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The dramatization of paintings: Methods and processes

Medoff, Richard Brad, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1993

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**THE DRAMATIZATION OF PAINTINGS:
METHODS AND PROCESSES**

by
Richard Brad Medoff

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1993

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed to the completion of this dissertation and I would like to thank a few of them here. Daniel Gerould has directed this project from the moment I discovered Przybyszewska's use of painting in *The Danton Case* and continually pushed me to improve my work. Marion P. Holt introduced me to Buero-Vallejo's work, David Willinger completed my committee and both have given me a great deal of useful advice. Jan Heissinger, Program Assistant in Theatre, provided assistance in countless ways.

A special thank you goes to a colleague and a special friend, J. K. Curry, for her assistance, encouragement, and example. Elaine and Gilbert Medoff, Ida Rosenberg, and Jayne Medoff-Smith, my family, have always supported me at whatever I chose to do. The work couldn't have been completed without the assistance of my summer family: Bob Michel, Frank Resillez Urioste, and Walter Wimberley.

This dissertation is dedicated to the many friends who helped me to this point in my life but are no longer with us: for Richard who will always be with me at the library; for Chris, who having taught me to use a computer, will always be at my shoulder when I write; and Carlyle who will always be on my lap or at my nose wanting a kiss.

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INTRODUCTION

The Maestro Angelo Nardi, a painter of the old Florentine school who was imported to the court of King Philip IV of Spain, turns back towards Velázquez. He is standing in a brightly lighted doorway. Having lost some favor in the King's eye and needing to secure his position in the court, he feigns admiration for the painter the King now most prefers, Velázquez. He tells Velázquez he will take his advice about shading.

Velázquez says nothing. He looks up, sees Jose Nieto Velázquez, his cousin, in the doorway on the third step of a staircase within, and says, "I'll put you in my painting, cousin, just as you are! It's exactly what I was looking for."¹ With his artist's eye he senses that the scene is now complete, a new balance has been reached, and the painting, the work of art, can be created.

We become aware of Martin, dressed as if he were the character in Velázquez's portrait *Menippus*, in front of the framing proscenium arch at the apron of the stage, eating

bread, and in a different time frame. Velázquez is still frozen with his palette in his hand. We hear Fuenllana's *Fantasia* playing as Martin speaks to us about a painting. This painting holds within it all the sadness of Spain and not all the light in the world could redeem it from this pain. Martin is draped in shadow as an inner curtain reveals the characters from the play recreating the painting *Las Meninas*, (The Ladies in Waiting). The characters speak, wondering what the painter, who knows all, is thinking. They speak of how the country must be as happy as they are in the palace. Velázquez can only mumble the name of a man who came to expose the reality of the pain, the suffering, and the political repression of the people. The lights fade out.

I have just described the last moment of Antonio Buero-Vallejo's play *Las Meninas* (1960). The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the cross-media influence of the visual arts on playwriting. The basic material for this investigation is an often overlooked aspect of the written text, the stage directions. I shall also be analyzing descriptive passages from dialogue that indicate the influence of a specific painter or painting. There are many ways in which the visual art of painting can influence the stage, from costume design to setting and lighting as well as written text. Scenography is most often studied from the aspect of the contribution of the director, set designer, or

costume designer. However, the use of paintings by these artists falls outside the concerns of this dissertation, which will investigate the impact of painting on the author and the text the author generates. This influence may be exhibited as a "quotation" of the art work translated either into words, three-dimensional representation or projection.

In Chapter 1, I intend to make a survey of the theory dealing with cross-media influences. Although there have been no major investigations dealing with the dramatizations of paintings other than Martin Meisel's seminal study *Realizations*, there are many critics who have written of the cross influences of the two media. I shall utilize methodologies that have been developed for analyzing the visual arts (particularly theories for the reading of paintings) and apply these to theatre that dramatizes painting.

There are three major kinds of influence the visual arts may have on a play. The first type of influence occurs if the playwright himself is also a painter; the creative impulse finds two interactive outlets. Examples of such dual vocation can be found in the works of Buero-Vallejo, Ibsen, Strindberg, and Witkiewicz. A second kind of influence is discernable in the case of writers such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Shaw, and Diderot who are also critics of the visual arts. The third way paintings can influence the author-generated text is through the use in drama of actual paintings--the work of artists other than the

playwrights themselves. Paintings may appear either as part of the stage directions or actually be created as part of the action of the play. They may appear as three-dimensional representations of the painting re-enacted by the actors who replace the characters in the painting. Additional ways in which paintings may appear on stage are as two-dimensional projections, or as representations through language (*ekphrasis*), music or stage directions (and not explicitly acknowledged in dialogue or action). The structure of the play may also imitate the structure of a painting.

My ultimate goal in this dissertation is to investigate the relationship of the primary text of the play to the secondary visual text particularized in the reconstruction of an already existent painting. There are moments in which this painting illustrates the theme of the play, but there are also instances when the painting runs counter to the primary text. I shall investigate plays in which the recreation of a painting is the primary action of the play, plays in which the recreation is suggested by the stage directions but not explicitly called for in the dialogue or action of the play, and plays in which the painting exists as verbal text (*ekphrasis*). *Ekphrasis* can be defined as the translation into words of an object of plastic art (the art need not exist in reality). The description of Achilles's shield in the *Iliad* is the first example of *ekphrasis* in Western literature; and the device became part of

rhetorical education in ancient Greece. The first use of *ekphrasis* in drama occurs in Euripides's *Ion*. A fuller discussion of the device will be provided in Chapter 2.

Although *ekphrasis* occurs as early as classical Greek Theatre we have to pass over much of early theatrical and art history to reach the experience which I have called the dramatization of paintings. Calderón in his theory of the *artes liberales* defines the artist as the individual creator of a work such as a painting or sculpture and not as a craftsman. Only when art is separated from craft does it become separated from life and something to be contemplated for the beauty and truth it holds. This act of separation occurs in theatre also as the stage becomes separated from the audience. First there was the raised platform, then the proscenium arch, a darkening of the auditorium and then finally the recreation of something that has already reached an elevated level and separation and a level for contemplation: art, in the form of the dramatization of paintings. Pageants and Passion plays of the middle ages were festivals in which there was much cross fertilization of the arts, but however much the plays may look like creations already in existence they are not immediately recognizable as one exact painting created by one person. Pageants, though they may be coordinated and masterminded by one person, tend to be a community effort and fall outside the consideration of this dissertation.

Ekphrasis predates theatre that focuses great attention on visual elements. An investigation of plays that use this first technique illustrating a cross influence begins this study of methods and processes of dramatizing paintings. A natural development from *ekphrasis* is *ekphrastic* structure. This can be explained as a structure that develops its logic or reason as a parody of visual arts. The playwright may use a painting to set the action of the play within the world of a specific painting without actually recreating that painting or may recreate the world of the painter in general. This approach is exemplified by Stoppard's *After Magritte* and *Artist Descending a Staircase*, and Arrabal's *Garden of Delights* which are set within a world as visualized and illustrated by Magritte, Duchamps and Bosch, respectively. Or an author may recreate a painting in a stage direction for the purpose of setting the atmosphere of a scene (and sometimes commenting on that scene in an ironic or parodic manner), as in *The Marriage of Figaro* by Beaumarchais, *The Deputy* by Hochhuth, and *Barabbas* by Ghelderode. Although these instances fall outside of the classic definition of *ekphrasis* as a verbal translation of a visual image, many critics who have investigated this phenomenon have called it *ekphrasis* for lack of another term of definition. Chapter 2, "*Ekphrasis* and *Ekphrastic* Structure," involves a study of plays that use any of these methods, with a special emphasis on plays that recreate the world as envisioned in the paintings of Bosch and Breughel.

When an author builds the narrative of the play around a famous painting that is physically recreated on the stage, the artwork's relationship to the play is most easily recognizable. In some dramas such as *Rent Day* by Douglas Jerrold and *The Blind Men* by Michel de Ghelderode, the painting plays a direct role in the action of the play. In both of these cases (as well as in many others) an artwork served as the inspiration for the creation of the play. In these cases, the playwright wished to dramatize the events depicted in a particular painting. One play, *The Broken Pitcher* by Heinrich von Kleist, resulted from a competition or game among friends to compose a play about a specific painting, Debucourt's *La Cruche cassée*. Western theatre is not the only instance of this type of cross influence. In *The Noh Theatre* Kunio Konparu cites a Noh play called *Sansho* which was a dramatization of a famous Chinese painting of three hermits.² A critique of several plays in which art acts as the inspiration is included in Chapter 3. Some of the plays recreate the painting; several only refer to the painting; while others point to the inspiration through citing other works by the same artist. The action of the play may revolve around the creation onstage of the actual painting (rather than as a momentary pose for the characters). I shall analyze this device in Chapter 3 at length but defer discussion of plays in which the painter is a character and the action of the play involves such a creation on stage. Buero-Vallejo's *Las Meninas* is an

instance of the use of this particular device and will be studied in a later chapter called "Metacreational Plays."

Art as a symbol of the theme, either art as a subject itself or a specific painting as a visual symbol, icon, or image of the theme, is the subject of Chapter 4. Three of the plays that fall into this area of investigation are Calderón's *A Painter of His Own Dishonor*, Casona's *Suicide Prohibited in Springtime*, and Howe's *Museum*. Stanisław Grochowiak's *Dulle Griet* is a special case in which a comparison is made between the world of the famous painting by Brueghel the Elder and the world of the play, with the result that the painting illustrates the theme. This play utilizes a combination of several methods of dramatization of paintings. Plays which employ more than one method of dramatizing paintings fall into several different categories.

A painting may be recreated on stage to support the historic authenticity of the scene the playwright is representing. The painting thus becomes a historic document. Examples are to be found in *The Danton Case* by Przybyszewska and *The Sleep of Reason* by Buero-Vallejo. Chapter 5 "Plays on a Historic Event," and Chapter 6 "Biographic Plays," deal with paintings used for authentication. Chapter 5 focuses on plays that undertake to represent the age of the French Revolution, beginning with Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro* and continuing through Przybyszewska's *The Danton Case* and Weiss's

Marat/Sade. Chapter 6 will focus on plays dramatizing the life of Goya and the vision of the world he created.

An interesting structure that develops through the cross influence of art, theatre and academia are plays that use an "Art Lecture" framework. In this framework the playwright draws a second frame not only around the stage in what becomes a play-within-a-lecture play, but also around the painting by refocusing what the audience should look at and read in the painting. An analysis of the plays *Night and War in the Prado Museum* by Alberti, *The Heidi Chronicles* by Wasserstein, and *A Question of Attribution* by Bennett are included in Chapter 7.

Metacreational plays contain many of the issues, methods, and processes detailed in the other chapters of this study. The creation of Velázquez's *Las Meninas* constitutes the action of Buero-Vallejo's play and at the same time visually represents its theme. The action of the play involves his becoming a character-author which defines a metatheatrical play; however, this is a play aware of itself not only as theatre but as a visual creation and so it is a metacreational drama. The last moment of the play is the creation of the world of the stage as a visual representation of the creation of Velázquez which is a recreation of his painting. Since metacreational plays tend to involve multiple forms of dramatizing art, they are discussed in the concluding chapter.

My purpose in writing this dissertation has been to develop a new system for analyzing the visual aspects of theatre. I have not attempted to survey every instance of the use of dramatized paintings. The beginning of each chapter will include a broad overview of the category of play I shall be analyzing in more detail later in the chapter with specific examples. A question that will need to be asked is if part of the sense of fulfillment we feel at that point in the play in which the art is dramatized is accentuated by the feeling of pleasure in viewing that which has been determined to be beautiful or is it in the fulfillment of our expectations of the completeness now that the frame has been filled and there is an establishment or re-establishment of order. Now that we see that *Las Meninas* exists on the stage, do we feel satisfied because we are viewing beauty or is it relief that our sense of order is re-established? In Stoppard's *Artist Descending A Staircase* the play ends when the unidentifiable sound is revealed to be a fly and what originally seemed confused and something we could not fully understand is made to seem absurd. Do we feel satisfaction that the play has ended and framed a story told structurally like a modern art painting we perceive as beautiful or are we satisfied because of the message that modern art is ultimately absurd? The answer to these questions may be the paradox that all these statements are true. Finally, another question that needs investigating is whether the role that art plays in the

society determines the way art is used by the playwright in recreating that society.

¹ Antonio Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas: A Fantasia in Two Parts*, trans. Marion Peter Holt (San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University Press, 1987), 104.

² Kunio Konparu, *The Noh Theatre* (New York: Weatherhill, 1983), 153. The actual reference is "*Sansho*, a dramatization of a famous Chinese painting of three hermit sages who meet, drink, unwittingly break a vow never to step outside the retreat, and then all burst into laughter."

CHAPTER 1: THE PALETTE

A BRIEF SPECTRUM OF THE EXISTING CRITICAL APPROACHES TO THE CO-RELATION AND CROSS-MEDIA INFLUENCES OF ART AND THEATRE

"Simonides called painting mute poetry. But in the tradition we are studying, the mute statue was given a voice and the silent form was endowed with the power of speech."¹

EKPHRASIS

The first term used to describe a co-relationship between the visual arts and the verbal arts was *ekphrasis*. *Ekphrasis* is the verbal construction of a graphic art. As such, it is the translation of a visual image into words. The graphic art that is being constructed or given a voice need not have pre-existed the description and may never have had a visual equivalent. The development of its present definition and its use as a critical tool is very interesting. In *The Sister Arts* Jean Hagstrum states, "This poetry, of which a work of graphic art is the subject, I shall in these pages call 'iconic.'"² In the note that follows she differentiates between the iconic, which is the literary description of works of graphic art, and *ekphrasis* which is giving voice and language to an otherwise mute object of art. She makes this distinction because the Greek root of the word *ekphrazein* translates "to speak out," or

"to tell in full."³ Hagstrum details some of the early usages of the word. "The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'ekphrasis' by citing an example from 1715: 'a plain declaration or interpretation of a thing.' The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* defines it as 'the rhetorical description of a work of art.' Saintsbury says it is 'a set description intended to bring person, place, picture etc., vividly before the mind's eye.' (*A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe* [New York, 1902], I, 491)."⁴ Since theatre is a mixture of the visual and the verbal, it is the perfect laboratory for a study of the practice of ekphrasis.

Charles Rowan Beye cites the practice of ekphrasis by Euripides in *Ion* to prove his thesis that the evolution of theatre in Ancient Greece was from the mythic to the historic. The writer, Beye argues, uses ekphrasis to legitimize the actions of the characters and to anchor the work in historic reality. The mythic relied on a sense of inevitability based in abstraction. It is through abstraction rather than detail that human experience remains mysterious, unexplainable and fated. The events of life remain beyond the control of the protagonists. "Tragedy is abstracted, generalized Euripides allows the many details in this play to be the legitimate object of the spectators' attentions, thought and imagination The movement toward theatre of this sort parallels the development toward historical thinking where again the emphasis is upon detail. . . ."⁵ Euripides abandoned

abstraction of tragedy for a new form of theatre that reproduced the external world more realistically; his method was accumulation of details. This new type of theatre manifested a belief in man's ability to change his life and his world. Beyer contends that since ancient Greek theatre used no sets or props, such concrete motivation could be developed only through the evocation of details provided by *ekphrasis*. *Ekphrasis* was the tool that was developed. Beyer points to three moments of *ekphrasis* in *Ion*: Creusa describing the bracelet with the poison on it (1006ff.)⁶, the messenger describing the embroidery on a banner at the place Xuthus prepares for sacrifice (1156ff.)⁷, and then finally a description of the cloth and embroidery in which Ion was exposed (1421ff.)⁸

In *History, Rhetorical Description and the Epic Page* DuBois details how *ekphrasis* becomes the symbol of a specific event in the history of the community for which the artwork was created. She starts the discussion by stating that "*ekphrasis* clarifies the relationship between individual and community history."⁹ She develops this argument by detailing the role of the hero in the epic and the way in which his destiny became subordinated to the needs of the community as a whole, thereby causing his destruction. "The hero in his epic incarnation encounters representations of the community's past in various media . . ., he sees in graphic form representations of significant events on weapons, buildings, and tapestries The

hero mediates the audience's relationship to these histories. . . . It is his presence before them--as legends recounted, as dreams or visions, as works of art--that bring them to his audience."¹⁰ As mediator he is the link between the present and the history of the community. The hero is the eternal artistic creation that symbolizes the history of the community out of which he was created and for whose survival he perishes. DuBois states that one notices *ekphrasis* immediately even if one is not familiar with the work being described because the time frame the device creates is outside the time frame of the present tense of the text. It is the verbal equivalent of a tableau in that it freezes time. "Because it imitates the structure of a work of art that is constructed in space, not time, it is markedly different from the rest of a narrative."¹¹ Dubois illustrates the several ways in which *ekphrasis* is used as a symbol of a past event. "The *ekphrasis* is a narrative poetic discourse that purports often to be a model or icon, literally of the past and future structures in the interest of explaining what they were, what they will be, by representing them in relation to an englobing narrative discourse" ¹²

According to Dubois, *ekphrasis* may also be used to "embody the relationship between the poet's art and his 'world' through the medium of another type of art--visible, plastic art." She notes that Murray Krieger in his analysis of T.S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton"¹³ "shows the object described

in an *ekphrasis* has the potential to stand as a metaphor for a literary work."¹⁴ He also indicates the timelessness of an *ekphrastic* moment; by stopping time it makes the perfect space "to offer a model of history's progress." "It is time fixed into a timeless model."¹⁵

The final use of *ekphrasis* as described by Dubois is as a symbol for an event in history. "In the epic poems the micro-history of the *ekphrasis* is at times made equivalent to the macro-history, the encompassing narrative, of a poem as a whole." ¹⁶ An example of this will be highlighted in my discussion of Ghelderode's *Barrabbas* in which the procession of the stations of the cross are described as an *ekphrastic* moment translating Goya's black paintings *El Santo Oficio* (*The Holy Office*) and *Romería* (known as both *Pilgrimage to the Miraculous Fountain of San Isidro* or *Vision of the Pilgrims of San Isidro*) into words and correlating the social and political oppressions of the three periods of time (Christ's, Goya's, and the eternal present of the play). Dubois explains, "Precious objects like the shield [Achilles' shield in *The Iliad*] make history visible as 'texts' which like the remembered song, record significant actions in the past for their audience."¹⁷

I shall make only a narrow sampling of *ekphrasis*. Since my analysis will focus on the difference between what the visual artist created and the text that the playwright has created, I shall deal only with *ekphrasis* traceable to an artwork that already exists.

LINDA HUTCHEON'S THEORY OF PARODY

On the last page of Linda Hutcheon's book *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*, the author explains, "Parody today cannot be explained *totally* in structuralist terms of form, in the hermeneutic context of response, in a semiotic-ideological framework, or in post-structuralist absorption of everything into textuality. Yet the complex determinants of parody in some way involve all these current critical perspectives--and many more. It is in this way that parody can, inadvertently perhaps, serve another useful function today: it can call into question the temptation toward the monolithic in modern theory."¹⁸ It is in this light that Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody is an important critical tool for this dissertation even though she deals primarily with parodic transposition of one visual image into another rather than trans-media parody. Parody, quite simply, is the use of images or spatial relationships created by other artists as a visual quotation within a new work. In the twentieth century particularly, art has begun to be an imitation of art rather than life. This immediately raises the question of exactly what "parody" is picturing. Hutcheon says it is an "alleged representation of a 'modelled reality' which is itself already a particular representation of an original 'reality'."¹⁹ Another definition could be "inter-art traffic,"²⁰ as Hutcheon quotes the film director Peter Greenaway in his response to

a question of his using the images from painters within his films.

Once Hutcheon has defined "parody" she addresses the question of why "parody" occupies a central position in contemporary art. "Perhaps parody can flourish today because we live in a technological world in which culture has replaced nature as the subject of art."²¹ We can only understand something in reference to what we already know. We are so culturally layered that we can no longer react to the primal or mythic and can only react to past culture as visually represented through paintings. In this way paintings become essentially a "learned memory"²² for the whole population. These images from past culture become, for the contemporary population, the symbols that form a tableau, as defined by Diderot, that allows for universal instantaneous understanding. This would mean that parody is not a conscious effort but may be the only way in which we can create. When parody is consciously used, however, it would be as a "cultural memory [which] echoes past works in order to borrow a context and to evoke atmosphere."²³ Another reason may be that in order to show a greater truth, modern artists use parody to show that all art is not a vision of truth but of artifice or as Hutcheon says, " . . . by making overt the artifice that in fact defines all art."²⁴ "The Romantic myth is put to rest; the writer thinks less of writing originally, and more of rewriting.

The image for writing changes from original *inscription* to parallel script."²⁵

Taking the idea of the "parallel script," Hutcheon theorizes how parody works or rather how we gather understanding from a work that uses parody. The audience is immediately disturbed by a work of parody for they sense "difference in the heart of similarity." "Doing consciously what time does more slowly, parody can work to distort the shapes of art, synthesizing from them and from the present of the encoder a new form--one not burdened, but enriched, by the past."²⁶

As other critics have already noted, a painting is an event within the cultural history of the society and as such it contains within it symbols of the context in which it was created. Though an artist might use a painting to recreate the context of the painting, the image is being used in a contemporary painting so that we look at the " . . . encoded intent [and] we posit some encoding intent to cast a critical and differentiating eye on the artistic past, an intent that we, as readers, then *infer* from the text's (covert or overt) inscription of it."²⁷

Parody is a form of "trans-contextualization," for the context of the new painting is encoded within the context of the old painting. As an example Hutcheon cites Picasso's many reworkings of Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, co-relating the context of all the paintings. Picasso, in painting a parody of Velázquez, foregrounds the context in which the painting

was created and relates it to his own which is one action of "trans-contextualization." Hutcheon theorizes that this works in that one ". . . then *remembers* aspects of the source text's 'intention' which can then be *connected* to the alluding-- parodic--text in order to complete the marker's [author's] meaning."²⁸ As further proof of this thesis Hutcheon quotes Edward Said who " . . . argues for a literary theory that would take account of what he calls 'the text's situation in the world' (Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1983) 151). Given his belief that all art is discourse-specific-- that is, that it cannot escape its historical, social and ideological context--his position is that all texts, even parodic ones are 'worldly,' to the degree that they are events, and even when they appear to deny it [as in self-reflexive parodic texts], they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course, the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted."²⁹

Hutcheon reveals how parody foregrounds context through quotation and the intentional artifice of the painting. "Parody is one of the techniques of self-referentiality by which art reveals its awareness of the context-dependent nature of meaning, of the importance to signification of the circumstances surrounding any utterance."³⁰ Interestingly, "texts can be understood only when set against the conventional backgrounds from which they emerge; and the

same texts paradoxically contribute to the backgrounds that determine their meanings."³¹ (It may be in this way that a painting when recreated on stage may reproduce a visual representation of the context within which this painting was created as part of the atmosphere.) The painting becomes the icon for a certain event in history and the use of it recreates the context for that event. In Hutcheon's discussion of Postmodernism she quotes Robert Stern as he is cited by Paolo Portoghesi in *After Modern Architecture* which is her source. Portoghesi interprets Stern as saying that, "Our attitude toward form, which is based in a love for history and an awareness of it, does not imply accurate reproduction. It is eclectic and is used as a technique of collage and juxtaposition, to give new meaning to known forms and thereby goes off in new directions."³² By using parody, the context of the painting changes and so does its meaning.

Hutcheon deals directly with theatre only once and in that instance her example is Brecht.

Much parodic metafiction today deliberately works either to orient or to disorient the reader. One of the effects of *both* kinds of maneuvering is to set up what one critic calls a 'dialectical relationship between identification and distance which enlists the audience in contradiction' (Belsey, *Catherine Critical Practice* (London, Methuen, 1980) 97). Like Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* parody works to distance and, at the same time, to involve the reader in a participatory hermeneutic activity.³³

She omits all other aspects of parody in Brecht's work. It is important to remember that none of Brecht's plots was original and all can be considered parodies of other plots. In speaking about the ending of *Three Penny Opera*, Hutcheon says that "Kurt Weil claimed, however, that this was not parody in the traditional mocking sense of the word. It was rather, an instance of the very idea of 'opera' being used to resolve a conflict, i.e. being given a function in establishing the plot. Brecht also transposes the time period of Gay's original work to the bourgeois Victorian times in which grand opera and capitalism went hand in hand."³⁴ This could be the same reason a playwright may use a painting from a particular era--not to be time specific but to be political and economically specific.

CALDERON'S THEORY OF THE ARTES LIBERALES

The point at which the art of painting became critically separated from the crafts marks the moment from which the possibility of art representing truth develops. In 1677, Calderón wrote a "Tractate in Defence of the Nobility of Painting" ("*Deposición de D. Pedro Calderón de la Barca en favor de los profesores de la pintura, en el pleito con el procurador general de esta corte, sobre pretender este se la hiciese repartimento de soldados*"), which is essentially a diatribe against the taxation of painters. This disposition contains the only extant writings by Calderón of a theoretical nature. The artes

liberales states that painters, having risen in social status thanks to the patronage of the court, were no longer willing to remain nameless workmen who could be confused with artisans and that the profession of painter was now one worthy of a freeborn man. During the Italian Renaissance art had been raised to the level of science with a series of laws and rules which became not only the basis for criticism but also creation. The concept of the "idea" became the prime principle behind the critical viewing of paintings. Calderón believed that the act of creating paintings was not only an emulation of nature but an activity that was in imitation of God. God created us in His image as if He were a painter. He states that painting is the art of arts for it contains within it the purposes of the other seven arts. "Grammar contributes its concordances to painting, dialectics its consequences, rhetoric its persuasion, poetry its art of invention, oratory its energies, arithmetic its numbers, music its harmonies, symmetry its measures, architecture its planes, sculpture its forms, perspective and optics their magnifications and reductions, and finally astronomy and astrology their symbols for the knowledge of the constellations; . . . "35

Defining the act of painting as an imitation of God allowed theorists and critics to believe that a painting illustrated a truth that the common artisan or citizen could not comprehend without the intermediary action of the artist. A playwright using that painting would be

illuminating that truth. If a painting contained the rules of the other arts' the moment of the recreation of the painting on stage becomes a pregnant complete moment. It is at this point in history that the study of the use of paintings recreated on stage begins, for it is through the search for a "truth" in beauty that contemporary criticism develops. Calderón, himself, used numerous metaphors of painting in his plays. The Colección Aula Magna edition of the play *El Pintor de su deshonra*, edited by Manuel Ruiz Lagos, contains twenty-five examples of what the critic calls a "*Breve Antología de Textos Pictórico-Literarios*."³⁶ In three plays painting is a supporting element in the dramatic structure, *Darlo todo y no dar nada* (*To Give It All And Not Give Anything*) and *El Pintor de su deshonra* (*The Painter of his own Dishonor*) and an *auto sacramental* by the same title.

DIDEROT

Much of Diderot's writings revolved around the inclusion of mime rather than dialogue within a play. A mimed moment becoming frozen into a pose develops into a tableau. A tableau is directly related to a painting and, as such, the audience has the time to reflect on the truth symbolized by the pose. In *Entretiens Sur Le Fils Naturel* Diderot states "a mimed scene is a tableau--an animated decor."³⁷ Later he declares, "A great deal of attention should be paid to mime. All *corps de théâtre* whose effect

is momentary should be eliminated and tableaux invented in their stead."³⁸ His play *The Natural Son* gives the best example of what Diderot means. The scene opens with the awakening of the Mother to tell of the death of her son: "And then unhooking the crucifix from above her bed, she folds it in her arms and fastens her lips upon it; her eyes are streaming with tears and with those tears she sprinkles her God moulded on the cross. The tableau of a religious woman."

Diderot was the first theorist to consider as central to his view a co-relation of the visual arts and theatre. In his book on nineteenth-century narrative, pictorial and theatrical arts, *Realizations*, Martin Meisel states that Diderot argued for "spectacle in connection with theatrical forms that were neither ceremonial and celebratory nor musical and balletic, but directed toward private life."³⁹ That would lead to what Meisel terms "pictorial staging."⁴⁰ In connection with Diderot's theories Meisel also uses the phrase "pictorial theatre."⁴¹ He develops his interpretation of Diderot from two quotations from *Oeuvres de theatre de M. Diderot* published in Amsterdam, 1772. The first quote is from Volume 1:168-170 "tableaux réels, qu'il y aurait dans l'action de moments favorables au peintre,"⁴² and then again, in particular dealing with staging, from Volume 2:418, prescribing the "grouping and otherwise manipulating the figures on the stage so as to create 'une succession de tableaux tous composés d'une manière grande et vraie.'"⁴³ In

Volume X of Diderot's works collected and annotated by Jacques and Anne-Marie Chouillet entitled *Le drame bourgeois: Fiction II*, there are several relevant references to theatre and painting. Diderot makes a reference to "*De la peinture théâtrale*"⁴⁴ and "*Lois de la composition communes à la peinture et à l'action dramatique*."⁴⁵ These comments suggest that Diderot was attempting to make the visual aspects of theatre articulate but he stops short of advising playwrights to recreate actual paintings, those that already exist on canvas, on stage.

Using the term "painterly" would help to connect these statements with the rest of Diderot's writings on the theatre. Diderot states "painting is the art of reaching the soul by the mediation of the eyes,"⁴⁶ and continues the thought by concluding, "when you make beauty you do not make anything that exists or even anything which can exist."⁴⁷ This is very similar to Heinrich Wölfflin's definition of the "painterly" in the visual arts. Painterly paintings give "only the appearance of reality."⁴⁸ This is the world not as it is perceived by touch but as it is seen. "The fundamental difference between draughtsmanly and painterly representation, as even antiquity understood it--[in that] the former represents things as they are, the latter as they seem to be"⁴⁹

When seen in the light of Diderot's theory of the paradox in acting in which the actor is both involved and uninvolved with the action on stages one can interpret

Diderot's call for the painterly visual elements of the theatre to contain the same paradox for the audience's involvement. The audience should be involved with the reality of the situation and believe in the emotional life being portrayed, and yet the visual images should provide enough critical distance from the play (by the picture frame reframing the procenium arch) to allow for the viewing of a deeper moral truth as realized through the vision of an artist.

Another aspect of Wolfflin's definition of the painterly is that "it is the total picture rather than the outlines,"⁵⁰ and in its totality it gives the impression of viewing the full accumulation of details. As such, the painterly extends the sense of particularizations of event through detail in visual terms that *ekphrasis* does in verbal terms. Again Diderot's plays provide good examples; the stage directions are extremely detailed and have as much or more dramatic weight than the dialogue. Diderot valued serious historical paintings because they had evident moral purpose and the majority of plays that recreate paintings on stage are either historical dramas or plays that take very strong moral stands.

MARTIN MEISEL'S REALIZATIONS

Meisel is concerned with formal similarities between painting, novels and drama and the expressive and narrative connections that they share. He traces the narrative

language of painting along with the pictorial structure of fiction. "In the nineteenth Century all three forms [novel, painting, and drama] are narrative *and* pictorial; pictures given to storytelling and novels unfold through and with pictures."⁵¹ In the type of theatre which uses the accumulation of detail to particularize the event, character was often subordinate to situation. This was before naturalism co-related environment and character. Theatre of this period shared a gestural and iconographic language of representation with paintings. Language also contained a shared vocabulary of gesture, expression, configuration, object and ambience with the paintings. The plots no longer were involved with heroes as individuals but rather with domestic issues in which each element of the composition of the scene was meant to impart information to the audience.

Plays before this period were mainly rhetorical and so the co-relation of the arts was illustrated through a rhetorical device, *ekphrasis*. These plays, being mainly situational, illustrate the co-relation through the three dimensional representation of the paintings within the action of the play and are what Meisel calls "Realizations." "'Realization' which had a precise technical sense when applied to certain theatrical tableaux based on well-known pictures, was in itself the most fascinating of 'effects' on the nineteenth-century stage, where it meant both literal re-creation and translation into a more real, that is more vivid, visual, physically-present medium. To move from

mind's eye to body's eye was realization, and to add a third dimension to the first two was realization, as when words became picture, or when picture became dramatic tableau."⁵² The paintings that were capturing the public's fancy were becoming more narrative and through the use of symbols were foregrounding a history of the moment described by the painting. The most appreciated of these paintings included within the frozen moment of the event both past and future by symbolizing and making manifest both cause and consequence.

Another type of visual narrative was the serial painting. Serial paintings, as popularized by Hogarth, related a story through a series of important moments. The dramatization of these types of paintings led to a structure where the action of the play leads from one frozen moment to another frozen moment, ending in a final tableau.

In the new dramaturgy, the unit is intransitive, it is in fact an achieved moment of stasis, a picture. The play creates a series of such pictures, some of them offering a culminating symbolic summary of represented events, while others substitute an arrested situation for action and reaction. Each picture dissolving, leads not into consequent activity but to a new infusion and distribution of elements from which a new picture will be assembled or resolved.⁵³

In this way not only do the plays "realize" the paintings but the structure of these plays are ekphrastic in that the structure illustrates the creation of the heavily symbolic and emblematic world of the serial painting. The dramaturgy, not just the mise-en-scène, was pictorial. An

example of this type of structure is found in Hauptmann's⁵⁴ *The Weavers* in which the structure of the play unfolds as a series of representative tableaux like those created by the painter Carl Hubner in 1845. Even earlier the Adelphi Theatre under the management of Frederick Yates in the 1830s presented *Novel illustrations of Shakespeare! exemplified by Tableaux Vivants, or Living Pictures*.⁵⁵ This aspect of Meisel's analysis of "realizations," complements my use of Hutcheon's theory of parody to fully define *ekphrastic* structure. Recent examples of *ekphrastic* structure will be illustrated by Tom Stoppard's *Artist Descending a Staircase* and John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation*.

ROLAND BARTHES

For Roland Barthes, "The theatre is precisely that practice which calculates the place of things as they are observed" ⁵⁶ Barthes's definition co-relates the theatre with what, as has already been noted, Wolfflin defines as "the painterly." Barthes is concerned with how an artist dictates the focus of the audience by determining what is represented within the boundary of the frame (or proscenium arch). His argument is shrouded in the jargon of deconstruction. The tableau he defines as a fetish-object which raises the audience's desire to see what is disallowed by the artist.

He begins by identifying Diderot's aesthetics. "As is well known, the whole of Diderot's aesthetics rests on the

identification of theatrical scene and pictorial tableau: the perfect play is a succession of tableaux, that is, a gallery, an exhibition; the stage offers the spectator 'as many real tableaux as there are in the action moments favourable to the painter'. . . . the tableau (pictorial, theatrical, literary) is a pure cut-out segment with clearly defined edges . . . is intellectual, it has something to say (something moral, social)."⁵⁷ Strengthening my argument for the use of the word painterly in the translation of Diderot, Barthes co-relates Diderot's concept of tableau and Lessing's "pregnant moment."

"Naturally, Diderot had conceived of this perfect instant In order to tell a story, the painter has only an instant at his disposal, the instant he is going to immobilize on the canvas, and he must thus choose it well, assuring it in advance of the greatest possible yield of meaning and pleasure. Necessarily total [painterly], this instant will be artificial (unreal; this is not a realist art), a hieroglyph in which we can read at a single instant (at one grasp, if we think in terms of theatre and cinema) the present, the past and the future; that is the historical meaning of the represented action. . . . This crucial instant, totally concrete and totally abstract, is what Lessing subsequently calls (in *Laocoon*) the pregnant moment."⁵⁸

Barthes continues his argument by reading Sergei Eisenstein's *The General Line* and shows how "the gesture bears the weight of a history: its pregnancy brings together the past victory . . . the present struggle"⁵⁹

Two important points relevant to my dissertation emerge from Barthes's theorizing. The first is a "pregnant moment" which is the presence of all the absences (memories, lessons, promises) by which History becomes intelligible and attracts attention. This moment is a hieroglyph in which past, present, and the consequences of the present may be read. An author may use a painting in order to conjure for the audience the social and economic influences under which the painting was created. In a novel an explanation may take pages, on stage the audience may experience the historic moment and, in an instant, immediately understand. The second important point relates directly to Brecht. To Barthes the gestus is an outgrowth of Diderot's tableau, consequently, epic theatre proves to be just a succession of tableaux.

Much of what Barthes writes about are theories revolving around directing the view of the audience and the concepts of absence and desire. While what an artist pictures focuses the attention of the audience, what a playwright decides to dramatize also focuses the viewing attention of the audience. When a playwright also uses a painting as a visual aspect of his play, he is doubly focusing the attention of the audience.

Barthes's theories come very much into play in my discussion of Buero-Vallejo's *Las Meninas*. An extended part of my discussion of this play deals with the concept of inside /outside (of both the painting frame and the

proscenium arch) and how it relates to what Velázquez and Buero both can, want to, and are allowed to represent. This very much involves political statements on power structures (Law) that correspond to both Velázquez's and Buero's eras. "Law" is an important deconstructionist term. Laws are the rules of a society and in the picture of society created by the artist the artist creates the "law." In representational art the law is what allows meaning, for it is only through knowing the language of the rules of the created world of the painting that an audience can read meaning. "This point of meaning is always the Law: the law of society, the law of struggle, law of meaning. Thus all militant art cannot be representational, legal."⁶⁰ This fact will be important in discussing the use of representational works of art in theatre that verbally carry revolutionary views.

JACQUES DERRIDA

Jacques Derrida's concern in his book *The Truth In Painting* is the multiplicity of meanings inherent in every event that takes place within this world. The book takes off on a verbal trip, full of jargon and puns, from the phrase, "the truth in painting," and from one meaning he finds several meanings. He develops his focus from one frame to several frames, from presentation to representation to several representations, from artist to recreating the artist and finally, to my concern, from one art translated

into another art. The question that rules where this voyage goes is "Does speech-act theory have its counterpart in painting?"⁶¹ Derrida is searching for a "pictorial metaphor of discourse,"⁶² while investigating the "bursting of speech into drawing."⁶³ While Roland Barthes develops his deconstructionist reading through a conventional reading of Diderot, Derrida makes a deconstructionist reading of several other critics. On his way to his own conclusions he takes us sightseeing through Hegel, Heidegger, Kant, and Barthes.

Derrida finds that it is only through focus that something has meaning. Art gives nature meaning through focus. "Semantic normality [meaning] It does not merely fix the economic propriety of a 'focus,' but regulates the possibility of play, of divergencies, of the equivocal" ⁶⁴ This focus is the frame, it gives a more precise meaning to a visual picture on stage by placing a double frame around the moment (proscenium and picture frame). This doubling takes away the possibility of play in the meaning, and the playwright is being dictatorial in the way in which he inflicts meaning on the visual instant being dramatized. According to Derrida there is less discrepancy between the two in the meaning.

Derrida believes that only that which has meaning can be defined as beautiful. Since only that which is focused and framed has meaning, Art is superior to Nature. He starts this argument by quoting Hegel that "more precisely

artistic beauty is superior to natural beauty, beauty as the mind that produces it is superior to nature [Nature has no frame]."⁶⁵ Taking Hegel's quotation he asks, "What are the examples of productions of art which are beautiful without signifying anything by and for themselves . . . without theme and even without text?"

Roland Barthes finds meaning in not only what the artist causes to be focused on but what is omitted from within the frame. In this context Derrida agrees that "there is an inside and outside of the work as soon as there is a work."⁶⁶ Derrida develops this thesis one step further in order to find meaning in the frame itself. He starts by defining frame as Kant does. He calls it a *parergon*, a hybrid of outside and inside at the limit between work and absence of work. He goes on to tell how the framing seduces our attention. As final proof of how meaning is inherent in the frame he posits that "if you take away its [the picture's] social, economic, political supports, etc., all that is left is the frame, but the frame only exists as a culmination of all that defines the painting."⁶⁷

Another aspect of "framing" that interests Derrida is "What happens when one entitles a 'work of art'?"⁶⁸ The title adds another focus to the picture by telling the beholder what the artist intended as the theme or main object of the picture. He finds that "the title plays inside the space of the work inscribing the legend with its definitional pretension"⁶⁹ Titling remains an

interest to Derrida as can be seen by the following quote from the text accompanying an exhibit he put together for the Louvre during 1991 called "*Memoires d'aveugle: L'autoportrait et autres ruines*." "It is not enough to simply see the work to decide what the subject is . . . ; at the edge of the work, neither inside nor outside, readable rather than visible, the title is our only recourse. As for deciding the subject, the initiative is always left to words."⁷⁰

Derrida begins his discussion of Roland Barthes's theories on tableau by indicating how other critics had perceived the dimension of time. "They think of 'art as a past'."⁷¹ "Heidegger interrogates art and more precisely the work of art . . . as the history of truth."⁷² He then goes on to discuss Roland Barthes's theory of tableau. According to Derrida's reading of Barthes, a tableau is the moment before an action laden with the probability of that action and a summation of all meaning, a pregnant moment. The tableau becomes the signifier for that event. In history plays it becomes a moment laden with all the political implications of that event. Derrida places this signification in the frame which defines the moment as a tableau.

