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A STUDY OF SOME YOUNG CHARACTERS
IN THE EARLY WORK OF JEAN ANOUILH

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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To my Mother and my Father

ABSTRACT

The thesis presents some young characters from the early work of Jean Anouilh, and their dilemmas. These young characters embody many of the ideas and ideals of the young Anouilh, and his subjectivity adds depth and realism.

The first chapters each present one major work, along with one or more works of lesser importance, and in all these, characters take on similar characteristics, and modes of behaviour: all conform to a particular code of ethics, and this generally involves revolt of some kind against society, home or life. This study culminates in the chapter depicting the young Antigone, who epitomises youthful absolutes and romantic ideals.

Prior to the concluding chapter, some of the works of Jean Anouilh after Antigone, 1944, are presented. These works are chosen to give some impressions of the change in Anouilh's themes as he grows older. The works of the 1970's show a complete change of emphasis and viewpoint: now, the audience, instead of seeing the world through the eyes of a young man or woman, sees everything through the eyes of an older man. And, instead of youth either eagerly anticipating involvement with life, or willingly opting out of its corruptions and compromises, we see older characters, who, with age, have grown cynical, bitter and regretful. Now the youthful heroes and heroines are gone, and in their place are the older and sad Anouilhean victims.

The conclusion surveys the Anouilhean Theatre as a whole, and affords a final comment on Anouilh's impact as a young 20th Century dramatist and as an older 20th Century dramatist.

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INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

While studying some of Anouilh's more recent plays, I gradually became aware of how very different the younger characters appeared there, compared with how they had appeared in the plays of his youth. The plays of this early period, some of which I had read four years earlier, had some fragile, beautiful spirit which was somehow indefinably lacking in these later works. And it was not until a recent rereading of the earlier plays that the essential difference became clear to me. Anouilh's works can be divided into clearly differing spheres. The one is that resilient realm they call youth: here, the young protagonist is presented positively, and subjectively. More often, he is the hero: sometimes he is cast as anti-hero. But in this realm, no challenge is too great, no beauty too perfect. Within this sphere, the young Anouilh chanced to immortalize young moods, impressions, thoughts and actions. Because he too was young, this was his period of best youth portrayal. In the later sphere, while he still creates young characters, he has moved from a young world to an adult one, and to commenting on the human condition, in the light of social and political change. In these later works, it is the mature outlook that is depicted, and therefore it is the mature character now that has impetus.

This work studies some of those masterpieces of his youth, and through them a definite progression, climaxed in Antigone. Behind this progression of character,

thought and theatrical skills, one can sense the presence and, in many instances, the support, of a young, sympathetic playwright. Anouilh was only 19 years of age when he wrote his first play studied here, Humulus le Muet. Along with this short play, the first chapter will include a comment on the first of the four major plays to be studied in this thesis: L'Hermine. Chapter II includes the second major play Jézabel and also an insignificant play written at about the same time. Chapter III studies La Sauvage, the third important study, along with a further lesser important play, while Chapter IV covers those plays appearing after La Sauvage and before the major study in this work, Antigone in Chapter V. The final chapter, Chapter VI discusses some of Anouilh's later works, which provide a parallel to the youth theatre. The conclusion then follows.

*** Jean Anouilh was born in Bordeaux on 23 June, 1910. He went to Paris when he was young and attended Colbert Primary School and Chaptal College. He spent a year and a half at the Law Faculty in Paris, then two years in an advertising firm, where he learned to be ingenious and exact. But the era surrounding and enclosing his youth was that of the bleak pessimistic depression of the 1920's - 1930's. The influences of compromise and corruption were prevalent: youth fell easy prey to these, and Giraudoux fought back with his theory and presentation of the youthful, pure absolutist, who defies to the point of rebellion all such tainting of the ideal self. Anouilh reflects many of these aspects in his early works, owing much of his early thought to the influence

of Giraudoux. In his early characters, from 1929 to 1934, the idea of the protagonist refusing to soil the perfect self, and to reject all that is sordid and repulsive to the idealist, is beginning. Anouilh develops his skill in this direction gradually, until finally, with Antigone, he creates something epitomizing youth, purity, absolutes, and romantic ideals.

The 1930's saw a renaissance in tragedy, with Giraudoux and Paul Claudel being among the foremost writers. Classical legends and historical subjects were used, with relevance to modern or contemporary life. Giraudoux himself became a dramatist in 1929 with Siegfried, and his reputation continued from that time. It was in fact his outstanding achievement that set a particular stamp on the theatre of the inter-war period. He and Cocteau well prepared the way for Anouilh's Antigone by their own successful depicting of the young, heroic protagonist. Giraudoux in Amphitryon 38 and Intermezzo incarnated much of his essentially youthful theatre, by which Anouilh could well have been greatly influenced. Such heroines as Alcmena and Isabelle "express well Giraudoux's constant creation of ideal values" as Inskip writes⁽¹⁾. He continues:

"The young girl, or the young woman, whose eager acceptance of life has not been shaken by the unpleasant necessity of reshaping dreams to fit reality, whose grace and charm are but the expression of her close kinship with Nature in its most youthful and spontaneously attractive forms - birds, young animals, the perfume of

flowers - is a natural incarnation of the artist's vision of a world of harmony and light."

Anouilh's *Antigone* reflects much of these qualities. She too loves Nature, animals, flowers and the sense of refuge she has always found outdoors, alone.

Giraudoux, therefore, had perhaps the greatest influence on the young Anouilh. Jean Cocteau also wrote on *Antigone*, and Anouilh shows signs of Cocteau's influence, though by no means to the extent of Giraudoux's. The major serious dramatists of the Occupation, along with Anouilh, were Camus and Sartre, and all three were primarily concerned with man and his place in the universe. Anouilh moves away from the tragic aura of depression, war and occupation, into maturity and peace; he loses youth and a sense of the tragic as he enters his theatre of social comment. He leaves behind him, for the most part, the heroic, courageous young characters, and he enters the world of the middle aged, highly objective writer, who is often sceptical, and cynical. He now comments on the human condition, using the retrospect device.

The protagonists now are older, and most of them have spent very ordinary, mediocre lives, doing all the ordinary things. They squabble and bicker, and regret. And they pass much time reflecting on their youth: in fact their present situations are for the most part those of the early anti-heroes, but aged. The final chapter will exemplify these statements.

Anouilh's works reflect the mood of the times in which he

was and is writing. He too was one of the poor youths who people his early works, and he too is one of older characters in the later plays. He could associate with Thérèse and Antigone, because in 1934 and 1942 he also was experiencing similar feelings of revolt, and absoluteness. To the people of war-torn France, Antigone gave courage and inspiration. To the man in the 1970's, I guess Antoine has constructive comments! I would not know. They do not mean much to me yet. Right now, Antigone is more relevant.

Inskip: Jean Giraudoux - the making of a Dramatist,
Oxford University Press, 1958.

CHAPTER I

The first theatrical work of Jean Anouilh was a very short play entitled Humulus le Muet written in 1929, in collaboration with Jean Aurenche. Since this time, the play has been frequently performed by amateur companies, being of extremely limited and simple actions, yet of considerable impact. And it is the impact created by the series of symbolic yet uncomplicated tableaux, that bears mention. Anouilh, at the age of 19, presents a solitary, clumsy, youthful hero, Humulus, the mute. In the first scene we meet a younger Humulus surrounded by older people, of extremely high class and social values, who impatiently await the youth's word, as he can say but one word a day.

The opening scene depicts hope, as they are all hoping that today, New Year's Day, the boy will say a new two syllable word, "bonheur". The situation is created skilfully. The atmosphere is tense, as the boy walks the line of servants to his grandmother, the Duchess, and his uncle, who are seated with his tutor. Scarlet with embarrassment, the boy wrestles inwardly with the word, and ultimately can but say "merci". Humulus, utterly dejected, despondent, is left alone in the middle of the stage.

By the end of the first scene, Humulus has become an interesting symbolic character, and already foreshadows the Anouilhean young man, tongue-tied and clumsy - frightened before the materialist world. Into a world of concrete materialism, he has tried to eject something abstract, aesthetic and lasting, "bonheur", but the combination of setting, atmosphere and clumsiness has

prevented it.

The second tableaux presents the same characters, including Humulus, in the same position, but all considerably older. Humulus, now a young man, enters, and is to pronounce the word "prospérité". He is, once again, tongue-tied, only this time his inability to speak is caused by his inability to express not only an abstract word, but an abstract feeling, love. So he has written it down, to be read. The Duchess is shocked. She then sees the reason for his silence:

"Ma triste infirmité ne me permettant de dire
qu'un seul mot par jour, je suis décidé, à partir
d'aujourd'hui, à m'abstenir de mots."⁽¹⁾

In the final scene, Anouilh demonstrates how Humulus uses his 30 words, in a supreme bid to express himself utterly. In the third scene, Humulus is with Héléne, the young woman with whom he has fallen in love; she asks him the way to the beach; he can only point the way, with one hand on his heart. She thanks him and gets back up on her bicycle, all smiles, and he follows. Then, in the final scene, set in the garden, the tutor approaches Humulus, a sheet of paper in his hand, and he informs Humulus of the very great difficulty he has had in trying to condense into 30 words all Humulus is to say to Héléne in explanation of his feelings for her. He has come up with the 30 words, which say in a complicated and heartless way, that he loves her:

"Mademoiselle. Un amour éclatant m'a pris aux

entrailles depuis l'autre jour. Que mes larmes
 et mes soupirs attendrissent votre beauté cruelle.
 Un seul geste de vous guérirait toutes mes
 blessures."⁽²⁾

Humulus now wants the tutor to move away, while he encounters the young maid alone. He goes towards her, rereading finally the piece of paper. And here we see the "mute" Humulus speaking the much revered 30 words, but moreover we see him, for the first time, uncontrollably pouring out words when love has moved him, not just the "mute" speaking, but spontaneously expressing himself. In these 30 words, the young man has first introduced himself: then he has answered her question, so long verbally unanswered, as to how far from the beach she was, and finally, in his remaining three word allowance, he has blurted out his simple declaration of love for her, "je vous aime".

In a final symbolic gesture, she smiles back at him, and explains, apologetically, that she cannot hear him, that she is a little hard of hearing. She opens the small black box she carries on her bicycle, and produces a hearing horn, and gently placing it to her ears she asks, "Voulez-vous répéter, s'il vous plaît?"⁽³⁾

The orchestra depicts audibly the utter despair of the young Humulus who has finally spoken spontaneously and sincerely, and who has exhausted his month's supply of words, without even being heard.

At the age of 21 years, Anouilh wrote L'Hermine, and this play serves as an interesting sequel to Anouilh's first work.

Frantz, the young protagonist, makes his entrance on to

the stage, and leaves after setting the stage for Anouilh's world, with all its dilemma and tragedy. Frantz introduces himself clearly as a young man with a problem. He loves or thinks he loves a childhood friend, Monime. She is an orphan, without means, and lives with an old aunt, the Duchess of Granat, who is very wealthy. Monime is the only heiress. Frantz also is an orphan, and is very poor. He wants to marry Monime, but since she is a minor, he wants to run away with her. For this he needs money. And money is the motivating force behind the protagonists in this play. For two years he has tried to make money in an industrial enterprise, which has advanced little. The play opens with Frantz confronting an influential American who, he hopes, will advance him the necessary funds for the enterprise. When these are not forthcoming, Frantz despairs, as did Hamulus; and in his youthful, blind desperation, both to realize his happiness, which is represented by money and Monime, and his thirst for absolutes, he murders her wealthy aunt, and is taken away by the police.

Anouilh, perhaps in an attempt to fulfil the aims ultimately realized in Antigone, presents the first part of the dilemma in this work in a concrete way. The conflict is established here. Frantz's problem is eclipsed when he suddenly realizes the heavy burden of heredity's influence and condition, while at the same time being aware of a better, finer heredity in another totally different class. First this young man, who has grown away from his lower class origins, in favour of a higher class or way of life, expresses utter disillusionment. Frantz cannot quite relinquish his hold on this new found existence, and he

elects absolutes, which here unfortunately involve criminal action, and he is convicted. Following Humulus, his role is the establishing of the setting, the life, the climate, the dilemma: young people who are confronted with life, the challenges they have to meet on their own in the midst of mature, successful and complacently unhelpful "salauds". Anouilh aims to place these confrontations in an arena in which the physical and spiritual fight will be played to the end, and where he can present his manifesto. This same manifesto, as we saw in the introductory chapter, is that followed by all the young heroes and heroines of Anouilh.

Frantz gives us the first glimpse of the workings and intentions of the young Anouilh. In Frantz Anouilh presents a young man not yet 25, and we meet him at a very critical stage in his development, open to all present corrupting influences. Whether or not Anouilh intended this as something autobiographical, we do not know. That they are both young, poor and probably in love at this stage, we do. There are other similarities. Frantz has a concrete goal, in keeping with Anouilh's plan. Frantz is to pave the way for the more solid thinkers, emotionally and psychologically, who are to succeed him. Frantz interprets his goal as money, which will, he is sure, give him happiness - Monime somehow falls between the two - whereas Anouilh's goal is aesthetic, literary, spiritual, and he realizes his goal in theatrical self-fulfillment and success. Frantz knows he has failed, when he accepts compromise, and realizes Monime has rejected his action.

In the first act, Frantz is seen clearly as the desperate youth who urgently needs money as a means to beginning life and happiness. We meet the older, complacent Bentz, who is not concerned enough to help the young man. Only later does he act, and then it is too late. Bentz tells him he must be patient. Frantz appeals: "Si je vous disais que je suis à bout?"⁽⁴⁾ Bentz replies: "Je vous répondrais que tous les jeunes gens disent cela."⁽⁵⁾ Here is youth and the predicament of the young. Right now, Frantz thinks money will solve all his problems:

"Je ne sais ce que je suis, sinon un jeune homme qui veut se procurer les quelques milliers de francs de son bonheur."⁽⁶⁾

Bentz repulses Frantz with his long-term acceptance of compromise. And Frantz hates himself for having to crawl to this man in order to achieve an absolute. Compromise seems the only means of escape: in order to reach the position in which only absolutes exist, he must face a dilemma involving some form of compromise to effect any progress at all. Is this compromise necessary, and is it really a compromise? Or where does compromise cease to be compromise and become transaction? Bentz makes an interesting statement at this stage to Monime.

"Mademoiselle, vous étiez en train de raconter des histoires charmantes où notre ami Frantz a eu peur d'être compromis."⁽⁷⁾

The use of the past tense is highly significant here. It indicates Bentz' anticipation of physical and moral victory over youthful absolutes and purity. Bentz symbolises the bourgeois' total commitment to material

demands. Frantz wants to remain aloof from all such bonds. This is part of the youthful illusion. He is prepared to discuss, and to change tactics and in this sense, he contemplates compromise, in order to escape from his youthful dilemma - thus he cannot be an Anouilh hero. Frantz, with his intentions and desires, has no alternative. He awakens to the ethics of the situation at this stage, and hates himself for it. Bentz tells him:

"Dans le cas présent, votre situation est extrêmement compromise: je vous conseille même de renoncer à cette jeune fille."⁽⁸⁾

Frantz replies,

"Cela me faisait mal, mais je croyais que vous alliez m'acheter mes confidences avec de l'argent."⁽⁹⁾

To Philippe he says,

"J'ai compris quelle sinistre farce c'était, une jeunesse pauvre."⁽¹⁰⁾

Poverty has, for him, become a living reality. Poverty and youth have become inseparable and incompatible. In the student cafes, it was different. This leads on to the contemplation of crime and the entry of moral choice. He will now try to compromise with the forces of evil.

"J'ai su voir mon bonheur, en déblayer le chemin à travers mes fausses idées d'adolescent, et je n'aurai pas la force de le réaliser."⁽¹¹⁾

and further, "c'est trop pour moi tout seul."⁽¹²⁾

Act II opens outside the home of Monime's aunt, and in her we see signs of a long ingrained awareness of class differences. Monime says: "Cela m'est bien égal d'être pauvre."⁽¹³⁾ But she has never been poor. She does however present a strong contrast to Frantz, who could be seen as a realist - foreseeing too clearly all the trials to which poverty would subject her.

