



Inside the Swashing Glossolalias of Artaud

Gil Roberto Almeida
César Lignelli

Universidade de Brasília – UnB, Brasília/DF, Brazil

ABSTRACT – Inside the Swashing Glossolalias of Artaud – By analyzing the works of Artaud it is evident a set of ideas that suggests principles for vocality in the context of performance. This vocality is based on a notion of glossolalia as a concept linked to enunciative practices, especially as potency for irrationalizing vocal strata. Thus, glossolalia can add sound-poetic values that destabilize voice related aspects of meaning production and perception. Here we seek a discussion of possible boundaries in vocal production. We will appropriate concepts from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as considerations from Certeau and Pozzo. This article aims to arouse and appreciate aspects of a glossolalic vocality, seeking to expand possibilities for the contemporary performer, problematizing the context of his vocal practices.

Keywords: **Voice. Glossolalia. Artaud. Body without Organs. Hearing.**

RÉSUMÉ – Dans le Clapotis des Glossolalies dans Artaud – A partir de l'œuvre d'Artaud, apparaît un ensemble d'idées qui indique des principes pour une vocalité dans le contexte de la performance. Cette vocalité est basée sur une notion de glossolalie en tant que concept lié aux pratiques énonciatives, surtout pour activer des strates vocales moins rationnelles. Ainsi, la glossolalie peut ajouter des valeurs sonores et poétiques qui déstabilisent des aspects de la production et de la perception de sens liés à la voix. Cet article présente une discussion au sujet des frontières possibles de la production vocale. Pour une telle discussion, nous employons quelques concepts de l'œuvre de Deleuze et Guattari, ainsi que des réflexions de Certeau et Pozzo. L'article a pour objectif de soulever et mettre en valeur des aspects d'une vocalité glossolalique pour élargir les possibilités d'expérimentation de l'artiste contemporain, et interroger le cadre de ses pratiques vocales.

Mots-clés: **Voix. Glossolalie. Artaud. Corps-sans-Organes. Ecoute.**

RESUMO – No Marulhar das Glossolalias em Artaud – A partir da obra de Artaud, evidencia-se um ideário que sugere princípios para uma vocalidade no contexto da performance. Essa vocalidade é baseada em uma noção de glossolalia como conceito vinculado às práticas enunciativas, sobretudo como potência para desarraoar estratos vocais. Assim, a glossolalia pode agregar valores sonoro-poéticos que desestabilizam aspectos da produção e percepção de sentidos relacionados à voz. Busca-se aqui uma discussão sobre possíveis fronteiras da produção vocal. Serão apropriados conceitos da obra de Deleuze e Guattari, assim como reflexões de Certeau e Pozzo. Os objetivos do artigo importam em suscitar e valorizar aspectos de uma vocalidade glossolálica, visando ampliar as possibilidades do performer contemporâneo, problematizando o contexto de suas práticas vocais.

Palavras-chave: **Voz. Glossolalia. Artaud. Corpo sem Órgãos. Escuta.**

The vocalities¹ in a scene permeate the performer's work, requiring from him a peculiar investment of energy in such an investigation. Reaching out to others by using the voice, while embodying this voice, through forms multiplied during sound research, requires a singular porosity that also adds borderline values of vocal production. Let us consider a voice whose instability share noisier, amoral, unintelligible aspects, a voice that is simply sound matter, noises of bodies, as Michel de Certeau (2013) called, whose becoming in performance, while being production of desire, has great potential of staying nomad in relation to language, sign and meaning processes as a way of representation. It is the potential of a border voice, riddled with quirky oddities, a voice between strata, between vocalities: glossolalia.

Thus, what can the voice in performance do? What are the territories pertaining to a glossolalic vocality? Before we turn to the term itself, let us tune our ears to the work of Antonin Artaud², especially during the hospital stay in Rodez (February 1943 to May 1946) until his death (March 1948). While institutionalized, Artaud faced a deep struggle with language, with the body, with madness and art and produced literature, critical-philosophical essays and many other texts that cannot fit the categories and genres usually given. This production, which included letters, drawings, poems and notes, has aided the expansion of the limits and the discussion of languages such as literature, theater, visual arts and performance.

Artaud truly was a thinker of below and beyond languages, especially the dimension of language, a place of surgeries and stage for a disproportionate delivery of his fervor. Through him, the French language suffered interventions whose lines of flight³ suggest a notion for voice in performance. In this context emerged the first glossolalic manifestations: as an overflow of this struggle with language. During that same period of intense textual production, in which Artaud dared to recreate himself as a Body without Organs (BwO)⁴, these manifestations of a delirious language, too lucid, incomprehensible, densely creative and philosophical went through him. They underwent a long process of incubation and internal alchemy until their transubstantiation in poetic language.

In the work of Artaud something demands to be heard, something arouses a voice. A vocal spectrum seems to populate his

writings. Perhaps due to his constant confinement in clinics and nursing homes, he has written excessively what otherwise could be said or experimented in different performance contexts. It is remarkable the aural potential of his work, because when we read it we have a strong feeling that what is written eagerly asks to be yelled, wrought in voice and language; often, an atrocious impulse seems to explode from his writings and drawings, making the language inspire sounds. In an interview, Jacques Derrida comments on this aural character of the Artaudian texts: “To read him should imply resurrecting his voice, to read imagining him utter his texts. I know of no other author whose act of uttering is so present in his writings”⁵ (our translation). This also means reading him using the ears, grasping a possible voice in his speech. Reading him aloud also as a resource of experimentation with reading. And in this vital and cruel need to say, uttering the word to realize it in the material word, Artaud will operate a conflict that, overflowing the language, will flow into glossolalia.

