A visualization of Jean Duvignaud's (1921–2007) socio-intellectual networks as an approach to the world of the *Nouveau Théâtre* in France in the 1950s

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https ://doi.org/10.17184/eac.10175

Abstract: The socio-anthropologist and writer Jean Duvignaud brilliantly traversed the second half of the twentieth century without, however, entering posterity. He witnessed and experienced the birth and existence of the Nouveau Théâtre in France, an engaged and didactic form of theatre, whose leading figures include Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud, and Jean Vilar. Jean Duvignaud left behind numerous writings and autobiographical archives that make it possible to define a corpus rich in data, suitable for the production of visualisations, their analysis, and their enrichment with other forms of knowledge. The networks formed from these data offer a snapshot of an individual's lived experience, but also provide the illustration and the foundations for a socio-historical analysis of the world of the Nouveau Théâtre in France in the 1950s.

Keywords: Théâtre nouveau, Sociology of Intellectuals, Social Network Analyzis, Elective Affinities

1 Introduction

This article stems from the author's doctoral thesis, one of whose objectives is to reposition an author on the verge of being forgotten – Jean Duvignaud – within the socio-intellectual network he frequented during the second half of the twentieth century. More broadly, this project seeks to interrogate selective public and institutional memory: a substantial number of artists, scientists, and writers are forgotten, along with their work, leading to a considerable loss of knowledge. This phenomenon is

correlated with the focus of academic research, heritage valorization, and media discourse on a handful of major figures — leaders such as Sartre and Beauvoir, Barthes, Foucault, Lévi-Strauss — who are indisputable cultural and scientific references, but whose prominence results in the narrowing of research objects, sources, and forms of knowledge produced.

We therefore take Jean Duvignaud as our starting point to develop this reflection and propose an approach aimed at rehabilitating forgotten figures. This case study is not arbitrary: the sociologist's career and body of work are singular in every respect and justify closer examination. Born in 1921 and deceased in 2007, Jean Duvignaud spanned the twentieth century. He was simultaneously a writer, sociologist, anthropologist, literary and theatre critic, screenwriter, and playwright. What remains of him is a prolific and diverse body of work[1], an extensive archive including manuscripts, letters, and photographs, and several autobiographies – thus an abundance of first-hand sources and an exceptional heritage (L'Hermite 2022, 83-84) – as well as a multitude of friends from the same milieu: writers, artists, scientists… constituting a substantial sample of the intelligentsia of the second half of the twentieth century. Those who remain active today regularly invoke his memory during commemorative events. All these traces provide information not only about Duvignaud himself but also about others, about his socio-intellectual network, since he describes it extensively in his writings and its presence is pervasive in his archives (particularly in his correspondence and photographs[2]). In this respect, Jean Duvignaud constitutes a rare source and a key witness for envisioning an entire segment of intellectual and cultural sociability from the 1950s to the 1980s, the most intense period of his activity (L'Hermite 2025, 100-101). We therefore consider him as an observation post of the cultural and intellectual ecosystem of his time.

More specifically, between 1950 and 1965, he developed a strong interest in theatre. Jean Duvignaud was a critic for *La NRF*[3] and for the journal *Théâtre Populaire*[4]. He also ventured into dramatic writing with the play *Marée basse*, presented in 1956 and staged by the French director Roger Blin. In 1952, he staged *La Mort de Danton* by Georg Büchner with his young pupils at the lycée in Abbeville. He also became a theorist of theatre: Jean Duvignaud produced the first detailed "sociology of theatre" with his doctoral thesis (Duvignaud 1965), published in 1965 under the supervision of the sociologist Georges Gurvitch[5]. In this respect, he was a pioneer in sociology. He

[1] Laurène L'Hermite. « Bibliographie de Jean Duvignaud ». Page accessed on September 29, 2025. https://ecana.huma-num.fr/bibliotheque/jean-duvignaud?current=110.

[2] La Rochelle Municipal Archives, Jean Duvignaud Collection, Photographs, Slides, and Negatives, 51FI 1-4.
IMEC, Fonds Jean Duvignaud, Archives professionnelles : Iconographie, IMEC, DVG2.P01.

[3] *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (NRF), renamed *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française* from 1944 onwards, is a literary and critical journal founded in 1908 by Charles-Louis Philippe.

[4] *Théâtre Populaire* (1953–1964) is a journal founded by Robert Voisin, then director of Éditions de L'Arche. Its editorial and executive board notably included Roland Barthes, Bernard Dort, Jean Paris, and Jean Duvignaud. The journal accompanied the launch of Jean Vilar's Théâtre National Populaire. Bringing together essays and reviews on theatre, it criticised conventional theatre, considered bourgeois, and promoted the *Nouveau Théâtre*, embodied by Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, and above all Bertolt Brecht.

