

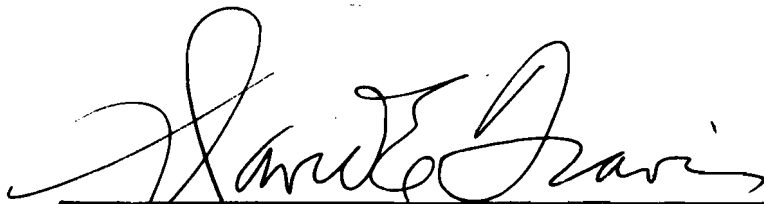
ROLE-PLAYING AS A TECHNICAL DEVICE
IN THE THEATER OF JEAN ANOUILH

A Thesis
Presented to
the Department of Foreign Languages
Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia

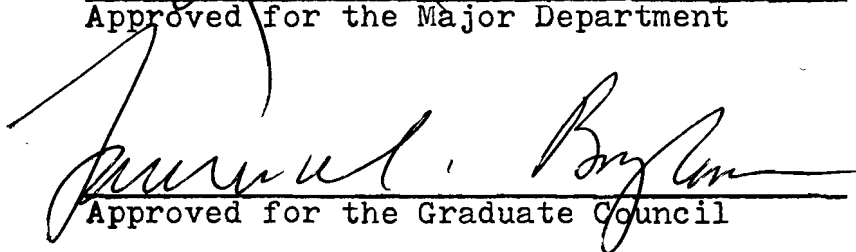
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C. R. B.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Jean Anouilh is one of the most successful writers of contemporary French theater. His first play, L'Hermine (1931), was hailed as "la révélation d'un remarquable talent."¹ Y' avait un prisonnier (1934) was likewise praised by Lucien Dubech as "la pièce peut-être la plus originale de l'année."² His plays have received praise ever since. André Camp states of his most recent play, Les Poissons rouges (1970): "Le dialogue est brillant, les scènes bien filées"³ Henri Peyre calls him "by far the most fertile, the most varied and lively, the most theatrical of those who have written for the French stage since 1934."⁴

Only a few of his more than thirty plays have not been highly successful. Le Bal des voleurs (1932), which

¹Armory, Comoedia, April 28, 1932, in Louise Delpit, Paris--Theatre Contemporain: Tableau du Mouvement Dramatique en France de 1925 à 1938 (Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, Vol. XX, Nos. 1-2. Northampton, Mass.: Smith College Press, Oct. 1938, Jan. 1939) p. 69.

²Lucien Dubech, Action Française, Feb. 1935, Ibid., p. 70.

³André Camp, "L'Actualité Théâtrale," L'Avant Scène, No. 443, (February 15, 1970), 43.

⁴Henri Peyre, Contemporary French Literature (New York: Harper and Rowe, Publishers, 1964), p. 291.

was first performed in 1938, ran for 200 performances.⁵ L'Invitation au château (1947) ran for 591 consecutive performances and was revived in 1962.⁶ Antigone (1942) had 645 consecutive performances.⁷ Le Voyageur sans bagage (1936) first ran for 190 performances, was revived in 1944, and was later made into a film.⁸ Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu (1959), highly successful in Paris,⁹ was likewise made into a film. In addition to the successful Paris productions, many of Anouilh's plays have been presented in the United States and in England, and have been very well received.¹⁰ In recent years he has also achieved success as a director of plays.¹¹

⁵Leonard Pronko, The World of Jean Anouilh (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1968), p. 254.

⁶Yves Darriet, "L'Invitation au château," L'Avant Scene, No. 265, (May 15, 1962), 41.

⁷Jacques Guicharnaud (ed.), Anthology of 20th Century French Theater (Paris: Paris Book Center, 1967), p. 456.

⁸Pronko, op. cit., p. 254.

⁹John Harvey, Anouilh: A Study in Theatrics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. x.

¹⁰Pronko, op. cit., pp. 257-258.

¹¹Jacques Guicharnaud, Modern French Theatre from Giraudoux to Genet (Yale Romantic Studies, Second Series, 7. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 117.

Recognition for successful plays is what Anouilh wants in life. He wants to be remembered only for his works. His own biography is a closely guarded secret, the details of which he keeps to himself:

Je n'ai pas de biographie, et j'en suis très content. Je suis né le 23 juin 1910 à Bordeaux, je suis venu jeune à Paris, j'ai été à l'école primaire supérieure Colbert, au collège Chaptal. Un an et demi à la Faculté de Droit de Paris, deux ans dans une maison de publicité, où j'ai pris des leçons de précision et d'ingéniosité qui m'ont tenu lieu d'études poétiques. Après L'Hermine, j'ai décidé de ne vivre que du théâtre, et un peu du cinéma. C'était une folie que j'ai tout de même bien fait de décider. J'ai réussi à ne jamais faire de journalisme, et je n'ai sur la conscience, au cinéma, qu'un ou deux vaudevilles et quelques mélôs oubliés et non signés. Le reste est ma vie, et tant que le Ciel voudra que ce soit encore mon affaire personnelle, j'en réserve les détails.¹²

Anouilh's father was a tailor, and Anouilh has stated that he wanted to be as good a craftsman in his chosen profession as his father was in his.¹³ Anouilh's mother played the violin in theater orchestras. While his mother was performing, he often remained in the wings. His close association with theater life developed his interest in the theater. His first dramatic attempts were verse plays in the style of Edmond Rostand. At the age of sixteen he wrote his first

¹²Hubert Gignoux, Jean Anouilh, p. 9, quoted in Oreste F. Pucciani, The French Theater since 1930 (New York, Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1954), p. 145.

¹³Harvey, op. cit., p. 65.

full-length play, which was never published.¹⁴

In 1930 Anouilh became the secretary for Louis Jouvet. He remained in this post only a short while, as he and Jouvet quarrelled considerably. While this post offered little financial reward, it enabled him to meet several people influential in Parisian theater. Consequently, he had little difficulty producing L'Hermine in 1932.¹⁵

Little else is known about "les détails" of his life. Indeed, little else need be known, as his biography has little direct influence on his plays.¹⁶

Anouilh has a theatrical view of existence. He feels that all people are playing roles in the game of life. It is only natural, therefore, that his theater should reflect this attitude. John Harvey describes Anouilh's theater as a jeu-- a game of pretending, involving creator, interpreter, and spectator.¹⁷ Many of his characters echo the sentiment that "on ne peut rien . . . que jouer le jeu."¹⁸

¹⁴Guicharnaud, Anthology of 20th Century French Theater, p. 455.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Pol Vandromme, Jean Anouilh: un auteur et ses personnages (Paris: Les Éditions de la Table Ronde, 1965), p. 9.

¹⁷Harvey, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁸Jean Anouilh, L'Invitation au château in Pièces brillantes (Paris: Les Éditions de la Table Ronde, 1965), p. 126.

Role-playing is a mode of behavior essential to a meaningful life. Clifford Morgan defines a role as a "pattern of behavior that a person in a particular social status is expected to exhibit."¹⁹ According to Combs and Snygg, a person selects those methods of behavior which seem appropriate in the situation where he finds himself.²⁰ Throughout a person's life he plays many different roles: child, student, parent, employee, organization member, among others. How he plays his roles is determined by how he sees his duties in the particular situations. A child, for example, behaves differently around his peers than he does around his parents, just as an employee behaves differently around his employer than he does around his family.

Anouilh's theater reflects his understanding of the concept of role-playing. His use of the device is intricate and skillful. In nearly every play except the early pièces noires there are clear examples of role-playing.

Harvey points out that role-playing appears on three distinct levels in Anouilh's theater.²¹ One level of role-

¹⁹Clifford T. Morgan, Introduction to Psychology (second edition; New York: McGraw Hill, 1961), p. 687.

²⁰Arthur W. Combs and Donald Snygg, Individual Behavior: A Perceptual Approach to Behavior (revised edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 155-156.

²¹Harvey, op. cit., p. 68.

playing involves those characters with self-imposed roles.²² They assume a role they voluntarily accept to play. Frequently they choose the role out of a sense of duty to an ideal. In the plays based on mythological or historical sources, the protagonists strive to uphold what they consider to be morally right. Their duty requires them to uphold this ideal, even in the face of death.

The plays where love is the central theme carry the idea of the self-imposed role to an extreme.²³ The lover must assume a role if he is to make a conquest. Love is an illusory ideal which seldom exists in Anouilh's plays. Love is most often equated with desire, even lust. Nevertheless, the lover does all he can to play his role well.

Another level of role-playing Harvey mentions involves unconscious role-playing.²⁴ Many of the characters found here are not aware they are playing roles. Someone else is controlling their movements, and they do not realize they are being treated like puppets. The unwitting marionettes act to help the meneur en jeu carry out his plan. Most often the one controlling the events is innocently amusing himself to combat boredom.

Closely related to the plays with unconscious role-players are the plays which use a play-within-the-play. The

²²Ibid., p. 73.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 76.

inner play frequently allows someone to control the actions of others while those being controlled realize they must cooperate. In other cases the inner play allows a character to express ideas which he could not express within the normal scope of his role and to behave differently from his usual role.

The third level of role-playing, which runs throughout most of his works, is purely theatrical. The characters are aware that they are appearing in a play, and various speeches and events point up this fact.²⁵ In the early plays Anouilh is rather subtle in presenting this idea. In some of his more recent plays, however, he clearly shows that the production is a dramatic event, with no pretense of presenting real life.

The purpose of this thesis is to present the various types of role-playing which exist in the theater of Jean Anouilh. Each type of role-playing will be discussed with representative plays selected to show how it is used. When more than one type of role-playing occurs within a play, the play is mentioned in each chapter where it applies. The plays will be discussed by the types of role-playing presented above. No attempt is made to keep the plays in a chronological sequence, as Anouilh's use of the various types follows no such order.

²⁵Ibid., p. 69.

CHAPTER II

THE SELF-IMPOSED ROLE

"Man tries to save himself from anguish by identifying himself with a role, with a game,"²⁶ states Jacques Guicharnaud about Anouilh's plays. In the plays based on mythological or historical sources this idea is most prevalent. The protagonists search to find a meaningful existence. The only meaning they can find in life is that which they give it. Thus they assume roles which they hope will give their lives a purpose.

Antigone²⁷ (1942) is a modern version of the Sophocles play. The intrigue is much the same as in the original, but the setting, the dress, and the language are all modern. Because of the anachronisms necessitated by placing a historical legend in a modern setting, the play has received some rather harsh criticism.²⁸ On the other hand, Murray Sachs, in an article in French Review, points

²⁶Guicharnaud, Modern French Theatre, p. 132.

²⁷Jean Anouilh, Antigone in Nouvelles Pièces noires (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1967), pp. 127-207. Hereafter, with the first reference to a play, a complete note will be given, after which the name of the collection and page reference will be enclosed in parentheses within the body of the thesis.

²⁸Joseph Chiari, The Contemporary French Theatre: The Flight From Naturalism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), pp. 184-185.

out that Anouilh is showing the legend is relevant to all times. The "décor neutre" does not limit the play to time or place.²⁹ The play's overwhelming success shows the public tends to accept this latter interpretation.

Anouilh assumes the spectator is familiar with the Sophocles version of Antigone. Thus, the play has a deterministic feeling. While all of the actors are on stage, the Prologue relates the plot and explains the roles of each of the characters:

Voilà. Ces personnages vont vous jouer l'histoire d'Antigone. Antigone, c'est la petite maigre qui est assise là-bas, et qui ne dit rien. . . . Elle pense qu'elle va être Antigone tout à l'heure Mais il n'y a rien à faire. Elle s'appelle Antigone, et il va falloir qu'elle joue son rôle jusqu'au bout.

.

Cet homme robuste, aux cheveux blancs, qui médite là . . . c'est Créon. C'est le roi. Il a des rides, il est fatigué. Il joue au jeu difficile de conduire les hommes.

.

La vieille dame qui tricote . . . c'est Eurydice, la femme de Créon. Elle tricoterait pendant toute la tragédie jusqu'à ce que son tour vienne de se lever et de mourir.

.

²⁹Murray Sachs, "Notes on the Theatricality of Jean Anouilh's Antigone," French Review, XXXVI (October, 1962), 6.

Ce garçon . . . c'est le Messager. C'est lui qui viendra annoncer la mort d'Hémon tout à l'heure. C'est pour cela qu'il n'a pas envie de bavarder Il sait déjà (Nouvelles Pièces noires, pp. 131-133).

To provide a background, the Prologue states that Antigone's two brothers, Étéocle and Polynice, after the death of Œdipe, their father, were each to rule Thebes as king for one year. At the end of the first year, however, Étéocle did not want to yield the power to his brother. A civil war then erupted, with both brothers being killed in the conflict. Créon, Œdipe's brother, became king and decreed that Étéocle should be granted a proper burial but that Polynice's body should lie exposed, unburied. Whoever buries Polynice would be punished by death.

Antigone sees that she must violate the king's order and bury her brother. She buries him, not out of a religious obligation, but because she feels that a burial is only proper. If by burying her brother she will be put to death, she is willing to accept the consequences of her action. After Ismène, her sister, tells her she should not bury Polynice, reminding her of Créon's decree, Antigone replies:

. . . A chacun son rôle. Lui, il doit nous faire mourir, et nous, nous devons aller enterrer notre frère. C'est comme cela que ç'a été distribué. Qu'est-ce que tu veux que nous y fassions? (Nouvelles Pièces noires, p. 140).

