Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare

3 | 1981

Théâtre et idéologies : Marlowe, Shakespeare

Shakespeare's aesthetic scheme (*extrait*)

Manuel Angel Conejero

Marie-Thérèse Jones-Davies (ed.)

Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/shakespeare/442>

DOI: 10.4000/shakespeare.442

ISSN: 2271-6424

Publisher

Société Française Shakespeare

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 November 1981

Number of pages: 133-136

ISBN: 2-86433-016-4

Electronic reference

Manuel Angel Conejero, « Shakespeare's aesthetic scheme (*extrait*) », *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* [Online], 3 | 1981, Online since 01 November 2007, connection on 20 January 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/shakespeare/442> ; DOI : 10.4000/shakespeare.442

SOCIETE FRANCAISE SHAKESPEARE

Actes de Congrès-1981

THEATRE ET IDEOLOGIES :

Marlowe, Shakespeare

DIRECTEUR DE LA PUBLICATION

M.T. Jones - Davies

JEAN TOUZOT Libraire - Editeur

38 , rue Saint-Sulpice 75278 PARIS CEDEX 06 1982

©1982 Jean Touzot Libraire-Editeur, Paris.
Reproduction et traduction même partielle interdite.
Tous droits réservés pour tous pays
y compris l'U.R.S.S. et les pays scandinaves.

ISBN 2-86433-016-4

AVANT-PROPOS

L'opposition soulignée par Horace entre éthique et esthétique — *Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae* — que les Elisabéthains aiment à évoquer, pourrait être le lien qui rattache les unes aux autres les communications, rencontres et table ronde de notre troisième congrès (1981) sur le thème : « Théâtre et Idéologies : Marlowe, Shakespeare. » Toutefois, le résultat de nos échanges montre un dépassement possible de l'alternative éthique / esthétique, puisqu'il met en valeur l'insertion d'idéologies susceptibles de transformer la fonction même de la littérature.

Les pièces analysées dans le contexte de leur temps révèlent de multiples aspects de la vision du monde et de la place que l'homme y occupe, tels que les projette le théâtre anglais au tournant du XVI^e et au début du XVII^e siècle.

Une exploration du langage et de la pensée des deux grands dramaturges aboutit à un commentaire sur les courants philosophiques ou religieux, sur les idées parfois contradictoires et sur la curiosité intellectuelle jamais assouvie qui se font jour à travers la rhétorique de la scène et le jeu dramatique, du *Faust* de Marlowe à *La Tempête* de Shakespeare.

M. T. Jones-Davies

Présidente de la Société Française Shakespeare

SOCIETE FRANCAISE SHAKESPEARE
Actes de Congrès-1981

THEATRE ET IDEOLOGIES :

Marlowe, Shakespeare

DIRECTEUR DE LA PUBLICATION

M.T. Jones - Davies

JEAN TOUZOT Libraire - Editeur
38 , rue Saint-Sulpice 75278 PARIS CEDEX 06 1982

Illustration de la couverture : affiche de Valerio Adami,
spécialement conçue pour les Journées Shakespeare 1979
au Centre Georges Pompidou

170 FF.

TABLE DES MATIERES

M.T. JONES-DAVIES	Avant-propos	5
<i>Théâtre et Idéologies : Marlowe, Shakespeare</i>		9-236
S. TRUCHET	The Alchemy of Beauty : aesthetic principles in <i>I Tamburlaine</i> and their relationship to the hermetic ideology.	9
D. PRUDHOMME	L'idéologie du <i>Juif de Malte</i> et du <i>Marchand de Venise</i> .	25
D. GOY-BLANQUET	De Hall à Shakespeare : quelques glissements idéologiques opérés par la dramatisation dans <i>Henry IV</i> .	37
M.T. JONES-DAVIES	Le Monde du «si» : Idéologies Incertaines dans <i>Comme il vous Plaira</i> .	51
G. VENET	Temps et Idéologie : Marlowe, Shakespeare.	69
J. RICHER	Les Sept Caractères et les Quatre Tempéraments dans <i>Jules César</i> de Shakespeare.	79
F. LAROQUE	En marge de l'Idéologie : Antimasque et Grotesque dans le <i>Dr Faustus</i> et <i>La Tempête</i> .	99
A. LECERCLE-SWEET	Conscience et Méconnaissance dans <i>Edward The Second</i> de Marlowe.	115
M.A. CONEJERO	Shakespeare's Aesthetic Scheme. (<i>Extrait</i>).	133
P. STEWART	Shylock, Shakespeare's Alien. (<i>Royal Shakespeare Company</i>)	137
J. RUSSELL BROWN	The Romantics' Shakespeare.	157
R. GILL	The Christian Ideology of <i>Dr Faustus</i> .	179
J. JACQUOT	Marlowe : de quelques problèmes d'interprétation.	201

