Conducting Embodied Research at the Intersection of Performance Studies, Experimental Ethnography and Indigenous Methodologies

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Abstract: Grounding embodied research in Indigenous methodologies as well as feminist, sensory and experimental ethnography, I propose an alternative performance-based approach modelled on the creative work of women from different cultures and generations who collaborated with influential theatre innovator Jerzy Grotowski. I infer from my experimental fieldwork and embodied research on the work of these artists that positionality, relationality, relevance, respect, and reciprocity are critical to articulating experiential ways of cognition beyond the limitations imposed by dominant conceptions of knowledge. Having foregrounded the Indigenous and environmentalist critique of performance-based methodologies derived from the work of Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire, I suggest that alternative approaches which allow for the interrelation of creativity, agency, embodiment and spirituality can help promote more diverse and inclusive perspectives.

Keywords: embodiment, performance, indigenous methodologies, Grotowski

Résumé : Mon approche performative de la recherche incarnée intègre les principes des méthodologies indigènes ainsi que de l'ethnographie féministe, sensorielle et expérimentale, et prend pour modèle le travail créatif de femmes de générations et de cultures diverses qui ont collaboré avec Jerzy Grotowski, un des plus importants praticiens du théâtre expérimental. Mon travail de terrain, fondé sur un processus de recherche qui passe par le corps, démontre que ce sont la positionnalité, la relationnalité, la pertinence, le respect et la réciprocité qui permettent de définir certains modes de cognition expérientielle situés au-delà des limites imposées par les conceptions dominantes de la connaissance. Ayant examiné la critique indigène et écologiste des méthodologies performatives dérivées du travail d'Augusto Boal et de Paulo Freire, je suggère qu'une démarche qui valorise l'interaction de la créativité, l'agence humaine, l'expérience vécue et la spiritualité, peut favoriser desperspectives de recherche plus sensibles à la diversité et l'inclusivité.

Mots-clés : Incarnation, performance, méthodologies indigènes, Grotowski

Embodied Research

Embodiment, lived experience and intersubjectivity are key to experimental approaches articulated at the intersection of performance and ethnography. Yet the slippery nature of the territories which this research proposes to investigate has often contributed to undermining its academic credibility. Since embodied experience eludes and possibly exceeds cognitive control, accounting for its destabilizing function within the research process potentially endangers dominant conceptions of knowledge upon which the legitimacy of academic discourses so crucially depends.

Within the discipline of anthropology, alternative ethnographic models that account for the lived experience of researchers and research participants have arguably been most compellingly articulated by indigenous and feminist ethnographers. Lassiter notes that American Indian scholars were among the first to produce a radical critique of ethnographic fieldwork and to "call for models that more assertively attend to community concerns, models that would finally put to rest the lingering reverberations of anthropology's colonial past" (2005:6). Lassiter further remarks that feminist scholars, writing "as women whose knowledge is situated vis-à-vis their male counterparts" are already positioned as Other (2005:59). Indigenous and feminist anthropologists therefore raise related epistemological and methodological questions about ethnographic authority and the politics of representation because they share similar concerns about the ways in which conventional methodologies enable researchers positioned within the academy to authoritatively speak for the Other (Lassiter 2005:56, 59). Positioning oneself from within the community they are studying and accounting for their own embodied participation in the culture of that community has led indigenous and feminist researchers to develop alternative research methodologies which foreground embodiment, lived experience and intersubjectivity, and which privilege collaboration and reciprocity.

While feminist ethnographers are committed to creating "more humane and dialogic accounts that would more fully and more collaboratively represent the diversity of women's experience" (Lassiter 2005:56), for indigenous ethnographers, consultation with community members is meant to ensure that the research they are conducting is mutually beneficial. In both cases, lived experience and accountability are linked and the researcher bears a moral responsibility to the community. When reflecting on his ethnography of Kiowa songs, Lassiter acknowledges that what mattered most to the Kiowa community was the power his interpretation would have in "defining [this community] to the outside—and to future generations of Kiowas for that matter." The questions that emerged from the research process were therefore about "who has control and who has the last word" (2005:11). Indeed, what is ultimately relevant to the Kiowa people is the power of the songs, for it is the embodied experience of singing these songs which sustains the cultural continuity of the Kiowa community.

"Meetings with Remarkable Women/Tu es la fille de quelqu'un," the SSHRC-funded research project[1] I am currently conducting with women artists whose experiential approaches to performance vitally depend on embodiment, similarly hinges upon questions of accountability, relevance, and reciprocity. Indeed, for these women from different cultures and generations, who often work with ancient traditional songs, it is the power of performance, transmitted through their teaching and performing, which gives meaning to their creative work as members of a transnational community of artists who share a direct connection to Jerzy Grotowski's groundbreaking performance research.

The significance of the cross-cultural research conducted by the Polish director was recognized through his appointment, in 1997, to the Chair of Theatre Anthropology of the Collège de France in Paris.[2] His legacy was later acknowledged by UNESCO on the tenth anniversary of his death through the designation of 2009 as the "Year of Grotowski." Although many theatre historians rank Grotowski, along with Stanislavski and Brecht, as one of the most influential 20th-century theatre innovators, there is a relative paucity of scholarly texts investigating all but the early stages of Grotowski's lifelong research.[3] Grotowski's approach is therefore often reduced to that early phase of his work due to lack of knowledge about the rarely documented, post-theatrical phases of the research that he conducted from the 1970s to the late 1990s.

In *The Grotowski Sourcebook* (Schechner and Wolford 1997), performance studies theorist Richard Schechner points to the small number of women among Grotowski's main representatives and their virtual absence among his official inheritors. Although not gender-specific, the particularly strenuous physical training emblematic of Grotowski's approach, as well as the central position occupied by Grotowski's male collaborators in most of his theatrical and post-theatrical experiments, have led historians and scholars to overlook the presence of women in Grotowski's work. The main goal of my project is to redress this imbalance by foregrounding the experience, contribution and perspective of women, and to provide access to their creative and teaching approaches in order to promote a more inclusive and diverse understanding of Grotowski's enduring legacy. Indeed, as evidenced by books, articles and interviews in Polish that have yet to be translated into other languages, as well as unpublished archival sources, personal testimonies and on-going transmission processes, it is clear that several generations of women from different cultures and traditions actively participated in all phases of Grotowski's practical research, and continue to play a pivotal role in today's Grotowski diaspora.

My own performance training is rooted in the transmission processes I am investigating in this project: I worked in Paris with Caroline Boué and Bertrand Quoniam, who were students of Ludwik Flaszen and Zygmunt Molik, two founding members of Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre. I went on to work directly with Molik, the voice specialist of the company, and with Rena Mirecka, also a founding member and the only woman to have performed in all Laboratory Theatre productions. Several other encounters with women belonging to the Grotowski diaspora eventually led me to conceive of this project.

