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“There is a cloud in a piece of paper”.

The actuality of myth in the theater of Peter Sellars¹

Daniela Sacco

English editing by Silvia Schiavinato and text revised by Jenny Condie

Daniela Sacco I read some interviews with you in which you talked about ‘making mythology’ or creating ‘mythological systems’ where ‘images resonate’. Could you tell me what do you mean exactly by these expressions? What does mythology mean to us nowadays?

Peter Sellars I think many things have to do with your childhood, certain images that you have when you are very small and coming into the world and when you are deeply impressionable. Later in your life you have experiences that touch those very deep early impressions. So it’s very much in the same way that psychologists understand that life habits are formed at a very young age, by your first perceptions and by this early period of taking things in. And that’s why people are beginning to realize that the most important thing you can do is to make sure that in the kindergarden children are really take care of. Actually the deepest investment in a human being is early on, not later, and what’s really empowering is this early time. That’s when somebody is empowered or disempowered as a human being. So the impressions that you have at this time in your life create a kind of “echo-chamber”, which means that later, when you feel something touching those impressions, it goes to the core of your being and your formative moments as a human being. So it doesn’t just become more information, it actually touches something that is very, very deeply at the core of your individual identity. Now just to take Plato a little further: our childhood is also many previous lifetimes and so these impressions actually go back many many lifetimes and so what happens is that we are in the middle of an impression that was created a hundred lifetimes ago. Suddenly something touches that core of our being from some previous lifetime: that’s mythology. It’s something that you know very well from an early formative time in your existence. This “echo-chamber” is set up. So there is a resonance and resonance is something very special that happens in classical music. I would suggest you to hear this performance of *Kafka Fragments* in a really beautiful concert hall. For example, in London, we did it in the Barbican’s concert hall, where the London Symphony Orchestra plays. This hall is made entirely of wood, wood is everywhere. So when Geoff Nuttall plays the violin the resonance of the wood against the

¹ La versione italiana di questa intervista, ‘C’è una nuvola in un pezzo di carta’. *Attualità del mito nel teatro di Peter Sellars*, è stata pubblicata nel numero 87 di engramma (gennaio/febbraio 2011).

wood creates warmth, there is a special intensity and this presence of the sound. Here in Rome, the Palladium's architecture is really made for rock music. So there is no resonance, the violin is a little cold, a little alone and "notes are just notes". Whereas resonance is when the environment responds, and a sound or an impression goes further than itself, because the environment recognizes it, has in some sense a solidarity with it, a relationship that is sympathetic. So an impression becomes deeper, richer, more profound. To give another example, in Los Angeles we have an amazing concert hall, designed by Frank Gehry, the "Walt Disney Concert Hall", where we did *Kafka Fragments*. The concert hall was built by Yasuhisa Toyota, using the same building techniques employed in traditional Japanese Nō theater, in which everything is made of wood. But in Japan, drums are placed underneath the stage, so when the actors walk around there is a very strong resonance, because the stage itself actually resonates like a percussion instrument. The same is true for Epidauros. Acoustic quality was enormously important question in Greek aesthetics, because in Greece theater was all about acoustics, sound, and the mask-persona through which sound was made. Everything was about this question of resonance, and the Greeks were really concerned with something that touched some inner part of your being, that was not just the surface. Just like Mr Toyota designing the concert hall according to the Japanese principles of Nō drama, with smooth surfaces under which there are these big drums that resonate and hold the sound. In Greek amphitheaters the sound was held by the curves of the architecture of rectangles, but an architecture which was deep resonator, that held sound in this special way. This receptacle is so important because it receives, holds and amplifies. So it's not just taking something from outside and bringing it in, but the resonator is actually inside the human being.

DS I would like to ask you about your idea that theater 'reveals the invisible'. What do you mean by the invisible? What is invisible? Is there any connections with what Paul Klee said when he stated "the arts don't reproduce the visible but make visible"? Is it possible to speak in the same terms about the theater?