<i>Table Ronde Sur Marlowe</i>	239
<i>Rencontres entre Universitaires et Gens de Théâtre</i>	247-258
Vendredi 4 décembre 1981	— Stuart Seide : Présentation du <i>Songe d'une nuit d'Eté</i> . Mise en scène pour le Théâtre de Chaillot janvier 1982
	247
	— A propos d' <i>Edouard (II)</i> de Bernard Turle
	251
	Bernard Turle : Métamorphoses de l'auteur et de l'écriture dramatiques. Intervention de Colin Harris (metteur en scène)

SHAKESPEARE'S AESTHETIC SCHEME
(EXTRAIT)

Everyday, on the stage of the Globe, with an exhaustive rigour, the fool *would* construct lies and undermine truth — order becomes chaos, chaos order — in a process which seems to have no end arising as it does from the Shakespearian obsession with the world as mirrors, in a theatre within a theatre, where as Clemen reminds us, the characters and their relationships «have first to pass through a welter of misunderstandings and erroneous evaluations» before they find again the position in the hierarchy they occupied before, a conclusion obviously reflecting the Elizabethan obsession with social order.

Throughout Shakespeare's dramatic works it is easy to single out passages of ingratitude or indifference, and to detect deception, disillusionment and frustration. If we invert the scheme of each dramatic moment, reverse the expressions, change our point of view, we may obtain an Iago who is deceived, overlooked, forgotten, condemned to keep his inferior rank and, as a result, full of hatred for Othello, we may discover a Timon who deceives his friends or a Troilus who deceives Cressida or even a Falstaff who deceives his Lord. Certainly we would find that all are other than they appear and that the image they present may change from day to day, in accordance not with the text, but depending on the audience and its reactions and the alterations the confrontations dictates.

In Shakespeare, the world of love (and with it, of order) is in constant danger. The excesses of bawdy language and the effect they have, are symptoms of love's instability, they behave as elements opposed to the conventions of language, in revolt against the concept represented by Decency/Meetness/Comeliness/Fitness/ Grace/Propriety; elements, in short, at war with order. To adopt «dramatic excess» signifies the desire to undermine order by some method or other (lack of decorum, bawdy language, the expression of hatred) to traverse chaos and reach some new sort of order. It is almost a demonstration that to produce order in one part of the universe, the poet has to destroy what exists in another part; almost a proof that one cannot

order the chaos aesthetically without allowing a vital disorder in another place to be an aspect of the new order created by the poet.

Jealousy, born of suspected betrayal, can be considered as part of the same pattern of opening and closing possibilities. The protagonists are forced to face up to it, to distance themselves, not to communicate, to forswear themselves. They are condemned beforehand not to understand themselves, to withdraw in a way which to us, as spectators, seems illogical. All that is needed is someone — maybe quite insignificant — to tell Othello the truth, to provide him with the information he lacks. But to be in a tragic scheme is to be deprived of any relief from a torment which must be excessive. It is just such excess which *characterizes* scenes like the one in which Othello kills Desdemona, or moments of spiritual grandeur such as that of his repentance.

Jealousy, along with hatred, is a dramatically useful device; its role is purely functional; on the one hand, it is a force which tends to increase entropy and, on the other, it reorders chaos in the process giving us scenes and moments of great beauty.

In the poems and the sonnets, jealousy and love betrayed or deceived, have the same dramatic role they play in the tragedies or the comedies. In the structure of the sonnets and poems, we can find all the main themes which crop up in the plays. With the sonnets we find ourselves in contact with a situation which reveals the tragic tendency of human nature. The poet of the sonnets presents himself in all his inadequacy to a woman. It is out of his conflict with her that an ideal of an opposite kind develops, whose only male characteristics are those which, by the technique of mirrors, come from the women.

In this way, in the scheme of misunderstanding, expressions of jealousy, falsehood and treachery will take on a new twist, becoming a game within a game, a hint concealed in a hint. The falseness of the language will serve to unveil the falseness of the sentiments which, in turn, reveals the falseness of identities, the certainty of change, deceit and chaos. Good and bad, the qualities of the masculine and the feminine, are used in such a way as to suggest Shakespeare's own creative spirit is bisexual. The youth of

the sonnets, like the adolescent in the comedies, symbolizes the best of both sexes. In him female attributes lose their negative and pejorative aspect.

As yet one is not dealing with the immortality which art bestows but rather with the search for a new form of life which art can offer, a new aesthetic reordering which literary activity can only achieve by transcending the cruel boundaries of reality. Hence the necessity, poetic and dramatic, to play a game within a game, a deceit within a deceit, acknowledging the deceptive qualities of language itself; hence the sleight of hand involved in using the artificial form of the sonnet, and the necessity of excess creating the adolescent icon, man like woman, and women more like men, and the *coincidentia oppositorum*, as successful methods of establishing new patterns of aesthetic order; hence, too, the need to weave elements of jealousy into the scheme of the sonnets or poems.

In the endlessly reflecting mirrors of his poetry, Shakespeare moves from one extreme to the other, creating an all embracing aesthetic scheme, where opposites may become alike. He places himself at the centre of the deceptions and converts them, as if to comprehend a mystical reality, into a coherent form of art. For his aesthetic self — indulgence is a symbol of the return to the amorphous and indifferentiated, the rediscovery of a state where all distinctions and opposites meet.

M.A. Conejero