

Keats's "Well Wrought Urn" Cracked in
Chaillot by the Giradoux-Valency
"Madwoman"

ALVIN I. DUST

JEAN GIRAUDOUX's *La Folle de Chaillot*, one of the remarkable plays of this century, which was posthumously published and performed for the first time in 1945, becomes even more remarkable, for an English-speaking audience, in the Maurice Valency translation-adaptation as *The Madwoman of Chaillot*.¹ When one examines Valency's assessment of his own work, one sees how apt the double appellation of translator-adaptor is:

As to the nature of these adaptations, it will be sufficient to say that they come as close to the original as in the circumstances it was possible to make them. If by translation is meant a faithful line-by-line rendering of the original, none of these is, strictly speaking, a translation. All were made with a definite end in view, that is, production on the American stage, and for this purpose a line-by-line translation would evidently be of little use. English has another music than French, but it is every bit as beautiful and delicate an instrument for the interpretation of thought and mood. I have tried to make these plays say in English what Giraudoux wished them to say in French. At the least, they are an approximation; at the best, an equivalent. This is about as much as translation can hope to accomplish in the theatre.²

Valency's comments, if somewhat too modest, are clear, ungilded guiding principles of his *modus operandi*; they provide an open statement of intention, as well as giving the reader some knowledge of the difficulties inherent in the task. Here we have a foreign play, transformed by a different language for a different audience, by a conscientious author, attempting an honest rendition that tries to avoid drastic alteration into newness by the intrusion of a new vision. When one does his work so well as

Valency, he deserves the title of "secondary author," especially since only lag of time denies him that of "collaborator." Valency does not stress strongly enough that re-working of a theatrical vehicle requires extraordinary linguistic perceptivity; for the language of a play, at the lowest level of appreciation, must provide almost instantaneous communication. Yet, if the new rendition is to enter the select company of the best, that language must also allow a spaciousness that will inspire the reflective reader to ascend further heights of appreciation. Besides, the structured language used by Giraudoux is not easy to approximate.

Valency remarks that Giraudoux "cultivated a manner which is deliberately provocative, enigmatic, and precious. It is a mannered style, certainly, but not decadent. On the contrary, it is fresh and bright, youthful and enthusiastic."³ On the subject of *preciosité* Conlon adds: "Giraudoux's remarkable subtlety of mind and facility of expression often led him to indulge in that refinement of language known as preciousity. His ideas take the form of complicated conceits, and his vocabulary is often startling in its adoption of archaisms, colloquialisms, technical jargon, and odd juxtapositions; he is constantly striving, perhaps not always consciously, to give new meaning to language by taking outworn and faded images, and reviving the original freshness of their meaning by the use of unusual antithesis, prolonged imagery, and figurative verbal tricks."⁴ He might also have appended the idea that this vital design of language patterns genuinely fits, as if tailored specifically, the theme and plot of *La Folle*. Even Reilly, another critic, seems captivated by the Giraudoux manner, as, oxymoronically, in mentioning the expressions of the madwomen, he states that they speak "their own special brand of nonsensical sense."⁵ Reilly notes that Giraudoux's writing abounds in "rhetorical devices such as polarity, antithesis, and contrast. . . . Antithesis, whether it be France and Germany, man and woman, the real and the ideal or principle and compromise, gives shape to the author's universe. Each contrasting side is presented as an essence, — that is, in its absolute position — and as a result, his writings tend to deal with extreme situations."⁶ All is true of *La Folle*, the world of which is definitely polarized.

Here, a pair of passages, one from *La Folle*, the other from *Madwoman*, with a brief, following interpretation, will illustrate both the style of Girandoux and that personal, "translation-plus" manner of Valency:

(1) *La Folle* (II, p. 170):⁷

Le Prospecteur, <i>criant</i> .	— Pétrole?
La Folle.	— Pétrole.
Le Prospecteur.	— Traces? Suintements?
La Folle.	— Jets. Nappes. Inondation.
<i>Grande euphorie chez ses messieurs.</i>	
Le Prospecteur.	— Odeur sui generis?
La Folle.	— Parfum.

(2) *Madwoman* (II, p. 67):

The Prospectors.	Oil?
The Prospector.	Oil.
Countess.	Oil.
The Prospector.	Traces? Puddles?
Countess.	Pools. Gushers.
Second Prospector.	Characteristic odor? <i>He sniffs</i> .
The Prospector.	Chanel Number 5. Nectar!

