

THE FIGURES OF SPEECH IN
GIRAUDOUX'S DRAMATIC WORKS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE.	iv
The Problem.viii
Statement of the problemviii
I. LIFE AND LITERARY ORIENTATION.	1
II. THE SENSES IN THE FIGURES OF SPEECH OF JEAN GIRAUDOUX	12
Visual	13
Aural.	20
Olfactory	24
Other sensations	24
III. THE THEMES USED IN THE FIGURES OF SPEECH OF GIRAUDOUX.	28
God and destiny.	29
The gods	30
Love	32
War	33
Themes from contemporary life.	35
Conclusions.	41
IV. THE FORM IN THE FIGURES OF SPEECH OF GIRAUDOUX . .	43
Composition.	43
Punctuation.	47
Lyricism	49

CHAPTER	PAGE
Comparisons	50
Language	52
Clichés	53
Key words or expressions	54
False metaphor	57
Balance	58
Repetitions	59
Axioms	61
Giraudoux's awareness of metaphor	62
Summary	62
 V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR	
FUTURE RESEARCH	64
Summary	64
Conclusions	65
Implications for Future Research	67
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	68
APPENDIX	73

PREFACE

It would perhaps be unfair to say that no French writer within the last half century has received as much attention as Jean Giraudoux; however, it would be less than just to ignore the proofs of esteem and affection rendered him since his untimely death in 1944. Streets and buildings have been named in Giraudoux's honor. A street in Paris bears his name; his old school in Châteauroux is now called the Lycée Jean Giraudoux. This is a type of recognition not frequently given to equally famous authors.

As a writer Giraudoux achieved the rare distinction of being applauded as a novelist during the first part of his career and praised as a dramatist from 1928 to 1944. His life was filled with promise, culmination, and triumph; but he was never without the shadow of defeat and frustration.

Giraudoux's work has been recognized as art. Many maintain that he is inimitable. He wrote with complete assurance and freedom from worry. Life for him was something happy, something to tell about, and he did this with delight. Paul Morand affirms, "Giraudoux was of all men the most lucid and the one who best knew

what he wanted."¹ One cannot find boredom in Giraudoux, neither in his outlook nor in his creative work. He had charm and an ability for imagination of the highest order. His memory was supreme: "Nothing is forgotten, nothing remains unused or unappreciated."²

Giraudoux's language, although accused of preciosity, can be accurate, active, and frothy. Because of these qualities, readers of Giraudoux have been left sometimes overwhelmed, sometimes puzzled, sometimes reluctant to accept his work; but they have always admired the technical dexterity of a master of his craft. One can easily understand the remark made by a friend of Giraudoux, as cited by Inskip, "Giraudoux has a charming failing: He expects us to grasp in a second what it takes him five seconds to conceive and put on paper."³

Probably the chief characteristic of his style, which makes him at times difficult but most of the time entertaining, was his continual use of figures of speech. These are sometimes expressed, sometimes implied, frequently extended into the field of allegory. His extensive

¹Cited by Donald Inskip, Jean Giraudoux The Making of a Dramatist (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 21.

²Ibid., p. 3.

³Cited by Inskip, ibid., p. 39.

use of metaphor and comparison has elicited much criticism. Lucien Dubeck labeled Giraudoux, "the worst writer of our generation,"⁴ but from Edmond Jaloux came the opposite opinion:⁵

If I had to name the young French writer in whom one finds the newest and most unexpected view of life, accompanied by a culture which makes of him a man worthy of our richest heritage...one who is at once the most revolutionary of our French writers without ceasing to be most traditionalistic, I should name Jean Giraudoux.

Such a reaction is perfectly understandable, for the contrasting opinions among his critics reflect the contrasting personal characteristics of Giraudoux himself. It has been said that Giraudoux "can be both pessimistic and optimistic, sentimental and cruel, logical, rational and magically superstitious at the same time."⁶

Critics have often challenged his fate at the hands of posterity. However, Giraudoux's claim to literary survival rests in his unique and extraordinary handling of the language. His style is rich and his own. He does not adhere to rules. Giraudoux abused the metaphor, wrote lengthy sentences, used unnecessary words, and

⁴Cited by Inskip, ibid., p. 38.

⁵Cited by Inskip, ibid., p. 38.

⁶Oreste F. Pucciani, The French Theater Since 1930 (New York: Ginn and Company, 1954), p. 82.

was accused of negligence. He repeated himself not only with metaphors but also in themes and ideas. But, good or bad, the style was his own, likeable and pleasing to his readers.

It is with Giraudoux's unique and extraordinary handling of language in mind that this study was undertaken. The desire of the writer was to study the figures of speech in Giraudoux's dramatic works.

Since Giraudoux wrote sixteen plays, but five of them are curtain-raisers, it was decided that only the major plays would be used in this study. Examination of these eleven plays, and critical comments concerning them, reveal that the plays may be classified as follows:

war

Siegfried (1928)
La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu (1935)

love

Amphitryon 38 (1929)
Tessa (1934)
Ordine (1939)
Sodome et Gomorrhe (1943)

the gods

Judith (1931)
Intermèze (1933)
Electre (1937)

The other two plays, La Folle de Chaillot and Pour Lucrèce, which will be studied also, do not, according to Mercier-Campiche, fall under the major

categories in which Giraudoux worked: "war," "love," "the gods," which were established as follows:⁷

D'où nos trois parties: D'abord "la guerre." C'est d'elle, vécue et méditée, que l'écrivain a reçu l'impulsion qui l'a mené au théâtre. Puis "l'amour." Il n'y a pas une doctrine de l'amour dans ce théâtre et Giraudoux n'est nulle part l'homme des doctrines, mais dans la complexité mouvante de la vie que l'auteur a voulu dépeindre, l'amour prend une place éminente. L'amour est le sujet même des pièces qui ont été groupées dans cette partie de notre étude. Enfin "les dieux." Giraudoux prend la mesure de la condition humaine en la confrontant avec la sphère des dieux: ainsi sont révélés les méfaits des abstractions métaphysiques et morales, sitôt que ces abstractions sont à l'état pur, coupées de tout rapport avec la vie.

Although the major motifs of Giraudoux's dramatic work fall under the headings of war, love, and the gods, it must not be overlooked that his work shows also a psychological and social treatment. It should be noted also that his themes overlap as, for example, war, love, and the gods are all found in Amphitryon 38 and La Guerre de Troie.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study to analyze the selected plays of Jean Giraudoux

⁷Marianne Mercier-Campiche, Le Théâtre de Giraudoux et la Condition humaine (Paris: Editions Domat, 1954), p. 6.

in order to study the figures of speech used in his dramatic works.

The first chapter will be devoted to his life and his literary orientation. Chapter II will analyse the sensory content of the figures of speech. Chapter III will study themes used in the figures of speech, and Chapter IV will be on the form of Giraudoux's figures of speech.

The conclusions of this study are briefly summarized and suggestions for further study are made in Chapter V.

CHAPTER I

LIFE AND LITERARY ORIENTATION

Inspiration is the quest of a writer in search of what he hopes to create. Many seek inspiration, but few meet it face to face. Jean Giraudoux was one of the elect.

Hippolyte-Jean Giraudoux, who was born October 29, 1882, in Bellac, Haute Vienne, was a diplomat by profession and a writer by vocation.

Giraudoux's family was modest, coming of peasant stock. His father, Léger Giraudoux, who was employed as a civil engineer and later as a tax collector, led the quasi-nomadic life of a civil servant, moving his wife and two sons on a provincial circuit of government employment. Since he spent only the first seven years of his life in Bellac, Giraudoux's devotion to the little town is somewhat surprising. Few poets have lavished more eloquence on the place of their birth than did Giraudoux. He made Bellac a perfect place for a genius to be born; a place which represented the model French community; a place where heroes and saints were ever present; a place which became a symbol in his writing. Although there were times when Giraudoux wanted us to know that he was joking about Bellac and its magic,

he still made it a town with a legendary past never to be forgotten.

Because of his father's position, Giraudoux received his early education from provincial schools. Regardless of the type of school which he attended, he was always a star pupil and was classified as such by his teachers. He mystified many of his readers in Simon le pathétique (a somewhat autobiographical novel), when he wrote the well-known paragraph:⁸

Travail, cher travail, toi qui terrasses la honteuse paresse! Travail d'enfant, généreux comme un amour d'enfant! Il est si facile, quelle que soit la surveillance, de travailler sans relâche. Au réfectoire, alors qu'en distribuait les lettres, j'en profitais, puisqu'on ne m'écrivait jamais, pour relire mes cahiers. Le jeudi et le dimanche, pour éviter la promenade, je me glissais à la Permanence. Ce nom vous plaît-il autant qu'il me plaisait: travail permanent, permanente gloire.

Giraudoux devoted himself entirely to his school work. It was the pure love he held for his studies, that made him stay at the Permanence, a combination library and study hall, where students prepare and make up their school work, under the surveillance of a teacher.

Giraudoux's childhood was probably little different from that of all small-town children--home, school and a whole country-side in which to explore and make-believe.

⁸ Jean Giraudoux, Simon le pathétique (Paris: Les éditions G. Grés et Cie., 1923), pp. 17-18.

However, Giraudoux seems to have found extraordinary interest and variety in the smallest things of everyday life. He saw adventure where others saw only dull routine and boredom. His imagination was never at rest whether he was looking at birds, plants, or people; they all affected him. These childhood perceptions evolved into the characteristics of his writing style.

When he was eleven years old, Giraudoux entered the lycée in Châteauroux where he continued the scholastic record previously established. He was conscientious, alert, intelligent, and satisfied with his work only when he had reached perfection. Needless to say, he was the joy of his teachers and, as one exclaims in Simon le pathétique, "Vous êtes un peu notre bien, Simon."⁹

In October, 1900, at the age of eighteen, Giraudoux was ready to enter a new life. During the preceding summer, he had successfully completed the first stage by passing his examination for the second part of his baccalauréat degree. His life in Châteauroux was over. He was off to the Lycée Lakanal in Paris where a scholarship would permit him to prepare for the Ecole Normale Supérieure.

⁹Ibid., p. 22.

