

THE USE OF MYTHOLOGY IN THE DRAMATIC WORKS
OF JEAN GIRAUDOUX

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Yvonne Baldwin
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Minnie M. Miller
Approved for the Major Department

James A. C. Bryan
Approved for the Graduate Council

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PREFACE

There is a certain charm about ancient Greece and Rome; there is glory in the history; and there is fascination and beauty in the literature and art. Great are the stories of the gods and the myths of old. Poets and story tellers of all nations use myths for many purposes. They retell them in prose and in verse, in their own language, and in their own way. They may not believe, as perhaps the story tellers of old did, in the tales they tell; but these myths furnish material for their fancy. Jean Giraudoux, having been acquainted with mythology since early childhood, took from the treasures of Greek and Roman mythology subjects for several of his dramatic works.

This thesis has been written to show how Giraudoux used the ancient myths and the gods to tell his own stories the way he wanted to tell them. An analysis of the major plays of Giraudoux has been made in order to present his version of the myths and in order to compare how Giraudoux's version differs from the actual myths themselves. Since all of Giraudoux's works do not deal with myths, the study has been limited to the following plays listed in chronological order: Amphitryon 38, Tessa, La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Supplément au Voyage de Cook, Electre, L'Impromptu de Paris, Cantique des Cantiques, Ondine, L'Apollon de Ballac, and Pour Inçrèce.

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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Hippolyte-Jean Giraudoux was born into a lower middle-class family of Bellac in the old province of Limousin on October 29, 1882. Little is known of his family except that his father was an engineer in the public service, and that his mother died while he was quite young. Because his father's work required the family to move often, Giraudoux attended a primary school in the village of Pellevoisin; then in 1893 he was sent to the Lycée of Châteauroux and boarded there for seven years. At the Lycée he received the education "which moulded his mind in the way it was to remain for the rest of his life."¹ Later, he attended the Lycée Lakanal in Paris and, in 1903, he entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure, which was the training ground for France's future intellectual leaders. Here he was both a brilliant pupil and a leader. He received an increasing number of scholarly honors especially in French, Latin, Greek, and history. Giraudoux recognized himself as a superior student and applied himself diligently to maintain this standard. He stood first in his class in every subject, for he displayed a keen and brilliant intelligence and worked with a zeal and enthusiasm which far exceeded all requirements.² He seemed to be destined for an academic career; but, when the time came for him to decide finally

¹George Lenaitre, Four French Novelists (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 212.

²Laurent Lesage, Jean Giraudoux, His Life and Works (Pennsylvania State University: Himes Printing Co., 1959), p. 10.

whether he would enter on a university career or not, he chose, instead, to take what the world might offer him.

After graduating from the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in 1905 with highest honors, he explored the world for five years as a fervent globe-trotter. Sometimes he had employment; sometimes he was entrusted with an official mission; generally he went without much money, but he always trusted his luck which often brought him picturesque adventure.³ During this time of travel, he became the tutor of a German prince, did newspaper work as a roving correspondent for the French paper *Figaro*, and sent in short stories to French literary magazines. In the course of his peregrinations, he visited hurriedly the greater part of Europe (Germany, Holland, Norway, Austria, Italy, the Balkans); he even took a short trip to the United States to become a member of the Harvard University staff from 1906 to 1907 and also visited Canada, Mexico, and the Azores. Of all the countries he saw, Germany had the most decisive influence upon him. He became fascinated by the problem of Germany and France, and later wrote eloquently of it in *Siegfried et le Limousin* (1922).⁴

His early life was by turns brilliant, aimless, and adventurous. However, the years were passing, and Giraudoux could not continue indefinitely leading this enjoyable but decidedly erratic existence. It was time to settle down. Yet he both wanted to go on traveling and at the same time

³Lemaître, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁴Oreste F. Pucciani (ed.) *The French Theater Since 1930* (New York: Ginn and Co., 1954), preface, p. 35. Later, when reference is made to the plays by Giraudoux in this book, each will be referred to by name, author, and page in parenthesis in the body of the thesis.

to retain a foothold in Paris. Fortunately, he was able to hold together these diverging aspirations through the prospect of a diplomatic career.

In 1910 he was appointed élève vice-consul in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When not abroad on more or less important diplomatic missions to Russia and the Orient, he remained in Paris, working in the office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵ As an army officer during World War I, he received the Legion of Honor for his courage on the battle-front of Alsace, the Marne, and the Dardanelles. He was given a mission to the United States where he served as instructor for American troops trained in Harvard University, and it is this period which is responsible for Amica America, a book of clever sketches of America and the Americans whom he knew so well.⁶ After World War I Giraudoux was appointed head of the section for Cultural Relations with other countries, and he remained in that position until 1924 when he spent a brief period of service at the French Embassy in Berlin. Upon his return to France, he was appointed chief of the Information and Press Services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1936 he was appointed Inspecteur des postes diplomatiques et consulaires. He remained in this post until 1939 when he served in the French government as chief of propaganda and censorship; however, he was criticized because many people felt he held back information concerning the status of the French army during the war.⁷ In 1940 he refused an appointment as

⁵Lemaitre, op. cit., p. 219.

⁶François Denoeu, Sonnets littéraires français (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1957), p. 483.

⁷Lemaitre, op. cit., p. 223.

Ambassador in Athens which the Vichy government offered him, and for the remainder of his life he had scarcely any official function to perform. Giraudoux had ably served his country as a career diplomat for three decades.⁸

While working in the service of the government, Giraudoux wrote novels and plays. Although his novels are good, his plays are superior to them and, as a dramatist, his prestige was equalled by none. He began his literary career as a writer of poems in prose, in a great variety of forms, both lyric and humorous.⁹ His literary career may be divided into two parts: autobiographical and theatrical. The autobiographical nature of Giraudoux's books is apparent, particularly of his first ones. Through them one can trace the reflections of his childhood and adolescence, his war experiences, and the beginnings of his diplomatic career. He himself is directly or indirectly the subject of his writings. A comparison of the central figures of his novels with certain characters in his plays indicates clearly enough that they are projections of the author's hopes, fears, and especially his dreams.¹⁰ Even in his drama the characters are something like himself, and those who differ from him are mere "cardboard effigies."¹¹ It was one of his amusing characteristics to give names well-known to him,

⁸Donald Inskip, Jean Giraudoux, The Making of a Dramatist (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 110.

⁹Pierre de Racourt and J. W. Cunliffe, French Literature During the Last Half-Century (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 483.

¹⁰Inskip, op. cit., p. 42.

¹¹Lamaitre, op. cit., p. 233.

his own or those of his friends, to characters in his books and plays. Of Giraudoux one may say: "Le style est l'homme même."¹² Of Giraudoux's later works of fiction and his plays, Lesage says: "the personal aspects of his life are less direct; for symbolism and other literary devices transmit his message, and his works acquire a greater depth in contemplating man in his true nature and his destiny."¹³

Giraudoux first published a novel, L'Ecole des indifférents (1911), then Provinciales (1913). In Provinciales, he wrote of Bellac, the place where he was born and loved so well. Lesage says of Giraudoux: "No poet lavished more lyricism and eloquence upon the place of his birth than Giraudoux who ascribed to Bellac every idyllic virtue and made of it a fitting place for genius to be born."¹⁴ Giraudoux said that the provinces were his link with humanity. For him, "Bellac est bien la plus belle ville du monde."¹⁵ Throughout his works he never tired of expatiating upon the quaint charm of his native Limousin. Both town and province strongly influenced his development and left their indelible stamp upon him.

People already admired the author of L'Ecole des Indifférents and Provinciales. From the war in Alsace and his mission to America, he brought back Retour d'Alsace (1917), which can be found in Lectures pour

¹²Joseph Chiari, The Contemporary French Theater (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959), p. 139.

¹³Lesage, op. cit., p. 153.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁵Lemaître, op. cit., p. 210.

une ombre (1917), and Amica America (1919). Then came his most characteristic works: Elphéor and L'Odyssée (1919), Simon le Pathétique (1920), Adorable Clie (1920), Suzanne et le Pacifique (1921), Siegfried et le Limousin (1922), Juliette au pays des hommes (1924), Bella (1926), Eclantine (1927), De pleins pouvoirs à sans pouvoirs (1939), La Française et la France (1951), and Les Contes d'un Matin (1953).¹⁶ The last two works were published after his death.

Hardly realizing it, Giraudoux had begun another career. From novelist and statesman he became one of the leaders in the renaissance of the French theater which took place during the 30's (Pucciani, preface, p. 86). Up to this time he had been regarded as a subtle humorist, a writer of delicate fantasies, an imaginative poet. His poetic style with its striking imagery and slight concern over plot seemed unsuited to the drama. Yet, in 1928 Giraudoux emerged, quite unexpectedly, as one of the leading French playwrights of his day with a dramatized version of Siegfried et le Limousin, the book which had first brought him recognition and the Grand Prix Balzac in 1922. Overnight it was revealed that Giraudoux possessed an instinct for the theater that almost nobody had suspected in him. Siegfried marked a turning point in his career and in the French theater. After Siegfried he continued writing intricate novels and stories such as Aventures de Jérôme Bardin (1930), La France Sentimentale (1932), Combat avec l'Ange (1934), Choix des Elues (1938), and Les Contes d'un Matin

¹⁶Henri Clouard and Robert Leggewie, Anthologie de la Littérature française, Vol. II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 321.

(1953). He retained his connection with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; but the "lure of the public's applause, also the realization of his own dramatic capacities, and the conviction that he had definitely found his most adequate vehicle of expression, led him to devote more and more time and activity to the theater."¹⁷ He produced successively: Amphitryon 38 (1929), Judith (1931), Intermezzo (1933), Tessa (1934), La Guerre de Troie n'eura pas lieu (1935), Electre (1937), Online (1939), and Sodome et Gomorrhe (1943). His last three plays: La Folle de Chaillot (1945), L'Apollon de Bellac (1946), and Four Lucrèce (1953) were produced on stage after his death.

It is to Giraudoux, above all, that we owe the great theater of the 30's, and it is often a theater of myths. Giraudoux, ably served by Louis Jouvet, a life-long collaborator and actor-manager who deserves the praise of revealing the talent of Giraudoux, was the master of the allegorical theater of this period. His plays show a wide knowledge of the classics (Greek, Elizabethan, and French) and a strong interest in psychology and in myth as well as a keen awareness of the life of his times.¹⁸ In his plays he continued to write about great myths. His theater, and it was in the theater that he received his greatest success, was a theater of poetry in prose.¹⁹

¹⁷Lemaître, op. cit., p. 224.

¹⁸Eric Bentley, Modern Repertoire, Series II (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 497.

¹⁹Pierre Brodin, Présences contemporaines, Tome III (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Debresse, 1957), p. 164.

Of his style Giraudoux said:²⁰

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. Chaque phrase, chaque chapitre naît de celui qui précède.

Although a far traveler, Giraudoux was anything but international in spirit. Remaining resolutely French, he perceptibly softened his satire when his native country was in question. He was as violent a nationalist as he dared be without jeopardizing his reputation as a clever and amusing man.²¹ Today, almost universally acclaimed, he occupies a position as one of the truly significant French artists and thinkers of the twentieth century.²²

Of Giraudoux it can truly be said that he was a diplomat who wrote novels, a novelist who wrote plays, and a playwright who circled the globe.²³ Although he traveled a great deal, he remained essentially French until his death in 1944. This great author died on January 31 of the year in which he would have rejoiced to live in a liberated France.

²⁰Lesage, op. cit., p. 169.

²¹Milton H. Stansbury, French Novelists of Today (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), p. 26.

²²Lesage, op. cit., p. 122.

²³Morton Rustis, "Jean Giraudoux," Theatre Arts Monthly (February, 1938), p. 128.

