

antropologia e teatro

ARTICOLO

Grotowski and Performance Studies di Dariusz Kosiński

Abstract – ENG

There are many links joining performance studies and Jerzy Grotowski's research and terminology. The article is an attempt of initial exploration of this dense web of relations following four main lines: 1) Grotowski's historic links to the individuals and organizations that pioneered performance studies; 2) particular meanings that Grotowski gave to the terms related to performance studies; 3) Grotowski's beliefs regarding the dramatic nature of human relations, which link him to the concepts of the forerunners and founders of performance studies; 4) Grotowski's distinctive vision of behaviour in non-daily situations, different from the ideas of performance studies and his different perception of the function of performance from the ones dominant in performance studies. The task I set myself is to provide preliminary outline of these four areas and to put forth initial hypotheses to be tested in future studies.

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Grotowski and Performance Studies

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Introduction

When in December 1970 Jerzy Grotowski announced in New York that theatre is a dead word for him (Grotowski 1973: 113), he did not claim that he would stop his creative activity. In the following years he was developing new artistic projects labelled with many different names, most of them still somehow theatrical: Paratheatre, Theatre of Sources, Objective Drama. From the perspective that started to be wider recognized by the time Grotowski went to USA at the beginning of the 1980 all these activities may be considered as different researches in the growing field of performance. The links between Grotowski's practice of the 1970s and 1980s and performance art were noticed a long time ago by Wojciech Krukowski¹ and mentioned by Richard Schechner (Schechner 1997: 490-491). They do require a more detailed study that needs more time and space, but I would like to propose in the article some preliminary approximations and hypotheses. I do so despite being aware that this may spark suspicions that another attempt is being made to link Grotowski to something, to lock him into some formula, or worse, to enshrine him in the gallery of patrons and pioneers of performance studies. These are not my intentions. Neither does performance studies need Grotowski's patronage (it does admirably well without it), nor does Grotowski need to be labelled in any way – he is a brand unto himself, and it is hardly any news that he will not fit into any pigeonhole. I just feel that examining the complex, multi-level relationship between Grotowski and performance studies can help uncover something that eludes both those who think of Grotowski as a theatre-maker and those working primarily within an anthropologic framework mining his work for cultural and philosophical meanings.

Also, my intention is not to prove that Grotowski was a performance researcher or that he was inspired by performance studies. If there was any (mutual!) inspiration, Grotowski benefited from it in his own way and for his own purposes. When he borrowed words from the performance studies vocabulary, Grotowski changed their meaning so that today, when the terms have become so widespread, there is a risk of serious

¹ Wojciech Krukowski, leader of important Polish avant-garde theatre and performance group, Akademia Ruchu, voiced this opinion during the discussion Grotowski – i co jest do zrobienia. (Krukowski 1999: p. 106).

misunderstandings. This is why, I think, Carla Pollastrelli during our work on the Polish edition of Grotowski's *Teksty zebrane* ("Collected Texts") repeatedly told me with a laugh, which if Grotowski had known what would become of *performance studies* and how popular the family of words associated with the word *to perform* would be, he would never have introduced *Performer* and *performing arts* into his vocabulary. The point, then, is not to prove that Grotowski's ideas and the ideas of the classics and pioneers of performance studies, mostly Richard Schechner, whom he knew well, were a near-mirror image of each other. Just the opposite, I want my readers to realize the fundamental differences despite many points of connection or even common ground. What I refer to here could be called Grotowski's own band of performance studies were it not for the fact that this would make performance studies paramount. Rather than adding another area to the already vast territory of performance studies, I am more interested in navigating and describing the 'Grotowski continent'. Performance studies, for me, is a grid that probably makes it possible to draw a different map than the ones we are familiar with.

