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Set in Poland, that is to say Nowhere: Alfred Jarry and the politics of topological space

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Abstract

This article is intended to shed light on philosophical considerations on the ontology of space (situation) as put forward in the prose and dramatic writings of French iconoclast Alfred Jarry, by posing that Jarry's notion of space is dynamic in a twofold sense. Firstly, Jarry's sense of space is consistently described in terms of a sense of temporality (duration), which is why Jarry's sense of space is distinctly higher-dimensional (space-time). Secondly, I argue that Jarry's reaction against conventional modalities of scientific and artistic thinking take the form of a subversive turn (which Deleuze calls the Great Turning), via the pseudoscience of pataphysics, which is directed not only against metaphysics, but also a geometric understanding of the physical and metaphysical worlds. I argue that Jarry's conception of a spatio-temporal ontology is distinctly non-geometric, or topological in nature. Topological imagery allows Jarry to present a more vital and fleshed out sense of living space-time, within which a new politics of space and time is activated by the forces of endless change and continuous deformation. I argue that through the topological corporeality of Ubu, Jarry promotes a sense of ABSTRACT theatre within which the dynamic properties of topological space become actualised in the way of a politics of the unimaginable, an Ubuesque realm where, through the power of technology and the imagination, the exceptional and unrealisable rule.

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Jarry's science of exceptions

French author Alfred Jarry posed a fascinating question regarding the ontology of everyday objects: 'Why should anyone claim that the shape of a watch is round- a manifestly false proposition- since it appears in profile as a narrow rectangular construction, elliptic on three sides; and why the devil should one only have noticed at the moment of looking at the time?'ⁱ Picking up, Gilles Deleuze explained that a watch only *appears* round, but that this appearance is due to the function of the watch as a utensil that allows us to keep track of time. On this account, Deleuze reintroduces his concept of the *phenomenon*, which refers to the fact the Being can only be thought of in terms of how it shows itself to consciousness, via an infinite series of temporalized singularities. This showing is characterised by the fact that Being presents itself to a being-now, who can only capture a present-time perspective of Being through the singular subjectivity that is individual consciousness. But this singular showing of Being is also a phenomenon characterised by a withdrawal. Because there is a temporalized moment in which Being comes into contact with consciousness or thought, Being at the same time recedes into the past and spills onto the potentiality of the future (technology). To better understand Jarry's question and Deleuze's answer, it is important to note that through Deleuze, it becomes clear that Jarry is presenting us with an ontology of everyday objects through quantitative relations of time. As such, Jarry's science of pataphysics is not only a 'great Turning' that overcomes and superimposes itself over metaphysics.ⁱⁱ Pataphysics, or the great science of exceptions, as Jarry puts it, is a pseudo-science that speaks against or over a geometrical understanding of quantitative difference (God as infinite metric duration). Crucially, pataphysics introduces a new temporal ontology, by the fact that it speaks of quantitative relations of duration: it is a movement *beyond* or *before*, whether *in* itself or *outside* itself. The answer to the question is in fact an ontology that obeys not only temporal properties of non-measurable relations, as Deleuze claims, but also a new spatial ontology of everyday objects. So in the same way that God as infinite extension is superseded in pataphysics by Human beings as continuous intensions, so the watch as a fixed shape in space is superseded by a changing series of ellipses in multi-space. Jarry tells us that:

‘an epiphenomenon being often accidental, pataphysics will [...] examine the laws governing exceptions and will explain the universe supplementary to this one; or less ambitiously, will describe a universe which can be- and perhaps should be- envisaged in the place of the traditional one.’ⁱⁱⁱ

In what follows, I will argue that in developing this science of imaginary solutions called pataphysics, Jarry developed an understanding of being-in-space and being-in-time that not only moved away from metaphysics, but also everyday conventions of physical space, thus seeking to describe the world of the unimaginable. Central to my argument is Jarry’s engagement with ideas that convey a non-geometric notion of space, and thus help constitute a topological spatial ontology; a sense of being spatialised within properties of continuous change, according to which things that appear fixed in certain spatial positions as diametrical opposites, might in fact be seamlessly the same when space acquires a continuous duration, such that space and time, duration and situation, become part of the same continuum.

