1962

Relationships in the modern French theatre.

Lee, Vera, 1923-

Boston University

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/11557

Boston University
A Dissertation

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MODERN FRENCH THEATRE

by

Vera Gladys Lee

(A.B. Russell Sage College - A.M. Yale University)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

1962
Approved by

First Reader

Herbert B. Myron
Professor of French

Second Reader

Cacillo P. di Pietro
Professor of Romance Languages
Chairman
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This dissertation was originally intended as a limited and exclusively literary study. I am grateful to Professor Herbert Myron for interesting me in the broader and more vital subject of relationships in the modern French theatre. I should like to thank him too for combining (à la Copeau) the intelligent guidance of the director with the creative liberty of the "interprete," and for being as generous with his always-current information and literature as he was patient with this struggling writer.

My most heartfelt thanks to Professor Camillo Merlino who not only opened his library to me but found the time among all his duties to offer me helpful suggestions and valuable information. More important I want to thank him for the great personal encouragement he gave me along the way and for his understanding.

Among the many professional people to whom I am in debt, I should like to mention especially Madame Nina Vidrovitch for her spontaneous kindness in opening numerous doors to me as a total stranger and in giving me the benefit of her own acute insight and views.

And lastly, deep gratitude to my close relative, Amanda Lee, for her consideration.
CHAPTER I

This stone not only attracts iron rings, but also imparts to them a similar power of attracting other rings; and sometimes you may see a number of pieces of iron and rings suspended from one another so as to form quite a long chain...

Do you know that the spectator is the last of the rings which, as I am saying, receive the power of the original magnet from one another? The rhapsode like yourself and the actor are intermediate links, and the poet himself is the first of them. Through all these the God sways the souls of men in any direction which he pleases, and makes one man hang down from another. (Plato, Dialogues)

This study will concern the interplay between the main links in the chain of the modern French theatre; the author, the director, the actor and the public—touching briefly on certain associated elements such as the stage designer, the critic and the producer. The relationships within this group will not be discussed for their anecdotal interest, that is as an account of personal dealings or connections between popular figures of the current French stage. Neither will they be analyzed for their legal or ethical significance, with a view to establishing what are properly the rights or duties of which party in a theatrical collaboration. Although biographical, moral, psychological and sociological factors will inevitably be considered, the associations examined here will be studied principally for their artistic meaning and with the ultimate purpose of assessing their value for the French theatre of the present and future.

We are reminded constantly that the theatre is more than its authors, that unlike painting, poetry and the novel, it depends for its execution on a synthesis of the work of several participants:

Separar auteurs, metteurs en scène, décorateurs, acteurs, ne va pas sans artifice. Car une oeuvre dramatique n'est pas une pièce, ou une mise en scène, ou une interprétation, mais tout.  

L'oeuvre dramatique est faite pour être représentée... La représentation appelle l'acteur qui joue et l'acteur traine avec soi le monde où il joue.

Si ses images et ses métaphores d'auteurs sont trop faibles, l'acteur interviendra avec... les accents de sa voix, les gestes de son corps pour imposer la présence du personnage; et le metteur en scène se jettera à la rescousse avec ses décors, ses lumières. Tout l'être est saisi au théâtre...

The idea of the theatre as a community of interrelationships has become an intrinsic part of the atmosphere of French theatre. The responsibility for this development can be laid to leading directors in the early decades of this century, men such as Antoine and Jacques Copeau. By their reforms they revolutionized theatre production, thereby giving great prestige to the work of the director. Since their time, in any comprehensive criticism of the French theatre, the author no longer is judged in a vacuum but in perspective with all of the creative and interpretive aspects of dramatic art.

2 Marc Beigbeder, Le Théâtre français depuis la libération, Paris, Bordas, 1959, p. 8
3 Henri Gouhier, L'Essence du théâtre, Paris, Librairie Plon, s.d., p. 33
4 Ibid., p. 57
5 Pierre-Henri Simon, Théâtre et destin, Paris, Armand Colin, 1959, p. 15
In the light of this it would be worth while to take a close look at this community of relationships and attempt to determine its importance for the modern French theatre.

It may be asked however whether the impact of such relationships is not a universal phenomenon and why such a subject should be confined to France. Part of the answer is found in the unique position that the theatre holds in that country today. France has more theatres per capita than any other country. There are about seventy-five in Paris, and in the center of town alone twice as many as in New York City. The French government encourages the flourishing of theatre through official subsidies to its five national theatres and occasionally makes grants to directors of private theatre groups. As we shall see later, this government has recently instituted far-reaching reforms which involve not only a reorganization of the important theatres of Paris, but a program of decentralization dispersing good theatre to the far corners of France.

Explaining to Americans the status of theatre in France, Oreste Pucciani deemed it:

...the gauge of the intellectual, moral, spiritual, and artistic life of the nation.

And recently Wallace Fowlie remarked:

The French attend a performance of Phèdre...in the spirit in which a baseball fan attends a World Series game.

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6 Annuaire du spectacle, Paris, Raoult, 1957, pp. 127-139
7 Jean Vilar, Arts, 10-16 décembre, 1958, p. 5
8 The French Theatre Since 1930, New York, Ginn and Co., 1954, p. 1
But the study of relationships as manifested in the French theatre has been inspired not so much by the prestige of this art in the eyes of the French people as for the part that such relationships may be playing in strengthening and revitalizing their theatre. The revolution achieved within the theatre by Antoine, Copeau and their followers was, as we shall find, largely the result of changes in the balance of relationships in the French theatre. Recognizing the need for such changes, many prominent French directors, from Copeau’s time to the present, have theorized that a proper equilibrium or harmony between the author, the director, the actor and the public is not only an immediate goal but a prime requisite for great theatre of all times. Copeau saw at the root of past periods of theatrical decadence a lack of unity between the author and the actor, and he prescribed:

Formation du comédien au métier de l’esprit, formation du poète au métier de la scène, consentement de l’œuvre littéraire au style de l’architecture théâtrale, unité foncière de la représentation: c’est de là que devait partir selon moi, l’appel à un renouvellement essentiel, à une épuration de la forme dramatique.10

Louis Jouvet stated:

...Cet accord, ce consentement harmonieux, cet équilibre entre un public, des acteurs et des auteurs, avait atteint aux dix-septième siècle un point de perfection et de pureté que l’on n’a jamais retrouvé.11

Even Gaston Baty, who was often criticized for over-emphasizing the director’s role, recommended a harmony of

10 Jacques Copeau, Souvenirs du Vieux-Colombier, Paris, Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1931, pp. 76-77
relationships which he saw as the basis of all great periods of the theatre in the past:

Alors tout s'équilibre... Les collaborateurs, écrivain, interprète, décorateur, travaillent sur un pied d'égalité, dans la mesure où leur métier respectif peut servir l'œuvre commune.\textsuperscript{12}

And today Jean Vilar among many others champions this point of view:

Rien de valable ne sera accomplie dans un théâtre sans l'assouplissement du personnel à un esprit d'ensemble.\textsuperscript{13}

It is a little less than one-half century since Copeau made the French public aware of the importance of theatre relationships. Since then the subject has received increasing attention from authors, directors and critics. There is scarcely a writer on the French theatre who does not take at least some aspect of these relationships into account. Yet, to my knowledge there has been no real study of them as such and no attempt to discover their implications.

One aspect of this subject has been studied in detail:

André Veinstein, in his scholarly, fully documented book entitled \textit{La Mise en scène théâtrale et sa condition esthétique}\textsuperscript{14} has dealt at length with the conflict between the director and the author, between advocates of a great amount of inventive liberty for the director and those wishing to restrict this liberty and concentrate exclusively on the author and his text. This is, however,


\textsuperscript{13}Jean Vilar, \textit{De la tradition théâtrale}, Paris, L'Arche, 1955, p. 104

\textsuperscript{14}Paris, Flammarion, 1955
a theoretical work, with a view to justifying the creativity of the director. In my first chapter I shall necessarily take this polemic into account as an important facet of the interplay between the author and the director, but shall take a broader view of the relationship and shall illustrate the topic specifically by examining some of the more renowned partnerships between dramatists and directors.

The connection between the theatre and the public is almost inevitably referred to in the concluding pages of modern works on the French theatre. Fowlie's *Dionysius* for instance devotes some final paragraphs to the actor and the public, and the last three pages of Dussane's *Notes de théâtre* are dedicated to the ideal of a close relationship between the stage and the audience.

However, although critics may point to these and other elements of the theatre as parts of a closely interdependent society, although they may describe here and there the interrelationships within this society, no one work has endeavored (as I shall here) to explore in any detail the patterns and significance of these associations.

This subject cannot be fully understood apart from its historical background. Since we shall have occasion constantly to compare the present and the traditional shapes of these relationships, it would be worth while to summarize briefly their nature and development from their early beginnings.

15 *op. cit.*, pp. 284 ff
The Middle Ages

The creation, organization and production of the earliest religious drama in France was centralized, usually in the hands of one person who wrote, acted in and directed his own play. By the time of the presentation of passion plays or "mystères" in the sixteenth century, theatre performances had become such highly complicated and ambitious undertakings that the business of directing them fell to a specialist, often called the "maître du jeu" and very similar to our modern director. But with the dissolution of the "mystères" the authority for staging plays was dispersed and distributed among men who held the separate functions of rehearsing actors, administering the business of production, supervising scenery, and so forth. These people arranged and adapted the work for its performance, the author merely furnishing the plot.

The first troupes traveling through France performed under the auspices of a "patron," a true businessman, who engaged them usually at a fixed salary for a stipulated time and who undertook the whole financial responsibility of the enterprise. Contracts were usually drawn up at the time of Lent. One such contract for a mystery play at Valenciennes stipulated that thirteen superintendents and conductors take charge. Three were to arrange the text and distribute the roles, one was to construct

17 A.-C. Gervais, Propos sur la mise en scène, Ed. Françaises Nouvelles, 1959, p. 20
18 Ibid., p. 23
19 Ibid., pp. 29-30
20 Petit de Julleville, Les Comédiens en France au Moyen Age, Ed. Léopold Cerf, 1889, p. 338
the stage, another to direct the actors, and so on. There were in addition to these thirty-eight actors, among whom were children for the parts of angels. Sometimes a mystery play might be composed of hundreds of amateur actors, recruited in a town from men of all classes of society.

When modern writers speak of a French public closely integrated with its theatre, they invariably refer to the audiences of the "mystères." Of them Petit de Julleville wrote:

Aucun événement ne remuait plus profondément une ville que la représentation d'un mystère. Le nombre immense des acteurs mettait un rôle presque dans chaque famille, qui se trouvait ainsi directement intéressée au succès de l'entreprise. Ceux qui n'étaient pas acteurs voulaient du moins être spectateurs; et, durant les jeux, la population tout entière s'entassait dans ces immenses théâtres, pour voir, au moins, sinon pour entendre.

The actor of the Middle Ages was sometimes employed by noblemen or subsidized by a town. At other times (as described above) he was a rank amateur or he considered acting his second profession, being an artisan, merchant, etc. In the sixteenth century, when an actor was employed for a given performance, his duties were clearly and emphatically stated as in the following contract:

Tous les joueurs sont tenus de...se rendre aux répétitions aux jours et heures fixes...sous peine d'une amende de trois patars chaque fois qu'il y manquera; Faire au théâtre dès sept heures du matin pour répéter tous les jours des représenta­tions sous peine d'une amende de six patars; Etre en scène à

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22 Julleville, op. cit., p. 354
23 Ibid., p. 354
24 Ibid., p. 328
l'heure convue, prêt à commencer, sous peine de payer dix patars, etc. 25

The status of actors in the eyes of the medieval French public was a rather inferior one. Around the mid-sixteenth century, when troupes became truly professional organizations, actors became suspect to church and parliament, were poorly paid and were often persecuted by the authorities. 26 They were refused church sacraments, such as a Christian burial, and their children were considered illegitimate. 27 Some of the hostility to actors had its foundation in their absence of moral judgement and lack of artistic ability. In 1542 an official complaint in the Parlement by the Procureur Général ran as follows:

Tant les entrepreneurs que les joueurs sont gens ignares, artisans mécaniques, ne sachant ni A ni B qui onques ne furent instruits ni exercerz en théâtres et lieux publics à faire talz actes, et davantage n'ont langue diserte ni langage propre ni les accents de prononciation décene, ni aucune intelligence de ce qu'ils dient; tellement que le plus souvent advient que d'un mot ils en font trois; font point ou pause au milieu d'une proposition, etc. 28

The interpreters of the Actes des Apôtres in particular were accused of taking great liberties with their text, adding various apocryphal incidents, lascivious farces and mummeries, in such a way as to prolong the Actes for six or seven months, thereby interfering with the duties and offices of the church. 29

26 Julleville, op. cit., pp. 341-342
28 Julleville, op. cit., p. 67
29 Ibid., pp. 29-30
Very little has been written about the men who supplied the text to actors and to theatre "entrepreneurs" in the Middle Ages. The early religious plays were first created by priests or monks, and later commercial producers often simply adapted these same plays for their public. Authors of "farces," "moralités" and other secular plays either worked without pay or for the meagre salary that they earned acting in their works. Among the prominent author-actors of the Middle Ages were Rutebeuf, Gringoire and Jean de Pont-Allais.

The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries:

In the seventeenth century, theatre troupes, especially the Comédie-Française, became highly organized. Chappuzeau, an historian of the theatre of his time, described the community of royal actors as somewhat of an aristocracy, where the most talented carried the most weight. The society of actors met regularly to read plays, to select the repertory, to settle financial accounts and to make important decision. Actors had certain official obligations. If called to play at court they had to go there on the spot and were not always paid. At times they were forced to stay there for long periods, and if there were not enough replacements for them in Paris, the Comédie had to suspend its presentations there for the while.

31 A. E. Sorel, "Le Métier d'auteur dramatique," Le Théâtre à Paris au dix-huitième siècle, p. 169
32 Samuel Chappuzeau, Le Théâtre français, Paris, Jules Bonnassies, 1675, p. 97
33 Ibid., pp. 109-110
34 Mélése, Propos sur la mise en scène, p. 64
It is curious to find that in an era when the literary genius of theatre reached its culmination, the author was well overshadowed by the actor in the French theatrical community. Although actors were still excommunicates, they held themselves in high esteem and had considerable disrespect for authors. Young dramatists had to play politics in order to persuade actors to accept their plays. Authors received good profits, but recognized or established actors earned more than great authors. An author would either sell a manuscript outright to the "comédiens" or, more often, settle for a share in the profits (usually two parts) until a specified time or as long as the play ran. When receipts dwindled, he would have it published for the remuneration and the play would become public domain. A new author earned nothing from a play but was considered an apprentice.

An author usually attended rehearsals and gave advice, but actors also gave their opinions at these sessions too. The casting of a play was not the author's right until 1683. Before that time this was the prerogative of the "sociétaires" of the Comédie, and so many political influences were at work in the process that the king sometimes had to intervene to settle

35 Mélese, op. cit. p. 110
36 Ibid., p. 169
37 Ibid., p. 297
38 Chappuzeau, Le Théâtre français, p. 69
39 Mélese, Le Public à Paris sous Louis XIV, p. 230
40 Jean Lailler, Le Contrat de représentation théâtrale, Paris, Arthur Rousseau, 1913, p. 15
the matter. From 1683 on there was legislation in the Comédie-Française for the author, and his professional rights and financial privileges became progressively strengthened.

In the eighteenth century, however (1768), the Dukes of Duras and Richelieu revoked the author's rights of casting and receiving full royalties once receipts of a play had fallen. At that time there was open warfare between authors and actors. The actors had the authors at their mercy by having a play's receipts fall prematurely. Authors complained of their insolence, their violation of rules, their falsification of receipts. It was Beaumarchais who paved the way for the establishment of authors' rights. He fought censorship and casting by the court, wrote his own stage directions, and insisted on receiving royalties. By a decree of January 13, 1791 the National Assembly recognized financial rights of an author to his work, suppressing the encroachment on these rights by the actors of the Comédie-Française. By this same decree works of living authors could be produced nowhere in France without their consent.

Actors in the eighteenth century were still refused Christian sacraments, Diderot referred to them sympathetically as excommunicates. They were considered to be morally suspect in their personal life, and as d'Alembert pointed out in his

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41 Mélése, op. cit., p. 230
42 Lailler, op. cit., p. 15
43 Ibid., p. 18
44 Cheney, op. cit., p. 383
45 Le Théâtre à Paris au dix-huitième siècle, Paris, Payot, 1930
article "Geneve" in the Encyclopédie, the denial of a Christian marriage could only aggravate this situation. 47 Rousseau held that "L’état du comédien est un état de licence et de mauvaises moeurs," that the very nature of the actor’s calling obliged him to lose any idea of virtue:

Qu'est-ce que la profession du comédien? Un métier par lequel il se donne en représentation pour de l'argent, se soumet à l'ignominie et aux affronts qu'on achète le droit de lui faire, et met publiquement sa personne en vente. 48

Yet, despite the personal attacks on actors during this period, their profession enjoyed enormous popular prestige. If in the organization of seventeenth-century theatre the actor was in a higher position than the author in spite of the ascendancy of the latter’s art in the period of Corneille, Molière and Racine, in the eighteenth century the actor gained even greater favor. It has been pointed out how the art of acting came to the fore in the Roman period of decadence of dramatic art. 49 This phenomenon also occurred in the eighteenth century. 50 Although actors reached heights of fame and popularity, dramatic authors failed to approach the level of their seventeenth-century predecessors in the realm of great tragedy, and even Voltaire’s dramas barely survived their century. The literature on the theatre of that period is almost exclusively composed of biographies, memoirs and ideas of stars like Clairon, LeKain or Dumesnil.

47 Jean d’Alembert, Oeuvres, Paris, A. Belin, 1822, Vol IV, p. 401
48 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Lettre à M. d’Alembert sur les spectacles, Ed. Fuchs, Lille, Giard, 1948, p. 121
49 Cheney, op. cit., p. 96
50 Ibid., p. 343
The function of production or "mise en scène" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was not in the hands of a specialist resembling the "maître" or "meneur du jeu" of the Middle Ages, but fell, as we have noted, mainly to the actor in the seventeenth century and more and more to the author by the end of the eighteenth. There are exceptions to this pattern: we find a remarkably living example of an author-director in the seventeenth century in the person of Molière (an actor and producer too), who in his Impromptu de Versailles set forth ideas that would edify any director of the twentieth century. And although Racine generally delegated the staging of his plays to others, he did take an active part in coaching his actresses, and has been judged "le plus 'metteur en scène' de tous les grands poètes tragiques." Still, at the end of the eighteenth century the profession of the director as such had yet to be created, or recreated.

The Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century saw the release of traditional restrictions on actors. In 1847 the Council of Soissons revoked the excommunication of the actor, and a decree of January 9, 1864, liberated him from domination by the state. It was not until 1890, however, that a syndicate, the "Chambre syndicale

51 William Stewart, "La Mise en scène d'Athalie," La Mise en scène des œuvres du passé, p. 244
des artistes lyriques et musiciens dramatiques," gave him some protection against total economic insecurity.\textsuperscript{52}

While gaining rights of human dignity the actor little by little lost privileges which were properly the author's, especially with regard to ownership of the text. The gains that dramatists made after the Revolution concerning financial rights to their works were finally formalized in 1864 when an imperial decree abolished the tradition of "droit collectif du texte."\textsuperscript{53}

It is around 1830, at the time of the romantic theatre, that the modern "metteur en scène" made his appearance in France. Madame Akakia-Viala in her study \textit{La Mise en Scène en France dans la première moitié du dix-neuvième siècle} names five people as worthy of the title in that period: Edmond Duponchel, director of the Academy of Music; Ferdinand Laloue, director of the Cirque Olympique; François-Antoine Harel, director of the Odéon and of the Porte Saint-Martin; and two authors, Alexandra Dumas ("père") and Victor Hugo.\textsuperscript{54} These men were all coordinators, taking charge of practically all the details of the stage including decor and costumes.

The romantic theatre concentrated so heavily on the visual aspects of production, on the machinery devised by the directors and all the effects intended to evoke an "atmosphere," that it

\textsuperscript{52}Pierre Chesnais, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 27
\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 233
\textsuperscript{54}Akakia-Viala, Paris, Librairie E. Droz, 1938, p. 99
incurred a great amount of criticism against the new trend and against the "metteur en scène." However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the director had emerged as a strong figure in the organization of the French theatre.

From the Turn of the Century to the Reforms of Copeau and the "Cartel"

Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, the French director has played a capital role in changing the status of French theatre by using his power to influence the nature of relationships between the various elements of his theatre. Earlier in Germany Wagner, in his capacity as a director, had emphasized subservience to the author's dramatic intentions. From this philosophy he achieved an unprecedented authenticity of production. Moreover, deeply involved in his theory of the stage was the idea that was to influence so many twentieth-century French directors, that of the theatre as a harmonious ensemble, a fusion of the arts where poetry, dance, acting and song "break into pieces and pass over into love for one another." Marcel Doisy finds in Richard Wagner

...le véritable point de départ de toute la rénovation contemporaine.

Around 1870 the Meininger players at Bayrouth had incorporated these theories of authenticity and harmony, demonstrating a

55 Akakia-Viala, op. cit., p. 138
57 Ibid., p. 15
59Doisy, Le Théâtre français contemporain, Brussels, Les Lettres Latines, 1947, p. 21
respect for the role of the author and an unusual truth of acting and direction. 60 Their director, Chroneck is sometimes considered the first modern stage director. 61

The French theatre at the time however, had nothing comparable to the organization and quality of production of the Meininger players. Despite a constant plea for truth of representation, "L'artifice y régnait en maître dans la déclamation, le jeu et la mise en scène." 62 The desire for financial success led to the production of tried and true works even by the Comédie-Française and to an author's gearing his works to an established actor's virtuosity. 63 Doisy sees in this situation a resultant sterility on the part of authors paralyzed by the impossibility of having anything of real worth produced in such a theatre. 64

It was the director-actor Antoine, in his little wooden theatre at 37 Fassage de l'Elysées des Beaux-Arts, who set about changing this state of affairs. His first production, En Famille, in 1887, was intended as a realistic portrayal of life. 65 His aim was truth, and in order to dispense with false theatrical conventions he did away with footlights and curtain, 66 and among other innovations, presented the famous "dos d'Antoine" to his

60 Doisy, op. cit., p. 22
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Marteau, (Ed.), De la décadance de l'art dramatique, Paris, Dentu, 1849, p. 56
64 Doisy, op. cit., p. 22
66 Ibid., pp. 102 and 82
67 His actors were almost always amateurs, he emphatically refused the traditional and artificial star system. He noted how real were the crowd scenes of the Meininger troupe which used for supernumeraries actors who also took principal roles, and he too had players double up in minor parts. 68

Unfortunately, Antoine’s name became linked inextricably with doctrinaire naturalist playwrights and a staging of an exaggeratedly realistic nature. His concentration on detailed, super-representational settings inspired a strong reaction on the part of those for whom the author’s language far outweighed the production. These were the adherents of the poet’s theatres, whose presentations were characterized by a suggestive or symbolic art rather than actuality reproduced on stage. In 1890 Paul Fort, aged 17, created the Théâtre d’Art where he produced works for such writers as Shelley, Marlowe and Maeterlinck, and three years later his establishment became the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre under Lénâ-Fœ. 69 A multitude of little-remembered poet’s theatres sprang up at this time, some calling themselves Théâtre Idéaliste or Théâtre Esotérique, many bearing the name Théâtre des Poètes. 70 Some of their offerings were not really plays but more in the nature of recitals and readings 71 that

67 Waxman, op. cit., p. 98
68 Ibid., pp. 95-96
69 Ibid., p. 95-96
70 Ibid., pp. 27 ff
71 Ibid., p. 27
72 Dorothy Knowles, La Réaction idéaliste au théâtre depuis 1890, Paris, Librairie Droz, 1934, p. 39
gave a minimum of importance to the actor and to the production and a maximum of emphasis on the author and his work.

But the wealth of poetic or art theatres toward the turn of the century did not mean that French theatre had reached some high spiritual plateau, with a public won over to works of dramatic worth and a theatre ruled by great authors. Well into the twentieth century Paris was to a good extent given over to that nineteenth-century creation, the "Théâtre du boulevard," frothy nothings in which stars overshadowed authors and directors.72 Besides these plays the repertory of the French theatre was comprised mainly of moralizing thesis plays of Hervieu, Brieux or Dumas-fils and the short-lived naturalistic comedies of Becque and his school. The easy commercial success was everywhere, even at the subsidized Odéon.73 Claudel wrote significant dramas in those years, but theatre owners would not follow Lugné-Poe's example in producing them for fear of financial failure.74

Although in 1910 the director Jacques Rouche was achieving interesting effects with his Théâtre des Arts and its stylization of décor,75 his approach was too limited for a real regeneration of the theatre. Antoine had gone just so far without evolving, and even Lugné-Poe was found to be stultifying with Ibsen and the symbolists.76

72 Pucciani, op. cit., p. 3
73 Maurice Kurtz, Jacques Copeau, Paris, Nagel, 1950, p. 21
75 Doisy, op. cit., p. 29
76 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 23
Then, to use a worn cliché, came Copeau. Jacques Copeau had watched the progress and end result of Antoine's innovations and had noted the achievements of Germany's Reinhardt, England's Gordon Craig and Russia's Stanislavsky. When Jacques Rouche offered him a chance to write for the theatre, the immediate result was an adaptation of the *Brothers Karamazov*, but doubtless of more lasting value to the modern French theatre was Copeau's article in the September, 1913, issue of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* with its description of the aims of Copeau's own troupe, the Vieux-Colombier.

The history of the Vieux-Colombier with its spartan training, its tribulations and rewards, is related in numerous works on the modern French theatre and would be out of place in this introduction. However, since Copeau's accomplishments effected through the work of this troupe were intimately involved with the trend of relationships in the modern French theatre, let us enumerate a few of his important reforms:

1) Supremacy of the author and his text, and

2) A suggestive rather than realistic interpretation of the author and his text by the actors.

In subordinating his theatre to the intentions of the author, he aimed for:

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77 Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 31
79 Copeau, "Un Essai de rénovation dramatique," *Nouvelle Revue Française*, #57, 1 septembre, 1913
80 Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 127
3) A homogeneous and rigidly-trained troupe\(^{82}\) and
4) A fixed and minimal decor. \(^{83}\)

And, as an outcome of these achievements, the realization of his goal of attracting the public to what was noblest in the theatre. \(^{84}\) Underlying these tenets one would recognize Copeau's constant allegiance to the principle of harmony of all the elements of the theatre. This motion that had so characterized Wagner's view of the theatre, a proper balance and a unity between the author, the director, the actor, the public, every element involved in the world of drama, was, as we shall see, emphasized time and again by Copeau in his striving for the perfection of the French theatre.

Many of Copeau's aims concerning this theatre were furthered by his friends and disciples, Louis Jouvet, Charles Dullin, Georges Pitoeff and Gaston Baty. In July, 1927, these artists, in a harmonious collaboration of director with director, published a manifesto declaring a program of collaboration that included a common publicity, mutual aid and an exchange of services. \(^{85}\) Their partnership has been commonly referred to as the "cartel." In implementing Copeau's ideas, this group and their disciples have constantly sought the proper balance of relationships that they have considered necessary for a revitalization of the French theatre.

\(^{82}\) Kurtz, op. cit., p. 51
\(^{83}\) Ibid., p. 136
\(^{84}\) Ibid., p. 213
\(^{85}\) Anders, op. cit., p. 149
In sketching the development and nature of the organization of the French theatre to modern times we have noted the fluctuation in balance of power and prestige between the actor and the author. We have also seen how the director of a troupe was at the start author and actor too, became a specialized professional coordinator during the sixteenth-century "mystères," then disappeared as such. We noted how this function, which with the exception of some prominent authors, fell mainly to the actor in the seventeenth century, became more and more the function of the writer in the eighteenth and developed once again into a specialization in the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century the French director has become an outstanding fixture of the theatre community. He is only rarely an author and is or has been in almost each case an actor. To the eminent director, usually to one who acts, directs and produces with his own troupe, we often give the title "animateur."*

We have seen how the early "animateurs" of a few decades ago took upon themselves the goal of imbuing French theatre with renewed glory, sometimes seeking authenticity through realistic productions, sometimes aiming for truth by means of a symbolic or suggestive presentation, and, especially with Copeau and his

*"Jardinier des esprits, médecin des sentiments, horloger des paroles, accoucheur de l'inarticulé, ingénieur de l'imagination, cuisinier des propos, régisseur des âmes, roi du théâtre et valet de chambre de la scène...it est indéfinissable, car ses fonctions sont indéfinies." (Jouvet, Réflexions du comédien, Ed. de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1938, p. 187)
followers, by trying to achieve a proper balance of relationships within the French theatre.

I should like now to devote myself to the study of these relationships, and shall proceed by examining separately the most important combinations of the components of the modern French theatre, beginning with the author and the director.
In this chapter on the association between the author and the director in the modern French theatre, we shall deal first with the problem of the opposition between a literary or author's theatre and a theatre emphasizing stage production and the director. In this connection we shall discuss some relationships in which the director is the dominant force and others where the author reigns supreme. We shall illustrate the topic with specific examples of certain directors who have been thought to have betrayed the author's intention and others who have demonstrated a great respect of the author and his work. Finally we shall investigate some prominent partnerships between directors and their contemporary authors, partnerships in which neither side predominated but which were obvious instances of harmonious collaborations between the two elements.

We have noted how the rise of the director in the nineteenth century brought with it a wave of criticism against his excesses. It was considered that the director had usurped the position which rightfully belonged to the author.¹ The controversy has continued for a century or more, and Jean Vilar, one of the leading "animateurs" in France today, gives the following explanation for this:

Qu'on le veuille ou non, du fait même que l'auteur dramatique a besoin d'autrui pour faire représenter sa pièce, il y a la existence de deux volontés. Il y a disharmonie du fait même que l'œuvre représentée est le produit de deux imaginations.²

¹ Akakia-Viala, La Mise en scène en France, pp. 138-146
² Vilar, De la tradition théâtrale, pp. 69-90
The problem has clarified itself on an artistic level in terms of theatre as literature or text versus theatre as a spectacle. According to Louis Jouvet:

Il y a d'abord le théâtre théâtral ou spectaculaire, celui qui donne toute l'importance... au spectacle, et dans lequel le metteur en scène peut s'en donner à cœur joie... Et il y a le théâtre des dramaturges et des poètes qui fait de l'art dramatique un genre littéraire au premier chef; celui qui donne l'importance au texte et n'admet que par surcroît et comme complément les éléments spectaculaires.  

André Veinstein has developed extensively this theoretical side of the argument in chapters entitled "Texte ou spectacle," "Le Théâtre, existence littéraire ou existence scénique," in which he discusses "La Scission entre deux univers distincts: celui du livre, celui du spectacle..."

The literary element or dramatic text has often been referred to symbolically as the written "word"—in French, "le verbe," a term reminiscent of drama's biblical incipience: Henri Ghéon among others has referred to the literary origins of the theatre by the phrase "Au commencement était le verbe." For many, the counterpart of "verbe" is "geste," a word often used to denote not only physical movement of the actor but the whole visual aspect of theatre production, the spectacle. The significance of the "geste" was discovered by Paul Claudel in the formalized movement of the Japanese theatre:

3 Jouvet, Réflexions du comédien, pp. 192-193
4 Veinstein, La Mise en scène théâtrale, p. 19
5 Ibid., p. 46
6 Ibid., p. 48
7 Henri Ghéon, L'Art du théâtre, Montréal, Ed. Serge, 1944, p. 25
Le Nô...n'a pas seulement une valeur artistique et une valeur religieuse, il a une valeur éducative. Il apprend à l'artiste et au spectateur l'importance du geste...

Alfred Jarry refers to the "geste universel" of ancient Greek theatre and would have drama interpreted by marionnettes who "ne vivent que pour le mystère des gestes qu'ils symbolisent."

The author and the director, the literary theatre and the spectacle, the "word" and the "gesture" confront each other constantly on the modern French stage. Jean-Louis Barrault has said:

Le geste et le verbe sont les deux postulations entre lesquelles nous évoluons...

Each of these poles has its adherents, its partisans. Among those favoring a theatre dedicated to the author have been writers who went so far as to desire the elimination of all stage production. Mallarmé, for example, wrote:

Un livre dans notre main suppléera définitivement à tout: symphonie intérieure qui se jouera dans le silence d'une chambre, pièce de théâtre évoquée en nous, définitive, ballet mystérieux de phrases courant sur les larges feuilles.

Becq de Fouquières, the author of an Art de la mise en scène believed that:

La lecture suffit au plaisir de l'esprit de l'homme cultivé capable par l'imagination de créer une mise en scène discrète uniquement destinée à mettre l'œuvre poétique en valeur.

In contrast with such proponents of a strictly literary theatre are those who, like the Swiss Adolphe Appia and the

8 Claudel, L'Oiseau noir dans le soleil levant, Paris, Gallimard, pp. 98-99
9 Jarry, Œuvres complètes, Vol. IV, Lausanne, Kaiser, s.d., p. 165
10 Ibid., Préfaces to Vol. VI, p. 9
12 Veinstein, op. cit., p. 54
13 Ibid., p. 52
English Gordon Craig who envisaged stage production as an end in itself. To this extreme went the poet-"animateur" Antonin Artaud, who would all but abolish the author's work in his allegiance to the "spectacle." In his discussion on the artists of the Balinese theatre, Artaud writes:

Ils démontrent victorieusement la prépondérance absolue du metteur en scène dont le pouvoir de création élimine les mots.  

He declares further that:

Un théâtre qui soumet la mise en scène et la réalisation... au texte, est un théâtre d'idiot, de fou, d'inverti, de grammarien, d'épicier, d'anti-poète et de positiviste, c'est-à-dire d'Occidental!  

For Artaud the "geste" is the main road to the power of the director, since, by placing emphasis on gesture, one is no longer the slave of the author's writings. Artaud's theories helped to engender a whole school of French pantomime artists (among the most prominent: Etienne Decroux, Jean-Louis Barrault, Marcel Marceau), who, although less radical or vehement than Artaud, call for, by implication, the effacement of the author when they practice this art of mime that Decroux termed "a pure form of theatre."  

If the divergence between the literary and scenic trends suddenly became a problem in the French theatre, it was the
result of the emergence of the director as a dominant figure of the French stage. It was he who decided ultimately whether a theatre was to be dedicated to the author's text or to his own art of stage production. Moreover, if the issue of written drama versus spectacle persists at the present time, it is to a great extent because of the director himself, his temperament, and the way in which he regards his artistic goals or obligations. Louis Jouvet has said:

Il y a deux sortes de metteurs en scène: ceux qui attendent tout de la pièce, pour qui l'œuvre est essentielle, et ceux qui n'attendent rien que d'eux-mêmes, et pour qui l'œuvre est une occasion.19

The second type of director, the one who in effect sets himself above the author, was considered by Giraudoux to be more common in Germany than in France. According to that author, the German audience would go to plays in order to see how a director had interpreted them20 (Max Reinhardt was a well-known illustration of this). In Giraudoux's opinion, the French have such a fondness for text or dialogue that they prefer to listen to the work of a good playwright than to have their senses jumbled with effects of production, and therefore directoral showmanship has not been so common in France.21

Be that as it may, French theatre most definitely has had and continues to have its share of virtuoso directors who will

19 Jouvet, Réflexions, p. 192
20 Jean Giraudoux, Littérature, Paris, Grasset, 1941, p. 229
21 Ibid., p. 237
enroach on the author’s realm, men of talent, who for good or bad have to some extent what Copeau calls the "terrible faculty of making something out of nothing." 22

Antonin Artaud, whom we have just cited as an exponent of "spectacle" over "texte," was himself a living example of a director who took precedence over the author. For Artaud, the director should be "a kind of manager of magic, a master of sacred ceremonies." 23 Artaud's was a totalitarian view, stemming, one would suspect, not so much from aesthetic principles as from the nature of his own strong and dominant personality—in 1935, for example, he refused an offer of collaboration by Jean-Louis Barrault, saying,

Je ne veux pas proclamer un spectacle monté par moi s'il y avait même un clin d'œil qui ne m'appartienne... 24

Artaud's philosophy of the theatre as a sheer visual effect or a creation totally of the stage, his exalted view of the director's position in theory, and his tyrannical attitude toward his own artistic prerogatives led him to select as material for performance not necessarily plays of intrinsic artistic merit but adaptations of novels or his own dramatizations of biblical or historical themes, such as:  Le Prise de Jérusalem,  La Conquête du Mexique, a story of the Marquis de Sade, and

22("L'Esprit des petits théâtres," Speech by Copeau to Washington Square Players), Cahiers de la Compagnie Renaud-Barrault, 1954, p. 17
23Artaud, Le Théâtre et son double, p. 60
24Lettres d'Artaud à Jean-Louis Barrault, Paris, Bordas, 1952, p. 91
des œuvres du théâtre élisabéthain dépouillées de leur texte et dont on ne gardera que l'accoutrement de l'époque, les situations, les personnages et l'action.²⁵

In the Artaud tradition was Gaston Baty, who was perhaps the artist most frequently criticized for abuse of directoral power and for the resultant imbalance in director-author relationships. Baty's point of departure is one that seems at first glance not merely harmless but helpful. One of his main theories was that the intentions of the dramatic author are sometimes lost in the writing. It is up to the director, therefore, to capture these intentions and provide the author with a truer expression of his own idea:

Le metteur en scène doit restituer au texte ce qui a été perdu entre le rêve du poète et le manuscrit.²⁶

But for Baty this reasoning could and did lead to an interpretation allowing a maximum of opportunity for a director, and for which, as it has been said "le texte n'est qu'un prétexte."²⁷ In Baty's presentation of Racine's Bérénice the stage was dominated by a huge funeral monument before which vestal virgins would kneel, burning real incense, and the play was capped with a grand finale depicting on stage senators, generals and a cross-section of the whole Roman populace. As Dussane pointed out, "Racine wasn't enough."²⁸

²⁵Artaud, Le Théâtre et son double, pp. 106, 107 and 136
²⁶A.-C. Gervais, Propos sur la mise en scène, (quoted from Baty's "Conférence de la Rive Gauche," 1937), pp. 41-42
²⁷e.g. Jouvet, Réflexions, p. 193
²⁸Dussane, Notes de théâtre, Paris, Lardanchet, 1951, pp. 84-85
Even with an author of lesser importance like Labiche, critics found Baty's liberties offensive. In staging the Chapeau de paille de l'Italie, according to Brasillach, Baty added an unimpressive orchestration which slowed the pace, and he had his actors move like marionettes in order to evoke an atmosphere of unreality. For Brasillach, Labiche, to be effective, had to be played both fast and believably.29

Taking issue with Baty's "chères petites lumières" or "manies," Brasillach gave him the title of "ennemi du véritable art dramatique,"31 and warned:

Décidément il convient de nous méfier des enrichissements que nos metteurs en scène apportent aux classiques.32

Rather than restrict himself to the ready-made dramatic creation of a competent playwright, Baty often adapted or dramatized novels, such as Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment or Flaubert's Madame Bovary.33 Of this tendency Pierre Brisson said:

Baty souffrait de n'être ni tout à fait auteur ni tout à fait comédien... il sentait en lui des possibilités littéraires.34

In the last twenty years other men have been placed in the class of directors who actually extend into the realm of the author. Marc Beigbeder has granted this dubious distinction to

29 Robert Brasillach, Animateurs de théâtre, Paris, Table Ronde, '54, p. 183
30 Ibid., p.183
31 Ibid., p.184
32 Ibid., p. 144
the competent French director Raymond Rouleau, whom he identifies as an "expressionistic" director. By this he refers not so much to expressionism as the artistic or literary style that achieved great popularity in Germany, but to "la mystique du geste... de l'ensemble, du metteur en scène... et avant tout, de sa visualité." He states:

Par nature, l'expressionisme a toujours eu tendance à réduire Sire le mot, ou à le prendre chez des vilains, plus tailloiables. 35

Beigbeder feels that Rouleau's interpretations of Tennessee Williams, Tolstoy, Superville and Huxley lose their meaning because of "cette lourde escorte... cette sauce" of Rouleau's staging. 36 He believes that Rouleau's productions indulge in brutalities and suspense which provide a spectacle in themselves.

Another critic, reviewing Rouleau's adaptation of Arthur Miller's The Crucible, states:

...Le metteur en scène et les acteurs ont pris un soin minutieux à châtier l'oeuvre originale.

Monsieur Rouleau s'est appliqué... à transformer une oeuvre de dénonciation sociale en une sorte de vaudeville sentimental. 37

And André Muller, while praising Rouleau's "ingéniosité et sa conscience professionnelles," writes of that director's production of Cyrano de Bergerac:

Les inventions jaillissent comme de la cuisine les marmitons de Ragueneau, elles entretiennent l'appétit; un peu trop peut-être... 38

35 Marc Beigbeder, Le Théâtre en France depuis la Libération, Paris Bordas, 1959, p. 150
36 Ibid.
38 André Muller, Théâtre Populaire, #1, Mars, 1956, p. 79
Brasillach at one time considered Rouleau the only director giving promise of carrying on the aims of the "cartel," but he deplored the fact that in nine years Rouleau had displayed his talents not in serving great dramatists but in staging the social dramas of Bruckner* and a detective story by J.B. Priestley.

The very talented Roger Planchon of the Théâtre de la Cité at Villeurbonne, doubtless the most talked-of young director in France today, has also been the butt of such accusations. According to Guy Demur, Planchon used Adamov's adaptation of Gogol's novel *Les Ames mortes* as a "prêttexte d'une démonstration théâtrale," Mlle Line Buet in *La Revue Moderne*, although allowing that the play itself lacked cohesion, saw in this production "une belle réussite artistique." But Guy Demur felt that granting such praise, Adamov's adaptation had been designed for a simple, stylized presentation such as those of Vilar, and that Planchon failed in his task by transforming the text into a purely visual spectacle. In this connection the critic Bernard Poirot-Delpech declared:

*L'effort ne doit pas se voir. Planchon en fait trop.*

Robert Kanters has referred to Planchon as the "new Baty," and he described that director's production of Marlowe's *Edward II*

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39 Brasillach, op. cit., pp. 178-179
40 Demur, *Théâtre Populaire*, #38, 1960, p. 93
42 op. cit., p. 90
43 Réalites, janvier, 1961, p. 47
* Le mal de la jeunesse, Races
** Virages dangereux
presented in front of a Roman wall in the amphitheatre of Orange as follows: "Il ne reste rien de la muraille, pas grand-chose de Marlowe."  44 He conceded that Marlowe, a true man of the theatre, always took considerations of the stage into account and that his original text could not be considered as untouchable or sacred, but concluded:

Il n'est donc pas question d'accuser M. Planchon d'avoir porté une main sacrilège sur un chef d'œuvre, mais de se demander si ses modifications sont des améliorations.  45

(Planchon, however, is obviously not one to be deterred by such criticism judging from the 1961-1962 theatre season in which he dismayed Paris theatregoers and critics with a sociological interpretation of Molière's Georges Dandin.)

For every "spectacular" director who is compelled to mark the author's creation with his own unmistakable personality and virtuosity, one could name a director whose aim is fidelity of presentation and a sincere wish to serve the author. Among the most prominent have been Fermand Gémier, Lugné-Poe, Jacques Copeau, Charles Dullin, Georges Pitoëff and Jean Vilar. These men have all stated their position with regard to the author's work:

Gémier: Est-ce qu'avec des bouts de bois et des toiles on peut ajouter à la pensée d'un auteur qui a une langue admirable... 46

44 Express, 4 août, 1960, p. 27
45 Ibid.
46 Veinstein, op. cit., p. 261
Lugné-Poe: Nous voulons faire connaître des œuvres où l'idée seule dominera... n'est-ce pas une erreur en effet, de vouloir faire jaillir d'objets ou de matérialités, une sensation d'art? 48

Copeau: Nul plus que nous n'est ennemi de ce qui dans le drame voudrait indûment se substituer au mérite dramatique. 49

Dullin: ... Quant à moi, j'ai le sentiment d'avoir toujours recherché la mise en scène en partant de l'intérieur de la substance même de l'oeuvre... 50

Pitoëff: Entrer en communion avec l'oeuvre, premier devoir du metteur en scène. 51

Jouvet: La pièce nous conduit... Il n'est qu'une attitude: la soumission. 52

Vilar: La mise en scène dépend à chaque fois de l'oeuvre. 53 Il faut d'abord se reporter à l'auteur. L'écouter. Le suivre. 54

Of these men Lugné-Poe is without doubt the one who gave the most importance to the author's text. Going to the opposite extreme from Artaud's view of the theatre as a "spectacle," Lugné-Poe's Théâtre de l'Œuvre was, as the name suggests, a literary theatre completely subordinated to the author's work. Just as Paul Fort before him had proclaimed the desire to present "toutes les pièces injouées et injouables" to the public, 55 Lugné-Poe was essentially a "flaireur de manuscrits" 56 with a marvellous

48 Knowles, La Réaction idéalist de au théâtre, pp. 199-200
49 Copeau, Critiques d'un autre temps, Paris, Éds. de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1923, p. 247
51 Pitoëff, Notre théâtre, Paris, Messages, s.d., p. 23
53 Vilar, op. cit., p. 36
54 Ibid., p. 54
55 Knowles, op. cit., p. 200
56 Robichet, op. cit., p. 196
faculty for evaluating new plays. On the other hand, his staging although always intelligent, often unusual, was generally careless and imperfect, for as Lagne-Poe himself said:

Nous n'attachons qu'une importance médiocre au côté matériel dénommé théâtre.

According to Pierre Brisson:

Les soins matériels du spectacle lui importaient peu... il ne s'agissait pas de mettre au point un art mais de livrer des textes au public.

Sometimes the emphasis on literature at the expense of an effective stage presentation had a nefarious effect on a performance at the Oeuvre. Speaking of their production of Bataille's Le Belle au bois dormant, Gertrude R. Jasper said:

The play failed because of its basically anti-scenic qualities. Floods of spiritualist philosophy drowned the work...

