



CARMELA CUTUGNO

RICHARD SCHECHNER'S PERFORMANCE STUDIES

This interview, taken in New York City on August 2012, is based on Richard Schechner's experience at the department of Performance Studies, New York University. He talks about the changes occurred since the time he contributed to create the department in the early 80s. This conversation also gives a brief overview of Schechner's focus on the concept of performance, and on the relationship between theory and practice in "his" Performance Studies.

CC: You are working on a new edition of "Performance Studies: an Introduction". I know that you are mainly working on the first chapter which is about "What is Performance Studies", and on the last one which is about the "globalization and the link between Performance Studies and globalization". I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about these updates.

RS: Well, since the book was first published I think in 2001 and then revised in 2006 and now in 2012 in terms of Performances Studies it was a pioneering effort, while now it is very wide dispersed. There are many many many places that say that they do Performances Studies and they are in all different parts of the world; they are in North America, in South America, in Europe, Asia, even some in Africa, Australia, of course; so that chapter just scans now different people, different groups, different departments and programs. Very often what has happened is that there is not a department of Performance Studies (there are still very few of them, maybe three or four or five in the whole world) but there are many departments like the one at Brown University, which is called Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies, or the one at University of California, Berkely... I think it's also Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies; in Europe it is sometimes called Performance Sciences. It has different names but it is basically the same notion of the expanded view of performance: performance in everyday life, performance in business, performance in sports as well as the aesthetic jobs. So that is the first chapter: just it brings that up to date with the people that I quoted in these boxes, these little citations of people who are in 2012 "*Practice in Performance Studies*". The last chapter is the movement in what constitutes globalization. After the terrorist attacks, in the second edition 2006 I did talk about the attacks on the United States, the 9/11



attacks, but in the new version I go a little bit further in terms of talking about the struggles... struggles between certain kinds of fundamentalisms. There are many efforts to, in a certain way, limit the use of technology or reject the use of technology. There are values that are pre-technological and actually pre-enlightenment even, on one side, and then humanist values on the second corner of the triangle, those are values that came in through the western eighteenth century, through the writings of people like John Lock or Emmanuel Kant, which formed the basis... let's say of notions that drove the French and American Revolutions, the notion of the universal rights of human kind and notion of democracy... that's all part of the function of the enlightenment, and it's still very active. But the third part of the triangle is technology and especially how technology is affecting economics and the global market. So, although we are living in "late capitalism", standing capitalism theory, standing markets theory doesn't really answer some of the questions that are raised by the internet and digital technology; not only at the level of increasing communication but at the level where there are generated enormously powerful artificial intelligences that guide our behaviors. And I don't think that globalization is going to go away or to turn itself back. I think there is going to be further and further integration among human societies; there is going to be some tensions about that, and there are going to remain huge inequities between the rich and the poor. And how this pertains to performance is that at a number of levels performance investigates, celebrates, criticizes these movements. So something like the olympic games (which are currently going on as we are talking) are a kind of globalized celebration of nationalism, but nationalism in a certain sense translated and translated into the efforts of these individual athletes, and the athletes themselves are a kind of postmodern in the sense that sometimes they run under a flag of a place that they are not really living, or they train and they perform in a certain kind of spectacle that we enjoy; but when the country wins rivalry currently between the United States and China for example... it's a false rivalry in a way; it's a true beautiful rivalry, but a false rivalry; it's the twilight of the age of nations and the emerging of this globalized world which is controlled by corporations, by interlocked systems, and so on. So the text-book is not a profound revision; it's an update. What makes the third edition most new is that it has a large media aspect. Sara Brady has worked with me to develop the series of online resources that can be used along with the text-book. So we'll have film clips embedded in it; we'll have things to do and things to discuss embedded: we'll have a number of links to different kinds of websites, and so on. So the text-book then itself becomes part of a system that is localized in whatever classroom or in the hands of a particular reader or participant, but it is globalized in terms of accessing the internet.