There is still a long way to go before the map can be drafted. A thorough examination and description of the many and varied links between Grotowski and performance studies (or what performance studies has become) are impossible without researching sources and other historical materials as well as investigating texts and ideas. The subject is vast and there is still more to be done than has been done, but even at this preliminary stage one can already identify four key areas to be researched:

- 1) Grotowski's historic links to the individuals and organizations that pioneered performance studies and became its hot spots; their mutual relations and mutual assessments; it seems that Grotowski's long-standing close acquaintance with Richard Schechner was the most important of these relationships;
- 2) the questions of terminology and, above all, the particular manner and meanings in which Grotowski used terms related to performance and performance studies, most notably 'performing arts' and 'Performer';
- 3) Grotowski's beliefs regarding the dramatic nature of human relations, which link him to the concepts of the forerunners and founders of performance studies, including the ideas of Erving Goffman; a holistic reconstruction of Grotowski's 'performative' ideas including the work of Witold Gombrowicz, which he minded for source material;

4) Grotowski's distinctive vision of behaviour in non-daily situations, different from the ideas of performance studies and, consequently, his different perception of the function of performance and the role of performance studies from the one's dominant in performance studies.

The task I set myself in this approximation is to provide a very preliminary outline of the possibilities contained in these four areas and to put forth initial hypotheses that must be tested but, I believe, are enticing enough to be worth the trouble of testing.

Another caveat is needed here. For the moment, I want to put aside the historical relationships as they require particularly thorough examination. I will only note that the most important one was the more-than-thirty-year relationship with Richard Schechner. Initially, when Schechner was an editor of *The Tulane Drama Review* (which ran its first piece on Grotowski as early as 1964) (Barba 1964: 120-33), then a director and the leader of the Performance Group, a professor at New York University and one of the leading lights of American theatre and academic life and, finally, as editor, together with Lisa Wolford, of *The Grotowski Sourcebook*. I find the period from the late autumn of 1982 to the summer of 1983 of particular interest here. It was then that, after leaving Poland, Grotowski stayed in New York for an extended period and, with Schechner's support, was searching for the right place to be able to continue his work. Grotowski and Schechner were in close contact at the time. Schechner, after a period of collaboration with Victor Tuner, who died in December 1983, was writing *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (published in 1985) and beginning to forge the shape of what would become performance studies in the 1990s. It seems very likely that Grotowski's conversations with Schechner made Grotowski aware of the complexity of the English word "performance" and the fact that it was different from its counterparts in Polish and French, which led him to use English terms in his own vocabulary. All of this is mere conjecture though, and in order to accurately describe the relationship between Grotowski and Schechner and other links between the Polish artist and the emerging American performance art of the 1980s, many interviews and a good amount of source research are needed.

Beyond the Clink of Words...

When looking for points of contact between Grotowski and performance, one runs into a fundamental difficulty, which on closer inspection turns out to be an unexpected opportunity. Performance studies is a field of research, which makes it part of academia and means that its exponents are 'theoreticians' while Grotowski

often made a point of noting that his domain is practice, or simply craft. To prove this, it suffices to recall a well-known passage on the *Performer*:

Performer [...] is a man of action. He is not somebody who plays another. He is a doer, a priest, a warrior. He is outside aesthetic genres. [...]

Performer is a state of being. A man of knowledge [...]: a rebel face to whom knowledge stands as duty; even if others don't curse him, he feels to be a changeling, an outsider. [...] A man of knowledge [*człowiek poznania*] has at his disposal *the doing* and not ideas or theories. The true teacher – what does he do for the apprentice? He says: *Do it*. The apprentice fights to understand, to reduce the unknown to the known, to avoid doing. By the very fact that he wants to understand, he resists. He can understand only after he *does it*. He *does it* or not. Knowledge is a matter of doing.²

Such an unequivocal statement seems to undermine any attempts to link Grotowski with academic 'theory' whose toolbox mainly consists of observation, thinking, speaking and writing. However, two fundamental counter-arguments can be raised here. For one, the innovation of performance studies lies, among other things, in the fact that it seeks to move beyond the dualism of practice and theory not just by stressing that thinking and writing are practices too, but by developing a methodology that incorporates into research practical actions and interventions seen not as illustration or 'material', but as legitimate tools and modes of knowing. The methodology of 'practise as research', or 'performance as research', form a vital element of performance studies, and is even considered its hallmark in some quarters. The phrase 'knowledge is a matter of doing' could even be the watchword and motto of the advocates and pioneers of performance studies³.