Coupled with Frantz's essential problem of how to get the money necessary to wed and provide for Monime, is his regret that she must leave this world of wealth and comfort. But he needs the money because this will bring him "happiness". Frantz sees but one action, which will deliver him from this dilemma - murder. He ceases to be aware of right or wrong. He can choose active evil, or remain stagnating within the inactive forces of good in his life. His need is urgent, thus the passive forces of good have no immediate appeal. He has but one path to follow now: to poison Monime morally against all sense of crime, and then to poison the aunt herself. He shouts, in front of Monime:

"Pourquoi m'avez-vous donné cet amour puisque vous ne m'avez pas donné avec lui toutes les crédulités nécessaires?"⁽¹⁴⁾

His anguish reflects his victimisation by his environment.

"S'aimer, c'est lutter constamment contre des milliers de forces cachées qui viennent de vous ou du monde."⁽¹⁵⁾

She adds, "Nous sommes assez forts pour lutter", to which he replies, "pas avec la pauvreté à nos côtés".

He commits himself to the consequences. They have become too powerful to fight; he accepts them. The aunt's death was to equate happiness, until the thought of it makes him sadistic, depraved. Monime remains perceptive, despite an intensity of emotion:

"Nous nous aimons mal, Frantz ... Nous ne nous aimons que de tendresse et, pour de la tendresse, on ne tue pas."⁽¹⁶⁾

He cannot understand the real truth of her statement:

"Tu mens, tu mens."⁽¹⁷⁾

He has become unreasonable at this stage, and it is this very unreasonableness that typifies Frantz as youthful. Act III opens with the intrusion of the outside world, and its strict code of ethics: Frantz is shown as compelled to confront them and to comply. His clever line of argument permits him to answer and evade each issue, but he is anguished and conscious of a still greater dilemma. The old man is charged with the murder, and Frantz confesses to Philippe:

"Si je l'ai tuée, ce n'est pas pour son argent, c'est parce que son argent ... était devenue le prix exact de notre pureté. Je voulais que mon amour vive, qu'il soit beau, qu'il soit pur, et, pour qu'il vive, j'aurais accompli les tâches les plus horribles."⁽¹⁸⁾

Once they have the money - which is the physical answer to the physical problem - something is dead between them. Monime can no longer accept him:

"Moi, je t'aurais aimé pauvre."⁽¹⁹⁾

She is a contrasting character to him, in that she has depth.

Frantz, young, stands as the Anouilh prototype, the physical embodiment of Anouilh's original thought: a boy just become man, poverty-stricken still, without obvious forthcoming financial aid, anguished, absurdly conscious of an inferior inherent social disposition, which he desperately wants to forget. Frantz is a physical character with a very physical, concrete problem: he firmly believes that love and happiness are dependent upon money. So he appears to live out his dilemma on the surface of existence. He stands trapped on the threshold of another world, caught up in the bitter web of disillusionment with which he is not equipped to cope. Physically torn by all the torments of the flesh, whilst possessing neither the ability to accept differences, nor the desire to rationalize, he exists, and loathes what he sees, what he has seen, what he knows, what he will never see, and what he will see forever unless he breaks free and revolts. In this way, Frantz, the first Anouilhean protagonist to face the harsh world through the theatre, experiences the anguish which Anouilh pursues further in his later works.

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|-----|---------------------|---------|
| (1) | <u>Pièces Roses</u> | page 18 |
| (2) | ibid. | 21 |
| (3) | ibid. | 22 |

(4)	<u>Pièces noires</u>	Page 12
(5)	ibid.	13
(6)	ibid.	13
(7)	ibid.	26
(8)	ibid.	35
(9)	ibid.	36
(10)	ibid.	40
(11)	ibid.	50
(12)	ibid.	52
(13)	ibid.	79
(14)	ibid.	80
(15)	ibid.	81
(16)	ibid.	96
(17)	ibid.	96
(18)	ibid.	116
(19)	ibid.	129

CHAPTER II

Anouilh, in the character of Frantz, presented the audience with a young man, whose dilemma was the inability to face reality, whose action was escape, and whose philosophy was fantasy. The precedent established here is taken up and developed in each of the ensuing plays. This second of the four major plays to be studied, Jézabel, reveals again the presence of the young writer. Anouilh seems very much present in Marc, the protagonist, as compared with Frantz, who seemed to merely exist, living out a series of disillusions, only ever truly living when his hands were finally chained to the physical, inevitable world. Anouilh is however by no means unsympathetic in his portrayal of his character, Frantz. He could not afford to be. L'Hermine's purpose was impact, to introduce the fundamental thought behind the Anouilhean theatre, and to present both a certain consciousness of the existence of two vitally and totally different classes at work in the France of 1930, and the establishment of a strict code of ethics and behaviour to be followed by the Anouilhean hero, and to be broken by the Anouilhean anti-hero.

Marc's progression from the physical chaining of Frantz to reality, through the depths of anguish and disillusionment to the culmination of both in the next important play, that is the subject of this chapter. First Marc's dilemma must be defined in detail. Anouilh takes up the theme at the physical level, and leads the reader into the world of the metaphysical, the conscious and the complex. Like

Marc, the reader senses a rebellion against the corrupting influences of money and materialism. Marc does not seek happiness. He seeks, rather, spiritual contentment, peace of mind in a world from which he knows he will never escape. He senses that his real being is greatly different from the corrupt and poverty-stricken world into which he was born, and in which he has lived for the greatest part of his life. He however feels bound to this life, and can sense it, always clinging to him. This is his dilemma. After being away from this world for some time, he returns to face its every implication and trial. Poverty-stricken and "stigmatised" he has fallen in love with a rich young woman, Jacqueline. But unlike Frantz, he flees from this whole situation. An Anouillean hero, he can exist only on absolutes, and he must flee from the reality of being "one of them". His mother, who has befriended the chauffeur of Jacqueline's family, and needs money desperately, has murdered her husband by feeding him poisonous mushrooms. Marc flees from her, too, for a time.

Marc sees life with Jacqueline as impossible. She is "graced", he is "damned". With his family he is, as part of them, responsible for their sins. He realizes he will never escape his past, but he will leave it temporarily, still uncompromised, still a man of absolutes, sincere, and a young "orgueilleux".

This is the world of the complex, thinking man. And among the impressions we glean from Marc's first comments is the realization that he has reached the point of a moral conflict. This is his first contact with such striking social differences. Even as the play begins, Marc is

aware of the great extent to which man is inseparable from his past. He must identify with it if he is ever to face himself openly and honestly, "je suis malheureux Marc, et c'est à cause de toi."⁽¹⁾ His mother will finally promise him happiness in a life of compromise and vulgarity. He had to flee from this. Indeed, flight often saves him from confrontation with compromise. Initially he fled from the sordid world of poverty and sin, of corrupting influences and of destruction of young people's ethics in the world of luxury and good times.

The values he fled to, however, were always rather aesthetic than physical. While in that other world, he was always conscious of being an intruder, inauthentic, and this feeling eventually became too much for him. His "natural" world was always with him, ugly and terrifying, and he returns to confront his destiny, knowing such a confrontation to be vital to his maturity. He had to cease being an escapist: his action is no longer escape, but rather a quest for time to reflect.

In L'Hermine, money is a main theme. Here, in Jézabel, there is the constant reminder that without material ease, all values can easily give way to corrupting influences, and that poverty reduces most men to a mere physical existence, made endurable only by a frantic seizure of any chance of temporary happiness or contentment. Here the sad outcome of a physically corrupt, aesthetically alive condition is explored. Marc's mother sadly epitomizes the physical result. Marc, too, despite his aesthetic resources, is a result of this same physicality.

He also learnt a certain pride, loyalty and duty, which the wealthy milieu could not give him. So he returned, and back in a world of corrupting influences, sordid compromise and vulgarity, he could now transcend the physical into the realm of ethics, morals and conscience. From this point he could come and go as he chose.

The text sets out the problem. The opening lines reveal the proto-Anouillean hero. From the start, he dominates others, and enjoys an inner strength as well. Jacqueline tells him,

"vous êtes le chef de notre petit groupe. C'est vous qui jouez le mieux au tennis, qui courrez le plus vite, qui nagez le mieux."⁽²⁾

She asks him why he will not return, to which he shouts,

"Je ne veux plus revenir, je suis malheureux, voilà tout."⁽³⁾

And he describes her as she appears to him,

"Je vous prends pour l'être le plus pur, le plus courageux, le plus droit."⁽⁴⁾

He happens to have met an absolutist from the class that is opposite to his own, and he compares her painfully and strikingly to Georgette, who is one of his own class. Without present or future hope in their relationship, Marc speaks to her. Incomprehendingly, she responds:

"J'espère que ce n'est pas parce que vous êtes pauvre?"⁽⁵⁾

To which he replies,

"Non je sens en moi une force immense. Et le

jour où je serai libre, où je pourrai approcher
le monde, je le vaincrai."⁽⁶⁾

Jacqueline asks Marc the basic question of his entire existence: "Mais qu'est-ce qu'il y a donc derrière vous qui nous menace?" She sees the threat to their happiness lying in his background: he answers, "je ne peux pas vous dire."⁽⁷⁾ She continues, "comme vous les aimez, Marc, Mes souvenirs!" and he replies, "je n'en ai pas comme cela. Alors, forcément, je me sers des vôtres."⁽⁸⁾ He has none of their heritage, and he hates himself for lowering his pride to use theirs. Instead, he returns to face his own life - his own duty. He pleads with his mother,

"ne te forge pas des idées mauvaises. Je t'aime,
je voudrais que tu sois heureuse: mais je voudrais
être heureux aussi."⁽⁹⁾

She cannot understand him. He explains how sad he has felt being back with her, and she cries "tu es un égoïste," to which he answers, "ne répète pas ce mot qui n'est pas vrai. Aie le courage de regarder en toi."

Anouilh does not miss any of the awkwardness of man's alienation in Marc's comments. Yet Anouilh conveys the idea that Marc felt he had to return. His spiritual feeling of inner peace is apparent once he has yielded at last to this natural calling. Then his pride reappears in the questions he asks the maid about his mother's funeral. At the opening of the play, Marc speaks with the arrogance of the young Anouilhean hero, dedicated in his search for absolutes. His mother's compromises repel him, and he deliberately and measuredly demands of her the sacrifice of absolute honesty.

Humbly and in anguish, he begs her to save herself in his eyes. This request is more a plea for the cooperation he so desperately needs of her. He can recognize, however, in his mother a certain inherent weakness, but as yet he cannot excuse her. He must rather blame her for his present problem. A pathetic little character, she too is victim of this milieu. Neither she nor her son chose to be there. Frantz simply referred to the poverty of the former years of his life: he no more than spoke of this fearful force, the implications it wrought, and the sacrifice and pain that inevitably accompanied it. Marc goes a decided step further, and attacks a cause.

He knows she can do nothing about their poverty-stricken and low-class position. Rather, he seeks comfort in the fact that he has explained to his mother any conduct she may interpret as reflection on her own nature. His argument is that they both now make a stand regardless of their low-class condition:

"quitte-le maman, quitte-le... Deviens une mère comme les autres, maintenant que tu es vieille et que l'âge te forcera bientôt à ce sacrifice."⁽¹⁰⁾

He now wants her to make the supreme sacrifice which he himself is making, in order for him to carry it out completely. He has wrestled with the possibility of marriage to Jacqueline being a success, and finally has rejected it. She has completely ignored his demands in her turn,

"laisse-le-moi, pour deux ou trois mois encore. Même si cela t'empêche d'être heureux."⁽¹¹⁾

In fact, facing poverty without pride or honour, she is

a more vulnerable victim than he is. She has not that same strength and calibre that even the poor possess, the sanctity they preserve against the odds so heavily weighted against them. Marc says to her, "tu es vieille maintenant, et tu ne l'aimes pas, j'en suis sûr ... moi je suis jeune, je l'aime." But she does not grasp the purpose of his comparison, and continues with her own story. By the end of the first act, his mother has summed up the action. Marc could never have wed Jacqueline. He is of a different race from her, and he grows more conscious of this as he listens to members of his own family slander her following the death of his father. Hypocrites themselves, they anger him.

He is in love with Jacqueline, but more than that, he is in love with goodness, purity and virtue. And somehow his mother, though morally degenerate, realizes the hopelessness of this union with Jacqueline. Had Marc no conscience, or, were he a Frantz, longing for material competence and wealth, he might have been relatively content. But Marc, in his awareness of the essential differences which divide them, could never permit this now. And though he wishes above all else to introduce into his life something beautiful and pure, he cannot, because she belongs to the other class. His mother cannot accept this pure being into her life, to be a living condemnation of all she stands for. Though "happiness" is within his grasp, he, true to the Anouillean hero's ethics, turns against it. His declaration is powerful:

"Je vous admire avec haine. Vous êtes tellement belle, tout est si sale ici, si pauvre, si raté."⁽¹²⁾

He tells Jacqueline that he, with his mother, killed his father. She then asks, "mais qu'est-ce que vous dites?" "Je l'ai aidé. J'ai préparé les champignons. Vous entendez."⁽¹³⁾ Even at this stage, he lies, in order to escape from the happiness Jacqueline has offered. He continues, "Je ne sais, pas pourquoi, on ne sait jamais pourquoi ici, allez-vous-en, vous n'êtes pas chez vous ici: Cette fois, enfin, vous ne pouvez pas comprendre ... je veux rester ici dans ma crasse ... avec elle. Foutez le camp, allez, foutez le camp." And he shuts Jacqueline and all she represents out of his life.

Eventually, Marc must be seen as a loyal son. He is stigmatized even more than Frantz. Marc's family bonds are deep and sincere, and they transcend all materialistic values. He is proud: to deny this world would be in complete opposition to his inner purity: compromises are no solution in his eyes. It is his strong sense of loyalty to his class that leads to masochistic thoughts towards the end of the play: he seeks a necessary outlet in temporary flight from a condition to which he has returned. This confrontation involves considerable anguish, not unlike that experienced by the conscience-torn Hamlet. He loves Jacqueline, and respects her, but when she stands between him and his duty towards a way of life that was at one time so much part of him, he insults her, and bids her leave. Much and all that he loathes his part, yet he cannot betray it without first betraying himself. When he finally sees these two worlds in juxtaposition, his choice is obvious to him. His final action proves he prefers, of necessity, to remain a faithful victim of destiny, to seeking happiness in a

world in which he does not belong.

In resolving his dilemma, Marc - unlike Frantz - realises that his first love is his family. It is, in fact, pride in his birthright that eventually and inevitably pulls him back. Through Marc, the Anouilhean hero's idealistic qualities and his need for absolutes are firmly established.

In the same year, 1932, Anouilh published Le Bal des Voleurs, one of his most popular plays. In this play Anouilh presents a sharp contrast to the gloomy reality depicted in his works so far. For this play is written in an entirely different vein: it is bright and superficial; yet beyond the lightheartedness Anouilh passes a subtle comment on the society of his time. He grouped this play, and several later ones, under the title, Pièces Roses. Though this first play in this series is not one of the four major plays in this thesis, yet it does warrant mention because of the different light it casts on the youth aspect, and on Anouilh's interpretation of youth in a non-tragic play. The young characters can be drawn out, studied, and then contrasted with the older characters in the play.

The play is qualified by the author as a comédie-ballet. Immediately, a bright, gay, somewhat artificial world is encountered. Three thieves are introduced early in the first act, Peterbono, Gustave and Hector. They are all young, and of a lower socio-economic group. The nieces of

Lady Hurf, Eva and Juliette are young also, and the juxtaposition of the classes is made most obvious. There is also a father and son financier team, who play a part of considerable importance in the dénouement of the play. Here youth and maturity are successfully combined for a time in the one operation: they have both their class and origins in common, and, of course, interests. And the theme is essentially that of youth, his cunning, his thirst for the adventuresome and the daring, and the inevitable encounter with romance.