Cree scholar Shawn Wilson suggests that, from an indigenous perspective, research is ceremony because it is about making connections and strengthening them, a process which takes "a lot of work, dedication and time" (2008:89-90). "Meetings with Remarkable Women/Tu es la fille de quelqu'un" crucially depends on establishing and sustaining the types of relationships which Wilson considers to be necessary conditions for conducting research. Informed by some of the key questions raised by indigenous and feminist researchers, this project examines the artistic journeys of women whose work has been significantly informed by their collaboration with Grotowski.

When reflecting on why, in my early 20s, after having studied acting in France for several years, I became interested in pursuing Grotowski-based training, I think I was searching for a performance practice that could provide women with creative agency beyond the limitations placed upon them by the conventions of psychological

realism. Feminist theorists have scrutinized the assumptions underlying such conventions, contending that realist theatre naturalizes the normative gender roles it reproduces on stage. Indeed, performers working in realist theatre are often type-cast in accordance with the gender roles society expects them to play. By taking on these roles, performers become complicit with the naturalization process at work in realist theatre, while at the same time being deeply shaped by these representations.

By focusing on women artists who do not readily align themselves or identify with post-structuralist feminist theory, however, my project confronts what Lassiter describes as "the gap between academically-positioned and community-positioned narratives," grounded in concerns about the politics of representation, that is to say, "about who has the right to represent whom and for what purposes, and about whose discourse will be privileged in the ethnographic text" (2005:4). Addressing such concerns entails calling into question the legitimacy of theoretical claims that make use of artistic practice to demonstrate the validity of an argument underpinned by a particular analytical framework.

While extremely empowering for women scholars, the feminist critique of essentialist representations of gender is itself a construction informed by a particular way of positioning oneself, which contains its own limitations. It seems impossible, for instance, to argue against biological determinism while simultaneously being engaged in forms of practice-based research that foreground embodied experience and generate alternative conceptions of what constitutes knowledge. Yet the women involved in this project have developed their own perspective on their positionality as artists, and they staunchly resist any kind of categorization which might limit, constrain or stultify what they envision as the human creative potential. In my articulation of the project's objectives, it was therefore imperative to leave the term *woman* open-ended so as not to impose a pre-determined theoretical lens through which to view and interpret their work.

Furthermore, that which may be referred to as the "spiritual" dimension of Grotowski-based artistic research eludes the grasp of post-structuralist theoretical approaches to performance, and I have found in indigenous research methodologies alternative theoretical frameworks that are inclusive of spirituality. Such inclusivity is especially critical to the analysis of Grotowski's post-theatrical work. Indeed, after having garnered international acclaim as the Laboratory Theatre's artistic director, Grotowski made the controversial decision, in 1969, to abandon theatre productions altogether in order to focus on practical research that ranged from one-time participatory experiments conducted in unusual indoor and outdoor settings, to the long-term practical investigation of ritual performance processes. From then on, Grotowski's research became increasingly focused on traditional cultural practices although he was very careful not to speak directly of the spiritual aspect of his work so as not to encourage reductive generalizations based on a Eurocentric understanding of what may constitute spirituality. However, reconnecting with one's cultural ancestry was key to his approach, especially in his practical investigation of ancient traditional songs. He states:

> As one says in a French expression, "Tu es le fils de quelqu'un" [You are someone's son]. You are not a vagabond, you come from somewhere, from some country, from some place, from some landscape...Because he who began to sing the first words was someone's son, from somewhere, from some place, so, if you re-find this, you are someone's son. [If you don't,] you are cut off, sterile, barren. [Grotowski 1997c: 304]

Although this statement seems to focus solely on sons and can appear to privilege the masculine gender, it is clear in the notes to the transcriptions and translations of his public talks, always given in French, that Grotowski was well aware of gender-based linguistic shortcomings and that he did not intend his discourse to apply exclusively to males. The subtitle of my project, "Tu es la fille de quelqu'un," nevertheless reclaims and reconfigures what is essentially a folk-saying in my native culture, raising questions about lineage, artistic and otherwise, and about what it might mean to be someone's daughter.

Hawaiian scholar Manulani Aluli Meyer also links identity, lineage and place when she writes: "You came from a place. You grew in a place and you had a relationship with that place...Land is more than just a physical place...It is the key that turns the doors inward to reflect on how space shapes us" (2008:219). Meyer goes on to cite the Hawaiian elder Halemakua: "at one time, we all came from a place familiar with our evolution and storied with our experiences. At one time, we all had a rhythmic understanding of time and potent experiences of harmony in space." Meyer specifies that Halemakua believed it was possible to reconnect with this knowing in order to "engender, again, acts of care, compassion, and the right relationship with land, sky, water, and ocean - vital for these modern times" (2008:231).

Moreover, Meyer poses questions which I find particularly pertinent to my own research process. She asks, "will your research bring forth solutions that strengthen relationships with others or will it damage

future collaborations?" She replies that "knowledge that does not heal, bring together, challenge, surprise, encourage, or expand our awareness is not part of the consciousness this world needs now. This is the function we as indigenous people posit." She therefore makes a direct appeal to researchers to "see your work as a taonga (sacred object) for your family, your community, your people," and suggests that "your relationship to your research topic is your own. It springs from a lifetime of distinctness and uniqueness only you have history with" (2008:219-220). She insists that researchers should acknowledge that "objectivity is a subjective idea that cannot possibly describe the all of our experience," and urges them to "expand [their] repertoire of writers and thinkers" in order to overcome "the limitations of predictable research methodologies." Finally, she challenges researchers to have the maturity to seek "what most scholars refuse to admit exists: *spirit*" (Meyer 2008: 226, 228).

Having to admit the existence of "spirit" is precisely what Lassiter was confronted with when conducting research on Kiowa songs. Kiowa people's lived experience of these songs is that of an encounter with *daw*, which he states translates into "power, or more precisely spirit." For Kiowa people, "spirit is the deepest encounter with the song," and in the course of his research, Lassiter came to understand that Kiowa people were "very conscious of how academics theorize this talk about song within their own academically positioned narratives, effectively dismissing or explaining spirit away in their texts." This led him to reflect upon his positionality and question his own disbelief. He writes:

> We may suggest, for example, that spirit doesn't exist as an empirical reality—that it exists because Kiowas believe it exists, that it is a product of culture. And because culture is very real, spirit is very real. Yet for [Kiowa people], spirit is not a concept. It is a very real and tangible thing. An encounter with *daw* informs belief; not vice versa. We academics take a leap of faith—or one of disbelief...when we argue otherwise. And when we argue from our position of disbelief, however constructed, we argue from a political position of power, privileging our own voice in our literature. [2005:7-8]

Valuing the lived experience of others in spite of one's personal convictions becomes an ethical imperative in this case, especially since the very purpose of the research is to investigate the power of Kiowa songs.