Nevertheless Lagne-Poe's total dedication to the author's work and his taste with regard to dramatic literature led him to discover and reveal to Paris theatregoers dramatists such as Maeterlinck, Jarry and Claudel.

Jacques Copeau, Charles Dullin and Jean Vilar are three "animateurs" who have been indeed conscious of the exigencies of the stage and whose theatres were not (in Vilar’s case, is not)

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57 Gertrude R. Jasper, Adventure in the Theatre, p. 274
58 Knowles, op. cit., p. 199
59 Brisson, Le Théâtre des années folles, pp. 69, 81
60 Jasper, op. cit., p. 145

*(It is interesting that at one time, before allying himself with the symbolists, young Lagne-Poe had dreamed of producing "spectacles qui seront purement spectacles." Robichez, op. cit., p. 73)*
primarily media for the dissemination of new or unpublished dramas. Yet, as it is apparent from the above quotations, their aim was to serve their authors as faithfully as possible. With Copeau, as we saw, adherence to the author's text was one of the main tenets of his manifesto of the Vieux-Colombier.  

Said he:

Le poète seul est la véritable origine et la vie de tout drame, comme Esychle l'était du drame grec; et le metteur en scène doit capter l'esprit de l'unité primitive du drame. 61

In practice Copeau followed this principle religiously. Sylvain Dhomme, in a chapter devoted to Copeau and entitled "L'Alliance avec la littérature," states of Copeau's theatre:

Si une technique existait, elle ne visait nullement aux effets et aux éclats que le public avait l'habitude d'applaudir. 62

Edouard Champion, in discussing Copeau's revival of Molière's Le Misanthrope at the Comédie-Française, said that people expected to see something completely revolutionary, but that:

Prêter à M. Jacques Copeau un tel sacrilege, c'était mal connaître son goût et son respect des classiques...Les habitués de la Comédie-Française n'assisteront pas à de brillants feux d'artifices extérieurs...cependant ils retrouveront un accent de vie qui avait un peu disparu. 63

Waldo Frank, contrasting Copeau with Craig and Appia, put an ethnological interpretation on Copeau's fidelity to the author's text:

In him was the saving strain...of a French tradition. For there is no tradition in modern Europe so great in its defense

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60 (see introduction, p. 20)
61 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 126
62 Dhomme, op. cit., p. 124
63 Champion, La Comédie-Française, Paris, Stock, s.d., pp. 226-227
of the Word... It was doubtless this racial character which
determined Copeau's part and which kept the Paris stage,
however low it lay, untouched by the blandishments of
unliterary innovators.64

Charles Dullin, even after leaving Copeau's troupe and de-
veloping his own style of stage production, did not basically
betray Copeau's belief in a director's fidelity to his author.
Doisy states that although Dullin recognized the necessity for
certain stage conventions in order to create "l'illusion scénique,"
Dullin chose among those conventions only the ones which best
conveyed the poetic thought of the author:

...celles qui contribuent à créer l'illusion poétique et
permettent l'expression harmonieuse de la pensée.65

It is true that Dullin was occasionally charged with taking
certain artistic liberties. In his production of the Marriage
of Figaro, Brasillach objected:

On chante l'air de Chérubin sur une musique nouvelle, alors
que Beaumarchais avait demandé la musique de Malbrough, on
bouleverse sans raison les entrées, les sorties, la présenta-
tion.66

Yet with Dullin such criticisms were the exception. Ordinar-
ily his treatment of a play was successful in emphasizing the
intrinsic quality of the work. Dussane said of his inter-
pretation of Corneille's Cinna:

On fut ébloui de retrouver, neuf et étincelant, le vieux
texte décapé d'alluvions de la routine par sa merveilleuse,
et respectueuse intelligence.67

Doisy and Brasillach have commented on the sober subordina-
tion of Dullin's décor to the author's work, and among the many

64Frank, The Art of the Vieux-Colombier, Eds. de la Nouvelle Revue
Française, Paris, Gallimard, 1918
65Doisy, op. cit., pp. 51-52
66Brasillach, op. cit., p. 192
67Dussane, op. cit., p. 80
testimonials of his fidelity to the author are such commentaries as:

**Dussane:** A travers sa carrière... il apparaît comme un serviteur passionné de l'œuvre. 68

**Coindreau:** Charles Dullin accueille tout ce qui peut mettre en relief la poésie et l'esprit d'un texte sous le strict contrôle de la raison. 69

Jean Vilar (an ex-pupil of Dullin) whose "mise en scène" is of the highest quality, has consistently been a champion of the author and his text:

L'œuvre, l'œuvre toujours. Il vient un moment, où, si libres qu'ils soient à l'égard du "régeisseur," le peintre, le compositeur, les comédiennes, les comédiens, le constructeur, l'éclairagiste, se trouvent enfin face à face avec l'œuvre, l'œuvre seule. 70

His own productions have amply illustrated this philosophy. One example of Vilar's own fidelity to the author's work was his version of *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, one of Marivaux's least interesting and least played comedies. Beigbeder saw in this production a "vraisemblance, calme même qu'avait conçue sans doute Marivaux." 71 Robert Kemp said of this same presentation:

*Qu'a fait Vilar? Il a retrouvé l'état d'âme de Marivaux quand il écrivait.* 72

Molière's *Don Juan* as presented by Vilar elicited these comments:

68 Dussane, op. cit., p. 78
69 Maurice Edgar Coindreau, *La Farce est jouée*, New York, Eds de Maison Française, 1942
71 Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 208
Le Don Juan me semble sortir tout droit du texte de Molière. 73
La réalisation de Vilar fait régner le texte. 74
Vilar serviteur du texte. 75

(This same play had failed when produced by Jouvet in 1947, because, according to Beigbeder and others, Jouvet had reduced the text to the actor's interpretation of Don Juan instead of presenting "le texte nu" both in meaning and in structure. 76

These are but a few among countless tributes to Vilar's perpetual loyalty in rendering the works of his authors.

In most of the above illustrations of subordination or domination it has been a question of a director's interpreting the works of authors no longer living. So the matter of how much liberty to take has usually been up to the director who was free to proceed alone within his own boundaries of good taste - or fear of public opinion and bad notices.

When a director decides to stage the work of a living author, especially one living nearby, the situation becomes more complex, and personal contact may present him with certain problems. He may find that the author's personality imposes itself on him, that there is often blatant disagreement on the part of the dramatist with regard to the director's interpretation of his work. True, sometimes the temperaments of dead authors

73 Jacques Lemarchand, Figaro Littéraire, 19 décembre, 1954
74 Robert Kemp, Plaisir de France, janvier, 1954
75 François Mauriac, Table Ronde, février, 1954
(73, 74 and 75 quoted in Marie-Thérèse Serrière, Le T.N.F. et nous, Paris, Libraire José Corti, 1959, pp. 165-166.)
76 Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 62
can assert themselves, as for example in the case of those like George Bernard Shaw, who annotate their plays with copious and definite stage directions, thereby lessening the director's prerogatives. But the problem of relationships between author and director becomes most acute, most complex, and needless to say most vital when a director works hand in hand with a contemporary playwright.

Besides the endless discussions preliminary to starting production there is the touchy problem of the author's attending rehearsals. Roger Blin, for instance, has been vociferous in his resentment of Samuel Beckett's presence at rehearsals of Krapp's Last Tape, when the author tried to control those rehearsals. Rather than being obliged to follow Beckett's directions, Blin would have preferred to improvise his own. He commented: "La mise en scène n'aime pas que la machine à inventer soit bloquée par l'auteur."

On the other hand, collaboration with a living dramatist has been considered a help and an inspiration by some directors. André Barsacq, referring to his staging of Jean Anouilh's Bal des Voleurs at the Atelier in 1938, stated:

Avant de monter ce spectacle, pendant plusieurs mois, j'en ai discuté avec Anouilh. Les personnages nous sont devenus familiers; nous vivions littéralement avec eux. La mise en scène naissait dans mon esprit au cours de ces échanges mutuels. Par cette genèse en commun, par ces rapports étroits, ces trouvailles faites ensemble, cette communion totale avec l'auteur, la pièce prenait sa forme définitive.

77 Guy Verdot, "Beckett Continue d'Attendre Godot," Figaro Littéraire, March 12, 1960, p. 3
78 A.-C. Gervais, Propos sur la Mise en Scène, p. 65
But it is difficult to appreciate the factors involved in this sort of association by citing such isolated instances as the above. In order to understand better the nature of the relationships between the author and the director in the modern French theatre, I should like to investigate more fully some active and protracted collaborations between notable modern French directors and their contemporary authors. As we shall see, in these cases neither the author's nor the director's contribution will dominate the picture; these associations will be characterized rather by a concordant interplay and exchange between the two elements.

Two of the most famous partnerships between modern authors and their directors are those of Jean Giraudoux and Louis Jouvet and of Paul Claudel and Jean-Louis Barrault. I shall discuss these in detail, after having characterized briefly the dealings between Georges Pitoëff and two authors with whom he worked directly. One might object initially that these are all reputedly "happy" relationships and therefore would not allow enough insight into the negative side of author-director affiliations. However, it is only a generally satisfactory collaboration that would afford enough material for study, distasteful associations usually being short lived. Moreover, as we shall see, there are even in generally harmonious relationships such as these, occasions for disagreement and conflict.

Georges Pitoëff, a member of the "cartel," was an "animateur" whose productions often centered on the theme of the spiritual or unreal. His name has been linked especially
with that of H.-R. Lenormand, a dramatist whose favorite subject matter was man's subconscious thoughts. René Lalou, discussing Pitoëff's interest in performing Lenormand's plays states:

Ce fut donc en un véritable accord spirituel qu'à Genève Georges Pitoëff avait créé Les Rates et Le Temps est un Songe. 79

Unfortunately, there is little information recorded about the professional dealings of these two men. Lenormand's book Les Pitoeff and chapters of his Confessions d'un auteur dramatique describe the theatrical adventures of Pitoëff and his wife Ludmilla, but involve Lenormand himself mainly as a friendly onlooker, going into little or no detail about their creative relationship. Other biographical material is equally uninformative on this point.

Benjamin Cremieux, however, gives a general view of Pitoëff the director in his procedure with the author in the early stages of production:

Il commençait par dévoiler à l'auteur toutes les lacunes, toutes les faiblesses d'exécution de son ouvrage. Il lui indiquait avec une clairvoyance sans défaut les répliques, les scènes à supprimer, à modifier ou à renforcer pour que l'étincelle jaillît, que le public put communier avec la part d'Esprit, incluse dans l'œuvre et invisible à l'œil indifférent... Une fois convaincu de l'impuissance de l'auteur à recréer son œuvre ou à l'améliorer, Pitoëff se jetait dans la lutte la plus envrante et la plus désespérée: il entreprenait de masquer par l'ingéniosité ou l'éclat de sa mise en scène les parties molles ou grises, d'inonder de lumière les parties "divines" pour que la révélation s'en imposât au public. 80

80 Pitoëff, Notre Théâtre, Paris, Messages, 1949, p. 88
So we see that this director took an active and decisive stand with the dramatist, having himself very definite ideas about what was or was not playable or brilliant in the author's work, and that his practice of fidelity to this work did not exclude attempts to vivify its lifeless moments.

Despite the dearth of concrete illustrative detail on Pitoëff and his authors, some insights can be gathered from Lenormand's biography, as for example that author's reaction to Pitoëff's decision to stage his play Les Rates in 1920. This work had been pronounced unplayable, evoking the comment, "Ce n'est pas du théâtre," so that Pitoëff's desire to produce it was exciting but disquieting at the same time. Then came to rehearsals--"peut-être la période la plus importante de ma vie d'auteur dramatique,"--when Lenormand, seeing how Pitoëff brought life to his dramatic creation, realized that his concept of the theatre was not merely a chimera,

...mais qu'elle était capable de libérer chez l'interprète une source d'émotion et de poésie...

And we also get a glimpse of the other side of the picture, for instance: Pitoëff's bitterness when Lenormand promised him the play Asie, then gave it instead to director Rene Rocher because an actress in his troupe was more suitable than Ludmilla Pitoëff for the part of a modern Medea. In filing through old manuscripts and notes, an aging Pitoëff, in

81 Lenormand, Les Pitoëff, Paris, Odette Lieutier, 1943, p. 50
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
Lenormand's presence, came upon Asie and mused aloud: "(Cette pièce), je n'ai pas pu la monter, parce que l'auteur me l'a reprise..." 84

But feelings such as these certainly did not generally characterize a notoriously good relationship between these two men. Indeed the fact that Lenormand devoted an admiring book to the Pitoëffs would indicate quite the contrary.

An incident with perhaps more bearing on Pitoëff's relationship with his authors had to do with the distinguished Italian dramatist Pirandello.* In 1922 Pitoëff wanted to present that author's Six Characters in Search of an Author, translated by Benjamin Crémieux. He undertook a correspondence with Pirandello in the course of which it is known that this playwright was not always in agreement with Pitoëff's proposals.** Crémieux tried in vain to arbitrate, to bring their concepts closer together. Pitoëff decided to start rehearsals in spite of the conflict of opinions, so Pirandello, on learning this, went directly to Paris. However, Jacques Hébertot, then director of the Comédie des Champs-Elysées where the play was to be given, had misgivings about the clash of those "deux intrangéances artistiques," and without Pitoëff's knowledge he invited Pirandello to a rehearsal of the play, requesting that he observe incognito. So, in the

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84 Ibid., p. 188

*Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936) was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1934.

**Pitoëff mentions that his idea of a "mise en scene" frightened Pirandello from the first but does not specify exactly what aspect of it offended the author (Notre Théâtre, p. 43)
dark corner of the auditorium, the author witnessed, unnoticed, the incarnation of his play. Said Pitoëff:

Il faut l'avoir connu pour s'imaginer quel supplice lui fut infligé cet après-midi-là.85

But as soon as the rehearsal ended, Pitoëff saw Pirandello push his way to the stage, both arms outstretched, proclaiming that he had conceived of his own work exactly as Pitoëff had interpreted it ("Il n'avait pas conçu son oeuvre autrement"),86 and Pitoëff concluded:

C'est bien là une des plus belles émotions de ma carrière et de ma vie.87

Later, in 1934, when Pitoëff staged Pirandello's _Ce Soir Improvise_, they became linked in what Pitoëff termed an "intense collaboration," having endless and enthusiastic discussions, all with one object: the Theatre. And what the director most appreciated in his author was an unusual capacity for understanding not only the literary but also the scenic aspect of this art:

...pour résumer en une phrase la psychologie de Pirandello, je dois reconnaître que l'esprit de la scène l'habitait, qu'il était le Théâtre fait homme.88

Although Pitoëff was acknowledged to be one of the foremost representatives of the school of fidelity to the author and was never classed with those accused of distortion of the text, he made a very clear-cut distinction between the playwright's realm and his own. If his production was not a

85 Pitoëff, _Notre Théâtre_, p. 43
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
betrayal of the author's word, it was still a sphere in itself—an independent sphere—and one in which he felt himself better qualified to proceed than the author.

It was to the credit of both Pitoëff and his authors that each ultimately respected the artistic sphere of the other and it was certainly a credit to Pitoëff that the distinction which he made between the author's artistic world and his own did not become a schism of gulf that would have destroyed such fruitful and harmoniously creative relationships.

Richer in illustrative detail are two other author-director collaborations: the famous alliance between Jean Giraudoux and Louis Jouvet and that of Paul Claudel and Jean-Louis Barrault. Of the association between Giraudoux and Jouvet, Barrault has said:

Professionnellement Jean Giraudoux et Louis Jouvet nous ont donné le plus noble des exemples et le plus précieux des conseils: L'association étroite, intime, véritablement mêlée, du poète dramatique et de l'homme de théâtre.

The first of Giraudoux's plays to be directed and produced by Louis Jouvet was Siegfried, presented at the Comédie des...
Champs-Élysées on May 3, 1928. Until that year *Siegfried* had been known only as the novel written in 1922 by a Giraudoux with no professional dealings in the theatre. Jouvet had been toying with the idea of adapting it as a film for Charles Boyer when a friend and colleague, Bernard Zimmer, a playwright himself, suggested making it into a play* (only to learn later that Giraudoux was being secretly tempted to do just that himself). Giraudoux set to work, and one Sunday morning deposited a voluminous folder in the hands of Cremieux. It was a dramatized version of *Siegfried* that would have taken three or four evenings to stage in its entirety. Little by little it dwindled into an evening's performance. Jouvet read the manuscript and decided to stage the play. His enthusiasm was matched by his disinterested artistic integrity. Said Jouvet to Zimmer:

Ça ne fera pas un ronde! mais ce sera l'honneur de ma vie d'avoir monté côte pièce.  

Laurent LeSage, author of a work on Jean Giraudoux marvels at just how much Giraudoux had to compromise in the period preceding the presentation of *Siegfried*:

Between the manuscript of July, 1927, and the play presented on May 3, 1928, there was an enormous amount of rewriting. At least seven times Giraudoux did the play over, with Jouvet at his elbow to indicate what would and what would not get beyond the footlights. It may seem remarkable that Giraudoux did not fold up his manuscript and go home. It is to his credit that he did not. He heeded Jouvet's counsels, and he assiduously followed the rehearsals.  

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92. LeSage, Jean Giraudoux—His Life and Works, Penn. State University
*We constantly encounter "middle men" such as Zimmer and Cremieux, intermediaries between the author and the director
Although the play had undergone a considerable amount of "weeding out," it went into rehearsal with an ending that was still to be changed before the actual performance. That Giraudoux learned greatly from this experience is evidenced by the fact that his second offering, *Amphitryon 38*, not an adaptation of a novel but a play written directly for the stage, needed much less revision than *Siegfried*. Laurent LeSage surmised that it was written more easily and quickly, since Giraudoux's first theatre experience with Jouvet had taught him a good deal about dramatic technique:

Thus it is that we find little rewriting in this play. The first two acts remain virtually intact throughout the several versions, and the alterations of the third suggest more inventive facility than struggle with dramatic necessities.

Now conscious of the factors of stage production and the dramatic effectiveness of a play before an audience, in writing the *Folle de Chaillot* before his death in 1944, Giraudoux himself conceived of three different versions of the final scene in Act One. As testimony to Jouvet's respect of Giraudoux's artistic evolution is the fact that that director kept and performed the final version which consisted of a monologue as opposed to the second, a scene between two characters, or the first, a livelier interlude with three characters. Of the first

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94 LeSage, *op. cit.*, p. 68
version Jouvet remarked (somewhat regretfully one might guess): "Pour un metteur en scène, cette scène est peut-être la plus séduisante, la plus excitante des trois versions." But the third version, the monologue, did remain in the actual presentation by Jouvet.

Once initiated into Jouvet's world, Giraudoux took a most active part in non-literary areas of theatrical production. He integrated so fully into the business of the stage that electricians and other workmen considered him one of the team. Francis Poulenc relates that in 1933, when he had various interviews with Giraudoux concerning the musical interludes for Intermezzo, Giraudoux held very definite notions of what he wished the music to convey. When Poulenc played two acts of the musical score that he had composed, the author cried "Bravo!", but said that he really should write another play to suit Poulenc's composition, and explained:

Cher Poulenc, j'ai besoin de musique qui ne soit pas de la musique. Il faut que cela ait l'air de sortir du décor, sans donner l'impression d'une fosse d'orchestre.

When Jouvet chided Poulenc on his "operatic" score and the composer offered to withdraw his collaboration, Giraudoux demonstrated all his charm, inviting Poulenc to dinner where he explained what he really wanted in the way of music. Said Poulenc of Giraudoux's judgment in these matters:

96 Jouvet, op. cit., pp. 208-209
97 Inskip, Jean Giraudoux, p. 78
99 Ibid.
Pour ce qui est de la proportion de la musique de scène, Giraudoux, comme Jouvet d'ailleurs, était infaillible.\textsuperscript{100}

The creative sessions involving author, director and composer were so full of inventive comraderie and good humor that in 1950, when Poulenc was asked to add ten minutes of music to the existing score for an American production of \textit{Intermezzo}, he found it difficult to work in a vacuum without the catalyst of Giraudoux's and Jouvet's enjoyment:

\ldots outre que Jouvet et Giraudoux n'étaient plus là pour m'encourager de leurs rires, je sentais que j'allais fâcheusement alourdir le texte, et, hélas, je ne me suis pas trompé.\textsuperscript{101}

Giraudoux was enchanted by the new world of the stage that Jouvet opened to him. He praised the atmosphere of rehearsals where actors willingly let themselves be shaped into another person's concept of a character, saying: "Je connais peu d'opérations aussi attrayantes que celle du divin habilage qu'est une répétition."\textsuperscript{102}

Much of the intention of these rehearsals, at least in the beginning was hidden from Giraudoux, so that he, no more than the actors, could understand completely the "prospect of continuous creation and interpretation."\textsuperscript{103} However, Giraudoux's reactions at rehearsals greatly impressed and doubtless influenced Jouvet:

\textsuperscript{100}Poulenc, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 31
\textsuperscript{101}Ibid
\textsuperscript{102}Revue d'histoire du théâtre, (quoted from Giraudoux \textit{Entre'acte}), p. 53
\textsuperscript{103}Inskip, \textit{Jean Giraudoux}, p. 51
His breathing followed the words in even or uneasy rhythm... from this breathing in more or less even rhythm with the actors I could measure the correctness of their delivery and of their interpretation.104

It is evident from these accounts that the association between Giraudoux and Jouvet exceeded the bounds of mere professional expediency. Pierre Brisson, in describing this relationship, writes:

L'alliance entre eux s'était immédiatement conclue. Elle fut indestructible.105

However, it was not a fraternal sort of liaison. A certain barrier always isolated Giraudoux, keeping him somewhat remote. Giraudoux and Jouvet were never heard speaking of themselves. It was the theatre that was the subject and object of their relationship, as it had been with Pitoëff and Pirandello. Giraudoux wrote:

... il n'y a jamais eu entre Jouvet et moi qu'un contrat, celui qui exclut les félicitations mutuelles, excepté aux insuccès, et qui remplace la louange réciproque par une collaboration spécialisée, une affection ouvrière, et le dévouement que suppose cet artisanat de théâtre qui est devenu, comme dit l'opérette, ma passion et mon honneur.107

Within the framework of their art, a prime ingredient of this "affection ouvrière" was, according to Brisson, "un besoin réciproque de satisfactions contraires."108 Giraudoux was all intellectuality. Reality for him was simply a point of departure, material for flights of fancy. At times he could

104 Inskip, op. cit., pp. 51-52
105 Revue d'histoire du théâtre, p. 13
106 Ibid.
108 Revue d'histoire du théâtre, p. 13
feel the artificiality and coldness of this viewpoint. Then Jouvet would bring him back to earth with his matter-of-fact manner of combing through the text and overcoming its obstacles. We could apply to this process a passage quoted by Jouvet from La Folle de Chaillot:

Il suffit de faire confiance aux êtres et à la nature, Nicolas, pour qu’ils répondent par des réalités à nos extravagances. (Here Jouvet added:) C’est le rôle du metteur en scène.

On the other hand, Jouvet, involved in the daily realities of a director-producer, was charmed by the magic vision of Giraudoux.

Georges Neveux further analyzes this interchange of needs, noting the great extent to which Jouvet perpetually doubted himself. Giraudoux's language of clarity and certainty provided Jouvet with the confidence he lacked. In exchange Jouvet gave Giraudoux's dialogue a "résonance exacte et éclairages heureux." Giraudoux describes this process thusly:

...semblable à ces découpages de papier japonais qui ne sont que du papier, moi, qui ne me croyais que du papier, je deviens, dans la piscine jouvetienne, tantôt un chrysanthème, tantôt un glaïeul, et ce qu’il ne m’est pas interdit d’envisager pour mon proche avenir, un épanouissement en lys ou en rose.

It is not surprising that such an intimate interrelationship insinuated itself into the language of these two men.

109 Revue d'histoire du théâtre, p. 14
110 Jouvet, Témoignages sur le théâtre, p. 208
111 Revue d'histoire du théâtre, p. 13
113 "Louis Jouvet par Jean Giraudoux," Ibid., p. 7
Georges Neveux states that "un certain ton Jouvet se glissait parfois dans l'écriture de Giraudoux." Giraudoux, as we shall see in a later chapter, had the actor Jouvet in mind in creating certain roles, and Jouvet's manner of speech asserted itself in the script. Likewise Jouvet, in his definition of an "animateur," (see Chapter I, footnote page 22) was wont to adopt Giraudoux's characteristics of style.

This reciprocity was carried so far that, as Neveux says, the laws of this collaboration became unfathomable, as mysterious as if they had reigned not over two separate minds but over two sides of the same imagination. Jean-Louis Barrault admits to perplexity in trying to catch the essence of Giraudoux's Pour Lucrèce. Should he try to see Giraudoux as Jouvet saw him? Should he try to see him with a completely fresh eye? But "Louis Jouvet l'a marqué fortement et Giraudoux n'est plus là pour nous guider ou nous approuver! Angoisse..."

Giraudoux conceived without Jouvet, Jouvet conceived without Giraudoux would be neither completely Giraudoux nor completely Jouvet, a point which leads us to the oft-asked question, "Did Jouvet make Giraudoux?" (The question is not asked in reverse since, although Giraudoux was perhaps the high point in Jouvet's career, he had countless other successes to his credit, whereas Giraudoux's fate in the theatre is inevitably linked to Jouvet's name). Giraudoux's plays have often

114 Neveux, op. cit., p. 4
116 Neveux, op. cit., p. 4
117 "A la recherche de Pour Lucrèce," Cahiers Renaud-Barrault #2, p. 83
received the same reproach as those directed at Lenormand's: that of not being "du théâtre." Marcel Moussy, in an article entitled "Jouvet ou Giraudoux," states that Giraudoux's plays seem all language with no real dramatic movement, but that nonetheless Jouvet's productions of them as with Ondine, have been moving and stirring productions. Who is responsible for this success he asks, Jouvet or Giraudoux? Only the future will tell.

Pierre Brisson implies that Jouvet "makes" Giraudoux not merely as a dramatist but as an artist in general. He notes that Giraudoux, prior to his association with Jouvet, wrote novels for the "happy few," that Siegfried made a better play than a novel.

Edouard Bourdet writes:

Il n'est pas sûr que, sans Jouvet, sans l'enthousiasme et la confiance que lui inspirèrent les premiers essais de Giraudoux au théâtre, sans la sollicitude dont il les entoura et l'intelligence qu'il apporta à les présenter au public, Giraudoux nous eût donné les œuvres dont notre patrimoine dramatique se trouve aujourd'hui enrichi.

Henri Gouhier, however, refuses to consider this question of responsibility, saying: "Giraudoux n'est pas plus derrière Jouvet que Jouvet derrière Giraudoux: leur collaboration est une preuve de l'harmonie préétablie." But although the harmony of this relationship is recognized by all, the issue

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118 Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, #2, p. 19
119 Ibid., p. 67
120 Brisson, Le Théâtre des années folles, p. 55
121 "Le Théâtre de Jean Giraudoux," Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, #2, p. 19
122 Gouhier, L'Essence du théâtre, p. 119
of responsibility still remains, generally in the sense of Jouvet's being the influence behind Giraudoux. A propos of Le Folle de Chaillot, Jouvet himself says:

Un auteur m'a déclaré: "C'est TA pièce. Ce n'est pas une pièce, c'est toi qui l'as faite." Enfin un critique a imprimé dans son journal: "Sans Louis Jouvet et sa mise en scène, la muscadel c'est ainsi qu'il a designé l'ouvrage--n'aurait pu passer."

That, comments Jouvet, is like saying, "It's the sauce that makes the fish"..."A quoi tient le succès de Giraudoux?" he asks. "À la magie incantatoire du verbe dramatique. Il n'y a pas d'autre raison." Still referring to Giraudoux, he speaks elsewhere of "le silence charmé d'une salle ravie par la magie d'incantation que donne seule le poète." Jouvet goes so far as to rank Giraudoux with Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare, and writes:

N'aurais-je d'autre titre de gloire, dans l'exercice de mon métier et de ma carrière, que d'avoir joué ses oeuvres, celui-là me suffirait.

To this faith in the intrinsic worth of his dramatist Jouvet adds as further justification of Giraudoux a lack of faith in the art of "mise en scène." "Je ne crois pas à la mise en scène," he declares. It is only a state of mind. The play too may be but a state of mind,

Mais l'état d'esprit de la pièce est unique et premier et l'état d'esprit du metteur en scène est second et multiple.

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123 Jouvet, Témoignages sur le théâtre, p. 148
124 "Jean Giraudoux par Louis Jouvet," Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, #2, p. 5
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid., p. 149
127 Ibid., p. 151
Furthermore, an author's play is un reducible ("irréductible"): it cannot be made to fit into one pat analysis, into any one director's version.

Le pièce est, en fait, délivrance. Et la mise en scène n'est généralement que considérations, points de vue et bourgeonnements d'idées. Interprétée cent fois, mille fois, elle garde encore en elle d'infinies possibilités de représentations, d'exécutions, de significations. 128

The goal of a director then should not be to exploit all the possibilities and opportunities he finds in a play, not to interpret or adorn it, but to find the state of mind of the one who wrote it.

It becomes clear then that Jouvet will not and cannot take credit for Giraudoux's success, since, in the light of the above, he did not intend his production to be a personal interpretation or elaboration of his own, but a rendering of Giraudoux's spiritual essence of his state of soul. It was Giraudoux, not reduced to a concept of Jouvet's, but Giraudoux himself who was presented to the public.

It may be difficult to follow this reasoning since, on the one hand Jouvet states that what he and any other conscientious director tries to do is deliver to the public the very state of mind of the author, and on the other hand he holds that his own presentation could be only one of thousands of interpretations, and therefore could not capture the essence of Giraudoux. As we said, however, the important conclusion here

128 Jouvet, op. cit., p. 152
is that one way or another Jouvet renounces the responsibility for success which critics tried to foist on him and which he preferred to grant to Giraudoux. (It seems like a point of honor with Jouvet, and he is so repeatedly emphatic on this score that one might wonder whether this stems from humility, his constant self-doubt, or his friendship and loyalty to Giraudoux; whether it might be an attempt at a justification of his own taste and judgment: --having linked his fate with that of Giraudoux he might want to be assured that he chose rightly--or whether one should simply take Jouvet's words at face value and accept them as a sincere belief in the greatness of his author.)

At any rate the Giraudoux-Jouvet relationship seems by all accounts to have been an idyllic, almost impossible one, and one that was characterized by an optimum degree of creativity. In spite of Louis Jouvet's protestations, in spite of Giraudoux's great talent, we can suspect a connection between this relationship and not only the commercial success of Giraudoux but the evolution of the form of his dramatic text as well.

How much liberty Jouvet took in shaping Giraudoux's thought, what amount of active influence he wielded on the author is something that would probably be impossible to determine precisely. There is in Jouvet's philosophy of "mise en scène" an area which would permit him great prerogatives. We have spoken of his idea of pushing a play to the limit of its scenic
possibilities. He also holds that "La mise en scène ne peut être qu'un affranchissement, une libération de l'oeuvre dramatique." As with Pitoëff's concept of the independence of the art of production, Jouvet's idea of liberating the text could be interpreted as a step toward liberating the production from the text. However, it is not in the sense of "disjoining" that the word is used. Jouvet's idea of the art of direction is rendered better thusly:

Mettre en scène c'est trouver ce ton, ce climat...dont l'auteur lui-même n'a parfois ni science ni conscience. C'est réaliser le charnel par le spirituel.

Although this too may leave room for great liberties, it has been said that at no time did Jouvet actually fail to respect the supremacy of the creator. Far from encroaching on Giraudoux's domain, his aim seems to have been only to serve him as faithfully as possible. In this connection he wrote:

Mettre en scène...c'est servir l'auteur, l'assister par une totale, une aveugle dévotion qui fait aimer son oeuvre sans réserve.

And indeed one of the main keys to this fidelity of director to author is for Jouvet in the word "love." He said:

Le Metteur en scène est une manière d'amoureux qui tire son talent, son invention et la joie de son travail, du talent, de l'invention et de la joie qu'il emprunte aux autres ou qu'il suscite en eux.

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129 Jouvet, op. cit., p. 156
130 Jouvet, Réflexions sur le comédien, p. 190
131 Brisson, Le Théâtre des Années Folles, p. 66
132 Jouvet, Réflexions, op. cit., p. 190
133 Ibid.
As a testimony to the effectiveness of this emotion when applied to this particular artistic liaison is Robert Kemp's comment on Jouvet's production of *La Folle de Chaillot*—that Jouvet had served Giraudoux "comme s'il était lui-même Giraudoux." 134

The association between Paul Claudel and Jean-Louis Barrault is not quite as renowned as that between Giraudoux and Jouvet. One name does not so quickly evoke the other. Claudel's works had been staged before the advent of Jean-Louis Barrault as a director by Lugné-Poe, Copeau, the Pitoeffs and others; whereas Barrault has been affiliated with contemporaries of Claudel such as Gide and later Jean-Paul Sartre.* Nevertheless Jean-Louis Barrault, perhaps more than any other of Claudel's directors, has been Claudel's "Jouvet," and Claudel, certainly more than any other author, a "Giraudoux" for Barrault. This may seem astonishing in view of the fact that Barrault often seems unduly interested in the "spectacular" side of the theatre, has a penchant for adaptations of novels rather than original plays, and has constantly received the sort of criticism that we have seen levelled at Baty and Planchon, of letting directoral effects distort the original meaning of an author's text. One condemnation among countless was directed by Dussane at Barrault's adaptation of Kafka's *Trial*:

...le Barrault-virtuose, le Barrault-commandant-aux-hommes- et-aux choses, le Barrault-qui-se-pose-des-difficultés- exprès-pour-la-joie-de-les-résoudre, le Barrault-Bonaparte

134 Kemp, *La Vie du théâtre*, p. 172
Yet it was doubtless the "spectacular" side of Barrault that must have appealed to Claudel: it is understandable that this author, with his appreciation for the stylized movement and the spectacle of the Japanese No theatre and Barrault with his affinity for mime and gesture, should have found themselves in basic agreement. René Farabet notes that:

Cette foi de l'auteur en l'expression complète, totale, du geste, de l'attitude, de la mimique, est à l'origine du succès de son rencontre avec Jean-Louis Barrault.

The beginning of this collaboration has been described by Barrault in several of his books and articles. Their meeting in 1939 had been preceded by a long period of intense admiration, almost worship of Claudel on Barrault's part. The young director, unable to contact Claudel in order to invite him to a performance of Tandis que j'agonise, wondered:

D'ailleurs invité, serait-il venu? et s'il était venue, n'en serions-nous pas morts? Et le rideau ne s'en serait-il écroulé sur nos têtes?

Their initial interview is always described by the director in emotional, even mystical terms:

Entrevue mémorable pour moi, au cours de laquelle, pour employer son langage, nous fîmes connaissance, re-connaissance plutôt, oui, nous nous re-connaîmes.

135 Dussane, *Notes de théâtre*, pp. 204-205
136 (Recently Georges Schéhade)
137 Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, #1, p. 48
138 Ibid., p. 50
They found themselves in complete agreement on countless phases of interpretation. Barrault states that in discussing his production of Numance:

Nous nous rencontrâmes sur la vertu du geste, sur les ressources du corps; sur la plastique du verbe, sur l'importance des consonnes, sur la méfiance des voyelles qu'on étire toujours trop, sur la prosodie du langage parlé, sur les longues et les brèves, sur l'ïambe et l'anastase, sur l'art de la respiration.139

- In short, as Barrault has said, they spoke the same language from the very start, and, he exulted, "Cette communion immediate entre nous deux m'émerveillait et me donnait l'envie de dire merci a toutes choses: à Dieu, à la vie, au premier passant dans la rue.141

At that first meeting the young man asked Claudel for permission to stage three of his plays: 1) Tete d'or 2) Soulier de satin; 3) Partage de midi. Of the first Claudel replied that it was "illisible." Of the second (very many hours of text) that it would have to be done in its entirety. Of the third, "Never, for Claudel had renounced that work completely.142 Eventually, thanks to Barrault's persuasive influence, Claudel granted him permission to produce all three, including a shortened version of Soulier de satin, composed by Claudel with Barrault's suggestions.

In approaching the first of these works to be presented, the Soulier de satin, Barrault was thoroughly permeated by a tremendous desire for and love of the text:

139 Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, #1, p. 50
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid.
J'avais une farouche envie d'épouser son oeuvre... 143
J'avais le Soulier de satin totalement... Je désirais aimer Le Soulier comme on aime une femme... 144

For Barrault much of the joy in beginning this work was due to the opportunity of creating a "théâtre total." By this he meant a theatre in which the author utilizes completely every resource of the human being as represented by the actor, a theatre in which an actor can symbolize the décor and the décor can suggest or express the actor, where "hommes et objets jouent ensemble." 145 It is also a process whereby true poetry is attained by means qui (sont) exclusivement des moyens de théâtre. 146...
dès que le spectacle se hausse au point de participer humainement à l'action... il fait partie intégrante précisément du théâtre total. 147

Barrault had often indulged his desire to create a total theatre that employs every aspect of a director's art, but, as he said, in each case had used an insufficient text: one of his own creation. Now, rather than making personal adaptations, he could effect complete expression through a great text, and through an author who more than any other knew how to create a "théâtre total." 148

Claudel accepted Barrault's suggestion that the Soulier be staged in two three-hour productions, but after a reading

143 Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, #1, p. 52
144 Ibid., p. 55
145 Cahiers R.-B., #1, "Du théâtre total et de Christophe Colomb," pp. 31, 32
147 "Du théâtre total," op. cit., p. 34
148 Ibid., p. 31
at the Comédie-Française, the Comité des Sociétaires insisted on one evening's presentation. However, it did accept Barrault's proposal of an unusually long version of four-and-a-half to five hours, and after much discussion, Claudel finally consented to this. 149

Claudel was fully aware of the fact that the play offered enormous problems of production and he had no illusions concerning its "playability." He stated in its preface that he was including a few stage directions:

...comme après tout il n'y a pas impossibilité complète que la pièce soit jouée un jour ou l'autre d'ici dix ou vingt ans ou totalement ou en partie. 150

The settings of the play were numerous. Even in Barrault's final stage version there were thirty-three different tableaux. (The sets had to be changed immediately one after another and transitions were difficult). 151

One seemingly insurmountable obstacle from the staging viewpoint was the scene where Dona Sevenswords and the butcher's daughter were swimming and the latter was supposed to drown. Barrault considered this scene a challenge, however, and regretted the fact that it had to be cut in order that the play not exceed its time limit. He later included it in a successful public reading in which he took the part of Dona Sevenswords. 152

149 Barrault, Réflexions sur le théâtre, Paris, Jaques Vautrain, 1949
150 Claudel, Le Soulier de satin, Paris, Gallimard, 1929, p. 11
151 Barrault, Réflexions, op. cit., p. 153
152 Cahiers R.-B., #1, p. 54
As with Giraudoux and Jouvet, it is impossible to know exactly to what degree Claudel made concessions to Jean-Louis Barrault, at what point he held to his convictions, or to what extent Barrault himself wished to influence or change the course of the production. However, it is apparent from Barrault’s accounts that he was allowed considerable margin and that he employed (with success) all his psychological arts to win a case with the "Maître." Describing how the two differed on the choice of a stage designer for Le Soulier, Barrault wrote: "J'avais bien ma petite idée derrière la tête, mais il fallait laisser faire le temps." 153 Claudel wanted the painter Derain; Barrault preferred Rouault, and there was an impasse. Then, when Claudel suggested his friend José-Maria Sert, Barrault countered with his friend Coutaud, since doubtless Claudel felt that only a friend would suffice in a "théâtre qui est amour, donc amitié." And Claudel consented to Coutaud.

In productions prior to the Soulier, Claudel had been noticeably present and active at rehearsals. 154 For this production, however, he granted Barrault permission to work alone with his troupe until the final rehearsals. Barrault gives an interesting account of what happened when Claudel finally did appear at these rehearsals: Twelve days before opening Claudel emerged on the scene. All were very nervous about his arrival at the theatre. They proceeded to perform

153 Cahiers, R.-B., #1, p. 61
154 Farabet, Le Jeu de l'acteur dans le théâtre de Claudel, passim
as Claudel sat in silent observation. When they arrived at a difficult scene that had always presented complications, Claudel said "Sautez cela et allez jusqu'au bout." After they had finished, Claudel discussed the rehearsal with Barrault, went home, and early the next morning he appeared with a new scene to replace the one that had given director and actors so much trouble. 155

Léon Chancerel considers this incident to be the
Amirable soumission du compositeur à l'instrument qu'il a choisi, admirable leçon donnée par un grand poète à tant d'auteurs à genoux devant "leur texte." 156

The anecdote also indicates how Claudel, like Giraudoux, enjoyed the experience of what Chancerel calls 'la cuisine du théâtre,' the pleasure he took in working actively with those interpreting his work. Jean-Louis Barrault said:
Il ne se contentait pas d'être comme un juge dans un camp adverse, mais comme un partenaire dans notre camp. Il perfectionnait les moindres détails, soit de diction soit de jeu. Avec beaucoup de délicatesse, il s'adressait rarement aux acteurs, mais m'envoyait des notes détaillées. 157

He worked closely with Barrault on ideas for décor and costumes. When it came to music his sessions with Barrault followed the same joyful pattern of Giraudoux and Jouvet amusing themselves by creating various musical effects:
Nous hurlions des rythmes, tapions sur la table et ailleurs avec toutes sortes d'ustensiles pour trouver quelques sonorités théâtrales, heureux toutefois que Honegger ait accepte de s'occuper d'une maniere un peu plus professionnelle

155 Cahiers, R.-B., #1, pp. 63-65
156 Chancerel, op. cit., p. 47
157 Cahiers, R.-B., #1, p. 65
Once the *Soulier de satin* had been produced (November, 1943) with dazzling success, Barrault set about to convince Claudel to let him stage *Partage de midi*, a work that had enchanted his generation.* There ensued a "dialogue Claudel-Barrault" in which Claudel objected that his own past suffering reflected in *Partage* was too close to him to be presented before him and the world. Barrault replied that that play was the key to Claudel's whole work and had to be realized completely on stage. When Claudel, already wavering, complained that at any rate the erotic frenzy of the second act made him tremble, Barrault replied:

*Cette féné’sie érotique ne vous appartient plus; vous l'avez jeté, ce cri, il vit sans vous, vous n'arriverez plus à l'étouffer.*

After much deliberation, Claudel relented, and the process of production began anew.

Barrault has told how, in order to impregnate himself as fully as possible with the spirit of Claudel, he stood on Holy Friday near the same pillar of Notre-Dame Cathedral where the young Claudel had been converted in 1886, and how, when Claudel noticed him against that pillar, they simply shook hands in silent communion.

\[158\] Cahiers, R.-B., #1, p. 58
\[159\] Ibid., pp. 75-77
\[160\] Ibid., p. 78
\[161\] Ibid., pp. 84-85

*(Although this work of Claudel had not been published, "clandestine" typewritten copies had been circulated among Claudel's admirers - Dussane, op. cit., p. 175)*
But while Barrault was imbuing himself with Claudel's text, Claudel himself, a striking phenomenon of a "poète-devenu-homme de théâtre," was himself changing this text. He thought the end of the play too literary and of an empty kind of lyricism, and Barrault agreed on this point, but was horrified later to find that Claudel wished to replace it with "un langage bête, sans grands mots, simple, naïf, presque enfantin, presque grossier!" 162

Claudel, moreover, in addition to making corrections for a smoother adaptation to the stage, which were in the main endorsed by Barrault, indulged in a more basic, more profound transformation of his text, not premised on "playability" but on a complete rethinking and reliving of his work. He saw his youth, the youth represented in *Partage de midi*, in a new light now and felt that the more recent view should be accepted as an evolution, "une maturation mentale qui se prolongé depuis quarante ans." 163

Perhaps just as curious as Claudel's compulsion to recreate his text was Barrault's reaction to this manifestation. Here it was a director, not an author who cried "sacrilege" when a play was tampered with.

*Pour moi, qui avait été nourri, comme toute ma génération, par le *Partage de midi* de 1905, je me sentais le devoir d'en être l'avocat, et je résistais.* 164

162 Cahiers, R.-B., #1, p. 58
163 *Tbid.*, p. 80
164 *Tbid.*
There ensued an anguished self-interrogation on Barrault's part:

...j'étais affolé. Pourrais-je sauvegarder cette œuvre qui avait emballé notre jeunesse? Mais d'un autre côté, avais-je le droit, ou simplement avais-je raison, de ne pas aller dans le sens actuel de Claudel? 165

As a result of this conflict there are now not one but three versions of *Le Partage de midi*: 1) the first edition of Mercure de France, published in 1905; 2) the new version edited by Gallimard in 1949 and sent to Barrault three months after Partage was in production at the Marigny; and 3) the one that was actually staged by Barrault in December, 1948 (in *Oeuvres complètes de Claudel*, published by Gallimard in 1957 under the direction of Robert Mallet), a version arrived at after many deliberations, demands and concessions between author and director. (This was actually a composite organized by Barrault from elements of three or four versions submitted to him by Claudel, none of which Barrault felt completely satisfied with). 166 Barrault felt, however, that the end result was not vastly different from the original text that he so wanted to preserve. 167

C'est celle, à mon sens qui respecte encore le Claudel de trente ans et, à peu près le Claudel actuel. 168

When the work of rehearsals had begun, both Claudel and Barrault were filled with excitement. According to Barrault

165*Cahiers, R.-B.*, #1, p. 81
167Ibid., p. 83
168Ibid.
the author "vibrated," and (unlike the procedure with Le Soulier) was now at rehearsals almost daily. His enthusiasm surpassed even Giraudoux's delight in this process of collaborative creativity. As Barrault commented in another context, "pour ce qui est de l'enthousiasme, Claudel et moi nous repondions 'Présent!'"

Barrault meanwhile felt a pride akin to Jouvet's in presenting a great author. He likened the excitement of rehearsing Partage to that of the "comédiens" rehearsing Bajazet, knowing that they were entrusted with a masterpiece.