The counter-argument on the other side goes as follows: Grotowski created a sizable body of comments on and analyses of his work from its early days in the 1950s almost to its end in the 1990s, which was an important part of his practice. In the opening passage of 'Performer', he introduces himself as a 'teacher of the Performer,' but when he utters the words cited above, he takes a different stance, one of someone who analyzes and interprets practical work, seeking to answer the essential question 'What is doing?' Strikingly, this question sound similarly to the fundamental problem of performance studies, which Richard Schechner posed explicitly at the beginning

² Grotowski 1997: p. 376.

³ For basic information on practice as research and performance as research see Kershaw 2009: pp. 23–45.

of his seminal *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, writing that it tries to describe “what people do in the activity of doing it” (Schechner 2013: 1). Although Grotowski repeatedly says that ‘knowledge is a matter of doing’ but by uttering these words and producing so many truly vital comments, he positions himself as a performance studies researcher who examines and describes what people (including himself) do. And even if we consider examination to be of secondary importance in relation to practice (as many propose to do), the sheer amount of work, time and attention that Grotowski devoted to word explanation suggests that ‘secondary’ should by no means be taken as unimportant.

I must admit that I am amazed by the way many of Grotowski’s former collaborators approach his words. On the one hand, they treat them with utmost reverence, even pedantry, putting every effort into being as faithful to the original words as possible, while on the other hand they often seem to give little care to the exact phrases he used, arguing that his word choices often depended on circumstances and one should not put too much stock in particular wordings. I realize that this reflects the attitude Grotowski had towards his own words – he used them as tools and warned against becoming too addicted to them. What is more, he would replace some words with the others as soon as they outlived their usefulness, including when they became too popular and thus ambiguous or too obvious. I have no intention of becoming a slave to words, and I do not want to forcefully claim that Grotowski meant something he did not, but I cannot shake the impression that in certain circumstances he made very deliberate choices to use certain terms and names over others.

This certainly applies to the terminology derived from the English word ‘performance’. From the second half of the 1980s onward, Grotowski used the words ‘performer’ and ‘performative’ in a very conscious manner, especially when it came to speaking in front of an audience and in languages in which these words were (and largely remain) foreign. This was the case with speeches and lectures delivered in French in Italy and France. ‘Performer’ is probably the best-known example, but it is also worth quoting a longer excerpt from the transcript of his first lecture at the Collège de France, where Grotowski uses the same terms (‘performative’, ‘performing arts’) to describe the particular domain he engaged in:

For example, in French there is a term *les arts spectaculaires*; in English we use the term ‘performing arts’. So I have two possible options: either to use the English term, *performing arts*, or to create a new, unknown French term, because the actual content of these two concepts – ‘performing arts’ and *les arts spectaculaires* – is completely different. When we talk about *les arts spectaculaires*, we mean something that exists because it is watched. Please pay attention to this. The *arts spectaculaires* are... something that becomes art... in the eyes of the one who watches. It is the gaze of the other person, one could say of the spectator, that is at the

origin of this term: *les arts spectaculaires*, the arts of the spectacle. On the other hand, when we say 'performing arts', the meaning of this concept is shifted to the one who acts, to the action, to the human being, who is an action.

So, since such a term does not exist in French, I decided to invent... such a term and to speak of *arts performatifs*. It's really fundamental to see that there's a huge difference in approach – for example, in the approach to theatre, in the approach to ritual – from the point of view of the performing arts and from the point of view of *les arts spectaculaires*.

Another example. It is not a problem of terminology, but a problem of content. And so, when we talk about expression, clarity – when we deal with... an art that is made by a human being using all ingredients the being owns: body, soul, mind, perhaps something more... When we talk about it, then... the question immediately arises: whether... is this type of creativity creative because somebody watches it, or is it first creative and then somebody watches it?

