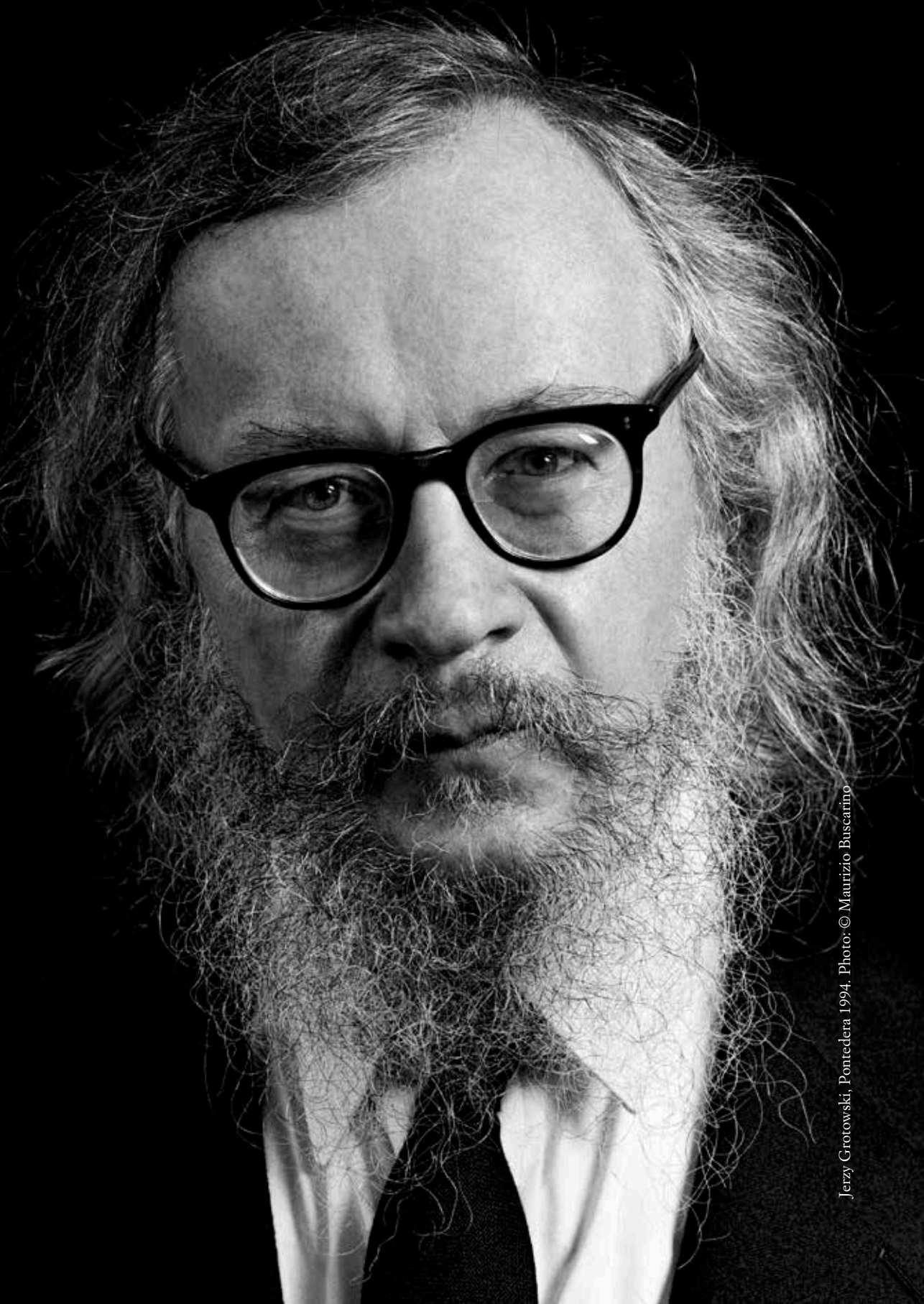


# Jerzy Grotowski's Theatrical Anthropology

Edited by Leszek Kolankiewicz

*The Constant Prince* (1966), directed by Jerzy Grotowski. Photo: Teatr Laboratorium