However, an inevitable thorn in the relationship asserted itself at what is generally a most trying stage for director and actors,--the last rehearsals. The moment had come to "fix" the work lest it become sterile or fall apart, and the "répétition générale"--the formidable last rehearsal which critics attend--was imminent. There was the poet, not fully cognizant of this immediate pressure, but "engouffré pour l'Eternité dans son Histoire." Barrault had already laid the foundations with Claudel, had worked hand in hand with him. It was now essential to "quitter le camp de l'auteur et passer dans celui des acteurs." Claudel's constant suggestions or objections became irritating and his presence nerve wracking. Finally, Barrault, at the height of exasperation, proclaimed:

169 Claudel, Mémoires, op. cit., p. 84
170 Barrault, Nouvelles réflexions sur le théâtre, Paris, Flammarion, 1959, p. 234
171 Barrault, Une Troupe et ses auteurs, p. 85
172 Cahiers, R.-E., #1, p. 85
Je ne peux plus poursuivre dans ces conditions-la, j'arrête la répétition.

(Suit un long silence, un silence dramatique. J'entends une voix triste, d'enfant qu'on punit.)

-Vous me mettez à la porte.
-Non, non, Maître! Pas à ce point-là.
-Enfin, vous voulez que je m'en aille?
-Oh bien, oui, là, je préférerais...

(Et tout penaud, il s'en va lentement. J'étais malheureux au possible. Car je l'aime cet homme! comme un père! Mais peut-être, au cours de ce récit, l'a-t-on déjà devine.)

This production of Partage de midi marked another victory for the alliance Claudel-Barrault. Dussane wrote:

Mais le grand événement, l'apothéose attendue et organisée, la victoire du théâtre sur la vie même d'un grand auteur, ce fut la représentation du Partage de midi, en décembre, 1948, à Marigny... Cette fois, Barrault a su être avant tout un fidèle serviteur du texte, et ce n'était certes pas une petite tâche. La réalisation du double décor du troisième acte, notamment, fut aussi ingénieuse que belle. Mais c'est à travers les acteurs que son influence a resplendi. De la première réplique à la dernière, toutes les mélodies, tous les rythmes, toutes les modulations et tous les éclats de la musique claudélienne ont retenti sans une faute à nos oreilles ravies...

(It must be added that Dussane felt obliged reluctantly to offer one objection: that of still not being able to lose consciousness of Barrault's "écrasante virtuosité.")

There were three more productions born of this author-director association: L'Echange, Christophe Colombe and Tête d'or. Barrault's account of L'Echange is almost the same story as that of the preceding presentations. Barrault began with a "désir quasi organique" to stage the play. Claudel agreed to this, saying at the outset, "L'Echange" est une des

173 Cahiers R.-E., #1, p. 85
174 Dussane, Notes de théâtre, p. 176
175 Ibid.
rare pièces que je n'ai jamais eu à reprendre... c'est parfait." But, lamented Barrault, "Ce bon sentiment ne devait pas durer!" 176

Son démon tripatouilleur s'était mis de nouveau à fonctionner; et, une fois de plus il voulut récrire L'Echange! Claudel, au besoin contre lui-même, cherchait toujours le plus-que-parfait! 177

There followed resistance, proposals, resigned acceptances, refusals, and despite everything, for Barrault "certaines amputations qui me faisaient mal." 178 Claudel refused to continue work on the original _Échange_ which he no longer recognized as "himself." 179 He sent Barrault a second version of the play and Barrault countered with a third.

Once they had settled on a definitive version and once the rehearsals had begun there was again the same enthusiasm and delight experienced in the preliminary stages of other productions. Of Claudel's joy at these joint sessions, Barrault remarked, "Des qu'il triturait la pâte il était à son affaire." It is true that Claudel did not restrain himself from taking an active part in the rehearsals to the point of demonstrating personally for Jean Servais how he should react at the sight of Madeleine Renaud in a certain scene:

_Ses yeux alors se plissaient de malice. L'eau lui venait à la bouche. Le rire le secouait tout entier au rythme de ses dents qui s'entrechoquaient._ 180

176 Barrault, Nouvelles réflexions, p. 234
177 Ibid., p. 235
178 Ibid., p. 235
179 Ibid., p. 236
180 Ibid., p. 237
This exaggerated interpretation served to provoke general mirth among those present. But as the "generale" approached it became once again necessary to ask Claudel to sit in the audience rather than mingle with the actors. This time, however, an aged Claudel grown quite deaf protested, "Ch! laissez-moi encore aujourd'hui parmi vous...c'est la dernière fois que je l'entends!" And out of affection for him they let the author sit in the middle of the state,"...et nous jouames, tres émus, en décrivant des courbes de slalom autour de lui... 181

The next of Claudel's plays to be interpreted by Barrault was produced in 1953. It was for Barrault the very essence of "théâtre total." He felt that this did not mean that it was necessarily a director's play, however, since:

L'auteur, ayant lui-même la vision de ce genre de théâtre, dicte ses volontés et le metteur en scène, pour le servir, n'a plus qu'à le suivre. 182

However, in actuality, Claudel left his director with a free hand. He was occupied with other work and was not too frequently at rehearsals. It was mainly Barrault who worked with Darius Milhaud on the musical score; 183 it was Barrault who chose the stage designer; 184 it was Barrault who truly took possession of the work. He wrote:

On aurait dit que la chose m'appartenait plus qu'à lui... 185 Jusque-là, mon devoir avait été de servir un texte, tandis que cette fois, ce texte, j'avais autorisation de m'en servir. 186

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181 Barrault, op. cit.
182 Ibid., p. 273
183 Ibid., p. 241
184 Ibid., p. 242
185 Ibid., p. 245
186 Ibid.
Barrault states that Claudel took pleasure in seeing put into practice his wish for "théâtre à l'état naissant." It was to be a true spectacle, combining elements of the cinema. But the ending was not quite satisfactory. This time Barrault urged Claudel to write a new one, but Claudel answered: "Trop tard, Barrault, je suis trop vieux maintenant, ma flamme intérieure est désormais en veilleuse." Only after Claudel's death did Barrault see a solution, but as the latter complained:

Il m'avait quitte. Il m'avait planté là, devant son oeuvre!

Christophe Colomb was very well received in general, although some critics were dissatisfied with the fact that as a work of art it was not of the calibre of a Soulier de satin. But because it was so suited to Barrault's own vision of a total theatre, it was a play for which he himself felt a strong personal kinship. He said of this work:

...J'ai un faible pour cette experience théatrale. Pour moi, chaque gouttelette renferme un noyau d'humanite... Si le théâtre est une fête et une participation collective, Christophe Colomb est comme un prototype.

For Tete d'or, which had been revised years previously, the author redid Act One, but it was so close to the end of his life that he could not continue and told Barrault to do what he would with the work after his death. Barrault finally

187 Cahiers R.-B., #1, p. 36  
188 Nouvelles réflexions, p. 248  
189 Ibid, pp. 248-249
did present this play in October, 1959, after Claudel had been dead for four years.

Throughout the period of Jean-Louis Barrault's directing Paul Claudel's plays there was the constant experience of revising these works. Besides the necessary process of adapting them to the exigencies of the stage, the director had to contend with a constant evolution on the part of the author. To gain additional insight into this author-director relationship, it might be useful to note here some differences and similarities between the first edition of one of these plays and its subsequent versions. *Partage de midi* is the most interesting case with its pre-and post-production revisions, providing a rare example of a director's rebelling against an author's deviation from a given text.

In comparing the 1905 edition with Barrault's stage presentation, the former appears to be more poetic, less conversational. In the second, sometimes common, almost vulgar interjections were attached to phrases which had previously stood alone. For instance, the first two lines of the original edition read:

-Vous vous êtes laissé enguirlander
-La chose n'est pas faite encore. 190

In the stage version of 1948 they read:

-Mon bon ami vous vous êtes laissé enguirlander.
-Vous savez, la chose n'est pas faite encore. 191

190 Paul Claudel, *Oeuvres complètes*, No. 11, Gallimard, 1957, p. 15
Passages which read like monologues were put into a more conversational framework with a more frequent interchange between characters, exclamations became more casual musings, stage "business" was inserted to break the monotony and bring the poetry to life. One part of the dialogue in the 1905 edition read:

De Ciz: Que c'est amer d'avoir fini d'être jeune!
Mesa: Qu'il est redoutable de finir d'être vivant!
Amalric: Qu'il est beau de ne pas être mort, mais d'être vivant!
Yse: Le matin était plus beau.
Mesa: Le soir le sera plus encore
Avez-vous bien vu hier
Comme du coeur de la grande substance de la mer
Il naissait, feuillages vert
Et lacs roses et tabac, et traits de feu rouge dans le grouillant chaos clair, etc.192

In the stage version this same passage is preceded by a sigh on the part of De Ciz and by Amalric's question, "Pourquoi soupirez-vous?" Two of the three melodramatic "que's" which start the above quotation are dropped. De Ciz has added the familiar "remâcher" to his poetic philosophizing and Yse has lent the dialogue a more conversational tone with "Qu'en dites-vous Mesa?":

De Ciz, soupirant: Ah! mon Dieu!
Amalric: Pourquoi soupirez-vous?
De Ciz: Que c'est amer à remâcher d'avoir fini d'être jeune!
Mesa: Redoutable de commencer à finir d'être vivant!
Yse: Le matin était plus beau, qu'en dites-vous, Mesa?
Mesa: Le soir le sera plus encore.
Avez-vous vu hier
Tout ce qui naissait de la grande substance de la mer?193

Then the musical, colorful lines of "feuillages verts et lacs roses et tabac, etc."--rather than offered as intrinsic

192 Paul Claudel, op. cit., p. 20
193 Ibid., p. 116
to Mesa's manner of speech are now (according to the directions) to be "declaimed" by that character with eyes closed, as someone reciting lines while reflecting on nature. The "Cantique de Mesa" in Act III of the 1905 edition was also retained with a few changes proposed by Barrault, "pour faire passer la pillule au public," as he said.\textsuperscript{194}

Corrections such as these then served to give the work a more natural tone, but it can be said that, except where Claudel wholly revised his concept of the atmosphere of this play, most of the poetry of the 1905 edition was, one way or another, preserved in the stage version, and for the most part word for word.

There were a few noticeable if minor deviations in subject matter and stage "business" between the original edition and the stage presentation. For example, whereas the former began at noon, Act One of the latter ended exactly at that hour. This was Barrault's own innovation, as was the substitution of a rocking chair for Ysé's chaise lounge of the first version.\textsuperscript{195}

Claudel's last version of 	extit{Partage}, written in 1949, retained most of the changes made in Barrault's production, for example certain deletions or revisions of the text, the ending of Act One at noon, the rocking chair. The "Cantique de Mesa" was further changed, now taking the form of Mesa's interrogations addressed to a tea kettle.\textsuperscript{196} The author inserted

\textsuperscript{194} Personal interview with M. Barrault, Paris, July 19, 1961
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Claudel, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 285
more stage directions, concocting such superficial actions as passing out drinks, for instance, and Amalric, who had emerged in the stage version as an ironic sophisticate who delivers phrases "en bouffonnant," here is every bit as much if not more the self-mocker.

Where Claudel deviated most from his original play and where Barrault most objected was in the final scene which portrays the parting of Ysé and Mesa. In the stage version most of Claudel's original lyricism had already been cut.

Phrases such as

O la fiancée qui donne sa bouche qui sent la jacinthe blanche et la têeufle fraîche! Combien de temps maintenant, ô femme, dis-moi fruit de la vigne, avant que je ne te boive nouveau dans le Royaume de Dieu...

are replaced in the stage production by:

Comme il est intelligent, ce petit Mesa... c'est vrai, mon petit gars, il y a la mort...
Tais-toi! Silence!

but the last speech of the original play, one of great lyric power, was retained almost word for word in that production:

Par quelles routes longues, pénibles, distants, encore que ne cessant de peser l'un sur l'autre, allons-nous mener nos âmes, etc.

On the other hand, in the new edition of 1949, Claudel inserted a completely different and seemingly irrelevant idea, couching it in familiar language. He made Ysé suddenly ask for the sky thusly:

197 Claudel, op. cit., p. 229
198 Ibid., p. 103
199 Ibid., p. 193
200 Ibid., p. 194
Mesa, cette espèce de ciel étoilé, qu'est-ce qu'il fiche là-haut à ne servir à rien... Il fallait bien quelqu'un pour me le donner peut-être.\textsuperscript{201}

and in place of Mesa's final speech, there is only one sentence by Yse as an ending to the play.

Although Barrault found this change particularly offensive (along with revisions made in the love scene between Mesa and Yse),\textsuperscript{202} although he rightly saw that there was a world of difference between Claudel's 1949 and 1905 editions of Partage, it is difficult to agree with him that:

La version que nous jouâmes fut... très proche de la version originale... et que par conséquent la version nouvelle... est très différente de celle que nous avons l'habitude de jouer.\textsuperscript{203}

The contrary can be seen immediately from the first three pages of the play where the stage version differs greatly in form and even to some extent in content, from the 1905 edition, whereas the "nouvelle version" of 1949 follows its immediate predecessor closely, changing or omitting very little of it by and large.

Even the ending bears this contrast out in a very basic way. In the original play the last scene showed a repentant Yse, humbled, plaintive, full of love, begging Mesa to return to her. In the 1948 and 1949 versions an utterly different tone is adopted by Yse: in both cases she pronounces phrases like: "Si tu savais pourtant, petit Mesa... à quel point je te

\textsuperscript{201}Claudel, op. cit., p. 297
\textsuperscript{202}"Le Drame de Partage de midi par Paul Claudel," Cahiers R.-E., #5, 1954, footnote to page 8
\textsuperscript{203}Cahiers, R.-E., #1, p. 82
haïssais, "204 and "C'est vilain d'être un vilain petit bougre de sacré égoïste comme tu étais."205

It is possible to surmise from this that, just as Barrault evidenced a special fondness for Christophe Colomb, a production in which his own artistic contribution was particularly great, perhaps his marked preference for the stage version of Partage as opposed to Claudel's new version, stemmed not so much from its supposed resemblance to the original as from his own participation in the act of creation and interpretation.

After having reviewed the features of this successful author-director relationship and studied in particular the pattern of their individual contributions to a given work, can we determine the importance of the role played by the director here? How great was Barrault's influence on Claudel? Can one say that Claudel's fame was as dependant on Barrault as Giraudoux's on Jouvet?

It is useless to minimize the role that Barrault played in this artistic liaison. We have witnessed throughout this account the degree to which he could influence or persuade his mentor in matters of stage production. When it came to the actual text, Claudel allowed Barrault great liberty: We have mentioned that Barrault's stage version of Partage was a composite of several versions that Claudel had in mind. Of this Claudel remarked:

204 Claudel, Oeuvres complètes, #11: Stage version, p. 192
1949 version, pp. 293, 294
205 Ibid., Stage version, p. 192; 1949 version, p. 295
...ce qui en réalité n'était pas mon idée...j'aurais préféré que Barrault prît la dernière version telle que je l'ai choisie.206

But he accepted Barrault's concept in order not to obstruct an imminent production.207 For the stage version of the Soulier, Claudel actually instructed Barrault to fill in some transitional sentences. As for the "jeux de scène" incorporated into the text of these plays (such as the tableau* at the end of Act I of Partage), these were almost all Barrault's inventions. Said he of Claudel, in this respect: "Il me laissait faire."208

Rene Farabet believes that Barrault had a definite influence on Claudel's style, that the natural rhythm of Barrault's production of Partage de midi induced Claudel to write a more direct, more conversation Echange.209 This Barrault emphatically denies, insisting that Claudel himself was "hanté par la simplicité," and that he, Barrault had little to do with this evolution.210 (It is true that the process of adapting his plays for the stage had been undergone by Claudel long before his encounter with Barrault. Lalou notes for example the two versions of Le Ville—the original one of 1893 and Claudel's stage version of 1897.211

206Claudel, Mémoires improvisés, p. 188
207Ibid., p. 189
208Personal interview, op. cit.
209Rene Farabet, Le Jeu de l'acteur dans le théâtre de Claudel, p. 96
210Rene Farabet, Le Jeu de l'acteur dans le théâtre de Claudel, p. 73
211Lalou, op. cit., p. 44
When asked to appraise his contribution to Claudel's theatre, Barrault replied that it consisted of 1) a "travail de coupure," the cutting of a minimum of passages to facilitate stage performance, and 2) his restraint of a Claudel who wanted to become too simple, who wished to use an overly familiar or unrefined language.* Barrault compared this to restraining a gifted violinist who preferred to play on a child's noise-maker ("crécelle").

Such a contribution would suffice to mark Barrault as a real influence on Claudel. But it would hardly be just to accept Barrault's low estimation of his effect on the author: Claudel himself admits being inspired by Barrault's inventiveness. The author's addition of the teapot in the 1949 version of *Partage* stemmed directly from Barrault's revision of the "Cantique de Mesa":

Vous donnez merveilleusement l'idée d'un dialogue, il faut un interlocuteur. 213

When Barrault made a rocker basic to the dialogue of *Partage*, Claudel himself made a similar effect with a swing in *L'Echange*. 214 This sort of pattern is often apparent in the course of their collaboration.

While recognizing Barrault's influence on Claudel, it might seem harder to prove Claudel's necessity for Barrault as a director in his march to fame. For one thing, it was

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212 Personal interview
213 Claudel, Oeuvres complètes, "Lettre à Barrault," 3 décembre, 1948, p. 319
214 Personal interview
*(e.g., "Où c'est qu'elle est, Ysé?")
Lugné-Poe who "discovered" Claudel, and before the former's production of his works, that author was hardly known to the French theatre public at all. Moreover through Barrault's writings one gets the impression that the director needed the author and not the reverse. Yet many writers feel that if not for Barrault's productions, Claudel may well have remained in demi-obscurity as a playwright. Farabet holds that the vitality of pace that Barrault injected into the performance of Partage de midi was greatly responsible for maintaining Claudel in the modern living theatre. And Beigbeder writes:

C'est...après un demi-siècle...que Claudel devient, avec le Soulier de satin, en 1943, renforcé en 1948 de Partage de midi, lancés par Barrault, l'auteur du jour.

Eric Bentley adds:

It is through Barrault that Claudel is coming to be recognized as one of the two or three outstanding French playwrights of the past half-century.

Even without the question of dependance or need on the part of either of these men, it is undeniable that this relationship, like that of Giraudoux and Jouvet, was one of the richest and most productive in the history of the modern French theatre.

Let us now resume and refocus the salient characteristics common to the author-director partnerships examined here.

215 Brisson, Le Théâtre des années folles, p. 74
216 Farabet, op. cit., p. 67
217 Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 41
218 Bentley, In Search of Theatre, New York, Knopf, 1953, p. 54
The first step on the part of the director was usually to do what Pitoeff describes as "entering into communion with the author's work." Then it was a question usually of "initiating" the author into the theatre or at least into that director's theatre. The first obstacle to overcome was often a lack of playability in the author's work, and this led often to extensive revisions of the text, on which both author and director collaborated and ultimately agreed. Another difficulty was sometimes as with Pirandello and Claudel, the conflict when a definite concept of the material ran counter to the director's interpretation (this particular difficulty usually being the most important one in any author-director relationship). Then at some point in these relationships we have witnessed the enthusiasm and enjoyment of an author immersed in the actual work of the stage and a friendly, joy­ful partnership of author and director engaged in solving together questions of music, decor, interpretation. At times there were occasions of an author encroaching on a director's prerogative. The problem was probably reversed in as many cases, although such situations would not as easily be gleaned from the accounts of directors. However, any struggles seemed far outweighed by the affection and satisfaction that colored these partnerships.

These feelings were allied to a deep sense of identification of director to the author and his work. We witnessed

219Pitoëff, Notre théâtre, p. 23
how Jean-Louis Barrault, so often censured for carrying his
own, rather than his author's personality to the stage,
although he may have enjoyed the liberty he had in staging
Christophe Colomb, in other cases identified so closely with
the text that he felt physically wounded by the changes made
by the author. This identification could be construed as
an egoism rather than a sense of communion: a feeling of ownership of the text. But there is no denying the extent to which
this director wanted to relate to the very essence of Claudel
and his work.

A most significant feature of the bond that united these
men was that it had not a personal basis but a working one.
It was the enthusiasm generated by a common goal--great theatre--
that fired these collaborations. The word "artisanal" always
recurs in describing their essence and often evokes the parallel
of the cathedral builders of the Middle Ages.

Oui, la communion absolue, la communion du coeur, et celle
de tout l'être pour une œuvre aussi passionnée, aussi
importante, aussi sacrée que celles des artisans du Moyen Age.

And beneath the framework of this harmonious communion of
artisans we have found that there was a strong foundation of
fidelity of the director to the author.

(From collaborations such as these there is an increasing
awareness these days of the director's contribution to the
author's art. We have noted how Barrault's "remaniement" of
Partage de midi was published alongside of Claudel's editions

220"Quatre lettres de Jacques Copeau à Louis Jouvet," (25 août,
1915), Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, #1, 1953, p. 101
of it in the latter's works; and no matter how faithful to Claudel, the stage version, viewed by a great public, owes its final form to Barrault's decisions. Similarly, the works of Eugene Ionesco include in their published form Georges Bataille's "mise en scène" which in many instances was quite different from Ionesco's original intention. *)

It is clear from the foregoing that the duality between the French author and the director in modern times, the conflict between the "verbe" and the "geste" may still arise, but that the goal is now clearly one of a harmonious communion based on a mutual respect and especially on the director's regard for his author whom he serves conscientiously. This trend is implicit in the many condemnations that we have quoted aimed at directors who have emphasized their art at the author's expense, and in the critics' praise of directors who have remained faithful to the intentions of their authors. It is obvious too in the partnerships described here, for even in the cases where a director may have affected an author and his work quite radically, it was still always a question of harmony of relationships founded on respect.

The association between the director and the author in the modern French theatre would be of little interest without the existence of their representative on the stage. Let us now examine therefore another side of this triangle--the relationship between the author and the actor.

*Ionesco has been most flexible in allowing for a director's interpretation. Said Robert Postec (director of Jacques ou la soumission in 1961,) "Il me laissait faire." (Personal interview, Paris, July 18, 1961)
In the preceding chapter on the author and the director in the modern French theatre, we have referred constantly to a duality or conflict that has sometimes been resolved in harmonious collaborations. Now, in studying the relationship between the author and the actor, the problem of conflict will not be the prominent factor. This is understandable, since in these times the actor no longer fulfills the imposing, authoritative role he once held with regard to the author. As we shall see in subsequent pages, the new importance of the director has tended to eliminate competition between the author and the actor in the French theatre. But since, in so doing, the director has, in addition, obviated a good deal of personal contact between the French author and actor, much of our study of the relationship between them will be based on their attitudes toward the artistic bond that links them—the character.

In this chapter we shall deal first with the changing balance of working relationships between the author and the actor from the beginning of the century to the present. Then, in order to determine the meaning of the modern French actor's role with respect to the author and his work, we shall study the attitudes of both the author and the actor toward the character. We shall see how writers such as Claudel, Ionesco and Genet regarded their fictional figures, how actors such as Copeau, Jouvet and Barrault considered the interpretation of the author's character and how they practiced their views.

\[1\text{See Introduction, p. 19}\]
And finally we shall attempt to see whether there is a correlation between the way that an author has created his character and the manner in which an actor should incarnate it.

We have alluded briefly to the phenomenon of the superiority of the actor's art over the author's, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This situation obtained through the early years of the twentieth century in France. After the turn of the century, most of the popular theatres were administered by well-known actors: Lucien Guitry, Sarah Bernhardt, Rejane, Porel, Les Coquelin. The plays submitted to these artists were often tailored to set off their own personalities, and if the author had not suited the "vehicle" sufficiently to his "star," the latter thought nothing of making the necessary changes himself. According to Jules Renard,

L'auteur accepte les idees, les ébauches de scène, les coups de théâtre infaillibles et on peut compter sur sa discrétion.4

Such a procedure represented for Renard and others a natural state of affairs and a healthy collaboration between author and actor—

Collaboration étroite et d'autant plus agréable qu'elle reste anonyme.5

Lucien Guitry, even when interpreting works of famous authors, could not be limited to a written text.6 A biographer of Sarah Bernhardt writes:

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2 See introduction, pages 13, 19.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
She amended Dumas triumphantly; she saw new meanings in Hamlet, she enlarged or restricted the part she was given.  

Henry James said of performances at the Palais-Royal:

The actresses are classically bad, and the actors are addicted to taking liberties.

As justification for this authority of the actor over the author's text, Renard proposed that since almost all of the above-mentioned star-producers "font des pieces ou sont capables d'en faire," they were well qualified to take part in such a "collaboration."

Moreover, many dramatists, often to insure the acceptance and performance of their plays, were wont to write them as show-pieces for specific actors and actresses. Lalou mentions the "bavarde" Marie Magdeleine of Maurice Maeterlinck, which was composed in 1913 simply to offer a fine role to the actress Georgette Leblanc, and Le Secret of Henri Bernstein, written the same year for Mme Simone LeBargy. Sarah Bernhardt not only had plays written for her but wrote her own version of Adrienne Lecouvreur, destining the title role for herself.

The major roles of Sacha Guitry the playwright were created for Sacha Guitry the actor.

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7 Joanna Richardson, Sarah Bernhardt, London, Max Reinhardt, 1959, p. 12
9 Renard, op. cit., p. 367
11 Ibid., p. 20
12 Joanna Richardson, op. cit., p. 157
Sometimes the effect of having used certain actors as models could be devastating to the playwright: Flers usually based his roles upon certain actors to such an extent that almost every characteristic or tic of the actor was included in the part. As a result, according to Dussane, there was a real risk in reproducing his plays later with other actors. Many have attributed the failure of Edmond Rostand's *Chantecler* in 1910 to the fact that Constant Coquelin, for whom the role of the cock had been written, died before the play was produced.

The great liberties that actors took with authors' texts, the prestige that they were granted by the authors themselves in the writing of plays was not unnoticed or unprotested: At the turn of the century Antoine had made the first real move against the star system (although that system remained in effect even at the Comédie-Française through the 1920's, bringing with it a poor and uneven dramatic presentation), when, as we have seen, he introduced the principle of the "troupe" to the French theatre. In 1905 Jacques Copeau's voice was heard decrying the unhealthy relationship between the author and the actor in the French theatre:

(No burden) is heavier than the actor's greed. Vain and arrogant, the latter are the true masters of the situation; their whims, their despotic ignorance rule the stage. A play is unrecognizable once it has passed through their hands. They modify the text, add, delete and transform it

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14 Dussane, *Notes de théâtre*, p. 218
15 Lalou, *op. cit.*, p. 40
16 Samuel Waxman, *op. cit.*, p. 131
to suit themselves; they are supposed to be the collaborators of the authors, they are the tormentors.  

We have spoken in a previous chapter of the great revolution that was wrought by Copeau and his disciples in restoring dignity to the dramatist and his work. By bringing all the elements of stage production into closer harmony with the author and his work, these "animateurs" brought the actor into a different perspective. Now, like the director, the actor was called upon to be the servant, not the master, of the author. In order to achieve this, Copeau proposed to educate the actor, "l'arracher de sa spécialisation dégradante," making of him an artisan among many united in the goal of good theatre:

 Là où régnait le désordre, la cupidité personnelle, la virtuosité poussée jusqu'â la grimace, une prodigalité barbare, nous voulions faire régner la discipline, le désintéressement, l'esprit de corps, l'économie des moyens et l'unité pour l'harmonie.

It is now an accepted fact that, like Stanislavsky in Russia, Copeau in France achieved this goal of "esprit de corps" in the troupe, the subordination of the actor to the author, of individual brilliance to the artistic ensemble. Although he was anticipated by Antoine in this work, it should be noted that their reforms took place within the framework of

18 Copeau, Notes sur le métier de comédien, Paris, Michel Brient, 1955. (Compiled by Marie-Hélène Daste), p. 40
a completely different philosophy of theatrical interpretation: Antoine's idea of acting was a natural and exact representation of everyday life, whereas Copeau's actors were taught to be more "intellectual" in their art, suggesting rather than reproducing exactly actions and emotions of real life.20

It is significant that by transforming the actor from a showman-idol to a member of a group in the service of an author, Copeau and his followers helped raise the artistic standard of the actor in France. The quality of acting in the first two or three decades of this century was generally quite poor. As late as 1926 Samuel Waxman noted that:

The Comédie-Française finds itself in the same situation today as the other theatres of Paris where the star system is doing much injury to dramatic art.21

About this same period Sheldon Cheney remarked:

One could witness mediocre performances of...the too usual French mixture of old-fashioned declamatory and new-fashioned "natural" acting.22

With the discipline of the troupe as realized by Copeau came a new purity in the concept of acting. With the constraint placed upon the actor by directors in the school of Copeau came a less flamboyant but higher ideal of dramatic truth. In 1923 Copeau said:

Délivérer le comédien de sa grimace...en faire un homme parmi les hommes, que son public en l'applaudissant ne cesse pas d'estimer et qu'il aime en l'admirant, relever la profession de comédien--comme l'avait fait Molière en son temps et comme l'a fait en Russie le grand Stanislavski--

20Kurtz, Jacques Copeau, p. 132
21Waxman, op. cit., p. 131
22Cheney, op. cit., p. 502
So we find that after Copeau's work was done, the actor, by humbling himself in the service of an author, reached a greater stature artistically than the majority of stars who were the despair of critics and theatre-goers in the early period of the century.

The dedication of the actor to the playwright and his work was also one of the main principles of Copeau's most prominent disciple, Louis Jouvet. We have discussed (Chapter II, pp.) the role he played as a director in the service of an author. It is natural in view of this that Jouvet should consider the importance of the dramatist and of the meaning of his text to the actor as well. Jouvet devotes much of his commentary on the actor's art in Le Comédien désincarné to the actor's position in relationship to the author and his work, and he concludes:

C'est du texte qu'il faut partir toujours pour tout.24

Just as one of Copeau's principal aims was to bring the actor to "penser son rôle,"25 Jouvet held that:

Le comédien doit savoir penser un texte, c'est-à-dire l'imaginer dramatiquement après avoir reçu, de sa lecture une impression sensible.26

"Penser son rôle" in Jouvet's terms does not mean "repenser son rôle"—for example, he finds it superfluous and ridiculous

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23 Copeau, Notes sur le métier de comédien, p. 40
25 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 127
26 Jouvet, Réflexions du comédien, p. 147
that an actor, in interpreting a play by Molière, should seek hidden meanings in accordance with his own frame of reference or with the ideas and attitudes of his generation. Such an actor

... va de considération en perception, de notions en déductions dans un désordre que les théories du moment et les pratiques traditionnelles nécessitent.  

These superimposed thoughts and deductions betray the author. The author offers the actor a cloak of feelings and sensations; but when an actor uses the cloak as a means of displaying his own ideas, "ce n'est là qu'une usurpation."  

Did Jouvet himself betray his author in his somber, humorless interpretation of a "sincere Tartuffe" in 1950 ("un Tartuffe dont le public n'a pas réussi à rire quatre fois dans la soirée."

Jouvet's reply to this charge was:

Votre Tartuffe n'est pas le mien, c'est tout ce qu'on peut dire.  

But this attitude does not place Jouvet in a category with actors who "rethink" the author's work. Unlike such men, Jouvet did not use Molière's text as a "mis au point de sciences historiques, d'exploitations psychologiques." He felt that an actor's creation of a role had to be a very personal one, but one much more profoundly personal than the interpretation of theorists. Rather than don the cloak of the author's text in order to adapt it to one's concepts,

27 Jouvet, Témoignages, p. 23  
28 Ibid., p. 26  
29 Dussanne, Notes de théâtre, p. 95  
30 Jouvet, op. cit., p. 93  
31 Ibid., pp. 10-11
L'usage véritable d'une pièce est d'y réchauffer son corps et son coeur.32

In a sense the actor really makes the author's text his own "jusqu'au point même qu'il s'en croit créateur."33 The appropriation of the text is not mechanical but instinctive. Therefore, "penser son texte" is not an artificial, analytical approach to the author's work. The real actor does not think:

Cet homme ne saurait penser. Il ne pense pas. Il n'a jamais pu penser... Il a une façon de penser qui est de sentir haut.34

For an actor like Jouvet, then to think one's role is to achieve a very personal, spontaneous, emotion understanding of the author.

In the light of this distinction that Jouvet makes between actors who exploit the author's text rationally or scientifically and those who live it intimately and organically, one can accept Jouvet's remark, "Votre Tartuffe n'est pas le mien" as more than just an impertinent way of ending an argument. Moreover, Jouvet did not make his own reputation as an actor by over-original interpretations of authors but was commended time and again for putting into practice his ideas of an actor's loyalty to the author's intentions. Among the many tributes to his deference to the author, we read:

M. Jouvet sert le texte... Les seules amusettes que se permette M. Jouvet... sont courtes et indispensables...35

32 Jouvet, Témoignages, p. 26
33 Ibid., pp. 10-11
34 Ibid., p. 11
35 Kemp, La Vie du théâtre, p. 102
36 Ibid., p. 103
Enfin! Enfin! un comédien assez intelligent pour traiter Molière en comique et ses comédies en comédies! Enfin... le retour au véritable esprit de Molière et de son siècle... 37

It is obvious from the above that Jouvet was a continuator of Copeau in emphasizing the service of the actor to the author and his work. Nevertheless there are many who would hold that essentially Jouvet the actor was out of line with Copeau's ideal of abolishing the virtuoso star. Mainly because Jouvet himself was such an outstanding actor, he perhaps overshadowed the others who worked with him. Although his troupe was composed of such fine artists as Pierre Renoir, Romain Bouquet, Jean Meyer, Jacques Mauclair, Valentine Tessier, Lucienne Bogaert, Madeleine Ozeray and Dominique Blanchar, it was still the actor Jouvet who received the greatest admiration of the public. The most popular production of his Compagnie des Champs-Elysées was one which thrived almost completely on Jouvet's personality—Knock. Whenever the finances of the company ran low, Jouvet had only to announce a revival of Knock and losses were regained. 38 Kurtz, in comparing this troupe with Copeau's said:

"Jouvet, comme malgré lui, dépasse tous ceux qui l'entourent." 39

However, if Jouvet's great talent broke in any way the equilibrium of his troupe, it never could put him in the category of the French showmen-stars before the 1930's. This talent was not displayed exhibitionistically in any way. Its

37 Review by Lucien Dubech of L'Ecole des femmes in Candide, quoted in Revue d'histoire du théâtre, p. 64
38 Ibid., p. 34
39 Kurtz, Jacques Copeau, p. 213
very nature was of a flegmatic, contained artistry. Whether or not he surpassed the others, it has been pointed out that the actors of his troupe formed a homogeneous unity, since Jouvet as director gave it a style, "une orientation très personnelle." (As with Copeau we see that it is again the director who prevents the actor from setting himself above the author and throwing the text out of balance).

It would be safe to conclude that although Jouvet's personal brilliance could not be contained unnoticed in a completely equalized community of actors, he did not basically go counter to his ideals quoted above and his sincere desire to serve the author and his text.

Where the theories of Copeau have doubtless found their most perfect expression today, both in the writings and in the experience of an "animateur," is in the person of Jean Vilar, Director since 1951 of the Théâtre National Populaire (T.N.P.). Like Copeau and Jouvet, Vilar's first counsel to the actor is to study the author's work:

"On ne lit jamais assez l'oeuvre, le comédien ne la lit jamais assez. Il croit avoir compris l'oeuvre parce qu'il a plus ou moins lucidement saisi l'intrigue. C'est une erreur fondamentale."

The actor worthy of his name should not only serve the text, says Vilar, he should do so "servilement." To his own

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40. Revue d'histoire du théâtre, p. 31
42. Vilar, De la tradition théâtrale, p. 22
43. Ibid., p. 26
troupe in rehearsal for *Ruy Blas*, Vilar gave the following advice:

Vous...interprêtes de Hugo, vous devez livrer ses arrières-pensées complètement. Ne gardez rien sur le coeur...N'enroulez pas autour des vers ou des répliques de Hugo, des jeux ou des intonations ou des phrases d'acteurs, trop particuliers à vous-mêmes, trop personnels, chapeau bas devant le poète. Et verbe haut. Restez des interprêtes, n'imposez pas votre nature à celle du poète.44

So we find that a good part of his director's notes in an actual production was aimed at the subordination of the actor's personality to the author's intentions. As for the principle of the troupe, this criterion and proof of the broken "cult of personality," Vilar's company is the epitome of that. Among countless critics Robert Kanters has taken note of this "troupe de comédiens qui jouent ensemble, dans le même mouvement et dans le même style,"45 and Marie-Thérèse Serrière praises the "composition ordonnée et coordonnée" of this group that plays as a concert of instruments.46

Although Vilar frowns on the glorification or domination of the director, it should be said that it is certainly he, as director, who sets the tone that keeps the troupe a homogeneous unit and maintains the actors in a proper perspective with regard to their authors (see p. Chapter IV).

A glance at the views and experience of these key figures in the modern French theatre reveals clearly the modern trend

44 Vilar, "Notes pour les comédiens," *Théâtre Populaire*, No. 6, 1954, pp. 46-47
toward bringing the actor into a position of servant (albeit noble servant) of the author. One may inquire here whether this tendency has been fully realized at this point. Recently, in an editorial preface to an article in Théâtre Populaire, it was stated:

Dans un siècle ou partout s'imposent et triomphent le sens du travail collectif et l'esprit de méthode, le théâtre français continue de s'en remettre à de brillantes personnalités.47

In still another review Georges Huisman writes that although actors realize that the success of a play depends on a collective endeavor:

Les faits démontrent que des artistes très remarquables, très célèbres n'ont pas toujours le sens exact des entreprises collectives.48

It is true that this was said with special reference to the Comédie-Française and that, as pointed out elsewhere, in that institution where power politics play an important part and where several directors alternate in quick succession, it is not easy to achieve the ideal of homogeneity of the troupe.49 However, one could not claim that all other acting companies have become completely collectivized even after mid-century. We have mentioned how Jouvet was considered outstanding in his troupe. With the Pitoeffs the imbalance was even greater,

47 Théâtre Populaire, No 39, third trimester, 1960, p. 1
48 Huisman, "Réforme de la Comédie-Française," La Revue théâtrale, No. 21, 1952, p. 29
49 Paul Arnold, "Crisis de la Comédie-Française," La Revue théâtrale, #27, 1954, p. 21
since they were frequently surrounded by mediocre actors,\textsuperscript{50} and Ludmilla was in effect the star of the company.\textsuperscript{51}

We cannot assume that the "cult of personality" has or will disappear totally from the French stage. Nevertheless we can see that these days it has certainly come under control: Serrière notes that even a gifted actor like Gérard Philipe did not destroy but affirmed the reality of the "équipe."\textsuperscript{52} Philipe's recent death, although a profound blow for the T.N.P. (and indeed for the theatre and cinema in general), diminished neither the quality nor the popularity of the T.N.P. Pierre Marcabru stated in January, 1961:

\begin{quote}
Décidément nous devons au T.N.P. les meilleures soirées de cette saison...\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

A great actress like Valentine Tessier has been highly admired in her own right but has not taken willful liberties with an author and his text. Toward the end of his career, Copeau wrote her: "Je t'ai trouvée fidèle."\textsuperscript{54}

Books and publications on the theatre are a testimonial to the shift in author-actor balance. Just as French theatre commentaries of the eighteenth century consisted largely of mémoires of great actors and actresses--Clairon, LeKain, Dumesnil, etc., so the early twentieth century teemed with books about Bernhardt, Coquelin, Réjane, Mounet-Sully, and so

\textsuperscript{50}André Frank, Georges Pitoeff, Paris, L'Arche, '58, p. 95
\textsuperscript{51}Kurtz, Jacques Copeau, p. 213
\textsuperscript{52}Serrière, op. cit., p. 30
\textsuperscript{53}Marcabru, Arts, January 18-24, 1961, p. 5
\textsuperscript{54}Copeau, Notes sur le métier du comédien, "Lettre à Valentine Tessier," April 18, 1944.
forth, whereas this type of writing comprises a very small percentage of the works on the current French theatre (as in the United States these days). Reviews devote a much smaller space to the actor than to the author (or the director). If there are criticisms of virtuosity or imbalance due to an outstanding actor, that is even more an indication of the fact that the subordination of actors to authors through the equalization of a troupe is now the accepted goal.

In the course of this exposition we have seen a definite change in relationships between author and actor in the twentieth century. In one sense it is a vertical shift, that is the "downgrading" or fall of the star-showman and at the same time the "upgrading" or rise in terms of true artistic distinction of the dedicated actor. In another respect it is a horizontal shift: the drawing apart of star and author, the widening of the breach as far as professional dealings are concerned (made inevitable with the director as style setter, middle man and coordinator), and, along with that, a drawing together of actor and author on a purely artistic basis through the medium of the author's text.

Since it is in terms of his creative rather than his practical or professional dealings that the modern French actor achieves prestige and a close bond with the author, it is this artistic union that I should like to examine here. This relationship, as we have been witnessing above, is primarily based now on the author's text, the actor's rendering of the
role in accordance with the author's intentions. The real point of contact between author and actor is found, then, in the role, or more specifically, in the character, the literary embodiment of the author's concept, which is destined for the actor's interpretation and illustration on the stage.

Henri Gouhier writes that unlike the novelist, the author must disappear from the play. He cannot resume, describe or comment personally on the development or ideas of his work. Instead, the character must represent him through the language and action of an actor's interpretation. So the author designs figurative individuals, the "dramatis personae:"

L'auteur joue au Créateur. La comédie qui commence avec lui est l'imitation de la Divine Comédie."55

Since it has become so important for the modern actor to play the part of the character, to "penser son rôle" in intimate accordance with the idea or attitude that the author had in creating him, it would be useful at this moment to study this attitude, the relationship of the author to his character at the moment of creation. We shall do this by treating a few important typical but different authors whose point of view in creating their characters may be especially significant and revealing to the relationship of the author and the actor in the modern French theatre, as it develops from the traditional (Claudel) to the more "avant-garde" (Ionesco and Genet).

55Gouhier, Essence du théâtre, Paris, Libraire Plon, 1943, p. 228
Paul Claudel has given valuable and interesting information both on his concept of the character in general and his relationship to the characters of his own plays. One of his main principles is that:

C'est le rôle qui crée le personnage et non pas le personnage qui crée le rôle.\textsuperscript{56}

By this he means that a character may be a host of various and contradictory elements, but that a unifying idea, the essence or the role, identifies him or gives him meaning.\textsuperscript{57} (He cites as an example Molière's Harpagon; although he is more than one thing, being both a miser and in love, the role of the miser subordinates or denies the other qualities, synthesizes and characterizes him).\textsuperscript{58} In creating his own characters, Claudel finds that "le rôle est antérieur au personnage,"\textsuperscript{59} meaning that the unifying principle of the role guides Claudel in writing (or to use Sartrean terminology: essence precedes existence).

Therefore, even though Claudel's characters are much more complex and contradictory and mysterious than the figures of the classic French theatre, Claudel still had in mind a traditional essence of the role that provided a framework or an order for his characters.

\textsuperscript{56}Claudel, Mémôires improvisées, (Radio Interview), Paris, Gallimard, 1954, p. 105
\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., p. 105
\textsuperscript{58}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59}Ibid.
Claudel notes too that after 1909, in composing these characters, he tended to see his work from the outside rather than live it emotionally.

J'ai eu un point de vue en quelque sorte extérieure, un point de vue constructeur... j'ai vu l'œuvre à réaliser un peu de dehors. Ce côté objectif est devenu de plus en plus important chez moi.  

Besides viewing his characters according to a general order and composing them from a point of view that became more and more objective, Claudel designed his characters as symbols of his thought. Lalà in La Ville represented for him "la Grâce" or "la vérité avec le visage de l'erreur;"  

Marthe in L'Echange was L'Eglise; Yse in Partage de midi, "la fausse femme... c'est tout ce que vous voudrez," and so on. These symbolic figures are not true-to-life psychological studies, Their language, although individual with each character, is often that of Claudel's rich, lyrical imagery. His women have been deemed utterly strange by one critic:

Les femmes imaginées par Claudel gagnent en bizarrerie ce qu'elles ont perdu en vérité. Rarement, il faut le dire, un auteur français a manifesté plus d'incompréhension vis à vis de la femme... on peut malaxer à sa guise un être aussi peu fondé psychologiquement.  

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60 Claudel, Mémoires, op. cit., p. 231
61 Ibid., p. 77
62 Ibid., p. 55

*(But then at no time does Claudel or his critics pretend that he is a realistic portrayer of men and women. As we have just seen, the poetic symbolism of his characters is intentional)*
Claudel's characters are never wholly likeable. The author himself, referring to certain ones of them has said:

Ils restent aussi deplaisants, aussi..."claudeliens" qu'ils peuvent l'être. 64

Poetic symbols, composed with increasing objectivity according to a preconceived idea, creatures with motivations unlike those of most people, it would seem that there could be little emotionally in common between Claudel the man and his creations. Nevertheless in a radio interview with Jean Amrouche, Claudel said of them:

Le drame qui se débat entre mes différents personnages, c'est un drame auquel je suis étroitement mêlé... 65

We have mentioned how deeply involved Claudel was in Partage de midi. The characters of this play were drawn from Claudel's own experience. (Claudel being represented by Mesa):

...personnages objectivement réels avec qui j'ai eu un contact profond... 66

They were conceived artistically by Claudel as a "quatuor" played one against the other tragically. Their names are symbolic, each representing a split or schism, 67 but they were in a very deep and personal sense utterly real to Claudel.

In L'Echange also four characters are tied in a dramatic situation, as Claudel says, like the pattern of a musical composition. 68 Unlike Partage these do not represent people that

64 Claudel, Memoires, op. cit.
65 Ibid., p. 225
66 Ibid., p. 185
67 Ibid., 184
68 Ibid., p. 106
Claudel has known but symbolize four sides of the individual, Louis Laine being the spirit of adventure, Lechy Elbernon an "imagination un peu folle," etc. However, it is clear that they represent sides of Claudel's own personality. As Amrouche said in their interview, "des parties de vous...des aspects de vous." Referring to *La Ville*, Amrouche spoke of "Lala qui est souvent votre porte parole," and *Avaré*, "un des personnages dans lesquels vous vous reconnaissiez le mieux," and Claudel himself reflected:

...J'ai connu les mêmes moments de désespoir profond qui sont traduits par Lambert de Besme de même que par Isidore de Besme.