Derrida finishes his musings on art with a discussion of the sublime and the colossal. "So although the sublime [he says the same about the colossal] is better presented by (raw) nature than by art, it is not in nature but in

ourselves projected by us because of the inadequation in us of several powers, of several facilities."⁷³ In his play *The Sleep of Reason* Buero-Vallejo has projected on the stage Goya's Black Painting *Saturno* which represents a Titan eating his own child. It becomes the symbol for what happens when our reason sleeps. Our senses cannot take in what cannot be measured, which in this case is both the size of the man performing the act of eating his own children, the size of the horror and revulsion at the act, and the size of Goya's fear. This horror is not in nature but in ourselves constructed by the system of man that allows these atrocities to occur; for Goya the monarchy, for Buero the government under Franco. We cannot comprehend deprived of reason so we project a construction that is beyond our understanding. "The colossal is the mere presentation of a concept which is almost too great for presentation i.e. borders on the relatively monstrous"⁷⁴ The colossal, for Derrida, becomes the revolutionary vision, breaking out of the frame and beyond understanding and meaning. The Colossus as dramatized by Buero in *The Sleep of Reason* can also be discussed as the ultimate image of how revolution devours its own revolutionaries.

MICHAEL FRIED AND THE CONCEPT OF ABSORPTION AND THEATRICALITY

Michael Fried does two important things in his book *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot*. The first is to redefine what Diderot

meant by tableau and the second is to define theatrical as an awareness of the viewer. He essentially argues that, "mediocre work of those years sought to establish what I called a theatrical relation to the beholder, whereas the very best recent works . . . were in essence anti-theatrical, which is to say that they treated the beholder as if he were not there."⁷⁵ Absorption is when the people within the painting are "completely occupied or engrossed or (as I prefer to say) absorbed in what he or she is doing, hearing, thinking, feeling."⁷⁶ This concept of absorption versus theatricality leads to the development of the fourth wall in theatre and a loss of direct contact with the audience or beholder. Some of the plays dealing with the concept of revolution recreate paintings that can be included in works that use "absorption" and so they leave the audience out of the action of revolution.

Fried traces absorption as a reaction from the Rococo school of painting. "The basic features of the reaction are well known: a turning away from the exquisite, sensuous, intimately decorative painting that held field for roughly thirty years; and an insistence on the need to return to what was perceived as the high seriousness, elevated morality, and timeless esthetic principles of the great art of the past . . . and the supremacy of history painting."⁷⁷ Fried applies his definition of "absorption" to the writings of Diderot. "Diderot's examples of the real actions of life are essentially absorptive,"⁷⁸ and "Throughout Diderot's

Salons the notions of silence and solitude, already encountered in commentaries on Vien's *Eremite endormi* and Grueze's *Repos*, are associated with absorptive themes and effects. And of course the characterization of Boucher's figures as marionettes asserts their lack of the capacity for inwardness on which absorption depends."⁷⁹ Fried quotes two comments on paintings by Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin; "a natural pause in the action which, we feel, will recommence a moment later . . . manifestations of an absorptive state" ⁸⁰ and "a single moment has been isolated in all its plenitude and density" ⁸¹ Fried believes that Diderot's writings influenced other "Anti-Rococo" critics and theorists to grade paintings according to a new appreciation of the representation of action and passion. This he calls a "new explicitly dramatic conception of painting."⁸² He goes on to say that "the new dramatic conception of painting is to be understood in turn as the expression of a still more fundamental preoccupation with *pictorial unity* . . . in which the causal necessity of every element and relationship in the painting would be strikingly and instantaneously apparent [tableau]."⁸³ This would lead to the tableau of the painting being "universally intelligible"⁸⁴ and one that would contain "radical intelligibility."⁸⁵ Paintings that fulfilled this requirement would not need an "educated viewer" to understand its message. In speaking of the new primacy given to history paintings Fried contends that, "It was also

that historical subject matter provided the context required for the representation of action and gesture to assume the fullness and precision of meaning without which true dramatic unity was unrealizable." One can read in the term "pictorial unity" Wolfflin's definition of the "painterly."

The remaining sections of Fried's book involves the re-defining of what he believes Diderot meant by tableau. He does this by applying what he believes became the primacy of absorption to Diderot's writings on theatre.

Diderot's vision of those relations [theatre and painting] is expounded in his two early treatises on the theatre, the *Entretiens sur le Fils naturel* (1757) and the *Discours de la poésie dramatique* (1758) in which he called for the development of a new stage dramaturgy that would find in painting, or in certain exemplary paintings, the inspiration for a more convincing representation of action than any provided by the theatre of his time. . . . Specifically, Diderot urges playwrights to give up contriving elaborate *coups de théâtre* . . . , whose effect he judged to be shallow and fleeting at best, and instead to seek what he called *tableaux*. . . , which if properly managed he believed were capable of moving an audience to the depths of its collective being. The spectator in the theatre, he maintained, ought to be thought of as before a canvas, on which a series of such *tableaux* follow one another as if by magic.⁸⁶

Fried believes that Diderot reverses such earlier critics as Roger De Piles who use the stage as a model for painting ("One must think of a painting as a stage , on which each figure plays its role."⁸⁷) by having painting be the model for theatre and the development of a new "pictorial dramatic experience"⁸⁸ or "pictorial dramaturgy."⁸⁹ Once one realizes that the priority of the arts is reversed one can then take

the theories written about the art of painting and apply them to the theatre.

Taking his theory of "absorption" as developed from the writings of Diderot, Fried now applies it directly back at Diderot. Fried says that there is "The recognition that the art of painting was inescapably addressed to an audience that must be gathered corresponds to the exactly concurrent recognition that the theater's audience was inescapably a gathering not simple of auditors but of beholders."⁹⁰ Having equated audience and beholder, Fried again quotes Diderot, "In a dramatic representation, the beholder is no more to be taken into account than if he did not exist . . . it is necessary that author and actor forget the beholder,"⁹¹ and "Whether you compose or act, think no more of the beholder than if he did not exist. Imagine at the edge of the stage, a high wall that separates you"⁹² Later in his writings Fried quotes Diderot further on the subject, "A scene represented on canvas or on the stage does not suppose a witness."⁹³ Fried ultimately comes to the conclusion that Diderot was against all that was theatrical and he goes on to define theatrical as those gestures that one plays at when one is aware of being beheld. Fried's new definition of tableau is:

The usual interpretation of Diderot's concept of the *tableau*, as asserting the importance of visual considerations in the achievement of dramatic illusion, and moreover as implying an exaltation of vision itself, is therefore somewhat misleading. The primary function of the *tableau* as Diderot conceived it was not to address or exploit the visuality of the theatrical

audience so much as to neutralize that visuality, to wall it off from the action taking place on stage, to put it out of the mind for the *dramatis personae* and the audience alike. More generally, the *Entretiens* and the *Discours* are often read as calling for stage realism pure and simple. But it would be truer to say that they called primarily for the illusion that the audience did not exist, that it was not really there or at the very least had not been taken into account.⁹⁴

One can consider the act of creating a stage tableau as a distancing device which separates the audience from the action on the stage giving them the necessary distance to observe the moral lesson being dramatized. However, Diderot also prescribes that tableau should allow for the pictorialization of an action and passion and for the audience to be able to respond in a like way. This paradox is intensified by Fried's observation that Diderot often comments on the absorption of the participants within a painting or tableau as being so absorbed it allowed him to enter into the picture.

Fried addresses this paradox of beholder as participant by indicating "silence" as an important element in all masterpieces. Pantomime is more important to Diderot in dramatic action than verbal language. Also in painting the act of absorption by the image in the painting is done in silence. It is through silence that the spectator enters the world of the painting and the theatre as a silent witness, endeavoring not to disturb the participants and make them aware of being observed. "Diderot often uses notions like harmony, peace, and silence to evoke distinctive effects of absorptive painting."⁹⁵

In the last section of the book Fried develops a theory of influence of Diderot on Jacques-Louis David. "[A] determined pursuit of naivete and a passionate revulsion against the theatrical in Diderot's sense of the terms were central preoccupations of David's maturity, and that issues of dramaturgy involving the relationship of painting to beholder were fundamental to his accomplishment"96 Fried points out that even though Diderot's writings were not published until the second half of the 1790s (which would have been too late to have been an influence on David) that, "starting in the late 1760s, despite a difference of 35 years between their ages, the *philosophe* and the painter were linked by their common friendship with the playwright Michel-Jean Sedaine"97

OTHER THEORISTS

Wendy Steiner in her book *The Colors of Rhetoric: Problems in the Relationship between Modern Literature and Painting* shows how one can identify an *ekphractic* moment. A painting is a still moment and one notices while reading a section that time is frozen. " . . . [T]he pregnant moment [using Lessing's term] in painting has in turn generated a literary topos in which poetry is to imitate the visual arts by stopping time, or more precisely, by referring to an action through a still moment that implies it. The technical term for this is *ekphrasis*, the concentration of action in a single moment of energy, and is a direct

borrowing from the visual arts."⁹⁸ Essentially it is the stillness of painting as imitated by poetry and, by extension, literature. Literature becomes something that no longer moves through time and "the ephemeral is permanently fixed."⁹⁹ Steiner corrects other critics about time and painting in that though what is pictured is frozen in time, the act of viewing a painting is not, for as an eye travels over a page to read, so does the eye travel over the painting. Her conclusion is that the mimetic impulse in both arts make them easy to compare, for a poem is a speaking painting and a painting is silent poetry.

In his analysis of Carlos Roja's *El Jarden de las Hespérides*, a novel that co-relates the life of a painter who may be either Dali or Velázquez, Jeffrey Bruner cites Steiner's position that *ekphrasis* is an attempt to dispel the boundaries between art and life, between the sign or icon and the thing itself. He states that, "the goal of *Hespérides* and of all *ekphrastic* literature is to retard, if not arrest, the deferment of reality by narrowing the margin between it and the representation thereof."¹⁰⁰ He states that *ekphrasis* has a second use and that is to disrupt the normal narrative and call attention to itself as a moment of difference, an alienated moment that allows distance for analysis.

Mary Ann Caws develops a theory of art as a Lacanian mirror which represents both self and other, in her book *The Eye in the Text: Essays on Perception, Mannerist to Modern*.

Essentially reading paintings that contain either mirrors, windows, or doorways, Caws relates how viewing a painting is a release from ordinary perception as if a sudden plunge into a new space which causes a simultaneous perception of "various layers of time."¹⁰¹ Caws begins with "*Je [et] est l'autre*" and identifies it as "the essential metaphor [that] establishes the motion from a system of rupture (I and the Other) toward the state of a double consciousness; it shows a search for unity, for the identity of being and existence." Taking off from this "metaphor" Caws proves how one cannot separate oneself from what one is viewing so that one's reading of a painting is part painting and part mirror. Diderot had spoken of the act of viewing a painting absorbing him into the painting. Though Caws patially agrees with this, her theory eliminates all pretense of a community of views let alone Diderot's concept of "universality."

Tom Wolfe takes a sarcastic view of the world of "Modern Art," and the only reason he is mentioned here is that his view is similar to the view Tom Stoppard takes in *Artist Descending a Staircase*. According to Wolfe the terms "modern and modernistic came into the language as exciting adjectives,"¹⁰² after the first world war. Wolfe often mocks Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg in this cynical chronicle of the art movement. "'At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act,' said Rosenberg. 'What was to

go on the canvas was not a picture but an event.'"103
 Rosneberg heralded a call for "Action Painting," as did
 Diderot, and Greenberg called for "flatness." Wolfe believes
 that movements like "Abstract Expressionism" were first
 determined by critics and then practiced by artists, who
 specialized in the commercial favored style of the moment.
 "First you get the word, and then you can see."104 The
 final important statement made by Wolfe is to quote Leo
 Steinberg to the effect that, "Whatever else it may be, all
 great art is about art."105

Michel Foucault's theories about painting will be dealt
 with more fully in Chapter 8 since they are written in terms
 of the painting *Las Meninas*. Foucault is building a
 philosophy of "context" showing how a creation is an event
 within an historic moment, shaped as much by the social,
 political, and cultural environment as by the individual.
 This work becomes a landmark through which that society at
 that moment in time can be understood. To Foucault, nothing
 is totally original or individual or else it could not be
 understood.

Terry Eagleton in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* focuses
 concerns of context, as represented by aesthetic principles,
 into economic terms. While he defines "that territory [as]
 nothing less than the whole of our sensate life together--
 the business of affections and aversions, of how the world
 strikes the body on its sensory surfaces, of that which
 takes root in the gaze and the guts and all that arises from

our most banal, biological insertion into the world," his main concern is how it is sold to us. It is an important book in that it reminds us of the commerce of aesthetics, but much of what he writes does not deal directly with the focus of this dissertation. His methodology will be used in part but not any of the principles he details in this book.

Finally, while I will be citing other theorists such as Ortega y Gasset in particular chapters, the last theorist I use as a critical tool throughout much of the dissertation is Ronald Paulson in his book *Representations of Revolution (1789-1820)*. The problems of representation that he deals with directly influence my reading of the plays and paintings that are involved with the recreation of history. "The problem to be explored is: How does a writer or artist represent something he believes to be unprecedented-- hitherto unknown and unexperienced? I have chosen the French Revolution because it was a phenomenon many believed to be outside their experience and accustomed vocabulary--" The French Revolution made people aware of the possibility of revolution and the problems with trying to illustrate that which we have never imagined before. In the chapter of plays that recreate an event of history, Chapter 5, the French Revolution will be investigated directly and an explanation of Paulson's theories begins that chapter. In the Biography plays and the Metacreational plays the representation of the new is the dramatic drive and so Paulson's criticism will again be employed.

¹ Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry From Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1958), 23.

² Hagstrum, 18.

³ Hagstrum, note ³⁴ [on bottom of] p. 18.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Charles Rowan Beye, *Ancient Greek Literature and Society* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1975), 362.

⁶ In Euripides, *Ion in Ten Plays by Euripides*, trans. Moses Hadas and John McLean (New York: Bantam Books, 1960), *Ion*, trans. Gilbert Murray (London: George Helen and Unwin, Ltd., 1954), *Ion in The Bacchae and Other Plays*, trans. Philip Vellacott (London: Penguin, 1954), *Ion in Euripides III* trans. Ronald Frederick Willetts (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), *Ion in Euripides: Plays in Two Volumes*, Vol. 1. Everyman's Library #63, trans. A.S. Way (London: J. M. Dent & Son Ltd., 1956), and *Ion in Euripides II* trans. Richard Lattimore (New York: Modern Library, 1956) the description does not fit the definition of *ekphrasis* being a simple statement of a chain made into a bracelet with no detailed description.

⁷ Euripides, *Ion in Ten Plays by Euripides*, trans. Moses Hadas and John McLean (New York: Bantam Books, 1960), 160.
 "SERVANT: . . . He measured the length of one hundred feet for each side of his rectangle; for he wanted to invite all the folks of the Delphi feast. Then he took sacred tapestries from the treasury and hung them as a screen, a marvel for men to see. First he threw a fold of drapery over the roof-tree; this had been dedicated to the god by Zeus' son, Hercules, part of the spoils of the Amazons. There were among them webs woven of figures like these: Heaven mustering his stars in ether's vault; Helios driving his horses toward the dying day, bringing in his train the brilliant light of Hesperus; Night the dark-robed goddess swinging her chariot onward, drawn by two horses unassisted, while the stars kept her company; the Pleiad moving along her path in mid-sky with Orion and his sword; and above the Bear wheeling round in heaven with his golden tail; the disk of the full Moon, that divides the month, shooting her arrows upward; the Hyades, the mariner's surest sign; and Dawn, the harbinger of day, chasing the stars. Upon the walls he hung other tapestries of foreign workmanship: well-oared ships bearing down on the Greek fleet; creatures fierce lions. At the entry way he hung the offering of some Athenian, Cecrops coiling his spiral folds near his daughters"

8 Euripides, 67.

"CREUSA: There is a web I once wove when I was a girl . . . An unfinished thing; the sort of thing we are taught to weave at first . . . There was a Gorgon in the middle threads of the cloth . . . The Gorgon is fringed with serpents, as in the aegis"

9 Page DuBois, *Histroy, Rhetorical Description and the Epic: From Homer to Spenser* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer an imprint of Boydell and Brewer Ltd., 1982), 3.

10 DuBois, 3.

11 DuBois, 7.

12 DuBois, 4.

13 Murray Krieger, "The *Ekphrastic* Principle and the Still Movement of Poetry: or *Laokoön* Revisted," in *The Play and Place of Criticism* (Baltimore, 1967), 110.

14 DuBois, 7.

15 Krieger, 110.

16 DuBois, 8.

17 DuBois, 12.

18 Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (London: Metheun, 1985), 116.

19 Hutcheon, 49.

20 Hutcheon, 7.

21 Hutcheon, 82.

22 Hutcheon, 88.

23 Hutcheon, 8.

24 Hutcheon, 83.

25 Hutcheon, 86.

26 Hutcheon, 97.

27 Hutcheon, 84.

28 Hutcheon, 95.

29 Hutcheon, 100.

30 Hutcheon, 85.

- 31 Hutcheon, 24.
- 32 Hutcheon, 114.
- 33 Hutcheon, 92.
- 34 Hutcheon, 104.
- 35 Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature And The Latin Middle Ages*, Bollingen Series 36, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 561.
- 36 Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *El Pintor de su dishonra*, Coleccion Aula Magna 19 (Madrid: Ediciones Alcala, 1969), 220.
- 37 John Hope Mason, *The Irresistible Diderot* (New York: Quartet Books, 1982), 134.
- 38 Mason, 134.
- 39 Meisel Martin, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 41.
- 40 Meisel, 41.
- 41 Meisel, 41.
- 42 Meisel, 42.
- 43 Meisel, 42.
- 44 Denis Diderot, *Le drama bourgeois: Fiction II* Edition critique et annottee by Jacques and Anne-Marie Chouillet (Paris: Hermann, 1980), 404.
- 45 Diderot, 408.
- 46 Mason, 172.
- 47 Mason, 174.
- 48 Heinrich Wofflin, *Principles of Art History : The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, trans. M.D. Hottinger (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1950 reprint NC: G. Bele and Son, Ltd., 1932), 21.
- 49 Wofflin, 20.
- 50 Wofflin, 20.
- 51 Meisel, 3.

- 52 Meisel, 30.
- 53 Meisel, 38.
- 54 Meisel, p. 164 notes that "Hauptmann himself had attended the art academy at Breslau and later studied art history."
- 55 Meisel, 251.
- 56 Roland Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," in *Responsibilities of Form: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), 88.
- 57 Barthes, 89-90.
- 58 Barthes, 93.
- 59 Barthes, 93.
- 60 Barthes, 96.
- 61 Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 4.
- 62 Derrida, 160.
- 63 Derrida, 160.
- 64 Derrida, 6.
- 65 Derrida, 25.
- 66 Derrida, 10.
- 67 Derrida, 98.
- 68 Derrida, 24.
- 69 Derrida, 24.
- 70 Meyer Raphael Rubinstein, "Report from Paris: Sight Unseen" *Art in America* 79 no.4 (April 1991): 51.
- 71 Derrida, 29.
- 72 Derrida, 29.
- 73 Derrida, 132.
- 74 Derrida, 143.

- 75 Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.
- 76 Fried, 10.
- 77 Fried, 35.
- 78 Fried, 40.
- 79 Fried, 41.
- 80 Fried, 50.
- 81 Fried, 51.
- 82 Fried, 75.
- 83 Fried, 75-76.
- 84 Fried, 90.
- 85 Fried, 90.
- 86 Fried, 77-78.
- 87 Fried, 77.
- 88 Fried, 76.
- 89 Fried, 138.
- 90 Fried, 93.
- 91 Fried, 94.
- 92 Fried, 95.
- 93 Fried, 97.
- 94 Fried, 96.
- 95 Fried, 115.
- 96 Fried, 137.
- 97 Fried, 138.
- 98 Wendy Steiner, *The Colors of Rhetoric: Problems in the Relation between Modern Literature and Painting* (Chicago: The University Chicago Press, 1982), 41.
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100 Jeffrey Bruner, "'Illustrated' Fiction: *Ekphrasis* in Carlos Roja's *El Jardín de las Hespérides*," *Modern Language Studies* 22 no.2 (Spring 1992), 109.

101 Mary Ann Caws, *The Eye in the Text: Essays on Perception, Mannerist to Modern* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 31.

102 Tom Wolfe, *The Painted Word* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), 30.

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104 Wolfe, 62.

105 Wolfe, 85.

CHAPTER 2

DRAMATIC PARODIES OF VISUAL ARTS:
EKPHRASIS AND EKPHRASTIC STRUCTURE

"--BE CRUEL in the works of imagination that you create: spare nothing in painting the demons in the desert who tempt Saint Anthony: a horseman with a head made of thistle, a mermaid riding on a rat, a tonsured devil with a pig's snout; etch two beatifically radiant whores holding captive a dignified libertine with the body of a chicken, and jabbing the quill of a plucked leather feather up his ass; . . . This we may call the cruelty proper to the artist, a cruelty to be found in both Nietzsche and Foucault, and also in the canvases of Bosch, the *Caprichos* and *Disparates* of Goya, the theatre of Artaud, the pornography of Bataille."¹

After having led his army into victory the Prince returns to the camp of his Barons and Lords only to be taken prisoner by them for having disobeyed them by prematurely pressing into battle. The Prince who has had previous problems distinguishing between reality and dream wonders again, "Do I wake? Dream? Am I alive? Unconscious?"² In an *ekphrastic* moment he states, "My cousin Frederick wants to play the Brutus, Chalks a sorry likeness on a canvas/ Of himself already on a curule chair."³ In this sentence from his play *The Prince of Homburg*, finished in 1811, Heinrich von Kleist recalls the painting *The Death of Titus* by David. A recreation of this painting was used in a well reported production of Voltaire's *Brutus* in Paris, November, 1790,

reenforcing an interpretation of revolutionary nationalism that had already been read into the play. *Ekphrasis* adds several layers of meaning to the image Kleist has the Prince envision. Voltaire's Brutus is a man so bound to the laws of the land that he allows his sons to be slaughtered. The Prince recognizes a higher order of right and wrong. This form of verbal iconography is only one use for *ekphrasis*.

Ekphrasis is the verbal reconstruction of a work of art. For this study that definition will be narrowed to include only works of visual arts that have been created by an artist other than the playwright. Even though some critics have extended the use of the term *ekphrasis* to include the use of projections or actual physical reconstructions of the painting I will not consider these instances as *ekphrasis*.

In theatre *ekphrasis* gives rise to *ekphrastic* structure. When the narrative sequence of scenes in a play is based upon the ordering of visual images in a painting or a series of paintings, we are in the presence of *ekphrastic* structure. Meisel discussed nineteenth-century melodramas with tableau structures in which each scene reaches its climax in an arrested pose characteristic of narrative painting. A more modern example of *ekphrastic* structure can be found in Leonid Andreyev's *The Life of Man* which is constructed as a series of tableau scenes suggest by Albrecht Dürer's *Das Marienleben*, a series of twelve wood cuts created while the German artist was enjoying the patronage

of the Russian court. The setting of *The Life of Man* resembles a large empty rectangle with no windows or doors, which replicates the interiors in Dürer's wood cuts.

These two forms of dramatization of paintings, *ekphrasis* and *ekphrastic* structure, take on the characteristic of parody in that they are re-interpretations of a visual image as created by one artist (visual) through the aesthetics of a second artist (dramatic). The paintings of Brueghel and Goya have often been used in this type of dramatic parody and this is most clearly indicated in a study of the plays by Michel de Ghelderode and Fernando Arrabal. Tom Stoppard parodies the visual structure of modern art.

MICHEL DE GHELDERODE

In many of his dramas the intensely pictorial Flemish playwright, Michel de Ghelderode, evokes the world of the paintings created by Bosch, Brueghel, Goya, and James Ensor. *Ekphrasis*, *ekphrastic* structure, characters developed from graphic images, and dramatic parodies of paintings are characteristic of Ghelderode's dramaturgy. The interrelationship of art and life is a central theme in his play *School of Buffoons*. The principal character, Folial, who has served at the court in Spain, trains a group of fellow dwarfs for their roles as jesters and fools. The play is structured in an *ekphrastic* series of tableau-like scenes. During a pause in the training Folial explains:

At Escurial we had a huge painting, one the King himself prized. It represented the Garden of Earthly Pleasures. Fruits and flowers, animals, and the sons and daughters of man pursued each other in chaotic confusion--orgasms that never expired. In a dead-end valley, that human breed hunted pleasure with sad ferocity, rabidly, under a sky bereft of light or air. . . . That original sin . . . that's why our valley is inhabited by monsters! . . . The rare angels in that painting who venture into the zenith catch fire, or else they're driven away from it by flying fish or devilish puppets riding on storks. So Hell invades Heaven, and the garden of rapture turns into a realm of atonement.⁴

In such an *ekphrastic* moment, by having Folial recreate for the audience Bosch's painting, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Ghelderode establishes his own picture of the world which recurs throughout his oeuvre.

Folial had first appeared in Ghelderode's one-act play *Escurial*, written nine years before *School for Buffoons*. In the earlier play, the grotesque King is described in terms suggesting that, "El Greco, that awkward artist has done his portrait."⁵ Later in the same play, Folial turns to the subject of art when he explains, "You've seen reason, at last? Listen to your old Master; listen . . . Verily, I say unto you . . . The secret of our art, great art, art, all art that purports to endure? . . . The secret is CRU-EL-TY! . . ."⁶ In interviews Ghelderode elaborated on this idea. "Cruelty means reality, exact painting, free of lies. Examples: Rembrandt is cruel when he paints flesh. Another: Goya is cruel when he paints his royal portraits. Goya did not lie; he was cruel. Finally, Breughel when he

shows us unreal landscapes, placing in them peasants who are merely real yet too much so--this dissonance is also cruel."⁷

The cruelty of art, both visual and theatrical, and the dissonance between art and reality inform Ghelderode's aesthetics. Bosch, Brueghel, Goya, and Ensor provide the models for the grotesque, cruel, and theatrical world of his works. Nurtered and sustained by the visions of these artists, the key figures Folial in *School for Buffoons* and The King in *Escurial* act out stories that seem to have an inevitability and seem reasonable and logical.

The visual arts serve as points of reference in several of Ghelderode's other plays. *The Death of Doctor Faust* draws directly upon the imagery of James Ensor. The three maskers, who intrude upon one of the many levels of performance-within-performance of the life of Doctor Faust, are dressed in the following manner:, "one in a yellow peplum and with black plumes on his head, the second clad in a silver shroud and wearing a crown of sham jewels, the last all pink, smug, and bloated. (Copy James Ensor's maskers.)"⁸

Ensor's maskers play a major role in Ghelderode's pantomime *Ostend Maskers* which, as David Willinger explains, was "inspired by the Ostend carnival and suggested by certain of Ensor's canvases."⁹ In 1911 Ensor, himself, composed a ballet-pantomime entitled *The Gamut of Love* (*Flirt of the Marionettes*) in which works of his art come to life.

In 1926, Ghelderode wrote *Venus*, which can best be described as a Dadaist play about different representations of Venus. We hear the voice of what is to be a nude Venus, and when the curtains part we see an imitation of Venus de Milo, which should be made from a mannequin with her belly covered with numbers. This figure is then joined by the Venus we heard speak. The stage directions indicate only that she is nude but later indication is that "this nudity, conceived by the painter Marcel Stobbaerts, is riskier than one could merely imagine: a zinc cylinder, breasts and stomach sketched on it, head, arms and legs sticking out."¹⁰ The play mixes metatheatre, opera/myth references, dance as represented by Isadora Duncan, archeology, science, and visual arts which represent Venus/Julie's comment, "for me the copy . . . [is] better than the original."¹¹ The representation of Venus, the quintessential image of sexual woman, loses all her power when she is completed by the archeologist's finding of her arms.

Fascinated with Christ, Ensor placed himself in his *The Entry of Christ into Brussels in 1889*. In *Barabbas*, Ghelderode uses an *ekphrastic* moment derived from Brueghel, Goya, and Ensor to describe the crucifixion of Christ in Jerusalem (though this Jerusalem has the contemporary atmosphere of Brussels about it). The Watcher describes the scene this way:

The sky is opaque. What trains of darkness are rushing from the horizons? Is a drama unfolding in the clouds just as one is unfolding on the earth? It is no longer

day; it is not night. The city lies prostrate at the bottom of a pit. The crowd is swarming like vermin on the wounded mountain. And its outcry seems to rise up from the depths of time, for never before has a crowd rattle in its throat in such a way. Would you not think it was humanity itself that was being executed and that gave the death rattle . . . A body is nailed to it. This body is dazzling. You would think it was nailed to the foot of the sky. Is it a man? This body hovers and shines far above the world. This cross opens its arms to all the peoples of the world. O woman in tears, look at this cross that is set up! And this mountain that is turning crimson. And this crowd attacking its flank, like a stormy sea. It is the mountain that is yelling. With fear, with joy . . . The sky is growing darker. The sun is losing strength. And all these lanterns, incoherent semaphores . . . Whom are they crucifying for the elements to assemble into a mob, then to break up like this? . . . It is impossible to breathe and the angels are flying very low.¹²

This description could well be of several of Goya's "Black Paintings" or Brueghel works rather than the observations of an onlooker of the death of Christ.

Ghelderode's stage directions for *The Women at the Tomb*, which was originally written as a marionette play, indicate that the gestures of the women should be copied from paintings by Flemish Primitive painters. Both of these plays, which are Bible inspired and use art, have a strange temporal quality seeming both recreations of past and contemporary time. George Wellwarth says "Ghelderode's plays clearly embody the tension between certain contradictory impulses: between modernist and medieval forms, between romantic and absurdist sensibilities, medieval certainty of a perfect prevailing order and the modern suspicion that chaos is impending."¹³ It may be this tension that causes that strange feeling of displacement in

time, but it may also be that special quality of art that is both then and now.

Other than the play *Adrian and Jusemina* which is indicated to be an entertainment after an ancient tapestry, the other two plays by Ghelderode which one can find to be directly influenced by paintings are *The Magpie on the Gibbet* and *The Blind Men*, the first being a farce after Brueghel the Elder while the second is a morality play after the same artist. *The Magpie on the Gibbet* takes place in front of a pink gallows and involves witches, a soldier who speaks of eating jellied foot and blue hand and nibbling on Adam's side, a procession of celebrating peasants, a lawyer, judge, condemned man, and a magpie. In this world created by Brueghel a peasant celebration, a witches dance, and the justice system all share the same weight of importance and also share a system of reason and logic.

The Blind Men is a dramatization of Brueghel's *The Parable of the Blind Men*. These men in their search for Jerusalem travel in circles. Even though they are blind, their other senses are not amplified for they misread an echo which makes them presume they are in the mountains only to find they are in the land of ditches which claims them as its victims. They are offered a chance at salvation by the King of the ditch country who offers to help them up a tree for the night and tells them the truth about their journey. They are obstinate and follow their wills into a ditch. These two plays might be included in the next chapter that

studies plays which were inspired by art; however, though each of these plays take their images from Medieval aesthetics, the philosophy and vision of life that propels the action and the characters is modern. In this way the plays are representative of dramatic parody rather than mere recreations of the paintings. These plays fully illustrate the tension George Wellwarth identifies within Ghelderode's creative impulse. Another of Ghelderode's plays, *The Seige of Ostend*, is discussed in Chapter 8 "Metacreational Plays."

FERNANDO ARRABAL

Guernica

Fernando Arrabal's *Guernica* is a play in one scene written in Paris in 1959 and is a personal retelling of the story of Guernica as represented by modern myth and ancient myth painted within the fragmentary Picasso painting.

Arrabal, a visual artist himself, re-interprets Picasso's painting through his own aesthetic. Structurally the play and painting are similar in that they build a total picture of the destructiveness of war through fragmentary shardlike pieces. The story revolves around a man and woman whose son has been killed at Burgos; the woman was going to the bathroom when the bombing started and is now buried under the rubble. This is obviously similar to Samuel Beckett's known play *Happy Days*¹⁴ except in this case the woman, instead of getting more and more buried, is already only a voice. To amuse her, the man is going to tell her a story

about a woman buried in rubble in a bathroom. As in many of the plays already discussed, along with the reconstruction of paintings there are usually metatheatrical allusions. Everyone is aware of performing a role. In addition there is talk about love, making love, having affairs, the fact that he used to like to undress her for his friends, that they believe in no religion and that he reads so much he should have been a professor if he had only had an umbrella.¹⁵

The setting for the play is "The interior of a bombed house: crumbling walls, debris, stones" ¹⁶ The man spends much of the time seeing if the tree is still there. This is the tree of Liberty in Guernica which escaped the massacre of the town and still stands. The tree symbolizes the Basques's continual quest for freedom; however, whenever the man looks out the window to see if the tree remains, he sees a soldier with handcuffs who eats a sandwich, bares his teeth and looks as if he's laughing but never makes a sound. This figure is not from Picasso but is a symbol of the continual silent threat of tyranny which is always within the midst of the Spanish people. There is a writer who comments on the scene in meta-artistic terms and says "This heroic and paradoxical people, which reflects the spirit of Lorca's poems, Goya's paintings and Bunuel's films is demonstrating, in this dreadful war, its courage, its capacity for suffering, . . . " ¹⁷ John Kronik in his article "Arrabal and the myth of Guernica" in *Estreno* 2, no. 1

(1975) states that this is an attempt by Arrabal to defend himself from claims that he imitated Beckett and to ally himself with Goya, making this play another representation of the *Disasters of War*.

Throughout the play there are a mother and little girl who proceed from right to left across the stage and remain mute. These are the only two representations that come directly from Picasso's painting. Their first appearance comes after the following stage direction: "Sound of aeroplanes. Raid. While this is going on a woman and her little girl cross the stage from right to left looking angry and helpless (see the Picasso painting)."¹⁸ The next time they appear, "the woman and the little girl cross from right to left. They are pushing a wheelbarrow. On it is a packing case on which the word DINAMITA is written."¹⁹ Still later the mother is carrying some sporting guns while the daughter carries three of them. During much of the rest of the play the mother and daughter carry ammunition across the stage: "the woman and her daughter cross the stage pushing a pram high with cartridges;"²⁰ "on her back the woman is carrying a bag full of makeshift ammunition;"²¹ and finally she is seen "pulling a little handcart full of old rifles."²² The last time she is seen "the woman crosses from right to left. The little girl isn't with her this time. She is carrying a small coffin on her shoulder. She looks angry and helpless (see the Picasso painting)."²³

There are many balloons; one blue balloon appears, then two colored balloons, followed by an officer who shoots at them and misses. Balloons are a major image in many of Arrabal's plays. They are a visual symbol of two of Arrabal's concerns: the child-adult syndrome of many of his characters and "as a symbol of the inexplicable nature of the characters' lives."²⁴ This happens right before the end of the play in which the sound of the boots of marching soldiers is heard close by. Then we hear from far off the singing of "Guernikako arbola," the Basque anthem, which eventually drowns out the sound of the men marching.

Garden of Delights

Again, the play provides not so much a realization of the Bosch painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* as a recreation of the garden as envisioned through contemporary aesthetics. The opening stage directions divide the stage into a space similar to that of the painting in that there are several columns that make the stage into a labyrinth reconstructing the sense of "no exit" and the folding in of itself of the painting. As the play opens there is the entrance of eight sheep, in the painting there are several goats being herded. The structure of the play is similar to that of the painting in that there is a concurrence of time as all times exist in the same plane at the same time.

The main character is an actress and the action actually takes place on a TV set; this is an interview/re-

enactment of her life. The labyrinth on stage is a representation of the past/present/future from which one cannot escape and also from the many layers of representation which hide, confuse, mask, and yet define who we are. The opening stage direction indicates this by "LAIS seems to have stepped out of an old engraving: her arms are bare, a plunging décolletage, a tiered gown, a rococo chapeau on her head."²⁵

The other character in the scene is Zenon, a beast in a cage suspended over the stage who is described as "creature which resembles a man but is hairy like an animal with gestures like an ape: Zenon. He is in his natural state half naked."²⁶ In this manner there are on stage at all times two representations of man from two different historical eras. There is a moment of metatheatrical intertextuality in that there is a sequence where Lais and a childhood friend, Miharca plays a nun and student and act out a scene of masochistic/sadistic power games reminiscent of Genet's *The Maids* and in which Lais is called Celestine (the most famous impowered female character of Spanish literature who is part whore and part witch).

Lais retells her childhood dream of, "I'll have everything: transparent eggs full of harps and tricycles, earthworms and zebras, and I'll go out walking with them in French gardens, with a bouquet of pansies for my parasol and I'll have . . . I'll have an enormous caldron of boiling shit where I'll throw all those people who've . . . "²⁷

This description in part depicts two of the three sections that make up Hieronymous Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Miharca's response is "I'll give you a gift of a pencil to draw all your plans with and its eraser will wipe away all your nightmares."²⁸ From this moment on her past and present are represented through painters and paintings both verbally and visually. Lais asks, "Miharca, do you think we're like Adam and Eve in Paradise [Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*] or Botticelli's virgins?"²⁹ When asked where she would like to go Lais answers "Into the future and the past too. I want to see Cleopatra, Christ with Mary Magdalena. I want to see Breughel, I want to see the astronauts a thousand years from now, I want to see Buddha, Bosch . . ."³⁰ After Lais dances in both an hysterical and innocent manner like a mad creature, she puts on a helmet and is placed in a cone of transparent light in order for her to take a trip in time. Then a series of projections flash on her including:

Goya's Dog. A battleground from World War II, devastation. A giant Alice in Wonderland. The professor and the nightclub singer, Blue Angel . . . Two lovers of Chagall. An advertising poster. The painting *The Birth of Arrabal*. The painting *The Garden of Delights* by Bosch.³¹

In order for her to become who she wants and to dwell in the garden of delights she must re-create a new representation of herself and kill off her past, as represented by Miharca. Her death is accompanied by projections on a screen of:

"Breughel painting. Bosch painting. Goya painting. Prison bars. Pictures of destroyed cities. Men imprisoned. Starving children. Planes bombing. Breughel painting. Bosch painting. Goya painting. Prison bars."³²

Act II begins with rebirth in the form of an egg that is wheeled on stage. This egg has the top broken off, and Lais and Zenon climb in and fornicate. The top of the egg is covered with drawings from Bosch. While they are coupling, in the egg and flowers are falling from the ceiling, the stage directions indicate:

A character out of Breughel crosses the stage from right to left. It is an invalid with a limp. One of his legs, bent at the knee, seems to be held tightly by a vise to which is tied a stange splint. He pulls a rowboat which is on wheels: from the boat grows a tree without leaves or flowers but on its naked branches sits a motionless black bird. A padlock on its beak.³³

From this moment on the present and past are represented alternately on stage through the sporadic juxtaposed projecting of Bosch's *Garden of Delights*, cartoon strips of today, "The Schoolchildren by Breugel, a train, *Spring* by Botticelli,"³⁴ and "Multicolors, *La Pierre et la Folie* of Bosch."³⁵ These projections move forward to nonrepresentational art as in the multicolors but also are tied to the past. These are projections of visual representations of Lais as a symbol of Spanish cultural representations.

TOM STOPPARD

After Magritte

In *After Margritte* Tom Stoppard recreates the world in which René Magritte's paintings make logical sense and are reality. He does this visually, dialogically, and structurally. From the second the play opens the audience realizes they are viewing a world of difference. The opening stage directions are: *"The only light is that which comes through the large window which is facing the audience. The street door is in the same upstage wall. There is another door on each side of the stage, leading to the rest of the flat."*³⁶

The rest of the stage setting is an absurd world in which the balance is very delicate. The slightest move sets everything else towards calamity. The table lamp is held up through a counterbalance system with a bowl of fruit. Everything else is barricaded against the door, closing this framed world from access. Frozen without movement for several seconds as the lights come up in frozen tableau is a trio of Albeesque³⁷ characters, Husband (Harris), Wife (Thelma) and Mother.

Two other aspects of the opening tableau give the audience the sense of being set within the world of a Magritte painting: there is a bowler hat on the stomach of the Mother who is reclining on an ironing board, and gazing at this scene through the window is a uniformed Police

Constable (Holmes) whose shoulders, face and helmet are the only parts visible.

The main emphases of Magritte's work are on the analysis of pictorial language, the relationship between various juxtaposed man-made and natural objects, and particularly between words and images--often creating effects of disturbing ambiguity. The language in the play seems absurd as exemplified by the following dialogue: "-- You could have used your handkerchief-- You mean *semaphor*? . . .-- I never took *semaphor* as a sophomore, morse the pity."³⁸ The dialogue becomes the verbal equivalent of their visible world, and in this manner it is an example of *ekphrasis*. The language of the play is full of puns and double meanings (there is the playing off of the different meanings of the word "address;" the Policemen cannot find the search warrant and must search for it), just as Magritte's paintings can be viewed as visual puns.

