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The Role of Women in the French Baroque Theater.

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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FRENCH BAROQUE THEATER.
THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COL., PH.D., 1978

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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE
FRENCH BAROQUE THEATER

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
The Department of Foreign Languages

by
Mazie Bodden Movassaghi
B.A., Louisiana State University, 1971
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PREFACE

A major portion of the dramatic production of the Baroque period has never been reprinted, therefore to serve our purpose, the original editions were consulted in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Whenever possible, we have maintained the original spelling, but we thought it might facilitate reading if we substitute "j" for "i," "s" for "ʃ" and "n" or "m" whenever a nasal vowel occurs as for instance, "dans" for "dâs."

The plays used in this study constitute a cross section of Baroque drama with no particular attention given to their relative literary importance, but were selected as regard to their relevance to our subject. This means that of the more than one hundred plays reviewed, only half were analyzed. This study does not pretend to be exhaustive, but we hope that no play of pertinence has been left out.
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ABSTRACT

This study set out to determine the function of women in the French Baroque theater. Baroque theater best exemplifies the characteristics of disorder, multiplicity and contradiction inherent to the Baroque movement as a whole, which is comprised of counteracting and opposing forces; these forces are intrinsically linked to religious, social, political, scientific and cultural elements, evolving from the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. One of the major new elements of the Baroque theater is the important part women came to play in it.

A survey of the evolution of the role of women as performers, spectators and playwrights in the theater before the Baroque reveals that this new aspect reflects a change for the better which was gradually occurring due to the ever increasing improvements in living, and in legal and economic conditions.

On the other hand, an attempt to identify the attitudes toward women which make up part of the general intellectual milieu of the period points to three basic models governing these attitudes. Two are essentially religious: the Eve model, responsible for man's temptation and subsequent fall to evil, and the Virgin Mary model who
upholds virtue and is a symbol for man's redemption. The Courtly Love model is basically a literary one where women are idealized. Along with these models one could place the social prominence of women as illustrated in the Querelle des femmes and the role they play in the literary salons.

An analysis of female *dramatis personae* in Baroque drama, taking into account the notion of heroine as mover of the action, that is dynamic, shows that the dynamism of heroines is in direct proportion to their degree of goodness or evil: the more dynamic they are, the more evil; the more passive, the more virtuous.

Once this pattern is identified it becomes evident that there is a correspondence between the Eve model and the dynamic-evil heroine whose activities invariably lead to perdition. On the other hand, the Virgin Mary model corresponds to the passive-good heroine. Ironically, the goodness of the passive heroine appears to act as a catalyst that leads male characters to different manifestations of evil. Passivity of heroine allied to goodness may also be Courtly Love model where the lady remains essentially a passive object of love who provides the knight with a goal to attain. Therefore, despite the awareness brought about by the Querelle des femmes and the new part they play in the Baroque theater, the function of women in the Baroque theater reflects the conventional and traditional attitudes which had always determined them.
Chapter 1

THE FRENCH BAROQUE THEATER

The purpose of the following study is to determine the function of women in the French Baroque Theater, a theater written mostly by men in a world made by and for men. However, before women in the Baroque theater are discussed, a brief sketch of what constitutes the Baroque, and more precisely, Baroque theater, must be in order.

The theater in France is characterized as Baroque at a time (1580-1640) when the tension caused by fifty years of civil and religious warfare was at its height and the optimism of the Renaissance was turning sour under the thrust of skepticism which came to prevail at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. A definition of the Baroque is almost an elusive task, for to be accurate, it must encompass elements of numerous counteracting and opposing forces that are themselves intrinsically linked to religious, social, political, scientific and cultural elements, evolving from the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Counter-Reformation.
One of the most important causes for the spread of skepticism during that period can be traced directly to the conflict between the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Earlier in the sixteenth century, Luther had attacked the authority of the Pope and the Church in religious matters by asserting that religious knowledge could only be gained through the Scripture and one's conscience. Later Jean Calvin echoed Luther's convictions, adding that religious knowledge is gained through illumination by the Holy Spirit and that religious truth is given to a select few chosen by God. The arguments of these two reformers were based on a kind of subjectivism which left them vulnerable to counter attacks by the Church. Grounding its attacks on skeptical arguments, the Church contended that man's reason and conscience are fallible, and therefore, that man needs the guidance of the Church to interpret the Scriptures. The conflict was therefore not on theological but epistemological grounds, for the crux of the argument was based on the question of what constitutes a valid criterion for truth. Aristotelian thought, which had prevailed for centuries and which was based on the validity of sensory perception, that is, the coincidence between the data perceived through the senses and the objects of perception, was thus challenged. ³

Both Erasmus at the beginning of the sixteenth century and Montaigne at the end of the century, are representatives of the skepticism that came to dominate the period. Erasmus argued to accept the tradition of the

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Church, due to the difficulty in subjectively establishing religious truth from the Scriptures while Montaigne's *Apologie de Raimond Sebond* expounded the skeptical arguments which were to form the basis for Libertine Philosophy.

The social scene was no less unstable than the religious one. Originating as a class in the feudal system, the aristocracy had progressed from a vital to an idle class. The knight whose function as warrior supported the feudal system, gradually lost his usefulness to the progress made in weaponry and to the evolution of the economic scene which transformed him into a courtier. This transformation which was completed under Louis XIV actually started in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and culminated in the sixteenth century. To these problems was added the rise of the bourgeoisie as a class.

It is difficult to distinguish the social from the political scene. With the death of François I began a period in which weak kings succeeded one another, from Henri II who failed to stamp out Lutheran beliefs, to the reigns of the last Valois, caught between various feuding noble factions seeking honor, power or position. It was only when Henri IV ascended the throne in 1589 that he brought about some stability and compromise between feuding parties. In 1593 he renounced Protestantism and in 1598 established political and religious peace with the *Edit de Nantes*. He also restored royal authority and saw to the reorganization of France, in which he was aided by both Protestants and
Catholics alike. However, his assassination in 1610 brought back the temptation of disorder which eventually culminated in the *Fronde*, before it was later brought under control by Louis XIV.

On an entirely different front, the scientific activity of Kepler, Copernicus and Galileo was having devastating effects on the minds of the sixteenth century. The world order of the Ptolemaic system, which religious ideology supported, was being demolished by the Copernican revolution. His new discovery reversed the geocentric world view of the cosmos. The new perspective challenged a well-established anthropomorphism: mankind was no more the center of creation, or the earth the center of the universe. The heliocentric discovery placed man in infinite space and the ordered world appeared disintegrating as did man's coherence with the world.

Such is the 'milieu' which produced what on the artistic level is known as Baroque, for as Dubois noted, "la mentalité d'une époque est le miroir de son histoire." The cultural atmosphere reflected the rapid changes around it. If we glance briefly at architecture for instance, the Catholic Church's desire to regain authority led it to promote the rebuilding of Church, the architecture of which reflects the movement, fluidity and anxiety of Baroque mentality. As J. Rousset notes, a favorite with Baroque art is the oval where there is no center to speak of and the
point of view is displaced.\(^6\)

In literature, works such as Ronsard's *Discours des Misères de ce temps* (1562), Du Bartas' *La Semaine*, d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*, de Sponde's poetic works, or Montaigne's *Essais*, tell of a world in transition, fascinated by illusion, death, movement and metamorphosis. The worldview as shown through the works of these Baroque artists is that ultimate reality can be "accessible to the human, if at all, only in moments of intense passionate experience."\(^7\)

These writers reacted in their own way to the world around them, torn between the tension from the calling of their own soul and the demands of the authority of both church and state. Following the short period of apparent freedom and belief in human autonomy embodied in the Renaissance, people and artists alike "recoiled in doubt, in fear and in hatred of life, and each in his own way uttered, camouflaged, suppressed or avoided these feelings."\(^8\) The fact that writers were not as free as they had been and tolerated only in so far as their literature's purpose was to bend people toward hierarchal authority, may explain how out of this suppression of freedom, emerged the very freedom of the spirit—we may call it a rebellion—identifiable with Baroque.

H. Hatzfeld points out that Baroque literature is paradoxical, for according to him, it is dominated by a fusion of the rational and the irrational. The literature of the Renaissance is rational, whereas that of the Counter-
Reformation "stood for the divine paradox of mystery and faith as being superior to human rationalizing." Rousset's outstanding work definitely establishes the fact that the Baroque is not a coherent movement, and that its essence is disorder, multiplicity and contradiction.

The Baroque theater is a perfect example of the characteristics of the period, and is an expression of its anguish, tension and pessimism. In fact the very nature of the theater, that is, its temporality and artificiality could serve as a reflection of the deeply troubled, disordered, illusory world of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, for the world of the spectacular is the very world of the theater.

Although Baroque theater is in many ways a continuation of the Medieval theater, it shows a purpose distinct from that of merely serving as a center for devotion and religious influence. Medieval Christian Drama is didactic, depicting the fall and redemption of mankind through the grace of God. The strong position of the Church enabled it to maintain the theater's didacticism through the mid-sixteenth century, when it withdrew its support. Baroque drama, on the other hand, is essentially humanistic, focusing on man and portraying a condition humaine, a crisis, even though it is situated against a background of Christian scenery depicting virtue and vice, good and evil, right and wrong, which allowed for moral tension. The fact that Baroque dramatists did not translate liturgical texts, but
sought subject matter from contemporary and classical history, demonstrates that their purpose was not, on the whole, one of religious indoctrination.

This moral tension in the Baroque theater manifests itself through cruelty and violence and culminates in sin against Christian ethic. A. Artaud likens the theater to the plague for they both reveal the existence of a latent cruauté beneath the surface. The aftermath of the plague is either death or purification. In the theater, the 'bad' is uncovered and the 'good' exposed. Placed in the perspective of Christian morals, the baroque theater causes the 'good' and the 'bad' to surface. In most cases the 'bad' is purified, leaving the 'good' exposed.

The favorite form of Baroque drama was tragi-comedy; it is through it that Baroque dramatational content could best be expressed. Tragi-comedy is to Baroque drama what multiplicity is to the Baroque. Portraying both good and bad, committing itself neither to tragedy nor to comedy, but to both, tragi-comedy expresses best the multiplicity of the Baroque.

Tragi-comedy was organized by 1580 in Robert Garnier's 

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were available in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but they were either misinterpreted or ignored by theorists and dramatists alike. Castelvetro, for instance, defined tragedy and comedy based only on the social status of the personae: tragedy dealt with kings and others of elevated status, and comedy with persons of lesser rank. To this Scaliger added subject matter in that tragedy must include "des meurtres, des exils, des parricides, des incestes, des combats, des plaintes, des funérailles" and comedy, "des jeux, des banquets, des ruses d'esclaves qui dupent des vieillards."¹³ P. De Laudun d'Aigaliers states that the subject matter of tragedy should be "les batailles, meurtres, viollement de filles & de femmes, trahisons, exils, plaintes, pleurs, cris, faussetés & autres matières semblables . . ." and that "plus les Tragédies sont cruelles plus elles sont excellentes."¹⁴ In early seventeenth century, François Ogier, prefacing Jean de Schelandre's Tyr et Sidon (1628), argued for a true-to-life presentation; the serious and the pleasant should be mixed and alternated, for to do otherwise would be to ignore the human condition.

These theories certainly added a new dimension to the Baroque theater for their subject matter (rape and incest, for instance) required the inclusion of women as important dramatis personae. Subjects related to women, such as passionate love and its effects, including madness, will become increasingly portrayed. Therefore, we shall now survey the role women play in the evolution of the
theater from the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century to see if indeed the inclusion constitutes a progression, or maybe even a real change in their dramatic status.
NOTES

1 These dates mark the beginning and the apex of Baroque drama. After 1630 there is a decline in Baroque theater and an increase in classical plays. Antoine Adam notes that "la pointe baroque est morte en 1635." ("Baroque et préciosité," Revue des sciences humaines . . . p. 219.) However, baroque as a movement reoccurs historically. See Eugenio Ors, Du Baroque, tr. Mme Agathe Rouart-Valéry (Paris: Gallimard, 1968).

2 See, for example, articles published in Baroque, Revue Internationale, especially Volume 1. (Montauban, 1974).


Chapter 2

WOMEN IN THE THEATER BEFORE THE BAROQUE

Prior to examining women as \textit{dramatis personae} in the theater before the Baroque, it might be of interest to identify their role as performers, spectators and playwrights.

Under Augustus women as performers were introduced on the stage in Mimes, which according to Maugras were accompanied by "danses les plus licencieuses," and by the close of the Empire, women appeared nude on the stage.\textsuperscript{1} For obvious reasons, the early Church put a stop to such licence and even prohibited their participation in any manner whatsoever on the ground that their mere presence would corrupt men.

The \textit{dramatis personae} of the Christian medieval stage were therefore strictly male, as it had been a custom in Roman theater up to the decadent period. However, in the eighth and ninth centuries, the funerals of abbots and abbesses concluded with funeral presentations in which nuns are believed to have participated.\textsuperscript{2} Also there were jongleureuses in the eleventh century for as noted by Hawkins, "the minstrels were now of both sexes." But women as entertainers waned with the outbreak of the Hundred
Years' War and with the Church's propagation of the liturgical drama. Henceforth, the role of women were performed by priests and later, by young boys. Stage directions for the eleventh century Office des Bergers (Officium Pastorum) indicate that the midwives were to be represented by priests dressed in dalmatic. And the Office du Sepulcre shows that "Trois Chanoines des hautes stalles, [seront] revetus de la dalmatique, et l'amict rabattue sur la tete de facon a ressembler a des femmes." In the fifteenth century the Chantilly collection of Mystères et Moralités, copied by nuns, indicates the addition of shepherdesses to the Nativity scenes. This however may be only due to the "feminine nature of both performers and audience." Consequently, if there were female performers prior to the sixteenth century, it was the exception rather than the rule.

Women were barred from attending the theater as well due to moral reasons. As late as the mid-seventeenth century, André Rivet, echoing the fears of the early church fathers, argued against female attendance and endorsed the long prevailing medieval attitude toward women attending the theater:

... les peres & maris, qui trouvent bon qu'on voye leurs femmes & leur filles parées es Theatres, & combien que 'la Virginité puisse estre deflorée par les yeux' leur permettent de jetter la veue avec plaisir sur les gestes des hommes & femmes in pudique, & d'avoir les oreilles à leurs discours, & d'aprouver par leur presence tout ce qu'ils font & proferent. Est-il pas bien seant à des femmes vertueuses & à des
filles sages, de veoir & contempler sur le Theatre
des femmes, ou des hommes travestis en femmes, en
habits de garces, & là former leurs voix, leurs paroles,
& leurs actions pour donner du plaisir aux spectateurs?
Est-ce un exemple convenable à leur sexe & à leur
condition? L'apostre ne veut pas que les femmes parlent
en l'Eglise; & quelques anciens interpretes en on donné
cette raison, que leur voix & leur parole, eust peu[t]
enflammer la convoitise en leur auditeurs."6

But there are reasons to believe that, as early as
the sixth century, nuns attended religious performances held
in some monasteries, although the doors of the theater would
not open to "decent" women until the fifteenth century, when
audiences included both sexes as well as all classes:
nobility, bourgeois and peasants.7

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, between
the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIII, female attendance at
theatrical performances increased to such a level that by
1650 it was to become a new dominant factor in the theater.
This period coincides with the violent religious wars that
devastated French life and dampened the spirits of the
literary world. But out of this turmoil came an awakening
that led to the self-assertion and self-consciousness of
women.8 This new awareness of feminine identity is one of
the contributing factors to the opening of literary salons.
These salons were meeting places for literary-minded women
and became influential in setting certain literary rules,
such as the bienséances for the dramatic arts.

However, in the evolution of the theater, women as
playwrights are conspicuous, owing to their scarcity. The
first female playwright is considered to be a Benedictine

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nun of Gandersheim named Hrotsvitha, who lived in the tenth century. She wrote six plays in prose and emerges as a remarkable and courageous woman, conscious of her talents, for which she gives God the credit. In the preface to her plays, she gives the reason for writing: to glorify the chastity of Christian virgins. Hrotsvitha states as her goal the depiction of "the dreadful frenzy of those possessed by unlawful love, and the insidious sweetness of passion—things which should not even be named." She appears as an assertive individualist, humble, but confident, and considers herself on the same basis as men: "To you, learned and virtuous men, who do not envy the success of others but on the contrary rejoice in it... I feel that I have enough confidence to apply myself to writing." Even she, however, admits to her inferiority, not as a writer, but as a woman: "I possess some little knowledge of those arts the subtleties of which exceed the grasp of my woman's mind." Nevertheless she seems to be speaking for the cause of all women when she adds:

That my natural gifts might not be made void by negligence... in the hope that my lowly ignorant effort may gain more acceptance... that the Creator of genius may be the more honoured since it is generally believed that woman's intelligence is slower... At least I do not pretend to have knowledge when I am ignorant. On the contrary, my best claim to indulgence is that I know how much I do not know.