This way, the sound and, above all, the voice as one of its aspects, appears in his work in an idiosyncratic, noisy way, in a constant appeal to a possible sound that does not sediment or establish itself, but reconfigures itself in an agony that feeds its own life. A possible vocality in Artaud travels a singular, experimental, warped, open and elusive cartography⁶. It pervades all his life but it is during his long hospitalization, extending from his years of freedom until his death that such a glossolalic vocality acquires an acoustic dimension as poetic suggestion.

Relating glossolalia to values and concepts such as noise, excess, constant experimentation, unintelligibility, cruelty⁷ and the BwO, it seems to rumor a vocality hypothesis between the fringes, at the borders of voice itself. Noisy hypothesis: the multiplicity of Artaud’s work corpus can contribute to a poetic of becoming-vocal, especially in a notion of glossolalia, aiding the contemporary performer to investigate into nomadisms of the voice in a performance context. Inordinate vocal: dislodge, move the voice beyond the locus of each day, beyond the vocal *métron*⁸ of each one. A recurring hypothetical rumor, glossolalia, while being a manifold concept, aggregates several layers from enunciative practices, enabling the voice to express itself as sonic material for methods outside of speeches and languages, and

can enrich a performer's vocal experimentation. And in the heart of this hypothesis lies rumors, inordinately put, again: What can the voice do?

The vocality gleaned from Artaud's work is pervaded by the spectrum of yelling. A noisy man, an outcry. Yelling has a distress call embedded in its etymology but, nevertheless, Artaud goes even further and his howl supports a rumorous practice, from the Latin *rumor*, rustle, murmur, in favour of the affirmation⁹. A yell and an affirmation. The yell goes through the hospital, nursing home and psychiatric institutions that provide no nurture for his conflicts, pierces through the language in which the word, often domesticated or moralized, does not allow a certain wildness of the creative act to flourish, breaks through creating a necessary disturbance, an uncomfortable furor. The noise between words, the noise of crisis, the noise of a language falling apart, the noises of the mind. The yell brings ugliness and amoral violence. Explosion. A nervous animal, a poorly done aesthetic, no refinement, no elegance.

This yell will reverberate a sensitive matter. A crisis of thought that reverberates a body crisis that reverberates a crisis of language that overflows in a voice. Artaud reclaims the freedom of his body, which is the freedom to say something forged in a singular language.

A deep notion of body and life matter pervades the thoughts of Artaud and all his work, up until the borders of a crisis of meaning, a crisis before the possibility of saying something, a crisis of the very meaning that language can give to enunciations. Immersing herself in the Frenchman works, Susan Sontag (1986, p. 57) speaks of "inadmissible voice and presence", as a cartography that provides singular forms to what is incomprehensible and, by stating that "The unintelligible parts of Artaud's late writings are supposed to remain obscure - to be directly apprehended as sound." (Sontag, 1986, p. 51), points to a peculiar aspect of glossolalic enunciation. But, after all, what is glossolalia and how can such a concept serve vocality in the context of performance?

Glossolalia: a word with ample meanings, strange, historically mutant, conceptually thick with many layers, an emanation of divine and psychiatric manifestations of trance and poetic contours, contradictory, elusive, obscure... It sets a path for enunciation practices, in a pervious way, as a possible experiment in the field

of vocal performance. However, it also casts an endless and often unfathomable range of aspects that contribute to a sound-poetic vision of vocality: liturgical chants, occultist formulas, invented languages, oracular predictions, possessed voices, unintelligible speech, theater games, linguistic transgression, noises of voices... First, let us take an etymological journey through one of its many stories, starting with the term itself.

From the Greek *glossa* (tongue, phonatory organ, dialect, language) + *lalein* (to speak). The origin of *glossa* is obscure and riddled with historical and conceptual inaccuracies. At first, we will base ourselves on the considerations made by Alessandra Pozzo¹⁰, who analyzes the evolution of the term *glossa* based on a study by Louis Holtz. The following is a summary of his considerations. *Glossa*, apparently and without precise temporal indication, would have been derived from *glokes* (*épi*'s beard) or yet, *glokis* (point), meaning tongue as a phonatory organ and a pointed tongue. It also meant the spoken word, a language, a dialect and even the very language in a generic sense. Aristotle describes it as the word that is notable for being foreign to the common and known lexicon. So, it is a term that, when purposely used, undermines the banality of speech, often in order to attract attention and admiration of the reader through the unusual.

From such meanings, we derive a sense that *glossa* is a rare lexical element, whether as dialect borrowing or as a barbaric word or yet as an ancient word, which has fallen into disuse. According to Holtz, language's poetic function has in the word *glossa* or *glotta* the stimulation of a reader's imagination. The rare word, in this sense, includes a potency connected to a multitude of meanings of what is strange and unusual. *Glossa*, so far, is linked to written texts, to which Holtz clarifies that "Therefore, the form *glôssais lalein* would constitute, in all likelihood, a meaning linked to the notion of *glossa*, but transposed to oral forms specific to the inspired speech of early Christianity" (Holtz *apud* Pozzo, 2013, p. 64, our translation).