The play is about the mystery of how we learn to understand the world; how each of us receives the same information and with the art of individual interpretation constructs a different meaning from it. Thelma saw a one-legged football player carrying a football and ivory stick with shaving cream all over his face. Harris saw the same man as an elderly man with a white beard and white stick, wearing pyjamas and carrying a tortoise. The Mother saw a convicted felon wearing a loose-fitting stripped gaberdine, carrying a handbag and a cricket bat. The Police Inspector

Foot arrives to arrest them for abducting a "bald nigger minstrel or Pakistani" and performing cut rate amputations. The image of feet is continually played on, not only in the one-legged man and amputations, but in the name of the Inspector and the Mother who burns one foot and hops on the other. In the repetitions of the theme of "foot" Stoppard is reflecting the way in which Magritte worked with repetition of theme. Finally, we begin to wonder if the ironing board is not really a surgical table.

Magritte painted with precise technique and pursued problems of paradox and the nature of perception, ultimately developing a new sense of logic. How we are to interpret this is revealed when we find out that the trio were at the supposed scene of the crime because they had just come from seeing an exhibition of surrealist paintings at the Tate Gallery. Their world view has been altered and, as if to punctuate this point, the Wife takes off her dress and stands only in her bra and panties. That which the audience perceives as odd in a normative sense is never commented upon by any of the characters as being odd. "Her action, since it is not especially remarkable, is not especially remarked upon."³⁹ Then, not finding anywhere else to hang her dress while she sews, she drapes it over the husband rendering the stage picture even more absurd.

The exhibit they had viewed was of Magritte's Tuba paintings which they went to see because the tuba is the Mother's passion. "Tubas on fire, tubas stuck to lions and

naked women, tubas hanging in the sky--there was one woman with a tuba with a sack over her head as far as I could make out."⁴⁰ The Husband then makes the comment that he found that the painting "just wasn't life-like--I'm not saying it wasn't good--well painted--but it wasn't from life."⁴¹ This is a statement the audience has come to recognize as incorrect for it is most especially life-like in this particular stage world.

The Policemen are at the apartment to try to make order out of the disorder of their lives, to be able to interpret the facts and deduct a logical reason. The Inspector explains that is why he has come up with the minstrel story. At the end of the play the mystery is solved for the minstrel troupe does not exist and the man they all saw was the policeman who had hurried out in his pajamas with shaving cream on his face, carrying his wife's white parasol and handbag, with both legs in one pajama leg. Once one realizes how life-like Magritte's paintings are in the logic of this stage picture, all the strange behavior can be explained rationally.

With the last image of the play they all become Magritte characters once again:

((1) Mother, standing on her good foot only, on a wooden chair which is placed on the table; a woolen sock on one hand; playing the tuba.) . . .

((3) Foot, with one bare foot, sunglasses, eating banana.) . . .

((5) Harris, gowned, blindfolded with a cushion cover over his head, arms outstretched, on one leg, counting.)

(Thelma, in underwear, crawling around the table scanning the floor and sniffing.)⁴²

The audience is left with only one last mystery. Does the title *After Magritte* refer to Stoppard's fashioning a world after Magritte's paintings, is this the view of the world one goes away with after having seen Magritte's paintings, or is the play simply about the events that happened to this family after seeing the exhibit? The ambiguity of the play's action, then, is exactly analogous to the universe of Magritte's paintings. The structure of the dramatic action of the play is thus *ekphrastic*.

Artist Descending A Staircase

An investigation of the nature of perception, memory and art, *Artist Descending A Staircase* is a play after Marcel Duchamp's 1912 painting *Nude Descending a Staircase*. (It also plays with the painting.) This play is Stoppard's treatise on modern art and can best be understood through the comments of someone with whom he seems to share an affinity, Tom Wolfe. Frank Rich in his *New York Times* review of a stage production of the play states "Certainly Mr. Stoppard sounds as conservative as Tom Wolfe."⁴³ Tom Wolfe in *The Painted Word*, his critical overview of the New York modern art scene, quotes Leo Steinberg saying, "whatever else it may be, all great art is about art."⁴⁴ Stoppard's play takes as its theme the creation of art that speaks about art.

After quoting Harold Rosenberg, Wolfe states, "At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event."⁴⁵ And, finally, Wolfe observes that "Abstract Expressionism of the 10th Street School was a reaction to earlier Modernism itself--to Cubism chiefly--it was an abstraction of an abstraction. . . First you get the word, and then you can see."⁴⁶ Though the painters in the play are not using Abstract Expressionism they are also reacting to Cubism in their Dada creations. Each of these artists creates their art in description, through words, before making a visible work.

One of the most striking characteristics of *Artist Descending a Staircase* is the structure which resembles the painting and can be called an ekphrastic structure. The story is told as a series of scenes in flashback-flashforward time scheme. The play's first six scenes descend in intervals of hours and finally years from 1972 to 1914; the remaining five scenes take one back up the chronological staircase to 1972. Stoppard's dramaturgical technique in turns mirrors the advancing, repeated image of Duchamp's Cubist-Futurist nude: the audience sees his characters in a progression of quick sketches that freeze them in isolated moments of time. Elissa S. Guralnick finds that the whole play is in essence a translation of Duchamp's painting. She details how the name of the three artists,

their works of art, and their attitudes on art reflect different aspects of Duchamp as if each character is a cubist representation of the same man from a different angle.

It is important to remember that this play was originally written as a radio play, for it is in part about how sound creates images and, consequently, can be considered a meta-aural play in its original form. The translation of the play to stage implies a loss of a level of creative imagination for the audience and commentary from the author. The audience no longer experiences the creation of the world of the play in the same manner that Sophie, the blind muse, experiences the world and the way in which Beauchamp wants his art experienced. On radio we do not know what is tape and what is reality; on stage we see the difference. Guralnick states that it is a play "in which the medium of radio is so deftly exploited that much of the meaning resides in the radio performance and cannot be captured on stage, on screen, or even in print."⁴⁷

Guralnick calls the structure of *Artist Descending a Staircase* circular and details how even Beauchamp's art, sound loops, reflects that circularity. Donner's views on art revolve back to an earlier traditional theory according to which the first time an event occurs it is reality; the second time it is art or a creative event. The repetition then comments on the art as parody or quotation. It causes a distance or a frame. In Guralnick's view, the audience is

trapped within this circle or frame within a mystery from which escape seems impossible. She contends that instead of seeking problems or solutions, we should look at the play simply as a representation of a "riddling reality." As such Stoppard represents a modern art that came into fashion after World War I and of which these artists in the play represent the beginnings.

I believe that *Artist Descending a Staircase* calls for a revolution back to the original state of things, a return to tradition, rather than a turn forward to change. In an interview with Tom Stoppard before the New York opening of the play, Mervyn Rothstein says "In *Artist Descending a Staircase*, and in life, Mr. Stoppard is clear about where he stands on the subject of modernism, in art as well as in theater. 'There's a character in the play,' he says, 'who remarks that there came a moment when an artist no longer had to do the things by which was meant art, but he could make art mean the things that he did. And I'm on the side of boring convention there. Someone in the play says art is something which should be difficult. And I've always felt that.'"⁴⁸ This character is Sophie who is destroyed by the character Beauchamp, who most completely represents Duchamp or Modernist art.

At issue in *Artist Descending a Staircase* is the economics of art as represented by the opinion of the critics. Beauchamp is told, "do not plead insanity. That

would reflect undeserved credit on three generations of art critics."⁴⁹ Martello says of Beauchamp, the oral artist,:

Beauchamp--I have achieved nothing but mental acrobatics--*nothing!*--whereas you, however wrongly and for whatever reason, came to grips with life at least this once and killed Donner I never saw much point in your tonal art I said, there'll be no revelations coming from *that*; no truth. And the critics won't listen either. And they didn't. But this time you've got them by the ears. It has the impact of newsreel.⁵⁰

Again, as in *After Magritte*, there is a continual misreading of the signs of reality:

Beauchamp: "You will hear how Mr. Donner, while working, dozed off in his chair . . .

(TAPE: *Droning.*)

Footsteps approach.

(TAPE: *Footsteps.*)

Someone has entered quietly. Who? No visitors came to this place. Martello and Mr. Beauchamp met their acquaintances outside, formerly at the Savage, latterly in public houses. And Mr. Donner, who was somewhat reclusive, not to say misanthropic, had no friends at all--except the other two, a *fact whose importance speaks for itself*--

(TAPE: 'Ah! There you are . . . '--and is switched off.)

Not, 'Who the devil are you?', or 'Good Lord, what are you doing here, I haven't seen you for donkey's years! '--no. 'Ah. there you are.' The footsteps can only belong to the man Martello." Martello answers, "Or, of course the man Beauchamp."⁵¹

It is this misreading that sets in motion the mystery of the play. This faulty interpretation remains the only reading the tape is given up until the end, and yet in every scene, including the center or last flashback, there is a clue to the actual reading of the sound of droning (it is in actuality a fly). This misreading of signs is what leads to

the tragedy in the play, the misreading by Sophie of a painting. There is even a misreading about tea: "Indian or Singhalese?--I don't know the difference--nobody does. That's why we only keep the one.--And which one is that?--It's best Assam."⁵²

Guralnick asserts that "what we take for truth [in the play] is merely paradox."⁵³ She also states that the language or dialogue of the play is intentionally evasive. Even the emotion of love is questioned as a misreading. It is a label that others have given the emotion but the person who feels it questions whether it truly is love or something unlabellable, unreadable. Sophie raises the question when she says, "It was quick: one moment the sick apprehension of something irrevocable I wouldn't have called it love myself, but it seems to be the word that people use for it."⁵⁴

Donner, in the first flashback, has reneged on all their youthful experiments in modern art and begins a conversation about art and artist that continues throughout the play. "I very much enjoyed my years in that child's garden of easy victories known as the avant garde, but I am now engaged in the infinitely more difficult task of painting what the eye sees Those tape recordings of yours are the mechanical expression of a small intellectual idea You can call it art if you like, but it is the commonplace of any ironic imagination "⁵⁵ Beauchamp admits to

the fact that his brain "is so attuned to the ironic tone it has become ironic in repose."⁵⁶

Beauchamp answers this by saying that his art is for the initiates and not for clerks, and while his tapes have been called awful noise, "it is only because people have not been taught what to listen for or what to listen to."⁵⁷ And yet it is he who misreads his own tape. Donner then gives his definition of an artist, "An artist is someone who is gifted in some way which enables him to do something more or less well To speak of an art which requires no gift is a contradiction. . . . An artistic imagination coupled with skill is talent. . . Skill without imagination is craftsmanship . . . Imagination without skill gives us modern art."⁵⁸ This is a repetition of what Sophie will say at an earlier time and later scene.

Beauchamp counters, "But Donner, ever since I've known you you've been running around asking for the name of his tailor--symbolism, surrealism, imagism, vorticism, fauvism, cubism--dada, drip-action, hard-edge, pop, found objects and post-object--it's only a matter of days since you spent the entire housekeeping on sugar to make an edible Venus de Milo, and now you've discovered the fashions of your childhood. . . our best hope as artists is to transcend our limitations and become *utterly* ludicrous . . post-Pop, pre-Raphaelite is pure dada brought up to date."⁵⁹ His concept of edible art is taking the economics of art to its most ludicrous conclusion.

Donner quotes Marcel, who may be Proust the author of *Remembrance of Things Past*, and if so it is interesting for he is also creating art from memory in order to recapture the past. "'There are two ways of becoming an artist. The first way is to do the things by which is meant art. The second way is to make art mean the things you do.'" and then he adds, "It made anything possible and everything safe!-- safe from criticism, since our art admitted no standards outside itself; . . . We were artists by mutual agreement. . . . It seems there is something divine about modern art nonetheless, for it is only sustained by faith."⁶⁰ In the next flashback, while he is creating edible art ("Let them eat art."⁶¹), he takes this one step further by saying "We tried to make a distinction between the art that celebrated reason and history and logic and all assumptions, and our own dislocated anti-art of lost faith."⁶²

In what is the next-to-last-flashback, towards the center of the play, Martello states, "painting nature, one way or another, is a technique and can be learned, like playing the piano. But how can you teach someone to think in a certain way?--to paint an utterly simple shape in order to ambush the mind with something quite unexpected about that shape by hanging it in a frame and forcing you to see it, as it were, for the first time--. . . . How does one account for, and justify the very notion of emulating nature? The greater the success, the more false the result.

It is only when the imagination is dragged away from what the eye sees that a picture becomes interesting."⁶³

Memories of 1915 (the center scene of the play) are all askew. Memory is not reliable; however the painting that Donner is making from memory is described as a naked woman sitting in a garden with a unicorn eating roses, and though it is not a seen reality, it is a reality in the mind of a blind woman. Sophie is his muse. When Martello is making a bust of her composed of the real objects that were used as metaphors for her features, Donner destroys it. He is haunted by memory; "I try to shut out the memory but it needs only . . . a ribbon . . . a flower . . . a phrase of music . . . a river flowing beneath ancient bridges . . . the scent of summertime."⁶⁴

A new flashback follows. By going backwards in time we see the reasons or causes dramatized after the effect. The dramatic impetus is an explanation of the search for truth or the cause for art's existence. The blind muse for Donner is Sophie who, when she has sight, misreads what she sees but, when blind, she uses other senses to create a reality which Donner then paints. "I can improve on reality, like a painter, but without fear of contradiction. Indeed, if I hear hoofbeats, I can put a unicorn in the garden and no one can open my eyes against it and say it isn't true."⁶⁵ "I can hear the clothes you put on in the morning . . . Your serge today, hear it and smell it-- . . . "⁶⁶ and "I shall sit at my new post, with the sun on my face, and imagine the

view as Turner painted it."⁶⁷ It is her misreading of a painting that she sees as "a row of black stripes on a white background"⁶⁸ and calls it a snow scene that leads her to fall in love with the wrong man, Beauchamp. The man she truly loved was the artist who had painted "thick white posts, top to bottom across the whole canvas . . . black in the gaps."⁶⁹

She is essentially the Muse for Stoppard, too. She says, "Oh, dear, I'm telling everything back to front,"⁷⁰ and then again, like the structure of the play, she speaks of "the secret in the deep centre of my life."⁷¹ The character Stoppard quotes in the already mentioned interview is Sophie. Stoppard not only quotes Duchamp and other artists, but he makes references to his own works. There are several references one can relate back to *After Magritte*, such as the "one-legged soldier."⁷² Martello is doing a sculpture of *The Cripple* a wooden man with a real leg.

The central scene of *Artist Descending a Staircase* is the flashback in which the three main characters declare themselves to be artists, as they make "indefensible statements about art."⁷³ While the artists are travelling through a countryside in which we can hear the sounds of war, they mis-read all the signs they see and make ridiculous statements such as "All deaths in war are ridiculous"⁷⁴ and "I can assure you that there will be no war"⁷⁵ (which we know to be untrue). Martello quotes his

Aunt who says "You live in a sane and beautiful world . . . and the least you can do, if you must be a painter, is to paint appropriately sane and beautiful pictures."⁷⁶ This view of the world as sane and logical ends with the war. The role of painter changes but the artist are all mis-readers of even the illogical aspects of the world and are non-political and uninvolved--in a very English manner.

In the war scene Beauchamps proclaims what is about to become the central principles of his art and his first manifesto. Art should always surprise, break promises and have nothing to do with expertise. He names his type of art after his horse, Beauchamp's Tenth Horse, which he says is not physical or metaphysical but pataphysical. The reference is to the science of imaginary solutions formulated By Alfred Jarry for whose *Ubu Roi* Duchamp designed a 1935 edition. In 1959 Duchamp was quoted as saying he had entered "The College de Pataphysique in France."⁷⁷

Another connection between Beauchamp and Duchamp is that Duchamp also gave up painting in order to create art of the mind instead of the eye. Both artists engaged in experiments with silence. Beauchamp explains, "Fascinating, isn't it? Layer upon layer of what passes for silence, trapped from an empty room . . . These unheard sounds which are our silences stand as a metaphor--a correspondence between the limits of hearing and the limits of all knowledge."⁷⁸ Later Beauchamp complains, "you ruined what

would have been a strand in my masterwork of accumulated silence."⁷⁹ Guralnick relates Beauchamp's ideas to Duchamp's principle of *infra-mince*, "a category of barely-measured phenomena exemplified by 'the faint sound made by velvet trouser legs brushing together'"⁸⁰

While the audience has a truer picture of reality (in the radio play) than the participants because they are relying on sound and imagination rather than vision, by the end of the play, when the truth is revealed about what is on the tape, the audience is also shown how aural signs can be misread. In the third from last flashback, Sophie falls through a window because she cannot read silence. In the last scene, it is revealed that the drone is the drone of a fly, the footsteps are Donner's, and the "Ah! There you are" refers to the fly. The audience sees the reenactment by Beauchamp of Donner's activity. When the play is heard on radio, the final truth is as questionable as the original truth.

Guralnick gives an interesting twist to her interpretation of the play. If we no longer read the mystery of Sophie as a secondary plot but rather the original plot, then there is still another painting of Duchamp's represented, his never completed *The Bride Stripped Bare*.

[I]f Sophie who constitutes the background of the play, were likewise to come to the foreground--that is, to displace Donner's death as our focus of attention. The result could, in fact, be revolutionary. For the play would translate into language, not the painting

that provides its name, but rather another work; *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*. Sophie, after all, is a bride surrounded by bachelors, and one, moreover, stripped bare both literally and figuratively--literally in Beauchamp's bed, figuratively in Martello's bust and in Donner's unicorn painting, as well as in her devastation over Beauchamp's desertion.⁸¹

There are a series of unanswerable questions at the end of the play that have more far-reaching consequences than the mysteries that can be answered. If love was based on a lie, a mis-reading, what could the Art based on that lie produce, artifice or truth? Sound makes up the reality of Sophie's life reality. The lie of sound that makes up the reality of Beauchamp's art. It is that lie of sound which is the basis of the mystery of the play. Beauchamp asserts, "I'm trying to liberate the visual image from the limitations of visual art. The idea is to create images--picture--which are purely mental" ⁸² But is this art, which Martello calls "newsreel," reality or is it a reflection of the lies and misreadings that reality is? Guralnick may be correct when she says, "We are caught in a conundrum from which escape seems impossible."⁸³

The works of Martha Clarke can serve as a final comment on dramatic parody. Clarke, a former dancer, has created a theatre that combines opera, the visual arts, and dance. In *Miracolo d'Amore* she recreates the art of Tiepolo (Punchinello), Grandville (Flower/Women) and J.J. Bromville's *The Court of Love* in which each woman is a different kind of flower and each man a Punchinello.

Michael Kimmelman observes that "at its most extravagant moments [*Miracolo d'Amore*] strives more towards the language of Bosch or Goya."⁸⁴ He indicates the influence of Bosch is apparent in the Christ-like figure that limps across the stage and many images come from Goya's *Caprichos* and *Disasters*. Other of art-inspired works by Clarke are: *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (Hieronymous Bosch); *Vienna: Lusthaus* (Klimt, Schiele), and *The Hunger Artist* (Goya and Chagall). Her theatre pieces are *ekphrastic* in structure. None is primarily narrative. Instead they dramatically resemble a series of illustrations or close-up fragments studying the works of several artists. These *ekphrastic* works are consciously theatrical dramatizing paintings that are are hyperbolic representations of cruelty or madness. The next chapter investigates plays and paintings in the realistic mode.

¹ James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 237. In a note Miller indicates this description of Bosch's *Temptation of Saint Anthony* and Goya's *Todos Caeran, Caprichos*, plate 19 is from Michel Foucault, *Folie et dèraison* (Paris, 1961), 550 & 280-281.

² Heinrich von Kleist, *Prince Frederick of Homburg* trans. Peggy Meyer Sherry in *Plays* ed. Walter Hinderer The Germany Library; Volume 25 (New York: Continuum, 1982), 302.

³ von Kleist, 302.

⁴ Michel de Ghelderode, *School for Buffoons* trans. Kenneth S. White (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co, n.d.), 13.

5 Michel de Ghelderode, *Escorial* trans. Lionel Abel in *The Modern Theatre* 5 ed. by Eric Bentley (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), 162.

6 Ghelderode, *School for Buffoons*, 31.

7 Ghelderode, *School for Buffoons*, in translator note xviii, originally from Michel de Ghelderode, *Les Entretiens d'Ostende* (Paris: L'Arche, 1956), 183.

8 Michel de Ghelderode, *The Death of Doctor Faust*, trans. George Hauger in *Michel de Ghelderode: Seven Plays Volume 2* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1966), 108.

9 Willinger, David, "Michel de Ghelderode's Short One-Act Plays" (diss. CUNY, 1980), 316.

10 Michel de Ghelderode, *Venus* in dissertation, "Michel de Ghelderode's Short One-Act Plays," David Willinger, 164.

11 Ghelderode, *Venus*, 166.

12 Michel de Ghelderode, *Barabbas* in *Ghelderode: Seven Plays* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), 96-97.

13 George Wellworth, "Michel de Ghelderode: The Theatre of the Grotesque," in *TDR* 3 no. 1 (Fall 1963), 13.

14 *Guernica* was more than likely written before Arrabal knew of *Happy Days*. *Guernica* was written in 1961 the year that *Happy Days* was first performed; however, *Happy Days* was not translated into French until 1963. Arrabal was living in France at the time.

15 possible reference to Arthur Adamov's *Professor Taranne* (1953).

16 Fernando Arrabal, *Guernica* in *Guernica and Other Plays*, trans. Barbara Wright (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967.), 9.

17 Arrabal, *Guernica*, 11.

18 Arrabal, *Guernica*, 12.

19 Arrabal, *Guernica*, 15.

20 Arrabal, *Guernica*, 20.

21 Arrabal, *Guernica*, 22.

22 Arrabal, *Guernica*, 25.

23 Arrabal, *Guernica*, 27.

- 24 Thomas John Donahue, *The Theatre of Fernando Arrabal: A Garden of Earthly Delights* (New York: NYU Press, 1980), 70.
- 25 Fernando Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, trans. Helen Gary Bishop and Tom Bishop (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1974.), 3.
- 26 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 6.
- 27 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 11.
- 28 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 11.
- 29 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 26.
- 30 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 27.
- 31 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 32. There is an imaginary painting included, *The Birth of Arrabal*. This painting is a bit of whimsy on the part of Arrabal.
- 32 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 44.
- 33 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 51.
- 34 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 60.
- 35 Arrabal, *Garden of Delights*, 64.
- 36 Tom Stoppard, *After Magritte* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 9.
- 37 This is particularly interesting as a post-modern parodic reference since Albee, of all American playwrights, is most interested in Modern Art and collects many pieces in order to inspire his writing.
- 38 Stoppard, *After Magritte*, 12.
- 39 Stoppard, *After Magritte*, 36.
- 40 Stoppard, *After Magritte*, 37.
- 41 Stoppard, *After Magritte*, 38.
- 42 Stoppard, *After Magritte*, 46-7.
- 43 Frank Rich, "Art Imitates Art in a Stoppard Play" review of *Artist Descending a Staircase*, *New York Times* 1 December 1989, C5.
- 44 Tom Wolfe, *The Painted Word* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1975), 83.
- 45 Wolfe, 54.

- 46 Wolfe, .62.
- 47 Elissa S. Gurnalnick, "Artist Descending a Staircase: Stoppard Captures the Radio Station--and Duchamp," *PLMA* 105 no. 2 (March 1990), 286.
- 48 Mervyn Rothstein, "A One-Act Dialogue Starring Tom Stoppard," *New York Times* 26 November 1989, Arts and Leisure Section, 5.
- 49 Tom Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase in Albert's Bridge and Other Plays* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1977), 77.
- 50 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 78.
- 51 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 79-80.
- 52 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 97.
- 53 Guralnick, 287.
- 54 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 96.
- 55 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 81.
- 56 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 78.
- 57 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 83.
- 58 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 83.
- 59 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 84.
- 60 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 86.
- 61 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 88.
- 62 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 89.
- 63 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 101.
- 64 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 91.
- 65 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 103.
- 66 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 92.
- 67 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 93.
- 68 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 100.
- 69 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 114.

- 70 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 99.
- 71 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 96.
- 72 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 89.
- 73 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 104.
- 74 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 108.
- 75 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 109.
- 76 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 109.
- 77 Guralnick, 293.
- 78 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 115.
- 79 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 78-79.
- 80 Guralnick, 292.
- 81 Guralnick, 295.
- 82 Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, 98.
- 83 Guralnick, 295.
- 84 Michael Kimmelman, "Theatre that derives Inspiration From Artwork," *The New York Times*, 6 July 1988, C15.

CHAPTER 3

ART AS A PLAY'S INSPIRATION

" . . . art is the magic mirror you make to reflect your invisible dreams in visible pictures. You use a glass mirror to see your face: you use works of art to see your soul."¹

When the lights come up on a Sunday in 1884, we see George, an artist dark-bearded and intense, seated downstage at an easel with a large drawing pad. As he speaks about the color white and all the possibilities it holds, the white ground cloth and drops disappear and the set is transformed into a park outside of Paris.

We are introduced to several characters who have been sketched by this artist. George paints, erases, and creates the reality we see on stage. At the end of the act all of the characters begin to congregate in the park, and squabbles and arguments break out, erupting into one big fight.

The orchestra hits a chord and everyone stops. George repeats several of his key words such as "order," "design," "tension," and "balance." The characters freeze into the pose in which George had drawn them. As the music starts they break this pose and they begin to sing the song "Sunday." Harmoniously they assume their positions in

Georges Seurat's *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, the painting that inspired Stephen Sondheim to write the musical *Sunday in the Park with George*. Many plays that interrelate visual art and drama take their inspiration and derive their titles from a particular painting recreated on the stage, and it is this type of art-inspired drama that I shall discuss in the following chapter.

THE RENT-DAY BY DOUGLAS WILLIAM JERROLD

The playwright and journalist Douglas William Jerrold, a close friend of Dickens, Thackeray, Tom Taylor, and other literary men and social reformers, was inspired by two well-known paintings by Sir David Wilke, *The Rent-Day* and *Distraining for Rent*. Jerrold wrote a domestic melodrama called *The Rent Day* to express his desire to see reforms in the landlord-tenant farmer system. It is important to remember that this play was written in 1832 before British theatre had seriously begun to address social ills. It predates realism, naturalism, and Ibsen. Jerrold's dramaturgical approach in this play reflects how the desire for social change was tempered in England by the concept of economic reform rather than revolution.

By all accounts the original audiences responded immediately to the recreation of the paintings by Wilke. Evidently the paintings were popular and well-known. Even members of the audience, who may not have been familiar with

the paintings, knew from the staging itself when a moment of difference from the rest of the stage action was reached, an ekphrastic moment, during which a painting was being recreated and they responded accordingly. Each reporter told of applause greeting the opening curtain. The play opens in Act 1, scene 1 with: "*An apartment in Grantley Hall. Discovered, Crumbs (the Steward), Beanstalk, farmers, their wives and children, servants, etc. The characters and stage so arranged as to form, on the rising of the curtain, a representation of Wilkie's picture "Rent-Day." A large archway in front, and a door beyond.*"² In the painting the archway is before the door in the rear. The stage direction is meant to incorporate the framing caused by the proscenium arch with the design of the room by making the proscenium one with an archway. The device eliminates one sign of viewing a stage picture by incorporating the proscenium as part of the decor of the room. While most paintings recreated on stage form a double frame, that of picture and proscenium, Jerrold eliminates the double encoding and stops a double distancing of the stage reality from the audience's reality.

The reading material of Toby, brother of the protagonist, serves as a reminder of the social commentary that the playwright intends to make. Toby tells of his few belongings, "my goods and chattels are a volume of *Robinson Crusoe*; ditto *Pilgrim's Progress*."³ Much of the play's metaphoric language draws upon terms taken from painting and

pictures: "This can never be the picture of that old man?"⁴
 "Tis seven-and-twenty years since he sat for it. "⁵ and "And
 wasn't I a picture of patience?"⁶

The verb "to look" is prominent in the language of the play, as I shall detail later. In fact, two major aspects of the plot revolve around a verbal picture and an actual painting. In the first instance Hyssop, one of the thieves, paints a verbal picture by reading the following description from a wanted bill: "(reading the bill) . . . John Harris, a convict. He is five feet ten; of darkish complexion; oval face; quick black eyes, with an eager look: his mouth large and restless; his hair deep chestnut brown in close curls."⁷ Later Jack, the villain, remarks that the poster "wouldn't look so well framed as that red-lipped young lady. (Pointing to picture)."⁸ This remarks indicates a connection with the second painting which is described in the stage direction for Act 1, scene 4: "*The Oak Room in Grantley's Mansion.-- the panels elaborately carved in antique style. In one of the panels, a picture of a young female, richly habited.*"⁹ Grantley, the landlord, is looking at the paintings in the oak paneling of the room when he first enters. Told by Bullfrog to look at the pretty cherubims' heads in the corner he is then pointly told that the picture of the female is "a figure of Mercy."¹⁰ He continues to look at the picture of the woman.

Bullfrog: What sir! you are looking at that picture?
 I don't know the painter. It's not a I must

get an Italian smatter, or I shall never be able to knock down the painters!

Granville: Is it a family portrait?

Bulfrog: I should call it a conundrum in an oak frame! . . . I caught Mr. Crumbs standing before it looking at it--and once . . . I caught him with the tears rolling down his cheeks.¹¹

Little does Bullfrog or Grantley know the picture in question can be considered a family portrait and will play an important role in teaching Grantley to see and act on Mercy. Although the Squire proves to be a sympathetic character, the verbal picture the audience receives of his riches causes the audience to be initially set against him: Diamonds on each of his fingers, heaps of guineas, and a brilliant snuff-box.

The two major characters, the farmer Martin and his wife Rachel, are first seen in an outdoor scene ("rustic landscape"¹²), one of only two outdoor scenes in the play. They have been left outside of the frame of the painting of *Rent Day*. They are pictured outside since they are not able to participate in the activity of rent-day. We meet them again indoors with the re-creation of the second of Wilke's paintings. Act II, scene 1 opens with the following stage direction, *"The interior of Heywood's Farm. The scene, furniture, etc., as in Wilke's picture 'Distaining for Rent.'* Martin and Rachel seated at Table, with Toby, Beanstalk, his Dame, and the children. Ale jugs, etc., on the table."¹³ This same painting is re-created at the end of Act II, bringing the action of the act full circle.

*"Bullfrog seats himself on bed; and other characters so arrange themselves as to represent Wilke's picture of 'Distaining for Rent.' End of Second Act."*¹⁴

In *The Rent Day* Jerrold makes much use of forms of the verb "to look" since, in the world of the play, one judges often by appearances. All aspects of surface reality are represented. "There's little of the beggar in my face."¹⁵ "I'm sure you must be intimate with him, by the correctness of your description."¹⁶ Painting appears to be truth, for *The Rent Day* is concerned with "looking" for truths that can be found on the surface. The major dramatic dispute between husband and wife results in the husband's accepting the event as it appears to be for he has no deeper understanding of his wife. The husband does not conclude from the truth found in his heart but from the evidence of his eyes, "I have been so deceived, that had a voice from the sky called you what it tears my heart to think of, I would not have listened to it. But these eyes--these eyes--oh! that I had been blind!"¹⁷ Through the character of Bullfrog Jerrold comments on equating truth with surface reality. Bullfrog, the appraiser, who is the detailer of the surface reality, is shown to be the fool of the play.

The dénouement of the play provides an explanation of the painting of the young woman noticed early in the play by Granville. Crumbs, the steward of the house and the keeper of its secrets, says:

At the mansion you saw a certain painting. You remember you asked me whose it was--I'll tell you. It was the likeness of a young and once virtuous wife. A devil, a golden devil, dazzled her vain heart, and she left her husband and disgraced him. The husband plunged in vice to fly from thought. . . . Years rolled away. In a foreign land he met his wife's destroyer, who, knowing not the man he had wronged, fostered him--took him to his heart--made him his man of trust, and brought him to England. He died and left him to manage his estate for his wild and absent son . . .¹⁸--the picture is the picture of his victim. . . .¹⁸

When asked how his passions for revenge survived the death of the participants in his disgrace, Crumb exclaims, "That picture!"¹⁹ Art has the ability to keep alive realities and emotions that might have otherwise died.

At the end of the play the tenant farmer is no longer the renter but the owner of the farm; the second painting re-created on the stage, *Distraint for Rent*, will never be reproduced again; however, the activity in the painting *Rent-Day* will still be carried out because all the participants in that painting still have the same roles to play. The play returns back to the original situation with a slight reform: the landlord, Granville, will no longer be an absentee landlord.

In analyzing why Wilke's paintings were a natural for reproduction on the stage, Meisel states that the space they represent is "dramatic." "The back wall parallel to the picture plane is also common to both; and critics observed the smallness of Wilke's figures in relation to the size of the rooms, an effect of the contemporary stage. More important, his sense of fundamental relation of onlooker to picture was rooted in the theater."²⁰ Meisel also points

out that the two paintings are not sequential and do not together add up to a resolution of the story. Meisel feels that Jerrold's play does not so much dramatize the paintings as it uses them to create a story not dealt with in the paintings: that of an unjust steward. It is the story, not the paintings, that contains political comment. Indication of how popular the play was is revealed by the fact that "Jerrold's play was rapidly plagiarized and imitated. Sadler's Wells put on A.L. Campbell's *The Rent Day*, and *Distraint for Rent; A Domestic Drama* (20 Feb. 1832), clearly derived from Jerrold's play."²¹

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

As Meisel has shown, Jerrold's play calls for the reform of English society, but a true theatre of social protest does not begin in Britain until George Bernard Shaw. In his seminal article "Exploiting Art: The Pictures in Bernard Shaw's Plays," Stanley Weintraub indicates the many ways in which the visual arts have influenced the Irish playwright's works. Weintraub discusses several tableaux in Shaw which parody different painting genres. In *Candida*, the heroine takes young Marchbanks's face into her hands, kisses his forehead as he falls to his knees in front of her. The gesture is typical of the "sentimental Victorian anecdote in painting."²² The reading of the will in *The Devil's Disciple* is typical of a grouping from a Royal Academy set piece. Weintraub points to two paintings that

have a direct influence on two of Shaw's stage directions. In the last act of *The Devil's Disciple*, when Dick Dudgeon mounts the scaffold for execution, the setting of the scene owes more to Frederick Barnard's Royal Academy painting *Sydney Carton "A Tale of Two Cities"* shown in 1882, than to Dickens's novel; and the nighttime setting with a prominent moon in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* draws upon Frederick Leighton's *Summer Moon* which was exhibited shortly before Shaw wrote his play.

Weintraub shows how Shaw uses paintings in the settings of his play to comment upon the action or the characters. *Candida*, which Shaw called a modern Pre-Raphaelite play, uses Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin* as part of the stage setting. Weintraub argues that "he [Shaw] wanted to make plain by a recognizable work of art [that the play] was an ironic Shavian mystery play about Madonna and Child, with the heroine of the title the Holy Mother."²³ Martin Meisel points to two paintings as influences on two scenes in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Luc Olivier Merson's 1879 painting, *Repos en Egypte*, in which Christ and the Virgin are pictured in the lap of the Sphinx, replaced by Caesar and Cleopatra in Shaw's Act I; and in Jean-Léon Gerôme's painting, *Cléopâtre Apportée à Caesar dans un Tapis* from 1866, used for the setting of the rug scene in Act II. Roebuck Ramsden's study in *Man and Superman* contains an autotypic photograph of allegories by G.F. Watts and a copy of Dupont's engraving of Delacroche's hemicycle of great men of

all ages, which is meant to represent aspects of Ramsden's personality.

With *Doctor's Dilemma* in 1906, Shaw creates a play in which one of the major characters is a painter; however, since the artist is fictional, the audience can have no familiarity with his work. The plot of the play involves a group of doctors who are treating tubercular patients. The artist is married to a beautiful woman who attracts the attention of one of the doctors who then decides to give the artist an inferior treatment. Throughout the play the artist is seen sketching, but the works themselves are not shown to the audience. After his death there is a showing of his masterworks which became a problem for the critics of the original production. They felt that by not having seen his work one can imagine them and can mourn the loss of a genius; however, when they are shown to the audience the paintings often do not live up to expectations and so the sense of tragedy was diluted.

In *As Far As Thoughts Can Reach*, the fifth play in *Back to Methuselah*, a painting is used in a descriptive manner in that one of the characters is described as looking like an Italian youth from a nonspecific Gozzoli painting. The only Shaw play in which an actual painting is reproduced on the stage is *Shakes versus Shav*. When Shakespeare dares Shaw to show him his *King Lear*, Shaw counters by bringing up *Heartbreak House*. Shaw's stage directions indicate that the character of Captain Shotover, Shaw's *Lear*, is to be

shown as in the painting by Millais called *Northwest Passage*. If the audience fails to recognize the character when he first appears, Shaw has Shotover speak a few lines from Act II of *Heartbreak House*. Weintraub states that there are other parallels between the play and the painting. The background of the painting has a nautical flavor like the house of *Heartbreak House* and in the painting there are even a log-book, maps and a telescope to complete the nautical theme. Millais's painting in all likelihood was a visual inspiration for *Heartbreakhouse* Shaw's *King Lear*. As Weintraub points out a final play of Shaw's with a visual inspiration is *The Six of Calais* (1934). A dramatic version *Les Bourgeois de Calais*, *The Six of Calais* is a celebration of the same event but has nothing in common with Rodin's sculpture.

OTHER PLAYWRIGHTS

I have already mentioned Heinrich von Kleist in the chapter on *ekphrasis*. His play by *The Broken Pitcher* is directly connected to a work of art. It was started in 1802, when Kleist was in Bern, Switzerland, with the writers Ludwig Wieland, Heinrich Gessner, and Heinrich Zschokke. They decided to have a play competition. Each writer was to interpret an etching by Jean Jacques LeVeau based on Louis Philibert Debucourt's painting *La cruche cassée*. In Kleist's version the painting is never realized on stage. The plot of this play revolves around the consequence of the

event depicted in the painting and involves a mystery and trial based on different readings of the event pictured.

Contemporary American playwrights often seek inspiration in paintings. Two examples are provided by Ann Ciccolella and August Wilson. In Ciccolella's play, *Madame X*, a framed narrator tries to imagine what the woman in the painting was really like and strives to recreate the circumstances of her sitting for the portrait. The structure of Ciccolella's play is similar to that of the Art Lecture play structure addressed in Chapter 7.

August Wilson has stated that *The Piano Lesson* takes its inspiration from the painting of the same name by Romare Bearden.²⁴ The play centers around an attempt to hold onto a family heritage, represented by the piano built by an ancestor, despite a desperate need for money. Romare Bearden is a part of African-American cultural heritage which Wilson feels should not be lost to the black community because of economic pressures. Wilson relates his writing to Bearden's art of collage. The playwright says of Bearden, "he's a collagist, he pieces things together--I discovered that that's part of my process, what I do. I piece it all together, and hopefully, have it make sense, the way a collage would."²⁵ Although Wilson's writing process involves collage, the structure of his plays are rooted in the well-made play tradition and are not particularly *ekphractic*.

It is hard to separate plays that take their inspiration from paintings from several of the other categories of plays that interrelate art and drama. An example of this problem is Joe Pintauro's *The Raft of Medusa*. *The Raft of the Medusa* is play about AIDS; the raft to which the shipwrecked victims are clinging in the Théodore Géricault painting becomes a metaphor for trying to find a way to survive the epidemic. The painting is evoked in the opening scene which ends with the raft changing into a hospital bed. The playwright found inspiration for his play on survival through the painting which then becomes a symbol of the theme of the play. Chapter 4 investigates more fully plays in which the visual arts are used as a symbol or icon for the theme of the play.

¹ George Bernard Shaw, *As Far as Thought Can Reach in Back to Methuselah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 221. It is interesting that the futuristic people in this play have scorn for art and yet the Living Theatre combined this play with writings by Kadinsky and performed a piece called *Yellow Methuselah* (written in 1981 by Hanon Reznikov and performed January 17-February 19, 1984 in the United States). The Living Theatre's play is about the life affirming action of art. It was the last play performed by Julian Beck who was dying of cancer at the time.

² Douglas William Jerrold, *The Rent-Day in British Plays of the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology to Illustrate the Evolution of the Drama*, ed. J.O. Bailey (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1966), 261.

³ Jerrold, 263.

⁴ Jerrold, 263.