Her themes, products of her cloistered environment, deal with chastity, faith and virtue.
We dealt at length on Hrotsvitha simply because there are, to our knowledge, no other female playwrights recorded as such until well into the seventeenth century when some attempts were made during the Fronde, which was a time when the presence of women was being felt in every aspect of life. The Duchess of Croy wrote a tragi-comedy entitled *Cinnatus et Camma* (1637), but it did not get beyond manuscript form, and Madame de Saint-Balmon and Marthe Cosnard wrote a religious play dated 1650. Further attempts were made by Françoise Pascal of Lyons who wrote four plays between 1655 and 1665. They have been mentioned but there are, to this day, no traces of their whereabouts.

The story is different as far as the role of women in the theater itself. More often than not, in Medieval drama, woman was to serve as a catalyst for moral and religious pedagogy. Along with Satan, she is portrayed symbolically in the *Mystères* and *Moralités* as having no human problems, she is an allegorical figure personifying both the forces of good and evil. However, she is most commonly identified with everything lustful and carnal, representing that which is weak and sinful.

Such an image is illustrated best in the twelfth century *Mystère d'Adam*. Here, Eve is contrasted with Adam, who is depicted as a strong, unyielding individual, sure of himself, but who nevertheless admits fear of God. He remains firm in his stand against Satan and drives him away:
Adam:
Fuis, hors d'ici!

Le Diable:
Que dis-tu, Adam?

Adam:
Hors d'ici! Tu es Satan, tes conseils sont mauvais; tu veux me jeter dans le tourment, me brouiller avec mon Seigneur, m'enlever ma joie, me mettre dans la douleur. Non, je ne te croirai pas. Fuis, n'aie plus désormais la hardiesse de revenir devant moi. Tu es un traître, un déloyal!

For the moment Adam is triumphant.

Eve, on the other hand, is presented as a naive, gullible person. With Satan's first utterance to her, she leaves herself vulnerable by talking to Satan:

Le Diable:
Eve, je suis venu a toi.

Eve:
Et pourquoi, Satan? Dis-le moi.

Le Diable:
Je cherche ton profit, ton honneur.

Eve:
Dieu le veuille!

Auerbach points out that both Adam and Eve know about Satan and his treachery, but it never occurs to Eve that it could be harmful to them both. "There is no moral consciousness in her as there is in Adam; in its place she has a naive childishly hardy, and unreflectingly sinful curiosity." Moreover Adam's condemnation of the Devil produces an 'How do you know' reaction from Eve, to which he answers 'I have found out by experience': Auerbach contends these words cannot be Eve's for "she would be admitting to Adam that she was in league with the Devil."
It is our opinion that she is. Auerbach disputes S. Etienne's conception of Eve as an "extremely skillful and diplomatic person . . . or that she does not blindly rely on Satan." He points out that instead, Satan intervenes when the situation grows worse for Eve: "For without the Devil's special help she is but a weak--though curious and hence sinful--creature, far inferior to her husband and easily guided by him." For this reason, Auerbach believes that Eve could not have uttered the lines attributed to her in Chamard's edition (Paris, 1525)

Adam:
Ne creire ja le traitor!
Il est traitre.

Eva:  
Bien le sai.

Adam:  
Et tu coment?
Eva:  
Car l'asaiai.  

he instead attributes them to Adam

Adam:  
...  
Il est traitre. Bien le sai.

Eva:  
Et tu coment?
Adam:  
Car l'asaiai.

That Eve is weak and easily persuaded by either Satan or Adam is readily corroborated. Therefore, it is our opinion that Chamard's and Jeanroy's editions are befitting to Eve's personality, for it is far easier for her to say 'Je le sai'
than to challenge Adam with a question, 'Et tu coment?'
Eve's purpose is to please, which unfortunately includes
Satan as well. Eve is totally lacking a fighting spirit.
Her inability to argue with Adam is all the more reason for
Satan to return, as he realizes that Adam is about to defeat
him again through Eve:

Adam:
Ne le laisse plus venir a toi, car il est de trop mauvais fois. Deja il a voulu trahir son Seigneur et se mettre au-dessus de lui. Le miserable qui a fait cela, je ne veux pas qu'il ait acces aupres de toi.  

The serpent then appears.

Eve does not understand the real consequences of her
conversation with Satan, or Adam's reprimands. She merely
agrees with both of them, favoring the one who offers the
most. She is caught in the middle of the conflict between
Adam and Satan; her function is to help contrast the
strength and goodness in Adam and the power and evil in
Satan. She is portrayed as weak and void of any human
sentiments, becoming, through her fall, an embodiment of
evil.

This image of Eve has as its counterpart that of the
Virgin Mary who fulfills the role left vacant by Eve's fall
in that she becomes the solution to man's problems. She is
the intercessor for straying mortals, wrestling at times
with Satan on behalf of the repentant. No where is she more
human than in the Miracles de Notre Dame of the fourteenth
century, appearing in deus ex machina situations to aid
atoning sinners. Totaling forty in number, the Miracles
were probably written to honor her on one of her holy days: the Conception, Birth, Purification, Annunciation and the Assumption. These plays were undoubtedly meant to reinforce adoration of fervent devotion to the Virgin Mary. But the most interesting and surprising aspects of these plays are their depiction of women in varied circumstances, such as the agonizing cries of women in childbirth (Un Enfant que Notre Dame Resucita, No. XV), attempted rape (Marquise de la Gaudin, No. XII), or a pregnant abbess (Miracle de l'abbesse Grosse, No. II).

These plays cover all classes of society. The portrayal is so vivid that it conveys at times the feeling that one is in the presence of real women with real emotions. The Abbesse for instance, fearing criticism of hypocrisy, admits her passionate love for her clerc, Perrot—a confession reminiscent of the one the Duchess of Malfi makes to her lover in Webster's seventeenth century play.

[The text includes a portion of the play in French]

L'Abbesse:
Amour qui a sur toutes riens
Dominacion et haultesce
Et qui les cuers humains aspresce
D'amor si, par son grant pouoir,
Que deux cuers ne sont c'un vouloir,
Pour toy amer me tient si prise
.. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Ceste amour qui se me demaine,
Qui mon cuer tient en son demaine,
.. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Car long temps a que n'oy repos
Pour penser comment mon propos
Je te diroie. (ll. 324-339)

Her "Faites tout quanqu'il vous plaira,/Amis de moy" (ll.418-19) is total surrender to the power of love.

The Miracles often mirrored the actual situation women
had to tolerate as beings socially subservient to fathers, husbands and the Church. Berthequine (La Fille du Roy de Hongrie, Vol. 5), facing the incestuous passion of her father, severs her arm in rebellion.

Que je soie femme mon pere; 
Car miex vouvroie mort souffrir
Que mon corps a ce faire offrir
Tant me semble estre orrible chose.

(ll. 348-51)

It is indeed a tragic situation which leaves her no choice: she must mutilate herself. In the first test she protests her chastity without the intervention of Our Lady. She is rescued, however, from the second persecution by the Virgin Mary.

In spite of her subservient social situation woman, as revealed in the Miracles, is nevertheless capable of confronting disaster and remaining loyal to her beliefs. She prefers to regress to a less eminent social status than to compromise values. She bears unnecessary hardships caused by the abuses of others. Queen Berthe, for instance, abandoned in the forest by her enemies, toils side by side with her peasant benefactors, and Osanne works as a maid at an inn before being found by her husband Thierry.

Swinging first from the debased character of Eve, then to a glorified Virgin, the pendulum of medieval dramatic attitude toward women finally came to rest at a credible mean. Fifteenth century drama de-divinized the Virgin Mary and elevated the figure of Eve, bringing them closer to the
tangible world and away from both extremes. This humanized portrait of women appears, for example, in Eustache Marcade's characterization of Mary Magdalen in La Passion d'Arras, where she is shown no longer as a repentant sinner, but as a woman who obviously likes herself and enjoys life and its pleasures. The Virgin Mary is also granted a touch of humanity in Greban's Mystère de la Passion, thereby leading to a tragic conflict between her humanity and divinity, between her maternal instincts and her acceptance of God's will.  

Women's characterization in sixteenth century French drama exhibits little change from that of the Middle Ages. During the first half of the century, the Greek tragic dramatists were discovered and drama consisted mostly of translations from Greek into Latin and then into French. Depiction of contemporary ideas and events was therefore restricted. It was not until mid-century that dramatists such as Jodelle, Grevin, Jean de la Taille, and Theodore de Beze began writing original plays in French. Although they were experimentalists who drew heavily from Greek tragedy, they were nevertheless influenced by the events of their period.

One who stands out among them, on the threshold of Baroque Age Drama, is Robert Garnier. His plays, spanning the period between 1568 and 1583, attest to the troubled and atrocious times in which they were written. The miseries he alludes to reflect the sign of the times as shown in the
dedication of *Les Juifves*, "Or vous ay-je icy représenté les souspirables calamitez d'un peuple qui a comme nous abandonné son Dieu;" or that of *Cornélie*, "Je laisseray les cris et les horreurs de mes Tragédies (poème à mon regret trop propres aux malheurs de nostre siècle) pour sonner plus tranquillement. . . ." The dedication of *Antigone* is of particular significance for it may suggest Garnier's awareness of the situation of women since in this instance, his sympathy clearly lies with the heroine, and maybe even with the female sex:

Je me radresseray donc pour vous entretenir des infortunes de ceste pitoyable Antigone, qui, revivant en nostre France, se vient, comme esperdue, jeter entre vos bras, pour luy estre aussi favorable support qu'elle fut débonnairement le soustien et conduitte de son misérable père.  

The core of Garnier's drama is cruelty. Baroque themes, vividly represented—murder, massacres, suicide, rape, sadistic sufferings—all become the focal point. It seems that women are those who suffer the most, as noted by Brereton in *French Tragic Drama in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*:

Their suffering is of course emotional, exteriorized in the wringing of hands, cries and sobs, ending sometimes in suicide before the audience. . . . The physical sufferings—the killings and massacres which provoke the emotional suffering—occur offstage.  

Garnier's plays are filled with physical as well as with mental violence, as shown in the last act of *Marc-Antoine* in which Cleopatra bids farewell to her children. Her death is prolonged by agonizing moments of despair and suffering, and
when it finally occurs, it actually produces a feeling of relief. The role of women as passive victims is therefore accentuated. They are victims of circumstances, sufferers of imposed dependency as exemplified by Porcie in (Porcie) and Cornélie in (Cornélie). In addition to their duty to lament their men, Porcie suffers from fear and remorse over the death of Cesar. Both women obviously lack courage and show no will to live after the death of their beloved, because they derive their identities only through their husbands. Learning of her husband's death, Cornélie declares:

Qu'avecques vous ne suis-je! ô femme misérable,
O pauvre Cornélie, hé! n'aura jamais fin
Le cours de ceste vie où me tient le destin?
Ne seray-je jamais avecques vous, ô cendre!
N'est-il temps ou'on me face au sépulchre descendre?

(Act III, p. 125, Vol. I)

So does Porcie:

Que de moy malheureuse il me demeure rien.

Car tandis que je vy, Brute n'est pas tout mort:
Il vit encore en moy, ma vie est demy-sienne,
Tout ainsi que sa mort est aussi demy-mienne.

(Act IV, p. 78, Vol. I)

But there remains a touch of moral responsibility in Cornélie for she wants to live long enough to bury her father and husband. Porcie, however, borders on insanity, demanding that Brutus be returned alive.

Vous, desloyale mer, qui courbastes le dos
Sur nos vaisseau armez, et qui dessus vos flots
Feistes voguer mon Brute, au lieu de me le rendre
Vous me rendez un corps prest de reduire en centre
Vous ne l'eutes pas tel commis à vostre foy;
Vous le prinstes vivant, vivant rendez-le moy;

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Rendez-le moy vivant, vivant vous le receustes,
Rendez-le ainsi vivant comme vivant vous l'eustes.
O folle que je suis! ô folle d'estimer

(Act IV, p. 74, Vol. I)

The women in *Les Juifves* and *La Troade* share the same fate in that they all helplessly await the will of their captors. The Jewish children are slaughtered and the mothers spared to lament while the Trojan women passively accept their lot until the death of the child Polydore triggers their wrath. Failing the test of endurance and driven by a desire for vengeance, the Trojan women blind the murderer Polymestor and kill his two sons. This collective action demonstrates their force as a group. Among the martyrs in *La Troade* is Andromache. Having been commanded by Hector to save their son, Astyanax, her actions are nothing more than laments and pleadings on her son's behalf. Realizing the futility of her efforts she utters in resignation,

Je ne vous puis aider, ma resistance est vaine.

(Act II, p. 47, Vol. II)

A wish she later reiterates:

Je veux mourir pour luy: mais de quelle defense
Serviront mes efforts? je n'ay point de puissance.

(Act II, p. 48, Vol. II)

In contrast with this typical picture of women, the story of *Bradamante* stands out because it adds another dimension to the role of women lacking in the other plays, even though it is staged in a fantastic world of chivalry, far removed from reality. Bradamante is a gifted swords-woman, "... qui de ses dons vous est si liberal," (Act II, Scene iii) who is equaled only by a few men, "Pucelle qui a
peu d'hommes pareils à elle" (Act II, Scene iv). She is second only to her beloved Roger for he alone can defeat her, "Que Roger seulement qui me vainquit en guerre" (Act IV, Scene iii), a conquest which she happily accepts. Even she gives in to her position as woman, thereby maintaining the traditional passive and subservient role of women in the theater mentioned thus far.

At the threshold of the Baroque period, it becomes evident that some progress had been achieved by women in the theater as a whole. This progress in women as spectators and entertainers is proof of a changing attitude toward them and to their growing influence. Lacour observes that even though the condition of women of the theater had been raised,

... il pesait néanmoins sur elles un disgréit moral dont la compensation, et en même temps, le témoignage le plus net, était le véritable privilege anti-moral que l'opinion leur avait concedé en ne leur demandant que du talent.22

It is time now to turn to women in the Baroque theater where, historically, their social emergence parallels their dramatic metamorphosis on the stage, they now presents a challenge to traditional attitudes and offers in their place assurances of women's initiative and leadership.
NOTES


2 Maugras, p. 49.


4 A. Jeanroy, ed., Le Théâtre religieux en France du X<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1924), pp. 8-9, l.


7 Frank, p. 170. But George Lanson believes that women spectators did not exist until 1580's. For a documented account see "Etudes sur les origines de la tragédie classique en France," Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, 10 (1903), 208 ff.

8 Bouten notes that the 17th century "will always be remembered in the history of France as the time of the first self-conscious vendication of female rights. This vendication--except in one or two isolated instances--did not take the form of a direct appeal; it adopted the persuasive method of furnishing convincing evidence of women's capacity to hold her own both intellectually and morally and even to supply certain elements which were lacking among the opposite sex for the benefit of French society." Mary Wollstonecraft and the Beginnings of Female Emancipation in France and England, Doctoral dissertation, Amsterdam, 1922, p. 21.

9 Sister Mary Marguerite Butler, R.S.M., Brotsvitha: The Theatricality of her Plays (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), p. 66.


13 As quoted by Auerbach. A consultation of the Jeanroy's edition showed the same breakdown of the lines spoken, p. 37.

14 Jeanroy, p. 37.


18 Miracle de Nostre Dame de Berthe and Miracle de Nostre Dame du roy Thierry, Vol. 5, 1877.

19 Frank, pp. 181, 185.


22 Léopold Lacour, Les premières actrices françaises ([France]: Librarie Française, 1921), p. 159.
Chapter 3

THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND SOME OF THE VARIOUS
ATTITUDES INFLUENCING IT

In this chapter an attempt will be made to identify the attitudes toward women that make up the general milieu of the Baroque Period in order to determine to what extent they might have influenced the role of women in the Baroque theater. While these attitudes do not exist independently one from the other, it is nevertheless possible to separate them for purposes of identification.

Literature is directly linked to the viewpoints of the period of which it is a product, and the period itself is a product of historical forces which influenced it. As Telle notes in *L'Oeuvre de Marguerite d'Angouâlleme et La Querelle des femmes*, "La littérature est le produit d'aspirations, d'idéals, soit moraux, soit esthétiques, soit scientifiques: c'est une oeuvre artistique qui . . . interprète la réalité, sans se proposer d'en donner l'image exacte et entière."

Consequently, general and recurring patterns of attitudes toward women might prove extremely important in any conclusions concerning the role they play in the Baroque
theater. Some basic areas of investigation which might be fruitful are the religious, the literary and the social ones.

