

AMERICAN CHARACTERS IN MODERN FRENCH DRAMA

A THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the intervention of the United States in the World War the feeling of the French toward us became one of gratitude, whereas it had previously often been one of annoyance. This new attitude was expressed in the literature. The types of characters of the post-war plays did not change to any great extent from those of the pre-war period, only possibly they received more kindly treatment.

The American character has appeared in the French drama at least since the American revolution, at which time France intervened on the part of the newly founded nation.¹ The leaders of the war, Washington, Franklin, and Arnold, were characters in plays at three different periods: one in 1791, one between 1830 and 1840, and one about 1881. Washington was by far the most important of the three.

Between 1796 and 1815, due to the suppression of the dramas by Napoleon, only one play with Americans appeared. During the Restoration period, interest in these characters was revived, became of great importance in the romantic thirties, went into a decline in the forties, and then disappeared. The three types that were developed at this time were the idealized character, the comedien, and the stage villain. Among the idealized American types were the patriot, the noble savage,

¹ The Historical material concerning the American in the French drama has been taken largely from Virginia Reese Withers, American Types in French Drama (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 1926).

and the rich benefactor. The noble savage shows the growing appeal of the rough country of the new nation. The comedians were usually an uncouth backwoodsman, a religious fanatic, or a burlesque Indian. Both the Indian and backwoodsman were types almost unknown to the French, so the interest in them was keen.

At the time of the Civil war in America, the negro problem was by far the most important to the French. Before the Civil war the negro received kindly treatment at the hands of the playwrights, but as the war developed this character became a villain in the plays.

Between the Civil war and the World war there appeared realistic types. Among these were business men, crooks, pleasure-seekers, professional men, and "far-west men" and criminals. An institution which received much criticism, both good and bad, was the American family. It was hard for the French to understand the frequent divorces.

Then came the World war. Before America entered the war, the French feeling still was rather unfriendly. However, after the intervention, the United States was idealized. In the post-war period some old types like the business man and the American girl were revived, and new ones such as the annoying guest and the valuable friend appeared. It is the problem of this study to show the influence of the American character on the French drama from 1921 to 1933.

The sixteen plays which were read for this study were selected from among those appearing in La Petite Illustration during the years 1921 to 1933. They have been chosen because of an American character or an American setting. The dates given below are those of the appearance of the play in La Petite Illustration. The authors and names of

the plays are: Alfred Savoir, La huitième Femme de Barbe-bleue (1921); Félix Gandéra, Atout---Coeur (1932); Jean Sarment, Je suis trop grand pour moi (1924); Charles Méré, La Danse de minuit (1924); Jean Sarment, Madelon (1925); Henry Kistemaeckers, La Nuit est à nous (1925); Charles Méré, Le Carnaval de l'amour (1928); Léopold Marchand, J'ai tué (1928); Edmond Fleg, Le Marchand de Paris (1929); Jules Romains, Donogoo (1931) and Boen ou la Possession des biens (1931); George Delance, Bluff (1932); Francis de Croisset, Pierre ou Jack--- (1932); Paul Morand, Le Voyageur et l'amour (1932); Aimé Declercq, L'Envers vaut l'endroit (1933); and Denys Amiel, Trois et une (1933).

As to the organization of the thesis, in Chapter II there will be shown some present day tendencies of the theater and a few notes on the lives and works of the authors of the plays which were read for this study. Chapter III will take up the types of American characters which are found in modern French drama. The customs and manners of America which are most appealing to the French playwrights will be found in Chapter IV. In Chapter V there will be listed the American words and phrases which are used by both the French and the American characters.

CHAPTER II

TENDENCIES OF THE THEATER

Due to the influence of propaganda literature brought about by the World war, the theater-going public, during the years 1914-18 and shortly thereafter, tended to scorn any play which was really worth calling artistic. Its main interest was in the plot rather than in the dramatic value of the work. However, a number of theater managers soon began to want in their theaters plays which were better artistically. These managers, M. Pierre Viber of Le Nouveau Théâtre Libre, M. Fernand Bastide of La Grimace, M. Jacques Copeau of Le Vieux-Colombier and Lugné-Poe of L'Oeuvre selected a group of young writers to work for art in drama and to try to overcome the prevalent scorn for the artistic drama.

Some progress had already been made when in 1921 another group of managers, among whom were M. Baty, director of successively the Chimere, the Studio, the Théâtre de l'Avenue; M. Jouvet, director of the Comédie des Champs-Élysées; and M. Darsens, director of the Théâtre des arts, became interested in this work. The first group had made enough progress that the last group began to change the methods of production. Their first work was to make some changes in the settings for the plays. There was the introduction of lighting effects and draperies for the purpose of atmosphere.¹ Their main purpose was to suggest rather than to express the idea.

¹ Edmond Sée, Le Mouvement dramatique (Paris: Les Editions de France, 1930), p. 3.

The form of the play also underwent some changes after the World war. The plays had formerly been divided into acts and scenes with all action within each act laid in one place. But sometimes this method of division was changed by the managers and young writers. The tableau, shorter than the scene, was often used as the division of the play instead of the act and scene. The tableau and the scene differ in that the scene has the same setting as the act and is used for the purpose of introducing a character or characters different from those of the preceding scene. Some of the modern plays do not even have scenes, just merely acts. When a tableau is used, each succeeding one has a different setting. This change in the division of the play made a difference in the process of dramatic construction. Plays divided into tableaux instead of into acts offer a greater variety of settings and hence increase the interest of the spectators. The division into tableaux shows the influence of the motion pictures since they resemble somewhat the rapidly moving scenes of the films.

Another after-the-war effect pertains to the characters. The taste and tendency of the young generation are shown in their choice of subjects and in their treatment of them. The characters were of a nervous type, tormented, anxious about their destinies or victims of shameful passions. Their taste draws them toward an interior art, a little mysterious, an analysis of individual consciousness, of hesitations, of unrests.² This situation is the result of the unrest caused

² Edmond Sée, Le Théâtre français contemporain (Paris: Librairie Armand Colvin, 1928), p. 151.

by the World war, which affected the young writers especially.

The popularity of plays varied as the new movement, that is, the movement for more art in drama, began to take a definite form, as it did about the year 1921. A play might be popular one day and not popular a short time later. Often plays were revived which had not been presented for a number of years. New critics of literary style now began to appear after the lapse of artistic interest caused by the World war. During the war, the public had tended to take the place of the critic. Naturally this criticism given by the public was inferior in literary content to that given later by the critics. The critics, who today are inseparable from the theater, in their criticisms take into consideration the characters, the ideas, the style, and the dramatic movement as well as the literary analysis of the play.³ This is somewhat different from the standard by which the public as a critic judged whether a play was acceptable or not. It judged a play on interest almost entirely. With this alone as a basis for criticism, the plays did not always meet the standards set by the critics.

The young writers are different from their forefathers of a few years before. The latter in writing took great care with their work. Often they went over and over it carefully for exactness and perfection. However, the young writers did not show this same care. Nevertheless these plays were more artistic than those during the period of the war. The recent plays have the appearance of being created spontaneously and

³ J. Bradley and E. Wilson, "La Critique dramatique Contemporain" Foreign Notes Study, p. 44.

so they do not seem to be as perfect in construction as those of the late nineteenth century. They turned to their genius for inspiration rather than to their talent.⁴ They aided in bringing the drama back to the important place which it had held prior to the World war.

There appeared also at this time a phase of romanticism. Romanticism today belongs with the modern unrest. This unrest as a theme in dramas developed from the mal du siècle of Musset, the homesickness for another climate, or another person or a far-away country. Almost all of the plays of this period have some characteristic of romanticism. Jean Sarment is an example of a young writer of romanticism. In Madelon the homesickness of Marc-Adolphe for his family and sweetheart shows a romantic characteristic. All the young people of this play are more or less restless. Romantic qualities may be found in several of the plays even though the play is not entirely romantic. In Dunogoo by Jules Romains there is the romantic quality of desiring to go off to a far-away country. In Pierre ou Jack---? Fernande wants to be with her lover in America where he has promised that he will make her a star. She dreams of going to America and becoming famous. In Le Carnaval de l'Amour Jeannie is torn between two desires, one of duty and one of love. This situation makes her restless and dissatisfied with life. There is also shown great emotion, which is a romantic characteristic. An example of this may be found in La Nuit est à nous. Bettine has a love so strong that she is willing to die for it.

