TOWARDS A SURREALIST DRAMA:
THE THEATRE OF ALFRED JARRY AND GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

by

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I should like to express my deep appreciation to Dr. B.S. Pocknell whose advice and encouragement have been invaluable to me in the composition of this dissertation.
Mais il mange de la viande de pourceau
et pisse tout debout. Je le prends
pour un fou ou un hérétique.

(Soliman in Jarry's Ubu Enchaîné, III, 8).
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INTRODUCTION

Georges Pillement's simplistic statement, on the occasion of the reprise of *Ubu Roi* in 1922, "... il nous a paru qu'il y avait un abîme entre l'humour d'Apollinaire et la grosse niaiserie d'Ubu Roi. ..." serves to illustrate the cursory and often superficial nature of those studies - we except Henri Béhar's excellent *Etude sur le théâtre dada et surréaliste* written in 1967 - which have mentioned the close relationship of Jarry's drama to that of Apollinaire.

For such a study implies more than a restatement of Apollinaire's surrealistic theatrical creations and Jarry's childlike farce. Not only questioning, and finally abolishing the rules of dramatic procedure which, though modernised in the work of the Symbolist and Scandinavian dramatists, were still being followed with conspicuous success in their later post-Romantic form by writers at the turn of the century, Jarry (1873-1907) and Apollinaire (1880-1918) use the stage to symbolise their own reconstitution of aesthetic realities. The theatre, in their hands, becomes a theatre of action and innovation rather than of...

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word and realism, so that a critique of their humour constitutes but one part of our study.

Humour itself, especially in the case of Jarry, becomes, as we shall see in Ubu Roi, an attitude to life, and both authors endeavour to ally their reconstitution of theatrical reality to an original attitude towards social reality.

We have not dealt with Charles Morin's claim that he and his brother, not Jarry, wrote Ubu Roi, while they were at the Lycée de Rennes. It will made clear in the first chapter that the mise en scène creates the originality of the play as much as the text itself. Lugné-Poe, the director of the play in 1896, clarifies the issue thus:

Que Jarry ait ou non participé en chef à la formation d'Ubu Roi, cela n'a aucune importance. Il est bien certain que la flamme et la géné ont été chez lui et non ailleurs. Parce de collégiens on satire sociale, que nous importe! C'est le résultat qui intéresse. . .

We have attempted to show how the original mise en scène and action of their plays indicates a development from Symbolism towards Surrealism in the work of Jarry and Apollinaire. Hence, we have not considered the overtly

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2 Lugné-Poe in L'Eclair, January 20, 1922, quoted by Charles Chassé D'Ubu Roi au Douanier Rousseau (Paris, 1947), p. 90. It was in Chassé's earlier book, Les Sources d'Ubu Roi (Paris, 1921), that Jarry's authorship was first questioned.
Symbolist Les Minutes de Sable Mémorial published in 1894 and César-Antéchrist\(^3\) published in 1895, in which the Mallarméan influence is manifest, preferring to concentrate on the three main plays of the Ubu cycle, Ubu Roi (written 1886-91), Ubu Cocu (written 1893) and Ubu Enchaîné (written 1899) in which the metaphysical symbolism of the earlier publications is superceded by the mockery of bourgeois values and the brutal fantasies which endeared Jarry to the Surrealists.

Similarly, we have not treated Apollinaire's Couleur du Temps (written in 1918), his apology for the modern poet, nor his Italian comedy, Casanova (1916), since they have little to add to Les Mamelles de Tirésias in the development of a Surrealist drama.

The essence of this study lies largely, therefore, in situating both dramatists in the context of recent literary history. Hence their theories and their reaction to nineteenth-century predecessors will be considered in the first two chapters. The third chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the texts in the light of those theories,

\(^3\) It should be noted, nevertheless, that the "acte terrestre" of César-Antechrist presents Ubu himself as the Anti-christ in a répétition of Ubu-Roi, I, 6 - IV, 6. So the nihilistic (Nietzsche's Anti-christ was written in 1888) posture of Ubu was known before the first performance of Ubu Roi in 1896.
and primarily of the satirical and fantasy elements of humour which lead to the iconoclasm of Jarry's parody of contemporary theatre and Apollinaire's sur-réalisme, discussed in the fourth chapter. As a result of these considerations, we endeavour to situate both writers in relation to the Surrealists themselves, in the final chapter.

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4 We shall often use this word, mentioned by Apollinaire in his preface to Cocteau's Parade in 1917, in order to distinguish his concept of Surrealism from that of the Surrealists themselves, though in his preface to Les Mamelles de Tiresias, the hyphen is abandoned.
CHAPTER I

JARRY'S VISION OF AN ICONOCLASTIC DRAMA

Il n'y a pas d'absolu, jamais!
dans aucun art! S'il y a un
théâtre, c'est qu'une mode l'a
créé hier et qu'une mode l'emportera
demain.

Emile Zola, Le Naturalisme au Théâtre

In an article written soon after the scandalous
first performance of Ubu Roi, Alfred Jarry compares his
theater with that of his predecessors:

Le temps est nécessaire parce que ceux qui
sont plus âgés que nous -- et que nous respectons
à ce titre -- ont vécu parmi certaines œuvres
qui ont eu pour eux le charme des objets usuels, et
ils sont nés avec une âme qui était assortie à
ces œuvres, et garantie devant aller jusqu'en l'an
mil huit cent quatre vingt . . . et tant. Nous ne
les pousserons pas de l'épaule, n'étant plus au
XVIIe siècle; nous attendrons que leur âme
raisonnable par rapport à elle-même et aux
simulacres qui entouraient leur vie, se soit
arrêtée. . . .

Jarry's iconoclasm has, he hopes, rung the death toll for
the bourgeois theatre that prevailed during the nineteenth
century. His ironical mind notes not only the imminence
of a theatrical revolution but also that the moribund drama
of the Parisian boulevards corresponded, and perhaps pro-

longed, a certain attitude to life.

The various kinds of Romantic drama do indeed reflect aspects of French society, though in an extremely stylised manner. The predecessors attacked by Jarry develop the "realism", in their depiction of society, that Hugo demands in his *Préface à Cromwell* of 1827. Seeking a liberal implementation of monologues and asides, in order to reveal the psychology of the characters, and the abolition of the traditional unities of place and time, he nevertheless contributes to the subsequent artificiality of bourgeois drama by insisting: "Le vulgaire et le trivial même doivent avoir un accent." Qualities and faults are to be exaggerated for the sake of dramatic potency, main characters being taken inevitably from the middle and upper classes so that the epic ambiance of Classical tragedy could be maintained.

Hugo is an eclectic, expurgating reality in order that only those elements agreeable to his bourgeois audience remain. Eugène Scribe, writing between 1815 and 1860, leads the way in the practice of Hugo's theories, his technically brilliant pièces bien faites, based on a complex plot and rarely gratuitous peripeteias, and often replete with light

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social satire, achieving instant success with the theatre-going public. His Comédies de moeurs, such as Le Mariage d'Argent (1827) and La Calomnie (1840), maintain their popularity because they treat the problems of marriage, dowries, and reputation which obsess Parisian society.

Jarry therefore attacks what becomes essentially a social drama, especially in the hands of Dumas fils whose play Le Demi-Monde (1855) illustrates the moralizing role of the pièce à thèse, in which characters serve to develop a certain theme, in the case of Le Demi-Monde the unscrupulous ambitions of women in high society and the care which the honnête homme should take in assuring himself of his loved one's impeccable reputation. Though he develops a pre-naturalist theme in Le Fils Naturel (1858), the monotonous dialogues and discursive monologues do not enhance the "realism" sought by Hugo. Likewise the melodrama of Sardou's drames historiques, of which Patrie! (1869) is an example, tend to make a mockery of true realism through the often violent action and the histrionic exhibitionism of the performers, the author consistently flattering the illusions of the public. Moreover, both drame (tragedy) and pièce

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See Stéphane Mallarmé, "Notes sur le théâtre", Oeuvres Complètes (Paris 1945), p. 337, where he writes of Sardou's comedies: "Appuyant sur des moï de rencontre, nommément il en fait Monsieur un tel, Madame, une telle et satisfait à la badauderie sans présenter, d'après la haute esthétique, plutôt d'essentielles figures."
(comedy and social drama) evince a propensity for the "mot d'esprit" which Jarry later criticises. Yet what Jarry is most acutely aware of in contemporary Romantic drama is a collusion between writer and public:

Il y a deux choses qu'il siérait -- si l'on voulait descendre jusqu'au public -- de lui donner, et qu'on lui donne: des personnages qui pensent comme lui... et en second lieu des sujets et péripéties naturelles...  

The artificial realism of the plays performed at the Vaudeville and Gymnase theatres symbolises the decadence of the theatre-going public as much as that of the dramatist. Innovators such as Zola, whose work Le Naturalisme au Théâtre (1881) deprecates Romantic drama and erects the new idol of Naturalism, or total realism, Mallarmé and Jarry are concerned about the lack of intellectual vitality on the part of the audience. Zola, while denying that escapism is the main reason for such degeneracy is convinced that the spectator does not go to the theatre for intellectual stimulation:

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4 See Jarry, "Questions de Théâtre", p. 154.

5 Jarry, "De l'inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", Mercure de France LXXXI (September 1896), pp. 467-468.

6 We are reluctant to attempt any precise definition of Realism, the nineteenth-century aspects of which are treated in detail by René Dumesnil in his book Le Réalisme et le Naturalisme (Paris 1955).
C'est une fatigue que d'aller à la Comédie Française pour un homme qui a bien dîné; il faut qu'il comprenne, grosse besogne.7

He goes from an evening's entertainment, a diversion from daily routine, for wit and dramatic intrigue, but also, and perhaps more significantly:

Dans ses théâtres à loges et scènes en boîte d'optique, qui ne sont que la caricature des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, la bourgeoisie parvenue à la fin du XIXe siècle tente d'imiter pour elle-même la splendeur des fêtes de cour et se complaît dans le réalisme le plus banal.8

The bourgeoisie, conscious of its powerful material rôle in society, is seeking to identify itself with the former glories of the aristocracy. To the modern reader, its drama often seems insipid, but the Parisian public is looking not for profound political, social or aesthetic leitmotifs but a theatrical atmosphere which would reassure it that the stability of the republican system, solidified since 1830 but badly shaken by the Commune of 1870, is being maintained.

It is in the most direct of the literary Arts that it could find such reassurance in a theatre which presents the bourgeois and his ideals in a sympathetic light.

In Ubu Roi, Jarry is intent on mocking not only the theatre of the day but also the social values which that


8 Denis Babelt, La Mise en Scène contemporaine, 1887-1914 (Paris 1968), p. 66.
theatre portrays. The stability of such values on stage bears little relation to the disunity and the resultant doubts and fears which reigned in France after 1870.\footnote{The deaths of 20,000 Parisians during the Commune, and the deportation of 7,500 others to New Caledonia created a permanent rift between upper and lower classes. Moreover, continual in-fighting amongst Monarchists, Republicans and Radicals, subsequently fermented by the anti-German Nationalist movement of Boulanger, Déroulède, Barrès and Maurras, and the rise of the Trades-unions, led to instability and frequent changes of government.}

The young intellectuals, of which Jarry was one, decried the democratic materialism of the Third Republic. They became egotistically nationalistic like Barrès,\footnote{Maurice Barrès, Sous l'oeil des Barbares (1887), \textit{Oeuvres Complètes} I (Paris, 1921), p. 115: "Insulter la société, les hommes et les idées... Se rouler soi-même et leur sotte existence dans la boue." One notes the iconoclastic fervour evoked later, but with no nationalistic intent, by Jarry.} escapist like the Symbolists, or sarcastically \textit{m'enfoutiste} like Jarry, who was candidly negative in his attitude towards the Franco-German conflict:

\begin{quote}
Etant né en 1873, la guerre de 1870 est dans mon souvenir trois ans au-dessous de l'oubli absolu... Je demande la guerre, la guerre immédiate (je ne suis point soldat).\footnote{\textit{L'Alsace-Lorraine et l'Etat actuel des esprits"}, Mercure de France, XCV (December, 1897), p. 653.}
\end{quote}

So Jarry is undermining the theatre which reassures the bourgeoisie that its middle-class values, in spite of the multifarious political and social crises, are still wholesome. He is, in fact, one of the first men of the theatre.
to mock these values for their unwholesomeness, deriving his
dramatic aesthetic partly from a satire of the bourgeois.
We hasten to add, however, that Jarry seems not to have any
profound social motives beyond the creation of humour in his
satire.\textsuperscript{12}

Like Jarry, the Symbolists, to whose movement he was
to belong, see little potential in social drama. Théodore
de Banville claims:

\ldots c'est pour oublier tous ces ennuis que je suis
venu au théâtre, \textsuperscript{13}

while Mallarmé seizes on the mystical potentiality of the
drama:

\ldots le foyer évident des plaisirs pris en commun,
aussi et tout bien réfléchi la majestueuse ouverture
sur le mystère dont on est au monde pour
envisager la grandeur, cela même que le citoyen,
qui en aura idée, fonde le droit de réclamer à
un État comme compensation de l'amoindrissement
social.\textsuperscript{14}

This desire for escapism on the part of the Symbolists
would seem to influence the largely aesthetic préoccupations

\textsuperscript{12}Jarry's use of the satirical as a poetic element in
his drama is discussed on pp. 53-56.

\textsuperscript{13}Théodore de Banville, "Préface à ses Odes Funambules-

\textsuperscript{14}Stéphane Mallarmé, "Le Genre ou des Modernes",
1886-87) \textit{Oeuvres Complètes}, p. 314.
of Jarry's theatre, though he does not intend to let the bourgeois audience escape from his satire. Mallarmé, the leading theoretician of the Symbolist drama, emphasises the purely aesthetic, escapist and metaphysical aims of his work in the statement:

Il n'est point d'autre sujet, sachez bien!
 l'antagonisme de rêve chez l'homme avec les fatalités de son existence départies par le malheur.

The theatre offers the possibility of attaining the Mallarméan absolute, a synthesis between man's conscious and the material universe, by means of a conceptualisation, in the mind of the spectator. Of the symbolism immanent in the poetry and movements of the actor. Mallarmé's theatre is not so much one of story and dialogue as a synthesis of all the arts, painting, music, ballet and poetry combining, with the latter playing the dominant rôle, to stimulate the spectator into an appreciation of the metaphysics of poetic drama. The ballerina becomes a catalyst for the provocation of such rêverie:

... elle te livre à travers le voile dernier qui toujours reste, la nudité de tes concepts et silencieusement écrira ta vision à la façon

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15 See Jarry, "Questions de Théâtre", p. 154, for his admiration of the Symbolists: "... la foule ne comprend Peer Gynt...; elle ne comprend pas davantage la prose de Baudelaire, la précise syntaxe de Mallarmé. Elle ignore Rimbaud..."

16 Mallarmé, "Hamlet", in "Crayonné au Théâtre", (1886), Oeuvres Complètes, p. 300.
d'un signe, qu'elle est.\textsuperscript{17}

The ballerina -- and consequently the lone actor in Mallarmé's projected definitive drama, \textit{Igitur}, which was to demonstrate on stage the principles of his \textit{Livre} of the universe -- enriches the dulled mind of the spectator by the suggestiveness\textsuperscript{18} of her movements which, combining with a "décot vivant" transcend their materiality to become spiritualized in the now fertilized mind of the onlooker, as well as in the mind of the performer. This theory heralds Jarry's ideal drama, upon which he elaborates:

\begin{quote}
\ldots [\textit{le théâtre idéal}] n'est ni fête public, ni leçon, ni délassement, mais action, l'élite participe à la réalisation de la création d'un des siens, qui voit vivre en soi-même en cette élite l'être créé par soi; plaisir actif. \ldots .\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

Just as Mallarmé was to consider a select audience of between eight and twenty-four people as an ideal élite of intellectual-theatre-goers, so Jarry carries this esotericism even further, scorning the idea of a theatre appealing to a

\textsuperscript{17}Mallarmé, "Ballets" in \textit{Crayonne au Théâtre"}, (1886), \textit{ibid.}, p. 307.

\textsuperscript{18}See Mallarmé, "Réponse à l'enquête sur l'évolution littéraire", (1891), \textit{ibid.}, p. 869: "Nommer un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème qui est faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu; le suggérer, voilà le rêve."

\textsuperscript{19}Jarry, 3\textsuperscript{e} Argument, "Douze Arguments sur le Théâtre", \textit{Tout Ubu}, p. 148.
general public which approves only of the material produced by Dumas fils, Labiche, Augier, and Sardou, preferring to write for those who may benefit from the powers of suggestion in his drama and who can create a multiple reality in their minds out of his symbols.

It is significant that while Jarry writes on "l'inutilité du théâtre au théâtre", Block describes Mallarmé's theatre as a "detheatricalization" of bourgeois conventions in which "Linear anecdote is replaced by a wholly poetic evocation, not the adventure of the Hérodiade, but of its inner consequences... The rejection of the conventional sources of dramatic effect is complete." Theatre is then, not only an external spectacle but an interior vision experienced by spectator and actor alike, in both Mallarmé's and Jarry's drama.

Zola and Mallarmé are the theoreticians, Antoine and Lugné-Poe are the practitioners. Antoine, director of the

20 Cf. Jarry, "Questions de Théâtre", pp. 154-155: "... la foule est une masse inerte et incompréhensible qu'il faut frapper de temps en temps, pour qu'on connaisse à ses grognements d'ours où elle est -- et où elle en est." Cf. also Jarry, "De l'inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", p. 472: "... nous ne comprenons pas cette idée d'un théâtre du peuple..." Mallarmé envisages two publics, the élite who hear the monologue and create the scene and action in their minds (Cf. Jacques Schérer, Le Livre de Mallarmé (Paris 1957), p. 29: "Le lecteur devient donc, non seulement spectateur, mais aussi metteur en scène, dans ce théâtre tout intérieur") and the general public who buys the 480,000 copies of the Livre which would subsequently be printed.

21 Haskell M. Block, Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama,
Théâtre Libre formed in 1887 is largely responsible for the dissemination of Zola's ideas, recognising, like Jarry, that the contemporary theatre has not only faded into decadence but also has failed to achieve the "realism" which Hugo idealistically enunciated in 1827. Though he still presents bourgeois comedies for the sake of financial solvency, Antoine endeavours, at the Théâtre Libre (1887-1894), at the Théâtre Antoine (1897-1906) and at the Odéon (1906-1913), to offer the audience the total illusion of a reality in which working-class poverty as well as middle-class manners and aristocratic grandeur exist. In order to create a total illusion, the actor must become the character, assimilating his rôle completely, and must live the drama as if he were in his own home, forgetting about the audience. As Antoine himself writes:

... un dos montré à propos donne bien au public la sensation qu'on ne s'occupe pas de lui et que c'est arrivé. 22

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22 André Antoine, "Manifeste" for the Théâtre Libre (1887) quoted in Francis Pruner's Les Luttes d'Antoine au Théâtre Libre (Paris, 1964), p. 224. Pruner, ibid., p. 131, accurately summarises the difference between Antoine's work and that of the later Romantic dramatists, in his comments on Björnson's Une Faillite, performed June 12-13th, 1893: "Enfin un pathétique sans nulle tirade, un moralisme sans raisonneur, un humour sans mot d'esprit, c'étaient là des qualités qui ne se rencontraient guère chez Augier, Dumas fils ou Sardou."
Ironically, it is against such an assimilation that Jarry reacts, for in his theatre the actor remains conscious of the fact that action, and not plot, constitutes the true reality of drama. However, Jarry does praise the efforts of the Théâtre Libre and, like Antoine, denigrates the exhibitionism of the "vedette" in Romantic drama. Antoine sets a precedent for Jarry, moreover, in his conscious provocation of scandal. Uproar is created by his production of Paul Alexis' *La Fin de Lucie Pellegrin*, in which the life of a prostitute is portrayed somewhat too vividly for the liking of the Parisian critics. Francisque Sarcey, the doyen of critics at the time, denounces Antoine:

... l'art n'a rien à voir avec ces ordures... C'est le vice ignoble sans un rayon de gaité ou de poésie qui en illumine la laideur.  

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23 Jarry, 2e Argument, "Douze Arguments sur le Théâtre", Tout Ubu, p. 147; "Théâtre d'Art, Théâtre Libre, Oeuvre ont pu... découvrir parmi plusieurs erreurs... [des dramatuges qui] ont écrit des oeuvres justifiant presque la définition du chef-d'oeuvre, et qui en tout cas ont perçu le nouveau et se sont manifestés créateurs."

Jarry is in general very loath to praise, "créateur" being perhaps the designation most valued by him.

24 Jarry, 7e Argument, *ibid.*, p. 150: "Il ne faut pas d'"étoiles"... ."

25 October 19th, 1888.

The critics, setting their standards in accordance with the
delicate feelings of the public, maintain gaiety, poetry and
beauty as the moderate prerequisite for drama. Antoine
challenges such mediocrity by daring, through the all-em-
bracing realism of Zola's Naturalism, to portray the social
and psychological problems of the lower classes. Jarry soon
carries provocation to even more extreme lengths by presenting
his bourgeois audience with a grotesque caricature of itself
and the diluted "realism" of its drama.

Antoine's aggression encourages the formation of
other new theatres, significantly Paul Fort's Théâtre d'Art
(1890), 27 and Lugné-Poe's Théâtre de l'Œuvre (1893), both
oriented towards Symbolism rather than towards Naturalism.
The latter theatre is of the greatest importance to Jarry,
because Lugné-Poe directs the first performance of Ubu Roi
on December 10th, 1896. In an article, 28 written as a

27 Paul Fort exhibits the influence of Mallarmé and Wagner
in his desire for a "correspondance" of the arts and the senses.
Indeed one idea of his is Baudelairean: a painting by the Im-
pressionist Sérusier is revealed to the audience for three
minutes, while music is played and perfumes pervade the "salon".
He heralds the ideas on a synthesis of the art which Apollinaire
evokes in his preface to Cocteau's Parade.

28 Lugné-Poe, "A Propos de l'inutilité du Théâtre au
Théâtre", Mercure de France, LXXXII (October, 1896), pp. 90-
98.
sequel to Jarry's "De l'inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", Lugné-Poe outlines his dramatic theory. The duality of actor and character must be abolished: "Devenir brusquement un" is the aim of the actor, who must no longer rely on the realism of gesture, the emotions in his face, his eyes and in his speech sufficing to unite author, actor and audience. Indeed the same mystical union beloved of Mallarmé is evoked by Lugné-Poe's ideal:

l'entente harmonique des volontés de l'auteur et du public voulant clamer leurs craintes et leurs espoirs.