Peter Sellars Very simply: courage is all around us, but it's invisible, you can't touch it. Love is everywhere but it's not visible. The most important feelings, the most important arts, the most important principles of your life are all invisible. The visible world has almost nothing to do with your feelings and the visible world is a miracle: the light on the trees at the end of the day, in Rome yesterday was unbelievable; the full moon coming up in the later afternoon... The visual world is magnificent, but as the Koran says, the world is a book made to be read, and beauty is not just the moon, the sunset, the swallows making their patterns as they come down to the river, but it is also a message: you learn to read the sky, you learn to read the moon or the sun. These are all texts, they are also a message about a larger creation, about the longer length of a life's cycle. So the

visible world, as the Koran says, is a sign, and not itself the object. I feel about the musical score of Kurtág and Kafka, that it's neither the beginning point nor is it the end point. It is the vessel, the journey. It's not the destination and it's not the point of departure. The point of departure has to be something deep inside you. So if you are having some deep experience, when you look at the sky, you see all kind of things and the sky means all these other things. The visible world is only made to be activated by your own inside, feelings and inner life. But also again, in reverse, it's made also to activate and reawaken your own life' questions and to remind you that you have been given another day, that the sun will rise again and that you can try again. These are all profound messages and so the circles in the world and the straight lines are, as Plato said, an indication of another geometry, another kind of order. I believe that this is science's power, that is why I believe that art is a parallel of science, that it is looking at the visible world for its inner principles and for what else it is telling us. Not as a ending itself, but as an indication of larger realities or more specific patterns and order, a deep order.

DS You have talked elsewhere about your formative experience with puppetry and cinema; could you tell me why you decided to work mainly in the theater rather than in film?

Peter Sellars For me it's probably the social element that makes theater more important: theater is sharing space and the whole question of the XXI century is 'Can we share the planet?'. Can we share the planet with the rest of the world?



Dawn Upshaw in *Kafka Fragments*.

With other people? This question of 'Do you receive foreigners?' was one which of course obsessed the Greeks. What is it that is not shared about life in this planet? The most powerful thing is not to build the wall between Israel and Palestine or between the United States and Mexico, but to ask the opposite: what do we share? Theater is the search for what we share and the assertion of what we find. In theater a lot of people come together in a space which, by the end of the evening, becomes not "my" space or "your" space, but a shared space where we had a shared experience. Where the borders are dissolved. Where we truly find these points of shared experience in space. For me film doesn't share space in the same way: film has its own space, the audience has its own space; it's really a mental space, but the actual physical act of sharing a room together is not the same. I think that the reason why for me theater has such priority has to do with the land rights of indigenous people, the water rights of indigenous people, the fact that again farmers are committing suicide in India and in Ohio. This question of land and how we share this land and how we treasure it. The earth isn't just something to be divided up and sold, it's sacred. We have to admit the sacredness of the earth, of the food, of the air, of the water. You can't just buy or sell it. There is something sacred, the water belongs to all of us: when Coca-Cola company buys all the water in the world – which is what it is trying to do – we have a crisis. So really this shared space, reminds everybody that the earth is sacred, the air is sacred, the water is sacred, the light is sacred, the plants are sacred, the animals are sacred, that life has a sacred dimension; not in the manner of organized religion but in the manner of theater. Where everything has its resonance, its aura, its mystery, its depth. It becomes more touching, it becomes something infinite. We have a finite quantity of water, but an infinite level of generosity. Certain things are infinite: love, courage, generosity, honesty. Other things are limited: the domain of water, the domain of land. It's really about understanding how we use the things that are infinite, and how we correctly use the things that are finite. Theater is the meeting place of that infinitude and this specific social limitation which is about sharing. Cinema is a great language, I have a great love of cinema before cinema: Chinese watercolour painting, or traditional Chinese and Indian theater, or Javanese shadow puppets, or cave paintings. They were all cinema before cinema: this cinematic impulse is so deep, it doesn't come only from the XIX or XX century, nor do the ideas of montage and cutting...

DS Yes, I would like to discuss the importance of montage for you in the way you construct theater. I think it's really important today, for the theater as well as the cinema. Did you learn about montage from cinema?

