

Perspectives on Modern Drama

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The questions relating to the 'subject' and its connotations are difficult to define within the 'modern' context, because the term subject and how it is used and explicated varies from writer to writer. These differences in the usage of the term 'subject', differs from movement to movement that characterizes Literature and its History. What we today define as 'modern art' is founded on the hypotheses that the 'subject is autonomous,' but, it should be noted that instead of being independent the 'subject' in reality is based on economics and politics of the society. With this perspective in mind, the signification and the utilization of the 'subject' in modern theater should be considered in relation to the changes in the concept and the development of the genre of theater itself, however irrelevant it may seem.

The evolution that we see in the domain of contemporary theater reflects both the 'historicity' and the changes in 'philosophy.' In some respect, one might state that, the modern theater is a direct residue and that it reflects the 'Naturalistic theaters.' This notwithstanding by stating modern theater, one must also acknowledge the fact that it opposes the very theories and the notions of 'Naturalistic theaters' and

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its subsequent literary movements. With the dissipation of the dominant theories that regulated the genre, such as that of Naturalists, the authors of modern theater tried to find 'new styles' in representation that were more suitable and were adaptable to the changes of ideas and theories.¹⁾

The 'subject' of modern theater *temoignes* the ideals that themes which define the very nature of modern theater shows tendencies to accept and relate to the societal surroundings 'from where it is issued.' The subject in contemporary theater, even if it is related to the context and the themes that could be discerned as being traditional, has changed. Furthermore, the modern theater is not satisfied in presenting just a *décalage* between the representation and the fictional world *décrit* in the fictional world.²⁾

In modern theatres, one can constate that the themes relating to, and which represents social aspects can be clearly noted even though the very themes themselves might be ambiguous. In this respect, the changes in character representation should be seen in accordance with the changes that has taken place in the development of the genre 'drama' for a more complete comprehension of the evolution of the genre itself: Modern drama in its portrayal of men tends to extend further the exploration of men than the traditional dramas, by encompassing both the spiritual and moral aspects.

The modern theater as Artaud suggested in his *Le Théâtre et son double* when defining 'Le Vrai théâtre'³⁾ not only differs from that of

1) Abirached, R., *La Crise du personnage dans le théâtre moderne*, p.176.

2) O'Toole, J., *The Process of Drama*, p.14.

3) "Une vraie pièce de théâtre bouscule le repos des sens, libère l'inconscient comprimé, pousse à une sorte de révolte virtuelle, et qui d'ailleurs ne peut avoir tout son prix, que si elle demeure virtuelle, impose aux collectivités rassemblées une attitude héroïque et difficile", p.40-41.

the past by the utilisation and the incorporation of everyday language in dialogues which makes the dialogue on stage more 'acceptable' to the readers or audiences, but also should be considered in its entirety. In other words, due to the 'impromptu' nature of the modern theater, the 'theater' should be looked upon in relation to all artistic domains that have influenced the genre of drama. In retrospect, Artaud's definition of modern theater is not free of faults. Even though it might be more complex and idealistic when compared to the rules, which had been implemented by Boileau in his *Art Poétique*, falls short in defining the diversity of the modern theater. In light of this, one could conclude that Artaud fails to incorporate all the different tendencies that one attributes in today's theatrical domain. However, in defense of the stated facts, one could argue that Artaud's formulation of the definition of what a modern theater may be quite acceptable, when viewed in relation to the evolution of the dramatic genre, but none the less, if we were to take into account the diversification of the genre as it is defined today one has to conclude that Artaud's theories even though it is suggestive of the very nature/essence of modern theater, it in itself is not sufficient for one to base any conclusive judgment.

The modern theater represents a theatrical model, which is different from the suggestive theater dogmas of Classicism. The modern theater returns to the very essence of its genre, that is, it is a representation that encompasses all aspects of life, not limited to the philosophies and the societies that which govern them, in short it is a *métareprésentation* of 'life.' The theatrical genre by being subjected to the modernization of the society has evolved to adapt to the new surroundings. Languages and jests that had major implications in the domain of theater, in large part, lost part of their influence in defining what a representation signifies.

The contemporary dramatic genre, *en consequence*, encompasses all the elements that make up the representation however furtive or small: space, music, mime and pantomime not to mention the dialogues, the jests and the question of 'subject.' In consequence one may define that the modern theatrical fictional world is an invented world that is based on reality but fictional in the true sense of the term fiction.