Of *L'Otage* he has said:

Je me reconnais aussi bien dans Sygne...dans Toussaint jurure ou dans Georges: dans les trois je reconnais des traits particuliers de mon caractère.

The identification of Claudel with his characters was so general that he said:

...Je ne (puis) m'identifier avec un seul de mes personnages en particulier, mes états d'esprit successifs sont plutôt toujours exprimés par un ensemble de personnages différents.

Even the most displeasing of Claudel's inventions were not alien to him but were seen compassionately.* Indeed Claudel often felt a greater kinship to his antipathetic characters than to the others (when asked by Amrouche whether this were true,

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69 Claudel, *Mémoires*, op. cit., p. 109
70 Ibid., p. 185
71 Ibid., p. 84
72 Ibid., p. 74
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., p. 233
75 Ibid.

*Henri Peyre states: "Les plus pervers, les plus acharnés à leur perte ne sont pour Claudel que des égarés, des misérables, à qui l'ordre harmonieux du monde n'a pas été révélé et qui en troublent la musique." (Hommage et oeuvres du vingtième siècle, Paris, Corréa, 1939, p. 81
he replied, "Je pense bien". For example, in L'Otage, the characters of Coufontaine, noble cousin of the heroine, Sygne, and Turelure, a villainous baron who forces Sygne to marry him, had their prototypes in Claudel's family. He felt that he was both of these men, but that:

Par mon tempérament, par la violence de certains instincts, je me sens beaucoup plus rapproché de Toussaint Turelure.

It was this character that led Claudel to develop L'Otage into a trilogy:

Ce personnage de Toussaint Turelure m'avait tellement intéressé en le réalisant, il était si rapproché de moi par beaucoup de côtés qu'il m'a semblé qu'il avait encore quelque chose à dire.

Of these characters then, some are patterned on people Claudel know, some are symbolic aspects of his own self or media for the expression of his thoughts and feelings, some are based on models so close to Claudel personally that they are really a part of him. They all derive from some part of his experience.

The position of Eugene Ionesco with regard to his characters is quite unlike that of Claudel. His point of departure in composing his characters is precisely the opposite of Claudel's principle that the role creates the character. For Ionesco, the existence of the character precedes its essence: the character is born, then determines itself the progress of the role--

76 Claudel, Mémoires, p. 242
77 Ibid., p. 246
78 Ibid., p. 255
C'est une image, une première réponse, qui déclenche toujours chez moi, le mécanisme de la création, ensuite, je me laisse porter par mes personnages.\textsuperscript{79}

In describing how he came to write \textit{La Cantatrice chauve}, Ionesco says that as he was writing the text became transformed beneath his eyes "contre ma volonté."\textsuperscript{80} As Ionesco describes it, the characters themselves took the initiative:

Mes personnages, mes braves bourgeois, mes héros se jetaient à la figure non pas des répliques...mais des syllabes ou des consonnes ou des voyelles."\textsuperscript{81}

According to Ionesco, then, the characters formed themselves or lead him to form them. If Claudel's characters seem unusual as compared with the people we know, Ionesco's, once created, resemble people only by the merest chance. Claudel and most writers of his time created characters, if not with psychological exactness, at least according to a pattern, as units having a general psychological essence or individuality with which to identify them. Ionesco's characters lose identity and cohesion, become absurd creatures, tossed into absurd situations:

Les personnages...s'étaient vidés de leur psychologie et le monde m'apparaissait dans une lumière insolite, avec des gens se mouvant dans un temps sans temps, dans un espace sans espace."\textsuperscript{82}

Once emptied of any psychological unity, these characters become non-existent shadows of people, without individuality or personality. They are, as he says, interchangeable:

\textsuperscript{80}Ionesco, "La Tragédie du langage," \textit{Spectacles} #2, July, 1958, p. 4
\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., p. 5
\textsuperscript{82}Ibid
Les Smith, Les Martin ne savent plus parler, parce qu'ils ne savent plus penser; ils ne savent plus penser parce qu'ils ne savent plus s'émouvoir, n'ont plus de passions, ils ne savent plus être; ils peuvent "devenir" n'importe qui, n'importe quoi, car n'étant pas, ils ne sont que des autres, le monde de l'impersonnel, ils sont interchangeables...83

Richard N. Coe has emphasized this depersonification of Ionesco's characters and pointed to their utter lack of continuity, the fact that they do change from one sort of person to another at any moment (even from one person to another, into things, or into several characters84). He notes that many lack memory or past,85 and comments:

A "personality," in the classical concept of the term, implies at least a minimum of continuity from one moment to the next, and not merely an unrelated sequence of "states of existence" accidentally confined within the same material body. But this minimum of continuity is precisely what is lacking.86

If the language of Claudel's characters is often highly poetic, it is also adapted to its characters, corresponding to the type of person who speaks. The language of Ionesco, as Coe puts it:

...does not exist to serve the characters; the characters are simply a vehicle--and a fragile, highly expendable one at that--by which language is conveyed.87

The language that is "conveyed is often as improbable as the characters:

Mme Martin: Basar, Balzac, Bazaine!
M. Martin: Bizarre, beaux-arts, baisers!
M. Smith: A, e, i, o, u, a, e, i, o, u, i!

83Ionesco, "La Tragédie du langage," Spectacles #2, p. 5
84Coe, Eugène Ionesco, New York, Grove Press, 1961, p. 34
85Ibid., p. 34
86Ibid., pp. 33-34
87Ibid., p. 43
Mme Martin: B, c, d, f, g, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, x, z!
Mme Martin: De l'ail à l'eau, du lait à l'ail!
Mme Smith, (imitating the train): Teuff, teuff, teuff, teuff, teuff, teuff, teuff, teuff!88

Still these characters with their extraordinary language are not utterly dissimilar to us. Jacques Lamarchand states in fact that he likes Ionesco precisely because his characters resemble us—"de profil."89 And it may be that they are "monstrous" because they go to extremes in resembling us. La Cantatrice chauve is a caricature of English middle-class suburbia and its dialogue is little more than plays on familiar clichés, as is the dialogue of most of Ionesco's plays. One typical passage of Jacques ou la soumission reads:

Jacqueline: Je viens à toi une dernière fois, qui ne sera certainement la dernière, mais que veux-tu, tant pis aller. Tu ne comprends pas que je suis envoyée vers toi, comme une lettre à la poste, timbrée, timbrée, par mes voix aériennes, bon sang!
Jacques: Hélas, bon sang ne peut mentir!90

But in going to extremes of action and language the characters remain unlikely shadows. Ionesco attributes much of their unreality to the fact that they are not figures of tragic drama, but comedy (although he does not profess to write comedies, but "farces tragiques" (Les Chaises), "anti-pièces" (La Cantatrice chauve), "drames comiques" (La Leçon), "pseudo-drames" (VICTIMES DU DEVOIR), etc.):

Les personnages comiques, les imbéciles, ce sont les gens qui n'existent pas.91

88Ionesco, La Cantatrice chauve, Vol I, p. 53
89Ibid., p. 3
90Jacques ou la soumission, Vol I, p. 40
91La Tragédie du langage, p. 5
It may seem strange in view of the nature (or lack of it) of these characters, that Ionesco says he projects himself very personally into his plays—

Le théâtre est, pour moi, la projection sur scène du monde de dedans: c'est dans mes rêves, dans mes angoisses, dans mes désirs obscurs...que pour ma part, je me réserve le droit de prendre cette matière théâtrale.92

Richard Coe speaks of Ionesco's identification with the "reality" of his characters' situation:

One fact is incontrovertible: Ionesco is inextricably involved in his own plays, "committed" willy-nilly to the struggles and destiny (if not to the language) of his characters. And these characters, despite the dream-surroundings in which they exist, are involved in reality.93

That these surreal characters are often caught in a gripping reality is very true. This can be seen in the more intense of Ionesco's plays, such as the Kafka-esque Victimes du devoir, in Tueur sans gages or in Les Chaises (in which a man who has tried unsuccessfully to be something, to find a meaning to his life, goes to his death announcing that a spokesman will justify him and deliver his earth-shaking message to everyone, but the "spokesman" turns out to be inarticulate, a mute).

Jacques Guicharnaud explains that these figures are endowed with enough density and humanity to cause an identification with the general vision of the world and individual suffering.94

92 Impromptu de l'alma, Vol I, p. 57
93 Coe, Eugène Ionesco, p. 80
94 Guicharnaud, Modern French Theatre, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1961, p. 186
But that writer and others grant that they are basically "characterless characters."\textsuperscript{95} Coe, then, in speaking of Ionesco's commitment to his characters, is discussing not a personal commitment but a philosophical or moral one—he is saying that although Ionesco is not "engaged" politically like Brecht or Sartre,\textsuperscript{96} he is concerned with "solitude, anguish, and death."\textsuperscript{97} It is a metaphysical, rather than a physical affinity.

So whereas Claudel identifies with his symbolic characters as believable psychological units intimately linked with his own thoughts and actions, Ionesco relates to his characters only as possibilities, as concepts, and sees reality reflected not in them \textit{per se} but in the tragic implications of their absurd situation.

In resuming the attitudes of these two authors to their characters, we have found positions that contrast greatly with one another. We have seen that a writer like Claudel creates a character with a synthesis or an essence of the role in mind ("le rôle crée le personnage"), that Ionesco has no unifying concept in view and claims to let his characters create the role almost willy-nilly ("mes personnages me conduisent"). We have remarked too that while for Claudel his characters have a personality and a reality intimately involved with his own personality and reality, Ionesco's characters are in his estimation lacking in individuality and personality and do not

\textsuperscript{95}Guicharnaud, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 178  
\textsuperscript{96}Coe, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 80  
\textsuperscript{97}Ibid., p. 83
exist. It is on the one hand the author's identification with the character as a person, on the other, his destruction of the character as a person.

Between these two extremes of attitudes of author to character there are infinite gradations and variations. There is moreover another position that has become increasingly prevalent in the French theatre recently and which I should like to mention now. Here it is not a case of the character that represents the author or the character that represents no person, but the character that represents itself.

The French theatre in the past has seen real authors figure as characters in a play to explain their own ideas or depict their own personalities on stage (Adam de la Halle in the Jeu de la feuillée, Molière in the Impromptu de Versailles, etc.). This has been done in the twentieth century too (Giraudoux's Impromptu de Paris, Ionesco's Impromptu de l'Alma): however, in these plays it is a case of an author playing the part of a character and not the question that concerns us here: a character playing the part of a character in the author's work. This phenomenon derives mainly from Pirandello, many of whose plays revolved around the author-character-actor relationship. In Tonight We Improvise, he posed this problem:

The author creates the character according to his concept, but our idea of the character is distorted by the fact that he is embodied in and interpreted by another—the actor... the only way out would be if the work could perform itself
no longer making use of actors but making use of its own character, miraculously endowed with flesh, blood and speech.  

Thomas Bishop has treated this conflict of "form versus life" in a book which traces the influence of Pirandello in the modern French theatre. Many of the French authors discussed there have dealt with the theme of the character in their plays. Henri Gheon's *Le Comédien et la grâce*, Lenormand's *Crépuscule du théâtre*, Savoir's *Le Figurant de la gaité*, Ghelderode's *Trois auteurs, un drame*, Salacrou's *Pont de l'Europe*, and more recently plays like Anouilh's *Rêpétition*, Sartre's *Kean*, revolve around the problem of the character portraying a character, its reality, its importance, its relationship to the actor and the author.

However, there is little in the point of view of these plays that would radically affect the traditional attitude of author to character. In all of these works the character-protagonist represents an actor in an actual play: In Sartre's *Kean*, based on Dumas' play about that famous English actor, the hero is completely representational, even biographical. In Anouilh's *Rêpétition* there is a play-within-a-play that is interwoven with the plot, but the procedure is much more conventional than in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* in which the characters announce that they are characters.

Where the concept of the character in modern French plays does have a bearing here on the relationship of the character

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98 Luigi Pirandello, *Tonight We Improvise*, New York, E. P. Dutton, 1932, p. 29
to the author (and eventually on the relationship of the
caracter to the actor) is where the playwright has carried
out the implications of Pirandello to a much greater extent,
where it is not necessarily a question of a play-within-a-
play but of an author's character proclaiming that he is not
to be believed, that he is really only a fictional invention.

One French playwright whose characters are avowedly
theatrical creations, forever demonstrating their fabrication,
is Ionesco's contemporary, Jean Genét. At the beginning of
his Les Nègres the characters announce that they will perform
for the public, but rather than acting out a plot, they act
out their own acting. Throughout the play the actors emphasize
their own fiction, "afin que vous soyez assurés qu'un tel
drame ne risque pas de pénétrer dans vos vies précieuses." 100
One says to another:

A qui parlez-vous? De quoi parlez-vous? Ici c'est le théâtre, non la ville. Le théâtre, et le drame, et le crime. 101

The characters are involved not in a story, but in a cere-
mony, a rite. One paragraph of stage directions reads:

(Diouf reste debout devant le catafalque, cependant que
les autres acteurs se placent en une file, vers la gauche,
et marchent doucement, à reculons, en agitant doucement un
petit mouchoir que les hommes ont tiré de leurs poches et
les femmes de leur sein. Ils reculeront ainsi, très lente-
ment, tournant derrière le catafalque pour les remercier,
ne cessant de saluer, face au public. Ils chantent à mi-
voix une sorte de berceuse). 102

101 Ibid., p. 73
102 Ibid., pp. 68-69
This presentation of theatre as theatre is seen in *Le Balcon* and elsewhere in Genet’s works. Characters wear masks and cothurni, disguise themselves in costumes, make believe. One can certainly see here the influence of Antonin Artaud who sought:

Un théâtre pur, ou tout, conception comme réalisation, ne vaut, n’a d’existence que par son degré d’objectivation sur la scène.103

(As we shall further explain later, this sort of theatre also illustrates the tendencies of Berthold Brecht* who does not want the spectator to identify with the character or take him for a definite person.)

By now we have come a long way from the attitude of Paul Claudel with respect to his characters. For Claudel the character, although not completely representation was at least a partial portrait of Claudel as a person. For Ionesco, the character, although in a situation that reflected Ionesco’s anxieties, was without logical meaning per se, not a literary transcription of Ionesco’s own personality. And now we see how the ideas of Pirandello, Artaud and Brecht manifest themselves in plays like those of Genet, where to a great extent the theatre is theatre and the character represents a character. Certainly Genet’s attitude toward his characters, whom he wishes not to be wholly believed, does not approximate Claudel’s close identification with his characters.

103 Artaud, *Le Théâtre et son double*, p. 57

*The late German author and director of the Berliner Ensemble.*
But even if the French author has finally come to the point of "destroying" his characters as conventional human beings, he has not realized Pirandello's dream of dispensing with their ultimate embodiment: the actor. Jouvet has said:

"Le comédien pratique sur l'auteur quand il dit son texte ou ses répliques, une sorte d'exorcisme des personnages que celui-ci porte en lui et qui ne sont pas encore délivrés." 104

The literary character still needs a human being to incarnate it in order to be part of real theatre. What then is the "rapport" of the character and the actor? Will the actor's response to the character parallel the author's attitude toward it? Should an author's point of view elicit a corresponding interpretation of his character by the actor? Let us begin by investigating the general nature of the relationship between the character and the actor.

The actor must incorporate the character sincerely, yet he must also remain himself. He is two things, neither completely the one nor the other. This duplicity, the paradox of the actor, is often discussed in terms of the theories of Diderot. In *Le Paradoxe sur le comédien* Diderot concluded that the uniformly good actor divests himself of his emotionality ("sensibilité") and does not lose himself completely in the part of the character.

"S'il est lui quand il joue, comment cessera-t-il d'être lui? S'il veut cesser d'être lui, comment saisira-t-il le point juste auquel il faut qu'il se place et s'arrête?" 105

104 Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres*, Paris, Gallimard, 1951, p. 1036
105 Jouvet, *Le Comédien désincarné*, p. 146
Instead of the emotional transports of an actor who feels himself the character, Diderot prescribed a technique and a cool judgment based on the study of an ideal ("le modèle idéal") greater than himself and said:

C'est au sang-froid à tempérer le délire de l'enthousiasme. Many "animateurs" and writers on the modern French theatre have taken up this idea of the paradox of the actor who wishes to be taken as his character. The problem is now expressed not so often in Diderot's terms of sensitivity versus judgment, but hinges on the concept of "identification" or "non-identification." Identification of the actor with the character that he interprets is quite a different phenomenon from an author's communion with the character that he creates. An author like Claudel identifies with his character by modeling it on himself; an actor, in order to seem the same as the author's character, must not appear to be himself but another person. But obviously, since the actor cannot really become someone else, complete identification cannot be realized by him and must only be considered as a vague general term covering numerous and unfathomable psychological processes by which an actor attempts to become as closely in harmony with his character as possible in order to make it believable to the audience.

For artists and critics of the modern French theatre, the opposite of this trait is often described as "alienation" or

106 Denis Diderot, op. cit., p. 1058
107 Ibid., p. 1038
"distanciation," referring usually to Berthold Brecht's idea of "verfremdungskeit," a technique somewhat akin to Diderot's description of the actor's objective judgment as he interprets his part (but as we shall see later in this chapter, the objectivity prescribed by Brecht is not designed to portray the character more accurately in order to make him more believable, but for quite another purpose).

No more than the idea of "identification" can "aliénation" or "distanciation" be construed as a pure or absolute psychological manifestation when applied to an actor,* but will be accompanied by many undefinable sensations and attitudes. Neither of these two extremes of "identification" and "distanciation" can alone describe accurately the complicated intuitive procedure of the actor as he attempts to bring his character to life. Yet as vague and complex as these concepts may be, as inadequate as they are in revealing the psychology of the actor, they are still the "coin of the realm:" these terms are used (along with Diderot's "sensibilité," etc.) constantly by modern French "animateurs" in discussing their ideas on the actor's interpretation, we shall also generalize here, using "identification"/"incarnation" to indicate the effort of an actor to become as closely allied subjectively

*As Henri Bergson has pointed out, we are wont to discuss qualitative, heterogeneous, intensive experiences as though they were as distinct and homogeneous as our view of spatial entities: "(L'espace), nettement conçue par l'intelligence humaine, nous met à même d'opérer des distinctions tranchées, de compter, d'abstraire..." (Essai sur les données immédiate de la conscience, Paris, Lib. Félix Alcan, 1932)
with his character as possible, and "non-identification," "distance," "aliénation," etc., for a more calculated, objective playing of a part.

For prominent "animateurs" like Copeau, Jouvet, Dullin and Barrault, the main goal has been to identity; but they have all come to grips with the question of distance or objectivity. Even while aiming to incorporate their characters, the opposites of a sincere, instinctive incarnation and an objective remoteness exist simultaneously for them.

Jacques Copeau, speaking of the need to "become" one's character, said:

Il ne suffit même pas de le bien posséder pour lui donner la vie. Il faut en être possède. 108

Sensitivity, spontaneity and sincerity are three ingredients that he felt essential for this "possession." However, these qualities are not enough. Even if an actor has spontaneously caught the spirit of the character from the start and can act the part with sincerity and emotion, if he is a good actor, he will not be satisfied with that. First he will work until he has lost all meaning and perspective, has become frustrated, is neither himself nor the character:

Il lui a fallu renoncer à la fraîcheur, au naturel, aux nuances et à tout le plaisir que lui causait son animation, pour accomplir le travail difficile, ingrat, minutieux, qui consiste à faire sortir d'une réalité littéraire et psychologique une réalité de théâtre. Il lui a fallu mettre en place, maîtriser, assimiler tous les procédés qui sont à la fois ce qui le sépare de son rôle et ce qui l'y conduit. 109

108 Copeau, Notes sur le métier de comédien, p. 20
109 Ibid., p. 25
This work of grasping the essence of the character is not analytical but instinctive, "un don qu'on a ou qu'on n'a pas." Once on stage, interpreting the character to an audience, a sincere feeling of the part will bring the actor to great heights, but

Il y a une mesure de la sincérité, comme il y en a une de la technique.

There is a balance and an interplay between the two terms of this paradox. The completely necessary side of sensitivity, spontaneity and sincerity is an outgrowth of the equally important qualities of judgment and technique:

Le tout du Comédiens, c’est de se donner. Pour se donner, il faut d’abord qu’il se possède... L’expression émotive sort de l’expression juste. Non seulement la technique n’exclut pas la sensibilité; elle l’autorise et la libère.

This scientific revelation of spontaneous emotions was not aimed at an exact portrayal of a character as an actual human being in everyday life. No champion of Antoine’s naturalism, Copeau’s idea of the actor’s interpretation of his character depended not on the exact representation of life but as cited on a "réalité de théâtre:"

Au lieu de faire tourner le geste théâtral autour du geste quotidien—comme il était devenu de règle—il faut tourner celui-ci autour de celui-là... sous le nom de théatralité.

It is to this end, the goal of an artistic or theatrical reality, that the combination of sincerity and technique was directed in Copeau’s thinking.

111 Copeau, Notes sur le métier du comédien, p. 30
112 Ibid., p. 31
113 Beigbeder, Le Théâtre en France depuis la Libération, p. 37
As for Copeau's own experience in the capacity of actor, he felt that too much of the side of cool judgment made him a poor actor, that he often underwent "une satisfaction amère mais vive à porter jugement sur lui-même avec la plus extrême rigueur." This tendency led to an acute self-consciousness which he called "dédoublement" and which limited the quality of his acting. He said "Je ne suis pas tout à fait un comédien." Michel Saint-Denis agrees that Copeau as an actor often missed the mark, but that when playing the part of a character near to his own temperament and personality, he was splendid:

...c'est le rôle d'Alceste qu'il a, selon moi, marqué de sa plus authentique originalité. Je crois qu'Alceste lui convenait: Il en sentait la noblesse, il en éprouvait les excès...dans ce rôle là sa faculté de dédoublement le servait...

For Louis Jouvet, an artist like Copeau would qualify more as an "acteur" than as a "comédien." The "acteur" is limited by his own personality which he projects into each role; the "comédien" can interpret many different characters individually and accurately:

L'acteur ne peut jouer que certains rôles...Le comédien, lui, peut jouer tous les rôles. L'acteur habite un personnage, le comédien est habité par lui.

Jouvet too speaks of a "dédoublement" in the art of the actor, but with him the word implies not a limitation, but a necessity. He means that the actor must first identify completely

114 Copeau, Notes sur le métier du comédien, préface par Michel Saint-Denis, p. 10
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
117 Réflexions du comédien, p. 141
with his character, but the effacement of his own personality: "C'est en perdant sa personnalité qu'il existe." 118 (This loss of personality is really the significance of the title of Jouvet's book Le Comédien désincarné). Jouvet quotes Hegel who says that the actor is the author's sponge, 119 and says himself:

Il faut que tu sois sec, nu et dépouillé. 120

Then, in addition to giving himself up to the role, the actor must be objective enough about himself to control the role. 121 There is first a sort of brute sensation, a fresh feeling of the role, and second, an ordering, an objective framework that the actor himself gives to the role—not an intellectual thinking of the part but a drawing on his own experience and an application of that experience to the role. 122

Jouvet's solution to the "paradox" then is similar to Copeau's: the actor's art consists in a union through a process of intuition of the two sides of the question, the sensitive, spontaneous sincerity of identification, and the personal control: "Culture de la sensibilité... sensibilité appliquée rationnellement." 123

118 Jouvet, Geddes Lecture at Boston University, March 16, 1951
119 Jouvet, Le Comédien désincarné, p. 152
120 Ibid., p. 114
121 Ibid., p. 197
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid., p. 203
* Copeau's nephew and recently of the Lincoln Center in New York
** Jouvet also uses the term "actor" generically and not to mean simply the limited actor.
Into the control and mastery of the character go:

...les pensées préparées, les souvenirs, les associations d'idées, les sentiments, les sensations, les habitudes, les rappels du passé, les détails de la vie, etc.\(^{124}\)

(Jouvet himself brought to his characterization of Knock the constant and meticulous hand washing of a surgeon whom he had observed during his service in the army.\(^{125}\))

But it was not generally a question of sheer imitation. Stanislavsky held that "an actor's creative impulse dies in imitation."\(^{126}\) For Jouvet, details of memory were assimilated into a sort of transmutation, a "transsubstantiation,"\(^{127}\) an artistic transposition made by the actor and which brings him into "l'état dramatique ou était l'auteur au moment de la création."\(^{128}\) This welding of actual detail into a dramatic interpretation, a concept that we have just seen with Copeau, is an important part of Jouvet's view of the actor and his character.

We find from the foregoing that Jouvet the theorist, while bringing new insights into the relationship of the character and the actor, did not differ greatly from Copeau. In actual interpretation of characters on stage, however, the differences were most noticeable. For one thing, Jouvet's capabilities as an actor are undisputable. He received acclaim in an enormous

\(^{125}\)Jouvet, *Témoignages*, p. 111
\(^{126}\)Stanislavsky on the Art of the Stage, compiled by David Magarshack, London, Faber and Faber, 1961, p. 223
\(^{127}\)Comedien désincarne, p. 203
\(^{128}\)Ibid.
variety of roles, thus qualifying himself for the title of "comédien" as opposed to "acteur." The sureness that was lacking in Copeau on stage (and to Jouvet in real life) was a principal characteristic of Jouvet's acting. Jean Sarment writes:

Il était "hurluberlu" avec une rigueur logique, trépidant et flegmatique, toujours maître de lui avec des airs de toujours s'égarder.130

This does not mean that his interpretations were cold or lacking in emotion. Pierre Scize wrote in reviewing L'Ecole des femmes:

Il vit avec une intensité merveilleuse ce personnage... quand l'homme amoureux est atteint par les traits que lui lance l'innocente et terrible Agnès, voyez ce visage de pierre, cette souffrance pitoyable, cette misère de l'amour malheureux. L'étonnant acteur!131

Yet most critics of Jouvet's acting refer inevitably to its logic and lucidity and, like Dussane, speak of "la maîtrise" and l'intelligence" that characterize it.

In one way Jouvet's own acting seemed in contradiction with his theories. Although he prescribed the loss of one's personality in order to identify with many characters, he himself was supposed to have always played Jouvet. Jules Romains said that where Jouvet had been ready to compose the character of Knock, Romains preferred that he play himself, Jouvet, and

129 Knapp, op. cit., p. 54
130 Revue d'histoire du théâtre, p. 31
131 Ibid., p. 64
that the latter was successful ever afterwards doing just that.\textsuperscript{132} Claude Cézan writes:

On peut en effet reprocher à Louis Jouvet d'être en chacun de ses rôles trop pareil à lui-même... de jouer Mercure comme Knock.\textsuperscript{133}

Cézan says that if Jouvet played himself so much, it was not to flatter "la paresse du public" but because the traits he reproduced in these characters were intimately linked to his own temperament.\textsuperscript{134} This contradiction within the actor who wishes to become devoid of his personality in order to incarnate his character and yet whose own personality always asserts itself, is perhaps inevitable: Jouvet scoffed at the aim of truly identifying oneself with a character:

S'identifier! Etre identique! Ne faire qu'un avec son personnage... ce n'est pas... une vérité.\textsuperscript{135}

But Jouvet's solution of attaining the character by becoming "disincarnated" was perhaps just as inconceivable, at least for himself, for as he said:

Il y a une présence double: celle de l'acteur et celle de ce fantôme qu'il a charge d'évoquer dans l'esprit et dans l'imagination du spectateur.\textsuperscript{136}

The assertion of Jouvet's personality within his interpretation of characters, due neither to professional charla-

\textsuperscript{132} Romains, interviewed by Claude Cézan in "Qui était Jouvet?" Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 17 août, 1961, p. 9
\textsuperscript{133} Cézan, Louis Jouvet, Paris, Émile-Paul Frères, 1938, p. 68
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Jouvet, Témoignages, p. 113
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.

*Similar remarks have been made about many highly competent actors, including one of France's most gifted "comédiennes," Madeleine Renaud (wife of J. L. Barrault)
tanism nor to a lack of ability, was then a manifestation of his own variety of "dédoublé-ment." This double view of the character which was a fault of self-consciousness in Copeau, was with Jouvet the objectivity of an accomplished actor who masters a part without losing himself completely in it. It was used consciously as a technique toward the end of Jouvet's career: In rehearsing an adaptation of Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, he wanted to minimize the actor's identification with the character, and stressed objectivity and control of the actor. In August, 1951, he wrote to Pierre Renoir about this play:

Le comédien doit faire et dire, mais sans chercher une incarnation, un état d'âme total,--il doit garder par-dessus tout le souci d'une composition lucide--on approche ici à un jeu un peu abstrait. 137

In this instance Jouvet's "dédoublé-ment" is a trait akin to the process of distanciation that we have referred to above (Jouvet himself mentions Brecht in this letter). But as we have seen, with this actor the aim has always been to become inhabited by the character, portray it as intimately and as believably as possible.

Charles Dullin is another actor who has dwelt at length on the problems of the actor's relation to his character. But before outlining his ideas, let us say a word about Dullin's career:

After having witnessed Antoine's naturalistic interpretations, Dullin began his career in the old school of

137 *Revue d'histoire du théâtre*, p. 86
melodrama, where he learned how to "make an entrance" and where he was taught the techniques of exploiting a role.\footnote{Dullin, Souvenirs et notes du travail d'un acteur, Paris, C. Lieutier, 1946, p. 51}

From there, and before starting his own company at the Atelier, he entered Copeau's troupe,\footnote{Ibid., p. 38} rejecting both a naturalistic and melodramatic interpretation of character for Copeau's artistic, suggestive one. Beigbeder speaks of "son horreur du gratuit, de l'effet réaliste ou crié, son constant appel à un jeu suggéré..."\footnote{Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 78}

\begin{quote}
La scène exige un grossissement, une transposition.\footnote{Lucien Arnaud, Charles Dullin, Paris, L'Arche, 1952, p. 155}
La vie est contingente. Il faut la corriger... c'est notre mission au théâtre.\footnote{Ibid., p. 154}
\end{quote}

Like Copeau and Jouvet, Dullin, referring to Diderot's theories, agreed that there must be an objectivity,

\begin{quote}
...Ce regard d'en haut de l'acteur qui surveille toujours un peu ce qui se trame au dedans de lui.\footnote{Dullin, op. cit., p. 51}
\end{quote}

But, as an actor, Dullin's own relationship to his characters was far from a distant, intellectually stylized one. Although he began by studying his characterization in minute detail, he soon scoffed at this method of approach:

\begin{quote}
J'avais eu jusqu'alors une tendance fâcheuse à freiner l'instinct au profit de la composition... dans mon ardeur de néophyte, je posais le problème de l'extérieur; je faisais dire avec raison: "Dullin... oui... un acteur intelligent" et c'était un reproche grave... Je puis dire que depuis ce temps-là... je me suis efforcé de ne jamais laisser ce sens critique et l'intelligence prendre le pas sur l'instinct.\footnote{Ibid., p. 41}
\end{quote}
So we see that although Dullin recognized the need for transporting the character's reality artistically to the stage, and the double nature of the actor who observes himself playing a part, as an actor he leaned much more than Jouvet to the side of sensitivity and instinct in his attempt to identify with his character. That he was successful is evident in the testimony of writers like Lucien Arnaud, who states of Dullin's characterization of Molière's *Avare*:

Cette identification totale plaçait Dullin devant Harpagon comme devant un bien personnel.145

A very intense example of the sort of identification prescribed by Charles Dullin is the case of Ludmilla Pitoeff. Lenormand gave the following account of the "gestation" of her character:

Elle portait son rôle comme un fardeau précieux mais encombrant... Enfin un jour... l' image attendue surgissait. L'être nouveau était là. L'actrice avait disparu: le personnage l'avait dévoré.146

This author notes too that Ludmilla Pitoeff's experience doing Shaw's *Saint Joan* completely transformed her and instilled in her a desire for perfection and transcendence and a need to believe in God.147

Ludmilla n'était plus la même après cette longue fréquentation du merveilleux personnage.148

At one point too this actress bowed out of Lenormand's play *Mixture* because she feared the effect of its character on her.149

145 Lenormand, Les Pitoeff, p. 61
146 Ibid., p. 120
147 Ibid., p. 121
148 Ibid., pp. 151-152
149 Ibid.
Jean Louis Barrault, original and revolutionary in so many ways, does not differ essentially from Copeau in his view of the character and the actor. One of his five working rules for the actor is the "règle de contrôle." Rather than strive for sincerity the actor must strive for accuracy in portraying his character's sincerity. This attempt involves the process of identification:

Pour interpréter un personnage, tout le monde sait qu'il faut pouvoir s'identifier à lui...150 Plus l'identification est étroite, plus la sincérité peut être partagée par le personnage.151

However, complete identification is impossible on stage and would even be disastrous (as in the case of the character's death):

Le décalage entre le comédien et son personnage est constant: obéissance de la mise en scène, présence de tout le théâtre... jeu des autres auquel il faut se conformer, nécessité de se faire entendre...et., etc.,152

Like his predecessors, perhaps even more so, Barrault believes in the artistic translation to the stage of the actor's interpretation of his character. This he includes in his "règle de transposition:"

...il arrive que l'on trouve, ou plutôt que l'on découvre, une manière de se comporter qui ne semble pas s'appuyer au premier abord sur quelque chose de vrai, mais qui renferme des vertus lesquelles projettent le plus vrai. C'est l'interprétation poétique.153

Barrault's own interpretations as an actor have provoked a great deal of negative comment, and have been thought lacking

150 Barrault, Nouvelles réflexions, p. 145
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
153 Ibid., p. 51
in qualities of spontaneity and emotion. Mechanical control, technique, and intelligence instead have characterized his acting. Barrault has said:

N'hésitons pas à le dire: il doit y avoir au fond même de tout acteur un côté "robot." 154

And Eric Bentley has stated that "there is a lot of the robot in Barrault." 155 Bentley, a champion of Berthold Brecht's theatre, has defended Barrault's acting in Brechtian reasoning:

As an actor Barrault has been criticized by the friends of spirituality as being too mechanical, external, materialistic, acrobatic. This is all to the good. It means that he places his character there for you on the stage instead of leaving him floating in the Craigian mist...as with Brecht, prodigious technique has defined a new clarity, a new style. 156

Yet Bentley, along with Tynan, Dussane and others, has pointed out Barrault's failure to soar, to transcend his technique into poetic flights when necessary. In one review Pierre Marcabru says of him:

C'est un comédien intelligent que nous avons devant nous et il faudrait tout autre chose qu'un comédien intelligent. 157

But in view of Barrault's avowed wish to identify with his characters, it is unlikely that this feature of his acting stems from his philosophy concerning the character and the actor. It would seem rather the mark of a failure to achieve what more gifted actors holding similar theories have accomplished. It is doubtless this limitation that accounts for the fact that

154 Racine, Phèdre, Mise en Scène by Barrault, Paris, Seuil, 1946, p. 68
155 Bentley, op. cit., p. 52
157
Barrault's most acknowledged successes as an "interprète" have been in his personal creations as a mime which have depended on Barrault's own grace, stylization or humour, or in a role such as Hamlet where it concerned, as he said, "un personnage qui colle à ma nature." 158

We have seen then that Copeau, Jouvet, Dullin, and Barrault, all actors, have all granted the coexistence of both sensitivity and objectivity of the actor in his treatment of the character. In these cases the aim has been not an exact representation of of person but a theatrical transposition in the character. This transposition, although seemingly remote from such traits as spontaneity, sincerity or from the attempt to identify with a character, is not synonymous with distance from or control of the character by the actor. It is, as Barrault would have it, another level of behavior, a metamorphosis into the "plus que vrai."*159

Within the scope of a similar philosophy of interpretation, we have seen variations in personal temperament: a Copeau who was too self-conscious to play many characters; a Jouvet who was logical and objective enough to play many characters but who brought to most of them the stamp of his own personality;

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158 Personal interview, op. cit.
159 Barrault, Nouvelles Réflexions, pp. 51-52
*These factors of a sensitive feeling of identification and an objective distance from the role on a level of the "plus que vrai" were succinctly illustrated in a criticism of Edwige Feuillère in Phèdre: "I saw in her... a fusion of technique and feeling on a scale of greatness." J. W. Lambert, "Plays in Performance," Drama, Spring, 1957, p. 24
a Dullin who leaned more to the side of instinct and spontaneity; a Ludmilla Pitoeff who typified a mystical incarnation of her character; and finally a Jean-Louis Barrault who has been largely unable to transcend his intelligence and technique. But for all of these people the main goal was almost to grasp the essence of the character, to become as nearly one with it as possible, whether objectively, subjectively, or both—in short, to identify.

According to other men of the theatre, identification is not possible, nor is it desirable. Gaston Baty, not an actor himself, echoed Pirandello's complaint that the character is inevitably distorted by the actor's personality "avec sa pesanteur, ses trois dimensions et aussi l'attrait sensuel qu'elle peut avoir." His solution was to abandon the actor for marionettes—"Seules les marionnettes savent s'effacer devant le personnage," just as Jarry before him had prescribed masks, more universal in nature than a particular actor's physiognomy.

Ionesco too had an objection to an actor's passionate incarnation of a person to the extent, for example, of crying real tears. We have seen previously how that author created characters without individuality or reality. This "dislocation

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160 Baty, "Je suis venu aux marionnettes," Formes et Couleurs, 1944, p. 31
161 Ibid.
162 Jarry, "Questions de théâtre," Œuvres complètes, Vol. 4, p. 169
was prompted in one sense by his own discomfort in seeing real actors representing real emotions of others, a procedure that he deemed "une sorte de tricherie grossière." \(^{165}\)

We have had occasion to refer to the theories of Berthold Brecht in speaking of Jouvet's interpretation of *The Power and the Glory* and of Bentley's criticism of Jean-Louis Barrault. Brecht, whose ideas are making a great impression on the modern French theatre,\(^*\) has taken as a main principle the non-identification or absence of communion between the actor and his character. His stand is not Baty's, that the actor's embodiment distorts the character, nor Ionesco's, that an actor's being the character is an embarrassing lie, but his own conviction that the actor must not 'lose' himself in the character or the audience will not be able to judge his actions rationally. The actor is a "démonstrateur,"\(^{166}\) who gives several versions of the events so that the spectator may choose the one he thinks best. The Brechtian actor in learning a role:

\[
\text{doit hésiter, faire appel à ses propres opinions, considérer d'autres énoncés, bref, se comporter comme quelqu'un qui s'étonne...Et tout en mémorisant le texte, qu'il apprenne par coeur ses premières réactions, ses réserves, ses critiques, ses stupéfactions, afin qu'elles ne soient pas détruites en se 'dissolvant' dans la composition définitive...}^{167}
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164 Ionesco, *op. cit.*, p. 260
165 Ibid., p. 247
166 Brecht, "Petit Organon," *Extrait*, *Théâtre Populaire* #11, Jan-Fév., 1955, p. 4
167 Ibid., p. 9

*One indication: the review *Théâtre Populaire* is founded primarily on Brechtian principles.*
and in his interpretation he should stop occasionally to ask himself "What truth am I portraying?" 168

This distance maintained purposefully between the actor and his character is not new. As Brecht said, the Chinese actor, although not for didactic purposes as Brecht's, would use the same principles:

**L'acteur chinois se regarde jouer... il observe ses bras, ses jambes, les dirigeant, les contrôlant, approuvant même, au besoin, l'exploit qu'ils viennent d'accomplir."** 169

It would appear that Diderot's idea of cool judgment had completely won over in Brecht's theatre. However Brecht denies this:

...Si vous pouvez assister à nos spectacles, vous verriez des hommes vivants... avec toutes leurs passions, leurs manifestations spontanées, qui ne sont pas hommes malgré nos principes mais grâce à eux!" 170

But real men or not, Brecht's actors, as we see, do not become absorbed by their characters, will not attempt to lose themselves completely in the part. The side of spontaneity, sincerity and sensitivity is too well under control for that.

There are many points of resemblance between some of the modern French theatre and Brecht's theories of "distanciation." For example, Jean Vilar from his own theories is far from a Brechtian "animateur." His ideas on the actor's interpretation of his character bear a strong resemblance to those of Copeau,

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169 Ibid.
170 Brecht, "Fragment d'une lettre à un acteur," *Théâtre Populaire*, #11, p. 60
Jouvet, Dullin (he speaks of the great importance of composing the character and advises the actor on how to capture this "monstre glissant." Moreover, whereas for Brecht, the actor counts for little in the production, for Vilar he is all important. However, in spite of this it is also possible to speak of his productions in terms of "distance" in the interpretation of characters. For one thing, Vilar, in presenting his theatre on huge stages before numerous spectators—the Palais de Chaillot in Paris and the even larger Palais des Papes in Avignon—needs a style of acting commensurate with these dimensions. Guicharnaud says that with Vilar

The character was masked or magnified according to the needs of the space in which the play was performed.

In addition to this Beigbeder notes a sort of separation between the actor and the character, where Vilar's troupe gives a kind of mechanical interpretation and appears to be making fun of this procedure: Beigbeder speaks of "la passion auto-moqueuse de Maria Casares, Catherine LeCouey et Georges Wilson," and says "Combien moins de sadisme, que de lucidite, de distance."

A similar sort of distance achieved by an attitude of self-mockery is noted by this same critic in the acting of Jean Meyer, of whom he says:

171Vilar, De la tradition theatrale, Paris, l'Arche, 1955, p. 27
173Guicharnaud, Modern French Theatre, p. 258
174Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 209
Tandis que chez d'autres les personnages tendaient... à retrouver une essence cartésienne, il y échappe en les vidant de leur substance, en faisant des mécaniques.175

In the acting of Jacques Mauclair too, Beigbeder finds a kind of "dédoublément comique,"176 the control of an actor who appears to be watching himself play a role.

Yet, despite all these indications of "aliénation" between these actors and their characters, it must be said that these cases are not all examples of Brechtian "distanciation" and that the techniques practiced here are not revolutionary nor new in the French theatre. Jean Vilar is familiar with Brecht and has played his works; but Beigbeder among many others, places his style of interpretation in the tradition of Copeau, an "interior" style of acting.177 Besides this Vilar's relation to his characters has often been described as one of close identification: Helene Breuleux exclaims of Ce Fou de Platanov, "Platanov, c'est Vilar,"178 and in reviewing Don Juan, Beigbeder speaks of "Ce couple Sganarelle-Don Juan qu'incarnent Daniel Sorano et Vilar."179

With reference to Jean Meyer, Beigbeder says that his "duplicité" derives from Copeau's artistic, theatrical view of interpretation (as opposed to a precise imitation of everyday life) and from the theories of Jarry and Artaud,180 and he

175 Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 118
176 Ibid., p. 180
177 Ibid., p. 208
178 Breuleux, Le Revue Théâtrale, #35, 1957, p. 81
179 Beigbeder, La Revue Théâtrale, #26, 1953, s.p.,
180 Beigbeder, Le Théâtre en France depuis la Libération, p. 119
attributes the "dédoublement" of Jacques Mauclair to the influence or example of Louis Jouvet. Jean Vilar explains these tendencies by the fact that traditionally the French actor has in his interpretation "un rien qui est déjà le signe de la distance.

The techniques of Brecht himself, however, have been taken up in France, not only by those who have introduced Brecht's plays, as for example Jean-Marie Serreau and Jean Daste to whom we shall refer in a moment, but by Roger Planchon, a disciple of Brecht, who has adapted Brechtian "distanciation" to other plays. Frederic Towarnicki said of Planchon's production of Shakespeare's Henry IV and of Adamov's Paolo Paoli:

Les comédiens parviennent à cette sorte de "double jeu" qui, au-delà de la magie toujours présente du spectacle, engage le spectateur à porter jugement sur ce qui est joué.

but he adds:

Peu importe que cette conception du théâtre fasse songer à Brecht. Brecht lui-même n'exprime que les idées du temps.

This is not to minimize the importance of the effect that Brecht's theories are having in many cases on the French actor's interpretation of his character. However, it is clear from the illustrations given here—the views of French animateurs on the character-actor relationship—that the distance between the character and the actor, the "dédoublement" of the actor

181 Beigbeder, Le Théâtre en France depuis la Libération, p. 190
182 Vilar, "Entretien," L'Express, 22 octobre, 1959, p. 38
183 Towarnicki, "Théâtre de la cité," Spectacles, No. 1 March, 1958, p. 47
184 Ibid.
who controls his portrayal has been and would continue with or without Brecht.

After having considered various attitudes and illustrations of French actors in interpreting their characters, it becomes apparent that just as we have seen varying degrees of identification and non-identification between the character and the author, we note similar indications in the relationship between the character and the actor. Sometimes, as with Ludmilla Pitoeff, an artist goes almost to the limit in identifying and the sensitivity side of the famous paradox is emphasized. At other times, as with the Brechtian actor, the side of control and judgment reigns in order that the audience itself may be in control of its judgment. We find too that both with the author and the actor creation and interpretation of the character tend toward either representational or non-representational styles.

Can one say then that a correlation exists or should exist between the degree of identification of these authors with their characters and the extent to which the actors too should give themselves over to their "personnages" or incarnate them? And is there a similar parallel in the levels of representationalism in the creation and interpretation of these characters?

In some cases part of the equation would seem to hold true: before the turn of the century, Becque's *La Parisienne* failed at the Comédie-Française, because, as Antoine said, that work was
played rhetorically, declaimed, whereas a realistic work should be played realistically.

However, there are times when the parallel does not hold: We have seen in the last chapter where Claudel, who created his characters as poetic symbols, found one of his most excellent interpretations in the natural portrayal of Partage de midi by Barrault and his actors. On the other hand Kenneth Tynan was disappointed by Barrault's troupe in its unsubstantial rendition of Giraudoux's Intermezzo. Giraudoux's characters are indeed creatures of fantasy, but, said Tynan:

Unless the actors keep one foot rooted in reality, the point of the piece is lost.

and he complains that all the characters seemed as unreal as the ghost in the play.

