ABSTRACT

ADAPTATION AND INTERPRETATION:
A STUDY OF THEATRICAL BANDE DESSINÉE

by R.L. Wetzel

When adapting theatre into bande dessinée, an artist cannot copy every element a theatrical production has to offer. Instead, comic book artists use conventions of their art form to present their medium in the way they deem most fit. Daniel Casanave and Aurore Petit both adapt Alfred Jarry’s play *Ubu roi* based upon their perception of the play. Through study of their presentation of sound, *mise-en-page*, and depth-of-field, readers not only gain an appreciation of what a BD adaptation has to offer to the world of theatre, but a better understanding of how artists differ in their interpretations of such an art.
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INTRODUCTION

Theatre relies on connections between people. Though manuscripts of plays can show stage directions, sets, and potential costumes, they generally tend to present dialogue between characters as the main focus of the play. We live in a time that is rapidly changing with the invention of new technologies. Theatres are less favored now than hundreds of years ago because people can now satisfy their emotional needs with television and movies. Plays have been adapted into new media, YouTube videos. Countless plays have been changed into BD, which is surprising considering the fact that the latter is a silent, unmoving medium and theatre relies heavily upon sound and movement to portray written plays. I focus on how BD could present a play.

_Ubu roi_ by Alfred Jarry is an absurdist play that has been adapted into BD by multiple artists—including Daniel Casanave and Aurore Petit. While Casanave’s version seems to present the play as entertainment, Petit’s drawing seems to lend itself more to educational purposes, especially because the BD is a _texte intégral_. Comparing the two adaptations, I study how the conventions of BD change between comics and show how the comic book artist overcomes potential limitations of this art form in order to help establish a link with their readers. I will discuss how theatre establishes emotional connections through its set, scene, and character and discuss conventions and the format of these two adaptations of _Ubu roi._

PHENOMENOLOGY

Placing the reader into the World

Adapting a play into BD form raises the question of how a person experiences the play. What exists in a theatrical production may not be adaptable into BD. In the world of theatre, the _mise-en-scène_ influences spectators, and for the BD, there is the creation of a _mise-en-page_. This also raises the question of whether a BD can present a play as effectively and realistically as a theatrical production. Can the fictional, theatrical world be constructed on a page? What elements are necessary to do so? What constitutes reality for this constructed world? Both theatre and BD guide the spectator throughout the actions carried out in the plot, but they do so in different ways. In this section, I will compare the conventions of BD to those of theatre and discuss how each of these conventions work to build the world of the play either on the stage or on the page.

Theatre
Theatre is a constructed world on a stage. From actors to props, every detail is specifically chosen to convey meaning. These details contribute to the overall production: details influence the *mise-en-scène*, the *mise-en-scène* influences how the characters interact with their environment, the actions of the actors influence how the scene progresses, and the actions within the scenes compose the entire plot of the play. Without attention to detail, a play becomes devoid of meaning. However, in the arts, meaning is subjective because perception changes. No two people have lived exactly the same experiences and will not perceive the world around them in the same way. Instead of focusing upon forcing audience members to perceive an object a certain way, theatre is about forming a connection between the audience and the fictional world of the play.

Connection is the key to theatre, and different manners of connecting are present in a performance. There are those who arrange the *mise-en-scène* (directors, dramatists, sound teams), the actors, and the audience. Those responsible for the *mise-en-scène* connect to the audience through their props and set. Their attention to detail is what creates the fictional world that appears before the audience. Each detail of the set they choose comes from their personal experience. A dramatist could find a certain connotation in an object and put it on the stage in order to generate a similar feeling for the audience. Evoking this sentiment is not necessarily guaranteed because a member of the audience may not have experienced something similar toward the object. These choices could be deliberate, or they could be unconscious by being based solely upon how the dramatist feels about the object.

According to Bert States,

> The dramatist assigns his play to a scene, designated by language or by objects in space, without troubling to think how radically he has shifted the ground and conditions of our perception of the world. In a stroke he has altered our customary orientation to time and space (48).

Though States believes that the dramatist does not think about shifting an audience’s perception, he points out two important facts: the objects in a space create a certain perception of the constructed world and the audience’s own world has been altered. The fact that the world of the

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1 I will use “they” and “their” throughout this essay when referring to playwrights, spectators, and readers in order to maintain gender neutrality.
play is constructed by the dramatist’s conscious or unconscious connotations of objects affects the adaptation of the play’s text. No two adaptations of a play will be the same, just as no two people will experience the play in the exact same way. This is because certain objects within each adaptation will be more powerful than others for certain audience members. What seems important to one person may be insignificant to another.

Connections with certain objects but not others create the difference in experience between audience members. These differences reflect the life of each audience member on the stage because what is real and present in their life appears on the stage in front of them. If each perception of the dramatists and audience members is different, how could such a world be able to alter “our customary orientation to time and space” (48)? Descartes ponders a similar question in his Méditations métaphysiques. Descartes seeks to verify the existence of God and the world around himself. In other words, he can only be sure of himself, and he seeks to verify that which he doubts.

He describes a piece of wax that changes shape next to a flame. After changing shape, the wax appears different, but the wax itself is the same material (33). This form change can also be applied to adaptations of plays: the script of the play remains the same in each production, but the manner of presenting it changes. The perception of the play is different between the audience members; this is similar to the wax changing shape. Descartes continues to emphasize the importance of validating reality and the world through the senses throughout his work. The senses are critical in the perception of theatre and situating the audience in the world of the play, but if only the senses were used to experience a play, the audience members would not differ in their experiences because they would hear and see the same events in the play. Interpretation is what drives the experience.

Aristotle also discusses the senses and their role in the arts. He states that, “it takes more than being sensitive to make a master in art; for by the senses we grasp things well as separate things, but the senses do not tell us the why about anything. They do not tell us why fire is hot, but only that it is hot” (5). If perception is the flame that changes the form of the wax, perception alone cannot explain why a person experiences a play in a certain way. Objects can simply exist in the world created on the stage, but reasoning (or interpretation) must be used to explain how

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2 The world of the play includes the set, characters, actors, and the actions that occur on the stage.
the perception of objects influences experience and interpretation. It is thinking that gives validity to the constructed reality on the stage.

Actors must connect with the audience to help immerse spectators into the constructed world. They interact with the details put into the scene, and they must also portray a character while doing so. Actors reveal their own personalities in their portrayals of characters due to their choices while acting. Similar to how no two dramatists could create the same set, no two actors could portray a character in exactly the same way. States explains that, “the inevitable starting point of any discussion of the actor’s presence on the stage is the fact that we see him as both character and performer” (119). In theatre, the performer and the character can never be separated because everything that is portrayed in a play is centered around its precise moment. What an actor does to convey a line is then gone after that moment and can never quite be recaptured—even if the play were recorded, which differs from theatre as experienced live. In portraying the same character during the next show, the actor unwittingly presents the same line in a different way, in part because their emotions could influence their behavior.

Emotion is what helps the actor connect with his character and his spectators. An actor could deliver a line one night in a somber voice to elicit sorrow, but the next night he could shift the timbre of his voice and make the line humorous. The actor’s own emotion during that moment could dictate how he utters the line, or he could choose differently how he thinks the line would best serve to emphasize a character’s emotions.

As a case study, I attended two performances of the same play with a week. The first was opening night. The actors seemed somewhat nervous, and two seemed to be focusing more on remembering their lines and trying to convey them in a convincing way to the audience rather than on their character. At certain points in the play, I was unconvinced that the actor was embodying the character, as they seemed to state their lines mechanically with an accompanying action. Near the end of this play, another actor recited a sizeable monologue. Certain fidgeting and smaller actions seemed to be the nervous actor rather than the character continuing his angry but nostalgic rant.

The second show I attended seemed to be completely different. The set remained the same, but the actors’ confidence increased. Nervous gestures were no longer prominent, and the actors were able to use their voices to play with the delivery of lines. During the same monologue by the same actor, I was much more convinced of the character’s sorrow and anger.
While the first performance seemed mechanical and nervous, the second resonated with the character’s passion. The actor varied the volume of his voice throughout the monologue and even seemed to yell at fate while connecting with his character’s troubles. This connection caused their voice to mimic the character’s sorrow realistically, as the actor’s voice almost shook while delivering their lines. Unlike during the first performance, I felt myself focusing more upon the actor’s movements and emotion rather than on the words they were reciting. This actor later stated to me that they felt very moved during this moment and that they were unsure whether they would emotionally be able to finish the monologue. This passion when reciting the monologue blended actor and character into one and almost brought me to tears of commiseration.

Racine summarizes this phenomenon in his preface to Bérénice. “...toute l’invention consiste à faire quelque chose de rien…” Artists, such as poets and actors, convey meaning “...par une action simple, soutenue de la violence des passions, de la beauté des sentiments et de l’élégance de l’expression” (8). Actors can feel this violent passion when they are moved by their character’s own emotions. When they become overwhelmed with their character, the performer and the character become one, making the representation of this character more powerful and easier for the spectators to connect with. While talking about Bérénice and his different performances of the play, Racine says, “...je ne puis croire que le public me sache mauvais gré de lui avoir donné une tragédie qui a été honorée de tant de larmes, et dont la trentième représentation a été aussi suivie que la première” (8). The tears viewers shed show that the emotion presented in the play resonated with their own experiences and allowed them to bond with the characters.

**Bande Dessinée**

No two BD adaptations of a play can be the same. Daniel Casanave and Aurore Petit vary drastically. BD has its own way of connecting with readers. While theatre highlights emotions and actions, the bande dessinée immerses the reader in the play. The comic book artist uses proximity, the characters, and angles (such as high and low angles) to establish the world of the BD and immerse the reader in it. In this section, I will describe potential obstacles in adapting a play into BD and compare how Casanave and Petit immerse the reader in the world they construct.
Rhythm plays a crucial role in theatre and BD. During a play, time cannot stop at one moment and allow spectators to observe the scene. However, BD is a sequence of still moments captured on an unchanging page. Provided that the BD is not a flipbook animation, the reader will never see the characters move. This could be seen by some as a limitation of the BD; moreover, there is an ellipsis of action between the panels. The characters seemingly occupy a space and time outside of the reader’s observation, creating a problem in immersing the reader. Though plays have fluid motions of actions, segmentation still exists. Plays are divided into acts, and acts are divided into scenes. These scenes are created by the movement of characters on and off the stage. In traditional theatre, characters would have to go offstage in order to obey the *bienséances*. The *bienséances* dictate what a playwright and actors could and could not show on the stage. Most notably, death could not be portrayed on stage. Deaths would occur offstage, and another character would come onstage to describe how they met their end. Obeying the *bienséances* is similar to the segmentivity within the BD. The actions that are the most important are depicted in both, but other actions can be presented without one actually seeing them happen.