CHAPTER II

GREATER DEITIES

In the northern part of Greece lies a mountain range, separating the regions called Macedonia and Thessaly. At the eastern end of the chain looms Mount Olympus. Here, the ancient Greeks believed Jupiter, the Roman name for Zeus, fought against the power of Cronus, ruler of the universe for many centuries. When Jupiter's reign was established, it was on Mount Olympus that he held court and conducted the councils of the gods. He lived in a magnificent palace and nearby were the mansions of the other important gods.²⁴

Jupiter, called the father of gods and men, was ruler of the universe, founder of kingly power, the patron of rulers, and the establisher of law, order, and justice.²⁵ In his plays, Giraudoux mentions Jupiter's authority, yet he ridicules and almost makes fun of the master of the gods. In La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Giraudoux satirizes Jupiter's claim as establisher of law, order, and justice in the scene where Hector and Ulysses are concerned with the fate of Helen. In answer to Priam's exclamation: "O mon fils, ce n'est ni Aphrodite, ni Pallas qui règlent l'univers. Que nous commande Zeus, dans cette incertitude!" Iris, the messenger from Zeus, replies:

²⁴Max J. Huzberg, Myths and Their Meaning (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 1928), p. 35.

²⁵Ibid., p. 36.

Zeus, le maître des Dieux, vous fait dire que ceux qui ne voient que l'amour dans le monde sont aussi bêtes que ceux qui ne le voient pas. La sagesse, vous fait dire Zeus, le maître des Dieux, c'est tantôt de faire l'amour et tantôt de ne pas le faire.... Il s'en rapporte donc à Hector et à Ulysse pour que l'on sépare Hélène et Paris tout en ne les séparant pas. Il ordonne à tous les autres de s'éloigner, et de laisser face à face les négociateurs. Et que ceux-là s'arrangent pour qu'il n'y ait pas la guerre. Ou alors, il vous le jure et il n'a jamais menacé en vain, il vous jure qu'il y aura la Guerre (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 136).

Here Giraudoux illustrates the duel existing between reality and rational idealism by the way in which the question of Helen's return is presented to the Trojans. Zeus tells them that those who perceive love in the world are as foolish as those who do not perceive it at all. He says that it is wise sometimes to make love and sometimes not to make love. Giraudoux expresses his ideas of an inexorable fate for, no matter what the Trojans do, the war cannot be averted.

In Amphitryon 38, Mercury speaks of Jupiter's powers when he says: "Nous sommes des dieux... Devant nous l'aventure humaine se cabre et se stylise. Le sort exige beaucoup plus de nous sur la terre que des hommes..."²⁶ When he speaks to Mercury of his love for Alcmena Jupiter says: "Tu sais que j'aime exclusivement les femmes fidèles. Je suis dieu aussi de la justice (Amphitryon 38, p. 54)." Jupiter himself speaks of his own authority as master of the gods when he reminds Amphitryon that he should not try to match wits with gods. Jupiter says: "Ecoute, Amphitryon. Nous

²⁶Jean Giraudoux, Amphitryon 38 (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1929), p. 17. After each play by Giraudoux has been indicated in the footnotes, it will be referred to by name and page in parenthesis in the body of the thesis.

sonnes entre hommes. Tu sais mon pouvoir. Tu ne te dissimules pas que je peux entrer dans ton lit invisible et même en ta présence.... Il ne s'agit pas de savoir si j'aurai Alcène, mais comment! Pour cette courte nuit, cette formalité, vas-tu entrer en conflit avec les dieux? (Amphitryon 38, p. 191).²⁷ Jupiter reminds Amphitryon of his power as a god when he says that it is not a question of having Alcmena for himself, but only how he as a god will take her. Jupiter asks Amphitryon if he really wants to rebel uselessly against the gods because of this short night that Jupiter intends to spend with Alcmena. Here Giraudoux refers to one of the main thoughts that is expressed throughout the play--the thought of the continual conflict between men and the gods.

Although Jupiter was the supreme god and ruled over others, he often came down to visit mortals and made love to mortal women. His devotion to the beautiful daughters of men involved him in frequent altercations with his handsome, but jealous wife. Giraudoux, being familiar with Greek myths from childhood, took from the initial theme of the relations of gods and men the theme of the myth of Alcmena and Jupiter. Of all the neo-Hellenic works, Giraudoux's Amphitryon 38 is probably the richest in its power of revealing unexpected truths about great subjects: the love of husband and wife, the power of any woman over any man (even a god in man's disguise), and the relations of man and the gods.²⁷

According to Greek mythology, while Amphitryon was away at war, the beauty and faithfulness of Alcmena attracted Jupiter. Taking the form of

²⁷Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 535.

Amphitryon, he visited her on the very night of her husband's return. Later this particular night which Jupiter made three times its usual length, the real Amphitryon came to Alcmena and she conceived twin children. One, Amphitryon's son, Iphicles, was an ordinary child not destined for any distinguished career; the other was Jupiter's son Hercules.²⁸ It was upon this classical allusion that Giraudoux based his play Amphitryon 38 in which he said he retold the story for at least its thirty-eighth time.

As for the main plot of the play itself, Giraudoux had little to invent; however, he turned the ancient myth into a noble defense of married fidelity. In his play Alcmena becomes the chief personage and a model of wifely virtue. She is the type of ideal womanhood Giraudoux liked to imagine and depict in his plays. She has beauty, charm, and sensitivity. All these are joined to Alcmena to make her a worthy adversary even for a god.²⁹

In the myths Jupiter, who was the chief figure in many romantic episodes, sometimes found it necessary, as in the case of Alcmena, to appear to those he loved or admired in different forms and disguises, even to the point of renouncing his divine privileges. In Amphitryon 38, Mercury says to Jupiter:

Mais je vous admire, Jupiter, quand vous aimez une mortelle,
de renoncer à vos privilèges divins et de perdre une nuit au
milieu de cactus et de ronces pour apercevoir l'ombre d'Alcmène,

²⁸ Herbert Jennings Rose, Gods and Heroes of the Greeks (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1957), p. 206.

²⁹ Inskip, op. cit., p. 60.

alors que de vos yeux habituels vous pourriez si facilement percer les murs de sa chambre, pour ne point parler de son linge (Amphitryon 38, pp. 7-8).

In the play Jupiter assumes the guise of a mortal rather than use his powers and privileges as a god when he tries to win Alcmena's love. In Amphitryon 38, Giraudoux mentions three of the mortals with whom Jupiter fell in love. Alcmena, not realizing that she herself is to be one of Jupiter's mortal loves, tells Mercury in the play upon his visit to her that these mortal women are very honored to be sought by the master of creation. To this Mercury replies astonished yet sarcastically: "Vous me ravissez... Alors le sort de Lédä, de Danaë, de toutes celles qu'a aimées ou qu'aimera Jupiter vous paraît un sort heureux? (Amphitryon 38, p. 120)" Jupiter visited Alcmena in the disguise of her own beloved husband, Amphitryon; Leda in the form of a beautiful white swan; and Danaë, imprisoned by her father in a subterranean chamber to prevent the realization of an oracle, as a shower of gold.

In Giraudoux's play Jupiter, despairing of not being able to overcome Alcmena's virtue with the ordinary wiles of the seducer, takes on the human semblance of Amphitryon and so disguised visits Alcmena while her husband is away campaigning against the enemy. Here, Giraudoux deviates from the original Greek myth. In the myth Amphitryon goes to war at Alcmena's suggestion in order to avenge a quarrel existing between Alcmena's father and the king of the Teleboans.³⁰ While, in the play, Jupiter, as master of the

³⁰ Rose, op. cit., p. 205.

gods, uses his powers to start a war between two friendly cities for the sole purpose of sending Amphytryon away so he can have Alcmena for himself.

However, in the play, complications set in when Amphytryon himself returns home unexpectedly from war and Alcmena is suddenly confronted with two men indistinguishably alike. The fact that Alcmena is loved by her husband gives her strength to repulse the advances of another man, even to rebuke those of the master of the gods and yet retain his goodwill. She can have an affair with the lord of creation, but she prefers her mortal husband and, to assure the birth of Hercules, she has to be tricked by Jupiter.³¹ In the play, Alcmena seeks help when Giraudoux imagines Leda to be passing through Thebes on the very day on which Alcmena is expecting Jupiter to visit her. Unaware as yet that Jupiter has already spent the previous night in her room in the form of her husband, Alcmena seeks Leda's help. When Alcmena learns of Jupiter's intended visit, Ecclissé, her maid, tries to console her by saying:

Léda, la reine de Sparte, que Jupiter aime sous la forme d'un cygne, et qui était de passage à Thèbes, demande à vous rendre visite. Ses conseils peuvent être utiles (Amphytryon 38, p. 111).

Upon meeting Leda, who wears a silver gown bordered with swans (Amphytryon 38, p. 134), Alcmena asks: "Léda, c'était vrai ce que la légende raconte, il était un vrai cygne? (Amphytryon 38, p. 136)" According to legend, Helen of Troy was born of Leda and fathered by Zeus in the form of a swan. Helen, when speaking to Andromache in La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu mentions

³¹ Lesage, op. cit., p. 68.

this relationship when she speaks of her birth and says: "Tout enfant, je passais mes journées dans les huttes collées au palais, avec les filles de pêcheurs, à dénicher et à élever des oiseaux. Je suis née d'un oiseau (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, pp. 128-29)." In Electre, Clytemnestra refers to Leda and Jupiter when she tells Electra of the relationship between her and Agamemnon and says: "Tout le monde ne peut pas être comme ta tante Lède, et pondre des oeufs."³² In referring to Leda and Jupiter, Clytemnestra tells Electra that she was indifferent to Electra from the moment of conception, for Electra was conceived and born in coldness and indifference. Clytemnestra admits she never loved Agamemnon.

This scene involving the appearance of Leda is one among several of Giraudoux's inventions which figure in this play. Alcmena is overjoyed when Leda accepts her proposition to take her place beside Jupiter when he appears that night. In the play, Giraudoux weaves enough mystery around Amphitryon's return home that Alcmena has every reason to believe he is Jupiter in disguise, and he leads us to believe that Leda willingly takes Alcmena's place that night. Upon realizing what has really happened, Alcmena shows her honor and fidelity by viewing with horror Jupiter's seduction the previous night under the guise of her husband, while the town rejoices over the honor that has come to it. No promise of immortality or deification can tempt her for she, who symbolizes the most perfect adjustment to life Giraudoux can imagine, is perfectly comfortable in her

³²Jean Giraudoux, Electre (Paris: Bernard Grasset, Editeur, 1937), p. 149.

marriage and cannot be tempted by the promises of divinity. Human she is and human she will remain. When Jupiter suggests that she can become immortal she answers: "Immortelle? A quoi bon? A quoi cela sert-il?... Devenir immortel, c'est trahir, pour un humain (Amphitryon 38, pp. 88-89)."

The final scenes of the play are purely Giraudoux's invention. Alcmena saves her honor by promising Jupiter something no god has ever experienced and which is a thousand times more valuable than love for him: human friendship.³³ In the play Alcmena can be considered a model of chastity and faithfulness when in her practical sense she offers Jupiter a platonic friendship instead of love. Of this friendship she says:

D'abord je penserai à vous, au lieu de croire en vous... Et cette pensée sera volontaire, due à mon cœur, tandis que ma croyance était une habitude, due à mes aïeux... Mes prières ne seront plus des prières, mais des paroles. Mes gestes rituels, des signes (Amphitryon 38, p. 201).

In this offering of friendship she succeeds in winning Jupiter and satisfying him without violating her vows of marriage fidelity. Of this happy marriage Jupiter says to Amphitryon:

Je n'aime pas seulement Alcène, car alors je me serais arrangé pour être son amant sans te consulter. J'aime votre couple.... C'est en ami que je m'installe entre vous deux (Amphitryon 38, p. 192).

Jupiter tells Alcmena and Amphitryon that, although he loves Alcmena, it is as a friend that he comes. During the play Alcmena realizes that she has, unknowingly, spent the night with Jupiter and that she will bear him a son Hercules, but at the end of the play she asks Jupiter for a kiss of

³³Donald Heiney, Essentials of Contemporary Literature (New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1954), p. 374.

forgetfulness, and he gives it to her. The mutual love between Alcmena and Amphytrion prevails and, in spite of the official Greek legend, they remain at the end of the play just a happy pair awaiting the birth of a son whom they will name Hercules. By deliberately making the character of Alcmena that of a modern, living woman instead of the conventional mythological figure she had been, Giraudoux made a success of this play. Giraudoux makes references to modern ideas or feelings in order to create the atmosphere of actuality which constitutes the most striking and original feature of the play.³⁴ However, of all the plays in which Giraudoux retells the Greek myths he follows the actual myth more closely in Amphytrion 38 than in any other one of his plays.

