

PICASSO AND THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

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by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is twofold. We begin by tracing Picasso's involvement in the theatre in France, his collaboration as a designer with important artistic avant-gardistes of his day. Secondly we study Picasso's work as a dramatist, analysing his two plays in detail and relating them to his work as an artist. We offer two appendices to supplement the research with pertinent information about his life and work in the theatre. The study undertaken here shows how the artist adapted his cubist precepts to theatrical subjects and thereby came to influence not only the art world, but the world of theatre as well.

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INTRODUCTION

As father of cubism, Picasso's contribution as an artist has been analysed by many authors. His first dealer Daniel Henry Kahnweiler, in his 1915 pamphlet The Rise of Cubism¹, and his friend Guillaume Apollinaire, in his art criticism of the early years, recognized that cubism was to change irrevocably the artistic perception of reality. Through their writings we learn of the reasoning which developed into cubist concepts of painting and are directed in our examination of Picasso's work as a theatre designer and dramaturge. Douglas Cooper's book Picasso Theatre² follows the artist's early interest in theatre and provides background information about his work with Diaghilev, for Les Ballets Russes, and the Comte de Beaumont for Soirées de Paris, and discusses his later more peripheral involvement in theatre projects. Cooper's greatest contribution to Picasso studies is his documentation, through photographs, reproductions of paintings, sketches and letters, of Picasso's career as a theatre designer. As well he attempts to trace the influence of Picasso's involvement in the theatre world on his subsequent artistic works. Cooper's work enlarges on and corrects errors in Picasso et le Théâtre³ Neither of these works, however, considers the reasons for Picasso's almost instant

¹ A translation of Der Weg zum Kubismus (Munich: Delphin Verlag, 1920) with preliminary notice by Robert Motherwell (New York: Wittenbarn, Schultz, Inc. 1949).

² Douglas Cooper, Picasso Theatre (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968).

³ Catalogue, exhibition at Musée des Augustins, Toulouse, 1965.

success in a field which was new to him, or for his enthusiastic acceptance by the acknowledged masters who were his collaborators. With the exception of Roland Penrose's brief descriptions of Picasso's plays and the events surrounding early productions of them in his introductions to his English translations of them, the plays have never been analysed. Although the cubism of Picasso's artistic works has been discussed, the cubism of his dramatic works has not. Furthermore, cubism's revolution in the art world is accepted without question, while the infiltration of cubist ideas into the field of dramatic art, being much more subtle, has been overlooked.

The vehicles for this infiltration were Picasso's decors for Les Ballets Russes productions. Because the cubism presented in these works was diffused into all aspects of the performances through the close collaboration of all the principals - dramatists, choreographers, composers and decorators - it was more easily understood than cubist painting which condensed its ideas into a single medium. Moreover, the productions of Les Ballets Russes had established an audience and a reputation for high quality. People who never attended an avant-garde art exhibition were now spending an entire evening experiencing a controversial art form because it was brought to the stage by a company they trusted. With this introduction to cubism theatregoers acquired a taste for the new trend.

Cubism's influences on dramatic art are not difficult to show. Tracing its techniques in dramaturgy has, however, been treated superficially because of a failure to relate these

techniques to the philosophy which engendered them. Matthews mentions the collage of a news clipping which appears in Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir, but does not see that the clichés of Vitrac's dialogue are also collage. Moreover, because Vitrac's use of the news clipping collage is in the surrealist mode, Matthews credits Picasso with being a para-surrealist.³ Breton, the self-appointed leader of the surrealist movement, claims Picasso for one of his own; his respect for the artist was due to cubism's two levels of meaning. However while Breton sought the realization of the unreal, Picasso was engaged in the "unrealization of the real".

The purpose of this investigation is then, to describe Picasso's formation in the theatre, his formulation of cubism, and to study their convergence in his work as a theatre designer and as a dramatist. We have investigated all the productions that Picasso was involved with, no matter how insignificant the commission, to illustrate his adaptation of cubist ideas to the needs of the theatre. We have described and analysed the language, structure and content of his own dramatic works in the light of cubism's philosophical ideas. And we have attempted to show the traces of cubism in other dramatic works and in other aspects of drama - choreography, music and theatre art.

We have not treated the influences of Picasso's life in the

³ J.H. Matthews, Theatre in Dada and Surrealism (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1974), p. 15.

theatre on his subsequent paintings. Picasso constantly refers to his activities in his paintings so that such a study would certainly take us beyond the limits of the present investigation. Neither do we intend to show the effects of Picasso's personal life on his work in the theatre except as it demonstrates the historical perspective of his interest in theatre subjects. Personal references are included only to show Picasso's use of reality as a basis for his work or in his collage technique of mixing real and non-real stimuli. They are a hallmark of his art and drama.

In Chapter I, Picasso's early interest in the theatre is traced; then his associations with avant-garde dramatists, his development of cubism and finally, the events leading up to his work as a theatre decorator are shown. All of Picasso's theatre commissions are discussed and where possible, comments of critics who were present at the early performances are given.

Chapters II and III will describe and analyse Picasso's two plays. In order to place each one in its historical context as well as its cubist context, the plays are discussed under the following headings: "context" and "title" give the dates and situation of each play and the significance of its title; "plot", "language" and "allusions" describe the action or what is done, the verbal texture or what is said, and the thematic and social references or what is meant, and "settings and costumes", "intertextualities" and "structure" describe the play's visual, literary and theatrical framework and context.

Appendix I lists all of Picasso's artistic theatre commissions, while Appendix II gives a chronological survey of his life as it pertains to work in the theatre and associations with other writers and dramatists.

Much of our work is necessarily descriptive. We hope it will lead to a clearer appreciation of Picasso's considerable contribution to the dramatic arts, a contribution which, although recognized by recent exhibitions, has, as yet, never been as fully documented as it deserves.

PART I

Early Contacts with the Theatre

(a) His Spanish Origins

During his childhood in Spain Picasso was taken by his father to watch the bull fights; such an outing is reflected in Picasso's earliest known work, painted at the age of eight or nine years.* In it he describes all the elements of a performance: the arena, the performer - a mounted picador - and his audience of spectators, indicating that he was already aware of the drama of the stage and the dynamic interdependence of actor and audience. Themes of the bull fight, its theatrical ritual and costumes, the arena, and the bull's enormous size and strength, were to remain favorite subjects for Picasso throughout his life as a painter. The bull became in the eye of the artist, a symbolic creature, the mythological Minotaur, whose strength and violent nature haunt his later work.

(b) The Cabarets

Picasso's first depictions of actual theatre subjects coincide with his arrival in the big cities of Paris and Barcelona as a young man in 1900. These scenes of the music halls and cabarets that he frequented at this time

* Picador, (1890), in the collection of Claude Picasso, Paris, reproduced in Pablo Picasso: a retrospective, ed. William Rubin (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 16.

give the spectator's eye view of typical performances. In his portrayal of the singers and dancers whose faces glow in the footlights Picasso uses the impressionist style associated with Degas' or Toulouse-Lautrec's paintings of similar scenes. He conveys the festive atmosphere of the theatre and the gestures and facial expressions of the performers. Many years later his curtain for Cuadro Flamenco would echo the work of this period.

(c) Le Cirque Médrano

Picasso spent the next few years wandering between Paris and Barcelona until he finally settled in Paris permanently in 1904. He and his friends often visited the Cirque Médrano near the Bateau Lavoir in Montmartre where he lived.¹ His paintings of the jugglers, harlequins and acrobats whom he came to know are painted from a different viewpoint than his cabaret scenes; he now focuses on the performers off-stage rather than on their performance. The glamour of the footlights gives way to the cruel reality of circus life and the alienation of the performer from his audience. Picasso's empathy for these pallid, emaciated actors, particularly the harlequin, may stem from his own poverty and lack of recognition during his wanderings between Paris and Barcelona.

¹ Fernande Olivier, who was Picasso's companion from 1905 to 1912, relates in her book Picasso and His Friends, translated by J. Miller (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), p. 127, that they attended the circus three or four times a week.

As his friend Apollinaire notes in his review of a 1905 exhibition, "La pitié rendit Picasso plus âpre."²

That Picasso's attachment to the performing arts was assuming great importance in his activities at this point is signalled by his inclusion of portraits of himself and his friends André Salmon and Max Jacob in several of these circus paintings. The paintings are known to have influenced contemporary poets: Apollinaire's Un Fantôme de Nuées and Rilke's Fifth Duino Elegy were both inspired by Picasso's blue period paintings of circus life.³

² Guillaume Apollinaire, "Les Jeunes: Picasso, peintre", La Plume, 15 mai, 1905, in Chroniques d'Art (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 30.

³ Theodore Reff, "Harlequins, Saltimbanques, Clowns and Fools." Art Forum, X (Oct. 1971), pp. 30-40.

PART II

Picasso, Apollinaire and Jarry: A Three-
Cornered Contact With the Cubist Movement(a) Picasso and Apollinaire

Apollinaire met Picasso in 1905. Always open to new ideas, he soon became the spokesman for Picasso's painting in his writings as art critic for several journals. In describing Picasso's blue period he wrote:

Picasso a regardé les images humaines qui flottaient dans l'azur de nos mémoires. 4

As Picasso's experimentation began to develop into cubism, Apollinaire attempted to explain the new painting techniques to his readers.

Cubism was the name given to the new style of painting which originated in Paris in 1907-08. During these years Picasso and Braque worked independently, not realizing until they met late in 1907, that they shared many ideas. In order to solve the problems that were presented by their new technique, they began to work together. First of all, they wanted to be freed from producing two-dimensional images of three-dimensional objects

...les photographes seuls fabriquent la reproduction de la nature. 5

⁴ Guillaume Apollinaire, "Les Jeunes: Picasso, peintre", La Plume, 15 mai, 1905, in Chroniques d'Art (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 30.

⁵ Apollinaire, "Les Trois Vertus plastiques", Catalogue, 3rd exposition of "Cercle de l'Art moderne", Le Havre, juin, 1908, in Chroniques, p. 58.

They concentrated on reproducing the object's true form and its position in space. They eliminated the single viewpoint and light source, showing the object from several sides at once. Apollinaire noted that the new art was not

... incompatible avec la réalité. Cet art...
 a pour but de nous montrer la vérité plastique
 sous toutes les faces et sans renoncer au
 bénéfice de la perspective. 6

Picasso and Braque, like other artists who were experimenting in new ideas at this time, wanted their art to have its own validity. A more interesting composition could be made by splitting the object into its basic forms and rearranging the fragments. But the result was a struggle between structural and representational demands.

In stressing the two-dimensionality of the canvas, the artists covered its entire surface with detail, a procedure that was in direct opposition to the centred foreground object found in traditional painting. They began to add bits of cloth, newspaper and other objects to give surface interest and textural information. Numbers and letters increased the semantic profusion, contrasting their two-dimensionality with the three-dimensionality of the other objects, as well as juxtaposing literal and pictorial images.

The sign, often just a fragment, was the jumping-off point in deciphering and reconstituting the object or

⁶ Ibid., p. 58.

unscrambling the polysemantic message. Paul Klee describes how to approach a painting:

The eye should graze the surface, absorb it part by part, and put all the parts in the brain, which stocks impressions and reconstitutes them into a whole. 7

Apollinaire's description of cubist art emphasizes its analytical approach, its surprising juxtapositions, the simultaneity of viewpoint, and most important, its basis in reality.⁸

⁷ Quoted in Jean Clay, From Impressionism to Modern Art, trans. Arnold Rosin, ed. John P. O'Neill and Alexis Gregory (2nd ed.; N.Y.: Chartwell Books, 1981), p. 121.

⁸ Guillaume Apollinaire, "Pablo Picasso", Montjoie! 14 mars 1913, in Chroniques, p. 289, writes,

Sévèrement, il a interrogé l'univers. Il s'est habitué à l'immense lumière des profondeurs. Et, parfois, il n'a pas dédaigné de confier à la clarté des objets authentiques une chanson de deux sous, un timbre-poste véritable, un morceau de journal quotidien, un morceau de toile cirée sur laquelle est imprimée la cannelure d'un siège. L'art du peintre n'ajouterait aucun élément pittoresque à la vérité de ces objets.

La surprise rit sauvagement dans la pureté de la lumière et c'est avec insistance que des chiffres, des lettres moulées apparaissent comme des éléments pittoresques, nouveaux dans l'art et depuis longtemps déjà imprégnés d'humanité.

Il n'est pas possible de deviner les possibilités, ni toutes les tendances d'un art aussi profond et aussi minutieux.

L'objet réel ou en trompe-l'œil est appelé sans doute à jouer un rôle de plus en plus important. Il est le cadre intérieur du tableau et en marque les limites profondes de même que le cadre en marque les limites extérieures.

Imitant les plans pour représenter les volumes, Picasso donne des divers éléments qui composent les objets une énumération si complète et si aiguë qu'ils ne prennent point figure d'objet grâce au travail des spectateurs qui, par force, en perçoivent la simultanéité, mais en raison même de leur arrangement.

These characteristics are also found in Picasso's dramatic endeavours both as a stage designer and as a playwright, and they appear in the dramatic works of Apollinaire as well. In the course of his friendship with Picasso, and because of his critical writings on art, Apollinaire's own work came under cubism's influence. He began to arrange his poems to form pictorial as well as literal messages, and his play, Les Mamelles de Tirésias which was presented 24 June 1917, also reveals the use of cubist elements.

In acknowledging that the stage, like the canvas, is its own reality, Apollinaire has his actors throw balls and balloons at the audience. He deliberately avoids chronological order and it is the male protagonist who, all by himself, gives birth to thousands of babies in a single day, showing that the reality of the theatre does not have to reproduce real life. He adds collage-like references to composer Erik Satie, poet Paul Léautaud, and Picasso.

Apollinaire subtitled the play "drame surréaliste" for that was the word he had coined to describe the new tendencies of the art world. In using the word surrealist Apollinaire was alluding to the separate reality that the artist or dramatist creates. In his prologue to the play he writes:

Car la pièce doit être un univers complet,
Avec son créateur
C'est à dire la nature même

Et non pas seulement
 La représentation d'un petit morceau
 De ce qui nous entoure ou de ce qui
 s'est jadis passé 9

Picasso's own explanation of the word also underlines its relation to cubism:

I attempt to serve nature, always. I am intent on resemblance, a resemblance more real than real, attaining the surreal. It was in this way that I thought of surrealism. 10

We believe that it was the analytical function of cubism that he was describing as surrealism. In any case, for both Apollinaire and Picasso, it appears that it was cubism that they were referring to in using the term surrealism.

(b) Picasso and Jarry

As an art critic, Apollinaire did not always have the clearest understanding of the new art form he was explaining, but he contributed to Picasso's career through his writings by making his name recognized, and by establishing his reputation as an artist. He was a stimulating companion to Picasso and it was he who introduced him to Braque. In turn, Picasso introduced Max Jacob and Marie

⁹ Guillaume Apollinaire, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, L'Enchanteur pourrissant, (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), p. 145.

¹⁰ Quoted by John Golding, in "Picasso's distortions" Unesco Courier (December, 1980), p. 20.

Laurencin to his poet friend. It was through Apollinaire that Picasso became familiar with the work of Alfred Jarry.

Like Picasso, Jarry was an early promoter of Henri Rousseau, the primitive painter. Jarry's bizarre behavior was aped by Apollinaire and Picasso, who took to firing guns into the air at odd moments in imitation of the eccentric Jarry.¹¹ Jarry's play Ubu Roi had revolutionized and scandalized the theatre and the ideas which it presented on costume design and stage settings influenced Picasso's work in theatre, particularly in the ballets Parade and Mercure, and in his own plays Le Désir attrapé par la queue and Les Quatre Petites Filles.

Jarry himself explained his ideas in a famous letter to Lugné-Poe, his producer. He wanted a feeling of universality which was impossible to convey in a realistic setting. Therefore, he devised an unidentifiable location combining all the necessary elements: a bed, a palm tree, snow, a fireplace and apple trees. This produced the juxtapositions of winter and tropics, indoors and outdoors. The idea was that the audience would focus on the part that was applicable to the situation, a bed for a bedroom scene, for example. Picasso's decor for Les Quatre Petites

¹¹ Roger Shattuck, The Banquet years, the arts in France, 1885-1918, 1958 (reprinted New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), p. 218, writes that: "Jarry was a frequent visitor in Montmartre during the earliest years of the bateau lavoir and exercised a special fascination over Picasso. The painter adopted his eccentric, pistol-carrying habits and later acquired a valuable collection of Jarry's manuscripts. Among these youthful champions of the twentieth century, in the cubist doctrine they devised, ... Jarry found his progeny."

Filles includes a tree, a bed, snow and ibises wading in a similar rotation of focus and juxtaposition of the elements. His combination "sewer bedroom kitchen and bedroom of the villa of the Anxieties" in Le Désir attrapé par la queue also is an example of this approach to set design. Jarry's idea of using the audience's ability to focus on the appropriate property is simplified by Picasso in Le Désir attrapé par la queue, when, against an all-black background he provides only the symbolic object, a bed, or a lottery wheel as the action requires. If Père Ubu is a symbol of the bourgeoisie because of his paunch and lust for money, Tarte, in stockings only, is the quintessential Toulouse-Lautrec prostitute.

The Tom Thumb puppet-like figures of the characters in Ubu Roi, whose masks hide facial expressions, are equalled by the non-reality of the high sandwich-board constructions for the managers costumes in Parade or the moveable bamboo "practicables" in Mercure.¹² Père Ubu's shocking repetition of "Merdre" (in 1896) has its counterpart in the urinating and farting of Tarte in Le Désir attrapé par la queue. Thus the iconoclast Jarry, who introduced the new experimental theatre, had his work carried on by Picasso in his settings and costumes for Les Ballets Russes, and in his plays which echo Jarry's humorous tone in describing more serious topics.

¹² The word used by Cocteau to describe the moveable decors of Mercure.

PART III

Picasso, Cocteau and Diaghilev: Picasso's
Entry Into The World of Les Ballets Russes

(a) Picasso and Cocteau

Picasso met Jean Cocteau in 1915, when Cocteau sought him out in the hope of his collaboration for the ballet Parade. In written tributes to Picasso, Cocteau describes the importance of their meeting.¹³ He recognized in Picasso a man whose ideas influenced others but who never allowed the work or criticism of others to alter his own style. As Cocteau struggled to escape the mold of the dilettante bourgeois circle of his friends, the Comte de Beaumont and Anna de Noailles, he was encouraged by Picasso who recognized his talents as a poet and draughtsman. Picasso drew him into his Montmartre/Montparnasse world. Cocteau came to understand the attraction that poets had for Picasso, whose friends included Apollinaire, André Salmon, Max Jacob, Gertrude Stein, Paul Reverdy and Paul Eluard. Picasso himself thought as a poet; according to Cocteau his painting was "d'un lyrisme trop écrit pour qu'on en écrive."¹⁴

¹³ In "D'un ordre considéré comme une anarchie", address to the Collège de France, 3 May 1923, in Le Rappel à l'ordre, in Oeuvres complètes de Jean Cocteau, IX, (Genève: Marguérat, 1950), p. 209.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 244.

Cocteau admired Picasso's way of taking discarded objects and incorporating them into new art works. This ability to use material from everyday life made Picasso the ideal collaborator for Parade, a ballet whose subject was drawn from contemporary life.

Cocteau had already created a Ballets Russes production, Le Dieu Bleu with Reynaldo Hahn in 1912. He was eager to create a second ballet and asked first Stravinsky, then Satie to write the music. Once he had Satie's cooperation he could then approach Picasso, as Picasso and Satie were already friends. With the support of these men of artistic standing, he was able to present his ballet to Diaghilev, the director of Les Ballets Russes. Diaghilev, who had given Cocteau the challenge, "Ftonne-moi!"¹⁵ during one of their discussions on his future plans, would certainly have this wish fulfilled by Picasso's participation in Parade, for his painting had been astounding the art world for nearly a decade.

(b) Picasso and Diaghilev

In 1907, Les Ballets Russes with Serge Diaghilev as director, arrived in Paris. As well as his Russian dancers, Diaghilev brought Russian artists to design costumes and settings for his ballet. One artist was totally responsible for the artistic design of each ballet and by making a series of maquettes, the artist ascertained the total

15

Quoted by Francis Steegmuller, Cocteau, a biography (London, Macmillan, 1970), p. 32.

effect of his costumes and backdrops.

This unity of artistic concept was an innovation in the French theatre where it was common for one set to serve many different productions and costumes to pass around independent of the sets they had originally accompanied. Until the symbolist theatres of Paul Fort and Lugné-Poe began to engage painters such as Bonnard, Vuillard, Roussel, Sérusier, Maurice Denis and Toulouse-Lautrec, artists were not usually invited to collaborate in stage productions. The participation of artists in theatre projects paved the way for a more sensitive interpretation of the author's text, directing public interest toward art and away from the technical stage tricks of nineteenth century realist theatre. The decors created by Ronsin for Pelléas et Mélisande are an example of the vague and lugubrious settings which were the result of an artist's interpretation of the other worldliness effected by symbolist dramatists. Not wishing to appear insensible to new art forms, theatre patrons began to look to stage design for shock value and excesses. The novelty of Les Ballets Russes' eastern European folklore of slavic and oriental origins and the lavish sets and costumes by Alexandre Benois and Léon Bakst stimulated the demanding audiences, who expected surprises from each new production. Diaghilev was thus forced to try new ideas. Gontcharova and Larionov were engaged to infuse some of the new trends in modern art into Russian

fantasy. Before long, he began to turn to French collaborators: Jean Cocteau and Reynaldo Hahn for Le Dieu Bleu in 1912, Ravel for the music of Daphnis et Chloé in 1912, and Debussy for Jeux in 1913.

By 1915, the most controversial trend in the art world, cubism, was making all other painting appear old-fashioned. In inviting the collaboration of Picasso, who was an originator of this style, Diaghilev was following the trend he had set for Les Ballets Russes: to bring to the theatre-going public the finest and most original work that musicians, choreographers, writers and artists could offer. Picasso's involvement in Parade brought together the left bank artists and writers, whose poverty and antisocialism isolated them, and the right bank bourgeoisie whom they had always mistrusted. Picasso gained the respect of Diaghilev and was to participate in Les Ballets Russes productions until Diaghilev's death in 1929. His work in the theatre also brought him recognition by a much larger public as well as entry into fashionable high society circles and their patronage.

PART IV

Picasso's Work as a Theatre Designer

(a) His major productions - 1917-1924

Picasso was a major contributor to the ballets Parade, Le Tricorne, Pulcinella, Quadro Flamenco and Mercure. As in the tradition established by Les Ballets Russes, he alone was responsible for the entire artistic concept of these productions: curtain, decor and costumes.

Parade (1917)

The curtain and decor that Picasso created for Parade offer two contrasting aspects of the circus theme.¹⁶

The curtain is an echo of his circus paintings of the

¹⁶ An outline of the ballet's plot is summarized in its programme: "Le décor représente les maisons à Paris un dimanche. Théâtre forain. Trois numéros de music hall servent de parade.