Therefore, there is a certain assumption here that the entire area of performing arts is simply related to expressiveness, which we create in order to be watched. I don't agree with that. I think there are certain types of performing arts where you create to be expressive. But there are also other performing arts, a different kind of approach, where a certain process is formed, expressed, is in a way a struggle between a human being and himself, in order to gradually become... clear, transparent, pure, rooted in the immediate experience of life, and which finds later, one could say 'in the montage', in the elements... theme... the ability, the ability to be understood by another person who is watching. As you can see, it is just... these... the two approaches are seemingly very similar. But they are different. In the first approach... everything... everything is done... to create expression, to be expressive, one could say. And in the case of the second approach, you arrive, through the process of... the immediate person who acts, to the point where, through the use of montage and composition, the phenomenon can be viewed and understood.⁴

The clear distinction between *les arts spectaculaires* and *performing arts* made by Grotowski here concerns both the nature of action and the way it is apprehended by the observer and researcher. These two aspects correspond to Richard Schechner's methodological and pragmatic distinction between what is performance and what is studied and described 'as' performance. The difference, I think, is that for Schechner what is considered performance in a given cultural and historical context depends on that context, whereas for Grotowski the

⁴ The quote comes from the transcription of the first Grotowski's lecture at Collège de France in Paris, given 24 March 1997 made for internal use of the Grotowski Institute in Wrocław, translated from French recordings by Leszek Demkowicz, edited by Grzegorz Ziółkowski; English translation – Dariusz Kosiński.

performance he was working on and looking for was objective and organic. This marks a fundamental shift in the understanding of performance and performance studies. Grotowski researched existing forms of performance looking for the ‘seeds of truth’ that link the action to sources that are present at once in tradition and in organicity, and can be found both through the study of ancient practices (as in the Theatre of Sources) or through self-exploration (as in the Total Act and in Action). Grotowski’s performance studies, if I understand it correctly, would not lead to the study of every action as a generalized performance. Instead, it would aim to find or track down traces, echoes, elements of Performance, an objective and essential action.

When I was recently comparing two versions of the same text, a transcript of Grotowski’s speech given on 5 June 1978 at the Old Orangery in Warsaw during an international ITI symposium on ‘The Art of the Beginner’, held as part of the First International Theatre Meetings, I found, quite by accident, a clue that lends credence to this supposition. The Polish version of the text, edited by Leszek Kolankiewicz and entitled *Wandering Towards a Theatre of Sources*, was published in «Dialog» as early as 1979. Almost a decade later, Jacques Chwat’s English translation of excerpts from the first part of that speech appeared. Authorized and annotated by Grotowski, it was published under the title ‘The Art of the Beginner’ (Grotowski 1988–1989: 6–7) and released after the death of the translator, who had long collaborated with Grotowski, in the volume that was a kind of a tribute to him. So we can presume that Grotowski had read the translation closely, which is also confirmed by his remark in the author’s note saying that Chwat had long asked for permission to publish his translation.

The English version of the passage that interests me here reads as follows:

When we speak of the art of the beginner we speak of beginning, beginnings. What does it mean to be in the beginning? Does it mean to look for historical beginnings, to look for something that once was? Can we ask how the performance began, how it originated, how it developed? Yes we can⁵.

Significantly, in the earlier Polish version instead of a Polish word that may be closer to ‘performance’ (like *przedstawienie*) Grotowski used simply the word *teatr* – “theatre” (Grotowski 2012: 640). This divergence may seem minor and my ‘investigation’ could perhaps be dismissed as pedantic and biased, but I find the edit in the version authorized for publication in 1988 significant. After all, the Polish passage could be translated literally with little difficulty, and the version ‘Can we ask how the theatre began, how it originated, how it developed?’

⁵ Grotowski 1988-1989: p. 7, emphasis mine– DK.

would seem natural and more understandable. I allow myself to suppose that it was Grotowski who inserted the word 'performance' in the text. And although he had no intention of speaking about the historical beginnings of performance (just as he did not want to explore in Warsaw the historical beginnings of theatre), he no longer referred to his domain of interest as 'theatre' but as 'performance'.

