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M. NADIN

There exist scores and scores of problems of the arts, beginning with the expression and style and ending with the assimilation of who knows what technical novelty. And there exists a *problem* of the art its big problem — *To be, or not to be* (Hamlet, III, 1) — which includes all the other ones. This is, in terms acknowledged as late as the beginning of our century, the problem of the relationship artist-spectator, or, to speak about theatre, actor-spectator. Beyond any directorial extravagances, and more especially beyond the *super-scenographization* of the theatrical art, there becomes manifest the tendency of the theatre (marked in a higher degree than with the other arts) of expressing the *consciousness of its own existence*. This is a return towards itself, a probing into the boundlessness of its being; the moment is similar to that in which the statue, a symbol of perfection, would uncover its stone body. And, naturally, it is a dissatisfaction which was expressed by quite a number of the great creators of our contemporary epoch.

By expressing the consciousness of its own existence, that is to say by probing its inner space and time, perceiving with sensorial acuity its inner movement, the theatre of the past decades, was in a way the stage of the metaphorical adventure of modern art. It achieved, in several of its orientations of notoriety, the condition of that „holy body and food for itself“, which the great Romanian poet Ion Barbu prophesied to poetry. But above this temporary hypostasis there hovers, infinitely heavier than above the other arts, the stirring curse of the *impurity* of the theatre. It was called an art of synthesis, a formula which names impurity thus, in a finalistic way, because it assumes a moment — that of the performance — in which the heterogenous elements, included in the act of theatrical creation, make up a whole. From this angle, the creator in the theatre — the director for instance, as the coordinator of the synthesis — appears as an alchemist, mixing the test-tubes into

a state of scientific, engineer-like responsibility and liable to error only to the extent to which the balance did not have the guaranteed precision or the substances, used, the degree of purity stipulated by the norms. So there is a mystification in this formula of art of synthesis; the theatre can be itself — while accepting the suggestion of its condition of impurity — only after having been something else. This state of *something else* is comprised in the act of dramatic writing, as well as in the art, autonomous up to a certain moment, of the actor, in the technique (also autonomous within certain limits) of the stage, in the pre-eminently non-theatrical act of conceiving the settings and costumes, the music and the lights. And also in the *state of something else*, in the availability of the *actor-spectator*, called thus because irrespective of the weight of his participation in the act of theatrical creation, he, the actor-spectator, is the necessary element of the process of crystallization of the theatre.

The relationship *actor-actor spectator*, often statically approached and solved by skilful architectural formules of the performance hall, is the most vital element of the theatre. The heroic condition of the self-rediscovery of this art, only after having been something else, is best expressed by the very relationship of these two terms.

Modern creators, that is to say those who are faced with the problem of the very existence of the theatre, have inherited, together with the stage à l'italienne, the material premise of this inflexible relation, equally and monotonously settled, between a group of people that are to be found in the box of mirages and another one, called audience, comfortably seated and completely relieved of any active participation in the theatrical act. I used on purpose *active participation*, because the participation was not abolished, but diminished, in the course of time. The programme of the Brechtian theatre is, aesthetically speaking, that of the resurrection of the actor-spectator, in all possible ways, in view of achieving that politically active attitude which should go even beyond the actual theatrical art.

It would be simplistic to say, ascertaining the restricted character of this formula (and more especially its partial efficiency) back to Shakespeare! In the first place because similarly — or even with a stronger argumentation — we could urge a return to ancient tragedy, exalting that atmosphere in which the entire city participated, in huge amphitheatres, at the traditional *competition-performances*. A certain element is to be taken into consideration, by all means, and namely that *appercptive background* of the spectators, called together in order to attend the confrontation of some spectacologic variations on a given and very well known theme.

