

## ON KANTOR: Four Photos

Jacquie Bablet

The Psychological Moment: Figure # 10



Fig. 10. *Wielopole, Wielopole* (1980). Photo courtesy of Jacquie Bablet/CNRS.

1984. Revival of *Wielopole, Wielopole* at the Théâtre de Paris, four years after the original production in Florence. At a café near the theatre, we gather in a small circle around Kantor. He has brought one of my prints with him—the rape of the bride from the Florence production—for an American journalist, in view of the Los Angeles Festival. He says, as he displays the photo: "Jacquie, this is very precise; it captures the exact psychological moment." Denis [Bablet] and I look at each other, slightly taken aback—Kantor has always preached non-psychological theatre.

## Odysseus's Coat: Figures # 11 and 12

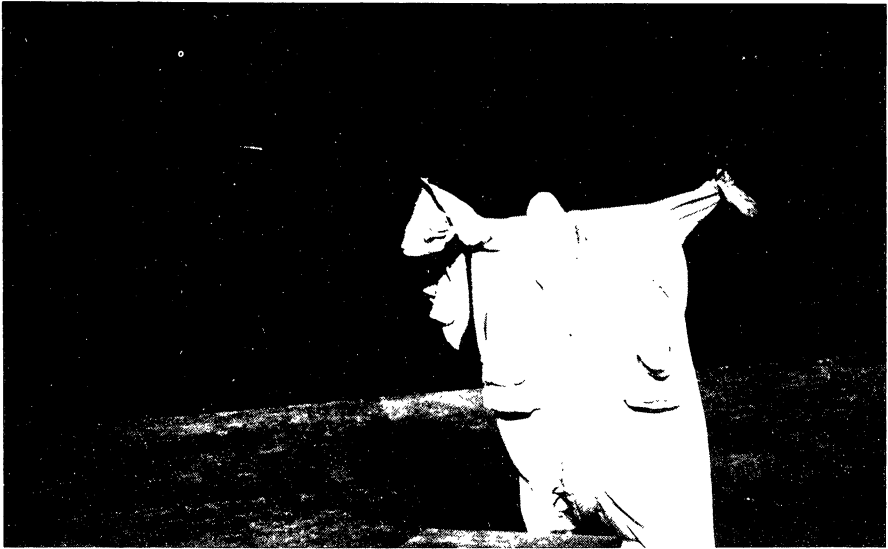


Fig. 11. *I Shall Never Return* (1988). Photo courtesy of Jacquie Bablet/CNRS.



Fig. 12. *I Shall Never Return* (1988). Photo courtesy of Jacquie Bablet/CNRS.

August 1988, at Charleville-Mezières. Kantor is directing a workshop at the Institut International de Marionnette. I bring him photos of *I Shall Never Return* taken two months earlier in Berlin. In the chosen camera angle, Ludmita Ryba,

who is running across the stage, nearly disappears behind the coat which is outstretched in her open arms. "I want to see the coat cross the stage by itself, as it does in the photo," says Kantor. And he keeps the print with him for the rest of the workshop, obsessed with the idea.

*I Shall Never Return* is produced in Paris in October, invited by the Festival d'Automne at the Centre Georges Pompidou. In fact, one sees Odysseus's coat enter the stage by itself—fixed on a wooden structure with moveable arms, mounted on a rolling platform and pushed from behind by Ms. Ryba. Kantor has given the coat "a scenic equivalent of the photographic vision . . . the entrance of Odysseus's coat therefore loses all appearance of the everyday."<sup>1</sup> The actors and technicians admitted to me later that they had sweat bullets at Kraków trying to resolve this technical problem.

### The Charleville "Incident": Figure # 13



Fig. 13. *A Very Short Lesson* (1988). Photo courtesy of Jacquie Bablet/CNRS.

Once more at Charleville, I am filming the dress rehearsal of the final workshop production of *The Very Short Lesson*. At the same time, another video crew films the performance, but with more professional equipment, shall we say, than mine. All of a sudden, noticing that they have appreciably changed the level of the lights, Kantor explodes: "Who touched the lights? I did not ask for a change! I do not give a fuck about television!" Naturally, I film this outburst as well, which is not directed towards me.

In Paris that Fall, we invite Kantor and the whole Cricot 2 company to our home to see the video. Kantor is very enthusiastic about it. Then, seeing his tantrum (the actors laugh delightedly), he tells me: "No, you have to cut out this incident, absolutely!" He continues to be amiable and charming, as he knew how to be—anxious to please, extremely humble as well.

## Notes

1. Denis Bablet, *T. Kantor 2: Les Voies de la création théâtrale*, 18 (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1993) 265-66.