

Sound Without a Ready-Made Meaning

On Presence, Grotowski, and the Inner Work of Sound Design

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New Edition, 2026

The original work was published in 2013 under the title *Kokonainen ääni — Idän vaikutteet äänisuunnittelussa* [Whole Sound — Eastern Influences in Sound Design]. Master's thesis, University of the Arts Helsinki, Theatre Academy, MA programme in sound design. Supervisor: Riku Saastamoinen.

Preface to the New Edition

This work was written in 2013. Since then my own practice has moved from sound design for the stage toward Spatial Listening Architectures, multichannel installations in which listening itself is the material of the work. The concepts I wrote this piece with have since condensed into something more structural: I now speak more readily of perceptual ecology than of Eastern wisdom traditions, and I locate listening in space and in the architecture of channels rather than treating it as a relation between a single performer and a single spectator. I still wanted to let this text live again. In 2013, the language of Zen Buddhism was the only vocabulary I had for naming the experience I was approaching as a sound designer. In this edition I do not present Buddhism as a system that sound design should follow, but as a historical language through which I then tried to understand questions of presence, listening, and letting go of ready-made meaning. I do not want to retouch that language afterward into something more neutral. That would be dishonest to the stage of work this text was. Instead I wanted to clarify the text so that it would carry better. This edition is the same work, stripped down — not a new work in an old suit.

In the new edition I have done the following: corrected typographical errors and clumsy sentences left over from the manuscript, tightened repetition especially toward the end of the first part, selected four of the ten oxherding pictures that carry the text's dramaturgical arc, and written this preface. The content has not been changed. The arguments, examples, and references are the same as in the original work.

The work's core question, how to make a sound that does not impose a ready-made meaning on the performer's presence, is still the same question I work with. It has simply since settled into space and channels, rather than into the relation between the stage and a single listener.

I no longer read this text as a finished view. I read it as a trace of an attempt to understand an experience that language easily begins to own. That is why I have also left visible the places where the text still clings to what it is trying to let go of.

Padinki, summer 2026

*"Good training will show in your work.
People who know will recognize it.
Those who don't — will see something too."*

— Jerzy Grotowski

Introduction

I found myself in a situation where a director asked me to make a sound that would not impose a ready-made meaning on the performer's presence. Since I could not find a single sound in my libraries that suited the director, I began to wonder: what does a sound empty of meaning sound like? Can such a sound even be created? What is my own relationship, as a sound designer, to emptiness of meaning? Who am I?

My conclusion was that in order to make a sound empty of meaning, I first had to empty myself of meanings. How else could I create something I had no experience of? I decided to go where this inquiry was already under way: into the discourse of actor training on authentic presence.

This text does not treat Grotowski as a neutral object of theatre-historical research. Grotowski's work resonates with me experientially: through bodily training, contemplation, and the performer's inner state of readiness. I had practised contemplative meditation for a long time before I began making theatre, and that practice has shaped the way I listen, sense space, and understand presence. The text's perspective arises from a question: can the transformation that takes place in an actor's work also be examined through the framework of contemplative practice? This approach does not claim that Grotowski was Buddhism, or the reverse. It examines where these two lines touch the same ground — and what recognising that point of contact means for the work of a sound designer.

The first part of this work is a dive into Jerzy Grotowski's thinking, his exercises, and the uncovering of the metaphysical factor that made possible what Grotowski called the total work of the actor and theatre as a "transgressive act." Choosing Grotowski as my interlocutor is interesting precisely because he himself arrived at a form of theatre in which light and

sound, for instance, were not used as means of approaching total expression. The first part ends where Grotowski withdraws from the world into the mountains with his group, detaching the spectator, too, from his theatre.

I myself do not follow Grotowski all the way into that oblivion, but change boats to a framework I consider parallel to his, the Buddhist framework, and continue the inquiry. The work's second part is a plunge to the source, followed by a return to the world. In the third and final part I examine a "whole sound design" free of representation, and timelessness as a starting point for creating an aesthetic experience on stage through the means of sound design.



Searching for the Ox.

"Alone in the wilderness, lost in the jungle, the boy searches, searches! The rivers swell, distant mountains and an endless path; exhausted and in despair, he does not know where to go, he hears only the evening song of crickets in the maple trees."

— classical oxherding verse (this edition's translation; cf. the classic English rendering by Nyogen Senzaki & Paul Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*)

PART ONE

The Ideal

Recognising myself out of silence and out of noise is knowledge I must have. I must be able to see the performance as finished while it is still unfinished. Only then do I not carry onto the stage my own uncertainty about finding myself; instead I can give the production and the working group pure movement, thought, and sonic execution. I see the angles of approach and carry them out, changing thought and action as the situation and the moment demand. Even standing still within the process is an active choice. If I can recognise myself from every direction of thought and space, I can use the centre of the kinaesthetic space and the content of the performance in a holistic way. As a sound designer I do not need to hide behind technical skill or the lack of it, resort to pleasing solutions, or fear whether my understanding of theatrical staging is sufficient.

On Aesthetics

"When we speak the word 'life,' it must be understood we are not referring to life as we know it from its surface of fact, but to that fragile, fluctuating center which forms never reach."

— Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), Preface (Artaud 1983, 17 in the Finnish edition)

I am not aiming, in this work, to imitate scientific validity, because my work concerns an aesthetic experience that is by nature non-linear. I do not believe there exists some all-solving theory or method that, followed slavishly, would make me or anyone else act or think automatically in the right way. There is no single correct way to make theatre. My purpose is not to flirt with

philosophy or Buddhism for its own sake, nor do I feel that theatre suffers from some illness that I am trying to cure by pushing some new, idealistic or religious propaganda into the theatrical process.

The term "aesthetic" comes from the Greek *aisthetike*. It was developed in 1735 by the philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten as part of a scientific inquiry into "how things are known through the senses." There is a danger hidden in the word. The term is marked by an ideal of beauty or sensuousness as a value in itself in art. At first glance the word breeds a conservative association with "good" or "correct" art. Clinging to this conception in turn creates a need, for theatre's reformers, to see the living centre of theatre as free of any definable "good" or "correct" way of being and acting. The living centre of theatre springs from deeper currents, where good and evil, right and wrong, still flow inseparable from one another, in the same vital current. Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) criticised the intellectualising of theatre thus:

"True culture operates by exaltation and force, while the European ideal of art attempts to cast the mind into an attitude distinct from force but addicted to exaltation. It is a lazy, unserviceable notion which engenders an imminent death."

— Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), Preface (Artaud 1983, 13 in the Finnish edition)

I use the term "aesthetic experience" as a kind of post-it note for a broader phenomenon that is difficult to define. To me it simply means an experience, or a way of experiencing, that speaks to and shakes me as a whole human being.

I share Artaud's view of the danger that lies in the Western tendency to study and watch ecstasy from the outside rather than submit to it. My aim is not to know but to understand the forces behind human movement. My interest turns to theatre's reformers who already existed, and to the themes and exercises they worked with in order to approach a representation-free art on

stage. This, I think, gives some indication of the kind of inner discipline that a theatre sound designer, too, must submit to in order to do artistically high-calibre work.

The Reformers of Theatre

Grotowski and Artaud were both reformers of theatre. Both wanted to find an expressive mode proper to theatre itself. Both were drawn, instead of text-based drama, to a physical theatre, and to art's kinship with religious experience.

"...a cultivated 'civilized' man is regarded as a person instructed in systems, a person who thinks in forms, signs, representations — a monster whose faculty of deriving thoughts from acts, instead of identifying acts with thoughts, is developed to an absurdity. If our life lacks brimstone, i.e., a constant magic, it is because we choose to observe our acts and lose ourselves in consideration of their imagined form instead of being impelled by their force. (...) [And however insistently we call for magic, we are still afraid of a life that would unfold under the sign of true magic.]"

— Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), Preface (Artaud 1983, 11 in the Finnish edition)

Artaud sets against one another the human-monster and the side-effects it generates (such as the worship of culture) and the free human being and the life this person enacts. Human-monsters turn their deeds into theories and settle comfortably into their ideals, while the living human being creates true culture through the skill of practising life. The living human being practises life within their art, so that art lies in living skill, not in the worship of images. In Artaud's view, an "epicurean" relation to one's own artistry is not enough for the artist; the artist must challenge their own worldview and take hold of an elemental relationship to art.

"To break through language in order to touch life is to create or recreate the theater; the essential thing is not to believe that this act must remain sacred, i.e., set apart — the essential thing is to believe that not just anyone can create it, and that there must be a preparation. This leads to the rejection of the usual limitations of man and man's powers, and infinitely extends the frontiers of what is called reality. We must believe in a sense of life renewed by the theater, a sense of life in which man fearlessly makes himself master of what does not yet exist, and brings it into being. And everything that has not been born can still be brought to life if we are not satisfied to remain mere recording organisms."

— Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), Preface, 13 (Artaud 1983, 17 in the Finnish edition)

Artaud creates a kind of vision that conveys the sense that working with the undefined, within a defined environment, the theatre, is possible, even easy. Artaud was criticised for this by the Polish Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999), who saw Artaud's work as deficient: alongside his vision, Artaud left behind no concrete technique or apparatus for how to approach a theatre that goes beyond language.

Grotowski points out errors in Artaud's work: how, for instance, Artaud read elements of Balinese theatre as "cosmic signs" and "gestures of higher powers," when in reality the gestures functioned for the Balinese as concrete signs, the alphabet of a theatrical language, whose materialist meanings were commonly known.

Unlike Artaud, Grotowski did not want to sacrifice a commonly attainable reality on the altar of the "undefined"; instead of a mere vision he wanted to study both worlds, the visible and the invisible, side by side. Grotowski sought systematically for ways of making the invisible visible, while holding on to rationality and the repeatability of the work. He had a permanent theatre group for whom creative work touching the metaphysical was "daily bread." For such a theatre to function at all, workable methods of training and exploration had to be found. An involuntary phenomenon, whose arising and

course cannot be foreseen, had somehow to be given structural form. Grotowski's work focused on studying the essence of the actor's craft, its spiritual-physical-emotional processes, in a way where concreteness strove to be present even though the content aimed at exceeded the limits of the concrete. For him it was not a matter of a miracle recipe, but of "laborious toil toward that which is in darkness, and whose illumination is possible."