When Antigone is caught in the act of burying her brother, Créon accuses her of trying to get special

consideration. She thinks, he contends, that he will not put her to death because she is his niece. Antigone answers that she knows she may die for her actions, and she accepts death as a consequence. She sees herself bound by no other obligation than to do what she understands to be her duty towards her brother.

Créon asks her why she attempted to bury her brother when both she and Créon agree that the burial action is a meaningless gesture:

Créon: Et tu risques la mort maintenant parce que j'ai refusé à ton frère ce passeport dérisoire, ce bredouillage en série sur sa dépouille, cette pantomime dont tu aurais été la première à avoir. honte et mal si on l'avait jouée. C'est absurde!

Antigone: Oui, c'est absurde.

Créon: Pourquoi fais-tu ce geste, alors? Pour les autres, pour ceux qui y croient? Pour les dresser contre moi?

Antigone: Non.

Créon: Ni pour les autres, ni pour ton frère? Pour qui alors?

Antigone: Pour personne. Pour moi (Nouvelles Pièces noires, pp. 173-174).

Pronko points out that "the burial of Polynices is only a pretext for Antigone to assert what she feels to be her real self in opposition to the compromises necessitated by life."³⁰

³⁰Pronko, op. cit., p. 25.

Créon interprets her revolt as a result of pride, a family trait. "Orgueilleuse! Petite Œdipe!" cries Créon (Nouvelles Pièces noires, p. 174). He argues that no one can escape from accounting for his actions by dying, as she plans to do, or by blinding himself, as her father had done.

His duty as king is to try to keep order as well as he possibly can. He cannot worry about his own, or anyone else's, personal problems. He must be responsible for the successful operation of the entire nation. "Il faut . . . qu'il y en ait qui mènent la barque," he insists (Nouvelles Pièces noires, p. 179). He continues, " . . . il faut surer et retrousser ses manches, empoigner la vie à pleines mains et s'en mettre jusqu'aux coudes" (Nouvelles Pièces noires, p. 180). Créon insists that when he accepted to be king, he accepted to bring order into a chaotic world. As king he governs all the people and not just a few. Likewise, the laws concern all the people, and the king cannot grant special favors to a member of his family. Antigone argues that he made his mistake in accepting, in saying "oui." His "oui" binds him to enforce the law, to have her murdered. Her "non," on the other hand, allows her to violate the king's decree, even if her action will result in her death.

Thus, what Antigone interprets as compromising with life by saying "oui," Créon interprets as taking a positive action towards bringing order to an absurd world. Where

Antigone regards her burying her brother as a positive action, Créon regards it as a violation of the law which cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. Each fulfills the duties required for his role in the best way he knows how; and each accepts, though sadly, the consequences of fulfilling those duties.

Later, Antigone questions her decision. Before she is to be murdered, she confesses in a letter to Hémon, "Je ne sais plus pourquoi je meurs" (Nouvelles Pièces noires, p. 202). She had been so sure of her cause; but at the moment of death she wonders if she had not been too dogmatic. On learning of the death of his son and his wife's suicide, Créon, too, regrets what he had to do: ". . . on est là, devant l'ouvrage, on ne peut pourtant pas se croiser les bras. Ils disent que c'est une sale besogne, mais si on ne la fait pas, qui la fera?" (Nouvelles Pièces noires, pp. 205-206). Créon is now alone to govern his nation, the duty he willingly accepted. Yet despite the tragic events, one feels that Créon will continue to govern, always fulfilling his duty, until it is his turn to die.

L'Alouette³¹ and Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu³² have

³¹Jean Anouilh, L'Alouette in Pièces costumées (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1967), pp. 7-139.

³²Jean Anouilh, Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu in Pièces costumées (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1967) pp. 141-297.

themes similar to that of Antigone, although these plays are based on the lives of real people. In the first play, Jeanne d'Arc carries out the commands of her celestial voices; in the second, Becket fulfills the duties required by various positions.

L'Alouette (1952) reenacts the trial of Jeanne d'Arc. To render the trial more interesting, various events in her life are acted out. Besides adding interest, this technique enables Jeanne to state her case more clearly, and the scenes give insights into the personalities of those who were involved in her life. The spectator sees the moment she first hears her voices, her first encounter with the Dauphin, Charles VII, and even the preparations for her execution.

Several accusations are made against Jeanne, including heresy and sorcery, because she claims to have talked with three saints. The judges accuse her of mocking what the Church holds sacred, of discrediting her sex by dressing as a man, and of damning her soul by not conceding to the Church's demands.

Saint Michel, she tells the judges, told her to gather a group of soldiers and help the Dauphin restore his place as king. She argued that she was only a weak girl and not capable of leading the destiny of France. Saint Michel assured her that he would continue to help her and

that Sainte Catherine and Sainte Marguerite would likewise assist her.

Her statements about her conversations with Saint Michel are met with scorn by the judges, just as they are met with scorn by her father and mother. The judges insist that she had talked with the devil, who said he was a saint, and that she should have resisted the temptation. Jeanne replies that the man who spoke to her was too handsome to be the devil:

Le Promoteur: . . .Il fallait lui crier: "Va-t'en, sale diable puant, ne me tente pas davantage!"

Jeanne (crie): Mais c'était saint Michel, Messire!

Le Promoteur (ricane): Qu'il t'a dit, petite dinde! Et tu l'as cru?

Jeanne: Bien sûr. D'abord, ça ne pouvait pas être le diable, il était si beau.

Le Promoteur (Proclame dressé, hors de lui): Justement! Le diable est beau! (Pièces costumées, p. 19)

Jeanne insists that only that which is beautiful is the work of God and that the work of the devil is ugly.

Jeanne's father's reaction is similar to that of the judges. He argues that she was with a lover while she should have been tending to her sheep. After she recounts what Saint Michel told her, he accuses her of immorality, stating she only wants to live among the soldiers:

Jeanne: Ce que me disent mes Voix. Demander une

escorte d'armes au Sire de Baudricourt . . . et quand j'aurai mon escorte, aller jusqu'au dauphin à Chinon, lui dire qu'il est le vrai roi, l'emmener à la tête de ses soldats délivrer Orléans, le faire sacrer à Reims par Monseigneur l'Archevêque avec les Saintes Huiles et jeter les Anglais à la mer.

Le Père (qui a tout compris): Ah, tu t'expliques, enfin, sale fille! C'est aller avec les soldats que tu veux comme la dernière des dernières? (Pièces costumées, pp. 28-29).

By the time Jeanne reaches Chinon, Charles has already revealed himself infantile, cowardly, and afraid to regain power. He confides:

Mais entre nous, ce n'est pas seulement les moyens qui me manquent, c'est le courage. C'est trop fatigant le courage et trop dangereux dans ce monde de brutes où nous vivons (Pièces costumées, p. 58).

Jeanne's first duty, clearly, is to convince him that everyone has fear, but the one who suppresses his fear and acts in spite of it is the victor. She even confides that she, too, is afraid but does not let her fear show. God, she states, is not on the side of the stronger but on the side of the more courageous. Thus he can only defeat the English by displaying more courage. The only way to conquer fear is to confront the fear before facing what one fears:

. . . Tu dis: "Bon, j'ai peur. Mais c'est mon affaire, ça ne regarde personne. Continuons." Et tu continues . . . Tu passes, parce que comme tu es plus intelligent, que tu as plus d'imagination, toi, tu as eu peur avant. (Pièces costumées, p. 78).

The judges reason that Jeanne was practicing sorcery to get Charles to overcome his fear. Jeanne, on the other

hand, claims that God helped Charles because he developed so much courage. The judges insist that God does not work miracles in the affairs of men. But Jeanne does not consider Charles' success a miracle. The judges twist her statement to mean that she does not believe in miracles, an accusation which confirms the heresy charges. She gives them further reason to accuse her of heresy by claiming that real miracles are the work of man:

Jeanne: Les vrais miracles, ceux qui font sourire Dieu de plaisir dans le Ciel, ce doit être ceux que les hommes font tout seuls, avec le courage et l'intelligence qu'Il leur a donnés.

Cauchon: Tu mesures la gravité de tes paroles, Jeanne? Tu es en train de nous dire tout tranquillement que le vrai miracle de Dieu sur cette terre, ce serait l'homme, pas autre chose. L'homme qui n'est que péché, erreur, maladresse, impuissance

Jeanne: Oui, mais force et courage aussi et clarté au moment où il est le plus vilain . . . (Pièces costumées, p. 90).

Her defense becomes more and more a defense for mankind. The judges emphasize the negative aspects of human nature, while Jeanne emphasizes the positive. They argue that man is sinful, vile, and debased. She agrees that man does sin and that he is ignoble. But, she adds, there is something in man that will cause him to leave "une maison de débauche, pour sauver un petit enfant inconnu . . ." (Pièces costumées, p. 91). She insists that God must be proud of man because of the good he can do, and that He must forgive

man for the evil he has done.

She brings this idea out again as she talks to the uncouth soldier La Hire: ". . . Le paradis de Dieu . . . est plein de brutes comme toi" (Pièces costumées, p. 103). She continues: "C'est rien que des copains au paradis!" (Pièces costumées, p. 103). She assures La Hire that God is always proud of those who honestly perform their assigned duties, regardless of whether they are bishops or soldiers.

The judges change their tactics and argue that they are only trying to save her soul. If she will admit to the charges brought against her, admit that she has sinned against the Church, and that she repents of her sins, then her soul will be saved. She pleads her innocence, claiming she did only what her voices told her to do: dress as a man, convince Charles to regain his throne, and lead an army to victory.

Cauchon finally persuades Jeanne to sign a confession by convincing her that in submitting to the will of the Church she will please God. Her confession absolves her from the penalty of being burned. Her sentence instead is to spend the rest of her life in prison "pour la pénitence de tes erreurs, au pain de douleur et à l'eau d'angoisse . . ." (Pièces costumées, p. 124).

As if she were thinking of how she will be remembered in the future, she renounces her abjuration. She does not

want to spend the rest of her life like anyone else:

"Jeanne acceptant tout, Jeanne avec un ventre, Jeanne devenue gourmande" (Pièces costumées, p. 131). She adds:

"Mais je ne veux pas faire une fin! Et en tout cas, pas celle-là. . . . Pas une fin qui n'en finit plus . . .

(Pièces costumées, pp. 131-132). A Jeanne who does not have a spectacular death will be forgotten along with those in her army; but a Jeanne whose life ends suddenly will long be remembered.

Before she is to be executed, she prays:

Messire saint Michel! Sainte Marguerite!
Sainte Catherine! vous avez beau être muets,
maintenant, je ne suis née que du jour où vous
m'avez parlé. Je n'ai vécu que du jour où j'ai
fait ce que vous m'avez dit de faire, à cheval,
une épée dans la main! C'est celle-là, ce n'est
que celle-là, Jeanne! (Pièces costumées, p. 132).

She has fulfilled the commands of her voices. The basic command given her was "Jeanne, va au secours du roi de France et tu lui rendras son royaume" (Pièces costumées, p. 15). The other commands told how to fulfill this one. Her mission is complete; she restored Charles to power, and she led him to victory until he was able to continue for himself. André Maurois mentions that after Jeanne's capture Charles led his army until almost all of the English were driven out of France.³³

³³André Maurois, A History of France, trans. Henry L. Binsse (New York: Straus and Cudahy, 1956), pp. 91-92.

Anouilh could not let his Jeanne die. Just as final preparations are being made for the execution, Baudricourt rushes in to remind the judges that one scene in Jeanne's life has been omitted:

On ne peut pas finir comme ça, Monseigneur! On n'a pas joué le sacre! On avait dit qu'on jouerait tout! Ce n'est pas juste! Jeanne a droit à jouer le sacre, c'est dans son histoire! (Pièces costumées, p. 138).

Charles, agreeing that the coronation should be played, concludes:

. . . La vraie fin de l'histoire de Jeanne, la vraie fin qui n'en finira plus, celle qu'on se redira toujours, quand on aura oublié ou confondu tous nos noms, ce n'est pas dans sa misère de bête traquée à Rouen, c'est l'alouette en plein ciel, c'est Jeanne à Reims dans toute sa gloire. La vraie fin de l'histoire de Jeanne est joyeuse. Jeanne d'Arc, c'est une histoire qui finit bien! (Pièces costumées, pp. 138-139).

The scene that the voices prophesied and that Jeanne helped to create has to be presented. With the coronation Jeanne fulfilled her role, and Jeanne d'Arc became known for history to remember and to judge.

Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu (1959), which Guicharnaud claims to be Anouilh's greatest production,³⁴ is the story of the relationship of Thomas à Becket and King Henri II. The play begins with Henri at Becket's tomb, and he remembers his friendship with Becket and the various events which cause

³⁴Guicharnaud, Modern French Theatre, p. 128.

the break in that friendship.

As young men, Henri and Thomas are close friends. The king describes their relationship as brotherly. Anouilh depicts Henri as rather weak and dependent on Becket. The two even share the same events, including hunting and debauchery. To reward Becket for his friendship, the king appoints him Chancellor of England. Immediately, their relationship changes. Instead of being loyal to the king out of friendship, as was the case, Becket is loyal to him because he is his servant.

The king does not anticipate that Becket will take his duty so seriously. The king wants to continue his frivolous ways. Becket, on the other hand, must devote himself to his new position. Henri expresses his disappointment in the changed Becket:

Le Roi: . . . Moi, quand je t'ai nommé chancelier, avec tous les revenus attachés à la charge, j'ai cru que tu allais tout simplement faire deux fois plus la fête, voilà tout!

