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Abstract of the doctoral dissertation "Performer repeated: Kantor-Grotowski. An Introduction to Polish Event Culture"

The basis of the dissertation is a comparative analysis of the *oeuvre* of Tadeusz Kantor and Jerzy Grotowski understood as a process rather than a collection of individual works. As the main methodological tool, the author uses Alain Badiou's philosophy of the event, based primarily on his book *Being and Event*. This reveals, beyond the obvious differences, the profound convergence of Grotowski's and Kantor's creative paths with the event, and the subsequent fidelity to the event as a central figure.

The introductory part of the dissertation includes theoretical considerations and analysis of the consequences of applying Badiou's philosophy to understanding the function of theater. First of all, an immanentist conception of theater is presented, with theater no longer seen as a fictional creation or representation of the world. It is, to use Badiou's language, "a procedure of truth." In this part of the dissertation, similar concepts about theater are indicated in Kantor's and Grotowski's texts on the function of art.

The works of both artists preceding the event are combined by the author into a collection of post-traumatic post-war "habitat." In Kantor's and Grotowski's feverishly created works from the early period of their work, we can find some post-catastrophic debris, narrative lawlessness, and disintegration of the body and things. However, works from this period of Kantor's and Grotowski's oeuvre are not so much the spinning of a post-traumatic narrative, but the creation of a "habitat" from which an event will emerge. In this understanding, theater becomes the most prolific tool not so much for narrating the world and working through traumas, but rather for experiencing the world and its being as such. Theater in such a perspective is not an image of the world dissected from reality, but a field for the emergence of an event and the emergence of an ethical subject faithful to the event.

The author points to *The Dead Class* as an event in Kantor's creative practice, whereas in Grotowski's case that would be the achievement of a *total act* together with Ryszard Cieslak, which is interpreted as an act of love. The event is unexpected and has the power to reconfigure the status quo. To put it in colloquial terms - it releases new energy for change. Events in the creative processes of Grotowski and Kantor reconfigure their theaters, which quite radically change the narrative tools, the set of figures activated, and the quality of "directorial" presence. Thus Kantor, after *The Dead Class*, changes the quality of his presence in the work. He almost

literally stands on the stage and tries out all sorts of dramaturgical operations on himself: he experiments with his presence; positions himself in the role of both executioner and victim; duplicates his presence; relates to himself various "old" and "strong" narratives. This is, according to Badiou's nomenclature adopted in the dissertation, Kantor's generic procedure in which the subject emerges. Grotowski, on the other hand, is driven by the event to abandon the theater. The total act turns out to be the work not of the theater, but of the love relationship between Cieslak and Grotowski. Therefore, the only way for Grotowski is to move away from the production of performances, to search for performance forms alternative to theater. But it is not the search for new forms that is the primary goal here, but the search for a space to enter into the most authentic relationship possible. This is because Grotowski's generic procedure is all about abandoning personal shame and opening up to relationships with the other.

Following the event - although it takes on the most varied forms - is an experience that consolidates the subject. It is the opposite of the work of trauma. Fidelity to an event and the associated emergent subject to some degree create the world. There is already an ethical project behind it. Hence an important aspect of the dissertation is a reflection on the project of culture embedded in the post-traumatic habitat, where the birthplace of the ethical subject is sought through the tools of art understood as truth.

In the dissertation, the author proposes a project of Polish culture of event. It is a culture understood as a habitat of events. The category of the essentialist subject is replaced by a subject understood as the retroactive effect of event fidelity. This implies particular ethical practice, which, in the author's proposal, is to replace the post-romantic culture with the victim at the center.

The culture of event is a culture that changes the view on creative processes: it is not the essentialist and ready-made subject that creates the work, but it is the intervention and fidelity to the event that generate the subject. The work, on the other hand, is merely a product of this process. The subject, understood in this way, is not formed through cultural narratives, but is created through the procedure of fidelity to the event. Thus, the subject of culture, in such a view, is more than ever linked to the process and not to the essence. As a result, the subject's agency is definitely higher. In the dissertation, the author proposes to look at Polish culture not as a place of production of various kinds of works and artifacts or an ordered narrative, but as a field of emergence of events and possible generic procedures that follow them. Such culture is purely creative rather than reproductive; it contains acts of transformation of the world in place of artifacts to be intellectualized; it is an experience rather than a product of "things."