- 5 Jerrold, 264.
- 6 Jerrold, 264.
- 7 Jerrold, 263.
- 8 Jerrold, 268.
- 9 Jerrold, 267.
- 10 Jerrold, 267.
- 11 Jerrold, 267.
- 12 Jerrold, 265.
- 13 Jerrold, 269.
- 14 Jerrold, 271.
- 15 Jerrold, 267.
- 16 Jerrold, 274.
- 17 Jerrold, 277.
- 18 Jerrold, 279.
- 19 Jerrold, 279.
- 20 Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 150.
- 21 Jerrold, 157.
- 22 Stanley Weintraub, "Exploiting Art: The Pictures in Bernard Shaw's Plays" in *Modern Drama* 18 no.3 (September 1975), 217.
- 23 Weintraub, 217.
- 24 Mervyn Rothstein, "Round Five for a Theatrical Heavyweight," *The New York Times*, 15 April 1990, Arts and Leisure Section, 1.
- 25 August Wilson, "How to Write a Play Like August Wilson," *The New York Times*, 10 March 1991, Arts and Leisure Section, 5.

CHAPTER 4

ART AS VISUAL SYMBOL OF THEME

FLAN

This is what I dreamt. I didn't dream so much as realize this. I felt so close to the paintings. I wasn't just selling them like pieces of meat. I remembered why I loved paintings in the first place-- what had got me into this--and I thought--dreamed-- remembered how easy it is for a painter to lose a painting. He can paint and paint--work on a canvas for months and one day he loses it--just loses the structure--loses the sense of it--you lose the painting. . . .

[And then, much later:]

OUIA

There is color in my life, but I'm not aware of any structure.

FLAN

Cezanne would leave blank spaces in his canvasses if he couldn't account for the brush stroke, give reason for the color.

OUIA

Then I am a collage of unaccounted-for brush strokes. I am all random

In Act I the "Gallery of Silence" was covered with famous death scenes from well known suicides such as Socrates, Cleopatra, Seneca, and Larra. By the end of the act love had saved another person from acting out another scene of suicide. The action of the second act takes place in the same space; however, all the death scenes have

disappeared and in their place there is only Botticelli's *Springtime*. Paintings are often used by a playwright to visually illustrate the theme of the play. It is in this manner that Alejandro Casona uses paintings to illustrate that *Suicide [is] Prohibited in Springtime*. Analysis of the works of two Spanish playwrights will demonstrate the various uses of this device. Further examples of Art used as a visual symbol of the theme can be found in metacreational plays in which the art is not only symbolic of the theme but representative of the worldview of the author, character and/or painter.

THE PAINTER OF HIS OWN DISHONOR by Pedro Calderón de la Barca

In his essay, "Tractate in Defense of the Nobility of Painting," Pedro Calderón de la Barca differentiated the artist from the craftsman. Calderón often used art as metaphor in order to elevate the station of playwright and theatre, and in many of his plays he describes the world or elements of the world in terms of art. For example, in the auto *The Great Theatre of the World* he uses pictorial language in order to describe "sensorial elements," which are also discussed as an esthetic value of sight and hearing in the auto *El valle de la zarzuela*. The pictorial aspects of lost beauty are also described in artistic metaphor in *The Great Theatre of the World*, and in the auto called *The Painter of His Own Dishonor* he describes live nature as a

pictorial effect. Precious gems and stones become elements of a painter's craft in the auto *La Hidalga del Valle*, while flowers and the symbolic value of color are explored in a passage in the auto *El lirio y la azucena*. In his comedia *Bien vengas mal, si vienes solo* he co-relates the action of the pen and the paint brush. Portraiture, portraits and painting are metaphorically used in the auto *El indulto general*, the comedia *Darlo todo y no dar* (parallels are drawn between portraiture, honor and truth), the drama *La sibila del Oriente* (a polemic between art-nature-painting is set up), and in the comedias *Los dos amantes del cielo*, *El mayor monstruo del mundo*, *Las tres justicias en una*, *Los tres afectos de amor: Piedad, desmayo y valor*, and *De una causa, dos efectos*. *La dama duende* offers painting-love similarity as does the comedia *Peor está que estaba* while a simile that compares portrait with human reality can be found in *Amor, honor y poder*.

In the comedia *Painter of His Own Dishonor*, Don Juan is the protagonist and the painter of his own dishonor. We are told by Don Luis, an old friend, in conversation with Don Juan, that Don Juan has spent his youth in "books, books, books--still day and night/Nothing but books . . . / By way of respite to the melancholy,/The palette and the pencil--/in which you [Don Juan] got to such a mastery/As smote the senseless canvas into life."² Added to the degree in which art directs this character is the fact that he had fallen in love with his wife through a miniature portrait provided by

her father. His artistry is taxed in Act II, scene 1, which opens with his attempt to paint her portrait himself. He fails and then explains his position on art:

Painters you know (just turn your head a little,)
 Are nature's apes, whose uglier semblances,
 Made up of disproportion and excess,
 Like apes, they easily can imitate:
 But whose more gracious aspect, the result
 Of subtlest symmetries, they only outrage,
 Turning true beauty into caricature.
 The perfecter her beauty, the more complex
 And hard to follow; but her perfection
 Impossible

To recognise and represent true beauty,
 I had not dreamt of such excess of it
 As yours; nor can I, when before my eyes,
 Glass the clear image in my trembling soul;
 And therefore if that face of yours exceed
 Imagination and imagination
 (As it must do) the pencil; then the picture
 Can be but the poor shadow of a shade.³

Serafina, his wife, is continually represented in artistic metaphor. In a conversation in Act II with the man whom she loved before marrying Don Juan, Alvaro, the son of Don Luis, and whom she presumed dead, they discuss their love in terms that compare art and nature:

ALVARO: But what if I remember other times
 When Serafina was no stubborn oak,
 Resisting wind and wave, but a fair flower
 That open'd to the sun of early love,
 And follow'd him along the golden day:
 No barren heartless rock,
 But a fair temple in whose sanctuary
 Love was the idol, daily and nightly fed
 With sacrifice of one whole human heart.

SERAFINA: I do not say't was not so;
 But, sir, to carry back the metaphor
 Your ingenuity has turn'd against me,
 that tender flower, transplanted it may be

To other skies and soil, might in good time
 Strike down such roots and strengthen such a stem
 As it were not to be shook: the temple too,
 Though seeming slight to look on, being yet
 Of nature's fundamental marble built,
 When once that foolish idol was dethroned,
 And the true God set up into his place,
 Might stand unscathed in sanctity and worship,
 For ages and for ages.

ALVARO: Serafina,
 Why talk to me of ages, when the account
 Of my misfortune and your cruelty
 Measures itself by hours, and not by years!
 It was but yesterday you loved me , yes,
 Loved me, and (let the metaphor run on)
 I never will believe it ever was,
 Or is, or ever can be possible
 That the fair flower so soon forgot the sun
 To which so long she owed and turn'd her beauty,
 To love the baser mould in which she grew:
 Or that the temple could so soon renounce
 Her old god, true good too while he was there,
 For any cold and sober deity
 Which you may venerate, but cannot love,
 Newly set up.⁴

We find that Serafina has learned to love her husband;
 it is the correct thing to do in a society which is bound by
 honor. In Scene 2 of Act II there is a masked festival
 after which there is a fire in Don Juan's house. Serafina
 is placed into the arms of the masked Alvaro who takes this
 as fate. As his ship is about to depart with the shift of
 wind, he abducts her. In Act III she is being kept
 imprisoned in Don Luis's mountain home and she now describes
 herself in terms of a statue. "My body,/But not my soul;
 without possessing which,/Beauty itself is but a breathing
 corpse,/But a cold statue, unsuffus'd/With the responsive
 hue of sympathy."⁵

In Act III, Don Juan, having lost his wife and thus his honor, is wandering looking for revenge. In order to make some money he paints. The Prince, who tells Portia that his only occupation when not with her has been to look at some pictures he has commissioned by the greatest masters of Italy and Spain, is approached by Don Juan to buy a painting he has just completed. Don Juan describes this painting:

JUAN: Hercules my lord . . .
 The point I have chosen in that history
 Is where the faithless Centaur carries off
 Deijanira, while beyond the river
 Stands Hercules with such a face and gesture
 As not a man, I think looks on it,
 But would exclaim, "Jealousy and Revenge!" . . .

That is the main group;
 But far way, among the tangled thicks
 Of a dark mountain gap, this Hercules
 Fires his own funeral pile to the smoky clouds.
 And I would have this motto for the whole,
 "So Jealousy in its own flames expires."⁶

The Prince agrees to buy the painting and explains, "Not only do I like the subject well,/But now especially, being deeply scorcht,/Not with the flame that burn'd up Hercules,/But that for which the unlucky Centaur died."⁷ The Prince then hires Don Juan to paint the woman he, because of honor, cannot possess. This leads to the climax in which Don Juan is hidden in a grill under the stage in order to see Serafina and paint her later. Seeing both his wife and her supposed lover, he shoots them, stating that "This death-like image is the sculptor's task/. . . A picture--/Done by the Painter of his own Dishonor/In blood."⁸

As political commentary the Hercules painting is of particular interest. It is the Prince of Naples who buys the paintings but there is an interesting line that can be drawn to Philip IV of Spain, Calderón's and Velázquez's Royal patron. According to Jonathan Brown in his book *Velázquez: Painter and Courtier*, the arts were used in a "concerted effort by the government to glorify the Spanish monarchy and were stimulated by the threat of war with France which became a reality in 1635 [note the omission of French painters by the Prince of Naples]."⁹ Painters became known as "artisans of glory."

Philip IV had the Palace of The Buen Retiro built and in it the Hall of Realms, also known as Hall of Princely Virtue, was designed as a focal point. For this Hall of Realms there were commissioned twelve battle scenes (as in the twelve stations of the cross), ten paintings showing the episodes of the life of Hercules (twelve were originally commissioned), and five equestrian Royal portraits. The Hercules paintings were hung between the battle scenes. On the two ends of the hall there were the painting *Surrender of Breda* by Velázquez and the painting *Defense of Cadiz* by Francisco de Zurbarán, who though he was not a court painter was recommended by Velázquez. The concept behind the room was that these paintings would represent the events and ideas which demonstrate the power and glory of the ruler, Philip IV. Brown states that "the message was conveyed in one of two ways, either through narrative illustrations of

important events in the life of the ruler and his ancestors, or though more complicated allegories which exalted the abstract qualities of the ideal prince. . . . the life of a hero or god of antiquity whose deeds and moral qualities were thought to be reflected in the person of the reigning Prince."¹⁰

Hercules was an important image in the paintings for it was widely used to symbolize the King, since Hercules was claimed by the Spanish Hapsburgs as an ancestor. Emperor Charles V, the King's great-grandfather had incorporated the Pillars of Hercules into his personal coat-of-arms. In "Art and Power in the Spectacle Plays of Calderón de la Barca," Margaret Rich Greer details how Calderón found ways to criticize within a structure meant to glorify the King. Since the Prince of Naples describes himself as the Centaur who is abducting Hercules's wife, we can interpret the use of this painting and the use of the theme of the play in two ways; either the King or Prince is indulging in too much womanizing (which King Philip was) or it is a warning not to be too quick to act in jealousy on the perception of loss of honor (which both Hercules and Don Juan, the painter, do). Since Don Juan is not punished by either the Prince or the fathers of the two dead people, one can presume that it is the fate of the figure of Hercules that is being presented as the lesson to the King (the King would not be punished for his actions either).

One of the other paintings found in the Hall of Realms, *Surrender of Breda*, was inspired by a work of theatre. Calderón de la Barca wrote a play called *El Sitio de Breda* which was performed in 1625 at the Palace in order to commemorate the victory pictured. At the climax of the play, Nassau hands over the keys of the city to Spinola, who takes them and states, the words that are embodied in Velázquez's painting, "Justin, I receive them in full awareness of your valor; for the valor of the defeated confers fame upon the victor."¹¹ For Brown, this painting becomes a metaphor for Spanish moral superiority.

Art is represented as having two natures in this play, revealing the truth through beauty but also as a mask for truth (an example is the way in which music is used). Theatre is represented in the play as a series of events involving much hiding, revealing, masks, and disguises. There is a metatheatrical moment in the carnival scene, with masks disguising all the characters as they play the roles of fools. Don Juan tells his wife to "go abroad mask'd to dance and see the shows."¹² The Father, Don Luis, and the Son, Alvaro, have a strained relationship and it is said that they speak to each other as people in plays. Music is represented as a mask for truth as when Portia says "The music is for him, the words for you./For I have much to tell you underneath/This mask of music."¹³ Alvaro describes Serafina as the " Siren/Who draws me with the music of her

beauty."¹⁴ Yet earlier in the play the Prince, relates music and truth metaphorically to a devine order:

He who far off beholds another dancing
 Even one who dances best, and all the time
 Hears not the music that he dances to,
 Thinks him a madman, apprehending not
 The law that rules his else eccentric action.
 So he that's in himself insensible
 Of love's sweet influence, misjudges him
 Who moves according to love's melody:
 And knowing not that all these sighs and tears,
 Ejaculations, and impatiences,
 Are necessary changes of a measure,
 Which the divine musician plays, may call
 The lover crazy; which he would not do
 Did he within his own heart hear the tune
 Play'd by the great musician of the world.¹⁵

While Lope de Vega can be called the father of Golden Age Theatre, Calderón raised it to an art form that reflected the power structure for which he was creating. After the Golden Age Spanish culture was eclipsed by developments in other parts of Europe. These influences, such as neo-classicism in the eighteenth century and romanticism in the nineteenth century, were copied and influenced Spanish culture. In the twentieth century, with García Lorca and Alberti, Spanish theatre again took on an individualistic nature and did this in part through an assimilation of the processes and images of surrealism. A generation older, Valle-Inclán, with his *esperpento* and his creation of a theatre which presented a world reflected in a funhouse mirror, developed his own aesthetic of drama that was to influence playwrights such as Arrabal, Alberti, Buero-Vallejo and Nieva. Claudia Schaefer in "Francisco

Nieva in the Shadow of Goya, Valle-Inclán, and the aesthetic of the *Esperpento*," notes how by breaking up the three act classical dramatic structure Valle-Inclán also created a different pictorial representation. Valle-Inclán structured his plays as "a series of *retablos* or *tableaux* simultaneously echoing painted or etched figures and the fragmentation of the images of silent film."¹⁶

NIGHT AND WAR IN THE PRADO MUSEUM by Rafael Alberti

Alberti, in addition to being an inventive playwright, is one of the most important modern Spanish-language poets. Like the younger Buero-Vallejo, Alberti was deeply interested in the visual arts, and in fact he had originally come to Madrid in order to study to become a painter. Most of the characters in *Night and War in the Prado Museum* come from works of art, except the characters called the Author, 1st Soldier, and 2nd Soldier. From Goya's paintings, drawings, and etchings there are: One Arm, Executed Man, Knife Sharpener, Woman (Maja), Student, Bullfighter, Priest, 1st Old Woman, 2nd Old Woman, 3rd Old Woman, Donkey, Buco (Great Horned Goat), Beheaded Man, Blindman, and assorted poor people and citizens from early nineteenth-century Spain dressed as in drawings and etchings. The characters developed from Titian are Venus, who is to be white and almost naked; Adonis, in a garnet tunic; and Mars wearing the hide and head of a boar. The opening stage directions indicate two characters from Velázquez; the Dwarf as in the

portrait *Don Sebastian de Morra* and *The King*. Although the latter is indicated as inspired by Velázquez he is actually dressed like the ghostlike figure in Goya's etching titled *Madness of Fear*. Many of the words spoken in the play are the exact words with which Goya captioned his drawings and etchings.

The play opens with a Prologue in which the author is standing in front of a projection of the Prado Museum. In his adolescence, the museum had been his refuge from reality, and the Rubens painting *The Three Graces*, which is then projected, was his muse from which his longing to create art sprang. He says that this is the afternoon of July 18, 1936, when the bombing of Madrid caused the Republic to remove the paintings of the Prado and place them in the cellar for protection. Later the paintings were removed to Barcelona, then to Figueras, and in 1939, as World War II was about to break out, they were like expatriates, on exhibit in Geneva under the title "The Masterpieces of the Prado." The Author's sense of disillusionment with the world starts on this day and Goya's *Executions of the Third of May in Moncloa* appears on the screen. The Author talks of soldiers, co-relating 1808, the time of the painting, and 1936, the time of the play. The soldiers are replaced with the images of Goya's *La Pradera de San Isidro* for the soldiers are, in truth, the people in this painting who would rather be enjoying everyday life. As the paintings are taken from the walls *La Tauromaquia* by

Goya is presented. The bull or bullfighter is often the visual symbol used for Spain and the voice of the bullfighter is heard in protest as he is being removed. The *Disasters of War* number 37 entitled *With a Knife* is projected and then fades only to be replaced with number 38, called *Savages*. This too fades and is followed by number 39. The Author speaks of the equalizing horror of war in which a man is killed because he is a knife sharpener by trade and has a knife on him; a severed head seems to scream, and students, gallants, rustics, nobles, and peasants all bury themselves together in a cellar for safety.

The Author then conjectures that the nightmares become so horrible for Goya that he gives up etching and retreats into the "Black Paintings." *The Pilgrimage to San Isidro* is projected and we hear the voice of the pictured blindman singing of his hunger. This is replaced by *The Assembly of the Witches*, and we hear their evil laughter. The Author identifies one of the witches as Maria Luisa of Parma the wife of Don Carlos IV who had an affair with Manuel Godoy, the royal favorite. His portrait as in the painting *War of the Oranges* replaces *The Witches* and we hear that he was a dictator and a traitor who opened the doors to the French who then drowned the Spanish in their own blood. Goya's *Donkey Walking on Hind Legs* appears, we hear laughter change to braying, and then the projection of the painting fades.

Velázquez's paintings are the next to be brought to the basement and we see both *Don Sebastian De Morra* and *King*

Philip IV in Hunting Suit appear and then fade. The author parades before us images of El Grecos, Zurbaráns, and Riberas being removed from the walls. The religious paintings are next as we work through images of Spain from reality, to nightmare, and on to mystical. The altarpiece of Arguis's showing the Archangel Saint Michael appears and then disappears to be followed by Fra Angelico's *The Annunciation*, as an example of the Italian school in the Museum's rich collection. The last images are Titian's rendition of *Venus and Adonis*, accompanied by a reading of a section of poet Garcilaso's verbal depiction of the mythological scene. We see *Venus and Adonis* and then hear the howl of a hound as it disappears. The Author says his goodnight and the single act of the play begins with the image of an empty Prado Museum, where only the ghost images of removed paintings remain.

The characters from the projected paintings inhabit the main body of the play. The Executed Man, the Knife Sharpener, and One Arm defend the Prado behind sand bags from the enemy who are The Moors, the French, The Emperor, Napoleon, and the Generalísimo. The executed man when asked his name cannot remember: "you can just call me one of the executed."¹⁷ He becomes representative of all men who are executed by the enemy for defending their country. The knife sharpener tries to remove the knife from his side but cannot. They have been frozen in this horrible moment for eternity. They cannot change, but as symbols of the history

of Spain as interpreted by its culture they cannot die either. The executed man describes the bravery of the women of Spain and relates the story of his girlfriend who is also from an etching by Goya. He gives reality to the moments preceding her brutal death: "They shot mine--but she really let them have it first! They had to tie her to a tree. Then they stripped her naked. Finally they chopped off her arms and nailed them to the branches."¹⁸

The different characters are from different painters with different political backgrounds and intents so they tend to argue; however, they do work together for the defense of the Prado, the symbol of their country's collective culture. As bombs start to fall close to the Prado, a dull beam of light reveals Venus and Adonis lying on the floor. They are frightened by the fight which they believe Mars, the symbol of eternal war, is perpetrating. The dull light changes into radiant sunshine as they begin to make love but this is interrupted by Mars, who kills Adonis.

The war continues and hunger sets in as represented by The Blindman; suspicion breaks out and the Blindman is accused of being a spy. Unable to see, he needs to ask questions, and asking questions leads the other characters to believe him a spy. Their mistake is identified and laughter breaks out, laughter representative of the bravery and humanity of the people. One Arm states this by explaining, "In this barricade everybody laughs. Those who

want to cry go somewhere else. We're not here to cry; we're here to fight and die, if we have to--and with laughter on our lips." The laughter builds and then out of the ensuing darkness come two contemporary soldiers who tell of the bravery of the common man.

This episode is followed by the appearance of Velázquez's Dwarf who is the first character to display fear. The King appears and is more afraid than the dwarf, who finds his courage in the fear of the King. The Dwarf declares, "The firing gave me courage. I saw myself as the Duke of Olivares, complete with horsemen and all the rest of it."¹⁹ It is with these qualities of nobility that Velázquez painted him. Through humor and sarcasm the Dwarf can tell the King the truth, in part because they are codependant on each other's weaknesses for their own strengths. The Dwarf is frightened without his King and the King panics when the Dwarf disappears. The King laments, "I can't figure out what this battle's all about. Are we at war, my son?"²⁰ The Dwarf asks bluntly, "Did your royal ancestors ever stop being at war?"²¹ The King does not stay to defend his realm; he leaves to hide in the Queen's quarters.

After the King and Dwarf exit, the common people talk again about the horrors of war as they are joined by the Beheaded Man carrying his own bloodied head. The pride builds to a hysteria which finds its outlet in a dance, and they sing a traditional Spanish song, a seguidilla (one of

the traditional songs sung at the corrales between the acts of comedias during the Golden Age) from La Mancha.

The play ends with a procession of the characters from the paintings led off by One Arm and the Executed Man holding two dummies representing Queen Maria Luisa and the Generalísimo hung from brooms. One character is holding a flag from the Goya painting *The Burial of the Sardine* which has a half eagle, half vulture on it with the words "Death to the savage vulture." They march off into the sunlight provided by the holes in the Prado's wall made by the dropping bombs and they are reminded that the Spanish are "one of the strongest, one of the most virile, one of the most dedicated people in its love for liberty and independence. Remember Numantia."²² This is one of many metatheatrical moments in a play rich in literary and artistic intertextuality.

The Prologue is presented as a lecture or explanation, a play structure peculiar to plays that recreate art which will be discussed in Chapter 7. The song and dance that break out seemingly spontaneously are as much a metatheatrical moment as the Procession itself. The allusion to Numantia refers to the siege of Numancia by the Romans as dramatized by Cervantes and triggers recall of the earliest stage of a long and violent struggle. Alberti's play dramatizes the thesis that the culture of Spain, even though it is the product of the cruelty, pain and horror of a political system dominated by tyrants and the wars they

inflict upon the society, will be what ultimately saves Spain.

Both of these playwrights create a world in which art is integral to an understanding of reality/truth. There are several other playwrights of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries whose worldview can only be understood through the use of art as symbol or metaphor. Plays by Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Stanisław Grochowiak, Richard Forman, Tina Howe and John Guare can be reinterpreted through their view of the world as a product of art.

Henrik Ibsen, an artist/playwright, whose plays deal with the possibility of change, of something new, makes use of images and allusions to art and creation, copy and original, reality and imagination. As Brian Johnston notes in *Text and Supertext in Ibsen's Drama*, "the quality in the play of . . . people gazing at a mysterious, sometimes frightening often symbol-laden landscape was beautifully rendered by the Romantic Dresden painter Caspar David Friedrich, whose close association with the Norwegian landscape painter J.C. Dahl would almost certainly have made him familiar to Ibsen."²³

Nordic landscape is an element in *Brand*, *The Lady From the Sea*, and *When We Dead Awaken*. Johnston co-relates the influence of art on Ibsen's plays by noting that Ibsen often uses the term *gestalti* when commenting on his plays and so he must have been familiar with *Gestaltist* drawings in which

the background and figure continually shift as in Escher's etchings. He provides further proof of the influence by noting that Ibsen was a painter himself. Johnston opens Ibsen's plays to a series of interpretations that balance character with setting and visual elements with words. In *Brand* Einar is a seeker for new sights, a creator and an artist. *The Wild Duck* compares the literalism of the camera against the wish of Hedvig to be a painter. Her mother retouches photographs and her Grandfather copies texts, an activity which is a step removed from creation and art. *Ghosts* presents the doomed Oswald who had left his home of lies and secrets to live as a painter. *The Lady From the Sea* involves two arts, as represented by Ballested the painter and Lyngstrand the sculptor of "the Dying Mermaid." In *Hedda Gabler*, Lovborg qualifies as being an artist because of his views of the future, and some of the tension in *The Master Builder* is between the craftsman and the artist. *When We Dead Awaken* is a living painting and deeply art encoded.

August Strindberg was another artist/playwright. Arnold Böcklin's painting, *Isle of the Dead*, is the closing image in *Ghost Sonata*. The stage can no longer represent the journey of the play and the playwright must resort to representing a greater truth through art/painting. Böcklin's painting is also the setting for an incomplete one-act play by Strindberg. In *The Creditors* two of the three characters are artists--a painter turned sculptor and his wife who is a

writer. The third character is the wife's ex-husband who insinuates himself into the couple's life by becoming the husband's best friend. The painter-turned-sculptor is most vulnerable to the poison of the others.

In *Dulle Griet* Stanisław Grochowiak dramatizes the difference between civilization and the natural world. The forms of nature are contrasted with those of art. The mystical side of what is natural is compared with the civilizing effect of religion.

Scene 5 at the Prosecutor's house opens with Clelia, the Prosecutor's daughter, looking at slides of old Dutch paintings. *Forest Marshes* by Ruysdael is projected first and then a fragment of a cart in *A Tavern* by Salomon Van Ruysdael. Clelia tells her father to look at the slides for it will help him wake from the nightmare of having to deal with the primitive Greta. Clelia is drinking in order to respond to the paintings; after viewing them reality for her turns into art. Clelia observes that "Suddenly everything downtown looks like all those old paintings by the Dutch Masters--especially at dawn: Many things resemble Pissarro's boulevards, Utrillo's alleys, Renoir's streetwomen, and Manet's elegant revellers."²⁴

Next come projections of Salomon Van Ruysdael's *After the Rain*, Pieter de Hooch's *A Woman Reading a Letter*, and then Breughel's *Dulle Griet*. After allowing themselves to interpret the events of their lives through artwork that is civilized and beautiful, Breughel's painting, because of its

grotesque nature and primitive quality, is declared ugly and evil. Its resemblance to the witch/murderess Greta is recognized and Clelia wants it burned at the stake.

Grochowiak explains in a foreward that his play was based on a real event with fictionalized characters; his characters explain that Breughel's painting is of a real event. Dulle Griet was defending herself against the slaughter of heretics, surrounded in the painting by figures of chaos and horror. The slide is followed by Wilhem van de Velde, Junior's *Ships*, and the dialogue now focuses on escape.

As playwright and director of his own works, Richard Forman creates visual images that represent his own art. The themes of his plays tend to be speculations on the nature of a very personal art. In 1992, however, in a production of his work called *the Richard Foreman Trilogy*, based on previously unproduced material and directed by Paul Schiff Berman and Deborah Lewittes, there is a reproduction of Edouard Manet's painting, *The Railway*. In this painting there is a woman facing the viewer and a young girl contemplating the Gare St. Lazare. Mel Gussow interprets Foreman's use of Manet's work as suggesting, "the venturesome possibilities of train travel. In the Foreman world, as influenced by Manet, 'the promise would be as good as fulfillment' and the dream can become its own reality."²⁵ Gussow calls Foreman's technique "mental impressionism."

John Guare, in *Six Degrees of Separation*, describes a double sided Kandinsky painting to be hung above the set. It is symbolic of the themes of the play--the doublesidedness of language and the two sides of one coin of reality and fiction/ illusion and reality/authenticity (originality) and reproduction (copy)/ art appreciation and art economics/ and truth and imagination. The set for the Lincoln Center production of 1990-1 used each of the doorways to suggest a picture frame. In the absence of a proscenium arch, this device served a way to frame the play, to turn the picture of the play into art.

There are two other ways in which art is used in the play. The issue of the first act is the selling of a Matisse; Ouisa is described in the dialogue as a Dada manifesto. The opening quotation in this chapter, taken from *Six Degrees of Separation*, describes how everyone in Guare's play is somehow formed by art. The husband's explanations of art enable Ouisa to understand herself.

Tina Howe has written several plays dealing with the visual arts. *Museum* uses paintings by three imaginary artists--Zachary Moe who paints entirely in white, Agnes Vaag who makes constructions on philosophic, mythologic, and literary themes from natural findings, and Steve Williams who displays five life sized realistic cloth figures. In an interview, "Women Playwrights: Themes and Variations,"²⁶ Howe says that for her playwriting is an personal aesthetic quest. She starts each play asking how art is created and

how art is consumed in the mind. These are the questions that are dramatized in *Museum*.

In *Painting Churches* a painter comes home to visit her parents in order to paint their portrait before they move out of her childhood home. The painter, Mags, recounts how she came to art through food; she would vomit up her food and retreat to her room to melt crayons on a radiator. The result amounted to an artwork based on her inability to digest food (reality). The painting becomes the visual equivalent her childhood.

In Howe's latest play, *Approaching Zanzibar*, the principal character is an artist (who combines the personality of Georgia O'Keefe with the aesthetic of Christo) named Charlotte Blossom who is dying of cancer and is visited by her family for a farewell. In its 1989 Second Stage production the set designed by Heidi Landesman was, appropriately, in the style of the artist portrayed on stage.

Peter Barnes's *Leonardo's Last Supper* may appear to be a biographical play, but it is really a study of the beginnings of modern philosophy and aesthetics. Though the audience is led to believe the play will deal with da Vinci's painting *The Last Supper*, the only painting represented is the drawing *Divine Proportion* which is projected while a lecturer speaks of the Italian Renaissance. Aesthetically, the play is more closely

patterned after Brueghel, and the main characters are from a peasant family who make their living through burial.

Leonardo is to be their next client, but the famous Renaissance man inconveniently is resurrected. The play revolves around the making of the characters into a modern family; awakening in them a christian value system. At the end, when the son announces he is a modern man, he kills da Vinci symbolizing the fact that contemporary man chooses money over art/culture or knowledge.

¹ John Guare, *Six Degrees of Separation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 45-46.

² Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *The Painter of His Own Dishonor* in *Eight Dramas of Calderón*, freely translated by Edward Fitzgerald (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1902), 13.

³ Calderón, 34-5.

⁴ Calderón, 39.

⁵ Calderón, 58.

⁶ Calderón, 65-6.

⁷ Calderón, 66.

⁸ Calderón, 73.

⁹ Jonathan Brown, *Velázquez: Painter and Courtier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 107.

¹⁰ Brown, *Velázquez*, 109.

¹¹ Brown, *Velázquez*, 119.

¹² Brown, *Velázquez*, 41.

- 13 Brown, *Velázquez*, 45.
- 14 Brown, *Velázquez*, 51.
- 15 Brown, *Velázquez*, 25.
- 16 Claudia Schaefer, "Francisco Nieva in the Shadow of Goya, Valle-Inclan and the Aesthetic of the *Esperpento*," *Estrenos* 15 no.2 (Otono, 1989), 13.
- 17 Rafael Alberti, *Night and War in the Prado Museum* trans. Lemuel Johnson in *Modern Spanish Theatre*, eds. Michael Benedikt and George E. Wellwarth (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1969), 206.
- 18 Alberti, 209.
- 19 Alberti, 218.
- 20 Alberti, 219.
- 21 Alberti, 219.
- 22 Alberti, 234.
- 23 Brian Johnston, *Text and Supertext in Ibsen's Drama* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 198.
- 24 Stanisław Grochowiak, *Dulle Griet*, translated by E.J. Czerwinski and Janusz Wilk, unpublished, copyright 1982.
- 25 Mel Gussow, "On Blindness, Time, Art: Richard Foreman's Ideas in Unforemanish Fashion," *The New York Times*, 27 May 1992, C18.
- 26 An interview in the *New York Times* 7 May 1989, Arts and Leisure Section, page 1 and page 42 with Wendy Wasserstein, Cindy Lou Johnson, Ntozake Shane and Tina Howe.

CHAPTER 5

PLAYS ABOUT A HISTORICAL EVENT

"It created the politics of the *impossible*, turned madness into theory, and blind audacity into a cult."¹

A Mother stands in the brightly lighted left corner. In the crook of her left arm is one daughter who has fainted and another holding her hands up to her face unable to turn away from the horror she is seeing. The Mother's other arm is straining to reach out to something in the right rear corner. In the shadow of the upper right corner is the figure of a soldier standing outside of the light from a doorway. Coming through that doorway there is a stretcher on which we see only the naked legs of a dead person being carried by a procession along the rear of the room. While all of this is taking place there sits on the right a man with a beard dressed in a Roman toga with his dispassionate face showing through the shadow. He faces the audience removed from the pain and sorrow, for he, Brutus, has done his duty for the Republic. This duty takes precedence over blood ties. This is the vision of *The Death of Titus* (Titus is Brutus's son) as created by the painter Jacques-Louis

David. This vision will cause a major controversy when it is dramatized for the stage.

Since historical painting is often considered to be a true representation, plays that dramatize specific events may use these paintings as historic documentation. During the French Revolution the visual image had an added function of conveying news and information to a largely illiterate populace. Diderot's ideas on transferring painterly images to the stage prepared the way for a play like *The Marriage of Figaro*, often taken as the first dramatic depiction of the ferment that would lead to the French Revolution. There is a connection that I wish to draw between the politicalization and the visualization of the stage at the time of the French Revolution.

According to Meisel, "a controversial production of Voltaire's *Brutus* in November 1790 had the play's newly imputed revolutionary nationalism reinforced definitively by the culminating spectacle of David's *Brutus* [usually referred to as David's *La Mort de Titus*] (1789). Voltaire's play ends decorously, with the announcement by the messenger of the execution of the protagonist's insufficiently patriotic son. But on the second night of the new production, the painting that (according to observers) every Parisian knew and the whole audience recognized, was 'set in action.' At the moment of the announcement, 'this unfortunate father places himself on the antique chair like

the Brutus of the painter, and one sees the passage of the funeral cortege that brings his two children back to the house.'"² Marie Hélène Huet states, "As early as 1790, Voltaire's play [*Brutus*] had been received with cheers. People thought it especially ingenious that the actors reproduced at the end of the tragedy [Voltaire's *Brutus*], in a tableau vivant, David's canvas entitled *La Mort de Titus*."³ Voltaire's text does not include a stage direction calling for the recreation of the painting. Because the addition was the work of the actor Talma, the play falls outside the purview of this dissertation, but it is clearly part of a trend towards an increasing politicization of the theatre.

The American War for Independence had created a sense of the possibility of revolution in the world's consciousness. Rousseau, Diderot, and the other French *philosophes* had popularized the notion of the basic equality of all men. Ronald Paulson in *Representations of Revolution* argues, "Action was necessarily preceded by words. The actions fulfilled the words-- . . . the French Revolution fulfilled the words of the *philosophes*, of Voltaire and Rousseau."⁴ Because of the need convey radical new ideas to the uneducated masses, symbolization of concepts or visualization of ideas became prevalent. With symbolization in all the visual arts (painting, sculpture, and theatre), the arts became markedly politicalized. Paulson believes that one of the major outcomes of the revolution was "the

feasibility now of altering political action by the action of art."⁵ The authorities, who had always believed in controlling of the theatre for the good of the realm, now felt that special vigilance was needed because the stage was becoming overtly political and therefore an especially dangerous instrument.

One of the first French play that within its stage directions calls for the reconstruction of a painting is also the first pre-revolutionary drama to be thought too politically explosive to pass the censorship. This play is Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro* or *The Follies of the Day* (*La Folle Journée ou le mariage de Figaro*). In *The Theatre of the French Revolution*, Marvin Carlson describes *The Marriage of Figaro* as containing, "inflammatory contemporary issues--the powers of the police, freedom of discussion, and the privileges of the aristocracy."⁶ I shall show how each of these inflammatory contemporary issues is represented through references to or illustrations of an art form. Carlson goes on to state that "people came from distant parts of the country to applaud its revolutionary sentiments."⁷ Tracing the further politicization of theatre he observes that the protest over the play *Charles IX* (1789) by Marie-Joseph Chénier "meant that the new popular leaders considered tragedy as a legitimate form of political propaganda, thus opening the way to Revolutionary drama."⁸

This chapter begins with a discussion of *The Marriage of Figaro*, a play in which Diderot's theories are applied and a painting is recreated on the stage. Though it is a pre-Revolutionary play and stops short of a call for action, Beaumarchais's comedy dramatizes many of the social problems that led to the Revolution. A discussion of Paulson's theories will be followed by a short history of representations of the French Revolution and detailed analyses of Stanisława Przybyszewska's *The Danton Case* and Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade*.

BEAUMARCHAIS'S *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO*

The Marriage of Figaro is not so much a sequel to *The Barber of Seville*, as it is a commentary on it. While the first play tells how to woo a wife, the second play illustrates that it is morally wrong to woo someone else's wife. In foregrounding the Count's intrigues in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Beaumarchais calls into question the same kinds of actions in the first play, *The Barber of Seville*. The audience now perceives, such machinations as endemic to an entire social class, rather than limited to the dramatis personae of a single drama. The central theme of *The Marriage of Figaro* is the master's right (*droit de seigneur*) to determine the love lives of his servants and gratify his own desires as he wishes. Figaro explains, "I shall be fighting my way through rain and mud for the

greater glory of your family while you are condescending to cooperate in the increase of mine."⁹

According to the *droit de seigneur*, servants are property. They need the permission of their master to fall in love and marry. Property and wealth are shown to be artificial, not natural rights. Beaumarchais upholds love as the most valuable and truthful of human emotions. For this reason the playwright includes a reenacted painting that will stress these values.

The painting is only the most evident moment of the use of tableaux. Meisel finds that the play is structured as a series of tableaux in which the action constantly leads to the frozen poses.

In *The Marriage of Figaro* (1778-1784) Beaumarchais attempted to pursue the dramaturgical implications of Diderot's dramatic pictorialism, by creating for them, as for more subversive matters, a historical and stylistic reverberator. . . . Each situation exists discretely, but varies and repeats. . . form a serially incremental assertion of an equality in fundamental humanity (all cats are grey in the dark) . . . Each act is built with such a situation as its fulcrum or climax, and, the emphatic result is a picture. It is simple in the first act, when Cherubin is revealed . . . under the cloak on the armchair and the actors freeze with surprise or dismay. It is complex in the last, where Beaumarchais contrives the piecemeal assembly of a picture before our eyes to climax a final crescendo of substitutions and exposures, helped imaginatively by night and a garden setting that breathes rococo eroticism.¹⁰

The Recreation of the Painting

The etching in question is recreated in scene iv of Act II. The act begins with the following set description.

"Scene: A bedroom furnished with great splendor; a bed in a recess; a dais downstage of it; a door upstage right; door to a small closet downstage left; door upstage to the maid's quarters; window at the other side."¹¹ The dialogue between Suzanne and the Countess leading up to the recreation is:

Suzanne: Let's make him sing his ballad. (puts it on the Countess's knee). . . .

Suzanne: . . . Poor little man with his sly downcast eyes! . . .

The Countess: Take my guitar.
(She sits holding the manuscript to follow the music. SUZANNE is behind the chair and reads the accompaniment over her Mistress's shoulder. The Page faces them eyes, downcast as in the print after Vanloo called 'Conversation Espagnole.')

¹²

The Actual Painting

Meisel points out in his book, in a note opposite a reproduction of an engraving based on the painting, "The engraving, by Jacques-Firmin Beauvarlet, was completed in 1769. Beauvarlet, exhibited preparatory drawings of the *Conversation* and a companion piece by Vanloo in the salon of 1765. The painting has been completed in 1754 when according to Baron Grimm, it won the suffrages of all connoisseurs, and it remained famous in the next two decades."¹³ The following is a description of the painting, *La Conversation Espagnole* by Carle Vanloo. The painting itself includes four people. There is a mature man, and a young girl, seated next to the Lady (Countess), looking directly at the viewer.

The fourth person is the Lady's maid (Suzanne) who holds the musical instrument as she is looking down at music in the Lady's hand. Included in the painted scene is a dog whose attention is focused on the intimate meeting of eyes between the man and the Lady. The Lady is barely holding the music as if in near swoon. She looks at the man in a state of rapture. The man leans down looking at the woman with passion. Although the emotion seems etched on his face his body still holds the courtly rigor of posed legs and the bend of his body remains stately. He has come with his hat in hand. The two major differences between the play and the painting is that the written scene includes only three characters and instead of a mature courtier, as in the painting, there is the Page, Cherubin.

Interpretations

Martin Meisel indicates the dissimilarities between the engraving and the scene in the play. "Moreover the scene is not the lady's boudoir, but the figures are grouped before an architectural screen (with a backdrop of landscape and architecture in the arcade openings) like that which defined the playing space in a Palladian version of the classical theatre."¹⁴

The author of *Realizations* points out that an educated viewer would remember that the engraving contains an older suitor rather than a Page and recall the prequel *The Barber of Seville* in which "'Lindor" (Almaviva) declares his love

for Rosine, the future Countess, also by putting new words to an old song."¹⁵ Meisel argues that "In Beaumarchais' sequel, the superimposition of images, with Almaviva present by proxy in the evocation of Vanloo's picture, brings into a single harmonic concurrence the play's antithetical sexuality: Cherubin and Almaviva, youth and full-fed maturity, one overflowing and generous, the other acquisitive and monopolistic."¹⁶ Thus *The Marriage of Figaro* becomes a commentary on *The Barber of Seville*. In Meisel's opinion, Beaumarchais doubly encodes his drama. The characters are their present selves and what they were in the first play, *The Barber of Seville*. The duplicitous roles they all play in the intrigue adds further doubling.

