

ANOUILH'S USE OF MYTHOLOGICAL
AND HISTORICAL SOURCES

A Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Foreign Languages
The Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by

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August 1967

Thesis
1957
Y

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer wishes to express her sincere appreciation to Dr. Minnie M. Miller, professor in the foreign language department at the Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, for her help and consideration during the writing of this master's thesis.

B.H.Y.

PREFACE

The greatness of a literary work is rarely found in the originality of narrative, but rather in the creative development of certain of its aspects in accord with the author's intentions. Jean Anouilh has been most successful in basing several of his plays on the stories of mythological and historical characters. This use of ancient sources serves the dual purpose of illustrating the universality of the human dilemma and metaphorically presenting Anouilh's harsh criticism of present-day social, political, and moral structures.

It is the purpose of this thesis to show how Anouilh has used mythological and historical sources to create a contemporary drama. Discussed here are his plays inspired by myths, Eurydice, Oreste, Antigone, and Médée; and those suggested by history, l'Alouette, Pauvre Bitos ou le dîner de têtes, Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu, and la Foire d'empoigne. A comparison is made between each play and various accounts of its source. Since Anouilh took great liberty with both myth and historical fact, an attempt is made to explain his reasons for such divergencies as well as his shifting of emphasis within the framework of the source.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE BIOGRAPHY AND THEATER OF JEAN ANOUILH	1
II. PLAYS BASED ON MYTHOLOGICAL SOURCES	12
<u>Eurydice</u>	12
<u>Oreste</u>	27
<u>Antigone</u>	31
<u>Médée</u>	43
III. PLAYS BASED ON HISTORICAL SOURCES	53
<u>L'Alouette</u>	53
<u>Pauvre Bitos ou le dîner de têtes</u>	62
<u>Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu</u>	68
<u>La Foire d'empoigne</u>	80
IV. CONCLUSIONS	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89
APPENDIX	97

CHAPTER I

THE BIOGRAPHY AND THEATER OF JEAN ANOUILH

For more than twenty years Jean Anouilh has been generally recognized as one of the essential voices of the French theater. Although highly esteemed and still productive today, little is known of Anouilh as he claims to have no biography and is reluctant to reveal the details of his private life.¹ Even though he refuses to grant interviews about himself, every play he writes is a part of his autobiography.

He was born in Bordeaux on June 23, 1910. His mother was a violinist who played in the orchestra of the casino at Arcachon. As a boy Anouilh was often allowed to stay up at night late enough to see the first half of operettas presented there. His father was a tailor, a simple, genuine man who knew his trade well and was proud and meticulous in it. In his chosen field of literature, Anouilh has aspired to be equally as good a craftsman.²

At ten he was already writing short plays, and at sixteen he completed his first full-length play. When his family moved to Paris, he attended the Ecole Colbert and later the Collège Chaptal. His formal education came to an end after a year and a half at the law

¹Hubert Gignoux, Jean Anouilh (Paris: Editions du Temps présent, 1946), p. 9.

²John Harvey, Anouilh, A Study in Theatrics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 65.

school of the University of Paris, but his preparation for the theater continued. He learned the skills of precision, conciseness, and agility of expression through writing advertisements for the Publicité Damour where he was employed for three years.³ During these years he supplemented his income by writing publicity scripts and comic gags for films. It was at this time that he met Monelle Valentin, who later portrayed on stage many of the roles of his young heroines, including that of Antigone. Later she became his wife and to them was born Catherine, who has also appeared in many of his plays. The marriage, however, ended in divorce.⁴

His first direct contact with the world of theater was as secretary to Louis Jouvet at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées. He earnestly began writing plays, but the great actor-director gave him little encouragement, often implying that he was a failure.⁵

L'Hermine was his first serious play, produced at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre in 1932 on the suggestion of Pierre Fresnay, who became the chief actor in the play. Although it ran for only thirty-nine performances, l'Hermine was considered to reflect real talent.⁶

³Marjorie Dent Candee (ed.), "Jean Anouilh," Current Biography (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1954), p. 29.

⁴Leonard Cabell Pronko, The World of Jean Anouilh (No. 7 of Perspectives in Criticism; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. xv.

⁵"Cynicism Uncongealed," Time, LXXXII (December 13, 1963), p. 66.

⁶Pronko, op. cit., p. xvi.

Anouilh continued to write with varying degrees of success, until André Barsacq produced Antigone at the Atelier in 1944. The play's 645 consecutive performances firmly established Anouilh's popularity in France.⁷ In 1948 Anouilh allied himself with Roland Pietre, whose ideas were more in accord with his own, and together they have directed most of his plays written since that time. He also began working with a limited, well-trained, and congenial team of actors. His public continued to grow until his plays were often dominating the season. However, throughout the 1950s, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, though lacking Anouilh's brilliant craftsmanship, drew the larger crowds of intellectuals with their provocative dramas. Now that Camus has died and existentialism is waning, Anouilh remains one of the more popular and productive of French playwrights.⁸ Such a position brings with it a constant combat with critics, whom Anouilh has been known to silence by writing reviews of his own plays for Le Figaro.⁹

Anouilh has written a variety of plays, both tragic and comic, as the titles of his collected works indicate: Pièces noires, Nouvelles Pièces noires, Pièces roses, Pièces brillantes, Pièces grinçantes, and Pièces costumées. No attempt is made here to discuss all the plays of Anouilh. Emphasis is placed on Anouilh's characteristics which are most pronounced in the plays influenced by mythology and history.

Greek legends have been extraordinarily popular in France during

⁷Harvey, op. cit., p. viii. ⁸Ibid., pp. ix-xi.

⁹"Cynicism Uncongealed," loc. cit.

the last three decades. Cocteau, Giraudoux, and Sartre have all utilized them. Like these authors, Anouilh was undoubtedly attracted to the Greek myths by their obvious symbolic significance.¹⁰ It was he who created an appropriate modern idiom in which to write formal tragedy based on the Racinian model and using the characters of mythology.¹¹ In fact classic influence has had an indirect as well as a direct influence on Anouilh's plays. Speaking of Anouilh's characters in general, Edward Owen Marsh comments:¹²

The characters become figures of a myth. Life is doom to them as it was to the Greek tragic heroes. We may not accept the myth any more than we accept AEschylus' view of the gods of Olympus, but the dramatic power of Anouilh's work is undeniable. With our remoteness from Greek mythology we can see the work of art undisturbed.

Anouilh's early pièces noires were influenced by the already fading trend toward naturalism. L'Hermine and Jézabel are both tightly constructed melodramas in the tradition of Scribe and Sardou.¹³ Anouilh credits Giraudoux with revealing to him the real truth of the theater-- that its language, character, and situation must be founded not in life but in theatricality. From Giraudoux he learned that there could be in the theater a language that is poetic and artificial and yet

¹⁰Elliott M. Grant (ed.), Four French Plays of the Twentieth Century (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1949), p. 256.

¹¹Anthony Curtis, New Developments in the French Theatre (No. 8 of The Masque; London: The Curtain Press, 1948), pp. 6-7.

¹²Edward Owen Marsh, Jean Anouilh, Poet of Pierrot and Pantaloon (London: W. H. Allen and Company, 1953), p. 26.

¹³Harvey, op. cit., p. 11.

truer than stenographic conversation.¹⁴ For many of his themes Anouilh acknowledges a debt to Luigi Pirandello, a modern Italian dramatist.¹⁵

The intellectual content of his work links him to Sartre and Camus, and especially to the negative aspects of their thought. All the ideas that the existentialist philosophers have in common have been expressed by Anouilh: man's solitude; the hero's refusal to accept any standard other than that which he himself creates; the frustration created by the realization that we are not only what we desire to be but also what others believe us to be; the awful freedom of the heroic man who realizes he must choose his own being.¹⁶ Sartre's hero, discovering the inescapability of freedom and its subsequent responsibilities, finds his case to be one of "negative affirmation;" Camus' man of the Absurd finds his to be one of "positive negation." Anouilh, whose point of view is less advanced intellectually, arrests his characters in the "attitude of revolt which remains gratuitous and without direction."¹⁷

Speaking on behalf of Anouilh and various other playwrights using existentialist ideas, Sartre defines the theater of situation which has replaced the theater of character in France today. It is

¹⁴Ibid., p. 137. ¹⁵Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁶Pronko, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

¹⁷Oreste F. Pucciani, The French Theatre Since 1930 (New York: Ginn and Company, 1954), p. 147.

the drama of man achieving his liberty through making a pure free choice which becomes the assertion of right. In his philosophy existence precedes essence, and thus man must decide his own purpose.¹⁸ Whatever he decides, that is whatever choice he makes in absolute freedom from outside influence, is right. The contemporary French playwrights present a conflict of these rights, embodied in characters who are dominated by a passion at the core of which is an invincible will. In addition to being an individual, each character is a symbol as well.¹⁹ For the French dramatists, it is the expression of a general, a universal truth, that is his objective. Anthony Curtis commends Anouilh for seeming "more successful than others in this and in avoiding the danger of reducing a play to merely an affair of words."²⁰

Anouilh is primarily a dramatist rather than a philosopher. Edward Owen Marsh observes that it is his ideas which have made him the most striking dramatist of recent years. This is not to say that his ideas are particularly profound nor that they are even sympathetic to the vast majority of people, but they are arresting, often deeply disturbing, and always impressively sincere.²¹

The dominant theme pervading many of his plays, especially the pièces noires, is that of a desperate and hopeless quest for absolute purity, always thwarted by the surrounding world which is sordid,

¹⁸Curtis, op. cit., pp. 3-7. ¹⁹Pronko, op. cit., p. 165.

²⁰Curtis, op. cit., pp. 41-42. ²¹Marsh, op. cit., p. 18.

illusory, and brings about defilement of anyone who accepts making a compromise with it.²² Anouilh's pessimism is a result of his desire for a personal perfection that is unattainable in this world. Man can never really know himself nor his neighbor in a state of purity. Those who become acutely aware of this are faced with the choice—to die, the only pure solution, or to live a lie. This is the human predicament as Anouilh sees it. Even when he turns to the past for inspiration, his sarcastic and humorous satires are directed against the intellectual anarchy, spiritual sterility, social injustices, amoralism, and the hypocritical complacencies of today.²³

In Anouilh's world purity may only be found in childhood, but this is a fleeting period of life, only realized when it is too late. Antigone and Jeanne d'Arc prefer death to forsaking the purity of their childhoods. The quest for purity is illustrated in various reoccurring subdivisions of that theme: the illusions of love, the importance of wealth and social class, the frustrations of poverty, and the confrontation with reality. All of these problems are to be found in Anouilh's plays based on mythology and history.

Anouilh's lovers strive toward a love of perfect communion and total identification between the partners. The failure of this love

²²Jacques Guicharnaud with June Beckelman, The Modern French Theatre from Giraudoux to Beckett (New York: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 114.

²³Barret H. Clark and George Freedley (eds.), A History of Modern Drama (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1947), pp. 296-97.

stems from its idealism. The ideal partner can exist only in the mind of the other, thus imposing a choice on the one idealized. He may refuse to play the role and risk losing the one he loves, or he may attempt to embody the role which he cannot play for long, for eventually his authentic and imperfect nature will assert itself. When this happens the illusion is shattered.²⁴ Another weakness in love, as Anouilh's plays reveal it, is the loss of spontaneity. The relationship becomes a habit, forcing it into meaninglessness.²⁵ There is also the concept of comradeship which excludes la femme féminine. The fallacy here is that the couple is actually man and woman, not two petits frères, and the basic differences soon bring an end to the comradeship. Only death can preserve these illusions about love. There are no united and happy couples who appear on Anouilh's stage. The mature ones are plunged into a farcical situation with an accent on its sordid or bitter aspect.²⁶

The questions of money, social position, and poverty are closely associated with Anouilh's love stories. The rich consider that they possess wealth and social position because they are superior, and that the poverty of the poor is a result of their inferiority.²⁷

Certain words in the theater of Anouilh take on his own special meaning--race and bonheur, for example. Race divides people into clearly defined types. It has an economic connotation of rich and

²⁴Harvey, op. cit., p. 81. ²⁵Pronko, op. cit., p. 107.

²⁶Guicharnaud, op. cit., p. 117. ²⁷Pronko, op. cit., p. 111.

poor, and a moral connotation of heroic and nonheroic, or acceptable and unacceptable. The weaker, nonheroic race masks the bitter truth with laws, codes of morality, rules, and anything that will avoid the profound.²⁸ The heroic race includes all those who refuse to compromise, such as Antigone, Jeanne d'Arc, Orphée, Médée, and Becket.

It is the refus du bonheur which makes most of these characters members of that heroic race.²⁹ In Eurydice, this bonheur is the comfortable life the weaker race finds in satisfying basic physical needs. To Orphée's father it is associated with copious meals and big cigars. In other pièces noires it is regular existence, the compromises made for reasons of state and expediency.³⁰

Fate and destiny, God and the gods play an important part in the tragedies. The Chorus in Antigone explains that she is going to have to play her role to the end. Jason in Médée speaks of the indifference of the gods but believes that they are in control and that man is not free. In Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu God returns in name only, for he is indifferent, and Henri and Becket are both forced to accept the roles assigned to them. Hubert Gignoux defines Anouilh's God:³¹

²⁸Pronko, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

²⁹Jacques Poujol, "Tendresse et cruauté dans le théâtre de Jean Anouilh," The French Review, XXV (April, 1952), p. 338.

³⁰John C. Lapp, "Anouilh's Médée: A Debt to Seneca," Modern Language Notes, LXIX (March, 1954), p. 103.

³¹Gignoux, op. cit., p. 142.

Cette représentation de Dieu, unique . . . dans l'oeuvre d'Anouilh, évoque une image précise: c'est une sorte de dieu primitif, indifférent et cruel, un gros animal somnolent qui nous fait payer cher le moindre dérangement.

In l'Alouette, God takes on a new meaning. Here in the universe that Anouilh describes, man's actions are a result of God's will and, unless man acts, that will cannot be disclosed on earth, which is the only place where it can have any true meaning.³² It is this will of God which pushes Jeanne d'Arc to her destiny.

Anouilh has used various devices in presenting his ideas. One is the use of the mask; not only does the character play his assigned role but, as in Pauvre Bitos, he also disguises himself as someone else. Another is the final scene which Anouilh so often tacks onto the end of a play following the denouement proper. This brief dialogue or miniature tableau forms an ironic commentary on what has preceded.³³

In some of his later plays, particularly those having to do with history, there is an equation of goodness with beauty. Jeanne d'Arc argues with her accusers that the devil is ugly and that everything beautiful is the work of God. Bitos is hated by Maxime because he lacks grace. Becket is incapable of lying, because lying appears inelegant to him, and King Henri is quick to note that all that seems to be morality in Becket is merely aestheticism.³⁴

Theater for Anouilh, says John Harvey, is a jeu; it is a game

³²Pronko, op. cit., pp. 68-71. ³³Harvey, op. cit., p. 20.

³⁴Ibid., p. 64.

of pretending, a game of the intellect, involving creator, interpreter, and spectator alike.³⁵ Some of his best games are played with characters already existing in mythology and history. He dresses them as he chooses, often in modern costumes, and manipulates them across his stage to create the effect he desires.

³⁵Ibid., p. 6.

