The Festive Play of Fernando Arrabal

Luis Oscar Arata
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I wish to express my thanks to all who have helped me in one way or another to make this book possible: to Professors David I. Grossvogel and John W. Kronik of Cornell University for their stimulating suggestions and criticism; to Professor Roberto Gonzalez Echevarría, Rubén Ríos, David Savarin, and Beth Goldsmith for critical readings; to Simone Brunau, director of the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, for warm hospitality. I am especially grateful to Martin Esslin for his support. It is equally a pleasure to extend very special thanks to Jean-Pierre Lhande who assisted in different aspects of research, and to Fernando Arrabal for confirming my suspicions and sustaining a creative dialogue. I am particularly indebted to Jean Piaget who encouraged me to continue the study of play, and to Michel Benamou who offered me a Fellowship for pursuing research on play and literature. To them and to my wife Laurie I dedicate the best of this exploration.
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Born in Melilla, Spanish Morocco, in 1932, Fernando Arrabal is a playwright situated between two languages and two cultures, the Spanish he inherited and the French he adopted at the age of twenty-three. Rather than being the result of a choice, his move to France came about largely by chance. During his second visit to Paris, motivated by a growing interest in the theatre, Arrabal developed tuberculosis, was operated on, and spent over a year in French hospitals. Soon afterward he married Luce Moreau, a French student, and they set up residence in Paris.

In 1957, shortly after being released from the Bouffemont hospital, Arrabal completed the final version of *The Automobile Graveyard*, the most significant play of his early theatre. *The Automobile Graveyard* already contains a striking feature of Arrabal's theatre, namely its fractured appearance. His plays become broken progressions of images, tableaux, and other small fragments that seem to be independent units. They lack clear logical links that would create some sort of continuity and unity among the different parts. Such fracturing not only occurs in the text of Arrabal's plays but also affects their performance, calling often for sudden changes in lighting, background sounds, and acting styles.

This kind of disconnected drama brings to mind Aristotle's objections to "episodic" plays, that is, plays whose plots have no reasonable sequence of parts. Aristotle noted that in a plot-oriented drama, all the components should constitute a rigorously ordered sequence, so that if any part is shifted or removed, the whole is loosened up and dislocated (*Poetics*, 51a33). But in episodic plays, the presence or absence of an episode or part does not make any perceptible difference. Aristotle discounted episodic plays and favored instead the
plot-centered drama, whose paradigm is Sophoclean drama, since dramas with solid plots based on the imitation of human actions do not depend structurally on the casual interrelationship of parts but form a solid whole.

The study of Arrabal's work led me, however, into the realm of episodic theatre, that other region of theatre where the discontinuous prevails and the unexpected can remain as such. A non-Aristotelian perspective is needed to explore this realm since the difference between plot-oriented and episodic plays derives from dissimilar dramatic concerns. The questions to be asked are different and concern mainly what is being left out by plays with crafted forms in which all the parts respond to a pattern of action with an explicit development.

To understand better the significance of episodic drama, I traced the history of this form back to the emergence of Western theatre. It is the episodic plot that helped shape the dramas of Aeschylus and Aristophanes; medieval mystery and miracle plays often had episodic plots. A survey of more modern manifestations of episodic theatre might begin with two dramas not meant for performance: Goethe's Faust and Flaubert's La Tentation de Saint Antoine, and with the romantic desire to mix low and high style, which led to a rediscovery of medieval aesthetics.

The Faust created by Goethe differs from all others in that his pact with the Devil takes him through a variety of human experiences, and these experiences are at the core of the drama—a fractured one. A nonepisodic version of the legend, such as Marlowe's, sacrifices substantial richness for a better focus on the dramatic action drawn from the story or plot-line of the legend. La Tentation de Saint Antoine was criticized in its time for what we now term its episodic characteristics: 1 uncoordinated expansiveness, the possibility of transposing parts of the work without altering the whole, lack of narrative continuity and direction.

Early in our century, Ramón del Valle-Inclan used the episodic form for his esperpentos, mainly in Luces de Bohemia where the blind poet Max Estrella steps out at dusk into the streets of Madrid to live a variety of distinct experiences and engage in a series of conversations that finally come to an end with his death at dawn. In Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett affords a peculiar contemporary example of this disconnected form
of drama, as he fragments emptiness to create a play upon a practically barren stage. The almost despairing vacuum in which Vladimir and Estragon find themselves is not communicated to the audience by means of discussions on the subject: instead, emptiness is played on the stage. Later I will note ways the episodic form allows for the play of drama.

A complete history of the episodic form of drama remains to be done. This summary intends only to show the existence of such a tradition and to analyze the form in order to establish the proper foundation for this study of Arrabal's work. Examples from Old Attic tragedy and comedy, and from early French medieval plays, will show that the episodic form is a structure of composition that permits an overaccumulation of dramatic materials. It neglects the self-imposed restrictions of plot-oriented dramas, allowing the playwright to indulge in expansive juxtapositions of these materials. This form is not a means to an end; rather, the episodic form is the natural shape of dramas that tend to embrace as much as possible of the playwright's inner and outer worlds.

The early manifestations of the episodic form drew their substance largely from the festivities about which they arose. Episodic Attic and medieval plays absorbed the main aspects of life celebrated in community festivals, turning this substance into drama. A natural affinity existed between the playwright and his public—a kind of public that has all but vanished since the Renaissance.

The danger of creating episodic drama in the absence of an immediate context provided by related festivities becomes evident: the spectator may easily be lost in fragmented plays that deal with unexpected subjects. By means of plot-oriented form, the author avoids this kind of difficulty by organizing structures that are familiar to the public or that can readily capture his attention. Rejecting plot, Arrabal uses a technique inherent to the episodic form—one that can achieve similar results: he groups the different episodes of a play within a simple pattern or basic structure with which the audience is familiar, such as a pattern of cycles, inversions, or repetitions; or else, he turns drama into the coarse "allegory" of a well-known myth. Plot structure produces a type of drama where the episodes are subordinated to the plot; plot must be traced within
the episodes. In episodic plays, however, the basic structures that replace plot are extrinsic to the episodes. The variety of basic structures used by Arrabal become, at times, rhythmical components that are fundamental to the performance of his drama.

The focus of my study soon became Arrabal's episodic theatre and the nature of this form of drama seldom explored before. This choice on my part meant devoting less attention to Arrabal's theatre after 1972, which tends to become more plot-oriented. The reason for this change could be the subject of a sequel to this study. I am inclined to think that the publication of his *Carta al general Franco* in 1972 and the production of his first two films *Viva la muerte* and *J'irai comme un cheval fou* mark the point where Arrabal's work begins to assume a more self-conscious tone. The characteristics of his work such as the notion of exile, violence, or political anarchism become externalized. His theatre ceases to be an encounter with an unknown Arrabal and seems to turn into a recreation of the obsessions of an Arrabal that used to be.

If a growing self-consciousness on the part of the writer parallels the transition from episodic to plot-oriented works, then the distinction between these two forms appears to be more than a matter of form. There must also be a difference in function of these patterns of composition. This consideration gave rise to another aspect of my study, which is the analysis of the function of the episodic form, and again I found in Aristotle's *Poetics* a point of departure for the new inquiry.

According to Aristotle, the origin of poetry, and of art in general, lies in our innate drive to imitate. In the *Poetics* he states that man differs from other animals in that he is the most imitative and can learn through imitation (48b6).

Imitation, however, is not the only epistemological procedure available; play has been left out of Aristotle's theory. The research of Jean Piaget in developmental psychology shows that imitation and play are epistemological activities performed by children as well as adults. Whereas imitation is an act of accommodation, play is one of assimilation, and both accommodation and assimilation are complementary epistemological procedures.

If imitation gives rise to art, is it not possible
that play also gives rise to art? And, if so, what would be the form of art created through play? This question will be presented in larger detail in the first chapter of this study, along with a brief discussion of Piaget's analysis of imitation and play. But to anticipate the answer, the form of art generated by a ludic drive is episodic. And, whereas the function of plot-oriented structures is imitation, that of episodic forms is play.

As part of this introduction I should now underscore the distinction between what is considered to be a game and the notion of play. A game is an instrument for playing. A player plays a game. A game has rules, strategies, and some method of reward. But it is possible to play without recourse to any obvious game-structure. The act of playing is vaster than just engaging in game-playing. So it seems to me that it is more interesting to study the act of playing and treat games as facilitators of play, rather than the reverse. It is clear that theatre and art in general can be considered as being somewhat of a game of the imagination. Yet seeing art as a game often leaves out what I consider more important, namely the players and the nature of the act of playing.

The act of playing surfaces as an essential aspect of Arrabal's episodic theatre. An episodic work of Arrabal is a play in the original sense of the word for drama: ludus or jeu. Yet there is a complementary aspect that must still be considered: the type of material that goes into making the dramas. Even though anything can be used as the object of play, Arrabal chooses to reach into the more intimate limits of his world. This biographical plunge has been documented in detail by Bernard Gille and Françoise Raymond-Mundschau. I will provide only a few biographical details and will focus closely on the shape of these materials. They appear as raw stuff, chunks of matter left in an ambivalent state, dredged by the author's incursion into the chaotic world of his visions, dreams, and nightmares. I will also explore the variety of these materials, attempting to group them thematically to obtain a clearer overall view of the substance that makes Arrabal's drama.

An episodic theatre that tends to embrace as much as possible of the playwright's world repeats the gesture
Introduction

of Attic and medieval festive dramas, for, in this case, the world of the playwright and the world of the festival become one. Moreover, festive celebration is a form of play. Thus the term festive play can be defined as a type of theatre based on the episodic form and a particular "festive" choice of materials transformed into the substance of drama.

Finally Arrabal's theatre can be seen as festive drama — a fact that must be taken into consideration when performing his theatre but not before making an inquiry into the notion of festive play. The understanding of play is also essential to the study of Arrabal's conception of the Panic because it allows us to retrace the playful process involved in the creation of the Panic and to observe its implications for a festive type of theatre.
Chapter One

The Form of Play

The Homeric Hymn XIX entitled "To Pan" provides the most complete description of this god from whose name is derived the term Panic used by Arrabal. Pan was the god of shepherds, living in the high mountains, a "goat-footed, two-horned lover of noisy confusion" (The Homeric Hymns, p.68). Pan's goatish features could panic anyone seeing them for the first time. This ugly god was nevertheless carefree, lustful, and overflowing with a love for life. When he was presented as a baby to the other gods by his father:

All the undying gods rejoiced in their hearts,
But Bacchic Dionysos beyond all the rest,
And they called him Pan, because he delighted all hearts. (P.69)

Because of Pan's ability to please all the gods, his name became associated with the notion of totality and was chosen to be synonymous with "all." His hideous form, half-human, half-animal, could also be marvelous; his gay laughter and joyful spirit would eventually be the delight of all because he was an exemplary affirmation of life.

Ovid, in the eleventh book of Metamorphoses, tells of a musical contest between Pan and Apollo, judged by the deity Timolus and witnessed by King Midas:

Pan made music
On the rustic reeds, and the barbaric song
Delighted Midas utterly....

Apollo's hair,
Golden, was wreathed with laurel of Parnassus,
His mantle, dipped in Tyrian crimson, swept
Along the ground. His lyre, inlaid with jewels,
With Indian ivory, his left hand held;
King Midas, however, delighted by the barbaric tunes of Pan, argued against the ruling of Timolus who preferred the sweet and sophisticated music of Apollo. The confrontation ended when Apollo turned Midas's ears into those of an ass. This was not a true contest, for the tunes of the two gods were inherently different, and it was impossible to judge them according to a common standard. The passage quoted shows that the conception of aesthetic beauty used by Timolus, as reflected in the description of Apollo and his lyre, excluded from the outset the music of Pan. The episode affords us a contrast between the figures of Pan and Apollo; the latter was the image of polished perfection, playing sweet music on his sophisticated lyre; the former was the image of the unformed, of the panic-causing materia prima—the primal matter that has not been molded into what is considered by mortals to be beautiful, playing barbaric tunes on his rustic reeds. I will return to this contrast between Pan and Apollo which informs the more general contrast between the Dionysian and the Apollinian.  

According to Homer, Dionysus rejoiced beyond all the other gods on the birth of Pan. Indeed, this ugly looking god, noisy, gay, born laughing, had the potential to join in the euphoric way of life of Dionysus which was manifested in bacchic and phallic celebrations. Euripides, in The Bacchae, described a mythological Dionysian orgy in all its wildness and euphoria. This god presided at celebrations which took place in Attica four times a year; they involved bacchic and phallic rites, though devoid of the fury and frenzy depicted in The Bacchae. The earliest plays extant were composed for two of these festivals (the Lenaia and the City Dionysia) and performed only at such times. The drama of Aeschylus and Aristophanes came into being for these celebrations and was an integral part of the festivals.

Dionysus endowed these festivals with a specific spirit; he symbolized the celebration of renewal and fertility, a communal unity linked to nature, and the
euphoric melting of the individual into a mythological continuum. However, there was no concern to portray directly either Dionysus or a Dionysian spirit, as later in *The Bacchae*. Dionysus, as a total symbol, could not be constrained within the stage. A sacrifice in his honor preceded the plays, but he did not appear in any of the plays of Aeschylus and Aristophanes still extant, except as a less symbolic figure, like the buffoon in *The Frogs*. This theatre was part of the Dionysian festivals because it played with basic elements celebrated in such festivities. These elements belonged to a language of myth and symbols which was common to the community, the dramatists, and the festivals. To provide an example of the Dionysian through drama or to present Dionysus on stage as a central character would have been contrary to the spirit of celebration. Aeschylean and Aristophanic drama shared the Dionysian spirit in its form, choice of material, and function; only thus could it participate fully in these festivals, as I will show when I analyze the episodic nature of this theatre.

Old comedy and Aeschylean tragedy did not concern itself with the creation of individualized characters. This drama does not focus on the character of a hero but on the interactions of one or several main figures within a particular situation. The main figures in a play do not create an interior locus of attention centered on their personal initiatives and on the outcome of a plot; they contribute rather to the formulation of a dramatic situation. And comedy does not deal with the personal worries of the protagonists, or with dramatic devices such as concealed identity, coincidence, and recognition. The absence within the plays of a guiding force deriving from psychology or the logic of a plot results in the episodic and disconnected form of this drama.

In the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus, there is a rapid succession of episodes linked to the central figure of Prometheus, which contributes to the illustration of the basic situation of the play: suffering. Hephaestus, as he nails Prometheus to a rock, opens the theme of the tragedy: "Alas, Prometheus, I groan for your sufferings" (p.142). Prometheus, in dialogue with a Chorus sensitive to his situation, proceeds to reveal the source of his sufferings, rehearsing as well a genesis of mankind. The successive arrival and departure of three visitors — Oceanos, Io, and Hermes — leads Prome-
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Theus to narrate in greater detail his sufferings at the hands of Zeus. We can imagine the audience pitying, along with the Chorus and visitors, the misfortunes of Prometheus, punished for the crime of giving great gifts to men.

This sort of loosely linked episodes around a main figure, branching into several disjointed moments—such as the recounting of mankind's evolution—is also found in Aristophanic drama. The Birds, for example, contains a series of episodes related to Eupides' and Peisthetaerus' search for a peaceful place where they may settle. The protagonists find themselves immediately engaged in a series of picaresque incidents that make them leaders of the birds, founders of a city between the sky and the earth, and masterminds of the birds' defeat over the gods.

In this play, local plots create intermittent links between consecutive fragments but not a consistent unity of action for the whole drama. The audience's attention is captured by a continuous lampooning presented by linking together the various episodes, thus creating the impression of a consequent whole. The sympathetic addition of new elements, otherwise unexpected, generates an expansive renewal of episodes which culminates with the ceremonial wedding of Peisthetaerus and Miss Sovereignty.3

The form of such dramas, then, is characterized by an overabundance of material presented in fragments. New episodes could be added to the plays without altering them noticeably. Likewise, many of their fragments could be deleted without bringing harm to an action. This is made possible by the dramas' lack of subordination to a specific logic of action or rigid dramatic rules and also by the lack of psychological characters that would require conflicts to bring out their essence or a certain consistency necessary to imitate types of behavior.

While tragedy dealt with mythological or historical material known to the audience, comedy thrived on allusions to contemporary situations and had the actors impersonate or mention figures well known to the Attic community. These plays were built on elements that belonged to the language of the community—elements derived from myth, symbols, history, ideas. These were also constitutive of the Dionysian festivals outside of
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the theatre: the drama melded with the festivities. The expansive form of Aeschylean and Aristophanic drama could encompass totally different aspects celebrated in the *Lenaia* and the *City Dionysia* and recreate, most of all, the festive drive of embracing all. Rather than individualizing itself through plot device or character-ization, this type of drama plunged totally into the festivals.

Sophocles, Euripides, and Menander drew theatre away from the episodic form. Drama continued to be performed at the festivals of Dionysus but became more of an event in itself, sophisticated and stylized. There was to be an important revival of the episodic form of theatre in France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which coincided with the resurgence of drama that had lived on only as a semilegitimate activity since the fall of Rome in the sixth century.4

This revival occurred mainly through the Christian liturgy. In the Mass it took the early form of tropes, or interpolations into religious texts. The tropes were first choral passages; later the melodic passages became more elaborate and words were added, giving rise eventually to religious plays. Toward the end of the twelfth century, the performances moved out onto the parvis. They were no longer in Latin, the language of the Church, but in the vernacular, which opened the dramas to a larger audience.5

Again, the festive spirit informed the development of this theatre since different religious plays started to be performed during particular religious ceremonies. One such play is *Le Jeu d'Adam*, an anonymous drama of the late twelfth century which is the oldest surviving play of the Middle Ages that is written practically entirely in the vernacular. It was probably performed during the Christmas or New Year festivities.

*Le Jeu d'Adam*, like most other religious plays, is structured upon what is called the Procession of Proph­ets — the successive appearance on the stage of prophets who predict the coming of Christ and then take leave. The figures that appear during the first two episodes are Adam and Eve, then Abel and Cain. Even though they are not biblical prophets, they still prophesy the com­ing of someone who will redeem their sins. These two episodes, which constitute about two-thirds of the play, incorporate biblical material often used in liturgical
The Festive Plays of Arrabal

dramas, including the Creation and the fall of Lucifer.

Among the prophets who appear after Abel and Cain is Balaam, who enters mounted on an ass. There are "diableries" (devil scenes) as well. The Balaam episode and the diableries are comic elements that belong to the Feast of Fools. The episodic nature of the play allowed for the insertion of such festive material into what was originally a liturgical play. The Feast of Fools took place throughout France between Christmas and Epiphany, its character and date depending on the region where it was celebrated. As a rule the feast was celebrated by the lower clergy and it involved invariably the inversion of social hierarchies. E. K. Chambers, in The Medieval Stage, translates the preamble to a manifesto of the Theological Faculty of the University of Paris, condemning the Feast of Fools as it occurred in churches throughout France. This preamble affords a good description of what went on during the feast:

Priests and clerks may be seen wearing masks and monstrous visages at the hour of office. They dance in the choir dressed as women, panders or minstrels. They sing wanton songs. They eat black pudding at the horn of the altar while the celebrant is saying mass. They play dice there. They cense with stinking smoke from the sole of old shoes. They run and leap through the church, without a blush at their own shame. Finally they drive about the town and its theatres in shabby traps and carts; and rouse the laughter of their fellows and bystanders in infamous performances with indecent gestures and verses scurrilous and unchaste. (1:294)

The procession of an ass through the church, accompanied by brayings from the congregation and from the priest, was also a characteristic element of this feast. The appearance of Balaam mounted on an ass in Le Jeu d'Adam recalls this tradition.