Whenever a painting is recreated on the stage a moment of difference results. Time stops and the audience reflects. The painting in scene iv, Act II of *The Marriage of Figaro* is a moment of true sentiment (love for the mistress) that then colors the rest of the play. This moment of truth is the revelation of the affection that exists between the Countess and Cherubin. (Proof of this affection is further substantiated in Beaumarchais's third play of the trilogy, *La Mère coupable*, in which one of the characters, Leon, is discovered to be the illegitimate son of the Countess and Cherubin¹⁷).

Meisel points out that Beaumarchais's stage direction does not include the garden found in the painting. Instead of the garden in the engraving being a problem, it can be

represented on stage as if through a window. The garden plays an important role in the play for it is to be the place of ultimate deceptions. Biblically, the garden is the scene of the first deception and temptation. The Countess says, "I'm tempted . . . you'll be in the garden."¹⁸

The Reasoning Behind the Use of the Painting

Differences between lies and truth, between reality and illusion, between nature and society, is central to Beaumarchais's comedy. Thus art plays an important role in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Music is the art of seduction. In *The Barber of Seville* the Count gains entrance to his wife-to-be's household by posing as a music teacher, while in *The Marriage of Figaro* music is a recurring motif. The painting in scene iv, Act II involves music. Cherubin tells to Suzanne, "I'll give you my ballad."¹⁹

The lies and artificiality of court life are contrasted the natural man (Figaro). Figaro explains how one must learn to live the life of the aristocracy, "Brains a means to advancement! Your Highness is pleased to make fun of me. Mediocrity and subservience--those are the qualities one needs To pretend not to know what one does know and know what one doesn't, to hear what one doesn't understand and not hear what one does, above all to promise beyond one's ability; to make a great secret of hiding what isn't there; to withdraw to one's privacy and employ it in sharpening pens, appearing profound when one is really empty

and dull, to play a part well or badly, to encourage spies and reward traitors, to tamper seals, intercept letters, and endeavor to compensate poverty of means by exaggerating the importance of one's ends--that's all there is in politics."²⁰ Suzanne too learns her lesson: "Suzanne: it was then that I saw how moving in high society teaches a lady to tell fibs without showing it at all." ²¹

Much is made of the difference between court life and what it actually takes to support the court both in actual labor and defence. "Figaro: No more running around all day with the girls, no more cream buns and custard tarts; no more 'tig' and blind-man's bluff. Soldiers of the Queen, by Gad! Just think of 'em, weather-beaten and ragged arsed, weighed down with their muskets, righ turn, left wheel, forward march! On to the field of glory and no flinching on the way."²² Suzanne "Do you imagine that women of my class have the vapours? It's a genteel malady. They only catch it in the drawing-rooms."²³

The difference between lies and truth, appearance and reality, leads Figaro to rail against the press and against banking. Two of Figaro's anti-press remarks are: "I'd tell him that stupidities that appear in print acquire importance only in so far as their circulation is restricted, that unless there is liberty to criticize, praise has no value,"²⁴ and "I could freely print anything I liked--subject to the approval of two or three censors!"²⁵ One of his anti-banking remarks is: "nothing was left to me but

stealing, so I set up as a banker . . . I could well have restored my fortunes: I even began to understand that in making money *savoir-faire* is more important than true knowledge. But since everybody was involved in some form of swindle and at the same time demanding honesty from me, I inevitably went under again."²⁶

The the look of love as pictured in the engraving including the true affection between the Page and the Countess, Suzanne and Figaro, is played against the artificiality of the games of passion as played by the Court. Marceline, Figaro's Mother, comments on this difference in what is a very liberated statement for its time:

Marceline: You men, lost to all sense of obligation, who stigmatize with your playthings of your passions-- your unfortunate victims! It's you who ought to be punished for the errors of our youth-- you and your magistrates so vain of their right to judge us, you who by your culpable negligence allow us to be deprived of all honest means of existence. What is there for these unhappy girls to do? They had a natural right to make all feminine apparel and yet they let thousands of men be trained to it. . . Even in the more exalted walks of life you accord us women no more than a derisory consideration. In a state of servitude behind the alluring pretences of respect, treated as children where our possessions are concerned we are punished as responsible adults where our faults are in question . . .
 . . .²⁷

Ultimately by questioning differences the answers are about sameness. In nature there is art, in every humble man there is nobility, and as explained at the end of the play, there may even be nobility even in nobles who according to

Figaro "lack the vanity of the wealthy." ²⁸ As is usual, Figaro has the last word on the differences between the court and everyday life "Because you are a great nobleman you think you are a great genius Nobility, fortune, rank, position! How proud they make a man feel! What have you done to deserve such advantages? Put yourself to the trouble of being born--nothing more! For the rest--a very ordinary man! Whereas I, lost among the obscure crowd, have had to deploy more knowledge, more calculation, and skill merely to survive than has sufficed to rule all the provinces of Spain for a century !" ²⁹ He does say these remarks to himself in a monologue, so it does not take any especially revolutionary courage for him to express such thoughts.

How Revolutionary is This Play?

In this play where everything has its double and difference, everything turns out equal and the same. The play takes place in Spain but only in name, for the characters are very French in both their nature and culture (interestingly even the engraving is called *The Spanish Conversation*). The audience would have recognized the remarks made as a criticism of French society. The true revolutionary aspect of the play may be related back to the moment of truth as represented by the painting. Ronald Paulson in *Representations of Revolution*, which will be covered in the next section, analyzes how the concept of a

woman engaged in true love takes a symbolic weight in Revolutionary France.

The femaleness of all the allegorical figures . . . was summed up in the goddess Liberty. This female also replaced the single paternal figure of the king. . . she was a sister of Reason and Nature or of Equality and Fraternity, or of the Davidian sisters of the Horatii, freed by her brothers from the paternal tyranny or the threat of royal rape . . . The act of love [is] the quintessential act of rebellion in a patriarchal society. . . . Liberty became for the male revolutionary . . . a sentimental love object, sometimes to be saved from paternal authority but also to be courted. This image of woman, which Mary Wollstonecraft would have regarded as a continuation of the *ancien regime* male chauvinism, is never an active force, that role being reserved for the male. But she is the other half of the revolutionary paradigm of the act of illicit love and regeneration (for the Marquis de Sade, incest between brother and sister), and the Caritas associations lead finally to the birth of a child, the embodiment of the new order.³⁰

The moment in the play when the painting is reproduced represents a moment of illicit love between a married woman and a Page who is the subject of her husband. This moment is perceived by the audience as a moment of absolute truth. A child born of this affection in the third Figaro play.

The structure of the play has within it metatheatrical elements and holds the possibility of change or revolution. The way in which this works in light of the writings of Diderot is explained by Marie Hélène Huet in *Rehearsing the Revolution*. In a metatheatrical play the character often becomes an actor in a play-within-the-play which he himself authors. This play-within-the-play always contains the possibility that the character will be writing it as he goes along from no pre-planned script and so opens the

possibility that change can occur. Change often happens only through revolution.

In the Corigliano opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* the opera-within-the-opera is disturbed by Figaro's revolutionary ideas. He refuses to continue with the actions as written by Beaumarchais, for he knows it would lead to the escape of Marie Antoinette from France. Beaumarchais then must enter the opera-within-the-opera in order to change history.

Huet suggests that this principle of metatheatre extends to Diderot's concept of theatre and spectator. "Diderot's spectator is an actor in waiting, an incomplete figure who is preparing for a role he too will play and whose model he looks at with eagerness."³¹ Such tension is felt by spectators watching a live performance. There is always the possibility that the audience will exchange the role of spectator for that of actor, as occurs in a metatheatrical work.

Huet explains how the playwright following Diderot's observations actually provides a form of containment. It is a Diderodian playwright who plays with this dynamic, for he increases the importance of spectacle on the stage. The power of spectacle is that it "make[s] a spectator of the people while making sure that the possibility of a spectator-actor reversibility remains carefully controlled, . . . to maintain an alienation that is the real form of power."³² Diderot's alienation effect is produced by the

posed pregnant moment of the recreated painting or painterly moment. Beaumarchais raises the spectre of a revolution and contains it by means of the same device.

The inflammatory remarks described by Carlson are posed as reflections on reality and illusion and are illustrated by reference to the arts. Some of the metatheatrical references or allusions within the dialogue of this play are: Figaro's, "Let us know our parts properly today;"³³ The Count's, "Madam, you are quite an actress;"³⁴ "The noble, the most noble, most infinitely noble Don Pedro George, Hidalgo, Baron de los Altos, Y Montes Fieros, Y otros Montes: against Alonzo Calderon, dramatist. It's a case of a play-stillborn, which each disavows and attributes to the other;"³⁵ and The Count's, "Is this a play we are acting?"³⁶

In his opera Corigliano reclaims the aristocracy and the Queen in particular from their reputation in history by trying to have Beaumarchais's play change history. He also undoes the revolutionary aspects of *The Marriage of Figaro* in the process. Paulson points out that Beaumarchais and his play had been were attacked as reactionary by the future Girondins, who themselves would later be beheaded by the party David allied himself with once the Revolution of 1789 got under way. David is the painter who manages to create the images that future playwrights will use in their plays reconstructing the revolution. An investigation of how David's paintings accomplished is now in order.

REPRESENTATIONS OF REVOLUTION by RONALD PAULSON

The question around which Paulson bases his investigation is as follows: "How does a writer or artist represent something he believes to be unprecedented--hitherto unknown and unexperienced?"³⁷ He begins his investigation with the French Revolution because "The French Revolution . . . was a phenomenon many believed to be outside their experience and accustomed vocabulary,"³⁸ and "The French Revolution created the awareness of revolution."³⁹ Paulson contrasts French views of the Revolution at its inception with later perceptions during the Empire and also the perspective from abroad, especially from England. Paulson argues that "An experience hitherto unknown is inevitably assimilated by analogy to areas of experience felt to be already understood."⁴⁰ For the French the central analogy was with the Roman Empire depicted visually.

In her review of the exhibit commemorating the role of the visual arts in the French Revolution, Linda Nochlin states that "In the construction of the new republican consciousness, images played a role as important as that of words, and the invention of an appropriate imagery with which to body forth republican ideals and aspirations was a major challenge to the artist and printmakers of the period. Indeed, as Klaus Herding points out in his admirable introduction to the exhibition catalogue, 'It was the secret power and strength of the visual arts to provide what reason

seemed to refuse, that is, a justification of the emotions in a (supposedly) rational society.' In their special appeal to the unconscious and the irrational, the visual arts might be said to have played a role rather similar to that played by cinema in later moments of cultural change."⁴¹ Explaining the importance of the visual arts to the leaders of the French Revolution, Nochlin explains, "Indeed, one of the major problems facing the leaders of the Revolution was that of giving concrete, easily comprehensible embodiment to the more or less abstract ideas of the Enlightenment, thereby making them accessible and popular."⁴²

For similar reason Paulson believes that the visual symbols of the Revolution reveal "what people thought the French Revolution was, said it was, and above all made it out to mean; that is, how people came to understand, assimilate, or make bearable (or usable) so astonishing and agonizing an experience in which exhilaration turned to 'terror' and terror to its chronic form of dread."⁴³ For Meisel the system of visualizing and authentication of new ideas continues into the period of the Empire. Meisel explains that "By employing widely familiar pictorial images as a form of external authentication, the Napoleonic myth could pass itself off as history."⁴⁴ This was a system of validation learned through the experience of the Revolution.

Paulson points out that revolutionary writers and artists adapted styles that existed before the Revolution. "The French themselves adapted a neoclassic style, seeing

themselves as heroic Romans of the Republic, but the style had already been fully developed before the fall of the Bastille. The young Brissot and Robespierre saw themselves as Romans and Greeks, and Jacques-Louis David's painting *The Oath of the Horatii* was exhibited in 1785, his *Death of Socrates* in 1787, and his *Lictors returning to Brutus the Bodies of his Sons* was already finished when the events of July 1789 imbued it with a revolutionary significance at the Salon in August."⁴⁵

A new vocabulary of images was needed that was based on transvaluation of words reclaimed from the aristocracy. Paulson cites the example of that is the word "light" (*lumière*) denoting sun and king, which had to be given the new meaning of Enlightenment. The visual salesman of the Revolution forged a new pictorial language: the bonnet (liberty); the cockade (nation); the pike (weapon of freemen); the club (popular will); and the fasces (revolutionary solidarity). The symbolization of women was in Paulson's opinion central to this transvaluation. "Venus, the goddess associated with the corrupt aristocracy, was replaced by a Trinity--not of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost but of three women, Liberty (carrying a pike capped with a red bonnet), Equality (carrying a level), and Fraternity (carrying the fasces)."⁴⁶ The flag, symbolizing the country, underwent a similar transformation. "Thus emblematic iconography was replaced, its aristocratic

associations were eliminated by pure colors with their own symbolic emblematic meaning (American flag colors.)"⁴⁷

Paulson traces the history of images of revolution through its various stages. After 1789, the Revolution came to be symbolized by images of natural change such as hurricanes, volcanic eruption, or conflagrations, or by mythic images, such as Pandora's Box or Prometheus's theft. While supporters of the Revolution believed in the positive nature of these changes (fire energy illuminating darkness and returning spring bringing forth new growth and fruit) those who feared violent upheaval portrayed the destructive side of these forces.⁴⁸ The negative, fearful side of the Revolution taken by Englishmen in 1899 can be seen in the play *The Only Way: A Tale of Two Cities*, a dramatization by Freman Wills of Charles Dickens novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, which uses as its metaphoric language the destructive side of natural occurrences.⁴⁹ In Paulson's discussion of "The View From England," he mentions that the English often made "Analogies between the events of the Revolution and tragic or indeed tragicomic dramas as well as Biblical stories [and they] sought to convert the distasteful mutations of the Revolution into natural causes."⁵⁰ This play in particular is mentioned because the stage direction for the last scene (Act V, scene 3) calls for "A large Court in the prison of the Conciergerie (The Scene was adapted from the picture by Muller.)"⁵¹ which is the painting called *Appel des dernières victimes de la Terreur*. This same painting is

recreated in Przybyszewska's *The Danton Case*. Both plays use the same painting and yet each playwright has a different political agenda in mind.

According to Paulson, the Revolution found its true visual equivalent in the grotesque. "Grotesque . . . was a perfect revolutionary paradigm in that based on decorative patterns of metamorphising plant-human forms it showed either the human emerging triumphantly from nature or the human subsiding or regressing into nature."⁵² Grotesque was often criticized as being either unnatural or liberating and so the style fit the revolution for it could be used by both sides. The grotesque tends to represent the cyclic and repetitive and tends towards the undifferentiation between the object and the world around it. It provides the perfect symbol for the Revolution, according to Paulson, for the Revolution first raised the question of equality and non-differentiation for all.

This sense of cycle as represented by the grotesque is dramatized by Przybyszewska's *The Danton Case*. The conflict between the protagonists involves how far a revolution needs to go, and the play structurally ends where it had begun. Paulson says of the revolution that "It is a process of two phases: the revolt, preoccupied with liberty, followed by the reconstruction of law, which inevitably restrains, redirects, and suppresses the unleashed liberty necessary for the first phase."⁵³ In *the Danton Case*, Danton's

opinion about the Revolution comes into conflict with Robespierre's beliefs.

Paulson calls his critical tool the "psychohistorical method."⁵⁴ According to this psychoanalytic theory there are two fundamental revolutionary images. "One is Oedipal and the other is oral-anal. In one the son kills, devours and internalizes the father, becoming himself the authority figure, producing a rational sequence of events, although a sequence that might be regarded unsympathetically as prerational. In the other the revolution is seen--in practice, in the very midst of it--as merely a regression to earlier stages of being, an ingestion that produces narcissism rather than an internalized paternal authority."⁵⁵

In support of his view, cites the famous remark of Pierre Vergniaud's "The revolution devours its own children,"⁵⁶ spoken in 1793 as he was about to be sent to the guillotine during the Reign of Terror. The cannibalism is actually shown in the caricatures of the sans-coulottes eating body parts and later in Goya's Black Painting of *Saturno* which pictures the Colossus eating his own children.⁵⁷

Jacques Louis David

Paulson explores David's central role in creating the new vocabulary of images for the Revolution (and later for Napoleon and the Empire). David staged many of the huge

civil festivals and designed the costumes for them. His paintings become iconic symbols of the Revolution. His paintings were used by several playwrights including Peter Weiss who in his play *Marat/Sade* uses two of the paintings, *The Death of Marat* and *The Oath of the Tennis Court*. Most of David's major paintings of the 1780s were performed on stage as tableaux. There are several instances in which their reproduction was of a non-revolutionary nature. In "Reciprocal Representations: David and Theatre," Carter Ratcliff details several of these instances:

The *Sabines* was recreated as comic *tableau vivant* (the poses were exact, but the characters wore modern clothing) in a vaudeville performed on Mar. 30, 1800 at the Opéra-Comique. Much later, in 1813, Goethe staged *tableaux vivants* of David's *Belisarius* and *Horatii* in Weimar as a court entertainment for the birthday of Grand Duchess Maria. As late as 1825, the year of David's death, the *Belisarius* was recreated in Act II, scene 3, of a play with the same title starring Talma at the Theatre Français. In the preface to the play, the author Victor Joseph de Jouy explained that David's image of the blind Belisarius was so familiar that theatrical representations of the tale must be modeled on the painting.⁵⁸

As I have already shown, the painting *The Death of Titus* was recreated in 1790 on the stage at the end of the play *Brutus* by Voltaire. *The Death of Titus* had been shown at the Salon a year earlier in August 1789. Paulson describes the painting as being "less concerned with the taking of sides than with the exploration of the private consequences of a public virtue."⁵⁹ David does not picture Brutus beheading his sons in order to stop the conspiracy attempting to return the monarchy; rather he shows the

consequences of Brutus's actions. Since the execution takes place offstage in the picture so that all our pity is directed towards the father. All our admiration goes to Brutus for having been patriot first and father second.

In 1800 N. F. Guillard and Salieri's opera *Les Horaces* enacted David's painting *Oath of the Horatii*, which had been realized in the Robespierre-David spectacle, "Festival of the Supreme Being" in 1794. According to Ratcliff, "David's outdoor *Fete* of the Supreme Being (June 8, 1794) was immediately appropriated by the playwright J.G.A. Cuvelier and transposed into a play at the Cité-Variétés, where it was performed by the same artists who hours earlier had created David's *fête* on the Champs-de Mars."⁶⁰ One can assume that the play includes a recreation of the painting.

The festivals proved to be an important form of revolutionary spectacle involving the participation of the whole community and thus fulfilling one of Rousseau's requirements for a people's theatre. Paulson argues that "National feasts can have no enclosure except the vault of the sky."⁶¹ Unlimited by either frame or focus, they can become the theatrical representation of Revolution. *Marat/Sade* uses the activity of street festivals in order to dramatize this part of the story of the Revolution, while Przybylska in *The Danton Case* uses a more conventional story-telling technique.

According to Paulson, *The Oath of the Horatii* (1785), "depicts the family sending out its sons as Roman champions to battle the opposing Alban champions . . . As a consequence of the Horatii's victory the surviving Horatius brother is cursed by his sister, whose lover he has killed in the duel, and he kills her for her lack of *pietas*."⁶² Although David represents the oath taken to seek liberty from royal tyranny, he "complicates the oath itself by taking his graphic form from representations of the oath of Lucius Junius Brutus over the corpse of his sister Lucretia who was raped by the son of King Tarquin, an example of *droit de seigneur*."⁶³ Lucius Junius Brutus rebels against an authority figure. Paulson points out that the title contains a further ambiguity, the audience may think of with Marcus Brutus whose oath sent in motion the assassination of the tyrant Julius Caesar.

One of David's most important paintings, which has come to most symbolize the French Revolution is *The Death of Marat*.⁶⁴ For Paulson, the painting marks an important shift in the symbol system of representing the Revolution; "David's rendering of Marat murdered in his bath [is made] to resemble Christ in a *pieta*."⁶⁵ An uneducated public would not know enough ancient history to recognize the Horatii. Marat becomes a secular Christ who died for the people.

Christian symbolism was intelligible to the poor and illiterate. The change from Greco-Roman to Christian

symbolism marked a change in philosophical world view. The mystical replaces the rational and logical. Neo-classicism puts responsibility on the individual man, whereas Christianity symbolism places the responsibility for the world on a higher order. This may have already shown the first inkling that the Revolution was about to fail, for while Christ converted the few true believers in his first coming the world needs to wait for his second coming before his work is completed. Thus the Revolution may also need a second coming. In each of the plays delineated there is always one of the principal characters of the revolution who will be discussed in terms of Christian symbolism, such as Christ, Judas, and in the case of Corday, Judith. David created another painting that can be discussed in terms of Christian symbolism, *The Death of Socrates* (1787). "This time beneath the ostensible iconography of the story of Socrates' death David employs the image of the Last Supper."⁶⁶

The last painting by David that Paulson investigates that is of importance to my discussion is *The Oath of the Tennis Court*. In the last moments of Weiss's *Marat/Sade*, the painting is reproduced, though not indicated as such in the stage directions.

The Oath of the Horattii may have created the *Oath of the Tennis Court* but also was superseded by it It's own peculiar features transcended any model and created a new one based not on a single patriot or sibling swearing an oath but on a disparate mass of men meeting in a royal tennis court to proclaim their independence of royal authority. The open window and

blowing curtains visualize the metaphor of letting new air into this game room.⁶⁷

What exists of this painting is the preparatory drawing made for the picture that was commissioned by the Jacobin Club to be hung in the hall of the National Assembly. The fact that it was never finished makes it more like the Revolution (or all revolutions), for if it can be represented fully it is over and has been taken into the regular activities; however unfinished, it remains open to change.

Paulson finds in the criticism written at the time of David's work a creative connective line to Goya. "The aesthetic opposition was outraged by the unusual looseness, attenuation, and dislocation of David's forms. They discerned the beginning of a tendency to disunification that we shall see carried to an extreme in the works of Goya."⁶⁸

In his chapter "The View From England: Stereotypes," Paulson shares Meisel's view about the English reaction to the French Revolution. "We see emerging from the events of the French Revolution a new sense of the way one action or event follows another--a new sense of plot or sequence and new examples of serial structure. As we have already seen, one sequence involved the relationship between word and action. Much of the significance of the French Revolution to the English was verbal. . . . Words may always have different meanings, but in a time of revolution everyone becomes aware of a peculiar phenomenon of a piece of a larger one of political and social change. . . . Action was necessarily preceded by words."⁶⁹

The new serialization of information develops culturally with the English novel, the narrative serial etchings (Hogarth), and leads to the developing of an audience ready for the cinema. Paulson details how the English took symbols that the French were developing in a positive manner and changed them. "If the emphasis was on Prometheus rather than his noble theft, the result was a tyrant-hero like Robespierre who suffers for his presumption, leading to the ultimate Promethean figure, Napoleon."⁷⁰ Prometheus is punished for the bringing of the light to mankind. The English used the term revolution to connote a revolving 360 degrees back to the original point in order to restore order, exemplified by the restoring to regularity of their Glorious Revolution of 1688 that marked the succession of William and Mary to the throne. The English pictured the French Revolution as passing through three phases. The first phase was marked by celebration at the fall of despotism and the rise of a constitutional monarchy, not to mention the weakening of a rival. The second phase starts with the entry of the people or the mob and the beginning of fear at the loss of the rational aspect of the Revolution. The third phase in which the Revolution turns markedly negative begins with the execution of the King. The English feared the Revolution in France because France was "Above all . . . the most imitated of all European countries, and so, by implication, anything that France did, soon England--and Italy and the Netherlands

would also do."⁷¹ Paulson indicates that Napoleon may have caused many of the English to look back to the Revolution with nostalgic sympathy.

Having adopted the Promethean symbol for the Revolution, the English needed to redefine the symbol of light when the Revolution began to be in disrepute. Paulson states that they took their cue from Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) "where he argues that darkness is sublime, light is not: 'But,' he qualified his generalization, 'such a light as that of the sun immediately exerted on the eye, as it overpowers the sense, is a very great idea Extreme light, by overcoming the organs of sight, obliterates all objects, so as in its effects exactly to resemble darkness.'"⁷² The Sun, the source of light, becomes redefined. "The true sun, as he sees it, enters 'into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium [and] are, by the laws of nature, refracted from their straight line. Indeed, in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections, that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction.'"⁷³

After the redefinition of the symbols of light and sun for the English political taste, all that was left was to redefine the use of Feminine symbols. "Marie Antoinette is the perfect focus because although queen she stands for the

weakness and indulgence that are the only incitements to love and confidence in Burke's system. Woman is at center of this problem because Burke and English society in general believe that God gave women beauty so that they would not be inclined 'to cultivate the moral virtues that might chance excite respect, and interfere with the pleasing sensations they were created to inspire. Thus confining truth, fortitude, and humanity, within the rigid pale of manly morals, they might justly argue, that to be loved, women's high end and great distinction! They should learn to lisp, to totter in their walk, and nick-name God's creatures.'"74

In her book *Rehearsing The Revolution* on the theatre during the Revolution Marie H  l  ne Huet observes of Marat's death, "the clerk even as the tragedy was enacted, wrote it down. No sooner had he written it than the actor . . . signed it."75 Early recreations did not show the assassination, for according to revolutionary mythology, Marat was not assassinated; he gave his life in order to be martyred for his country. Corday was often left out of these representations.

It had been Corday's intention to take Marat's life in public at the National Assembly, but because of his illness Marat could not attend. "Thus Marat's assassination did not have the public, theatrical character she [Corday] had hoped for. It would be the theatre that would instead, by presenting on the stage the idealized death of the

revolutionary, restore all the force of the murder and the sacrifice."⁷⁶

There were six successful plays inspired by Marat's death during the years 1793-97. "One put the assassination back where it ought to have taken place [by Corday's plan], on the stage of the National Convention, while another staged the opening of the assassin's trial, nearly all of them, in the apotheosis that concludes most revolutionary plays brought the People's Friend [Marat] back to life surrounded by various figures representing Liberty, Justice, Equality"⁷⁷ The first of the six plays to be performed was *L'ami du Peuple ou la mort de Marat* (*The People's Friend or the Death of Marat*) by Gassier Saint Armand at *Théâtre des Variétés Amusantes* Aug 8, 1793 only one month after his death. This was followed by *Marat dans le souterrain, ou la journée du 10 aout* (*Marat in the Caves, or the Day of August 10th*) by Mathelin at *Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique National* in December, 1793. In *La Mort de Marat* by Citizen Barrou performed February 1794, Corday was portrayed as in an engraving by Tassaert after a painting by Hauer created in 1793.

Huet indicates that when the *Théâtre de la République* presented Jean-Francois Barrau's play, *La Mort de Marat*, in February 1794, Charlotte was portrayed as a fanatically devoted disciple of the Gironde deputies. As a footnote to the problem of popular iconography, Charlotte reappeared on stage after the murder with the knife-sheath visible at her

breast and wielding the bloodied weapon, which was an obvious direct reference to the Hauer/Tassaert engraving. The engraving shows a very masculine woman (against nature) who is unemotionally holding the knife and sheath, dressed in the high hat and style that makes her almost look like an English Puritan. She stares threateningly out at the viewer of the engraving. There were three plays that glorified Corday: *Charlotte Corday* 1793 by Jean Baptiste Salles; *Charlotte Corday*, anonymous 1795; and *Charlotte Corday or the Modern Judith*, 1787.

Other revolutionary works Huet mentions from this period were *Le Tribunal redoutable* by Martelierre, *Le Jugement dernier des rois* by Marechal, *Le Bien fait de la loi* by Forgeot, *Les Contre-revolutionnaires jugés par eux-memes* by Daruo, *Le Tribunal revolutionnaire* by Ducancel, and also *Charles IX*, *Les Victimes cloitrées*, *Brutus*, and *Brutus, chef des brigands* (a Schiller play adapted to the needs of the Revolution). Huet also refers to other Marat plays mentioned by Herissay: *La Mort de Marat*, *La Mort de l'infortune Marat*, *Marat dans le souterrain des Cordeliers*, *L'Apothéose de Marat et Lepelletier*, *Marat dans l'Olympe*, *L'Arrivée de Marat aux Chanps-Elysees*, and *Le Véritable Ami du Peuple*.

In the mid-nineteenth century after the Revolutionary fervor had abated there was a second reclamation of Charlotte Corday as a modern Judith. This is best illustrated by *Charlotte Corday: drame en trois actes*, a

1847 drama by Dumanoir and Clairville which opened at the *Théâtre Gymnase* on July 14th and used the sympathetic portrait of Corday painted by Henri Scheffer in 1830 called *The Arrest of Charlotte Corday*. This painting was first shown at the Luxembourg Place at a special exhibition that was held in order to raise funds for the victims of the July 1830 revolution.

The focus of the painting is very much a rehabilitated Charlotte Corday who takes the center of the picture and is bathed in bright clear light. Her face is calm and composed, her dress is well fashioned and orderly. She is in fact the calm central stillness in a painting where all the other participants, sans-coulottes (and one soldier), are active, dishevelled, and demented looking. There is a dog tugging at one of the legs of the sans-coulottes revealing that even nature was against the arrest. Corday is the only figure reasonable and calm enough to be self-collected and well-focused; she looks out at the viewer of the painting.

Of Dumanoir and Clairville's drama, a modern critic writes: "The play is a very loose interpretation of history: within its mix of entwined hearts (Charlotte is in love with the Royalist army leader, Henri de Belzunc) and reactionary politics, Charlotte's act is portrayed as a crime of passion committed off stage, the author's directions are simple: *mise en scène du tableau de Scheffer*."⁷⁸ Corday becomes a sympathetic character who

does what is right in the face of passions out of control. The painting, itself, is a product of the cross influences of the two arts, for the configuration of the characters in the painting is posed as if on the front or apron of the stage, with very little depth to the painting.

In analyzing the systems of representing the Revolution Huet says that "all things considered, the various systems of representation . . . were grounded in the concept of 'revolution' in Robespierre's sense, i.e., a complete rotation, the closure of a cycle."⁷⁹ Re-enactment on stage takes what is new, a revolution, and imparts a sense of something that can be reproduced. Huet argues that "by virtue of its properly social character--popular assembly, pageant, game, ritual--the theatre fully pertains to what can be called a sociology of history."⁸⁰ Popular assembly, pageant, game, ritual, song and dance are all tools of the theatre which Peter Weiss uses to dramatize and comment on the death of Marat in his play *Marat/Sade*.

MARAT/SADE by PETER WEISS

In *Marat/Sade* the use of paintings lends a sense of inevitability to the event because in our mind's eye the event has already taken place, for the painting already exists. All the action of the play leads up to the death of Marat as represented by David's painting, the sight of which reenforces our feeling that this is right, correct; we knew that the scene as pictured in the painting had to happen.

The actor representing Marat must die in the madness of the asylum, for then order is restored by the repositioning of the frame.

The stage resembles a framed painting with the proscenium representing the frame. Even in productions without an actual proscenium arch a sense of proscenium is formed through the use of metatheatrical devices. This arch gives the audience a sense of safety. The actors, representing two levels of character, are actors after all and the revolution ends with the transformation of Revolution into art. Art reforms revolution into order.

However, Weiss's play does not end with the representation offered by *The Death of Marat*, but continues to the image of revolution provided by a second David painting *Oath of the Tennis Court*. In the painting our eye is directed by the light and blowing curtains to that which is outside the frame. As Paulson has stated, light represents revolution. Since our focus is outside the frame of the painting, our attention is directed to the source of the light, the street. When viewing the painting we imagine the continually changing scene of Revolution in the streets. The natural force of the Revolution is blowing the curtains into the room. Also the last moment of the play in which that painting is represented is the representation of an unfinished painting--an unfinished revolution having the possibility for change.

The debates in the play center around the following questions: how far should revolution go, why does a revolution lead to terror, and who represents revolution-- Marat or Sade, reason or insanity, art already realized or the imagination? Art has a peculiar position within the world created by Peter Weiss. Art represents the world of reason and so becomes the anti-thesis to the revolution which it is being used to illustrate. In the prologue, Coulmier, the Director of the mental asylum, explains to the audience that "We prefer therapy through education and especially art."⁸¹ Art is perceived as achieved reality. Each action that directly illustrates the motion of the revolution towards the need for Marat's death starts with the characters/actors being posed for the reconstruction. This pose is a moment of stillness, stasis and art. "(The GROUP assumes the pose of a heroic tableau.)"⁸² Each of Corday and Duperret's scenes are posed in the stage directions as exemplified by "(DUPERRET . . . amorous pose before CORDAY),"⁸³ "(CORDAY is placed in a heroic pose.)"⁸⁴ and "(so that they form a pleasant tableau.)"⁸⁵

Huet argues that art defuses revolution by making all changes reproducible and repeatable, Weiss addresses the same issue as he poses Corday time and again, depicting her as incapable of making her own decision and trapped by her madness in the reason of art. Art is continually shown as a controlling force. Through art the unreasonable, the incomprehensible becomes understandable. The head of the

asylum is "the voice of reason" asking for Sade to "Please keep your production under control" (my emphasis) and assuming that "Times have changed times are different and these days we should take a subtler view of old grievances."⁸⁶

The imagination, however, which is the spark, spirit or creator of art, leads to revolution. Sade states, "For me the only reality is imagination, the world inside myself."⁸⁷ "In prison I created in my mind monstrous representations of a dying class, The Marquis explains. "In a criminal society I dug the criminal out of myself so I could understand him and so understand the times we live in. My imaginary giants committed desecrations and tortures."⁸⁸ Sade presents himself as the creator and representer of the Terror by which the Revolution devoured its own children.

Many of the arts as practiced at the time of the Revolution are reproduced on stage or alluded to in Weiss's play. Roman symbols abound as in the following examples: "(The wreath is placed on MARAT's head.),"⁸⁹ "the PATIENTS in the procession carry out studied gestures of homage."⁹⁰ "(CORDAY is put in position in the arena. This all resembles a ritual act.)"⁹¹ Two character are described as dressed in the styles of the period: "(One is an 'incroyable' another a 'Merveilleuse')"⁹² which we find in satirical drawings from the period. Weiss recreates the atmosphere of the times through the arts of the times.

Peter Weiss's Marquis de Sade constantly calls attention to the dark underside of the Revolution, which corresponds to the English or counterrevolutionary view. In the play-within-the-play, written by Sade, and so the views of the characters must be seen as representing his opinions, one patient says, "Man's a mad animal."⁹³ Corday laments:

Why are they howling
 What are they dragging through the streets
 They carry stakes but what's impaled on those stakes
 Why do they hop what are they dancing for
 Why are they racked with laughter
 Why do children scream
 What are those heaps they fight over those heaps with
 eyes and mouths
 What kind of town is this hacked buttocks lying in the
 street."⁹⁴

This is an ekphrastic moment verbally reconstructing visual lampoons done by the English press. And again, later in the play, we are accosted with the following image: "(The PATIENTS play ball with the head.)"⁹⁵ Another aspect of Weiss's representation of the counterrevolutionary view is the way in which light and revolution are co-related. Roux voices this opinion: "For the Revolution burns up everything in blinding brightness."⁹⁶ A conservative view of revolution has co-related moral corruption with revolution as early as Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserved*. Sade also co-relates the two. "Marat forget the rest there's nothing else beyond the body,"⁹⁷ and "And what's the point of revolution without general copulation."⁹⁸ This section of the play ends with the song about general copulation.

While most of the characters are representatives of Sade's world view, Sade creates Corday in his play-within-a-play as a representative of Marat and so her monologues hold a mirror up for Marat to view himself. Corday says, "Once both of us saw the world must go and change as we read in great Rousseau "⁹⁹ and again, "a society in which every man is trusted with the right of governing himself himself."¹⁰⁰ Corday voices Marat's philosophy, and thus it is that Marat himself and his worldview lead the fanatical woman to commit the murder. Marat's martyrdom is a kind of self-inflicted death. Sade also believes that it was Marat's own philosophy that gave man the right to murder his fellow man. Marat says, "and if so much as a shop gets looted they squeal There is a rioting mob inside me . . . I am the Revolution."¹⁰¹ The right of ownership of property was included in the Rights of Man. While Sade comes to represent the the Terror, Marat represents the Revolution, and since Marat, we know, comes to his death as represented in the painting, the Revolution also comes to a predictable end.

For Sade, revolution marks the end of art since it destroys the individual by whom art is created. Sade states, "this Revolution is leading to the withering of the individual man and a slow merging into uniformity to the death of choice to self denial to deadly weakness in a state which has no contact with individuals but which is impregnable."¹⁰²

Death is an art form for Sade, and the revolution has abolished individual death as art. The guillotine rendered death mechanical, while Louis XV showed true art in the torture and death of Damiens who had plotted his overthrow. The guillotine was more humane but less human, for in the machinelike action it takes away much of the horror. "That was a festival with which today's festivals can't compete,"¹⁰³ Marat explains about the torture of Damiens. "We condemn to death without emotion and there's no singular personal death to be had only anonymous cheapened death which we can dole out to entire nations on a mathematical basis until the time comes for all life to be extinguished."¹⁰⁴ With the invention of the guillotine, the art of death has been replaced by the science of death.

Marat's death is played out in the context of Christian symbolism. According to Marat, "the poor instead of bread made do with a picture of the bleeding scourged and nailed-up Christ and prayed to the image of their helplessness."¹⁰⁵ Christianity and the Marquis de Sade glorify suffering.

Corday had the Book of Judith open on her window sill. The view of Corday as a modern day Judith was an anti-revolutionary view. The Herald in Sade's play says, "Seems good policy since Marat's heading straight for Calvary and crucifixion all good Christians know is the most sympathetic way to go."¹⁰⁶ Sade suggests Marat's kinship to Christ when he explains, "you are going to suffer for them."¹⁰⁷ Marat's death is recreated in the play as

represented by David's painting with its pieta-like representational space.

(The entire cast have resumed their positions exactly as before the song. CORDAY clasps the knife with both hands above her head, Very slowly she lowers it towards MARAT. SADE follows her movements precisely [the puppetmaster], bending from the waist. She kills MARAT. PATIENTS let out one single scream. CORDAY crumples on the stage. SADE stands contemplating the scene. MARAT hangs as in David's classical picture, with his right hand over the edge of the bath. In his right hand he still holds his pen, in his left his papers.)¹⁰⁸

Marat believes in progress through revolution while Sade finds revolution merely a futile sign of life's circling back on itself. The Herald declares, "The Revolution came and went and unrest was replaced with discontent."¹⁰⁹ Sade's belief in the cyclical nature of the revolution is represented by his staging of the play-within-the-play. The patients often move in circles. Sade explains, "It's easy to get mass movements going movements that move in vicious circles (A PATIENT begins to run in a circle, a second and third join in.)"¹¹⁰ Sade as author knows that the revolution is played over and over again and answers the objections by stressing the repetitive nature of such events.

Herald: The regrettable incident you've just seen was unavoidable indeed foreseen by our playwright who managed to compose some extra lines in case the need arose. ¹¹¹

Marat believes in man's potential; freed of social and economic constraints, man will throw off his chains. Change

is possible. Marat declares, "It becomes clear that the Revolution was fought for merchants and shopkeepers, the bourgeoisie, a new victorious class and underneath them, ourselves."¹¹² Marat pictures himself as a man of action (an ironic presumption, since he is trapped in his bath thinking).

Marat: Against Nature's silence I use action
 In the vast indifference I invent meaning
 I don't watch unmoved I intervene
 and say that this and this are wrong and I work to
 alter and improve them.¹¹³

While Sade's revolution goes around in circles, Marat's progresses in a straight line to his martyrdom.

The opening stage directions describe the room used by Sade for his presentation. "There are window openings high up in the side walls."¹¹⁴ At the end of the play, "A strong wind blows in through the upper side windows. The huge curtains billow far into the room."¹¹⁵ Here is recreated the room in David's painting, *The Oath of the Tennis Court*. The patients dance madly and are beginning to revolt; however, this representation of another revolution ends when the "voice of reason," Coulmier, calls for the closing of the curtain. The representation of the revolution ends, but we do not know if the revolution ends. If we believe in Sade's world view, we believe the revolution ends only to be carried out again and again in repetitious circles. If we adopt Marat's view, we sense the revolution going on behind the curtain just as we sense the revolution going on in the

street, the source of the light and wind in David's painting.