But the ideal case (under the aspect of its consequences not only of an aesthetical nature) is that of the open work. Ancient tragedy aspired, similarly to the entire classical literature and art, to the harmony of the sphere. By thinking, we would say nowadays, inane as compared to Plato the transcendental, Aristoteles tried to express those objective norms in the field of the work of art, with enough specifications con-

cerning the theatre of his time, by whose action the ideal of perfection is achieved. For all the aesthetic norms applied — norms that were preserved a long time with a well-established admiration — these ultimately also proved mere laws of a phenomenon, itself closed, of the stylistic modality of classicism. It is only the feudal mysteries, but in the sense of the consequences of the state of exaltation they proliferated, that re-opened the theatrical art, as it had been during the Dionysiac feasts, but this re-opening had only an accidental character whose consequences for the autonomous evolution of the theatre were too few. Shakespeare represents, from this angle as well, the moment of a reaction in face of the spirit of the Eleusinian theatre, the first plays which he writes (and in which he acts) illustrating the polemic stage of his art, the moment of the declarations of war made to the magical character of the mediaeval performance. Either in "King Henri VI" (in which the scene capturing the Duchess of Gloucester while practising black magic called forth so many assumptions) or in "The Comedy of Errors", "King Richard III" or "The Taming of the Shrew" we often come across lines accusing both the commonplace, non-transfigured expression as well as the attempts of certain authors (several of whom were sources of inspiration to him such as Jorge de Montemayor with his pastoral "Diana Enamorada" for "Two Gentlemen of Verona") at making a theatre only for the initiates. In the course of time he goes beyond this stage and the theatre of the great Will, in its entirety, reaches the character of the open work, an ideal field, as I said, for the manifestation of the relation actor-actor spectator. It seems that he intuited, to such an extent, the impurity of the work of theatrical art that he went through all the possible stages from the direct taking-over, sometimes in an unchanged quotation, of some lines or fragments from historical chronicle and down to the free improvisation, in dialogue, with the spectator from the pit. The condition of that *to be something else*, and to become itself through something else, of the very theatrical act, was expressed by him in various ways. Fluchère (in "Shakespeare dramaturge élisabéthain", Gallimard, 1966) remarks, only to subsequently ignore the consequences of this remark, that the power of discernment of the playwrights of the Elisabethan epoch was applied upon *the execution* and not upon *the codification*. Consequently this was the epoch of trailblazing in which not the theorization of the experiment but the discovery, in the very act of creation, was both aim and means. Denying the magical character of the performance of mysteries, Shakespeare nevertheless followed it along the line of the freedom of movement of the characters (as an element of the stage space), assimilating its amazing capacity to accelerate, stop or slow down the passage of time (as an element of stage time); he blamed the performance of moralities for its hypocrisy, but while taking over allegory he discovered, in the first place, its synonymity with the refusal of psychologization and later, the framework opened to imagination, by the dialogue with the attending actor — spectator, parallelly with the cultured author of the ballad, proverb or sparkling pun.

If stylistically speaking, "The Tragedy of Mr. Arden of Feversham" was not yet established as belonging to Shakespeare's work (the argument, of the recording of the murder, actually committed in 1550, in the same *Chronicles of Raphael Holinshed*, on which he copiously drew, being considered insufficient) we would now be in a position to bring the argument of the unity of the way of conceiving the theatre both as an open act as well as a modality constituted successively by contingency.

It is another in the series of royal murders (this is confirmed by its publication in 1592) with the same development as a mechanism similarly to the former imbued with a brutal realism but lacking neither stresses of black humor. Here ceases — several commentators noticed this — the prerogative of monarchy to tragedy and the moment had to occur, by all means, in a theatre which does not preserve typicalness (petty, perishable), but the functional system, the model. As a matter of fact it appears impossible to undertake that bizarre examination which declared itself to be axiological and aesthetical, opposing *reality to the work*, in accordance with the unit of measure of superficial typology. The model restores situations, consequently it speaks about the circumstances in which the objectivations of certain visions on the world can occur, the circumstances in which a certain ideal embodies itself in the reality of existence, sometimes even against its determination. Alice's love for Mosbie is, nothing else but the love of all Shakespeare's queens for the murderers of their husbands. And Arden's death, the same with the succession of murders, burdening so heavily the rigmarole of the pharisaical masses from the austere cathedrals in which reigns begin and come to an end. By changing the social background, the murder does not change its essence. It is as Shakesperian, caused by the same passions and interests — at another scale than in "King Richard III" — as those so stubbornly masked under the heavy purple of a royal mantle.