Becket: Mais je m'amuse, moi, mon prince, en ce moment. Je m'amuse beaucoup.

Le Roi: Travailler au bien de mes peuples, cela t'amuse, toi? Tu les aimes ces gens-là? D'abord, ils sont trop nombreux. On ne peut pas les aimer, on ne les connaît pas! Et puis, tu mens, tu n'aimes rien.

Becket: J'aime au moins une chose, mon prince, et cela j'en suis sûr. Bien faire ce que j'ai à faire (Pièces costumées, p. 196).

After Henri became king, a split developed between the Church and the government as the Church gained strength. Becket sees the growing strength of the Church much clearer than does Henri. Comparing the government of England to a game of handball, Becket reminds the king that just as in handball one does not wait for the ball to reach him but goes after it, so in government one must actively fight those who try to usurp his power rather than hope things work out for the best. He points out to Henri that within ten years the Church could overpower him and place the Archbishop of Canterbury as ruler of the nation. The king is so complacent, even narrow-minded, that he cannot conceive of his not being the stronger in the future. Becket reminds him that he must not merely live for the present, but must also think of possible future consequences.

While they are visiting in France, they learn of the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Church tradition allows that the king may choose the Archbishop. In an attempt to gain control over the Church, Henri appoints Becket to that post. Becket tries to decline the offer, arguing that he is not even a priest, that the Pope may not approve, and that as Archbishop he may have to act against the king's expectations. "Si je deviens Archevêque, je ne pourrai plus être votre ami" (Pièces costumées, p. 218), he gravely tells him. He adds, "Je ne saurai servir Dieu et

vous" (Pièces costumées, p. 219). But the king cannot understand this. He is sure that if he has his man as Archbishop, he will have control of the Church.

Becket immediately becomes the perfect Archbishop.³⁵ He gives up his post as Chancellor; he frequently invites the poor to dinner; and he even gives all his belongings to charity. He goes so far as to excommunicate three men high in the king's court. All this he does in the interest of the Church because he believes his position demands it.

Henri regrets his appointment and seeks to have Becket removed from that position. His only recourse is to have him arrested for mismanaging funds while he was Chancellor. Becket is able to avoid capture because the men sent to arrest him are afraid to touch the Archbishop. He simply walks past them and immediately escapes to France and later to Rome.

In Rome he seeks refuge with the Pope. The Pope, who is depicted to be an opportunist seeking to obtain money from any source, including betraying one of his staff, counsils Becket to go to a monastery in France to spend the rest of his life austerely in prayer and meditation. After much consideration, Becket decides that the secluded life of a

³⁵Ibid.

monk would be too simple for him, that he must return to England to serve his people and the honor of his God.

Becket and Henri meet for the last time on a plain in France. They try in vain to reconcile their differences. Henri can forgive Becket for much that he has done if only he will yield to the honor of the king. Becket replies that he has accepted to serve the honor of God. Becket admits that Henri is his king concerning terrestrial affairs, but he must serve God concerning spiritual affairs. This idea is brought out in a discussion where they compare governing a nation to guiding a ship:

Le Roi: . . . Je suis prêt à oublier bien des choses, mais pas que je suis roi. C'est toi qui me l'as appris.

Becket (grave): Ne l'oubliez jamais, mon prince. . . . Vous, vous avez autre chose à faire. Tenir la barre du bateau.

Le Roi: Et toi, qu'est-ce que tu as à faire?

Becket: J'ai à vous résister de toutes mes forces, quand vous barrez contre le vent (Pièces costumées, p. 271).

Becket's resistance to Henri reminds one of Antigone's resistance to Créon. Just as Antigone says to Créon, "Moi, je peux dire 'non' encore à tout ce que je n'aime pas . . . (Nouvelles Pièces noires, p. 177), Becket tells Henri, "J'ai seulement à vous dire non" (Pièces costumées, p. 273). Henri tries to show him the futility of his resistance; he should compromise his religious views with his political

views:

Le Roi: Il faut pourtant être logique, Becket!

Becket: Non. Cela n'est pas nécessaire, mon roi. Il faut seulement faire absurdement, ce dont on a été chargé--jusqu'au bout (Pièces costumées, p. 273).

Referring to this passage, Guicharnaud comments:

. . . And "absurdly" is the word for it. Becket never for a moment gives a thought to what he considers a duty: it is an imperative which is given without justification and which places him beyond any psychological or political vision.³⁶

Throughout Becket's career he wants to do well what is his duty to do. Guicharnaud points out that:

As the King's friend he plays the part of a fellow libertine and he plays it well. Yet what interests him is not debauchery but perfection in debauchery. When the King appoints him Archbishop, all he does is to be the perfect Archbishop³⁷

The king tells Becket that even in debauchery "tu étais plus fort que moi" (Pièces costumées, p. 147). As Chancellor he gives up some of his lecherous pleasures to devote time to his duties. As Archbishop he fulfills his duties so far as to terminate his friendship with the king. After all, Becket reminds Henri, "La seule chose qui soit immorale, mon prince, c'est de ne pas faire ce qu'il faut, quand il faut" (Pièces costumées, p. 208).

Becket suggests early in the play that he will serve

³⁶Ibid., p. 129.

³⁷Ibid., p. 128.

Henri only so long as serving the king is in his best interest:

. . . Mais moi, je me suis introduit en trichant, dans la file Tant que Becket sera obligé d'improviser son honneur, il te servira. Et si un jour, il le recontre... (Un petit temps. Il demande:) Mais où est l'honneur de Becket? (Pièces costumées, p. 187)

Even Henri recognizes that Becket must be true to his sense of duty:

Tu es incapable de mentir. Je te connais. Non parce que tu as peur du mensonge--je crois bien que tu es le seul homme de ma connaissance qui n'a peur de rien, même pas du Ciel--mais cela te répugne... Cela te paraît inélégant (Pièces costumées, p. 182).

In both L'Alouette and Becket Anouilh has taken liberties with history, which he readily admits. Jeanne, for example, was not the thin, fragile girl he shows her to be, but rather large and strong.³⁸ Similarly, Becket was not of Saxon origin, as Anouilh shows him, but of Norman origin.³⁹ These inaccuracies do not detract from the effect of the plays but rather help to establish the characters Anouilh was trying to create. Anouilh's little Jeanne makes one appreciate more her courage and lack of fear in helping Charles, in leading the troops, and in standing up to the

³⁸Jean Anouilh, "Mystère de Jeanne," in Pol Vandromme, Jean Anouilh: un auteur et ses personnages (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1965), p. 236.

³⁹Jean Anouilh, "Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu," Ibid., p. 240.

Church. And the Saxon Becket enables him to have more compassion towards the Saxons and to befriend the Saxon monk, which a Norman Becket could not do. These plays, it should be remembered, are not historical plays.⁴⁰ Anouilh classed them as Pièces costumées, not historiques. Anouilh writes about the inaccuracies in Becket: " . . . je suis un homme léger et facile--puisque je fais du théâtre. J'ai décidé que cela m'était égale."⁴¹

⁴⁰Dorothy Knowles, French Drama of the Inter-War Years: 1918-39 (New York: Barnes & Noble) p. 179.

⁴¹Anouilh, loc. cit.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE LOVER

Love, in Anouilh's theater, is an illusory ideal which is seldom attained. The lover is not moved by emotion but acts as he must in order to make a romantic conquest. His concept of love, then, is not compassion but desire. Anouilh's ideas on love are most clearly expressed in Ardèle ou la marguerite,⁴² La Valse des toréadors,⁴³ and Ornifle ou le courant d'air;⁴⁴ and they are suggested in several other plays.

Ardèle (1948) is a mockery of love, showing unhappy marriages and unfortunate love affairs. General Saint-Pé is unhappily married to his demented wife Amélie. She so distrusts her husband that she gives her piercing cry of "Léon! Léon!" every few minutes to find out where he is. Her cries are often confused with those of the peacock. The general explains the difference: "Son cri est légèrement plus perçant que celui du paon" (Pièces grincantes, p. 15). The general has taken the chamber maid as a mistress.

⁴²Jean Anouilh, Ardèle ou la marguerite in Pièces grincantes (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1966), pp. 7-84.

⁴³Jean Anouilh, La Valse des toréadors in Pièces grincantes (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1966), pp. 85-210.

⁴⁴Jean Anouilh, Ornifle ou le courant d'air in Pièces grincantes (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1966), pp. 211-370.

Ironically, he distrusts her, fearing she may find a new lover. The general's sister, the Countess, has a lover who lives with her and her husband. The Count accepts his wife's lover as a close friend. Yet the ménage à trois arrangement is not satisfactory for any of them. The lover, Villardieu, is so jealous of the Count that the Count and Countess must arrange secret rendez-vous even to talk privately. Nathalie, the general's daughter-in-law, secretly meets with Nicolas, her husband's brother, while her husband is away in the army. Nathalie, for many years in love with Nicolas, refused to wait for him to terminate his studies at St. Cyr, and she married Maxime, his brother. All seem to share the attitude of the general that "il y a l'amour bien sûr. Et puis il y a la vie, son ennemie" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 14).

The general has reunited his family to announce that his hunchback sister, Ardèle, has taken a lover, the hunchback tutor of his youngest son, Toto. Although Ardèle is the focal point of the play, she is never seen. All show great concern at these two grotesque creatures falling in love. The Countess expresses in horror, ". . . il y a autre chose que l'amour! Il y a le monde. Il y a le scandale" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 37). Later she remarks, "Vous savez bien qu'il ne s'agit que de respecter les apparences" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 50). Nicolas expresses an opposite sentiment. He counsils Ardèle "Moquez-vous

d'eux. Moquez-vous de ce qu'ils appellent le scandale. Aimez, tante Ardèle, aimez qui vous voulez" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 61). Despite the encouragement from Nicolas, Ardèle and her suitor are unable to cope with the criticism of the rest of the family, and they end their lives in a double suicide.

One wonders who the grotesque people in the play really are. The physically normal people treat love as something ugly which is to be avoided. "C'est laid l'amour" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 76), comments Nathalie, a sentiment shared by all. One would be tempted to despise the normal people if Anouilh had not made them so ludicrous. The only true love expressed in the play is that of the two hunchbacks. ". . . This is just beyond the bounds of credibility," writes J. L. Styan, "and we are to be forgiven if we realize too late that we should not have laughed."⁴⁵ Certainly the way the others mock the hunchbacks' love makes it difficult to accept that love seriously.

The Count suggests that perhaps Ardèle's love is real when he suggests, ". . . figurez-vous que tante Ardèle a une âme dans sa bosse" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 51). Despite her physical deformity, only she understands the true meaning

⁴⁵J. L. Styan, The Dark Comedy: The Development of Modern Comic Tragedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 200.

of love. Ardèle, according to Styan, is the only symbol of true love in the play. Because Ardèle is never seen, perhaps Anouilh is saying that true love likewise is never seen.⁴⁶

La Valse des toréadors (1951) is reminiscent of Ardèle. Again there is an amorous general Saint-Pé unhappily married to a wife named Amélie. In this play, however, Amélie is a bed-ridden invalid. For seventeen years the general has loved Mlle Ghislaine de Saint-Euverte, whom he met at a dance at Saumur. Although they have corresponded regularly, the general does not want to take her as a mistress out of respect for her and for his wife. As the general often suggests, "Il faut donc jouer le jeu selon les règles . . ." (Pièces grinçantes, p. 154). Ghislaine patiently waits for the general's wife to die or for him to divorce her. When Ghislaine finds proof that Amélie has a lover, she thinks she can at last marry him. But the general declares he is not going to divorce his wife, and she attempts suicide by shooting herself. When the pistol does not fire, she jumps off the balcony, falling on Gaston, the general's secretary and illegitimate son. While semi-conscious she mistakes Gaston for the general. She

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 206.

discovers that she can find physical pleasure with him and falls instantly in love. Meanwhile, Amélie admits to the general that her sickness is only from jealousy for him. She accuses him of having taken several mistresses and admits to having taken several lovers herself. In the final scene of the play it is clear the general, in his true military spirit, will not accept defeat as he takes the new maid for a stroll in the garden.

Although the general has been unhappily married for the past seventeen years, he has been faithful to his wife. He attempts to seduce the maid only after he learns that his wife has been unfaithful to him and that Ghislaine has found a new lover. He does not want to admit he has grown older. His thoughts continually return to the dance at Saumur where he first met Ghislaine. He repeats several times, "Lieutenant Saint-Pé, sorti second de Saumur" (Pièces grincantes, p. 155). And he confides to his secretary, "Vous avez raison, mon garçon. C'est ignoble de vieillir et de comprendre" (Pièces grincantes, p. 155). As a young lieutenant he had his life ahead of him, full of dreams and aspirations; however, as a general, he has only memories of unfulfilled hopes and desires. Even at his advanced age he confides to the doctor, "Je veux vivre, moi, je veux donner mon coeur . . ." (Pièces grincantes, p. 208). He even tells the new maid, "Je suis un vieux petit garçon . . ." (Pièces

grinçantes, p. 210).

Amélie, the general's wife, pretends to be an invalid only so he will have to stay near her. As long as she must stay in bed or in a wheel-chair, she knows he will not leave her. At that dance at Saumur she became so jealous of the attention he received from other women that she took a series of lovers, then feigned her illness. The general asks her the reason for her action:

Le Général: Si vous me trompiez, pourquoi ces larmes . . . ? Pourquoi cette maladie?