The diableries sprang from the liturgy and also from popular masquerades: people disguised as devils would run around the town playing tricks, creating commotion, causing panic and laughter. Le Jeu d'Adam contains a diablerie in which the fallen Adam and Eve are driven to hell by a group of devils. Chambers translates this passage which appears in Latin in the original:
Then shall come the devil and three or four devils with him, carrying in their hands chains and iron fetters, which they shall put on the necks of Adam and Eve. And some shall push and others pull them to hell; and hard by hell shall be other devils ready to meet them, who shall hold high revel at their fall. And certain other devils shall point them out as they come, and shall snatch them up and carry them into hell; and there shall they make a great smoke arise, and call aloud to each other with glee in their hell, and clash their pots and kettles, that they may be heard without. And after a little delay the devils shall come out and run about the stage; but some shall remain in hell. 
(2:81-82)

The biblical story was changed so that Adam and Eve might be driven to hell in order to introduce a popular diablerie into the play.

Willem Noomen notes that *Le Jeu d'Adam* has an additive episodic structure. He observes that the play is made of a series of juxtaposed episodes, each of which is an autonomous element, centered upon a specific theme that is stressed. He also points out that the episodes are not conditioned or linked by an impelling causality. The unity of the play is provided rather by a general theme that flows through the episodes. Noomen argues that this theme has to be external to the play but determined by the celebration to which the play contributes.

The unifying framework may usually be given by a well-known story or myth related to the celebration. *Prometheus Bound* is built upon the mythical story of Prometheus; the Bible furnishes most of the situations for *Le Jeu d'Adam*. The play does not have to be a faithful representation of the underlying story on which it is constructed. In fact, episodic dramas change the given material, indicating that they are not a simple retelling of stories or characters but the manifestation of a certain spirit that might not even be present in the original story.

*Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas* of Jean Bodel is especially interesting in this respect. It was performed on the eve of the festival of Saint Nicholas (December 6). The legends about this saint were many; a prologue addressed
to the public recounts the particular legend on which the play is to be based. The play itself follows the story outlined in the prologue, but much of the play has little to do with the circumstances of the legend. Nearly half of the action takes place in a tavern and shows people drinking, joking, and playing dice.

Such departures from the external controls of a predetermined or traditional framework, or the succession of largely unexpected episodes, shows the free play characteristic of the episodic form. What we find in *Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas* is a great number of secular episodes exploding the framework of a religious legend. This dramatic form fits the mixed religious and secular spirit that permeated the celebration of Saint Nicholas; much of the celebration must have taken place in taverns with considerable drinking and dice-playing.

*Le Jeu d'Adam* and *Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas* exemplify a type of drama that absorbs elements from its immediate festive context and plays with them as suggested by the name given to these works: *jeu* — a translation of the Latin *ludus*, a term often applied to medieval mystery and miracle plays when written in Latin. A number of reflections are to be derived from this fact.

A game implies certain structural constraints: 1) it requires two or more participants; even solitaires involve a player playing against at least the figment of an opponent; 2) a set of rules must be used, which delimit and define the game; 3) it involves strategies which measure the ability of the players; 4) it leads to rewards or consequences when the players win or lose; 5) it needs certain basic elements to actualize the activity and make it physically possible, such as a language for the players to communicate and for the game to function and symbols or physical objects with which the participants play.7

A first option in game playing subordinates the player to the game, usually in view of winning a reward related to the game; that is, the participant plays only with the hope of winning the game so as to gain a reward intrinsic to the game, which could be a material gain or a moral reward such as a sense of power — over self or opponent — that the winner may acquire. This way of seeing games is located within the perspective of quest. A second option focuses on playing: the game is seen as furnishing a structure within which the playing occurs;
The Form of Play

the reward that may come at the conclusion of a game is of importance only if it allows for the continuation of play. This second option is how game is understood in the perspective of play and very much defines such perspective.

Games can be classified according to their form and placed somewhere within a spectrum ranging from games oriented toward an end—a reward terminating the game—to games without a specific reward and that could, in theory, continue indefinitely. The form in Old Attic tragedy and comedy and early medieval drama noted earlier is structurally equivalent to a game without the prospect of final gain. This is the episodic form, which lacks an intrinsic plot pointing toward some type of conclusion or denouement. A scene such as the final wedding in *The Birds* is not prepared by the events of the play but comes as an arbitrary final development in the succession of episodes; it is a joyful chord that terminates a play that might, but cannot, go on forever.

The classification of games just outlined refers only to the games themselves; the emphasis on reward depends, however, on the perspective of the player, which could range in orientation from quest to play. Games of dice involve a reward, but the players in *Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas* are not concerned with gains that would put an end to playing dice because the gains serve to buy wine and their thirst is never satisfied. Such a situation produces a succession of games—here a series of dice-playing and drinking—that, taken as a whole, could also be viewed as an endless game. Conversely, games without intrinsic endings or rewards could be situated within a larger game that would have a reward and a termination, so that they become only the means for attaining that end. We may then be forced at times to distinguish between the structure of games and how the player plays, that is, from what perspective he views games.

The perspectives range from quest to play. The perspective of play sees all activities as instances of play and celebrates this vision as a way of being in the world. Even activities that do not evidence immediately the form and function of play can be transformed by this perspective into manifestations of play. Finally, the notion of perspective itself vanishes in a dance of aphorisms that celebrate play.
In contrast, the perspective of quest views what otherwise would be manifestations of play as part of an evolutionary chain that ultimately dictates the aim or direction of activities. The perspective, itself part of such an evolution, provides a framework for ordering activities according to the purpose or goals of value systems relating to this framework.

With this framework it is enlightening to note the contrast between Pan and Apollo, that is, between the Panic and the Apollinian. The Panic stems from the drive to be in touch with all, to participate fully in a celebration; it makes itself manifest in an episodic form of rough and unstructured appearance, free of internal constraints. The Apollinian generates individual and stylized forms whose structures are controlled by the rules of an inner consonance or logic; this drive tends to create self-consistent and self-regulating systems that serve to order whatever basic elements are fitted into them; it does not attempt to encompass all, but only that which can be readily contained by the structure. The Apollinian can stand on its own individuality; the Panic exists as a part in a larger context with which it communicates and celebrates.

It is only within Apollinian systems that knowledge can be defined and rendered objective. Thus emerges the sweet and sophisticated music of Apollo, opposed to the "barbaric" tunes of Pan whose music cannot speak for itself. Apollo stands for law and order, the prerequisites for scientific disciplines; systems and disciplines can be established only under precepts like "Curb thy spirit," "Observe the limit," "Fear authority," "Bow before the divine," all inscribed in Apollo's temple at Delphi, beneath his famous advice: "Know thyself." Nevertheless, in order to create new systems one must go beyond old ones, and this sudden leap involves breaking basic Apollinian precepts. The two opposing forces must combine at times so as not to be overcome by total chaos or stifling rigidity, particularly in artistic expression.

The opposition between the Panic and the Apollinian traces Nietzsche's contrast of the Dionysian versus the Apollinian and the necessity to establish, within art, tense balances between these two tendencies. In the form of drama here discussed, the Panic or Dionysian drive, manifest in an outpouring of episodes, is domi-
nant; but chaos is averted by the control of an individuating Apollinian characteristic that constrains the Panic within the dimensions of a work for the theatre. This Apollinian component is not established from within the dramas; it is an extrinsic structure, a framework or armature derived from reminiscences that antedate the play itself, like stories, patterns, and themes belonging to the festivities of which the plays were a part.

By leaping through the discontinuities of the episodic form, one is drawn into a participation, a celebration through immersion within the festive intensity that informs the play. This requires first the existence of a celebration. But if there is no celebration, what happens to the episodic form and its function? This requires a further questioning of the function of play and an analysis of its form.

In my present observations on the function of play, I am guided mainly by Jean Piaget's explicit and systematic formulation of results obtained from direct observation of the phenomenon of play where it appears the clearest: in the activities of children. His guidelines are closely related to our present concern, which is to derive a form from the function of play and, more particularly, a certain form of drama.

Piaget's theory of intellectual development describes only what occurs to the individual from birth to adolescence, whereas I will be dealing with the creations of adult minds. This difficulty, though not insuperable, will require selecting from the studies of Piaget those aspects of his developmental psychology which are invariable with respect to the age of the person.

There are two such functional invariables: one is the tendency of the individual toward organization, that is, toward the creation of schemes or structures which permit the ordering of sequences; the other is the tendency toward assimilation and accommodation, and eventually toward adaptation, which occurs when a certain balance is achieved between assimilation and accommodation.

In finding "what is common to the needs and interests present at all ages," Piaget concludes:

All needs tend first of all to incorporate things and people into the subject's own activity, i.e., to "assimilate" the external world into the structures that have already been constructed, and sec-
ondly to readjust these structures as a function of subtle transformations, i.e., to "accommodate" them to external objects. From this point of view, all mental life, as indeed all organic life, tends progressively to assimilate the surrounding environment. ... In assimilating objects, action and thought must accommodate to these objects, they must adjust to external variations. The balancing of these processes of assimilation and accommodation may be called "adaptation." Such is the general form of psychological equilibrium, and the progressive organization of mental development appears to be simply an ever more precise adaptation to reality."

(Six Psychological Studies, p.8)

Concepts such as "external" world and "reality" have a precise meaning in Piaget's developmental theory. "Reality" is the reality defined by science, particularly by physics and mathematics and is thus a clear but theoretical concept.10 This use of basic terms is justified since Piaget is most often concerned with the child's adaptation to a physical world. However, when we leave this realm, as Piaget occasionally does, the meanings of "reality" and its subordinate, the "external" world, become vague.

Care thus must be taken in extrapolating the notion of adaptation from childhood to the adult world, for the "realities" of the child's world and the adult's world with which the individual has to come to terms are different. The notions of adaptation and equilibrium entail problems beyond the scope of this study. Besides, my discussion of play will need to depend only on the notions of assimilation and accommodation which can be studied independently of the question of "reality."

As opposed, for example, to the conceptual views of Eugen Fink and Kostas Axelos, or the description of adult games done by Johan Huizinga and Roger Caillois, Piaget's work is based on observations drawn from the development of the child until he reaches adulthood. In Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood, Piaget notes: "A schema is never essentially ludic or non-ludic, and its character as play depends on its actual functioning. But all schemas are capable of giving rise to pure assimilation, whose extreme form is play" (pp. 90-91). When there is a primacy of accommodation over
assimilation, imitation occurs. The individual in this case attempts to modify his structures of organization in order to reproduce in some way what is being perceived. Play occurs when there is primacy of assimilation over accommodation. In this case the structures of the individual are not changed by what is being perceived but instead, perceptions are directly integrated into the structure used by the subject. The world is, so to speak, transformed or absorbed by the individual as it is assimilated into personal structures through the interaction of the individual and the world.

When accommodation dominates there is then a control of the structure by that which is being imitated. The imitated modifies and fashions the structure. In play, however, the assimilating structure remains largely independent of any possible modification occurring during the process of assimilation; the emphasis is thus placed on the activity of assimilation without concern for the goal or the constraint of having to accommodate to models being imitated. Play is not guided by any aim but serves as an opportunity for performing an activity that effects, nevertheless, the assimilation or incorporation of the world into the structures of an individual. This activity is free in the sense that it does not aim at turning the world into a model that has to be discovered and internalized through a process of imitation or accommodation requiring the modification of perceptual or conceptual schemas so as to fit the constraints resulting from the model.

Again the problem arises: to what is the subject accommodating? I introduced the word model because imitation implies that what is being imitated is seen as a model; the world is turned into a model that allows for imitation. The world seen as a model or hypothetical reality is then called "reality." To provide an example of the structuring of reality through models we must refer to the sciences; experimental sciences create a particular reality which is the one imitated theoretically; this reality is the one determined by the measuring instruments being used.

In play, the world is not problematic since it is only taken as primal matter for the activity that assimilates it — whatever "it" is — to the structures used by the individual. Play can even incorporate into its activities the realities produced through imitation; in
this respect it is all-embracing. To recapitulate: the predominance of accommodation aims at results, but play is its own aim; play is mainly the affirmation of a particular activity that seeks to embrace the world, not as a conscious aim but as a mode of being.

Again the difficulty of incorporating Piaget's work into a study dealing with adult activities is apparent even in strict reference to age-invariable functions, for the function of adaptation emerges constantly. The child has to adapt to the sensory-motor world, as does any other living being; but he also has to adapt, through what Piaget calls an equilibrium between accommodation and assimilation, to a reality that is the model presented by the adult world. Once the child becomes an adult he enters into such a reality only to realize that it can be changed, that he can modify it. So, the seriousness of the process of adaptation is brought into question because adult reality itself can be questioned.

It is sometimes said that play is the opposite of serious activity. This claim can be justified to a certain extent in childhood when the adult reality is presented to the child as unquestionable. In adult life, however, such a claim is untenable since it would require positing an absolute reality and the best we can do is to present models of hypothetical realities. Huizinga and other analysts of play theory point out that, indeed, play as manifest in adult life cannot be understood by opposing it to an idea of seriousness. Play is beyond such distinctions. Conversely, it is often implied that play is all there is. I will deal with this hypothesis when I begin to differentiate between play as an activity and play as a perspective. I return now to Piaget's conception of play in order to derive from it the form of play's function.

The activity of playing manifests itself most clearly in certain forms of action. The forms of play may vary and it might be said that all forms of action are a manifestation of play. But certain forms of action reveal play to different degrees, the most suited forms occurring in extreme cases of pure assimilation. The task is now to see if pure assimilation can give rise to inherently different forms or if it is possible to establish one general form which best relates to it.

Imitation, the reverse of play, requires the accommo-
The Form of Play

Accommodation of actions to a particular situation. What structures this type of action is the external model being imitated. The goal of accommodation is then established by that object of imitation to which the activity is totally subordinated.

Assimilation, however, does not impose such rigid goals. Actions do not have to be structured so as to fit a model. Rather they result from an embracing of what is being assimilated. The form or structure of that embrace is independent of the object. The structures of action allow for play to take place, in the same way as a hopscotch grid is needed in order to play hopscotch.

The form of play should then reveal no necessary connection between structure and the parts of the world assimilated in play. While in imitation the materials selected and the initial schemas have to accommodate to a model under observation, in play the material taken from the world is thrown into a schema in a sequence that does not produce by itself any particular ordering that could modify the schema. The result is then the production of a disconnected series of assimilative episodes, each of which is a moment of incorporation of chunks of matter into the structure which, in turn, permits the activity of pure assimilation to occur. We thus arrive at a general form of play, seen as a disconnected series of episodes of assimilation. Such a form is like the episodic one in Aeschylean and Aristophanic drama and early medieval plays.

In that drama, the function of the episodic form allowed play to occur within specific festivities; this was a play of pure assimilation that could involve a whole community by bringing it to participate in the celebration of all the elements of the festivity. The festival provided both the immediate source of drama and a public that participated in the festivals; the festival helped integrate the play into a communal celebration. Arrabal's theatre does not arise within the festivities of a community, though he stresses the notion of festivity and his drama also evidences an episodic form. Thus it was necessary to show that the general form of play is episodic, that the episodic form reveals play. We can now relate Arrabal's theatre to play, in form and in function, and also to the notion of festivity since festive celebrations are a form of play. But
before turning to Arrabal's theatre, there remains to consider his formulations of the Panic.

In 1960 Fernando Arrabal, Topor, and Alexandre Jodorowsky began meeting at the Café de la Paix in Paris. They wished to express a nondogmatic conception of art and of the world, first called burlesque, then panic in February 1962. Later that year, Arrabal gave the first formulation of the Panic during a lecture in Sidney, which was then published in Spanish under the title "El hombre pánico." This text was subsequently revised slightly and translated into French, appearing as "L'Homme panique" in a book edited by Arrabal, titled Le Panique.

The panic is a way of being, observed by the panic person who is to a large extent a projection of the imaginary god Pan: lustful, joyful, playful. He can espouse any view or cause but can subvert his commitments at any time, especially if he wants to start something new or finds himself in jeopardy: "the panic hero is the deserter" (Le Panique, p.51). He is free to follow whatever awakens his boundless curiosity and high sense of wonder; he likes to play with all that comes within his reach and puts aside that which cannot generate new instances of play. The panic person enjoys comfort and solitude in order to rest at times, and also because he is egotistic, somewhat like a child, enjoying the company of people but being at the same time close to, and separated from, everyone in a group. These are necessary characteristics for being playful, humorous, and enthusiastic, living the power of play without aiming for a final gain or domination.

Arrabal's panic person is receptive to festive moments that furnish him with the means for being in touch with the world and the community to which he belongs, by practicing his favorite activities: "Art/Play/Euphoric feast or indifferent solitude" (p.49). Such a person suggests a faceless protagonist, one never defined by his commitment to specific goals, never ruled by a single morality or norm of conduct. This ultimately harmless hero appears always in new masks that do not hide anything but give him the opportunity to play and be linked to all, for this is his way of life. The sudden sight of such a person might cause panic, for his figure has no form or takes all forms continuously in an euphoric confusion. He lives within the perspective of
play. The view from such a perspective can likewise cause panic, for it shows the absence of a logos and the dissolution into indifferent sameness, according to what Eugen Fink calls, in *La Philosophie de Nietzsche*: "the play of individuation" (p.240). But this fleeting vision disappears at once within the joyful laughter of the ugly and beautiful Pan.

The panic person is a presence playing anywhere between tragedy and comedy; he is a leaping and dancing figure; a creator never captured by his creations but constantly changing and renewing himself, feeling himself participating in the productive process that brings him in touch with his community and the world. When his dance ends, existing ends; he is essentially nothing at all.

The panic person is one of the many figures in Arrabal's gallery of characters; he does not occupy a dominant role and actually has not been portrayed in a play. He is largely a theoretical entity existing within the Panic manifesto and at the same time is Arrabal's peculiar self-portrait.

Arrabal's Panic manifesto depends heavily on his axiom: "life is memory and man is chance" (*Le Panique*, p.47). The term memory used in this statement originated, according to the playwright, in one of his dreams that also gave rise to the twenty-fourth labyrinth of his *Fêtes et rites de la confusion*. Arrabal thought then that he had stumbled onto something interesting: the idea of memory insistently returned to his attention and he started to play with it by first tracing the origins of the word to Greek mythology, then by reading about what has been observed on memory in philosophy and psychology. He also was fascinated by the terms *chance* and *confusion*. Arrabal envisions confusion as being somewhat the opposite of that which is pure or perfect. These two notions of uncertainty found a personal aesthetics which, indeed, permeates his theatre. Arrabal states: "The more a work of art is governed by chance, confusion, and the unexpected, the richer, more stimulating and fascinating it is" (p.48).

In the perspective of play, the function of memory is seen as a source of matter to be used in play. It can become the world of the artist, which gives rise to his work. Arrabal observes then that "an interpretation of the world founded on these two problems [memory and
chance] is then a PANIC vision or interpretation" (p. 48). Such a vision is located within the perspective of play or the two can even become one and the same.

To say that the performance of an activity gives rise to certain forms is not to say that such forms have to be followed carefully for the sake of that performance. This understanding is fundamental for the panic vision and the perspective of play. In the following chapters, I will consider Arrabal's theatre in this light, noting, in particular, that the function of memory is to furnish the primal material and structures for play. When this memory is collective, that is, not just the personal memory of the author, then the play may be open to a community and offer the means for participating in a festive celebration. Chance will function inasmuch as there are no restrictions on the play through aesthetic or moral codes or games with a specific purpose.