Jerzy Grotowski, Pontedera 1994. Photo: © Maurizio Buscarino

Leszek Kolankiewicz

# Gnostic Anointed as College Chair

## Grotowski's Theatrical Anthropology\* at the Collège de France

*Abstract: This article reconstructs Jerzy Grotowski's theatrical anthropology based on a series of nine lectures, La "lignée organique" au théâtre et dans le rituel, that he gave at the Collège de France in Paris between 1997 and 1998. In these lectures, Grotowski reported on the discoveries he had made on his creative journey along the border of theatre and ritual. At the core of Grotowski's research, which can be described as "the science of doing", was the intention of inducing in the doer a flow of energy. As in alchemy, the inner process followed by the doer in the state of organicity is inextricably linked with his or her body. In this state, the doer is an ánthrōpos, a total being. This image lies at the centre of Grotowski's theatrical anthropology, an anthropology whose perspective is far removed from that of social or cultural anthropology; it is in fact the perspective of gnosis.*

**Keywords:** *Organicity, Ritual, Gnosis*

Mention anthropology lectures at the Collège de France and one is instantly reminded of Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose lectures in social anthropology at France's most prestigious research establishment spanned nearly a quarter of a century from 1959 to 1982. Those who did not have a chance to witness them in person – admission to Collège de France seminars and lectures is free and open to all without registration – will find their "accounts", themed about myths and rituals, in *Anthropology and Myth* (Lévi-Strauss 1987a). Lévi-Strauss's successor at the Collège de France, Françoise Héritier, dedicated fifteen years, between 1983 and 1998, to comparative studies of African societies (her comparativism had a broad remit, typical for French humanities). She was followed by Philippe Descola, who lectured in anthropology of nature for almost two decades. The three consecutive departments (*chaires*), all of them statutory, existed for a total of sixty years, hosting lectures in the broad domain of Philosophy and Sociology.

Lévi-Strauss, who penned the programmatic *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss* (Lévi-Strauss 1987b), in a way took over from his great predecessor, Marcel Mauss, who had been Chair of Sociology in 1931-40, teaching the eponymous subject in the Durkheimian spirit, with anthropology included within its compass. It was Mauss,

\* The form "theatre anthropology", familiar from the name "International School of Theatre Anthropology", has become widely accepted in English. However, we have opted for "theatrical anthropology" (the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines "theatrical" as "of or pertaining to the theatre or stage; of or pertaining to actors or acting") to differentiate it from Eugenio Barba's usage and to mirror Grotowski's use of the adjectives *théâtrale* and *teatralny* in, respectively, French and Polish. Incidentally, the term "theatrical anthropology" is analogous to the names of other branches of anthropology, such as cultural anthropology or social anthropology. For these reasons, we use "theatrical anthropology" throughout the block of texts focused on Grotowski's *anthropologie théâtrale*. For more on theatre/theatrical anthropology, see the footnote on page 67.



the father of French anthropology and author of *Sociologie et anthropologie*, who in 1934 put forth (admittedly, not in a lecture at the Collège de France but in a *communiqué* at the *Société de psychologie*) the concept of "body techniques" (Mauss 1950, 365-86), which would later become fundamental and essential to theatre anthropology, both for Eugenio Barba (Barba and Savarese 1991, 227-31) and for Jerzy Grotowski.

As Lévi-Strauss was being appointed Chair of Social Anthropology, the foremost scholars of his generation, Henri-Charles Puech (Chair of the History of Religions) among them, still taught the contiguous domain of Historical, Philological and Archaeological Studies. Having dedicated himself fully to gnosis at the Collège de France, Puech taught a course on its phenomenology in 1952-56 before spending sixteen years (!) researching and interpreting the 20-page text of the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*. In his first series of lectures (1956-60), he explicated it in conjunction with the Greek logoi of Jesus in the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. In the second (1960-72), he presented an exhaustive discussion of its esoteric doctrines and gnostic themes (Puech 1978). A few years later, the *Gospel of Thomas* would become a pivotal text for Grotowski as he worked on his three final projects: Theatre of Sources, Objective Drama, and Art as Vehicle.

In his Collège de France lectures, Grotowski made no mention of Puech, co-editor of the standard edition of the *Gospel of Thomas*, nor did he acknowledge Mauss, even though he used the word "technique" in the sense borrowed from Mauss at least twenty times in his inaugural lecture. The reason for this may have been the fact that when he was taking up *Chaire d'anthropologie théâtrale*, a regular statutory *chaire*, situated where Mauss's Sociology Department and Lévi-Strauss's *Chaire d'anthropologie sociale* had been situated, i.e. in the domain of philosophical and sociological inquiry, he had no intention of engaging in theoretical scholarship or otherwise practising academic discourse.

