

Grotowski's Legacy

The Rights for *Towards a Poor Theatre*

17 June 2009, Eugenio Barba delivered into the hands of Jarek Fret, director of the Grotowski Institute in Wroclaw, Poland, the rights for *Towards a Poor Theatre*, the book by Jerzy Grotowski which, over the years, has become the most inspiring theatrical vision of the second half of the twentieth century. The book was originally published in English in 1968 by Odin Teatret's publishing house, at a time when Jerzy Grotowski needed shelter for himself and his activities from the ideological prejudices of the pro-Sovietic Polish regime. It was immediately translated into many languages in many countries, yet this classic of the theatre was only published in Poland in 2007.

Towards a Poor Theatre was edited by Eugenio Barba who, in close collaboration with Jerzy Grotowski, brought together the latter's technical and theoretical writings, prophetic visions and interviews. The book also included texts by Ludwik Flaszen (the co-founder, together with Grotowski, of the Teatr Laboratorium in 1959) and Eugenio Barba. During the following years, Jerzy Grotowski often considered publishing a second updated edition of his book, but this project never saw the light. He decided, instead, that any future translation and edition of *Towards a Poor Theatre* should respect the original version without additional texts, photos or comments. For this reason, the Polish edition is accompanied by a separate booklet containing an accurate bibliographical account and comparative explanation by Leszek Kolankiewicz which does not alter in any way the profile of the original one. Thus *Towards a Poor Theatre* will continue to reach all corners of the globe in the same form as when it was printed in 1968 in Holstebro, Denmark, where Odin Teatret has its home.

The rights for *Towards a Poor Theatre* were owned by Odin Teatret. After the fall of the Wall and the death in 1999 of the stateless Jerzy Grotowski in Pontedera, Italy, in June 2009 - in the year that the UNESCO has devoted to the figure of this outstanding Polish artist - Eugenio Barba went to Wroclaw with the whole of Odin Teatret. During a ceremony entitled *The First Stone*, which was concluded by Odin's Brechtian performance *Great Cities under the Moon*, he surrendered the rights for the Grotowskian classic to the Grotowski Institute, publicly co-signing with its director Jarek Fret a regular contract of sale that includes the entire world and all past and future rights for the book. "The value of *Towards a Poor Theatre* is incalculable - said Eugenio Barba - so we have established its price at one Euro".