The moral attitudes and opinions of the early Catholic Church had more effect on the position of women than those of any other institution. The early Church leaders, influenced by the teachings of St. Paul, preached that Eve—henceforth, all women—was the cause of Adam's—henceforth, all men's—fall from grace. As a satanic agent, she is sinful, evil and an obstacle to man attaining salvation. Tertullian, an early church father, addresses her thus:

Do you not know that each of you is an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that forbidden tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert, that is, death, even the Son of God had to die. ²

Eve is thus related to everything evil. Man's lower impulses and desires are identified with her for she has "the power to seduce man from his purpose to draw him down from his proper realm of thought to her realm of matter." ³ She is the part of man that is most susceptible to the temptation of the devil. E. Power points out that "this attitude established a point of view about women which survived long after the social and intellectual conditions which created it had passed away." ⁴

In direct contrast to this view of women as symbolized
by Eve, one finds the rise of the Cult of the Virgin Mary, which takes place about the twelfth century. Pilgrimages to the Virgin's shrines, stories of her miracle plays, establishment of feast days in her honor all attest to the adulation given her. The Fall of mankind becomes less reason for concern for without his Fall, there would not have been a Virgin Mary. She is now accepted as the symbol for his redemption. These two views of women— inconsistent one with the other, yet stemming from the same religious tradition— existed simultaneously throughout the centuries: the one placing her at the lowest possible point and the other at the highest.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the figure of Eve, that is, woman as an embodiment of evil was reinforced by that of the sorceress. Sorcery became widespread during this time, and was considered an act of the devil fighting against God. It was believed that Satan could take animal or human form, and F. Delacroix remarks in Les Procès de la Sorcellerie au XVIIe siècle that taking the form of women was one of his common ploys; in fact "sa plus nombreuse clientèle est parmi les vieilles femmes pauvres idiotes et méchantes, ses alliés naturelles. ..." As a matter of fact, he finds a great similarity between the fall of Eve and the devil's possession of these women:

Le Maudit, qui a ensorcelé la première femme, continue son rôle; il ne se contente pas des vieilles sorcières et vient assaillir les jeunes filles et les femmes mariées; les trompe audacieusement, et la possession prend un caractère tout à fait humain.
On the literary scene, the most salient occurrence, and one closely associated with the cult of the Virgin Mary, is Courtly Love. Whether the cult of the Virgin was a cause or consequence of courtly love is not easy to determine, but we know that the lyrical devotion the chivalric knight lavished upon the courtly lady rivaled that given to the Virgin. This radical change in the status of women is closely linked to changing economic conditions, for the social importance of women had risen during the time of the Crusades when they, in the absence of their husbands, had to administer affairs of the fief. Since women held the purse string, it became imperative for the poets and jongleurs to please them, and this social phenomenon coupled with the concurrent religious adoration of the Virgin Mary, enhanced the literary status of women. Fealty was transferred from the lord to the lady, who became the focal point around which love, beauty, devotion and fidelity revolved. This new relation between man and woman clearly established her as a superior being, albeit an idealized one.

Courtly love, as conceived by the twelfth century troubadours is a source of virtues and of strengthening of chivalric qualities for the knight who feels it. "Aimer exalte les capacités de l'être." But love had to be chaste and refined, experienced by man alone. Woman is the object of love as well as the personification of love and interchangeable with it, as illustrated by this line from Pons de Capdevil, a troubadour, "Heureux est celui qu'amour tient
en joie; car amour fait l'homme gai et courtois, franc et noble, humble et orgueilleux."^ The ultimate benefit goes to the man and not to the woman, who is seen simply as the means to an end. Any physical contact with her would mean loss of virtue because in order for love to elevate, the desire to possess has to remain unsatisfied. This is one of the reasons that courtly love between husband and wife was held to be impossible.

This idealized concept of love was modified into a more physical form by the writers of Northern France. One of the chief propagators is Chretien de Troyes, who translated Ovid's works on love. Ovid's concept of love was practical and sensual, not virtuous. In Chevalier de la charrette, Chretien de Troyes expounds the theory that man cannot love for the sake of love, and that courtly love is far from making a man virtuous. Another important contributor to the theory of courtly love is André le Chapelain, for whom it means also sexual love. If a knight wishes to impress a lady, he has to be refined enough to become acceptable to her. Love is thus brought down to a more sensual level, from the somewhat ideal one it previously held. Chapelain seems to support the widespread view that love and marriage are incompatible. Marie de France, however, stands out for her original conception of courtly love as something to be shared by both man and woman. She also prefers marriage for her lovers, as illustrated in Eliduc. But the various and opposing aspects of courtly love are
probably best reflected in the thirteenth century *Roman de la Rose*. Part One, written by Guillaume de Lorris presents the more traditional view of devotion toward the woman; but in Part Two, written by Jean de Meun, she is reduced to a mere object of sensual pleasure. Jean de Meun's attack on the Rose that is, women, was later to be echoed in the fabliaux and farces in which the viciousness and evil wickedness aspects of women were popularized. However, in the fifteenth century, there came a violent reaction in defense of women, the loudest expression of which is probably the one that came from a woman herself: Christine de Pisan. In *La Cité des Dames* she makes a case for the virtues of women and in *l'Epistre au Dieu d'amour*, she argues vehemently that all women should not be judged as evil because of the fault or mistake of one.

The medieval traditions of the Cult of the Virgin Mary and of courtly love reoccur in the Renaissance concept of neo-platonism, in which the love of a woman becomes the means for man to attain the realm of the ideal, as opposed to love being an end in itself as in courtly love. This concept of love is illustrated by both Dante and Petrarch and later in the sixteenth century poets and more specifically by Maurice Scève and Du Bellay. J. Ferrante describes the process in *Woman as image in Medieval Literature*:

Man reaches God through woman. Mary provides the way for all mankind. Beatrice for Dante. . . . As reflections of God, as symbols of virtue and love, they draw out the good that is in man; as loving and compassionate beings, they bring the straying man
back with their criticism, and help expiate his sins with their prayers. All women, not just the Virgin, can be intermediaries between God and man through love, moving man with their beauty and God with their prayers. 

The evolution of the social status of women, especially during the Middle Ages, is heavily influenced by the Church. At the dawning of Christianity women had attained great freedom and influence in the Roman Empire. J. Donaldson notes in *Woman: Her position and influence in Ancient Greece and Rome, and among the early Christians*, that "by a concurrence of circumstances women had been liberated from the enslaving fetters of the old legal forms, and they enjoyed freedom of intercourse in society." In the early stages of Christianity women took part in its spread and in the activities of the Church, but these soon ceased and were then limited to being martyrs and deaconesses. They could be doorkeepers and messengers but even these functions were gradually taken away from them and by the High Middle Ages, women had lost much of the progress made during the last centuries preceding the pre-Christian era, for feodality had adopted with complacency the Church's attitude toward the subjection of women. Both confined women to an inferior position, subordinating them to their husbands and demanding complete obedience and fidelity of them. The feudal law in many instances considered women as mere chattel. 

Medieval Chivalry, as seen above, helps to elevate the position of women but this is limited to a small courtly group. Although debate begins to brew in the fifteenth
century concerning the position of women, it is not until the sixteenth century that women are granted a role they had not hitherto enjoyed. This movement is now identified as the Querelle des femmes which tried to bring about some tangible improvements pertaining to the social status of women, improvements among which were their right to an education, and their right to a role in marriage.

Education therefore becomes one of the foremost concerns of Renaissance women, as well as of men, for the Renaissance itself grew out of a desire for learning. By the very nature of their beliefs, the leaders of new learning could do no less than to advocate the education of women, for they themselves discovered "truth" through self instruction. However, not all the leaders shared in this opinion; in fact, some even condemned secular as well as monastic education, insisting instead upon a "return to the ancient ideal of womanhood in making them essentially wives and mothers, assuming without discussion the female inferiority." The most notable of these is Montaigne. Even though he is considered as one of the most enlightened minds of the period, Montaigne does not fully endorse education for women, and is willing to grant them only certain fields of study. Poetry, according to him, suits women well because it is for pleasure and for show, just as they are:

Quand je les voy attachées à la rhétorique, à la judiciaire, à la logique, et semblables drogueries si vaines et inutiles à leur besoing, j'entre en
Montaigne prefers to keep women ignorant because instruction would ruin their natural charms and states that they should content themselves with the advantages their sex naturally has.

On the other hand, leaders supportive of the intellectual advancement of women point to the lack of "justification for keeping women in ignorance and subjection." Some even rally for the cause of women, of whom the most outspoken is probably the German Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim, referred to by some critics as the "father of feminism." His treatise De nobilitate et praecellentia feminini sexus, highly recommends instruction for women. He is convinced that men had robbed women of their birthright to be free by holding them prisoners in their own homes as if they were incapable of applying themselves to more meaningful tasks.

Another leader is Erasmus, one of the more advanced thinkers of his day on the education of women as his Institutio Christiani matrimonii and some of his Colloquies show. His ideas were dispersed throughout France, for instance by Clement Marot's translation of some of his Colloquies. We need to point out some of Erasmus' views on education for women because his ideas were addressed not only to the members of the royalty or aristocracy, but to middle-class women as well. In "The Abbot and the Learned
Lady," Magdalia asks, "Are court ladies the only ones allowed to improve their minds and enjoy themselves?

Erasmus is giving women the equal chance available to all men to go to the real source of wisdom, that is, books, and to discover 'truth' for themselves. He allows women the ability to secure for themselves knowledge in order to raise children:

Magdalia:
Isn't it a wife's business to manage the household and rear the children?

Antronius:
It is.

Magdalia:
Do you think she can manage so big a job without wisdom?

Antronius:
I suppose not.

Magdalia:
But books teach me this wisdom. Erasmus contends that only through serious education can women's lives be made more useful. In Abbates et Eruditate, he anticipates the problem of female education for women in later periods. He foresees that women will become dissatisfied with their status and will want to improve themselves and demand an education. J. Bouten gives credit to Erasmus for being "the first to see the close connexion between the moral worthlessness of females and their need for an education."

Another pioneer in feminism is Scevole de Sainte-Marthe, who, echoing Christine de Pisan, claims an equal education for women and men. He also denounces the double
standards used for judging them:

Pourquoi ne sera-t-il donc permis aux femmes de
puiser à la commune fontaine, qui sont les livres,
ce qui leur est commun avec tous les hommes? . . .
Si ceux qui lisent les philosophes et regardent les
saintes écritures pour y apprendre une intégrité de
moeurs sont de nous estimés bons sages et prudents
pour quelle raison defendrons-nous aux femmes de
lire les memes livres?20

Claude de Taillemont also rises up against men who
would refuse women instruction. These men, in his opinion,
want women to remain ignorant because "l'ignorance, mère de
tous maux, leur empêchait la connaissance de leur Seigneur
et Facteur, et bien souvent d'elles-mêmes. . . . N'a-t-elle
sens jugement et raison, l'esprit prompt et autant susceptible
que l'homme?"21

Women themselves enter the debate. For the first
time since Christine de Pisan, they enunciate their opinions
on an issue which until then had been determined solely by
men. Education was a matter that concerned them, as their
future and well-being were at stake and the gap between them
and their male counterparts was widening. Handicapped by the
refusal of schools to admit women, they sought means for
self instruction. Unfortunately only members of the
aristocracy were privileged to do so; women such as Anne de
Bretagne, Catherine de Medicis, Marguerite d'Autriche,
Marguerite de Navarre, Marguerite de France and Marguerite
de Valois furthered their status by at first patronizing men
of letters, and later becoming their students. A few women
became writers as in the case of M. de Navarre, Mme de
Rochechouart, Mme de Lignerolles and Anna de Lautier. A few
others became translators and even educators. But two women, Marie de Jars de Gournay and Catherine de Rambouillet, are conspicuous for their help in enhancing the status of women in the area of education during this period.

Mlle de Gournay is better known as a champion for women's rights. In *De L'Egalité des hommes et des femmes*, and *Grief des dames* she asserts that nature is opposed to inequality in that the souls of men and women are equal, a premise that was to be later held by Descartes. She admits to women's inferiority only in strength. However, her other writings, *Les Advis ou les présents de la demoiselle de Gournay* (also known as *L'Ombre de Mlle de Gournay*) and the editions of Montaigne's *Essais*, show that she exemplifies the possible fruits of education. She even has her own ideas on language and style. Noteworthy is her definition of poetry, which subordinates form to content, a direct contradiction to Malherbe's definition.\(^2\)

Catherine de Rambouillet, to a certain extent, undertook the educating of women by means of a social experiment in the establishment of the first *salon* in Paris. Repulsed by the smell and crudeness of Henri IV's court, she moved out of the Louvre into a château magnificently remodeled to her Italian tastes.\(^23\) There she resolved to cultivate her own refinement of manners and the *Hôtel de Rambouillet* soon became the meeting place for refined ladies and men of letters. This elite circle would, in the years to follow, set the pace in refining contemporary tastes, improving
morals and judging literary productions. Their influence was felt in all aspects of French society, although the result of this effort—la préciosité—was damaging to their cause for it promoted a sense of the absurd. Préciosité was a game by which educated manners and tastes could be cultivated, but the literature it produced was hardly more than trivia.

Despite women's small advances in the areas of education, literary and social attitudes barely changed with regard to her position in marriage and in the home. Tradition had always called for the training necessary to make women fit to be wives. This was the only profession proposed for women, except for the nunnery. The reformers were willing to give women an equal chance at education, but insisted that their place was still in the home, subservient and under the control of their husbands-masters. R. Kelso in Doctrine for the Lady of Renaissance, confirms that writers agree, almost without exception,24 that the husband's primary duty is the exercise of authority.25 This attitude is reflected, for instance, in Erasmus' colloquy on marriage. Eulalia advises her friend Xanthippe how to get along with her husband and what to do to make him stay at home:

See that everything at home is neat and clean and there's no trouble that will drive him out of doors. Show yourself affable to him, always mindful of the respect owed by wife to husband. Avoid gloominess and irritability. Don't be disgusting or wanton. Keep the house spick and span. Know your husband's taste; cook what he likes.26
This survey has shown that the evolution of women from the earliest times illustrates in most instances, improvement in their status. This progress cannot be attributed to real effort on their part to upgrade their position, but rather to an evolution and amelioration of living, legal and economic conditions. However, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, women such as Mlle de Gournay, Catherine de Rambouillet and a handful of others, were reluctant to embrace the conditions which had robbed them of their rights; whether acting out of spontaneity or circumstance, they deviated from the social formulas in which they lived. There remains to see now if this progress and this change in the status of women are reflected in the Baroque theater; whose arrière plan, as already noted, was kaleidoscopic and fragmented with religious warfare, social permissiveness, and philosophical arguments; a theater that was itself changing and setting new standards of good and evil, right and wrong. Baroque drama may have responded by exploiting these new developments and the fluxion society was undergoing.
NOTES

1Emile V. Telle, L'Oeuvre de Marquérie d'Angoulême, Reine de Navarre et La Querelle des femmes (Toulouse: Imprimerie Toulousaine Lion et Fils, 1937), p. 10.


6Frédéric Delacroix, Les Procès de Sorcellerie au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Librairie de la Nouvelle Revue, 1894), pp. 99-104. See also P. Villet's article, "La Sorcellerie dans le nord de la France . . .," Mélanges de Science Religieuse, 13 (1956), in which he states, "Notons en passant que les personnes en cause sont pour l'immense majorité des femmes . . . parmi les procès dépouillés aux Archives Departementals, nous avons la proportion d'un homme pour quatre femmes" (p. 41).

7Ferrante, p. 66.

8Sidney Painter, French Chivalry (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), pp. 115-16.

9Ferrante, p. 131.

10Donaldson, pp. 154-55.

11Power, p. 119.

Ibid., p. 97. Dow observes that the earlier ecclesiastical organization wanted to maintain a distinct advantage by keeping women ignorant and exerting authority over their children.


Michel de Montaigne, Essais, Livre III, Ch. iii.


Bouten, p. 18.


Ibid., p. 43.


Ibid., p. 32.

Cornelius Agrippa shows compassion for the married woman and appeals to the conscience of the husband to be the understanding mate in order to have a good wife.


Thompson, p. 126.
Chapter 4

THE HEROINE

In order to facilitate our study of women in the Baroque theater, it seems appropriate to take into account the very nature of drama as action, and to categorize women as either heroines, that is the main characters (in principle, the protagonists) or as non-heroines, that is accessory characters in the plays. The notion of heroine implies in the usual context of drama, that she be the dynamic character, the mover of the action. However, we can immediately say that even a cursory glance at these plays tells us that quite often, this heroine, instead of being dynamic, is on the contrary passive. Therefore, for purposes of clarity, it seems best to divide our study of the heroine into the heroine as dynamic and the heroine as passive. In a following chapter we shall look at women in their role as accessories to the action.

Let us examine first the plays in which the heroine is dynamic. We find that we can divide the dynamic heroine into three types: the avenger, the ambitious and the rebel.

In the category of the heroine seeking revenge, three
plays are typical and quite significant. In Cleomedon, Argire is single and has an illegitimate son, Cleomedon, by Policandre, who abandoned her to marry another woman. In order to avenge Policandre, she marries a king and gives birth to a son, whom she replaces with Cleomedon in order that he might inherit the throne. In so doing, she deprives Policandre, who eventually becomes king, of a son and an heir. This being a tragi-comedy ends well, of course, with Argire marrying Policandre, but we can immediately see that her motives and ethical behavior are not of the highest calibre. She stops at nothing to achieve her revenge.

In our second play, L'Orbec-Oronte, Orbec seeks vengeance against her father Sulmon, who pretends to consent to her secret marriage to Oronte, by whom she has had two children. Sulmon instead presents Orbec with the heads of Oronte and their two children. Infuriated and brokenhearted, Orbec avenges their deaths by murdering her father. She then commits suicide. This is obviously a very gruesome play where there is a clash, between father and daughter who act in a most extreme manner. Orbec, who is not motivated by an ethical, social and moral code, has acted in an immoral way and must be punished for her actions; but on the other hand Sulmon commits a most hideous crime. So in this play, we have the usual code of honor on the part of the father punishing his daughter for having acted immorally; on the other hand, we have the daughter avenging the death of the man she loves and her children. This unnatural father-
daughter relationship makes for a gory play. Moreover, we cannot ascertain who is right and who is wrong. The violence appears totally gratuitous.