Juno, Jupiter's wife and queen of the heavens, came to be for the Greeks and Romans the patroness and guardian of womankind. She was at the same time imagined as a jealous and demanding wife, yet she was known for her dignity and virtue. It is perhaps as the symbol of married virtue that Alcmena thinks of her when she says: "Laisse-moi brouter tout l'Olympe... D'ailleurs j'aime surtout prononcer les noms des dieux par couples.... Jupiter et Junon... (Amphytrion 38, p. 81)." In Giraudoux's entire works this is the only reference made to Juno.

In his plays Giraudoux seems to be concerned with beauty and its place in life. When he wants to close his eyes willfully to the ugliness of the world or depict it as if it is lovely, we may regard his vision of

³⁴Lemaître, op. cit., p. 264.

things as Apollonian.³⁵ Ever-present in Giraudoux's mind is the theme of man's need for beauty and to feel himself beautiful in a world of beauty.

Through his characters Giraudoux expresses his ideas of man's search and need for beauty--his "raison d'être" in a world where beauty is unreal, coming to us only in dreams and yearning. In Supplément au Voyage de Cook, Outourou, the chief of a primitive tribe on the island of Otahiti, says in response to Mr. Banks' statement that work is one of the three duties of man on earth: "Et ils restent beaux, ceux qui travaillent? Ce qui importe dans la vie, c'est d'être beau."³⁶

In his L'Apollon de Bellac, the gentleman from Bellac says: "Chaque homme, même le plus laid, nourrit en soi une amorce et un secret par lequel il se relie directement à la beauté même."³⁷

Giraudoux used the Greek god Apollo as a symbol and representative of beauty. Apollo, the son of Jupiter and Latona and the ideal of handsome and vigorous youth, was the god of beauty, the sun, the sciences and arts, especially poetry, music, and medicine. Apollo, whose other name was Phoebus meaning "shining," was very proud of his long, golden locks which were likened to the rays of the sun.³⁸ Giraudoux refers to Apollo as god of

³⁵Lesage, op. cit., p. 164.

³⁶Jean Giraudoux, Supplément au Voyage de Cook (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1937), p. 49.

³⁷Jean Giraudoux, L'Apollon de Bellac (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1947), p. 26.

³⁸Anna Robinson Kleckner, In the Misty Realm of Fable (Chicago: A. Flanagan Co., 1900), p. 57.

beauty in three of his plays: L'Apollon de Bellac, Cantique des Cantiques, and Amphitryon 38. In Amphitryon 38 Jupiter tells Mercury: "Je me sens soudain plus beau qu'Apollon (p. 60)." Here Jupiter, now become a mortal in the disguise of Amphitryon, senses a superiority as a mortal that he seems never to have felt before as a god.

In Cantique des Cantiques the president goes to a luxurious cafe and speaks to the waiter Victor about the reasons why people really go to cafes and he says:

Qu'est-ce qu'ils viennent chercher au café, les clients?
Ce n'est pas votre café, qui est toujours immonde,--c'est
vous!... La tête de leur garçon--Dieu sait pourtant que vous
n'êtes pas beaux...

To this last remark the cashier replies to the president: "Vous n'êtes pas non plus Apollon..."³⁹

The idea of Apollo as a representative symbol of beauty is, perhaps, best expressed in L'Apollon de Bellac. The title of the play has the sense of Bellac's Apollo or Bellac's image of Apollo. Since Giraudoux assumes that his audience knows where he was born the title can also mean a statue of the god of beauty found at the author's birthplace. In the play Agnes, who practices saying "Vous êtes beau" on inanimate things, compares one of the characters in the play to Rodin's Le Penseur, but the gentleman from Bellac tells her if she must use statues to use the one of Apollo of Bellac. Even though it does not exist, the thought that it does can serve her purpose (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 58).

³⁹Jean Giraudoux, Cantique des Cantiques (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1939), pp. 12 and 13.

In this play we are asked to interpret what at best seems a demonstration of the incurable vanity of men for beauty in this life. The man from Bellac is not Apollo. He is really a shabby fellow who does not know where his next penny is coming from, and he poses as an inventor. He dreams things up, but he actually does nothing and he has nothing. Agnes is a girl looking for a job in an office but completely lacking any of the conventional qualifications, and she is very much afraid of people. To her aid comes the gentleman from Bellac, who imparts to her a magic formula to cure her fears and obtain anything she desires. All she must do is to exclaim before any man, "Comme vous êtes beau!" Thus, she becomes for all who meet her, the dispenser of beauty.⁴⁰

Agnes succeeds in winning everyone to her, but in the final scenes she says to the gentleman from Bellac:

A force de répéter votre mot, j'ai gagné une envie. Pourquoi m'avoir forcée à dire qu'ils sont beaux à tous ces gens si laids? Je me sens à point pour dire qu'il est beau à quelqu'un de vraiment beau (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 104).

To this the gentleman from Bellac answers:

Supposez qu'il nous arrive ce qui arrive dans les pièces qui ont de la tradition, ce qui devrait arriver dans une vie qui se respecte.... Que c'est le dieu de la beauté même qui vous ait visitée ce matin (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 106).

In this scene Agnes closes her eyes and pretends that Apollo, beauty himself, stands before her in all his splendor. She pretends the gentleman from Bellac to be Apollo as he attempts to describe himself as the god of beauty. Here, we see that only gods with names such as Apollo are really beautiful

⁴⁰Lesage, op. cit., p. 78.

yet they do not exist. The entire play centers around man's quest in life for real visual Apollonian beauty only to find that it can be visualized only in dreams. In the final scene of the play, Agnes realizes that she knows the gentleman from Bellac only as Apollo and when someone asks if "Apollo" is present, she must answer: "Non... il est passé (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 17)."

In the play L'Apollon de Bellac the gentleman from Bellac, in pretending to be Apollo, tries to describe himself to Agnes. In his lengthy description he says: "L'idée de l'équerre est venue aux géomètres de mes épaules, et l'idée de l'arc à Diane de mes sourcils (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 108)." Diana, twin sister of Apollo, was the virgin goddess of the moon, the hunt, and the protectress of young persons and wild animals. Her greatest joy was to speed away over hill and dale followed by a long train of nymphs, all in pursuit of game. As patroness of hunting and the sports of the field, she is represented with a bow, quiver, and arrows.⁴¹ Giraudoux again mentions Diana in Pour Lucrèce. Armand, one of the central characters in the play, compares Lucile to "la statue de Diane dressée" when Lucile, a woman so completely pure herself that she is mysteriously sensitive to impurity in others, sits immobile in a cafe and refuses to speak to him.⁴² Lucile, the principal character in the play Pour Lucrèce, is modeled after Lucretia, a Roman matron who felt a great sense of purity and who committed suicide when she thought her purity had been violated.

⁴¹Kleckner, op. cit., p. 65.

⁴²Jean Giraudoux, Pour Lucrèce (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1953), p. 57.

Lucile resembles Diana in that Diana was also the goddess of purity and she not only gloried in her own virginity, but required a vow of chastity from the many nymphs who were her attendants and her hunting companions.

Minerva, also known as Pallas and Athena, was the daughter of Jupiter and was said to have leaped forth from his brain, mature and in complete armour. She was the goddess of wisdom and presided over the useful and ornamental arts for both men and women. She was also a warlike divinity, but it was defensive war only that she patronized.⁴³ Giraudoux refers to Minerva in her role as goddess of wisdom in La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu. It was Athena who brought victory to the Greeks at Troy. Here, again, Giraudoux almost makes fun of the gods when he uses Iris, a messenger of the gods, to convey their advice as to what should be done with regard to Helen and Paris. Iris says:

Pallas me charge de vous dire que la raison est la loi du monde. Tout être amoureux, vous fait-elle dire, déraisonne.... Et elle vous ordonne à vous Hector et vous Ulysse, de séparer Hélène de ce Paris à poil frisé. Ou il y aura la guerre... (cf. p. 7).

Pallas advises that reason and wisdom are the laws of the world, not love, and there will be war if Helen and Paris are not separated.

Pallas Athena is mentioned only slightly in Electre when Aegisthus, Clytemnestra's lover, is overjoyed on the day of the battle because he has been given Argos instead of Athens, the city of Minerva or Pallas Athena.

Minerva was goddess of war and represented the winning side of conflict that leads to victory. Because of her superior wisdom, she had the

⁴³Thomas Bulfinch, The Age of Fable (New York: The Heritage Press, 1942), p. 107.

better of Mars, the god of rough, crude war. He exalted in the noise of battle, and when the fight was the thickest he rushed in without hesitation. Alcmena, thinking of the war in which Amphitryon is engaged, says to Jupiter in the disguise of Amphitryon that there will be nothing tragic in her death for she will die when her husband does. She says: "Elle aura peut-être lieu ce soir, en ce lieu même, si tout à l'heure le dieu de la guerre t'atteint.... (Amphitryon 38, p. 92)."

Mars was, perhaps, the most hateful of all the gods but his loved one and mother of five of his children was Venus, goddess of beauty herself. Girardoux refers to Mars' love exploits in Amphitryon 38. Jupiter in the disguise of Amphitryon and expressing his anticipation at the thought of being with Alcmena says: "Je me sens soudain plus capable d'exploits amoureux que Mars.... (Amphitryon 38, p. 60)." Alcmena mentions Mars and Venus together when she speaks to Jupiter of the gods grouped according to couples (Amphitryon 38, p. 81).

Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, is said to have sprung from the foam of the sea and to have been immediately carried to the abode of the gods on Olympus where they were charmed with her extreme beauty.⁴⁴

Cassandra, while talking to Hector of Helen, refers to Helen as being cold and says: "Elle est née de l'écume, quoi! La froideur est née de l'écume, comme Vénus (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 101)."

According to other legends, Venus was the daughter of Jupiter and the nymph Dione. In her myths Venus appeared in her many manifestations as the great,

⁴⁴"Mythology." The Lincoln Library of Essential Information (Buffalo: The Frontier Press Co., 1931), p. 340.

complicated love instinct of human nature. She was the loveliest of the goddesses and the favorite of poets and sculptors of all nationalities. Giraudoux mentions the Venus of Milo (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 45), the celebrated armless statue of Venus found on the Greek island of Milo in 1820 and now in the Louvre. In Pour Lucrèce Giraudoux imagines a statue of "Vénus accroupie" when he compares the immobile Lucile to a statue (Pour Lucrèce, p. 57).

In one of his lighter moments Giraudoux has Venus appear in Ondine when l'illusionniste, a magician who is actually king of the water sprites and Ondine's uncle, tries to prove he is capable of performing before the court by making magic without the use of material things. The magician says he can make Venus appear, and she does appear momentarily (Ondine, p. 89).

Venus not only surpassed all gods and all mortals in beauty, but she also had the power of granting beauty to others. Venus and her beauty were in no small degree accountable for the Greeks' war against Troy. The cause and impossible prevention of the war of Troy is the central theme of Giraudoux's La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu. In the play the elders of Troy all admire Helen's beauty to such an extent that in saluting her they say: "Vive Vénus! (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 102)." To this salutation Cassandra says of the elders: "ils ont imaginé que c'était Vénus qui nous donnait Hélène... Pour récompenser Pâris de lui avoir décerné la pomme à première vue (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 103)." Cassandra refers to the incident in which Paris, obliged to judge who was the most beautiful of goddesses Juno, Minerva, or

Venus, chose Venus and awarded her the golden apple inscribed with the words: "To the fairest." Each of the three goddesses attempted to bias Paris' decision in her own favor by promising gifts. Venus had promised him the fairest of women for his wife.

Venus is represented as the symbol of love in La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu when Iris tells Hector and Ulysses what Venus desires to be done to Helen and Paris. Venus tells the Trojans that love is the law of the world and that she watches over all who are in love from king to shepherd. She forbids Hector and Ulysses to separate Helen and Paris, saying that there will be war if they are separated (cf., pp. 7 and 17).

As a result of her power to unite by means of love all beings, whether in heaven on earth or in blackest Tartarus, Venus came to be viewed as a goddess presiding over married life. It is in this light that Alcmena and Amphitryon speak of Venus when they discuss how they will think of each other while he is away at war. Amphitryon refers to Venus as "notre amie commune (Amphitryon 38, p. 36)." But Alcmena says: "Je n'ai pas confiance en Vénus. Tout ce qui touche mon amour, j'en aurai soin moi-même (Amphitryon 38, p. 36)." Here Alcmena gives expression to her humanness and her independence of the gods as she tells Amphitryon that she will take care of her love herself rather than depend upon Venus to do it for her.