CC: Thank you! At the very beginning you were mentioning the fact that now we have different departments both in the States and also somewhere else, but most of the times they are not just Performance Studies departments, they are Theatre and Performance Studies departments, or Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies departments. Could you please focus just for a while on the identity of the Performance Studies department here at NYU, talking about the way it used to be at the beginning of the 80s and the way it is now?

RS: First of all, life is a system of organic changes. So if it was the same as it was in the 1980s, which is like 32 years ago, it would be a signal that it had become like a pyramid, something beautiful but dead. At that point the Performance Studies department consisted of, I think, only one woman, maybe two women: Barbara Kirshenblatt Gimblett, who just arrived at that point; she was an anthropologist from the University of Pennsylvania; she is still a member of the faculty. There may have been Marcia Siegel; I am not sure if Marcia was there yet or not, but she was a dance critic and a dance scholar; she was interested in modern dance, particularly American modern dance; but in addition to that there was Michael Kirby, who wrote the book about happenings and was a visual artist and an happenener; there was Brooks McNamara who was a theatre historian, interested in particular in the history of popular entertainments and Broadway, and he was the head of the Schubert archive. There was Theodore Hoffman, who was a minister of actor training; he was interested in the theories of acting, but he was not really a scholar the way Brooks and Michael were scholars; Ted was the head of the theatre program at the Tisch School of the Arts and not really teaching acting so much as hiring people who thought acting. And then he was put in our department when they really felt that there was not room for him in the other things. So he was a kind of an addition that didn't really belong in Performance Studies. At one point he was collaborating with me on *TDR*. And then there was me and my interest that, to some degree, consisted with the anthropological study of performance, the study of rituals, the study of performances in cultures throughout the world, currently working as I was even at that point at the Ramlila of Ramnagar, in Northern India. But I was also very interested along with Michael in the avant-garde. Michael, Brooks and I actually collaborated artistically. Michael Kirby did the towers, the design for Dionysus in '69, and Brooks McNamara did part of my production of Macbeth. Brooks had been a student at Tulane University, so I had known him from way back in the early 60s. He had come to NYU actually one year after I did. He came to NYU in 1968 and I came there in 1967 and I



was one of the people who brought him there. Michael Kirby was a friend of mine before he got his PhD and he got his PhD from Performance Studies. So all of this was at that point when the department was beginning; it was a balance between the avant-garde and performance history, popular entertainments, dance and movement and what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett brought, which was the anthropological approach from the point of view of the study of food and the eating process, the study of tourists; she wrote *Destination Culture*, a book about tourist performance. We developed along those directions for about twelve or thirteen years, because Barbara was Chair from 1980 to 1993, but during that time, I am not exactly sure when, Michael passed away; and later Brooks in the late 90s or even in the early 2000 retired. And we began to open up to things that would have become what Performance Studies in the department is now. So when we hired Peggy Phelan, that was a very important hiring, and we hired her when she was still just finishing her dissertation. I don't know where she was getting it; I think she came from Rutgers, but whether she was teaching there or whether she was doing her dissertation I don't know. But she was a radical feminist scholar. She opened up the department to that branch of thinking. Sue Ellen Case, Judith Butler, Jill Dolan... well Jill had been a student in the department and worked with Michael. So that opened in that direction, and also Peggy was very interested in what was becoming Cultural Studies, not simply Performance Studies. So that was one opening and then shortly thereafter Peggy was Chair for six years I believe, into the mid 90s. And she left for Stanford, I am not sure exactly when. But at that point we added first James Amankulor who was a scholar in African Performance, and after he passed away because of a brain tumor, we added Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, who was a Kenyan Performance scholar, playwright, novelist. We were opening in the direction towards this kind of broader view of Culture Studies. During the 70s and the 80s I continued my work with Turner and all those developments I had already been folded in. Also Michael Taussig came to the department; he is at the Anthropology department at Columbia at present and he is a specialist in Latin American studies and shamanism in Latin America; one of his most famous books is about shamanism in Latin America. We added José Muñoz. So people circulated in and out and José, who is still on the faculty, was just finishing doing his degree at Duke University (we were hiring young people). He was obviously very very bright and his field was queer studies. So if Peggy introduced strong feminist contingents, then José introduced the queer study contingents. Marcia Siegel, who had been doing dance from the criticism point of view, left and we brought here André Lepecki. And he was very young at that point, but we also had before that Randy Martin who is still at NYU in the Art and Public Policy, but he was a dance scholar; but then