Actually the audience's interest is not distracted from the murders of power which constitute the object of the historical dramas, but warned as to the climate which these maintain and propagate. Moreover it is also the assumption of a demystification, because, up to now, the royal murder was always excused, it appeared, similarly to the throne, a privilege of power though its monstrousness was by no means lesser than the murder taking place in Arden's home. Turned into court characters — king, queen, duke — Arden, Alice, Mosbie have to do nothing else but change their clothes.

Shakespeare wrote — accepting the vocation of the impurity of the act of theatrical creation in this respect as well — for a particular stage. He was not its designer, but for sure he had contributed to its adjustment, in the course of time. The drawing of the Dutchman Witt, dating back to 1596 (when "The Merchant of Venice" and "Henri IV" were performed) represents a stage jutting out to the centre of the theatre, with the disposal of its three sections — the proscenium, the inner stage and the pit. There is no curtain, there are no footlights. The performance is continuous and if it had not been for the publishers' stupid ambition to

apply to Shakespeare's plays the unit of measure of classical convention, we would be exempted, nowadays, of their division into acts and scenes. Each moment — not only the whole — is open, accessible to the comment, releasing that *prise de conscience* of the actor-spectator. It was often said that Shakespeare did not write indications in brackets, neither did he require settings. A new character enters and asks: "How far is't call'd to Forres?" — Macbeth, I, 3 — or the action obliges him to sit down on his throne; *this is the place*. And the time: "The ides of March are come". ("Julius Cesar", III, I) or "They have travell'd all the night?" ("King Lear", III, 4). If, according to Henslowe the theatrical company of the Lord Admiral had props including various weapons, crowns, lion hides and heads and what not there is no reason for us to assume that "The Globe" was less liberally provided. But what is peculiar to this flea market is the symbolic intention of each object. Consequently open *by its architectonics*, then *by its sollicitation with plastical suggestions*, committed as an accomplice in the chain of disguises (which Shakespeare does not use with a sparing hand) *the hall enters the very theatrical act*. There exist keen lines, sometimes left suspended, the too hurried concern of the successors to complete them succeeding only in creating new problems to Shakespeareologists.

It is not accidental that in the 36 plays there are so many characters that are commentators, so many moments in which the audience's complicity is being prepared, obtained, exploited.

But there exists — and even actors of Burbage's or Allyn's standard have pointed this out to him — the perril that the openness of his work should turn into the premise of its discrediting. When Hamlet instructs his strolling players: "for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quatity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villaneous and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it". (III, 2), it is as if Shakespeare himself were speaking. But the case transcends him; once opened, including the necessary, vital impurity of the actors-spectators, the theatrical act, in its making, gets out of his control. And hence the fear which, after the resurrection of the Renaissance, has fed the entire history of the theatre. The stage rose higher, got aloof, the hall remained a muffled echo and a final enology. The pit, with its aleatory vitalities, got even more aloof. And Shakespeare, tamed on the stage of gorgeous settings, helped by settings that sometimes were real factories in miniature, covered the epoch of some fidelities inadequate to his spirit, sacrificed as a model of a vision which he actually rejected. Confronted with the crisis of the means of expression which all the arts equally go through (the appearance of the cinema and of television strengthening more especially this crisis) the creators split up, the tendency of the pure theatre as well as the syncretic tendencies nevertheless meeting (as I pointed out in the first pages) in the relatively new approach of the relationship between the work and its public. This is where the card of the survival, of the existence of the

theatre, is actually played. It is to be presumed that the current form of performance, in small halls, with productions meant for a series of runs, will not be definitely compromised at least for reasons of cultural necessity. But the theatre means more than that, it is an existence within existence, it lives its adventure only as a moment of life itself, beyond which limit it becomes archaeology. The exaltation, though inconclusive, of some improvisational forms, of the happening type, reflect the very tendency of the roots of the theatre to spread beyond the stage and the hall. The consciousness of the congenital impurity of the theatrical act, is itself included into the latter. The attempt at ambiguity in a certain section of modern theatre, beyond the fact that it gets bogged down in the labyrinth of sophistry, is simultaneously the reflection of a necessity, of an objective nature, which is undergone by the progressive movement of this art.