CHAPTER II

PLAYS BASED ON MYTHOLOGICAL SOURCES

I. EURYDICE

Eurydice,³⁶ perhaps more than most of Anouilh's plays, lends itself to a variety of interpretations. It may be viewed as a work born out of the utter despair of the war years, an eulogy to Death which alone can release one from the degradation of life. It may be considered an exposé of the power of the past to soil the present, or a denunciation of the people who blatantly interfere in the lives of others.³⁷ Marsh calls it "a parable of the elements of the futility and sordidness of life, with all the elements of Greek tragic inevitability."³⁸

All this and more is to be found in the play, but whatever interpretation one gives to the whole, it is the love story from the myth which Anouilh has chosen to emphasize. Love, as Anouilh sees it, is anything but romantic bliss. It happens suddenly, demanding more than is humanly possible of the lovers, who must compromise, lie, and sacrifice to keep its illusion alive, realizing in the end that death

³⁶Jean Anouilh, Eurydice in Pièces noires (Paris: Les Editions de La Table Ronde, 1961), pp. 391-538. Hereafter, with the introduction of a new play, a complete note will be given, after which the name of the play and page reference will be enclosed in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

³⁷Harvey, op. cit., p. 84. ³⁸Marsh, op. cit., p. 91.

alone can keep love from deteriorating.

In a general way, Anouilh follows the famous myth of Orpheus,* who was presented a lyre by his father, Apollo. He was able to play such melodious music that nothing could resist its charm. Eurydice was no exception, and the two were married, attended by Hymen, who brought no happy omens with him, for his torch smoked and brought tears to their eyes.³⁹ Shortly afterward, the bride was walking along a river bank when a shepherd, Aristaeus, struck by her beauty, made advances toward her. In fleeing his pursuits, she accidentally stepped on a snake, was bitten, and died.⁴⁰ Orpheus, overwhelmed with grief, determined to go down to the world of death and bring back his beloved one. By playing his lyre, he gained entrance to Hades and put all those there in a trance, even bringing tears to the eyes of Pluto and the Furies. The gods of the underworld were unable to refuse his request to have Eurydice returned to him for a while longer. However, they reserved one condition: he must not look back at her until they reached the upper world. Joyfully he led the way through the blackness; but, as he approached the daylight, he thoughtlessly cast one quick but fatal glance at his almost regained wife to assure himself that she was

*For the Greek legends and historical characters English spelling will be used, whereas the French spelling will be retained for the French plays.

³⁹Thomas Bulfinch, The Age of Fable (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). p. 184.

⁴⁰Michael Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans (New York: The New American Library, 1962), p. 267.

following. They stretched out their arms to clasp each other, but she slipped back into the darkness. Desperately he tried to follow her, but the gods would not allow him to enter the world of the dead a second time while still alive.⁴¹ Thus he wandered about in desolation, playing his lyre, until a band of Maenads out upon some Bacchic mission slew him, tearing him limb from limb and throwing his still-singing head into the river Hebrus.⁴² This is the most prevalent account of Orpheus' death, but in one version he commits suicide.⁴³

The meeting of Eurydice and Orphée in Anouilh's play takes place in a provincial French railway station. The personages are caricatures, but otherwise they are surrounded by realism in stark contrast with the fantasy which comes later in the play. Orphée is a musician, who plays the violin for his livelihood, but his father, far from being Apollo, plays the harp rather badly and throughout the play symbolizes the degradation of man with the passing of time.⁴⁴ No one is charmed by the young man's playing except Eurydice, an actress with a third-rate traveling company. She is not so beautiful as her Greek counterpart, but even without these assets, their love is as immediate and transforming as in the myth. Hubert Gignoux summarizes their love at first

⁴¹Edith Hamilton, Mythology, Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (New York: The New American Library, 1942), pp. 103-04.

⁴²Alexander S. Murray, Manual of Mythology (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus Company, 1897), p. 268.

⁴³Pronko, op. cit., p. 196.

⁴⁴Harvey, op. cit., p. 40.

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Au premier instant ils sont éblouis, le monde autour d'eux est transfiguré. La salle du buffet prend un air coquet, la caissière rajeunit de plusieurs années, et le garçon paraît soudain si noble et distingué qu'on l'imagine sociétaire de la Comédie-Française.

Their seeming happiness must be constantly interrupted, however, by evil omens as was the case in the mythological wedding. One of the players keeps reminding Eurydice of her past lover: "N'oublie pas Mathias!" (Eurydice, p. 407) They are subjected to the sickening expressions of shallow love between two actors, Vincent and his mistress, whom Eurydice admits is her mother after Orphée has ordered them to leave. But most damaging of all are the lovers' own speeches, foreboding the tragedies to come. Eurydice is afraid that he will leave her when he sees prettier girls and childishly makes him go through a ritual to swear that he will always stay with her. The two are acutely aware that many things will happen to them. They say:

Orphée: Vous croyez qu'il va nous arriver beaucoup de choses?

Eurydice: (gravement) Mais toutes les choses. Toutes les choses qui arrivent à un homme et une femme sur la terre, une par une . . .

Orphée: Les amusantes, les douces, les terribles?

Eurydice: (doucement) Les honteuses, les sales aussi . . . Nous allons être très malheureux.

Orphée: (La prend dans ses bras.) Quel bonheur! . . . (Eurydice, p. 409)

In pledging their eternal love Eurydice promises to be everything she thinks Orphée would want her to be and envisions their lives together

as being inseparable. Orphée realizes that he must give up his solitary walks and other habits for this unity.

An attempt is made to repudiate the past so that their love may continue. Orphée leaves his old father who can hardly earn his living without his son's talent, and Eurydice rejects her former lover, Mathias, who promptly throws himself in front of an oncoming train.

The first act ends with a dialogue, which is almost humorous here but full of pathos when repeated later:

Orphée: Voilà l'histoire qui commence . . .

Eurydice: J'ai un peu peur . . . Es-tu bon? Es-tu méchant? Comment t'appelles-tu?

Orphée: Orphée. Et toi?

Eurydice: Eurydice (Eurydice, pp. 442-43).

The next morning finds them in a hotel room in Marseilles reiterating the details of their first day together. The magic of love still surrounds them and Eurydice exclaims:

Tout un soir, toute une nuit, tout un jour, comme nous sommes riches! (Eurydice, p. 446)

But the shadow of the past and the impossibility of perfect love is still present. Orphée is concerned over the words Eurydice has muttered in her sleep: "C'est difficile . . ." (Eurydice, p. 447).

They are interrupted several times by a waiter who finally gets Orphée to leave on the pretext that the manager wants to see him. When alone, he presents Eurydice with a letter which we later learn is from Dulac, her impresario, whose mistress she has been for the past year, demanding that she join him at the railroad station.

Now it is clear what is so difficult. She must leave before Orphée can find out about her past. Convincing Orphée that she would rather have lunch in their room, she tells him "Adieu, mon chéri" (Eurydice, p. 466) and pretends to go out to buy food and flowers. Whereas the pure Eurydice of legend flees a would-be lover, Anouilh's Eurydice is fleeing a former one whom she is afraid will destroy the illusion of purity that Orphée has built around her.

She takes a bus for Toulon and, when it collides with a truck, she is the only passenger who is killed.

In the meantime Monsieur Henri, an omniscient character, who previously had appeared as a young man in the railway station, comes to Orphée, offering him cigars and cognac, assuring him that he understands the two lovers.

Dulac, a despicable character, appears on the scene, looking for Eurydice. To Orphée's unbelieving ears he describes his mistress of the past year as a careless, untidy, cowardly person with bad habits. A debate ensues between the two over the character of Eurydice, but the images of both lovers are colored by what they each feel about her, thus they seem to be discussing two different persons, neither of which is the true Eurydice. When the waiter rushes in to announce her death, both men are shocked not only because she has been killed but also because she was en route to Toulon and not on the way to meet either of them.

The play has been realistic enough up to this point, but an unsuspecting audience is jolted into fantasy as the curtain rises on

the third act, for here we find M. Henri and Orphée entering the dark, empty railroad station which is the counterpart of Hades in the myth, although it is on this side of life. Here M. Henri has assured Orphée that he will again find his lost Eurydice. But, as in the myth, there is a condition which M. Henri has Orphée repeat to be sure that he understands:

Si je la regarde en face une seule fois avant le matin, je la reperds (Eurydice, p. 488).

When M. Henri leaves, Orphée goes to the door, calls Eurydice, and her ghost enters. Again they discuss the people who became a part of their life together and repeat the words of their introduction from the end of the first act, Eurydice adding: "Seulement cette fois nous sommes prévenus" (Eurydice, pp. 490-91).

She tells him all that has happened up to the point of her death, but she is forbidden to disclose what happened afterward. She describes the accident which occurred just as she had finished writing a letter to Orphée and explains that she left him in order to prevent him from seeing Dulac and hearing his lies about her.

Orphée, still upset from Dulac's description of her, is determined to know the truth. Has she really been his mistress? She denies it to save him pain and to preserve his illusion of her purity. He knows the only way to be sure she is not lying is to look into her eyes. She pleads with him: "Ne me regarde pas Laisse-moi vivre" (Eurydice, p. 499). But he must know the truth. He deliberately looks at her and forces her to admit the ugly truth.

Before she slips away into the shades, the host of personages who have affected their lives come by with their comments: Dulac, appearing more repulsive than ever; the little manager whom Eurydice has protected; the chauffeur of the bus, who had smiled at her in the mirror before the crash; Vincent and Eurydice's mother, who have asked little of life and thus are satisfied with the meager portions they have received; the cashier who until now has been mute; the noble waiter; and a young man who reads aloud and seems to understand the meaning of Eurydice's letter which ends thus:

" . . . C'est pour cela que je m'en vais, mon chéri, toute seule . . . Pas seulement parce que j'ai peur qu'il te dise comme il m'a connue, pas seulement parce que j'ai peur que tu te mettes à ne plus m'aimer . . . Je ne sais pas si tu comprendras bien, je m'en vais parce que je suis toute rouge de honte. Je m'en vais, mon capitaine, et je vous quitte précisément parce que vous m'avez appris que j'étais un bon petit soldat . . . " (Eurydice, p. 514).

As she fades away Orphée calls after her: "Pardon, Eurydice." Eurydice responds: "Il ne faut pas, mon chéri: c'est moi qui te demande pardon" (Eurydice, p. 514).

As morning breaks, we are back in what seems like reality. Orphée orders a cup of coffee, and his father, who is still around, joins him to give him some advice from his years of experience. But, like Eurydice's mother, he has asked little from life and thus is not dissatisfied with his lot.

Back in the hotel room, M. Henri shows up again, admonishing the son to listen to the father because "les pères ont toujours raison" (Eurydice, p. 527). But, as M. Henri knows, the more Orphée listens to what his father considers a magnificent life, the more he will become

disgusted with it. M. Henri then reveals to Orphée what the future with the living Eurydice would have been:

Un jour ou l'autre, dans un an, dans cinq ans, dans dix ans, si tu veux, sans cesser de l'aimer, peut-être, tu te serais aperçu que tu n'avais plus envie d'Eurydice, qu'Eurydice n'avait plus envie de toi (Eurydice, p. 529).

He stubbornly refuses to believe that their intense love would have ever faded, but M. Henri finally convinces him of the cruelty of life by pointing to his ugly, pitiable father, who has fallen asleep and is snoring terribly, a most unpleasant sight. Until this point Orphée has been willing to go on suffering through life alone. M. Henri continues his argument:

Pourquoi hais-tu la mort? La mort est belle. Elle seule donne à l'amour son vrai climat. Tu as écouté ton père te parler de la vie tout à l'heure. C'était grotesque, n'est-ce pas, c'était lamentable? Hé bien, c'était cela . . . Cette pitrerie, ce mélo absurde, c'est la vie. Cette lourdeur, ces effets de théâtre, c'est bien elle. Va te promener là dedans avec ta petite Eurydice, tu la retrouveras à la sortie avec des taches de mains plein sa robe, tu te retrouveras, toi, étrangement fourbu. Si tu la retrouves, si tu te retrouves! Je t'offre une Eurydice intacte, une Eurydice au vrai visage que la vie ne t'aurait jamais donnée. La veux-tu? (Eurydice, p. 533)

Orphée then accepts death as the only way to keep forever his ideal Eurydice. At this point fantasy again prevails. M. Henri's instructions for entering the land of the dead are a far cry from the gruesome experience of the Greek hero. He directs:

Prends ton manteau, la nuit est fraîche. Sors de la ville, par la route qui est devant toi. Quand les maisons s'espaceront tu arriveras sur une hauteur, près d'un petit bois d'oliviers. C'est là Que tu as rendez-vous avec ta mort. A neuf heures (Eurydice, p. 534).

In one sense, however, because Orphée voluntarily chooses death, this

could correspond to the less popular suicide version of the myth.

Orphée takes his coat and leaves. The ghost of Eurydice enters and waits for the nine o'clock rendezvous. The ghost of Orphée arrives on time, they embrace, and Eurydice sighs: "Mon chéri, comme tu as été long" (Eurydice, p. 537).

The two spirits are transparent, and the waiter busies himself with tidying the room. The father wakes up and demands with an oath: "Où est Orphée?" (Eurydice, p. 538) M. Henri points to the invisible couple explaining: "Orphée est avec Eurydice, enfin!" (Eurydice, p. 538)

Unlike lovers in other plays of Anouilh who have different social or economic backgrounds with which to contend, Orphée and Eurydice have the same type of parent. In fact they are parents as Anouilh generally conceives of them--sordid and amoral.⁴⁶ The young couple's problems are of another nature.

Eurydice and Orphée have both been waiting expectantly for something wonderful, perfect, and ideal that will lift them out of their common, degrading existences. In one account of the Orpheus story, the musician had a longing that he might someday sing a song not yet heard on earth--a perfect song. When he meets Eurydice, he thinks that their love will make the perfect subject for that song. But he soon learns that Love must be accompanied by her twin brother, Grief, in order to

⁴⁶Joseph Chiari, The Contemporary French Theatre (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 186.

reach the utmost goal of music.⁴⁷ Love, likewise, seems to be the answer for Anouilh's couple, but as Jacques Poujol states:⁴⁸

Rien de plus fragile en effet que la tendresse entre amants. C'est un état instable et précieux qui est à la merci d'un geste malheureux, un de ces "hideux gestes de l'amour" dont Anouilh parle souvent . . . Une perfection ne saurait naître de l'union de deux êtres imparfaits. Il ne peut être question d'éternité entre mortels.

The failure of this love stems from its idealism. Anouilh's lovers idealize their partners, seeing them under an aura of perfection, thus imposing this perfection upon them.⁴⁹

Another flaw is that Orphée and Eurydice do not have enough confidence in love. Marsh observes:⁵⁰

They suffer like the Greek tragic heroes who measured their strength against the gods, only in Anouilh the gods have become the conscience itself, the memory of things done in the past. Eurydice would like to rewrite the past, but she has to see that there is no escape from memory.

Orphée is more of an idealist than Eurydice, who yearns for simplicity and is content with a physical love from Orphée.⁵¹ She pleads with him not to question her further about her past, but Orphée is obsessed with trying to know all there is to know about her:

Je ne peux pas non plus! Tous les mots ne sont pas encore dits. Et il faut que nous disions tous les mots, un par un. Il faut que nous allions jusqu'au bout maintenant de mot en mot. Et il y en a, tu vas voir! (Eurydice, p. 498)

Like the Greek Orpheus he turns to look at his beloved to assure himself

⁴⁷W. M. L. Hutchinson, Orpheus with His Lute (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1909), pp. 246-59.