Prestidigitateur chinois

Petite fille américaine

Deux acrobates

Trois managers organisent la réclame. Ils se communiquent dans leur langage terrible que la foule prend la parade pour le spectacle intérieur et cherchent grossièrement à le lui faire comprendre.

Personne ne se laisse convaincre.

Après le numéro final suprême effort des managers.

Chinois, acrobates et petite fille américaine sortent du théâtre vide.

Voyant le crach des managers ils essayent une dernière fois la vertu de leurs belles grâces.

Mais il est trop tard."

Thus, the plot demonstrates cubism's characteristic two levels of meaning. Programme notes, Parade, (18 May, 1917)

rose period with a naive, dream-like quality in the scene of costumed circus performers and white winged horse with fairy rider. The backdrop provides a sharp contrast of mood: dark shapes loom out of the background to form a menacing city-scape. The entrance to the circus tent is limited to a simple proscenium arch. This is a real-life scene, painted in flat planes without perspective, its angularity and unshaded colour areas deriving from Picasso's cubist technique. In quick succession, Picasso shows both the real and the idealized aspects of circus life. The fantasy setting of the curtain is treated realistically while the real setting with its dark streets and buildings is rendered abstractly. Thus the curtain and backdrop offer a contrast in aspects of circus life; imagined/real, and contrasting styles of painting; traditional realism/cubism, as well. This doubling of contrasts heightens the dramatic effect. The fantasy of the winged horse and rider and their costumed companions is magnified by the use of trompe l'oeil realism, and the dark unfriendly city is made even more threatening when it is depicted in cubism's coldy analytical style.

The costumes Picasso designed for Parade continue this dichotomy. The managers "terribles divinités vulgaires de la réclame" according to Cocteau¹⁷ are dressed in huge eleven foot high constructions which resemble

¹⁷ Jean Cocteau, "Lettre à Paul Dermée" Nord-Sud, IV-V, (Juin-Juillet 1917).

sandwich boards. These costumes preclude freedom of movement and form a transition between the dancers and their setting. The French manager's sign boards portray a moustached dandy in evening clothes on one side, and a house and trees on the other. The American manager combined, in the same fashion, a wild west costume and a skyscraper. A ridiculous sway-backed horse, so grotesque as not to attempt to be an imitation of the real thing, completed the trio.

In contrast with these outlandish costumes, the circus performers wear colourful costumes which allowed them to move freely and perform their various circus acts.

Erik Satié's musical score offered innovations as well. Klaxon horns and typewriters accompanied his sparse orchestration providing further contrast of real and unreal, in much the same way as real objects inserted into a collage as clues, contrast with the painted images around them. A journalist of the day described the result:

M. Serge Diaghilev a réuni autour de lui, depuis la guerre, toute la jeune école en peinture, en musique, en art théâtral. Il a voulu réaliser plastiquement, musicalement, picturalement, les aspirations les plus audacieuses de la jeunesse la plus avancée dans les arts. 18

Diaghilev had been well served by his collaborators, whom

¹⁸ See Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, R.P. (Picasso) Fonds Rondel, 18 mai, 1917. Hereafter press reviews will be indicated as F.R.

he wisely allowed the freedom to demonstrate their skills.

The first performance provoked a tumult in the audience. A critic describes the chaotic scene but is not so intimidated that he misses the significance of Picasso's ideas:

Les gens difficiles accueillirent Parade avec mauvaise humeur. Cependant que d'autres - les adeptes - manifestaient sans se lasser un enthousiasme infatigable ... c'est à ces signes contradictoires que se marque la naissance orageuse d'un chef d'oeuvre. 19,20

Le Tricorne (1919)

This ballet is based on Pedro de Alarcón's novel Three Cornered Hat, with music by Manuel de Falla and traditional flamenco dances adapted by Léonide Massine. Picasso created curtain, decor and costume for this ballet which, because of his own Andalusian background, must have seemed made-to-order for him. In fact, he made the maquettes and designed the costumes in a single

¹⁹ Henri Quittard, 18 May 1917, F.R.

²⁰ Some of the negative reaction is due to cubism being falsely associated with Germany, with whom France was at war. In several paintings by Picasso and Braque, done before the war, the word "KUB" can be seen. This is a double reference: to cubism and to a German beer. Some people took the "KUB-Kubist" spelling to mean that the art style was of German origin.

evening.²¹

Picasso's solution for the curtain is an unmistakably Spanish setting rather than a scene from the ballet itself. A group of spectators is seen looking through an arcade at a bullring below. The white mantillas worn by the women and the man's red cape echo the pageantry of the decoratively harnessed white horses in the ring. This realistically depicted scene evoking the ritual and tradition of the bullfight immediately places the viewer in Spain.

The decor which follows is the synthesis of a Spanish landscape. Houses are depicted in flat colour planes of terra cotta and beige. A sandy hill is profiled against a starry sky. The arches of a bridge and a hillside town are suggested by a few lines. "What he produced was a common denominator of his own Spanish countryside,"²² writes Cecil Beaton. The simple backdrop needed only a few small

²¹ Diaghilev records Picasso's reaction to being asked to design for Tricorne:

il nous "engueula", disant qu'il n'avait rien a faire avec le théâtre, qu'il trouvait ce spectacle idiot, qu'il était un peintre de tableaux, et bien qu'il m'aimât beaucoup, il me demandait de lui fiche la paix ...

Le lendemain, rentrant chez moi dans l'après-midi le portier de l'hôtel me dit qu'un petit monsieur était revenu et qu'il l'avait chargé de me dire que "tout était prêt".

Picasso était venu m'inviter à voir des maquettes du décor et les dessins des costumes qu'il avait créés pour Tricorne cette même nuit.

²² Serge Diaghilev, in "Le Tricorne à l'Opéra", 22 janvier, 1920. F.R.

flats to complete it. Dancers wore colourful peasant costumes which were simplified rather than authentic. The total effect was to present the artist's own country in the best possible light. One critic responds: "...décor et costumes d'un modernisme suraigu révèlent une Espagne insoupçonnée."²³

The decor of Tricorne was not provocative in any way. Its utter simplicity was to mislead one critic:

le dessin d'un enfant très ordinaire...
une plaisanterie un peu bien grosse. Par-
fois les "blagues de l'atelier" sont amu-
santes. Celle-ci ne l'est point. 24

while other critics saw cubist simplicity as a progressi-
ve step in theatre design:

Rien ne montre mieux l'évolution de la
peinture. L'ensemble est d'un goût
charmant.... 25

Once more, it was the collaboration of established artists, Massine, de Falla and Picasso, which drew critical praise: "Bien rarement on vit pareil accord entre le musicien, le peintre, le danseur."²⁶

²³ André Rigaud, 24 janvier, 1920, F.R.

²⁴ Adolphe Boschet, 29 janvier, 1920, F.R.

²⁵ Henri Bidou, Opinion, 19 décembre, 1920, F.R.

²⁶ Louis Laloy, 27 janvier, 1920, F.R.

In presenting a sunny idealized landscape, this simple decor presents an uncomplicated yet descriptive backdrop which enhances the story line narrated through dance.

Picasso's dedication to the quality of the whole production is evident in this undramatic and non-intrusive decor, for he resists using the backdrop to make an artistic statement. His contribution as a designer is but one element of the production and he is respectful of Alarcón's story and Massine's choreography.

Pulcinella (1920)

The theme of this ballet was taken from the traditional Commedia dell'Arte theatre of Naples, an itinerant, improvisational theatre where the harlequin character, so often painted by Picasso, had originated. Commedia dell'Arte players relied on stock situations and used masks to convey the different roles, having little in the way of costumes or scenery as they travelled about. The Pulcinella character is identified by his long nose, and he and the harlequin, often played by acrobats, were portrayed as witty, nimble servants who became heartless and capricious as lovers.²⁷

Picasso's identification with the harlequin character is documented by his paintings of circus life as

²⁷ The Commedia dell'Arte characters are described by Reff, "Harlequins, Saltimbanques...", p. 30-40.

we have noted elsewhere (p. 7) which begin in 1901 and carry on throughout the blue and rose periods. While working on Parade in Italy in 1917, he visited Naples and saw Commedia dell'Arte performances. The dramatic transformation achieved through simple means was a lesson in theatricality which Picasso adopted in the simplification of his own sets and costumes. His interest in this forum of theatre was shared by Massine and Stravinsky.²⁸

The story chosen by Diaghilev and Massine, The Four Identical Pulcinellas has short contrasting scenes of courtship, attacks by jealous suitors, disguise, a magician, and ends with the uniting of three couples.

Stravinsky's musical score was an orchestration of themes of the 18th century Neapolitan composer Pergolesi.²⁹

Omitting the curtain, Picasso designed a backdrop composed of the simplest possible elements of Naples - a narrow street with houses on each side, a view of the sea by moonlight, Vesuvius in the background, and a

²⁸ Cooper, Picasso Theatre, p. 43.

²⁹ Pergolesi, who died in poverty at age 26, was to become popular posthumously. His intermezzo La Serva Padrona became a great success, inspiring many forgers to imitate his work. Some of these compositions of doubtful authenticity are included in those chosen by Diaghilev for Stravinsky's orchestrations. Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Ed. H.C. Colles, IV, (New York, Macmillan, 1947), p. 103.

fishing boat anchored by the quay in the foreground. All these visual elements immediately provide the exact geographic location, in spite of the fact that the scene is entirely an invented one. The only colours, white, grey and blue, give the effect of moonlight on different surfaces. All lighting is from above, with the dancers performing on a freshly painted white cloth to heighten the effect of moonlight.

The set, placed in centre stage, consists of a three-panelled screen, the centre panel showing the view down the narrow street of Naples bay, and the two side panels forming the facing rows of houses. These two side panels slant back from the centre panel so that they are out of the way of the dancers. But by a trick of distortion of perspective they are given the appearance of seeming to come forward, so that the centre panel, which is actually in the foreground, appears to be farther away. This monochromatic backdrop is offset by the colours of the dancers' costumes which stand out clearly against it: black and white with touches of red for Pulcinella and Pimpinella, plum and pink for the second couple, pale blue and jade green for the third.

Sokolova describes the ballet as "high jinks by moonlight", and Stravinsky considered it:

... a complete success, one of those spectacles in which everything holds

together and all the elements, subject, music, choreography and decorative scheme form a coherent and homogeneous whole. 30

Stravinsky was particularly pleased with the decor:

As for Picasso he performed a miracle and it is difficult for me to say what enchanted me most, his colour, his plastic sense or the astonishing sense of the theatre displayed by this man. 30

The critics remained unimpressed, however: "...décor de M. Picasso qui est ... d'une limpide incompréhension ... La scène a paru sombre."³¹ Cubism, even when not used to shock - for the set was rendered in a very realistic, albeit simple, style - continued to draw angry reactions from critics in spite of its proven effectiveness in solving the problems presented by the stage. Louis Schneider offers this explanation:

Actuellement nous sommes en face d'une tendance cubiste du ballet. C'est dans un décor informe qu'évolue Pulcinella... Que quelques snobs et snobinettes, que quelques bolchevistes de l'art se réjouissent de cette conception à rebours, c'est leur affaire ... il ne semble pas qu'ils trouveront la faveur de succès dans la voie bizarre où ils s'engagent actuellement. Le public aime comprendre, et lorsqu'il voit Pulcinella il ne comprend pas. 32

In reacting so negatively to the simple and uncomplicated

³⁰ Dancer Lydia Sokolova, who danced Pimpinella, and composer Stravinski are quoted by Cooper, Picasso Theatre, p. 50 and p. 48.

³¹ Antoine Banès, Création, 17 mai, 1920, FR.

³² Louis Schneider, 8 mai, 1920, FR.

set the critic seems to be taking aim at cubism in general which he associates with snobs and Bolsheviks. This political polarization was, fortunately, beginning to dissipate as theatre-goers gained acquaintance and appreciation of the art form in the guise of Picasso's decors for les Ballets Russes.

Cuadro Flamenco (1921)

Owing to the departure of his choreographer and male lead dancer Léonide Massine, Diaghilev was unable to create a new ballet in time for the upcoming season. He decided to present instead a troupe of flamenco dancers he had seen in Spain during rehearsals for Le Tricorne. As these dancers were accompanied by gypsy musicians, the production required neither choreographer nor composer. Only costumes and decor were needed to provide a suitable setting for the Paris season of Les Ballets Russes. Diaghilev asked for Picasso as a decorator, knowing that his Spanish background would give him special insight.

Picasso's set is a theatre, richly decorated in the 19th century style in red, gold and black, traditional Spanish colours. Its galleries are peopled with theatre-goers echoing his early paintings in the style of Toulouse-Lautrec. A richly curtained inner stage has a proscenium arch with gilded cherub. A three-panelled screen provides the inner stage backdrop and a platform is set up in front of this for the dancing, with chairs at each side

for those not performing at the moment. Thus all those in the troupe were performers, the singers and guitarists being as important as the dancers themselves. Costumes were traditional flamenco costumes: black narrow trousers and white shirts with black waistcoats for the men, pastel dresses with flounces and trains for the women.

The effect of this realistically painted trompe-l'oeil stage within a stage as a setting, was to give a glamorous sense of occasion to the performance of an improvisational and untrained group of folk-dancers. Because of his Spanish background, Picasso understood their whimsical performing style and he adapted his setting to it so that the dancers could perform in their own fashion. Without altering their style, he packaged them for the Parisian theatre-going public whose demands he also understood.³³

In Cuadro Flamenco Picasso demonstrates his skill as a man of the theatre. He completed the decor in one month and painted much of the scenery himself. An illusion of increased depth was achieved by beams radiating outward from the centre panel. When the dancers not performing were seated in their chairs at the sides of the tiny platform, they became one with the painted spectators in the galleries providing the inner stage with a larger audience.

³³ As these dancers could not be used in other Ballets Russes performances, this ballet did not become part of the company repertoire. Diaghilev sold the decor to raise money for the company in 1926.

Critics praised this traditional decor: "Une oeuvre nouvelle de M. Picasso est déjà par elle-même un événement artistique",³⁴ while another commented:

Soirée riche d'enseignements et d'émotions, où l'on voudrait revenir à tête reposée, ne fût-ce que pour goûter mieux encore l'ironique et truculent décor du Zuadro Flamenco (sic) où M. Picasso a su dresser, entre une scène beuglant et des loges à torticolis, la splendeur de ces rideaux rouges. 35

Mercury (1924)

This ballet, in which Picasso's ideas pervade every area, is a manifestation of the ideal which has been brought to the French theatre by Diaghilev. Ironically the ballet was not created with Diaghilev but was the result of a collaboration between Léonide Massine, Erik Satie and Picasso, and was presented by Massine and Comte Etienne de Beaumont in Soirées de Paris.

The theme describes the various aspects of Mercury - fertility god, messenger, thief, magician, and henchman for the under world. Tableaux with miming, referred to as "Poses plastiques" in the programme, allowed little real dancing so that the decor, to a certain extent, dictated the choreography.

³⁴ Le Figaro, 7 mai, 1921, F.R.

³⁵ Louis Laloy, 20 mai, 1921, F.R.

Massine considered Mercure as Picasso's ballet, since Picasso had worked with him from the beginning in deciding what form the ballet was to take, consulted with Satie on the music, and then designed curtain, costumes and decor for this decorative spectacle.

The curtain seems to be a statement of Picasso's authorship of Mercure. A lyre (the invention of Mercury) appears in the foreground with Picasso's own symbols of identity, a guitar-playing harlequin and a Pierrot with violin. It is rendered in continuous line drawing with blocks of colour.

The moveable decors which follow are a continuation of this technique: cut-out figures with linear forms of bent rattan superimposed over them which could be manipulated by the dancer behind resemble pen and wash drawings come to life. These moving decors were referred to as "practicables". The backdrops are solid black or white, framed by a white and grey proscenium.

Its most ambitious set, "the bath", has a large rectangular form, its surface representing water is slanted upward to reveal holes through which appear the Three Graces. These characters are played by men in black wigs with red breasts. Other characters wear classical tunics and togas, juxtaposing the humourous and imaginative with the sober, traditional style expected for a classical subject.

As could be predicted from public reaction to Picasso's more experimental creations, the spectators

responded negatively to the first performance.³⁶ However Picasso did have his supporters such as the critic and composer Georges Auric who praised the resourcefulness and unrivalled imaginative powers of a truly extraordinary artist.³⁷

The ballet was later revived by Diaghilev (who by this time had Massine back in les Ballets Russes) but it was not popular enough to earn a place in the repertoire. Mercure, the ballet which was Picasso's most ambitious theatrical project, was his least understood due to its innovative nature. Perhaps the juxtaposition of traditional elements (the theme from classical mythology, togas and tunics) and cubist elements (non-narrative presentation, grotesque costumes) gives the impression of treating this subject of classic mythology in an overly comic manner.

(b) Peripheral Theatrical Involvement - 1922-1963

Picasso's reputation was established by the ballets in which his artistic conceptions became an integral part of the dramatic production. Tricorne and Pulcinella showed his interest in traditional theatre while in Parade and

³⁶ Some of this had been organized by certain surrealists who objected to Picasso's association with an aristocrat, the Comte de Beaumont. André Breton defended Picasso in a published letter praising the artist for "son audace et son génie". Breton credits Picasso for creating "l'inquiétude moderne et d'en fournir toujours l'expression la plus haute. voici qu'avec Mercure à nouveau l'incompréhension générale..." ("Hommage à Picasso" in Paris-Journal, 20 juin, 1924, F.R.

³⁷ Georges Auric Les Nouvelles Littéraires 21 juin, 1924, F.R.

Cuadro Flamenco he created dramatic presentations of contemporary subjects. But Picasso also contributed in a more peripheral way to other theatre productions. Having shown his ability to devise practical solutions to many theatrical problems, Picasso was frequently called on, particularly in last minute situations, to complete decors which had been already created by others.

After 1924 Picasso worked only occasionally on theatre projects and never undertook an entire production. As with his curtain for Le Train Bleu, he often adapted an existing work to suit the production.

L'Après-Midi d'un Faune (1922)

The original backdrop for this ballet, a forest scene created by Bakst in 1912, had been lost. Picasso was asked to create a new decor, using a large rock that was the only remaining piece of Bakst's design and the original costumes. He created a pale yellow beach leading to blue water and surmounted by a grey sky. Its extreme simplicity displeased Diaghilev who commented that he wanted Egypt and Picasso had given him Dieppe.³⁸ Critics, too, expected something more elaborate:

Dans L'Après-Midi d'un Faune la pauvreté et l'exiguïté du décor dont la toile de fond, à quatre mètres de l'avant-scène, masque la préparation du décor suivant, donne à toute

³⁸ Quoted by Douglas Cooper, Picasso Theatre, p. 52.

la pièce, si suave pourtant et d'un charme si savoureux, une pénible impression de pauvreté - pauvreté d'éclairage et d'accès-soires. 39

Antigone (1922)

This play was an adaptation by Jean Cocteau of Sophocles' tragedy staged by Charles Dullin. Gabrielle Chanel designed the costumes, Picasso the décor. Picasso's participation shows the attraction that traditional theatre had for him.

The theatre and its stage were small in comparison with the ballet stage. Picasso's set had to project monumental classic Greek architecture and a warm Mediterranean climate in terms allowed by the limited space. Money was short. As a backdrop Picasso hung a sheet of purplish-blue jute loosely in folds. Through a lattice-covered hole in the centre, Cocteau declaimed the text. This hole was surrounded with painted masks so that the voice coming from within would give the effect of an oracle, or Greek chorus. Below the masks, the tops of Greek columns were seen painted on a white panel. The décor was executed by the artist himself the day before the performance.

Le Train Bleu (1924)

An "opérette sans paroles" according to its composer, Darius Milhaud describes the plot:

³⁹ G. de F., "Au Théâtre Mogador", 26 juin, 1922, F.R.

L'action se déroule dans une villégiature à la mode où le train élégant Le Train Bleu déverse chaque jour de nouveaux baigneurs; ils évoluent sur la scène et s'exercent à leurs sports préférés: tennis, golf, etc. 40

Le Train Bleu is Picasso's last work for Diaghilev and les Ballets Russes. He designed the curtain only, Laurens created the decor and Chanel the costumes.⁴¹

Le 14 Juillet (1936)

Picasso's association with Romain Rolland's play came about through his involvement with left-wing political groups. By restaging Rolland's rabble-rousing play the Front Populaire government hoped to give more meaning to the national holiday. Milhaud, Jacques Ibert, Georges Auric, Albert Roussel and Arthur Honneger composed special music. With insufficient time to design specifically for the production, Picasso enlarged a gouache to serve as curtain.

⁴⁰ Darius Milhaud, Notes sans musique (Paris: René Juilliard, 1949), p. 162.

⁴¹ Grigoriev speculates that Diaghilev asked Picasso to do the curtain because he did not think the decor was very good. As quoted by Douglas Cooper in Picasso Theatre, p. 61. Another reason is suggested by Milhaud who was being harassed by Diaghilev because he was also working on music for Salade, a ballet for Massine's "Soirées de Paris." Milhaud writes,

...la rivalité entre les deux troupes engendrait pas mal de drames et d'incidents, d'autant plus que Massine avait entraîné avec lui plusieurs danseurs, transfuges des Ballets Russes. Diaghilev ne pouvait empêcher des artistes tels que Picasso et Braque de coopérer aux deux spectacles, mais il prévint Auric et Poulenc qu'il ne tiendrait aucun compte du succès que leurs ballets Les Biches et Les Fâcheux avaient remporté à Monte-Carlo et qu'il ne les montrerait à Paris s'ils acceptaient de collaborer avec le Comte de Beaumont. Perhaps Picasso felt he owed something to his old friend Diaghilev after having worked on Mercure with Massine and the Comte de Beaumont. Ibid., p. 161.

The drawing carries a complex symbolic message of violence and destruction. A desolate landscape with the ruins of the Bastille is shown in the background, while a bird-headed, winged man carries the limp form of a harlequin with minotaur head and the anguished face of a man. Opposing this pair a horse-costumed man bears on his back a youth, whose pale skin and golden curls personify the innocence of youth and whose gesture seems to sweep away the still-smoking fires.

Realistically drawn, the curtain portrays symbolically the various aspects of the origins of the revolution. Picasso projects in this historic work the essence rather than the paraphernalia of history. These symbolic figures would later be seen in more cubist form in the protest painting Guernica.

Andromaque (1944)

Picasso's smallest commission for the theatre as far as we can trace was a sceptre for actor Jean Marais who was appearing in Racine's Andromaque: it was requested by the actor himself. He brought a large broom-handle to be transformed by Picasso only one day before the play's premiere.⁴²

The sceptre was so attractive that it was subsequently stolen from Marais' dressing-room. Picasso's attention

⁴² Brassai, Picasso's photographer, recounts how he met Picasso the morning following this all-night project. Picasso told him: "...because of the trouble I had with that damned broom-handle of Jean Marais I worked on it almost all night." Brassai describes how, "...Picasso, reinventing the geometric ornamentation of some archaic style, has burned into it a series of spirals and circles." This story is corroborated by Françoise Gilot in My Life with Picasso, Brassai, Picasso & Co (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1967), p. 144.

to this small work demonstrates his willingness to devote his best effort to any theatrical project.