[5] Georges Gurvitch (1894–1965) was a French sociologist of Russian origin (naturalised in 1929). He founded the Laboratory of the Sociology of Knowledge at the Sorbonne and the journal *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* in 1946.

Published in : BRISTAULT CANOVA, Juliette ; CHANTRAINE BRAILLON, Cécile ; ŽUGIĆ BORIĆ, Anamarija (dir.), *Performing Arts in the Digital Age. Research, Archives, and Innovation*, Editions des archives contemporaines, ISBN: 9782813005588, doi: 10.17184/eac.9782813005588

viewed theatre not only as a pastiched representation – nevertheless highly revealing of social reality – but also as a site of ritual manifestation, which he analyzed in an almost ethnographic manner, shortly before the emergence of performance studies in the Anglo-Saxon world in the seventies. Through its observation, he mobilized and developed his preferred sociological themes, situating him within the Durkheimian tradition: anomie and subversion. Through these notions, theatre marks a rupture in social organization and practices.

A theatre theorist naturally possesses an extensive knowledge of theatre—its works, genres, and history (Jean Duvignaud wrote a *History of Contemporary Theatre*), that is, a theatrical culture. Jean Duvignaud's involvement in the inner workings of theatre at the turn of the 1960s cannot be reduced to his dramatic, critical, and scholarly output. This culture and its imprint were also shaped alongside these "professional" activities. To take up the idea of a distinction defined as porous, even complementary, by the sociologist of « la civilisation des loisirs », Joffre Dumazedier (Dumazedier 1962), Jean Duvignaud developed his knowledge and his work in an indistinct manner—at the university, through his teaching at secondary school, and through his personal leisure activities (reading) and his social life with friends (at the theatre, in bars, and during gatherings at one another's homes) (L'Hermite 2025: 126-131). His sociability and leisure activities thus constituted fertile ground for knowledge and creation (Bourgatte 2022, 46-47). In this way, through an extended system of elective affinities centered on his *violon d'Ingres* – the theatre – he simultaneously built a culture, a social network, and an object of scholarly study. This led him to participate in the development of the *Nouveau Théâtre* in France.

Our objective is therefore, through a socio-historical and information-communication-based reflection, to characterize Jean Duvignaud's position and action as an actor and mediator of the *Nouveau Théâtre* in France.

2 Contextual Elements

The *Nouveau Théâtre* emerged in France in the 1950s in parallel with the *Nouveau Roman*[6]. It was an engaged, but above all emancipated and subversive form of theatre – a theatre of cruelty[7] and the absurd – drawing in particular on the theoretical and dramatic contributions of Bertolt Brecht[8] and Antonin Artaud[9]. It was driven by emblematic authors and directors such as Jean Vilar, Eugène Ionesco, Arthur Adamov,

[6] A literary genre that emerged in the 1950s, characterized by writers and works that depart from conventional narrative writing and the traditional novelistic style. Representatives of the *Nouveau Roman* include Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, Michel Butor, Jean Ricardou, Robert Pinget, Claude Simon, and Claude Ollier.

[7] An expression coined by Antonin Artaud to designate a form of theatre in which staging takes precedence over the choice of text. It seeks to affect the spectator directly, without sparing violence or rawness in either form or content. One of its aims is to reduce the critical distance between stage and audience through expressive intensity.

[8] Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) was a German playwright, regarded as having renewed the theatrical genre through his distanced approach to staging. From 1933 onwards he was forced to flee Germany, and during his exile he wrote some of his most famous plays, notably *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1938), first performed in France in 1954.

[9] Antonin Artaud (1896–1948), a playwright as well as an actor, painter, writer, poet, and theatre theorist, is best known as the author of *Le Théâtre et son double* (Gallimard, 1938), a collection of short essays including *Le Théâtre de la cruauté*.

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Samuel Beckett, Roger Blin, and Jean Genet (L'Hermite 2025, 120). This genre was also founded on its opposition to classical theatre, which was state-subsidized and for which ticket prices were high, making it a particularly elitist form of entertainment.

Jean Duvignaud's personal history reveals intense intellectual sociability, while also making it possible to identify groups formed around theatre criticism, creation, and their interactions and interrelations. It therefore seemed relevant to produce visualizations of this social network in order to highlight and analyze the place and functions occupied by Jean Duvignaud within the intellectual microcosm thus reconstructed, but also – within a socio-historical perspective – to gain an original overview of the organization and social and creative dynamics of the movement that formed around the *Nouveau Théâtre*.