La Générale: Pour te garder, Léon! Pour te tenir toujours parce que je suis ta femme (Pièces grinçantes, pp. 180-181).

Ghislaine de Sainte-Euverte is a "ridiculous old spinster."⁴⁷ When she first arrives at the general's house, she recounts an adventure she had with "un individu de mine patibulaire" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 104). Every move he made she interpreted as an advance. "Il eût fait un geste, il eût seulement touché le bas de ma robe, je l'abattais et je me tuais ensuite. Je voulais arriver pure jusqu'à vous" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 104). She has carried a revolver for years for just such protection. Yet when she attempts suicide because the general will not leave his wife, the revolver does not work. Despite her desire to wait for the

⁴⁷Harvey, op. cit., p. 110.

general, when she finds physical pleasure with Gaston, she immediately falls in love with him. Gaston's youth makes her forget the seventeen years she has waited for the general. She can again become the young girl she once was.

Ornifle ou le courant d'air (1935) shows the romantic poet Ornifle de Saint Oignon. He is commissioned by a magazine editor, Machetu, to write a poem for the next issue. In the meantime, a Jesuit priest, le père Dubaton, asks Ornifle to write a poem for an upcoming Christmas pageant. Each man insists that his poem is more important and becomes indignant if Ornifle does not work on his commissioned poem.

Ornifle has had series of mistresses, which has concerned greatly Mlle Supo, his secretary. Mlle Supo, homely but pure, has offered herself to him several times only to be refused for a more beautiful young lady. By one of his former mistresses, Ornifle has an illegitimate son. Fabrice, the son, a medical student, vowed to his mother before she died that he would avenge her misfortune by murdering Ornifle. Fabrice attempts to shoot him, only to discover that the bullets have been removed from his pistol. The sight of the pistol so frightens Ornifle that he passes out.

Fabrice diagnoses the problem as a mild heart attack. Later, two doctors, Dr. Subitès and Professeur Galopin, both friends of Ornifle, discount this diagnosis, stating that he merely passed out from fear. When Ornifle shows his

appreciation for their opinion, Dr. Subitès reminds him, "Tu vois bien qu'il faut toujours écouter son médecin, même sur les questions de médecine" (Pièces grinçantes, p. 354).

Fabrice's fiancée, Marguerite, visits him at Ornifle's apartment to dissuade him from murdering his father. Eventually Ornifle persuades Marguerite to go with him and Fabrice to the Midi for his health and for Fabrice to continue his studies. Mlle Supo admonishes him at this proposition, stating she can see that he intends, in time, to make Marguerite another of his mistresses.

Ornifle goes to a near-by hotel supposedly for an interview with a Mademoiselle Marie-Pêche. While he is at the hotel, the proprietress of the hotel telephones his apartment to tell Mlle Supo that he has died of heart failure. In the final scene of the play Mlle Supo falls tearfully on a couch, knowing her last hope of having anyone make love to her is now gone.

For a man as experienced in love-making as Ornifle, he has to have some rather definite ideas on love. He reveals in many of his speeches that he considers love nothing more than desire, rather than an emotional feeling. He considers love an illusory ideal which does not really exist. "Personne n'aime que dans les romans des bibliothèques des gares. On joue le petit ballet du désir . . ." (Pièces grinçantes, p. 275). Desire, Ornifle's sense of

love, is only a game that one plays. True love, he admits, is very rare. "Dieu qui n'est qu'amour--à ce qu'on dit--l'a distribué très parcimonieusement aux hommes . . ." (Pièces grinçantes, p. 335).

The general in Ardèle expresses a similar sentiment about desire:

Si Dieu avait voulu que l'amour soit éternel, je suis sûr qu'il se serait arrangé pour que les conditions du désir le demeurent. En faisant ce que je fais, j'ai conscience d'obéir obscurément à ses desseins (Pièces grinçantes, p. 15).

For love to be eternal, one must have the desire for love-making. In fulfilling one's desires, the general points out, one is simply obeying the will of God.

The husband is not the only partner who is unfaithful; the unfaithful wife likewise has a role she must learn. In Colombe⁴⁸ (1950) Anouilh shows the wife just as capable of deception and infidelity. While Colombe's husband, Julien, is away in the Army, Colombe has an affair with his brother, Armand. She explains her infidelity by stating that she has to have affairs with men in order to enhance her career as an actress. She adds that her duty as a woman requires her to please all men:

⁴⁸Jean Anouilh, Colombe in Pièces brillantes (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1965), pp. 157-347.

. . . Depuis que tu es parti, je suis heureuse. Je me réveille, il fait soleil, j'ouvre mes persiennes et il n'y a rien de tragique dans la rue Le rempailleur de chaises qui est au coin du Crédit Lyonnais me crie: "Bonjour beauté! Je t'adore!" Et je lui réponds: "Bonjour!" . . . Et si le facteur sonne et que je lui ouvre en chamise, ce n'est pas un drame Nous sommes une fille et un facteur contents l'un de l'autre, voilà tout: lui, que je sois en chamise et moi d'y être et que cela ait l'air de lui faire plaisir. Et il repart tout guilleret parce qu'il se figure qu'il a vu quelque chose et qu'il aime mieux ça qu'un verre de vin (Pièces brillantes, p. 307).

Carlotta in Cher Antoine ou l'amour raté (1969)⁴⁹

explains that she has deceived Antoine for ten years because she loves him: "Quand on trompe un homme pendant dix ans, c'est qu'on l'aime, sans cela on le quitte" (Cher Antoine, p. 91).

If the unfaithful wife has her role to play, the deceived husband must learn a new role. When Julien returns on leave, after learning that Colombe has a lover, La Surette, who also has an unfaithful wife, tells him he must learn to accept his new role: "C'est pas si simple monsieur Julien, c'est un vrai rôle, tout en nuances, le cocu. Il y a toute une danse" (Pièces brillantes, p. 254). He then adds, "Le drame de cocu, c'est la drame de l'homme" (Pièces brillantes, p. 256).

⁴⁹Jean Anouilh, Cher Antoine ou l'amour raté (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1969), pp. 1-193.

Loyalty to one's spouse is reduced to a duty, or a role one must play, because one agreed to accept that role.

Julien tells Colombe:

Je ne veux pas que tu sois ma femme parce que tu m'aimes! Qu'est-ce que tu veux que cela me fasse que tu m'aimes? Demain tu peux ne plus m'aimer. Je veux que tu sois ma femme, toujours, parce que tu me l'as juré (Pièces brillantes, p. 191).

Similarly, in L'Hurluberlu ou le réactionnaire amoureux⁵⁰ (1958) the general insists that his wife be loyal because she loves him, whereas Aglaé vows that she will not deceive him because she swore to it:

Le Général: Si un jour vous étiez séduite par un autre homme, vous me tromperiez?

Aglaé (nettement): Non.

Le Général: Pourquoi?

Aglaé: Parce que je l'ai juré (L'Hurluberlu, p. 134).

Clearly, love does not enter into marriage in Anouilh's plays. Either the partners are unfaithful because there is no love in the marriage, or they are faithful because they have sworn to be so. Seldom are they faithful because they love one another.

In these plays Anouilh has shown the lover merely plays a role in order to succeed at love-making. If, how-

⁵⁰Jean Anouilh, L'Hurluberlu ou le réactionnaire amoureux (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1959), pp. 1-209.

ever, the one loved does not play his role, by refusing to be loyal and faithful, then the deceived one must learn another role. If Anouilh has presented these ideas in humorous, even though pathetic situations, it is clear that these ideas enforce his idea that life is simply a game, sometimes happy, sometimes sad. The humor in these situations is only to take a little of the sting out of the truth contained therein.

CHAPTER IV

ROLE PLAYING SANS LE SAVOIR

It is not uncommon to find a character so bored or discouraged with life that he creates his own dramatic production within his own dull life. For his own amusement he will manipulate others, like a puppeteer, thereby directing his own play. The unsuspecting actors, however, are usually not aware that they are nothing more than marionettes. This device is used in Le Bal des voleurs⁵¹ where Lady Hurf, in an attempt to rebel against her lonely existence, carefully maneuvers the members of her household. The device is effectively used in L'Invitation au château⁵² where Horace organizes a ball, but his aunt ends up controlling the action. In Léocadia,⁵³ Le Rendez-vous de Senlis,⁵⁴ and

⁵¹Jean Anouilh, Le Bal des voleurs in Pièces roses (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1967), pp. 23-131.

⁵²Jean Anouilh, L'Invitation au château in Pièces brillantes (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1965), pp. 1-155.

⁵³Jean Anouilh, Léocadia in Pièces roses (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1967), pp. 267-374.

⁵⁴Jean Anouilh, Le Rendez-vous de Senlis in Pièces roses (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1967), pp. 133-265.

Pauvre Bitos ou le dîner de têtes⁵⁵ the unwitting actors soon realize they are being manipulated, but they continue to play along.

Le Bal des voleurs, Anouilh's first comedy, was written in 1932, the year after L'Hermine. In this comedy of errors Lady Hurf, who is bored "comme une vieille tapisserie" (Pièces roses, p. 43), comments about her life:

. . . Je veux profiter de mes dernières années et rire un peu. J'ai cru pendant soixante ans qu'il fallait prendre la vie au sérieux. . . . Je suis d'humeur à faire une grande folie (Pièces roses, p. 43).

"Faire une grande folie" is exactly what she does throughout the play. While she is giving a ball at her home, three thieves enter. They disguise themselves in various costumes, changing several times during the festivities, so that they will not be recognized. Peterbono, their leader, has as one of his many disguises that of a Spanish gentleman. Lady Hurf, immediately recognizing that he is not among her invited guests, says of him, "C'est ce cher duc de Miraflor" (Pièces roses, p. 46). He believes that he is effectively deceiving her when, to all of her questions about his relatives, he replies "mort." He does not realize that she is simply amusing herself at his expense.

⁵⁵Jean Anouilh, Pauvre Bitos ou le dîner de têtes in Pièces grincantes (Paris: Les Éditions de la Table Ronde, 1966), pp. 371-507.

The three thieves are so well disguised that they do not even recognize one another. They steal from each other, change costumes, then steal back what has been stolen without realizing what is really happening.

If the thieves do not recognize each other in the various disguises, it is understandable that the other members of the household likewise get confused. Hector falls in love with Eva, one of Lady Hurf's nieces, while he is in one of his many disguises. Even after Eva realizes she has fallen in love with him, Hector has to wear the same disguise before she admits her love. Poor Hector spends several frustrating moments changing costumes until he finally finds the correct one. As if the costume makes a difference, Eva will only admit her love to the costume which first impressed her, even though she knows the same person is in each one.

The confusion of disguises occurs again when Lord Edgard telephones "Scottyard" (Pièces roses, p. 42) to have a detective sent. When he sees Hector for the first time, he asks, "Vous êtes le détective de l'agence Scottyard?" (Pièces roses, p. 62). After Hector's negative reply, Lord Edgard commends him for being so discreet. Lord Edgard does not find out who his detective is until he thinks he has no more need of him. The real detective reveals himself at the end of the play as the clarinetist who provides music during the dramatic moments.

Lady Hurf announces to her guests that she saw an announcement for a "Bal des voleurs." All prepare for the ball, dressing as thieves usually dress in the theater. Hector and Peterbono appear as operetta bandits. As everyone bursts out laughing at their costumes, Peterbono asks Hector, "Comment s'imaginent-ils les voleurs?" (Pièces roses, p. 91) Little do the others know, of course, that no matter how Peterbono and Hector dress, they will always be dressed as thieves. To the dismay of all, the announcement actually read "Bal des Fleurs," and they are not permitted to enter in their ridiculous thieves' costumes. Lady Hurf claims that the print on the announcement was so small that she could not read the notice correctly. Nevertheless, planning for the ball enables her to leave, even if for a short time, her drab existence within her château. She again is able to control the actions of others so that she may amuse herself.

If Lady Hurf's plans get a little out of hand, that does not bother her. Her only desire in manipulating the actions of others is simply to amuse herself. She has no ulterior motive. In L'Invitation au château Horace likewise tries to manipulate the actions of others. But his plans get so much out of control that his aunt must help resolve the situation.

Horace invites Isabelle, a beautiful operatic dancer,

to a ball at his château in order to have her pretend to fall in love with his twin brother Frédéric. His intention is to cause Frédéric to break his engagement with Diana Messerschmann by causing Diana to become jealous and angry. Horace tries to pass Isabelle as a fashionable young lady, and he even buys her her first expensive dress from one of Paris' most exclusive couturières.

In a lengthy discussion about destiny, Horace explains to Isabelle that it would take too long to wait for Frédéric's love for Diana to terminate naturally. "Je prends tout sur moi et je brouille les cartes" (Pièces brillantes, p. 41), he tells her. He also states, "J'ai résolu que ce serait moi . . . qui organiserais la comédie" (Pièces brillantes, p. 40). He assures her that he has his plans under control, that he will direct the action, and that she only needs to be herself:

. . . Je ne vais pouvoir vous donner maintenant que les grandes lignes. Le détail devra s'improviser tout à l'heure, pendant le bal. . . . Je serai partout, vous surveillant toujours, vous dictant vos consignes. Le problème est simple. Il faut d'abord faire en sorte ce soir, que tout le bal ne s'occupe que de vous. . . . Ne vous occupez de rien, soyez vous-même (Pièces brillantes, p. 42).

