

This article was downloaded by: [University of Kent]

On: 12 October 2012, At: 03:11

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rprs20>

### Of Pounds of Flesh and Trojan Horses: Performer training in the twenty-first century

Frank Camilleri

Version of record first published: 03 Nov 2009.

To cite this article: Frank Camilleri (2009): Of Pounds of Flesh and Trojan Horses: Performer training in the twenty-first century, *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14:2, 26-34

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528160903319232>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# Of Pounds of Flesh and Trojan Horses

## Performer training in the twenty-first century

FRANK CAMILLERI

Performer training in the West has been increasingly commodified in the course of the last two decades by having its most tangible and transmittable aspect (i.e., training techniques) severed from the wider contexts that had initially given it impetus. This situation indicates the strong possibility of a paradigm shift that is currently still underway: *performer training in the twenty-first century seems to have outgrown the twentieth-century need of a formative ethical dimension as it becomes increasingly implicated in the processes and procedures of institutionalization*. I consider this a 'fundamental' shift precisely because it concerns the very foundations of performer training, i.e., it concerns not technique per se but the manner in which technique is approached and treated. Furthermore, the widespread extent of this movement, which is fuelled by heavy institutional intervention in the educational and cultural industries, assures its paradigmatic status rather than being merely a 'tendency' or a 'trend'. Though the full effects of this shift still need to filter upwards to become more clearly manifest in performance and pedagogical practices, there is ample evidence of its activity in the inter-century decades (1990s and 2000s). The current article deals with this activity.

Ian Watson voices one aspect of this fundamental change under the section 'Some Contemporary Shifts' (2001: 7). The contrast he highlights, between 'individual' work aimed at holistic and creative formation and 'systematized training' aimed at the sophistication of

technique, indicates the most immediate aspect of the distinction I will draw between ethical and ideological approaches to training, i.e., which I see between technique conceived as process rather than as product. Following other scholars and practitioners who have already applied the term to laboratory contexts (see Stanislavsky 2008: 552-78; Camilleri 2008: 254), I refer to 'ethical approaches to training' to indicate the latent and more holistic dimension that accompanied the pursuit of Western theatre-makers in the twentieth century. As Fabrizio Cruciani observes, 'the history of twentieth-century theatre is the history of individuals who find their fulfilment in the setting up of groups, of micro-societies which live the utopia of an *ethical project* in the arts' (1995: 239, my translation and emphasis). In this context, training is not an end in itself but part of a bigger project. I will contrast this with what I call 'ideological approaches to training' that characterize the compartmentalization and marketing procedures that involve technique training at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. 'Ideological' is my preferred term instead of 'institutional' or 'systematized' because it provides a more complex dimension that is sensitive to the relations between the political, economic and cultural elements in specific societies. This same web of socio-cultural relations also serves to implicate ethical approaches in that no material phenomenon is conceivable outside these relations as a practice. What sets the two apart is their relationship to

the socio-cultural forces around them that also informs the way they approach training: ethical laboratories are resistant to dominant paradigms in their displaced and interrogative practices, whereas ideological approaches tend to support dominant structures in terms of institutional allegiances.

#### ETHICAL APPROACHES

Part of the difficulty of defining ethics rests in the fact that to do so would constitute a categorical subversion in promoting one account at the expense of others. Peter Singer's practical approach argues that ethics is neither 'a set of prohibitions' nor 'an ideal system', neither is it 'something intelligible only in the context of religion' nor is it 'relative or subjective' (1993: 2-4). The problems with pinning down ethics are apparent even in such a utilitarian perspective, for we can immediately detect challenging tensions between something that is not a system or set of prescribed rules, and something that is not relative or subjective. Geoffrey Galt Harpham prefers to describe ethics in spatial terms where sensitivity to the other prevails: it is thus 'the locus of otherness' and 'the arena in which the claims of others ... are articulated and negotiated' (1995: 404, 394). Harpham identifies a constitutional problem at the core of ethics: 'As the locus of otherness, ethics seems to lack integrity "in itself", and perhaps ought to be considered a matrix, a hub from which various discourses, concepts, terms, energies, fan out, and at which they meet, crossing out of themselves to encounter the other, all the others' (404). In this perspective, ethical choice is never a matter of selecting the right over the wrong because a choice is 'ethical' only insofar as all available options embody worthy principles. Ethical choice is thus always 'a choice between ethics' (396). It is this complex and porous quality of the term that makes it appropriate to describe a paradigmatic approach to actor-training in the twentieth century.