A further interpretation refers to a notion of *glossa* as a rare word, which is not necessarily placed in a text with intent, but as any word whose unusual meaning needs to be explained, creating a double: a rare word and the interpretation of this rare word. Still referring to Holtz's study, Pozzo summarizes the history of *glossa*,

based on an impression of a word that is notable in a text because it is foreign and therefore requires an explanation or, well, a translation; and then indicates any uncommon lexical element, without regard to its rarity and subsequently any rare word whose meaning needs to be explained. According to Pozzo (2013, p. 64, our translation) “The proximity to *lalein* projects this word to the world of spoken language, while originally it belonged to written texts”. Therefore, glossolalia binds itself to enunciative practices marked by their unintelligibility and the necessity to explain the unknown, especially in an oral context.

As a hybrid, borderline term and hard to define, it encompasses many fields of knowledge, such as religious practices, language studies, art and culture, moving through many contexts. More often, glossolalia refers to the act of speaking in tongues or the gift of tongues as an oral practice in Pentecostal churches, referring to the descent of the Holy Spirit at the miracle of Pentecost, as a manifestation of God’s voice. The language of men cannot encompass celestial designs, thus the meaning is acquired by way of a kind of clairvoyance relating to this phenomenon’s sonority, often understood through the gift of interpretation of tongues. However, glossolalia is not a strictly Christian phenomenon, as it was part of pagan practices, especially in marginal contexts, as is the case with oracular practices and other liturgies in ancient Greece. Moreover, it is a term that has been appropriated by psychiatry, psychoanalysis and linguistics, to nosographic registers of psychological conditions and language disorders. In any context related to glossolalic practices, it has always been associated with a kind of instability, whether of the speech, vocality or written text, always as an overflowing and a surplus beyond a code, standard or structure.

As a heterogeneous territory whose concept drinks from many sources and whose angles even seem to contradict themselves, glossolalia can instigate with its power to cause bewilderment, suggesting a set of practices and poetics that in many ways can contribute to a discussion of vocalities for performance. In the face of the multiplicity of contexts related to a performer’s research, glossolalia stirs up the listening of voices long prohibited and despised and, returning to the hybridity of an unreasonable vocal action, Jean-Jacques Courtine (2006, p. 01, our translation), in his article

Les silences de la voix, speaks of an imprecise, elusive and hybrid character of glossolalias:

Scattered at the edges of institutions - ecclesiastical, medical, scientific or literary – that protect the meaning of enunciations, comes to deliver in these practices the lack of meaning of produced sounds that all sound, at the same time, as a challenge and a call for interpretation. Unstable, fluid and intermittent practices: the history of glossolalia is the history of many disappearances and sudden erasings, but also of sudden effervescence and continuous renewal. This history, to a great extent, has not yet been written. To do it is a complex affair.

It is precisely in the sense of instability and obscurity of these practices that a notion for voice will be based, the excess of which causes the overflowing of several cracks that lie between the most stable strata of meaning perception oriented towards vocal production, as its marginal character places it on the convergence of practices which, throughout its history, or better yet, its histories, invested in nomadism as a way beyond institutional boundaries, destabilizing the *logos* of a world view which makes control, in official and standardization scopes, of governing principles of relationship.

The evasions of meaning and, especially, of the meanings regarding the voice, recur in the histories of glossolalia, creating the possibility of nomadic vocalities that are difficult to categorize because of their heterogeneous character. Simultaneously, these possibilities of enunciation approximate the founding experience of those who enunciate, which is the presence of a reverberation of the matter through noise produced by bodies with no necessary connection to any meanings. Referencing the researches of Certeau (2013), Courtine (2006, p. 07, our translation) discusses the potency of this experience respecting a glossolalic voice:

Beyond the effect of the body of their statements, they restore, at the price of a semblance, their vocal materiality, that is, their bodily materiality, to the language. In escaping the act of meaning, they find this essential dimension of language: an inner sensation, irredeemably singular, that a language is spoken and that the body produces vocal noises. They remind the theories of signs of that which is the base of their reason: that the subject talks.

This way, a glossolalic enunciation is, above all, vibrating by sound, moving a body, making it present through the voice as a

phenomenon of the matter, transforming the experiment into a vocal singularity as a body that talks is a body that vibrates, and talking and hearing to oneself imply this reverberation of something that states itself as a founding phenomenon, which is the production of an ancient spark, crucial for human consciousness. According to Certeau (2013), it is a fiction of saying, as glossolalia is not a language: it has the appearance of one, but not its structure. To avoid the pitfalls of meaning and avoid mistakes regarding words, glossolalia is pure fable: a reunion with an ancestral and primeval speech.

Certeau (2013) asks provocatively if glossolalia is such an exceptional phenomenon. And concludes that the answer is negative, because, in ordinary speech, it insinuates itself with noises of bodies in the articulations of speech, through incomprehensible fragments in citations and interjections. It is as if parallel to a voice that organizes the meanings, including linguistic meaning, there is a voice that cuts it and doubles it and multiplies it. According to him, “The parallel noises that populate ordinary conversations represent an interlocutory and vocal tattoo on speech. They indicate the workings of language as it is spoken” (Certeau, 2013, p. 339, our translation). Our ordinary talking is populated with rumors that are “Beyond the walls of language” (Certeau, 2013, p. 339, our translation).