Ever cautious or even distrustful of discursive thinking, Grotowski rejected theorising as bookish scholarship detached from experience, from real life trials and from creative abilities and powers. At the outset of his first lecture, he proclaimed that he was not a scholar, introducing himself as a craftsman, i.e. someone who has mastered the technique of an artistic practice, becoming at most a pro in his chosen field. He described his domain of expertise, somewhat cryptically, as meta-quotidian human behaviour. The term refers both to human behaviour in general – studied by social or cultural anthropology – and to particular extra-daily body techniques (Barba's term; *techniques extra-quotidiennes du corps*) – researched at Barba's International School of Theatre Anthropology as typical of organised theatre or dance performances (Barba 1995, 9-12, 15-6). It must be added here that Grotowski defined his area of interest as transcending theatre – or, more generally, *arts du spectacle*, the performing arts – and including ritual. The meta-quotidian human behaviour differs from everyday human behaviour in that it is methodically selected and more condensed. That said, Grotowski made a caveat that – as Ludwik Flaszen, the inseparable commentator of his work, once remarked – theory always stemmed from practice throughout Grotowski's life-long research, and if it proved helpful in any way, it served as a tool to sustain and support the spontaneous process of creative research. Grotowski also drew attention to the fact that scholarly theories are by nature not everlasting – their lifetimes are limited and they give way to other theories with newer concepts and solutions. Grotowski never cast any theory into a doctrine, using them, at most, as useful tools to help frame and resolve issues.



At the same time, Grotowski acknowledged that, in contrast to scholarly research, his explorations as part of his craft-focused work were less complex and not so difficult to comprehend. His approach to the relationship of theory and practice can be encapsulated in an epigram he liked to quote from memory:

*In words there is desire, in action, power;  
To pen a tome is easy, to live one day well – harder.*

Adam Mickiewicz, *Thoughts and Remarks*

It is worth noting at this point that to Grotowski, who had been an émigré since August 1982 (he was formally recognised as a political refugee in July 1983 and became a citizen of the French Republic on 22 November 1990), a Collège de France *chaire* brought to mind different associations or rather, one association – with a fact every Polish child learns at school: the Parisian lectures of the Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz. Deemed by Poles as a national bard, Mickiewicz was active in the Polish émigré circles after the collapse of the Polish insurrection against Russian rule in 1831. In 1840-44 he gave four courses of inspired lectures at the Collège de France – as *chargé de cours* (lecturer) at the Department of Slavic Language and Literature (Mickiewicz 1849), in which he proffered a synthesis of Romantic historiosophy. Grotowski, who in 1961 was working on a staging of *Dziady* (Forefathers' Eve), Mickiewicz's national dramatic masterpiece, at the Theatre of 13 Rows in Opole, remained in thrall of the words and deeds of the Romantic poet throughout his life, not unlike the Nobel Prize-winning poet Czesław Miłosz. In 1979, at a congress in Milan, he summed up the first decade of his Laboratory Theatre as "practising Romanticism" (Grotowski 1980a). Taking up a chair at the Collège de France, Grotowski was following in Mickiewicz's footsteps, perhaps even emulating him – just as Miłosz, in a way, emulated Mickiewicz by accepting the post of Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Berkeley.

Like Grotowski, Miłosz had no badge of PhD, but unlike him, he gave his Berkeley courses on Dostoevsky and on the history of Polish literature such breadth that after a few years he was able to dictate *The History of Polish Literature*, covering the period from the Middle Ages to the present, a volume spanning nearly 600 pages. Likewise, Mickiewicz launched his courses at the Collège de France with a fairly systematic outline of a certain historical vision: the history of the Slavic world as a struggle between freedom and despotism, embodied in the Polish-Russian conflict, before moving on to a mysticism at the centre of which was the "inner human being" as the most revolutionary element of history. If his four courses constituted a whole, it was because of a historiosophical synthesis, but one that was Romantic, inspired, prophetic.