THE DANTON CASE by STANISŁAWA PRZYBYSZEWSKA

From the beginning of *The Danton Case* the dominant sentiments are pro-revolutionary. In the bread lines, the mob voices its outrage. "It's not the war it's those damned speculators!"¹¹⁶ "What profits they make!"¹¹⁷ "Do you think the Committee wages war for its enjoyment, or something? Or for a piece of land, like the kings do?"¹¹⁸ The riot is ended by the commissioner's suggestion: "Come on, citizens: stand in threes, quick! Everyone will get one-third of a life."¹¹⁹ This process is called "bread-giving slavery."¹²⁰

From the first scene on, the central image of the play is entrapment in a labyrinth. No one in *The Danton Case* is ever alone; there are always spies or spectators watching. Someone is always just behind the door. Robespierre expresses his desire to escape confinement in the second scene, "I can't have enough of the joy of free movement."¹²¹ But the audience soon learns that Robespierre's Secretary is a spy; Robespierre is never free from being watched. Movement and choice become more and more restricted throughout the drama as door after door is shut. The movement of the play leads to enslavement rather than freedom, terror rather than pleasure, empire rather than democracy.

Przybyszewska maintains the labyrinthine atmosphere through the use of mirror scenes. A scene in which Robespierre warns his mistress Eleonore Duplay that he uses her for sex in order to relieve himself of sexual drive and so free his mind for deeper thoughts is contrasted with Danton's false declarations of love, hiding his animal lust for his child bride, Louise. The fates of the two women are contrasted. The child-bride proves to be the true revolutionary, especially under pressure, while Camille's wife is ultimately deceitful and two-faced in her dealings with Robespierre.

Camille is a central character in the building of an atmosphere of labyrinth and no exit. His oscillations between loyalty to Danton or to Robespierre make him seem a caged animal seeking an exit but, finding none, forced to pace back and forth. Additional mirroring scenes contrast first Robespierre-Danton, then Camille-Robespierre and finally Danton-Camille, in alternating scenes: Act 2 Scene 3, Act 2 Scene 5, and Act 3 Scene 2 (each scene has a scene in between). Furthering the feeling of being trapped within a labyrinth, all scenes take place indoors except the first, which then moves inside the bakery. All the other scenes are indoors or even indoors with a further inside being visible.

Przybyszewska dramatizes a wide cinematic variety of scenes. While the actions of the main characters become more and more restricted, many of the scenes also contain

characters and actions outside the main frame. This leads to there being no sense of onstage or offstage of the dramatic scene. This structure becomes the representation of the structure of a true revolution, for everything is dramatized without particular emphasis being placed on any class.

Everyone is empowered with a voice. Act IV scene 3 takes place in the vestibule of the Revolutionary consul as we hear clearly the words of the witnesses of the event, the citizens, which are more important than the falsehoods being acted out for the court of the consul. The scene ends with a minor revolution in that the citizens who were being kept from having free access within the tribunal room eventually force their way into the scene, concluding with "BILLAUD . . . Citizens, in the tyrant's day you were the rabble . . . Today you are free citizens. You are the masters of the city now . . . and that's why you are responsible for keeping its peace."¹²² We hear the mobs voices and see all their reactions. Everything that happens offstage is also dramatized, for the voices of those involved are heard. This approach has been called cinematic, and as such it is a natural extension of *ekphractic* theatre.¹²³

The play often epitomizes Diderot's theatrical theories. Many of the scenes include long mimed sequences.

(Silence; the measured breathing of four men who are trying to fall asleep. After a while DANTON turns round cautiously, as quietly as possible, and leans on his elbow, watching the candle. Then he begins to observe his hand; makes some movements with his hand and forearm. Having examined his knee, he pulls his legs up sharply and then straightens them out again.

*Suddenly he lies down flat, stiffly on his back, and then immediately gets up, as if in panic, and sits at the edge of the bed. He looks round closely observing his colleagues. He thinks that they are asleep, not having noticed when DELACROIX quietly raised his head, watched him with his usual smile and turned back to face the wall . . . Involuntarily he strokes his throat, religiously in love with that smooth, compact, unbroken surface . . . realizes this and tears his fingers away. He supports his head on his fist, the elbow below the knee. . . .)*¹²⁴

Throughout the play Robespierre gradually assumes a Christ-like character. Speaking of Robespierre, Eleonore, his mistress, says, "the expression of tragic passivity becomes you."¹²⁵ As Danton grows more and more animal-like Robespierre becomes detached from earthly matters. In appearance he becomes ever more aesthetically beautiful and ethereal. Danton, on the other hand, is described mainly in terms of the Roman images as the one "who will revive for you the times of Tiberius, Free Nation !" ¹²⁶ and "He is an authentic, perverse Nero." ¹²⁷

The Danton Case dramatizes the debate between a man who believes in equality and one who believes in government by the rich and the rights of property. But Robespierre's belief that "the law of universal good neutralizes all other laws"¹²⁸ causes the revolution to fail, because he denies the right to a fair trial in the name of universal good and in so doing undermines the philosophy of the revolution. Danton himself admits to wanting dictatorship and declares that he'll "smash the revolution with an iron fist."¹²⁹

Robespierre fears the future because he foresees the inevitable failure of the Revolution. Opposing the Terror, he declares, "don't let's turn the Revolution into a slaughter house."¹³⁰ He is aware that "Justice, gentlemen, is a virtue of almighty God. It is not accessible to us . . . terror is ruled only by *despair*."¹³¹ The revolution ultimately fails because in order to fulfill some of its aims other rights have to be curtailed. "It's *nobody's* fault, you blubbing idiot, we *had* to execute Danton, and now we *must* go on, even though from now on every step will move us farther from our target!" Robespierre explains, "Power will have to be concentrated."¹³²

Both Weiss and Przybyszewska arrest the forward motion of their plays in order to warn of the coming of Napoleon. In *The Danton Case*, Robespierre declares: "The soul of someone who is a soldier by calling is not a mature human soul. It is the half-animal soul of a malicious child. . . . any enterprising little son of Mars will focus this power round *himself*. . . . France is so loaded with vitality that it could swell up to the Urals--for a few hellish years--if it fell into the clutches of such a brainless plunderer Haha! What a fulfillment of the dreams of a universal Republic: Europe devastated as if after an earthquake, trembling with hunger and fear at the feet of a divine Caesar."¹³³

Robespierre asks for the classic representation of revolution not to become a reality. He hopes to avert their

"devouring one another to the joy of our enemies,"¹³⁴ a reference to Vergniaud's image of the Revolution devouring its children.¹³⁵ After Danton's death the Incorruptible says, "Danton is the colossus of life--the first born son of Nature--the immortal beast in man."¹³⁶ The colossus, according to Paulson is another image of revolution--something too large to be pictured fully or to be realized fully, and also the Colossus, the devourer of its own young.

In *The Danton Case* Przybyszewska also utilizes metatheatrical references. In this instance they add contribute to the sense of labyrinth by placing a second proscenium arch or frame around what the audience views. Robespierre says, "He will become a fanatic for our ideas, if only we are able to dramatize them effectively for him."¹³⁷ Two of the characters work in the theatre, Camille Desmoulins, unemployed actor, and Fabre d'Eglantine, playwright. Other metatheatrical references are: Robespierre says, "It's time to stop this tragicomedy;"¹³⁸ "How his gaudy stage effects produce results!"¹³⁹ "He simply *must* have his melodrama!"¹⁴⁰ "I have no need for friends modeled on Shakespeare's sonnets;"¹⁴¹ "(*amphitheatrically rising benches*);" ¹⁴² "You cheap playactors!"¹⁴³ "parody of a court!"¹⁴⁴ "Any truth can be tolerated in a tragic guise;"¹⁴⁵ and "Oh, Danton! What a great actor perishes with you!"¹⁴⁶ This also leads to posturing and posing by characters aware of playing a role:

"You find this heroic posture becoming?"¹⁴⁷ and "(DANTON immediately adopts a pose.)"¹⁴⁸

Two paintings are recreated on stage within *The Danton Case*. The first is only briefly described and not definitely identified. "(his [Robespierre] calm face has assumed an expression of concentration, tension, and fascinated horror--the expression which strikes us on looking at his last profile portrait)"¹⁴⁹ The second painting is more important and is described as follows:

ACT V Scene 4 The vestibule of the office at the Concierge; a vaulted basement chamber, very somber, Upstage a narrow staircase leading up to ground level. The office entrance is on the left. Skylight just below the ceiling. The general appearance more or less corresponds to the well-known painting by Muller at the Louvre, 'Appel des dernières victimes de la Terreur.' Soldiers are posted by the walls. There is also SANSON, the executioner: an elegant, modest, serious person, with four assistants, and four barbers. They are all suspended in mid-movement [tableau], listening to DANTON'S last display offstage.¹⁵⁰

Danton is forced within this picture. He is now trapped within his fate as illustrated by the frame of both the stage and the painting. The focus of the painting is toward André Chenier, a poet, who is seated facing the audience of the painting with his hand on his head. He was one of the last victims of the guillotine. The majority of the people in the painting are seated aristocracy (one woman with a child). On the left side of the painting are shadowy deathlike faces, and in the back center there is the only source of light which floods down from the staircase to the

place of execution. It appears to be a place of ascension, similar to those in religious paintings, and the place to rise to heaven.

Even though *The Danton Case* casts doubt on the honesty and revolutionary dedication of Danton and the others sent to the guillotine, Przybyszewska evidently uses Muller's painting to create sympathy for the victims in the play as well as to establish historical authenticity for her drama.

The same painting had been used earlier by Freeman Wills in his adaptation of Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, entitled *The Only Way: A Tale of Two Cities* which was a starring vehicle for the British actor John Martin-Harvey. The painting is recreated in the last scene in which Carton is about to die. "Scene: A large Court in the prison of the Conciergerie (The Scene was adapted from the picture by Muller.)" ¹⁵¹ Here the spectators are meant to feel sympathy for Carton and approve of his sacrifice.

The last act of *The Danton Case*, after the recreation of Muller's painting, addresses the problem of maintaining the revolution. The last scene takes place in the same setting as the second scene, Robespierre's chambers. The play's location has completed a full revoltion. Saint-Just trying to console Robespierre, argues that the Revolution still lives and will continue "as long as there is no stagnation, because stagnation means decay."¹⁵² A painting is a frozen moment. Danton is depicted at such a stagnant moment.

For Robespierre, the forward thrust of the Revolution is over. "Democracy or autocracy?" he asks. "Maxime, in the end, *this is of no significance!* Even though the ground of doctrine has vanished from under your feet, the people's misery is a *fact!* To the people it's all the same on what theoretical basis you will win them the right to be human."¹⁵³ Now he realizes his true task. "I must transform the government from within, without nominally changing it . . . to educate people to be people."¹⁵⁴ Robespierre is trapped at the center of the labyrinth of power. He hoped for a rational revolution but reason slept during the days of violence. Robespierre sees too late the recurring error. "Until man outgrows this beast in himself, he will time after time rebel and bleed--in vain."¹⁵⁵

The French Revolution is one of many historical events for which dramatists have used paintings to lend validity and provide visual documentation. Many events in American history have been relived on stage in the same way. George Washington wrote *Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation*. This was adapted and directed by Hanon Reznikov for The Living Theatre. The rules are illustrated as quasi-military tableaux, some of which evoke heroic paintings of the Revolutionary War. The Living Theatre has often used the dramatization of paintings in their presentations. Reznikov took over the role of artistic director of the Living Theatre after the death of

Julian Beck. Julian Beck was a painter before he joined forces with Judith Malina, an actress and director trained by Piscator at The New School, and started The Living Theatre with the principle of joining the visual arts, poetry and theatre. Though totemic and hieroglyphic images had been used in past works such as *Antigone*, *Paradise Now*, *Frankenstein* and *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, it wasn't until Reznikov adapted Shaw's play *Back to Methuselah*, intermixed with Kadinsky's writings as *Yellow Methuselah*, that another specific artist, other than Beck, was evoked on the Living Theatre's stage.

Another play written for a theatre collective, *Old New York: New Year's Day*, was adapted by Donald Sanders and the New York Art Theatre Institute from the last section of Edith Wharton's four-part fictional chronicle of New York social history. The play is divided into seven scenes connected by narration in which episodes forming the story are re-enacted as living genre painting. Since this play is a product of a theatre collective, it is impossible to analyze the play and not the production. The acting style was meant to imitate the formal tableau style painting of the nineteenth century while the costumes were synthetic exaggerations of period fashions. The collective was started in 1980 and had originally applied Abstract Expressionist, Pop Art and Minimalist principles to the theatre. Donald Sanders, the founder of the collective, explained in an article in the Sunday, May 8, 1988, *New York*

Times that after experiencing the mystical landscapes of the nineteenth-century American painter Thomas Cole, the theatre company has tried to apply Cole's aesthetic principles to contemporary materials.

Richard Caliban's *Famine Plays* is a play which tries to create a contemporary *Grapes of Wrath*. To counterpoint the hunger and hopelessness of the live characters, Caliban has used projections of artworks from such varied people as Andrew Wyeth and Edvard Munch projected. One of the characters in the play acts as the specter of Norman Rockwell, serving to remind the audience of his drawings of bountiful Thanksgiving dinners.

Finally, sometimes a painting is dramatized in order to re-write history. In *Dream of a Common Language* Heather McDonald scrutinizes the disparity between male and female artists in 1870 France where artists like Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt were allowed to exhibit their work but were not invited to take part in the decision-making process. McDonald says that she was provoked to write this play after seeing a painting of the dinner meeting to organize the first Impressionist exhibition and wondering where the women were. Her play answers that question. Mel Gussow says of a New York production that it "takes a painterly approach to its subject. Anita Stewart, as designer, has set the stage as a frame within a frame. The actors pose as if on a canvas . . . there is one final evocative image, of Manet's

'Picnic in the Grass,' with a novel reversal of male and female characters."¹⁵⁶

- ¹ Ronald Paulson, *Representations of Revolution (1789-1820)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 2.
- ² Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 110.
- ³ Marie Helene Huet, *Rehearsing the Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 91.
- ⁴ Paulson, 49.
- ⁵ Paulson, 3.
- ⁶ Marvin Carlson, *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 1.
- ⁷ Carlson, 5.
- ⁸ Carlson, 23.
- ⁹ Caron de Beaumarchais, *The Barber of Seville and The Marriage of Figaro*, trans. John Wood (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972), 110.
- ¹⁰ Meisel, 108.
- ¹¹ Beaumarchais, 129.
- ¹² Beaumarchais, 129.
- ¹³ Meisel, 108
- ¹⁴ Meisel, 108.
- ¹⁵ Meisel, 110.
- ¹⁶ Meisel, 110.
- ¹⁷ John Corigliano and William M. Hoffman extend this into their opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* in which Marie Antoinette is redeemed through the viewing of the play *La Mere coupable* which Beaumarchais has written because of his love for her. The character of the Countess is meant to represent Marie Antoinette while the Beaumarchais of the opera writes the role of the Page for himself.

- 18 Beaumarchais, 155.
- 19 Beaumarchais, 117.
- 20 Beaumarchais, 162.
- 21 Beaumarchais, 155.
- 22 Beaumarchias, 126.
- 23 Beaumarchais, 164.
- 24 Beaumarchais, 200.
- 25 Beaumarchais, 201.
- 26 Beaumarchais, 201.
- 27 Beaumarchais, 175-6.
- 28 Beaumarchais, 181.
- 29 Beaumarchais, 199.
- 30 Paulson, 22.
- 31 Huet, 34.
- 32 Huet, 35.
- 33 Beaumarchais, 127.
- 34 Beaumarchais, 144.
- 35 Beaumarchais, 168.
- 36 Beaumarchais, 188.
- 37 Paulson, 1.
- 38 Paulson, 1.
- 39 Paulson, 2.
- 40 Paulson, 4.
- 41 Linda Nochlin, "Fragments of a Revolution," *Art In America* 77 no.10 (October 1989), 162-3.
- 42 Nochlin, 163.
- 43 Paulson, 4.
- 44 Meisel, 217.

45 Paulson, 6.

46 Paulson, 16.

47 Paulson, 17.

48 Many of these symbols are pictured by Abel Gance in his film *Napoleon*. Sequences showing the debates among the Revolutionaries are intercut with shots of the lighting fixture swaying as if reacting to an earthquake and a boat in the middle of a body of water being tossed in a hurricane.

49 There are numerous examples of this. Page 71 Act IV Scene I "The restless sea--the mob is like the restless sea," "It seems to be swallowing up all I love," and "My darling's life is ebbing out, . . . "

50 Paulson, 55.

51 Freeman Wills, *The Only Way* (London: Frederick Muller, 1942), 83. Also in ACT III on page 55 the Revolutionary Tribunal Court is said to be "similar to that in the picture by Bouillon representing the trial of Marie Antoinette."

52 Paulson, 7.

53 Paulson, 23.

54 Paulson, 8.

55 Paulson, 8.

56 Paulson, 24.

57 This painting is projected in Antonio Buero-Vallejo's *The Sleep of Reason*, which dramatizes the last years of Goya's life in Spain.

58 Carter Ratcliff, "Reciprocal Representations: David and Theatre," in *Arts Magazine* 54 no.8 (April 1980), 259.

59 Paulson, 31.

60 Ratcliff, 203.

61 Paulson, 19.

62 Paulson, 28.

63 Paulson, 28.

64 According to Ratcliff since David's death it has been known as *Marat Dying* even though David referred to it as *The Death of Marat*

65 Paulson, 24.

66 Paulson, 30.

67 Paulson, 18.

68 Paulson, 35.

69 Paulson, 49.

70 Paulson, 55.

71 Paulson, 43.

72 Paulson, 59.

73 Paulson, 59.

74 Paulson, 83.

75 Huet, p.4.

76 Huet, 11.

77 Huet, 11.

78 Michael Marrinan, "Images and Ideas of Charlotte Corday: Texts and Contexts of an Assassination" *Arts Magazine* 54 (April, 1980), 165.

79 Huet, 15.

80 Huet, 22.

81 Peter Weiss, *Marat/Sade* (New York: Pocket Books, 1970), 17.

82 Weiss, 18.

83 Weiss, 79.

84 Weiss, 81.

85 Weiss, 81.

86 Weiss, 28.

87 Weiss, 55.

88 Weiss, 72.

- 89 Weiss, 24.
- 90 Weiss, 24.
- 91 Weiss, 29.
- 92 Weiss, 35.
- 93 Weiss, 52.
- 94 Weiss, 38.
- 95 Weiss, 40.
- 96 Weiss, 71.
- 97 Weiss, 128.
- 98 Weiss, 130.
- 99 Weiss, 30.
- 100 Weiss, 80.
- 101 Weiss, 32-33.
- 102 Weiss, 74-75.
- 103 Weiss, 44.
- 104 Weiss, 44-45.
- 105 Weiss, 48.
- 106 Weiss, 68.
- 107 Weiss, 71.
- 108 Weiss, 138.
- 109 Weiss, 26.
- 110 Weiss, 65.
- 111 Weiss, 51.
- 112 Weiss, 65.
- 113 Weiss, 46.
- 114 Weiss, 15.
- 115 Weiss, 141-142.

116 Stanisława Przybyszewska, *The Danton Case and Thermidor* trans. Boleslaw Taborski, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 23.

117 Przybyszewska, 23.

118 Przybyszewska, 25.

119 Przybyszewska, 31.

120 Przybyszewska, 39.

121 Przybyszewska, 34.

122 Przybyszewska, 151.

123 The film is a series of frames which are essentially moment after moment of dramatized art.

124 Przybyszewska, 165.

125 Przybyszewska, 35.

126 Przybyszewska, 187.

127 Przybyszewska, 191.

128 Przybyszewska, 158.

129 Przybyszewska, 164.

130 Przybyszewska, 41.

131 Przybyszewska, 59.

132 Przybyszewska, 173.

133 Przybyszewska, 206-7.

134 Przybyszewska, 56.

135 This may be a reference to Greek mythology. Atreus found out that his brother, Thyestes, was having an affair with his wife and vowed revenge. Thyestes strikes first by killing his nephews and serving them to his brother, their father.

136 Przybyszewska, 206.

137 Przybyszewska, 57.

138 Przybyszewska, 77.

139 Przybyszewska, 79.

- 140 Przybyszewska, 87.
- 141 Przybyszewska, 109.
- 142 Przybyszewska, 173.
- 143 Przybyszewska, 179.
- 144 Przybyszewska, 194.
- 145 Przybyszewska, 194.
- 146 Przybyszewska, 195
- 147 Przybyszewska, 85.
- 148 Przybyszewska, 195.
- 149 Przybyszewska, 155.
- 150 Przybyszewska, 189.
- 151 Freeman Wills, *The Only Way* (London: Frederick Muller, 1942) 83. There is also a metatheatrical reference made in this scene in reference to the proceedings (85) "De Fauchet: . . . you elevate our farce into high comedy."
- 152 Przybyszewska, 198.
- 153 Przybyszewska, 199.
- 154 Przybyszewska, p204-5.
- 155 Przybyszewska, 206.
- 156 Mel Gussow, "In the Impressionist Era, Women Were Artists, Too," review *New York Times* 6 May 1992, C12.

CHAPTER 6

PLAYS IN WHICH ART IS USED
TO CREATE A SPECIFIC BIOGRAPHY

"I am an artist. I can give wings to my thoughts and charm all life to radiance: a flower, a wife. I take creation in my stride."¹

Rubek is an artist whose fame is based on his creation of *Resurrection Day*, described by him as a young woman who awakens from the sleep of death. He is vacationing in the mountains and while there he sees a thin young woman dressed in white whose face is pale as a plaster mask. He believes that this woman is Irene, the inspiration for his sculpture. As the play proceeds, the woman, who at first seems like a walking ghost, reawakens to become a fully passionate person. Ibsen dramatizes the life of a fictional artist through a recreation of his most famous work. One interpretation of Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken* would term it metacreational, because much of the action and the visual aspects of the play appear to be created as a projection from the imagination of Rubek.

Plays in which art is used to create a specific biography are really a sub-category of the preceding chapter. Most of these plays deal with the biography of a

painter, and most famous painters were involved not only with the cultural but also the political history of their country. As already indicated by plays that dramatize a specific event, paintings are often used as historic documentation or as an icon of a specific period of history. In dramatizations of artists' lives, their paintings often serve not only as a landmark in their lives but an indication of the society from which they develop and for which they create. The differentiation between the two categories of plays is that the artist is the central character in the second type. The distinction between these plays and what will be called metacreational plays is that the dramatic impetus for the metacreational plays is towards the creation of the painting which will then be created on the stage. In both types of plays, metacreational and biographical, the visual elements may be scripted by the artist/character. Moments in the biographical plays may revolve around the creation of paintings and the world of the stage may seem *ekphractic*, but the events that drive the action of the play are events of biographic import.

ANTONIO BUERO-VALLEJO

Antonio Buero-Vallejo is Spain's most important post-World War II playwright. He is a man with two talents; he is also a painter and consequently almost all of his plays contain some reference to visual arts. His plays with art references include: *The Concert of Saint Ovide* (1862),

which is based on an eighteenth-century etching of a French street fair picturing blind musicians dressed in ridiculous clothing; *The Foundation* (1974), in which a Turner-like vista is meant to represent the illusory outside world that Thomas, one of the characters, has created and which the audience at first experiences as reality; and *Secret Dialogue* (1984), in which Velázquez's *The Spinners* is represented in washed out hues when the colorblind art critic tries to come to terms with his predicament.

Buero has also written three plays in which artists are the main characters: *Arrival of the Gods* (1971), in which a fictional pair of father and son painters represent conflicting views of the function of art; *The Sleep of Reason* (1970), a play that depicts Goya's final days in Spain; and *Las Meninas* (1960), a play that culminates with the re-creation of Velázquez's painting. Though chronologically *Las Meninas* was written first, *The Sleep of Reason* will be discussed first because the later play uses paintings in a more direct manner as co-signifiers. *Las Meninas* is one of the most densely art encoded plays analyzed in this dissertation and its subtle construction becomes clearer when seen in contrast with the multimedia uses of painting in *The Sleep of Reason*.

THE SLEEP OF REASON

Although this play disguises itself as a history play about one period of Spain, the repressive rule of Ferdinand

VII, it comments obliquely about another--the dictatorship of Franco. The title of the play is derived from one of Goya's etching in his series of *Caprichios*, which in the last act is reproduced during a nightmare sequence. The play involves the period when a totally deaf Goya was creating the so-called "Black Paintings." These fourteen works are projected in varied configurations throughout the play and are very much characters in the play. As such they have lines and/or sound effects which are heard only by Goya and the audience since these paintings are also either products of Goya's imagination or his ability to see a truth behind the masks of society.

Each "Part" of the play (the play is divided into "Parts" rather than "Acts") is framed by a scene dramatizing the authority Goya is rebelling against as symbolized by King Ferdinand VII. In "Part One" the King is performing a craft; he is embroidering "neatly and carefully on a frame."² What this frame scene does is to act as a reminder that whatever occurs in the rest of the play is both witnessed and influenced by the Royal Patron. In a way, this framework is comparable to the mirror reflecting The King and Queen in the painting *Las Meninas*. In metatheatrical works the outer framework is usually the controlling structure within which the author creates the world of the inner play, and it introduces the reality which is closest to that of the audience. In *The Sleep of Reason* the King's scenes are presented downstage and so they are

also physically the closest to the audience. The King speaks of his determination to control Goya by bringing him to fear; in other words, Ferdinand is about to impose on Spain his own system that is comparable to the Reign of Terror.

Goya is said to be a liberal and accused of being a Free Mason. This he represents pictorially for, according to the King, he creates "artless drawings, [with] harsh colors . . . Royal portraits without dignity or beauty . . . Insidious engravings against dynasty, and against the clergy."³ But it is the King who creates the world that Goya sees and paints. Even the later paintings, the enigmatic "Black Paintings," can be viewed as pictures created by the King's political system and not necessarily Goya's alleged insanity.

The first scene ends with the King's looking through a spyglass at Goya's house. Scene 2 opens with Goya looking through his own spyglass towards the palace. The *Witches' Sabbath* (*Aquelarre*) is the first painting we see projected as Goya seems to be retouching it. He hears soft meowing which is an aural projection of the witches he thinks about as he paints their images from his mind. On the viewer's left side of the painting is a silhouetted goat which other than a manifestation of the devil may be a representation of the way Goya feels about himself and his guilt. As he indicates later in the play, he thinks of himself as an old goat. Actually, his feeling of guilt is at times only the

product of frustration with his ineffectiveness because of old age, deafness, and political repression. However, the guilt also develops because he has chosen to retreat from the Court rather than staying and risking his life. He has hidden himself away and now resides in a place in society from which he can have little influence.

The plot revolves around making Goya fear and yet all indications in the beginning of the play are that he is already afraid. The next sound we hear is that of the laughter of Mariquita (Maria Weiss), a child who, having died, is eternally eight. The sorrow for her and the horror which her envisioned death brings are the muse for several of the "Black Paintings." He calls Leocadia, her mother and his mistress, who, when asked where Mariquita is, protects Goya and says she is out. Accusations ensue and the scene of marital conflict is interrupted by the arrival of Doctor Arrieta, Goya's friend, doctor, and fellow Liberal.

The *Witches' Sabbath* is joined by *Saturn*, the image of the Titan Saturn eating his own children, the quintessential image of autocratic reaction to revolution. This is of particular interest because Arrieta reminds Goya of the "Green Book," which lists the names of the King's enemies, putting them in danger of annihilation. Goya had written insultingly of the King to a friend. The letter has been intercepted and the painter, himself, is now considered in active rebellion.

On the other side of *Witches' Sabbath*, to the left, *Judith* is projected. This is meant to represent Leocadia. In Chapter 5 it was noted how Charlotte Corday became pictured as a contemporary Judith and in fact this Judith in the painting is not dressed as the biblical figure but more closely resembling the clothing of Charlotte Corday. Leocadia is pictured in this guise, since Goya believes she is out to kill him, as Judith killed Holofernes to free her people. Leocadia has an estranged husband elsewhere; in some ways this is a reflection of Goya's own guilt not only on a societal/religious level but for being a liberal in politics and a dictator at home.⁴

The projections of the paintings shift in different combinations and comment on each other. Just as a playwright like Caryl Churchill doubles the characters played by an actor to comment on different roles, Buero intentionally combines the paintings for the same effect. While Leocadia is explaining to the doctor her fears about Goya's mental state she illustrates her point by indicating several of the "Black Paintings." The *Witches' Sabbath* changes into *Fantastic Voyage (Asmodea)*.

In this painting troops are about to fire on a group of people who are travelling up a mountain, on top of which is an architecturally classical-looking fortress or castle. In the foreground there is a man pointing to the mountain. He is being flown away by a woman who is covering her face. Again, this may be an indication of Goya's guilt at

abandoning his people, and their search for a more equitable society and just government. Buero may be indicating that the greater truth lies in images rather than words; the images suggest both Goya's sense of guilt and his vision of a more enlightened society. Leocadia can be interpreted as the woman leading the man away in the painting since she continually tries to protect Goya by not allowing him to make public statements in support of liberal causes. As they speak to each other, *Saturn* turns into *The Busybodies*. In *The Busybodies* two women are hiding their laughter as they watch an old man masturbating. Leocadia voices to her doctor her concern that Goya is now taking his pleasure in that manner, suggesting yet another way in which Goya has withdrawn into a private world.

Goya returns and announces that there is now a platoon of Royal Volunteers stationed on the road to their house. As the doctor uses sign language and writing to express his concerns for Goya's health and welfare, *The Busybodies* turns into *Leocadia* (a conventional painting of Leocadia in black), *Asmodea* into *The Holy Office* and *Judith* into *Two Friars*. The first switch can be interpreted as a comment by Goya on the feeling of being intruded upon by Leocadia's protective love while the second transformation is a close-up view of the people making their way up the mountain. In the background of *Holy Office* we see people struggling up the mountain with their possessions while in the foreground there is a fat friar and a nobleman with servants who have

turned away from making the climb. Buero indicates that these people are painted with little insect eyes, the eyes of the people from the Holy Inquisition who questioned Goya about having painted a nude woman.

The third change of projection is more complex. Buero has Goya indicate that the *Two Friars* shows an old deaf man being whispered to by the other friar. My reading of the painting shows an old man being whispered to by a gargoyle or devil, definitely a representation of evil. If we add to this the indication by Buero that the old man is deaf it again must be a representation of Goya and again replacing *Judith* it is an acknowledgment of his feeling guilt. After the transformations, Goya is asked by the Doctor if he feels afraid and Goya answers that he doesn't. Buero, however, adds the amplified sound of a quickening heartbeat, which the audience hears because Goya hears it.

After the *Two Friars* turns back into *Judith*, *The Holy Office* changes into *The Pilgrimage* and the audience hears the sound of beating wings. *The Pilgrimage* is another painting showing a religious procession. In the foreground there is a drunken guitar player and a group of men who truly have insect eyes. The sound of wings is part of the dream Buero gives Goya--a dream of a race of people who have escaped from the human condition. They will bring hope and light to mankind. These people have artificial wings and live in the house on top of the mountain, the house from

which the female is flying the man in *Asmodea*, and the people have turned away from in *The Pilgrimage*.

After these changes Goya actually "hears" another character on stage speak. This only happens twice in the play. Goya hears Arrieta say, "Divine Reason,"⁵ one of several titles of Goya engravings that are used as dialogue and which would spark a flash of reconstruction in the memory of an audience member familiar with the engravings. It remains an enigma why this line is audible to the deaf man, just as some of the engravings themselves are enigmatic. At the end of the scene there is a more intense discussion of fear and a plan to remove Goya from harm's way. All of the paintings disappear except *Saturn*, which is projected again. We hear the heartbeats even louder than before as the painting grows larger and larger.

The next scene opens with projections of *Leocadia*, *The Holy Office*, and, for the first time, *The Reading*. *The Reading* shows four figures reading from a book with one of the four looking heavenward. Behind these men lurks a devil who looks directly at the audience of the painting. Gumersinda, Goya's daughter-in-law, comes to visit in order to tell Goya how much his family still loves him but how they cannot possibly take the risk of visiting him for the holidays. During this scene there is a recreation through sound of an image from several of Goya's etchings, that of the Donkey or Ass. As Leocadia and Gumersinda talk their

dialogue is imagined by Goya and heard by the audience as first cackling and then braying.

After Gumersinda leaves, *Leocadia* and *The Reading* disappear, *The Holy Office* grows in size as Goya is visited by Father Duaso, who has been secretly sent by the King. A cross is painted on the door of the house. Goya recognizes in the priest a comrade by birth in that he comes from the same area of Spain as Goya. Goya speaks honestly to him about his views of the political situation in Spain. *The Holy Office* becomes *Fight With Clubs* as Goya speaks about the way in which the people, out of fear for their own survival, cause the beating of their neighbors.

It is by causing the ordinary people to fight amongst themselves that the dictatorship of the King remains in power. The painting shows two men buried to the knees in sand with raised cudgels about to hit each other; it is an image of the eternal war man fights with his neighbor. To the right of *Fight*, *The Trapped Dog* is projected as Goya accepts his part in the collective guilt. In an argument that echoes the contemporary cry "Silence=Death," he says, "We are all participants in crime."⁶ The scene ends with the King's thugs rushing his door and shouting obscenities. Goya tries to ignore the panic of the others by taking up his paintbrushes but the amplified heartbeats announce his rising fear.

In the opening frame scene of the second part of the play, the King works out his plan to frighten Goya into

submission. As the action shifts to Goya's house, the painter imagines that Leocadia is being unfaithful to him with one of the Royal Volunteers. With *The Busybodies*, *Witches's Sabbath*, and *Judith* projected, Goya hears the voices of the women taunting him to take his own pleasure. Next the central painting becomes *The Fates*, which is a distorted parody of the popular classic image of the Fates floating in the air. He hears Leocadia's voice tell him that she is his Judith, his Judas, and it is she who will cause his doom either by kissing him or sinking a knife into his chest. This confused imagery--in one case Judith is the hero and the death is a positive act and in the other case, Judas is the ultimate betrayer and causes the death of Christ--represents Goya's own confused state at that moment.

Arrieta arrives with a letter from Martín Zapater, the man to whom Goya had written but from whom he had not received a reply. Goya debates whether to open the letter, for if he does not know what it contains he cannot fear the worst. *The Fates* turns into *The Witches' Sabbath* as Goya learns that Zapater is writing to find out why Goya has not written and now Goya realizes that his letter has been intercepted. At the end of the scene, Goya again starts to paint and the silence is broken only by the sound of heartbeats.

The third scene of Part II is a discussion between Duaso and Arrieta in which the King's plan is intimated by Duaso to Arrieta so that he may be there to help. They also

discuss the worth of the "Black Paintings." When asked if they are any good, Arrieta answers that Goya himself said in one of his etchings that *The Sleep of Reason produces Monsters*.

In the fourth scene the world of Goya's etchings takes control. It starts with a projection of the painting *Old Men Eating Gruel* projected. This painting shows a toothless old man obviously in his dotage with a devil at his elbow. Goya dreams he hears a knocking at the door and images from his etchings, a horned figure, a bat masked man, and a cat figure place him on mock trial. Leocadia dressed as in the painting *Judith* enters with a knife.

The scene is interrupted by banging on the door as the lighting changes and *Saturn*, *Witches' Sabbath* and *Judith* are projected. Five Royal Volunteers enter. They tie up Goya and place on him a penitent's gown with a cross and the pointed dunce cap of the heretic. He becomes the image of the man in the collection of etchings known as *Album C: Inquisition Drawings*. Leocadia is raped by the Volunteer who caused Goya's jealousy, and we witness the violence of the silent rape while Goya imagines that Leocadia has taken pleasure in this sexual encounter.

After the soldiers leave there is an avalanche of howls *Saturn* and *Judith* fade and *The Witches' Sabbath* becomes larger as Goya believes he hears Leocadia tell him of the pleasure she took in being abused. He questions if he truly heard this, but then answers that it makes no difference.

Leocadia represents all Spain for him and in order for him to leave Spain he must believe that she wants the abuse that is inflicted upon her. He decides to leave Spain for France but only until "it dawns."⁷ After it dawns the witches "will go"⁸ from Spain and reason will re-awaken.

Buero-Vallejo is not the only author to use Goya as a political paradigm when writing a play about repression. *Goya's Last Portrait* by John Berger and Nella Bielski is subtitled "The Painter as Played Today." The play starts with a prologue in which Goya appears to an actress about to play a Duchess in the contemporary time. The beginning of the main body of the play, or the play-within-the-play, takes place during the French Revolution, with a Spanish Duchess eager to start a revolution in Spain. The people do not want their rights or freedom and so they sandbag the castle to prevent the Duchess from burning her property. Goya meanwhile is saving a painting.

Visually there are only two instances in *Goya's Last Portrait* in which a painting is reconstructed. In Act II a cemetery changes into a landscape of boulders, which is the background of *Two Men with Clubs* and later "at the foot of that rock there's a dog howling."⁹ There are several instances of verbal descriptions that remind one of Goya's *caprichos*. The Doctor says "here we should note, my dear, the constant ambiguity which touches everything concerning the ear as a symbolic organ: an organ which lends itself to both sensual and spiritual raptures. The male word enters

the ear just as sperm enters the vagina to make its spiral way to the uterus and there to fertilize the ovule. Seminal fluid and divine words are interchangeable. The Annunciation is a perfect example of this ambivalence."¹⁰ The Duchess then responds to him in a very Goyesque manner by saying, "your ideas show us how to fly! . . . Engender, engender. Play for me."¹¹ Goya ends this interchange with an image from the "Black Paintings, "Cayetana, who gave birth and kills through her teeth! Cayetana the witch."¹²

Goya wants to be identified as only a man, while the other characters, the revolutionary characters, want to deify him. When a dwarf calls him a visionary, Goya answers that he had no imagination; he only painted what he saw. Later he proclaims, "He [God], the seer, is invisible. We are with our flesh and hair, mucus and bones, condemned to be seen. And worse than that we are condemned to see."¹³ One of the things he is condemned to see is the horrors of war and in a verbal recreation of one of his etchings he declares, "I see an unborn soldier who is not yet a fetus lecturing on the military use of firearms. His listeners are moths. Shhh! I can hear their wings."¹⁴

There is a discussion of *The Third Of May* in which Goya describes the third man to die as wearing a white shirt with yellow trousers, after which Goya turns from the audience to look out a window and sees this man at the window. Only the audience and Goya see this vision as Goya laments, "I do not know who chooses what I see. Not me, dear God, not me."¹⁵

The political point of view of the authors is very evident. The artist is not the artist/genius of Romanticism but an Everyman who has taken the time to create remembrance of an event. The first act of *Goya's Last Portrait* ends with a discussion of Socialism. One of the characters quotes a late poem by Mayakovsky: "Let Socialism be/ in the teeth if all conflicts/ for us a monument struck/ in common bronze."¹⁶ Another character responds that "more or less it [Socialism] refers to the organization of a social body for the benefit of the common good rather than private interest. Based on a principle which is the opposite of egoism."¹⁷ The play suggests that Goya is willing to paint the victors, no matter what they stand for, in order to survive. He is made to seem the painter equivalent of Mother Courage. Goya is depicted as increasingly deaf, but his gardener remarks to him late in the play that "the washerwomen say you're not so deaf you don't hear the clink of reales in the money bags. That's how you know when to change sides they say."¹⁸

A very different view of Goya was seen in the exhibit, "Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment" shown at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, May-July 1989. Here Goya was presented as a major influence in bringing the philosophy of Enlightenment to Spain (as he had been in Buero-Vallejo's play). In a negative review of that exhibit Michael Brenson writes in *The New York Times*, "No one should forget who Goya was. He may have been working for liberal patrons, but he was no modern-day liberal, which the exhibition comes

dangerously close to making him out to be. No one owned him, and his art was an unending battle against platitudes. He was constantly testing the limits of decorum and good taste. His derisive sarcasm has as much to do with the peasant's suspicion of power as it does with the progressive's commitment to reform."¹⁹ And yet after saying this the critic still admits that his art "has the force of personality and imagination that is the mark of the romantic genius."²⁰ He starts his review by making a statement of why Goya seems to be used by many for different agenda and why he is representative of so many periods of history. "He belongs to his time, yet he seems less a historical individual than a force of nature."²¹

After deciding that God makes the future, that man only sees and paints what he sees, the Goya in the Berger-Bielski play states that "the Devil works with words . . . people talk themselves into evil and afterwards with the same words . . . they hide what they've done, so its forgotten. What's forgotten is forgiven. . . What is engraved doesn't forgive."²² It is in this way that Goya presents to the present the sins that are still with all people and which they want to forget. The Duchess tells Goya that "the latest Paco, is that we're already living in the future. Not the one we fought and died for. The one the Giants substituted for ours."²³ The Giants that Goya painted, such as *The Colossus* and *Saturn*, have defined the future and the

present rather than the common man he painted dying for his dream of the future.

Goya's Last Portrait supports the contention that everywhere one looks one finds the past restored, a political fact in the England of 1989. Near the end of the play there is a quote from the Spanish satirist Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas about Bosch. The gardener's daughter tells Goya that "the painter Hieronymous Bosch finds himself in hell and there he's cross-questioned. When you were a painter on the earth, they ask him, why did you paint so many deformed men. And Hieronymous replies to them: Because I don't believe in Devils."²⁴ It is man that makes the evil in the world. The play ends with the dropping of a white curtain. Despite its pessimistic view of change to date, we are left with the symbol of possibilities for the image of a future yet to be painted on this canvas.