The compelling paradoxes that constitute

ethics can serve as a stem upon which we can graft what has been identified as 'a central paradox within performer training', i.e., that 'discipline and rigorous techniques ... help the performer find spontaneity and freedom' (Allain and Harvie 2006: 212). This paradox lies at the heart of the distinction between ethical and ideological approaches to training. The main endeavours of practitioners such as Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Copeau, Decroux, Grotowski, Lecoq and Barba were directed at liberating the performer from all sorts of blocks: the ways they found vary but their 'discipline and rigour' to training was not subject to an institutionalized curriculum or a set of regulations but to 'an ethical framework ... open to the exigencies of research and discovery' (Camilleri 2008: 254).

An 'ethical approach' is thus a *modus operandi* that is also a *modus vivendi*. In other words, a committed form of training that is integral to a performer's life to such a degree that the principles and techniques investigated and practised in the laboratory shape one's life. This sentiment, or rather a variation of it due to the different historical and cultural circumstances, is voiced by Stanislavsky himself in a chapter called 'Ethics and Discipline':

Actors ... have a duty to be bearers of beauty, even in ordinary life. Otherwise they will create with one hand and destroy with the other. Remember this as you serve art in your early years and prepare yourself for this mission. Develop the necessary self-control, the ethics, the discipline of a public figure who takes the beautiful, the elevated, the noble into the world. (2008: 577)

Later practitioners, ranging from Grotowski to Lecoq (Murray 2003: 43-4), blurred Stanislavsky's boundary between the 'public figure' and the 'private person', often as a result of an external displacement that made it possible to live theatre in addition to doing it, which in turn impacted on the way training is approached.<sup>1</sup> An ethical approach thus marks a way of training where sensitivity and commitment to the otherness of technique assures that it is not a fixed or

<sup>1</sup> Without going into the specificities of each case, but without trying to conflate individual histories into a unified narrative, it is possible to recognize a red line of spatial or geographical displacement among theatre practitioners that led to a corollary shift in training techniques in the twentieth century, e.g., Stanislavsky's self-financed Theatre Studio, Meyerhold's laboratory studios, Copeau's retreat to the countryside, Grotowski's workspace in Brzezinka and his Workcenter in Pontedera, Barba's theatre in Holstebro, Decroux's tiny basement studio in his house, even Lecoq's school (Murray 2003: 49, 56) and Brook's three-month meanderings in Africa and his relocation from the UK to France in 1970.

determined end in itself but rather is alive and adaptable according to the development of the performer. If technique is considered like language, it is then like enabling speakers to change language itself and not simply improve their proficiency. In this way of working, a stage is reached where *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* mutually inform each other, not only on the superficial level of technique but more so on the ethical level: *technical principles* (such as the consideration of context, spatial and psychophysical awareness, the responsibility to act, decisiveness, and precision as an inner process of discovery) *become ethical principles*.<sup>2</sup>

All this does not mean that laboratory practitioners are the paragon of ethical behaviour. Indeed, considered from without, certain actions and decisions taken by *individual* practitioners appear to be ethically questionable. These range from the sometimes inexplicably 'austere' treatment of apprentices, to the 'abandonment' of performers once an objective has been achieved, and even to the extent of sexual 'openness' that occurs between older practitioners and younger apprentices. Conversely, it might be claimed that committed performers who follow the ideological approach also combine *modus operandi* with *modus vivendi* in an integral way. However, it is the *context* that provides the crucial distinction. A displaced and open-ended context, which cultivates sensitivity to the otherness of technique and performance, is very difficult to obtain within the rationalized practices of institutional structures. If the ethical approach is informed and characterized by *displacement*, the ideological approach is geared towards technical *placement* meant as subject formation.

#### IDEOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Though it is hardly possible to escape from the conventional and narrow sense of ideology as some kind of rigidly held system of political beliefs, I use the term mostly as it is informed by Louis Althusser's reworking in the light of the

complex Lacanian notion of subject-formation (see Althusser 1971: 160–5; 135–41). According to the Althusserian narrative, the formation of performers in a highly institutionalized landscape occurs in the image of the dominant socio-economic conditions. To this effect, by 'ideological approach' I denote a predetermined and predetermining way of operating that defines the parameters of the real and the self in a way that is conditioned by the socio-economic structures of the historical moment. An ideological approach to training is thus, in this account, a training that already knows where it is going, where the point of arrival is already predicated, where exercises and techniques are all in function of something already known, where the approach is packaged. And this predication and packaging is, ultimately, at the service of the industries that surround the phenomenon of performer training today: mainly the academic, publishing and funding industries, which in turn form part of the rarefied realms of 'education', 'culture', 'economy' and 'politics'.

Althusser's critique sounds dated and crude forty years down the line, but it is still possible to extract the principles and mechanisms of ideological practice. Althusser's analysis takes on a prophetic quality when we consider that at the time of its composition in the late 1960s, performer training was just about to take its first steps in a process that was to lead it into becoming part of the so-called educational ideological apparatus. In the late 1960s, Eugenio Barba was conducting laboratory research in Holstebro at the same time as making films and documentaries, publishing books and organising events that would bring laboratory practice to the attention of academia. Contemporaneously, other practitioners whose work is now entrenched in institutional education programmes were also investigating the nature of performer training, e.g., Grotowski in Poland and Decroux in France. These were the spearheads of a movement that included other research practices such as Ingemar Lindh's Institutet för Scenkonst in Sweden and Mike Pearson's and Richard Gough's

<sup>2</sup> See my discussion of Ingemar Lindh's investigation of collective improvisation which is permeated by the mechanics of encounter and sensitivity to the other in the context of the performer's technical work upon oneself, the relationship with space and text, the role of the spectator, and the discipline of the work (Camilleri 2008: 252).

Cardiff Laboratory Theatre in Wales. The seeds of the current inter-century paradigm shift towards institutionalization were sown forty years ago, paradoxically at a time when institutions were under siege by such alternative cultures.

The ideological 'packaging' of training takes various forms. The packaging process actually begins with the nomenclature of the practitioners themselves, e.g., the term 'biomechanics' and the individual *étude* of, say, 'Throwing the Stone', imply a body of training and a specific technique that as such refer to a content. It is this 'content' that then lends itself as 'knowledge' that can be curriculumized and modularized in academia, and which is then subjected to the various regulatory entities (including health and safety, assessment criteria etc.) that come with conservatoires, performing arts schools and universities. The whole package is then further processed as a promise by marketing strategies aimed at attracting paying customers.

An objection might be raised at this point that 'this is the way of things, how things develop and progress'. My riposte is that such 'naturalness' and 'obviousness' is precisely the effect of the ideological phenomenon described by Althusser: that ideology interpellates us as subjects and 'naturalizes' a process that is essentially a construct (1971: 161). The fact that this construct was not a natural process at all is evidenced by the theatre practitioners themselves who, in the first instance, had to forge these techniques as an unknown quantity rather than as a known or natural experience. The aspect of the above objection that is more difficult to rebut concerns the fundamental (thus arguably 'natural') process that marks codification, because the moment a technique or an exercise is formulated, it immediately lends itself to packaging, reproduction and placement. In this sense it is indeed 'natural' for things to be cut down to size in any process of development and transmission, but then that is also why our only hope lies in the strategic resistance of constant questioning and reworking announced by an ethical framework

(cf. Derrida 1999: 72-3). The ethical approach is just as ideological in being a specific material practice and in defining the parameters of the real and the self, but its constitutive nature of *displacement* (geographic, architectural, technical etc.) makes it resistant to the dominant ideology of the socio-cultural moment whose material practices are aimed at *placement* and sameness. This is the resistance implied in the original sense of the 'avant-garde' before this term was appropriated and commodified into a style and a practice.