The Poor Theatre

"Man is in the world without knowing where he came from, who he is, or where he is going. He is like an actor who suddenly finds himself standing on a stage in the middle of a play without a script, with no idea of what part he is supposed to play, what he ought to do or say. He does not even know whether the play has an author, whether it should be taken seriously, or whether it is all one great bluff. He has to decide for himself which role he will take in the play and how he will play it — there is no director to tell him. He is free to choose a tragic or a comic role, the part of a hero, a villain, or a fool. But he cannot leave without choosing: he is forced to play some part. Unless he decides to leave the stage altogether. But that too is a choice, and then he will never know what the play was really about. Only by taking part does he keep the possibility of understanding something of it."

— Lehtinen 2002, 199 (translated from the Finnish; Lehtinen's own text, not a quotation of an English-language source)

Grotowski was born into the era after the Second World War, an era marked by philosophical-anthropological reflection on man thrown into the world, on the meaningfulness of existence, and on the relation between the individual and the human species, between the human being and society, and between one human being and another. Grotowski's theatre, too, appears above all as a continuous settling of accounts with the world and with theatrical tradition. His thinking crystallises in the concept of the Poor Theatre, in which, instead

of showing off with external elements, the aim was to strip from the core of theatrical expression all those components that did not serve theatre's own specific nature:

"The theatre must recognize its own limitations. If it cannot be richer than the cinema, then let it be poor. If it cannot be as lavish as television, let it be ascetic. If it cannot be a technical attraction, let it renounce all outward technique. Thus we are left with a 'holy' actor in a poor theatre."

— Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, "The Theatre's New Testament", 41 (via Niemi 1975, 211 in the Finnish edition)

Unlike Artaud, Grotowski had at his disposal a state-subsidised theatre in which he could systematically research and develop the performer's inner work, and develop exercises for how to approach a natural, total presence on stage that springs from within the person. For him, theatre was a final act in relation to the world and to the human being, a means of reaching a truth within the human being. Grotowski positioned, as the opposite element to truth, the sense of inauthenticity churning within a human being, born of the daily performance of social roles: "the mask of life." Authentic presence on stage meant for him the use and the removal of "the mask of life" in a way that also brought the spectator's own mask up out of shadow into light. The spectator was offered the possibility of a kind of "redemption" as the performer moved through everyday emotional walls, taboos, revealing and sacrificing an area of their person that usually belongs to the sphere of privacy.

"This defiance of taboo, this transgression, provides the shock which rips off the mask, enabling us to give ourselves nakedly to something which is impossible to define but which contains Eros and Caritas."

— Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, "Towards a Poor Theatre", 22 (Grotowski 2006, 35 in the Finnish edition)

In Grotowski's theatre it was the perceptible and immediate connection between performer and spectator that took precedence. The plasticity of feeling and the connection to corporeality exceeded the expressive means of mechanical film and theatre. Instead of an external stage and its usual agents (light, sound, set, costume), the human being alone served as the stage of feeling.

The Total Actor

"Everything is concentrated on the 'ripening' of the actor which is expressed by a tension towards the extreme, by a complete stripping down, by the laying bare of one's own intimacy — all this without the least trace of egotism or self-enjoyment. The actor makes a total gift of himself. This is a technique of the 'trance' and of the integration of all the actor's psychic and bodily powers which emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and his instinct, springing forth in a sort of 'trans-lumination.' [The result is the most natural expression of the actor-person's personality, reaching unhindered to the true self.]"

— Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, "Towards a Poor Theatre", 16
(Grotowski 2006, 18 in the Finnish edition)

Grotowski emphasises that performance and the actor's work do not take place in a separate theatrical reality. The performance itself is reality. Performance and rehearsal do not exist outside their own material and their own mode of presentation. Central to Grotowski's method was finding, not inventing. In practice this meant the already-mentioned stripping of theatre bare of external factors, so that attention fastened purely on the performer's inner work. Grotowski was not interested in the external drama of the "here and now" moment, but in harnessing an already-existing struggle, for instance the dialectic between lie and immediacy, as the dynamic centre of the performance. He exposed his actors to a spiritual state in which it was not possible to hide behind inner or outer technique; instead the performer had

to recognise themselves as whole, and from this recognition use their actor's apparatus on stage. The apparatus was not seen as sufficient in itself; what mattered was a spiritual skill that used the apparatus to make itself visible.

Grotowski wanted to lead first the actor, then his spectator, into a state of being in which they became acquainted with regions within themselves where "nothing is any longer finally certain, and nothing is clear, in the domain of that necessary certainty by which obstacles can be surmounted." The performer, as it were, studied a space where the usual means and certainty for solving problems were absent, leaving behind only the "concrete organism." Grotowski describes this process as a "struggle towards truth,"

"I really do not know why self-transcendence (going beyond one's own limits) is possible when we accept ourselves. Various conjectures can be offered on the subject. Self-transcendence is not a matter of manipulation. Some actors torture and exhaust themselves through physical exercises. They do not transcend themselves. They torment themselves. Guilt drives them to manipulate themselves. Self-transcendence is passive, a giving up of resistance. That is all. There is something which surpasses us. We do not resist. Even a simple, potentially painful exercise involving limited developmental risk is enough to help the actor over the threshold, over the possibility of resisting risk."

— Grotowski, "Exercises" ("Ćwiczenia"), 1979 (translated here from the Finnish via Grotowski 2006, 125; exact wording not verified against James Slowiak's unpublished English translation — see Uncertainty Log)

Grotowski's method did not aim, strictly speaking, to teach anything; attention was focused instead on removing the obstacles or resistances that arise in the actor's organism within their spiritual activity. The aim was to strip away filtering (obstacles) from between the inner impulse and the outer response, so that no gap of time remained between them. The impulse itself had to be the simultaneous reaction, so that the spectator was left dealing only with the flowing stream of visible spiritual impulses.

"The requisite state of mind is a passive readiness to realize an active role, a state in which one does not 'want to do that' but rather 'resigns from not doing it.'"

— Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, "Towards a Poor Theatre", 17
(Grotowski 2006, 28 in the Finnish edition)

As I see it, this is a matter of the development of a kind of spiritual readiness, which is self-recognition out of a readiness to act and to think: the opposite of blind reactivity. Grotowski describes this state of readiness as something "that cannot be taught, but can be trained for." The skill is not voluntary, even though it does demand concentration, trust, openness, and an almost total absorption in the work.

Art as Vehicle

Although this is a kind of metaphysical technique in which the performer exposes themselves to a situation requiring non-linear problem-solving, Grotowski stressed the importance of concreteness and precision for the exercise. Although the spiritual technique is formless by nature, it needs a concrete form in order to become visible. Grotowski takes as his example Artaud's description of Balinese theatre:

"But in his description he touches something essential, of which he is not quite aware. It is the true lesson of the sacred theatre; whether we speak of the medieval European drama, the Balinese, or the Indian Kathakali: this knowledge that spontaneity and discipline, far from weakening each other, mutually reinforce themselves: that what is elementary feeds what is constructed and vice-versa, to become the real source of a kind of acting that glows."

— Grotowski, "He Wasn't Entirely Himself", in *Towards a Poor Theatre*, 121
(Grotowski 2006, 65 in the Finnish edition)

The quotation above already shows Grotowski's later-familiar habit of positioning phenomena as opposite pairs in order to open a space for genuine understanding. Grotowski also divides the skill of making theatre into two parts. The first is called *art as presentation*. It aims at producing performances and is a necessary developmental stage, one that teaches that theatre work demands careful application, and during which the theatre-maker learns the apparatus for making performances. The second, to which it is possible to rise from this field, is *art as vehicle*. It is, according to Grotowski, "a kind of yoga," a working with one's own self, but its elements are still parts of a precise artistic craft, and so it greatly resembles art as presentation; only the purposes differ. In art as presentation it is a matter of improving one's skills; in art as vehicle, of overcoming resistances and obstacles. In art as presentation, the existence of the body is of fundamental importance; in art as vehicle, a kind of disappearance of it. In art as presentation the montage takes place in the spectator; in art as vehicle it takes place in the doer.

"It is desirable that a model of another dimension of work should exist within this craft, so that art at the pole of presentation may retain a sense of its higher aim. But it is equally necessary for Art as vehicle that forms of art as presentation remain in confrontation with it; otherwise one falls into self-indulgence and subjective criteria are applied instead of objective criteria tied to the quality of what one does. Or one simply becomes unnecessary."

— Grotowski, speech on receiving an honorary doctorate from the University of Wrocław, 10 April 1991 (published as "Przemówienie doktora honoris causa Jerzego Grotowskiego", *Notatnik Teatralny* 4, 1992, 19–24; translated here from the Polish; Grotowski 2006, 14 in the Finnish edition)

Art as vehicle is a spiritual technique. It is a creativity that is not predetermined, one that uses the form of theatre as its instrument to create an expression that exceeds the imitation of life and content imitating norms. A studied role and spiritual technique need one another to come meaningfully into being. Spiritual technique and form are not opposites; on the contrary: a spiritual technique that does not include form-bound expression, discipline,

and the structural quality of a role disintegrates into formlessness. In the actor's exercises, too, it was important for Grotowski to preserve concreteness, "lest the exercise be reduced to rolling about on the ground in the belief that this is exercise."

For the exercise to be effective, the performer must work with the whole mind and body on the task at hand. Grotowski stresses that although the resistances that appear in exercises, and their overcoming, can be examined from a technical point of view, the overcoming of resistance for "art as vehicle" is never technical. He takes as an example the balance exercises of hatha yoga, in which nature itself dictates the arc of the work's development: balance is maintained if nature guides the work. Falling is a symptom of the loss of one's own trust in oneself, that is, of an attempt to manipulate the work. Balance expresses the trust that is to be found through the exercise.

"If the actor sets about performing difficult things in such a way that he gives up resisting, he finds a basic trust in his own body, that is, in himself. He is less divided. To be undivided, that is the essence."

— Grotowski, "Exercises" ("Ćwiczenia"), 1979 (translated here from the Finnish via Grotowski 2006, 126; exact wording not verified against James Slowiak's unpublished English translation — see Uncertainty Log)

Grotowski worked in theatre by theatrical means, but the deeper motives and aims of his work lay outside theatre itself.

Sacred Theatre

"If this act — the total gesture — is accomplished, the actor, the human being, transcends the state of incompleteness to which we condemn ourselves in our everyday lives. The division between thought and feeling, body and soul, consciousness and the unconscious, seeing and instinct, sex and brain then disappears. The actor achieves totality. (...) He is renewed and has found his primitive indivisibility. New sources of energy are at work in him."