The Panic is significant not only because it forms a substantial segment of Arrabal's work but also because it presents a perspective that marks all the playwright's work. The Panic manifesto is closer in spirit to the Dadaist manifestos of Tristan Tzara than to André Breton's surrealism. Dadaism and the Panic are anarchic; they rebel against the constraints imposed by ideological and aesthetic programs, even their own. Arrabal declares that "'panic' is neither a group nor an artistic or literary movement; it is rather a way of being. Or, rather, I do not know what it is. I would even prefer to call the panic an anti-movement" (p.53). He concludes by stating that anyone can call himself panic, creator of the movement, and author of the panic theory. Arrabal avoids the dogmatism in which Breton enclosed himself; a movement that seeks to present new openings for creation cannot be dominated by a dictatorial figure who would bitterly persecute detractors of the movement — as Breton did, notably against Artaud.

The Panic is inherently antidogmatic and anarchic, which poses the problem of how to make an antidogmatic statement without becoming dogmatic. Arrabal achieves this by a certain play with the structures of logical discourse, in a fashion similar to Tzara's strategy. Arrabal sets the foundations for the movement through a well-formulated definition and at the same time negates playfully the definition and the movement by calling them "anti-definition" and "anti-movement." This leaves
open the possibility of constantly redefining the movement, so that anyone can make it his own by assimilation, or, in other words, by playing with it.

In his discourse, Arrabal is tied to the logic and limits of language; but instead of their becoming an obstacle, these limitations are the basis of his play. Also by playing, Arrabal comes to terms momentarily with the notions with which he is playing; he performs the assimilation of a set of materials through a game based on the rules of cognitive discourse. This is characteristic of play, an activity that is evidence of assimilation, of absorbing materials constituted in this case by notions like "memory," "chance," "confusion" and the question of how to live according to them. But the result of such an appropriation must not in itself bring an end to the activity; what has been achieved is put aside and the play continues.
Alongside full-length plays, Arrabal has written a number of short plays. These brief one-act pieces can well be considered as essays, for they contain fundamental elements that are used in the longer dramas. *Oraison* presents a couple — Fidio and Lilbé — faced with the project of playing at being "good and pure." This pair recalls the couples in the more elaborate plays *Le Tricycle* and *Fando et Lis*. They are all childlike, that is, they play with words and ideas without concern for purpose or consistency. The characters are also attracted by the question of how one should behave toward others.

*Oraison*, nevertheless, focuses exclusively on the play of Fidio and Lilbé. This turns the drama into a purely ludic moment affording us the simplest example of the episodic form: an episodic-type drama with only one episode. The underlying schema that gives rise to the play of the couple consists in accepting all that could make them be happy and good. In this fashion, Fidio and Lilbé explore a moral and religious code, assimilating it by means of their schema. But soon the couple becomes disappointed with the project for, like everything else they have tried, it will eventually bore them. This sudden realization brings the play to an end.

At first glance some plays may appear to be episodic, but under closer observation, their schemas turn out to be actual plots constructed progressively by what would seem to be disjointed parts — this is largely the case with *Le Tricycle* and *Fando et Lis*. *Le Tricycle* contains the logical links of a plot sequence. The childlike behavior of the characters, based on the pleasure principle, leads to the murder of a man. Climando, after consultation with his friends Mita, Apal, and the Old Man, kills someone for money that he needs to pay an
installment on a tricycle. The murder places the four friends beyond the pale of society. Apal and Climando are arrested in the end and condemned to death. The form of *Le Tricycle*, instead of being episodic, builds from within the successive episodes an action to which the separate events have to accommodate.

*Fando et Lis* tells of a journey to the city of Tar and progressively reveals the impossibility of reaching the city, turning the decision of the characters to continue the journey into an absurdity. In an episodic play, the audience would have to sense the journey independent of the play's story; that journey must appear as a reenactment of something they already knew, as a pre-text for play. But in *Fando et Lis*, the episodes influence one another in order to center the attention on the nature of the journey; they are accommodated so as to appear as the narrative purpose of the play.

The two plays contain, however, many moments that contribute little to plot or to characterization, thus presenting a mixture of forms; the overabundance of their materials belongs mainly to episodic-type plays. The four friends of *Le Tricycle* indulge in the richest variety of childlike games found in Arrabal's theatre; the action of the drama is constantly interrupted by this superfluous substance which delays the progression of a plot that, nevertheless, exists.

*Fando et Lis* also incorporates a number of episodes having little relation to the absurd journey to Tar, in particular those resulting from the discussion with Namur, Mitaro, and Toso – the three persons that Fando and Lis encounter along the way. Toso is the practical person; Namur and Mitaro are Arrabal's version of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Together, they turn everything into a play with words. The hybrid form of *Le Tricycle* and of *Fando et Lis* anticipates Arrabal's firmer espousal of the episodic form, beginning with *Oraison* and *Le Cimetièrè des voitures*.

After *Oraison*, a drama with only one episode, we must proceed to episodic plays with a plurality of parts which bring us to a central aspect of the episodic form: the coordination of basic structures. We noted that an episode of play is directly related to a schema that in turn could give rise to a series of new moments of play. *Prometheus Bound* affords a clear example of this case since the visits of Io, Oceanos, and Hermes expand the
drama through new episodes dependent on a single basic structure; the presentation of monologues making manifest the sufferings inflicted by the gods. It is also possible to envision a series of episodes or events of play, all produced by different schemas. Even though such a situation is normal in principle, its transposition to theatre becomes problematic, for a drama made of a series of episodes, all operating under different schemas, would tend to produce a Dionysian confusion to which an audience would find difficult to relate. An Apollinian constraint has to be introduced in order to coordinate somehow the separate parts. Two alternatives become immediately evident: link in some way all the episodes or unify the different schemas. Plays like The Birds or Le Jeu de la feuillée of Adam le Bossu use the first type of Apollinian constraint: their episodes are linked together without strict unification of their schemas. This kind of drama is not self-explanatory and could hardly be followed by an audience requiring the logical linking of a plot; it needs a context already familiar to the public, usually provided by a celebration. Barring this, an episodic drama would have to depend on very simple structures that could be recognized easily by the public and would have to deal with generally familiar material. In this case, the armature conforms to the second type of Apollinian constraint: making the drama rely on unified schemas. Arrabal's episodic plays depend mainly on this second alternative.

Arrabal uses a variety of armatures to shape his episodic plays; Le Cimetière des voitures is particularly rich in such structures. The action takes place during a timeless night, whose silence is broken at the beginning by Dila asking the dwellers of an automobile graveyard to go to bed, while she briskly rings a little bell; the play concludes at dawn as Dila appears again, ringing a bell and asking everyone to get up. The drama explodes within the confines of the night as if it could occur only during a time dominated by dreams and nightmares when visions come alive.

The night is one of Arrabal's favorite settings; however, only in Le Cimetière does it serve as a strong structuring element. La Grande Revue du XXe siècle also begins at dusk and ends at dawn. But here, the structuring operates more casually, as if it were just a setting for the play without the punctuation of an opening
and a closing influencing all levels of the play. In *Le Tricycle* and *Le Grand Cérémonial*, the night is again chosen to locate the action in time, but in these plays night does not come after dusk, nor does it terminate at dawn. Specifications about the time of the day are scarce and replaced by plays of darkness and light indicated through stage directions.

The night in *Le Cimetière* acts as an independent schema, one not resulting from a plot; the episodes in the play do not exert any control over the structure. Whereas in a drama like Claudel's *Partage de midi* the temporal moments of noon and midnight are integral parts of poetic passages that progressively acquire a particular significance, the night of *Le Cimetière* does not achieve such a signifying purpose; it is a separate entity unindividuated by the episodes of the play.

An armature of a more abstract nature can be found in *Le Cimetière*. The second character to appear is Tiossido, a runner identified by the number 456, coached by an old woman named Lasca who insistently gives him advice as she marks the pace of the race. During most of the first act, this couple is distanced from the events around them; they are seen crossing the stage periodically, running from right to left, constantly engaged in their own private race. As they appear for the seventh time, Tiossido falls exhausted in the middle of the stage, no longer able to run. Suddenly, as this seventh "day" of their race is about to conclude, they become lovers and rent space in a graveyard car so that they can spend the night together. After this grotesque juxtaposition of opposites — a young man and an old woman falling in love — often encountered in Arrabal's theatre, the couple enters into the world of the other characters.

In the second act, Tiossido and Lasca emerge from the car dressed as policemen. They are immediately informed of the whereabouts of Emanou, the fugitive trumpet player; this sets them off in pursuit of the criminal. Again the couple starts crossing the stage periodically from right to left, now dressed in their police uniforms and pushing a bicycle. They capture Emanou during their third raid and carry him off the stage. Later they appear carrying Emanou tied to the bicycle as if crucified and cross the stage from right to left. At this point the play is about to end: dawn arrives as Dila ringing
The Festive Play of Arrabal

her bell calls on everyone to get up. Tiossido and Lasca make a final entrance running from right to left but this time Lasca is the athlete bearing the number 456 and Tiossido is her coach.

The play of Lasca and Tiossido provides a structural rhythm in seven movements during the first act, then an interlude linking the first and second act as they find lodging in a car, followed by an overture where Emanou is denounced, starting the cyclic search that ends with his arrest. The second act is punctuated by the three appearances of the couple searching for the fugitive, a finale where Lasca and Tiossido carry off Emanou, and a coda that repeats an inverted version of the beginning of the schema since the two figures have interchanged roles. This trajectory within Le Cimetièrè does not constitute a plot in the Aristotelian sense of the term, nor is it a subplot, since it does not obey any causal ordering that would help to substantiate a sequence of action.

A ludic process recalling the play of Lasca and Tiossido appears again in later works of Arrabal, in the form of rituals of initiation, as in Ars Amandi, or of rhythmical progressions ending cyclically with an inverted beginning as in L'Architecte et l'empereur d'Asyrie and Le Jardin des délîces. L'Architecte begins with the arrival of the emperor on an island after his plane has crashed. He encounters the architect who happens to be the only inhabitant of the island and asks him for help. But all the architect can do is mutter in horror "Fee! Fee! Feega! Feega! Fee! Fee!" (T, p.7).

A new tableau begins immediately after this incident, carrying the action two years forward. At this time the emperor is about to finish teaching the architect all he knows through a series of games involving a variety of impersonations and role playing. As a final game, the architect is to eat the emperor; he does so, and as he eats his former master, the architect becomes the emperor. The architect-turned-emperor seems to be happy with his new situation and starts singing. Suddenly an architect arrives asking for help because he is the lone survivor of a plane crash. Horrified, the emperor starts muttering the same words pronounced by the architect at the beginning of the play. The drama ends in an inverted beginning with the possibility of an infinite repetition of the same structure.
Le Jardin des délices also presents this inversion but in a more rudimentary way. The beautiful Laïs lives with a person that is half man, half beast, and able to mutter only a few words. This creature named Zénon is in love with her, but its feelings are not reciprocated. Eventually Laïs falls in love with Zénon. They both climb into a giant eggshell where Zénon proceeds to eat the jam inside a pot carried by Laïs. The content of this jar turns out to be her soul, placed there by a former friend of hers. As a result, the play ends with Laïs stuttering words of love and Zénon singing with a clear voice.

In Alain Schifres's Entretiens avec Arrabal, Arrabal comments on the importance of the use of such abstract structures as armatures for his plays: "I feel that mathematics plays a large role in the elaboration of my dramas.... I am sure that there is a very close relationship between play-writing and algebra, let alone chess. The same holds true for set theory: used skillfully, it gives me a sense of tranquility and calmness at the very moment when I act in total confusion.... Set theory allows me to use whatever materials I want, and establish connections within this total freedom" (pp. 142-43). Arrabal's freedom as a playwright is located within the constraints of the medium chosen for creation and his desire to play with anything he wants. He is not attracted, however, by the total confusion of the "happening," a form cherished by Alexandro Jodorowsky, a co-founder of the Panic. Instead, Arrabal chooses to use simple and solid armatures as pre-text for his chaotic play. The dramas he creates have the appearance of unified bodies and contain at the same time swarms of elements conglomerated into separate parts, hardly ever coming to terms with each other.

It needs to be stressed that the Apollinian order found in an episodic drama appears somewhat superfluous for it does not follow from a necessary and causal relationship among the elements of the play, and at the same time it becomes essential for obtaining a cohesive drama and not a total Dionysian chaos. This results in a fundamental distinction between basic structure and plot. A plot tends to produce a careful and logical selection of elements so that the trajectory of the play seems to result from the causal relationship among its different components — in this case, the substance of
drama is subordinated to plot. But the selection of adequate basic structures allows for a freer exploration of a body of material often extracted from the playwright's world. These elements can thus be ordered into a drama without eliminating the raw forms of the original substance. In this case, the elements are not selected and molded into a plot but rather they are made manifest in a coarse and freer way through the play founded by the basic structure.

In more Aristotelian terms, the basic structures lack the powerful elements of attraction termed peripeties and discoveries. Nevertheless, they do provide dramas with a strong sense of unity without relying on complication and denouement. The substance of episodic-type dramas has to accommodate to fewer constraints than plot-oriented plays. But this added freedom places a heavier burden on the skills of the playwright to create dramas that are attractive to spectators.

*Ars Amandi* and *Le Lai de Barabbas* are one-act plays structured upon schemas comparable to the mechanism of rituals of initiation. Instead of ending with an inverted beginning, these plays conclude as they began, leaving everything unchanged except the protagonist, for he undergoes an initiation throughout the drama. As the play ends, the ritual schema is ready to begin working again on future "victims."

The ritual of initiation does not make itself manifest as a ritual until the end. Another schema is needed in order to make the protagonist move more willingly through the successive steps of the hidden ceremony and to capture the attention of the spectator. This is accomplished by establishing an initial mystery that entraps the protagonist in the mechanisms of the ritual. As a modern Perceval, Giafar in *Le Lai de Barabbas* is obsessed by a quest; he must find his beloved Sylda whom he met mysteriously before the beginning of the drama and brought back to life at the opening of the play by kissing her in a reenactment of the Sleeping Beauty. Sylda vanishes shortly after her revival, but the mechanism of the ritual has already been set in motion and Giafar, prey to his obsessive quest, will be caught up in a series of situations beyond his control, punctuated by his repeated inquiries as to the whereabouts of Sylda. Her final reappearance is not a consequence of Giafar's search; she becomes manifest
again in the manner dictated by the ritual process when it is about to reach the end of its cyclic trajectory.

In *Ars Amandi*, Fridigan is first seen looking for his friend Erasme Marx who had just disappeared. His search leads him to Lys, an intriguingly charming woman, and to her servants Bana and Ang, a strange duo comparable to Kardo and Malderic of *Le Lai de Barabbas*. All three take Fridigan through a series of curious episodes propelled by the discoveries of traces of Erasme Marx that renew Fridigan's interest in the search. But Fridigan is overpowered by the events; in the process he falls in love with Lys, to the point that he agrees to die for her. She leads him without delay to an operating room where he suddenly enters into another space and finally encounters his friend Erasme Marx. The quest is over; the last scene is a repetition of the initial image of the play, a view of the giant body of Lys covered in certain parts by clusters of little dots. It becomes clear that Fridigan and Erasme Marx — whose unsettling juxtaposition of names evokes man's quest — are to be counted now among those human "dots" happily lost on the giant naked body of the woman as a result of the ritual that structures the play.

Within the hidden dynamics of a ceremony, the recurrent mention in *Le Lai de Barabbas* and *Ars Amandi* of a search for a missing person affords a rhythmical point of reference which serves to keep the attention of the spectators focused on the action, relating them constantly to a familiar moment. Meanwhile the ritual schema of the two plays progresses toward its culmination. Only at the end of the dramas would an unprepared audience realize that the plays were built on rituals of initiation. This final discovery makes the audience perceive the totality of the episodic play as a coherent whole. After Giafar is initiated into knowledge and taken away, Sylda lies dead on a bed, as she did at the opening of the drama. Knocks are heard on the door anticipating the entrance of another person who will follow Giafar's fate. At that moment one might hear a spectator shout: "don't come in!"

*Le Cimetière des voitures* contains yet another structuring component: the biblical mystery of the passion of Christ. The characters in the play become modern biblical figures. Emanou, the Christ figure, recalls, by his name, Isaiah's prophecy: "the virgin shall be
with child and bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall be living on curds and honey by the time he learns to reject the bad and choose the good" (Isaiah 7:14-15). He was born in a manger of a poor mother, kept warm by the breath of a cow and a donkey and soon became a trumpet player. His mission is to play for the poor people living backstage, so that they may also be able to dance and be happy; he will be arrested for that crime. Fodère and Topé, his fellow musicians, are his apostles. Fodère becomes Peter as three times he disowns Emanou who had been arrested previously by Lasca and Tioskido. Topé resembles Judas Iscariot when he denounces Emanou for a reward offered by the police. Dila represents Mary Magdalene, the former prostitute who later followed Jesus, and at the end she also incarnates Veronica as she washes the face of Jesus/Emanou. Milos finally becomes Simon the Cyrenian as he helps push the bicycle on which Emanou is "crucified."

Such use of a well-known religious story for the construction of a play is in the tradition of medieval mystery and miracle plays. A person not familiar with the religious context would not be able to draw a consequential story from the drama. Nevertheless, the life of Jesus orders the play so that a spectator with the necessary background knowledge would immediately perceive the unity of the drama, a unity borrowed from an external source serving as pre-text.

Whereas Emanou is a trumpet player who at the age of thirty left his parents in order to bring music to the poor, Tosan in *Et ils passèrent des menottes aux fleurs* is the revolutionary image of Jesus, who left his wife and children to fight for the freedom of his people. He was a regional leader and, upon his arrest, sacrifices his life rather than reveal any details of the revolutionary organization. Tosan's jailing is announced among the prisoners at the start of the play; they know that the one who will redeem the oppressed from the domination of the ruling class that has established a modern form of Inquisition is now among them. This saintlike figure has the power even to cause miracles: the mute prisoner Pronos regains his speech in order to beg that Tosan's life be spared.

*Le Cimetière* ends with Emanou being carried away tied to a bicycle on his way to Calvary; *Menottes* takes
the drama of the passion a step further and finishes with the resurrection of Tosan: he urinates as he dies in the garrot and his urine, collected by Falidia in a basin, turns into blood that is to convey the grace of redemption to the prisoners who wash their faces with it. The play ends in an apotheosis of liberation: "All actors wash their faces with this blood. Amidst joyful songs, men and women untie Tosan and carry him in procession. They take him to the highest area of the theatre where they embrace Tosan who is now alive and happy. They sing together the end of repression and the beginning of a new era" (p.254).3

Besides the schema based on the passion and resurrection of Christ, _Menottes_ contains a second structure of a new type. This armature is built upon the continuous alternation between dialogue and dreams or memories elicited by one prisoner at a time. Sudden blazes of light or moments of darkness mark these alternations. The dream episodes occur under an artificial type of lighting that gives them a different tone and places them in sharp contrast to the prison episodes that occur in a barren white light. During the oneiric passages, the actor who remembers an episode from his past remains dressed as he was; but the others who intervene in the sequence dress according to the requirements of the scene: "When the actors play the part of oppressors they are to wear hoods. When it is neither a prisoner nor an oppressor they are to wear a hat — for example, a top hat. When they adopt a role different from their own but of the same kind they will put on a plastic mask to disguise themselves" (T, p.4).

These stage devices effect an ordering of the episodes, giving a rhythm to their succession, which helps the spectator gain familiarity with mechanisms that construct the play; his attention can then focus more easily on the diverse elements presented. This procedure can be considered as a strategy of communication. The use of precise structures not only helps Arrabal to create a play out of a highly heterogeneous set of elements but also establishes a better communication with the spectator who is given schemas for assimilating the episodes in the drama. By entering into the rhythm of the play or by discovering the mechanisms that structure the stage occurrences, the spectator becomes an accomplice in the drama. He becomes a participant in the
play which leads him to absorb what is presented, more through his senses than by cognition.