It is possible to draw an ego-centered social network (with the relational fabric structured around the central node of Jean Duvignaud), revealing a prolific universe characterized by complex and dynamic relational configurations, primarily focused on literary journals and theatre. Secondary centralities then emerge, for example around figures such as Jean Vilar[10], Roger Blin[11], Jean Atlan[12]… sub-networks involving not only theatre practitioners but also literary and intellectual figures—which are particularly meaningful for understanding the environment and actors involved in the emergence of the *Nouveau Théâtre* in France.

3 Network Analysis in Social Sciences: A Brief Overview

Network analysis is "a set of methods, concepts, theories, models, and investigations" (Mercklé 2016, 3) that initially developed within sociology and anthropology[13]. It gradually extended to the humanities and social sciences with the penetration of digital technologies: in history, when the structural paradigm gave way in the 1980s to micro-history – an anthropological and cultural history focused on individuals, who cannot be studied independently of the social and societal environments in which they evolve – and more recently in literature and information and communication sciences. With the development and penetration of digital technologies in the humanities, data extracted from corpora become quantitative, grow in scale, and require the multiplication and automation of computational tasks. Visualization in the form of graphs then becomes an indispensable step, as it has the virtue of simplifying analysis: the visual and organized representation of a complex phenomenon, produced from a multitude of raw data, allows for contextualization and coherence. They can then be worked on by the researcher as knowledge. However, it must be borne in mind that visualization

[10] Jean Vilar (1912–1971) was a theatre practitioner and co-founder of the Avignon Festival in 1947. He served as director of the Théâtre National Populaire (TNP) from 1951 to 1963. His objective was to offer high-quality theatre accessible to all, featuring both classical and contemporary works.

[11] Roger Blin (1907–1984) was a theatre practitioner—actor and director—emblematic of the *Nouveau Théâtre*. He notably directed plays by Samuel Beckett and Jean Genet. In 1956, he staged *Marée basse* (by J. Duvignaud) at the Théâtre des Noctambules.

[12] Jean-Michel Atlan (1913 – 1960) was first a philosopher and later a painter.

[13] Jacob Moreno is considered one of the pioneers of the modelling of social phenomena. Later, in 1954, the British anthropologist John A. Barnes mobilized the notion of the "social network" in a study of the population of a small island in Norway.

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possesses a "mediagenic" [14] (Marion 1997) quality – it lends expressiveness and visual impact to discourse – and the power to reveal a reality that is far more complex and multidimensional. It nevertheless remains a simplification, whose observation alone cannot explain a social phenomenon. Its use therefore necessarily involves a critical distance from the representation and the data employed, as well as a documentary apparatus intended to contextualize it (L'Hermite 2025, 89-92).

Indeed, "network analysis is not an end in itself, but a way of contextualizing individual activity within the overall structure" (Grandjean 2018, 70). All visualizations generated from the collected data are thus inseparable from a detailed knowledge of Jean Duvignaud's trajectory, and it is necessary to have an understanding of his work and the context in which it was produced. The design and analysis of these networks therefore result from a process that is both quantitative and qualitative. In this way, the graphs of Jean Duvignaud's social network can also shed light on more complex phenomena, such as some of the social and cultural processes that contributed to his being forgotten. The visualizations make it possible, for example, to highlight his position as a "satellite-creator"[15], that is, an intellectual who voluntarily contributes to the mediation and promotion of knowledge and individuals he values: through the creation of journals, the organization of meetings and cultural events in both public and private spheres (by integrating them into his own network), and through biographies. He thus rarely occupies center stage, working instead towards the dissemination of others' work. This is one of the probable reasons why an active thinker becomes a secondary figure. This is one of the theories defended by the author in the first chapter of her thesis, and it is in this manner that he acts, as we shall see, within the sphere of the *Nouveau Théâtre*.

4 The analyzed corpus

We therefore transformed Jean Duvignaud's sociability into data by systematically collecting references to his friends and collaborators from his archives and autobiographies. The collected data were indexed using thematic descriptive elements (period, main activities of the person mentioned, relational context with Jean Duvignaud). This enabled us to produce network visualizations filtered on theatre using the open-source software Gephi[16].

The relational data are drawn from Jean Duvignaud's autobiographies. There are five of them (Duvignaud 1976; 1995; 1998; 2003; 2006)[17], each responding to a specific intention: recounting his trajectory and analyzing and explaining his intellectual and career choices; producing a critical portrait of the intellectuals and artists he met and associated with; depicting the society of intellectuals and reflecting on his place

[14] A neologism coined by Philippe Marion, professor and researcher in Information and Communication Sciences.

