

## Jerzy Grotowski's Theatre, Acting, and Enacting the Lived Body

Yanna Popova, PIASt (Polish Institute of Advanced Studies)

As Peter Brook has famously noted, no one since Stanislavski has investigated the nature of acting, its phenomenon, its meaning, the nature and science of its mental-physical-emotional processes as deeply and as completely as Grotowski. Yet, he offered no positive techniques, no systems to use, only a negative training to remove personal blocks that the actor might have in expressing authentic experience. This presentation, part of a much larger project, aims to examine the role of the body as an instrument of thought and expression in Grotowski's theatre by situating the investigation within the context of both a phenomenological understanding of the body, and a current embodied/enactive view of the mind, as evidenced in cognitive science. I will look at some existing models of acting in the Western theatre tradition, highlighting the assumed psychological components of acting. I will then present a view of acting as described and demonstrated in the practices of the Laboratory Theatre. My claim will be that Grotowski's understanding of the body, particularly the concept of 'body memory' as an essential basis for our experience of self and its application in actor training, anticipated the current view in cognitive science about the embodied nature of human cognitive processes, including memory, affectivity, and the formation of meaning, all of which are assumed to be foundational for the art of acting.