We do not know how Grotowski's lectures would further unfold or how he would finally structure them, because he did not even complete the first series due to declining health: of the ten lectures planned, he delivered nine between 24 March 1997 and 26 January 1998. Starting with the second lecture, he gave them in blocks of three: on 2, 16 and 23 June 1997 at the Théâtre de l'Odéon, on 6, 13 and 20 October 1997 at the Conservatoire national supérieur d'art dramatique, and on 12 and 26 January 1998 at the Théâtre du Rond-Point – the third lecture planned in this block was cancelled. The series title, "*La 'lignée organique' au théâtre et dans le rite*" (The "Organic Lineage"

in Theatre and in Ritual), suggests a structured and segmented lecture and perhaps even an attempt at systematisation and classification, but this is somewhat misleading. Admittedly, Grotowski began by defining the two poles of performing arts: the pole of artificiality and the pole of organicity, but he soon moved to providing a more or less structured account of the discoveries he had made on his creative journey, one that led him through the territory situated at the boundary between theatre and ritual, from its start at the Theatre of 13 Rows in Opole, Poland, to its end at the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards in Pontedera, Italy.

Grotowski described the origins of the relationship between his craft and ritual at the conference "*Le théâtre d'aujourd'hui à la recherche du rite*" (Today's Theatre in Search of Ritual), held in Paris on 15 October 1968 at the Scientific Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Grotowski 1969). He traced the evolution of his chosen tactics, assessing them in terms of their influence on the audience: from drawing spectators directly into the action as quasi-participants (*Forefather's Eve*, 1961) to isolating them and positioning them as voyeurs (*The Constant Prince*, 1965). Paradoxically, only in the latter case did he succeed to achieve full – genuine and sincere – involvement. To put it in psychoanalytic terms: the spectator, unable to intervene or protest against the violence inflicted on the victim and limited to tacitly satisfying his scopic urge, identified himself with the tormented Prince – the spectator's voyeuristic sadism took the form of sadomasochism, enabling him to narcissistically appropriate the Prince's suffering: his surrender to the violence of the theatre could be viewed as equivalent to a religious conversion; the theatre's efficacy here was comparable to that of ritual. Referencing this effect, during the Paris conference, Grotowski formulated a thesis stating that the spectator was called forth as a witness, claiming that this calling was ancient and equating it with a Christian's vocation (*martyres* in the Greek original of Acts 1:8, *testes* in the Latin text of the Vulgate).

Towards the end of his artistic journey, when Grotowski no longer produced theatre work, during the periods of the Objective Drama Project (1983-86) and the research Peter Brook dubbed Art as Vehicle (1986-99), the spectator was no longer part of the equation: with the show erased, the spectator vanished from view and the question of semiotically conceived pragmatics was invalidated. All that mattered was the performer, or rather the Performer with a capital P, "a man of action" (Grotowski 1997, 374). If someone was allowed in as an observer of the Performer's actions, it was only as a witness, in whom, it was presumed, an induction occurred comparable to electromagnetic induction (the induction of a voltage in an electrical circuit, attesting to the appearance of energy in it): when an inner action (Thomas Richards' term) understood as a "qualitative transformation of energy", a "gradual transmutation of that which was vital into that which was subtle" (Magnat 1997b), was taking place in the Performer, then "something within the observer was witness to a process or an action similar to that which was being observed" (Magnat 1997c). Grotowski explored these questions in detail in the lectures he gave in October 1997 as part of his Paris course in theatrical anthropology at the Conservatoire national supérieur d'art dramatique.

In his theatre work, Grotowski programmed the spectator's reactions with the same pedantic precision with which he honed the actor's action scores. When, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he abandoned the theatre understood as creating theatre work

for *communitas*, which he termed "the Holiday" (Grotowski 1973a), he transformed spectators into active participants whose involvement in the *sui generis* participatory theatre then known as paratheatrical meetings – such as the Special Project led by Ryszard Cieślak (1973-76) or the Mountain Project led by Jacek Zmysłowski (1976-77) – was designed to grant them access to experiences comparable to actors' creative acts; this is why Grotowski used the term "active culture" to describe his activities at the time (Kolankiewicz 1979). Importantly, this work was by no means any kind of *création collective*. Rather, he wanted the participants, both individually and collectively, to enter the state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi 2005), to attain peak experiences (Maslow 1970), to commune with one another, to create and experience I-Thou relationships (Buber 1958). When Aristotle, who was concerned not only with the pragmatics of tragedy but also with the specifics of the Eleusinian initiation, states that those who participated in the mysteries were not supposed to learn anything but "to experience something (or: to undergo something, feel an emotion or impulse) and to be put into a certain condition (or: state)" (*patheîn kai diatethênai*, Synesius, *Dio*, 10), his words can also be applied to the participants of the paratheatrical meetings.

