



Barter as Deliverance from the Desert

by Elizabeth Parks

photo by TonyD'Urso Peru 1978.
Geronimo, Roberta Carreri's character



Odin Teatret- A Brief History

- 1954-Eugenio Barba migrated to Norway
- 1956- Attended University of Oslo
- 1961-went to study directing with Grotowski
- 1964-Returned to Oslo and founded Odin Teatret
- 1966-offered a farm for a Theatre Laboratory in Holstebro, Denmark
- 1974- First Barter in Carpignano, Italy



Odin Teatret
Nordisk teaterlaboratorium



Dreaming Our Way Out of Desert

- Academic deserts
 - Internal
 - Departments
 - Disciplines
 - External
 - Disconnected from
- Surrounding Communities
- Odin in the Desert
- Two banks of the river: social exchange

What is Barter?



Birth of the barter

- 10 years after inception Odin traveled to Italy
- Ontological challenge: “But *who* are you?”
- “Now you must hear *our* songs”

Barter = A performance framework that engenders exchange, affirms cultural resources, and allows for the assertion of creative, personal, and community identities.



A man and a woman are celebrating in a field of water. The man, on the right, is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, a black vest, and white pants. He has his arms raised and is smiling. The woman, on the left, is wearing a light purple long-sleeved shirt and white pants. She is also smiling and has her arms raised. The background is a blurred green field with a yellow light in the distance. The word "Festuge" is written in white text in the center of the image, with a white underline.

Festuge



Barter: Agent of Connection

“They began to sing and dance, those typical forms of popular culture that are not limited to elaborate verbal language, but which, through the whole of their very physical presence, reveal the history and the vision of a community.”

--Eugenio Barba, *The Floating Islands*

- Connection with
 - Self
 - History
 - Culture
 - Geographic community

Communitas



- *Spontaneous communitas*
 - A temporary assemblage of pure sharing and reciprocal generosity
- Understanding self and others
 - “a flash of lucid mutual understanding . . . a moment of intersubjective illumination”
- Fellowship
 - Shift from I/me to Us/We
- Ideal
 - Performing “we know” by “writing” the text of performance together.



Barter as Dream Act

- “Plant a stake crowned with flowers in the middle of a square; gather the people together there, and you have a festival. Let the Spectators become an Entertainment to themselves.”
- -- J.J. Rousseau, *Letter to M.D’Alemberton the Theatre*



Possibilities for Utopia

- “ideal of a beautiful commune, where humans, labour, and life are united in joy”- Maria Shevtsova
- Theatre as utopia
 - Social equity
 - Democracy
- Utopia *is* performative
 - Engaged, acting democratic society
 - Performing dream identities
- Barter is a performance framework that engenders exchange, affirms cultural resources, and allows for the assertion of, arguably, ideal creative, personal, and community identities.

Movement

- Visceral self-engagement
 - Personal visceral connection with self, history and heritage through Song, Dance, Ritual
 - Roberta Carrerrii n Burkina Faso
 - a community is enacting itself, engendering its identity, declaring “this is who we are ”because “this is what we do.”
- Evocation of physical resources
 - Acrobatics (Swiss, Finland)
 - Tarantella (Italy and Malta)
 - Mime and dance (retirement home)
 - Reggeaton(US, Italy)
- Physical meeting ground
 - Asking someone to dance with you



Implication for Education

- Barter in the classroom
- Training educators
- Intercollegiate barter?
Interdisciplinary barter?



Conclusions

- Agency for new communities to emerge: ideological, geographical, interpretive, performative eetc.
- Low-maintenance framework for creating performance
 - Purity and organicity of event is what makes it so special, it is untainted
- Event of experienced insight-
 - Allan Kaprow- providing participants with 'experienced insight': an event of
- embodied thinking by the participant in the act of doing
- Stages the unknown or not previously known
 - "no place" of utopia-
 - place of sheer novelty, an experiment with no known results