The modernization of art is but an 'evolution/development' in the context of literary movements; and it is through this movement that art derives its qualities of autonomy. The normalities of being autonomous for a work of art depends largely on its primeval definition, that is, art in its natural form should be something that may allow one to deviate from the conventionalities of constraints which are imposed by the society.⁴⁾ The autonomy of art can also be defined by suggesting that the subjectivity of the author be regulated for the benefit of the objectivity of the work itself.⁵⁾ To rephrase, the objectivity of a work of art does not pass the limits that are attributed to the subjectivity that the work encompasses, in other words, a work of art is based and founded on the presumptions of the reader (reader as denoting the grand public: audience, author and reader etc.). In short, modern art bases its liabilities and its survival as such on the general public and no one else.

4) Bürger, P., *La Prose de la modernité*, p.23.

5) "The subjectivity of the rebel dramatist, on the other hand, is unique, since the drama has traditionally been a form of imitation-impersonal, objective, detached-with the author excluded from the work ... still, the theatre of revolt is only partially subjective; the rebel dramatist continues to observe the requirements of his form. A play proceeds by dialogue implies debate and conflict. Without debate, the drama is propaganda; without conflict, mere fantasizing. The rebel dramatist may desire to live out his revolt in his art, but this desire is disciplined by his objective consciousness." (Brustein, R., *The Theater of Revolt*, p.13)

With this criteria established one has to redefine the notion of 'beauty' as it applies to any work of art, since it might be going against the autonomous aspect of art and thus the very foundations with which one associates the work of art. In short, the definitions that one accords traditionally with the term 'beauty' does not correspond with the definitions that one might be inclined to think of when considering modern theatrical art and its characteristics. For modern art, the notion of 'beauty' englobes all traits/circumstances that surrounds it, like psychology, individuality and all the other phenomena's that is viewed as having relevance in the contemporary artistic domain of today. Traditionally the term 'beauty' as defined by Baudelaire,⁶⁾ is something whose properties remain eternal and is not subject to any changes, and of course, one might suggest that the correspondence of art and the term beauty should be in conjunction for any work of art to be designated as one. But, it is also necessary to state that the term 'beauty' in general is established to justify the objective opinion of the general public, while the term in modern context refers more so to the subjectivity of the person or persons in question.⁷⁾

The autonomy of art has changed the notion of spectacle and representation in the domain of theater. In changing, the rules that had governed the theories of theater since its conception as a separate genre have been discarded.⁸⁾ In modern theater, more and more authors

6) "Le beau est fait d'un élément éternel, invariable, dont la quantité est excessivement difficile à déterminer, et d'un élément relatif, circonstanciel, qui sera, si l'on veut, tour à tour ou tout ensemble, l'époque, la mode, la morale, la passion." (Baudelaire, Ch., *Critique de l'art*, p.345)

7) "Le concept moderne de forme est rigoureusement lié à chaque œuvre particulière, il renvoie à l'individualité irréductible de l'œuvre, indifférente à son appartenance à un genre." (Bürger, P., *La Prose de la modernité*, p.23)

are engaged to show to the public the problems of society by diversifying the themes, that which were once sought to be non-negotiable under the past definitions of 'representation.' This of course, is not to state that traditional theaters did not accord justifiable importance to the diversification of 'subject,' but to exemplify how representations are being more specifically targeted to meet the needs of the public in the contemporary theater. The modern theater represents the problems of alienation of man, the isolation of the man from the very community, to which he or she belongs to, bringing to surface the actual problems that were once considered as being taboos in the society.⁹⁾

The problems that dramatists faced due to the changes in 'vision' and 'values' is important to note since it touches the very essence of the definition of what is meant by modern theater. In other words, the problems of the society are directly related to the 'subjects' of today. In defense of this statement, it is important to note that the contemporary theater tends to view the problems associated with the representation more seriously than those which were before it. Contemporary theater is more definable as a spectacle rather than the

8) Inferring to the rules of three unities that were set up to regulate the theatrical scene by Bolieau, like that of time, space and intrigue.

9) "The playwrights of the absurd, so labeled by Martin Esslin, certainly follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, seeking a new kind of grace even more fervently the more lost, godless, and homeless they feel. Eugene O'Neill insisted that all the serious art of his day dealt with man's failure in a materialistic world to find a new god to replace the old. No less than O'Neill and no less than other modern playwrights, the absurdists, despite their despairing depiction of a chaotic world, still undertake the religious quest. Surely one of the reasons Godot has become such a potent symbol for our time is that the subject of art today, as in O'Neill's day, remains the quest for meaning in a world in which the old gods no longer serve." (Burkman, H. K., *The Arrival of Godot*, p.15)

domain of written drama. In short, being a spectacle it fulfills its role as a *métarepresentation* and *dédoublement* of the actual reality.

