hope for them to make their contribution. When reading Lessing, you are not in doubt about his personal trust in art, reason, and enlightenment. His hopes for what art might achieve were high. Therefore, the historical sensibility for changes in aesthetic hierarchies is an important scientific proficiency that allows us to describe an evolution in the relationship between the art-system and the differentiated systems in the surrounding world. It also allows science to consider the development of traditions. To point at continuities and discontinuities. Studying Barba's theatre provides us with an understanding of one of the most important contributions to significant changes in modern theatre.

³ Luhmann, Niklas (1990), p. 483.

The reflexive theory of Eugenio Barba

Eugenio Barba started his experiment with the Odin Theatre 200 years after Lessing and in society and in the art system much have changed. The subsidies in Nordic cultural politics have made it economically possible – though not in any way lucrative – to conduct longstanding artistic experiments, subsidies that have to be supplemented by the theatre's own revenue. "Reason" is no longer the blessed light, darkness have crept into the rays of enlightenment, casting shadows. In order to appreciate the scope of the project called "Odin Teatret" it is important to understand the main features of the construction: We are dealing with a theatre that has existed for close to 50 years, and it is driven by director Eugenio Barba and a group of actors who have participated, some of them from the very beginning. The daily training and the production of performances takes place within firm daily routines and discipline. The production of performances can last years, and the performances are constantly adjusted while they are in performance, and they can be on the repertoire for many years. The Odin Theatre travels world wide with their performances. In addition, many projects leap out of the Odin Theatre. Let us just mention ISTA, International School of Theatre Anthropology, founded 1979, which studies and compares diverse acting traditions from around the world. Of great importance are The Odin Theatre weeks that every year draws many international participant to workshops, demonstrations, and performances in Holsterbro. Needless to say, this places the Odin Theatre in a category of its own. The dream of many romanticists and members of the historical avantgarde of making life and art come together is in many ways fulfilled by Eugenio Barba's masterpiece: The Odin Theatre. This has been made possible only because life and art is established with unprecedented patience, rigour, love, discipline, and freedom. Of course, there have been variations in the over 70 performances, there have been different focuses during the many years, but there is also an astounding consistency in the artistic ideas and expressions. The following analysis is not an attempt to evaluate the historical or cultural political importance of the Odin Theatre. It is an endeavour to re-

describe the dramaturgy at work, in the house of Odin as expressed by Eugenio Barba. Barba and the Odin Theatre constantly provide a profound self-reflection. This is also very rare in theatre-companies, let alone when this happens in a company with a history of 50 years. Thus, it presents itself as another obvious reason for the selection of the Odin Theatre.

Situated only an hours drive from Holsterbro, the small Danish town where the Odin Theatre, after its start in Oslo 1964, found its permanent residence in 1966, the department of Dramaturgy, at the University of Aarhus, have had an outstanding possibility to cooperate with and follow the work of Eugenio Barba. It has resulted in a number of books, conferences, workshops, and other collaborative projects⁴. I saw my first Odin Theatre performance in 1972: *My Fathers House*. I saw it a chilly spring evening in another small Danish town (Horsens). The audience was placed on benches with an aisle between them, where the actors played. Beside me sat an elderly couple. From their whisper I understood, that they felt very estranged by the performance. However, during the intense performance their whispering stopped, and when we left the theatre I heard him say that he had felt like crying, because the accordion was so sad. As a young student of dramaturgy I myself had been moved, and challenged by the fact that theatre could be like this: a theatre that spoke "to each spectator in a different and penetrating language."⁵ The performance made its connection with me through the way it was filled with elements of sensuality and revolt. Not only in the stories told but also by the form and its strangeness. The challenge from the

⁴ See Centre for Laboratory Studies (from 2002): <http://www.odinteatret.dk/research/ctls.aspx>
Andreasen, John og Kuhlmann, Annelis (ed. (2000): *Odin Teatret 2000*, Acta Jutlandia LXXVI:1, Aarhus University Press, Aarhus.

Christoffersen, Exe (1993) *The Actor's Way*, Routledge, London.

Christoffersen, Exe (ed.)(2004): *Why a Theatre Laboratory, Peripeti*, Nr. 2, Århus

Christoffersen, Exe (2006): *Teaterhandlinger*, Klim, Aarhus p.441-473.

Risum, Janne (1994): *The Castle of Holstebro*, *New Theatre Quarterly*. TQ38, CUP, Cambridge.

Risum, Janne (1996): *The crystal of Acting*. *New Theatre Quarterly* TQ48, CUP Cambridge.

⁵ Barba (2010), p. i.

aesthetics of the performance forced me to try to come to terms with the language of the performance. It was, first of all, a challenge in terms of a multiple and simultaneous use of all theatrical elements. How could I even begin to make an analysis of a performance that produced so many different meanings? No simple hierarchies, no single and unifying plot, no immediate coherence to cling to. I was confronted with an anarchistic and order-dissolving order. It presented a paradox that I had no idea of how to describe or analyse. I was faced with a double challenge: a personal and a professional. At that specific time in my own life, as a young man recently moved into a new phase of his life, I felt connected with the performance and its constant revolt towards all the forces of repression and tradition. In addition, as I was a student of dramaturgy, it became a professional challenge to try to come to terms with this cryptic performance. It rapidly became clear, that any attempt to reduce the complexity would be like an act of violence. In the following years, I kept returning to the Odin Theatre and their performances. I was constantly inspired and disturbed both by their aesthetic and by their working methods. Whenever I tried to focus my analytical work, I discovered that the performance escaped most of the analytical concepts I appropriated during my studies and tried to apply. It made the idea of interpretation seem void. I could try to describe my own experience of the performance, but when I did, it became obvious that such a description was unavoidably connected to my personal biography and private associations. The performance invited the spectator to create meaning, the meaning was not manifest, and so it had to be selected by each individual spectator. This special type of art confronted the spectator with him- or herself in the act of perception. I saw the performances in my perspective, how could that ever be “objectified” or generalized? I was on equal terms with all spectators, and even if had placed myself on a chest full of footnotes⁶ it would make little or no difference to the outcome of my analysis. When a work of art provokes science in such a way that art renders customary analytical devices obsolete, it rocks the epistemological foundation of

⁶ Bredsdorff, Thomas (1986): *Magtspil. Europæiske Familiestykker*. Gyldendal, København.

science. The events of that chilly spring evening made a lasting impression on me. I saw a puzzle, and did not know how to solve it. The performances challenged existing analytical theories, and called upon development within science. This, of course, is a third reason for my choice: a personal and professional interest in this enigmatic theatre.

It was not until several years later that I dared offer a first timid attempt to say anything at all about this theatrical enigma. I had been presented with something that was not a simple reversal of theatrical forms. It was not an aesthetic manoeuvre that made a straightforward reversal: it was not a Brecht turning a dramatic form into an epic form. When that happens, the reversal becomes bound to that which it reverses. The old “major” of the dramatic form is substituted by the “minor”: the epic form of theatre. In those days, it was as if the former minor had become a new major. The idea that dramaturgy could only either be dramatic or epic, either open or closed, either masculine or feminine made me indignant. I tried, in 1989, to describe the performance of the Odin Theatre with a concept of a theatre of simultaneity⁷, and I compared it with theatre of more conventional dramatic and epic forms. Within this aesthetic form, the spectator is not only confronted with the intensity of the theatrical language, but also with the fact that his or her own perception of the performance is unique and a product of ones own selections of understanding. It pointed to the heart of the communicative act. I even dared to present the idea for Eugenio Barba; he gave me a friendly smile, and said that there might be something there, but it was only a small fragment of the performance and its aesthetic, that could be described in this way. 30 years later, I do acknowledge the fact that there were more to it, than could be summed up in my first attempt. To follow the work of the Odin Theatre was a unique chance to witness, on close range, the development of one of the most influential new “traditions” in late-modern theatre. We witnessed an experiment with a paradigmatic shift. In an article

⁷ Christoffersen, E, Kjølner, T., Szatkowski, J. (1989): *Dramaturgisk analyse. En antologi*. Heri Szatkowski, Janek: Dramaturgiske modeller. Om dramaturgisk tekstanalyse. P. 9-85.

from 1992, I argued that theatre science would have to acknowledge and take into consideration the epistemological turn in theory of science⁸. It is a discernible shift from thinking in depth and identities to a difference theoretical thinking. Post-structuralism were one of the many contemporary scientific theories that arose partly as response to new forms in art. In terms of art, it is a shift from the paradigms of the *historical avant-garde* and high *modernism* into paradigms of another form of modernism, characterized by self-reflectivity, indeterminacy, and contingency. In some theories, this shift is seen as an epochal transgression of modernism into post-modernism. Within theatre science, particularly since the 1990'ies, it has been en vogue to proclaim a turn in the representational mode towards a post-dramatic theatre (Hans-Thies Lehmann, 1999) and in the aesthetic realm as such: a turn to performativity (*Ästhetik des Performativen*, Erika Fischer-Lichte, 200x). We will deal with this later, in chapter 5, but I am critical towards the tendency to think of this shift in epochal terms, and in attempts to privilege this theatre form as the avant-garde of avant-gardes. Here it is sufficient to state, that the theatre performances of the Odin Theatre can be seen as an example of a theatre form that inherits elements from the historical avantgarde but transforms them into performances dominated by *self-reflective dissemination of meaning*. This is neither place nor time to unfold a close retrospective analysis of the development of the performances of Odin Theatre. One might point at the way in which some balances shifts during the many years of work. In the performance *Oxhyrincus* (1985) which will be analysed briefly later on, you'll find a performance with quite a lot of coherence. In some of the performances e.g. *Talabot* (1988) and *Chaosmos* (1993) Eugenio Barba experiments with a form that plays almost joyously with making the contingency of meaning manifest. In these performances, the actors are set free to improvise, although within a strict (latent) order. This is as close to a pure post-

⁸ Hov, Live (ed.)(1993): *Teatervitenskapelige grunnlagsproblemer*. Universitetet i Oslo, Oslo.
Szatkowski, Janek: (1993): Et dramaturgisk vende, Perspektiv for teatervidenskaben.
Dramaturgiske modeller og forestillingsanalyse.(A Dramaturgical Turn. Perspectives in Theatre Science, Dramaturgical Models and Performance Analysis) p.116-142.

structuralist deconstructive perspective the Odin performances ever gets. The oeuvre of the Odin Theatre displays an ambiguity, which we also find in the theoretical work of Eugenio Barba, and it makes it abundantly clear, that one should not search for any one-to-one relation between the two. Where the belief in the biological as the latent order with supremacy in terms of determining life is clearly expressed in the theoretical writings of Barba during the 1970'ies and 80'ies, it could be argued that Barba in his later theoretical work gradually reduces some of the metaphysical elements and emphasizes a difference theoretical thinking. A closer analysis of the self-reflexive theory will demonstrate this point and allow us to connect the reflective theory with our theory of communication and dramaturgy. The cue to understand the complexity in the aesthetic hierarchy and the dramaturgy behind these ambiguities, so goes my main argument, is a closer study of Barba's interpretation of three central concepts: The concept of *Bios*, of *The Empty Ritual*, and of *Complementarity*.

The end – and a new beginning

Finally, I must make a note of a difficulty that inevitably confronts you when you describe a research process. As stated, my relationship with Eugenio Barba and the Odin theatre is of a long standing. It is important to stress, that my research process has been a constant hither and back. Attempts to formulate approaches to describe the work and poetics were followed by seeing new production, reading new materials and books, following seminars, which made me return to my study where I read new books on new epistemologies: post-structuralism, deconstruction, pragmatism, constructivism etc. and tried to reformulate my theory. So, the square and probably very abstract theory presented in earlier chapters, is in its own way a result of this and other long recursive and investigative processes. Even in the production of this chapter, I have had reasons to return to my main theory and formulate new elements inspired by the process of analyzing Barba's reflective theory. If you believe you are able to let a theory confront an object with the purpose of *illustrating*

the theory and its strength, then, an awkward truth will appear: you risk losing your sensibility towards the object in favour of attempts at fitting the object to the theory. Any deductive use of a theory must be supplemented by an inductive alertness towards any resistance in the object. Inductio (lat.) or epagogé (gr.) means to take another by the hand and lead him from the singular experience to generalization. Hume was convinced that induction led to conclusions that would not stand, because the attention-span of a single person in no way would be able to take into consideration all possible situations in an eternal future. And he saw universal laws as overstressing any case. Hume's problem rests upon a concept of science that envisages a possible goal in a classic teleology. My argument is that scientific knowledge is inherently inconclusive, a historical machine that becomes a new machine by every new state introduced into it⁹. So, Hume's ideal of negation (that which cannot be) should be abandoned. In the last 40 years we have seen several different theoretical takes on difference-thinking (Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, Rorty, Luhmann etc.). Examining this scientific development, my colleague Niels Lehmann, presents an overview of differences between thinkers of difference¹⁰. In this luminous paper, Lehmann demonstrates a set of crucial differences operating in this scientific field. The first dimension entails the difference between dissemination and distinction. The other dimension discriminates between two different aspirations in the scientific work: Cognition or Action. With the help of these dimensions Niels Lehmann draws a map over contemporary positions in the post-metaphysical science of the humanities. We will return to this in our final analysis, but here just point at the subtitle of Barba's book "Burning the house". It is not immediately comprehensible why the words 'personal aesthetic' bothers Barba (page xv). We are dealing with an aesthetic in the sense of a programme of art, and it is personal, as Barba emphasizes. It is unique and must be understood as such. However, to describe an aesthetic hierarchy or personal aesthetic might be seen as a closure, rendering

⁹ Luhmann (1990) WdG, p. 283f

¹⁰ Lehmann, Niels (2004): On Different Uses of Difference. Post-ontological Thought in Derrida, Deleuze, Luhmann, and Rorty. In *Cybernetics And Human Knowing*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp 56-80.

the organic and artistic process as something stagnated and finite. Nonetheless, writing a book about directing and dramaturgy calls for definitions and methods, and it is not easy to pass this on, without clarifying goals, preferences, and concepts. The uneasiness about such a project might have to do with a deeply rooted conviction about the instability of truth and the fear of unequivocal meanings. The need to clarify is instantaneously followed by a wish to avoid closure, to obscure or cross over. Consequently, Barba would like to destroy the house with the personal architecture, burning his house, as the subtitle of the book suggests. It is a gesture that characterizes Barba's reflections: the architecture of the house of Odin is unique, the glimpses we get of it reading the book, should, according to Barba, best be forgotten, so that new buildings can be erected, new ideas unfolded. So maybe it would have been better never to write the book, to have burnt the house. In a country of speed this disseminating gesture would be the obvious. A constant deterritorializing (Deleuze) would prevent stagnation. Luckily Barba decided to write it, even though it took its time, he accepted the need for cognition, to describe how differences differentiate, how a *différance* (Derrida) is always at work. It is out of the scientific development within difference thinking I have come to choose the operative systems-theory as preferred programme. It works, as we have seen in the opening chapters with the help of the central distinction system > < environment. Thus this theory is able to observe how theories of dissemination functions. The autopoietic system of Science accepts this unending process. Every new element is a new starting point for the production of further elements. Every end is a new beginning. In this conclusive inconclusiveness, the works of Eugenio Barba have been a constant challenge, a test that would apply a maximum of stress to the scientific theory. This then, is the final reason for my choice.