— Grotowski, "Teatr a rytuał" ["Theatre and Ritual"], *Dialog* 8/1969, 73; key terms via Jennifer Kumiega, *The Theatre of Grotowski* (1985), 128–129; full wording to be checked — see Uncertainty Log (Grotowski 2006, 103 in the Finnish edition)

For Grotowski, sacred theatre, or holiness, takes place out of a passive state of readiness, a kind of pre-consciousness that precedes acting or not-acting. Art as vehicle, the precondition of sacred theatre, is as I understand it fundamentally a kind of odourless and tasteless state of readiness or, as Grotowski puts it, a "source of energy." It functions as the necessary basis for harnessing myth as the dynamic centre of the performance.

Theatre served Grotowski as a secular substitute for religion. It acted through universal archetypes, renewing and sustaining them. Grotowski recognised myth and the archetypes as a pattern that guides people's action in a group. The purpose of the work was to shake these "idols" and clear a space for genuine understanding, which led both to the destruction of archetypes and to their own renewal.

"By means of the archetype the 'dialectics of mockery and apotheosis' is directed against the system of taboos, conventions, and accepted values. In this way each performance produces a 'multifaceted mirror' effect. The facets of the archetype are destroyed one after another; new taboos arise out of the destruction, and they in turn are destroyed."

— Grotowski, "The Ancestors", *Współczesność*, November 1961; English wording via Eugenio Barba, "Theatre Laboratory 13 Rzedow", *TDR* 9:3 (1965), 153–171, repr. in *The Grotowski Sourcebook*; key terms via Barba, full wording to be checked — see Uncertainty Log (Grotowski 2006, 22 in the Finnish edition)

Because of the nature of the actor's total work, it is impossible to separate the performer from the archetype. The petrified archetype, which I understand as energy petrified into taboo, appears to the outside world in the form of the human being, the performer. The state of readiness the performer trains gives them the power to expose the petrified archetype to change, a change that appears as stage action whose nature resembles gesture more than intellectual or psychological discourse.

The skill of inner work had to be developed to a point where the performer, with sovereign creativity, could unite their inner dialectic with the form and structures of the role (the score) so that the outer role became a springboard that helped clothe the inner struggle towards truth in a generally recognisable and identifiable form.

The image of a performance that produces a "multifaceted mirror" effect gives a hint of the power and ferocity that rises from the performer's mastery of their inner world. The performer can destroy, again and again, the myth that defines and limits existence, without ever becoming caught in any permanent structure. This polar play (the desecration, the birthing and destroying of archetypes) is continued to the point where the subconscious structures that sustain the archetypes become wholly exhausted, leaving behind only an invisible "white point" between the extremes.

Grotowski's way of grasping the archetypes and "the mask of life" is elusive. Using archetypes is not the same thing as the power that makes possible their creative destruction and renewal. Behind Grotowski's use of archetypes lies a conviction of the existence of cultural universals: common elements found across cultures that existed already before cultures differentiated from one another. Grotowski calls these shared elements, in a Jungian manner, archetypes or the collective subconscious. He describes archetypes as something to be found within, as "ancestral experiences" and "reactions of past generations" written into the human genetic inheritance.

I see Grotowski's archetypes as echoes of an "inner home" that precedes the human being's represented self, into which the human being has been tenderly set down, rather than "thrown into the world." For Grotowski the human being appears rather as "someone's son" than as having emerged, in a postmodern way, out of an emptiness of meaning: "you are from somewhere without being anything." Rather than reading "ancestral experiences" as some kind of occult message from generations beyond, I feel that this is, rather, a matter of Grotowski's own personal ontology, of how to be well present in the world. As evidence of this, according to Grotowski, a natural way of expressing oneself can be found and freed from within the human being. "The mask of life" appears to me, in turn, as a kind of residue, a consequence of the human being having detached from the rituals and ways of being that helped them become empowered and recognise themselves in the world.

In relation to the spectator, the performer's work is at once very intimate and, in a certain way, untouched and distant. Grotowski stresses that the actor must not perform for the audience but against the audience, in the audience's presence. The performer then becomes the spectator's "proxy," who performs the "authentic act" on the spectator's behalf. The spectator can, together with the performer, become part of a ritualistic redemption, a kind of transgression, in which the dominant archetypes give way in the manner of perceiving the world, leaving behind only that "which is innermost in the human being."

The Curtain Falls

Grotowski names Stanislavski as his predecessor. Stanislavski was a theatre reformer who posed the key questions concerning methods of actor's work. After Stanislavski's death, Grotowski says he continued the renewal of his views, and does not see it as contradictory that his own answers differ from Stanislavski's, even taking, at times, wholly opposite forms.

It was typical of Grotowski to repeat the phrase "there are no miracle recipes." For the method to be real, it had to constantly die and be born again. What mattered was finding and renewing one's own basic experience of existence: being present in the change that takes place between the self and this basic experience. Grotowski himself sums up his work thus:

"...it is only a question of an open and thorough attitude to the work and of finding the right organic reactions on the technical, aesthetic and philosophical planes alike."

— Grotowski (translated from the Finnish via Niemi 1975, 213; original text not yet identified — see Uncertainty Log)

Grotowski openly lists the external systems of actor training his own theatre took influence from: Dullin's rhythm exercises, Delsarte's studies of centripetal and centrifugal reactions in human behaviour, Stanislavski's "physical actions," and Meyerhold's biomechanical training. Grotowski was also openly interested in methods of actor training and rehearsal in Eastern theatre, such as the Peking Opera, Indian Kathakali, and Japanese Noh theatre. He also used asana exercises drawn from Indian yoga as part of his actor training. At the same time, however, Grotowski stresses that the method his school worked with was not a composite of methods borrowed from various quarters, but something else. After this, Grotowski returns to describing pre-conscious actor's work, to a kind of metaphor. He does not, however, name any model or parallel inner method for his work. A metaphysical curtain falls, and Grotowski disappears with his knowledge behind the front curtain.

This unwillingness to name a model for the inner work seems to me a consequence of the fact that Grotowski committed his whole life to studying a non-representational path, in which the discriminating mind was used chiefly as a sharpened tool to reveal the invisible lying between polarities.

Detachment from a thinking in which the represented world forms the centre of being means detachment from all relative orders. In practice, this means taming within oneself the very region that claims to need "necessary certainty" in order to understand wholes and to meet other people.

To give the work a philosophical or theological name would have been to give meaning to the meaningless, at which point the work's dynamic core would have burst apart. Such a move would have worked against the aims of the work. So the answer was either an abstract title, a description of exercises, or a metaphor that did not really aim to increase the questioner's knowledge of who Grotowski is or what his method is; the questioner's fate, instead, was to find themselves in the space, or the silent knowledge, that surrounded the questioner and the object of the questions. The actor's exercises, too, aimed at this silent knowledge's contemplative understanding. Below is a description of "the dialectic of opposition and collision" as an actor's exercise:

"On the one hand the exercises should seem difficult, and yet the actor must not resist performing them; on the other hand he should be objectively capable of carrying them out. Their performance should be possible despite all apparent impossibility. By practising them the actor can find trust in his own body."

— Grotowski, "Exercises" ("Ćwiczenia"), 1979 (translated here from the Finnish via Grotowski 2006, 125; exact wording not verified against James Slowiak's unpublished English translation — see Uncertainty Log)

Grotowski repeatedly stresses that a total act does not arise without collision and opposition. A process that does not involve discipline does not lead, in his view, to

"freedom from all imaginable limits,"

but the horizon of experience remains at the level of biological chaos, the so-called "primal slime."

Grotowski's work is vulnerable to misuse, because anyone can take up polar opposition for their own use without contemplative knowledge of the inner framework within which polarisation functions. There is then a risk that the dialectic of opposition is made out of imagination rather than out of an experiential connection to the integrity of body and mind. In the absence of the total gesture, no real collision takes place, and the silent knowledge or "source of energy" is not activated. Already within his own lifetime, Grotowski became the object of mechanical copying by beginning directors, so that from his Poor Theatre mainly a nihilistic attitude and a stripped-down external form were imitated.

The same happened to Artaud, whose work's mythic core, "cruelty," in hands other than Artaud's own, was reduced to screaming and the pretence of cruelty, without a tangible connection to the field that precedes language.

Both Artaud and Grotowski came to experience a fate in which their rebellious work, born against the general norm, became the object of superficial imitation, the "right" way to make theatre. When this happened, the use of the poor theatre and mythic depth turned against its original purpose, strengthening the divide between the sacred and the sanctimonious, between the visible and the invisible, instead of a total theatre.

Inner Work

As already noted, Grotowski worked in theatre, but the deeper motives and aims of his work lay outside theatre itself. It can generally be seen that his work is marked by influences adopted from Eastern wisdom traditions: the conception of the unity of body and mind as the foundation of a living craft, the description of training as a path, the revealing of the true self through contemplative practice, an energy source to be found within the human being, and a way of grasping the dialectical relation of opposing forces as a mode in which wholeness manifests.

The elements mentioned above can be found directly in Eastern wisdom traditions, for instance in the Advaita school, with which Grotowski had become acquainted, and in contemplative Buddhism, especially Zen Buddhism. Grotowski's rebellious movement can thus be transposed into a context in which the activity opens out into an understandable and trainable form.

Although Grotowski refuses to settle into any category, and, like a true reformer, showily detaches himself from all doctrinal systems, this does not mean that his inner work lacks parallel systems. Mirroring Grotowski against the Buddhist tradition of practice helps to dismantle the possible assumption that his deep motives were somehow unique, hidden, or unattainable to everyone except Grotowski and embodied performers. As I mentioned at the start of the text, my aim is to understand what kind of thinking and positioning is demanded of me as a sound designer in order to create a representation-free sound design that renews theatre. It seems to me that there is a bubble around Grotowski's authentic methods that isolates me, specifically as a sound designer, from them. I want to burst this bubble and clear my own path toward a shared body of knowledge: a discourse on an art free of representation.

The Body Disappears

Grotowski and Artaud were united by many conceptual similarities. Both were drawn, from the outset, to a physical theatre rather than text-based drama. Grotowski's "total act," with its idea of sacrifice, can be seen as a positive version of Artaud's "theatre of cruelty." Both wanted to create a theatre that founded its expression on theatre's own expressive language, and for both, the necessity of myth and religious experience as theatre's meta-level was important.

For me, the significant factor separating these two reformers of theatre from one another is not aesthetic or qualitative difference, but the fact that Grotowski's work was founded on trust in a natural expression springing from

within the person, while Artaud built his own cosmic gestural language on the basis of the Balinese theatre he had seen.