Juliette falls in love with the robber Gustave, and in so doing she rejects her high class values in favour of her feelings for him. Youth chooses youth, in total disregard for social decorum. There is an interesting parallel here with Jézabel. First, youth puts feelings first. Secondly, the attitudes of parent, or parental figure towards adolescent happiness are quite different.

Juliette's aunt, in complete contrast to Marc's parents, has Juliette's own happiness very much at heart. The focus moves from tormented conscience-torn adolescents to contented ones. The end is happy. And though the play is light, full of charming dances and disguises, impossible plots and other fantasies, some comment can be drawn from the youthful situations and reactions. Lady Hurf presents the contrast in her sadly realistic comment,

"Et ce qui est plus grave, je me rends compte qu'entre cette petite fille et cette vieille femme, il n'y a eu qu'une solitude pire encore."⁽¹⁴⁾

Juliette, on the other hand, seems to treat life lightly,

never really stopping to realize that this attitude merely disguises reality. She asks her cousin, "tu n'es pas heureuse? C'est facile, tu sais, pourtant, il n'y a qu'à se laisser aller," and Eva says, "Evidemment, tu es toute intacte, toute prête à croire,"⁽¹⁵⁾ and yet, despite their lighthearted approach to life, it is nonetheless the young girl who triumphs here. To Eva, Lady Hurf says finally:

"Elle est finie, notre belle aventure. Nous nous retrouvons tous seuls, il n'y a que pour ceux qui l'ont jouée avec toute leur jeunesse que la comédie est réussie, et encore c'est parce qu'ils jouaient leur jeunesse, ce qui réussit toujours."⁽¹⁶⁾

She accepts the fact that youth has triumphed in this acting out of roles. The play is one of lightheartedness, yet through the light-heartedness, Anouilh does project a serious image of youth's encounter with reality, and the choices he must make. And through the superficiality of their moods, comments, the young characters have merit, and some indication of lasting qualities is apparent.

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|-----|--------------------------------|---------|
| (1) | <u>Nouvelles Pièces Noires</u> | page 40 |
| (2) | ibid. | 6 |
| (3) | ibid. | 7, 8 |
| (4) | ibid. | 10 |

(5)	<u>Nouvelles Pièces Noires</u>	page 10
(6)	ibid.	10
(7)	ibid.	13
(8)	ibid.	15
(9)	ibid.	39
(10)	ibid.	43
(11)	ibid.	53
(12)	ibid.	113
(13)	ibid.	123
(14)	<u>Pièces Roses</u>	69
(15)	ibid.	90
(16)	ibid.	130

CHAPTER III

This chapter will state and explore the dilemma of Thérèse Tarde in La Sauvage, and will examine briefly one further play Y avait un prisonier, the two appearing in 1934. La Sauvage developed points of protagonist dilemma established effectively in the preceding major plays. The conflict arising within an individual when he confronts his past is an important theme here also. And this confrontation, which occurs at such a vital stage in the protagonist's life, brings about the physical revolt and the anguish which the title of this work well describes. Further still, this play reaches into the depths of both the conscious and the active human condition. Frantz acted, and sought to justify his act by argument, but he was basically a man of action, a man not given to deep philosophical thought. He ultimately saw but one action, and acted upon it. Marc, on the other hand, was a man of little physical action, except where it could somehow assist in resolving his dilemma. Anouilh examines through theatre the realm of the human condition, with its every absurdity and complexity.

However, in La Sauvage, the presence of both the physical, materialist Frantz, and the pensive Marc, expressed in the attitudes, thoughts and behaviour of Thérèse Tarde, can be distinctly felt. She is clever enough to think when necessary, to reason when the situation warrants thought, and to act spontaneously when she thinks she ought. She is the most fascinating creature so far. She is young, capable of great feeling, and a woman of delicate,

sensitive and sympathetic qualities at those times when she is herself, and not a spokeswoman for a cause. Like Marc, she can understand and transcend mere physical awareness and recognize differences. Like Frantz, she is aware of a deficiency in material possessions. And like the poor mute Humulus, she stands, frightened and tongue-tied before a society of ever increasing compromise and moral corruption. She combines all these and goes further. The physical rebellion of Frantz and the moral rebellion of Marc merge in the physical, moral and aesthetic revolt of Thérèse. Finally, as a woman she widens the Anouilh spectrum.

Her revolt is the ultimate resolution of her dilemma which from the opening act is clearly demonstrated. The play introduces the tragedy of the young and the predestined. There is a decisive move away from the earlier worlds of physical violence and corrupt action: rather, there is in this play the poisoning of pure minds by a corrupt environment. The aura of corruption is counteracted by musical instruments, aesthetic rather than violent - viola, violin, piano, libraries and the arts in general - symbols of a purer but unattainable world.

Thérèse Tarde is the daughter of a second-rate café orchestra director and a mother of low repute. She is in love with Florent, a rich young man and a successful musician, who finds everything easy, and has never wanted for anything. Instead, he has lived a sheltered and contented existence, with happiness a mere passive state in which to exist. He appears to have, however, little deep sensitivity or empathy. He is presented in sharp

contrast to Thérèse. At first, she looks forward to a happy marriage with Florent, because she is young, because this seems so obviously ideal. Then, gradually, she moves into the centre of the dilemma. She finds that her love for Florent is affected by the attitudes of others towards it. Her parents cannot wait to get hold of his money, and even her best friend advises her to go for what has best "re-sale value". Then, in a blinding, realistic revelation, she finds that she is as much a part of this horrid, sordid intrigue as are her parents and her friends, even though she, like Marc, may have believed and felt that she belonged almost entirely to another world. But for her, as for Marc, to disown this past completely would be a betrayal both of them and of her own inner purity, prized (above all else) by the Anouillean heroes and heroines. Any slight to this world would be a sullyng compromise. From the outset, Thérèse appears young, impulsive and determined in her ways. So much so, that from the opening scenes onwards, there is never a doubt that Thérèse is "La Sauvage". Another marked characteristic making up the complex whole of her being is, as again Anouilh makes clear from the beginning, the honesty and frankness of her comments. It is these same qualities that enable her, finally, to return from her escape into illusion back to the confrontation with reality. So a progression is made in the battered world and soul of Thérèse. At the beginning of the play, we see her as the spiritually and physically battered victim of destiny. Yet she is at this stage relatively unaware of her real situation: soon, aware of her dilemma, she

grows perceptive and afraid of the social condition into which she was thrust at birth.

In the first scene of Act I, Thérèse is laughing with Jeannette in a small café, mediocre and pretentious, and she says to her, "S'il veut m'épouser, tant mieux! S'il ne le veut pas..."⁽¹⁾ From the beginning, she, so adolescent-like, lives in the world of positives. It has never occurred to her that this might not be realized. She leaves the alternative statement unfinished. Gosta, the pianist who loves Thérèse, confronts her father openly and frankly:

"Il y a assez longtemps que vous essayez de la vendre à quelqu'un, il fallait que cela réussisse un jour ou l'autre. C'est une gosse! vous lui avez fait miroiter l'argent qu'elle pourrait avoir, un argent dont elle n'a même pas envie, parce qu'elle vaut mieux que vous, vieux débris."⁽²⁾

The world Thérèse has lived in for so long is well depicted in these comments. She replies to Gosta, nevertheless:

"Tu ne sais pas ce que tu dis. Personne ne m'a forcée à l'épouser. Je l'aime."⁽³⁾

For she would rather the man she loves were poor - an interesting contrast with Frantz, and an interesting parallel with the Jacqueline and Monime type. Thérèse says to Jeanette:

"S'il était pauvre et malheureux, c'est drôle, il me semble qu'il serait davantage à moi."⁽⁴⁾

Jeanette counters, "Des malheureux, tu en trouveras

d'autres ne t'in quiète pas."⁽⁵⁾

That this comment could come from one reared in the same family and milieu as Thérèse, certainly places Thérèse among the Anouilhean heroines. Her attitude is so different from Jeannette's, and her parents'. Thérèse, disappointed, simply adds:

"Toi aussi, alors.

Va-t'en, va-t'en! Je ne veux même pas te répondre...

Mais qu'est-ce que vous croyez tous? Qu'il est une machine à vous faire gagner de l'argent, qu'il faut que je ne pense qu'à son argent?"⁽⁶⁾

She does appear very sincere in her regard for Florent. And here we see her first physical revolt. She confronts wildly the accepted behaviour of a particular environment, with her own absolute argument. To her father, she says:

"Mais on ne peut donc pas cesser de s'en occuper une fois de cet argent."⁽⁷⁾

She loves him for himself, and all his wealth seems odious to her. It is this wealth and the material life associated with it that awakens her to her great revolt, for already she has seen that, firstly great material differences separate them, and secondly, spiritually, their whole lives have been based on different values. It will be this essential class barrier that will jeopardize her love for and her future with Florent. Just as Frantz grew progressively anguished in his search for material wealth, so Thérèse grows progressively anguished in her search for an escape from materialistic society, taking with her all her small, exquisite, aesthetic beliefs. Her father tells

her:

"Ne fais pas la sottise, tu es aussi commerçante
que moi."⁽⁸⁾

He knows this hunger is like some inherited disease, with which she too is afflicted. She has now reached the stage of a conscious perception of all those about her, of their appearance and more so of their moral values. As an Anouilhean heroine, she is to revolt and to live out the rules. Prior to this discovery - actually brought about by this first revolt - she seems to have been relatively content in her blindness to her condition, and her ignorance of anything better. Her sister Jeannette is the first vehicle for these revelations, being enmeshed in worldliness. We can see her rather as a mere Beauvoirien "autrui", similar physically to Thérèse, but there the resemblance ends. The older victims have accepted this condition now; they merely continue to act out their roles.

But Thérèse, unlike them and Jeannette, is of a different calibre. Florent tells her, referring to her comments on her mother's behaviour:

"Oui, Thérèse, mais cela a si peu d'importance.
Nous effacerons tout cela."⁽⁹⁾

Little does he realize that the very impossibility of effacing this inherited disgrace makes it so lethal and so tragic. She adds:

"Vous croyez que vous pourrez?
Mais ne soyez donc pas si fier de votre force, si
sûr de vous!"

He certainly admires her, but he just cannot accept her dilemma. He says to her:

"Comment une fille, comme toi, si libre, si fière, pourrait-elle être atteinte, une minute, par une histoire d'argent?"⁽¹⁰⁾

Thérèse asks him if he is ashamed because of her family. She informs him that she, unlike them, is not happy.

Jeannette lacks the depth and insight which enable Thérèse to perceive another world, and to escape into it. Her second deliberate act of revolt is the throwing of Florent's money to the ground before him. She has tried to show them she is no longer like them. She watches them, and loathes the way they all stand round, waiting to pounce upon the precious small pieces of gold. Florent could never understand how significant this outrageous act of refusal is, nor how very vital is this second personal act of revolt against every value held dear by her parents and their life style. She cries out to Florent:

"Comme tout est simple pour toi. Je suis toute froide de honte et tu joues un joli jeu."⁽¹¹⁾

She then regards her parents objectively:

"Regardez-les tous les deux. Cela leur fait mal, ces billets par terre..."⁽¹²⁾

She pauses - then states:

"Je suis une imbécile d'avoir commencé. Moi aussi, malgré moi, cela me fait mal cet argent par terre. J'ai voulu faire la fière, mais je mentais... A genoux, à genoux. Je dois les ramasser à genoux pour ne pas mentir, je suis de cette race."

She is still one of them, but she will try again in the next act.

In act II Thérèse stands outside her own small world for the first time. The setting is luxury. This is the world of Florent, and it is a bright, smiling, happy and successful world, where people live in total ignorance of the poor, miserable lives lead elsewhere. Thérèse moves deeper in her period of perplexity. With her father she is about to confront realities. He is so much in contrast with her in that, now, he simply exists and accepts, and consequently enjoys. He is totally oblivious of the social agony and anguish she is enduring.

"Crois-tu que si j'étais venue ici avec l'intention d'être heureuse j'aurais insisté pour t'emmener, papa?"⁽¹³⁾

She has an heroic plan of action. Her pride for what is her heritage will now help her to confront Florent and all he represents. She tells her father of her revolt and he asks: "Contre qui es-tu révoltée?"

She answers,

"Tout ici est avec lui, contre moi."⁽¹⁴⁾

And this further deepens her purpose to revolt and escape from it all - back to her own race.

"Malin d'arriver ... comme une vraie fiancée, sans honte et révolte."⁽¹⁵⁾

Her shame and her revolt are her inheritance, and duty demands both. So she reveals to them much of what she has harboured within her for so long. She cannot blame

him for not being poor, but she must know he is listening to everything she has to say, and that she must remain faithful to herself.

"Tu ne sais rien d'humain, Florent ... Ces rides, quelles peines les ont donc tracées? Tu n'as jamais eu une vraie douleur, une douleur honteuse comme un mal qui suppure ... Tu n'as jamais hâï personne, cela se voit à tes yeux, même ceux qui t'ont fait du mal.

"Comme tu es sûr de toi! Comme tu es fort!

"Tu n'as jamais été laid, ni honteux, ni pauvre ... Moi, j'ai fait de longs détours parce qu'il fallait que je descende des marches et que j'avais des bas troués aux genoux."

He replies:

"Je n'ai jamais été pauvre, non, Thérèse, mais ce n'est pas ma faute."

"Tu es un riche. C'est pire. Un vainqueur qui n'a pas combattu."⁽¹⁶⁾

More than Florent individually, she is blaming the social class he represents. Nothing personal is meant; but she could never have really loved him again, after having fully revealed to him all he still represents and always will, in her eyes. They try to leave, but Florent continues the discussion and Thérèse reveals more of her sad past. She cannot believe she has so touched Florent, when she thinks she sees him crying - she cannot believe he is capable of such feeling:

"Tu pleures à cause de moi? Tu sais donc pleurer?"

"Tu n'es donc pas toujours sûr de toi?"

"Aie besoin de moi pour que je ne souffre pas trop."⁽¹⁷⁾

In a final act of hope, she persists. Her hope is both physical and spiritual. In all her youthful desperation for a dream she knew could never materialize, she cries out to her father:

"Oui, je reste, moi, et je n'ai pas honte et je suis forte et je suis fière et je suis jeune et j'ai toute la vie devant moi pour être heureuse!"⁽¹⁸⁾

And she sinks into an impossible dream for the next few scenes - knowing, surely, that she will have to revolt once more, in order to regain reality and fidelity to herself.

She is now living her predicament. Her whole problem is no longer in the realm of thought, but is rather a reality. Yet despite all, she is brave and proud still. Youth and hope rise to accept the challenge. She sends her father away and chooses to stay for a short time in this other world. In her desperation, she is almost ruthless towards him:

"Je suis heureuse parce que tu vas t'en aller tout seul, papa, avec tes deux valises de carton, parce que je me suis enfin détachée de toi!"⁽¹⁹⁾

Act III presents the physical result of her moral choice. She is shown being fitted for her gown. She has tried to let him understand what she is by revealing to him all her past, and her hatred of hypocrisy and of the compromising influences of society. This act is the most concrete, and values now take on a very physical form. The world of

those in whose company she now finds herself is so different, and so materialistic. Florent's sister, Marie, says:

"Passer deux ou trois ans de l'autre côté du Channel: il n'y a rien de tel pour faire connaître la vie à une jeune fille."⁽²⁰⁾

Thérèse knows of much harder, more painful ways of understanding life. These people think so very differently from her, and it is only by actually living in their world with them that she can grow completely convinced of what she must do, in order to remain as honest, faithful, dutiful and an Antigone, as she knows she must. To the small kitchen maid, Léontine, Thérèse says:

"Je te demande pardon pour ma robe, Léontine."⁽²¹⁾

Thérèse feels for this small maid, and, in a way, befriends her, seeing their cause as one and the same. She reveals her dilemma now.

The Hartman, a close friend of Florent's, smiling sadly, she says:

"J'ai tant crié! Oh! ces six jours, ces six horribles jours ... Quelquefois, dans moi, c'était comme un cheval qui se cabrait..."