The third play, *Albouin ou la Vengeance*,\(^3\) yields more interest as it offers a variation of the typical revenge play. Rosemonde is a heroine who takes revenge on her husband for having murdered her parents, a situation parallelizing the *Le Cid-Chimène* situation; like Chimene, it is her duty as daughter to avenge the murder of her parents, on someone who is dear to her, her husband Albouin. Rosemonde at first hesitates exhibiting a sense of insecurity and lack of confidence, but soon after, proceeds with plans to have Albouin killed:

\[
\text{Et pourquoi si longtemps au fonds de ta poitrine} \\
\text{Couvarde caches-tu cette peur feminine?} \\
\text{Laisse toi maitriser au désir de vengeance.}
\]

(Act III)

She herself points out her assuming of a role which is typically unfeminine. She wants to reject her own femininity in order to achieve her goal. Rosemonde solicits the services of Almachilde, Albouin's swordsman and of Peredee, a Prince and Rosemonde's lady-in-waiting, Barcee's lover to perform the actual killing. Almachilde agrees only because he desires it; for him it is purely a transaction of mutual interest, as he calls it: "un acte pour le bien du public salutaire." In return Rosemonde promises him as reward both the sceptre and herself:
De nos peuples Lombards, qui me voyant nous prendre
Pour legitime époux, & le sceptre vous rendre,
... et vous reconnoistront
Leur Prince souverain le Diademe au front. (Act IV)

Let us point out that throughout the play Rosemonde needs continued moral support to proceed with her plans. Almachilde provides the needed reassurance when it seems that Peredee will inform Albouin: "Cessez de soupirer,/
Reposez vous sur moy, vivez en asseurance./ Qu'Albouin de ceci n'aura la connaissance." However, Rosemonde leaves nothing to chance and seeks to use the ultimate weapon in order to secure Peredee's loyalty: sex; she proclaims bluntly, "Je veux que Peredee avecques moi se couche."

However, this would mean stealing Peredee away from Barcee. Having discovered that Peredee and Barcee are having a clandestine affair, Rosemonde succeeds in frightening Barcee, who is no match for Rosemonde and who calls her a whore: "Ne me deguisez rien/Cauteleuse putain, tous vos traits je sçay bien." She then orders Barcee to help her persuade Peredee, and promising her, as reward, marriage with the man of Barcee's choice, or with Peredee. Rosemonde, however, meets with resistance from Peredee when she tries the same approach as with Barcee. When she realizes that he actually disobeys her order to murder Albouin, she reneges on her promise to Almachilde and promises Peredee the throne instead. Rosemonde double crosses Almachilde not only once, but twice, for she later promises her love to Longin, another character in the play, who happens to love her.
All along, Rosemonde exhibits a great deal of duplicity. As seen above, she has been double crossing everybody, and her husband not the least, since she tells him that she loves him and that she is so happy to be his wife. To Barcee, Almachilde, Peredee and Longin, she has pretended to be in good faith, promising them each a reward. The only reason she wants alliance with Longin is to have him help her dispose of Almachilde. Her final duplicity is after Albouin is murdered and she reneges on her word to Longin claiming she is worried about Almachilde, when it is really because Almachilde has become a threat to her power, for now both Rosemonde and Almachilde are in competition with each other, and Rosemonde cannot tolerate being second to anyone in power:

Almachilde vivant cela ne pourroit estre
Prince dont la valeur par tout se fait parestre
Puis, qui seroit celuy qui se voudroit charger
D'une si pauvre Reine en pays estranger.

(Act V)

Thus it is logical that she should try to poison Almachide herself: "Cela sera ma charge." When he discovers the poison, he forces her to share the drink, insisting that they are "unis en une chaste foy," and they die together. In causing Almachilde's death, she actually begets her own. As she utters her last words, she recognized that she is victim of her own crime and thereby responsible for her own death:

Toy mesme de ta mort seule tu es courable
Longin est bien fauteur de ceste prompte mort
Mais las! helas! c'est moy qui seule au tout le tot.

(Act V)
At the end of the play Rosemonde is justly punished for her actions.

Two years later, in 1610, Billard published his version of *Alboin*,\(^5\) which depicts an even more revengeful heroine than La Croix's in that her drive for vengeance overshadows her concern for her honor:

Cet honneur n'est que vent,
Qu'un songe, un faus penser, qui nous va decevant
On ne sent rien la bas de gloire, et de renom. (Act II)

Rosemonde even scorns those who die in the name of glory; as for her, she prefers to die seeking revenge. When Elycie, her lady-in-waiting, comments concerning women dying for glory, Rosemonde replies: "Se meurtrir pour si peu c'est trop peux de victoire" (Act II). Rosemonde even has Elycie killed to keep her away from Elmechide, whose service she solicits to murder her husband, Alboin, although she is prepared to kill the king herself if necessary:

Moi, je me vangeray; si l'amour ne peut pas
Me vanger par ta main, guidé de mes appas
J'iray par l'univers, aux lieux plus solitaires
Invoquer les Demons, les ombres mortuaires,
Les monstres, les Tyrans, les enfans dépités
De la terre animée, & mille cruautés,
Pour me vanger. (Act II)

In Act V, Alboin's assassination is announced in gruesome detail, along with the escape of Rosemonde and Elmechide. The chorus of women, frightened by the wickedness of Rosemonde, compares her to Eve. This comparison deserves mentioning, for Rosemonde, like Eve, serves vice which leads to the downfall and death of all.
Cette Rosemonde aux beaux yeux,
Qui sembloit un astre des deux
Serve du vice, & de l'erreur

... ... ... ... ... ...
Sa mort est la mort de nous tous
Sa mort est le ciel en courrous,
Et nostre langueur éternelle.

(Act V)

The fact that these two plays are titled *Albouin* but deal instead with Rosemonde as heroine, provides the key to the understanding of the heroines we have just surveyed. They do not fit into the heroic pattern of the protagonist for they are in fact antagonists; they are "anti-heroines." Our sympathy is not with them, or for that matter, with any of the avenging dynamic females because they totally lack moral standards. In the first play, the heroine's moral code is of a personal nature and she disregards completely any general ethical standards. In the second play, the heroine removes herself from the moral code. The third heroine seems to fit into the typical revenge play pattern; that is, there is at the beginning of the play a situation where the wronged seeks to avenge loss of honor, but the manner in which Rosemonde fulfills her revenge, negates the ethical value of her revenge-motivated actions.

The second category of Dynamic Heroines is the ambitious ones motivated by the desire to achieve either personal glory or accede to power. The play *Roxane*\(^{6}\) starts with Roxane the heroine, of the same name, in love with Phradate. Her father, Cohortane, willing to pay homage to Alexandre le Grand, at the expense of his daughter, asks her
to accept favorably the amourous advances of Alexandre. At first Roxane plays along, but only as a means of saving Phradate, her lover: to reject Alexandre in favor of Phradate would result in her lover's death. In Act III, Phradate becomes worried that Roxane has given in to Alexandre and that she is betraying him. Roxane resents his accusations and reproaches him for distrusting her:

Phradate, quel discours & quelle hardiesse?
Doncques vous me croyez infidelle & traistresse?
O Prince sans respect! qu'aymez-vous donc en moy
Une beauté sans coeur, sans justice, & sans foy?
Qu'ay-je dit, qu'ay-je fait depuis ma foy donnée?
Ma constance au besoin m'a-t-elle abandonnée?
Ay-je fait voir un coeur humble, foible, & soumis?
N'ay je pas fait pour vous tout ce que j'ay promis?

(Act III, sc. ii)

There is no reason at this point in the spectator believing she is anything other than sincere, for even though her approach is indirect, she does not lose sight of her virtues. Throughout the play, her father constantly coaxes her into pleasing Alexandre, and is willing to sacrifice her honor for his personal gain. But for Roxane, "la vertu doit vaincre la Fortune." She soon starts resenting being torn between Phradate and Alexandre, and trying to please them both. She even contemplates suicide as a solution preferable to dealing with the pressures imposed by both of them.

He bien, que feras-tu Roxane? il faut mourir
Car ce n'est qu'en mourant que tu le peux guérir.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
Tu ne peux refuser, ny recevoir ses voeux:
Mais par ta seule mort tu peux en guérir deux.
Si Phradate eut ta foy, ce Prince a ton estime;
A l'amour de tous deux donne toy pour victime
Mais Roxane, mourir ce n'est pas resister
Pour conserve ta foy tu dois tout surmonter.

(Act III, sc. vi)
This thought of death, however, seems to be a very important moment of recognition on her part: she realizes that her death would accomplish nothing and resolves instead to overcome her problems and benefit from them. She will seize the opportunity of achieving power even if it means setting aside virtue and decides in favor of Alexandre. In this case, the lover Phradate, acts partly as a catalyst to cause a change of heart in her since it is not until he begins to threaten Alexandre's life that she makes her final decision to reject him and accept Alexandre. Roxane tells Phradate:

Je travaillais moy-mesme à mon aveuglement.  
J'attendois la prudence où regnoit la malice:  
Comme si la vertu devoit naistre du vice.  
Maintenant je voy clair, mes yeux sont dessillez;  
Mes sens ne dorment plus, tu les as resveillez:  
Et je rends grace au Ciel, qui dans la nuit obscure  
Par toy-mesme m'apprend ta perfide nature.  
Aussi le noble effort de ma fidelité  
Ne fut jamais amour: mais generosite.  

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
Ton amour m'abaissoit, ton mepris me releve;  
Et quand tu m'as voulu dépeindre comme toy,  
J'ay trouve que Roxane estoit digne d'un Roy.  

(Act IV, sc. iv)

to which he rightly answers: "Vostre ambition parle, & non vostre colère."

Phradate is later killed as he tries to enter Alexandre's apartment, hoping to find Roxane in Alexandre's arms so that he might kill them both. Free of Phradate and any harm he could cause, Roxane prepares to become queen and looks forward to the glory of being Alexandre's consort:

Je veux que dans ma mort on approuve son choix  
Je veux avec mon sang voir leurs pleurs se repandre  
Roxane, diront-ils, miritoit Alexandre.  

(Act V, sc. iv)
As for Alexandre, she will reign over him and the world.

Even though Roxane does not set out to achieve glory, she seizes the opportunity when it arises, but in so doing she compromises the moral principles which at the beginning were valuable to her.

Another ambitious heroine who manipulates others to obtain power is Fredegonede in Le Merovee. The author, Billard, comments in the Argument that she, "transporté[e] des impudiques amours . . . abandonne la conscience, et la crainte de Dieu pour chercher les moyens de parvenir a son intention." Although Fredegonede does not appear on stage until the third act, the audience has been adequately prepared for her from the onset since Tysiphone, a fury, forewarns of the horrors she will bring about:

Ranime tes fureurs, cruelle Tysiphone,
Reveille les efforis, tizons de Persephone
Remetz sur un theatre aux veux de ces mortels,
Les temples embrasez, les bris de leurs autels,
Lamentables effects de leurs mains effroiables:
Les inhumanitez, les meurtres incroiable,
La vengeance, l'inconse, & les ceps & les fers

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
Se voit rien de sauvage, inhumain, detestable
De sanglant, d'impiteux, d'horreur, d'espouvantable

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
Ce n'est que jeu d'enfans des cruautez premiers,
Faire devant ses yeux annuiter les lumieres

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
Dans leur gorge beante atremper inhumains,
Ces glaises rebouchez en rointes fremissantes
Du barbare assasin des amis innocentes.

(Act I)

Fredegonede plots with Landry, Maire du Palais the assassination of her husband Chilperic, King of France, his son Merouve and Merouve's wife, Brunechilde. She is even willing to make a pact with evil and will go to any length
to achieve her goals:

\[ J'\text{engageroy mon ame aux cruelles Erynes} \]
\[ \text{Pourveu que je regnasse, et que durant ma vie} \]
\[ \text{Je visse à mon seul chef la couronne asservie.} \]

(Act III)

The crown for her is a symbol of greatness by which she can emulate the gods. She addresses the crown as if worshipping it:

Couronne, l'ornement des frons les plus altiers,
Qui sous toy font trembler un monde de guerriers,
Qui te fais respecter de tant d'ames serviles

(Act III)

In Act V we learn of Merovee's murder. Bosson, Merovee's capitaine des gardes, has killed him at Fredegonede's command. She now wants to dispose of Bosson for fear that he might talk, although Landry would prefer to have him banished:

Landry:
Il en fera trop loin: à qui peut-il parler?

Fredegonede:
Il peut escrire aux ventz, il peut semer en l'air

Landry:
Vous deffiez de tout.

Fredegonede:
Je ne m'assure en rien
Ne fais de rien estat, que de ce que je tien.

(Act V)

Landry, suddenly aware of the viciousness by which she is
driven, decides he wants no part of it, for she has the power to corrupt and destroy the world around her, which might include him eventually:

Quel sexe, quelle humeur, quel coeur de Frédegonde Quels meurtres projetez ... Si meschant, si cruel, et puis-je dire encore.

He speaks of her magic powers:

Car rien n'oblige tant une beauté ravie Que feindre en l'adorant de ne tenir la vie Que d'elle, de ses yeux, & mourir mille fois Sous ces atrais, ces feux qui me donnent ses loys. Ce faux sexe est léger, se repaist d'apparence: Le nostre feint à aymer lors que moins il y pense. (Act V)

What is astonishing even for the Baroque theater with its numerous instances of gratuitous cruelty and violence, is the fact that Frédegonde's wickedness goes unpunished. The chorus comes out and of all people, blames Chilperic, who apparently before the play begins, has acceded to the throne by means of murder. Nevertheless, he is punished and she is not.

Lydie, in **Alcionée**, is an ambitious heroine who turns her back on love for the glory of the crown. She is supposed to be in love with Alcionée, but driven by vanity and self-esteem, she claims that her love for him violates her rank and honor:

Donnons tout à la gloire, & rien à mon repos Contentons aujourd'hui l'orgueil d'un Diadème ... Et pour me faire voir digne d'une grandeur Qui mèle tant d'ennuis avec tant de splendeur. (Act III, sc. iv)

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And even though her father agrees to her marriage to Alcione, Lydie's arrogant pride makes her see the man she loves only as an enemy who fought against their kingdom to extract a promise of marriage, and thereby gain a crown. Now she welcomes her chance to get even and makes known to him her reasons for not marrying him:

Desirez vous scavoir ce que j'ay dû resoudre?  
Regardez cêt Estât, mis en feu, mis en poudre,  
Voyez nos maux passez, voyez vos actions,  
... ... ... ... ... ... ...  
Celuy qui de mon Throsne a voulu me chasser  
Demande insolemment que j'aille l'y placer!  
Jugez sans vous flatter, & d'une ame plus saine,  
Si je doy de l'Amour à ces marques de haine.  
Et s'il est juste enfin, après tant de travaux  
De donner ma couronne à l'autheur de mes maux.  

(Act III, sc. v)

Alcione is astonished at Lydie's sudden change of heart. She hastens to add that not only is she not in love with him but has always hated him:

Non, je n'ay point changé je suis tousjours la mesme  
Tousjours preste à vanger l'honneur du Diadésmé:  
(Act III, sc. v)

He, who is sincerely in love with her, is brought to his knees by her in order to ask forgiveness, but she insists that his actions have smothered their love:

Vostre rebellion fut grande & redoutable,  
Mais j'apprenns aujord'hui qu'elle m'est profitable,  
Puis qu'apres des corbats, si longs & si douteux  
Elle me sert à vaincre un amour si honteux.  
(Act III, sc. v)

Alcione stabs himself in order to be worthy of her and asks to be taken before her and left to die at her feet. The sight of him, dying, rekindles her love and she rationalizes that to have accepted marriage would not have
lessened her glory, "un lasche amour n'offence point ma gloire." Lydie has thus brought suffering upon herself in the pursuit of glory.

The ambitious heroine does not completely fit into the anti-heroine structure of the avenging dynamic female since in some cases, she is not an antagonist who cruelly inflicts harm on others. She is not always an evil character, and sometimes if harm is done, she may suffer the consequences as well. Yet she does not conform to the protagonist model since she is generally not a morally good character. Roxane and Lydie are actually neither good nor bad. Fredegonede, while one has to admit, is bad, is not punished. This leaves the spectator at a loss as to the purpose of the play. Let us immediately note that this absence of purpose, these contradictions and paradoxes, are in perfect agreement with the general nature of the Baroque theater and Baroque itself.

Our third category of Dynamic Heroines are those who rebel against social conventions, oppressors, conditions, or personal situations. The first heroine in this category is Cephalie in L'Infidèle Confidente. She revolts against social restrictions, eloping with the man she stole from her best friend. At the beginning of the play, Lorise and Lisanor are writing love letters to each other; however, when Cephalie sees Lisanor, she becomes determined to win
him over for herself. So she substitutes her own love letter for Lorise's.