The archives at Lakanal were destroyed during the Second World War. Thus little is known of his time at this famous lycée, except that he was an honor student and that, upon completion of his two years of preparation at Lakanal, he found himself obliged to go back to Châteauroux for his year of military service.

Giraudoux returned to Paris in 1903 with the rating of reserve sergeant and resumed his studies. He obtained his licence in 1904 at the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Paris.

It was at that time that Giraudoux decided to pursue his interest in German, with particular concentration upon a group of Romantics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This particular interest was to have a great influence upon his later writings. In addition to studying intensively, Giraudoux did some writing and that same year his first essay, Le dernier Rêve d'Edmond About, was published in a student newspaper.

During the spring of 1905, Giraudoux won a scholarship to Germany, the country in whose literature he had demonstrated so much interest. Overwhelmed and excited he left his teaching position of a few months at the Lycée Janson-de-Sailly and travelled across the border to Bavaria. On June 23, 1906, he returned to the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris to receive his

Diplôme des Etudes Supérieures in German. However, a year later, he was stunned when he failed to receive the agrégation in German. Disappointed and upset though he was, when the opportunity to live abroad came again, his anxiety disappeared completely and he happily packed his things to spend the academic year 1907-08 at Harvard University.

While at Harvard, Giraudoux did not neglect his writing. In fact, he was constantly publishing articles of which some were about the United States and Canada, where he also travelled. Some of these articles were later incorporated into his Provinciales.

When Giraudoux left the United States to go back to France he turned to another subject of passionate interest to him--the comparison of France and Germany--a most controversial subject. The return to France marked the beginning of his serious writing career, for in Paris Giraudoux worked as secretary to the son of the owner of the newspaper, Le Matin, a position which provided him with a little income and a great challenge.

The fragrance of French Symbolism was still in the air when Giraudoux was making his literary début about 1909. In the famous Café Vachette in the Latin Quarter, he came in contact with a number of great writers

who helped mold his talent. Inskip recalls that Giraudoux was often seen with Paul Claudel and Edmond Jaloux and that, as a great admirer of André Gide, he had conferred many times with the latter for advice on the Provinciales.¹⁰

Although he admired German Romanticism and French Symbolism, Giraudoux had few good words for French Romanticism. Musset and Gérard de Nerval may be the only exceptions to this group which he labelled as pompous and false. Victor Hugo, the most famous of them all, was the first to be criticized.

In an interview granted Simone Ratel, a few years before he became famous, Giraudoux expressed better than anyone else the spirit that possessed him and his associates during the early years of his success:¹¹

Vers 1910, 1912, il y avait des jeunes gens qui peut-être préparaient, comme moi, l'Ecole Normale: ils n'avaient pas la mine de révolutionnaires. Ces jeunes gens se sont mis à voyager. Ils ont échappé à l'influence stérilisante de Paris, où l'homme de lettres était à cette époque une sorte de fonctionnaire exécutant sa besogne dans des cadres traces une fois pour toutes. Ils ont plongé dans de grandes ondes poétiques dont les cercles de dressage littéraire et mondain semblaient ignorer l'existence. Je ne veux pas dire que la France tout entière se tenait à l'écart du mouvement: il s'était déjà manifesté, en poésie, par Verlaine, Rimbaud et le symbolisme. Mais la prose était figée dans le moule stéréotype du langage que nous avaient

¹⁰Inskip, op. cit., p. 24.

¹¹Laurent LeSage, op. cit., p. 35.

légé le dix-huitième et le dix-neuvième siècle, coupable d'avoir desséché et compliqué le beau langage vivant du dix-septième et du seizième. Et la littérature romanesque était une route monotone creusée d'ornières dans lesquelles on s'engageait docilement à la queue-leu-leu.

Nous avons voulu réagir, briser les moules, donner du champ à l'invention.

As young as Giraudoux was in his career at the time of this interview, his remark shows his extreme self-confidence. He was well on the road which led him to his success. Giraudoux must have realized how fortunate he was in his art, to be free from the bypaths and confusing aims which mislead so many writers.

In 1910, when he was nearly thirty, Giraudoux decided to take the examination through which young men were recruited into the French consular service. On June 14 of that year he began his diplomatic career when he was appointed to the political and commercial section of vice-consuls. Important missions soon took him to northern Russia and to the Orient.¹²

The years between 1907 and 1914 have often been thought of as Giraudoux's years of exploration and crystallisation.¹³ He explored two lives, that of a

¹²Kunits and Haycraft, Twentieth Century Authors. A Biographical Dictionary (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1942), p. 538.

¹³Inskip, op. cit., p. 22.

diplomat and that of a writer, and attained success in both. At the beginning of the First World War, Sergeant Giraudoux spent two years on the battle front where he was twice wounded. After he had been wounded the second time he asked for a diplomatic assignment from Philippe Berthelot, who was in charge of the European desk and was a very close friend.¹⁴ However, on April 26, 1917, Giraudoux arrived at Harvard, where he was delighted to be again in the country he admired so much. There, Giraudoux served as an instructor to American officers who were learning the use of certain war weapons.¹⁵

During the following decade Giraudoux passed from the consular to the diplomatic branch of the French foreign service, filling several important posts. In the meantime he had married, and a son had been born to the family.

Although successful in his diplomatic career, Giraudoux was also very successful in his literary vocation. We may assume that Jean Giraudoux must have been intrigued by drama during these years, but not until

¹⁴Laurent LeSage, Jean Giraudoux. His Life and Works (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1959), p. 39.

¹⁵René Marill, Esthétique et Morale chez Jean Giraudoux (Paris: Librairie Nizet, Place de la Sorbonne, 1957), p. 73.

1926 did he turn his talent in this direction with the dramatization of Siegfried et le Limousin.

The presentation of Siegfried was a significant event in the writer's career; it turned the tide not only for him but also for the French theater. Giraudoux was launched on a new and stimulating career to which he was to devote the remainder of his creative years.

As one of the leaders in the renaissance of the French theater which took place in the thirties, Giraudoux staged about a dozen full-length plays. These plays were only a fraction of what he could have done had he devoted full time to the theater, but Giraudoux did not give up his diplomatic career. He was, nevertheless, the chief French dramatist in the period between the two World Wars.

In 1939, at the beginning of the Second World War, Giraudoux was made Commissaire Général à l'Information, permitting him to work on the subject of Franco-German relations, his lifelong preoccupation. However, his new position was of short duration. Germany invaded France, forcing her to capitulate in June, 1940. Giraudoux was left without a position; and, in spite of his knowledge, background, and sprightly mind, he sought no other governmental post. His hope and desire to see France and Germany as two great nations united by an unbreakable

link of friendship and understanding seem to have completely vanished. He retired from government service at the age of fifty-eight, unhappy over the conduct of the many Frenchmen who had reached their position through fraudulent action.

The post-humous Pelle de Chaillet was the last manuscript Giraudoux completed with the intention of staging it. In this satirical play Giraudoux shows his concern over the social atmosphere of exploitation prevailing in Paris at the time.

Before his untimely death in January, 1944, Giraudoux became interested in the cinema. Many have wondered what could have enticed a man who had had the greatest attraction and admiration for the stage, to turn suddenly to the screen. It may be well to remember that in 1939, when Giraudoux was Secrétaire Général à l'Information, he was also in charge of the war cinematography. Although this does not explain everything, it still seems quite right to assume that his job gave his active searching mind the opportunity to become acquainted with another art form. His two films, La Duchesse de Langeais (1942) and Les Anges du Péché (1943) have been both criticized and highly praised. His good friend, Paul Morand, manifested great enthusiasm for the films and exclaimed: "Enfin, un grand écrivain donnait un sens plus pur aux

mots de la tribu cinématographique. Il apprivoisait l'écran comme il avait apprivoisé la scène."¹⁶ Giraudoux's friends admit that he liked the cinema. It was a medium by which he gained one more tool to express himself. His creative mind was once again intrigued by the cinema, and one can but speculate on his possible success had life permitted him the opportunity to carry on. Thus, as we view the life of Jean Giraudoux in retrospect, we find a man of great talent influencing and being influenced by the world, the events, and the people around him.

¹⁶Alain Virmaux, "Les écrivains et l'art du film," Le Français dans le Monde, no. 18, juillet-août, 1963.

CHAPTER II

THE SENSES IN THE FIGURES OF SPEECH OF JEAN GIRAUDOUX

Giraudoux was a talented writer with ideas of his own in the literary world, which permitted him to use a unique and original style of writing based on the play of figures of speech. Whether Giraudoux used figures of speech properly or overused them is still a controversial subject for many critics. To some it is the result of a creative, imaginative mind, the work of a brilliant writer. To others it is nothing but preciosity or a style adopted in order to follow a fashion.¹⁷ To most of us, however, Giraudoux's figures of speech are refreshing and delightful. We do not look at them as the creation of a new universe but something which gave life, purity, and newness to the things he saw.

A metaphor, as we know it, is the result of a search for a precise epithet and, according to J. Middleton Murry, "is no more ornamental than a man's Christian

¹⁷Daniël Mornet, Histoire de la Littérature et de la Pensée française contemporaines (Paris: Bibliothèque Larousse, 1927), p. 115.

name."¹⁸ "Ever since Aristotle's day it has been held ... that writing of the highest kind is distinguished by a commanding use of metaphor."¹⁹ Thus we have a picture of Giraudoux who, by the use of figures of speech, tried to add precision to his thoughts like a painter adds a touch of red or blue to brighten up his canvas. It was his idea not to create something with pure imagination but to give reality a new flair which marks Giraudoux's figures of speech as unique.

Interestingly enough, Giraudoux's imaginative qualities are somewhat restricted and one must not look for a lush sort of imagery abounding in rich colors, heavy perfumes, and enchanting music. He used very little color in his figures. Color as an inspiration for the image itself or as a quality of it was inimportant.