Given that the reader may perceive gutters as gaps in the action of the BD, they may have more difficulty finding a connection to the BD’s world, especially because the characters on the page are not actual human beings portraying emotion. A comic book artist establishes connections in other ways. According to States, “the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known...Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important” (21). In this case, the object is the script of *Ubu roi*. Adapting a play into BD form changes how a person experiences the play.

In Petit’s and Casanave’s adaptations of *Ubu roi*, the scenes that are the most important to analyze are those that show crowds or those that show a character looking at another. Often in these panels, the reader is put in a position where they are no longer a passive onlooker but seem to be more implicated in the act of looking, helping them feel as if they were a part of the comic’s world. Casanave and Petit both use angles and the proximity of characters in the same scenes to create different atmospheres and comparing these scenes allows for a better understanding of just how these differences in atmosphere and tonality of the scene are constructed.

The first important sequence is Père Ubu recounting his plan to potential allies. In both adaptations, this moment is significant because the angle that serves as the reader’s point-of-view
changes. Casanave shows this when Père Ubu attempts to call his allies together to recount his plan (12). Panel one of this page (Fig. 1) is the first time the reader experiences a crowd in the BD. Panels before this have shown multiple characters, but this example makes everything within the frame seem overcrowded. This is achieved through the close proximity of Père Ubu to the space the reader would occupy if they were a physical being in the constructed world. The reader is in the foreground and the angle seems to be level with him; however, in the same panel, the characters in the background look as though the reader is looking upward toward them at a low angle. This could evoke an almost claustrophobic feeling, as the reader feels as though the panel were too crowded and the volume of characters were physically pressing them down.

While Casanave suggests a low angle for this scene, Petit uses a high angle (37). The final panel (Fig. 2) of this page has an angle so high that it creates a top-down angle. This scene is not crowded. Instead, it shows only Bordure and Mère Ubu looking upward while Père Ubu looks at Bordure. The act of looking is important in this panel because both Mère Ubu and Bordure look in the same direction, seemingly focusing on the same point in space based upon their eyes. Père Ubu appears disconnected from the other two because the reader cannot see his face. Instead, the reader sees his round stomach and the swirl in his hair, which will later come to symbolize his greed and corruption. In Petit’s adaptation, the reader seems almost disconnected from the scene. The angle is unnatural, as the reader would have to be floating to see someone from this angle; it puts the reader in a god-like position watching while events unfold. Casanave’s version is the opposite, because the reader feels as though they were crushed beneath the weight of Père Ubu and his followers.

After Père Ubu claims the crown, he addresses his new subjects, showing another instance of a crowd gathering (Fig. 3). His first act as king is to give his subjects money in order to pay their taxes (22). Again, Casanave and Petit present this scene is opposite ways. Casanave shows Père Ubu in the foreground looking at the people frantically gathering money in the background (22 p 4). The panel shows a high angle, making it seem as though the reader were looking over Père Ubu’s shoulder. This creates a voyeuristic feeling, as though the reader were investigating Père Ubu to see the results of his money-throwing. The reader is in closer proximity to Père Ubu than his subjects. Though the reader is close, Père Ubu’s back is turned to the reader, restricting the reader’s ability to connect with a character in this panel. Because of this, the reader does not occupy a definite location within the constructed world. Instead, they
assume the role of a disembodied viewer in order to have a voyeuristic view of the events occurring.

In Petit’s adaptation of this scene (Fig. 4), the reader sees Père Ubu through the use of a long shot. His subjects occupy the foreground, while he and his allies stand in the background (57). The reader sees the back of the cheering subjects, as they seem very near to where the reader would stand if they were to occupy a space in the panel. This creates the feeling of being in the crowd. Père Ubu and his allies appear to be at an equal level with the reader, but his subjects appear lower due to the high angle. Two pages later, the ground is level, putting Père Ubu and his subjects on the same level. Perhaps the reader is further back, standing on an object to be higher than the others in the crowd. More plausibly, the reader is once again only a viewer of the events unfolding but occupying an unrealistic space within this constructed world.

The final scene that Casanave and Petit both portray focuses on the act of looking. Mère Ubu finds Père Ubu in a cave and watches him before feigning to be a ghost. Petit and Casanve portray this scene in a similar way, but the resulting tone from each is different. Casanave devotes many small panels to incorporate this sequence (64). The first panel (Fig. 5) shows a closeup of Mère Ubu’s silhouette as she scolds Père Ubu, who does not appear in the panel. However, the second panel shows Père Ubu responding to her dialogue, and the angle at which he is positioned corresponds to the direction in which Mère Ubu wags her finger. This use of a gutter to divide the scene shows that Père Ubu is much farther from the reader than Mère Ubu. What seems to complicate this analysis is the fact that the face of Mère Ubu appears as a black silhouette while that of Père Ubu appears white, despite them both being in the same cave. This choice seems to be for the reader’s benefit, so that they can view Père Ubu’s shocked reaction and distinguish the two characters visually.

The next panel shows yet another conflicting view. Père Ubu and Mère Ubu stand in close proximity to one another while the reader is far from them, creating an establishing shot of the scene. Both appear white against a black background despite the lack of light in a cave. They make exaggerated gestures once more. Mère Ubu raises her fists angrily while Père Ubu clasps his hands to plead with her. The reader is far enough away to be able to read each character’s body language, helping them to understand the emotions in the scene. However, the reader is detached from the story once again because they are far from the characters in the scene, and the latter both have been drawn in light shades in order for the reader to see them better. If Père and
Mère Ubu saw their world in the same shades as the reader in this moment, Père Ubu would immediately see that the apparition was actually Mère Ubu.

Petit has a similar structure in her panels and *mise-en-page*, though the lines in each panel are different from those of Casanave’s. *Fig. 6* shows the interaction between the two. It starts with Mère Ubu plotting to act as an apparition. A closeup of her face shows the reader that she is looking behind herself at Père Ubu. The next panel is a long shot and shows Père Ubu looking in the opposite direction of Mère Ubu. In this panel, his head is positioned slightly higher than Mère Ubu’s in the previous panel, making her eyeline directly meet his head. This is similar to Casanave using the gutter to show distance between the characters, but Petit makes use of proximity to establish the separation. The next panel shows Mère Ubu crouched behind a rock, looking at Père Ubu. This moment is slightly different. The angle of the panel is equal to her in her crouched position, showing that the reader, if occupying space in the constructed world, would be performing a similar action. They—the reader—become more connected to the fictitious world than in the previous examples because they are seemingly included in the action of the play: hiding.

Though the *bande dessinée* may not provide the same emotional connection as a theatrical production, it compensates by creating a fictitious world as one does when building a set. In theatre, the spectators are often separated from the constructed world, because the actors stay on the set to perform. *Bande dessinée*, however, are an unchanging book that the reader can hold in their hands. The reader controls the passage of time within the play as they read, study images, and turn pages. Reading a BD is a way of experiencing a play that allows a reader to be more connected to the text and have access to moments of the play captured on the page. They can interact with these images at their own leisure whereas theatre is in the moment. These two art forms portraying a play’s script will never be able to convey its meaning in the same ways, but the nature of adaptations is to provide different experiences in encountering the play.

**Semiology**

The idea of Descartes’ piece of wax is helpful for describing the semiology of BD adaptations of plays. After Petit and Casanave create their world, readers unconsciously take account of what details are important to them. They too act as the flame and mold the contents of the play through their own experience. Because the readers must interact with this new, immersive world, prominent details shape their experience and mold how they ultimately interact.
with the material of the play. Because the artist had the idea of drawing a particular object to convey a certain meaning, a connection is made between this meaning and the symbolic object. Arranging objects in a specific way on the page to create a certain meaning influences how the reader perceives a scene. According to André Helbo, “de même qu’il n’y a pas de temps mort dans les comics, de même l’espace n’est pratiquement jamais vide” (130). The time the reader takes to observe these details is as important as what is put on the page. Even when the page seems blank, the blankness itself serves as a function.

In her adaptation of *Ubu Roi*, Aurore Petit makes particular use of blankness, as many of the panels throughout the comic do not have borders. The coloration of the BD is either solid black or solid white, and the panels without borders seem to fade into the background of the page. Often, the black panels contrast against these faded, white scenes. A stark example of this is act V, scene 1. On page 165 (*Fig. 6*), the reader sees two defined, black panels with Mère Ubu plotting to scare her husband. Père Ubu, on the other hand, appears three times in front of a completely white background without borders. Despite the two being in the same, dark cave, there is a separation of action, symbolized through tonal change. Père Ubu submits to Mère Ubu, who pretends to be a ghost. Mère Ubu stands out on the page because of her black background. She is in charge of the situation and manipulates her abusive husband. At this moment, the reader sees that the white background of the panel shows indecisiveness, while the black panels symbolize her ability to hide from and deceive her husband because of the exchange of roles. She now resorts to dishonest tactics to influence her husband while he simply must follow what she says.