"Il s'est sauvé. Il court. Il est loin déjà ... Il ne faut pas le regretter, c'était sûrement une mauvaise bête."⁽²²⁾

This rebellious movement symbolised by the horse was her natural self breaking through social influences and hypocrisy, escaping from an almost unbearable situation.

She did not belong here, but had to remain a short time even beyond this point.

She tells Hartman that she is trying to understand him, and more, that she wants Florent to understand her. Hartman does not understand her either, and he interprets what she has said in the exact terms against which she is revolting.

"Ne dites pas cela, Thérèse. C'était un bon cheval, fier et noir, magnifique ... Mais il ne faut pas regretter, non, de l'avoir laissé se sauver, puisque c'était le prix de votre bonheur. Ce sale bonheur qu'il voulait fuir de toutes ses forces, vous vous souvenez?"⁽²³⁾

This happiness still seems the same - and she does regard it as a false life, "Mais c'est une comédie étrange, leur bonheur!"⁽²⁴⁾

It is Florent and his attitude that convinces her. Even Florent, who loves her, does not need her. He has everything. So she chooses to take the other alternative - where she is needed - which lies in the duty she owes her own race:

"Il est sûr de moi comme de toutes choses ...
Moi qui suis si peu sûre de moi, pourtant."

Hartman says he loves her; she continues:

"Je veux le croire, Hartman, je veux le croire de toutes mes forces - mais cette larme qu'il a versée sur moi et que j'ai cueillie au bout de mon doigt ... Elle s'est séchée et maintenant je n'ai plus rien ..."

"Hartman, il n'en a même pas besoin, de mon amour, il est bien trop riche! ..."(25)

She has returned to reality after riding the high crest of the wave of disillusionment, in believing Florent really needed her. Their interpretations of "need" were entirely different, and Thérèse did not allow for this. Hartman tells her:

"Laissez-vous aller. Vous finirez par penser à leur manière."(26)

which is exactly the compromise even of thought that she can neither afford nor accept. Little does he realize, she could never do this. She would hate herself for ever for this ultimate yielding to forces outside her own world. She suddenly perceives a clear way of portraying to him this ultimate sacrifice:

"Mais c'est un peu comme si on était mort ..."(27)

To continue to exist in a meaningless world is like death in her eyes. She sees what living here would entail, or rather, what it would not entail. This existence with Florent would be totally selfish and pleasure-seeking, with never a thought for others:

"Ce qu'il faut, c'est ne jamais penser qu'il y en a d'autres qui vivent, qui se battent, qui meurent..."(28)

Her sense of personal duty stands in direct contrast to this aimless superficial existence which never touches reality, and implies a life of hypocrisies and illusions. Her father returns with news of her mother's death. His

arrival jolts her back into reality and the urgency of her own past. She can understand how Gosta must have felt:

"Vous ne le savez pas, vous autres, mais tout au bout du désespoir, il y a une blanche clairière où l'on est presque heureux."

It is in this region that she is at present. Her father comments:

"Un drôle de bonheur!"

"Oui, papa, un drôle de bonheur, qui n'a rien de commun avec votre bonheur à vous. Un affreux bonheur. Un sale, un honteux bonheur."

"Mais je n'en veux plus, ... je veux être heureuse comme les autres!"⁽²⁹⁾

She desperately wants to be happy - but not with her father - yet she knows this is where she will inevitably go. She revolts again, mentally, against her father and Gosta, and both revolts symbolize her youthful struggle for purity and absolutes, which she cannot however recognize in either of them. But here, and here only, she can find her own cause, her duty, her flesh and blood and her race. Yet, because she is young and impulsive, she still revolts against her father and Gosta, because they have both accepted the compromising and corrupting influences of this same society:

"Vous êtes laids, vous êtes sales, vous êtes pleins de sales pensées et les riches ont bien raison de passer vite à côté de vous dans les rues."⁽³⁰⁾

And Gosta, meekly, answers:

"Je comprends maintenant qu'on n'aurait jamais dû revenir te montrer nos sales têtes."⁽³¹⁾

Because she is young, she finds this anguish virtually impossible and bursts out, "laissez-moi, dites, laissez-moi". In a way, she assumes a universally significant role. She represents youth, hopeful, searching for truth, purity and absolute values and, because she is young, believes no revolt is too difficult to reach these ends.

This act ends with Florent practising on the piano, as happy as ever, while Thérèse - who pretends to listen from the garden - slowly makes her exit from his world:

"Oui, mon chéri, va vite jouer ... Tu en meurs d'envie, je le vois à tes yeux."⁽³²⁾

She has accepted the fact that they are products of two different worlds. He is caught up in his world of travel, sport, music and of complete self-sufficiency. She must return to her own world, where her true self has been all along. She finally says, wistfully, though far away from him:

"Tu comprends, Florent, j'aurai beau tricher et fermer les yeux de toutes mes forces ... Il y aura toujours un chien perdu quelque part qui m'empêchera d'être heureuse ..."⁽³³⁾

The young heroine had rejected the evil and corruption of

a sinful, compromising adult world, for one she believed would be less corrupt, only to discover there a complete lack of authenticity and, furthermore, that being there, her own sense of personal loyalty no longer existed.

Florent tried to make her realize that the sins poverty forced her to commit are forgiven by her entry into this new world, but Thérèse cannot accept this. Her father, who was with her for most of the time spent in her fiancé's luxurious house, serves as her constant reminder of the poverty into which she was born. She could not bear him to leave until she weakened, briefly, and after having decided to give happiness a chance, ordered him to leave. Then she revolted against the world of compromise and against the people who existed within it.

In Thérèse we see much of the personalities of Humulus, Frantz and Marc. She is frightened and often speechless before the awesome world of adult responsibility, like Humulus, poor and in love with a rich person; like Frantz and Marc, she is filled with a sense of duty to a race which, so often repulsive and corrupt, is none-the-less the one to which the protagonist must remain loyal. Anouilh, having progressed into the world of Thérèse, is now ready to explore it.

She is, further, very proud. In this respect she is the first of the great Anouilh "orgueilleux". Her pride causes her revolt against her background, and then her revolt against the same high-class world of compromise and corruption, back to her own race. She belongs here: realizing and accepting it, she says to Florent simply:

"Je suis de cette race"⁽³⁴⁾

Florent cannot possibly understand her tragedy, nor free her from this feeling of union with her own world, nor from the circle of real sorrows that surrounds her past life, and holds her trapped within. Like Ruth in Keats' Ode she stands "in tears amid the alien corn".⁽³⁵⁾

Thérèse is, like Ruth, spiritually sick for her true home. She has left it and revolted against it, only because initially she was searching for a world of absolutes, utterly beautiful, rather than the ugly reality and the necessary compromises she saw in life about her at home. She carried on her own small shoulders the burden of a race.

The last impressions given in La Sauvage do point to a more hopeful future, once the protagonist has returned to the point of origin and to the possibility of a new love, back home. The final lines seem rather to point this way. Thérèse has become the Anouilhean spokeswoman, and she assumes also a certain prophetic quality in her mature final resolution.

Y avait in Prisonnier is an interesting study as regards the youth aspect in that here we move with a character who has just returned, after being imprisoned for 15 years, to a situation and atmosphere he left when he was still young. He returns to a world objectively, after having left it subjectively. Consequently, he is now struck by the hypocrisy and artificiality of the lives about him and also by the fact that, had he remained with those who

formerly were in his social group, he would be leading a similar kind of life to theirs. His friend Marcellin tries to answer his questions on how he has spent these last years but he can think of no definite answer:

"Ça passe plus vite que tu ne le crois et tous les jours se ressemblent ..."

to which Ludovic replies:

"Mais la vie se réduit donc à des mots, pour des hommes libres? Mais tu as tout de même fait d'autres voyages, j'imagine, sans bouger ta peau. Des voyages au fond d'un être, au fond d'une foule ... tu as vécu libre au milieu des autres, c'est un voyage pour chaque jour, ça?"

"... pas un amour, pas une haine? Pas un enthousiasme pour une idée ou pour un être?"

Ludovic has still the vibrant life enthusiasm of the youth he was when he left. Marcellin, on the contrary, has aged, and has been victim to and influenced by the compromising society Ludovic has escaped.

This play, though short and by no means among Anouilh's important works, does contribute to this thesis, in that it emphasizes the physical effects of life. The man returns, till now free from the corroding compromises of life, and he can see all too clearly this physical and spiritual corrosion, which all those about him can neither see nor sense. Thus, while not a major work, Y avait un prisonnier warrants mention in this collection of youthful studies.

(1)	<u>Pièces Noires, La Sauvage</u>	page 139
(2)	ibid.	147
(3)	ibid.	148
(4)	ibid.	164
(5)	ibid.	164
(6)	ibid.	169
(7)	ibid.	170
(8)	ibid.	170
(9)	ibid.	176
(10)	ibid.	178
(11)	ibid.	181
(12)	ibid.	182
(13)	ibid.	194
(14)	ibid.	197
(15)	ibid.	201
(16)	ibid.	221-223
(17)	ibid.	231, 232
(18)	ibid.	235
(19)	ibid.	234
(20)	ibid.	238
(21)	ibid.	246
(22)	ibid.	249
(23)	ibid.	250
(24)	ibid.	250
(25)	ibid.	251
(26)	ibid.	253
(27)	ibid.	253
(28)	ibid.	253
(29)	ibid.	261
(30)	ibid.	267
(31)	ibid.	268

- (32) Pièces Noires, La Sauvage page 272
(33) ibid. 272
(34) ibid. 262
(35) Keats. Ode to a Nightingale. VII

CHAPTER IV

This chapter will survey those works appearing after 1935 until 1942, in which year Antigone was written. Each can be seen as a further development of Anouilh's portrayal of youth, and those points presenting and furthering the youthful dilemma will be analysed in this chapter. All four plays emphasize Anouilh's concentration on youth at this stage in his literary works, and prepare in different ways for Antigone, in which threads of all these contributing works can be seen, woven together. Also, each work can be regarded as distinctly apart from the others, not only in content and character, but also in theatrical and technical device. These plays are Le Voyageur sans Bagage 1936, Le Rendez-vous de Senlis, Léocadia, 1939 and Eurydice, 1941 which is the immediate precursor to Antigone, 1942. However, only the first and last afford any serious comment on the youth aspect, and on the presentation and explanation of youthful problems. The other two plays, Le Rendez-vous de Senlis and Léocadia are plays of a much lighter vein, and are grouped among the Pièces Roses. They all, essentially, involve a theory of escape from both the past and the present, into a world of fanciful illusions.

Georges, the young protagonist in Le Rendez-vous de Senlis has invented an ideal world, present and past, to conform with the illusionary ideal he has always imagined. To carry out this dream, he leaves the designing woman he had married because of her money, and rents a country

house in order to receive his new girl friend, Isabelle, as he pleases. In reality, this symbolises life the way youth wants it, because it is nothing but George's youthfulness that has caused him to revolt against the life of mediocre luxury into which he has married. To counter this real world, which he has come to loathe, he has invented the ideal past, which is of course ideal to him or to a youth, and into this ideal past he has established his ideal family.

An interesting point here is that Georges, in his ideal world, no longer sees himself as a husband, but as a young man, once again, home with his parents. Anouilh has let youthful illusions materialise for a brief time, and Georges by living out this illusion gives some idea of the family life he has never had, and which he has missed. He has even hired an actor and an actress to act out the roles of his ideal parents; but his plans go awry, and unforeseen complications, with which the world of illusions cannot cope, arise. His dilemma arose after he had realized his mistake, which was that he had regarded money as an answer. Then, he saw all that money could not give him, such as a happy family life and authentic values. And in order to show Isabelle that he realized the great importance of these two essentials, he created an illusory world, and took her there. In doing so, however, he soon realizes that this escape can neither last, nor has it delivered him from his predicament. His past, also, cannot be changed by any present, fanciful arrangements. It is only in facing reality that Georges can ever find a solution. He must face himself honestly,

and he must be true to himself, and to his own world, if he wants others to accept him fully. He must leave behind him, with his youth and youth's illusions, the game he has played for so long, so that with maturity he can learn acceptance. The message of this allegorical work can be seen as youth having to accept realities, forsaking the dream world. Once he has reached this point of self-knowledge, and of knowledge of realities, he can encounter further experience with strength and incentive.

Léocadia has a similar theme. In this play, the past once again plays a role of considerable significance. The prince, one of the main characters, has been living in the past, trying desperately to relive the three days he spent with the actress Léocadia. This dream world ended on the third day when she accidentally strangled herself. Since her death, he has done little other than to try to completely relive those days spent with her. The Duchess, his aunt, instead of trying to jolt the boy back to the real world, discovers Amanda, a humble seamstress, who bears a considerable resemblance to Léocadia, and brings her to their home. And it is Amanda who opens to the audience the dilemma of the young prince. She finds that he never really was in love with Léocadia, and that rather he was in love with her ability to transform his hitherto meaningless, soulless existence. Amanda takes this change a step further, and she proves to him that even Léocadia, much as she had changed his life, was herself a mere shallow being, a symbol, and that rather she, Amanda, is alive and concerned for him, and can offer him life and happiness. She forces him into the real

world of the present:

"S'il vous plaît, ne vous débattez plus dans ce rêve où tout vous échappe. C'est le matin, maintenant. Regardez comme le monde est plein de choses sûres autour de nous, de fleurs qu'on peut sentir, d'herbes qu'on peut prendre et froisser dans ses mains."⁽¹⁾

She, also young, has been able to bring him out of the world of appearances, back into that of reality. She is a spontaneous, pure and authentic character who has replaced the symbols and illusions of his former life. This play itself can be taken as a highly symbolic one, in which the Prince, Amanda and Léocadia all play very symbolic roles. The décor, even, plays a central part in conveying Anouilh's ideas.

In the third play in this group, Le Voyageur sans Bagage the tone becomes immediately more serious. And as the plot unfolds, Gaston's dilemma becomes more and more symbolic and tragic, whereas in the two former plays the world of illusion could change into an acceptable reality. Gaston's problem involves a very crucial choice. He could be seen rather as a victim of an unnatural force, since he has lost his memory. Rather than being caught in an inescapable illusive world such as those of the Prince or Georges, Gaston is trapped in a world of frustrating anguish. In this state, he quickly grows angry when his past is brought before him. Prior to this he has forgotten all his past, and when he sees or hears what this involved and the effects of it now, he prefers not to know of it. He discovers the truth,

finally, but reveals only to the child what he knows to be his real identity: he prefers to live out the present in hope, rather than continue to exist as his past and environment dictate. For this reason, he prefers to suppress his knowledge of his past.

Through this man, Anouilh illustrates how great an emphasis society places on heredity, and how society must have this knowledge in order to successfully categorize individuals. A further essential difference between this play and the former two is that Gaston is not an adolescent character, and he could well be excluded from this study, which is focused upon young characters and their dilemmas. However, Gaston does indirectly afford us some comment of considerable importance on the youth aspect. For Gaston leaves the world of conscious man as a youth, and returns later and older to that same world totally unaffected by the corrupting influences society breeds in those years between youth and maturity. In this way, he returns as youthfully naïve and innocent as he was some fifteen years before.

And his youthfulness, when he left for the war, is emphasized. At the opening of Act III, he is looking at his old room and he is told, "tu étais si jeune, Jacques, quand tu es parti!"⁽²⁾ Gaston cannot understand how his brother can still welcome back this villain. He asks him:

"Et puis comment pouvez-vous souhaiter de le voir revenir, même vieilli, même changé, entre votre femme et vous?"⁽³⁾

To which Georges answers:

"Qu'est-ce que tu veux, même si c'était un assassin, il fait partie de la famille, sa place est dans la famille."

Gaston must then choose. There are advantages in belonging to a family again, but also in remaining an isolated, unhindered being. On the one hand, he can choose his present isolation, with neither incriminating past, nor youth, nor family ties, or choose a new present with a sense of commitment not only to past actions and his youth, but also to a present, which places him back in the midst of a family. In this way Gaston can be seen as a significant figure in the study of the youthful characters. His life as a youth had only begun when there came a void, during his loss of memory, so that in this sense he has had no youth and can but know of its effects, none of its joys.