The same, of course, can be said of the "tester" – Grotowski's term (Grotowski 1980b, 39) for the witness tasked with checking whether the so-called source techniques in the Theatre of Sources (1980-82) functioned as such; and, undoubtedly, of casual observers of *Action* (1986-2022), an opus in the domain of Art as Vehicle. The pragmatics of Grotowski's craft work outlined here – from his "poor theatre" productions to the opuses in the domain of Art as Vehicle – evolved along a similar line to Stanislavski's system: from affective memory (Théodule Ribot's *la mémoire affective*) to the method of physical actions. I speak here, respectively, of Stanislavski's pivotal interest: the actor's work on himself, and of Grotowski's pursuit of the most effective way of influencing the spectator, tester, or observer, which, over the years, he relegated to secondary importance. What comes to the fore, however, is the search for such a technique of an actor or such an influence on the perception of a witness that would be indisputable in terms of palpability, concreteness: privileging physical actions over feelings, and the induction of a stream of energy over the release of affects. In both cases, the creators' approach was akin to a scientific approach with its reliance on experience and on the verifiability of the results and their measurable and revelatory nature. Just as Stanislavski's system has been described as "the science of acting" (Tcherkasski 2016, 18), Grotowski's research can be described as the science of doing. Grotowski contended that "a man of knowledge has at his disposal the doing and not ideas or theories" (Grotowski 1997, 374) and that "knowledge is a matter of doing", except that the man of knowledge is neither a theoretician nor a researcher – not even the most avid one – but a consummate rebel who confronts knowledge as his human – perhaps even sacred – duty. I will come back to this further on.

The term "organicity" in the title of Grotowski's Paris lectures on "The 'Organic Lineage' in Theatre and in Ritual" was borrowed from Stanislavski, who positioned organicity at the core of his system, framing it as its objective and ideal. The noun *organichnost* and the adjective *organichnii* recur 50 times in Toporkov's book *Stanislavski in Rehearsal: The Final Years* (1998), which gives an account of the last period of Stanislavski's work, when his system took the final form of a method of physical actions that Stanislavski regarded as his artistic testament. Stanislavski uses the word "organic"

in the sense of "characteristic of or derived from living organisms" or "forming an indivisible unity" – "integral" and "natural". "My system is only needed to fully activate the creativity of the artist's organic nature", Stanislavski is quoted as saying, "to put to work our organic nature and its subconscious" (Toporkov 1949, 136, 186). The antonym of the adjective *organichnii* in Russian, *iskusstvennii*, means "artificial", i.e. "not made by nature, man-made", as well as "unnatural, ostensible, false", but it should be remembered that it is derived from the noun *iskusstvo* meaning "art". Thus, when Stanislavski speaks of practising *organicheskoe iskusstvo* ("organic art") (Toporkov 1949, 107) as deserving to be called veritably high art, he formulates an obvious paradox.

In contrast to dilettantism, with its characteristic traits of showing off and acting from the gut, Stanislavski distinguishes two contrasting types of acting as art: the art of representation and the art of emotional experiencing. The former draws on a well-established tradition, handed down from generation to generation, and consists in learning and mastering a box of tricks of the acting craft, in training the muscles of the body and face, the voice and intonation or, in short, in mastering the technique of acting. Through constant repetition, students of the craft develop a prodigious muscle and voice memory. They fashion spectacular forms that strongly excite the senses, are awe-inspiring and beautiful but lack power and depth – forms that delight but do not jolt, do not sink deep into the soul, do not enrich. Stanislavski had no appreciation for such acting. While he did not deny his students the chance to master the technical aspects of acting, he reproached them for their lack of creativity and invention and for getting stuck in clichés – traits that caused him to regard them as mere hacks. What are these few more or less stereotyped tricks in comparison to the immeasurable richness of nature that the art of emotional experiencing taps into? The actor arrives at creation that derives from his organic nature – which, for Stanislavski, is subconscious in character – via conscious technique, or rather psychotechnique – by emotionally experiencing a role. The emotional experiencing allows him to create the "life of the human spirit" of his character (Stanislavski 2017, *passim*) and convey that life on stage, which is the essential and loftiest objective of his art. The art of emotional experiencing requires the actor not only to cast away any stereotyped tricks, but also to work on himself unceasingly, persistently, to keep reinventing himself.