came Lepecki who was a dance theorist and very interested in European dance, while Marcia had been focusing on American dance. We always were going to have a dance component; we always were going to have an African American or African component. We started to have the queer component, and with the African and African American we introduced critical race studies; so that would be like Tavia Nyong'o, who is still again on the faculty. Again, we added him as a very young person. Barbara Browning came in the late 90s or early 2000s, and her interest at that point was Latin America and Capoeira, and Latin America and dance; *Infectious Rhythm* was one of her earlier books. She was from Princeton and a very good writer, so she brought into the department this notion of high level of literary style in writing. In somewhere along the turn of the century, probably the late 90s, Diana Taylor joined the department. I met Diana in Durham, where I was a visiting scholar. I am not exactly sure how she got involved in our department, whether I was instrumental in that or Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett was instrumental or whoever was instrumental... but Diana brought this enormous energy of hemispheric consciousness and she created while she was here the *Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics* which still exists and it's extremely powerful and important to the department. I should back up a little bit: with Peggy Phelan we began the journal *Women and Performance*. So that was part of this feminist business; the journal still exists. I brought *TDR* with me from Tulane University where it was the *Tulane Drama Review*, and here it became *The Drama Review*; I still edit it here, but *Women and Performance* became a second journal in the department. There were series of other people who worked in dance like Ann Dally, who wrote a very good book on dance and moved to the University of Texas. She is now not teaching anymore. With Diana there was this opening to the rest of the Americas. For one year Joseph Roach was here, and he brought in his particular historical sense. I am very sorry that Joe left and went to Yale. I would love to have Joe as a colleague still. Phillip Zarrilli: he wrote his great works on the psychophysical actor training and a lot of colleagues were here over years. There are a lot of people who passed through and expanded Performance Studies. At the present moment, at the present constellation of faculty, where we have Diana being 2/3 of the time in Performance Studies and 1/3 in Spanish and Portuguese; Ann Pellegrini who is a specialist in Religion and Performance and Ritual, but she splits her time between Performance Studies and Religion Studies, and Karen Shimakawa, who came again around 2004 or 2005 from the University of California. She was working on theories of objection and she is now starting to explore Japanese performances. Even though she is Japanese-American, she had roughly a little knowledge of that kind of performance. Now she is trying to open up more to that. She is the current Chair of the



department. José was Chair of the department for six years of big growth. So the department has moved in my view; it has expanded its range, so it does cover more the broad spectrum than when I began and I called for the broad spectrum, but it was highly theater and dance; now it's much more. On the side that I have sometimes resistances; it is hard to distinguish Performance Studies from Cultural Studies, and I would like to see it more stay tight to the analysis of behavior, whether it's behavior in everyday life, or behavior in sport, or in popular entertainments. But sometimes we become a department really concerned with high theory. And again with Peggy Phelan and then with José the import of particular post-structuralist thought was very important. And now with the influence of *TDR* and Lepecki and myself, we are getting to deal more with neurology and neurobiology and some of the developments in cognitive psychology in performance and in performance theory. So there is a kind of tension between elements of the department that deal with performance and aesthetic performance, elements that deal with performance behavior and elements that deal with theory.