Though the use of black and white creates subtle symbolism, Petit employs a more overt symbol: Père Ubu’s spiral. In his original script of the play, Alfred Jarry included illustrations of Père Ubu, who appeared to be covered in sheets with a black spiral on his round stomach. In Petit’s adaptation of the play, she draws the spiral on Père Ubu’s forehead, showing it as part of his hair. The incorporation of the spiral is also important because it appears too in several locations the reader does not expect, not just Père Ubu’s head. Thierry Groensteen describes Père Ubu’s spiral by saying, “le pire est le sort réservé à la gidouille si caractéristique du Père Ubu, cette spirale qui, apposée sur sa bedaine, en souligne la rondeur et l’énormité” (4). The reader sees it noticeably appear in other locations in the comic, including act I, scene 3 when Père Ubu serves his “merdre” to his guests. When he presents his dish, the excrement appears in the form
of Père Ubu’s spiral (21). Due to this presentation, the reader further associates excrement with Père Ubu. It is no longer only his catchphrase, but it is what he presents to his people. It becomes characteristic of his mentality, as the spiral does not just represent the roundness of Père Ubu’s stomach but digestion and excrement. The spiral is located on his head, emphasizing it is his thinking that is excrement-like.

Petit shows the spiral again when it is removed from Père Ubu’s head. Bougrelas cuts it in an act of revenge before he leaves flees for his life (50). When he cuts it, the spiral flies into the air and does not quite resemble the spiral associated with Père Ubu. In this moment, Père Ubu is humbled. He and his men could not stop a young boy from fleeing. This cutting of Père Ubu’s hair is a moment of emasculation, as Père Ubu no longer has what signifies his person. However, the spiral returns in act II, scene 6, after Mère Ubu glues it back onto his forehead (56). She does so as she gives him advice on how to win over his new subjects. Both the act of gluing on the spiral and helping him to win his subjects give Père Ubu back his confidence. He now has the willpower to continue with his plans of self-enrichment through exploitation. The reader sees Père Ubu’s evil mentality and his reactions to other characters.

Like Petit, Casanave also makes use of Père Ubu’s spiral. The reader sees the spiral grow in size, showing Père Ubu’s monstrous intentions. In the first act of Casanave’s BD, Père Ubu is shown wearing a suit instead of the white garments that Jarry drew. On the breast of his blazer, there is a square containing the spiral, which one could assume to be a breast pocket. During this scene, Père Ubu has not yet overthrown Venceslas, but he makes his plans for doing so known to Bordure. The spiral on the jacket could be seen as a cockade, similar to those worn by revolutionaries during the French revolution. Because Père Ubu has not yet made his true character known, the spiral is a small cockade. During act II, the spiral becomes more prominent. When overthowing Venceslas, Père Ubu wears a white garment similar to what Jarry drew. His entire character is now white, and the cockade stands out (16). This is a moment of transition for Père Ubu because he is slowly adopting the dress of Jarry’s original drawings (Fig. 7). Now that Père Ubu is a visible character for the entire kingdom, his true motivations are now noticeable. The white clothes Père Ubu wears highlight the spiral, emphasizing his bad intentions.

Once Père Ubu solidifies his role as king, his evil intentions grow, and with them, the spiral. Act III shows Père Ubu’s financial meetings (Fig. 8), and this is the first time readers see the spiral covering the entirety of his round stomach—as Jarry had drawn it (25). With his
newfound power, Père Ubu is now in the public’s eye. His white clothes make him stand out in a similar way. Casanave enlarges the spiral to show Père Ubu’s evil intentions growing, just as Petit used it to show Père Ubu’s attitude.

Having the freedom to manipulate what appears on the page allows Petit and Casanave to show changes in Père Ubu’s character throughout their adaptations. Though it is simply a spiral that appears on the page, it embodies the greed and anger behind Père Ubu’s conquest. It became so closely associated with his character that its mere presence invokes the thought of Père Ubu. This relates back to Aristotle’s thought of the senses—in this case, sight—only establishing the presence of an object. Readers must relate the spiral to other aspects of the comic in order to establish the “why,” as Aristotle calls it. For these two comics, the “why” is simply to link Père Ubu’s faults with a visible symbol in order to better communicate his atrocities to the readers.

Through symbols in the unfamiliar, constructed world of the BD, the reader can better understand what is happening. They give a firm basis to help the reader make sense of what transpires in the plot, but interpretation impacts exactly how readers see the other components of the BD. Their own lives affect how they can see the atmosphere of the play while reading. This harkens back to Descartes’ idea of verifying reality because the reader is confronted with the idea of the finite and the infinite. While trying to verify the reality of God’s existence, Descartes states,

\[ \text{et je ne dois pas imaginer que je ne conçois pas l’infini par une véritable idée, mais seulement par la négation de ce qui est fini…puisque au contraire je vois manifestement qu’il se rencontre plus de réalité dans la substance infinie que dans la substance finie…} \]

(52).

Using the senses—sight—to verify these symbols in the BD constructs that which is finite. The details a comic book artist puts in their BD cannot be changed after the book is printed.

The infinite is that to which Aristotle alludes: using reasoning to create meaning out of what the senses perceive. Though there is a set object in the scene, each reader may see it in a different way because of their own experiences in life. Responding to the “why” creates the reality of the BD and a sense of infinity because no two readers have lived the same experiences in life. Each reader would perceive the BD differently because of this, creating infinite perspectives of the comic. By having a medium like a play that can mirror life so readily by reflecting emotion and perception, artists of relatively newer art forms such as \textit{bande dessinée}
can continue to adapt a play’s contents into a form that will be readily received by the people of the time.

**SOUND**

In studying *bande dessinée* adaptations of plays, sound is a critical feature to consider because BD has no audible features. To compensate, these adaptations must rely upon visual sound as a substitute. Audible sound can create meaning that is not present within the written lines of plays, so visual sound must find strategic means to achieve the same effect. Two ways comic book artists include sounds are speech balloons and onomatopoeias. Though these conventions have a general form, the specific ways they are drawn and utilized affect how the reader perceives them in any given adaptation. This is similar to actors changing the timbre or volume of their voice to manipulate the words they speak. Daniel Casanave and Aurore Petit—both comic book artists who have adapted the play *Ubu Roi* into BD—make use of these methods to produce visual sound within their work. However, like changing productions of a play, the two adaptations of the play into BD influence the perception of the reader in different ways. While Casanave makes use of his own style of speech balloons and onomatopoeias, Petit employs the traditional conventions of sound in BD. In this section, I will use the script of *Ubu Roi* to analyze visual sound and how it influences the perception of the reader by comparing the adaptations of both Casanave and Petit.

**Casanave and Speech Balloons**

First, Casanave uses speech balloons to highlight significant events of—or that build up to—Père Ubu’s reign. These events are generally moments of collective discontent in Père Ubu’s subjects regarding their current situation and show their eagerness to support him as a change in rulers. To do so, Casanave often uses several tails with one speech balloon to attribute it to multiple characters. A handful of examples of this style of speech balloon can be found throughout most of the play, but one important detail is that these collective speech balloons stop after Père Ubu’s reign begins to fail. The first time the reader sees a collective speech bubble is on page 12 (*Fig. 1*). This moment is the beginning of Père Ubu’s rise to power as he discusses how he plans to seize power from Venceslas by killing him with the help of the other nobles. The final panel of the page simply shows Mère Ubu—who encourages the plot to begin—and hands of the nobles. Though Mère Ubu is the only clearly recognizable individual, the speech balloon is not only attributed to her, but to three of the outstretched hands. One hand remains without a
tail to attribute it to the speech balloon, but the reader assumes this noble also agrees because he is included in the collective that supports Père Ubu’s rule. This panel shows the beginning of Ubu’s rule and the excitement of subjects based on Mère Ubu’s reaction, but it only shows a small portion of Père Ubu’s supporters.

The reader sees a collective speech bubble again on page 22 (Fig. 3), but this balloon shows that the force Père Ubu is accruing. Previously, only five hands identified as his followers, but Fig. 3 establishes how Père Ubu’s power has grown after he kills Venceslas. This is a pivotal moment in the plot because it sparks the rest of the story after act II. On this page, the first panel shows the text, “VOILÀ LE ROI ! VIVE LE ROI ! HURRAH !” These words appear at the top of the panel in a speech balloon that has seven tails. It occupies almost the entire length of the panel and spans a majority of the length of the crowd beneath it. This crowd is similar to the crowd whose hands are shown at the beginning of the story. Though the reader sees that there is an assembly of people, they cannot make out a single person, in a way similar to the reader’s inability to see the faces of the nobles who raised their hands. As in the panel with the hands, the speech balloon has several tails, but the tails above the crowd cannot be attributed to one specific person. Previously, each tail could be assigned to a character, but now Père Ubu’s following is so large that a single person’s cheer becomes indistinguishable from that of the rest of the crowd. They chant the same words as the others, showing a like-minded approval. Through this progression between panels, the reader sees that his supporters grow in number with Père Ubu’s actions.

Also important to note in this speech balloon is the lettering. Though Casanave does not have a standard font throughout his comic, the lettering is visibly larger than what the reader has seen previously. This technique is a way to avoid losing meaning in a silent medium. According to Thierry Groensteen, when reading a bande dessinée, “dans tous les cas, cependant, le timbre de voix, le ton, le rythme du débit et ses variations, les intonations prosodiques et les nuances d’accentuation sont perdus, ignorés--sauf...de faire varier la taille...des lettres” (1). With a constant lettering throughout the comic, the reader loses any variations that distinguish between the characters’ voices or their speech. In a play, actors vary their voices in order to convey meaning that may not necessarily be written explicitly in the lines of the play. Because this variation of voice is lost, Casanave compensates with variation in lettering. The combined voices of everyone in the courtyard would produce a cry louder than normal speech. To represent this,
Casanave writes, “VOILA LE ROI ! VIVE LE ROI ! HURRAH !” in significantly larger lettering that seems bold in comparison to the general lettering in the BD (22). Changing the lettering indicates a change in the voices of the characters despite them not actually having voices.

Another example of the collective speech balloon is found in the following panel on page 22. One change from the previous panels containing collective speech balloons is that here there is another speech balloon from a separate character within the panel. Père Ubu addresses his newfound subjects. He says that he does not want to give his money to the people, but he will so that they can pay their taxes. The people, in return, cry “OUI!” (22). Several elements of this panel are important to note. First, Casanave draws two speech balloons containing the word “OUI.” Each balloon has multiple tails, three on the left balloon and two on the right. The juxtaposition of speech balloons shows dominance: Père Ubu’s words are at the top of the panel while his subjects’ words appear below the balcony on which he stands. Père Ubu’s words matter more than the other characters’ in the scene because his sentiments affect the plot of the play. His love of wealth drives the wedge between himself and the other characters, and this juxtaposition of speech balloons reflects and helps establish the hierarchy of power.