The topological imagination

Topology is a non-geometric understanding of mathematical space that stemmed partly from the work of German mathematician Bernhard Riemann and his idea of an analysis of spatial situation or *analysis situ*. It is by definition the investigation of mathematical objects that can be transformed continuously, without being torn. If you prefer a more formal definition: it is ‘the study of qualitative properties of certain objects (called topological spaces) that are invariant under certain kind of transformations (called continuous maps), especially those properties that are invariant under a certain kind of equivalence (called homeomorphism)’.^{iv} In popular accounts of topology, this concept is often demonstrated by way of a joke. A topologist cannot tell the difference between a doughnut and a coffee mug because these objects are topologically equivalent. Despite the concrete differences between actual doughnuts and coffee cups, their topological counterparts, abstractly taken as but continuous surfaces with single holes, are regarded as the same object.^v By concerning itself with transformations that can be performed without regard to the size or shape of the mathematical object being changed (so long as

the object retains its continuity), these two objects are the same because the transformation of one object into the other is continuous.

Henri Béhar writes in his book *Le Surrealisme et la Science* that Henri Poincaré's mathematical and philosophical writings, and to a lesser extent Riemann's *analysis situ*, had a powerful effect on the Dadaist and Surrealist movements. Béhar suggests that the influences of non-Euclidean geometries and 'Riemann's topology' (*sic*) led to the emergence of a new cultural understanding of science whose preoccupation with imaginary objects made it more akin to a poetic sensibility.^{vi} It is perhaps this aspect of Riemannian geometry that most appealed to Alfred Jarry's imagination. And whilst Jarry does not make any explicit references to topology (the term did not come into use until the second decade of the twentieth century)^{vii}, he does mention Riemann in a number of prose works. As Linda Dalrymple Henderson suggests, Jarry found something deliciously subversive about the new geometries with their challenge to so many long standing truths.^{viii} Likewise, Paul Edwards points out that 'Jarry opened the door to absolute relativism, even if he did not positively argue for it, since he did not positively argue for anything'.^{ix}

In an essay entitled 'Jarry: Patasophe', Brian Parshall further argues that Jarry seems to employ techniques addressed by topology, particularly in his discussion on the nature of God. Jarry's definition of God as the shortest distance between zero and infinity is further qualified: in Euclidean space the shortest distance between two points is the straight line. But in non-Euclidean space, as in topological space, there are no straight lines of measurable value. So Jarry argues that GOD IS THE TANGENTIAL POINT BETWEEN ZERO AND INFINITY. Here we have an inversion of the Classical definition of God as a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. Jarry's topological God is a circle whose circumference is everywhere, and whose centre is nowhere, or rather, 'a circle without circumference-since it is without extension'. Like the *Sphairos* of the ancient Greek Eleatics, God and space are 'a pulsating, fluctuating, living, breathing, self-generating, biological organism'.^{xi}

In topological fashion, distance is not metrical, but relative to position, which is why Jarry could assume the possibility of the impossible Plus-and-Minus (\pm). Jarry suggests that to resolve the dispute between the Plus and the Minus signs, philosophy can demonstrate the identity of opposites by means of a conjugality of revolution that can erase the temporality of difference, revealing that 'there are neither nights nor days', 'neither systole nor diastole- no pendulum movements'.^{xii} In a mock philosophical

dialogue on the subject of erotic love included in Jarry's *Exploits and Opinions of Dr Faustroll Pataphysician*, Ibicrates the Geometer tells his student Mathetes:

Minus sign is feminine; Plus sign is masculine- for the Geometer, these two signs cancel each other out or impregnate each other, and there results their progeny, which becomes... zero, all the more identical because they are contrary'.^{xiii}

The Geometer's definition of sex as the arithmetic of + and – equalling 0, is then wrongly questioned, so Ibicrates warns us, by Reverend Father Ubu, who by a physical application of pataphysics and its technological devices (particularly the *physick stick* or upturned phallus), can reconcile the difference by some other means. In a short play entitled *Caesar-Antichrist* Jarry reveals that in pataphysical terms Antichrist and God are in fact the same. Thus, a different identity of opposites is possible in the Minus-in-Plus or the Less-which-is-more, which Jarry also speaks of in terms of a 'kinematics of the zero' and 'polyhedral infinity'.^{xiv} At the heart of Jarry's sense of being is therefore a topological property, where doughnut and coffee mug are not poles that cancel one another, where man and woman, plus and minus, are not self-cancelling or indeed free-standing opposites. Man and Woman do not make sense only as opposites that come together for the act of sexual intercourse or progeny, as Jarry's Geometer proclaims. For Ubu, the Topologist, man and woman do not stand apart, nor do they come together in sex, they are indeed a homeomorphism, in the sense that they are part of the continuous map of human transformation: man is always in the process of becoming woman and viceversa. Later on in *Caesar-Antichrist*, Jarry has the character of Fess, a Pataphysician, refer to the Templar, a messenger of Christ, in a way that also seems to react against a sense of geometrical difference. Fess speaks out against any moral geometry and any sense of ontological difference, regardless of it being man or woman, physical or metaphysical.