Dramaturgy in Odin's house

The book on dramaturgy and directing has its own dramaturgy. It is composed in a way that makes the reader aware of a multiplicity of voices in the text. It is structured by

several storylines. Some of these are concerned with presenting a coherent theory of dramaturgy; others are dedicated to the unfolding of an autobiographical dimension. The voices in the text are indeed several. Eugenio Barba writes like the scholar with concern for precision and coherence. However, the artist constantly interferes with modifications and supplements. You get the feeling of listening to a friend, telling you about his life and aspirations, and while he is at it, he, for good measure, throws in a theoretically consistent corpus of concepts and relations. As a reader, you are confronted with the voices of actors from the Odin Theatre, and voices of scholars and friends in observation of, and in dialogue with Barba. In this way, the book reflects some of the fundamental values inherent in the poetical programme of the Odin Theatre. The plurality of voices creates a polyphony that you as reader must listen to with utmost care, especially because they form a weave of arguments that functions in a web of complementary positions. It is a theory on dramaturgy constructed from the artists' point of view. To put in terms of the "post-dramatic theatre", it is the reflection of an "auteur" on the "devising" practices involved in the production of a performance working with the actors and without a text as final point of reference. It describes some of the rules in rehearsal processes. These rules are carefully constructed in order to arrive at a performance that makes it possible, and in fact necessary, for the spectator to confront him- or her-self in the meeting with the performance. The spectator is challenged by a performance, which is so complex that each spectator has to choose his or her own way of reducing this complexity. *How* this is done depends on the biography of the spectator and is thus unpredictable. The structure of the dramaturgy, however, can be described. Barba makes it clear that the essentialist question, "what is dramaturgy?" is a rather useless question. To search for an answer to questions of this type, is to search for an essence, a core that could produce the link between a whole and its part. It is much more fruitful to ask *how* dramaturgy works. Therefore, Barba asks himself: "As a director, how did I interfere in the actor's actions?" (p.9)

Levels of organisation and BIOS

First, it is important to recognise, that dramaturgy for Barba is not to be understood as a literary composition. It has to do with a process of weaving and growth of a performance and its many levels in order to arrive at a result with some very distinctive features. He explains the complexity of the concept dramaturgy by presenting three different *levels of organisation* that may help us towards a closer understanding of how dramaturgy functions. Barba explicitly points to biology as a paradigm for the performance, a living organism with different parts, levels of organisation, and mutual relationships between parts and organisation. It was this “biologist way of thinking” that helped Barba understand his own work. It described how different and overlapping logics could exist simultaneously. It was also a way to describe a concrete reality, that could not be isolated and placed on the lab table, but which existed as structure, as “logic.” Cells functions as a base for tissue, organs, and finally the organism, and each level develops its own logic as the relations between the parts and the levels are under evolution. It is not a mere technical analogy between organisms and performances that inspires Barba, but *the biologists’ way of understanding a complex system*. In the works of Barba, we find clear traces¹¹ of the biologist influence from the early 1980’ies. If one regards an *organic system* (i.e. the human body), it is necessary to distinguish different *parts* of the organism (i.e. heart, liver, blood) but also to explain how these parts are able to coordinate their actions. In order to understand this, biologists examine *levels* of organisation (i.e. cells, tissue, organs). So the unity of a living organism can be seen as a wide range of organs, constituted by different kinds of tissue, and at the base: the level of cells.

For me, the performance too was a living organism and I had to distinguish not only its parts, but also its levels of organisation and, later, their mutual relationships. ‘Dramaturgy’, then, was a term similar to ‘anatomy’. It was a practical way of working not only on the organism in its totality, but on its different organs and layers. (p.9)

¹¹ Barba, 2010, p. 149; Barba, (1994), p.128 On ‘pre-expressive’

When a performance was about to reach its final state in the rehearsal process, when the dismantling and reassembling of scenes and sections were about to find its imminent end and the performance was taken over by the actors, Barba describes it thus:

The actions, the single cells, had melted together and formed tissues, organs, systems, a living organism which thought with an autonomous will and whispered stories different from those I had intended. (p.58)

The performance is regarded as a living organism, which communicates (p.24). When attending a performance by the Odin Theatre it soon becomes very clear that their works of art challenge the spectator in a special way. Barba sees art as opposed to a "stony sky called 'reality'". Art is a possibility to superimpose illusions, ideals on the raw reality. He calls it *superstitions*: that which is above, something that can crush or attract and elevate. Superstitions should not be shared, Barba argues, but experienced in "the personal and incommunicable microcosm: the *country of speed*, my body-in-life." (p.14). This is summarized in the following sentence:

Bios means 'life': the actor's *bios* which penetrates the spectator's inner world; the performance's *bios* which is confronted with the meaningless logos of history; the *bios* of the theatre as rebellion and transcendence, as the embodied presence of individual superstitions, beyond diversion and art. [...] Can these living actions, which are embedded in fiction, turn themselves into a path towards the origins of life? Towards the origins of the injustices of the world? Towards the origins of our many identities?

This formulation places the concept of bios at the centre. This is the closest we come to an understanding of what it is Barba inherits from biology. Any more explicit iterations of the biological logic, the way it is understood by Barba, are hard to come by. I take it upon me, as part of my scientific experiment to present a re-description of "bios" as it appears in Barba's theoretical work.

Barba consider dramaturgy as something that exists in the three-dimensional weave of signs, sounds, and actions in a space that constitute a performance. In this sense, the performance can be regarded as an organic system (first level). At the same time dramaturgy functions by means of surprise and turns that makes the spectator wonder. For Barba it is important that the performance avoid any univocal simplicity, but present images that are ambiguous, contradictory and that overturn evident causal relationships. But a simple chaotic overturning is not enough. Chaos is boring. On the second level of dramaturgy there must be a sense of coherence in the performance as well. Coherence towards what? asks Barba, and answers: "towards an image, an association, a memory – towards an ever-present shadow which should not be too detectable in the performance" (p.12). The latency of any meaning should attract the spectator and make him an active part in the selection of understanding (third level). The complex work of modern art can be seen as a ritual, as something offered to the spectator for the private, yet public, enjoyment; a ritual that has no meaning in itself, but makes it possible for the spectator to create his or her own unpredictable meaning. This third organisational level relies on a specific dramaturgy of the actor, the director, and the spectator, and the purpose is to make the spectator "live a *change of state*".

The level of the *organic dramaturgy* is concerned with "composing and interweaving the dynamisms, the rhythms, and the physical and vocal actions of the actor in order to stimulate sensorially the attention of the spectator." (p 10) It is work with *form*. The level of the *narrative dramaturgy*, is the level of organisation where "the intertwining of events which orientate the spectators about the meaning, or the various *meanings*, of the performance". It is working with creating possible information in form. Finally, the level of the *evocative dramaturgy* is "the faculty of the performance to produce an intimate resonance within the spectator. It is this dramaturgy which distils or captures the

performance's unintentional and concealed meaning, specific for each spectator". It is work concerned with offering the spectator a special way of *understanding* the performance.

In the following chapters of the book, these three levels of organisation serve as guiding lines for illuminating the dramaturgy of the Odin Theatre. The chapters provide the reader with concrete examples drawn from the artistic processes and theoretical statements. The chapters are interspersed by intermezzos where other voices mix in, and with a line of biographical material. This rich texture afford complexity to the theoretical project; a complexity that a general theory of dramaturgy must be able to handle and reduce in a convincing way. First, let us take a closer look at each level.

Organic Dramaturgy

The main elements in the organic dramaturgy are actions, scores and subscores, vocal actions, space. An *action*, as defined by Barba, is *the smallest change of tonicity in the torso of the actor* (p.34). Barba insists on this action as a "*real action*" (p.99), not in the sense realistic, but in the sense that it radiated an impulse in a minute dynamic form within the whole organism, that could immediately be sensed by the spectator. This produces an effect of immediateness (p.26). The change of tonicity catches the attention of the spectator. But the movement is so small, that it is impossible to select information from it. It is in this sense "pre-expressive". It is not yet possible to reach an understanding.

For example, the actor had slapped someone, but the director had changed it into a caress. Although the actor moulded the dynamic design as if to caress, she kept the original tensions of striking a blow. The real dynamic *information* was thus retained, but appeared in a different *form*. The spectator's kinaesthetic sense (or empathy) recognised the dynamics of striking a blow, but this sensorial information did not correspond to what he was seeing: a caress. (p.26) [my emphasis]

This illustrates a main point of the strategy of communication applied in the work of the Odin Theatre. In the theoretical terms of the communication theory presented, it is this

minute displacement, which makes the spectator react. He perceives a motion, when he tries to select information out of the form; he becomes aware of a peculiar contradiction. Something in the form directs him to select the understanding, that the specific movement is a caress, but at the same time, the form seems to point him in the direction of selecting the understanding, that it is a blow. In a way, Barba deconstructs and reconstructs the communication in such a way, that we need to readjust our perception. Did we see what we saw? We thought we saw a caress, but it might have been a blow: thus, the selected form carries with it (at least) two sets of information and we are made aware of our perception; we perceive our perception.

Eugenio Barba asks his actors to improvise a *score*, a sequence of real actions, that each has their own beginning, climax, and conclusion. This score can use many different starting points: a text, an image, sensorial associations, or a melody. The actions could be treated in many different, complementary ways. It is a question of how and for whom the form creates information:

I could model it following contradictory categories: as pure dynamism (dance) or as carrier of a clear meaning for me, yet ambiguous for the spectator. I could turn it into a rhythmic entity or into an 'open' action that the spectator would have filled with his own specific sense. I could treat it as a vague associative sign or as a clear conceptual expression, as a stimulus of energy or as a narrative indication for me and/or the spectator. It depended on the circumstances and on the web of relationships and references in which I inserted this action. (p.34)

Therefore, the *action is not in itself a bearer of meaning*. Neither are vocal actions, scores or the use of space. Actions should maintain their ambiguity, and this achieved by "disseminating them into layers of light and darkness". How can this metaphor be interpreted? Maybe by pointing at light as manifest, and darkness referring to the latent. The shadow becomes a metaphor for something that blocks the light. So, an action must be manifest, but if, within it, one could perceive important latent material, the action would

create a vague associative sign. If only a very small portion of the action referred to latency, it would be a clear conceptual expression. How is this dissemination of meaning achieved?

Narrative Dramaturgy.

Eugenio Barba emphasizes that the different levels did not help him to solve the problem of how to develop them artistically, but they helped him to “oppose the performance’s univocal nature and the plot’s explicit relationships.” It is central for the aesthetics of the Odin Theatre to avoid linear causality in plot and actions. Why, one might wonder. The development of dramatic narrative form since early 18th century culminates in a form where central characters are in conflict that may or may not be resolved (Lessing). Spectators have since Ibsen learned to look for the back-story wound: the psychological causes explaining the main character’s behaviour. When the wound is defined, we feel satisfied, and the story now generates a clear meaning. The “change of state” as the aim for the evocative dramaturgy, has to do with a specific approach to the construction of meaning; it has to do with *overturning* obvious relationships and blending them into *ambiguous* and *contradictory* sequences. It is important to be able to “demolish, disarrange, and destroy logics and links” that seemed too obvious. This is made possible in the rehearsals only by establishing constraints, obstacles, and rigorous rules. The actors have to be able to improvise, but also to repeat the improvisation and fixate them as scores. Overturning could not stand alone as an aesthetic principle, it is important to work with an *emotional coherence* towards the ‘not too detectable shadow’ which should always be in the performance (p. 12). The performance should give the spectators a shared sense, but at the same time a “different confidence” specific to each spectator. How can this overturning be constructed in rehearsals? We learn that ‘Disorder’ and ‘Error’ are the two crucial factors. “Disorder is the irruption of an energy that confronts us with the unknown” (p.17). A performance should confront us with the unknown. I certainly felt confronted in my first

meetings with performances of the Odin Theatre. What was felt to be an absence of logic in a nonsensical and chaotic work, proved to establish its own logic of bewilderment. To experience Disorder (with capital D), is to be given a chance to break the chains of habit, of norms of social, psychological, religious and sexual nature. Disorder does not concern the categories of aesthetics, claims Barba (p.19). It should be read as a leap into another ontology: "It happens when a different reality prevails over everyday reality". The problem is that no method to achieve Disorder exists:

Generally, when in my work I have tried to lean on safe rules, I was penalised for my naivety. If I resigned myself to the idea of a craft deprived of rules, I was paid for this naivety with failures that were just as drastic. What is there, then, between rules and absence of rules? Between law and anarchy? If we think in the abstract, the answer is nothing. But practice has taught me that there *is* something there, simultaneously combining the rule and its negation. (p.19)

This something is *error*. Errors come, according to Barba, in two forms: 'Solid Errors', that are measurable and can be brought back into rules and order, and 'Liquid Errors' that presented themselves as something 'wrong' be it a scene or a mistaken structure of a performance. Nevertheless, the fact that these errors were so blatantly 'wrong' indicated, that they might represent a parallel path. Liquid errors proved to be the right wrongs. So here, selection of variations is made according to their ability either to produce new liquid errors (cognitive structure, in our vocabulary) or as solid errors to re-establish the existing order (normative structure).

The narrative dramaturgy is a special dramaturgy in the sense that it is constantly informed by the need for overturning the obvious and by the longing for ambiguity or indecidability. The concept 'knots' became a valuable tool for the Odin Theatre. A 'knot' is "simultaneous actions which negate each other, giving life to a powerful and irrational image" (p.99). This "synthesis of contradictory information in a convincing sensory form" was important as a method that helped creating the ambiguous images of the performance.

The necessity of separate sub-scores and the elaborate artistic work in composing a performance is closely linked to the idea of avoiding univocal causality and the plot's explicit relationships (goodbye Lessing), in order to achieve an "incongruous coherence". Barba is the creator of many paradoxical statements. The technique of a paradox is to declare something, we usually consider as opposites, to be a unity. So here we are confronted with a coherence that includes its own opposite: incoherence. The term suggests a "third" possibility: that is the excluded third: something that could at the same time be coherent and incoherent. It makes you wonder: what that might be? So in order to dissolve the paradox, one must establish new oppositions to relieve the paradox. It may be an order with a specific resilient pattern incorporated in it. But is that not just another paradox: "disordered order"? In short: the game of creating paradoxes illustrates the point we made on observations. (GdG p 1134) All observations are based on a paradox! To observe something we need a distinction that we apply in our operations (cognitive or action based), but these distinctions can not be reflected as a unity. If you try to reflect the distinction by the distinction you are using to observe, you mercilessly end up with an ultimate paradox: the difference is sameness. We will return to this argument several times later.