In her discussion of "spirit," Meyer warns her readers not to confuse the category of spirit with religion, since Hawaiian elders speak of spirit with regard to intelligence (2008:218). Describing spirit as that which gives "a structure of rigour" to research, she specifies that it is about

> moving towards usefulness, moving towards meaning and beauty. It is the contemplation part of your work that brings you to insight, steadiness, and interconnection...In research, it is answers you will *remember* in your dreams...It is understanding an unexpected experience that will heighten the clarity of your findings. [2008:229]

She is therefore pointing to an experiential way of knowledge and infers from "the specificity of knowing her ancient self" the notion that "knowing is bound to how we develop a *relationship* with it," which leads her to posit that "*knowing is embodied* and in union with cognition," and to conclude that "*genuine knowledge must be experienced directly*" (2008:224). This is also a fundamental aspect of Grotowski's approach which his collaborators continue to uphold in their own creative research and in their teaching. Yet it is precisely what makes the investigation of their work particularly challenging for theatre and performance scholars.

Within theatre and performance studies, the practice–theory divide which separates performance scholars from performance practitioners is described by Conquergood (2002) as an "apartheid of knowledges" and attributed by Jackson (2004) to an insidious "division of labour" privileging those who think over those who do. Dance studies scholars have perhaps most effectively unsettled this hierarchical configuration by foregrounding the cultural specificity of mind–body dualism. Barbour thus remarks that "affected by dominant Western culture's denial and repression of the body, and of experience as a source of knowledge, lived movement experience has only recently been studied academically" (2005:35). Within the field of theatre and performance studies, somatophobia casts a shadow of suspicion over the hybrid status of the artist-scholar and contributes to undermining practice-based research endeavours that require the building of relationships based on trust, respect, and reciprocity with artists outside the academy.

In the case of this project, it is important to note that Grotowski's own critical stance toward the production of abstract intellectual constructs that replace (and displace) performance practice as such, was constantly balanced, in Grotowski's analysis of his own work, with the exacting demand for rigour and consistency that characterized his life-long practice-based research. Grotowski's perspicacity on these matters helps to explain why his collaborators may seem so acutely aware of the

potential for academic approaches to colonize practice in order to fit pre-established theoretical frameworks. Many of Grotowski's collaborators have similarly dedicated their life to sophisticated ways of conducting research through practice. Not only are these artists convinced that academic interpretations cannot convey the kind of embodied knowledge that is gained through "doing," but they are also weary of researchers who go to the other extreme by mystifying artistic practice to liberate it from theory's grasp.

Artists in the Grotowski diaspora therefore tend to mistrust most academic research endeavours, especially those supported by a large amount of university funding—a seemingly sure sign that there must be a hidden agenda. And in fact, there always is, since the academy sets the criteria for successful research—such as dissemination by means of peer-reviewed academic publications addressed primarily to an academic audience—thereby excluding most practitioners from the debate even when claiming to support process-oriented and practice-based projects grounded in the notion of performance as research.

Wilson speaks of a similar disjunction between Western and indigenous scholars:

> As part of their white privilege, there is no requirement for [dominant-system academics] to be able to see other ways of being and doing, or even to recognize that they exist. Oftentimes, then, ideas coming from a different worldview are outside their entire mindset and way of thinking. The ability to bridge this gap becomes important in order to ease the tension that it creates. [2008:44]

Because of the complex negotiations in which I am engaged due to my positionality within this particular project, I have witnessed and experienced tensions not unlike those described by Wilson as I straddle two worlds that often seem irreconcilable.

Positionality and Productive Disorientation

I was born and raised in a French working class family, but left France when, at the age of 15, I received a full scholarship to study at Lester B. Pearson College, a United World College located on Vancouver Island, Canada. Returning to France after spending three years in North America, I pursued performance training rooted in the work of Grotowski. I was then offered funding to pursue doctoral studies in theatre at the University of California, where I later held a Postdoctoral Faculty Fellowship in Anthropology. I went on to teach performance practice and theory at an English-speaking Canadian university, and am currently directing a cross-cultural research project funded by the Canadian government.

I am therefore always positioned as conducting research "abroad," whether I am in Canada, the United States, Poland, or even France, since "abroad" has paradoxically become what I now call "home." Due to my hybrid identity as an international performance practitioner and scholar, I am almost always simultaneously an insider and an outsider engaged in research processes where the distinction between practice and theory remains ambiguous to say the least. This balancing act at the crossroads of disciplinary and professional affiliations constitutes my experience of "precarious equilibrium," a phrase used by Grotowski and his collaborator Eugenio Barba to describe the organic tensions and oppositions cultivated in performance training to alter the balance of the performer's body-mind, thereby also altering the performer's perception or awareness of her relationship to herself, others and the world-at-large.

It is this particular positionality that has led me to become interested in the implications, for performance studies, of the critique of dominant Euro-American models produced by indigenous researchers. Indeed, this critique calls for the legitimization, in the academy, of embodied knowledge as a counter-hegemonic mode of inquiry and performance is foregrounded as fundamental to a number of indigenous cultures. While indigenous research approaches are designed by and for indigenous scholars and activists working within their communities, they raise questions that are more pertinent to my experience as a researcher, theatre practitioner and educator than the questions formulated by those whom Wilson (2008) identifies as "dominant system academics."

According to some of the key research criteria outlined by Wilson (2008), Aboriginal people themselves must approve the research methods and researchers must be willing and able to engage in a "deep listening and hearing with more than the ears" in order to develop a "reflective, non-judgmental consideration of what is being seen and heard" along with "an awareness and connection between logic of mind and the feelings of the heart." Researchers thus bear the "responsibility to act with fidelity in relationship to what has been heard, observed, and learnt." Wilson does not preclude the possibility that non-indigenous researchers might also benefit from following these principles, since he states: "so much the better if dominant universities and researchers adopt them as well" (2008:59). Such principles are particularly well suited to the embodied, participatory practice-based research I am conducting since the latter hinges upon a type of lived experience which also requires

a "deep listening" engaging the whole being, that is to say body, mind, and heart, as well as a suspension of judgment which can be understood as a form of "fidelity" to the embodied knowledge accessed through this experience.

Wilson's choice to equate research and ceremony emphasizes practice and efficacy, thereby grounding research in a form of doing. Participating in a ceremony entails carrying out a series of actions which, if performed competently and in accordance with traditional knowledge, can activate, sustain and revitalize relationships to others, the entire community and the natural world. There are striking parallels between this conception of ceremony, the research process in which I am engaged, and Grotowski's approach to artistic research, in which the performer is often referred to as a "doer." Furthermore, the transmission processes connecting one generation to the next in the Grotowski intercultural diaspora hinge upon the kind of artisanal competence and bodily know-how that guarantees efficacy within traditional ritual practices. Ironically, it is precisely the embodied dimension of Grotowski's cross-cultural research on aesthetic and ritual performance processes which tends to be dismissed by theatre scholars and critics for being suspiciously "esoteric" or even dangerously "mystical."