Unlike in Artaud, the centre of Grotowski's theatre was empty. The skill that made possible the use and the trans-lumination of the person was free of the poor theatre. Theatre's creative core was free of the technology by which it made itself visible: form is not the same thing as skill.

Grotowski used myth as the dynamic centre of the performance. Myth, embodied in the actor's living organism, was raised up by provocation, so that it functioned as an intellectual and emotional surface of identification for the spectator. The performer's body and person were used as the stage of the myth, the location from which the performance's true authenticity sprang. But the true authenticity was not in the body — it was in the skill of using body and mind in a creative way.

I see that Grotowski's instruments were the performer's body and mind. The means by which these were used sprang from contemplative training, which taught the skill of surmounting obstacles in a non-linear way. With the actor's work whole, the performer's body "disappeared." The performer was then not caught up in the instrument they were using (their mind or their body), the technology of the poor theatre. In action, instrument and means could not, in practice, be separated from one another. This was "theatre that crosses frontiers."

I have no reason to doubt that the *via negativa*, this attitude of stripping away, reached its goal. It is quite possible that Grotowski succeeded in stripping from theatrical expression everything that did not specifically underline theatre's own particular essence. But having found the metaphysical means, and having clarified the actor's work remaining after the stripping into a total act, the poor theatre no longer knew how to return to the multiplicity from which it had originally set out to strip itself.

I see the poor theatre as having remained a prisoner of the poor theatre. The *via negativa* changed from servant to master, whom the metaphysical skill quietly served. Grotowski's theatrical work leaves the impression that Grotowski and his group rescued the use of the state of readiness from oblivion, and not the other way round, that the state of readiness would have rescued its theatre-makers from oblivion. In the next stage, the *via negativa* turned to the "disarming" of the actor's apparatus itself. The demand for authenticity cast all apparatus, including the actor's own, in a questionable light, as a concealment of "true essence." In the end Grotowski stripped away the spectator, too, from his theatre. He also detached himself from the use of archetypes, which had helped clothe the invisible in visible form. What remained, in the end, was ritual and the holy actor in a poor theatre.

Toward the end of his career, Grotowski withdrew, concretely, with his group, into the mountains. I do not believe that this withdrawal from the world was a derivative of a state of readiness free of linearity to act and think. I see it, rather, as an inability to detach from the vehicle, or from the ideal of attainment. Grotowski appears to me as a kind of great explorer, who found — but who remained a prisoner of the spiritual capital he himself had generated: the *via negativa*. When I imagine an alternative route for Grotowski's life, it occurs to me that, instead of travelling ever deeper, he might have risen toward the surface. He could have returned from unity back toward the multiplicity of the world, forgotten the capital he had attained, and worked with the whole apparatus of theatre, creating an apparatus, spanning the whole of theatre, free of idealism and of bodily nihilism.

Zero Point

"Everything I have said above, if included in some kind of system, would be worthless. Such a system would congeal in the same way as all other systems. If there has been anything, in what I have said, that any single listener could have understood as a purely personal message, meant for him alone and no one else, then that is exactly what I have wanted to express. General formulas, suited to everyone, are irrelevant — they only create slogans and a false appearance of pointing people towards some new truths."

— Grotowski, "Un inédit de Jerzy Grotowski. L'obscénité au théâtre", *La Quinzaine Littéraire* 101 (1–15 September 1970), 26–28, at 28; quoted in Jennifer Kumiega, *The Theatre of Grotowski* (1985), 238 (translated here from the Finnish via Grotowski 2006, 308; wording to be checked — see Uncertainty Log)

If the skill that made the poor theatre possible, or the skill found through the poor theatre, is stripped of the ways of making it visible, nothing remains. Only a white point on white paper. But stripping the skill bare from Grotowski's discourse on acting and directing must be done, because I cannot transfer the system he developed into myself as it stands.

My purpose is not to study Grotowski's school's way of making total theatre, but to form my own view of how to approach a representation-free theatre through the means of sound design. I do not, then, seek to adapt myself to Grotowski's system, but to internalise a starting point from which I can, in practice, converse on equal terms with existing theatre-makers. My reality is this: as a freelance sound designer I work continuously with different theatre groups, all of which are defined by different methods, exercises, and aesthetic and philosophical lines on how an aesthetic experience is staged. Differing ways of grasping a "total performance" are a natural consequence of people being different. There is no single correct way of approaching an artistically

ambitious, non-representational theatre. I fully accept the starting points of my own work: that as a sound designer I must, like a nightingale, first be able to recognise, and then to sing, all the songs of the world.

I share Grotowski's view that a liberating total act, or a total experience, is found by positioning one's own thought and action against death. Death means, to me, change. Change constantly devours all prevailing polarisations, whether of right or wrong ways of approaching meanings or the emptiness of meaning. I would see two alternatives facing change: either consenting to the fire, in which I lose all my particular spiritual capital where art is concerned, or I can stop where I am and rely on the maps I already have for how to approach and find my way in the unknown outside myself.

But even relying on maps, my fate is the loss of the world I know. Time affects reality, turning the known world into a labyrinthine maze in which old maps no longer hold. What I think best withstands time and change is Grotowski's understanding of the opposition between skill and artistic apparatus: the dialectic of opposition and collision. But a personal understanding of the matter, harnessing the force for one's own creative use, demands diving into the unknown. One must return to the source, where forms have not yet been born.

PART TWO

It is time to say farewell to Grotowski, and to move from West to East.

At the Source

"To return to the origin, to be back at the source — already this is a wrong step! Far better it is to stay at home, blind and deaf, without much ado; sitting in one's hut, not thinking of things outside, beholding no flowing streams — where they go, no one knows; and no bright red flowers — for whom do they bloom?"

— classical oxherding verse (this edition's translation; cf. the classic English rendering by Nyogen Senzaki & Paul Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, and D. T. Suzuki's *Manual of Zen Buddhism*)

In Buddhism, the emphasis on unity or on the source is itself seen as a foreign thing, a partial view. In a classic Zen story, a student asks Master Hakuin, "What happens after death?" Hakuin answers, "I don't know." The student presses further: "But surely you must know! You're a Zen master!" To which Hakuin replies, "Yes, but I haven't died yet!"

In Zen, enlightenment is seen through very ordinary eyes. Enlightenment is "eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty." Enlightenment is action and thought, as well as non-action and non-thought. The Zen master Yoka Daishi described the essence of Zen thus: "Whether speaking or silent, the essence is always at rest." Nothing can be excluded from enlightenment. Zen's secret is that everything is exactly as it appears. Confusion takes hold only when one begins, numbly, to doubt life as it is.

"By enlightenment I mean believing in nothing, believing in something which has no form or no color, which is ready to take form or color."

— Shunryu Suzuki, "Believing in Nothing", *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (Weatherhill, 1995), 118 (Suzuki 2006, 107 in the Finnish edition)

Instead of enlightenment or unity, Zen stresses practice and prajñā. Prajñā is the Buddhist counterpart to wisdom. It is contemplative wisdom, a knowledge that comprises both body and mind, not one or the other alone. Prajñā is intuitive wisdom that has nothing to do with book-learning. In Buddhism, mind is seen as an organic part of the human being: mind is counted as a sixth sense alongside sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. Mind is not seen as defining reality or the human being's selfhood, but as part of the human being's conscious selfhood. This is how Master Shunryu Suzuki (1905–1971) describes the oneness of body and mind:

"Our body and mind are not two and not one. If you think your body and mind are two, that is wrong; if you think that they are one, that is also wrong. Our body and mind are both two and one. We usually think that if something is not one, it is more than one; if it is not singular, it is plural. But in actual experience, our life is not only plural, but also singular."

— Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (Suzuki 2006, 25 in the Finnish edition)

The Buddhist teaching on original mind, non-attachment, and enlightenment may seem paradoxical, because it does not hold that body or mind exist as separate from one another. In Buddhism mind is not regarded as the defining mark of being, which is why it is hard to understand without practice of one's own. Buddhist art or philosophy can be read only in a way that takes in the whole of body and mind.

Prajñā is not a single insight but a way of being. It is a wisdom whose field of awareness includes the capacity to recognise the non-representational nature of things as well, which appears in the practitioner as a bodily state of readiness. Prajñā does not arise from the body, nor from the mind, but body and mind are both parts of a functioning prajñā. Prajñā is direct knowledge of the self: it is the capacity to notice feelings before the dualistic mind has time to grasp at them and form opinions and attitudes about them. Prajñā is not one-pointed concentration and does not point in any particular direction; it resembles, rather, the unrestricted, 360-degree awareness of a hunted animal.

"The spider knows the universe through its legs, which touch the main strands of its web. It knows when it is raining, and when food is available. It doesn't think to itself, 'There's no fly in the web now — that's the rain.' Yet it knows. The spider doesn't ponder what kind of fly it would like to eat, or blame the rain for trying to trick it. The spider just knows what it's doing, effortlessly and spontaneously."

— Loori 2008 (translated from the Finnish; Loori's original English wording not independently verified — see Uncertainty Log)

Prajñā has been characterised in countless turns of phrase without ever capturing its actual nature, because language simply does not reach it. It can be said, though, that prajñā is a wisdom that arises from the fusion of body and mind, or of the observer and the object observed. Seeing with the whole body and mind, "the human being goes blind," and hearing with the whole body and mind, "the human being goes deaf." This is a reference to the core teaching of Zen Buddhism, on which Zen's other teachings are founded. The teaching goes by the name of the Prajñāpāramitā Sutra (the great sutra of the heart of wisdom), or, more familiarly, the Heart Sutra. The Heart Sutra describes seeing with the whole body and mind thus:

"...no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind; no form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or dharmas; no realm of vision, and so forth, up to no realm of mind-consciousness."

— *Heart Sutra*, English trans. as widely rendered (cf. Buddha Gate Monastery / Nalanda Translation Committee editions); replaces the Finnish edition's citation of Loori 2008, 84

Emptiness Is Not Enough

"O Shariputra, form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form. So it is with feeling, conception, volition, and consciousness. O Shariputra, all dharmas [objects of mind] are marked by emptiness."

— *Heart Sutra*, English trans. as widely rendered (cf. Buddha Gate Monastery / Nalanda Translation Committee editions)

In unity, the human being looks into a mirror, and an unknown familiar looks back. In eternity, at the core of change, everything is present. There is happening, but with the great being small and the small being great, stillness being motion and motion being stillness, nothing actually happens: everything moves within everything.