Peter Sellars Montage is crucial; it's also in Sophocles' works. Sophocles always created some episodes that he then cut and in place of those episodes he put the chorus. In Sophocles you can't see simple real time, because there is a lot that he

doesn't show, that he cuts out. He only gives you a very specific moment in time and then he cuts to another moment in time and then he puts these two moments in time next to each other. It has an incredible emotional impact, precisely because Sophocles is constructing his pieces, in chorus even more so, from these moments in time that normally will not come together, and by putting them right next to each other, the contrasts are so intense and extreme that he creates a crisis, but he also creates the deeper thing which is that everything of course is linked. Montage is simply saying: any two things in the world are connected. And we are going to connect them across this supply and the interconnector is the poetry: this chair isn't just this chair, this theater isn't just this theater, so nothing is just itself. Everything is itself in relation to this question of interrelation and that is where montage is so exciting, because it really sharpens, and heightens and deepens that sense of relation. When I was in university my obsession and my thesis was about Meyerhold and Ejzenštejn, and the dawn of cinema. I was influenced by silent cinema. I really specialized in Griffith, early Hitchcock, Godard... but in terms of silent cinema, the really great period of my life was in Brussels, where in my twenties I worked on many projects, and where there was a cinemateque that every night showed two silent movies, with live music. So I lived there. I love the idea of cinema and live music. In this Godardian way, the soundtrack and the image-track are different: you have the tension between the soundtrack and the image-track. That's a very satisfying thing, rather than the Hollywood thing that the soundtrack is the slave of the image-track. I love having not a "master slave" relationship, but a relationship between two consenting adults, who can agree or can disagree, and can come together or separate. So for me that's one very exciting element of montage: montage separates sound and image, and creates the possibility that each can have the wrong narrative flow and narrative dimension, then, when they come together, a complex experience is created.

DS I'd like to know more about the relation between mythmaking and montage. I think that both myth and montage are ways of describing the relation between particular and universal, in the sense that both tend to represent the "typical". I'm thinking about the concept of the generalized image and of the *pars pro toto* in Eisenstein's speculations on montage. Do you believe that there is such a relation?

Peter Sellars Yes, and the relation is also between metaphor and metonymy. An example that I often give is that of the Buddhist image of the piece of paper and the cloud; the idea is that when you see a cloud you see a piece of paper, or when you see a piece of paper you see a cloud. That's because a piece of paper comes from a tree, and for that tree to have become a piece of paper, there had to have been a lumberjack cutting down the tree and there had to have been a paper-mill, there had to have been the lumberjack taking his lunch break. There had to be everything in world because it becomes a piece of paper and you can see it. But for the tree, which is in the forest, there had to have been

the sunlight, the rain, a cloud... So, when you see a piece of paper, you see a cloud. It's because, as the Buddhists say, everything contains everything and is not just itself: a piece of paper is not only made from paper but from elements. This is really important. Plato imagined that we had been in this world before, that our corpses decomposed and came back as trees, as rocks, as plants, as animals, hundreds of times. It's not just a poetic image, it's a physical reality. We have decomposed many times and come back in some other forms. So this is physical as well spiritual process. The beauty of montage is that it counters a current existence with a previous one: again the inter-relatedness of things that for piece of paper to exist there has to have been a cloud. So, in the same way, if two things are put next to each other, the relatedness that is all of a sudden apparent shocks you and grabs your attention because it makes you jump all the other links, taking a shortcut between one thing and the other. Montage is where the long path is, where the centuries are, so they cross in one place. Cuts are made across time, across space, across process...

DS Is it in these cuts that the "typical" manifests itself?

Peter Sellars Montage goes from the specific to the understanding that the specific is an indication of something larger, again as the Buddhists say: conditional reality versus un-conditional reality. *Oedipus Rex* is a conditional reality: because he had this mother, this father, everything in his life is based on a particular set of conditions; on the other hand that specific set of conditions takes you to a conditional reality which is an indicator of un-conditional reality, of



Peter Sellars in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu* by Antonin Artaud, 2003.

a larger truth which is somehow guiding this smaller truth. So you are in a relationship of reality of truth, of conditional truth, of small truths, of provisional truth and of larger truths. They are the main truths across larger piece of time, larger pieces of history and different lifetimes.

DS Your theater is created in America and it is directed at an American audience, though it is also naturally, international in scope and in its reference to other cultures... Do you think that American culture has anything to teach to European culture?