Oedipe Roi (1947)

Picasso's decor for the Pierre Blanchar production of Sophocles' tragedy is strikingly simple. A double elliptical arch frames the stage like a rainbow. The curved backdrop has classic formal balance: painted double doors are at its centre, and an actual opening on the left is balanced by a painted door on the right. Across the front sweeps a wide flight of steps with a blue patch of sky adding the only colour. In the sparest possible terms Picasso calls into the imagination the blue sky and white marble of classic Greece. The simplicity of Picasso's set gives an effect of space and light to a small stage to capture the sense of the dimensions of the myth.

Le Rendez-Vous (1945)

Lack of time was a deciding factor in Picasso's design for the curtain for Boris Kochno's contemporary ballet to be presented by Jacques Prévert and Roland Petit. Brassai, who photographed many of Picasso's sculptures, was the designer of the ballet's decor. He approached Picasso but the artist did not want to interrupt his own work at this time so he suggested that Kochno choose from among some recently painted still lifes for a painting that would be suitable for the curtain: Kochno chose one depicting a burning candle and harlequin mask in blue, beige, mauve

and black that would underline the ballet's themes of love and destiny. Under Picasso's supervision the painting was enlarged. Picasso also made a line drawing, La Muse, for the programme. For the company's 1948 production, he made a drawing of a pipe-playing faun and centaurs dancing which was used as the cover for the programme.

Le Chant Funèbre (1954)

In staging García Lorca's poem Le Chant Funèbre pour Ignacio Sanchez Mejias, actor Marcel Lupovici needed a decor which would evoke the drama of the bullfight.⁴³ Lupovici selected two Picasso drawings to be enlarged and hung on each side of the stage. The black and white drawings are of bulls, one a side view, the other shows the bull from behind, its enormous, faceless head swung around to confront the viewer.

Critics were divided on Picasso's decor: "Le rideau se lève sur une magnifique image de Picasso qui suffit à nous placer au coeur même du poème"⁴⁴ while another wrote,

Picasso qui peut décidément tout faire et qui réussit tout ce qu'il fait a dessiné deux images de "toro" qui, agrandies devant les tentures noires écrasent les vivants qui viennent mimer les faiblesses et la grandeur de la mort. 45

⁴³ The critic for Parisien Libéré, 1 octobre, 1953, F.R. describes the production: "...écrit à la mort de son ami le toréro Sanchez Mejias, tué dans l'arène par le taureau qu'il combattait. Ce poème funèbre pour "treize voix et le taureau" a été enregistré. Pendant son audition treize acteurs mimeront, sur la scène, les phrases bouleversantes de la mort de Sanchez Mejias et son entrée dans la légende, tandis qu'à la guitare Jean Borredon accompagnera ce chant déchirant en s'inspirant de thèmes espagnols."

However, these dominating images were seen in a more favorable light by another critic who wrote: "L'un réaliste, l'autre mythique, deux toros peints par Picasso dominant majestueusement la scène."⁴⁶

Picasso's symbolic portrayal of death's dominion over the living thus goes beyond merely providing the atmosphere of the bullfight.

Icare (1962)

Serge Lifar requested a backcloth for his Paris Opera production of Icare. The ballet is based on Ovid's myth of the young son of Daedalus who flew too close to the sun so that the wax which held his wings melted and he fell into the sea. Made from an enlargement of a drawing in coloured chalk, Picasso's original design shows a large golden area, representing the sun's rays. From it, a huge pink figure with green wings plummets head-first into the blue water below, while, from panels on each side, upraised hands evoke the horror of spectators who watch the tragic event. The drawing is child-like in its simple rendering in unshaded primary colours on a white background. When in the

⁴⁵ J.S. in Paris Presse-L'Intransigeant, F.R.

⁴⁶ J.-B. J. in Le Figaro, 15 octobre 1953, F.R.

final scene of the ballet, a dancer simulates Icarus' head-long plunge, the backdrop is progressively lowered. An earlier drawing of Icarus was used for the curtain. In the same brightly coloured chalks, it shows the young winged boy ascending gracefully toward the sun over lilted waves.

L'Après-Midi d'un Faune (1962)

Picasso was asked by Lifar to create a curtain for his 1962 production of L'Après-Midi d'un Faune. As we have seen, Picasso had already designed a backdrop for the ballet. For this production, Lifar wanted the stage completely bare except for the rock which dated from Bakst's decor for the ballet's first performance in 1912. Picasso's design was in coloured chalks, using the same child-like drawing style of his backdrop for Icare. It showed a horned faun chasing a frightened boy. However, Georges Auric, director of the Paris Opera, was offended by the witty, seemingly naive drawing and would not allow its use. The curtain was later executed for a 1965 production of the ballet at the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse.

Les Passions Contraires (1963)

In 1963 Picasso designed the drop-curtain for a play set in contemporary Spain, which was written by his friend Georges Soria, a Frenchman of strong left-wing sympathies. Soria describes his play:

... I have tried to look more deeply into the psychology of my characters than I have in the past. I have ... tried to express the continued "presence" of the Civil War

conflicts in the Spain of today but more through its effects on the people in my play than directly through stage action. 47

In a black line drawing on a white ground with green and red areas of unshaded colour Picasso designed a curtain which, according to Barnes, represents the concept of destiny carrying its victims away.

The later work of Picasso as a theatre designer does not represent as important a contribution as do his 1917 to 1924 collaborations. After 1924, Picasso devoted all of his time to his own work, and after 1950 spent little time in Paris, the centre of French theatre. The subjects of the later productions did not relate to Picasso's particular interests in the way that Parade and Pulcinella had, in evoking his fondness for circus life, or Le Tricorne and Cuadro Flamenco, in recalling his childhood in Spain. In this later period Picasso made special designs only for the ballets Icare and L'Après-Midi d'un Faune, the productions of his old friend of Les Ballets Russes, Serge Lifar, and for the tragedy Oedipe Roi. Nevertheless, his willingness to assist indicates his continued interest in the theatre and the appropriateness of his choice of drawings or paintings to be adapted as curtain, backdrop or programme reveals his understanding of many different theatrical subjects.

Because he had always been interested in exploring the

47 Quoted by Clive Barnes, New York Times, 17 september, 1963, p.31.

possibilities of different artistic media, a factor in his success as a stage decorator, Picasso's decision to contribute to the French theatre as a dramatist seems a very natural step. We shall discuss his two short works later.

CONCLUSION

A review of the foregoing evidence shows that although he was originally chosen to collaborate in production of Les Ballets Russes because of the controversial art form he represented, Pablo Picasso soon proved that his contributions to the French theatre would be valued for more than their provocative nature.

If a tumultuous audience reaction was an indicator of the success of the theatre production to those seeking novelty and shock, productions such as Parade and Mercure could be considered successful, because the riots which greeted the first performances of both these ballets insured that remaining performances would be well attended. The ultimate success of these ballets is however, in the artist's innovative approach which changed artistic perceptions in French theatre. It is in these two ballets that Picasso's influence is present in all the artistic aspects of production and even suggests the necessary form of choreography. These two ballets are also the most innovative and the least understood of his theatrical works. They introduce to ballet a contemporary life subject in the case of Parade and, in the case of Mercure, a classical subject treated in a modern comic way. The narrative plot in both ballets is omitted in favour of a cubist-style analysis and presentation of the subject from different aspects. Both make no attempt at presenting trompe l'oeil realism in either sets or costumes. Both stress the separate reality of the stage in deliberately unreal costumes-decor: the managers in Parade and the practicables in Mercure. Both have sets which reduce the depiction of location to the

barest essentials. The circus tent of Parade is limited, for example, to its proscenium arch; while in Mercure a Roman bath is a mere rectangular box with heads poking through its water surface. The comic grotesque nature of Parade's sway-backed horse is equalled by the bewigged male actors with red false breasts in Mercure.

The cubist characteristics seen in Parade and Mercure are presented to a lesser degree in the other productions. Contemporary life subjects are treated in Cuadro Flamenco, Le Train Bleu, Le Rendez-Vous and Les Passions Contraires, while traditional subjects form the balance of the remainder: ancient classic myths in Antigone, Oedipe Roi, Andromaque and Icare, seventeenth century Commedia dell'Arte in Pulcinella, the French revolution in Le 14 Juillet, and a nineteenth century literary classic in Le Tricorne.

The success of Picasso's decors for these productions is the result of his sensitive understanding of the author's work. In the case of Cuadro Flamenco and Le Tricorne, his early life in Spain and his interest in her cultural traditions, the bullfight and folkloric dances, form the basis for his ability to create backgrounds which furnish immediate recognition of locale. Pulcinella and Parade are the result of his interest in circus life as we have seen, and of his visit to Naples where he saw actual impromptu theatre performances.

But Picasso's rapport with more lyrical productions such as L'Après-Midi d'un Faune, Chant Funèbre and Les Passions Contraires is owed less to his own background than to his friendship with the

poets of his time, Max Jacob, André Salmon, Rainer Maria Rilke and Guillaume Apollinaire from his earliest days in Paris, and later Jean Cocteau, Raymond Queneau, Paul Eluard and Paul Léautaud. Our study of this part of his activity in the theatre leads us to agree with Cocteau that Picasso's syntax, being visual, was comparable to a writer's.⁴⁸ Certainly his technique of juxtaposing disparate objects to create the shock of a new discovery is not unlike the poet's technique of ostranénie, the placing of words in new and strange contexts.⁴⁹

As well as displaying his sympathetic understanding of poets and classical subjects, Picasso was able to earn the respect and friendship of composers Erik Satie and Igor Stravinsky. Serge Lifar and Léonide Massine were inspired to depart from classic choreography - indeed Picasso's costumes in Parade and Mercure made this a necessity - and include mimed gestures and acrobatics, combining the real with the ballet movements. In much the same way Satie's inclusion of klaxon horns and typewriters in the musical score of Parade also imitates Picasso and Braque's technique of including real materials in collage paintings.

That Picasso continued to be asked for his assistance in theatre projects in a peripheral way long after the exciting years of Les Ballets Russes testifies to the reputation he had acquired as an artist in the theatre. He could not only interpret dramatic

48 Cf. quote, page 16 .

49 It was Cocteau who requested Picasso's collaboration in Oedipe Roi and Andromaque, two plays which have as their subject classic myths.

works but also had the interest, energy and physical stamina to realize his projects, often on very short notice. This also provided for Picasso, who no longer had the time to devote to an entire artistic production, a means to continue his collaboration with the poets, composers, choreographers, dramatists and actors whose work was a source of great stimulation to him.

In the words of Apollinaire, the great collaboration that began with Parade formed "la synthèse des arts, de la musique, de la peinture, de la littérature... Il n'y a là qu'une recherche pour aboutir à de nouvelles expressions parfaitement légitimes."⁵⁰ Apollinaire called this artistic cross-fertilization "l'esprit nouveau" in an attempt to sum up Picasso's theatrical contributions, his innovative techniques that would change the thinking of those who came after. Although Apollinaire is talking about poets, his words describe with singular aptness Picasso, the poet of plastic art:

Il lutte pour le rétablissement de l'esprit d'initiative, pour la claire compréhension de son temps et pour ouvrir de vues nouvelles sur l'univers extérieur et intérieur qui ne soient point inférieures à celles que les savants de toutes catégories découvrent chaque jour et dont ils tirent des merveilles. 51

⁵⁰ Guillaume Apollinaire, "L'Esprit Nouveau et les poètes", Mercure de France, XDI, (1 décembre, 1918), p.396.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Le Désir attrapé par la queue(a) Context

During the winter of 1941 Parisians were beginning to face the reality of defeat. Picasso, who had elected to endure the cold and hunger of occupied France rather than spend his time more comfortably in North America, turned from brush to pen and in four days of feverish writing created Le Désir attrapé par la queue.

We can only speculate on his reasons for expressing his anger and frustration through drama rather than painting. Given his predilection for contemporary life subjects¹ Picasso faced a problem. His protest painting Guernica was well known to the Nazis and he was constantly bothered by the visits of their officers.² Another painting of this sort would have been a dangerous project.

Picasso may have been inspired to write through a conversation with Sabartés which took place at that time. The two friends discussed authors whose visual descriptions seem to indicate a wish to paint rather than write.³ By reversing this idea Picasso found a medium which gave him anonymity; he was unknown as a writer. Furthermore, cubist techniques put into words would be incomprehensible to non-

¹ In this context Parade was the first ballet to have a contemporary life subject.

² A propos Guernica, a Nazi officer pointing to a photo of the huge painting asked, "Was it you who did it?" The artist replied "No, you did." Vallentin, Picasso (Paris: Ed. Albin Michel, 1957), p. 352.

³ Jaime Sabartés, An Intimate Portrait, trans. Angel Flores (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1948), p.19.

initiates. This obscurity provided a shield allowing him greater freedom of expression. The play was put aside until March 1944, when Picasso's friends gave a reading of it at the home of Michel Leiris, public performance being impossible at the time. For those who understood Picasso's work, the play was a morale booster after many long years of occupation, just as Apollinaire's play Les Mamelles de Tirésias had been in 1917. According to Michel Leiris, more than a hundred people were present at the first performance, and it had to be repeated several times.⁴ The audience included actor Jean-Louis Barrault and writers Armand Salacrou and Paul Eluard. Albert Camus was the director. The cast was most impressive:

Zanie Aubier	- Tarte
Simone de Beauvoir	- Cousine
Dora Maar	- Angoisse Maigre
Germaine Hugnet	- Angoisse Grasse
Louise Leiris	- Toutous
Michel Leiris	- Gros Pied
Jean-Paul Sartre	- Bout Rond
Raymond Queneau	- Oignon
Jacques Bost	- Silence
Jean Aubier	- Rideaux

⁴ Quoted by Roland Penrose, Foreword, Desire Caught by the Tail, translation by Penrose of Le Désir attrapé par la Queue (London: Calder and Boyers, 1970), p. 12.

Georges Hugnet was in charge of the gramophone selections which were used as musical accompaniment.

Three years later in 1947 a reading was given in London using Roland Penrose's translation at the London Gallery in Brook Street,⁵ and in 1950 a second reading of this translation was given by the Institute of Contemporary Arts at Rudolf Steiner Hall, also in London, with Valentine Dyall as Gros Pied and Dylan Thomas as Oignon.⁶

The play had its first stage production in July 1967 as the crowning event of the Festival of Free Expression. This took place in a huge tent set up in a field near Ramatuelle in Southern France. The producer was Victor Herbert, directors were Jean-Jacques Lebel and Allan Zion. Decors were created from Picasso's sketches by Roger Tallon, Mac Donald Prain and René Richetin. Quasar Kahn created the costumes and musical accompaniment was by Soft Machine.

The cast was:

Jacques Seiler	- Gros Pied
Jacques Blot	- Bout Rond
Marnie Cabenetos	- Tarte
Taylor Mead	- Toutous
Michelle Lemonnier	- Angoisse Grasse

⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

Rita Renoir	- Angoisse Maigre
Katherine Moreau	- Silence
Laslo Szabo	- Oignon
Dorte Oloé	- Cousine
Ultra Violet	- Rideaux ⁷

In May 1982, to mark the centenary of Picasso's birth Le Désir attrapé par la queue and Picasso's second play Les Quatre Petites Filles were performed by the Reading Performance Group at the Brighton Festival, in translations by Roland Penrose. Five performances were given and background talks on Picasso by Roland Penrose and Gavin Henderson were scheduled.⁸

(b) Title

The title of the play Le Désir attrapé par la queue is a metaphor for frustration: "désir" being personified as an animal caught in a trap, unable to escape or move forward. The title is a play on the expression "tirer le diable par la queue", meaning to have trouble making ends meet, and thus it describes the actual situation of those who had to live through the occupation years in France. The title is typical of the puns and plays on words used

⁷ "Picasso Théâtre", L'Avant-Scène Théâtre, D, (1972) p. 9.

⁸ Brochure, Brighton Festival, 1982 (Brighton, Brighton Festival Society Ltd., 1982), p. 8.

by cubist writers.⁹ In this case "désir" also implies sexual arousal (which is also frustrated in the play) and directs the spectator to the double meanings which continue throughout the play.

(c) Analysis of Acts I - IV

Act I

i) Summary of Plot

In scene one of the first act (p. 12),¹⁰ Gros Pied begins by announcing the purpose for the meeting which is taking place: to tell the cousin the home truths. Despite frequent interruptions he discusses the rental of a furnished villa referring to the "prix des meubles et de la location de la villa" and the "compte à régler au propriétaire." The other characters are more concerned with a faulty chimney. In scene two (p. 13) a violent storm is indicated by a change in lighting and the shaking of the curtains. The scene ends when fireflies invade the stage.

ii) Summary of Language

The dialogue is dominated by Gros Pied whose tone of language indicates that he is in charge here. He begins in a business-like manner: "trêve de plaisanteries...", "une fois pour toutes!" Then he alerts the

⁹ Kamber writes of their obsession with and practise of puns and credit this as a major influence on surrealism and many post-surrealist movements. Gerald Kamber, Max Jacob and the Poetics of Cubism (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 54.

¹⁰ Page references refer to Pablo Picasso Le Désir attrapé par la

spectators to the play's purpose: "dire les quatre vérités premières à notre Cousine:", and "déshabiller tout de suite le silence... et le mettre nu dans la soupe."

Oignon also threatens: "examiner au microscope d'abord, parcelle à parcelle, les poils follets du sujet..."

Except for the five lines of discourse which concern a smoking chimney, the dialogue is dominated by repetition. Gros Pied begins this with alliteration: "causes", "conséquences" and "convenances", as well as "rides" and "rider". The others continue in a simple repetitious:

Bout Rond: Un moment, un moment

Gros Pied: Inutile, inutile

Tarte: Mais enfin, mais enfin

Gros Pied: Bien

Bout Rond: Bien, bien

Toutous: Gua, Gua

.....

Angoisse Grasse: Je demande la parole

Angoisse Maigre: Moi aussi, moi aussi

.....

Bout Rond: Au dodo, au dodo ...

This last closes the scene by returning to the pattern of repetition established at the beginning by:

"un moment, un moment". This is underlined by:

¹⁰ queue (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), reprinted in L'Avant-Scène Théâtre, D, (August, 1972).

"Savez-vous l'heure qu'il est? Deux heures un quart."

which acts as a reminder of the repeated words; there are eight different pairs of them.

The dialogue of the second scene enhances the repetition of the first scene. Rideaux describes the storm, repeating "nuit" five times, and pairing "quel" and "quelle", "câline" with " de Chine", and "pestilentielle" and "porcelaine". The storm outside:

"Nuit de tonnerre dans mon ventre incongru" (p. 13) is echoed by her body in farting.

iii) Allusions

The contrast of Gros Pied's dialogue concerning the rental of a villa with that of the other characters who talk about the chimney demonstrates Gros Pied's concern with the bigger problems, the German occupation and the shame it brings to France, whereas the other characters think only of the problems the occupation brings, such as keeping warm.

The bitter truth is France's defeat and the cousin Gros Pied refers to, is Germany; the expression "cousin germain" means a first cousin. By extension, then Tarte must refer to France, (France and Germany being the two countries important to the play.) This hypothesis is borne out by Gros Pied's reference to "les causes et les conséquences de notre mariage adulterin", an allusion to France's defeat and its collaborationist Vichy government under Pétain, and "les semelles

crottées" which is a variant of "avoir les pieds dans la crotte", meaning to be in misery. Other veiled references point to the political situation:

place publique du champ clos
 derrière le derrière de l'histoire
 l'ombre portée du compte à régler au propriétaire

The rental of a villa is used in this way as a metaphor for the occupation: selling out to the Germans. If the Germans are the "propriétaire", then one's house is not one's own. As Angoisse Grasse remarks at the end of scene one, (p.13) "Tais-toi, on est en visite."

Scene two reveals the terror of the occupation by using the storm as a metaphor and "Porcelaine de Chine" suggests the fragility and preciousness of life for the French.

Act II

i) Summary of Plot

Act two (p. 13) opens with five pairs of disembodied feet complaining to one another of chillblains as they writhe in pain outside their hotel room doors. At the end of the scene, the transparent doors are illuminated from behind and monkeys eating carrots can be seen. In scene two (p. 13) a bathtub is placed in front of the doors. All the characters are in the tub together. Tarte is enjoying her bath when the others begin to make disparaging remarks about her. Gros Pied extolls her beauty. They all jump out of the tub fully

clothed except for Tarte who wears only stockings. They begin to set out a picnic but are interrupted by undertakers who arrive with coffins and begin to nail the characters into the coffins.

ii) Summary of Language

The dialogue attributed to the feet in scene I is simple: "Mes engelures" (p. 13) is repeated fourteen times. Scene II opens with Tarte's discussion of her bath, "bien lavés, bien rincés, nets." This pattern of multiple repetition continues "mon savon", repeated three times,* "je te vois", (4), "coquine", (3), then three synonyms "vieille putain", "petite grue", and "garce" are each used once.

Contrasted with this repetitious language is the elaborate speech of Gros Pied in praise of Tarte. He begins in a simple fashion: "Tu as la jambe bien faite et le nombril bien tourné, la taille fine ..." He becomes a little vulgar, "et les nichons parfaits" then continues with careful analysis, "l'arcade sourcilière affolante." This last adjective sets up a stream of descriptive images which become more and more fantastic in which he makes a series of comparisons:

bouche	nid de fleurs
hanches	sofa
ventre	loge aux courses de taureaux
fesses	plat de cassoulet
bras	soupe d'ailerons de requins
nid d'hirondelles	feu d'une soupe aux nids d'hirondelles

* Henceforth in the analysis of language, repetitions will be indicated as (3) for three repetitions, etc.

and ends it with a progression of three, "mon chou, mon canard, mon loup" which is an echo of Tarte's "bien lavés, bien rincés, nets".

Then, "Je m'affole", repeated four times, recalls the pattern set earlier in the scene.

Tarte's opening dialogue stresses the purifying aspect of bathing: "Miroirs de nous-mêmes, shows the improvement in self-image and gives it the religious aspect of renewal through baptism or confession with: "prêtres à recommencer demain".

Tarte asks for the flagellation to be continued by the name-callers. The expression "passer un savon" means to reprimand severely, thus her "où est mon savon" incites them to continue. Then she implies that she enjoys this treatment: "Il sent bon ce savon,"

iii) Allusions

Gros Pied compares Tarte to the things he likes best: flowers, a comfortable sofa, seats at the bull fight and food - cassoulet and shark's fin soupe - choices which recall the author's life in Southern France.

The name-calling which identifies Tarte as a prostitute in the eyes of the others continues the metaphor established in Act I, of Tarte as a personification of France because she prostitutes herself with the ennemy. Gros Pied is the only one who is still able to find good in her, citing good things of former

times.

The setting of the second scene, with all the characters together in the bathtub enacts the idiomatic expression "être dans le bain" meaning to be compromised in a situation or, "all in the same boat".