Cephalie's reason for ignoring social conventions is that she feels they are of little value, and that love is the only law that should be obeyed. As she writes to Lisanor,

L'honneur, la hayne, & le respect.
Confus a ton premier aspect,
N'ont point condamné mon envie
Et ceux qui m'ont donné le jour
Peuvent disposer de ma vie
Mais non pas establir des lois à mon amour

(Act II, sc. iii)

Charmed by her beauty, Lisanor proposes marriage. They elope. Cephalie's two brothers go in pursuit of them in order to save Cephalie's honor. The elopement, of course, causes Cephalie's mother great distress and anxiety out of fear for her daughter's chastity. Cephalie, on the other hand, boldly refers to her relationship with Lisanor as "nostre amour legitime." Her chastity is therefore open to question. Consequently, the social code of honor must be restored to the satisfaction of Cephalie's family. This is fulfilled through the betrothal and pending marriage of the two young lovers.

The second heroine in the rebel category is Perside in La Rhodienne ou La Cruaute de Solyman. She is in love with Eraste, Chevalier Rhodien, who is exiled and later killed by Solyman, Emperor of the Turks, so that he can win Perside's love. While it is difficult in this case to refer
to Perside as a dynamic heroine since she is not the prime mover of the action, she nevertheless reacts against Solyman's actions, causing her own death. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that Perside is a step above the heroines studied thus far in that she exhibits some signs of consciousness rarely observed in Baroque drama. It is this consciousness of her *raison d'être* and an awakening of her senses as to the reason for her existence in relation to Solyman that causes her to react. The discovery she makes is that one of her functions as a female is to serve as an object to Solyman, who has brought her from prison for no other purpose than to serve him:

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O Rigoureux meschef, ô dure destinée,
Falloit-il que je fusse helas au monde née
Pour estre le jouet de l'aveugle malheur,

Si en perdant mes biens, mon pere et ma cité
Je ne perdois encor ma chere liberté
Mais quoy pour ma beauté jadis tant estimée
Dans une estroit Sarrail pour malgré mon desir
Servir à Solyman de jouet et plaisir:
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(Act III, sc. i)

She becomes conscious of the purpose assigned her which is to be the mere toy for pleasure-seeking Solyman. She adopts the Stoic attitude and discovers that the way to protect her honor is also the escape route leading to suicide. She will not use any other means because anything less would not truly preserve and protect her honor:

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Que si à tous hazards il me veut faire outrage
Et desire, cruel, ravir mon pucelage,
J'auray recours au fer, & d'un brillant poignard
Je me transperceray le coeur de part en part,
Car je n'ay point en moy d'autre soin ny envie
Pour sauver mon honneur que de perdre la vie.
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(Act III, sc. i)
Upon hearing the news of Eraste's death, she revolts against her lover's enemy. She is a woman in love, whose lover has been murdered by the man she scorns. Courageous and determined, she arms herself and her soldiers,

Mais pour venger ma perte & ma calamité,
Je m'en vay au palais d'un courage indompté
Faire armer nos soldats. . . .

(Act V, sc. i)

Solyman had hoped that in eliminating Eraste, she would no longer refuse him, but she remains adamant in her determination not to surrender herself.

Perside (to Solyman):
As fait injustement meurir mon cher Eraste,
Tu penses par sa mort accomplir ton désir,
Tu penses par sa mort m'avoir à ton plaisir,
Mais plustost le Soleil esteindra sa lumiere.

(Act V, sc. ii)

Her threatened revenge is only a means to achieve death. She is a victim, but still openly rebels against her aggressors and in so doing tries to affirm her dignity as a woman. She actually evokes pity for we see her as an object. She is unable to create a situation, only react to it; and dressed in Eraste's arms, presenting a masculine and militant image, she provokes Solyman's soldiers into shooting her. Her desire is satisfied.

Portraying the legendary amazon type—a variant of the rebel—is Hypsicratee in La Mort de Mitradate. Her husband, King Mitridate, has been condemned to die in combat for his wrongdoings against Pompee. Mitridate's son, Pharnace, has been appointed by Pompee to kill his father.
Although the play deals with Mitridate and the events leading up to his death, Hypsicratee provides a dramatic effect by the part she plays in a man's world. She provides both moral and physical support to Mitridate, and projects the image of a woman of force and spirit, even though she is not the prime mover of the plot. She is a dynamic heroine nonetheless in that she shares the role of the protagonist with Mitridate, and even accompanies him into combat,

Mitridate:
Toy qui dans mes combats compagne inseparable,
M'accompagnes aussi dans mon sort deplorable
Exemple infortune de conjugale amour,
Et sans qui Mitridate est ennemy du jour.

Hypsicratee:
Souffrez que me servant demon premier pouvoir,
Je veuille a Mitridate enseigner son devoir,
Puis que dans la tristesse ou son malheur l'engage,
Il me conserve rien de son premier courage.
(Act I, sc. ii)

Mitridate's attitude toward his wife is quite unconventional. Normally, she would represent a challenge to a man's position, but he accepts her with great admiration and respect. She also feels at ease in her novel situation as if it were an inherent part of a woman's world. She displays a strong sense of independence combined with exceptional self-sufficiency. She is brave and proud of it. She considers fighting an intrinsic part of her. She willingly accepts the role of a woman and that of a combatant being at ease in both. The two roles work in unison and complement each other.

As they prepare for battle in Act II, Mitridate expresses concern for her safety. He is moved by love and
need for her companionship. The loss of her would be too
great for him to bear,

Mitridate:
   Je veux que du combat vous soyez exemptée.

Hypsicratee:
   Avez-vous résolu de me rendre ennemie,
   Ou si vous avez cru ma valeur endormie?
   Ce coeur que les dangers n'ont jamais rebuté,
   Se peut-il bien noircir de quelque lâcheté?
   Portay-je à mon costé une inutile espée
   Ne l'ayant jamais craint, puis-je craindre Pompée?
   Et lors que les perils ne seront que pour vous,
   Du haut de nos ramparts jugeray-je des coups?
   Scachez que les malheurs augmentent mon courage,
   . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
   Vostre meilleur secors est celuy de ma main.
   (Act II, sc. i)

Unable to convince her not to enter the battle, he accedes
to her wish:

   Puis qu'aucune raison ne t'en neut divertir
   Je veux à ton dessein malgré moy consentir.
   Mille fois je t'ay veule, invincible Amazone,
   Acqerir des lauriers que la valeur nous donne,
   J'ay veu les escadrons de ta vois animez,
   Fendre pour t'imiter des bataillons armez
   Ton visage & ton fer font d'égales conquestes.
   (Act II, sc. i)

Before the combat can take place, however, Mitridate
and Hypsicratee resolve to die by poison, thereby avert
fighting their son. As always, Hypsicratee provides the
necessary support and comfort. There is actually an exchange
of traditional roles, for Mitridate not only falters at
times, but sheds tears as well. He enters the domain of
'femininity,' and thus weakens his 'masculine' role,

Hypsicratee:
   Paravant que j'expire, approche qu'en ce lieu
   Je puisse sur ta bouche imprimer un adieu
   Des douleurs que je sens m'annoncent desja l'heure.
   Qouy! Je respire encore, & Mitridate pleure.

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Le plus grand Roy du monde est si peu resolu,  
Et regrette un trespas que luy mesme a voulu.  
Quelle honte!

Mitridate:  
Permet la douleur qui m'emporte  
Ma constance se perd, & ma raison est morte.  
Je ne me puis resoudre.

Hypsicratee:  
Il te faut toutefois  
Supporter sans regret l'estat oü tu me vois  
Ne t'en afflige point, ou je meurs mecontente.  
Il est vray, ma douleur est un peu violente.  
Mais elle doit finir par une prompte mort.  

(Act V, sc. ii)

She dies in Mitridate's arms. Mitridate is unable to die from the poison and has to fall on a sword. Through their death, they revolt against Pompee, thus preserving their position as King and Queen, rather than becoming his prisoners.

As previously mentioned, the heroines' revolts in Baroque Drama take various forms. One of the most unique rebellions is that of Calirie in La Celidee, ou de la Générosité d'amour. Oronte has learned that Alidor, his nephew recently returned from England, has fallen hopelessly in love with Calirie to the extent that he has become ill. To cure his nephew's illness, Alidor asks Calirie, whom he loves deeply, to help his nephew's recovery, with daily visits. Believing she loves him, Alidor gradually recovers. To help him stay in good health, Oronte, out of love and concern, requests from Calirie's mother, her consent to the marriage of her daughter to Alidor. Furious at the knowledge that Oronte
has betrayed her, Calirie not only strongly objects to his actions, but causes a considerable damage to Alidor's health by confessing to the latter that his love is unrequited. However, despite Calirie's anger toward Oronte, she still loves him. On learning this, he changes his mind concerning her marriage to Alidor and wants her back. Calirie, frustrated by the constant tug-of-war between the two men, revolts against them in a most unique manner, by destroying her beauty, which she feels stands in the way of her real merit. If her outward appearance is the only means by which she is to be judged, then she must destroy it. In her own eyes she has lost her dignity. So Calirie, alone in her room, facing her mirror, defies Nature by cutting her face with a diamond. In a tirade of 72 lines, she explains her plight to the mirror who used to reflect her:

Ah! miroir autrefois consulté pour l'usage
Des embellissements qu'on net sur un visage,
	.
	.
	.
Je vien pour consulter avec toy les moyens
De perdré le plus cher, & plus grand de mes biens,
Je scay, sans me flatter, qu'on me peut dire belle,
Qu'aujourd'huy je viens faire une action mouvelle:
	.
	.
	.
Si je perds mes appas, au moins je ne les pers
Que pour me retirer de ces injustes fers,
	.
	.
	.
C'est avecque raison, que de vous [la beauté] je me prive,
Puisque c'est de vous seuls que ce malheur m'arrive,
	.
	.
	.
(Elle se gaste le visage avec un diamant.)

(Act V, sc. iii)

She destroys her beauty in order to test Oronte's love.

J. Rousset identifies one of the values of beauty to women in the Baroque. "La femme n'a d'autre arme que sa beauté;
Calirie does just the opposite; she destroys it rather than use it. For Alidor, beauty is what he loves: "Madame, pardonez ceste incivilité [his love]/Puis qu'elle ne vous vient que de vostre beauté." Calirie wants to turn Alidor away since he loves her for her beauty. "Alidor, mon visage,/Sans doute estant change changera ton courage" (Act V, sc. iv). Used as an object by the two men, her act is an ultimate form of rebellion. She demands recognition of her inner self rather than of her beauty.

Our analysis of the different kinds of Dynamic Heroines reveals a definite difference in their respective behavior patterns. The avenging heroines display the highest level of dynamism. Their actions show no moral awareness; they behave as antagonists rather than protagonists and evoke no sympathy from the spectator. They are in fact "anti-heroines."

The ambitious heroines, on the other hand, are not as extreme in their behavior. Their actions are not necessarily intended to cause harm to others but rather achieve success; but they do, however, bring about catastrophic consequences for themselves or others. We cannot really say that they are inherently good or bad, only that their actions produce negative results.

Finally, the rebellious heroines fit more closely

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the characteristics of the protagonist of a play: that is, there are basically good characters. Cephalie is certainly not corrupt, for even though she elopes with Misanor, she lives according to her own code of love. Perside, Hypsicratee and Calirie all require our sympathy, for it is because of their good qualities that they suffer. One must note also that in their case, they are not the prime movers of the actions, but rather occupy supportive roles.

The heroine can also be passive instead of dynamic; in other words, she is acted upon rather than motivating the action herself. Three categories that emerge over and above the rest are the victims of violent physical crimes, the victims of moral crimes and the conformists.

The majority of the plays in this first category deal with rape, which is indicative of the subject's popularity among Baroque dramatists. Two plays, representative of this type of violence, should suffice as illustration.

The first play is _Lucrece_, by P. Du Ryer, in which the virtuous heroine is raped. In the opening scene, Tarquin ridicules Collatin, Lucrece's husband, for his excessive love for Lucrece on the grounds that love and marriage cannot co-exist, voicing thus a commonplace of courtly love ethics:

Et d'espoux et d'amant! Collatin il me semble
Que ces deux qualitez ne vont gueres ensemble
L'amour recompense brusle moins ardamment,
Et le titre d'espoux chasse celuy d'Amant.

(Act I, sc. i)
The entire Act I centers upon a discussion of Lucrece and virtue itself by a group of male characters, whose opinions illustrate some callous attitudes toward women in general. Collatin's friend, Brute, goes as far as to imply that every woman is a potential Eve:

\[
\text{Si la femme est un bien agréable et charmant,} \\
\text{C'est un bien peu durable, et qu'on perd aisément} \\
\text{On le fait désirer aussi tost qu'on le vante,} \\
\text{Ce désir est dans l'âme un Démon qui la tente} \\
\text{Chacun tient comme toy pour un point débatu,} \\
\text{Que le nombre est petit des femmes de vertu.}
\]  

\(\text{sc. ii}\)

Tarquin is especially challenged by Lucrece's virtue and wants to seduce her to show off his masculinity:

\[
\text{C'est Lucrece, qu'importe, il la faut emporter,} \\
\text{Et je suis en un rang a ne rien respecter,} \\
\text{La plus haute vertu peut choiro en un instant,} \\
\text{Et n'est jamais constante en un sexe inconstant.} \\
\text{Ce merite apprent qui releve Lucrece,} \\
\text{N'est peut estre qu'un fard qui cache sa foiblesse,} \\
\text{La vertu d'une femme est un foible averse.}
\]  

\(\text{Act II, sc. i}\)

Even though Tarquin sometimes seems to pay homage to Lucrece's virtue—consistency of characterization is not one of the Baroque theater's forte—he believes her to be weak and an easy target:

\[
\text{Au lieu d'un vain amour monstrons de la fureur,} \\
\text{La vertu d'une femme est aisément contrainte,} \\
\text{Si ce n'est par foibllesse, elle cede par crainte} \\
\text{Et le monde abusé n'a point de chastetez.}
\]  

\(\text{Act III, sc. vi}\)

Tarquin does not consider Lucrece or for that matter any other women as individuals but rather as stereotypes. Consequently, in ravishing Lucrece, he is symbolically...
violating all women. He insists that the female sex is weak, easy to subdue and should serve as a means to his glory and satisfaction.

In Act III, Tarquin has a plan to set Lucrece against Collatini, and hopes that she will then turn on him. He has his slave inform Lucrece that Collatini has transgressed his marital vows, and has also slandered her; these are lies which Lucrece is unable to refute.

An ensuing discussion between Lucrece and her two maids-in-waiting concerning Collatini's unfaithfulness shows typical female reactions in this matter. Cornelie advises Lucrece not to worry for such affairs do not last. Livie, on the other hand, fears that it might hurt their marriage, as he could fall in love with the other woman. They do not condemn Collatini's actions and instead offer advice on how to handle the situation: that her complaints, for instance, should be discrete.

Cornelie:
Madame pensez-y, l'on peut tout doucement
Apporter un remede a cet aveuglement;
Une plainte amoureuse, & toutesfois secrette,
Un tendre sentiment d'une amitié discrète,
Quelques pleurs à propos devant luy répandus
Vous rendront tous les biens que vous croyez perdus.
On irritex un mary lors cue la plainte esclatte.
Mais la plainte secrette est un son qui le flatte
Et qui mentre bien-tost que par des traits si doux
Une femme peut tout sur le coeur d'un espoux.

(Act III, sc. iv)

Although Lucrece thinks that her husband's actions are shameful, she does not condemn him and even goes as far as taking the blame for his infidelity:
Si l'on voi d'autre part Collatin attaché
Mes imperfections excusent son péché.
Je blasme mes defects beaucoup plus que luy-mesme
Puis qu'ils sont les tyrans qui m'ostet ce que j'ayme
Mais les reconnoissant je les corrigeray,
Et peut estre qu'ainsi je le r'appelleray;
Ou si de mon repos le destín aversaire
Ne payoit mon travail que d'un succez contraire,
Au moins j'auray par mes soings corrige mes défauts.

(Act II, sc. v)

Blaming herself for being a female is of course negating her essence. Women are weak, but Lucrece strives at transcending that weakness in hopes of remaining virtuous: "Si la femme est fragile, elle l'est par sa faute/Un coeur vrayment fidelle est toujours assez fort" (Act IV, sc. i). Lucrece exemplifies the supposed dilemma of all women. They are weak because they are women, they should be virtuous because they are women, but in order to be virtuous they must be strong. A paradox to say the least.

The rape scene occurs in Act IV. Targuin enters with a slave and advises her to surrender to him or she will die. She naturally prefers death a drastic course of action that she is ready to take; she considers this eventuality with equanimity:

Percez, percez ce coeur, et me privez du jour
Je crains moins ce poignard qu'une impudique amour
Je feray si l'on veut ce coup illegitime
Et ma main à la vostre espargnera ce crime
J'iray pour mon honneur au devant du trespas.

(sc. ii)

Tarquin, however, will not allow her to escape so easily and threatens to kill his slave and lay his body over hers, thereby insuring the loss of the honor she is struggling to preserve. She, therefore, has no choice, for either way--
rape or not—she will be dishonored.

In the tirade following the rape, Lucrece points out that only death can restore her honor and preserve her innocence; ironically, death is a punishment as well, a punishment truly underserved:

    Je regarde la mort comme un soulagement,
    Et ne puis l'embrasser que comme un chastiment.
    Mourrons nous, vivrons nous.

