A study of the theme "the refusal to accept reality" as portrayed by female characters in three plays by Jean Anouilh

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ABSTRACT

FRENCH

THOMAS, MELVIN ANDREW  B. S., Fort Valley State College, 1963

A Study of the Theme "The Refusal to Accept Reality As Portrayed by Female Characters in Three Plays by Jean Anouilh."

Advisor: Professor Benjamin F. Hudson, Jr.

Master of Arts degree conferred August 5, 1967

Thesis dated August 1967

Jean Anouilh's favorite theme, "the refusal to accept reality has been stated by most of his critics to be the dominant theme in his pièces noires. This thesis is an attempt to show that this theme of revolt is also dominant in some of his pièces roses and pièces brillantes. The writer points this out through critical analyses of three plays each representative of Anouilh's three groups of plays.

Definitions of the theme, "the refusal to accept reality" and how it reflects the personal ideas of a contemporary French playwright are also pointed out in this thesis.

There is an attempt to show how Anouilh has created female characters as main illustrators of the theme in question. The writer gives a critical analysis of each female character who illustrates the theme. Emphasis is placed on the author's development of these characters in relation to their portrayal of the theme.

It is also pointed out in this thesis that some minor themes are
interwoven into the dominant theme of each play. It is through these minor themes that one recognizes the moralistic tendencies of Anouilh. These minor themes reflect the ideas of a moralist, a perfectionist, and an individual deeply concerned with man's conditions and destiny.

The chapter headings reveal the sequence of the contents:

I. Introduction or Background Information

II. Critical Analysis of Antigone, Le Bal Des Voleurs and L'Invitation au Château with Emphasis on the Development of the Theme

III. Analysis and Comparison of Female Characters through which the Theme is Illustrated

IV. The Relationship of the Principal Theme with Certain Minor Themes in the Three Plays
A STUDY OF THE THEME "THE REFUSAL TO ACCEPT REALITY"
AS PORTRAYED BY FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THREE PLAYS
BY JEAN ANOUILH

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
MELVIN ANDREW THOMAS

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
AUGUST 1967
Jean Anouilh is considered to be one of the outstanding contemporary French dramatists. Since the success of his first play, L'Hermine in 1932, Anouilh has written approximately thirty successful plays. These plays have been classified by the author as: pièces noires, pièces brillantes, and pièces roses. Anouilh has achieved the greater part of his success from his pièces noires, which are generally modernized versions of classical Greek tragedies.

The author began his career during the turbulent period between the two World Wars. Before his success as a playwright, Anouilh's life was the classical story of poverty and struggle. These experiences have played an important role in the development of one of the principal themes found in most of his plays. The Refusal to Accept Reality is said to be the central theme found only in the pièces noires.

In this study, the writer proposes to examine critically this theme in one play, taken from each of the three groups, and to study the use of female characters to illustrate the theme.

The Refusal to Accept Reality is the title given to Anouilh's theme by Pronko in his book The World of Jean Anouilh. It represents a conflict between the ideal and the real resulting in the refusal of life as it is by the idealist. It is the dichotomy of good and evil, the impossibility of the alliance of the ideal and the real, and it represents an attitude of revolt in which purity and compromise are
What is the significance of the theme, The Refusal to Accept Reality, and how does the author relate it to man's conditions and situations? How does he use female characters to illustrate the theme? These are questions which the writer intends to resolve in this study.

The writer is deeply indebted to Dr. Benjamin F. Hudson, Jr., Chairman of the French Department of Atlanta University, for his guidance and encouragement and for the valuable suggestions he has given the writer. The writer owes a special debt of gratitude to his wife, Mrs. Wynell L. Thomas, whose encouragement and personal sacrifices made it possible for him to remain in school. Sincere thanks are extended to Mrs. Dorothy B. Sims for the typing of this manuscript.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Critical Analysis of Antigone, Le Bal des Voleurs, and L'Invitation au Château with Emphasis on the Development of the Theme</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Analysis and Comparison of Female Characters Through Which the Theme is Illustrated</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. The Relationship of the Principal Theme with Certain Minor Themes in the Three Plays</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Jean Anouilh, like many contemporary French playwrights, reflects in his theater a profound pessimism which is a direct result and reflection of the troubled spirit that existed during the period between the two World Wars. He began his career during the early thirties, a period of political, social economical unrest and uncertainty. The French people, during this time were still affected by the costly disaster of World War I and were also threatened by the approaching World War II. Indeed, this was a period of complete instability. Andre Leveque gives a brief and concise picture of this time between the two wars:

La période entre, les deux guerres fut une période d'instabilité, d'incertitude du lendemain, de conflits de toute sorte, conflit entre l'idéologie fasciste et l'idéologie communiste ... Les années qui suivirent la première guerre mondiale furent pour la France, celles de ce qu'on a appelé l'effritement de la victoire.1

Inevitably, the socio-economic conditions of this period were to have a tremendous influence on the literary and philosophical front. Many different trends of thought sprang up from this period of uncertainty. At the base of these philosophies, such as the existentialism of Jean Paul Satre and the theme of the absurd of Camus, there is an

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undertone of pessimism. Along with the development of these new trends of thought, new forms of literary creations were also developed, mainly, as means through which these ideas were to be presented. The contemporary French theater had its origin in the revolutionary literary genre of Alfred Jarry. Since the first controversial presentation of Jarry’s *King Abu*, there were developed new trends of literary genres such as the avant-garde theatre, having such distinguished playwrights as Guillaume Appollinaire, Jean Cocteau, and Antonin Artaud; the Dada movement with Tristan Tzara as its leader and the surrealistic movement with André Breton as its leader were also developed as a result of Jarry’s innovations in the theater. Each of these post Jarry literary movements reflects the anti-realistic concepts of Jarry’s original intention. This anti-realistic idea found in these various literary schools has produced some very radical and audacious styles and forms in theatricality. These new schools opened doors to a new spirit in drama. This new spirit was antididactic, antisentimental and anti-traditional in scope. According to S. A. Rhodes:

...it aimed at a more imaginative, picturesque, and poetic interpretation of life than the pre-war theater had afforded. It was more dynamic in character, tending to portray the thoughts and actions of men on the stage which they would not confess to themselves in life.¹

The theater of Jean Anouilh does not belong to any particular school mentioned above. However, his theater possesses, to a certain extent, characteristics of all these literary schools. It is Anouilh’s anti-realistic tendencies which are basically in accordance with the new

trends of thought in the theater. In Anouilh's theater, an ingenious and fanciful approach to the stage generally brings us to the borders of the fantastic. Michael Benedikt points out how Anouilh does this:

The playwright's use of whimsical structural devices--disguises, mistaken identities, and denouements of sudden simplicity in which it is impossible to believe--reinforces the impression of this literary territory. Anouilh's presentation of harlequin-like sprites in his dramas and interpolated musical and balletic sequences tend to place his virtuosic use of anti-realistic stagecraft conspicuously within the perspective of tradition.¹

Anouilh's career as a playwright was developed, therefore, during a period in which different trends were prevalent in the world of dramatics. His theater represents no simple dramatic school; it exhibits aspects of most of the trends that were influential in its development. His ideas reflect the instability, the uncertainty, and the profound pessimism that existed in French society during the developmental period of his career.

Jean Anouilh has not exposed much of his personal life and ideas to the public. He has even refused to discuss his works. He has surrounded himself with a general anonymity. In answer to a request made by Hubert Gignoux for a biographical sketch, Jean Anouilh sent the following brief, clear-cut passage:

Je n'ai pas de biographie, et j'en suis très content. Je suis né le 23 juin 1910 à Bordeaux, je suis venu jeune à Paris, j'ai été à l'école primaire supérieure Colbert, au collège Chaptal. Un an et demi à la Faculté de Droit de Paris, deux ans dans une maison de publicité, où j'ai pris des leçons de précision et d'ingéniosité qui m'ont tenu lieu d'études poétiques. Après L'Hermine, j'ai décidé de ne vivre que du théâtre, et un peu du cinéma. C'était une folie que j'ai tout de même fait de décider. J'ai réussi à ne jamais faire de

Since early childhood, Anouilh has been associated or in close contact with the theater. His mother, a violinist, worked at the Casino d'Arcachon and Anouilh, then eight years old, had an opportunity to see many plays and operas. He was also exposed to many aspects of the theater which later proved to be fruitful in his career as a playwright. He frequently attended the theater and opera houses; this contributed, therefore, to his interest and achievement as an outstanding French dramatist. During his adolescence Anouilh attempted to write without much success several plays in verse, poetry and vaudevilles.