In *Concert dans un oeuf*, a strong rhythmical armature is also at work through the rigid and geometrical structuring of its episodes. The play is composed of two acts, each containing seven tableaux. The odd-numbered scenes of both acts present a continuous action involving Filtos and Li, a Man, two women, and the voice of an old woman. The even-numbered tableaux are silent episodes played by an old couple and a young couple; they constitute a separate series of self-contained actions having no direct relation to the odd-numbered series. Slides are projected between tableaux, generally in a series of six, for periods of ten, fifteen, or twenty seconds each; the majority are pictures of full views and details of paintings by Bosch and Breughel the Elder.

The rhythmically invariable progression that orders the episodes in *Concert dans un oeuf* soon becomes familiar to the spectator, turning the play into repeated appearances of similar elements involved in new situations.

Each of the even-numbered episodes is a small drama in itself, centered upon a particular situation. Each strikes the spectator as an image, as a tableau in the proper sense of the term; the absence of words is filled with loud background sounds such as the "deafening sound of a tempestuous sea" (p.195); the lighting is invariable too: "brutal illumination: artificial light" (p.182).

*Concert dans un oeuf* is possibly Arrabal's most accomplished drama built mainly on a rhythmical progression; it combines both an action developed along separate episodes and a succession of powerful images framed by the projected paintings of Bosch and Breughel.

*La Grande Revue du XXe siècle* presents a new form of structuring in Arrabal's theatre, one that is never used again. The drama derives from a short story that opens and closes the play. A family-group living in total isolation in a desert kills someone who came near them driving a luxury car. Marie Satanas, one of the members of the group, whose deeply ambivalent name is not a reflection of her nature, finds in the car a book titled *Le XXe Siècle raconté par l'image* and proceeds to leaf through it. She begins to live the scenes in the book, thus giving rise to six different dream epi-
sodes that constitute the main body of the play. The reading begins at dusk after the crime and ends at dawn when a police helicopter spots Marie Satanas and captures her.

Two sung passages are included in the prologue and epilogue, a device widely used in the medieval epic and drama. In the prologue of *La Grande Revue* the actors sing about the imminent arrival of Marie Satanas and give the titles of the six tableaux that comprise the program of the play. Next they urge the spectators to join in the play and enjoy it. In the epilogue, the actors sing a farewell to the public, asking everyone to send their friends to see the play so that the spectacle may continue to be shown. All this is done in a vulgar and merry tone characteristic of the way in which the *jongleurs* and other medieval artists would present their works to an audience.

The six tableaux are arranged as a revue, that is, as a succession of comic and satirical sketches with songs and revelry that review a certain period, the twentieth century in this case. Arrabal borrows this popular form of drama as a basic structure to order a disparate wealth of material into six skits bearing different titles ranging from "Hiroshima and Einstein" to "The Crimes and the Moon." The play progresses almost as a dance, with the different steps provided by the presentation of conflicting images and inversions of points of view; the cadence of the ensemble is given by the succession of individual tableaux.

The tableaux are made of series of connected episodes, a kind of linkage hardly ever used before by the playwright. The first tableau shows Truman on a navy vessel rejoicing as the atomic bomb is dropped on a large-scale model of Hiroshima from a plane whose front is the head of a woman. The bomb explodes; Truman and his men toast the event with champagne and sing an ode to Hiroshima. Einstein is then seen in a corner saying that if he knew what they were going to do with his theory of relativity, he would much rather have been a plumber. Suddenly, the plumbers' union comes on stage dancing and singing. The chief of the union proclaims Einstein plumber honoris causa with rights to retirement and social security.

The situations played out in the revue change before they can become ironic. Satire is evident but is not
exploited by having the situations develop logically to ironic resolutions—something that would be incompatible with an episodic form.

An episodic play need not be a pure manifestation of this form. Though articulated by such form, the episodes may still contain narrative components embedded in them. The odd-numbered episodes in *Concert dans un œuf* trace the faint plot outlined by Bernard Gille in his *Fernando Arrabal*. Gille notes that Filtos loves Li, but she is too sensuous and prefers the Man who attracts her physically. Both Filtos and Li suffer, but Filtos is finally vanquished by his rival. What holds the drama together is not a plot such as this but an armature made of small units that are linked. In *Concert dans un œuf* the very plot is broken down and dispersed precisely by that which gives the drama a different kind of structure: the rhythmic alternation of episodes. The public's attention then shifts from following a logical ordering of events to sensing the events.

*La Grande Revue* also has a short narrative component contained in the prologue and epilogue. It is the story of Marie Satanas beginning with the murder of the man in the Cadillac at the hands of her family and ending with her final arrest by a police squad that brings her back to civilization. This story helps to situate the moment when Marie Satanas starts leafing through *Le XXe Siècle raconté par l'image* which, in turn, gives rise to the main body of the play in six tableaux and also provides an ending for the drama; the narrative in this case becomes a container for the play and acts somewhat as a second armature.

In 1966 the Argentine director Víctor García created in Dijon a version of *Le Cimetière des voitures* which incorporated three shorter dramas into the play: *Oraison*, *Les Deux Bourreaux*, and *La Communion solennelle*. This production, admired by Arrabal, changed little of the text of *Le Cimetière*; it was ordered as follows: *Oraison*; *Le Cimetière des voitures*, act 1; *Les Deux Bourreaux*; *Le Cimetière des voitures*, act 2 up to page 69; *La Communion solennelle*; *Le Cimetière des voitures*, pages 69-71, and an added ending. The main change introduced by García occurs at the end of the play. He eliminated the coming of dawn with the appearance of Dila ringing a bell and Lasca and Tiossido crossing the stage as runner and coach in inverted roles. Instead
he started a procession from the moment Tiossido, Lasca, and Milos enter pushing Emanou "crucified." Odette Aslan narrated this modified ending:

The executioners whip Christ. Then he is tied to a motorcycle covered with violet paper, and taken in procession. All the characters follow him in disorder, wailing painfully as a discordant music plays among incongruous noises. García invented this procession to replace Arrabal's ending which consisted in having Milos and the two executioners carry Emanou away, tied to a bicycle.... Emanou crucified on the motorcycle is lifted in the air by means of a pulley, everyone kneels. The lights dim slowly. Then comes the tableau of Christ's resurrection. All stand up shouting and singing a fervent hallelujah. The Christ is brought down slowly and carried triumphantly. Final rejoicing. (P.338)

García reinforced one of the basic structures of Le Cimetière, namely, the simplified version of the biblical story of Christ, and made of it the basis for the extended drama, at the expense of all others. The night functions no longer as a schema, for the play does not end with the arrival of dawn. The schema of cyclic inversion established by the final entrance of Lasca and Tiossido, after having exchanged their roles, is absent as well; only the rhythmical play of this couple remains. García's addition of the resurrection of Emanou anticipated a similar ending used three years later by Arrabal in Menottes which also concludes on the optimistic note afforded by a resurrection scene as a last apotheotic moment of epiphany.

Le Cimetière des voitures created by García clearly reveals the episodic form of Arrabal's drama. By making full use of the potentials of the form for juxtaposition and incorporation of new material, García added the three short plays to Le Cimetière by showing them as tableaux within the longer drama. This procedure is reminiscent of the technique of interpolation used by Arrabal in Concert dans un oeuf, which produces a rhythm stemming from a careful and almost geometrical ordering of episodes. It is interesting to note that through this technique of juxtaposition, a nonepisodic autobiographical melodrama such as Les Deux Bourreaux can be successfully turned into a self-contained tableau.
within a larger episodic drama, showing that as long as plots do not take over the entirety of a play, they can have a restricted existence within an episodic drama.

The incorporation of three short plays into *Le Cimetière* neither adds to the action of the later play nor helps establish a narrative trajectory; such additions do not contribute to the creation or clarification of a plot. What the shorter dramas add to the longer play is substance, and this is possible for two reasons detailed in the next chapter: 1) the materials used in Arrabal's plays appear mainly in an inchoate state which allows for the addition of more material without redundancy; 2) these plays have common elements; they contain similar pieces taken from Arrabal's dramatic world.
Chapter Three

The World in Pieces

An analysis of the main topics that recur in the episodic theatre of Arrabal will approach the question of what is assimilated in his drama and in what form this material appears. Such observations will allow us to formulate further remarks concerning the functional characteristics of the episodic form as Arrabal uses it to mediate his relation as a dramatist to the world.

A primitive cry is heard in *Le Grand Cérémonial* and continues to resound even in Arrabal's *Jeunes Barbares d'aujourd'hui*: "Mama, mama!" The cry is originally uttered in the darkness by Cavanosa, whose name is an anagram of Casanova, and is followed immediately by strident police sirens that are soon swallowed up in the night. This paratactic moment opens a drama that gains a strong narrative component which tends to overshadow the episodic potentials of the play.

The image of the mother is first presented in Arrabal's earlier one-act play *Les Deux Bourreaux*. She appears protective toward her children, wishing only the best for them, even if for her that means killing their father. Mauricio, one of the sons, comes to his father's defense and rebels against his mother only to find himself confronting a seductive figure that is both loving and perverse.

*Le Deux Bourreaux* is largely based on Arrabal's life, with Mauricio being a distant but recognizable reflection of the playwright. On the night of July 16, 1936, Arrabal's father was arrested in Melilla for being republican. Placed on death row for eight months, his sentence was commuted to thirty years in prison. He was transferred to Burgos. Six years later, prison officials declared he died of exposure after escaping. His body was not returned, casting doubt on the truth of the official version. Arrabal's mother blamed her husband for allowing his politics to bring about his family's
suffering. His figure was cut out of family portraits and the children were not taken to see him in prison. When seventeen, Fernando was shocked to discover letters and photographs of his father hidden in a closet. For five years he did not speak to his mother whom he adored (Entretiens, pp.13-17).

Even though Les Deux Bourreaux is not strictly autobiographical, its main source of factual and emotive material is Arrabal's biography. The playwright is not concerned with reconstructing the past factually; the drama shows, however, a play with motivations and ambivalent feelings stemming from past events.

Le Grand Cérémonial might be seen as a later stage in the life of Mauricio/Cavanosa. It tells of his breaking away from the clutches of a selfish, protective, and domineering mother through the love of Lys. It is, however, in L'Architecte et l'empereur d'Assyrie that we find the best presentation of Arrabal's different visions of the mother. An amalgam of contrasting parental images is played out through a swirling flow of episodes in a manner that could not be captured by narrative trajectories such as those found in Les Deux Bourreaux and Le Grand Cérémonial.

The conflicting images of the mother are broken down into pieces disseminated throughout the episodic play, and these pieces are presented as gamelike moments where the architect and the emperor impersonate different roles in order to bring forth parental obsessions. The architect impersonates the mother three times, always portraying a protective and understanding woman, especially in the first and third instances. The emperor/son complains that he is unhappy and alone, that everybody hates him:

Mama, where are you? It's me, I'm all alone here, everyone's forgotten me.... Mama, everybody hates me, they've abandoned me on this island.... Mama, don't go, always stay with me.... Dear little mommy, kiss me. (T, p.15)

Mama, I'm so unhappy.... Will you always comfort me?... Look! I'm a banana. Peel me and eat me if you want to.... Everybody hates me.... Mama, let me sit at your feet like when I was little. (T, p.80)

The architect/mother comforts her son by assuring him that she will always be by his side to protect him, then
kisses him, and later puts him to sleep by singing a lullaby:

My child, what's the matter? You're not alone, it's me, your mama... I'm here to protect you. You mustn't feel alone. Come on, tell your mother everything... Yes, my child, I'll stay here with you, day and night. (T, p.15)

Child, I'm here to comfort you... Come, I'll rock you on my bosom. My child, don't cry. Poor little thing. Everybody hates him because he's better than they are. They all envy him. (T, p.80)

However, during the mock trials, the witnesses present a different view of the mother-son relation. The architect/wife testifies about her husband the emperor:

He hated her like a devil and he loved her like an angel. He lived only for her. Do you think it's normal for a man of his age to hang by his mother's apron-strings day and night? He needed a mother, not a wife. When he hated her he'd do anything to annoy her, even get married. I was the victim of that vengeance. (T, p.59)

Shortly before [his mother's] disappearance they went through a period of violent hatred. Then his mother requested a meeting which my husband agreed to under the following conditions: first, that his mother pay him a very large sum for every minute of the conversation; second, that she suck him with what he called her "maternal mouth," thereby committing the most infamous sin. (T, p.70)

The architect/Olivia de Kant adds a macabre detail that took place before the disappearance of the mother: "While she slept her son crept in and carefully placed a fork, salt, and a napkin next to the bed — and a butcher knife. He carefully lowered it to his mother's throat and at the moment when he dealt the terrible blow which was to decapitate her, she moved aside. It seems that the Accused, instead of feeling ill at ease, laughed like a madman" (T, p.76). The emperor finally confesses his crime — imaginary or not. He killed his mother with a hammer, then cut her in pieces and gave them as food to his dog who was the "chien-loup" of children's fairy tales. For this he asks to be pun-
ished; the architect must kill him with a knife and eat him while wearing the clothes of the emperor's mother, kept in a large suitcase bearing a caption that reads: "Clothing of my adored little mother" (T, p.88).

Amid this hallucinated succession of revelations and impersonations which negate distinctions between fantasy and reality, we are told by the emperor of his experience immediately after he split open his mother's skull with the hammer: "What a strange sight, it looked as if vapors were escaping from her shattered head, and I thought I saw a lizard crawl out of the wound. He got on the table facing me and stared at me fixedly, his goiterly throat moving up and down. Examining him more closely, I could see that his face was my face. Then when I tried to catch him he disappeared as if he were only a phantom" (T, pp.81-82).

The problems between the emperor and his mother are not presented through a causal sequence that could afford the spectator some explanation. On the contrary, the parental episodes are played out separately from each other, alternating between tender and gory images, without achieving a final resolution of the situation within the play. Elements presented this way are in a raw state for they remain unshaped; the drama does not force the material into patterns that arrest its effervescence.

The mother appears as a strong ambivalent element in Arrabal's drama. The sole mention of her name can lead a character such as the emperor to curl up into a fetal position, delighted, as if an invisible being was rocking him, and can make Tenniel say, in *Jeunes Barbares d'aujourd'hui*, when Chester impersonates the mother: "Put me in your womb, mama, and keep me always enclosed as if I were your calf of dung" (p.13). The image of the mother is also capable of driving characters into a violent rage, filled with obsessions of murder. She is an angel and a devil, a source of life and a castrating figure, a protective virginal being and an incestuous monster, but above all she is a mirror placed before her son reflecting his own mystery.

The ambivalent tensions present in the relations between parents and their children have fascinated artists of all times and given substance to plays since, at least, Aeschylus's *Oresteia*. The horror of Goya's *Saturno* shown devouring an offspring, and of Oedipus's
incest and parricide, prevail as a poignant dramatic theme. This parental material has an equally direct appeal to all audiences, since it can be readily assimilated to personal nightmares and fantasies. On the boundaries of common interactions between parents and their children lie insistent questions of life and death which can lead to most extreme cases of anguish, violence and tenderness. The skill of the playwright consists in making those dramas that use ambivalent parental materials communicate with our deepest fears. Arrabal's broken presentation of raw substance has a great potential to establish successfully such a communication at an emotive rather than intellective level.\(^1\)

In Arrabal's plays up to and including Oraison, we encounter characters who are largely still like children in the sense that they have not yet been initiated into the laws that govern adult life.

One of the child's main cognitive tools is play. He learns about the world through the egocentric process of assimilating it. The child samples the world through his natural ludic tendencies but is also forced to accommodate to external constraints by experiencing the displeasure or pain that mark the boundaries of his play. Only at a later stage will he be able to begin internalizing mentally his cognitive activities, thus removing himself from physical pain and also pleasure.

Oraison describes the entrance of Fidio and Lilbé into a system of rules that have to be followed in order to be good. They see this as a game that will take them out of their boredom; if they play well, they could attain a fun-filled paradise. The rules of this game are given in the Bible, which they see also as a book with nice stories about the creation of the world and Christ. There they learn that they will not be able to sleep together, lie, kill, or steal; all they have to do is perform good deeds. They suspect, however, that this game may also turn out to be boring.

The childhood described in Oraison, as well as in earlier plays, is one dominated by an innocent and egocentric desire to be happy—a refreshing but cruel perspective, for these people do not perceive that their games can inflict pain and even kill. Mita and Climado in Le Tricycle do not see anything wrong with killing an old man for his money; war is treated as a game by M. and Mme Tepan in Pique-nique en campagne. But pain and
death are always present, marking the limits of play.

The innocence and poetry suggested at first by Arrabal's childlike characters is rendered fully ambivalent since such spirit is also conducive to shocking crimes whose horror does not become apparent to their playful perpetrators. The spectator will be struck by the image of Fidio and Lilbé talking about being good as they stand next to the coffin of their baby whom they killed for fun, and realizing casually that, perhaps, what they did was bad. This unsettling vision of a childlike state is not reduced to the details of a particular situation. In all its ambivalence and without individuating details, the material is presented raw, allowing the audience to absorb it directly on a more personal level.

Like Fidio and Lilbé, the architect and the emperor of Assyria act by playing. The emperor communicates his knowledge, visions, and memories by role playing, so that the two can recreate a series of episodes stored in the emperor's mind. This game not only serves to impart all the information the emperor wishes to reveal, it also keeps alive the tension, anguish, and violence associated with the visions. By playing, distinctions between present and past, real and imaginary, vanish: the emperor and his roles merge into one. The architect, also caught in the emperor's play, does not hesitate to enact the final episode: dressed as the mother he eats the emperor-son. Play, as an activity, is shown to be not as innocent and fictitious as it would seem at first. Play can be beautiful and frightening for children as well as for adults. It possesses the same ambivalence of dreams—those plays of the subconscious—but on a physical level.

Whereas the plays just mentioned show characters behaving in childlike ways, *Le Jardin des délices* presents a woman confronting her childhood which returns to haunt her by means of vivid images and dreams. The actress Laïs is assailed by visions of Miharca and Téloc, two former friends who materialize her memories and fantasies as if they were real. Laïs becomes entrapped in the space of dreams where she takes on the role of spectator-participant assisting to a reenactment of past episodes. In this respect, her relation to the visions she witnesses is somewhat similar to that of a spectator confronted by *Oraison*, for example, except that the latter does not get involved physically in the drama. The
substance of *Le Jardin des délices* is also more personal since it deals with Laïs's past.

Through the mediation of the protagonist's past, *Le Jardin des délices* confronts the audience with the rawness of childhood experiences. This past is ambivalent and fractured since it is not reconstructed by a historical mind but is the product of Laïs's possession by emotive moments returning from the past. In order to free herself from these haunting remembrances, Laïs has to enter the imaginary space of her memories. Then, by actively mingling fantasies and memories, she can possibly change the emotive landscape of her past. To achieve this play, the material is taken in its full rawness and ambivalence — as meaningful clay to be molded again.

Laïs also is an image from Arrabal's repertory of woman figures that often combine conflicting traits. The image of the woman in the theatre of Arrabal is a dominant one, inaccessible, and veiled in mystery.

There is a difference between presenting feminine characters with a hidden psychology whose actions are constantly veiled in the mystery of egotistic desires, and women who are not unified characters but juxtapositions of conflicting images. The ambivalence of Arrabal's principal feminine characters in his episodic theatre is not of a psychological nature; it stems rather from a refusal to compose unified figures that would stand together by themselves without breaking down as contradictory evidence. Dila, in *Le Cimetière des voitures*, is already an ambiguous figure. She assumes at times a dominant role with respect to Milos and the residents of the graveyard; otherwise she submits to their wishes and lets herself be punished as if she were a little girl. But it is with Tasla in *La Bicyclette du condamné* that Arrabal's drama begins to present the fully ambivalent image of woman.