The prospector(s) have been offered a concoction, surely the nearest to a witch's brew, which the chief prospector has drunk with great gusto; the melange was prepared from Paris tap water, which earlier native Parisians had refused to drink because of its unpalatability; left-over tea, perhaps not of the best; kerosene; and mud in suspension. Such a mixture is even milder than what these unscrupulous entrepreneurs, whom the ragpicker would call "*mecs*," will meet in their final place of habitation, the sewers of Paris, which, in the play, symbolize hell. In fact, the sewers are where, directed by the Countess, they hope to find the well-spring of their "black gold." This unappetizing, odoriferous, viscid mixture is then designated by *La Folle* as "Parfum," a generic term which does not begin to encompass all the meaning that Valency is able to evoke by his more specific "Chanel Number 5," especially when newly assigned to the prospector as speaker. In France, especially Paris, use of perfume is so general that it may

even be ordered at public baths, and, like wine, the best is exported, leaving only a limited supply of the high-quality product for enjoyment by the most affluent. Valency had to choose a brand name which, on the one hand, is well advertised as a choice French scent, known to the general American public, but, on the other hand, stands for an item expensive enough to conjure up images of conspicuous consumption by not only the rich, but definitely and most tellingly by the *nouveaux-riches*. The use of the trade-name, pointing up the plot line, also dramatically characterizes the habit of mind and personality of the speaker, who has speciously become a rags-to-riches phenomenon. Valency ventures more deeply into the theme of the play when he adds "nectar," which underscores that antithesis and contrast of which Giraudoux was so fond. Nectar signifies the drink which accompanies ambrosia, a food of supreme delicacy, suitably reserved to the classical gods on Mount Olympus. This drink, extreme opposite to the effluent of the Parisian sewers, also suggests classical times and therefore is synonymous with timelessness, supporting a contrast Giraudoux frequently uses. The juxtaposition of Olympus-Heaven and Sewers-Hell is certainly contrast at its most extreme.

These cited passages serve only as a minor entry into awareness of the skill exemplified by the nice literary sense of Valency, for, I believe, he achieves a master stroke, far exceeding the above example, when he parodies with spectacular success the final two lines of Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn." The following three excerpts will augment what has already been said about the Valency translation-adaptation, and, in addition, the Keats passage will stress the secondary author's artistry:

(1) *La Folle* (II, p. 175):

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|----------------------------|--|
| La Folle. | — Parfait. Voici l'entrée pour la visite. |
| Le Syndic, <i>criant</i> . | — O Madame, nous ne visiterons pas. La publicité n'a pas à s'occuper de la réalité. Que votre gisement soit réel ou imaginaire, c'est l'honneur de sa mission, à laquelle elle ne dérogera pas, de le décrire avec le même zèle. |

(2) Madwoman (II, p. 68) :

Countess.	This is the entrance.
First Press Agent.	Entrance to what?
Countess.	The oil well.
First Press Agent.	Oh, we don't need to see that, Madame.
Countess.	Don't need to see it?
First Press Agent.	No, no — we don't have to see it to write about it. We can imagine it. An oil well is an oil well. "That's oil we know on earth, and oil we need to know." <i>He bows.</i>

(3) "Urn" (Stanza V, lines 9-10) :

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty." — that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Obvious here is the enrichment of the original by Valency's interpolated parody of one complete, one partial Keatsian line, a passage made eye-catching by quotation marks. Only a review of the Keats poem can show how apt the choice and then how wonderfully the selection, in parody, fits the Giraudoux-Valency play.