(Act IV, sc. vi)

She opts for death nevertheless for it assures her revenge on Tarquin. As she sees it, her death will cause him to lose the esteem of the Roman people when he becomes king:

    Meurs non pour tesmoigner que tu te sens coupable
    Mais pour rendre aux Romains Tarquin detestable.
    Meurs, non pour faire voir l'horreur de ton peche,
    . . . . . . . . . .
    Mais meurs, pour tesmoigner par un coup qui te lave
    Que qui s'en peut priver n'en fut jamais esclave
    Quiconque s'est prive des sens et des plaisirs
    Et pour l'un et pour l'autre eust de foibles desirs.

(Act IV, sc. vi)

There is another similar version of the Lucrece story, La Lucreesse Romaine, by Chevreau. The only difference between the two is that for Lucreesse, death is not a punishment but a means of preserving her chastity.

In Amnon et Thamar, the violence of the Lucrece plays is actually dwarfed by even greater crimes when incest is coupled with rape. Amnon's incestuous love for his sister, Thamar, is brought out right at the beginning of the play. He rationalizes that lust in a strange manner; since love-making is a rule of the universe it must have God's
approval and therefore must be acceptable, no matter who or what is involved:

Les arbres font l'amour, l'air le fait à la terre
Le feu se mèle aux corps que le haut ciel enserre,
Les brutes font l'amour, voire avec passion,
Et les vistes oyseaux parfois font cette action,
Les poissons font l'amour, & sous les eaux courantes,
Le Dieu les va brûlant de ses flammes ardentes
Les hommes font l'amour, & mon père l'a fait,
Bien qu'il soit renommé en prudence parfait,
Pourquoi ne puis je donc en ce devoir le suivre,

On ne peut faire mal imitant ceux qui ont
Par une juste loy le diadème au front

Je veux taster ce bien, le donner ce remède
A mon coeur amoureux.

(Act I)

Amnon has made up his mind in spite of warning from an Angel no less, that he will be punished. "Ne sois pas si meschant que de commettre inceste . . ./Dieu punit asprement ces injustes amours." But Amnon is resolved to defy the rule of God and insists that he is going to "jouir de Thamar . . ./Suis la resolu, il sera fait ainsi/Malgré le ciel, la terre,
& ce qui vit ici."

Thamar, however, is in direct contrast to Amnon, for while he seeks to destroy the universal harmony, she wishes to preserve it. Her responsibility is to uphold virtue:

Soyons chastes tousjours; car sans ce bien aimé,
La femme n'a d'honneur digne d'estre estimé.
Ses autres faits sont fols.

(Act II)

During the rape, she even comes up with an honorable solution by suggesting marriage. "Dont la Loy fait le joug à l'amoureuse rage . . ./Ainsi sans m'offencer tu seras satisfait." Thamar's passivity is extreme to say the least,
as she demands no amends for the crime committed against her, but quietly accepts her fate. She is apparently unaware of the necessity for revenge. Their father's punishment of Amnon does not involve her in any manner. That she is a victim of the crime and may suffer deeply from it, is overlooked in the play, especially when the spectator is made a witness to the father's grief over his son's death and not over the harm done to his daughter.

The next play, Les Portugaiz Infortunez, does not actually deal with rape, but is just as horrible in as much as the heroine, Eleonor suffers abuses at the hands of her enemies. Having been shipwrecked, the Portuguese hope to obtain food and shelter from the South African natives, but are attacked instead. Eleonor tries to save her people by appealing to the African King, but her efforts are futile. Even though she may not appear as passive in her attempt to save those she loves, the end of the play points to her as a victim. As Chrétien des Croix remarks in the Sujet de la tragédie, "Eleonor Femme honorable, se souvenant de sa Race, voyant ces Barbares depouiller son Mary, ses Enfans, et Elle, oubliant son sexe, et sa dignité les provoque a coups de poin, et de souflets, les irritant par tous movens pour la tuer." She dies a horrible death whereby her clothes are torn off her--on stage!--and she is left to die in the scorching sun. Her only defense is to bury herself in the sand in order to protect her virtue.
In these plays the heroine functions as a catalyst to bring out the worst in man. She is a victim in every sense of the word, for she is always acted upon. Her good qualities, such as chastity, work against her and she is either driven to commit suicide, is raped, or made to bear excessive sufferings. Quite often, death is welcomed relief and suicide an easy escape.

The second category of Passive Heroines is comprised of the victims of moral imperatives. This is to some extent the result of their own doing since they are tied down by conventions from which they do not wish to free themselves. For example, the heroine in Panthee is so obsessed with her chastity that she commits suicide. Pursued by the amourous advances of Cyrus, Panthee remains resolute throughout the play. When at the end she hears of her husband Abradate's death at the hand of Cyrus, she seemingly lacks the will to act to protect herself from Cyrus. She searches for the body of her husband in a field covered with corpses and upon finding it, commits suicide. The chorus comes out at the end and proclaims her glory. Throughout the play, Panthee fails to act and the only positive move she makes is ironically her suicide, which can hardly be viewed as constructive.

The heroine in Polyxene is a sister in behavior to Panthee for she too welcomes death as a means for preserving her chastity:
Non pour servir, helasl de proye, & de butin
A ces tigres esmeus de felonie extreme,
Mais pour me sauver, en me perdant moy mesme
Non, non, il faut mourir: meurs en fille de Roy

Tu mourras chaste, & belle aiant d'un brave coeur
Fait paroître à ces Grecs, qu'il n'y a rien vainqueur

Malheureuse en vivant, bien heureuse en ma mor:
Bien heureuse a quitter ce miserable por.

(Act II)

She dies for glory and honor, which in this case consists in preserving her virginity:

Mais moi, brave en courage . .
L'immolerai mon ame au temple de l'honneur,
Je mourrai, generouse, & vierge renommée
D'avoir osé garder cete rose estimée....

(Act II)

She is a victim because the decision for and the manner of her death are beyond her control.

The Tragedie de Sainte Agnes in many respects, attracts more interest than those just covered. In it the heroine displays a remarkable degree of perseverance and courage. Martian, son of King Simphronie, falls in love with Agnes, a peasant girl, who refuses his offer of marriage, claiming she is already a bride of God. In reality, Agnes associates marriage and its physical aspects with that which is impure and sinful. Her refusal of Martian leads to disgrace and she is sent to a brothel; when Martian urged by his friend Censoin, tries to rape her, he is struck dead by lightning sent by God. Agnes is thus saved and her purity eternally preserved when Simphronie orders her death. Agnes' resoluteness would be more
admirable if only it were accompanied with some sort of action or a semblance of struggle against her fate, but even the rape attempt is solved by *deus ex machina*. This is a religious play, but one can only wonder at the mixture of obscenity and piety which seems strong even for a Baroque play.

In *La Machabee*, Solomone, like Sainte Agnes, is worthy of admiration and respect throughout most of the play, but she too is abused at the end. Solomone and her seven sons have been ordered by King Antiochus to renounce their Jewish faith and pledge allegiance to him. A paragon of religious faith and moral strength, she is a "nourrisante" to her sons, giving them courage to face their adversary. The King deals with her rather than with her sons and at first treats her with kindness. He appears to be offering her a choice, but it is done in such a manner that he is actually forcing her to give in to his wishes. She refuses of course:

Nous ne quitterons point nostre loy mosaique
C'est un acte meschant cruel & tyrannique
De nous vouloir forcer par telle impiété
Changer les saintes loix de nostre antiquité
Pour nous faire adorer une masse muette
... . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Tu ne pourras jamais ny mes enfans ny moy.
Esbranler tant soit peu nostre aimantine foy.

(Act I)

Here is an act of defiance as well as refusal. She shares with Agnes the unshakeable faith that loving God brings, and portrays the image of a rare and steadfast woman:
Jamais, jamais ce vil & pénible servage
Ne pourra refroidir nostre noble courage
Jamais crainte de mort ou d'un superbe Roy
Ne pourront esbranler nostre immortelle foy.  (Act I)

However, her being steadfast and constant are not in themselves active and it is really by her inertia that she wishes to save herself and her sons. All the action is in Antiochus' hands and they all die at his command.

Next, *La Polyxène* questions the established ethics on love and marriage and in so doing focuses on some attitudes with regard to both. It is placed in this category because the heroine, the Duchess Polyxene, succumbs, although happily at the end, to the established social ethics.

At the beginning of the play, the Duchess is worried because "un homme estranger estrangement" moves her. Since she is already married this feeling understandably causes her deep concern:

\[
\text{Faut-il qu'un fol amour me donne tant d'esmoy,}
\text{Faut-il qu'un fol amour triomphe ainsi de roy?}
\]  (Act II)

The fear of sinning against her marital vows is justified.

\[
\text{Vienne m'accravanter, que je rompe ou viole}
\text{Tes loix, ô saint Hymen, de fait, ou de parole.}
\text{Celuy qui le premier de mes chastes amours}
\text{A recueilly la fleur, seul moissonne toujours}
\text{Le fruict, entier d'iceux, & qu'un lasche adultere}
\text{En rien de mon honneur l'integrite n'altere.}
\]  (Act II)

Moreover, the Duchess is afraid of what she calls *fol amour*, seen by her as the cause of irrationality in the
most rational minds, let alone a woman's. She notes that "mes sens vont me quittant, et ma raison s'esgare," thus leaving her vulnerable to the temptations of illicit love. For the Duchess, *fol amour* is associated with chaos, darkness and inconstancy; all hateful elements of which she wants no part.

A stichomythic exchange between the Duchess and Euboulie (*Damoiselle donnant bon conseil*), deserves to be quoted in its entirety for it sheds light on what is accepted and what is not in marriage. The Duchess' concept of matrimony is quite emancipated and we can only assume that she is expounding some of the less orthodox views of her day. She seems to strongly disapprove of a union in which only the husband can feel free to indulge in extra-marital affairs. However, even she finally accepts the notion that the wife's duty in marriage consists in virtue and honor.

Polyxene:
La loy de mariage est due et rigoureuse.

Euboulie:
Mais telle rigueur rend la femme bien-heureuse.

Polyxene:
Quel [bon]heur est-ce toujours d'être en sujettions?

Euboulie:
Trop grande liberté mène à perdition.

Polyxene:
Mais le droit est commun pour nous et pour les hommes.

Euboulie:
Mais par le droit d'honneur leurs sujettes nous sommes.

Polyxene:
C'est honneur fier Tyran vient nous violenter.
Euboulie:
Non, non, vous vous tromper, c'est en gloire exalter.

Polyxene:
Les hommes auront donc liberté de tout faire,
Sans crainte d'en avoir des honneur, ni affaire
Et les femmes seront sujettes à la loy.
Au blasme, et à la peine, et n'oseront sur soy.
Quoy qu'ils fàçent bien pirs, prendre aucune licence.

Euboulie:
Sur le malfait d'autruy fonder son innocence
Est chose trop unique, il ne faut recueillir
Exemple aucun d'ailleurs, pour pecher, et faille.
Quoy que des hommes soient meschamment contemnee
La foy qu'ils ont promise au sacre Hymenee
Ils nous faut toutefois de tout nostre pouvoir
Faire ce que commande au honnest devoir.

Polyxene:
Vous dites vérité ma très chère Euboulie
...:...:...:...:...:...:
Je n'ay point encore mis l'honneur tant en oubly,
Je n'ay le coeur aussi tant lasche et affoibly.

(Act VI)

In Act IV, the Duchess rejoices at conquering fol amour. Her change of heart, "je veux changer d'avis et amener la faute/Que j'ay faite ..." stems, not so much from a free choice, but from Euboulie reminding her of the wife's duty. Everything is now returned to normal and Le Sainct amour is able to rationally and reasonably reign once more. The Duchess' final submission to sainct amour is indispensable for a harmonious interaction with society and with her husband.

The third category of the Passive Heroine is the Conformist, who at first refuses the position assigned to her, but in the end, accepts the very things she started out rejecting. To some extent, this type of heroine is not as
passive as those reviewed above, for she really is a victim of her own choice. Her will is directed at coinciding with an accepted set of values.

Clavigene, our first play, deals with the rape of Cephise and the subsequent pursuit of her rapist, Clavigene, by her father and brother in order to restore her honor. Cephise, however, refuses to support them in their attempt and in doing so, is actually refusing the protection of social and moral laws. She does not complain about the crime committed against her and seeks no revenge. This ambiguous position makes her vulnerable to the accusation that her refusal to seek reparation is sparked by love for her rapist. Indeed, she sees no dishonor or crime in Clavigene's act because of the gentle manner in which he rapes her. (He did not rape her once, but twice!) According to Cephise, Clavigene has erred because he is a man:

Toutes ses actions ne tendent qu'à sa gloire
Mesme en me ravissant il fut respectueux
Et mesme dans son crime il parut vertueux
Par cet enlevement qui le combla de joye.
Il me fit sa captive, Il me rendit sa proye.

... ... ...
Et ce fut son amour qui sauva mon honneur;

... ... ...
Quelque fatalité me rengea soubs ses loix
Et je puis dire enfin qu'il me ravit deux fois
Mais helas il est homme. . . .

(Act V, sc. ii)

For Cephise, loss of her virginity is not detrimental to her honor as long as it is coupled with love. However, she finally accepts the social convention she had previously opposed, and allows her father to restore her honor through marriage to Clavigene.
In *La Juste Vangeance*, the heroine Cintilla refuses to marry Attilla, her father's assassin who now occupies her kingdom, but seeks no revenge on him. After failing to extract a promise of marriage, Attilla, out of anger, banishes her from the court and has her moved to an island. When the play opens, Cintille is lamenting this fate, but acknowledges Attilla's control over her:

> Tu me tiens en tes mains, & ma condition
> Agrave ton forfait par ta lasche action
> Donne moy la trespas, mets fin a mes douleurs
> Exerce dessus moy ton humeur sanguinaire.

*(Act I)*

Cintille descends from a line of women who have fallen victim to power-seeking men. In general, a man's quest and glory are considered incomplete without the love of a woman, and love is what Cintille is bent on denying Attilla. Having passively resisted him, she now only asks for death to end her miseries:

> Approche donc cruel, contente ton envie,
> Je n'apprehende point que tu m'ostes la vie
> Acheve dessus moy ton injuste dessein,
> Par cet assassinat ensanglante ta main.

*(Act II)*

Childebrand, with whom Cintille has been in love prior to her father's death, returns, defeats Attilla and delivers Cintille from bondage. She ascends the throne and has the opportunity to command, but instead passes the responsibility of her kingdom over to Childebrand. She is happy to be second in power to him: "Je seray fort contente en vivant sous ses loix." This final subjection is gradual and not surprising.
Orphise ou La Beaute Persecutee portrays the willingness of a heroine to overlook her lover's betrayal. Orphise and Theage love each other, but Prince Ligdamis also loves her. He confides in Theage:

*Je l'adore Theage, et mon amour est telle
Que je suis resolu de me perdre pour elle
Si tu ne vaincs pour moi son obstination. (Act I, sc. iv)*

Even though the Prince's actions are not noble, Theage cannot refuse his plea. He consequently assures the Prince that he will help him win Orphise over. "Je vous prepareray le chemin de son coeur," but he later explains to Orphise that he betrayed her out of duty: "Le devoir, non l'amour a fait agir ma langue" (Act II, sc. i). Naturally she is infuriated, and is only subdued once she is convinced of his sincerity, which he must prove by offering her his sword to kill him. She will not have it, of course. At her suggestion they decide to play along with Ligdamis in order to deceive him. Ligdamis, however, uncovers their scheme and vows revenge. He has Orphise kidnapped during one of the lovers' rendezvous and afterwards has Theage imprisoned. At Ligdamis' insistence, Theage repents and again agrees to give up Orphise. Later when Ligdamis offers Orphise the choice of himself, a Prince, or Theage, a traitor, "... souffrez maintenant qu'il nous fasse connoistre/Qui vous devez ayment ou d'un Prince, ou d'un Traistre" (Act IV, sc. vii), in pure defiance, she refuses them both and explains:
L'un n'est pas plus que l'autre agréable à mes yeux.
Aussi pour mon repos je des fuiray tous deux
Car le vice ne l'un choque mon innocence,
Et l'autre a des grandeurs don la pompe m'offence.

(Act IV, sc. vii)

Since this is tragi-comedy, it has to end well.

Hermodore, the King, using his foremost authority, returns
Orphise to Theage; a command she happily accepts despite
Theage's double crossing of her.

In Les Deux Amis,²⁸ the heroine, Sophronie is forced
to obey the will of her lover, Gesippe, who willingly gives
her in marriage to his best friend, Tite. At first Sophronie
is furious and shocked when she discovers that she has been
abandoned by the man she loves so that another may take his
place, since she feels her honor is at stake:

Je n'espère plus rien, puisque dans ce mal-heur
Je perds sans y penser, et Gesippe et l'honneur.

(Act II, sc. i)

Moreover, Sophronie is abandoned by her father, Aristide,
for he offers neither assistance nor protection to preserve
her honor. Further, his honor is at stake since Gesippe
reneged on his promise to marry Sophronie. Instead Aristide
sides with Gesippe and convinces her to accept the decision:

Puis donc que c'est un point tout à fait résolu
Et que pour nostre bien tous les Dieux l'on voulu
Carezsez-le [Tite] ma fille. . . .
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Vous devez profiter dans cet aimable change.

(Act III, sc. i)

In the end Sophronie is made to feel as if she were
to be blamed for Tite loving her. Tite confesses to her
that her beauty is responsible for his falling in love with
her. She passively accepts this fact:

Mon pere, je sçay bien sans parler davantage
Tout ce que le devoir veut d'une femme sage.