Visual. An analysis of the sensory aspect of Giraudoux's figures of speech reveals that he was pre-occupied with unusual sensory impressions. He did not describe the world as he saw it, but the one his creativity substituted for what he saw. In Intermezzo, for instance, the countryside setting offered Giraudoux a great

¹⁸J. Middleton Murry, The Problem of Style (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 83.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 12.

opportunity for color, yet he used it sparingly. The comparison of the stars to diamonds²⁰ is, of course, suggestive but he did not make any reference to colors of any kind. The hope of the little girls in Intermezzo to be able to imagine the beauty of the firmament on the other side of the earth at the time of darkness on their side (Intermezzo, II, 40), brings to mind many beautiful skies to the reader, but none described by Giraudoux. Images of exquisite painting, such as the following description of the sun, are rather infrequent: "Il s'amasse plus de naere sur les faubourgs de Troie qu'au fond des mers."²¹

Blue, which was a favorite color of Giraudoux in his earlier novels, is not dominant in his plays. A beautiful clear sky may be described as a sky without clouds or simply as a clear sky. Delicate shadings at dawn and twilight are better described. Dawn is

²⁰Jean Giraudoux, "Intermezzo," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), II, p. 40. In this thesis complete footnote information will be provided the first time reference is made to a play. Thereafter only the name of the play, the volume, and the page will appear in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

²¹Jean Giraudoux, "La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), II, p. 251.

"ce bourrelet de sang sur l'horizon, un ciel plein de
pus et d'or."²²

A few comparisons based on color concern persons. The black clothing worn by Siegfried as he leaves Germany is a mourning sign for the country he loves.²³ A black coat worn by Judith is very fitting for the spouse of God (Judith, I, 315). Another example is when Amphitryon wears a coat trimmed in black as he leaves Alcmene to go to war.²⁴ The ghost adjusts "sa cape noire" as he goes about the fields (Intermède, II, 35).

The very common form of simple comparison used by Giraudoux in his earlier writing, becomes more subtle in his plays. For instance, in his plays one is more likely to read: "Il comprenait que j'étouffais, que j'avais ton nom sur ma bouche comme un tampon d'or,"²⁵ rather than comparison such as round and red like an eye or yellow and white like an egg. This simpler type of comparison was often used in his novels.

²²Jean Giraudoux, "Judith," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), I, p. 293.

²³Jean Giraudoux, "Siegfried," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), I, p. 79.

²⁴Jean Giraudoux, "Amphitryon 38," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), I, p. 137.

²⁵Jean Giraudoux, "Electre," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), III, p. 86.

Although Giraudoux did not use color extensively for descriptive purposes, he did have a tendency to use color for symbolic purposes. Red is commonly associated with blood. Helen sees a brilliant red spot on the neck of Hector's unborn son (La Guerre de Troie, II, 281). Orestes as a child is hurt by falling out of his mother's arms and Electra recalls: "Je sanglotais en le voyant à terre, sa marque rouge au front" (Electre, III, 34).

Giraudoux's plays reveal a rather minor interest in simple color images but a natural inclination toward the luminous effect of daylight and the shining brightness of platinum, gold, and silver. For the author, Jupiter was a block of light (Amphitryon 38, I, 188). Judith is a most beautiful girl; she has "le reflet du luxe et de l'or" (Judith, I, 241). Paul, in Judith, sees angels fighting with luminous swords (Judith, I, 229). Ondine thinks Bertha would be most beautiful, if she could make her glitter under the sun.²⁶ Isabel trapped the ghost because he was fascinated by lights:

²⁶Jean Giraudoux, "Ondine," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), III, p. 314.

Vous regardiez le reflet de la flamme, sur le montant du pare-étincelles, la lune sur l'écaille du réveil, vous regardiez le diamant des ombres (Intermezzo, II, 65).

Although each description lacks in vivid and precise coloration, the implication is outstanding and reveals the author's great ability in pictorial art.

Platinum, gold, and silver are sometimes used for effects of lights, sometimes to mark wealth and riches, and sometimes to distinguish the degree of riches and even reward. Judith's wealth comes from her ancestors "qui ont pendant trois siècles, prêté, usuré, volé, pour amasser un scele d'or" (Judith, I, 260). Holophernes must melt his jewelry in order to furnish ammunition to his army, which prompts the enemy to remark how nice the war must be since they will be wounded only by platinum and gold (Judith, I, 236). Amphytryon and Alceste are building a silver altar to honor Jupiter, but promise a gold one if Amphytryon returns safely from war (Amphytryon 38, I, 176). Throughout the plays, it is easy to see that Giraudoux loves luminous effects and the brilliance of metals. "Un éclat d'or" is a common expression for the author, and the word or appears to be the most frequently used by Giraudoux in his descriptions of metals.

Metals are also used in connection with their color. "N'alourdis pas de plomb ces ombres qui vont flotter tout à l'heure autour de nous" (Siegfried, I, 19). The use of lead in describing shadows seems to be most à propos. "Tout l'acier de la mer était un ourlet de l'onde" (Ondine, III, 348) is another good image of metal and color.

Not too frequent in his plays, though deserving of mention, is the author's fondness for bringing in diagonal lines, angles, circles, etc. The comparisons which he suggests are delightful and daring. The stranger in Electre remembers that as a child: "on me posait dans un losange de tigres quand j'étais méchant, et dans un hexagone de fleurs quand j'étais sage" (Electre, III, 8). To save Orestes from falling, Clytemnestra could have been "une courbe, une conque, une pente maternelle" (Electre, III, 39). Luce, in Intermezzo, exclaims that there is no such thing as a right angle. The only angle, almost right, "s'obtient en prolongeant par une ligne imaginaire le nez grec jusqu' au sol grec" (Intermezzo, II, 30). Constellations do not bear the names of heroes but "l'horloge, le triangle, la balance, le compas" (Intermezzo, II, 40). A circle comes up often to describe objects or even people and to indicate a

round form. It may take great imagination to recognize it, but it is there. One notes this example:

Et ainsi vivra Electre, fille de Clytemnestre et du roi des rois, à voir dans les plates-bandes son époux circuler deux seaux aux mains, centre d'un cercle de barrique! (Electre, III, 38).

Electra, the daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon will, if married to the gardener, see her husband walking among the flower-beds, so that the round buckets in either hand make him the center of a circle.

Giraudoux often presents the movements of his characters by making a striking comparison. The perfectness of Isabel is the key to understanding the things and people around her:

Regardez la franchise de cette silhouette! Près de chaque être, de chaque objet, elle semble la clef destinée à le rendre compréhensible (Intermezzo, II, 11).

The light step of Isabel is like that of a thief, who can go up a stairway without making it squeak (Intermezzo, II, 49). The following description, even though appropriate, gives an image grotesquely humorous: "les filles de la pension ... avaient des figures comme des puddings et marchaient deux par deux."²⁷

²⁷Jean Giraudoux, "Tessa," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), II, p. 132.

Aural. Movements are always rich in suggestion for Giraudoux. Of Asiatic women he says: "Leurs étreintes sont de la glu, leur baisers des effractions, leurs paroles de la déglutition" (La Guerre de Troie, II, 258). Other gestures may bring to mind many fanciful suggestions. The terms of the following extravagant metaphor are certainly very suggestive:

Mais obéis-moi sur-le-champ; si non, là, devant le peuple, je reprends forme et je fonce, et je lutte avec toi pour arracher de ton pharynx le mensonge de Dieu, et je te roule au sol comme le vacher la bergère! (Judith, I, 313).

Here the guard not only implies a fight between him and Judith but also an attack to ravish her.

The figures of speech in Giraudoux's plays are not the beautiful and scenic images of his novels. In fact, it would be safe to say that the majority of his images are those of conflict, reflecting the great themes used in his plays. The following image depicts the conflict between war and peace:

Comme la nature munit les insectes dont elle prévoit la lutte, de faiblesses et d'armes qui se correspondent, à distance, sans que nous nous connaissions, sans que nous nous en doutions, nous nous sommes élevés tous deux au niveau de notre guerre (La Guerre de Troie, II, 323).

Giraudoux compares man to nature. Nature provides animals with defense mechanism to fight one another; man, without realizing it, finds himself involved into war.

Within the lines of his plays Giraudoux uses language to provide the most specific and unexpected images. The guard tells Judith that, for her, mud sparkles, dirt glitters, and old leather smells like roses (Judith, I, 307). In a description of England, Giraudoux compares beautiful music to the ever-green English soil, and to the air of welcome given everyone by the healthy, thick hedge rows, but then he adds: "aux vaches en particulier" (Tessa, II, 185).

Often the characters, to explain themselves, make use of details that are amazing in the contrast between their apparent insignificance and the importance of their function. In Siegfried Zelten explains that he was unable to bring about his counter-revolution for want of arms, but also for want of glue to stick up his manifestoes (Siegfried, I, 58). In a similar way in Electre, Clytemenestra explains that much of her hate for Agamemnon stemmed from the way in which he always, under no matter what circumstances, held his little finger up in the air (Electre, III, 104).

Personification, as we know it, helps to animate even the stationary objects of nature. In Giraudoux's work, few are the simple personifications, such as the following: "Les branches d'un poirier témoin s'inclinent sur mon passage" (Amphitryon 38, I, 184). Most of

Giraudoux's personifications are complex. For instance, everything around the soldier who has lost the battle, is a reminder of his defeat: "Tout ce qui est drapeau ou clairon ou médaille devient soudain la boue du monde, et la patrie des couleurs ou des métaux même le reniel (Judith, I, 240). Germany is an interesting subject for personification by the author. "L'Allemagne s'était forgée d'elle-même un modèle géant et surhumain (Siegfried, I, 42). For Zelten, she is the adulteress of whom he says:

Je suis encore plein de son parfum, de toute cette odeur de poussière, de rose et de sang qu'elle repand dès qu'on touche au plus petit de ses trônes, j'ai eu tout ce qu'elle offre à ses amants, le drame, le pouvoir sur les âmes (Siegfried, I, 59).

This is a beautiful personification of Germany on Giraudoux's part. Zelten claims that he is still full of Germany's fragrance: her smell of dust, of roses and of the blood which she pours out so easily. He receives from her everything a lover could possibly expect.

The following personification is one of the most original found in Giraudoux's plays. It shows an acuteness of vision and creativity by exploiting the verb of each sentence to its maximum possibility:

Il y avait dans son vêtement un pli qui disait, je ne suis pas le pli de la mort, mais le pli de l'assassinat. Et il y avait sur le scoulier une boucle

qui répétait: je ne suis pas la boucle de l'accident, mais la boucle du crime. Et il y avait dans la paupière retombée une ride qui disait: je n'ai pas vu la mort, j'ai vu les régicides (Electre, III, 71).