You counterpale with your lingam the horizontality of my being, more infinite since being undivided it has no measurement. [...] You have not understood your master [...] stressing the divergence of the two signs, but at the same time that one of them added to itself is cancelled out, and then becomes its opposite. Already stammering geometers have worked out that when multiplied by ourselves [...], one or the other we become your Christ, but one multiplied by the other we become my Caesar.^{xv}

Jarry's attack here seems to be, as elsewhere, on ontological difference. As Jarry explains in his essay *To Be and to Live*, whilst living is discontinuous, Being is continuous, which means opposites are identical. To live, on the other hand, is to cease to be (to exist as non-Being). As Deleuze reminds us, Jarry's ontology is as always concerned with time, insofar as Being lies outside time, in a duration that includes Past, the Present and the Future.^{xvi} Time, as Jarry himself describes it, is a 'closed curved surface' that allows for such folding, which in turn makes the unimaginable possible. In topological time, time travel is possible, which is why Jarry can write so confidently about such pataphysical technologies as the Time Machine. The key to understanding Jarry's thinking, as Deleuze notes, is via their common master, Henri Bergson, after whom Jarry can speak of Duration: the transformation of a succession into a reversion. THE BECOMING OF A MEMORY.^{xvii} But I depart from Deleuze in his predilection for seeing temporal topologies in Jarry, as he famously does in his book on Foucault. This future memory or past-in-the-future is not only temporal in Jarry: the topology is also spatial. The continuity of being affects not only the duration of being, but also its situation. Time being an element of space would imply that in a pataphysical sense, space is also duration, because space in a Jarrian sense is ever-changing and 4D: the temporal dimension is inseparable from the spatial. Thus situation and duration are co-extensive.

In a striking passage in his novel *Days and Nights*, Jarry writes that mankind has been inspired by geometric figures whose lines are prolonged externally producing other figures with similar properties yet greater dimensions. He continues: 'Geometry has enabled man to perceive that his muscles can move, by pressure rather than traction [...] and that in a prolongation of his bone structure, that is, based on geometric principles; he can use this machine to whisk up forms and colours as he whirls along roads and bicycle tracks.'^{xviii} But Jarry is not content with a geometrical imagination, and the geometric extension of the body-in-space, which 'man' (sic) achieves through technology (the bicycle). Rather, he has to work his way to an understanding of space that is exceptional, non-geometric, and higher-dimensional, insofar as it is temporalized space (space-time): 'For by serving the mind pulverised and scrambled scraps of food, one is spared working through memory's destructive oubliettes, and after this assimilation the mind can far more easily recreate its own new forms and colours'.^{xix} Here Jarry seems to be pulling away from a chronometric or linear sense of memory, whilst removing himself onto a

sense of mental space or situation (thought) that has time or duration built into it, through the powers of technology and the imagination.

In a chapter entitled 'Pataphysics' further along the same novel, Jarry makes use of this kind of topological imagination perhaps even more vividly. 'There is nothing in the back of infinity', writes Jarry, 'or perhaps because movements are transmitted in rings. It is established that the stars describe narrow ellipses, or at least, elliptical spirals; and that a man in a desert, believing himself to be walking in a straight line, walks to the left^{xxx}. Likewise, in a so-called telepathic letter to Lord Kelvin,^{xxi} included in the chapter 'Eternity' in the pseudo-scientific novel *Exploits and Opinions*, a dead Dr Faustroll acknowledges that he is no longer on earth- that he has departed. He expresses the strangeness of his pataphysical whereabouts in an evocatively topological way:

If one can measure what one is talking about and express it in numbers, which constitute the sole reality, then one has some knowledge of ones subject. Now, up to the present moment I knew myself to be *elsewhere* than on earth [...] But was I elsewhere in terms of date or of position, before or to the side, after or nearer?' I was in that place where one finds oneself after having left time and space: the infinite eternal. ^{xxii}