When Isabelle first arrives at the château, her mother is instructed to stay in a room and not to leave. Curiosity overtakes her, and she explores the château. In so doing she meets her old friend Capulat, Mme Desmortes'

reader. In a little comedy of their own the mother and Capulat speak to each other in Alexandran verse. The mother tells Capulat how Horace invited Isabelle to the château, passing her as the niece of Romainville, a rich man of the world, in order to have her fall in love with Frédéric. Capulat, in order to present the mother at the ball, announces her as La Comtesse Funela from Venice. Mme Desmormortes, like Lady Hurf, welcomes any new event in life and is quite willing to help the mother amuse herself.

During the evening Isabelle plays her role well. She first believes she has fallen in love with Horace. Later she discovers it is not Horace she loves but Frédéric. Diana becomes angry at Isabelle and tears her dress, and later she lashes out against Frédéric. Diana threatens to expose Isabelle, and only her father can persuade her to guard the secret. Mme Desmormortes learns from Capulet how Isabelle was introduced into the château. She finds the scheme amusing and plays along with Horace's game. She remarks about Isabelle, "Il n'y a pas qu'elle qui n'a pas l'air de jouer la comédie" (Pièces brillantes, p. 55).

The twins are so similar in physical appearance that both Isabelle and Diana get them confused. Horace is crafty and less emotional, whereas Frédéric is less sensible and boyish. Although each girl believes she can tell them apart, each must verify the twin she is with. Of course the twins

take advantage of their similarities in order to vex the girls. Isabelle shows clearly the difference between the two as she reveals her love for Frédéric:

Isabelle: Ce n'est pas votre frère que j'aime.

Frédéric: Mais qui est-ce?

Isabelle: C'est votre frère, mais bon et tendre, et un peu triste et capable d'amour. C'est votre frère, mais c'est vous! (Pièces brillantes, p. 76)

The comedy of the physical similarities of the twins is carried out so far that Anouilh has them played by the same actor. Obviously, then, both cannot be on stage at the same time. Anouilh carefully maneuvers the twins so that one leaves before the other arrives. Near the close of the play, however, as Diana, Frédéric, and Mme Desmormorts are on stage, Mme Desmormorts calls to Horace. While they expect him to appear, a servant appears instead. Frédéric comments, "J'étais sûr qu'il ne viendrait pas" (Pièces brillantes, p. 152). The servant delivers a note from Horace which reads:

Ma tante, pour des raisons que vous comprendrez tous, je ne peux pas me joindre à vous au milieu de l'allégresse générale; je ne l'ai jamais tant regretté. Mais j'aime Diana puisqu'elle est pauvre. Rien ne nous sépare plus. Je l'épouse. Qu'elle vienne me retrouver au fond du parc (Pièces brillantes, p. 152).

Both those on stage and the spectators understand why Horace cannot appear as long as Frédéric is present.

The play terminates in the way Horace planned, with

Horace and Diana loving each other and Frédéric and Isabelle loving each other. The desired ending only comes about because, when Horace's game gets out of hand, his aunt comes to the rescue. Horace is too occupied with winning Diana for himself to be concerned with Isabelle's emotions. When he thinks his plan is not working, he exposes Isabelle, who attempts suicide by jumping into a pool. Later Mme Desmormortes has Frédéric take Isabelle for a walk to calm her; and she has Horace and Diana confront each other to avow their love. Each of the four young people is too concerned with his own problems to understand the other people. Only Mme Desmormortes has a clear understanding of the situation. She tells Isabelle:

. . . Heureusement qu'il existe encore quelques vieilles femmes qui ont renoncé à cette folie pour leur compte et qui commencent à y voir clair . . . (Pièces brillantes, p. 145).

Lady Hurf and Mme Desmormortes involve themselves in the action only for amusement. Yet their involvements not only add humor to the plays, but also help direct the course of events. In Léocadia again there is a crafty aunt directing the action of the play. But her motive is not to entertain herself; it is to help her nephew find happiness in love.

Léocadia (1939) is a touching story about young Prince Albert Troubiscoï who has preserved for two years the memory

of Léocadia Gardi with whom he spent three glorious days. As the years passed, his memory has become increasingly vague. He remembers bits of their conversations and places they visited together. But he spends much of his time trying to complete the sketchy memories he has.

Two years prior to the beginning of the play Léocadia Gardi, a famous singer, was a guest at Albert's aunt's château. For three days Léocadia and Albert sat in the park, took walks, and drank champagne. But on the third day of her visit Léocadia, who was accustomed to acting dramatically and brusquely, accidentally strangled herself with her scarf. Her death so shocked Albert that he could think of nothing else but Léocadia. As time passed, however, he had difficulty remembering the details of all that happened.

Albert's aunt, la duchesse d'Andinet-d'Andaine, reconstructs for him the château just as it was when Léocadia visited. The tables in the park are in the same location. There are the same servants and even the same gypsy orchestra. She goes so far as to have the same taxi waiting in front, which rabbits have since taken over, and the same ice cream vendor, who no longer sells ice cream. To complete the scene, she even invites Amanda, a sales clerk who in physical appearance resembles Léocadia, to visit Albert. Her role is simply to play Léocadia for three days while Albert reenacts the events of Léocadia's visit.

Throughout Amanda's stay Albert gives her the lines which, as well as he remembers, Léocadia used; and he returns the appropriate replies. If Amanda's inflection is different from Léocadia's, or if she gestures differently, he tells her so, and Amanda repeats the line correctly. During this time Albert also tells her all he remembers of Léocadia. He has to admit that he has forgotten many of the details: "Je ne suis même plus sûr de la couleur exacte de ses yeux" (Pièces roses, pp. 330-331).

Soon, Amanda realizes that she has fallen in love with Albert, and she wants him to love her, not just because she resembles Léocadia. As they are in Le Beau Danube, a night club where Albert took Léocadia, he orders his usual champagne (un pommery brut 1923). Amanda asks for an anisette with water, which Léocadia detested. When Albert tells her this, she answers that she does not want to be Léocadia but herself: "Je redeviens 'moi' un petit moment . . . Et 'moi' j'ai soif. Et je n'aime pas le champagne 'moi'" (Pièces roses, p. 349).

Amanda finally proves to Albert that he does not love Léocadia, that he has been living in a fantasy trying to recreate a love which did not exist. Even though Albert realizes that what she says is true, he is not willing to accept it. Gradually, though, Albert leaves his world of fantasy. Amanda welcomes him to reality with, "Je suis bien

heureuse de vous recevoir Voici mes arbres, mes abeilles, mon soleil" (Pièces roses, p. 368). He at last realizes he has renounced his love for Léocadia and has fallen in love with Amanda. As he dances with her, remembering that Léocadia did not like to dance, he states, "Comme c'est simple, c'est vrai. Comme c'est facile. Comme c'est sûr (Pièces roses, p. 372).

In Léocadia the duchess sets the stage for Albert by providing the scenery and the actors. Albert then has to direct the action himself. He does not realize that perhaps Amanda will not want to play her assigned role in his little play. Albert needs Amanda to bring him out of the fantasy where he has been living for too long.

If in Léocadia a young lady rescues a young man from a world of fantasy, in Le Rendez-vous de Senlis an idealistic young man brings a dreamy-eyed young lady into his make-believe world. Le Rendez-vous de Senlis (1937), which Vandromme calls "la plus noire des pièces roses,"⁵⁶ begins with Georges preparing a dinner for Isabelle, his new mistress. Georges, like many of the protagonists in Anouilh's plays, is ashamed of his true family. He rents a house at Senlis, which he represents as his boyhood home, hires a maitre d'hôtel, whom he claims to be a family servant, and

⁵⁶Vandromme, op. cit., p. 85.

hires professional actors to play the roles of his parents. He makes elaborate preparations in an attempt to impress Isabelle for one evening.

To prepare the maître d'hôtel to be his family servant, Georges tells him about his childhood. The parents are to be ideal parents. "Tu es un vieux monsieur charmant Tu es le papa idéal, . . . celui qui a su à temps se transformer en un grand frère. Tu es mon camarade" (Pièces roses, p. 166), he tells Philémon, the actor who is to play his father. He tells Mme Montalembreuse that the mother is to be "la mère telle qu'on la décrit dans les livres d'enfants. Une mère admirable en somme" (Pièces roses, p. 168). He even suggests that she crochet something in order to enhance her image as a mother.

In contrast, the actors want to play theatrical parent roles, which they have previously performed. Philémon appears with a Biblical beard and dramatically insists that he be an industrial magnate. Mme de Montalembreuse insists that she play the same mother in Bretagne d'abord or La Grande Coupable, where she leaves her baby on the steps of a church. They then become concerned when they learn that they will not have a script and that they must improvise their lines.

Georges tells the maître d'hôtel to set five places at the table. The fifth place is for Robert, whom Georges

previously described as his boyhood friend. Like the "ideal parents", Robert is an "ideal friend" and does not exist.

As Georges and the "parents" are waiting for Isabelle, a neighbor comes with a message from Georges' mistress, Barbara. Georges is to see her at once or there will be "du pétard" (Pièces roses, p. 180). While Georges is gone, Isabelle arrives at the house. The actors promptly tell her where Georges has gone and reveal to her their real identities. Isabelle so well sees the falsity of the situation that she wonders if even the Napoleon III furniture is not an imitation.

Later Barbara, Robert, her husband, who is quite a contrast from the "ideal friend", and Georges' real parents, M. and Mme Delachaume arrive at the house to confront Georges, who, instead of going to Barbara, went to see his wife about a divorce. Isabelle is so sure that Georges' "ideal friend" Robert will be at that dinner that she addresses Robert by his name. Knowing the whole arrangement is staged, Isabelle asks Robert if he, too, is not an actor.

When Georges reappears, he realizes his scheme is foiled. He asks Isabelle, "Avec lesquels préférez-vous passer la soirée? Les faux étaient charmants, s'ils avaient su leurs rôles. Mais les vrais ne sont pas mal non plus . . . (Pièces roses, p. 228). He continues by explaining that he is ashamed of his real family. He wants to reject his

past, and even his present, and reconstruct his life with new parents, new friends, and even new surroundings.

All the time he is hiring actor-parents and renting a new location, Georges himself is assuming a new role. Barbara tells Isabelle that her own Georges is sad, brutal, and unjust: "Mon Georges à moi, vous n'en auriez pas voulu. Il est tout ce que vous devez haïr" (Pièces roses, pp. 243-244). Around Isabelle Georges is happy, kind, and gentle.

As Robert pretends to leave, he makes a theatrical exit, "avec une galanterie bien française . . . , le mouchoir bien haut pour l'adieu final" (Pièces roses, p. 250). But he adds that life is not like the theater, that he cannot leave forever from Georges' life. Robert advises Isabelle to leave Georges because he not only deceived her, but himself as well. No matter how much he tries, he will never be able to "jeter sa vieille peau par la fenêtre et devenir un vrai petit agneau" (Pièces roses, p. 252).

For Georges, however, his world in the house is real. He actually believes he can reject his problems, his wife, and his past. "Demain j'aurai un autre costume, une autre chemise" (Pièces roses, p. 255), he informs Robert. He realizes that he cannot stay in the rented house forever, but he thinks that when he leaves, all will be changed. Isabelle is as much of a dreamer as is Georges. When Robert, Barbara, and Georges' parents leave, Isabelle tells him,

"Vous allez pouvoir vivre maintenant" (Pièces roses, p. 264). After they hear Robert's automobile drive off, she adds, "Elle est entrée dans la nuit. Elle n'existe plus" (Pièces roses, p. 264), as if their absence changed the real world.

At last Georges and Isabelle plan to continue their dinner. When the curtain falls, Georges, Isabelle, and his actor-parents leave for the dining room. They continue acting as if they were having a family dinner even though the truth is known. One can only wonder how long their fantasy will continue. As Pronko concludes of Le Rendez-vous de Senlis:

He still has not changed his past, but only deludes himself in believing he has freed himself from it. There still remains the same question that we saw arise at the end of Le Voyageur sans bagage: How long can this dream, even in its form of caricature, endure against reality?⁵⁷

Pauvre Bitos ou le dîner de têtes (1956) like Le Rendez-vous de Senlis, involves a dinner where the guests are to portray different personalities. The play opens with Maxime making final preparations for a dinner he is giving where all of the guests are to wear masks depicting various leaders of the Revolution. Bitos is to depict Robespierre, whom he resembles in appearance and behavior. The plan for the dinner is that the guests are to ridicule

⁵⁷Pronko, op. cit., p. 16.

the unsuspecting Bitos to the point of humiliation. The dialogue often changes from the assumed roles to the real roles and vice versa. While these changes are sometimes difficult to follow, they add to the goal of the dinner--to harrass Bitos. The arguments which ensue are sometimes personal arguments against Bitos and sometimes political arguments as they imagine the Revolutionary leaders they portray would have argued. Although they manage to put Bitos on the defensive, he is, nevertheless, successful in defending his own arguments.

Finally, however, Bitos realizes the real reason for which he was invited to the dinner, and he prepares to leave. But before he can even put on his coat, a late-arriver, disguised as a gendarme of the period, portrayed by a man whom Bitos sent to jail, shoots an unloaded pistol at his chin, just as Robespierre had been shot in the chin the night before he was to be guillotined. Through fear, Bitos passes out and imagines himself as Robespierre in jail waiting for his execution.