CC: Thanks! This has just brought up something which is very interesting for me. Because for people who are not from here and who are not familiar at all with Performance Studies as a field, it might be very hard to understand what's the difference between Performance Studies and Cultural Studies...

RS: I think that these differences are in the bad sense academic. In other words: what difference does makes what the difference is. If I would have asked to tell the difference in a sense, I would say that Performance Studies must have at its basis behavior and must be based, as its research tool, either on artistic practice or anthropological participant observation; while Cultural Studies has at its basis literature and writing and takes as its primary resource texts. So if you say to me that behavior is a text, if you take a Jacques Derrida approach I would say: "No! I don't want that approach! I don't look at everything as a text. I look at text as a kind of behavior". So I am more of a J. Austin "*How to do things with words*", rather than a post-structuralist "how even a behavior is a kind of text", "there is nothing outside the text" - says Derrida. So Cultural Studies is very textually driven, Performance Studies is behavior driven. Now, this is a very slippery slope and blurry boundary between the two. And I am of course advocating behavior, I am advocating participant observation, I was deeply influenced by anthropology and anthropologists and by artistic practices where you have to be in a room doing... let's call it... practical research standing on your feet. I mean, you where



there watching me work all these months in England and afterwords and you know that that's a different kind of work than sitting in a library reading a text.

CC: That was part of my attempt to try to really understand part of the methodologies in Performance Studies, because another element is just about the methodologies, which are proper of Performance Studies. So, I guess that what you have just said is pretty much about the methodologies of the field. Am I wrong? Am I right?

RS: Again... all of this is contested and I don't wanna become a defender of any kind of orthodoxy. So when you talk about methodologies and disciplines... these are things that academicians argue about and shed blood about, but they don't defeat the angry or clothe the naked, they don't bring peace to the world, instead of war; they don't alleviate poverty, they don't cure diseases. So I think we have to keep ourselves focused on what our work does to, in a certain sense, at one level alleviate the sufferings of the world and at another level entertain, make the world a more pleasant place to live in; and in a third way advance a knowledge. Now, where do you want to call that Performance Studies or Cultural Studies, where do you want to say it has this or that methodology... those kinds of questions have never deeply concerned me. Those are academic questions like in the Middle Ages when we had these philosophers arguing how many angels dance on the head of the pin, because they want to know what is the size of an angel. So when you say methodology I say: "What is that you want to research and then we can discuss what methodology you should use to get that research done." So if you wanna do research on the performances of Grotowski during his poor theatre phase, then you have to look at those archives, you have to interview the people who performed there, you have to look at the films, you have to try to experience the plastic exercises and do them yourself, etc. etc. etc. If, on the other hand, you wanna do surgery as performance then you would have to go to a surgical hospital, you have to go to a teaching hospital, you have to observe surgery. I don't think you can become a surgeon... that would take too long, but you have to watch what surgeons do. I think that for me the methodology in Performance Studies is always saying "what is done", not "what is thought", not "what is written", but "what is done", that's where it starts, and then analyzing the doing. Now, in order to analyze the doing you have to read a lot that is written, and you have to apply that kind of literally scholar's methodology or post-structuralist methodology or Foucault methodology, whatever, but for me it is about things done, physical actions... but I think some of my colleagues would disagree, and they are welcome to their disagreement. I respect their disagreement, and I don't try to say that everybody should



do what I do. I think that what I do is make my contribution and those who want to follow it or develop it still further will, and those who wanna go some place else will also. I have never engaged myself (I don't think) in academic polemics as such.

CC: Thanks! I am very interested in trying to understand the political power of Performance Studies. It's something that you have just mentioned. What can we see through Performance Studies in a kind of political way that we are not able to see from another point of view?