Both of these Goya plays are structured in a manner that is representative of much of Goya's art. Adam Gopnik in his review of the exhibit "Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment" states, "What is new in Goya, and modern, is his sense of the seamless interpenetration of the social and dreaming worlds; his theatre puts comedians and demons and society beauties together on a makeshift stage, in a single, uninterrupted performance. His obsessive images begin as jokes, swell up into horrors, subside into personal devils, but always retain the possibility of still another

metamorphosis."²⁵ It is that sense of another metamorphosis that adds a glimmer of hope at the end of both plays.

WILLIAM HOGARTH, HENRY FIELDING AND *THE ART OF SUCCESS*

William Hogarth is an important figure in this study for two reasons, the first being his documentation of the theatre of his time through his etchings and his direct influence on theatre practitioners through his narrative series of etchings. The second reason for his importance is a recent English play, *The Art of Success* (1989) by Nick Dear, which uses him as its central character and dramatizes several of his creations.

Hogarth was a dramatic writer whose stage was an easel. He had a very close relationship with Henry Fielding and consequently it is not surprising to find Fielding borrowing or translating an incident, a character, or an idea from Hogarth. In fact, it is said that one cannot fully understand Fielding's work in the theatre without a knowledge of Hogarth. In *Hogarth's Literary Relationships*, Robert Etheridge Moore makes a study of Fielding through an analysis of Hogarth's work. His aim is to clarify the work of the "century's greatest prose artist by means of its pictorial artist."²⁶ How close these artists were is indicated in a story about how nine years after Fielding's death his publisher wanted a drawing for an edition of his collected works and so he turned to Hogarth for the portrait. Rumor goes that Hogarth dressed Garrick, the

actor, to look like Fielding in order to do the portrait. This story then became the basis for an one-act French play, *Le Portrait de Fielding*, Paris, 1800, in which the portrait is reproduced and in the end Hogarth marries Fielding's daughter.

Hogarth painted or etched several satires on the theatre *The Necromancer or Harlequin Doctor Faustus* (John Rich at Lincoln Inn Field 1723-24), *Masquerades and Operas or The Taste of the Town* (1724), *A Just View of the British Stage* (Horace Walpole called it *Booth, Wilks, and Cibber contriving a Pantomine, a satire or farce*²⁷) (1725), *The Beggar's Opera Burlesqued* (1728), *Rich's Glory or his Triumphant Entry into Convent Garden* (1732) and an unfinished painting *The Ill Effects of Masquerades*. Both the second plate of *A Harlot's Progress* and the fourth plate of *Marriage à la Mode* contain theatre scenes. *A Rake's Progress* contains a satire on Italian opera. *The Oratorio* (1732) satirizes a rehearsal of the oratorio *Judith* as composed by Huggins (?).²⁸ Moore indicates that the levee scene from *Marriage à la Mode* in which "a repulsive castrato is singing to an enraptured dowager"²⁹ was the inspiration for Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*. In a footnote Moore states, "All Hogarth's figures appear in the Marschallin's boudoir--the flautist, the Italian singer, the Blackamoor with the chocolate, and even the symbol of the cuckold. In Hogarth the little Blackamoor points to a deer's horns as the countess dallies with her future lover; in the opera the

Marschallin is attended by Octavian, who has already received her favors."³⁰

Fielding, in our time less known for his plays than his novels, wrote *Love in Several Masques* which was presented at the Drury Lane the same year as *The Beggar's Opera*. In January 1730, his *The Temple Bear* was presented and March 1730 saw the presentation of his first dramatic burlesque, a two-part play, *The Author's; and the Pleasures of the Town* which neatly combined several of Hogarth's prints from *Masquerades and Operas*. There was also a scene in which three poets are seen using Byshe's rhyming dictionary, an episode reminiscent of Hogarth's *Distressed Poet*.

On April 24, 1730, Fielding presented a satire on the pomposity and claptrap of heroic drama, *Tom Thumb*. The next year he expanded it to three acts and retitled it *The Tragedy of Tragedies, or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb The Great*. When Hogarth was asked to do a frontispiece for the play and he painted the scene in which Honcamunca holds a candle to Gumdalca's face so that Tom can compare her beauty with the other's ugliness, parodying a scene between Cleopatra and Octavia in Dryden's *All for Love*.

Fielding adapted two Molière comedies, *The Doctor In Spite of Himself* and *The Miser*. *The Mock Doctor*, presented June 23, 1732, had an added scene with the noted French Quack, Dr. John Misaubin, whom Hogarth had two months before ridiculed in *A Harlot's Progress*. Moore says, "I suspect that the scene from Fielding, which plays no functional part

in the comedy, was suggested by the success Hogarth was still enjoying at Misauben's expense."³¹

Fielding's next two plays, *The Lottery* and *The Convent Garden Tragedy*, were both unmistakably drawn from Hogarth's *A Harlot's Progress*. In *The Lottery*, Lovermore comes to town, London, to seek his sweetheart and finds that she has been set up in a brothel in Pall Mall. Moore cites his exclamation, "Ha! by all that's infamous she is keeping already; some bawd has made price of her as she alighted from the stage-coach--while she has been flying from my arms, she has fallen into the colonel's."³² Moore details how the reference to the bawd and the stagecoach links the speech to the first print from *A Harlot's Progress*, but the mention of the Colonel who is not in the play established the co-relationship as a fact. The Colonel is Colonel Charteris, who stands at the side of Hogarth's picture. *The Convent Garden Tragedy* contains the character Mother Needham who is the bard in Hogarth's pictures. Moore suggests that the play brings out aspects of the prints that had hitherto gone unnoticed and that several of the passages seem to describe the plates in the sense of illusions or metaphors. Fielding attempted two other plays from *A Harlot's Progress* but both, *An Old Man Taught Wisdom*, or *The Virgin Unmasked* and *Miss Lucy in Town*, remained unfinished.

The Licensing Act of 1736 put Fielding out of business in the theatre, and it is close to this point in history that *The Art of Success* by Nick Dear takes place (The stage

directions say London, 1730s) In addition to Fielding and Hogarth, Miss Needham, the bawd, is also a character, and the stagecoach from *A Harlot's Progress* is also presented. The dramaturgy is serial, as were Hogarth's etchings, but the structure of the play is ekphratic rather than a "realization" of the paintings. The play is about an artist coming to terms with art as a system of economy. If there is a revolution in this play it is a sexual revolution--not from a feminist point of view but from a male homosexual point of view. It is worth remembering that the sexual and political revolution had been seen as interactive as early as Thomas Ottway's *Venice Preserved*.

Dear's play opens with a nightmare of castration. William says, "My head is full of nightmares . . . The dreams get worse the more you gorge. It's as if the brain, it fractures open, and horrible creatures spew hot from its crack."³³ From the first, the play poses such questions as: What is Art? Who is responsible for sustaining art and the artist? and What responsibility does an artist have to his society, his subjects, and his art? The first statement made is that "Art rests in the original, not the copy,"³⁴ which immediately comments on Hogarth's marketing of prints. Hogarth asks, "What is art--property? Or communication? Does it exist to be owned, or to be understood?"³⁵ Later he answers that he practices "art as business."³⁶

Fielding is about to write a play satirizing Walpole and representing him as a midget. He tries to convince

Hogarth to follow up *Harlot's Progress* with a political work *The Statesman's Progress*. Fielding is answered by another character, Frank, who counters this idea and says that there are some things that are worth defending, "stable government for one."³⁷ After the discussion, the three illustrate their elevated station in life by pissing out the window. Needham, the bawd from *The Harlot's Progress*, enters offering them some of her wares including a fat whore who will force them to ejaculate between her breasts and "a little virgin, a real one mind, nothing sewn up or otherwise embroidered."³⁸

The next scene opens with Louise, a whore, looking for trade while standing in a pleasure garden among the classical statuary--a good use for art. An added irony is the fact that there is a customer waiting for her at the "Temple of Virtue," an artistic reconstruction in the park. When told that William is a painter, she answers that it's a nice thing, "a Profession as old as my own."³⁹ Because his wife Jane at first refuses to be painted, Hogarth searches for other women.

Scene 3 is set in a jail cell where Hogarth has come to draw a murderess about to be executed. He does this in order to make a print and profit from her image. In this scene he practices developing a vocabulary of images. William states, "But how do you show a smell, I wonder? How do you paint an aroma? . . . You might for example draw someone holding a scented handkerchief to their nose,

standing nearby and, what could they be--glancing at the pisspot? . . . I've developed this system of visual language."⁴⁰ In this scene again there is the question of how an artist supports his art. Does he sell himself out by doing popular subject and style? Or does he sell himself out by supporting the political system for patronage? William remarks, "I'm a business I'm an artist who likes to eat,"⁴¹ and then later almost in contradiction he says, "Look, I'm an artist, an artist must be free to view the world unhindered. "⁴² His subject complains, "You give me desire."⁴³

The end of the scene is dramatized through the use of a device similar to Buero-Vallejo's immersion technique. The audience hears the nightmare within William's head from which he creates his art. *"A horrible noise, the screaming of women, very loud. William clutches at his head. Sarah is still . . . Suddenly, from the shadows in the corners of a cell, a number of nightmarish Women Prisoners emerge and run at William. They clutch at him. He tries to get away, yelling for the Gaoler. All the time this dreadful noise, half-pain, half-laughter. Sarah remains. The cell door opens. The Gaoler stands brandishing his whip. The prisoners, except Sarah, disappear. William runs out with his picture."*⁴⁴ Dear may have known an English translation of Buero Vallejo's *The Sleep of Reason*, which uses the same type of immersion in relation to the life of Goya, another great practitioner of the art of caricature. The characters

of Goya and Hogarth are similar in the expression of their sexual needs.⁴⁵

In the next scene, while William is visiting his whore Louise, who is the subject of his prints, there is a metatheatrical moment. The scene is invaded by a drummer announcing a parade in order to advertise Fielding's new play, a farce. Meanwhile, in the next scene, occurring supposedly at the same time, Sarah, the murderess, has escaped and meets Jane, the wife, as Walpole comes to visit in order to offer a bribe for Hogarth to be the next royal engraver. Walpole explains why he wants to defuse the political aspect of Hogarth's satire.

WALPOLE

Some vicious satires he had done. The Royal Family scorned! You have no idea how the laughter of the illiterate rings in the halls of St. James. Put your satires in books, by all means, 'Gulliver's Travels', yes yes yes, the Queen enjoys a read--but pictures? Everyone will get it! Worse than bloody plays! Can you imagine--a picture in every home? Your hubby-to-be was sailing into danger. I could hardly allow such influence to rest in the hands of an artist. I had to help him to the safe high ground of creative endeavour--the oil painting. But how to bung him up there without denting his pride? Blinding flash of inspiration, commissioned him to engrave the Walpole Salver. Lovely job he did, too, old Hercules putting the allegorical screws on Calumny and Envy. A charming introduction into the bosom of polite society, and with it the opportunity to marry But he is my man now, and damned if I let him forget it.⁴⁶

When Sarah and Jane are in bed together, the first reference to male homosexuality occurs; "Have you ever noticed how they love the thought of women having women, but hate to think of men seducing men?"⁴⁷ At the end of Act I

the nightmare world of Hogarth's mind and the world of stage reality become one.

The beginning of the second act finds Hogarth outside his mistress's house in a white sheet. Louisa says, "'One second of perfection'! Talk about seeing things from a male point of view!"⁴⁸ He has been locked outside because he has forgotten his money. Art is not the only commodity in this economy, so is love. Fielding wanders by and they discuss love and respectability and the double sidedness of their personalities. Harry notes, "We alter the world around us but we never change ourselves inside. We hear the first rumbles of industrial progress but what will it bring us?"⁴⁹ In that one line Fielding expresses the English point of view of change while also indicating the one revolution that truly affects them, that is, the Industrial Revolution, an economic rather than social revolution.

Hogarth warns that art should also celebrate or else it does not tell the truth. Fielding reacts negatively and says, "No, no, it should abuse, it should insult, the audience should be shocked, disturbed, and made to think again . . . satire is too sugary, too easy to swallow. I dream of writing something where the laughs turn into tears. Where the wit is sharp like a mouthful of lemon. The truth is not a joke. It's dark. The only light is love, the only thing that redeems us, salvages us from the world we have made. And what do we do? We betray it."⁵⁰ The image of truth as darkness is Blakian. Harry replies, "It's almost

as if the satirist *needs* a sick society . . . has a vested interest in preserving it . . . so you can feed off it . . . suck it's blood . . . "51 This is why satire never truly brings change.

The play dramatizes the enticement of stable government and stable relationships, as in marriage. Stable government is represented by Walpole who says of Jane Hogarth, "She must have been experimenting. We all do when we are young. But when we grow up we find we want to settle down We discover that what we want most, what gives us the greatest pleasure and the greatest freedom to enjoy it is stability," and then goes on to say, "I believe it will one day become the mark of a cultured society, that its artistic members realise when they have gone too far, and voluntarily apply the curb."⁵²

This idea is played off linguistically against Hogarth's use of the word "Progress" in his series of prints. Walpole adds the enticement of money to the concept of stability. "My houses are stuffed full of art, you know. It's such a damned good investment . . . I love art. I love it more than all my other property, they're so neat and compact, those rectangles of wealth." Walpole goes off in a sedan chair; when it returns on stage we are again immersed in Hogarth's mind. Louisa is in the chair *"She is in tattered rags, and ravaged by an indescribably disgusting disease. The flesh hangs off her in strips. Her face is horribly disfigured. Her hands drip green slime."*⁵³ The

spector of the pox is raised, and early in the play there is the discussion of the use of condoms. The play is obviously a reflection of the post-AIDS era. While political revolution brings the excesses of the Reign of Terror, the sexual revolution brings the pox and AIDS.

Other aspects of *The Art of Success* are interesting from a post-AIDS perspective. The play shows how an artist thrives in a society that measures success in economic terms. The play revolves around an artist, Hogarth, who holds to the line of the political party in power in order to get economic support.

The question of the National Endowment for the Arts and its responsibility to giving money to non-commercial art that may be morally or politically in conflict with the majority view is raised, even though this is an English play. The conflict is well dramatized and if this play had been viewed by Jesse Helms, he would have found much to object to, in its depiction of sex, both heterosexual, lesbian and homosexual, especially since the 1989 Manhattan Theatre Company's production was made possible, in part, by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. As Frank Rich notes in his review of the New York production, December 21, 1989, "an American theatergoer might well assume it had been written in New York this fall. In our year of Mapplethorpe and Serrano, here is a scabrous comedy about creation, purpose, promotion, merchandising, censorship and government patronage of art--all set forth in

a theatrical palette that encompasses rough sex, scatological language, ribald political satire, urine and excrement."⁵⁴

Scene 8 of the play takes place at the pillory where Mrs. Needham is being punished. This episode is taken directly from *The Harlot's Progress*. The scene adds a dimension of realism for there is very little that's funny about her truly being hurt by the stones with which she is pelted.

The next scene has Jane explaining to Sarah, in very feminist terms, why she will not pose for her husband. "I won't let him put me in that role, the role of the subject. I am not his subject. I am his lover and his wife, and I will never let him do my portrait. I will never surrender up that kind of power."⁵⁵ However, Jane finds out that she has been the subject of some fantasy drawings by her husband. These drawings are described as pornographic. When confronted, Hogarth explains, "I sit at my table and fiddle with my charcoal and my mind is off and away. I don't even realize I'm doing it, there are nightmare things that I have got caged up, hairy, growling, they scrabble at the skin of me, and sometimes slither out. Have you noticed there is that quality of horror in even my gentlest work?"⁵⁶

It is in this manner that the Romantic view of the world starts to interfere with and undermine the English desire for control.

Sarah complains about the fact that that someone else in making and selling copies of her image is making money and yet she, the original, dies poor. Louisa complains about her having been his subject, "Up and up he goes. I watch from the gutter. Daubing paint on canvas with his fingers like a kid smearing shit on walls. And they buy it! They pay money for it! In the salons and soirees of the West End, they dip into the hot-pot of his brains, and what do they find? Pictures of a prostitute. Dying of clap."⁵⁷ When he expresses the hopes that this is all one of his nightmares Louisa answers back, "But can you distinguish anymore? Between pencil lines and people? You pin us like moths to your paper and you sit and watch us squirm."⁵⁸ Sarah manages to get the painting of her and burns it. In what is the most poetic, artistic language of the whole play she recounts how the picture was drawn. In this recollection she goes through the same process of burning emotionally as the picture is doing physically.

The play falls into total nightmare at this point as a stagehand brings on a polaroid camera. As the play descends into a nightmare, the playwright introduces a metatheatrical device. Walpole, Fielding, Frank and Oliver enter. Walpole has just had Fielding's play closed for being in violation of the Licensing Act. Fielding and Hogarth have a homosexual moment caught on film. Walpole knifes Fielding. Frank spits mouthfuls of money at Hogarth. All four men attack Hogarth, strip him of his clothes and photograph him

This episode is very close, in content, structure and theme, to the rape scene of Goya's mistress in Buero-Vallejo's *The Sleep of Reason*). After the nightmare ends, Jane reenters and tells Hogarth, "You have to let people know of your feelings for them. It's vital, Will, it really is. Otherwise your work is a lie."⁵⁹

The last scene takes place several months later by the shore of the Thames. Oliver's skin shows dark patches, a sign of the pox. Walpole has had a Copyright Act passed which now means more money for Hogarth because his work is protected from plagiarism. Ironically, Hogarth will become the first English painter to succeed without patronage. He will be the first commercially successful artist and it will be with *The Rake's Progress*. Fielding tells Hogarth that he is obsessed with sex. Hogarth answers that he is obsessed with beauty, to which Fielding answers, "There is no truth about beauty. Beauty disguises truth. It is impossible to write a beautiful play."⁶⁰

Needham enters, now wearing black with a cross and carrying a Bible, asking if she had just passed Hogarth who had with his art stopped many girls from going down the wrong path. This is the truth Hogarth would like to believe. We hear Handel's *Water Music* as we imagine the passing of the Royal barge. Handel represents the use of the patronage system to best advantage. A marriage is being celebrated. The music is a triple representation of how this society is controlled: royalty (political control),

patronage (economic control), and marriage (sexual and moral control).

The play ends with Fielding deciding that he needs to find a new system for expressing protest and initiating change. He will write a novel--exactly what Walpole originally had wanted since to read a novel requires active participation. Revolution will come to England only when the lower classes learn to read and are initiated into the system. Change will only come from within as reform.

Hogarth is not the only artist whose life poses the dilemma of art as commodity. Dennis McIntyre's *Modigliani* is a play about Amedeo Modigliani and his friends Utrillo and Soutine and their attempts to be recognized as artists in a world that only understands art as an economic commodity. An art dealer recounts how Picasso, in need of a fresh canvas, scrapes the paint off a Modigliani in order to paint one of his own works. The play dramatizes the self destructive will of an artist who needs to steal food and canvas in order to survive. An offstage sequence tells of Modigliani's burning a stack of his own paintings outside the Louvre.

Dramatizations of the lives of artists are popular in contemporary theatre. Dimitri Frenkel Frank wrote *Spinoza*, a play in which Rembrandt and Spinoza debate intellect versus emotion. In *The Pink Studio* Jane Anderson attempts to bring Matisse's art to life. A series of imagined scenes that lead to the creation of specific paintings such as

Interior at Nice. Hilary Blecher is the author of *Frida*, which uses puppets to create the images of Frida Kahlo and her husband Diego Rivera's paintings (rather than tableaux of fully realized paintings). *Frida* captures the main events of Kahlo's life but often moves off into Latin American magical realism which allows the author to intertwine art and the artist's surrealistically artful life.

¹ Henrik Ibsen, *Brand*, trans. Geoffrey Hill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 10.

² Antonio Buero-Vallejo, *The Sleep of Reason*, in *Three Plays*, trans. Marion Peter Holt (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1985.), 3.

³ Buero-Vallejo, *The Sleep of Reason*, 5.

⁴ One of the odd aspects of the play is that though these paintings tend to be projections from the world that Goya inhabits these projections appear while Goya is out of the room. One explanation is that all of the "Black Paintings" already exist in the house and are projected as are needed for dramatic reasons; however, the projections do lose a level of commentary by this occurring.

⁵ Buero-Vallejo, *The Sleep of Reason*, 14.

⁶ Buero-Vallejo, *The Sleep of Reason*, 30.

⁷ Buero-Vallejo, *The Sleep of Reason*, 57.

⁸ Buero-Vallejo, *The Sleep of Reason*, 57.

⁹ John Berger and Nella Bielski, *Goya's Last Portrait: The Painter Played Today* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989.), 51.

¹⁰ Berger, 45.

¹¹ Berger, 45.

- 12 Berger, 45.
- 13 Berger, 57.
- 14 Berger, 58.
- 15 Berger, 88.
- 16 Berger, 75.
- 17 Berger, 76.
- 18 Berger, 95.
- 19 Michael Brenson, "Goya's Dark Vision at the Met,"
review *New York Times*, 5 May 1989, C28.
- 20 Brenson, C28.
- 21 Brenson, C28.
- 22 Berger, 95-96.
- 23 Berger, 100.
- 24 Berger, 101.
- 25 Adam Gopnik, "Goya Today" review *The New Yorker* (19
June 1989), 92.
- 26 Robert Etheridge Moore, *Hogarth's Literary
Relationships* (reprint New York: Octagon Books, 1969,
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), 78.
- 27 Moore, 81.
- 28 Moore, 88.
- 29 Moore, 88.
- 30 Moore, 88.
- 31 Moore, 95.
- 32 Moore, 95.
- 33 Nick Dear, *The Art of Success and In the Ruins: Two
Plays* (London: Methuen, 1989), 1.
- 34 Dear, 6.
- 35 Dear, 7.
- 36 Dear, 8.

- 37 Dear, 9.
- 38 Dear, 11.
- 39 Dear, 13.
- 40 Dear, 17-18.
- 41 Dear, 21.
- 42 Dear, 24.
- 43 Dear, 24.
- 44 Dear, 25-6.
- 45 An English translation of *The Sleep of Reason* had been circulated to many theatre companies in London including The Royal Shakespeare Company, with which Dear is associated, during the late 1970s. This was a few years before Dear's play was written.
- 46 Dear, 35.
- 47 Dear, 36.
- 48 Dear, 38.
- 49 Dear, 42.
- 50 Dear, 42.
- 51 Dear, 43.
- 52 Dear, 44.
- 53 Dear, 46.
- 54 Frank Rich, "Art of Success Makes Hogarth the Warhol of the 18th Century," *New York Times*, 21 December 1989, C11. In this review he correlates Hogarth with Warhol because of their mass marketing of their works, their self-promotion, and because Dear introduces the use of the Polaroid Camera later in the play. This production even furthered the use of images from Hogarth by surrounding all four sections of seats with a long narrow strip of eighteenth-Century looking faces from Hogarth's drawings and caricatures.
- 55 Dear, 52.
- 56 Dear, 57.
- 57 Dear, 59.

58 Dear, 60.

59 Dear, 65.

60 Dear, 68.

CHAPTER 7

ART LECTURE PLAYS

"Now we know pretty well everything that can be known about the technical side of pictures."¹

The author as lecturer tells us of the significance of the paintings not only for the history of the country but in his own biography. There is a sense of an intermingling of time sequences: the eternal now and past of the paintings; the now of the audience and lecturer; and the past that the play is about to dramatize. The stage is now emptied and the author departs so that his creation, the play, can be presented.

This is the Prologue of the already mentioned play *Night And War in The Prado Museum* by Rafael Alberti. In Chapter 4 the drama is discussed as representative of plays in which art is symbolic of the theme, but its structure also resembles plays that frame their action within art lectures. This structure is particular to plays dramatizing paintings. A lecture about art precedes or interrupts the time frame of the main dramatization of the work. Like the play-within-the-play structure these play-within-the-lecture plays focus the attention of the audience by double framing

the internal play. As if the artist's view is not dictatorial enough, the playwright indicates to the audience what they should look at, how they should react, and what their reading of the painting should be. Since this device is purely structural the plays discussed in this chapter also fall into other categories of dramatization.

A QUESTION OF ATTRIBUTION by ALAN BENNETT

Bennett's play has multiple frameworks. It works as an art lecture, an interrogation, and a dramatization. With the opening stage direction, Alan Bennett represents a world in which art's enigmatic element is the ultimate representation of truth. *"Above the desk and upstage of it is a projection screen with a slide projector on a nearby side-table. BLOUNT stands left of the screen and the RESTORER, a humbler figure in a dustcoat, to the right. Their positions resemble those of saints or patrons on either side of an altarpiece and some effort should be made in the production to create stage pictures which echo in this way the composition and lighting of the old masters."*²

Anthony Blount is the spy who turned state's evidence exposing a Soviet spy ring; though he has gained immunity he will not always have anonymity. In fact, the play works towards that moment when the answer to the question of whom to attribute the information about the spys to is about to be exposed. As the play moves towards this answer, the dialogue also questions to whom to attribute a painting of a

Triple Portrait, especially when compared to the authenticated Titian, *Allegory of Prudence*. As indicated by the title of the play, the paintings in the play are illustrations of the theme of the drama.

Blount is an art historian in the employ of the royal family. Art so infuses his life that he naturally takes the poses from paintings as his natural positions. His becoming a spy has been a development from his life as an art historian, for as Blount explains, "a life spent teasing out riddles of this kind does carry its own risks . . . a barrenness of outlook, a pedantry that verges on the obsessive, and a farewell to common sense; the rule of the hobby horse. Because, though the solution may add to our appreciation of this painting, paintings--we must never forget--are not there primarily to be solved. A great painting will still elude us, as art will always elude exposition."³

Many of Bennett's plays are involved with the secrets that Englishmen keep in order to survive as "Englishmen." In *A Question of Attribution*, the playwright equates the secret lives of men with the secret lives of paintings. The scene with the Restorer gives way to the first of many scenes with Chubb, an agent of the English Secret Service, who projects photographs of young men for Blount to identify, which sometimes get mixed in with some of the art slides. Chubb is not only trying to get information on the men but also trying to educate himself about Art. How better to truly

understand a period in history or society than to have knowledge of its art?

The first time a wrong slide comes up, it is a picture of naked guardsmen; when asked what his students might think of it, Blount answers, "They might think it was Art."⁴ Clubb's art lesson for the day revolves around Titian's *Allegory of Prudence*, which, he is told, is "an emblematic painting, a puzzle picture--a visual paraphrase of the *Three Ages of Man* obviously, but something else besides. The clue is the animals."⁵ At the bottom of the painting under each of the three figures there is an animal: a lion, a wolf, and a dog. Each of these symbols mean something when seen separately but together they make a three-headed beast representing prudence. Clubb is frustrated by his lack of skill in this type of identifying or reading. Blount comforts him with the fact that he's "just carrying over the techniques of facile identification favoured in your profession . . . Appearances deceive. Art is seldom quite what it seems."⁶

The *Triple Portrait* had recently been cleaned and revealed its third figure (originally it had been catalogued as *Titian and a Venetian Soldier*). Once the figures in the *Allegory* painting have been identified, *Triple Portrait* is attributed to Titian because of the resemblance between the secret hidden figure and one of the figures in *Allegory*. Blount is removing the painting from the Palace until the question of attribution is answered. While replacing it

with an *Annunciation*, he is approached by the Queen. The *Annunciation* is significant, for the Virgin is discovered reading. Blount explains that as time went on, the Holy family was elevated from simple peasants to better represent the patrons who were paying for the paintings. Joseph went from a simple carpenter to being represented as a full-blown architect, while the Virgin went from reading a book to being discovered in a full library. Blount says, "in later versions Gabriel looks as if he is delivering his message to the Mistress of Girton."⁷ The question of how patronage affects art is again dealt with in this play as in *The Art of Success* and was obviously a concern in English arts after the Thatcher government had cut back on funding.

The discussion turns to a question of original and fake (expecially interesting since the actress playing the Queen is easily recognized as a fake since her image is very familiar to the audience ⁸). It is decided that people are ultimately more interested in the fakes, for they hold more questions, more secrets, more intrigue. To Blount it is not a question of fakery because each piece holds its own interest and secrets. "A painting is a document, Ma'am. It has to be read in context of art history."⁹ The Queen comments, "I think it was Gertrude Stein who said after a while even the best pictures turn into wallpaper."¹⁰

Questions of the co-relation of art and photography and of original and copy are raised. Queen Elizabeth does not believe that portrait painters are artists because they

cannot follow art trends. One does not expect a Royal Portrait to have two noses. Today what is needed is an Identikit from Scotland Yard rather than a painter. Blount counters, "I'm sure Michelangelo would have used the camera, Ma'am, if it had been invented. And Leonardo would probably have invented it."¹¹ The Queen says that what one looks for in a portrait is a hint of the sitter's secret life and no royal patron wants that secret exhibited. Blount's theory is that "Paintings make no claims, Ma'am. They do not purport to be anything other than paintings. It is we, the beholders, who make claims for them, attribute a picture to this artist or that."¹²

In the context of forgery the Queen observes, "This can't be a forgery, it's in such and such a collection, its background and pedigree are impeccable--besides, it has been vetted by the experts . . . Isn't that how the argument goes? So if one comes across a painting with the right background and pedigree, Sir Anthony, then it must be hard, I imagine--even inconceivable--to think that it is not what it claims to be . . . Easier to leave things as they are in every department. Stick to the official attribution rather than let the cat out of the bag and say, here we have a fake."¹³

Here is an official explanation of why Blount has been undetected as a spy. At the end of the play, when he is about to be charged with the passing on of information about his fellow spies, he makes the analogy explicit by saying,

"And as a fake I shall, of course, exite more interest than the genuine article."¹⁴ The play ends with Blount looking at the slides of young men one more time. "But who are they all? What difference does it make? Behind them both lurk other presences, other hands. A whole gallery of possibilities. The real Titian an Allegory of Prudence. The false one an Allegory of Supposition. It is never ending."¹⁵

Art in *A Question of Attribution* defines the main character, gives the reasons for his actions and represents a world view. The use of the *Triple Portrait* in which the third secret figure is exposed after cleaning is a particularly pointed use of a painting in a play. Blount is found to be the fourth man in the Soviet spy ring which included Guy Burgess, Kim Philby and Donald Maclean. All these men would have been above suspicion because of their background (Public School), pedigree, and the company they kept. Bennett intermingles and co-relates all kinds of enigmatic and secret codes. These codes are those embedded in art, in the English class system, and in Blount's shadow lives as a spy and as a homosexual.

Wendy Wasserstein also uses the same structure in *The Heidi Chronicles*, a play about a woman coming to terms with feminism. The play is framed by Heidi's art lectures and projection of slides. In the first act prologue there is a discussion of: Sofonisba Anguissola, a 16th century portraist said to be an equal of Titian but left out of

contemporary art history texts, and her painting *Three Sisters Playing Chess*; Clara Peeters, a seventeenth-century painter, and her self portrait; and Lily Martin Spencer, a nineteenth-century American genre painter, and her painting, *We Both Must Fade*.

The second act opens with a similar discussion of Impressionist Lilla Cabot Perry and her paintings *Lady with a Bowl of Violets* and *Lady in Evening Dress*. The lecture starts with the wrong slide being shown--that of Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. Heidi makes the comment that the art works by Perry are genuinely feminine; the women are observers and seem removed from the activity they are watching. The wrong slide represents an empowered woman who was savior, martyr, whore and murderess.¹⁶ The play ends with Heidi pushing a baby carriage, containing a female child, up to an exhibit of Georgia O'Keeffe paintings. The ending was read by many reviewers as representative of Wendy Wasserstein's coming to terms with her own feminism, her womanhood and her sexuality.

Another play that uses the art lecture structure is *Belshazzar's Feast* written and designed by Mel Andringa. The play incorporates Mel Andringa's autobiographical images superimposed upon the dramatization of an unfinished painting by Washington Allston. It begins as a gallery lecture in front of a line drawing of the painting which slowly gives way to a three dimensional representation behind a scrim. The painting was worked over and over in

many layers over a period of twenty-five years and the play *ekphrastically* echoes the form of the painting by being a layering of scene fragments. Each scene dramatizes a section of the playwright's life and visually mimics part of the painting. These elements of the painting freeze in position and are carried into the next scene. The final scene is a tableau of the entire painting in authentic historical costume with Andringa rushing on stage at the last moment in contemporary garb and assuming the position of Daniel, the reader of the words of God at Belshazzar's feast. The frame of the play, the lecture, informs the audience of the history of the painting so that they can appreciate the play.

¹ D. H. Lawrence, "Introduction to These Paintings," in *Poets on Painters: Essays on the Art of Painting by Twentieth-Century Poets*, editor J. D. McClatchy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 79.

² Alan Bennett, *A Question of Attribution in Single Spies and Talking Heads* (New York: Summit Books, 1990.), 41.

³ Bennett, 73.

⁴ Bennett, 48.

⁵ Bennett, 54.

⁶ Bennett, 61.

⁷ Bennett, 68.

⁸ In Frank Rich's 17 December 1988 review from London in *The New York Times*, 20 December 1988, C19, he says "the

audience all but gasps when the comic actress, Prunella Scales, nearly the spitting image of the Queen appears."

9 Bennett, 61.

10 Bennett, 62.

11 Bennett, 66.

12 Bennett, 69.

13 Bennett, 70.

14 Bennett, 75.

15 Bennett, 76.

16 Paintings picturing Judith was discussed more fully in Chapter 5 with plays that dramatize the French Revolution and Chapter 6 with *Sleep of Reason*.

CHAPTER 8

METACREATIONAL PLAYS

"There are obviously no peaceful, harmonious social relations in Goya's art, like there are no 'happy endings' to the works of Valle-Inclán or Nieva since that order has been restored. Instead, the spectator, reader, or observer is left permanently off-balance, questioning complacency . . ."¹

His greatgrandmother, Dot, shows him the English reader where she has taken down things his greatgrandfather Seurat has said. The industrialized island fades away while the dissonant notes come together as a harmonic chord. The missing notes are gone; he has moved on. By seeing something old he has learned to see something new. A *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jette* reforms as it did at the end of Act 1. The depicted characters sing the title song. George says the words that when combined form the theory of art that Seurat created through, "Design, Tension, Composition, Balance, Light, . . . Harmony."² George steps back to view his work. The chord falls apart again. The sides of the stage have white flies which start to extend out, swallowing up the picture. As Dot disappears George says, "White. A blank page or canvas. His favorite. So

many possibilities."³ And so the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* ends with the possibility of a new beginning and a new picture being painted, one that cannot yet be represented.

Metacreational plays can be defined by two major categories: plays in which the visual image is scripted by one character and plays in which the general action of the play leads up to the creation of a famous painting. Metacreational plays tend to fall into several of the categories of this study simultaneously with the category of metacreational. The two plays discussed in this chapter, *The Siege of Ostend* and *Las Meninas* are both plays that dramatize a particular event of history. The central character of *Las Meninas* is Velázquez and what is dramatized is an episode in his life so this play can be called a biographical play. Both plays have elements of *ekphrasis* and *ekphractic* structure.

THE SIEGE OF OSTEND

In *The Siege of Ostend*, Ghelderode recreates through his character Sir Jaime the historic siege as if imagined by the painter James Ensor. Although Sir Jaime only appears in three of the tableaux he remains the major character of the play, for everything we see and hear has been scripted or visualized by this character. David Willinger, in the introduction to his translation of the play writes:

Sir Jaime knows he is a king only in his imagination, but wields enormous power in that acknowledgedly fictional domain. He is the embodiment of the artist, and as such, there is no limit to the reprisals he can (in his imagination) heap on his enemies. Ghelderode gives the artist (personified by Sir Jaime, but surely including himself as well) endless power: over heaven, hell and the weather.⁴

Willinger further states, "Ghelderode, who worshipped Ensor, and knew the siege of Ostend was one of his favorite episodes out of military history, had already written and was yet to write several plays using Ensor's canvasses as sources of inspiration."⁵ It is Willinger's thesis that Sir Jaime is a thinly disguised characterization of James Ensor.

Later in the introduction Willinger demonstrates that the play is *ekphrastic* by pointing out that, "The play is littered with images, both verbal and visual from Ensor's work and references, both obscure and generally known, to Ensor's life. And Sir Jaime's (very long, rambling) speeches intentionally ape Ensor's oratorical style of address"⁶ This oratorical style is *ekphrastic*. Sir Jaime does not speak in narrative form but as a series of images. Not only are these images referents to the works of Ensor, but the structure of his speech also imitates the visual structure of Ensor's paintings. Sir Jaime speaks as a series of lists or fragments just as the paintings of Ensor appear as an accumulation of fragments of images.

Willinger details the many ways in which etchings and paintings are referred to in the play. He notes that the paintings: "*The Entry of Christ in Brussels* is evoked at the climax of Tableau IX;"⁷ that Sir Jaime's masks are

continually referred to or seen and that the mask was a favorite subject of Ensor's, including one well known painting called *Ensor Surrounded by Masks*. Willinger also comments on how Sir Jaime's skeletons indicate Ensor's *Skeletons Disputing over a Pickled Herring*; and he finds the paintings *Doctrine Nourishment* and *The Bad Doctors* to be inspiration for Tableau X in which three doctors do an autopsy on a living patient. The structure of the play is *ekphractic* in that it is built on tableaux that are self-contained in epic style rather than driven by narrative.

The characterizations of the historic characters are created through the aesthetic of Sir Jaime. An indication of this is that Sir Jaime's speeches are littered with food images and metaphors which then are used again in the speeches of Isabella and Albert. The other characters are just what Sir Jaime paints them to be. The characters have no volition or self-motivated action because this is Sir Jaime's vision and world and consequently one that resembles the paintings of James Ensor. Ensor's paintings are influenced by the works of Goya, Brueghel and Bosch. The play is also populated by characters from these painters: there are devils, fisherwomen, doctors sawing away, women in sheaths coated in mud and infested with bugs, noblemen in animal masks, and "visored helmets, sallets, coats of mail, cirass leather corsets, iron masks, . . . catapults, seringes, bellows, Chinese head-splitters, spikes, lances, cutting shears, bayonets."⁸

In *The Siege of Ostend*, like many other plays that dramatize art, Ghelderode makes dramatic reference to other playwrights such as Aristophanes, Rabelais, and Jarry. The most telling tableau in metacreative terms is Tableau XV which takes place at the "Farting Jackass," and it also makes a striking metatheatrical reference. The characters are wearing Ensor masks and are coming from having watched a puppet show designed by Sir Jaime. The play by Ghelderode, *The Siege of Ostend*, has been indicated to have been written for marionettes. The marionette play-within-the-play is also about the Siege of Ostend drawn as a farce in the same manner as Ghelderode's play. Sir Jaime appears near the end of the scene dressed as Jupiter, King of the Gods. Here Ghelderode is obviously winking at the audience and letting us know the play we have been observing has been written through the aesthetic of Sir Jaime and is his tribute to James Ensor, "the only real artist alive in Netherlands."⁹

LAS MENINAS

"Velázquez, wrote the late Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, 'was probably one of the coolest men in existence. To him, to live meant to keep distance. His art reflects his attitude toward life. It is an art of distance.'¹⁰ It is important to mention José Ortega y Gasset at least briefly in a discussion of Spanish artistic creativity, for it is most often his philosophy and studies on art that are used to define important trends in Spanish culture. Ortega

y Gasset started writing after nationalism had exploded through Europe as a repercussion of the French revolution. Rockwell Gray in his biography of Ortega y Gasset states that "many intellectuals and artists sought to delineate the particular color and tone of their nation's cultural lives. Increasingly conscious of the idea of *Zeitgeist*, they sought to express the spirit of the age in painting, poetry and philosophy."¹¹ Ortega y Gasset tried to define that spirit which is essentially Spanish with the understanding that man was the maker of life's meaning. He found that Cartesian and Galilean solutions no longer made absolute sense and that man had to see himself as part of history. Man could only understand life as part of a pattern from the past and he should not expect a single or absolute version of the ends of culture. There were no eternal answers. Velázquez and Buero-Vallejo represent this philosophy by concerning themselves with creating and seeing something new. It is in this way they hope to inspire a new order, new hope, and a difference.

Las Meninas is the most densely encoded play of all the meta-artistic plays discussed. The play continually compares outside-inside, darkness-light, open-closed, seeing and not seeing and unseen, representing and what cannot be represented. The set is a series of playing spaces, some above and some within other playing spaces, representing the many layers and levels of Spanish society. The central area of the stage is meant to replicate Velázquez's studio within

the Palace and with either a shift of light or a curtain to expose an upper area, the central area becomes Velázquez's house. This house, the so-called "Treasury House," was close enough to the Palace that it could be seen from the royal residence. On either side of the central area there are the facades of his home and the Palace, so that when scenes take place between the two areas the participants are enclosed by the set. There is never any sense of being outside the power structure the set represents, except in the case of the frame character, Martin, who is also outside the time frame of the play. The structure of the play is what Silvio Gaggi defines in her discussion of postmodernism as a "frame-tale"¹² in that it pretends to be told by one of the characters of the play.