The central content of the Heart Sutra can be condensed into the sentence "form is emptiness and emptiness is form." This reflects a kind of journey to the emptiness of meaning and back, but in Zen this journey is seen as only a journey, a partial view that is not yet, in itself, enough to generate a working *prajñā*. Wisdom is not alive if the view of a "total self" still holds within it a path, or some kind of pedagogical system. Knowing the truth does not make a person free. Knowing how things ought to be does not help me solve the obstacles I meet here and now.

Suzuki Roshi's (1905–1971) story of what real Zen is about tells of the meeting of Baso and Nangaku:

"One day, while he was practising under Nangaku, Baso was sitting in zazen. He was a big man, and when he talked his tongue reached to his nose, and his voice could be heard far away. His zazen must have been very good. Nangaku saw Baso sitting like a great mountain or a frog, and asked, 'What are you doing?' Baso said, 'I am doing zazen.' 'Why?' 'To attain enlightenment, to become a Buddha,' said the disciple. The teacher picked up a tile and started to polish it. Baso asked, 'What are you doing?' 'I want to make this tile into a jewel,' said Nangaku. 'How is it possible to make a tile a jewel?' Baso asked. Nangaku replied, 'How is it possible to become a Buddha by practising zazen? Do you want to be a Buddha? There is no Buddhahood besides your ordinary mind. When a cart does not go, which do you whip, the cart or the horse?'"

— Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (established English edition; passage located and confirmed — cf. Suzuki 2006, 85 in the Finnish edition)

In Zen it is thought that true wisdom is the understanding that unity, or the emptiness of meaning, is not something opposite to the self that can be grasped. They are not objects attainable by anyone, not even by the Buddha. In Zen it is held that we have already attained enlightenment; it is enough merely to recognise it. Suzuki continues:

"True zazen is beyond being in bed or sitting in the zendo. If your husband or wife is in bed, that is zazen. If you think, 'I am sitting here, and my spouse is in bed,' then even though you are sitting here in the cross-legged position, that is not true zazen."

— Shunryu Suzuki, "To Polish a Tile", *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (Weatherhill, 1995), 81 (Suzuki 2006, 85 in the Finnish edition)

When I become I, Zen becomes Zen. It is said that without prajñā, practice remains chiefly a gathering of merit. Concentration exercises, too, without prajñā, take on a questionable, even dangerous, form.

The Buddhist contemplative tradition contains a wide range of forms of meditation, including some in which a person, separate from their object (unity), pierces the membrane between the invisible and the visible through severe one-pointed concentration. Using this technique, the meditator is freed from the world, from saṃsāra. Separate meanings and selfhood then fuse, momentarily (for seconds, or for weeks) into the continuum of unity. These particular states are called, for instance in the Chan tradition, dhyāna states. Dhyāna states are a kind of "heaven of mind." Reaching dhyāna states is a kind of deep dive, in which the person anchors their concentration in the breath while shutting out all stimuli outside the self, the breath, and the concentration, travelling far from the human world into the peace of a deep primal sea.

Yet this is not real wisdom, but rather an understanding of the mind as a kind of instrument. The Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra warns: "Do not dwell in the dharmas [the dhyāna states]; dwell in prajñāpāramitā!" The warning is well founded, because otherwise it may happen that the practitioner spends their whole life travelling "from somewhere to somewhere," never understanding their own present nature. One-pointed meditation can open the horizon of experience onto very blissful states of body and mind, in which the person also becomes party to an understanding of their own origin. But such knowledge is only on loan to the human being; it is not permanent. Detachment from the world is, before long, followed by a return to reality, which also means letting go of the total vision.

In Zen, using the mind as a vehicle toward the emptiness of meaning is not seen as a path to total understanding, but at best as a way of gathering knowledge about how the mind works. In Zen it is thought that the human being's natural horizon of experience includes everything between earth and heaven: unity, multiplicity, and the experiencer themselves. The real obstacle is not the temporariness of experiences of unity, but the deeply rooted conception of human duality: of an attainer and an object of attainment separate from the attainer.

"...here is you, form, and here is emptiness, which you are trying to realize through your form. So 'form is emptiness, and emptiness is form' is still dualistic. But fortunately, our teaching goes on to say, 'Form is form and emptiness is emptiness.' Here there is no dualism."

— Shunryu Suzuki, "No Dualism", *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (Weatherhill, 1995), 41

Self-realisation refers not to attaining unity but to the observer's own unmasking, the observer who is split into a self and an object. Between the human being and total understanding there is only the human being: the idea of a seeker and of an object of the search that lies outside the self.

"So which do you hit, the cart or the horse? Which do you hit, yourself or your problems? If you start questioning which you should hit, that means you have already started to wander about. But when you actually hit the horse, the cart will go. In truth, the cart and the horse are not different. When you are you, there is no problem of whether you should hit the cart or the horse. When you are you, zazen becomes true zazen."

— Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (established English edition; passage located and confirmed — cf. Suzuki 2006, 86 in the Finnish edition)

Contrary to what one might assume, real self-realisation is not a matter of mystical depth or of discovering some kind of key that would help the seeker unlock the universe's hidden lock and pour the secrets hidden inside over their own head. On the contrary, self-realisation means understanding that one has been playing a kind of hide-the-key game, seeking a solution to meanings one has assigned to oneself. Emptiness of meaning is the insight that one is oneself both the giver of meanings and their seeker. No answer is needed to grasp the ultimate truth. Recognising oneself out of one's own thought and action is enough. The Heart Sutra continues:

"...no ignorance and no ending of ignorance, no old age and death, and no ending of old age and death; no suffering, no origin of suffering, no cessation of suffering, no path; no wisdom, and no attainment."

— *Heart Sutra*, English trans. as widely rendered (cf. Nalanda Translation Committee edition); replaces the Finnish edition's citation of Loori 2008, 84

On an existential level, the Heart Sutra is about accepting one's own finite and deficient existence in a world whose contradictions are, in the end, impossible to master. The Heart Sutra means, in practice, the ending of illusions of power and force between "self and other": the surrender of the over-self to the self that is present. When the search ends, a space opens for a genuine understanding of what one already has. Prajñā appears in the silence that arises once the feverish searching, hoping and fearing, longing and grief within the self have come to an end. Once explanations fall away, silence remains. A simple but liberated readiness arises, to listen to the space empty of meaning, and a capacity to act and think from this silence. A space arises to hear silence even within noise. Having recognised the emptiness of meaning within, one can recognise oneself from without as well. There is nothing esoteric in hearing the emptiness of meaning, yet it is nevertheless very profound. With silence, the practitioner steps into a silent understanding that has no name and no system.

On Earth and in Heaven

The return from unity to the world takes a human form. The person of no class sheds from their shoulders the marks gathered on their journey toward total understanding. The seeker becomes the "meaningless sign" they were seeking. The return to the world is, at the same time, a kind of death of the practitioner, or of the individualist artist. A consumerist relation to one's own self, to one's artistry, and to the other human being disappears. Letting go does not mean removing everything worldly, throwing everything away headlong, or heroically forcing oneself into purification, but accepting that

the nature of things is to come and to go. Once the practitioner has let go of separateness in relation to the happening of being, only the human being remains. When the human being is human, life is life.

"How wondrous, how mysterious? I carry firewood, I fetch water."

— after Layman P'ang (translated here via Klemola 1996, 78)

In Zen, what is real is the moment we are living right now. Once the practitioner has passed through the "gateless gate," the journey no longer proceeds anywhere. The path is not linear. Advancing is standing still, standing still is advancing. When the practitioner is freed from the dream of an attainer and an attainable object, they find that they are free also within the strictly form-bound orders of things. Washing one's hands and an aesthetic art-experience both belong, equally, within the same circle of experience empty of meaning. As being flows freely, the happening expresses itself:

"The brush paints by itself, the camera takes the picture by itself, the sculpture shapes itself, the words write themselves, the dance dances itself. The creator of the art, the subject of the art, and the expression itself merge into a single process, in which there is no thinking or judging."

— Loori 2008 (translated from the Finnish; Loori's original English wording not independently verified — see Uncertainty Log)

If the "suchness" of life settles into its original place within the human being's horizon of experience, the body takes over the mind and the mind takes over the body. When the artist thinks of rain, this becomes the whole being of the rain, its duration and its changes. With body and mind being one, thinking and feeling do not differ from doing. Instead of representing an emotional state, the rain lives in the artist and out of the artist.

"When we express our true nature, we are human beings. When we do not, we do not know what we are. We are not an animal, because we walk on two legs. We are something different from an animal, but what are we? We may be a ghost; we do not know what to call ourselves. Such a creature does not actually exist. It is a delusion. We are not a human being anymore, but we do exist. When Zen is not Zen, nothing exists. Intellectually my talk makes no sense, but if you have experienced true practice, you will understand what I mean. If something exists, it has its own true nature, its Buddha nature."

— Shunryu Suzuki, "Nothing Special", *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (Weatherhill, 1995), 48 (Suzuki 2006, 50 in the Finnish edition)

Buddhism cannot be understood if it is detached from contemplative practice or from the contemplative experience of body-mind. So, rather than mad poetry, it is wisdom to go deeper into the actual practices of presence to which Buddhist practitioners expose themselves on their journey toward total understanding. Zen's core exercise is conscious breathing. It is a method that unites the theoretical with the practical.

Contemplation

Zen's core exercise is zazen — sitting. No magic, no system. Posture, breath, watching the current up close. Timo Klemola describes the insights the practitioner meets.

Zazen

A meditation exercise in the Rinzai tradition usually begins with the instruction to sit down on a cushion in the cross-legged position, facing the wall. The eyes are directed roughly along the line of the nose, toward the lower front. The tongue lightly touches the roof of the mouth. The posture is not stooped; the back is held straight. The body is alert but not rigid. The

palms rest one on top of the other, the thumbs lightly touching. Meditation usually lasts from half an hour to an hour, depending on the practitioner and the group.

In zazen, the primary interest is, at the outset, in the mind, but this dualistic view later dissolves to encompass both body and mind. Training the mind usually begins with counting the breaths from one to ten. On reaching ten, the count begins again from the start. When the mind wanders off into other thoughts, the attention is drawn back to counting the breath. If the practitioner keeps up this practice for a few months and becomes aware of what is happening in awareness, the silent knowledge that arises moves roughly like this: the associative stream of our thoughts is not within our control. We are not free to think whatever we want; thoughts come from somewhere and pass, as it were, over us, forming into concepts, memories, feelings whose origin is not visible.