Mercury, the Hermes of the Greeks and son of Zeus and Maia, was the king of wanderers, and he made his first journey when less than a day old. So skillful was he in abstracting the property of others, and in doing whatever he undertook to do, that he early attracted the attention of the gods of Olympus, and they made him their messenger. Jupiter gave him a winged cap and winged sandals which enabled him to go to any part of the world with

great speed.⁴⁵ Giraudoux jokingly refers to Mercury in L'Apollon de Bellac when Agnes asks if the gentleman from Bellac, who is pretending to be Apollo, has winged feet (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 103). The gentleman from Bellac answers: "Non. Celui qui a des ailes aux pieds, c'est l'Hermès de Saint-Yrieix (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 103)."

Mercury's attributes were the most varied and complex of all the major gods. He had the power of assuming any form, and of making himself invisible. He became a deity of wealth, the god of trade and, because of his smoothness of tongue and shrewdness of mind, the god of oratory.⁴⁶ Mercury also conducted the intercourse between heaven and earth, announcing the will of the gods to men. It is in the capacity of messenger of the gods that Giraudoux refers to him.

Although Giraudoux mentions Mercury in L'Apollon de Bellac, it is in Amphitryon 38 that Mercury is best represented. In the play Mercury assumes his office as messenger of Jupiter and god of oratory for it is he who goes to Alcmena first in the disguise of Sosie, Amphitryon's servant, then in Jupiter's behalf as the god he is. Mercury's part in this entire myth is simply a Giraudoux invention. Mercury very definitely adds life and wit to the play. He serves as mediator between Alcmena and Jupiter. Mercury in the disguise of Sosie, Amphitryon's servant, is another Giraudoux invention. He approaches Alcmena to prepare her for Jupiter's visit by announcing

⁴⁵Kleckner, op. cit., p. 75.

⁴⁶Dan S. Norton and Peter Rushton, Classical Myths in English Literature (New York: Rinehart U. Co., Inc., 1952), p. 207.

Amphitryon's return in the evening. Later in the play Mercury approaches Alcmene as Jupiter's messenger to prepare her for Jupiter's intended second visit to her--this time as a god. It is Mercury who takes it upon himself to use his gift of oratory to announce to the world that Alcmene has been chosen by Jupiter to become the mother of Hercules. Although Mercury, in mythology, has no part in the love affair of Alcmene and Jupiter, Giraudoux does keep Mercury in character as Jupiter's messenger.

Of the great gods in Greek and Roman mythology, Giraudoux uses or refers to Jupiter, Apollo, Venus, and Mercury more in his plays than he does to any of the other gods. Although he deviates from mythology in his presentation of the great gods in the myths, he does keep them in character with what they represent. Giraudoux knew the myths so well that he could do what he wanted with them; thus, he used them to serve his own needs and purposes in his plays. In his dramatic works he gives a whimsical turn to the gods and myths.

CHAPTER III

LESSER DEITIES

The greater gods of Greece and Rome were subordinate only to Jupiter and were often called the Olympian deities. There were, however, lesser deities who occupied subordinate positions in the system of gods but who were nevertheless worshipped independently, if not so universally as the others. In his plays, Giraudoux mentions and uses several of the lesser deities to tell his stories.

Iris, goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the gods, especially of the goddess Juno, lived among the other deities of Olympus. She left Mount Olympus only for the purposes of conveying the divine commands to mankind who looked on her as a guide and advisor. She traveled always with the speed of wind from one end of the world to the other; and, in this respect, she formed the feminine counterpart for Mercury in his capacity as messenger of the gods.⁴⁷ Running errands primarily for Juno, she used her rainbow as a pathway from heaven to earth or to other parts of the mythological world. She was represented as a beautiful virgin with wings of varied hue, in robes of bright colors, and riding on a rainbow. Iris' flight through the air was so rapid that she was seldom seen, and no one would have known she had passed had it not been for the brilliant trail her many-colored robe left behind her in the sky.⁴⁸ Giraudoux mentions Iris as

⁴⁷Alexander S. Murray, Manual of Mythology (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1946), p. 181.

⁴⁸H. A. Guerber, Myths of Greece and Rome (New York: American Book Co., 1921), p. 52.

messenger of the gods in two of his plays. In La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu she appears in the sky bringing a message to the people of Troy, especially to Hector and Ulysses, from Venus, Minerva, and Jupiter. It is her duty to convey the wishes of the gods regarding the fate of Helen and Paris; however, each message contradicts the other (cf., pp. 7, 17, and 19). Thus, no matter which message the people take to heart, the war will take place. Giraudoux uses the messages Iris delivers to express his own feelings that war is inevitable. As Iris departs, a large rainbow forms in the sky and Helen remarks: "C'est bien elle. Elle a oublié sa ceinture à mi-chemin (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 137)." Electra mentions Iris as the messenger of the gods when she says to Aegisthus who awaits his proposed marriage to Clytemnestra that he need not wait for the messenger of the gods because she will not appear. Electra says:

Si le règlement divin est un Egisthe absous par l'amour de sa ville, épousant Clytemnestre par mépris du mensonge et pour sauver bourgeoisie et châteaux c'est le moment où elle (Iris) devrait se poser entre vous deux, avec ses brevets et ses palmes. Elle ne viendra pas (Electra, p. 184).

Electra tells Aegisthus that he need not wait for Iris to bring news that the gods sanction his actions because not even gods can transform a criminal into an innocent man. Iris will not come.

The Eumenides, three winged sisters with serpents twined in their hair and blood dripping from their eyes, were attendants of Hades and lived at the entrance to the lower world. Their first duty was to see to the punishment of those of the departed who, having been guilty of some crime on earth, had come down to the underworld without obtaining atonement from the gods. At times, they appeared on earth pursuing criminals.⁴⁹ They

⁴⁹Murray, op. cit., p. 216-17.

were avengers of crime and executors of curses invoked by one wronged on those who have wronged him; but especially on those who had violated the ties of kinship. Thus, above all, they heard the cry of a father or mother wronged by a son.⁵⁰ On earth they implacably pursued anyone guilty of a crime and in Hades they continued the sinner's punishment for they completely lacked mercy. Nothing escaped their sharp eyes as they followed the evil-doer with speed and fury, permitting him no rest. In Electre the Eumenides appear from time to time throughout the play. In the Greek myth Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, slew his mother Clytemnestra to avenge his father's death. The atrocity of the crime committed by Clytemnestra was held by Jupiter to be no excuse for Orestes' action, and accordingly Orestes was subjected to the long and cruel pursuit of the Eumenides from which at long last he was freed.⁵¹ In mythology Orestes met the Eumenides after he had committed the crime of killing his mother while in Giraudoux's play Electre, Orestes meets them at the gates of Argos, his father's city, as he enters the city for the first time since a child (Electre, p. 11). In the play, the Eumenides are grown women at the time Orestes kills Clytemnestra. Giraudoux introduces them at the very beginning of Electre, calling them "les trois petites filles." The gardener in the play says to Orestes:

On ne sait qui elles sont. Elles circulent depuis deux jours dans la ville, sans amis connus, sans famille! Si on leur demande

⁵⁰Rose, op. cit., p. 84.

⁵¹Murray, op. cit., p. 216.

qui elles sont, elles prétendent s'appeler les petites Euménides. Et l'épouvantable, est qu'elles grandissent, qu'elles grossissent à vue d'oeil... Hier, elles avaient des années de moins qu'aujourd'hui... (Electre, p. 18).

When they first appear in the play they are but small girls (Electre, p. 11); when they appear the second time they are young maidens of twelve to thirteen years old (p. 132) and when they appear at the end of the play they are about the same age as Electra.

The scenes of Electre in which the Eumenides appear have some irony in them. When the scene seems full of horror and murder, Giraudoux uses the Eumenides to distract from it. At the beginning of the play, one of the Eumenides speaks of Atreus, the first king of Argos, who killed his nephews and served their hearts to his brother. The third little girl immediately wants to know the precise details about the cooking of the hearts and their taste (Electre, p. 15). The Eumenides stand, almost like the chorus in Greek tragedy, somewhat outside the play in order to comment upon the action that takes place. When asked by Orestes what they do in life, they answer:

Nous mentons. Nous médisons. Nous insultons. Mais notre spécialité, c'est que nous récitons.... Nous disons tout le mal que nous pouvons trouver (Electre, pp. 17-18).

They describe the events that are to come, recite alternately episodes of the play and almost entertain the spectators. Giraudoux, instead of portraying them as the dread and merciless tormentors they are, presents them as malevolent, ingenuous, and gleeful girls. In the final scenes of the play the Eumenides do say that they plan to follow Orestes wherever he goes but no mention of punishment for the crime he committed is made (Electre, p. 218). The Eumenides seem to enjoy and glory in the horror of the events.

Giraudoux mentions the Eumenides in one other play, L'Impromptu de Paris. In the play the actors of Jouvet's troupe are discussing the French theater, its good and bad qualities, and they present their ideas for improvement. Boverio, one of the actors who discusses style in the theater, presents his views. In answer to Boverio's very eloquent presentation, Bogar, a fellow actor answers him by saying:⁵²

Vous avez beau lâcher sur la scène la terreur, la fatalité, les Erinyes, une vraie terreur, de vraies Erinyes: du fait qu'elles font leurs accords de participe, on vous dira que vous vous complaisez à des jeux d'esprit, à des subtilités de vocabulaire.

Bogar compares the terror and harshness of Boverio's words to that of the Erinyes saying that they show their horror by action while he does it by words.

In Ondine Giraudoux refers to another group of three lesser deities, the Sirens. Far out in the sea on an island dwelt the three Sirens, sea nymphs who were half bird and half woman. The sea around this island was always calm for the Sirens' song had power to hush the waves.⁵³ The irresistible sweetness of their voices cast such a spell on any man who heard them that their island was carpeted with the corpses of sailors wrecked on the shores. Giraudoux mentions the sirens in only one of his plays. He makes Ondine, the central character in the play, an enchanting water sprite who possesses the sparkle, beauty, and purity of water; however,

⁵²Jean Giraudoux, L'Impromptu de Paris (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1937), pp. 77-78.

⁵³Kleckner, op. cit., p. 135.

she possesses more than this for in her there is also power. She lives with her foster parents near a lake and at fifteen falls in love with Hans, a knight. He, too, falls under her spell, forgets his troth to the Countess Bertha, and prepares to take her back home with him. The king of the water people warns Ondine that Hans will deceive her but in her infatuation she will not listen. Hans spends the night at Ondine's foster-parents' home because of a severe storm. That evening while Hans and Ondine sit discussing their new-found love, several ondines singing songs appear to Hans. Each ondine tries to lure Hans away with her song of enchantment. Of their songs Hans says: "C'est simple, c'est charmant. Ce devait être à peu près cela le chant des sirènes." To this Ondine answers: "Ça l'est justement. Elles l'ont copié!"⁵⁴ However, the ondines with their enchanting song are not able to lure Hans away from Ondine and they leave telling Ondine that he will deceive her and die. Ondine at first fears their enchanting power but Hans reassures her by saying: "Qu'étaient les liens d'Ulysse, à côté de tes bras! (Ondine, p. 66)" In Ondine Giraudoux compares the ondines who try to lure Hans away from Ondine to the sirens who tried to lure Ulysses away from his ship. The sirens failed because Ulysses was bound to his ship and the ondines fail because Hans is bound by Ondine's arms. The ondines of Giraudoux differ from the sirens of mythology in that we see that the ondines are trying to lure Hans away from Ondine to save him from death while the sirens tried to lure Ulysses away from his ship to death. The

⁵⁴Jean Giraudoux, Ondine (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1939), p. 65.

ondines and the sirens are similar because of their irresistible song, their beauty, and the fact that both are water spirits.