[15] "Satellite intellectuals" constitute a category of cultural transfer identified by Fatiha Idmhand. The term refers to writers working in the shadows who, in a sense, prepare the ground for the success of others without attaining it themselves, whether intentionally or not (Idmhand 2018, 4-12).

[16] Gephi is an open-source software for network analysis and visualization developed at the Sciences Po Médialab. It offers a wide range of modes for representing and analyzing datasets. https://gephi.org/

[17] Duvignaud, Jean. *Le Ça perché*. Stock, 1976 ; *L'oubli ou La chute des corps*. Actes sud, 1995 ; *Le pandémonium du présent : idées sages, idées folles*. Plon, 1998 ; *Les octos : béants aux choses futures*. Actes sud, 2003 ; *La ruse de vivre : état des lieux*. Actes Sud, 2006.

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within it. This five-volume primary source constitutes an analytical and critical documentation of the society of intellectuals in the second half of the twentieth century, unparalleled in its kind. Moreover, it is complemented and enriched by thousands of archival documents, particularly letters and photographs. Taking correspondence into account makes it possible to fill the gaps in biographical writing: the relational data are drawn from facts reported by Jean Duvignaud in his autobiographies—thus the product of a memorial construction, and therefore partial; and of an individual experience, and therefore subjective.

The datafication of a corpus of nearly 1,700 received letters, involving no fewer than 947 correspondents (not always identified by archival repositories), enables us to generate essential information on Jean Duvignaud's theatrical activity, shedding light in particular on an aspect of his psychology: theatre appears to have been of great importance to him, as he refers to it extensively in his writings. Yet the study of his letters and his editorial career reveals that his involvement in the field (as critic, author, and theatre practitioner) was intense only over a very short period, from 1954 to 1956—that is, the duration of his collaboration with the journal *Théâtre Populaire*.

5 The visualizations

The graph above represents the sociologist's overall network as documented in his autobiographies. The nodes – representing Jean Duvignaud's relationships – are color-coded according to their field of activity. Writers, in dark green, represent 24.7% of his relationships; theatre practitioners, in pink, 13%; sociology and anthropology, in orange, 12.5%; and finally, philosophers—or related figures—in light blue, 11.7%. Thus, two thirds (61.9%) of Jean Duvignaud's relationships consist of figures from the intelligentsia and the creative arts. The predominance of literary figures – accounting for one quarter of these relationships – can be explained by the fact that most of Jean Duvignaud's social and intellectual network was built between 1942 and 1961, at a time when his ambition was to become a writer himself. As for individuals directly connected to the world of theatre account for one sixth of this intelligentsia. When these results are compared with those extracted from correspondence data, the picture changes slightly:

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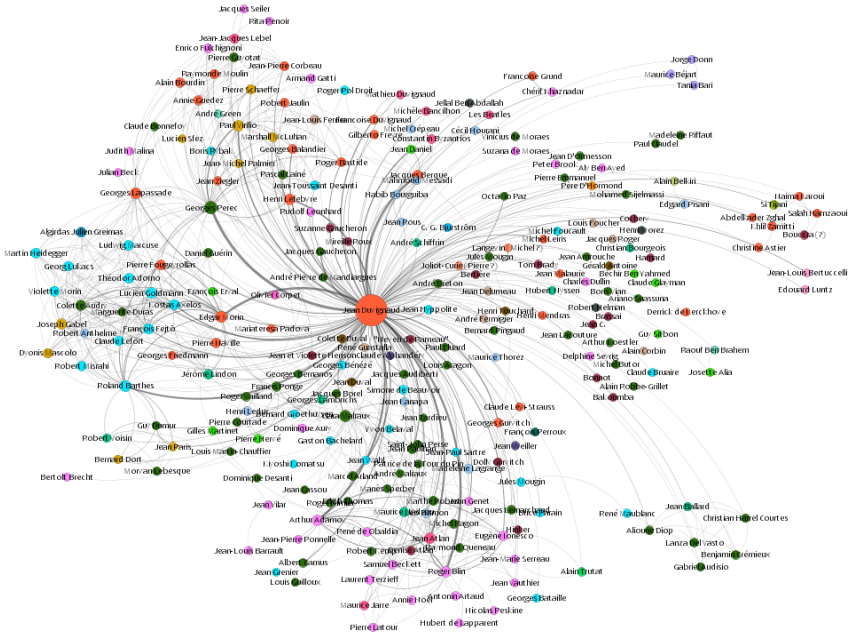