With respect both to corresponding degrees of identification or representationalism in the actor and the author, it does not appear that there is any set formula, but a variety of possibilities. However, there is doubtless a general spirit, something in the author's point of view or style in conceiving his character that is best served by a particular attitude or style of the actor. Let us illustrate this by examining briefly the styles of interpretation suited to the authors we treated above.

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185 Waxman, op. cit., pp. 137-138
186 Kenneth Tynan, Curtains, New York, Atheneum 1961, p. 393
187 Ibid.
With Claudel, for example, whether played realistically or symbolically, the identification of the actor to the character must be made. Indeed Claudel often had long discussions with his artists, often, as with Marie Kalff (Lenormand's wife and an actress in Pitoëff's troupe) inviting them to his home to imbue them with the atmosphere of the character. He commented once to the actor Georges LeRoy, "Vous ne jouez pas le Pape, vous êtes le Pape." Eve Francis, on the other hand, was thought to have played Claudel too intellectually, not making enough real contact with the character, and Pierre Brisson said of her "elle interprète un poète plutôt qu'un personnage." To be able to identify with Claudel's characters, Dussane thought that:

Il faudrait que l'acteur pût nourrir son très grand talent, d'abord nécessaire, d'une expérience qui est proprement celle de Claudel, expérience de prière ardente et qui engage tout l'être.

If Claudel's characters need such a close relationship with the actor, what of the characters of Ionesco. Do such "characterless characters" demand "actless actors," and is no identification to be made? It appears that just the opposite is true. As Coe said: Unlike Brecht who nullified the initiative of the actor,

For Ionesco...the essential was to compel the actor to act, to act creatively and violently.

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188 René Farabet, op. cit., p. 45
189 Ibid., p. 33
190 Ibid., p. 38
191 Dussane, Notes de théâtre, p. 173
192 Coe, op. cit., p. 15
This does not mean that the actor will give a natural, true-to-life presentation, since as we saw, Ionesco's characters have too little unity or reality (and we have mentioned his reaction against realistic interpretations of the character by the actor). However, the actor who best serves Ionesco does so with sincerity and even makes a kind of identification. Robert Postec, who directed and acted in a most successful performance of Ionesco's Jacques ou la soumission (Studio des Champs-Elysées) recently, explained that although the characters are absurd, without any psychological evolution, he and his troupe interpret their roles with sincere feeling. When asked if this meant that they emoted "in a vacuum" so to speak, he answered that on the contrary, if the actor could not identify consistently with Ionesco's own characters he, as Postec himself, would use as a point of reference "certaines archétypes de personnages," patterning themselves on these familiar models who could motivate their actions and responses in Ionesco's play.193

Without sincerity or sensitivity, Ionesco's plays, especially the more serious ones, do not fare well. In the original production of Rhinocéros, Barrault was thought to have played the main role intellectually, keeping a certain distance between himself and his character.194 The play was improved when Michel Bouquet took the main role, playing it more pro-

193 Interview with Robert Postec, Paris, juillet 18, 1961
194 Pierre Marcabru, Arts, janvier 11-17, 1961
foundly and giving the impression of a man really alone, uncomprehending, making the play a more complete drama. 195

Much has been written on the style of playing Brecht and writers of Brechtian tendencies. It is apparent that besides following Brecht's commandment of non-identification, the actor should not present his character naturally or representationally: Roland Barthes says:

L'acteur peut y être tout sauf "naturel:" il peut être neutre comme un cadavre ou possédé comme un mage; l'important c'est qu'il ne soit pas une personne. 196

Jean Genèt, as we have seen, is to some extent a Brechtian author whose theatre announces that it is theatre. When the actors of his Le Balcon gave realistic interpretations of characters, they were playing in contradiction to their author: Lucien Goldman said of this performance:

La chose la plus grave nous paraît être le jeu des acteurs qui, extrêmement doués et bien choisis ont--à l'exception de Blin et de Muselli--joué la pièce dans le style naturaliste de n'importe quel drame moderne dans lequel ils jouent d'habitude, empêchant ainsi ce que Brecht appelait l'effet de distanciation. 197

And Bernard Dort wrote:

La première exigence à laquelle doit en effet répondre un comédien de Genèt, c'est la nécessité de styliser. 198 Loin de rendre son personnage naturel, que le comédien en exalte d'emblée l'apparence. 199

195 Pierre Marcabru, "op. cit.,
197 Lucien Goldman, "Entretien avec Peter Brook," L'Express, 19 mai, 1960
198 Dort, Les Temps modernes, juin, 1960, p. 1880
199 Ibid., p. 1884
On the other hand Guy Demur took the exact opposite stand in judging that Reine Courtois was the only one who was correct in her interpretation—a sincere interpretation which highlighted the "fauzesetés et les vérités de ce texte." It is certainly obvious that the last word has not been said on the manner of interpreting characters in plays of a consciously theatrical nature.

When it comes to the work of Brecht himself as rendered by French actors, it is curious that according to critics the earliest presentations of these plays failed because of the actors and directors carrying Brecht's "distanciation" to an extreme. In discussing Jean Daste's* presentation of Le Cercle de craie caucasien, Frederic Towarnicki said:

"Ce qu'on peut lui reprocher (c'est) d'avoir poussé si loin la distanciation que le spectacle se ressemble par instants à un "jeu dramatique" pour feux de camps."

Jean-Marie Serreau received a similar criticism in his interpretation of Brecht's Homme pour homme, and his actors were found either "mous, conventionnels, ou à contre-sens."

The difficulty in presenting Brecht's characters in line with Brechtian theories is that these theories are not understandable apart from the illustration of Brecht's own actors in the Berliner Ensemble. It is a case of an author creating

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200 Demur, Theatre populaire, #42, p. 105
201 Towarnicki, "Brecht à la Comédie de St. Etienne," Spectacles #1, mars, 1958, s.p.
202 Théâtre populaire #12, mars-avril, 1955, pp. 96-97

*Copeau's son-in-law, director of the Comédie de Saint-Etienne
in terms of a specific stage production. As one writer puts it:

La conception théâtrale de Brecht est inséparablement liée à la technique. 203

What one sees for example in actual productions of the Berliner Ensemble is that there are moments of real identification and emotion in Brecht. Kenneth Tynan has noted occasions when the actor is utterly moving, almost shattering, to an audience--the moments before distance is reestablished. 204

After having considered the interpretation of the works of these authors by modern French actors, we find no set formula that would correlate precisely the degree of identification* or realism in the creation and incarnation of characters, but instead the possibility of a most apt or relevant style by which an actor or troupe of actors best serve an author’s characters, some of which styles we have discussed above.

In reviewing some important aspects of the relationship between the author and the actor in the modern French theatre, we have focused attention first on the fate of the star-showman of the early twentieth century, have seen how his loss in vocational rank and his professional separation from the author, thanks to the director, has meant new artistic prestige and a

204 Tynan, op. cit., p. 467

*Joseph Chiari points out, however, that identification of the actor with his character is greatest in plays of a tragic nature (The Contemporary French Theatre, New York, McMillan, 1959, p. 5)
concentration on a close aesthetic relationship with the author through his work.

Although the above study has, among other things, seemed to have relegated the actor neatly to a specific position as noble servant of the author, it should be mentioned that all could never be so well ordered where human relations (and actors) are involved. Moreover, as late as the thirties and forties, Giraudoux was writing plays, as had Rostand, Bernstein and others, with specific actors in mind: Valentine Tessier for Alcènè in *Amphitryon 38*; Elizabeth Bergner for Judith in the play of that name; Jouvet for many characters and so intimately involved in the idea of those characters that Giraudoux would write Jouvet's name rather than those of the fictional figures he was to represent.205

There are also contemporary writers like Paul Arnold who place great stress on the actor's duty to recreate, to "élargir" le rythme secret du texte,"206 or Hermann Teirlinck who says:

*L'avenir est dans l'acteur qui est tout, total et unite.\* Alors je préconise résolument l'improvisation...sur une matière vive...qu'une litterature tentaculaire s'apprête à étouffer.207

This sort of opinion is not the prevailing one at the present time in France, as we have seen. But perhaps a justification for those who wish a new ascendancy of the actor

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is the oft-repeated complaint these days that there are no longer any great French tragedians. This might indicate that the ideal of the author-oriented homogeneous troupe as opposed to the virtuoso has its disadvantages too."

Since the point of contact in the author’s play is the character, we have studied the attitudes of modern French authors in creating their characters, noting varying degrees of identification and representationalism in this process of creation. Then, after examining the theories and illustrations of prominent actors relative to their characters and criticisms of their interpretations, we found that there is no clear-cut conformity in degree of identification or of realism between the author and the actor. From critical commentary cited here, however, it seems that there is felt to be an optimum style commanded by each particular author of his actors. This could be realized ideally only in the case of an author—"animateur" such as Molière or Brecht. Lacking such phenomena it is still a matter of groping for the most suitable presentation of the character. But the significant point here is the sincerity of this search in the modern French theatre, indicative of the striving for unity and harmony between the author’s text and the actor’s interpretation.

At various points in this chapter on the actor and the author we have encountered the shadow of their intermediary, the director. We have referred to his responsibility in the
shift of relationships between the author and the actor in the modern French theatre and his influence in the style set for the translation of the author's character to the stage. In the next chapter we shall consider more fully the relationship of this figure with the actor of the modern French theatre.
CHAPTER IV

Thus far the French director and actor have been considered in connection with the author and his text—the artists of the stage and their productions have been studied in the context of the written works that they interpret. Now, in discussing the relationship between the director and the actor, although the author cannot be ignored completely (no more than the director in the preceding chapter on the author and the actor), we shall of necessity be primarily concerned with matters of stagecraft and production than of literary dramatic art.

This association will be considered mainly from the viewpoint of the director: In the light of our findings on the rise in status and prestige of the director and the virtual disintegration of the star system, it is understandable that the nature of the dealings between modern French directors and their actors would be largely determined by the director himself.

Considering the strong position of the director in the twentieth century, one of the first questions that come to mind about his relationship with the actor is the matter of freedom, the liberty he grants or refuses to the actor. I shall begin therefore by discussing the attitude of certain French "animateurs" toward this problem. I shall then relate their views on other essential ideas and ideals that form the basis of their "rapport" with their actors; and finally I shall outline the techniques used by various of these men in the actual work of directing their actors.
There are few modern French directors to match such German, Russian or English counterparts as Max Reinhardt, Vesvolog Meyerhold or Gordon Craig in their complete subordination of the actor to the director and his concept of the theatre. Antoine was named by André Veinstein and Bettina Knapp, among others, as an authoritarian director in the style of Gordon Craig, and by Léon Chancerel as crude and lacking in consideration toward his actors. In characterizing directors, he said:

Il y en a qui restent tapis dans leur fauteuil, dans l'ombre de la salle...de temps à autre, ces messieurs daignent lancer à l'acteur une observation souvent désagréable, même cruelle et parfois grossière. C'était la manière d'Antoine.

However, Samuel Waxman indicates that although Antoine was a very strict director, insistent on minute details, he was certainly not a dictatorial or despised one, and that his actors remained with him a long time, standing by even in periods of crisis.

Antonin Artaud could be judged to have had a tyrannical view of his directoral rights when he proclaimed:

S'il y a des animaux à faire passer dans mes pièces, je les ferai passer moi-même.

But there is no evidence that Artaud actually considered or treated his actors as martinets.

1 Veinstein, op. cit., p. 259; Knapp, op. cit., p. 260
3 Conversation with Samuel Waxman, January 20, 1962
4 Lettres d'Artaud à Jean-Louis Barrault, Paris, Bordas, 1952, p. 91
On the other hand, even in this age of the homogeneous troupe ideal, the outstanding French "animateurs" have espoused the cause of freedom for the actor. Jacques Copeau, for one, although aware of the dangers of granting the actor excessive freedom, never wished to restrict an actor's creative spirit.

He said:

Le rôle du metteur en scène...est...d'être présent partout, et cependant invisible, sans opprim er la personnalité de l'acteur.\(^5\)

In order to leave the actor artistic freedom, Copeau felt that a director should not interpret his role for him.

Il ne faut jamais, sous pretexte de l'aider, se substituer à l'acteur. Il suffit d'appeler, d'amorcer en lui certains sentiments, de faire signe à certaines actions qui les exprimeront, mais sans les exécuter, car il y a des choses qui ne s'expriment pleinement, réellement, que selon les moyens et selon la personnalité de l'acteur.\(^6\)

In practice Copeau followed these principles faithfully.

Kurtz says of him:

Jamais il n'essaya de dominer ses comédiens qu'il préférait voir rechercher eux-mêmes les gestes et les intonations.\(^7\)

More recently Jean Vilar and Jean-Louis Barrault have expressed convictions similar to Copeau's. Jean Vilar, opposing Gordon Craig's idea of the pre-eminence of the director, wrote

Le comédien n'est pas une machine. C'est une lapalissade qu'il convient de crier à tue-tête. Le comédien n'est pas un pion, un robot. Le réalisateur doit lui accorder à priori tout le talent qu'il doit avoir...\(^8\)

Ce que j'ai toujours voulu, c'est rendre à l'acteur sa liberté dans la recherche de son personnage. Il faut qu'il erre sur la scène, qu'il se batte les flancs tout seul. Je

\(^5\)Copeau, Notes sur le métier de comédien, p. 43
\(^6\)Ibid.
\(^7\)Kurtz, op. cit., p. 136
\(^8\)Vilar, De la tradition théâtrale, p. 30
ne veux pas être l'homme, seul juge de la pensée de l'auteur, qui dit: "tu fais ceci, et puis ensuite tu fais cela."

Yet, if Vilar allows the actor a free hand in discovering his character, this freedom does not assert itself as a form of aggressive hyper-virtuosity or anarchy but is well controlled by the director, as is obvious from the many testimonials to the disciplined character of his troupe. Marie-Thérèse Serrière states:

Chacun, somme toute, a la liberté d'être lui-même. Ou plutôt, il y est contraint. Mais l'extériorité du jeu, elle, reste soumise à une rigoureuse discipline.¹⁰

Jean-Louis Barrault, often ranked with Vilar as the most prominent living theatre director in France, does not differ radically from the former in his attitude toward this question of freedom and control of the actor. He has said:

Quand, comme moi, on a le bonheur de travailler avec de grands comédiens, il importe de les laisser libres de leur jeu.¹¹

But, like Copeau and Vilar, Barrault is not in favor of giving an actor, even a talented one, absolutely free reign. The artist's originality can be unleashed only when there is some established principle or pattern to guide him and give him security.

(Les comédiens) ne pourront vraiment se laisser aller à leur inspiration, à leur invention, à leurs trouvailles personnelles, dominer leur travail, que dans la mesure où ils peuvent s'appuyer sur quelque chose déjà de très précis, de préalablement réglé, certains qu'ils sont ainsi

¹⁰Serrière, Le T.N.P. et nous, p. 158
¹¹Chancerel, op. cit., p. 75
It was Barrault's work as director to provide the underlying idea to which the actor could refer. However, with Barrault, as with Copeau and Vilar, this procedure never stultified or smothered the actor. Barrault the director has been described as a friendly collaborator,

Se donnant de tout son être, de toute sa tendresse, de tout son respect, de toute sa volonté tendue, en "camarade de combat."

Such an attitude cannot be construed as consistently true of all French directors. Says Léon Chancerel:

Il y a ceux...qui, par principe, se resignant à "la trahison" de leur génie par les "interprètes" se bornent à les contraindre à s'inscrire à la place précise qu'ils ont fixée dans LEUR décor, sous LEUR éclairage, conçu dans le silence du cabinet, conformément à une conduite immuable et sacrosainte. Ce sont les "étalagistes."

The difference between such directors and liberal, respectful mentors like Copeau is, it would seem, often a difference of temperament, a matter of egotism versus empathy.

Chancerel continues:

Il y a enfin ceux qui, sachant ce qu'il en coûte d'efforts pour parvenir à ne faire qu'un avec son personnage au sein de tant de difficultés diverses, partagent les affres de l'acteur, luttent avec lui.

But whether from character or conviction, the outstanding directors in France today tend not to suppress an artist's

12 Chancerel, op. cit., pp. 75-76
13 Ibid., p. 75
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., p. 74
creativity but to encourage his initiative while giving him helpful guidance and a sense of direction.

The rejection of the concept of the actor as a marionette, besides being a matter of temperament, is often based on a belief in the great importance of the actor to the theatre. This artist, as we have seen, is Barrault's point of departure in his definition of "théâtre total:"

Mettons qu'il s'agit d'utiliser l'acteur dans la totalité de ses ressources...16

And describing the importance of the actor in Vilar's theatre, Serriére states:

...l'acteur est ici primordial. Il recouvre son authentique dignité. C'est lui, et lui seul, qui assure par sa présence, la présence du poète. Il est vraiment l'interprète, le médiateur entre le poète et le spectateur...Il est le théâtre.17

Says Vilar himself, "Il n'y a que deux choses qui comptent: le texte et le jeu de l'acteur."18

But often, when the actor becomes the determining factor of a production or when the initiative granted him is unaccompanied by the careful supervision exercised by men like Vilar and Barrault, there may develop on the director's part a situation of "laissez-faire" at quite the other extreme from a restrictive or dictatorial control.

Georges Pitoeff, whose ideals, as we saw, were not dissimilar to Copeau's was considered to have been to non-directive

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16 Chancerel, op. cit., p. 65
17 Serriére, op. cit., p. 143
18 Boissieu, op. cit., p. 11
in his working relationships with most of his troupe. It is true, as Jean-Jacques Barnard mentions, that like Copeau and other contemporary dedicated directors, Pitoëff would sit down actors at the beginning of rehearsals and at least analyze the play and the author's intention to them.\textsuperscript{19} However, H. L. Lenormand, who spent much of his career observing and writing about Pitoëff, emphasized the fact that that director gave, on the whole, a completely free rein to his players.\textsuperscript{20}

Les comédiens s'y montraient parfois surpris de l'attitude de Pitoëff. Il n'indiquait pas. On sentait que ses scènes avec sa femme avaient été répétées séparément. Les autres interprètes devaient chercher seuls. Georges ne leur refusait ni une indication générale, ni un conseil, parfois ironique. Mais il n'était pas de ceux qui s'acharnent à modeler l'acteur.\textsuperscript{21}

Pitoëff himself stated:

Le metteur en scène doit tenir le plus grand compte du co-efficient qu'apporte le tempérament de l'acteur. Sa tâche est seulement, quand ce dernier a une forte personnalité, de susciter en lui l'image qu'il s'est faite... du rôle même et de son plan dans l'oeuvre... Une fois que j'ai réussi à faire passer dans un acteur la flamme que je sens en moi, je le laisse libre.\textsuperscript{22}

This would seem similar at first to Barrault's policy of granting a good deal of freedom to actors of talent. But the strongest personality, the outstanding talent in Pitoëff's group was his wife, Ludmilla, and Lenormand relates that actors connected with Pitoëff felt that his attitude of "laissez-faire

\textsuperscript{19}Bernard, "Georges et Ludmilla Pitoëff," \textit{Revue Théâtrale} #27, 1954, pp. 9-10
\textsuperscript{20}Lenormand, \textit{Les Pitoëff}, pp. 98-99
\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 98
\textsuperscript{22}Pitoëff, \textit{Notre Théâtre}, p. 27
with his troupe stemmed from his preoccupation with her interpretation:

On le prétendait exclusivement occupé du jeu de Ludmilla, indifférent à tout ce qui n'était pas elle.  

Whatever the reason, according to this biographer many an actor and actress felt abandoned and disoriented in this situation of unlimited independence. (This fact is corroborated by Madame Eve Danièle, Director of the French Art Theatre in New York, who left Pitoëff's troupe when she realized that she would not be learning and growing with so little direction).  

It is impossible to regulate exactly the range of a director's or of an actor's liberty. French theatre code, actor's contracts do nevertheless have rules that attempt to limit and define the duties and prerogatives of these artists. A recent book on French theatre laws as related to the actor stipulates certain regulations included in many contracts, such as:

1. L'artiste est dans l'obligation de se trouver à toutes les répétitions, leçons et lectures aux heures et endroits qui lui seront indiqués...  

2. L'acteur a l'obligation de se conformer strictement aux indications qui lui sont données concernant son interprétation, ses [sic] costumes, son maquillage...  

3. (Le metteur en scène) doit tout mettre en œuvre pour que l'acteur ait le nombre de répétitions utiles pour se présenter au public dans les meilleures conditions.  

23Lenormand, op. cit., p. 98  
24Personal interview with Mme Danièle, New York, December 26, 1961  
But in practical fact these and similar regulations are no more than formalities, since it is not a case here of such a tangible commodity as salary or such a definitive act as the forming of a corporation. The commodity here is human talent, and the situation is a creative act involving all the variables and imponderables of human relationships. Certain overall suggestions can be offered, as for example the advice of Jacques Mauclair that a director must "veiller à la tradition"—see that an actor does not become so exhilarated by his public that he distorts the author's text, but that sometimes an actor's inventions, his "trouvailles" can, if adopted, benefit the production. However, it would be impractical to regiment, by codification, such behavior. It is up to the director to try to maintain the optimum balance between control and freedom of the actor without going to one extreme or the other. Some of the most capable "animateurs" in the modern French theatre, men like Copeau, Vilar and Barrault, have, as we have seen, believed and succeeded in achieving such a balance.

But the collaboration between the director and the actor involves much more than these moral issues of prerogative. Esthetic, human, psychological, professional, pedagogical elements and others come into play. Each director has his particular manner of dealing with these elements, a manner conditioned by his own personality and talent. Let us consider briefly a few important directors, outlining first their aims

26 "Jacques Mauclair par lui-même," Théâtre Populaire #27, 1957, p. 22
with regard to the actor and then the general nature of their dealings with him.

The first modern director to speak at length of the goals determining his relationship with the actor was Jacques Copeau. Perhaps the word that best expresses his philosophy is "help." Copeau stated:

L'art d'aider l'acteur, de lui révéler, de lui débrouiller son chemin, est peut-être celui que j'ai pratiqué avec le plus de plaisir et de réussite.27

According to Copeau, in order best to help the actor, a director should know him well and treat him tactfully. (Likewise, the actor should know his director, like him, and give him his confidence). The director should defend the actor against an author's hurry to develop a character:

La première vertu du metteur en scène c'est la patience. On n'imagine pas combien il en faut pour que mûrisse chez un interprète un état intérieur, le plus simple mouvement, le geste le plus élémentaire.28

The best way Copeau could conceive of to benefit his actors (and the theatre) was to educate them. Since the individual artist must be part of a comprehensive and homogeneous unit, the director should adapt him to such a unit by providing him with a rigorous training on many levels:

Il fallait donner une ouverture plus large et des racines plus profondes à l'esprit de compagnie; créer des habitudes d'existence favorables au métier, une atmosphère de formation intellectuelle, morale et technique, une discipline, des traditions...29

27Notes sur le comédien, p. 42
28Ibid., p. 43
29Souvenirs du Vieux-Colombier, Paris, Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1931, p. 31
Although Jouvet, Dullin, Barrault and Vilar have spoken at length on the director's obligations to his author, they have been less explicit in their writings with regard to the director's role in his associations with actors. However, from the commentary on this subject noted in their works, we find that:

Louis Jouvet and Jean-Louis Barrault add to Copeau's idea of "help" the key word "love." Says Jouvet:

Le metteur en scène est une manière d'amoureux... 30
Mettre en scène, c'est, avec amabilité, aider les acteurs qui s'exercent pour la mémoire, jusqu'à ce que le texte, par ce massage patiemment renouvelé de la répétition, se dépouille de son sens livresque et s'imprégné de leur sensibilité. C'est rendre l'acteur ou l'actrice "confortables". C'est une manière de commander et d'aimer une troupe. 31

And Barrault, speaking less of a general concept of directing than of his personal attitude toward actors, says:

...on ne peut pas ne pas aimer les camarades avec qui l'on joue, avec lesquels on partage les mêmes tracés, les mêmes émois, les mêmes regards... les malaises, les maladies, les ennuis, etc. 32 Une répétition c'est un moment amoureux partage avec mes camarades. 33

Jean Vilar's philosophy of the director's role regarding his actors reflect Copeau's ideas of understanding and guidance. The understanding depends on a thorough knowledge of each actor:

Pour le réalisateur du spectacle, chaque comédien est un cas nouveau. Cela lui impose de bien connaître chacun de ses interprètes; connaître son emploi, certes, mais plus

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30 Jouvet, Réflexions, p. 189
31 Ibid., pp. 189-190
32 Barrault, Nouvelles réflexions, p. 38
33 Chancerel, op. cit., p. 75
encore sa personne, jusqu'au seuil où commence sa vie intime. Peut-être même faut-il franchir ce seuil.\textsuperscript{34}

On the subject of guiding the actor, it is always a matter of suggesting the role as sensitively and subtly as possible, and once more it is a question of patience:

Le réalisateur a parfois tort d'oublier qu'un personnage n'est souvent trouvé par l'interprète qu'à la veille de la présentation.\textsuperscript{35}

The director's guidance also involves a careful nurturing of the actor who is searching for his character, reassuring him that he is successful in his search:

Le réalisateur doit mettre en confiance l'interprète, lui faire croire qu'il a, comme on dit si justement, trouvé ou retrouve son personnage.\textsuperscript{36}

So we see that, although these "animateurs" have not written copiously on their ideas and attitudes about their relationships with their actors, they have in general emphasized friendship or love, a deep knowledge of the actor, a tactful, suggestive guidance in the actor's search for his character, teaching, and understanding patience.

To what extent did these and other prominent directors fulfill such aims?

Those who have worked with Copeau have testified many times over that the ideals he described were realized by him personally. The guidance and help he gave an actor, "l'art de lui débrouiller le chemin," was constant and invaluable.

\textsuperscript{34}Vilar, \textit{De la tradition théâtrale}, p. 31
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36}Ibid.
Cezan called Copeau's psychological insight "miraculeusement intuitive" \(^{37}\) and stated:

> Il fut le maître. Je veux dire qu'il sut dégager en chacun le trait profond du caractère où se révèle l'exacte personnalité et que souvent l'on ignore. \(^{38}\)

Copeau's value as an intermediary between the actor and the character was attested to by Charles Dullin whose understanding of the role of Smerdiakov in *Les Frères Karamozov* owed much to that director:

> L'intelligence critique de Copeau servait admirablement l'effort que je faisais. De jour en jour je me sentais plus habité par mon personnage. \(^{39}\)

The tact which Copeau felt so essential to a director was evidenced in his own handling of actors:

> Quand il reprenait l'un [des comédiens] c'était avec le sourire, affectueusement et sur un ton badin, les mains appuyées à ses épaules. \(^{40}\)

Copeau was not only loved but revered by his actors:

> Sur ces jeunes qui voulaient tout comprendre, le prestige de Copeau fut immense... son éloquence, son charme personnel leur en imposaient. \(^{41}\)

When it came to the protection of the actor's slow creation of character against the author's impatient demands, Copeau, by his own account, knew how to interfere. \(^{42}\) Copeau's own patience with the gestation of the actor's character is described in Michel Saint-Denis' account of that director's

\(^{37}\) Cézan, *Louis Jouvet et le théâtre d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, Emile-Paul Frères, 1938, p. 66

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Dullin, *Souvenirs, Notes de travail d'un acteur*, p. 39

\(^{40}\) Cézan, *op. cit.*, p. 66

\(^{41}\) Ibid.

\(^{42}\) Copeau, *Notes sur le comédien*, p. 42
treatment of Jouvet in rehearsal:

Copeau n'avait travaillé sur Jouvet qu'à la lecture ou lors de la mise en place. Le reste du temps il l'avait regardé de ses yeux profonds, sans intervenir, sachant que le germe était ensemencé et qu'il ne fallait pas gêner la croissance presque invisible du fruit... 43

The ideal of the "Ecole" was realized in 1920 by Copeau and became a most important part of his career. Kurtz says of this:

Ce qui, pour Copeau, était primordial, c'était ce groupe d'apprentis de quatorze à vingt ans, qui devait rester trois ans sous sa tutelle. 44

Outside of that particular experience, the pedagogical viewpoint forever characterized Copeau's relationships with his actors. The teacher in Copeau was appreciated by his dedicated and admiring actors "ce tour pédagogique de pensée qui fut sans doute alors profitable à tous." 45 Furthermore, his high moral precepts with respect to the function of the "comédien" were heeded by many of his fine actors, as is attested by the fact that toward the end of his life he was able to pay Valentine Tessier his highest tribute: "Je t'ai trouvée fidèle." 46

However, the teacher-moralist in Copeau sometimes met with at least mild rebellion on the part of actors who were

43 Copeau, Notes sur le comédien, preface by Michel Saint-Denis, p. 10
44 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 110
45 Cézan, op. cit., p. 66
46 Lettre à Valentine Tessier, 18 avril 1944, Notes sur le comédien, p. 73
no longer at the apprentice stage. Kurtz recounts how some players who had already made their reputation on Paris stages could not or would not conform to Copeau's discipline. Among them was the actress Gina Barbieri whose husband was not happy to see her "aller à l'Ecole."

Artists like Louis Jouvet and Valentine Tessier, although faithful to Copeau's principles, became in great demand elsewhere and could not remain forever under the wing of the "patron." Copeau, referring to his experience in later life with the Copiaux, a young troupe he trained at Pernand-Vergelesses in Burgundy, acknowledges that the stringent idealism of his "chimère" or his "folies Calvin" as some critics called it, put him out of touch with his young trainees:

L'école, autour de moi, rencontrait une hostilité grandissante. J'admets aujourd'hui qu'elle fut en partie justifiée. Ma compagnie pouvait se demander avec dépit quelles chimères je poursuivais en dehors d'elle, et quelles satisfactions je puisais dans des essais encore informes. Elle se croyait abandonnée.

Yet the experience of learning under Copeau was for his protégés the most exciting part of this director-actor relationship. Despite Copeau's utopian artistic goals and despite a religious crisis that he underwent during his stay in Burgundy with the Copiaux, the atmosphere was entirely stimulating, and the group was characterized as a "communauté familiale."

Artists such as Jean and Marie-Hélène Daste

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47 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 128
48 Ibid., p. 129
49 Souvenirs du Vieux-Colombier, p. 97
50 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 177
(Copeau's son-in-law and daughter) who were involved in this experience, become enthusiastically expansive when recalling it. Copeau himself finishes his account of his career with a nostalgic tribute to the days at Peronnard with this troupe.

C'est là que nous avons vécu tous ensemble, pendant cinq ans... C'est là que je remonterai bientôt...  

It is clear that the main points of Copeau's philosophy concerning his relationship with the actor were put faithfully into practice. The particular relationship that would exemplify the embodiment of his principles is his association with Jouvet. Of this Michel Saint-Denis says,

Je suis sûr que c'est Jouvet qui donnait au mot "patron" lorsqu'il le lançait à Copeau comme nous tous, son sens le plus cérémoniel... C'est que son accord d'acteur sur le plateau avec Copeau metteur en scène, était complet.

Although Jouvet's principles as a director would not have deviated basically from those of his idol, Copeau, his actual dealings with actors were colored by a totally different kind of personality. Biographers of Jouvet refer constantly to his lack of confidence and doubts about himself. It was probably this weakness that made him capable of wounding many of those with whom he worked. Jean-Louis Barrault, not one to speak ill of any one, and certainly not of Jouvet, remarked that:

Jouvet, toujours écorché, se soulageait en taquinant les siens.

51 Souvenirs du Vieux-Colombier, p. 124  
52 Copeau, Notes sur le métier de comédien, p. 9  
53 Ibid.  
54 Barrault, Nouvelles réflexions, p. 27
Pierre-Aimé Touchard notes his "cynisme verbal, son plaisir à torturer les faibles, sa tendance à démolir les enthousiasmes." 55

Personne n'a sans doute fait souffrir plus que lui ses collaborateurs. 56

Yet Eve Daniele notes that Jouvet retained the same loyal troupe for many years.*

But he adds that nobody was capable of inspiring the kind of devotion that Jouvet did. Touchard tells of the time that he charged Jouvet with not believing in his own production of Don Juan. Jouvet was both stupified and indignant. During Touchard's verbal onslaught one of Jouvet's actresses who revered him became pale and almost sick with emotion, at which point Jouvet went to her and silently led her from the room. Touchard concludes:

C'est que...cet homme était un croyant et il savait communiquer sa foi. 57

It is doubtful that Charles Dullin, any more than Jouvet, was equal to Copeau in disposition and tact when dealing with his actors. Chancerel says that Dullin,

Le grand bohème naïf et passionné, et "pur" plus que quelconque, était malin comme une vieille fouine. Il y avait du Mercadet dans cet enfant du chœur du culte théâtral. 58

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Chancerel, op. cit., pp. 11-12
*Personal interview, December 26, 1961
But this author also states:

Quiconque a vecu les "années héroïques" de l'Atelier... sait tout ce qui s'y dégens de courage, d'amour, de fraternelle émulation.59

Lucien Arnaud refers to Dullin's violent if short-lived fits of temper and the fact that Dullin went through an unusually long line of "régisseurs" during his career.60 Yet his memories of Dullin with his troupe at Néronville reveal him as a friendly leader not above joining or organizing their games or practical jokes. He speaks of "notre communauté familiale et professionnelle d'étudiants-ès-théâtre,"61 and of a Dullin who was "heureux de se mêler à notre jeunesse."62

As with Copeau, teaching was a most important part of his association with the actor. Although known as a strict taskmaster,63 he was sincere in his desire to help and form dedicated artists. Barrault tells of his first audition with Dullin, a forbidding-looking creature slumped in the armchair of a darkened room. After the young, aspiring actor had performed his "numero," Dullin said:

-Vous êtes décidé à faire du théâtre?
-Oui, Monsieur.
-Vous savez que c'est grave, que vous risquez de crever la faim?
-Oui, Monsieur.
-Êt actuellement, quels sont vos moyens d'existence? car l'Ecole de l'Atelier est hélas! payante.
-Monsieur, je n'ai aucun moyen d'existence, je suis pion à

59Chancerel, op. cit., p. 9
60Arnaud, Charles Dullin, Paris, L'Arche, 1952, p. 179
*However, the "régisseurs" themselves were described as unduly excentric
61Ibid., p. 62
62Ibid.
63Ibid., p. 183
Chaptal au pair, j'y suis simplement nourri et loge, mais je n'ai pas d'argent.
-Alors je vous prendrai gratuitement à l'Ecole, mais ne le dites pas... Sans cela... Alors...

Although Dullin and Jouvet were not so verbal* as Copeau concerning the nature of a director's relationship with his actor, although neither was known to be a model of patience and tact, anecdotes such as these indicate that in their actual association with actors they both carried out the highest ideals of their teacher.

With present-day "animateurs" such as Vilar and Barrault, it is quite difficult to discover the nature of their own relationships with their actors. Such directors may inform us about the behavior of those under whom they themselves once worked, but either they have not yet become legendary enough for such testimony about themselves, or adequately informed Boswells have not yet declared themselves. Still it is possible to gain some insight into these relationships from what writing there is on these men.

For example we have already seen how Barrault, in the last stages of rehearsals for Partage de midi defended his actors against Claudel's demands ("Il me fallait quitter le camp de l'auteur et passer dans celui des acteurs."65) It is obvious too from Chancerel's comments that Barrault is heart and soul the director-guide who lovingly brings the actor to

64 Barrault, Réflexions sur le théâtre, p. 14
65 Barrault, Ibid., p. 230
*In publications
an understanding of his character:

Il se tient en quelque sorte (non seulement avec son intelligence, mais charnellement, avec son corps) entre les acteurs et les personnages, pour les rapprocher, les accorder, suant, soufflant, s'amusant, se donnant de tout son être, de toute sa tendresse, de tout son respect, de toute sa volonté tendue, en "camarade de combat." 66

On the other hand, Jean Vilar does not appear personally so giving of himself as Barrault. Morvan Lebbeque describes Vilar as a man who is basically not a "camarade." On the contrary:

On a dit que Vilar était un ambitieux, un orgueilleux, un misanthrope, un cynique. Il est probable que tout cela est un peu vrai... 67

But, adds Lebbeque, "tant mieux" if Vilar can create such great productions. Furthermore, Vilar’s "rapports" may not be warm with those whom he deals with, but as for his actors:

L'équipe du T.N.P. est aujourd'hui parfaitement rompue à l'apparente froideur du "patron." 68

And judging from Vilar’s productions, if he is not too warm or enthusiastic in his relationships with his actors, he is obviously effective in bringing them to artistic fulfillment individually and as a team.

One can see that the modern French "animateurs" whom we have considered have often differed temperamentally—Dullin and Jouvet have been known to be gruff, sardonic (but have

66 Chancerel, op. cit.
67 "Le Théatre national populaire," Le Point LII, mars, 1957, p. 19
68 Ibid.
inspired deep loyalty), Vilar is seen as personally somewhat cold and distant, Copeau and Barrault as warm and generous in their dealings with actors. Yet the same aims and ideals are found in almost each case. Over and above the creative freedom that they all champion for the actor, these men provide ample evidence of a positive approach toward him. A listing of the common denominators in philosophy and attitudes that make these directors truly heirs of Copeau would sound like an impossible catalog of abstract ideals—fraternity, loyalty, understanding, guidance, dedication, love based on respect and a common goal, etc. Nevertheless they are real convictions that have been a practiced reality in these and many other cases.

In order to acquire a more complete idea of the relationship between French directors and their actors today, we must consider not only the aims and general qualities of these relationships, but detailed accounts of the actual processes and practices of direction. The intimacy of such a process was not to be found in the association between the French author and his actor, whose main link these days, as we have seen, is the literary character. Even the close collaboration of those authors and directors described in Chapter II does not match the sort of communication or give-and-take between these artists actively creating together on stage. Indeed, their work is constantly termed an "accouchement," and the director considered as a "sage-femme" in the birth of the actor's "personnage."
The techniques of "delivering" the actor of his character vary with each director and each actor (and each role for that matter). The overall pattern of staging a play, leading the actors into production, depends usually on the individual director. As examples, let us consider the preliminary work of organization in the production of Copeau and Barrault.

After Copeau chose a play, he would conceive of his production alone, "dans la retraite de son cabinet," outlining, classifying the whole play in his mind. Next he would gather his actors around the table, and

...il lisait le texte d'une voix claire, expressive qui excellait à révéler le personnage et le ton de chaque rôle.

After the play had been case he would devise and then have the actors improvise a scene that would provide the theme of action of the written play. When they had reached a certain degree of precision and spontaneity, they would examine the text again, and, seated around the table, would listen to Copeau's explanation of the dialogue, as they read their lines...

...La première répétition sur le plateau n'avait lieu que lorsque toute la compagnie connaissait le texte à fond... Puis ils modifiaient leur interprétation pour s'y soumettre mieux encore et coordonner gestes et mots, tout en conservant la spontanéité de l'improvisation première.

Then came the "blocking" or "mise en place," the arrangement of movement, exists and entrances, which Copeau set in a rapid but precise manner. After this they would engage in the

69 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 135
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Notes sur le métier de comédien, Preface, p. 10
more basic interpretative work of creation of character.

Barrault, too, after studying a new play, conceives of his "mise en scène" privately, and he writes it down in its entirety:

Inutile de... dire qu'elle ne sera pas, qu'elle ne peut pas être définitive. Mais ce travail de scribe sert à rassurer la troupe; c'est un monstre sur lequel nous pourrons physiquement travailler.73

Next he himself reads the play meaningfully to the actors and then they read it together "en famille" around the table. Often, in the course of this exercise, the casting falls into place naturally:

...elle se fait peu à peu; et tel qui se trouvait "distribué" dans tel ou tel personnage en prend un autre... Cela se passe d'autant mieux qu'il m'arrive, à moi aussi, de me confier un rôle, de me le retirer et de m'en donner un autre.74

Once the psychological lines are drawn, the troupe goes on stage and the plan of physical movement is established as quickly as possible ("les acteurs n'aient pas les metteurs en scène qui 'vasouillent'")75 Barrault allows two or three days of "blocking" to each act, about two weeks in all. During this period the actors have had a chance to learn their roles. Then, when thoroughly intimate with their characters, they engage in "le premier essayage," the first "run through" of the play as a whole.76

73 Chancerel, op. cit., p. 70
74 Ibid., p. 71
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
Other directors seem to follow the same general pattern. Georges Douking* may allow four days or more for the preliminary analysis of the play by the troupe "autour de la table." Jean Vilar may grant one-third of his rehearsals to sessions "à l'italienne," simple readings of the play:

Manuscrit en main. Cul sur la chaise. Le corps au repos. Et la sensibilité profonde se mettant peu à peu au diapason voulu, quand l'interprète a enfin compris (ou senti) ce personnage nouveau qui un jour sera lui.78

And some may be more or less rapid than others in their "mise en place," but before the thorough work of interpretation begins, the approach customarily is:

1. Choice of the play.
2. Study of the play by the director alone.
3. Concept of a "mise en scène" by the director, including patterns of physical movement.
4. Discussion and reading of the play to and with the actors.
5. Casting.
6. Blocking on stage--"mise en place," before or during which period the actors have learned their lines.

One of the most crucial factors in this preliminary work of guiding the actor into the play is the question of casting. As Douking puts it, "Une erreur de distribution fiche une représentation par terre."79 And Barrault states:

Nous savons tous qu'une pièce bien distribuée est à moitié montée.80

This matter of casting is much more complex now than in Molière's day when the actors were "type cast." There is still

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77 Personal interview, July 19, 1961
78 Vilar, De la tradition théâtrale, p. 23
79 Personal interview, op. cit.
80 Chancerel, op. cit., p. 71
*A director of "La comédie du Sud-Est," best known for his "mise en scène of Musset's Il ne faut jurer de rien (published in Collection "Mises en scène," of Éds. du Seuil)
today, though to a far lesser degree, a certain categorizing in the assignment of roles: in the T.N.P., for instance, Catherine Sellers or Sylvia Montfort will often play the young female lead; Jean Vilar, kings and patriarchs; and until his death, Gérard Philipe excelled as the impetuous but noble hero.

But there is also a great versatility among such artists and a great flexibility in distributing roles. In that particular troupe, for example, Maria Casares, recognized by some as one of the greatest living French tragediennes, was cast in the role of the youthful Chimene of Corneille's Le Cid, and Jean Vilar has taken the role of a comic peasant in Goldoni's Les Rustres.

There is no uniformity in the technique of casting from director to director: We have noted above how Barrault's "distribution" seems to occur almost automatically as his troupe reads around the table. Yet a director like Jacques Mauclair, who has no one group or theatre at his disposal, states that he has a specific actor in mind from the very first and in reading a play will think of the voices, tics, or physical qualities of certain actors who can best fit the parts. 81

At the Comédie-Française the situation has been unique in view of the powerful "Comité d'administration," a group of

81 Mauclair, op. cit., p. 22
actors who until recently have been solely responsible for casting. When Touchard became administrator of the Comédie-Francaise, he took some part in these decisions, but in the main left them up to the individual directors who were better acquainted with the acting potential of the "comédiens." 82

On the whole it is safe to say that casting of plays in France as elsewhere is the outcome both of an actor's imposing himself in the role, generally during the initial group readings, and the director's preconception of the sort of person suitable for the part.

Once the precursory planning has been done and the director has laid the foundation of the production, he embarks on the more consequential phase of guidance or supervision of the actor—the hours in rehearsal. It is here that the differences of approach among individual directors will doubtless be the greatest, since this important part of the technical relationship, to which some usually attach the very word "directing," exclusively is the most vital and human one, both the director and the actor giving extraordinarily of themselves. Here we are more conscious of personalities and temperaments than of theories and generalities. As Louis Jouvet said:

Le théâtre est un miroir et le metteur en scène, le premier, y réflète son visage et sa personne. 83

82 Touchard, op. cit., pp. 32-33
To study absolutely thoroughly the manner of directing of modern French "animateurs," one should really know these men personally. To compare in an exact fashion their techniques, the ideal procedure would be to see and record each of their "mises en scène" of the same play on the same stage, using the same actors. Although the possibilities for such conditions do not obtain here, one can have valuable insight into their individual directing styles and peculiarities through biographical accounts, published records or radio transmissions of taped rehearsals, and detailed, written instructions given by directors for certain plays. Let us consider, therefore some ways in which several outstanding directors rehearse their actors in various comedies.

Jacques Copeau's manner of directing impressed many as stimulating, mercurial, ubiquitous. Louis Jouvet, in speaking of this "poète scéniste merveilleux,"84 said:

Il était là, se multipliant sur la scène, animant les comédiens dans une alternance d'enthousiasme et d'accablement.85

Copeau gave a life-like description of Molière as a director, and Jouvet has offered this as an exact picture of Copeau himself:

Il interpelle et gourmande ses acteurs, les bouscule un peu. On le sent disposé à la gentillesse et prêt à la féroce. Il mêle des propos familiers aux instructions qu'il enveloppe d'un tour badin, faisant passer une raillerie dans un compliment, tirant partie de la nature de chacun,

84 Molière, op. cit., p. 9
85 Ibid., p. 22
refoulant les mauvaises humeurs, écoutant les proposoiseux sans trop d'impatience, entraînant tout le monde
avec gaïeté, simplicité, optimisme, dans la précipitation
de ce métier terrible. Il tire de lui-même, prenant le
masque tour à tour et l'ôtant. Il esquisse un scénario,
explique les personnages, improvise des imitations, rit,
s'excuse...

(This picture of Copeau as an animated and very human
director may surprise the student of the French theatre, for
whom Copeau's name means the distinguished and rather abstract
father of modern stage production in France.)

The only published record of a complete "mise en scène"
by Copeau is his version of Molière's *Fourberies de Scapin*
(Copeau playing Scapin and Jouvet, Géronte. 87) This is not a
completely revealing document, since the play is stylized
farce and would give rather little indication of one area of
direction in which Copeau excelled, the formation of the
character within the actor. Another shortcoming of such an
account is that these are simply notes to guide rehearsals and
are only an incomplete idea of the play as ultimately presented. 88
But although we cannot get from this a true idea of Copeau in
the fluid situation of a "live" rehearsal, some features of
these instructions may add to our understanding of this phase
of the director-actor relationship.