The core experience of the exercise is: "thinking happens in me," not "I think." In meditation there is no succeeding or failing. In meditation one only becomes more sensitive to one's own nature, which in this case means making the essential observation: "thinking happens in me," not "I think." Klemola compares thinking to the craft skill of handiwork: in order to think skilfully, one must first study the skill of awareness. Klemola sees the skill of awareness as making possible a free thinking, in which the thoughts, habits, and customs already thought do not think "on my behalf." He compares an untrained mind to a rower who believes they are steering the boat, while in reality the boat drifts at the mercy of deep currents. In zazen we gain access to this current that usually stays invisible, guiding feeling, action, and thought.

On the walls of Buddhist monasteries there are often pictures of oxherding, in which the practitioner's counterforce is depicted as an ox. At first the practitioner searches for the ox, and finally rides it. Oxherding, I think, well illustrates the contemplative nature of Zen practice, which does not resemble philosophical discourse, because contemplative practice takes in both body and mind. Instead of conceptual reflection, it is a matter of a holistic change in the way one understands oneself and reality. Zen tradition creates a frame

for the practitioner meant to help the practitioner understand themselves, rather than to teach an answer for how things are. There is no moral value in itself in the practice; Zen itself does not elevate the practitioner. The value of the practice lies in the existential understanding of oneself as a whole. The practitioner must find their own ox and learn, personally, how to work with it.



Taming the Ox.

"The boy must not part from his whip and tether, lest the animal wander off into some dusty path; when the ox is properly tended, he grows gentle and tractable; then, without chains, unbound by anything, he follows the oxherd of his own accord."

— classical oxherding verse (this edition's translation; cf. the classic English rendering by Nyogen Senzaki & Paul Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*)

Once the ox has been found, a struggle begins in which the practitioner tries to keep the ox within the field of conscious presence, but the ox keeps escaping from view. Gradually, as a result of long work, the ox calms down, and the work can move on to the next level: living with the ox.

Zazen practice gradually becomes more precise. In the next stage, the practitioner gradually lets go of one-pointed concentration on the breath and begins to count only the out-breath. The mind then stays empty on the in-breath. As the practice deepens, the stream of thought becomes governable. On the in-breath, wanting to keep the mind empty, one must only "listen" and "wait." Gradually one becomes aware of the point in awareness where a thought arises: a word has a beginning and an end, and it can be watched closely. And then, decisively: when a concept arises, "I" arises with it. When the concept disappears, this "I" disappears.

Shikantaza

Once the practitioner is able to recognise their breath, as well as the beginning, middle, and end of thoughts, they are already well advanced in the skill of awareness. They are then able to see the point in awareness where thoughts and concepts do not arise. Thinker and thought reveal themselves to be dependent on one another. Once the practitioner learns to know the interdependence of thought and thinker, they can approach a conscious state of "non-thinking."

The state of non-thinking is a dynamic presence without a thinker and a doer, in which the practitioner practises a conscious "dropping of body and mind." It is a matter of a very subtle listening to oneself. As an exercise this means letting go of the object of concentration; in this case, detaching from counting and observing the breath. Shikantaza means "just sitting." It contains no actual technique; rather, an understanding of the shikantaza exercise arises from its dialectical relation to knowledge of being-in-oneself already internalised. Even though it is "just sitting," within the context of the practice it remains a gradually more precise form of training.

In shikantaza the aim is to hold a state of "pure awareness," in which one is aware of both oneself and one's surroundings, but without a thought arising. Because of shikantaza's non-linear nature, it cannot be grasped as either easy or difficult. The suchness of sitting is available at all times, but if the practitioner tries to grab hold of it, the original purpose of sitting, "just sitting," becomes obscured. As a form of practice, shikantaza is a kind of mirror that throws back at the practitioner their own conscious and unconscious attempts to manipulate their way to sitting correctly. The silent knowledge that arises from the work moves like this: it ("just sitting") cannot be attained by trying or by willing, because willing is itself already a thought that arises. Once one has learned to find the point in awareness where a thought arises, one can stay watching that point and "wait."

When no self arises, there is also no object standing opposite any self: there is only being. When, after that, the experience of thought and self arises, it appears in an entirely different way: one sees the frame within which a thought arises, and the frame within which a thought imprisons the world. From this one is freed, arriving at things themselves without preconceptions of what reality "should" look like.

When we rest in the stream of pure being, the experience is very bodily. There is no separate body and mind; there is only being, in which the whole of one's being is intensely present. This feeling of life cannot be separated from the body, because no "ego" arises.

Before long the practitioner learns to distinguish representational thinking from contemplative thinking. If the practitioner reflects on their own thinking, they are, in reality, thinking their thinking anew, in new concepts. Reflection reveals itself as the re-conceptualising of what has already been conceptualised. Contemplative thinking does not reflect.

From the point of view of zazen practice, this means the capacity to stop the stream of thoughts whenever one wishes. What then remains is an alert presence without representations: once the representation of time and space has stopped, the representation of being human, too, comes to a stop. One can then regard the present moment as the first moment of one's life. When representational thought does not arise, no division arises either between subject and object. When no thinker arises, the experience is very bodily. Instead of being flung into a black hole, what is present is the most natural experience of being, in which the whole human being is intensely present and alive. The familiar body reveals itself as the original landscape.

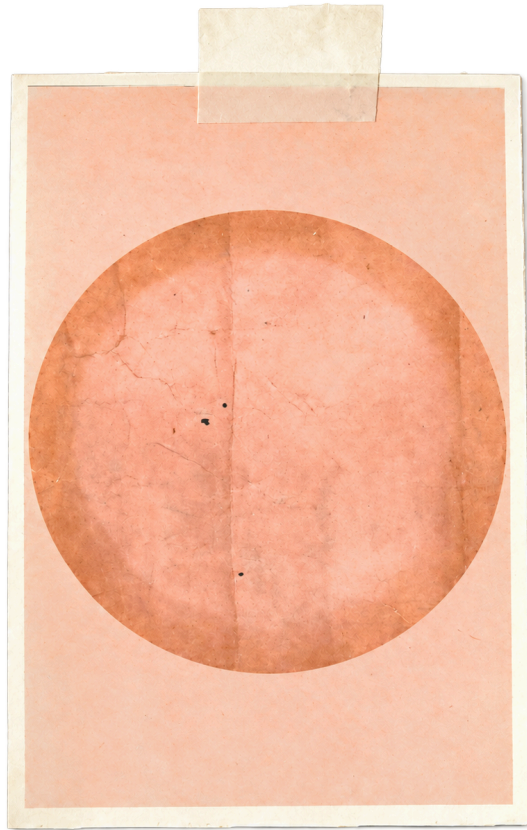
Open Mind

"If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything; it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few."

— Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (established English edition; passage located and confirmed — cf. Suzuki 1995, 22 in the Finnish edition)

Having practised enough, the practitioner learns to stop the stream of their thoughts and to turn the "stream of life" in the direction they wish. One can make a sign of oneself, conceptualise oneself as a living representation, and remain within the frame of this representation with one's whole body and mind. Even though roles separate us from the experience of this moment, they are not a threat. Roles, too, can be a space empty of meaning, one that is neither speech nor silence. An empty body and mind are free to take on any meaning, moving the boundaries of humanity outward, all the way to infinity.

Goal-directed practice is necessary at the start. During it, the practitioner studies the skills of awareness and becomes acquainted with a state of being without representations. In practice this means the practitioner gains a connection not only to separateness but also to non-differentiation. But as such, this view still holds duality within it. Understanding the worlds of a differentiated and an undifferentiated body and mind is only the possibility of being born as a human being. Next, the practitioner must rub the opposing sides, roles and unity, closely together. They must melt timeless wisdom into temporal knowledge, and temporal knowledge into timeless wisdom, unity and roles into one. As the two halves rub together, both lose their meaning. The ox and the human being disappear.



The Ox and the Man, Both Gone.

"All confusion has fallen away, and stillness alone reigns; not even the idea of holiness lingers here. He does not tarry where the Buddha is, and where the Buddha is, he swiftly passes by. Where no trace of dualism remains, even a thousand eyes cannot find a loophole to look through. The holiness to which the birds bring flowers as offerings is nothing but a mockery."

— classical oxherding verse (this edition's translation; cf. the classic English rendering by Nyogen Senzaki & Paul Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*)

Beginner's Mind

"In the beginner's mind there is no thought, 'I have attained something.' All self-centred thoughts limit our vast mind. We are true thinkers when we do not think at all about attainment, or about ourselves. Then we can really learn something."

— Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (established English edition; passage located and confirmed — cf. Suzuki 1995, 22 in the Finnish edition)

In his book *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Suzuki stresses that the beginner's mind is the practice's beginning and its end point alike. At the start of practice, it is really a matter of training and development. But once the practitioner has reached the point where the associative stream of thoughts is quiet and no clinging arises around a rising thought, they must forget the attainment-based self. Practice continues as before, but a crucial question must be understood: who is practising? Since the question has no answer, the practice can go on just as before — only now, without anyone practising. Real practice is when limitations no longer limit the practitioner.

"Just to continue should be your purpose. When you do something, just to do it should be your purpose. Form is form and you are you, and true emptiness will be realized in your practice."

— Shunryu Suzuki, "No Dualism", *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (Weatherhill, 1995), 43

Practice returns to the beginning, to the beginner's mind, for which every direction of seeking and finding is possible. The original invisible essence is unattainable, so ideals of practice (such as enlightenment, the cultivation of good taste, social skill, or the deepening of peace of mind as a path to total understanding) must be forgotten. Practising as self-improvement now appears as a great piece of mockery, and the human being's essence as one enormous cosmic joke. The fifteenth-century Zen poet Ikkyu, who lived a life of vice, wondered what should be done with lying Buddhas:

"If liars end up in hell, what will we do with Buddha, who told stories that never even existed?"

— Ikkyu (translated from the Finnish via Ikkyu 2010, 124; not checked against an established English translation of Ikkyu's poems, e.g. John Stevens — see Uncertainty Log)

Having let go of the illusion of seeking, the practitioner has, for the first time, the chance to learn something real. Learning to learn means a kind of second birth, in which the human being becomes master of their own life without illusions about the purpose of their existence. Once systems have fallen away, learning takes on a new meaning: the practitioner knows how to ask questions to which they do not know the answer in advance. If there is no division between me and the world, then there is also no division between the sacred and the wicked. If there is no seeker, there is also no ailment to cure, let alone a world to heal. Once the game of seeking is over, a unique opportunity opens up to throw oneself, genuinely, into a dangerous and unknown life, in which the unknown is more than a product of one's own imagination. When I

become I, the world becomes the world. The human being no longer needs to pray for fusion into unity, once they can grow drunk on both heavenly and earthly sources.