Figure 1: Jean Duvignaud's social network

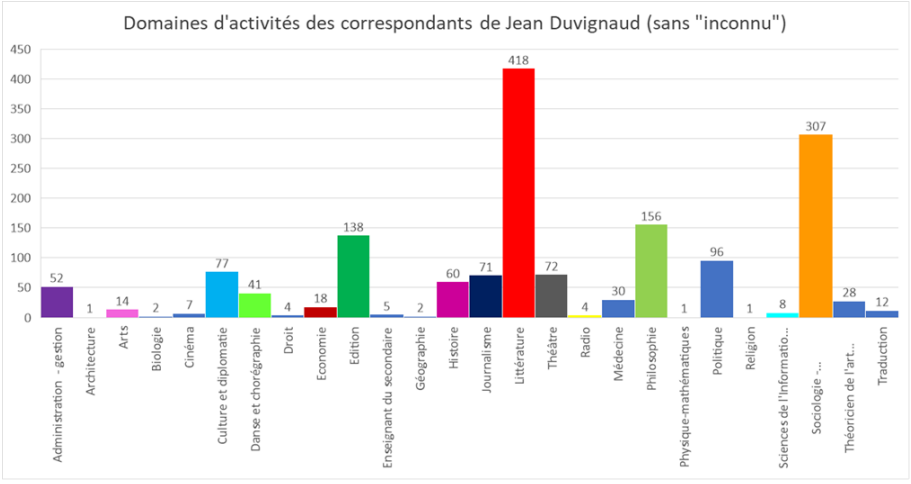


Figure 2: Fields of activity of Jean Duvignaud's correspondents

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Out of 1,625 letters from identified and named correspondents, 67% come from figures associated with the intelligentsia and the arts (a figure quite close to that extracted from biographical data). Between these, 25.7% were sent by figures from the literary field, 18.8% by sociologists and anthropologists, and 9.6% by philosophers (results that are consistent with the autobiographical relational data). However, 8.5% of the letters concern the publishing world, which appears only marginally in the graph, and only 4.4% were written by theatre practitioners—one third of the figure derived from relational data.

This pronounced difference between the two graphs, with regard to the relationships established within the realm of theatre, can be analyzed through a biographical study based on the cross-analysis of primary sources (his archives) and secondary sources (direct and indirect testimonies from those he associated with).

Indeed, Jean Duvignaud was a keen theatre enthusiast, particularly during the 1950s: he devoted his doctoral thesis to the subject, invested heavily in theatrical criticism, experimented with playwriting, and also engaged in directing productions with his secondary-school pupils. During the few years he taught philosophy (from 1952 to 1954), his students were "primarily struck by their teacher's digressions on the plays about to be staged in Parisian theatres and on the exhibitions, he had recently visited" (Bellos 2022, 137).

The sources suggest that the intensity of these interactions should not be underestimated: Jean Duvignaud was personally committed to the field of theatre and to the circle of affinities that coalesced around this art. The relative absence—or limited presence—of this closeness in the correspondence can be explained by the fact that these artists and intellectuals frequently met in person. Nevertheless, the letters reveal enduring friendships grounded in theatre, such as the sociologist's exchanges with Arthur Adamov[18] and Roland Barthes, thus highlighting the significance of including and analyzing these exchanges within the corpus[19].

In addition to that, Jean Duvignaud was an author who consistently blurred forms of writing (L'Hermite 2025, 201). Reflecting the author's tendency to combine, among other things, literature and theatre in his work and career, the sociability that develops specifically around the Nouveau Théâtre involves figures who, although all belonging to the cultural and intellectual sphere, are active in different domains. This phenomenon appears to be fairly characteristic of the functioning of the French intelligentsia at that time, of which Jean Duvignaud is a prominent representative. It is also noteworthy that, at a given moment and over a limited period, three individuals from three distinct creative worlds – theatre, pictorial arts, and literature – established, within specific spaces and a segment of intelligentsia society, a network in which genres were interdependent and contributed to a program that was both affective and creative.

[18] Arthur Adamov (1908–1970) was a playwright strongly influenced by Antonin Artaud's theatrical theories. He was also one of the leading figures of the Theatre of the Absurd, inspired by Surrealism.

[19] IMEC, Fonds Jean Duvignaud, Correspondances, Arthur Adamov – Jean Duvignaud, DVG2 C01 : 31 letters between 1952 and 1957.
IMEC, Fonds Jean Duvignaud, Correspondances, Roland Barthes – Jean Duvignaud, DVG2 C01 : 13 letters between 1953 and 1960.