The very absurdity of past, youthful grudges can be keenly sensed, when brought up later in conversation. When his mother reminds him of the cousin he hates because of the logarithm episode, Gaston remarks:

"comme c'est plein de choses agréables, un passé ...
je suis mort à 18 ans, sans avoir eu ma petite
joie, sous prétexte que c'était une bêtise, et
sans que vous m'ayez reparlé."

He represents the young man, grown older, who, perhaps significant of his times, wishes to be accepted for what he is, or for what he has made himself. His mother says to him further on, "tu me parles comme autrefois", to which he replies "je n'ai pas d'autrefois, je vous parle comme aujourd'hui". It is a certain youthful simplicity of life and purity of motives that Gaston wishes to recapture and maintain. He has returned to see what his youth would have been, and what it would have made him,

had he stayed there. Yet, by listening and observing, he cannot help but strike the audience as being there, but in a vacuum, as it were. At the end of Act III, Gaston revolts against all their planning in a desperate bid for something real in his life,

"Moi. Moi. J'existe, moi, malgré toutes vos histoires ... Vous avez parlé de la merveilleuse simplicité de ma vie d'amusique tout à l'heure ... Vous voulez rire. Essayez de prendre toutes les vertus, tous les vices et de les accrocher derrière vous."⁽⁴⁾

which summarizes his condition. He has returned spiritually if not physically youthful, and with his young, uninfluenced ideas he can maintain a youthful outlook on a corrupt and easily influenced society. His ideals are still strong and pure, and this very complacently mediocre society repels him. He presents his state quite succinctly:

"Imaginez que, pour vivre, il vous faille plonger à jamais dans le néant un jeune homme. Un jeune homme de dix-huit ans ... Un petit orgueilleux, une petite fripouille, mais tout de même ... un pauvre petit."⁽⁵⁾

Valentine asks him if he is aware of what he is doing, to which he replies: "Oui. Je suis en train de refuser mon passé et ses personnages - moi compris ... je vous refuse."⁽⁶⁾ And he continues to present his case as being both unique and privileged. He says:

"Je suis sans doute le seul homme, c'est vrai, auquel le destin aura donné la possibilité d'

accomplir ce rêve de chacun ... Je suis un homme et je peux être, si je veux, aussi neuf qu'un enfant! C'est un privilège dont il serait criminel de ne pas user. Je vous refuse."

Finally, he reaches a conclusion. He has chosen youthful absolutes in a world where he hopes to be able to continue to live out his own values. It is from all the compulsion, imposed by a materialistic society, that he must escape. He has seen the world of the others as but a platform, and their actions as mere roles. He can, for once, align himself directly with another human being when the small boy asks him the way to the small room where one can find peace. The boy suggests action, in order to find this place. Yet it is this small piece of spontaneous, sincere advice which at last makes sense to Gaston. In this small child, Gaston has found an answer. He has discovered a young need, which only he can answer, and he senses a feeling of necessity and of meaningfulness. And finally, holding the small boy, he can confront the past,

"Laissez-moi seul avec ma famille - il faut que nous confrontions nos souvenirs."⁽⁸⁾

This work, Le Voyageur sans Bagage marks too some further developed thought in the theatre of Anouilh. For the first time, Anouilh depicts a man who disregards the past in favour of a present which will be both spontaneous and pure of motive. The world of childhood alone seems to be able to induce Gaston back to life. He has broken the tie with the world of inevitable physical conditions. So, though no longer very young, Gaston must play a considerable part in Anouilh's fuller portrayal of youth and youthful

characters, in that Gaston looks back with greater clarity on his short youth, its lost opportunities, and its ever inevitable abuse.

Eurydice, written in 1941, marks firstly a definite progression from reality into the world of fantasy and myth that will lead on to Antigone. Secondly, Anouilh can, within this new sphere, comment on the eternal nature of youth's hopes and desires. The setting in this play is a railway café, quite different from the usual low-class family settings of La Sauvage and Jézabel. In the characters of Eurydice and Orpheus, youth confronts destiny - but cannot quite accept destiny's full implications. Youth escapes the consequences of the human condition because it has considerable difficulty in mastering the strength necessary to face up to it. So, like many other young Anouilhean characters, they escape into fantasy, and try to play out their roles there.

The principal characters will encounter and will ultimately accept destiny, which, for the first time, plays a role of considerable immediacy. The presence of this externally determining force is keenly felt from the start, when the two protagonists first meet. Later, destiny is still to the fore in the guise of Monsieur Henri. He is always there, by means of an "eye-of-God" technique, and his statement, to be strongly re-affirmed later in Antigone, is that death alone is totally pure and totally absolute, if encountered for the right reason - to escape the corrupting influences of a mediocre society. Death, therefore, is here for the first time depicted as being far preferable to a life which is neither pure nor absolute.

And the quandary of the two young protagonists in Eurydice takes its source from this very contingent dissatisfaction with life. Orpheus, before the return of Eurydice in the last acts, wants back a pure, absolute Eurydice, or else death.

Their values in life have been quite different; both are from the same low-class background and because Orpheus could be seen as having a higher set of values than she, their essential differences must be moral rather than environmental. She appears to recognize in Orpheus as soon as she meets him a sincerity and a warmth of feeling which she has never encountered. Young, spontaneous, she appeals to him:

"Qu'est-ce que je ferais, moi, toute seule sur la terre, comme une idiote, si vous me laissez? Jurez-moi que vous ne me quitterez pas."⁽⁹⁾

From the beginning she is insecure, and eager to clutch at friendship. And while she takes all so very seriously, Orpheus seems to toy with ideas. She continues:

"Il faudra me tenir la main tout le jour ... je vous serai toujours si fidèle, si fidèle ..."⁽¹⁰⁾

all of which reflect her sad upbringing. And when Orpheus asks her "Qui êtes-vous? Il me semble que je vous connais depuis longtemps", she appears to him to be but a sorrowful symbol of all those shadowy faces one meets but does not know.

The first time they meet, destiny inflicts death on a bystander, who falls beneath a train. Then Monsieur Henri, Destiny's spokesman, moves into focus and says:

"Je vous écoute depuis tout à l'heure. Un beau jeune homme et une belle jeune fille! et prêts à jouer le jeu sans tricher, jusqu'au bout."⁽¹¹⁾

M. Henri represents not only destiny but age and maturity as well. Eurydice represents, on the other hand, youth and youth's every whim and caprice. Not presented as either strong or inspired, she appears rather timid, yet wilful, and full of youthful hopes. Her somewhat shallow initial presence takes on a deeper, more significant reality with each of her actions.

The action of the play takes place the moment another world is opened up before both young characters. The worlds of both older people and of the past are immediately excluded, and they give each other the chance to live out their futures for a short time, in a vacuum, which becomes their "reality", peopled by youth only. In the second act the action within their own small world begins. The setting is a small provincial hotel room. Out in the world they had considered themselves alone, regimented and never content with themselves. Now, together, they have youth in common and consider themselves powerful, "Nous sommes terriblement plus forts que tout au monde, tous les deux!"⁽¹²⁾ And the fact that they have known each other for only one day further underlines youth's great influence over youth. Orpheus can see that spontaneity is typical of youth, and he admits that this love cannot be but infatuation, but Eurydice still evades reality and begs him be quiet. In M. Henri, she has met one force from which she cannot escape:

"Alors, toute notre vie, ce gros homme sale et

content de lui fera partie de notre premier jour?" and he answers, "Toute notre vie".⁽¹³⁾ The dilemma of Eurydice begins to take some form, "tu es sûr qu'on ne peut pas tirer les mauvais personnages et garder seulement les bons?" Though they are both young, Orpheus seems considerably more mature than she is. Her actions continue to reflect youthful impulse, and youthful ignorance. Eurydice has, in fact, fallen victim to the traps and enticements of youth. She is still easily impressed. When the waiter leaves, she says to Orpheus,

"Tu n'as pas remarqué qu'il me regardait tout le temps ... Oh! j'ai jamais vus l'autre ... de la Comédie-Française."⁽¹⁴⁾

The waiter then reappears with the letter which will end this temporary, idyllic escape. Eurydice is then plunged back into reality, where she remains until the bus accident in which she is killed. Then, reality once more gives way to fantasy, only this fantasy is that of the supernatural world. She now sees herself as being trapped by destiny perhaps, whereas in her past life, though it was so superficial and lonely, she felt free; now, she can feel free only when there is silence, or some lack of communicating of thoughts.

"Quelquefois tu te tais et je crois que je suis libre comme avant. Je tire sur mon fil de toutes mes forces pendant une minute. Mais tu recommences à parler, le fil s'enroule sur la bobine et je m'en reviens vers mon piège, trop heureuse ..."

And Orpheus comments:

"Tu es un petit serpent qui se demande trop de choses."⁽¹⁵⁾

He tries to reassure her, but somehow she cannot accept his love.

"Tu es un traître", she tells him, "Oui, mais tu m'as peut-être crue une autre ... mais je ne t'ai pas dit grand-chose."⁽¹⁶⁾

She is terrified of his finding out about her past, and this fear conditions her conduct towards him. She is constantly on the alert, never really herself but continually striving to live out this illusion. Her fear then carries through to the point at which he may no longer accept nor love her, in the light both of the past and of her having lied to him.

Her consequent feelings of acute inferiority are understandable in this light. She waits eagerly to hear how much he thinks of her, and for the answer to her question, "tu penses vraiment tout cela de moi," she says, in answer to his favourable comment. So that, then, once she has heard the only words she could ever have wished to hear, she must leave before he finds out about her past, in detail.

Fate resolves all her personal misgivings: she is killed and later when she returns to him, she is no longer bound by the pains of mortal consciousness. She can now, on the contrary, accept her differences, once she is no longer either conditioned or categorized by them. Youth, as seen in the living Eurydice's life testimony, has seldom the strength to accept fate's dealings. She was no exception, in fact Eurydice is in so many ways Anouilh's most realistic portrait of youth.

In Act III, Orpheus and Monsieur Henri await the return

of the spirit of Eurydice. In life, she could never confront him as an equal - she was never strong enough for this - but she can confront him once she has immortality on her side. With the entrance of Dulac, Orpheus learns more of Eurydice's shame, and can understand her feelings of inferiority, though he can scarcely believe all that Dulac reveals to him. "Vous mentez. Eurydice ne peut pas avoir été à vous!"⁽¹⁷⁾ In this act, conclusions are reached but, for this, youth is immortalized. Perfection, according to Anouilh, cannot be attained on mortal terms and this argument alone reinforces human imperfection. If youth, in this play, found perfect love while still alive, then all threads of both reality and relevance would be lost. The fact that reality here gives way to an unreal but essential situation only seems to underline all the more keenly and poignantly the passing nature and beautiful fragility of youth's short cycle. Orpheus, who is young and therefore finds it all too hard to accept, says he would have preferred her even old, but alive. This he cannot however have. She appears, but he must not look at her before daybreak. She says, prophetically, to him:

"Nous nous aimons, nous sommes jeunes; nous allons vivre. Accepte d'être heureux, s'il te plaît ..."⁽¹⁸⁾

and he later answers:

"c'est trop d'attendre le matin.
c'est trop long d'attendre d'être vieux."

He associates morning and seeing her with moments after dying, an old man.

She tells him now of her past innermost feelings and tragedies:

"Tu me voyais si belle, mon chéri. Je veux dire belle moralement, car je sais bien que physiquement tu ne m'as jamais trouvée très, très belle. Tu me voyais si forte, si pure, tout à fait ta petite soeur ... Tu ne pourras pas comprendre, je le sais bien."⁽¹⁹⁾

Then, as if now enlightened, as if now she can see after living out blindly her destiny on earth, she tells Orpheus that it was a mere, youthful infatuation.

"Je ne t'aimais pas. Je ne savais pas. La pudeur des filles comme il faut me faisait bien rire."⁽²⁰⁾

She has returned to him as a very different Eurydice, a Eurydice no longer bound nor stigmatized by mortal values, and Orpheus, who is young and living still, cannot accept this. Monsieur Henri tries to explain that this is infinitely better than losing interest in each other later in life, to which Orpheus replies: "Je lui serais resté fidèle toujours".⁽²¹⁾ Monsieur Henri tries to draw him further out of his dilemma, "d'ailleurs, Eurydice t'aurait peut-être abandonné la première ..."⁽²²⁾ And in the answer of Orpheus, a youthful, very worldly physical love can still be sensed, "non, nous ne pouvions pas cesser de nous aimer".⁽²³⁾ Eurydice too was bound by the same condition, until her release from it. Once free, she is no longer bound to the compulsions of a mortal youth,

"Non," Orpheus continues, "Cela aurait duré toujours, jusqu'à ce que je l'aie vieille et blanche à côté de moi, jusqu'à ce que je sois vieux près d'elle!"

Monsieur Henri comments that life could never have let their love remain so perfect, "L'amour d'Orphée et d'Eurydice ne lui aurait pas échappé".⁽²⁴⁾ And here, youth and maturity are finally depicted in eternal conflict. Both Monsieur Henri and Orphée's father present the full portrayal of the values of an older age group. Monsieur Henri, rationally and persuasively, tries to tell Orpheus the sole solution to his dilemma. This being death, and death being the very contradiction of youth, Orpheus battles against this. Monsieur Henri asks "pourquoi hais-tu la mort? La mort est belle. Elle seule donne à l'amour son vrai climat", and Orpheus finally accepts it; young love is seen finally as triumphant over young life. Anouilh here affords to his theatre an answer to youth's eternal enigma. Youth, as one gains experience, must confront and accept reality. This passive acceptance, portrayed here in Orpheus' decision, affords assistance if he wants his dilemma solved. Otherwise he must live it out, beyond life.

Finally, Eurydice is a work dedicated to youth. There are no great heroic messages, and there is little personal heroism on the part of either protagonist. Life for both Eurydice and Orpheus, prior to their meeting, has had little meaning for them. It is not till they have met that they realize how truly meaningless their former lives must have been. There had been little of substantial personal value to inspire them. Having met, they really lived in the present only, and here only could they begin to live, and to relate. But since this essential present could have no future in the light of her shameful past,

the living Eurydice had to flee from the living Orpheus into death, knowing in herself that she could never be the Eurydice he loved. The human condition is, therefore, presented solely, uniquely and completely in terms of youth.

The structural presentation of youth within the play is interesting. Youth is first presented in relation to other age groups, and this is successfully achieved in the station scenes, at the opening and closing of the drama. After this first presentation, the youth aspect alone is developed outside the world of complex humanity. And the problems and pains of youth are explained and illustrated with a growing awareness, fullness, accuracy and sympathy. Within these two young people there are many contrasts, which climax in the eventual death of the one, followed by an attempt at acceptance of life by the other, until finally he too can no longer accept this real, loveless world, instead of death and reconciliation with his beloved.

Anouilh, up to this point, has painted many detailed youthful tableaux. But he has epitomised Youth's aspirations and sufferings in this work. From here on, he moves into the theatre of a socially conscious writer. Monsieur Henri points to the element of subjectivity on which Anouilh will now focus his thought:

"Je filais droit. Je ne connaissais pas d'obstacles. Une ambition démesurée. Mais, attention! j'avais une forte préparation technique."⁽²⁵⁾

In the statements of Orpheus' father also, there are now signs of a theatre of wider implications:

"Une vie de sensations. Mais toute la vie n'est

pas là. Il y a la respectabilité, la vie sociale."⁽²⁶⁾

La vie sociale will follow Antigone - still a life of sensations.

Finally, Monsieur Henri offers him the means to obtain what he has been hankering after and, quite full of feeling, Monsieur Henri sums up youth's pathetic condition when he says:

"Adieu, petit homme",

In the next play the "petite femme" will be featured and she will point to individual duty and heroic action, climaxing Anouilh's theatre of youth's romantic ideals and world of absolutes.