If Faustroll cannot locate himself in any measurable way, it is because he is elsewhere, he is dead-alive, removed from the discontinuity of living and reinserted into the continuity of Being. Jarry also corroborates his use of a topological imagination in his concept of 'foliated space' (*l'espace feuillité*), inspired by Riemann, which Jarry also quotes in *Exploits & Opinions*, and his article *La Vérité Bouffée* from 1903. For Jarry, this applies to his idea that spaces may be superimposed in a kind of interleaved system. The idea that space can be recast through Riemann's counterintuitive and unempirical imagination (i.e. in terms of n-dimensionality, affine spaces and complex manifolds), is mentioned by Jarry no less than three times in his writings, suggesting that Riemannian conceptions of multiple space could have held for him a particular significance in the spatial ontology of pataphysics. Thus, through the power of the imagination, it becomes possible for Faustroll to speak not only of time travel, but of being physically elsewhere than here, by virtue of the fact that in an interleaved space, one can be here and there all at once. For instance, in Chapter 7 of *Exploits and Opinions*, Jarry mentions foliated space in relation to the 27 assorted volumes or books contained in Faustroll's library.^{xxiii} Thus, Faustroll's

library is a space of multiplicity and a diversity of interleaved worlds where truth cannot be found in one single place but in several at the same time.

There are a great number of truths. The Ancients designated it as a young person immersed in the bottom of a knowledge well. Others found truth in wine [...] Non-Euclidean geometers knew it well as an interleaved space.^{xxiv}

Finally, the problem for Jarry is that when the exceptional in pataphysics is conventionalised as truth- in other words, when unimaginable worlds become discoveries and inventions of the unexceptional, they cease to matter, as they no longer possess even the virtue of originality. Jarry is then refusing to accept anything that settles, anything that stratifies or congeals or normalises, anything that fixes or finalises into a sense of discontinuous living. For Jarry, there is no point in trying to promote the inconvenience of a single truth, to be found in the Thereeness of absolute divine wisdom, handed over to the Hereeness of our physical living being by the Christophori, the messengers from the metaphysical yonder. Whether religious, scientific or mathematical, Jarry finds that the only thing that holds true about truth is that it is a joke. Or as Jarry puts it: to speak of truth as a singularity is to speak in terms of a *vérité bouffée*, a burlesque truth, which is often, paradoxically, a mathematical truth.^{xxv} Neither God nor Theorem can be proved, therefore, to be true, unless it is a joke, as is the case of Jarry's pseudo-mathematical calculations of the surface of God. The joke is on mathematical and religious dogma: the victim of Jarry's irreverent humour is the fallacious believe that from one singularity one can access the whole picture. Like the notion that a watch is round, such proposition is manifestly false.

Ubu Roi: *Place: Nowhere. Time: Eternity*

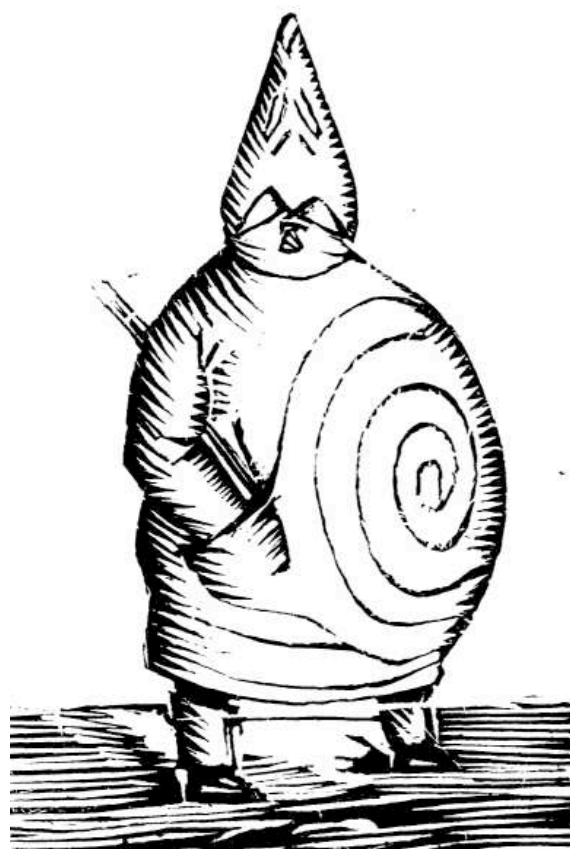
In his article *Réponses à un questionnaire sur l'art Dramatique*, translated as Twelve Theatrical Topics, Jarry proclaimed: 'We are witnessing a birth of theatre, for in France we have for the first time [...] an ABSTRACT theatre'.^{xxvi} In many ways, Ubu is an actualisation of this sentiment, as well as many of the philosophical ideas expressed above. In his famous preliminary address on the first night of *Ubu Roi* in December 1897, Jarry famously announced that the action of his play 'takes place in Poland- that is to say, nowhere'^{xxvii}. Jarry bypasses the need to determine exactly where, when and indeed

