

Physicists, Irony, and Paradox in Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker*

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When one traces the history of the elusive term 'irony,' it seems that it can be placed on a rather simplistic historical continuum. Generally speaking, the more recent the usage, the more complex the accepted understanding of the term becomes. On the early end of the continuum, there is the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here, Aristotle opines that irony deviates from the truth not for the sake of one's own advantage, but out of dislike for boastfulness (135). From this point forward, irony makes its entry into the system of classical rhetoric in its most basic form, that is, the intention of the speaker is opposed to what he expresses in speech. Theoretically, it is not until the late eighteenth century when Schlegel, using his "cryptic terminology" (Furst 227), conceives of a universal irony that Hegel would later term the "allgemeine Ironie der Welt" (Hegel 376). In the twentieth century, Furst lent credence to both German philosophers when she identifies irony as "the instrument for registering the obdurate paradoxicality of a universe in eternal flux" (229).

This admittedly more complex, modern view of irony, however, was laid out in no uncertain terms by the Serpent centuries before. In Genesis 3:1-7, the Serpent encourages Eve to eat from the tree forbidden by God. When Eve realizes, "that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that it was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons." Why is it that the acquisition of knowledge always and predictably necessitates a loss of innocence? This seems to be one of the more obdurate of paradoxicalities in this eternally fluctuating universe. One may call it the ur-paradox and its literary representation the ur-irony. It is not simply that good is bad, that is, it is not as simple as taking the opposite of what is stated and regarding that as meaning. The serpent, in his great wisdom, knows that it is more complicated than the simple irony suggested by the fact that eating, an otherwise life-sustaining process, will cause death. A highly original thinker, the serpent knows that God, in his apparently limited wisdom, has created paradox and thus the universal irony of the world. And, by extension, God planted the seed for both his replacement by man and/or mankind's annihilation

of itself. In short, it does not appear that God displays the insight that even the mortal Swiss dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt did in his "21 Punkte zu den Physikern." Point 3 states "eine Geschichte ist dann zu Ende gedacht, wenn sie ihre schlimmstmögliche Wendung genommen hat"(see Appendix). His play *Die Physiker* (1962) gives artistic expression to this aphorism. Even though the story of mankind has not yet taken its worst possible turn of events in the play or in reality, humankind still stands on the edge of destruction. How is it that irony in the form of paradox has gotten so out of hand as to bring us to the brink?

Dürrenmatt makes several bold attempts at this puzzle. Implicit in all of his works is what he considers the truth of paradox: for example, the more the individual sinks into anonymity in a modern society, the heavier becomes the burden of his personal responsibility for the collective destiny of mankind. Paradox in Dürrenmatt's dramas is quite possibly the modern incarnation of the irony found throughout the great tragedies of ancient Greece, as well as those of William Shakespeare. As Robert Helbling writes in his introduction to a 1977 reprint of *Die Physiker*, "The more Oedipus, for example, tries to remove himself from a web of fateful circumstance, the more he becomes ensnared, thus symbolizing the awe of the Greeks before the tragic irony of man's fate" (xxii). The same holds true for Eve, and the same holds true for modern man who has "equally strong reasons to be overwhelmed by the paradoxes inherent in the civilization he has developed" (xxii). Dürrenmatt describes the great paradox of the modern age thus, "Sichtbar, Gestalt wird die heutige Macht nur etwa da, wo sie explodiert, in der Atombombe, in diesem wundervollen Pilz, der da augsteigt und sich ausbreitet, makellos wie die Sonne, bei dem Massenmord und Schönheit eins werden" (*Theaterprobleme* 45). The more we try to exploit the atom, through science, the greater the likelihood that we will experience nuclear holocaust (Helbling xxii). Dürrenmatt goes on to explain that, "Vor ihr [der Atombombe] versagt jede Kunst als eine Schöpfung des Menschen, weil sie [die Atombombe] selbst eine Schöpfung des Menschen ist. Zwei Spiegel, die sich ineinander spiegeln, bleiben leer" (*Theaterprobleme* 45). Dürrenmatt's image of the mirror suggests that the great irony that runs from Eve through the modern age also negates art.