An actor must act (in the primary sense of the word: "do", "perform an action"). And his actions must be alive and authentic, filled with truth. He must find in his role an "unbroken organic line of actions", an "organic line of physical behaviour" (Toporkov 1949, 52, 65) – the truth of physical actions that leads to an alive and suggestive embodiment of his character, equivalent to the state of "I am" (Toporkov 1949, 139, 70): I am now and here, fully present. This embodiment, incarnation, or personation (*voploshcheniye*), just like transformation, transmutation, or transfiguration (*perevoploshcheniye*), and, above all, the state of "I am" – Stanislavski uses the biblical phrase *ya yesm* (from the Hebrew *ehyeh*, the Greek *egō eimi*, the Orthodox Church Slavonic *az yesm*) – are clear references to Orthodox Christianity, as Maria Shevtsova (Shevtsova 2020, 87-120) has recently sought to underscore and bring back to wider attention. As Jean Duvignaud noted, transfiguration and embodiment have their counterparts in possession cult rituals. Seeking to answer the question of the "meaning of possession of the actor by the character" (in Stanislavski's system, Jacques Copeau's school, and the practices of the



Cartel des Quatre), Duvignaud links theatre with "the phenomena of possession studied by ethnology in non-historical societies" (Duvignaud 1965, 244):

When, during a Vodou cult celebration in Haiti, the gods called loa descend upon dancers primed through a kind of collective hypnosis to receive them (thus satisfying the conditions of the "prepossession" and "expectation" that Marcel Mauss speaks of when describing the "common consent" required for a magical cult to be completed), the figures corresponding to these "spirits" take full possession of those they enter. (246)

Incidentally, in his Collège de France lectures, Grotowski also glosses over the name of Duvignaud – the sociologist and anthropologist who until 2000 was president of Maison des cultures du monde, an association dedicated to protecting and promoting intangible cultural heritage and to carrying out, together with the Université de Paris-VIII, research in the field of ethnosociology. The linking of theatre and possession is not the only point where Grotowski's and Duvignaud's views coincided: at more or less the same time that Duvignaud formulated his dramatic question "Is it [at all] desirable for theatre to continue to exist?" (Duvignaud 1971, 143), Grotowski orated: "the phenomenon called theatre is devoid of meaning. Everywhere", in his view, "one can see symptoms of its [final] agony" (Grotowski 1973b, 122).

Another thing Grotowski borrowed from Stanislavski, apart from the term "organicity", was the opposition of organicity-based theatre and artificiality-based theatre, the difference being that Grotowski's construal of the word "artificiality" was not far removed from its etymological meaning: he equated it with craftsmanship, i.e. the precision of execution attained through long-term exercise and practice. In the tradition that follows the convention of artifice, actors perform meticulously composed, or montaged (Grotowski's preferred phrase), performative formal structures in a masterful manner, often with technical virtuosity, without engaging in an inner process. Notably, Grotowski added the caveat that his usage of the term "artificial" did not carry any negative connotation. He gave two eminent examples of this tradition: the theatre of Bertolt Brecht and the so-called Peking Opera (*jīngjù* in Chinese, capital city theatre); he invokes the paradox of the actor, which, according to Denis Diderot, holds that to attain greatness an actor must act in cold blood rather than seeking to identify with his character. Grotowski situated his own artistic research at the opposite extreme – at the pole of organicity, in close proximity to Stanislavski's system, of which he proclaimed himself a continuator, with the proviso that what was paramount for him was not a particular (e.g. realistic) style of acting but a method of physical actions. This is corroborated by the title of a book by Thomas Richards, Grotowski's student and artistic heir, *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions* (1995). According to Grotowski, other than the craft-orientated work in the domain of Art as Vehicle at the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards, the organic tradition was represented, in the field of theatre, by Ryszard Cieślak's work on his title role in *The Constant Prince* and, in the domain of ritual, by the Afro-Haitian Vodou cult and South Italian tarantism.