It was Jean Giraudoux who influenced Anouilh to devote his life to the theater. After Giraudoux's death, Anouilh pays tribute to him and, in doing so, reveals to us that it was Giraudoux who really inspired him:

Mon vrai choc au théâtre, ce fut Giraudoux. Je n'ai rien fait, j'espère, qui lui ressemble. Mais c'est Giraudoux qui m'a appris qu'on pouvait avoir au théâtre une langue poétique et artificelle qui demeure plus vraie que la conversation sténographiée, je n'avais pas idée de ça. Ce fut ma révélation.2

Many contemporary French dramatists were successful in other literary forms before turning their interests toward the theater. Giraudoux and Montherlant were first successful novelists and Claudel first gained recognition as a poet. Anouilh has from the beginning of his career, concentrated all of his efforts and talents on the theater.

1Hubert Gignoux, Jean Anouilh (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1946), I, 9.
He has written approximately twenty-two plays since his first success, *L'Hermine*, which was presented in 1932.

Several of Anouilh's plays have been presented throughout the world. Though many people cannot fully understand what the author is really saying in his plays, his works are popular and are enjoyed mostly for their entertainment values and his aesthetic abilities. His plays hold the attention and involve the emotions in a singularly compelling fashion. Yet, hidden behind this front of superb dramatic form and theatricality, there is an idea or theme of revolt. The author, who must be considered a moralist, has cleverly placed in his plays his ideas as regards the social evils of his time. Jonathan Swift gives an interesting description of Anouilh's basic thoughts when he compares the world of Anouilh with that of Salacrou:

The world of Jean Anouilh is at once more extreme, more mysterious and harder to understand than that of Salacrou. In the beginning were purity and happiness; they remain the axis of Anouilh's theatre, and our misfortune, suffering and malaise are a result of falling outside the orbit of their power. We have rejected the natural order by growing up to worship false values, to compromise, to lie, sin, be sophisticated.\(^1\)

Anouilh, thinking along puritanical lines, has constructed his theater to express his refusal to accept society or life as it is. S. Beynon John says that in Anouilh's drama one of the most characteristic acts of his heroes is their rejection of society.\(^2\)

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What Anouilh is actually rejecting or refusing is reality itself. The theme, "the refusal to accept reality," is found, as Swift puts it, "again and again in Anouilh's plays; his obsessions, that is to say his ideas, grow work by work, varying in shade only in their relation to pièces roses, or pièces brillantes..." The writer will examine the treatment of this theme in three plays representative of the three groups of plays which the author has, himself, classified.

One of the most popular of the pièces noires is Antigone. The principal or dominant theme of the play is "the refusal to accept reality." Antigone was purposely created to illustrate this theme. The play possesses all the qualities of the author's pièces noires. Brodin, discussing the presentation of Anouilh's themes, gives the reader an idea of what are some of the characteristics of this particular group of plays:

These pièces noires present this theme in an atmosphere which is in most instances, sombre, or deathlike. The feeling of death is present in practically all of Anouilh's pièces noires. In Antigone, one senses death and feels that he is being drawn closer and closer to it as the play progresses toward its climax.

Antigone is a well constructed play interwoven with the author's great dramatic abilities and his rather unusual ideas. Robert de Luppe expresses this opinion in commenting on Antigone:

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1Swift, op. cit., p. 183.

Avec son Antigone, Anouilh résout ainsi harmonieusement son problème, qui est de montrer au spectateur qu'il n'est seulement un conteur d'histoires, que son intuition touche à la condition même de l'homme. Il le résoud harmonieusement car, s'il n'abandonne rien de sa vision personnelle, il réussit à capter quelque chose de la force antique.1

One of Anouilh's successful pièces roses is Le Bal des Voleurs. The theme "the refusal to accept reality" is found in this play, but not in the same dark atmosphere as it is found in Antigone. However, it is not as fully developed in Le Bal des Voleurs which like most pièces roses, were created primarily to please and amuse the audience. It is a lightcolored play with a touch of fantasy in it. Robert de Luppe described this play as a "Comédie-ballet,"2 and he further states that "Le Bal des Voleurs est, vis-à-vis d'une société à décrire, moins une peinture qu'un jeu, organisé en toute liberté."3

An interesting example of the author's pièces brillantes is L'Invitation au Château. If one compares L'Invitation au Château with Le Bal des Voleurs, it can be easily seen that the ideas of Anouilh are more explicitly expressed in the former than in the latter. It possesses qualities of both pièces noires and pièces roses. There is a mixture of seriousness and lightness of touch. In this play Anouilh emphasizes the evil effects of money on man and on society. He points out the "ugliness of life" in such a manner that some of his characters rebel and refuse to accept this "reality." He conveys these ideas in such a manner as to hold the interest of his readers or audience.

1 de Lupp, op. cit., p. 58.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
According to Jonathan Swift:

...but the highly successful L'Invitation au Château proves little except that Anouilh is a clever entertainer who can at any time turn his gloomier thoughts rose coloured and write a play which merely marks time.¹

A glance at the similarities and differences between these three groups of plays reveals that basically, the themes are, directly or indirectly, the same. S. Beynon John, attempting to define Anouilh's ideas as an "obsession with purity" and how it is developed in stages, sums up the author's presentation of the theme in the three groups of plays:

The obsession with purity and the ritual stages through which it progresses on its way to defeat are contained within a framework of highly stylized dramatic conventions. These are the conventions of melodrama, farce, and fantasy.²

Anouilh has become a successful French dramatist since World War II. Even though he has published no theory concerning his plays, and even though he has maintained the utmost secrecy about himself and his life, one can conclude after reading his works that he is a dramatist who is deeply affected by and concerned with the conditions and destiny of man. His plays, representatives of each group, that is to say, pièces noires, pièces roses, and pièces brillantes, have gained worldwide fame and esteem. All of his plays, whether they be serious dramas, farces or fantasies, illustrate in part, or completely, the favorite theme of Anouilh, "the refusal to accept reality."

In the following chapters analyses will be made of the three plays mentioned above in order to indicate how Anouilh presents and develops his favorite theme.

¹Swift, op. cit., p. 186.
²John, op. cit., p. 35.
CHAPTER II

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF Antigone, Le Bal des Voleurs, AND L'Invitation au Château WITH EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEME

Before beginning an examination of the plays, it should be pointed out how some critics define this favorite theme of Anouilh. Clement Bogal states that the theme is presented as a reaction by the characters to all worldly and human ideals:

Si le drame de la personnalité constitue le thème central ou il se traduit, non en tirades ni en dissertations, mais en réactions instinctives. Le personnage s'affirme par une rébellion contre le monde un refus de la réalité et de ses compromissions.¹

Elliot M. Grant defines the central theme as:

...the antagonism that may exist between an individual and his milieu; the frustration of love by the accidents or complications of life; the threat offered to present happiness by past experience; the demoralizing effect of poverty and wealth on human character and the capacity of a few to remain uncorrupted by either; the conflict between principle and expediency.²

Oreste F. Pucciani describes Anouilh's central theme as:

...an essential contradiction within human reality which is presented through the characters as an attitude of revolt which purity and compromise are at war.³

Antigone was created specifically for the purpose of presenting a direct illustration of "the refusal to accept reality." The plot, in brief, is concerned with a very young woman, Antigone, who defies the orders of King Creon, her uncle. She insists on burying her brother whom the King has ordered not to be buried. She uses the burial of her brother only as a pretext to assert what she feels to be her real self in opposition to the compromises imposed upon her life. She goes to her death, thinking it is the only answer that one can give to life if one is to remain true to one's self.

The play is constructed in the form of one continuous act. The author has taken the Greek tragedy of Sophocles and modernized it to illustrate his own ideas. In his stage directions, the author insists that the characters be dressed in formal attire so as to indicate the universality of time. The characters Antigone and Creon are created to present a conflict between idealism and realism. There is a tone of death throughout the play. Anouilh, even though he has modernized the Greek tragedy, has kept the Choeur. The Choeur is used to keep the audience informed of what is taking place in the play and to give the author's interpretation of tragedy:

Dans la tragédie on est tranquille. D'abord, on est entre soi. On est tous innocents en somme! Ce n'est pas parce qu'il y en a un qui tue et l'autre qui est tué. C'est une question de distribution. Et puis, surtout, c'est reposant, la tragédie, parce qu'on sait qu'il n'y a plus d'espoir, le sale espoir; qu'on est pris, qu'on est enfin pris comme un rat, avec tout le ciel sur son dos, et qu'on n'a plus qu'à se plaindre, à gueuler à pleine voix ce qu'on avait à dire, qu'on n'avait jamais dit et qu'on ne savait peut-être même pas encore. Et pour rien pour se le dire à soi, pour l'apprendre, soi.