⁴ Edmond Sée, Le Mouvement dramatique, p. 14.

The writers of the sixteen plays which were read for this study may be divided into five divisions: (1) psychological comedy, represented by Edmond Fleg; (2) dramatic comedy, used by Henry Kistemaekers and Charles Méré; (3) ideologic and symbolistic plays, as those by Jules Romains; (4) light comedy and vaudeville, represented by Alfred Savoir, Francis de Croisset, and Félix Gandéra; (5) the theater after the World war, to which belong Jean Sarment, Denys Amiel, Léopold Marchand, Paul Morand, and George Delance. Some of these writers had begun to write before the World war and had won fame. Others have come into prominence since the World war. The theater in modern times has many phases.

The representative author of the psychological comedy is Edmond Fleg, who was born in Switzerland in 1874. He made his début in drama in 1913 with two comedies, Le Démon and La Trouble-Fête. After the World war he wrote in a more bitter manner and, like many of his contemporaries, his idea was suggested rather than expressed. The theme that he used was one of great controversy, the question of the Jew. This question appears as the idea in his poetry, Écoute, Israël; in his novel, L'Enfant prophète,⁵ and in several of his dramas, including Le Marchand de Paris, which was presented at the Comédie-française in 1929. The theme of this drama was hailed by the critics as not suited to the theater because M. Fleg treats the Jew too favorably. This subject of the Jew since Shakespeare's Shylock has not been treated with kindness by the

⁵ Daniel Mornet, Historie de la littérature et de la pensée françaises Contemporaines (Paris: Bibliothèque Larousse, 1927), p. 62.

theater.⁶ There have been many recent dramas written on the subject of the Jew including L'An prochain in 1928 by René Wiener and La Race errante in 1932 by François Porché. The latter play concerns the Jewish immigrants in America. They come to America to make money and to live for themselves.

Charles Méré, who was born in 1876, has turned to dramatic comedy, a form which was no longer frequently found in the theater. He is also the most recent writer of the well-made play. He has written several dramas among which are La Captive in 1920, La Danse de minuit in 1924, and Le Carnaval de l'amour in 1928. He is very much interested in contemporary life which he uses as settings for his plays. However, there is a great variety in his plays. He has that acquaintance with the public and that security in his work which make for success. About La Danse de minuit Méré says, "c'est à la vie plus qu'à l'imagination que j'ai emprunté mon histoire. Ma pièce est une pièce de situation et de caractères."⁷ As for the title, this refers to life as much as to the play itself because one meets in life "plus de masques que de visages."⁸ Le Carnaval de l'amour exhibits somewhat the same qualities and effects of the dramatic comedy as were used by Rostand in his Cyrano de Bergerac.

The other author of dramatic comedy, Henry Kistemaekers, born in 1873, was of Belgian origin. This dramatist, like so many of his con-

⁶ Edmond Sée, op. cit., p. 66.

⁷ Robert de Beauplan, Dramatic criticisms of La Danse de minuit in La Petite Illustration, (May 31, 1924), preface.

⁸ Robert de Beauplan, Dramatic Criticism of Le Carnaval de l'amour in La Petite Illustration, (May 26, 1928), p. 35.

temporaries, takes life about him and hunts for new ideas. The same theme does not appear many times. He has written many plays including La Blessure, L'Embuscade, L'Occident, L'Esclave errante, L'Amour, and La Nuit est à nous. This last play was presented at the Théâtre de Paris in 1925. The author was one of the first to use the automobile as a theme around which to build a play. But he justifies this theme by saying that the situations arising from the use of the automobile are important in modern life.

Jules Romains, who was born in 1885, was the originator of the school of unanimism. His first contact with the idea to which he later gave the name, unanimism, was when he was very young at the time his parents moved from their little home in the Cévennes mountains to the busy city of Paris. When he was eighteen years old (1903), his idea took definite shape. It happened one evening when he was going through a crowded section of Paris. Everybody seemed to be acting as one person. This came his idea of substituting for the study of the individual soul the study of the collective soul of human groups. For his education he attended the Lycée Condorcet and prepared for the École Normale Supérieure. In 1909 he became a professor. He followed this profession until 1919. He then devoted all his time to writing. He has carried his theories of unanimism into three branches of French literature: the novel, the theater, poetry. His first recognition was won in the field of poetry. in 1904 with a group of four poems: La Ville consciënte, La Conscience de la ville, A la Ville, L'Âme des hommes. Then he turned to the novel and gave to the public Mort de quelqu'un (1911) and Les Copains

(1913). Since 1920 his best work has been in the novel and the drama. Of the former his best examples are Quand le navire----(1929) and Les Hommes de bonne volonte (1932). His best dramas are Boen ou la Possession des biens (1930), Donogoo (1930), Knock ou la triomphe de la médecine (1923). In his dramas he does not give only the exterior appearance or the picturesque surface of modern society but he also shows its deep currents and fundamental tendencies. He deals with the innermost thoughts and reveals the souls of his characters. Thus through the speeches of Boën there are shown his attitude towards wealth which emphasizes the accumulation of money. M. Lucien Dubech in the Revue Universelle after the presentation of Boën said "M. Jules Romaine donne une note singulièrement plus haute que celles qu'on a coutume d'entendre au théâtre."⁹ Romaine does not present new ideas, he only makes a new application of them. He sometimes takes the ideas used by other schools: symbolistic, realistic, idealistic, or romantic--and presents them from his point of view. The difference would be that Romaine studied and emphasized the group while the older schools concentrated on the individual. Oftentimes Romaine's plays are not very well accepted by the public because many of his problems are too deep and serious for the lazy-minded public. Some of his plays have been accepted on the basis of the lighter vein in the play, but the deeper and more significant ideas escape unnoticed.

⁹ Robert de Beauplan, Dramatic Criticism of Boen ou la Possession des biens in La Petite Illustration, (October 31, 1931), 35.

Of the three writers of light comedy and vaudeville, Alfred Savoir, who is of Polish descent, is the most prominent. He began his career before the World war but it was not until afterwards that he won success. He wrote some light comedies which have a great deal of spirit and are picturesque. He is a writer of the vaudeville of ideas or symbolistic farces of which he is the inventor and master.¹⁰ Savoir is the author of La huitième Femme de Barbe-Bleue, which was presented at the Théâtre Michel in 1921; Blanco, Passy 47-28, and Le Dompteur.

As a collaborator and friend of Robert de Flers, Francis de Croisset, who is of Belgian origin, has many qualities of his old friend. After the death of de Flers in 1927, Croisset wrote nothing until the appearance of Pierre ou Jack--- in 1932. During this period of inactivity it was his habit to attend the movies, not that he was in favor of them but by this means he often came upon new ideas for his own literary production. Je ne sais quoi, written before the death of Flers, seems to be the subtitle of almost all his plays of this period.¹¹

The third writer of light comedy and vaudeville, Félix Gandéra, author of Atout---Coeur (1922) was an actor who later took up writing dramas. He first wrote only light plays but with Atout---Coeur he began to write comedy. He obtained the idea for Atout---Coeur from reading a very amusing novel dialogued by MM. André de Lorde and Jean Marsele.

¹⁰ Edmond Sée, Le Théâtre français Contemporain, p. 113.

¹¹ Gaston Sorbets, Dramatic Criticism of Atout---Coeur in La Petite Illustration, (October 14, 1922), preface.

¹² Daniel Mornet, Op. cit., p. 155.

As many of his contemporaries he writes well about modern life and its problems.

Among the group of young writers who began to write after the World war, Joan Sarment, who was born 1897, is one of the most outstanding. He has spent some time in America as an actor. He is an author who acts in his own plays. He made his debut as an author in 1919 with La Couronne de Carton. His first play had too many qualities of the older writers, especially Shakespeare, Musset, of whom he is a spiritual descendant, and Laforgue. In this play there is some study of the subconscious, as is shown in his characters influenced by dreams. In 1924 Je suis trop grand pour moi was presented at the Comédie-française. This play shows the influence of the older writers, especially Musset. But with Madelon, presented at the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin in 1925, he tried to break away from previous influences, and the play does show that he has succeeded.