Mallarmé, Lugné-Poe and Jarry, in then different ways, seek to involve the audience, by a means of the actor-catalyst, in the action itself.

Lugné-Poe, too, shows himself not to be averse to provocation in his production of Ibsen's Un Ennemi du Peuple, a virulently social drama designed to offend the bourgeois mentality. The reaction to the play, described by Alfred Vallette, proved no less violent than the reception given to Ubu Roi three years later:

Soirée houleuse, ainsi qu'il fallait s'y attendre... Il ne s'attaqua guère... qu'à des abstractions:

29 Ibid., p. 97.

30 Ibid., p. 98.
l'esprit protestant, la russophilie trop poussée, le suffrage universel, etc. Cela suffit à 'déchaîner' le tapage. ... Les protestations partaient en tout cas et à coup sûr de groupes appartenant à cette 'majorité compacte' dont Un Ennemi du Peuple nous montre le gracieux tableau. Ce ne fut durant un bon quart d'heure qu'applaudissements, invectives, vociférations. ... 31

This and subsequent avant-garde enterprises led to the Lugné-Poe-Jarry liaison that created Ubu Roi, for they both sought a variety of interpretation, a quality not sought by Antoine in spite of his innovatory aspirations:

La différence se pourrroit saisir d'abord sans l'interprétation: il y a tellement de façons de comprendre. 32

Such is Vallette's conclusion in his discussion of the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, contrasted with the Théâtre Libre.

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The play was performed at the Bouffes du Nord (November 9-10, 1893). Both Lugné-Poe (Chapter Three) and Antoine (e.g. Ibsen's Les Revenants (May 30, 1890), Le Canard Sauvage (April 27-28, 1891), Hauptmann's Les Tisserands (May 29-30, 1893), presented many foreign plays to compensate for the lack of French plays which treated the social and psychological problems of the lower classes, as demanded by Antoine, or the universe of symbols and mystery, expressed by Lugné-Poe.

JARRY AND SYMBOLISM

Jarry's critical works reveal several parallels with the work of earlier theoreticians. His basic antipathy towards the popular playwrights of the time is hardly disguised:

... MM. Augier, Dumas Fils, Labiche, etc. que nous avons en le malheur de lire avec un ennui profond, et dont il est vraisemblable que la génération jeune, après les avoir peut-être lus n'a gardé aucun souvenir. 33

Condemning the stereotyped, contrived "realism" which the audience assimilates with no mental effort whatsoever, aided as it often is by a "personnage prologal" 34 who explains the plot, Jarry would seem to be criticising the work of Shakespeare, very popular during the nineteenth century and revered by the Romantics as the symbol of their opposition to the tenets of Racinian drama. Yet both Lugné-

33 Jarry, "Questions de Théâtre", p. 152. We should note that there were considerable differences between the writers mentioned here. Labiche wrote outright farce; Dumas' fils led the way in the pièce à thèse, at times quite realistic and outspoken in his treatment of modern themes; Augier, whose play Le Gendre de M. Poirier achieved considerable success, developed the pièce à idées, differing from the pièce à thèse in that it presented a counterbalancing argument. Zola admits the talent of Augier, "plus humain et plus puissant" than Dumas' fils. (Le Naturalisme au Théâtre, p. 284).

34 Jarry, "De l'inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", p. 467.
Poe\textsuperscript{35} and Jarry\textsuperscript{36} admire the plays of Shakespeare who, one feels, did not profess to write conventional "realism", often creating works akin to poetic drama and fantasy. Characters like Hamlet are derived from the world of the imagination, and Jarry likes to think of him as an abstraction\textsuperscript{37} rather than as a character taken from contemporary social reality.

Drama, for Jarry, becomes the realization of the poet's imaginative fantasies. Jean-Richard Bloch will define the theatre thirty years later as "vision et audition".\textsuperscript{38} Jarry intends to emphasise the same element, while assuring that they shall be appreciated for themselves rather than as the means to a complicated plot and psychological subleties. He insists:

\textsuperscript{35}See Lugné-Poe, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 90-91, on the formation of an Elizabethan stage.

\textsuperscript{36}See Jarry, \textit{ibid}, p. 468, and \textit{2\textsuperscript{e} Argument, Tout Ubu}, p. 147, for favourable mentions of Shakespeare.

\textsuperscript{37}Jarry, \textit{4\textsuperscript{e} Argument, Tout Ubu}, p. 149: "...Hamlet, par exemple, est plus vivant qu'un homme qui passe, car il est plus compliqué avec plus de synthèse, et même seul vivant, car il est une abstraction qui marche". One suspects that this idea was taken from Mallarmé. See Schérer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 40. "On sait que l'oeuvre dramatique qu'il admire le plus est l'Hamlet de Shakespeare; c'est, dit-il, 'la pièce que je crois celle par excellence". Hamlet is a character who, concentrating on his own interiority, "lisant au livre de lui-même, haut et vivant Signe, nie du regard des autres". Schérer quotes from Mallarmé, \textit{Oeuvres Complètes}, p. 299 and p. 1557.

Any theatrical adaptation of a novel — and Jarry may well be thinking of those plays based on naturalist novels — will almost certainly contain a complex plot and a lengthy analysis of character, elements detracting from Jarry's prime concern, the action itself. One suspects that Jarry has reservations to make about the merits of Antoine in that the latter's adaptations and "réalisme illusionniste" leave little to the imagination.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Jarry rejects any over-elaboration of the décor:

The creativity of the spectator's imagination, for which the action and visual aspects should be signs rather

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39 Jarry, 4o Argument, op. cit., p. 148.

40 Antoine as director of the Théâtre Libre, adapts Zola's Thérèse Raquin (May 20, 1892), Une Page d'Amour (1893), and the Concours' Sœur Philomène (October 10, 1887) among others.

41 Jarry, "De l'inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", p. 468.
than literal reality, cannot find expression if confronted with a naturalistic décor ("une qualité") but would be stimulated by a scene presenting a number of incongruous objects which require the spectator's mental application in order to assume their own reality in his mind. The drama will take place in the auditorium as much as on the stage.

... [Le] décor abstrait, n'en donnant que la substance 42

a décor contrasting with the precision of Antoine's backgrounds, evokes a vagueness of time and place and nourished the symbolistic aims of the ideal theatre. Changes of scene are to be indicated summarily:

L'écriteau apporté selon les changements de lieu évite le rappel périodique au non-esprit par les changements des décors matériels que l'on aperçoit surtout à l'instant de leur différence. 43

The imaginative processes of the spectator's mind must not be interrupted by the changes of scenery frequently employed

42 Ibid., p. 469.

in realistic drama.

Jarry is concerned primarily with the aesthetic problems of the theatre, especially of Symbolist theatre. The audience should, ideally, not be concentrating on the plot, which in Ubu Cocu becomes subordinated to the individual scene, but should spiritualise the poetic effects of word and action, so that the drama may be understood on several planes. As such, Jarry's theatre echoes the suggestivity advocated by Mallarmé.

Hence, he recommends that the work of art should, if it is to attain some degree of perfection, be extra-temporal:

"...mettre son oeuvre en dehors du temps, je crois que c'est là l'ambition de l'artiste,..."

Moreover, the eternal aspect of an idea cannot be portrayed in terms of the rational and the real, because Jarry, already influenced by Mallarmé and the Symbolist poets in his works Les Minutes de Sable Mémorial and César Antéchrist, realises that the rational world constitutes but one aspect of the relativity of reality:

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"Le dramaturge comme tout artiste cherche la vérité, dont il y a plusieurs. . ." 45

These truths may be interpreted as the poetic planes which Mallarme and Jarry try to evoke, and though Jarry's work differs in many ways from that of the Symbolist dramatists, such as Maeterlinck and Quillard, his theories nevertheless seem to indicate a gradual abandonment of the traditional values of bourgeois "bon sens" and logic which Apollinaire, in spite of his sur-réalisme continues to respect.

Yet it is the actor rather than the décor who assumes the crucial rôle in Jarry's theatre. He is no longer a tool for the analysis of character:

\[\ldots \text{il n'y a aucune espèce de raison d'écrire une œuvre sous forme dramatique, à moins que l'on ait eu la vision d'un personnage qu'il soit plus commode de lâcher sur une scène que d'analyser dans un livre.} 46\]

An actor is someone who acts, not someone who presents a confusion of personal and literary psychological traits in the midst of an ingenious plot. Drama is action, not anecdote.

We have already noted Jarry's desire for a 'décor abstrait'. In a brief note on Maeterlinck, he advocates

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45 Jarry, 1er Argument, Tout Ubu, p. 146.

46 Jarry, "Questions de Théâtre", ibid., p. 152.
"un théâtre abstrait"\textsuperscript{47} and later favourably describes Hamlet as "une abstraction qui marche".\textsuperscript{48} The actor, like the ballerina in Mallarmé's theories, is the source of a greater abstraction and spiritualisation of Man's and nature's characteristics. Though Jarry's theatre would not seem to seek the profound metaphysical goals of the Mallarméan mystère, it would nevertheless seem to search for a universalisation of human features and emotions, and because this totality would be beyond the scope of the rational world, it is called an abstract theatre.

This universalisation is to be achieved by simplifying the face of the actor. Going beyond the self-control of Lagne-Poe's actor, Jarry's will don a mask, thus presenting:

\begin{quote}
... l'effigie du personnage, laquelle n'aura pas comme à l'antique caractère de pleurs ou de rire (ce qui n'est pas un caractère) mais caractère du personnage.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
47 Jarry, 2\textsuperscript{e} Argument, ibid., pp. 146-147.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
48 See note 37, p. 17.
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49 Jarry, "De l'inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", p. 470. Not only is it a universalisation, but also an "externalisation", Jarry creating "le caractère éternel du personnage... inclus au masque..." ("De l'inutilité...", p. 470). The mask, because of its vagueness, forces the spectator to give the character meaning: "Le Théâtre, qui anime des masques impersonnels, n'est accessible qu'à qui se sent assez viril pour créer la vie". 4\textsuperscript{e} Argument, Tout Ubu, p. 149.
\end{flushright}
No longer will there be any confusion between actor and character, which in the theatre has frequently impaired the essential features of the latter.

The actor's personal features now hidden by the mask, a character can no longer be realistic, has become a symbol of certain primordial human essences and, as we shall see especially in *Ubu Cocu*, expresses his awareness of the fact that he is participating not in a real plot but in a contrived situation whose only reality is the action on stage.

Lighting is to be simplified in order to emphasise the characters' lack of realism.\(^{50}\) Linked with this deliberate reduction of the "effets" of theatrical production is a parallel diminution in the number of positions which the head and mask may take to six:

> Comme ce sont des expressions naturelles elles sont universelles.\(^{51}\)

The character thus becomes a generality, in the case of *Ubu*,

\(^{50}\) See Jarry, *ibid.*, p. 470.

adopting a special voice, in order to demonstrate his lack of individuality on the purely human plane.

The disciples of Romantic drama stereotyped their theatre in order to produce their own kind of reality:

un art réaliste moyen, étayé sur le bon sens et sur l'observation, à dose modérée; which its public, hypocritically delicate in taste, could accept. Jarry, by deliberate simplification, has also stereotyped his theatre, not to create an expurgated version of conventional reality but in order to produce a new reality in a symbolic fantasy world which the Ubu cycle will demonstrate.

As in the case of Zola, Mallarmé, Antoine and Lugné-Poe, Jarry produces his ideas in reaction not only to the contemporary theatre but also to the Parisian theatre-going public, enamoured as it is of the grandiose:


Thus the criticisms advanced by Zola and Mallarmé recur: the bourgeois theatre has lost in its bid to create a valid theatre, yielding to the pressures of a society trying to regain the relative stability of the Second Empire, and creating an atmosphere of short-lived cosiness for its audience. The rapid changes undergone by the literature of France during the nineteenth century makes Jarry realise that, though the public does not want change, new ideas must find expression in the theatre and that formal changes must be made:

\[ \ldots \text{il est insensé de vouloir exprimer des sentiments nouveaux dans une forme [conservée].} \]

There is, then, in Jarry's mind, an acute awareness of the vast changes to be made both in form and content, ignoring the wishes of the general public. Antoine had, in the opinion of Bloch, realised that both 'forme' and 'fond' of the drame bourgeois were dead:

\[ ^{54} \text{Jarry, 3\textsuperscript{e} Argument, Tout Ubu, p. 146.} \]
\[ ^{55} \text{Jarry, 10\textsuperscript{e} Argument, ibid., p. 150.} \]
Mais il n'était pas en son pouvoir de susciter des dramaturges comme il avait suscité des comédiens. L'art de la scène a anticipé l'art du poète. 56

He had, therefore, attempted renovation by compromise, 57 still clinging to the ideal of realism, forgetting that the solidity of "common-sense" reality, even conceived in liberal minds, had already been jolted by Lautréamont, Baudelaire and Rimbaud.

Jarry has no desire to compromise with the general public whatsoever. Since Mallarmé has already emphasised the importance of communion between actor and public, it is not surprising that Jarry's interest in symbolism should prompt him to investigate means of stimulating the public into creating some of spectacle in spite of itself, if not into an appreciation of the drama's poetic qualities.

Such stimulation first takes the form of satire, not in order to educate the spectators as Zola and Antoine would wish in their social drama, which still maintains the essential separation of actor and relatively passive audience, but in

56 Block, op. cit., p. 40.

57 A compromise that becomes more evident at the Théâtre Antoine and the Odéon.
order that the spectators should involve themselves in the drama. In the contemporary theatre, a play is largely designed for the amusement, relaxation or education of the audience, but Jarry's theatre presents something different:

Cet autre théâtre n'est... ni fête pour son public, ni leçon, ni délassement mais action; l'élite participe à la réalisation de la création d'un des siens... plaisir actif... dont la foule civique à la caricature dans l'acte de chair. 58

Jarry, far from being an idealistic socialist, envisages two kinds of audience for his plays: an élite of five hundred capable of understanding the seemingly arcane theories behind his drama, and the general public, which, because of its failure to comprehend and consequently violent reaction to his plays, will present, for the benefit of the élite, a symbolic caricature of the grotesque bourgeois personality which Ubu, the hero of his plays, partially represents. In this way, Jarry's ideal of total theatre is achieved.

It is significant that in the letter to Lugné-Poe in which he discusses the forthcoming presentation of Ubu-Roi, he advises that the costumes should preferably be modern, since the satire of the play is topical,59 while a month

58 Jarry, 3e Argument, op. cit., p. 148.

59 See Lugné-Poe, Acrobatics, pp. 161-162, for this letter written January 8, 1896.
later he notes regretfully: "La liberté [n'est] pas encore acquise au théâtre de violemment expulser celui qui ne comprend pas. ...60 However, in the same letter he contradictorily states: "... je ne vous ai parlé d'Ubu-Roi que parce qu'il a l'avantage d'être accessible à la majorité du public".61 Hence, it would seem that Jarry is not only a theoretician but a tactician. The satire in his plays will suggest poetic rather than didactic aims, but he whets the appetite of the public, whom he needs for the perfection of his total theatre in Ubu-Roi, by scandalously mentioning the possibility of expulsion.

In assessing the priorities of Jarry's critical works, one notes especially that the intends to employ satire primarily as an aesthetic device and as an aspect of Symbolism. Though he evinces a strong antipathy towards the general public, he gives expression in his articles of 1896 and 1897 to no nihilistic or anarchistic sentiments, such as are later imputed to him by critics.

60 Jarry, "De l'inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", p. 467.
61 See Lugné-Poe, ibid., p. 162.
CHAPTER II

APOLLINAIRE'S IDEAL OF A NEW SOCIAL DRAMA

La poésie doit être faite par tous, non par un. (Lautréamont)

Apollinaire's "play", Les Mamelles de Tirésias, though performed nearly twenty-one years after Ubu Roi, constitutes in some ways the author's reaction against the same kind of theatre condemned by Jarry, for the experiments of Antoine and Lugné-Poe do not have any immediate repercussions within France, the bourgeois comedies continuing to enjoy immense popularity until the outbreak of the First World War.

Antoine takes his provocative stand only on rare occasions, still managing to have his production of Hauptmann's Les Tisserands banned in March, 1898, because of its "biased" expression of lower-class life. Later, in November, 1901, the under-secretary of state for the Arts, Roujon, denounces Emile Brieux's public reading of his play Les Avariés, based on the hereditary effects of syphilis, and due to be performed by Antoine's troupe. The prejudice of the literary representatives of the middle-classes has, it seems, changed little since Sarcey's reaction to La Fin de Lucie Pellegrin in 1888, though Antoine eventually succeeds in staging Brieux's play.

Meanwhile, Lugné-Poe, concentrating largely, though by no means totally, on Symbolist drama, which — and one suspects Jarry is right — only an intellectual élite could appreciate,
suffers from the disaffection of several Symbolist dramatists, including Jarry, in June, 1897, and of his public. The Théâtre de l'Oeuvre eventually goes bankrupt in 1899, but is revived later.

Romain Rolland, concluding that the era of neomysticism in French literature, provoked by the nation's confusion and disappointment with its intellectual and political leaders, is dead, proposes a social drama which appeals to the working-class. Ignoring Jarry's call for an élite and Zola's and Antoine's exhortations to the middle-classes, he, and subsequently Jean-Richard Bloch, seek to create a true social drama, devoid of the escapist tendencies of the Symbolists and of the liberal bourgeois tendencies of the Naturalists which, in the final analysis, serve only to check briefly the degeneration of the French theatre.¹

Though the Romantic drama of Sardou and Augier ends, according to Bloch, as a social phenomenon in 1900, a new liberal class of writers take over their ideas:

¹Cf. Bloch, op. cit., p. 44: "... le gigantesque effort d'Antoine n'a abouti, en gros, qu'à hâter les succès brillants et vides d'une nouvelle génération de fabricants". Bloch is thinking perhaps of Courteline and Curel, whose plays Antoine performs frequently after 1900.
Quelquefois cédant au penchant didactique qui entraîne tous les parvenus - classes ou individus - leur théâtre se fait prosélyte, humanitaire, prêcheur, vertueux, bon, cherche à nous détourner de l'alcool, de jouer aux courses, de nouer des relations éphémères avec des damois de rencontre.

Such themes, recalling the pièces à these of Dumas Fils, evince a mediocrity which was anathema to the innovators of the period. Though Apollinaire takes a moderate stance on socio-political matters, it is significant that Rolland sets a precedent for the ideas expressed in "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes" and the preface to Les Mamelles de Tirésias, when he insists:

... un peuple, à la rigueur, se passe de beauté: il ne doit pas, il ne peut pas se passer de vérité.

and

l'action doit surgir du spectacle de l'action.

Apollinaire, too, envisages the poet as primarily a discoverer of truth:

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2 Bloch, op. cit., p. 42.

3 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 33. The first théâtre du peuple is inaugurated September 23, 1892, by Maurice Pottecher at Bussang in the Vosges. Subsequent attempts, such as the Théâtre du Peuple de la Coopération des Idées (December 3, 1899) meet with little success.

4 Ibid., p. 144.
Les poètes ne sont pas seulement les hommes du beau. Ils sont encore et surtout les hommes du vrai...en tant qu'il permet de pénétrer dans l'inconnu.  

though his truth lies beyond the world of politics in the universe of the imagination. The fact remains that Apollinaire, like Rolland, stresses the social function of drama, and he idealistically proclaims the primacy of the poet as the figure who stimulates men to great scientific inventions and social achievements. In spite of his essentially bourgeois opinions, and though he still places considerable value on the aesthetics of drama, Apollinaire recognises the positive social influence that the theatre could exert, whereas Jarry expresses no interest at all in the effect his plays may produce outside the auditorium.  

One must look outside France for any further influences  

5Apollinaire, Guillaume, "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes", Mercure de France, CXXX, 491 (December, 1918), p. 393.  

6However, Apollinaire shows no liking for the traditional realism of Rolland's ideas: "Romain Rolland et tous ces auteurs pour pianister des deux sexes continueront à nous emmerder après la guerre, parce qu'au lieu d'audace, de bon sens et de vérité de fondements solides, on n'oppose aux entreprises des pieds plats que de vagues et bien incertains principes traditionalistes et classiques...", Letter to Willy, November 21, 1915, Apollinaire, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. M. Décaudin (Paris, 1966), IV, p. 869.
to which Apollinaire may have been subjected. The Swiss Adolphe Appia recommends, like Mallarmé, a blending of actor and décor, while the Englishman, Edward Gordon Craig, writing after the turn of the century, takes up the idea of the *marionnette*, already discussed by Léonard-Pac and Jarry, which should replace the actor, too much a prey to his own expressions and emotions. Echoing Jarry's ideal of the actor's creativity, as opposed to the imitation of reality sought by Antoine, Craig writes:

> De nos jours l'acteur s'applique à personnaliser un caractère et à l'interpréter; demain il essaiera de le représenter et de l'interpréter; un jour prochain il en créera un lui-même.  

We shall see how Apollinaire animates the décor in order to accentuate the surrealist aspect of his drama, how his characters become pure creations of the imagination and the intellect rather than realistic representations of humanity, and how the actor creates the action and significance of the drama outside the "plot" itself, by involving the audience physically. He will, accordingly, present a significant reaction to the best theatre of the immediate post-war period.  


8 Jacques Copeau's new *Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier* (1913), important for its rejection of commercialism and exhibitionism in the theatre, does not present a real social drama or a pre-surrealist drama. Like Antoine, Copean forms an homogeneous, well-trained group of players capable of applying themselves to the ideas of the director and the author.
APOLLINAIRE AND L'ESPRIT NOUVEAU

Nous avons vu. . . depuis Alfred Jarry le rire s'élèver des basses régions où il se tordait et fournir au poète un lyrisme tout neuf. 9

Apollinaire is conscious of the fact that Jarry has given a new lease of life to the comic, in reaction to bourgeois realism:

L'art théâtral sans grandeur sans vertu
Qui tuaït les longs soirs d'avant la guerre
Art calomniant et délétère
Qui montrait le péché et non le rédempteur. 10

One suspects that the crime is not only one of didactic superficiality, but also one of meagre creative skills.