(Act III, sc. i)

Although her pride and personal honor have been hurt, she obeys male authority and conforms to her duty as a woman by accepting a marriage imposed upon her.

The passive heroine definitely fits the role of the protagonist as far as her being a 'good' character is concerned. She upholds all the social values she is supposed to believe in and the social structures to which she belongs. The role of victim that she plays definitely insures the spectator's sympathy. However, by the manner in which sympathy is created, prevents this heroine from conforming to the accepted model of the protagonist. A protagonist is a mover of action who has the sympathy of the spectator. The passive heroine has the sympathy but is not the mover of the action.

When we couple this passive heroine with the dynamic one a pattern emerges: whenever the heroine is dynamic, she moves away from the role of protagonist and reaches in some extreme cases that of antagonist, thereby losing the sympathy of the spectator. She will be assured of that sympathy only when she is a passive victim. Dynamism of heroine and sympathy of spectator seem to be mutually. If a woman is active, she is bad; if she is good, she is passive.
NOTES

1Du Ryer, Cleomedon, 1636. (All the dates listed here and in the following chapter are those of publication.)

2Edouard I. du Monin, L'Orbec-Oronte, 1598?

3N. Chretien des Croix, Alboin ou la Vengeance, 1608.

4Sex and poison have always been considered the two weapons used by wicked women to destroy their victims. Sex drains men of their potency, leaving them weak. Poison is said to be the weapon most frequently used by Roman women.

5Claude Billard, Alboin, 1610.

6Desmaretz, Roxane, 1639?

7Claude Billard, Le Merovee, 1610.

8Pierre Du Ryer, Alcionee, 1637.

9Pichou, L'Infidele confidente, 1631.

10Pierre Mainfry, La Rhodienne ou la Cruaute de Solyman, 1621.

11LaCalprenede, La Mort de Mitridate, 1637.

12de Rayssiguier, La Celidee sous le nom de Calirie ou de la Generosite d'amour, 1635.

13Jean Rousset, La Litterature de l'âge Baroque, p. 43.

14Plays whose subjects are also rape include Boisrobert's Pyrandre et Lisimene, 1633; Hardy's Scédase, 1624 and Du Ryer's Clarigene, 1632.

15Du Ryer, Lucrece, 1638.

16Chevreau, La Lucrese Romaine, 1637.

17Chretien des Croix, Amnon et Thamar, 1608.

18des Croix, Les Portuqaiiz Infortunez, 1608.
19 Claude Billard, Panthee, 1610.

20 Billard, Polyxene, 1610.

21 P. Troterel d'Aves, Tragedie de Sainte Agnes, 1615.

22 Marina Warner, Alone of all her Sex, observes that the early church fathers preached that women could maintain their purity by preserving their virginity and disassociating themselves with marriage and womanhood, pp. 72-73.

23 Jean de Virey, La Machabee, 1599.

24 Behourt, La Polyxene, 1598.

25 Pierre Du Ryer, Clarigene, 1639.

26 Anon., La Juste Vangeance, 1639.

27 Desfontaines, Orphise ou la beaute Persecutee, 1638.

28 Chevreau, Les Deux Amis, 1638.
Chapter 5

THE NON-HEROINE

While the heroines obviously provide the main body of the corpus for this study, it is still valuable to examine what happens to the non-heroines in the Baroque theater. They are abundantly present in this capacity. However, the majority of these women is limited to supporting roles such as mostly those of confidantes or suivantes or any other characters who may serve as a pretext to enhance the position of the heroine: the Greek women in Hector\(^1\) suffered and mourn helplessly at their plight of being at the mercy of the Trojans; Liliane in Les Rivaux Amis\(^2\) does nothing to help Yolante, her sister, achieve justice against their brother, and acts as a mere observer of the conflict. The list is endless. These women whom we shall call passive non-heroines are totally devoid of interest as far as this study is concerned for they fulfill no vital function in the theater.

On the other hand, instances when the non-heroines are dynamic, even as accessory characters in the plays, are relevant to the subject matter at hand. Indeed, in the plays reviewed in this chapter, it will become evident that
they are somewhat of a contrast to the dynamic heroines. When the non-heroines are dynamic they seem to possess a sense of moral values lacking in the heroines and therefore they seem to come closer to what a protagonist would be. It is now necessary to determine if a distinct pattern similar to the one found in the heroines emerges in the dynamic non-heroines. To aid our discussion, their roles will be divided into two types: the aggressors and the avengers.

In our first category, the play La Bourgeoise ou La Promenade de S. Cloud\textsuperscript{3} is relevant to our purpose because of the ambiguous function of one of the main characters, La Bourgeoise. The plot of this play is the conventional one of comedy: young lovers encounter obstacles before they can be united at the end of the play. Acrise and Cloris are in love, but they are destined to marry Florise and Atis, respectively, who also happen to love each other. La Bourgeoise, however, wants Acrise and participates in blocking the union of the young lovers. According to the theory of comedy as set forth by N. Frye and S. Langer, La Bourgeoise is actually an obstacle, an antagonist, who, as it is in so many of Molière's plays where the obstacle—Arnolphe in L'Ecole des femmes, M. Jourdain in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, is really the most important character in the play.\textsuperscript{4} As antagonist, La Bourgeoise is therefore a dynamic non-heroine, while the two pairs of young lovers are the protagonists.
From the onset, the spectator is provided an insight into La Bourgeoise's character by Climent, who loves her, comments that she has "l'esprít, fin et malicieux./Son coeur dément souvent et sa bouche et ses yeux" (Act I, sc. iv).

La Bourgeoise's first blocking maneuver is to have Floris— who will marry Acris as soon as Cloris and Aris are married— kidnapped to eliminate her rival. But the manner in which she does it is sly: "J'avais conduit ma ruse avec tant d'artifice/Qu'on n'y saurait encore soupçonner de malice" (Act III, sc. ii). Unfortunately for La Bourgeoise, the kidnapping is aborted by Atis' timely entrance. Her resilience allows her to rapidly recover from this blow and to explore other avenues: in a manner reminiscent of the scene in the garden of Eden between the Serpent and Eve, she entices Cloris to confide in her the love she (Cloris) feels for Acris. In order to serve her own interest, La Bourgeoise, on the pretense of being a true friend, advises her to forget Acris and marry Atis:

Consolez-vous Cloris, lors que vous serez femme
Vous ne penserez plus à la première flamme
Atis n'est pas un homme à devoir refuser
C'est aujourd'hui le jour qu'on vous doit espouser.

(Act III, sc. iii)

Next, La Bourgeoise torments Acris about Atis' impending marriage to Cloris. While on the surface she appears to be only intent upon convincing Acris that he should allow Atis to marry Cloris,

Que c'est le seul Atis qui la doit posséder
Vous estes trop amis pour ne la luy ceder.
Il est premier en datte, et dans cette journée
On les verra tous deux sou- le joug d'hymenee.

(Act III, sc. v)

her real purpose is to maintain doubt among all the char-
acters and plays one against the other.

At the end of Act III it looks as if a reversal is
beginning to occur: Acrise questions Atis about the
latter's love for Cloris, only to learn that Atis loves
Florise instead. But in Act IV, La Bourgeoise continues to
entangle the plot by convincing Atis that Florise actually
loves Acrise and that he should divert his attention to
Cloris instead.

La Bourgeoise:
Elle [Florise] vit plus contente, et montre à
descouvert
Qu'à ce nouveau parti [Acrise] son coeur est tout
ouvert.
Ainsi si vous croyez celle qui vous conseille,
A l'amour de Cloris prestez aussi l'oreille
Laissez-là cette ingratte, et n'y pensez jamais.

Atis:
Je le scay, mais dis moy, esperes tu qu'Acrise
Se porte avec ardeur à l'amour de Florise.

La Bourgeoise:
Il n'en faut point douter, il en est si content,
Qu'avec mille plaisirs cet hymen il attend,
Et Florise de mesme attend cette alliance,
A ce que je puis voir avec impatience.

Acris:
Mais sa mort ou la mienne en previendra l'effect.

(Act IV, sc. vi)

Having tricked Atis into wanting to hurt his good friend,
she thus achieves her goal.

At the beginning of Act V, the situation is still
working to her advantage. Florise has refused to marry
Acrise and La Bourgeoise needs only to collect the reward for her efforts:

C'en est fait, ny Cloris, ny Florise aujourd'hui
Ne me peuvent donner aucun sujet d'ennuy.
Cloris est mariee autant vaut à cette heure
Et Florise obstinée en son dessein demeure
 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
L'aymable Acrise ainsi ne peut estre qu'à moy.  

(sc. i)

In the final scene, however, the truth is uncovered, the two pairs of lovers will be married, and La Bourgeoise becomes the trompeuse trompée: "Voulant tromper autruy je me suis bien trompée" (sc. vi). But she quickly shrugs it off and uses her final trump card: the man who loves her, Climant. "En tout cas j'ay toujours mon fidelle amoureux" (sc. vi). She reluctantly accepts his love, but has no intention to submit to the laws that make her submissive to her lover, and warns Climant of what is in store for him:

Vous estes d'une humeur à la mienne contraire
Je veux qu'on m'obeisse et qu'on tasche à me plaire

Climant:
Et je vous fairay voir que non contentement
Est de vous obeir.

La Bourgeoise:
J'aimerois bien Climant
S'il faisoit ce qu'il dict, mais pourtant j'apprehende
Qu'en voulant m'obeir en fin il ne commende.

(Act V, sc. vi)

She is one of the rare characters who is adverse to loving, but not to being loved, and who actually refuses male domination in matters of love.

In the next play, Scipion, Hyanisbe is quite aggressive in her pursuit of Garamante, whom she loves. But
Garamante loves Olinde, the heroine, who intends to marry Lucidan. Hyanisbe appears on stage dressed as a soldier, a garb which must definitely serve as a reminder of her masculine traits. Although she seems to be sincere in, and distressed by her love for Garamante, the forceful manner in which she pursues him actually frightens him, and to his, "Ah! laissez-moy mourir" she responds with a threatening remark:

Ouy, traistre, tu mouras:
Ce sera de ma main, si ce n'est de tes playes;
Mais avant que mourir, je veux que tu me payes
Tous les traits douloureux que tu me fis sentir.

(Act III, sc. iv)

Garamante flees from her because she poses a threat to his masculinity. He prefers Olinde, the submissive and subservient type.

Hyanisbe does not lose heart easily and in the final scene of the play, still claims Garamante and appeals to Scipion, the Emperor:

Vous me l'avez promis, Seigneur, voicy le traistre
Que vous devez me rendre, estant icy le maistre
A ces conditions je vous sers de mon bras.

Scipion:
Il est vray, je l'avoue, & n'y resiste pas.
J'avois promis un traistre, emmenez-le, il est vostre
J'ay fait cest promisse avant qu'avoir fait l'autre.

(Lucidan and Olinde's marriage)

But when she turns to Garamante, he refuses to marry her.

Hyanisbe:
Ah! meschant, que de maux tu t'en va recevoir.

Garamante:
J'ayme bien mieux mourir, qu'estre sous son pouvoir.

(Act V, sc. [vi])

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The comic in these lines is negated by the seriousness of her love for him. In despair she resolves to remain a virgin:

"Et je fay voeu, pour moy, qui suis fille et Princesse,
D'est Vierge a jamais. . . ." In renouncing Garamante, Hyanbisbe gains in stature for Garamante is rightfully hers because of the King's promise. In choosing to remain a virgin, and not entering a convent, she in fact affirms self-sufficiency.

Two similar non-heroines are the Infantas in two or the Cid plays, and Dona Urraque, in Chevreau's La Suite et Le Mariage du Cid is the most aggressive of the two. She disregards her high position and willingly risks her honor in order to win back Rodrigue, the man she loves and was to marry, but who has fallen in love with Chimène. This Infanta is one of the rare women in French Baroque drama who knows precisely what she wants and pursues it. Her actions coincide with her desires. She rejects the advice that marriage between her and Rodrigue is not possible:

L'amour scait empescher mes plus sains mouvement.
Neantmoins je souscris à mon disadvantage
Si j'ai de la raison, je m'en ai pas l'usage
Mais quand bien je l'aurois, ah je ne voudrois pas.

(Act I, sc. ii)

The Infanta is aware of the strict code into which she is born and the fact that she is disregarding it does not bother her:

Mais seule je me crois, ce devoir m'est suspect.
Et mon amour l'emporte au dessus du respect.
Un reste s'en est fait, quoique tu me conseilles.
Quelque juste raison qui frapper mes oreilles.
Et quelque dure loi qu'on me puisse imposer.
Pour lui plere une fois je pourrai tout oser.

(Act I, sc. ii)

The Infanta's plans against her rival Chimène, calls for Leonor, the Infanta's governess and confidante to give to Chimène the news of Rodrigue's death. The Infanta feels that once she has pretended to remove the object of Chimène's passion, she will be able to deal with her more effectively,

Si bien qu'ayant perdu ce bel object vainqueur,
Je pourai librement disposer de son coeur,
Lors mes desseins par tout trouveront une voie
Tous mes sens gouteront une parfaite joie
J'entretiendrai Rodrigue, et lors mille plesirs
Succederont sans doute a mes justes desirs.

(Act II, sc. ii)

The false news of Rodrigue's death drives Chimène to the brink of insanity, and the Infanta's plan is successful until in Act III, Rodrigue's return is announced. In Act IV, the King, concerned for his daughter's honor, urges Rodrigue to declare himself to her. His declaration evokes the following reply from the Infanta:

Je vous aime; bien loin de vous dissimuler
Vous apprendrez encore que je me sens bruler.
Le Roy, lesElemens, la longueur des annees,
La Chutte de l'estat, et la perte du jour
N'ont rien encore en eux qui changent cette amour.
J'ay bani comme vous le respect et la crainte,
Et l'honneur ne lient plus mon esprit en contrainte.

(sc. iii)

These last two lines must be singled out for they show that the Infanta considers herself Rodrigue's equal, because they have both transcended moral codes and those of honor. The King even offers the scepter to Rodrigue and his crown to
the Infanta, but Rodrigue refuses, which is a defiance of
the King as well as a rejection of the Infanta. Provoked by
Rodrigue's refusal, the King orders him imprisoned.

Meanwhile, in Act V, the Infanta continues to
torture Chimène; this time attacking her where she is most
vulnerable: the disgrace of being in love with her father's
torment Chimène; this time attacking her where she is most
vulnerable: the disgrace of being in love with her father's
torment Chimène; this time attacking her where she is most
vulnerable: the disgrace of being in love with her father's
killer.

Vous devez doc ma fille en cette ocasion
Temoigner vos vertus et votre affection
Songez-y bien sur tout, Rodrigue vous honore,
Vous sqavez d'autre part que Sanche vous adore
L'un tua votre pere, et l'autre vous vanga,
L'un fit naitre vos pleurs, l'autre vous soulaga.
Ce n'est pas le moyen de finit sa misere,
Que d'espouser ainsi le boureau de son pere:
Il vous faut par raison querir de cet erreur.
Et d'un objet d'amour faire un objet d'horreur.

(Sc. iv)

By now the spectator is totally convinced of her disregard
for honor and respect. "L'amour me suit par tout; j'en suis
persecutee,/Et quoi que la raison s'opose a tous mes voeux/
L'honneur et le respect n'etousent point mes feux" (sc. vi).
She tries until the very end to win Rodrigue and even when
she realizes that it is hopeless, she is determined to go
down fighting. She has been ridiculed, but can tolerate
that more than rejection.

Quoi je suis meprisée.
Et je suis a Rodrigue un objet de risée?
Ah! ces desseins pour toï sont tous pernicieux.
Tu Chimè ne aujourd'hui doit perir a mes yeux.
Pour vanger cet afront je veux estre cruelle
Et rendre par sa mort ta douleur immortelle.
L'immoler à ma haine, et dans cette rigueur.
Lui percer de ma main, & lui tirer le coeur.

(sc. v)

However she finally has to accept her father's new
decision which allows the marriage of Chimère and Rodrigue, "Il faut donc apris tout que mon coeur se contente."

The Infanta in Desfontaines' version, La Vraye Suite du Cid is less aggressive. She antagonizes Chimène, but is not driven by the same emotions as Chevreau's Infanta. For instance in Act II, when Rodrigue admits openly that he loves Chimène, she answers unconvincingly: "Va! Tu prends ce pretexte, afin de me quitter./Mais je seray vangée, et pour croistre ta peine,/J'emploiray contre toy les rigueurs de Chimène" (sc. v). Later in the play she becomes interested in Sherante, the prince of Toledo.

The non-heroines in this category certainly display a dynamism to rival that of some of the dynamic heroines reviewed in the preceding chapter. They are generally good and evoke our sympathy. Except for La Bourgeoise, they are all motivated by love. The pattern observed in these plays is one in which each of the non-heroines attempt in some manner, to remove herself from a social code which she should normally follow.

Even in La Bourgeoise, although the non-heroine is somewhat "vicious," she is not inherently bad and does not wish to physically harm her rivals. Her goals are unrealistic since her rank, as her name suggests, does not allow her to upset the class order. In the following play, the non-heroine displays high ethical standards for which
sympathy and admiration is felt. Her masculine traits are a factor in her unsuccessful bid for the man she loves. Our sympathy is often with the Infantas who try to take themselves out of the social code; but here again, the established order wins.