It is exactly this post-atomic bomb age, during which it seemed that civilization was teetering on the brink of destruction in light of the Gary Powers U2 spy case (1960), the Bay of Pigs Invasion (1961), and the construction of the Berlin Wall (1961) (Roe 260), that is Dürrenmatt's concern in his 1962 play *Die Physiker*. In this work, he expresses his concerns regarding the state of humankind through irony, at the heart of which lies paradox. Before examining the machinations of *Die Physiker* more closely, it would be helpful to consider a possible construct of irony and then to determine how Dürrenmatt's work fits into that paradigm.

Defining irony is very much like trying to put your thumb on a ball of mercury; it seems, therefore, advisable to attempt to establish a paradigm that serves merely to contain this elusive element. Furst makes a most convincing, cogent distinction between traditional irony and romantic irony. The former is marked by "the security of knowledge held with assurance [. . .]. Buttressed by faith in the existence of truths and absolute standards" (Furst 227). The latter and opposite end of her continuum is marked by the idea that "irony is not used to differentiate the true from the false because for the romantic ironist all options may be true, or false" (Furst 229). In other words, the traditionalist believes she has firm footing on which to base her ironic statements, and she provides that footing to her reader as well. The romantic on the other hand provides no such grounding. Her objective seems in fact to be to knock that footing out from under her reader. Dürrenmatt, a twentieth-century playwright, falls somewhere between the two poles, for although he would agree that there is, in the words of Furst, an obdurate paradoxicality to our universe that is eternally in flux, he also finds that there is a Truth in that statement, not a Truth that provides firm footing, but a Truth that provides some footing nonetheless.

Wayne C. Booth gets to the heart of Dürrenmatt's ironic disposition when he sets up the following model: "We can say that all truths can be undermined with the irony of contrary truths *either* [Booth's emphasis] because the universe is essentially absurd and there is no such thing as coherent truth *or* [Booth's emphasis] because man's powers of knowing are inherently and incurably limited and partial" (267). These are two very different epistemological propositions. The former, chaotic universe aligns with Furst's concept of romantic irony, which involves probing a chaos of contingencies. While the search for certitude or the ability to 'know' something may be the goal, doubt will always prevail. The latter is closer to the grotesque world of Dürrenmatt. Mankind seems capable of 'knowing,' but only 'knowing' a part of the story and recognition of this necessitates recognition of paradox. Again the search for certainty is the project, and doubt exists due to paradox, but it is not as strong as romantic doubt because, as Dürrenmatt explains in his Point 19, "Im Paradoxen erscheint die Wirklichkeit" (see Appendix). To Dürrenmatt, this is Truth stated as plainly as Truth can be stated.

In Points 3 through 8, he imparts the idea that *Zufall* is the heart of the drama. Yet in Points 8 through 10 it becomes apparent that Dürrenmatt's concept of *Zufall* is much more ominous than any classical version of fate. Dürrenmatt's *Zufall* is the modern incarnation of Aristotle's notion of fate. In a world of relativism that notion of fate is consigned to the realm of the unknowable. In the empirical world, fate will show itself in its knowable form—*Zufall*. The difference between fate and *Zufall* is one key to understanding *Die Physiker* and Dürrenmatt himself. A playwright who tries to depict fate in drama presupposes "a universal knowledge of the world and, on the part of the

playwright, an omniscient point of view. The problem with this is that man can only have a particular, relative knowledge of the world. Man and the convincing playwright must view the world from within. Hence the playwright will look for the potential *Zufall* in the chosen story. That which, from a transcendent point of view, appears to look like necessary, causal links between events, only looks like irrational chance from within" (Helbing xxiv). Dürrenmatt, in the words of Gerhard Knapp, proclaims for the theater "its emancipation from the shackles of empirical causality" (60), therefore although Point 8 seems to echo Oedipus' horrifyingly ironic dilemma, the intensity of the horror portrayed by Dürrenmatt is greater than that of Sophocles' work because *Zufall* is apparently more random and thus more ominous and frightening.

This idea is further emphasized in Points 9 and 10. In *Die Physiker*, the events are not fated or inevitable in the Sophoclean sense, "but rather," as Helbling suggests, "they are the paradoxical, grotesque outcome of the mixing of human motives and projects. A nuclear holocaust for example may not be inevitable, but it might be possible as a grotesque chance happening" (xxv). The chance happening is a result of men pursuing that which all of the aforementioned scientists and thinkers were pursuing—enlightened nirvana, or rational, empirical control and understanding of their surroundings. This is exactly what Muecke describes as the irony of chance: "It is ironic when we meet what we set out to avoid, especially when the means we have taken to avoid something turn out to be the very means of bringing about what we sought to avoid" (102). The mention of *Oedipus Rex* is therefore simply food for thought and a bit of a red herring. Yes, Dürrenmatt is begging the reader to find the similarities, but he also wants the perceptive reader to find the very real, qualitative difference between his work and Sophocles' work, that is, *Zufall*. It is thus the nature of paradox as he points out in number eleven.