L'Idéalisme vulgaire des dramaturges qui ont succédé à Victor Hugo a cherché la vraisemblance dans une couleur locale de convention qui fait pendant au naturalisme en trompe-l'oeil des pièces de moeurs. 11

The same idealism which offers an escape from social reality, in the form of melodramatic heroism, or comédie de moeurs, tempered with a conventional realism which, purely external,

9 Apollinaire, op. cit., p. 390.

10 Apollinaire, prologue, Les Mamelles de Tirésias (Paris, 1948), p. 27. One suspects that Apollinaire refers specifically to the pièces à thèse of Dumas fils.

11 Apollinaire, preface, ibid., p. 10. In the Prologue, ibid., p. 31, he is even more insistent: "...le théâtre ne doit pas être un art en trompe-l'oeil".
does little to renovate the stereotyped nature of the characters and plot, is the bête noire of Apollinaire too. Moreover, Apollinaire disapproves of the implementation on stage of the tranche de vie technique, which Antoine initiated, commenting on the futility of photographic representation, when the cinema can do it so much better.12

The attitude of both Jarry and Apollinaire to the Naturalist theatre is a nebulous one. They refrain from outright criticism of it, because of its innovative value in the theatre. And yet, Zola's statement, "... l'étude de l'homme passe avant l'action elle-même",13 is diametrically opposed to their view that action is the prime requisite of drama and to Apollinaire's desire to go beyond realism in a synthesis of the arts, and to replace imitation by creation.

Two imperatives spur Apollinaire in his proposed renovation not only of the theatre, but of poetry as a whole: the need for a synthesis of the arts and the need to

12 See Apollinaire, Preface, ibid., p. 15: "Ce trompe-l'œil, qui convient, sans doute, au cinéma, est, je crois ce qu'il y a de plus contraire à l'art dramatique." The tranche de vie drama, consisting of fifteen-minutes-long plays modelled thematically on those of Augier, combined total realism with middle-class moral values. See the poem "Avant le Cinéma" in the collection Il y a, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris, 1956), p. 362, for Apollinaire's ironical view of the cinema's domination of the arts.

13 Zola, Le Naturalisme au Theatre, p. 483. See Apollinaire, Preface, Les Mamelles de Tiresias, p. 9: "Je l'ai appelé drame qui signifie action pour établir ce qui le sépare de ces comédies de mœurs, comédies dramatiques, comédies légères."
rejuvenate French society. Critics have suspected him of living in a fantasy world during the War and of not facing the realities of the situation. However, this would appear somewhat unjustified since the evidence is drawn largely from his poetry which is written in moments of war-time emotion.

The superficial goal, "réformer les moeurs", in that the French should increase their manpower, sadly depleted during the war, by producing more babies seems at first a superficial and idealistic fancy. In his preface to Jean Cocteau's Parade (1917) he expresses confidence in the Esprit Nouveau, of which Parade is an example:

...cet Esprit Nouveau... ne manquera pas de séduire l'élite et se promet de modifier de fond en comble les arts et les moeurs dans l'allégresse universelle. Car le bon sens veut qu'ils soient au moins à la hauteur des progrès scientifiques et industriels.

Appealing, unlike Jarry, to the "bon sens" of an élite which will be required first to understand and then disseminate new

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14 Apollinaire, Prologue, ibid., p. 30.


16 Ibid., p. 426.
aesthetic concepts, Apollinaire envisages an artistic movement worthy, in its desire for experiment and novelty, to stand beside the achievements of science.

It savours of a naive optimism on Apollinaire's part to believe that the general public will be convinced of the validity of this new sur-réalisme. Yet, in referring to his own play, he assures the reader that, far from being an esoteric work, Les Mamelles de Tiresias is designed to interest and entertain the audience:

C'est le but de toute oeuvre théâtrale. Il a également pour but de mettre en relief une question vitale pour ceux qui entendent la langue dans laquelle il est écrit.

The moral, if not the aesthetic, problems treated in the drama should be understood by Frenchmen because such problems are vital to the future of their country.

He admits that he has given free rein to his imagination:

17 Ibid., p. 426: "une sorte de sur-réalisme". Apollinaire remains doubtful as to the exact definition and purpose of the new aesthetic.

18 Apollinaire, Preface, Les Mamelles de Tiresias, p. 10. Cf. ibid., p. 14: "Le sujet sera assez général pour que l'ouvrage dramatique dont il formera le fond puisse avoir une influence sur les esprits et sur les moeurs dans le sens du devoir et de l'honneur." This indicates that repopulation is not the only theme, and that he is appealing to the patriotism not only of an élite but of all those concerned for the future of France. The Esprit Nouveau encouraging such activity assumes a very positive aspect in contrast to the sentimentality of the Romantics:

"Ou tente ici d'infuser un esprit nouveau au théâtre Une joie une volupté une vertu Pour remplacer ce pessimisme vieux de plus d'un siècle."

(Prologue, ibid., p. 30).
cette fantaisie se manifeste avec plus ou moins de mélancolie, de satire et de lyrisme, mais toujours et autant qu'il n'est possible avec un bon sens où il y a assez de nouveauté. 19

Hence Apollinaire seeks a compromise between moderation and novelty, for while he wishes to retain the goodwill of the general public, he also endeavours to attain, through a mélange of moods and themes, the originality of Jarry. In view of the social function of his drama and l'Esprit Nouveau he could have treated the question of repopulation "selon le ton sarcastico-melodramatique qu'ont mis à la mode les faiseurs de pièces à thèse", 20 or he could have written "un drame d'idées", 21 another form of nineteenth and early twentieth-century drama. But, no doubt anticipating the harm which too "realistic" a play might do to his reputation, he decides that surrealistic drama shall approach didacticism in a new way, by means of surprise.

Parade will shake the preconceptions of many intelligent spectators:

19 Ibid., p. 11
20 Ibid., p. 10.
21 Ibid., p. 11.
Ils seront surpris certes, mais de la plus agréable façon et, charmés, ils apprendront à connaître toute la grâce des mouvements modernes dont ils ne s'étaient jamais douté. 22

Apollinaire does not wish to alienate the public as Jarry does, and though he uses a social problem as the point de départ for his own play, he does not claim any virulently satirical motives, nor does he treat any particular sector of the public with undue sarcasm, apart from playwrights. Avoiding Jarry's m'enfoutisme and iconoclasm, he retains a complete faith in his society, and sees the poet working for the nation as a whole:

Les poètes modernes sont... des créateurs, des inventeurs et des prophètes: 23 ils demandent qu'on examine ce qu'ils disent pour le plus grand bien de la collectivité à laquelle ils appartiennent. 24

He reveals little of the outright élitism or the desire to provoke that Jarry does, but does intend to surprise people

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23Apollinaire, like Mallarmé, often sees art as a religious celebration. e.g. Apollinaire, Les Peintres Cubistes (Paris, 1965), p. 47: "...le peintre doit avant tout se donner le spectacle de sa propre divinité et les tableaux qu'il offre à l'admiration des hommes leur conféreront la gloire d'exercer aussi et momentanément leur propre divinité".

into awareness of new truths. The poet is working for the benefit of the scientifically orientated society, creating modern myths which will incite the scientists to greater inventions. Hence, the theme of Les Mamelles de Tirésias, a man giving birth to babies, is not an absurd nonsense, but a valid symbol:

"une vérité supposée, qui cause la surprise parce qu'on n'avait pas encore osé la présenter. ... j'exprime une vérité littéraire qui ne pourra être qualifiée de fable que hors de la littérature."

Though he denies it, one suspects that the influence of Symbolism upon Apollinaire is quite strong. In claiming that "... les poètes modernes sont avant tout les poètes de la vérité toujours nouvelle", and:

"... le moindre fait est pour le poète le postulat, le point de départ d'une immensité inconnue où flamment les feux de joie des significations multiples."

he would seem to echo Jarry’s words: "Le dramaturge, comme tout artiste, cherche la vérité dont il y a plusieurs.”

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25 Ibid., p. 392.

26 Apollinaire, Preface, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, p. 12: "Il n'y a aucun symbole dans ma pièce, qui est fort claire."

27 Ibid., p. 393. Apollinaire confesses, with the apparent experience of a mature thinker: "Mais on ne découvrira jamais la réalité une fois pour toutes. La vérité sera toujours nouvelle." (Les Peintres Cubistes, p. 48).

28 Ibid., p. 393.

29 Jarry, 1er Argument, Tout Ubu, p. 146.
Jarry's truths, evoked by the symbols inherent in his satire, remain within the aesthetic ambience of the theatre, whereas Apollinaire's artistic discoveries should ideally stimulate the audience to discovery and invention outside the theatre.

One may now perceive why Apollinaire writes, of Les Mamelles de Tirésias:

Le sujet est si émouvant à mon avis qu'il permet même que l'on donne au mot drame son sens le plus tragique: mais il tient aux Français que s'ils se remettent à faire des enfants, l'ouvrage puisse être appelé désormais une farce. Rien ne saurait me causer une joie aussi patriotique. 30

Like Jarry, he believes that drama is constituted largely by action rather than dialogue.31 For him, this implies action on the part of the public as well as the actors, as he hopes to encourage the audience to create the signification of

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30 Apollinaire, Preface, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, p. 11. The mingling of the tragic and the comic in Les Mamelles de Tirésias echoes Jarry's preference for the impossibility of the mask, likened to "la minéralité du squelette dissimulé sous les chairs animales, dont on a de tout temps reconnu la valeur tragi-comique" (De l'inutilité. . ., p. 471). Cf. also: Apollinaire, Preface, p. 15: "Selon le cas, le tragique l'emportera sur le comique ou inversement."

31 Cf. Jarry, 1re Argument, Tout Ubu, p. 151: "Toute 'histoire' est si ennuyeuse, c'est-à-dire inutile." Cf. also: Apollinaire, Preface, p. 11: "...mes scènes ne s'enchaînaient naturellement selon la fable..." Both writers are anxious to avoid anecdote which would tempt the audience to follow the plays on one level only, that of superficial realism, and to ignore any poetic resonances.
his work within and outside the theatre. Provoking "un étonnement qui deviendra vite de l'admiration", surrealist drama will shock and cause indignation at first, but its authenticity will eventually find acceptance because France, "détentrice de tout le secret de la civilisation", urgently needs not the a-social, and perhaps anti-social, drama of Jarry, not the aesthetic preoccupations of the Symbolists, but a social theatre which points out the truth and the hitherto unknown secrets of the universe which man's imagination will eventually conquer.

The sur-réalisme which holds the key to the new aesthetic is unfortunately not defined by apollinaire. He describes Parade as a play in which "il s'agit de traduire la réalité", while Picasso's Cubist reconstitution of reality is achieved by an "analyse-synthèse" of phenomena. 

32 Apollinaire, Parade, p. 427.
34 Apollinaire, "Parade", Chroniques d'Art, p. 427.
35 Ibid., p. 427: "... une sorte d'analyse-synthèse embrassant tous ses éléments visibles et quelque chose de plus, si possible, une schématisation intégrale qui chercherait à concilier les contradictions en renonçant parfois délibérément à rendre l'aspect immédiat de l'objet".
sorte de sur-réalisme" and "une sorte d'analyse-synthèse" suggest a certain vagueness in Apollinaire's understanding of the new approaches to Art.

He is, however, quite adament about the necessary optimism of sur-réalisme and of its origins within nature itself. In an interview, on the day of the first performance of Les Mamelles de Tirésias, Apollinaire seems confident and explicit, as he talks of his preferred avant-garde theories:

... Orphisme ou surnaturalisme\(^{36}\) c'est-à-dire un art qui n'est pas le naturalisme photographique uniquement, et qui cependant soit la nature, ... ; cette nature intérieure aux merveilles insoupçonnées, impondérables, impitoyables et joyeuses. Il faut réagir contre le pessimisme qui depuis le début du XIX\(^{e}\) siècle n'a pas cessé de hanter nos écrivains. ... À cet égard je suis anti-baudelairien.\(^{37}\)

There will be no wholesale rejection of conventional reality, the elements of which, one reconstituted, will serve to form

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\(^{36}\) Surnaturalisme, was rejected both by Apollinaire and Breton as a nomenclature for the new aesthetic since it had already been employed by Nerval in Les Filles du Feu (1854) and by Carlyle in Sartor Resartus (1831). See Apollinaire, Letter to Paul Dermée, March, 1917, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. M. Décaudin, IV, p. 886.


Maintaining contact with nature, his play will demonstrate:

... l'usage raisonnable des invraisemblances/
Ainsi que des acteurs collectifs ou non/
Qui ne sont pas forcément extraits de l'humanité/
Mais de l'univers entier. (Prologue, p. 31).

Apollinaire's characters, while possessing the impersonality of Jarry's marionettes, are created rationally from natural elements, and are not intended for Jarry's "hallucination de l'intelligent".
a new artistic reality. "Avant tout, les artistes sont des hommes qui veulent devenir inhumains",\(^{38}\) he claims, hoping that the artist will set aside the pessimism, the sentimentality, the preoccupations with the tragic and the comic, which have dominated the arts. The dramatist, too, will approach his subject in the same optimistic, but objective, manner as the scientist, in order to maintain their value to society.

Les grands poètes et les grands artistes ont pour fonction sociale de renouveler sans cesse l'apparence que revêt la nature aux yeux des hommes. \(^{39}\)

Though Jarry, too, endeavours to escape from the conventions of the Romantics and the Naturalists, his critical writings express an essentially a-social and occasionally anti-social attitude in his theatre criticism, whereas Apollinaire would seem to emphasise the social function of the artist and writer.

It is with some justification that he is able to write to Tzara in 1916:

Je ne vous ai pas écrit plus tôt car jusqu'à maintenant je craignais que vous ne fussiez au-dessus de la mêlée attitude inadmissible à une époque où le progrès matériel artistique et moral sont menacés et qu'il faut le [sic] défendre victorieusement.


\(^{39}\)Ibid., p. 53.
Vive la France! Vivent les Alliés! Vive la Roumanie! Apollinaire, eager to maintain the traditional values of French society, idyllically sees the advent of a widely disseminated Esprit Nouveau as the aesthetic counterpart of the material progress which science will once again stimulate after war-time retrogression.

Les Mamelles de Tirésias will be the theatrical realisation of the Esprit Nouveau, and the Surrealists, in their criticism of both play and theory, cannot accept the patriotism and moderation involved. Breton does admit that the theory possesses some valid elements:

"... 'L'Esprit Nouveau' et les Poètes', texte qui n'emporte, il faut bien le dire, que notre partielle adhésion. Si nous trouvons bon de le voir confirmer qu'en poésie et en art 'la surprise est le plus grand ressort nouveau'et revendiquer' une liberté d'une opulence inimaginable nous nous inquiétons du souci qu'il marque de renouer avec 'l'esprit critique' des classiques, ce qui nous paraît terriblement limitatif, aussi bien qu'avec leur 'sens du devoir' que nous tenons pour contestable, en tout cas périmé et de toute manière, hors de question. La volonté de situer le débat sur le plan national et même nationaliste ('La France, dit Apollinaire, détentrice de tout le secret de la civilisation... ') nous semble inadmissible encore. Nous n'acceptons pas davantage de voir l'humilier l'art devant la science... les moyens lyriques proprement dits...


41 In his article, Apollinaire talks of mingling the Romantics' adventurousness with "des Classiques le solide bon sens", p. 389.
ne sont ni approfondis, ni renouvelés. 42

It is, then, not only the patriotism and classicism of Apollinaire's theory, but also his avowedly scientific approach to art, which in the opinion of the Surrealists undermined the quintessence of poetry, its lyricism, that cause critics to question the authenticity of the Surrealism in his drame surréaliste.

CHAPTER III
THE MARRIAGE OF SATIRE AND FANTASY FROM THE UBU CYCLE TO LES MAMELLES DE TIRESIAS

Il y a des moments de siècle où les dalles crevantes, les égouts, comme des volcans, éclatent et éjaculent. . . .
(Lugné-Poe, Acrobates)

Jarry insisted that the Oeuvre should "monopoliser toutes les innovations", and indeed the previous two years had amply justified his claim, for Lugné-Poe, ensuring that his theatre would stay independent of aesthetic and socialist coterie, presented plays which attacked all manner of opinion. Paul Vérola's L'Ecole de l'Idéal, modelled on the style and wit of Augier, ridiculed the very literary snobs who frequented Lugné's theatre, while Herdey's Le Fils de l'Abbésse and Quinel and Dubreuil's Des Mots! Des Mots! respectively criticised the individualism and the revolutionary socialism of the political avant-garde groups which

1 Letter from Jarry to Lugné-Poe, August 1st, 1896, op. cit., 162.

2 May 8th, 1895.

3 May 15th, 1897, after the audience's antipathetic reaction to Ubu Roi.

4 January 7th, 1896.
Lugné was believed to favour. Furthermore, his presentation of Symbolist and Scandinavian plays had indicated that Lugné was a director who did not fear even the extremes of experimental theatre or the wrath of the bourgeois public.

Meanwhile, Antoine was creating a furore in the more upright theatrical circles by resigning his directorship of the second Théâtre Français in October, 1896. Little of originality was being produced at the Odéon under Ginisty who had taken over the reins completely after Antoine's departure. The programmes for November and December 1896 and January 1897 indicate that the Odéon was presenting a variety of Greek plays, Romantic theatre — plays by Leconte de Lisle and Alexandre Dumas — and lightweight comedies, while the numerous Boulevard theatres were presenting a plethora of bourgeois comedies and comic operas including Divorçons by Sardou at the Vaudeville. The only significant avant-garde enterprise outside the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre was the Théâtre de l'Odéon's performance of

5 e.g. Ibsen's Rosmersholm (October 1893); Un Ennemi du Peuple (November 1893); Brand (June 1895); Maeterlinck's Intérieur (March 1895); Henri de Régnier's La Gardienne (June 1894) and P. Quillard's L'Errante (April 1896).

6 Dumas' Halifax (December 16th, 1896), Leconte de Lisle's L'Aphollonide (December 3rd, 1896).

7 December 19th, 1896.
La Révolte written by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, a play notable for its symbolism and for the rebellious nature of its author.

Peer Gynt performed only a month before Ubu Roi, and in Lugné-Poe's opinion, a great success, did not fail to annoy the establishment because of its social satire and general flouting of all the rules of theatrical convention. Lugné-Poe consequently realised that the line between success and failure was a very thin one, that scandal could easily provoke the latter if a play insulted the snobs and aesthetes of his audience as well as the more staid members of the literary establishment. Though he had already incensed his public, Merdre, he felt, might even so be too forceful an introduction for Ubu Roi, and the special features of décor, voice and movement which Jarry required might prove

Villier's plays Axel, Elén and La Révolte are notable for their Wagnerian symbolism. His prose works, moreover, indicate a strong antipathy toward bourgeois values, both social and aesthetic, e.g. Nouvelles Reliques (Paris 1968), pp. 37-38, "Le Talenteuse" in which he criticises the "poète bien pensant":

Fourrions des sentiments: cela rapporte!  
Aimer sa mère: voilà du sentiment!  
...Donnez-moi de l'argent, puisque j'aime ma mère!

He thus presents a socio-aesthetic attitude not unlike that of Jarry's. Gémier, in fact, was preparing to play in La Révolte at the time of Ubu Roi's first performance, but Ginisty lent him to Lugné-Poe.

Ibsen's Peer Gynt performed November 12th, 1896.
impossible to implement on stage. Rachilde advised him to use strings attached to the roof of the stage-setting in order to convey the puppet-like nature of the play more thoroughly. Such a move would have emphasised the unreality of the play and might perhaps have mitigated the effect it would have on the audience. In any case, the idea was not implemented.

His reservations over too close an alliance with the puppet-theatre are described in the speech he makes to the audience, where he notes:

\[ \ldots \text{si marionnettes que nous voulions être, nous n'avons pas suspendu chaque personnage à un fil, ce qui eût été sinon absurde du moins pour nous bien compliqué.} \]

It may well be that he allows such a compromise, not only to facilitate Lugné's task as metteur en scène and to alleviate his financial burdens, but also because the audience, if it were face with puppets or a facsimile of them, would accept the play too readily as a Polichinelle farce and would not be moved by the satirical content. The actor must demonstrate the general humanity, or moral inhumanity, of his character, compartmentalising that humanity in such a way

\[ 10 \text{See the letter from Rachilde to Lugné-Poe, quoted in Acrobaties, pp. 174-175.} \]

\[ 11 \text{Jarry, speech delivered December 10th, 1896, Tout Ubu, p. 19.} \]
that individual characteristics vanish and only essences remain: 12

Il a plu à quelques acteurs de se faire pour deux soirées impersonnels et de jouer enfermés dans un masque, afin d'êtr bien exactement l'homme intérieur et l'âme des grandes marionnettes. . . . 13

The fantasy has perhaps to be acted by human beings so that they gradually become marionnettes. Both interiority and exteriority should be rendered impersonal, and it would be only with difficulty that "l'âme des grandes marionnettes" could be revealed by puppets alone, since they might not convey the intense stupidity of Ubu. Puppets are perhaps too impersonal in certain instances, since Ubu Roi presents its main character not only as an "automatisme", conveniently realised by puppets, but also as a creature plagued by human failings. Nevertheless Ubu Roi was performed with genuine marionettes in 1898 by Pierre Bonnard and there is little doubt that they were Jarry's favourite modus operandi.

12 Cf. Louis Perche, Alfred Jarry (Paris, 1965), p. 71, where he quotes from Jarry's "Conférence sur les Pantins" delivered in Brussels, March 21st, 1902: "Nous ne savons pas pourquoi nous nous sommes toujours ennuyés à ce qu'on appelle le Théâtre. Serait-ce que nous avions conscience que l'acteur, si génial soit-il, trahit -- et d'autant plus qu'il est génial -- ou personnel -- davantage la pensée du poète?". The use of the mask, and its ultimate development, the puppets, helps to avoid such a "betrayal", perpetuated necessarily by the exhibitionists of the later Romantic drama.