Peter Sellars Sophocles, Mozart and Shakespeare were writing about America! They were all American! They were writing very specifically about my country: in a strange

way, they were all writing about power, about the handling of power. Today of all the countries in the world, America is the one that is truly experiencing what those people were writing about. Every catastrophic social mistake that America has made in the last 20 years, Europe has repeated 5 year later. I could say: there is nothing to learn from America. The sad thing is that you have terrible things to learn, if this is how you start treating refugees, if you build more prisons, if this is how you conduct war, all of these are actually horrible things that have destroyed Europe over the last 20 years. Because Europe imitates America and European politicians imitate American politicians: we are seeing a catastrophe with Mr Berlusconi, with Mr Sarkozy, all of whom learned their conduct from America. So I feel, as an American coming to present things in Europe that I am giving Europeans a picture of what will soon be very familiar to them and I try to warn people: 'This is what's coming' and I'm sorry to say that the whole world is deeply influenced by America at this moment. Everybody is closing their borders, everybody is waging economic war, everybody is becoming egoist and selfish and the result is economic and social stagnation in America, and now in Europe as well. So you watch Europe cutting itself off from the future and going backwards into a false image of the past: it's painful. Right now in America and in Europe you see the rise of fascism again, it's back: for example in Holland, what incredible for me in this Kurtág piece, was the image of the gypsy violinist on the street who is homeless who will never live anywhere. The Romanian sound of Kurtág is, of course, the sound of that Europe which was almost totally annihilated in Auschwitz and yet Mr Berlusconi continues his policies unchecked. I feel that from America. I think Bulgarian



Peter Sellars in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu* by Antonin Artaud, 2003.

theater becomes universal when it is most Bulgarian, not when it tries to imitate something else: I think we should always speak our own language as deeply as possible, with its own specificity, its own interiority. Not just speak some other language which nobody else speaks. I think we all have to speak our language with our own deepest articulation and our ability to get in touch with culture through that language. In Japan people see in America some things that they recognize, other things they don't; but I believe humanity has a sort of mirror where we all look at ourselves: it's really interesting to look in a mirror of Sophocles, of Shakespeare and find yourself, and so for me that's why these texts exist: it's not that they have a certain truth. There is no one truth in a certain moment, in a certain way

from a certain group of people but quite the opposite: certain texts are mirrored across all of human history and every generation find itself in a mirror and that's what's powerful.

DS Do you believe that America should be a reference point for its youthful cultural approach?

Peter Sellars I have to say that America was very consciously founded on trying to understand Athenian democracy and the structures of our government and our country were based very consciously on models from Athens and on classical texts. It's not an accident that in America the post office has these corinthian columns, or that the White House is built in the style of classical Greek architecture. These things did not come about casually: we were modelling ourselves after an image of Athens and what the promise of Athenian democracy held. For me these Greek texts are the founding texts of my country. I think that Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin also took these texts very personally and struggled with them, and tried to draw from them a future that had not been possible in Periclean Athens which eventually, of course, collapsed. So it's like saying that America is young, but compare to Periclean Athens, it is old: democracy has been going on longer in America than anywhere else right now, and has run into real and serious problems. Democracy is really threatened right now by money, as it is here in Europe and everywhere else. Euripides and Sophocles were very clear about that and they said very simply: do not let money replace democracy. They knew that this was the crisis point. So I look at these texts and I see my own country, both in terms of 'where we are right now', but also in terms of what the founding principles and myths were.

DS Do you think that American culture has a special relationship with myth, or a particular sensitivity where mythology is concerned?

Peter Sellars Yes, because America was already mythmaking from the outset and its government has always been seen through the prism of mythology. The mythology of the Kennedys, the mythology of Richard Nixon: the mythology of that all American leaders are mythical, as well as real people, and all of them have known how to construct and use myth. So American culture has been actively using the mythic from the beginning, because it was a country based on a larger idea, it was not based on ethnicity or any of the things that countries are usually based upon: it was a new idea, and therefore it wasn't for the people, who had always lived there, because they were actually excluded, it was a mythology only for the people, who arrived there, plus all the slaves. So it was a strange country like no country that had ever existed before: it became a country of the mind, you have to imagine it, you have to say: 'Ok, we are

working on a large project'. And this large project was where all the Americans were and where they were represented. New America wasn't just a country of facts, it was a country that represented certain values, aspirations, achievements: people from all over the world went there looking to build a new life, a new future. I don't think that there is a country in history that had an incentive like that. It was a very unique mythology. People from all over the world said: "We will go to America and that's where our future is". That's incredible, generation after generation did that, and they created the future for themselves. That's why America was able to create this kind of economic and social miracle, in spite of all its flops. So it's just amazing, and it was due precisely to these higher ideals, that were Athenian. We made this country with a completely different selfimage; and that's why it's a nightmare when this country says no to immigration, and that English is the official language of white people only and judges all these other things to be An-american: because it's a violation of the founding principles of the country.