In fact, in Points 11 through 14, Dürrenmatt emphasizes the unavoidability of paradox in the universe. Applied to the physicist, this means that she cannot close her eyes to the paradoxical world she has helped to perpetuate. Yet Dürrenmatt is not leveling accusations against physicists in particular, rather against humankind in general. In Points 15 through 18, he makes a strong case for the recognition that all men and women bear an individual share of responsibility for the course of world events, and to further complicate the idea of *Zufall* and undermine the idea of the great individual tragic hero, Dürrenmatt belittles the possibility of an individual, common or uncommon, undoing the net of problems we have created in the modern world (Helbling xxv). It is paradoxical that we live in an increasingly anonymous, bureaucratic world, and the individual still bears responsibility and possibly even more responsibility than he did in the ancient world.

The Truth of paradox is what Dürrenmatt wishes to reveal. Reality lies in paradox and revealing paradox exposes reality. Prison is freedom, sanity is insane and scientific progress is regressive—these are just a few of the paradoxes

revealed to the reader of *Die Physiker*. The problem, as stated in the final point, lies in the fact that drama can only expose people to reality and not force them to deal with it. It is therefore questionable whether drama can have the didactic effect that Dürrenmatt wishes. This is the pessimism of Dürrenmatt, but it begs the question, how does one "deal" with paradox? Does one *solve* paradox, or does one content oneself with simply *recognizing* it and making peace with it? These questions bring us full circle in our discussion of irony. It seems that Dürrenmatt fully subscribes to Schlegel's theory that irony is the primary means for the literary/aesthetic representation of paradox. When the reader confronts the major ironic twists in *Die Physiker*, she is confronted with paradox and therefore, in Dürrenmatt's construct, reality.

There is, of course, also some simple irony in this play. For example, in his lengthy, almost naturalistic-in-detail stage instructions, Dürrenmatt advises us at the outset that the three classical unities of time, plot, and place are strictly observed. In keeping with this theme of threes, most things in the play occur in threes—there are three physicists, three murdered nurses, three armed guards, Möbius has three children, and so on. Additionally, Dr. von Zahnd, harkening back to the classical era, speaks convincingly of her fate and her family's destiny. Given what we have already observed of Dürrenmatt's less than enthusiastic take on classical tragedy, this discussion of destiny and fate is intended ironically. Another example of simple irony is the role reversal that occurs during the murder investigations. All of these examples are great fun, but they do not cut to the heart of the matter, that is, paradox. The paradox that shapes this drama has to do with the irony of good intentions, as Hal Rennett calls it (96), and it is epistemological in nature.

The irony of good intentions is of course directly related to Point 9. In this case, the "planmäßig vorgehende[n] Menschen" are Möbius and his two physicist colleagues who have finally revealed themselves as secret agents and given their respective philosophies regarding the role of the scientist in modern society. Upon hearing this, Möbius declares, "Unsere Wissenschaft ist schrecklich geworden, unsere Forschung gefährlich, unsere Erkenntnis tödlich. Es gibt für uns Wissenschaftler nur noch die Kapitulation vor der Wirklichkeit [. . .]. Wir müssen unser Wissen zurücknehmen, und ich habe es zurückgenommen" (*Physiker* 74). This quotation is key in that it involves a recognition on the part of a scientist regarding the deadly nature of his field of endeavor. Möbius has not merely unlocked the secret of the atom as Einstein did, he has also unveiled the principle that will allow the unleashing of even greater destructive force on humankind.