13 Jarry's speech delivered December 10th, 1896, Tout Ubu, p. 20.
The impersonal leads, as we have seen, to the universal, which is achieved not only through the disintegration of character but also through the incongruity and Mallarméan suggestivity of the décor, on the subject of which Jarry is very precise:

... [un décor] parfaitement exact, car de même qu'il est un procédé facile pour situer une pièce dans l'Eternité, ... vous verrez des portes s'ouvrir, sur des plaines de neige sous un ciel bleu, des cheminées garnies de pendules se fendre afin de servir de porres et des palmiers verdier au pied des lits, pour que les broutent de petits éléphants perchés sur des étagères.\(^14\)

Exact in its detail but vague in the confusion of disparate elements, this surrealistic setting, heralding the dream-world of a Salvadore Dali painting, reinforces the generality of the action.

[L'action] se passe en Pologne, c'est-à-dire nulle part,\(^15\)

concludes Jarry. This nulle part is expanded in the brochure. Poland, Jarry feels, is a suitably exotic choice:

... pays assez légendaire et démembré pour être ce nulle part ... bien loin un quelque part interrogatif. ... Nulle part est partout, et le pays où on se trouve d'abord. ... \(^16\)

\(^14\) Ibid., pp. 20-21.

\(^15\) Ibid., p. 21. The artists Bonnard, Vuillard, Toulouse-Lautrec, Sérusier and Ranson helped to create the décor.

\(^16\) Brochure-Programme, in Tout Ubu, p. 22.
Poland is everywhere, including France. Therefore Ubu speaks French, Bordure English, the Queen Rosemonde Cantal.

Hence the background is the basic symbol. Its suggestivity developed by surprise objects and the use of the pancarte partly creates the symbolic nature of Ubu himself:

Il nous ressemble (par en bas) à tous. 17

His oval, embryonic appearance does not necessarily lend to simplicity, because of the axiom, "...le corps le plus poli est celui qui présente le plus grand nombre d'aspérités". 18

Jarry anticipates in these comments the accusations of superficiality which the critics will level at him, and he emphasises once more that satire is not necessarily the prime objective of the play:

...vous serez libres de voir en M. Ubu les multiples allusions que vous voudrez, ou un simple fantoche, la déformation par un potache d'un de ses professeurs 19 qui représentait pour lui tout le grotesque qui fût au monde. 20

17 Ibid., p. 23.

18 Speech, Tout Ubu, p. 19.

19 The character of Ubu was originally based on a teacher called Hébert at the Lycée de Rennes.

20 Ibid., p. 19.
This alternative would seem to reveal the most important element in the author's mind to be "le grotesque". But he is not ruling out any other ideas, since the imagination of the spectators must be allowed free rein.

Such an advocacy of the spectators' freedom to interpret the play as they wish has led critics to view Jarry as a mystifier. Professor Robichez, in fact, considers mystification to be a key objective in the symbolism of Ubu Roi:

Avec Jarry plus d'analyse, mais un comique qui ne se repose sur rien, un comique vide et par là essentiellement mystificateur. 21

Absolving himself from any responsibility as an inveterate social satirist in the sentence,

Si diverses satires se laissent voir, le lieu de la scène en fait les interprètes irresponsables. 22

Jarry proceeds to claim that Ubu is "un être ignoble". 23

On the other hand, in eliminating the nobles, magistrates and financiers 24 Ubu reveals other qualities:


22 Jarry, Brochure-Programme, pp. 22-23.

23 Ibid., p. 23.

24 Ubu Roi, Act III, Scenes 1 and 2.
Ainsi, ayant tué tout le monde, il a assurément expurgé quelques coupables, et se manifeste l'homme moral et normal. 25

Whatever the illogicality of his reasoning, Jarry seems keen to demonstrate his lack of political commitment, and goes on to unveil a more subtle and philosophical exegesis of Ubu's personality. Three crucial elements, la physique, la phynance, and la meurde are all elements of the quintessential duality residing in human behaviour. The first represents bourgeois crudity:

... le moins de compréhension opposé au plus de cérébralité, la réalité du consentement universel à l'hallucination de l'intelligent 26 Don Juan à Platon, la vie à la pensée. ... ,

while the second and third symbolic bourgeois materialism:

... les honneurs en face de la satisfaction de soi pour soi seul, tels producteurs de littérature selon le préjugé du nombre universels, vis-à-vis de la compréhension des intelligents. 27

The thesis conveyed in the Third Argument is thus elucidated: the five hundred intelligent spectators,

25 Brochure-Programme, p. 23. In his introduction to the short play, Les Paralipomènes d'Ubu, Tout Ubu, p. 165-166. Jarry makes it clear that Ubu does not symbolise the Anarchist. "Ce n'est pas exactement Monsieur Thiers ni le bourgeois, ni le mufle: ce serait plutôt l'anarchiste parfait, avec ceci qui empêche que nous devenions jamais l'anarchiste parfait, que c'est un homme, d'où couardise, saleté, laideur, etc."

26 Ibid., p. 23.

27 Ibid., p. 23.
assuming the role of the Poles, and thereby involving themselves in the drama, see Ubu as a caricature of the ignorance and materialism of the bourgeoisie, at the same time as the artificial frivolities of the bourgeoisie, at the same time as the artificial frivolities of the bourgeois dramatists parodied, as we shall see, as Jarry contrasts them with the Five Hundred's own poetic sensibility.

The irony of the situation lies in the fact that, even before the performance, Jarry had presented the critics and the audience at large with an accurate analysis of the play, which, he presumed, would be lauded by those anti-bourgeois aesthetes, anarchists and nihilists lucid enough to comprehend, but would pass unperceived by the majority, who in any case must have been aware, after the recent ventures of Lugné-Poe and the publication of Ubu Roi and "De l'Inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", that scandal was in the air.

If Jarry or Lugné-Poe had any doubts about the possibility of an audience creating a total theatre by its spontaneous involvement in the drama, such doubts were dis-

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28 Ibid., p. 24.

29 See our discussion of this theme on pp. 115-129.

pelled within a minute of Gémier's first utterance.

Throughout our analysis of the play we intend to emphasise the intricate combination of fantasy and satire which provokes the comic elements. Remembering that the satirical content is not an overtly social one but one whose meaning is supplied by the intelligence and imagination of the spectator, Jarry’s ideal audience would have derived great comic satisfaction from the effect of Ubu's first word, "Merdre!".

Lugné-Poe tells us that Gémier, portraying Ubu, immediately set out to reveal the distortions of his character:

Gémier, terrible, tour à tour injurié puis acclamé sous un masque en carton qui le gênait, imposa silence par une subite gigue effarante qu'il dansa sans s'arrêter jusqu'au moment où il tomba assis sur le trou du souffleur, jambes ballantes devant la salle. 32

Spectators walked out, others shouted frenzied abuse.

Courteline, one of the well-established writers of comedy at the turn of the century, assumed the rôle of martyr for the establishment and cried:

Vous ne voyez pas que l'auteur se fout de nous! 33

31 Lugné-Poe, Acrobaties, p. 177.

32 Ibid., p. 177.

33 Ibid., p. 181, Fouquier writing in Le Figaro (December 11th, 1896).
According to Fouquier, many of the "decadent" aesthetes, were dismayed. Jarry had already shown who in his opinion, were the authentic and profound critics of drama, and who, on the other hand, were essentially, though hitherto not manifestly, attached politically and artistically to the establishment. To swear on stage was too much even for a play which, it had been sufficiently publicised, was Symbolist. The bear had already been clubbed to Jarry's satisfaction.

Eventually the obstreperous calm down or leave, and the play continues. Ubu, having flopped down on the floor heavy, stiff and immobile complete with mask and special voice is upbranded bluntly by his wife, and he is not slow to reply in gross fashion:

Mère Ubu: Oh! voilà du joli; Père Ubu, vous estes un fort grand voyou.

Père Ubu: Que ne vous assom-je, Mère Ubu!

Mère Ubu: Ce n'est pas moi, Père Ubu, c'est un autre qu'il faudrait assassiner.

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34 See Jarry, "Questions de Théâtre", pp. 154-155: "Et c'est parce que la foule est une masse inerte et incompréhensive et passive qu'il la faut frapper de temps en temps pour qu'on connaisse à ses grognements d'ours où elle est --- et où elle en est".

35 Ubu Roi, I, 1.
Hence the verbal brutality which they show toward each other is revealed in farcical tones. Mère Ubu also exhibits her cunning in the way she turns the argument towards the intrigue to follow, accentuating at the same time a corresponding lack of subtlety on the part of her husband. Having failed to understand that Mère Ubu wants him to kill Venceslas and become King of Poland, Ubu, once she has bluntly expressed this suggestion, reveals one of the contradictions which provoke the idea of mystification:

Père Ubu: Ah! Mère Ubu, vous me faites injure et vous allez passer tout à l'heure par la casserole. 36

Feigning honour, and thereby disguising what will be revealed later as cowardice, he immediately negates the formal value of such noble sentiments by threatening his wife. He soon succumbs to temptation, however, and in Bardolphian tones boasts of what he will do to the King. Even so, the plot proves too dastardly for his forced bravado, and he leaves in an angry mood.

Potential satire in the possibility of assassination and humour in the banter of the Ubuses do not as yet suffice to indicate any substantial subtlety on the part of the author. The language is gross and clichéd: phrases like

36 See Jarry's critical reference to honours in the Brochure-Programme, p. 23 and the Nobles' and Peuple's desire for honour in the third act.
"merdre", "de par ma chandelle verte" and "Bougre de merdre, merdre de bougre" do not savour of spirituality, but do help to introduce the spirit of theatrical iconoclasm. For such words intimate an attack on a conventional theatre keen to identify itself with the rhetorical language of the aristocrats of classical drama. One recalls Jarry's dislike for the mot d'esprit, which he is anxious to avoid because of the abuse made of it in bourgeois theatres. No bourgeois comedy or melodrama would indulge in colloquialisms, let alone swear-words, especially in the dialogue of aristocrats. So Jarry, in the space of three pages, has already entered upon a parody of contemporary drama. This irony, as we shall see, lies in the very lack of irony in the dialogue of his plays, and though the reality and normality of such language would be accepted by the modern reader, the fantasy of such an overt parody would not be lost on the Five Hundred. For not only the intercalated "r" sounds, but also the décor, mask, voice and costume create a totally incongruous scene.

The second scene begins on a note of superficial farce as Ubu steals some chicken from the table, saying in

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37 See p. 5.

38 See Jarry, "Questions de Théâtre" in Tout Ubu, p. 154, where he comments on the audience's disappointed criticism of his play: "Dans tout cela, pas un mot d'esprit".
an aside: 39

Tiens, j'ai faim. Je vais mordre dans cet oiseau. C'est un poulet, je crois. Il n'est pas mauvais. 40

As well demonstrating Ubu's greed, such antics belie a realism which the Romantic drama could not attain because of the stranglehold of its conventions. Under the guise of superficiality there is revealed a subtlety of technique as both realism of language and action and fantasy, in that a noble is farcically perpetrating it, are simultaneously provoked in the mind of the spectator.

Fantasy and farce, the exotic and the grotesque, are then mingled at Ubu's feast, where Mère Ubu serves "soupé polonaise, côtes de rastron, veau, poulet, pâté de chien, croupions de dinde, charlotte russe". 41 The soup not finding popularity with Bordure and the other guests, Ubu flings "un balai innommable" on the table and orders them to eat it. The poisoned guests are then thrown out so that Ubu may discuss the projected assassination with Bordure. The latter consents to help Ubu, who enthusiastically embraces him:

39 Throughout the play Jarry exaggerates the absurdity of the asides, thereby mocking the psychological realism which Hugo attributes to them.

40 Ubu Roi, I, 2.

41 Ubu Roi, I, 3.
Bordure: Eh! vous empestez, Père Ubu. Vous ne vous lavez donc jamais?

Père Ubu: Rarement.

Mère Ubu: Jamais! 42

The grotesqueness of Ubu should be ridiculed not only by the audience but also by the actors themselves, where unoriginal wit is intended almost as a spontaneous parody of the "mot d'esprit".

Fantasy, satire, and humour are most intimately attached in the portrayals of Ubu's egoistic brutality and cowardice. In the fifth scene, a messenger alarms Ubu with the news that the King has summoned him to court. Ubu's reaction is violent:

Oh! merdre, jarnicotonbleu, de par ma chandelle verte, je suis découvert, je vais être décapité, hêlas! hêlas! 43

The braggart turned whimpering urchin in an instant, threatening to put the blame on his wife and Bordure, becomes a comic mirror of mankind's ugliness as well as a parody of the melodramatic scenes exemplified by Rafaël's and Karloo's histrionics in Patrie! 44

The humour is intensified not by brilliance but by its continual pressure on the minds of the spectators, who, if

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42 Ubu Roi, I, 3.

43 Ibid., I, 5.

44 See Patrie!, Act II, Third Tableau, 4.
they treat the play as fantasy cannot but laugh at the egoism, stupidity and simplicity of Ubu, who, when he realises that the King has discovered nothing and has in fact made him Count of Sandomir is overcome with relieved gratitude, and is prompted in his drunken state to offer Vencelas a mirliton, a child's toy.45

Incongruous, fantastic and ridiculous though his behaviour may be, it serves as a genuinely realistic representation of human essences, intensified in order that their poetry may be savoured all the more by the imagination of the spectator. The suddenness of Ubu's offer heralds the surprise element requested by Apollinaire in his critical works.

45 Ubu Roi, I, 6. Jarry has in mind perhaps Cinna's relief that his plot against Auguste has not been discovered, in Corneille's tragedy Cinna. This scene provokes André Salmon into drawing an interesting parallel between Picasso and Jarry: "Picasso a de cruelles gaîtés et ce noble inspiré édifie, à l'usage des naïfs, une théorie de tout repos: 'Veuillez, accepter ce petit mirliton, disait le Père Ubu'." André Salmon, "Exposition Picasso", Paris Journal, December 22, 1910, quoted in Apollinaire, Les Peintres Cubistes, pp. 156-157. The simplicity and freshness of Jarry's character, going beyond the conventional tragic or comic figure displaying his symbolism by means of marionettes rather than by actors like the writers of Symbolist tragedy, would seem to be evoked here.
The childlike fantasy-world in which the spectator now finds himself teaches its apogee in the assassination plans and the act itself. Ubu suggests:

\[\text{Je tâcherai de lui marcher sur les pieds, il regimbera, alors je lui dirai: MERDRE, à ce signal vous vous jetterez sur lui.}^{46}\]

The traditional means of stabbing and poisoning have been rejected in favour of Merdre, which symbolises, as we saw in the Brochure the physical contrasted with the spiritual, egoistic materialism contrasted with the refinement of the genius.

The childlike fantasies of Jarry's mind continuë, for in the ensuing fight, Ubu finds himself face to face with the orphaned heir, Bougrelas. The elation of the assassination is quickly forgotten:

\[\text{Père Ubu: Oh! Bordure, j'ai peur, laissez-moi m'en aller.}^{47}\]

Parallels between Ubu's reactions and the child's world which Jarry had but recently left behind, lend weight to Wellwarth's claim that "[Jarry] presented everything with the simplicity and immediacy of a child."^{48}

\[^{46}\text{Ibid., I, 7.}\]

\[^{47}\text{Ibid., II, 4.}\]

Not only the fantasy of incongruity and humour, but also that of violent action, gain in intensity as the play develops. The hyperbolic direction:

[Bougrelas] fait le moulin et avec son épée et en fait un massacre, 49

not only typifies this child's dream-world, but also Jarry's intention of parodying the drame bourgeois. Many an action described in Sardou's Patrie! 50, consciously intended to be realistic, but objectively ridiculous as far as Jarry is concerned, is mocked through the very exaggeration of the dramatic events in Ubu Roi.

Satire, symbol and humour combine harmoniously in the sixth scene of Act Two where Ubu Roi placates the people. It is this scene above all that implies socio-political satire on Jarry's part, since Ubu would seem to play the role of a benevolent despot. The necessity of winning the people to Ubu's side is evident to his wife and Bordure, but gifts of gold or meat are anathema to the new king who at first orders:

Abattez trois vieux chevaux.
C'est bon pour de tels sagouins. 51

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49 Ibid., II, 4.
50 See Patrie!, Act II, Third Tableau, 4.
51 Ubu Roi, II, 6.
Bordure, however, knows how to tempt Ubu, reminding him respectfully that if the people does not receive gold, it will not pay taxes. Ubu produces a volte face as swift as that from boast to cowardice:

Oh! Alors je consens à tout. Réunissez trois millions, cuisez cent cinquante boeufs et moutons, d'autant que j'en aurai aussi.52

Through the common technique of antithesis Jarry has revealed the greed of the man, but Jarry leaves open the choice between the grotesque comic and the tragically tyrannical aspect of Ubu.

The action remains within the realm of fantasy as the people vie for the gold, Ubu instituting at Bordure's instigation a race for the amusement of the new royalty, the winner of which will receive a casket of gold. A handful of actors representing "la foule", reacting like Pavlov's dogs to the thought of money, scamper across the stage, battling with each other for the lead. Such a symbolic microcosm of the despot's world seems to suggest not only the fantasy of exaggeration but a sheer love of playful action on the stage.

The third act opens with Ubu, bedecked with crown and garbed in the royal cloak he has coveted since the very

52 Ibid., II, 6.
first scene of the play, and made for economic reasons "en peau de mouton avec une agrafe et des brides en peau de chiens." Royalty has not lessened the intense grotesqueness of Ubu's appearance and ideas. Once again the more authentic reality of ostensible fantasy occurs as Ubu decides that Bordure has outlived his usefulness:

Je n'ai pas besoin [de Bordure], il peut bien se brosser le ventre, il n'aura point son duché.55

Not only the oaths quoted earlier but also such obscenities as this, though they would be regarded nowadays as examples of dramatic realism, amazed the late nineteenth century audience because of their novelty.

A deeper element is never far removed from the apparently empty farce of the Ubu's banter. Mère Ubu advises her husband to win Bougrelas over with or else the latter will wreak vengeance upon him:

... car il a pour lui le bon droit.56

The hypocritical emptiness of the sentiment in that it is

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53 See Ubu, in I, 1: "Si j'étais roi, je me ferais une grande capeline comme celle que j'avais en Aragon."

54 Ibid., III, 1.

55 Ibid., III, 1.

56 Ibid., III, 1.
spoken by one so immoral as Mère Ubu is intended to provoke both humour and a mockery of Christian and bourgeois values. What Jarry regards more as the truth of human values is found in Ubu's reply:

Ah! saleté! le mauvais droit ne vaut-il pas le bon? 57

The egotistical scepticism underlying the veneer of social decency rises to the surface.

The philosophical element is developed further as Ubu proceeds to eliminate the bastions of society which stand in the way of his tyrannical hold on the country. What thematically would seem to be social satire is again expressed through farce and fantasy, a strong surrealistic element evolving in the use of the trap-door and the 'crochet à nobles', with which Ubu disposes of the aristocrats in order to give free rein to his self-indulgence:

Eh! je m'enrichis. Je vais me faire lire MA liste de MES biens. Greffier, lisez MA liste de MES biens. 58

The emphatic selfishness of this statement exemplifies the fundamental quality of Ubu. Ubu's greed, cowardice, brutality, tyranny, and materialism all emanate from the essential selfishness to which men, once absolved from the

57 Ibid., III, 1.

58 Ibid., III, 2.
restrictions of social convention, are prone. Yet Professor Robichez's thesis that Jarry's Ubu is basically a mystifier is rendered more credible by the riposte of the magistrates to Ubu's demand for 'reform':

Nous nous opposons à tout changement, and that of the financiers:

Il n'y a rien à changer.

The multiple reality evoked by Robichez also seems justified when we recall Jarry's claim that from a certain standpoint Ubu is a good man because he has rid the country of the capitalist element. Conservatism has been replaced by a simple dictatorship, neither system being socially desirable, but the latter being aesthetically desirable as it liberates Jarry's fantasies and reveals the authenticity of man's egotism, which in Ubu's case demands exorbitant satisfaction:

Un impôt de dix pour cent sur le propriété
un autre sur la commerce et l'industrie, et
un troisième sur les mariages et un quatrième sur les décès, de quinze francs chacun.


60 Ubu Roi, III, 2.

61 Ibid., III, 2.

62 Ibid., III, 2.
Exaggeration in order to convey more strongly the burdens of the people and face the bourgeoisie to scrutinise its moral situation more reverently, or ridiculous fantasies intended to make the spectator exchange the material and the rational for the imaginary, la physique for la cérébralité?63

Certainly the latter is not lacking as Ubu scours the countryside in search of taxes, which he hoards in his "voiturin à phynances". The peasant who insists that he has already paid is given short shrift by the King:

"Payez! ou j vous mets dans ma poche avec supplice et décollation du cou et de la tête!"64

The peasant's house is destroyed after a skirmish. The machinery of Ubu's egoistic fantasies, developed to even more extreme lengths in Ubu Cocu, find their roots in the strange methods of torture in which Ubu revels. One feels that Jarry is consciously creating a kind of topsy-turvy land replete with its own bizarre mode de vie.

The swiftness of scenic changes indicated by a pancarte and a few physical modifications accentuates the suggestive fantasy of the drama. We have seen Ubu's dwelling, the court of the Polish King, the countryside and

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63 See p. 55.
64 Ubu Roi, III, 4.
now, in the sixth scene of Act Three, the court of Moscow
where Bordure asks for the Czar's assistance against the
vicious projects of Ubu, whose only source of discontent
seems to be Mère Ubu's continual sarcasm:

Sabre à finances, corne de ma gidouille\(^65\)
madame la financière - j'ai des oneilles
pour parler et vous une bouche pour
m'entendre. (Éclats de rire) Ou plutôt non!\(^66\)
Vous me faites tromper et vous êtes cause
que je suis bête! \(^67\)

Blunt neologisms, deliberate and unsophisticated farce, evoke
at once the consistent stupidity of Ubu.

Regretting the inconvenience of having to pour his
money back into warfare, Ubu sets up headquarters outside
Warsaw and prepares in his own ridiculous fashion for battle.
A breastplate, a piece of wood carved to penetrate under the
nails of his antagonists, the sabre à merdre, the croc à
finances and the cheval à phynance\(^68\) evoke an absurd paraphernalia that, even Ubu admits, will not allow him any speed of
movement. Yet, like Bardolph, Ubu regards a pompous costume

\(^65\) Ubu's stomach, especially in Ubu Enchaîné, symbolises
la physique which in turn symbolises the materialistic egotism
of the bourgeois.

\(^66\) Phrases such as this indicate, as we shall show later,
the actor's conscious expression of his character's unreality as
a realistic element of the play.

\(^67\) Ubu Roi, III, 7.