In his fantasy Bitos-Robespierre in turn imagines Robespierre as he advances politically--no doubt as Robespierre might have done while awaiting execution. Like Bitos, Robespierre was mocked and ridiculed as a school boy. He had a former friend executed for a crime the latter committed,

because he considered his duties as a tribunal more important than mere friendship. Robespierre, like Bitos, shows himself to be an opportunist, taking advantage of any situation for his own personal gain.

When Bitos regains consciousness, it is raining so hard that the other guests persuade him to stay. They realize that he may file a complaint against the man who fired the gun at him. The new plan is to get Bitos so intoxicated that he would not dare to say anything about the gun for fear that the others might talk about Bitos' condition. With each drink of whiskey Bitos, who usually does not drink, coughs profusely. Finally, however, Bitos manages to elude his companions. During the evening Bitos tore the trousers of his costume. While the other men go to get an automobile, Bitos stays behind to have his trousers mended. When he has time to think and to realize how he is being mocked, he leaves through the kitchen in order to avoid the others.

If the other people at the dinner assume roles only to humiliate Bitos, Bitos, at least, really believes his role. He has his ideas, right or wrong, and he sticks to those ideas. However much of an opportunist he may be, he follows the letter of the law, even at the expense of a personal friend. If Robespierre proved himself to be

incorruptible,⁵⁸ Bitos likewise, proves himself just as honest.

⁵⁸Maurois, op. cit., p. 316.

CHAPTER V

THE PLAY-WITHIN-THE-PLAY

Anouilh frequently uses the play-within-the-play technique to add to the dramatic effect on his theater. This device usually enables a character to express his feelings and attitudes which he could not do within the normal scope of his role. In La Répétition ou l'amour puni⁵⁹ Tigre uses the inner play as a medium for expressing his love for Lucile. Antoine's play in Cher Antoine ou l'amour raté enables him to reconstruct his life and to control the people of his past. In Colombe the inner play reveals Madame Alendra as a phony who is only acting in real life. David Edward Mendigalès' first play in L'Hurluberlu ou le réactionnaire amoureux is a satire on modern drama, and his second play brings about a change of personality in several people.

In La Répétition ou l'amour puni (1950) the Count (referred to in the play as Tigre) prepares to stage La Double Inconstance by Marivaux. The action of La Répétition, as the title suggests, centers around rehearsing for the play. All of the people in the household are given roles

⁵⁹Jean Anouilh, La Répétition ou l'amour puni in Pièces brillantes (Paris: Les Éditions de la Table Ronde, 1965), pp. 349-481.

which resemble their personalities. The Count is to play the prince. The Countess, his wife, (referred to as Eliane) is to play Flaminia, while Hortensia, his mistress, is to play Lisette, Flaminia's sister. Lucille, Tigre's new mistress, is to play Sylvia.

The play enables Tigre to express his feelings toward Lucile. Even his explanation of the role of Sylvia sounds more like a proclamation of love than a theatrical direction:

Que dire de Sylvia? Elle n'est pas romanesque, elle est tendre, elle n'est pas naïve, elle est bonne, elle n'est pas dure, elle est nette. Les belles dames de la cour ni le prince ne l'éblouissent. . . . Sylvia est une petite âme inaccessible. . . . Mais je n'ai pas besoin de vous expliquer le rôle, Mademoiselle; vous n'avez qu'à être vous (Pièces brillantes, p. 376).

The dialogue of La Double inconstance is interspersed throughout La Répétition in such a way to keep the Anouilh play lively and interesting. Anouilh's characters suddenly switch to their Marivaux roles and continue their conversation as if the Marivaux lines were part of their conversation. It is easier for Tigre to speak as the prince to Sylvia than as Tigre to Lucile. His choice of words is facilitated by using the Marivaux lines. Since the Marivaux lines express his sentiments, he simply uses the speeches already at hand.

The attitudes of the people at Ferbroques, the Count's château, toward the play are reflected in the characters they

portray. Just as the ambition of the prince is to win Sylvia's heart, Tigre tries to win Lucile. Even in rehearsing the play he stresses only those scenes where the prince is with Sylvia and quickly passes over those scenes where he is not involved. Lucile, a working girl who runs an orphanage, is business-like in her attitude toward the play. She dutifully realizes she has a role to play, and she continually brings Tigre back to the play whenever he digresses from it. Eliane and Hortensia are indifferent toward the play, just as the ladies they portray are described as "ces dames blasées" (Pièces brillantes, p. 375). Villebosse, Eliane's lover, insists on rehearsing on schedule. Just as Arlequin, his role, is described as "tendre et bon, mais . . . naïf" (Pièces brillantes, p. 375), Villebosse never seems aware of what is happening throughout the play. Eliane and Hortensia are quite aware of the reason Tigre is giving the play, which explains their indifferent attitudes. But Villebosse is unaware of, or at least not interested in, Tigre's affair with Lucile. He wants to rehearse the play in spite of the other events in the château. Héro is to play a rich lord. He sees his role as a man with few lines to say and much time to drink. Héro frequently extols the virtues of drinking; drinking, he contends, helps one forget his problems and makes life more bearable. He admits that he is disgusting when he is intoxicated, but he adds, "Il faut que je dégoûte

un peu. C'est dans mon rôle. Pas celui de la pièce de Marivaux, dans l'autre, --celle que je joue vraiment" (Pièces brillantes, p. 398).

Lucile realizes that she can never fit in with the household at Ferbroques. After a long conversation with Héro, who reveals his love for her and tells her Tigre knows their love is impossible, a lie brought about by his intoxicated condition, Lucile leaves the château. She realizes she will never be able to cope with the criticism and treachery of Eliane and Hortensia nor the jealousy of Héro. She leaves Tigre a note: "Vous avez raison. C'était impossible. Je suis partie. Je ne vous reverrai jamais" (Pièces brillantes, p. 475).

Because of the dissension within the château, and because of the difference in social classes, the love of Tigre for Lucile could never be more than a fantasy--even if he really does not see this fact. Throughout the play Eliane and Hortensia treat Tigre like a schoolboy with a crush on a new girl. If Tigre really loves Lucile, he should not have to resort to the Marivaux play to express his love. With as many mistresses as he had in the past, he certainly should not have trouble finding the words to express his love. The idea that the whole affair is a fantasy is heightened by the Louis XV costumes that the characters wear, even when not rehearsing.

In Cher Antoine ou l'amour raté the inner play is even more closely related to the main play. The play begins with friends and relatives of Antoine, a playwright, gathered for the reading of his testament. They recall their association with Antoine, and the conversation leads to a discussion of his last play. The scene then changes to Antoine's preparations for the play, when he was still living.

The title of his new play is Cher Antoine ou l'amour raté. As the title suggests, it is Antoine's biography. Antoine is critical of the people in his past. The play, he contends, enables him to rewrite his life, to comment on the actions of others, and to control them:

C'était un dernier plaisir un peu amer que je voulais m'offrir. Convoquer les personnages de ma vie et, qu'une fois enfin, ce soit moi qui aie fait le texte--le vrai texte--celui qu'on ne dit jamais. Qu'une fois enfin, j'aie fait la mise en scène. Que j'aie pu vous arrêter pour vous dire que vous parliez faux . . . Vous faire taire. Vous renvoyer à votre néant au besoin si vous étiez trop mauvais. Tout ce qu'on ne fait jamais avec les vrais personnages de sa vie (Cher Antoine, p. 157).

One of the actors complains about this sort of a play, stating that it involves a device never before used in the theater, and that it is written only for the satisfaction of the author. Antoine responds, "Ce n'est jamais pour autre chose que pour sa satisfaction solitaire qu'on écrit" (Cher Antoine, p. 158). He adds that he is interpreting his life, that he is having the characters act as he saw them:

Ce n'était pas vous qui parliez: c'était vous vus par moi. On n'en sort pas! On est en cage. On ne connaît les autres que par l'idée qu'on se fait d'eux. Quel monde incompréhensible, les autres (Cher Antoine, p. 158).

One scene in his life he is not able to write is his own funeral. He asks the characters to speak as they will speak after he is dead. They are at first somewhat hesitant; then they begin to express their regrets at his death. This scene enables him to comment on the insincerity of the people in his life and to show the impossibility of ever understanding other people:

. . . C'est faible. C'est très faible. Si j'avais été vraiment mort vous ne m'auriez pas gâté. . . . Devant les vivants on ne dit déjà pas grand-chose, mais devant les morts on ne dit rien Je n'ai donc plus aucune chance de savoir qui vous étiez (Cher Antoine, p. 165).

Just as Cher Antoine shows the sensitiveness of a playwright, Colombe shows the phoniness of theater people. Off stage Mme Alexandra is an aged lady who suffers with rheumatism and walks with a cane. On stage, in her role as a twenty-year-old girl in La Maréchale d'Amour, she moves with all the agility required of her part.

By inserting the inner play, Anouilh also shows how the acting profession brings out the hypocrisy in a person's behavior. Colombe, the young wife of Julien, Mme Alexandra's son, is given a minor role in La Maréchale d'Amour. In a short time she becomes as hypocritical and as corrupt as the

other members of the acting company. She uses the same meaningless terms of endearment that the other actors use to each other. When her husband comes home on leave from the Army, her statements of love for him would seem sincere if one did not know that she had an affair with his brother.

Colombe, at first glance, may seem to show that theater life corrupts a person's behavior. When the young Colombe first appears, she seems to be innocent and loyal to her husband, who is preparing to leave for the Army. Julien visits his mother at her dressing room to ask her to take care of Colombe and their baby son while he is away. Then while Julien is in the Army, Colombe is given the part in the play, and she appears to be corrupted by her association with theater people. One wonders, however, if instead of corrupting Colombe, the theater association does not actually bring out the real Colombe. As Julien and Colombe are waiting to see Mme Alexandra, Julien speaks critically of his mother, stating how she neglected him as a child and how she favored his brother. Colombe counsils him to be more respectful toward her: "C'est tout de même ta mère" (Pièces brillantes, p. 169). And she adds, "sois aimable, . . . sois poli. Pour le petit et pour moi" (Pièces brillantes, p. 171).

Similarly, in the epilogue, where Julien remembers his first encounter with Colombe, it is clear that Colombe can be influenced by theater life. As a flower girl, she takes

a basket of flowers for Mme Alexandra. She tells Julien what a fine actress she thinks Mme Alexandra is. Julien appears disrespectful toward his mother, and Colombe admonishes him for this. Only when Julien states that he is Mme Alexandra's son does she show an interest in him.

There is little doubt that Colombe's attitude and behavior will change once she actually has an opportunity to obtain an acting role. Armand takes Colombe into Mme Alexandra's dressing room while poor Julien has to wait outside. While in the dressing room, Mme Alexandra gives her a new dress, has her hair-dresser restyle Colombe's hair, and even offers Colombe a part in the play. When Julien finally enters the dressing room, after all but Colombe have left, she exclaims:

Colombe: C'est moi, tu crois?

Julien: Oui c'est toi. C'est ta voix en tout cas.

Colombe: Si tu savais comme ils sont amusants! Ils parlent tous en même temps. Ils crient, ils se disputent, ils s'embrassent. On ne doit jamais s'ennuyer avec eux. Ils vont me faire faire du théâtre. . . . C'est moi, c'est moi tu crois, Julien?

Julien: Je ne sais plus, Colombe.

Colombe: C'est moi. C'est moi (Pièces brillantes, p. 213).

Again in the epilogue Colombe appears interested in an acting career even though she can only obtain it through association with Julien. She sees her quick romance with him

as a means of obtaining her personal gain:

Colombe: C'est trop vite n'est-ce pas, c'est trop vite, ce n'est pas sérieux?

Julien: Oui c'est vite, mais je crois tout de même que c'est sérieux . . . et que ça durera!

Colombe: Oh! mon chéri! J'en suis sûre à présent. Toujours (Pièces brillantes, pp. 346-347).

For the moment she is sure that their love will last. Yet with their first encounter being presented at the end of the play instead of at the beginning, one wonders if Colombe does not use Julien as a means of getting into the theater.

Clearly, then, Colombe does not show that the theater corrupts a person, but rather that it brings out the hypocrisy within a person. Anouilh shows theater people to be untrue to each other and to themselves. Harvey comments about Colombe: "Professional actors, Anouilh implies, are professional liars, and their working day is never over."⁶⁰ Mme Alexandra shows that she can be two different personalities on and off stage. And one sees the change that comes over Colombe by merely being associated with theater people for a short while.

L'Hurluberlu ou le réactionnaire amoureux involves a retired general who reminisces of his days of glory in the military. He does not approve of the changes that are taking

⁶⁰Harvey, op. cit., p. 53.

place in the world and especially in France. Consequently, when his friends suggest that he use his estate to stage a play for la fête de Saint Alphonse, it is understandable that he reacts with horror when David Edward Mendigalès, his daughter's suitor, suggests the avant-garde play Zim! boum! ou Julien l'apostat, antidrame by Popopieff. Absolutely nothing happens on the barren stage, adorned only with a bidet, which has "une signification profondément métaphysique" (L'Hurluberlu, p. 115). The actors face each other, saying nothing. Finally Julien scratches himself. David Edward explains the significance of the play: "Nous avons vu l'homme: son néant, sa vacuité, et quand enfin il fait un geste, le premier, c'est pour se gratter" (L'Hurluberlu, p. 116).

It is not surprising that the general does not allow this play to be produced, especially when he says about life, "Je ne veux pas que rien change, jamais!" (L'Hurluberlu, p. 131). Unlike many other of Anouilh's characters, the general would like to guard his past. The past represents security, what is known, whereas the future represents uncertainty and, consequently, fear.