On page 24 (Fig. 9), however, the people continue their praise of Père Ubu. The final panel of this page combines several techniques that the reader has seen in the previous panels. Characters celebrate Père Ubu’s false generosity and cheer, “VIVE LE PERE UBU ! C’EST LE PLUS NOBLE DES SOUVERAINS !” (24). This panel shows the beginning of his regicidal plot. Individual characters can be made out, and their features are generally visible to the reader. Four tails attribute the speech balloon to specific characters, but it clearly indicates a general cry of approval. All the characters in the panel shows signs consistent with celebration because their mouths are open to cheer, and they raise their drinks to show their approval. Again, the reader sees a variance in the lettering of this speech balloon, showing that the collective voices are creating a sound louder than normal speech. This emphasizes the immensity of Père Ubu’s popularity.

However, the next time collective speech appears, it expresses fear of Père Ubu. Page 27 (Fig. 10) shows Père Ubu collecting taxes from his nobles. Between two panels of Père Ubu explaining his financial maneuvering, a panel shows the terrified nobles crying, “HORREUR! À NOUS, PEUPLE ET SOLDATS !” The speech balloon has three tails attributed to certain
nobles, but the remaining four nobles cry out as well. Each noble looks concerned or agitated, and they all cry “à nous.” In saying “nous,” they create a collective sentiment, and they attempt to involve others as well, by pleading for the people and soldiers to come to their aid. This shows fear, and the next collective speech balloon—which appears in the same scene—shows a change of emotion. Several pages later (Fig. 11), Père Ubu’s magistrates also become a collective opposing his rule. They announce, “NOUS NOUS OPPOSONS À TOUT CHANGEMENT” (34). Again, there is the repetition of “nous,” and the magistrates appear in close quarters in a similar way to that of the nobles. Four tails connect this speech balloon to each of the four magistrates, showing unanimous opposition to Père Ubu.

Through the use of attribution via the tails of speech balloons, the reader can see Père Ubu’s rise to power as well as his downfall. After Père Ubu declares war in act III, the use of a collective speech balloon in his favor completely disappears from the comic. Only once after the start of act IV does Casanave use the collective speech balloon. In it, Bougrelas rallies his supporters, who shout, “VIVE BOUGRELAS” (47). This further shows the use of speech balloons to show support and how Père Ubu has fallen out of favor with the people. However, the rest of the speech balloons in the final two acts use one tail. At this point, Casanave employs an untraditional speech balloon the reader has not yet seen in the BD.

With the discontent of the people growing, the Ubus fall into such a state of ruin that Mère Ubu resorts to robbing the graves of kings to escape her problematic husband. In this scene, Casanave uses a speech balloon—if one can call it that—without a tail at all. The final panel on page 46 (Fig. 12) shows only Mère Ubu—who is fleeing—and a statue, but the words “JAMAIS MÈRE UBU” appear amongst the dark background. No one line creates a border for the speech balloon, and no tail attributes it to a speaker. The words are surrounded by a darkness that stops abruptly and jaggedly around them, creating an informal speech balloon. These jagged edges are provided by the shading around the words. Lines point inward toward the text to give emphasis to what is being spoken; the jaggedness of the lines influences how the readers interpret what is in the speech balloon. Pointed lines and the large lettering, which is normally used for the collective speech balloon, lead the reader to believe what is being said is harsh and loud. Only the juxtaposition of the speech balloon to the statue allows the reader to determine that a supernatural entity is speaking: one or more of the dead kings. The balloon is not attributed to an entity the reader can clearly see or determine.
By seeing the progression of speech balloons in Casanave’s BD, the reader sees Ubu’s rise to power and eventual fall. Through the collective speech bubble, we see the tentative few followers at the beginning of the play, the amassing of a kingdom, then the inevitable fear and anger that the people feel when seeing Père Ubu as a tyrant. After the collective speech balloon disappears from Père Ubu’s plotline, the tail disappears in one panel to help show that Père Ubu’s reign has made his followers and his wife fall so low that he has even angered the spirits of past kings. Through the use of these tails, Casanave gives a visual meaning to what would normally be spoken words. He inflects how the reader reads these words through variance in his lettering, to represent sound visually in the speech balloons with multiple tails. With only these two elements of speech balloons, Casanave makes his interpretation of words known to his readers, whether they consciously note it or not.

**Petit and Speech Balloons**

Not every comic book artist necessarily uses speech balloons to create meaning in innovative ways, as Casanave does. Aurore Petit utilizes mostly traditional speech balloons in her adaptation of the play. She does not rely heavily upon creating new meaning through visual sound in her adaptation of *Ubu roi*. Almost every speech balloon has a clear border and a tail attributing it to one character. There are several times throughout the BD that she draws a speech balloon with multiple tails, but the latter simply attribute the words being spoken to a specific character in the frame. An example of this is on page 105 (*Fig. 13*). The first panel shows a collective speech balloon being attributed to three of six characters, but due to the identical dress and actions of all six characters, the reader already knows that they are all praising Bougrelas as a group. This is the closest Petit comes to showing the extent of Père Ubu’s reign, but it does not capture the true extent of his reign. None of her panels shows a crowd with indistinguishable members that all participate in one cry. The tails of the speech balloon do not have as much impact in Petit’s BD as in Casanave’s because they simply attribute speech instead of highlighting other aspects of the BD.

Petit only breaks from the traditional speech balloon structure one time in the BD: *Fig. 2*. It occurs in act I, scene 7, when Père Ubu is explaining his plans to kill Venceslas to his potential allies. The center panel shows a closeup of Père Ubu’s face and the word “MERDRE” at the top (37). This panel is important because there is an informal speech balloon drawn into the image of

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3 Traditional speech balloons utilize a clear border and a tail in order to attribute dialogue to a character.
the panel: Père Ubu’s hair. “MERDRE” appears in bold, white lettering across a black background that appears to be Père Ubu’s hair. Every other speech balloon in the BD has a white background with black font. This standard font takes away the possibility of variance in lettering, as one sees in Casanave’s adaptation, but this single panel that appears on page 37 breaks this monotony of font. The fact that “MERDRE” appears to be written on Père Ubu’s hair reinforces the association between this word and Père Ubu’s personality. Another important aspect to note is the swirl in Père Ubu’s hair. It is a signature feature of his character—as discussed earlier in this essay—and it creates a tail to the speech balloon. It directs the reader’s attention downward from the word to Père Ubu’s face, again, reinforcing not only the association between Père Ubu and “MERDRE,” but the image of the swirl with such harsh emotion. This utilization of the speech balloon in a non-traditional way is the sole instance in which Petit creates special meaning using speech balloons to represent visual sound.

**Casanave and Onomatopoeias**

Around the time Casanave stops using the collective speech balloon, another type of visual sound appears: the onomatopoeia. Act IV is the first time the reader sees an onomatopoeia appear in Casanave’s adaptation of *Ubu roi*, and it is in this act that major conflict begins. The war starts, and Casanave uses onomatopoeias to amplify the sounds of battle. Acts I through III rely more upon the words of the characters, while acts IV and V emphasize action. Casanave uses onomatopoeias coupled with motions in order to help the reader better visualize the sounds happening in war.

One of the most prominent onomatopoeias throughout these two acts is the sound “PAN,” which is usually linked to firearms, and smoke that issues from guns when they are shot. Often throughout the battles in these scenes, “PAN” appears over smoke, with a man holding a gun, but page 53 (*Fig. 14*) of the BD shows the most intense use of onomatopoeias because it shows both the aggressor and the victim in detail. This moment in the play is the first time the reader sees both in one panel, and it emphasizes the brutality that comes with war. “PAN” appears very boldly in the first panel of the page due to the white background and lines pointing outward from the word, creating a sound balloon. Though most of the scene is dark, the white background makes the word “PAN” stand out because it is written in black, thick letters. These details are important to the interpretation of the noise because, “un type de police particulier, une taille de police précise, une couleur, un aspect tactile participent à la construction d’un sens qui va au-
delà des sèmes inhérents à l'onomatopée” (Mouratidou 47). With the black lettering of “PAN” making it prominent against its white background, the reader assumes the noise is very loud. The eye is immediately attracted to the large, bold lettering, and the lines of the balloon seem to spread out from the source, indicating a spread of the sound. After following the lines, the reader sees smoke and an inhuman face of a Russian soldier, which allows the reader to know the Russian fired a gun at Père Ubu’s soldier. Due to the sound “PAN” contouring to the shape of the smoke cloud around Père Ubu’ pitiable, dying soldier, the violence done to Père Ubu’s subjects is emphasized in this panel.

Two panels later, “PAN” appears again. This time, the sound has no autonomous balloon around it. Instead, a cloud of smoke serves as its background. Because no lines serve as an indicator of how explosive the sound is, Casanave draws a star-like figure next to the sound in order to emphasize how the sound should be read. The star-like figure could be the explosion from the end of the gun appearing through the smoke, but because the gun itself does not appear, the reader could interpret it to represent the spreading of soundwaves. Here, the star-like figure serves a similar function to the lines surrounding the “PAN” in the first panel of the page. Again, the head of the Russian soldier is in close proximity to the onomatopoeia, and the reader associates the sound of the gunshot with the masked head of the soldier defending the Czar from Père Ubu’s troops. This soldier is resisting Père Ubu’s injustice, and readers see this through the use of onomatopoeias, because they can interpret the sound of a gun firing, despite not being able to see the gun in its entirety.