DS Your theater is political: so do you think that the mythical function of theater is political as well?

Peter Sellars Yes, especially because myth is always moving in two ways: in one sense it is empowering because theater puts us in the presence of great heroic actions of a previous era and so it lets us think that if in the past they could do these things, then in this era too we could do them. Theater can be really inspiring in this way. But, at the same time, it can be horrid: it can act as a warning to control human ambition, when human ambition is political or economic or concerns honor, control or possession of *hybris*. Whereas mythology is very empowering when it is about thinking in larger and more creative ways, which across time and space invite you to share a larger idea of humanity, of human possibility. So mythology works in both directions: it's a window on the infinite and also a reminder of human limitations. That's what's powerful: it is unlimited, infinite, it opens your mind to shocking visions, but at the same time it says: "Watch out, those who ignore the limit will be killed".

DS Do you believe that the use of technology, which feeds on *hybris*, is a way to make mythology?

Peter Sellars: Yes, it's so simple. Technology is a rock, it's a pencil, it's a rocket going to Mars: all of these are technology. Technology by itself is neutral: it's just a pencil, whether you use a pencil to draw your daughter or a neutron bomb. What you hold in your hand is still just a pencil. For me mythology always exists in whatever form we have to communicate or to circulate information.

DS So it's in how we use technology that makes it human or inhuman?

Peter Sellars Yes, technology by itself has no soul, it's what you do with it: that actually reveals its power. We've all seen really bad movies and really good movies and strangely the mythology is in both extremes. King Kong is a really bad movie, but it gave people a myth that remains potent and dangerous, racist and horrible. But it has remained nevertheless, and everybody has it in his consciousness: white people imagining black people raping a white woman. All this is ugly stuff from a bad movie about an ape made in the Thirties. Now why is it that this piece of kitsch, this piece of junk has had such a long life? It's interesting how these things work in our consciousness: certain things, particularly bad things, remain. Now suddenly Harry Potter is everywhere in these years. We have to ask, why is it that this particular mythology is making a real connection right now in people's imagination? What are people finding in Harry Potter that resonates with their own reality? That's a really crazy question and maybe there's a kind of strange longing for an ultra-conservative British boys'-school, with its strict discipline, but in which at the same time there is total freedom to wave a magic wand and subvert the order. It's as if there were a strange longing in this generation for some really horrible and conservative thing, where the answers to everything are simple and rigid, where there is an order that cannot be questioned but, at the same time, where you have the magical powers to change everything. What is the Harry Potter myth feeding? That's such an interesting question right now. And also the need that everybody has to remain a child forever: even though the Harry Potter actors are adults, they are still acting like they are fourteen years old. It's like wanting to remain in high school forever. It's such a strange moment where you get these phenomena. Culture has to do with our projections of people fantasies. We are all high school kids, but we are fighting larger forces. But, to come back to the possible relationship between technology and mythology, for me the question of technology is deeper. Technology is the new mythology in a really profound way. I think of the revolution in Chiapas where sub-comandante Marcos has waged mythological and real war. And because the facts of this struggle takes place on the internet, it means that although we aren't actually there in the jungle of Chiapas, we are still there in solidarity. So, when the Mexican army attacks the campesinos in Chiapas, all over the world this attack becomes part of our lives. So the idea of people struggling in a remote place in Mexico becomes something that enters into our consciousness and all over the world you can see posters of the revolution in Chiapas. It is not just a revolution in Chiapas but it has become an image, an empowering image for people everywhere. At the same time, the fact that they can go on the web and they can say that the Mexican army is attacking, they can alert people all over the world and this creates, for the Mexican government a different set of choices and pressures, so the Mexican government can't do something that would obviously violate the world's opinion, which is now in favour of the farmers in Chiapas. That's a very interesting thing where something is both reality and

mythology: so in this moment in history, that place is both very present and very far away, and it presents us with certain things that we have been imagining, in many parts of the world.

DS Do you think that mythology could substitute of history?

Peter Sellars Between history and mythology there is only an interplay: history is what somebody said happened, so it's already mythology. I'll try to explain myself better: think about an event. You were not there, but if you were there, you only saw what you could see and the event is always bigger than what you could see of it. So every time we describe something, it's mythology because we don't have a complete vision and we have to depend on what somebody else tell us. It's only by this act of hearing, only by entering into this mythical sphere that we can form a more complete idea.