The evolution of authors in the domain of art could be categorized as that which brought about the 'very' modification of the world of imagination. This in turn, permitted the writers to distance themselves from the everyday rituals of society. Approaching from this perspective, the evolution in theater and its theories signifies a movement which is in direct relation with revolutions in imaginations and not that of materialistic world¹⁰⁾ which denotes the contemporary tendency in literature, like post-modernism. This statement like the definition of what a representation should be, infringes upon the frontiers of the definition of what signifies a fiction. The definition tends to further itself from the reality, but at the same time create a new world that can be defined as fictional in nature, in short a world which is parallel to the real world.

The audience, in general, expects the spectacle to be more to their needs and expectations, thus changing the very 'values' which have governed the domain of theater. In other words, the difference between the traditional and the modern theater are not only discernable in the evolution of the writers and their functions, but also, by the exigencies of the audience/reader who expects to be implicated in the stories that unfolds on stage. This dictates that the themes developed in the theater to be more inclusive of the world that surrounds them.¹¹⁾ This

10) "The revolt of the dramatist, it is important to add, is more imaginative than practical-imaginative, absolute, and pure." (Brustein, R., *The Theatre of Revolt*, p.8)

11) "... the traditional and the modern theaters are clearly distinguishable from each other in regard to the function of their dramatists, the engagement of their audiences, and the nature of the worlds they imply and evoke." (Brustein, R., *The Theatre of Revolt*, p.4)

mutation in the theories that govern the domain of theatre is inseparable with interrogation of the values of aesthetics, which I believe is in relation to the function of representation of art.¹²⁾

The outstanding problem for the modern authors were the representation of ideas/ideals that which would be received by the general public but at the same time reflect and concretize their artistic ideas and values (staging, participation of the public and social reality). If we were to question the very nature of drama/theatre, it brings into play the question of aesthetics of reception, the importance of which cannot be treated lightly by contemporary authors, both in economical or theoretical values. The reception is related to the aesthetics of art in general, and is also related to the function of communication. This reasoning has developed into a major category in the judgement of contemporary art. In other words, one finds not only the aesthetics of negativity but also positivity in any given work of art, which defines the traits of modern writers as suggested by H. Jauss in his book *Pour une esthétique de la réception*.¹³⁾

The modern theatre can be defined as the second vague of Romanticism, but it should be noted that it does not reflect the optimistic Romanticism of Rousseau, but the contrary, that of Nietzsche

12) "La représentation est toujours, d'une part, interprétative de la manière dont une culture se représente et, d'autre part, toujours une métaphorisation, par la propriété de l'écrit, de cette représentation. Reste exclue une assignation objective ou idéologique unique. Système construit de symboles, l'œuvre se comprend dans l'ensemble social et cognitif d'une culture et d'une histoire, dont elle propose un paradigme de lecture. L'actualité de l'œuvre est un dire et un analyseur de l'Histoire. Par là, la fiction est toujours médiatrice-représentation et contre-représentation." (Bessière, J., 'Littérature et représentation', *Théorie littéraire*, p.319)

13) Jauss, H. R., *Pour une esthétique de la réception*, p.147.

which is pessimistic and which demanded the complete transformation of human spirit.¹⁴⁾ It is this negativity, which not only characterizes the modern theatre but all modern fiction in that they entertain the pessimistic vision of society. This pessimistic vision constitutes the very core of the modern 'dramatic theory.'

The modern theatre does not rest simply in the domain of 'text.' It has to be 'alive.' it has to be 'a spectacle' to succeed. It is a 'symbolization' of the society from where it is issued, encompassing the very nature of society, which is negative as well as positive in nature. These traits define the essence of the contemporary theatre. In short, if the 'avant-garde' is defined as an artistic mode which signifies the pessimistic vision of society the rest of the contemporary theatre can be defined as belonging to the category of positive vision to a certain extent. Of course, this categorization does not and can not comprehend "all theatrical dramatic works" that we are witnessing today, like for example the 'neoclassic' works of Jean Giraudoux the 'religious theatres' of Paul Claudel or even the theatres of 'absurd' such as the works of Jean Paul Sartre or Albert Camus.