(1)	<u>Pièces Roses:</u>	Léocadia	page 371
(2)	<u>Pièces Noires:</u>	Le Voyageur Sans Bagage	315
(3)	ibid.		364
(4)	ibid.		352
(5)	ibid.		369
(6)	ibid.		370
(7)	ibid.		371
(8)	ibid.		380
(9)	ibid.:	Eurydice	415
(10)	ibid.		421, 422
(11)	ibid.		441, 442
(12)	ibid.		445
(13)	ibid.		450, 451
(14)	ibid.		455

(15)	<u>Pièces Noires:</u>		
		Eurydice	page 460
(16)	ibid.		460
(17)	ibid.		474
(18)	ibid.		498
(19)	ibid.		513
(20)	ibid.		514
(21)	ibid.		530
(22)	ibid.		531
(23)	ibid.		531
(24)	ibid.		532
(25)	ibid.		525
(26)	ibid.		525

CHAPTER V

Sophocles (and Aeschylus) per medium of their ancient myths, provide the material for Antigone. Though much of the action and characters are drawn directly from their works, the contemporary interpretation of them is Anouilh's own. As in antiquity, the scene is Thèbes, immediately following the death of the brothers of the young Antigone. Créon, her uncle, having assumed the throne, is about to act out the role of her guardian and advisor. In fact, the mature Créon will be the strongest threat later, when she attempts to carry out the great personal duty she senses imposed on her.

This play further develops the themes of the preceding plays, and introduces for the first time a mature personality to counter the young character. Youth is still present, and is in fact manifest in the very strong character of the determined yet gentle Antigone. Créon, however, is presented as powerful also, yet still human enough to be hero alongside the heroine. There is a further underlying statement.

The conflicting moral values of the people of post-war France are well depicted in the arguments and thoughts of the two protagonists. These contrasts form an obvious progression from Eurydice, in which play youth's viewpoint alone was depicted. In Antigone the moral is opposed to the political: one protagonist is young, the other older: while one is full of hope and ambition, the other is disillusioned, and one being idealistic, the other is a realist. Although Créon is so obviously

the spokesman for the contemporary, war-torn man, it is the young Antigone who, by her spontaneous nature and purity of thought, demands throughout the sympathy of the spectator.

The play itself can be seen as divisible into three main parts: the first introduces the heroine, her nature and her life as it has been up to this point. Her background plays a role of little importance - an interesting contrast with the earlier works in which environment virtually created characters, and was their relentless persecutor. She is convincingly described by both her nurse and her sister, adding depth and realism to her stature. The second part contains the central action, following the discovery of what she has done, and her confrontation with and challenge of Créon, the King. Then follows her acceptance of what this defiance will entail. The third part contains all the action; the death of Antigone and the suicides of Hémon and his mother, and the King's continuing acceptance of his role and all it incurs.

When the play opens, Antigone's life, to this point, has been manageable and relatively happy. Yet this happiness remains qualified, since she herself says to Ismène within the first scenes that she, in her own tomboy way, was so often unhappy during her girlhood. So far, though, the natural life outside the confines of the palace has always been her greatest attraction, she has, nevertheless, been able to relate to both worlds. When Créon orders that one of her dead brothers is to be buried with due ceremony, while the other lies unburied outside the walls as the food of vultures, she learns of Créon's commitment to some outwardly definite action and of his long since

acceptance of compromise. Antigone, too, finds herself bound up in a world of essential compromise and corruption. In direct antithesis to Créon, she chooses absolute purity, rejecting any compromise or corruption; even death cannot make her alter her resolution. In this respect she greatly resembles Giraudoux's Electre. She is driven by two forces, absolutism and youth. She is youth: restless and totally unsatisfied. To her nurse, she says:

"Il faut te lever plus tôt, nourrice, si tu
veux voir un monde sans couleurs."⁽¹⁾

"Oui, nourrice, mon oncle Créon saura. Laisse-
moi maintenant!"⁽²⁾

To Ismène:

"Il y a des fois où il ne faut pas trop réfléchir."⁽³⁾

To Créon:

"Si je veux, moi, je peux ne pas vous écouter."⁽⁴⁾

"Le bonheur ... quel sera-t-il, mon bonheur?"⁽⁵⁾

"j'aime un Hémon dur et jeune; un Hémon exigeant
et fidèle, comme moi."⁽⁶⁾

Unable then to accept life as it is, she revolts against both society and man. To do this, she uses the action of the forbidden funeral rites for her brother as an explanation for her behaviour. She needed an urgent, personal and moral cause with which to begin her revolt, and she finds this chance in the outward, physical gesture of revolt against Créon's orders, in the burying of her brother's body. This gesture disguises the central heroic action in the play: her act of refusal - out of a

matter of personal loyalty - to what Créon has committed himself to, and her rejection of all that the life of commitment offers. Along with this central action, is the detailed study of Antigone: a study of youth in its most explosive form: determined and unreasoning in the eyes of the mature Créon, yet somehow understood by her peers - and accepted. From the opening of the play, she is caught up in an heroic ideal which is almost beyond her youthful strength, and towards the end, certainly beyond her youthful reasoning. "Je ne sais plus pourquoi je meurs"⁽⁷⁾, she tells the guard shortly before her death.

She has always found a spontaneous and irrepressible delight in nature; and similarities to the work of Giraudoux are often very marked, especially in the early scenes of this work. Antigone, like the young characters of Giraudoux, has all the qualities of the young Anouilh heroine: beauty, intelligence, a gentle and sensitive disposition, freshness of outlook and an empathy with nature and with life's essence. Along with these attributes, she possesses that certain tragic purity of the absolutists, refusing to sully in any way an heroic ideal. The "virginal girlhood" of Giraudoux is epitomised by Anouilh more so in Antigone than in any other of his heroines. The simplicity and beauty of her expression, from her beginning lines to the moments before her death, adds another important dimension to her character. There is something goddess-like in her impact - something Anouilh has never recaptured in his later works; perhaps one can never recapture the expression

of the swansong of one's youth!

Antigone loves life, and those about her - again an important theme in the theatre of Giraudoux - but she says no to all this by committing herself to an act which to her means more than life. Her dilemma is intensely metaphysical: so much so that at times her arguments border on the absurd, and it all appears quite meaningless. "Je ne sais plus pourquoi je meurs"⁽⁸⁾, and in her argument with the challenging Créon - when he too asks her why, she answers vehemently, "pour personne, pour moi"⁽⁹⁾ where again, the attitude of pointlessness is implied. Although she is so much in love with the physical world, yet she is not satisfied. She wants to live only if she can live out the life she knows she wants, in its entirety. She could live happily with Hémon for a time, but she senses all too keenly the corrupting influences of compromise and age in the near future, along with the endless quest for happiness. When the play opens, life for Antigone still incorporates all the childhood truths and beauties, and she is not prepared to lessen or change these absolutes. Créon's "absolutes" have been eroded over the years of compromise, but he now is as determined as she is. He has tried to save her: he was prepared to compromise and overlook his duty if this meant he could save her, but she remained aloof and resolute. They now stand as opposing forces, neither being able to reconcile the self to the thoughts of another generation. He would rather this had never happened, and would rather forget the entire incident. She is involved in the morals of the same incident, and young and inexperienced, she loathes his ability to

accept and discard so crucial an episode. She continues to loathe his attitudes, his rules, and the life he leads now, which has changed him so completely when, as he states, he was like her when he too was twenty.

The Prologue introduces Antigone briefly but fully at the start of the play. She is described as young, inexperienced, and a small, insignificant yet powerful creature, chosen by destiny to act out an extremely difficult role:

"Antigone, c'est la petite maigre ...
Elle pense qu'elle va être Antigone tout à l'heure, qu'elle va surgir soudain de la maigre jeune fille noire et renfermée que personne ne prenait au sérieux dans la famille et se dresser seule en face du monde, seule en face de Créon."⁽¹⁰⁾

From this point on, Anouilh presents youth as solitary, alone: as courageous, yet misunderstood. Part of the tragic element in her nature lies in her being so young, and in her appearing even younger still. In many ways, she is still a child, who has grown more contented, now that she has accepted physical differences, yet dissatisfied, now that she has sensed moral differences. She cannot accept life as all those about her have accepted it. Life, to her, is too powerful to be ruined by one single, disappointing infidelity, disloyalty or any human imperfection. There is a very child-like innocence in the spontaneity of her expressions:

"De me promener, nourrice. C'était beau. Tout était gris. Maintenant, tu ne peux pas savoir, tout est déjà rose, jaune vert. C'est devenu une carte postale. Il faut te lever plus tôt, nourrice, si tu veux voir un monde sans couleurs.

"...Le jardin dormait encore. Je l'ai surpris, nourrice.

"...Dans les champs c'était tout mouillé et cela attendait. Tout attendait. Je faisais un bruit énorme toute seule sur la route et j'étais gênée parce que je savais bien que ce n'était pas moi qu'on attendait."⁽¹¹⁾

Life right now is very beautiful in her eyes. She still knows childhood, yet she has also tasted youth, with all its bitter-sweet pathos. At this point in her development she has reached awareness. Suddenly she can see life as it is, stretched out before her, and she perceives the choice which she is now to make. She has encountered the brink of childhood: that can never be relived: now she must either venture into the world of adulthood - with its joys - in the love of Hémon - and with its repulsions - in the necessary and continual acceptance of compromise, or else opt out of both; an absolutist solution. By this final act, she herself would be choosing to be her own arbiter, rather than age or death - both compromisers of life. Her brother's burial subtly disguises her desire to now opt out of life - when it is still all so beautiful in her eyes.

Even her own nurse, who has tended her all her life, does not understand her, at this early stage. Ismène too, her sister, tells her that they cannot continue with their plans because Créon would kill them - an interesting contrast to herself; Antigone replies:

"Bien sûr. A chacun son rôle. Lui, il doit nous

faire mourir, et nous, nous devons aller enterrer
notre frère. C'est comme cela que ç'a été distribué."⁽¹²⁾

This concrete explanation must suffice them. They, both so heavily and "happily" entrenched in a committed adulthood, would never at this stage understand her thoughts. Dying is the last thing the young Ismène wants: "Je ne veux pas mourir," to which Antigone replies, "Moi aussi, j'aurais bien voulu ne pas mourir". Ismène can see the other view, "Il est le roi, il faut qu'il donne l'exemple,"⁽¹³⁾ to which Antigone counters:

"Moi, je ne suis pas le roi. Il ne faut pas que je donne l'exemple, moi ... ce qui lui passe par la tête, la petite Antigone, la sale bête, l'entêté, la mauvaise, et puis on la met dans un coin ou dans un trou. Et c'est bien fait pour elle. Elle n'avait qu'à ne pas désobéir."

Ismène is the first of those about Antigone to indicate the presence of some powerful force within her sister, "Et te voilà lancée sans écouter personne"⁽¹⁴⁾. "Lancée" implies compulsion, as if by some greater force, coupled with youth. Eurydice and Thérèse had the youth force only. The element of strong personal duty, and of a convincing interior logic is understood. Ismène's statement that Antigone listens to no-one could further indicate the apartness of the absolutist: that all the others who live out their lives in the world about Antigone, within and without the palace confines, are guided and swayed by others and depend on their views. Compromised and compromising, they must listen to others, and they must comply.

On the contrary, Antigone wants neither to comply nor understand, "comprendre ... toujours comprendre, moi, je ne veux pas comprendre. Je comprendrai quand je serai vieille." Ismène admits to having little courage, and attempts to sway Antigone from her ambitious undertaking. She is a fine example of youth contented:

"Antigone, je t'en supplie! C'est bon pour les hommes de croire aux idées et de mourir pour elles. Toi tu es une fille. Ton bonheur est là devant toi, et tu n'as qu'à le prendre. Tu es fiancée, tu es jeune, tu es belle ..."⁽¹⁶⁾

In the following encounters prior to her meeting with Créon, several aspects of Antigone's character are well presented. With her nurse, she appears as the child, afraid and small, and very human. The short dialogue where they discuss her dog adds a different and touching dimension to her character. Hémon enters, and this encounter reveals Antigone's last unsuccessful bid to compromise, like the others. This, too, is a concrete example. The previous evening, despite make-up, perfume and the fine dress, she neither succeeded - in that it was not in her nature to comply to such an extent - nor did she impress. A further aspect revealed is Antigone as a mother, "tu sais, je l'aurais bien défendu contre tout ... Il aurait eu une maman toute petite et mal peignée - mais plus sûre que toutes les vraies mères du monde."⁽¹⁷⁾ Convinced of his true and absolute love for her, she begs the young, handsome Hémon to leave her. Ismène, having rushed in and finally begged her sister to stay with them, learns that Antigone has completed the burial. To all these three, she has revealed her

intention to do what she knows she must do. Finally, she must encounter Créon.

This is the most powerful and symbolic confrontation in the early work of Anouilh. Strong convicted opposites are brought into direct conflict. Créon is committed to being king: Antigone, as the ~~choix~~ ^{choice} has just told, is about to be herself for the first time. Both are proud, and both have fault in their arguments. The point most pertaining to this thesis is youth and its idealism confronting the world of maturity and realism: youth reluctant to entertain the thought of maturity, and idealism loath to encounter realism. As soon as they are alone, Créon's first question underlines maturity's wariness. He is afraid for his own position, as he asks:

"As-tu parlé de ton projet à quelqu'un? ... as-tu rencontré quelqu'un sur ta route? ... tu en es bien sûr?"⁽¹⁸⁾

and his first advice to her is to return to her room and say she is ill - and had not gone out the previous evening. She sees this as a complete negation of everything she stands for. Her question to him implies absolute faith in her own convictions and actions.

"...pourquoi? Puisque vous savez bien que je recommencerai."

"Pourquoi as-tu tenté d'enterrer ton frère?"

"Je le devais."

"Je l'avais interdit."

"Je le devais tout de même."

This is their conflict. She had to do it, while he was

compelled to forbid it. Her action was direct, and positive. His was indirect, and negative. She had a choice: defy Créon and do her duty or comply with Créon and defy duty. She gives him the concrete reason for choosing the former,

"Ceux qu'on n'enterre pas errent éternellement sans jamais trouver de repos."⁽¹⁹⁾

A concrete family duty deepens to a very personal and vital one. Créon, cautious and calculating, says to her that she knew he would not kill her, to which she replies:

"Vous vous trompez. J'étais certaine que vous me feriez mourir, au contraire."

He cannot understand what is impelling her to do something so heroic, when so much young life is in her; nor can he understand the very sacred symbolism of her act. Measuring success by physical achievement, he lets her know that she will never succeed:

"Que peux-tu donc?"

"Rien d'autre que cela, je le sais. Mais cela, du moins, je le peux."⁽²⁰⁾

To his question why, she answers wearily, implying that he would never understand anyway:

"Pour personne. Pour moi. Faites comme moi. Faites ce que vous avez à faire."⁽²¹⁾

"Vous êtes le roi: vous pouvez tout, mais cela vous ne le pouvez pas. Ni me sauver, ni me contraindre!"

He begins to realize her great strength, and feels

immediately challenged. This forces him to turn on her. First he acknowledges her position.

"Ecoute-moi bien. J'ai le mauvais rôle, c'est entendu. Et tu as le bon. Et tu le sens."

Then he threatens her:

"Mais n'en profite tout de même pas trop, petite peste ... où veux-tu en venir?"⁽²²⁾

She asks him then why must he do this to Polynice, to which he answers, simply, that one morning he awoke as King of Thèbes: therefore he inherited at the same time the duty to do, as King, all that the title demanded. She says:

"Il fallait dire non, alors!"

"Je le pouvais. Seulement, je me suis senti tout d'un coup comme un ouvrier qui refusait un ouvrage. Cela ne m'a pas paru honnête. J'ai dit oui!"⁽²³⁾

Honesty has greatly influenced both, therefore, but in different ways, and for different motives.

She then sees him as inevitably trapped in his condition of having said yes.

