

B. Notes

We have to find out what is the essence of "Philoctetes", what is the main frame of our thoughts

-we look for a simple, clear idea
"DAS WORT DAS MORD WIRD"(H.Müller)

"DER LEIB DER LAND WIRD"

-the base has to be a simple idea plus informations on different levels, the simplicity becomes complex, but it isn't made complex

-the languages: English, German, Dutch and Greek
(we have to resist the pressure of doing everything in English)

-we'll not use the title 'Philoctetemachine', that would be already an interpretation

First reading of John Jesurun's text:

-John's text is putting the accent on Philoctetes' point of view, making clear also the view of the two others

-how can we form the triangle of the three men, is it an equilateral triangle?

-geometry in the triangle: all three want something back, the trading between them, they try to colonize each other

-to add the female element to the three men

-Philoctetes: he's talking about himself in the third person
what's the etymological meaning of the name 'Philoctetes'?
his disguise as a non-being: he is a different kind of person or becomes different, he decides to stay at Lemnos
he wears a black mask, he is schizophrenic
his disguise as a goddess(sends the mythology back to the beginning): the idea of self-generating(Gaia was the goddess of the earth, her power passed to the male god;
the triangle of father, son and holy ghost
the question of the guilt of Philoctetes: why is he been bitten? is there an explanation for the bit, a reason for the punishment in the play?
the ground for the violation is a violation in itself

"Hopcaphone" in the centre of the play - cfr. Henry Threadgill

"Indochimney" - the influence of a defeat in war on the society and the people

The idea of autopsy: the fly; from her point of view a body is a big landscape

-the video: an autopsy of a human body - from landscape to dance to filmed dance

"The cadaver will direct the autopsy" - the body directs the process of dying, cfr. the vulture in 'Philoctetes' from H.Müller, they observe his pain, waiting for his death
cfr. the body of Philoctetes which becomes a landscape/ the idea for the video

"Philoctetes is dead. I was looking at him from outside. He had a fly on him. But that fly was tiny, triumphant." - from the point of the fly everything becomes a huge landscape, a different perspective

-the permanent presence of the fly isn't as threatening as the presence of the vulture, but in fact they're both waiting for the death of Philoctetes

"Send me anything, a sugared skull..." - a sugared skull is part of a funeral ceremony in Mexico
(we have to look for material on funeral-rituals.)

The bow as an image, a metaphor of possession and power
Philoctetes as the artist in society and his bow as the artistic gift, society needs him, but expels him

Aids/Illness

- the 'gift of illness': being ill makes the value of things clear
- isolation of the society
- the play should be a song about life and death with clear statements, but not an 'Aids-play' with social and psychological statements

Greek lamentation:

- the sound of the Greek language
- not to empathise in the pain, but to see its beauty, cfr. a requiem
- lament as a power, cfr. the music of Black People; the misery which becomes a strength

Irregular logic in the performance:

- "Philoctetes" is one of Sophocles' last plays, he used very old poetical forms in rhyme and ritual
- we don't want 'normal' narrativity, we don't want to retell the play or to illustrate the 'story' - the play should be in the centre/the eye of the tornado of rage
- there will be different 'readings' of this production: the classical one, the Aids one, different interpretations will be possible
- we'll start from the rational, making a lot of material, working on different tracks at the same time (e.g. a 'traditional' staging of one of the texts), the illogical will appear during the work
- the keywords for our work: resistance, the bow, requiem, exclusion, instrumentalisation, machine
- what will be the end of our play, who will be the 'winner of the fight'?
- there will be no beginning and no end, but that doesn't mean to keep it open
- the end as a transformation, something that mutates, cfr. the schizophrenic as a transformation, energy never disappears, a detached force in its positive sense
- the question, if there is someone in the triangle of the three who doesn't trade and who doesn't make compromises, has a big influence to the end

Do we want to give ethic borders to the audience?

- we don't want to decide between right or wrong, we don't want to walk into the trap of making a moral essay
- cfr. 'Deafman's Glance' by Robert Wilson

We have to find out how black, how existential the story is

- inherent doom or instrument of hope
- to be clear about life and death, the black card should be in our hands, there's no doom
- the ace is the transformation card
- both sides of the card are black, the audience has to look for the light side of the card itself

- black means there isn't hope
- but also to see the beauty of the sound of the lamentation in Greek if we use it as music not as a cry
- the humor and the energy make it hopeful

What is the way out of the black card?

- music as the way out of the black, as a transformation 'to look with your ears'
- the song 'Good night, Irene' by Neil Young
- Jessy Norman 'Four last songs' by Richard Strauss
- an image which becomes music:
Bernard Berenson's analysis of Piero della Francesca: he painted his belief, clearness, necessity, simplicity of the images - the ineloquent in art
- the longing for life as a statement
- the picture of H. Müller's friend Brigitte Mayer: the old man with young men around his bed
- the humor and comic elements in the play
- the article of Susan Sontag: in the last 25 years 'the low' was introduced in theatre, now there is an impulse to go back to 'the high'