The general is successful in persuading David Edward to choose another play. He chooses Les Amours de Doña Ardèle et de Rosario. The general prefers this play because it is written in a classical style. The importance of the second play is not so much in the play itself but in the changes it

makes in the general and his wife. When Le Figaro announces the engagement of David Edward Mendigalès to Mademoiselle Ghislaine-Marie-Victoire-France-Chantal Lévy-Dubois, the general does not let him see his daughter again. With David Edward not directing the play, Aglaé, the general's wife, promptly takes over. Prior to this time Aglaé has been subservient to the general, catering to his wishes. Much to the general's approval, her theater work has given her self-confidence:

Le Général (sourit, admiratif): Je vois que le théâtre vous a rendue une femme de décision.

Aglaé: Après votre scène ridicule avec David Edward Mendigalès, il fallait bien que quelqu'un prenne les choses en main (L'Hurluberlu, p. 196).

The general has a new goal in life, a new battle to win. Having a successful play is as important to him as it is for Aglaé. He realizes that life, like the play, must continue, that it cannot be stopped. Where before he asked his wife, "Pourquoi n'êtes-vous plus la même, Aglaé?" (L'Hurluberlu, p. 131), he accepts quite willingly the changes that the theater has made in her. The same general whose actions made the doctor remark, ". . . j'ai l'impression que vous voulez conspirer contre ce qu'on appelle maintenant le fil de l'histoire," (L'Hurluberlu, p. 22) later tells his son, "Dans la vie, il faut avoir du courage, . . . et il faut gaiement jouer la comédie" (L'Hurluberlu, p. 207).

Thus, like Colombe, L'Hurluberlu shows that the theater world can develop a person's true qualities. With Colombe, the theater brought out hypocrisy and corruption. With Aglaé, the theater brought out a leadership ability; and with the general, it taught him to accept life. If the tone of L'Hurluberlu is light and frivolous, the message which comes through is, nevertheless, serious and sobering.

CHAPTER VI

THE SELF-CONSCIOUS STAGE

Several of Anouilh's plays reflect what David Grossvogel calls "the self-conscious stage in modern French drama."⁶¹ The actors are aware of the spectators' presence. The author realizes that he is not showing a real situation but is creating a situation whose reality exists only on the stage. The characters are real only in the sense that the actors portraying them are real.⁶² Consequently, just as the author writes the play, and the actors perform it, the spectator is likewise a participant in the production. "Une pièce se joue avec des acteurs," writes Anouilh, "et l'un de ces acteurs . . . c'est le public."⁶³

As was pointed out in Chapter II, the actors are aware that they are merely presenting the story of Antigone. Each of the actors has an assigned role he is to play. Because he knows what will happen later in the play, his behavior and attitudes are influenced by this knowledge.

⁶¹David Grossvogel, 20th Century French Drama (New York: Gordian Press, 1967), 378 pp. The original title of this book was The Self-Conscious Stage in Modern French Drama.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 6-8.

⁶³Jean Anouilh, "Propos Déplaisants" in Vandromme, op. cit., p. 223.

The Chorus serves to bridge the gap between the spectator and the actors. He speaks for the spectator when he pleads with Créon not to allow Antigone to die. Midway through the play he summarizes for the spectator all the events that have taken place and reminds him of what will happen:

Et voilà. Maintenant le ressort est bandé. Cela n'a plus qu'à se dérouler tout seul. C'est cela qui est commode dans la tragédie, on donne le petit coup de pouce pour que cela démarre C'est tout. Après, on n'a plus qu'à laisser faire. On est tranquille. Cela roule tout seul (Nouvelles Pièces noires, p. 160).

Similarly, much of L'Alouette reminds the spectator that he is watching a dramatic production and not Jeanne's actual trial. The very fact that the trial consists of playing scenes from Jeanne's life and not just relying on testimony points up this idea. Even the stage directions suggest that another production was presented prior to L'Alouette, and that the stage has not been completely cleared of its properties:

En entrant, les personnages décrochent leurs casques ou certains de leurs accessoires qui avaient été laissés sur scène à la fin de la précédente représentation (Pièces costumées, p. 11).

The conversation throughout the trial sounds more theatrical than judicial. The judges place great importance on who is to play the parts, getting the scenes placed correctly in the proper sequence and played exactly as they

happened. When it is time for Jeanne's voices, someone cries out with great concern, "Qui fera les voix?" (Pièces costumées, p. 13). Later Jeanne becomes confused as to the events to which the judges refer:

L'Inquisiteur: . . . Te crois-tu en état de grâce en ce moment?

Jeanne: A quel moment, Messire? On ne sait plus où on en est. On mélange tout (Pièces costumées, p. 23).

Cauchon reminds Ladevenu when he tries to stop Jeanne's father from beating her after she tells him of her voices:

Nous n'y pouvons rien, Frère Ladevenu. Nous ne connaissons Jeanne qu'au procès. Nous ne pouvons que jouer nos rôles, chacun le sien, bon ou mauvais, tel qu'il est écrit, et à son tour (Pièces costumées, p. 30).

Similarly, Warwick realizes he should not attend the coronation of Charles. He comments, "Ma présence à cette cérémonie serait indécente, Monseigneur, je m'éclipse" (Pièces costumées, p. 138).

Baudricourt's dramatic entrance at the end of the play shows that Anouilh was thinking of the theatrical impact his play would have. Certainly the spectator cannot forget he is merely watching a play when during a tragic event the scene is suddenly changed to present one more event in Jeanne's life. In addition, the final scene points up an important event in France's, as well as Jeanne's history, and it ends the play on a happy tone.

The play where the idea is most vividly brought out that one is merely watching a play is La Grotte⁶⁴ (1961). According to the Author, who is the principal character in the play, La Grotte is a play that he was never able to write. The purpose of the play is to show the mental turmoil an author goes through in writing a play.⁶⁵ The Author never has control of the plot; and the characters often get out of hand, not doing what he intends for them to do.

"La pièce de se soir n'est pas faite, elle est à faire et on compte particulièrement sur vous" (La Grotte, p. 11), begins the Author. He explains that he tried to write a play but was never able to complete it. Yet because the play was scheduled for a certain date, the actors will try to present it. To counter any unfavorable criticism, he reminds the audience of the amount of work already put into the production: ". . . nous nous sommes entraînés, six semaines, pas vous" (La Grotte, p. 11).

It is shown in the play that three elements are required for a theatrical production: author, actors, and audience. Clearly Anouilh considers the author the most important element in a play, as the Author is the main character in La Grotte, and the Author frequently reminds the characters that

⁶⁴Jean Anouilh, La Grotte (Paris: Les Editions de la Table Ronde, 1961), pp. 1-177.

⁶⁵Knowles, op. cit., p. 180.

he created them and that he can send them back to their néant. The actors only serve to express the author's message. The audience should be receptive to his message and should be aware of the difficulties of presenting a dramatic production. The Author tells the audience, "J'ai toujours pensé, pour ma part, qu'il faudrait faire répéter aussi les spectateurs et les critiques" (La Grotte, p. 11).

Two rooms are visible on stage: " . . . la cuisine . . . la Grotte proprement dite" (La Grotte, p. 13), and the parlor. In the dimly lit kitchen are the servants. Located above them in the brightly lit parlor are the members of the household. The two groups of people clearly represent the two races found so often in Anouilh's plays.⁶⁶ The servants must always remain in the kitchen unless they are performing a duty for the members of the household. Likewise, the people upstairs are not to descend into the kitchen; they ring a bell to call a servant. As is common with Anouilh's two races, there is a mutual feeling of scorn and distrust. The members of the household consider the servants crass, vulgar, and uncouth. The servants consider the people upstairs snobbish and demanding. Other members of the cast, who are not members of either group, include the Author, a police commissioner, whose only concern is to find a guilty person,

⁶⁶Ibid.

and a seminary student, the illegitimate son of a servant and the Count. The student is not properly a member of either world and is not accepted by either.

Prior to the beginning of the play one of the servants, Ermeline Joseph, had been murdered, as the Author states, "dans des circonstances qui n'ont jamais été très claires, même pour moi" (La Grotte, p. 16). The police commissioner interviews the Count to find out what he knows about the crime. The interrogation procedure is lengthy and uninteresting, and little is learned.

The Author does not like this beginning to his play. In order to find out more about the murder he would have to use a flash-back technique to reconstruct the crime. This device, he contends, is not very successful on the stage. He decides, therefore, to give the play a new beginning, which takes place prior to the servant's death, and to give the servant a new name--Marie-Jeanne, a name he borrows from a poem by Rimbaud. The new beginning will better enable him to establish the character of the servant.

When the Author announces the new beginning, the actors grumble. He has to assure them that they will all still be in the play:

Vous reviendrez! Vous reviendrez! Vous avez tous des rôles, vous le savez bien. (Au public:) Ces comédiens, quand ce n'est pas à eux de parler, ils sont persuadés qu'il n'y a plus de pièce (La Grotte, p. 36).

The new beginning enables more characters to appear. But like the first, little is accomplished. The seminary student has been called home to tutor the Count's children in Latin. Marie-Jeanne has no respect for the student, her son, and pejoratively calls him "curé" or "Monsieur l'abbé." Adèle, another servant, reveals her plan to go to Oran to work in a bar because she is going to have a baby.

Finally the Author advances, stating that despite its weaknesses, he prefers the second beginning to the first. He expresses his sadness over the plight of Adèle. Whatever happens to any of his characters is his responsibility:

Ah, Adèle! C'est ma tristesse et mon remords.
Tout ce qui va lui arriver, je le porte sur mon dos
comme une honte (La Grotte, pp. 50-51).

He goes on to say that he is not able to develop any character as fully as he would like to. A separate play could be written about each character. Instead, he can only include enough information about each to make him a part of the total play.

The police commissioner interrupts him, asking who killed the servant girl. The Author replies that he has no idea, adding that that fact is a minor detail. The commissioner argues, "Un meurtre, c'est jamais un détail. Surtout pour la victime . . ." (La Grotte, p. 54). The Author admonishes the commissioner, stating that his questions do not add anything of value to the play. He threatens to exert

his authority as the creator by having another policeman sent to replace him if he is not more tactful in his interrogations. The Author then tells Adèle and the seminary student to play the scene where they reveal their love and she reveals to him that she is pregnant. Adèle becomes indignant and bursts out:

. . . Vous n'avez pas le droit de reparler tout le temps de ça. C'est à moi, tout ça. C'est mon secret (La Grotte, p. 70).

She believes she can act independently of her creator, that she can have secrets unknown to him.

The Author sees that his play is leading nowhere. Much has been said, but little is known about the crime. In desperation he exclaims:

. . . Aucun! Aucun! je n'ai aucun talent! Il faut que je me mette à faire du cinéma! Ou du journalisme! N'importe quoi! Tenez! Je préfère être critique! . . . J'aime mieux chercher ce qui ne va pas dans les pièces des autres, mais plus dans les miennes, bon Dieu! (La Grotte, p. 84)

Again he expresses the idea that the general public is not aware of the problems of writing a play. It is much easier to be critical of what someone has done than to produce a creative work of one's own. The commissioner assures him that the audience is not so concerned with how the play is developed, but rather who killed the servant. He suggests to the Author that if he were to have an intermission, he would be able to create a solution to the crime. The Author

enthusiastically exclaims:

Voilà! C'est une excellente idée! Un entracte!
C'est encore ce qu'on réussit le plus facilement.
Et puis, cela nous donnera le temps de réfléchir.
(Il s'avance vers le public et annonce:) Un entracte.
Vous devez en avoir besoin vous aussi. . . . N'en
profitez pas pour vous sauver! (La Grotte, p. 85)

When the curtain rises again, the characters are on stage and are caught unprepared. There is nothing they can do but improvise their lines. Their conversation becomes rather vulgar before the Author has an opportunity to stop them. Le Père Romain, the maître d'hôtel, explains why they took the liberty of continuing the play. He assures the Author that they were simply having an idle conversation and said nothing essential. The embarrassed Author says to the audience:

. . . Excusez-moi, Mesdames et Messieurs. J'espère que vous n'avez pas été trop déçus. Toute cette partie du texte n'était pas de moi. Nous allons reprendre la vraie pièce (La Grotte, p. 102).

Reminding him of how little is accomplished, the police commissioner suggests that perhaps the Author regrets even having begun the play. He becomes rather disrespectful, suggesting that Shakespeare had no trouble writing excellent plays. Referring to the idea that several people wrote Shakespeare's plays, the Author retorts, "Moi aussi je pourrais être Shakespeare dans ces conditions" (La Grotte, p. 108). Becoming more defensive, he adds:

Il ne faut jamais prononcer sur un certain ton le

nom de Shakespeare devant un auteur dramatique. Il y voit tout de suite une allusion blessante. Nous sommes des écorchés vifs, mon vieux. Si vous croyez que c'est une vie de passer son bachot tous les ans! (La Grotte, p. 109)

For a playwright every new production is like taking an examination; it can enhance or ruin his reputation as a writer.

Throughout the play the Author loses control of his characters. The commissioner, as was seen, has little respect for him as a writer. The servants' conversation becomes so vulgar that the Author is afraid for his reputation. To make things worse, there is a black-out, and the actors leave the stage. The Author and the commissioner express great concern about the play. The Author realizes little has been accomplished and that the audience is becoming restless. The commissioner offers to help by reciting a comic monologue.