Such a propensity to discount embodiment is cogently countered by Danish anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup, who provides an analysis of human agency which anchors the latter in the living body. Hastrup discusses the connection between performance processes and the ethnographer's fieldwork experience, derives from her encounter with theatre the insight that "most cultural knowledge is stored in action rather than words," and specifies that such embodied knowledge is transmitted through psychophysical involvement in cultural processes (1995:82). Situating flesh and blood human agents within a corporeal field "with which every individual is inextricably linked by way of the physical, sensing and moving body" (1995:95), she infers from this embodied condition that "the point from which we experience the world is in constant motion...there is no seeing the world from above" (95). Interestingly, Hastrup's perspective on embodied agency is significantly informed by her collaboration with Eugenio Barba, the Italian theatre director who was deeply influenced by his three-year apprenticeship with Grotowski and went on to found the International School of Theatre Anthropology.

Barba infers from his cross-cultural investigation of embodied knowledge transmitted transgenerationally by performance practitioners, that the principles governing a wide range of world performance traditions hinge upon the interconnectedness of body and mind, in stark contrast with the Cartesian mind–body dualism. He therefore suggests that what he names "thinking-in-motion" can provide an alternative to the type of thinking which is discursive and resorts to language, or "thinking-in-concepts." He contrasts "thinking-in-motion" with "thinking-in-concepts" by specifying that the former is linked to what he describes as "creative thought...which proceeds by leaps, by means of sudden disorientation which obliges it to reorganize itself in new ways" (1995:88). Building on Barba's perspective, Hastrup defines such disorientation as simultaneously inherent to our embodied condition and resulting from our psychophysical engagement in the unpredictable fluctuations of forever emergent cultural processes.

In the social sciences, however, disorientation is still often dismissed as lack of control, and being taken by surprise is not something that is necessarily valued and acknowledged as productive, even though, as argued by Pink (2009), it is an unavoidable aspect of fieldwork experience. Pink warns that when ethnographers open themselves up to the new world in which they find themselves immersed during fieldwork, they may experience an acute sense of disorientation, and contends that, no matter how prepared they may be, "researchers' own sensory experience will most likely still surprise them, sometimes giving them access to a new form of knowing" (2009:45). It is precisely this new form of knowing that comes through disorientation which I would like to foreground here, inasmuch as this kind of lived experience, which, according to Pink, can be simultaneously jolting and revelatory, relates to performance training as conceived by Barba and Grotowski.

Engaging the entire organism in the research process is also critical to the notion of "sensuous scholarship" developed by Paul Stoller (1997), who suggests that the ethnographer should become an apprentice to those they are studying. Challenging the mind–body dualism which he argues still pervades Euro-American research paradigms, he suggests that anthropologists who are searching for ways of accounting for embodiment must "eject the conceit of control in which mind and body, self and other are considered separate." The embodied research process he envisions values a "mixing of head and heart" and demands an involvement in that process which I posit is akin to performance training, namely, an "opening of one's being to the world—a welcoming," or an "embodied hospitality" which Stoller argues is "the secret of the great scholars, painters, poets and filmmakers whose images and words resensualize us" (1997:xvii-xviii).

Furthering Stoller's contribution to sensory ethnography, Pink contends that the latter is about "learning to

know as others know through embodied practice," which entails participating" in *their* worlds, on the terms of their embodied understandings" (2009:70-72). Pink relates the notion of "ethnography as a participatory practice" to conceptions of "learning as embodied, emplaced, sensorial and empathetic, rather than occurring simply through a mix of participation and observation." She infers that such participatory practice hinges upon a multisensorial, attentive engagement in which "visual observation is not necessarily privileged" (2009:65).

Drawing from this alternative conception of ethnographic fieldwork, I would argue that the very notion of intimate immersion which is associated with fieldwork experience calls into question the assumption that, in order for research to be reliable, the researcher's mind and body must function separately. In light of Stoller's and Pink's suggested epistemological readjustments, it therefore becomes necessary to recalibrate methodologies in order to enable researchers to fully engage the dynamics of human interactions. I am therefore suggesting that what Pink refers to as the "jolt" of fieldwork experience constitutes precisely one of the most promising characteristics of embodied research.

Learning from Indigenous Perspectives

My training as a performer is rooted in the teachings of Grotowski's collaborators and I therefore bring to the "performance turn" in the social sciences an alternative conception of performance practice and theory. Indeed, Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed model is often presented as the "default" approach to performance, and Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, who advocate an approach to critical pedagogy informed by indigenous perspectives, state that "the performative and the political intersect on the terrain of a praxis-based ethics...a space of post-colonial, indigenous participatory theatre, a form of critical pedagogical theatre that draws its inspirations from Boal's major works" (2008:7).

The privileging of Boal by proponents of critical pedagogy can, of course, be attributed to their explicit allegiance to Paulo Freire, since Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed is grounded in Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed as well as in Brecht's Marxist approach to theatre. Allain notes that "Brecht wanted the spectators to rationalize their emotional responses and to evaluate the stage action objectively in order to ascertain the social foundation of the characters' motivations and their own reactions to these" (2006:30). Boal, inspired by Freire, envisions a post-Brechtian theatre in which the separation between audience members and actors dissolves, and where the "spect-actor" can intervene and change the course of events presented by the Theatre of the Oppressed, the latter being envisioned by Boal as "a rehearsal of revolution" (1996:97).

In her examination of competing scholarly assessments of Boal's approach, Nicholson remarks that "depending on how you look at his work, Augusto Boal is either an inspirational and revolutionary practitioner or a Romantic idealist" (2005:15). She contrasts the perspectives of Schechner and Taussig with the former identifying Boal as a postmodernist who refuses to offer solutions to social problems, and the latter indicting Boal for being a traditional humanist who "believes that human nature has the power to transcend cultural differences." Nicholson goes on to suggest that it is Boal's relationship to the work of Freire which is most relevant to "those with an interest in applying Boal's theatrical strategies to pedagogical encounters" (2005:116-117).