⁴⁸Poujol, op. cit., p. 339. ⁴⁹Harvey, op. cit., p. 81.

⁵⁰Marsh, op. cit., p. 95. ⁵¹Pronko, op. cit., p. 81.

that she is still there; but, in the case of the French Orphée, it is to see if his ideal is still present. Her slipping back into death symbolizes the fading of his illusion. John Harvey questions:⁵²

Has not Anouilh implied that Orphée's love was built upon dreams, that he has fallen in love with an idealized Eurydice, a Eurydice whom the heroine was quick to sense and willing to play?

Another illusion about their love relationship is that it can have the purity of childhood friendships, based solely on a feeling of fellowship.

It is also a painful discovery for Orphée to realize that each man is alone and can never fully understand another. The desire of the lover to lose himself in the beloved is another weakness in love as Anouilh depicts it, for the authentic self must be lost. In being true to oneself it is necessary to hurt others and thus in love one must be more compromising than ever.⁵³

Had Orphée been willing to accept Eurydice as she really was rather than demanding that the truth be equal to his ideal of her, he might have found much to admire. All the bad she has done has nevertheless been done unselfishly. She has given herself to Mathias out of pity and to Dulac in order to protect the little incompetent manager from being sent away; her lies to Orphée have been partly to protect him from pain.⁵⁴ It is her nature to protect the unfortunate and imperfect. Her mother says of her:

⁵²Harvey, op. cit., p. 85. ⁵³Pronko, op. cit., p. 82.

⁵⁴Pronko, op. cit., p. 85.

. . . Elle protège, Dieu sait pourquoi, tout ce qui est mal fichu sur cette terre, les vieux chats, les chiens perdus, les ivrognes (Eurydice, p. 403).

Hubert Gignoux comments:⁵⁵

Elle n'est pas coupable, c'est même par bonté, par charité qu'elle s'est perdue, mais comme on dit, le mal est fait, la tache est ineffaçable.

The omniscient M. Henri is given various interpretations.

Lassalle refers to him as an "ange du suicide."⁵⁶ He is perhaps the counterpart of Pluto, who guarded the gates of the underworld:⁵⁷ but, if so, he has certainly spent enough time on earth to understand mortals. He speaks some of the most significant lines of the play, for example, this comment on the two types of men:

Il y a deux races d'êtres. Une race nombreuse, féconde, heureuse, une grosse pâte à pétrir, qui mange son saucisson, fait ses enfants, pousse ses outils, compte ses sous, bon an mal an, malgré les épidémies et les guerres, jusqu'à la limite d'âge; des gens pour vivre, des gens pour tous les jours, des gens qu'on n'imagine pas morts. Et puis il y a les autres, les nobles, les héros (Eurydice, p. 470).

Leonard Pronko envisions M. Henri as Providence who returns Eurydice as a free gift rather than as a result of Orphée's musical abilities.⁵⁸ Or perhaps he corresponds to Hermes, the shepherd of souls, who in one version of the myth, is Orpheus' guide through the underworld and points

⁵⁵Gignoux, op. cit., p. 58.

⁵⁶Jean-Pierre Lassalle, Jean Anouilh ou La vaine Révolte (Rodez: Editions Subervie, 1958), p. 22.

⁵⁷John Gassner, Masters of the Drama (New York: Random House, 1954), pp. 711-12.

⁵⁸Pronko, op. cit., p. 197.

him to the way back to earth.⁵⁹ However, he seems more logically to be a messenger from Death or perhaps Death itself.⁶⁰ Throughout the play his part is reminiscent of the Chorus in Greek tragedy, which constantly interrupts the action to interpret what is happening and to prepare the audience for what lies ahead.

Anouilh's attempt in Eurydice to restate a myth in a modern setting seems to be more difficult than in the other plays of the same nature. Joseph Chiari feels that in spite of beautiful, moving scenes in which oratory and whimsicality, comedy and poignancy are skillfully blended, the fate of the two protagonists fails to be moving. They lack humanity because they are weighed down by the mythological framework of the play.⁶¹ Leonard Pronko supports the criticism of this weakness:⁶²

The names of the characters and an awareness of the myth are necessary in order to make the supernatural elements sound less discordant with regard to the original setting of the play. Had the author been able in some way to bring about the return of Eurydice, or suggest Orphée's search for her without having recourse to the other-worldly, a greater unity of tone would have resulted.

Helmut Hatzfeld, however, feels that Anouilh has been successful in portraying the tragic concept of man by combining "brilliant dialogue and characters who are at the same time individuals and types."⁶³

⁵⁹Marsh, op. cit., p. 93.

⁶⁰Allardyce Nicoll, World Drama: From Aeschylus to Anouilh (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), p. 915.

⁶¹Chiari, op. cit., p. 187. ⁶²Pronko, op. cit., p. 199.

⁶³Helmut Hatzfeld, Trends and Styles in Twentieth Century French Literature (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1966), p. 173.

The transitions from reality to fantasy and real people to symbols, however, are not so difficult to accept as what seems to be a happy ending: the lovers are together at last, and forever Eurydice will remain pure and ideal. True, they both die as Greek tragic heroes are expected to do. They trade the sordidness of this world for the nothingness of death, but somehow their embrace on stage weakens the effect of tragedy. Otherwise, it is a brilliant rendering of the myth, containing humorous as well as thought-provoking dialogue.

II. CRESTE

In 1945 Anouilh published in La Table Ronde a one-act fragment, Oreste.⁶⁴ It has never been produced and is generally considered to have been written before Antigone as it seems to be sort of a trial run for that play inasmuch as Antigone and Electre are similar in character.⁶⁵ It is derived from the mythological story of Agamemnon, commander of the Greek forces in Troy and King of Argos, who returned home in triumph with Cassandra, the daughter of King Priam, as his prize. His wife, Clytemnestra, was waiting for him, not with welcome, but with a sword. She slew both Agamemnon and Cassandra, her motive being not only to save her lover but also to seek revenge for Agamemnon's sacrificing their daughter Iphigenia in order to have good winds for sailing to Troy. There were two other children, Electra and Orestes. Aegisthus, who was Clytemnestra's lover and had supported her in the murders, would have killed the boy Orestes had he not been sent away to live with his uncle. He spared the girl but made her utterly wretched so that her whole life was concentrated in one hope, that Orestes would come back and avenge their father. As the boy grew to manhood, he realized that a son who killed his mother was abhorrent to gods and to men. Receiving orders from the oracle at Delphi to appease the angry dead, he and his friend Pylades journeyed to the palace bearing the

⁶⁴Jean Anouilh, Oreste in La Table Ronde, III (1945), pp. 55-79.

⁶⁵Marsh, op. cit., p. 106.

false message that Orestes was dead. When Clytemnestra recognized her son, she knew why he had come. She tried to save herself by evoking a maternal image of herself. Orestes hesitated; but then, deciding that he must obey the gods, killed both his mother and Aegisthus.⁶⁶

Anouilh's *Electre*, *Oreste*, *Egisthe*, and *Clytemnestre*, are all presented in some vague setting. *Egisthe* acts as a chorus, introducing the characters and explaining their roles which they have played before. *Egisthe* and *Clytemnestre* are made aware of their impending deaths by the knife in *Oreste*'s pocket. Whereas the mythological story centers around *Orestes* and *Clytemnestra*, the play spotlights *Electre* and *Egisthe*. *Oreste*'s part consists mainly in recalling a scene from his childhood. When he was only four years old he had become suspicious of his mother and *Egisthe*, but was unable to understand their relationship. He watched them constantly and in silence at meals and wherever he met one of them. *Egisthe* says he was "un petit singe noir avec de grands yeux sans regard qui se posaient sur vous et qui n'en bougeaient plus" (*Oreste*, p. 59). After his father's death *Oreste* was sent to be reared by an old man who taught him to hate, then to kill beasts, and finally to kill men. Only the day before his death did the old man reveal to him the purpose of his training: *Oreste* was the son of *Agamemnon* and must avenge the death of his father by killing *Egisthe* and *Clytemnestre*.

Electre, however, who stayed at home, needed no one to teach her hate. She learned it alone. Unlike the myth, it was not *Egisthe* who

⁶⁶Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-46.

made her wretched. Electre admits:

D'abord ça n'est pas vrai, ils ne m'ont pas fait faire la vaisselle. Ils ne m'ont pas forcée à aller chercher de l'eau à la fontaine, c'est moi, c'est moi qui faisais tout exprès pour qu'on dise: "Regardez; ils traitent la petite Electre, la fille du roi, comme une souillon" (Oreste, p. 62).

She tore her dresses and refused to bathe and comb her hair to the point that her mother was always ashamed of her. Not only did Electre hate the two for murdering her father, but also for causing him to fall on the stone floor making such a sinister noise. Egisthe was also haunted by this sound; and, to increase his sense of guilt, Electre would often go down to the kitchen at night and drop iron dishes on the floor. Electre spent fifteen years waiting for Oreste to return. That evening finally came, and she ran to meet him. Egisthe heard her running and returned to the palace feeling at peace, for at last he would be relieved of his guilt. Electre is surprised to learn that Egisthe has been waiting for him too. Egisthe says: "Je savais qu'Oreste était là. Je pouvais m'endormir enfin" (Oreste, p. 68). Clytemnestre shares his tranquillity, but Electre is afraid that Oreste will be swayed from his purpose. She cries:

Ne les regarde pas: ce tableau vivant ridicule, ça n'est pas eux. Je vais te dire la vérité. En ce moment, ils savent que tu es là et ils sont verts de peur, blancs de rage, serrés l'un contre l'autre dans leur chambre, comme tous les assassins du monde quand ils se sentent pris (Oreste, p. 69).

Egisthe seems strangely attracted to Oreste whom he views as a boy on the threshold of manhood. He wants to teach him all that the old man has not told him--all that there is in the world besides hate. Egisthe tries to dissuade him from the path of revenge, pointing out what an

intolerable load of guilt the murderer must bear. Electre, a typical Anouilh incorruptible, cannot tolerate an understanding between Egisthe and Oreste. Throwing herself on Oreste, she says: "Tue-le, tue tout de suite, petit frère! Ne l'écoute pas!" (Oreste, p. 76)

As the play is unfinished, it is difficult to say what it might have become, but Edward Owen Marsh gives this comment:⁶⁷

Had this play been completed it could have led to scenes very closely parallel to some of the most famous scenes in Antigone. But Antigone has a better chance than Electra; it would be difficult to sustain a modern play on the morality of revenge. This one act has very powerful characters, of which the most impressive is AEGisthus, who bears a close resemblance in every way to Creon.

Anouilh makes no reference to the sacrifice of Iphigenia or to the capture and murder of Cassandra. Events are relatively unimportant, as the struggle is between Electre's uncompromising obsession for Oreste to avenge their father's death and Egisthe's more sensible desire for Oreste to live a full life without being encumbered by the guilt of murder.

⁶⁷Marsh, loc. cit.

III. ANTIGONE

When Antigone⁶⁸ was first performed in Paris in February, 1944, it was hailed by disheartened Frenchmen as a symbol of their frustrated revolt against the conquering Germans and their refusal to compromise. Although it seems doubtful that Anouilh had intended his play to have the political significance attributed to it, it firmly established his popularity in his own country.⁶⁹

As a framework for the play, Anouilh chose to re-create the Greek play of Sophocles. Antigone, the central character, was in mythology the daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta, who with all their descendants were the victims of unrelenting fate. She alone had shared the wanderings of her father after he had torn out his eyes and had been driven from his kingdom of Thebes, dreaded and abandoned by all men as an object of divine vengeance. She had remained with him until he died. Antigone then returned to Thebes. Her brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, had agreed to share the kingdom between them, and reign alternately year by year. The first year fell to the lot of Eteocles who, when his time had expired, refused to surrender the crown to his brother. Polynices invaded the kingdom with his armies. After a long siege, it was agreed that the brothers should decide their quarrel by single combat. They fought and fell by each other's hands. The war continued,

⁶⁸Jean Anouilh, Antigone in Nouvelles Pièces noires (Paris: Les Editions de La Table Ronde, 1963), pp. 131-207.

⁶⁹Fronko, op. cit., p. xvii.

however, until Polynices' forces were defeated.⁷⁰

Sophocles' play begins as Creon, the brothers' uncle, newly crowned, is occupying the throne. His first official act, after an elaborate funeral for Eteocles, was to decree that the body of the defeated Polynices be left where it fell. In the Greek tragedy, Antigone invites her sister Ismene to help her bury Polynices. Ismene feels it is a foolish gesture and decides to obey Creon's decree. In the next scene a guard rushes in to inform the King that the body has been covered with the sacrificial burial dust. Antigone repeats the act a second time, is caught, and brought before Creon where she admits breaking his law. Creon, enraged at having his authority challenged, condemns her to be walled up in a tomb. Haemon, Creon's son and Antigone's fiancé, begs the King to reconsider, but he refuses, and Antigone is led to her death. Tiresias, a seer, warns Creon that the gods are angry at his pollution of Polynices' body, and the King reluctantly consents to bury the body and release Antigone. But, when he arrives at her tomb, he discovers that Antigone has hanged herself. Creon then witnesses his son's suicide beside the body of Antigone. The Queen, Eurydice, hearing the report, kills herself. Creon is left in hopeless despair, realizing that he is the cause of his own suffering.⁷¹

Anouilh follows this basic story, expanding some scenes and

⁷⁰Bulfinch, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-82.

⁷¹Sophocles, *Antigone* in *Plays of the Greek Dramatists*, translated by Sir George Young (Chicago: Puritan Publishing Company, n.d.), pp. 97-132.

abbreviating others to fit his own objectives. He set his play in a modern world, using the dress and slang of the Second World War. Thus it was easy for the French to see a similarity between their struggle and Antigone's struggle against political forces more powerful than she. They identified Antigone with the spirit of freedom and Creon with the Vichy government.⁷²

Adverse criticism of the modern atmosphere is presented by Joseph Chiari, who feels that it makes the play seem "artificial, a mixture of realism and fantasy." In Sophocles' play Antigone's behavior is part of a pattern of beliefs which held together an ancient civilization. Reverence was due the dead, and their relatives could not rest until they had been buried. He believes that these feelings are lost in Anouilh's version. Chiari states:⁷³

The up-to-date jargon of the guards is clever work, but completely out of place in a play which ought to have some unity of atmosphere The mention of "fleur de cotillon," "fêtard," "joueur," or of Polynice "ricanant, qui allumait une cigarette," by the same Creon, ruler of Thebes in the year 3000 B. C. is like a firework display in a musical comedy or a brilliant farce about the past, but out of place in a play which ends with three corpses and general wailing.

On the other hand, Leonard Pronko praises Anouilh's choice of a neutral setting in which the characters are dressed in simple evening clothes.

Speaking of Anouilh's liberal use of anachronism, he says:⁷⁴

It furnishes a humor to contrast with the tension of the greater part of the play, and it reminds us that we are not in Greece, but in a timeless ground where antiquity and modernity can touch finger-

⁷²Pronko, loc. cit. ⁷³Chiari, op. cit., pp. 184-85.

⁷⁴Pronko, op. cit., p. 201.

tips without becoming ridiculous. It is another indication of the neutrality of setting and the universality of application and appeal which the author attempts in his play.