\(^68\) See letter from Jarry to Lugné-Poe, December 7, 1896.
as a real indication of his high rank though the position he holds is contradicted by the reality of his ineptitude. George Meredith notes that the comic characters are detected "by force of the contrast they offer between themselves and the wiser world about them".69 It is the abnormality which Ubu presents in contrast to normal behaviour that provokes the comic in the critical mind of the intelligent spectator and the enjoyment of fantasy in his creative and liberated imagination. Ubu's extremism engenders 'l'hallucination de l'intelligent'.70

A pitched battle, containing the frenetic action of the earlier violent encounters, in spite of the deliberate incongruity of the troops being represented by only a few actors, ensues between Bougrelas' band and the Palotins.71

'L'armée polonaise en marche dans l'Ukraine'72 has become the


70 See Jarry, Brochure-Programme, p. 23.

71 Ubu Roi, IV, 2.

72 Direction, IV, 3. J. Robichez, Lugné-Poe (Paris, 1955), p. 81, notes how Lugné-Poe symbolised this movement on stage:

"C'étaient ici des figurants qui, cachés à mi-corps, se dressaient sur le pointe des pieds ou fléchissaient les genoux pour donner l'impression qu'ils gravissaient ou descendaient les pentes."
archetype of Jarry's vague and suggestive \textit{pancarte}, as he and the three Palotins then advance towards the Russian army. Jarry thereby achieves a total negation of bourgeois realism which faces the spectator to accept the pure fantasy of the scene.

In spite of their 'armes tant à merdre, qu'à phynances et à physique,\textsuperscript{73} Ubu's battle performance is not the most heroic. Playing safe by ordering his men to circle round him so that he can stand 'comme une citadelle vivante' in the midst of the turmoil he nevertheless yields to the extremes of childlike fear:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ah! j'ai peur, Sire Dieu, je suis mort!}
Et cependant\textsuperscript{74} non, je n'ai rien...\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

after the second shot:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ah! je n'y tiens plus. Ici il pleut du plomb et du fer et nous pourrions endommager notre précieuse personne.}\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

and finally

\begin{quote}
\textit{C'est un coup de canon que j'ai reçu.}
\textit{Ah! Dieu, pardonnez-moi mes péchés.}\textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ubu Roi}, IV, 3.

\textsuperscript{74} See note 66, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid.}, IV, 3.

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Ibid.}, IV, 4 and see note 66, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}, IV, 4.
Such hyperbole demonstrates once again the creation of humour by the exaggeration of the human weakness of cowardice, which reaches a pitch of hilarious intensity when Ubu, threatened by a Russian soldier, has recourse to his childish whimpering:

'Tiens toi! Oh, aïe! Ah! mais tout de même,'\(^{78}\)

Ah! monsieur, pardon, laissez-moi tranquille

Oh! mais je n'ai pas fait exprès.\(^{79}\)

Soon, however, Ubu is boasting of his grand exploits to the Palotins Pile and Cotice after they have taken flight. A second antithesis follows when a bear appears on the scene. Cotice screams for help, but Ubu scales a rock, concluding that self-interest and conscientious religious motives demand a politic retreat whence he may recite the Lord's Prayer in Latin. Once the bear is dead, Ubu naturally claims full credit for its downfall:

Nous avons même poussé plus loin notre dévouement car nous n'avons hésité à monter sur un rocher fort haut pour que nos prières aient moins loin à arriver au ciel.\(^{80}\)

\(^{78}\) See note 66, p. 71.

\(^{79}\) Ibid., IV, 4.

\(^{80}\) Ibid., IV, 6.
The cunning use of the half-truth to cover up his cowardice and generally to rewrite his intentions in the light of the finalities of an episode, is a subtle ploy developed in *Ubu Cocu* as a means of provoking humour by dramatic irony 'for the audience knows the truth full well, in spite of the protagonist's claims to the contrary.

Eventually, Bougrelas routs Ubu's forces completely, and the anti-hero finally escapes on a ship sailing for France via the Baltic Sea. Yet even in the comparative safety of a ship, Ubu's fear makes him panic over the lurching of the vessel which, he feels, will topple over. He takes over the helm, echoing the captain's order:

Amenez le grand foc, prenez un ris aux huniers!

with his own version

... amenez le grand coq et allez faire un tour dans les pruniers. 81

adding a final touch of farce, if any were necessary, to the proceedings which close on yet another mystifying note as Ubu extols the merits of Poland:

*S'il n'y avait pas de Pologne, il n'y aurait pas de Polonais.* 82

Tossing a final reminder that what we have been watching was an

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81 *Ubu Roi*, V, 4.

exercise in suggestivity and creating a multiple reality, not just a social satire, a farce or a fantasy, Jarry impresses upon his spectators that the superficial gratuitousness of the setting, the actions and the dialogue should help them to avoid too precise a conclusion as to the aims of the play.

Ubu Cocu, conceived like Ubu Roi during the period 1888-1891, is a shorter play than the latter, but is nevertheless equally explosive in its propensity for fantasy and satire. Mockery of the savant would seem to be Jarry's aim in the opening scene between Achras and Ubu. Achras' study of the "polyèdres" is progressing, only twenty-two volumes remaining unwritten. On Ubu's arrival, Achras introduces himself as

"un vieux collectionneur, qui est en même temps, j'ose dire, un grand savant." 83

False modesty is followed by half-truth as Ubu announces that he is a pataphysician:

"La Pataphysique est une science que nous avons inventée et dont le besoin se faisait généralement sentir. 84"

One notes the pomposity of the recurring "nous"85 in this section of the play as Ubu vies with Achras for superiority.

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83 Ubu Cocu, I, 3.
84 Ibid., I, 3.
85 A technique already employed during Ubu's dictatorship, see p. 74.
Achras is mesmerised by the image which the word "Pataphysique" conjures and accepts Ubu's credentials without any qualms, "entre grands hommes...". 86

Unfortunately for Achras, Ubu sees no equality in their situations:

Soyez plus modeste, Monsieur! Je ne vois d'ailleurs ici de grand homme que moi. Mais puisque vous y teniez, je condescends à vous faire un grand honneur. Vous saurez que notre maison nous convient et que nous avons résolu de nous y installer. 87

Ubu's cunning use of the half-truth, twisted for his own interest, contradicts the stupidity which characterised his behaviour in Ubu Roi. An element of his grotesqueness, it is developed further in the ensuing scenes between Ubu and his Conscience.

Having transformed Achras' words "c'est une imposture manifeste" into "une posture magnifique", Ubu decides to interview his Conscience in order to ascertain the justice of disposing of Achras and moving into his host's abode with all his family.

86 Ibid., I, 3. Jarry's Pataphysics, defined in the Gestes et Opinions du Docteur Faustroll, Oeuvres Complètes, I, p. 217, as "la science de ce qui se surajoute, à la métaphysique... s'étendant aussi loin au-delà de celle-ci que celle-ci au cela de la physique: Ex: l'épiphanomène étant souvent l'accident, la pataphysique sera surtout la science au particulier quoi qu'on dise qu'il n'y a de science que du général". In short, Pataphysics will be the science that systematises the illogical values of Jarry's fantasy world.

87 Ibid., I, 3.
Elle est là, dans cette valise toute couverte de toiles d'araignée. On voit bien qu'elle ne nous sert pas souvent.

He tells the audience, emphasising his immorality, which becomes even more evident when, having learnt from *La Conscience* that Achras is too weak and that therefore it would be cowardly to kill him, Ubu trenchantly concludes the meeting with the words:

Merçi, Monsieur, nous n'avons plus besoin de vous. Nous tuerons Monsieur Achras.

Ignoring the moral value of his Conscience, he is content with facts from which his egoism can benefit.

Ubu's pride and verbose rhetoric gradually replace cowardice and stupidity as the more unpleasant aspects of humanity. He is later eager to demonstrate his knowledge of pataphysics, likening himself to a sphere, in order to bolster his own ego:

La sphère est la forme des anges. A l'homme n'est donné que d'être ange incomplet. Plus parfait que le cylindre, moins parfait que la sphère, du tonneau radie le corps hyperphysique. Nous, son isomorphe, sommes beau.

Whereas in *Ubu Roi* he gives free rein to his brutality, he now

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88 See note 66, p. 71.

89 Ibid., I, 4.

90 Ibid., I, 4.

91 *Ubu Cocu*, II, 4. An example of pataphysics, "la science du particu-lier".
puts a new found ability with words to good use in order to enhance his position. The Platonic verbiage of Jarry's pataphysical humour breaks into Latin92

\[ \text{Non cum vacaveris, pataphysicandum est, a dit Sénèque.} \] 
\[ \text{Il serait urgent de faire remettre une pièce à notre habit en laine philosophique. . .} \]

The lack of any logical coherence in the sentences, the attribution of an original "aphorism" to Seneca, and the meaninglessness of "laine philosophique" all serve to mock the inconsequential and gratuitous verbal renditions of the academic.

So far we have seen how the balance between fantasy and satire found in Ubu Roi becomes weighted more towards the fantastic in Ubu Cocu. But Ubu Enchaîné, completed in 1899, lies at the other end of the spectrum from Ubu Cocu in that it is the satirical that is dominant, Jarry indulging in a humorous critique of man's enslavement to the jargon of democracy and especially to the concept of liberty. Indeed,

\[ \text{92 Biographers, e.g. Chassé, have noted Jarry's brilliance in the Classics while at school.} \]

\[ \text{93 Ibid., II, 4. Jarry, in his introduction to Les Paralipomènes d'Ubu, op. cit., pp.165-6, remarks on Ubu's "Platonic" characteristics: "Des trois âmes que distingue Platon: de la tête, du coeur et de la gidouille, cette dernière seule en lui, n'est pas embryonnaire". Remembering Mallarmé's great interest in Platonism, we feel that Jarry, whose more overtly Symbolist work Les Minutes de Sable Mémorial (1894) evinces an even more considerable Mallarméan influence, has retained many of those Symbolist themes in his perfecting of the Ubu cycle.} \]
from this preoccupation are the comic and fantasy elements of the play derived.

That Ubu Enchaîné and not Ubu Cocu is intended to be the sequel to Ubu Roi may be seen in the very first scene, where Ubu insists on being a wiser man who has learnt the lesson of his traumatic Polish experiences, refusing to utter the mot de Cambronne since it has caused him too much trouble in Ubu Roi. He has also decided to abandon the tyrannical brutality which led to his downfall and become a slave. As in the case of his royal armoury, he possesses all the necessary clothes and implements commensurate with slavery.

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94 Perche, op. cit., p. 55, sees Ubu Enchaîné as Jarry's bitter reply to those of the literary establishment who have decried his Ubu Roi, and who have thus caused him to become an outcast of the Parisian literary scene. In view of Ubu's statements, "... je ne veux plus prononcer le mot, il m'a valu trop de désagréments" (I, 1), then, in reply to Mère Ubu's suggestion that he is going to attack passers-by, "Oh non! ils n'auraient qu'à me rendre les coups!" and finally, his wise remark: "À présent nous avons plus d'expérience et remarquons que ce qui fait rire les petits enfants risque de faire peur aux grandes personnes." (II, 2). Perche's thesis seems very plausible. The idea also bestows more validity on Béhar's belief: "Ubu Enchaîné, 'contre-partie' d'Ubu Roi selon Jarry lui-même est une pièce d'un humour très moderne, fait d'une logique rigoureuse, méprisant toute considération sentimentale, et illustrant la parfaite lucidité de son créateur qui... a campé au théâtre le seul personnage réellement libre de notre littérature, celui qui... maintient... le principe de la liberté individuelle." Béhar, op. cit., pp. 42-43. Béhar, in fact, sees the work as a strictly logical social satire of bourgeois liberty (the fantasy element being slightly reduced), a liberty which in Jarry's recent experience, had been proved hypocritical.
Just as he felt that his value as King, warrior and tax collector had to be indicated by objects, so his servitude must also create a set of tools with the correct nomenclature.

Eager to give his new rôle some factual validity, he later pounces upon the young lady, Eleuthère, Mère Ubu holding her bare feet firmly as Ubu shouts gleefully:

\[\text{Je veux lui cirer les pieds avec la brosse à cirer les pieds. Je suis esclave, cornegidouille! Personne ne m'empêchera de faire mon devoir d'esclave. Je vais servir sans miséricorde.}\]

The reductio ad absurdum produced by the egoistic actions of Père Ubu sets the scene for a continual mockery of liberty and, on a more general plane, of logic, the notions of liberty and slavery becoming confused to such a degree that they are rendered meaningless as a result of Ubu's inevitably self-interested fantasies.

This theme is portrayed in a series of superficially unrealistic actions which seize upon the essence of the

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95 Ubu Enchaîné, I, 1.
96 Eleutheria, 2 s.f., the Greek work for liberty.
97 Ibid., I, 7.
problem. The archetypal scene is that of the "Trois Hommes Libres" who, in order to demonstrate their freedom at every moment, need a corporal to give them order which they can immediately disobey. Their strength is defined as l'indiscipline avengée et de tous les instants", while their concept of liberty is hardly positive:

La liberté, c'est de n'arriver jamais à l'heure - jamais, jamais! pour nos exercices de liberté... 98

When the corporal orders "Rassemblement", they disperse, and when he orders:

Rompez vos rangs! Une, deux! une, deux!

they come back into line, being careful not to march to time.

Such an absurd world symbolises man's reliance on others in order to give his liberty any meaning. Hence the "Trois Hommes Libres" cannot be truly free. It is the absurdity of the situation which gives the play both a fantastic and a philosophical mood, an absurdity which Ubu easily accentuates by joining their troop and obeying instead of, as the conventions of liberty demand, disobeying.

Everyone in this topsy-turvy world is playing the rôle which their function, that which their title evokes, theoretically demands. Much in the same way that Genet's brothel-customers play at being general, archbishop and

98 Ibid., I, 2.
judge, in order to give their lives the imaginary meaning that they want,\textsuperscript{99} so Pissembock insists that his niece Eleuthère should not address him by that ugly name "Marquis de Grandair", and he is also very conscious of the formal family relationship he has with her:

\textquote{... petite Eleuthère, il ne faut pas laisser les hommes libres prendre trop de libertés. Un oncle, s'il n'empêche rien, est une pudeur vivante. On n'est pas une femme... libre, on est, une nièce. J'ai déjà ingénieusement exigé, quoique l'usage de ce pays libre soit d'aller tout nu que tu ne sois décolletée que par les pieds.} \textsuperscript{100}

Not only does he restrict the liberty of the free, but he also obliges Eleuthère to play the rôle of an innocent and delicate niece, so that he can play the protective uncle. Hence she has to suffer the physical pain and social indignity of having her bare feet cleaned by Ubu.\textsuperscript{101}

In the second act, we find that Ubu has decided to become the valet of his victims, but only in name, because his view of slavery does not include absolute obedience. Serving Eleuthère, he reveals that he is unlikely to show any courtesy to her visitors:


\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Ubu Enchaîné}, I, 5.

\textsuperscript{101} As we have noted, the consequence of this situation is that Ubu, also performing his functions to the letter, polishes her bare feet. See p. 81.
... je refuserai le cordon à ceux qui demanderont à la voir. Je la claquerai dans mes services de tous les instants. Je ne l'abandonnerai point. Vive l'esclavage! 102

The absurd farcical element of the play is developed largely from Ubu's forceful insistence on his dominance as a slave. Mère Ubu tries to persuade him that Eleuthère, having rung, may want some food. Ubu reacts sharply, saying:

Madame n'est pas servie, Mère Ubu! Madame sera servie quand nous le jugerons à propos, que nous aurons fini de nous restaurer nous-même, et s'il reste quelque desserte de notre table. 103

While portraying the grotesqueness of Ubu in these instances, Jarry is perhaps lending some philosophical validity to the theory that Ubu is a kind of nihilist, unprepared to brook the hypocritical class distinctions of contemporary society, though Ubu's answer to the problem is as egoistic as the system he seeks to disrupt. Going to even more extreme lengths in his disregard for his mistress's wishes, he drags twelve empty wine-bottles from the cellar and then orders his wife to collect the final dregs in a glass for Eleuthère. The only issue is a huge spider which puts an hysterical Mère Ubu to flight.

102 Ibid., II, 1.
103 Ibid., II, 2.
The arrival of Eleuthère's fiancé, Pissedoux, who like Pissembock, prefers to be known by another name, "Marquis de Granpré", gives Ubu yet another opportunity to contradict the already absurd values of the "pays libre". Ubu refusing to let Pissedoux see Eleuthère, the marquis decides to take advantage of his consummate knowledge of the "théorie de l'indiscipline" and whips Ubu. This naturally pleases Ubu:

...cireur de pieds, laquais, portier, esclave, je serai bientôt en prison et quelque jour, si Dieu me prête vie, aux galères. Votre fortune est assurée, Mère Ubu. 104

he shouts masochistically, contradicting the norms of personal sensation and ambition. Even after the whipping episode, Ubu is not satisfied with Pissedoux's credentials, preferring, as her slave, to perform the rôle of Eleuthère's fiancé himself, with disastrous consequences. For at the ball held by Pissembock on behalf of the engaged couple, Ubu forcibly dances with her, all but strangling and suffocating her with his ample frame, and declaiming a serenade of romantic words for her benefit. It would seem that the more violent fantasy of Ubu Cocu has been replaced by a more intellectual interpretation of Ubu's surrealistic

104 Ibid., II, 5.
activities which conveys the absurd even more intensely.

The plot of the play is concerned essentially with Ubu's "progress" as a slave towards imprisonment and eventual return to dictatorship through his own slavery. He is arrested at the ball and thrown into prison. He is, of course, immensely pleased about this for he no longer finds himself at the mercy of the public as he was in Poland. He realises:

...Les bêtes ont permission, à des jours marqués, de venir nous voir. 105

Hence he can still retain his monarchical attitudes without having to deal with the problems that such power brings in its train. The trial takes place, Ubu emphasising all his crimes in order to become a convict. The worst sentence is his desire:

...non point à mort, car il faudrait noter des crédits exorbitants pour la construction d'une assez énorme guillotine. 106

No longer is Ubu as stupid as he often was in Ubu Roi. Self-interest has taught him cunning as well as brutality, a new refinement in his ability to take advantage of others' obsessions or problems. As a result, the count sentences him to life imprisonment on the galleys of Soliman.

105 Ubu Enchaîné, III, 1.

106 Ibid., III, 2.
It is at this point that values become really confused. We learn in the third act, when a Frère Tiberge visits some devout women, that the whole population is so attracted by Ubu's rationale of happiness, that houses are being converted into prisons and that as a consequence of the immense quantities of food required by Ubu, the State is nearing bankruptcy. A collection is therefore being made to feed all the prisoners whom Ubu has threatened to evict from prison if he is not fed at least twelve times a day.

The fourth act heralds the arrival of the English Lord Catoblépas and his valet Jack, who have come to give tips to the Ubus, now regarded as royalty outside the 'pays libre'. Ubu eventually condescends to form his own entourage, the "Armerdre", in deference to public acclaim.

The fifth act opens with Pissedoux announcing:

Nous sommes libres de faire a que nous voulons, même d'obéir, d'aller partout où il nous plaît, même en prison! La liberté, c'est l'esclavage!  

and thus symbolising the total reversal of the traditional social values of logic. He and his men eventually penetrate Mère Ubu's cell, cut her chains and evict her. Everyone, even his entourage, revolts against Ubu in the hysterical

\[107\] Ibid., V, 1. We learn, too, that a new class of people has emerged, the nouveaux pauvres, replacing in Jarry's satirical fantasy, the bourgeois nouveaux riches.
desire for servitude. Pissedoux turns the cannons on Ubu, while the "Hommes Libres" frenetically attach the chains to their feet and run towards the ships. Ubu, however, holds on to the end of the chain and manages to board the ship before them. Mère Ubu chides him for failing to find a master, but Ubu responds:

Je commence à constater qui ma Gidouille est plus grosse que toute la terre et plus digne que je m'occupe d'elle. C'est elle que je servirai désormais.108

This conclusion illustrates that Ubu's egocentricity has reached a more coherent state, if one compares his attitude here with the panic-stricken imbecilities and gratuitous conclusion of Ubu Roi.109 At the same time, one notes that Mère Ubu has become more subservient as Ubu's intelligence increases, realising that her husband is become more successful. He is finally triumphant because he knows how to take advantage of the fact that in society one is always at the mercy of other people both mentally and physically. Whereas in Ubu Roi, he used physical pressure to dominate people, Ubu Enchaîné presents his successful application of intellectual coercion in man to destroy the whole system of values in the fictitious world of the "Hommes libres." a world

108 [Ibid., V, 7.]

109 Ubu refuses to take the helm when the Argousin suggests the idea, V, 8.
nevertheless representing the very essence of the slogans beloved by Republicans in the France of 1899.

Fantasy has the final word, nevertheless, when Ubu encourages his wife who is disappointed at their leaving France:

Ce sera assurément quelque pays extraordinaire pour être digne de nous. Puisqu'on nous y conduit sur une trirême à quatre rangs. 110

The incongruity of the final clause is clarified by the word "extraordinaire". The author is telling the audience that apparent meaninglessness has a logic of its own when transferred to the fantasy-world of the Ubus.

110 Ibid., V, 8. The same kind of meaningless comment concluded Ubu Roi. Considering, too, the special voice adopted by Ubu, we may draw a parallel between Jarry and his literary successors. Ionesco, who says of La Cantatrice Chauve: "Pour moi, il s'était agi d'une sorte d'effondrement du réel. Les mots étaient devenus des écorces sonores, dénuées de sens: les personnages aussi, bien entendu, s'étaient vidés de leur psychologie et le monde m'apparaissait dans une lumière insolite." E. Ionesco, Notes et Contre-notes (Paris, 1966), p. 252. Though Ionesco's characters do not indulge in the same fantasies as Jarry's or Apollinaire's, the simplification and often the meaningless and exaggerated artificiality of language and character in the latters' work heralds Ionesco's techniques.