To construct a performance that activates each spectator in a different way demands a very complex dramaturgy. It is not just a question of overturning every known order of classical dramaturgy, which would only lead to chaos, which is rather uninteresting. Therefore, there needs to be coherence. The performance consists of a manifest level: the actual physical elements and movements, sounds and gestures of the actors. However, in the performance there should also be a shadow. Something that reminds the spectator of something by its absence: If we only see the shadow, we can only guess at what casts it. The shadow is the bait waiting to be devoured in the mind of the spectator. Where there is light, the shadows make darkness. The darkness becomes visible as an effect of a latency,

hence Barba's use of the metaphor of the empty ritual. We are dealing with a paradox: Coherent incoherence. Let us see, how this paradox is de-paradoxicalized in Barba's text.

The manifest is created in such a way, that it should point at latency. This is the very act of the imaginary reality. It is created to point at reality, but reality is not accessible as such. This ambition can only be met, if the logic is attached even to the smallest bit of communication in the actors' scores. Imagine a man reading a newspaper, his eyes follows the lines and his hands are turning the pages, but at the same time, his body is possessed with another tension: that of following the flight of a bird.

The rhythm of the eyes moving along the lines of print and of turning pages was the equivalent of the action and rhythm of following the flight of the bird. Thus the actor succeeded, in practice, 'in negating the action while executing it': a good antidote against illustration, emphasis or the vacuity of an action. [...] [T]hese contrasting tensions acted on the spectator's nervous system and perception, causing a slightly unfamiliar impression, which *brought the actors' action to life* and thus prevented it from being the object of a mechanical hasty look from the spectator. (p. 57)

A score should be composed by such disturbing "real actions." The spectator recognizes the "reading newspaper" picture, but if she also receives the contrasting tension, then the first immediate perception is disturbed: it could be read differently, he might be reading, but his body tells us something else it at stake: it is as if he wanted to leave the space and follow a line of flight. To be able to perform this double task requires an extraordinary control by the actor of body, timing, rhythm, and flow. In rehearsals, Barba, as director, works on the level of actions with the intention of cleaning the material brought forward by the actor. It is cleansed for superfluous, redundant, and 'obese' material. To describe this element of the aesthetical hierarchy in terms of the presented theory, it becomes clear, that Barba is working on a simultaneous de- and reconstruction of communication. By selecting and making distinctions between information and utterance, we try to reach a selection of understanding and interpretation. Barba experiments with creating a communicative form

so complex, in fact, that it makes the spectator aware of an uncertainty: what we immediately perceive might not be sufficient, we need to take an extra look, it might be that something else were meant. Thus, the spectator *experiences his own experience*. We have in the earlier chapter defined perception as the almost contiguous experience of “surprise” and “recognition” (se p. XX). Our communication in daily life seldom focuses on the perception of things. Art, as we insisted, has the possibility to make us aware of our perception: to perceive perception. The ‘organic dramaturgy’ and its ‘narrative’ brother are for Barba the idea of a performance that orchestrates a flow of stimuli that are

“...both necessary and unpredictable, which attract or repel the spectator’s senses. They are artistic forms and biological signals addressing the reptilian and limbic part of our brain. Sensuality and sensorial incitements hound the animal nature of the spectator. [...] The living roots of the performance are not a literary text, a story to be told or my intentions as director, but are a particular quality of the actors’ physical and vocal actions: presence, scenic *bios*, organic effect, seductive persuasion, body-in-life. (p. 24f)

When one communicative operation of this kind is linked to another, the director has to make a balance between the manifest and the latent levels of communication. Barba explains how the artificiality of the score and the organic processes that shakes the score is equivalent with the coherence of an ‘external discipline’ and the ‘dark forces’ (p.32), which makes it mysterious. So when combining actions, Barba appraises recursively the effect of each action to those preceding and to those following. This happens in the narrative dramaturgy. Here, the information emerging in the organic dramaturgy must be combined in forms that maintain the ambiguity of the single ‘real actions’. This can only be done by referring to the third dramaturgy of evocation, which influences the spectators’ interpretation and understanding. Thus our definition of communication has important common features with the three dramaturgies in Barba’s theory.

An action is always an interaction. This is not a play on words, the consequences were evident. Its external manifestation interacted with the inner one (the subscore). As director, I applied myself to exploiting the

actions' complementarity and to consolidate their ambiguity by disseminating them into layers of light and darkness." (p34)

Perception is a normally latent prerequisite for our actions in every-day life. To evoke the latent and make it manifest is what art might be able to do. However, the *way* in which the latent becomes manifest is the distinguishing factor of an aesthetic hierarchy. We need to be able to re-describe this in terms of operations and structures. In this aesthetic hierarchy, Eugenio Barba insists on ambiguity, dissemination, and as we shall soon see: complementarity or paradoxality.

Evocative Dramaturgy

In order to make this last point standing out, it is important for Barba to stress that actors, director and spectators have their own "executions," their own dramaturgies. The spectators have their similar personal selection of understanding of the *work in reception*. This should make it clear, why Barba stresses the fact, that "the eyes and the logic giving sense to the performance" belongs to all three. If the same performance should be able to give each spectator his or her own meaning, and at the same time the shared feeling of overturning the world as we know it, it could, according to Barba, be described as an empty ritual; empty in the sense, that the performance does not convey one simple meaning, but in fact several meanings. Barba describes how his imagined (implicit) spectator is in fact several:

A child carried away by the euphoria of rhythm and wonder, but unable to appraise symbols, metaphors and artistic originality; Knudsen, an old skilled carpenter, who knew how to value small details; the spectator who thought he did not understand, but danced sitting on his seat; a friend of mine who had seen many of my performances, and lived again the pleasure of recognising what made him love them, and at the same time was bewildered by distasteful scenes; the blind Jorge Luis Borges, who enjoyed the least literary allusions and the thick layer of vocal information; the deaf Beethoven listening to the performance through his eyes, appreciating the symphony of its physical actions; a bororo from

Amazonia who envisaged it as a ceremony for the forces of nature; a person I loved and whom I would like to be proud of me and my actors.
(p. 184)

This multitude of implicit spectators, Barba explains, is a conscious act to explode the 'unity' of the audience at a mental level. The performance, with its many layers, should be able to speak to all our senses, rationality and logic should meet their limits, left to our own perception spectators have to select an understanding, but that can only happen if we are prepared to invent our own laws of interpretation, trust our own associations, invest them in the process of selection. If the performance succeeds in doing so, the spectator might experience a "change of state", from being to becoming-an-other. The body-in-life is seen as becoming, not as being. A permanent process, unending and ever in transition. *Bios*.

The Gospel according to Oxyrhincus.

Notes from a spectator.

I have seen the performance 4 times. I present a few fragments of the notes I made then, in order to give examples of how the dramaturgy can be experienced.

One image from the performance keeps hunting me. Torgeir Wethal playing the false Jesus, stabs a baby with a sharp dagger. It reappears from the white wrapping presenting a baby, and on its pointed end a piece of bread. It is a murder, it is the bread transformed to the image of the body of Jesus, a mock ritual performed by a false prophet. Yes, Jesus was murdered and stabbed with spears. The transubstantiation is an important central element in the mass and its ritual commemorating the fundamentals for the Christian faith. And it is mixed up in a fake ritual.

Blood appears in many forms, reminding us of the blood of Jesus. The actors drink it, but also spits into the cup (kalken).

Antigone buries her brother. She follows her own rules, not those of society. But she is confronted by the law. An early revolution and beside her Joan of Arc, on fire, a Christian warrior prepared to give her life for her religion. The necessity that drives Antigone, is a belief in following the rules of the Gods, and not those of men, should they stand in her way. She is obliged as an individual. Hegel's first "spirit" of mankind. When are we to follow our own ideas, and when do we have to join in the war? Would I know?

The senselessness of the Christian ritual and its sacraments, echoes in me and stirs up memory from childhood, when I served as 'minestrant', assistant to the priest. The injustice done by the catholic

church towards my Father. It is all whirled up as associations during the performance. I feel I cannot stay with the associations, because new actions demand my attentions. But a certain mood has been inserted in me. It follows me during the entire performance. When reflecting on the experience of the performance, I later realize that it addresses some my own wounds. An unarticulated anger towards the church as institution, and an never ending contemplation over the need to act, the need to believe in a cause, and stay in solidarity with those unfortunate, but in the next moment doubts, grave doubts as to what it is that informs such action? To find a rock solid platform for reason and action, scares me even more. No clear cut enemies, only latent structures that I believe exists. How can I know?

The third time I saw the performance, I decided to try to stay closer to my own experiences and associations, not to let me be dragged by the tempo in the performance. It proved to be a difficult task. Room for contemplation was difficult for me to find. The constant music, and/or screaming sounds from the actors invaded my mind. And suddenly I saw a new pattern (I do believe that some changes had taken place in the performance, but could not say for sure). The extremity of violence. Could the Mexican robber be excused for his conduct, could Joan of Arc? And the jew, wandering with his own hopes, disengaged, misinformed, was she/he not a passive force of violence? I remembered my Fathers stories about the wealthy Jews of Warsaw. Swords and daggers are constant followers of all actions. When are we supposed to take to weapon? In the spectacular scenography of Luca Ruzza, the weapons kept appearing and disappearing in mysterious ways. Again and again the movements of the actors were combined with violence and weapons. When reason gives in, violence takes over. Just as I never found mental space to contemplate, our history seems to be driven by violent forces, disabling moments of calm reasoning. The performance became very dark indeed. I hardly managed to see it again.

Bios

If the above summary is an acceptable description of the main features of the three levels of dramaturgy made from the inside of the position, but with hints at how the concept of communication: information, utterance and understanding could be applied, then it is time to establish a re-description of the inherent logic from a systems theoretical point of view. In our re-description, we will need to make explicit the basic assumption as to how cells, parts, levels, relations, and organism create a system. First of all it is important to recognise,

that we need to take a look inside the cell, because it is here the fundamental operations take place. The biochemical structures that permit the cell to live are concrete *operations* in the cell. The cell is created as living system by these system-specific operations. Life is in this sense a biochemical invention, a circular self-producing system that due to evolution over time has created many diverse creatures and other systems, all out of one circular, autopoietic mode of operation. This is only possible because such operations build systems. Operations are building *structures*. Where *living systems* are describable as chemical procedures between proteins and enzymes etc. *social systems* could be described as systems whose basic operation is *communication*. *Psychic systems* are systems based on *consciousness*. In the living systems, life is possible because the biochemical structures in a cell makes operations that functions as *programmes* (the enzymes) for rebuilding structures and operations. This circular framing makes systems determined by their structure. In the systems theory presented here, “poiésis” is the production of a “work”, and the concept autopoiesis¹² covers the fact that a **system** is produced by its own **structure** of operations, and the structure is produced by its **operations**. This circular process is ruptured by time. Luhmann relates¹³ that the biologist Humberto Maturana in the 1980'ies came to the concept of autopoiesis by way of a philosopher friend who explained the difference between Aristotle's concepts “práxis” and “poiésis”. “Práxis”, according to Aristotle, is an action whose meaning lies in the very action. It is done because it in itself is satisfying and without any necessary results. “Poiésis”, on the contrary, was an action that produced something external to itself, a “work”. In poiesis actions are directed towards production. A **system** is its own **work**; **operations** are the condition for **the production of operations**.

The concept of autopoiesis is easily both under- and overrated. It is overrated if one thinks that the concept explains how the fundamental operations in different systems are

¹² Maturana, Humberto R.: “Autopoiesis” In: Zeleny, Milan (ed.) (1981) *Autopoiesis: A theory of Living Organizations*. North Holland, New York (p. 21-32).

¹³ Luhmann, Niklas (2001), p.

functioning. It does not. It is underrated if one misses the ontological and epistemological point: The ontological tradition presumes that something from the surrounding world penetrates into the perceiver, and that the surroundings are mirrored, imitated, or simulated inside the perceiving system. The thesis of autopoiesis points us to the fact that a system creates its own boundaries and thus differentiates itself from the surroundings. At a first glance, it might seem trivial that a system cannot operate in its surroundings, that its operations always must be applied *inside* the system. If system specific operations could take place in the surroundings, it would ruin the distinction between system and surrounding. By a closer look though, it is surprising that a system cannot use its own operations to connect with the surrounding world.

With a radical wording you could say, that cognition only is possible because there are no connection, no operative connection to the surrounding world. ... Cognition is not only possible *in spite of*, but rather *because* the system is operatively closed.¹⁴ (Einf p.93)

This does in no way imply that the system is without possible links to the surroundings. Such links are structural couplings: alterations or modifications of system-internal operations and expectations due to observations of other systems in the surrounding. Now, why do we need these specifications? They are necessary in the development of a general dramaturgical theory because we want to avoid the ontological claim that it is “the way of the world”; that structures “exist” that “produces similarities everywhere”, while that is “how nature is created”. Claims, which Barba, in some cases, is on the verge of subscribing to. Autopoiesis can be generalized in the sense, that living systems, social, and psychic systems each have their distinctive basic operations. Social systems operate with

14 Luhmann, Niklas (2002): *Einführung in die Systemtheorie*. Carl Auer Verlag, Heidelberg. P. 93. “Wenn man radikal formuliert, kann man sagen, dass Erkenntnis nur möglich ist, weil es keine Beziehungen, keine operative Beziehungen zur Umwelt gibt. ... Erkenntnis ist nicht nur möglich obwohl, sondern weil das System operativ geschlossen ist.”

communication, not with chemical or physical phenomenon. So when describing art processes and works of art, it is unavoidable to implement a concept of communication.

The organizing principle for the performance is, according to Barba, best expressed as a *logic* that presents itself as a texture:

On the one hand, we have the dramaturgy of the performance as plot, as a weaving of different threads in a concatenation and simultaneity of different actions or episodes; on the other, we have the simultaneous presence in depth of different layers, each endowed with its own logic and peculiar way of manifesting its life. (p.10)

On the level of organic dramaturgy, Barba works with the composition of physical and vocal actions of the actors, costumes, objects, music, sounds, lights, and spatial features. In continuation of the concept of work presented earlier, we would, according to the systems theoretical dramaturgy, speak of dramaturgy as concerned with selections in the operation of communication. **Therefore, the *organic dramaturgy* would in our terms be the selection of "form", of utterance.** Working on the level of narrative dramaturgy Barba deals with intertwining of events, which orientate the spectators about the meaning(s) of the performance. Here it is work with characters, stories, texts, events, and iconographic references. **We would describe *the narrative dramaturgy* as concerned with selection of "information"**. Finally, on the level of evocative dramaturgy it is a question of capturing the performance's unintentional and concealed meaning, specific for each spectator. This level is singled out as different from the other two as far as it is *the goal*: the performance's way of "touching the personal superstitions, the taboos, and the wounds of the spectator" (p.10). We would agree that it is special, as **the *evocative dramaturgy* deals with the selection of "understanding"**. The evocative dramaturgy makes the spectator live in a "change of state."

It was in the wake of this re-description it dawned on me, that one of the possible ways in which to reconstruct dramaturgy, could be formalized in a theory of the recursive interdependence of the three selections of communication. The selection of information is informed by an idea about the form and the expected understanding. The selections mutually force each other into preferring specific kind of selections. All works of art have their own preferences for specific selections of information. The selection of information reduces the possible kind of utterances, and points at the kind of understanding that would be privileged by the chosen elements of information.