why his play takes place. As such, and as Jarry himself argued, 'a play could be set in Eternity'.^{xxviii} This would imply that a play, as an event of Being, might become a theatre-in-itself, outside any fixed sense of place and time. When applied to an understanding of theatre space, Jarry's ontology seems to me to be challenging fundamental theatre conventions by arguing for the impossibility of a hereness (and nowness) on stage. As a site for the manifestation of his 'science of imaginary solutions'^{xxix}, Jarry's pataphysical stage attacks the problem of difference (the divergence between here and there, now and then) by installing at the very heart of this pseudo-scientific theatre, a topological proviso: so long as things change continuously, one thing and another remain the same. From this perspective, it could be argued that one striking feature of Jarry's theatre is that it physicalizes topological space by abandoning universal and absolute notions of place and time. If hereness and nowness (place and present time) are axiomatic in what for want of a better term we might call Aristotelian theatre, then Jarryian theatre is a continuous displacement and dis-timing. Like the shape of the watch, the shapes and identities that populate Jarry's theatre depend on where you look at them from, why you look at them, and which technology you are using to access it as a space-time of the unimaginable (the Time Machine, the Supermale, the physick stick, or Jarry's beloved Bicycle). If there is no way one can obtain an objective sense in space, then it is necessary to abandon the belief in an all-seeing vantage point from where all objects are perspectivalised in relation to some kind of bird's eye Cartesian view. This is precisely what Artaud had in mind when developing his Alfred Jarry's Theatre into a total theatre where the audience was positioned in the middle.

Following on this argument, Brian Parshall points out that Jarry's Poland is a place that historically has lost its periphery following various political partitions- Poland is a curve that does not complete itself into a full circle.^{xxx} While periphery and circumference are terms Jarry often used interchangeably, the difference lies largely in relation to the form being circumscribed. The latter is most often (although not always) specific to circular objects, while the former is often used to describe the perimeter of an irregular shape, or an imprecise boundary.^{xxxi} The 'poles' in Jarry's satirical play refers not only to people of Polish descent but to inhabitants of periphery, dwellers of un-centred circumference. And whereas the politics of Euclidean space are defined in terms of rectilinear order and religious morality, in this new politics of space-time all lines curve and all objects fold into a boundless and seamless continuity. This means that digression,

deviation, ellipsis, and boundlessness become not only acceptable, but in fact, politically determined.

The word 'Baloney', which is the name of the kingdom usurped by Ubu, also hints at the spherical imagery that is central to Part One of the Ubu trilogy, at once reminiscent of the French words *ballon* (ball) or *ballonné* (bloated/distended). In *Slave Ubu*, the last instalment of Jarry's trilogy, Pa Ubu introduces himself as 'Doctor in Pataphysics and Sir Cumference of Sphericals'.^{xxxii} In sum, the Kingdom of Baloney in Pole-land is a world where straight lines are an impossibility, and where all things function according to the rule of what Baudrillard would call 'Ubuesque distension'.^{xxxiii} Whilst the straight line is a metonym for Justice and rectitude in a Euclidean politics of space, Ubu's portly belly and the famous spiral it sports must advertise that curvature or moral deviation is all there is in Pole-land.^{xxxiv} The politics of nowhere, that is to say Pole-land, are characterised by the fact that there is no humanity there: there is no geometric order, no moral, no absolute value that can hold the inhabitants of Pole-land together. All elements of this Pole-land, this nowhere, are mobilised in a state of unceasing flux.



23. Alfred Jarry's drawing of Pa Ubu, sporting the famous spiral on his chest

This radical new politics of space-time is hinted at perhaps most explicitly in *Cuckold Ubu*, the second instalment in Jarry's trilogy. At the very beginning of the play Ubu must confront yet another Geometer, one that goes by the name of Peardrop, specialist in polyhedra. Peardrop explains: 'Sixty years I've spent with them, they're all I know'^{xxxv} And later: 'Sixty years I've spent on the ploppipot syndrome alone'.^{xxxvi} When Ubu turns at Peardrop's house in order to expel him and take over, Jarry seems to suggest that Ubu is also replacing the polyhedra themselves, whom Peardrop regards as his children (PEARDROP: 'The icosahedron was a bit naughty this morning, needed a smack on the botty, well, all twenty botties')^{xxxvii}. Peardrop inhabits a very old-fashioned world of geometric solids with flat faces and straight edges. Ubu erupts as violently into Peardrop's house as non-Euclidean geometry enters the world of modern mathematics. Likewise, Ubu subverts Peardrop's most fundamental axiom: regularity. After all, the Platonic solids which Peardrop has studied his whole life are regular, in the sense of having regular polygons or equiangular and equilateral sides. The next axiom of Peardrop's house is congruence: all sides of a regular polyhedron coincide with one another. The regular and congruent world of Peardrop the Geometer cannot be more at odds with the irregularity and incongruence of Ubu. Thus whilst Peardrop's children are his polyhedra, regular and congruent, Ubu's 'children' Barmpots, Snotweed and Gripshit are vulgar, inarticulate, incongruent. In Act Two, and after having tortured Peardrop, Ubu reflects on what kind of object or shape should come to replace Peardrop's obsolete polyhedral world:

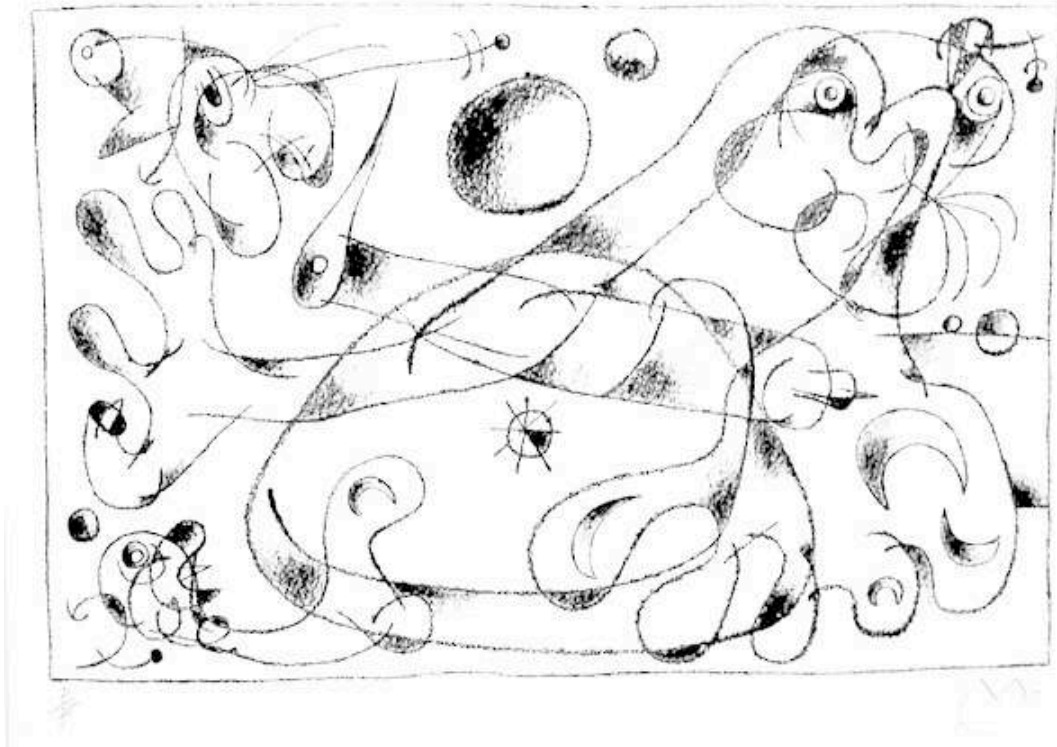
PA UBU: The sphere is a perfect shape. The Sun is a heavenly body. The head in mortals is perfection, oriented always to the Sun and taking its physical form. Only excelled by the eye, which mirrors that heavenly body and taketh shape from it. The sphere is the form of an angel. Mortal form is a poor simulacrum of angelic form: more perfect than the cylinder, less perfect than the sphere. As a barrel radiates hyperphysical matter, so we, its isomorph, are beautiful.^{xxxviii}

There are, no doubt, political implications to Peardrop's torture, to Ubu's glorification of his almost deformed fatness, as well as his decision to literally stuff his own Conscience down the sewage. Ubu is a mass of portly hyperphysical flesh, driven by a ferocious power to consume, to deform and transform everything that surrounds him, thus paying no heed to a sense of political conscience. The political division also occurs