In the case of Ubu's conclusion here, however, the word "extraordinaire" indicates that the author is looking upon the Ubus' world as having a logic of its own when transferred to the plane of fantasy.
In 1903, while contributing to the Festin d'Esopo a literary magazine, Apollinaire corresponds with Jarry, and later during the period 1909-1911, the two men meet at the Café Odéon with other poets connected with La Plume, another avant-garde publication. Shattuck remarks on the influence of Jarry on Apollinaire:

His manner became increasingly eccentric for he often adopted Jarry's bombastic parler Ubu, filled his conversation with erudite and vulgar allusions. 111

It is not surprising, then, that the seeds of Les Mamelles de Tirésias are sown probably in 1903 when the original version is written, according to Apollinaire himself.112 However, the final version, probably written in 1916 after the issue of depopulation has become a major issue in the French press, differs considerably from the original one. One suspects that the 'fil conducteur' of the play, the question of women's emancipation and the consequent fall in the birthrate, is inserted at the propitious moment to hold the surrealist elements together.113

112 Apollinaire, Preface, p. 9.
We know little of the developments which led up to first performance at the Théâtre Renée Maubel in Montparnasse on 24 June, 1917. The performance of Cocteau's Parade, which no doubt made Apollinaire fear that he would lose credit for his theories on sur-réalisme and the Esprit Nouveau encouraged not to delay in presenting his play. Moreover, his sponsor, M. Albert-Birot felt that the time was ripe for the theatre to emulate Cubism in its breaking down and subsequent reconstitution of reality.

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114 For the distribution of the parts, see Appendix, p. 143.

115 Parade was a theatrical exercise in the synthesis of music (by Erik Satie), art (costumes and background by Picasso), and ballet (choreography by Léonide Massine). The ballet itself was performed by the Compagnie des Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev, and was performed May 19, 1917.


117 See Arlette Lafont in Apollinaire ed. M. Décaudin, IV (Paris, 1965) , p. 6. She quotes Albert-Birot: "En décembre 1916, un soir, chez moi, au cours d'une réunion j'ai pris Apollinaire à part et lui ai dit: il faut absolument que nous passions sur le plan dramatique ce que nous faisions sur les autres plans de l'art, avez-vous une pièce? Il me regarda tout souriant: Oui, j'en ai une, Les Mamelles de Tirésias." The idea of simultanéisme, the simultaneous depiction of several aspects of an object, would be transferred to the theatre through a mélange of actions, sounds and lighting.
An indication of the kind of décor desired by Apollinaire comes in a letter to Serge Férat, where Apollinaire suggests:

Le décor sera le plein air qui appartient au théâtre. Si tu veux, la veille, on pourra lui donner un aspect zanzibarien par une bande de papier qui simulera les toits. 118

Though the ideal of the first suggestion is not fulfilled, we can see that the vagueness of the décor will yield the same stimulus to the imagination as Jarzy's pancarte.

Thérèse arrives on the stage,

visage bleu, longue robe bleue ornée de singes et de fruits peints. 119

Such a costume, and what is virtually a mask, have been interpreted by Raymond and Virginia La Charité as a "field of virginity inscribed with symbols of fertility". 120

More likely it is meant to represent not only the exoticism of Zanzibar, but also Apollinaire's own attempt to rid the play of all realistic conventions from the outset.

One notes how, in her opening speech, directed against her husband who is off-stage, her words are accompanied by sounds and actions symbolising other meanings. She hisses


119 Direction, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, I, 1.

as she emphasised her independence:

Vous ne me ferez pas faire ce que vous voulez. Je suis féministe et je ne reconnais pas l'autorité de l'homme. 121

She then announces:

J'ai envie d'être soldat, une deux, une deux
Je veux faire la guerre. 122

and as she marches on the spot, the thunder of drums is heard in the background. These are the first simplistic steps taken by Apollinaire towards the theatrical interpretation of the "analyse-synthèse" of art which he advocated in Parade,123 of a kind of Baudelairean correspondance yielding the sur-réalisme which Apollinaire himself enunciated. It will be noted as this analysis progresses that the fantasies of language provoked by the grotesqueness and stupidity of Ubu

121 Ibid., I, 1.

122 Ibid., I, 1.

123 Apollinaire, Chroniques d'Art, pp. 426-427. His simultanéisme, already practised in Cubist painting where several aspects of an object are shown at once, demonstrates "Le grand déploiement de notre art moderne/Mariant souvent sans lien apparent comme dans la vie/Les sons les gestes les couleurs les cris les bruits/La musique la danse l'acrobatie la poésie la peinture/Les chœurs les actions et les décors multiples." Apollinaire, Prologue, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, p. 31. While the phrase "comme dans la vie" reminds us that Apollinaire's sur-réalisme is based on the natural and is not a rejection of the normal world, Thérèse's marching reminds us of the deliberately iconoclastic actions of Ubu's "Armée polonaise en marche dans l'Ukraine." See footnote, p. 72.
give way to a more surrealistic emphasis on action which, because of the surprise element of incongruous sounds and actions, goes beyond the humorous fantasies of Ubu-Roi, revealing perhaps a closer affinity to the acrobatics of Ubu_Cocu. Though fantasy of language is by no means absent, the ideas of the protagonists usually bear a direct relationship to the socio-political themes of depopulation and feminism, as we have seen in Thérèse's first tirade.

Nevertheless, the same relationship between fantasy and social comment that we found in the Ubu cycle seems to occur in Les Mamelles de Tirésias. Thérèse "se courbe trois fois, derrière au public"and then shouts in the megaphone:

Ce n'est pas parce qui vous n'avez fait la cour dans le Connecticut
Que je dois vous faire la cuisine à Zanzibar. 

The gross masculinity of the action is ideally intended firstly to surprise the audience but secondly to make it laugh at Thérèse and the incongruity of the spectacle which is rendered more bizarre by the Belgian accent of her husband off-stage as he demands:

"Donnez-moi du lard je te dis donnez-moi du lard."

125 Les Mamelles de Tirésias, I, 1.
126 Ibid., I, 1.
This is followed by the sound of broken dishes. Apart from the fantasy of Connecticut, Zanzibar and Belgium being confused in the history of the characters, the quaintness of the accent and the fact that he is washing or cooking should suggest to the audience the meekness of the husband.

Thérèse, sneezing seven times in masculine fashion, and interrupted only once by her husband who repeats the same request, continues her tirade:

"Vous l'entendez, il ne pense qu'à l'amour,"¹²⁷ a stock phrase for the militants of emancipation, the word "amour" being accentuated by a "petit air de musette".

In the second scene fantasy combines with farce as the husband enters, losing the Belgian accent, flinging down the flowers he has brought as a peace offering when Thérèse, now sporting a beard and a flat chest, refuses to look at him. He goes to hit her, but, realising that she has undergone vast physical changes, he refrains and begins to meditate melodramatically upon the situation.

Thérèse intensifies the farce by explaining to him her new-found masculinity and then throwing a piano, violin, urinal, basin, chamber-pot on the stage as she packs her bags, recalling the antics of Ubu and his guests at the pre-

assassination dinner-party in *Ubu Roi*. Not content with these extremes, she pounces on her husband, undresses him, ties him to a chair, dresses him in her clothes, cuts her hair, dons his trousers and a top-hat.

A brief shooting duel between Lacouf and Presto, whose existence has no relevance to the social theme of the play, produces more fantasy, the *Peuple de Zanzibar*, represented by one actor who deals with all the sound effects, firing the shots that make them fall down. At this point Thérèse, now called Tirésias, takes flight.

The fifth scene heralds the arrival of the *Gendarme à Cheval* who, after pulling the bodies to the sides of the stage, and then seeing the Husband, concludes:

\[\text{ça sent le crime ici,}\]

suggesting that he, like Thérèse/Tirésias and the Husband, is going to play a stereotyped and exaggerated version of his function as a policeman. Ubu, too, portrays the same intensification of human essences, though he is more complex in that he represents not just a function like Apollinaire's characters, but a series of purely psychological qualities.

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128 *Ubu Roi*, I, 3.

129 It is not clear whether he arrives on a wooden horse, like Ubu in the battle-scene, or whether he imitates the action of riding.

130 *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, I, 5.
The Gendarme, muttering continuously "Quelle belle fille" begins to play the rôle of the lover as he later describes the Husband gauchely as "agréable au toucher comme une balle en caoutchouc", finally admitting,

Mademoiselle ou Madame je suis amoureux fou
De vous
Et je veux devenir votre époux. 131

Reminiscent of the absurdity created by the confusion of values prevailing in Ubu Enchaîné, the situation symbolises an excessive and feeble romanticism which ignores the realities of life even to the point where he will marry a man "par procuration" rather than concentrating on the more urgent problem of producing children. The whole episode is rendered more comic by his gullibility and even farcical by the continual background chants of Tirésias' feminist demonstrators, and by the breaking of crockery and pipe music. The Kiosque ironically reminds us:

Le music-hall et le grand bar
N'out-ils pas pour lui de charmes
Que repeupler le Zanzibar. 132

Such farce as we have witnessed so far may seem to indicate that Apollinaire is mocking the serious questions he posed in the Prologue. Yet he is after all appealing to

131 Ibid., I, 7.
132 Ibid., I, 8.
the imagination of the spectator to treat gaily rather than morosely the whole future of their country. One suspects, however, that to appreciate so farcical a play at once with the intellectual's eye for satire and social thesis, and also with the gay abandon advocated by Apollinaire would be rather difficult to achieve, since farce so often provokes a cynical attitude to a serious theme rather than accordance with it. It is, in fact, the "lyrisme assez bon marché" of the play to which Breton objected.133

An example of the mockery in which Apollinaire indulges opens the second act. The Husband, having decided to produce, in as much as he is an "homme-femme", his own children, has created 40,049 in one day. Flinging two dolls on the floor, he listens to them crying:

C'est épatant la musique moderne
Presque aussi épatant que les décors des nouveaux peintres
Qui florissent loin des Barbares
A Zanzibar
Pas besoin d'aller aux ballets russes ni au Vieux-Colombier. 134

Apollinaire is here having a quiet joke at the expense of the Cubists and Copeau, once again intending, through the sheer

133 Breton, Entretiens (Paris, 1952), p. 27.
134 Ibid., II, 1. See note 38, p. 33, for information on the Vieux-Colombier.
absurdity of the idea, that farce should convey the social motive, the joy not only of having children but also of the vérité-surprise\textsuperscript{135} which will revolutionise the relationship of science to the arts.

The arrival of the Journalist introduces, perhaps, Apollinaire's only criticism of Science's rôle in French society.

Sa figure est nue, il n'a que la bouche.  
Il entre en dansant.\textsuperscript{136}

The mask, as well as indicating the stereotyped impersonality of the character, serves to symbolise the comic essence of the Journalist, the man who talks and makes others talk. Like all aggressive, sensation-seeking newspaper-reporters, he is American, introducing himself thus:

\textbf{Hands up}  
\textbf{Bonjour Monsieur le Mari}  
\textbf{Je suis correspondant d'un journal de Paris}  
\textbf{.. ville de l'Amérique.}\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{135} See Apollinaire, "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes", p. 392: "On peut également exprimer une vérité supposée qui cause la surprise, parce qu'on n'avait point encore osé la présenter."

\textsuperscript{136} Les Mamelles de Tirésias, II, 1. In the letter to Férat, op. cit., p. 782, Apollinaire suggests that the Journalist wears "un costume de sauvage".

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., II, 2. It may be significant that one of the three main characters in \textit{Parade} is a "Petite fille américaine."
and then unfurls the American flag as another shot is fired. Satire of the American infiltration of Paris would seem to be intended in these symbols. Later he asks the Husband if his children are negro "ou comme tout le monde", and produces the fashionable jargon of pre-Freudian psycho-analysis, though by means of a comic deformation of terminology, illustrating once again the avant-garde nature of Apollinaire's play:

En somme vous êtes quelque chose comme une fille-père
Ne serait-il chez vous instinct paternel
maternisé. 138

The episode closes with yet more satirical fantasy, the Husband extravagantly announcing the successes which his children have already achieved. America comes under fire once again in the case of the child who has won an alimony of 100,000 dollars as a result of her divorce from the "roi des pommes de terre".

Apollinaire seems to be developing in humorous vein the prophetic rôle which, he hopes, the poet will play in the new society. Rejecting the .. économistes imbéciles
Qui nous ont fait croire que l'argent
C'était la pauvreté, 139

138 Ibid., II, 2.
139 Ibid., II, 3.
the Husband proceeds to evoke a synthesis of surprise and social functionalism, the ideal elements of art according to Apollinaire's article "L'Esprit Nouveau et Les Poètes". He decides to produce a child-journalist:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Comme ça je saurai tout} \\
\text{Je devinerai le surplus} \\
\text{Et j'inventerai le reste.} \quad 140
\end{align*}
\]

His saying this reminds the audience of Apollinaire's hope that the imagination of the poet will become prophetic. The fantasy recommences with the Husband throwing torn-up newspapers into an empty cot so that the, as yet unborn, child will be capable of writing on any topic. He then decides:

"Il lui faut un sang puisé dans l'encrier", \[141\]

and so, through the literal interpretation of the clichéd image, he opens a bottle of ink and pours the contents into the cot. A huge pen-holder is inserted, the child needing a back-bone, and this is followed by a pot of glue representing

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{De la cervelle pour ne pas penser} \\
\text{and scissors representing} \\
\text{Une langue pour mieux baver.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{Ibid., II, 3.}\]

\[\text{Ibid., II, 3.}\]
He then invites his concoction to sing, with the result that
the child blackmails him to the tune of five hundred francs
as a good "maître-chanteur" should.

The child's subsequent reporting of the news and
prophecies concerning Apollinaire's friends, indicated this
time by a series of radio-pancartes, so overwhelmed the
Husband that he shouts down the loudspeaker to an imaginary
telephone operator that he refuses to subscribe to her
company. Delesalle has suggested that Apollinaire is
concerned for the survival of man's individuality under
the barrage of newspapers, tele-communications and other
inventions foisted upon him by the Scientific Age.\textsuperscript{142}

Considering his disappointment, in "L'Esprit Nouveau et les
poètes" with poetry's failure to keep pace with scientific
developments. Apollinaire is perhaps more concerned, since
the Husband represents the author, that the poet's spontaneity
may have been blunted by the new world of machines. Essentially,
however, the scene serves to accentuate the gaiety with which
the audience should appreciate the play.

\textsuperscript{142}See Simone Delesalle, "La Modernité dans le langage
d'Apollinaire", Europe CCCCLI - CCCCLII (November-December,
1966), p. 106: "Apollinaire s'approprie le monde, il ne s'y
perd ni ne le subit. Les choses rentrent dans l'ordre
humain, les hommes ne peuvent être réifiés."
Whatever reservations Apollinaire may have about science he is not averse to employing it on stage. Hence, the Cartomancienne, who comes to issue identity cards to the 40,050 children because they are causing a famine in Zanzibar, her head covered by a wooden box lit by an electric bulb. Just as it should create modern myths which the inventor may translate into scientific reality, so the scientist should stimulate the imagination of the dramatic poet and his audience so that new realities may be perceived.

The Cartomancienne involves the audience by pointing at a spectator and shouting:

   Vous Monsieur prochainement
   Vous accoucherez de trois jumeaux ,

and then by exhorting the whole audience to produce more children. She then reveals herself as Thérèse who asks her husband to take her back. Briefly rejecting her plea because she has no breasts, he picks up some balls and balloons in order to create some. Deciding, however, that they will not foster procreation, he throws the balls to the audience, urging them to take advantage of his gift:

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143 Apollinaire does not mention the problem of overpopulation, which was as yet not an issue at the time.

144 Les Mamelles de Térésias, II, 7.
Allez nourrir les enfants
De la repopulation. 145

The poetic, almost mock-rhetorical, tone of these lines serve to re-emphasise the fact that repopulation is not the dominant issue of the play, for if it were Apollinaire would have treated it in a more serious vein. The theme of repopulation is but a convenient point de départ for an optimistically gay advocacy of poetic prophecy, of Apollinairean surréalisme and of audience-involvement designed to make the spectators look upon France's post-war prospects with optimism, imagination and willingness to support a closer relationship between the arts and sciences.

The fact that Apollinaire appeals to the whole audience yields an essential difference between his and Jarry's drama.146 Jarry, too, asks for participation but not through acquiescence, whereas Apollinaire wants his audience to accept his fantasies:

Acquiescer aux situations les plus saugrenues: le nouveau-né déjà journaliste, le père qui accouche: ne pas en être choqué, pas plus que

145 Ibid., II, 7.

des inventions impossibles des romanciers. 147

He intends to win the spectators to his side. Jarry, on the other hand, accepts the bourgeois hypocrisy and stupidity of the majority of his audience, and therefore goads them into an involvement which bears no relationship to the gaiety that Apollinaire endeavours to instil into his audience. Only the "cinq cents intelligents" could participate willingly in the caustically satirical comedy presented in Ubu Roi, Ubu Enchaîné and to a lesser extent in Ubu Cocu.

Though Apollinaire's drama is superficially more satirical in that he treats precise social themes, he nevertheless evinces a moderation and optimism in his ideas. Ubu's ugliness, though more general in its application, presents a more devastating satire because Jarry searches for no positive answer to bourgeois vices, implementing them only for the purposes of his aesthetic principles and for the pleasure of indulging in the grotesque. Jarry is not a political or social animal like Apollinaire, for in his

147 The evening of June 24, 1917, did not pass without incident. André Breton recounts that the Dadaist Jacques Vaché, who was not sympathetic to Apollinaire's moderate ideas, entered "en uniforme d'officier anglais: pour se mettre immédiatement au diapason, il avait dégainé son revolver et et paraissait d'humeur à s'en servir". Les Pas Perdus (Paris, 1924), p. 25.
later years he identifies himself more and more with his main character, perpetrating fantasies similar to those of his plays. 148

Moreover, the fantasies of satire and farce in Jarry's drama forces the spectator either to love or hate Ubu, because the extreme stupidity, grotesqueness, brutality and occasional cunning of his language are inevitably directed against somebody else. On the other hand, Apollinaire's fantasy and comedy of language serve only to reveal the fact that his stereotyped characters are merely functions of the theme of repopulation and of the potentialities of surprise. Ubu is just as stylised, even as stereotyped, as they are, and yet he becomes a more dominant, a complexly human, character because he possesses the essence of potent human qualities that cannot fail to stir the emotions.

148 Jarry eventually drank himself to death. A passion for cycling, a mild eccentricity in itself, was intensified by the fact that Jarry often carried a gun with him on his visits. The story is told that, at Vallette's house, Jarry had frightened a neighbour by shooting wildly in the air while her children were playing nearby. Jarry told her not to worry: "Nous vous en ferons d'autres." On another occasion, when a man asked him for a light on a dark night, Jarry pointed his gun at the man's mouth and said: "Voilà du feu, Monsieur!" Breton, Les Pas Perdus (Paris, 1924), p. 57, recounts: "Il parlaït alors d'une voix mesurée, prononçant toutes les muettes et contant, dans une langue châtiee, les histoires les plus abracadabrantes, jouant au naturel le rôle d'Ubu lui-même et se vantant sérieusement d'exploits imaginaires."
CHAPTER IV

SUR-REALISME AND PARODY

The same distinction that could be made between Jarry's and Apollinaire's approaches to the fantasy of language and character may be drawn in an analysis of the more direct surrealistic action in their plays. Ubu's actions are generally perpetrated with a view to harming others or gaining something from them, and his humour revels in its brutality, whereas the actions of Apollinaire's characters are generally intended purely as demonstrations of his surrealism.

Fantasy of language was employed largely as a vehicle for social satire, whereas fantasy of action would seem, because of its often gratuitous extremism, to be a direct parody of the coherent and realistic developments of the drame bourgeois.

Béhar notes how many of Jarry's situations conspire to deprive the audience of the vestiges of realism to which it must cling in order to retain a perspective on the rational world.1 This would apply especially to Ubu Cocu. Though the consciously spoken, coherent language of the

1 Béhar, op. cit., p. 37.
actors reminds us that we are still far from the automatic writing of the post-war Surrealists, there is a parallel to be drawn between the dream-world actions of Ubu Cocu and the paintings of Dali or the collectively created poems of Artaud, Soupault and Eluard. The extremism of Ubu's impalement of Achras on stage; the acrobatics of Ubu bounding across the stage after disappearing in spite of his enormous gidouille through the trap door; the Conscience hanging upside down above Ubu's gidouille, upon which he eventually falls; Achras and the Rebontier trapped in a

2 Ubu Cocu, I, 6.
3 Ibid., II, 3.
4 Ibid., II, 2.
5 Ibid., II, 3. Jarry's conception of a physically autonomous conscience is surrealistic in itself, heralding the work of Dali. Eslin notes interestingly that Jarry, through the creation of the Conscience at the armoury of la physique, la phynance and la mardre, "anticipates the tendency of the Théâtre of the Absurd to express psychological states by objectifying them on stage." M. Eslin, The Théâtre of the Absurd (Garden City, 1961), p. 259.
barrel full of 'merdre', and Memnon and the Conscience immersed in a urinal and subsequently joined by Ubu, who falls through his throne; and finally the irrelevant crossing of the stage by "un chien à bas de laine" and by a crocodile sounding like a train, all savour not only of farce but of a rejection of the rational for the fantasy world of a child. Perhaps the most significant development from Ubu Roi to Ubu Cocu lies in the greater eccentricity of action which takes the spectator further away, though not separating him entirely from the mockery of bourgeois hypocrisy manifested in Ubu's Polish tyranny. For the latter element, in order to be effective, always needs a relatively close connection with the values it sets out to denigrate.

Hence, a simple but clear plot is evident throughout Ubu Roi, whereas the theme of cocugage is virtually ignored in Ubu Cocu and no coherent causal nexus serving to unify the

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6 Ibid., III, 5.
7 Ibid., IV, 2.
8 Ibid., IV, 4.
autonomous surrealistic situations into any semblance of rational development.

Though coherence returns in *Ubu Enchaîné*, the same imaginative creations abound. *Ubu* expressed his annoyance that his "boulet" will not move under its own steam:

> Nous avons fait tout le chemin le traînant nous-même au moyen de notre pied, encore qu'il s'arrêtait fort souvent apparemment pour ses besoins. ¹⁰

The prisoners' ball and chains produce yet another surrealistic image as Elenthère, in an effort to obtain her own chains, cuts with a scissors those of Mère *Ubu*. ¹¹ Equally intense irrationality concludes the play with *Ubu* splitting Pissenbock in two as the latter tries to take over his cell. We realise that the absurd is by no means sacrificed to the surrealistic: rather do the two elements develop simultaneously as Eleuthère's uncle advises ensemble:

> Ne t'effraie pas, ma chère enfant, tu as maintenant deux oncles. ¹²

In *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, Apollinaire is creating deliberately illogical, unrealistic situations with

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¹⁰ *Ubu Enchaîné*, V, 3.


sur-réalisme in mind.