It is possible to state that the plurality of expressions found in the domain of contemporary theater is a product of individualization that surfaced with the modernization of society. In retrospect the individualization of man is the hidden force behind the very nature of

14) "The modern drama, in short, rides in on the second wave of Romanticism -not the cheerful optimism of Rousseau, with his emphasis on institutional reform, but rather the dark fury of Nietzsche, with his radical demands for a total transformation of man's spiritual life. And Nietzsche remains the most seminal philosophical influence on the theatre of revolt, the intellect against which almost every modern dramatist must measure his own." (Brustein, R., *The Theatre of Revolt*, p.8)

man, which dictates the very diversification of art. Through the usage of connotative meanings in the term 'individualization' the problems of suffering, the problems of loneliness, the problems of banishment not to mention the search for the 'ideal beauty' or any other relative phenomena's are seen as the truth in themselves. This aspect in turn, not only resides in the world of imagination of the author but also that of the reader/audience. In short, the contemporary theatre is a private manifestation, as long as they reflect the ideas of the authors in their totality, since they already reflect the changes in the society or that of aesthetic of representation.

The moral and the value is separated and linked, in the sense that one corresponds to another in the habitual definition. The moral dictate what the values should be in normal circumstances, but in the contemporary theatre this proposition can be false, In the domain of contemporary drama, the rules or conventions that which had govern the domain, like in the traditional drama, does not have an absolute power. The conventions are solely a reference of aesthetics. It encompasses the ideals that may be quoted as being outside the normal criteria or definition. The relevant changes concerning the changes in the definition of aesthetic, which also dictates that of representation, explains the diversification of theories of the contemporary drama.

In Jauss's definition the changes in aesthetics in the domain of representation is a direct result of the social middle class who characterizes the modern society. Historically this statement of Jauss seems to hold the truth, but it should be noted that if the middle class provoked the birth of modern theatre, it should be also stated that they were the targets of authors who represented them on stage as ambiguous.

The dramatists of the twentieth century adapted diverse styles to present their messages. These diverse ideas that are flourishing today are radically different from one another. It is in comprehending these changes that one may understand the very nature of diversity in today's dramatists. This diversity of the vision is not just an occurrence with the authors but that it applies to the audiences as well.

The changes in the modern dramatist that we have described are directly related to the notion of objectivity. Objectivity in theatre, like in all other domains of art, is to be comprehended in a manner that the author is only responsible for the written material/text, because it is the director who stages the written text and gives the text its representational form. To elaborate further it is the director who through *mise en scène* creates the representation, which may be quite different from that of the original author. Furthermore, the audience/reader is the final judge of a staged representation. In brief, the audience/reader rather than the director who staged the work is the one who finally recontextualises the representation. The audience/reader is very much solicited in the domain of art today because they constitute the final judgment, not only in reconstructing the work, but also because they define the economic success and the artistic success of the representation in question.¹⁵⁾

It is evident that without the point of view of 'objectivity', the contemporary theatre would be difficult to define or characterize; in

15) "Le spectateur est obligé, non seulement de suivre une histoire, une fable (axe horizontal), mais de recomposer à chaque instant la figure totale de tous les signes concourant à la représentation. Il est contraint en même temps de s'investir dans le spectacle (identification) et de s'en retirer (distance)." (Ubersfeld, A., *Lire le théâtre*, p.41)

short, the logic of ‘recontextualisation’ is a question that needs to be answered before venturing to define contemporary representation and drama. The question of recontextualisation is linked to the question of ‘to see’ or ‘how to see.’ The phenomena of ‘seeing’ is not a question that may be addressed in simple terms, as it is explained by Georges Didi-Huberman in his book *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*.¹⁶⁾ Didi-Huberman’s definition of ‘to see’ makes it plain that it is the reader/audience who finally recontextualises any given work (text or representation). And it is the reader/audience who gives the meaning or the means necessary for a given text/work or a spectacle to be categorized as belonging to or not belonging to the domain of art. Objectivity is closely associated with this definition in that it is the means needed to ascertain the truth of the signification which may be hidden behind the representation, thus only by looking at a work in an objective manner would one be able to decipher the significance behind the work itself.¹⁷⁾

This ‘recontextualisation’ by the reader/audience is a non-negligible function, which weighs on the authors; it is a force that not only