There’s something in the voice, a pulsion that cannot be reduced to a linguistic sign. But what is left after we remove the language that is articulated during speech? This is a territory whose investment in desire exudes a glossolalic vocality. According to Certeau (2013, p. 343, our translation), “Excluding all effective languages, it (the glossolalia phenomenon) is the utterance of each language, without which no language would be spoken”. This leads us to reflect on how we speak in any language at all, since “Glossolalia isolates the utterance of all utterances” (Certeau, 2013, p. 343, our translation). It sounds like neutral before language, something that gives all the conditions of impersonating a language and that, nonetheless, can never be this language. It consists in how we invest ourselves in the act of uttering, setting up all the principles needed so the enunciation can have a sound presence and, at the same time, exceed the limits of language structure. This vocal utopia brings with it the possibilities of a reflection about glossolalia in arts, especially for voices in performance, and Certeau (2013, p. 345, our translation) touches this point, opening the discussion:

In every glossolalia there is a combination between something of a pre-language, concerning a silent origin or the 'attack' of the spoken word, and something of a post-language, made of excess, overflowings or residues of language. Just as a myth, these fictions combine the before and after of saying to build the artifact in which it throws itself.

Based on these reflections, Pozzo will designate as playful glossolalia, distinct from the glossolalia used in religious practices, the one which encompasses artistic creation. The foundation of these glossolalias would be a transgression of linguistic rules, done in the field of art. To play around with language was a way of effecting delirium, a shift in meaning, or rather an expansion of meanings, paving the way for a subsequent definition of glossolalia:

If 'ordinary' glossolalia goes from a prohibition to say (God) to being able to say, a secondary glossolalia would go the opposite way. Relying on articulated speech, it proceeds with its deconstruction by a game of phonemes and/or by derision of words. This glossolalic figure rehearses the virtualities of the vocal palette and is based on an absence of obligations: a permission to play with language (Pozzo apud Certeau, 2013, p. 295, our translation).

This way, we think that such glossolalia, that tries to serve a vocality for performance, can go beyond playing with language and can even reject its support. Such a move allows the performer a freedom which is distinct, but that also includes that other one: to play with sound. Because the principle is to look for ways to vocalize, simply by vocalizing (which can be an utterance, for example); it is not communication, but the act of vocalizing/enunciating that makes glossolalia an atomic phenomenon of a body that says itself. Certeau (2013, p. 353, our translation) speaks of "games at the borders" in relation to what begins being said and, for that, this zone is a "Place of abundance and game, too, because it is not subject to the technical and tactical constraints imposed by linguistic articulations of communication. A place of indeterminate joy [...]".

Glossolalia alters and disrupts a territory, unsettling identitarian principles and promoting lines of flight, working a heterogeneous set of signs schemes. Let us return to one acceptance for the origin of *glossa*: it is a term that, when intentionally used, destabilizes the banality of speech. Moreover, given the impossibility to express the diversity of human experience using the language, often it is created

in a sense of continuously variable¹¹ linguistic aspects and, advancing, would be correlated with playing with the sound of voice, seizing all excesses below or beyond stable vocal programs. Glossolalia, as a marginal practice, relates to everything that hurts a set of rules, pointing to an absence of understanding of meanings and, often, even of an immediate meaning. It also relates to a founding experience of sound production by the body; that is: as I vocalize, I reverberate and make myself resonate through matter.

Glossolalia, as a set of possible practices for voices in performance contexts, does not exclude the word from itself, whether written or spoken, or even the *logos* of world building. It is not a polarization of speech, nor is it a word ghost, but it exists between all possible speeches, always in some kind of frontier process. It relies on the stability of territories to suggest lines of flight and nomadic processes, whether in relation to languages, bodies or institutions.

Faced with an unreasonable vocality as suggested by a notion of glossolalia, a conceptual universe resonates here: a philosophy of desire and difference that starts with Artaud and will reverberate in Deleuze and Guattari. The BwO, a concept developed by the French authors based on the work of Artaud, will be crucial for a glossolalic practice. *To Have Done With the Judgement of god*¹² was a work created on the threshold of death, after long years of hospitalization. And it was no accident that the performance of this text was called by him as theater of cruel healing, as was the territory of incubation of the BwO.

In an incandescent *insight*, Artaud (1975, p. 50) outlines a new anatomy, devoid of organs: “When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom”.

An existential autopsy, Artaud’s vocal legacy for posterity, a work weathered in nursing homes, fertilized with deep reflections on Christian theology, mystical delusions and an unsettling feeling of an amoral voice. In Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy, the body, in this Artaudian context, could not be submitted to the institutional powers of god. He acted as the usurper of an intense body, a-significant, immersed in a micropolitics of desire. God was the thief of this body. Who was God? What is an organ? What is invested in the notion of organism? What would be the BwO tortured by Artaud?

God, as a regulatory principle of body politics and life politics, is the one who holds the power of judgment. Thus, only a body transformed into an organism, with its clear, objective and convenient division, can be judged from a fragmented notion in which desire follows a coercion, a cultural coercion, a psychoanalytical coercion, a religious coercion, a coercion based on the powers vested in institutions. In this case, the desire sounds like an absence. How does desire move in such a well-organized body? It runs along a stream of stratifications, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1999), it does not experiment, it serves the experiment. In other words, its social, political, economic, animic-spiritual or any other arbitrary functions regarding existence, follows the determination of territories where movement as nomadic potency meets obstacles when experimenting and making a pact, barriers when creating and limits to affecting and being affected, since a stratified body cannot be a gradient of intensities whose desire it populates with certain liberty.