In this figure of speech, Giraudoux uses the verbs disait and répétait so effectively that it gives the whole paragraph a precise and even tempo, as Agamemnon's clothing declares his assassination.

Sound provides the point of departure for numerous metaphorical divagations. For Lia, the laughter of a man is the sound of freedom.²⁸ A woman's voice, however,

is the complete opposite for Paola who claims that:

"Tout ce qu' une femme murmure à l'amour en cantiques ou en insultes fracasse le tympan de toutes les autres femmes."²⁹ Sometimes an aural image inspires great

silence: "Chaque Saxon marche aujourd'hui aussi silencieusement que la mort" (Siegfried, I, 51). Often,

the verb suggests an aural image of great vigor: "Il y a dans cette oreille un marteau qui frappe sur une enclume, qui excite un tympan" (Judith, I, 298).

Giraudoux's ear seems delicately attuned to all sounds.

Money in his pocket reminds him of a mule's bell

²⁸ Jean Giraudoux, "Sodome et Gomorrhe," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), IV, p. 17.

²⁹ Jean Giraudoux, "Pour Lucrèce," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), IV, p. 282.

(Intermezzo, II, 61). The sound of a waterfall is the most enchanting sound of peace in the world (Tessa, II, 157). Certain words have a beautiful sound for the author: le mot jet d'eau, le mot source, le mot printemps (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 241). Précieux as Giraudoux may be, such figurative arabesques show genuine perceptual sensitivity.

Olfactory. Olfactory, tactile, and gustatory figures of speech are very rare. The description of perfume often serves as the pretext for a joke. The garbage man in La Folle de Chaillot knows no better odor than the mixture of sardines, toilet water, and chrysanthemums.³⁰ Marcellus deploras the idea of Blanchard, which is to wear an orchid marked with blood and smelling of stagnant water (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 223). The odor of mouldy furniture brings a moment of ecstasy to Hans as he roams about the haunted countryside (Ondine, III, 328). But from a young girl, according to Giraudoux, emanated the newest of perfumes (Intermezzo, II, 54).

Other Sensations. The word, "velvet," seemed to come to the author's mind when he wanted to express a

³⁰Jean Giraudoux, "La Folle de Chaillot," Théâtre (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1959), IV, p. 123.

soft touch: "... sa peau est de velours, elle est faite à ravir" (Ondine, III, 329). The sweet flavor of honey was sometimes used in a derogatory manner: "Vous chantez, vous l'embrassez, et votre bouche devient muqueuse et miel" (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 251).

Another minor sensory factor in the figure of speech is weight and measure. Even though Giraudoux made use of weight, he used it very sparingly; for example, "Les pas d'hommes, la nuit sur les pavés, nous donnent le poids des hommes" (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 249). Salambo represents strength by his ability "de dresser les colonnes que six équipes ne pouvaient soulever" (Ondine, III, 284). Lead was also used to build up an idea of weight. A broken nose may be the result of a French bullet for Geneviève. To this possibility Robineau answers: "N'alourdis pas de plomb ces ombres qui vont flotter autour de nous" (Siegfried, I, 19).

Thermal sensations are a distinctive aspect of Giraudoux's imagery. In La Guerre de Troie, the reader is made aware of the warmth of the sun-bathed town of Troy. The words doré, naéré, pourpré, come back automatically to describe the beauty of the sun; be it on people or on things. There is a heat sensation when Hector tells Helen: "Nous allons vous remettre aux Grecs en plein midi sur le sable aveuglant, entre la

mer violette et le mur ocre" (La Guerre de Troie, II, 278).

Sometimes there is a quality of softness stressed in figures of speech used in connection with the sun. Men are warmed by the sun as they sit on a terrace, near a lake or in a garden (La Guerre de Troie, II, 321). Mercury describes Alceba as a rosy blond, enhanced by the sun (Amphitryon 38, I, 126). Holofernes receives a certain satisfaction when, after conquering a city, he sees it bathed in sunshine (Judith, I, 247).

After studying sensory motivation for the Giraudoux images, it appears as if a classification could be made as follows. The figures of speech in Giraudoux's plays are more subtle than a simple comparison, and sometimes very complex. Visual imagery is definitely the most common. Colorful descriptions are very rare, but color is often suggested. Some color symbolism may be observed. Gold is frequently used for effects of richness, wealth, and color. Black symbolises mourning and sadness; red is used for blood. Luminous effects are frequently suggested and show Giraudoux as a stylist in pictorial art. The author likes to play with geometric forms, and makes frequent use of the circle, either to represent a round object or a movement. Giraudoux can be most delectable and proper in his figures of speech, he is

often humorous, sometimes grotesque; but most of the time he is colorful and charming.

Personification helps to animate even the stationary objects of nature. Germany is a favorite subject in Giraudoux's personification.

Aural images tend to be non-musical sounds. Olfactory, tactile, and gustatory images are infrequent in all plays. Olfactory images, however, appear more often than the other two and, when used, often serve as the pretext of a joke. Thermic sensations represent a distinctive aspect of Giraudoux's imagery. Weight also is present but in a very subtle form.

CHAPTER III

THE THEMES USED IN THE FIGURES OF SPEECH OF GIRAUDOUX

In Chapter II the sensory contents of Giraudoux's images were examined, showing the result of a creative and imaginative mind. In this chapter, we will examine the themes. A theme is not created, according to Gassner, it is the "after-effect of a sensation, the continued presence of an impression after the object which first excited it has been withdrawn from the actual experience."³¹ In other words, themes are not creations but simply recollections of past experiences. Therefore, the themes of Giraudoux's figures of speech should be free of intellectual control and should reveal the poet's subconscious treasury of experiences.

Giraudoux was a talented writer, unique in ideas, with a brilliant mind and wide interests. A thorough study of figures of speech of such a writer would furnish a wealth of imagery from a great variety of fields, which would exceed the limits of this study. Therefore this writer will make only a general survey of Giraudoux's themes.

³¹John Gassner, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art (Dover Publications, Inc., 1951), p. 125.

God and destiny. The importance of God and destiny may be seen in Giraudoux's plays. While Giraudoux appears to have rejected the ideology of the Catholic religion of his youth, he did not show complete hostility toward God. In a comparison of men to God, for instance, Giraudoux leaves the reader in a state of perplexity about his idea of God:

Ils (men) sont soudain logiques, il n'abdiquent plus, ils n'épousent pas celle qu'ils n'aiment pas, ils ont le raisonnement des plantes, des eaux, de Dieu: ils sont fous (Ondine, III, 348).

Even the words of the archangel to the gardener are not in accord with Christianity: "Ce soir, si de tous les limiers du ciel aux pistes dans Sodome, aucun n'a trouvé ce qu'il cherche, c'est le châtimeut dans son feu et sa mort, c'est la haine de Dieu..." (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 8). The end of the world is near, says the archangel, as a punishment from God to man, who is unable to live in harmony. This is contrary to Christianity which teaches that God has only love and forgiveness. Sometimes, however, a certain belief demonstrates Giraudoux's sympathy toward a silently attentive God: "L'oreille de Dieu se tend aux prières sincères" (Tessa, II, 209). "Nous sommes à l'instant où Dieu, comme la mère qui veut donner à son fils qui grimace le temps de se reprendre, détourne le regard" (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 64). In these images,

Giraudoux shows not only sympathy, but also a disposition for acceptance and understanding by God.

Figures based on destiny, at times, take the appearance of a force, uncontrollable by humanity.

HECTOR: Tu as beau me dire oui, Hélène, tu es comble d'une obstination qui me nargue!

HÉLÈNE: C'est possible. Mais je n'y peux rien. Ce n'est pas la mienne (La Guerre de Troie, II, 281).

Sometimes destiny seems to be a force meddling in human affairs: "Le destin est plus acharné à résoudre les énigmes humaines que les hommes eux-mêmes" (Siegfried, I, 41). In Giraudoux's mind, destiny takes over a situation which seems too much for men to understand. The following image is used by Giraudoux to show that man has no power over his intentions, his life, and the world around him. Hans recalls that he lives stupidly, like other men. He does everything as he is told. He loves Ondine because she wants him to, and he goes to Bertha because he is asked to, and then adds: "J'ai été pris entre toute la nature et toute la destinée, comme un rat" (Ondine, III, 349). It is apparent that the tragic truth about destiny is the fact that the world does not belong to men, but to a complex combination of the universe.

The gods. References to the gods are rather common in plays starting in 1929 with Amphitryon 38.

It is interesting to note here that a great change takes place within three years, and the courteous gods of Amphitryon 38 become cruel and hostile in Judith. In Amphitryon 38, Jupiter, realizing the stubbornness of Alcmena who refuses his love, exclaims: "Alcmène, la tendre Alcmène, possède une nature plus irréductible à nos lois que le roc" (Amphitryon 38, I, 166). Gracefully, he accepts his defeat and in exchange for her friendship, he is willing to leave her alone so she can find true love and happiness with Amphitryon, her husband. "Adieu donc, Alcmène, sois heureuse, et toi Mercure... donne la récompense qui convient à deux époux qui se retrouvent" (Amphitryon 38, I, 219). In 1931 Judith shows the gods as hostile forces, which create a feeling of antagonism in the reader. The understanding gods have become vicious: "Les dieux infestent notre pauvre univers, Judith. De la Grèce aux Indes, du Nord au Sud, pas de pays où il ne pullulent, chacun avec ses vices, avec ses odeurs..." (Judith, I, 277). Within these images of the gods, the reader may wonder why there are such contrary implications. According to René Marill, Giraudoux used the gods like puppets, unnecessary, only playing an official rôle.³²

³² René Marill, Esthétique et Morale chez Jean Giraudoux (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1957), p. 344.