The discovery of this re-entry of selections in selections came as the result of an error. In my second reading of Barba’s book I suddenly wondered why, on page 12, Barba mentions “perspectives” in the part where the three *levels* are described. I thought I might have misread the text, and overlooked something. That maybe Barba made a distinction between levels and perspectives. So I read it again, and could suddenly see that maybe the empty ritual could be perspective on the level of the evocative dramaturgy. I could even construct a nice cross tabling of the idea. When I returned to Barba’s text again, I realised I had made an error. But after some further scrutiny of my table I realised, that this error contained an obvious logic: if dramaturgy is a science of communication of communication, this re-entry is of central importance. So here is the table illustrating the dramaturgy of Odin Theatre:

	Utterance (form)	Information	Understanding
ORGANIC form of utterance	DYNAMIC REAL ACTION	The utterance must allow several information to coexist in polyphony	Understanding is made manifest only as a shadow of coherence
NARRATIVE information	Information must always consist of several contradictory	OVERTURNING NON-CLOSEURE	Understanding is relative to the spectator not to the

	information.		information
EVOCATIVE changing state of understanding	Utterance must provide powerful and irrational images	Information is hinted at, the individual spectator can choose	THE EMPTY RITUAL

Barba is of course aware that the attempt to analyse communication is indeed a process of selections.

In the reality of the performance, the narrative dramaturgy engraved itself on the organic one and the two were inseparable. But during rehearsals I could practically and conceptually separate them in two adjoining roads. Thus these two paths were simultaneously present each with its own logic, and started to collaborate in an unplanned way, combining precision (necessity) and chance (unpredictability). (p 98)

Therefore, the demand on information was not to expose one clear story, but provide means to entangle many different storylines (threads) in the narrative. In the rehearsals, Barba takes great care not to dismantle the integrity of each actor's organic material. This is where the "knots" become paradigmatic in the sense that a "synthesis of contradictory information in a convincing sensory form" (p.99) was developed. In terms of understanding it should be clear that information and utterance must avoid any simple manifest meaning to occur. The latency of meaning in the empty ritual is the prerequisite for spectators changing states.

By re-describing Barba's theory of dramaturgy in three levels as an operative way of identifying the three selections in communication we have only reached the first step of an overall understanding of Barba's theory. Our theory of dramaturgy insists on a re-description of the semantics of the aesthetic hierarchy, be it in a work, an oeuvre, or in a reflective theory, in order to extract the ex- or implicit understanding of the artistic and creative process, of the theatre "traditions", and of the intended relation to art system and society.

The Semantic of the Empty Ritual

We have seen how the first step of a dramaturgical analysis could concentrate on the communication of the performance, in order to understand what values inform the artistic work. We do agree with Barba in focussing the question of dramaturgy on the relation between director and actors, and thus on the relation between the spectator and the performance. When analysing a *reflective* theory we are especially interested in semantics i.e. the linguistic reservoirs of condensed meanings that are used to regulate these relations. To put it a bit more concrete: in theatre, as well as in any other organisation, decisions are made continually. Decisions are the autopoietic operations that produce an organisation¹⁵. In the time just before a decision is made there are many possibilities for actions and experiences to choose between, but once a decision is made there are certain specific expectations chosen, and they regulate any future action or experience in the organisation. If no decisions are made, the organisation will evaporate. So when a director asks an actor to behave in a special way, the decision maker decides what kind of behaviour is considered meaningful in the artistic process. The actors need to accept this meaning. How does the director/organisation make this acceptance meaningful? It goes without saying, that power is included in any of these decisions. If you want to stay as a member of the organisation, you must accept the rules, or risk exclusion. Given that the relationship is not based on a pure power relation, there must be other types of arguments. Spectators could be considered "guest" in the organisation. In theatre no one is forced to join a performance. So how will the theatre organisation persuade the spectator to use her time and money on visiting a performance? What is the offer? What is the semantic attached to this line of reasoning? Our analysis will probably elucidate how the theatre conceive itself vis-à-vis other theatres and society. Let us continue the investigation of the dramaturgical principles at the Odin Theatre.

¹⁵ Luhmann, Niklas (1987): *Organisation und Entscheidung*,

The artistic creative process between director and actor

It is important, Barba emphasizes, to understand that

...dramaturgy is not a *single* technique, but merges the different techniques of the theatre. And, finally, dramaturgy identifies with the person who does the merging, with his or her biography. (p. 215)

Hence the biographical story weaved into the book on dramaturgy. In this way an important point is made: there will be no Odin Theatre performances when Barba no longer directs. "Tradition doesn't exist. I am a tradition-in-life." (p. 203). The special flavour of the performances depends on the creator and his personal biography. As director Eugenio Barba has the final cut. His is the choices that establish the performances in all their ambiguity.

Often, at the origin of a creative path, there is a *wound*. In the exercise of my craft I have revisited this intimate lesion to deny it, question it or simply be near it. It had little to do with aesthetics, theories, with the wish to express myself or to communicate with others. This *wound necessity* has acted as an impulse to remain close to the boy I was, and from whom time removed me, pushing me in a world of constant change. (p. 1)

Where the concrete wound and its conscious components has nothing to do with aesthetics or a wish to express, the *assumption of its existence* and function within the artistic process is indeed a matter of aesthetics and theory. The premise that in artistic creation there must always be an impulse, something that informs the wish to speak, is an assumption Barba accepts and refutes in this paragraph. The *wound* is there, and it will always be there, as it is an integral part of our consciousness. Whether it is turned into an impulse for the artistic process is another matter. We do, however, get the clear picture that an art without wound necessity, will lead to indifference. When art is made out of necessity and not as mere obligation, it is driven by the energy generated in the process of confronting memory. When we remember, we actualize feelings connected to the past, but our here-and-now feelings also evaluate the feelings from the past. Is it a pleasant or an unpleasant memory?

Barba's theory on dramaturgy contains a very exact description of the prerequisites for an artistic process: The main "fertile zone" of an artistic process can only be entered by the gateways of memory. It requires us to register our present feelings towards the past situations and its emotions. "Memory no longer belongs to what we were; it is no longer sentiment, but flesh and blood. It is an integral part of what we are and will be." (p.173). If we manage to let memory become an active part of ourselves, we have entered the "humid zone" that separates the "cold" distanced way of remembering from the "torrid zone" of the creative process. The torrid zone is a zone we only reach in rare cases. As I understand it, the humid zone allows us to confront our memories and register how our feelings at present moment react towards the memories and the past feelings connected with them. If a memory is unpleasant, we tend to turn away from them, eager to obtain pleasure and not pain. In the torrid zone however, we confront ourselves with the feelings that can not so easily be valued. Here "extremes meet in an embrace. ... We are dazzled, seduced and sometimes burnt." (p.173). It is the zone of the *wound*. When we enter the torrid zone, we do not know what is going to confront us. It might be pain, it might be pleasure.

The wounds are stories which do not wish to be told. Whenever we try to tell them, they turn their backs on us and distance themselves. [...] Our wounds refuse to be danced or mimed. Perhaps they know their destiny is elsewhere, to be poured into another story, the smokescreen which allows us to evoke and conceal them at the same time. (p.173)

So, wounds are not to be presented, they must remain latent, but they evoke other stories in which they can disappear. To steer the creative process toward the torrid zone, where the important artistic material is accumulated, and then to sculpture out the final complex stories, is the director's craft.

It is not pure coincidence that ignites unexpected meanings, unintended connections and clusters of images that surface from time to time and questions us on things about which we do not want to speak. We have to increase the *probabilities*, especially the unexpected ones, and work meticulously in order to materialise them. (p. 175)

Up to this point the creative process can to a certain extent be described in theoretical frames. But when the artistic process of generating material and composition merges with the biography of the director, it becomes a unique aesthetic expression. When Barba tells the story of a young boy, who at 10 years of age witnessed his father, an Italian fascist General die, who later on is educated in military academies and boarding schools, we get a glimpse of the young boy in Barba's memory. The boy, who began his wandering years at 15, and sailed the world, worked in Norway, studied in Poland with Grotowski, and ended in a small town in rural Denmark to create a world renowned theatre. This story is in itself an adventure. How this story with its wounds, shadows and dark forces is merged with each single day of rehearsal, with every minute of a performance is of course impossible to analyse. However, this is what constitutes the fragrance of a performance by the Odin Theatre. Maybe it would have been better to describe dramaturgy, not as a weave, but as a perfume, Barba reflects (p.202).

The metaphor of the perfume demonstrates an impossibility: the connection between analysis and process doesn't exist. Only a chemical analysis can establish which elements are present in a perfume, and chemical analysis doesn't resemble the operations to create it. (p.205)

The performance is indeed an "intense indivisible unity", a compact communication, we called it earlier. It is important to be clear at this point: Barba is absolutely right in pointing at the impossibility of analysis to reach a description of each *operation* and the choices involved in it. That would require us to access the consciousness of the actors and director. However, another structural connection between analysis and process does exist.

In order to illustrate how these general ideas are active in the minor details of the rehearsal process, let us take a closer look at one example concerning the administration of rules in the rehearsal process. As director Barba has to test each action on his own sensorial system. His wounds and shadows are merged into the process. It has important consequences for the creative process and the power structures in the rehearsal. Barba is convinced, that the

“true tragedy for an actor, is not being able to find in his director an individual to whom he can offer his total trust” (p.205). During rehearsals on the performance *Salt* Eugenio Barba works with Roberta Carreri. She is to speak some lines from a novel that functions as inspirational material. In order to arrive at an expression that avoids “recitation” as well as “conditioned reflexes”, Barba suggests an elaborate scheme: The texts are to be spoken in Italian in the performance. Roberta Carreri is asked to translate the Italian texts into English. She should then make an improvisation on a theme given by Barba and fix it. Then overlay the English text on the fixed improvisation, adapting physical impulses to vocal ones. Finally, she should use the resulting rhythm, intonations, and melody for the Italian text. This scheme was a way to challenge an actor, who had her own strong identity, and had found her personal style. Working together for many years, it is unavoidable that actors from time to time develop mannerisms and clichés. (+ p 66)

How can the director shatter the clichés of an actor who possesses intuition, experience, a capacity to guide herself and is partially aware of her mannerisms? ... In recent years, some of the actors have a tendency to discuss, explain and justify. But I could see their mannerisms and felt obliged to protect the spectator from the déjà-vu. On the other hand, I was incapable of saying directly: you have already served up what you are showing me, in a different sauce, in such and such performances. I strove to give stimulating tasks, but after years and years of work in common my proposals were not always effective. Then I became impatient and irritated. Later I was always unhappy, as if I had slapped a defenceless person. (p.78)

What is at stake here? Why is it not possible to say directly that mannerisms are at work? It seems that something should be kept latent, something that can not be made manifest. Why, and for what reasons? In the terminology of the theory presented here, it is obvious that a theme is made unavailable for the communication in the social system, here including director and actor. With regard to the consciousness of the psychic system, it is a

question of why something is latent¹⁶. We need to distinguish between a) what is unknown, as a result of it not being made a theme for communication, and b) what is unknowable because it is impossible to know (as Aristotle could not know of computers and hence not communicate about them). However, there is a third form of latency. It is knowledge that is latent c) because, if revealed, it would destroy structures or unleash considerable restructurings. The prospect of this blocks consciousness in the psychic system *and* communication in the social system. This structural latency is potentially explosive. So what do we have here? Is it a latency that stems from a well-known, repeated procedure, which merely makes the theme of mannerisms unimportant? I do not believe so. In the quote Barba registers a shameful irritation, the matter is important, so, the latency must be due to functional and structural causes. The experienced actor knows that when Barba asks for new material and responses, it may be because he is unsatisfied, but it might also be because he just had another idea. The actor on her side cannot know what happens inside the psychic system of the director. However, if the director were to state openly, that these new suggestions for improvisations are caused by mannerism, this would clearly suggest that his expectations had not been met. Why then, is latency so important? It may be due to the fact that the *structural basis* for the rehearsal process consists of a very delicate balance of power and mutual trust. Barba has, as director, the privilege of assembling the performance. He works with each actor individually (at first) and the agreement is that each actor places his or her material at the director's disposal. They have their own inner stories and motivations, which make their score. Barba has his story as director that is constructed with different spectators in mind, but also from his own personal impulses. For the actor to invent and fix material, never knowing how it is going to be used, calls for an immense mutual trust and loyalty. The actor deposits some of their freedom with the director. This explains why actors trying to discuss and justify might jeopardize the delicate balance. *The structural necessity behind the idea of the ordered Disorder and the*

¹⁶ Luhmann, Niklas (1987): SS, p.

consequential power structure cannot be negotiated in every rehearsal, if at all. It must remain an implicit law, a rule, and a taboo. So if Barba started to argue and justify his judgement, so could the actors. It could well be that Barba's own judgements were infected with mannerisms, seen from the perspectives of the actors. Consequently, such judgements must be avoided. The need for a tacit understanding of the basic structure is communicated beneath the surface of this little incident.

If we step up a level in generalization, the incident could be described as an example of how the Odin Theatre, as an organisation, has developed its own rules. The *decision* that Eugenio Barba as director has the final say in the composition of a performance, is a rule that establishes a *clear set of expectations* to both actor and director. The director makes the decisions and the actors are addressees. Any discussion of this rule would unleash an endless discussion as to who was right about mannerism being at stake. Endless, because decisions in the end will prove paradoxical: meaning is a mechanism that is self-referential. The paradox of the art-system: "And art is art, because it is art (or because someone says it is art)" is a way to *blur the ultimate paradox*: meaning refers to itself as meaningful. We saw in chapter 1, that organisations develop their own semantics in order to make communication possible, and to avoid this ultimate paradox. At the Odin Theatre we find a situation, where "in recent years, some of the actors have a tendency to discuss, explain and justify". However, they should not doubt their director, because for Barba it is a "true tragedy" if an actor, is unable "to find in his director an individual to whom he can offer his total trust". It could be reiterated as a confirmation of the semantics of expectations addressed towards actors and directors implanted in the organisation. Our systems theoretical dramaturgical question is: What type of symbolic generalized medium is used to shape this semantic? What makes the actors hand over part of their freedom to the director? How does the director explain to himself and his actors that these are the necessary expectations to actions and way of experiencing?

An organisation needs to know how to express its own *raison d'être*. For a theatre it is important to be able to explain what its spectators should experience, and how the performance could make a difference that makes a difference. Let us therefore make another investigative detour on our way towards an analysis of the semantic constructions.

Disorder in the spectator

One of the reasons why the book on directing and dramaturgy has been under production for 14 years is, according to Barba, that he started imagining dramaturgy as a theatrical technique (p.215). However, dramaturgy is much more:

The dramaturgy doesn't concern only the composition of a performance. It is a struggle not to be expelled from the present and the refusal of hell. Hell would be to feel at home in my time. (p.211)

Theatre should reveal itself as Disorder: as an "irruption of an estranged and intensified reality which upset the points of reference of my daily existence". (p.210)

Theatre is a tool...