“PAN” appears five pages later, after Père Ubu flees the battle to hide in a cave. On page 58 (Fig. 15), a bear attacks Père Ubu and his men, and the resulting gunfire combines elements of the panels seen on page 53. The reader sees both the holder of the gun and the victim that receives the bullet—the bear. However, in the panels where the soldier fires, the reader cannot see the firearm underneath a puff of smoke that appears around “PAN,” despite having seen it in the previous two panels. The puff of smoke and the word “PAN” serve to show how dire the situation with the bear is, while also seeming somewhat comedic because Père Ubu is standing on a rock far away from the danger. In the foreground, the reader sees the bear holding a man in its claws, and the second soldier fires on the bear to save his life. “PAN” and its smoke frame appear on a white background, while the sound the bear makes—“RON”—appears on black. The difference in colors shows life—the gun killing the bear to save humans—and death—the bear’s
threatening sounds. Meanwhile, Père Ubu appears simply as a small, black figure against the white background. The smoke puff framing “PAN” is larger than Père Ubu’s figure, showing that the soldier’s grave actions are more noble than Père Ubu’s cowardice, which appears humorous to the reader.

Returning to the war a few pages prior, page 53 (Fig. 14) shows another important onomatopoeia: “SCHRUICK.” This sound shows specifically the violence Père Ubu inflicts during the battle. After a Russian soldier fires on Père Ubu, the latter becomes angry and rips the soldier’s torso from his legs (53). “SCHRUICK” is the sound of this action. Like “PAN.” “SCHRUICK” is in black lettering on a white background, but it does not have any formal border or balloon around it. Instead, the lines seem to follow the motion of the sound as Père Ubu rips the man in half. According to Ian Hague:

...the sounds that comics produce tell us about the comic in time. They inform us of the motions of the comic, the changing positions and configurations of its composite elements. The nature of sounds as motions (in the air or another medium) produced by motions (in objects) means that they serve as stark reminders to the reader that comics are not, indeed they cannot be, stationary while being read: they move through both space and time (69).

He holds a half of this man in either hand, and three lines guide the eye from the waist of the man in Ubu’s left hand to the upper half of the man in his right. The sound “SCHRUICK” curves with the lines that show the motion Père Ubu uses to tear the man in half, showing that the sound is following this motion. This relates to Hague stating that characters in a comic have their own space and time in which they can move. The sound and lines indicate motion within a stationary panel on a page. “PAN” is associated more with the moment of firing a bullet and the sound of the explosion rather than a fluid movement and its sound. Whereas “PAN” was bold and abrupt like a gunshot, “SCHRUICK” is more closely related to a ripping sound that one would expect from paper—or in this case, a person.

Also important to note about “SCHRUICK” is the fact that it replaces didascalies within the text of the play. In Jarry’s text, Père Ubu exclaims, “ah ! je le tiens! (Il le déchire.) Tiens! recommenceras-tu maintenant!” (4.4). Casanave excludes the text before the didascaly because it would be redundant with the image. However, he incorporates the didascaley in adding the onomatopoeia, because the visual sound replicates the sound of ripping paper. This refers to
Jarry’s literal didascal in his representations of the play, as he used paper dolls for soldiers and ripped them in half to portray Père Ubu killing the soldier. In place of the writing, “(Il le déchire.),” the actor would then rip the paper soldier in half, adding the noise of ripping paper to the play. Casanave incorporates this literal ripping of paper into his BD by having Père Ubu rip a man in half, but using the sound of ripping paper to visualize the sound.

The same reference is made when Père Ubu kills Bordure (Fig. 16) in the final panel on page 54. Again, Père Ubu has either half of the man in each of his hands, and the word “SCHRUICK” appears underneath two lines. This time, the lines are not as smooth as the fluid ripping motion seen before. “SCHRUICK” follows their motion, indicating that ripping the man into left and right halves is not as easy as separating the top half from the bottom. Potentially, this trouble comes from the quick motion that seems indicated by such short lines. Within Jarry’s text, it is indicated that Père Ubu, “...se rue sur [Bordure] et le déchire” (4.4). The sound and motion in the comic, again, replace the didascal within Jarry’s play in order to indicate the brute strength and violence of Père Ubu’s action during the war.

**Petit and Onomatopoeias**

As with speech balloons, Petit does not use onomatopoeias in such an innovative way as Casanave. In her BD, Petit rarely uses onomatopoeias, and when she does, they have relatively little importance in the plot of the play. She uses them in ways to show doors closing or characters walking, but they do not seem to indicate how the reader should read—and ultimately visualize hearing—the sounds nor their motions, as Casanave does. They are not associated with a certain image—as the puff of gun smoke and “PAN” are—through the BD. Comparing the way Petit portrays the war scene to how Casanave does so indicates two vastly different ways of adapting the scene.

While Casanave shows Père Ubu literally ripping enemies in half, as Jarry writes, Petit draws the scene more realistically. Act IV, scene 4 (Fig. 17) shows Père Ubu using his sword to spill the entrails of the soldier onto the ground instead of ripping him in half (119). The didascal is not present in the dialogue because it is an action, but it is not portrayed in the image itself as it was in Casanave’s adaptation. Petit chooses to focus more upon Père Ubu’s words in this panel than on the sounds of death. However, it is interesting to note that both Casanave and Petit drew a soldier firing at Père Ubu in their adaptations. While Casanave focused on the soldier firing the gun, Petit focuses more on the act of firing the gun.
The first panel of page 119 is the closest Petit comes to using an onomatopoeia to create more depth than a static image on the page. “DING” appears on Père Ubu’s breastplate after the bullet strikes it. There is a slight passage of time shown by this “DING.” On the left, a gun is visible. A line leads from the gun to the breastplate where one sees—once again—a star-like shape indicating the bullet striking the armor. Another line indicates the bullet flying upward until the bullet itself is seen. Within this panel, we have time divided into two sections: the time before the bullet struck Père Ubu’s breastplate and the time after it struck. The process of the bullet leaving the gun, striking, and ricocheting shows a small passage of time in only one panel, affirming Hague’s theory of there being motion and time in the BD itself. Though this adds depth in time to the BD, the onomatopoeia does not add to the meaning of the play or detract from it; it simply shows action. While Casanave focuses on evoking emotion and meaning using the brutality of his onomatopoeias, Petit is more focused on simply indicating actions that take place in the plot of the play.

NARRATIVITY

Visual conventions as dividers of reality

Casanave experiments with visual sound in his comic more than Petit. However, Petit creates her own way of adapting *Ubu Roi* through her *mise-en-page*. The way the panels are arranged on a page impacts the perception of the page as a whole, but it also influences how the reader interprets the images and texts within each panel. Casanave adheres to what one would think of as a traditional layout of panels: a clear border around each image, the panels laid out in strip form, and gutters dividing the panels. Petit does not adhere to this form and creates a more abstract *mise-en-page* that complements a play considered as theatre of the absurd. The abstract panels Petit creates are not defined in a strict form, and they allow actions within the panels to run into one another, creating a flow to the page. Her abstract panels also permit the reader to see the thoughts of characters, with a clear indication that these images are subjective and do not influence the play’s plot. This division between the actual events occurring in the play and the thoughts of the characters helps divide reality and the imaginary, relative to the characters. In this section, I will analyze how Petit uses borders and the *mise-en-page* to show moments of her own interpretation of the play without altering Jarry’s original text.

The first time the reader sees a panel’s border appear as something other than a straight line is an important moment in the BD because it establishes that the adapted play can include a
character’s thoughts that have no bearing on the plot. In act I, scene 6, Père Ubu feigns being grievously injured to garner the sympathy of King Venceslas, and asks what will become of Mère Ubu (34). The final panel (Fig. 18) shows Père Ubu and Venceslas surrounded by three straight lines serving as borders. This half of the panel is showing an actual moment in the play’s plot. However, as the readers look right, the panel’s border becomes cloudlike, indicating that Venceslas is thinking about the question Père Ubu just posed. His imagined response to Mère Ubu’s fate is making love to her after Père Ubu’s death.

This thought balloon is important for two main reasons: it shows a transition from the real to imaginary and it shows how Petit can insert her own interpretation. The reader starts the panel looking at Venceslas and Père Ubu but finishes by being engrossed in Venceslas’ thoughts. This could be seen as a technical hiatus transition of sorts because the reader starts outside of the character’s thoughts, thereby establishing the characters involved, and finishes inside Venceslas’ head. Also important to note is that in his play, Jarry never indicates that Venceslas harbors lustful feelings for Mère Ubu. This thought balloon is a way for Petit to insert her own interpretation of the plot without otherwise altering the play’s original text. She gives Venceslas a motive for wanting Père Ubu dead instead of simply offering him comfort. Because of Venceslas’ thought balloon, he now seems dastardly in the reader’s mind, because he would copulate with a recent widow and perhaps even wish for Ubu to die, with no other motive or justification. Though the reader sees Venceslas engaging in coitus with Mère Ubu, it in no way affects the plot of the play, as Père Ubu does not die. The thought balloon adds a layer of depth to the BD because there is the reality of the plot and the imagination of the characters.

Petit also uses wavering borders to indicate dream sequences that are included in act III, scene 7 of the play. Père Ubu sleeps in a cave and dreams of slaughtering all those who stand in the way of his happiness (150; 154). Over the course of five pages (Fig. 19), Père Ubu’s dream is indicated with a wavering border framing five splash pages. In these five pages, there is a fictitious plot of Père Ubu’s creation. Though these are splash pages, the actions of each page are divided into what look to be abstract panels, or panels created with the images themselves. Page 150 is divided into three sections. The first is Russian soldiers firing upon their victims. Their blood guides the reader’s eye down to see Bordure as a bear, lying on a rug. His sword divides the soldier from himself, and the rug creates a bottom border to this second abstract panel. Beneath Bordure, the reader sees Bougrelas as a bear with a gun. There is a flow to Père Ubu’s
dream that shows his fears. Surrounding these three abstract panels is a black background that wavers, indicating that this sequence is a dream that starts as a nightmare. This nightmare incorporates aspects from Père Ubu’s recent experiences, but the scene changes as Père Ubu dreams about vanquishing his foes.

Over the next several pages, Petit divides the splash pages into three separate actions, as seen on page 150. The final page (Fig. 20) is no exception to this structure, but it serves to anchor the reader back into the reality of the play instead of the dream sequence. There are no borders surrounding the splash page completely, but the second abstract panel helps transition from dream to reality. At the top of the page, the reader sees more slaughter, but the superimposition of Père Ubu’s sudden victory divides the slaughter from Père Ubu sleeping in the cave. The tail of the thought balloon attributes the image to Père Ubu, showing that this moment is the end of the dream sequence.