As a writer of psychological drama Denys Amiel has held a place through L'Image, La Souriante. Before the World war he wrote a biography of Henri Bataille for whom he had served as a secretary. His best theatrical work followed the World war. He is the author of Trois et une, which was presented at the théâtre Saint-Georges in 1933.

Léopold Marchand is a writer of psychological drama, of which J'ai tué is a good example. He reveals to the public the souls of the characters through their conversation.

Paul Morand, who was born in 1898, is really best known as a

novelist, but he is also a poet and dramatist. He made his theatrical début at the Comedie française in 1932 with the play, Le Voyageur et l'amour, which deals with the same cosmopolitan attitudes as do many of his novels. Morand is a great traveler and most of his works have to do with his travels. He first gained knowledge of the world from his father, a true cosmopolitan, who knew Mallarmé and Oscar Wilde, and had many other friends in the literary world, both French and English. When Paul Morand entered Oxford in 1907 he began to study his own country in relation to other countries. Later he prepared himself for the diplomatic career. Through this career and through his travels he has been in a number of different countries. He has frequently visited the United States. He knows well the Americans and their ways. Morand has written several novels about the United States, including Champions du monde (1930) and New York (1930). He has other novels dealing with many countries, especially those of the Orient.

George Delance, who was born in 1897, belongs to the group of young writers. At the time the World war was declared, he was at a naval school. He joined the marines and later took up aviation. His adventures in the war to some extent affected his works. His dramas are La Lumière que renait (1923), the hero of which is a blind soldier; L'Equipage (1929), where the action is laid among aviators; Le Secret de William Selby; and Bluff (1932), a satire on contemporary customs, which was presented at the Varietés.

The theater is in the process of reconstruction under the direction of this group of young writers and many others who have not been

mentioned in this short summary. They have come a long way from the type of drama which was found in the theater during the World war. Many of the plays then dealt with propoganda, such as always appears during a war. Now there may be found many types, such as the psychological play, the romantic comedy, symbolistic theater. The drama seems to have regained in large part the prominence it had formerly held.

CHAPTER III

TYPES OF AMERICANS IN FRENCH DRAMA (1921-33)

The French have had an interest in American characters from 1921 to 1933 which equaled that of the period before the World war. Some of the pre-war types were later revived and also new ones appeared. After the World war, business man, richer than in earlier plays, was again depicted. Money means everything to him and, according to the French viewpoint, he always manages to get what he wants by some means. But in none of the late plays read for this study was there any reference to the depression which began in America in 1929. This seems unusual because the topic is of world-wide importance. America is still the country where one may go to seek his fortune.

In Bluff the American business man is persuaded by the fast-talking Frenchman to accept the value of his plan. Mr. Randson, who is thought to be American, is really French, but he is judged by his name and his manners, both of which he has molded to fit those of an American. He speaks the French language, his native tongue, with an American accent. Randson, like many Americans, is flattered by the friendship of a Frenchman with a title of nobility. For example, just because Gilbert Lancy calls himself the duc de Lancy, Randson is all the more interested. He is weak in his business dealing and allows himself to be drawn into an association which is not altogether to his benefit. The French attitude toward American business dealings is expressed through these words of Lancy:

Et! Mon cher, le Français voit petit, tout lui fait peur. Des affaires comme celle-ci, il dit tout de suite: utopie, rêve, sans même les étudier. C'est inhérent à la race, cela. Elle conçoit Panama, elle ne le réalise pas. C'est vous, l'Amérique, qui le réalisez. L'Américain est ouvert aux conceptions larges, il va de l'avant, il ne craint pas le risque, l'imprévu. Le Français est pantouflard. L'Américain est sport. C'est pourquoi je suis stupéfait que vous, un Américain---(act II p. 17).

The above speech shows how Lancy tries to induce Randson to fall in line with his, Lancy's, plans for their association. Randson immediately makes his nationality known. But the American qualities, as Lancy described them, are so embedded in Randson's nature that he accepts Lancy's proposition because the latter interests him. It seems that the American is thought by the French to be willing to run almost any kind of a risk whether it is necessary or not. The element of sport frequently enters into this action.

In Le Marchand de Paris Wood, representing an American company, finances the factories of Samuel Brizach, who always gives the person with whom he is dealing a present of a sum of money. In Wood, there are found qualities which resemble those of Randson in Bluff. Both allow themselves to be dominated by other men against their will. They are wealthy and thus are interesting to others. When Wood tries to break his relations with Brizach, the Jew forces him to renew their business agreement. Après un geste de désespoir, he follows the instructions of Brizach, which include a telephone message to the American company for the purpose of placing the desired amount of money at the disposal of Brizach.

Brown in La huitième Femme de Barbe-Bleue is a wealthy American of a different type. Instead of allowing somebody to dominate him, he dictates to those about him. To him money is everything; it will buy whatever he wants, no matter what this is. He says

Les chiffres, c'est la vraie science pratique, la poésie de la vie---(act I p. 6).

Through the influence of his money he is able to use high-handed methods and thus obtain reductions in price.

Brown.--Encore un mot, monsieur Matard, l'appartement que j'occupe---
(Brown s'assied)

Matard.--C'est celui du roi.

Brown.--Le prix?

Matard.--Peu le roi payait mille francs par jour.

Brown.--Pour moi, ce sera trois cents.

Matard.--Mais, monsieur Brown, vous n'y pensez pas, à ce prix-là nous y perdons.

Brown.--Je l'espère bien. (au marquis.) Je ne connais pas de site plus poétique que celui de Westend.

Matard.--Soit, monsieur Brown, trois cents---prix d'ami---

Brown.--Prix d'ennemi (act I p. 6).

Brown, whose grandfather had had a bar in Chicago, is interested in making his own cocktail, and this unusual demand is granted to such a wealthy person. Since he had not been received at the casino the night before because he was not in formal dress, Brown asks that the manager of the casino be notified that this evening he will enter and not in formal dress. The director of the hotel says his wish will be granted. Even in matrimony, by means of his money, he does whatever he wishes. He has been divorced five times, each time he has agreed to an enormous sum as alimony. Before he makes his eighth marriage he settles on the amount of the alimony in case of a possible divorce.

The question of wealth enters into Boën ou la Possession des biens. Jacob Parker, an American, falls into discussion of the question of wealth. He asserts his ideas before Boën, who disagrees with him. Parker, a very wealthy man, explains in the following speech that riches are a weight:

Je puis pourtant vous nommer trois ou quatre très grands riches de chez nous qui, déjà, sont pareils à ces hommes dont parle votre fils. Vraiment, la richesse est un poids sur eux et ils font un quotidien effort pour s'en alléger. Même la nuit, il leur arrive d'imaginer comment le lendemain ils remettront une nouvelle quantité de millions aux autres hommes (act III sc. 13).

Parker's attitude forms a surprising contrast to that of the Frenchman, Boën, who considers the accumulation of wealth an all-important factor. However, another Frenchman, M. Menuise, believes that the day will come when people will realize that they need have only a moderate amount of money in order to receive pleasure and in order to live with people. Then Parker explains that already people in America are beginning to realize the weight of money and they are trying to find ways by which they may rid themselves of this weight.

In La Nuit est à nous the great value of money appears. William Burtley is an American lawyer and a detective at the same time, or at least so his client, L'Inconnue, the American wife of Alain Brécourt, classifies him. The Americans wish to give Bettine money which she refuses to accept.

L'Inconnu.---M. Burtley offre la moitié. J'ajoute un peu et je signe le chèque. Vous me rendez ma propriété. C'est tout. Sinon, nous faisons le procès. Je paie les journaux. J'ai le droit, vous avez le scandale (act II sc. 21).

The proposition is that the Countess and Burtley will each offer some money until whatever amount Bettine desires is reached. When Bettine

receives the check, she is to give Alain back to his wife as one would a piece of property. If Bettine refuses, the Americans will use their money to publish scandalous stories about Bettine. The Americans as shown here are rather selfish. L'Inconnue protects herself and takes all the rights that she can possibly have regardless of the other person's reputation.