*La Bicyclette* progresses on two levels, one inverting the roles found in the other. Viloro is the only figure that does not change in such a way throughout the drama but continues playing the piano and improving on the C scale. The figure that changes the most on stage while passing from one level of reality to the other is Tasla. First she appears as an innocent woman filled with a platonic love for Viloro; both dream of a joyful future together and exchange gifts. In other episodes she be-
comes a lavish and voluptuous person who tries to seduce the prisoner Paso behind Viloro's back. These two modes of behavior in the same person are reconciled in a last strange episode; Tasla tenderly embraces Viloro, who had just been stabbed by Paso, and puts him in a coffin, showing great love for the dead man, then she rides away on her bicycle carrying the coffin.

The woman is a source of both love and violence; she is someone to be adored and feared. Giafar, in *Le Lai de Barabbas*, encounters such a figure. At first her name is Sylda; she appears as a virgin sorceress who enchants Giafar and traps him in the mechanisms of a ritual that unfolds throughout the play. Giafar is brought to the point where he declares himself ready to risk everything for her. Sylda then chains him to a bed and leaves him behind. Another woman comes to Giafar. Her name is Arlys. She shows great kindness for the unfortunate Giafar. He, in turn, soon feels at ease with Arlys and reveals to her his rather platonic love for Sylda whom he deeply admired and feared. Gradually Giafar falls in love with Arlys who then turns out to be Sylda in disguise. Thus Giafar is brought to the culmination of a ceremony amounting to a fall into knowledge.

The double figure Sylda/Arlys finds its counterpart in two separate characters of *L'Enterrement de la sardine*, Altagore and Lys. Altagore, like Sylda, possesses a certain essential knowledge of the world which she tries to communicate in mysterious ways to the male character. This learning process cannot function through words alone; on the contrary, the subject has to experience the different steps that lead to knowledge, which amounts to going through a ritual of initiation. Giafar must also be introduced to sexual love, but this initiation cannot be performed by the same woman. Sylda disguised as Arlys has to carry out the second part of the initiation, or else a different woman (Lys) is needed.

Lys, the female protagonist of *Ars Amandi*, is Arrabal's total image of woman. She appeared already as a giant statue in *Fêtes et rites de la confusion*, where groups of people brought her offerings. The opening and closing images of *Ars Amandi* present Lys as a giant naked woman with swarms of what seem to be insects on different parts of her body. The drama reveals that
these insects are people living in ecstasy on her figure. Without knowledge of it, Fridigan, the male protagonist, will undergo a process of initiation carried out by Lys — in human size — and her two servants Bana and Ang, which eventually will place him on the gigantic body of the woman. Lys appears successively as a mother-like figure who looks after Bana and Ang; as their cruel tormentor forcing them to mislead Fridigan; as a heavenly figure; as a Goyesque sorceress. Fridigan is drawn into this world partly because he is curious, partly because he is searching for his lost friend Erasme Marx; but he falls deeply in love with Lys, to the point where he would do anything for her. Fridigan is forced to wallow in muck, and he still cries out his love for Lys; finally, she goes to him in the dirt where they seal their union. Fridigan soon joins his long-sought friend Erasme Marx, who seems to have undergone the same ritual of initiation before him, and they will live happily, along with everyone else, on the giant body of Lys shown as the world-turned-into-a-woman.

Among the central female figures of Arrabal's post-1956 theatre — excluding the mother-figures — Laïs of Le Jardin des délices stands as a notable exception to the dominant ambivalence that characterizes their actions. Possibly inspired by Santa Teresa de Avila, Arrabal chose a former nun-turned-actress to play the exorcism of childhood memories. Laïs represents the female equivalent of Fridigan and Giafar. All are protagonists free from unsolvable ambivalences and subject to the influence of strange figures who will trap them in an even stranger world where nothing can be taken for granted.

The women described here belong to such a world. They retain much of the dominant and castrating attitude of Arrabal's mother-figure but also offer the possibility of love without incest. The male protagonists can only approach them as if in a dream to learn about love and about life: Viloro, Giafar, and Fridigan fall into a labyrinth where pain leads to joy, death to life, and fear to love — a striking vision of the mystery of redemption.

Jean-Jacques Daetwyler, in Arrabal, quotes Domingo Semedo, director of the Lausanne production of L'Architecte et l'empereur d'Assyrie, as saying: "Yet I do not believe that Arrabal is an atheist. If he insults God,
it is precisely because he seeks to find Him through provocation; if he would lose an arm after having blasphemed, he would be the happiest person on earth" (p. 149). Semedo has touched upon a fundamental aspect of the playwright's sense of blasphemy. Nevertheless, Arrabal's religious sense cannot be reduced solely to a strategy of provocation aiming at revelation, for this would be the product of an intellectual perspective negated by the poignant and shocking ambivalence found in the treatment of sacred material in his episodic theatre.

When the architect first pronounces the word God, the emperor immediately thinks there is blasphemy involved. The architect repeats: "Long live God!" and a somewhat relieved emperor answers: "Long live God? Ah! Then I don't know if it's a sacrilege. One would have to read the *Summa Theologica* or at least the Bible in comic-book form" (T, p.29). This reply reveals, simultaneously, a serious concern for the act of blasphemy and an implicit mockery of theology that states the boundaries of the sacrilegious. But above the determination of whether or not an utterance is irreverent lies the question of the existence of God. The emperor sets out to play the existence of God on a pinball machine; one out of three wins means God exists. At a certain point he is on the verge of winning a game: "I got impatient, God was in my hands. I held the irrefutable proof of his existence. Farewell the great watchmaker, the supreme architect, the great master-of-ceremonies: God would exist and I was going to demonstrate it in the most definite way, my name would be spread in all theology manuals. An end to the councils, the lucubrations, the bishops and the doctors, I alone, I was going to discover everything. They would write about me in all the newspapers" (T, p.42). The emperor feels he has God in his hand, for he can determine whether he exists or not; at the same time, he wants God to exist and becomes wholly distressed after he loses all three games.

His next reaction is blasphemy. He tells the architect: "Do you know exactly what I do when I leave? I defecate in the most distinguished manner and with great euphoria. Then, with the product, using it as paint, I write: "God is a son of a bitch"... Do you think that someday he'll turn me into a pillar of salt?" (T, p.77). According to the Bible, sacrilege is supposed to be pun-
ished in any number of ways, yet God has not revealed himself through his wrath. So the emperor invites the architect to sing in duo even stronger irreverencies but this does not produce divine retribution either.

There is no clear posture toward God in this play; carefree mockery alternates with holy irreverence in a manner characteristic of Arrabal's juxtapositions of conflicting elements, which in this case also operates a reduction of the sacred to a popular and comic level: the Bible is seen in comic-book form, and God's existence is made to depend on the outcome of a pinball machine game. Arrabal's own religious posture, like that of the emperor, is dominated by doubt and contempt for institutionalized forms of worship. He expressed well this indeterminacy: "I think God is a myth like all others, but I cling to it strongly" (Entretiens, p.23).

Menottes contains two other religious elements often used by Arrabal: a free reconstruction of the passion of Christ played allegorically by Tosan, and the desecration of a Catholic Church that retains practices dating back to the Inquisition and supports fascism. If the status of God and Christ remain ambiguous in Arrabal's theatre, there is no doubt about the existence of a very strong condemnation of all dogmatisms and structures of authority found in the Church, often expressed in his drama through scatological episodes shattering the mystical veil of purity which protects and isolates the Church from the common world. One of Amiel's dreams exemplifies well this attitude. Amiel thinks about God with tenderness whereas the jailers are the ones who evidence profanity by talking about God "with whips" (T, p.26). This triggers a vision in Amiel's mind, involving a despotic priest who is later forced to eat his own testicles while praising the Lord.

The paratactic nature of episodic theatre allows the juxtaposition of a marked sense of sacredness with blasphemous forms of adoration. This union on equal terms of seemingly incompatible elements not only preserves Arrabal's ambivalent religious posture but gives it as such to the audience. It is for the spectator to absorb and mold in his own image this unsettling material. The two communion scenes in Menottes evidence this mode. First Amiel eats the food of his dead comrade so that he himself may live and begins his meal with the ritual words, "O Lord, permit me to eat of thy body and drink
of thy blood" (T, p.56). The second episode shows hu-
man communion in love: God is present in Amiel's sperm
and he feeds it to Lelia as they kneel, facing each
other. Amiel tells her: "This is my body which is given
to you. Take, eat — forever and ever. So be it" (T,
p.74). The contrasts are shocking and invigorating for
they bring into question and renew our sense of the sa-
cred, the profane, and their possible interplay.

At the heart of religion lies the mystery and fear of
death. The way in which death is treated accounts for
the tone of religious cults and their forms of worship.
In Arrabal's episodic theatre, death is frequent: Emanou
is crucified, Viloro is murdered, the architect kills
and eats the emperor, Tosan dies in the garrot. Never-
theless, death is overshadowed by a natural sense of op-
timism usually evidenced by resurrection. Víctor García
noted this tendency as he added a final resurrection
after the death of Emanou in his production of Le Cime-
tière des voitures. Tosan, in Menottes, comes back to
life to spread a sense of salvation. In L'Architecte et
l'empereur d'Assyrie, the emperor says that death is the
only event that lies beyond pure play and terminates it,
but this is not confirmed by the drama itself, since the
death of the emperor leads eventually to his resurrec-
tion in the architect's body and to the continuation of
game playing. Likewise, toward the end of La Bicyclette
du condamné, Viloro is killed. Tasla, who is greatly
responsible for his death, puts him in a coffin, and
before closing it, she embraces Viloro passionately.
Tasla exits carrying the coffin away with her bicycle.
Suddenly, after a long silence, laughter is heard. A
balloon rises and disappears in the flies to the sound
of children's innocent laughter and perfect scales
played on a piano.

Death, mixed with violence, is found in most of Ar-
rabal's theatre, but, in fact, it is not really there:
because of its ambivalent presentation, death is not
perceived as the end of life. Death is presented with
Goyesque intensity and is simultaneously negated by
images of salvation, resurrection, and rejoicing. It
should be stressed, however, that Arrabal's drama does
not portray a doctrine of salvation. Being episodic, it
does not create a unified picture, nor does it present a
coherent view. The sense of death is given to the audi-
ence together with a sense of salvation from total ex-
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tinction. Nevertheless, the ordering of such presenta-
tion does communicate optimism and hope.

Arrabal's treatment of religious elements reveals
doubt, faith, and a certain mysticism that seeks revela-
tion of the divine. This ambivalence is well expressed
by Arrabal himself: "I believe in God. This belief
makes the idea of death less harsh because it is not the
end. I am against the mediation of any religion; I am
a man very much against the catholic religion but I be-
lieve in God and I believe that God loves me and will
receive me. I trust that very much." Arrabal's state-
ment of belief is practically a prayer. His posture
becomes Faustian when we recall an earlier statement he
made to Schifres: "Dracula, there is a hero for me: the
man who never dies, that sleeps during the day and lives
at night, the man who procures eternal life. If Dracula
did exist, I would like him to bite me right away" (En-
tretiens, p.23).

The pieces of Arrabal's dramatic world are orches-
trated in a pictorial manner that avoids blending. The
parts are not resolved into a homogeneous whole but re-
main as chunks of matter — each part practically a unit
in itself. Such pictorial technique recalls the work of
Hieronymous Bosch and Pieter Breughel the Elder. The
presence of Bosch in Arrabal's work is quite explicit:
Concert dans un oeuf and Le Jardin des délices take
their names from paintings by Bosch; L'Enterrement de
la sardine — name taken from Goya's El entierro de la
sardina — is also called "Livre du nain Hiéronymous";
many of Bosch's images appear in the dramas, such as
couples entering into eggs or spheres, characters dis-
guised in various ways, and so on. Less apparent but
nevertheless strong is the presence of Breughel and Goya
in the playwright's work.

Arrabal first encountered the fantastic world of
these three artists in the Museo del Prado of Madrid.
Only a decade later would the influence of their vision
begin to surface. Arrabal's theatre drew from Bosch,
Breughel, and Goya a number of easily recognizable ele-
ments and tonalities; but, above all, he derived from
the two Flemish masters a peculiar sense of pictorial
composition that helped shape the episodic form of his
theatre.

Bosch's paintings result from acts of pure assimila-
tion (play), which produce a paratactic mixture of ele-
ments without concern for accommodating material into homogeneous images. The elements incorporated into the paintings have not been digested. They remain in relations of tension within the framework of an underlying pattern that holds together the ensemble. The Flemish proverb, for example, "The world is a hay mount. Everyone takes from it whatever he can seize," provides an armature for Breughel's The Hay Wagon which, in turn, is a juxtaposition of a vast number of separate scenes, all swirling around a hay wagon.

Breughel followed a system of composition similar to the one used by Bosch in the majority of his works; both Flemish painters captured the world in pieces. Arrabal shares in the fantastic imagery of these two Flemish painters who render oneiric visions with realistic precision and mix heterogeneous elements to produce ensembles rich in details. In this respect, the playwright is closer to Bosch and Breughel than he is to Goya whose works present mainly unified visions.

Nevertheless, Arrabal found in Goya a series of poignant images that he could assimilate into episodic moments. Images from Goya's "Los desastres de la guerra" permeate Et ils passerent des menottes aux fleurs; the nightmares of his etchings breed the playwright's phantasms; the tone of Goya's art becomes intertwined with Arrabal's childhood memories of Spain to produce series of violent remembrances which he brings forth in the episodic dramas.

Concert dans un œuf takes its title from the drawing by Bosch that depicts seven musicians singing with their bodies half-trapped inside the shell of an egg. The play incorporates paintings of Bosch and Breughel through sets of slides projected between successive tableaux. Slides of paintings are also shown in Ars Amandi and Le Jardin des délices, presenting works by Miro, Botticelli, Chagall, Marx Ernst, and Goya alternating with a vast number of paintings and details by Bosch and Breughel and other slides showing hogs, flowers, slaughterhouses, fireworks, tortures, prisoners, bombers, vultures, advertisements, inquisition scenes, cartoons. The silent, even-numbered scenes in this play are closed units that appear as paintings. Arrabal explores the possibilities of using a pictorial technique in the theatre. John Kronik explains this mechanism noting that "the inherent linearity imposed by the word
can never be wholly overcome; but Arrabal's contracted dramatic expression becomes, in antithesis to that linear nature of the literary arts, the explosion of a sensation that the spectator can apprehend (almost) as a lone image or within a single frame, the way he grasps a painting."

Kronik's observation individuates a fundamental phenomenological aspect of Arrabal's episodic form: the playwright is almost able to do away with the linearity of the word by fragmenting his discourse and exploding into separate images the different parts obtained by his fracturing technique, thus producing a series of pictorial episodes, such as the even numbered tableaux in Concert dans un œuf.

The composition of L'Architecte et l'empereur d'Assyrie finds its counterpart in paintings like Breughel's Children's Games and Battle between Carnival and Lent. These paintings, when not viewed as total units, can be seen as series of separate episodes contained within basic structures. Kronik notes that historic time needs to be erased in order to obtain this doubleness because, otherwise, the fragmentation would only be an apparent one and would give us only successive images of a story which would still impose its linearity. But to abolish historic or linear time is to allow for a different time to take its place; this is the festive time to which I will return in my final chapter.

The actual assimilation of images from paintings such as Bosch's The Garden of Earthly Delights and Flemish Proverbs takes place mainly in the three plays that we could call the "Bosch Trilogy": Le Lai de Barabbas, Ars Amandi, and Le Jardin des délices. Arrabal, however, did not remain as faithful to his sources as did Michel de Ghelderode, who recreated scenes that would seem to be taken directly from the palette of the two Flemish masters, as is, for example, the setting of Marie la misérable. Even though characters like Kardo and Malderic, Bana and Ang recall Breughel's plumb figures with faces usually half-hidden by hats, or Bosch's humanoids, the dramas of Arrabal do not re-present images taken directly from the works of the two Flemish painters, but rather play with them in separate episodes that crowd the dramas, recalling the crowding produced by the fractured composition of works by Bosch and Breughel.

What struck Arrabal at the Museo del Prado developed
into a technique of composition and a way of incorporating the world into his theatre. Images from these paintings were captured not through pictorial imitation but through the medium available to the theatre and an episodic form similar to the one used by Bosch and Breughel, which preserves the ambivalence found in the different fragments of their paintings and in Goya's images. Such a pictorial technique infuses the silence of images into Arrabal's plays. The didactic and narrative potential of words is not put to use. Instead, words and stage images combine to show rather than to tell. The difference between these two modes of presentation becomes quite marked when Arrabal treats materials with strong political implications in his early play Guernica, but most of all in his theatre of the late sixties.

Guernica (1959) is a play that draws its substance from Spanish history at a time when Arrabal was making dramas with oneiric materials and childhood impressions. Le Jardin des délices (1967) marks the beginning of a change in the subject matter of Arrabal's theatre that will bring it closer in substance to Guernica than to the fantastic world of practically all his previous plays.

Two moments in Arrabal's life influenced this change. In July 1967 he was arrested in Spain for defamation and put in jail, later stood trial and was acquitted mainly because of the prompt and effective intervention of artists from several countries — notably Samuel Beckett. This short episode, lasting about two months, brought the playwright face to face with the crude reality of the Spanish prisons that had earlier destroyed his father and the life of the prisoners trapped in a living nightmare.

Le Jardin des délices, which was well under way at the time of Arrabal's arrest, incorporates episodic flashes of the experience. Twice the scene is illuminated by light filtering through the bars of a prison cell; Laïs plays then the role of a hungry and forgotten prisoner who does not know why she is punished. In her misery, she talks to a cockroach as if it were a friend, telling it about her desire to commit suicide by drinking urine and beating her head against the cell bars. In two separate episodes, Téloc plays the role of executioner and barrister; Laïs plays again the role of
prisoner. Like Arrabal, she is accused of blasphemy against God and treated in ways that recall the times of the Spanish Inquisition.

By showing the cruel treatment of political prisoners in an unspecified country, Arrabal turned *Menottes* into a full-length drama based on his prison experience. This play incorporates almost word for word the second of the four segments that compose his preceding play *L'Aurore rouge et noire*, where a woman pleads for the life of her husband, except that direct mentions of Spain and Franco are left out or modified so as to eliminate explicit historical connections. Throughout *Menottes*, the debasement and continuous degradation of the prisoners is contrasted to their dreams and to the adventures of the first two astronauts who walked on the moon, announcing to the hallucinated imagination of the prisoner Durero the dawn of a new age.

A year after his incarceration, Arrabal takes to the streets during the revolt of May 1968. This intense experience is soon reflected in *L'Aurore rouge et noire*. The play opens with a spokesman narrating episodes of the student revolt while films and slides of the events are projected onto screens that surround the public. The dialogues consist mainly in exchanges of phrases taken from the graffiti that appeared on the walls during the revolt. Some of these graffiti are written by the characters on screens placed on stage. Images of discussions in a revolutionary atmosphere are contrasted with fragments depicting oppression and the torments endured by political prisoners.

Arrabal is drawn out of his isolation as a playwright to compose *La guerre de mille ans (Bella Ciao)*, a propagandist drama whose substance was gathered through a process of collective creation. Arrabal's function was to translate into drama the political ideas that surfaced during discussions with Jorge Lavelli and the actors who later were to perform the play. Even though it contains a number of Arrabalian images, this work is unique in that it differs in substance and style from all other plays written before and after. The experiment was exhilarating but ephemeral. The playwright soon renounced his role as spokesman for a revolutionary group and returned to his oneiric use of the episodic style of nondiscursive play. He wrote *La Grande Revue du xxè siècle* which expresses his vision of recent his-
historical events through a fantastic dance of well-known figures in the manner of a typical revue.