#### SHARED TERRITORY: THE ETHICS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THE MORALITY OF REGULATIONS

The crucial aspect I am trying to highlight here is not so much a rigid distinction between two paradigms but the extent of the territory shared by both. Indeed, the success of the ethical approach is partially measured by its ideological application, in the sense that 'packaging' is initially due to the laboratories themselves, which necessarily present knowledge in coherent logical components that are transmittable in a more efficient and less time-consuming manner. The separability of exercises, which is an important aspect of laboratory training processes, is at the centre of what makes codified technique prone to commodification. When these repeatable components are transposed into the wider context of commodities, technique takes on a different dimension and marketability informs and structures its logic. One argument that Simon Murray proposes in his contextualization of the rise of various types of physical theatre is precisely the marketability and commodification of the body (2003: 38-9). In such a market, exercises and techniques are choice products, but the ethical context that had initially brought them about is obscured. In an ethical approach, everything from choice of space to way of life is in function of the work. In an ideological approach, the work is in function of the myriad structures and regulations that surround it.

The ideological contact with technique follows the *dynamics of appropriation* as distinct from the *dynamics of encounter* that characterize ethical endeavours. The ideological packaging of technique already presupposes an end and a known process. The results of ideological and ethical approaches might be superficially similar (e.g., a trained body and engaging performances), but their processes and less tangible dimensions are not. If the ideological impulse to codify lies at the heart of the ethical approach, that impulse becomes *self-negating* - because in the ethical approach points of arrival are not institutionalized as practice but are transformed into points of departure. Ingemar Lindh observes how in the process that led to the performance 'To Whom It May Concern' (1985) the initial task of the Institutet för Scenkonst was to work against the techniques that had emerged in their previous performance, i.e., the work on active immobility inspired by frescos in 'Fresker' (1979-82) was interrupted by the new work on explosive 'super energy' (Lindh 1998: 109). It is this kind of constitutive displacement that renders such practices resistant to the ideological impulse of fixing and placing.

Another instance of shared territory between ethical and ideological approaches concerns the locus of responsibility. In an ideological approach, the ethical framework of laboratory principles and guidelines is replaced by regulations. A good example of this involves the institutionalization of health and safety issues. In an ethical outlook these matters are integral to the work in forming part of a wider framework of respect, responsibility, commitment and discipline. There is often no need to name this invisible dimension, but these elements are manifest in the way that work is conducted in a studio. Simple mundane procedures, such as cleaning the floor, take on a quasi-ritualistic function and are the result of a practical necessity that also serves as a warm-up or point of entry into the work. A clean and uncluttered

environment is an essential issue for laboratory practitioners intent on cultivating psychophysical awareness. It is also a sign of discipline as well as of respect and responsibility to keep the space clean. In most institutions, cleaning the space or a clean space is not considered an integral part of the work; it is divorced from the training process and allotted to 'cleaning service providers' with the result that students abdicate the responsibility of cleaning the space.

In an institutionalized context, a private empirical process is not possible: you have a group or professional ethos that is really an instituted compilation of rules (usually set up to protect the institution from legal culpability) to which you are expected to adhere, regardless of your aesthetic and ethical views on the matter. A case in point is health and safety regulations which are aimed at complementing such professional work practices. A typical example of the way that the ethos of these regulations contrasts a laboratory ethic is the common prohibition of naked flames (even of a single candle) in studio and performance spaces. Practitioners in an institutional context are expected *to work with a substitute rather than with the thing itself*. This is perhaps an insignificant example, which nonetheless stands at the core of the paradigm shift from ethical to ideological approaches. In an ideological approach the onus of responsibility is placed not on the individual but on regulations which were initially set up to compensate for the lack of responsibility that occurs during the transplantation of technique from an ethical context to an ideological one. The terms 'responsibility' and 'respect' are used in the widest possible sense, i.e., not as forms of imposed responsibility or respect but ones that are ingrained in an integral way (such as the cleaning of the space and the responsibility of using a naked flame) that does not distinguish between my responsibilities as a human being and my responsibilities as a performer.

In an institutional context, regulations come to

function as morality rather than ethics. The distinction between morality and ethics is a fine one, and these two terms are often used interchangeably (Singer 1993: 1). However, it is important to tease out a working difference between the two in order to illuminate the distinction between ethical parameters and ideological regulations. Harpham argues that morality represents 'a particular moment of ethics, when all but one of the available alternatives are excluded, chosen against, regardless of their claims' (1995: 397). Viewed from this angle, morality is the endpoint of ethics. The relationship between the two is complex, because despite announcing different moments, morality and ethics are dependent on each other. Without morality, ethics would be inconsequential: 'without decision, ethics would be condemned to dithering. It is morality that realizes ethics, making it ethical. At the same time, however, morality negates ethics, and needs ethics in order to be moral' (397). The dynamic at work in the relationship between ethics and morality is reminiscent of the view that at the heart of the ethical approach to training is a self-negating ideological impulse. The morality announced by regulations, which determines what is right and wrong in an institutionalized process of formation, functions as a point of arrival and a closure. On its part, the ethical framework that sustains laboratory practice makes sure that points of arrival are not transmogrified into a dead shell but transformed into creative possibilities.