For Grotowski, the secret of organicity lies in the continuous flux of small impulses that stimulate action and attest to the flow of *énergie vitale* (vital energy), to the presence

and impact of *tonus* (vigour, vitality). This flux is uninterrupted, fluid, mutable, alive, whereas the actions of actors at the pole of artificiality are limited to gestures and facial expressions that are peripheral – accumulated in the muscles of the face, arms and legs, condensed into poses assumed in a staccato rhythm. In contrast, the flux of small impulses, constitutive of organicity, flows from within to encompass the entire body, stimulating small actions that add up to a process that, for Grotowski, is not solely physical. Grotowski came to describe this process in terms of verticality – as an attempt to take off, rise up, as the passage from an energy source that is vital, more biological, towards an energy source that is more subtle: luminous and joyous. Grotowski gives examples of this process at work in multiple religious traditions: the practice of Hindu Baul (itinerant mystical singers), the Orthodox tradition of *hesychasts* (combining inner prayer with breathing), Muslim Sufi mysticism (*dhikr* prayer), and "especially [practitioners] of certain ancient Afro-Caribbean traditions" (Magnat 1997a), meaning both Haitian Vodou and, probably, Cuban Santería, which resembles Afro-Brazilian Candomblé. While for some mystics, verticality has no horizontal references, horizontality in Baul performances or Vodou rituals, surrounds the doer with "a kind of huge magical conclave", to quote Mauss (Mauss 1950, 131), which buoys him in his vertical process. Stanislavski was already aware of this and he emphasised the vital importance of communing, or communication (*obshcheniye*). Unfolding in a theatre actor, and in a Performer in the Art as Vehicle, this process involves not only letting oneself be carried away by an ascending current, but also letting the luminous, joyous and subtler descend downwards towards the biological and vital – so that energy can circulate, enabling a *coniunctio* (union) of what is below and what is above.

This is an alchemical idea *par excellence*. Grotowski describes the inner action of the Performer as a process that is a form of transmutation (I have already referred to this). In relation to verticality, he also sketches a map of the body's energy centres, invoking not only the Hindu tantric tradition (*chakras*) or Taoist alchemy but also the figurines of pre-Columbian art and Johann Georg Gichtel's engravings. The caveat, however, is that the hypothetical link between these energetic centres and the endocrine glands would be difficult to prove. At this point, it is worth noting that alchemy has always gone hand in hand with various mystical traditions: Chinese alchemy was tied up with Taoism, Indian alchemy with Tantrism, Hellenistic alchemy with Gnosticism and with the mystery religion, Arab alchemy with Sufism, European medieval and Renaissance alchemy with Hermeticism and Kabbalistic mysticism. As these linkages demonstrate, alchemy was fundamentally a spiritual technique. For Grotowski, organicity was a spiritual technique likewise – he viewed it as full involvement in the actions of the doer who performs them integrally and as an undivided psycho-physical unity. The inner process followed by the actor or Performer in a state of organicity is inseparable from his body and his body offers no resistance. The inner process is the embodiment (*voploshcheniye*) of Stanislavski's "life of the human spirit" of the character or of a *loa* spirit "riding" a dancer in Vodou. At the core of the process, however, is what Grotowski, following Georges Bataille, named *expérience intérieure* (inner experience). When asked about how his research related to psychiatry, he answered that they both involved a technique of personal development enabling one to *grandir intérieurement* (grow internally; Magnat 1997b). Inevitably, this puts one in mind of the individuation process as described by Carl Gustav Jung, who

authored works such as *Psychology and Alchemy* (1968) and *Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy* (1970), as well as smaller-scale studies of alchemy, including *Commentary on "The Secret of the Golden Flower"*, *The Spirit Mercurius* (1967) and *The Psychology of the Transference: An Account of the Transference Phenomena Based on the Illustrations to the "Rosarium philosophorum"* (1966). In his account of his work as director with Ryszard Cieślak on the latter's role in *The Constant Prince*, Grotowski said that a kind of *coniunctio* transpired between what could be considered "something very personal but absolutely not banal" and "something extra-individual", that is, something in which one can discern "a kind of archetypal image" and which he described as *ánthrōpos*: "when accomplishing an act that might be called a sacrifice, the actor crossed a boundary and became *ánthrōpos*, or a total human being (*l'être total*) in that moment" (Magnat 1997b). That image is at the centre of Grotowski's theatrical anthropology. That same image was central to the Romantic anthropology of Mickiewicz, who, in his inspired lectures at the Collège de France, spoke of the desire to become "a whole man", "a man conceived as a whole", that is, one that would at once participate in history as a warrior and engage in the life of his own being, or, in a word, "devote himself fully to what he does" (Grotowski 1980a, 113).