The choice of the word and words associated with it was at the time both bold and risky. 'Performance' was not as common a term in Europe as it is today (at least in some countries), so using it in this context was intended, above all else, to set Grotowski apart from theatre and theatre production, while still remaining somehow in a domain related to them. I do not know to what extent Grotowski was aware of the concurrent development of performance art, which, after all, involved a similar anti-theatrical turn. I suspect that he was unaware of the possible misunderstandings that the similarity of the terms might bring about. Now, more than forty years later, these misunderstandings may be even magnified, so it seems all the more important to give a precise description of Grotowski's performance research and his understanding of performance, as well as to trace the links between the supposedly isolated and hermitic artist and the changes occurring in Euro-American culture at the time. In this context, the question arises: Was not Grotowski's exit from the theatre and then his undertaking of rigorous craft research in a field that was similar but not identical with the theatre a result of the same processes that gave birth to avant-garde performance art and anti-discipline performance studies? And also: Was not the difference in how Grotowski defined his aims a response to the liminoid relativism that seems to bog down both performance art and performance studies?

A Person in the Theatre of Extra-Daily Life

If one takes a closer look at the parallels between Grotowski's way of thinking and the basic diagnoses of performance studies and some intellectual traditions they were built on, one can notice more points or even entire fields in common. One of the most obvious is the belief that everyday life is a complex theatre of social roles that form an intricate network, far from the one-dimensional 'masks' assigned to human actors by the divine Creator of the Great Theatre of the World.

Grotowski spoke of this on many occasions, sometimes in a way redolent of Erving Goffman's analyses in his famous book, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. And it seems more than likely that in addition to his own observations, he owed this way of seeing and understanding everyday life to the one internationally renowned Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz (1904–69) developed and deepened in his novels, dramas and famous *Diary*. Grotowski read Gombrowicz very carefully and as Ludwik Flaszen confirms the write was his "secret master"

(Flaszen 2010: 211)⁶. But there was one crucial difference between the two artists: the idea that people constantly engage in an interpersonal game was not treated by Grotowski in such a pessimistic or even tragic way as in the work of the author of *Cosmos*. Grotowski's pragmatic advice in his speeches from the paratheatre period prove that he viewed the 'theatre of 'everyday life' as a sphere of reality where one must act in accordance with its rules, making conscious use of them to accomplish the objectives that one considers most important. Being aware of the existence of the everyday theatre and of play also means putting some distance between oneself and them, helping in not succumbing to the illusion that the version of reality they produce is the only one, or even the most important one.

Among Grotowski's many statements on this subject, I would like to quote a seldom cited and probably little-known text, 'A Talk About Theatre for Youth at Schools', which explains the ideas summarized above in a very simple and clear way. The quotation is extensive, but I find it vital, not least because it makes an explicit reference to Witold Gombrowicz:

We play all the time in life, don't we? If someone is in the situation of, for example, a teacher or a professor, he is in a situation of a certain role. Of course, he can learn this role one hundred percent to such an extent that he can be recognized on the street: here is the teacher. It happened to me many times. Since I come from a family of teachers, I had a whole series of examples in my family, so to speak, to observe and I saw how some people identified themselves with this role in such a way that you could recognize them on the street: here is a teacher, a professor. And some (a few) did not identify with the role and simply took it off when they left school as an actor takes off his costume when he finishes playing his role. Although some trace remained on them – it is a certain role. A teacher or professor is not able to fulfill his function if he does not perform this role. Fulfilling the function is like the 'assumed circumstances' to build the role of Hamlet in Stanislavski's method. If you are in such a situation that you are sitting in front of forty energetic, lively or even unruly people, you have to deal with them and make them want to cram into their heads certain messages that are not interesting for them – these are the 'assumed circumstances' that dictate your behavior. Of course – you have several options: either this way or that, but it is the circumstances that dictate the possibilities of the role. And let's imagine that you have people at school who are approaching eighteen years old, and you are a twenty-year-old teacher. You have two options: either you pretend to be a colleague or you have to become serious. You must add to these twenty years another twenty years, so to speak,

⁶ Ludwik Flaszen, Grotowski & Company, translated by Andrzej Wojtasik and Paull Allain, Icarus, Holstebro – Malta – Wrocław 2010, p. 211.

psychically or mentally, and attain seriousness. You have to play this role — there's no way out. The smaller the age distance, the harder it is to play it.