As directions vanish, the seeker sheds the marks and the scent that told which class they had belonged to on their quest. The tracks and the reasoning of a person who has moved into "the class of no class" are hard to follow or predict, because they act "here and now," and do not present themselves as an image (except, perhaps, in humour). I see the surmounting of the original "good" motives as meaning a letting-go of roles that demean another human being: victim and helper, broken and whole, living and dying. In the end all reasons for practising appear as conceptual manuals of the imagination, for how to live better with defeat. Letting go of these manuals also means the death of the beloved individualist thinker, the inner genius.

Once illusions have given way, a new kind of art rises out of a dynamic readiness to act and to think. Every deed, in itself, is the realisation of being human. The person whom practice has strengthened now walks in step with the world, ready to meet a frightening world; and the world receives them into an eternal battle of good and evil. They no longer have the option to retreat, still less to explain to themselves a possible bystander's distance from the events of their own life. They now have the resources to fight the forces that rob and separate the self, and to defeat them. But even though mind and body are one, and reality appears as the play of opposing forces, this does not mean moving up onto some god-level of safety. A clarified intuition and prajñā help, but each of us must grow our own skin. Working in the world takes place by the world's own means, subject to the world's own laws.

PART THREE

The path travelled so far has centred on a view in which reality is neither unity nor duality, but the unity of unity and duality. The same total view can also be expressed as the unity of self and non-self, or of the visible and the invisible. Having stepped outside their represented self-image, the human being is free to move "on earth and in heaven," because they are no longer caught in the mutually dependent relation of a fixed thinker and time. One is then free of temporal experience, or of the sense of hurry marked by a beginning, a middle, and an end. Their essence is marked by corporeality, because the mind can be experientially present even without meanings, in a way that is, in a sense, empty and alert at once. One is oneself both with the represented self and with the unknown self. This means, in practice, the capacity to stop the stream of thoughts whenever one wishes. Once the stream of thoughts has stopped, a state of being opens up that is free of the dualistic relation for understanding one's own self, the world, and the motives of action. This means non-attachment to meanings: a transparency of relation between self and object.

Up to now I have considered the non-represented self as a static idea or possibility, but what forms can art born of no-mind take? The path travelled can be understood to mean a state of readiness to act and think, and a transparency of meanings, but this in itself does not yet mean anything concrete for, say, the making of art.

My interest turns to a new phenomenon born in the thirteenth century: the makers of Zen art, Zen painters and poets who expressed no-mind in their artistic work. These artists broke, through their work, the earlier modes of presentation of religious and secular art. Art did not aim at any ideals; it was neither representational nor iconographic, and its purpose was not to reinforce the religious experience of believers, but to offer an entirely new way of seeing and being, penetrating deep into the foundation of being human, into what it is to be fully alive.

The Single Line

"If we practise seriously, one day the 'true man who belongs to no class' will grasp the sword, and the self, which is no-self, will flow out of the brush."

— Sogen (translated from the Finnish; source not further identified in the original text — see Uncertainty Log)

The practice-process of calligraphy has three stages. It begins with the exact repetition of form, during which the student studies the technical foundation of the skill.

In the second stage the student begins to detach from the given order, taking space for their own creativity. In the third stage the student seeks a total act, in which their action is entirely free. Once this is achieved, the student is a master. The human being is then free not only within their skill, but in all their action. Art becomes the art of life, because the practitioner has learned to know life within themselves.

"In the practice of self-forgetting, which lasts many years, one must recover 'childlikeness.' When a person attains this, they think, and yet they do not think. They think as the rain falling from the sky thinks. They think as the waves surging in the ocean think. They think as the stars lighting the night sky think. They think as the green leaves trembling in a relaxing spring wind think. Indeed, they are the rain itself, the ocean, the stars, the leaves. When a person reaches this state of 'spiritual' development, they are a Zen artist of life."

— D. T. Suzuki, quoted in Loori 2008 (translated from the Finnish; Suzuki's original English wording, if any, and Loori's exact wording not independently verified — see Uncertainty Log)

Zen art continues onward from the point where the seeker's footsteps disappear. The classless, or "homeless," human being is the starting point from which the practitioner focuses on deepening their total expressive

power, which comprises both visible and invisible form. In Zen's "artless arts" (the tea ceremony, bamboo flute music, garden architecture, Noh theatre, ceramics, archery) some traditional craft skill or task is turned into an art form by which total understanding is deepened into a dynamic form of self-expression. The art forms are seen as a path to clarify the artist's understanding of their own self and of the nature of reality, and to act as a visual dialogue that conveys the wordless.

The foundation of Eastern calligraphy is a single line, *mujibō*. The search for one's own expressive power begins with the drawing of a single line, which may take as long as three continuous years. Master Sogen writes: "For the line to be perfect, every point on it must be perfect; every hair of the brush must then be filled with the power of spirit — otherwise the line is dead." Artless art is not a representation of the invisible, nor does it remain a mere surface producing aesthetic pleasure. A true line embodies no-mind, in which the artist works, in an intimate way, from the centre of being, splitting the universe with their brush. Everything the calligrapher holds in mind shows in the *mujibō*.

"When Soen wrote a poem or painted calligraphy, I saw his whole being change. He became very quiet, motionless, and as I watched I felt the same stillness descend into me. Although in front of me I saw only a Chinese character, it always felt to me as though this artwork were all there is to see. It filled the universe."

— Loori 2008 (translated from the Finnish; Loori's original English wording not independently verified — see Uncertainty Log)

The artist recognises, from the present situation, the "original landscape," and uses the brush as their instrument for bringing the visible and invisible worlds into collision and destroying their representations. The painting is a trace of the suchness of being, and of the destruction of the prevailing "purpose of life." The samurai classic *Hagakure* instructs the student to "smash the paper with the brush." The description gives a hint of the dynamism of the work, which resembles a martial art rather than daydreaming. The work is as

cruel as a human being is cruel when speaking the truth. The path is taken with great seriousness. One ancient master refused to take as a pupil anyone who had not bathed in sweat while drawing a single Zen line.

"Without complete devotion and hard practice, a true line never comes onto the paper. The mujibō is like the decisive stroke of a sword in a struggle over life and death. It splits the universe in two."

— Klemola 2004, 282 (translated from the Finnish; Klemola's own text)

Harnessing the state of readiness as a dynamic instrument of self-expression demands the presence of the practitioner's whole body and mind. With the "decisive stroke of the sword" the artist stops time, drawing both the spectator and the maker into their work. Art takes place in a space that recognises no difference between the art, the artist, and the receiving audience. Over time, the collision of worlds, the destruction of representations, becomes ever more controlled and powerful, yet at the same time more subtle and lighter, almost invisible. This is how Klemola describes the state behind the maker and the spectator:

"When we listen to our own bodily awareness, we meet the pulse of life, which reveals itself as a secret. We cannot explain or understand this basic pulse of life within ourselves, but we can experience it in a very intense and meaning-giving way. This secret, as it were, breathes out meanings that provide the foundation for what can be called truth, goodness, and beauty. This is so because it reveals itself as true, good, and beautiful. Because human beings carry within themselves the foundation of truth, goodness, and beauty, they can also follow these signposts when conceptualising the world and themselves. This foundation is the experience of 'the secret.'"

— Klemola 2004, 291 (translated from the Finnish; Klemola's own text)

The inner state that form-bound work expresses is not just any mental state. It is not fantasy, or a burst of inspiration, a performed emotional state, but the human being's foundational experience of body and mind. If it were a matter

of fantasy, artistic expression would have no power to transform, to split open the space between speech and silence. The dynamics of the inner work are entirely bound to the artist's bodily awareness. Bodily awareness is not a permanent state; it must be trained daily.



Suchness.

Whole Sound

In this chapter I keep the original concept of "whole sound." The new edition's title shifts the work's centre of gravity toward sound without a ready-made meaning, but this chapter is the point where the 2013 concept and today's conceptual vocabulary lie closest to one another.

I see whole sound design as requiring two factors to be realised. The first is the skill of letting representations drop away, and the second is the will to conceptualise, first oneself, and then the sound, into a sign fitted to the situation. The represented and the non-represented world then meet, with the result that the prevailing "purpose of life," that is, time, disappears. This, I think, can be called an aesthetic experience.

As an inner experience this means that I do not separate my inner and outer space from one another. Together they form a dense weave, a three-dimensional painting, in which I also see myself. The painting is both the world and the performance. Sonic work demands of me the courage to step, in a motionless moment, into giving birth to something that would not appear unless I stopped time and changed the course of events. I wait, thinking nothing, and listen to the inner current. By letting conceptual thinking drop away I give birth to an unhurried space, in which I can feel out the forces moving in the space. If I can recognise these forces within myself, I gain mastery over them. By conceptualising myself from the centre of action and thought I can create a sound with which I bring the visible and the invisible, the contemplative and the conceptual forces, into collision. The sound arises from present impulses, but is free of present time, of the direction of time and action. As a result, the prevailing "purpose of life" or "myth" disappears, and the space experienced behind meanings is revealed.

For sound design, it is essential that it position itself in relation to the true content of the performance, which lies in no single good or bad meaning, but "in the unity of the direction of action and the reality that falls outside it," or "in the space between silence and speech." If I recognise whole sound within myself, the sound follows me also into sound design. This means that the artistic content of my work draws its power directly from an existing suchness: a music that is not based on the manipulation of the self or the spectator, but on an undefined, free centre. It is a matter of an intimate space that spectators can only recognise for themselves, from within. For me, such work means continuous listening: a capacity to recognise the invisible white point within oneself, and a skill of positioning artistic work and concepts in relation to this emptiness of meaning. I then understand the meanings I encounter through myself, "here and now," rather than positioning the impulses I encounter as part of meanings I have already experienced and known.

Below is a description, by the ninth-century Zen poet Shitou Xiqian, of the art of opposing forces and of the observer's place at the centre of mystery. The poem is called the *Cantongqi* ("The Merging of Difference and Unity"), and I think it captures well the very core of what "whole sound" in theatre sound design is about.