The other category of the dynamic non-heroine is the avenger, whose actions are often triggered by love, which in turn arouses other emotions such as jealousy and hatred. When this occurs, she often forgets her traditional place in society and can become capable of very dishonorable actions.

The first non-heroine in this category is Leriane in *La Madonte*. She is one instance of an evil and vicious non-heroine in the Baroque theater. She seeks vengeance on the man she loves, Damon, for not accepting her love, by trying to dishonor Madonte, her rival. As Madonte's governante, she finds herself threatened by the young woman and vows revenge for her wounded pride on Madonte, Damon and Thersandre, who also love Madonte:

\[
\text{Tu le scauras, Damon, qu'une femme abusee}
\]
\[
\text{Vange aux occasions son amour méprisee}
\]
\[
\text{J'ay l'esprit assez plein de ruse ce me semble}
\]
\[
\text{Pour me vanger d'un seul, j'en trompe trois ensemble.}
\]

(Act II, sc. ii)

At first, Leriane makes no attempt to harm Madonte, but merely tries to create suspicion in Damon. This she does in a classic scene in which Damon overhears her telling Thersandre that Madonte loves him, and sets up a meeting between them. Damon now doubts Madonte's fidelity. Leriane
feels quite at ease in the game she plays, for after all, love is the domain of woman. She is quite confident she can win:

Notre sexe autrement inutile à la terre
Se doit montrer instruit a cette aymable guerre
Le premier des mortels ne fut si tost forme
Qu'on luy fit une femme afin d'en etre ayme.

(Act II, sc. v)

Meanwhile, she uses her niece Oronte to distract Damon's attention from Madonte and orders her to dazzle him with her beauty so that Damon will fall for her. In Act III, however, Madonte uncovers the plot. Moreover, Damon is presumed drowned following a duel with Thersandre. These events cause Leriane to change the direction of her attack, and this time aims toward Madonte's reputation,

Il le faut, il est temps, Leriane concoy
Un crime à te vanger qui soit digne toy
Un crime tout nouveau, crime que l'enfer mesme
Reconnoisse pour tien, que tu craignes toy mesme.

... ... ... ... ... ... ...
Un crime pui soit grand, & rien moins que vulgaire
... ... ... ... ... ...
Acte qu'au pis aller la posterité blame
Mais qu'on dira venir de l'esprit d'une femme:
Le crime le plus grave en l'Ame des plus saints.

(Act IV, sc. i)

Not only does Leriane want attention for her crime, but she hopes to be remembered for it was well. The emphasis here is certainly on the act which has now become purely gratuitous. To assure the ruin of Madonte and possibly that of Thersandre Leriane needs the help of Ormante, who is ready to deliver a child claimed to be Damon's. Madonte's seclusion to mourn Damon's presumed death, lends credibility to Leriane's story when she tells the King that the infant
belongs to Madonte and Thersandre. Leriane adds the sin of hypocrisy to her slanderous behavior when she pretends to pity Madonte and begs the King not to punish her:

\[ J\'ay \ l'\text{esprit} \ tout \ \text{confus}, \ & \ je \ \text{sofre} \ \text{un \ martire} \\
\text{Mon \ \text{devoir} \ \text{contraignant} \ \text{ma \ langue \ de \ \text{le \ dire}} \\
\text{Et \ \text{pleignant} \ \text{son \ malheur,} \ \text{je \ voudrois \ en \ \text{efet,}} \\
\text{Qu'\text{on} \ \text{peust} \ \text{vanger} \ \text{sur \ \text{moy} \ \text{le \ pech\text{e} \ qu'\text{elle \ a \ fait}} \\
\text{Mes \ soins \ s'en \ \text{remettoient} \ \text{dessus \ \text{sa \ conscience}} \\
\text{Et \ \text{j'eusse \ creu \ faillir \ \text{d'en \ avoir \ defiance,}} \\
\text{Elle \ semble \ pourtant \ \text{apres} \ \text{cette \ action}} \\
\text{Plus \ \text{digne \ de \ pitié \ que \ de \ punition.} \quad \text{(Act IV, sc. iii)} \]

She has now reached the lowest point of moral degradation.

Madonte, however, confronts Leriane and defends herself against the accusation: "Cruelle Leriane, es tu bien sans front/Attaquer mon honneur. . ." (Act IV, sc. iii)? Honor—that is, virtue, for they are indistinguishable—is Madonte's most precious asset and she intends to defend it. As is his duty, Thersandre comes to her rescue and offers to defend their respective honor in a public combat. Leriane refuses to concede and promises her two nephews rewards if they defeat Thersandre. (He later dies of his wounds.) Ormante then exonerates Madonte, Thersandre and Damon, accusing Leriane of forcing her to have an affair described as "un sale amour." Poetic justice is achieved. Damon returns and the two young lovers unite. When the King orders Leriane imprisoned, she recognizes that she is the cause of her own downfall:

\[ \text{Hâ \ pauvre \ Leriane!} \quad \text{He \ Dieu \ que \ la \ justice} \\
\text{Voit \ clair \ sous \ son \ bandeau!} \quad \text{que \ les \ sens \ aveuglez} \\
\text{Donnent \ des \ mouvements \ facheux \ et \ déréglez} \\
\text{Ta \ rage \ est \ reconnue, \ et \ ta \ ruse \ éventée} \\
\text{Tu \ ne \ te \ peux \ sauver, \ ta \ perte \ est \ arestee.} \quad \text{(Act IV, sc. vi)} \]
There is no attempt at repentance.

In *Les Rivaux Amis* we have the revolt and subsequent death of Yolante. The complex plot reveals that Yolante is in love with and promised to Phalante, her brother Yolas' best friend; but Phalante loves Liliane, Yolante's younger sister. Yolas is married to Berenice, Phalante's sister, but this brother-sister relationship is not discovered until Act V. Meanwhile Phalante and Berenice are also attracted to each other since they are not cognizant of their relationship. As the play begins, Yolas is believed to be dead, and Berenice, now a widow, declares her love to Phalante, who realizes that he is also attracted to her. Phalante, however, must re-evaluate his feelings, for he also loves Liliane: "Un mouvement secret, dont mon coeur est complice./ Me donne à Liliane, et puis à Berenice" (Act I, sc. i).

When Yolante learns that Phalante's interests lie elsewhere, she accepts the news with dignity, commenting that, "Je ne veux rien tenir des mains de cet Infame/Quoi n'a point mérite de m'avoir pour sa femme" (Act II, sc. iii).

In the second act, Yolas returns, though he is wounded and near death. Upon hearing of Phalante's attraction to Berenice, he offers his best friend the State and his wife. However, Yolante bitterly objects giving up the State to Phalante:

Quoy cet homme inconu, que j'abhore sur tous
Sera maistre absolu de nos bien, et de nous?

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Mon Frere peut encor disposer de sa Femme,
Mais il ne sçauroit pas disposer de mon bien;
Je m'y veux opposer, non il n'en fera rien
Avant qu'il puisse voir sa volonté suivie,
Et qui m'oste l'Etat, il m'osterait la vie:

(Act III, sc. iii)

She resolves to die or to save the State from Phalante.

This shift in purpose from love to civic affairs influences what follows in the play. Yolante's contempt against Phalante is prompted not so much by jealousy, but by resentment of his authority. She thinks that Yolas overstepped his boundary by trying to dispose of his sisters and his wife as he fancies, without even consulting them. Consequently, Yolante plans to solicit the help of a neighboring Duke—actually Berenice's and Phalante's father—to invade the State. She seeks the alliance of Leriane to help reinforce her position: "Il faut l'interesser dans ma juste vengeance/Et par elle a mes maux chercher quelque allégeance" (Act III, sc. iii). She tries to inform Liliane of the danger they face in allowing their brother to go through with his plans, but fails to convince her. Liliane simply wants no part of the scheme and Yolante is forced to act alone: "Que ton courage est bas!/Je me vengeray seule, et j'en auray l'honneur" (Act III, sc. iv). Consideration should be given here, not to whether or not Yolante's intentions and purpose are misguided, but to the fact that she acts according to a firm conviction. Liliane begs her not to follow through on her plans: "Ah! de grace, ma Soeur, ne t'abandonne pas/Aux coups de Desespoir" (Act III, sc. iv). Yolante's actions, however, are not prompted by
despair, but by revolt.

The Duke complies with her request to invade the State, but his army either flees or is captured by Phalante and his men. After everything else has failed, Yolante defiant and determined decides to kill or be killed:

Sus, courage Soldats, il me faut secourir
En ceste occasion, il faut vaincre, ou mourir
Je l'extermineray, . . .

(Act V, sc. ii)

She dies at the hands of Phalante. Yolas makes a miraculous recovery and thus prevents incest between Phalante and Berenice, whose identities are revealed. Order is thus restored. Yolante dies for a cause she considers just and her revolt aimed at male authority, cannot be equated with criminal acts, for she revolted to defend her rights.

In the last play of this category, Daphnide, in Les Thuilleries, is out to get even with Alcidon for abandoning her, and does not hesitate to make use of Lucidan's love to accomplish her goals. Her first aim is to make Alcidon jealous enough to come back to her, by pretending to love Lucidan:

Avecque tous les deux j'ay commencé de feindre
L'amour pour Lucidan, et le mespris pour luy [Alcidon],
. . . . . . . . . . . .
Alcidon en prendra cent sortes de soubçons
Et ne pouvant juger si c'est amour ou feinte
Croyant en son endroit ma flamme presque esteinte
Il viendra quand et quant avecque plus d'ardeur:
Faire tous ses efforts de vaincre ma froideur.

(Act I, sc. iii)

She then tries to create doubt in her rival, Clorimene by relating the news of a duel fought between Lucidan and
Alcidon which Daphnide claims was fought on her account.

Daphnide, however, dislikes the double binded position in which she finds herself: she would prefer not to be in love, or at least be indifferent to it, for it lowers, she believes, her status as a woman. She would like to have the courage to forget Alcidon so that she can once again control her emotions:

Amour, cruel tyran, qui gouverne mon Sort,
Me faut-il donc souffrir qu'on me face ce tort.
Alcidon pour brusler d'une nouvelle flamme,
A fait mourir le feu que je luy mis dans l'âme,
Et moy sans me vanger d'un affront si honteux,
Non il faut l'oublier puis que l'ingrat m'oublie,
Il faut rompre aujourd'hui la chaisne qui me lie.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
La hayne, le despit, l'Amour, la jalousie,
Tienent également ma pauvre ame saisie.
Je ne sçay que penser, je ne sçay que choisir.

(Act II, sc. i)

So evident is the struggle between her pride and her love that Philis, her Suivante notices it. Once she is able to sort out her emotions, it is no surprise that love turns into hatred. She intends to make Alcidon and Clorimene pay for her sufferings and their impending marriage makes it easier for her to do so:

Aujourd'hui la vengeance est seule mon penser,
L'amour en est banny pour donner à ma haine.
Dans le mal d'Alcidon, le mal de Clorimene.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Il faut tout employer à leur perte totale,
Et qu'ils sachent que c'est de m'avoir pour rivale
Quoy qu'il en soit au moins, ayant part à mes pleurs,
Leur maux alégeront quelque peu mes douleurs.

(Act III, sc. iii)

A decision she reiterates later:
Je dois tout hazarder, et me pardre moy-mesme,
Pour vanger aujourd'hui sa perfidie extreme.

(Act IV, sc. i)

However, Daphnide's avenging spirit is shortlived for she gradually comes to realize that Alcidon does not love her and she decides, for the moment, to settle for Lucidan's courtship.

This play deserves special recognition in so far as at the end, unlike previously mentioned avengers, Daphnide is not in the least hostile to Clorimene and not as upset as one would expect about losing the man she loves. Her last speech shows no resentment:

Tous ces discours à part, il faut penser ailleurs,
Nous avons maintenant des mouvements meilleurs.
Le Ciel qui veut finir nos peines amoureuses,
En vous faisant heureux nous fait de mesme heureuses
Allons chez Clorimene, et là de tous costez
On reconfirmera l'accord des volontez.

(Act V, sc. iv)

These comments reveal a harmony and contentment between two women--obvious in the last two lines--that may be a reflection of an attitude between women prevailing at this time in social circles. This play, written and performed circa 1635, also shows a growing consciousness of the hostility women felt toward men in matters of infidelity. Daphnide's statement, "Que les hommes vers nous se monstrent inhumains" when she learns that Alcidon will be marrying Clorimene, is representative of so many such instances found in Baroque drama. Her final hostility is directed toward Alcidon and not Clorimene.
Other speeches provide examples for this awareness, for instance one by Doris, Clerimene's Compagne:

Que l'infidélité reigne au siècle ou nous sommes!
Qu'on est mal assuré dessus la foi des hommes.
Que les filles ont tort de croire leurs tourments.
Leurs discours sont menteurs, et faux tous leurs sermens.
(Act V, sc. i)

As is evident from this review of plays, the dynamic non-heroine is not as easy to fit into a definite pattern as is the dynamic heroine. Neither good nor bad, she is often an ambiguous character who even acts as antagonist from the point of view of structure of the play. She seems nevertheless able to create at times sympathy in the spectator.
NOTES


2Boisrobert, Les Rivaux Amis, 1639.

3de Rayssiguier, La Bourgeoise ou La Promenade de S. Cloud, 1633.


5Desmarets, Scipion, 1639.

6Chevreau, La Suite et Le Mariage du Cid, 1638.

7Desfontaines, La Vraye Suitte du Cid, 1638.

8Auvray, La Madonte, 1632.

9Boisrobert, Les Rivaux.

10de Rayssiguier, Les Thuilleries, 1636.

11Backer, Precious Women.
Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

The analysis of a number of various plays in chapters 4 and 5 reveals a pattern in which evil and virtue in the female dramatis personae are contingent upon their activity. It was ascertained that a passive heroine is incapable of evil behavior, while the reverse is true of the dynamic heroine. In fact, the dynamism of the heroine is in direct proportion to her degree of goodness or evil; that is, the more dynamic she is, the more evil, the more passive, the more virtuous.

These observations are of particular interest because these heroines do not fit the conventional mold of the protagonist, which requires the coincidence of 'goodness' and 'dynamism': a hero has the audience's sympathy. Even though Baroque drama is characterized by its contempt for rules and conventions, yet this specific disregard should carry a significance beyond that of being simply the result of the whim of the playwright. We must therefore go beyond the rules of drama to try to find answers in the religious, literary and social conventions prevailing during that period; that is, turn to what we have established as being
the major conventional attitudes toward women in chapter 3. If we assume that the Baroque heroine is synchronically dynamic and evil on the one hand, and passive and good on the other, these deep rooted attitudes should provide some answers.

In chapter 3 we delineated the Eve model, responsible for man's temptation and subsequent fall in evil; the Virgin Mary model who represents goodness and is a symbol for man's redemption; and the Courtly Love model where woman is idealized. We are immediately struck by the correspondence between the Eve model and the dynamic-evil heroine, whose activities invariably lead to perdition. Conversely, the Virgin Mary model corresponds to the passive-good heroine. The passivity of the Virgin Mary need hardly be pointed out as she is a mere figurehead who upholds virtue by her very existence, and is the means to man's salvation. However, this last function is not prevalent in Baroque drama and ironically, the reverse occurs as far as the passive heroine is concerned. Her virtue seems to be a catalyst that leads men to different manifestations of evil—rape, incest, torture and the like. Goodness has an ambiguous function to say the least.

Passivity of heroine allied to goodness may also be a reflection of the Courtly Love model where the lady remains essentially a passive object of love who provides the knight with a goal to attain.

Baroque dramatists, therefore, while ignoring the
basic model of the heroic dramatic tradition, follow conventions in their portrayal of the heroine. This comes somewhat as a surprise. The survey carried out in chapters 2 and 3 definitely points to the enhancement of women's role in the Baroque theater, an enhancement which is proof of the changing attitudes toward them and to their growing influence. By this time, women as spectators, and women as actresses and characters, had become an integral part of the theater. Even the eclectic manner—the multiplicity of their roles—in which they are portrayed, shows that the dramatist were aware of their changing status: women dressed as soldiers, swordswomen, mothers having control over their children, women in pursuit of men, all attest to this change. Moreover, women often present a challenge to traditional attitudes and offer instead assurances of their leadership.

Why then does the Baroque heroine, despite the backdrop against which it functions, project an image that is basically conventional? We believe that an answer lies in the nature of the theater itself in that it is a medium which operates on and reflects established conventions. There must exist a common ground against which the events delineate themselves. Action must be posited on recognition and conventions be allowed to operate. Drama, by its very nature, that is, imitation of an action, must coincide with the beliefs of the spectator and provide a framework for credibility to insure recognition of sympathy for its characters.
Yet the paradox remains: the French Baroque theater, novel in the numerous portraits of women that it presents, does not however add or change any concept pertaining to them. Must we assume therefore that despite the awareness brought about by the Querelle des femmes, the basic role of women remained unchanged during that period? Based on their function in the theater, the answer has to be affirmative. As a mirror of society, the French Baroque theater serves as a reminder that the social novelties enjoyed by women during this period were indeed extraneous to the basic conventional function they held in that society.
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