at the level of a contested space, that is, the household where the play is set. Like Poland, in the first part of the trilogy, the play remains set nowhere. Peardrop's home is an abstraction. Peardrop's world is the world of regular polyhedra. The political contest is thus played out initially between a sense of space that is regular, well-structured and ordered in geometric abstraction. On the other, there is Ubu's fleshed out brutishness. I am reminded here of Merleau-Ponty's instructions that topological space is the image of a being that is at the same time 'older than everything and on the first day'- a 'wild or brute being that intervenes at all levels to overcome the problems of classical ontology'.^{xxxix} It is worth echoing Steven Rosen's sense that topology demands a flesh; an idea Brian Massumi also explores in his notion of the body topologic. Ubu's disrespect for geometry is also an affront on the classical ontological argument, espoused both by Plato and Aristotle, that geometry is in fact removed from any sense of the corporeal, and is thus equatable with abstraction at the level of moral rectitude, insofar as a Geometer is in fact someone who understands how to bisect life in terms of justice and equality. Whilst the contest between this abstract and fleshed out space amount to the opening conflict of the play, subsequently the conflict descends into a surreal love-triangle between Pa Ubu, Ma Ubu and an Egyptian colossal statue: Memnon. In the absence of a moral order, and a sense of rectitude provided by the moral geometry of Peardrop, the world of Pa Ubu descends into an immoral farce. Both Peardrop and Ubu's conscience return at the end of the play, after Memnon decides to hide in the same sewage where Ubu has flung his Conscience. With the same impunity that a topologist sees doughnuts and mugs as the same object, so Jarry's Ubu gives himself the license to claim that equivalence is preserved in a world where there can no longer be a significant qualitative difference between real-world and illusion. Dream and waking are the same. If the topologist bites into the mug thinking it is a doughnut, Jarry bites into his dreams thinking they are his waking life. The politics of the imaginary presupposes that this new system installed by Ubu is quite simply, not real. But for Jarry there is no Real, there is no waking life, no day and no night. Ubu's vision is finally realised not so much as a politics of the imaginary, as a politics of the unimaginable, the coming forth of a political realm that is so exceptional as to stand outside any sense of what is imaginary or real.

In the politics of topological space, ultimately all that counts is deformation and transformation. The topological is, as Deleuze well says, 'vital', it is pure force, it is pure and unimaginable being. This highlights a politics of space-time that makes no recourse to mensuration. When Peardrop's household becomes Ubu's, then there is no order, no

control, no law-enforcement, no morals, no marriage, only forces that deform and transform those objects contained within the space. If the politics of the unimaginable are to be set nowhere, it is because this chaotic nowhere is also at once, in its folded spatio-temporality, the possibility for being everywhere at once.



23. *Ubu Roi X* (1966). Joan Miró illustrated three Ubu texts, *Ubu Roi* (1966), *Ubu aux Baléares* (1971), and *L'Enfance d'Ubu* (1975). Miró's Ubu is a force for chaos, often rendered as a series of undulating curves that resemble bodies ingesting themselves, much like a Klein Bottle.

So one might argue by way of a conclusion: how do you escape place, how do you remove place from theatre when the text is ultimately aimed for in-placed performance? How do you escape the placement that is unavoidable in the staging of a play? How do you remain faithful to the theatre-idea, when you have to crudely fit it into some physical form in performance? Indeed, to perform Ubu you would need to perform in real space, and real time, with real actors and real audiences. The performance of Ubu is also the end of Ubu as a force of becoming: it enters into the discontinuous lifeworld of the living. Let us not forget, however, that the second and third parts of Ubu were never performed in Jarry's lifetime. As a form of what Jarry himself called ABSTRACT theatre, who is to say whether these plays are enactments of a politics of the unimaginable, precisely insofar as they are not meant to be reimagined for performance,

but for an existence in mental or technological spaces which, through the power of the imagination, can indeed fold onto the space-times of the unimaginable? Let us be reminded, as Deleuze would in his article on Jarry, that to speak of Jarry is to speak of a planetary technology of selfhood, which spills onto situations and durations which have not appeared or shown themselves to our consciousness yet, or which have withdrawn too far into the unimaginable past, but which can be retrieved by the power of technology and by the forces of our imagination. Jarry's theatre thus moves us through some technology into an unimaginable future that also lies in our memorial past.

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ⁱ Alfred Jarry, *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician: a neo-Scientific Novel*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. (Boston: Exact Change, 1996), 23.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid*, 91.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid*, 21-2.

^{iv} Paul Louis Shick, *Topology: point set and geometric* (New York: Wiley, 2007), 1.

^v Steven Rosen, *Topologies of the Flesh: a Multidimensional Exploration of the Lifeworld*, (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), 4.

^{vi} Henri Béhar. *Le Surréalisme et la Science* (Lausanne: Éditions L'Age d'Homme, 2007), 12.