As the play begins the audience sees two beggars on opposite sides of the stage. Martin, the frame character is a visual recreation of the figure in Velázquez's painting *Menippus*, while his companion Pedro, is dressed as the old man in the painting *Aesop*. Pedro, who is almost blind, will play an essential part in the drama that ensues. Buero has created from a painting a beggar who has in turn created for himself a new personality. It is this beggar created by Buero from Velázquez, who has in part influenced his own appearance, for he has influenced what and how Velázquez paints. Martin speaks directly to the audience, saying, "Talking to the air is a way of surviving. You tell things as they might have happened. I make up a lot of tales but

this one could be true."¹³ Immediately Buero's dramaturgy raises the question of who is creating whom; is this a representation of history and truth or a tale told by a beggar and storyteller? Almost immediately the atmosphere darkens and a sense of dread appears for out of the shadows and blackness appears a Dominican Friar who slithers slowly onto the stage. Silence follows while Martin shows great obeisance to the Priest. The darkness of the stage creates the sense that it is filled with people, spying, listening, and waiting. Martin then steps back into the frame of the play in order to speak to Pedro and tell us of a secret life Pedro is hiding.

The lives from the buildings on either side of the stage come out onto the stage. From the Palace two of the Ladies-in-Waiting (*las meninas*), Doña Maria Agustina Sarmiento and Doña Isabel de Velasco, appear on the balcony, "wearing the same dresses as in the painting *Las Meninas*."¹⁴ Shortly, Doña Marcela de Ulloa, their duenna, joins them demanding of the Ladies who gave them permission to go out. Buero immediately prepares the audience for the representation of a society so oppressed that permission to get air must be obtained. Don Diego Ruiz de Azcona, who follows Doña Marcela to the balcony, remarks that "Life is far more pleasant inside,"¹⁵ setting up one of the major dynamics of the play--that is, the differences between the people inside in power and the people outside, out of power, out of money, and out of food. This inside/outside dynamic

occurs in the artistic discussion also, for what Velázquez decides to include within the frame of art and what he excludes defines his politics. The fact that the beggars, who are outside, are created by Buero as images from Velázquez's paintings exemplifies Buero's view of the democratic instincts of the artist.

As the scene continues, Velázquez's wife enters into the main area of the stage with her son-in-law, Juan Bautista del Mazo. A Burgundian guard had entered while the ladies-in-waiting scene was beginning and he continues his rounds while the next scene opens. This guarding adds to the atmosphere of repression as does the cinematic flow of action which gives one the feeling that someone is always around, watching, listening, and spying. As Doña Marcela says, "It's not forbidden to come out . . . as long as you do so with a person who commands proper respect."¹⁶ Juana speaks of earthly concerns (her scene takes place on stage level) and reprimands her son-in-law by suggesting that he favors art over family: "You seem to be fascinated by his paintings. I'm concerned with my grandchildren."¹⁷ And on cue, from above, on the balcony of his house we see Velázquez and the dialogue focuses on him. They ask each other what he is doing, what he is seeing, what he is looking at. Velázquez speaks to Juan de Pareja, his mulatto apprentice, below on the street. Pareja addresses him as Master; Velázquez corrects him: "Master? Are you forgetting that the King has freed you?"¹⁸ It is very

important that Buero has these as Velázquez's first lines for it establishes the painter's social concerns.

The others gossip about the surface events of the court or a superstitious report about a message in the clouds and wonder if that is what is concerning Velázquez. They are sure that he must be playing one of their games by pretending not to see them, but we as audience members are privy to his conversation. He is looking at the horizon and seeing a new shadow, wondering at what deeper truths slight shifts in tint might tell. In order for Pareja to enter into the house he must exit through the facade and come around back to the main playing area. This furthers the labyrinthian feeling for it makes the set circular and inclusive of the backstage. On the right, the Ladies are speaking of having committed the ugliest of sins by looking too long at a man, while on the left Velázquez is showing Mazo and Pareja an actual sin in the eyes of this society, a painting of a nude woman.¹⁹ The audience never sees the painting; it remains invisible to the audience, we do not even see the back of a canvas (as in the painting *Las Meninas*). Buero does not represent on the stage that which could not be displayed in the society that he is recreating. It must remain imagined in the minds of the audience as it does in the mind of the artist. We must fill in the blanks of truth that society will not allow to be represented on stage and also make the leap to an analogy between the repression from the time of the play and artistic censorship

in our time. The painting can only be spoken of in conspiratorial whispers and the room that contains it must be closed and locked. Velázquez's sorrow comes from the fact that this painting will not be seen because part of the drive towards creation is the need to share.

Juana complains that since he has come back from Italy Velázquez has become a stranger, always alone and always silent. He answers that "When you breathe the air and experience the light of Italy . . . you understand that until then you were a prisoner."²⁰ This land of Spain is a prison and a land of darkness for him for he cannot paint what he wants to paint because of the repressive political and ecclesiastical system. His wife can only understand his silence from the point of view of suspected infidelity with another woman. His answer is that his hands may be reaching "out for someone without knowing it. But not another woman, as you think. Someone to help me bear the torment of seeing clearly in this land of blindmen and lunatics."²¹ He tells of a man who taught him about life years before who was a beggar and the model for a painting. This man, ironically is the blindman Pedro. Buero continually builds metaphorically a dynamic between seeing/looking/watching and blindness (which ultimately may be seeing more clearly).

Velázquez slips out as his cousin Nieto comes in to visit, while the Infanta Maria Teresa appears on the balcony to watch her sister below. No one is ever alone. Velázquez meets Doña Marcela on the street outside and they speak in

veiled language of a past romantic intrigue. As a guard marches close by, she asks in hushed, secretive tones why Velázquez refuses to understand her hidden meaning. Velázquez warns her that they are being watched. This is the one constant in the play: everyone is being watched, from a balcony, from behind a curtain, or even by way of mirrors.

Nieto, meanwhile, is visiting with Velázquez's wife and filling her head with rumors of Velázquez's sinning with another woman. While the other characters try to bring Velázquez's focus from art to behavior of the court, namely extramarital sex, his cousin represents the religious impulse to see his preoccupation as a sin. He then tricks Juana into allowing him to see the hidden painting, under the pretext of saving her husband's soul. At the moment that we see Nieto look at the painting in the alcove of the central area, Pedro is at the door of Velázquez's house, Juana is on the balcony above, and the central area of the stage becomes Velázquez's studio in the Palace with the door in the rear open, flooding the area with light. What follows in the studio is a conversation among several of Velázquez's fellow court painters that is marked by jealousy. The studio is to be closed up, locked, for in it is a sketch of what Velázquez wants to paint next and for which he must get permission from the King. There is fear among the sychophants that it's going to be "frightfully scandalous."²² Velázquez enters unnoticed and then Pareja

slips into the room. A little later the Dominican Friar, who appears in the upstage door, stops, and watches them, is told to enter since the door is open. He dispenses quick blessings and then exits without having any dialogue. His only function is to represent the ever oppressive presence of the church.

Fearing that the painting is in danger, Velázquez asks to be filled in on court gossip. Pareja tells him of the jealousy, to which Buero's Velázquez answers that, "men will willingly believe the greatest stupidity provided they can belittle you with it."²³ The young Infanta Maria Teresa enters and we are given a glimpse into the unconventional friendship that has sparked much gossip and suspicion. Pareja leaves them alone, but Velázquez cannot drop his formality. The strangeness of being alone this way is emphasized by the number of times Maria Teresa mentions that they are alone. She asks the great truth teller, the painter, to answer her without lying and expresses her sense of isolation and exclusion. "You know that I often walk through the palace alone . . . Sometimes I catch a glimpse of a world that is not mine . . . the simple tenderness in the eyes of a washerwoman, the tired look of a guard. I overhear people talking about a child with a fever, or a harvest that will be good this year. But they see me and become silent."²⁴ She asks him about rumors she has heard about her father's adulteries. He answers "If they found out I was telling you the truth, no one would understand.

Truth is a terrible burden."²⁵ What place is there for Art in a society where truth is unknown or an unwanted burden? He eventually tells her that the rumors are true. The King is guilty of what everyone believes Velázquez to be doing, for in this world defined by the King everyone is a representation of the King.

After the Infanta exits we see the dwarf Nicolasillo playing with an invisible dog. The other dwarf, Mari Barbola, tells him he shouldn't ask so many questions. He is too curious for a world that prefers its secrets to the truth. Nicolasillo's eyes are sharper than the painter's and he proves his ears are better by telling of another's approach. Pareja reenters to tell Velázquez of the appearance of the beggar who was his model for Aesop. Velázquez quickly exits to go home. The two dwarfs remain, and Mari Barbola defines the Palace and Court life as a carnival. She comforts Nicolasillo, telling him that she will watch over him continually for he will always be a child.

Pedro, who says his name is now Pablo, was the model for Aesop and is warmly greeted by Velázquez. They discuss truth and change. "Things change . . . Perhaps their truth is in their appearance, which also changes . . .if we managed to look at them in a different way from the ancients, we could even paint a void."²⁶ Velázquez is trying to change the world by seeing in a different way. This character symbolizes the theme of the play and

ultimately provides the inspiration for Velázquez to complete the painting.

Meanwhile, the other court painters have invited the King to see Velázquez's sketch without his knowing so that they can make sure the King does not allow it to be painted. Furthering the sense of being watched, "Invisible hands separate the curtains"²⁷ to allow Philip IV into the studio. Nardi, one of the painters shows the sketch to the King and gives his interpretation. He argues that Velázquez plans to paint the Infantas without respect for they they look simply like other ladies of the court; the dwarfs, the servants and even the dog are as important in the painting as they are. The Marques says that the most radical aspect of the painting is that it is Velázquez, who is the largest and most central character. Even the King and Queen were only to be represented as reflections in a mirror.

The Infanta enters through the curtains, asks to see her father alone and then confronts him with not being involved enough with the problems of the kingdom. He orders her to leave, and then Velázquez enters to ask if he can continue the painting. The King inquires about the hidden meaning in the painting. Velázquez admits that it represents one of the truths of the Palace and that everything can be loved, dogs, dwarfs and children. He then tells the King quite candidly that his greatest desire is to own the Cross of Santiago as recognition of his genuine nobility. One of Velázquez's major personal ambitions was to

prove the nobility that he believed he had despite his birth which in the play is represented by the attaining of the Cross of Santiago. The art critic Janet Hobhouse in analyzing Velázquez's paintings finds, "an assertion of his own belief in the greatness of his calling, his awareness of his own dignity, even nobility--something that in material form he spent a good deal of his later life trying to arrange (through false documentation and the marriages of his children)"²⁸

Velázquez receives no answer to his question about the painting and the King exits to three echoing and ever more distant calls of "the King" by guards. Through this effective device Buero conveys to the audience the immensity of the maze in which the studio is so deeply buried. Nieto the cousin speaks to Velázquez about the evil spirits he fears are influencing the painter. Velázquez answers that Nieto is "always seeing evil spirits in the corners."²⁹ Pedro is present and because in this world all things are understood only as they relate to the court, Nieto presumes him to be the new court jester. When they are alone, Velázquez shows Pedro the sketch and he interprets it to Velázquez's pleasure and consequently, perhaps, the way in which Buero-Vallejo reads the painting.

PEDRO: A calm painting; but with all of Spain's sadness within it. Whoever sees these beings will understand how hopelessly condemned to sorrow they are. They're living ghosts of people whose truth is death. Whoever looks at them tomorrow will do so with awe. Yes, with awe, for there will come a moment, as is happening to me right now, when he'll wonder whether he

is the ghost in the presence of these figures . . . And he will want to save himself with them, to embark on the motionless ship of this room, because they are looking at him, because he is already in the painting when they look at him, And perhaps, while he seeks his own face in the mirror, he is saved for a moment from dying.³⁰

For Pedro, Velázquez and Buero-Vallejo the painting draws the spectator in and traps him/her for eternity. Velázquez answers this interpretation with, "This painting was waiting for you. Your eyes transform the sketch into the larger canvas . . . just as I shall paint it. A painting of poor beings saved by light . . . I have come to suspect that the very form of God, if He has form, must be light."³¹ In the light one sees the truth and what during the French Revolution represents revolution becomes God in Velázquez's symbolic vocabulary. Since Velázquez's paintings are defined by him as being paintings of light, then they are always religious in nature; his paintings are in a sense always depiction of God. The religion of Buero's Velázquez is an early form of secular humanism.

The rest of the scene deals with Pedro's past and the political injustices that had caused him to give up the dream of being a painter and brought him to the point of rebelling violently against his oppressor and urging others to rise up too. Nicolasillo had been hiding all this time and has overheard the political heresy that has been spoken by Pedro. Part I ends with Velázquez bringing Pedro home with him, Juana's disagreeing with her husband but giving in to the will of her master, followed by Pedro's disappearance

from Velázquez's home. The two *meninas* have been speaking silently on the Palace balcony throughout this scene. They speak of the superstition of a ball of fire being seen in the sky that would symbolize the birth of a male heir for the crown. They keep looking at the sky hoping to see this sight and finally they delude themselves into thinking they see the ball of fire, as in the street below the painter takes the hand of the old beggar to lead him back into the house.

While the first part of *Las Meninas* presents a mosaic of interrelated scenes and impressions, the second part of the play focuses on a kind of inquisition of Velázquez's talent. It opens with prison imagery for behind the upstage door, which is only left ajar, we see and hear Doña Isabel playing music as the commentator Martin says, "She's like a canary in a cage."³² The structure of the action of this part duplicates that of Part One except now the characters, even the King, notice that they are never alone. The number of guards are even doubled. Much of the silent watching is done by the Infanta Maria Teresa who has obviously learned much about power from her father. With her search for truth, her speaking of her mind, and her ability to learn the weapons of the enemy she is one of Buero-Vallejo's most empowered female characters. This is of particular interest when placed against what Hobhouse says about the women in Velázquez's paintings. "His women are characteristically austere, duty-bound creatures, as though nobility, or

occupation desexed them in his eyes."³³ But then she states that "Two of his best portraits of women are depictions of power."³⁴

During the interrogation, the first charge brought against Velázquez is that he has done a painting of a nude woman. Velázquez's defense is: first, he has not exhibited it, second there are creations of the sort already in Spain and finally, that there are religious paintings that use nudity such as a Christ which he painted for the nuns of San Lacio years before. The King answers that they are kept in secluded places and after all were not painted by Spaniards who should set a higher example. To the charge by his cousin that he is being blasphemous, Buero's Velázquez answers, "I have seen it pure; your eye besmirches it. . . . A painter is an eye that sees Creation in all its glory."³⁵ The charge of this painting being pornographic duplicates Hobhouse's observations on another nude by the painter. She writes, "Nor does Velázquez's painterly coolness melt in the presence of flesh. His famous Rokeby Venus ("Venus and Cupid"), the only surviving example of a female nude in his oeuvre, is a notably chilly artifact, close to the strategies of pornography in its teasing back-view half-display, and its denial of the persona of the model This is not an inviting nude [It is a] display of mutual remoteness."³⁶

The next accusations have to do with lack of talent and failing eyesight. Nardi and the Marques accuse him of

having created only one painting that glorifies the power of the King as a warrior, *The Surrender of Breda*, which is "too peaceful a painting . . . he invites us to laugh at a glorious soldier of our armies."³⁷ Regarding the sketch, Nardi maintains that, "he admits no distance between Their Majesties . . . and the dogs and jesters that he paints," and "the same could be said of his religious paintings: they are few in number, and I don't believe that they inspire devotion. He seems only to seek human qualities in what is divine."³⁸ He is accused of not seeing very clearly since many of his paintings are smeared when you get close to them. His answer is that they, the other painters, do not understand the laws of color and goes on to prove that Nardi himself had copied some of his effects. Velázquez is the first impressionist painter for he is painting light and what one sees rather than the details. Finally, they accuse him of a political infidelity because he gave shelter to a political fugitive, who is now dead, named Pedro.

At this point the Infanta enters and defends Velázquez. The King can only interpret her actions by his own experience and sees in them sexual misconduct. The rumors that have caused the King to come to these conclusions are exposed as false and the only thing the King demands is that Velázquez recognize his submission to the King's person. Velázquez is weeping for the dead Pedro and asks the question, "Does power only know to silence with blood the outcry against its own error."³⁹ While Velázquez was

silently acquiescing to the power structure before Pedro's death, he now gives his frustration voice. He says, "hunger is spreading, the air is poisoned, and truth is so intolerable that it must be hidden like my Venus."⁴⁰ This is a comment on political tyranny that duplicates Buero's own experience. Art in the language of this play is a metaphor for the political. After the Infanta's pleading to the King not to exile his conscience and to choose between truth and lies, Velázquez is pardoned and honored with the Cross of Santiago he had so desired. The King exits; Nieto is about to follow but stops and looks back suspiciously at the scene of the Infanta and Velázquez. Velázquez remarks that he will freeze this image of his cousin as a suspicious weasel for all eternity by painting him in this pose (which he does in *Las Meninas*). In the final scene Martin closes the play in the time frame of the audience or spectators. The last image (Nieto in the rear) needed to complete *Las Meninas* has been identified, and the painting is re-created on stage in a tableau in which the subjects of the painting speak the final bits of dialogue under Martin's direction.

Dennis Perri in his article "*Las Meninas: The Artist in Search of a Spectator*" makes an examination of the entire play from the perspective of receiver or spectator. This approach makes sense since Pedro, the *raisonneur*, speaks of how the painting draws the spectator into it. The play's structure does the same with the frame-tale of Martin. Perri is looking for the "creative role of the spectator in

the aesthetic experience."⁴¹ In particular he points out the scene in which Pareja and Velázquez observe the sky towards the beginning of the play and every character thinks he or she sees something different. He finds in this scene an example of how the play is about the variability of perception and competing interpretations. He finds that the play is about multiplicity of readings and the triangle that is formed between artist/work/public. He states that "the painting constitutes an act of rebellion against the crown" and "for some spectators, unorthodox perspectives in art challenge dominant social norms and therefore must be condemned."⁴² By interpreting the play in this manner he finds that both the play and the image it represents are revolutionary. Perri's final argument is that Pedro's life as a rebel and Velázquez's art complement each other and that the painting, which draws you into its "timeless space"⁴³ cannot be divorced from its social circumstances.

It is very important to investigate what has been said about the painting, *Las Meninas*, for not only is the play metacreative, the painting is a perfect representation of the themes of the play. The play is not called *Velázquez*, but *Las Meninas*, and even though the painting does not exist until the last moment and the dramatic action of the play does not revolve around the actual creation of the painting, the thesis of the painting and the thesis of the play are the same. The action questions the right to create a painting, to see something new, a question that in its

answer and in its questioning leads to the realization of the painting.

Nina Ayala Mallory, in her review of a 1990 exhibition of Velázquez paintings, quotes the seventeenth century celebrated Neapolitan painter Luca Giordano who, upon seeing *Las Meninas* called it "the Theology of painting."⁴⁴ While Silvio Gaggi in *Modern/Postmodern: A Study in Twentieth Century Arts and Ideas* details how in the postmodern period "new attention has been given to a painting from the Spanish Baroque--Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (*The Maids of Honor*, 1656)--a painting that like many contemporary works, cannot be made neatly to fit into a classic-romantic duality. It has been quoted and parodied."⁴⁵ Among the more recent parodies (in Linda Hutcheon's use of the word parody) are those of Pablo Picasso, Joel-Peter Witkin, a Mexican artist, and in the theatre Tadeusz Kantor in his last piece *Today Is My Birthday*⁴⁶ and Paolo Pasolini in his play *Calderon*. Gaggi finds it "a major visual antecedent to postmodernism--just as works like *Don Quixote*, *Tristram Shandy*, and *Hamlet* have become major literary and dramatic antecedents."⁴⁷

Gaggi continues by stating that *Las Meninas* can be viewed as "an examination and problemizing of the conventions of Renaissance and 'classical' perspective [and also] questioning of classical ways of knowing and of the traditional notion of self."⁴⁸ In this manner it shows the influence of the recent Italian art acquisitions of the

Spanish court. "[The] artist inscribes himself into his work, and this figure inside the painting appears to be painting the real individual who stands in front of it. The contradictory aspect of the painting is further complicated by the mirror at the back of the room which appears to reflect two individuals [the King and Queen] who seem to occupy the viewer's space in front of the painting, the same position at which the artist gazes."⁴⁹

Gaggi quotes John R. Searle, "*Las Meninas* and the Paradoxes of Pictorial Representation," in *The Language of Images*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) who maintains "that the painting being worked on in *Las Meninas* is *Las Meninas* itself. In support of this view he argues that the painting in the painting is approximately the same size as *Las Meninas*, that it is too large for a portrait, and that *Las Meninas* is probably the only portrait of the royal couple Velázquez painted."⁵⁰

All interpretations of the painting revolve around the problem of the mirror in the rear of the painting.

The central paradox of the painting resides in the mirror Logically, the space in front of *Las Meninas* can be occupied by only two possible individuals (or groups); the artist who actually stood in front of the canvas when he painted it and could therefore be reflected in a mirror represented on the canvas, or, more literally the viewer who, in effect, displaces the artist when he or she steps up to the painting to view it is complete. . . . [However] '*Las Meninas*' incorporates an irreconcilable contradiction. Both artist and viewer have been displaced by the royal couple the mirror casts back not the image of the viewer but the image of individuals that the viewer knows himself or herself not to be . . . we may be threatened by the fact that our position--along with

out 'selves' perhaps--has been appropriated by the monarch. Our presence has been literally erased; we have been made invisible and non-existent as far as the painting is concerned. It is significant that it is the monarch, the figure of highest political and social authority, who approximates the viewers space, visibility, materiality, and ego.⁵¹

Carlos Fuentes tells us his impression of *Las Meninas* upon seeing the cleaned painting in 1987. He stayed and watched for an hour and decided, "the painting looks at us; we look at the painting and as the essayist and philosopher Ortega y Gasset observed in his study of Velázquez, a double dynamic is established: we are invited into the painting, but we also invite the painting out of itself towards us. The painting exists because we see it; do we, too, exist because the painting sees us? . . . Philip Roth [who was with him at that viewing] quickly pinned down one aspect of our problem with *Las Meninas*: the narrative possibilities of the painting, the infinite combinations of *telling* the material offered by Velázquez."⁵²

Michel Foucault uses his analysis of the painting (or more correctly the painting within-the-painting) in order to develop his theory on perception and representation in *The Order of Thing: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Foucault feels that the painter "rules at the threshold of those two incompatible visibilities [being within and without the frame]"⁵³ He states that "the painter is turning his eyes toward us only in so far as we happen to occupy the same position as his subject . . . the painter's gaze, addressed to the void confronting him outside the

picture, accepts as many models as there are spectators."⁵⁴ He finds enigma in the painting in that "subject and object, the spectator and the model reverse their roles to infinity . . . it prevents the relation of these gazes from ever being discoverable or definitely established."⁵⁵ It is this sense of reflecting into infinity that adds to the labyrinthian feel of Buero's play. Furthering this sense of loss of identity, he says, "Because we can only see that reverse side [of the painting being worked on] we do not know who we are . . . seen or seeing? The painter is observing a place which from moment to moment never ceases to change its content, its form, its face, its identity."⁵⁶ In looking at the mirror of the painting the viewer seeks himself, "his invisibility made visible to the painter and transposed into an image forever invisible to himself [the spectator]"⁵⁷

There are usually *sprecter* figures, figures who appear to be looking at the spectator of the painting, in all of Velázquez's paintings. In this case it is not only the Painter, but the figure in the rear of the room, Angelo Nardi, Infanta Margarita, and the dwarf Mari Barbola. In art criticism these *sprecter* figures are important for they acknowledge the spectator and draw the activity of looking into the frame of the painting. This is in contrast to the realist painter who tends to have the characters absorbed in an activity uninvolved with the existence of an audience.

Leaving the painting-in-the-painting for a while, Foucault turns his attention to the mirror (after all, paintings are only a mirror of life and so both are mirrors.) "It is not the visible it reflects [in the sense of what is visible in the painting], in those bright depths. In Dutch painting it was traditional for mirrors to play a duplicating role, they repeated the original contents of the picture."⁵⁸ In this way the painting also represents a representational break with the Flemish masters and identifies Velázquez with the Italian Renaissance painters. Following through, Foucault says that because the mirror position is more or less central it ought not be governed by the same lines of perspective as the picture itself; however, when one draws those lines, one finds nothing visible in that position. It is his thesis that the mirror is reflecting the painting that Velázquez is looking out of the frame of the painting in order to paint. "The mirror provides a metathesis of visibility that affects both the space represented in the picture and its nature as representation; it allows us to see in the centre of the canvas, what in the painting is of necessity doubly invisible [because it lies outside the frame of the painting and the painting of it is turned away from us]".⁵⁹ The aspect of metathesis also comes from the fact that the left side of the painting is illuminated by a window, an opening, that allows in light for us to see, while the right side of the painting from which the painter, the see-er, sees is

dark, hidden from our view, and the mirror which should show us ourselves represents something else that the painter is seeing.

Foucault goes on to build this thesis of metathesis by showing how the picture is structured. The sovereigns provide the center around which the entire representation is ordered. "For the function of that reflection is to draw into the interior of the picture what is intimately foreign to it . . . the King appears in the depths of the looking-glass precisely because he does not belong to the picture."⁶⁰ And yet it must be remembered that the painting only exists because of the King, his permission and his patronage. Foucault finds that if one were to draw a line on the canvas dividing it in half that the line passes between the eyes of the Infanta and that "here, beyond all question resides the principal theme of the composition; this is the very object of this painting [the eyes, of in particular the child]. As though to prove this and to emphasize it even more Velázquez has made use of a traditional visual device; beside the principal figure he has placed a secondary one kneeling and looking in towards the central one . . . like an angel greeting the Virgin."⁶¹ A further political implication that Foucault draws from the painting is the way in which Velázquez engrandizes himself by being colored so strongly in comparison to the Royal reflection.

Foucault concludes that "it may be that, in this picture, as in all the representations of which it is, as it were, the manifest essence, the profound invisibility of what one sees is inseparable from the invisibility of the person seeing--despite all mirrors, reflections, imitations, and portraits. Around the scene are arranged all the signs and successive forms of representation [mirrors, paintings, window, doors, light and dark] . . . representation undertakes to represent itself here in all its elements, with its images, the eyes to which it is offered [the spectator-King], the faces it makes visible, the gestures that call it into being."⁶² In true deconstructionist manner Foucault shows how seeing is not seeing. We cannot see ourselves in the act of seeing for then we would only reflect ourselves. A painter cannot represent himself viewing what he is painting for it would eternally shift--though, as I will propose, the frozen reflection of the King and Queen is a political statement about his viewers.

Gaggi agrees with Foucault about the "meta" aspect of this painting. "Three elements on the back wall--paintings, the mirror, and the 'real' figure in the doorway--can be seen as constituting an itinerary of forms of reflection and representation. Gaggi goes on to speak of how the painting is a two-dimensional surface that pretends to be a three dimensional world,"⁶³ and the theatrical representation of this illusion, the play *Las Meninas*, adds another level of illusion. Gaggi notes that, "The painting deals with

problems of representating and symbolization and does so in a way that bears repercussions on our understanding of the individual and of the individual's relationship to forms of authority that exist outside the self."⁶⁴ More concisely stating Foucault's point, Gaggi notes that, "the central paradox of the painting turns on the impossibility of representing the act of representing."⁶⁵ Gaggi then terms the picture "metapictorial" and states that it involves "a set of complex and shifting relationships of observer and observed, subject and object, artist and audience."⁶⁶ It is interesting how all the observations about the painting could be restated as observations about Buero's play. Self-referentiality is a signpost of postmodernism.

Frank Stella, the artist, writes of having found a new admiration for Velázquez from The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1989 Velázquez exhibit. He disagrees with Ortega y Gasset (not knowingly) and says, "We love Velázquez because his greatness is approachable. His work is warm, contained and manageable. His compassion for his subjects and for himself wins us over."⁶⁷ More importantly he is impressed by his concern for technique, and that places him in agreement with Buero's dramatization of Velázquez. Stella's reading of the painting *Mars* is interesting because he imputes a political position to the painter. *Mars* is painted in a double light: the upper part half in shadow, hard, still helmeted, and warlike; while the lower half is soft in posture and color, naked, and even romantic. This

is Mars as both warrior and lover. Stella states, "Certainly it's not very difficult to see Philip IV as a model for Mars. His responsibilities as an imperial commander in chief fit him for the role of warrior, and his passions for the theatre, notably actresses, made him well known as a lover."⁶⁸

Jonathan Brown, the foremost expert on Velázquez finds that the painting is primarily a visual thesis supporting Velázquez's contention that a painter's status should be above that of a craftsman. This is in part supported by Buero's play in Velázquez's desire for the Cross of Santiago.⁶⁹ It is possible to conclude that Buero's recreation of the painting that the mirror contains the King and Queen, not because they may be actually present but because in this totalitarian society even the air reflects their presence. The inside, outside, and aboveness of the setting suggest that in all areas of this society no one is ever alone, there is always someone watching, and there is no escape, for each exit only leads deeper into the labyrinth of the kingdom ruled by the King.

This play illustrates as much or more than any other play the difference between the novel and drama. It is very important to notice what takes place off stage for it represents statements about the power structure the play is illustrating. Each time the King enters or exits there are echoes of calls "The King." There is the continual reappearance of a Burgundian guard who walks on and off with

his pike. Early in the play Velázquez says, "We have enough light" and the stage directions read "(from offstage)"⁷⁰ but this offstage is actually from farther in or on the stage.

The play setting continually shows openness and closeness at the same time and the dialogue follows this dynamic. The artist is shown looking and speaking about seeing as we as audience also try to see and interpret what we see. The set is defined by shadow and light (lightness and darkness) and they play a role in the action and dialogue of the play. Velázquez says, "Don't you see a new shadow? It's curious how little the tints of things tell us about them. I begin to wonder if they're not telling us a deeper truth."⁷¹ It is in the same way that the audience searches for deeper truth within this play.

It is important that we see no painting until order is re-established at the end, when Velasquez gives in to the King, rebellion is crushed, and order is replaced. Then the painting comes into view; and yet we remain uneasy because of the questions that the painting itself raises: Why are the King and Queen reflected in that mirror that seems to face the audience, and what is in the painting that Velázquez is painting and we only view from the rear? If Velázquez is painting and watching what is posed in front of him, it is we who are being painted. Our gaze is at the stage, Velázquez's gaze is back at us--the closed system, the labyrinth without escape, the mirror-within-the-mirror continues to infinity without change. The yelling of the

guards sets up a system of room-within-room. There exists a painting-within-a-painting. What hope of change is there? He looks at us while we look at him and the King and Queen are seen in the reflection. The only light comes through the unseen window which is outside the frame of the picture and that light is said to represent God. There remain many questions about the painting as there also remain enigmas within the play. They are perfect complements--the impulse is the same though the means for translating the truth are different.

¹ Claudia Schaefer, "Francisco Nieva in the Shadow of Goya, Valle-Inclan, and the Aesthetic of the *Esperpento*," *Estreno* 15 no.2 (Otono, 1989), 15.

² Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, *Sunday in the Park with George*, in *Famous American Plays of the 1980s* selected by Robert Marx (New York: Dell, 1988), 411.

³ Sondheim, 413.

⁴ David Willinger, intro., *Michel de Ghelderode* (Austin: Host Publications, 1990), 5.

⁵ Willinger, 7.

⁶ Willinger, 7.

⁷ Willinger, 10.

⁸ Michel de Ghelderode, *The Siege of Ostend* in *Michel de Ghelderode*, trans. David Willinger (Austin: Host Publications, 1990), 58-9.

⁹ Ghelderode, *The Siege of Ostend*, 56.

¹⁰ Janet Hobhouse, "Power and Flesh," *ARTnews* (November, 1989), 112.

¹¹ Rockwell Gray, *The Imperative of Modernity: An Intellectual Biography of Jose Ortega Y Gasset* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 34.

- 12 Silvio Gaggi, *Modern/Postmodern: A Study in Twentieth Century Arts and Ideas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 9.
- 13 Antonio Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas: A Fantasia in Two Parts*, trans. Marion Peter Holt (San Antonio,: Trinity University Press, 1987), 5-6.
- 14 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 7.
- 15 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 8.
- 16 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 10.
- 17 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 10.
- 18 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 10.
- 19 Marion Peter Holt in the introduction to his translation of the play makes it clear that this painting is not the *Rokeby Venus*, the only female nude by Velázquez that exists today.
- 20 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 16.
- 21 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 16-17.
- 22 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 26.
- 23 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 30.
- 24 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 33.
- 25 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 33.
- 26 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 41.
- 27 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 43.
- 28 Hobhouse, 112.
- 29 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 52.
- 30 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 54.
- 31 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 55.
- 32 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 65.
- 33 Hobhouse, 115.
- 34 Hobhouse, 115.
- 35 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 87.

- 36 Hobhouse, 114.
- 37 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 90.
- 38 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 91.
- 39 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 102.
- 40 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 102.
- 41 Dennis Perri, "Las Meninas: The Artist in Search of a Spectator," *Estreno* 1 (Primavera 1985), 25.
- 42 Perri, 26.
- 43 Perri, 28.
- 44 Nina Ayala Mallory, "Courtly Natures: Velázquez at the Met," *Art in America* 78 no.2 (February 1990), 129.
- 45 Gaggi, 2.
- 46 The Infanta is a character. We see the structure that holds up her skirt. It is a metal cage which constructs this image of female beauty. I, from a twentieth century perspective, interpret this to be an image of how society represses natural woman by entrapping her in this type of structure and as represented through a woman who is an image of art created under a repressive regime.
- 47 Gaggi, 2.
- 48 Gaggi, 2.
- 49 Gaggi, 4.
- 50 Gaggi, 4.
- 51 Gaggi, 4-5.
- 52 Carlos Fuentes, "Velázquez, Plato's Cave and Bette Davis," *New York Times*, 15 March 1987, Arts and Leisure Section, 1.
- 53 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Thing: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 4.
- 54 Foucault, 4.
- 55 Foucault, 5.
- 56 Foucault, 5
- 57 Foucault, 5.

- 58 Foucault, 7.
- 59 Foucault, 8.
- 60 Foucault, 15.
- 61 Foucault, 12.
- 62 Foucault, 16.
- 63 Gaggi, 5.
- 64 Gaggi, 6.
- 65 Gaggi, 6.
- 66 Gaggi, 6.
- 67 Frank Stella, "Velázquez and the Truth That Is Art," *New York Times*, 1 October 1989, Arts and Leisure Section, 1 & 39.
- 68 Stella, 39.
- 69 Jonathan Brown, *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth Century Spanish Painting* (New Jersey: Princeton, 1978) University Press. The general thesis of his chapter on Velázquez is that *Las Meninas* is a statement of Velázquez's raising the status of painter.
- 70 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 13.
- 71 Buero-Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 11.

CONCLUSIONS

"I owe you the truth in painting and I will tell it to you."¹

The interrelationships of art and drama in Western European Theatre are varied and the processes and methods by which these interrelationships are displayed are just as varied and diverse. In search for new words, new phrases, new ideas, and new stage environments, playwrights have often borrowed from the language of paintings. The reasons for the recreation of paintings on stage or the dramatization of paintings often depends upon the position that art holds within a society; the value which it is given. In order for a theorist to have needed to prescribe the use of paintings on stage, art must have been separated from the general activity of the society. In order for the visual arts to be reintroduced into the theatre, the visual arts must have separated at some point from theatre arts. In Europe, art became a representation of a higher order of life, created at first as a glorification of a religion or God and then as a glorification of a monarchy. Art finally became a representation of a society having developed to a higher order.

The dramatization of a painting is a framed moment of deeper resonance: a frozen moment pregnant with deeper meaning. It is distinctly different from ordinary staged life. Art reconstructed on stage can be intertwined with life as part of a cultural whole with no separation between art, life and politics. It also can be viewed as primarily an economic commodity.

There is no proof that any one group of playwrights discussed in this study learned from another. The theatre movements that developed directly from art movements often used the manifestoes from those movements; however, in this study the concern has been with playwrights who have quoted art and art movements rather than adopting their aesthetics.

The oldest form of recreation of paintings on the stage is *ekphrasis*. *Ekphrasis* can usually be identified by the sense of breaking the time frame of the play, often being a frozen moment of description. It is in this way that *ekphrasis* can be recognized by an audience that may not be familiar with the painting verbally represented. This technique of translation of visual image into words leads to *ekphractic* structure where the dramatic development of the play follows the logic represented in a painting. It would be difficult for an audience not familiar with the works of Bosch, Duchamp, and Magritte to understand the reasoning behind the action in Arrabal's *Garden of Delights* and Stoppard's *Artist Descending a Staircase* and *After Magritte*, respectively.

It is hard to prove a playwright's source of inspiration; however, when that inspiration is a piece of art there are often clues to that inspiration such as titling the play after the painting or describing a character in terms of the painting. The power of painting to become symbolic or iconographic of a particular aspect of life is used by some playwrights who recreate paintings on stage. In these plays painting often becomes metaphoric for a particular view of life and man's ability to create and influence his own life.

History plays often use paintings as a historical document proving the truth of what is being portrayed on stage. The French Revolution was a particularly fecund event for this type of representation. With the revolution in France there was a need to anchor the society through the art of representation. The painters of the revolution, especially David, anchored the visions of a new society in the symbols of the past in order to make some sense out of the chaos. The position of art in this society was not only to educate the illiterate but also to make order out of revolution. By relating the revolution to images that refer back to the Bible or Roman history, the revolution is presented as a higher inevitable truth with historic precedence. This can be seen from both sides of the Revolution, those who believe in its inevitable success, even though it means a second coming, and those that believe in its inevitable failure.

Playwrights writing about the French Revolution often use the ability of paintings to refer to a greater reality. Przybylska has the stage picture modelled after a painting when her play turns into a tragedy. It is at the moment of Danton's death that the failure of the Revolution becomes inevitable. Robespierre knows that his death brings the beginning of the reign of terror and the end of the revolution. Weiss, a German playwright writing about the revolution from outside France, presents the moment of Marat's death as a reconstruction of David's painting which is modeled after a Pieta, and then represents the revolution's "second coming" by ending the play with a vision of David's *Oath of the Tennis Court*.

Many Spanish artists represent art as the soul of the country, that which defines a Spaniard. When the country was uniting it was the first cultural artifact that was treasured and elevated. Buero-Vallejo writes in *Las Meninas* that the painting is the image of the soul of Spain. It remains so for the Italian director/writer Pasolini who uses the same painting to define Spain in his play *Calderón*. Calderón uses the metaphor of painting and a description of painting to glorify his King who at that moment in history is Spain. To Alberti, the rape of Spain by the Civil War can only be represented through the removal of the Art from public view in the Prado. In exile, Arrabal defines himself as a Spanish playwright through the use of images from

Spanish art. Using images from his country's cultural past he defines his country's political present.

It is the ability of paintings to recreate a moment in cultural and political history that makes them the perfect tool for biographical plays. These paintings try to recreate the atmosphere for the audience to feel the way in which the people's lives being dramatized were lived. This is a particularized subcategory of plays dramatizing an event in history, for these plays are often about the people who made the events of history. Confusion over which category a play can be fit into occurs when a person becomes representative of an event in history. In Buero's *The Sleep Of Reason*, Goya's paintings, though they all refer back to him, are about his society.

There are two categories of plays that are an outgrowth of metatheatre; "art lecture" plays and metacreational works. Metatheatrical reference is often made in plays that recreate paintings as are references to other arts such as dance and music; however, the above mentioned categories are defined by their structural similarity to metatheatre. "Art Lecture" plays are related to the play-within-the-play technique in which a lecture within the time frame of the audience leads to a dramatization of the painting being lectured about. This type of dramatization splits the ability of art to exist both in the time frame of its creation and the eternal present of the viewer.

Metacreational plays develop from the ability of a character in metatheatre to script the reality that the audience is viewing. In the case of the metacreational play the script writer is a visual artist and the stage reality is representative of that artist's worldview. This is different from *ekphractic* structure in that the artist is a character in the play and is creating the visual world from within the action of the play.

Most critics, while referring to the fact that a painting is recreated on stage, do not read significance into the recreation of art on stage. Many of the paintings that are translated to the stage by playwrights are themselves heavily culturally encoded. Paintings such as *Las Meninas*, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, and *Triple Portrait* have volumes written about them; however, plays which use these paintings are rarely viewed by critics with these writings in mind. This study is an attempt to reveal the rich and complex problems raised by such plays and to suggest methodologies by which they can be addressed.

¹ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 2.

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