And moving to the other side: you are a student.... If you are a student, this is also a role. There are rules of the game, such as how to blink, but not too much. And there are clear edges, clear boundaries of this score. In fact, they are passed down from generation to generation. In Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke* all this is described in an extraordinary way — all this fun: what does it mean to be a student? what does it mean to be a teacher? But when you come home, then you are inevitably in a different situation. If you are a teacher and, say, you have a wife or a child, then you are in the position of a father and guardian of the family. Or, if you are a student, at home at a certain age you feel obliged to occupy a different position than that of your parents or one of them; This can be a natural phase of development, because it leads to the determination of one's own autonomy and, although it often takes unwise forms, it is somehow necessary. Wise parents can understand this and open up a field for discussion. Unwise parents close the field for discussion, and then additional tensions are created. It varies greatly. In any case, there are such rules. So at home it's a different situation than at school — you play a different role, and you go out with your friends to the yard and play a different role again. For example, there are backyards where — in order to be accepted — you have to play the role of a strong person. There are such backyards, right? And there are also places or groups of friends where it is important to play the role of an intelligent, educated, cultured person — then you go to the theatre, for example, because it is appropriate, while out of pleasure, you normally go to the cinema. There are such groups of friends, where one fights for maturity in the sense of private life. These are private groups. There you play a real woman or a real man.

A person plays different roles in life — even more than one. And it happens that there are strong conflicts between the role one plays in the workplace and the role one plays at home, or between the role one plays towards colleagues and the role one plays towards superiors, as it is beautifully said, or subordinates, as it is beautifully said. There are neuroses against this background — well, because it's hard to bear such conflict situations when everything is constantly playing differently. As if a person was losing her own identity. (You can see it — when you are at school with your father, in the presence of a 'private' friend and you talk to a teacher...)⁷

I quote the above excerpt with great pleasure, because the Grotowski that one can hear in it is far from playing a 'guru' or 'initiated artist', so from the roles that he sometimes played with premeditation or (probably more

⁷ Jerzy Grotowski, Pogadanka o teatrze dla młodzieży szkolnej, in: Jerzy Grotowski, *Teksty zebrane*, pp. 675–676 (English translation mine).

often) was put into them. In my view the quotation evidently proves that in his approach to everyday life and to a role-playing it forces us all to accept, Grotowski was a very acute analyst and, years before the emergence of performance studies and before the publication of the Polish translation of Goffman's book, he was accurately describing the mechanisms of interaction rituals and the distortions that arise at the interface between various 'facades'.

But of course Grotowski was far more interested in an opposite pole of everyday performance. In the following part of the same 'Talk About Theatre for Youth at Schools' he focused on it:

And in certain activities it is possible to start *not* from the question of how to play. This means not only not aiming to become a professional actor, but even aiming to become less of an 'actor' in life. That's a remarkable situation. There emerge there the simplest of things, which can be half light-hearted, half deadly serious, as for example when an individual runs through tall grass. Such a simple thing can be something great, if it is linked to a certain kind of non-acting ...

And there may be – but this is only the simplest of examples – very complex activities, from which emerges the problem of a natural contact between people – one built not upon an acting situation. In these the elements of conventional contact disappear, for example: 'I am playing someone who is picking up a girl', or 'I am playing a girl who is being picked up'. And if I do not act? There then takes place something which is simultaneously mature and childlike. Between wisdom and childishness – something very particular. It cannot then be said that those who initiate this are actors in the classical meaning of the word. But they are the initiators of certain activities, they are active, drawing others after themselves. And drawing others after them they become actors in the meaning in which it was used, for example in the 18th century. 'Actor' then meant 'an active individual'. This is the etymology of the word. In this sense there exists the 'actor' – the active person (like 'actor of one's fate', 'actor of a certain event', 'actor of a certain battle' etc.). An individual more active than others, drawing them into participation, into action – but through an attempt at non-acting, a resignation from acting, also a resignation from daily social roles.⁸

The understanding of 'actor' presented above is not far from a 'doer' that Grotowski would speak about during Art as vehicle. Yet there is a fundamental difference between the 'non-acting' proposed in the 1970s and the knowledge "to link body impulses to the song" (Grotowski 1977: 377) that Grotowski spoke of in Pontedera in