...to make incursions into zones of the world which seemed beyond my reach: incursions into unknown lands which characterise the vertical immaterial reality of the human being; and incursions into the horizontal space of human bonds, of social circles, of the relationships of power and politics, in the daily reality of this world in which I live, and to which I don't want to belong. [...] On one side, the external world: with its rules, vastness, incomprehensible and seductive zones, its evil and chaos; on the other, the inner world with its continents and oceans, its folds and alluring mysteries. (p. 210)

In this paradoxical double movement of withdrawal and attack, of incursions and irruptions we find the basic artistic impulse behind Barba's theatre. Art, here theatre, furnishes tools, paths and alibis for these incursions, that allows artistic work to irrupt and shake the spectator, and his or hers habits, superstitions, values and points of references in the daily reality. This is what art should do, according to Barba. It is the positive value on top of the aesthetic hierarchy. My dramaturgical hypothesis is that there might be contingency and uncertainties, but in a work of art there will always be a certain uncertainty that keeps appearing, a necessity that informs the broken stories, the polyvalent metaphors. It has to do with certain beliefs about the world as expressed in the work of art. In Barba's work and in his reflective theory, the world appears as meaningless and malevolent, as a place that is painful and unrewarding. It is accompanied by a reoccurring impulse to insist on one kind of complementarity: within goodness, you will always find evil. Within evil you will meet goodness. The world is in this sense unreliable and unpredictable. We have routines, schemas, and habits for our behaviours and actions that all contributes to reduce the complexity of communication. For Eugenio Barba it is important that art deliberately disturbs these habits, and makes us see the world in a new way. The major project that Barba undertakes is to create an artistic communication that changes the spectator's state of mind. What does that mean? What kind of states are we talking about?

Eugenio Barba suggests that the performance should be "touching the personal superstitions, the taboos, and the wounds of the spectator" (p.10). Let us explore what it means for the spectator to look for the challenge in opening or reopening "wounds".

I am sure that theatre will always have men and women among its spectators who will look for the indirect exposure of wounds similar to their own. Or wounds which, although apparently healed, have an obscure need to reopen themselves." Barba, 2010, p. xvi.

In this quote, Barba combines wound with aesthetic experience. Wounds are not normally combined with pleasure but with pain and repulsion. How is the function of addressing the wound conceived?

I wanted my performance to inflame the memory of the spectators and caress a wound in that part within them which lived in exile. The spectator had the right to be cradled by the thousand subterfuges of entertainment, by the pleasure of the senses and the stimulation of the intellect, by emotional immediateness and aesthetical refinement. But the main point was the transfiguration of the ephemeral performance into a virus which took root in him, provoking a particular way of seeing: an upside-down look, one which was addressed towards the interior. [...] Disorder (with a capital D) irrupts, and the performance becomes an empty ritual because it has burst its chains: theatre-in-liberty. (p.185)

One notices the metaphoric language of inflammation, wound, and virus. The Disorder should be like a disease that affects the perception of the spectator and permits a travel with theatre-in-liberty. The spectator might thus experience a change of state, from a "healthy", normalized perception of the world, towards the "illness" of the upside-down perception. Here the theatre seems to serve a purpose of transfiguration and liberation. The spectator's inner exiled experiences, should become a fertile soil in which the new "upside-down" virus could grow, maybe resulting in a new perception of the world. It is in order to achieve this that the performance must have the particular form and the actors act in those specific ways. Dissemination of meaning remove from the spectator any "easy way out" (that is unless we are dealing with a "lazy spectator"); confronted with him-self he must trust the performance and consult his own wounds.

Let us address the concept of the wound. Together with concepts like 'shadow' and 'dark forces' it suggests a reading of C.G. Jung. Barba points at him once:

Thousand and One Nights, Freud's psychoanalysis, Jung's analytical psychology and cultural anthropology all show how narration – mythos in Greek – may help to save the life of the individual and a society. Men and

women, children and adults, all need stories to orient themselves in the world. (p. 88)

Jung's idea on wounds, shadows and dark forces was established with the purpose of describing how our consciousness works. According to Jung there are dark spots in our memory that we tend to avoid. These spots become shadows. If we do not confront our shadows, they will grow stronger, darker and threaten to dissolve an otherwise coherent consciousness. The shadow is between darkness and light. He, who dares to step in between his shadow and the darkness, will discover the light.

To confront a person with his Shadow is to show him his own light. Once one has experienced a few times what it is like to stand judgmentally between the opposites, one begins to understand what is meant by the self. Anyone who perceives his Shadow and his light simultaneously sees himself from two sides and thus gets in the middle.¹⁷

It is not my intention to follow this trail in order to determine if and how Jung has inspired Barba. I do however, claim that Wounds and Shadows are concepts connected to the formative idea behind The Empty Ritual. Our own stories get a chance to be told, exactly because the performances of Odin Theatre do *not* offer any explicit stories. On the contrary, we are vehemently denied any causal relations. So, we as spectators, must find our own stories, actively join the creative process ourselves, and that means to be prepared to confront our own wounds and maybe perceive the Shadow and then the Empty Ritual may lead to a glimpse of light.

Odin Theatre: origins and an empty throne.

Our origins are to be found in what moves away from us. They don't come before, but afterwards. They don't belong to the past, but to the future (p.190).

¹⁷ Jung, C.G. (1970): *Civilization in Transition*, p 463. Jung, C.G. *Collected Works*, vol. 10, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

In this paradoxical way origins become future. So for Barba, origins are for instance the many hundred groups in South America who insist on creating another young theatre, deeply inspired by the Odin Theatre (p.208).

Origin is a mental state. It is linked to transition, to the need to refuse to belong to a culture, a nation, an ideology. Transition is the permanent path of de-familiarisation and extraneousness. [...] Transition is the consequence of an instinct which is present only in a few. My origin is this: the instinct to separate myself from my native home, from the ideas that gave certainty to my parents, from the criteria giving sense to my actions and from the prejudices I call values. [...] Origin is not 'something' or 'somewhere' from which I move away; it is a hive of dark forces which I stubbornly stay close to. The *maîtres fous* of the twentieth century theatre remained close to their origins using the art of fiction (p. 208)

Theatre has during its many thousands years of existence developed many different ways to address society. At times theatre was tolerated as entertainment for nobility and plebs, but actors were considered outcasts. Lessing and Schiller called for theatre to be the court that judged the vices and injustices of their time. This possibility is no longer at hand for theatres. Their voices are not strong enough.

Theatre no longer possesses a voice capable of reaching the ears of an entire city. It doesn't frighten anyone as a possible enemy of power and public morality. And no reasonable person expects that its effectiveness can stir up a general change of mentality (p.xix).

In the twentieth century theatre "seemed destined to perish" because of this inadequacy. However, some theatre people managed to make the surrounding society recognise theatre as a cultural good to be protected.

Our profession is art, they claimed, and managed to get it subsidised and safeguarded as a valuable national legacy. On the other [hand], while this change of mentality was taking place, a few men and women established archipelagos of small autonomous theatrical islands. [...] It is a negligible minority, capable nevertheless of opening its own path into new territories and escaping the customary enclosures of commercial theatre and traditional artistic performances. (p. 111)

This was the great reform of the twentieth century, “the theatres ‘big-bang’ (p.202). The generation of many small theatre laboratories took shape, and formed a theatrical tradition where no single form could claim to be the most important. Many small nomadic traditions were generated.

They didn’t belong to a culture or a nation. A totem was at the origin of each of them, an actor or a director who, borne by a deep personal need, had invented superstitions and techniques to give life to it. These superstitions and techniques were embodied in individuals. They travelled, proliferated by contagion and spread the ‘plague’, indifferent to frontiers, fashions and impositions of history p.202.

From Stanislavski to Grotowski they created an “island of freedom and a shelter from the spirit of the time” (ibid). So this is the tradition to which Eugenio Barba and the Odin Theatre belongs. Totem was an object (as an animal or plant) serving as the emblem of a family or clan and often as a reminder of its ancestry; a person or a thing representing an idea.

I have often told my actors that a magnificent performance doesn’t change the world, but a performance which leaves one indifferent and seem generated by indifference makes it uglier. [...] A mediocre or indifferent performance doesn’t make the world more obscene than it is. For the spectators, nothing is removed or added, and it soon fades from their memory. But a lukewarm commitment remains indelible in my and my actors’ nervous system. [...] If I dilute my longing for *excellence*, I erode and impoverish my working process, the capacity for discovering energies buried within me and reacting to the surrounding reality. In such case, the tepid work tarnishes those who perform and accustoms them to indifference of the world. (p.1)

The idea behind the Odin Theatre is to produce performances that speak to the world in a special tongue. A language of theatrical excellence, powered by the experiences of the exiled, a language that speaks to each spectator (not the audience, seen as a broad mass), in a mixture of all senses, with music, costumes, words, movements, an sounds, which

presents a perfume of illusions and a magical Disorder, not translatable into univocal causal stories, but demanding of the spectator a creative effort to connect and develop individual meanings. The language is incoherent, it disseminates meaning yet it creates associations.

The values and preferences in the work of Eugenio Barba come across quite strongly: the work of art should avoid unequivocal enunciations. In order to achieve this, certain ways of working with the actors in the rehearsals are preferred so the surface of the performance becomes an ambiguous, empty ritual, allowing the spectators to construct their own images and meanings. The dramaturgy is used as a tool to avoid closure, but simultaneously to build complex actions into sequences of elusive order. We have seen that the effect of the ambiguous work upon the spectator could be described as a chance to perceive perception. A nomadic clan and its totem, wounds, dark forces and superstitions: an empty ritual. This is the image of a theatre and its *raison d'être*. But what is it all about? In the exact middle of the book, Eugenio Barba makes an ironic gesture towards classical dramaturgy (i.e. the concept midpoint or Gustav Freytag's 'höhepunkt', where the tragic hero's luck changes from "steigerung" to "fall"), and asks the question: For a theatre that follows such a path towards an aim and a centre, for a theatre "which knows that it is pretending and does not pretend to know [;] what is the centre?" The answer comes in form of a story about an Italian missionary Jesuit and mathematician, Ricci Matteo, who in 1601, after 20 years of preparation in China, finally enters the gates of Peking in order to meet Him, who is at the centre of the Celestial Empire. Together with thousand of others he performs all the rituals:

He advances towards the throne, kneels and bends down, touching the earth with his forehead. For a second he lifts his eyes: the throne is still empty. He has been unlucky. The emperor will appear to the bows of the others. (p.122)

But, no, none of the many thousands meets the emperor: "an empty throne – the centre."

This story, Barba declares, explain everything, yet, he is unable to say why. Buddhists wisdom has it, that he who seeks must be lead into a radical self-identification with the empty nature of reality. The Universe is a continuously floating whole, where everything exists in dependence upon everything else around it. Now, whatever superstitions we might want to deduct from this, one thing remains clear: the centre is empty. There is no such thing as a finite signifier, no last reference.

Religio – to bind back (...to God)

I have throughout this presentation quoted extensively from Barba's book in order to share its language and images. We must now make an attempt to suggest a reading of the semantic applied here. Semantic should be understood as a form of communication that condense certain words, values, meanings and confirm them as something, that should be remembered. Semantics are, in other words, structures that identify important meanings. Semantics are prerequisites for the evolution of ideas. Semantic structures are mechanisms that supply observations and descriptions of evolution of systems with appropriate differences¹⁸. When analysing reflexion theories it is important to note, that semantics are dependent on the functional system they are connected with. So in our case, the arts system develops a reflective theory that, when it is at its best, combines intelligible reasoning on art and theatre with a controlled sensibility towards possible variations, a willingness to test consistency, and openness towards controversies. It should be noted, once again, that a reflective theory can not observe the central difference it uses itself. It can not observe itself without a paradox collision. When observed from a second order it is possible to point at the initial difference. That is what the scientific operation and observation aims at. The scientific theory observes how ideas are set in motion, and follows the evolution of ideas to describe the continued reconversion of society.

¹⁸ Luhmann, Niklas GdG , Bd I p 538 f. and Bd II p. 979ff

My hypothesis is that the semantic incorporated in the poetic programme of Barba's theatre is closely linked with the symbolic generalised medium we find in the religious system¹⁹.

It is undeniable that I have integrated my private experiences in the artistic work. By turning them into theatrical fiction, today I can affirm that the intensity of this process of transformation has transformed me into another person. *Theatrical experiences are not of the same quality as religious ones, yet they belong to the same species.* (p. 111) [my italics]

Let us try to understand in what way theatrical and religious experiences could be said to belong to the same species. First of all it is important to emphasize that in this discussion religion should not be associated with miscellaneous esoteric or arcane systems of belief, as we know them from the religious system and its diverse programmes i.e. Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, but religion should be understood as a generalized form of meaning. Here, I follow Niklas Luhmann when he designate to religion a specific way of observing. As we have seen (chap1&2 p.xx yy) observation is only possible when a distinction makes an indication possible. This provides us with an observable "marked space", and leaves us with a vast "unmarked space" into which the ending horizon of the world withdraws, it remains transcendent. The transcendent alter its position with each and every attempt to cross the border with new distinctions and indications.

Sie [transcendens] ist immer präsent als Gegenseite zu allem Bestimmten, ohne je erreichbar zu sein. Und eben diese Unerreichbarkeit „bindet“ den Beobachter, der sich selbst ebenfalls der Beobachtung entzieht, an das, was er bezeichnen kann. *Die Rückbindung des Unbezeichnenbaren an das Bezeichnenbaren – das ist, in welcher kulturellen Ausformung immer, im weitesten Sinne „religio“.* (Gdg bd. 1, p. 232) [my italics]

¹⁹ This reading inspired by Aakerstrøm, Qvortup and Nikolaj Kaare. They are excellent examples of innovative ideas as to "applied Luhmann", a discipline, which Denmark is internationally well ahead in. The central source is of course: Luhmann, Niklas () religion der gesellschaft.

In Latin ,religio' means to tie (or bind) back, and where religion is concerned, back to God. The idea to bind what *can not be indicated to indications* is found at the core of the semantic structures in Barba's performances and in his concept of dramaturgy. Let me illustrate this point by recalling some of the central formulations in the reflective theory.

The centre, the empty throne could be seen as an example of an indication: the throne, binding back to what can not be told, or indicated: the meaning of the Celestial Empire. At the very centre of a structure is the initial difference that generates the structure. We can not observe this difference; it is the blind spot in every operation. Ricci Matteo was confronted with the paradox of all religions, you simply have to *believe*, because you will never see it for yourself; never have absolute proofs or certainty. We are made aware that our longing for the final meaning, will never be met. Towards this you can adopt several different attitudes: you might find that you are left with no other choice than to jump in to the deep of the "70.000 favne" Kierkegaard mentions²⁰, and start to believe! Or, you might prefer to accept the fact that meaning are relative to the differences we use to conjure up meaning. Then an unavoidable relativism sneaks in. You might enjoy that and follow the lines of flight and an upbeat tempo in de-territorialising, disseminating meaning (post-structuralism: Derrida, Deleuze). Or, you might accept relativism, yet recognize the necessity of reducing complexity for local purposes (i.e. pragmatism, Richard Rorty or systems theory, Niklas Luhmann). In our second order observation of the reflexive theory, we are able to observe that the central values in a semantic could always be replaced by another, the values are contingent. In Barba's text *The Empty Ritual, Wounds, Superstitions, and Dark Forces* are metaphors pointing at the unobservable. We should not

²⁰ Kierkegaard, Søren (1845): *Stadier på Livets vei*. SKS (collected Works) vol. 6, p. 411, Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter bd. 1-28 1997-2013, Gads Forlag, København. On danish: "Aands-Existentis, især den religieuse, er ikke let; den Troende ligger bestandigt paa Dybet, har 70,000 Favne Vand under sig."

speak about our superstitions, says Barba. They have to remain latent, to stay in what we can not see. The manifest performance then, might bind us back to these beliefs.