Copeau's instructions throughout the play relate mainly
to physical movement, "business" of the actors, integrated
into the rhythm of the play. There are many directions for

86 Molière, op. cit., pp. 10-11
87 Ibid., p. 18
88 Ibid.
specific gestures, facial expressions and vocal effects. At various points Scapin wipes his forehead or scratches his nose; Léandre bites his nails; Argante shuts his eyes, clenches his teeth, shakes his head, stammers. The action is given definite shapes and patterns in time and space: actors are kept moving and doing. The tempo is rapid and varied. In Act II, Scene VI, for example, Copeau outlines the stage thusly to indicate movement up and down a staircase:

He specifies:

Scapin remonte les deux marches qu'il avait descendues. Il s'agit... remonte en blais. Géronte le suit. Toutes ces interjections très rapides, les unes sur les autres.

The text reads:

Scapin: Monsieur
Geronte: Quoi
Scapin: Monsieur votre fils...
Geronte: Eh bien? mon fils...

On that line Géronte was to pull Scapin by his jacket, Scapin to go back and say "est tombé dans une disgrâce," and on the next line both Scapin and Géronte were to return again to down center stage.

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89 Molière, op. cit., p. 87
90 Ibid., p. 43
91 Ibid., p. 75
92 Ibid., p. 87
93 Ibid., p. 95
94 Ibid.

*This idea of movement up and down a staircase was exploited in the recent Comédie-Française version of Les Fourberies, with Robert Hirsch as Scapin (presented in Boston, March, 1961)
Copeau introduces "lazzi" in the tradition of the commedia dell'arte—bits of "stage business" as for instance in Act I, Scene II, when Scapin was supposed to watch the flight of an invisible fly. On a certain line he was to try to catch it but miss, then vary the trick during Octave's story of his meeting with Zerbinette.95

The characterization is naturally enough completely superficial and merely outlined in facial expressions or tones of voice. For example, when Hyacinthe must break into tears, Copeau qualifies, "Mais, pleurs de comédie."96

We find then that Copeau in this instance has manoeuvred his actors in the same way that Molière must have done, in the spirit of a light, superficial farce where voice must be stylized and movement synchronized to fit the comic rhythm, where "slapstick" effects are in order, the role of the actors being purely to evoke laughter.

Copeau eventually passed the role of Scapin on to Jouvet, and the latter in turn asked Barrault to take the part. It is from Barrault's recollections of Jouvet's directing him in that role that we have some significant views of Jouvet as a director. Barrault remarks:

Ce fut passionnant pour nous de le voir travailler. Il était parvenu à une telle maîtrise qu'il paraissait ne pas avoir préparé sa mise en scène. Peu lui importaient les entrées et les sorties. Les personnages uniquement le préoccupaient et il les possédait tous à fond.97

95 Molière, op. cit., p. 39
96 Ibid., p. 45
97 Barrault, Nouvelles réflexions, p. 43
In this production Barrault witnessed Jouvet's extraordinary talent for creating "trouvailles" or imaginative effects, especially in Silvestre's and Zerbinette's main scenes, but he seemed lax about other parts of the play, and, Barrault insists, purposely so:

...il "lâchait" volontairement, ce me semble, certain coins. C'est peut-être moi qui souligne: volontairement, car je pense que lorsqu'on atteint un certain degré de savoir-faire on peut se permettre de laisser des taches sur son dessin. Une tache bien placée, même.98

There has been as yet no published record of a complete "mise en scène" by Jouvet. A biographer, Bettina Knapp, has, however, given an account of a rehearsal of Knock. This, although quite short, is more illuminating than Copeau's written instructions for Scapin, since it is not a preliminary guide but reflects the living moment of creation. Here too the comedy is not quite so broad or physical as in Scapin, and one would expect more of the emphasis on character cited by Barrault. This is obviously a description of one of the early rehearsals of Knock with Jouvet interrupting extremely frequently to correct interpretation.

The account begins with Jouvet correcting Parpalaid's line "Et nous avons eu de très belles rentrées à la St. Michel." He wanted no pause after "rentées" or it would emphasize "St. Michel" too much. Immediately after this Jouvet said to the actor playing Parpalaid, "Look at your wife who has just made a boner," and he himself mimed a look of disdain suitable

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98 Barrault, op. cit.,
for the doctor. Then when the actress playing Madame Parpalaid repeated her first line, "Et nous avons eu, de très belles, etc.," Jouvet said, "Be much more unsophisticated! And there you can use your slight head gesture." Jouvet interrupted the next line of Madame's, "Il se fait des illusions," giving his own rendering of it, stressing the "i's," and had her withdraw one or two steps. Later he underlined the importance of Parpalaid's reaction to Knock's autobiography. Parpalaid's interest, he said was necessary as a device to interest the audience in the story. Jouvet himself ran in back of the man acting Parpalaid, "crossed his arms and stood in solemn meditation."

A good deal of Jouvet's corrections were addressed to vocal quality or intonation. When Dr. Parpalaid shouted about his miserly clientele, Jouvet had him say the line softly, accompanied by a bitter smile, whereas other lines he wanted snorted emphatically. Even such an insignificant phrase as "Il y a peu de l'industrie" had to be corrected, Jouvet wishing the "peu" to be sung out.

The synchronizing of gesture with lines was often quite mechanical. At one point, for example, the druggist made three answers to Knock in the negative. On the first one he was to raise one hand, on the second, the other, and on the third, both

100 Ibid., p. 82
101 Ibid., p. 83
hands were to be raised on high "as if to ward off the sting of Knock's insinuations." 102

From just this bit of detail we can agree with Knapp that these were indeed "exacting" sessions. In these rehearsals Jouvet seems to have had very definite ideas about every aspect of the interpretation down to the last comma. Every tone of voice, facial expression, gesture of a character had to be right. As we see too, contrary to the idea of Vilar who felt as Stanislavsky that an interpretation should not be given but suggested by the director, 103 Jouvet did not hesitate to recite lines, offer his own facial expressions, or set an example on stage if an actor did not do what Jouvet felt was the correct thing. It is true that although Knock has more psychological breadth than Les Fourberies, it does border on farcical satire and it would be expected that much of the direction would indeed be mechanical and arbitrary; however, Knapp recounts this as a typical rehearsal by Jouvet and these same characteristics of his direction must have applied in other productions of his.

The published instructions of Gaston Baty for Musset's Les Caprices de Marianne point up a contrast between his approach to directing and the kind of emphasis we have just noted in Jouvet. Since Jouvet excelled as a comic actor, it is understandable that he should have concentrated on the

102 Knapp, op. cit., p. 83
103 Vilar, De la tradition théâtrale, p. 30
perfect delivery of lines or the timing of a gesture most likely to win laughter for the players and their characters. Baty is the rare "animateur" who never was an actor, and as mentioned, he did not have too much faith in the actor as an interpreter of roles. The "mise en scène," which for Baty took precedence over the author's text, now seems to dominate the actor too. Great importance is given to the luxurious décor. Although Baty claims that rather than mere setting it is intended as an actor in collaboration with the other actors, and photographs of the setting during performance expose it as a formidable star. Baty himself, after stating that the costumes should not detract from the décor, said:

Les personnages font partie de l'estampe et n'en sortiront pas.  

These characteristics do not mean that Baty ignored either the author or the actor and his character. Besides giving attention to these in his introduction, the stage directions at times take into account both Musset and some psychology of character:

De chaque côte de la fontaine, les deux Musset Coelio et Octave se font pendant comme des sujets de pendule. Le dialogue va laisser voir, sous sa légèreté la grave amitié qui unit les deux hommes, et l'ironie dont se déguise la mélancolie d'un enfant du siècle.

Hermia n'a jamais oublié l'amoureux éconduit qui jadis s'est tué pour elle. Peut-être l'a-t-elle aimé en secret. Elle en garde du moins la terreur de l'amour passion...  

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104 Musset, Les Caprices de Marianne, Paris, Seuil, 1952, p. 16
105 Ibid., p. 17
106 Ibid., p. 37
107 Ibid., p. 53
However, the general impression of this version of the play tends to subordinate the actor as well as the author to the magnificent production of Baty's.

A published "mise en scène" of Labiche's light comedy *Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon* as directed by André Barsacq* enlightens us somewhat about Barsacq's techniques of directing. Unlike Baty's production of *Les Caprices*, an outstanding feature is the commentary on psychological motivation. In contrast too with Knapp's account of Jouvet, rather than restrict his instructions on lines and gesture to the requisite tone of voice or position, he indicates the "why" with the "what."** When for instance, Mme Perrichon says, "Voilà pourquoi tu le préfères," Barsacq's comment is:

Mme Perrichon se cabre, et comme il s'agit de défendre le bonheur de son enfant, n'hésite pas à dire ses quatre vérités à son seigneur et maître qu'elle a depuis longtemps jugé à sa juste valeur.108

Then, when Perrichon must turn away haughtily, Barsacq notes:

Drapé dans sa dignité offensée, il s'appuie sur le bras du canapé...109

In addition to specific psychological motivation for the actor's interpretation, Barsacq includes descriptions of the

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109Ibid., p. 39
*A pupil of Dullin, known especially for his direction of Anouilh's plays. His *Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon* was produced by the Grenier de Toulouse at the Atelier in 1954.
**Jouvet might very well have done so, too, had he published this "mise en scène," but Barsacq does seem to dwell considerably on such explanations.
characters' personalities:

Le commandant...est un être visiblement nerveux et emporte.¹¹⁰

Toute la sentimentalité refoulée de Mme Perrichon, tous ses rêves romanesques de jeune fille...ressurgissent...¹¹¹

generalizations about the characters and the author:

Les domestiques des bourgeois...se moquent de leurs maîtres et n'ont pour eux aucun attachement.¹¹²

Dans le théâtre de Labiche, les militaires sont en général de terribles fantasistes.¹¹³

La platitude même de cet argument témoigne du don d'observation de Labiche.¹¹⁴

Another very noticeable facet of this "mise en scène" (and a point of similarity with Baty's direction) is what might be called its busy geometry. Barsacq seems to delight in shuffling his characters neatly around to various sections of the stage at properly exciting moments of the intrigue:

110 Labiche, et Martin, op. cit., p. 39
111 Ibid., p. 31
112 Ibid., p. 41
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid., p. 27
115 Ibid., p. 43
116 Ibid., p. 61
It is true that a great deal of movement is inherent in the play itself, but Barsacq seems to make the most of this feature.*

Copeau, Jouvet, Baty and Barsacq have been seen here as directors of comedy. Let us turn now to some cases of directors of tragedies.

Jean Vilar has no published "mise en scène" to date, but he did set forth a few general principles taken from his rehearsal notes of what must have been the final stages of production of Hugo's Ruy Blas. Some of these notes were reminders of a "maître" to his troupe: "Tâchez en coulisses vos accessoires," "articulation nette, respect des effets," he wrote, and he urged them not to overemphasize or "milk" their sonorous rhymes, not to "lécher leurs alexandrins." He gravely reprimanded those actors who arrived at the beginning of the play, rather than well in advance.

But besides the advice of Vilar, as head of a troupe, there were suggestions aimed at the actors' overall interpretation of character. He suggested to his actors that rather than continue playing their roles with too much complexity, they should interpret them sincerely, "avec le coeur," and with simplicity:

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117 Vilar, "Notes pour les comédiens," Théâtre Populaire, #6, mars-avril, 1954, p. 46
118 Ibid., p. 47

*His penchant for groupings, "tableaux" was noted in a more serious play, Tchekov's La Mouette, by critic Guy de Chambure, Théâtre Populaire, #15, septembre-octobre, 1955, p. 106
Un peu moins de profondeur et un peu plus en surface. 119

Vilar ended his notes by saying,

Je demande aux ministres d'être après, durs, rapaces.
Aux amoureux d'aimer comme des fous.
Aux drôles d'être tonitruants ou vifs.
Aux rôles d'autorité d'être autoritaires, vifs, nets, forts.
Nous manquons encore de flamme.
Il faut jouer, si ce mot a un sens, romantique. Pas de pudeur.
Qui, pas de pudeur. 120

For a much more detailed, thorough record of an "animateur"'s technique of directing tragedies, we are fortunate in having various accounts of "mises en scene" by Jean-Louis Barrault. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Barrault's approach as seen in these documents is its comprehensiveness. One can understand the importance of Barrault's concept of "théâtre total" after measuring the breadth and depth of his instructions.

For Phèdre, 121 for example. In the fifty-seven-page introduction, Barrault—so famous for his emphasis on mime and gesture— not only discusses the play and its historical background but gives a short course in Racinian diction, going into minute explanations about the delivery of the alexandrines verse: when to make the hiatus or the "liaisons," etc. The entire production is seen throughout as a symphonic or operatic work; Thésée is a baritone, Phèdre a mezzo-soprano, Hippolyte a tenor, and so on. His instructions for the beginning of each act are listed under "ouverture;" each act or "partie" is divided into "mouvements;" the major speech of actors are

119Vilar, op. cit., p. 46
120Ibid., p. 48
121Racine, Phèdre, Mise en Scène par Barrault, Paris, Seuil, 1946
characterized as "récitatifs;" vocal intensity is described as crescendo, diminuendo.

Rhythm is of the utmost importance, not only in the play as a unit, but in individual speeches. For instance, in Act II, Scene II, Barrault's instructions for Cenone's speech to Hippolyte read:

Ainsi, sans avoir pris le moindre temps, Cenone s'exprime, essoufflée et mystérieuse. Tantôt elle précipite, tantôt, reprenant son souffle, elle élargit sa diction. Vers 143: rapide-respiration. Vers 144: large; 145: rapide-respiration. Vers 146: le plus large possible, etc. 122

The vocal quality too is constantly kept in mind. There is often mention of "cris sourds" or "voix étouffée," descriptions such as "voix rauque, légèrement étranglée par la souffrance,"* or at different moments Barrault will specify a brassy effect or a woodwind tone of voice. For one early speech of Theramene's he wrote:

Changement de timbre...le ton confidentiel apparaît d'autant mieux que le timbre de la voix descend dans la gorge, tout en diminuant de volume...123

In his overall view of Phèdre as a harmonious symphony of many elements, Barrault has rebalanced or shifted emphasis on the characters of the play as they are to be portrayed by his actors. Rather than have Phèdre reign supreme, Barrault lessens her importance by pointing up the symmetry between

122 Racine, op. cit., p. 85
123 Ibid., p. 83

*Some such effect must have been achieved in actuality by Edwige Feuillère in Barrault's production of Partage de midi. Tynan, using a metaphor once applied to Bernhardt, said that she uttered certain phrases in the "tones of a strangled dove." (op. cit., p. 384)
that heroine and Hippolyte (played by Barrault). In line with the modern tendency to create a homogeneous troupe, he has attempted here to democratize or equalize the cast of characters, the instruments of his orchestration:

Phèdre n'est pas un concerto pour femme; c'est une symphonie pour orchestre d'acteurs.\textsuperscript{124}

Il faudra veiller à ce que Phèdre, comme les autres, serve un Tout. Mettre en valeur une œuvre d'art et non une "reine incandescente." Faire jouer avec la précision d'un mouvement d'horlogerie une Troupe, et non pas donner la réplique à une célèbre tragédienne.\textsuperscript{125}

And a minor character such as Panope gets close attention in Barrault's all-encompassing orchestration:

Panope est une fille jeune, forte, sympathique et sensible... Elle est délicate à "distribuer." C'est elle qui reste le seul être vivant à la fin de la tragédie. Son rôle est important.\textsuperscript{126}

Although Barrault's directions to his actors here denote a primary preoccupation with the symphonic interpretation of Phèdre, there is a good deal of thought given here to the movement or physical action of the principals. These characters are linked to a predesigned geography of the stage, entering each by his own "chemin." There is a "Chemin Phèdre," a "Chemin Aricie," etc., and impassioned exits are made via allegorical "Chemins de l'Evasion."

Just as Barrault has fixed very definite vocal effects, he is most specific and graphic concerning physical attitudes and gestures of the actors:

\textsuperscript{124} Racine, op. cit., p. 22
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 21
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 101
On voit la main de Phèdre qui, d'un geste large, vient placer sa paume sous le menton d'Oenone et, très lentement, soulève Oenone (c'est en réalité Oenone qui se lève, au ralenti, cette lever correspond au rythme de: "lève-toi").

Elle dégage donc... et c'est, séparée de lui d'un mètre, qu'elle dit, le corps renversé comme une tige tordue, les vers 699 à 702.

In these directions as in the instructions concerning the musical quality of Phèdre we see not only a proof of Barrault's comprehensiveness of direction, but an exactness in regulating voice and movement according to a style or a stylization that characterize almost all of Barrault's productions. This stylization is most apparent in his ordering of the movement and gesture of the actors. We have already mentioned (Chapter II, page 69) the "tableau" at the end of Partage de Midi. Barrault mentions that in this same play, at the moment when Mesa and Ysé "become one" he placed them five-and-a-half meters apart, Mesa standing straight, Ysé, with her arms outstretched. He told the actors of Kafka's Le Château that the play was one long succession of "attitudes," like a series of photos, and he warned:

It ne s'agit pas de faire trop vite, c'est dans la cérémonie du spectacle, tous ces changements-là appartiennent à l'atmosphère du spectacle.

From this deliberate creation of an "atmosphere" through the ritual of gesture, it would appear that another salient fea-

127 Racine, op. cit., p. 95
128 ibid, p. 129
129Personal interview, op. cit.
130 "Répétition de Travail pour Le Château, Cahiers R.-B. #20, 1957, p. 115
131 ibid
ture of Barrault's direction is its intellectual or conscious artistry. In these days of the Stanislavsky influence (or Strassberg Method in the United States) we would perhaps expect more insistence on sincerity or on the inner feeling of characters rather than on effects, postures and attitudes. Actually feeling is not neglected in Barrault's concept of direction. Indeed, in Phèdre he becomes so involved in expressing emotion that his directions include such statements as:

La paume de ses mains est moite...
L'air est embaumé de son odeur. 132

But the famous "dédoublement" of intellectual control which typified Barrault's own work as an actor recurs time and again in his directions to others. The actor's dramatic moods or transcendent emotions are ultimately regulated by the director's down-to-earth instructions:

Hippolyte est "mal dans sa peau. Il suffoque... Le Silence est palpable. Hippolyte rassemble ses forces, et grâce aux temps et aux respirations qu'il a pris, il peut dire les deux vers suivants sans les cisailler. 133

Phèdre, toujours assise sur le siège, se livre à une véritable danse du désespoir; elle se tourne d'un côté et d'autre, se renverse, se tord les mains, s'étire, lève le poing vers le ciel, puis retombe enfin, essouflée et épuisée... elle s'est agitée comme un malade qui, sous l'effet d'une crise, se retourne dans son lit. Dans cette crise, ne pas oublier toujours la musicalité des vers. 134

In Barrault's instructions to his actors we have found, in addition to the great scope of his view, a conscious style or stylizing of the actor's voice and movements and a reflection of

132 Phèdre, p. 125
133 Ibid, p. 79
134 Ibid, p. 95
Barrault's own objectivity or intellectuality of interpretation.

Further understanding of his procedure is obtained by a glance at an account of Barrault's own working sessions with his actors in Claudel's Soulier de satin. We find, for instance, that he is ever a teacher, critic, translator and representative of the author's work to his actors: When Prouhèze says, "Mais quel cachot serait capable de me retirer quand celui même de mon corps menace de se déchirer," Barrault comments:

Toujours le thème du départ chez Claudel, mais avant tout, ce thème de départ de soi-même, on est enfermé! Il avait dû souffrir horriblement quand il avait dix-huit ans d'être ainsi enfermé dans une société, enfermé dans son propre corps... c'est là tout le drame de la pièce.135

In speaking of the "côté espiègle" of Prouhèze, he added:

C'est une femme claire tout de même, c'est là la difficulté de Claudel.136

Another facet of Barrault's direction as seen in actual rehearsal is its delicate and sensitive imagination that helps reveal moods through actions. One example of this is when Prouhèze says that she needs a tower like her friend Balthazar. On the words "Mon ami Balthazar" she was to take both hands, spin him around as a girl would her uncle until both of them burst out laughing, and--

135 Repétition du Soulier de satin," enregistrée par Simone Benmessa et Jean Capin, Cahiers Renaud-Barrault #25, 1958, p. 66
136 Ibid, p. 62
137 Ibid, p. 67
138 Ibid
Elle met sa tête sur sa poitrine tout en riant d'un rire un peu nerveux.  

Barrault added:

Si tu pouvais avoir à la fois les larmes et le rire, ce serait exactement la tonalité de la scène.  

Roger Planchon has been described here (Chapter II, pp. 33-34) as a virtuoso director, not too respectful of the author's work, and as we shall see in the following chapter he claims to value his effects of production above his actor's interpretation. Yet a rehearsal of Planchon and his actors shows this director in another light completely.

To begin with, in rehearsing Les Ames Mortes by Adamov, Planchon seemed mainly concerned with interpretation of character. One scene was particularly troublesome because of the difficulty in rendering the character Plouchkine. This part had already been rehearsed with several actors. The present one, Vassas, was playing it with too much complexity. Plouchkine, according to Planchon, was completely childlike and should be presented with less reality, just by infantile reactions. The discussion of character analysis was joined here by the author and another actor who wished to help the new Plouchkine--this was not simply a unilateral establishing of a pat interpretation by Planchon.

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139 Ibid, p. 67
140 Ibid
141 Jacqueline Autrusseau, "Comment on répète au Théâtre de la Cité," Théâtre Populaire #36, 1959, p. 20
Planchon allowed for an actor's personal creativity in the role, but provided a necessary amount of guidance. When Vassas could not grasp Planchon's idea, the director himself began to read the part of Plouchkine, but without giving the exact tone of voice he wanted, trying instead to suggest the relationship between each line and the action of the play:

Essayant de préciser le geste qui permettra à l'acteur de trouver le ton.\textsuperscript{142}

Then Vassas resumed his role, Planchon playing Tchitchikov, and

Cette fois il s'agit d'indiquer à Plouchkine, de façon précise et schématique, sa position par rapport à l'interlocuteur. Et peu à peu les répliques se "placent."\textsuperscript{143}

In rehearsing another scene that had only been read as lines, Planchon admonished an actress not to think of the rhythm of the scene since they had not yet arrived at that phase, and he went into the discussion of character, but in a way that gave the actress enough direction without limiting her originality:

Sofia est romanesque. Elle fait de la mauvaise littérature. Quand on fait de la mauvaise littérature, on met partout des adjectifs. Or, ces adjectifs ne sont pas dans le texte; à vous de trouver un équivalent, en gonflant les mots.\textsuperscript{144}

The actress playing Sofia proceeded to stress key words as suggested, but in order to avoid caricature, Planchon interrupted to set the psychology more exactly. Sofia, he explained, has

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, p. 21
had no adolescence and now has the mentality of a fourteen-year-old. She says, "Il m'a jeté quinze roubles à la tête," just as if she were saying "Et le prince Charmant emporta la princesse." Using a technique common in modern direction, Planchon had the actress—Sofia substitute the imaginary line for the textual one until she could say the latter with the right shade of meaning.\(^{145}\)

We are surprised then to find that in this instance of an actual rehearsal at Planchon's theatre, this "new Baty" is shown as concentrating less on brilliant directoral tricks than on as exact as possible an analysis of character. We see too that this is a cooperative enterprise, allowing for some comment of the author and other actors. And finally we find that Planchon, rather than imposing his own precise idea of a character, encourages his actors to arrive at this interpretation by themselves.

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From this investigation of the attitudes, philosophy, nature and techniques of prominent French "animateurs" in their relationships with their actors we find that there are very basic similarities in their viewpoints, theories and ideals despite differences in temperament, but that when it comes to the practical interpretative and quite personal work of direction there is a great individuality of approach. We find Jouvet concentrating on comic caricature, setting every line, gesture, \(^{145}\)Ibid
facial expression exactly as he conceived it, to bring the desired audience reaction. We find Barsacq aiming both at psychological motivation and at arrangements or patterns of movement of characters on stage. We find Barrault attempting a "total" direction, effecting a stylization of voice and gesture, creating artistic effects, building the mood or atmosphere of a play. We see Baty's grand concept of a spectacle in which the characters seem somewhat submerged in the production.

We discover that the manner of coaching an actor in rehearsal may be utterly different from any expectations based on theoretical knowledge of an "animateur." It is hard, for example, to reconcile Jouvet's picture of a Copeau-Molière in rehearsal with the "Jansenist" philosopher of the stage whose principles have so influenced the modern French theatre. His lively arrangement of the actor-marionnettes in a farce such as Les Fourberies de Scapin contrasts with the serious matters of characterization that he is fond of analyzing. One is surprised too to see that the young Planchon, often likened to Baty for valuing direction above text, insists on the actor's personal creativity, that although he does have a very definite view of character, his method is the "suggestion" preached by Copeau and Vilar.

As we have indicated, some of the differences between these directors in their instructions to their actors may be attributed to the type of play involved. Nevertheless, the repetition of
particular techniques, the concentration on certain aspects of staging testify to a great individuality in all the cases we have just examined.

These "animateurs," in general agreement in their basic attitudes toward the actor yet so different in their techniques of dealing with him, are the men largely responsible for determining director-actor relationships in the French theatre today. In these relationships, as we have seen, the director must be many things. He must be the emissary of the author, the literary scholar, critic and pedagogue. He must be both an interpretive and a creative artist, a "chef d'orchestre," an "accoucheur" and a "poète scéniste." But, as Jan Doat puts it, he must be "d'abord un chef," and administrator well versed in the psychology of human relations:

Ne serait-il que cela ce serait déjà un bon metteur en scène.\(^{146}\)

These directors can only be conceived with the group. They are in charge, usually respected by "vous" while the family of actors for them are "tu." The family may not always be in agreement; for example the atmosphere of the Comédie-Française does not lend itself to the communion of an intimate, young, idealistic troupe such as Copeau's Vieux-Colombier. As Touchard has said:

\(^{146}\) Doat, "Cours pratique du Theatre," *Rue Théâtale*, #15, p. 70
••• 'a la Comédie-Française chaque sociétaire a le sentiment qu'il est un patron. 147

(Although he also mentions that they all shared a common bond, all having been bitten by the Comédie-Française "bug":

J'étais mordu de cette morsure venimeuse qui nous empoisonnait tous, mais qui nous faisait tous solidaires du même destin. 148)

From their concrete experiences and techniques outlined above, is there some formula that can be drawn to define precisely the working relationship of the French director and his actors? In view of the great differences in approach, it would seem not. Jouvet said:

...il ne saurait y en avoir car les théories sont le fruit de l'expérience et au théâtre aucune expérience ne se renouvelle. 149

These "animateurs can only proceed individually, according to temperament and guided by their philosophy of fraternal creativity. Said Barrault:

Je fais ce que je peux, comme je peux, selon les circonstances, selon la pièce, selon les interprètes, et aussi selon le lieu où j'ai l'occasion de travailler...Et puis...ça colle ou ça ne colle pas. Et on recommence...Il n'y a pas de règle, pas de système: il faut aimer, non pas soi-même, mais l'œuvre, et tous ceux "nos frères humains" qui s'efforcent douloureusement de lui donner mouvement et vie à des fins de ressemblement, dans les larmes ou le rire, de communion. 150

Lacking any infallible rule of directing, if there is one guiding principle that the outstanding French directors of this era have in common, it is certainly as we have seen, this idea of communion or harmony between themselves and their actors.

147Touchard, op. cit., p. 24
148Ibid., p. 42
149A.-C. Gervais, op. cit., p. 43
150Chancerel, op. cit., pp. 76-77
With this discussion of the director and his actors we have now studied the main elements in the relationships of the modern French theatre: the author, the director and the actor. Before attempting to draw our conclusions on the subject, let us investigate a few other associated relationships that constitute or bear on this community of the theatre.
Thus far we have considered relationships between the three main components of the modern French theatre: the author, the director and the actor. This theatre has lately become so highly organized that there could be almost no limit to associations that could be studied—associations between the principal elements of the theatre and others such as stage designers, musicians, the whole administrative hierarchy, not to mention different patterns of relationships within the author-director-actor community itself. For the purposes of this study, I shall confine myself to those relationships which are especially significant or interesting or which have a particular bearing on the present and future of the modern French theatre. I shall begin by bringing in an important creative artist associated with the author-director-actor trinity, the stage designer. Then I shall discuss the director in a new perspective—as an actor in his own troupe—and after that to consider the director outside of his immediate professional circle, in his dealings with directors of other troupes. From there I shall deal with the effect of the producer and of the critic on members of the theatrical unit and, finally, shall examine the question of the public in its relationship to the artists of the French stage.

The stage designer generally ranks fourth in importance after the author, director and actor in the modern French theatre. It is true that in many cases the stage musician takes a most active and important part, as for example,
Maurice Jarre and André Jolivet in the T.N.P. (we have touched somewhat on the role of the "musicien de scène" in speaking of Claudel, Barrault and their composers, in Chapter II). However, it is generally agreed that in the subsidiary group of theatre artists the musician's importance is not usually equal to the place of the stage designer. Henri Sauguet speaks, for example, of "le musicien dont la part est moindre et plus accessoire,"¹ and it is, after all, within the physical reality of the décor that the actor lives his part and that the audience observes him. Says Phillippe Van Tieghem of the stage designer's function:

"Ce rôle est capital; si le metteur en scène est responsable de la traduction scénique du texte, si l'acteur a comme mission d'en faire sentir la vérité humaine et psychologique, le décorateur doit traduire plastiquement le texte, en transmettre visuellement le contenu, l'atmosphère morale ou historique."²

Although stage designing may be as old as the stage itself, the professional stage designer as such is a recent addition to the theatre community.³ At times his work has been granted a more fundamental importance on the French stage than the work of the author and the actors. It was against this emphasis on the stage designer's contribution that Copeau rebelled, specifically against its prominent role in Antoine's theatre and against the exaggerated realism of its style, as displayed there. Copeau's aim:

¹Henri Sauguet, Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, I-II, p. 147
³Ibid
Le décor réduit... à son strict minimum et demeurant lui-même secondaire car, dût le cadre suggérer la richesse ou la pauvreté, il ne devait doter l'œuvre que de son climat, en évoquer l'atmosphère, s'incorporer à la pièce elle-même.  

There are three recent tendencies that are suggested by Copeau's goals and accomplishments: 1) the diminishing in power or scope of the virtuoso designer, 2) the concordance of the decorator with the meaning of the author's text and the actor's interpretation and 3) the non-realistic but suggestive evoking of the author's text.

Christian Bérard, one of the greatest names in French stage designing and costuming, carried out two of these principles: harmony with the author's and actors' meaning and a suggestive rather than a pictorial art. On these two grounds he more than fulfilled Copeau's precepts. Of Bérard's position with regard to the author and his text Pierre Dux has said:

Bérard s'intéressait profondément à la vie de l'œuvre dramatique.

This was obvious from the fact that he was always at rehearsals immersing himself in the atmosphere of the play. He may not always at first have grasped the meaning of a work by the most direct method. Jouvet recounts Bérard's "ignorance suprême" when confronted with a play, his powerlessness to comprehend its intent or tone:

Il peut prendre la pièce à deux mains, la déformer, l'étirer en tous sens, la froisser, la piétiner durant une nuit de conversation, puis s'endormir dans un fauteuil las de fatigue.

5Kurtz, op. cit., p. 137
6"Christian Bérard Selon ses Amis," interview Spectacles No. 3, Jouvet, Témoignages sur le Théâtre, p. 153
But:

Lorsque, quelques heures plus tard, il rouvre les yeux, le
ton qu'il a pour parler, la voix, les gestes, les croquis
qu'il dessine sur le bout de papier à portée de sa main,
tout est neuf pour lui, tout est frais et dispos à nouveau.
La pièce brille...Il vient de la découvrir...

Dûe de la plus grande personnalité créatrice, Christian
Bérard est le plus modeste, le plus impersonnel décorateur.
Il a l'esprit même d'un auteur dramatique.

Bérard's close cooperation with actors is legendary.
Madeleine Renaud commented on the sense of security players had
working with Bérard, and how much they were helped by him.
When, for instance, Mlle Renaud found it difficult to evolve
from a bereaved widow into a woman about to remarry (La Seconde
Surprise de l'Amour), Bérard suggested wearing a black scarf in
the first act, a grey one in the second and a pink one in the
third. This was most effective. 8

Directors have valued Bérard's collaboration highly, accept-
ing not only his designs for décor and costumes but his
advice on other phases of production. This was true certainly
of Jouvet, with whom Bérard's name was constantly associated.
It was not surprising for example to hear Bérard say to Jouvet
during rehearsals, "La tu montes sur l'échelle," at a certain
point in the plot. 9 To Pierre Dux, who was rehearsing Cyrano
de Bergerac, Bérard suggested that in the second act the cadets
should march in rapidly, since each had a red mark on his

7 Iibd, pp. 154-4
8 Iibd
9 Iibd
his uniform and their quick entrance would give the effect of a flame. 10

Bérard's style was, as Copeau urged, suggestive. In Cyrano for example three white marks on a blue background with a red dot could be understood as three tents against a blue sky and a fire. 11 His art did not understand conventional realism or authenticity, as when he insisted that Ysé in Partage de midi wear a sari even/though she was in China, not India. 11

But as tastefully evocative as was Bérard's décor, as closely allied with the author's text, with the director and the actor as he was, Bérard did not follow another of Copeau's precepts: that the decorator's contribution should be minimal in comparison with the work of the author and the actor. Not that he ever exceeded the bounds of good taste, was extravagant or ostentatious; nor that he aimed consciously to compete with the play itself, said Jouvet:

Le don le plus éminent de Bérard est de savoir pratiquer dans l'art du Théâtre où tout est dépendant cet art de subordination qui le rend égal au créateur. 12

Yet an audience could not help but be so aware of his delicacy, his discriminating elegance and ingenious inventions that his decor was often the star of a production. A critic writes of Jouvet's presentation of L'Ecole des Femmes:

10Ibid
11Barrault, Nouvelles réflexions sur le théâtre, p. 231
12Jouvet, Témoignages, p. 154
Le rideau se lève sur un décor exquis de Christian Bérard. On n'est jamais allé plus loin dans l'art de suggérer un style sans copier. Le haut mur du jardin avance en proie contre la rampe. Ses lampadaires magnifiques descendant des frises, scintillant comme une gerbe d'étoiles...

Tout à l'heure, aux interminables acclamations d'un public transporté, ce décor se transformerait sous nos yeux, les murs en proie s'ouvrirent découvrant à nos regards le jardin où Arnolphe tient Agnes confinée... Simplicité, honnêteté des moyens. On fait la nique aux changements à vue, aux scènes tournantes, aux ascenseurs du Pigalle. Il n'y a qu'un adjectif qui convienne: c'est ravissant.

In contrast to this example of a brilliant and applauded designer is the stage decorator as found in the theatre of Jean Vilar. Here Léon Gischia generally creates the settings, but in accordance with Vilar's desire to keep stage furnishings to absolutely bare essentials. Any accessories are used only out of sheer dramatic necessity, never for decoration. And what is added to a set by Gischia (as with Bérard) is never reproduced as reality but as a "vérité de création." Serrière, in discussing the few properties that are used speaks of their "participation" in the actual drama—Macbeth's table, for example, which radiated a sort of malificence. The décor is especially minimized at Avignon where the impressive outdoor setting at the Palais des Papes provides enough background in itself. One anecdote has it that admirers of the T.N.P., wishing to praise the stage design at Avignon, have remarked on the clever use

13 Pierre Scize, Comoedia, 10 mai, 1936, quoted in Revue d'histoire du théâtre, p. 64
14 Serrière, Le T.N.P. et nous, p. 86
15 Ibid, p. 88
of little blue lights at certain intervals of the platform—
those lights actually being not a decorator's "effects" but
guideposts for actors who must exit down the dark back stairs
of the stage.  

This reduction in the display of the stage designer's
contribution is largely the result of the conviction of Vilar,
who, like Copeau and Appia before him believes in the theory

L'art scenique doit etre basé sur la seule réalité digne
du théâtre: le corps humain.  

So it is not merely the matter of subordinating "spectacle"
to "texte" which we dealt with in chapter II, but of subordinating
it to the actor as well, for Vilar learned on his stage at Avignon
that:

Il n'y a que deux choses qui comptent: le texte et le jeu
de l'acteur.  

Without décor or accessories the actor of the T.N.P. has a
great freedom. As Serrière says: "Il est réduit à lui-même." 

Sur la scène dépouillée, grandi par ce dépouillement, cerné
par la lumière, lumière lui-même, il accomplit le drame
dans l'instant sans retour...

Although this trend to the reduction and suggestion of a
decor within the scope of the author's play, the director's

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16 Interview with Mme Nina Vidrovitch, stage designer, Paris,
July 30, 1961
17 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 124
18 Jean Boissieu, op. cit., p. 11
19 Serrière, op. cit., p. 34
20 Ibid, p. 35
intent and the actor's interpretation is considered the ideal
today in France from the viewpoint of enlightened "animateurs"
and critics, it is not a thoroughly consistent feature of the
French theatre.

An important exception is found in the productions of
Roger Planchon. One illustration of Planchon's use of the stage
designer is his recent presentation of Berthold Brecht's
Schweyk dans la seconde Guerre mondiale (October of 1961). A
clever device was introduced by designer Roger Allo--a turning
platform which, rather than change a set completely, permitted
the audience to see the same scene, the same situation at a
different angle, in a different light. It was on the one hand
a procedure that integrated the décor into the action of the
play. It was on the other hand a piece of machinery that drew
the admiring attention of the audience to such an extent that,
as Michel Cournot pointed out, some spectators were inclined to
watch the "plateau tournant" rather than the action of the play.

This incident is not simply an indication of Planchon's
wish for spectacular effect, but is symptomatic of his whole
view of the relative position of the actor's and the decorator's
art. When Michel Cournot, in an interview, accused Planchon of
having his actors interpret their Brechtian parts Realistically,

22Michel Cournot, L'Express, 26 octobre, 1961, p. 25
that director began by explaining that the strangeness of décor made a natural style of acting necessary:

Tout est faux, tout est fou dans ce décor, et pour ramener un tout petit peu quand-même la scène vers l'action, j'ai fait jouer les acteurs plutôt comme des hommes que comme des clowns...23

Then, when Gournot asked him if he really believed so much in the effectiveness of a décor that he would modify an actor's style in order to counterbalance the nature of his stage set, Planchon answered simply, "Oui."24

Just as the subservience of the French designer to author, director and actor is not always maintained, sometimes we find that the harmony of his art with theirs is destroyed. André Boll complained that the French director's custom of using not technical decorators but prominent painters for their sets—a tradition begun by Paul Fort and Lugsné-Poe25 has at times been detrimental to the unity of a production.

Sacrifiant à la mode du jour, dans le but d'imprimer sur l'affiche le nom d'un peintre célèbre, on oublie trop souvent d'examiner si son talent est apte à s'accorder harmonieusement avec le style de l'oeuvre.26

Such a protest only underlines the fact that harmony with the author and his interpreters is a sanctioned goal in the relationship of the designer to the more important elements of stage production. There is a perpetual search

23ibid
24ibid
25Veinstein, op. cit., p. 83
26Boll, "La Crise des Théâtres nationaux II," Spectacles No. 3, 1958, p. 66
for ways to make this harmony an intrinsic feature of the décor. One of the most striking achievements in this direction is a set design that Picasso devised for Pierre Blanchard's version of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex.* It is significant first of all that after Picasso had shown the director and construction men his preliminary sketch or "maquette" done on the back of an envelope, he tore up this drawing, since, in his thinking, a written décor was not in keeping with real theatre, that to create for the stage one had to create on the stage. This Picassian décor is considered one of the most perfect to have been invented, "le décor parfait dans la boîte." On a traditional prosценium stage (la scène à l'italienne") Picasso had created a large oval of white and ochre, a functional design permitting the actor many possibilities of evolution. It was not only functional but symbolic of the author's text, for, as the audience could slowly realize, the whole stage was in the shape of a huge eye. It would seem that this example combines almost every ideal of a relationship between the decorator and the other components of the theatre: an artist who does not work in a vacuum but insists that his art be "of the stage," his non-representational creation that evokes the author's text, and his functional design that permits the actor great freedom of interpretation.

27 *Théâtre des Champs-Élysées*, 1947
28 Nina Vidrovitch, interview, July 30, 1961
29 ibid
30 ibid
Ironically, the production was not particularly successful: It is rarely mentioned by critics of this period, and Beigbeder refers in passing to:

Cédine-Roi, que Pierre Blanchard avait complètement désossé, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, malgré une pléiade de génies - ou à cause - au lendemain de la Libération...31

It would seem more logical that the failing lay with the director and his actors (the author at least being exempt from blame in this instance) rather than with the décor of this "génie," since the decorator's art is inevitable only accessory, and even a bad décor could not ruin an excellent performance. Had the other elements of the production been as harmoniously inspired as the stage design, Picasso's conception may well have helped to create an immortal example.

This illustration, as well as others mentioned here, suggests one problem in the relationship between the stage designer and his associates--it is the problem of style. Perhaps because the stage designer is more originally creative than the actor, because he does not interpret so much as invent (especially in the case of an actual painter), it is in some ways more difficult for him to efface his personality in his work. The actor, even while attempting to be not himself but the character, is still exhibiting at least physically his own person to the audience. The stage designer or painter contributes of himself only through his inimitable style. In addition

31 Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 53
to this, although a young, conscientious stage designer might have the high ideal of making his talent conform completely with each author's intention, of being not a virtuoso but a servant of the whole, still, in order to be in demand in Paris theatres, one must have a reputation, and, as Marcel Marceau has said, in order to have this reputation, a designer must have an individual style.  

So the relationship of the stage designer to the other members of the stage community, although tending more and more in the same direction as the other relationships discussed here—towards the direction of harmony—involves certain more complicated issues which perhaps the coming decades will clarify.

Another important association in the modern French theatre, unlike the one we have just discussed, does not encompass another sphere of the theatre, but arises from a shift in arrangement within our original area of the author, director and actor. It is the question of a director who becomes an acting member of his own troupe.

One great difference in relationships of the French and American stage is that prominent directors in France most frequently take acting roles in the plays that they direct. This is the case with practically all those whom we have mentioned here: Copeau, Jouvet, Dullin, Pitoéff, Vilar, Barrault, etc., Gaston Baty being a notable exception. In

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32Vidrovitch, op. cit., reference to her conversations with Marcel Marceau
the United States, a director may have begun his career as an actor, but generally he abandons the latter role when in the capacity of a director. The French director performs the feat of directing his actors, directing himself, and acting with his actors. It is a prodigious "stunt". Copeau has been pictured in the throes of directing a play in which he took a central part:

A un acteur, il envoie son intonation... cependant qu'il a l'œil et l'oreille déjà ailleurs, fait un tour sur lui-même en avançant un siège de fortune: "Messieurs, voilà des coffres... lance sa réplique de l'autre extrémité du théâtre, revient en courant prendre sa place, s'éloigne pour juger à distance.33

Kurtz says:

Il était partout en même temps, surtout quand il était à la fois comédien et metteur en scène. Du plateau où il donnait la replique à un camarade, il courait au fond de la salle pour juger l'effet. On eût dit qu'il voulait se voir jouer lui-même!34

Most directors doubling as actors in a play will, like Antoine35 or Jouvet36 sit in the audience much of the time to judge the total effect of a scene, while another actor substitutes temporarily in the director's part. Moreover, an "animateur" will often interpret large and demanding roles in the plays that he directs. One has only to think of Knock, in which the central character is on stage nearly every moment.

33Les Tourberies de Scapin, pp. 10-11 (Jouvet uses Copeau's description of Molière to characterize Copeau himself)
34Kurtz, p. 136
35Van Tieghem, op. cit., p. 41
36Knapp, p. 81
At a time when homogeneity, harmony, unity are bywords for modern theatre production in France, it would seem that this tendency of a director to allot himself a large rôle in a play which he himself is staging might be dangerous. Would it not for one thing limit a director's perspective? In these theatres where rehearsals are often at a minimum, would something have to be sacrificed--the quality of the directing or the discipline of the acting?

Jean-Louis Barrault, referring to the experience that an "animateur" undergoes when he combines directing and acting, says that just as the Japanese claim that an actor has to keep a "third eye" on the public,

Ajoutons pour l'acteur-metteur en scène un quatrième œil pour la coulisse et nous aurons une idée de l'étrange animal qui évolue sur la scène.37

Although Barrault enjoys acting in Le Procès, he is tormented each performance when a complicated system of décor and lighting effects must be executed with absolute precision and rapidity (around twenty changes of sets, around sixty different lighting effects).38 When questioned on this subject, Barrault added to the distracting "fourth eye" of the director-actor a "third ear" that listens critically to the other actors and that makes it difficult for the director to lose himself in the actors' situation. Yet, when he was asked whether this

37 Barrault, Nouvelles réflexions, p. 40
38 Ibid
preoccupation of the director-actor did not detract from the quality of the performance, he replied that such was not necessarily so, that in his case the fact of having directed the play made him if anything more effective in his role, since he had conceived the play as a totality and had become penetrated with the whole work:

La radioactivité du personnage est renforcée parce qu'on est imprégnée de toute l'œuvre..."39

He added that the plays in which he had taken a very large role were generally the ones that were the least criticized, for example Le Proces, Christophe Colomb, Hamlet.40

When it comes to the effect of the director-as-an-actor pattern on the harmony of the ensemble, it is obvious that whether or not this combination actually improves a play, in the case of a talented artist, it certainly does not detract from or break the unity of the production. To be convinced one has only to see a performance of the T.N.P. in which Vilar gives a competent, nonvirtuoso rendering of major roles, almost blending into the atmosphere of the ensemble, while the whole production keeps to a general level of excellence.