An organ is vested with functions, there is a political and moral domestication of its attributes and scope. If, on one hand, fear is a fascist feeling, that judges and is judged, and establishes a retrenchment policy, as pointed out by Deleuze and Guattari (2011, p. 158), desire, they said, is revolutionary, for “[...] no society can tolerate a position of real desire without its structures of exploitation, servitude, and hierarchy being compromised”. Deleuze (2004, p. 148) analyzes cruelty as a form of desiring potency that opposes the theological doctrine of judgment on the level of bodies, for

[...] judgement implies a veritable organization of the bodies through which it acts: organs are both judges and judged, and the judgement of God is nothing other than the power to organize to infinity. Whence the relationship between judgement and the sense organs. The body of the physical system is completely different; it escapes judgement all the more inasmuch as it is not an ‘organism’, and is deprived of this organization of the organs through which one judges and is judged... Artaud presents this ‘body without organs’ that God has stolen from us in order to palm off an organized body without which his judgement could not be exercised.

What to move over this body? What is happening? What is not happening? What prevents the desire to pass through it? Experimentation with these limits is what gives affective meaning

in creating a BwO. It consists of an incessant search, a lifelong continuous becoming: “Find your body without organs. Find out how to make it. It’s a question of life and death, youth and old age, sadness and joy. It is where everything is played out” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1999, p. 11), there is always a limit, and another, and another and another, which relate to a set of practices.

If, according to Artaud, at the level of the body there is a fight against its own stratification and a demand for singularity in its investment of desire, the voice could not be an organ in such a body or, at least, wouldn’t settle for being an organ. It could not be a mouth, a diaphragm, a larynx, a nose, lung, breath-organ, air-object. Also, it could not be an organized arrangement of these parts: it would encompass something beyond the articulation of the vocal tract based on technical principles and possibly codified forms. Therefore, the notion here intended of a nomadic voice would be more consonant with the question, always the question as an ever recurring, constantly renewed motif: what can the voice do? What can the voice, in a body proposed by Artaud, do? This would involve a set of disarticulation, desubjectivation and a-signification practices, as shown by Deleuze and Guattari.

The organism, the significance and the subjectification are the major general strata mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari, against which a notion of BwO will be opposed. In a politics of desire, the organism must be disassembled in order to become a zone of intensities that transcend the anatomical role of the organs. An a-signifying practice raises a conflict with interpretation. And nomadism destabilizes the identity search of the subject. Did Artaud disarticulate himself until getting completely lost in the fire of folly? Did he succumb to the experiment of creating a body without organs for himself? We believe that he experienced the limits of the art of dosages against the danger of overdose¹³.

Artaud primarily used disarticulation to oppose the organism. An operation of disassembling to later rearrange oneself in singular settings, not a configuration of divine judgment. It consists of an atomism replacing an anatomy:

Who am I? / Where do I come from? / I am Antonin Artaud
/ and if I say it / as I know how to say it / immediately /
you will see my present body / fly into pieces / and under

ten thousand / notorious aspects / a new body / will be assembled / in which you will never again / be able / to forget me (Artaud, 1975, p. 65).

His corporeality always holds a virtual potency on the verge of actualization¹⁴, causing him to avoid the organization of judgment. Derrida (2009, p. 275) talks about this process of disarticulation as desire turned against the phenomenon of expropriation:

But what we will call organic differentiation had already raged within the body, before it had corrupted the metaphysics of the theater. Organization is articulation, the interlocking of functions or of members... This constitutes both a membering and dismembering of my proper body. Artaud is as fearful of the articulated body as he is of articulated language, as fearful of the member as of the word. For articulation is the structure of my body, and structure is always structure of expropriation. The division of the body into organs, the difference interior to the flesh, opens the lack through which the body becomes absent from itself, passing itself off as, and taking itself for, the mind. Now, 'there is no mind, nothing but the differentiation of bodies' (March, 1947). The body, which 'always seeks to reassemble itself', escapes itself by virtue of that which permits it to function and to express itself; as is said of those who are ill, the body listens to itself and, thus, disconcerts itself.

We notice here that the articulation of the organism is a stratification that operates on many layers, such as those of the body and language, as well as significance and subjectification. If we are to try to trace a chronology of signification in the work of Artaud, it is possible to notice a huge inconsistency, because it violently resists this interpretation. Sontag comments on a notion of language in Artaud, striving to speak the unspeakable:

The language Artaud used at the end of his life, in passages in *Artaud le Momo*, *Here Lies*, and *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*, verges on an incandescent declamatory speech beyond sense. "All true language is incomprehensible," Artaud says in *Here Lies*. (Sontag, 1986, p. 51, italics added).

Such a-signifying practices made the speech permeable to the scintillation of noises and a profusion of images. Artaud intensively experimented with the limits of language at the intersection with other languages. Then, a swashing glossolalia inhabited the edges of his experiments, at the incubation of stray sounds.