^{vii} The term 'topology' was first used in mathematics in 1914, several decades before Jarry wrote on a similar subject, albeit from a cultural theoretical approach. It was Felix Hausdorff who coined the term 'topological space' and gave the definition for what is now called a Hausdorff space. See Paul Louis Shick, *Topology: point set and geometric* (New York: Wiley, 2007).

^{viii} Linda Dalrymple Henderson. *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in the Large Glass and other related works*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

^{ix} Paul Edwards, 'Introduction to Siloquies, Superloquies, Soliloquies and Interloquies in Pataphysics'. In Alastair Brotchie and Paul Edwards (eds.) *Collected Works of Alfred Jarry Volume 1 (Adventures in Pataphysics)*, (London: Atlas Press, 2001), 223.

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^{xi} Brian Parshall, 'Jarry: Patasophe.' In Cal Clements (ed.) *Pataphysica*, (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2002), 36.

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- xii Alfred Jarry, *Days and Nights: Novel of a Deserter*. Translated by Alexis Lykiard, with additional verse translations by Stanley Chapman (London: Atlas Press, 1989), 103.
- xiii Alfred Jarry, *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*. Edited and translated by Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor, (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 252.
- xiv Alastair Brotchie and Paul Edwards (eds.) *Collected Works of Alfred Jarry Volume 1 (Adventures in Pataphysics)*, (London: Atlas Press, 2001), 142
- xv *Ibid.* 142.
- xvi Alastair Brotchie and Paul Edwards (eds.) *Collected Works of Alfred Jarry Volume 1 (Adventures in Pataphysics)*, (London: Atlas Press, 2001), 199.
- xvii *Ibid.* 218.
- xviii Alfred Jarry, *Days and Nights: Novel of a Deserter*. Translated by Alexis Lykiard, with additional verse translations by Stanley Chapman (London: Atlas Press, 1989), 67.
- xix *Ibid.*, 67.
- xx *Ibid.* 102.
- xxi Lord Kelvin was a Belfast-born mathematical physicist and engineer. He did important work in the mathematical analysis of electricity and formulation of the first and second Laws of Thermodynamics. He is also widely known for developing the basis of Absolute Zero.
- xxii Alfred Jarry, *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician: a neo-Scientific Novel*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. (Boston: Exact Change, 1996), 101.
- xxiii Alfred Jarry, *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician: a neo-Scientific Novel*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. (Boston: Exact Change, 1996), 17.
- xxiv Alfred Jarry, *La Chandelle Verte: Lumières sur les Choses de ce Temps*, (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1969) 303. *Author's translation*.
- xxv Alfred Jarry, *La Chandelle Verte: Lumières sur les Choses de ce Temps*, (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1969), 648. *Author's translation*.
- xxvi Alfred Jarry, *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*. Edited and translated by Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor, (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 86.
- xxvii Jarry's famous preliminary address at the premiere of *Ubu Roi* may be found in Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, translated by Beverly Keith and Gershon Legman, (New York: Dover, 2003).
- xxviii Alfred Jarry, *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*. Edited and translated by Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor, (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 77.
- xxix Alfred Jarry, *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician: a neo-Scientific Novel*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. (Boston: Exact Change, 1996), 22.
- xxx Brian Parshall, 'Jarry: Patasophe.' In Cal Clements (ed.) *Pataphysica*, (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse), 28.
- xxxi *Ibid.*, 28.
- xxxii Alfred Jarry, *The Ubu Plays*. Translated by Kenneth McLeish, (London: Nick Hern Books, 2000), 101.
- xxxiii Jean Baudrillard, *The Vital Illusion*. Edited by Julia Witwer, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 45.

^{xxxiv} Alfred Jarry, *The Ubu Plays*. Translated by Kenneth McLeish, (London: Nick Hern Books, 2000), 20.

^{xxxv} *Ibid*, 55.

^{xxxvi} *Ibid*, 63.

^{xxxvii} *Ibid*. 55.

^{xxxviii} *Ibid*, 65. In a puppet play version of this same speech, Ubu adds: ‘To oust the infidels, we have created, with our Science, massive snakes of Brass, the Swallowers of Filth and the Unclean/ They plunge all quivering with raucous hiccupping into the narrow grotts where daylight faints and dies; and in the light of day when they emerge again, like servile cormorants that dance attendance to their lord the fisherman, their booty they disgorge and spew from gaping maws’. See Alfred *Collected Works Volume 1 (Adventures in Pataphysics)*. Edited by Alastair Brotchie and Paul Edwards. Translated by Paul Edwards and Antony Melville, (London: Atlas Press, 2001), 43.

^{xxxix} Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*. Translated by Claude Lefort. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 27.