When a director places himself in the position of an actor in his own production, he changes somewhat the perspective of his associations with his troupe as he treads the fine line between "patron" and "camarade." Other relationships of the

39Interview with Jean-Louis Barrault, Paris, July 19, 1961
40Ibid
modern French director take him outside the circumference of his particular group endeavor and have a more general bearing on the theatre than his doubling as an actor. I should like to mention one such relationship that seems of especial consequence these days: the association between a director and directors of other troupes.

In the twentieth century there is nothing to match the frenzied animosity between artists of competing theatres that so colored the climate of the seventeenth century French stage.\textsuperscript{41} It is known that during his career at the Théâtre Libre Antoine was hostile to the Comédie-Francaise,\textsuperscript{42} that Léon-Poë was not on very cordial terms with Copeau\textsuperscript{43} Jouvet\textsuperscript{44} or Antoine.\textsuperscript{45} But in general this century has witnessed an increasing cooperation, even collaboration among directors of different theatres. A noteworthy step in this direction was the formation of the "cartel" on July 6, 1927, at which time Louis Jouvet, Charles Dullin, Georges Pitoeff and Gaston Baty affixed their names to a document, forming an association in which, without compromising on individual creativity, they were to make certain major decisions jointly, consult each other before taking stands on public issues, organize inexpensive advertising techniques and

\textsuperscript{41}Chappuzeau, passim
\textsuperscript{42}Waxman, op. cit., p. 53
\textsuperscript{43}Kurtz, p. 45
\textsuperscript{44}Knapp, p. 149
\textsuperscript{45}Gertrude Jaspers, Adventure in the Theatre, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1947, p. 32
even lend their actors to one another when available. Their professional aim was to promote a theatre of good taste in France. On a personal level there was a great respect and often a strong bond between certain of these men such as Dullin and Jouvet, whose friendship Knapp characterized as "envigorating and rewarding." Recently there have been other attempts to form "cartels" of directors. In 1954 Robert Voisin remarked that Barrault, Serreau, Reybaz and Vitaly had that idea in mind. In 1958 an article in Arts was entitled "Quatre directeurs de Théâtre decident de fonder un nouveau cartel" (Barsacq, Vitaly, Guenburger and Jacquemont). Although no new "cartel" seems to have achieved the force and reputation of the original association, these experiments clearly denote an endeavor of directors to cooperate for a common purpose.

Two "animateurs" who exemplify the spirit of fraternity with other directors are Jean-Louis Barrault and Jean Dasté. Barrault's career is marked constantly by sympathy and thoughtfulness toward his peers. At times his consideration of them has been quite naturally motivated by a practical diplomacy, as when he refused to produce Claudel's Annonce faite à Marie because Jouvet had just presented it:

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46 Knapp, pp. 118-119
47 Voisin, "Le Théâtre et la cabale," Théâtre Populaire No. 9, 1954, p. 55
48 2-6 avril, 1958, p. 6
Je connaissais sa sensibilité extrême. La chose ne paraissait donc même pas envisageable.  

But even when there was no fear of incurring bitterness, Barrault has preferred friendship and cooperation to cold competition. To illustrate, Gide had given Barrault his Oedipe to produce, and Jean Vilar was to offer this same play the previous season. Barrault stated:

Quand vint mon tour, je n'eus pas le cœur de disputer à Vilar cet Oedipe et vis une occasion, au contraire, de lui offrir l'hospitalité. Nous décidâmes qu'il monterait Oedipe chez nous. Ce fut l'un de ses plus grands succès et je suis heureux que ce soit au sein de notre Compagnie qu'il ait pris le départ définitif de sa montée fulgurante et méritée.

Jean Dasté's attitude toward other directors seems equally generous. It is not surprising to find his name in the news of other theatre companies. He constantly lends his efforts where needed, and has many times encouraged other directors to participate in productions of his own troupe. In his simple, forthright way Dasté wrote of André Clavé, a former director of the Centre dramatique de l'Est:

C'est un ami. Nous pensions qu'Amal et la lettre du roi lui conviendrait à mettre en scène. Il put se libérer...Cette nouvelle collaboration fut une réussite.

Besides this Dasté has invited directors of other regions to perform with their own troupes at his Centre, and the Comédie

19 Barrault, Nouvelles Reflexions, p. 222
20 Ibid, pp. 43–44
21 La Comédie de Saint-Etienne, Dix années de théâtre, Le Henapf, Saint-Etienne, 1955, s.p.
22*(such as André Clavé, Hubert Gignoux)
de Saint-Etienne has, in exchange, toured their territories.52

With both Barrault and Daste it is perhaps a question of two unusually generous and loyal souls who by nature have a desire to give of themselves, but they and others of their ilk are setting and promoting this example of friendly exchanges between directors of troupes, in the interest of better art.

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Within the artistic framework of the family of the theatre, the striving for harmony or communion has repeated itself in each relationship studied. In certain peripheral associations, those between the artists of the theatre and elements outside their immediate circle, the pattern may be quite different. Although such associations take us beyond the realm of author, director, actor and their fellow artists, and although the atmosphere of these associations may not resemble the quality of relationships within the theatre, in order to understand our subject more fully it is desirable to describe, if briefly, at least two such relationships -1) the producer and 2) the critic, and their respective effect or influence on the French theatre community.

Louis Jouvet explained that the theatre may be founded on the noblest of motives, but that just as a priest had to earn a livelihood from his altar and a soldier from his sword, the men of the theatre too had to be paid for their art, since

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52 ibid
the theatre is, after all, "un petit commerce au jour le jour." 53

Le théâtre doit être d'abord une affaire, une entreprise commerciale florissante, c'est alors qu'il lui est permis de s'imposer dans le domaine de l'art. 54

The man occupied with directing a play is not usually the man with a theatre at his disposal and the time and desire to run it; so in France, as elsewhere, another individual, usually the producer—"le directeur"—has taken charge. 55 While recognizing the need for someone to control the business side of theatre, an "animateur" such as Jouvet could not quite rejoice over his associations with those "soi-disant organisateurs... les marchands du temple." 56 Like many others Jouvet realized that those who wanted to make a profit out of the theatre were not necessarily sympathetic to the artistic aims of its directors, and that producers with their financial authority were a threat to many an "animateur."

Le théâtre, par l'évolution de son organisme ternaire: auteur, acteur, public, a suscité, engendré, toléré... subi cette fonction supplémentaire et adventice: celle du directeur. 57

As enthusiastic and idealistic as Jouvet was concerning relationships between author, director, and actor, he was entirely pessimistic about any satisfactory association where the producer was concerned.

53 Jouvet, Réflexions, p. 114
54 Ibid
55 Ibid, p. 207
56 Ibid, p. 165
J'ai renoncé depuis longtemps à croire que l'exploitation théâtrale soit améliorable, qu'on puisse trouver pour sa pratique des modalités satisfaisantes, qu'une entente quelconque mette jamais d'accord auteurs, acteurs et directeurs dans une profession où le succès est le seul et unique principe d'organisation.57

Jean Vilar shares Jouvet's irritation toward the businessman-producer. In a letter to a fictional "directeur" he states:

Puisque vous fûtes, et êtes encore, je crois, un industriel, il s'agit ici de bien se rendre compte que l'activité débordante de Ford est inutile où est indispensable la patience désintéressée de l'ébéniste.58

Then, after carefully and calmly outlining how a producer should act toward the director and actors, Vilar added a venomous "Lettre pneumatique" in which he said:

Avoir été courtois, conciliant envers vous m'a rendu bête. Vous n'êtes qu'un tôlier.59

It is certain that every producer has not fit the descriptions of Jouvet and Vilar and that all have not been so destructive to an artist's goal. In almost any biography of Copeau of the "cartel" members, for instance, it is not uncommon to find the name of Jacques Hebertot. To Jouvet, Baty and Pitoëff, Hebertot offered his Théâtre des Champs-Élysées when other producers were not so receptive to pioneering in the theatre. He characterizes his long relationship with Pitoëff as:

Une amitié qui ne se démentit pas durant dix-huit années.60

57 Jouvet, Prestiges et perspectives, p. 57
58 Vilar, De la Tradition théâtrale, p. 105-106
59 Ibid.
60 André Frank, Georges Pitoëff, Paris, Arche, 1958, p. 57
In general, however, the producer's effect on the community of the theatre has not been salutary or for the most part praiseworthy.

This state of affairs has not gone unheeded: after the Liberation, it was stipulated that any producer had to be an "homme de l'art" on the logical premise that a qualified person actually in the field of theatre would naturally have the interest of this theatre at heart. However, Beigbeder points out that people side-stepped this ruling by using "straw men," stage artists who were merely figureheads, while the profiteering producer has continued to hold the power and make the decisions.\(^{61}\)

Some "animateurs" have tried the solution of being themselves both director (or, as we have seen, director-actor) and producer. Jacques Copeau is a notable example of the modern theatre artist in charge of his own theatre, responsible ultimately to himself. Kurtz has mentioned the fact that even before his experience in the theatre, Copeau had manifested a great competence in business affairs:

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\ldots il \text{ apprit par force les rapports du commerce et de l'art, non sans témoigner d'une certaine compétence en affaires qui lui fit même prédir par ses amis une carrière à la Beaumarchais.}^{62}\]

\(^{61}\)Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 27
\(^{62}\)Kurtz, op. cit., p. 19
Jean Vilar too was, from the beginning of his career, his own producer, and coupled his artistic sense with business acumen. Serrière gives an example of this:

Vilar, avec l'obstination qui caractérise sa carrière, emprunte 30,000 francs à un ami, loue pour dix jours le Théâtre de Poche... il tient l'affiche durant un mois plein, rembourse son emprunt, et gagne sa première bataille.

But for lack of this administrative talent, the director-producer combination is not usually feasible, and the commercial producer, as we see, is still a source of irritation to French directors. There is an attempt now and then to come to a closer understanding, as in Vilar's advice to the producer:

Les conversations hors du plateau sont toujours fructueuses entre un directeur qui a au moins du bon sens et un metteur en scène qui n'est pas mégalomane.

still, on the whole, harmony has not been achieved between the producer and the "animateur" in France.

The French producer, although not necessarily participating in the creative work of the theatre's inner circle, is still a fundamental part of its organization. The French theatre critic has no vested interest in a theatrical production and is not involved in its organization. Yet his relationship with the community of the French stage is considered vital by all those active in it.

An example of one author who has been deeply concerned with the critic is Jean Giraudoux. He was most affected by

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63Serrière, op. cit., p. 20
64Vilar, De la Tradition théâtrale, p. 119
bad reviews of his play *Judith*,*65* and part of his *Impromptu de Paris* dealt with the injustice of the critic toward the dramatist:

Si la scène française pendant des décades a été un asile de marionnettes et de poncifs, si le langage dramatique n'a pas dépasse le patois, si le théâtre français a été grave-

ment atteint dans sa noblesse qui est le verbe, et dans son honneur, qui est la vérité, les critiques en sont évidemment les premiers responsables.65

Directors and actors too have always been at the mercy of their critics. Copeau's Vieux-Colombier had an extremely difficult start largely because

La plupart des critiques étaient bien trop accaparés par les générales du Boulevard pour sacrifier à "l'audace charmante" d'une soirée sur la rive gauche.67

On the other hand, good notices from critics provided Jouvet with the self-confidence he had previously lacked. Said Knapp of the favorable comments on *M. Le Trouhadec*, "This was the encouragement he needed to continue."68

The reaction of the members of the theatre groupe toward their critics has very often indicated the helpless bitterness and frustration of the vulnerable artist whose defenses have been withdrawn publicly. There have at times been dramatic protests, even insults. Henri Becque once wrote to the critic Sarcey:

Quand je serai mort, je viendrai vous tirer par les pieds,

vous ne jouirez pas longtemps de mon absence.24

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*65Inskip, op. cit., p. 65
67Kurtz, op. cit., p. 141
68Knapp, op. cit., p. 76
24Rossou adds "Mais Sarcey a la prudence de mourir... avant Becque," op.c
When Catulle Mendès openly referred to Lugné-Poe as a "comédien médiocre," the latter challenged him to a duel.* Gide cites the case of an actor who slapped a critic after a bad review, since his ephemeral talent could only be judged by the critic's written word. 70

The amount of actual power that the critic holds in relation to those who compose the modern French theatre has often been debated. It is certain that at the turn of the century the critic Francisque Sarcey did appear to hold the fate of these people in his hands. Henry James commented:

...if M. Sarcey praises a play the play has a run;...if M. Sarcey says it will not do it does not do at all...If M. Sarcey devotes an encouraging line-and-a-half to a young actress, mademoiselle is immediately "lancée." 71

Unfortunately Sarcey's influence was often matched by his lack of taste and foresight. The efforts of Lugné-Poe and Antoine to the contrary, until Sarcey's death, Dumas-fils was the idol of French theatre goers. 72 On the other hand, Curel was unappreciated by Sarcey, who termed L'Envers d'une sainte "crevant." 73 Maurice Coindreau called Sarcey an

...homme qui pendant quarante ans s'appliqua à fausser le goût de ses lecteurs. 74

At the present writing there is nothing comparable to Sarcey's tyranny in the work of French theatre critics. Yet the people

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70 Gide, Evolution du théâtre, p. 19
71 James, op. cit., p. 370
72 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 146
73 Coindreau, op. cit., p. 37
74 Ibid., p. 38
*After Lugné-Poe spent most of the time backing up out of bounds, Mendès finally walked out in disgust. (Gertrude R. Jasper, op. cit p. 262)
involved in the theatre most often agree that the critics today still are to a great degree responsible for the success, or as it is more commonly felt, for the failure of a play. Modern French theatre critics are, as we have mentioned, usually highly cultured and intelligent, and sometimes famous figures in French literature or philosophy (such as Franois Mauriac or Gabriel Marcel). There pronouncements on the theatre are among the most penetrating to be found and their commentary seems to reflect their conscientiousness. But, according to Giraudoux, this "élite cultivée, sensible, honnête," inflicts a great deal of harm on the French theatre.\textsuperscript{75} Jacques Mauclair imputes a large responsibility to the critics in his statement:

\begin{quote}
C'est la critique, ou plutôt une certaine critique, qui décide du succès d'une pièce.\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

By "une certaine critique" he must have had in mind critics of popular periodicals such as Le Figaro, since he mentions in the same article that his production of Ionesco's \textit{Victimes du Devoir} was doing well until a bad review appeared in that paper.\textsuperscript{77} (He adds, however, that the success of \textit{Les Chaises} owed much to a favorable review by Anouilh).\textsuperscript{78}

Guy Demur, himself a critic states that it is the fault of Paris critics that Georges Schéhadé has not been fully recognized:

\textsuperscript{75}Giraudoux, \textit{L'Impromptu de Paris}, p. 63
\textsuperscript{76}Mauclair, op. cit., p. 29
\textsuperscript{77}Ibid, p. 18
\textsuperscript{78}Ibid
Pour les mêmes raisons qui ont empêché Claudel d'être joué et qui ont peu à peu écarter les poètes de la scène française, la pièce* de Schéhédré fut accueillie avec une fureur injustifiée par des critiques dont le moins qu'on puisse dire est qu'ils n'acceptent guère la nouveauté.79

Most critics do not concur with such appraisals of their influence on the modern French theatre and its artists. André Frank and Bertrand Poirot-Delpech agree that they cannot cause a good or popular production to fail, but can help young, struggling artists to success.80,81 This argument could probably be debated indefinitely, but outside of the question of which side has the correct answer, it remains clear that the relationship between the critics and the theatre community is and will continue to be a strained one as long as one side has the reputation of forming public opinion and the other is the object of its study.

Before concluding this section, I should like to mention some of the characteristics of the modern French critic which affect the nature of his judgments on the author, director and actor.

The French critic has evolved from his seventeenth-century predecessors, whose accounts of plays were usually written in laudatory superlatives,82 to a much more stringent and demanding commentator. An extreme example of this severity is the reviewer

79Demur, Spectacles, No. 1, p. 23
80Le Théâtre contemporain
81"L'auteur du Grand Dadais au Théâtre," Réalités, Jan., 1961, p. 44
82Melese, Le Théâtre et le public au dix-septième siècle, p. 403
*Histoire de Vasco
Bernard Dort whose articles are rarely if ever totally accepting of a work and whose reservations seem subtle, oblique and very personal. An illustration of this is his objection to Robert Hirsch playing Scapin in Les Fourberies. Dort claimed that Hirsch should have played not only Scapin but Scapin as interpreted by Molière the actor. He objected to the gravity of Hirsch's voice in that it stirred a spectator tragically rather than provoking him to laughter (anyone who saw this production can testify that Hirsch, voice and all, stirred the audience to hilarity, that he made a clever use of his resonant tones in a comic parody of the tragic hero).

In general, it appears that good critics try to be fair and precise. There is, however, the difficulty of relying on certain groups of critics who are motivated by specific social or political leanings. This is true, for example, of the often brilliant writers of Théâtre Populaire, an interesting and instructive magazine, whose intent is, however, partisan, being pro-Brechtian and marxist in tenor. Recently, for instance, one of its critics, Guy Demur, objected to Hubert Gignoux's successful production of Victor Hugo's old melodrama, Les Cent mille francs de récompense, on the grounds that rather than emphasize its social meaning, Gignoux presented it as a farce. "Gignoux a seulement voulu faire rire," censured Demur.

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83 Dort, review of Les Fourberies de Scapin, Th. Pop. No. 22, Jan., 1957, p. 79
84 Demur, review of Les 100.00 francs de récompense, Th. Pop. No. 42, p. 95
Whether or not a critic has a "parti pris," his job is such a subjective one that the French critic, as critics anywhere, cannot be unanimous in their appraisals. Writing of this same play, Renée Saurel praised it, having seen it not as farce but as "pleine de vérité, de tendresse, d'humour... et de poésie... en proscrivant toute parodie."85 (Having seen the play, this writer disagrees with both reviews, interpreting it as a "tour de force" that maintained itself on the fine line between a serious performance and farce. The mirth that it provoked in the audience stemmed from this director's trick of having actors play old-fashioned melodrama almost sincerely.)

The fact that, as we see here, French critics can be exacting, can be partisan, can be in total disagreement with each other must certainly not help to better their relationship with those whom they criticize (and complicates or alters for the future the account of theatre as produced in our time).

There is no easy solution to the problem of "rapport" between the critic and the subjects of his reviews. Unlike the work of a producer, a critic's function is one that an "animateur" cannot add to his already long list of professions. Still, as in the case of a producer there is a certain striving within the theatre for a greater degree of harmony between the critic and the stage. Barrault, deploiring the fact that critics, instead of attending the "générale" or dress rehearsal, as it had become

85Saurel, "En attendant un nouveau théâtre," Les Temps Modernes, juillet, 1961, p. 183
customary, asks for the reestablishment of a "vraie générale" where the critic "devient un collaborateur au même titre que le décorateur, le musicien, les acteurs, l'équipe...".

Georges Lerminier, in an effort to bring the critic and the theatre to a better understanding, advises that rather than be principally a judge, a critic should be an interpreter of the author, director and actors, explaining and describing them to the public:

Il doit être du plateau à la salle le lien entre le créateur de théâtre et... le spectateur.

So we see that the harmony of relationships that has been the goal of those participating in the art of the theatre appears as a possibility, if only a vague one, even when it involves an outsider who often opposes and may appear as a threat to the author, director, actor and their associates.

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In discussing the relationship of the critic to the modern French stage, we have stressed that he represents an element apart from the immediate circle of the theatre. The critic sits opposite the stage, observes rather than participates in the work of the artists, and communicates his opinions to those on his side of the theatre, the public. But it is this public and not the mighty critic (any more than the stage designer, composer or administrator) that makes the production possible.

86 Barrault, "Pour le rétablissement des vraies générales, Cahiers R.-B., No. 1, p. 121
87 Gouhier, Théâtre et collectivité, p. 16
for without the public the theatre could not exist. Said Henri Gouhier:

Il y a là une exigence qui n'est pas seulement une exigence d'ordre financière...il y a une exigence qui tient à l'essence même du théâtre, car si le public n'est pas là, les créatures de la scène perdent leur existence.87

Even the author, who creates his work in the privacy of his studio, has the audience in the back of his mind. There are rare exceptions like Becque who claimed to write for himself rather than for an audience,88 or Musset who, rejected by the public of his day, became an "armchair playwright." But almost always great or talented dramatists direct themselves to and are accepted by the public of their time. Armand Salacrou said:

...Il n'y a pas d'exemple dans l'histoire d'un auteur de génie qui n'ait pas été joué...il n'y a pas d'orateurs muets, il n'y a pas d'auteurs dramatiques sans public.89

The need for the public is undoubtedly most intense in the case of the actor whose work unlike the author's will not endure and whose talent can only be truly judged and appreciated during his hours before the public. The actor cannot exist as such without his audience. Camus wrote:

L'acteur a trois heures pour être Iago ou Alceste, Phèdre ou Glocester...Jamais l'absurde n'a été si bien ni si longtemps illustré...Passe le plateau, Sigismond n'est plus rien. Deux heures après, on le voit qui dîne en ville. C'est alors peut-être que la vie est un songe.90

87 Ibid
88 Jouvet, Réflexions, p. 105
89Salacrou, "Que sera le théâtre de demain?" Arts, 24-30 juin, 1959, p. 7
90Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe, Paris, Gallimard, 1942, p. 199
In general actors and director-actors agree that their aim is to establish a bond between themselves as interpreters of characters and the public. (The relationship between the actor and the public has been discussed by Copeau and others at times from the point of view of the actor wishing to establish contact with the audience and himself as a person rather than as a character, but ordinarily writers treating this subject have in mind the spectator's feeling for the actor as representing a fictional character.) The impulse to make contact is so strong and deep that the actor, according to Jouvet has a sort of mystical sixth sense about his audience and can even from off-stage feel whether its silence is caused by emotion or indifference.\(^9^1\) Dullin, recognizing the need to capture the public, has discussed at length an actor's methods of "magnetizing" the audience, of forcing it to enter completely into his imaginary world.\(^9^2\) For Barrault the wish for a spiritual union of actor and audience is motivated by an actor's unselfish giving of himself:

Le théâtre est un acte d'amour.\(^9^3\)

J'ai fait du théâtre pour communier avec mes semblables, pour partager.\(^9^4\)

But whatever the motive and whatever the technique, most "animateurs" believe that an indispensable facet of their art

\(^9^1\)Jouvet, Réflexions, p. 34
\(^9^2\)Dullin, Souvenirs, P. 51
\(^9^3\)Barrault, account of a discussion in Théâtre et collectivité
\(^9^4\)Ibid, p. 118
is this communion with the public. As Beigbeder put it:

Le théâtre, c'est...l'emportement de l'acteur et du public
dans un mouvement commun, où ils s'oublient.95

An exception to this rule of communion of the public with
the actor is the "distanciation" proposed by Brecht and which
we have already discussed insofar as it concerns the actor and
the character. As explained in chapter III, Brecht wished an
actor to keep somewhat remote from his character in order that
the spectator might maintain an objective view of it and might
not project himself blindly into the character's situation:

Le spectateur ne doit jamais s'identifier complètement au
héros, en sorte qu'il reste toujours libre de juger les
causes, puis les remèdes de sa souffrance.96

Too close a link between audience and actor means for
Brecht an identification leading to an "état d'égarement," a
hypnosis of the spectator which prevents him from appraising
what he sees.97

Ces spectateurs semblent tendre tous leurs muscles dans un
violent effort, ou s'abandonner à un état de profondépuse-
ment...ils ne regardent pas, ils boivent du regard, ils
n'ecoutent pas, ils "absorbent" par les oreilles.98

There is no doubt that Brecht's influence has taken hold in
certain kinds of productions (especially in the "avant-garde"
theatre which we shall speak of in our concluding chapter),
where there is a trend to a break in "rapport" between the
stage and the public. However, it is unlikely that this

95 Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 196
96 editorial, Théâtre Populaire No. 11, janvier, 1955, p. 1
97 Ibid, p. 6
98 Ibid
that this tendency could ever destroy the basic need for identification of the audience with the actor-character. As we have mentioned99 with Brecht himself the schizm between actor and audience is never a complete one and the Berliner Ensemble's performances provoke the audience on various occasions to project themselves emotionally into the situation and identify with the actor-character. One observer commented for example that when a stirring song was suddenly interjected into the action, an audience could be thrown totally off guard and "pris dans le piege."100 Similarly, in almost any production, spectators undergo the simultaneous experiences of belief and non-belief, identification and non-identification which parallel the dualism noted in the relationship of the character and the actor. It is a sort of paradox of the spectator whereby the playgoer identifies with the character but is conscious at the same time that he is watching an actor. Henri Gouhier explains:

Je veux que Tartuffe existe, mais je sais parfaitement que l'homme existant devant moi est Louis Jouvet, et c'est pourquoi je vais, pendant le jeu, vivre vraiment dans deux mondes: à la fois en suivant les événements qui font l'existence de Tartuffe et en observant, en admirant, en critiquant l'homme qui existe sur un autre plan quand il joue Tartuffe et qui ne s'appelle pas Tartuffe mais Jouvet.101

And Georges Jamati:

Le théâtre est dynamisme, il est aussi transparence. Nous sentons et nous connaissons en même temps.102

99(chapter III, p.146)
100Vidrovitch, op. cit.
101Théâtre et collectivité, p. 17
102Ibid, p. 97
But although modern French "animateurs" do not attempt to solve this paradox and do not necessarily want to destroy a spectator's lucidity or occasional awareness that the character he observes is also an actor, these men strive mainly for close contact between the actor-character and the audience. This aim is motivated not only by a strong psychological need of the actor but by a very practical reality: a public indifferent to the characters on stage would hardly continue to be a public, and just as the actor cannot exist as an actor without a spectator, the theatre cannot exist as theatre without its public.

So the desire for harmony or communion between the artists of the stage and their public occurs on a much broader level than that of certain actors wishing to "capture" an audience in a specific performance. It reflects a problem involving the very existence of the theatre. In the past century a great number of writers, producers, directors, actors, administrators and associates have devoted themselves to the question of the French theatre community and its public. Their aim has been to bring what has for three centuries been an institution for the elite to every geographical segment and social and economic level of France—to recreate a "théâtre populaire." Since an acquaintance with this popular theatre movement in France is pertinent not only to the relationship of French theatre artists and their

*(Keeping in mind the popular nature of the medieval French theatre)*
public but to the present and future state of French theatre in general, I should like at this point to give a brief account of its development.

It is possible to trace the beginnings of the modern French popular theatre to Rousseau's desire to transform the theatre of his time into public, fraternal ceremonies or Diderot's goal of a theatre for forty- or fifty-thousand spectators; but it was toward the end of the last century that the foundations of this movement were definitely laid. In 1892 Maurice Pottecher founded the "Théâtre du Peuple" at Bussang, and other, less remembered popular theatres sprang up in its wake. Another milestone was Romain Rolland's book Le Théâtre du Peuple, published in 1909, which emphasized the need for a popular theatre and outlined Rolland's proposals concerning the nature of such a theatre. Firmin Gémier is also an outstanding name in the recent history of French popular theatre. In 1911 he created the "Theatre National Ambulant," and in 1919-20 he produced grandiose spectacles in the Cirque d'Hiver. (Pottecher, Romain Rolland, Gémier and many others, in trying to bring the theatre to the people, wished to offer a special style of play, suitable to a public whom they respected, almost revered, but recognized as a completely

103 Serrière, pp. 43-43
104 Coindreau, La Farce est jouée, p. 153
105 Romain Rolland, Le Théâtre du peuple, Paris, Hachette, 1913
106 Serrière, p. 45
different species of man from the cultured Parisian." For Pottecher such a theatre should take into consideration questions of morality, should speak to the emotions rather than the intellect. For Rolland this theatre should be for relaxation, provide a source of energy and a guide to "la foule" and teach them to judge clearly. And Gémier felt that it should evoke the ceremonial atmosphere that held great segments of the population in the middle Ages.

Jacques Copeau, generally considered an hermetic "étroite chapelle" in his views on the theatre, became interested especially toward the end of his career in extending theatre to all of the nation, "vers le peuple entier pour lui dessiner et lui enseigner l'époque et le monde." We have seen how Copeau took young actors out of Paris and into small towns and villages. With this experience he not only brought theatre to groups of people who had never had contact with the stage, but gave these people and his troupe the opportunity of knowing each other personally, since the young actors were completely accepted by their new community.

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107 Pottecher, Le Théâtre du peuple, Paris, Paul Ollendorff, 1899, p. x
108 Ibid, p. xv
109 Rolland, op. cit., pp. 113-114
110 Serrière, p. 45
111 Kurtz, p. 153
113 Interview with Jean and Marie-Hélène Daste, Pernand, July 21, 1961

* (Although Pottecher did say that he thought all people, even the rich, were "peuple," it was to the "foule simple et presque inculte" that he directed his theatre.) op. cit. pp. 6, 18
There were other attempts to disperse theatre into a hitherto non-theatre-minded public, such as the Théâtre d'essai in 1937 and later the Association Jeune France, but the extension of theatre to a large public might still be a fantasy in France if capable members of the Ministry of Arts had not implemented it concretely and intelligently. The Third Republic had not supported the network of provincial theatres and these theatres had deteriorated. After the Liberation, the Minister Pierre Bourdan and Jeanne Laurent, "Sous-Directrice des Théâtres," took a giant step in decentralizing the "theatre of the élite" by creating the "Centres dramatiques de province,"-companies that tour small towns in a given geographical location and are encouraged to propagate new and original works with which to enrich the country and forming institutions which would grant aid to worthy young troupes all over the country. This work has permitted the following "Centres" to operate in strategic parts of the country:

1) Le Centre Dramatique de l'est, the first official "Centre," founded in 1947 at Colmar, moved in 1949 to Strasbourg, formerly under Andre Clavé and Michel Saint-Denis, now directed by Hubert Gignoux.

114 Yves Bonnat, Arts, 26 mars-1 avril, 1958, p. 12
115 Jeanne Laurent, "Le Théâtre de province attend des architectes," Spectacles No. 1, mars, 1958, p. 41
116 "Le Théâtre national populaire, Le Point, LII, mars, 1957, p. 4
117 Laurent, op. cit., p. 42
118 Le T.N.P.," Le Point, p. 4

*(Her title varies slightly with almost every author, e.g., Beigbeder calls her Sous-Directrice des Arts du Secrétariat des Arts et Lettres, p. 23; Sylvain Dhomme says Directrice des Spectacles à l'éducation nationale, p. 326, etc., etc.)
2) **La Comédie de Saint-Etienne**, founded in 1947 (originally the "Comédiens de Grenoble," in 1945). This group, under Jean Dasté has served as a model for subsequent "Centres."

3) **Le Centre Dramatique du Sud-Ouest**, founded shortly after the Comédie de Saint-Etienne (originally the "Grenier de Toulouse," in 1945) directed by Maurice Sarrazin.

4) **Le Centre Dramatique de L'Ouest,** 1949, at Rennes, formerly under Hubert Gignoux, now directed by Guy Parigot.

5) **Le Centre Dramatique du Sud-Est** (Comédie de Provence), 1952, at Aix-en-Provence, originally under Gaston Baty, later Georges Douking and others.

6) **Le Centre Dramatique du Nord,** 1960, at Tourcoing, under André Reybaz. 119*

In addition to these officials "Centres" many new companies have been springing up in such areas as Rouen, Marseilles and elsewhere. 120 Those which show promise are authorized by Pierre-Almé Toucharé to receive government subsidies. 121 Among those conscientiously bringing their art to districts outside of Paris are Jacques Fornier's troupe at Beaune, a small town near the Fernand-Vergelesse of the Copiaux; the company of

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120 Arts, 3-9 janvier, 1962, p. 9
121 Interview with actors of small troupe, Le Theatre au Village, at rehearsal of Ecoles des mariés, Theatre du Lutèce, July 18, 1961
121* These "Centres" are not fully government-subsidized. Towns contribute to their support. Groups such as Tourisme et Travail, Peuple et Culture, sponsor some productions. ("La Décentralization," Spectacles #1, p. 40)
Sophie Laurence at Lyon (both of these troupes use their plays as devices for the education of youth in their areas\textsuperscript{122}); la Comédie de Bourges, directed by Gabriel Monnet, an itinerant troupe, les Tréteaux de France, under Jean Danet, and more well-known than these, Roget Planchon and his Théâtre de Villeurbanne.\textsuperscript{123}

The most successful director of a popular theatre has been Jean Vilar. In 1947, after having done his apprenticeship by touring the provinces, and made a reputation in small theatres of Paris, such as the Théâtre de Poche, the Noctambules, he was chosen to direct annual open-air theatre festivals in the Palais des Papes at Avignon.\textsuperscript{124} His success there led to his nomination by Jeanne Laurent to the directorship of the Théâtre National Populaire, whose regular performances take place at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. There and at Avignon immense numbers of people can see his productions at minimal prices.

Theatre directed to the masses, theatre located in the provinces no longer bear the stigma of third-rate art. Some of the great names in the modern French theatre are attached to cities outside of Paris (Roger Planchon at Villeurbanne, for example). Yet it is often asked whether these troupes are actually reaching the people that they should reach and whether they

\textsuperscript{122}Yves Bonnat, "Les Jeunes compagnies de province," \textit{Arts}, 26 mars-avril, 1958, p. 12
\textsuperscript{123}\textit{Le Français dans le monde}, #5, p. 27
\textsuperscript{124}Serrière, pp. 19-21
*A renewal of an old tradition of open-air theatre in amphitheatre of nearly Orange and at Avignon ("Le T.N.P., Point LII, p. 8)
are making a real contact with their public. Of Vilar's T.N.P., for instance, Jean-Paul Sartre has insisted that it is not truly "populaire":

Son T.N.P. n'a pas de public populaire, de public ouvrier. Son public c'est un public petit-bourgeois...mais pas un public ouvrier. 125

With regard to Vilar's repertory, Andre Boll states:

On est en droit de se demander si, a coté de grandes œuvres classiques ou romantiques, françaises ou étrangères, des ouvrages tels que La Ville de Claudel, Ce Fou de Platanov de Tchekov, Henri IV de Pirandello...méritaient d'être présentés à un public dit populaire. 126

Sartre, whose viewpoint here seems to resemble Rolland's belief that a popular theatre should be geared to a specific social class, says that Vilar's repertory consists of:

...des pièces qui n'ont pas été écrites pour les masses d'aujourd'hui...À un public populaire, il faut d'abord présenter des pièces pour lui: qui ont été écrites pour lui et qui parlent de lui. 127

In addition to these questions of the lack of a public or repertory that qualify as "populaires," a third obstacle may be facing the French popular theatre. It is noticeable that some "animateurs de province" play so to speak with one eye on Paris—that once they have made their mark elsewhere, they spend a great amount of time in the Capital. These three factors, 1) the lack of a truly "popular" audience, 2) the lack of a repertory attuned to the public and 3) the gravitation back to Paris, point up some of the basic difficulties underlying

125Jean-Paul Sartre nous parle de théâtre, Théâtre populaire, septembre-octobre, 1955, p. 2
126Boll, "La Crise des théâtres nationaux," Spectacles #3, p. 65
127Jean-Paul Sartre nous parle de théâtre, p. 2
the attempt to integrate theatre and public to the satisfaction of all. How have the "animateurs" themselves been dealing with these matters?

Concerning the lack of a "public populaire," Jean Vilar's theatres it is true are not attended mainly by the lowest economic and social levels ("les ouvriers," if one can still think in such terms). However, to quote Jean Dasté on the subject: "Le peuple n'est pas salement les ouvriers."128 Serrière writes:

Le T.N.P. est en train de reformer la société du théâtre... grâce au T.N.P. le théâtre a pénétré dans les milieux qui l'ignoraient ou le connaissaient mal: la petite bourgeoisie sans fortune: employés ou petits fonctionnaires, artisans ou petits commerçants; il a même touché, fût-ce superficiellement, le monde ouvrier; il a gagné la jeunesse. sur les 65.149 spectateurs des avant-premieres qui eurent lieu du printemps 1952 au printemps 1953, près du tiers n'avaient jamais mis les pieds au théâtre.129

Moreover, Avignon's festivals are not comprised, as some would have it, solely of Vilar's stylish followers from Paris and elsewhere. Many people from that region, people who would not be considered particularly cultured or modish, make it a point to see at least one performance each festival.130

Vilar's repertory is certainly not specifically created for or adapted to the public; they are not the melodramas, historical epics, social dramas or circuses that Rolland prescribed. But, in defending the choice of his plays against

128 Interview, Pernand, July '21, 1961
129 Serrière, op. cit., pp. 184-185
130 (Conversations with townspeople of Avignon, July, 1961)
Sartre's criticism, Vilar stated that it is not a question of gearing the theatre to the level of the public but of bringing the public up to the level of the theatre.\textsuperscript{131}\textsuperscript{*}

Moreover, the phrase "théâtre du public" could not mean anything really in this day and age: one cannot think in terms of a theatre of an elite, nor of metallurgists. Theatre must be directed not to a specific group but to men and women.\textsuperscript{132}

It can be affirmed that Vilar's tasteful productions of such plays as Le Cid or Le Mariage de Figaro have held huge and heterogeneous segments of the French population, and in this sense he has more than succeeded in adapting repertory to public.\textsuperscript{**}

Vilar has not had to contend so much with the third problem mentioned here, the gravitation back to Paris from the provinces, since it is not his function to spread theatre to remote small towns under the trying conditions that pioneers of the "Centres dramatiques" must face. Besides, Paris is one of his two bases of operations. The conflict between Paris and the provinces is more of a reality in troupes which spend most of the time touring little villages in meagerly populated districts. There the emigration back to Paris occurs for several reasons. Jeanne Laurent mentions the "malaise" of young actors who undergo the very real discomforts of a

\textsuperscript{131}\textsuperscript{Vilar, Théâtre Populaire No. 40, printemps, 1960, p. 5.}

\textsuperscript{*This is the position of Copeau who insisted that "Le théâtre pour les masses n'est pas forcément un théâtre de masses" (Copeau, Le Théâtre populaire, p. 33).}

\textsuperscript{**It should be noted that although the founders of the "Centres dramatiques" encouraged the creation of new plays, they did not stipulate the orientation of such plays to any group, such as the workers.}
"troupe de province," where a career is physically demanding, where theatre halls are unobtainable. These young people, who wish to make their mark and be recognized, will not be content to practice their art in such disadvantageous circumstances.\footnote{132}{Laurent, op. cit., p. 43}

But even in the case of the director of the most prominent "Centre," enjoying a dramatic school and a fine theatre, the satisfaction of remaining in the provinces may lessen. Hubert Gignoux, after having contributed his talents to the C.D.E., producing such plays as Thornton Wilder's Our Town to villagers (even prisoners on one occasion\footnote{133}{La Vie du C.D.E., bulletin d'information, No. 15, avril, 1959, p. 12}), has recently scored a success in the capital with sophisticated productions of Dürrenmatt's La Visite de la vieille dame, with Valentine Tessier, and the above-mentioned \textit{Cent mille francs} of Victor Hugo. Conscious of the censuring that he might earn as a "defector" to Paris, Gignoux explained to his public that the Paris visit was for an airing out ("aération") and in order to submit the troupe's reputation to the verdict of Paris critics. However, it is apparent that the cause of popular theatre is no longer an all-consuming one with that director:

Un certain scoutisme décentralisateur a pu nous exalter pendant quelques années; mais après six, dix, douze ans, des adultes auraient bientôt le droit de s'en lasser... Mais ceci est une autre histoire.\footnote{134}{La Vie du C.D.E., No. 24, octobre, 1961, p. 4}
Jean Daste is one animateur who has come to grips with these problems and who would satisfy the most exigent supporters of a popular theatre. His repertory has included experimental works such as Les Noces noires by Jean Lescure, and has never compromised on quality or good taste. The productions have often been preceded by explanations for the benefit of a public totally unaccustomed to theatre and have included songs and dances that have helped to conquer these spectators.¹³⁵

The allure of Paris, this threat to the theatre of the provinces, provides no problem at all for Daste, and apparently not for lack of opportunity in the capital. As one actor put it, in spite of any attractive offers he may receive from Paris: "Chapeau bas--il refuse."¹³⁶ Some of this preference for the public of the provinces may be explained by Daste's own description of himself as a man who prefers life in the country to the animation of the metropolis,¹³⁷ but most people would agree that it is Daste's own dedication and generosity that keep him serving the people of the provinces.

Much more can be said about the French popular theatre, but this sketch gives at least some indication of the means employed these days in bringing the artists of the theatre in contact with the largest public possible, some of the problems inherent in this effort, and some ways in which a few "animateurs" are meeting these problems. Whether the modern French

¹³⁵La Comédie de Saint-Etienne, s.d.
¹³⁶Interview with actors of Le Théâtre au Village, July 18, 1961
¹³⁷Interview with Jean Daste, July 21, 1961
theatre community is seeking a new and larger public because of the practical need of audience support in order to subsist, because of the desire of young artists to gain an experience and reputation in the provinces before conquering Paris, because of a philanthropic pioneering spirit, or for all these reasons, it is obvious that the trend toward the extension of theatre throughout France is increasing and that "animateurs" are succeeding in making dramatists, actors, the whole membership of the theatre, a closer reality to a greater segment of the French population.

Yet many feel that any true understanding or communion between the theatre and the public these days is utterly impossible because of the nature of the present civilization and the lack of cohesion in the French public. Serrière wrote:

Aujourd'hui le théâtre n'est plus un, il y a des théâtres... le public n'est plus un, il y a des publics. 138

And the French critic Bertrand Poirot-Delpech stated:

S'il y a une crise, à mes yeux c'est une crise de public... de fête collective exprimant des mythes, des angoisses et des espoirs communs, la représentation théâtrale, sorte de cinématéâtre, sorte de "cinéma en chair et en os." est devenue une occasion de détente individuelle. 139

Many have felt that the only solution to this disunity would be some transcendant faith that would unite society and thus make it possible for there to be a strong bond between "la salle et la scène." Copeau believed that the fate of French theatre hinged on communion through common belief, that:

138 Serrière, p. 41
139 Poirot-Delpech, op. cit., p. 45
Il n'y aura de théâtre nouveau que le jour où l'homme de la salle pourra murmurer les paroles de l'homme de la scène en même temps que lui et du même coeur que lui.140

Gustave Cohen, Gaston Baty, Jean Vilar and many others have held that this integration of the public and the theatre through some common denominator is necessary for great theatre.141, 142, 143

Lacking any such unifying factor, the artists of the French theatre have perhaps set their hearts on a goal that is not completely attainable, but judging by the growth and development of their popular theatre, it would seem that they have made great strides in bringing the public closer to themselves.

In this instance, once again the pattern has been the search for harmony and communion of theatre relationships. Let us now resume these relationships and try to assess their significance for the present and future of the modern French theatre.

140 Copeau, quoted by Ghéon, Art du théâtre, p. 183
141 Cohen, La Mise en scène au quatorzième siècle, Paris, Brient, 1957, p. 155
142 Baty et Chavance, Vie de l'art théâtrale, p. 294
143 Vilar, Théâtre et collectivité, p. 113
CHAPTER VI

Relationships in the modern French theatre, and above all a proper balance of these relationships, have been for many writers and "animateurs" the key to the renovation of this theatre. At the beginning of this study we noted how men like Copeau, Jouvet and Vilar have held that harmony of all theatrical elements is a prime requisite for great theatre in France. The implication of such a theory is that the means of achieving superiority in this art form are sought not primarily within the author's sphere of literature but in the world of production controlled now by the director. Copeau has justified this concentration on a well-balanced "mise en scène" on the grounds that great authors like Molière or Shakespeare regulated all phases of production, and for lack of such universal talents, a harmony of all phases of the theatre is the surest way of eventually approximating this greatness.1 Barrault and Chancerel echo this idea:

L'idéal est assurément que le poète soit l'homme de théâtre complet, qu'il soit son propre "metteur en scène" et son propre interprète...Mais comme cet idéal se trouve rarement réalisé au cours des siècles, il faut bien avoir recours au compromis...Dès lors, la collaboration s'impose et, si possible, dès avant la création, alors que l'idée dramatique est encore à l'état fluide, dans un désir commun, une commune entente préalable, dans une co-naisance simultanée.2

Marcel Doisy, who sees the ideal of harmony as the basis of the present high level of the art of production in France, believes that only such a perfection of this art can

1 Personal interview, Marie-Hélène Dasté, July 21, 1961
2 Chancerel, op. cit. (Chancerel paraphrases Barrault), p. 57
lead to a drama of genius, that great playwrights can appear only when the stage has evolved sufficiently to meet their needs.\(^3\)

In view of the prevalence of such theories, I have analyzed patterns and trends of important theatrical associations in twentieth-century France and should now like to determine what effect they are having on the status of the French theatre and what their implications are for the French theatre of the future. First, let us resume our findings on these relationships:

In discussing the conflict between an author's and a director's creativity, we have found that it is the director who determines which path a given theatre will take. Some directors, especially at the beginning of the century, have emphasized the author's text at the expense of their own production. Others have preferred to exercise their own virtuosity, often adapting novels or rearranging plays to suit their own talent. We have seen, however, that although the duality between the author and the director in terms of "text" versus "spectacle" is still an issue, the goal of prominent directors from Copeau's time to the present has been fidelity to the author's intention and integration of the director's interpretation with the author's work.

To illustrate this tendency we presented three examples

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\(^3\) Doisy, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 21
of active collaborations between modern "animateurs" and dramatists. Each gave evidence of relationships that were mutually profitable. There was a very decided influence of director on author, especially in the Jouvet-Giraudoux and Claudel-Barrault partnerships. In these instances a director discovered a jewel and polished it. This polishing was sometimes simply a matter of "theatricalization" of an author, making a literary person more aware of factors of "playability," of what was or was not suitable for actual stage presentation. It also might have involved an actual revision of a text by a director (with the author's consent). These were at times changes for the benefit of a director's "jeux de scène," at others an intensive cutting of the author's material. We found too that these particular playwrights were extraordinarily quick to become attuned to the demands of production and to anticipate or even (as with Claudel) overrun the director in this area.

Finally, we saw that in spite of the individual nature of these relationships, in each case a director pledged his allegiance to the spirit and aims of the author, and the atmosphere of all three partnerships was one of creative fraternity based on mutual respect and a common goal.