Hans takes Ondine to court; but her simplicity, charm, and naturalness are completely out of place and she rapidly becomes the despair of Hans for he sees that she is different. When Ondine realizes that Hans compares her to the Countess Bertha, she says of her natural beauty: "J'aime mieux mes cheveux en filasse, comme elle dit, que ses nattes comme des serpents. Regardez-la... elle a des vipères pour cheveux! (Ondine, p. 134)"

In mythology the three Gorgons lived in a cave far at sea; they were shaped like women, but they had wings, brazen claws, enormous teeth, and snakes for hair. Anyone who looked at their faces was turned to stone. Two of them were believed to be immortal while the third, Medusa, was mortal.⁵⁵ In La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu Demokos, a poet, statesman, and a character invented by Giraudoux, is interested in writing a stirring war song for the war he thinks will take place because of Helen's abduction by Paris. He believes he has an excellent idea for the song for he says: "Elle (la guerre) doit être lasse qu'on l'affuble de cheveux de Méduse, de lèvres de Gorgone: j'ai l'idée de comparer son visage au visage d'Hélène (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, pp. 118-119)." Here, Demokos believes that instead of having a Gorgon's head represent war, they should have the beautiful face of Helen represent it. For the Greeks to possess a representation of a Gorgon's face was to be provided with a charm against

⁵⁵Norton and Rushton, op. cit., p. 341.

ills and, accordingly, it was frequently employed as a personal ornament.⁵⁶ Minerva, goddess of war, wore a breastplate called the aegis on which hung the sculptured head of Medusa. Thus a representation of a Gorgon's face was associated with war. In Amphitryon 38, Amphitryon wears a helmet with the head of Medusa carved on it when he leaves Alcmena for the war (Amphitryon 38, p. 33).

Another group of three deities who appeared together and to whom Giraudoux refers is the three Graces. They were daughters of Jupiter and presided over the banquet, the dance, and all social pleasures. They were the goddesses of gracefulness, charm, and cheerful amusement.⁵⁷ In all his plays Giraudoux mentions them only once. In Tessa Tomy, Paulina, and Tessa, three sisters, stand in front of a small group of people to sing for them. Giraudoux describes them: "Les trois sœurs restées seules se ressemblent aussitôt dans cette attitude des trois Grâces..."⁵⁸

Echo, a beautiful nymph who was fond of the woods and hills, came under the displeasure of Juno and, because of her constant chatter, Juno condemned her to the loss of voice except for purposes of reply. Having fallen in love with Narcissus, the beautiful son of the river-god Cephessus, Echo found it impossible to express her regard for him in any way but by mimicking what he said. From this time forth she lived in caves and among

⁵⁶Murray, op. cit., p. 220.

⁵⁷Charles Mills Gayley, The Classic Myths in English Literature and Art (Chicago: Ginn and Co., 1939), p. 36.

⁵⁸Jean Giraudoux, Tessa (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1934), pp. 177-78.

mountain cliffs and faded away till there was nothing left of her but her voice.⁵⁹

In Amphitryon 38 Echo repeats the rien, rien of Alcmena when she, thinking she has tricked Jupiter, says: "Qu'ai-je à redouter des dieux et des hommes, moi qui suis loyale et sûre, rien, n'est-ce pas, rien, rien? (Amphitryon 38, p. 162)" Echo and her lover, Narcissus, are mentioned in L'Apollon de Bellac. Narcissus, a beautiful youth loved by Echo, was the personification of self-conceit. He fell in love with his own image and his vanity was such that he used to idle by the brinks of clear fountains and brooks and gaze upon the reflection of his own face until at last he languished in his unreturned love for it.⁶⁰ In L'Apollon de Bellac we see how man searches for his own beauty in the world and how he longs to be beautiful. The president in the play, believing all that Agnes has told him of his so-called beauty, says: "Merci, miroirs. Merci, reflets. Merci à tout ce qui me renverra désormais mon image ou ma voix. Merci, bassins de Versailles! Merci, écho!" To this, Therese, his fiancée, says that she lost the president and found Narcissus. The gentleman from Bellac replies: "Le seul Narcisse coupable est celui qui trouve les autres laids (L'Apollon de Bellac, p. 93-94)." Because of Agnes, the president believes he has found the beauty all men search for in this world. The gentleman from Bellac says that those who find beauty are not wrong unless, in finding it, they see ugliness in others.

⁵⁹ Gayley, op. cit., p. 183.

⁶⁰ Murray, op. cit., p. 173.

CHAPTER IV
MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES

The ancients were not content to worship the gods only but also offered up sacrifices to a few mortals who, by their heroic deeds and virtuous lives, had won both admiration and respect. They were regarded as partly of divine origin and were represented as men possessed of godlike form, strength, and courage.

The mightiest and most famous of Greek heroes was Hercules, son of Jupiter and Alcmena. Though regarded sometimes as a god and honored in the way appointed for immortals, it was chiefly as the hero of a long series of arduous labors, difficulties apparently insurmountable, and sufferings that Hercules obtained the numerous honors paid to his memory throughout Greece. Hercules was looked upon as an example of extraordinary physical strength and patient toiling to the end. He came also to be held as an ideal of virtue and duty.⁶¹ Giraudoux mentions Hercules in two of his plays, Amphitryon 38 and Ondine. In Amphitryon 38 Giraudoux dramatizes the circumstances of Hercules' birth. Jupiter, while talking to Mercury of Alcmena and Hercules, says: "Je l'aime, en un mot, et je peux bien te le dire, Mercure, son fils sera mon fils préféré (Amphitryon 38, p. 100-01)." Jupiter, not wishing to reveal his identity but yet wishing to know what Alcmena thinks of having an immortal son, says to her:

Mais tu n'aimerais pas avoir un fils moins humaine que toi,
un fils immortel?... Un fils qui deviendrait le plus grand des

⁶¹Murray, op. cit., p. 280-81.

héros, qui, dès sa petite enfance, s'attaquerait à des lions, à des monstres?... Qui tuerait des serpents énormes, venus pour l'étrangler dans son berceau? (Amphitryon 38, p. 91)

Since Giraudoux dramatizes the circumstances of Hercules' conception, he never appears in the play; however, the characters, in anticipation of Hercules' birth, speak of his great deeds and exploits. At one point the people are gathered together outside the palace to hear a celestial voice announce the exploits of the hero whose birth they anticipate (Amphitryon 38, p. 164). Hercules speaks to the people from heaven as a celestial voice and tells them what attributes he will receive from Jupiter and from Alcmena. Contrary to the actual myth, Jupiter in the play fears for Hercules because Alcmena vows that she will kill herself rather than be unfaithful to Amphitryon. Jupiter says: "Elle ne souffrira pas. Je n'ai aucun doute à ce sujet, elle se tuera. Et mon fils Hercule mourra du même coup... (Amphitryon 38, p. 104)." However, later Jupiter finds a solution to his problem. Mercury tells Alcmena that Hercules must be born and she answers: "Si je me tue?" to which Mercury replies: "Jupiter vous redonnera la vie, ce fils doit naître (Amphitryon 38, p. 132)." At the end of the story Alcmena and Amphitryon anticipate the birth of a son they think is their very own, for Jupiter gives Alcmena the kiss of forgetfulness, and Alcmena says to Jupiter: "et nous vous promettons de l'appeler Hercule, puisque vous aimez ce nom. Ce sera un petit garçon doux et sage (Amphitryon 38, p. 218)." Here, Giraudoux deviates from the myth because in the play Alcmena and Amphitryon believe the child is their own, while in the myth both know that the child will be Hercules, symbol of strength and courage and Jupiter's son. With this one exception, Giraudoux keeps

Hercules in character with what he represented in mythology. In the actual myth little is mentioned of the anticipation of Hercules' birth while in the play Giraudoux emphasizes this aspect of the story.

In Ondine Giraudoux's treatment of Hercules is light, full of fun, and almost ridiculous. The king of the country is named Hercules and the chamberlain explains to Ondine the reasons for this when he says: "Il lui fut donné parce que dans son berceau il écrasa sous son derrière un orvet qui s'y fourvoyait par mégarde (Amphitryon 38, p. 120)." An orvet is a worm, and in this instance King Hercules is said to have crushed one in his crib as a baby. Here Giraudoux jokingly refers to Hercules' first trial as a baby in the crib when Juno, being jealous of Hercules, sent two serpents to crush him. Hercules seized them by their necks and squeezed them to death.⁶² Giraudoux refers to the twelve labors of Hercules when the chamberlain tells Ondine that she is about to be introduced to the court and that she will be asked about Hercules' sixth labor since she is the sixth debutante of the year (Ondine, p. 120). Although mythology attributed twelve labors to Hercules, Giraudoux in Ondine implies that there were only nine. When Ondine meets King Hercules, he receives her in a room consecrated to Hercules. The king claims relationship to Hercules when he says: "de ma filiation avec Hercule par mon aïeule Omphale?... (Ondine, p. 131)" Omphale was a queen in mythology who bought Hercules as a slave when he was ordered to sell himself to expiate a murder he had committed in a fit of madness. He performed many services for her and she finally became his

⁶²Kleckner, op. cit., p. 83.

mistress and bore him children.⁶³ Throughout the play, at each mention of Hercules, Giraudoux makes light of this great Greek hero and his deeds. Since the mood of the entire play is light and full of fantasy, Giraudoux's references to Hercules and mythology are in keeping with the mood of the play.

Of all Giraudoux's works none is so full of mythological references as La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu. A thousand years or so before the birth of Christ the Greeks actually made war on the Trojans, and the war was probably the result of trade rivalry. The Greeks were victorious and, soon after the war was over, the Greeks began to turn history into legend. The cause of the war, according to the poets, was not trade rivalry between Greeks and Trojans but personal rivalry between three powerful goddesses and the abduction of Helen by Paris.⁶⁴ The subject of the familiar story is the abduction of Helen by Paris and the dire consequences of this act. Giraudoux develops the story of the abduction in such a way that Helen is not the immediate cause of the war as she was in mythology. The title itself indicates the theme--the hope of avoiding war and the fatal advancement toward it. Borrowing its characters from mythology, the play recounts Hector's efforts to prevent the Trojans from fighting the Greeks merely because a Trojan prince abducted a Greek queen. Here we see the Trojan side of the events. In the play Giraudoux combines modern reality in an

⁶³Catherine B. Avery (ed.), Classical Handbook (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1962), p. 540.

⁶⁴Gayley, op. cit., p. 378.

antique setting which is that of the city of Troy on the eve of the famous siege. The starting point of the Trojan War is provided by Giraudoux's knowledge of the classics, but the resemblance to mythology ends here because only the characters and the basic situations are borrowed. The entire dramatic development has been built by Giraudoux as he works from the idea that the war between Troy and Greece is as yet undecided to the point where it becomes inevitable. The action of the play occupies a short time just before war is declared between the Greeks and the Trojans, and is filled with the speculation of those who consider that the war can be avoided and those who feel that it is inevitable.

Hector, the chief Trojan champion and a brilliant and chivalrous fighter, is perhaps Giraudoux's noblest character. In both mythology and the play he does not approve of what his brother has done, and he counsels all to give up Helen for the sake of peace. Hector loved glory and battle, and the great joys of victory and the excitement of the risk in war were his but, upon returning home from his last victory, he has a horror of war and brings back with him the idea that peace is the only good thing in life. Hector expresses his dislike of war to Andromache when he says: "Les autres sont comme moi. L'armée que j'ai ramené hait la guerre," but Andromache answers by saying: "La guerre est dans Troie, Hector! C'est elle qui vous a reçus aux portes (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 99)." Giraudoux portrays Hector as a noble, loving husband, loyal friend, and a brave soldier who has seen the sufferings of war. He sees that there are really no enemies in war, but simply men fighting against each other for he says of the enemy: "On a de l'amour pour lui (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 98)." Hector is tired of bloodshed and wants peace; even

to the point that he can swallow his pride to maintain peace. Hector sneers at Paris' explanation of his infatuation with Helen. Paris says: "Même au milieu de mes bras, Hélène est loin de moi." To this Hector snaps back: "Très intéressant! Mais tu crois que cela vaut une guerre, de permettre à Paris de faire l'amour à distance? (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 100)" In Giraudoux's play we see that, at times, the characters almost mock each other. Hector, in his efforts to insure peace says: "Dis-moi pourquoi nous trouvons la ville transformée, du seul fait d'Hélène? Dis-moi ce qu'elle nous a apporté qui vaille une brouille avec les Grecs! (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 105)" Hector almost succeeds in averting war but, at the end of the play, he knows he has lost his battle. Hector's nobility of character can be seen in the fact that, although he above all tried to avert war, he becomes the bravest of the Trojans as his honor compells him to fight for family and country.