Act III

i) Summary of Plot

Act three takes place in Gros Pied's atelier. In the first scene (p. 15), in a long monologue, recited in darkness, he extols the virtues of his cook.

Scene two (p. 15) opens with the arrival of Bout Rond who has come to deliver a lottery ticket to Gros Pied. He notices the smell of roast pig. Gros Pied pays him for the ticket and offers him a glass of water. He tells Bout Rond of his problems in renting a house, and with a neighbour's cat. Bout Rond offers a possible solution "Le tuer", to the problem of the cat and departs for the neighbourhood bistrot to have coffee.

In the third scene (p. 15,16) the four women, Tarte and her cousin and the two Angoisses, admire the sleeping form of Gros Pied. They cut off locks of his hair until he is bald. Streaks of sunlight coming in through the venetian blinds whip the women until they bleed.

ii) Summary of Language

The language of Gros Pied's monologue (p.15) is a series of word associations falling into several

categories:

Gastronomy

ragout de mouton, bourguignon, miroton
 ses chairs hachées
 sauts d'humeur
 chauds et froids
 farcis de haine
 l'oeuf frais de son nu

Word Sounds

mouton bourguignon, miroton
 . esclave, slave
 hispanomauresque, albuminurique
 charme, chamarré, amarré ... force de
 marées
 les coins et les recoins
 proportions démesurées, propositions
 émues
 allure ... de son amour ...
 allume, allumette

Visual
 References

allure au grand galop de son amour
 j'écoute à l'oreille du silence
 j'allume les cierges du péché à
 l'allumette
 la luisante superficie du portrait
 la harpe éolienne de ses gros mots .
 la fenêtre de son regard
 la toile ... saute l'obstacle et tombe

Related Ideas

allure au grand galop
 la poix et la glu de ses considérations
 détachées

la cicatrice de la blessure de son
caractère

servante et maîtresse

In the exchange between Gros Pied and Bout Rond (p.15)
Gros Pied's language continues its freely associative
poetic style full of imagery, assonance:

à l'heure de biscottes
des figues, mi-figues, mi-raisin
la gloire noire
ce bon gros de Jules - son gros chat
cette chipie - mis en charpie

Bout Rond begins to speak in the same obscure poetic
style:

l'écharpe du voile qui pend des cils des persiennes
essuie les nuages roses sur la glace couleur de pomme
du ciel qui se réveille déjà à ta fenêtre,

a collection of images whose message is obscure.

Two homolies are included:

Gros Pied: "Rira bien qui rira le dernier"

and Bout Rond: "Folie! Les hommes sont fous."

In scene three Gros Pied himself is extolled by
Angoisse Maigre (p.15). She likens his beauty to a
star or a dream then continues her comparisons:

ses cheveux - l'art des arabesques
teint - son argentín de la cloche ...
corps - rempli de la lumière
pantalon - gonflé de parfums
mains - glaces aux fruits

yeux - huftres
 regards - paroles

While Gros Pied's comparisons group stimuli in pairs whose characteristics are related - curly hair and arabesques for example - those of Angoisse Maigre are unusual juxtapositions:

	<u>Expected</u>	<u>Picasso gives</u>
teint	colour, texture	sound
corps	size, strength	light
pantalon	sexual	smell
mains	strength	food
yeux	beauty, colour, look	food
regards	sentiment	words

By using the unexpected, the description is more powerful. For example by comparing Gros Pied's complexion to the silvery sound of a bell the author reveals more about its colour and clarity. Similarly "lumière" implies a body of power and agility, "pantalon gonflé de tous les parfums d'Arabie" is sexually exotic, and "paroles de ses regards" signifies the expressiveness of his look.

Cousine relates the story of a former lover (p. 16) whom Gros Pied resembles, Tarte repeats "Je l'aime" (4) and the language disintegrates into monosyllables as the women are being whipped:

ai (35)

a (15)

with "Oh qu'il est beau" becoming simply "bo" (11), the word "bobo" being French baby talk for "hurt".

iv) Allusions

Scene I opens with Gros Pied's discussion of food preferences, revealing his longing for a decent meal. But he quickly distracts himself with an amusing description in culinary terms, of his cook. More unusual juxtapositions sharpen the description. For example:

Gros Pied's auditory image, "la harpe éolienne de ses gros mots orduriers et communs" describes his cook's conversation as discordant and monotonous - the Aeolian harp being sounded by wind to produce a single interval usually a fifth. But it is his visual images which reveals their author as a painter: "la luisante superficie du portrait" recalls the Dutch portraiture of the seventeenth century with varnished surfaces depicting the honest but uninteresting faces of solid citizens who commissioned them, and "les roses de ses doigts sentent la térébenthine" provides a hint of the author's own atelier. The final line "la cuisinière électrique à bon dos" is a play on "cuisinière" designating both cook and stove. The reliability implied in "à bon dos" alludes to the cook as compared to Tarte, the steady reliability of traditional France personified by the cook as opposed to the treacherous collaborators of occupied France.

In scene two, Bout Rond's "le pont des soupirs" refers to the Bridge of Sighs in Venice through which prisoners passed on their way to execution. Its juxtaposition with the "loterie nationale" alludes to the precariousness of existence under Nazi rule when survival was a gamble.

Gros Pied speaks of "la gloire noire" in reference to the country's shame, as opposed to "gloire" in the Racinian sense denoting honour. This is coupled with more references to the rental of a house, i.e. the occupation of France. The story of the prowling cat refers to the German officers who harassed Picasso by visiting his atelier at unexpected moments. Bout Rond's proposal to catch the "cat" and make it sing and repair watches implies a scheme to catch these "spies" and use them for blackmail. The idea of roasting them suggests that they be used as a means for obtaining food. Gros Pied's reference to "une plus grande disette nous accueille" refers to the lack of food.

Scene three's story of a gentleman from Châteauroux may be a sketch of Jean Giraudoux who had been a student in Châteauroux. He later served as Minister of Information but resigned in 1940. He wore distinctive glasses, and being a diplomat, was rich and cultivated. This story is inserted whole, as in a collage.

The sun coming through the blinds may represent truth or exposure which destroys the women. Gros Pied is chilled to the marrow at the sight of this cruel revenge: "L'os de la moelle charrie des glaçons".

Act IVi) Summary of Plot

The lottery mentioned in Act three, Scene two, takes place in Act four (p. 16). All are present, expecting to win. The wheel turns. Everyone is a winner. The act ends with the sound and smell of potatoes frying in the prompter's box. Smoke fills the stage.

ii) Summary of Language

The text is dominated by words pertaining to the lottery.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number of times used</u>
moi	(11)
gagner and variants	(13)
gros lot	(14)
gros lotier	(4)

The last two words lead into Silence's little rhyme:

"Adieu misère, lait, oeufs et laitière!"

Numbers play a role as well. Everyone wants to be "premier," a term mentioned four times. With the spinning of the wheel the numbers begin, ranging from:

7 - 249,0089.

Twenty different numbers are mentioned and not in any order, as befits a game of chance. In the final dialogue the numbers counted in sequence by Rideaux 1, 2, 3, 4, contrast their order with the disorder of the foregoing.

iii) Allusions

The numbers of the lottery underline the role of chance and coincidence in life. Unlike a real lottery, this one is absurd because everyone wins.

Act Vi) Summary of Plot

The lottery wheel is replaced by a camp cot in Act five, and Gros Pied lies on it, writing. He is interrupted by Tarte who wants to make love. She is also hungry and thirsty. They embrace. She urinates into the prompter's box. She farts, then sits down to do her toenails.

Instead of a snack of tea and toast, Gros Pied offers her a reading from his account book. He begins at page 380,000.

They are interrupted by Oignon and Cousine who arrive bringing shrimp. Gros Pied scolds them and they are offended by his lack of appreciation. Cousine threatens to tell Tarte's mother that she is improperly dressed in the presence of a man. Tarte denounces Gros Pied and goes to the bathroom to dress. In her absence, Gros Pied confides that he loves her, but finds her personal habits annoying. He has no intention of marrying her. Cousine tells him that Tarte has led an exemplary childhood and they agree that she still has certain charms. After offering a few suggestions for cooking the shrimps Oignon and Cousine leave Gros Pied to his writing. Now clothed, Tarte emerges from the bathroom and professes

her love for him. Then she sets off for an evening of prostitution.

ii) Summary of Language

Gros Pied's monologue (p. 15,16) reading from his own work, is filled with images. There are twenty-five in all, of which twenty-one are visual and four are auditory. Four contain references to food or eating (the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth.)

Visual

sauts d'humeur de l'amour

sauts de cabri de la rage

la robe amidonnée de riches lambeaux de chair

le beurre fondu de ses gestes équivoques

l'oeuf rempli de haine

les langues de feu de sa volonté

le citron exaspéré se pâme

silence pris au piège

le reflet ... aromatise la dureté de son sang

les rayons de salive du soleil

la pointe d'aiguille de l'envie

les mains pendues au cou

le jour descend la charge des années

la blancheur et la dureté du marbre brillant de
sa douleur

les draps chiffonnés des pierres

les joues de la hache

Pierre dur des anémones

la chaux vive du rideau

le soufre du ciel accroché au cadre de la fenêtre

Auditory

gargarisme du métal fondu de ses cheveux

l'harmonie du bruit assourdissant

des persiennes détachées frappant leurs cloches ivres
les loups de marteau des fleurs

Note also Gros Pied's repetition of "pas" (p. 18) emphasizes shortage of some of the necessities, for even staple commodities are unobtainable.

pas d'eau

pas de thé

pas de sucre

pas de tasse in soucoupe

pas de cuillère

pas de verre

pas de pain

pas de confitures.

Tarte's speech is full of sexual innuendoes. She says she is dying of thirst but the juxtaposition of thirst and nudity underlines the sexuality intended: "Je suis toute nue et je meurs de soif."

As well "J'ai si chaud", refers to her passion. Her analogy between sex and food soon becomes quite clear: "Embrassez-moi sur la bouche et ici ici ici et là et partout. Apportez-moi une brique. "Brique" means "miette".

Gros Pied continues reading from his book. Visual

images again dominate, with one food reference to his book, "ce gros saucisson". The language here is legal and business jargon:

case provisoire
 fait concret
 a priori
 à aucune retenue
 devant sa femme et par-devant notaire
 le seul responsable établi
 ma responsabilité entière
 les cas précis
 la vue partielle du sujet mis à table
 déroisant à plein rendement
 coûte que coûte
 les données exactes du cas
 à l'inverse de l'éclairage apporté par les points
 de vue
 sur lesquels appuyer les poids des précisions
 intérieures
 fait accompli
 en matérialisant convenablement

He later refers to this reading as "en train d'en foutre un coup", a surprising contrast considering the dry tone created by the legal terminology and the absence of sexual innuendoes.

Juxtaposed with this sober image of passion is Cousine's description of Tarte's behaviour: (p.18)

peut-être très littéraire et très
cochon, mais ça ne fait pas ni Vénus
ni muse

which she sums up as "ta déplorable conduite dévergondée".

Gros Pied is accused by Tarte as being "un cochon, un pervers, un raffiné et un juif."

Gros Pied discusses the pros and cons of his relationship with Tarte. (p. 19)

Positive elements

Negative elements

-j'aime

-de ça à faire d'elle ma femme

-elle me plaît

ou ma Venus, il y a un long

-sa beauté s'excite

et difficile chemin.

-sa puanteur m'affole

-sa façon de manger à table

de s'habiller et ses manières

si maniérées m'emmerdent.

(iii) Allusions

In Gros Pied's writing Picasso is poking fun at his writer friends. The fantastic images are intentionally preposterous while the real message is obscure. His description of Tarte's attributes recalls his first mistress Fernande Olivier who was very beautiful. Although they never married, they lived together from 1905 to 1912.

"Writing is What is Remembered, Alice B. Toklas relates Picasso's annoyance with Fernande's "little ways". She quotes him as saying after their separation,

"I never liked any of her little ways but her beauty¹¹ always held me." According to Toklas, Fernande's only topics of conversation were perfumes and hats. Picasso's inclusion in his play of a description of his mistress may be due to his associating her with the hunger they endured together during meager years. Later the hunger caused by the privations of the occupation may have called this period to mind.

Two autobiographical references to paintings are: Gros Pied's mention of Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Picasso's first cubist painting which dates (1907) from the time of his relationship to Fernande and

les tripes que traîne Pégase après la course dessinent son portrait sur la blancheur et la dureté du marbre brillant de sa douleur,

describes the subject of drawings and paintings made in 1933-34.

Cousine's description of Tarte's model childhood contrasts with her behaviour as an adult prostitute. This may allude to France's past of glorious tradition and her present "debauchery". Tarte's perfidy is indicated by her wanting then rejecting Gros Pied. Her gestures of urinating and farting signify rejection of social mores.

¹¹ Alice B. Toklas, What is Remembered, (N.Y. Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1963), p. 39.

Act VI(i) Summary of Plot

Act six takes place in the villa of the Angoisses where Angoisse Maigre is cooking for her sister Angoisse Grasse, who is just getting out of bed. Angoisse Grasse proposes a toast. Their dinner consists of soup, sturgeon, mussels, turkey with stuffing and gravy and bread.

Tarte arrives and they invite her to dine. They exchange news. Tarte tells them she has found love. She jumps out the window.

Angoisse Maigre summons everyone with a trumpet. Then she asks each person a question, offering a prize for correct answers. All are correct.

Suddenly a large golden ball appears, casting a blinding light around the room. Shielding their eyes, they all point accusingly at one another. The word "Personne" appears on the ball.

(ii) Summary of Language

Angoisse Maigre's speech (p. 19) contains references to hunger and food, cold, love and suffering.

Hunger le petit sac de pralines ... me brûle
 les mains
 ma chair à saucisse
 faim de loup
 soif océane

Cold la plaie des engelures
 je ne suis que l'âme congelée
 mains glacées

Love la brûlure de mes passions malsaines
 fistule purulente dans mon coeur
 l'amour joue aux billes
 carrousel échevelé de mes désirs

Suffering marchandise de ma douleur
 à toute miséricorde

The references "faim de loup", "soif océane" and "je ne suis que l'âme congelée" may also refer to love.

The recipe, which begins logically:

melon d'Espagne
 de l'huile de palme
 du citron
 des fèves
 sel
 vinaigre
 mie de pain

ends in fantasy.

Then the list combines sense with nonsense:

mettre à cuire à feux doux
 retirer délicatement de temps en temps une âme
 en peine de purgatoire
 refroidir
 reproduire à mille exemplaires sur japon impérial
 laisser prendre la glace à temps pour pouvoir la
 donner aux poulpes

Thus the recipe is a collage-like inclusion which seems to go slightly awry.

(iii) Allusions

The speech of Angoisse Maigre (p. 19) reveals the areas of her anxiety - lack of love is the most important, then cold and hunger. She speaks of "l'égout de notre maison" referring to France. Other references to national shame are: "plier le linge sale taché de sang et d'excréments", whereas sang denotes the heroism, excréments bring forth images of shame: "la mare glacée de mes chagrins", "je me suis étendue sur l'ordure de cette eau" and "j'ai tenu longtemps ma bouche ouverte pour recevoir mes larmes".

Indeed the story of "la robe de dentelles que je portais en bal blanc" which is later "toute mitée et pleine de taches" suggests a comparison with France's shame.

Cooperation with the Nazis in return for food is probably the allusion in: "suivre derrière le corbillard des sauts de carpe que le gros teinturier ... voulait mettre à mes pieds" (p. 19)

as well as "un serin qui chantait toute la nuit" (p. 20) a canary being a caged bird which depends on its owner to feed it.

Picasso's early association with the clowns of the Cirque Médrano taught him the vocabulary of clowns, "saut de carpe" is a comical, inelegant movement they used.

The whole act invites conjectural interpretation. For

instance, the toast to "la joie, l'amour et le printemps (p. 20) seems to be a plea for a new beginning. This is underlined by "découpe la dinde et sers-toi convenablement de la farce." Dinde being figurative speech for stupid girl, in this case, France.

The unhappy fate of Oignon who is "pâle et défait, trempé d'urine et blessé, traversé au front par une pique" (p. 20), may refer to brutal punishment he has received, an allusion to his association with Cousine. Love's fate, that of being reduced to a beggar, also sums up earlier allusions in the speech of Angoisse Maigre, as well as the blighted passion of Tarte and Gros Pied in act five. "La chatte a eu ses petits. Nous les avons noyés" (p. 20) may be another reference to the frustrations of love. It could also be an allusion to "le gros chat" of scene two, act three, where the prowling cat calls to mind German soldiers and the guerilla tactics of the French Resistance.

Whatever the interpretation, the images are of cruelty and retaliation.

The questions asked (p. 20) are absurd and any answer is acceptable. Prizes are equally absurd. This may allude to the meaninglessness of war.

Tarte's closing speech is a final accounting in which she sums up the glorious traditions of France which are symbolized by food:

600 litres de lait dans mes nichons de truie
 du jambon
 du gras double
 du saucisson
 des tripes
 du boudin
 cheveux couverts de chipolatas

which she contrasts to the infection, decay and disease which characterize France's misery during the occupation:

gencives mauves
 du sucre dans les urines
 blanc d'oeuf plein les mains nouées de goutte
 cavernes osseuses
 du fiel
 des chancres
 des fistules
 des écrouelles
 lèvres tordues de miel et de guimauve

She underlines her identification with France; she is mother country as well as seductress describing the dichotomy of the collaborationist government:

"je suis mère et parfaite fille de joie et je sais danser le rumba".

And her prize "un bidon de pétrole et une canne à pêche" would cheer any Frenchman whether of modern or traditional taste.

Gros Pied closes the play with a call to forget the past, "Enveloppons les draps usés dans la poudre de riz des anges," and make a new beginning "retournons les matelas."

As he pleads for hope and peace: "

Allumons toutes les lanternes.
Lançons de toutes nos forces les vols de
colombes contre les balles...
fermons à double les maisons démolies
par les bombes.

In saying this Gros Pied seems to be making a plea to the audience to forgive and forget.

Conjectures apart, and interpretations left aside, the gesture which closes the play, when the six blindfolded characters pointing accusingly at one another, saying: "Toi! Toi! Toi!" has its answer supplied by a lighted ball, "Personne."

The mention of "colombes contre les balles" is an early manifestation of Picasso's future involvement with the peace movement which would have as its symbol a dove.

There is another autobiographical reference:

Je frappe mon portrait contre mon front et
crie la marchandise de ma douleur aux fenê-
tres fermées à toute miséricorde,

which describes one of the figures seen in Guernica.

(d) Structural Considerationsi) Sets and Costumes

The fragmentation evident in analysing the characters of Le Désir attrapé par la queue is also found in the stage settings and costumes of the play. Picasso's indications are given in drawings which accompany the text, as well as in the text itself. He does not give precise locations, but rather, by providing typical objects as clues, stimulates the spectator to imagine the setting.

In Act I, (p. 12), only the feet of the characters can be seen beneath a frieze of food, creating the effect of a cocktail party seen from underneath its buffet table. Feet again are the only body parts seen in **Act II**, (p. 13). These feet are disembodied and placed outside their hotel room doors as in the practise of leaving shoes to be polished by the hall porter of a hotel. In scene two of the second act, a huge bathtub is brought in, and heads only are seen sticking out of the soap bubbles. The characters are finally seen in their entirety at the end of Act II. All are fully dressed except Tarte, who is clad only in stockings. Acts III, IV and V are set in total blackness, the stage properties indicating changes of subject. In Act IV (p. 16) a huge lottery wheel is the featured stage property, and a camp cot appears in Act V (p. 16), denoting respectively a lottery and a love scene. In

contrast with the single symbolic object, the setting for the final act (p. 19) of the play is a room which serves several purposes assembling many fragments into a new whole:

l'égout chambre à coucher cuisine et salle
de bains de la villa des Angoisses.

A huge golden ball appears on the stage to signal the end of the play as a concrete manifestation of the hoped-for enlightenment.

Contrasts in costuming are used to heighten the message given by the dialogue in several scenes. For example, in Act II, Scene ii, all the characters emerge from the bathtub fully clothed except for Tarte, who wears only stockings. Tarte's nudity is thus emphasized by the others wearing clothes. The additional absurdity of their being in the bathtub with clothes on, and of Tarte's wearing only stockings underlines this juxtaposition of naked/clothed, and gives visual evidence of Tarte's role as a prostitute.

The first two acts offer contrasts on a similarly absurd note. Act I and the first scene of Act II show only the feet of the characters while the second scene of Act II shows only their heads (until they jump out of the bathtub). By showing only the part of the body which suffers the chillblains, the author shows visually how the pain radiating from that part seems to dominate the whole body. In showing only the heads of the

characters in the bath, the spectator imagines that they are all naked (as is usual in bath water) and wonders what is going on beneath the surface of the water, thus the idea that Tarte as a prostitute is introduced even before Bout Rond says: "Je te vois, je te vois, coquine". Fragmentation of the body in this fashion allows the body to be revealed one part at a time in much the same way as the sets are dominated by one symbolic stage property (such as the lottery wheel or the camp bed) as we have already shown.

(ii) Intertextualities

The intertextual references in Le Désir attrapé par la queue indicate the author's awareness of the literary trends of his day. Such references also represent in dramatic form Picasso's ability to create works of art out of found objects; in this work he has taken remembered scenes, lines or subject material from other texts and incorporated them into his play. These intertextual references show, in several examples, that Picasso's cubist ideas have made their way from his 1908 experiments in painting to the literary world and back again to his own work in its dramatic form. Apollinaire in his play Les Mamelles de Tirésias of 1917 was one of the first writers to adopt cubist ideas. Apollinaire's Tirésias, who bears 40,049 infants in a single day, is an example of his deliberate

avoidance of verisimilitude and of his imitation of the cubist fondness for numbers¹²: Picasso's lottery in Act IV is reminiscent of the preposterous number of infants accredited to Tirésias, for these lottery numbers are equally preposterous. As in Parade, Jean Cocteau's 1917 ballet, where the managers announce the acts to be presented, Gros Pied and Oignon also announce the play's purpose in Le Désir attrapé par la queue again stressing the irreality of the stage. The set for the ballet Mercure in which a large pool has heads protruding from a black water surface is repeated here in Act II, Scene ii when a bathtub large enough to contain the entire cast is shown with heads alone revealed. Both sets again are the result of Picasso's refusal to imitate reality, but rather to dissect and manipulate it. Picasso's use of the absurd as a deliberate rejection of imitative reality was adopted by dadaists, whose philosophy was simply the rejection of social and moral order, and by the surrealists who favored absurdity and contradiction for its own sake. Contradictions thus come full circle in Picasso's play when (Act II, Scene ii) Bout Rond remarks on the smell of roast pig in Gros Pied's room whereas Gros Pied says that he has nothing to offer his friend: "Pas de sucre, pas de thé

¹² Guillaume Apollinaire, Les Mamelles de Tirésias dans L'Enchanteur pourrissant (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1972).

...pas de pain et pas de confiture".