"Moi, je n'ai pas dit 'oui'."⁽²⁴⁾

She is not trapped, either by adulthood or by its compulsions. She remains the child, free, unspoiled, within nature's laws. She confronts him with the dreadful reality that he, as King, must by his duty, put to death any subject who does not comply. And she tells him he might not have wanted to deny her brother the tomb, but he did deny all all the same, regardless of his personal

convictions. He is sure she does not really know why she is dying: this prompts him to enlarge upon the reason she has given. He continues to give her a detailed account of what really happened, determined this should convince her completely of the pointlessness of her self-sacrifice. And youth, impetuous and spontaneous, listens and accepts: Créon has succeeded.

Antigone is seen here at her most human. She has been beaten just when all seemed to be won - Créon stands triumphant.

Giraudoux's Electre has the same personal argument as Antigone. She too is fighting to uphold youthful absolutes and idealism before the corrupt and compromising world of maturity. Again, the temptation to happiness is strong. Her self-imposed duty is revenge, and she forces her brother, Oreste, to resist compromise, which she, like Antigone, loathes. She too cannot be swayed to comply and has an open confrontation with the King as well as with her mother.

Egisthe, in a very similar position to Créon, is disturbed by her actions and attitudes. He puts his case to her and has difficulty in understanding her's. He says to her:

"Depuis longtemps, tu nous inquiètes. Je ne sais si tu t'en rends compte,"

and he upbraids her for mourning her father so lengthily:

"Tu n'es pas la seule à pleurer ton père."⁽²⁵⁾

Like Antigone, she still feels sad at the death of a loved one. The Queen had ordered Electre to marry her father's gardener, and Electre agreed; but the Queen

wanted to withdraw her command. Electre has recognized her brother, and in her following comments there is much of the young Antigone:

"O joie d'être aveugle, pour la soeur qui retrouve son frère. Vingt ans mes mains se sont égarées sur l'ignoble, ou sur le médiocre, et voilà, qu'elles touchent un frère."⁽²⁶⁾

The human aspect is presented in the works of Anouilh with striking realism. The plays prior to Antigone have been all the more striking in that it is the young characters who are the protagonists; humanity's derelicts, victims or sometimes her favoured ones. Including Eurydice and Orpheus, these characters have been real, and often very ordinary, so that one could readily associate with many of the situations in which they found themselves. With Antigone the theme is lofty, which in itself demands heroic ideals, heroic action and characters with roles to fulfil. Indeed, much of the action is the mere working out of destined roles. And to take the place of the protagonist-spectator relationship, the protagonist is in this play equated with another protagonist, and the action is balanced between the two, while the spectator is the third party. He can feel for the young, innocent Antigone and her dilemma, or for the mature Créon, and his predicament.

She is bound by no laws or oaths. But she does come very near to some acceptance of the life about her after Créon tells her the truth about her brothers. She sees her pyramid of heroic action tumble. He continues:

"Ne reste pas trop seule. Va voir Hémon, marie-toi vite. Tu as toute ta vie devant toi ... rien d'autre ne compte. Et tu allais le gaspiller! Je te comprends, j'aurais fait comme toi à vingt ans."

Perhaps it could be inferred that this equating of his youth with hers stirs her to consciousness - he continues:

"La vie n'est pas ce que tu crois. C'est une eau que les jeunes gens laissent couler sans le savoir, entre leurs doigts ouverts ... Tu vas me mépriser encore, mais de découvrir cela, tu verras, c'est la consolation dérisoire de vieillir: la vie ce n'est peut-être tout de même que le bonheur!"⁽²⁷⁾

But suddenly, Créon has given too clearly his version of life.

He has pronounced the forbidden word: "bonheur". It is this that saves her entire heroic act. She stops listening, and like one reborn into a world of light and clairvoyance she resumes her moral stand. Again, despite the sincerity of Créon's efforts, she rejects purely and simply life itself, since to live in her eyes involves necessarily and continually the compromising and the abasing of the perfect self. Just at the moment where he holds her convinced, he loses her by bringing into his speech the fated notion of happiness, and she awakens immediately to the flood of ugly situations she would have to endure were she to accept the life he offers her now.

"Quel sera-t-il mon bonheur?"

"Quelle femme heureuse deviendra - t-elle, la petite Antigone? ...

"Quelles pauvretés faudra-t-il qu'elle fasse elle aussi - jour par jour, pour arracher avec ses dents son petit lambeau de bonheur?"

By her own use of "petite" she emphasizes the point that she is still young and still innocent, and exposes the determined efforts of Créon to persuade her against her youthful, sacrificial intentions. The words chosen express a painful and deliberate bid to demonstrate to him the constant efforts needed to make her future relatively happy.⁽²⁸⁾ She continues to describe her thoughts in detail to him:

"Dites, à qui devra-t-elle mentir, à qui sourire, à qui se vendre? Qui devra-t-elle laisser mourir en détournant le regard?"

And so doing, she puts her case before him, plainly and factually. He counters her directly with his comment that her love for Hémon could give her life purpose and happiness, to which she responds, "oui j'aime Hémon" - she admits to his point - but goes on further to qualify its being as a potentially transient love, open to the wearing effects of time and compromise:

"J'aime un Hémon dur et jeune: un Hémon exigeant et fidèle, comme moi ...

"Mais si votre vie, votre bonheur doivent passer sur lui avec leur usure, si Hémon ne doit plus pâlir quand je pâlis, s'il ne doit plus me croire morte quand je suis en retard de cinq minutes, s'il ne doit plus sentir seul au monde ... s'il

doit apprendre à dire 'oui' lui aussi, alors, je n'aime plus Hémon."

She could relinquish this love now, rather than her quest for absolute purity always.

Being young and so subjective, Antigone cannot really realize the extent of her total sacrifice. Experience and political opportunism in the person of Créon can only beg her not to continue with her crazy plan. To her, however, it is so necessary. She could never stand by to witness the necessary soiling of so perfect a dream, nor does she want to understand, if understanding involves a compromise of her moral convictions:

"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 petit morceau si j'ai été bien sage. Je veux être sûre de tout, aujourd'hui, et que cela soit aussi beau que quand j'étais petite, ou mourir."⁽²⁹⁾

There is her argument, and there is her choice: if the dreams and the beauty of childhood and youth cannot last, then she will die now while they still are real to her. Créon has said "yes" to life so he is prepared to accept all life's consequences, even the death of Antigone.

Her revolt, her theory of absolutes and her determination to adhere religiously to these, demand admiration and sympathy. Créon cannot understand her but he is compelled to admire her. She fears the disillusionment which she is sure the adult world holds. She has till now lived in the world of childhood - the beautiful free world. Now her thought has deepened and matured, and she is conscious of

the nearing necessary presence of and confrontation with reality, complete with all its ugly truths and soul-destroying reality. She does, however, realize the presence of a choice: she can leave now, never having lost to life or to life's compromises. She says to her sister,

"Tu as choisi la vie, et moi la mort."⁽³⁰⁾

Créon's case in this study is a very interesting one. He represents the opposing force of experience and of the world. He cannot understand her, yet he does try so determinedly to save her. The way Anouilh has skilfully and convincingly balanced Créon's argument with that of Antigone points clearly to the maturing of the writer. He sees both thoughts, and he gives to youth and to the mature man their own arguments. Créon too must do his duty, just as Antigone must do hers. He represents a materialistic, political force - a necessity to a ruler - but one which she loathes and refuses. He lives in the present only - which again he is compelled to do by his duty. While she choses to live in the future also, she equates age with disillusionment and ugliness, neither of which she could live for. She does love the young, fervent and faithful Hémon, but it is the world in which their love must exist, with its corroding effects on emotions, people and aspirations that she loathes, and against which she must revolt. Créon later answers to her:

"Vous me dégoutez tous avec votre bonheur.

"C'est elle qui voulait mourir. Aucun de nous n'était assez fort pour la décider à vivre. Je le comprends maintenant. Antigone était faite

pour être morte. Elle-même ne le savait, peut-être, pas, mais Polynice n'était qu'un prétexte. Ce qui importait pour elle, c'était de refuser et de mourir."⁽³¹⁾

And to Hémon, he adds,

"Si mon petit, du courage,"

to which Hémon returns,

"Crois-tu que je l'accepterai, votre vie."⁽³²⁾

His attitude is typically youthful.

Immediately before Antigone's death, her statements take on some very youthful qualities. Her revolt is complete as can be seen in her powerful last lines to Créon. He does not see her womanly instincts and feminine fears. She maintains her argument: not once does she falter:

"Créon, je ne veux plus voir leurs visages, je ne veux plus entendre leurs cris, je ne veux plus voir personne! Tu as ma mort, maintenant, c'est assez."⁽³³⁾

Absolutes are maintained till the guards come for her. She is aware of the end: "mon dernier visage d'homme." Yet she is determined that even he will count as a fellow man - not one the mere numbers as Créon saw men, and this demonstrates her final youthful triumph over maturity. She asks the guard about his life. Though she is quite alone, yet she needs no one. She is to face her destiny alone. The letter is the final action by which she immortalizes her absolute love for Hémon, which the "absolutiste parfaitement jeune" could never send. As the guard grotesquely repeats Antigone's last words to Hémon,

we witness the world's soiling effect on pure emotion and sincerity. She smiles sadly as she is taken away, realising how utterly different and separate she is from other human beings.

(1) <u>Nouvelles Pièces Noires</u>	page 134
(2) <i>ibid.</i>	136
(3) <i>ibid.</i>	141
(4) <i>ibid.</i>	178
(5) <i>ibid.</i>	186
(6) <i>ibid.</i>	187
(7) <i>ibid.</i>	202
(8) <i>ibid.</i>	202
(9) <i>ibid.</i>	202
(10) <i>ibid.</i>	131
(11) <i>ibid.</i>	134
(12) <i>ibid.</i>	140
(13) <i>ibid.</i>	141
(14) <i>ibid.</i>	141
(15) <i>ibid.</i>	142
(16) <i>ibid.</i>	144
(17) <i>ibid.</i>	151
(18) <i>ibid.</i>	168
(19) <i>ibid.</i>	169
(20) <i>ibid.</i>	173
(21) <i>ibid.</i>	174
(22) <i>ibid.</i>	175

- (23) Nouvelles Pièces Noires page 177
- (24) *ibid.* 177
- (25) Giraudoux, Electre,
Act I Scene IV - Methuen's 20th Century Texts
- (26) Giraudoux, Electre,
Act I, Scene VIII - Methuen's 20th Century Texts
- (27) Nouvelles Pièces Noires page 186
- (28) *ibid.* 186
- (29) *ibid.* 188
- (30) *ibid.* 186
- (31) *ibid.* 190
- (32) *ibid.* 193
- (33) *ibid.* 195

CHAPTER VI

This final chapter will pass a comment on the young characters in Anouilh's later theatre, as compared with those appearing in his early theatre. Examples will be drawn from the more outstanding works of his recent years and where the instances of young characters in prominent roles are so minimal, some comment will be passed on the themes and character representation.

One of the most striking aspects in Anouilh's later portrayal of young characters is the lack of authenticity they display. Certainly Anouilh himself has moved away from his youth, at which time his works were highly subjective. Furthermore, these characters who were once the protagonists; heroic, absolutist and through whose eyes and thoughts the entire action often took place, are now no longer major characters. They are only peripheral, inhabiting shadows, remaining virtually silent, fulfilling roles of considerably lesser importance.

Anouilh's youth, along with Depressions and two World Wars, was spent in times of great human adversity, poverty and compromise. These factors greatly influenced his writing and his plays at this stage, even his "Pièces Roses", reflect much thought and awareness. They pass a comment on and for the people of this time. But the older Anouilh grows perceptive and less naive. His protagonists are older, and through them he now comments on the life about him, especially in his most recent plays.

Anouilh has always been conscious of social differences.

They were constantly depicted in his earliest works, prior to his masterly development of the Anouilhean hero. After Antigone and Roméo et Jeannette, Anouilh moves slowly from the heroic, the dutiful and the young. But this transition was slow. And the class consciousness and personal anguish and awareness present to a lesser extent in the latter work are the same as we found in L'Hermine in 1931: the result of the juxtaposition of the poor and rich classes. Satirical comments are passed on both rich and poor, in relation to the lives they lead. The class to which he belongs still greatly affects the thoughts and actions of the character. Both rich and poor, in his later works, remain victims of their social milieu and still cannot understand those from the other milieu: this is where Anouilh focuses his attention.

As far back as the 1930's, his indictment of social evils was a pointer to further comment. Early, Anouilh claimed the right to repudiate either society, such as in Y avait un Prisonnier, 1935, L'Hermine, La Sauvage, or life itself such as in Antigone, 1944, Roméo et Jeannette, 1946 and so forth, or one's own past and personality, such as in Le Voyager sans Bagage, 1937 and Le Rendez-Vous de Senlis.

And in all these works, the human condition is central. In the early plays, and in some of the later plays, life seems both pointless and absurd. Yet it is only after Antigone that Anouilh more strongly presents the idea that life ought to be challenged, accepted and lived out.

L'Alouette and Becket - ou l'amour de Dieu are plays belonging to the heroic, absolutist period. Joan of Arc is shown loving mankind, regardless of its many failings,

and she is also shown as being very proud of her deeds. She, however, like the young Antigone and Thérèse, cannot accept life's compromise. She is the last of his young heroines. This work was a great success. Anouilh once again presented the world of the courageous young heroine who lives by absolutes, and who rejects and refuses. The critic of an article, in Les Nouvelles Littéraires,⁽¹⁾ wrote:

"Alouette nous touche, parce que Jean Anouilh y manifeste pour Jeanne une tendresse dont ni Antigone ni La Sauvage n'avait pas lui arracher l'aveu, s'agit-il, comme l'ont annoncé plusieurs de nos confrères, d'un élargissement de la vision humaine chez l'un des maîtres du théâtre français de notre temps."

Anouilh has given to this character something deep; a certain maturing outlook is apparent in her feelings. She takes her stand as a soldier for mankind, and Anouilh shows clearly his pity for suffering humanity.

Beckett represents one man who stands ready to die for what he believes. And he too stands in direct contrast to the type of character Anouilh presents in his later works.

With maturity, Anouilh grows in awareness, socially and physically. And something of the spiritual is lost.

The human condition now replaces the youthful impetus of his early theatre. After 1945, Anouilh enters a theatre of commitment, not unlike that of Sartre and Camus. His theatre is no longer to concern the young only: it must

concern all men, of all ages. A slice of life is henceforth presented. Rather than from the point of view of the hero who refuses commitment to life, Anouilh now writes for and presents the man who has opted for life, and is continuing to live out life's challenges. He no longer grapples with choice. Jeanne d'Arc is his final dedication to youth's aspirations.

From 1955 to the 1970's, Anouilh gives a heavily detailed account of the ghastly world of those who have accepted life, and have lost their innocence. Man's plight is presented in a very raw way which often becomes frightening the characters are life's victims. The plays of this period move on to stress loss of innocence through bitter experience.

Pauvre Bitos (1956) marks a further movement away from the theatre of the heroic. In fact, Beckett is one of the final characters depicting absolutes and refusal. For although Bitos has taken a stand for what he believes, he at no point gives an impression of strength. This play, the final of the "Pièces grinçantes" and one of his most controversial works, is the first to present scenes re-enacted from the past. Gaston referred constantly to his past, and the effects of this time were shown as completely pointless, if one has lost one's memory. Bitos is presented as an older man by the older Anouilh, but by no means, despite similarity of age, conveys any of the subjectivity which had been so strikingly apparent in the portrayal of younger characters. Bitos is a product of his social environment. He is a victim of his birth, of his upbringing and of his own abilities. Anouilh uses Bitos to illustrate social victimisation, and

as a pointer to his theatre depicting reality. Anouilh shows that he has begun to depict life as he sees it about him, and not only is his new theatre real but with reality comes of necessity, cruelty. There was no such cruelty in the lives of the great heroic figures: Antigone, Jeanne and Becket, freely accepted death: Orpheus and Eurydice, though not of the same heroic calibre, also chose death in preference to the life they knew they could otherwise have to lead.