Recent critical reassessments of the Marxist-inflected emancipatory discourses underpinning Boal's relationship to the work of Freire demonstrate that the seemingly unilateral integration of the Boalian performance paradigm by social scientists is far from unproblematic, especially from an indigenous perspective. For example, Driskill (2008) articulates a critique of the Theatre of the Oppressed methodology within the context of indigenous communities based on seven years of experience as an activist. While acknowledging that the Theatre of the Oppressed model benefits from "the radical and transformational possibilities in Freire," Driskill contends that "it also inherits a missionary history and approach in which Freire's work is implicated." Highlighting the alphabetic literacy projects which were key to Freire's activism, Driskill states that "while certainly alphabetic literacy is often an important survival skill for the oppressed, the teaching of literacy is also deeply implicated in colonial and missionary projects." In light of the violent history of residential schools that severed Aboriginal children from their families and uprooted them from their ancestral culture and native land, Driskill contends that "it makes sense for Native People to be critically wary of Freireian work," and adds: "many of the concepts that Freire asserts in regards to pedagogical approaches—community-specific models that differ from the "banking model" of education, for instance—are already present in many of our traditional pedagogies" (2008:158-159).

This critique is furthered by Bowers and Apffel-Marglin (2005), who state that, according to Third World activists who tested the pedagogy of the oppressed in their work with specific communities, Freire's approach is "based on Western assumptions that undermine indigenous knowledge systems." Bowers and Apffel-Marglin

suggest that the emancipatory vision pertaining to such an approach is grounded in "the same assumptions that underlie the planetary citizenship envisioned by the neoliberals promoting the Western model of global development" (2005:vii-viii), and Bowers later contends that it is urgent to acknowledge that Freire's emancipatory discourse is "based on earlier metaphorical constructions that did not take into account the fact that the fate of humans is dependent on the viability of natural systems" and that the preservation of biodiversity and "the recovery of the environment and community" are dependent on a nuanced understanding of the function and value of traditions (2005:140-143).

Questioning Freire's conviction that the individual can and should be freed by critical thinking from the weight of tradition, Bowers (2005) argues that such view is consonant with conceptions of self-determination that emerged out of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. He infers that this kind of individualism isolates members of a society by replacing "wisdom refined over generations of collective experience" with consumer-oriented culture and new technologies upon which everyone becomes increasingly dependent (2005:140-141). Bowers contrasts intergenerational knowledge, which is community-based, with the technology-driven hyperconsumerism that promotes a "world monoculture based on the more environmentally destructive characteristics of the Western mindset" (2005:145-147). Having specified that he intends neither to romanticize traditional knowledge nor to discount critical inquiry, he provides the example of an indigenous community in British Columbia whose elders "spent two years discussing how the adoption of computers would change the basic fabric of their community," suggesting that while they were engaged in critical reflection, the latter was practiced "within a knowledge system that highlighted traditions of moral reciprocity within the community—with 'community' being understood as including other living systems of their bioregion" (2005:189).

Finally, Grande's analysis of the anthropocentric dimension of Marxism posits that, while "the quest for indigenous sovereignty [is] tied to issues of *land*, Western constructions of democracy are tied to issues of *property*" (2008:243). She points out that what is at stake for revolutionary theorists is the egalitarian distribution of economic power and exchange, and asks: "*How does the 'egalitarian distribution' of colonized lands constitute greater justice for indigenous people?*" (2008:243). Grande further remarks that although Marx was a critic of capitalism, he shared many of its deep cultural assumptions, such as a secular faith in progress and modernity, and the belief that traditional knowledge, connection to one's ancestral land, and spirituality based on one's relationship to the natural world, were to be dismissed as the worthless relics of a pre-modern era. Moreover, while Marx emphasized human agency by invoking the power of human beings to change their social conditions, an anti-deterministic view which has greatly contributed to the development of revolutionary movements and struggles for self-determination among oppressed and colonized peoples, Grande concurs with Bowers' critique of Freire by stating that Marxism "reinscribes the colonialist logic that conscripts 'nature' to the service of human society" (2008:248).

While it is undeniable that Boal's approach has been as influential in political theatre practice as Freire's has been in radical critical pedagogy, the absence of a discussion of alternative conceptions of performance and the singling out of Boal's approach by critical theorists results in making it a default position which serves as the sole model of critical pedagogical theatre. I was fortunate to meet Boal during a brief but engaging "Theatre of Images" workshop held at the University of Southern California in 2003, yet my training as a performer is Grotowski-based, and while I am certainly not advocating Grotowski's approach as the only alternative to Boal, I am suggesting that it may open up different possibilities for embodied research. Indeed, conversely to the European artists who were his contemporaries, Grotowski challenged the very notion of avant-garde by stating:

> I do not think that my work in the theatre may be described as a new method. It can be called a method, but it is a very narrow term. Neither do I believe that it is something new. That kind of exploration most often took place outside the theatre, though inside some theatres as well. What I have in mind is a way of life and cognition. It is a very old way. How it is articulated depends on period and society. [...] In this regard I feel much closer to [the painter of the Trois Frères cave] than to artists who think that they create the avant-garde of the new theatre. [1980:118-119]

By positing that his research is linked to an old way of cognition that can be traced back to ancient cave paintings, Grotowski thereby rejects the notion of linear progress, the separation of art and life, and the conflation of creativity with originality, thereby disowning the identity of an avant-garde artist.

Grotowski envisioned artistic practice as a struggle against all forms of limitations—those imposed by outside circumstances and those that one imposes upon oneself. In his 1985 talk, "Tu es le fils de quelqu'un" (You Are Someone's Son), Grotowski stated:

> I don't work in order to lay out some treatise, but rather to extend that island of freedom that I carry...I must solve the problem of liberty and tyranny in practical ways—that means that my activity must leave behind traces, *examples* of liberty...This life that you are living, is it enough?...No, such life is not sufficient. So one does something, one proposes something, one accomplishes something which is the response to this deficiency...Art is deeply rebellious. [It] pushes back the limits imposed by society or, in tyrannical systems, imposed by power." [1997c:295]

Such a conception of art may be attributed in part to the oppressive political and social circumstances of Grotowski's Poland and to his witnessing of the destruction and suffering perpetrated by Nazism and Stalinism.[4] Theatre can therefore be said to have represented for Grotowski a field of practical investigation in which the performative was envisioned as a privileged, intimate area of human experience within which life might manifest itself at its fullest, in sharp contrast with a social reality tightly controlled through propaganda, censorship and repression.

In this context, the performer's embodied experience becomes "a matter of doing," as in the performance of ritual actions: "Ritual is performance, an accomplished action, an act" (1997b:36). Grotowski stresses that such actions are efficacious and deeply affect those who witness them, so that the performer becomes "a *pontifex*" or "a maker of bridges...between the witness and something" (1997b:37). Moreover, the notion of "meeting" recurs throughout Grotowski's theatrical and post-theatrical research, and is associated with an alternative type of agency emerging from the ability to let go of the will to control; it arises from the action of entering a space in which one cannot choose not to respond to the other, yet which is not a space for confrontation, for one neither refuses nor imposes oneself. In this type of meeting, "it is as if one spoke with one's self: you are, so I am. And also: I am being born so that you are born, so that you become. And also: do not be afraid, I am going with you" (1997a:119). While the notion of meeting is ever-present in Grotowski's approach, it is especially pivotal to the Paratheatrical and Theatre of Sources periods during which Grotowski's research became increasingly focused on sources of embodied knowledge that might reconnect human beings to their community, the natural world and their ancestral past.