It is Picasso's way of emphasizing the different lifestyles of ordinary people, as opposed to collaborators. Raymond Queneau describes the two lifestyles of that era: "...les collaborateurs savorent la défaite, et les autres font la connaissance des rutabagas dans les maisons sans feux." ¹³

Thus this seeming contradiction is really a cubist presentation of two sides of reality. It may also indicate the suspicions of Bout Rond. However, in other instances Picasso uses contradiction for its own value as absurdity as in surrealist writings: Silence complains (Act I) "Qu'il fait chaud" while the other characters are complaining that the chimney does not give any heat. In Act V, Tarte, although naked, says "J'ai une faim de loup et j'ai si chaud!... Donnez-moi une fourrure." (p. 18). And in Act VI, Angoisse Grasse seems unsure of the weather, saying "Il faisait beau ce matin. Un peu froid mais chaud quand même," (p. 20) while Angoisse Maigre (Act VI) complains in the same contradictory fashion of having: "l'âme congelée aux vitres de feu." (p. 19).

Picasso's technique of fragmentation was adopted by dadaist writers. Tristan Tzara's Le Coeur à Gaz (1920) ¹⁴

¹³ Raymond Queneau, essay, "L'incongrue et lyrique" in Bâtons chiffres et lettres (N.R.F.) reprinted in L'Avant-Scène Théâtre, D, (1972).

¹⁴ Tristan Tzara, Le Coeur à Gaz (Paris: Editions G.L.M., 1938).

in open imitation of Picasso's dismembered forms lists characters similarly divided: Oeil, Bouche, Nez, Oreille, Cou and Sourcil. Picasso's cast of characters in Le Désir attrapé par la queue fragments in a very complex manner. As is shown in the discussion of structure, fragmentation is present, for example, in dialogue where words are reduced to single syllables: the woman crying in Act III is clearly reminiscent of dada theatre and poetry.

ai, ai, ai, ai, ai, ...

A a a a a a a a a a ...

A a a bo a a bo bo

Picasso uses the dadaist device of provoking audience reaction by farting or other antisocial behavior. The farting of the curtains at the end of Act I, and of Tarte in Act V recalls Roger Vitrac's Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir (1928, II, ii)¹⁵, where Ida Mortemart's repeated farting is both amusing and embarrassing. Farting was used much earlier, however. The "pétomane" was a music-hall act at the Moulin Rouge¹⁶ and Marinetti's 1905 play Le Roi bombace - tragédie satirique¹⁷ was one of the first plays to include it. Thus this sort of

¹⁵ Roger Vitrac, Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir in Trois Pièces Surréalistes, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969).

¹⁶ Accomplished performers were able to extinguish candles and do amusing imitations, according to Geo. Sandry and Marcel Carrière in the Dictionnaire de l'argot moderne, 11th ed. (Paris: Dauphin 1957), p. 368.

¹⁷ Marinetti, Le Roi bombace - tragédie satirique (1904) quoted in Annabelle Meker, Latest Rage the Big Drum, p. 107.

vulgarity did not originate with dadaist theatre. However, in adopting it Picasso is exploiting a gesture begun half a century earlier as his use of this gesture is not merely to shock or amuse but may also be symbolic: the farting of the curtains is a mimesis of the storm and wind outside. The farting of Tarte is indicative of her rejection of social conventions, and used more in the line with dadaist thinking. Social mores are also attacked by the inclusion of platitudes, as in Bout Rond's "Folie! les hommes sont fous" (p. 15). This technique is also found in Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir,¹⁸ when Victor tells little Esther,

Soigne tes poupées. Lèche tes chats,
 aime ton prochain comme toi-même et sois
 une enfant docile, en attendant d'être
 une bonne épouse et une bonne mère. (I, iii) 18

or, in Jean Cocteau's Les parents terribles (Act I, scene iii) when Michel addresses his parents saying: "Ecoutez, mes enfants ..." (I, iii)¹⁹

Many of the intertextual references are simply collage-like insertions that do nothing more than vary the texture of the play, contrasting new material with reminders of other written works. The inclusion of lists

¹⁸ Roger Vitrac, Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir, in Trois pièces surréalistes, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969)

¹⁹ Jean Cocteau, Les Parents Terribles (Paris: Gallimard, 1983)

of items, or recipes, is a technique which is found in the works of many of Picasso's contemporaries. In Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir²⁰ (II,ii) two newspaper clippings of events such as the Cook and Peary expeditions to the North Pole provide details known to be authentic in the midst of an absurd dialogue. Picasso's (I,ii) dodo/rideau/bobo juxtaposition is also found in Tristan Tzara's La Première Aventure Celeste de Monsieur Antipyrine²¹ (1916) Max Jacob's poetry contains a line about a lady trimming her corns: "...Pendant que la vieille taille les cors",²². The fact that the lady in question is also in the bathtub reinforces the association between this poem and Tarte. In the second act (p. 13) she is in the bathtub, in Act V (p. 18) she is doing her toenails. The echoes of surrealist writing and particularly the speed at which the play was written, have led some of Picasso's friends to conclude that it is an example of the surrealist technique or automatic writing.

Alice B. Toklas writes:

Picasso's play is what is called surrealist but is really a descendant of Ubu Roi but not half so amusing. 23

²⁰ Vitrac, Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir.

²¹ Tristan Tzara, La Première Aventure de Monsieur Antipyrine, Tristan Tzara: Oeuvres Complètes, 1912-1924 (Paris: Flammarion, 1975), p. 78.

²² Max Jacob, Le Cornet à dés (Paris, Gallimard, 1945), p. 73.

²³ Alice B. Toklas, What is Remembered (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1963), p. 139.

Although the two plays are similar in their anger which is cloaked in humour and directed at real political situations, Ubu Roi is in fact a satire on Macbeth and contains a strongly delineated narrative line in contrast to Le Désir attrapé par la queue, which has no narrative plot, but rather projects its subject through fragmented double exposures. Picasso's photographer Brassai elaborates:

(Picasso) had simply allowed his mind to wander, following the dictum of "automatic writing", a verbal trance which gives full rein to dreams, obsessions, unconfessed desires, odd confrontations of ideas and words, absurd and everyday banalities.²⁴

However, the visual effect and character development and as we shall see, the careful structuring of the play would not have been possible to create by working with this technique. Although certain parts of the play, chiefly the long monologues of Gros Pied, appear to be written using automatic writing, Picasso may have used this surrealist appearance as a means of obscuring the message of the play in order to protect himself.

²⁴ Brassai, Picasso & Co. p. 144.

iii) Structure

Le Désir attrapé par la queue follows closely the conventionalized form found in dramatic comedy - the formula of hero who desires heroine but is thwarted by parental opposition until the situation is finally resolved in the last scene. Mistaken identity and disguise, and the old order changed for a newer, more enlightened one are also characteristic of this type of play. As is common in dramatic comedy (and Picasso's play is no exception) a banquet scene with all present sets the stage for the resolution in the last scene. The play's structure cannot be described without first defining the various characters and their roles in the action. The characters central to the action are clearly portrayed. Gros Pied, for example, is identified as a writer by Cousine: "un monsieur, un écrivain, un poète". The pompous literary style of his monologues underlines this description. He is the organizer, in Act I, and his is the final word in Act VI. He is the only character able to see beyond the physical and emotional privations and identify the larger problems. For him, intellectual stimulation can satisfy other hungers: his book replaces love and food. Thus his moral and intellectual superiority would associate him with the role of a king or god in traditional dramatic comedy.

Tarte, who is called a prostitute by the others:

"coquine", "vieille putain", "grue" demonstrates her lack of concern for social conventions by urinating and farting. Her perfidiousness is shown by her continued prostitution despite her love for Gros Pied. Her dual role of prostitute and mother makes her a metaphor for occupied France. She is France the fallen woman/collaborator, France the mother country/glorious traditions: "j'ai 600 litres de lait dans mes nichons de truie".

Cousine, as we have already shown, is a personification of Germany because she is cousine germaine to Tarte/France. She reveals her association with the collaborationist government in Act V: "Toi, la Tarte, de ce pas je vais lui raconter tout, à ta mère."

Like Tarte, Oignon's name first connects him with food images and therefore hunger, but there is much to suggest that he is a collaborator. He may be the "cor" or "oignon" Tarte is trying to remove from her foot in Act V. He is, on the other hand, a friend of Gros Pied, who addresses Oignon as "tu", although Gros Pied refers to Tarte as "vous". His association with Cousine makes him guilty in Act V, when they arrive at Gros Pied's atelier bearing shrimp (obtainable only through enemy sources). His final state indicates that he has been punished, yet allowed to live: "trempé d'urine et blessé, traversé au front par une pique". His remorse, "il pleurait", suggests that

revenge has been meted out by his own countrymen, who have let him return to his friends rather than kill him, as the Germans would have done.

Bout Rond's role, a minor one, is unclear. Although his name has sexual connotations, he does not play a sexual role. He has little to say which does not echo the other characters except for his part in Act III, scene ii, which ends in his platitude on war, an observation which ties him to Gros Pied: "Folie! les hommes sont fous." Otherwise, he is an onlooker, a kind of Everyman who enjoys going to the corner bistrot.

The two Angoisses personify the emotional state their name indicates. They speak of frustrated love, cold, boredom and hunger. The feast they prepare in the final act is a reminder of better days in the past and of hope for the future.

Gros Pied's desire for Tarte can be described as Platonic in spite of her sexuality because it is as France/mother country that she is the object of his affections. Thus the structural relationships of the play can be shown as:

<u>Subject</u>	=	<u>Gros Pied</u>
object		Tarte
<u>helper</u>	=	<u>Bout Rond</u>
opposer		Cousine

The chief obstacle, the occupier or usurper, is not

characterized because the usurper is the state; in this capacity the usurper can be identified with the role of the opposing parent in dramatic comedy. And as is usual in comedy, mistaken identities create situations of double meaning. For example, Gros Pied's love-making to Tarte in her dual role of prostitute/mother creates an Oedipus situation. Familiar also is the audience's recognizing of the opposants as usurpers thus directing their sympathy toward the hero. His appeal for new order completes the cycle of golden age/repression/new golden age.

Within this highly conventionalized form Picasso has applied his cubist technique devised for painting in the early years of the century. Picasso analyses his subject, then separates all the details and rearranges them to make a pleasing composition which fills the whole surface of the canvas. Bits of real materials provide textural interest to the surface and give additional visual and tactile information. He then provides a title to aid in comprehension, for an intellectual reconstruction must be made. As has already been stated in the discussion of the title, Le Désir attrapé par la queue is both a description of and an idiomatic expression for frustration. The many references to privations, which are the symptoms, coupled with the allusion to shame and disenfranchisement which have been pointed out act by act as they occur, lead to a total picture of the misery of occupied France. The play is

not the story of one person's experience but shows simultaneously many different points of view to form a complex picture. The material is carefully arranged to give balance and interest over the entire "surface" of the play.

The opening and closing statements of Gros Pied²⁵ provide brackets. Despite the fragmentation of dialogue and plot, this sense of form is continued throughout the play by the repeated pattern found in the six acts: all end negatively except for the last. In Act I, a terrible storm shakes the curtains and fireflies invade the stage. Act II, ends with an aborted picnic; Act III, ends with the whipping of the female characters. Act IV's lottery finishes with everyone a winner, then all are asphyxiated by smoke. Act V's love scene ends with Tarte going out to prostitute herself. The pattern is reversed in the final act when light cast from a golden ball, signifying hope and absolving everyone of blame, blinds everyone. Thus the attention to structure of a Picasso painting is evident also in his play.

The "collage" pieces inserted into the play provide interest and amusement, information and nonsense. There are lists: legal terms, Tarte's attributes, recipes and the menu of the final feast. These real items contrast

²⁵ Act I, scene i: "... dire les quatre vérités premières à
notre Cousine."

Act VI: "Lançons de toutes nos forces les vols de colombes
contre les balles..."

with the fantasy. Numbers are mentioned frequently. As in painting they vary the stimulus from the visual or verbal to the numerical. Sometimes they are used to enumerate. This is the case in Act V; "Cigarette 1, cigarette 2, cigarette 3" which underlines the preciousness of the item. Other times they can be nonsensical, as in Act VI: "Dis-moi combien ça fait quatre et quatre?"

In Act IV the whole dialogue is based on numbers which range from 7 to 249,0089.

Also included in this category of collage-like items are veiled references, puns and jokes to amuse friends. The description of someone who bears a strong resemblance to Jean Giraudoux is one example: "J'ai connu à Châteauroux un monsieur...". The identity of such a reference can only be guessed. Picasso includes many references to his own works as well, as we have already noted.²⁶

Like Picasso's paintings which have neither foreground nor background and tend to scatter details over the entire surface of the canvas stressing its two-dimensionality, Le Désir attrapé par la queue has several climatic scenes: Tarte urinating into the prompter's box, the bathtub full of characters who all jump out

26 (a) Pégase, p. 18;
 (b) Loge aux courses de taureaux aux arènes de Nîmes, p. 13;
 (c) Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, p. 19;
 (d) Description of Tarte resembling Fernande Olivier, p. 19.

fully clothed, the women in a trance cutting off Gros Pied's hair, the golden ball with its blinding light. Picasso creates his most dramatic effects visually, as can be seen from the foregoing list, and these occur throughout the play. Thus the "canvas" is well covered, and the play given structural unity and cohesion.

The grouping of the characters in Picasso's play demonstrates his cubist mode of fragmentation. As in the title of the play where "Désir" is personified, three of the characters, Silence and the two Angoïsses are also personifications. Four humans are represented in whole or in part; Tarte (the prostitute), her cousin, Gros Pied (who is only a foot because he is seen by the others from floor level), and Bout Rond (whose name may be a phallic reference). But Tarte may also be included in those characters referring to food: Tarte, Oignon, Angoïsse Maigre and Angoïsse Grasse (a pun on French sauces), and Bout Rond (whose name may refer also to the round end of a sausage - a term Gros Pied uses in Act five (p. 18) for his book.) Another group is a series of pairs; the two Angoïsses, Tarte and her Cousin, the two Toutous, and the Rideaux, a pair of curtains. These four sets of pairs can be subdivided into two; those pairs which are two separate roles, Tarte and her cousin, and Angoïsse Maigre and Angoïsse Grasse, and those pairs which are cast as a single role, Rideaux and Toutous.

Thus the cast of characters is a shifting fragmentation of things which are related, unrelated and inter-related in several categories:

<u>Food</u>	<u>States</u>	<u>People</u>
Tarte	Silence	Tarte
Oignon	Angoisse Maigre	Cousine
Bout Rond	Angoisse Grasse	Bout Rond
Angoisse Maigre		Gros Pied
Angoisse Grasse		

<u>Pairs</u>	<u>Pairs cast as a single role</u>
Tarte and her Cousin	Rideaux
Angoisse Maigre and Angoisse Grasse	Toutous
Rideaux	
Toutous	

Gros Pied is the only principal character who does not fit into more than one category. A whole unit is not designated by these fragments: the sum of the characters in Le Désir attrapé par la queue denotes not one but several things; people, food, emotions, relationships. Their shifting inter-relationships fragments their denotations, scattering them throughout the cast of characters. For example, Bout Rond represents both a person and food; the two Angoisses symbolize states, food and are paired in two separate roles. Tarte and

her cousin represent people and are paired in separate roles, but only Tarte symbolizes food. Thus the role can represent two or more different areas or, put another way, be seen from several different points of view. This sort of oscillation is a characteristic of cubist painting.

The cubist idea of projecting more than one viewpoint can be seen in the non-related and episodic plot sequences of Le Désir attrapé par la queue. However, given the fragmentation of the signifiers, these viewpoints are difficult to trace. The fragmentation of the characters shows these oscillating interrelationships at work. A gesture or stage property often represents more than one signified, in keeping with the two-level diegesis of the play. The bathtub of Act II signifies universality as well as Tarte's compromise; the lighted ball of Act VI, enlightenment as well as destruction of the old order;²⁷ and the lottery wheel chance as well as the cyclical nature of life. In this way the fragments can be seen to be not only redistributed, but overlapping one another as well.

The language of the play belongs in both traditional and cubist categories. Its lyrical richness of imagery identifies it with the poetry used in dramatic comedy.

²⁷ As in Fellini's film The Rehearsal where a wrecker's ball ends the chaotic orchestra rehearsal.

Consider: "Le bruit des persiennes détachées frappant leurs cloches ivres sur les draps chiffonnés des pierres arrachent à la nuit des cris désespérés de bonheur." (Act VI), while on the other hand the absurd numbers of Act four's lottery recall cubism's use of numbers and its fascination with the absurd in juxtaposing sense and nonsense.

In spite of the traditional form of the play's structure, its use of the formula for dramatic comedy is not out of place in this cubist play. Cubism emphasizes the importance of structural unity even at the cost of figurative representation, as we have shown in Chapter I. Furthermore, cubism does not reject traditional forms, only traditional realism. In this way both the modern and the traditional aspects of the play can be seen as representing cubist thinking.

(e) Conclusion

In his play Le Désir attrapé par la queue Picasso once again treats a contemporary life subject in a cubist manner in giving a non-mimetic presentation of an actual situation. Deliberately refusing to imitate reality, he reinvents it into a reality relative only to the theatrical work itself. The resulting creation invites more than one level of appreciation; the play can be seen as a piece of comic buffoonery or as an account of thwarted dreams, fear and impotence.

By taking the episodic, non-narrative treatment of plot one step further through fragmentation and redistribution

of the dialectic processus Picasso demonstrates cubism's role as a hinge between old and new, for such fragmentation requires a strong structural framework to give form to the splintered elements of plot.

Although the hallmarks of cubism are clearly visible in personal references, intertextuality, jokes and puns, numbers, language contrasts and varying semiotic stimuli, these components are clearly subservient to the structural form. For Le Désir attrapé par la queue gains its overriding comic expression through the use of the structural principles and character types of dramatic comedy. And as is usual in Picasso's paintings, it is the title which reveals the real message of the play.

In making an absurd mockery of an unbearable situation Picasso shows that he will not allow circumstance to defeat him. His play Le Désir attrapé par la queue surely laughs in the face of adversity.

Les Quatre Petites Filles(a) Context

In 1947-8 when he was living with his family in Vallauris, Picasso wrote a second play Les Quatre Petites Filles.¹ The privations of the occupation which had formed the background for his 1941 Le Désir attrapé par la queue were over. His third child Claude had just been born (May 1947) and his two other children were twenty-seven and thirteen. As in Picasso's work at every period, the life going on around him is reflected in this play. From his observations of his children and their friends at play he created a dramatization of the games, fantasy and nonsense of four little girls.

To celebrate Picasso's ninetieth birthday, the play was performed in 1971 as Open Space Theatre, London, using a translation by Roland Penrose. Patrons for this performance were:

Lord Birkett
Peter Brook
Bernard Deffont
Peter Hall
Arthur Lewis
Harold Pinter.

¹ Written as Les Quatres Petites Filles by the author.

Artistic directors were Charles Marowitz and Regie Thelma Holt. The cast was:

Suzannah Williams,	Première Petite Fille
Ann Holloway,	Deuxième Petite Fille
Susan Penhaligon,	Troisième Petite Fille
Mia Martin,	Quatrième Petite Fille

Decors were created by Carole Schneeman, Penny Slinger and Robin Don.²

The play does not appear to have had any further performances until 1982 when it was produced at the Brighton Festival to honor the centenary of Picasso's birth. Using the English translation of Roland Penrose, the actors, all members of the Reading Performance Group, gave five performances from May 11 to 15.³

(b) Title

The title Les Quatre Petites Filles seems to denote nothing more than the activities of four little girls. However, the dark undertones of violence and death which become evident as the play progresses recall other works about children, notably Jean Cocteau's 1930 novel Les Enfants terribles,⁴ whose title by contrast immediately suggests the hidden dimension of its young protagonists.

² L'Avant-Scène Théâtre, D (Paris: L'Actualité Parisienne, 1972).

³ Brochure, Brighton Festival, 1982 (Brighton: Brighton Festival Society Ltd, 1982), p. 8.

⁴ Jean Cocteau, Les Enfants Terribles (Paris: Grasset, 1930).

In Vitrac's 1928 play, Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir, the truths of the adult world are brought sharply into focus by the mimicry of Victor and little Esther in much the same way as Picasso's protagonists who, in their play, expose the superficiality of their elders.

The title alone presents interesting possible allusions Picasso's choice of the number four recalls "les quatre vérités" of his earlier play, Le Désir attrapé par la queue. In fact, as we will see, in Les Quatre Petites Filles, he once again brings out the home truths that lie beneath the children's play. Another parallel suggested by the title is Aeschylus' play Eumenides in which the furies avenge the death of Clytemnestra for, in Jean Giraudoux's play Electre⁵ treating the same subject, the Eumenides are reduced to three and indicated as Première Petite Fille, Deuxième Petite Fille and Troisième Petite Fille, exactly as Picasso has done with his four little girls. As the third little girl in Picasso's play rarely speaks, spending most of her time hidden in a well, Picasso's play has dialogue exchanged between three little girls. Moreover, the style of their discourse resembles the chorus of a Greek tragedy in that they seem to speak as one voice.

⁵ Jean Giraudoux, Electre (London: Methuen, 1961).

(c) Analysis of Acts I - VIAct Ii) Summary of Plot

Act I opens with all the children singing a nursery rhyme. They soon spy a cat eating a bird he has caught. When the third little girl hides in a well, the other children fetch a ladder to rescue her. Deciding not to worry about her, they sing a song about the rain which begins to fall. As the rain stops they resume play, running and dancing. Then as they sleep beneath the ladder which is now placed against the tree, the three children are awakened by the calling of the missing child. They imitate her cry. The act ends as the little girls chase each other up the steps of the house with the missing child running after, calling: "ça y est, ça y est ..."

ii) Language

In Act I the language is non-conversational; except for a few exchanges of information about the missing child, the three little girls do not talk to one another. Rather the emphasis is on two nursery rhymes; each one is sung through once and partially repeated once.

Rhyme No. 1:

Nous n'irons plus au bois
 Les lauriers sont coupés,
 La belle que voilà
 Ira les ramasser.
 Entrons dans la danse,
 Voilà comme on danse,
 Dansez, chantez, embrassez qui vous voudrez (p.33)

Rhyme No. 2:

Il pleut, il mouille,
 C'est la fête à la grenouille,
 Il pleut, il mouille,
 C'est la fête à la grenouille,
 Il pleut, il neige
 C'est la fête à la punaise. (p.34)

In addition, two rhyming lines are given:

La vie se cache pour traire les vaches
 La vie est belle, cachons-nous d'elle. (p.35)

A fourth rhyme is mentioned:

Alouette, gentille alouette. (p.36)

These sung and spoken rhymes establish a tone of gaiety in the play. They are also a form of cultural ritual which children engage in, and are augmented by other forms of ritual throughout the play.

These rituals include mimicry of the adult world, in which often the imperative mood and sometimes deprecating and world weary observations identify the speaker being imitated as either a parent or a teacher:

Arrangez-vous comme vous voudrez...
 Veillez, que je vous dis...
 Ce qu'elle est bête!
 Arrangez-vous tous (sic) les fleurs...
 Fais pas l'idiote!
 Veux-tu venir Paulette, oui ou non? Tu nous emmerde.