Andromache, Hector's wife, is an ideal wife, a loving mother whom Hector adores and admires deeply for she is aware of the consequences of war and the need for peace, and she is prepared to risk all in favor of her high ideals. At the beginning of the play she sees no reason for war because Helen and Paris do not care for each other but later, when she realizes that the conflict is unavoidable, she beseeches Helen to try to love Paris so that the war may at least have a sufficient cause. In the play Andromache's son who is not born at the time the events of the play take place, is mentioned in the play when Giraudoux uses the parent's anticipation of his birth as a means of expressing their attitudes about war in general. Helen with prophetic vision sees the death of Astyanax as he is hurled by

the Greeks from the walls of Troy to his death so that he will not restore the kingdom.

Priam reigned over Troy at the time of the war, and his chief distinction is the fact that he is the father of many noble children. He is an old man in the play and has come under the spell of Helen's beauty. He wants war for the honor and valor it brings and, like the elders in the play, he is intoxicated with Helen's beauty. Hecuba, his second wife and Hector's mother, is on the side of wisdom and with her son Hector opposes war. In the myth, she is important as Hector's mother but in the play she is important in that she shows wisdom and sees and understands the reality of the situation at hand. She makes fun of some of the ideas presented by others in this delicate situation. When Demokos, the poet and one of Giraudoux's original characters, explains to her what a woman is, she answers: "Voilà cinquante ans que je suis femme et je n'ai jamais pu encore savoir su juste ce que j'étais (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Fucciani, p. 106)."

Paris, a Trojan prince and Helen's abductor, is pictured in the play as a young man infatuated but definitely not in love with beautiful Helen. Reference is made in the play to the fact that before Paris was born Hecuba dreamed that she had given birth to fiery serpents and awoke screaming that Troy was in flames. Her dream was interpreted to mean that the child she would bear would bring disaster to Troy.⁶⁵ Although in the play Giraudoux makes it quite plain that the war is a result of fate, Paris' abduction of

⁶⁵Murray, op. cit., p. 255.

Helen was the reason for the quarrels and discussions that led to war. In the play the characters are divided into those who favor war and Helen and those who favor peace and the return of Helen; however, Paris is so interested in sensual pleasure that he cannot be concerned with war or the effects of war on the people.

Of all the characters in the play, Cassandra most nearly represents in the play what she did in the myth. She had been loved by Apollo, who gave her the gift of prophecy, but she rejected his advances. He punished her by decreeing that, although her visions of the future would always be true, no one would believe her. Before and during the Trojan War, she prophesied many dire events, but her predictions were always received with scorn and disbelief. The more accurately she predicted disaster, the more convinced her hearers were that she was mad.⁶⁶ Paris expresses this well when he says: "Pour une fois qu'elle dit le présent au lieu de l'avenir, c'est la vérité (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 102)." Cassandra always speaks of the future rather than the present, and much of what she says is ignored. Here Paris sarcastically mentions that for once she can speak of the present and tell the truth when Cassandra says that Priam loves Helen more than he loves his own daughters.

Troilus and Polyxena, Priam and Hecuba's youngest son and daughter, have a small but significant part in Giraudoux's story. Giraudoux presents Troilus in a scene with Helen in which she flirts with him. The scene lasts only a few minutes but it is significant in that Giraudoux shows that Helen

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 382.

really is not in love with Paris, but in love with love, or perhaps in love with men in general. When Troilus does not respond to her demand, she says: "Tu sais que tu m'obliges pour la première fois à crier, en parlant à un homme? Ils sont toujours tellement collés à moi... (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 115)." Helen's flirtation with Troilus results in his falling in love with her. Polyxena is a small girl in the story, and she merely listens to the discussions of her elders; however, in one scene Andromache sends her to Helen in hopes that her childlike ways can give Helen thoughts of leaving. Polyxena goes to Helen and says: "Si vous nous aimez, partez!" To this Helen replies: "Cela ne me paraît pas très logique. Si tu aimais quelqu'un, tu le quitterais? (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 126)." However, Helen knows who has sent Polyxena and why she has been sent.

The two most important characters in the play are Ulysses and Hector, for the negotiations for peace and the prevention of war are left in their hands. Even Iris, the messenger sent by Zeus and two goddesses, says: "Il s'en rapporte donc à Hector et à Ulysse pour que l'on sépare Hélène et Paris tout en ne les séparant pas. Il (Zeus) ordonne à tous les autres de s'éloigner, et de laisser face à face les négociateurs (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 136-37)." In mythology, Ulysses is represented as a brave man of great wisdom and ingenuity, always ready with a stratagem to save the day and never wanting in sage counsel or valor.⁶⁷ In La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu he is represented as a man of wisdom and

⁶⁷ Avery, op. cit., p. 308.

statesmanship whose knowledge of and scepticism about men and the gods enables him to look upon human affairs with cold detachment. Ulysses sincerely does not believe that peace is humanly possible but is willing to try; he knows that wars are caused and arranged by a few but are fought and suffered by the majority. Ulysses, the leader and negotiator for the Greeks, is prepared to try for reconciliation even though he feels mistrustful of what this thing called destiny does to the lives of men. Giraudoux gives an insight into Ulysses and Hector during the minutes they spend together weighing their responsibilities. In the discourse between Hector and Ulysses, Ulysses describes their positions thus:

A la veille de toute guerre, il est courant que deux chefs des peuples en conflit se rencontrent seuls dans quelque innocent village, sur la terrasse au bord d'un lac, dans l'angle d'un jardin. Et ils conviennent que la guerre est le pire fléau du monde, et tous deux, à suivre du regard ces reflets et ces rides sur les eaux, à recevoir sur l'épaule ces pétales de magnolias, ils sont pacifiques, modestes, loyaux. Et ils s'étudient. Ils se regardent.... Ils ne trouvent dans le visage d'en face aucun trait qui justifie la haine, aucun trait qui n'appelle l'amour humain.... Et ils sont vraiment comblés de paix, de désirs de paix. Et ils se quittent en se serrant les mains, en se sentant des frères.... Et le lendemain pourtant éclate la guerre... Ainsi nous sommes tous deux maintenant (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 138).

In this discourse Ulysses expresses the thought he has entertained in his mind from the beginning--the thought that he is willing to try to outwit destiny for peace, but he cannot win. Upon leaving Hector, Ulysses asks him if Hector knows what gives him courage to leave and he says:

"Andromaque a le même battement de cils que Pénélope (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 141)." Ulysses sees Penelope in Andromache because they resemble each other and have the same type of character. He realizes that one of them will be left a widow after the inevitable war.

Perhaps of all the characters, Helen's personality is changed more by Giraudoux than any other character from mythology. Helen, the daughter of Jupiter and Leda and the wife of King Menelaus of Sparta, was, according to mythology, the most beautiful woman of her age, and she chose Menelaus among her many suitors. Those who had been suitors took an oath that they would defend her from all injury and avenge her cause if necessary. She was living happily with Menelaus when Paris, their guest, and Venus persuaded her to elope with him. Thus arose the famous Trojan War, the theme of the greatest poems of antiquity.⁶⁸ Giraudoux turns the episode of her abduction into a farce when he describes Menelaus as being unable to pursue Helen and Paris because a crab has hold of his big toe. In mythology, Menelaus was not home at the time of the abduction. In the play Helen is also a prophetess but, when she explains to Hector that her prophetic visions are sometimes in vivid colors, and sometimes colorless, he merely sneers: "album de chromes (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 112)." In the play she is not the figure of remorse found in the Iliad, but she is a captive of fate. Her role is best described in the words of Ulysses:

Nous parlons d'Hélène. Vous vous êtes trompés sur Hélène, Paris et vous. Depuis quinze ans je la connais, je l'observe. Il n'y a aucun doute. Elle est une des rares créatures que le destin met en circulation sur la terre pour son usage personnel... mais si vous les touchez, prenez garde! C'est là la difficulté de la vie, de distinguer, entre les êtres et les objets, celui qui est l'otage du destin. Vous ne l'avez pas distingué (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 140)."

Here, Helen is merely a means of crystallizing certain emotions necessary for war. Giraudoux portrays her as being self-centered for, although she

⁶⁸ Balfinch, op. cit., p. 215.

willingly agrees to anything, she gets her way in the end. To those who admire her she becomes a symbol of beauty and a slogan of war. The elders admire her and the poets want to write poems and songs about her. Giraudoux pictures her as a person who takes pleasure where she finds it and accepts her beauty and the misery of war with indifference. She has no pity for others because she has no pity for herself. She says herself that if war comes she will not shrink from the hardships it brings just as she will not shrink from the loss of her beauty with advanced age. She does not see much sense in love, for she loves neither Paris nor Menelaus. She does not care to know anything about sentiments because she does not want to be bothered. She says: "Je laisse l'univers penser à ma place. Cela, il le fait mieux que moi (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 111)." She accepts things as they are because she herself is an instrument of fate.

Giraudoux includes some passages in his play that one would take as references to Homer but which prove to be his own invention. He also includes several characters of his own; most of these characters promote the cause of war in some way or other. There is Busiris, the expert on international law who can, under pressure, come to any desired interpretation of the facts and there is Demokos, the poet, who glorifies war and has the leading role in forcing war on the Trojans, for it is he who, at the end of the play, opens the gates of war in his dying moments. At the end of the play Demokos tries to invite the Trojans to war when he learns that Helen is to be returned. In order to silence him, Hector strikes him but in his dying moments Demokos shouts that Ojax, a Greek, has killed him. Thus, the stage for war is set and the gates open once again.

Giraudoux shows that the events presented in the Iliad are not merely episodes of an ancient Greek legend because they have a very human significance. He shows the emotions gripping Troy when the outbreak of war appears inevitable, and the frantic and useless efforts made to avert the disaster. In this, one can see the fears, anxieties, and worries that confront peoples of all times in times of such crises. In Hector and Ulysses Giraudoux portrays the efforts of our modern diplomats in their efforts to maintain peace through peaceful negotiations. Giraudoux suggests that perhaps, if warriors such as Hector and Ulysses could be left alone to settle the differences of two nations, peace would endure. However, he emphasizes the fact that it takes only a handful of people, like the instigators of the Trojan War, to incite war. In La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu the majority is in favor of peace but it takes only a small incident and minority group to excite the tiger at the gates of Troy. In the play in one of Ulysses' speeches, Giraudoux presents his argument in favor of world government (La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, Pucciani, p. 138).² In La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu Giraudoux used characters from a classical theme to present his ideas about modern-day methods of diplomacy between nations and to satirize war propaganda. In portraying his characters and creating them he makes them more appropriate to modern Germany and France than to ancient Greece.

Giraudoux uses another classical theme in his play Electre, which may be considered as a follow-up of La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, since the play emphasizes the events that took place on the home front during and after the war. The principal characters are those in the house

of Agamemnon, ruler of Argos, brother of Menelaus, and commander-in-chief of the allied Greeks who went to the siege of Troy. Once again Giraudoux uses the main plot and characters of mythology but changes the plot and circumstances at will. Although the play takes place some twenty years after the death of Agamemnon, he is repeatedly mentioned throughout the entire story. The play itself is concerned with justice and conscience. As the play opens some twenty years have gone by since Aegisthus and Clytemnestra have murdered Agamemnon. All traces of the crime seem to have disappeared and Aegisthus, as regent, reigns over a peaceful and prosperous country.

Agamemnon, according to myth, came from a very noble and royal family, but one whose history was a history of bloodshed because of a curse that caught four successive generations in a web of crime. Atreus, Agamemnon's father and king of Mycenae, took revenge upon his brother Thyestes by killing two of Thyestes' children and serving their hearts to their father for a banquet. Thyestes, Aegisthus' father, took over Atreus' throne but was later driven out by the brothers, Agamemnon and Menelaus.⁶⁹ Aegisthus took advantage of Agamemnon's absence during the Trojan War, went back to Mycenae, took Clytemnestra as a lover, and became regent.

Perhaps of all the characters in the play, Agamemnon most nearly represents what he does in mythology. In the myth he incurred the deep anger of Clytemnestra by persuading her to send their daughter Iphigenia to Aulis on the pretext that she was to marry Achilles. She was, instead, seemingly to be sacrificed to Diana. Before embarking on the voyage to

⁶⁹ Rose, op. cit., p. 247.