If we are often confronted with that which appears unintelligible and unclassifiable in searching homogeneity of discourse and established interpretations in Artaud, in the search for an identity, he also makes such a task collapse. Artaud's miracle of multiplication. Beyond the cliché that no one stays the same, it consists of a conscious nomadic movement of destabilization of the subject, for there is no *I say*, but a legion, a pack that explores the faltering self. There is a collective in the voice, a polyphony. In a letter to Paulhan, Artaud says "I don't want to sign anymore, at all" (Mèredieu, 2011, p. 57), in a direct affront to the principle of identity. He transubstantiated himself in Christ and also created lines of kings to dwell in his figure. He was *Artaud Nalpas*, *Artaud le Momo*, *Arland Antoneo*, in greek *Arlanpoulos* and tried to rename himself in an initiatory mystique...¹⁵.

A BwO for a glossolalic practice of voice in performance will always be a limit and it is unattainable, as the very nature of becoming puts it into a continuous variable state. Also, it sounds like a set of practices groping at the limits and thresholds of vocal creation, such as listening, a stutter in its own language, alliances made with the unknown and the unusual and being exposed to unheard-of experiences. These practices amount to a-signifying, desubjectivating and disarticulating and can be observed in many layers of Artaud's work, such as in the experiments engendered in a face-to-face with French language.

The compulsion and frenzy for writing and drawing made possible for Artaud to achieve a singular oral practice, which made him swash a peculiar glossolalia. Mèredieu (2011, p. 908) speaks of his personal liturgies in these contexts:

Glossolalias multiply themselves as his writing becomes more electrical, rhythmical and musical. At the end of Artaud's life, they are an integral part of rituals set by him to fight his demons and constitute a larger part of this Theatre of Cruelty, which he incessantly practiced. They are syllables meant to be spoken, unraveled, cadenced, sung, wailed. And Artaud devoted himself to practice in Ivry, drumming on his wooden stump at an almost frantic speed.

The rhythm, musicality and intensity of writing made him cross the limits of language to be able to voice them as well. To imagine Artaud immersed in excessive writing practices, which stimulated the vocality in performance, which feeds back into writing starting

a constant cycle of hours, days, months in a row, is to imagine an individual seeking to transcend the limits within which the word operates, to make it rave in a vocal operation. A delirious pythoiness in a nursing home room? A cruel meditation seeking an alternative to despair? A pathological voice tentatively honking the meanings of a neurosis? A sound poet trying to transmute and expand the limits of his questions about art and life? A molecular, sanguine voice, experimented during the furor of delivery, a rigorous exercise, an affective practice, glossolalia, sonorous wine.

The last writings of Artaud were largely written according to an oral improvisation technique based on written fragments, as pointed out by Évelyne Groosman in a note in *Interjections*, part of *Suppôts et Supplications*, published in *Oeuvres* (2004). On reading the text, it is clear that she is referring especially to glossolalias, which were dictated to a typist at his disposal: “*maloussi toumi / tapapouts hermafrot / emajouts pamafrot / toupî pissarot / rapajouts erkampfî [...] lokalu durgarane / lokarane alenin tapenim / anempfti / dur geluze / re geluze / tagure / rigolure tsipi*” (Artaud, 2004, p. 1335). These glossolalias were practiced, unraveled and tortured in nursing homes rooms, where he was hospitalized. His writings, beyond evoking a whole sound spectrum, were veritable accounts of an experimented-with voice.

In reinventing a *new language*, Artaud uses what Camille Dumoulié (2003, p. 107, our translation) called idiocy resource, “[...] a term designating an absolutely personal use of language, but which can also be understood as the expression of a holy idiocy”, what Deleuze (2004) called the ability to stutter in his own language. Interestingly, when Artaud says he will write for the illiterate and uneducated, he has no *intention* of writing for a reader, as assessed by Deleuze¹⁶, but, more than anything else, he puts himself *in the place of*: in the place of the unlearned, in the place of the idiots, which agrees with a practice of desubjectivation where the *self* is pierced by a collectivity, because it is not a *Self* that responds to private matters. Thus, the indirect speech operates as a flux of glossolalia, because “To write is perhaps to bring this assemblage of the unconscious to the light of day, to select the whispering voices, to gather the tribes and secret idioms from which I extract something I call my *Self (Moi)*” (Deleuze; Guattari, 2002, p. 24).

Glossolalia is intertwined with a series of words, practices and phenomena with which it intersects, in some way, establishing a conceptually poetic relationship. It was appropriated by different contexts in various areas of knowledge, with different sources through space-time. From mythical-religious, liturgical, psychiatric and artistic practices, it can be inferred the inexhaustible openings to the indiscernible zones that resonate a poetics of the *between* of vocal possibilities. In keeping with its principles, we can glimpse: the voice of Demetrio Stratos¹⁷, whose scope of solo work points to sound as raw material for a self-investigating vocality, a liberating practice, prolific, unlimited; the *grommelot*¹⁸ of Dario Fo that, by appropriating sound clichés that pervade languages, was able to engender wordless sound toys; the linguistic interventions of Anthony Burgess (2004), whose creation of *nadsat*, a language spoken in his best-known book, *A Clockwork Orange*, places the reader before a strange language, populated with anomalies and oddities; Lord Chandos, fictional character created by Hugo von Hofmannsthal (2008), whose crisis of language makes him unable to communicate and express himself in any language, dragging him to a boundary experience of linguistic breakdown; the sound poetry of the twentieth century and its experiments on vocal strata.

Such suggested vocality places the performer before a vast unreasonable experience, limit-experiences, between-experiences. This can take him to investigate supposed vocal restraints, which goes to meet the ensuing restraints of his listening.