RS: Probably nothing! There is probably nothing that we can see from many points of view. This kind of questions is a kind of what makes you special, what makes you a thing valuable. It's a kind of like salesmanship; it's an attempt to say: "If you buy the BMW you are gonna get something that no other car can offer you. But, you know, different cars offer roughly the same thing. So the question is if you think of the world as a set of actions, a set of doings, and you understand how people do things, how people tell the truth and lie, how people follow certain set scenarios, certain narratives and what narratives they follow; then you will be able to understand how people behave and you also understand how people make works of art or make business operations or make a political campaign. And I think that an academic discipline like Performance Studies does not change the world directly, it is not in itself political, though I think Diana Taylor would say that in the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics and her involvement with the *Yes, men!* now she is trying to make an intervention into politics. Perhaps *TDR* makes an intervention; but my interventions are trying a two types of interventions: one is trying to help students find their particular voices and ways of behaving and means of research. Since I have an handcraft called teaching, then each student whose work I guide I guide in different ways. I am not rigid, I don't say that everyone who does a dissertation with me has to do the same thing. My relationship to you is different than my relationship to Sarah Cousin, is different than my relationship to Dominique Laster; and that's a kind of like, again, directing a play: each play, each performance, each devised performance is a relationship between a particular space, a particular set of actions, a particular group of people, a particular time and circumstances. So that's very important into Performance Studies, the particularity or the specificity of each arrangement, and not overall and generalize and not to be deductive, but more inductive. So if you say "what is the politics of *Imagining O*", the piece that you observed and helped work with me (and hopefully we will continue to work on), I would say that it's a kind of unusual take on women's erotic and social experience that is



at the edge between a kind of pornography and eroticism, between what is allowed and what is forbidden, what is politically correct and incorrect; my tendencies are always to move towards the regions that people feel a little bit uncomfortable. So Performance Studies when I began... the people were doing theatre, the people were doing English Literature or Literature... they all felt uncomfortable... “What is this guy doing/what is he saying? We should study sports or we should study business... we should study anything as performance... isn’t that too broad?” Well, the world is very broad. So, what’s going on in *Imagining O*? Why do so many women liked it? It’s about a woman who has been abused and debased. But at the same time it’s a celebration of one mastery owned by holding that text, by not enacting *Histoire d’O* so much, as holding the book of it and taking from and playing with it, and saying that some other questions that are raised there Shakespeare also raised. So that these are classical questions as well as modern questions; and they also rise in a kind of deep way the “place of women”, the fact that women still have not totally emerged from being in a dominated position. And I would like to see a world which dominance is alternate between men and women and “transman” and “transwomen” (in other words there are many many different genders). So if there is a politics into my work it’s a politics of a kind of not anarchy because I am very systematic, but a profound liberation, and a profound questioning, whatever it is represented with, rather than an accepting. So that’s why I resist when you ask me “what are the methodologies”, because these kinds of questions push me towards normatives, and I have always struggled against normatives.

CC: Can you explain a bit more about the way you got to focus on performance?

RS: I was thinking about these things way back in the 1960s, when I wrote the essays called “*Actuals*”, in which I said that the performance activities of human beings were play, sports, rituals, popular entertainments and so on. So it’s a question that when I looked around performance was everywhere; the anthropologists were studying performance. So I looked up there and Victor Turner was writing about rituals and Clifford Geertz was writing about Balinese cock fights. This is in the 60s and 70s. Spencer and Geller were talking about circumcisions and subincisions around Australian Indigenous people. So I saw that they were calling this anthropology, but it really was performance. In other words there was following a certain kind of script; it was behavior in which the behavior meant more than what it was simply. So you cut yourself, that’s not a wound, that is a kind of semiotic statement about something. It’s wounds that means something. So I saw that; I went to a ball game and I saw that there was a drama