Religio in director actor relations

We saw how wounds, for Barba, are important impulses in the creative process. Wounds are stories that can be evoked and concealed at the same time. Wounds are a re-entry schema, which remain unobservable even though the performance text evokes them. They are personal and as such they must remain latent, they can not be communicated in the rehearsal process. The director's artistic decisions must never be challenged or questioned by the actor. Hence the inability to discuss "mannerism" in the rehearsal process. The actor must trust the director 100%, she must *believe* in the director.

Unfortunately there are no objective criteria to measure the quality or the efficacy of the organic effect in theatrical actions. The actor must trust the director's reactions. What is inert for me could be alive for another director and vice versa. (p.67)

In other words, directors' judgements are contingent; they could always be made differently, although not by this specific director. So the organisation expects the actor to behave in such a way that the decisions of the director in the rehearsal process should not be doubted or discussed. There are no guaranties, no objective way to qualify the director's call for "real actions". The actor must therefore rely on the director in order to be a part of the theatre, and so the actors did, "they were even prepared to surrender their autonomy, mixing it intimately with mine and that of their colleagues." The work in the rehearsal room was like a "defenceless child that had to be protected from private conflicts".

At Odin Teatret, dramaturgy didn't only embrace the techniques to compose a performance. It also involved a web of motivations, relationships, tacit norms and superstitions: an environment-in-life" (p. 206)

This web describes the symbolic generalized media that makes work at the Odin Theatre appear as meaningful. It is by replacing empirical logic ways of observing the world with this web as a new frame that gives the Odin Theatre power to generate meaning in the world, to let the unobservable be bestowed with meaning. What the religious system calls “faith” – in order to part the world into believers and non-believers – is here a web of expectations and “superstitions” that determines inclusion in the organisation. This then, is our answer to the question²¹ to the kind of symbolic generalised media that informs the semantic of the Odin Theatre: it is the symbolic generalised medium of *faith* – as we find it in the religious system. The main motive for director’s and actors’ actions and experiences is the belief in the web described above. It is openly admitted: this can not be argued within empirical or logical terms. This also implies that any critique of empirical/logical kind is invalid and without legitimizing power.

Spectator performance relation

We showed how the spectator must accept the part that is intended for her. She must be prepared to invest her own wounds in creative adaption of the performance. It also means that spectators are divided into those willing to accept and trust the performance’s secrets and volatile orders, and those who distrust it. The spectators are split as Believers and Unbelievers. The constant dissemination of meaning in the performance denies any traditional dramaturgical pleasures of careful designed set-ups and pay-offs, no causality in logical terms is possible. As spectator you must be prepared to invest your self in the creative process. One could rephrase the dramaturgy of an Ibsen play that invites you as spectator to look for the “back-story wound” in the past, in the fable of the play, and say that The Odin Theatre invites you to find back-story wounds in your own past. By doing so, the spectator is activated in the process, and she may experience a “change of state”. Inflamed by the upside-down viruses affluent in the performance’s language, the spectator might become another person, willing to brake with own habits, schemas of everyday

²¹ (p. 37 in this paper)

routines and superstitions. Thus confirming the central idea of the performance: that through the “rite-de-passage”, through wounds and shadows, it is possible to see the light: the empty throne. No empirical or logic causality will lead you to the same cognition. In this way, it is the spectator herself who must bring meaning to the performance, and to the work of the Odin Theatre. She does so by *believing* that there is a meaning with the performance/the organisation that transcends the performance/organisation itself. Or to put it in relational terms: the implicit “spectator that creates meaning” is expected to bring meaning into the organisation and the performance. It is once more the semantic of ‘religio’ that is at work.

Odin Theatre relation to society

When the metaphor of the totem is applied to the “small tradition” of nomadic companies engaged in “the third theatre”, it is another way to express the religious symbolic generalised media of religion. In front of the clan we meet a totem, if not a wooden representation of the animal coupled with the clan, then the person blessed with an idea that provides the theatre clan with its identity. The totem serves as reference for the participants. The “third theatre” is a row of totems, the “maîtres fous” of the twentieth century theatre. The masters and their special ways help theatre to survive and prove meaningful in society. In the arts-system the initial code splits the world in imaginary realities and reality. How can we know that imaginary reality offers us anything that reality doesn’t already give us? The initial difference creates meaning for the arts-system, it can refer to the necessity of an imaginary reality, it can develop different aesthetic programmes to decide how this imaginary reality should be composed in order to be most efficient. As the arts-system observes the world with the difference imaginary reality \times reality, it is unable to observe this difference. This is a paradox. A paradox that covers the ultimate paradox of meaning: that meaning can only point to itself as meaningful. It is meaningful because it gives meaning! The functional differentiation uses diverse types of

“smaller” paradoxes to cover this ultimate paradox. It is the symbolic generalised media that allocates meaning and form to the functional system. For a long while art and theatre were supposed to function as enlightenment of the world, now we find another type of semantic at work. What are the advantages of observing the world (here art) through the symbolic generalised medium religion: faith?

The answer is: the religious system functions in a special way: it includes the ultimate paradox in its own deparadoxication strategy. Where all other systems cover the ultimate paradoxes with other paradoxes – be it the system of law (legal/illegal), the financial system (payment/no payment) or the health system (healthy/sick) the religious system confronts the ultimate paradox, the empty throne, by accepting, that we can not know, and hence we need to believe. A revelation is a glimpse of the transcendent, of the unobservable, and if you have seen the unobservable you return to the immanent world of observables and can now determine what is meaningful and what is not. Religion states it clearly: we can not know that God is there, we can not see him and the way in which he creates meaning, God is transcendent. So when we observe the mundane world we have no way of knowing whether there is meaning or not. This religious paradox is solved by re-entries, with Jesus as a master example. He is a semantic tool to help believers. The distinction immanent <> transcendent is entered into itself on the “inner side” of the distinction. So ‘transcendent’ appears in the immanent. By doing so it is implied that transcendent can be observed in the immanent; thus, what under normal circumstances could not be observed might now be observable. Jesus belongs to both sides at the same time. He is man and he is God. God can be observed. Jesus invests meaning with meaning in the sense that he condones the ultimate difference a specific meaning. And when the Christian church celebrates communion we remember Jesus as human and yet a deity. We drink his blood and eat the bread, the body of Jesus, and incorporate the divine transcendent in our mundane and human body. We need rituals to help us believe, to be able to get a glance of the meaning of

meaning. Now, is Jesus a man or a deity? We can not decide it. This paradox is quite simply the price every religion must pay to solve the ultimate paradox of meaning. Religion makes us see, that only by accepting a paradox are we able to get a glimpse of the transcendent, and thereby get meaningful meaning into the world. So the religious must accept faith as premises for all their expectations towards actions and experiences of the world.

When all this has been said, it is important to avoid any conclusions, as far as The Odin Theatre and Eugenio Barba are concerned, of the kind that would establish equations between any dogmatic traditional religion, and the work of the Odin Theatre. The point made here is that *what we find in the performances and in the organisation, are semantic structures that functions in a way parallel to those of the functionally differentiated system Religion*. Traditional religion is dogmatic and closes meanings on beforehand, using Holy Scriptures, Holy Institution, sacraments etc. The 'religio' we find in the theory of Barba is reflexive. Barba is very careful not to identify any traditional religion (very discrete hints at Buddhism at the most) and not to privilege any special "superstition" or any particular kind of wounds. This is what the spectator is confronted with: she has to look into her own reservoir of wounds and beliefs, examine her own way of constructing meaning-in-life. The re-entry figures are: 1) the "up-side-down" virus that changes *cognition*; 2) an elusive order in Disorder provided by "knots" of *ironic* actions with ambiguous meanings, and 3) a empty ritual, in which, we discover an indication of the transcendent, that provides us with our own power-source to confer meaning to the world.

Last Step: Traces of Tradition in the Aesthetic Hierarchy – and a note on complementarity.

What we claim to have identified is the semantic structuring of the aesthetic hierarchy in the works of Eugenio Barba; it is his version of the dramaturgy of dramaturgies. In his book, Barba exposes the architecture of the “house” of the Odin Theatre. He does so out of a sense of duty to repay his debt to the former masters and his collaborators. The last step in the theory of dramaturgy presented in this dissertation is an attempt to establish threads to other aesthetic hierarchies, to investigate relations to Tradition. This could be done in many different ways. Here, I have chosen to conduct the investigation on the semantic level, and have consequently selected three central semantic fields, all present in the aesthetic hierarchy of Eugenio Barba: *cognition, irony, and difference*. I wish to demonstrate how bits of semantic structures from former poetic programmes, find their way into Barba’s poetics, where they create a tension. My hypothesis is that Barba uses the concept of *complementarity* to overrule these tensions, whereby he eliminates the problem of incompatibility.

Cognition

Since the middle of the eighteenth century, Modern art has had to explain what its purpose was, and why it formed a functional differentiated system amongst many other systems. What could art offer that no other system in society could? One of the first important semantics of aesthetic was occupied with presenting art as another way of seeing the world, art and cognition had to find a way of coexisting. Our first part of this comparison takes us back to Lessing and Kant. In order not to drown in the immense material, I have chosen to focus on Lessing’s dramaturgical theory of “Mitleid”: where he discusses compassion or empathy as moral guidelines, and has his own difficulties choosing between rationalist or sensualist explanations. In Kant’s arguments on “Das Erhabene”: the sublime, we see how he combines the empirical with the rational, in an impressive system in a call for reason. My main point is to show how art tried to integrate moral reason, and knowledge of truth in its aesthetic hierarchies, thereby borrowing

semantic structures from the symbolic generalized media “truth” – or the system of science that established itself at the same time using the initial difference: truth > < untruth.

Where Lessing insisted upon pity as the only passion available for the spectator, he also carefully avoids telling his audience how they should react upon their pity²². Lessing did not believe in theatre that had the state as object: “ein Staat ist ein viel zu abstrakter Begriff für unsere Empfindungen”²³. He wanted the moral impact on the spectator to be rooted in the feelings. It is an ancient European dualism: reason > feeling, and we have lived with it since Plato. Lessing fights the dualism as best he can. Lessing believed it was possible to change the moral perception of the audience by appealing to their pity and empathy, without involving truth in the matter. Has this any influence on our reading of the reflective theory of Eugenio Barba? I do believe so. If we carefully avoid any simplifying comparison of two theories more than 250 years apart, we might recognise a parallel in terms of how a performance is supposed to affect the spectator. Barba insists on talking to the spectators’ senses through the wounds displayed in the performance, and the personal wounds actualized by witnessing. Barba carefully avoids any clear messages in the performance in terms of suggesting what the spectator should do with this disturbance. His hopes are that by keeping the wounds alive, and inseminating a grain of the up-side-down way of observing the world, they will enable a ‘clandestine revolution under the open sky’. Lessing found that pity might open the spectator towards evaluating the socio-political circumstances and their impact on the spectator. Lessing was pointing at bourgeois families; he fabricated stories that could show tragic fables. The figures appearing in Barba’s theatre are rare mixtures of archetypical elements in history, they tell no explicit stories, and so, on this level we identify an immense difference between the two aesthetic hierarchies as the result of major changes in socio-political conditions. But the

²² See the more detailed analysis in Chapter 2: Reconstructing Modern Dramaturgy, p.xx-yy

²³ Lessing, G.E. () : *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, part 14.

similarities are hidden in the common belief in stimulating the spectator in the sensitive area of her consciousness, and through 'pity' or 'Disorder' to provoke the *cognition*. This common thread between the two theories become of extra importance, because the appeal to reason and moral becomes stronger and stronger. Partly due to a man, who managed to give his own solution to a dialectical uplifting of the intellect/feeling dualism.

In the 1780'ies, Kant (1724-1802) provided the world with arguments that supported Lessing's fight for enlightenment, but he did so by subsuming feeling and intellect under the category of reason. Kant would show us, that reason included and subsumed the true, the good, and the beautiful. Given the immense amount of literature on the aesthetic of Kant, I have chosen to focus on one element, directly relevant to our discussion with Barba: the sublime (das Erhabene). To put that specific discussion in perspective, we need to remind ourselves of Kant's enormous importance and influence on European thinking. It can be explained approximately by pointing at the fact that at the time of Kant, cognition and reason indeed had a monstrous job to do: after the fall of the stratified, absolutistic society, no simple guidelines for the individual existed. When society fell apart, and no immediate new forms appeared, how should and could the individual cope? Kant's answer was: by using his own reason. He even baptised the new member of society: 'subject' and declared that it, at its disposal, had an ultimate weapon: reason. It should be used to free the subject from all the mechanisms of absolutistic suppression, ignorance and self-inflicted immaturity. Kant declared in 1784:

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity²⁴. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. *Sapere Aude!* [dare to know] "Have courage to use your own understanding!"--that is the motto of enlightenment.

²⁴ Dårlig oversættelse af unmundighed.. kommentar?

Kant saw freedom as the ultimate prerequisite for enlightenment. In his short programmatic paper, he advances his thanks to King Friederich, who insisted on giving the people their freedom to choose what religion they wanted. Choice of religion was not a matter for the King and the authorities. If only the people were lifted out of the yoke of autocratic despotism, it would eventually learn to walk by its own reason.

It is so easy to be immature. If I have a book to serve as my understanding, a pastor to serve as my conscience, a physician to determine my diet for me, and so on, I need not exert myself at all. I need not think, if only I can pay: others will readily undertake the irksome work for me. The guardians who have so benevolently taken over the supervision of men have carefully seen to it that the far greatest part of them (including the entire fair sex) regard taking the step to maturity as very dangerous, not to mention difficult.