At last the seminary student appears. During the black-out, which was arranged by the actors, they met to discuss the events of the play. They decided that the Author should grant them complete control of the play:

. . . Maintenant qu'elle est commencée, maintenant qu'elle est à demi vraie, si nous ne devons pas la jouer honnêtement, mes camarades et moi, nous avons le sentiment qu'il vaut mieux que nous rentrions dans notre néant. Que nous redevenions ces idées informulées, ces possibilités vagues que nous étions avant que vous ne pensiez à nous . . . Mais nous sommes là maintenant, Monsieur, nous avons commencé à la vivre et il faut considérer cela . . . Pour vous, ce n'était qu'un caprice de votre imagination, vous étiez en train de faire votre métier, vous cherchiez à construire une pièce. Vous n'auriez

Peut-être pas dû, mais vous l'avez fait. Alors maintenant, il faut nous laisser. Ne plus intervenir jusqu'à la fin (La Grotte, pp. 134-135).

During the scenes which follow the Countess descends to the kitchen to ask Adèle to be the Godmother for her new baby. Adèle rather violently refuses, confessing that she will have a baby of her own. After Adèle vividly describes how she was attacked by the coachman, the Author and the commissioner discuss the vulgarity of the scene:

L'Auteur (sourdemment, comme ayant honte.): . . .
C'est affreux.

.

Le Commissaire: Dites donc, c'est vous ou c'est pas vous qui l'avez inventée, cette histoire?
(L'Auteur a un geste désesparé.) (La Grotte, p. 142)

The Author's gesture further shows that he is no longer in control of his play.

A conversation with the maître d'hôtel points up the idea that the characters are products of the Author's imagination, playing roles in a dramatic production:

L'Auteur: Un mot, avant de continuer. Vous qui m'êtes un personnage familier...

Le Père Romain: Monsieur est bien bon de s'en souvenir. J'ai beaucoup servi Monsieur, en effet. Le Voyageur sans bagage, 1937; Léocadia, 1940, le Rendez-vous de Senlis, 1941; l'Invitation au château, 1947; Monsieur a toujours été très satisfait de mes services. Monsieur m'a même prêté une fois à Monsieur Oscar Wilde, à l'occasion d'une adaptation à laquelle Monsieur avait collaboré.

L'Auteur (modeste): A vrai dire, je crois bien que c'est Monsieur Oscar Wilde qui avait dû vous prêter à moi, primitivement (La Grotte, pp. 102-103).

A similar idea is brought out in a conversation with Marie-Jeanne. During another black-out someone stabs Marie-Jeanne. The other servants place her on a table to take care of her wound. She first mistakes the Author for the Count. When she realizes her mistake, she tries to find out how he knows her:

Marie-Jeanne: . . . Vous ne me connaissiez pas.

L'Auteur (doucement): Si. Très bien.

Marie-Jeanne (Ingénue): On s'était rencontrés?
(Elle rigole.) Dans le monde?

L'Auteur: Non. Pas dans le monde (La Grotte, p. 172).

If he does not know her in the world, he knows her in his imagination. Because he has created her in his imagination, he is concerned for her welfare, just as he was for Adèle. Consequently, with Marie-Jeanne's death he is deeply touched and is melancholy during the last few moments of the play.

Satisfied with having done his duty, the commissioner announces that he found the murderer--the coachman. Using the American method, with a bright light shining in the coachman's face, the police were able to get him to confess. The commissioner concludes to the Author: "Au fond, vous voyez, elle était toute simple, votre histoire. C'est vous qui aviez tendance à la compliquer" (La Grotte, p. 176). Now that the crime is solved, the Author tells the commissioner, ". . . Eh bien, disparaissez maintenant. Vous pouvez retourner à votre néant" (La Grotte, p. 176). He then turns to the

audience to apologize for the play:

Excusez les fautes de l'auteur, Mesdames et Messieurs. Mais cette pièce-là, il n'avait jamais pu l'écrire (La Grotte, p. 177).

Clearly the plot of La Grotte is not the important element of the play. Anouilh's intention is to show the difficulties a writer has in preparing a play. When the Author in La Grotte tries to develop the actors, the plot becomes banal and meaningless. When he thinks he has his characters clearly enough developed to improve the plot, the characters get completely out of control. "Je sais très bien ce que j'ai voulu dire avec cette Grotte" (La Grotte, p. 108), states the Author. It is only in trying to connect all of the elements that he complicates the play.

The plot does not actually develop until the last few minutes of the play. Harvey suggests that the last few scenes are some of the most electrifying of Anouilh's theater:

Apparently the playwright learned that he could generate as much emotion in the space of a few moments as he could in an hour of gradually mounting tension. The significant point, then, is that a loosely and whimsically constructed play may jolt, envelop, and illumine the spectator as deeply and as repeatedly as a more ordered, sustained work.⁶²

There can be no doubt that Anouilh is the Author of La Grotte. It has already been shown that the maître d'hôtel

⁶²Harvey, op. cit., p. 122.

refers to plays where he appeared that were written by Anouilh. During the Author's opening comments he states that he has been writing plays for thirty years. La Grotte, it will be noticed, appeared exactly thirty years after Anouilh wrote L'Hermine.

If, in the above plays, the play is intended to appear to be a dramatic production, in several other plays Anouilh is more subtle in reminding his audience of the play. Pronko points out that in Le Bal des voleurs and L'Invitation au château, not only is the action guided by one of the characters, but the plays themselves have an appearance of a Guignol production.⁶⁸ By carefully controlling the entrances and exits of the actors, unrealistic coincidences occur such as one person "just missing" the person he comes to see. Also this device enables the author to present several intrigues within the same play by removing one set of characters just as another set enters from the opposite direction. One has the feeling that he is watching a puppet show with live puppets, and that Anouilh is the meneur en jeu.⁶⁹

Less obvious reminders to the spectator that he is watching a dramatic production occur during the speeches in

⁶⁸Pronko, op. cit., p. 146, 151.

⁶⁹Ibid.

some of the plays: "Cette petite comédie commence à se faire longue" (L'Invitation au château, p. 146; Cécile ou l'école des pères,⁷⁰ p. 533); ". . . la pièce est finie" (L'Invitation au château, p. 152; Le Bal des voleurs, p. 130); "Cette scène est ridicule" (Pauvre Bitos, p. 458); "Quelle farce: C'est lugubre" (La Valse des toréadors, p. 207). Such statements serve to destroy the illusion that the events on stage are real.

Anouilh further destroys the illusion of the theater by reminding the spectator that the events on stage are pre-determined. On stage there is a feeling of certainty, even security, whereas in real life one can never be sure of what will happen. In Cher Antoine ou l'amour raté Antoine brings out this idea quite clearly:

Quand on met le pied dehors, c'est le désert--et le désordre. La vie est décidément irréaliste. D'abord, elle n'a pas de forme: personne n'est sûr de son texte et tout le monde rate toujours son entrée. Il ne faudrait jamais sortir des théâtres! Ce sont les seuls lieux au monde où l'aventure humaine est au point (Cher Antoine, pp. 127-128).

A similar idea is brought out in Antigone:

C'est propre la tragédie. C'est reposant, c'est sûr. Dans la tragédie on est tranquille. D'abord, on est entre soi Et puis, surtout, c'est reposant, la tragédie, parce qu'on sait qu'il n'y a plus d'espoir, la sale espoir . . . (Nouvelles Pièces noires, p. 161).

⁷⁰Jean Anouilh, Cécile ou l'école des pères in Pièces brillantes (Paris: Les Éditions de la Table Ronde, 1965, pp. 483-535).

The "dirty hope" can be a false hope. In real life one can hope; but one's hopes may prove futile. In the theater one need not vainly hope because the events are already established.

In La Répétition Tigre reminds those in his play that a play is merely an artificial representation of life and not necessarily a true picture of life:

. . . Le naturel, le vrai, celui du théâtre, est la chose la moins naturelle du monde
N'allez pas croire qu'il suffit de retrouver le ton de la vie. D'abord dans la vie le texte est toujours si mauvais! . . . C'est très joli la vie, mais cela n'a pas de forme. L'art a pour objet de lui en donner une précisément et de faire par tous les artifices possibles--plus vrai que le vrai (Pièces brillantes, p. 387).

Although Anouilh is a man of the theater, he continually places theater people up for ridicule. He suggests that actors are liars both on and off stage. According to Harvey:

. . . His attitude was one of hostility, even revulsion, before people who live to lie--not for love, lucre, or power, but for the mere pleasure of lying.⁷¹

It has already been pointed out how in Colombe Mme Alexandra can play a sprite, young girl on stage, yet must walk with a cane off stage. She is shown to be equally as phony in real life. Julien tells Colombe how his mother

⁷¹Harvey, op. cit., p. 54.

neglected him when he was a child and only acted motherly once: when reporters were interviewing her for a story about how she could be both a mother and an actress. Even then he was too frail and sickly to be photographed. Not only is Mme Alexandra shown to be a bad mother, but she is also inconsiderate and lacks compassion for others. She would never give to charities if her secretary did not remind her what Sarah Bernhardt gives. Mme Alexandra gives a statue entitled "Le Jeune Homme et la Mort" to a charity for tuberculin children. "J'envoie ce que j'ai: . . . S'ils sont tuberculeux, ils se doutent bien qu'ils doivent mourir" (Pièces brillantes, p. 178), she comments. She has flowers, which were gifts to her, sent for a fund to raise money for the firemen. "Ils les arroseront. Ils adorent ça, les pompiers!" (Pièces brillantes, p. 181), she explains. All her charitable gifts are only to get rid of items she does not want, and not out of a feeling of compassion.

As a further reminder that actors are professional liars, in L'Hurluberlu the general refers to the one-time Church doctrine against the theater:

Le Curé: Le bon Dieu vous a donné la plus belle maison du pays, Général. Vous n'allez tout de même pas refuser de la lui prêter?

Le Général: Etes-vous sûr qu'il aime le théâtre, d'abord le bon Dieu! Etes-vous sûr qu'il ne se gratte pas la barbe avec inquiétude quand il voit des âmes qu'il a faites mimer avec impudence des passions qu'elles n'ont pas? Il y a deux mille

ans, cela le mettait dans une colère épouvantable et il excommuniait les tricheurs (L'Hurluberlu, p. 107).

Actors, then, not only deceive the public on stage, but are insincere off stage; and they even think they can deceive God with their pretenses.

Even though Anouilh shows that the theater world is unreal and phony, he also shows that through the theater one can learn to accept the real world, as chaotic and as unordered as it may be. In L'Hurluberlu he indicates that life is really nothing more than a puppet show with live puppets:

Le Général: . . . Eh bien, tu verras en grandissant, Toto, que dans la vie, même quand ça a l'air d'être sérieux, ce n'est tout de même que du guignol. Et qu'on joue toujours la même pièce.

Toto: Alors on ne doit plus jamais rire?

Le Général: . . . Si. L'homme a cela de charmant, Toto. Il rit quand même (L'Hurluberlu, p. 208).

Clearly Anouilh agrees with Shakespeare that "All the world's a stage. And all the men and women merely players."⁷²

People are actors as well as spectators; they play roles and observe their own actions and the actions of others. If life is nothing more than a play, then one can learn to accept life as he accepts the theater. He must learn to take it lightly and to laugh at it so that he controls life instead of life controlling him.

⁷²William Shakespeare, As You Like It (New York: The New American Library, 1963), p. 77.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Anouilh's theatrical view of life permeates his works. His theater shows that he considers life a game. If one is to cope with life, he must learn to treat it lightly, if not frivolously. Only those who take it seriously are unhappy. One must learn to laugh at life so that he is not overcome by it.

His early pièces roses show people who play with life in rebellion against a dull or sad life. Lady Hurf welcomes her uninvited visitors and enjoys preparing for "le bal des voleurs." Mme Desmormort is quite willing to take control when Horace's plan gets out of hand. Horace, like Albert and Georges, plans the festivity in hopes of rendering his sad life a little more gay.

The plays involving the play-within-the-play technique allow the characters to behave somewhat differently from the normal scope of their roles. Tigre uses the inner play to express his love for Lucille. Antoine is able to rewrite his life by presenting an autobiographical play. The old, crippled Mme Alexandra acts like a young, sprite girl in her play, while Colombe becomes corrupt because of it. Through association with the play Aglaé develops leadership qualities, and the General learns to accept life.

Love in Anouilh's plays is synonymous with desire. To be successful at love-making, one must learn the role of a lover. General Saint-Pé and Ornifle know the lover's role well. Colombe, similarly, learns all too well the mistress' role. Julien, unfortunately, must learn the role of the deceived husband.

Anouilh's plays based on historical or mythological sources clearly have a deterministic feeling. The audience already knows the outcome of the play. Anouilh takes advantage of this fact and places less emphasis on the plot in order to develop his characters. The characters perform their duties as if guided by a loyalty to their historical counterparts. Seldom is there a logical reason for their actions.

Throughout Anouilh's plays he seems concerned with their theatrical impact. His early comedies have the appearance of a Guignol production. In his more recent plays he frequently expresses his own comments on the theater and its function. In several plays since Antigone the plays are intended to appear as theatrical as possible, with no pretense of depicting reality.

Because Anouilh has a theatrical concept of life, it is only natural that his theater should reflect this attitude. Life, in Anouilh's theater, becomes a play. Many of his characters act as if they are playing roles in a dramatic

production. They clearly express the idea that they act as they do because their role demands it. Thus Anouilh seems to reverse the traditional concept that the theater is a mirror of life. Anouilh makes life a mirror of the theater.

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