Through a masterly use of dialogues, ironies, satire and criticism, Anouilh presents a conflict of ideas, a conflict not only universal but age old. Past and present are shown as necessarily intermingled in the cause and the result. The human condition is the theme, yet this is disguised by the great charade of 18th Century costumes worn by those whose roles in the present correspond to those whose costume they wear.

The youth aspect is relevant in that Bitos is victim of a sad adolescence, and now embodies the effects of this. Anouilh, in a pessimistic way, describes and depicts the long-term tragic effects of this, and always the battle of the lower classes is seen through the eyes of experience. Social victims of poverty encounter aristocrats, and the theme of personal vengeance subtly and cruelly pervades the main action. Pauvre Bitos belongs with such plays as La Sauvage and Jézabel. They all put forward the idea of a philosophy through life. But in Pauvre Bitos Anouilh more than ever before deals with a real, social situation. This play is modern, references are historical, and the characters themselves are timeless. Anouilh has moved away successfully from his youth theatre. From now on, the accent shifts from youth to the older characters,

through whom a social comment is made on man and his lot. In this play there are some important developments within Anouilh's theatre and his own thought. Social comment is reinforced in the physical and obvious awareness of social differences; the physical repugnance felt for Bitos by his friends opens Anouilh's theatre of the cruel or the gringant - and so moves his theatre into that of the older man. And rather than being presented subjectively with a young, desperately idealistic hero, we are confronted with a middle aged man for whom we can hardly feel even pity. His comrades detest him for having crushed in himself all feelings for the sake of laws, honour and duty. He has upheld the law ruthlessly. Another strong difference between this and his earlier works is that Bitos looks back on his childhood as a long, bitter, cruel and dark period of his life, and he is glad it is now over - in striking contrast to Antigone who never wanted to leave the world of childhood. Yet, like Antigone and Tàerèse, he has asked too much of life. And unlike Thérèse and Marc, who ultimately accept their inherited social position, Bitos cannot accept his poverty. He revolts, and clambers up the social ladder.

L'Hurluberlu (1958) and La Grotte (1960) both point to man finding his true nature in entertainment. No longer is the life of the hero a model. In fact, the later protagonist is an inversion of all that the early hero stood for.

"Pièces costumées" appeared in 1962, and both L'Alouette and Beckett were grouped among these. This collection

marked two important progressions in the work of Anouilh. First, thematically, for the first time he took religious themes. Secondly, theatrically, he introduced into his work the use of two plateaux of action: the one is that of the courtroom and the burning; the other, within the same setting, is that made up of the most significant events from Jeanne's life.

Anouilh literally and figuratively puts youth on trial. Again we glimpse the Anouilhean heroine, pure, resolute, refusing. Jeanne represents man himself as he was prior to the great discovery of his nothingness. She represents original man and physical man, striving to act as she thinks she should, as a christian.

This play, wedged between "Pièces grinçantes" with all their worldly, bitter and often cynical interpretations of life, is a spiritual feast. It gives man a respite from the ugly life-patterns he has seen so often portrayed. And its beauty is very real.

Just as Bitos began the plays of retrospect in which the protagonist reflected on his youth and felt now regret and sadness, so the plays of the 1970's take up the same theme and expand it painfully. What the young Anouilhean heroes and heroines feared and knew would happen, now has happened.

Les Poissons Rouges, one of Anouilh's most recent works, well depicts the changes that have occurred in Anouilh's theatre, in contrast to the theatre of his youth. In this play a middle aged man, living in the 1960's, still very active, recalls his past which has led to his present. In

other words, Anouilh presents now what Antigone knew would happen. Here is the middle-aged man, compromising still, and corrupted by the tides of life and all its ill-effects. And furthermore, even his children now are in the throes of being corrupted and robbed of the Antigonian effervescence. Gone however is the intense anguish of Thérèse and Marc, in that now there is an equalising force markedly present. Social problems replace the social differences that so scarred the early characters. And the social problems are presented on a wide scale, incorporating a wide range of ages and characters. Socially Anouilh may be putting the France of the 1960's on trial, and judging her, but this too is symbolic. He is rather portraying universal errors.

Closely linked with this work, both thematically and chronologically, are three further recent works which are even more striking as a contrast to everything the young heroes and heroines represented. These later characters have run the course of the years after youth, and before old age. And the maturity span has managed to destroy in each of them everything that was spontaneously beautiful and absolute. They now stand and act as cynics, compromised and compromising still.

An interesting point is the theme which runs through all three. Each pertains to some aspect of the "theatre man" - Cher Antoine depicts the dramatist; Le Directeur de l'Opéra the manager, and Ne Réveillez pas Madame the producer.

Anouilh's plays of the 1970's are yet to be concluded. He is still writing, and we can comment on the living dramatist

only as far as his most recent work. Who knows the theme of his next play? However, to this point, the work of Jean Anouilh continues to draw on experience, looking back from the same viewpoint on problems of youth, and confirms his somewhat pessimistic feeling about the compromising effect of the world, society, and the environment in which humans are forced to live.

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CONCLUSION

We have travelled a long way since Humulus and Frantz. Anouilh wrote Humulus le Muet in 1929, and opened his youth drama. He was only nineteen years old and, before the gloomy world of the 1920's, he was himself one of Giraudoux's innocent, pure youth, fighting the corrupting influence of compromise and aging. Humulus, the young Anouilhean man, has much to say, only symbolically, he is alone, afraid and tongue-tied before the terrifying adult world. His tutor is the only one to understand something about the boy, and even he has little idea of the frustration and despondency experienced by the young man. He cannot verbally express himself, except by using one word a day. In the physical world, Humulus feels isolated and life seems hopeless. When the play begins, not only has no one any immediate ties with Humulus in the physical world except a tutor who is paid to help him, but in the non-physical, spiritual world also, Humulus is alone. He has little incentive to continue until, one day, entirely on his own, he meets Hélène and, even though he cannot speak to her he falls in love with her. When he does finally declare his love for her to her, she cannot hear. Anouilh introduced himself and his philosophy in this work. Anouilh too was tongue-tied and clumsy before the world of 1929. He too had a message, and he too would deliver it in his own time. This time span, for the young Anouilh, ended in 1942 with his great play Antigone. Within this

period Anouilh matured, and his theatre developed with each of the plays written between 1929 and 1942. But these thirteen years see rather a development and climax of Anouilh's youth drama, than a great change within it. In his later works, Anouilh's attitudes do change greatly, as he moves into the orb of the committed, socially conscious writer. Many of the ideas expressed in the short, humble fledgling work of Humulus, the mate boy, are the same ideas immortalized by the young Antigone. These ideas or themes are the essence of Anouilh's early theatre. His protagonists are all young, except Gaston, who had no youth at all.

They are intensely unhappy, because of barriers which class, money, ill luck or duty set up against their quest for love and happiness.

They are also alone in their predicaments, having no close friend or confidant to whom they can relate. The Anouilhean hero and heroine must face adversity bravely.

They must accept this condition and act on it.

The element of universality pervades these works, and we seem to move with Anouilh through the characters as they experience the life into which they have been born.

The protagonists are intense idealists, full of romantic notions, living in a world of absolutes.

Marc, Thérèse and Antigone are obsessed with a powerful sense of personal duty and loyalty to family. This duty is placed even before personal happiness.

Abstract values, finally, are what Anouilh explores, not

people.

Of the plays of Anouilh's youth, the main ones have been studied here: Humulus, L'Hermine, Jézabel, La Sauvage, Eurydice and Antigone. And that Antigone climaxes Anouilh's youth drama is the statement of this thesis.

Humulus opens the adolescent world; he does so to present the theme of communication, and its importance. Humulus begins to live once he begins to feel. Frantz, who immediately succeeds him, is more a non-entity or a character without values. Frantz experiences the physical effects of destiny. He is not strong, but he does create a strong impression, and the influence he was to have on the audiences of the 1930's cannot be underestimated. Anouilh instilled into Frantz both a sense of passion for life, and a very keen sensitivity. And Anouilh's sympathetic portrayal of this feeling of acute wretchedness must stem from the fact that he himself was young like Frantz, and that he too was coming into direct confrontation with bitter reality; he was just married, so he too was in love, and beginning to appreciate, no doubt, the weighty influence of heredity and environment on a young person's condition and thinking. An element of materialism pervades this play, and the class awareness introduced is developed in the next two plays, Jézabel and La Sauvage. Frantz bears similarity to Marc and Thérèse in that all three are desperately poor, and all three are absurdly conscious of this fact. They are ashamed of their humble family life, and by running away from their families, try desperately to lead that other life they all want so much. All three, by escaping into this other world, hope

to be able to stay with the one they love, for each is in love with a member of this upper class. But the basic similarities end there. Frantz is a materialist, and in a way typical of youth, he no longer tolerates family ties.

Marc and Thérèse have similarities and dissimilarities, and their similarities mark the development of Anouilh's youth theatre into the theatre of awareness. Marc and Thérèse, firstly, are presented in their environment: Frantz was only presented in the high class milieu. Marc and Thérèse are conscious of their degenerate family backgrounds, yet both, having tried to escape from them, feel compelled to return. Already, there is the element of duty entering Anouilh's work. Jézabel, however, is melodramatic and this is the most important dissimilarity. La Sauvage attacks social values, which points to his later theatrical works, at the same time presenting a very tragic picture of youth, poverty and irreconcilable differences. La Sauvage is more realistic than is Jézabel. But Jézabel does introduce an element of maturity. Marc seeks peace of mind and contentment rather than happiness. The young man is shown here torn between his home, to which he owes his loyalty but by which his Anouilhean purity and innocence are repulsed and lost, and the other world - which though one of wealth and ease, is also that of a young woman who is pure and beautiful.

Anouilh himself cannot resolve this dilemma: it is one of the eternal riddles of the human condition, and almost inevitably it is youth's lot to attempt to resolve it. And so Anouilh presents both sides, and builds his drama out of the conflict which grows within the protagonist.

Thérèse also wrestles with this problem. She is by nature pure, but her soul has been virtually destroyed by poverty. The man she loves is entirely different from her: therefore he does not nor cannot really understand her. She is proud, and this pride is the cause of her revolt against her squalid background, and then a further revolt back to her old life against the wealthy world. Thérèse is trapped by her dilemma, as is Antigone. They both act according to their inner convictions, doing what they feel they must. Yet Marc, Thérèse and Antigone all act in quite different ways: there is an element of progression in the first two which culminates in Antigone. Marc seeks something spiritual, and he can be seen here as Anouilh's mouthpiece, bridging the gap between the world of the physical, and that of the spiritual rebellion of Thérèse. He wrestles with the real world and loathes the debasement of life which he sees about him.

The characters prior to Antigone follow closely a peculiar pattern. Having grown away from their own origins, they express utter disillusionment. Following this can come a feeling of repugnance towards the forsaken life and values, and a desire to escape from it entirely: physically and spiritually. This pattern is manifest in Frantz to a physical extent: then in Marc and Thérèse, the escape is spiritual. The third phase involves development within the character, when the young person may stop running, may face reality, and either carry personal absolutes to the furthest degree, as do Eurydice, Orpheus and Antigone, or return, as do Marc and Thérèse, and, in so doing, accept life, its demands, its challenges and their own identity with the milieu into which they were born.

Then the culmination of these elements is presented in the masterly work, Antigone. She is as young and as full of love and life as Eurydice: she has the depth of thought and the sense of personal achievement of Thérèse: she loathes the compromise and acceptance she sees about her as does Marc, and yet, like Frantz, she is human: his plan however was harmful to others: her plan also was inhuman but she saw herself as the only eventual victim. And, like Humulus, she tries to communicate yet, like him, is misunderstood.

She is misunderstood by Créon. He tries to save her: never does he consider the fact that her duty demands her death. Out of their conflict of values, Anouilh creates drama. In fact, it is values he presents, rather than people. For what are characters if they are not the sum total of their values? The conflict in this play is essential and irreconcilable. Both aspects are presented by two people. The young Antigone is the youth force: pure, determined, beautiful: the older Créon is cynical, willing to compromise and experienced: he has had to grow tolerant and forgiving. She violently proclaims youth's romantic ideals and absolutes, while he vehemently attempts to reason with her. Anouilh creates the situation, but the predicament is universal. Antigone and Créon each carry their principles through to their logical and ultimate conclusions.

Anouilh's young characters represent abstract values. And these values are those of young absolutists.. This ephemeral and eternal quality gives to Anouilh's earlier period something magic, immortal and nostalgic. Humulus

begins to feel love - and his life is changed. The young Frantz is immature and at the end has lost the only abstract value he knew - freedom. Marc is drawn magnetically to purity, innocence and virtue, and all that for which the white creature, Jacqueline, stands. He is in love with goodness. Thérèse too seeks goodness, higher values and contentment, but Florent, unlike Jacqueline, has not the spirit of giving. Florent has no real values - everything has come too easily for him. Thérèse's revolt does not succeed, because there is no goal: Antigone does succeed: she is therefore the perfect absolutist, knowing within herself what she must do and why. She says no to life, because the life she sees about her and before her would negate her every youthful ideal, her every absolute value, her sense of personal duty.

Anouilh's young characters are universal. They represent youth in many different ways, yet, within this universality, each of them is an individual. And each one depicts a force which is typically human, and typically adolescent. Humulus represents the shy, the afraid, the lonely, the young man of few words yet of many thoughts: he is a listener, who tries to understand, himself misunderstood. Frantz is the adolescent obsessed by material things; very impressionable, impetuous, a man of actions, spontaneous, he lives for a good time. Marc represents youth absurdly aware of life: slightly overacting, none-the-less deep thinking, utterly sincere, one of life's victims who, young, finds all this hard to accept. Thérèse represents youth who can no longer stand a certain life situation called home - that place into which one is born,

and which, if one is lucky, is a happy and values fostering place but which, if one is not so lucky, is that place from which the young protagonist runs. She revolts against the past and present squalor she sees about her and escapes - only to return, slightly wiser for the experience, after having found a lack of authentic feeling amidst those of the other class. Antigone represents youth's eternal search for romantic idealism and absolutes.

Anouilh's youths strive for purity and truth, with a marked aversion for compromise and corruption. And it is Antigone who epitomises this view. She remains completely convinced that it is her duty to refuse, to say no to life and all that life offers.

Young and absolutist now, she wants to remain as she is. She stands now at the peak of human perfection, but any compromise would involve a fall. Life could never sustain her hopes: rather, therefore, than suffer disappointment, infidelity or any diminished value, she outruns life and chooses, by means of carrying out her brother's burial rites against the King's command, to do her duty and to be her own executioner. Créon offers her life - but with it she would have to accept experience, which necessarily involves loss of innocence. This she cannot and will not accept. Towards the end, however, her youth is strikingly apparent: she is affected by an increasing sense of loneliness - as are all Anouilh's protagonists. The fact that she is still free to make her own decision points to an "absurd" element in her reasoning.

The plays prior to Antigone present the youth viewpoint

very strongly. Anouilh too is young, and is therefore subjective, an attitude which is reflected in the sympathetic youth portrayals. With Antigone, however, there is a reconciliation of life forces in that Anouilh presents youth and age in a parallel situation. He presents two arguments, both clearly and substantially. We feel for the young, innocent and extreme idealist Antigone, and we feel too for Créon, who tries desperately to understand and save her. The plays beyond this point continue to depict youth for some years, but the field gradually broadens. Young people are still present, but relegated to roles of lesser importance: adolescent feelings are still there, but the passion and outbursts are tempered: and now in its place, rises Anouilh's theatre of social commitment, wherein men are seen in relation to social and political change.

Eventually, as he approaches old age, Anouilh presents ageing characters who look back on their lives and, above all, on their youth. The latest plays bring about a synthesis of attitudes, a view which is a mixture of cynicism and sadness, for the characters have hardly changed: they are still the youth characters of his early plays, soiled by failure and compromise, their ideals not so much shattered as unrealised and unrealisable. And a new generation of young characters starts to emerge, the victims of their environment, with a desire to pursue absolutes, but aware of the dangers of poverty and wealth. And one realises the degree of cohesion that exists in Anouilhean drama.

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