1Jean Anouilh, Antigone (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1946), p. 56.
The Ghoeur appears three times in the play: at the beginning, at the middle, and at the end.

The author develops the central theme "the refusal to accept reality" through the character, Antigone, who is the symbol of Anouilh's rejection of reality. It is through this conflict between Antigone, an idealist, and Creon, a realist, that the theme is developed. Antigone says "no" to Creon and refuses to be subjected to his authority and power.

The universe of childhood is a minor theme also found in the play. Antigone is portrayed as a young lady who has reached the age of accepting the role of adulthood. The author presents her still clinging to certain childish traits. She still has a "nourrice," a dog, a child's necklace and belt with which she hangs herself. These things, which are typical of children, indicate that the character desires to remain in her childhood. It appears that Antigone is afraid that she will sacrifice the privileged world of childhood for a slavery of compromise, betrayal, and disappointment found in the adult world. In the play, Antigone seems to symbolize a negative attitude towards political power. One may conclude that Anouilh, who wrote the play during the German Occupation of Paris, is striking out indirectly against the oppressive, tyrannical, Nazi regime.

The second major character of the play is Creon, the King of Arago. Creon represents life as it is. He, like Antigone, following certain ideals, is dedicated to a realistic solution of life's dilemmas:

Moi, je m'appelle seulement Créon, Dieu merci. J'ai mes deux pieds par terre, mes deux mains enfoncées dans mes poches et, puisque je suis roi, j'ai résolu, avec moins d'ambition que ton père, de m'employer tout simplement à gendrer l'ordre de ce monde un peu moins absurde, si c'est possible. Ce n'est même
Creon's realistic attitude about himself and life is quite evident in these lines as they are spoken to Antigone. Creon knows that what he has to do is, in reality, "ugly" and unpleasant:

J'ai le mauvais rôle, c'est entendu....

In contrast to Antigone's "non" Creon must say "oui" which is compromising or accepting life as it is. He thinks that it is more difficult to say "oui" than to say "non":

C'est facile de dire non! ...Pour dire oui, il faut suer et retrousser ses manches, empoigner la vie à pleines mains et s'en mettre jusqu' aux coudes.

Creon, in upholding of the law, is as unbending as Antigone is in her search for truth. This can be seen in Creon's response to Hemon, his son, who is trying to change the King's mind about Antigone's death-sentence:

Je suis le maître avant la loi. Plus après.

Thus, one sees Creon as a symbol of reality representing an image of earthly things.

The minor characters are: Ismene, Hemon, the guards and the nurse. Ismene, Antigone's sister, is quite unlike Antigone. She is more realistic than her sister. In the discussion of the burial of their brother, Ismene reveals her realistic attitude when she says to

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1 Ibid., p. 71.
2 Ibid., p. 77.
3 Ibid.
Antigone:

Ecoute, j'ai bien réfléchi toute la nuit. Je suis l'aînée. Je réfléchis plus que toi. Toi, c'est ce qui te passe par la tête tout de suite, et tant pis si c'est une bêtise. Moi, je suis plus pondérée. Je réfléchis.¹

After Antigone tells her that there are times when it is not necessary to think, Ismene shows a more hostile attitude towards the idealism of Antigone in the following lines:

Si, Antigone. D'abord c'est horrible, bien sûr, et j'ai pitié moi aussi de mon frère, mais je comprends un peu notre oncle... Il est roi, il faut qu'il donne l'exemple.²

Ismene is concerned about Antigone, but she does not understand her. Ismene decides to die with Antigone not for the impossible idealism of her sister, but for the love and affection she has for her:

Si vous la faites mourir, il faudra me faire mourir avec elle!... Je ne veux pas vivre si tu meurs, je ne veux pas rester sans toi!³

Antigone does not permit her sister to die with her because Ismene chose to accept life as it is. Antigone tells her:

Tu as choisi la vie et moi la mort. Laisse-moi maintenant avec tes jérémades.⁴

Hemon, the son of King Creon is in love with Antigone. He is a symbol of the happiness that Antigone refuses to accept. He is influenced by Antigone to the point of rejecting happiness and life which his father offers him:

Crois-tu que je pourrai vivre, moi, sans elle? Crois-tu que je l'accepterai, votre vie? Et tous les jours, depuis

¹Ibid., p. 24.
³Ibid., p. 102.
⁴Ibid., p. 103.
le matin jusqu'au soir, sans elle. Et votre agitation, votre bavardage, votre vide, sans elle, ... Être un homme, comme tu dis, et trop heureux de vivre?1

One is also aware of Hémon's rejection of his father's way of life in the following line:

Nous ne sommes pas tous les deux au pied de ce mur où il faut seulement dire oui,2

Like Antigone, Hémon becomes an idealist and dies in the hole with Antigone.

The guards portray the unconcern and indifference of the general populace in regards to life's conditions. It is through the actions of the guards that one gets the impression of what Anouilh intended for them to portray. In a conversation with Antigone who is waiting to be executed, the guards show no interest or feeling for her predicament. The Chœur also indicates the roles of the guards in his first speech:

En fin les trois hommes rougeauds qui jouent aux cartes, leur chapeau sur la nuque, ce sont les gardes. Ce ne sont pas de mauvais bougres, ils ont des femmes, des enfants, et des petits ennus comme tout le monde, mais ils vous empoigneraient les accusés le plus tranquillement du monde tout à l'heure. Ils sentent l'ail, le cuir et le vin rouge et ils sont de pourvus de toute imagination. Ce sont les auxiliaires toujours innocents et toujours satisfaits d'eux-mêmes, de la justice...3

From the appearance and the words of La Nourrice at the beginning of the play, one is led to assume that Antigone is still a child. Therefore, indirectly, the author created this character to help bring out his theme of a child, refusing to accept the ugly world of

1 Ibid., p. 107.
2 Ibid., p. 109.
3 Ibid., p. 13.
adulthood. Thus, each character in the play is an intricate part of the dramatist's attempt to develop the central theme in the play.

In 1944, Antigone was presented to the French audience for the purpose of symbolizing the spirit of democratic freedom in conflict with the German invaders. According to Elliott M. Grant:

...it is in the view of some critics that Antigone's decision is more a nihilistic rejection of life itself than an affirmation of positive faith.¹

The writer is of the opinion that Antigone was created for both political and personal reasons. Antigone's rebellion against Creon's orders or her refusal to accept his authority symbolizes the rebellion against the German Occupation by the French people. Her refusal to accept his offer of happiness and life, as it is, can be interpreted as the author's own conscience which probably cannot totally accept the bitter reality of life.

Antigone is one of Anouilh's most successful plays. Although the central theme of the play is somewhat bitter and absurd, it is well constructed and the characters are well developed for their intended roles. The theme, "the refusal to accept reality," is well defined and fully developed in Antigone. This theme is treated more extensively in the group to which Antigone belongs, les pièces noires. In examining a play, taken from the pièces roses, one will find that this theme is not as fully developed.

Le Bal des Voleurs is a delightful and amusing play. Three so-called robbers, Peterbono, Gустave, and Hector, come to the residence of Lady Hurf with the intention of robbing her and her two nieces,

¹Grant, op. cit., p. 256.
Eva and Juliette. At the same time, the robbers make their entrance to Lady Hurf's mansion, two bankers, Dupont-Dufort and his son, arrive with the intention of getting money from this wealthy family. Lady Hurf invites her unexpected guests to a masquerade ball, even though she knows their intentions. Hector and Peterborno become involved in separate love affairs with Eva and Juliette. As the play unfolds, the bankers, mistakenly accused of robbing Lady Hurf, are arrested. Actually, it was Gustave and Juliette who took some of Lady Hurf's valuables as they were eloping. The other robbers, after unsuccesfully attempting to rob this rich family, leave upon the arrival of the police.

*Le Bal des Voleurs* is a four-act comedie-ballet written in prose. There is an element of musical parody in the play. The music is used to give a certain comical effect to the actions and movements of the characters.