Love. The plays of Giraudoux provide countless examples of expressions of emotions and thoughts which go straight to the heart of the matter by a contradictory image. Paris, speaking of his love for Helen, agrees with Hector that if he left Helen, she would not be the first woman with whom he had broken, adding: "...l'amour comporte des moments vraiment exaltants, ce sont les ruptures..." (La Guerre de Troie, II, 260). For Tessa the sight of those we detest reminds us of the ones we love (Tessa, II, 176). In trying to create, for the reader, the state of mind of Hans who discovers the unfaithfulness of Ondine, Giraudoux used an effective contrasting form of accusation:

J'accuse l'amour le plus vrai d'être ce qu'il y a de plus faux, l'amour le plus déchaîné d'être ce qu'il y a de plus vil, puisque cette femme, qui ne vivait que d'amour pour moi, m'a trompé avec Bertram! (Ondine, III, 240).

Ondine who has always shown the purest and strongest love for Hans proclaims her unfaithfulness. This prompts Hans to say that the strongest love can turn into the most violent hate.

A curious and delightful image is used by the author to express the ultimate feelings of the love of Agatha for her lover as she says:

L'escelle mangée par mon amant devient une ambroisie, dont je lèche les restes. Et tout ce qui est souillé

quand mon mari le touche sort purifié de ses mains
ou de ses lèvres... (Electre, III, 80).

Through Giraudoux's technique of images the reader becomes acquainted with the characters and their personality. The images indicate the way the characters think, the way they act. An outstanding example is the following conversation between Electre and her mother, who has just admitted her love for Agisthus and to whom Electra answers:

Tu jettes dans mes pieds l'amour comme les
voituriers poursuivis par les loups leur jettent
un chien. Le chien n'est pas ma nourriture
(Electre, III, 76).

Electra refuses to recognize her mother's love for Agisthus, accusing her of throwing love around as one would throw a dog to a wolf in order to detract his attention.

War. Perhaps nothing else reveals more clearly the author's aversion to wars than the way he treated the subject in his figures of speech. In the civil war fought in Germany by Zelten, Giraudoux compared countries to fruit, adding that the worms are always inside (Siegfried, I, 21). In spite of his admiration for Germany, Zelten denounces the German people for their love of grandeur.

Vous a-t-il dit cette démente amoureuse, ces noces de l'Allemagne avec le globe, cet amour presque physique de l'univers, qui poussait les Allemands à aimer sa faune et sa flore plus que tout autre peuple... (Siegfried, I, 43).

In Amphitryon 38, Giraudoux exposes the crimes brought by wars:

Vous, jouisseurs impies, la guerre vous permet tout, d'aiguiser vos armes sur les statues même des dieux, de choisir entre les lois, entre les femmes! Vous, paresseux, aux tranchées; la guerre est le triomphe de la paresse (Amphitryon 38, I, 134).

Hector gives a penetrating interpretation of the futility of the war:

Mais ce que j'ai à vous dire aujourd'hui, c'est que la guerre me semble la recette la plus sordide et la plus hypocrite pour égaliser les humains et que je n'admets pas plus la mort comme châtement ou comme expiation au lâche que comme récompense aux vivants (La Guerre de Troie, II, 299).

It should be noted here that regardless of how tragic Giraudoux's plays may be, brutal scenes or descriptions of dramatic opposition are very seldom seen. The author's theater is filled with details and accessories of all kinds, which tends to slow down and vanquish the violent scene which should have taken place. In La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, for instance, the setting is there but no dramatic scene takes place. Chiari notes that Giraudoux was not a psychologist in the manner of Ibsen, neither was his poetic vision such as to take

him, except very rarely, into deep disturbance.³³ Yet Giraudoux was a man who abhorred the chaos of war and its suffering.

Themes from contemporary life. Many of Giraudoux's figures of speech are found in the prosaic details of contemporary life. Some writers may look beyond the realm of the common life for their subjects, but Giraudoux found his wherever he lived and among the people whom he encountered. Again and again he drew upon memories of his childhood to make his metaphors more precise. The provincial landscape and life in the small town of Bellac are often conspicuous in the author's variety of images.

At times Giraudoux seemed to have a mild obsession for one particular feature which he used whenever possible. Water locks and floodgates are brought to mind in almost every one of the author's plays. The gardener tells Electra that he will sleep in the shed from where he will be able to keep an eye on the surroundings, assuring her safety, should it be from a marauding bird or an opened floodgate (Electre, III, 38). Orestes imagines the walls of the palace as protecting water gates (Electre,

³³Joseph Chiari, The Contemporary French Theater (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1959), p. 126.

III, 48). Agisthus compares the gnashing of floodgates to the first cry of a newly-born town: "... et le grincement de ses écluses, son premier cri" (Electre, III, 89). Ecluse sometimes means a period of time or a stage in progressive development:

Mais je sens que ma présence sert toujours d'écluse entre deux instants qui ne sont pas au même niveau, de tampon entre deux épisodes qui se heurtent, entre le bonheur et le malheur, le précis et le trouble, ou inversement (Intermezzo, II, 33).

There, the druggist who has always been used as a go-between for good news and bad news, happiness and unhappiness, thinks of himself as a water-gate. He is like a buffer serving to deaden a shock or bear the brunt of a collision.

Giraudoux's frequent reference to animals of all kinds shows that he must have had a great love for them. The most commonly used in the author's images are the domestic animals which could be seen in rural France at the time of his youth: cats, dogs, cows, horses, etc. There are also many references to wild animals usually found in the woods and meadows of France. Rather noticeable in Giraudoux's writing, however, is the lack of complex images involving animals. Though the author's figures of speech often become complex in plays, images involving animals are simply created out of common everyday observation. Consider, for instance, the description

of a teacher who likes the outdoors: "Un maître ... est plus petit que l'arbre, moins corpulent que le bœuf, moins mobile que l'abeille... (Intermezzo, II, 26).

The actions of old men watching Helen go by are compared to those of storks. "Les voilà qui se penchent tout d'un coup, comme les cigognes quand passe un rat (La Guerre de Troie, II, 261). A simple distraction may cost the hunter his game. "Il suffit d'un lièvre pour le détourner du fourré où est la panthère" (La Guerre de Troie, II, 303). The image used by Giraudoux is often determined by the person who is depicted. Speaking of Orestes' ear, Electra says: "Je te la fait petite, n'est-ce pas, ourlée, diaphane comme l'aile de la chauve-souris" (Electre, III, 45). Actions of persons are frequently explained by reference to dogs. "Et soudain le coup de pied donné par Egisthe au casque (d'Agamemnon) lui apprit tout, comme au mourant le coup de pied donné à son chien" (Electre, III, 197). And in Ondine, pride for her beautiful house and boat is compared to that of a dog for his harness (Ondine, III, 272). In an amusing way Giraudoux muses on the nature of men and cats. Paola says that Lucile's husband is no more dangerous to women than a cat with bells would be to mice (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 254). Large and small animals, all seem to appear at one time or another. Quite frequently

Giraudoux calls upon reptiles to aid in a description. For Jacques, Ruth is an adder (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 28). Lewis accuses Tessa of slipping outside to go look at the moon, moving like an adder (Tessa, II, 131). Long, tressed hair provokes Ondine to say that Bertha has snakes hanging from her head instead of hair (Ondine, III, 308).

Birds are frequently present, more often expressing sentiments of poetic quality. Clytemnestra remembers how well she could sing when she was young, adding: "j'élevais des oiseaux!" (Electre, III, 102). The guard takes pleasure in recalling some of Judith's movements: "cette caresse dont elle a de loin caressé un oiseau de nuit!" (Judith, I, 309). Daring thoughts come to Giraudoux's mind as he views colorful birds. "Jeunes filles nous devons baisser les yeux devant les oiseaux trop colorés," says Isabel, referring to the rigorous rules of her youth (Intermezzo, II, 51). Transfiguration inspires the most pretentious and incongruous bird image, when the author, in times of misunderstanding between the couple, compares the singing of a meadow lark to a thunderstorm: "Et par le gosier de l'alouette c'est le tonnerre de l'implacable qui se déchaîne" (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 29).

Figures of speech about children are very delightful, showing an unpretentious innocence. Afraid like a child, Lucile exclaims: "Je me cramponne à la mort comme un enfant à sa mère" (Pour Lucrece, IV, 272). Aegisthus receives his town "comme une mère son enfant" (Electre, III, 89). At times Giraudoux revealed some of his boyhood memories. Remembering how agilely a boy slides down a tree, bird-nest in hand, he expressed the same gesture for Orestes, "elle (Clytemnestre) va s'incliner en arrière, de façon que le petit Oreste glisse d'elle comme un enfant de l'arbre où il a déniché un nid" (Electre, III, 39).

Men and women are also present in Giraudoux's themes. His men are usually less perfect than his women. Compare the two following images found in Ondine: "Le point de la plus faible femme devient une coque de marbre pour protéger un oiseau vivant" (Ondine, III, 307). "...les hommes. Ce sont des monstres d'égoïsme que la mort d'un oiseau bouleverse" (Ondine, III, 307). Strength and weakness are shown but in a sense inverse to normal belief.

Giraudoux makes allusion to the home and to all the small details attached to daily living. Closing a home for all intruders could not be better described: "Je verrouille cette porte. Je ferme cette fenêtre.

Je baisse ce tablier de cheminée. Je calfeutre hermétiquement cette cloche à plongeurs qu'est une maison humaine (Intermèso, II, 85). Giraudoux's modernity is evident in his allusions to certain pieces of furniture, refrigerators in particular, which were very rare among the average French people, at the time of his writing. Constance sends a telegram to the "président du conseil" to let him know that the representative of the pope does not have a refrigerator (La Folle de Chaillot, IV, 146). Lewis worries about Tessa wanting her own cup because next she will have to have some knives and then a refrigerator (Tessa, II, 197). A reference to food or cooking reveals some of the details of French living: "...ils se beurreraient mutuellement leur tartine..." (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 10). "De la cuisine l'odeur du sarment nous arrive" (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 11). "Tout m'appelle en cette heure chez moi, j'ai à la fois confitures et lessive qui cuisent" (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 243).

Giraudoux was not only a poet but also a humorist. Numerous images give an indication of his love for a good time and a perfect sense of humor. A pair of stockings caught in electric wires and blowing with the wind reminded him of a national holiday (Tessa, II,

117). Such comparisons are amusing and typical of the author's uninhibited fancy.