As early as 9 April 1818, a date perhaps fairly near to the time of composition of his poem, Keats wrote to John Hamilton Reynolds, in reaction to criticism of another work: "I have not the slightest feeling of humility towards the Public — or to anything in existence, but the eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of great men,"⁸ a pronouncement which seems to underlie Keats's overwhelming concern for beauty in the abstract and his elevation of it in the poem as being synonymous with the totality of worthwhile knowledge. Of course, one must take these final lines, which Cleanth Brooks labelled "sententious" and which, rightly, he insisted be related to their whole context, at least, in part, as a striking utterance of the urn, well-fashioned by an ancient artisan, which has wisdom to impart, first to the persona of the poem, and then, through Keats, to the world. The urn speaks, overtly, very little, far less than Brooks credits to it. Most of the "speaking" must be "heard" and perceived privately by the "mind's ear" or intuited, internally, not having been externally vocalized and therefore inaccessible to eavesdroppers. Most of the urn-speeches are the same as the "sweeter," "un-

heard melodies," played by the "soft pipes," for we assume answers are received in response to the many questions of the persona. The "sylvan historian," as the urn is named, who may be further personified as an historian both in and out of the woods, is virtually a physical mute, except for its comment in the second-to-last line of the poem, when its words are quoted for the first one-half. For the second half of the penultimate and all of the ultimate lines, one can suggest a third speaker, in addition to the urn and the persona, who summarizes the applicability of the truth-beauty idea to all earthly knowledge.

The poem, therefore, has three speakers: the persona, who questions the urn at length, and to whom the urn, second speaker, gives the truth-beauty comment, which is summarized, rather sententiously, by the third, an observer, almost an intermediary, in sympathy with the other two speakers. He hears the questions of the persona and the urn's comments; then he caps the poem with his concluding remark. Further complications arise when one considers that the complete urn is often displaced in prominence for attention by its parts; for details, pictured on the urn, are often allowed to speak for the full urn. The poem opens by equating the urn with a living, human entity, a "sylvan historian," who is also an "unravish'd bride of quietness," a "foster child of silence and slow time." But later in the poem, when the poet turns to personages and their supposed actions depicted on the urn, we learn of a couple, a "bold lover" and an un-kissed lass of unfading fairness, of which the latter may also be "unravish'd" since she is "For ever warm and still to be enjoyed." In one sense of "unravish'd" one can see the impossibility of her being carried off by force, since she is fixed *en tableau* on the urn; further, Keats dispells violence in the encounter by undercutting the possibility of rape by the use of "enjoyed." He cannot obliterate the suggestion of a sexual liaison, however, when he uses such a word. Keats carries on, into free territories of unbridled imagination, exceeding the limits of his speaking urn by considering a town made desolate because of the activities shown on the urn, certainly an extension beyond the study of what is preserved by the potter's craft. The people have left the town in procession, a principal figure of which is a heifer, a young cow, which has not

yet given birth. One cannot avoid seeing the cow as another unravished creature, which is decorated with garlands and sleekly groomed to have "silken flanks." The cow is being led to sacrifice, a practice one must believe serves a higher end than earthly love. The poem, then, sets up more problems than can be solved here; likely Valency himself, who no doubt had the poem in mind when he re-worked the Giraudoux play, did not go far beyond the surface meaning of the poem. He was attracted to its readily grasped ideas and used its themes to fit his task at hand.

The dramatic qualities within the poem, a main attraction for Valency, are adequately treated by Brooks when he attempts to rebut the objections of T. S. Eliot, who saw the truth-beauty partial line as an extremely disfiguring blemish on the face of the poem.⁹ But when Eliot so criticized the poem, he also defended the "Ripeness is all" speech in *King Lear* because of its relevance to the whole play. Brooks responded to Eliot: "'Ripeness is all' is a statement put in the mouth of a dramatic character which is governed and qualified by the whole context of the play. It does not directly challenge an examination into its truth because its relevance is pointed up and modified by the dramatic context. Now . . . one could show that Keats's lines, *in quite the same way*, constitute a speech, a consciously riddling parader, put into the mouth of a particular character, and modified by the whole context of the poem."¹⁰ "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' has precisely the same status, and the same justification as Shakespeare's 'Ripeness is all.' It is a speech 'in character' and supported by the dramatic context."¹¹ Doubtless it was this dramatic context which allowed Valency to remove the speech, parody it, and transfer it to another dramatic context which evoked for him many other attendant images of the poem. Following Brooks's lead, this then is how we shall consider the First Press Agent's parody, while we also examine the many images of the Keats text which have a bearing on *Madwoman*.