The interconnection of traditional wisdom and contemporary cultural practice is also pivotal to indigenous conceptions of knowledge, according to which the purpose of research is "not the production of new knowledge per se" (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:14), but the development of pedagogical, artistic, political and ethical perspectives guided by indigenous principles and informed by the conviction that "the central tensions in the world today go beyond the crises in capitalism and neoliberalism's version of democracy" (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:13). For, according to Native Canadian, Hawaiian, Maori, and American Indian pedagogy, "the central crisis is spiritual, 'rooted in the increasingly virulent relationship between human beings and the rest of nature.'" In response to this crisis, indigenous activists propose a "respectful performance pedagogy [that] works to construct a vision of the person, ecology and environment that is compatible" with indigenous worldviews (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:13).

The spiritual dimension of cultural practices that have existed around the world for thousands of years is something which, when not simply dismissed as a form of false consciousness, is left entirely unexamined by the type of Marxist-inflected emancipatory discourses that inform Brecht's and Boal's perspectives. In contrast, because Grotowski's perspective acknowledges the value of traditional embodied knowledge, it does not preclude such a dimension, and the women whose creative work I have been investigating often anchor their artistic research in performance practices that can provide access to embodied experiences of spirituality.

Becoming Someone's Daughter: Embodied Research in Action

The main practice-based component of my research project involved organizing a month-long Laboratory of Creative Research that took place in Poland from 7 July to 5 August 2009 hosted by the Grotowski Institute for "2009, Year of Grotowski" (UNESCO). This Laboratory included five work sessions led by Rena Mirecka (Poland), Iben Nagel Rasmussen (Denmark), Katharina Seyferth (Germany), Ang Gey Pin (Singapore) and Dora Arreola (Mexico), a three-day theatre festival featuring the current creative work of these artists, as well as two days of meetings with other key women artists from the Grotowski diaspora such as Maja Komorowska and Ewa Benesz (Poland), Elizabeth Albahaca (Venezuela) and Marianne Arhne (Sweden). These events took place at two historical sites: the performance space in Wroclaw where the Laboratory Theatre rehearsed and performed landmark productions such as *The Constant Prince*, *Akropolis*, and *Apocalypsis cum Figuris*, and the workspace located in the forest of Brzezinka, about an hour and a half away from Wroclaw, where Grotowski conducted his post-theatrical research.

Taking part in this laboratory entailed "lending one's body to the world" (Stoller 1997), so that conducting research may become a form of apprenticeship through which one learns from others (Pink 2009) rather than study them. The intensive daily physical training, led by artists having themselves invested many years of their lives in a process of "self-cultivation," as defined by 15th-century Japanese Noh master Zeami, or what Stanislavski, and Grotowski after him, called "the work on oneself," turned this apprenticeship into an experiential approach to research hinging upon the direct transmission of embodied knowledge. In the summer of 2010, I continued to develop this research process as I travelled to Italy, Poland and France to meet individually with the artists, participate in workshops, and lead a group meeting hosted by Ewa Benesz at her home in Sardinia. I was accompanied by videographer Celeste Taliani, a member of the project's documentation team, who filmed and photographed these encounters.

The collaborative documentation process I developed is designed to provide participating artists with the opportunity to work closely with professional photographers and videographers to produce high quality documentation which can then be used by the artists for their ongoing research, personal archives, and the promotion of their work independently of this project. This material is also key to the book manuscript and companion documentary films which will constitute the main research outputs. Such a collaborative approach to documentation ensures that the artists remain in control of the modes of production and the representational strategies throughout the creation of audiovisual material, from the choice of medium (photos or video) to the selection and editing of that material. Indeed, respectful representation is critical if this process is to be mutually beneficial.

Providing access to the creative practice of these women is an important outcome. Feminists conducting phenomenological research in dance studies argue that while phenomenological inquiry, as conceived by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, challenges the Cartesian body–mind division by positing the living body as the centre of human experience, a generic male body remains the implicit reference point, leaving out individualized lived experience of male and female bodies. In response to the shortcomings of early phenomenology, Barbour argues that it is crucial to account for what she identifies as "women's lived movement experiences" through the development of specific methodologies and alternative ways of writing.

Barbour thus envisions an approach in which "the researcher's voice, theoretical discussion and quotes from the dancers all mingle together in the research publication," and writing is complemented with "'visual phenomenology' combining a CD-Rom or video of dancing with text and voice-over" (2005:39), thereby allowing readers "the novel experience of positioning themselves within the richness of the lived experience" (2005:43).

In Grotwoski-based approaches, "organicity" is conceived as a fundamental dimension of lived experience. Relationship to nature is central to the teachings of Rena Mirecka, a Polish woman in her mid-70s who may be considered as the elder of the group of artists whose creative work I am investigating. After 25 years of collaboration with Grotowski as a founding member of his Laboratory Theatre, Mirecka went on to develop her own paratheatrical research. This research is informed by Hinduism and Native American spirituality, and situates human beings in relation to "Mother Earth," "Father Sky" and the four cardinal directions (North, South, East, West), which are themselves linked to the four elements (air, water, fire, earth), as well as the four colours white, red, yellow and black. While Mirecka's interest in ritual performance practices is wide-ranging, her familiarity with North American indigenous cultures is informed by two important experiences: her work with Floyd Favel, a Cree performer, director and writer who took part in the last phase of Grotowski's practical research, known as Art as Vehicle; and, her encounter with a Native American woman who invited Mirecka to take part in an initiation ceremony.

Mirecka's teaching relies on seemingly very simple principles that are put into practice in her work: it is in giving that we receive; focusing only on the mind creates an imbalance because it leaves out other dimensions of existence which the mind alone cannot apprehend; every single detail must be attended to as precisely as possible, yet there must be joy and sorrow because that is part of life, and doing things mechanically or technically is not alive. When speaking about physical and vocal training, she explains that experiencing the organic connection between movement and sound is like stepping lightly into a canoe—only after developing a friendship with the water can we navigate the river. She also states that the participants' journey requires great commitment, the ability to let go of fear, shame, and will, in order to accept oneself and others as we are.