But if only scholars used their reason in addresses to the public, gradually the people, including even women, would experience freedom. How could Kant guarantee that reason had this strength? How could every subject in this sense become a scholar? In order to answer this question Kant had to invent the transcendental subject. *Kant assumed that the precondition for the possibility of cognition could not be given in cognition itself.* So in order to avoid the paradox of cognition made possible by cognition, Kant introduced the concept of 'a priori' i.e. certain preconditions that should be placed before, a priori, other conditions and thus be an unconditioned condition. Kant declared that these preconditions were transcendent. That was the only way he could explain how cognition was possible, he had to break the paradox: if the consciousness had to analyse itself, then the subject had to be something more than the empirical existing consciousness: there had to be a transcendent subject different from the empirical consciousness²⁵. Knowledge or cognition would before Kant be explained as a truth that was inter-subjective compulsory and possible because all had the same anthropological preconditions their "common sense". So everyone could be

²⁵ Luhmann, Niklas (1990): WdG, p. 127.

included in knowledge. Kant replaced common sense with the *conscious reflection of the conditions that influenced cognition*. This might prove to be the most important element in his thinking. He replaced the focus of analytical attention by shifting it from questions like: “what is cognition?” to “how is cognition possible?” His major system included reflections on three different types of reason: pure reason (theory, question to truth, intellect) *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781); practical reason (questions to moral, reason) *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788); and finally aesthetic reason (questions to sensual reason, feeling) *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790). For Kant the practical reason made social life possible by the way in which we morally judge and value our actions, as such it was more important than pure reason, which on the other side provided the foundation for our critique and understanding of the world. It poses the question how reason and cognition is possible. Dealing with the question of how we make our judgments Kant suggests that our power of judgement is the ability to subsume single events or sensuous perceptions under one common law. Kant saw two possible modes: either a law is already established, and our power of judgement is the ability to see that the single event is an example of the general law (subsuming power of judgement), or, if no law is established, the ability to generate a common law that the single event could be an example of (reflective power of judgement).

When confronted with a work of art one reacts subjectively: one might feel pleasure or pain, and consequently judge something as good or bad art. But because it is subjective, I have no right to claim that my verdict is better than others “Ein jeder hat seinen eigenen Geschmack”²⁶. If this is true, the aesthetic judgement can not be transformed in a rule that would be compelling for everybody else. But another colloquial saying has it: “: “über den Geschmack lässt sich nicht disputieren”, which is to say that it is not possible through specific concepts to prove your aesthetic judgement. Hidden in this saying is the assumption that the verdict might rely on objective reasons, but these reasons can not be

²⁶ Kant, (1996) §56 p.279.

formulated in exact concepts, hence not proven. Between the two positions, Kant adds, one might add a third: "über den Geschmack lässt sich streiten". If to "dispute" means: by the use of given objective concepts to reach definite proof, then to "struggle" might mean: to try to find common ground between two different judgements, but that would still mean that we could find elements in the judgements that were not purely privately validated. So, Kant had established an antinomy:

- 1) THESIS. Das Geschmacksurteil gründet sich nicht auf Begriffen; denn sonst ließe sich darüber disputieren (durch Beweise entscheiden).
- 2) ANTITHESIS. Das Geschmacksurteil gründet sich auf Begriffen; denn sonst ließe sich, ungeachtet der Verschiedenheit desselben, darüber auch nicht einmal streiten (auf die notwendige Einstimmung anderer mit diesem Urteile Anspruch machen).

This contradiction could, according to Kant, only be lifted by claiming that the aesthetic judgement relies on concepts that could be seen as "das übersinnliche Substrat der Menschheit" – the transcendental subject. This procedure is what we since Kant have come to know as: dialectic. That means: lifting a contradiction by showing that a concept on a higher level subsumes the differences (or, one might critically add, that there were no contradiction in the first place). Cognition relies on our "Verstand" – subsuming power of judgement – *intellect* and its ability to find laws in the nature. However, cognition also relies on our "Vernunft" – reflective power of judgement – *reason* that strive after freedom. In its own awkward way even our aesthetic judgement contributes to cognition because it has a freedom of its own kind, and uses our imagination. When our imagination (Einbildungskraft) challenges our intellect, the intellect tries to force the imagination to play with rules and logic, this activity challenges the reason to evaluate the judgements a priori. This schema is also seen at work, when Kant deals with the concept of the sublime: "Das Erhabene": a state of mind that overwhelms the human imagination. Kant makes a distinction between the beautiful "Das Schöne" and the sublime. "Das Schöne" is a state of mind, where reason and imagination can follow each other in a pleasurable way.

However, confronted with the mighty forces of volcanoes and thunderstorms, reason and imagination clashes, and in this clash it becomes possible to think the sublime in its monumentality. The pleasurable (“lust”) perception of the sublime is only possible through the feeling of abhorrence (“unlust”)²⁷.

Schön ist da, was in der bloßen Beurteilung (also nicht vermittelt der Empfindung des Sinnes nach einem Begriff des Verstandes) gefällt. Hieraus folgt von selbst, dass es ohne alles Interesse gefallen müsse. Erhaben ist das, was durch seinen Widerstand gegen das Interesse der Sinne unmittelbar gefällt. [...] Das Schöne bereitet uns vor, etwas, selbst die Natur, ohne Interesse zu Lieben; das Erhabene, es, selbst wider unser (sinnliches) Interesse, hochzuschätzen. (p 193)

With this distinction beautiful/sublime, Kant points at what he conceives as the most central function of aesthetics: *Reason is sublime* as it can fathom the enormity of nature and not allow itself to be repressed by it. In the sublime, it is possible for the subject to be conscious of its own power of reason, and that substantiates freedom. For Kant freedom is the goal of the human kind, and as such a matter for our reason (Vernunft). Our intellect (Verstand) may cognitively be able to grasp the complexity of nature, and find laws. However, the aesthetic judgement invokes freedom as a play, *not* as a law.

...welches die echte Beschaffenheit der Sittlichkeit des Menschen ist, wo die Vernunft der Sinnlichkeit Gewalt antun muss, nur das im ästhetischen Urteile über das Erhabene diese Gewalt durch die Einbildungskraft selbst einem Werkzeuge der Vernunft ausgeübt vorgestellt wird. (p.194)

In this sense art becomes a tool for our reason. Kant manages to provide art with meaning because it makes the individual experience how much reason can do.

²⁷ Kant, Immanuel (1996).: *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, (Einleitung p.94ff and §23 og §29) Werkausgabe, bd X, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp,

Drawing this connection is, again, *not* to say that Barba adopts a Kantian aesthetic. However, when Barba insists that all the aesthetic pleasures of a performance might be given to the spectator (citeret p. 39 i denne), he adds:

But the main point was the transfiguration of the ephemeral performance into a virus which took root in him, provoking a particular way of seeing: an upside-down look, one which was addressed towards the interior.

Then we are faced with an interesting parallel to the sublime that generates “Unlust” or pain in the subject, in order to stir up the reason, wake it from its dependence on habits and the thoughts of everybody else, only to allow a transfiguration of the subject, from being a slave to becoming its own master. The enlightened freedom may be Kant’s goal, but for Barba the idea of intellect, reason, and aesthetic judgment seems to be balanced in another way. The liberty that Barba addresses is not necessarily a moral good. Barba frequently hints at the dark forces, which might uplift or destroy us. So, even though some formulations might appear to coincide, even though the inheritance from Kant still linger in our concepts of the aesthetic, it is important to recognise the differences in values and outlooks. With the British scholar, Raymond Williams, we could say, that the “feeling structure” behind the conventions have changed. As presented in Chapter 2 [Reconstructing Modern Dramaturgy p. xx-zz] this concept can be translated into the concept of different “values at work”. Within the framework of the systems theoretical dramaturgical theory, I would say that feelings are evaluations of expectations connected to certain actions. We attribute meaning to an action by connecting it with an expectation. For Kant, meaning is connected to our reason (moral faculty) and intellect (critical faculty). Even “das Erhabene” in our aesthetic experience is constructed as a “tool” for our reason. Maybe Barba puts it differently, but the “upside-down” perspective is also a “tool” for our perception of the world. It goes to show how an evolution of reflection theories can be observed and accordingly how similarities and differences can be brought forward to shed light upon different aesthetic hierarchies. Let us demonstrate this with a last example.

Das begriff des Subjekts schließt niemanden aus und eignet sich dadurch als Symbol für eine nicht mehr ständisch differenzierte Inklusion. Jeder ist Subjekt, jeder also kann sich selbst zu der Einsicht befähigen, die ihn mit anderen Subjekten in derselben Gegenstandsauffassung verbindet. [...] Der Begriff des Subjekts schließt, anders gesagt, Exklusion aus der Inklusion aus. WdG p. 351

With the idea of a transcendental precondition, Kant tried to break the paradox, or tautology: cognition is produced by cognition itself. But is this distinction between transcendent and immanent in itself either transcendent or immanent? Kant's solution does not convince us today. The systems theoretical dramaturgy would rather accept the circle and confront the paradox: because it is unavoidable. We do accept that we need to cover this by other paradoxes, or to put it in another way: we introduce a distinction and this will solve one paradox, only to introduce a new. Confused? Well, it is a more than two thousand years old dilemma that have found a new solution. The joke here is the concept of re-entry. Draw a distinction and then re-enter the distinction on the side of the marked spaces. We then have two sets of distinctions: the original and the distinction inside the distinction. It is the same, and not the same.

Sie ist dieselbe und nicht dieselbe. Sie ist dieselbe, weil der Witz des re-entry gerade darin besteht, dieselbe Unterscheidung rekursiv auf sich selbst anzuwenden; sie ist eine andere weil sie in einen anderen, in einen bereits unterschiedenen Bereich eingetsetzt wird. (WdG p. 379)

And in this way the paradox is transformed. Kant could not choose this way out. It has taken science 200 years to find other solutions. However, art reacted promptly on the privileges bestowed on reason.

Irony

In a fairy tale, Barba says, pure anarchy establishes an upside-down view and a world of confusion.

It is a world that children love, but which doesn't love children. There they are abandoned and overpowered. They experience naked reality: anxiety and fear interspersed with flashes of unreasonable justice (p.21)

In this, very elegant, formulation of the semantic of fairy tales, Barba confirms the clash between 'naked reality' that produces fear, and the fantasy that provide 'unreasonable justice': the upside-down trick. We know that the early romanticists used the fairy tale as one of their preferred art forms. Art was, according to the Schlegel brothers, an effect of the imagination. Art was seen as progressive "universalpoesie", a universal force that could never finalize itself.

Die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive Universalpoesie. [...] Die Romantische Dichtart ist noch im werden; ja das ist ihr eigentliches Wesen, dass sie ewig nur werden, nie vollendet sein kann.²⁸

In this sense, the romantic art can never finalize its own justification, neither can it be systematized. Universality in romantic perspective implies that it is not just something that applies to art, but also to life. So romantic art "Will die Poesie lebendig und gesselig, und das Leben und die Gesellschaft poetisch machen" (ibid). The modern process of reconversion of society is gathering strenght. The process of enlightenment is beginning to show some of its enormous consequences, and as a reaction against this, romantic art questions the progress and its one sided reliance on reason and intellect. In romantic art the concept of irony, becomes a central tool in the attempt to destabilize this whole machinery of modernity. F.v. Schlegels famous dictum "Ironie ist die Form des Paradoxen"²⁹ points out that irony is not only an attempt to *say* one thing and *mean* another, but is an aesthetic function that highlights the contrast between universality, non-closure, and fragmentation. Irony is not a concrete message, but an utterance that makes the receiver hover in the air because of a unique displacement between poetic associative

²⁸ Schlegel, F.v. (1958ff.): *Kritische F. Schlegel Ausgabe*. (Ed. Behler, E. et al), Paderborn. Quote is from Bd. 2, p. 182f) it is Athenäumsfragment #116.

²⁹ Schlegel, F.v (1958ff): bd. 2, Lyceums-Fragment #48, p. 153

expressions and discursive narrative elements. This is also the paradox: two elements that we normally treat as mutually excluding each other are treated as a unity. Hence, the romantic preference for fragments: something that is simultaneously a totality and an infinity. Closed but never ending, another paradox. The joke is another preferred artistic expression, it is a micro-cosmos: "ein punktuellles Aufblitzen der Einheit von Einheit und Unedlichkeit im Endlichen"³⁰. This very brief summary demonstrates how *the romantic concept of art is the first self-reflective modern art concept*. This has great influence on the ideals of how art should function: it should not any longer concern itself with classical mimetic utterances; on the contrary, it should create its own reality: the autonomous imaginary reality of art. In this sense, the work of art is appreciated as a self-referential system of signs. The fairy tale, to come back on track, is a privileged romantic form, here the reader must engage in the fictional universe, find its hidden meanings in the complex weave of semiotic elements, and from that point return to the real world. The implied reader must exert all his imaginative powers in order to engage with the romantic work of art. This enables the romantic work of art with the possibilities to counter the rationality of daily life; time and space can be annulled; figures can become animals; inanimate things can speak, and metamorphoses can happen.

We do recognise several elements from the reflective theory of Barba. The idea of art as an unending becoming, the preference for the fragment, and if you consider the concept "knots" as an ironic gesture, a joke, this could be threads in the dramaturgy of Barba that has the colour of romanticism. Knots are concrete physical gestures that provide the spectator with an immense amount of possible information. Many different understanding may be selected. There are different kinds of irony: the *stable irony*, where you do not doubt that you have to select one of its possible contents as the correct. Fairytales may have quite

³⁰ Frank, Manfred (1989): *Einführung in die frühromantische Ästhetik. Vorlesungen*. Frankfurt am Main, p.294 f.

simple moral endings. So, here you may find solid ground after the short confusion. But the *unending irony* is of another quality altogether: here the irony continues, one ironic statement is followed by another, and it is suddenly no longer possible to end this game. Meaning keeps disappearing in front of you. The performances of the Odin Theatre have the quality of unending irony: the performances stimulate the imagination with their extra-daily elusive orders and hidden meanings. Here, again, we have to be careful with our comparison. My colleagues Lehmann and Sidenius argue³¹ in an article that one way of describing Barba's aesthetic hierarchy could be as a 'post-romantic romanticism'.

Romantic notions could be seen in the suspicion towards the capability of language to represent reality in a straightforward manner. The romanticists privileged art, because it was able to express reality in a not-straightforward way, art could express the ineffable, or with a change in sensory system, as Klee once said, "Art does not reflect the visible, it makes visible".

The conclusion that Lehmann and Sidenius arrives at, based upon their analysis of Barba's poetological writings from the 1970ies through to the start of the new millennium, is that they find proportionately larger numbers of quotes that tends to emphasis a more classical ontological stance, where "the dialectical movement is at the heart of life". So, when Barba "claims to have knowledge of the dialectical rules governing life, he reinstates being in the becoming."

Romanticist searched for a deeper kind of truth, representation as such is not being attacked, but they searched for an improved form of representation. Now, Post-romanticists have given up the quest for truth, be it from rationality or from art. They insist upon the inevitable transformation of things into differences, no timeless essences, no *being*, but instead an endless *becoming*³².

³¹ Lehmann, Niels & Sidenius, Steen (2000): "Postromantic Romanticism. A note on the Poetics of the Third Theatre" in Andreassen, John og Kuhlmann, Annelis (red.): *Odin Teatret 2000* Aarhus University Press, Acta Jutlandica LXXXVI, Århus. p.175

³² Cf. note 36 p. 178f

I acknowledge the thrust of the analysis, but believe that the presented hypothesis of 'religio' would account for some of the possible internal contradictions in Barba's theoretical work, and that it is the difference between on the one hand: the strategy of dissemination applied in the performances, and on the other hand: the search for the 'arche' difference, 'differance' in the theoretical foundation that might be at odds with each other. I maintain that the plurality of threads in the weave of Barba's dramaturgy attain the colour of post-structuralism. Finally, the different threads in the weave, or the different ingredients in the perfume, are bound together by another paradoxical concept: complementarity.