Anouilh wrote this play for entertainment only. It is, more or less, the author's display of theatrical skill, rather than a medium through which he would purposely give his personal ideas. Every aspect of the play, the characters, the action, and even the plot, is unreal. The musical parody adds to the unreality or fantasy of the play. What happens in *Le Bal des Voleurs* is usually what one would expect to happen in a fairy tale. All of these qualities give to the play the over-all image of a mask.

The problem posed by the conflict between illusion and reality is the central theme in *Le Bal des Voleurs*. The thieves are continuously disguising themselves in an attempt to hide their identity as thieves, but as the plot develops, they are, in reality, "good-guys." One does
not know whether they are true thieves or not. Robert de Luppe calls this play "un jeu avec la réalité."\(^1\) He further states: "Mais ce bal n'est encore qu'un jeu pur, ou le sujet est transcendu, ou la fantaisie règne seule."\(^2\)

In Le Bal des Voleurs the author does not fully develop his favorite theme of revolt. However, it is found in the play and is illustrated by Eva, who refuses to find happiness in her love affair with Hector.

One also finds in this play a theme concerning the rich and the poor, their attitudes toward each other and the demoralizing effects of money on them. The development of this particular theme is to be discussed later.

Lady Hurf is the principle character who appears to dominate the actions of the other characters in the play. She immediately recognizes the ill-planned scheme of the robbers. She keeps them around merely because it is a change of pace or a relief from the boredom that she has endured for such a long time. She is as bored as "une vieille tapisserie."\(^3\)

She engages in a bit of fantastic intrigue to amuse herself: "Je suis d'humeur à faire une grande folie."\(^4\) She thinks that she has control of herself and is in charge of the other characters:

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\(^1\) de Luppe, op. cit., p. 73.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
"Voici nos marionnettes..."¹ Close to the end of the play, Lady Hurf reminds the audience that the play is over: "Tu sais bien que la pièce est finie."² This is a technique that Anouilh often uses to remind the audience that the play is not to be taken seriously and that it is just a play.

The robbers, Peterbono, Gustave, and Hector, represent the poor and their vain efforts to gain wealth. Through their amusing and often ridiculous attempts to rob, they are very pleasant and amiable characters. An example of their vain efforts to rob is found in the scene where the robbers discover that they have robbed each other under disguise:

Peterbono à Gustave

Tu n'as rien fait toi, ce matin naturellement?

Gustave

Si, deux choses. D'abord ce magnifique portefeuille.

Peterbono

Voyons cela (Il l'examine, puis soudain se fouille inquiet.) A qui l'as-tu fait, ce portefeuille, et où?

Gustave

Je l'ai fait boulevard Ravachol à un vieux monsieur avec une grande barbe blanche...

Peterbono (achève, terrible)

Un pantalon à carreaux, un cronstadt et un-rase-pet vert-olive, n'est-ce pas imbécile?

Gustave (tremblant)

Oui, monsieur Peterbono...vous m'avez vu?

¹Ibid., p. 272.
²Ibid., p. 242.
Peterbono (tombe affalé sous ce dernier coup)

C' était moi, imbécile, c' était moi! Je vous dis que nous ne couvrirons même pas nos frais!1

The amiable aspect of the robbers can be seen in their relationships with the nieces. Hector tries vainly to convince Eva that she could find happiness with him. He is also puzzled as to why he cannot please her again: "Ah! pourquoi ne puis-je pas réussir à vous plaire une seconde fois?"2 Gustave, a very naive character, falls deeply in love with Juliette and elopes with her. Eva and Juliette will be treated in detail in the third chapter.

Dupont-Dufort and his son come to Lady Hurf's house with the intention of getting some of her wealth. Lady Hurf clearly points this out when she says: "Les Dupont-Dufort veulent nous soutirer de l'argent."3 The father is portrayed in a comical manner. He tries to use his son as a means of carrying out his intentions:

Dans la finance, il ne faut jamais se contenter de quelque chose... Je préférerais mille fois le mariage. Il n'y a que cela qui remettrait vraiment notre banque à flot, Ainsi du charme, de la séduction.4

Anouilh is satirizing this group of rich, greedy and selfish people.

In writing Le Bal des Voleurs, Anouilh had no diadactic or moral objectives. He merely wrote an amusing and entertaining play, and in so doing, he once again revealed his skill in modern theatricality.

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1Ibid., p. 137.
2Ibid., p. 167.
3Ibid.
4Ibid., p. 143.
Of course, some of his ideas concerning human conditions, which are presented under the theme "the effects of money on man," are present in *Le Bal des Voleurs*. Lady Hurf, even though she is extremely rich, is unhappy and bored. The robbers go to the point of appearing ridiculous and funny in their quest for money. The bankers, even though they are rich, appear to be greedy, selfish, and even obsessed with money. Thus, the author demonstrates that money is a social evil which demoralizes man when he puts money above everything else in life. Although these ideas are present in *Le Bal des Voleurs*, they are treated rather lightly and unconsciously by the author. It is in *L'Invitation au Château* that the theme of "money" is more fully developed.

In this play, Isabelle, an actress, has been maliciously invited to attend a ball given at a chateau by an aristocratic family. Horace wants to end the relationship between Frédéric, his twin brother, and Diana. He is the one who has hired Isabelle to divert Frédéric's attention from Diana. In the course of the play, Isabelle falls in love with Horace, but, later, she will fall in love with Frédéric. She is constantly being encouraged by her mother to use her beauty and charm to marry one of these aristocrats. Isabelle refuses to be used maliciously by Horace in his little game and by her mother in the quest of money. Eventually all turns out well through a few clever maneuvers of Mme. Desmermortes, the rich aunt of Horace and Frédéric.

*L'Invitation au Château* is a five-act comedy written partly in prose and partly in poetry. Like many of Anouilh's plays, *L'Invitation au Château* was not written in the traditional manner of modern realism which, according to Leonard Pronko, advocates a "slavishly photographic
imitation of life." "It is a lively and sometimes fantastic farce with an air of fairy tale about it." 1

Just as he did in Le Bal des Voleurs, Anouilh has again demonstrated his superb skill as a playwright with L'Invitation au Château. Most of the action of the play is centered around Isabelle. In observing certain techniques of Anouilh in this play, one sees that the roles of Horace and Frédéric are played by the same actor. They are thus physically identical. The only distinction lies in the personalities. During some scenes of the play, Anouilh gives us the impression that he is going to let both Horace and Frédéric appear on stage at the same time, which is impossible, since both characters are played by the same actor. At one point of the play, instead of both brothers appearing in the same scene, the butler appears in place of Horace and Frédéric and says, "J'étais sur qu'il ne viendrait pas!" 2 Horace sends a note stating:

Ma tante pour des raisons que vous comprendrez tous, je ne peut pas me joindre à vous au milieu de l'allégresse générales. 3

There is an element of mask and game in L'Invitation au Château, which is typical of Anouilh's pièces roses. Horace's intention to use Isabelle to break up Frédéric's relationship with Diana can be interpreted as a form of mask. Also, La Mère, Isabelle's mother, taking the title

3 Ibid.
of La Contesse Funela, portrays a form of mask. One might go so far as to say that the entire play is a mask which conceals the ideas of Anouilh. The play is very amusing, but beneath this comic appearance, one finds upon close examination some very serious ideas. Two of the more noticeable themes or ideas found in the play are the "demoralizing effects of money on people" and the author's favorite theme, "the refusal to accept reality." The indifference of the rich in regards to the poor, the poor going to any length to gain wealth, the wealthy preying on the wealthy for money, are examples of the theme, "the demoralizing effects of money on people." In the section dealing with the development of the characters one will find how these aspects of the theme are presented.

The theme the "refusal to accept reality" is a more dominant theme in L'Invitation au Château than in Le Bal des Voleurs. This theme is presented through the character, Isabelle, who refuses to be affected by the powers of money. The author's development of this character is found in the third chapter.