Having worked with Mirecka in various natural sites, from the verdant campus grounds of the University of Kent in Canterbury to the Sardinian wilderness, and from the city of Montreal to the forest of Brzezinka, I recall images of people dressed in white, singing or dancing around a tree bedecked with the multicolored oriflammes they crafted by hand; I revisit a subtle and inexorable

movement pivoting around the axis of the spine and enabling the gaze to encompass the surrounding landscape in its entirety—including the scrawny and hirsute Sardinian cows slowly gathering around us with a disgruntled look of disbelief; I can hear the calming tempo of a ceremonial drum punctuating a slow walk in which each participant is connected to others by long strings of white, red, yellow and black wool, and I can perceive in the background the violent honking of drivers infuriated by the sight of these white silhouettes filing past their halted cars in slow motion.

Relationship to nature is also central to the teachings of Katharina Seyferth, who participated in Grotowski's post-theatrical research as a core member of the group which was based in the forest of Brzezinka, an hour and a half away from the city of Wroclaw. In addition to studio work, Seyferth invited us to explore the forest on our own to discover a particular place with which to build a relation by developing a site-specific action that would eventually be shared with others. She also led us on long walks through the forest at night: in a long line we all followed in her brisk footstep, relying on our awakened sensory perception and the alertness of our bodies to avoid ditches, puddles and stinging nettles, at times running in her stride through the darkness, at times lying down on the soft, cool earth to contemplate the sky enfolded by the trees shooting towards the stars and to listen to the light and changing rhythm of invisible raindrops flickering on the leaves that sheltered our faces.

Mirecka and Seyferth both use elements of yoga when teaching physical training, and both speak about the training as a preparation for a journey into "the unknown": precise and rigorous physical work provides a structure taking the doer farther and deeper each time, beyond perceived limitations. During this training, it is crucial to take time to delve into the organicity and flow of the body in movement, for Mirecka and Seyferth stress that personal associations only emerge from a total commitment of the body to deep work. This is the necessary condition for something unexpected to take place—which becomes a point of entry into the unknown. Finally, Mirecka and Seyferth both make clear that although the training is physically demanding, the point is not to be exhausted but to find an organic way of working that energizes the body, which can only happen when going beyond tiredness and discovering another quality of energy. This is how one finds "the life" that turns mere exercises into creative exploration.

Seyferth noted during her work session that simplicity should ensue from the work, so that the training is a preparation enabling something to emerge by itself: unknown, surprising, alive, unpredictable. She also stressed that judging or being judged during the work must be avoided, as well as talking about the work afterwards, because the workspace must remain a space in which one feels free to explore. Similar principles link the respective approaches of the other work leaders involved in this research project, with the most central element being what Grotowski himself termed "organicity."

During the Collège de France lectures, Grotowski defined "organicity" by stating that it referred to the existence of the genuine living process which characterized an "expression not elaborated in advance" (1997-98). Grotowski provided the example of the movement of trees swaying in the wind, or the ebb and flow of the ocean on the shore. He remarked that the expressiveness that could be perceived in nature by the viewer appeared without the purpose of illustrating, representing or expressing anything. Without the presence of the viewer, these natural phenomena kept occurring and recurring, unnoticed.

Grotowski remarked that organicity in and of itself was not necessarily a guarantee of creativity, and stated that a truly creative organic process was always connected to the flux of personal associations. He explained that the notion of personal associations was, in a way, "very down to earth: one does something...and one has an association" (1997-98). He then placed his right elbow on the table he was sitting at, resting his head inside the fold of his right arm, with his right hand on his left shoulder, close to his neck. He indicated that because this action was not quotidian, it resulted in a series of personal associations which would not have taken place if he had been holding himself in a more conventional way. He specified that associations could be linked to something that had happened to us in the past, or something that could have happened, or that we think should have happened: "something rooted in the personal life, for example a longing never nurtured" (1997-98).

Organicity and personal associations are also key to vocal training and the singing of traditional songs, which often have a central place in the teaching of the women involved in this project. Working with these artists has thus led me to reconnect with traditional songs in the ancient Occitan language, which my maternal grandmother spoke with her sisters, brothers, parents and grandparents. It has also fueled my interest in the creative research of women in the Grotowski diaspora, and has compelled me to try to understand what motivated many of them to dedicate much of their lives to this research.

For Ang Gey Pin, a woman who works with ancient Chinese traditional songs, singing requires receiving and following the song with the whole body, neither ahead of

nor behind the leader, trusting that "the song is a map." It is about having the courage to dive in: the structure is there, yet a freedom must be found. This is similar to working with a text through building a precise line of organic physical actions (physical score), which is both the source and the channel of a river of images, sensations, and memories (associations) born from the interplay of actions and words. Just as acting, in this kind of approach, is not about reciting a text but about letting the text speak through the psychophysical score, singing is not about reproducing a melody but about embodying the song's structure and letting the song sing you. To borrow Ang's words, "it's about singing with the heart and asking for something, as if searching for the secret life of the song."

According to Grotowski, what keeps a song alive is the particular vibratory quality linked to the precision of the song's structure, so that it is necessary to search for the vocal and physical score inscribed within each particular song. When a competent performer actively and attentively embodies a traditional song, it can become a vehicle that reconnects them to those who first sang this song. Grotowski thus believed that ancestral embodied knowledge was encoded in traditional songs, and that the power of these songs hinged upon the embodied experience of singing them. Trusting that the body can remember how to sing these songs can therefore become a way of reclaiming cultural continuity.

Driskill might be referring to a similar process when writing about learning to sing a Cherokee lullaby:

> As someone who did not grow up speaking my language or any traditional songs and who is currently in the process of reclaiming those traditions—as are many Native people in North America—the process of relearning this lullaby was and is integral to my own decolonial process. The performance context provided me an opportunity to relearn and perform a traditional song, a major act in intergenerational healing and cultural continuance. As I sang this lullaby during rehearsals and performance, I imagined my ancestors witnessing from the corners of the theatre, helping me in the healing and often painful work of suture. [2008:164]

The relationship between performance, embodiment and cultural continuance evoked here by Driskill points to a creative agency which is intimately linked to lived experience and yet which is not limited to or defined by a single individual perspective.

When Grotowski spoke about "la lignée organique au théâtre et dans le rituel," the title of his Collège de France lectures, he established a link between aesthetic and ritual performance processes, suggesting that theatre and ritual were related because of the live process they had in common and that may be described as a transformation of energy generating a different quality of perception—Grotowski employed the English term "awareness" (1995:125). Favel defines this type of process as linking theatre, tradition and ritual:

> Theatre and ritual traditions share the same characteristics: narrative, action, and the use of a specialized or sacred space. But theatre comes from across the Big Water and our traditions originate here. Both of these mediums have different objectives and goals. Where these two mediums connect is at the spiritual level. In the moment of performance, higher self is activated, and it is at this higher plane that theatre and tradition are connected and related. [2009:33]

Among the women from different cultures and generations who have been in direct contact with Grotowski's work, those involved in "Meetings with Remarkable Women/Tu es la fille de quelqu'un" have developed approaches which, while extremely diverse, are often situated at the intersection of theatre, tradition and ritual. Consequently, their work does not fit in any single category available in Grotowski's terminology, whether it be art as presentation, para-theatre, theatre of sources or art as vehicle. The spiritual dimension to which Favel refers is present in the traditions from which these artists draw, and the heightened awareness evoked by Grotowski also seems key to their teaching.