Arrabal remains above all a poet. This informs his vision of revolution presented in L'Aurore rouge et noire:

The Revolution will be carried out without sacrificing anyone. It will be our panic feast, our pure and excessive orgy. Revolution not only has a place for poetry, it cannot exist without poetry. (p.272)

Enough divisions. We are born by the sea, we seek the rumor of surf, and we do not want to trap our dreams in cages.... We must put an end to the idea of abnegation and sacrifice. This exalting play known as revolutionary struggle can only be a type of play in which all feel drawn to partake.... Without structures: the essential is yet to be invented! (pp.276-77)

Arrabal is not a political writer. The structure of his drama does not allow this type of didactic theatre. He makes his inclinations known in his plays but does not defend or explain them. Jacques Ehrmann clarifies the difference between poetic and political writing:

The "law" of poetic language — which consists in maintaining the world "open" through the sheer force of words (breach in the laws which permits communication with the "other side" of the laws) — is finally incompatible with political language, which consists in "closing," in delimiting the world through laws in order better to define "this side" of laws. (p.22)

Political language is thus realistic in the only acceptable sense of the word: that which subordinates reality to an ideology. It is therefore a means. Through it laws are made and carried out, and (world) order established. (p.24)

The episodic plays, by their very form, are not able to present an ideology that would order the playwright's vision of the world. On the contrary, Arrabal's plays are not the product of an ordering of experiences that attempts to present a coherent view; they are the result of a fragmenting of experiences and a selection of
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those pieces that are most striking. With them he reconstructs situations devoid of specific contexts but which contain all their intensity.

Arrabal's episodic theatre is pre-ideological. It is one of unsettling impacts, of raw images played against each other holding the world open through their sheer force. Arrabal refuses to think the world: he sees it, plays with its fragments, and presents it according to his vision. He only takes sides and shows allegiance through a particular selection and treatment of basic materials. This is the extent of the political engagement of his plays; but he is convinced that poets have an active role to play in revolution by transforming action into celebration, by opening the world to creation, and by participating in its deconstruction and recreation. May 1968 was Arrabal's idea of a revolution: bloodless and festive, open to all.

Arrabal, as a playwright, finds himself confronted with his own experience in the world and in dreams. The world for him is a vast space of experience revived and transformed by memory, combined in various ways to create adventures and give rise to episodes of play. Biographical elements occupy a central place in this self-centered world that provides substance for his drama.

What characterizes Arrabal's use of his own biography as material for his theatre is the particular way in which he handles it. No attempt is made to mold it by following the chronology of events as they occurred. His experience is given in all its ambiguity, broken down into conflicting images and hallucinated visions. The pieces of Arrabal's world are then gathered within a chosen armature to form dramas perceived by the observer as successions of fragments. They constitute a literary counterpart to Bosch's and Breughel's images, escaping from the imposition of a unified vision. The playwright does not use theatre as a way of bringing order into his world but as a pretext to get in touch with that world by playing with its elements.

The material found in Arrabal's plays appears raw as a result of being taken out of context and presented without elaboration. The material is not accommodated to circumstances, plot, and character; it remains ambivalent since it has not been subsumed within a logical
plot, or polished. It is captured and presented as play, confronting the public so as to force it to see the raw substance, for the drama does not let itself be internalized through conventional techniques of narration which give rise to familiar games linking play and spectator.
Chapter Four

Visions, Dreams, & Other Nightmares

There are fundamental differences between the textual and the stage versions of a play. The realm of the written work is the page; the performance occurs, however, within a physical space that affords means of communication beyond those of the written word. This difference is fundamental, for it not only marks a separation between the artistic medium of playwriting and of performance but also underlines a qualitative distinction between written drama and other forms of prose.

The text of a play anticipates its creation as performance; a prose writing anticipates only reading. The playwright must keep in mind the limitations imposed by the physical theatre. The written play projects itself into an imaginary performance, trying to remain within the boundaries imposed by the technical constraints of the stage, the actors' physical limitations, and the receptive tolerances of an actual audience. At the same time, the playwright has access to a wealth of possibilities offered by the physical space of performance — a supplementary medium manipulated indirectly through stage directions.

Arrabal chooses to use the space of performance to provide an essential dimension to the memories, dreams, fantasies, and experiences that form the fragmented stuff of his theatre. Such a dimension is that of dreams, as understood by Strindberg who noted in the preface to A Dream Play:

In this dream play...the Author has sought to reproduce the disconnected but apparently logical form of a dream. Anything can happen; everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist; on a slight groundwork of reality, imagination spins and weaves new patterns made up of memories, experi-
ences, unfettered fancies, absurdities and improvisations.

The characters are split, double and multiply; they evaporate, crystallize, scatter and converge. But a single consciousness holds sway over them all— that of the dreamer. (p.193)

To express this rupture with normal space and time, the stage becomes a space of metamorphoses requiring a precise use of light effects, sounds, and colors. The physical stage ceases to be just the place where the drama takes place; it is transformed into an integral part of the drama and of its language.

Symbolists had moved toward an integration of play and scenery so as to establish a silent dialogue between the two. Arrabal, however, avoids the creation of symbols, keeping his stage distant from that of a Paul Claudel. He also does not use the antithetical symbolism presented by Genet in a play like Le Balcon.

Arrabal's episodic theatre benefits greatly from the achievements of Adolphe Appia, Gordon Craig, and Antonin Artaud, whose theoretical and practical work in directing contributed to turning the scenic space into a "living space" by placing emphasis on the expressive importance of rhythm, light, objects, and particular forms of corporal expression, traditionally subordinated to the spoken word and to realistic characterization by the actor. Appia stresses in The Work of Living Art the significance of this change in perspective: "But like all other artists on intimate terms with living art, he [the writer-poet] will discover that his sense of values is being modified. Things will be put in their places, so to speak, in a way that he had never anticipated. He will realize how many ideas and feeling he had once entrusted to words alone, when they rightly belonged to living expression. On the other hand, he will realize how many subjects worthy of poetic attention he had refused literary expression" (p.61).

Arrabal also attempts to escape the domination of the spoken word as an instrument of communication. He wants the theatre to make full use of its possibilities, its greatest asset being that it can appeal directly to the senses and thus put the spectator in relation with the "double" of drama: something that is felt and cannot be explained through words.
Likewise, the theatre of Arrabal tries to stay away from dialogue as the dominant medium of ideas. His episodic plays cannot be summed up in words; any verbal description of them is incomplete since it leaves out those elements that create images appealing directly to the senses. A reading of his plays requires a constant effort of visualization, for the stage directions do not complement or reinforce what is being said through dialogue, nor do they establish clear symbolic relations, but go their own separate ways to give the drama still other dimensions. The trajectory of the episodic plays is marked by their basic structures which reflect an order that does not have to be explained in the plays but can be readily sensed by the spectators, freeing the spoken language from the need to guide the action; likewise, scenic play is allowed to proliferate without the constriction of plot.

The freedom allowed by the episodic form, coupled with a precise use of the physical space of performance, permits Arrabal to prepare the creation of an oneiric world of ambiguous visions, shaped by exalted tensions and the violence of nightmares. Like dreams, his dramas unfold unpredictable juxtapositions of episodes dominated by metamorphoses of words, characters, and stage elements.

The primitive or childlike language of Le Tricycle and Fando et Lis comes practically to an end with Oraison, where characters are attempting, for a last time, to determine innocently the meaning of words such as good and pure by playing games of definition. This form of discourse functions according to a logic of discovery which infuses meaning into words treated as undefined; in the process, it is discovered that words and the concepts for which they stand do not draw their meanings from "truth" or from an inner necessity but from social practices. The characters of Le Tricycle fail to sense why they should not kill; the police are there to make clear to them that murder is a punishable act.

Through the repeated experience of playwriting, Arrabal came to terms with the problem of meaning in language, or at least exhausted it to his satisfaction. Le Cimetière des voitures contains traces of the early childlike language but is used in new ways that bring nonverbal components to the expression of his episodic theatre. When Dila tells Emanou that she would like to
be kinder but does not know what they have to gain by being good—a situation that recalls conversations between Climado and Mita in Le Tricycle as well as between Fidio and Libé in Oraison—he replies: "Well, when you're good... (Reciting as if he had learned the lesson by heart)... you feel a great inner joy born of the peace of mind that is yours when you see yourself in the ideal image of man" (T, p.26). The tone with which Emanou answers, as indicated by the stage direction, underlines the meaning of the sentence, pointing to a dissociation between the act and formulated principles as guidelines for action. Emanou's maxim is more significant in the manner of its recital than in its meaning, which has little weight in the play, because the different modulations used reveal his disposition toward his professed beliefs. Emanou first recites the maxim to Dila and friends with self-confidence, as though he were preaching. Dila later tells Emanou that his actions are not exemplary after all for they may lead to the persecution of his followers. Emanou begins to doubt his principles as evidenced by a sudden incapability to remember the maxim and only being able to mutter a few words. As Emanou is finally carried away to be crucified, he whispers the maxim to Dila as she washes his face. This recital is not too clear due to pain and exhaustion but it reveals a return of his faith.

Le Cimetière des voitures also presents solid instances of a new figure of speech in Arrabal's language of drama, which directly suggests dreamlike images and states: 1 "I would like my mouth to be a cage for your tongue and my hands swallows for your breasts" (p.119). "When I see you, electric trains dance between my legs" (p.119). "I will wheedle you as if you were a lake of honey in the palm of my hand" (p.119). Emanou and Dila exchange such remarks as an expression of their mutual love and tenderness; their playful courtship is doubled by a free play with words—within the limits of a correct syntax—juxtaposed not according to a significant order but for the purpose of generating a stream of sensuous combinations through a dancing display of words.

The figure of speech introduced by Arrabal in Le Cimetière is not metaphoric. Metonymy has been replaced by a total presence of the juxtaposed words that now become figures of desire and contentment, Arrabal enters here into the realm of language suggested by Artaud: "It
is not a question of suppressing the spoken language, but of giving words approximately the importance they have in dreams" (The Theater and Its Double, p.94).

Nevertheless, dialogue in the episodic theatre of Arrabal functions like ordinary speech within the dramas, even though conversations often do not appear logical from the spectator's point of view. The characters give the impression of being able to use language as a means of communication that allows them to talk to each other, not past each other. However, rapid successions of episodes undercut the explicative function that normal conversation could have.

Whereas the oneiric figure of speech remains constantly attached in its use to certain moments of exaltation, speech modulation specified in stage directions gains progressive importance. Not only does it help to differentiate characters and materialize their emotional states, it also plays a primary role in the creation of ambivalent states which make the material presented appear unformed.

Two fundamental uses of modulation occur in Arrabal's episodic theatre. The first is found in L'Architecte et l'empereur d'Assyrie. The architect speaks in an ordinary and natural fashion; he can be recognized by the spectator as his kin in the same way as a dreamer would identify with his protagonist in his dream. When the architect plays the games of impersonation taught by the emperor, one can see that he is an apprentice who must read instructions when it comes to eating the emperor. The same does not hold for the emperor: it is not possible to tell whether he is an excellent actor caught up in his own games or whether he actually becomes the roles he plays. The emperor does not speak at any time a neutral language that would tell the spectator when the game-playing is over and truth is spoken. His tone changes constantly from furious to frightened to grave to delirious to emphatic, and so on. Even when he says he is being serious and wants the architect to eat him, it is not possible to know whether he is not playing at being serious in order to push the architect into playing his role in an ultimate game that eventually will make the drama start over again with the roles inverted.

The crafty use of modulation, together with the creation of a rhythm of change which gives equal validity to all spoken tonalities, is one of the ways in which
Arrabal differentiates through language between the emperor and the architect, not through what is being said but in the way things are said. It should also be noted here that at the moment of play, the expert player is entrapped by his role and becomes his own impersonation, subject to the rules of the game. It is only after the game is over that he comes out of the role. In L'Architecte et l'empereur d'Assyrie, the game is never over; the emperor remains constantly caught in his roles and the architect keeps on learning how to play the games of the emperor.

The difference marked by the use of tonality in speech also serves to distinguish the protagonists Giafar (Le Lai de Barabba) and Fridigan (Ars Amandi), kin to the spectator, from the dreamlike world that all the other figures in these two plays seem to inhabit.

Menottes contains another kind of modulation that achieves an ambiguous presentation of violence where the scatological is mixed with tender tones following Arrabal's characteristic juxtaposition of opposites. The prisoners driven to ultimate degradation speak nevertheless with dreamy voices about the adventures of the astronauts who walked for the first time on the surface of the moon. Their erotic fantasies narrated in soft tones contrast strikingly with the horror of their actual situation. At times, the prisoners impersonate their visions. Pronos plays a priest who prays with the fervor of a martyr as his eyes are gouged out and he is forced to eat his testicles; a wife defecates on her imprisoned husband while she insults him in tender tones rhythmed by the melody of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake.

The playwright's use of language contributes effectively to the presentation of a dreamlike world. Violence belongs to this world and cannot be redeemed by any purpose. Arrabal is aware that attempting to arrest violence with violence could fail; Artaud already noted in The Theatre and Its Double that "everything depends upon the manner and the purity with which the thing is done. There is a risk" (p.82). The playwright runs the risk of breeding more violence. Turning violence into a nightmare is an alternative that Arrabal explores. Menottes appears as an extended nightmare to which we can only wish to put an end. Unfortunately, political prisoners in jails throughout the world cannot draw such a line between dream and reality, remaining captured in
a nightmare from which they are not free to awake. As spectators we know that the play is bound to be over; we also have the alternative of getting up and leaving the theatre.

The realm of theatre possesses possibilities of its own. Dreams cannot be represented as such in this medium, nor would it be fruitful for dramas to mime them. But dreams can serve as catalysts in the creation of plays by introducing particular uses of resources as already noted in reference to words and as also observed with regard to characters.

Strindberg notes that in dreams the characters "are split, double and multiply; they evaporate, crystallize, scatter and converge" (p.193). Arrabal is also aware that the dreamer is an outsider in his dreams: there are people in them who know more than he does, even though they are his creation. We must distinguish then the dreamer-protagonist — the unchanging character personifying the actual dreamer — from the other characters who function rather as appearances or mysterious forms that can go through complex metamorphoses as the dream progresses along successive episodes. The dreamer-protagonist, or the dreamer's "eye," is not omniscient and has little control over what occurs. The other persons in the dream — whom we call figures since they manifest themselves as outward forms — appear as autonomous beings that possess some hidden knowledge and escape the influence of the dreamer.

The world of a dream is not a simple moment when the dreamer-protagonist can rehearse his fantasies at will; it is a vivid space which usually resists the dreamer, forcing him to interact with other autonomous figures in unexpected ways. The dreamer-protagonist does not have special powers to change what occurs or to put an end to it. He can only "play" in the successive situations presented by the unknown whims of the mind until all comes suddenly to an end.

The episodic theatre of Arrabal is filled with this magic of dreams that causes metamorphoses to proliferate and leaves ambiguities unresolved. Like Alice who steps through the looking-glass and falls down the rabbit-hole into Wonderland, there are characters in Arrabal's drama who appear as impersonations of a dreamer. Giafar, in Le Lai de Barabbas, is a good example; he is not a figure, for he has a definite interiority that is the
source of consistent emotions and predictable behavior. Giafar reacts with surprise and fear when confronted with bizarre occurrences; he is able to analyze sincerely his love for Sylda and then for Arlys. The spectator finds a definite normality in him.

On the other hand, Kardo, Malderic, Sylda/Arlys, and her parents appear as figures. Such a distinction was noted earlier in terms of the tonalities of speech. Now this further difference can be stated in terms of ways of acting within the scenic space.

The action in Le Cimetière des voitures represents allegorically the life and passion of Christ. Emanou, the protagonist and Jesus' modern counterpart, is guided by ideals that allow the logical development of the biblical story. All other figures in the play go through several metamorphoses culminating with their taking of biblical roles. Lasca and Tiossido, former athletes, become Roman soldiers (policemen) who will arrest Jesus; Tiossido also impersonates Pilate, miming the moment when he washes his hands; Fodère, the saxophonist, enacts the role of Peter, voicing the triple denial of Jesus; Dila, the prostitute and mother-figure, first resembles Mary Magdalene and later turns into Veronica as she washes Jesus' face; Topé, the clarinetist, impersonates Judas Iscariot; and Milos, servant and panderer, finally turns into Simon, the Cyrenian who helped Jesus carry the cross. The different persons in the drama become biblical figures mainly by playing out characteristic moments specified by stage directions. These changes are not indicated through dialoguing, which plays a minor role in Arrabal's episodic drama.

In the Bosch trilogy, Arrabal comes closest to the creation of a "dream" play. The protagonists — Giafar, Fridigan, and Laïs — are confronted by mysterious figures who know what is happening but hide all information from the protagonists in order to tempt them into certain acts. The figures haunt the protagonists, evading any possible identification by playing different roles and continuously assuming different personalities. They succeed in captivating and totally confusing Giafar, Fridigan, and Laïs, who are finally caught up in their machinations. The dream-world ensnares the dreamer—protagonist and leads him through a series of adventures bordering at times on the nightmare and the sublime un-
until the ritual of initiation, which is unfolding inad­vertently, comes to an end.

The staging of these plays requires a clear differ­entiation between protagonists and figures. The latter should not resemble any type of stock characters, nor should they be utterly fantastic. Figures must present an ambivalent juxtaposition of realistic and abnormal traits, all played in a natural way. Their chaotic appearance is the product of sudden and unexpected changes, not of exaggerated acting.

Artaud has noted that the language of drama encom­passes a vast dimension far more effective than that of words taken as series of signifiers. Like dreams, dramas can be haunting, shocking, and magical, by ap­pealing directly to the senses so that the spectator can live experiences rather than be told about them.

The characteristics of Arrabal's episodic plays place them within this conception of theatre. The episodic form breaks down intellective causal chains and allows him to present unmolded materials which the mind absorbs without an effort of concentration, thus allowing for immediate sense reactions ranging from fascination to shock. Play and dreams merge to break the world into fragments without reducing its load of ambivalences, tensions, fleeting emotions, shocks, all constituent of our sense of being alive. For this theatre, the world is the one we experience.

The creation of images gains fundamental importance in a theatre where dialogue loses its power to guide and explain an action. Half of Concert dans un œuf is composed of silent scenes (even-numbered tableaux) which alternate with the various scenes of a story-line (odd-numbered tableaux). All silent scenes are self­contained units within the play. They take place in a blinding light with loud background noises such as the sound of a stormy sea and the deafening uproar of war. A mature couple and a young couple play out a variety of brief actions. During a particularly poignant episode, the four figures are seated around a table for dinner. They exchange glances filled with hatred except at the moment of blessings when all solemnly perform the usual ritual. Afterward the older woman is stared at with hatred by the other three persons who then proceed to get up one by one and leave. The woman stays alone,
lowers her head, and makes an effort to swallow a spoonful of soup. The roaring sound of the sea accompanies the entire episode. The shock caused by a silent tableau such as this one alters the audience's perception of the story contained in the odd-numbered episodes; both halves of the drama come together to modify each other through an interplay of powerful images.

The same method of alternating silent episodes is used in the first and third acts of L'Aurore rouge et noire. Here the silent scenes are filled with violence and cruelty. These nightmares of repression are contrasted to episodes recreating moments of the May 1968 uprisings as if they represented materializations of all the fears that the revolt wished to bury. The silent episodes of the first act portray a man in uniform torturing a young couple in different ways; the last episode shows the man in uniform turned into a skeleton and the young couple celebrating their liberation. Whereas these silent scenes appear as a propaganda play of the type encountered in guerrilla theatre,2 the silent episodes contained in the third act present once again familiar obsessive images of Arrabal's drama: a young man tortured by women who appear as mother-images or sadistic lovers, all involved in sexual perversions played as rituals against a background of religious connotations.