in the ball game. So when you play American baseball, you hit a ball and you run around, you leave home and you go to basis, you return home, like Odysseus leaving home and going to Troy and returning; I mean I saw that there were narratives embedded in this, I felt that there were narratives embedded in these things. I make connections. I saw that what was done in the non-western and what was done in the western were very parallel. They were very similar. So in the West you have these certain magic practices, we may not call them shamanistic, but they are shamanistic. I mean these are kinds of cultural impositions, they make these broad separations, and I also saw that what was done aesthetically is also done aesthetically in rituals, excepted that in the rituals people emphasize what can the ritual accomplish, while in the aesthetics they were a kind of standing back, reflecting what did that mean. But the behaviors were very very similar; the behavior of a priest raising the host and the wine and saying “This is the flesh and this is my blood” and then “sharing and participating”, or Hamlet poisoning the cup or Polonius poisoning in the cup and Gertrude takes the wine and Hamlet says “Don’t drink!” So that’s a kind of poison communion, between again a mother and a son, a man, a Mary and a Jesus. I mean I always see connections, rather than separations, and I wanted to generate and form an academic discipline that would thrive on making connections, rather than thriving on making smaller and smaller separations. So that’s in a certain way why I am sympathetic to certain aspects of globalization. I see that globalization undermines the nation-state and maybe then we can undermine the corporations to some degree also. I see that there is a dynamic between the rich and the poor; the poor become rich and the rich become poor, there is a constant shifting. But overall I see that the level of human accomplishment is rising and the level of human suffering is falling overall in the long term. I have thought about a very long term of what happens. A hundred years ago the life expectancy of a man was a 55 years and of a woman was 58 or something, even in Northern Europe, and now the life expectancy of a woman in Japan is like 90 years, 85 years, and so on. So we know that we are making advances in this kind of medical things. So I am interested in making connections. I am also interested in the fact that we are constantly, as Erving Goffman would say, presenting ourselves, so we are performing. *“Presentation of self in everyday life”*. Wherever I looked I saw similar things being done, but I saw people putting themselves in little places, in little rooms and closets; it’s not communicating. So I wanted to create a kind of form, a public place where the English professor and the theatre professor, the sociology professor, the anthropology professor and even the mathematician and the physicist come into a public forum and exchange. I look at Performance Studies as an exchange of disciplines: it’s an inter-discipline. In a certain way I am glad that there are



Performance Studies departments, in another way I wish there were not any Performance Studies departments, that there would only be a mixture of other departments, something like that.

CC: At a certain point you were talking about Theatre Studies as a field which was going to produce people who would not really have the chance to get specific jobs, and you were talking about this shift to Performance Studies as a new field where you could get the chance to analyze the world in a new way¹. So I am basically thinking about students in Performance Studies and the kind of things that they can do in life through Performance Studies.

RS: That's another question that at one level should concern me, but it does not concern me. I am not an employment agency. I realize that most people who get a PhD want to become College professors, I did, and I did become a College Professor, so that's good. I would think that if you have a degree from a well known department like NYU's Performance Studies department that would make you attractive to be hired. But I don't teach in order so people can get jobs. I do know that people who have gotten into Performance Studies... a woman is a broad-caster for the NPR; there are people who have gone onto Law School; there are people into Arts Management; there are people who are theatre directors, there are people who are professors; but those are the endpoints, or the next-process pints. What I am interested in is teaching the specific thing, teaching comparative Rasa-Chi, comparing Greek, Indian, Chinese and Japanese performance theory or ritual, play and performance. I am very interested in the subject I teach. I don't like writing letters of recommendation; of course, I want the people I work with to get good jobs, but I wish I never have to write a letter. I do it because that is part of what I should do to be a good guy, but I hate it. I'd rather never writing a letter of recommendation; I'd rather never talking about a job. I am interested in the subject, and that's why I love so much when I get into a rehearsal room, because I am not really concerned about how to sell it. Of course I want to stage it, I want people to like it, but I am not concerned about whether Niamh (one of the actresses of *Imagining O*) is gonna get a job as an actress or not; she is working for me now. So if you are in my class you are working with me; what happens later is your business. I am not a very good professor in that regard. I wish I could teach and give no grades, read only the papers I

¹ Richard Schechner, *A New Paradigm for Theater in the Academy*, TDR, Vol. 36, No. 4, Winter 1992. Questo *Comment* di Schechner é in realt  la trascrizione dell'intervento fatto dallo stesso Schechner in occasione della conferenza nazionale dell'ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education) tenutasi ad Atlanta nell'agosto 1992.



want to read, and never write a letter of recommendation: that would be the perfect job for me!