In Trois et une Marcel Erland is referred to as the American, the son of le fameux William Houston des machines à calculer. He has been in America and has become there a big business man. In the play itself he has no business dealings but he goes about matters in a business-like manner. The entire family is cosmopolitan. They have traveled extensively.

Besides the business man, there is one more character which has continued to appear. This is the viveur, but there are not many examples of this type. He is the sort of person who drinks a great deal. American characters of this type have appeared many times before and very seldom do they have an important role. The viveur is found in James Hoxwell of Le Carnaval de l'amour. He has had too much to drink, yet he asks for more.

Aôh! C'est à vous dégôûter de l'eau!---Aôh!---Je boirais bien un peu de whisky! (act II sc. 1).

There is still another character which has an important role in the modern play. This is the motion picture employee. Motion pictures have had a great influence on the modern French drama. They are an American product and were at first reluctantly accepted by the older French dramatists, many of whom even yet are not willing to accept them. The younger writers seem to see in the movies stimulus for a new creative

art. According to Soupault, the American cinema brought "to light all the beauty of our epoch, and all the mystery of modern mechanics."¹ To the French the greatest American actor is Charlie Chaplin. No pictures equal those starring this comedian who to the French mind "invented" the motion pictures. The French are surprised that no writer has tried to follow in the footsteps of Charlie Chaplin.²

In two plays which were used for this study there may be found the American movie actor or actress. In Pierre ou Jack---, Fernande is sad because her lover, Jack, has gone to America to be in the movies and he has not written her since he left. When she describes him, she gives him the so-called American qualities.

Pierre.--Il était---il était beau?

Fernande.--Au stade et à la piscine, épatant! Vous savez, une petite tête, des épaules larges, une taille fine, quelqu'un de triangulaire---enfin le type Américain (prologue, p. 8).

In fact he is so American that upon returning to France eighteen months later he is taken for an American. He assumes the task of placing Fernande in the movies. In his abrupt manner he settles matters for the girl. His plans have all been made which include the changing of Fernande's name for that of an American. He asks also that he be allowed to guide her.

Jack.-- Rends-moi cette justice! J'y ai toujours cru. Maintenant, j'en suis sûr. Et je t'ai déjà trouvé un nom: "Stella"! C'est de bon augure. Ça veut dire: "Étoile".

¹ Philippe Soupault, The American Influence in France (No. XXXVIII, University of Washington Chapbooks, Glenn Hughes, editor; Seattle: University of Washington Book Store, 1930), p. 17.

² Ibid., p. 15.

Fernande.--En anglais?

Jack.--Non, en latin. Mais c'est de l'anglais tout de même et ça t'ira. Tu parles anglais, tu pourras tourner dans les deux langues. Quant à ton nom de famille: Janson, qui fait toc, on le changera en Jones, et puis---

Fernande.--Ne va pas si vite. (Avec ravissement.) On le change en "Jones", pourquoi?

Jack.--Ça se retient: c'est un nom de star.

Fernande.--De star---

Jack.--On fera de toi quelqu'un, tu sais. Tu ne te doutes pas du succès que tu peux avoir. Tu seras quelqu'un de célèbre (act I sc. 8).

The changing of the name of an actress or even actor is frequently done in America. There is often no real reason for doing it except, as Jack explains to Fernande, it is the custom and tends to increase the fame of the movie star. Jack also explains that Fernande must be able to speak English as well as she does French.

When Fernande first appears after she has become a star, she is described as with toilette impressionnante, bijoux somptueux. This is a common practice among movie actresses or, at least, that is the French opinion concerning their dress. An actress must always be at her best if she expects to hold the public interest. Often in the film, they must wear much jewelry in order to play the part well, so this becomes a habit for them even off-stage.

Elen Barker, a movie actress, in J'ai joué tries to explain to Français about her popularity.

Elen.--Je n'ai pas le temps de donner ici près de trois cents signatures par jour---et puis, je n'ai plus de photographies---Là-bas à Hollywood, j'ai un département---

François.--Quoi?

Elen.--Un office---un bureau---spécialement pour répondre aux demandes d'autographes---(act I p. 2).

This speech shows the extent of the motion picture business in America. This actress is so popular that she must have an office for autographs alone.

A type of minor importance is the traveler. He is used by the writers, such as Morand, who have traveled extensively and thus understand the ways of the countries about which they are writing. The traveler may have a minor role and may simply furnish background for other characters. Of course he is not the only type which may be used for this purpose. There are others, such as speciality dancers and the director of motion picture scenes.

Travel characters appeared in plays beginning in the fifties (1850) with the increased number of American tourists in France.³ After the Civil war the traveler appeared more frequently in the drama. By this time he was better received as the French were better acquainted with the American traveler. Some of the tourists had an appreciation of France, and these won approval and friendship. However, some were merely dominated by fad and came for a good time. In the twentieth century the type of traveler is often one seeking a husband for some relative or simply one who is traveling for pleasure. Miss Squirrel in Le Voyageur et l'amour seems to be traveling largely for pleasure. She is interested in French men more than she is in Paris. Paris is more for the older people she says.

Régine.--Et Paris? Vous aimez Paris?
Miss Squirrel.--Non. Parée! pour vieilles Américaines; Parée! après quarante ans. J'aime les Français.

³ Virginia Reese Withers, American Types in French Drama (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1926), p. 29.

Régine.--Le peuple français?
Miss Squirrel.--Non, les hommes français (act II sc. 5).

French men are always on hand when needed, according to Miss Squirrel. However, Régine disagrees with her because the former has not heard from her lover for a long time.

There is a group of American characters who seem to have no particular part in the play except to furnish a background for other characters. In Pierre ou Jack "le Metteur en scène" and his attendants are from America. This fact indicates the great influence American production of pictures has had on the French. In Je suis trop grand pour moi among the party that follows and is supported by the Count there is an American, Evelyn Stone, who is grande, blonde, du charme, aucune aristocratie, mais l'espèce de hauteur des femmes de New York. This is a commonly accepted French idea of the American girl. The American in Madelon furthers the setting, which is laid in a suburb of New York. One of the many scenes in Donogoo is laid in San Francisco. This shows that Americans are among those who are hunting Dongoo-Tonka, which has not been located. Among the wedding guests at the Millois home in Atout--Coeur is the American, Miss Murray, a tennis champion. She expresses what she thinks without investigating and for this reason she congratulates the wrong man as the bridegroom. In La Danse de minuit the American dancer, Mary, dances with her partner, Brount, who whistles an American tune.

In the play, L'Envers vaut l'endroit, the type of setting found is somewhat different from that of the other plays which were read for this

study. The setting is so cosmopolitan that the play may be laid in New York, Paris, or Rome without any changes. The characters are given American names and also French ones. The insistent newspaper reporter is an American type. He bribes his way past the door-keeper by the use of money.

American characters from 1921 to 1933 were of various types. The business man who is the most important character in the earlier dramas has continued to hold his place of prominence. The most recent innovation in American types used in the French drama is that of the motion picture director and actor. Of special importance, also, is the fact that through the movies the younger writers have seen the United States in a different way. It is the older generation which created the legends about the United States and to them it still is the country of Fenimore Cooper's redskins, of Buffalo Bill's cowboys, and of millionaire uncles.⁴ These ideas are gradually changing due to the influence of the movie.

The American character has become very interesting to the French. To many French people America is a utopia where there is freedom and much money. The French who do not always approve of American business dealings, find them of particular interest. America will probably always be rather hazy in the minds of the French whose ideas will doubtless be formed largely from the movie. However it is evident that the American has continued to interest the French and the writers of their drama.

⁴ Philippe Soupault, op. cit., p. 8.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICAN CUSTOMS AND MANNERS

The influence of American customs and manners on the French people has been great even though warning has been given concerning the adoption of these customs to them by a number of recent writers and critics, for example, André Bellessort and Bernard Fay. The United States is made up of all nationalities. This fact tends to create new problems in their civilization. The foreigner has come to America because of the great freedom given to those who live here and because of the idea that money is made easily. The latter idea has not been affected by the depression of 1929 and the years following. This great mass of foreigners affect the traditions, ways and language of the American people.¹ The American customs have been adopted from such widely divergent sources that it is difficult to tell which may be called typically American.