This article is about sound, about the sound of the voice, even though it is the virtual potencies of a voice and, in this way, it is about the necessary listening that is part of a set of practices to approach this vocality, since it is part of the perception and production of meanings arising from the acoustic dimension of performance. Surrendering to a listening demanded by glossolalia provides a curious experiment of strangeness, especially if listening your own voice while trying to experiment with uncharted territories: a shady place in the voice, amoral, bleak, ridiculous, noisy. To listen, in this way, is to be pervious to the vicissitudes of any voice, no matter how crude it seems to be, however unintelligible, however inaudible it may be.

Listening is primarily a principle of alterity. Listening to the voice of the other. To listen without prejudice to what disturbs your

aural comfort, to accept the unusual and the unknown. Glossolalia demands a singular listening, a listening that craves desire and to be desire. According to Roland Barthes (1982, p. 228):

[...] a free listening is essentially a listening which circulates, which exchanges, which disaggregates, by its mobility, the fixed network of the roles of speech: it is not possible to imagine a free society, if we agree in advance to preserve within it the old modes of listening: those of the believer, the disciple, and the patient.

The practice of a pervious listening wants to embrace a glossolalic rumor, for “[...] listening is externalized, it compels the subject to renounce his ‘inwardness’” (Barthes, 1982, p. 228). When we hear glossolalia, we are pierced by others, a legion, we let the unknown unheard of pass. Here sounds the notion of collective agency of enunciation as according to Deleuze and Guattari, that is, there is no single enunciation, only a collective rumor, therefore such a listening opens up to possible others and a glossolalic vocality delivers a set of voices that makes a collectivity swash. It also endorses what Certeau (2011) called quotations of voices.

The production of voice is permeated by a listening inasmuch oneself accepts the other. A pervious listening. A BwO that is all listening. Thus, glossolalic contexts can permeate a notion of voice, making resonances swash between a philosophy of desire and the aesthetic and experimental practices of contemporary performance. This implies the passages of others through the vocal practices of the performer, in a profusion of differences and singularities. The *self* would be a dissolution in the glossolalic experience, which strikes a multiplication of others in the possibilities of alterity. Such a voice demands to wallow in the instability of language and speech, inspiring a continuous variation, constantly reconfiguring oneself as sound and meaning. To defile oneself in the impurities of another.

It is interesting to note a gap with regard to publications that focus on a notion of glossolalia aimed at vocal performance, especially in Portuguese. The majority of these publications are related to religious and psychiatric aspects, as well as the area of communication and linguistics. This gap seems to suggest a practical gap, that would allow the performer to recognize unpalatable instances of a possible vocality, as in a discursive-linguistic unintelligibility, noises, excesses and debris, and amoral routes, whose challenge, given the risk of

opening up to strange sounds, may arouse and unfold itself in a literature on the subject.

It also can be noticed that the notion of a glossolalic vocality is wide, swashing, multitudinous, there is no sedimenting it, instead, one seeks affections in favor of their singular becomings. It is also a concept that tries to establish itself in the fluctuations of other territories, appropriating other vocalities, in the *betweens* of other practices, as a feature that irrationalize. Thus, when we speak of a voice based on glossolalic principles, it is not a movement that excludes stable aspects of vocality, such as is the case with language, word and text, but that which even appropriates these instances and can also be engendered between these strata, fostering a continuously variable movement toward a multiplication of differences.

Moreover, listening to disparate sounds in human and cosmic contexts, as the sounds of the animal kingdom, the sounds of worldwide languages and dialects, vocal sounds of children in stages preceding language acquisition, strange liturgies in several mythical-religious contexts, poetry and music references, the sounds of a dying star and an immense glacier cracking and all that, by means of sound, will make the spread of a vocality for the scene possible, is also part of the practices that presume an unreasonable voice.

Glossolalia, as a set of enunciative practices, matters to the performer as a possibility to play with the sounds of the voice. Mostly, playing with the sounds that populate borderline and obscure ideas of a vocality that reports to the *betweens* of vocals territories. Therefore, by glimpsing cartographies in the context of performance, one finds in the work of Artaud an entire sonorous-poetic and conceptual suggestion for such vocality, when inferring the importance of a sound-of-the-voice materiality, whose investment of desire is cast upon the many supports of vocal creation: language, body, the written word and life, in their multiple contexts of enunciations that can be appropriated by the performance.

The practice of such vocality also provides the performer with another perspective of text, word and speech, by glimpsing these instances as broad contexts for possible sounds, from values which do not necessarily return to the significances and meanings already established. To stutter in a vocality that appropriates text and language to deviant purposes, syncopated, by engendering acoustic potencies



in uncharted territories. To bite that which sounds too inhospitable and unusual to be digested. It also sounds challenging and exciting for the performer to grope at the experience of an unprecedented incomprehension by improvising with an often nameless matter, that nonetheless can be touched and travelled down. To appropriate sound parameters and make surgeries and experiments on them, to allow sound *frankensteins* and let other voices populate its becoming in performance. A voice like this: *et cetera*.

Notes

¹ Within the context of this research, the use of vocality means “[...] the multiple forms of voice and word production implemented by a particular human group in a given socio-historical contingency” (Davini, 2007, p. 18, our translation).

² French poet, writer, actor, director and thinker. A figure whose importance for the history of the performing arts still reverberates with potency in contemporary discussions.