The sudden growth of beard and moustache and the corresponding loss of her breasts by Thérèse, Presto's and Lacouf's antics, the Husband's creation of the child journalist, and the formidable Cartomancienne, who strangles the Gendarme on stage in the final scene, constitute, apart from their satirical value, a rejection of realism for the discoveries of the modern imagination upon which these incredible actions rely for their validity. Yet the mechanics of the Kiosque are ingenious:

un Kiosque à journaux avec une nombreuse marchanaise étalée et sa marchande figurée dont le bras peut s'animer; il est encore orné d'une glace sur le côté qui donne sur la scène, illustrations the difference between the Symbolists and Apollinaire for whom "art had to be concrete albeit unnatural". He was attempting to create an entirely new aesthetic out of the natural, whereas the Symbolists by means of their suggestivity, were trying to escape from the concrete, is often self-explanatory. So, the Symbolists, though with more subtle and suggestive powers in the spiritualisation of the literal, create an imagery based on

13 Directions, first Act.

the natural.

... il en sort ses mamelles l'une rouge,
   l'autre bleue, et comme elle les lâche,
elles s'envolent ballons d'enfants, mais
restent retenues par les fils. 15

An action designed above all to provoke surprise, it would,
Apollinaire must have concluded, also scandalise many of
the spectators since it forms the first irrational and
superficially implausible situation of the play. 16

Yet the playfulness of the coloured balloons, the
strings of which Thérèse amusedly pulls, hardly suggests
that Apollinaire considers the audience with the same
disdain as Jarry:

... une masse inerte et incompréhensible
et passive qu'il... faut frapper de temps
en temps, pour qu'on connaisse à ses
grognements d'ours où elle est et où
elle en est. 17

Such were Jarry's views of and intentions toward his audience
in general. Apollinaire is not mocking his audience, hoping
rather to spur it into a sense of involved gaiety, so that
the play may become a fête. 18

15 Les Mamelles de Tirésias, I, 1.
16 Thérèse bursts the balloons with a cigarette lighter,
er possession of which is another symbol of women's emancipation.
18 Cf. Apollinaire, Prologue, pp. 30-32, where he compares the flashes of gunfire to the "feu nouveau" of his drama
and the new society.
The duel between Presto and Lacouf presents an equally devastating rejection of realistic drama. They arrive on the stage armed with cardboard revolvers — another indication of fantasy — and argue about the game of "Zanzibar" which they have just played. Lacouf has won, but submits that there is no question of Zanzibar, since they are in Paris. Presto disputes this, and so they reconcile the argument by a duel, the cardboard brownings, the fact that Lacouf is played by a woman and their exotic attire evoking a parody of Romantic drama with its propensity for the melodramatic. The fantasy and parody are intensified when "Le Peuple de Zanzibar", a single character who creates many of the sound effects from the back of the stage, fires two shots. The protagonists fall. "Le Peuple" than hangs up a pancarte at each end of the stage, presumably representing the front page of the newspaper which Tirésias is reading. Then meaning, or lack of it, resides in the confused signification of the word Zanzibar. The scene demonstrates the

19 The pancartes read:

PANCARTE POUR PRESTO
Comme il perdait au Zanzibar
Monsieur Presto a perdu son pari
Puisque nous sommes à Paris

PANCARTE POUR LACOUF
Monsieur Lacouf n'a rien gagné
Puisque la scène se passe à Zanzibar
Autant que la Seine passe à Paris.

The farce of the pun on Zanzibar is accentuated by that of Scène-Seine: The scene illustrates Apollinaire's advice to the dramatist: "...qu'il ne tienne pas plus compte du temps que de l'espace" (Prologue, p. 31). The idea not only of simultaneity but also a reaction against the "Reconstruction historique", recalls Jarry's ideas on plot and scenic changes.
La Charités (2), argument that, with the vagueness of décor "Zanzibar actually represents Paris and by extension the whole universe" in the same way that Jarry's Ubu Roi takes place in Poland, "c'est-à-dire nulle part", and therefore as much in France as anywhere else. The suggestive value of the pancarte, emphasising the symbolism of the dramatic situation reveals the similarity in the authors' techniques.

Linked with the surrealism of Thérèse's behaviour is her awareness that she is acting before an audience, that the true reality is the action and not the plot. Just as Ubu flouts convention in his first utterance, so Thérèse takes the unprecedented step of signalling to the orchestra to stop, thereby stressing her awareness of being an actor and involving the audience in the reality of the drame. The later direction,

Elle se courbe trois fois derrière au public

20 La Charité, op. cit., p. 5.

21 See p. 35 for Apollinaire's attitude to drama as action. Yêta Daesslé played the Journalist, the Kiosk, Lacouf and the child-journalist, while Louise-Marion played Thérèse, Tirésias and the Cartomancienne. Hence there is no question of actor realistically identifying with character, with a woman playing male rôles. Rather is the actor's reality effaced. Cf. Jarry, pp. 22-23.

22 Apollinaire notes: "A la première représentation... Mlle. Niny Guyard était au piano, la partition d'orchestre n'ayant pu être exécutée à cause de la rareté des musiciens en temps de guerre." in Les Mamelles de Tirésias, p. 23.
illustrates the same elements as well as the surprise which recurs in the final scene of the play where the Husband involves the audience physically in the action by throwing balloons and balls to the spectators as a symbol not only of their participation but also of the necessity for the public to profit socially from the imagination of the poet.

The awareness which Jarry's characters have of their artificial situation constitutes a more overt and conscious attack by the actor against realism, specifically in Ubu Cocu. Achras, informing the cobbler Scytoromille of Rebontier's desire to buy new shoes, regrets:

Pour ne point nuire, voyez-vous bien, à l'unité de lieu, nous n'avons pu nous transporter jusqu'à votre échoppe. Installez-vous (il ouvre la porte du fond) dans ce petit réduit, votre enseigne au-dessus de la porte, et mon jeune ami va vous présenter sa requête. 24

The aims of this subtle passage are complex. A parody of the conventions which the Classical Theatre and the drame bourgeois had instituted, the passage shows that unity of place can be achieved only by more unreality and artificiality. Furthermore, the actors express their awareness of an ontological divorce between themselves and the characters they represent, realise at once that they are acting but also existing in the real world of the theatre, where even their gratuitous fantasies

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23Cf. the suggestive décor for the first scene of Ubu Roi, p.

24Ubu Cocu, III, 4.
are an acceptable reality. The character enters the world
der the actor, and becomes an actor. The suggestive value
of the pancarte in Ubu Roi and Les Mamelles de Tirésias is
repeated in the shop sign and open door. The reality of
the play is constituted by the action and not by the
realistic portrayal of a story resembling aristocratic or
middle-class life, a reality which because of its genuine,
unpretentious lack of meaning, gives free rein to the
surrealistic and symbolistic interpretations of the avant-
garde poets.

Ubu, too, indicates that he is acting a rôle when
he considers using his "pique-tête" on Achras:

Le pique-tête est sans doute un instrument
ingénieux, mais la pièce dure depuis assez
longtemps et nous n'avons point l'intention
de nous en servir au jourd'hui. 26

Mocking Romantic "realism", especially that of plot, the play
finds a more valid reality in the primacy of action itself.

When one has accepted the nascent surrealism and
the artificiality of psychological and historical realism,
one appreciates more easily the parody of more precise
elements in the drame bourgeois. In as much as Ubu Roi is

25 See Jarry's statement: "Toute 'histoire' est si
ennuyeuse, c'est-à-dire inutile" in the 11e Argument, p. 151.

26 Ubu Cocu, V, 3.
potentially a drama of heroic deeds in battle, like *Patrie*!,
Ubu represents a reversal of heroic values. He is one of the
first modern anti-heroes, especially in his volte face from
brutality to cowardice. On learning that the Czar is to
invade Poland, Ubu panics:

Ho! ho! J'ai peur! j'ai peur! Ha! Je pense
mourir! O pauvre homme que je suis. Que
devonir, grand Dieu! Ce méchant homme va me
tuer. Saint Antoine et tous les saints,
protégez-moi, je vous donnerai de la
phylance et je brûlerai des cierges pour
vous. (Il pleure et sanglote)²⁸

The parody of the romantic hero and the melodrama is
rendered all the more effective by the epithets, 'pauvre'
and 'méchant', which contradict what we know of Ubu and the
Czar, and by Ubu's invocation of the saints, the audience
being fully aware of his total immorality and of his
hypocrisy.

His cowardice seems to throw into greater relief Ubu's
attempts at rhetoric. Just before he takes flight before the
advancing bear, Ubu declaims upon the death of one of his men,

Rensky:

Ainsi que le coquelicot et le pissenlit à la
fleur de leur âge sont fauchés par l'impitoy-
able faux de l'impitoyable faucher qui fauche
impitoyablement leur pitoyable binette,
ainsi le petit Rensky a fait le coquelicot, il
s'est fort bien battu cependant, mais aussi

²⁸ *Ubu Roi*, III, 7.
il y avait trop de Russes. 29

The contrast between the childish, almost platitudinous remarks explaining the image accentuates the absurdity of the passage. The grandiloquence of Ubu's complaint in Ubu Cocu is grotesque:

Madame Ubu, notre vertueuse épouse, nous trompe indignement avec un Égyptien nommé Memnon qui cumule les fonctions d'horloge à l'aurore, la nuit de vidangeur au tonneau, et le jour, de nous faire cocu. Nous avons projeté de tirer de lui, cornegidouille! une terrifique vengeance. 30

Moreover, it is defeated by the absurd fantasies of the play, and by the grotesque pride and appearance of Ubu, who throughout the cycle prefers to refer to himself in the plural, and by the scatological references continually recurring.

Ubu's prolixity is counteracted by the no less comic utterances of his adversaries, representatives of the bourgeois citadel that he is attacking. Bordure, chained, threatens him:

Le sang du soi et des nobles crie vengeance, et ses cris seront entendus, 31

reminding the audience of the heroic values which have been

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29 Ubu Roi, IV, 5.

30 Ubu Cocu, I, 5.

31 Ubu Roi, III, 5.
left far behind. Another parody of the values to be gleaned from Romantic melodrama is developed through the excessive and stereotyped reaction of Ubu's antagonists when he seizes power. The nobles shout "Horreur" in unison, the magistrates, 'Horreur', 'Infamie', 'Scandale', 'Indignité', while Ubu's own cohorts greet Bordure's suggestion that stabbing, the traditionally heroic means of killing one's enemy, would constitute the most efficient method of assassination, with the words:

Oui, voilà qui est noble et vaillant! 33

Later, the people echoes this sentiment when Mère Ubu advises her husband to engage in war with the Czar:

Vive Dieu! Voilà qui est noble. 34

Such clichés have been repeated for the sake of realism in the drame bourgeois, but Jarry, with sufficient exaggeration of voice and gesture on the part of the actors, has made them comic.

The even more melodramatic monologue of Bougrelas as he sits and ponders his fate after the death of his mother, Queen Rosemonde, reveals an exaggeration which renders it

32 Ibid., III, 2.
33 Ibid., I, 7.
34 Ubu Roi, III, 7.
ridiculous:

Mais je suis dans un désert! O mon Dieu!
Son cœur ne bat plus. Elle est morte!
Est-ce possible? Encore une victime du
Père Ubu (Il se cache la figure dans les
mains et pleure). O mon Dieu! qu'il est
triste de se voir à quatorze ans avec une
vengeance terrible à poursuivre.

(Il tombe en proie au plus violent désespoir).

Yet it is such emotions as these that attract the audiences
to the Paris theatres in the name of the realism which Hugo
enunciated in his Préface à Cromwell. The monologue, claimed
by Hugo as a vehicle for an expression of the innermost thoughts
of the character, often serves as an opportunity for the actor
to indulge in the exhibitionism which Jarry abhors.

The melodrama of the romantic lover is by no means
exempted from the scourge of Jarry's parody. In Ubu Enchaîné,


36 Moreover, convention is mocked by the fact that Jarry,
in letters to Lagné-Poe on July 29 and August 1, 1896, suggests
having Bougrelas played by a youth, rather than by a female
actor: "...il serait peut-être amusant, pour que tout soit
nouveau quand on montera Ubu, de faire jouer Bougrelas par un
gosse intelligent de l'âge requis et de réagir ainsi contre
une tradition de travesti que personne n'a osé démolir depuis
une phrase de la préface du Mariage de Figaro. ..." (Letter
of July 29, 1896, Tout Ubu, p. 135).

In the note "Caractères et Habillements de la Pièce",
Theatre Complet (Paris, 1957), p. 256, Beaumarchais writes:
Le Mariage de Figaro, of Cherubin the page: "Ce rôle ne peut
être joué comme il l'a été, que par une très jeune et très
jolie femme; nous n'avons point à nos Théâtres de très jeunes
hommes assez doués pour en bien sentir les finesse..."
Ubu dances with Eleuthère, who has already demonstrated her melodramatic weaknesses by fainting twice before the ball, accompanying his grotesque movements with a verbal serenade:

Eh! ma bonne enfant, que les plaisirs mondiaux ont de charme pour nous... Il faut bien que quelqu'un vous invite à valser maintenant, cornegidouille! Alors je me dévoue, de par ma chandelle verte. 38

His promisingly sophisticated introduction is inevitably deflated by the earthy levity of the real Ubu.

The Husband's monologue in Les Mamelles de Thérèse, when he notices that Thérèse has changed physically, presents the same stylisation as Bougrelas' monologue:

Thérèse ma petite Thérèse où es tu
(Il réfléchit la tête dans les mains, puis campé, les poings sur les hanches)
Mais toi vil personnage qui t'es déguisé en Thérèse
Je te tuerai. 39

The final heroic words of the romantic protecting his love are rendered absurd by the swift defeat of the Husband at the hands of Thérèse/Tirésias.

We should note at this point Pascal Pia's contention 40

37 See Rafaële in Patrie!, Act V, Eighth Tableau, 2.
38 Ubu Enchaîné, II, 6.
39 Les Mamelles de Thérèse, I, 2.
that Apollinaire is in fact debunking the social play, rather than searching for means of stimulating the public to an awareness of its social situation outside the theatre. Though we do not accept this thesis in view of Apollinaire's critical works, we would suggest that his play is a conscious parody of the pièce à thèse and pièce à idées, which discussed precise social problems sometimes to the detriment of the psychological realism of the characters and the plot.\textsuperscript{41} Apollinaire believing that modern problems demand a modern theatrical context. By the same token Ubu's discourse in \textit{Ubu Enchaîné}:

Puisque nous sommes dans le pays où la liberté est égale à la fraternité laquelle n'est comparable qu'à l'égalité de la légalité, et que je ne suis pas capable de faire comme tout le monde et que cela m'est égal d'être égal à tout le monde puisque c'est encore moi qui finirai par tuer tout le monde, je vais me mettre esclave. \textsuperscript{42}

This presents a parody of the values on which the pièce à thèse was based.

The farce and scatology of the Ubu cycle have caused Grossvogel to condemn Jarry's works as no more than plastic, "felicitous formalizations" of the author's personality, contending that Jarry knows of very few means of making the

\textsuperscript{41} Alexandre Dumas fils is the most noted exponent of the pièce à thèse in \textit{La Demi-monde} (1855); see p. 3.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ubu Enchaîné}, I, 1.
audience laugh, and of developing characters:

... he seems not to have realized that all drama but superficial comedy relies on an essential stylisation that demands more than just the token assistance of masks. 43

This will, perhaps, remain the most erroneous criticism written on Jarry, considering that Ubu Roi is massively stylised in order to negate the norms of conventional realism and that the simplicity of characterization constitutes an essential part of that negation. Grossvogel has ignored the theory of a "réalité multiple", which indicates that there is a considerable degree of complex irony in the satire and parody inherent in Jarry's drama.

Shattuck, too, ignores the essential parody of Jarry's work, though he is not critical:

Jarry did not assume the lofty tone of irony but took the literal earthy approach of humour. 44

The fact remains that the farce and stupidity of the Ubu cycle - though in Ubu Cocu and Ubu Enchaîné Ubu reveals self-interested irony in his cunning treatment of Achras, his Conscience, Pissemebock, Pissedoux and the Trois Hommes Libres - counteracts the mot d'esprit which prevails in bourgeois comedies. Jarry is even more direct in his criticism of such


artificial wit, often inserted gratuitously, when Ubu suggests at the end of Ubu-Roi why Germany is so called:

...le pays appelé Germanie, ainsi nommé parce que les habitants de ce pays sont tous cousins germains.

It seems unlikely that Jarry intended the audience to take the weakness of the pun as the best humour that he could produce. Rather are we to replace its intrinsic value by its relationship to the wider plane of parody. For the irony of Ubu Roi resides not in individual elements of farce: a far greater irony unfolds itself in Jarry's demolition of contemporary theatre.

In Les Mamelles de Tirésias, one finds the same combination of farce and subtlety which forms the comic foundation of Ubu Cocu and Ubu Enchaîné. One recalls the satirical irony of the Husband's creation of a child-journalist, and his admission that his child-novelist has won a literary prize composed of twenty cases of dynamite. The latter alludes perhaps to the in-fighting amongst the avant-garde literary groups of Paris – the Cubists, Futurists, the Vieux-Colombier group – or perhaps to Apollinaire's arrest in 1911 when he was wrongly accused of stealing the Mona-Lisa from the Louvre and was subsequently spurned by his closest friends, even Picasso.

Critics emphasised after the first performance of Ubu-Roi the influence of Shakespeare and Rabelais. Jarry
himself protests against these suggestions:

[Le public] a reproché à Ubu Roi d'être une grossièrre imitatio de Shakespeare et de Rabelais parce que les décors y sont économiquement remplacés par un écrivain et qu'un certain mot y est répété. On devrait ne pas ignorer qu'il est à peu près prouvé aujourd'hui que jamais, au moins du temps de Shakespeare, on ne joua autrement ses drames que sur une scène relativement perfectionnée et avec des décors. 45

Making no mention of his parody of Shakespeare, he proceeds to scoff at the suggestion that the play has been written in Old French because of the word "phynance" and the orthography of "ji vous fous dans la poche..."46

These are not the elements which indicate a conscious implementation of Shakespearean or Rabelesian technique, though Lugné-Poe had already made much of the Shakespearean stage in his article, "A Propos de l'inutilité...". Rather does one find a délibéré parody of Macbeth and the drame bourgeois.

However, as G.E. Wellworth points out in his article on Jarry:

... Parody does not indicate literary influence."47

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46 Ubu Roi, III, 4.

nor does it always imply criticism. For the Shakespearean elements in *Ubu Roi* should not be interpreted as a parody of realism as are the *drame bourgeois* elements. Jarry does, after all, praise Shakespeare on several occasions, and no doubt realised that the English playwright's drama was a far cry from the *drame bourgeois* in its propensity for fantasy and its more extreme flouting of the Three Unities.

Macbeth's and Brutus' brutality is mirrored in *Ubu*. Lady Macbeth's cold-blooded cunning in the figure of Mère Ubu, the Three Apparitions and Banquo's Ghost are echoed in the Ombre appearing before Bougrelas, the Voice from Sigismond's tomb warning Mère Ubu not to touch her husband's gold in the Cathedral of Warsaw, and in Mère Ubu's own attempt to persuade her drowsy husband that she is the Archangel Gabriel. In addition, Rosmonde's dream foreseeing the death of her husband at the parade evokes Calpurnia's dream in *Julius Caesar* in which she is warned of impending doom.

Finally, the ghost visiting Bougrelas and exhorting him to avenge his parents' murder and giving him a gigantic sword to accomplish the task recalls not only Macduff's oath to avenge Duncan's murder but also Hamlet's promise to avenge

\[48\text{ Julius Caesar, II, 2. Caesar: "Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out, Help, ho! they murder Caesar." In Ubu Roi, V, 4, Ubu remarks: "Nous arrivons à l'instant sous le château d'Elseneur", evoking the Elsinore of Hamlet.} \]
his father.

We should, perhaps, mention the chorus of Palotins in Ubu Cocu\(^49\) and the chorus of actors at the end of Les Mamelles de Tirésias\(^50\) as a renaissance, in the field of comedy, of the Greek chorus.\(^51\)

One suspects in the final analysis that it is the popularity of Shakespeare, Greek drama and Rabelais in the late-nineteenth century which incites Jarry to parody them, rather than any weaknesses on their part, for what little praise he does proffer is almost solely reserved for Shakespeare, Greek drama and those writers concerned with Symbolism. Béhar notes, with reference to the public's reaction to Ubu Roi:

\[\text{Le public a protesté justement parce qu'on s'en prenait à ce qu'il a de plus cher, ses illusions. Il a compris que si l'on osait s'attaquer à la belle langue de théâtre rien ne demeurerait plus.}\] \(^52\)

\(^49\) The Palotins, chanting throughout the play scatological praises of Ubu and his Machine à décervelage, may well represent a parody of the opéra-comique popularised at the time in the work of Scribe. The pure theatricality of a chorus, in that it is not a "realistic" element, should be noted.

\(^50\) The real chorus, originally intended to be used throughout the play, was in fact used only during the interval. The chorus was made of several people, including Niny Guyard, Maurice Lévy, Max Jacob and Paul Morisse.

\(^51\) The titles Ubu Roi and Ubu Enchaîne are probably parodies of Sophocles' \textit{Oedipus Rex} and Aeschylus' \textit{Prometheus Bound}.

\(^52\) Béhar, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37.
Shakespeare's popularity resulted from the fact that his theatre presented a world, often of fantasy, which was far removed from the problems of the bourgeoisie, while the drame bourgeois supported the values which they held dear. The theatre acted as a symbolic realisation of their illusions so that once it was parodied, bourgeois values were automatically being attacked as well.

Moreover, the mélange of so many temporally disparate elements, ranging from the sixteenth-century (Rabelais) to the contemporary, suggests a deliberate mystification once again, Jarry teasing the audience, reminding it of its own theatre, yet not developing any element which the audience may conclusively identify, and forcing it to enter his own fantasy-world of satirical symbols.