The relationship between ethics and morality provides a further twist in the context of performer training. If morality is ethics-in-action and the actor is concerned with action, then the responsibility of the actor is necessarily moral. The implicit suggestion here is that the moment of performance is the moral instant of an ethical process. This is perhaps why practitioners such as Grotowski, Lindh and Barba have resisted and rethought the moment of performance in spatial and other terms, and why for Decroux, Lecoq and again Lindh performance was intimately related

to pedagogical contexts. In both cases the moment of finality announced by the morality of performance is subjected to the dynamics of displacement.

#### OF POUNDS OF FLESH AND TROJAN HORSES

Paul Allain's articulation of the challenges faced by Gardzienice Theatre Association in the 1990s is symptomatic of those confronted by other ethical approaches to training in the current paradigm shift.

The economic regulation which Western models of funding demand, in terms of rationalising expenses, do not co-exist comfortably next to Gardzienice's open structures. An era seems to have drawn to a close: a period which began with the protests and student expression of the 1960s and 1970s and which led to the openness of paratheatre, which gave a broader theoretical base for theatre. The roots of Gardzienice grew in a distant time of self-trained, marginal groups, shaped by paratheatre. Now different attitudes to culture and money are being established, which threaten to undermine these traditions. (Allain 1997: 57)

The paradigm shift in performer training at the turn of the twenty-first century coincides with a shift in funding cultures. A combination of sheer necessity and funding opportunities from the 1990s onwards has increasingly pushed laboratories towards ideological perspectives. In order to survive in the current climate, theatre laboratories have to adapt to changing circumstances by adopting something akin to a split personality that allows them to follow the ethical way at the same time as catering for the ideological demands of their sponsors.<sup>3</sup>

A case in point is the three-year EU-funded Tracing Roads Across Project (2003-6) of the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards. Perhaps the epitome of secluded and displaced laboratory practice up till Grotowski's death in 1999, the Workcenter under Thomas Richards and Mario Biagini was granted Culture 2000 funding with the objectives to 'foster an

<sup>3</sup> Nicole Bugeja's discussion of the 'economic strategies and mechanisms' applied to safeguard contemporary research theatre practice has been inspirational for this section of the article (2007: 75-112).

intense cultural dialogue between the participating nationalities; strengthen and enlarge an existing transnational network of cultural operators; promote the emergence of new networks of young artists/theatre groups; foster international coproductions' (European Commission 2009: 6). Beyond the trappings of bureaucratic language, the project was aimed at providing the Workcenter with financial security that would allow it to continue its research for a stipulated period. It was also obliged to open its doors for three years with a packed schedule of events all over Europe. *Tracing Roads Across* has served to give the post-Grotowski work of the Workcenter substantial exposure and currency in various academic and publishing contexts. A number of publications, including a recent issue of *TDR* (T198 summer 2008), have followed in the wake of the project. It has also had the effect of fuelling an already existing tendency to reproduce a Workcenter 'style' or 'technique' that has been copied and reproduced in various contexts: from the singing of traditional songs (complete with the mannerisms of Richards or Biagini) and recurrent performance images of persons being born (by appearing from between other people's legs), to women all dressed in red and the predictable use of candles.

It was evident during the project that the Workcenter leaders were trying to protect the identity and nature of their work by retaining strict control on its exposure. But the moment doors are open, a practice becomes amenable to commodification. During the project, the split personality dynamic I mentioned earlier could be sensed in some of the events. For example, in the closing conference of the *Impulse* in Bulgaria (Varna, June 2004) there were various moments of unease and tension in the manner that sections of the panel and audience were addressed by Richards and Biagini: answering questions by means of other questions such as 'Why do you ask us these questions?' and by remarks like 'Read the books that have been published', seemed to go against the spirit of 'Opening Doors' (Camilleri 2004). Such

behaviour, which was not restricted to the Bulgaria conference, can be ascribed to the institutional and contractual tensions that push Richards and Biagini in a direction different from the ethical practice to which they had been accustomed. The problem is symptomatic of the paradigm shift in the early twenty-first century: one cannot wholly resist commodification while accepting to partake of its fruit - there is always a pound of flesh to be paid.