The most important difference between Venceslas’ thought and this dream sequence is that the thought was Petit’s own addition whereas the dream sequence is included in the play. Despite this difference, Petit indicates a transition from reality to thought in the same way: through borders. Within the borders, Petit can interpret these sequences as she imagines them. Though the dream sequence is in the original play, Père Ubu’s words serve more as a narration. Petit is free to portray his words in any way she chooses, and here the wavering borders signify an escape from the confines of the reality established in the play. She is not confined to the limitations imposed by a strictly human play, as a theatrical production would be, and she can draw the characters as bears if she would like. The final abstract panel of page 150 (Fig. 19) is an example of this. Bougrelas is a bear wielding a gun, but the dialogue mentions nothing of the gun. Petit is free to make this choice, as she does not have to limit herself to simply following the text of the play or the physical limitations of a real bear.

In her arrangement of panels, Petit produces a meaning completely her own by creating a three-panel rhythm that lends to a larger picture. Through her use of borders, she indicates a change from the reality—or plot—of the play to the thoughts of the characters. These two visual conventions of drawing BD add more depth to the plot of the play by allowing the reader to see into the characters’ heads. Petit can also influence the reader’s perception of the play by incorporating her own visualization of events through these thoughts, leaving the original text of
the play unmarred. Her use of the *mise-en-page* sets her BD apart from that of Casanave because she relies more on visual arrangement while Casanave relies on visual sound.

*Mise-en-Page*

Unlike theatre, which is composed of moments on the stage, *bande dessinée* is made up of isolated moments on the page. Because of this, an artist must find inventive ways to make the story flow. Each panel is distinct from the other, and they are often separated by a gutter. This presents the challenge of finding a linking element to make a continuous story through the contiguous panels. Both Casanave and Petit use panel arrangement to create a continuous action on a page, but they do so in different ways. This reflects their own styles in panel arrangements, and these styles may be analyzed in the same scene: Père Ubu throwing people into his *trappe*. In Jarry’s play, Père Ubu punishes his penniless nobles by throwing them into a hole in the ground in act III, scene 2. Both artists play with the idea of *la trappe* in their adaptations but have different interpretation of where the *trappe* leads. Casanave’s adaptation shows a well-defined dungeon, while Petit’s *trappe* is more ambiguous. In this section, I analyze how the artists connect the panels to compare their presentations of this scene.

*Casanave*

In act III of Casanave’s adaptation, he uses the arrangement of panels (*mise-en-page*) to create an almost seamless link between two panels, one above the other on page 28 (*Fig. 21*). There is a clear progression of an action and its effect through images with minimal text. Père Ubu points to a noble, shows a malevolent smile, and picks him up with a hook. These first three panels mainly use Père Ubu to show continuity. The second panel of the page shows a closeup of Père Ubu’s face to expose his evil intentions, the next panel shows a medium shot to establish exactly what that evil intention is, and the long shot of the following panel shows the disappearance of the noble, along with everyone’s reactions. Based on these reactions and because Casanave draws a cloud-like figure where the noble should be, with lines pointing downward to the missing floor tile, these lines create a transition between this panel and the one below. No characters are repeated between the two to sustain continuity. Instead, the lines seem to traverse the gutter and show the noble falling. The gutter between these two panels looks almost as if the floor were seen from a side angle, as one sees on page 32 (*Fig.22*) with the *trappe*. The lines cross this gutter in a way similar to the lines crossing the side view of the tile (32 p 7). Due to the gutter seemingly connecting the two panels into one larger one, the reader
must interpret what the upper and lower halves mean to the story. Père Ubu literally comes out on top in the top panel, while nobles are thrown down below into a grim area filled with torture devices and threatening figures looming in the darkness.

According to Ann Miller, “the bande dessinée panel does not occur in isolation. Meaning is produced out of the relationships, both linear and non-linear, between panels” (82). In the case of these two panels, the gutter serves as an important division metaphorically because it does not divide the image. Instead, it shows Père Ubu’s brutality because it literally embodies the fine line between being invited to a palace and being tortured. If the final panel were moved to the next page, it would not hold the same impact as it does being directly beneath the other panel. The two panels would be disjointed, and the rapidity of falling from favor would not be emphasized so well. In putting the dungeon panel directly below Père Ubu’s financial meeting, the artist shows that Père Ubu has torturers waiting just below for anyone who could possibly displease him. This juxtaposition literally puts Père Ubu on top while he puts his enemies down.

Casanave only uses a similar spatial link in one other scene in this BD. In two horizontally juxtaposed panels on page 24 (Fig. 9) Père Ubu is offering to feed his new subjects in a scene that is divided by a gutter. He stands with a man in the left panel, and his followers cheer him on in the right panel. The reader knows this is one image because a chest is divided between the two panels, and a man is partially split in two between the panels and erased by the gutter between them. This is a similar technique to that of page 28, but this time it offers a sequence of dialogue. Because Père Ubu is in the left panel, what he says is necessarily read first before we move on to the next panel. In the following panel, we see the people praising Père Ubu. Readers know that the characters are reacting to what Père Ubu has just said.

Continuing downward, the eye sees the next speech balloon, but its tail attributes it to a character not in the panel. Because the two panels compose a single image, the reader sees that Père Ubu speaks the words. Because these words are below the speech balloon containing the cheers of his new subjects, the reader knows that Père Ubu speaks after them. If the gutter disappeared and these two panels were combined into one, the reader’s eye would be guided down to the second part of Père Ubu’s dialogue by his round stomach projecting toward it. With the gutter, however, the sequence of speaking is well established. The gutter dividing these two panels serves as a temporal divide. It helps to order the speech of characters, and it separates cause (Père Ubu’s first pronouncement) from effect (the acclaim of his subjects). The latter is
similar to the former example with a division between cause and effect, where Père Ubu pushes the nobles through the trap door in the floor in one panel, then the reader sees the noble falling into the dungeon in the next panel below.

The *mise-en-page* in these examples show Père Ubu’s political strategy: he manipulates other characters until he is able to show his true evil intentions. He is always prepared to punish those around him, and he will always be the victor because he always comes out on top. Casanave very strategically blends his panels together to show information that Jarry had not included in his play. Creating a seamless transition on page 32 shows that Père Ubu had torturers ready in a dungeon, despite Jarry making no mention of this in the play. Without changing the script of the play, Casanave inserts his interpretation of Père Ubu’s evil mind into his BD, influencing how the reader sees Père Ubu overall.

**Petit**

Though she does not use multiple panels to create one image as Casanave does, Petit also uses panel arrangement to set the tone of *la trappe*. Act II, scene 2 shows an alternation of panels that does not appear throughout the rest of the BD. Starting on page 70 and continuing into 71 (*Fig. 23*), the page shows half of the panels with no boundary nor gutter, and the other half with at least a partial panel boundary. Each time the trapdoor appears, the panel has no border, though the reader is able to see where the panel ends because the surrounding panels with defined borders or speech balloons serve as a border. Much of the page is simply blank space, and the eye can follow it downward unimpeded through most of the page. The overall whiteness of the page is due to the lack of details and borders.

This whiteness lends to the ambiguity of the *trappe* in the second to last panel on page 71. According to Peeters, “...l’utilisation rhétorique de la case et de la page est certainement celle qui assure à une fiction les meilleures chances de continuité” (77). This panel is the most significant of the page because of its lack of borders and the fact that it is at the bottom of the page. Père Ubu dangles a noble into the *trappe* that has no visible bottom. No one knows what happens to the nobles that have been thrown in, but the end of the page makes the *trappe* more menacing because it is the end of the character’s world. The *trappe* is just above the edge of the page, and dangling the noble above a hole on the edge of the world is threatening to drop him out of the BD into nothingness, as he cannot exist outside of the book.
Later in the BD, a lack of border also shows a sense of uncertainty, though this uncertainty now belongs to the characters rather than the reader. Returning to the cave scene where Mère Ubu poses as a ghost (Fig. 6) there is a stark divide in power based on the use and lack of borders. On the left half of the page, there are a closeup and an establishing shot of Mère Ubu hiding herself to act as a ghost to scare Père Ubu (165). She is surrounded by the color black because she is making herself invisible to Père Ubu. Also important to note is that she has a clear border around her every time she appears on the page. As she attempts to speak as an apparition to Père Ubu, he appears without a border and always looking in the wrong direction (165). This shows that he is unsure of where Mère Ubu is, but it also shows his uncertainty about his safety in the cave. He contemplates what the apparition—or Mère Ubu—says and fears her. There is no border to guide him in the empty space of the page and his thoughts seem to be just as lacking as the blankness. Because he can neither see Mère Ubu nor master his own thoughts, he is lost in the blankness of the page.

The following page (Fig. 24) shows a transition back into Père Ubu’s certitude. There are three panels in the first strip of this page, but only two have borders. Mère Ubu continues to play the apparition, curses, and tells him to be silent, causing him to become indignant at the thought of a lying, swearing angel. (166). By becoming suspicious, Père Ubu focuses his thoughts and emotions, giving him a basis to take control of the situation. He is still unsure of where the voice is coming from, and he once again stares off into blank space because his panel does not have borders. However, the two panels showing Mère Ubu have borders, and they seem to help frame Père Ubu, showing that he is not as lost as he was on the last page. The final image shows a similar occurrence. Père Ubu has decided to say insulting things about Mère Ubu, again focusing his thoughts, although he may still be unaware that he is talking to Mère Ubu about herself. Her panels with defined borders that surround Père Ubu establish a border around him, showing that he is quickly becoming angry and his old self again.

Unlike Casanave, Petit plays with a lack of borders to create ambiguity in her BD. Whether this ambiguity is for the reader or for the characters depends on the selection, as she uses this technique quite often throughout the BD. She often experiments with using borders of panels to create a border for another one, and she pays close attention to the mise-en-page in order to present her themes in the most effective manner. In this case, she highlights Père Ubu’s malevolence and his temper through empty space without a lack of borders. Petit also plays with
the medium itself by breaking a fourth wall of sorts and threatening to erase characters from her fictional world by dropping them into ours. The differences between Casanave’s and Petit’s depiction of the trappe scene clearly show how the artist’s own interpretation of the scene influences how the reader perceives the scene as well, just as a dramatist would influence their audience.