Anouilh used the character, Horace, to represent the rich who think that the poor are always at their disposal. Horace thinks that because he pays her money and gives her the dress that she is to wear to the ball, Isabelle will do exactly what he tells her to do. But when she questions him about her personal feeling and dignity that may be affected, he responds:

Que voulez-vous donc devenir? Je vous remets, avec le cadeau que vous aurez bien mérité, entre les bras de madame votre mère et de Romainville. Et il vous reste une belle
robes et jolis souvenirs, ce qui reste toujours d'un bal.\(^1\)

Horace is portrayed as a bitter character, especially, during the first three acts of the play: "Je n'aime personne..."\(^2\) He thinks that he is incapable of love and because of this he considers himself, like Lady Hurf, in control of everything:

C'est ce qui va me permettre d'organiser en toute sérénité d'esprit la petite comédie de ce soir. Car j'ai résolu que ce serait moi, ce soir, qui organiserais la comédie.\(^3\)

Diana is the character through whom the author reveals the effects of money on the rich. She is the daughter of the rich Messerchamann and has everything she wanted except happiness. After Isabelle asks her why she is unhappy Diana replies: "Je suis trop riche!"\(^4\) She thinks that if she were poor like Isabelle, she would be happier:

Ah! vous ne savez pas votre chance... Je sais que c'est très irritant pour les pauvres ce genre de raisonnement, mais essayez de comprendre tout de même - je ne serai plus jamais, plus jamais, quoi que je fasse 'invitée au château!'\(^5\)

She is disliked by Horace whom she loves. Since she cannot have Horace, Diana accepts as her fiancé Frédéric who follows her like "un petit chien." Thus, Diana is a character who is bored, dissatisfied and unhappy because of her wealth.

La Mère represents the poor who try vainly to attain wealth by

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 101.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 40.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^5\)Ibid.
any possible means. She is a selfish character exploiting her daughter in order to acquire some of the luxuries that she was unable to attain in her youth:

Je t'admire. Moi avec mon passé, avec tous mes rêves perdus, j'en serais absolument incapable... Ah! Isabelle! Je rêve pour toi d'un autre avenir - d'un avenir de luxe et de beauté où ta maman aurait une petite place. Tu es artiste, tu es jolie, moins fine que moi peut-être cela c'est ton père-moi classique, en somme, mais piquant. Tu dois plaire, tu dois surement plaire, mon enfant. Que peut bien te vouloir ce jeune homme?

La Mère also represents individuals who do not accept their status in life or society. This idea is illustrated as she changes her identity to La Contess Funela, in order to be in the presence of Isabelle at the ball. She does this so she can continuously encourage her to perform well the malicious role given to her by Horace.

Mme. Desmermortes, mistress of the Chateau, is a character who is insensitive toward the feelings of the poor. She portrays this indifference of the rich to the poor when she tells Capulat, her reader and servant:

Capulat, je suis votre maître. J'ai l'habitude d'être obéie sans en arriver à cette extrême. D'ailleurs, je vous ai toujours donné mes vieilles robes. Vous me devez tout.

The character and personality of Mme. Desmermortes are similar to those of Horace in that she thinks that she is outside of the game of life for a moment:

Ah! que ce bal est donc bête... Regardez-les tourner. Ils ne pensent tous qu'à leur petite vanité et à leurs petites affaires.

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1Ibid., p. 23.
2Ibid., p. 55.
3Ibid., p. 56.
This idea of the character, thinking that he is on the outside of human situations and thinking that he can see the frailties of others, can be interpreted as an aspect of the theme, "the refusal to accept reality." Actually, Mme Desmermortes is not free because she says: "On vit avec sa classe qu'on le veuille ou non."\(^1\)

Anouilh further elaborates on the "effects of money on men" through the characters, Lady India and Patrice Bombelles. They are both employed by Messerchmann. They are dependent upon him and appear to be using him for his money. This is pointed out when Lady India says:

> Et puis vous ne devez pas oublier, Patrice, que vous êtes un homme du meilleur monde, que je suis Lady India et que c'est nous qui sommes bien bons, en fin de compte de nous occuper un peu de ce ramasseur d'argent.\(^2\)

These two characters are rich and they are guests of Mme. Desmermortes. They have a sublime conception of poverty, which is the conception of some rich people. It appeals particularly to the romantic Lady India, who has no idea of what the stark reality of poverty means. She thinks that being poor is something wonderful and enchanting:

> Moi j'adorerais être pauvre! Seulement, je voudrais être vraiment pauvre. Tout ce qui est excessif m'enchante. Et puis, il doit certainement y avoir une grande poésie dans la misère, n'est-ce pas Patrice?\(^3\)

She is serious at the end of the play when she believes that

\(^{1}\) Ibid., p. 134.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 15.
\(^{3}\) Ibid.
Messerchmann has lost all his money. She cries out that she will follow him barefooted to his native Warsaw, to the depths of Siberia, where she will be his squaw and cook for him in his log hut. Lady India appears to portray the gross ignorance or naiveté of one who has had no concrete knowledge of, or contact with, the poor; she seems typical of those wealthy ladies who acquire distorted or idealized concepts of the poor from non-factual or exaggerated fiction. One suspects, however, that Anouilh used Lady India as a symbol of the unconscious rejector of the true idea of what poverty really is. Is poverty really something wonderful and enchanting? Of course, it is not. Lady India in willing to accept the life of poverty in an ideal sense as something to be enjoyed rather than a condition of hardships and sufferings. This is an aspect of the theme "the refusal to accept reality."

In the next Chapter the writer will examine further the treatment of the theme "the refusal to accept reality" as it is portrayed by female characters found in these three plays.
CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF FEMALE CHARACTERS
THROUGH WHICH THE THEME IS ILLUSTRATED

Throughout his theater, Anouilh has used more female characters to illustrate his theme "the refusal to accept reality" than male characters. In each of the plays included in this study, it is the female character who illustrates the theme. In this Chapter the writer will attempt to examine the author's development of each female character who illustrates the theme in question.

Antigone is the symbol of Anouilh's theme of revolt. As was mentioned previously, she was created exclusively to portray this particular theme. Antigone's appearance is vividly described by Le Prologue at the beginning of the play:

Antigone, c'est la petite maigre qui est assise là-bas, et qui ne dit rien. Elle regarde droit devant elle. Elle pense. Elle pense qu'elle va être Antigone tout à l'heure, qu'elle va surgir soudain de la maigre jeune fille noiraude et renfermée que personne ne prenait au sérieux dans la famille et se dresser seule en face du monde, seule en face de Créon, son oncle, qui est le roi. Elle pense qu'elle va mourir, qu'elle est jeune et qu'elle aussi, elle aurait bien aimé vivre. Mais il n'y a rien à faire. Elle s'appelle Antigone et il va falloir qu'elle joue son rôle jusqu'au bout.¹

Thus, one is given a physical picture of Antigone and what to expect of her role in the play. Antigone is motivated to perform burial

¹ Anouilh, Antigone, p. 9.
Vous me dégoûtes tous avec votre bonheur! Avec votre vie qu'il faut aimer coute que coute. On dirait des chiens qui lèchent tout ce qu'ils trouvent. Et cette petite chance pour tous les jours, si on n'est pas trop exigeant. Moi, je veux tout, tout de suite, - et que ce soit entier - ou alors je refuse! Je ne veux pas être modeste, moi, et me contenter d'un morceau si j'ai été bien sage. Je veux être sûr de tout aujourd'hui, et que cela soit aussi beau que quand j'étais petite - oumourir.1

In this passage, one can see the idealism of Antigone and, perhaps, the absurdity of her reasoning. Thus, rather than accept reality, she chooses to die "malgré la peur qui lui tord le ventre..."2 She dies totally uncorrupted by the evils and ugliness of life. She remains pure and virtuous as she was in childhood:

Antigone est au fond de la tombe pendue aux fils de sa ceinture, des fils bleus, des fils verts, des fils rouges qui lui font comme un collier d'enfant.3

Antigone, through her actions and verbal expressions, exhibiting an idealism which, to a certain extent, shows absurdity, symbolizes the most extreme form of revolt.

S. Beynon John states that:

It is, of course, Antigone who symbolizes the most extreme form of revolt and her encounter with Creon represents that most intense and sustained confrontation between revolt and resignation that can be found in Anouilh's plays... In Antigone's person, Anouilh seems to envisage disobedience as the highest moral law. She is moved neither by religious conviction nor by the need to protest against political tyranny. She revolts against the world as it is.4

In observing some aspects of Antigone's character development,

1 Ibid., p. 99.
2 Ibid., p. 93.
3 Ibid., p. 122.
4 John, op. cit., p. 32.
rites for her brother, which is in defiance of Creon's decree. Creon asks her why does she insist on burying her brother and for whom does she persist in attempting this illegal act. Antigone answers: "pour personne. Pour moi." Her actions are only the guise of duty. In reality, her actions are expressions of her refusal to accept life as it actually is. She tells Creon that no matter what he says or does, he cannot make her change her mind. She is an idealist, representing exactly the opposite point of view of Creon, the realist. She says "non" to reality and Creon says "oui."