Many correspondences between poem and play could be investigated, an exercise which Valency invites by the Agent's corrupted quotation, which divides the personages of the play into two groups: those who are too insensitive to know the original and therefore are not conscious of its garbling (they wouldn't

care even if they did know), a group to which belong Prospector(s), President(s), Baron, Broker, Press Agents, Ladies; and those sensitive people who make up the rest of the cast, a group, if they did not know the original, would subscribe to its tenets, led by the Madwoman, Countess Aurelia. Of course in both groups are fringe characters who are not so deeply involved as the principals. The play, however, continuously asks us to contrast these two groups, and, in doing so, to examine three concepts: the treatment of time; Aurelia's concern for beauty as it affects her, her world, and that of her companions; and her adjustment, disoriented as it is, to life. Beauty for the Countess is equated with the grotesque, time-warped truth of her own existence.

Central to Keats's poem are the paradoxical confusions of timed sequences in an atmosphere of timelessness. The urn, an artifact petrified in a definite time period, with its figures frozen in poses, caught in the midst of activities incomplete, speaks to another age, far removed from when it was first fashioned. If we may assign the summation "that is . . . all ye need to know" to the postulated, intermediary third speaker, we may offer some slight evidence for proving his existence on the basis of diction. The third speaker uses "ye" as contrast to modern speech, and his emphasis on "all," "need," and "know" connotes timelessness. Though younger than antiquity, he is somewhat older, having experienced a longer living span, than the persona; he therefore speaks a rather dated language. Dated language, however, is not his alone. The persona is also given one "ye" to speak, but in his many lines, he concentrates on "For ever," "ever," and "evermore" while he describes the young lady as one who "cannot fade," who is "For ever . . . fair" amidst trees "never . . . bare." The diction of the persona first impresses a reader as being more archaic than that of the third speaker, but the language only *seems* so. The persona is self-consciously adapting his diction to a time far different from the present, to speak in a language that, unhampered by present time, will facilitate communication between the urn and him. In the self-consciousness is self-revelation; he is a *poseur*, exhibiting an attitude in language which he hopes will achieve sympathetic hearing and elicit apt answers to his

questions. When one removes the attitudinizing, the persona, truly, because less knowledgeable, proves less experienced in life than the third speaker and far less than the urn, the first speaker, eldest of the trio. A further surprise occurs when one considers the diction of the urn. The tables are turned on the persona. The language of the urn is surprisingly modern, but the speech, limited as it is, cannot be dated by language history.

From the very opening of the play, the vehicle exploits the use of timed, definitely dated events and ideas in an aura of controlled timelessness. At the opening of Act I, stage directions give the time as "*a little before noon in the Spring of next year*" (p. 3). While "noon," "Spring" and "next year" cite definite spots in time, the effect of the context signifies manifest improbability leading to timelessness. When we first meet Aurelia, she is dressed in a costume dated 1885 (p. 16); similarly, the dress of her companion madwomen is out of synchrony with that of the majority of characters outside their immediate social circle. Gabrielle's costume reflects the 1880's (p. 42), Constance is "*all in white. She wears an enormous hat graced with ostrich plumes, and a lavender veil*" (p. 42), and Josephine appears in a "*get-up somewhere between the regal and priestly*" (p. 52). The madwoman, however, does move nearer in time to the present, when she tells us that the only newspaper worth reading is dated 22 March 1903; she keeps re-reading this item from the past, even though it now is in tatters (p. 27). Becoming almost modern she complains about the difficulty in donning her underwear; her dressmaker, however, refuses her request to fit in zippers (p. 27). From time to time she recalls events of the past. She knows she lost her feather boa five years ago (p. 17), she chides Josephine for waiting to see President Wilson because "He's been dead since 1924" (p. 52), and, though she treats Constance's dog, Dickie, as if he were living, she later commands Constance not to "fuss over him just as if he were still alive" (p. 43). She realizes that she "let Adolphe Bertaut [her lover] go" (p. 23) and that she only saw him once after he left, "thirty years later" (p. 23). At the end of the play she recalls happenings that took place 24 May 1881, 5 September 1887, and 21 August 1897. By references to President Wilson (pp. 42 and 52) and to Clemenceau (p. 60)

we gain substance for timing the play for the post World War I era, but throughout the play one senses that the author expected parallel reflection on the World War II period. The Countess knows that only death can end worries about time, for, when the Sergeant is remarking about Pierre's suicide attempt, he says, "If he wants to kill an hour, that is," to which the Countess replies, "He doesn't want to kill an hour. He wants to kill himself" (p. 25).