The European Commission document I quote in the preceding paragraphs also includes details of another project that was awarded Culture 2000 funding: 'European Theatre Laboratories as Cultural Innovators' under the leadership of Eugenio Barba's *Odin Teatret*. The contractual objectives of the project state:

Further exchange and presentation of performances in the future, extending similar activities ['performances, festivals', 'cultural barter', 'symposiums'] into European countries; support the qualified pedagogical process parallel to the education given in schools ['universities and cultural centres']; to develop training programmes with immediate connection to concrete work within the companies, groups and projects; movement of artists; the documentation of the project.

(European Commission 2009: 1)

These are practically the same objectives that Barba has been following since the 1960s, including the prominent roles that pedagogy and training play in his practice. This Culture 2000 project marks the latest evolutionary stage that laboratory practices as a general phenomenon have experienced in the twentieth century. Barba is once again at the forefront when it comes to adapting to the socio-economic conditions of the times. From a very early stage in his practice Barba has sought and managed a relationship with institutional bodies, in the process allowing him to fulfil his 'ethical project in the arts'. 2002 marked an important point in his dealings with academia: *Odin Teatret* established the Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies (CTLS) in conjunction with Aarhus University. This means that a branch of *Odin Teatret* is now officially



part of a university; it is highly likely that this step will lead to further joint ventures.<sup>4</sup> Barba is too much of an old hand and a master at institutional contact to suffer from any form of split-personality tension. However, something, somewhere, must always give. The Symposium of the International School of Theatre Anthropology on 'Improvisation', which was held in Wrocław in April 2005 with the assistance of Culture 2000 funding did feel like it was following a tried and tested formula and like this was one big show that has been rehearsed and performed countless times before. In this sense it was definitely an 'ideological' event that packaged and marketed training and performance practices for consumption. But that is, presumably, the particular pound of flesh that Barba has to pay. The open secret of his success lies in the fact that, apparently and strategically, he pays his dues willingly without begrudging anything to Caesar. This appears to be a wiser strategy than direct resistance to the forces of commodification: it becomes a Trojan horse that spells the survival and continuation of a theatre practice.

Big multi-year projects are not the only means that mark the crossroads of ethical and ideological positions in twenty-first-century performer training. The commercial wing that research-oriented practices have been obliged to develop alongside their laboratory work is now a requisite. A glance at the websites of these practitioners, which in themselves are symptomatic of the endeavour to bestow visibility on their work, is enough to indicate how theatre-makers are categorizing and rationalizing their practice in terms of performances, training, projects, current events, documentation and contact. The website links are a veritable trail, packaged at attracting students and sponsors alike because, as Alison Hodge observes, 'in the present economic climate of Western theatre practice ... sustained training and ensemble work are becoming scarce. It may be that the "total" model of Grotowski's practice is difficult to absorb within the commercial

environment of Western capitalism' (2005: 62). Due to the open-ended and long term nature of their work, research-based practices cannot depend on the presentation of performances for revenue, and so they offer all sorts of pedagogical services from short workshops to longer residencies. Of particular note is the MA programme in Acting Techniques established by Teatr Pieśń Kozła (Song of the Goat Theatre) with Manchester Metropolitan University. In this case, the packaging entails the promise of an authentic experience of working with these practitioners at their own base in Wrocław. It also entails collusion with the forces of commodification in the way that the revolutionary 'avant-garde' spirit has been reduced to a recognizable aesthetic (a 'tradition') that is curriculumized and made teachable (Teatr Pieśń Kozła 2009). A university degree of this kind would have been inconceivable in the 1990s. It has been brought about by a combination of factors that includes the appeal of 'physical theatre' as a performance practice worthy of academic study. The recognition of practice as research has also put a premium on the research work of laboratory theatre whose practitioners have found a home in academia.