The opening of the work, under the pressure of contingencies, therefore of what we call (by extension from the language of musical aesthetics), aleatory elements has, in a first vision, only the finality of preserving and increasing the audience. But included into the act in which the aleatory element was accepted, it becomes a generator itself, a source of new contingencies, it returns to that active and individual condition (but more especially as a collective entity) of the actor-spectator.

Shakespeare is a hypothesis in this field of virtualities by his way of conceiving the theatre. Concrete possibilities, which he could not have had in view, open up a new horizon which, while moderating the possible enthusiasm of anyone, we must examine with a certain aloofness.

Contesting the traditional oneness of the work of art (which also leads to the demythologization of the very creator) the tendency towards its opening means the broad access of a series of influences directly from reality, that is to say from a natural order of things into the second, artificial universe of creation.

The broken bridges are not mended; it is not the traditional mode that must be consolidated, but another one should be synthesized. Isomorphism — the contents of art objective reality — is replaced, in perspective by the vision of art as the very moment of this reality. The procedure, according to which upon the work in execution (the example is taken from music) there acts a world of contingencies independent of the composer's or interpreter's will may still appear as an extravagance to us, while placing various objects on the wires of the piano (and these move about unpredictably during the concert) John Cage obliges the performer to a certain solidarity with the work, improvisation, in the field of a predetermined structure, being arbitrary only from one point of view. While dealing with the theatre, I do not think of a "Music for changes" composed by playing heads or tails. The actual interpellation of the spectator along the tradition of the performances at "The Globe" becomes not only a circumstantial direction (as in the agitational performances from the theatre attempted by Eisenstein), but a new way of opening up the theatrical world, of creating it a new field of impurities

by whose assimilation it should ultimately reach another condition, that of being itself.

The situation of the television camera in face of the aleatory, spontaneous reality, is different from that of the on-looker facing a new one, that of the interlocutor. The consequences were first seen in the art of film-making (this too, an art of impurity). But the effect was felt in the theatre as well. The change of role of the shooting camera suggested changes of the actor-actor-spectator relationship. The double finale of a play, of distinctly Brechtian suggestions, demonstrated with the participation of the audiences, already seems to us a cheap manoeuvre, because on other coordinates, turning to good account another theatrical space, the actor-spectator calls or drives away characters, ignores the action from one stage, concentrating his glances upon the other, climbing up to the world of suggestitons of the acting platform coming into play as early as the preparatory operation of the actual theatrical act.

There exists here relation, qualitatively similar to that which is expressed in quantum mechanics by Heisenberg in his famous relation of indetermination. There does not exist, on the one hand, the work of art and on the other one, the spectator, there does exist only their relation, the flux of interinfluences. The state of purity of the two parts was again and probably definitely impaired. The actor takes up the position of a sensitivised receiver, therefore that of a spectator, the entirety of the act of creation experiencing an almost tip-up regime, with numberless moments of mutual interaction. The spotlight turned towards the hall immediately changes the condition of those seated there. Shakespeare gave his performances in the equal daylight, towards 11 o'clock; the mystifications brought about by the curtain the spotlight do not belong to him.



Who would have said that Hamlet — the divine tragedy — is itself, in an exemplary manner, a paragon of that which constitutes the virtualities of the manner of openly conceiving the theatre by its author? "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead" by Tom Stoppard¹ unfolds its action "within and round the action in Hamlet", faithfully observing the scenes of the original tragedy. The finale is a "colage": the English Ambassadors bring the news:

"The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his comandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?"

(*Hamlet*, V, 2)

¹ In the same way: Eugene Ionesco, *Macbett*, Edward Bond, *Lear*, Heiner Müller, *Macbeth*; Rolf Hochhuth, Peter Weiss, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Erich Fried, Peter Handke, Heiner Müller, Martin Walser, Franz Xaver Kroetz, Martin Sperr, Bert Brecht, Peter Hacks, Günter Grass, *Hamlet*.

the play further staying open, through the final line. It is no longer a hypothesis that Shakespeare himself is a modern author, involved in the heroic attempt of giving to the theatre a future worthy of its past, to which he belongs only chronologically.

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