Grotowski's theatrical anthropology, therefore, is to Richard Schechner's and Victor Turner's anthropology of performance, or even to Eugenio Barba's theatre anthropology,<sup>1</sup> what alchemy is to chemistry. In his course at the Collège de France, Grotowski proffered no systematic comparison of theatre and ritual as cultural traditions (his own term) (Magnat 1997a). In fact, the cultural and social context(s) of these phenomena presented no interest to him, which is why his perspective was so far removed from the perspective of social or cultural anthropology. Grotowski did not address the question, vital for Turner (1982, *passim*), of the difference between liminality and the liminoid, which is crucial for distinguishing *rites de passage* from theatre, and even from his own theatre of participation (paratrete meetings). He even ignores the distinction between ecstasy and trance, probed by Schechner in the presentation of his ecstasy/trance wheel where he references Cieślak in *The Constant Prince* (1988: 175-9), the question that Gilbert Rouget (Rouget 1985, 11) sought to resolve and put to rest. Furthermore, when Grotowski mentioned the possibility of simulated trance in spirit possession cult rituals, he made no reference to Michel Leiris's classic work, in which Leiris distinguishes between *théâtre joué* (acted theatre) and *théâtre vécu* (lived theatre) in the Ethiopian cult of *zār* (Leiris 1980, 117-32). Thus, the location of Grotowski's *Chaire d'anthropologie théâtrale* in the same domain as Mauss's and Lévi-Strauss's *Chaires* stems from a misunderstanding – from an automatic association of anthropology with social sciences.

1. The distinction between Barba's theatre anthropology (1979) and Grotowski's theatrical anthropology (*anthropologie théâtrale*, 1997) is as arbitrary and artificial as the one between Freud's psychoanalysis (*die Psychoanalyse*, 1896) and Jung's analytical psychology (*die analytische Psychologie*, 1914). However, while with regard to the latter, it was the case of the successor (Jung) wishing to distinguish himself from his predecessor (Freud) by inventing a new name, in the former case, it was Grotowski who borrowed a name from Barba (changing its slightly in Polish and English; in French one form is used, *anthropologie théâtrale*), without referring to the substance that Barba had filled it with over the years of his work at the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ten sessions and two books by 1997) or articulating any differences between his approach and that of Barba.

In his final manifesto, Grotowski states emphatically that the "essence" of the human being that manifests itself in the Performer's doing interests him "because nothing in it is sociological" (Grotowski 1997, 375). Therefore, the right location of his *Chaire* seems to be where Puech conducted his investigations when he researched *thèmes gnostiques* within the framework of *phénoménologie de la gnose*.

It bears recalling an excerpt from Gilles Quispel's lecture on gnosis as an unknown universal religion, delivered at the C. G. Jung Institute:

In the final analysis gnosis is anthropology: man stands at the centre of gnostic interests. The myths and doctrines of gnosis describe man's origin and essence so that he knows what path he should follow, namely, the path leading to the Self, a path of salvation. The gnostic myth is intended to be but an anamnesis (Quispel 1951: 29).

Therefore, the Performer, defined by Grotowski as a man of knowledge, is a Gnostic journeying towards the Self through anamnesis. "The process [which the Performer is working on and which is linked to essence] is something like the destiny of each one [of us], his own destiny, which develops (or: which just unfolds) with time", contends Grotowski in his final manifesto, before adding, "Each time I discover something, I have the feeling it is what I recall." (Grotowski 1997, 375, 377) He asks, "Is essence the hidden background of the memory?" (Grotowski 1997, 377) This question is a paraphrase of the gnostic myth understood as an anamnesis leading man to the Self in accord with his destiny.

Translated by Mirosław Rusek

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