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The extraction of Jean Duvignaud's social network below is strained on relationships formed within the theatrical context:

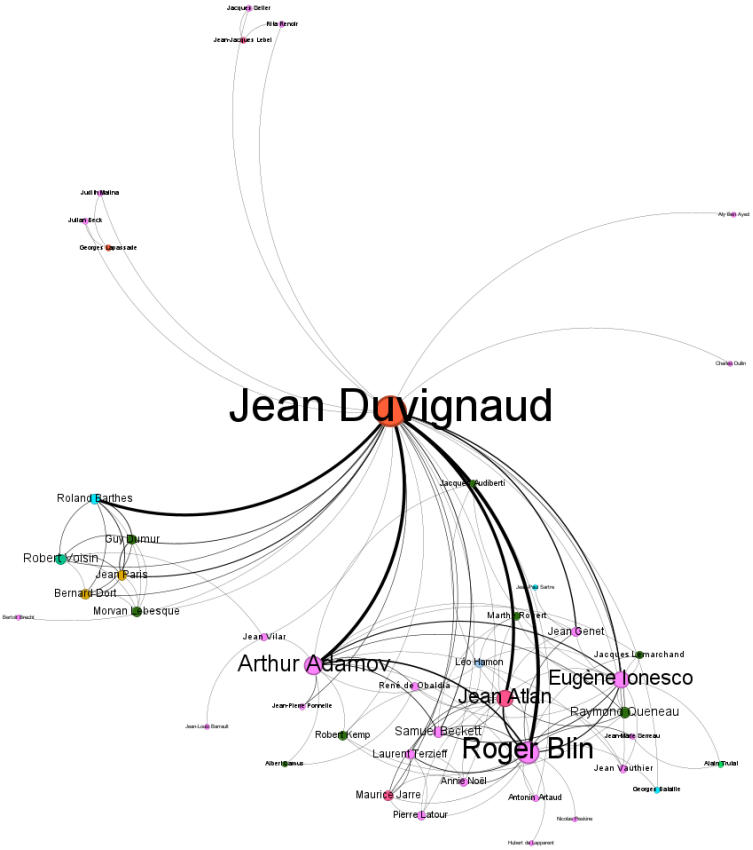


Figure 3: Jean Duvignaud's social network, "theatre" filter

The dominant node color is pink, representing theatre practitioners; the other colors correspond to critics, writers, theorists of the performing arts, thinkers with multiple affiliations (Roland Barthes, Georges Bataille), and sociologists (Georges Lapassade, Jean Duvignaud). The network they form is highly structured, consisting of four hubs, one of which is particularly dense and organized around the figures of Jean Atlan and Roger Blin. This is the "social" block, structured around friends frequently referred to by Jean Duvignaud in his writings. Beyond their intensity of relationship with Jean Duvignaud (the thickness of the link between two nodes is more pronounced), these are two interlinked and unifying figures. Roger Blin is a pivotal figure in the world of theatre; Jean Atlan, for his part, is an artist at the heart of Parisian cultural life. Through his studio passed "Adamov, Marthe Robert, Nadeau, Paulhan" (Duvignaud 1995, 100): figures from theatre and literature. What we observe is that around this

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1950s theatre—born alongside modern movements in art and literature, and on the margins of "conventional" and "bourgeois" performance—a microcosm formed, united by artistic, social, and friendly values.

The second block, the "critical" block, is linked to the journal *Théâtre Populaire*. It includes its contributors, its publisher Robert Voisin (Éditions de L'Arche), and Bertolt Brecht, whom they approached during his first visit to France.

The two smallest clusters, based—as with the first—on intellectual and artistic affinities, concern, respectively, the Living Theatre (composed of Judith Malina, Julian Beck, and Georges Lapassade, the latter being a sociologist like Jean Duvignaud who was passionate about this genre), and the Happening[20], focused on the figure of Jean-Jacques Lebel[21].

6 A "Creative" Sociability Cemented by Personalities and Places

Atlan's "Saturdays" and Duvignaud's "Attic"

In his thesis on intellectuals under the Fifth Republic, the sociologist Rémy Rieffel identifies within networks of intellectual sociability close-knit circles organized around shared values and ideas, relying on both public and private spaces that "vividly embody a sociability specific to the French case" – bars, neighborhoods, writers' residences, reception venues, and private studios or homes) – (Rieffel 1993, 29).

A close examination of Jean Duvignaud's network reveals a segment of the intellectual sociability of the period. Centralities become visible: places of theatrical creation but also unifying personalities who do not necessarily belong to the theatrical world. Thus, both Jean Atlan's studio and Jean Duvignaud's attic apartment on Rue Glacière in Paris played a unifying role by hosting individuals driven by a shared love of art. These homes became not only spaces conducive to discussion and friendly exchanges, but also to creation, as it was there that ideas and relationships formed, leading—among other places and processes—to theatrical creation and the emergence of journals.