Anouilh gives a more elaborate introduction than does Sophocles. He adds various inventions of his own leading up to the scene between the two sisters. The curtain rises with all the characters on stage involved in their typical activities. The character, Prologue, introduces each and brings the audience up-to-date on previous events. There follows a sentimental conversation between Antigone and her nurse in which Antigone reminisces about her childhood and makes the nurse unwillingly agree to take care of her little dog, Douce, when she is gone. Both plays begin in the early morning as Antigone reveals her choice to disobey the King's decree and to bury her brother; in both she tries to enlist her sister's help; in both she is refused, but it takes Anouilh's Ismène a night of reflection to decide, whereas in Sophocles' play she does not hesitate. In both versions, she later decides to share the blame and to die with her sister, but Antigone refuses the gesture as coming too late. Anouilh adds pathos by having Antigone dig the burial dirt with a little child's spade which had been cherished by Polynice and by inserting a tender scene in which Antigone tells Hémon she can never marry him.

Both authors use the Chorus to explain what is happening and to pass judgment on the characters. The Greek Chorus speaks long poetic passages in contrast to the rather short prosaic comments of the French Choeur. Joseph Chiari objects to Anouilh's reducing this "lyrical instrument" to an "announcer or a sports commentator."⁷⁵ But if his

⁷⁵Chiari, loc. cit.

Choeur lacks the lyric tone, he has not forgotten Greek elocution entirely. In approaching her fate, Antigone cries out: "O tombeau! O lit nuptial! O ma demeure souterraine . . ." (Antigone, p. 199).

Anouilh has brought out certain facets of Sophocles' play which might otherwise have been overlooked: the solitude of heroic individuals, the compromise of life, the freedom of choice, problems of state, and the meaning of happiness.⁷⁶

Religion is a motivating force in the Sophoclean original. Antigone refuses to obey Creon's decree because it was not Zeus who ordered it. She chooses rather to follow the unchangeable, unwritten law of heaven. Haemon pleads with his father to spare her life not only for himself but for the gods. Creon, who had refused to have his authority questioned, trembles when confronted with Tiresias' prophecy of his punishment in the afterlife.⁷⁷ Tiresias is vital to the Greek drama because his prophecy is the cause for Creon's reversing his decision, but he would be superfluous in Anouilh's play where religion plays no vital part.

Anouilh's tragedy is enacted in an absurd universe where Antigone's desperate resolution is close to the acte gratuit familiar in existentialist thought; it is a universe where neither major figure can win, and where there are no final answers.⁷⁸ At the beginning of Antigone's

⁷⁶Pronko, op. cit., p. 204. ⁷⁷Sophocles, op. cit., pp. 109-17.

⁷⁸David J. DeLaura, "Anouilh's Other Antigone," The French Review, XXXV (October, 1961), p. 40.

argument, she presents religious reasons for her act, like her Greek counterpart, stating the then commonly held belief that those who are not buried wander eternally without finding rest. She states that she is willing to die so that Polynice's soul can have rest. However, Créon easily breaks down her argument by getting her to admit that she, like him, does not believe in eternal life. He continues thus, ending with a key phrase of the play:

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, p. 173)

Antigone readily admits: "Oui, c'est absurde" (Antigone, p. 173).

As Créon proceeds in his questioning, her argument is reduced to a vague admission that what she has done has been only for herself. They say:

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 (Antigone, pp. 173-74).

Finally, in a letter to Hémon, which he never receives, she pathetically dictates to an insensitive guard: "Je ne sais plus pourquoi je meurs. J'ai peur . . ." (Antigone, p. 201). This is Anouilh's major divergence from his Greek source. Sophocles' heroine dies courageously for right as her faith in the gods has revealed it to her. Anouilh's heroine is uncertain in her religious faith, but nevertheless she dies for right--the existentialist right which is used to mean an action which results

from any choice which is made in absolute freedom.⁷⁹

In the Greek original the scene between Antigone and Creon is rather brief, but what these characters symbolize permeates the whole play. Antigone, as has been noted, represents the immutable law of the gods. Creon, on the other hand, represents the law of the state. He conceives of himself as the symbol of the kingdom and his first duty is to that kingdom. In showing his concern that his pride has suffered and his authority been challenged to the point of humiliation, he becomes less sympathetic than Anouilh's Créon, but also more absolute.⁸⁰ The fact that Antigone is a young girl and thus inferior to him prevents him from allowing any sympathy with her argument. For fear that she may be stronger than he, he refuses her any concessions. When Haemon comes to plead her cause, he is likewise rebuffed for his insolence. Creon considers his authority absolute, and it is reluctantly that he bends even before a priest, yielding only when confronted with his destiny.

The French Créon is more humane; he would save Antigone if he could, for her sake and for Hémon's. He is also a more clear-sighted monarch. He knows that what he is doing is in the best interests of the state, but at the same time he realizes it is a compromise, and that Antigone is right to a certain extent. Actually both protagonists are right, and Sophocles felt this as much as did Anouilh, but the latter gives emphasis to the fact by making his Créon more humane and

⁷⁹Curtis, op. cit., p. 7. ⁸⁰Pronko, op. cit., p. 203.

keenly intelligent.⁸¹ Anouilh's Créon meets Antigone as an equal, another human being fulfilling her role as he must his, even conceding that hers is the better role. He is kind to her and his pride does not prevent him from listening to her. He admits:

Si j'étais une bonne brute ordinaire de tyran, il y aurait déjà longtemps qu'on t'aurait arraché la langue, tiré les membres aux tenailles, ou jetée dans un trou. Mais tu vois dans mes yeux quelque chose qui hésite, tu vois que je te laisse parler au lieu d'appeler mes soldats (Antigone, p. 175).

Serge Radine considers him totally deprived of the cruel but real grandeur of Sophocles' Creon.⁸² Speaking of his own kingship, Anouilh has Créon say:

Un matin, je me suis réveillé roi de Thèbes. Et Dieu sait si j'aimais autre chose dans la vie que d'être puissant (Antigone, p. 117).

Unlike Sophocles' Creon, he has a respect for the rebellion of youth. He confides to Antigone: "Je te comprends, j'aurais fait comme toi à vingt ans" (Antigone, p. 185). But for all his humanity he is still afraid of what people might say. He tries to explain:

Tout Thèbes sait ce qu'elle a fait. Je suis obligé de la faire mourir Ils diront que . . . je la sauve parce qu'elle allait être la femme de mon fils (Antigone, pp. 192-93).

In both versions Antigone makes her choice, fully aware that she will be sentenced to death, and never wavers nor reconsiders for a moment. In sympathy with her are Ismene, Haemon, Eurydice, the Chorus; and, in Sophocles' play, also Tiresias, the senators, and public opinion; but

⁸¹Pronko, op. cit., pp. 203-04.

⁸²Serge Radine, Anouilh, Lenormand, Salacrou, Trois Dramaturges à la Recherche de leur vérité (Genève: Editions des Trois Collines, 1951), p. 50.

she appears very alone in her struggle.

Whereas in Sophocles' play the laws of the gods and of the state are in conflict, in Anouilh's play the conflict is between the freedom to say non and the compromise of saying oui. This central struggle is represented by the long dialogue between Antigone and Créon which takes up most of the play. Even though she cannot verbalize her reasons for dying, the Choeur says it for her: "La petite Antigone va pouvoir être elle-même pour la première fois" (Antigone, p. 162). This inner compulsion motivates her actions and the only way she can be true to herself is by refusing the compromise of life represented by the policy of Créon. Her action is a symbol of her liberty. Créon, with all his logic, cannot batter down her defenses; and if she insists upon death, even in the face of the absurdity of her reasoning, it is because she has the courage to be her truest self.

Anouilh's Créon at first regards her as a misguided child who has not understood the law, immediately forgiving her, and planning a means for her escape. He soon realizes, however, that he is confronted with "la fille de l'orgueil d'OEdipe" (Antigone, p. 170). After giving some fatherly advice, he tries to free her again only to be met with the obstinate reply that she must go bury Polynice again. Créon is plainly shocked and, in disbelief, questions: "Tu irais refaire ce geste absurde?" (Antigone, p. 171)

He is successful in tearing down her religious argument; but she, on the other hand, is able to belittle him for choosing compromise rather than the freedom of saying non. She boasts

Moi, je peux dire "non" encore à tout ce que je n'aime pas et je suis seul juge. Et vous, avec votre couronne, avec vos gardes, avec votre attirail, vous pouvez seulement me faire mourir, parce que vous avez dit "oui" (Antigone, p. 177).

He has tried to understand her position, and in part only is successful, but for her even to understand is compromise. In a final desperate attempt to get her to reconsider, he reveals to her the true character of her brother, calling him "un petit fêtard imbécile, un petit carnassier dur et sans âme, une petite brute tout juste bonne à aller plus vite que les autres avec ses voitures, à dépenser plus d'argent dans les bars" (Antigone, p. 183). For the first time, there is some hope of her relenting, but Anouilh puts into Créon's mouth a fatal word--bonheur. Créon explains: "La vie, ce n'est peut-être tout de même que le bonheur" (Antigone, p. 186). The word causes Antigone to react instinctively as do other heroines of Anouilh, for bonheur is for them the symbol and price of capitulation, that which enslaves the soul and causes one to renounce his ideal of purity in favor of the temporal, the merely expedient.⁸³

Neither will she accept espoir, as she wants everything here and now or not at all. She wants the purity that can only be found in childhood. Taunted by Créon that she is like her father, OEdipus, in her refusal of happiness, she replies:

Nous sommes de ceux qui lui sautent dessus quand nous le rencontrons, votre espoir, votre cher espoir, votre sale espoir! (Antigone, p. 188)

The argument degenerates. Antigone ridicules Créon, and he orders her to

⁸³Radine, op. cit., p. 58.

be quiet. Finally she provokes him into calling the guards and ordering her death.

The scene which follows, between Créon and Hémon, is brief and to the point. Like the Haemon of the Greek play, he has always admired his father, but there is none of the expression of filial obedience and loyalty found in Sophocles. When his father counsels him that this is the day he must become a man, he can only refuse to accept the compromise and follow Antigone in death.

Eurydice, Creon's wife, speaks only a few lines in the Greek play and merely sits on stage knitting in the French one. In both cases her suicide is reported by a messenger. In Sophocles' play her death serves as an additional grief to the agony that Creon has brought on himself. To Anouilh's Créon, her death and that of Hémon do not seem so tragic. They have at last found rest while he, tragically, must continue to fulfill his role alone.

Following the attempted rescue by Creon, Sophocles' drama ends with the King in despair, raving about his guilt, while the Chorus reminds us that the moral of the story is that Heaven does not tolerate man's irreverence.⁸⁴ Anouilh's King returns to the routine of his office, addressing his page:

Eh bien, si nous avons Conseil, petit, nous allons y aller (Antigone, p. 206).

The Choeur points out:

⁸⁴Sophocles, op. cit., p. 132.

Il ne reste plus que les gardes. Eux, tout ça, cela leur est égal; c'est pas leurs oignons. Ils continuent à jouer aux cartes . . . (Antigone, p. 207).

In such an absurd universe, Antigone was right not to look beyond herself to explain why she had to die.

Critics have given a variety of reactions to Anouilh's Antigone. David J. DeLaura in an article in The French Review calls the play "one of Anouilh's most integral and disturbing dramatic creations"⁸⁵ and "a major creative achievement of contemporary French existentialist thought and art."⁸⁶ Leonard Pronko comments:⁸⁷

Although lacking in the multiplicity of perspectives that Sophocles' play had for the people of his day, Anouilh's Antigone is still broad in its appeal and a richly suggestive treatment of myth for audiences of our age.

Antigone, more than any other of Anouilh's plays, is written in the style of early Greek tragedy. He uses a prologue and a chorus and arranges a well-known myth to fit his own purposes. He has made of Antigone a perfect example of his heroic race, nihilistic, choosing death rather than the bonheur of this life.

⁸⁵DeLaura, op. cit., p. 41. ⁸⁶Ibid., p. 36.

⁸⁷Pronko, op. cit., pp. 206-07.

IV. MEDEE

The last of Anouilh's so-called pièces noires is Médée.⁸⁸ Here, for the first time, Anouilh casts doubt on the virtue of rebellion, asserts that it is a vain attack on humanity to refuse constantly other people's values, and admits that there is much to be said after all for resigning oneself to compromise and accepting life without resistance.⁸⁹ Unlike Antigone and Eurydice, Médée is not played against a modern setting. Anouilh's establishment of parallels with contemporary life is accomplished through his handling of the story and the characters themselves and in his highlighting of certain aspects that were already inherent in the Medea myth.⁹⁰

The story of Medea is connected with the famous quest for the Golden Fleece. The fleece was that of a ram which had been entrusted with carrying two children to safety. The girl was lost in the sea, but the boy, Phryxus, arrived unharmed in the kingdom of Colchis on the Black Sea. In gratitude he sacrificed the ram to Zeus and gave the Golden Fleece to Aëtes, the king, who placed it in a consecrated grove, under the care of a sleepless dragon.⁹¹ Phryxus had an uncle who should have been king of Iolcos in Greece, but the throne had been usurped by his nephew Pelias. Jason, the son of the rightful heir, when he was grown,

⁸⁸Jean Anouilh, Médée in Nouvelles Pièces noires (Paris: Les Editions de La Table Ronde, 1963), pp. 355-99.

⁸⁹Marsh, op. cit., p. 132. ⁹⁰Pronko, op. cit., p. 207.

⁹¹Bulfinch, op. cit., pp. 130-31.

came boldly to claim the kingdom from his wicked cousin. Pelias, unwilling to give up his position easily, sent Jason on a perilous journey to bring back the Golden Fleece. The idea of great adventure was exciting to Jason, and he set out with several famous heroes in the ship Argo.⁹² After many harrowing experiences, he arrived at Colchis. King Aëtes gladly entertained the Argonauts, but became very angry when he learned of their mission. The gods, however, were on the side of Jason and had Eros shoot an arrow into the heart of Medea, the King's daughter, causing her to fall passionately in love with Jason. Medea possessed magical powers and was willing to assist the adventurers. Aëtes had Jason perform several impossible tasks; but Medea, with her magic, protected him each time, finally putting to sleep the terrible guardian of the Golden Fleece so that Jason could take it. Jason was grateful to Medea and promised to take her with him and to marry her when they reached Greece.⁹³

There are various accounts of the Argonauts' escape. The more gruesome one, which shows the extremes to which Medea was willing to go for her love of Jason, is that she took her brother with her; then, as her father's pursuing ship approached, she murdered and dismembered him, casting his pieces into the water. The delay caused Aëtes in collecting the pieces of his son enabled Medea and Jason to escape.⁹⁴

When they reached Greece, they took the Golden Fleece to Pelias who, they soon learned, had caused the death of Jason's father, resulting

⁹²Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 118-20. ⁹³Michael Grant, op. cit., pp. 255-56.

⁹⁴H. A. Guerber, Myths of Greece and Rome (New York: American Book Company, 1893), p. 271.

in his mother dying of grief. To punish him Jason turned again to Medea for help. She brought about his death by tricking his daughters into cutting him into pieces as part of a supposed cure for bringing back the old man's youth. She used her sorcery in many ways for both good and evil, but always it was for Jason. After they had lived in Corinth for some time and she had borne him two sons, he became ambitious and chose to marry the King's daughter.⁹⁵

It is at this point that Anouilh's Médée begins, based primarily on the classic dramas of Euripides and the Roman author, Seneca. The opening scene shows Médée and her nurse in front of a caravan of wagons outside their house. The heroine is forced to listen to the revelry and celebration which, in Anouilh's often-used meaning of the word, is the common expression of bonheur. A boy enters to announce the coming of Jason and from him she learns that the celebration is in honor of the marriage the next day of Jason to the King's daughter, Créuse. Médée is immediately filled with the emotions of jealousy, anger, revenge, and a sense of freedom at being released from him. This latter emotion, the sense of freedom which will restore her identity, is resisted at first. She says:

Il sait que son nom et le mien sont liés ensemble pour les siècles.
Jason-Médée (Médée, p. 372).