The American influence in the twentieth century has not been political nor commercial but social.² The most important social questions which are discussed have to do with the position of women in America, especially young women; the divorce question; jazz, which usually includes, in the mind of the French, all American music; money matters; and publicity. There is also the American tendency to hurry and to form hasty decisions.

The position of women as expressed by André Bellessort and as found in Le Voyageur et l'amour is much the same. Bellessort says that

¹ Bernard Fay, "Psychologie du peuple américain." Revue des deux mondes, Series 8, II (September 1, 1932), p. 114.

² André Bellessort, "L'Américanisme en France." Revue Hebdomadaire, XXXVII, part 3 and 4 (April 21, 1928), p. 261.

the young French girl has not yet gained the unlimited independence which is given to the American girl. In America the man obeys two powers: the policeman and the woman.³ The women take the same examinations and follow the same professions as do the men. The companionship between the young men and young women of America is becoming much closer. In Le Voyageur et l'amour Miss Squirrel gives Régine an idea how the women do in America. Régine is sitting at home alone waiting for her lover, so Miss Squirrel tells her that a young woman of America would never allow herself to be in this situation. Instead she would call up some one rather than be alone.

Régine.--Qu'est-ce qui arrive à New York quand un homme vous laisse seule?

Miss Squirrel.--Une Américaine n'est jamais seule! C'est un déshonneur! Elle téléphone à n'importe qui (act II sc. 5).

The attitude of the men of America toward their wives is different from that of the Frenchman. Miss Squirrel says the American women are happy with the attentions paid to them by their husbands, but Régine prefers those of her own country.

Régine.--On dit que les Américains sont si gentils pour les femmes!

Miss Squirrel.--Une fois par an, ils donnent un million de dollars, un beau yacht, une maison; et puis ils s'en vont; c'est vite oublié. Les Français, eux, ils font tous les jours un petit cadeau, bouquet de violettes ou cochon de pain d'épice avec notre nom dessus (act II sc. 5).

This shows the American and French method of giving gifts. The American gives great quantities at one time but not very often. The Frenchman

³ Ibid., p. 270.

gives little gifts but gives them often.

Miss Squirrel tries to tell Régine a little about the American method of obtaining a husband. However, it is the French idea of the way that it is done in America. The American woman goes out in pursuit of happiness.

Miss Squirrel.--Nous savons que le bonheur ne s'attend pas: il faut aller le chercher. Il n'attend pas non plus: il faut le retenir. A l'école, on m'a donné des bonnes jambes; à l'université, j'ai appris à distinguer les hommes désirables; ensuite, je suis sortie dans le monde et je me suis servi des premières pour courir après les seconds.

Régine.--Ils se laissent bien attraper!

Miss Squirrel.--Ils ne peuvent pas échapper, parce que les femmes les surveillent et parce qu'elles sont loyales les unes envers les autres. Elles se renvoient les hommes, comme les trois quarts se font des passes, mais elles ne se volent jamais le ballon.

Régine.--L'esprit de corps.

Miss Squirrel.--En France, vous n'avez pas. C'est pourquoi l'équipe femmes est toujours battue.

Régine.--Nous sommes battues parce que nous sommes plus faible. C'est notre plaisir (act II sc. 5).

The French think that the American girl is educated to such an extent in the problem of obtaining a husband that she never fails to get the one she wants.

In another play, J'ai tué there is a discussion of the position of women. Elen Barker, the American actress, and François have adjoining suites at the hotel. She is really his mistress, but she does not wish everybody to know the fact. When someone knocks at the door she tries to urge François to leave but he refuses. It is the conciergerie, who has brought some mail. When he has left Elen asks:

Elen.--Qu'est-ce que vous voulez que cet homme pense maintenant?
 François.--Ni plus ni moins que se qu'il pensait avant---
 Elen, gentiment exaspéré.-- Oh! dear!--Comme vous êtes
 purement Français!
 François, de même.--Je suis bon teint!
 Elen.--En Amérique, sachez-le, il y a certaines choses que nous
 n'aimons pas à orier par-dessus les toits!
 François.--C'est même le seul genre de publicité que vous
 n'admettiez pas (act I p. 2).

This speech of François shows the French attitude toward the American girl. Ordinarily they care nothing what other people think. He is surprised at her care for her reputation and what other people may think of her.

The question of divorce appears on the French stage as early as 1870. At this time the cause of the divorce was the woman because she could not take marriage seriously.⁴ Then there was a period during which divorce did not appear much on the stage; this probably was a period of adjustment in so far as understanding more about the problem. By the beginning of the twentieth century the trouble was divided between the husband and wife.⁵ And as the century goes on the wife becomes the favored one. Early in the century the Naquet divorce law appeared in France. There had been many arguments for such a law by Dumas fils and Augier. The law was some relief, but it did not prove successful because it required the consent of both parties to a marriage, or flagrant crime on the part of one.⁶ This law was the subject of many plays because it

⁴ Virginia Reese Withers, American Types in French Drama (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1926) p. 157.

⁵ Ibid., p. 159.

⁶ Frank Wadleigh Chandler, The Contemporary Drama of France (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1921), p. 249.

was so inadequate. However the method of American divorces is not approved of by the French. The ease with which divorce may be obtained in America rather encourages it.

The American attitude toward the divorce is shown in the character of Brown of La Huitième Femme de Barbe-bleue. When he first talks to Monna, he gives him the idea that she is married. Immediately he informs her she must get a divorce. He speaks of divorce so lightly that she remarks to him that he has "sur le mariage des idées un peu particulières." When he asks for the hand of Monna in marriage he very smilingly says he has been married several times, in fact, seven times. He says:

Mais j'ai déjà été marié---J'ai l'habitude du mariage---je puis même dire une grande habitude (act I sc. 8).

The terms of a divorce between Monna and Brown are settled before the marriage. It is the least of his worries just what the terms are. Monna too has talked about the divorce in a very matter-of-fact way much to the disgust of her father. This is like the American girl, according to the French idea. Monna explains the reason for the marriage:

Je n'ai pas l'habitude de me sacrifier; mais je pense, et tu penseras comme moi, que la situation d'une femme divorcée, avec quatre cent mille francs de rente, est plus enviable que celle d'une vieille fille, sans tache ni dot (act I sc. 9).

She says that even though she would be a divorcee she would be in a better position to remarry because she would have the income from the divorce and now she has no dowry. In this play the fault one may say is with both parties. It is readily seen that the French are not altogether in favor of such a lack of seriousness concerning marriage. In La Nuit est nous there is no divorce, although Alain really wishes one.

American music, which, to the Frenchman, is usually of one form, jazz, was not accepted in France by the more cultured classes. It was thought that this music should be only for the restaurants and cabarets. In France and in most other countries there are two forms of music: the classical and the popular. Some French writers tend to consider jazz the American folk music, which expresses the character of the people as does the folk music of European countries. According to M. Soupault⁷ it was through this music that France really came to know and understand the United States. American music represents in part American life with its restlessness. The close relationship between art and life is characteristic of America. Old and young both participate in the enjoyment of the music in America. Along with the movies it awoke the French writers to the realization of what the United States really was.

Dancing and jazz are the topics of discussion between M. and Mme. Duchemin in Madelon. Mme Duchemin enjoys dancing with young boys both French and American, but her husband very definitely says:

Je n'aime pas m'exhiber dans des amusements qui ne sont plus de mon âge (act I p. 3).

However M. Duchemin finds it easy to fall into the ways of the American and when he is asked to dance he does not refuse to try. Americans are so free in their customs that it is a relief for a foreigner to accept them. The Frenchman who enjoys good music does not see any value in American music. To him it is just noise. Marc-Adolphe, the musician who really knows good music, expresses the French idea about American music:

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Philippe Soupault, The American Influence in France (No. XXXVIII, The University of Washington Chapbooks, Glenn Hughes, editor; Seattle: The University of Washington Book Store, 1930), p. 19.

Ce n'est pas Beethoven (act I sc. 1).

American music to the French is something which expresses cheerfulness and tends to relieve the listener's mind of his burden of sadness or responsibility. This is explained by Robochon in the following speech:

Robochon.--Pour du Beethoven, ce n'est pas du Beethoven. Moi je ne déteste pas. C'est de la bonne musique d'après les liqueurs, de la bonne petite musique d'en attendant mieux, d'en attendant les événements.