Might such a conception of performance process provide women with an alternative form of embodied agency otherwise unavailable to them in more conventional forms of theatre practice and in the normative gender roles that society expects them to play in real life? Can physically-based training focused on organicity and associations lead women performers to undertake their own journeys into the unknown? If this process-oriented approach can enable women to explore "what could have happened, what should have happened," and what is rooted in their personal lives and linked to "a longing never nurtured" (Grotowski 1997-98) how might women claim the power of performance and transmit it to others in order to change lives?

Because the training in each work session during the month-long Laboratory of Creative Research required engaging one's whole being—body, mind and heart—it became impossible to distinguish between being, doing, sensing, feeling, imagining, remembering, thinking and understanding. In this type of embodied experience, different layers of consciousness seem to be activated simul-

taneously without cancelling each other out. The perception of self and other merges with the experience of time and space, which expand beyond everyday notions of duration and location. Everything in the world seems interconnected, and everyone seems to exist in relation to everything. There is no difference between inner and outer, impulse and action, movement and repose. Boundaries dissolve to let life flow through with a rush of fresh associations in its wake. Years elapse in the blink of an eye. Tender traces of sensations and images linger longingly in the depths of the flesh, with the body-memory[5] as sole recording technology—a sedimentation process occurs and an archeology of experience becomes possible.

Although I employed a team of professional photographers and videographers to document these meetings, it is impossible to capture on film personal associations that endow physical actions with organicity, or to record the kind of silence and stillness from which the vibratory qualities of movement and voice emerge, filling the space with energy and life. Moreover, while the pages of the participants' journals overflow with words struggling to convey what can be learned from lived experience, they can only provide a partial perspective of how such an experience might transform us.

Yet, I would posit that intense immersion in embodied research creates the type of fieldwork experience which Pink describes as a "learning to know as others know through embodied practice" (2009:70) or a multisensorial engagement which results in a sense of productive disorientation combining the loss of control, mixing of head and heart, and opening to the world evoked by Stoller (1997). Participating in embodied research is therefore a form of apprenticeship, which, as suggested by Wilson (2008), entails listening with more than the ears, seeing with more than the eyes, and understanding with the heart as well as the mind. In the research I have been conducting, this embodied awareness implies a different notion of creative agency, rooted in the very principles of the training itself, and transmitted through the teaching of that training. The intrinsic value of this form of embodied knowledge, which must be experienced through doing, might very well reside in the process of searching. "Searching for what?" one may ask.

While it is still too early to draw conclusions, it is clear that Grotowski is commonly remembered by his collaborators as someone who entrusted them with doing the impossible. In his "Reply to Stanislavski," Grotowski (1980) suggests that one can only respond to the perils of life by tapping into the sources of life, and that this is only possible if one finds the direction leading to these sources. When assigning impossible tasks to his collaborators, the Polish director must have been curious about what they would discover in the process of searching. While inviting people to do the impossible may appear unduly demanding, it may also be interpreted as challenging them to find their own way.

Through my on-going apprenticeship, which began in my early 20s, I have learnt that acquiring such knowledge requires not only discipline and perseverance, but audacity as well. It might involve searching within oneself for potentialities that had remained unexplored, hence unknown; letting go of the desire to acquire the skills and techniques usually associated with artistic know-how; and, confronting one's perceived limitations and shortcomings in order to allow oneself to live life more fully.

This searching may enable one to experience the here and now in a new light, even if only momentarily, and the embodied memory of this lived experience may become an oasis and a landmark, sustaining one's journey by giving it direction and meaning. For, in the end, creative research may very well be about learning to remain open to possibilities, to embrace surprises, challenges, and transformations. If envisioned as an experiential way of cognition, embodied research might even become a way of life. Perhaps this is what Meyer has in mind when pointing us to answers remembered in our dreams (2008:229), while Wilson reminds us: "if research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (2008:135).

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Notes

1 This research project is funded by a SSHRC Standard Research Grant and a SSHRC Research/Creation in Fine Arts Grant.

2 Grotowski held a series of public lectures in various theatres throughout the French capital (24 March; 2, 16 and 23 June; 6, 13 and 20 October 1997; 12 and 26 January 1998). The title of these lectures was "La Lignée Organique au Théâtre et dans le Rituel" (The Organic Line in Theatre and in Ritual). Each four-hour session was comprised of two parts. During the first part, the founder of the Polish Laboratory Theatre spoke of his on-going research; he also presented and commented on documentary and archival film excerpts specifically selected for each session. The second part was entirely devoted to creating a dialogue with the audience through questions and answers. I attended each of these lectures and have documented them in the Polish theatre journal *Didaskalia*.

3 Theatre scholars tend to focus exclusively on the theatre of productions period (1959 to 1969) addressed in the seminal

book *Towards a Poor Theatre* (Grotowski 1968), which is the best-known primary source available in English.

4 See Findlay (1997) for a discussion of Grotowski's work as an anti-Stalinist youth activist and founding member of the Political Center of the Academic Left (1997:178). In a statement published in 1957 in *Gazeta Krakowska*, Grotowski, who was then 24 years old, declared:

> We want an organization that will teach people to think politically, to understand their interests, to fight for bread and democracy and for justice and truth in everyday life. We must fight for people to live like humans and be masters of their fate...We must fight for people to speak their minds without fear of being harassed. [Findlay 1997:182]

Two years later, Grotowski founded the theatre company that was later to become the Laboratory Theatre. Findlay suggests that the official statements made by Grotowski in the 1960s and 1970s about the allegedly apolitical nature of his work may be retrospectively interpreted as ingenious smoke screens dissimulating the group's intense engagement in the political life of the country.

5 In "Reply to Stanislavski," a talk given in 1969 at the Brooklyn Academy, Grotowski states that performance is about mobilizing one's body-memory (*corps-mémoire*) or body-in-life (*corps-vie*), which simultaneously encompasses one's experience and one's potential, one's past and one's future. Grotowski defines personal associations as actions that cling to one's life, to one's experience, to one's potential, beyond the "re-living" of past events which have come to characterize approaches to psychological realism. He also specifies that the performer's moment-to-moment experience always occurs in the presence of someone or something, so that performing is never the repetition of a "real life"-type of response that already occurred in the past, but constitutes the performer's actual response to what is happening here and now, and it is precisely the unpredictability of this organic process which keeps the performer's work alive (Grotowski 1980:118-119).

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