But Anouilh had shown in Eurydice that the fusion of the sexes only intensifies the eternal dilemma of human ability to communicate; true

⁹⁵Hamilton, op. cit., p. 128.

understanding and direct communication are rendered impossible by it, and from this springs tragedy.⁹⁶ It is Médée's struggle to be herself which becomes the motive for her final actions.

At this point in the story, however, the emotions of anger and revenge are uppermost. Jason has wronged her and been most ungrateful for all the crimes she has committed for him. But, in spite of her plight, she is still Médée and capable of even greater crimes. She boasts:

Je suis Médée, toute seule, abandonnée devant cette roulotte; au bord de cette mer étrangère, chassée, honnie, hafe, mais rien n'est trop pour moi! (Médée, p. 365)

As she plans her revenge, the nurse tries to placate her, or at least put off any action for awhile. She reminds Médée that she really has not cared for Jason for some time and that she prefers to be without him.

The King of Corinth, Créon,* then comes to demand that she leave immediately. He is very like the Creon of Euripides' play,⁹⁷ afraid of her magical powers that she may use against his daughter, but unable to refuse her request to remain one more day in Corinth. Créon warns her that Pélias' sons will kill her if she remains long, and it is Jason's idea to let her leave unharmed. But, like Antigone, she makes a suggestion of what would be more proper for a king to do, thus foreshadowing her own

⁹⁶Lapp, op. cit., p. 185.

*This is not the Créon who is discussed in Antigone.

⁹⁷Euripides, Medea in Three Greek Plays for the Theatre, translated and edited by Peter D. Arnott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), pp. 32-38.

method of suicide by fire. She says:

Tu n'agis pas en roi, Créon. Si tu veux donner Jason à ta fille, fais-moi tuer tout de suite avec la vieille et les enfants qui dorment là et le cheval. Brûle tout ça sur cette lande avec deux hommes sûrs et disperse les cendres après. Qu'il ne reste de Médée qu'une grande tache noire sur cette herbe et un conte pour faire peur aux enfants de Corinthe le soir (Médée, p. 371).

In almost a translation from Seneca's play,⁹⁸ Médée, revealing that she is too proud to bow before anyone, requests that Jason be exiled with her, for her crimes are his as well. Médée says to Créon:

Je ne veux pas te supplier. Je ne peux pas. Mes genoux ne peuvent pas plier, ma voix ne peut pas se faire humble, Mais tu es humain puisque tu n'as pas su te résoudre à ma mort. Ne me laisse pas partir seule. Rends à l'exilée son navire, rends-lui son compagnon! Je n'étais pas seule quand je suis venue. Pourquoi distinguer maintenant entre nous? C'est pour Jason que j'ai tué Pélias, trahi mon père et massacré mon frère innocent dans ma fuite. Je suis sa femme et chacun de mes crimes est à lui (Médée, p. 372).

Anouilh's Créon has become kinder as he has grown older. He is easily swayed by her anxiety over her children and offers to take them as his own. She refuses to leave them, however; and, after Créon has left, she derides the old King for having granted her requests. She mocks:

Tu as perdu tes griffes, vieux lion . . . Et puisque ton sang refroidi, tes glandes mortes, t'ont rendu assez lâche pour me donner cette nuit, tu vas le payer (Médée, pp. 374-75).

The long dialogue between Médée and Jason comprises most of the rest of Anouilh's play. Their speeches are in true Greek style, often long soliloquies, explaining their actions. Médée reminds him that she has done everything for him. Jason is well aware of this. The two seem to

⁹⁸Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Medea in Seneca's Tragedies with an English translation by Frank Justus Miller (London: William Heinemann, 1917), p. 252.

slip unconsciously into reminiscing about their love as it was when they first met, but it is gone now. "Je t'ai aimée," Jason says (Médée, p. 376). His new marriage is not of the type of love he has known with Médée. He explains to her:

Crois-tu que c'est pour chercher un autre amour que je te quitte?
Crois-tu que c'est pour recommencer? Ce n'est plus seulement toi
que je hais, c'est l'amour! (Médée, p. 378)

Jason now wants to forget her, but she assures him: "Morte ou vivante, Médée est là" (Médée, p. 379). They argue about who was unfaithful first, making accusations; then the typical lovers' quarrel develops into a deeper expression of what each one is and has felt. Médée says:

Je suis ignoble, tu le sais. Je t'ai trahi comme les autres. Je
ne sais faire que le mal Je suis ton malheur, ton ulcère . . .
(Médée, pp. 383-84).

Jason explains how he loved Médée:

Tu as été longtemps ma patrie, ma lumière, tu as été l'air que je
respirais, l'eau qu'il fallait boire pour vivre et le pain de tous
les jours Le monde est devenu Médée (Médée, pp. 385-86).

He refers to their relationship as that of "deux petits frères qui portaient leur sac côte à côte" (Médée, p. 386). They were also competitors and, when they became too accustomed to each other, they discovered that the love was gone. Anouilh has again stated his view of love and marriage, an illusion of the ideal which is doomed to a short life.

Now Jason wants to leave Médée, without whose poison he can become a man, strong, good, noble, honest, accepting the standards of society. This will be a struggle just as difficult as the one which he has had in partnership with Médée in which he has revolted against

all that is not himself. Now he will battle humbly "adossé à ce mur dérisoire, construit de mes mains entre le néant absurde et moi!"

(Médée, p. 390) This is Jason's compromise.

Yet his chief motive for marrying Créuse is an attempt to regain innocence through a self-denying devotion to the purity of another.⁹⁹ It is not that she is more beautiful than Médée or even that he loves her, but "elle est neuve, elle est simple, elle est pure," and with her he hopes to find what Médée despises--"le bonheur, le pauvre bonheur" (Médée, p. 390). This is another instance of Anouilh diverging from his source for his own purposes. In Euripides' account, Jason explains his reason for the new marriage as being a means of bettering both himself and Medea financially and politically. At first he had no plans for rejecting Medea; she would have benefited as well as he; but, because of her jealousy and foolish talk of revenge, she must be sent away.¹⁰⁰ As Anouilh's Jason leaves his Médée, he realizes he cannot tell her to be happy; all he can say, knowing her as he does, is "Sois toi-même" (Médée, p. 391). Médée calls after him, almost convinced that his choice of compromise is better; "Retourne-toi et je serai peut-être délivrée . . ." (Médée, p. 391). But it is too late; she must be herself, cruel as her destiny has made her.

As in Euripides' play, she sends her children with a poisoned wedding gift for the princess. It is a veil and diadem, rather than a dress as in Euripides' version. Créuse dies horribly when she puts them

⁹⁹Curtis, op. cit., p. 38. ¹⁰⁰Euripides, op. cit., pp. 44-46.

on. Old Créon, trying to save his daughter, dies on touching the poisoned garments.

Euripides was probably the first to have Medea deliberately kill her own children to hurt Jason.¹⁰¹ Anouilh follows his account rather closely, but to the idea of revenge are added words of hatred for the compromises toward which they are heading in life.

The ending is Anouilh's invention. Euripides' Medea finds refuge by going to live with Aegeus, who has come from Apollo's ancient oracle at Delphi, looking for a wife to bear him sons.¹⁰² Anouilh makes Médée into another of his champions of purity. In her stylized death recitative she claims that she, too, was made for innocence and joy, that she, too, is pure within. It is the fault of fate which has caused her destruction. She cries:

Je veux, je veux, en cette seconde encore, aussi fort que lorsque j'étais petite, que tout soit lumière et bonté! Mais Médée innocente a été choisie pour être la proie et le lieu de la lutte . . .
(*Médée*, p. 396).

But this eleventh-hour assimilation of Medean hatred and revolt into a search for purity is too contrived and sudden to impress.

Médée, in the midst of her caravan with her two dead children, sets the wagons on fire and shouts out at Jason:

J'ai retrouvé ma patrie et la virginité que tu m'avais ravies! Je suis Médée, enfin, pour toujours! Regarde-moi avant de rester seul dans ce monde raisonnable, regarde-moi bien, Jason . . . ton petit

¹⁰¹Samuel Noah Kramer (ed.), Mythologies of the Ancient World (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961), p. 238.

¹⁰²Euripides, op. cit., pp. 48; 73.

frère et ta femme, c'est moi. C'est l'horrible Médée! Et essaie maintenant de l'oublier! (Médée, pp. 397-98)

She has achieved her goal; for she has become herself apart from Jason, and at the same time left him in such a manner that he can never forget her.

However, Jason says he will forget her. He leaves the fire-watching to a guard, and turns away toward his new life of order without illusions.

Following the denouement, Anouilh adds a simple scene between two servants who enter the stage. John Harvey summarizes their dialogue and purpose:¹⁰³

In the soft light of dawn they speak of humble things, of harvest, bread, the simple tasks men must perform to live out each day. In subtle counterpoint to Médée's ravings, these words linger with us after the play has ended; they confirm our impression that at last Anouilh may have cast off his own youthful idealism.

Instead of using the formal Chorus of Euripides' play with its mythical characteristics, Anouilh has replaced it with a matter-of-fact individual--Médée's nurse.

Leonard Pronko compares the central struggle of Euripides' play with that of Anouilh's:¹⁰⁴

The central struggle of Euripides' play takes place within the heroine: it is the study of a soul divided against itself. In Anouilh's play this central struggle is retained, but it is represented on the exterior plane by Jason, or rather by that part of Médée which would cling to Jason, as opposed to Médée's wish to be true to herself and independent of Jason. Thus, the struggle is no longer between the desire for revenge and her love for her children; it is the conflict of every heroic person--the desire for

¹⁰³Harvey, op. cit., p. 20. ¹⁰⁴Pronko, op. cit., p. 209.

peace and comfort opposed to the desire to be true to one's self. Médée chooses the latter course.

In the classical treatments of the myth by both Euripides and Seneca, one aspect of the story has been accentuated: the revenge of a woman deserted by the man she has loved. Anouilh has chosen to emphasize a different facet: a woman returning to the purity of her truest self which has been partially obliterated by years of marriage.

A striking aspect of the play is that neither Jason nor Médée can really be admired. Médée's effort to find purity in being herself is blurred by the horrible crimes which being herself entails. Jason's compromise to accept society's standards and find his purity in forming a union with one who is pure are tainted by his easy means of redemption: rejection of his guilt through Médée as though she alone embodied all their crimes together. However, Jason is more admirable than Médée. This forces the audience to be on the side of compromise. In choosing a mythological character known for her cruelty to represent the uncompromising search for purity, Anouilh has marked a significant change in his attitude toward his central characters.

CHAPTER III

PLAYS BASED ON HISTORICAL SOURCES

I. L'ALOUETTE

In spite of a hostile press and opposition from major dramatic critics, L'Alouette¹⁰⁵ became a popular success and enjoyed a long run in Paris.¹⁰⁶ In the program notes of the French production, found in the introduction of Christopher Fry's translation of the play, Anouilh alludes to his habit of altering history to suit his own purposes; he refers to Jeanne d'Arc as a haggard, thin young girl, adding in parentheses that he knows that she is a big, healthy girl, but he could not care less. He admits that he does not understand this mysterious girl and makes no attempt to explain her.¹⁰⁷ However, in dramatizing this ever-popular story, often confused by legend and fiction, Anouilh has adhered more closely to his source than in any of his other plays based on mythology or history. Jack Brooking, in an article dealing with the dramatic use of Jeanne d'Arc's Trial Notes,¹⁰⁸ chose for his example

¹⁰⁵Jean Anouilh, L'Alouette in Pièces costumées (Paris: Les Editions de La Table Ronde, 1962), pp. 11-139.

¹⁰⁶Wallace Fowlie, Dionysus in Paris, A Guide to Contemporary French Theater (New York: Meridian Books, 1965), p. 119.

¹⁰⁷Jean Anouilh, L'Alouette translated as The Lark by Christopher Fry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. i-ii.

¹⁰⁸Jack Brooking, "Jeanne d'Arc, the Trial Notes, and Anouilh," The Theatre Annual, 1959, Vol. XVI (Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1960), pp. 20-29. Brooking's reference here is to Jules Quicherat, Procès de Condamnation et Réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc, dite La Pucelle (Paris: J. Renouard Cie, 1841-49). Since Brooking refers to the entire work as the Notes, the same term will be used in this thesis when he is cited.

Anouilh's l'Alouette as representative of plays based on them. He contends that Anouilh used both the letter and the spirit of the Notes to develop his variation upon the theme. Brooking further states:¹⁰⁹

Anouilh must have kept in constant touch with the Notes, for he has extracted from them abundant detail of character, situation and dialogue, as well as broad concepts for a number of his scenes. Yet he is not fanatical about historical accuracy and may deviate completely from it to make a philosophical point or to create theatrical excitement.

To tell the story of Jeanne, Anouilh has all the characters come on stage in vaguely medieval costumes. As the curtain is raised, Jeanne is at her trial. The questions asked her elicit the portrayal of various episodes of her life, and the necessary characters step forward as needed. The Englishman Warwick is in a hurry to conclude the affair, to judge, and to burn her; but Bishop Cauchon reminds him that she must play the scenes from her life first (l'Alouette, pp. 11-12). This she does and we witness her childhood, her hearing of the voices of the saints, her departure from home, her visit to Baudricourt, the recognition of the King at Chinon, her departure for Orléans, and the first few minutes at the stake, relieved by the last-minute recollection that the coronation scene has been omitted.

The names of all his characters are authentic, but in some cases Anouilh has purposely confused their roles. Warwick was actually as cruel and eager as Anouilh portrays him for Jeanne's death by fire. He sent for a doctor when she was ill to prevent her from dying a natural

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 23.

death; he wanted her tried quickly and then burned.¹¹⁰

V. Sackville-West describes Lemaistre, the representative of the Grand Inquisitor, as "timid, uneasy, unwilling, hating the case, but compelled to do as he was told."¹¹¹ Anouilh does not exactly contradict this view of him, but he uses him for a dual purpose of his own. First, Anouilh has him give an account of Jeanne's childhood in which he says: "Tu étais une petite fille très pieuse" (l'Alouette, p. 93). Anouilh mentions Jeanne's best friend whom he calls Haumette, and tells how Jeanne said adieu to other friends, but did not even mention her leaving to Haumette because it would have been too painful (l'Alouette, p. 93). Albert Paine tells that she said goodbye to the people of the village, "but to little Hauviette, la préférée, she sent no word of her going."¹¹²

Secondly, Anouilh uses the Inquisitor to show the incompatibility of the Church with the humanity that his Jeanne represents. Anouilh says: "Qui aime l'homme, n'aime pas Dieu" (l'Alouette, p. 96).

Leading Jeanne's historical trial was Cauchon, the bishop of Beauvais who, throughout most of the trial, revealed himself as "cold, supple, implacable, relentless."¹¹³

Anouilh's Cauchon is very like his Créon¹¹⁴ in Antigone, doing

¹¹⁰V. Sackville-West, Saint Joan of Arc (New York: The Literary Guild, 1936), p. 280.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 286.