But this strange mélange of definite time periods and timelessness held by the Countess and her circle is odd behaviour to the entrepreneurs who have forced themselves into her beautiful world. As the President, one of these upstarts, says, as he surveys the *habitués* of the Place de l'Alma in the Chaillot quarter: "Baron, the first thing we have to do is to get rid of these people! Good heavens, look at them! Every size, shape, color and period of history imaginable" (p. 17); to the group he would like to exterminate, heaven is the last place to which he should appeal, when he is remarking about eliminating them because of their timelessness. A much-used word by the Countess and her circle while they decry its destruction is "beauty." Beauty to them must be understood in a very broad sense. Irma, the *ingenue* of the play, remarks that "it's an exceptionally beautiful morning" (p. 7), and that she hates ugliness and loves beauty (p. 37). When the Countess says, "The world is beautiful. It's happy. That's how God made it. No man can change it" (p. 31), the Ragpicker counters, "The people are not the same. The people are different. There's been an invasion. An infiltration. From another planet. The world is not beautiful any more. It's not happy" (p. 32). Previously, the Countess, preparing to make her usual periodic tour of Chaillot, had said, "I begin my rounds. I have my cats to feed, my dogs to pet, my plants to water. I have to see what the evil ones are up to in the district — those who hate people, those who hate plants, those who hate animals" (p. 28). Her concept of beauty encompasses well-being for decent humans, tamed animals, and cultivated flowers. When truth dawns that decided changes have occurred, that, as the ragpicker had said, the area has been entered by evil people, intent on destruction, she decides to rectify the problem; and only when the Madwoman has

resolved the problem in her unique way, can Irma rejoice, saying, "Life is beautiful again" (p. 70).

We know of the Countess's care for the animals of Paris, for she comes daily to the cafe, where Irma works, to pick up discarded pieces of meat, edible to the animals she fosters. But she distinguishes between the tamed and the untamed. When she equates certain evil, unmannerly human beings with beasts, she does not think she is down-grading animals, for she chooses for comparison mainly wild, untamed creatures. She remarks to Gabrielle: "Men are changing back into beasts. They know it. They no longer try to hide it. There was once such a thing as manners. . . . But now they no longer pretend. Just look at them — snuffling their soup like pigs, tearing their meat like tigers, crunching their lettuce like crocodiles. A man doesn't take your hand nowadays. He gives you his paw" (p. 46). Only the pig, in her list, is domesticated, but that animal has a bad reputation for uncleanness; the rest of the list are condemned for being wild, preying animals. It is for this reason, no doubt, that she punished the cat: "I struck the cat that was stalking the pigeon — it was worth it —" (p. 28); it should not have been trying to feed on fellow creatures.

The Countess might have approved of Keats's heifer, though she might have had difficulty when she learned it was being led, by human beings, to an altar for slaughter. For this animal seems highly domesticated; its coat has been groomed to silkiness and it wears a garland of flowers; besides, it's still a virgin! In depiction of the heifer, two loves of the Countess in her quest for and preservation of beauty have been unified: tamed animals and flowers. The Countess's care for the flora of Paris is not only manifest in her watering of plants but in her choice of flowers for personal adornment. The Countess asks Pierre, at his revival, "You're looking at my iris? Isn't it beautiful? . . . Yesterday, the flower girl gave me a lily" (p. 23). Later, when she talks to the Sewer Man, she comments, "All I ever throw in the drain is flowers. Did you happen to see a lily float by this morning? Mine. . . tomorrow you shall have this iris" (p. 39). Constance and Gabrielle echo Aurelia in their conversation with the Rag-picker:

Ragpicker: I go through their garbage every day.

Constance: And what do you find there?

Ragpicker: Mostly flowers.

Gabrielle: It's true, you know, the rich are always surrounded with flowers.