Moi, je n'ai pas dit (oui)! Qu'est-ce que vous voulez que cela me fasse, à moi, votre politique, votre nécessité, vos pauvres histoires? 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 is portrayed as a child who, obsessed with a kind of puritanical idealism, refuses "le pauvre bonheur humain." This is pointed out in the lines in which she questions Creon about his happiness:

Quel sera-t-il, mon bonheur? Quelle femme heureuse deviendra-t-elle, la petite Antigone? Quelles pauvretés faudrait-il qu'elle fasse elle aussi, jour par jour, pour arracher avec ses dents son petit lambeau de bonheur? Dites, à qui devra-t-elle mentir, à qui sourire, à qui se vendre? Qui devra-t-elle laisser Mourir en détournant le regard?

Antigone's refusal to accept life is further elaborated in the following lines:

1 Ibid., p. 76.
2 Ibid., p. 82.
3 Ibid.
one can clearly see that, through her revolt against the world as it is - that is to say, in its impurity, the theme "the refusal to accept reality" is fully developed. It is to a lesser degree that this theme is developed in the female character, Eva, in Le Bal des Voleurs.

Eva is seen in the first scene with Hector "unis dans un baiser très cinéma."¹ She is happy and is very much pleased by Hector who is disguised with a false moustache and wig. But the next time she meets him, after he and the other robbers come to her aunt's house, she discovers that he, having changed disguises, no longer pleases her:

 Vous me déplaisez. C'est ma façon de vivre; je suis cruelle avec ce qui me déplait. Mais en revanche, quand quelqu'un me plait, je suis capable de tout.²

She tells Hector why she no longer likes him:

 Vous le savez bien, vous n'êtes plus le même.³

Eva knows that the man to whom she is talking now is the same one who pleased her at the beginning of the play. She recognizes his voice and his physical appearance; but "ça ne suffit pas."⁴ She tells him that she is thinking only of the young man whom she met in the park, who actually, was Hector:

 Je conserve avec plaisir le souvenir d'un jeune homme qui m'a parlé dans le parc.⁵

²Ibid., p. 27.
³Ibid., p. 28.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid.
She tells Hector that, if he finds this person whom he himself portrayed under disguise: "J'en serai peut-être encore amoureuse." Actually, Eva does not know whether she is capable of loving someone. Lady Hurf asks her if Hector or the young man whom she met in the park really pleased her and Eva answered: "Je ne sais plus."

Up to this point, Eva appears to be vaguely rejecting Hector as a man who does not meet her requirements of the ideal man. Whatever she expects from her ideal man is obviously unattainable by Hector and, in reality, any man. Throughout the play, Hector tries everything within his power to find the mask that he was wearing when he pleased her in the park. Each time he thinks that he had found the right mask, she says "no" to him. Eva uses the mask only as a pretext to cover up her personal rejection of the many evil aspects of life.

Money and wealth are considered by Anouilh to be among the greatest evils of man. One cannot find total happiness in money and wealth. Eva illustrates this idea in her rejection of reality. She is rich; but, she is also dissatisfied, bored and unhappy. One can see this as Lady Hurf says: "Ma petite Eva s'en mêle tant qu'elle peut." As Eva talks to Juliette about the differences of their concepts of life, some of the former's bitterness toward love and wealth are revealed.

Tu n'as jamais eu comme moi un homme dans ton lit, sans

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., p. 30.
3 Ibid., p. 29.
amour. Tu n’as même pas de perles à ton cou, pas de bague à ton doigt. Juliette, pourquoi n’es-tu pas voleuse comme nous?1

Eva has refused to compromise with this "ugly" life and the "sale bonheur" that one must accept in order to live fairly contentedly in this world. Instead of compromising and making herself accept life as it really is, she condemns herself to a life without love, a life of solitude and boredom, and an unhappy dissatisfied wealthy life. Lady Hurf points this out when she tells Eva:

Va, tu finiras comme moi, sous les traits d’une vieille femme couverte de diamants, qui joue aux intrigues pour tacher d’oublier qu’elle n’a vécu.2

Eva refuses to accept the happiness and love that Hector so diligently tries to offer her. When she says:

Et je m’en vais continuer à jouer mon rôle de charmante jeune femme qui a beaucoup de succès...3

she means that she is going to carry out the sentence which she has imposed upon herself. This condemnation of herself to live her life without happiness and love is Eva’s way of expressing her refusal to accept reality. This is a relatively strong aspect of the theme "the refusal to accept reality."4

The character, Juliette, portrays, to a certain extent, aspects of Anouilh’s favorite theme. She appears to be the opposite of Eva’s character in that she refuses to be affected by wealth and class distinction. Whereas Eva finds it impossible to be happy in a love affair

1Ibid., p. 148.
2Ibid., p. 172.
3Ibid., p. 242.
with Hector, Juliette allows nothing to prevent her from loving Gustave

...mais moi je l'aime. N'essayez pas de me parler, je veux partir avec lui parce que je l'aime. N'essayez pas de me dire quelque chose, je ne pourrais que vous détester.¹

Juliette possesses a quality of purity which is similar to that

of Antigone. She remains totally unaffected by the demands of her

aristocratic class. She elopes with Gustave knowing that he is a

robber. "Mais je le sais que vous êtes un voleur!"² Juliette even helps

Gustave rob her aunt's valuables and she tells him that she is willing
to live the life of a robber just to be with him:

Je vous aiderai. Je ferai le gest. Je sifflerai quand
il viendra quelqu'un.³

Juliette appears to be sincere and innocent in her mild but

unalso revolt. Her actions sprang from the desire not to be in the

same miserable state in which Eva and Lady Hurf are found. She seems
to be escaping from the effects of money and social distinction.

Gustave tries to convince her that by being wealthy, she is in a

better situation than she would be if she were poor:

Juliette, vous êtes heureuse ici tout de même. Vous ne
saves pas ce que c'est de fuir et d'avoir peur. Vous êtes
habituée au luxe.⁴

Juliette, wanting only to be happy and with Gustave replies:

Mais nous sommes riches avec ce que nous emportons. Si
cela vous ennui tant que je sois traquée par la police, nous

¹ Ibid., p. 75.
² Ibid., p. 56.
³ Ibid., p. 57.
⁴ Ibid., p. 58.
ne vlerons plus... Nous serons pauvres alors.1
Gustave tells her that if she goes with him, it would be the end of her
quiet and "easy-going" life. But this is one of the main things from
which she wishes to escape. "Elle était en train de me tuer, ma tran-
quillité."2 Juliette is, somewhat, an idealist in her pursuit of
happiness. In telling Eva what she thinks happiness is, Juliette
states:

Il n'y a qu'à se laisser aller. On ne passe d'ailleurs
pas une minute sans être malheureux mais je crois bien que
cest ça être heureux.3

This idea of Juliette may appear to some as an element of com-
promise rather than that of revolt. The writer is of the opinion that
Juliette does not wish to live a life of restraint, solitude and un-
happiness which Anouilh sees as characteristics of the wealthy. When
Eva asks Juliette why is she different from the others in their group,
Juliette says:

Oh! Je suis trop heureuse! Je n'ai pas le courage
de rester près de toi qui est triste.4

Juliette, in her pursuit of total happiness, even to the point
of becoming poor, revolts against the demands of her social status.
In doing so, she, therefore, exhibits an aspect of Anouilh's theme,
"the refusal to accept reality." This theme is illustrated more

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 49.
directly through the female character, Isabelle, in L'Invitation au Château.