Marc-Adolphe.--Quels événements?

Robochon.--Que le train arrive, qu'il fasse moins froid, qu'on ait de la chance, qu'on devienne riche, ou que la femme aimée se jette dans vos bras en vous disant: "Oh! comme tu as bien fait de m'attendre!"(act I p.4).

There is a slight reference to American music in La Danse de minuit. At the home of the Reynauds there is a dance with a jazz-band très moderne, parfois bruyant, trop bruyant---(act II stage directions). This expresses the attitude of the French towards the American dance orchestra.

In the business world the dealings are with wealthy Americans. The French have the idea that if an American has any money at all he is very wealthy. America is looked upon as the home of the dollar. This fact is shown when Régine in Le Voyageur et l'amour greets Miss Squirrel:

C'est que, depuis causeries, vous n'êtes presque pas revenue me voir. Je comprends ça: je suis triste, et vous êtes gaie. Vous êtes le dollar, et je suis le franc (act II sc. 5).

The dollar symbolizes the lightness and freedom of the United States. The American faces even serious problems with a sort of gaiety which the French are not able to understand.

In Le Marchand de Paris, Wood, as representative of la compagnie américaine, does not wish to buy up the debts of the generous Jew, Samuel Brizach. The Jew has taken the privilege of writing to one of his friends

that he has associated with the American company. The friend has replied and Samuel gives Wood the letter to read. The latter is surprised to find that Samuel has advertised the Association before it is really made.

Wood.--Comment? Vous lui avez écrit que j'associe avec---

Samuel.--Evidemment.

Wood.--Et il vous a cru?

Samuel.--Puis que c'est vrai!

Wood.--Ça, c'est américain! (act III sc. 11).

Samuel has the American idea of doing business. He is determined to become associated with the American company so he almost forces Wood into the deal through this letter. In continuing the letter the friend further states that he will redeem Samuel.

Wood, lisant.--Je vais réaliser un bénéfice de plusieurs millions qui me permettra de te rembourser---(S'interrompant, à Samuel.) Comment, dans la même occasion, vous vous faites rembourser?

Samuel.--C'est bien le moins!

Wood.--Ça, c'est américain!

The fact that the association is going to be made gives confidence to the friend that the factories and the company stock are safe. The American, in the French way of thinking, has a large amount of money and can easily finance a company even though some money may be lost through the deal.

In Boën ou la Possession des biens, a different type of discussion about finances is held between Boën and Jacob Parker, the wealthy American from Cleveland. Boën, in his greediness for money offers M. Menuise a check for a moderate sum in return for an invention from which Boën hopes to reap a fortune. M. Menuise says he would rather be poor than to possess great wealth so he does not accept the check. This action foils Boën's

scheme and so greatly distresses him. M. Parker thinks that la possession des biens has caused much unrest in America. The American is always trying to find some new way of spending his money. At night he lies awake worrying about his money.⁸ When Boën makes fun of M. Menuise for his persistent refusal of the check, Parker says:

Et certains impressaires de ma connaissance proposeraient peut-être à M. Menuise beaucoup de dollars pour une tournée. Mais cette idée me vient: quand l'Amérique sera encore plus riche, est-ce qu'un homme encore plus pauvre que M. Menuise n'ira pas fonder en Amérique une nouvelle religion pour soulager un peu le poids des biens de la terre sur nous? (act III sc. 13).

Here Parker gives a picture of what he thinks might happen in America. A man poorer than M. Menuise would devise a plan by which some of the weight of a great quantity of money might be lifted.

In La huitième Femme de Barbe-bleue the marquis remarks to Brown after the latter has obtained the room he wants at the price that he mentions:

Le Marquis.--C'est beau, l'argent, tout de même!

Brown.--Oui---Ça permet de ne pas en dépenser.

Le Marquis, rêveur.--Ça permet aussi des fantaisies.

Brown.--Sans doute.

Le Marquis, rêveur.--Ainsi, si vous rencontrez quelqu'un d'intéressant, un visage sympathique, qu'est-ce que ça vous coûterait de lui faire cadeau d'un million?

Brown.--Ça me coûterait exactement un million, comme à vous. J'ajoute que, pour ma part, je n'ai pas encore tenté cette intéressante expérience (act I sc. 3).

The marquis dreams what money could do for a person. He has the same idea as do most Frenchmen that the American dollar will buy anything. The

⁸ See Chapter III, p. 19.

French think that it is a common practice for an American to give money to those who interest him.

Gilbert Lancy in Bluff tells Randson the method of government of the Americans.

Lancy.--La publicité en est la clef. Si nous avons la publicité, nous avons la presse; si nous avons la presse, nous avons l'opinion publique; si nous avons l'opinion publique, nous avons les gouvernements.

Randson.--Et si nous avons les gouvernements?

Lancy.--Nous gouvernons (act II, p. 17).

The French think that it is comparatively easy for an American to reach a prominent place in government. After one once gets the backing of the newspapers and other forms of publicity the real work is over because public opinion is formed from what is read in the newspapers. As soon as a person is discussed freely by the public, it is easy for him to secure the attention of the government and finally to govern.

In J'ai tué there is a reference to American publicity. Elen, the actress, does not wish everybody to know that she is the mistress of François. She says that in America there are certain things that are not shouted from house-tops. François, expressing the French idea, says this is the only kind of publicity that is not allowed in America. In America there are so many ways of letting people know what one is. Actions are often the best means. Often the American does not seem to care what he does. Frequently one is judged by his associates. As for the movie actresses their actions often get in the newspapers and magazines. If anything happens even though it is not to the credit of the actress, the event by some means reaches the newspapers. This is not according to the French idea of publicity.

A prominent characteristic of the American is the appearance of being in a hurry without any particular reason. This tendency has appeared in French plays almost since there have been any American characters in them. As early as 1795 one finds an example in Bella, ou la femme aux deux maris by Duval.⁹ In the modern plays there are often the same words used as appeared in the older plays, je n'ai pas le temps. Elen Barker in J'ai tué used this expression when she is trying to explain to François about her popularity. She has not the time to sign photographs.

When Jack in Pierre ou Jack--- is making the plans for Fernande's future she asks that he not go so fast. These plans are all new to her and the idea of changing her name is not entirely clear. Jack shows an American mannerism when he does not allow Fernande even the time to question him about her career.

The American is also known for his quick decisions. In La Nuit est à nous it is evident that L'Inconnue has come to conclusions too quickly in the case of her husband and Bettine. So also does Burtley decide on the affair before investigating thoroughly. They take it for granted that Bettine knows about Alain's wife and they can not imagine that she is perfectly innocent.

Bettine, très pâle.--Mais enfin, madame---de quoi parlez-vous?
Qui êtes-vous?

L'Inconnue.--Oh! vous savez très bien. Je suis la comtesse de Brécourt, la femme---

Burtley, répondant au regard interrogatif de l'Inconnue.--
---légitime---

L'Inconnue.-- ---La légitime épouse du comte Alain de Brécourt.
Bettine, défaillante.--La femme de---Alain est marié---Alain est---(act II sc. 21).

⁹ Virginia Reese Withers, op. cit., p. 175.

Thus Bettine proves her innocence to most people but not to these two Americans. They still do not believe her.

American customs have been adopted by many of the French people especially by those of the younger generation. However, M. Bellessort warns the French not to be too eager to accept these customs from a nation which lacks centralization. America has not yet produced any literature which has had great influence.¹⁰ The mixture of peoples in America has tended to prevent the formation of a representative tradition in customs which would greatly influence those of other countries. At present the French seem most interested in American money and in certain peculiarities of customs such as the extravagances of movie actors, the freedom for divorce, and the prevalence of jazz.

¹⁰ André Bellessort, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN SPEECH

American speech has had its effect upon the French language, just as French has influenced the English language. A number of American words appear in the plays which were read for this study. These words are a somewhat miscellaneous assortment. However some grouping can be made. There are the words which pertain to American music, those to sport, and those to drinking. Another interesting group is that of the mispronounced words, both French and English. Then there are a few proper names which are American.