Il est bien difficile de passer un agréable
après-midi...

Il faut la laisser et ne pas s'occuper d'elle.

Laisse-la faire et rien dire.

Tu ne me feras pas croire - et si je dis
croire, j'exagère.

Ne touche pas il brûle, il est en feu.

Mais la grosse question est de savoir.

Tais-toi, tu nous embêtes.

Es-tu bête...

Arranges tes cheveux.

School room rituals are also heard. They can be found in several forms such as solfège: "do ré mi sol la si do" (p. 35), or the practicing of verb forms: "Nous avons bien rigolé. Je rigole. Tu rigoles. Elle rigole." (p. 35).

The little girls repeat "heureuse" five times and "Je suis heureuse" (p. 35) as if some unseen teacher were insisting on the feminine form. "Je vous prie d'agréer bien sincèrement" (p. 34) mimics the "correct formal" closing for written correspondance. Their teacher's insistence on good spelling is made fun of: "Sans une faute d'orthographe et aux quarante-cinq mille virgules". (p. 34)

These rituals of song and school room give a tone of fun and mischief to the first act and put the reader on the alert for more rituals as the play continues. As well as signifying fixed impressions of childhood the repetitiveness of these rituals helps to structure the nonsensical dialogue. Furthermore, the repetition

of "ça y est, ça y est..." (p. 35-6), (twenty-one times) introduces a call which is a continuing refrain throughout the play, and which is echoed, in turn, by the other children.

The little girls' chatter reveals their childish humour. They deliberately make mischief: "Ouvrons toutes les roses avec nos ongles"; or "Jouons à nous faire mal et embrassons-nous avec rage en poussant des cris affreux." On other occasions, they are shown telling tales on one another: "Non, elle est derrière le puits. Non, elle est sur le toit de la maison." "Maman, maman, viens voir Yvette saccager le jardin et mettre le feu aux papillons, maman, maman." (p. 33) "Je veux dire à maman que tu ne veux pas jouer." (p. 34) They also enjoy the absurdity of juxtaposing sense and nonsense, as in: "Je vous prie d'agréer bien sincèrement à vos pieds et je signe." (p.34).

The mischievous tone of this childish dialogue and the repetitiveness already cited are augmented by the inclusion of references to colours. The colours and their variations are used as a sort of competition in which each child tries to demonstrate his powers of imagination and each colour appears many times over:

yellow appears five times⁶
 blue (and variants) (33)
 violet (and variants) (11)
 green (and variants) (11)
 red (and variants) (10)

⁶ Henceforth three repetitions will be noted as (3) and so on.

orange (5)
 black (5)
 white (and variants (12)

As well as these colour references, another frequent reference is the mention of food. References to food are sometimes straight forward:

au beurre fondu
 les coupes pleines de vin
 les grandes feuilles de rhubarbe
 la tranche de pain
 la coupe de fruits
 le sirop des mûres
 tes amphores pleines de vin.

At other times they are used in a more imaginative fashion:

Le silence doit faire son oeuf
 Le bouillon imaginaire
 Anges de guimauve
 Nuit de caramel
 Le miel du puits
 Pastèque d'azur.

Fruit bearing trees are part of this pattern of references to food. In addition "citronnier", "poirier" and "je cueille les pamplemousses" situates the play in southern France.

Into the atmosphere of childhood frolic, gay colour and plenitude, the darkly contrasting subject of death creeps in. The little girl in the well underlines the ominous implications of her hiding place: "Vous ne m'aurez pas vivante" and "vous ne me voyez pas.

Je suis morte." (p.33) The children are fascinated by the example of death in nature that occurs and describe in detail the violence and cruelty they see: "Regardez, regardez en haut de l'échelle un oiseau. Il se déchire, en voit son coeur crier et de ses griffes il s'arrache les yeux." (p. 35).

Thus the dialogue of Act I sets a tone of gaiety and childish humour while at the same time, the melancholy call of "ça y est" by a lost child and two references to death portend a more serious dimension.

iii) Allusions

While the opening nursery rhyme seems to be a gay traditional song sung by generations of children it has indirect references to the child's transition to adulthood. "Nous n'irons plus au bois..." suggests the end of childhood, whereas "Entrons dans la danse..." alludes to the beginning of a new, more complex phase of life if the word "danse" is taken to infer the dance of life.

The mention of "La Chute d'Icare" refers to two works where a child is featured as protagonist, Le Vol d'Icare a novel by Picasso's friend Raymond Queneau; and la Chute d'Icare, a drawing done by Picasso which was enlarged to make a curtain for the ballet Icare in 1962.

The missing child - who hides in a well - is an allusion to death which recalls the English nursery rhyme

"Ding dong dell, Pussy's in the well." The destiny of "pussy" is revealed by the closing line "what a naughty boy was that to try to drown poor pussy cat." The third little girl in Picasso's play calls out "vous ne m'aurez pas vivante et vous ne me voyez pas. Je suis morte." This reference to death is underlined by the threatened mass suicide of the others: "Si tu ne reviens pas, nous irons toutes nous pendre aux arbres du citronnier et vivre en fleurs..." "Vivre en fleurs" denotes death and renewal in nature.

Act II

i) Summary of Plot

Act II opens with the missing little girl on stage alone with her doll and a goat. She fixes the flower-bedecked doll to the mast of a boat which is on centre stage, and suckles from the goat. Then she gets up, unties the goat, and cuts its throat. The three other little girls, who appear onstage in false moustaches, surround the dead goat and third little girl who puts her hand into the wound to pull out the still-beating heart and show it to her playmates. Frightened, the first little girl passes it like a hot coal, into the mouth of the doll. The fourth little girl drinks from the lake. Gravediggers disguised as mythological characters place a coffin on trestles decorated with palms. They take cups and wine out of it, place the

wine jars on top and dance drunkenly around. The gravediggers then take the coffin and dance off with it, followed by the little girls. From a distance the voice of the third little girl calls "ça y est".

ii) Summary of Language

A soliloquy spoken by the third little girl opens the act with a speech addressing a lover:

beau jeune homme
 mon amant
 bel amoureux
 mon soleil
 mon courroux
 mon centurion
 mon cheval furieux
 mon mensonge (p. 36)

Colours, a theme introduced in Act I, appear:

oiseau blanc
 carreaux bleu amarante et bleu citron
 ligne perpendiculaire du bleu azureal
 moyen irritant du blanc
 la tache lilas
 large jaune citron
 laques émeraudes.

There are also geometric shapes and architectural references:

carreaux
 ligne perpendiculaire
 moyen
 ogive fermée
 centre éclatant
 grand cercle fermé
 laques émeraudes
 les plis de l'oeuf (p. 36)

Religious phrases ritualize the death of the goat. There are even images of the stigmata: "Fais-nous voir la clarté" and "ses mains pleines de signes", Baptism is suggested by "Laisse couler son sang sur mon front" while images of the resurrection are also present:

la fraîcheur des alizés de sa vie envolée au loin
 allons chercher du vin dans des grandes jarres
 la barque bouge, se gonfle, se lève, elle s'allume
 partout de mille bras ramant
 la ruche chantera ses litanies à matines
 la page est blanche vide éteinte
 une grande falque blanche, ses doigts pâles
 le bord du drap tendu sur le cadavre (p. 37)

Finally, the association of the goat and wine with the death of the goat recalls the last supper and holy communion, as in:

la chèvre cuve son vin"

and other phrases either taken directly from, or imitative of religious ritual:

le rire est
 le rire vivra
 le rire a mis sa robe de mariée...
 Regarde, j'avais rempli cette coupe d'eau
 l'arbre de sagesse et du bien et du mal
 la morte, cette eau claire (p. 37)

Christ's burial is recalled:

Bordez de feuilles vertes le lit, la dentelle
 faisons une chambre à part et blanche alcôve
 en secret.

The parody continues on to reincarnation as the child places the heart of the goat into her doll's mouth.

Although the religious references which have been cited already convey the theme of death, it is further shown on a secular level by an allusion to the bullfight:

seule l'oeil du taureau qui meurt dans l'arène voit.

The appropriateness of the bullfight here is in the very ritualistic way the bull dies. As well, death and decay as part of the life cycle are described:

...le soleil qui nous désirelèpre
nos figures, nos mains nos robes et le
jardin. Ses doights sentent la figure
sèche le pus, le sang et le bleu de sa
robe se décompose... Le soleil déguise en
mortes, le soleil nous aime. (p. 37)

The absurd laugh of the speaker, the first little girl, introduces the macabre dancing of the gravediggers who appear at this moment. Thus, the scene of drunken singing and dancing takes the religious ritualism and turns it into a pagan ritual.

In the mist of the ceremonial language, collage-like remnants of real life find their place. A grocery list is given verbatim:

un petit sac de pralines
le charbon
l'huile
les pois et les carottes
le sucre
les clous de girofle (p. 37)

pommes de terre
 oignons
 olives
 sel
 poivre
 le riz
 l'ail
 les pois chiches

Another scrap of a list begins as an account: "le boucher 50, l'épiciier 3000" (p. 37) and then is taken over by numbers: "38 et 200, 3000, 80650".

These numbers, printed as arabic numerals, are juxtaposed with "primo" and "secundo" the written latin forms which are used at the beginning of the list of groceries. The numbers and their variety provide the play with a device common to Picasso's paintings, where the numbers are used to give a two-dimensional contrast to a three-dimensional work, and provide written stimuli which contrasts with the pictorial dimension.

iii) Allusions

The third little girl's opening gesture, placing her flower-crowned doll on the mast of the boat, comes as an echo of Christ's death on the cross and although the killing of the goat which follows this gesture may be seen as childish violence or parental rejection - the child has just suckled the goat - the fact that the killing follows this opening crucifixion gesture

reveals it as a ritual sacrifice. The biblical analogy is furthered by the placement of the still beating heart in the mouth of the doll, parodying Isaiah's story of deliverance.⁷ Further symbolism of Christ's death and resurrection comes from the words of the first little girl as she places the heart in the doll's mouth: "Le coeur ira pondre son oeuf" The egg is the symbol for Easter and resurrection. With the passage that begins: "Le rire est mort, le rire vivra ..." the Christian liturgy is parodied, "le rire" replacing the name Christ. The comparison of "le rire" and Christ is then strengthened by the description as a bridegroom, and by the flower-strewn path which recalls Christ's entry into Jerusalem before the crucifixion. The passage continues: "...le rire à mis sa robe de mariée et paré d'anémones ses cheveux, mais le long voile de plomb l'immobilise et l'écrase et sa traîne s'accroche et rompt et brise les coupes de cristal si délicatement posées pleines de fleurs par terre à son passage." This passage is given a morbid portent by the inclusion of words such as "plomb," "immobilise", "écrase", "accroche", "rompt"

⁷ Isaiah, 6:5-7 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.

and "brise". This paragraph has its parallel in another passage which describes the sun as a lover:

Regardez comme le soleil qui nous désire
vient à nous à travers les feuilles et
lèpre nos figures, nos mains, nos robes
et le jardin. Ses doights sentent la figue
sèche, le pus, le sang et le nard et le
bleu de sa robe se décompose en mille pail-
lettes et chants grégoriens et alcali re-
lents. (Riant) Le soleil nous déguise en
mortes, le soleil nous aime.

The personification of the sun as a lover compares with the use of "le rire" in the first passage as the Christ like bridegroom. In addition, although this lover attracts living things, it eventually leads them to death and decay: "le soleil qui nous désire... lèpre nos figures". The inevitability of death in both passages is a key to the interpretation of the play. The sun as a lover is perhaps the lover being addressed by the third little girl in the opening soliloquy; it is she who is associated with death in Act I.

The dancing of the gravediggers is a significant gesture, not only because of the macabre atmosphere it provides for the close of an act which is characterized by omens, but also because of its contrast to the innocent songs of the children. The drunken dancing which takes place around the coffin resembles child's play deformed and provides a dismal picture of adult experience.

Act IIIi) Summary of Plot

In contrast with the preceding act, the third act has little stage movement. The drama is provided by a verbal competition when the little girls, nude and encaged, try to outdo one another in their ability to be extravagantly fanciful. The third little girl remains silent. They do not remark on the huge aquarium of coloured fish which appears on centre stage.

ii) Summary of Language

The act opens with two soliloquies (p. 38) which, in spite of being nonsensical, nevertheless establish a pattern of contrasting moods which continues throughout the act. This contrast is achieved through the juxtaposition of images having either positive or negative connotations. The two soliloquies end in a similar fashion: "festin mis en jeu" (first soliloquy) and "festin mis à part" (second soliloquy).

Each contains positive and negative elements:

First soliloquy spoken by second little girl:

Positive

la marelle

l'air de violon

la frange lilas

roches de cobalt

sauts de carpe

colliers d'oursins

negative

les corps de chasse étendus

incompatibles blessures

coups de fouet

du carnage

crissants chagrins

la honte

positive

fleurs évanouies

le lac d'amande

à chaque agneau sa charge
d'ailes

le poids des aurores

bleu du ciel

les cordes de l'arc-en-ciel

bouquet

du festin mis en jeu

negativele marbre gravé à griffes
et dents

la mélancolique innocence

linges essuyant la sueur

tendu à craquer

aux transes

Second soliloquy spoken by first little girlpositiveplantent un étandard à la
cimedéploient ses fastes et ses
anniversaires

jouée à pile ou face

le cristal du prisme

des volutes

des chants

des chars roses des ibis

la moire des arcades

l'éventail et fil d'Ariane

negativela catastrophique absence
de tout échafaudage

la crainte imprécise

grand saut au bout de
l'échelle

se déchire les genoux

l'âcre persistant parfum

les mains tendues aux
supplicestraînant ses loques dans
la boue

rames frappant en désordre

piquées corps et biens

ronces des murènes

festin mis à part

This contrast in moods is reinforced by the insertion of lists of objects which also have either positive or negative connotations. The first list is repeated with minor changes so that it becomes a sort of refrain, as the nursery rhymes of Act I. It is a collection of rodents and unpleasant solutions - burning acid, greasy medication and insecticide - designed to repulse. The second little girl is the speaker:

First list

rat

souris

mulot

musaraigne

chauve-souris

fleur de pyrèthre

onguent gris

acide nitrique

Second list

rat

souris

mulot

musaraigne

chauve-souris

onguent acide lilas gris
nitrique

The fourth little girl starts another list which begins as an attractive table setting: "Du pain, un verre de vin et la soupe, la table recouverte de la nappe à carreaux bleu foncé et bleu clair, la fourchette, le couteau, la cuillère, la serviette pliéé sur l'assiette..." It then changes and becomes repugnant: "... le coup de poing sur le côté droit de la table, du seau de jaune versé légèrement rasé vomé par le soleil essuyant la couleur mordorée dressée sur les ergots lui faisant face."

The strongly contrasting images of the previous list are effectively neutralized by a list of numbers which follows:

(1,2,3,4) (10,11) (20) (2,3,4,4,4)

These are grouped to show their order which is a gradual progression speeded along by the omission of numbers five through nine, and twelve through nineteen. The procedure is repeated only to get stuck on four. This inability to progress again up to twenty creates a sense of frustration.

A happier mood ends the act, created by a list of foods, and times of day:

orange	le tictac du réveil
mandarine	l'heure du soir
citron	le jour
olive	le matin
petits poissons grillés	l'aube

In this way the author, without attempting to provide discourse has, in the enumeration of items and images, managed to create a contrast of moods as well as an impression of fantasy and nonsense.

iii) Allusions

Two allusions to visual art works can be found in the nonsensical dialogue of this act. In the first soliloquy: a reference to a winged animal: "A chaque agneau sa charge d'ailes", recalls Picasso's white winged

horse which appeared on the curtain for Parade in 1917. That the animal named here is a sheep, rather than a horse may be a reference to the author's 1944 sculpture Man Carrying a Sheep which symbolizes resistance to oppression and may indicate the author's reference to war as the passage continues: "et tout le poids des aurores mises à jour sur le marbre gravé à griffes et dents", suggesting the gravestone of one who has died in a struggle.

The second soliloquy also contains a reference to the planting of a flag: "... plantent un étendard à la cime, déploient ses fastes et ses anniversaires."

This passage recalls the 1944 Joe Rosenthal photograph of American marines raising their flag over Iwo Jima.⁸ Picasso's inclusion of it here seems to underline the absurdity of war, a game which is played by adults.

⁸ This photograph inspired paintings, a statue and a postage stamp. It commemorated the costly recapture of a strategic five-mile-long volcanic island in the North Pacific. (There were 43,000 casualties.)

Act IVi) Summary of Plot

Act IV, shows the garden by moonlight. A soliloquy by the fourth little girl is interrupted first by a winged horse dragging its entrails, then by a cat which has killed a canary. Snow begins to fall but neither interruption is noticed by the child who stops only when the first and second little girls arrive pulling a wagon. They are naked and hold big, lighted cigars. The fourth little girl bursts into tears and begins to dance madly. She finally falls down laughing and tearing at her dress. All the while she speaks nonsensically, and is soon imitated by the others. Although the voice of the third little girl is heard calling from a distance, the little girls continue their chatter. The curtain falls and the scene changes. An all-white stage is festooned with coloured letters and numbers. The three little girls lie in a bed surrounded by enormous winged dogs. Singing a song of their own invention, they jump, naked, out of the bed to spread out a lake on the stage. From this lake the third little girl emerges dancing, holding a doll and the goat on a leash. Then the winged dogs fly off and photographers arrive to take the pictures of the scene.

ii) Summary of Language

The language used by the children is a stream of fantasy, freely imaginative and unrestrained. Long sentences - there are only seven full stops in the soliloquy which opens the act (p. 39) - give the impression of speaking for as long as the breath will last. The language does not alter according to the action taking place and there is neither discernable pattern nor repetition in the dialogue, nor do the speakers address one another. Nevertheless, certain phonetic or semantic word associations can be noted:

phonetic associations

{apprivoisant	{âcres	{mouillant	{l'azur	
{pourvoyant	{ocres	{montrant		{l'acier
				{l'amas

{contorsionnant	{mordant
{concentriques	{tordant

semantic associations

{axes	{points	{melodies	{silence
{croisée	{virgules	{cris	

{cantiques	{révérences	{incantations
{incantations	{genuflexions	{éclatements

{graduellement	{immobilisé	{Oncle Tom
{goutte à goutte	{suspendre	{Tristan et Isolde

{bouillante	{griffes
{inondant	{mains

Phonetic and semantic associations

{allusions	{solives
{illusions et allusions	{ogives
{rats	{pois citron
{ratures	{vert amande
{rongé	{noir et amarante

These associations of ideas or word sounds or both give the long soliloquy a sense of cohesion. This style recalls automatic writing, associated with surrealist André Breton.

In contrast with the rambling style of the soliloquy the following passage is a tightly controlled play on words and ideas which sums up the nonsense which has gone before in its juxtaposition of serious and absurd:

Ah ah ah ah ah! l'amour
 Ah ah ah ah ah! la mort
 Ah ah ah ah ah! la vie
 Ah ah ah ah ah! rire, rions-nous, rire, rirez-vous, la mort, l'amour, la vie, rirez-vous l'amour, rirez-vous la vie, rirez-vous la mort, riez que je rie, que la vie la mort, l'amour et vous et la mort, la vie et l'amour rient, riez avec nous, rions avec vous, l'amour à la mort, la mort à la vie, la vie à l'amour, la vie à la mort, la vie, la mort, l'amour toute la vie! (p. 40)

This passage is organized so that the repetition of the first three lines, and the similarity of "l'amour" and "la mort" creates a little poem. The phonetic contrast

of "la vie" is balanced by its being the semantic binary opposite of "la mort", making it an appropriate inclusion. Combining and re-combining these three substantives with varied forms of "rire" produces statements which are both serious and amusing. The school room rote-learning repetition of "rire" gives it a childish absurdity. Thus the passage combines repetition with rote-learning, life and death.

iii) Allusions

Various autobiographical references are included in this act. The winged horse, which enters during the long opening soliloquy spoken by the fourth little girl, is a frequent subject of the author's paintings. For instance, a white winged horse is in the circus scene of Picasso's curtain for Parade, while a horse being disembowelled by a bull is the subject of a series of bullfight paintings done in 1933, 34.⁹ This winged and disembowelled white horse thus combines the two subjects. The cat and its dead canary (the second stage movement which occurs during the soliloquy) are the subject of a 1939 painting Cat and Bird¹⁰.

Picasso established the play's location in the South

⁹ Including Bullfight: Death of a toreador, Musée Picasso, Paris reproduced in Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective, Museum of Modern Art, p. 314; and Bullfight, private collection, ibid., p. 318.

¹⁰ From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs Victor W. Ganz, New York, Ibid., p. 363.

of France where he was living at the time of writing by the inclusion of foods of the region; "friture de goujon", "gnocchi", "pissaladière", "raisin", "figue" and "olives noires" are all common to this region. The author dates the play: "Aujourd'hui le dix-sept du mois de mai..."¹¹ and describes his own activities at the time: "notre père à pris son premier bain et hier beau dimanche, est allé voir à Nîmes une course de taureaux avec quelques amis, mangé un plat de riz à l'espagnole et bu aux éprouvettes du vin à œnologie" (p. 40). The inclusions of his works and his surroundings as well as his own portrait occur frequently in Picasso's paintings.

The re-entry of the third little girl, who rises out of the lake, crowned with flowers holding her doll and the goat, is an analogy of the resurrection. The little girl is a substitute for the doll, decked with flowers, that she placed on the crucifix-like mast of the boat in Act II, before killing the goat, which is now alive.

¹¹ The play was not completed until August 13, 1948.

Act Vi) Summary of Plot

The nursery rhyme which opens the play: "Nous n'irons plus au bois" is repeated at the beginning of Act V. The little girls are wearing brightly coloured dresses and ibises fish in the water. A large bright sun rolls onto the stage over the lake.

After the opening song the children call "**Jeannette**" in turns (seven times). A letter brought out by the fourth little girl is read aloud and commented on. Then the children return to a nonsensical dialogue, interrupting each other to contribute a line. The second little girl dives into the lake singing a song. The lake then is invaded by a flock of winged pigs and their piglets. The little girls dance and sing the song of the second little girl. Then all is still and silent.

ii) Summary of Language

Repeating "Jeannette", the little girls imitate one another in the same fashion as their repetition of "ça y est" imitates the call of the lost child. It is done in fun, but shows the cruel side of the children's play.

The mimicry becomes even more edged in the parody of a letter (p. 41) typical of those written to children by vacationing parents. Beginning with "Mes choux", a standard form of endearment, the letter continues:

mes raves, mes choux-raves, mes petits-pois, mes alouettes, je vous écris d'ici... Le père et la maman se portent bien... Nous attendons aussi ton oncle avec sa petite chienne (a spiteful comment) et les gros frais viendront après (black humour)... Bonne nuit, en vous embrassant, je m'offre mes petites lentilles. Votre humble serviteur et votre bien tendre et dévouée servante.