16) “L’acte de voir n’est pas l’acte d’une machine à percevoir le réel en tant que composé d’évidences tautologiques. L’acte de donner à voir n’est pas l’acte de donner des évidences visibles à des paires d’yeux qui se saisissent unilatéralement du “don visuel” pour s’en satisfaire unilatéralement. Donner à voir, c’est toujours inquiéter le voir, dans son acte, dans son sujet. Voir, c’est toujours une opération de sujet, donc une opération refendue, inquiétée, agitée, ouverte.” (Didi-Huberman, G., *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, p.51)

17) “C’est-à-dire que la chose qu’on y voit n’est plus seulement représentée comme suspendue, mais strictement telle qu’elle est, figée réellement. C’est la chose seule, isolée par le besoin de la voir, par le besoin de voir. La chose immobile dans le vide, voilà enfin la chose visible, l’objet pur. Je n’en vois pas d’autres.” (Beckett, S., “La Peinture de van Velde ou le Monde et le Pantalon”, *Disjecta, Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, p.126)

manifests itself in the background of the work itself, but also is the force behind the author's creativity. In pushing this hypotheses to its limits, one could say that the author and his work is situated in the world of 'decontextualisation', since in the definition of a modern art, the work should be objective in nature because the intentions of the author should not be at the foreplan of the work but rest in *arrière-plan* of the work.¹⁸⁾ The author in Historical sense has always been situated at the foreplan of any work of art, and with the modernization of the society this is truer in its aspects, even if they did not seem to be for the reader/audience. And so one can state that the author and only the author can give the significance that the work of art needs by making the work more objective even if the final judgement as to the work itself is judged by the reader/audience.

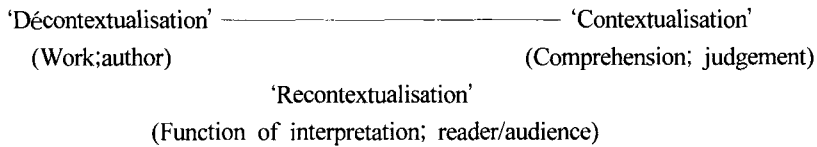
A text should be written without any apparent *intentionnalité* for it to be received by the reader/audience without provoking any opposition subjecting about the work itself. To arrive at this status, the work should not be a mode of expression for the writer but rely more on

18) "Selon certains commentateurs, le sens véritable de l'œuvre serait un effet immanent des potentialités signifiantes "profondes" du texte échappant aux significations linguistiques "de surface" et à l'intention de sens du locuteur: le texte serait la mise en œuvre de pulsions inconscientes, d'un habitus social, de l'appartenance sexuelle, ou encore du processus infini de la sémiosis textuelle (quoi que cela puisse vouloir dire). Pour d'autres, son sens véritable consisterait dans le fait qu'elle exemplifie de manière non intentionnelle (en fait, contre la volonté de son auteur) le caractère réifié ou illusoire des significations rapportées à une intention de signification: l'œuvre littéraire exhiberait l'impossibilité de toute présence à soi de la signification. Pour d'autres encore, le sens de l'œuvre consisterait dans la révélation autoréférentielle de la logique littéraire: l'œuvre littéraire, dit-on, coupe tout lien référentiel avec la réalité commune en faveur d'une signification purement intertextuelle (dans l'œuvre littéraire, la littéraire se parle à elle-même, les écrivains n'étant que ses porte-voix). (Schaeffer, J.-M., "Littérature et intentionnalité", *Littérature et théorie*, p.21)

discretion as to the authors point of view which has to be hidden in the work or representation so that any judgement stemming from the reading or viewing of the said work will be a consummate judgement of the reader/audience. The writer uses the very tools and the signification's that one sees around his or her society, his world of imagination and his surroundings and interprets it to his best knowledge in written format that make up the work. In short, plurality that we observe in today's theatrical field is a direct result of this '*dédoublement*' of the portrayed world. *En consequence*, the relative 'translation' of a work depends on the reader/audience and not on the author. As the 'translation' of a work rests with the reader/audience, it implicates that the very status of judgement of a work belongs to the reader/audience.

The objectivity in the works of literature is the very necessity for the author to adapt himself or herself to the visions, the morals and the values of the general public, because it is the reader/audience to whom the judgement the discretion whether a work is literature or non-literature. Objectivity is also important in that it is the tool by which the author can transpose the reality in the world of imagination, since all works of literature is by definition founded on the very imagination of the author. In other words, the work itself rests in a state of '*décontextualisation*', and by '*recontextualising*' the work based on their imagination the reader/audience gives the needed substance for the work to be accepted as depicting reality. This in effect, signifies that the 'dogmas' which governed any work of literature in relating the 'vraisemblance' of the work itself has been largely discarded for the benefit of the genres, and thus adapting itself to the changes and the various movements that can be seen in the domain of literature.