Nature itself had an attraction for the author. He seemed to take special delight in discussing the picturesque flora and fauna. A painter with a brush could not have done a more beautiful job of depicting the countryside than did Giraudoux with his pen, in the following image:

Tous ces arbres à feuillage, ces prairies à fleurs, ces animaux à courses et à bonds qui ont été donnés à l'homme pour le distraire de son soliloque et de son pêche, et toutes ces voix des ruisseaux à reflets, des oiseaux à couleurs, des métiers, des chars sur les routes... (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 40).

As an image, it is beautiful and complete and definitely an artistic characteristic of Giraudoux's work.

Conclusions. Despite the variety of themes in Giraudoux's figures of speech, some themes are almost never used by the author. Music, dance, and literature seldom figure as terms in images.

The themes of the figures of speech show certain basic characteristics of the author's work. But those mentioned are only a part of the great variety used by Giraudoux. His memory and recollection of experiences were unequalled. His images were piled high and jumbled like letters in a bowl of alphabet soup.

Studying Giraudoux's themes makes one increasingly aware of many qualities which further help describe the author. While the major theme of a play may be the gods, love, or war, prosaic themes are ever present, mixing the psychological with the subconscious recollection of humble things. Giraudoux was a poet, to be sure, but he was also an enjoyable humorist who knew how to spice his writing to prevent poetic banalities. If, at times, his figures of speech make him difficult reading, it can be said that his images are generally built upon common knowledge and experiences and facilitate the reader's understanding.

The next chapter will discuss the form and mechanics of Giraudoux's figures of speech and may help further to understand them.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORM IN THE FIGURES OF SPEECH OF GIRAUDOUX

The world for Jean Giraudoux was like a picture book, with each picture bringing to mind another in an endless procession. These pictures provided him, as a writer, with an unusual way of expressing himself, to either the confusion or the delight of his readers.

Behind the puzzling aspects of Giraudoux's imagery it is possible, however, to detect a consistent method and a rather small number of stylistic devices.

Composition. To begin the study of form of Giraudoux's figures of speech, it would be well to look at the technique of his composition. One should know how he wrote in order to determine how he created his images and the form they were likely to take. Although it may appear unnecessary to categorize the images of a writer as spontaneous as Giraudoux, a knowledge of his method may help to understand him better and also contribute to the removal of a label which has always accompanied his work, that of auteur difficile. Pucciani admits that "Giraudoux's language can be a source of real difficulty to one who is not accustomed to his recherche

of verbal effects, to his exploitation of the intrinsic power of words to convey drama."³⁴

The most logical idea which seems to have guided Giraudoux's pen is that of free association. His writing was spontaneous; one can almost see how his thought patterns took form. Often Giraudoux began a long paragraph with a phrase which explained completely what he had in mind. The author, however, was not satisfied and went on, adding to that theme nothing but just embroidery:

L'amour était sur Aix avec ses privilèges, la confiance des maris, la coéité des mères, avec ces orages des mois calmes, de juin, de septembre, qui apportent le pathétique aux lieux passiones. Chaque petite joie de la vie, du serbet à la danse, prenait à Aix valeur de volupté, car elle s'accordait à l'amour. La passion vivait chez nous à l'état endémique et personne n'y trouvait rien à dire. On laissait la peste à Marseille, et ici s'était l'amour. L'amour entre inconnus. L'amour familiers. Un homme et une femme qui s'étaient vus dix ans sans quoi se prenaient un beau jour l'un pour l'autre d'un délire inextinguible. Personne n'avait l'assurance de ne pas brûler un jour devant l'être qui lui était le plus indifférent. Quelles appréhensions! Quelles délices!... C'est alors que tu es venue, toi avec ton procureur de mari, Lucile et Liemel! (Peur Lucrece, IV, 229).

To show that love was in Aix and people were happy until Lucile and Liemel came there, Giraudoux wrote an unnecessarily long paragraph which lacked conventional construction.

³⁴Rusciani, op. cit., p. 92.

The author appears to have had no preconception of where his pen would lead him. Each sentence seems born from the preceding. But within such a paragraph construction one can detect a musical character probably because each expressed idea has a counterpart idea.

Giraudoux's composition can best be described by the following quotation: "Je prends une feuille blanche et je commence à écrire. Ce que j'écris correspond à un thème général, mais avant d'avoir tracé le premier mot, j'ignore ce que ce sera."³⁵ Improvisation is the author's basic method of composition. Giraudoux's improvisation makes full use of figures of speech, bringing curious and interesting analogies.

Giraudoux's figures of speech may be arbitrarily classified by their form as (1) pure and (2) mixed.

1. Pure figures. The following image is used by Giraudoux to describe the wrath of God:

Une scène avec dents et griffes, une crête hérissée jusqu'au plafond, et les apostrophes de supplice, de plomb fondu, et de damnation; et des coups d'aile à tuer un chevreuil (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 14).

In this complex image, one notices that each observation is in itself a complete but curious comparison to the wrath of God.

³⁵LeSage, op. cit., p. 169.

2. Mixed figures. This type of figure is often used within a paragraph, forming a cluster of images which normally start from a literal suggestion but develop with the author's fancy. Once the point is made, the narrative may continue in a straight line of plain statements completely deviating from the main idea, with crisscrossing patterns which leave the reader in a daze. In the following paragraph Armand tries to explain that Marcellus is not a coward but simply vain:

Vous l'entendez, Madame, cet homme n'est pas lâche. Il est vaniteux; d'une petite vanité; son sang circule en lui sans cœur, toujours veineux. Je l'ai vu au bain; il a l'orteil du dernier de la classe. Mais il n'est pas lâche. Il sait sa force au pistolet, où lui est passable. Il a une mère, qui est digne. Il a une gouvernante qui l'aime, il a des chiens qui l'idolâtre. Il a la seule collection de vaisselle en argent de Louis XIII, et qui se vendra à sa mort (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 278).

The first part of the paragraph, in a preciousness-like subtlety, leads to a clear understanding of Marcellus' vanity. The thought is later amplified when Armand reminds Lucile that he is far superior in a gun duel than Marcellus. But Giraudoux did not stop there, for Marcellus' vanity was further illustrated by a comic exaggeration and amusing images describing the reasons that should make him want to live rather than to accept a duel which he is likely to lose.

Punctuation. The pattern of the sentence in the preceding quotation is also characteristic of Giraudoux's method of punctuation. A simple and sometimes banal observation ends in a colon or semi-colon; what follows is usually an illustration, for example: "Il est vaniteux; d'une petite vanité; son sang circule en lui sans coup,...". Then images follow. Here is another good example:

J'ai besoin d'un ami qui me dise ce qu'on leur disait: que le devoir est le devoir, que la vie est courte, toutes ces verités qui auraient été brodées, dans ce pays, sur les coussins de Secrate ou de Danton... (Siegfried, I, 34).

Geneviève who is supposed to reveal to Siegfried that he is not Siegfried but Jacques Forestier, suddenly feels like a murderess and asks for moral support. She wants to be told that it is her duty to do this, like Judith who killed Holofernes and Charlotte Corday who killed Marat.

On a careless syntax joined by commas, colons, and dashes, images are sometimes strung indefinitely to the point of making the reader weary. The controlleur describes Isabel's room endlessly, observing one thing after another in a movie-like manner:

Je suis seul avec ces meubles et ces objets qui déjà m'ont fait tant de signes par la fenêtre ouverte, ce secrétaire qui reprend ici son nom, qui représente pour moi l'essence du secret, -- le pied droit est refait mais le coffre est bien intact -- cette gravure de Rousseau à Ermenonville -- tu as mis tes enfants à l'Assistance publique, décevant Helvété, mais à

moi tu souris -- et ce porte-liqueurs où l'eau de coing impatiente attend l'heure du dimanche qui la portera à ses lèvres...Du vrai Baccarat...Du vrai éping... Car tout est vrai, chez elle, et sans mélange (Intermezzo, II, 79).

These movie-like images follow one another so quickly that they blur and confuse the theme the reader is trying to extract from such a paragraph. Giraudoux indulges freely in such figures of speech, yet most of the time the effect is successful. An example of a tiring and somewhat blurring paragraph describing the perfectness of the world and its vulnerability to death is:

Au zénith de l'invention et du talent, dans l'ivresse de l'illustration de la vie et de l'exploitation du monde, alors que l'armée est belle et neuve, les caves pleines, les théâtres sonnants, et que dans les teintureriers on découvre la pourpre ou le blanc pur, et dans les mines le diamant, et dans les cellules l'atome, et que de l'air on fait des symphonies, des mers de la santé, et que mille systèmes ont été trouvés pour protéger les piétons contre les voitures, et les remèdes au froid et à la nuit et à la laideur, alors que toutes les alliances protègent contre la guerre toutes les assurances et poisons contre la maladie des vignes et les insectes, alors que le grêlon qui tombe est prévu par les lois, et annulé, soudain en quelques heures un mal attaque ce corps sain entre les sains, heureux entre les bienheureux. C'est le mal des empires... Il est mortel... (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 7, 8).

Images of the world: army, caves, theaters, mines, etc. succeed one another so quickly that the reader feels like pausing to take breath before getting to the end.

Lyricism. It should be noticed that at times Giraudoux seems carried away by a wave of lyricism. It may be on the subject of the beauty of nature or on love, as in the following:

O chéri, le jour approche, et je t'ai eu une heure à peine, et combien de temps encore va-t-il consentir à croire que je suis semnambule... (Electre, III, 66).

Likewise some images have a charm due to the lulling quality of the words. Ecclissé sees a bee enter Alcmena's room and believes that it is Jupiter. She begs Alcmena to let the bee sting her, which is Jupiter's way of showing his affection for her. "O piquêre bien-aimée! Laisse-toi piquer, ô maîtresse! Laisse-la se poser sur ta joue" (Amphitryon 38, I, 173).