All these parallels, whether they be outright parodies or not, enrich Jarry's play, lending a texture to the drama from which the fantasies of the Ubu cycle can be evolved. Yet, rich though Jarry's iconoclasm may be, Grossvogel obsevantly notes the consequently greater originality of Apollinaire's play:

Whereas the spurious plot outline merely pretends to be a play in order to mock real plays, the real play now created by Apollinaire will seek substance in conformity with the ideals of the preface - from within itself
rather than through parody. 53

Does this mean that Apollinaire's play is the purer dramatic form? The suggestion is a very plausible one, but one may also argue that Jarry's works, in as much as their aims are fulfilled within the temporal and spatial context of the performance itself, are purer than Les Mamelles de Tirésias, which has a social purpose effective beyond the precincts of the theatre.

53 Grossvogel, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
CHAPTER V

TOWARDS A SURREALIST DRAMA

Sa folie ne fut pas belle,
C'est pourquoi elle vit encore.

(Tristan Tzara: Lautréamont)

André Breton defines Surrealism in 1924 thus:

Automatisme psychique pur par lequel on se propose d'exprimer, soit verbalement, soit par écrit, soit de toute autre manière, le fonctionnement vrai de la pensée. Dictée de la pensée en l'absence de tout contrôle exercé par la raison en dehors de toute préoccupation esthétique ou morale.¹

Considering Jarry's ostensible attachment to Symbolism, a movement deeply involved with aesthetic problems, considering the meticulous and logical way in which he constructs Ubu Roi around situations typical of Shakespearean and Romantic theatre, one might justifiably conclude that the Surrealists of the Twenties, many of whom know Apollinaire personally, would adopt the latter's sur-réalisme as the starting point for their own literary and social revolution, concerned as they were with the same qualities of surprise and "le merveilleux".

But though Apollinaire may have coined a word destined

to provoke a minor revolution in French intellectual circles,

Les Mamelles de Tiresias seems to have disappointed Breton, who writes:

Les Mamelles de Tiresias m'ont paru une pièce de bonne humeur où j'ai trouvé soulageant de rire sans arrière pensée. Je sais qu'Apollinaire tient le secret d'une gaieté moderne à la fois profonde et tragique et que c'est volontairement qu'il ne l'a pas engendrée.

J'aime autant dire que la pièce ne révèle pas, dans le choix des moyens, la même infaillibilité que le chef-d'œuvre de Jarry. Elle n'en remet pas moins en cause l'Esprit Nouveau dont Apollinaire a senti un peu l'immense corps. 2

The naive joy and the absence of any real criticism of the rational world of middle-class values evoked in Apollinaire's drama were not to the liking of Breton, who preferred the iconoclastic black humour of Jarry's work, in which he saw a revolt against French society and the human condition. 3

The Dadaist Vaché, waiting before the first performance of Les Mamelles de Tiresias, manifests a quite considerable contempt for its author in a letter to Breton:

'Êtes-vous sûr qu'Apollinaire vit encore...?' Pour moi, je ne crois pas - Je ne vois guère que Jarry. 4

2 Breton, Les Pas Perdus (Paris, 1924), pp. 43-44.

3 Ibid., p. 48. "À tel assaut de raisonnable, nul mieux que Jarry ne se trouva résister".

Soon after June 24, 1917, Vaché even condemns Apollinaire as an decadent aesthete:

Donc nous n'aimons ni l'art ni les artistes (à bas Apollinaire). ... Mais nous ne connaissons plus Apollinaire ni Cocteau - Car - nous les soupçonnons de faire de l'art trop sciemment, de rafistoler du romantisme avec du fil téléphonique et de ne pas savoir les dynamos. 5

Apollinaire, attached to an ideal of a moderate social drama, could not abandon his optimistic lyricism in order to explore the "dynamos" of the creative mind, whereas Jarry, through a rejection of socially acceptable logic, conventional realism, and society, expressed in the Ubu cycle, his paraphysics, and subsequently in his own life 6 symbolised the extreme ideals of the Surrealists.

For the patriotism, optimism and scientific approach to drama evinced by Apollinaire were anathema to Breton and his followers, who saw the Great War as the end-product of the

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5 Vaché, Letter to Breton, August 18, 1917, ibid., p. 45.

6 See p. 106, and Breton, Les Pas Perdus, pp. 52-53, where he quotes Jarry: "L'organe des sens étant une cause d'erreur, l'instrument scientifique amplifie le sens de la direction de l'erreur. La superstition vaut donc la science. 'Le consentement universel est déjà un préjugé bien miraculeux et, incompréhensible'."
Positivist age, in which Apollinaire felt, the poet could play the rôle of inventor and stimulator. The nemesis of bourgeois society, whose crowning achievement was "le perfectionnement d'une quelconque machine à tuer", had given intellectuals the opportunity of creating a new set of social values. Hence the simplistic outlook of Apollinaire's lecture on *l'Esprit Moderne et les Poêtes*, in which he exhorted the French poet to put his faith in patriotism and material progress, amazed Breton "par le néant de sa méditation et l'inutilité de tout ce bruit."

Apollinaire, though his critical works suggested that he had enjoyed "un aperçu théorique" of a new art form which rejected realism, and indeed much of traditional literature, did not relate his new aesthetic to any new social concepts, whereas the Surrealists were to participate in a revolution:

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7 Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme* (Paris, 1945), I, p. 25. Apollinaire is, however, aware of the effect that a materialistic democracy could have on the intellectual and artistic élite: "Le retour vers l'esclavage, que l'on décrit de nos jours du nom de liberté a déjà eu pour premier résultat, en ce qui touche les lettres... de supprimer l'élite indépendante." *L'Oeuvre poétique de Charles Baudelaire*, ed. G. Apollinaire (Paris, 1916), p. 4. Wanting "les progrès matériels" to continue, he is nevertheless concerned for the privilege which he and other artists enjoy.


9 Breton, *Les Manifestes du Surréalisme*, p. 44.
Tout est à faire, tous les moyens doivent être bons à employer pour ruiner les idées de famille, de patrie, de religion. 10

These words, written in Breton's Deuxième Manifeste of 1929, evoke an attitude far more akin to Jarry's than to Apollinaire's drama, which was produced with the expressed intention of helping to solve some of France's social problems. "Réformer les moeurs"11 said Apollinaire. "Détruire les moeurs" was essentially the reply of the Surrealists.

Roger Shattuck correctly remarks that in Ubu Roi, the audience enters "the realm of hallucination, of violated consciousness... the eruption of dream into waking experience..."12 The amoral, savage world of Ubu's brutal

10 Breton, ibid., p. 17. He reveals his attitude to realism: "... l'attitude réaliste... m'a bien l'air hostile à tout essor intellectuel et moral. Je l'ai en horreur, car elle est faite de médiocrité, de haine, et de plate suffisance." (Premier Manifeste). Realism prevents the mind from entering the realm of the unconscious, of attaining an entirely new field of creativity. Hence, in their Déclaration of January 27, 1925, the Surrealists stated: "... Nous n'avons rien à voir avec la littérature..." quoted in M. Nadeau, op. cit., II, p. 42. Surrealism was not a "métaphysique de la poésie" but a "moyen de libération totale de l'esprit".

11 Apollinaire, Prologue, p. 30.

12 Shattuck, op. cit., p. 35.
fantasies and the extraordinary pleasure which Jarry derives from such grotesque satire, herald the humour objectif of the Surrealist mind. Faced with the decrepit values of bourgeois society, the poet can treat that world with objective complacency by creating a mental barrier between himself and the tragic:

L'esprit, mis en présence de toute espèce de difficulté, peut trouver une issue idéale à l'absurde. La complaisance envers l'absurde rouvre à l'homme le royaume mystérieux qu'habitent les enfants. 13

The childlike weltanschaung of Jarry, notable in the linguistic and dramatic fantasies of Ubu Roi and Ubu Cocu, which were literary evocations of the poetic life he was to lead as he gradually drank himself to death, looks back to the 'raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens'14 in which Rimbaud indulged, and looks forward to the "hallucinations dirigées" which Breton advocates as the means of attaining the sublimation of the conscious required for a surrealist perception, and creation, of the universe. Did not Jarry inform the audience before the curtain rose on December 10, 1896, that la physique


14 Arthur Rimbaud, letter to Paul Demeny, May 15, 1871, quoted in Rimbaud, Œuvres (Paris, 1960), pp. 344-350. Lautréamont, Rimbaud and Jarry were the idols of the Surrealists.
symbolised "la réalité du consentement universel [opposé] à l'hallucination de l'intelligent."? 15

Hallucination is more violent than rêverie, and so Professor Robichez is justified to a considerable extent in suggesting that "[Ubu Roi] exige la complicité de nos moins avouables instincts et, à cet égard, la pièce pourrait passer pour une parodie du drame symboliste", 16 since the Symbolist drama of Maeterlinck and Quillard conveys both the noble and the tragic elements of humanity.

Parody it certainly is, but considering Jarry's praise for Maeterlinck's "théâtre ABSTRAIT" and for the "éternellement tragique" of Marlowe, Shakespeare and Goethe, 17 Professor Robichez's thesis should perhaps be modified.

Il ne manque plus qu'une comédie aussi folle que l'unique de Dietrich Grabbe. ... 18

Jarry adds, implying that the ideal comedy will be the counterpart, as much as the parody, of the Symbolist

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15 Jarry, Brochure-Programme, p. 23. Words underlined by the writer of this thesis.

16 Robichez, Le Symbolisme au Théâtre, p. 360.

17 Jarry, 2e Argument, Tout Ubu, pp. 146-147.

18 Ibid., p. 147.
tragedy. 19

Henri Béhar goes even further on the question of parody:

La pièce n'est pas plus anarchiste que symboliste, ou, bien entendu, naturaliste... Ubu se moque bien du symbole, qu'il renverse au même titre que le roi Venceslas, pour se donner le plaisir de vivre, réellement vivre sur la scène. 20

Here Béhar has perhaps given us the key to the originality of Jarry's, and subsequently Apollinaire's, plays. For even as a comic parody, Jarry's drama does not recall the traditional comedy enunciated by Molière. Henri Bergson, writing only three years after the first performance of Ubu Roi, after noting that laughter serves to protect society from abnormality, concludes with a comment on the tragic essence of the comic spirit:

19 The symbol of the vulture, used by A.-Ferdinand Hérold in his adaptation of Aeschylus' Prométhée Voleur de Feu (See note, p. 127, for Jarry's parody of Greek drama) performed at the Théâtre des Poètes, August 26, 1900, signified hate, envy, vanity, and ignorance. It is interesting to note that Jarry, in his introduction to Les Paralipomènes d'Ubu, Tout Ubu, p. 165, suggests that the name "Ubu" may have been derived from "Ybex... le Vautour". Considering that Ubu demonstrates the same grotesque characteristics, this illustrates the possibility that Jarry, who frequented the same literary circles as the Symbolists, interpreted certain symbols in the same way.

But Bergson cites examples from Molière and Labiche, whose characters, though they are types rather than individuals, nevertheless portray a humanity and realism through which the underlying tragedy of their situation may be detected. But are Jarry's or Apollinaire's characters human enough to evoke pity? Though Jarry's Ubu presents certain human essences, they are derived from the grotesque, egoistic, perhaps instinctive elements of the human personality, while Ubu's antagonists are rendered so artificial by the consistent parody of the play as to evoke no feeling of tragedy whatsoever. Apollinaire's characters evince a similar artificiality in that they are essentially foils for a social thesis and an aesthetic experiment. In the case of both dramatists, human physical traits are distorted or effaced by make-up and mask, Jarry seeking to create the impersonality of the marionette and Apollinaire "des acteurs.../Qui ne sont pas forcément extraits de l'humanité/Mais de l'univers entier."  


22 Apollinaire, Prologue, Les Mamelles de Tiresias, p. 31.
While the satirical element, especially in the work of Jarry, may easily provoke a mood of pessimism in the minds of the audience, neither writer definitively describes his work as a comedy or tragedy, Jarry content to evoke the tragi-comic nature of the impersonal character, Apollinaire simply saying that the reaction of the audience to the moral of the play, once the performance has finished, will determine whether Les Mamelles de Tirésias is a tragedy or a farce. (He does not call it a comedy).

Apollinaire makes it clear that his play constitutes a reaction to the sentimentality of the Romantic period:

On tente ici d'infuser un esprit nouveau au théâtre
Une joie une volupté une vertu
Pour remplacer ce pessimisme vieux de plus d'un siècle.

Just as the Romantic dramatists intended to abolish the

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23 Jarry, "De l'inutilité du Théâtre au Théâtre", p. 471.


25 Apollinaire, Prologue, ibid., p. 30. Apollinaire's statement (Prologue, p. 31) that he will produce "Les changements de ton du pathétique au burlesque" does not suggest the possibility of strong emotions because of the impersonality of the characters. In the same way, Ionesco recommends that "... Le passage du burlesque au tragique doit se faire sans que le public s'en aperçoive. ..." Notes et Contre-notes, p. 256. Such distinctions are effaced in the minds of the audience by the absurdity of the logic in La Cantatrice Chauve.
Classical dichotomy of tragedy and comedy, so Jarry and later, though, in their symbolistic imagery, still attached to the nineteenth century, go one step further in an effort to disregard the concepts of tragedy, comedy and tragi-comedy, and the conventional realism evoked thereby.

Of Jarry's originality, Ghéon writes:

... C'est du théâtre 'cent pour cent' ou comme nous dirions aujourd'hui, du théâtre pur, synthétique, poussant jusqu'au scandale l'usage avoué de la convention, créant en marge du réel une réalité avec des signes... Il ne fut pas suivi. 26

But he was followed by Apollinaire who, if we discount the social aims, and the mild satire engendered by the question of depopulation and the American influence on France, a purer form of drama. For whereas Jarry's theatre relies considerably on satire and parody, Apollinaire's drame surreéaliste derives an intrinsic value from its simultanéisme and its own action, which, if the audience decides to treat the play as a farce, becomes totally internal and gratuitous. Hence one feels that the early critics of Apollinaire's play lacked a certain perspective in their judgement, failing to see that, though the social value of the play was of little importance, its aesthetic value was unquestionable since

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Apollinaire had not only rejected realism but also, going beyond the intellectual involvement of the élite sought by Mallarmé and Jarry,\textsuperscript{27} provoked a physical involvement. Lusseyran on the part of the whole audience claims:

\begin{quote}
[Apollinaire] compose la première œuvre authentiquement surréaliste de la littérature française. \ldots \textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

But for the parody imminent in \textit{Ubu Cocu}, causing frequent mental reference to conventional realism, one might justifiably claim that \textit{Ubu Cocu} was the first surrealist drama. However, Jarry, so conscious of the iconoclastic aim of his plays, did not attempt such a trenchant reconstitution of reality as Apollinaire did.

Had the latter demonstrated some of Jarry's anti-social virulence, then the Surrealists might have overlooked the superficial logic and gay lyricism of his characters and plot, in the same way as they accepted the logic in Jarry's \textit{Ubu Roi} and \textit{Ubu Enchaîné}, presumably because of these plays presented a criticism of bourgeois values, and might have given him more credit as the originator not only of \textit{Surréalisme} but also of \textit{Surréalisme}.

\textsuperscript{27} See Jarry's \textit{m'enfoutiste} attitude towards an audience other than the "cinq cents intelligents" in Chapter I.

One suspects that, though the Cubists and Breton criticised
Les Mamelles de Tirésias itself, it was the vagueness and
unfashionable moderation of Apollinaire's poetic and
dramatic theories, particularly in their relation to the
Esprit Nouveau, that led to the partial eclipse of his
reputation. For Jarry and the Surrealists, their
reconstitution of reality in literature derived from, and
was an expression of, their desire to reconstitute social
reality, whereas Apollinaire's aesthetic iconoclasm is in
no way derived from any profound dissatisfaction with French
social values.
CONCLUSION:

BEYOND SURREALIST DRAMA

Though both Jarry and Apollinaire have been regarded primarily as precursors of the Surrealist drama, critics have in recent years begun to note the debt of the present avant-garde dramatists particularly to the work of Jarry. Both writers delight in the invention of a fantasy world - and Apollinaire's play is perhaps the richer and purer in this respect - and therefore herald the surrealist drama of Roger Vitrac and of Antonin Artaud, who, as co-director of the Théâtre Alfred Jarry (1926), endeavours to develop not only Jarry's "hallucination de l'intelligent" but also to promote, like Apollinaire, the physical as well as the mental involvement of the audience, advocating a theatre in which the spectator "saura qu'il vient s'offrir à une opération véritable où non seulement son esprit, mais ses sens et sa chair sont en jeu".¹ His presentations reveal the simultaneity of poetry, movement and lighting, the seeds of which were sown in the Symbolist inventions of Les Mamelles de Tirésias, while the irrational state of hallucination to which the spectator

would be subjected finds its origins partly in the theatre of Jarry, whose more savage and aggressive fantasies seem to have more affinities with the sub-conscious experiments of the Surrealist movement.

But, in spite of Jarry's quest for theatrical hallucination and his penchant for the marionette, Ubu's language, like that of Thérèse and the Husband, full of fantasy though it may be, indicates the essentially logical nature of the character's mind. It may be, therefore, that Jarry and Apollinaire should be considered as early exponents of what Lionel Abel calls the metatheatre, in which not only the audience but the characters too are conscious of the lack of realism and the illusion in the action itself.

For this kind of play, fantasy is essential, it is what one finds at the heart of reality. ...in the metaplay life must be a dream and the world a stage. Abel contrasts the often supernatural forces which govern of necessity the logical and clear-cut development of tragedies,


with the self-conscious, self-questioning theatre initiated by *Hamlet*, continued in Europe by Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, a "drama of philosophical depth expressed in fantasy, mixing comedy and satire", and intensified by the drama of Jarry and Apollinaire. Authentic theatre makes no pretense of realism, abandons the traditional labels of tragedy and comedy, delights in its own illusion.

Ionesco and Genet, whose Theatre of the Absurd explores the potentiality of the same metatheatrical concepts, employ, like Jarry, the rigid but superficial logic of language in order to convey the tenuousness of rational thought and the rational world. Ionesco defines his theatre thus:

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4 *Hamlet*, beyond the realism of the traditionally tragic character, in that the drama is based on his questioning the reality of existence, reveals an unconventional and more complex interiority that attracted Mallarmé and Jarry (see p. 17 the latter regarding him as an "abstraction" because he differed so much from a "realistic" character.

5 *Peer Gynt*, first performed in France by Lagnié-Poe's Théâtre de l'Œuvre, November 12, 1896, "considered wildly heretical because of its poetic expansiveness and its bland disregard for the current canons of playwriting theory" (Wellworth, op. cit., p. 117), suggests in its fantasy certain parallels with *Ubu Cocu*: the journey in Egypt, the singing statue of Memnon. However, since the first version of *Ubu Cocu* was probably completed in 1893 and Prozor's translation of *Peer Gynt* appeared in the Revue Blanche only in May or June, 1896, the parallel may be fortuitous, though Jarry mentions *Peer Gynt* favourably in "Questions de Théâtre", Tout *Ubu*, p. 154, and in fact plays the role of one of the trolls in the performance of 1896.
Théâtre abstrait. Drame pur. Anti-thématique, anti-idéologique, anti-réaliste-socialiste, anti-philosophique, anti-psychologique de boulevard, anti-bourgeois, redécouverte d'un théâtre libre. 6

All the elements enunciated by Jarry and Apollinaire in their critical works are found here, except that Apollinaire, because of his optimistic faith in bourgeois values, does not exhibit the latent pessimism of Jarry and Ionesco as they break down traditional values.

Genet, conceiving like Mallarmé and Artaud, of drama as a religious act, and developing Artaud's concept of a theatre of signs, 7 recalls the work of Jarry not only in his desire for illusion but also in the ostensibly deliberate mystification derived from the confusion of illusion and reality in Les Bonnes, Le Balcon and Les Nègres, plays which evoke Jarry's preference for a total theatre involving the audience by means of virulent and provocative

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6 Ionesco, _op._cit., p. 255.

7 Jean Genet, letter to Pauvert, L'Atelier d'Alberto Giacometti (Décines, 1958), p. 146, talks of the Catholic Mass as a theatre of symbols: "Sous les apparences les plus familières - une croûte de pain - on y dévore un dieu. Une représentation qui n'agirait pas sur mon âme est vaine. Elle est vaine si je ne crois pas à ce que je vois qui cessera - qui n'aura jamais été - quand le rideau tombera." So Jarry's "théâtre pur" is also evoked here.
satire rather than by Apollinairean charm.\textsuperscript{8}

Apollinaire, inspite of his flair for inventiveness and lyrical fantasy, lacked the social extremism necessary to bring his aesthetic extremism into line with the mainstream of avant-garde drama, to which Jarry more clearly belongs. The contrast between the character of the rebellious young man and that of the mature, politically moderate, former soldier, serves to exemplify the results of the comparison which we have undertaken.

\textsuperscript{8}Les Bonnes (first performed April 17, 1947) tempts the superficial spectator into interpreting the play as a satire of the middle class's insensitivity to the problems of the poor. Le Balcon (April 22, 1957) with its action taking place in a brothel where men's fantasies may be satisfied, in spite of the revolutionaries who act in reality outside the brothel, uses ostensible socio-political satire as a succadance to the development of illusion. Les Nègres (October 21, 1959) again tempts the spectator to interpret it as a discussion of racial conflict rather than as a theatre which, mystifying like Ubu Roi the bourgeois audience, evokes brilliantly the "réalité-multiple" which Professor Robichet sees in Jarry's play.
APPENDIX

LES MAMELLES DE TIRESIAS

PERSONNAGES

Avec la Distribution de la Première Représentation

(24 Juin 1917)

Le Directeur .................. Edmond Vallée
Thérèse-Thirésias et la Cartomancienne . Louis-Marion
Le mari ........................ Marcel Herrand (Jean Thillois)
Le gendarme ..................... Juliette Norville
Le journaliste parisien .......... Yéta Daesslé
Le fils ........................ –
Le Kiosque ....................... –
Lacouf ........................ –
Presto ........................ Edmond Vallée
Le peuple de Zanzibar .......... Howard
Une dame ......................... Georgette Dubuet
Les choeurs ........................

A Zanzibar de nos jours.

A la première représentation les décors et les costumes étaient de M. Serge Férat, Mlle. Niny Guyard était au piano, la partition d'orchestre n'ayant pu être exécutée à cause de la rareté des musiciens en temps de guerre.
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VIII

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IX

Social, Political and Historical Background