Atlan's personality acted like a magnet, and the figure below, focused on him, is telling—the size of the labels (names) is proportional to the number of incoming and outgoing links for each node in the network:

[20] A spontaneous artistic expression, often improvised, intended to challenge the conventions of theatre and the sensory perceptions of spectators.

[21] Jean-Jacques Lebel (1936-) is an artist, writer, and organizer of events and happenings. He was invited by Jean Duvignaud to the *Mass Media* conference in Venice in 1967, during which he invited the assembly to take part in a large-scale happening.

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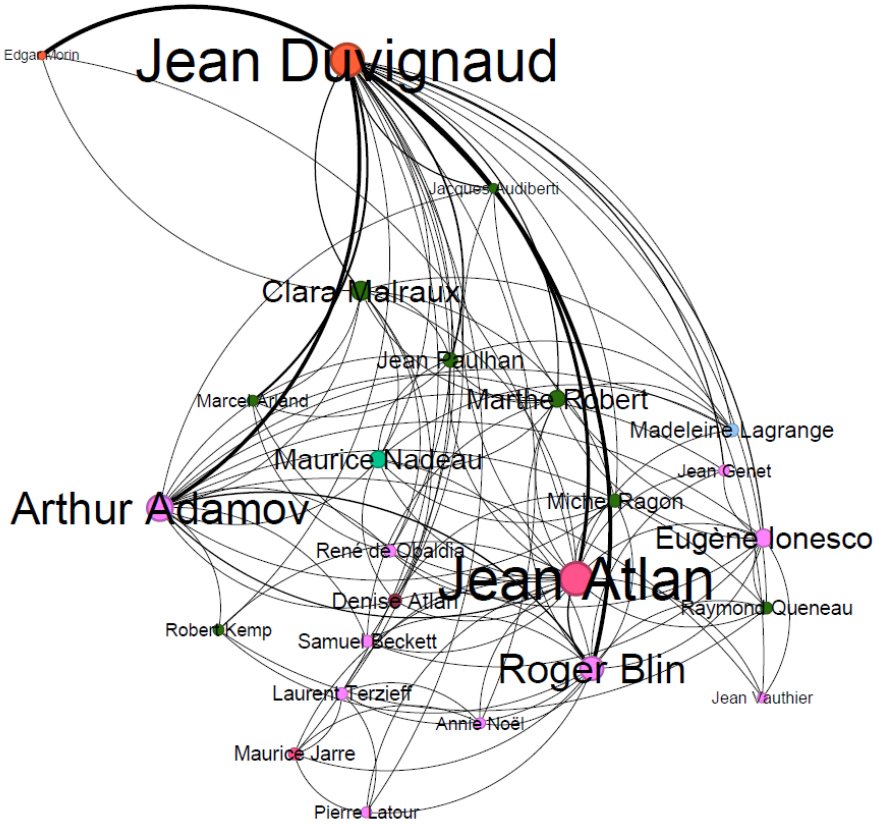


Figure 4: Jean Duvignaud's social network, "Jean Atlan" filter

The writer Michel Ragon recounts that on Saturday evenings Atlan was one of the few members of the artistic and intellectual community who preferred to stay at home rather than "wander from café to café" (Ragon 1989, 74), prompting people to go directly to his studio. A diverse crowd attended these gatherings, and Jean Duvignaud "was among the regulars", along with the playwright Arthur Adamov (Ragon 1989, 74). Atlan performed the role of host and entertainer, offering improvisations and parodies. It was at Atlan's that Jean Duvignaud met Roger Blin and Arthur Adamov, who became close friends and introduced him to the *Nouveau Théâtre*, Artaud, and Brecht.

As for Jean Duvignaud, he rented a room from Senator Léo Hamon, which he called his "attic", where he had "set up a stage". There, gathered artists (Atlan), theatre practitioners (Blin, Adamov), writers (Clara Malraux, Georges Perec, Francis Ponge), and intellectuals (Morin, Barthes), who rarely met each other but to whom he was "bound by affinities of pleasure or collaboration" (Duvignaud 1993, 22). More than performances among friends "intoxicated by theatre" (Duvignaud 2006, 39) took place there: individuals discovered one another, formed bonds, communicated, and inspired

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each other. It was in the homes of unifying figures—leaders and influential amateurs—that this creative sociability took shape and spread. By actively participating, Jean Duvignaud emerges as a mediator of this modern theatre.