Isabelle, a poor, young and pretty dancer, is supposed to be used by Horace as a puppet on a string. It is his intention to use her as the main attraction in his malicious little game. Of course, his aim is to use Isabelle as a means of ending the relationship between his twin brother, Frédéric and Diana. Isabelle thinks that she has been invited to the chateau as a dancer. Horace asks her for what reason does she think one has invited her to the chateau. She answers:

Je ne sais pas. De danser sans doute. Je suis danseuse.¹

Isabelle is a character who is innocent, virtuous and pure. Because of these qualities, she will not allow herself to be used in Horace's game beyond a certain point. Some indication of her character is presented when Horace describes her as naive, tender and persistent:

Vous n'êtes pas sotte, vous êtes naïve. Vous n'êtes pas romanesque, vous êtes tendre. Vous n'êtes pas dure, vous êtes exigeante.²

Isabelle falls in love with Horace and carries out his orders in his little game, at least until she realizes that she is being used maliciously by him. Then she refuses to continue her role: "Ah! Monsieur Horace, c'est mal de ne penser qu'à jouer."³ She tells him in the following lines why she did what he demanded of her - not

² Ibid., p. 38.
³ Ibid., p. 101.
because of his money and the evening gown which she was to keep after
the ball, but because she fell in love with him:

Moi, je n'ai pas joué une seule fois depuis que je suis
ici, j'ai été malheureuse tout de suite, moi. Parce que vous ne
l'avez pas compris ou pas voulu le comprendre sans doute: je
vous aime. C'est parce que je vous aime que j'ai ébloui vos
brochettes de vieilles dames ce soir; c'est parce que je vous
aime que j'ai fait semblant d'être amoureuse de votre frère et
que j'allais me jeter à l'eau pour finir tout à l'heure, comme
une idiote! Si je ne vous avais pas aimé tout de suite, en
arrivant, vous croyez que je l'aurais acceptée votre comédie?

Thus, one can note that Isabelle, an idealist, is not corrupted
by the power of money. Her puritanical ideas are further illustrated
in the scene between Isabelle and Diana's rich father Messerchmann.
Like Antigone, Isabelle's greatest pleasure is the freedom to say "no"
to all the realizations of her dreams which Messerchmann offers her.
Messerchmann offers to pay Isabelle whatever she wants if she would
leave:

Remontez dans votre chambre et disparaissez sans revoir
personne...En plus de ce que vous allez décider de me demander,
je vous en rachèterai deux autres.2

But Isabelle is leaving anyway and Messerchmann cannot understand why
she refuses to be paid by him. He says: "Ce n'est pas dans l'ordre
des choses,"3 as if he can buy anything he wants. Isabelle maintains
firmly to her refusal: "Parce que cela me plait de ne pas le prendre,
voilà tout."4 Isabelle knows that riches do not necessarily mean

1Ibid., p. 110.
2Ibid., p. 115.
3Ibid., p. 117.
4Ibid.
happiness and it is through her that the old financier, Messerchmann, finally admits that he has no faith in money either, for it has only made him miserable. After his final plea for Isabelle to accept money and she says "non," he begins to destroy his money:

Non? Hé bien! regardez ce que j'en fais des belles petites briques qui peuvent tout, puisqu'elles ne peuvent plus me servir à rien! Je les mange, je les déchire avec les dents, je les crache!  

Isabelle further illustrates her refusal to be corrupted by money in the conflict mentioned in Chapter II. Isabelle's mother tries to exploit her in order to satisfy the former's own selfish whims. Money and wealth are the sole aims behind the actions and wishes of Isabelle's mother. Isabelle knows this and, consequently, does not fulfill her mother's desires. This is pointed out in La Mère's last poetic lines:

Vous direz de ma part à la gamme,  
Que je renonce à tous mes espoirs insensés!  
Pauvre, mais honnête, auprès de Geraldine  
Je vivrai dans le souvenir des jours passés!  
Je la poussais au luxe et la poussais au vice,  
Pour elle je revais ce que je n'ai pas eu!  
Je ne la pousse plus! Qu'elle file droit puisqu'  
Elle a décidément du gout pour la vertu! 

Isabelle, in the final analysis, is portrayed as a young woman who is amiable, innocent, pure and uncorrupted by money. She refuses to be corrupted by it in her revolt against Horace's malicious intentions, her refusal to be exploited by her mother who wants to be a part of the wealthy class, and her refusal to be "bought-off" by

1 Ibid., p. 123.  
2 Ibid., p. 150.
Messerchmann. Thus, it is evident that, in the relationship with money, Isabelle exhibits a strong aspect of the theme "the refusal to accept reality."

Since each female character is found in a play taken from three distinctive groups of plays, it is obvious that there should be some differences in their development. The similarities between these characters are greater than the differences.

Antigone's character is developed in a tragedy in which she meets her death at the end. She, not being able to accept true life, chooses death as an escape from it. Eva, faced with similar problems, cannot accept the happiness offered by life as it is. She does not choose death as Antigone does, but she condemns herself to live a very miserable, unhappy, and bored life. Juliette, portraying an obsession to live a happy life, revolts against the boredom and tranquility of the wealthy. She is similar to Isabelle in that they both illustrate, more or less, indirectly the author's favorite theme and, although they remain firm to their revolt against certain aspects of life, they have a rather happy ending. This is due to the group of plays in which these two characters are found. Isabelle and Juliette remain uncorrupted by money; they both exhibit purity and innocence.

Of the four characters, Antigone is the least attractive. Her role in Antigone is a very serious and tragic one. The play is a tragedy presented in a dark atmosphere. One may conclude that this explains why Anouilh created the character, Antigone, to appear unattractive. Eva, Juliette, and Isabelle are presented as beautiful young ladies.
As has been previously mentioned, Antigone was created specifically to illustrate the theme, "the refusal to accept reality." It is quite evident that Antigone is rejecting the reality of life, but this is not true with Eva, Juliette and Isabelle. These three characters illustrate the theme indirectly and not as forcefully as Antigone does. The illustrations of the theme by Eva and Juliette are more hidden than those of Antigone and Isabelle. The portrayal of the theme by Eva and Juliette is covered up by the light-coated and comical aspects of the play, Le Bal des Voleurs. One of the main reasons that Antigone and Isabelle give a clearer illustration of the theme, "the refusal to accept reality," is that they are the principle characters in their respective plays. The roles of Eva and Juliette are minor in Le Bal des Voleurs, thereby rendering the theme less conspicuous.

As regards the similarities between the four characters, each one of them is refusing something. Antigone refuses to accept life as it is with its "sale bonheur." Eva refuses to compromise and accept the happiness which could be found in the love offered by Hector. Juliette refuses to be subjected to and restrained by the demands of her wealthy social status. Isabelle refuses to be corrupted by the powers of money. All four of these female characters portray a particular aspect of idealism. Antigone is willing to die because she thinks that life as it is does not meet her standards - that is to say, her ideals. Eva cannot find her ideal expectations of man in Hector. She is miserable and unhappy being rich, mainly, because wealth has not satisfied her ideas of what happiness should be. Juliette's idealism is to love, be loved and be happy. Isabelle remains completely free
from being used and corrupted by money. Her only desire is to be pure and innocent, which may be interpreted as an aspect of idealism. It is also interesting to note that each one is dressed in a white dress portraying "une forme blanche," which represents purity. Whether the character wears the dress throughout the play or only during certain scenes varies according to the play in which the character is found. Each character exhibits some traits of purity, and Antigone shows more tendencies toward purity than the other three. She goes so far as to die in order to remain pure and uncorrupted, whereas, the others, at least, live and remain true to their unrealistic ideals.

After having studied the author's development of his three plays with emphasis on his development of the theme "the refusal to accept reality," it is evident that he has used female characters as main vehicles to illustrate this theme. One must not conclude that the author does not use male characters to illustrate his favorite theme throughout his theater. Even though they were not created for that specific purpose in the three plays used in this study, they are used to illustrate the theme in some of Anouilh's plays. The play, Le Pauvre Bitos, is an example of some of the plays in which the leading male character specifically illustrates the theme, "the refusal to accept reality. The male characters are not used as often as female characters to portray the theme.

The female characters of the three plays mentioned in this study illustrate the theme with varying intensities depending upon the nature of the play - that is to say, whether the play is "dark," "rose" or "bright." It is not known why Anouilh persistently uses female
characters through which he develops his theme. But, throughout his theater there is found some aspect of the theme "the refusal to accept reality" and it is the female character who is the main interpreter of this theme.

The following chapter will be devoted to the author's development of certain minor themes which are interwoven into the principal theme.
CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PRINCIPAL THEME WITH CERTAIN MINOR THEMES IN THE THREE PLAYS

Jean Anouilh is considered a moralist who expresses his concern for man's condition under the form of revolt in his theater. Although his favorite or central theme is dominant in most of his plays, several minor themes are also present. It is more clearly evident in these minor themes that Anouilh is deeply concerned with man's essential problems in life. The minor themes or ideas are interwoven into the principal theme, "the refusal to accept reality."

Antigone's refusal or rebellion against Creon's authority reveals several social and political problems that Anouilh probably was aware of during the period in which he wrote the play, Antigone. One may interpret Antigone's rebellion against Creon as an "anti-nazi" sentiment of the author and the French people in Paris during the German occupation.