¹¹²Albert Bigelow Paine, Joan of Arc, Maid of France, Vol. I (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 31.

¹¹³Sackville-West, op. cit., p. 286. ¹¹⁴Cf., p. 37.

what he must do in his role, but tired of killing and unwilling to let a young girl die for the foolishness of saying non. He pleads:

Je te supplie même, parce que je sais que tu es tendre. Je suis un vieil homme, Jeanne, je n'attends plus grand-chose de ce monde, et j'ai beaucoup tué, comme chacun de nous ici, pour défendre l'Eglise. C'est assez. Je suis las. Je ne voudrais pas, avant de mourir, avoir encore tué une petite fille. Aide-moi, toi aussi (l'Alouette, p. 113).

V. Sackville-West gives some credence to this sympathetic view. He concedes:¹¹⁵

It would be perfectly possible to make out a case proving that Cauchon personally had treated Jeanne with remarkable long-suffering leniency. He did, in fact, make repeated attempts to reconcile her to what he believed to be the only Church whose authority she ought, as a Catholic, to recognise.

In his view of Jeanne, Anouilh departs from tradition by making the lark her symbol. Choosing the unlikely Warwick to speak these words, he says: "C'est cette petite alouette chantant dans le ciel de France, au-dessus de la tête de leurs fantassins" (l'Alouette, p. 83). Anouilh turned to the trial Notes, however, for her basic qualities which reveal the two extremes of her personality. She was simple, devout, and kind; but at the same time a stubborn and relentless soldier.¹¹⁶ Anouilh explains the personality split by saying that God gave her these qualities in order that she might be able to accomplish her mission.¹¹⁷

Joseph Chiari criticizes Anouilh for reducing the grandeur of her story to homeliness¹¹⁸ and having Jeanne use coarse language such as the

¹¹⁵Sackville-West, op. cit., pp. 290-91.

¹¹⁶Brooking, op. cit., p. 23. ¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 24.

¹¹⁸Chiari, op. cit., p. 189.

word godons.¹¹⁹ The word, which was a French form of a favorite English oath,¹²⁰ was used by Jeanne at the trial in reference to her English foes.¹²¹ The fact that she was only a peasant girl makes her story even more glorious, and Anouilh reminds us of this.

The meeting of Jeanne with Charles is quite accurate. With reference to the meeting, Sackville-West says:¹²²

He attempted to deceive her by concealing himself among the crowd, less magnificently dressed than some of his lords. Yet, having first asked rather piteously that they should not seek to mislead her, she picked him out. She went straight up to him, disguised as he was, dropped a curtsey and thus addressed him: "Gentil Dauphin, j'ai nom Jehanne la Pucelle."

Anouilh has his Charles put a page on the throne for a joke, while he hides in the crowd. Jeanne is quick to discover the trick, picks him out, chases him into a corner; and, falling on her knees before him, says: "Gentil Dauphin, j'ai nom Jeanne la Pucelle" (l'Alouette, p. 67).

The reference in the Notes to Charles' cowardice sets up Anouilh's amusing Jeanne-Charles scene in which she gives him the magic word, courage.¹²³

No other Jeanne d'Arc playwright has so skillfully utilized the character of La Hire, a rough soldier in Jeanne's army. He seems to

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 191.

¹²⁰André Lévêque, Histoire de la civilisation française (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 75.

¹²¹Sackville-West, op. cit., p. 281.

¹²²Ibid., p. 122, citing the third volume of Procès, p. 102. Cf., p. 53, note 108.

¹²³Brooking, op. cit., p. 24.

have been waiting, tucked away in the Notes, for Anouilh to give him life.¹²⁴ Jeanne forced him to go to confession and forbade his swearing. He tried to follow her wishes but, when he prayed, his prayer had almost the nature of an oath.¹²⁵

Anouilh is able to capture the spirit of this delightful transgressor. Following his accidental use of an oath, La Hire excuses himself thus: "J'ai rien dit, mon Dieu, j'ai rien dit! Faites pas attention. . ." (l'Alouette, p. 106). In this ambiguous use of mon Dieu, it is difficult to ascertain whether he is swearing or addressing God. By pointing out La Hire, Jeanne proclaims the miracle of man. He is a man who swears, drinks too much, thinks only of girls, kills, eats onions; but this penitent warrior becomes "un petit sous neuf" in the hand of God (l'Alouette, p. 102). This is a surprisingly optimistic note from Anouilh.

In general, Anouilh has avoided both the supernatural and the gruesome, but he does have the executioner appear, in an effort to bring about Jeanne's recantation. The executioner explains:

On laisse les premières flammes monter et puis, dans la fumée, je grimpe derrière, comme pour arranger les fagots, et j'étrangle. Il n'y a plus que la carcasse qui grille, c'est moins dur. Mais avec les instructions que j'ai reçues, c'est trop haut, je ne pourrai pas grimper (l'Alouette, p. 111).

Anatole France gives support to this practice. He says:¹²⁶

D'ordinaire, le bourreau, pour abrégier les souffrances du patient, l'étouffait dans une épaisse fumée avant que les flammes eussent

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 25. ¹²⁵Sackville-West, op. cit., p. 159.

¹²⁶Anatole France, Vie de Jeanne d'Arc, Vol. II (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, Editeurs, 1908), pp. 395-96.

monté; mais l'exécuteur de Rouen éprouvait un grand trouble à l'idée des prodiges accomplis par cette pucelle et il pouvait difficilement atteindre jusqu'à elle, parce que le bailli avait fait construire en plâtre un échafaud trop élevé.

It was human weakness, partly brought about by the sight of the executioner, that caused the historical Jeanne to recant.¹²⁷ Anouilh's Jeanne recants as a result of Cauchon's strong argument that by submitting herself to the will of the Church she would be pleasing God (l'Alouette, p. 116).

Her method of signing her recantation is not clear. Some say it was with a cross and others that it was with an "O."¹²⁸ Anouilh does not presume to solve the mystery. His Jeanne asks: "Je fais un rond ou une croix? Je ne sais pas écrire mon non." Frère Ladvenu, who has befriended her throughout the trial, answers: "Je vais te tenir la main" (l'Alouette, pp. 123-24). He helps her make a mark, but still we do not know which one.

The historical Jeanne was brought back to trial because she resumed her dressing as a man. At the second trial she claimed that the voices of Sainte Catherine and Sainte Marguerite had come to her again, telling her that in saving her life she had damned her soul. She then boldly reasserted that it was God who had sent her on her mission.¹²⁹

Anouilh's Jeanne chooses death for quite a different reason. Her hour of glory has passed, and now she envisions herself "végétant à la Cour de France d'une petite pension" (l'Alouette, p. 131). She must die

¹²⁷Sackville-West, op. cit., p. 326.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 328. ¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 335-36.

to keep alive the true image of herself.

In the historical account of Jeanne at the stake, she asked for a cross. Anatole France says: "Un Anglais lui en fit une petite avec deux morceaux de bois et la lui donna."¹³⁰ She had been accompanied to the stake by three monks, Ladvenu, Massieu, and de la Pierre. The last two are not mentioned by Anouilh. Massieu, sent by de la Pierre, brought the crucifix from a neighboring church. Massieu mounted the scaffold and held it up before her. Jeanne told him to get down when the fire was lighted.¹³¹

In the play it is Ladvenu who goes to a neighboring church for a cross, and he is sent by Cauchon. In the meantime a soldier hands her an improvised cross. Ladvenu then runs onto the stage with his cross, and mounts the scaffold. Jeanne says: "Merci, petit frère. Mais descends, tu serais en danger d'être brûlé, toi aussi" (l'Alouette, p. 136).

Jeanne's last words in the play are these:

O Rouen, Rouen, tu seras donc ma dernière demeure? (Elle gémit soudain.) O Jésus! (l'Alouette, p. 137)

These words are very similar to Jeanne's actual ones. She had cried out: "Ah, Rouen! j'ay grant paour que tu ayes à souffrir de ma mort;" then several times called out the name, Jésus.¹³²

But Anouilh cannot let his Jeanne go up in flames. Baudricourt, the first one whom she had been able to convince of her holy mission,

¹³⁰France, op. cit., p. 395. ¹³¹Sackville-West, op. cit., p. 340.

¹³²Sackville-West, op. cit., pp. 341-42, citing the third volume of Procès, p. 53.

comes rushing onto the stage screaming, "Arrêtez! Arrêtez! Arrêtez!" (l'Alouette, p. 137) It seems they have forgotten to play the coronation scene; and it must be played, as it is a part of her story. All agree, and Charles remarks that the true ending of the story is a happy one. Jeanne is "l'alouette en plein ciel" (l'Alouette, p. 139).

As is so typical of Anouilh, the last words of the play are spoken ironically by a member of the nonheroic race. Jeanne's father tells his son:

Avance, toi. Et tire tes doigts de ton nez! Prends modèle sur ta soeur! Regarde comme elle est à l'honneur, qu'on se sent fier d'être son père! . . . J'avais toujours dit, moi, que cette petite avait de l'avenir . . . (l'Alouette, p. 139).

Although Anouilh has made few alterations in Jeanne's story and has recaptured her personality, he is unwilling to let her die heroically for God and her country, a concept that can easily be accepted. He must make of her his kind of heroine, one who above all else must be true to herself and die only for herself.

II. PAUVRE BITOS OU LE DINER DE TÊTES

When Pauvre Bitos ou le dîner de têtes¹³³ was first viewed in Paris in 1956, it brought about unanimous and vehement disapproval on the part of dramatic critics.¹³⁴ It is a play of bitter hatred, relentlessly portraying humanity at its lowest and meanest capacity, pitting rich against poor, even attacking the French and their political practices. To draw his parallel with modern society, Anouilh turns to the French Revolution, that period of extremes which magnified all that was vile in man.

The first act gives a clear picture of André Bitos, a victim of poverty who, as a scholarship student, was able to attain the highest marks in school in spite of the cruelty shown him by his wealthy schoolmates. After taking an active part in the Resistance against the occupation by the Germans during the Second World War, he became a deputy for the Procureur during the Fourth Republic and took part in the trials of those who had collaborated with the Germans. A man of principles, he refused to make compromises of any kind. His old school enemies, who hated him for his poverty and his winning of all the prizes, have organized a dinner party in which their heads only are disguised as characters from the French Revolution. The host, Maxime, has designated the role of Robespierre to Bitos. They are to pretend that the year is

¹³³Jean Anouilh, Pauvre Bitos ou le dîner de têtes in Pièces grinçantes (Paris: Les Editions de La Table Ronde, 1961), pp. 375-507.

¹³⁴Fowlie, op. cit., p. 110.

1793 and that each guest is to have studied well the character he impersonates. From behind these masks, they can unmercifully mock Bitos whose life is similar in many respects to Robespierre's. Bitos arrives in full costume, an error which immediately puts him on the defensive, and gullibly falls into every trap set for him. Finally realizing that they intend only to ridicule him, he says to his host:

Mon cher Maxime, je savais en venant chez vous que je serais le seul à défendre mes idées--et c'est un peu pourquoi je suis venu. Je pensais que cet échange d'idées serait vif, mais courtois (Pauvre Bitos, p. 413).

He then asks for his coat, but even this courtesy is denied him. Maxime explains that he must stay to play his role up to the end. The derision continues until a young man dressed as Merda, who had shot Robespierre in the jaw the night before he was guillotined,¹³⁵ suddenly enters the room. Bitos recognizes him as a man whom he condemned to twenty years imprisonment. The young man, who has since been released, shoots a blank cartridge, striking Bitos' jaw and causing him to faint. The second act is his dream in which the dinner party guests become the Revolutionary characters which they represent. Bitos, as Robespierre, is confronted with his childhood in which he submits to a beating by a Jesuit priest. He converses with Mirabeau, Saint-Just, Danton, Tallien, and Camille Desmoulins, all of whom were leaders of various factions of the Revolution. As he is dictating to Saint-Just the articles of the Revolutionary Tribunal, he revives. In the third act the other guests are no longer

¹³⁵Hilaire Belloc, The French Revolution (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), p. 145.

in costume. They feign friendship, force him to drink too much whiskey, and invite him to go to a night club with them. Victoire, who has recently refused Bitos' proposal of marriage, warns him that it is only a trick to humiliate him further. Anouilh's old theme of the value of being oneself is brought out in the only sincerely kind words in the play. Victoire tells Bitos:

Restez vous-même. Restez pauvre. La seule chose de vous que j'aurais pu aimer, si j'avais pu vous aimer, c'est précisément votre pauvreté. Mais c'est comme toutes les choses précieuses, c'est très fragile la pauvreté. Gardez la vôtre intacte, monsieur Bitos (Pauvre Bitos, p. 506).

Yet Anouilh's indictment against this poverty is a very strong theme in Pauvre Bitos.

In the second act, the episodes in the life of Robespierre are arranged, in defiance of the chronological order of history, so that Anouilh's purpose becomes clear. Robespierre was bloodthirsty and wicked, and he has grown into that kind of character because of his early poverty and because of the beatings he received in childhood.¹³⁶ Anouilh, in creating Bitos, has related degradation by poverty to contemporary life.

Robespierre, who was most influential as a member of the Committee of Public Safety, was an honest and inexorable fanatic. His private life was simple and dignified without affectation. They called him the Incorruptible. A disciple of Rousseau, he was virtuous and humane, but that did not prevent him from coldly sending to the guillotine those

¹³⁶Fowlie, op. cit., p. 111.

who had formerly been his best friends.¹³⁷ Bitos, either as himself or playing the part of Robespierre, is true to this description. Bitos' role as deputy corresponds in a small way to Robespierre's tyranny. Bitos serves himself sparingly at the dinner party and refers to himself as being incorruptible. Saint-Just, played by Maxime, refers to him as "un fils de Rousseau" (Pauvre Bitos, p. 450). Reference is made to Bitos' coldly condemning to death a former childhood friend and then giving an expensive doll to the man's child (Pauvre Bitos, pp. 385-86).

Robespierre was somewhat timid at first before the Constituent Assembly and unwilling to alienate the more famous leaders, but his confidence and his resourcefulness in debate developed rapidly. Before the Assembly had ended its session, he commanded attention, if not always respect, whenever he took the floor.¹³⁸ In the play he is very timid before Mirabeau, the great orator of the Revolution, as he discusses the subject of his first speech before the Assembly. Mirabeau gives him some good advice, and he is debating fluently before the end of his dream.

Robespierre-Bitos quotes verbatim from the decree for establishing the worship of the Supreme Being.¹³⁹ He says:

Article premier: Le peuple français reconnaît l'existence de l'Être suprême. Article second: Il reconnaît que le culte de l'Être suprême est la pratique des devoirs de l'homme (Pauvre Bitos, p. 469).

Robespierre's committee had summoned poets to celebrate the principal

¹³⁷Lévêque, op. cit., p. 253.

¹³⁸Leo Gershoy, The Era of the French Revolution, 1789-1799 (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1957), p. 135.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 160.

events of the Revolution, to compose hymns and poems, and republican dramas.¹⁴⁰ Robespierre-Bitos says to Saint-Just:

Tu vois, Saint-Just, ce qui nous manque: c'est une littérature qui exalterait les bons sentiments. Il faut que nous organisions une littérature! . . . Au fond, nous manquons de poètes . . . (Pauvre Bitos, p. 472).

Robespierre's great weakness was his love of popular acclaim. He so misread men that he believed the Terror to still be popular long after most men had found it deplorable.¹⁴¹ In the last act of the play, Bitos is unable to realize the insincerity of the other guests as they court his favor only to prolong their own amusement.