³ According to Deleuze and Guattari “From the viewpoint of micropolitics, a society is defined by its lines of flight, which are molecular. There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine” (1999, p. 94). That which seems given, well-formed and visible in the macro-political sphere, happens by the confluence of fine lines, often imperceptible, in the sphere of micropolitics. And if everything is politics, as stated by these authors, there is body politics, with its micro-humors, microstatutes, micro-vocal-strata, microagency...

⁴ According to Deleuze and Guattari (1999), the Body without Organs is a limit, which takes the form of a set of practices that involve experimentation as an experiment agency territory. In other words, it is a zone of intensity capable of drawing feelings and desires using a release function. Aspects of this concept will be dealt with later.

⁵ *Las voces de Artaud*, interview with Èvelyne Grossman, in *Magazine Littéraire*, n. 434, 2004. Available at: <<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/jacques-derrida/articles/las-voce-de-artaud/>>.

⁶ The cartography has become an open research method with a singular permeability to events and changes within the researcher, artist and anyone who wants to go with the flow and affections of his own transformation in relation to experiences with his times. According to Suely Rolnik (2007, p. 23) “[...] the cartographer’s task is to provide language to affects demanding passage [...] who is immersed in the intensities of his times, aware of the languages encountered by him and devour those which seem to him as possible elements for the composition of the necessary cartographies”.

⁷ Cruelty, affirmative concept in the work of Artaud, puts on the same plane creation and a rigorous and vital need in the face of existence. It would be the very appetite for life, an unavoidable aim that requires a singular delivery.

⁸ The concept of measurement is crucial in the context of Classical Greece. The *métron*, a measurement of man given by the gods, joins the values for a Greek ethics such as harmony, restraint, prudence, common sense, the ideal of beauty, poetic measure and social order. This concept is directly related to *hybris*, which is inordinate, a transgression of limits, an outrage, an excess that breaks the measure of man. In Greek tragedy, the tragic hero, putting himself in a situation of danger for exceeding his measure, meets his tragic fate by clashing with the order of the world and of the gods. Principles about an ethic that permeated Greek society in its classical period can be observed in *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, by Werner Jaeger (2003).

⁹ In his book *Nietzsche* (2009a), Deleuze regards the affirmation as a founding principle of the German’s philosophy. The affirmation is active, diverse and pluralistic, it is the essence

or even the will to power. It affirms life and all of creation as it is born of the fullness and abundance. The will, as an affirmation, searches for beautiful possibilities of life.

¹⁰ Expert in strange languages and forms of expression that exist on the border between sign and language, he researched the *grammelot* in Dario Fo and published the essay *La glossolalie en occident* (2013).

¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari (2002, p. 53), in *Postulates of Linguistics*, part of *A Thousand Plateaus*, declare that the continuous variation is “[...] as an amplitude that continually oversteps the representative threshold of the majoritarian standard, by excess or default”. Here, the French authors infer a notion of becoming, which is always minoritarian, such as the minor literature in Kafka. An intensive matter is released in favor of metamorphoses that present themselves in the act of experimenting, opposing to an invariant stability.

¹² We opted, in the use of this text, by the Portuguese translation of the original title *Pour en finir avec le Jugement de Dieu*, in *Antonin Artaud - Oeuvres* (2004), although the Portuguese version, *Para acabar de vez com o juízo de Deus* (1975) has also been consulted and cited.

¹³ Prudence, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari (1999, p. 22), is the common art of the practices that act upon the strata of significance, articulation and subjectification. According to them, “Dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire agency, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations [...]”. Thus, the set of practices that effect a body without organs should be exercised using the principle of prudence, by investing in desires that do not get confused with the destruction and disintegration of oneself.

¹⁴ Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition* (2009b), raises the discussion of the virtual and the possible, which will unfold in *Becoming Virtual: Reality in the Digital Age* (2011), by Pierre Lèvy. Deleuze’s philosophy reverberated the great potency and reality of the virtual and its actualization.

¹⁵ Throughout his hospitalizations, Artaud gave various names and nicknames to himself, believed to have lived as other individuals, multiplying himself in a variety of personas. See his biography by Mèredieu (2011).

¹⁶ *L'abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* (A is for Animal). Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxqnjjFpMXU>>.

¹⁷ Greek-born Italian singer, musician and researcher of the vocality in performance. He created the notion of voice-music.

¹⁸ According to Pozzo (2013, p. 312, Our translation) “*Grommelot* is an improvised theatrical language, unconventional and not articulated through words. It is based on the phonological system of a real language, which serves as a ‘reference language’. It is not just a language in which the actor operates a sound parody, but also dialects, jargons and noises of all kinds”. It is a practice made singular by Dario Fo, Italian comedian and playwright.

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Gil Roberto Almeida is an actor and performer, Master of Arts in Compositional Processes for the Scene, Instituto de Artes - Universidade de Brasília (2015), researcher at the Vocalidade & Cena research group (CNPq), studied Scenic Arts at Universidade de Brasília (2008).

E-mail: gilcomg@gmail.com

César Lignelli is an actor, musical director and professor of Voice and Performance in the Scenic Arts Department, Post Graduate Arts Program and Post Graduate Scenic Arts Program at Universidade de Brasília. Post-doctor at Contemporary Culture Advanced Program at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Leader of the Vocalidade & Cena research group (CNPq). Fellow at Universidade Aberta do Brasil (desde 2007).

E-mail: cesarlignelli@gmail.com

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