



KING LEAR

Atelier for the Creation of Theater led by Alessandro Serra
Compagnia Teatropersona

The character of a man is his destiny
Heraclitus

Honor the face of an old man
Leviticus

PREMISE

A theme and two words

King Lear is perhaps Shakespeare's greatest work, crossed by an infinity of planes and because of this perhaps the most complex. The risk is to tell the story of a senile old man who divides the kingdom among his daughters and then changes his mind.

There is no trace of senility in Lear. He's not an old man, but a man full of strength and violence, not stupid at all and who wants *that future strife may be prevented now*, as he says. However tyrants, like poets, never abdicate. When profession coincides with destiny one does not let go. This is where tragedy is born: you do not inherit from the living, but from the dead.

So it is that apprentices may never truly inherit until they shake off the shadow of the master. That's why Zen warns us: *if you meet The Buddha, kill him!*

The fall is the theme.

Since the first act in King Lear we witness an inevitable degradation: political, spiritual, physical, until we reach the end where, unlike any other of Shakespeare's tragedies, there is no hope left. Such a principle is sublimed in the scene where Edgard accompanies his father to the edge of a fake cliff and the audience witnesses the scene of an old blind man who falls to his knees and asks his son:

But have I fall'n, or no?

The first radiant word which returns and weaves the story is in fact *sight*, that is to say the lack of it, *blindness*. Those who have eyes, in King Lear, cannot see. Gloucester, his eyes gouged out, will only see in blindness. Like Oedipus guided by Antigone he will be led to the edge of an inexistent cliff by his son disguised as a madman.

Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind.

Lear's story, like the story of Oedipus, is about acquiring inner sight.

It is an initiation to old age.

The second word which illuminates the text and upon which we will pause over the course of the five days is *truth*.

In this tragedy without any hope or future, the blind see and the mad tell the truth.

Cordelia and the madman both tell the truth, and perhaps are the same person.

Lear will have to descend to the bottom of desperation for him to learn to see truth, until then it will be the fool who sees on his behalf.

LEAR *Dost thou call me fool, boy?*

FOOL *All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.*

PREPARATORY PHASE

Every Actor will have to read Shakespeare's King Lear and memorize an extract from a character of their choice. They will then have to bring along:

1. Comfortable training clothes
2. Notebook
3. Complete clothing and accessories to dress the chosen character
4. An object which must be both an accessory and a requisite of the character.
5. A source of light

THE ATELIER

Training

- Physical warm-up
- Relationship between hips and spine: managing and directing energy
- Managing weight and balance
- Writing with the body, composition exercises
- Voice and listening. Singing and polyphony
- The choir

Creation

- Study of space in relation to shape and time.
- Rectangle, triangle, circle
- Text analysis
- Construction and composition: relationship between actor, character and figure
- Evocative and narrative power in objects
- Dramaturgy of the image: composing and building the scene
- Carnal relation between actor and light sources