

# Untitled Text by Jerzy Grotowski, Signed in Pontedera, Italy, July 4, 1998

*According to the wish of Jerzy Grotowski this text is published posthumously.*

It is possible that the end of my life approaches. I should like first of all to rectify an information which leads to a false understanding of the work of the **Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards**.

“*Action*: the last performance of Grotowski”: this information contains three deformations of the truth.

My last performance, as a theatre director, is entitled *Apocalypsis cum figuris*. It was created in 1969 and its representations ended in 1980. Since then I have not made any performances.

*Action* is not a performance. It does not belong to the domain of art as presentation. It is an opus created in the field of art as vehicle. It is conceived to structure, in a material linked to performing arts, the work on oneself of the doers.

Witnesses, outside observers, may be present or not. It depends on several conditions which, under different circumstances, this approach demands.

When I speak of art as vehicle, I refer to verticality. Verticality — we can see this phenomenon in categories of energy: heavy but organic energies (linked to the forces of life, to instincts, to sensuality) and other energies, more subtle. The question of verticality means to pass from a so-called coarse level — in a certain sense one could say an “everyday level” — to a level of energy more subtle or even toward the *higher connection*. I simply indicate the passage, the direction. There, there is another passage as well: if one approaches the higher connection — that means, if we are speaking in terms of energy, if one approaches the much more subtle energy — then there is also the question of descending, while at the same time bringing this subtle something into the more common reality, which is linked to the density of the body. Thomas Richards analyzed his perception, his individual experience of this kind of process, and he characterized it as *inner action*.

With verticality the point is not to renounce part of our nature — all should retain its natural place: the body, the heart, the head, something that is “under our feet” and something that is “over the head.” All like a vertical line, and this verticality should be held taut between organicity and *the awareness*. *Awareness* means the consciousness which is not linked to language (the machine for thinking), but to Presence.

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So I repeat: *Action* is not a “performance.” It is an opus entirely created and directed by Thomas Richards, and on which, since 1994, he carries on a continuous work.

Can one say that *Action* has been a collaboration between Thomas Richards and myself? Not in the sense of a creation by four hands; only in the sense of the nature of my work with Thomas Richards since 1985 which has had the character of transmission, as it is understood in the tradition; to transmit to him that to which I have arrived in my life: the *inner* aspect of the work.

As for *Action*, Thomas Richards is its exclusive author.

If I repeat these statements, it is to make a clean sweep before approaching the topics which have been inhabiting me for a long time.

What can one transmit? How and to whom to transmit? These are questions that every person who has inherited from the tradition asks himself, because he inherits at the same time a kind of duty: to transmit that which he has himself received.

What part has research in a tradition? To what extent should a tradition of a work on oneself or, to speak by analogy, of a yoga or of an inner life be at the same time an investigation, a research that takes with each new generation a step ahead?

In a branch of Tibetan Buddhism it is said that a tradition can live if the new generation goes a fifth ahead in respect to the preceding generation, without forgetting or destroying its discoveries.

I know, I know. . . in the artistic domain *stricto sensu* we can say that there exists only an evolution and not a development. And that the work of Beckett, because it arrives after in time, is not more developed than the work of Shakespeare.

But here I speak of a domain that is artistic and that is not exclusively artistic. In the field of art as vehicle, if I consider the work of Thomas Richards on *Action*, on the ancient vibratory songs and on all this vast terrain linked to the tradition that occupies the researches here, I observe that the new generation has already advanced in respect to the preceding one.

Jerzy Grotowski  
July 4, 1998

*Translated from the French by Mario Biagini*