Paradox or complementarity

It is obviously true that some of the ingredients in the structure of Barba's dramaturgy rely on a difference between immanent and transcendental, this ontological way of thinking is at odds with a post-structuralist negation of metaphysics and privileging of dissemination. *This is complementary in the sense that these two views cannot be applied at the same time within their own logics. They are mutually exclusive.*

In search for regulative ideas in the aesthetic hierarchy and its poetic programme we need to investigate how the concept of complementarity is interpreted by Eugenio Barba and to what ends, he uses it. The idea of complementarity is even found in the stationary of the Odin Theatre, in a quote by the Danish professor of quantum physics, Niels Bohr: "opposites are complementary." For a theatre to have a motto related to quantum physics is rather unusual. It is my ambition to demonstrate how the thinking rooted in the scientific discoveries of the 1920'ies and 30'ies influences the concept of knowledge informing the aesthetic hierarchy of Eugenio Barba.

To comprehend what the sentence “opposites are complementary” implies, we need to know how the concept of complementarity works. This is not an easy task to undertake. When a dear Norwegian friend of mine found himself confronted with a situation that forced him to choose between two different solutions, and I said: “you can’t have it both ways”, he shrugged his shoulders, tilted his head, and with all his boyish charm said: “Ah, but you could always try!”. This is, in a simplistic sense, an important element in complementarity. And the again, it only hints at one part of the concept. Complementarity is a concept originated within quantum physics, and it is definitely not easy to extrapolate meaning from advanced natural science to other fields. It should be done with great care in order not to simplify and fail to spot the core of the problem.

Complementarity in the quantum physical sense of the word relates to the fact, that within micro-physics the atom consists of different elements, particles i.e. electrons. Physicists can make these, otherwise invisible parts, visible by applying mechanical instruments, abiding known macro-physical laws. The problem that Niels Bohr was confronted with arose when it appeared that electrons, when observed in a bubble chamber behaved like particles ‘corpuscular’, but when observed in another experimental setting with a nickel crystal electrons behaved like ‘waves’. In macro-physics the distinction *corpuscular* \times *wave* is a two-side form, it is “either/or”. The fact that in micro-physics the same phenomenon (the electron) could be observed as behaving in both ways, created a paradox *inter-domain* dilemma³³. It is important to add: there are no epistemological reasons why one way of observing should be preferred above the other. Is it the macro-physical (domain 1) distinction that should be abandoned, which would have severe theoretical consequences,

³³ Lindenberg, Siegwart & Oppenheim, Paul (1974): Generalization of Complementarity. *Synthese* 28, p. 117-139.

or could it be possible, that other “laws” applied within micro-physics (domain 2), not explainable in macro-physical terms?

Bohr was confronted with the inter-domain dilemma where he could either refrain from using classical concepts in micro-physics, preserving their unambiguous use but rendering micro-physics unintuitable, or applying classical concepts to micro-objects, gaining intuitability at the price of ambiguous use of the concepts (Bohr, 1958, p. 39). The Principle of Complementarity was designed with regard to the solution of this dilemma. It allows application of classical concepts in micro-physics without rendering them ambiguous. (op cit p. 130)

The next step is crucial in our understanding of complementarity: what does the principle of complementarity apply to? The distinction between a dilemma inside one domain, a *intra-domain* dilemma, and a inter-domain dilemma between two domains, is important. You might say it is a question of who “owns” the dilemma. Bohr chose to focus on the dilemma between the two different phenomenons: electron observed as corpuscular and electrons observed as waves. Bohr chooses to declare that it was the two phenomenons that were complementary, not the two different characteristics in macro-physic³⁴.

If we should re-describe this in terms of system theory, what happened was that Science faced the problem, that what the scientist sees (observe) depends on the apparatuses applied (the indication and distinction). The invisible thing turns out to be either a particle or a wave. It cannot be both at the same time, according to our known physical laws. Therefore, what seem to be opposites may be supplementary ways of describing the quantum physics at work inside atoms. The radical consequences of this has enormous impact on theory of knowledge, epistemology. It affects all ideas of correspondence: that knowledge is representations of a truth existing “out there”, in the surrounding world. It makes it apparent that *matter is indeterminate*, and that no such thing as *reality independent of*

³⁴ Petersen, A. (1968): *Quantum Physics and the Philosophical Tradition*, MIT press, Cambridge Mass. P. 126 f

observations exists. The idea that knowledge will bring us closer to reality “as it is” and thus reveal the *unity of concept and matter* is forever shattered. This is perhaps the most important turn in the history of science. It is a shift from thinking in *identity between matter and thought*, to acknowledging that *in the beginning was difference*. It has now become necessary to think in differences. One might speak of the rise of a post-ontological thinking springing from a range of different sources in philosophy and science over some fifty years.

As a young man, Niels Bohr often joined discussions between his father (a well-known biologist and physiologist) and his friends on the question of how biology could maintain the idea of evolution as change, and the idea of a more deterministic law of inheritance as stable continuation. Should one have to choose between two equally satisfying ideas to describe nature, because one logically excludes another? Later in his life (around 1936), Niels Bohr found it necessary to state the fact, that as researcher into phenomena on the level atoms and quantum mechanics, it was important to realize that it is impossible to study *reality as such*, the phenomena “an sich”, because our access to reality depends (also in case of quantum physics) on the apparatus with which we observe. This thought demolishes naïve and positivistic epistemologies. It even makes the distinction between subject/object vacillate. It is perhaps the most important “turn” in the history of modern science. Quantum physics drew a lot of attention with its insistence on in-decidability and probability as the only fundament for our “secure” knowledge of everyday life. It is important *not* to follow the argument of some physicists that draw the conclusion that indeterminacy is a quality inherent in matter, as if that settled the case. As negative phenomena like *in-determinacy* do exist, and as probabilities are the result of observations one may *draw the conclusion that the results of quantum physics only can be predicted by the 2nd order of observing observations*. The limits of determinacy are part of the physical laws themselves. When science at the same time was confronted with Gödel’s emphatic

argument concerning the impossibility of proving systems of some complexity free from contradictions, the theory of science had to revolutionize its understanding of it self.

One possible conclusion is that cognition takes place within a recursive system of observations that functions as its own unity, but the system itself cannot observe and describe the unity.

When producing cognitions things happens as they happen. When an operation tries to describe the unity of the system that it itself is a part of, it must make the system differentiate itself from something else as an identity – it is exactly this operation of distinction and indication that excludes whoever makes it from the observation. (my translation wdg p. 506)

For a contemporary theory of science, this means that every observer has to accept the blind spot of his own observations and at the same time accept that he can observe other observers with the help of their distinctions. The epistemological consequence of this radical change forces scientists to *abandon the idea of truth as something absolute*, which could be reached independent of the machines used to measure. The philosophical and epistemological conclusion that can be drawn from this is clearly *anti-metaphysical: there is but one reality*. The problem is that we can only access this reality through concepts and observations. The consequence is that no such thing as an observational-invariant world/reality exists. We can observe the world/reality, and this observation is an operation *in* the world. It is empirical, and it purely functional. It is not ontological in the sense that we are speaking of separate ontologies (e.g. existence and thought) or other transcendental-theoretical goods like the belief in unconditional truth.

It is, contrary to transcendentalism, denied that anything unconditional exists at all. Where a transcendental-theoretician in his kingdom of freedom would search for the unconditional knowledge as prerequisite for all empirical cognition, the cybernetic instruction would read: Observe the observers. (Luhmann, 1990, my translation wdg p.76)

This stresses the importance of the observation of second order. To observe an *operation* we only need to observe what happens, when it is applied i.e. experiment with electrons in bubble chambers or nickel crystals. But to observe an *observation* we need to be able to identify the distinction it uses in order to indicate its (auto) self-reference (i.e. corpuscular \times wave logics). If a phenomenon applies to two mutually excluding observations we must conclude that a situation of complementarity has arisen. Science as a functional differentiated system observes the surrounding world by the distinction truth/un-truth. It is the code of the system. In this sense, we should avoid the belief that there by definition is coherence between truth, meaning, and reference. If we do *not* apply this differentiation between first and second order observations, we will only receive an unclear indefiniteness. The object could be marked (even as Truth) but it would not make any observable difference. Nothing compels us to observe reality with the help of the distinction subject/object. An observer is no "subject" when this description is seen as a distinction to an "object." *The observer is his own reality created by his own operations*, but this again can only be observed in a second order observation, which sees him as a system in a surrounding world. We need to replace the circular and paradoxical distinction between subject and object with another, just as circular and paradoxical differentiation i.e. that between "operation" and "structure". The argument in favour of this distinction is the fact, that it *includes time*. The structure (knowledge) guides the operation (cognition), and this in turn will confirm or modify the structure. Here the circle is broken, the paradox is de-paradoxalized by a chronological sequencing and not by reference to some metaphysical difference of ontology or essence.

Let us now, for the last time, return to the analysis of the aesthetic hierarchy of Eugenio Barba. If we sharpen the analysis of Lindenberg & Oppenheim, as to the formal elements in the generalization of the concept of complementarity, we are confronted with an epistemological difference. What Bohr confronted was a double dilemma as described

above. Quantum Physics proved to be a field of science, where previously accepted modes of observation became ambiguous. Yet, these concepts were helpful in the sense, that they helped the researchers produce intuitability. Bohr designed the principle of complementarity to solve this dilemma³⁵. It had, as suggested, a high price to pay. It shook the firm acceptance of the idea of science as something that by evolution could get still closer to reality 'as it is', it was only a question of continuously making better representations of this truth 'out there'. When Bohr declared that it was impossible to solve the intra-domain dilemma, because no epistemological criteria could point at reasons to prefer 'Wave-observation' for 'Corpuscular-observation', he took a 'revolutionary' decision.

Rather, *insolubility of the intra-domain dilemma is crucial for any meaningful application of the Principle of Complementarity*. Suppose the intra-domain dilemma could be solved; then we would have epistemological criteria for choosing between the C's [circumstances, i.e. experimental apparatus used to observe electron, JSz] or making the choice unnecessary. In physics, for instance, the conflicting findings under mutually exclusive C's were reconciled by various theorists in various ways. It was suggested that the electron is wavelike but not corpuscular and that particles are only more or less temporary entities with the wave field (Schrödinger, 1953); or it was suggested that the electron is corpuscular but not wavelike and that 'waves' are only waves of probabilities (Born, 1949); or it was suggested that electrons are both wavelike and corpuscular (DeBroglie, 1939); or neither wavelike nor corpuscular (Margenau, 1950).³⁶

What made Bohr one of the first thinkers of difference was that he rejected all of these 'solutions' to the intra-domain dilemma and indeed stipulated that this dilemma is insoluble³⁷. It was not just a question of a dilemma between two domains in the science of Physics; it was the creation of a new epistemological understanding.

³⁵ Bohr, 1958, p. 39

³⁶ Lindenberg, Siegwart & Oppenheim, Paul (1974), p. 43

³⁷ Bohr, Niels (1958): p. 62.

I have tried to stress this understanding of complementarity, because it is an important platform for the question as to how Eugenio Barba applies the concept to his work. *If* the identification of a 'religio'-dimension in the aesthetic hierarchy of Barba and the Odin Theatre, is valid, we are confronted with a paradox. *If* the strict interpretation of complementarity is accepted, then we must ask whether the concept of complementarity can be used to solve the paradox between a work of art insisting on dissemination of meaning, with a 'religio'-semantic based on an insistence on transcendence to a 'world beyond' placed in a non-existing world of ideas. Is it possible to insist on binding back to this unnameable sphere of superstitions and burning winds, in order to create meaning in the existing world? To part with metaphysics means to part with the distinction existing/non-existing. There are no hidden order, no God, no truth out there, waiting to be discovered. Or, are we dealing with an attempt to do two things at the same time: to pursue a deluzian flight from territorialisation, and while we are at it, to pursue a derridean investigation of the conditions of possibilities to escape from metaphysics at all. The first position would call for a firm stand on the epistemology of difference thinking, and then we have in Barba's aesthetic hierarchy a post-ontological ontology (or with Lehmann and Sidenius a post-romantic romanticism), and accordingly lead us to the conclusion that the concept of complementarity could not be brought to cover this dilemma. The second position would be one of complementarity: we do not have any epistemological chance to decide whether we should prefer Deleuze over Derrida. It would be different means for different purposes.

Here, I once more turn to the groundbreaking article by my colleague Niels Lehmann³⁸ where he identifies four different positions within a science based on "difference" as opposed to science build on the hopes of establishing the assuring fundament, the rock

³⁸ Cf. Note # 10

bottom of truth. Now, if we accept that this domain have been developed to the degree where it offers an epistemological alternative to positivist metaphysical science, we must first consider whether the dilemma we have presented in Barba's aesthetic hierarchy is an inter- and/or intra-domain dilemma. If we consider it an inter-domain dilemma (between two epistemologies: thinkers of identity and thinkers of difference), we would have to follow Lehmann and Sidenius in their conclusion that we are dealing with a post-romantic romanticism, because the thought of bios at the centre of life, would count as a rock-bottom secure closure of any discussion, it would count as an origin. To use the concept of complementarity to cover this dilemma alone would be misleading. In other words: the semantic we have shown is at work in Eugenio Barba's reflective theory on dramaturgy, points at 'religio' and the way it is used in producing art, give us an example of how elements from one domain is at work. In the post-epistemological domain of difference, we might see an internal dilemma in the very fact that the book has been written, and not burnt with the house. Barba's constant search for ways to describe acting and theatre is indeed an attempt to find the differences that makes a difference. His performances are constant offers of line of flight, and they may provide a glimpse of life in a land of difference. The intra-domain dilemma could be described as an inability to choose between behaving like a Derrida and/or a Deleuze. Something we can only observe, because we use a systems-theoretical theory, in order to spot ways to cope with reality. Complementarity could be described in the words of Niels Lehmann:

On the one hand, a full acceptance of contingency seems to be necessary if it shall become possible to jump between the different perspectives. Profound territorializations should be avoided and nu conceptuality should be allowed to obtain a status beyond its fundamental deconstructability. On the other hand, it is important not to become overly anxious about conceptual closure. If we are to get at the differences that make a difference and see various philosophies of difference as different means for different purposes, we shouldn't hesitate to produce operative closures that may work as momentary reterritorializations. (op.cir. p.79)

To see different Pragmatic uses (Rorty) we need to see the differences (Luhmann)

We need the revolutionaries (Derrida and Deleuze) to radically attack our habits and break horizons and open into undiscovered territories, we need the evolutionary thinkers (Rorty and Luhmann) to a momentary stabilization in order to settle new local territories.

Barba produces performances that indeed break habits and open other horizons; the performances do not invite many moments of reterritorialization. Here we are offered constant lines of flight. When Barba describes his work, it is difficult unambiguously to decide whether we have left the realm of metaphysics for good or not. Maybe this is the closest we get applying a scientific theory of dramaturgy based on an epistemology of difference.