**Tonal shifts**

Despite each page of the comic book being simply a sheet of paper, a comic book artist must make a world come alive. Each panel presents a new moment of their world, and because of this, the artist must make their reader believe that they are actually seeing the world of the play. How this world appears to the reader differs according to the artist. We are able to see this with the different adaptations of *Ubu roi*. Though the play remains the same, both Casanave and Petit use different drawing styles and techniques to present the scenes in the play. Aurore Petit uses a style with a clear division between black and white. Daniel Casanave, however, uses shading throughout his comic, making the division between light and dark less clear. Because of Petit’s stark division in tones, the play is not situated in as specific of a location as it is in Casanave’s adaptation. In this next section, I will study how Casanave uses shading to create depth and texture in his comic. I will then analyze how the solid tones in Petit’s comic highlight and emphasize characters’ actions.

**Casanave**

Looking at Casanave’s adaptation of *Ubu roi*, the reader sees a variety of tones due to the cross hatching he uses to shade his comic. The tones range from completely white, to grey, to completely black. Several panels throughout the comic even demonstrate this complete spectrum of tones within the confines of their borders. These examples provide the best opportunity to see just how Casanave uses tone to add depth to his adaptation of the play, both in a physical sense and a metaphorical sense. Benoît Peeters states that, “Un...problème, plus secret peut-être [de la bande dessinée], est celui de l’échelle des plans et du regard” (142). Casanave approaches this problem by using his tones and textures to help guide the reader through the depth of scenes he creates. Studying Casanave’s tonal shifts throughout the comic shows just how powerful the shifts become when influencing the perception of the single panels that use a majority of the tones. Often these panels are those showing fire, gunfire, smoke and gun smoke because these
elements make up much of the plot in the BD. The first time the reader sees fire and smoke is when Père Ubu greets his subjects for the first time while standing on the balcony (Fig. 3).

The reader can see two pigs on spits among the crowd of people, and smoke billows up from them (22). Smoke rises up from four other locations in the crowd, but those other pigs are invisible because of the crowd of people and the fact that they are so far away that the details become almost indistinguishable. The dark tone of grey establishes that they are so far away that individual people cannot be made out. The size of these smoke clouds also helps establish the vast depth of the courtyard because the nearest column of smoke is much larger than the others, creating a middle ground. However, the remaining five columns become increasingly smaller, establishing the background. With the diminishing size of the smoke columns, the panel suggests more than a two-dimensional drawing, but a three-dimensional space that the characters inhabit.

The smoke also produces a verticality to the panel because, as it billows up, the smoke seems to become cloudlike, floating horizontally. In this panel, the smoke floats so high that it stretches even above the building. It is evident that these clouds lingering above the courtyard are not all simply clouds because the cross-hatching used to shade the smoke corresponds to that of the horizontal clouds, indicating that some may be formed from the smoke billowing from fires. The smoke is darker on the right side while the smoke clouds floating in the sky are darker on the bottom. Wind seems to blow from left to right in the panel. Cross-hatching on the right side of the smoke column becomes the bottom of the clouds as the wind blows in this direction. The wind’s movement creating an evolution in the cross-hatching indicates that the smoke columns are being blown horizontally and are lingering in the sky.

The next time the reader sees fire and smoke is on page 36 (Fig. 25). This series of panels is important to note because the reader sees both gunfire and fire and the resulting gun smoke and smoke. Panel three shows soldiers firing at Père Ubu’s citizens, and the entire image seems to be taking place in a cloud of gun smoke surrounding the soldiers and a pig. Readers know that the smoke issues from the firearms due to the texture Casanave adds to the scene. A soldier brandishing a gun in the background seemingly is firing it because Casanave adds wavering lines around the end of the gun, indicating that the artillery, which can be seen near the end of the gun, has exploded out of it. This small puff becomes part of the larger cloud of smoke because Casanave does not quite close off its border, allowing the white of the puff to merge into the white cloud of smoke.
Directly beneath this panel, fire and smoke appear once more. These two panels undergo a scene-to-scene transition, as there seems to be an ellipsis of time between the battle and viewing the aftermath. In the background, two columns of smoke billow upward as the soldiers burn the remains of the town (36). The reader can view the extent of the destruction by looking at the dark shading of the objects being burnt. Directly to the left of the fire, two small crosses emerging from two distinct black masses are just visible against the completely white background (Fig. 26). Several pages prior (Fig. 27), upon Père Ubu entering the town, a small cathedral with crosses on either of its towers is visible in the background (33). The forms in the fire and in the background of the town are very similar. This suggests Père Ubu is in the process of burning down the town. Adding to this idea is Casanave’s use of black lines against a white background. Around the fire, Casanave draws black lines that seem to originate from the fire. They are closer together nearer to the fire, but as they grow farther from the fire, they are not as close together, suggesting the lines are emanating from the fire. Because Père Ubu and his troops are burning down the town, these lines could be light debris flying upward with the intense rise of hot air from the fire.

Perhaps the best demonstration of all these elements coming together to give metaphorical and literal depth to the play occurs in act IV. On page 50 (Fig. 28), the reader sees a long shot of Père Ubu looking at the destruction the Russian troops are causing while a pig stands in the foreground. This panel gives depth to the panel, showing a passage of time in solely this panel. It also demonstrates Casanave’s use of texture. First, there is depth within this panel because there is a foreground, middle ground, and background. The foreground is established by the small boy carrying a pail of water toward the pig. Père Ubu and his soldiers stand in the middle ground of this panel. In the background, the reader sees a cloud of smoke emanating from the destruction the Russian troops are inflicting. Lines similar to those of the town burning on page 36 indicate more fire being used to devastate the area.

Next, an ellipsis of time that the characters experience but that is not shown to the readers is established in this panel with the help of texture. In the foreground and middle ground, there are lines creating sharp points on what appears to be a hill. This texture resembles grass, but as the reader’s eye continues to the right of the panel, the grass disappears. Instead, very tight cross-

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4 Dust clouds are also represented in this visual style in western comics. Due to Ubu roi parodying MacBeth, my interpretation is biased to see smoke, which is often present in presentations of MacBeth.
hatching makes the ground appear black. Considering that the smoke of a fire is shown in the background, the reader could interpret this as charred ground, showing that a fire has already passed through the area. The reader has not seen this fire ravage the land; however, they could assume that it started in the charred area, but it has burned so long that it has destroyed everything flammable and expanded to the horizon. Black clouds hanging overhead seem to indicate that the fire has run its course through the area, and the ruin inflicted by the troops is following their path of destruction as they move through the countryside. Establishing that the fire and troops have already run their course in an area without the reader seeing further reinforces Hague’s idea that comics have a space and time all of their own.

Through Casanave’s use of tonal variance and texture, the space—or rather the depth—of the BD’s world is established. His use of fire, gunfire, smoke, and gun smoke are a common motif throughout the comic to show how violent Père Ubu’s reign really is, and images of pigs also seem to highlight the idea of slaughter from the moment Père Ubu seized power. Linking these panels with the pig shows just how often fire appears. This is, perhaps, to show the duration of fire and that it will continue to devastate and spread in the time of the comic rather than the time of the reader.

Petit

Petit does not use detailed tones. Her comic is composed of solid black or solid white spaces—she rarely uses texture or tonal shift. These solid spaces seem to indicate the difference between plausible events in the play and implausible events. One of the rare instances of Petit breaking her solid black and white scheme is in act II, scene 5 (Fig. 29 and 30). After Bougrelas flees from Père Ubu, he and his mother hide in a cave (53). The reader first sees a clear change in the strict black and white theme. The cave walls are black, but white speckles break the solid tone. One could think this is moisture collecting on the walls of the cave, but the reader cannot see a water source that would create this effect.

On this page, there is also an inconsistency in how Petit portrays the floor of the cave. In panels one and three, the floor appears white, but in the fourth, the floor appears the same as the walls: black with white speckles. At this moment, the ghosts of Bougrelas’ ancestors appear. Without the cave’s white floor, the scene has a celestial appearance. The characters appear to float in space. The impossibility of ghosts is indicated by a tone that appears nowhere else in the BD: grey. The ghosts are simply silhouettes comprised of black and white speckles.
The following page continues this sequence, with the specters seemingly walking on the star-like speckles in the first panel, and then offering a sword to Bougrelas in the second (54). These three panels anchor the story back into reality. While all the specters exist, they appear to walk on the stars. However, when it is just Bougrelas and one specter, the panel shows a closeup of the two, and the speckles disappear. This causes the reader to focus upon the action of the specter charging Bougrelas with avenging the death of his family, which will influence the plot later. The specter’s presence indicates that Bougrelas is still in an implausible situation, but that changes with the next panel. A long shot shows Bougrelas on his knees, but the floor has changed from black with white speckles to white with black speckles. This reversal of tones shows that the specters have finally disappeared and that Bougrelas is finally anchored in reality. No trace of the ghosts remains behind, reinforcing the suggestion that this could have been a dream sequence. However, Bougrelas appears in the same position as when kneeling before the specter, and one aspect of his reality is missing: his mother’s corpse. She died in front of Bougrelas, and before the ghosts arrive, she is seen stretched before him. However, after the ghosts leave, her body is no longer there. Since he has not moved from his original position, her body should still be before him; this leads to one explanation: the ghosts came to recover the dead. Once her body is gone, the ghosts are gone as well, leaving only what could plausibly remain in the play behind: Bougrelas.

According to André Helbo, “il est certain qu’un homme volant (‘fantasy-fiction’) n’entretiendra pas la même qualité de rapports avec ses semblables héros condamnés aux lois de la pesanteur. Une autre dimension pourra venir altérer la ‘normalité’ graphique des relations…” (131). The supernatural adds a metaphorical depth to the BD. Now that Bougrelas has the support of his dead ancestors, he seemingly has more power than Père Ubu and his henchmen. The previous line of kings asks him to become the rightful heir and overthrow the tyrant Père Ubu. This science-fictional moment shows that Bougrelas is the true heir to the throne and raises the question of whether the spirits will actively try to stop Père Ubu’s future actions. After ghosts appear for the first time in the play, there is the possibility of them returning later on, altering what could be considered real within the confines of the play.