In music the French have no word which equals the American word, "jazz." In Trois et une Marcel asks his brother, Pierre, why he does not try to write "jazz" instead of classical music. In La Danse de minuit a "jazz-band" is playing for the dance at the home of the Reynauds. Another reference to a "jazz-band" is in Madelon. Madeleine tells Marc-Adolphe, who is longing for France, to come to New York in the summer when the "jazz-band" plays in the open air. At the beginning of this play there is a phonograph which is playing a "one-step" to which several are dancing. These words show to what extent American music has been accepted by the French. For entertainment of a light type American music is sometimes used.

Certain words of sport are of special interest to the French. In the cosmopolitan play, Trois et une, there are several examples of this type of words. Charles is called a "sportsman." At one place

Marcel, a brother of Charles, asks for "fair-play" from Charles and Pierre, a younger brother, in the case of Hugnette, the girl whom they all think they love. In Madelon at the end of Act I, when the young people are hunting some thing to do, the game of "poker" is suggested but never is played. From the number of words in this group one would judge that American sports have not had as great an influence as has music.

American words concerning drinking often appear. Especially are these words used by Brown, the American, in La huitième Femme de Barbe-bleue. His grandfather had a "bar" in Chicago, and so Brown thinks he can make "coktails" in which he stirs "brandy." In Le Carnaval de l'Amour Hoxwell, the American viveur, often takes a drink of "whisky." He says Je boirais bien un peu de whisky! (act II sc. 1). In Trois et une Charles and Marcel, two of the "Erland brothers," take drinks of "whisky." The appearance of these words no doubt are due to the influence of the viveur character. Whisky seems to be the favorite drink for American characters.

There are numerous special expressions of various kinds. "What" appears in Atout--Coeur when Miss Murray in her excitement over the wedding speaks in her native tongue, and it also is found in J'ai tué when Elen, surprised by the call to her apartment for François, forgets her French for a moment. In Madelon Mme Duchemin's English is apparently somewhat limited. However, her favorite expression is "all right." This is used again in Le Marchand de Paris by Samuel, after Wood has ordered the business deal to be made. In Le Carnaval de l'Amour expressions may be found: such as "come in" and "dear," both of which

are used by a French girl, Liane. James Hoxwell also uses the word, "yes." The American, Ellen Barker in J'ai tué, turns back to her native language when she uses the expression "stop," "shut up," and "darling." Huguette, in Trois et une, tells the Erland brothers to "shut up" when they are arguing. Short exclamations and expressions seem to have been adopted more readily by the French than individual words. The increased contact between the French and the Americans since the war has caused such expressions to be adopted as are indicated in this paragraph.

In the miscellaneous group many different kinds of words may be found. In Madelon Mme Duchemin says her telephone number is "five three three." Madeleine tells Marc-Adolphe that he will like New York better when summer comes with its "ice cream" wagons. Besagne and Burtley in La Nuit est à nous are dining at a hotel, and when the waiter brings the food Besagne says to his American guest:

Besagne.--Lemon squash?
Burtley.--Thanks.

In Pierre ou Jack--? there are some expressions which are typical of the motion pictures. "Le Metteur en scène Américain" directs the assistants to move the light with "spot on the left, more on the left." An assistant announces that this film is "English version number 384." Later when a certain scene is finished, an assistant calls, "out. O. K." Other words spoken by the American director are "hello," "good evening," "no," and "very good." In Le Carnaval de l'amour, there is mention of a "party" of the day before.

The influence of American money on the French has been such that it is not surprising that there are several references to the word "dollar." Régine in Le Voyageur et l'amour greets Miss Squirrel with the fact that she is from the country of the "dollar."¹ In Bluff, during the auction of the kiss of La Paoli, M. Randson bids in the terms of "dollars" instead of francs. Paul in Madelon has given one hundred "dollars" to dance with a girl at a cabaret. Charles in Trois et une tries to get his mother to sign a check for "100 dollars." Parker in Boën ou la Possession des biens refers to the American "dollar" when he is giving examples of what might happen to M. Menuise if he should go to America. The dollar is a symbol of great wealth to the Frenchman.

There are a few proper names which are American in the plays. The setting for the first act of Madelon is "South Beach" and that of the second is "Arrochar," near "South Beach" at the home of the Duchemin on "Maryland" street. In La huitième Femme de Barbe-bleue the "New York Herald," the leading American newspaper in France, may be found at the hotel.

Several complete English sentences are spoken by Americans, for the most part, but occasionally one is used by a Frenchman in answer to some question. When the young American in Madelon asks Mme Duchemin to dance, he asks "Do you want?" Later when they have finished dancing, he says "Good night, mistress Duchemin" and she answers "Good night, master Percy. To-morrow." The English spoken in the plays is some-

¹ See Chapter IV, p. 32.

times incorrect, although it is the type that the Frenchmen understand. Wood in Le Marchand de Paris begins to talk to the American company in English, "Hello. Hello! Is that you Burton! Wood speaking." But Samuel asks him to speak in French.

L'Inconnue and Burtley talk to Bettine in French but between themselves they speak English. L'Inconnue begins to tell Bettine the plan but stops to ask Burtley:

L'Inconnue.-- --Is't well, Burtley?
Burtley.--Yes. But let them speak first.

When Bettine faints from the shock of the news the following conversation takes place.

L'Inconnue, à Burtley.--How do you call that, in french?
Burtley.--Syncope.
L'Inconnue.--Syncope. C'est ennuyeux. Let us go now, Burtley.

The speeches in English are not understood by Bettine, so the two Americans can talk without being understood.

In Pierre ou Jack--- the American actress says a long speech in English to the American director:

Well, you are drinking again!--And if you think I'm going to hang around here till you are drunk, you are mistaken!--You are just a low down good for nothing and you wouldn't dare act like this, if your mother was around!--I didn't come over here to France to be treated like this. You seem to forget who I am. Well I will have you understand that I am a lady and you had better not forget it, you old drunken bum!---(En sortant.) Can't get over it!--Never heard anything like it!-- It's the limit. I should have left a man like you long ago---(act III sc. 5).

In this speech the author, Croisset, shows considerable acquaintance with American slang.

Another interesting group consists of mispronounced or misspelled words, both French and English. In La Nuit est à nous Besagne attempts

to give Burtley's name a French pronunciation which is Baurattley. In J'ai tué, Elton Barker's name is spelled with one "l" instead of two. Wood in Le Marchand de Paris gives the American diphthongation to the word "Aôh," instead of the clear-cut "oh" as the French pronounce it. An assistant to the motion picture director in Pierre ou Jack--- announces the picture thus:

Production 115. Scène 44. Teck 2.

The word "teck" is a mispronunciation of the American word "take." As is shown in the above speech of L'Inconnu in La Nuit est à nous she makes a wrong contraction in "is't." Also in her speech the word "French" is written "french."

The study of American words which appear in the French language is one of great interest. Words relating to jazz are the most prevalent. The motion picture, despite the newness of the field, has already served to introduce to the French a number of words from English. The English which has been used by American characters in the plays has, on the whole, been understood by the French characters. Individual words and short expressions, often exclamations, furnish the majority of the examples. Evidently only words and expressions are used which are clear to French who have made very little study of English. It would seem that the French have become familiar with certain American expressions used by the tourist, the motion picture actors, and the jazz orchestras.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The dramatists in the period from 1921 to 1933 started the drama on the road to importance again. The propaganda literature during the World war had plunged the drama into a deplorable state. The critics, who came to the front again after this period of decadence, did much to aid the struggling playwrights. They helped the young writers to work for art in the drama. The managers of the leading theaters, however, really began this movement, because they wanted plays which were more artistic. They interested the dramatists in this idea.

The American types of characters are not much different from those of an earlier period. The business man is still to be found in the theater. He is often at the mercy of a schemer, but he has money, an important factor with the French. The viveur also continued to appear although he was never a very important character. The traveler, for the most part, was used to furnish background. But there is one new type which has had a tremendous influence for the length of time that such characters have been used. This is the motion picture employee. The movie has enabled the French to obtain a better understanding of the United States.

Many American social problems can not be thoroughly understood by the French. Of these the most important probably is divorce. If divorce were not so easily obtained in America, there would not be so

many. The American speaks of the matter too carelessly, according to the French. The women of America have much more freedom than the French women. However, the latter seem to enjoy their situation.