Bitos may be called an antihero, as he is like the members of Anouilh's heroic race in many ways, but here he is an object of mockery and scorn. The desire for purity has become a mechanical gesture of brushing himself which he does, much to the irritation of others, both as himself and as Robespierre.¹⁴² At one time he says:

J'aurais voulu que tout soit net, toujours, sans ratures, sans bavures, sans taches. (Il se brosse, égaré) (Pauvre Bitos, p. 494).

One of the major objections of the critics to the play was that it would confirm and strengthen anti-French feeling abroad.¹⁴³ France is ridiculed in several instances in the play. Vulturne, a count attending the party, apologizes for having wounded Bitos' feelings. He explains:

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 161. ¹⁴¹Bellco, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

¹⁴²Robert de Luppé, Jean Anouilh (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1959), p. 88.

¹⁴³Fowlie, op. cit., p. 110.

Cela prouve que la discussion politique est toujours très difficile en France. Nous avons tous, de part et d'autre, trop de vilaines histoires derrière nous. Pour longtemps, la haine est française . . . (Pauvre Bitos, p. 418).

In the last act as everyone is trying to win back the favor of Bitos, Brassac, one of the guests, says:

Tout cela nous prouve, mon cher Bitos, que nous étions d'assez mauvaise foi tout à l'heure tous en accusant ce pauvre Robespierre qui, au fond, n'a tué que le strict nécessaire, pour maintenir, pendant son court passage au pouvoir, une vieille tradition française! (Pauvre Bitos, p. 489)

Pauvre Bitos is skillfully constructed; but its blatant, caustic attacks on wealth, France, and humanity in general are as extreme as the Revolutionary spirit from which Anouilh draws his analogy.

III. BECKET OU L'HONNEUR DE DIEU

Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu¹⁴⁴ may well be Anouilh's greatest work. It is a serious play posing many questions. Immediately it won high praise from a host of Parisian critics.¹⁴⁵ Wide in scope, this historical narrative encompasses events from almost three decades, settings in several countries, medieval social strata from peasant to pope, and scenes ranging from tragedy to low farce. As in some of his other later plays, Anouilh seems to have turned toward more positive values in treating the existential problem of heroism versus compromise.

The inspiration for this drama came from an episode of twelfth-century England about one hundred years after the Norman Conquest when Henry II, the first Plantagenet, was King. It was an era of conflicting power between Church and State in a feudal society. Thomas à Becket was then Archdeacon of Canterbury. It was Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who introduced him to the King. Henry took an immediate liking to Becket and soon appointed him to the position of chancellor. Not only did he prove himself an able administrator, but he became the trusted friend of the King as well.¹⁴⁶

When Theobald died, Henry felt it would be a shrewd move in his

¹⁴⁴Jean Anouilh, Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu in Pièces costumées (Paris: Les Editions de La Table Ronde, 1962), pp. 145-296.

¹⁴⁵Peter Forster, "Old Guard and New Wave," The Spectator, CCIII (December, 1959), p. 827.

¹⁴⁶Arnold Durant, The Age of Faith (Vol. IV of The Story of Civilization, 9 vols.; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), p. 670.

struggle for power against the Church to have his chancellor be archbishop as well. Becket had never failed to take a stand for the King's authority, and Henry thought that in this way he could insure himself of sympathetic church leadership. In spite of Becket's warning that such an appointment would end their friendship, Henry used his direct influence to have Becket elected Archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁴⁷ Becket had been notorious for his pomp and splendor, and his new appointment brought about an abrupt change. He gave up his stately palace, his royal raiment, and his noble friends. He put on coarse garb, ate simply, fed the poor at banquets, became an unyielding defender of all the accustomed rights and privileges of the Church, and sent Henry his resignation as chancellor. Henry, discovering that his friend had turned adversary, persuaded his knights and bishops to sign the Constitutions of Clarendon, which ended many clerical immunities. Becket refused to put his seal upon the documents, but Henry promulgated the new laws nevertheless and summoned the prelate to trial at the royal court. When the court ordered his arrest, he declared that he would appeal to the Pope; and, as no one dared touch his archiepiscopal robes, he walked unharmed from the room, gave a banquet for the poor, and escaped in disguise.¹⁴⁸

He gave his resignation as Archbishop to Pope Alexander III and submitted to living as a simple monk in the abbey of Pontigny in France.

¹⁴⁷Thomas B. Costain, The Conquering Family (Vol. I of A History of the Plantagenets, 4 vols.; New York: Doubleday and Company, 1962), p. 56.

¹⁴⁸Durant, op. cit., p. 671.

When Henry came to Normandy, Thomas left his cell and pronounced the excommunication of the English clergy who had opposed him.¹⁴⁹ The quarrel between King and Archbishop lasted for six years. Louis VII of France accorded Becket asylum for many of his years of exile. Henry decided to have his eldest son crowned and let him share some of the responsibility of ruling. As only the Archbishop of Canterbury had the right to crown a king of England, Henry received special permission from the Pope to have the Archbishop of York do the honor, thus insulting Becket. Finally Henry and Becket approached a reconciliation at a meeting at Fréteval in Touraine and met for a last time at Chaumont. At this time Becket indicated that he knew they would never see each other again in this life. Becket then repeated his excommunication of the bishops, secretly crossed the Channel, and rode in triumph past crowds of cheering commoners to Canterbury.¹⁵⁰ Henry, who had an uncontrollable temper, fell into a rage, denouncing all in his household for being cowards as none of them would rid him of his adversary. Four knights who heard him left Normandy and went to England, apparently without the knowledge of the King. On December 30, 1170, they found the Archbishop at the altar of the cathedral in Canterbury and murdered him there. All Christendom was struck with horror. Henry secluded himself in his chambers, refusing food for three days. He issued orders for the

¹⁴⁹Winston S. Churchill, The Birth of Britain (Vol. I of A History of the English Speaking Peoples, 4 vols.; New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1965), p. 205.

¹⁵⁰Costain, op. cit., p. 75.

apprehension of the assassins; sent emissaries to the Pope, promising to perform any penance he might require. He rescinded the Constitutions of Clarendon, and restored all the previous rights and property of the Church. The Church pronounced Becket a saint in 1172, and soon thousands were making pilgrimages to his shrine. Henry, too, came to Canterbury as a penitent pilgrim, walking the last three miles with bare and bleeding feet. He prostrated himself before the tomb and begged the monks to scourge him.¹⁵¹

The account is dramatic enough without alteration, but as usual Anouilh made no attempt at historical accuracy. His idea for portraying Becket as a Saxon and the subtitle, l'honneur de Dieu, both came from Augustin Thierry's now outmoded Norman Conquest of England,¹⁵² first published in 1825. Thierry used as one of his sources a chronicle of the fifteenth century. This work is now known to be a forgery.¹⁵³ Present historians state that Becket was of Norman descent, whereas Thierry, who felt deeply the horror of the Norman Conquest, elaborates on Becket's Saxon origin. Thierry says that Becket, while young, was sent to France to lose his English accent.¹⁵⁴ In the play, when Henri asks Becket how he is able to speak French without a trace of accent, he replies:

¹⁵¹Durant, op. cit., p. 672. ¹⁵²Forster, op. cit., p. 827.

¹⁵³Augustin Thierry, Thierry's Norman Conquest of England with an introduction by J. Arthur Price (ed.), Vol. I (London: J. M. Dent and Company, n.d.), p. ix.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., Vol. II., p. 60.

Mes parents . . . m'ont envoyé tout jeune en France y prendre un bon accent français (Becket, p. 149).

This portrayal of Becket as a Saxon is one of the mainsprings of the action and the foundation for Anouilh's characterization of Becket and his relationship with the King.¹⁵⁵

The subtitle, l'honneur de Dieu, comes from a statement Becket supposedly made to Henry at the end of his exile, in which he submitted to the King's judgment as sovereign arbiter in all things save the honor of God. Henry was quick to realize that the defense of the honor of God could be twisted to veto all that pleased the King and support all that pleased Becket.¹⁵⁶ Here Anouilh found an excellent situation for one of his uncompromising heroes.

He begins his play with Henri kneeling before Becket's tomb. The ghost of Becket appears, and the two, recalling their last fruitless dialogue, say:

Le Roi: Je te l'ai dit: "Sauf l'honneur du royaume!" C'est toi qui m'avais appris la formule, pourtant.

Becket: Je t'ai répondu: "Sauf l'honneur de Dieu!" C'était un dialogue de sourds (Becket, pp. 145-46).

By using the flashback technique, Anouilh then artistically traces their lives together through friendship and enmity, following the historical outline of the story, to the tragic conclusion. The stage is suddenly darkened as the four murderers throw themselves on Becket.

¹⁵⁵"Theatre Notes," English XIV (Spring, 1962), p. 20.

¹⁵⁶Thierry, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 89.

The lights come on effectively showing Henri in the place of Becket with four monks making the same gestures in beating Henri with cords as the barons had made in killing Becket with swords. The device of beginning and ending the play with the King's penance allowed Anouilh to frame the story in irony. As the monks finish lashing him, the King cries out:

Tu es content, Becket? Il est en ordre, notre compte? L'honneur de Dieu est lavé? (Becket, p. 295)

The King declares that Becket will henceforth be honored as a saint, but he then cynically dispatches one of Becket's known slayers to apprehend the murderers, thus making it obvious that political opportunism, and not conviction, has led the King to revere his late Archbishop.¹⁵⁷

Anouilh follows history closely in the major events of the play, but he admits not having seriously bothered to find out what Henry II or even Becket was really like. He created the King he wanted and the ambiguous Becket he needed.¹⁵⁸

Anouilh's King bears little resemblance to the historical Henry except in his strong temper, his many love affairs, and the persistence with which he fought against the power of the Church.¹⁵⁹ Thomas Costain depicts him as an athletic and decisive man, possessing tremendous energy and a keen intellect. He loved war. He was a hard taskmaster,

¹⁵⁷Harvey, op. cit., p. 97. ¹⁵⁸"Theatre Notes," loc. cit.

¹⁵⁹Durant, op. cit., p. 670.

but hardest always on himself. On the morning of a departure, he would be up at dawn, roaring orders and bundling state papers himself to facilitate an immediate start.¹⁶⁰ Anouilh's Henri has "la peau tellement fragile" (Becket, p. 146), is always complaining of the cold, and likes to sleep until noon (Becket, p. 147). Following a battle with the French, Becket comes to Henri's tent to report the casualties and to discuss the future strategy for the war. Henri is more interested in amusing himself with a French girl. He would rather not hear the names of those he knows who have been killed, and finds it difficult to pay attention to Becket's military advice (Becket, pp. 195-200). By his own admission, he does not have "énormément de courage" (Becket, p. 150). When he appoints Becket chancellor, he tells him: "Je ne faisais rien sans ton conseil" (Becket, p. 154). His weakness finds its extreme in the fictitious incident of Henri's tricking Becket into giving him his faithful mistress. When he finds the girl, who has committed suicide, dead on his bed, he comes trembling to Becket for comfort. Like a frightened child, he crawls into Becket's bed; and, when he cries out in the night because of nightmares, Becket pats him and soothes him with these words: "Mon prince . . . Mon prince . . . Dormez en paix, je suis là" (Becket, pp. 185-86).

The Henry of history was an indulgent and affectionate father, showing a special love for his eldest son.¹⁶¹ Anouilh never has him utter a kind word to his son. When the King offers the son the honored

¹⁶⁰Costain, op. cit., pp. 24-25. ¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 46.

place at the table, after announcing his intention of having him crowned, he says to him: "Allons, bouger, grouille! Tu es Roi, mais tu es toujours aussi bête" (Becket, p. 283).

The historical Henry, showing a desire to rule well, made it a practice to visit the outlying parts of the kingdom.¹⁶² Anouilh's Henri has obviously made no effort to discover how his subjects live. When Becket and Henri are caught in a rainstorm and forced to find refuge in a peasant's cottage, Becket must explain to Henri that the room is cold because the peasants are allowed only a small quota of wood and that the only food they could possibly serve would be turnips as they are not allowed to cultivate anything else (Becket, pp. 165-67).

When Becket takes seriously his role as Archbishop and thus must oppose the King, Henri acts "like a rejected lover."¹⁶³ Throughout the last part of the play, as he opposes his former friend, King Henry often laments "O mon Thomas!" and "Je l'ai aimé!" (Becket, pp. 244; 290 et passim).

Becket, on the other hand, is more like his historical counterpart. One exception, however, concerns his conduct up to the point of his being appointed Archbishop. Winston Churchill states that Becket's private life had always been both pious and correct.¹⁶⁴ Anouilh's Becket is a libertine who shares in a life of debauchery with the King.

¹⁶²Costain, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

¹⁶³Tom F. Driver, "Drama: Ambiguous Battle," Christian Century LXXVII (November, 1960), p. 1285.

¹⁶⁴Churchill, op. cit., p. 206.

Costain describes Becket as having a compelling personality, being an amazingly fine soldier, and possessing mental resources which the King lacked. Henry willingly conceded Becket's superiority.¹⁶⁵ This description may also be applied to Anouilh's Becket. The historical Becket loved magnificence, pomp, and showmanship, easily outshining the King.¹⁶⁶ Anouilh bears this out in the following dialogue:

Thomas: Mon Seigneur, vous savez que ma nouvelle vaisselle d'or est arrivée de Florence? Mon roi me fera-t-il l'honneur de venir l'étrenner chez moi?

Le Roi: De la vaisselle d'or! Quel fou tu fais?

Thomas: Je lance cette mode.

Le Roi: Je suis ton roi et moi je mange dans de l'argent! (Becket, p. 151)

Anouilh even goes so far as to have Becket introduce the use of forks into England. Typical of the type of humor scattered throughout the play, the barons, when first confronted with the new fourchettes, think they are for gouging out each other's eyes until Becket explains their function (Becket, p. 176).

For Anouilh's Becket, his metamorphosis after becoming Archbishop is largely one of appearance and change of loyalties. Even before his appointment, Becket stated:

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

He enjoys giving away his rich possessions as much as he has enjoyed amassing them. He can play the Archbishop role equally as well as he

¹⁶⁵Costain, op. cit., pp. 28; 54. ¹⁶⁶ibid., pp. 54-55.

has played his former roles. The second act ends with Becket remarking to God:

Seigneur, vous (sic.) êtes sûr que Vous ne me tentez pas? Cela me paraît trop simple (Becket, p. 222).

The only long, serious prayer of Becket's in the play occurs while he is living under the strict discipline at the Pontigny monastery. Again he expresses his feeling that all is too easy. It is not difficult to serve God in an austere surrounding. He makes his decision to return to Canterbury, ending his prayer with these words:

Je retournerai à cette première place, humblement, laissant le monde m'accuser d'orgueil, pour y faire ce que je crois mon ouvrage. Pour le reste, que Votre volonté soit faite! (Becket, p. 260)

One never has the feeling that Becket suffers. We are aware that he is alone in his struggle; but, if and when he suffers, we are hardly conscious of it so pronounced are his wit, clever ingenuity, composure, and determination. Ironically, it is the historical Becket who is the suffering hero. Here is a man who, in becoming a zealot, fasted so often that his cheekbones sharpened. He prayed continuously and in humility, "tears streaming down his face as his supplicating voice went on and on."¹⁶⁷ At the time Becket appeared at his trial, he was ailing. As he carried a heavy silver cross in front of him,¹⁶⁸ he might have been compared to the suffering Christ. However, Anouilh does not have his Becket appear on the stage in this condition. A page merely reports to the King:

¹⁶⁷Costain, op. cit., p. 63. ¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 69.