Möbius's next step is representative of Muecke's irony of chance. He wants to capitulate to reality. The use of the word *Wirklichkeit* is especially significant in light of the 21 Points. Reality according to Dürrenmatt is paradox. His scientists on the other hand espouse three limited views of reality. Kilton is the naively optimistic American capitalist. He tells Möbius that he

(Möbius) is "ein Genie und als solches Allgemeingut" (Physiker 68), and he believes in the unfettered freedom of the scientist to achieve. Kilton is wrong on both counts. Genius is never *Allgemeingut*, and, as Möbius gets him to admit later in the conversation, Kilton achieves largely in the name of national defense. Eisler is the East-bloc communist who also believes that he decides upon whom he bestows his genius and under what conditions. He, too, is convinced by Möbius of the error of his beliefs. Möbius, although significantly more convincing than his two colleagues who explicitly reject any question of ethical responsibility, also demonstrates the limited view of the ordinary human being, the view from within. In his mind, reality is exclusively the danger inherent in physics and his acceptance of his responsibility for that danger. The reader however knows that reality is the paradox of knowledge that the Serpent recognized, or that Dürrenmatt colorfully portrays in his *Theaterprobleme*, that is, paradox "bei dem Massenmord und Schönheit eins werden" (45). Möbius is blind to such difficulties. Instead of contemplating this paradox, he acts on what he "knows," but we as readers have already seen flaws in what Möbius "knows." Michael Morley points out some of his more serious oversights: "Möbius could not know...that he had not concealed his knowledge early enough, that Kilton and Eisler were already on to him. Nor could he stop Monika from falling in love with him...Above all, he could not know that by entering a mental sanatorium he would be surrendering himself to...Dr. von Zahnd" (235). Möbius's hubris lies in his belief in his own omniscience. Morley's last point, this last extraordinary step of feigning mental illness so that he may be committed, is almost as calculating and *planmäßig* as it gets, but the reader can be certain that this will not solve his perceived dilemma.

The final difficulty with Möbius's view is that he suggests he can take back his knowledge. Dr. von Zahnd dismisses this idea out of hand after she has revealed her true intentions to her captive physicists, "Er versuchte zu verschweigen, was nicht verschwiegen werden konnte. Denn was ihm offenbart worden war, ist kein Geheimnis. Weil es denkbar ist. Alles Denkbare wird einmal gedacht. Jetzt oder in der Zukunft" (*Physiker* 82). And Möbius echoes this very sentiment at the end, "Was einmal gedacht wurde, kann nicht mehr zurückgenommen werden" (*Physiker* 85). This thesis is well supported in the Bible, a necessary source due to the many biblical allusions in this work. In Genesis, it was impossible for Adam to keep secret the shame of his embarrassment over his nakedness. In Kings, God destroys Solomon because he tries to keep his knowledge to himself, the same step Möbius takes. In fact, Dürrenmatt chose his biblical cipher well. As Robert Reno points out, even though one is a scientist and the other an ancient king, they both believe themselves "solely responsible for their knowledge," and they are both "determined to limit and control" what they know in any way they please (73). This is both a mistake, in that it is once again a demonstration that mankind's knowledge is severely limited, and an impossibility as Dr. von Zahnd rather eloquently explains.

And it is Dr. von Zahnd who is perhaps the most interesting character in the drama given that she is the embodiment of paradox. Morley lays out an effective case regarding the paradox that is Fräulein Dr. Mathilde von Zahnd. "She is a doctor, yet is herself physically deformed: she affects concern for her patients, yet in reality treats them like caged animals" (236). On the one hand, she plays the philanthropist when she assures Möbius's ex-wife that she will raise the necessary funds for his permanent stay at her sanatorium. On the other hand, Dr. von Zahnd remains a power hungry megalomaniac who, for example, ominously claims to Inspector Voss that she determines "für wen sich [ihre] Patienten halten [. . .]" (*Physiker* 25). Möbius cannot see any of the self-contradictory aspects of Dr. von Zahnd's character anymore than he can perceive the true nature of a scientific endeavor like physics in which beauty and mass murder become one in the same thing (*Theaterprobleme* 45). He is blind to all paradox and Dr. von Zahnd, as its embodiment, is no exception.

Möbius's lack of vision is his flaw, and it causes him to overlook the *Zufall* inherent in Muecke's irony of chance. Dr. Von Zahnd as paradox is the single factor that Möbius did not and could not have reckoned with and, as Point 8 advises, "[je] planmäßiger [ein Mensch vorgeht], desto wirksamer vermag [ihn] der Zufall treffen" (see Appendix). Möbius had a plan to keep his discovery secret and avoid the destruction of humanity. Through *Zufall* he meets Dr. von Zahnd, that is, he encounters paradox, and his secret is revealed. As Point 9 warns, he has reached "das Gegenteil [seines] Ziels" (see Appendix). This is the irony of chance, and Möbius's gross inability to see that is the central irony of *Die Physiker*.