⁸ Jerzy Grotowski 1985: 235–236 (Kumiega translated and published only short fragments of the original text, that is why the previous long quote from the omitted part was mine)

February 1987. Having bid a firm farewell to paratheatrical and countercultural utopia, in the 1980s he worked intensely on something that, in the context of the words quoted above, must be regarded as ‘acting’, that is, on elements of traditional theatre productions and, at the same time, on individual dramatic structures. His work yielded Action, a performing arts genre invented by Grotowski, which had nothing to do with ‘non-acting’ understood as ‘spontaneity’ or ‘being carried away by overwhelming emotion’ but it also had nothing to do with ‘the theatre of everyday life’ and its imitation in the dramatic art.

Action was a response to recognizing life as play(ing), a response that the proposal of ‘non-acting’ failed to provide. This meant finding the place and meaning of theatre and other performing arts as well as giving structure to the journey/path of Grotowski, who could see it now as a continuous trajectory. This was possible thanks to both the invention of the notion of ‘meta-activity’ and recognizing himself as ‘a craftsman in a rather peculiar field, that is, the field of human behaviour in extra daily conditions, that is, conditions that, as we can assume, occupy a place a minimally above everyday human behaviour’⁹.

In his second lecture at the Collège de France, Grotowski explained that, in his opinion:

A spectacle, a ritual, a celebration are something more dense, more concentrated, selected compared to everyday life, which is not extra daily. Which is simply everyday life. We cannot say that there is something that is actually beyond everyday life, because everything happens *hic et nunc*, here and now. Always. When we prepare a thing and after it has been prepared, we think that everything has already been solved: we have prepared an action, we have prepared a celebration, whatever it is, everything is already settled, everything is solved, all the decisions have been made, such a thing will become dead one day. But if we do the same thing that was previously designed, constructed, developed, today, now, now... And here, in such a case, it mysteriously regains its former life, its presence – you could say that it adapts to the circumstances, but it is not only about that, it is rather about the attitude that makes it... Everyday life, in a positive sense, is present. But the extra daily is something more concentrated... more... dense, more... refined, without unnecessary or accidental things than ordinary everyday life.¹⁰

If everyday life is theatre, then ‘extradaily life’ is doubly theatre. Paradoxically, this doubled, condensed ‘theatre’ is, for Grotowski, the domain in which a true, full life can be experienced. One is reminded here of a

⁹ Grotowski, the quote from the first lecture at Collège de France

¹⁰ Grotowski, the quote from the second lecture at Collège de France; transcript and translation into Polish by Lesezka Demkowicza from the archive of The Grotowski Institute, Wrocław; English translation – mine.

phrase from the final section of *Holiday*, a beautiful text dedicated to extradaily experience *par excellence*, at the core of which was a “Man as he is, whole, so that he would not hide himself; and who lives and that means – *not everyone*” (Grotowski 1973: 119). Grotowski evokes a full life different from both biological life and social life, a life that is yet to be conquered, to be created, which is only possible through particular actions that are completely different from the theatre of daily life.

This is, I believe, the essential point of that risky ‘performance studies of Jerzy Grotowski’, who, being fully aware of the ‘theatrical’ nature of daily life, conducting deep practical research of various genres of the performing arts, mostly theatre and ritual, and thus doing almost the same things as the creators and pioneers of performance studies, did not stop at what they did. Consistently refusing to accept an attitude that was limited to an ever-deepened critical analysis, he equally consistently sought to discover/create non-critical performance, a precise tool rooted in psychophysiology, which would complete daily life by opening up the prospect of extradaily.

At the beginning of 21st century the fundamental ideas of performance studies were deeply and critically analysed by Jon McKenzie in his seminal book *Perform, or Else* (Jon McKenzie 2001). This critic was a part of the diagnosis McKenzie developed in the book, describing a new paradigm ruling our world: the one of performance the replaced discipline as a basic form of power. Seen from this perspective Grotowski’s studies of Performance of extradaily may be seen as a chance to escape the rule of the performative paradigm – a chance for the future we have to develop.

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