DS To come back to montage, in relation to what we have already said: do you believe that montage has a particular function in relation to the narrative construction and could it enter into the relationship between truth and fiction?

Peter Sellars What it is powerful about montage is that interrupts normal narrative flow and it sharpens the edges of truth. Normal narrative flow goes along with whatever is happening, but montage questions each development, and it puts each development up for examination by creating a situation which looks at something from different angles instead of from only one point of view. That's why montage becomes very powerful. You realize that history, that reality are composed of different facets like the eye of a house fly: and the more different facets you see, the more multi-dimensional reality becomes. So narrative is not a single narrative, it's not a single image, it's not a single montage: every narrative is "multiple". Everything is "multiple" and therefore there is room for meta-narratives and multi-narrative. There is a large narrative that is behind the story which is being told and there are many smaller narratives that haven't been included in the story which is being told. And so we know that all these other narratives could, at any moment, intersect with other narratives.

DS Probably, when you decide to cut a scene it's always a political act...

Peter Sellars Yes, and whenever the master narrative is interrupted, that's a good sign. That's why it's so important to make fragments: because everybody knows that the master narrative is a "lie". The big Hollywood movie, complete with swelling orchestral music, is a total lie! Interrupting it is a good sign! The only thing that we can trust is a small moment of truth that we can verify. We can work with these fragments. We can recombine fragments in whatever way: our lives, our societies have been broken, but out of everything that has been

broken, we pick up small pieces and put them together... Kurtág, for example, wrote *Kafka Fragmente* out of his experience of being a refugee: but what does it mean? That when you escape under the fence, you have to abandon your previous life. And all that remains is a few fragments, you hold on to them and from those fragments you have to build a new life, wherever your life is continuing. This idea of fragmentary lives and fragmentary life, broken systems and broken life experiences is really quite destructive emotionally and at the same time strangely liberating. Like in this experience of immigrants, who are actually rebuilding their lives creating new narratives out of the broken pieces. I think this is a special form of narration, something that I really appreciate in Beckett: it's the understanding that the fragment is probably able to represent truth precisely because it doesn't pretend to be total, it already declares that it is a partial understanding of someone, and because it doesn't pretend to be all. The form of the fragment is really satisfying artistically. Which is why, in this century, the obsession with Greek ruins is growing: because a fragment is both "unfinished" and incomplete and it will remain incomplete. This combination of something which is permanently incomplete is very powerful and mythology is also that way, because mythology is always broken. There are many versions of the Medea myth: everybody disagrees on it, and everybody wonders if what happened in this myth is truth or what the myth stands for. Everybody has a different version, so everything is fragmentary: and from that fragment



Dawn Upshaw and Geoff Nuttal in *Kafka Fragments*.

something is recreated. We are all building a world where broken things are strewn around – including our own life, emotions and hopes – and we have to keep going: we pick up the pieces and move on...

DS What we can do, sometime, is try to create different compositions...

Peter Sellars Absolutely, that's the powerful act of human perseverance and determination. In *Kafka Fragments* there are some images in the background, images of people in recovery programs, rehabilitation for alcoholics and drug-takers: they used their lives for sharing and they are now picking up the pieces to rebuild their life.

DS This could be a metaphor of the present...

Peter Sellars It's always the same: in Greek times everybody was arriving from somewhere else, strange, faraway places, and they brought with them some partial myths. When I was visiting Epidaurus my companion was Pausanias. He went from place to place, meeting different people with different stories to tell. It was never a discussion of facts, it was about different stories: you listen to a folk tale and you observe how one myth changes into another myth, so the same myth is associated with another myth, with another meaning. I believe it's always that discussion, a discussion about broken pieces: by the time of Pausanias everything was already broken, he had to reconstruct, with all the contradictions, with all the missing and different pieces of information. I love it! The same myth can be described by Sophocles and in a completely different way by Euripides. In February I staged Händel's *Heracles*, in Chicago, and I based it on Sophocles' *The Trachinae*... But when you say Heracles you ask: which Heracles? It's an important question. I've already staged Euripides' *The Sons of Heracles*, and there were many problems. The death of Heracles, for example, is completely different: same character, completely different death, completely different story, completely different trajectory... there are so many Heracles! Where do I start? This, for me, is the perpetual question.



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