Constance: How beautiful. (p. 54)

After the Countess has disposed of the evil men, she hears voices, which in turn announce themselves as friends of animals, friends of people, friends of friendship, and friends of flowers, the last of which promises to water all plants of Paris, while a former voice says "And the sewers will be fragrant with jasmine" (pp. 70-71). The work of the Countess will be carried on by others, even to scenting the sewers, which, before, she has been able to do only minimally by casting down a flower each day in her attempt to bring some beauty into even the most dismal of areas. With the return of beauty, because of the elimination of the evil ones, even the deaf-mute can speak; previously Irma, who had "spoken" to him only in sign language, tells us that "He knows everything" (p. 30). Like the urn, which is a "foster child of silence and slow time" and which, except at the very end of the poem, communicates only by signs, the figures displayed on its surface, the deaf-mute now, too, speaks only one enigmatic line: "Sadness flies on the wings of morning, and out of the heart of darkness comes the light" (p. 71), a line as difficult to interpret as that of the urn.

In considering these evil outsiders, the Countess had characterized them as beasts, below her tamed animals, synonymous with the untamed, cruel, preying ones. They, then, are inimical to all she considers beautiful. As cited before, they would like to eliminate all her friends from the city. Yet even they seem opposed to beastly creatures. Two of their references to the past mention a medieval dragon (pp. 13 and 19), guardian of treasure, a symbol of all those who would stand in their way to prevent their headlong dash to amass fortunes. It is therefore ironic that their destruction comes in the cellar of the Countess's house which is described as an "*ancient vault set deep in the ground, with walls of solid masonry, part brick and part great ashlars, mossy and sweating. A staircase of medieval pattern is built into the thickness of the wall.*" The cellar contains "the

accumulation of centuries" (p. 38). These greedy men would destroy anything to make money. The Prospector says, "They say that where we pass, nothing ever grows again. What of it? Is a park any better than a coal mine? What's a mountain got that a slag pile hasn't? What would you rather have in your garden — an almond tree or an oil well? . . . Imagine the choicest place you ever saw for an excavation, and what do they put there? A playground for children! Civilization!" (p. 13). The President goes a step further. Not only will he excavate open space, but he'll destroy man-made beauty to use the land for profit. He'd dig for oil "Even if it's in the middle of the Louvre" (p. 14). When the President sees the Countess, he looks down on her, and by his comments shows how far he is from understanding her concept of beauty. "That madwoman. . . . Suppose that I — President of twelve corporations and ten times a millionaire — were to stick a gladiolus in my buttonhole and start yelling — Are my bones ready Irma?" (p. 18). He shows his lack of regard for her appreciation of flowers. The height of irony occurs when the President says, "A financier is a creative artist. Our function is to stimulate the imagination. We are poets!" (p. 6). The Press Agents show that they are part of the group of avaricious men and likely share the President's ideas. The Second Press Agent, just before descending into the sewers, steals the gold brick (p. 68) and the First Press Agent, insensitive to poetry, had warped Keats's lines to his own end.

Earlier in the play, evincing his contempt for the heterogeneous natives of Paris, the President remarks, "I tell you, sir, the only safeguard of order and discipline in the modern world is a standardized worker with interchangeable parts. That would solve the entire problem of management. Here, the manager . . . And there — one composite drudge grunting and sweating all over the world. Just we two. Ah, how beautiful!" (p. 17). His concept of beauty, diametrically opposed to that of the Countess, would reduce all persons — except himself, of course — to mere mechanized robots. It is a fitting touch that, by the end of the play, the Countess has reduced her evil men from the category of beasts to that of mere machines, as she hears Irma say, "The

gentlemen of the press are here" to which she responds, "The rest of the machine! Show them in" (p. 67). Of the three groups whom Aurelia sends to her hell, the sewers of Paris, the last to go are the members of the press. After all, it was the First Press Agent who had corrupted the Keats line; hearing his destruction of a thing of beauty, she may then have first decided to administer to this group also her *coup de grâce*, for she must have heard the preceding half line as part of Keats's unheard melodies, sweeter than the heard ones. And Valency, though she did not record this partial line in the play, expected us also to hear it internally because unvoiced.