Mon Seigneur, Thomas Becket est apparu au moment où on ne l'attendait plus, malade, tout pâle, en grand habit pontifical et portant lui-même la lourde croix d'argent. Il a traversé toute la salle sans que personne n'ose l'arrêter Et puis il retraversé la foule qui s'écartait muette. Il vient de repartir (Becket, p. 246).

Before our emotions can properly respond, Henri interprets the scene as another of Becket's clever tricks. He cries joyously: "Bien joué, Thomas, tu marques le point!" (Becket, p. 246) As the page continues to relate the incident, telling how no one dared touch him in his holy garments, Henri remembers which side he is on, blushes, and cries out:

Les imbéciles! Je suis entourné d'imbéciles, et le seul homme intelligent de mon royaume est contre moi! (Becket, p. 247)

Only as his murderers approach him are we allowed to realize fully the difficulty Becket has endured. His final words are these:

Ah! que Vous rendez tout difficile et que Votre honneur est lourd!
(Il dit encore soudain, tout bas) Pauvre Henri (Becket, p. 294).

It was this love for the honor of God that brought about the break between the King and his friend. Becket explains: "Que l'honneur de Dieu et l'honneur du roi se confondent" (Becket, p. 271). Anouilh has used the word honneur as a dramatic demonstration of the existentialist idea that a man is the sum of his acts and that the essence of a concept must follow and not precede the acts themselves which define it. The word itself is merely a label. To Becket the label comes to mean an ideal to serve, to live for, and ultimately to die for. Becket's honor is achieved in solitude and defined in and by the actions to which he attaches the name; his definition is neither acceptable nor understandable to Henri nor to the world in which he has chosen to live.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹Jesse C. Gatlin, Jr., "Becket and Honor: A Trim Reckoning," Modern Drama, VIII (December, 1965), p. 283.

Two other modern plays, T. S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral and Christopher Fry's Curtmantle are both based on the same historical story that Anouilh has used. Anouilh's play is written from a more secular and existentialist point of view, as he finds the world more disorderly and shapeless than do either of his English contemporaries.¹⁷⁰ But like them he created out of the raw material of history a drama which bends to the author's purposes.

¹⁷⁰ Emil Roy, "The Becket Plays: Eliot, Fry, and Anouilh," Modern Drama, VIII (December, 1965), p. 276.

IV. LA FOIRE D'EMPOIGNE

La Foire d'empoigne¹⁷¹ is based on Napoleon's hundred days following his escape from the island of Elbe. Anouilh does not attempt to contradict the record of history; but rather, in a light vein, he parallels the two rulers, Napoleon and Louis XVIII, to show the absurdity of political struggle; and, in the fictitious character d'Anouville, he satirizes his own death-seeking heroes.

Following the collapse of the empire and his abdication, Napoleon had been sent to the tiny island of Elbe near Italy, over which he was to have full sovereignty, but which he was never supposed to leave. Louis XVIII had been brought back from exile, thus restoring the throne to the Bourbons. The King fled, however, when he heard of Napoleon's escape and his approach to Paris. Although the play begins with Napoleon's arrival at the palace of the Tuileries, allusions are made to various events in his triumphant march to Paris. For example, when his small force found an infantry regiment barring the road near Grenoble, he advanced alone in his familiar gray overcoat, shouting for them to kill their Emperor if they wished. A single shot would have finished the adventure; but the regiment, ignoring all commands to fire, broke ranks, and surrounded Napoleon with acclamations of "Vive l'Empereur!"¹⁷² Marshal Ney, known in the play only as le maréchal, had sworn to bring

¹⁷¹Jean Anouilh, La Foire d'empoigne in Pièces costumées (Paris: Les Editions de La Table Ronde, 1962), pp. 301-371.

¹⁷²Felix Markham, Napoleon (New York: New American Library, 1963), p. 213.

Napoleon back in an iron cage and place him before the throne, but he refused his chance and joined Napoleon.¹⁷³ Napoléon in the play reminds the marshal of these events. He says:

Je vois qu'on n'a plus très bon esprit! Vous regrettez de ne pas m'avoir arrêté comme vous l'aviez juré à Louis XVIII?

.
Je me suis présenté devant vos hommes; je leur ai crié: "Tirez sur votre Empereur" en entrouvrant ma redingote (ce qui était un geste superflu, j'en conviens). Il fallait commander: "Feu!" (la Foire d'empoigne, pp. 309-10)

Napoleon had returned insisting that his empire would be a force for peace, but the allied powers at Vienna publically outlawed him, and it was necessary to take up arms again. This time he met his defeat at Waterloo and was forced to abdicate once more, thus restoring Louis XVIII to the throne.¹⁷⁴ Anouilh skips over these details, assuming the audience's familiarity with them.

The last scene is of Napoléon aboard the English ship, Bellerophon. Napoleon had considered fleeing to America, but he had hesitated too long and his escape was prevented by an English blockade. He decided to seek asylum with the English; and, relying on their sense of honor, he signed his famous letter to the Prince Regent,* part of which is quoted by Napoléon in the play. He reads:

"Je viens, comme Thémistocle, m'asseoir au foyer du peuple britannique. L'Angleterre a toujours été mon plus loyal ennemi . . . etc." (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 368)

¹⁷³Emil Ludwig, Napoleon, translated by Eden and Cadar Paul (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Company, 1926), p. 510.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 530.

*The son of George III, who was ruling for his father.

As in l'Alouette, Anouilh makes use of theatricality to emphasize that his heroes are only playing out the roles that Destiny has written for them. In reference to Napoléon's return, Fouché, his ministre de la Police says:

Vous l'imaginiez finissant comme un chef de bataillon en retraite entre ses mille hommes, à l'île d'Elbe, un acteur pareil? Vous ne connaissez pas le théâtre. Il sait qu'il est perdu mais il vient se faire une sortie. Il l'avait ratée la première fois (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 304).

Throughout the play, Napoléon parades himself as an opportunist devoid of any conviction, a soulless actor who bases his every move on the impression it will create.¹⁷⁵

Louis XVIII is true to his historical record: obese, suffering from gout, less royalist than his supporters, and willing to make concessions to the new ideas brought about by the Revolution.¹⁷⁶

The personalities of the two leaders are contradictory. When Napoléon learns that Louis knew three weeks in advance that he was marching toward Paris, Napoléon exclaims: "Ah, j'aurais voulu être à sa place!" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 313) But the positions of the two men are very similar. Perhaps to underscore this, Anouilh who, along with Roland Pietri, directed the production, had one actor play both parts.¹⁷⁷ Napoléon considers his seizing France again as a repetition of her history. He exclaims: "Quelle foire d'empoigne, l'histoire de France!" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 320) Louis, in like manner, grasps

¹⁷⁵Harvey, op. cit., p. 53. ¹⁷⁶Lévêque, op. cit., p. 291.

¹⁷⁷Harvey, op. cit., p. 165.

all he can of what Napoléon has given France, including a more effective government. He says: "Je suis preneur! C'est la foire d'empoigne" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 347). When Louis is back in power for the second time, he remarks in reference to Napoléon: "Je comprends qu'il regrette la France. Moi aussi je l'ai regrettée" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 338). The likeness is further shown when Napoléon asserts: "Je travaillais pour toute la France, moi! . . . Pas pour une petite élite de raffinés" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 323). Louis similarly claims: "Je vais travailler, pendant les quelques années qui me restent à vivre, pour le bien de la France et non pour le mien" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 336). He further indicates: "Je ne puis pas être le roi de la petite poignée d'hommes qui m'a été fidèle" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 342).

The political game of musical chairs has its repercussions on all levels. Napoléon hesitates in taking over Louis' quarters for fear of finding himself "nez à nez avec ses vieilles pantoufles fleurdelysées" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 309). When Louis is back, he gives Napoléon a week to be gone, adding, "Qu'il les emporte, après tout, ses pantoufles!" (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 338)

The parallelism is most pronounced in their relations with Fouché. He was, in real life as in the play, a man seemingly indispensable to both Napoleon and the Bourbons, both of whom knew he was playing a double game but neglected to do anything seriously about it.¹⁷⁸ In the play, Napoléon has him arrested, then immediately realizes that he needs him,

¹⁷⁸Ludwig, op. cit., pp. 230-31.

and has him released (la Foire d'empoigne, pp. 315-16). In Louis' turn, he likewise decides to utilize Fouché despite the advice offered against it and his personal repugnance for the man. As Napoléon discusses with Fouché a list of names for an épuration (a word furnished by the character d'Anouville) the curtain falls. When it rises, the hundred days have elapsed, Louis is in Napoléon's place, and Fouché is helping the King make out a list for proscription (la Foire d'empoigne, pp. 333-34).

In Anouilh's earlier plays there is very often a member of the older generation, such as Eurydice's father, who is ignoble and grotesque, and opposes his young, uncompromising hero in his search for purity. As Anouilh approached his fifties, he not unnaturally turned to caricaturing the younger generation and displaying a more tolerant attitude toward the older one. His young d'Anouville, by his words and acts, is a brutal caricature of the heroes of former plays; and by his name, he is a caricature of his creator.¹⁷⁹

D'Anouville is supposedly the illegitimate son of Fouché and a prisoner in Fouché's keeping during the Revolution. Fouché had also been responsible for her husband's execution. D'Anouville hates Fouché for his lack of loyalty to Napoléon. Before discovering that Fouché is his father, he attempts to assassinate him. The bullet, however, strikes far from its target and makes a hole in Louis' hat. Louis forgives him and sends him back to Napoléon whom d'Anouville

¹⁷⁹Harvey, op. cit., p. 40.

idolizes. From the first meeting between Napoléon and d'Anouville, the young lieutenant continually avows at the slightest provocation that he wishes to die for his Emperor. Napoléon, for his part, often seems to be thinking of something else, forgets who the young man is, mocks his idealism, or sends him away for being so stupid. In the last scene Napoléon reads him his letter to the English and tries to explain to d'Anouville why he is writing it. Unsure as to whether the young man understands what he is saying, he asks if he is following him.

D'Anouville hears only the word suivez. With much emotion, he exclaims:

Ah, Sire! Je voudrais faire mieux. Je voudrais vous donner ma vie et vous suivre là-bas (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 368).

But unlike Anouilh's Jeanne d'Arc and Antigone, he does not get his wish. He is forced to live the compromise of this life. When Napoléon tells him to write to let him know what becomes of him, d'Anouville, in tears, says: "Je le sais déjà, Sire. Me marier et avoir des enfants."

Napoléon answers indifferently:

Eh bien, c'est une idée comme une autre! Mais, croyez-moi, ne leur parlez pas trop d'idéal à vos gamins. Ce n'est pas un bagage pour la vie (la Foire d'empoigne, p. 371).

Anouilh seems to have used this page of history to indicate, among other things, that he no longer believes that one must die absurdly to keep from compromising with the world. Idealism is incompatible with life; but, since we must relinquish one or the other, let it be idealism.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

It is interesting to note that all of Anouilh's mythological plays were written within a five-year span. Six years elapsed before he began writing plays based on characters from history. These two groups of plays contain his most significant work and are representative of his theatricality, his themes, and his ideas. The action in all of the mythological and historical plays is guided by fate; the heroines and heroes are merely playing out their destinies. The outcome is never a surprise. Some reference is made to the characters playing their roles in all of these plays, but in Oreste and l'Alouette we are most aware that we are in the theater and are witnessing the dramatization of events which have already happened. Eurydice and Médée are typical of Anouilh's love theme. Pauvre Bitos exemplifies his ideas on the evils of poverty and l'Alouette represents its glories. Antigone is the epitome of Anouilh's many uncompromising, nihilistic heroines, who seek death as the only means of expressing their freedom and revolt against all that is impure in this world. Jeanne d'Arc is most like Antigone; and Electre, in Oreste, shares her obsession with a single idea. Anouilh seems to have become disillusioned with his own pessimism and the negative aspect of his central character. The first hint of this comes in Médée to whom compromise offers more virtue than does the freedom of being herself. Becket is obsessed with a single purpose; but he does not seek death; he accepts it as a valid means of defending and

perpetuating a positive idea. Death-seeking is finally made ridiculous in the character of d'Anouville in la Foire d'empoigne. As fate is such an important factor in his plays, Anouilh naturally turned to mythology for some of his basic plots. As we look back into history, it is difficult to imagine the world's great men and women fulfilling any roles other than those which they have lived. Thus, here again, Anouilh was able to find characters who seem to have been guided by fate. Anouilh is always concerned with the human predicament and the problems man faces in this imperfect world. Mythology and history have both offered him an opportunity to compare the past with the present, thus showing that neither man nor his problems change basically.

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A discussion of Becket and the sources Anouilh used in writing it.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Chronology of Anouilh's major plays: when written, if known (dates are in parentheses), and when and where first performed.

- L'Herrine (1931), April 26, 1932, Théâtre de l'Oeuvre.
- Le Bal des voleurs (1932), September 17, 1938, Théâtre des Arts.
- Y avait un Prisonnier (1934), March 21, 1935, Théâtre des Ambassadeurs.
- La Sauvage (1934), January 10, 1938, Théâtre des Mathurins.
- Le Voyageur sans bagage (1936), February 16, 1937, Théâtre des Mathurins.
- Le Rendez-vous de Senlis (1937), January, 1941, Théâtre de l'Atelier.
- Léccadia (1939), November, 1940, Théâtre de la Michodière.
- Eurydice (1941), December 18, 1942, Théâtre de l'Atelier.
- Antigone (1942), February 4, 1944, Théâtre de l'Atelier.
- Roméo et Jeannette (1945), December 3, 1946, Théâtre de l'Atelier.
- L'Invitation au château (1946), November 4, 1947, Théâtre de l'Atelier.
- Médée (1946), March 26, 1953, Théâtre de l'Atelier.
- Ardèle ou la marguerite (1948), November 3, 1948, Comédie des Champs-Elysées.
- Cécile (1949), October 29, 1954, Comédie des Champs-Elysées.
- La Répétition ou l'amour puni (1950), October 25, 1950, Théâtre Marigny.
- Colombe (1950), February 11, 1951, Théâtre de l'Atelier.
- La Valse des toréadors (1951), January 9, 1952, Comédie des Champs-Elysées.
- L'Alouette (1952), October 14, 1953, Théâtre Montparnasse.
- Quinifle ou le courant d'air (1955), November 3, 1955, Comédie des Champs-Elysées.
- Pauvre Bitos ou le dîner de têtes (1956), October 11, 1956, Théâtre Montparnasse.

L'Arkluberlu ou le réactionnaire amoureux (1958), February 5, 1959,
Comédie des Champs-Élysées.

Badité ou l'honneur de Dieu (1958), October 1, 1959, Théâtre Montparnasse.

La Foire d'empoigne (1959), January 11, 1962, Comédie des Champs-Élysées.

Le Sonce du critique, November 5, 1960, Comédie des Champs-Élysées.

La Grotte, October 4, 1961, Théâtre Montparnasse.

L'Orchestre, February 10, 1962, Comédie des Champs-Élysées.

This list was compiled from similar lists in Anouilh, A Study in Theatrics by John Harvey and The World of Jean Anouilh by Leonard Cabell Pronko. These books are found in the Bibliography.