Ghosts return to involve themselves in the affairs of Mère Ubu in act IV, scene 1, the next moment where a striking difference in the tones of the panels occurs. Mère Ubu goes to the royal crypts in order to steal money from the graves (103). Throughout this sequence (Fig. 31),
the reader is often watching Mère Ubu from above through high angle shots. Looking directly down on her reveals a pattern of squares and rhombuses on the floor of the crypt. Instead of having a completely white floor, these shapes arrange a pattern on the floor with stunningly straight lines that appear nowhere else within the comic. The reader realizes the shocking amount of detail within the scene. Arches appear and seem to make the scene three-dimensional, which has not been the case previously in the comic. Mère Ubu contemplates a disembodied voice (103). She is the only character present in these panels, and it is impossible that another human character is speaking. The following page shows the floor with its segmented whiteness (Fig. 32). Panel two of page 104 shows not only this floor, but a white spider on a white web that breaks up the solidity of the black arches that frame Mère Ubu. These two factors seem to indicate Mère Ubu’s mounting suspicion of the supernatural.

Such deviations from Petit’s normal style of drawing seem to indicate a change in the plot of the story as well. The reality within the play—that which could plausibly happen—slips into the implausible when Petit breaks her normal, solid tones. These moments of implausibility seem to divide the plausible and in the first example, are shown in a similar way involving color. Petit uses the color grey, halfway between black and white, in order to show this slip into unreality. Regarding the second example, Petit contrasts unreality with realism in order to create a shocking difference between a ghost speaking to Mère Ubu and her surroundings. Deviation from normal styles of drawing serves to highlight these moments because the eye is especially attracted to what seems different about these panels.

CONCLUSION

Though a BD does not have sound, it can play with visuals in order to create its own sound, as with speech bubbles and onomatopoeias. These techniques to convey sound vary between different illustrators, showing that even in the same medium, art changes. Actors and dramatists can easily connect with their audience because they are in the same room. BD creates a connection with the reader by how they situate them in the story. Petit often seems to keep the reader outside of the events by maintaining distance between the reader and characters. Casanave, on the other hand, creates a voyeuristic point of view in his comic, as if the reader were sneaking into the story to observe what is happening. The ability to connect with the characters in both of these comics is based upon these methods of viewing the story.
Theatre is a very time-oriented art. BD does not rely on time quite as heavily, but its ability to change a reader’s perception relies heavily on the arrangement of panels and other visual techniques. Casanave uses tonal shifts in order to add physical and metaphorical depth to his adaptation, while Petit uses changes from her normal color scheme to separate reality from unreality.

When picking up a BD adaptation of a play, the reader may have certain expectations that may impact how they receive the adaptation. Comic book authors and artists find different means to keep the essence of the play the same while making it conform more to the standards of its new medium. Casanave and Petit are not dissimilar to a director who controls how the scenes are presented in a theatrical representation of a play.
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Appendix

Figure 1
Enfin je consens à m’exposer pour vous. De la sorte, Bardure, tu te chargera de pourfendre le roi.

Ne vaudrait-il pas mieux nous jeter tous à la fois sur lui en braillant et guerillant ? Nous aurions chance ainsi d’entraîner les troupes.

MERDRE

et à ce signal vous vous jeterez sur lui.

Alors, voilà : je tâcherai de lui marcher sur les pieds, il tremblera, alors je lui dirai :

Oui, et dès qu’il sera mort tu prendras son sceptre et sa couronne.

Et je courrai avec mes hommes à la poursuite de la famille royale.

Oui, et je le recommande spécialement le jeune Bougras.
Figure 3
Figure 4
Acte V · Scène 1

Mais, par saint Antoine ! on parle. Jambédieu ! Je veux être pendu !

Monsieur Ubu, on parle, en effet, en la trom-

de l'archange qui doit tirer les morts de la cendre.

La poussière finale ne parlerait pas autrement !

Voici cette voix sèvere. C'est celle de saint Gabriel

qui ne peut donner que de bons conseils.

Ah ! ma gïouille ! Je me tais,

je ne dis plus mot. Continuez,

madame l'Apparition !

Figure 6
Figure 7
AU PALAIS

JE PAK MA CHANDELLE VERTE, ME VOICI ROI DE CE PAYS. JE ME Suis PLANCHE UNE INDIGESTION ET ON VA M'APPORTER MA GRANDE CAPELINE.

EN QUOI EST-ELLE, PÈRE UBU ? CAR NOUS AVONS BEAU ÊTRE ROI, IL FAUT ÊTRE ÉCONOMES.

MADAME MA FEMELLE
ELLE EST EN PEAU DE MOUTON AVEC UNE AIGLÈE ET DES BRIDES EN PEAU DE CHIEN.

VOILÀ QUI EST BEAU.
MAIS IL EST ENCORE PLUS BEAU D’ÊTRE ROI.

OUI, TU AS RAISON,
MÈRE UBU.
Figure 9
Figure 10
DÉPÉCHEZ-VOUS, PLUS VITE, CE VOIR FINIR
LES LÉS MAINTENANT. DE N'ABORD
REFORMER LA JUSTICE, APRES NOUS
PROCEDEM AUX FINANCES.

ON VA VOUS CA.

VOUS AUREZ LES AMENDES
QUE VOUS PRÉVORREZ
ET LES BIENS DES CON-
DAMMERS A MORT.

HORROR

INFAMIE

INSIDITÉ

SCANDALE

NOUS REJUSIONS A JUHRER, DANS
DES CONDITIONS PARENTES.

A LA TRAPPE
LES MAESTROS.

EH ! QUE FAIS-TU PEPE UBU ? OUI
REVENIR MAINTENANT LA JUSTICE?

TIENS ! MÔI !

QU' CE SERA
D'UFEA.

ALLONS, TÂCH’ TOI
BOUFFRESQUE, NOUS
ALLONS MAINTENANT
MESSEIJRS PRODIER AUX FINANCES.
Figure 12
En avant, mes amis ! Vive Venceslas et la Pologne ! Le
evieux grondin de Père Ubu est parti, il ne reste plus que la
sorcière de Mère Ubu avec son Palatin. Je m’offre à marcher
à votre tête et à rétablir la race de mes pères.

Vive Bougrelas !

Il nous supprimeron
ns les impôts déblis
par l’affreux Père Ub.

Hurrah !

en avant !

Courons au palais
et massacreons
cette engeance.
EN AVANT! AH! MONSIEUR, QUE JE T’AIL RAVE, ENTENDS-MOI? SAC A VIV!

AH! JE SUIS MORT.

AH! OUI! JE SUIS BIERE, JE SUIS TROUVE, JE SUIS PERDUE, JE SUIS ADI-NSFRE, JE SUIS ENTIERE.

TIENS! RECOMMENERAS-TU MAINTENANT?

EN AVANT NOEURS FIGUREUSEMENT PASSONS LE ROSSÉ, LA VICTOIRE EST À NOUS.

TU URGÉ? JUSQU’À CE SENS SUR MON FRONT PLUS DE ROSES QUE DE LAURERS.
Figure 15
Figure 16
Figure 17

Acte IV · Scène 4

Ah ! Oh !
Je suis blessé,
je suis troué,
je suis perforé,
je suis administré,
je suis enterré.

Oh, mais tout de même ! Ah ! Je le tiens.

Tiens ! recommenceras-tu,
maintenant !
Acte I • Scène 6

De par ma chandelle verte, je me suis rompu l'intestin et crevé la bouzine !

Oui certes, et je vais sûrement crever. Que deviendra la Mère Ubu ?

Père Ubu, vous estes-vous fait mal ?

Nous pourvoirons à son entretien.

Vous avez bien de la bonté de rester.

Oui, mais, roi Vencusias, tu n'en seras pas moins massacré.

Figure 18
Ah ! Sire Dragon russe, faites attention, ne tirez pas par ici, il y a du monde.

Ah ! voilà Bordure, qu'il est mauvais, on dirait un ours.

Et Bougrelas qui vient sur moi !

L'ours, l'ours !
Acte IV - Scène 7

c'est la vie des Salopins.

c'est le bonheur du Maître des Finances.

Figure 20
Figure 21
Figure 22
Figure 23
Acte V § Scène 1

Nous disions, monsieur Ubu, que vous étiez un gros bonhomme !

Taisez-vous, de par Dieu !

Oh ! les anges ne jurent pas !

Très gros, en effet, ceci est juste.

Merdr !

Vous êtes mort, monsieur Ubu.

Parfaitement, à la dernière des chipies !

Vous voulez dire que c’est une femme charmante.

Une horreur. Elle a des griffes partout, on ne sait par où la prendre.
Figure 25
Figure 26
Je te le souhaite, mon cher enfant, mais pour moi, je ne verrai pas cet heureux jour.

En ! qu'as-tu ?
Elle pâlit, elle tombe,
aucurs ! Mais je suis dans un désert !
Ô mon Dieu ! son cœur ne bat plus. Elle est morte ! Est-ce possible ? Encore une victime du Père Ubu !

Ô mon Dieu ! qu'il est triste de se voir seul à quatorze ans avec une vengeance terrible à poursuivre !
Acte II - Scène 5

Eh ! que vois-je ? toute ma famille, mes ancêtres... Par quel prodige ?

Apprends, Bougradas, que j'ai été pendant ma vie le saugneur Mathias de Königsberg, le premier roi et le fondateur de la maison. Je te remets le soin de notre vengeance.

Et que cette épée que je te donne n'ait de repos que quand elle aura trappé de mort l'usurpateur.

Figure 30
Voilà ! Voilà l'or au milieu des ossements des rois. Dans notre sac, alors, tout !

Eh ! quel est ce bruit ?

Dans ces vieilles voûtes y aurait-il encore des vivants ?

Acte IV - Scène 1

Remettons la pierre.

Eh quoi ! toujours ce bruit. Ma présence en ces lieux me cause une étrange frayeur. Je prendrai le reste de cet or une autre fois, je reviendrai demain.

Jamais, Mère Ubu !