The American is still the restless type who is always in a hurry to go nowhere in particular. He makes his decisions often very quickly and sometimes to the disadvantage of the other person. The music of this country is an example of this restlessness. To the French American jazz appears to be used as a relief from everyday worries and problems. Often, however, it is not well received because by some it is thought to be only for the restaurants and cabarets.

The language of the American has not had any permanent influence of importance on French as yet. But more cosmopolitan writers, such as Morand and Sarment, do have a large number of American words and phrases. However, there are a few found in almost all the plays. In time certain words which are representative of jazz or the motion picture will tend to become a part of the everyday language of the French.

Probably there will always be things about America which the French can not understand. New ideas and customs are constantly appearing. The more radical types which the older nations tend to shun have been of particular interest to the newer nation. But these unusual American types have also frequently interested the French. Motion pictures have been the latest development. Time alone will tell what the next will be.

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APPENDIX: SYNOPSIS OF THE DRAMAS

Plays used from *La Petite Illustration* (Chronological Order)

La huitième Femme de Barbe-bleue by Alfred Savoir, March 21, 1921.

The Marquis, who is hunting a husband for his older daughter, Monna, gives her hand in marriage to John Brown, a wealthy American, who has been married seven times. The marriage is performed with the understanding that Monna will get four hundred thousand francs in case of a divorce. The union is not a success so a divorce follows, but Monna and Brown are reconciled and remarried.

Atout---Coeur by Félix Gandéra, October 14, 1922.

Married to a false count, Arlette on her wedding day goes to the home of the real count to whom she is supposed to be married. This is done in order to disguise her love affair with her cousin, Marc. Through the aid of the count the plans proceed even to the extent of an apartment for the two who are to be married when the first marriage has been annulled. When the news of the annulment reaches them, Arlette realizes she loves the count so they are married instead of Arlette and Marc.

Je suis trop grand pour moi by Jean Sarment, May 3, 1924.

Virgile comes to the inn of Virginie, and later the millionaire count and his party of friends arrive. The count proves to be an old friend of Virgile. When the count sees Hélène de Légé, he immediately seeks her acquaintance, much to the despair of Moute, his present mistress. Later he is about to make love to Hélène when he is accused

of bad intentions by her guardian. The count loses Hélène, then Moute convinces him that they should go on together.

La Danse de minuit by Charles Méré, May 31, 1924.

The Baron Reynard, having lost his capital at the bank and realizing that his wife is very fond of M. Maurand, guards carefully some papers which, if printed, would damage the latter. Even though forbidden entrance, Maurand comes to a party at the Reynard home, which ends in the death of M. Reynard. A trial follows after which Mme Reynard goes to a sanitarium. She then turns against Maurand and seeks happiness with Daniel, the former secretary of her husband.

Madelon by Jean Sarment, May 2, 1925.

The play is named for the well-known song, Madelon, which Madeleine sings in the first act. The suburbs of New York are the settings for acts one and two. Among the young men at the restaurant there is a musician whom Madeleine befriends. He proves to be a very jealous person and asks her to give up her former men friends. However, he leaves her to marry his childhood sweetheart. Their love does not last long. Madeleine comes at Marc-Adolphe's request to hear his symphonie amoureuse.

La Nuit est à nous by Henry Kistemaeckers, December 19, 1925.

Alain Brécourt buys a car from the company where Besagne and Bettine are directors. He becomes very fond of Bettine, and many meetings follow. But this must be stopped because of the intervention of Alain's American wife and her American lawyer. At their last meeting, Bettine plans to kill herself by poison. But Besagne has changed the poison for morphine. Both Bettine and Alain take it and go to sleep together.

Le Carnaval de l'amour by Charles Méré, May 26, 1928.

Arlette Jasmin, an actress, wishes to marry her daughter, Jeannie. The daughter, a mistress of Roger, refuses the proposal of Olivier, until she discovers that Roger will not marry her at once. Jeannie tries to make Olivier happy even though she really loves Roger. Suspecting the situation, Olivier traps her. Although Jeannie is allowed freedom in her relation to Roger, when Olivier has a heart attack she returns to him through the feeling of duty.

J'ai tué by Léopold Marchand, December 15, 1928.

François de Larson and his present mistress, Elen Barker, an American actress, are at a hotel. His former mistress, Paule Valaire, comes to see François. When he will not listen, she kills him. Seven months later when she is acquitted, she returns home fearing to be alone. She becomes the mistress of Serge Ithier, one of her lawyers. Sometime later, they part because she is preventing him from following his career since they have to live in secluded places.

Le Marchand de Paris by Edmond Fleg, May 4, 1929.

Samuel Brizach, a Jew, who owns some factories, is preparing to leave on a trip. Because his wife will not go with him, he takes Maud Fabrice, a journalist, even though the family is displeased with this act. To the further anger of the family, he gives this woman four hundred thousand francs. The family really rebels when he gives away a large part of his factory to the employees. The excitement causes

him to have a heart attack. He is not allowed to move about but he directs his business from a chair. Realizing that he is almost bankrupt, Samuel, through his talking, forces Wood, representative of an American company to refinance the business. After Samuel is sure of the financial support, his failing again appears, and he begins again to give away large sums of money as gifts.

Donogoo by Jules Romain, February 7, 1931.

Lamendin, when he is contemplating suicide, through the advice of a friend, goes to a professor who promises to give him a reason for living. He is told to approach the first man who takes out his handkerchief and blows his nose. This person proves to be a professor of geography who has written a book about a place which does not exist. Lamendin, gaining financial aid, establishes the place, Donogoo-Tonka. People from everywhere set out for it. Thus the fictitious city of Donogoo-Tonka becomes a reality.

Boën ou la Possession des biens by Jules Romain, October 31, 1931.

Greedy for money, Boën has his financial condition verified. He has used the invention of M. Menuise, one of his employees, without payment. His secretary, Mlle Sabine, shows him that money is not everything. Jacob Parker, an American, wants to buy the invention, but Boën will not sell. He offers M. Menuise a check which he refuses.

Bluff by George Delance, January 16, 1932.

Gilbert Lancy, an American, appears at a charity entertainment in search of Sammy W. Randson. Knowing perfectly well that he has only

thirty-six francs at the bank, Lancy writes a check for one hundred thousand francs to kiss the beautiful singer, La Paoli. He calls himself Gilbert duc de Lancy. Lancy is forced to tell La Paoli that the check is not covered. Randson accepts Lancy's proposition of bringing only himself and no money into their business association. La Paoli tears up the check.

Pierre ou Jack---? by Francis de Croisset, February 20, 1932.

Pierre Verdier meets and proposes to Fernande, who is really in love with Jack Laroze, a French actor in the American movies. Because he has not written to her, Fernande accepts Pierre; but when Jack returns she goes away with him. Pierre then marries Jeanne who really loves him.

Le Voyageur et l'amant by Paul Morand, March 5, 1932.

Régine is in love with Gilles, who is a traveler. He is not content to stay in one place very long. When he leaves this time, he does not write to her for a very long time. Miss Squirrel finally convinces Régine that she should marry Ludovic who prefers home to travel. As the couple are ready to leave, Gilles telephones her from long distance. Then Régine decides not to leave.

L'Envers vaut l'endroit by Aimé Declercq, July 15, 1933.

This play can have as its setting New York, or Paris, or Rome. Four rooms may be seen at one time. Nancy and Ruth are featured in James Carroll's play, Visages du destin. Nancy loves him and wishes his play to be a success. She obtains financial aid for him from M. Glames, an American. James disappears when he discovers the check on Nancy's

dressing table. The play is a success but when James returns he leaves Nancy and his other friends in order to follow Ruth who will aid him in gaining further fame.

Trois et une by Denys Amiel, October 28, 1933.

The three sons of Loys Erland, Charles, a sportsman, Marcel, a business man, and Pierre, a musician, are together to spend two weeks. Each believe he is the favorite of Huguette, a guest of the mother. This causes much argument. Charles and Huguette plan to go away together. Huguette leaves, but Charles is detained by his mother, who succeeds in convincing him that the family is the more important than his love.