Poetic effusions, however, are rarely sustained by the author. He seemed to enjoy showing his poetic ability; but, in the middle of it, as if caught in some misdoings, he brings in critical or intellectual elements and cuts short the extravagances of the poet. The result is irony, the most powerful weapon against sentimentality. Sosie in Amphitryon 38 makes some beautiful remarks about the well-being of a world at peace but closes by saying that there is nothing more beautiful than the naked body of man, sleeping on his back, arms opened

with only his navel to weigh him down. The quotation follows:

Il est bon de dormir sur une patrie que n'éventrent point les tranchées de la guerre, sur des lois qui ne sont pas menacées, au milieu d'oiseaux, de chiens, de chats, de rats qui ne connaissent pas le goût de la chair humaine. Il est bon de porter son visage national, non pas comme un masque à effrayer ceux qui n'ont pas le même teint et le même poil, mais comme l'ovale le mieux fait pour exposer le rire et le sourire. Il est bon, au lieu de reprendre l'échelle des assauts, de monter vers le sommeil par l'escabeau des déjeuners, des dîners, des soupers, de pouvoir entretenir en soi sans scrupule la tendre guerre civile des ressentiments, des affections des rêves!... Dormes! Quelle plus belle panoplie que vos corps sans armes et tout nus étendus sur le dos, bras écartés, chargés uniquement de leur nombril... (Amphitryon 36, I, 132).

The poetic and the unpoetic are side by side, transforming what seem to be lyrical images into mocking whimsy.

But very poetic and beautiful images can also be found:

"Regarde cette oreille, père, c'est un coquillage!"

(Ondine, III, 257). "...par l'entaille du pin résinier s'écoulent les pleurs de la fin du monde" (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 29).

Comparisons. Laurent LeSage remarked that Giraudoux's comparisons in his novels are often created by balanced sentences, the two parts being connected by ainsi que and comme forming a sort of equation.³⁶

³⁶LeSage, op. cit., p. 180.

However, for his plays Giraudoux seems to have favored the comparison with c'est. "Le tempérament c'est le vinaigre dans la salade, une cuillerée suffit" (Tessa, II, 120). "L'homme qui découvre la faiblesse dans une femme, c'est le chasseur à midi qui découvre une source" (La Guerre de Troie, II, 277). Lewis says of Tessa: "Celle -là, c'est la fleur du bouquet, malgré les apparences" (Tessa, II, 108). The Folle de Chaillot regrets that some people should commit suicide because "Un suicidé, c'est un soldat de moins, un contribuable de moins" (La Folle de Chaillot, IV, 113). Sometimes the comparison is a very subtle one, exposing the author's brilliant mind and vivid imagination: "Quelle lèpre que la défaite sur un uniforme! c'est l'été dans un poil de bête" (Judith, I, 239). The effect of defeat on a soldier is like leprosy; it affects him adversely like hot summer days do the fur of animals.

Preposterous exaggerations in comparisons are also present, as in the following image where Zelten refuses to impose Siegfried's constitution upon the German people, adding: "c'est faire avaler un réveille-matin au dragon de Siegfried, du vrai, pour lui apprendre à savoir l'heure" (Siegfried, I, 10). To say that the teaching of a new constitution to Germany would be as inconceivable as trying to make it swallow an alarm

clock to teach it to tell time, is an extravagant exaggeration. This fondness for superlatives indicates, according to Jean-Paul Sartre, Giraudoux's Aristotelianism.³⁷

Emile Bouvier sees it as a fresh spontaneity on the author's part who felt a need, a thirst, "de rompre à tout prix la langue de la littérature antérieure."³⁸

Language. Language was of utmost importance for the author. Language as a means of communication is to be distinguished from language as an art. Giraudoux's work is one of the best illustrations among French writers of language as an art. Everyday language is, of course, composed of beautiful words and poetic possibilities, of which most of us are not aware. We have grown accustomed to them like we grow accustomed to some of the more beautiful sights of nature. But for as gifted a writer as Giraudoux, a word is always something new, a unique experience, a wealth of imagery.

A new and striking image may be created through the literal interpretation of a single word. One may speak of a frown or the raising of an eyebrow as a meaningful facial interpretation. Thus, Giraudoux describes

³⁷Cited by LeSage, op. cit., p. 178.

³⁸Emile Bouvier, Initiation à la Littérature d'aujourd'hui (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1932), p. 241.

Clytemnestra: "Son cadavre d'avance l'a trahie. Son sourcil était le sourcil d'une femme morte qui a eu un amant" (Electre, III, 71).

The word vêtements, although used in its literal sense, gives a delightful quality to a certain metaphor. Paris, referring to Helen's capture, says of Menelaus, her husband, who was by the sea, naked: "Il a regardé filer mon canot comme si le vent emportait ses vêtements" (La Guerre de Troie, II, 259). At first glance, Giraudoux's language may appear odd and utterly unfit but, like new food, if it is well prepared, one soon learns to love it.

Clichés. Not all of Giraudoux's images and expressions are the result of his poetic mind. Some are clichés, heard from every walk of life but when the author makes use of them they have an air of newness, not because the brilliant poet has polished them, but because he makes them fit into another world, that of Giraudoux.

A heavy downpour was described by the well known: "Dehors il fait un temps de chien" (Tessa, II, 214). Of an unhappy person who left her living quarters Giraudoux said: "Nous avons levé le pied, et nous voilà" (Tessa, II, 174). To be stubborn is "être entêté comme la lune," as says Eugénie of Auguste (Ondine, III, 256). "Vaniteux comme des pintades" was used by le chevalier, referring

to men in general (Ondine, III, 260). Typically French is the following one by Constance: "Ne jouez pas la sainte Nitouche, Gabrielle" (La Folle de Chaillot, IV, 138). This familiar expression describes a person who feigns to be other and better than he is. Surprisingly vulgar for Giraudoux, but fitting the situation quite well is this remark from Constance: "Il m'engueule, comme dirait Gabrielle" (La Folle de Chaillot, IV, 145). If Giraudoux was a dedicated précieux, as some critics like to imply, the use of such common expressions would seem to contradict them.

Key words or expressions. A study of the more difficult passages in the author's plays appears to reveal that the key to understanding such passages may be found in a perfectly simple word or trite expression. The author took great delight in skipping back and forth between the literal and the figurative sense of a word. Frequently the result is a blurred mixed image, but once the key word or phrase is found the image becomes clear and understandable. For instance, écluse is the key word in

Laisse-moi dans tes bras imaginer de quel bonheur ces murs auraient pu être l'écluse, avec des êtres plus sensés et plus calmes, O Electre, que de noms dans notre famille étaient au départ doux, tendres, et devaient être des noms de bonheur! (Electre, III, 48).

Orestes believes that if the walls of the palace had been écluses, opening and closing as necessary in order to let the people within the palace lead the ordinary life of a kingdom, happiness at the palace would have been normal.

Ruth says:

Tu compares les hommes. Ils portent devant eux leur vie étalée comme une pancarte, mais sous la plus astiquée et la plus franche on sent des réserves et des ruses qui courent comme des rats. On voit la queue de l'un, l'œil de l'autre. Cela clique, cela remue, et puis c'est le silence (Sédens et Gomorrhe, IV, 21).

The word étalé, used in a figurative sense, is the key word. The image conceived by the author is that men give the impression of living a clean life, in the open for every one to see; however, even the best of them are far from being pure.

The difficulty in the following figure of speech comes from the play on the last expression. "Il suffit d'une femme de sens pour que la folie du monde sur elle casse ses dents" (La Folie de Chaillet, IV, 179). Here Giraudoux used a figurative expression to say that all the world needs is a strong woman to straighten it out.

The improper coupling of words belonging to different categories is further evidence of Giraudoux's wit. Often the literal and figurative are so linked that they create a false image difficult for the reader to understand.

As an answer to: "Et la vie, qu'est-ce que c'est?", Geneviève says: "une aventure douteuse pour les vivants, rien que d'agréable pour les morts" (Siegfried, I, 39). In the first figure of speech, life is used in the natural sense, the second is figurative and somewhat bewildering as an answer to what life is.

Sometimes Giraudoux will apply a verb to a subject completely foreign to it, as in: "Tu prends devant elle l'œil de celle qui va copier un chapeau ou scruter une robe" (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 262). The verb, prendre, is bold but it shows the venturesome spirit of the author.

Word games of this sort make a reader wonder if Giraudoux did not at times premeditate his work. Joseph Chiari, however, states that Giraudoux's works stress the creative act itself and reveal the absence of a conceptualized approach,³⁹ recalling the words of the author himself: "...je prends une feuille blanche et je commence à écrire; les personnages naissent au fur et à mesure; au bout de cinq ou six pages, j'y vois clair."⁴⁰ According to the above statement, one would think that Giraudoux was a writer who started with one word and ended up with a novel or a play. No doubt Giraudoux was a creative and gifted writer, but it is

³⁹Chiari, op. cit., p. 113.

⁴⁰Ibid.

difficult to believe he would have written without pre-conceived themes.

False metaphor. Another high-handed technique in Giraudoux's figures of speech is the false metaphor. As the author plays with words and ideas, sometimes the combined images are a shock to the reader who is preoccupied with meanings. Siegfried, who compares his grief to "ces exercices funèbres," adds: "...vous tendez poliment je ne sais quel filet de tristesse. Je m'y laisse rebondir" (Siegfried, I, 40). Here the reader's thought jumps from funeral to circus, for no one is likely to see a net stretched out with someone bouncing on it at a funeral. Giraudoux's facility in creativity accounts for such figures of speech. "Giraudoux had a poetic mind and he had a good measure of what Coleridge described as fancy."⁴¹

Giraudoux's spontaneity and memory must account for another type of image, the simple comparison where his mind seems to work like a reflex: one thing is immediately associated with something else. This sentence pattern is the verb, plus comme and an obvious comparison: "Ils se sont étendus sur le flanc, comme des humains"

⁴¹Chiari, op. cit., p. 113.

(Amphitryon 38, I, 133). "Je peux donner l'oubli, comme l'opium" (Amphitryon 38, I, 216). "...ces corps pleins comme un sac" (Judith, I, 271). A jealous husband is like a tiger (Pour Lucrèce, IV, 253). Trees have white rings like mushrooms (La Guerre de Troie, II, 318). This type of metaphor, however, is not frequent in Giraudoux's plays; it is more like a reminder of his earlier endeavors.