There is, however, one question remaining with regard to Dr. Von Zahnd. Is she insane? The question of her sanity is the subject of much debate in the secondary literature. Most refer to her as mad, thereby taking their stance. Bodo Fritzen writes "[it] is of course a theater-coup when it turns out in the end that the mental patients are normal and the doctor is crazy" (107). To believe this is to miss the irony of her character. I strongly agree with Crockett who explains that the question of her sanity hangs on "the simple metaphoric code, Solomon=Knowledge" (112). She is presumably an astute psychiatrist who is quickly able to discern a real delusion from a fake one. Once she cracks his code, she understands that the key lies in Möbius's manuscripts. Hence, when she proclaims: "Auch mir ist der goldene König Salomo erschienen" (*Physiker* 81), and later: "Was Salomo gefunden hatte, kann einmal auch ein anderer finden, es sollte die Tat des goldenen Königs bleiben, das Mittel zu seiner heiligen Weltherrschaft, und so suchte er mich auf, seine unwürdige Dienerin" (*Physiker* 82), her proclamations are ironic. Crockett is correct when he writes, "Möbius believes that she is insane because he ironically fails to recognize his own metaphor being thrown triumphantly back in his face" (113). Möbius tells Dr. von Zahnd, "Nehmen Sie Vernunft an. Sehen Sie ein, daß sie verrückt sind" (*Physiker* 83). She replies, "Ebensowenig wie Sie"

(*Physiker* 83). Crockett concludes “[if] we take this line seriously, we can understand the rest of Dr. Von Zahnd’s speech for what it is: a magnificent, consequential use of metaphor, not insanity” (113). To mistake her sanity is to mistake the horrifying reality gleaned from the lessons of the Holocaust and pointed out by Dr. von Zahnd herself, that is, the mentally stable are not only fully capable of killing at any time, but of doing it significantly more often. To mistake her sanity is to mistake the truth of the paradox that says that a philanthropist can murder. To mistake her sanity is to not appreciate fully how much the great scientist Möbius cannot know, and if a great scientist is limited, so are we as readers.

In the end, Möbius is closer to Solomon than ever. He proclaims, “Ich bin der arme König Salomo...meine Weisheit zerstörte meine Gottesfurcht, und als ich Gott nicht mehr fürchtete, zerstörte meine Weisheit meinen Reichtum. Nun sind die Städte tot...mein Reich leer...und irgendwo um einen kleinen, gelben, namenlosen Stern kreist, sinnlos, immerzu, die radioaktive Erde” (*Physiker* 86-7). Möbius gets the final irony that is the literary representation of the ultimate paradox. As we know in the case of Solomon, knowledge destroys the fear of God. Möbius / Dürrenmatt is at his most effective when he juxtaposes the ancient biblical example with its logical consequence, the radioactive earth. Knowledge emboldens us to believe that we can be God, especially in that we are now capable of both eliminating humankind and artificially reproducing mankind.

In answer to the question posed in the introduction —Why is it that the acquisition of knowledge always and predictably necessitates a loss of innocence? — I posit that the extent of our knowledge never provides the complete answers humankind desires. In fact, knowledge ironically creates great blind spots, which are the source of *Zufall*. All that we know about the story of our origins and of our end is, to say the least, unsatisfactory. To the question, “How did it all begin?”, we answer, “Probably through *Zufall*.” To the question, “How will it all end?”, we answer, “Probably through *Zufall*.” And to many people, a *zufälliges* life is not worth living. Next come the other blind spots. We have, for example, no answer to the question, “Why are we here?” and, to the question, “What moral instructions do you give us?”, the knowledge that informs our answer is limited. Möbius certainly acts on an ethical code he finds efficacious. The problem is that the extent of what we know can be placed at the service of both the beneficent and the cruel, and the grand moral impartiality, if not indifference, makes knowledge, in the end, the ultimate paradox. The one thing we can take heart in is the fact that the ‘Truth of Dr. von Zahnd’s victory’ is also likely to be undermined by the irony of a contrary truth because her “powers of knowing,” like those of Möbius, “are inherently and incurably limited and partial” (Booth 267). Humankind, therefore, remains on the brink.