The closing is an overly solicitous form, inappropriate for a mother to use in writing her child, for in it she talks down to the child: "Le père et la maman se portent bien" instead of "...Papa et moi" or "votre père et moi". The children's comments all contribute, as if one voice, to the denunciation of the hypocrisy of the letter: "Grosse pouffaise, large étron, ordure bien filée... Chambre à pets... Vieille marmelade d'égouts, sac à punaises... Tartine dorée de merde...". The combination of letter and commentary reveals both parent and child at his worst.

This same style of speech, with each child in turn adding something to the same idea is reminiscent of a Greek chorus. Another example (p. 41) is:

Petite Fille IV	"lait de jasmins..."
Petite Fille II	"Onguent de nard..."
Petite Fille I	"Liqueur d'oeillets..."
Petite Fille III	"Gros trait de craie barrant la route..."

This style of dialogue is the dominant form of speech of this act: in twenty-one lines out of a total of

thirty-eight the speaker is interrupted, which gives a fragmented, disconnected quality to the dialogue. The act ends with a song (p. 42) composed of several different categories of items:

{	silence de rose	
	silence de melon	(repetition and semantic
	silence de guimauve	association)
	silence de charbon	
(assonance)	{	rose de silence de charbon de rose
		de rose de rose
		de rose et blanc coquelicot
(semantic and assonance)	{	chapeau d'hirondelle
		souliers de crapaud
		ceinture de couleuvre
{	Poires	
	figues	
	pêches	(semantic)
	oranges	
	citrons	

These differing lists are held together by words which act as connective tissue through consonance: "la maison, la mouche sur la manche..." or assonance such as: "air frais de montagnes... gros tas de vieux cons... ora pro nobis", continuing the word associations of the lists. There again the automatic writing style

is evident. The song ends "et vous dis salut en montrant mon cul...", an impertinant ending in contrast with the overblown ending of the mother's letter.

iii) Allusions

The ironic juxtaposition of the lush, tropical stage setting and the action which takes place in it - the children's parody of a letter from their mother which the children read and comment on - recalls the Garden of Eden which was the setting for the fall of man. Just as Eve disobeyed God, Picasso also breaks the fifth commandment by disobeyal; ¹² in dishonouring their mother the children recreate the sin of Eve, the mother of all the living who dishonoured her creator. Eve's action, eating of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, meant that she would die. The children's acquaintance with good and evil will mean their loss of innocence, the theme of Picasso's play. Picasso's stage setting which includes a tree and water, and the mention of animal life and fruit trees in the dialogue compares with the Bible's description of the Garden of Eden in Genesis II: 8-9:

And the Lord God planted a garden Eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the

¹² Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee. Exodus 20:12

Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Act VI

i) Summary of Plot

In Act VI a table is set in the garden with a large bouquet of flowers, food, a plate of fruit, bread and a knife, glasses and a jug. Into this still life painting comes a snake, slithering up the table leg, eating the fruit, and drinking from the jug. As the little girls are reading from a book, a swarm of winged ants invade the stage. Using the snake as a scythe the little girls are fending them off just as some boys pass by, singing to the accompaniment of their accordion. There is laughter. Night falls and the moonlit stage is illuminated by candles which flicker from every leaf and branch. Shooting stars fall. The girls play leap-frog, laughing all the while. As they fall asleep on the ground, blood flows over the stage. Four white leaves growing out of the ground form a square enclosing them. The stage darkens and lights again to show a new setting: the interior of a huge white cube, a glass of red wine standing in the centre.

ii) Summary of Language

The opening dialogue of Act VI (p. 42) in which the

little girls read in unison from a book, continues the style of repetitions of the closing song of Act IV. Here "la mort" and "la vie" are used with articles and prepositions, although "l'amour", is omitted:

la vie	(16)
la mort	(8)
la	(7)
de	(4)
à	(7)
si	(4)

In the substantives "la vie" is repeated twice as often as "la mort," and the articles and prepositions are similarly paired. The pattern of these repetitions gives the dialogue the rhythmic aspect of poetry. Then the language drifts into a fantasy which is nonsensical but continues to suggest poetry by the inclusion of a series of words ending in the sound (e): "pointée, carrés, acidulé, pointillés, révélés, déchirée, fermée, justifié payer, festonnée, arrosée, serrée, délayée.

This repetition of word endings gives cohesion to the disjointed dialogue which achieves a sense of order only thanks to its ending (p. 42) a series of lists:

gros tas { d'oignons
 d'aubergines
 de piments
 de melons
 de figues

{ du thym
 du romarin

{ du loup
 des rascasses
 des anguilles

{ de l'ail

{ robe de lune
 robe blanche
 robe d'azur

robe faite de grand troncs { d'arbres
 noyers
 chêne
 acajou

{ bois de fer d'ébène
 bois de rose et
 citronnier
 bois de réglisse
 bois de panama

The children, who have fallen asleep, are awakened by a drinking song sung by passing boys who accompany themselves on an accordion. The rowdy style of this song is in direct contrast with the nursery rhymes

the little girls sing in Act I.

The play closes with a series of lists, spoken in unison by all four little girls. The items are all food, and can be subdivided into four main categories:

Purées

pommes de terre

lentilles

haricots

fèves

oignons

Sauces

vive la crème

crème de marrons

sauce au vinaigre

choux à la crème

Desserts

éclair au chocolat

tarte aux mirabelles

Fruits

gingembre

bananes

melon

figues

pêches

abricots

raisins

The lists are once again composed of foods which, for the most part, are typical of mediterranean France. The two series of lists serve to neutralize tension

created by the juxtaposition of "la vie" and "la mort" which opened the act through the innocuousness of the items mentioned. Being spoken in unison by all four girls, the lists are given a free lyric quality which balances them against the set patterns of the nursery rhymes sung at the play's opening.

iii) Allusions

Here the setting of a kitchen garden becomes a further analogy of the Garden of Eden because of the intruding serpent which eats fruit intended for the children: as Eve is enticed to eat the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden by a serpent, here it is the serpent eating the forbidden fruit. The symbolic action of striking out against evil with the serpent as a weapon suggesting an effort to resist temptation, has its corollary in the rowdy singing and raucous laughter of the boys in its inference of the girls' inevitable loss of innocence. The barking dog may signify a call to fidelity.

The final tableaux are both contrasts of white and red, composed of visual symbols described by Northrop Frye as "apocalyptic".¹³

¹³ Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p.144.

white leaves	-	snow, purity, tree of life
white cube	-	perfection, temple
blood	-	crucifixion
red wine	-	redemption

The cube representing cubism may also be intended as a signature of the play's author as one of the creators of cubism.

(d) Structural Considerations

i) Settings and Costumes

As we have seen, the basic language of the play is non-sensical, with very few exchanges to provide any real information. Gestures therefore reveal almost all of the plot and the audience depends on settings and costumes to provide a context for what it is seeing on stage.

The garden setting remains the same throughout; a kitchen garden close to a house. The parallels already drawn between this setting and the Garden of Eden are reinforced by the highly symbolic stage properties.

The Garden of Eden represents a place half way between heaven and earth as it is the original point of contact between God and man. Picasso's sketches for the play show a tree similar to the tree of knowledge described in Genesis. This tree, the ladder and the steps of the house, as well as the mast of the boat (a sort of crucifix), are all symbolic of the figurative distance between earth and heaven. All other costumes and properties can be shown to conform to the traditional three levels of heaven, earth and hell.

In the uppermost category, heaven is represented by birds such as ibises (Act V), sacred to ancient Egyptians, and doves (Act II), symbols of universal concord. The bird in the tree (Act IV) is symbolic of the human

soul. Heaven sends down rain and snow (Act I and Act IV) and sunlight and moonlight (Act V and Act IV) giving the seasons, and day and night as described in Genesis. The candles carried by the children (Act IV) and the burning tree branches (Act VI) are symbols of God as in Pentecost,¹⁴ tongues of fire¹⁵ or the burning bush.¹⁶ The children's nakedness resembles the nakedness of Adam and Eve before the fall as a symbol of innocence.

The children's earthly world is one of innocence. The goat is a domestic animal with special significance: the Jews brought a pair of goats to the altar on the day of atonement; one was sacrificed and the other set free (a scapegoat). This may explain why the goat can be sacrificed in Act II, but is still alive in Act IV. The house, table and its fruit, flowers and tableware and the kitchen garden which is cultivated, all belong to the earthly world. Like the goat, the jar and glasses are an earthly reminder of heaven because of their association with communion. As the bread and wine symbolically represents the body and blood of Christ, and Christ is the Son of God, the earthly world is linked to heaven. The level below earth, hell, has crawling animals; the serpent (Act VI)

¹⁴ Lev. 23:11, 15, 16

¹⁵ Isa. 30: 21

¹⁶ Ex. 3:2

and insects, frogs and toads (Act VI). Because bodies of water go below the surface of the earth, they suggest the lower world of death without salvation. The well (Act I) and the lake spread out by the children (Act VI) and the boat which travels on water (Act II) all suggest hell. The grave-diggers' role as agents of this world is compounded by their costumes of satyrs, centaurs and bacchantes. Their coffin is included in this imagery and can be compared with the cage which encloses the children (Act III) and the fishbowl, its animal counterpart. These are all analogies to the circle sinisterly symbolizing loss of direction. Thus the little girls, naked in their innocence and imprisoned in a cage have their mimesis in the fish, symbols of Christianity, which are confined by their bowl. The empty cart (Act IV) dragged by the candle-bearing children can be taken for a sign of redemption, as an empty cart signifies freedom from sin.¹⁷

Given this highly symbolic background, the killing of the goat in Act II acquires a significance beyond childish cruelty. The actions of the play become more ritualistic and less carefree. Words become superfluous. The play's deeper level of consciousness cannot be ignored.

¹⁷ Isaiah 5:18

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope.

ii) Intertextualities

Both Picasso and Artaud¹⁸ believed that art, whether painting or drama, should be its own reality and not serve as a vehicle for a didactic message. Artaud's idea that the language of theatre should encompass decor, costumes, gestures and lighting is well represented in Picasso's play, which conforms to the theatrical precepts of Artaud's "théâtre de la cruauté". Indeed, his most dramatic effects are achieved without words - the killing of a goat, the ritualistic songs, the Garden of Eden setting with its plundering serpent, and the contrasting tableaux which end the play. Artaud wanted to provide theatre that his audience would experience and react to, such as the provocation that Picasso provides in the killing of the goat. Like Artaud who drew inspiration from the ceremonial aspect of oriental theatre, Picasso offers ceremonies which take the form of the rituals of children's songs and games, the sacrifice of the goat and the fragmentary religious rites accompanying the action, and the drinking song of the boys - a ritual denoting passage into manhood.

As well as the ritualistic references to biblical

¹⁸ Alan Virmaux, Antonin Artaud et le théâtre (Paris: Ed. Seghers, 1970). Picasso provided a dry-point etching for Artaud's Autre Chose que de l'enfant beau in 1957.

sources, the setting of the last act resembles the Garden of Eden with its serpent and fruit, and the sleeping girls awakened by the raucous singing of the boys. This latter brings to mind the literary work of another artist-poet, William Blake's Elegy,¹⁹ whose message is the vulnerability of the child:

O Rose, thou art sick;
 The invisible worm
 That flies in the night,
 In the howling storm,
 Has found out thy bed of crimson joy;
 And his dark, secret love
 Does thy life destroy. 20

Les Quatre Petites Filles has many other non-biblical references ranging from ancient to modern sources. Several intertextualities have already been noted elsewhere in our discussion, but still others remain. Apart from the allusion to the Eumenides by its title, Picasso's play uses a style of speaking, reminiscent of ancient Greek theatre, in which his four little girls seldom exchange information but comment in turns on the action like a Greek chorus. A more modern source of inspiration may be Shakespeare's Hamlet in which a tragic death scene is thrown into relief by the comic action of the gravediggers preparing for the victim's burial. In much the same way the

¹⁹ From Songs of Innocence and Experience, William Blake, 1794 an illuminated manuscript. Elegy in William Blake, a selected edition, ed. by J. Bronowski (Penguin, 1960).

²⁰ Ibid.

tension of the sacrifice in Act II is contrasted by the revelry of the gravediggers. This juxtaposition of comic and tragic also appears in Picasso's painting Evocation (1901) in which the body of his friend Casegamas is surrounded not only by mourners, but by harlots and dancing nudes.

Les Quatre Petites Filles gives many other references to the author's own paintings and to works of his friends, a tendency of cubism. The winged white horse and cat with dead bird (Act II) are both subjects of Picasso paintings. Using the device of intertextualities as a means of vraisemblance, Picasso mentions (p. 36) the work of his friend Raymond Queneau, Le Vol d'Icare. Apollinaire also names his friends Picasso and Erik Satie in Les Mamelles de Tirésias,²¹ and in Ionesco's play Rhinocéros²² Jean asks, "Connaissez-vous le théâtre d'avant-garde, dont on parle tant? Avez-vous vu les pièces de Ionesco?" This referential device²³ as used by Apollinaire and Ionesco is amusing and Picasso too may intend it for that purpose. In his art as in his dramatic works, the inclusion of

21 I, iv.

22 (Paris: Gallimard, 1959) I, p. 55.

23 A convention of cubist painting which we have discussed in Chapter I is the inclusion of lettering, often a word or product label. The mention of Picasso's friend then is an intertextual reference to this technique. Culler points out that these "conventions make possible the adventure of discovering and reproducing a form, of finding the pattern amid a mass of details and they do so by stipulating what kind of pattern one is reading towards."

Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 148.

people and personal possessions is an aspect of his cubist precept of presenting reality. This establishes authenticity and also gives his works a locus to date and identify them.

Other cubist hallmarks which can be seen in Les Quatre Petites Filles may have their origins in Symbolist writing. Picasso's use of numbers, dating back to 1911 in his collages, recalls Baudelaire's Le Gouffre in which the finite quality of numbers is summed up in the final line: "Ah! ne jamais sortir des Nombres et des Etres!"²⁴

Picasso, however, shows that in both painting and drama his interest is in varying the symbol - from three dimensional to two dimensional in painting and from verbal to numerical in drama - because in his works the numbers are not given any underlying message; as used by Picasso numbers are confined to their digital role and are not developed into more abstract symbols as in Baudelaire's poem.

The surrealist poets' penchant for combining seemingly unrelated things is taken to new heights in Picasso's play. Consider this passage from Act I: "Ma main est pleine de voix, mes cheveux sont des couleuvres de rubans de toutes les couleurs. Les peigner. Ils glissent entre mes doigts et allument des feux de

²⁴ In Les Fleurs du mal, (Paris: Larousse, 1972), p. 84.

Bengale à chaque feuille des arbres arrachée par les lèvres à chaque coup de rein." These seemingly disparate things are visually related to one another:

hand → hair → snakes → ribbons → colours
 combing → uprooting
 (sparks) fireworks

On the other hand, Baudelaire's poem Recueillement speaks of "le fouet du Plaisir"²⁵ or in Le Cygne, "... tétant la Douleur comme une bonne louve!"²⁶ In both cases the relationship is an abstract one - pleasure being personified as a slave driver, or pain a hungry infant- whereas in Picasso's writing, the images are concrete.

Colours are used in a similar manner by the symbolist poets. For example, Rimbaud's poem Voyelles,²⁷ arbitrarily links each vowel with a colour, then continues by describing objects in these colours - each object having the sounds, smells, colours or movements that are symbols of decay. Thus, formerly neutral vowels acquire emotion through these associations. As the link between colour and vowel is rather obscure, and the link between object and vowel even more so, the final effect is vagueness and mystery. Mallarmé

²⁵ Recueillement, *ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁶ Le Cygne, *ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁷ Voyelles, in Twelve French Poets; 1820-1900. (London: Longmans, 1968), p. 268,

uses colours in a simpler way, giving them emotional content through word association. He writes of "blancs sanglots" in *Apparition*,²⁹ and the final line of the poem: "Neiger de blancs bouquets d'étoiles parfumées," brings together both colour and perfume. Baudelaire also brings together the different senses to create the effect of another world:

Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,³⁰

In this verse he establishes a correspondance between olfactory, tactile, auditory and visual stimuli through word examples with which each is undeniably associated: perfume, baby skin, oboes and green prairies.

Like Baudelaire, Picasso uses colours repeatedly; they can be seen, for example in the nonsensical portions of dialogue in Act I of Les Quatre Petites Filles.

The interest here, however, is in the repetition of the colour names, and in combining and re-combining colours as if they were on an artist's palette. Sometimes the colours are associated with things in nature which exhibit the colour named, showing that it is the real value of the colour which he is denoting, or its infinite variety: "le bleu, l'azur, le bleu du blanc, le bleu du rose, le bleu lilas, le bleu du

²⁹ *Apparition*, in Twelve French Poets, p. 223.

³⁰ Correspondances in Les Fleurs du Mal, p. 23.

jaune, le bleu du rouge, le bleu citron, le bleu orange", and so on. But, in any case, in Picasso's play the colours are not given other connotations as in symbolist poetry.

As well as looking backward at symbolism, Picasso's play shows his awareness of contemporary writers. The most obvious carry-over is the technique of automatic writing advocated by Surrealist spokesman André Breton. He urged writers to put down words as quickly as they come without any preconceived subject in mind, writing so quickly that it would not be possible to remember what had gone before. One should not be tempted to re-read, or make corrections, because in this way the subconscious mind could reveal itself.³¹

The illogicality of fantasy passages in Les Quatre Petites Filles recalls this style of writing with its images heaped on images with no interconnection. A typical example is the soliloquy which opens Act IV. The dialogue, as has already been pointed out, does not relate to the actions taking place. Although certain words are paired through their phonetic similarity, "d'âcres" and "d'ocres" for examples, the passage jumps

³¹ Anna Balakian theorizes that Breton's idea was actually formulated by Dr. Pierre Janet, professor of psychiatric medicine whose text L'automatisme psychologique was used at the time of Breton's medical studies. Janet experimented with automatic writing as a therapeutic and exploratory technique in mentally ill patients.

Anna Balakian, André Breton: Magus of Surrealism: Oxford University Press, 1971, in Annabelle Melzer Latest Rage the Big Drum (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1980) p. 169.

from image to image with no transference, and no logical interpretation is possible.

Although not as illogical as Picasso's writing, the prose poetry of his friend Max Jacob is remarkably similar in style. Consider:

O les vivalves! nous en avons vu une
tapisserie: c'était comme les plumes
de paons à l'endroit qu'elles font
l'oeuf, mais cela phosphorescent dans
le diamant de son ivoire blanc et puis
le violet était plus pâle. 32

The images all describe the oyster and the poem therefore is not difficult to understand in spite of the jumps in thought. The interest is in the words, and in the colours and textures they describe. Whether Breton or Picasso actually wrote spontaneously is open to question; the idea of allowing subconscious thought to be recorded is rewarded by the kind of fantasy produced in Picasso's play. Jacob was able to use these free associations to his advantage in creating poetic images. Jacob's poetry is perhaps the model for other poetic devices found in Picasso's play. Similarities between the revolving play on words are numerous. For example, Jacob's prose poetry of 1916 accents this device:

Comme un bateau est le poète âgé
ainsi qu'un dahlia, le poème étagé
Dahlia! Dahlia! que Dalila lia 33

32 Max Jacob, Le Carnet à dés, p. 69.

33 Ibid. p. 65.

or

Le toi, c'est quatre, quatre, quatre: il y en a quatre. Le perron est une pelouse que nous opérons et qui les jalouse. Les toits sont amarante: reflet d'orage! rage! rage! et l'ensemble est en sucre, en stuc, en ruche, moche, riche. 34

In the same way, Picasso's revolving use of "l'amour", "la mort", "la vie", in Act IV is sequential, making the phonetic qualities of the words equal in importance to their semantic values. Juxtapositions of "l'amour", "la mort", and "la vie", or "perron" and "pelouse", "orage" and "rage" and "sucre", "stuc", "ruche", "moché" and "riche" yield pattern as well as message, and the combinations are thus shown to be not as illogical as their disparity would suggest. These hidden meanings which are only revealed through such unlikely combinations were the sort of inner revelations sought by the surrealists. In Jules Romain's Knock, the protagonist asks his patient: "Est-ce que ça vous chatouille, ou est-ce que ça vous gratouille?"³⁵ The answer is unimportant. It is the question which reveals the doctor as a charlatan because of its silly rhyme.

The surrealists went further in their use of word patterns

34 Ibid., p. 68.

35 Knock ou Le triomphe de la Médecine (Paris: Gallimard, 1977) II, i.

and juxtapositioning of words; lists become a logical extension of this technique. In Ubu Roi, Alfred Jarry is able to incorporate lists into meaningful dialogue:

Père Ubu: "Tiens! Polognard, soûlard, bâtard,
hussard, tartare, calard, cafard,
mouchard, savoyard, comunard" 36

The words are linked by their common suffix in a logical progression; it is the illogicality of their meanings which reveals the speaker as a bombastic fool, and the absurdity of such speech from the mouth of a king gives the play a sense of fantasy. A comparison of food lists from Ubu Roi and Les Quatre Petites Filles reveals a striking similarity in their presentation; a mix of real and fantasy.

Ubu Roi (Act I, scene iii)

soupe polonaise
côtes de rastron
veau
poulet
pâté de chien
croupions de dinde
charlotte russe
bombe
salade
fruits
dessert

Les Quatre Petites Filles (Act IV)

belle friture de goujon
plat de gnocchi
douce pissaladière
voix claire de linge tendu
tranche de melon
lait d'amande douce
raisin
figues
laitue
or fondu
olives noires

³⁶ Alfred Jarry, Ubu Roi, V, ii.

Ubu roi (cont'd)

bouilli

topinambours

choux-fleurs à la
merdeLes Quatre Petites Filles (cont'd)

grappe de rires

vert-jus d'étoiles

naissantes

The important difference is in the use of the lists. Mère Ubu is asked what she is serving for dinner. The list is her answer. Picasso's list does not relate to the action of the play and is merely an absurd collection of fragments. The real foods, or grocery lists or household accounts correspond to real materials in collage. At most, through the connotations of the items, the tone can be changed; and like Jarry's list, their absurdity imparts a comic flavour of a list without purpose and demonstrates the dadaist revolt against social order. Tzara's play, La Première aventure céleste de M'Antipyrine includes a list very similar to Picasso's

quatre cents chevaux soixante chameaux
trois cents peaux de zibeline cinq cents
peaux d'hermine
son mari est malade
vingt peaux de renards jaunes trois peaux
de chelizun
cent peaux de renards blancs et jaune... 37

³⁷ Tristan Tzara, M. Antipyrine, p. 78-9.