CC: This brings me to the link between theory and practice, for instance within the department...

RS: Well, in the Performance Studies department at NYU I don't know what is the link between theory and practice. I know that a lot of students who come here are practicing art, and they want to continue their practice. When somebody asks me: "Should I come to NYU to be trained in practice at Performance Studies?" I say: "No!" It's a department that focuses on theory and, to some degree, history. We do have the ECA (East Coast Artists) workshop in the summer and people enjoy that, and Anna Deavere Smith does hers as well; but it is not a "practice as research" department; it is not like the department at Kent where we worked together. It is basically more a theoretical department. I would like it to be more practical, but it is not going to be more practical, so I accommodated myself to that. I do my practice though. I do a workshop, or I do a directing. Obviously it needs to be a relationship. What constitutes a practice? Obviously artistic production causes one kind of practice, but anthropological observation, living inside a group, studying something constitutes another kind of practice. And I imagine for some people archival research is also practice: existing within a library, finding out what happened historically... that's very very interesting. So some people do that very very well, and I respect that.

CC: When it comes to the ontology of performance, there is this big discussion which is about the nature of performance in terms of "disappearing or remaining", how can we "save" performance if the nature of performance is about disappearing. What is your opinion on this kind of issues?

RS: You know, those arguments seem to me to be highly academic and not in a particular good way. Obviously performance manifests itself in actual behavior, and obviously once the behavior is behaved it is no longer there. When we finish this interview, the interview will have moved into the past. It is the nature of the way we live life and our consciousness that the present moment becomes the past and the future becomes the present. It's also the quality of our increasing ability to digitize and record and archive things that we tend to preserve the present into an ongoing present that is not exactly passed and we are troubled by because we say: "Well, this film of you talking to



Richard is different than actually talking to him". But this notion of ghosting, this notion of performance disappearing... I have never understood it exactly. What does it mean? Let's say we watch a film of Grotowski's *Akropolis*. It is very different than having been there. Once you say that, you were at this performance or at that performance? Unless you are Grotowski himself or the performers who were there at every performance, you are always gonna be there to sampling. So you are never sure which one you are gonna get. The amazing thing about a film of course, like with a novel or a piece of writing, is that finally there is a product which of course is not the same as its reception; the reception changes. But the primary product itself is more frozen in time and space. There is a particular set of words, or there is a particular set of behaviors in the film and so on. In live performance, since it is repeated over and over again, or it is done only once and it is gone, you have the performance itself or you have its archival representation. The archival representation is not the same as the performance, because the performance was made for the one-on-one encounter. And in that sense it disappears, so it is the last time I kissed my wife. Most things in life disappear once we have done them. I am about to go out for supper, because it is getting closer to my wife birthday; we are celebrating this week. We are going to have a nice supper. When I am finished with that supper it is over. I'll have the memory of the supper. I now have the anticipation of the supper and then the supper itself. All I can say is that performance in that regard shares what mostly everything in life shares. When we talk about making records like books or films, films record behavior, books record description about behavior, monuments, buildings and so on... they don't disappear, they are not quite as ephemeral as behavior in itself. But they are also ephemeral in the sense that at the physical level they disintegrate, at the memory level they get reinterpreted. So I don't see where it is such a big problem! I mean I do see that people exercise themselves about it, and that's part of what academic style is about: you find something that nobody is worried about and you worry about it, and if you worry about it in an articulate way you'll get a big reputation and then you'll get promoted.