Our findings on the author and the actor demonstrated first the shift in balance of this relationship from the beginning of the century to the present. We saw how on the one hand the French actor has been down-graded from all-powerful
star to one in a group of servants of the author; how on the other hand he has thereby reached a higher artistic stature than his virtuoso predecessors who dismayed proponents of good theatre. We noted that although the actor no longer deals first-hand with the author but is separated by the intermediary of the director, he has been drawn closer to the author in aesthetic concept—through the fidelity of his interpretation to the author's meaning.

Since the main point of contact between author and actor is now the author's work, we have studied what we consider the real bridge between the author and actor—the character—in an attempt to discover whether there is or should be a correlation between the author's attitude in creating the character and the actor's rendering of this character.

Concerning the relationship of the character to the author we discussed three attitudes: 1) the author who identifies personally with his character (Claudel); 2) the author who, while identifying metaphysically with the plight of this characters, considers them not as individuals but absurd nonentities and does not identify himself with them as persons (Ionesco); 3) the author who, in the tradition of Pirandello, sees his character neither as himself nor as a nonentity but as a character in a play (Genèt).

In analyzing the character as interpreted by the actor we first considered modern French actors confronted by the paradox of the player who tries sincerely to "become" his
character but is conditioned at the same time by technique and an objective view of his role. It has been shown that the outstanding actors discussed here have kept both of these factors in account, have veered more or less to one side or other of the paradox, but in most cases have wished to identify with their characters—to incarnate them as believably as possible.

In apparent contrast to this attitude is the stand of certain French actors, especially the admirers of Brecht, who refuse to become absorbed into their characters and wish to maintain a certain distance between themselves and their rôles. But, as we saw, the distinction between identification and "distanciation" is never clear-cut, a sort of objectivity being customary in the French actor, and subjective emotion being inherent even in the Brechtian concept of acting.

The question of correlating the actor's interpretation of the character with the author's concept of it did not lead to any consistent pattern. It was obvious that where an author such as Claudel had conceived his characters as a reflection of himself and of people that he knew (although poetically symbolic reflections), the best interpretations of his works to date have been realistic ones in which the identification of the actor with the character has been the goal. On the other hand we found that Ionesco's absurd characters did not demand a similarly absurd portrayal but fared best when identification was made. And Genêt's
characters have been thought by some to demand an artificial presentation, by others to warrant a realistic living of the part and so forth. Yet, although there has seemed no exact equation between the creation of the character by the author and its representation by the actor, we surmised that there still remained the possibility of an optimum or most suitable style of portrayal of the author's work by the actor.

This study of the relationships between French authors and actors implied throughout the presence and influence of their directors. It was the director who largely determined the changing balance of the author-actor "rapport." The director has been the go-between who on the one hand obviates the contact or practical dealings between the author and the actor, on the other insures the fidelity of the actor to the meaning of the author and very often determines the actor's general style of presenting the author's character.

As with the author and the director, the modern concept of the French author and actor is based on the ideal of harmony. This ideal instigated the shift from the virtuoso star who dealt personally with the author to the actor as a faithful servant among servants. It is responsible for the endeavor to make contact with the intention of the author through the character and to reveal the true spirit of the author by seeking the most suitable method of incorporating his character.

The association between the director and the actor, un-
surprisingly, is mainly determined by the director himself. We have dealt therefore with certain attitudes of directors, contrasting first those who believe in a firm control of the actor and those who leave him a great liberty. It was noted that twentieth-century France does not offer many examples of excessively authoritarian directors, and that the outstanding "animateurs" have usually endorsed a combination of granting creative liberty to an actor while providing him with intelligent guidance and a general orientation in his role.

The question of liberty as opposed to control is not today a highly significant issue for the French theatre and is in any case never a clearly-defined antithesis, since it hinges not so much on a basic conviction as on personalities. Moreover, as we have seen, those directors who were considered difficult and demanding, insistent on the smallest details, men such as Antoine and Jouvet, could boast of troupes that remained on the whole closely loyal to them.

The philosophy of prominent directors toward their actors uniformly revealed the same ideals encountered in other relationships, ideals of fraternity, loyalty, understanding, guidance and love based on respect and a common goal.

No generalization could be drawn from the working relationships of the various "animateurs" and their troupes, since every case was highly dependent on and colored by the particular temperament of each individual director. For lack of any theory or formula regarding the nature of director-
actor collaborations in the actual staging of plays, "animateurs" have offered simply the idea of a fraternal troupe spirit or "communion."

Other associated relationships have brought forth similar aims of unity, harmony and communion: the stage designer has shown a move toward subservience to the author's work, although the difficulty of self-effacement for the good of the play and its "ensemble" is great in the case of talented designers wishing to contribute their personal style. The customary procedure of a director who doubles as an actor in his own group may increase rather than destroy unity; the seventeenth-century pattern of enmity between directors of troupes no longer holds in the age of the "cartel," of Barrault and Dasté. The exceptions to the rule of unity involve relationships with elements outside the artistic circle--the producer and the critic, and even in these cases the doors remain wide open to possibilities of greater concordance.

In associations beyond the circumference of the theatre unit, the necessity for communion is most urgent in the case of the public. Governmental appointees and "animateurs" have recognized this and instituted a most positive, concerted and concretely organized campaign to bring the public closer to the theatre and its artists. This is illustrated by the growth of the "théâtre populaire" and the whole process of decentralization of French theatre. We have pointed to some of the major obstacles in the path of the unification of the French
public with its theatre, not the least of which is the acknowledged disunity of the public itself. And lastly we have stated the position of prominent writers and directors who hold that without a common myth or some transcendant belief shared by the general public, any communion between the theatre and the public is impossible.

Throughout this study of relationships in the modern French theatre we have had to contend with a tangential topic which has affiliated itself in various ways with our subject—the question of realism as opposed to a non-representational art. This duality entered into our analysis of attitudes of the author-oriented idealistic and symbolic theatre at the turn of the century and in our references to the realistic productions of Antoine and the suggestive purity of Copeau and Vilar. We found realism and non-representationalism important issues too in the creation of the character by the author and the portrayal of the character by the actor. But although the discussion of this duality is inevitably and inextricably involved in our subject, there is no pat conclusion that equates it mathematically with the patterns of relationships in the modern French theatre.

Let us now resume the most pertinent features of these relationships:

1. In the modern French theatre, the conflict between an emphasis on the author's text and the director's production still continues, but the recognized ideal is a harmonious
submission of "spectacle" to text.

2. The actor-author conflict has been largely resolved through the medium of the director. A "vertical" shift has reduced the actor from star to servant and raised him in artistic integrity; a "horizontal" change has separated him from personal and practical dealings with the author (now taken over by the director) but linked him closer artistically.

In the aim of a harmonious rendering of the author's text, an actor's interpretation of the character does not necessarily coincide or correlate with the author's attitude in creating the character, but the actor must still contend with the probability of an optimum or most suitable style.

3. The issue of liberty or control of the actor on the director's part is not a vital one at present. In actual working procedure there is a wide variety of techniques and no one system or formula; in point of view the "animateur"'s bywars are fraternal guidance and, once again, harmony.

4. Other associated relationships show a similar tendency to equilibrium, subordination of each element to the "ensemble" and especially to the spirit of the author's work. Two external factors, the producer and the critic, still remain unlikely candidates for harmony—although this is an oft-proposed goal. The stage designer attempts, often with difficulty to efface himself for the good of the whole; the typical director-actor combination does not destroy unity; many directors continue Copeau’s and the "cartel’s" example
of cooperation and reciprocity with other directors. The most important drive for communion is directed at the public. Great strides have been made recently in that direction, although for want of internal unity, the public is still considered by many to be unattainably remote.

To list a few of the salient points implicit in these observations:

1. In none of these relationships may any precise pattern of behavior be anticipated.

2. However, in almost every instance it is the "animateur"-director who takes the lead in determining the nature of relationships in the modern French theatre.

3. Generally speaking, directors who have concentrated primarily on the author's literary work have tended to discount the actors' and their own art (the poets theatres' use of shadows, their unpolished productions); directors who have gone to extremes in emphasizing their own staging have suppressed the actor and the author (marionettes, mime, adaptations).

4. Most of the outstanding "animateurs" have used their influence on the actor and the other members of the stage to serve the interests of the author. They have considered the actor next in importance to the author.

5. Harmony here then is not synonymous with equality. Each relationship has shown an "imbalanced balance" with some element stronger than others. It is clearly a question of a hierarchy: the author may be considered king, the actors
his subjects, and the director the prime minister holding the real reins of government affairs and supervising the subjects' allegiance to their remote but respected monarch.

6. Not inconsistent with this idea of a hierarchy is the fact that the present goals of leading "animateurs" tend to the self-effacement of the individual to the harmony of the ensemble.

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Let us attempt to assess now the effect of such a trend on the French theatre of the present time. Has there been a marked improvement or depreciation since the turn of the century, and has the effort toward a unified production through harmonious relationships had an influence on the status of this theatre today?

Although it has become increasingly difficult to separate dramatic art with stage production in evaluating this theatre, I shall use as a criterion here the writings of dramatists through which succeeding generations will judge the theatre of this period.

There is certainly no question but that the level of this art has improved in the past few decades. The theatre at the beginning of the century was, as Pierre-Henri Simon put it, "brillant et pauvre," and we have seen how this was an age of domination of actors over authors. Copeau took a

4Simon, Théâtre et destin, Paris, Armand Colin, 1959, p. 21
long look at the dramatic art of his day and said "Nous n'avons rien à attendre du présent." Jouvet among others lamented the "carence actuelle ou nous nous trouvons."

Today, however, writers speak in terms of a flourishing of drama in France. Pierre-Henri Simon's recent book *Théâtre et destin* carries the subtitle "La Signification de la renaissance dramatique en France au vingtième siècle." The first chapter of Jacques Guicharnaud's *Modern French Theatre* is "Theatre Resurgent;" the first sentence in Wallace Fowlie's *Dionysius in Paris* reads:

During the past quarter of a century, the theatre in France has recaptured a prestige comparable to that which once existed at the time of Louis XIV and which was associated with the achievements of Racine and Molière.

Beigbeder, more reservedly says:

Si nous n'avons pas eu de fête dramatique nationale, nous avons eu à tout le moins des éléments de fête.

Although none of these authors would concede that a Racine or Shakespeare has been produced in our time, all agree that this has been a rich period, to use a term by which Jean Dasté and Renée Lang, among others, have characterized it, a "foisonnement" of great talents.

The frothy plays of the "boulevard", so popular in the early decades of this century, have lost ground to, or in some cases, joined forces with the more intellectual theatre of

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5 Critique d'un autre temps, p. 235
6 Réflexions, p. 206
7 Simon, op. cit.
8 Guicharnaud, op. cit.
9 Fowlie, op. cit., p. 11
10 Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 15
11 Interview with Dasté, op. cit.
12 Conversation with Madame Lang, Boston, Dec, 1961
the "avant-garde." Georges Pillement sees as imminent the complete disintegration of the "théâtre du boulevard," because of a public drawn to a more serious or profound type of play.\textsuperscript{13}

Some people feel that the frequenting of new, unconventional, often perplexing dramas is due to a snobbery in the modern French public.\textsuperscript{14} Yet certainly this snobbery, if it is such, is healthier than the seventeenth-century variety, in spectators who often frequented the theatre in order to be seen by the right people. No matter the motivation, it is obvious that the public has become more receptive to the high ideals of the theatre.

There are few who speak of the present enriched state of the French theatre without attributing much of it to Copeau and contemporary "animateurs" and the revolution that they affected within the theatre community. After stating that the first achievement of modern "animateurs" was the coordination of all the arts of production into a unified whole, Guicharnaud says:

\begin{quote}
New life has been infused into the great works of the past and authentic playwrights have appeared on the scene.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Fowlie, speaking of the fact that Ghelderode, Beckett, and Ionesco have replaced Bernstein, says:

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{13}{Pucciani, op. cit., p. 10}
\footnotetext{14}{Robert Kanters' interview of actor Jean Martin, L'Express, 25 mai, 1961, p. 25}
\footnotetext{15}{Guicharnaud, op. cit., p. 262}
\end{footnotes}
This evolution in the theatre, which in reality is a renovation, is the result of many forces and changes... The art of certain directors and the particular kind of training to which they submitted their actors stand out prominently.16

Simon too attributes this renovation largely to "animateurs" like Antoine and Copeau who rehabilitated the author:

Antoine rendit à la représentation son caractère de jeu concerté, à l'acteur le sens de son art, au public le goût des grandes œuvres.17

It is obvious from such testimonials that the new balance of relationships has had a marked influence on the French theatre, that matters which seem properly the domain of stage production have been tied very really to the creation and propagation of literary dramatic art in twentieth-century France. The two elements in these relationships which seem most significant in this trend have been the disintegration of the star system—which implied complacency and non-creativity of the author—and a conquering of the public to the ideal of a fine and pure theatre.

Nevertheless it would be deluding ourselves to paint a rosily uncomplicated picture of the present situation of the French theatre and the role of these relationships, or to surmise that this renovation can only lead to a new Golden Age of drama in France. In many ways the French theatre finds itself without any sure sense of direction, and it is some-

16 Fowlie, op. cit., p. 15
17 Simon, op. cit., p. 28
times precisely a conflict in artistic relationships that creates such an impasse. We have, for example, underlined the fact that the schizm between the author with his text and the director with his production is far from resolved. It is still possible to hear from young directors statements such as:

Je ne crois pas à l'auteur: il y a le tréteau, l'acteur et le public. \(^{18}\)

It is still a fact that the most outstanding young director in France sacrifices both author and actor to his "mises en scène": In a recent article entitled "En Sacrifiant aux artifices de mise en scène Roger Planchon fait fausse route," Pierre Marcabru notes:

Ses comedies m'ont paru d'une extrême maladresse... La mise en scène ne saurait suppléer à tout. \(^{19}\)

Improvisations* popularized by Copeau and Dullin, the brilliant mime of Decroux, Barrault** and Marceau, seem in opposition to any literary orientation necessary for an enduring theatre, and a good percentage of the repertory of the current French stage is comprised of adaptations of novels, many of them foreign. The danger here, as understood by

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18 Personal interview with Henri Saigne, director of the Théâtre du Village, Paris, July 13, 1961
19 Marcabru, Arts, 1-7 décembre, 1961, p. 12
*Improvisation is seldom if ever part of actual theatre production but has found its way into the cinema. Jean-Luc Godard said, "Si j'arrive à m'exprimer sur du papier, a raconter mon film, je n'ai plus besoin de faire le film." (Entretien, L'Express, 2 juillet, 1961, p. 33)
**Despite his great service to Claudel's language, Barrault remains faithful to his idea of total theatre which includes the spectacle.
Brasillach, Cheney and others, is that periods of decadent theatre have been characterized by the emphasis on spectacle—circuses, pantomimes, dances, adaptations rather than original masterpieces, etc.  

In contrast to the concentration on an extra-literary elements of the theatre is the return to the written word in the works of Montherlant, which encourage not spectacular "coupes de théâtre" but an "interior" theatre—a traditional revelation of inner moral and psychological conflict through the language of the author.  

According to Sylvain Dhomme the conflict between the director's "mise en scène" and the author's text has been resolved by the kind of play being written by men like Audiberti, Schéhadé or Vauthier, who in their language make use of theatrical effects of "incantation, de choc ou d'explosion que nous avons vu hanter la scène de Craig à Artaud." In the past few years, he adds:

En France le théâtre avait rendez-vous avec sa littérature.

Yet, in view of the attitudes and preferences of some of the directors discussed here, it is impossible to take as a general maxim Dhomme's statement (concerning modern French drama) that "Le divorce de la littérature et de la scène semble aboli." 

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20 Brasillach, op. cit., p. 21 Cheney, op. cit., pp. 94-97
21 Montherlant, preféce to Port Royal, Paris, Gallimard, 1954, p. 11
22 Dhomme, op. cit., p. 318 24 ibid, p. 319 25 ibid, p. 317
If all the problems of the modern French theatre were provoked by similar conflicts or imbalance of theatre relationships, this would bear out the thesis that great theatre depends on the proper harmony of such relationships. Nevertheless, one of the main stumbling blocks for the French theatre today exists notwithstanding the strides made in this area. We have said that it is generally conceded that French theatre has become increasingly rich in talented writers. Yet the major complaint in recent years has been the lack of good, new dramatists. Earlier, Antoine, having revolutionized the position of the actor in his theatre and incorporated the principle of the "troupe" did not himself succeed in revealing great playwrights.

Il n'était pas en son pouvoir de susciter les dramaturges comme il avait suscité des comédiens.

Later Copeau too, who had perfected even further the relationships of theatre production failed to discover any outstanding dramatists. * And even at the present time, Barrault is forced to say "Je cherche encore mon poète dramatique." Jean Vilar, whose work epitomizes complete devotion to principles of harmony, presents in his T.N.P. almost exclusively classical and foreign plays.

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26 Maurice Régnaut, Théâtre Populaire, sept., 1958, p. 20
27 Kurtz, op. cit., p. 48
28 Barrault, personal interview, July 19, 1961
*On the other hand, Lugné-Poe, who emphasized the author at the expense of stage production was the first to present Maeterlinck, Claudel, Jarry.
The reasons for the failure of intelligent directors to unearth new dramatists have been many and varied. Some, like Barrault are searching for the outstanding, a star to link their fortunes with, and are not satisfied with the galaxy available. Others, like Vilar, admit that there is a wealth of interesting unpublished manuscripts but are afraid to take the financial risk and perhaps fear ridicule even more. Antoine Bourseiller, in discussing the financial drawbacks, mentions that it costs around one million old francs to produce a play, that young authors find it easier to gain success writing novels (he names André Barsacq as one of the few directors who do manage to provoke young authors to write for the stage). Poirot-Delpech includes as reasons for the dearth of good new playwrights the lack of a homogeneous public and the competition that the cinema offers to the theatre.

If the French theatre is not satisfactorily producing new authors at the present time, the same is considered true with regard to its "animateurs." Vilar and Barrault are already considered established "pères de la mise en scène." Renée Saurel states that whereas ten years ago a group of young dynamic and penniless directors--Vitaly, Reybaz, Serreau, Blin, and others--were adding their magic to the Paris scene, Vitaly

29 Vilar, "Entretien" L'Express, 22 octobre, 1959, p. 38
30 Bourseiller, Le Monde, 13 aout, 1960
31 Poirot-Delpech, Le Monde, 22 juillet, 1960

**Answering the question "Où va le théâtre?" Jean-Pierre Giraudoux said "Il va au cinéma." Yet Jouvet held that "Le cinéma ne menace personne...Par lui, le théâtre a gagné de nouveaux auditeurs." (Témoignages, p. 125)
is now "rive droite," Reybaz is out of the Paris picture in his "Centre dramatique,"...

...Blin et Serreau marchent dans le sillon qu'ils ont tracé, et les plus jeunes, ceux qui normalement devraient assurer la relève, font preuve d'une extrême prudence... Il n'y a plus d'enfants terribles.

Although it seems premature to sound the knell for directors who defect to the right bank or emigrate to a Centre dramatique, the criticism that the "avant-garde" and its directors offer little that is new or striking these days is a prevalent one.

In France especially, where the rule of the new and the surprising is so applicable in art, conventionality is an especially severe condemnation. Particularly since Diaghilev uttered his famous challenge "Étonne-moi" to Jean Cocteau, have French cultural circles been aware of the importance of throwing artistic bombs. As Charles Dullin said:

Qu'ils nous passent sur le corps, mais qu'ils avancent, bon Dieu! au lieu de toujours remettre leurs pas dans les nôtres. 33

Yet even a Cocteau (even if to "étonner" once more) becomes an Academy member and continues to write plays for a traditional Italian stage, even an "enfant terrible" like Barrault uses the Odéon, according to Marcabru, as a "forteresse,"

...n'osant ni renouveler les textes, ni renouveler les mises en scène. 34

33 Cézan, Le Grenier de Toulouse, Paris, Edouard Privat, 1952, p. 21
However great the theatrical renovation inspired by French "animateurs" with their concepts of unity, harmony, equilibrium and communion, the most glaring reproach today is aimed at the lack of good new authors and the want of originality in directors.

What is being done to improve the status of the modern French theatre? And what are the likely paths that this theatre may take? I should like at this point to discuss these two vital questions.

We have already seen what initiative the government has taken in instrumenting the decentralization of the theatre in the effort to bring this theatre and its artists closer to the general public. In April, 1959, André Malraux in his capacity as Minister of Education and Culture, instituted a reorganization of certain key theatres in Paris, granting the Comédie-Française's Salle Luxembourg or Odéon to Jean-Louis Barrault under the name of Théâtre de France, setting up two experimental theatres, one to have been directed by Albert Camus (who died several months later), the other, the Théâtre Récamier, going to Jean Vilar. These changes were intended, as Germaine Brée said:

...to give the theatre once again a bold new direction, new perspectives and a broader appeal.

There was to have been at the Salle Richelieu an emphasis

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35 Fowlie, op. cit., p. 35
on classical tragedy which writers and critics such as Robert Kemp and Gabriel Marcel lauded but felt not to practical in this era.\(^{37}\) In point of fact this theatre has been including works such as Labiche's *Chapeau de paille* and *Le Dindon* in order to retain its public.

But this reorganization was sorely needed, magazines and periodicals having been full of complaints about the "crisis" at the Comédie-Française and other theatres. It seems a sincere attempt to put government support behind an earnest search for good theatre.

More recently the Ligue de l'Enseignement has been lending out the Théâtre Récamier in an effort to reveal new playwrights and directors. In December, 1960, a young company under Claude Vernicq presented an unpublished play by an unknown writer (Robert Lafont) at this theatre.\(^{38}\) It is obvious that the ills of the theatre occasioned by financial inadequacies are being given government attention and in many cases concrete government help. What is more, there is no noticeable complaint that government aid has at all meant intervention or restriction on artistic creativity and originality.

The avenues open to the French theatre provide many interesting possibilities. The most fruitful purveyors of new works continue to be the little theatres that Copeau set such great store by, since such theatres need not undertake too

\(^{37}\)Kemp, "Une Noble idéologie du théâtre," *Le Monde*, 9, 15 avril, pp. 1 and 5; Marcel, "Bravo André Malraux, mais un théâtre n'est pas un musée," *Nouvelles Littéraires*, 16 avril, 1959, p. 8

severe a monetary risk. They are most suitably adapted to the small-scale modern play which for practical reasons (inadequate salaries for actors) contain few characters. However, the financial situation in unsubsidized little theatres tends to force them to become "commercial" and present already successful authors.

Perhaps the popular theatre may eventually take the lead in bringing forth France's new playwrights. To date their most important discoveries have been Andre Obey who composed for the Copiaux and Morvan Lebesque who wrote for the Centre dramatique du Nord.

Besides exploiting the potentials of the small art theatres and the "Centres", there is another direction open to the French theatre, one that is becoming increasingly important in the opinion of French "animateurs" and critics—the direction of an international theatre. Since the beginning of the century, with Lugné-Poe and Antoine, the French have adopted foreign works as part of their theatre, so that it has become impossible to speak of twentieth-century French theatre without referring to Ibsen, Shakespeare or Calderon. Now the Theatre des Nations has been having a great effect on the French theatre, as it reveals foreign works played in foreign tongues in their native "mises en scene." Frenchmen can find new meaning in the Japanese "No" drama, see Brecht

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39 Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 28.
40 Marcabru, "Les Petits théâtres doivent-ils disparaître?" Arts, 7-13 janvier, 1959, p. 6
performed as he wished it, become enriched and inspired by a great variety of theatre cultures. Moreover, as it has been pointed out often, the most popular dramatists in France today, such as Ionesco, Adamov, Beckett, are foreign born.

Far from seeking a theatre that will particular represent France as a nation, French authors and "animateurs" have been moving toward a cosmopolitan concept of theatre. When asked what he felt was the greatest problem facing French theatre today, Jean-Louis Barrault replied without hesitation: Trouver un style international. 41

What part can harmony of relationships play in the future of the French theatre? There is of course no categorical answer to this, but I should like at least to hazard an opinion. First, let us examine some of the negative implications of these relationships, their shortcomings or failures.

One of the most noteworthy contradictions or detractions from the theory of harmonious relationships as a creative catalyst is the traditionally nonconformist or individualistic nature of the French people. As Vilar said:

Par tempérament le Français répugne à une vie collective précisément exigée et trop longuement maintenue. 42

Another inevitable objection is that a harmonious equilibrium of relationships may obviate the extraordinary. Paul Arnold, for example describes Dullin's troupe as having "unité"

41 Barrault, personal interview, op. cit.
42 Vilar, De la Tradition théâtrale, p. 115
trop absolué," an equilibrium so perfect that no gradations in importance of roles were noticeable and nothing really striking created. Such a viewpoint is borne out by the much-lamented fact that there are no great tragedians of this era. The new order of relationships is certainly not favorable to a Mounet-Sully or his ilk.

As far as concerns the wish for a homogeneous public to facilitate communion with the artists of the theatre, there are strong reservations to this point of view. André Villiers, in discussing the faith that unified the public of the Middle Ages, said:

Lorsqu'on joue une mauvaise Passion de patronage devant un public conquis d'avance, évidemment l'art n'a pas besoin d'être très grand.

A similar criticism can be made of Soviet theatre of propaganda to which it has been objected that where there is unanimity of belief the theatre tends to flatter its audience and simply presents what the spectators already know or believe. Eric Bentley, remembering the mass demonstrations of Nazi Germany, sees a real danger in attempting to unify the public through a transcendent myth.

It must be conceded that France's greatest theatre came not from a period of religious unity, such as the Middle Ages, or of an all-encompassing political ideology, such as the Revolution, but in the seventeenth century which produced a

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43Arnold, op. cit., p. 236
44Villiers, Théâtre et collectivité, p. 119
46Bentley, In Search of Theatre, New York, Knopf, 1953
theatre of an elite for a public that, although sharing a common religion, came to the theatre not as members of a rite but as individuals who were often opinionate, sometimes brazenly hostile. 47

Has the French theatre then been searching in the wrong directions? Has the harmonious relationship theory of Copeau, Jouvet, Dullin, Barrault, Vilar, etc., been a blind alley rather than a key to a grand renaissance of the theatre?

Before approaching these questions concerning the role of relationships in the future of French theatre and their capacity to inspire a great theatre, let us inquire first what are the conditions for "great" theatre. To begin with, the value of any theatre, as we have repeated, is judged by posterity according to its authors, the various elements of production being ephemeral. With this in mind we offer that:

1) Really great theatre only occurs in eras of grandeur, as Giraudoux maintains. 48

2) A country producing a theatre of genius usually has a government or chief of state that encourages the arts (which is the case in France at the present time).

3) A country producing great theatre usually has the confidence of its superiority as a nation, or an enthusiasm about itself.

4) As Gide, Giraudoux and Jouvet state, great theatre

47 Melese, op. cit., pp. 215-217
48 Giraudoux, Littérature, Paris, Grasset, 1941, p. 209
can only be born of constraint (constraint of literary rules, of the church, financial necessity, etc.)\textsuperscript{49,50,51}

5) Dramatists of outstanding genius have not only written but taken charge of the execution on stage of their works (Aeschylus, Molière, Shakespeare).

It is apparent from these considerations that harmony of relationships cannot by itself magically bring about the kind of theatre that only occurs when several of the above factors are present. Moreover it is difficult to agree with Doisy and others that the benefit such a balance brings to the art of production provides the inspiration essential for great dramatists, especially when one remembers how Corneille wrote for a theatre of inferior actors and a "mise en scène" that emphasized its machinery;\textsuperscript{52} that the theatre of Lope de Vega's day had degenerated into a medium for exaggerated mechanical contrivances such as trap doors and flying angels.\textsuperscript{53}

As we see, the new balance of relationships is not the complete answer to the theatre of the future. Yet it would be a mistake to underestimate the value of their effect on theatre to come. Their revolution strictly in the field of theatre production is awe-inspiring. Moreover, the perfecting of the stage does not indicate in this case an emphasis on

\textsuperscript{49} Gide, \textit{Evolution théâtrale}, p. 15
\textsuperscript{50} Giraudoux, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 211
\textsuperscript{51} Jouvet, \textit{Réflexions}, p. 24
\textsuperscript{52} (Théâtre du Marais)
\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Obras de Cervantes No. 1}, Madrid, Bernardo Rodríguez, 1915, p. mcmxv
production that goes hand in hand with periods of decadence of dramatic art, since the new harmony here has ever been directed to the service of the author. If it is true as Jean Vilar says that:

...les vrais créateurs dramatiques de ces trente dernières années ne sont pas les auteurs, mais les metteurs en scène...54

and if we have witnessed throughout this study that it is the director who determines what the author-director-actor balance of relationships will be, we have likewise seen that the real champions of harmony have also been those who subordinated their own talents to the authors that they encouraged. If it is true, as we have seen, that outstanding dramatists such as Claudel do not necessarily emanate from these advocates of harmonious relationships, it is equally true that in certain cases "animateurs" can through their own communion with an author facilitate the development and propagation of that author's genius or talent. Not least of all, these "animateurs," in awakening a greater interest on the part of dramatists by their attack on the star system, in conquering the public by appealing not to its inferior taste but to its best potentialities, and in their allegiance to the author, have opened the door if not for a Racine or Shakespeare, at least for another Paul Claudel.

Finally, it may be that they have provided a significant example and guide for authors to come: By consciously

54 Vilar, De la Tradition théâtrale, p. 71
formulating regulations for a purification and renovation of the theatre, by attempting to bridge the gap once filled by authors who themselves once unified text with interpretation, they achieved for the "illustration" of the French stage what their rule-devising sixteenth- and seventeenth-century predecessors had achieved for classic literature. Cannot the artistic constraint that "animateurs" have placed on themselves be imitated by authors? Should they perhaps heed Jean Vilar's half-jesting proposal that a potential "pléiade" of authors arbitrarily stipulate canons for a French drama of the future?55

Rather than put the blame on financial obstacles—which have never stifled great theatre in the past—or attempt to turn back the clock by "assassinating" the director, can they not devote their energies to equalling the breadth and scope of Vilar's stage? Just as that theatre has, by its huge area, reached out to a vast public, can authors too surpass the scope of the clever little-theatre "avant-garde" drama and find a new dimension to equal the example of the T.N.P.? Perhaps this is too much to hope for in this age of the "anti-hero," but if the dreamed-of playwright should emerge he will find in France a society of directors, actors and public ready to justify and give meaning to his work.

55 Vilar, Théâtre et collectivité, p. 118
*(Vilar's term) De la Tradition théâtrale, p. 70*
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Addendum

(In answer to my questions)

Q. Marcel Doisy a dit que la révolution effectuée dans la mise en scène en France (contre la vedette, contre la facilité, contre le déséquilibre théâtral, etc.) pourrait mener à une rénaissance du théâtre—que lorsque l'instrument aura été perfectionnée, les grands auteurs pourront apparaître. Êtes-vous de cet avis? Croyez-vous qu'il y ait une telle relation entre le perfectionnement de la mise en scène et l'inspiration des poètes dramatiques?

A. Je crois, avec d'autres, que depuis la dernière partie du 19e siècle, l'influence exercée par les hommes de théâtre—metteurs en scène—réformateurs a été plus déterminante que celle des auteurs; il n'est pas sûr que certains auteurs importants se seraient manifestés ou imposés autrement: Stanislavsky-Tchekov, Jouvet-Giraudoux... Il ne s'agit pas de perfectionnement de la mise en scène, mais d'une action beaucoup plus profonde.

Q. Les critiques ne sont pas d'accord sur la manière d'interpréter les auteurs, surtout les auteurs d'avant-garde. Croyez-vous qu'il existe un style optimum ou le plus convenable pour jouer Ionesco, Genet, etc.? (Par exemple, pour un auteur "distancié" comme Genet, doit-on jouer plus froid ou faux, sans s'identifier avec le personnage?)

A. Naturellement, chaque écrivain véridique a son style propre et demande un style d'interprétation qui lui correspond. Généralement les classiques et tous les auteurs à "style écrit", comme Genet, demandent un style plus objectif que les naturalistes.

Q. Le théâtre français semble s'être internationalisé de plus en plus récemment. Est-ce qu'une nation peut atteindre à un grand théâtre sans se préoccuper à créer une œuvre nationale?

A. Je ne crois pas que la production française de théâtre se soit internationalisée. Nous avons contact avec un nombre de plus en plus grand d'œuvres étrangères, mais nous sommes plus imperméables qu'il n'est sans doute souhaitable. Si l'art et les traditions d'un pays sont forts, alors il peut se permettre de s'ouvrir aux influences: il restera national, sans trop s'en préoccuper et s'enrichira.

Q. Quel est à votre avis, le plus grand problème du théâtre français aujourd'hui?

A. C'est de passer d'une tradition qui reste classique (17e-18e siècles) et aristocratique à une production plus ouverte, plus populaire, sans perdre son caractère et sa qualité: c'est une
évolution qui est amorcée du point de vue social et économique; il s'ensuit que le public, les acteurs, l'architecture, sont en avance sur les auteurs. L'auteur le plus suivi aujourd'hui en France, c'est Bertolt Brecht, mais il est allemand. Le problème essentiel, c'est celui des auteurs; nous en avons, mais ils correspondent à une avant-garde qui disparaît.

Q. Peut-on compter sur le théâtre populaire, sur les Centres dramatiques comme sources de poètes dramatiques? (je n'ai entendu parler que d'André Obey, de Jean Lescure, de Morvan Lebesque comme auteurs de ces Centres).

A. On ne peut jamais "compter." Si le mouvement de culture populaire, très actif pour le moment, continue à se développer, si les pouvoirs publics l'aident et l'orientent, on peut espérer un renouvellement de la production: André Obey l'avait amorcé plus que qui que ce soit, mais sans s'affirmer: les Centres jouent O’Casey, Durrenmatt, Brecht et peu d'auteurs français d'aujourd'hui.
Because of the great emphasis placed on a need for a unity and harmony of all the relationships within the French theatre, an emphasis that has continued since the early part of this century to the present time, I have undertaken to analyze the nature of these associations, in an attempt to assess their significance for the present and future of the French theatre.

After having provided an historical sketch of French theatre relationships since the Middle Ages, I began this study with an examination of the problem of the author and the director in the modern French theatre. It was seen that a schism between these two elements exists in theory and practice, that conflicting ideals of a theatre geared to the author or one that is a vehicle for the director have been and continue to be represented by certain "animateurs," and that it is indeed the director who determines which of these two factors will have the primary stress in his theatre.

I illustrated this fact with commentaries of French critics concerning 1) directors whose own virtuosity sometimes led to a betrayal of the author's intentions, e.g.: Gaston Baty, Raymond Rouleau and Roger Planchon; 2) directors whose first concern was the author. In this category was the example of Lugné-Poe whose production was hampered at times by an exclusive concentration on the author's work. But this group also included some of the most prominent "animateurs" of this century whose productions have been of the highest
quality: Jacques Copeau, Charles Dullin, Jean Vilar.

The main part of this chapter on author-director relationships dealt with three "animateurs" and their harmoniously creative relationships with living authors with whom they worked closely. Georges Pitoëff was considered briefly in connection with H.-R. Lenormand and Luigi Pirandello. Then we studied at greater length the working relationships between Louis Jouvet and Jean Giraudoux, Jean-Louis Barrault and Paul Claudel. In these cases we found that directors had had a marked influence on the author's procedure, had helped lead the author to a form more suitable for audience appreciation, but that these authors themselves were extraordinarily quick in adapting their own work to the stage. We found that the director's influence sometimes made itself felt in the work itself (as one illustration of this I compared three versions of Claudel's *Partage de midi*: Claudel's original 1905 edition, Barrault's 1948 production, and a later version by Claudel), and that the director was also to a good degree responsible for the prestige and popularity of his playwright. Yet we found an extremely close feeling of identification of the director with the author and his work, a sincere feeling of loyalty, and an intense desire to recreate as faithfully as possible the author's meaning. These were enthusiastic and friendly, satisfactory collaborations that worked to the mutual advantage of author and director but in which the author was always considered the "maître."
In the next chapter, on the author and the actor, I discussed first the changing balance of relationships between the author and the actor in the twentieth-century French theatre. This evolution represented 1) a vertical shift: on the one hand the virtuoso "star" of the turn of the century had fallen from his all-powerful position on the French stage to the level of a servant among servants of the author. But at the same time he had risen to a higher stature in artistic achievement and prestige; 2) a horizontal shift: the actor no longer deals first-hand with the author, being removed from him through the intermediary of the director. Yet he has become closer to the author in aesthetic concept, through the fidelity of his interpretation to the author's meaning.

In order to find what the relationship between the author and the actor implies today, I took as a point of departure the author's character, the bond that unites the playwright with the actor. I proposed to determine whether there was evidence of a correlation between the relationship of the character to the author and that of the character to the actor—whether the actor's interpretation of his character should equate to the author's concept of that character.

In this respect I examined first attitudes of certain authors—Claudel, Ionesco, Genêt—in the creation of their characters. With Claudel we found a profound identification of the author with characters who, although poetic symbols,
were clearly representative either of people in Claudel's experience or of Claudel himself. With Ionesco we found, in spite of a metaphysical identification, a lack of personal "rapport" between the author and the characters whom he considered non-entities. With Genèt we found that influences of Pirandello, Artaud, Brecht led not to a reflection of real persons or a creation of "anti-persons" but to a presentation of the character per se.

I next considered the general relationship between the character and the actor, first in the framework of Diderot's paradox of the actor who while "being" the character still remains himself. Since Diderot's terms of "sensibilité" and "jugement" have to a great extent been rephrased in modern concepts of "identification" and Brechtian "distanciation," we discussed these terms, then saw how they applied to modern French actors. We noted how such "animateurs" as Copeau, Jouvet, Dullin and Barrault all allowed for a double existence of sincere, spontaneous identification and objective distance between the actor and his character in the aim of a theatrical, non-representation transposition of the character to the stage. We saw that some of these people may have leaned in their own interpretation more to the side of "sensibilité" and others to the side of "jugement," but that in almost all cases the aim of these prominent French actors was as close as possible an identification with the character and as believable as possible an interpretation.
In contrast to this attitude we noted a feeling among certain "animateurs" and authors (motivated by different reasons) that the actor should not closely represent the character or identify with him. We discussed in particular the influence of Berthold Brecht and considered the objectivity that, with and without this influence, French actors have maintained between themselves and their character.

In attempting then to establish what relationship maintains or should maintain between an actor's presentation of a character and the author's creation of it, we noted first that according to appraisals of actual productions 1) Claudel's characters demanded a close identification of the actor; 2) Ionesco's characters, as unreal as they may be, seem to fare best when an identification is made (even if it is a question of identification with a prototype rather than Ionesco's character); 3) Genet's characters have been thought by some critics to warrant a stylized "distanciated" interpretation, by others to demand a naturalistic identification; 4) the characters of Brecht himself were at first presented in too objective and unreal a fashion in France, and a suitable rendering of them was difficult to attain without an acquaintance with the manner of Brecht's own troupe, the Berliner Ensemble. Obviously then there was no exact correlation to be found consistently between the author's and the actor's relationship to the character. We were aware instead of the possible existence of an optimum style, a most suitable method of adapting interpretation to creation, and of a constant striving
on the part of the "animateur"-actor to achieve this goal.

In examining the director-actor associations in the modern French theatre, we found that the question of the tyrannical versus the liberal director was not an important one, since, although some directors were more demanding or inhibiting than others, the authoritarian director does not pose a real threat to French actors. Moreover, we noted that the prominent French directors have been those who have stood for a great creative liberty on the part of their actors while assuring them the needed guidance in their perpetual search of their characters.

The actual work of rehearsals between directors and actors, representing perhaps the most intimate form of such associations, showed a great variety of approach, according to the temperaments and personalities of the directors in question. We saw, for example, that Jouvet stressed comic caricature, insisting on setting each minute detail; Barsacq concentrated on psychological motivation and patterns of movement on stage; Barrault aimed for a "total" direction of his actors, stressing voice as well as gesture, in a stylized concept that built artistic effects for a given mood or atmosphere; Planchon, whose theories and actual productions have not emphasized the author or the actor, surprisingly pointed up the psychology of the author's character and allowed for the actor's personal creativity.

We found no formula, no theory fixing how a director
should direct his actors, but "animateurs" such as Copeau, Jouvet, Barrault and Vilar all agreed that the basis of this relationship was or ought to be comprised of fraternity, loyalty, understanding, guidance, dedication and love based on respect and a common goal.

In other relationships associated with the author, director and actor we saw that the modern trend was generally in this same direction of harmony and communion. We showed how stage designers in general attempted to accomplish this aim in spite of their own personal style; we found that the universal practice of French directors taking major roles in their own productions was not necessarily disturbing to the ensemble and was perhaps even a unifying factor; we saw that rather than fierce competition between director and director, the tendency is now to friendly collaboration and interchanges of services. Two traditional "thorns" in these relationships, the producer and the critic, from the very nature of their professions, still pose problems to and remain beyond the theatre unit. Yet even in these two cases we saw a real effort toward some sort of friendly "entente."

Finally we studied the relationship between the elements within the theatre and the modern French public. Since one of the most important outgrowths of the effort for communion between the theatre and the public is the popular theatre movement in France, we traced the history of this movement from 1892 to the present, bringing the reader up to date on the
"Centres dramatiques" and certain young troupes that tour the provinces. We discussed such problems as 1) the lack of a truly "popular" public; 2) the lack of a repertory suitable for the "people"; 3) the migration back to Paris of members of provincial troupes, etc. In this connection we examined in particular the cases of Jean Vilar and his Théâtre National Populaire, Hubert Gignoux and his Comédie de l'Est and Jean Daste and his Comédie de Saint-Etienne. We finished this discussion with a consideration of theories concerning lack of cohesion in the French public and the need for a transcendent unifying myth.

From the foregoing we drew such implications as:

1) In none of these relationships may any precise pattern of behavior be anticipated.

2) However, in almost every instance it is the "animateur"-director who takes the lead in determining the nature of relationships in the modern French theatre.

3) Generally, directors who have concentrated primarily on the author's literary work have tended to discount the actors' and their own art (the poet's theatres' use of shadows of actors, their unpolished productions); directors who have gone to extremes in emphasizing their own staging have suppressed the actor and the author (marionettes, mime, adaptations).

4) Most of the outstanding "animateurs" have used their influence on the actor and other members of the stage to serve the interests of the author. They have considered the actor
next in importance to the author.

5) Harmony here then is not synonymous with equality. Each relationship showed an "imbalanced balance" with some element stronger than others (we used the metaphor of the author as king, the actors his subjects, the director their prime minister holding the real reins of government affairs and supervising the subjects' allegiance to their remote but respected monarch).

6) Not inconsistent with this idea of a hierarchy is the fact that present goals of leading directors tend to the self-effacement of the individual to the harmony of the ensemble.

In attempting to determine whether this emphasis on harmonious relationships has affected the course of the modern French theatre, we found that 1) there was definitely considered to be a "renovation" or "renaissance" of the French theatre in the past few decades, not only in quality of production but in the works presented; 2) it is definitely felt that the improvement in production effected by the new emphasis on a proper balance of relationships has had a marked influence in this "renovation." The two elements in these relationships that appear most important in this trend have been the disintegration of the star system--implying complacency and non-creativity of the author--and a conquering of the public to the ideal of a fine and pure theatre.

Nevertheless we found obstacles in the way of a truly great theatre--some of these hinging on an imbalance of relationships and some existing in spite of or even because of
a balance or equilibrium in these relationships. Two particularly imposing problems were the lack of good new authors and the lack of originality in modern directors. We discussed some steps that are currently being taken to remedy the situation and then considered certain avenues that are open to the French theatre of the future.

When it came to the question of the role that harmony of relationships can play in this theatre of the future, we stated some objections to this goal, some of the drawbacks or dangers inherent in it. After reviewing some of the usual conditions for great theatre, we concluded that:

1) contrary to Marcel Doisy's belief, harmony of theatre relationships and the perfection of production that such harmony engenders are not in themselves the main determining factors for the advent of great dramatists.

2) Yet the improvement in balance of theatre relationships has been and can continue to be of real value to the French theatre, since in the form that it now takes, it not only brings with it excellence of stage production but an emphasis on the author, and in awakening a greater interest on the part of playwrights by demolishing the star system, in conquering the public by appealing not to its inferior taste but to its best potentialities, those who sponsor this trend have opened the door if not for a Racine or Shakespeare, perhaps for another Paul Claudel.
3) The "animateurs" who endorse this harmony of relationships can provide a significant example and guide for authors to come, through the purification and renovation effected in their field by self-imposed regulations and constraint. Moreover, just as the effort toward communion with the public has led to the breadth of the T.N.P.'s stages, the author, too, could seek a new dimension to correspond to such a concept and transcend the limited scope of the present "avant-garde" theatre.
This candidate was born in New Haven, Connecticut, June 19, 1923, was graduated with honors from Russell Sage College in 1946 and received her A.M. in French from Yale University in 1949. From 1946 to 1949 she taught French at Quinnipiac College in New Haven and the following year gave a French reading course to Ph.D. candidates at Yale. For financial reasons (a husband in medical school), she postponed further graduate study to serve as Henri Peyre's secretary in the Yale University French Department. Then, a year later, she moved to small southern towns remote from colleges or universities. The candidate was unable to continue studies until 1953 at Ohio State University where she held a teaching fellowship in French. On moving to Boston later that year, she obtained a teaching fellowship in French at Harvard (Radcliffe). When she adopted a small child studies were again discontinued, but in 1957 she was admitted to Boston University where she has now completed this dissertation.

Other teaching experience has included a year in French at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a year of part-time teaching in Spanish at Boston University and Northeastern University, and three years of teaching French and Spanish at Suffolk University, Boston, where she is now an assistant professor.
The candidate has made five trips to Europe, concentrating mainly on France and Spain. Her last trip was devoted to obtaining information for this dissertation through documents unpublished in the United States and through interviews with certain prominent men and women of the French theatre.

She is a member of Phi Sigma Iota Romance Language Honorary Society.