APPENDIX

21 Punkte zu den *Physikern* (*Physiker* 91-93)

1. Ich gehe nicht von einer These, sondern von einer Geschichte aus.
2. Geht man von einer These aus, muß sie zu Ende gedacht werden.
3. Eine Geschichte ist dann zu Ende gedacht, wenn sie ihre schlimmstmögliche Wendung genommen hat.
4. Die schlimmstmögliche Wendung ist nicht voraussehbar. Sie tritt durch Zufall ein.
5. Die Kunst des Dramatikers besteht darin, in einer Handlung den Zufall möglichst wirksam einzusetzen.
6. Träger einer dramatischen Handlung sind Menschen.
7. Der Zufall in einer dramatischen Handlung besteht darin, wann und wo wer zufällig wem begegnet.
8. Je planmäßiger die Menschen vorgehen, desto wirksamer vermag sie der Zufall zu treffen.
9. Planmäßig vorgehende Menschen wollen ein bestimmtes Ziel erreichen. Der Zufall trifft sie dann am schlimmsten, wenn sie durch ihn das Gegenteil ihres Ziels erreichen: Das, was sie befürchteten, was sie zu vermeiden suchten (z.B. Oedipus).
10. Eine solche Geschichte ist zwar grotesk, aber nicht absurd (sinnwidrig).
11. Sie ist paradox.
12. Ebensowenig wie die Logiker können die Dramatiker das Paradoxe vermeiden.
13. Ebensowenig wie die Logiker können die Physiker das Paradoxe vermeiden.
14. Ein Drama über die Physiker muß paradox sein.
15. Es kann nicht den Inhalt der Physik zum Ziele haben, sondern nur ihre Auswirkung.
16. Der Inhalt der Physik geht die Physiker an, die Auswirkung alle Menschen.
17. Was alle angeht, können nur alle lösen.
18. Jeder Versuch eines Einzelnen, für sich zu lösen, was alle angeht, muß scheitern.
19. Im Paradoxen erscheint die Wirklichkeit.
20. Wer dem Paradoxen gegenübersteht, setzt sich der Wirklichkeit aus.
21. Die Dramatik kann den Zuschauer überlisten, sich der Wirklichkeit auszusetzen, aber nicht zwingen, ihr standzuhalten oder sie gar zu bewältigen.

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Hacia una lectura cubista de *Así que pasen cinco años. Leyenda del tiempo* de Federico García Lorca

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El viaje que realizó Federico García Lorca por tierras americanas entre 1929 y 1930 desembocó en España en dos de sus obras de teatro menos convencionales: *El Público* (1930) y *Así que pasen cinco años* (1931). Ambas obras han sido frecuentemente caracterizadas por la crítica como obras surrealistas, y como una acumulación de imágenes expresionistas, cuyo montaje tiene que ver tanto con el teatro como con el cine.

Así que pasen cinco años cuenta con estudios críticos como los de Paul J. Smith, Andrew A. Anderson, Virginia Higginbotham o Joaquín Roses-Lozano, aunque quizás, es el presente estudio uno de los primeros intentos de leer esta obra de teatro bajo la luz de una nueva perspectiva, la cual sigue en la línea de las vanguardias que dominaron el panorama de los comienzos del siglo veinte. La nueva faceta de la dramaturgia de Lorca que incluye estas dos obras de teatro, coincide cronológicamente con los años que marcaron el distanciamiento entre él y su amigo Salvador Dalí. Dalí permanece sumergido fundamentalmente en la estética cubista hasta 1928 cuando empieza a cambiar su rumbo pictórico (Gibson 1: 483). Igual ocurrirá con Lorca, porque en 1928 tras recibir las críticas de Dalí y Buñuel sobre el estilo de su *Romancero Gitano*, decide tomar una nueva dirección surrealista al igual que las pinturas que desde ese momento pintará Dalí.

Cuando Federico García Lorca terminó *Así que pasen cinco años* en agosto de 1931 el movimiento del cubismo pleno había terminado.¹ No obstante, la estética cubista que había arraigado en artistas españoles algunos años antes había quedado latente subyaciendo al movimiento surrealista que le siguió. Lorca no se mantuvo ajeno al cubismo. Antes de escribir esta obra de teatro imposible había tenido una relación ambivalente con respecto al creacionismo y al ultraísmo, dos manifestaciones en España relacionadas con el cubismo. Por otra parte, la relación de amistad con Dalí en la época cubista de éste le hizo componer poemas relacionados con esta estética como la "Oda a Salvador Dalí," y también le llevó a abogar en favor del cubismo en su conferencia del 28 de octubre de 1928 titulada "Sketch de la pintura moderna." En un plano más personal, Lorca