This is where the author of this article enters the picture in the guise of the hybrid practitioner-scholar that has increasingly characterized university drama and theatre departments since the 1990s. As a laboratory practitioner since 1989 I have found a permanent home in academia since 2004: working at a university allows me to continue my research practice within certain parameters. The institutional obligations that come with this security include adherence to rules and regulations (administrative as well as pedagogical) and high expectations of publications and funding grants acquisition. The time and energy this adherence and these expectations demand is the pound of flesh practitioner-scholars have to pay. In this sense, the author of this article and the article itself are both complicit with the ideological shift I have

<sup>4</sup> The development of the Cardiff Laboratory Theatre into the Centre for Performance Research (CPR) in 1988 and the subsequent close association with Aberystwyth University (which has been used in 2008 as an implicit excuse by the Arts Council of Wales to cut revenue grants to CPR) is also characteristic of the paradigmatic movements discussed in this article.

identified. The challenge is to find a way of working within the institution that acknowledges the esoteric dimension of our exoteric practice.

#### IN FIFTY YEARS' TIME

When a new technique is discovered, it is only a question of time before it is incorporated within the ideological circle of educational institutions, publishing industries and funding agencies. A stage has been reached where, encouraged by funding strategies and research grants, 'techniques' are invented to feed demand rather than to serve a practical need. Indeed, a substantial number of presentations at practice-as-research conferences are visible witness to the fetishization of technique and to the habit of putting the cart of results in front of the horse of process. The saturation bubble of demand and supply can never burst in an ideological framework: it can only move sideways, just as it has moved in the direction of the body as a locus of intervention and speculation in the second half of the twentieth century (Murray 2003: 38-9). The seeds of a *future* paradigm shift, which have been sown in the final decade of the twentieth century, are already sprouting: the increasing application of new technology and new media will inevitably impact the way preparing for performance is conceived. As the potential of cyborg possibilities become widespread realities in the new century, laboratory training will most probably revert to its ethically informed and utopian beginnings.

#### REFERENCES

- Allain, Paul (1997) *Gardzienice: Polish theatre in transition*, London: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Allain, Paul and Harvie, Jen (2006) *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance*, London: Routledge.
- Althusser, Louis (1971) *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, London: NLB.
- Bugeja, Nicole (2007) 'Research Theatre in Contemporary Europe: An analysis of the means of continuation', unpublished MA dissertation, Malta: University of Malta.
- Camilleri, Frank (2004) Personal notes.
- Camilleri, Frank (2008) 'Hospitality and the Ethics of Improvisation in the Work of Ingemar Lindh', *New Theatre Quarterly* 24(3): 246-59.
- Cruciani, Fabrizio (1995) *Registi Pedagoghi e Comunità Teatrali nel Novecento*, rev. ed., Rome: Editori and Associati.
- Derrida, Jacques (1999) 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A dialogue with Jacques Derrida', in Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (eds) *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary debates in philosophy*, London: Routledge, pp. 65-83.
- European Commission (2009), 'Culture 2000 - Implementation 2003' <[http://ec.europa.eu/culture/archive/culture2000/pdf/projets2003/perform\\_artsA2.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/archive/culture2000/pdf/projets2003/perform_artsA2.pdf)> [accessed 12 March 2009].
- Harpham, Geoffrey Galt (1995) 'Ethics', in Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (eds) *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 2nd edn, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 387-405.
- Hodge, Alison (2005) 'Gardzienice's Influence in the West', *Contemporary Theatre Review* 15(1): 59-68.
- Lindh, Ingemar (1998) *Pietre di Guado*, Pontedera: Bandecchi and Vivaldi.
- Murray, Simon (2003) *Jacques Lecoq*, London: Routledge.
- Singer, Peter (1993) *Practical Ethics*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stanislavsky, Konstantin (2008) *An Actor's Work: A student's diary*, trans. Jean Benedetti, London: Routledge.
- Teatr Pieśń Kozła (2009) 'MA Course in Acting Techniques' <[http://www.piesnkozla.pl/ma\\_course\\_in\\_acting\\_techniques,en.html](http://www.piesnkozla.pl/ma_course_in_acting_techniques,en.html)> [accessed 12 March 2009].
- Watson, Ian (2001) 'Introduction', in Ian Watson (ed.) *Performer Training: Developments across cultures*, London: Harwood Academic Publishers.