To further elaborate on the subject of ‘objectivity’, comprehension of the phenomena of ‘*décontextualisation*’ is an imperative; the diagram that follows shows the flow of how ‘*contextualisation*’ of a work is defined:



In more linear fashion the diagram will be: work (state of *décontextualisation*) → interpretation; giving meaning to a symbol [reader/audience (state of *recontextualisation*) → comprehension (state of *contextualisation*).

Any given work of art is a liaison between the reality and the images, because all creations of art has to produce images that the reader/audience could comprehend as the reality that surrounds the reader/audience, if the work does not engage the reader/spectator as in the said manner it loses the very status that qualifies it as a work of art. (Time/relation to society from where it is issued from). For these reasons the work of art has to remain objective in the eyes of the reader/audience if it wants to remain as a work of art through the flow of time.

In defining the term ‘objectivity’ in such a way, the modern theatre demands as its attributes no less the elements of objectivity to be incorporated in the subjectivity of the theatre because the modern theatre is not only a manifestation of the author but also of the reader/spectator. For the modern authors the notion of ‘objectivity’ is a

mixture of traditional objectivity and subjectivity, since the work itself is based on the subjectivity of the experience of the author. But, even though the subjectivity of the author represents the major part of a work, the work should incorporate the traits of objectivity because if the work does not do so it may lead to a false interpretation of the author's intentions. We could further elaborate that if the work does not have any objectivity it may compromise its proper credibility when viewed from a perspective that all representation is closely related to the reception of the work. To conclude we could very well state that the modern theatre may be subjective which takes into account the individuality, the inspiration and the intention of the author, but also simultaneously objective so that the work may be accepted by the society.

The writing reflects the objectivity of the author either in consicietal manner or in conscient manner. In this case the reader/spectator plays an important role because the author is not trying to influence the reader/spectator. In this instance we could state with a measure of clarity that the symbols that the author uses do not have any signification, since the reader/spectator is the sole party who judges the signification through his objective views from his reception of the work concerned.¹⁹⁾

In this regard the modern theatre presents characteristics that are not only similar but also different from that of the Naturalist theatres that signifies the last dogmas in regulating the domain of theatre. The difference between the two resides in that while one bases its theories

19) "Car finalement, c'est le spectateur qui est le dernier juge. Le seul juge. C'est pour lui que le théâtre est fait" (Touchard, P-A., "L'Amateur de théâtre", *Dionysos; L'Amateur de théâtre*, p.118)

on the scientific references (the reality itself, and therefore one may say that the Naturalist theatres are kind of mirror image of the society from where it is issued from) the other is based upon the universe of imagination of the authors. The world created by the authors has to correspond to the society itself; in other words the reality. This world should be clearly denoted as being based on the real world, because if the author does not limit his world to the real world, one could very easily find oneself in the domain of fantastic which would necessitate a deeper and larger reflection of the reader/audience, from the perspective of objectivity and subjectivity.

In conclusion the modern theatre is not so different when compared with the Naturalist theatres because it is founded on the same principal theories that govern any spectacle such as psychology and imagination that motivates the sensation and the sentiments of the reader/audience. In these aspects one could say that the two theatres are similar in theory and in a way are very much complimentary to each other since one mirrors the superficial aspects of the society while the other tries to represent the hidden inner aspects of the society concerned, by which one stimulates the imagination of the reader/audience.

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[Abstract]

The paper develops the arguments as to how one should perceive modern theater and how one should categorize it, not to mention how one may identify the traits of modern theater. The Contemporary Theater has changed in a way that it is no longer possible to define the genre relying on conventional definitions that we associated with it in the past. The paper in this regard proposes a perspective which by addressing the evolutions that one has seen in the theories of reception and other relevant literary fields may define the very nature of the theater as we know it today. The paper is largely based on the aesthetics of reception and the objectivity theory which is based on the decontextualisation, recontextualisation and contextualisation method that is being more and more commonly used in the field of literary academics of today. The relevancy of this paper rests with the hypothesis that it is by and through using various theories of reception that it is the only true solution as to defining and identifying the characteristics of modern theater.