Aulis, Agamemnon in hunting killed a stag which was sacred to Diana, and the goddess in return visited the army with pestilence and produced a calm which prevented the ships from leaving port. The virgin goddess could only be appeased by the sacrifice of a virgin on her altar, and none other than Iphigenia would do.⁷⁰ However, Diana takes pity on Iphigenia at the last moment and carries her away to Crimea where Orestes meets her. Throughout the entire play Clytemnestra's great hatred for Agamemnon prevails, and she finally confesses her extreme hatred when she says to Electra: "Oui, je le haïssais. Oui, tu vas savoir enfin ce qu'il était, ce père admirable (*Electre*, p. 202)." Clytemnestra confesses she hated Agamemnon from the moment she saw him. When Agamemnon returns home from the war he brings Cassandra with him, and, although Clytemnestra has long since taken Aegisthus as her lover, she resents this. Aegisthus and Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon the day of his return home. Girardoux describes the scene of the killing thus: "... elle avait délié le lacet de la cuirasse, et les lèvres d'or déjà s'écartaient, et Egisthe.--Ah! voilà pourquoi il était beau, Egisthe! Cette beauté, Agamemnon l'avait vu envahir Achille tuant Hector, Ulysses tuant Dolon--approchait, l'épée renversée (*Electre*, p. 209)." In the war it was Achilles, one of the Greek heroes, who killed Hector; and Dolon, a Trojan spy, was captured and killed by Ulysses.

When the play begins Agamemnon's daughter, Electra, is about twenty years old; and Aegisthus and Clytemnestra have established themselves as rulers of Argos. Aegisthus is an intelligent political leader who realizes

⁷⁰Bulfinch, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

that he must act so that he neither angers the gods nor men. Aegisthus says:

On voit parfois les corneilles ou les daims succomber sous des épidémies inexplicables: c'est peut-être que le coup destiné aux hommes a porté trop haut ou trop bas. Quoi qu'il en soit, il est hors de doute que la règle première de tout chef d'un état est de veiller féroceement à ce que les dieux ne soient point secoués de cette léthargie et de limiter leurs dégâts à leurs réactions de dormeurs, ronflement ou tonnerre (Electre, p. 41).

Aegisthus believes that the best thing for man to do is to avoid any move which might attract the gods' attention. If the gods are not awakened, man can live in peace; but, if they are awakened, the result is a calamity.

In mythology Clytemnestra and Aegisthus marry immediately after they murder Agamemnon while in the play, some twenty years after the murder, they are still not married. No thought of marriage is mentioned until almost the end of the play when Aegisthus is informed that the Corinthians are attacking Argos and intend to destroy it. Aegisthus knows that the armies of Argos have never had to obey a queen and need a king to command. Thus Aegisthus solves the problem when he says: "Capitaine, annonce à la garde que le mariage est célébré, à l'instant même (Electre, p. 170)."

Aegisthus' primary concern in the play is to insure the safety of his regency, but Electra stands in his way. He knows what Electra thinks and feels, and he decides that he must remove her from her elevated position as the daughter of well-known royal parents. While nothing of this is mentioned in the myth, in Electre Aegisthus makes plans to marry Electra to a gardener; thus making her a plain wife and putting her into obscurity. At the beginning of the play preparations are being made for Electra's wedding to the gardener who really loves her, but the plans are upset by the appearance of her brother Orestes disguised and known to all simply as the

stranger. It is Orestes who prevents the marriage by pretending that he will marry Electra. Since Electra's marriage falls through, Aegisthus entertains the idea of murder. A beggar who seems to understand the situation only too well says: "Electre...Je voudrais bien la voir avant qu'on la tue." To this Egisthus replies innocently: "Tuer Electre? Qui parle de tuer Electre? (Electre, p. 47)" and the beggar answers: "Moi, j'ai une qualité. Je ne comprends pas les paroles des gens. Je n'ai pas d'instruction. Je comprends les gens... Vous voulez tuer Electre (Electre, p. 48)." It is the purpose of the conspirators Clytemnestra and Aegisthus to get rid of Agamemnon's family so their hold on the throne might be secure. In the case of Electra, Aegisthus thinks of two possibilities: marrying her into obscurity or getting rid of her altogether. Clytemnestra protests Electra's marriage because of the inferior social status it will give her. As for Orestes, Aegisthus believes him to be with a kinsman because Electra saved Orestes' life at the time of Agamemnon's murder.

In the versions of Electra before Giraudoux wrote his, Electra's revenge is the result of foreknowledge and planning extended over years, but Giraudoux imagines that Electra, until just before the arrival of Orestes, is ignorant of the crime committed against her father. All Electra knows is that she has an unexplained and almost fanatical hatred for her mother. Throughout the entire play Electra searches for the reason for her hatred and toward the end she realizes that Clytemnestra not only has a lover but also that she helped him kill Agamemnon. Giraudoux introduces a second theme in the story. Electra is faced not only with the choice of allowing her father's murderers to go without punishment or to punish them, but also

the choice of allowing her city Argos to continue to thrive under Aegisthus' rule or bring disaster upon the city through his death. Aegisthus, towards the end of the play, shows repentance and even asks for Electra's help in saving the city, but Electra is so obsessed by the need for revenge that she is willing to sacrifice the entire city of innocent people because she feels that only pure rather than bloodstained hands can save anything. In the last part of the play Giraudoux emphasizes this desire of Aegisthus' to save the city; in the myth itself the avenging of Agamemnon's death is of prime importance. Although Aegisthus, who has the power to imprison both Electra and Orestes, tries for a compromise, Electra refuses to delay the punishment of the crime irregardless of the consequence, for in her belief of truth and purity she finds her only comfort. Through the entire play Electra shows a strong love and attachment for her father. Actually she has seen very little of her father. She expresses her feelings toward her mother when she says: "C'est justement ce que je ne peux supporter d'elle, qu'elle m'ait mise au monde. C'est là ma honte...J'aime tout ce qui, dans ma naissance revient à mon père... Tout ce qui est de cette naissance du côté de ma mère, je le hais (Electre, p. 87)." Electra loves Orestes not so much for himself, perhaps, as for the fact that she sees in him an instrument for revenge. Both in the myth and in the play we can see Electra's great desire and longing for her brother's return; however, in the play he has a relatively minor role. In mythology Orestes returns to Argos with the sole intention of revenging his father's death, because an oracle has advised him to do so. In the play Orestes returns home but at first he cannot understand Electra's hatred for Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. It is

Electra who tells Orestes of the murder and conspiracy. In Act II Electra tells Orestes how she knows of the assassination when she says:

Son cadavre cette nuit m'est apparu, tel qu'il était le jour du meurtre, mais c'était lumineux, il suffisait de lire: 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 soulier 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 (*Electra*, p. 133).

When Electra begins to accuse Clytemnestra of taking a lover and finally of killing Agamemnon, Clytemnestra denies all of it, but finally she admits she has a lover. Of Agamemnon's death Clytemnestra vows that it was an accident.

Aegisthus is warned of Orestes' return because he goes to Clytemnestra and says of Orestes: "Ils revient pour reprendre le trône de son père, pour m'empêcher d'être régent, vous d'être reine... Des émissaires à lui circulent et préparent une émeute. Rassurez-vous. A tout je mettrai bon ordre... (*Electra*, p. 94).

When Aegisthus says this, little does Clytemnestra realize that she has met her son in the disguise of the stranger whom she believes married Electra. Clytemnestra meets Orestes again later in the play and recognizes him. She becomes afraid of Orestes and she asks Electra to help her but Electra says:

Tu mens. Tu n'as point peur d'Oreste. Tu le vois comme il est: passionné, changeant, faible. Il rêve encore d'une idylle chez les Atrides. C'est moi que tu redoutes, pour moi que tu joues ce jeu dont le sens m'échappe encore (*Electra*, p. 146).

The ending of the play is quite like that in mythology. Orestes does kill Clytemnestra, and then he flees, followed by the Ermenides. Electra is

satisfied and she expresses her satisfaction by saying: "J'ai la justice. J'ai tout (*Electre*, p. 218)." One of the Eumenides tells Electra what she can expect when she says: "Oreste! Plus jamais tu ne reverras Oreste. Nous te quittons pour le cerner. Nous prenons ton âge et ta forme pour le poursuivre. Adieu. Nous ne le lâcherons plus, jusqu'à ce qu'il délire et se tue, maudissant sa soeur (*Electre*, p. 218)." At the end of the play, Electra is seen as a tragic figure who is a symbol of truth and has accomplished her mission, for she is a creature chosen by destiny to accomplish a particular goal.

Giraudoux adds two characters of his own who are significant to the play, namely the gardener and the beggar. Giraudoux uses the gardener who was supposed to be the future husband of Electra to deliver the sentimental speeches in the play. At the end of Act I, the gardener delivers a lament which he frankly announces is not part of the play but merely tells "ce que la pièce ne pourra vous dire (*Electre*, p. 113)." The beggar is a simple fellow in appearance, but he has a great insight into human nature for he sees and understands happenings which the other characters do not see nor comprehend.

Although Giraudoux borrowed the characters and basic ideas from mythology, the plot is definitely his own. Through the entire play we see Electra's complete obsession of hate for her mother and Aegisthus, her desire to know the truth, and her ultimate goal which is vengeance.

In three of his plays Giraudoux makes references to mythological figures to put across a point he wishes to make but these figures do not necessarily have any direct connection with the remaining part of each.

particular play or to the other characters in the play. He refers to these figures to prove a point, allude to some particular incident, or simply to state a fact. He does this in three of his plays Ondine, Amphitryon 38, and Pour Lucrèce.

In Ondine le chevalier speaks to Auguste, Ondine's foster father, about the adventurous life of a knight. The knight says: "Nous délivrions Andromède et cela nous valait le droit à une retraite à soixante ans (Ondine, p. 53)." The knight refers to Andromeda, daughter of King Cepheus of Ethiopia. Her mother had offended the sea nymphs and they sent a sea monster to ravage the coast. This monster would not leave until Andromeda had been offered as a sacrifice. Perseus saw the maiden fastened with chains to a rock and the monster rising out of the sea ready to devour her. He rushed down upon the monster, killed it, saved Andromeda, and later married her.⁷¹ In this particular passage the knight refers to this incident in mythology to explain that one of the duties of knights is to rescue maidens in distress and, for this act of mercy, he is rewarded.

In Pour Lucrèce Paola gives Lucile a sleeping potion, and she falls to the floor in a deep sleep. Paola, while looking at the sleeping Lucile, says:

Toute femme est comme toi, belle Lucile, achevée comme une clef.
Que vais-je bien ouvrir avec toi! Le scandale? Le malheur? Nous
allons voir ce que tu ouvres. Pas une de tes moulures, pas une
de tes encoches qui ne m'indique que ce sera un scandale de choix,
un malheur inouï. J'ai la clef d'or de la boîte de Pandore...
Tu l'as voulu puisque tu as voulu que j'ouvre la haine (Pour
Lucrèce, p. 80).

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 119.

Here Paola compares herself to Pandora who opened a box which was forbidden to her, thus allowing all the evils of life to escape. Hope alone remains. Paola represents Pandora who has the power to open the box while Lucile represents the key that opens the box. Paola asks herself what will Lucile as the golden key open and let out. Now that Lucile is unconscious, Paola prepares everything for the supposed seduction and refers to Ariadne when she says: "C'est ton mouchoir d'Ariane (Pour Lucrèce, p. 34)." In mythology, Ariadne, princess of Crete, was deeply in love with Theseus, and he returned her love. She helped him kill the Minotaur that fed on human victims. When he left Crete he took her with him but one morning, while she was sleeping, he abandoned her on an island.⁷² Paola compares Lucile to Ariadne because Paola, to avenge herself of Lucile, drugs her and carries her to a house of bad reputation where Lucile regains consciousness in circumstances which lead her to believe that she has been attacked and abandoned. After the incident is over, Lucile, upon realizing what has happened, is mortified. Paola talks to Lucile of what has happened and says:

De chacun de nos amants, il reste juste ce qui resta au pauvre Orphée après l'assaut de ses prêtresses, une main dont vous reconnaissez surtout la bague, un globe d'oeil, dont vous reconnaissez la veinule plutôt que le regard. Une mamelle, un parfum. C'est peut-être le seul détail qui nous rende imparfaite l'aventure d'hier (Pour Lucrèce, p. 126).