Menottes is fragmented into independent pictures that differentiate the world of the prison from the space depicting memories and visions expressing desire. The transitions are marked by blazes of light followed by a change of lighting. In the vision scenes, the characters impersonate other characters after putting on a mask, a hood, or a hat. The same technique is used in Le Jardin des délices, except that the characters play themselves in all memory scenes making the use of masks unnecessary. These plays, together with L'Aurore rouge et noire, follow the poetics first discerned in Guernica and La Bicyclette du condamné, that flowers in Concert dans un œuf, consisting in alternating images belonging to two different levels of reality.

Guernica, La Bicyclette du condamné, Le Cimetière des voitures, and Le Lai de Barabbas create mainly a single image within which the action is separated into episodes. Ars Amandí should also be included in this group, were it not that the action takes place in dif-
ferent locations of Lys's house, but since this drama has a dreamlike character, only the immediate area of play should be illuminated, leaving the rest of the stage in shadows. This would create the impression of observing a single image partially changing its decor from time to time. Likewise, *L'Architecte et l'empereur d'Assyrie* suggests a unified image since there are no changes in lighting or setting. The play vaguely recalls, however, the technique of presenting separate images used in *Menottes*, since the architect and the emperor play a multitude of roles with the aid of masks, each one suggesting a distinct image.

The various objects that help compose these images are not placed there as elements of setting but in view of the active roles they will play. The automobiles of *Le Cimetière* are homes for a community of people; the house in ruins of *Guernica* falls gradually on Lira and Fanchou; a strangely colored boat in *Concert dans un œuf* serves as a secondary space where people can hide without leaving the stage; the list extends to all objects mentioned in Arrabal's plays.

When performing his plays, it would be a mistake to add any more furniture and decoration other than that indicated in the stage directions, for they would be superfluous, serving only as some form of backdrop. But there is an even more compelling reason why the set should be as barren as possible: images created in Arrabal's drama belong to an uncertain world close to things and people perceived, not as they are but as in a dream, where the mind focuses on figures and objects directly involved in the action, blocking out what would be inert or distant from the location of the action.

A stage fully decorated throughout would suggest that the setting has an independent existence, whereas in Arrabal's drama it is preferable to reduce stage objects to the necessary minimum so that the required relation of immediacy between objects and actors not be impeded. As characters move away, objects should tend to vanish in the shadows or at least produce the impression of such a receding. The staging has to avoid theatricality; the images must suggest presence, as if visions and dreams were materializing before an audience, turning into nightmares.

The staging of Arrabal's images is achieved also through specific uses of space. The space considered
here is the totality combining stage and auditorium, two subspaces that may be called scenic space and audience space. Space provides one of the many "voices" to the "language" of drama, one that is spoken with varying nuances in Arrabal's episodic theatre.

Menottes presents Arrabal's most complex use of space. The drama begins even before the spectators sit down; actors lead them one by one from the entrance to their seats through a completely dark theatre filled with perfumes and a variety of sounds. On the way, a master of ceremonies whispers short sentences into their ears, setting the tone for the ceremony which will begin shortly. The play area is organized as follows: "The environment — the theater — is made up of planks or scaffolding placed at different levels. There will be seven or eight little scenic platforms scattered amongst the audience. In the center (at ground level) the prison scenes will take place in an irregularly-shaped space. The audience will sit on the ground, on the planks and scaffolding" (T, p.3). The prison scenes are played in the middle of the auditorium while the vision-episodes take place on the small platforms scattered among the public. Audience and scenic space are thus merged, as the actors have to move among spectators to go from one area of the stage to another and are surrounded, at all times, by the audience.

At the end of the drama, a direct interaction between actors and spectators is again established, as at the beginning. A loudspeaker asks the spectators to stay if they want to be participants in a rite. A hood is placed on the heads of those who stay to render them blind. The actors take the spectators one by one and proceed to rub their hands with sand while murmuring a melody with an obsessive rhythm. The loudspeaker gives a series of directions which cause the participants to touch one another and perform various other actions. It is then requested that a few persons volunteer to whip someone or let themselves be whipped. Finally, the session is turned into an encounter, with the participants taking turns at narrating moments in their lives, while the actors ask them questions and gently put orange sections into their mouths.

Whereas in the plays of the Bosch trilogy the role of dreamer-to-be-initiated is taken by the protagonists (Giafar, Fridigan, and Laïs), in Menottes the spectator
assumes such role. This is possible due to the absence of a character impersonating the dreamer and the almost physical inclusion of the public in the drama. The spectator's involvement at the beginning of the play contributes to establish this rapport; the initial ceremony and the drama itself can then be seen as stages that prepare the spectator for the final ceremony in which he may choose to participate actively. The spectator is placed as close as possible to the action so that he may feel himself entangled in a dream that is his own. Turned into figures, the actors of Menottes plunge the spectator-protagonist into a nightmare from which he would want to awake.

In L'Aurore rouge et noire, the audience is surrounded by giant photographs taken in May 1968, the action unfolding in the middle of the area. Several actors are scattered among the audience, speaking during the episodes of revolutionary discussions as if they themselves were spectators. In this manner, the audience is given the impression of direct participation in the discussions of problems that were still very much alive when the play was written and first produced. Extending the scenic space to encompass the audience coincides with the immediacy of the situation presented in the play. The spectators could have taken part in similar situations during May 1968, or at least sympathized with the revolt, thus becoming immediately aware of the role the drama assigns them as members of a revolutionary discussion group. Because of their knowledge of the situation presented, the spectators do not feel strangers to the role and are able to see themselves critically as passive members of such a crowd.

Le Cimetière des voitures also allows for a special use of space, as demonstrated by Víctor García's production. He followed closely techniques outlined by Artaud in the first manifesto of "The Theater of Cruelty." In the Dijon production, the spectators sitting in swivel chairs found themselves surrounded by an action that did not require the presence of a backdrop or stage props. The whole theatre was turned into scenic space, with automobile carcasses hanging almost on top of the spectators' heads.

Such an extension of dramatic space is possible for two reasons. It provides the depth needed to present two simultaneous but independent actions, one taking
place in the graveyard and the other within sight but quite distant from the graveyard, involving Lasca and Tiossido appearing repeatedly as athletes running from right to left during the first act, and the "chase" scenes of the second act in which Emanou, Topê, and Fodêre cross the stage several times, pursued by Lasca and Tiossido who have become policemen. García put this disjunction to good use by encircling the audience with the stage area used for the secondary action, whereas the graveyard was located along one side of the theatre and extended almost to the middle of the auditorium.

Furthermore, *Le Cimetière des voitures* is, to a large extent, a modern passion play. The audience living in a world where the image of Christ is very much alive, is brought as close as possible to the action, since the biblical story belongs as much to the stage as it does to the spectator's own mythology.

The rest of Arrabal's episodic theatre occurs in a space that more often than not is that of visions and dreams in which the public could not be directly involved; it also lacks in social connotations which could possibly bridge the distance between scenic space and audience space as achieved in *Menottes*. In dramas like *Concert dans un oeuf* and the Bosch trilogy plays, the audience is not meant to be brought into the scenic space nor engulfed by it: it is not intended that the spectator should enter into someone else's dream. These plays function as spectacles in the usual sense of the word, with the dramatic space more traditionally displayed in front of the audience and separate from it. In such a case, communication between both spaces is not achieved by a fusion but through the sharing of a common primitive awareness which allows the spectator to identify with, and relate to, the images presented to him at a distance.

At the same time, the scenic space used to play dreams has to be devoid of theatricality in order to become a presence. The distance maintained between the spectator's and the play's areas helps prevent a fusion of scenic and audience space; otherwise, the mixture of public and actors would immediately reveal the theatricality of the event and break down fragile but potentially convincing illusions.
The episodic form of drama allows play, the result of a ludic drive. Play unifies dramas exhibiting this form, and it also acts as a source of differences stemming from the various orientations of the ludic impulse. The substance of episodic dramas, that is to say, the choice of material used for play, and the way in which this substance is shaped depend on the orientation of the ludic act which produces them. The study of these components thus serves to individuate the specificity of play. Previous observations on Arrabal's theatre point toward a pseudobiographical, oneiric dimension evident in the way physical elements of performance are used and in the ordering of images. There also seems present a festive sense of drama oriented by the panic drive, that totalizing primordial gesture sketched earlier, and to that I now turn so as to formulate the oneiric and festive nature of Arrabal's theatre.

Arrabal's use of the stage draws on dream-mechanisms. It is the very episodic form that facilitates the entrance of drama into the realm of dreams.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud shows that dreams obey a process of regression by which "an idea is turned back into the sensory image from which it was originally derived,... In regression the fabric of the dream-thought is resolved into its raw material" (p. 543). Dreams operate a disintegration of thought in a way comparable to the irrecoverable fracturing of plot achieved by the episodic form. This allows a direct plunge into the raw substance which makes dreams and dramas, instead of reshaping that substance into controlled patterns with an ideological content. The primacy of ideology would be effected by discarding large amounts of superfluous substance and diminishing its rawness.

Freud wrote, "The thought [as it] is objectified in
the dream is represented as a scene, or, as it seems to us, is experienced" (p.543). This is precisely the process that we find in Arrabal's theatre: communication achieved by means of sensory images constructed by using with equal power all that the physical stage can offer within the freedom afforded by the episodic form. However, it appears as if the thought, which according to Freud triggers and founds the dream process, has been lost, what remains is the experiential impact of images at play. Arrabal may assume that if communication is established between author, stage, and audience through these sensory images, then the guidance of an originating logos becomes superfluous. This view eliminates the need to return from the scenic fragments to an idea, to the unconscious side of symbols — perhaps a fictitious journey altogether — leaving only the visceral communication of an oneiric play.

Artaud, who was also concerned with an oneiric theatre, cautioned, however, that "the public will believe in the theater's dreams on condition that it take them for true dreams and not for a servile copy of reality; on condition that they allow the public to liberate within itself the magical liberties of dreams" (p.86). If an oneiric theatre is to infuse the haunting magic of dreams in its public, then the plays must avoid the empirical disorder of the spontaneous dream. What is needed, according to Artaud, is a certain cruelty, which Derrida explains, in *L'Ecriture et la différence*, as the devastating progression that dreams of the theatre can be made to follow (p.355). Such dreams are calculated, directed. They obey absolutely necessary and determined patterns.

Arrabal's plays are, indeed, articulated around rigorous structures within the confusion of disparate fragments. These articulations, which we called basic structures, range from cyclic patterns and calculated inversions to obsessive rhythmical contrasts of images. They are responsible for conveying most of the power present in the dreams of the stage. Otherwise, the impact of individual images would be lost in a random confusion.

If dreams are one of the shapes the episodic form may take, then dreams also have to be manifestations of play. Freud observed that regression carries the dreamer to a certain condition that existed in childhood, to
"the instinctual impulses which dominated it and...the methods of expression which were then available for him" (p.548). Piaget's analysis of dreams in childhood reveals that what dominates such dreams is the primacy of assimilation at the level of feelings. This is not unusual for the child since during that period assimilation dominates both intelligence and feeling. "But in the adult," wrote Piaget, "there is at least one kind of situation in which this primacy continues from the affective point of view.... This is in dreams, during which affective life goes on, but without the possibility of accommodation to reality" (p.209).

Dreams appear as the play of desires within affective schemas, an activity that is beyond the conscious control of the dreamer. In drama, the control is given back to the subject — the playwright — who creates the dreams of the theatre by juxtaposing images so as to obtain a rather rigid frame, one certainly far more solid than the simple linking together of fragments which normally occurs in dreams. Arrabal's images are orchestrated meticulously, yielding nevertheless the sense of oneiric randomness produced by unexpected sequences of episodes. The ludic nature of dreams is not lost, however; only its tone has slightly changed in the direction of a more ordered disorder. Within Arrabal's oneiric stage a specific selection of raw material takes place. The choice of substance and further characteristics of the shape it takes point to the second dominant trait of the episodic form used by Arrabal, one that can be called festive.

When I asked Arrabal about the festive aspect of his theatre, he answered: "One must consider the society in which I lived: a dramatic and festive society that only had the festival for entertainment or the tremendous drama of the Church and the great ceremonies" (24 August 1976). Anyone who has grown with the familiarity of popular festivities, carnivals, and the ceremonies of the Church is left with their deep imprint, with the memory of those euphoric moments when everything was removed from normal space and time, appearing different, frightful, and familiar. This legacy is probably Arrabal's greatest artistic debt to Spain, one that shaped his episodic theatre.

But this discourse on the festive is going to encounter a special problem of definition, namely, the deter-
mination of the boundaries of the festival, which will entail a choice: to delimit what is most important about this activity in relation to theatre. Arrabal distinguishes between the festival and religious ritual; Freud, however, tends to consider the festival as a sacred ritual. He notes in *Totem and Taboo* that the essence of such events lies in a form of excess: "A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. It is not that men commit the excesses because they are feeling happy as a result of some injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited" (p.140). But the transgression of any prohibition will not necessarily produce a festive mood. Freud still must determine which rules are usually transgressed in connection with fetes and what kind of freedom is afforded by such transgressions.

According to Freud, the primal transgression is based on the killing and eating of a "primordial parent," who is generally represented by a sacred totemic animal. The chosen figure is then slaughtered and devoured "raw—blood, flesh and bones" (p.140). Such ingestion accomplishes an act of assimilation of the parental substance by the celebrants and an ultimate identification between the two: the celebrants "acquire sanctity by consuming the totem: they reinforce their identification with it and with one another. Their festive feelings and all that follows from them might well be explained by the fact that they have taken into themselves the sacred life of which the substance of the totem is the vehicle" (pp.140-41). The sacred totemic figure is destroyed and recreated by the celebrants so that they may share in the original sacred nature of the totem. The act is ambivalent, for it involves a fearful transgression dominated by a desire that becomes a source of festive pleasure.

In *Man and the Sacred*, Roger Caillois presents a view of the festival which is functionally similar to that of Freud but more general in scope. He replaces the primordial parent by a *primordial age* or *primordial chaos* which is "the ideal place for metamorphoses and miracles as nothing has yet been stabilized, no rule pronounced, and no form fixed" (pp.103-4). "The first age is presented as the era of exuberant and disordered creations,
of monstrous and excessive childbirths" (p.105). The first component of the festival is an encounter with the primordial chaos. This is achieved by breaking down differentiating barriers. The preexisting order is inverted and broken so that the participants accede to a state of fluidity and undifferentiation. This is a fresh realm of newly acquired freedom since it will allow to play, over and over, the act of creation of the world: "the festival recalls the time of creative license, preceding and engendering order, form, and taboo (the three notions are related and, together, are the opposite of chaos)" (p.112). The festival also comprises the re-creation of the world from the regained chaos, a process that, according to Caillois, is often ordered into precise ceremonies and announces the end of the event. Entering the primordial chaos corresponds to Freud's notion of devouring a primordial parent: a figure of authority that maintains order. To devour such a figure and to identify with it implies taking the role of creator, that is, becoming a creator in a world suddenly devoid of traditional or parental order.

Caillois presents a view of the festive, permeated by a defining ambivalence, for it produces the joyful and euphoric feeling of becoming a creator; but the suspension of order gives rise simultaneously to "a time of universal confusion that cannot be visualized without anxiety" (p.106). The primordial age is "simultaneously nightmare and paradise" (p.107). This ambiguity disappears again when the festival comes to an end, marking the return to order. The feast allows nevertheless participation of the celebrants in the act of creation, using the pieces of a fragmented world; the feast inaugurates the play of creation.

In Rabelais and His World, Mikhail Bakhtin adopts a less abstract view of the festive but one that is based on the same principles of destruction and re-creation observed by Freud and Caillois. Bakhtin writes that the nucleus of the festival, in its pure or popular form, is "life itself, but shaped according to a certain pattern of play" (p.7). The function of the festival is "to consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement" (p.34). This drive effects the creation of a series of ambivalent and contradictory images, "ugly, monstrous, hideous from the point of view of 'classic'
aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed" (p.25). The products of festive creation are necessarily ugly when judged according to the standards of the order which they subvert. It should be noted, however, that the festive order is made of the fragments of the destroyed order. That is what makes it monstrous: the new creation is a "playful" disfiguration of recognizable elements remembered in other arrangements. Furthermore, since festive order destroys restrictive orders which would hamper inventive freedom, it is not stable, lasting only the duration of the festival. Festive creations are not ends in themselves but merely by-products of what is essential: the performance of the act of deconstruction and re-creation of the world encompassed by the festivity.

Arrabal's images have, indeed, the shape that Bakhtin ascribes to festive images. We already noted their prevalent ambivalence and raw appearance. Things are turned overtly upside down, without need for explanations. The Christ of Le Cimetière des voitures is a thief and a trumpet player, love in Ars Amandi is consummated while the couple wallows in muck, and so on. There is also an abundance of grotesque images of the body throughout the stages of Arrabal, such as defecation, urination, and anthropophagy. Bakhtin stresses the ambivalence of these elements: "They debase, destroy, regenerate, and renew simultaneously. They are blessing and humiliation at the same time" (p.151).

The act of festive creation and the transgression of established canons become an indivisible unit in Bakhtin's view of the feast. This action destroys and renews, allowing the celebrants to play festive recreation. The mediation of established rituals becomes superfluous within this secular conception of the pure or popular feast since it claims no end beyond itself and presupposes, as in carnivals, that the participants know in their own ways how to share in the festive spirit. Established rituals, on the contrary, require submission to a set of rules and are oriented toward an aim, whether it be initiation, catharsis, or revelation. Though there may be rituals within festivals, they lack their usual sacred character, appearing instead as pastiches, such as the mocking liturgies of the Feast of Fools or the crowning of festive monarchs: the general
sense of ritual is preserved but has been stripped of its sacred power.

Arrabal's dramas perform the festive double gesture of deconstruction and re-creation by presenting the world in pieces and holding the fragments within basic structures whose existence does not become totally evident until the end. Shapes are created out of a deconstructed world but they retain characteristics of the unformed and the unstable due to the overpowering impression of continuous fracturing that prevails. Some armatures appear as ritual schemas; however, the episodic form has voided such ceremonies of all teleological purpose. They function, like all basic structures, as unstable components of festive writing.

The basic structures of the episodic form, aside from containing the fractured substance of plays, serve to convey the power of dramatic oneirism through the creation of haunting patterns and rhythms. The comparison of Arrabal's plays to festive patterns allows us to draw further conclusions about the episodic form.

In the festivals of Dionysus and medieval celebrations, drama was only one of the many forms of expression, all sharing in the festive spirit. Arrabal's drama lacks such a festive context from which plays, in the past, drew their substance—one already being celebrated by the public. Arrabal and his audience are no longer united from the start by a common festive spirit: his plays must lure the spectator by means of vivid rhythms and easily recognizable patterns in order to present, at the same time, the festive substance.

Artaud gives a preliminary view of how the festive playwright would see the world at the moment of creation: "The images in certain paintings by Grunewald or Hieronymus Bosch tell enough about what a spectacle can be in which, as in the brain of some saint, the objects of external nature will appear as temptations" (p.87). For things to be tempting, they must appear to the observer in a state of ambivalent tension which both attracts and repels, fascinates and frightens. This is the way things may also appear in dreams. In dreams, however, the dreamer is not free to choose a course of action; in the feast the participant is at liberty to rehearse his fantasies and exercise his imagination. The festive participant chooses consciously to trans-
gress what would be normally established rules and plunges into temptation.