*"Within light there is darkness, but don't try to understand that darkness.
Within darkness there is light, but don't look for that light. Light and
darkness are a pair, like the foot before and the foot behind in walking.
Each thing has its own intrinsic value, and everything is in its place in
connection to everything else. Ordinary life fits perfection like a box fits its
lid. The absolute works together with the relative like two arrows that
meet in mid-air."*

— Shitou Xiqian, *Cantongqi* / *Sandōkai* ("The Merging of Difference and Unity"), widely circulated English rendering (cf. terebess.hu; Suzuki, *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness: Zen Talks on the Sandokai*); replaces the Finnish edition's citation of Looori 2008, 268

If shadow and light, good and evil, appear to me as phenomena that illuminate themselves, I can carry this view over into my sound design as well. Understanding good and evil, body and mind, unity and separateness as a whole, I can hear the whole sound with all my senses, including my mind. My sound design is then not thinking; I simply paint what I hear within myself. In wholeness nothing moves, which means for me the possibility of staying, for a long time and in peace, at the edge of an unworded mystery. As linear hurry fades, my work gains an unshakeable calm and a sense of certainty. The forces that usually function like traffic-sign commands now open out as a single surface, against which I can unpack all of humanity's most fundamental and deepest questions. The answer I receive is a human echo: I hear my own voice reflected back, and understand that there is something in it that exceeds myself. The emptiness of meaning answers with its whole being, and I work against this living, resilient surface. I can draw strength from it for a fundamentally very sensitive and bare artistic work, in which I hide no identity separate from the moment. Instead of withdrawing to the level of thought, I act from inside the aesthetic experience, so that the visible and invisible of the meanings I create sound together, in balance. The meanings that resonate in my sounds are, to me, immaterial — I play the world's sounds back to the world, and the spectator is free to make their own interpretations.

References

As in the original 2013/2026 text; where a quotation is given in this edition from an established English edition rather than translated from the Finnish, that edition is named alongside. Square brackets inside a quotation mark wording translated from the Finnish where the corresponding passage in the English edition has not yet been located. The oxherding verses are this edition's own translations from Niinimäki's Finnish.

Artaud, Antonin (1983). *Kohti kriittistä teatteria*. Keuruu: Otava. — Finnish edition cited in the original text. English quotations are taken from Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

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Ōmori Sōgen & Terayama Katsujō (1983). *Zen and the Art of Calligraphy: The Essence of Sho*. Trans. John Stevens. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. Source for the term *mujibō*, the Zen line; not in the original bibliography.

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Suzuki, Shunryu (1995). *Zen-mieli, aloittelijan mieli*. Helsinki: Delfini. Cf. Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind: Informal Talks on Zen Meditation and Practice* (New York/Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1970) — the original English edition; direct quotations in this translation are taken from it where located.

Suzuki, Shunryu (2006). *Zen-mieli, aloittelijan mieli*. Helsinki: Delfini. (As above.)

Warner, Brad (2006). *Hardcore Zen*. Helsinki: Basam Books.

Heart Sutra passages are quoted in this edition from a standard English rendering of the *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya* (cf. Nalanda Translation Committee, 1975/1980; Buddha Gate Monastery translation), rather than translated from the Finnish edition's citation of Looori 2008.

"The true man of no rank" renders the classical Chan/Zen term (cf. Linji Yixuan).

Translator's Glossary

Established technical terms are kept in their standard English form; Autio's own recurring concepts are translated consistently across the book; ordinary descriptive Finnish is rendered idiomatically and does not appear here.

Grotowski's own terms (established English usage, cf. *Towards a Poor Theatre* and *The Grotowski Sourcebook*)

köyhä teatteri

the Poor Theatre

kokonainen teko

the total act

taide liikkumavälineenä

Art as Vehicle (Grotowski's term for his final period, from the mid-1980s)

esittävä taide

art as presentation

via negativa

via negativa (kept, as Grotowski's own Latin term)

läpivalaisu

trans-lumination

pyhä näyttelijä

the holy actor

sakraali teatteri

sacred theatre

elämän naamio

the mask of life / of everyday life

rajat ylittävä teko / teatteri

an act / a theatre that crosses frontiers, transgresses

Zen and Buddhist terms (established English usage)

zazen

zazen (kept)

shikantaza

shikantaza (kept)

prajna

prajñā

shunyata

śūnyatā / emptiness

dhyana-tila

dhyāna state

ydin-sutra

Heart Sutra (*Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya*)

samsara

saṃsāra

ei-mieli

no-mind (mushin)

aloittelijan mieli

beginner's mind

alkuperäinen mieli

original mind

luokattomaan luokkaan siirtynyt ihminen

the true man of no rank (a rendering of the classical Chan/Zen term, cf. Linji Yixuan)

härän paimennus

oxherding (the Ten Oxherding Pictures)

mujibo

mujibō — the Zen line, the line of emptiness (cf. Ōmori Sōgen & Terayama Katsujō, *Zen and the Art of Calligraphy: The Essence of Sho*, trans. John Stevens, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983)

Autio's own recurring concepts (translated consistently)

kokonainen ääni

whole sound

ääni ilman valmista merkitystä

sound without a ready-made meaning

merkityksistä tyhjiys

emptiness of meaning

esteettinen elämys

aesthetic experience

kokonainen äänisuunnittelu

whole sound design

Per the historical-fidelity brief for this edition, terms belonging to Autio's later (post-2013) practice — e.g. *Spatial Listening Architectures*, *perceptual ecology*, *field*, *relationality*, *distributed listening* — are used only in the 2026 preface, which is written from that later position, and never introduced back into the 2013 body text, where the Finnish original does not use them.

Uncertainty Log

Open items after the first quotation round. Resolved this round and removed from the list: the four Artaud quotations (now from Richards' Grove translation), all Suzuki passages (now verified against the Weatherhill 1995 edition), the oxherding verses (this edition's own translations, declared), mujibō, and the firewood-and-water verse (after Layman P'ang).

1. **Epigraph ("Good training will show in your work...")** — the attribution to Grotowski has been removed: no Grotowski source was found, and the identical text appears in Owen Daly's writing on Grotowski, attributed to Jeff Spolan (Pillory Theatre). Confirm that source, and decide whether the epigraph stays.
2. **Artaud, page numbers in the Grove edition** — all four passages are in the Preface ("The Theater and Culture"); only "To break through language..." is confirmed at p. 13. The bracketed final sentence of the "civilized man" quotation has not yet been located in Richards.
3. **Grotowski — source correction.** Grotowski 2006 (*Kohti köyhää teatteria*) is not the Finnish edition of *Towards a Poor Theatre*. It is based on the Polish collection *Teksty z lat 1965–1969* and adds the later text "Performer", so each quotation must first be matched to the individual Grotowski text it comes from. Resolved this round, all from *Towards a Poor Theatre*: poor theatre / holy actor ("The Theatre's New Testament", p. 41), total gift / trans-lumination (p. 16), passive readiness (p. 17), taboo / transgression (p. 22). The final sentence of the Finnish total-gift quotation has no counterpart in the English passage and is kept in brackets. Also resolved: spontaneity and discipline (Grotowski 2006, 65), which comes from "He Wasn't Entirely Himself" (1967), *Towards a Poor Theatre*, 121; the full passage is now quoted. Passive readiness is now confirmed in full. Art as Vehicle (Grotowski 2006, 14) comes from Grotowski's honorary-doctorate speech at the University of

Wrocław, 10 April 1991 (*Notatnik Teatralny* 4/1992, 19–24; repr. *Teksty zebrane*, 2012, 862–870). The 1991 date matches the term's late-period use, so there is no anachronism. No authorised English translation was found, so the English is this edition's translation from the Polish. For the total-gift and taboo passages, only the key phrases were confirmed; check the full sentences against the printed pages before publication.

4. Grotowski, "open and thorough attitude to the work" (via Niemi 1975, 213) — not yet traced.
5. Grotowski, "Exercises" ("Ćwiczenia") — self-transcendence (Grotowski 2006, 125 ×2) and trust in the body (p. 126). Source identified: the text is based on talks with international trainees in May 1969, published in French in 1971 and in Polish in *Dialog* 12/1979, pp. 127–137. James Slowiak's unpublished English translation was checked by Grotowski, and Lisa Wolford quotes it in *Actor Training* (as Grotowski 1979: 16). What remains is only Slowiak's exact wording for these particular sentences; the current English is this edition's translation from the Finnish.
6. Grotowski — source identified, wording not yet checked. The English sentences in these three quotations were built around confirmed terms or snippets. They must not be treated as the published wording until they are checked against the page.
 - *Total gesture* (Grotowski 2006, 103): "Teatr a rytuał" ["Theatre and Ritual"], based on the Paris statement of 15 October 1968, *Dialog* 8/1969, 64–74, at 73. English via Kumiega, *The Theatre of Grotowski*, 128–129. Confirmed terms: state of incompleteness, body and soul, seeing and instinct, achieves totality, primitive indivisibility, new sources of energy.
 - *Archetype / mirrors* (Grotowski 2006, 22): "The Ancestors", *Współczesność*, November 1961. English via Barba, "Theatre Laboratory 13 Rzedow" (*TDR* 9:3, 1965; repr. *The Grotowski Sourcebook*). Confirmed terms: taboos, conventions, accepted values, "multifaceted mirror", facets destroyed one after another, new taboos. Also check whether Barba writes "mockery" or "derision".
 - "Everything I have said" (Grotowski 2006, 308): a talk at the Brooklyn

Academy of Music, New York, December 1969, published as "Un inédit de Jerzy Grotowski", *La Quinzaine Littéraire* 101 (1–15 September 1970), 26–28, at 28. Kumiega's bibliography gives the subtitle "L'obscénité au théâtre"; the Grotowski Institute bibliography gives the same issue and pages as "Pas acteur, fils d'homme". Keep both until the journal pages have been seen. The chain runs Kumiega 238 [note 51/28] → Lois Brown 1989, 38–39. Kumiega's page contains the counterparts of the opening ("That system would paralyse in the same way as all other systems"), of the personal message, and of the closing ("Anything that has been a general formula for everybody has already missed the point..."). The book text stays this edition's translation until the page is read; it is not assembled from search snippets.

7. **Loori** — the Soen calligraphy anecdote and "the brush paints by itself" are located (Mountain Record); adopt that wording. The spider/web passage and the D. T. Suzuki "Zen artist of life" passage still need checking in *The Zen of Creativity*.
8. **Ikkyū**, "if a liar goes to hell..." — attribution confirmed; choose the English source.
9. **"Sogen," epigraph to "The Single Line"** — the context points to Ōmori Sōgen, but this exact wording has not been found. Keep "Sogen" until it is confirmed.