The Countess has an interesting relation to the poem. While she hears, without vocal effect, the line of the poem, for she has always responded to beauty, she also seems physically depicted on the urn. At the end of the play, the Countess urges Irma and Pierre to "Kiss each other quickly" (p. 72) so that there will not be "another madwoman in Paris" (p. 72). She attributes her madness to desertion by Adolphe Bertaut, and when he returns in a dream-like sequence at the end of the play, she sorrowfully laments, "Too late! Too late!" (p. 71). Throughout the play she is never kissed, and that, perhaps, is the reason why she is insistent that Pierre and Irma seal their love with a kiss. And the Countess must remain un-kissed, if she is to satisfy Keats's poem, where the "Bold lover never, never canst . . . kiss." The girl on the urn will be "Forever ever panting, and for ever young," as is the Countess, always waiting for the return of Bertaut. Yet she cannot be attached to anyone other than Bertaut; for this reason, to break identification with men as young and attractive as Bertaut must have been when he left her, she uses Pierre as a symbol for all young men, and she constantly changes his name. Pierre is first identified by name as an agent of the Prospector (p. 19). When the Countess then meets him, she grasps his hand, recalls Bertaut, and realizes that she was holding Bertaut at their last meeting. When she saw him again, thirty years later, he didn't recognize her. When she addresses Pierre as Roderick, and he protests, she responds that to her his name is Roderick, for "At noon all men become Roderick" (p. 24). The Sergeant interjects, "Except

Adolphe Bertaut" (p. 24) to which the Countess replies, "In the days of Adolphe Bertaut, we were forced to change the men when we got tired of their names. Nowadays we're more practical — each hour on the hour all names are automatically changed. The men remain the same" (p. 24). In succession she changes the name Roderick to Valentine (p. 37) and later, confusing reality with dream, to Bertaut (p. 61). Here identification serves a double purpose: no man is identified with a permanent name, thus forestalling personal involvement, and, by extension, all men are permanently unidentified, except Bertaut. Except that Bertaut return, the Countess must always remain an "unravish'd bride" married to spinsterhood, as a votaress to higher, ethereal, unearthly love. Like the girl on the urn, however, she courts remaining ever young, by dressing as she did when Bertaut was her sweetheart, by avoiding mirrors, by never wearing a faded flower. When Pierre comes in to find the Countess napping, he takes her hand, which brings her to a partially awakened state in which she can imagine that Bertaut has returned. She asks, "Is it you, Adolphe Bertaut?" to receive the reply. "It's only Pierre," which the Countess refuses to accept (p. 61). Pierre, humouring her self-deception, says to her, in the guise of Bertaut, "Yes, I've aged" (p. 62). She retorts, "Not I. I am young because I haven't had to live down my youth like you. I have it with me still, as fresh and beautiful as ever" (p. 62). Just before she becomes fully awake, the Countess allows Pierre to drop his deception, but she has already admitted that she has always kept the illusion of the youthfulness she once had when wooed by Bertaut.

Enough has been given here to lend credence to the strong probability that, no matter how conscious or unconscious the association, Valency, in translating-adapting Giraudoux's *La Folle de Chaillot*, fortified his *Madwoman* with influences from Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and that the Valency production, in images, ideas, and over-all meaning, bears resemblances to the poem too obvious to be by-passed. The American version, then, might almost be seen as an anachronistic, dramatized rendition of the poem itself. The play also stands as an unusual example of enriched translation.

NOTES

¹ Maurice Valency, *Jean Giraudoux. Four Plays, Adapted and With an Introduction*. (New York: Hill and Wang of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1958). *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, pp. 1-72. All English excerpts come from this edition.

I have also used: Jean Giraudoux, *La Folle de Chaillot. Pièce en deux Actes*. Hors-texte de Christian Berard (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1946). All French excerpts come from this edition. Jack Stillinger, ed., *The Poems of John Keats. Definitive Edition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978). All references to Keats's poem come from this edition. This paper is also indebted to Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947). See especially, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," pp. 139-52.

² Valency, "Introduction," p. xxi.

³ Valency, "Introduction," p. ix.

⁴ D. J. Conlon, ed., *La Folle de Chaillot* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963). "Introduction," p. 7.

⁵ John H. Reilly, *Jean Giraudoux* (Boston, Mass.: Twayne Publishers, 1948), p. 126.

⁶ Reilly, p. 43.

⁷ In all dramatic passages, I have italicized only stage directions, disregarding italics usual for foreign terms.

⁸ Harold E. Briggs, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of Keats* (New Modern Library, Random House, 1951). See Letters, pp. 438-40.

⁹ T. S. Eliot, quoted in Brooks, p. 140.

¹⁰ Brooks, pp. 141-42.

¹¹ Brooks, p. 151.