Arrabal's feast is his own life. He chooses to plunge into experiences as well as dreams and fantasies, turning them into series of obsessive images that are both fascinating and terrifying. This is not an expository or apologetic biographical incursion; on the contrary, the assimilative episodes produce a primal subject matter that casts his stage into ambivalence and confusion. This primal matter is obtained by the playwright's immersion into his own primordial chaos, where elements are not captured by individuating explanations or other procedures that might reduce their richness. Arrabal breaks up his world into separate parts stripped of causal connectives, historical references, and a specific context. Such is the stuff that dreams are made of, but the playwright remains in control of the orchestration of fragments in order to produce festive recreations of his world.

The festive quality of Arrabal's pseudobiographical assimilations is evident in the ambivalence of the images presented in his dramas. They effect transgressions of moral and religious codes, substituting them with fragments of other codes and various travesties. The newly created world is unstable, incapable of arresting the festive process of re-creation. Assimilated images dissolve as the feast—the drama—comes to an end, leaving only the experience of having been in touch with the world. Such is the playwright's festive writing echoing in Zarathustra's words: "But say, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion could not do? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yes.' For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred 'Yes' is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world" (Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, p.27). The festive playwright, as the child, forgets and remembers. This is not just any type of play but that of re-creation, consisting essentially of deconstruction and creation, which is festive play. The festive play of the writer is always a first movement that embraces and conquers its own world until the gesture exhausts itself temporarily and stops, only to be
repeated in the future when the time comes for renewed acts of creation.

The question about the role of the audience in the playwright's feast still remains open. Arrabal stated in my interview with him (24 August 1976) that "if I think about an audience, if I think beyond the act of writing — which is the most entertaining act in my life — I wish others could partake in that feast I perform when writing." Only the context of a festival can assure the participation of all through various forms of celebration; Arrabal can merely hope that his dramas will awaken a festive spirit in the spectator. The form of his plays and the material they capture certainly facilitate such communication; his theatre is made of elements that the spectator is more likely to internalize at an intimate and profound level, like the passion of Christ transcribed into a different form, or ambiguous presentations of parental images, all of which are gathered within a noncoercive structure.

The spectator's participation depends ultimately on his willingness and ability to let the play call forth his own private temptations and obsessions, thus finding himself returning to a state of primordial chaos. David Grossvogel notes in The Self-Conscious Stage that the unsophisticated spectator is more likely to find a dramatic performance a living reality, "a natural food, readily assimilated," concluding that "for him who brings but his naive being to the theatre, its world is a richer one, more mysterious and at the same time infinitely more familiar than can ever be that of the connoisseur" (pp.259-60). The spectator should avoid adopting a critical distance from the spectacle; he must be able to let himself be invaded by the images of this kind of drama without attempting to reason them out and let the rhythm of the play guide him into a fete within his own world.

The performance of festive drama occurs after the festive gesture of the playwright has come to an end. Such an origin, reflected in an episodic structure and a special choice of material, cannot assure a festive response from the audience, nor can this type of response stand as the aim of the plays since the gesture that created them had no purpose beyond its own manifestation. Furthermore, as noted by David Cole in The
Theatrical Event, all theatre has the potential to produce this type of response, even if the plays do not reveal a festive writing. Cole argues that the performance of any drama can become, for actors as well as spectators, an encounter with a primordial chaos — the basic festive ingredient; all depends on producing theatre with the appropriate spirit and also seeing it from the proper point of view, which would often imply re-educating the audience.

But we must hear again the Director speaking to the Poet in Goethe's Faust:

The boards are up,...
And everyone expects a feast from you. (p.69)

You have a piece [play], give it in pieces then!
Write a ragout, you have a pen;
It's easy to invent, and easy to unroll.
What good is it, if you construct a whole?
The public takes it all apart again. (p.73)

Is this not the spectator's feast, the dismembering of drama? Or does such fracturing prepare what is most essential about a festive response: the "ingestion" of the play? The festive response of the spectator consists in deconstructing the drama so that its fragments relate to his inner world. A drama whose parts are mutually dependent calls rather for a mental construction of what is perceived, whereas an episodic play is already fractured and allows itself to be taken apart easily. From chaos to chaos, a rapport is established between drama and spectator.

As for the drama's substance, the Director advises the Poet in these terms:

Employ the sun and moon, do not hold back!
Use all the stars we have in stock;
Of water, fire, walls of rock,
And beasts and birds there is no lack.
In our narrow house of boards, bestride
The whole creation, far and wide;
Move thoughtfully, but fast as well,
From heaven through the world to hell. (p.81)

Arrabal's drama does not use the elements suggested by the Director, presenting instead pseudobiographical substance to which the spectator can relate. The emphasis
of the Director's advice rests, however, on a certain excess: the Poet is not to hold back in order to use all that belongs to the world of his play. It is through this excess that his total creation is made to fit within a drama and the confines of a theatre. Festive drama becomes an excessive celebration, an overwhelming overabundance that appears to encompass a totality by moving swiftly and with care between opposites. Arrabal's festive theatre is, indeed, panic, in the double sense of "encompassing all" and being monstrous, unformed, overwhelming; it adumbrates the panic gesture so that the spectator may perform it in his own way.

Arrabal's panic gesture expresses relations of people with the world of their obsessions and repressions, relations that are degrading as well as liberating. But Arrabal's play is never arrested by the necessity to formulate ideological solutions to the conditions shown; his episodic plays are "silent." If there is a primary intention to speak through drama, then the form needs to be adapted for such purpose, as is the case in the theatre of Bertolt Brecht or Peter Weiss. It would be futile to attempt to convey intellectual meaning through an episodic structure. This formal difference is in fact natural and rests on distinct conceptions of theatre and art.

The episodic theatre is ultimately silent and conservative: it does not aim at changing the views of the spectators. Arrabal stated: "I would prefer my theatre to be a ceremony in favor of liberty and tolerance," indicating the inclination of his drama. Spectators would benefit from sharing this inclination before attending a drama like Menottes, for otherwise they might be left in a state of confused shock. People joined in celebration must share a common ground. Episodic drama, even though it speaks no meaning, bears, as does all art, the impress of the author's biases, preoccupations, obsessions. But in Arrabal that impress intends celebration.

For these reasons, Arrabal's type of theatre can also be most dangerous, a fact that was well understood by Spain's censors during the Franco regime. Plays that blaspheme, assault, and break established law make play of what is considered by some to be sacred and leave little room for compromise. Since the episodic form does not argue, attention cannot be diverted to the
accuracy of the information presented or the logic of derived conclusions. Ideological plays tend to call for intellectual responses that prevent direct emotional reactions. The force of Arrabal's drama comes from the episodic images themselves; it is as immediate and intense as a cry or a gesture; it is as primordial as celebration. His theatre induces above all a visceral response which the spectator may resolve afterward within an ideological system. An ideological theatre is propagandist and critical; an episodic one is innocent but can be destructive.

Drama of this kind celebrates a festive destruction and re-creation of the world by emphasizing the process and not the result. But the newly created world remains as an ambivalent collection of fragments for, otherwise, the play would be terminated. Even though Arrabal's basic structures allow his dramas a conclusion, the endings do not offer resolutions; they merely suspend episodic progressions, leaving the spectator with the ambivalent feeling that something has come to an end in a technically satisfactory way but that what has been created remains shapeless.

Plays intended to disseminate a festive spirit present the compatible spectator with material in a raw state, to which he may relate, leading back into himself and his own inner chaos through the collapse of an otherwise imposed order. The images of this kind of theatre must relate closely to the spectator's obsessions, experiences, temptations, and background so as to call those emotions into play. In evolving from observer to active participant, the spectator would have to create his own process of assimilation and thus set in motion his personal Dionysia, conceived by Artaud as an exorcism calling forth our demons (p.60).

Such is the ending of the feast of Pan and of this analysis of Arrabal's drama, a break that does not privilege itself as a termination but as the possibility of other beginnings. Arrabal is still an active playwright; his post-1973 theatre may venture into other structures and concerns different from the ones observed up to that time. The exploration of Arrabal's pre-1973 theatre has taken us from an episodic drama to the playwright's act of festive writing, from the product of ludic activity to the process itself. His rich episodic
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theatre directs us to the ephemeral feasts, and the function of these moments related to festivities envisaged by such playwrights as Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Jean Bodel, Adam le Bossu, and the anonymous creators of early mystery plays. The staging of such drama involves the performance of festive play and continues to raise the question of art in general as a ludic activity.

For Arrabal, freedom exists only in action that is play. Through the play of his writing, he has access to the world; this is not an illusion but a phenomenon—the "reality" of dreams. As Artaud noted, in the theatre, dreams can be only those of theatre, otherwise the playwright submits to another reality. For Arrabal the power of writing lies in the act of creation, of recreation, which actualizes his encounter with the world and states his freedom. This gesture is somewhat tamed by the constraints of the medium which also render the act possible. Aside from these restrictions, Arrabal does not submit his writing to the domination of other extrinsic factors such as the need to convey meaning—a concern that must stem from the act itself as a supplement, not as a guiding necessity.

Arrabal's act of writing is situated outside the illusion/reality dichotomy. Only when this is understood can the force of his drama be felt as play in its purest form, not as aim-oriented game. The illusion/reality distinction rests on the insertion, within the creative act of the playwright, of elements that do not belong to the expressive possibilities of the stage, making the medium provisional, incomplete, and illusory. The full realization of the work takes place, therefore, elsewhere: in the realm of ideas, in the physical world, in society, in the spectator's mind, and so on. That complementary otherness functions as reality—the realm where illusion is or can be actualized. Similarly, aim-oriented games tend beyond themselves for justification in the form of rewards. Pure play is concerned only with itself, or better, is unconcerned: it is only action. The same can be said of aimless games, those games not played for reward but only out of a desire to play.

The episodic form has been equated at times with the epic structure of Brecht's theatre, with the succession
of episodes found in the picaresque novel, and with other forms that evidence fracturing. Such a comparison breaks down in that the episodic form has no structural economy working as an ordering principle; that it contains no inherent didacticism, morality, story-line; that no inner necessity helps unfold the action and lead to a resolution. The episodic form is the natural shape taken by play, by aimless games; it also incorporates the restrictions of its medium in the form of more or less marked basic structures within which proliferate moments of play.

The episodic form assumes an oneiric and festive quality when it becomes the playground of desires and materializes the transgressions generated by temptations rendered possible by that form. Arrabal transforms his experiences into script, his writing becomes his life open to play. The act of playwriting is for him a prison since it is closed, separate from extrinsic concerns; and yet, such a realm allows him to actualize his freedom as the play of creation. This fact characterizes the festive space: it is a distinct and self-enclosed totality obeying only its own necessities, all of which have in common the performance of re-creation.

That other festive performance, the play on stage, rests largely with the director. Arrabal's theatre will remain linked to the productions of three directors: Víctor García, Jorge Lavelli, and Jérôme Savary. The playwright's scripts became in their hands the basis for developing dramatic visions closely aligned with Arrabal's conception of festive play. This second process of creation was made possible by Arrabal's consent to let the three directors orchestrate his scripts. Though it remains beyond the scope of this work to study their productions, we must note that the repetition on stage of the festive gesture performed by Arrabal's writing required a renewed act of creation and not a mere adherence to the script. Dorothy Knowles describes how Savary's successive stagings of *Le Labyrinthe* departed more and more from the textual play until the script was replaced by improvisations within loose guidelines vaguely recalling the initial play. García orchestrated *Le Cimetière des voitures* by interpolating within it three short plays of Arrabal. According to García, "The texts provided merely the 'primary structure' of
the show" (p.533). Lavelli performed his own transforma-
tions with *L'Architecte et l'empereur d'Assyrie.*

1
Knowles recounts that "Arrabal and Lavelli worked
together cutting out whole scenes and correcting de-
tails of style, in order to produce the well-ordered
ceremony that the final version, that is to say the
one published and performed, became" (p.534). Finally
Knowles observes: "[García], Lavelli, and Savary have
used author's texts as spring boards for productions,
as matter to be rendered by purely theatrical imagery.
When it is Arrabal who provides the text with the full
intention of having it 'orchestrated' by the producer,
the result is a dramatic 'festival'" (p.538).

When, at last, the public's response is considered,
Arrabal can only wish that the audience may repeat his
festival gesture and initiate its own play. Arrabal's
drama facilitates such response, but the spectator's
reaction remains his own and cannot be coerced. The
audience may be educated, conditioned, flirted with,
guided, but within bounds since these manipulations
would be contrary to the spirit of festive drama.
The overall value of such conditioning, as it applies
to various forms of art, remains an open question un-
derlying all critical discourse.

We may venture to state a function of the festive
moment at the risk of attributing to it concerns it
does not openly seek to realize. Narrowing the festive
gesture to Arrabal's act of writing, the festive artist
communicates directly with his world. Arrabal embraces
his world as festive stuff; nothing remains beyond his
grasp that cannot be possessed in writing. The script,
that space of imaginary performance, becomes his world
fragmented for the purpose of play. And his play dis-
pels the characteristic alienation of other realms that
separates the individual from his desires and his world.
Barriers are broken and temptations materialize provid-
ing the sense of the action. This function must be
distinguished from the one against which the Romantics
often reacted: the idea that by reading fiction one
gains experience without having enacted the experience.
The domain of festive writing is not a substitute for
something that could be carried out on another level.
Artaud's "dreams of the theatre" are not substitutes
for the experience of personal dreams; Arrabal's theatre
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does not replace actions that he could possibly perform elsewhere. The festive actualization of desire occurs in its own space. It provides a particular fullness and sense of realization only possible in the theatre, stemming from a creative act which is, ultimately, one of the many forces that affirm and celebrate life.
Notes

Introduction


Chapter 1

1. I use Walter Kaufmann's term Apollinian as it appears in his translations of Nietzsche (The Birth of Tragedy, p.9).

2. See Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens, for a detailed description of the four principal Dionysian festivals: the Anthesteria (end of February), the Lenaia (January), the Rural Dionysia (December), and the City Dionysia (March-April).

3. Francis Macdonald Cornford, in The Origin of Attic Comedy, outlines a "canonical plot-formula" for Aristophanic comedy. He notes: "This canonical plot-formula preserves the stereotyped action of a ritual or folk drama, older than literary Comedy, and a pattern well known to us from other sources" (p.5). Aristophanic comedy borrows this pattern from a tradition; it does not develop such "plot" internally through a causal chain of incidents and relations but takes it from outside the drama to obtain an order for the play. To the unprepared audience, the different articulations of this "plot-formula" occur without apparent reasons.

4. See E. K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage, and Allardyce Nicoll, Masks, Mimes and Miracles, for information on the theatre of this period and the resurgence of drama in the Middle Ages.

5. Benjamin Hunningher, in The Origin of the Theatre, shows that the revival of drama during the Middle Ages occurred through an incorporation into the ceremonies of the Church of already existing pagan plays and rites. Indeed, the secular basis of this revival cannot be denied; festivals and festive plays need a strong popular rooting to exist.


7. The structural elements of games given here, except for the fifth one, are taken from the article by Laurence B. Slobochin and Anatol Rapoport, "An Optimal Strategy of Evolution,"


10. In rough terms, the theoretical sense of "reality" is that endowed by a postulational system to its elements; the more concrete "reality" is that which can be observed repeatedly and recorded by measuring instruments or systems of observation. Piaget's use of the term is based on this second meaning.

Chapter 2

1. All translations are mine, except when a T precedes a page number, in which case the page number refers to the corresponding English translation cited in the bibliography.

2. Le Lai de Barabbas is a slightly modified version of Le Couronnement, published earlier by Julliard. The two plays are essentially similar; Arrabal mainly simplified a few scenes and added an onerous tone to certain passages — especially to those moments showing tenderness and love — by charging the phrases with streams of images. For example, in Le Couronnement, Giafar tells Sylda: "Don't cry! You are so beautiful!"; this becomes in Le Lai de Barabbas: "Don't cry! You are so beautiful! I would like to be a street car to sing praises for you at every street corner with my steel pipe" (p.38).

3. The English translation of this play omits this passage; And They Put Handcuffs on the Flowers is based on the translation done by Charles Marowitz for the first Off-Broadway production of this play. The drama, directed by Arrabal, opened on April 21, 1972, at the Mercer O'Casey Theatre in New York. He wanted to create a more dramatic effect at the expense of the optimistic tone created by the resurrection in the original version. Thus Tosan does not come back to life; the play ends with Falidia washing her face with Tosan's urine-turned-into-blood. Because of the differences among editions and translations, I used the Christian Bourgois editions of Arrabal's theatre. They contain additions to plays published earlier by Julliard, such as Le Couronnement. Some English translations are based on the Julliard edition or, as Handcuffs, on a slightly altered stage version.


Chapter 3

1. I am concerned with the way in which Arrabal's dramas incorporate parental materials. For the psychological impli-
cations of these materials see Raymond-Mundschau's analysis: "Sadisme et masochisme" (Arrabal, pp.92-97).

2. Bernard Gillé notes that Arrabal wrote Le Jardin des délices for the great actress Delphine Seyrig (Fernando Arrabal, p.99). This could well explain the unusual change from a male to a female protagonist.


5. John W. Kronik, "Arrabal and the Myth of Guernica," Estreno No.3 (Fall 1975): 15-20. Picasso's "Guernica" and Arrabal's homonymous play are compared as to the use of a common myth and a similar pictorial technique that requires a special use of space and time.

6. Arrabal was arrested for having written a blasphemous dedication in Madrid while signing copies of his book Arrabal celebrando la ceremonia de la confusión. It read: "Me cago en Dios en la Patria y en todo lo demás" (I shit on God the Patria and all the rest). During the trial, Arrabal argued that he had written "Patria" and not "Patria" — which means Motherland. Furthermore, Patria was the nickname of his cat Cleopatra. For a more detailed account see Bernard Gillé (Fernando Arrabal, pp.99-102), Françoise Raymond-Mundschau (Arrabal, pp.25-27), and Angel Berenguer (L'Exil et la cérémonie, pp.363-64).

7. The book "Les Murs ont la parole" Journal mural Mai 68 can be used to identify Arrabal's borrowings and modifications of these graffiti which are particularly numerous on pages 295 to 297 of the drama.


Chapter 4

1. These are my translations from the 1972 Bourgois edition. The English translation of the play is based on the 1958 Julliard edition which does not contain such oneiric expressions.

2. Richard Schechner explains in "Guerrilla Theatre: May 1970," Drama Review, No.47 (1970): 163-68, that, like guerrilla warfare, this form of theatre is disruptive and depends on simplicity of tactics, mobility, pressure at the points of greatest weakness, surprise, and a certain degree of improvisation, The term was first adapted from war to theatre by Ronnie Davis and used in his 1966 article "Guerrilla Theatre" (Drama Review, No. 32). Arrabal's Théâtre VII, which contains Et ils passèrent des menottes aux fleurs and L'Aurore rouge et noire, is subtitled "Théâtre de guérilla." Though Arrabal was inspired by this type of play, clearly his two dramas are not formally "guerrilla" plays, for they lack the necessary mobility and simplicity; besides, the plays are not political, that is, didactic and utopian. Nevertheless, both plays are strongly disruptive, one of the basic criteria of guerrilla theatre.
Chapter 5

2. Bernard Gille's *Fernando Arrabal* provides information on the different acts of censorship which made impossible any normal production of plays by Arrabal in Spain until after Franco's death. He also gives an account of the playwright's incarceration in Spanish jails, lasting almost a month, and subsequent trial, for having written a blasphemous dedication while autographing copies of *Arrabal celebrando la ceremonia de la confusión* in Madrid.

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