Balance. The equational figure is a favorite method of expressing a significant thought for the author. Egon asks Judith if she does not think that, as people are able to recognize wisdom in sentences and sayings, they are also able to sense the importance of good soldiers above the importance of a good battle:

ne crois-tu pas que l'imagination simple des peuples de même qu'elle sait isoler la sagesse en phrases et en dictons, sait isoler aussi, au-dessus des grandes luttes, les vrais combattants? (Judith, I, 271).

Geneviève does not think a name or a surname, a rank, or even a title is very meaningful:

Leurs nom, prénom, surnom, aussi bien que leurs grades et titres, ce sont des étiquettes si factices, si passagères, et qui les révèlent si peu, même à eux-mêmes! (Siegfried, I, 39).

Both quotations above have a form of balance. In the first one Giraudoux explains that if people are able to recognize wisdom they also know real greatness and

true values. The second one balances out name and rank, either one is as meaningless as a tag with a number on it; it reveals so little of the content.

Repetitions. An extremely noticeable form of style in Giraudoux's plays is that he frequently repeats himself, as in the following paragraph:

Je vous vois enfant, jouant à la corde. Je vous vois jeune fille, lisant auprès de votre lampe. Je vous vois au bord d'un étang, avec un reflet tranquille.... Je vous vois jeune femme priant sur la tombe de votre fiancée... (Siegfried, I, 41).

The emphasis here is not boring but rather striking.

Sometimes the repetition takes a significant form of balance. The archangel expresses his feelings about the end of the world thus:

Cette nature indivise, ces admirations et ces dégouts indivis, jusqu'à ces animaux indivis, ils se les répartissent. Plaisirs, souvenirs, objets prennent un sexe, et il n'y a plus de plaisirs communs, de mémoire commune, de fleurs communes. Le mal a un sexe. Cela vaut la fin du monde (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 10).

In this case, as Giraudoux made a definite game of the words indivis and commune, there is a sense of rhythm as well as equation.

Another fanciful form of repetition and balance frequently appears with a third device, that of contrast. An outstanding example comes from Irma, when she describes herself thus:

Je déteste ce qui est laid, j'adore ce qui est beau. Je suis de Fursac, dans la Creuse. Je déteste les méchants, j'adore la bonté. Mon père était maréchal ferrant, au croisement des routes. Je déteste Boussac (a small town in the Creuse) j'adore Bourgneuf (in the Creuse also, but a little larger than Boussac). Il disait que ma tête est plus dure que son enclume, . . . Je déteste le soir, j'adore le matin. Je déteste le diable, j'adore Dieu (La Folle de Chaillot, IV, 130).

The entire description covers more than a page; a length not uncommon for Giraudoux.

One more form of repetition which needs to be mentioned is the simile itself. As new images are created, the old ones always seem to come back, sometimes in an identical form, sometimes slightly altered. Notice the following example referring to the death of the bee after it has stung. "Mais tu es désarmé après chaque mort d'ennemi comme l'abeille après sa piqûre!" (Amphitryon 38, I, 139). "Tu attendis enfantinement la mort sans bouger, comme l'abeille après sa piqûre" (Judith, I, 311). The health officer reminds the prospector: "L'abeille meurt de sa piqûre. Les droguistes s'engraissent de leur drogue" (La Folle de Chaillot, IV, 109).

A reference to two bodies attached to one another is frequent. The angel explains the creation of man by God: "Il a créé deux corps jumeaux unis par des lanières de chair" (Sodome et Gomorrhe, IV, 66). The sisters Mangebois were well known because they sponsored

the operation of Siamese twins, "elles ont fait trancher la membrane de deux sœurs siamoises" (Intermède, II, 16). Ondine wishes to be bound to Hans the rest of her life: "Je connais quelqu'un qui pourrait nous unir pour toujours... qui ferait que nous serions soudés l'un à l'autre comme le sont certains jumeaux..." (Ondine, III, 280).

Axioms. Even though the author is not a moralist, his axioms recall thinkers like Pascal, La Bruyère, or La Rochefoucauld. Referring to the idea that Electre, as the wife of a gardener, would be easier to kill than as a princess, Giraudoux says: "On enterre beaucoup plus vite dans du terreau que dans du marbre" (Electre, III, 29). The struggle of man on earth is part of his desires: "Plus on souffre, plus on est heureux" (Ondine, III, 347). In La Folle de Chaillet, Aurélie, one of the mad women, exclaims: "L'argent est bien le mal du monde!" (La Folle de Chaillet, IV, 163). This strongly supports the theme of the play. Truly depicting Giraudoux's wit and humor is Tessa's retort to Paulina who notices that she is no longer crying: "Les larmes s'arrêtent toujours dès qu'on leur a trouvé une utilité" (Tessa, II, 154). No matter how one reads Giraudoux, it is impossible to remain insensible to his talent.

Giraudoux's awareness of metaphor. It is interesting to know that Giraudoux himself makes fun of his excessive use of figures of speech. Judith, hearing the voice of her own people chanting her praises, says to Holophernes: "Je connais par coeur ce cantique. Ils me détaillent par métaphores" (Judith, I, 277). Siegfried, tired of listening to Zelten, bursts out: "Epargnez-nous les métaphores. Parlez" (Siegfried, I, 60).

Summary. Giraudoux's figures of speech can be described as using a spontaneous style, a style free of preconceived ideas. Composition, in the ordinary sense of the word, is lacking. Giraudoux developed his own pattern and way of writing with figures of speech natural to his mind and sensibility. Unless the reader follows the author's action from the beginning, he may find himself completely lost at the end of an image, for Giraudoux thinks nothing of adding images completely out of context, once his statement is made. Figures of speech are not preconceived but appear to evolve from the theme. Ideas involved in images are controlled by imagination, perception, and fancy. The author makes copious use of colons and dashes to amplify his style. Images are sometimes strung indefinitely within one sentence. Imaginative figures are characterized by

lyricism, which usually ends in ironical images. Comparisons are often made by using the expression, e'est. The author's unique use of words is the key to many delightful figures of speech. Even old, over-used clichés and common expressions seem to find a place in his works. Vulgarity is also used, but sparingly, like a strong spice. Frequently, images are based on a key word used in the figurative sense. A number of figures of speech give a false image because the author mixes words of different categories. A small number of metaphors are eye-catching only; because of their spontaneity they seem to work like a reflex. The explanatory and descriptive figure takes on a pattern of balance. Descriptions can be lengthy. Repetitions at times become banal and tiresome, but the author was aware of his mania and was the first to make fun of it. Axioms are frequently used which remind us of our great thinkers.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I. SUMMARY

The preface of this study presented a short review of Giraudoux as an author, and the problem and the selection of the plays were analyzed. It also oriented the reader to the specific content of each chapter.

The purpose was to explore the figures of speech in Jean Giraudoux's plays in terms of sensory contents, themes, and the forms used by the author in an effort to discover some of the difficulties in understanding, caused by such images.

The first chapter of this report presented the life and orientation of Jean Giraudoux. The scope of his literary works was explored for an over-all view of his inclination toward figures of speech.

Chapter II investigated the sensory content of figures of speech in the selected plays. Aural, visual, olfactory, tactile and gustatory images were studied.

The third chapter concentrated upon the themes used in the figures of speech. The themes studied were the major themes of Giraudoux: love, the gods, war,

and a small number taken from the contemporary life. Although the author used a great variety of themes, this study was limited to a general survey.

Chapter IV presented the forms and a number of the stylistic devices used by the author, in order to detect possible formation of habits in the figures of speech, which might help to better understand them.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The object of this thesis was to provide an overall perspective of Giraudoux's figures of speech.

The conclusions are as follows:

1. Giraudoux used figures of speech as his most important accessory in writing, exceeding what writers of his time accepted as a normal usage of images. As one of the most distinguished representatives of the romantic revolution in the art of writing, Giraudoux has been the subject of constant discussions, studies, and critiques. While critics cannot agree on the greatness of his style and whether he should be classified as précieux or not, they all agree, however, that his images represent a free association of ideas. Giraudoux's works were undoubtedly not completely preconceived but written as they came to his mind. While we may wonder why the author abandoned the conventional literary forms

of his time to develop a complex style of his own, it is well to remember that twentieth-century writers believe that art is the basis of good writing, and Giraudoux was an artist. Above all, he was an individualist, not a copyist.

Giraudoux criticized the idea that art should be a copy of nature and denounced such famous romantics as Victor Hugo. The art of writing was for Giraudoux, not political or moral guidance, but sensitivity and vocabulary. These, Giraudoux had to the utmost.

2. Giraudoux's figures of speech are subtle and sometimes very complex. Visual imagery is definitely the most common. Color is used more as a symbol than for descriptions. Even nature, which the author may describe at length, brings in very little color.

3. The themes are prosaic. Giraudoux usually built upon common knowledge of everyday experiences. This facilitates, to a certain point, the understanding of the author's complex imagery.

4. True composition, as established by grammarians, is lacking. The author used humorous devices to entertain the reader as well as to divert him from distasteful subjects. Reading devices, such as the finding of a key word within an image, can be developed to assist the reader in the comprehension of complex and blurry images.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several implications for future research were uncovered by this study. Those that have tempted the writer are as follows:

1. The possible revelation a key word or phrase may have as a means of understanding a figure of speech.

2. The development of images within a paragraph. Do figures of speech have an affinity or are they at times simply recorded one after another with an artificial connection?

3. The comparison of Giraudoux's figures of speech in his novels with those of his plays. A definite change in structure of images seems to have taken place between the period of the novels and the period of play writing.

In the course of this study, the writer felt that the figures of speech in Giraudoux's works became more subtle and less frequent in his later plays. Of this gradual change in style, it might be said that Giraudoux's writing became perfected by time.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE PLAYS OF JEAN GIRAUDOUX

Siegfried (1928)

Amphitryon 38 (1929)

Judith (1931)

Intermezzo (1933)

Tessa (1934)

La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu (1935)

Supplément au Voyage de Cook (1935)

Electre (1937)

Cantique des Cantiques (1938)

Ondine (1939)

Sodome et Gomorrhe (1943)

La Folle de Chaillot (1945)

L'Apollon de Bellac (1947)

Pour Lucrèce (1953)

*Dates given here refer to the year when the plays were first staged in Paris.