Tzara proposed a different version of automatic writing. His method was to cut apart the words in a news article and shake them up in a bag. On being taken out one by one, the words were copied down to make a composition. Tzara was interested in the chance element, rather than the revelations of subconscious thoughts. His static poetry used words on placards placed on chairs, the chairs being moved about to change the word order again and again. This rotation of a given number of words is not unlike Picasso's juggling of "l'amour, la mort et la vie" in combination with different forms of "rire" in Act IV.³⁸ Language using images of excrement such as "Tartine dorée de merde" (Act V, p. 41) is also reminiscent of Jarry, Tzara or Max Jacob. In the hands of these writers the shock value of such dialogue was a protest against social order and was an effort to liberate poetry and drama from social restrictions. Picasso uses it to give authenticity by reproducing the sort of bathroom language used by children. In any case, while the word "merdre" elicited a reaction from audiences in 1896, a half century of such expletives would certainly have diluted their effect.

³⁸ The static poem was one of five literary experiments performed by Tzara before a cabaret audience in 1916. Other poems were: a gymnastic poem, a concert of vowels, a bruitist poem and a vowel poem. Georges Huguette, L'Aventure Dada quoted by Annabelle Melzer in Latest Rage: the Big Drum, p. 69.

iii) Structure

Like the medieval mystères popular in Provence during the 15th century, the movement of this play derives not from a narrative but on gestures, song, costumes and settings which constitute finally its message. This dramatic form is appropriate for performances which would have taken place outdoors, perhaps in a town square, where some of the dialogue would not be heard by the crowd. In any case the prose-poetry used in Les Quatre Petites Filles imparts little that cannot be deduced from other means.

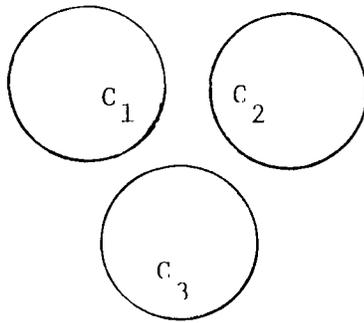
The gestures which convey the plot content of the play are a series of tableaux:

Act I	Act II	Act II	Act II
Celebration	crucifixion	atonement	burial
Act III	Act IV	Act IV	Act V
purgatory	grace	resurrection	human birth
Act VI	Act VI	Act VI	
temptation	resistance	sanctity.	

These tableaux form a cyclical pattern, or rather, two cyclical patterns: the first four acts are analogous to Christ's life, and the remaining two acts relate an idealized human existence.

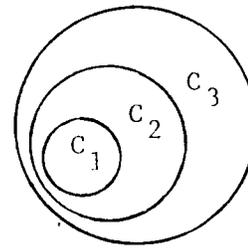
The characters are not developed individually; the speech of little girls one, two and four being indistinguishable one from another. The only differentiation is between the third little girl and the others - she

being a Christ substitute the others must follow. Her call "ça y est" is a sign which gives her a separate identity and underlines her association with God. A diagram of metalanguage indicates the prevailing patterns of discourse:



Separate monologues

OR



One monologue in 3 voices

39

The lack of interrelated dialogue, however, is overcome by its strong lyric qualities which we have pointed out. This style of prose-poetry complements the pageantry given the play by its tableaux of gestures.

With the symmetry of baroque music, the subject of the play, the ephemerality of childhood, runs counterpoint to the thematic material. The theme is introduced in the opening song: "Nous n'irons plus au bois" signalling the end of childhood, and as the song continues: "Entrons dans la danse" denotes the beginning of a new period. This light-hearted nursery song is balanced

39

After the schema of Pavis.

Patrice Pavis, Dictionnaire du Théâtre (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1980). p. 371.

by the drinking song of the boys in the last act, a song which portends a harsh adult world. Between these two poles fragmented details are scattered, covering the play's surface with songs, dances, mimicry, fantasy and humour.

This cubist fragmentation is enhanced by the contrasts which present the multiple viewpoints characteristic of this art. Infantile humour portrays the world of the child, while violence, black humour, parody and images of death indicate his inevitable passage into adulthood. Act II's coup de théâtre in which the third little girl dominates both action and dialogue is countered by her withdrawal from the rest of the play; her absence is emphasized by her calls of "ça y est". Mythical winged creatures appear throughout, invoking fantasy as well as foreboding. The enchanting garden setting of the last act is violated by a plundering serpent. This dichotomy is also present in the costuming: bright dresses as opposed to total nudity when the children's vulnerability is underlined by enclosing them in a cage (Act III). Certain elements remain which do not belong to the contrasting categories but which act as unifying threads. The predominant example is the nonsense dialogue. Fantasy passages appear in every act, sometimes interspersed with discourse. In Act I the third little girl begins, "Arrangez-vous comme vous

voudrez..." before going off on a tangent. The line is taken up by the fourth little girl, "Arrangez-vous tous les fleurs..." before abandoning the idea. Finally the first little girl develops the idea, "Arrangez-vous, arrangez-vous la vie." and continues, "Moi, j'enveloppe la craie de mes envies du manteau déchiré et plein de taches de l'encre noire coulant à gorge ouverte des mains aveugles cherchant la bouche de la plaie." What begins as a child imitating a teacher is developed into a more meaningful statement, almost hidden by the nonsense which surrounds it. Thus the surface pattern formed by nonsensical dialogue must be closely observed to perceive the cogent remarks within. Here in literary form is the harlequin, his silhouette disguised by his costume.

Lists of items also become a kind of surface texture. The recitation of related words, objects, colours, foods and numbers can create varying moods (as has been previously discussed) and becomes almost poetic because of its frequency. The final speech of the play combines poetry and banality - surface and subliminal message.

As we have seen by the foregoing discussion, cubist ideas in dramatic form can be identified within the play's traditionally-inspired framework. However, while the distribution of fragmented information allows balance and continuity, it also alters the

play's message beyond recognition. Cohesion is gained at the expense of comprehension, a literary example of the old struggle between structure and representation. The oscillating images of cubist painting find their counterpart in the blurred projection of the characters: does the author portray four little girls or only one child whose image is refracted through a prism? Cubist technique provides a shifting viewpoint revealing two perspectives in the parody of a letter: their mocking imitation is equalled by the parental condescension. Itemized lists and lyric passages show minutiae balanced with extravagant vision.

The more philosophical tone found in cubist works bordering on political activism, can be seen as well. The juxtaposition of real and unreal, sense and nonsense, sacred and profane, tranquillity and violence are a parody of real life through personal references, contrasts in language and emotional leaps. The cubists' disrespect for institutions and their loathing of sham are manifested in the travesty of religious rites or education by rote. This concern for real issues gives the play a sense of commitment. Transcribing facets of real life into works of art marks the pivotal function of cubism. In citing the value of this artistic movement for its fertility rather than its destructiveness, Kamber remarks:

"Janus-like, its practitioners gaze in two directions: toward a past century of literary and artistic conventions and toward an era of changing preoccupations and dynamic expression.⁴⁰

In its traditional formality of structure and cubist orientation, Les Quatre Petites Filles can be seen to look both ways.

⁴⁰ Gerald Kamber, Max Jacob and the Poetics of Cubism. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p.53.

(e) Conclusion

In Les Quatre Petites Filles Picasso gives the spectator a glimpse of creation through the play of children, for his play is an allegorical treatment of childhood in which he draws parallels between innocence and experience, heaven and earth, spiritual and temporal. Halfway between infancy and adulthood, his little girls exist in an idyllic setting which is both earthly and divine. They are neither the choir of angels they appear to be in Act I, nor the diabolical brats they seem in Act IV. Their lyrical language is the music of the spheres which will quickly fade into dogmatic monotony.

Picasso is re-creating in dramatic form a dome by Tiepolo, an unending frieze of naughty putti echoing the life patterns of all mankind. In his cubist technique, as in real life, details circulate as haphazardly as letters in a bowl of alphabet soup. In drama as in painting, cubist forces are at work. "This sense of multiple relationships was the core of cubism's modernity. It declared that all visual experience could be set forth as a shifting field that included the onlooker."⁴¹ We relate to Picasso's play because like the spectator viewing Tiepolo's dome, we are part of the story.

In rendering a universal subject in cubist terms,

⁴¹ From a review of the 1980 retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, entitled The Show of Shows, Picasso modernism's father, comes home to MOMA, Time Magazine, 5 October, 1983, p. 126.

Picasso has avoided the dogmatism and didacticism which dominate the mystère. He has created instead a ritual that romps with colour and life, a pageant presented with childish gracelessness. For in the hands of Picasso a chain of paper dolls can be made to remind us that children are the gift of heaven.

CONCLUSION

Because cubism was a philosophy which changed artistic representation of reality, Picasso's art and his presence in the theatre world served as a catalyst in all aspects of dramatic art. The extent of his influence is difficult to assess clearly, yet the diffusion of cubist ideas can be traced not only in theatre art, but in dramaturgy, choreography and music.

The most easily recognized technique that resulted from this artist's philosophy was collage, which can be readily identified in the writing of surrealist dramatists whose work has been cited, as well as in the choreography of Massine, and the music of Satie, as we have shown. More subtle effects result from other cubist benchmarks. For example, acknowledging the validity of the medium itself freed dramatists from representational demands and unleashed a flow of inspired fantasy. With the picture plane of the proscenium a concept of the past, interaction between actor and audience could add a fourth dimension to the stage. Simultaneism can be seen in the episodic diegesis of dadaist and surrealist drama. Moreover, cubism's representation of reality in non-realistic forms encouraged dramatists to examine political and social solutions through absurd and comic guises. Picasso's art provides a new means of expression for Jarry's Collège de Pataphysique, as well as techniques for surrealism's revelations of the unconscious. The influences are nevertheless more diffuse than direct comparison would suggest. The first idea, the objective presentation

of reality without attempting representation of realism
 resulted in:

using subjects from contemporary life
 synthesis of visual data
 concealment of form beneath surface
 fragmentation, representation as opposed to structure
 simultaneism, contrasts and multiple viewpoints
 collage, real and unreal, intertextual references.
 non-reality of stage. (See Chart I, page 160)

Chart I outlines the different properties of cubism and
 cites a specific work or technique which demonstrates the use
 of the concept. As well, the specific aspect for which the
 work is cited is indicated within the lines. Certain tech-
 niques, such as the synthesis of visual data, are pertinent
 only to the visual arts. However, the diversity of the list
 which includes dramaturgy, decor, gestures, costumes, poetry,
 choreography and music, is truly remarkable.

Picasso's contribution to the theatre as a decorator re-
 mains unique. Although as a cubist artist his decors were ex-
 pected to scandalize, he was nevertheless provocative only
 with good purpose. More importantly, he drew theatre art and
 dramaturgy away from the traditional realism into the world
 of deliberate non-reality. He solved theatre problems with
 simple artistic answers instead of mechanical gimmicks.
 Mixing reality with illusion for example, he could provide
 an ingenious solution for Cuadro Flamenco, where a stage-within-

a-stage turned a rag-tag group of improvisational dancers into a theatre production. Each set conveyed a sense of time and place without attempting to be realistic. Moreover, their non-reality was an important contribution to the artistic impact of each production. His structure-costumes in Parade and Mercure underlined the non-reality of the stage and were the first cubist sculptures, providing a living link between the theatre and the art world.

The productions of Les Ballets Russes offering public exposure and talented collaborators, no doubt hastened the acceptance of cubist art so that the proliferation and transfusion of cubist ideas into other media became possible. This is the final acknowledgement of Picasso's greatness, for, as his friend Cocteau wrote of him, "Un grand homme est contagieux."¹

Because Picasso's work as a theatre designer came early in the century, it had a great impact on both dramaturgy and theatre design. His own plays, which did not appear until 1941 and 1948, merely follow the trends begun in 1917 without breaking new ground. Nevertheless, Picasso's plays provide an insight into cubist techniques applied to poetry and drama. With his artist's eye for the visual impact of gesture, costume and decor, it is understandable that he made use of this aspect of drama for diegesis; in Les Quatre Petites Filles he relies entirely on a series of tableaux. Although Picasso's two plays push comprehension to the limit, they are an invaluable resource for the study of cubism in literature and the nature of literature itself.

¹ Jean Cocteau, Le Rappel à l'ordre, Oeuvres Complètes, IX (Genève: Marguerat, 1950), p. 218.

REALITY - I

Contemporary Life

population
social mores

NON-REALITY OF STAGE - II

SIMULTANEISM - III

Contrasts, multi-viewpoint

CONCEALMENT OF FORM - IV

Two levels of appreciation

REJECTION OF REALISM

Integrity of medium
(Les Demoiselles d'Avignon)
(1907)

FRAGMENTATION - V

Representation vs structure

SYNTHESIS OF VISUAL DATA - VI

Symbolic object

COLLAGE - VII

Real and unreal, intertextuality jokes,
personal references

audience participation
"twenties" bar
Victor's height

German occupation
absurd actions
non-real set
sets, action

authoritarianism
childhood
social mores
family life

circus life
sets, actions

names
children's games, meaning of life

peasant culture, theatrical production

characters, diegesis
costumes

names, puns
musical intertextualities

jokes, puns
names, dates
noises, mime
banal plot
real, unreal spectators

costumes
parental clichés

contradictions

noises, intertextualities

breasts
phonograph, characters
clichés

comedy, protest
absurd, true
characters, diegesis
properties

costumes
adultery

rhythm, diegesis
comic, political

costumes
real, abstract

comedy, alienation
absurd, banal

costumes
comedy, serious message
aspects of love

costumes
poly-tonality

contradictions

noises, intertextualities

contradictions
comic, protest
changing perspectives
lyric, absurd
child vs. adult
comedy, tragedy

aspects of power
Victor's height

clashes
curtain
noises, dances

contrasts attitudes
set

musical, technical work

set

costumes

comedy, alienation
absurd, banal

comedy, serious message
aspects of love

costumes
poly-tonality

contradictions

noises, intertextualities

I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII

Max Jacob's poetry
IV, VII

Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel
I, IV, VI, VII

Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir
II, III, IV, VI, VII

Coeur à gaz
V

Mercure
III, VI

Le Boeuf sur le Toit
I, II, III, VII

Pulcinella
II, VI

Le Désir attrapé par la queue
I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII

Automatic writing
III

Nino Rota - Divertimento
IV, VII
Concertante

Tricorne
VI

Façade
IV, VII

Rhinocéros
I, II, IV, VI, VII

Les Quatre Petites Filles
I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII

Parade
I, II, IV, VI, VII

L'Armoire à glace un beau soir
I, III, VI, VII

Cuadro Flamenco
IV, VII

Jacques ou la soumission
I, IV, VI, VII

Les Parents Terribles
I, III, VII

Dadaist and surrealist episodic
III
plot

Groupe de Six
II, VII

APPENDIX I

List of Productions to which Picasso Contributed.

Date and place of first performance are given where possible.

Parade (1917)

Ballet by Jean Cocteau and Léonide Massine

Music by Erik Satie

Curtain, décor and costumes by Picasso

Created by Les Ballets Russes, Serge Diaghilev, May 18, 1917,

Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris.

Le Tricorne (1919)

Ballet by Léonide Massine, story by Alarcón

Music by Manuel de Falla

Curtain, décor and costumes by Picasso

Created by Les Ballets Russes, Serge Diaghilev, July 22, 1919,

Alhambra Théâtre, London

Pulcinella (1920)

Ballet by Léonide Massine from Commedia dell'Arte play

Music by Igor Stravinsky after Pergolese

Décor and costumes by Picasso

Created by Les Ballets Russes, Serge Diaghilev, May 15, 1920,

Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Paris.

Cuadro Flamenco (1921)

Suite of Eight traditional Andalusian dances

Music provided by flamenco guitarists

Décor and costumes by Picasso

Produced by Serge Diaghilev, May 22, 1921,

Théâtre de la Gaîté-Lyrique, Paris

L'Après-Midi d'un Faune (1922)

Ballet by Vaslav Nijinsky

Music by Claude Debussy

Backdrop by Picasso

New production by Les Ballets Russes, Serge Diaghilev,

of 1912 ballet

Antigone (1922)

Tragedy by Jean Cocteau, after Sophocles

Decor by Picasso

Created by Charles Dullin

Mercure (1924)

Ballet by Léonide Massine

Music by Erik Satie

Curtain, décor and costumes by Picasso

Created by Comte Etienne de Beaumont for Les Soirées de Paris,

May 17 or June 15, 1924,

Théâtre de la Cigale, Paris

Le Train Bleu (1924)

Ballet by Jean Cocteau and Bronislava Nijinska

Music by Darius Milhaud

Curtain by Picasso

Décor by Laurens

Costumes by Gabrielle Chanel

Created by Les Ballets Russes, Serge Diaghilev, June 20, 1924,

Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris

Le 14 Juillet (1936)

Play by Romain Rolland

Curtain by Picasso

Presented by La Maison de la Culture

Andromaque (1944)

Tragedy by Racine

Sceptre by Picasso

Le Rendez-vous (1945)

Ballet by Jacques Prévert and Roland Petit

Music by Pierre Kosma

Curtain by Picasso

Décor by Brassai, costume by Mayo

Created by Les Ballets des Champs-Élysées, Boris Kochno,

June 15, 1945,

Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris

Oedipe Roi (1947)

Tragedy by Sophocles

Décor by Picasso

Presented by Pierre Blanchar

Chant Funèbre (1953)

Poem by Garcia Lorca

Décor by Picasso

L'Après-Midi d'un Faune (1960)

Ballet by Lifar after Nijinsky

Curtain by Picasso

Executed for the Paris Opera first performed at

Le Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse, 1965

Icare (1962)

Ballet by Serge Lifar

Curtain and décor by Picasso

Paris Opera production

Les Passions Contraires (1963)

Play by Georges Soria

Backdrop by Picasso

APPENDIX II

Chronological Summary of Picasso's Life

Picasso born October 25, 1881, Malaga, Spain

baptized Pablo Ruiz Picasso.

- 1888-89 earliest painting Picador
- 1899- at Els Quatre Gats, an artist café, meets poet Sabartés, philosopher and critic Eugenio Oro, painter-playwrite Santiago Rusinol. Becomes familiar with work of Steinlen and Toulouse-Lautrec.
- 1900- comes to Barcelona
comes to Paris with Casagemas another artist
meets Max Jacob
Sabartés comes to Paris
- 1901- Suicide of Casagemas
- 1902- shares room with Max Jacob
- 1904- meets Fernande Olivier
resides in Bateau Lavoir - André Salmon is a neighbour
- 1905- meets Apollinaire
meets Rilke
two paintings bought by Gertrude Stein, who becomes friend
- 1906- Portrait of Gertrude Stein
meets Derain
meets Matisse

- 1907- meets Kahnweiler
 meets Braque
- 1908- Suicide of Wiegels in Bateau Lavoir
 party for Douanier Rousseau attended by Apollinaire,
 Marie Laurencin, Salmon, Braque, Stein
- 1909- moves to Blvd de Clichy
- 1911- Paints in Ceret with Braque
- 1912- Fernande Olivier replaced by Eva Gouel (Ma Jolie)
 Braque makes first collage
- 1914- Sees Derain and Braque off to war.
- 1915- Baptism of Max Jacob, Picasso is godfather.
 Jean Cocteau, on leave, visits Picasso's studio
 with composer Edgar Varèse
 Death of Eva Gouel. Max Jacob and Juan Gris go to
 cemetery with Picasso.
- 1916- Apollinaire wounded.
 Invited to participate in Parade, meets Diaghilev,
 Satie
 Blaise Cendrars is introduced
- 1917- to Rome with Cocteau
 meets Olga Koklova
 Apollinaire coins word "sur-réalisme"
- 1918- Wedding of Apollinaire-Picasso and Vollard are
 witnesses
 July 12 - wedding of Picasso and Olga - Cocteau,
 Max Jacob and Apollinaire are witnesses
 Nov. 9 - Apollinaire dies

- 1919- Cocteau publishes Ode à Picasso
Blaise Cendrars publishes Pourquoi le "Cube" s'effrite?
goes to London for Tricorne
- 1920- First dada manifestation. André Salmon, Max Jacob,
Aragon, Cocteau, Breton and Tzara participate.
Works on Pulcinella
- 1921- Feb. 4 birth of Paulo
Cuadro Flamenco
Max Jacob leaves for monastery
- 1922- Tzara pamphlet says that as long as Braque, Picasso
and Gris are working, cubism lives.
Antigone by Jean Cocteau.
- 1923- "Soirée du Coeur à Barbe" - films by Hans Richter and
Man Ray, Music by Satie, Milhaud, Stravinsky and Auric
Coeur à Gaz by Tzara - evening ends in riot.
- 1924- "Homage à Picasso" in Paris-Journal signed by Aragon,
Auric, André Boiffard, Breton, Desnos, Joseph Deltiel,
Max Ernst, Francis Gérard, Max Morise, Pierre Naville,
Benj. Péret, Francis Poulenc, Soupault, Roger Vitrac.
Mercure
Train Bleu
Reverdy's Picasso in N.R.F.
- 1925- Death of Satie
Breton publishes Le Surréalisme et la peinture naming
Picasso in cause of surrealism
- 1926- Diaghilev sells Tricorne curtain and Cuadro Flamenco
set

- 1927- meets Marie-Thérèse Walter
 death of Gris
 Gertrude Stein's Dix Portraits includes Picasso's
- 1930- Jung essay on Picasso and relation of fragmentation
 to schizophrenia
- 1933- Minotaure - surrealist magazine
- 1935- Marie-Thérèse gives birth to Maïa
 Sabartés becomes Picasso's secretary
- 1936- Portrait of Paul Eluard
 Curtain for 14 Juillet
 Summers with Penrose, Man Ray, Eluard, René Char and
 Dora Maar.
- 1937- Dream and Lie of Franco etching with poem.
Guernica
- 1940- Picasso to Royan
- 1941- August - returns to Paris
 Gallery of Picasso's dealer, Rosenberg is confiscated
 writes first play
- 1942- Eluard joins communist party
- 1943- meets Françoise Gilot
- 1944- Arrest of Desnos, dies in German camp
 Arrest of Jacob, dies in Drancy
 performance of Le Désir attrapé par la queue at
 Leiris' apartment
 liberation, Picasso sees Eluard, Aragon and other
 friends from Résistance
 joins Communist party

- 1945- visited by André Malraux
Le Rendez-vous
meets Françoise Gilot
- 1946- death of Gertrude Stein
Breton snubs Picasso because of his communism
Nusch Eluard dies (she was circus acrobat in her youth)
- 1947- Birth of Claude
Oedipus Rex
Writes Les Quatre Petites Filles
- 1948- Visite à Picasso - film
- 1949- Paloma born
- 1950- Attends World Peace Conference in Sheffield, England
Receives Lenin Peace Prize
- 1952- death of Eluard
- 1953- meets Jacqueline Roque
- 1954- death of Derain
death of Matisse
death of Maurice Raynal
death of Henri Laurens
- 1955- death of Olga
filming of Le Mystère Picasso
- 1958- Icarus mural for UNESCO
monument by Picasso to Apollinaire dedicated
- 1961- marries Jacqueline Roque
second Lenin Peace Prize
ballet Icare, Picasso designs decor

- 1963- death of Braque
death of Cocteau
- 1965- Picasso et le Theatre exhibition in Toulouse
- 1966- death of Breton
Hommage à Picasso exhibition opened by Malraux
- 1967- refuses Legion of Honour
- 1968- death of Sabartés
- 1973- death of Picasso at Mougins, April 8.

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