Elliott M. Grant is somewhat of this opinion:

It was of particular poignancy in Paris when the play was first produced in February, 1944. To the French audience of that year Antigone may well have symbolized the spirit of democratic freedom in conflict with the German invader...¹

There are no specific lines in Antigone which directly illustrate

¹Grant, op. cit., p. 256.
the "anti-nazi" spirit of Anouilh. However, one may conclude that since Anouilh wrote this play during the German invasion, he may very well have been influenced by this political upheaval. Antigone seems to symbolize the French people who were subjected to the Nazi rule and Creon may be the symbol of the Nazi regime. Thus, one may conclude that Anouilh’s Antigone possesses certain political overtones.

One of the main social aspects pointed out in this play is the one dealing with "the indifference and unconcerned attitudes toward others." This particular idea, as has been mentioned previously, is developed through the guards. It appears that Anouilh is criticizing that group of people who remain silent and accept whatever confronts them. This point can be seen in the following lines of the guard:


Antigone, portrayed as a child, shows a personal conflict of the author in his relationship with life in general. The childish aspects of Antigone suggests Anouilh’s personal longing for the lost innocence of childhood. Jonathan Swift states that:

Anouilh’s violent fanaticism is for unspoiled innocence; if this has been stained, the stain can never be effaced; his plays are in fact engagee, not in the existential sense, but in the past, the lost purity of adolescence and childhood.

Perhaps Anouilh desires to return to this childhood stage, whereas, he will not have to face the reality of the "cruel and dirty adult life." One may interpret this idea from the scene between Creon and

1Anouilh, Antigone, p. 49.
2Swift, op. cit., pp. 171-172.
his son, Hémon:

Creon

-On est tout seul, Hémon. Le monde est nu. Et tu m'as admiré trop longtemps. Regarde-moi, c'est cela devenir un homme, voir le visage de son père en face, un jour.

Hémon

-Antigone! Antigone! Au secours!¹

Oreste F. Pucciani, commenting on Anouilh's theme "the desire to remain in childhood," states that:

...it does not follow for Anouilh that the discovery of adulthood is accompanied by freedom. The universe of childhood is sacrificed for a slavery of compromise, betrayal, and disappointment.²

It is, therefore, evident that Anouilh, through his ideas of wanting to remain in or return to childhood, seeks an escape from a world which has become vile and loathsome.

Included with the principal theme in Le Bal des Voleurs one finds certain minor themes such as, "the frustrations of love by the accidents, or by complications of life" as portrayed in the relationship between Eva and Hector. In order to see how the author developed this particular theme one must know what is Anouilh's conception of love. Leonard Pronko gives a clear picture of Anouilh's meaning of love:

For the members of the heroic race, love is all-important. When they feel they have found real love they are willing to sacrifice almost everything else to it. Only when they finally realize - as Anouilh believes all who see life in its true perspective must - that love is built, upon a lie, do they renounce it. The hero will never sacrifice his integrity. For that reason, the picture of love, as society

¹Anouilh, op. cit., p. 109.
²Pucciani, op. cit., p. 47.
understands it, is to be found in the compromises of the mediocre. True love, as Anouilh envisages it, as Tristan and Iseult exemplify it, must always end in death or renunciation, for it is tainted with certain weaknesses that prohibit the realization of a perfect love in life.  

Eva discovers that Hector was wearing a mask the first time she met him. Because of this discovery, she cannot find true love with him. Another factor or complication which prevents a successful love affair between Eva and Hector is the personal frustration of Eva in relation to her ideal expectation of life. She is bored by her wealth and, probably, disillusioned by the lost of her first husband. She is not happy being wealthy and no man has met her expectations since her husband's death. Thus, it is evident that the theme "the frustrations of love by the accidents, or by complications of life" is found in Le Bal des Voleurs. Another theme, "poverty involved in a struggle with wealth," is found in Le Bal des Voleurs. This theme is illustrated by the robbers in their vain attempts to rob Lady Hurf and her nieces. The author has developed this theme by creating the three robbers as symbols of poverty involved in a vain struggle with the wealthy who are illustrated by Lady Hurf, her nieces, and the bankers. The theme, "the effects of money on the wealthy" is portrayed by Lady Hurf and Eva who are both bored and lonely. Next to his principal theme, that of "money and its demoralizing effects on man" is a major theme in Anouilh's theater. Anouilh, obviously, experienced the effects of poverty during the early stages of his life which influenced the development of this theme. Pronko states that:  

The insistence of this theme in Anouilh's theater,
particularly in the early years, leads one to wonder whether it is a reflection of personal attitudes engendered by the conditions of his own life. The gradual decline in his emphasis of this theme would suggest that this is reasonable, for as Anouilh has become more successful he has tended to mute the bitterness of his early poverty-stricken heroes.  

In L'Invitation au Château, it is through the theme of "money and its effects on man" that the theme "the refusal to accept reality" is developed. As was pointed out in Chapter III, one noted how Isabelle, knowing the cruel and degrading effects that money can have on man, refuses absolutely to be corrupted by it. It is interesting to note that most of the ideas about money found in Le Bal des Voleurs are found in L'Invitation au Château. The idea of "poverty involved in a struggle with wealth" is clearly illustrated by La Mère who would use her daughter as a mean to gain recognition in the wealthy class. The "effects of money on the wealthy is vividly portrayed by the greedy characters, Lady India, Patrice Bombelles and Messerschmann. Thus, money is one of the important ideas found in Anouilh's plays and it is envisaged as a symbol of society's corruption. Those who possess great wealth are seen as miserable characters such as, Lady Hurf, Mme Desmermorter, Diana and her father and Eva. The characters who freely and willfully accept poverty, such as Isabelle are more or less heroic.  

The theme of purity is also another theme which is interwoven into the principal theme "the refusal to accept reality." Each heroine studied in this thesis possesses qualities which are pure in nature. They are absolutely free from social corruption and contamination. They represent an idealism that is completely unattainable in reality. It

Ibid., p. 117.
is because of this aspect of purity, that these characters revolt against reality or life as it is.

Through these various themes, both major and minor, it appears to the writer that indirectly, Anouilh is striking out against the evils which are haunting man and which are, perhaps, leading him to a rather uncertain and unhappy destiny. According to Anouilh, the greatest of these evils is money.

CONCLUSION:

Jean Anouilh's theme, "the refusal to accept reality" has been stated by most of his critics to be the dominant theme in his pièces noires. It is evident that this theme is also dominant in some of his pièces roses and pièces brillantes. Antigone, a representative of the pièces noires group of plays, was specifically created to illustrate Anouilh's favorite theme. In this study it is pointed out that this theme is also illustrated in representatives of the other two groups of plays such as, Le Bal des Voleurs, a pièce rose, and L'Invitation au Château, a pièce brillante. However, the author's treatment of the theme in question is presented to a lesser degree in the plays of the last two groups mentioned. The theme is somewhat indirectly presented in Le Bal des Voleurs and L'Invitation au Château, mainly, because of the lightness or rose color of these plays.

The theme, "the refusal to accept reality," is defined as Anouilh's personal revolt against life as it actually is. Anouilh began his career as a playwright during the period between the two world wars. This was an era of complete uncertainty and instability
for the French people. As a result of this political upheaval, a pessimistic idea was developed. Literary works reflect this new trend of thought. One may conclude that Anouilh's theme of revolt, which reflect certain pessimistic attitudes of the author, was created as a result of this troublesome period. This theme reflects the ideas of a moralist, a perfectionist, and an individual deeply concerned with man's conditions and destiny.

In each of the three plays, the author has created female characters to portray his favorite theme. Antigone portrays the theme openly and directly. The female characters of the other two plays portray it to a lesser degree, depending upon the lightness or comical aspect of the play.

Some minor themes are interwoven into the dominant theme of each play. It is through these minor themes that one recognizes the moralistic tendencies of Anouilh. According to Anouilh, money is one of the main evils of man. This subject is treated rather extensively in Anouilh's theater. His characters illustrate how both the wealthy and the poor are affected by money. They do this by degrading themselves under the powers of money or by refusing to be corrupted by it. Those who refuse to be affected by money remain true to an idealism which is, basically, that of a purist. Puritanical qualities are typical of Anouilh's female characters who illustrate his favorite theme of revolt.

It is, therefore, evident that the theme, "the refusal to accept reality" is not only present in Anouilh's pièces noires, but also in his pièces roses and pièces brillantes. It is also evident that
Anouilh has used female characters as main illustrators of his favorite theme, "The refusal to accept reality."
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