Lucile wants Marcellus, the supposed abductor, killed for the deed, but Paola tries to convince her that it is unnecessary to have the deed avenged since really not much remains from such an affair.

⁷²Lincoln Library of Essential Information, op. cit., p. 323.

In Amphitryon 38 Sosie, Amphitryon's servant, has a proclamation to announce and asks the trumpeteer to play the fanfare, but the trumpeteer wants to talk. Impatiently, Sosie says to him: "Dépêche-toi. Orion paraît, (Amphitryon 38, p. 19)." In mythology Orion was a hunter who dwelt with Diana with whom he was a favorite. She accidentally killed him and, when she realised what she had done, she placed him in the sky as a constellation.⁷³ Sosie refers to the constellation Orion as a sign of the approach of darkness. Sosie's evening proclamation is one of peace, but at almost the same moment Amphitryon is with Alcmena saying his farewell before departing for war. Amphitryon and Alcmena speak of their love for each other and he says:

Attends-moi donc sans crainte. Je serai bientôt revenu, et ce sera pour toujours. Une guerre est toujours la dernière des guerres. Celle-ci est une guerre entre voisins; elle sera brève. Nous vivrons heureux dans notre palais, et quand l'extrême vieillesse sera là, j'obtiendrai d'un dieu, pour la prolonger, qu'il nous change en arbres, comme Phlémon et Baucis (Amphitryon 38, p. 46).

Both Amphitryon and Alcmena express their desires to be together forever and he says in consolation that they will be like Phlémon and Baucis who, as a reward from Jupiter for their hospitality, were changed into trees upon reaching old age so that they might be together always. Thus, he says that they too will live side by side in tranquillity forever.

In Amphitryon 38 Jupiter tells Mercury that man believes there is a conflict between man and the gods and goes on to say: "Nous avons pris une énorme peine à leur imposer l'usage du feu, pour qu'ils croient nous l'avoir

⁷³Ibid., p. 260.

volé... (Amphitryon 38, p. 99)." Here Jupiter refers to man's acquisition of fire but Giraudoux leads us to believe that the gods gave man fire when mythology tells us that Prometheus gave fire to man. In this same scene Jupiter is amazed at Alcmena's will and endurance and says: "Je n'exagère pas. Alcène la tendre Alcène, possède une nature plus irréductible à nos lois que le roc. C'est elle le vrai Prométhée (Amphitryon 38, p. 99)." In mythology Prometheus was punished by Jupiter for giving fire to man by being chained to Mount Caucasus where an eagle preyed by day upon his liver, which grew again by night.⁷⁴ He came to be known for his endurance and defiance of the gods, and it is in this way that Giraudoux compares Alcmena to Prometheus. Prometheus defied Jupiter by giving fire to man, while Alcmena defied Jupiter by resisting his advances.

For the Greeks the heroes were paragons of excellence. They felt closer to them, perhaps, than to the gods for the ordeals the heroes underwent in pursuit of immortality or fame made them seem more vivid and more admirable. Giraudoux confines his references to and uses of mythological figures to primarily two plays, La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu and Electre. Even though he took the names of the characters in his plays from mythology, he very definitely used his wit and imagination in applying them to his own adaptation of the story. In his use of these figures he keeps the original essence of the character but adds his own ideas to this essence so that in his story they convey the ideas intended.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 338.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The gods and the heroes are largely creatures of Greek fantasy, yet they seem even more vivid and alive than those who invented them. The entire range of human emotions and human experiences is there because these gods and heroes are prototypes of all human experiences. All the Greeks knew the stories not only as a wonderful legacy from ancient civilization but as stories of the gods to whom they prayed and sacrificed. It is for the human reasons that our modern playwrights have turned to Greek mythology for the characters and plots of their plays. In recent years there have been many retellings of the Greek legends, in poetry, prose, and drama, and one of the most interesting groups is the neo-Hellenic French dramatists of whom Giraudoux is one. Giraudoux wrote about the myths for, perhaps, several reasons. The myths are permanent stories, and they deal with all the great problems--problems that do not change because, basically, man does not change and neither do his problems. Giraudoux's myths deal with love, war, fate, sin, tyranny, courage, and the relation of man to divine powers; they are simple yet the content contains significant thoughts for all men. Giraudoux was primarily interested in originality in the treatment of a subject rather than originality of the subject itself. His idea was to transform a well-known story into something else. By rehandling the legends, he was able to deal with contemporary problems and his idea of fate as an irresistible force much more broadly and easily than if he had invented a contemporary plot of his own because the myths lent themselves to such a

treatment. By bringing the myths nearer to humanity he made them more real, and he found in them an inexhaustible source of ideas of contemporary problems which could be treated as versions of Greek myths. His plots were almost always the same as the myths on which they were based but he gave them a new implication by explaining the facts in a different, yet interesting way. In his treatment of the myths he added, subtracted, and sometimes altered the story to suit his purpose. By rehandling the myths, he was able to bring out his own ideas about contemporary problems. His characters are personalities taken from mythology, but they often step out of character to voice the author's ideas on one subject or another. Giraudoux himself said that his characters belong not necessarily to ancient Greece or contemporary France, but to all times and to all men because their problems are universally the same. He said that as far as the characters of his plays are concerned, even though they come from ancient Greece, they would not be out of character dressed in an everyday suit or dress because their speech is not archaic, but modern, and their thoughts are modern. Although his characters come from myths, he has modernized them by infusing in them the feelings, preoccupations and idiosyncrasies of the social groups to which they belong for he combines modern reality with an antique setting. He depends upon allusions to events in mythology as a comic device, and his humor often breaks the tragic elements in his plays. One of the ideas that seems to recur persistently throughout his works is his idea that life is controlled by a superior, guiding fate against which man can do nothing. Whenever Giraudoux finds it necessary to assign a cause to an unexpected event or surprise, he attributes its cause to fate. Almost all of Giraudoux's works

lend themselves to mythological interpretations, but the actual myth is general and sometimes ambiguous in nature. In his plays he blends two worlds: the world of fantasy and the world of reality. The ancient fables are thoroughly reinterpreted by his keen, modern mind because he is very aware of the fact that man's fate today does not differ much from what it was in the time of ancient Greece.

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Clurman, Harold. "Theatre - Jean Giraudoux," Nation (May 7, 1960), p. 411.

A review of the play "Duel of Angels," the English version of Pour Lucrèce.

De Beauplan, Robert (ed.). "Amphitryon 38," La petite Illustration, no. 471 (March 15, 1930), pp. 1-32.

The selection includes the play, photographs, and critical comments. In discussing the title, it is stated that none of the preceding versions resemble Giraudoux's version, and that is the essential thing.

- _____. "Cantique des Cantiques," La petite Illustration, no. 899 (December 17, 1938), pp. 3-12, 15.
Of Giraudoux he says that his versions of the myths are significant because they have modern ideas in them. The play and critical comments are included.
- _____. "Electre," La petite Illustration, no. 826 (June 19, 1937), pp. 1-36.
The selection includes the play and critical comments. A general summary of the play is also included.
- _____. "Intermezzo," La petite Illustration, no. 625 (May 6, 1933), pp. 1-32.
In the comments about the play and Giraudoux's writings it is pointed out that Giraudoux is the most difficult writer to attach to a school of writing or to a movement.
- _____. "La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu," La petite Illustration, no. 751 (December 14, 1935), pp. 1-30.
It is mentioned in the comments that Giraudoux wished to present the absurdity, inhumanity, and horror of war.
- _____. "L'Impromptu de Paris," La petite Illustration, no. 899 (December 17, 1938), pp. 2-14, 16.
The selection includes the play, photographs, and comments on the play.
- _____. "Ondine," La petite Illustration, no. 933 (August 26, 1939), pp. 3-38.
De Beauplan believes that the play stresses the fact that two people of different origins cannot live happily together.
- _____. "Tessa," La petite Illustration, no. 703 (December 22, 1934), pp. 1-46.
This includes the play and a brief summary of it.
- Bustis, Morton. "Jean Giraudoux," Theatre Arts Monthly (February, 1938), pp. 127-32.
In this article Giraudoux's form of dramatic expression is discussed. His theater is compared to that of the Greeks, Shakespeare, and Racine.
- Gibbs, Wolcott. "Tiger at the Gates," New Yorker (October 15, 1955), pp. 76-79.
In this analysis of the play, which is the English version of La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu, a character sketch of the major characters in the play is included.
- Hayes, Richard. "Tiger at the Gates," The Commonwealth, LXIII (November 25, 1944), pp. 200-01.
A general review of the English version of La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu with an analysis of the characters in the play.

Hewes, Henry. "Duel of Angels," Saturday Review of Literature (May 7, 1960), p. 26.

A review of the play which is referred to as a "tragedy of purity." "Duel of Angels" is the English version of Four Lucrèce.

_____. "Rape under Glass," Saturday Review of Literature (May 7, 1960), p. 26.

A brief summary of the English version of Four Lucrèce, the article states that the play leads us to believe that life is best suited for compromises rather than extremes.

_____. "Tiger at the Gates," Saturday Review of Literature (October 22, 1955), p. 27.

La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu is reviewed and the article closes with the idea that Giraudoux includes in the play a nice argument for world government.

"Jean Giraudoux," Publisher's Weekly (February 12, 1944).

A brief biographical sketch of Giraudoux and comments on his play, L'Anellon de Bellec.

Lewis, Theophilus. "Tiger at the Gates," America (November 26, 1955), pp. 258 and 260.

In summarizing La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu Lewis says that war gives a nation an excuse for an "emotional binge."

"Online," Commonweal (April 2, 1954), pp. 649-50.

Comments on the stage production of Online. The conclusion is that the play is an allegory on the nature of love.

"Online," Theatre Arts, XXXVIII (May, 1954), pp. 18-20.

In commenting about the play, it is mentioned that Online relates things in the human world to those in her spirit world and most often our world suffers by comparison.

Phelan, Kappo. "The Enchanted," The Commonweal, LI (February 10, 1950), pp. 486-87.

Comments on the stage production of Online and the general theme of the play.

"Poet and Diplomat." (translated from the Pariser Tageszeitung, Paris German-Emigré Daily), The Living Age (October, 1939), pp. 148-50.

A brief biographical sketch of Giraudoux and comments on La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu.

"The Lady of the Lake," New Yorker (February 27, 1954), pp. 74 and 76.

Brief summary of the play, Online. It is stated that the theme is the idea that man, or perhaps all men, falls in love with something bodiless and eternal, beyond human comprehension and gives up mortal love for the illusion of possessing it.

"The Troubles Started by Helen of Troy." Life (October 17, 1955), pp. 164-65.

Of Helen Life says she is no more than a "Greek chippy as irresponsible as she is beautiful."

Valency, Maurice. "Some Facts about a Myth," Theatre Arts, XXXVIII (December, 1954), pp. 32-33.

In reviewing the play Online, Valency says that Online and Hans, because of their different backgrounds, complement each other.

Wyatt, Euphemia Van Rensselaer. "Amphitryon 38," The Catholic World (December, 1937), pp. 338-39.

A review of Amphitryon 38 and a discussion of its general theme.

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Atkinson, Brooks. "Giraudoux Drama," New York Times, June 12, 1955.

Comments on La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu with an analysis of the events that caused the war.

_____. "Tiger at the Gates," New York Times, October 23, 1955.

Atkinson reviews La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu and comments on it. He says that it is a satire not only on the grandeur of the Homeric characters but on the stupidities of human nature.

Clurman, Harold. "Discussion of the Giraudoux Drama Arriving Here from the West End," New York Times, October 2, 1955.

A review of La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu in which Clurman says that Giraudoux shows the ways by which different kinds of people face reality and destiny.

Lesage, Laurence. "Jean Giraudoux," New York Times, December 26, 1948.

A brief discussion of Giraudoux's works which refer to the myths.

Valency, Maurice. "Bellac, France," New York Times, January 15, 1950.

A commentary on Giraudoux's birthplace and its influence on him.

_____. "Knight and Sprite," New York Times, February 14, 1954, pp. 1 and 3.

In reviewing the play Online Valency says that the characters move in a medieval setting, but the story is modern.