The "Troupe Leaders"

The socio-historian Marjorie Glas defines "troupe leaders" (*chefs de troupe*) in a 2018 article (Gas 2018). This term refers to the "founder and leader of the troupe", a figure that emerged after the war and became dominant in decentralized, avant-garde theatre until the mid-1950s. These individuals displayed strong personalities and unquestionable reputations, enabling them to gather young followers in the name of the ideal of popular theatre. They thus became central elements of the theatrical networks structured around them: recruiting actors, uniting teams, sharing their networks, and being, in a sense, endorsed by critics who saw in these charismatic personalities the promise of "a return of dramatic art to its original dimension" (Théâtre Populaire 1953). This centrality and power of attraction are perceptible in Jean Duvignaud's network: Jean Vilar, Roger Blin, and others stand out in our visualizations as unifying figures. Indeed, Figure 3 clearly shows Jean Vilar linking the two most significant constellations of the graph: that of intellectual gatherings and that organized around the theatre criticism journal *Théâtre Populaire*.

7 The Proximity between Creation and Criticism

Jean Duvignaud's network also illustrates the proximity between theatre practitioners and the critics of *Théâtre Populaire*, through the link between publisher Robert Voisin and director Jean Vilar, who connected the journal and the group of playwrights, as well as through Jean Duvignaud himself, who maintained strong ties with both poles.

In any case, observation of the graph demonstrates how the *Nouveau Théâtre*, and particularly the *Théâtre National Populaire* (TNP), its most visible expression, relied on intellectuals and literary and theatrical criticism journals to ensure visibility and promotion. The journal *Théâtre Populaire* is a singular case in the world of art criticism. It was genuinely conceived as an organ dedicated to serving a specific theatrical genre, and was concretely an offshoot of the TNP, having been created in 1953 at the initiative of Jean Vilar and Robert Voisin, director of Éditions de L'Arche, to support and explicate the work of the TNP through criticism. Its purpose was therefore to educate audiences in the appreciation of theatre, to popularize it by disseminating both classical and modern repertoire, and to encourage audiences to attend financially accessible performances with social and educational values. Léa Valette's thesis on the sites of theatre criticism in France (Valette 2014), as well as Marco Consolini's synthesis on *Théâtre Populaire* (Consolini 1998), shed light on the proximity and functioning of these two poles. These ensembles were interrelated and mutually supportive, and as a result, the cultural environment of the intelligentsia gathered around the *Nouveau Théâtre* – which also included representatives of the literary avant-garde and the humanities – while ostensibly directed towards the public sphere, in fact functioned as a closed system.

Published in : BRISTAULT CANOVA, Juliette ; CHANTRAINE BRAILLON, Cécile ; ŽUGIĆ BORIĆ, Anamarija (dir.), *Performing Arts in the Digital Age. Research, Archives, and Innovation*, Editions des archives contemporaines, ISBN: 9782813005588, doi: 10.17184/eac.9782813005588

Through these visualizations, it becomes clear that Jean Duvignaud was both a witness to and an actor in a rupture, as he left the journal quickly, in 1954. For the journal to remain viable, it had to critique French theatrical production indiscriminately. Under the impetus of its most prominent contributors—Roland Barthes and Bernard Dort—in order to mark the difference between popular and bourgeois theatre, discourse shifted away from aesthetic considerations towards social impact. This ideological positioning also produced an effect of enclosure, and its impact on the public the *Nouveau Théâtre* sought to reach was all the more limited given that *Théâtre Populaire* was distributed on an exceedingly small scale (Consolini 1998, 38-39). Ultimately, the *Nouveau Théâtre* failed in its ambition to be a "popular" alternative and became an elitist form of entertainment for a socio-intellectual elite, even as it positioned itself as a didactic leisure activity, an elevation of the senses and the mind accessible to all. Subsequently, the phenomenon of the happening and the emergence of the Living Theatre continued the project of artistic and aesthetic innovation, exploring the margins of the relationship with the spectator, while completely abandoning the popular and didactic dimension of the project initiated by the *Nouveau Théâtre*.

8 Conclusion

Socio-historical analysis of the theatrical world of the second half of the twentieth century remains in its infancy; there is little scholarly literature addressing the issue by linking the worlds of creation and criticism and by defining networks of producers of theatrical culture. The "Jean Duvignaud" focus thus opens up avenues for analyzing unexplored, little-studied, or overlooked phenomena: such as the existence, alongside "troupe leaders", of influential personalities not originating from the theatrical world, whose number and notoriety suggest that they fully participated in this moment of creation; the fact that this heterogeneous microcosm could gather and create outside theatre-specific environments, in private spaces; and the illustration of the paradox inherent in the social and educational aims of avant-garde culture, whose ideological and aesthetic commitments became increasingly exclusionary and elitist, leading it ultimately to withdraw into itself.

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